To any parent with young kids, the weeks leading up to the December orgy of gift-booty are a vexation to the spirit and a trial to the liver. (Straight bourbon at breakfast, honey. Skip the eggnog.) Matters are made worse today by the arrival of an early season snowfall. Hysterical children are marooned at home because the schools here in Massachusetts are closed. The world is reduced to white pelted with white. The streetlights, which never went off at dawn because dawn never got bright enough, render the day not warmer but bleaker.

OK, so the three small kids are watching a video right now. (How else could I be tussling with prose at this hour?) Still, their down time in front of the television is just a brief interlude in a longer, more intimate entertainment that their other dad and I have chosen out of a love of stories and a respect for the color of the weather. We are both reading aloud (one as narrator, the other one taking all voices in the dramatis personae) from "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe."

So we hunker down with hot cocoa, under a blanket, and we take up with Chapter 7. Our three kids, all adopted from equatorial countries in which the existence of snow itself must be taken
on faith, shudder with glee and huddle closer. They're enjoying both the apprehension of danger and the hope of consolation. A second-grader, a kindergartner, a preschooler: two boys from Cambodia and a girl from Guatemala. They are learning to be American, paradoxically, by listening to a quirky mid-century British fantasy about a land cursed by endless snow without the promise of Christmas.

They are my children, so they are all our children too: the children of America. In time they will come to know more about Cambodia and Guatemala -- they know some small bits already, and recognize themselves in the photos from infancy. But they need also to recognize themselves in a sledge being drawn by the White Witch, in a wardrobe stuffed not only with fur coats but with a whole magic country. Why do I believe this recognition is so crucial for them?

There's a central reason: The literature of childhood -- including the fairy tales, the parables of history, the hero tales and legends, the cautionary lore and the folk beliefs -- increasingly serves as that rarest of constructs: a set of references recognizable to us all. Our choices aren't limited to mid-century British fantasy, nor to the books we loved as children. We're liberal in our literary diet, taking anything we love and caroling it in their direction. Mother Goose and Father Christmas. Madeline and Eloise and their modern cousin, Olivia. The Cat in the Hat and the boys on the raft on the Mississippi. Oz and Narnia and Neverland. The spider writing in the web and Harriet writing in her spy notebook.

It doesn't matter which side of the political aisle any one of us citizens sits on (or shouts from), or which position on any current-affairs debate we might take. We could be card-carrying members of a red state or blue state, or we might be marooned in the wrong state, white with disbelief, green with envy, or purple with apoplexy. We nonetheless share the spoils of our childhood reading. Before political identity, class identity, often even before the reality of ethnic and racial identity has set in, the Tooth Fairy gets to all of us first. Santa Claus gets to all of us. The wolf in grandmother's nightgown got to all of us. Hell, the Wicked Witch of the West scares all of us long before any dangerously out-of-touch foreign policy advisors can.

These childhood reading experiences are our lingua franca, the commonest coin that jingles in all our memories, and they will serve us our whole lives long.

Having a common language is the start of civilization.

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ries, and they will serve us our whole lives long.

Tomorrow the snow will let up, and we consumers will plunge back into the marketplace for pillage and plun-
der, to make our spirits bright. Let's not forget to scavenge for the best books for our kids. We are giving our
newest citizens a way to belong to each other, giving them a language they can use their whole lives long. "In
reading," said C. S. Lewis, the author of the Narnia stories, "... I become a thousand men and yet remain my-
self." Andy and I are reading aloud "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" on a snow day to some immigrant
kids growing themselves magically into American kids. Having a common language is the start of civilization,
and our best chance to maintain civilization is to civilize our children. And, friends, this is a project we're not
done with yet, because -- even though the snow may stop tomorrow -- the weather outside is still frightful.

GREGORY MAGUIRE is the author of "Wicked" (Regan Books, 1995) and "Son of a Witch" (ReganBooks, 2005).
Gregory Maguire, Los Angeles Times - Dec 23, 2005

Congratulations to Kathi Bartle-Angus!

At the annual College Reading and Learning Association conference in November, Kathi Bartle Angus received the Special Recognition Ser-
vice Award from the national organization. As a long time member of
the organization, she has served in many capacities. Kathi is the Coor-
dinator of the Professional Associations Liaisons. She has reviewed
several manuscripts, books and articles for CRLA and has served on the
conference program committee. Kathi was the principle advocate for
Communities of Practice, one of CRLA’s newest additions to the yearly
conference. She has also presented institutes and sessions at CRLA
conferences through the years. In addition, Kathi led a group of CRLA
members, who over several years, wrote the document, “The Rights of
Adult Learners.” This document was approved by the Board and pub-
lished in the Journal of College Reading and Learning. Most recently,
Kathi led a crew of 15 to stuff tote bags for the 2005 annual conference held in Long
Beach, CA.

