



# Virginia Association of Teachers of English

## Spring 2004

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Number 1

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### From the editor

I have been involved with VATE for as long as I can remember, and I have enjoyed working with English and Language Arts teachers from all across the state. I have attended too many state and national conferences to even remember anymore, but I do remember all the great teaching ideas I've picked up from my colleagues.

You could help your friends and your organization by sharing this newsletter with them. Find one person whom you could encourage to join VATE. Maybe that person would also be willing to go with you to the conference that you will read about in this issue.

For another way you could serve, check out Nancy's appeal:  
Are you looking for new avenues for professional growth?

Would you like to become more involved in issues that affect English and Language Arts teachers in Virginia?

Have you attended a VATE Conference and wanted to know more about the organization?

If so, now is the time to become a VATE Executive Board member! We are always looking for enthusiastic individuals who will bring new ideas and fresh perspectives to the Board. A number of positions are available each year, and we would love to have you become involved. If you are interested in serving as an officer or a Member-at-Large elect for 2005, please email Nancy Moskwa-Vaderesen, Past President, at [nsmoskwa@vbeps.k12.va.us](mailto:nsmoskwa@vbeps.k12.va.us). Let's work together to make VATE the best professional affiliate

in NCTE!

Sharon Hurwitz



Virginia Association of Teachers of English  
**90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

**New Frontiers in Teaching English**

**October 8-10, 2004**

**Holiday Inn Select, Central Park  
Fredericksburg, Virginia**

Ancestors of George Washington settled in Fredericksburg and the Northern Neck of Virginia over 300 years ago. Immigrants from England, Ireland, Germany, and Africa poured onto our shores and settled in Virginia. They brought with them their language and cultures. America was the New Frontier and the English language and literature from Great Britain began to evolve into our American language and literature.

The Father of our country, George Washington, grew up on the banks of the Rappahannock River. He took the ferry from his farm across the river to Fredericksburg. Not being privileged to have a university education, he labored to read and write, under the tutelage he received there. He knew that in order to be successful in a newly civilized world, literacy was imperative.

Today, as over three centuries ago, we have an influx of immigrants. Now they hail from all over the world, all continents and territories. They bring with them their cultures, languages, and stories. We pay homage to them by teaching multi-cultural literature. English is their second language, and they labor to become fluent in reading and writing it.

From our early Native American literature, to the Naturalism, Romanticism, Realism and other periods throughout our history, our language and literature continue to evolve. We are in the midst of this change; it is happening in our classrooms and before our very eyes. How can we balance the literature of the past with the constantly changing new literature? How can we address the language barriers of the English language learners? How do you see our language and literature changing? How have the technologies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century presented new opportunities but, at the same time, challenges for us? How have the English language learners and special needs students created a different kind of English classroom? How can we differentiate instruction for the ever-increasing diversity in our English classrooms?

The 2004 VATE conference hopes to bring teachers together in fellowship. It encourages teachers to share how they deal with the answers to the questions above. There will be keynote guest speakers, institutes, mini-workshops, and sessions to promote discussion and exchange of ideas.

Check your newsletter and the VATE web site for the Conference 2004 Call for Proposals. If you have an idea that has been successful, plan to share it with your colleagues! Check your school, department, or school system for assistance in conference funding. Plan to attend and bring a friend!

For site and program information, contact Janice Suppa-Friedman at  
jdsfrontier@aol.com or (540) 372-4378.

For other information, browse the VATE web site at <http://www.vate.org>.



## CALL FOR 2004 PROGRAM PROPOSALS

Virginia Association of Teachers of English  
90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year and 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

### New Frontiers in Teaching English

Holiday Inn Select, Central Park, Fredericksburg, VA.

October 8-10, 2004

Please complete Parts I, II, and III of the proposal by **July 15, 2004**. The program committee will consider all proposals and will contact all applicants via **e-mail**. As a professional nonprofit organization, VATE cannot reimburse program participants for travel, hotel, or other conference expenses. All conference participants and presenters must pay registration fees. Print this page and mail the proposal to:  
Janice Suppa-Friedman, 1021 Clearview Ave., Fredericksburg, VA 22405, 540-372-4378, E-mail: jdsfrontier@aol.com.

