

NEWSLETTER

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IATE NEWSLETTER

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Illinois Association of Teachers of English

ASSOCIATION INFORMATION

IATE is a professional organization for teachers of English/language arts. IATE publishes the *IATE Newsletter* and the *Illinois English Bulletin* and hosts an annual fall conference. IATE is organized by districts throughout the state, each district having a district leader and providing local activities to members throughout the year.

IATE also maintains standing committees that address a number of professional interests and works with other professional organizations to further the interests of teachers. Composed of nearly 1,000 teachers throughout the state, IATE provides a working network for the exchange of teaching tips, current research, and professional development as well as enduring friendships.

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

The *IATE Newsletter* is an official publication of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English, Inc. Published two times a year by IATE. Member: NCTE Information Exchange Agreement.

The *IATE Newsletter* and the *Illinois English Bulletin* are produced at the Publications Unit of Illinois State University's Department of English.

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SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Manuscripts should usually range in length from 500 to 2500 words (roughly two to ten typed, double-spaced pages). Query about longer manuscripts before you submit them.

If possible, submit your article electronically in Rich Text Format (.rtf) as an e-mail attachment. Alternatively, you may submit your article in hard copy (x3) to the editor's address (see above). Follow current MLA style—including documentation of references and using internal citations wherever possible.

Avoid lengthy notes and references.

Follow the NCTE guidelines for nonsexist use of language.

Include a separate title page with the following information: title of submission, author's name, author's professional affiliation, author's address, and author's telephone number.

Include a cover letter summarizing the article and stating that the work has neither been published nor submitted elsewhere.

The editors will acknowledge receipt of your manuscript and may make minor changes (for clarity, length, or language) in the manuscript without notifying you.

IATE OFFICERS

Mark Sujak	President
Barb Chidley	1st Vice President
Bill Curtin	2nd Vice President
Jennifer Gouin	Secretary
Tarrie Dullum	Treasurer
Janice Neuleib	Executive Secretary
Carol Medrano	District Leader Coordinator

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MARK SUJAK

At our last conference, “Close to Home: Creating Authentic Contexts for Reading and Writing,” presenters and attendees came together to imagine meaningful experiences for their students. The work students do in our classes should relate to and feel like the work necessary to succeed in the real world. But students aren’t the only ones who need authentic contexts for growth; we, as teachers, deserve authentic professional development experiences as well.

Over the last few years, I have begun to view my own professional development needs in the same way that I view data analysis. When reviewing data, it is critical to triangulate data points to ensure reliability. Additionally, various types of data have different purposes, specific limitations, and unique benefits. Each piece is key in a bigger picture to truly make informed decisions and grow beyond the present.

In a similar way, I believe we need to triangulate our professional development to ensure a diversity of experience. For many of us, we are part of a Professional Learning Community or instructional team within our school. These experiences are regular and sustained, providing weekly opportunities for growth and show immediate results in our instructional practice. But these can be limited by all members sharing the same educational environment. To get unfamiliar, exciting, and innovative ideas, many of us are members of personal learning networks (PLNs), often through social media platforms such as Twitter or by following a series of blogs. Though one strength of these networks lies in the fact that they are available for us at all times, allowing us to

read a few tweets or a blog post before bed or in a rare free moment in our day, PLNs very rarely provide personal and sustained connections.

This current reality leaves many of us missing that intermediate point, somewhere between building-level teams and 140 character innovations. IATE is a perfect opportunity to fill that gap. Through annual conferences, local mini-conferences, and social events, IATE provides opportunities for professional growth that is more sustained and personal than PLNs while still providing an array of ideas and innovations that are outside the comfort zone of our own schools. Through conversations with presenters and other attendees, ideas and collaboration flourishes, empowering members to return to their school with bright new ideas. And, even more than the glow of inspiration many feel after the conference has ended, it is the personal relationships that keep people coming back. I can say from personal experience, the people I have met at IATE have become some of my closest friends and forever have changed the way I view my career. I can confidently say I am not the only one that feels this way.

