

The Harbinger

The Newsletter of the South Carolina Council of Teachers of English

Spring 2007

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SCCTE Back to the Beach in 2008

--By Nancy Swanson

Plans for next year's SCCTE Conference are already underway. We have reserved the facilities at Kiawah Island, including a block of bargain-priced villas, for the last weekend in January once again.

The Board has also selected a theme for next year's conference: "Celebrating South Carolina Writers." Also, the Board made some tentative decisions to offer workshops both before and after the main conference on Friday. We are investigating opportunities through the South Carolina Education Department and the National Writing Project for Thursday afternoon. Saturday morning would be an excellent opportunity for teachers to do some writing on their own, perhaps in consultation with some of the professionals at the convention.

The exact title isn't set, so if you have any good ideas, please feel free to send along ideas to Nancy Swanson. Also feel free to send her suggestions about writers or speakers from South Carolina you would like to see represented or workshops you would find useful. Her email is on the SCCTE webpage, along with other details as they develop. Hopefully, our beautiful brochure will be ready as school begins next year. Be looking for it so you can submit proposals and make plans to attend.



SCCTE President's Message

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

Greetings and welcome to the spring issue of the Harbinger! As we celebrate our 60th year of SCCTE, Harbinger Editor Terry Filippo has created a fresh new look for our newsletter! This issue features our amazing 2007 conference organized by conference chair, Mike Ward. Our weekend at the beach was filled with inspiring presentations by Frank Serafini, Harvey Daniels and Jim Burke. A sneak preview of our 2008 conference being planned by Nancy Swanson as a special celebration of South Carolina is also featured.

I hope that you will consider the many opportunities that SCCTE can offer for your professional growth. Along with our annual conference, SCCTE sponsors three publications: the Harbinger, South Carolina English Teacher (SCET), and Carolina Writes. These publications offer rich opportunities for development through articles and essays on important topics for the profession, as well as a place for students and teachers to have work published. Information regarding submissions for our journal, South Carolina English Teacher (SCET) is included in this newsletter.

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2007 SCCTE CONFERENCE REVIEW: NOT JUST ANOTHER DAY AT THE BEACH!

Sometimes if you miss only one conference, you miss a lot. If you weren't able to join us at Kiawah in January, here's just a little bit of what you missed. . .

Harvey Daniels Delivers SCCTE Keynote Address

--by Bob Hanley

In his keynote address, "Best Practices in the English Language Arts," Harvey "Smokey" Daniels provided a stimulating presentation designed to help teachers create classrooms that engage students in learning. First, he reminded us that too often classrooms rely on the standard worksheet to occupy students. Most significantly, our classrooms still have the teacher as the "sage on stage," who dominates the student learning experience through a lecture format.

Smokey asked teachers how often they had tried to have a large group discussion about a book and had very little student interaction. In many cases students would only respond if asked, and some students may never get a turn. To counter this non-productive strategy, he challenged teachers to make their classrooms more student-centered. Such classrooms would ask the students to be more reflective and to be engaged in more authentic work. Students would cooperate more, be challenged more, and have more responsibility for their own learning. In simple terms, he stated that students should talk more in class and teachers should talk less.

To illustrate his point, he offered a particular strategy that would achieve this goal. This strategy focused on student letter writing. For example, a class would read a common book. Then the teacher would ask the students join a group of three, and each student would write about a particular aspect of the book for ten minutes. They would then pass what they had written to another person in their group. They would respond to what their peer had written, and then the process would continue around the group for several rounds. Finally, the teacher would lead the class in a whole group discussion. Most importantly, the students would have much to talk about since they had written about the book in many ways.

Smokey used this illustration to show how our students can be invited to use their intellect to analyze topics critically, and, when given the right guidance, they can be empowered to give voice to their thoughts and can take ownership for their learning.

To highlight his message, he offered many student illustrations to show how students can have much to offer if they feel their thoughts are valued and they are comfortable sharing them. In all, Smokey reminded teachers to enjoy their work, to seek constantly new ideas, but to remember the tried and true ones as well that can be successful in engaging students in learning.



A Journey with Jim Burke

--by Mike Ward

Perhaps the most famous English teacher in the country, Jim Burke wrapped up the annual SCCTE Conference Saturday morning with an interactive workshop entitled Teaching the Academic Essentials. Citing Judith Langer's *Beating the Odds* research, he stressed that students must be taught to be "generative thinkers," a theme corroborated by Frank Serafini, Harvey Daniels, and Janet Allen on Friday. Burke then modeled several generative activities with his audience. In one activity, teachers selected "well words" (such as relax, connect, celebrate, and thank), circled one to write more about, and then generated three questions about that word to explore in their writing. Citing his own habit of constantly reflecting on what he's doing, he led teachers in reflecting on how that lesson was designed to scaffold students to success, moving from the easy (selecting words) to the more challenging (writing insightfully about a word).

