

North Dakota Council of Teachers of English

Spring 2009

President's Notes

NDCTE Summer Conference makes a difference



ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY RUGGIO

In life there are many decisions we need to make. Daily we decide on things both large and small. Each morning I decide what to wear,

what to eat for lunch, what needs to be done that day, etc. At school I decide what to teach and the best way to deliver information to students. There are so many decisions in our daily lives that we often forget that we are making these decisions all the time. We recently hired two new staff members at our school, and I realized that luckily the task of making the really hard decisions only comes around every once in a while.

In my first year of teaching I made a decision that changed my life. I had received a newsletter from the North Dakota Council of Teachers of English. This was passed along to me by an administrator who was concerned about teacher growth. In this newsletter was an invitation to come to the NDCTE Summer Conference. I was eager to learn all I could about my profession and promptly registered for the conference. That one decision has made a world of difference in both my personal life and my professional life.

My involvement with NDCTE and my regular attendance at the summer conference has added so much to my teaching on so many levels. NDCTE has changed my professional life. My involvement with NDCTE has strengthened my belief in my chosen profession. NDCTE and its members have made me

realize how important it is to be a part of a professional organization that affirms my beliefs that teachers are truly important in the lives of our students. At the NDCTE summer conference I can discuss books, plays, media issues, and writing with other professionals. It is an opportunity that is not afforded to teachers as we often get caught up in the day to day work and paper load of teaching.

The second way that NDCTE has impacted my life is evident on a day to day basis in my classroom. Being a member of NDCTE and attending the summer conference has changed my instructional strategies. Each summer I get a wealth of new plans and ideas that I incorporate into my curriculum. Each year I leave the summer conference refreshed, renewed and eager to implement the great ideas fellow teachers have given me. I have had the opportunity to meet authors and educators who are changing the language arts landscape.

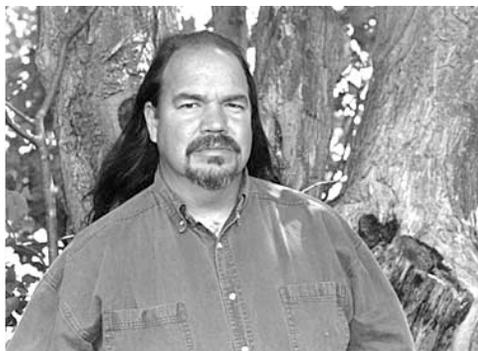
Finally, NDCTE has added to my personal life. I have made so many good friends and met so many wonderful colleagues that I feel as though the summer conference is now like a family reunion. I get to laugh and commiserate and celebrate with people I would never have known if I hadn't decided to go to that first summer conference many years ago.

I made a decision that has affected my life in so many ways. I decided to join. I decided to become a part of a professional organization. And as Mr. Frost once wrote-- that has made all the difference. Please join us this summer. Our focus is Native American Culture and the Language Arts Classroom.

Check out the session details in this newsletter and online at www.ndcte.org. Hope you make the right decision and join us in August!

Poet Mark Turcotte to be keynote speaker at Summer Conference

NDCTE is honored to have Mark Turcotte as this summer's keynote speaker. Turcotte was highly recommended by many NDCTE teachers and has been a popular speaker at the UND Writer's Conference. He will be speaking to us about Native American literature and poetry.



c. 2000 Uncle Willie

Writer Mark Turcotte spent his earliest years on North Dakota's Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation and in the migrant camps of the western United States. Later, he grew up in and around Lansing, Michigan. After school, he traveled the country, living and working *on the road* for nearly 15 years.

Arriving in Chicago in the spring of 1993 Turcotte rediscovered a love of words and writing and quickly established himself as a unique voice in the city's thriving poetry scene. That summer he was winner of the *First Gwendolyn Brooks Open-mic Poetry Award*. Soon thereafter he was selected by Ms. Brooks as a *Significant Illinois Poet* and was named to the *Illinois Authors Poster*. Since that time he has been the recipient of a *Writer's Community Residency* from National Writer's Voice and was awarded the 1997 *Josephine Gates Kelly Memorial Fellowship* from the Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers.

