

### MAKING THE POLITICAL PERSONAL: WORKING WITH THE “ENEMY” FOR EDUCATIONAL GOOD

*Michelle Tremmel, SLATE Newsletter Editor*

One fairly conscious objective I had when I traveled to Baltimore to attend the 2001 NCTE Annual Convention last November was to listen and watch, rather than putting on blinders and moving from session to session in search of new ideas for my classroom back home, as I usually do. Instead of focusing on myself, one of 6,008 (reported by NCTE) to put aside fears of flying and gathering in large groups to attend the convention, I found myself wanting to gauge how many people had stayed away and how those who attended were feeling at this first meeting of the Council since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

During my convention experience, I found some of what I had expected (i.e., a few canceled sessions, higher profile security), but for the most part everything seemed, on the surface at least, to be business as usual. Overall, I still felt what I believe is the most powerful and positive aspect of the annual meeting: the English teacher spirit, that constant yearning to answer the question “How can I teach better in order to help my students learn better?” This overwhelming commitment to students that motivates teachers to shoulder the financial, time, and work burden necessary to get to this annual convention was everywhere in evidence. Yet, at the same time, this year I also felt a certain anxiety and tension as a result of social and political forces beyond the classroom.

Though convention sessions were proposed and accepted before the events of Sept. 11, many of the panels, roundtables, demonstrations, conversations, and workshops seemed to recognize more overtly that our classroom missions are irrevocably tied to society and its agendas. For instance, over 50 dealt in some way with standards, high-stakes testing, and/or educational assessment by others (often out-

side education). And other socially and politically charged subjects like diversity; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender issues; and whole language constituted strands that ran through concurrent sessions. One session even showed that picture books, which may seem politically neutral (just a piece of early childhood literacy programs), have political ramifications in the way they contribute to our society’s negative image of teachers. Indeed, the convention offerings showed how politics and social issues are necessarily a part of the thinking and planning we do in our day-to-day teaching.

It may be that as an active participant of SLATE I have become more aware this year of the politics of teaching English, but that, I don’t think, is the whole explanation for the interest in the political I saw everywhere at the convention. Instead, I think members of our profession are increasingly more concerned about the interrelationships between what we English teachers do in our classrooms and the forces outside those classrooms (both within and outside schools). Because of national and global political events, including our recent economic problems after 10 years of boom and the resulting cuts in educational spending and programs across the country, English teachers don’t feel as comfortable shutting their doors on the rest of the world as they used to. And they need help in making sense out of the complexities creeping in.

What this tells me is that now, more than ever, we need SLATE to be vibrant and active—active, perhaps, in more personal ways than it has been. Though the political often seems to pit institutions and monolithic groups against each other, Sept. 11 has shown that behind the seemingly nameless and

#### Share These Materials

*SLATE Newsletters* are offered as resources for dealing with current issues affecting the teaching of English language arts. **Reproduce these materials** and use them to help promote better understanding of the goals of English teaching.

faceless “them” (with whom some “I” or “we” is in conflict) are *real* people both with real weaknesses and real strengths. Even those with whom we disagree are not objects; they are people, people with whom we can work if only we erect the bridges needed to reach them. Diversity doesn’t have to mean division.

In this, the convention gave me some hope through the stories I heard of people working together during these troubled times to deal with complex challenges like state-mandated writing and reading assessments, preparing preservice English teachers to meet performance standards set by NCTE/NCATE, and forming partnerships to improve learning and achievement in English language arts classrooms. Most encouraging were stories that told of working together not only with those within our profession—something we’re at least fairly good at already—but with those we tend too often to think of as the “them” to our “us”: students, parents, local communities, and state and national decision makers.

SLATE still needs to take strong stands against educational injustices like censorship and lack of equal access to quality education for all students, and unfortunately such stands often polarize individuals and groups. However, at least as much, we need to think concertedly about how to break down more barriers than we build when we adopt such stands. For this, we might adopt one key belief of the Society of Friends. Fundamental to its pacifist stance in war, this belief holds that no person is purely “evil” or wholly “good” and that what we should be doing instead of trying to wipe out “evil” is to find ways to enhance the natural spark of goodness that lies within everyone and everything. As a first step, we must be able to see those who seem to be against us as flesh-and-blood individuals and to reach out to them personally in ways that will develop social and political good.

In the arena of advocating for that “good” in English language arts, SLATE has an important role. It can be a leader in making the political personal and in exploring, for the greater benefit of our students, as many ways as we can to disrupt the friend/foe duality in contentious educational issues. In 2002, I would encourage submissions to this newsletter that allow us to celebrate the stories of people who are advocating for children by trying to put differences aside and working with the “enemy.” Making the political personal in constructive ways is a challenge worthy of SLATE’s attention as we begin our next 25 years as the voice of political and social action for NCTE.

## WHEN LITERACY BECOMES POLITICAL: ORGANIZING FOR ADVOCACY

*Below is information taken from materials used for the “When Literacy Becomes Political: Organizing for Advocacy” session presented by Connie Weaver and Ellen Brinkley at the 2000 NCTE Annual Convention. Cathy Fleischer and Laura Roop of the Michigan Literacy Consortium also contributed to this document. Following are items 16–30. Items 1–15 appeared in the March 2001 issue of the SLATE Newsletter.*

### **Taking It to the Streets: Teachers as Advocates**

What can teachers do to inform and instruct parents and their communities about their ways of teaching?

16. Start three-way journals to establish dialogue between student, parent, and teacher. Invite parents to write their questions and comments about the student’s work.
17. Establish student-led parent conferences.
18. Invite parents to language arts staff inservices.
19. Invite the media to sharing activities.
20. Publish students’ writing by distributing it in nursing homes, etc.
21. Plan evening discussions of curricular concerns.
22. Construct a defense for authentic learning experiences.
23. Display student accomplishments, especially writing, not just in classrooms but in the library, the cafeteria, etc.
24. Display student writing in local banks, libraries, and art fairs. Glue student writing to grocery bags, etc.
25. Give public readings of student writing, possibly in a coffee-house atmosphere.
26. In the fall make welcome-to-our-community phone calls designed to begin an ongoing conversation with new residents about school issues.
27. Don’t always hold community meetings in school buildings. Look for ways to meet in homes, businesses, churches, city hall, etc. to involve a variety of people. Be sure parents co-plan and co-facilitate.
28. Send letters to the editor of the local paper, focusing on issues addressed recently in news articles.
29. Provide materials that explain why we address editing problems/usage within the context of students’ own writing (Connie Weaver’s *Fact Sheets*).
30. Work out arrangements with the local newspaper to highlight what’s happening in classrooms. Some districts produce a weekly page of student writing—real publishing! Sometimes weekly papers in small towns are especially receptive to such a plan or to publish teacher-written articles (e.g., “Spotlight on Excellence” articles) about school and classroom issues.

