
MCTE News

August 2002
Volume 42, number 6

Newsletter of the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English

President's Column



Sometime in April, after Daylight Saving Time begins, I begin to anticipate the coming summer. I look forward to the lengthening hours of daylight, the sun no longer setting at 5:30 or 6:00. I look forward to daylight extending until 9:30 and waiting until its dark enough for fireworks at 10:00 on the Fourth of July. I often joke with friends that the first day of summer in June is also the beginning of the end--for after the longest day of the year, the days gradually become shorter again. I also hear from neighbors and friends that after the Fourth of July, summer is over--"It's all downhill from here." And part of it is true, I guess. The Vikings begin preseason shortly, summer sales are easy to find, sweaters and fall wear appear throughout the malls, and soon back-to-school ads will begin appearing on TV and in the newspapers. But until fall workshops and first bells begin to ring again most of us still have a few weeks left.



This spring, my niece, who is going to be a senior, gave me a lengthy and hefty list of suggested summer reading given to her and other in-coming seniors by their 12 grade teachers. She gave me the list with the intent that I check my shelves. I found *The Stranger*, *Tale of Two Cities*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *Things Fall Apart*, and some others. (truly a rich and eclectic list) I stopped at Barnes and Noble and picked up a few more, including *Native Son*, *The Invisible Man*, *Caged Bird*, *The Color Purple*, *Women of Brewster Place*, and *The Metamorphosis*. I was impressed with the list and with the table of books at Barnes and Noble identified as summer reading for seniors. I was encouraged to learn the expectations of our seniors. I made it my goal, or part of it, to read several of the books on the list.



So far this summer, I have entertained friends, spent some time at Madeline Island, watched fireworks at 10:00 over Forest Lake, plan to see *Sisters of Swing*, *Triple Espresso*, *Forever Plaid*, and *Rent* with my girlfriend, Susan and with my 17-year old niece. When I asked whether main floor seating would be too loud for *Rent*, thus giving away my age, I guess, I was told by the box office receptionist that the sound is too loud for her in the lobby! (Giving away her age as well.) I'm looking forward to a reunion with Minnesota Writing Project in August and *Les Miserables*, more my speed. I've also made a dent in the list by reading more of Steinbeck, *The Alchemist*, *Sound and the Fury* (yikes!), *My Antonia*, *Agony and the Ecstasy*, all on the list and *Empire Falls*, not on the list, but a great book by Richard Russo about life in a small Maine town.



Summer, for teachers, is a time of renewal, rebuilding, and re-energizing. But also a time for relaxing. I start to plan subconsciously for lessons yet untaught and to revise lessons previously used. In my mind I forget some of the disillusionment I experienced last year and look optimistically forward to the year ahead.



With the weeks remaining, I hope you have time to enjoy a new book or two, check out a suggested reading list for seniors, travel, spend time with those significant to you, enjoy the remaining days of sunshine, and have several quiet moments alone. And then return to school in the fall--refreshed and ready for new experiences, lessons, and kids. Happy remaining summer vacation!

GERRY LIDSTROM



RESOURCES



Professional Reading: What You Know by Heart: How to Develop Curriculum for Your Writing Workshop

- Katie Wood Ray

I love Katie Wood Ray's books. The first one I read, *Wondrous Words*, has elementary in the subtitle, but it isn't just for elementary teachers. All writing teachers should read it and this one is the same.

In *Wondrous Words*, Ray writes about the notion of encouraging students to envision what their writing can be by reflecting on what they've read. What a simple but powerful idea...to look at words we know well for illustration of craft that will make our writing better. She extends that idea in this book by showing us specific ways to help students see things in their reading that will help them in their writing.

Katie Wood Ray believes that what we know from our experiences with reading, what we know by heart, can be a profound and effective source of curriculum for writing workshops. In *What You Know by Heart*, she makes the connection easy to understand. She shows us, with writing from her own journals, scripts from conferences, and examples of teaching material gleaned from those experiences, the thinking that connects her reading experiences with the curriculum decisions she makes. The appendices of the book contain more examples of curriculum statements with ideas for texts to illustrate them.

Ray's books are infused with her love of teaching writing but she says in order to be good teachers, we need to think like writers first. This book will show you how to do just that. ~Teresa Saum

YA Lit:

The Girls - Amy Goldman Koss

Girls as bullies has been getting a lot of press lately. Oprah, Nightline, *Newsweek* have all featured stories, and speculation. But once your awareness and empathy are raised, what do you do? This novel, told from the viewpoints of each of the five girls of a circle of friends, could be just the thing to get discussion going with your students. Maya is being subtly ousted from the group through the manipulations of Candace. The reactions and inner thoughts of the other three girls as well as the resolution will give middle school girls new insights and some practical skills for working through this all-too-common middle school problem. ~SH

Other great YA Reads while there's still hammock time:
Because of Winn-Dixie - Kate De Camillio -- Move over, Scout Finch!