Turcotte is author of *The Feathered Heart*, *Songs of Our Ancestors*, a chapbook, *Road Noise* and *Le Chant de la Route*, a bilingual collection published in Paris. His newest collection, *Exploding Chippewas*, is in its fourth printing. His poetry and fiction have appeared in *LUNA*, *TriQuarterly*, *POETRY*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Ploughshares*, *The Missouri Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Rosebud*, *Hunger Mountain*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, and *The Laurel Review*. His poem, *The Flower On*, was chosen by the Poetry Society of America for inclusion in their *Poetry In Motion* project, which places poetry placards on public transportation in cities across the United States. His work is also included in the national poetry recitation project *Poetry OutLoud*, sponsored by the NEA and Poetry Foundation.

Recipient of a 2001-2002 Lannan Foundation Literary Completion Grant, Turcotte has also received two Literary Fellowships from the Wisconsin Arts Board. He has served as Writer-In-Residence for the National Book Foundation's "American Voices" program, and was awarded a Lannan Writer's Residency in Marfa, Texas. He recently served as the 2008-2009 Visiting Native Writer at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Building Academic Vocabulary/ Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Melanie Bernier

Academic Language Coach
Sheltered Journey Program
Bismarck Public Schools

Building academic vocabulary in the content area classroom is a best practice teaching technique proven effective for all students, especially American Indian students who fall into the Limited English Proficient (LEP) category on state tests, as well as immigrant English Language Learner (ELL) students. Experts like Drs. Robert Marzano, Deborah Pickering, Kate Kinsella, and Robin Scarcella have done the research, created the models, and attest to the importance of building a strong academic vocabulary program for accessing content and ensuring academic success in the classroom.

Academic vocabulary-building activities include explicit vocabulary instruction in the content area through the use of pre-teaching selected vocabulary terms, pronunciation drills, games, pictures, videos, drills, arts and crafts, music, body-

mapping, pantomime, dictionary activities, and more. The activities are a lot of fun, really engage students of all levels, and allow all students to have success in the classroom.

Practicing and playing with vocabulary taps into prior knowledge and builds background knowledge—learning strategies that ELL and LEP students may lack due to learning gaps, newcomer status, poorly developed study skills, and other issues that present a variety of concerns in the classroom.

A systematic effort to include explicit academic vocabulary instructional strategies in each content area class at the secondary level, as well as in all classes at the elementary level, will yield amazing and concrete results for all of our students. The bonus is—these strategies make learning fun!

Educational and Fun: A Sneak Peak at '09 Conference Presenters

Cheryl Long Feather

Cheryl Long Feather (Hunkuotawin) is an enrolled member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Communications from the University of Mary, as well as Masters degrees in Management and Business Administration. She holds a Ph.D. in Communication & Public Discourse from the University of North Dakota. Long Feather currently serves as the Research Director for United Tribes Technical College. She has worked in and with Tribal communities and populations for the majority of her career, especially for Native American youth and elders. In addition to professional responsibilities, Long Feather advocates for Native people and Tribes in a variety of volunteer efforts. Her session will address some of the common problems, often labeled miscommunication, experienced by teachers in American Indian student-teacher interactions. The session will focus on some of the major historical and contemporary cultural underpinnings which influence the different ways cultures use language. Participants will also discuss ways in which more effective cross-cultural communication can occur in classrooms.

Melanie Bernier

Melanie Bernier has been employed by Bismarck Public School's Sheltered Journey program as an ELL teacher and Academic Language coach for the past 3 years. Prior to that, Melanie taught Spanish in the classroom in Bismarck, Beulah, and in Colorado Springs and for the Great Western ITV Network in North Dakota. Melanie has a B.S. degree in Secondary Education, with a major in Spanish from Minnesota State University Moorhead, and a B.A. in English from UND. She has her ND ESL endorsement. A look at Melanie's Building Vocabulary lesson is on page 3 of this newsletter.

