

# VATE VOICES



February 2018

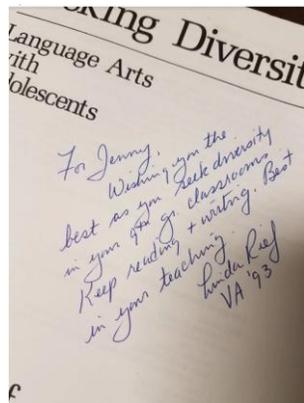
## Thank You for Reading Tori Otstot, Editor

Well, I'm guessing some of you have been doing a little snow dancing! Hopefully, 2018 has brought you as much time for leisure reading as it has for last-minute lesson plan scrambling!

In this edition, we'd like to bring you some information about upcoming events as well as some insight into the professional goals of our board members and their reading habits. We hope you are inspired; feel free to share your resolutions with us on social media, tagging with #vate2018, or let us know what you're reading, personally or professionally, by submitting a book review to [totstot@ycsd.york.va.us](mailto:totstot@ycsd.york.va.us) for inclusion in an upcoming edition of VATE Voices!

## 5 WIIFMs for VATE Jenny Martin, College Member-At-Large

In 1992, I joined VATE during my senior year at Radford University. After graduation, I served as Secretary. During those years teaching high school English, VATE was my professional learning network. It's where I met Linda Reif, and she transformed my teaching through her keynote address and Seeking Diversity, which I purchased at the conference.



Now, I am pleased to serve on the board again, and as your College Member at Large, I'd like to share some with you five WIIFMs (What Is In It For Me) for VATE. I hope these inspire professional activity and invigorate your professional life as they have mine.

1. [Literacy Education Advocacy Day!](#) For the last two years I've traveled to our Nation's Capitol to advocate for literacy, and this past year students joined me. Keep an eye out for the the date on this site and mark your calendars. (Last year it was April 27, but it has also been held in March). This is a great opportunity to be active with NCTE and represent Virginia since we live relatively close!
2. [Literacy Explosion](#). Involve your students in this opportunity and breathe purpose into their work. Another way to be involved is to serve as a judge for the event. I am organizing judges this year, so please email me at [jmmartin@bridgewater.edu](mailto:jmmartin@bridgewater.edu) if

you can help. English Education university graduate and undergraduates can serve as judges!

3. Recognition. It was through VATE that I had the opportunity to nominate both my former high school English teacher and my daughter's former English teacher...yes the same teacher! Prior to her retirement, I was able to nominate her for this award through VATE. Likewise, this year, I was pleased to see Amanda Staton, a current student and member of VATE recognized with the student teaching scholarship.



4. The annual conference. Each fall, I look forward to learning from my colleagues, wherever the venue may be! Plan to join us in Roanoke next October. If you have attended in the past, but have not presented, then take that risk and share your good work!



5. *Virginia English Journal*. Why it took me so long to finally be brave enough to write for the journal is beyond me, but organizations like VATE help us grow in these ways. I encourage you to set a goal to write for *VEJ* and share this work with your students. Students need teachers who model the hard work that writing demands.

A friend in VATE,  
Jenny M. Martin

## [Resolve to Get Involved!](#)

Want to get involved with VATE this year?

We are looking for an Advocacy and Outreach Chair, a Professional Development Chair, and a Webmaster.

If interested in a position or just more information, please contact Angela Moore at [aandrews@rvaschools.net](mailto:aandrews@rvaschools.net).

**LOOKING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK:  
PERSPECTIVES OF OUR BOARD**

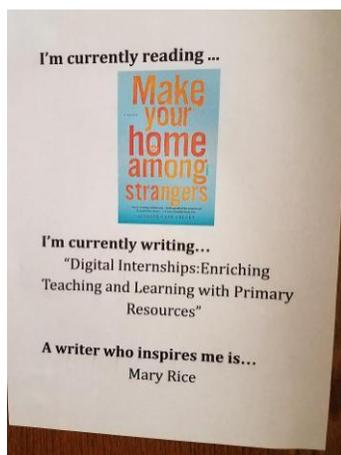
**LATRESE YOUNGER**  
**NCTE Recognition of Excellence in Literary Magazines  
Coordinator**

My New Year's resolution is to improve in delegating responsibly to capable teachers.