As we approach this year’s conference, “RE-imagine,” we’re asking to not only push our students to grow beyond their own expectations, but to expect the same for our growth as professionals as well. We can do this by RE-imagining our own professional development. Get involved with IATE events, both statewide and local. Invite your friends and colleagues to attend. Let IATE help you find the opportunities to expand as an educator. You won’t be disappointed! ✍

More Ways to Connect with IATE

Follow us on  **@IATENow**, or Like us on 

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S MESSAGE



Greetings to IATE members,

Our National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) representative, Cheryl Staley, just asked Claire Lamonica and me to serve on a round table discussion at NCTE in St. Louis in November. I am not suggesting that you should come to our round table, though that would

be great if you did. I am, however, reminding all of you that the national conference will be within easy and cheap travel distance. Please do consider attending, especially if you have not gone before. Claire and I went to the NCTE College Composition and Communication conference in Portland, Oregon in March and were reminded of the great joy of seeing old friends and hearing new ideas. I attended a session led by one of ISU's PhD graduates. Professor Will Banks chaired a general session which was participated in by teachers and professors from around the nation. I felt very much like a proud parent seeing my former student achieve so much. Will was, however, just one of many former students from ISU and other Illinois schools. The excitement of seeing our former Illinois graduates in the spotlight was a complete delight. Do come to the national conference in St. Louis and meet many of our colleagues from around the state and nation, and perhaps see your students up in front.

JANICE NEULEIB

That said, don't forget the IATE conference in October to be held at the Marriott in Normal. Bill Curtin, program chair, has provided you with program ideas and registration information in this newsletter. So spend a weekend in October in Normal, then one in November in St. Louis.

Please continue to enjoy the *IATE Bulletin*. The spring 2017 issue includes essays by teachers from around the state as well as an essay by a former ISU undergraduate student and a wonderful book review by Tiffany Flowers. She will appear in the summer issue as well. Of course, the fall issue with the work of young writers will be out for the fall conference, so you all will have the chance to see work by Illinois Young Writers. This was the first year that we here at ISU completed this issue without secretarial help. I want so much to thank our Publications Unit coordinator Holms Troelstrup and IATE's own Deb Will for their wonderful "detail" help and thank, as always, Angelo Bonadonna for coming to my rescue over and over with the complexities of our system for turning in prose and poetry, and/or for Angelo's patience with my struggles of all sorts as I negotiated this issue.

As always, IATE's thanks must go to Robin Murray who coordinates the poetry contest and Delores Robinson who coordinates the prose contest. This year Delores had a co-coordinator, Tracy Lee, who faithfully helped me through the complexities of the prose entries. Finally, as always I thank Illinois Poet Laureate, Kevin Stein, for his devotion to the *Bulletin* and the young writers of poetry. His essays each year are a delight.

My thanks to IATE for keeping me busy and happy! ✍

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

The 2017 IATE Fall Conference will be held October 20 and 21 at the Bloomington-Normal Marriott Hotel and Conference Center. The conference will kick off at 8 a.m. Friday, and will conclude at 4 p.m. Saturday, after an award ceremony and closing remarks from NCTE President Doug Hesse. This year's conference challenges us to *RE-Imagine: Our Passion, Our Practice, Our Profession*. We will focus on elevating the profession of education through the sharing of best practices that work and classroom experiences that rekindle our passion. The lineup includes more than 50

BILL CURTIN

presentations from IATE members and educators from across the Midwest, including four keynote speakers:

Dave Stuart Jr. teaches English and History at Cedar Springs High School in Michigan. He believes all students and teachers should flourish, and the certainty that that can, and must, happen animates his work. He writes about literacy instruction, character strengths, and the inner work of teaching, and shares his work at conferences and schools around the USA. Over 35,000 people read his articles each month through his free e-mail newsletter.

He describes his work as a focus on what matters most:

Like you, I'm in pursuit of big questions. I want to do all I can to ensure my students dominate life's challenges. I want my passion for my content areas to be contagious. I want to make an impact with my career while not losing my personal life in the process.

I got into teaching because I wanted to impact students. I did not get into teaching because I wanted to produce dog-and-pony-show lessons on evaluation day, or because I wanted to obsess over test scores.

I'm just not that guy.

But I do want to be the guy who helps you get rid of the fluff and go big on practices that matter most. So that's what I do: I show you how to take a non-freaked out approach to teaching. I share what actually works and fails in my classroom and others.

Brian Curtin teaches English at Schaumburg High School in District 211. He holds Bachelor's degrees in English and Spanish from the University of Illinois and from Illinois State University, and a Master's degree in English Education from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Brian is a National Board Certified Teacher, a recipient of the Those Who Excel Teaching Award of Excellence, and in 2013, he was named the Illinois Teacher of the Year.

Teaching in a 1:1 environment, Brian focuses on student engagement through creativity, collaboration, and technology. Outside of the classroom, he coaches lacrosse and coordinates Schaumburg's New Educator Program. He also presents professional development sessions at his school, in the district, and throughout the state.

As a member of ILSTOY and NNSTOY, Brian advocates for increased teacher leadership in Illinois. He also blogs for the Center for Teaching Quality, engaging educators through online conversations around the importance and implementation of collective leadership. You can follow him on Twitter @BrianCurtinSHS.