#### Part I: Proposal Application

**Person submitting the proposal: (please circle) Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Last name</b>	<b>First name</b>	<b>Middle initial</b>
<b>Institutional Affiliation:</b> _____		
<b>Position and/or Title:</b> _____		
<b>Mailing Address: (street)</b> _____		
_____ (City)	_____ (State)	_____ (Zip)
<b>E-mail Address:</b> _____		
<b>Phone Number: (Home)</b> _____ <b>(Work)</b> _____		

**Local Affiliate of VATE (if known) or School District or County** \_\_\_\_\_

**List of Co-presenters: (Please include professional titles, institutional affiliations, and E-MAIL ADDRESSES OF ALL PARTICIPANTS.)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Type of Presentation (Check only one)

- 50 min. Sessions designed to provide an overview of a given specific topic**
- 75 min. Mini-Workshops use an interactive format and audience participation**
- Half-day Institutes allow for the most in-depth sharing of a topic with suggested follow-up activities (three hours).**

#### Strand Addressed

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>American Literature</b>            | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Multi-cultural Literature</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Technology</b>                     | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Our Changing Language</b>     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Differentiation in Instruction</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b>                     |

**Intended Audience:** Elementary School \_\_\_ Middle School \_\_\_ High School \_\_\_  
College \_\_\_ Administrators \_\_\_ Parents \_\_\_

**Audiovisual Equipment Needed:** Overhead \_\_\_ TV/VCR \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_ None \_\_\_



**Part II: Please attach a *one-page* description that includes the following:**

1. Session Title,
2. Objectives,
3. Narrative Description of Session,
4. Abstract (25-30 words to be used in Conference Program)

**Part III: Can you bring a colleague to chair/record your session?**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Affiliation** \_\_\_\_\_

**Are you willing to chair/record a session you might be attending?** \_\_\_\_\_ **Yes** \_\_\_\_\_ **No** \_\_\_\_\_

**Biographical Information:** Please provide biographical information no longer than one paragraph for each presenter listed in Part I.

On behalf of the presenter(s) listed on this proposal, I understand I (we) must pre-register for the conference and be responsible for all conference registration fees and other expenditures for the 35<sup>th</sup> Virginia Association of Teachers of English Annual Conference to be held at the Holiday Inn Select, Central Park, Fredericksburg, VA, on October 8-10, 2004.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Person Submitting Proposal** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Note: We welcome all proposals and give each serious consideration. Please submit your proposal early as sessions fill up rapidly. We had a waiting list to present for the 2003 conference. Please note conference theme and strands on the VATE web site.

If you have questions/concerns, check out the FAQ's on the VATE web site at <http://www.vate.org>. If you have additional questions, contact J. Suppa-Friedman.

**Special Note to look for:** We are working on the possibility of providing you with the opportunity to receive graduate credit for attending the conference. The James Monroe Center for Graduate and Professional Studies will grant one graduate credit for conference attendance and follow-up activities that must be approved/checked/graded. Look for this information in the next newsletter.



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## Announcements

Free Materials: The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes, founded by young adult author T.A. Barron, offers educators a free set of materials to use in exploring the concept of heroes with their students. A new Heroes Curriculum for grades 5 to 9 includes activities and discussion points for exploring heroic character qualities and examples of heroism. A Heroes Bibliography listing over 200 books and a Reader's Guide to Barron's book, *The Hero's Trail*, are also available. The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes honors young leaders ages 8 to 18 who have made a significant positive difference to people and our planet. To obtain the heroes educational materials or learn more about the Barron Prize,

visit <http://www.barronprize.org>.

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Poetry Alive! offers an accredited week-long summer residency program for educators on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Asheville, located in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains. The program focuses on poem performance as a way to study poetry. Our summer residency allows us to share the Poetry Alive! approach with you so that you will be able to carry this method back to your school district and to your classroom.

