

Academic Language Therapy Association®
Dedicated to the remediation of written-language skills.

bul•le•tin

Fall

2001

The bul•le•tin is a triannual publication of the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA), and is free to its membership.

President's Message

By **Martha Sibley**

If each of you could have been at ALTA Board's annual planning retreat in August, you would have gained a deep appreciation for the officers and directors whom you elected last spring! As we enjoyed Valerie Tucker's gracious hospitality at her "5T Ranch" in Argyle, Texas, the committees reported efficiently, and board members attended to the business of your organization with probing questions and deliberate discussion. Each person was intent upon upholding our standards and being good stewards of our resources while moving toward the future. Forward-looking plans were made to extend our influence and strengthen ALTA's resolve to constantly improve professionally, so we can always do what's best for the children.



Martha Sibley,
ALTA President

The most fascinating thing for me during the day was to look around the quadrangle of tables and realize that the 18 attendees represented a wide range of areas, training centers, and teaching situations. The Board has truly taken on a national scope, and represents a wide spectrum of our membership. In addition, I was truly amazed as I pondered the vast amount of talent, intelligence, and creativity in the room.

Some of that unusual ability to create was shown by Nancy Redington and her committee who have researched the Spelling Bee history and materials in order to put together a kit to guide local groups in challenging their students. They have done a spectacular job on a formidable task, and I think you will be pleased. As soon as it is available, you will be told how to obtain a kit for helping your teachers as they plan their own local event.

Another illustration of the many ways in which board members apply their talent to ALTA's endeavors is the work by Melanie Royal and her committee. They have spent many hours analyzing and refining the examination and registration process. They have responded to requests and suggestions made by many of you and are attempting to make the process as efficient and "friendly" as possible. They are also working closely with the Centers' Council to schedule a choice of dates in a variety of locations to make it more convenient for newly trained therapists to become certified.

Much is being accomplished by you and your colleagues! I hope each of you is having a pleasant and productive year! ✍

ALTA assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions. To submit news items or articles, which are subject to editing for space and style, or for advertising or other information, contact:

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Future Exam Dates

October 6, 2001 - Wichita, KS
June 12, 2002 - Lubbock, TX

ALTA Board Members Meet for Retreat

The group that converged upon Valerie Tucker's "5T Ranch" in August brought enthusiasm and friendship to the planning table. After some time for visiting and getting reacquainted over juice, coffee, and breakfast snacks, the officers and board members settled into a day of



ALTA Treasurer Linda Stringer, Vice President of Programs Connie Peters, and board member Elsa Cárdenas-Hagan listen intently as pressing issues are discussed.

intense discussion and decision-making. Committee reports reflected many hours of background thought and preparation to bring to the board updates on current efforts, ideas for new projects, and recommendations for action.

One board member commented that she had never realized how much time and effort went into the work of ALTA, and that she had come to appreciate those who began and supported the organization in past years. Another comment in passing reflected upon her recognition that the newsletter is an important way to keep informed about the ongoing work of members scattered across the United States.

The committees responsible for membership issues reported a successful first audit on CEUs as well as progress toward refined and enhanced steps for the examination registration process. They brought a recommendation to encourage the centers to plan for examinations to be given in more locations, with a greater choice of dates available. This will make it more convenient for graduates of training programs to attain certified status and become members of ALTA. Melanie Royal, who has led this committee, reported that response from individuals has brought this and other issues to the attention of committees, and input from members has been a valuable part of decision-making.

The committees in the public relations group have been busy preparing for exhibits at the IDA conference, responding to questions over the telephone and web site, planning the newsletter, and keeping the web site current. Since ALTA



ALTA Board President Martha Sibley, President-Elect Kay Peterson, and web site committee chair Rae Cromeens work on strategic planning at the annual ALTA Board retreat.

has changed hosts for the web site, this committee, chaired by Rae Cromeens, has had a mammoth job during the last few months. This part of ALTA's work provides a major service to the community as well as to members.

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Is There Life After Decoding?

Ginger Holland, CALT, Qualified Instructor



ALTA Qualified Instructor Ginger Holland is proud of Ryan's progress in written composition skills.

Ryan received Orton-Gillingham instruction when he was in the first and second grade. When he continued to have academic problems in the third grade, his parents took him for an additional psycho-educational evaluation. This testing revealed significant improvement in spelling, word identification, word attack, and word comprehension; however, he was still below his intellectual potential in fluency, written expression, and passage comprehension. Ryan's parents' search for a therapist and my eagerness to use

Practices for Developing Accuracy and

Fluency, authored by ALTA Qualified Instructor Suzanne Carreker, brought us together.