## POLITICAL ADVOCACY WORKSHOP HELD AT NCTE CONVENTION

V. Pauline Hodges, Forgan High School, Oklahoma

Those SLATE members who were unable to attend the SLATE-sponsored workshop at the NCTE Convention missed an opportunity to hear two quite knowledgeable people from Washington, D.C., discuss political advocacy. William G. McBride (former Region 8 SLATE Representative) and V. Pauline Hodges (former Region 5 Representative) organized the workshop "Working with Legislators and Other Policymakers," which focused on issues directly affecting English teachers and their freedom to teach. Invited speakers were Bruce Hunter, Director of Public Policy for the American Association of School Administrators, and Ellin Nolan of Dean Blakey & Moskowitz, the NCTE lobbyist. They spent the morning and part of the afternoon on Monday, November 19, discussing legislation current at that time, including the Elementary and Secondary Education Act; providing suggestions for ways for English teachers and coordinators to work with their local and state administrators; and suggesting endeavors to combat the negative attitudes toward public schools that are so prevalent at both state and national levels. Both Hunter and Nolan have a great deal of experience in working with educators and in expressing the needs of educators to legislators. Their interpretations of pending legislation, its likely outcomes, and ways educators could make a difference in the legislation were extremely valuable.

The interactive session also covered ways for teachers to work with their administrators to influence legislation and other policymaking bodies. Mandated testing that reflects mandated standards was also addressed. McBride and Hodges voiced their disappointment at the small number of attendees since these issues are the very ones that seem to threaten our existence in the public school arena. Especially pertinent to all is the new Elementary and Secondary Education Act (known also as the *No Child Left Behind Act*), overwhelmingly passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on December 14 and 18, 2001, respectively, and signed into law by President Bush on January 8, 2002.

*For details on this bill and its implications for English language arts educators, see the January 13, 2002, issue of the NCTE electronic newsletter INBOX or the advocacy pages on the NCTE Web site <http://www.ncte.org>.*

## SLATE NEWSLETTER MOVES INTO THE 21ST CENTURY AND GOES ONLINE!

Beginning with the September 2002 issue, the *SLATE Newsletter* will be sent to you electronically via e-mail. What does this mean to you? It means you'll still receive terrific articles and important details about issues that affect the teaching of the English language arts. It means that you'll also receive ready links to pertinent information such as bills before Congress and intellectual freedom Web sites. And you'll be able to access all this information both through your personal e-mail copy of the newsletter and also from the NCTE Web site.



Please send us your name and e-mail address so that we can get the newsletter off to you. E-mail [affsec@ncte.org](mailto:affsec@ncte.org) with the information.

We're excited to be taking the *SLATE Newsletter* online and sharing all sorts of great news and information with you, the contributors to SLATE.

## NOMINEES FOR SLATE OFFICES

The 2001–2002 SLATE Nominating Committee puts forth the following nominees for SLATE offices. SLATE ballots will be sent out to all current SLATE contributors in April.

### To serve on the SLATE Steering Committee from November 2002–2005

#### REGION 1

Pat Cordeiro, Rhode Island College, Providence

Barbara Searle, John Jay High School, Hopewell Junction, New York

#### REGION 4

Jill Van Antwerp, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI

Fred Barton, Michigan State University, East Lansing

### To serve on the 2002–2003 SLATE Nominating Committee

Joanne Yatvin, Portland, Oregon

Miles Gullingsrud, LaQuinta, California

Sharon Batson, Westbury High School, Houston, Texas

Susan Freeman, University of California, Santa Cruz

Jane Braunger, WestEd, Oakland, California

Marilyn Wilson, Michigan State University, East Lansing



## Meet the 2002 NCTE/SLATE Steering Committee

*Note that profiles of the new representatives in Regions 2, 3, 6, and 7 follow later in this issue.*

### Chair

Agathaniki (Niki) Locklear  
(Simon Kenton High School)  
3010 Magnolia Court  
Edgewood, KY 41017-3352  
859-331-0643 (h)  
859-363-4141 (o)  
nlocklea@kenton.k12.ky.us

### REGION 1

Nancy A. Olson  
(Brattleboro High School)  
45 Pratt Road  
Putney, VT 05346  
802-387-5963 (h)  
802-257-0356 (o)  
olsonnan@together.net

### REGION 2

Ruth McClain  
(Ohio University-Chillicothe)  
1069 Edgewood Drive  
Chillicothe, OH 45601-2155  
740-775-7494 (h)  
740-774-7200 (o)  
740-773-0112 (fax)  
rmcllain@bright.net

### REGION 3

Maryann Manning  
(University of Alabama-Birmingham)  
4344 Clairmont Avenue S.  
Birmingham, AL 35222-3726  
205-592-9953 (h)  
205-934-8359 (o)  
mmanning@uab.edu

### REGION 4

Reade W. Dornan  
(Central Michigan University)  
1309 Daisy Lane  
East Lansing, MI 48823-5146  
517-351-7653 (h)  
517-774-3371 (o)  
517-774-1271 (fax)  
reade.dornan@cmich.edu

### REGION 5

Michelle R. Tremmel  
(Iowa State University)  
526 NE 5th Street  
Ankeny, IA 50021-1913  
515-965-1376 (h)  
515-294-8374 (o)  
515-294-6814 (fax)  
mtremmel@iastate.edu

### REGION 6

Aurelia Dávila De Silva  
319 Bluff Knolls  
San Antonio, TX 78216  
210-494-6789 (h)  
210-921-0380 (fax)  
aureliasilva@hotmail.com

### REGION 7

Linda M. Christensen  
2814 NE Mason Street  
Portland, OR 97211-7112  
503-249-8410 (h)  
503-916-5840, ext. 428 (o)  
503-916-2727 (fax)  
lchristensen@pps.k12.or.us

### REGION 8

Donald Mayfield  
1835 Sunset Blvd.  
San Diego, CA 92103-1641  
619-296-5740 (h)  
619-296-5740 (fax)  
donmayfi@sdcoe.k12.ca.us

### SLATE NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Michelle R. Tremmel  
(See Region 5)

### SLATE STARTER SHEET EDITORS

Reade W. Dornan  
(See Region 4)

**REGION 1:** CT, DE, ME, MA, NEATE, NH, NJ, NY, ON, RI, VT

**REGION 2:** DC, KY, MD, OH, PA, VA, WV

**REGION 3:** AL, FL, GA, MS, NC, SC, TN

**REGION 4:** IL, IN, MB, MI, MN, ND, SD, WI

**REGION 5:** AR, IA, KS, MO, NE, OK

**REGION 6:** LA, NM, TX

**REGION 7:** AB, AK, BC, ID, INCTE, MT, OR, SK, WA, WY

**REGION 8:** AZ, CA, CO, HI, NV, UT

---

**MEET *Ruth McClain*,  
REGION 2 REPRESENTATIVE**

Adrienne Rich wrote, “The moment of change is the only poem,” but with that change comes always a constant—that of being a lifelong learner. From my childhood in the streets of a south St. Louis tenement neighborhood to my present position in the English department of Ohio University, I am a combination of factors that have coalesced to form the person who brings a variety of experiences to the SLATE Steering Committee.