The best book I read in 2017 was *The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz. The author discusses practical ways to bring more joy and fulfillment to your life through improving communication skills and increasing intentionality in all of your actions/decision making.

**JENNY MARTIN**  
**College Member-At-Large**

My New Year's resolution is to post outside of my classroom a sign that shows what I am currently reading and what I am currently writing...



The best book I read in 2017 was *Make Your Home Among Strangers*, because it was my daughter's freshman transition book for college. It was nice to connect through this book, and hear her talk about when the author came to her campus to visit.

**HEIDI BRANCH**  
**Middle School Member-At-Large**

My New Year's resolution is to talk with my students about hard-to-talk-about topics like stereotypes, racism, injustice, refugees, etc.

The best book I read in 2017 was *Just Mercy*.

**KELLY TRUMP**  
**Past President**

My New Year's resolution is to find some joy in work tasks that would usually frustrate or annoy me.

The best book I read in 2017 was *Wonder* by RJ Palacio because it provided a beautiful reminder of how choosing kindness can make a difference.

**SEAN RUDAY**  
**Virginia English Journal Editor**

My New Year's resolution is to read Larry Ferlazzo and Katie Hull Sypniewski's book *The ELL Teacher's Toolbox* when it comes out in April.

The best book I read in 2017 was *Buffalo Lockjaw* by Greg James. It's both heartfelt and gritty--the prose is fantastic and the characters come off as complex, authentic, and believable.

**PAIGE HORST**  
**President-Elect**

My New Year's resolution is to go back to writing every single day, even if it's just a half an hour at a time!

The best book I read in 2017 is a tie between *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas and *Turtles All the Way Down* by John Green. Both are such well-written, profoundly humane, thought-provoking books. *THUG* is brimming with humor that adds to, rather than takes away from, the urgent subject matter and authentic voice. In *TATWD*, Green has leveled up as a writer and as a storyteller. This novel is him beginning to reach his full potential, in my opinion. I am seeing this title start to transcend the "young adult" genre and move into the "literary fiction" category.

**ANGELA MOORE**  
**Past President**

My New Year's resolution is to have my students read for 15 minutes in the beginning of class to build their reading stamina.

The best book I read in 2017 was *Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds because I can personally relate. It will allow my students to think seriously about choices and consequences. It is written brilliantly and is an easy yet complicated read. I love how he wrote it in a way that allows you to analyze the book's format and the purpose for his writing it that way. He uses anagrams to highlight his point of view, while addressing the current issue of Black on Black Crime and how it impacts family friends and its community overall. Truly one of my best reads from the 2017 school year.

**PEGGY GEARHART**  
**Executive Secretary**

My New Year's resolution is to incorporate literacy in the content-area classrooms. In addition to modeling reading and writing strategies at content department meetings and in classrooms, I will video the strategies being used in the classroom so that teachers can have a resource to refer to.

Professionally, the best book I read in 2017 was *The Reading Strategies Book* by Jen Serravallo because they help me provide personalized, targeted instruction to my students. Personally, it was *Orbiting Jupiter* (early 2017?). I felt the impact of the events because I became so invested in the characters.

**ASHLEE MEREDITH**  
President

My New Year's resolution is to be more intentional in mixing up my lesson plans to avoid falling into a pattern or rut. I'd like to maintain my structure but still provide enough novelty to spark my students' imaginations and curiosity.

It's difficult to narrow it down to a best book, so I will settle for two (and even that is difficult): *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas and *The Reason You're Alive* by Matthew Quick. Both novels dealt with uncomfortable and complex issues with dignity, grace, and beauty without oversimplifying. They explore the human condition in ways that touched me deeply and presented me with characters who were flawed but authentic.

