



VATE's 2014 Fall Conference will be held October 10th-12th at the DoubleTree by Hilton in Williamsburg.

Celebrate VATE's 100th birthday at the Fall Conference in Williamsburg

By **Tori Ostot**

I know it is hard to say goodbye to summer, but not quite as much when you have the fantastic VATE Fall Conference to look forward to! If you haven't already heard, we will be back in Williamsburg, Virginia, at the DoubleTree by Hilton from Friday, October 10 – Sunday, October 12. To say that we are looking forward to it would be quite the understatement!

We are very excited to offer you an excellent line up of speakers, including young adult author Neal Shusterman, Sherry Levitt and Dr. Cynthia Sz wajkowski from the Library of Congress' Teaching with Primary Sources program, and Dr. Joseph Emerson, a local educator and author.

You may have noticed that lunch is now included in your registration price, and Neal Shusterman's presentation is free – that's right, FREE! We hope these changes make the conference an even more positive experience. We have a really fantastic excursion planned for Friday night – we hope you'll consider coming out and having a little fun with us in historic Williamsburg! You can register online at <http://www.tinyurl.com/vateconference>. Remember to book your hotel room, too - the DoubleTree has given us an unbeatable rate!

We have a special evening planned for Saturday when we will wish VATE a very happy 100th birthday! There will be appetizers, drinks, and most importantly, cake! We will also get to hear from VATE and NCTE superstars Pat Kelly and Leila Christenbury. You won't want to miss it!

We are looking forward to providing you a fun and content-rich experience. We are working very hard to make this our best conference ever. We hope to see you there!

Meet the Speakers at VATE's Fall Conference

Happy birthday, VATE!

I hope you are all getting excited for VATE's 100th Anniversary! We have a fantastic venue, exciting excursion, and great speakers – now all we need is **YOU!** Please go to our website and register online for the conference at <http://www.tinyurl.com/vateconference> . In the meantime, get to know who is speaking at the conference.

Neal Shusterman, Saturday morning speaker



Neal Shusterman (www.nstoryman.com) is the author of thirty books for young readers, including the best-selling *Unwind* and *Skinjacker* trilogies, and the critically acclaimed *The Schwa Was Here* and *Downsiders*. As a screen and TV writer, Neal created scripts for the "Goosebumps" and "Animorphs" TV series, and he wrote the Disney Channel Original Movie "Pixel Perfect". Neal has two grown sons and he lives with his two daughters in Southern California.

Sherry Levitt and Dr. Cynthia Szwajkowski, Saturday lunch speakers

Sherry Levitt is executive director of TPSNVA (Teaching with Primary Sources, Virginia), part of a national program of the Library of Congress providing professional development and unparalleled digital resources for K-12 teachers. Prior to her current work, Mrs. Levitt was an English Language Arts curriculum specialist for Fairfax County Public Schools. She served as department chair and English teacher at James Madison High School in Vienna, Virginia, for many years and is particularly interested in literacy, the humanities and the intersection of English Language Arts curricula around primary sources and inquiry learning.

Dr. Cynthia Szwajkowski, Assistant Director, taught U.S. History and Government in Fairfax County Public Schools for twenty years before coming to Teaching with Primary Sources, Northern Virginia Partnership in 2011. She has a Ph.D. in History and she served as the Teaching American History Grant coordinator for Fairfax (2005-2009). Her career included teaching in elementary, middle, high school, at The George Washington University and the University of Virginia.

Dr. Joseph Emerson, Sunday brunch speaker

Dr. Joseph Emerson is a career educator. His research interests include the politics of education, adolescent political socialization, and the role of religious faith has in cultivating personal leadership capacities. His previously published work includes a doctoral dissertation on educational interest groups, a policy paper on reframing school board governance, and a critical review of the literature on teachers' unions. A portion of his dissertation's second chapter is currently being used as a template by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration to assist members in lobbying members of the United States Congress. Donald's Cross, Dr. Emerson's first novel, is available as an e-book. "The Unlikely Hero," an anti-bullying short story won third place in a national competition sponsored by Writer's Digest.



Compete in the First Freedom Student Competition



The First Freedom Center announces its 22nd annual First Freedom Student Competition. This national essay and video contest offers 9th - 12th grade students an opportunity to compete for \$2,500 awards as they examine the First Amendment and the history and implementation of freedom of religion and conscience in American democracy and the world today. Student online registration is required on or before Monday, November 17, 2014. The postmark deadline for mailing the essay or video and its accompanying entry materials is Monday, November 24th. For topic, guidelines, classroom poster, student flyer and registration, visit www.firstfreedom.org and click on the First Freedom Student Competition button.