At the age of 19, I left St. Louis for my very first teaching position in Laredo, Texas. Since then, that journey has taken me from Papua New Guinea to Ohio where, in 1989, I became OCTELA’s SLATE/Censorship Chair and, in 1991, the Executive Director, positions I still hold. I recall the first time I ever sat in an OCTELA board meeting. My head swam, but I left that meeting with two exhilarating discoveries: I had found colleagues who would ultimately shape not only my career but also my life and I had the words of Ruth Ann Peck, then president of OCTELA, who whispered in my ear, “Don’t worry. It all seems overwhelming at first!” It did!

*Continued on Page 6*

**MEET *Maryann Manning*,  
REGION 3 REPRESENTATIVE**

Most of my life I have been concerned with social justice. I’m not quite sure how this happened because I grew up on a farm in rural Nebraska in a family that was very Methodist and very Republican. I didn’t plan to be a teacher but as a first-generation college student, my parents felt a college education should result in a career. I chose teaching because it gave me an opportunity to do the things I loved, music and drama. To my surprise, during the last 42 years, I have never doubted that being a teacher was the best way to spend a life.

During my 12 years of public school teaching, I evolved from being a secondary music teacher to an elementary teacher especially interested in literacy development. I moved from rural Nebraska to an urban elementary school in Omaha. My notions about the lack of respect poor rural children often receive became coupled with what I saw happening to minority children in the city. My fermenting ideas caused me to reject many of the values of my childhood as I mounted a passionate platform to change the education of the students I encountered.

*Continued on Page 6*

**MEET *Aurelia Dávila De Silva*,  
REGION 6 REPRESENTATIVE**

In my family, we tell stories not just once but many times. We reflect on our experiences through stories, and my personal experience and history have shaped my perspectives on education.

When I was growing up, I wondered why I did not see people like me in the books I read, why I did not hear or see books in my native language when I entered school speaking Spanish. My teachers told me I must speak English, but my parents only knew Spanish. Throughout my education, even through the completion of my Ph.D. and my work as a university professor, I struggled with those who had misconceptions about and prejudices against my expertise in bilingual education and the kind of research I had chosen to do, and I learned something about who was heard and who was not. I learned that people made others invisible and that many of today’s schools still neglect students’ languages, their need to see themselves in books and to study and be studied.

As a bilingual teacher in the 1970s, I found materials inadequate to interest and challenge students, so I wrote my own. By bringing aspects of home culture into the

*Continued on Page 6*

**MEET *Linda M. Christensen*,  
REGION 7 REPRESENTATIVE**

When Oregon decided to double the weight of conventions on the Direct Writing Assessment, grammar and punctuation worksheets floated back into view, and teachers and principals called me to find old copies of Warriner’s grammar texts. On Monday I will once again pull open my file drawer and locate my *SLATE Fact Sheets* on the perils of teaching grammar, punctuation, and spelling in isolation as I prepare a workshop on writing for teachers.

SLATE’s distillation of research over the years has helped me prepare lessons for my own high school classrooms, defenses for doubtful administrators and parents who wondered why I didn’t use grammar and spelling books, and now workshops for teachers who want to eradicate errors from students’ papers. But SLATE has given me more than facts and research. It has provided me the understanding that as a classroom teacher, I have to fight for my students’ right to a rigorous education.

During my first years of teaching, I worked to end the use of multiple choice tests as a measurement of students’ writing ability and wrote a proposal that launched our district’s first direct writing assessment. After teach-

*Continued on Page 11*

---

## **MEET *Ruth McClain*, REGION 2 REPRESENTATIVE**

*Continued from Page 5*

I have found that in the business of teaching, it's easy to become complaisant if we are not constantly challenged and, sometimes, that challenge must come from within. My own experience with a censorship case, for example, points this out. Not only did my own colleagues question my use of "real literature" in my classroom, they also challenged the inclusion of a short story into a classroom anthology of student writing. Little did I realize, at that time, that they would want the story in question either edited for language or removed from an already published book. I proudly remember my student author's reply to this demand. "Even though I might be personally opposed to the use of such profanity in my own life," she said, "it fits my character. I won't edit the story. You'll have to remove it entirely." My heart responded with a silent, "You go, girl!"

Today, I no longer feel that I am immune to censorship challenges. What I do know is that since that day so many years ago, I am far better prepared to help others in similar circumstances. That's one of the reasons I am ever appreciative of the work done by SLATE, and as a newly elected member of the Steering Committee, I am anxious to once again meet a new set of colleagues where, together, we can address issues affecting the teaching of English language arts and, perhaps, write some new lyrics to an ever-changing poem.

## **MEET *Maryann Manning*, REGION 3 REPRESENTATIVE**

*Continued from Page 5*

As a teacher educator at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, I have continued to encourage my students to buck the system and not accept the status quo. I believe that each one of us can make a difference toward improving the lives of children and youth.

I want NCTE's commitment to social justice to resound, loud and clear. High-stakes testing and the mandatory isolated teaching of reading and writing skills must be disputed. Unreasonable standards set for literacy learning and censorship must be challenged. NCTE can influence policy makers at all levels of government who mandate programs that deprive teachers of their autonomy, intellectual capacity, and right to develop sound literacy instruction. Leaders must address and question these issues so democracy and equity for literacy educators and learners prevail.

## **MEET *Aurelia Dávila De Silva*, REGION 6 REPRESENTATIVE**

*Continued from Page 5*

classroom, I enriched the curriculum, creating a learning environment for all students, one where children could learn without fear of failure, where it was permissible to negotiate differences, and where there was honesty.