**MARYNN DAUSE**  
Vice President

My New Year's resolution is to read *Ditch That Homework* by A. Keeler and M. Miller

Both *Teach Like a Pirate* and *Learn Like a Pirate* have had a profound impact on the life my students and I share in our classroom. While reading those two books this summer, I laughed, frowned, thought, wrote, and laughed some more. My pedagogy is better for it.



**African American Read-In**

From the NCTE website - The National African American Read-In is the nation's first and oldest event dedicated to diversity in literature. It was established in 1990 by the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English to make literacy a significant part of Black History Month. This initiative has reached more than 6 million participants around the world.

Visit <http://www2.ncte.org/get-involved/african-american-read-in/> for more information & to host an African American Read-In this year!

"It is important for all of us to see ourselves in books." – Dr. Jerrie Cobb Scott, founder of the African American Read-In

**Call for Nominations for the Foster B. Gresham Award**

Do you know a teacher who....

- teaches in Virginia?
- is a VATE member and is distinguished in serving his/her students (college, secondary, or elementary)?
- two people would write recommendation letters for him/her?
- could attend the VATE fall conference?

If so, then honor this teacher with a nomination for the Foster B. Gresham Award!

**Deadline: May 1, 2018**

**Applicant information must be submitted by the nominator NOT the nominee. Email the nominee's resume and two letters of recommendation to Jenny Martin at [jmmartin@bridgewater.edu](mailto:jmmartin@bridgewater.edu)**

*The recipient of this award will receive a plaque, conference registration, room, auto mileage, and banquet fees.*

Foster Bagwell Gresham (1905-1980) taught English at Emporia High School, Randolph-Macon Academy, Charlottesville School for Boys, Lane High School, and Longwood College. He was a key figure in the growth of VATE; he became President in 1951, the second editor of the *VIRGINIA ENGLISH BULLETIN* (name changed to *Virginia English Journal* in 2012) in 1952, and VATE's first Executive Secretary in 1958. His leadership during those seven years help propel VATE from a struggling membership of about one hundred teachers to over two thousand. He was instrumental in organizing VATE into the twenty current local affiliates. Results for VATE came from his creative ideas combined with his perseverance, persistence, and enthusiasm, all of which he applied to whatever undertaking claimed his interest and attention. His cheerful, winsome personality produced the faithful following of his policies; his magnetism brought others into the act. To name this award for him recognized the indebtedness of the Association to him and exemplified at the same time what Foster B. Gresham meant to the teaching of English in Virginia--EXCELLENCE. (Condensed from Richard Meade's article, "Tribute to 'Mr. VATE'" in *VEJ*, Spring, 1981)



**Welcome WorldStrides, our newest Corporate Member!**



*Virginia Association of Teachers of English*

Please contact Peggy Gearhart at [peggy.gearhart@lcpss.org](mailto:peggy.gearhart@lcpss.org) to update your email and post office address so that you will not miss a publication or announcement. Encourage others to join VATE online at [www.vate.org](http://www.vate.org).

**VATE VOICES**

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The Virginia Association of Teachers of English is committed to enhancing the quality of the teaching of English and language arts in the Commonwealth.



## **LITERACY EXPLOSION!**

**WHAT:** Language Arts Festival & Contest

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. - 12 p.m., March 10, 2018

**WHERE:** George Wythe High School, Richmond

**WHO CAN PARTICIPATE:** All K-12 students

### **CONTEST CATEGORIES:**

Book Cover

Book Trailer

Scene It

Digital Poster

Photo Essay

Podcast

**REGISTRATION BEGINS IN JANUARY**

**VISIT [VATE.ORG](http://VATE.ORG) FOR MORE INFO!**

Literacy Explosion is a language arts festival designed to celebrate and promote the integration of literacy and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills. Literacy Explosion encourages and rewards Virginia students' excellence in reading, writing, speaking, presenting, filming, drawing, and acting.