New VATE Voices editor calls for submissions



Summer is finally over and many of us have just begun the first days of school. I love this time of year because its full of new beginnings and fresh starts with a new group of students. As I go into my third year of teaching, I have learned and utilized many resources from professional organizations to improve my classroom teaching. By going to VATE conferences and interacting with various members I have learned how to become a better teacher by learning through the expertise and experiences of master teachers. Teacher collaboration is essential to improving the success rate in our students. My goal as the editor of VATE Voices is to provide an avenue for other teachers to share their successes in the classroom, spotlight teachers doing extraordinary things in the classroom and providing a forum of discussion for best practices in the classroom. I hope to fill this newsletter with articles from Virginia teachers that discuss the strategies they use to teach a subject, reviews of professional and young adult books, and finally student work. With your help, I can make this happen. If you have any submissions, please email shannonpittmanprice@gmail.com and you will see your work in the next issue of VATE Voices.

Shannon Pittman-Price is the new VATE Voices editor. She is a 6th grade English teacher at Crittenden Middle School in Newport News.

Students excel at 3rd Annual Literacy in Explosion

By Sarah Crain



This past March, students from around the state convened once again at Mountain View High School in Stafford County for VATE's 3rd annual Literacy Explosion. This unique event, conceived by VATE Past-President and current VATE liaison to the Virginia State Reading Association, Adria Merritt, invites students to showcase works of fiction and non-fiction in a variety of technology based platforms. Students chose from six different product categories, ranging from original book covers to podcasts, and presented their product before their peers and a panel of judges. Following their presentations, students are interviewed about their product and their process. Both the product and the interview count toward the students' overall scores.

This year saw one product category dominate: the Book Trailer. Serving as a commercial for a book, participants, parents, and judges alike found titles to add to their spring break reading lists! VATE congratulates the following winners of the 2014 Literacy Explosion:

Elementary Book Trailer:

1st place: Jason Raymond, Jack Tipling, Abraham Panjshiri, and Logan Davis (Kate Waller Barrett Elementary School)

2nd place: Peyton Rooney and Charlee Dorsch (Kate Waller Barrett Elementary School)

3rd place: Jasmine Washington and Aubrey Reed (Kate Waller Barrett Elementary School)

Middle School Book Trailer:

1st place: Eleanor Hatton (Gayle Middle School)

2nd place: Abby Cole (J. T. Henley Middle School)

3rd place: Elena Craig (Gayle Middle School)

Middle School Digital Poster:

1st place: Casey Beetle (Eagle Ridge Middle School)

High School Book Trailer

1st place: Kofi Merritt (Woodside High School)

In addition, VATE also recognizes the school with the highest participation rate (calculated by greatest number of entries, not participants). For the second year, **Kate Waller Barrett Elementary School** clinched the participation award!

We want to congratulate all of our winners and thank all of those who participated in this event, and we hope you will join us next year at **Longwood University on March 14, 2015** for our fourth year!

Photos from the Literacy Explosion



More Literacy Explosion Photos



WANT TO BE A PART OF THE LITERACY EXPLOSION?

Join us next year at Longwood University on March 14, 2014

Please visit www.vate.org for information on how to participate in this event. We hope to see you and your students there!

Dominion's Project Plant It! Inspires Works by Young Tree Planters



Looking for ways to help your students branch out in their creative writing skills this school year? English teachers will find plenty of ideas to get the creative juices flowing with Project Plant It!, the free environmental education program offered each spring by Dominion, the parent company of Dominion Virginia Power.

Project Plant It! includes several nature-based lesson plans that support language arts learning standards for third-grade. For example, students are encouraged to create poetry and short stories about trees to share with their classmates. Also, there are many opportunities for students to engage in individual and team research about topics related to trees and the environment and then to practice their public speaking skills during oral reports to the class.

Below is a list of several language arts resources that English teachers will find on the website, www.projectplantit.com:

- Tree Reading List
- Interactive games with tree trivia facts
- Opportunity to ask a question to a Dominion forester
- Links to websites about trees and the environment for online research
- Language arts lesson plans and instructional tools that can be downloaded at no cost to teachers

The cornerstone of the program is the distribution of a redbud tree seedling to each participating student on Arbor Day. "The redbud is native to Virginia and grows well throughout the state," said Irene Cimino Roberts, manager-Corporate Public Relations for Dominion, the parent company of Dominion Virginia Power.

Students would enjoy writing about the sensory experience of being outdoors with their friends or family and planting their own tree in the soil.

"Each and every year, Project Plant It! continues to effectively engage students by connecting them with nature," said Jo McElwain of the Arbor Day Foundation. "Project Plant It! puts Eastern Redbud trees into the hands of the next generation of tree-planters who will always cherish the memory of planting a tree and watching it grow."