Classroom environments need the oral and written stories of children from many diverse backgrounds. Our students' histories are important and necessary for us to create relevant materials, learn from our students, and make our schools culturally responsive. However, I still see the omission of this rich literature continuing to be an acceptable form of censorship. What does this help portray about ourselves and our histories? What message does this neglect of our Mexican American literature send to other people outside our community?

I believe schools have the unique challenge of creating an environment in which all children are respected, each individual is celebrated, and children can visit each other's worlds. I believe teachers can make a difference in children's lives, giving them the opportunity to interact with people different from themselves. Teachers create schools as a place of social interactions, a decision-making forum, and a knowledge center.

I am a proponent of students collecting literature from the community, school, and family. Such community studies can be the catalyst for emerging awareness about social justice and equity and can counter the notion that students are academic outsiders and instead strengthen the knowledge and experience they bring into the classroom.

Parents are an important part of this process, I've discovered. After a long journey through academia, I found myself, as a parent, testifying at legislative sessions and involved in educational policymaking. Parent advocacy has been one of the most difficult but also rewarding roles of my life. As parents, teachers, and community members, we should be concerned about the welfare of all students in our public schools. In this, my experiences teach me, parent involvement holds much promise.

## **CALL FOR SLATE NEWSLETTER ARTICLES**

*SLATE Newsletter* is looking for short articles of 250–500 words on issues related to the teaching of the English language arts. Send your contribution to Michelle Tremmel, Editor, *SLATE Newsletter*, 526 NE 5th St., Ankeny, IA 50021-1913; phone: 515-965-1376; fax at Iowa State University: 515-294-6814; [mtremmel@iastate.edu](mailto:mtremmel@iastate.edu).



# NCTE/SLATE INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AWARD



## NATIONAL AWARD

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of the NCTE/SLATE Intellectual Freedom Awards is to honor individuals, groups, or institutions that merit recognition for advancing the cause of intellectual freedom. Award categories are (1) a national award and (2) NCTE affiliate-based awards.

### WHO CAN PARTICIPATE:

Any member of the National Council of Teachers of English may make a nomination for the national award by following the specifications below.

### FREQUENCY/NUMBER OF AWARDS:

One national award will be given each year, with up to two honorable mentions.

### AWARD SPECIFICS:

The national award winner will receive a plaque from NCTE; honorable mention winners will receive certificates. Awardees will be acknowledged at the NCTE Annual Convention during the Opening General Banquet. They will receive a banquet ticket and mention in appropriate Council publications. The winner will receive complimentary convention registration.

### AWARD CRITERIA AND JUDGING:

The **eligibility criteria** for the national NCTE/SLATE Intellectual Freedom Awards are as follows: (a) the awardee has shown courage in advancing the cause of intellectual freedom or fighting censorship; (b) the awardee can be an educator or noneducator; (c) the awardee can be an individual, group, or institution; (d) the awardee's activity can be related to particular recent events (e.g., as in a censorship dispute) or it can be ongoing (e.g., as in leadership demonstrated over a period of years); (e) the same awardee may not be named for two years in succession.

The **procedural rules** for the national NCTE/SLATE Intellectual Freedom Awards are as follows: description of the activities or events that merited the award must be presented by May 1 in two forms: the attached Intellectual Freedom Award Summary sheet, and concise documentation and/or testimony of not less than one single-spaced page and not more than three double-spaced pages and three pages of attachments.

### EXAMPLES:

- ◇ A nationally syndicated columnist who has taken a stand for intellectual freedom
- ◇ An organization that has been active in censorship cases
- ◇ A legislator who has opposed censorship legislation
- ◇ An author or film producer whose work focused on intellectual freedom

Judges for the national NCTE/SLATE Intellectual Freedom Awards will be a five-member joint subcommittee of the NCTE/SLATE Steering Committee and the Standing Committee Against Censorship, headed in alternate years by the Chair of SLATE and the Chair of the Standing Committee Against Censorship.

The permission of the potential awardee must be obtained in advance by the nominator. This specification acknowledges that many who act in defense of intellectual freedom remain under continued scrutiny and pressure. They sometimes choose to avoid public notice which, however supportive, places them under further duress.

### DEADLINE:

Nominations with appropriate documentation must be received at the office of the NCTE Director of Affiliate and Member Services **by May 1.**

---

---

# NCTE/SLATE INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AWARD SUMMARY SHEET

## NATIONAL AWARD

---

---

Nominee's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Institutional Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Permission: \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation of why nominee merits consideration for this recognition (maximum 100 words):

I authorize that I am an NCTE member, that permission of nominee to be nominated has been obtained, and that eligibility and procedural criteria for nominations for this award have been met. Further documentation is attached.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print) (Signature)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (O) \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and complete address of newspaper to be contacted: \_\_\_\_\_

If selected, nominee will \_\_\_\_\_ will not \_\_\_\_\_ be able to attend the 2002 NCTE Annual Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, to receive the award at the Opening General Banquet, Thursday evening, November 21, 2002.

---

Send this form with further documentation no later than May 1 to Millie Davis, Director of Affiliate and Member Services, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096; Phone: 800-369-6283, ext. 3634; Fax: 217-278-3760; E-mail: mdavis@ncte.org.

---

---



# NCTE/SLATE INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AWARD



## STATE, REGIONAL, AND PROVINCIAL AFFILIATE AWARDS

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of the NCTE/SLATE Intellectual Freedom Awards is to honor individuals, groups, or institutions that merit recognition for advancing the cause of intellectual freedom. Award categories are (1) a national award and (2) NCTE affiliate-based awards.

Each state, regional, and provincial affiliate is urged to establish and implement an Intellectual Freedom Award. The awardees will be cited in the 2002 NCTE/SLATE Intellectual Freedom Award Roster and at the Affiliate Breakfast at the NCTE Annual Convention.

### WHO CAN PARTICIPATE:

Any state, regional (e.g., multi-state), and provincial affiliate of NCTE can participate by naming an Intellectual Freedom Award winner in accordance with the specifications below and by sending information about their awardee to NCTE by May 1.

### FREQUENCY/NUMBER OF AWARDS:

One award may be given annually by each state, regional, and provincial affiliate, but affiliates may choose to participate or not in any given year.

### AWARD SPECIFICS:

All affiliate awardees will receive certificates prepared by NCTE and presented to the participating affiliate or the awardee at the Affiliate Breakfast at each year's NCTE Annual Convention. The affiliate is also urged to honor the awardee at an affiliate event of its choice. A roster of awardees will be published in the breakfast program, *Council-Grams*, the *SLATE Newsletter*, or other appropriate NCTE publications.