When Zachary Beaver Came to Town - Kimberly W. Holt
Any of the *Series of Unfortunate Events* - Lemony Snickett

MCTE News is published six times a year as a benefit to members

Next Deadline: August 1

Contact Sandy Hayes, sjhayes@aol.com

19019 180th Ave, Big Lake, MN 55309

Member NCTE Information Exchange Agreement

Showcasing and Sharing English Teachers' Work

*A One-Day Conference for English/Language Arts Teachers:
High School, Middle School, and College*

**Thursday, September 26, 2002
9:00-3:00 - Radisson Metrodome**

In this conference, teachers will be sharing their teaching activities, units, web-based instruction, and student work in poster sessions. Participants will have an opportunity to share and interact with colleagues about their teaching. \$25 Registration (includes lunch)
Contact: tegwe002@umn.edu



6TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

September 18 - 22

Exhibits, Tour, Drama productions, Tea Dance, Banquet, Ice Cream Social. For more information and tickets
http://people.csp.edu/heginbotham/Fitzgerald/Public_Events.htm

CONGRATULATIONS, JOANNA KNIGHT, Perpich Center senior, winner of Fitzgerald writing contest

*Minnesota Writing Project
12 Year Reunion*

Keynote:

Mary Beth Blegen

Saturday, Sept. 14 9:00 - 3:00

\$25 (lunch included)

Radisson Metrodome, Mpls

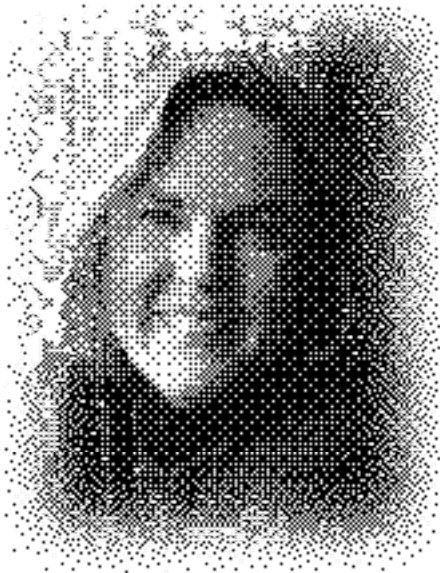
Reservations:

Minnesota Writing Project, 227 Lind Hall,

207 Church Street SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455

more info: 612-625-6323 murielt@umn.edu

MCTE Fall Workshop: Stephanie Harvey



Reading Strategies That Work

It's not enough to teach readers to read words. Readers must think about words and ideas to make sense of reading. Reading comprehension is about much more than answering literal questions at the end of a passage, story, or chapter. Reading comprehension involves an ongoing process of evolving thinking. This workshop will help teachers think about comprehension in this light and will look at thoughtful instruction that promotes deeper understanding. A variety of strategy lessons will be shared, and participants will have time to do their own reading and thinking.

One day workshop: November 11 or 12

Royal Cliff, Eagan Cedar Avenue (Hwy 77) & Cliff Road

Registration: 8:30-9:00

*Registration includes
workshop, materials, lunch*

Name _____

Home Mailing address _____

City, State, & Zipcode _____

School name _____ grade level _____

email address _____

• Workshop desired

- Monday, November 11 (for teachers of grades 6-10)
- Tuesday, November 12 (for teachers of grades 4-6)

• Registration

Current MCTE member

- \$75 - Early bird (postmarked by Oct 3)
- \$85 - Regular
- \$95 - Onsite (not preregistered)

Non-member or lapsed member

- \$100 - Early bird (postmarked by Oct 3)
- \$110 - Regular
- \$120 - Onsite (not preregistered)

Mail to: Marsha Besch, 14702 Oak Run Lane, Burnsville, MN 55306
See www.mcte.org for more details - including a map to the workshop site

>>Fast Forward: Humor from the Internet

While waiting for my first appointment in the reception room of a new dentist, I noticed his certificate, which bore his full name.

Suddenly, I remembered that a tall, handsome guy with the same name had been in my high school class some 40 years ago. Upon seeing him, however, I quickly discarded any such thought. This balding, gray-haired man with the deeply lined face was too old to have been my classmate.

After he had examined my teeth, I asked him if he had attended the local high school.

"Yes," he replied.

"When did you graduate?" I asked.

He answered, "In 1960."

"Why, you were in my class!" I exclaimed.

He looked at me closely and then asked, "What did you teach?"

- On a plumber's truck: "We repair what your husband fixed."
- Pizza shop slogan: "7 days without pizza makes one weak."
- Outside a muffler shop: "No appointment necessary. We hear you coming."
- Over a gynecologist's office: "Dr. Jones, at your cervix."
- In a veterinarian's waiting room: "Be back in 5 minutes. Sit! Stay!"
- On the trucks of a local plumbing company in NE Pennsylvania:
" Don't sleep with a drip. Call your plumber."
- Door of a plastic surgeon's office: "We can help you pick your nose!"
- On an electrician's truck: "Let us remove your shorts."
- In a non-smoking area: "If we see smoke, we will assume you are on fire and take appropriate action."
- On a maternity room door: "Push. Push. Push."
- At an optometrist's office: "If you don't see what you're looking for you've come to the right place."
- In the front yard of a funeral home: "Drive carefully. We'll wait."

MCTE

Minnesota Council of Teachers of English

News

**Non-profit
postage paid
Monticello, MN
Permit No. 249**

Sandy Hayes, Editor
19019 180th Avenue
Big Lake, MN 55309



Preview of Fall Conferences & Workshops