Hancock Fund

The Hancock Fund was established to honor Dr. Deborah Osen-Hancock for her contributions to the field
of reading and specifically to the Reading Department. The fund is solely for use by the CSUF Reading
Clinic. Over the years, the fund has supplied books and technology for use by clinicians and students.
REG would like to thank the following members for their generous contributions to the Hancock Fund dur-
ing Fall Semester:

Peggy Hammer
Melinda Montgomery
Ruth Yopp Edwards

Volume 34 Issue 1 REG Newsletter Winter 2006
Jan Bagwell Receives Volunteer of the Year Award!

On September 16 at the annual Concert Under the Stars Jan Bagwell, current President of REG, was presented with the Volunteer of the Year award for Reading Educator’s Guild by the Coordinating Council of Support Groups at CSUF. For the past 14 years Jan Bagwell has been an active member of the REG, serving as President and an Executive Board member. Jan has hosted numerous successful events, and was instrumental in establishing the REG Grant for a member for use in financing of classroom innovations. During Jan’s tenure as President, membership in REG has steadily increased.

Jan truly deserved this award in recognition of the many hours of service and her years of devotion to REG.

FACULTY FOOTNOTES by Kathryn Bartle-Angus

The College of Education (COE) entered its second year under the guidance of Dean Ash Bishop.

The Founder’s Wall that many reading alumni contributed to should be erected sometime this spring. Stop by the College of Education Office complex in the Education Classroom building on the Fullerton campus for a look.

Another inaugural event for COE took place on January 21. The first annual Honor a Teacher celebration provided COE board members and university faculty with an opportunity to recognize a teacher who made a difference in their lives. Master of Ceremony for the event was Harold Greene, College of Education Advancement Board and Channel 2 news anchor. Look for information coming soon about opportunities for alumni and community members to honor teachers.

Congratulations are extended to Dr. JoAnn Carter-Wells. Dr. Carter-Wells was awarded a sabbatical for the spring semester. Reading Department faculty are looking forward to working closely with Dr. Ruth Yopp-Edwards while she serves as department chair for the spring semester.

A new administrative assistant is in place for the Reading Department. Kathy Kamau took over the position in late 2005. She can be reached at the department web address, reading@fullerton.edu or at the new department phone number, 714-278-2114. Along with other department business, Kathy will be helping with the Project Katrina campaign. Hopefully the partnership between Scholastic Books and the Reading Department will be able to provide substantial support for replenishing public school libraries destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Contributions and questions can be directed to Kathy Kamau.
Developmental Education Conference
Parachutes & Ladders V:
No Brain No Gain

Where:  Mt. San Antonio College
         Music Recital Hall
         1100 N. Grand Avenue
         Walnut, CA  91789

When:  Friday, March 10, 2006
        8:30 am - 2:45 pm

Who:  Keynote Speaker-Dr. Janet Zadina is an experienced high school and community college instructor and reading specialist now engaged in Neuroscience research. She received her doctorate in the College of Education at the University of New Orleans. She is currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow in Cognitive Neuroscience in the Department of Psychiatry and Neurology at Tulane. She has presented keynotes and workshops on brain research and instruction for numerous regional and national conferences, as well as for faculty development workshops.

Breakout Sessions – presented by Mt. SAC Faculty.

Registration Deadline:  March 1, 2006
To register please fill out the registration below and fax to (909) 468-3985
AND then mail your check to:
Mt. San Antonio College
Professional & Organizational Development, LTC-140
Attn: Laura Martinez
1100 N. Grand Avenue
Walnut, CA  91789

Sponsored by:
California College Reading & Learning Association (CRLA)
Mt. San Antonio College Developmental Education Study Team
Mt. San Antonio College Instruction Office

For further information, please contact Laura Martinez, P.O.D.,(909)594-5611 x5813

Developmental Education Conference Registration Form (Off Campus)
Please return registration form and a check for $40 or $50, payable to "Mt. San Antonio College" and mail to the address above.

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We would welcome your submissions to the newsletter. Please send your article via email to lovett.gc@verizon.net. Please type “REG” on the subject line of your email. Thanks, we’d love to hear from you!
Gena Lovett, Editor