### AWARD CRITERIA AND JUDGING:

The **eligibility criteria** for the affiliate NCTE/SLATE Intellectual Freedom Awards are as follows: (a) the awardee has shown courage in advancing the cause of intellectual freedom or fighting censorship; (b) the awardee can be an educator or noneducator; (c) the awardee can be an individual, group, or institution; (d) the awardee's activity can be related to particular recent events (e.g., as in a censorship dispute) or it can be ongoing (e.g., as in leadership demonstrated over a period of years); (e) the same awardee may not be named for two years in succession.

The **procedural rules** are as follows: (a) the governing body of each participating affiliate will authorize the judging panel and determine the nominating process, with attention to requesting nominations from local or other intrastate affiliates, if any exist within the state affiliate; (b) descriptions of the activities or events that merited the award must be presented by May 1 in two forms: (1) the attached Intellectual Freedom Award Summary Sheet and (2) concise documentation and/or testimony of not less than one single-spaced page and not more than three double-spaced pages and three pages of attachments; (c) the permission of the potential awardee must be obtained in advance; (d) NCTE will accept without further review all affiliate awards that have met the above criteria and the deadline; however, NCTE reserves the right to request further information if needed to clarify the affiliate's material on its award. *Note:* Specification (c) acknowledges that many who act in defense of intellectual freedom remain under continued scrutiny and pressure. They sometimes choose to avoid public notice which, however supportive, places them under further duress.

### EXAMPLES:

- ◇ A newspaper that supported, in an editorial, a teacher, school, or Board of Education action in defense of a challenged book, film, or educational method
- ◇ The teacher, school, or Board of Education involved in such a defense
- ◇ A department chair, principal, or central office leader who has over a period of time developed and/or supported intellectual freedom policies and practices
- ◇ A public official who took a stand in a difficult intellectual freedom case

### DEADLINE:

Nominations with appropriate documentation must be received at the office of the NCTE Director of Affiliate and Member Services **by May 1.**

(over)

---

---

# NCTE/SLATE INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM AWARD SUMMARY SHEET

## AFFILIATE AWARD (STATE, REGIONAL, AND PROVINCIAL AFFILIATES)

---

---

Nominee's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Institutional Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (O) \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Explanation of why nominee merits consideration for this recognition (maximum of 100 words):

I authorize that the permission of the awardee has been secured and that other eligibility and procedural criteria for the award have been met. Further documentation is attached as per **procedural rules** under "Award Criteria and Judging."

Signature of Submitter: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliate (no abbreviations, please): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Affiliate Submitter: \_\_\_\_\_ Position in Affiliate: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (O) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and address of newspaper to be contacted: \_\_\_\_\_

We will\_\_\_\_will not\_\_\_\_have a representative attend the Affiliate Breakfast (representative expected to purchase ticket) on Saturday, November 24, 2002, in Atlanta, Georgia. If attending, name of representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Send this form with further documentation no later than May 1 to Millie Davis, Director of Affiliate and Member Services, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801-1096; Phone: 800-369-6283, ext. 3634; Fax: 217-278-3760; E-mail: mdavis@ncte.org.

---

---

---

## MEET *Linda M. Christensen*, REGION 7 REPRESENTATIVE

*Continued from Page 5*

ing in a magnet high school that promoted tracking to segregate students based on race and income, I became an advocate for untracked classrooms. And when my high school was reconstituted because of low test scores, I wrote and spoke out against the harmful abuses of testing.

As the Language Arts Coordinator for Portland Public Schools, I am in constant need of research as we defend the right to read novels like *Beloved*, struggle for teachers' academic freedom to choose appropriate reading and writing strategies for their students, or advocate for the judicious use of testing as a genuine assessment tool for teachers rather than as an instrument to rank and sort students, teachers, and schools.

Joining the SLATE Steering Committee as a representative for Region 7 is payback for the professional debts I've accumulated by using the knowledge, research, and hard labor of SLATE committee members over the last 25 years of my teaching career.

In the introduction to *Poetry like Bread*, Martín Espada writes,

Any progressive social change must be imagined first, and that vision must find its most eloquent possible expression to move from vision to reality. Any oppressive social condition, before it can be changed, must be named and condemned with words that persuade by stirring the emotions, awakening the senses. Thus the need for a political imagination (16).

NCTE's SLATE committee has provided that political imagination for me through the years. Now I hope I can help provide that vision for others.

## BOOKS SUSTAIN DEMOCRACY

*Carol Edmonds Sullivan, Colorado School of Mines, Golden; and President, Colorado Language Arts Society*

*Reprinted with permission by the author from The Denver Post, Sunday, September 2, 2001—EDITOR'S NOTE: Denver writer and teacher Carol Edmonds Sullivan this year successfully nominated the Tattered Cover's Joyce Meskis to receive the National Intellectual Freedom Award given annually by the National Council of Teachers of English. In celebrating Meskis, Sullivan*

---

*also came to better understand her own dependence on the ideals of intellectual freedom. Carol Edmonds Sullivan can be reached at caros8@email.msn.com.*

---

When my daughter was a baby, my mother would marvel at her lusty cries announcing hurt or hunger: "My grandbaby knows her rights!" My mom was to make the same observation about each of her grandchildren. Her proclamation never failed to remind me of my own quest to pursue this precious, complex freedom of expression—enumerated in the U.S. Constitution as the First Amendment, which guarantees rights of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition. Inevitably, ideas and rights clash, but the capacity to debate rather than censor harbors our democracy.

Since I first read John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* as a college student in the late '60s, I have sought first as a journalist, still later as a state legislator, and in the last 20 years as a teacher and a mother to abide by his credo: "He who knows only his own side of the case, knows little of that." Instead of simplistic formulas, Mill defends a good rule-of-thumb: Seek out all sides before looking for resolution.

Mill's clarion call to free expression is a call that underpins our very humanity. Historian Barbara Tuchman has proclaimed the value of free expression in books: "Without books, history is silent, literature dumb, science crippled, thought and speculation at a standstill. Books are humanity in print." We are nourished by competing ideas in, as John Milton wrote, books that "sally" out to face their adversaries. Freedom is proclaimed even from jail in Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

Heeding these great authors, as well as the First Amendment, how can I cultivate robust discussion of diverse ideas as the foundation of action?

As a teacher of British literature, I asked high school students to read John Donne's "Meditation 17," including his assertion that "No man is an island." A student whose relative had been killed in the Columbine school shootings responded, "Bull—!" as he declared that Donne's idea of global community was a lie. He wanted neither the false sympathy of a TV camera nor the condolences of classmates he barely knew; he saw concern about the suffering of persons in other countries as pointless.