David Borlaug

David Borlaug has been president of the Lewis & Clark Fort Mandan Foundation of Washburn, which operates the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center and Fort Mandan at Washburn, ND, since 2000. Prior to that, he was the volunteer chairman of the board of the Foundation since its inception. Borlaug, who was born and raised in Washburn, was previously a publisher of newspapers and magazines. He served as president of the National Council of the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial from 1999 to 2002 and was also president of the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. He has worked with Tribal representatives from across the United States in his various national positions through the years. He will present "Better Understanding Story-telling Among American Indians" which will utilize his extensive knowledge of North Dakota and the American Indians.



Aaron Knodel and Kristi Mahrer

Aaron, who teaches in West Fargo, and Kristi, who teaches in Wahpeton, will reprise their "Novel Ideas" session from last year's conference with a new session titled "More Novel Ideas." This brother and sister duo is high energy and high quality! They invite conference participants to bring their ideas for novel use to share with the group!

These are just a few of our featured presenters. In addition to these great sessions, we will have a visit from Jason Kingbird and the Native American Dancers and several sessions featuring NDCTE members!

For more information about this summer's presenters, check out the NDCTE website at www.ndcte.org.

Summer Conference planning is almost complete

The NDCTE Board has been working hard to complete the plans for this year's summer conference. We have been working to ensure that the conference is meaningful and educational no matter what grade or classes you teach. Below is a tentative schedule. **Please note that it is subject to change.**

Native American Traditions and The Language Arts Classroom

****TENTATIVE Schedule- subject to change***

Sunday, August 2

- 6:00-7:15 **Presenting Native American Literature**
Mark Turcotte
- 7:20-9:20 **Smoke Signals**
Marj Bubach
- 9:30 Credit registration

Monday, August 3

- 7:30-8:00 Breakfast
- 8:00-9:15 **Cultural Diversity in North Dakota**
Robert Littlefield
- 9:20-10:20 **Connecting to Culture: Native American Literature Lessons**
Linda Baker
- 10:30-11:45 **More Novel Ideas**
Aaron Knodel & Kristi Mahrer
- 11:50-12:30 Lunch
- 12:35-1: 35 **Building Academic Vocabulary**
Melanie Bernier
- 1:40-2:40 **Roundtable Lesson Plan Sharing**
Marj Bubach, Claire Andrus & Billie Gibson (small group exchange)
- 2:45-3:45 **Poetry Reading**
Mark Turcotte
- 3:45-4:30 **Native American Dancers**
Jason Kingbird

Tuesday, August 4

- 7:30-8:15 Annual Business Meeting
- 8:15-8:30 Break
- 8:30-9:30 **Understanding Storytelling Among American Indians**
Dave Borlaug
- 9:30-9:45 Break-- time available for hotel check out
- 9:45- 10:45 **Miscommunication, Misnomers, and Miss Know-it-all**
Dr. Cheryl Longfeather
- 10:50-11:50 **Writing and Producing a One Act Play**
Benita Saur
- 12:00-1:00 Awards Luncheon
- 1:10-2:10 **"Do We Still Dewey?" Probing Questions about Your Library Media Center**
Toni Gredesky
- 2:15: 3:30 **Bringing it All Together: Native American Culture and the Language Arts Classroom**
Marj Bubach

Flashcards in the High School Classroom

from Heather Woods, NDCTE SW Representative

Remember those addition and subtraction flashcards from elementary school? $2 + 2 = ?$ While the system of using flashcards tends to go by the wayside by the time middle school rolls around, I would encourage you to rethink this old-fashioned tactic.