Burke's workshop approach alternated between specific teaching techniques and big picture ideas such as his Academic Essentials Matrix and 10 Principles for Effective Instruction. He bases his matrix on the skills students need and the abilities of generating, evaluating, analyzing, organizing, and synthesizing. Burke concluded by saying that "public teaching is about demystifying your performance" and reading aloud *The Journey* by Mary Oliver. SCCTE's journey with Burke provided a memorable and fitting end to a wonderful conference. Teachers can continue their journey with Burke through his many books and his website, www.english-companion.com.



Janet Allen: REAL Books--REAL Reading-- REAL Results!

--by Matthew Nelson

In the final general session on Friday, "Real Books—Real Reading—Real Results," Janet Allen provided an opportunity to celebrate the work done by numerous ELA teachers throughout the state in creating the new English 1 and 2 curriculum modules. Allen described the history of the development of the modules and explored some of the key principles which guided the project, such as teaching vocabulary in context and increasing both the volume and variety of texts read by students. Allen provided examples of how the new curriculum incorporates contemporary, easily-accessible texts to serve as a gateway to the study of "classic" texts. She showed how a hypothetical diary entry by a teenaged Guinevere could be used as an introduction to Mallory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Allen concluded by congratulating her colleagues on four years of hard work devoted to developing curriculum devoted to "Real Books—Real Reading—Real Results."

**MORE from the Conference
on page 3 . . .**

2007-2008 SCCTE Awards and Scholarships

Affiliate Award

Recognizes and celebrates a local affiliate that provides outstanding service to the profession. (Recognition by certificate and plaque at the SCCTE Conference)

Coleman Undergraduate Scholarship

Recognizes and celebrates an outstanding undergraduate student majoring in some aspect of the teaching of English Language Arts. (Recognition by \$1000 award and certificate at the SCCTE Conference)

New Member Award

Recognizes and celebrates an outstanding new member of the organization (5 years or fewer). (Recognition at the SCCTE Conference and \$500 toward attendance at NCTE annual convention in November of the following year)

Outstanding Administrator Award

Recognizes and celebrates an administrator who provides outstanding encouragement in support of English Language Arts programs in a district or school. (Recognition by certificate and plaque at the SCCTE Conference)

Richard Riley Award for English/Language Arts

Recognizes and celebrates a classroom teacher who displays outstanding service to the profession. (Recognition by certificate and plaque at the SCCTE Conference)

Theme Award

Recognizes and celebrates classroom teachers whose attitudes and strategies demonstrate the theme of the annual convention in their classroom. (Five recipients will be recognized by certificate at the SCCTE annual convention in January)

Secondary Section High School Teacher of Excellence

Recognizes and celebrates a high school classroom teacher. SCCTE's selection will be entered into the NCTE's Secondary Section Teacher of Excellence award program. (Recognition by certificate and plaque at the SCCTE Conference)

Nomination and Documentation Materials

DOCUMENTATION FOR ALL AWARDS SHOULD BE SENT BY DECEMBER 1 TO: Sara Biltz, SCCTE Coordinator for Awards and Scholarships, 23 Glenhawk Loop, Irmo, SC 29063. Please note that special requirement information and nomination materials are available online at www.sccte.org. Note that some awards require both SCCTE and NCTE membership.

Conference Continued . . .

One of Many Excellent Break-Out Sessions:

“Pairing Up”: Thematic Text Sets for the High School Classroom

--by Mary Styslinger

High school literacy coaches with the South Carolina Reading Initiative introduced teachers to a variety of text sets which interweave best practices in the teaching of literacy through a partnership of more “traditional” works and other genres including fiction (young adult novels, poetry, drama, short stories), nonfiction (essays, biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, testimonials, diaries, journals, letters, newspapers), media, and the arts.

After a general introduction to the purpose and goals of thematic teaching by Mary Styslinger from the University of South Carolina, participants joined 3 roundtable conversations and were able to explore materials around three different themes. Sally Hursey from Boiling Springs High School provided information around the theme of “man’s inhumanity to man,” utilizing the core text of “To Kill a Mockingbird.” Debby Greene shared the new English 3 curriculum support materials around the themes of identity and non-conformity. And Mary Jo Floyd offered a historical perspective for teaching “To Kill a Mockingbird.” The room was filled with conversation and ideas.