Other classmates claimed his rejection of kinship or consolation would lead to world wars. Mill declares, "We can never be sure that the opinion we are endeavoring to stifle is a false opinion; and if we were sure, stifling it would be an evil still." Surely Mill's idea of liberty flourished when the bereaved student, however alienated, articulated and gave reasons for his beliefs, while others expressed their counter-arguments.

My greatest teacherly worry is not the angry stu-

dent who barks out his views but the blank stare from those who balk at entering the world of the book. In George Orwell's *1984*, where Big Brother's surreal image has permeated every unwitting mind, Winston Smith thinks that "the stuff that was coming out (of a co-worker) consisted of words, but it was not speech in the true sense; it was a noise uttered in unconsciousness, like the quacking of a duck." In Big Brother's world, "duckspeak" means to "quack like a duck." Do words like "freedom of speech" sound to those who shun reading like the emptiness of "duckspeak"?

If anyone embodies the realities of the battle for First Amendment freedoms, it is Tattered Cover bookstore owner Joyce Meskis—though she demurs when deemed a hero. Recently, she won the 2001 Intellectual Freedom Award from the National Council of Teachers of English, an award for which I had nominated her.

In considering how to bring the significance of freedom of expression into the high school classroom, I imagined this conversation:

"The Intellectual Freedom Award," I could begin, "is like the Nobel Peace Prize, except it is sponsored by English teachers. Bookseller Joyce Meskis is nurturing democracy's vital need for access to books, even unpopular ones.

"You may have heard about a police raid on an illegal methamphetamine lab in Thornton last year. Law enforcement officers discovered the lab, as well as two books on drug manufacture. The day before, an officer found a Tattered Cover mailing envelope in a nearby garbage can. To link a suspect—who wasn't there at the time of the raid—to the operation of the drug lab, police obtained a search warrant calling for the Tattered Cover's purchasing records of the suspect. They hoped to find it was this suspect who bought those two books.

"Meskis says in a court brief contesting this search warrant that she was 'frightened and dumbfounded' when police entered her office requiring immediate access to these records. She called her lawyer, and he secured a stay of the warrant until the Colorado Supreme Court rules."

Polite silence from students might very well greet my description of these facts culled from court briefs. In my imaginary classroom, bodies slouch lower in chairs; pens are set down.

"Meskis is protecting your right to read," I would stress. "She contends that the police are wrong in believing that if you buy a book concerned with illegal activity, you are likely to commit such illegal activity."

"Great," comes a sarcastic voice from the back of the room. "You're gonna make us read and write about this, aren't you?"

"Hey, Bart," I implore. "Remember how much you

liked Richard Wright's *Black Boy*? What if police found a copy of that book at the site of a suspicious fire at your neighbor's house, and then asked our school librarian for a list of books you had read this year? What if they tried to use that list as evidence that you had started the fire—like Wright did in his childhood home?

"Would you agree with Joyce Meskis that the First Amendment protects every reader from government agencies that want to prosecute citizens on the basis of what they read, whether it is books about a wizard named Harry Potter, drugs, or any other idea, organization, or practice?"

"So since I read about a bad teacher in *Catcher in the Rye*," Bart asks, "I have a right to tell bad teachers to shut the hell up?"

"No, Bart, the First Amendment doesn't give you a license to defy reasonable rules of conduct in our school. As one jurist said, you have no right to free speech when you yell 'FIRE!' in a crowded theater when there is no fire, no 'clear and present danger.'"

"Yo, Bart," says Chenille. "You know you can't shout obscenities at Principal Skinner, but the First Amendment does allow you to read *Catcher in the Rye*, attend a music concert starring Marilyn Manson, or buy a CD that you like and the city council doesn't, and it allows you to dis Presidents Bush—father and shrub."

"And," says Ben, "the First Amendment allows me to read about my homeland, Germany, in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*—without being charged with some crime committed by skinheads."

Keely jumps in, "Ancient Greece had no First Amendment. Socrates drank the hemlock rather than stop speaking ideas that many thought were dangerous to youth."

Cara adds, "Anyway, Bart, we know you like to read about rebels like yourself. Ishmael's line in *Moby Dick* has become your battle cry—I love to sail forbidden seas, and land on barbarous coasts."

"Maybe the First Amendment rights of free speech as well as the Fourth Amendment right of privacy—you know, no 'unreasonable searches and seizures'—could be this decade's big battle?" asks Roberto. "Like *1984*, everybody's being watched—by the FBI, Internet spies, cops, video cameras in the airport, stores, banks."

"One of Meskis' customers would agree with you, Roberto," I reply. "This customer wrote to Meskis: 'I don't want to live in a world where people have to always watch their backs or worry about what they say. It stunts the creative and artistic spirit, and indeed the human spirit that resides in us all.'"

Ryan starts to list the books he's read that were among the most challenged in the 1990s, according to the American Library Association—among them Roald Dahl's *James and the Giant Peach*, Alice

Walker's *The Color Purple*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*.

The bell rings. Lindsay tells Bart, "Get a life outside the lunchroom. Read a book instead of blowing off a test or a teacher."

Bart rushes for the door. "As Donne says: 'Ask not for whom the bell tolls,' he grins. 'It tolls for THEE!'"

"Or for democracy," I reply amid the whirlwind of book bags and bodies.

"The bell tolls for democracy—its defeats, its victories. Bart, you and your generation are steeped in uncensored stories—in books, movies, newspapers, the Internet."

"Hey, Dr. Sully," says Lisa. "Remember Shakespeare? *The Tempest*? Your favorite quote? 'We are such stuff as dreams are made of.' We can explore our dreams when we can freely read, write and talk, right?"

I smile as I pronounce my nonsectarian benediction: "May God, Allah, the Force, Antony, Cleopatra, J. K. Rowling, Margaret Wise Brown, and other creatures and kingdoms of the book be with you."