For more information, visit www.projectplantit.com or "Like" Project Plant It! on Facebook.

GET INVOLVED WITH VATE

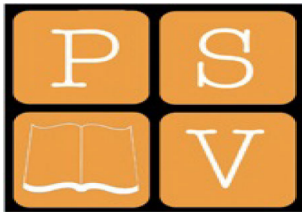
By Freyja Bergthorson

Do you believe that your state affiliate is a worthwhile cause, and you've been wondering how you can become more involved without becoming overwhelmed? You might be interested in becoming our new PRESLM Coordinator.

This is a great way to support VATE, and provide an essential service to schools in Virginia. The PRESLM Coordinator is responsible for managing NCTE's annual literary magazine contest in Virginia. Duties are simple, and occur mainly during the summer months, usually taking no more than 5 hours total commitment. This gives busy teachers, like you, an opportunity to serve both VATE and NCTE.

The PRESLM Coordinator's duties can be conducted from home, and tailored to meet the demands of your schedule. The Coordinator contacts past judges in the spring, communicates with NCTE so that magazines are sent to him/her, and mails magazines and judging materials to judges in early July. Results are compiled and sent to NCTE in September. All expenses are covered by NCTE, and this is a wonderful way to become involved in both your state affiliate (VATE), and the national association (NCTE).

If you are interested in becoming our new Coordinator, please contact Freyja Bergthorson (fbergthorson@msn.com).



Poetry Virginia

Where poetry happens in the Commonwealth

**Readings, contests, workshops,
festival, publishing, seminars,
and classroom visits**

The Poetry Society of Virginia
Poetryvirginia@gmail.com

Visit our website:
www.PoetryVirginia.org

Poetry Virginia at the VATE Conference

The Poetry Society of Virginia (PSV), an exhibitor and sponsor of the VATE Annual Conference, will present a poetry program at 4:00pm, Friday, October 10. It will feature readings by four published poets, an opportunity for teacher-poets to read their poetry, and a Q&A period. In addition to the poetry, all teachers who attend will receive the following:

- A complimentary book of poetry
- The opportunity to sign up to receive a classroom visit by a PSV poet this school year
- The opportunity to join PSV and participate in its annual poetry contest
- The opportunity to meet and talk with the Poet Laureate of Virginia
- A chance to win a door prize

PSV, since its beginning at the College of William and Mary in 1923, has encouraged the teaching of poetry in the classroom. All students will not become poets, but they will become better educated adults.

Come and enjoy a relaxing hour of poetry.

Poets presenting at the conference

Edward W. Lull, having graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1955, had his first career in the Navy, serving primarily in submarines. He earned an MS from The George Washington University in 1969. Lull began writing poetry in retirement; he has published five books of his poetry: *Cabin Boy to Captain: a Sea Story* in 2003; *Where Giants Walked* in 2005; *The Sailors: Birth of a Navy* in 2007; *Bits and Pieces: A Memoir* in 2011 and *Creating Form Poetry: A Poet's Handbook* in 2013. He is a Life Member of the Poetry Society of Virginia and served four terms as its president. Lull was the 2012 winner of the Emyl Jenkins Award "for inspiring a love of writing and writing education in Virginia." He is also an essayist and president of the Emerson Society of Williamsburg. Ed and his wife, Evelyn, live in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Nancy Powell is a Hampton, Virginia poet whose work has appeared in *Kalliope*, *Black Water Review*, *BlueLine*, *Virginia Adversaria*, *The Beacon*, *Skipping Stones*, *SweetBay Review*, *Article 25*, and the anthology, *The Light in Ordinary Things*. *Poets of Virginia Online*. Her first poetry collection, *How Far Is Ordinary*, was published 2007, and her second collection, *The Blackbirds Tell Stories*, is forthcoming the end of this year. She is a past president and executive council member of the Poetry Society of Virginia, a member of The National Association of American Pen Women, and was on the advisory council for The Christopher Newport University Writers' Conference for ten years. She organized the Poetry Society of Virginia's yearly student contest for five years and edited the PSV newsletter. She has lived in England and Australia, and has traveled throughout Europe, parts of Asia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific. When not at her "day job," she can be found at home by the Hampton River.

Bill Glose is a former paratrooper and Gulf War veteran. He is the author of the poetry collections *Half a Man* (2013) and *The Human Touch* (2007), and editor of the story anthology *Ten Twisted Tales* (2008). He has won the F. Scott Fitzgerald Short Story Award and the Virginia Press Association First Place Award for Sports News Writing. For the past ten years he has been a Contributing Editor of *Virginia Living*, and has contributed articles to many other magazines. Now a full-time writer, he undertakes intriguing pursuits, such as walking 1,500 miles back and forth across Virginia, and participating in a world-record-setting skinny dipping event, and writes about them for magazines. His website (www.BillGlose.com) includes a page of helpful information for writers.