President’s Message

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I invite you to consider a leadership position in SCCTE. If you are interested in any of our elected and/or appointed position, please to let us know. A list of current officers is included in this issue. By networking with colleagues across the state, we are able to share ideas and to learn from each other. Together, we have a world of experiences and a rich history in teaching that can grow even more as we collaborate and work together.

Let us know how SCCTE can better serve you in the future. Be sure to check our webpage (www.sccte.org) for news and current information. I hope that you enjoy this issue of the Harbinger. Please send your news and ideas for future issues to Terry Filippo (TFilippo@anderson4.k12.sc.us).

Sincerely,

Rebecca Kaminski
President

Call for Articles



The South Carolina Council of Teachers of English welcomes contributions to *South Carolina English Teacher* (SCET), a journal that represents varied perspectives, formats, and voices focusing on the teaching of English in our state. SCET publishes critical essays, research reports, teaching strategies for all levels, bibliographies, interviews, personal essays, short stories, poetry, and other creative works including black and white photography and drawings. We invite original artwork for our cover design. Each manuscript should be no more than 12 double-spaced, typed pages in current MLA style. SCET is a blind, peer reviewed journal. Place the author's personal and institutional identification including an e-mail address on the cover page only. Send three copies of the manuscript and a self addressed stamped envelope. In addition, please attach a copy of your manuscript in Word, subject heading, SCET, to mstyslin@gwm.sc.edu. Submissions will not be returned. Deadline for submission for the Fall 2007 issue of SCET is August 1, 2007. All submissions postmarked by this date will be considered. Send manuscripts to:

Dr. Mary E. Styslinger
 College of Education
 #232 Wardlaw
 The University of South Carolina
 Columbia, SC 29208

SIXTY YEARS OF TEACHERS SERVING TEACHERS

SCCTE Presidents, 1947-2007

SCCTE will be celebrating 60 years at next year's conference. We are trying to locate all past presidents. If you have contact information for any of the presidents listed below or are able to identify presidents who served from 1964-1968, please send that information to Paul Thomas, Historian (paul.thomas@furman.edu).

1947	Susie Osteen, Sumter	1977	Alvin Rucker, Greenwood
1948	Susie Osteen, Sumter	1978	Marguerite McCaskill, Columbia
1949	Mary Wilds, Greenville	1979	Nancy Thompson, Columbia
1950	Ruth Riddle, Laurens	1980	Bela Herlong, Saluda
1951	Frances M. Todd, Augusta	1981	Patsy Candal, Georgetown
1952	Lillian Killingsworth, Abbeville	1982	Bettie Horne, Greenwood
1953	Alice Blanton Carter, Columbia	1983	Margot Rochester, Lugoff
1954	J. M. Ariail, Columbia	1984	Lynn Harrill, Woodruff
1955	Marguerite McCaskill, Columbia	1985	May Jones, Sullivans Island
1956	Isabel W. Foster, Columbia	1986	E. Lee Craig, Columbia
1957	M. A. Owings, Clemson	1987	Curt Elliott, Columbia
1958	Marjory Good, Columbia	1988	Nell Braswell, Rock Hill
1959	Marjory Good, Columbia	1989	Jim Wilhide, Columbia
1960	Wilson Snipes, Spartanburg	1990	Eve Coleman, Charleston
1961	Wilson Snipes, Spartanburg	1991	Janet West, Rock Hill
1962	Mrs. Walter McKinney, Columbia	1992	Janet West, Rock Hill
1963	Mrs. Walter McKinney, Columbia	1993	Sue Mellette
1964		1994	Janet Sanner
1965		1995	Marty Hutto Triffiletti, Pawleys Island
1966		1996	Libby Carnohan, Columbia
1967		1997	Bea Cain Naff Bailey, Clemson
1968		1998	Terrell Tracy, Fountain Inn
1969	Henry Rollins, Columbia	1999	Barbara Goggans, Murrells Inlet
1970	William B. McColly, Columbia	2000	Eudora Dickey, Spartanburg
1971	Winifred Johnson, Greenville	2001	Kelly Harrison McGuire, Spartanburg
1972	Nettie Parler, Orangeburg	2002	Hope Spillane, Columbia
1973	Betty Hodges, Lancaster	2003	Lynn Harrill, Woodruff
1974	Harris Chewing, Spartanburg	2004	Terry Filippo, Clemson
1975	Marianna Davis, Columbia	2005	Bob Hanley, Anderson
1976	Joye Pettigrew, Rock Hill	2006	Rebecca Kaminski, Greenville