*Note: The Colorado Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the case of "The Tattered Cover vs. The City of Thornton" on Dec. 5 at Brighton High School just outside of Denver. Tattered Cover owner Joyce Meskis said that attorneys have told her that it is likely that the high court will seek to decide the case before the end of the school year. One attorney in the audience who was unconnected to the case told Carol Sullivan after the oral arguments that it was his prediction the court would rule 6-1 in favor of the bookstore.*

*As part of its courts-in-the-schools program, the Colorado Supreme Court sent an extensive briefing packet to Brighton High School teachers before the hearing. It included the observation that "This case presents the question of balance between two important interests: (1) the government's power to investigate criminal violations by compelling a bookstore to provide information regarding records pertaining to customers' purchases, which are presumptively confidential, and (2) the First Amendment rights of individuals to have access to expressive materials without the fear of interference from the State, as well as the First Amendment rights of entities, like bookstores, to distribute such expressive materials without the fear of interference from the State."*

*After the hearing, the court retired and students were allowed to ask both the prosecuting and defense attorneys questions. Then the justices returned to the school's auditorium—no longer garbed in their black robes but instead wearing the school's sweat shirts. Students were then allowed to question the justices about the process of judicial review.*

## NOTES FROM THE FIELD: CUTS IN STATE LEGISLATURES AFFECT TEACHER CERTIFICATION

—Reade W. Dornan, Region 4 Representative to the NCTE/SLATE Steering Committee

Region 4 might generally be called the Upper Great Lakes region since more than half the states or provinces touch one of the five Great Lakes, and Region 5 contains the states we traditionally think of as the Midwest. Because these two regions make up the geographical center of the country, we think of ourselves as sharing similar challenges for teachers. Three state representatives—Sharon Olbertson of South Dakota, Gregory Bouljon of Iowa, and Fred Barton of Michigan—share their hopes and concerns about educational trends in their states. The biggest topic lately has been the lack of money in the states' coffers and how it will affect the integrity of the profession.

South Dakota's Sharon Olbertson is pleased about being at the top in the nation as far as schools wired for Internet use. The governor enlisted the help of trained personnel from the state's prison system to do the wiring. She says, "The jury is still out, however, on distance learning. Students from small schools have access to many Advanced Placement classes through the Internet, but they also have access to courses that have been watered down to accommodate the slowest/laziest students who register." The issue of distance learning raises the concern that school districts are undermining teachers while trying to find ways to deliver education cheaply.

President Bush's tax cut and the recession have forced state legislatures to trim spending wherever they can. Many are trying to meet the teacher shortages in their states by hiring unqualified people. Indeed, all of Region 4 is talking about the financial squeezes that threaten the soundness of teacher certification and English education. As Greg Bouljon writes, "Personally, I feel that it will be very difficult to recruit teachers who want to be academics, get advanced degrees and pursue careers as administrators, counselors, professors in the future if their graduate work and teaching experience are not recognized as we have in the past."

Bouljon explains, "Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack has gotten the legislature to seriously look at the level of teacher pay in the state. The idea was to raise salaries to at least the national average. We are currently around the 35th mark. But it is a mess. There are four levels from beginner to National

---

Board Certified teacher. There are strong mentoring components too, but . . .

1. The highest pay levels are not as high as the current larger school districts' salaries.
2. The new system does not recognize experience or education—a serious item for English teachers who need to stay current and increase their own literacy.
3. Movement upward depends on doing extra-leadership roles. But there may not be enough leadership positions in districts to allow everyone to move up and that will cause friction in teaching staffs.
4. Mentoring is only paid for in the teacher's first year. Most districts mentor beyond that, but will receive no money for that from the state.
5. Money promised to help defray the registration for NBPTS and to compensate teachers who earn certification has been cut severely. Some who were interested before are thinking twice and reconsidering. Even though our number of NBPTS teachers is currently growing in Iowa, many wonder if that will continue or if it will wane in the next few years."

Certification of nonteachers to make up for the teacher shortage has become a problem in South Dakota as well. Olbertson says that the state might hire college majors in the relevant subject area or people with five years of experience in the field. Applicants would take a competency test and intensive courses in teaching for two summers, but the sessions only need to be 20 days long. They would also be mentored.

The governor in Michigan, an outspoken opponent of professionalism, has similarly been seeking ways to reduce or eliminate teacher education course requirements. Fred Barton speaks of the budget woes, "With Michigan's economy slowing, state leaders must trim spending. Out of the coming fiscal year's portion of the \$88 billion, three-year budget for K-12 education, they must find \$175 million in cuts. The cuts would reduce the \$6,500 per-pupil allotment to schools by \$73 per student for the current school year. Several compromise and alternative budgets have been presented by various legislators, but they involve dipping into the state's rainy day fund, which the governor has been reluctant to do."

One of the legislative tactics in Michigan has been to introduce hundreds of charter schools that hire "provisional" teachers, and another strategy has been to allow for-profit companies that get around state requirements for certification. Barton recognizes this problem, but he also worries about the state's ability to meet growing needs for nurturing diversity in the classroom. He explains, "The question of whether an

American Indian community college should be allowed to grant charters to schools anywhere in the state continues to plague Lansing lawmakers. Such authority, if granted, would lift a statewide cap on the number of charter schools the state would allow. Early in the year, Bay Mills Community College in Michigan's Upper Peninsula decided to grant charters to two schools to be run by Mosaica Education Co., a for-profit company based in New York City. Neither of the schools—which opened in September near Bay City and in Pontiac—is near the college. Some legislators have tied the cap question to funding in the past, but with the tightening economy in Michigan, pressure for a funding bill may supersede attempts to put the brakes on charter schools." Barton insists that we need to keep multicultural education in the forefront of our thinking, even as cutbacks threaten resources to assist schools in urban districts and those with high nonwhite populations. He writes, "The truth is everyone will need to be prepared to live in an increasingly diverse society in the future and the schools have a central role in preparing students, all students, to find a place and make a contribution."

Fortunately, NCTE and the state councils of NCTE are monitoring these situations. Bouljon looks to the national organization for leadership on these issues, "NCTE can help by speaking out on the issues of experience and education. Certainly experience and education do not ensure expertise, but devaluing them devalues what we are all about in education: learning experiences and education. Devaluing them financially also ensures that expertise will decline. Graduate work for many of us was a crucial part of our development. So is the experience that we gain in the classroom."

Local councils of Teachers of English can do a great deal to monitor similar trends to cut requirements for teacher education in their own states by getting acquainted with key legislators in their states, especially those most influential in education decisions, and by discovering who is committed and who is opposed to each key issue. SLATE members may then write letters strategically and selectively; isolate the specific parts of a bill that are objectionable and suggest specific changes in wording that will improve it; support legislation whenever possible, even if it seems less than perfect; and make sure that key legislators are aware of NCTE's affiliate and what it tries to do for English teaching.