Sarah Brown Wessling is a National Board Certified Teacher since 2005 and in 2010 was selected as the National

Teacher of the Year. In that capacity she worked as an ambassador for education, giving over 250 talks and workshops in 39 different states as well as internationally.

Currently she maintains a hybrid teaching position which keeps her in the classroom and allows her to write, speak and work on teacher leadership initiatives around the country. Sarah is Laureate Emeritus for the nonprofit Teaching Channel, is an author of *Supporting Students in a Time of Core Standards*, and has launched her own blog, *Open Teaching*, at sarahbrownwessling.com.

Douglas D. Hesse is Professor and founding Executive Director of Writing at the University of Denver, where he's been named University Distinguished Scholar. The current Past President of the National Council of Teachers of English, he previously chaired the Conference on College Composition and Communication, was President of the Council of Writing Program Administrators, and held leadership roles in the Modern Language Association. He taught for twenty years at Illinois State University, where he directed the Writing Program, the Center for the Advancement of Teaching, and the University Honors Program.

Hesse's 60 published articles and four co-authored books (among them, *The Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers*) focus on writing pedagogy; nonfiction; and professional issues facing teachers and writing programs. He's been keynote speaker at over 40 conferences (with presentations at twice as many more), and he has consulted at over 50 universities. Hesse edited the journal *Writing Program Administration* and helped found a national writing competition, the NCTE/Mailer Writing Awards for High School and College Students. He was educated in rural Iowa schools and holds a PhD from The University of Iowa. His wife is a writer, and his three adult children are a national newspaper reporter, a cellist, and a public radio producer. He's an avid hiker and photographer who sings professionally with the Colorado Symphony Chorus.

You can register for the conference by visiting our website at IATEonline.org. Although the initial deadline for presentation proposals has passed, we do accept additional submissions on a rolling basis that may be selected if they fill a need in the program, or if a presenter cannot attend due to unforeseen circumstances. ✍

To register for the 2017 IATE Fall Conference, visit

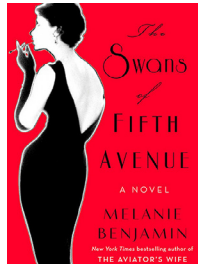
<http://iateonline.org/2017-fall-conference-registration-options/>

MELANIE BENJAMIN, 2016 IATE ILLINOIS AUTHOR OF THE YEAR

DEBORAH WILL AND GENEVIEVE SHERMAN



Photo by Deborah Feingold



Ms. Benjamin is the author of titles such as *The Aviator's Wife*, *Alice I Have Been*, *The Autobiography of Mrs. Tom Thumb*, and her latest work, *The Swans of Fifth Avenue*.

During her acceptance speech, Ms. Benjamin discussed her writing process and how characters often drive her story ideas. For example, when Ms. Benjamin learned about Mrs.

This fall IATE was proud to announce Melanie Benjamin as the 2016 Illinois Author of the Year at the annual conference in Bloomington-Normal, Illinois.

Tom Thumb and began reading about her life and circumstances, a book developed seamlessly through her fascination with the world this woman inhabited. Benjamin's latest work, *The Swans of Fifth Avenue*, blends fact and fiction and transports the reader to the high society world of Truman Capote. Benjamin's research combined with her flair for a colorful story, enthralled IATE members and inspired us all to think creatively and investigate the news stories we read with greater detail, depth, and imagination.

IATE Conference attendees were fortunate to have a complimentary copy of one of these works supplied by Lake-Cook Distributors for Ms. Benjamin to sign after her acceptance speech. With the help of Lake-Cook Distributors, the inspiration of Melanie Benjamin, and the expertise of the many presenters, this year's Fall Conference proved to be another huge success! ✍

Call for Papers

PUBLISH YOUR WORK IN THE ILLINOIS ENGLISH BULLETIN

Illinois English Bulletin is the written forum in which Illinois teachers of English share their ideas. Please see any recent issue of the *Bulletin* for a detailed "Call for Submissions." The deadline to submit materials for possible inclusion in the spring issue is the previous **November 1** and the deadline for the summer issue is the previous **January 15**. If you need any further information—or encouragement—to complete a teacher-research project and submit it for possible publication, please contact *Bulletin* editor Janice Neuleib at jneuleib@ilstu.edu. ✍

PUBLISH YOUR WORK IN THE IATE NEWSLETTER

The *IATE Newsletter* welcomes articles, reviews, reports, announcements, brief teaching narratives, calls for papers, and other material important to the professional lives of English teachers in the state of Illinois. IATE district leaders are especially encouraged to send reports of district events. The deadline for submitting material for the Spring 2018 *Newsletter* is **November 15, 2017**. Please send inquiries or submissions via e-mail to Cris Embree at cechris@ilstu.edu. ✍

For more info or to post comments,
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