I have many sets of homemade flashcard decks that I incorporate into my lessons as a high school English and speech teacher. **Here are examples of some:**

Novels: I have review questions for novels I commonly teach laminated on flashcards. When I teach "The Crucible," for instance, I have the cards color coded by act and they serve as our review day. Students draw a card at random and must find evidence in the text to support their answer. Everyone must use his or her own brain because no two people have the same question.

Celebrity Weddings: In my speech class, each student must prepare a wedding toast. I decorate the room with accordion style wedding bells and we have weak punch while we toast celebrities. Each student toasts to a different wedding. How do they choose? They each pick two weddings from a deck of celebrity wedding cards.

Partners: Want a fun way get kids to partner up randomly? Use a deck of animal cards. Each deck has two cards for each animal. I hand them out and tell the students to find the person with the same card as them. Want to spice it up? Tell them they can only make the noise their animal makes and must find their partner by listening for the person who is making the same noise.

Creative Writing: As a creative writing prompt, I use a flashcard deck with various pictures on them. I found these pictures in magazines. Each student must pick two or three cards and weave a story using them all.

Flashcards can be a fun way to spice up your classroom. Plus, once you've laminated them once, they are good for life. (Or at least until you are able to retire!)

2009 National Conference Announced

In 1787, fifty-five delegates gathered in Philadelphia for the Constitutional Convention. November 19-22, 2009, NCTE will host its convention in this historic city. As in 1787, the air will be rich with ideas and argument — point and counterpoint — and crackling with excitement. The theme of the conference, "Once and Future Classics: Reading Between the Lines," is designed to inspire courageous conversations about traditional and contemporary literature and foster lively discussions of how we teach as well as what we teach.

We would be ambitious if we aspired to close our conference with a proclamation as far reaching as did the framers of the U.S. constitution, but I can say with certainty that our assembly of authors and experts, researchers and practitioners, poets and scholars, will have a powerful effect on how we teach. I look forward to seeing you there.

--Carol Jago, Program Chair

Check the National Council of Teachers of English website for more national conference information!

Reasons why the NDCTE Summer Conference is like a Hershey's Candy bar

It's sweet

Summer Conference is a wonderful time to reconnect with friends and fellow teachers from across the state. If it's your first time, you'll make many new friends and those contacts can prove priceless.



It's something you'll need desperately during a crazy, stressful day

The materials and lesson plans you pick up at the conference will be a lifesaver on those crazy days where you need to borrow someone else's brilliant "teacher brain" just for a day.

It's the perfect size

It is not too big, not too small. It is just the right amount. The Summer Conference is large enough to bring in fabulous presenters but small enough that the presentations are applicable and useful for everyone.

It releases good feeling chemicals

Summer Conference helps you gear up for your next school year. All the laughter, fun and learning will leave you with a smile on your face and renewed passion for teaching in your heart.

I love it

There is nothing better!

Hope to see you there!

Annie Volk, Secretary NDCTE

***At this year's conference we will be doing a
Lesson Plan Exchange.***

***Bring copies of a lesson that you find really
works in your classroom!***

***Remember, what's old hat to one teacher
may be brand new to another!***



2009 NDCTE Summer Conference Registration Form
Native American Traditions and The Language Arts Classroom

August 2-4

Best Western Doublewood Inn, Fargo, ND

1-800-433-3235

NAME _____

Elementary

Middle School

Secondary

College

Home Address _____

School Address _____

City _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

Email address: _____

Registration Fee:

Before July 15, 2009: \$140.00

After July 15, 2009: \$150.00

Registration fee includes: Keynote speaker and conference sessions, hors d'oeuvre on Sunday night, and breakfast and lunch on Monday and Tuesday.

Please mail above form and check to

1 semester hour credit pending from
MSU, UND, and NDSU
Cost for credit is \$50

NDCTE Treasurer Susan Anderson,
Box 355, Richardton, ND 58652

**Conference price includes membership in NDCTE
and the online Quarterly Newsletter.**

**\$5.00 of each membership registration is donated to the Linda S.
Christenson Literary Scholarship.**

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