*Locate names and contact information for your government officials and read sample letters here <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/dbq/officials/?lvl=L>.*

---

# MINUTES FROM SLATE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING— BALTIMORE 2001

**Members Present:** *Agathaniki (Niki) Locklear, Ellen Swain, Ruth McClain, Maryann Manning, Reade Dornan, Michelle Tremmel, Aurelia De Silva, Donald Mayfield, Rose Schmitt*

**Absent:** *Nancy Olson, Sharon Chaney, Linda Brown, Linda Christensen*

- I. Chairperson Niki Locklear welcomed committee members
- II. Don Mayfield, Region 8, was appointed secretary for the 2001 meeting
- III. Reade Dornan was elected Vice Chair for 2001–2002

#### IV. Editor Reports

- A. Michelle Tremmel, *SLATE Newsletter* editor, reported three issues of the newsletter had been published and announced deadlines for the next issues:
  - a. December 2001 (no theme)
  - b. February 10, 2002 (personal experiences in censorship)
  - c. July 10, 2002

To add more continuity among issues, Tremmel suggested that Regional Reps. provide legislative/policy/censorship updates every issue and should include references to news items and actions taken by state and local affiliates.

- B. **Starter Sheets**—Rose Schmidt reported that one *Starter Sheet* submission on Reading Recovery was presently being edited. Reade Dornan reported other commitments from Bob Infantino, University of San Diego and two other SLATE members for new or revised *Starter Sheets*. The committee also discussed how *Starter Sheets* might be updated.
- C. **Censorship**—Niki Locklear read Charles Suhor's report—the essence of which is printed in the October 2001 issue of the *SLATE Newsletter*. His letter strongly urged the need for SLATE to support a second CD-ROM of *Rationales for Challenged Books*.

#### V. Regional Reports

- A. Region 1—no report.
- B. Region 2—An incident of *Harry Potter* being censored in southern Ohio was cited. Charles Suhor was involved.
- C. Region 3—Again *Harry Potter* had been censored in south Alabama. High-stakes testing has been instituted; phonics has been legislatively mandated, as well as scripted reading instruction.
- D. Region 4—Reade Dornan reported an expanding concern about the separation of church/state issues raised as a consequence of the emergence of charter schools.
- E. Region 5—In Iowa, there is still no statewide test administered. Nebraska is in the third year of standardized test reporting; no reports from Kansas and Oklahoma.
- F. Region 6—Re: high-stakes testing, SLATE reps in New Mexico wrote letters reporting the inequities

that teachers experienced in terms of the instructional support some schools received, while others did not. It was reported that Texas instituted policies that rank school performance.

- G. Region 7—no report.
- H. Region 8—Mayfield reported efforts by California (CATE) to identify the organization's core values; also reported state conference on assessment that produced a document, which will be used to form policy and initiate action.

#### VI. Review of 2001 Goals and Selection for 2002 Goals

- A. Niki Locklear stated that goals of committee had been achieved by the publication of two issues of *SLATE Newsletter* and *Starter Sheet* on Reading Recovery (in process).
- B. We will continue with the same goals for 2002 and also concentrate on broadening our issues to include concerns for lowered teacher requirements and no voice for teachers at the university level.

#### VII. Intellectual Freedom Award Committee

Don Mayfield and Niki Locklear were selected to serve with two members of SCAC for the 2002 committee.

#### VIII. SLATE Business and Concerns

- A. Millie Davis proposed that *SLATE Newsletter* go online. Approved by committee.
- B. Reade Dornan recommended that SLATE broaden its concerns beyond testing and censorship. Issues might include charter schools, teachers' (K–university) progressive lack of voice in curriculum development and teacher education.
- C. Pat Graff, Executive Committee, proposed that JEA provide a liaison to SLATE and that a January meeting of reps from JEA and SLATE discuss how the organizations might assist one another in critical issues censorship. It was proposed and approved that five reps. from SLATE meet with five reps. from JEA in January. SLATE reps. might include: Millie Davis, Michelle Tremmel, Charles Suhor, Ruth McClain, Niki Locklear, and Maryann Manning. (Motion by McClain, 2nd by Tremmel. Committee approved.)
- D. Standing Committee Against Censorship (Margo Sacco, representative) proposed that SLATE send a letter to NCTE to support another volume of the CD-ROM on rationales. Committee approved. (Motion by McClain, 2nd by Tremmel.)

#### IX. SLATE Guaranteed Slots at NCTE 2002 Were Confirmed

- A. Ellen Swain will once again propose “Cute Ideas Are Neat, But They Won't Count If We Teach to a Test.”
- B. Maryann Manning and Aurelia De Silva will propose a session on State and Local Mandated Curriculum and Materials—What to Do?
- C. Reade Dornan will contact Cathy Fleischer for presenting a workshop on “Getting Parents Involved in Policy Issues.” Niki will contact Gerry Kuroghlian, outgoing SCOA Chair, and Olivia Pass, incoming Chair, to see if SCOA wants to cosponsor the workshop in Atlanta.

---

## JOIN THE NCTE EDUCATION ADVOCACY NETWORK!

As Congress considers education legislation, local educators like you have an important opportunity to give your legislators the benefit of your knowledge and experience.

Please take a moment to sign up as part of the NCTE Education Advocacy Network. (And feel free to photocopy this form for your colleagues.)

As part of this network, you will be notified **most often by e-mail** of pending legislation and NCTE's positions on that legislation. Please send completed forms to Millie Davis, National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801 or FAX: 217-278-3760; e-mail the following information to [mdavis@ncte.org](mailto:mdavis@ncte.org).

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Position/Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_  
**Home** Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
County \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (O) \_\_\_\_\_  
**(Essential)** E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_

I would be willing to do the following:

- Call     Write     Visit  
 Invite a legislator to my school  
 Advise a legislator on English language arts education issues  
 Speak to the media on English language art education issues

I have expertise on the following issue(s):

Please list \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*SLATE Newsletter* is sent to individuals who contribute \$15 or more per year to support SLATE. Send your contribution to NCTE/SLATE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801-1096.

**EDITOR:** Michelle Tremmel

**NCTE Staff Liaison:** Millie Davis

**NCTE Staff Editor:** Ellen Clark

**SLATE TO YOU**—The function of SLATE is to influence public attitudes and policy decisions affecting the teaching of English language arts at local, state, and national levels and to implement and publicize the policies adopted by NCTE. As part of its charge, SLATE is officially recognized as NCTE's intellectual freedom network.

---

## In this issue . . .

---

- **SLATE at the NCTE Convention in Baltimore**
- **Teachers as Advocates**
- **Nominees for SLATE 2002 Ballot**
- **Meet the New NCTE/SLATE Steering Committee**
- **“Books Sustain Democracy”**
- **National and Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Awards Applications**
- **Reports from Regions 4 and 5**

---

---

**SLATE**

National Council of Teachers of English  
1111 W. Kenyon Road  
Urbana, Illinois 61801-1096

Nonprofit  
Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE

**PAID**

National Council of  
Teachers of English