Our week begins on Sunday evening with dinner and a Poetry Alive! performance, and it ends Friday night with you and your workshop partners performing your own Poetry Alive! show for the public.

Each session is limited to 20 participants. The cost is \$800.00 for the week. Included in this price are materials, dorm room accommodations (double occupancy\*) as well as all meals beginning on Monday and running through lunch on Saturday. We throw in a trip to Carl Sandburg's farm, Connemara, a Poetry Alive! "T", and a special Thursday Night Out meal at a great local restaurant to boot!!

To find out more, go to <http://www.poetryalive.com/residencies.html>

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Notice to all sponsors and/or editors of student literary magazines: it's time to gear up once again for the annual NCTE Program to

Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines in Writing. So, polish the selections and dust off the covers. The deadline for submission is July 1, 2004. If your school participated before, entry forms will automatically be sent to your school. Otherwise, you can download entry forms on the NCTE website: [http://www.ncte.org/library/files/About\\_NCTE/Awards/StudentAwards/PRESLIMbrochure\\_04\\_web.pdf](http://www.ncte.org/library/files/About_NCTE/Awards/StudentAwards/PRESLIMbrochure_04_web.pdf)

If you have questions, please email Theresa Guillory, state leader, at [yoatree@msn.com](mailto:yoatree@msn.com)

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VATE member Mary Quattlebaum's 11th children's book has just been published. "Family Reunion" (Eerdmans, \$16, ages 5 and up) features 15 poems about an extended family and 4 cousins coming together for a reunion. The book includes a variety of poetic forms (sonnet, free verse, villanelle, haiku, ballad) to help expand young people's experiences with poetry. "Children are so curious about writing themselves," says Mary, "that maybe they will 'jump off' from the book and try their own sonnets and haiku." Mary also recently completed an educational video on poetry for the Meet the Author series for schools. It's available free to educators associated with the Fairfax County Public School System and can be purchased by others from Sandra Brennan, Director, by calling 703-503-7531 or accessing the website [www.fcps.edu/fairfaxnetwork](http://www.fcps.edu/fairfaxnetwork) (click "video store"). Mary's most recent middle-grade novel, "Grover G. Graham and Me," is set in rural Virginia (where she grew up) and is available in hardback and paperback from Random House.



Is the Integrity of ERIC at risk?

by Kathryn Kelly, Radford University and Carl Young, Virginia Tech

The Educational Resources Information Center, better known as ERIC, has been at the forefront of making education research conducted at the university level accessible to the field for more than 35 years. At the 2003 Fall Convention of National Council of Teachers of English, members were informed of the U. S. Department of Education's purging of ERIC's database of educational research that does not support the 'No Child Left Behind Initiative. As English Education professionals we should all be concerned. ERIC is one of the main sources teachers and teacher educators use to stay abreast of new educational research on the best practices for helping students learn. If this database is censored based on the criteria of one governmental initiative we, along with our children, stand to lose.

In her editorial, "An Orwellian Purge," Baltimore Sun, April 28, 2003, Leila Christenbury, treasurer of VATE and former president of NCTE, likened this purge of educational research to the actions of the Ministry of Truth in Orwell's novel 1984. She cites an internal memo from the Education Department dated May 31, 2002, "Criterion and Process for Removing Old Content from [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)" that justifies this purge not only on research that is out of date or is duplicate but also on materials that (her quote) "runs counter to current administration priorities... [and] does not reflect the priorities, philosophies or goals of the present administration." Materials are being deleted that don't meet criteria set by the department—two of which are related to support of the current administration's educational initiatives. Christenbury projects that up to 13,000 of 50,000 documents on the database will be removed. Other estimates are much higher.