J. Ron Smith Poet Laureate of Virginia

In June 2014, Governor Terry McAuliffe appointed **Ron Smith** the poet laureate of Virginia. Smith serves as the writer-in-residence and George O. Squires Chair of Distinguished Teaching at St. Christopher's School in Richmond. He has published three books of poetry: *Its Ghostly Workshop* (2013), *Moon Road: Poems 1986-2005* (2007), and *Running Again in Hollywood Cemetery* (1988). Smith has won awards for his poetry, including the Carol Weinstein Poetry Prize, Southern Poetry Review's Guy Owen Prize, and Poetry Northwest's Theodore Roethke Prize. Smith's poems have appeared in many periodicals, including: *The Nation*, *Kenyon Review*, and *New England Review*; and in anthologies Wesleyan University Press, Time-Life Books, University of Virginia Press, University of Georgia Press, and University of Illinois Press.

Student Showcase

Lewis and Clark's Journey

By Lela Hood
Crittenden Middle School
Newport News, Virginia

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark started,
On May 14th of 1804, with the Corps Discovery.
Starving, sick, and sunburned,
The troubles tore them down.
They met Sacagawea, like the stars she guided,
Through the barren fields and thick forests.
Soon traveling up the Missouri River and through Montana.
They traded for horses, by the ones of Sacagawea.
Swish, swish, swish, down the rivers they went,
As the rivers snaked and bent.
Soon coming to a vast plain of water,
As far as the eye could see.
Turning back go to home,
They returned from two years of the journey.
On the 23rd of September,
To share all the things people would soon see.

The Iron Mason

By Javien Lewis
Crittenden Middle School
Newport News, Virginia

*Born an alpha with roaring discipline
His ambition is always sizzling.
With a golden heart of steel.
Rustling papers of hate for appeal.
After lots of work was failed,
several meetings were held.*

*He was still spoiled with ideals of constitutional rights for all people,
Rights of equality to make everyone equal.*

*He kept being like an ant in the colony ordeal,
Until he finally struck a deal.
He made a deal that was approved by the judge not the juror.
This is the truth not a rumor.*

Boston Massacre

By Rhianna Jenkins
Crittenden Middle School
Newport News, Virginia

Bing! Bang! Bong!
The shots rang out.
And when the crowd dispersed,
Five men had met their doom.

Sentry Thomas Preston was accused,
Manslaughter was his charge,
While waiting for his trial to end,
He was verbally abused.

Some troops were released
Like a fish off a hook
But two men still got charged
And all of their hope ceased.

The Boston Massacre: an important event,
Led up to the Revolutionary War,
March 5th of 1770
Historians will never forget!

Boston Massacre

By Angel Prach
Crittenden Middle School
Newport News, Virginia

March 5, 1770 is the night that started the madness,
Lots of people died and families were filled with sadness.
Patriots fought against the cause,
But most of them ended up in gauze.

Thomas Preston was responsible for it all,
It was one of the events that started the revolutionary ball.
Some are guilty of manslaughter now,
And they were branded on their thumbs,
Just like a big fat cow.

Publish Your Student's Work

We teach very talented students who deserve for the world to see their work. Send us any literary works done by your students and we will publish them in VATE Voices. Send any submissions to shannonpittmanprice@gmail.com or vatepublications@gmail.com.

Roanoke Poem

By Kylie Becker
Crittenden Middle School
Newport News, Virginia

Why did the Roanoke settlers disappear?
Was it the Croatoan, I have a fear.
Did Virginia Dare really become the white deer?

115 people vanished like a thief in the night.
Were they willing to go, or did they put up a fight?
A new colony gone, I can't imagine their fright.

Did their home become a prison, so they had to escape?
No one has solved the answer to this mystery.
This is part of our Founding Fathers history.

Francisco Vazquez de Coronado

By Jailyn Lewis
Crittenden Middle School
Newport News, Virginia

Born in Salamanca, Spain
He was given a lot of pain.
He was European
And had 7 golden cities to be in.

He had a mission
But he failed his expedition.
He then explored North America's Southwest
Which proved he was the very best.

His health decreased
Which made him deceased.
But that's what happened in 1554
Francisco Coronado no longer lived anymore.

Like an archaeologist he explored the Southwest
Giving him and all of us great success.
Happier than a kid on a sugar high, he explored the Grand Canyon
He and his soldiers were a great companion.
We will all remember Francisco Coronado
And his exploration of El Dorado.