With little publicity, the Department of Education closed ERIC's 16 independent, subject-matter-oriented clearinghouses on December 19, 2003, and is in the process of restructuring the overall system with the goal of handing it over to a single contractor. In effect, the DOE is censoring the information available to us as educators to inform our teaching while at the same time redefining research in a very narrow and politically self-serving way. Teachers across the state should be aware of this purgation of educational research on the ERIC database and make a public outcry for the censors to cease and desist, immediately.

For the most current information on the status of ERIC, including suggestions for how to take action and who to contact, please see the ERIC Reauthorization News website (<http://www.lib.msu.edu/corby/education/doe.htm>), created and maintained by Kate Corby, Reference Librarian and Education and Psychology Bibliographer for Michigan State University. To avoid our losing access to invaluable resources and research and to stem the tide of the impending "Newspeak" being perpetuated by No Child Left Behind, we must make our voices heard and our dissent palpable. We are long past the age in which we should tolerate Big Brother tactics, especially when they limit our ability to teach in the most effective and compelling ways to touch our students' lives.



## Paul C. Slayton, Jr.

Those of us who have been with VATE for any length of time will remember with fondness Paul Slayton. He was an active member who contibuted much to the teaching of English. He died on February 6th and we are printing his obituary which was published in the Daily Progress on Sunday, February 8th.

On Friday, Feb. 6, 2004, Paul C. Slayton Jr. took another step in the passage of life after a long battle with cancer, at his residence in Orange, Virginia. His family was at his side.

He was born July 28, 1930 in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas to Paul C. Slayton and Guthrie Mae Meadows Slayton. He was a graduate of Pocahontas High School in Pocahontas, Arkansas. He served in the United States Air Force. Paul earned a Bachelor's degree in English, and a Master's and a Doctorate in Education from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia and a Diplomas from Universitas Vilensis, Lithuania.

A lifelong student and educator, he taught at McLean High School for one year. He was former principal of Orange Elementary School in Orange, Virginia and Venable Elementary School in Charlottesville. He retired from Mary Washington College in 1995 as a Distinguished Professor Emeritus after thirty years on the faculty. He was Chairman of the Department of Education at Mary Washington at Mary Washington College for sixteen years

He was a member of the Boy Scouts of America as a Scout and later as Scoutmaster; Phi Delta Kappa Fraternity, Chapter President; Virginia Educational Association; Virginia Association of Teachers of English, Past President; Virginia Anti-Censorship Committee, Founding Chairman; American Historical Association; National Education Association, Board of Directors; American Professionals Participating in Lithuanian Education; Orange County Historical Society, Past President; Orange Downtown Alliance, Past President. He served as member of the Selective Service Board. He was past Chairman of the Orange County Democratic Board, a lifelong Democrat and proud of it.

He is survived by his wife of fifty-three years, Ann Shackelford Slayton, and two sons, Paul C. Slayton, II, and his wife, Debra S. Slayton of Gainesville, Florida; and Roderic H. Slayton and his wife Rita G. Slayton of Orange Virginia. He is also survived by two granddaughters, Bayleigh Ann Winbery Slayton and Chesleigh Ella Stott Slayton of Gainesville, Florida; and two step-granddaughters, Jessica M. Woodcock and Jennifer E. Marks of Orange, Virginia. Two brothers, Ronald Meadows Slayton and his wife Lawanda Slayton, and Larry Eugene Slayton and his wife Martye Slayton also survive him, all of Memphis, Tennessee. He was predeceased by a daughter, Signa Shackelford Slayton and two sisters. Carol Ann Slayton and Carolyn Mae Slayton.

In lieu of flowers, please send memorial donations to Bank of America in care of the Paul C. Slayton Jr. Memorial Fund, which shall be used towards the preservation of the historical portraits in the Orange County Courthouse.

The Needle's Eye  
**Sharon Hurwitz, Editor**  
**7612 Bridgette Lane**  
**Norfolk, VA 23518**

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“The Needle’s Eye doth supply the thread that runs so true.”

**Call for News items**

If you have news items related to teaching English and language arts that you would like to share with fellow English teachers, please send them to [shurwitz@cox.net](mailto:shurwitz@cox.net)