Ryan is a delightful ten-year-old boy who agreed to be my guinea pig as I learned a new skill. He thought it was an intriguing concept and eagerly assumed the role. We agreed to meet twice a week during the school year for sessions of an hour and a quarter in length. We used the *Practices for Developing Accuracy and Fluency Manual* as our main source book because it provided the stories we needed for our work on fluency. His fluency rates were as follows:

Grade Level	First Reading	Fourth Reading
2.8	92 wpm 97% accuracy	100 wpm 100% accuracy
3.6	111 wpm 98% accuracy	134 wpm 97% accuracy
3.7	80 wpm 95% accuracy	139 wpm 95% accuracy
3.7	133 wpm 98% accuracy	159wpm 99% accuracy
4.5	89 wpm 96% accuracy	148 wpm 97% accuracy.

An additional bonus to the selected fluency stories was their narrative as well as expository nature. We used these particular stories to increase Ryan's ability to visualize what he reads. We manipulated cards to answer the questions Who, What, When, Where, and Why after we read the narrative text. For the expository text, we made a card pyramid with the main idea, the supporting ideas, and the details. These cards were a natural link to writing since he was then able to use this information in writing a summary of the stories he read.

The composition instruction supplemented the information in *Multisensory Grammar and Written Composition* also authored by Suzanne Carreker. Ryan responded well to this instruction. An interesting result occurred during the last week of school, when Ryan's class was allowed to go to the computer room to play self-selected computer games. Ryan's selection was a grammar game. Studying grammar had a positive impact

See Decoding on Page 5

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Fluent Reading: Will It Ever Happen?

By Suzanne Carreker, CALT, Qualified Instructor

A therapist was once overheard to say, "What gets me up every morning is knowing that I have the tools to teach any student to decode. What keeps me humble is the need for strategies to help them become fluent readers." A fluent reader reads with a rapid, prosodic flow that mirrors spoken language. His or her reading is fluid and accurate, with appropriate speed, phrasing, and intonation. Fluency supports comprehension, makes reading enjoyable, and is often difficult to develop. We therapists know that lack of fluency is one of the last vestiges of a dyslexic student's difficulty in learning to read. While fluency may be difficult to develop, it is not impossible.

Automatic word recognition is essential for fluency. A recent study by Neuhaus and Swank (in press) suggests that automatic let-

ter recognition is directly related to and is the key to automatic word recognition. Students must overlearn the names of the letters. Thorough knowledge of letters leads to the rapid recognition of words. Although letter familiarity is influenced by frequency of occurrence in the language and is individually determined (i.e., how much or what a student reads), Neuhaus and Swank recommend that careful attention be given to letters that occur with less frequency in the language (e.g., j, q, v, w, x, z). These letters need to be overemphasized in letter-naming practices.

A Rapid Recognition Chart (Carreker, 1999) is an easy-to-use, effective activity for reinforcing letter names. The chart consists of five rows of six squares. In each square is a letter. The focus of the chart is six letters. Each row contains the same six

letters in a different order. The therapist points to each square in the first row and names the letter in each square. The therapist then points to each square in the first row again as the student names the letters in the squares. After this warm-up, the student names letters for one minute as the therapist quickly points to each square in order on the chart, starting with the top row and working down and across each row. The student may be able to complete the chart several times in a minute. At the end of one minute, the student calculates the number of letters named. Progress can be graphed.

Evidence suggests that reading single words quickly can result in

improved speed and accuracy of text reading (Tan & Nicholson, 1997). The Rapid Recognition Chart may be used for single word reading. Instead of six letters the chart focuses on six irregular words (e.g., said, are, were, was, they, their) or six regular words that share a common pattern or contain contrasting patterns (e.g., hen, her, nod, nor, fit, fir). These words are repeated in each row of the chart in a different order. Using the same procedure as described above, the student reads as many words as possible in one minute. Both the letter and word recognition charts may be used as part of fluency training.

The National Reading Panel (2000) identifies repeated reading as one of the most consistent techniques for increasing word recognition and fluency. The rereading of the same text several times provides the repeated exposures needed for a reader to form adequate orthographic memories of letter patterns and words (Torgesen, Rashotte, & Alexander, 2001). The article by Ginger Holland in this issue demonstrates how repeated reading can be used during fluency training to develop automatic word recognition and prosody. Prosody is the attention to the features of spoken language that can be imitated in print (e.g., phrasing, intonation).

Text that a student is able to read with at least 90 percent accuracy is suitable for fluency training (Adams, 1990). Decodable text provides the most beneficial practice for a dyslexic student as he or she practices the sound-symbol patterns that have been taught. Meyer and Felton (1999) reviewed desirable rates for oral reading fluency. Generally, a student in mid-second grade through fourth grade should aim for an oral reading fluency rate of 100 words per minute (wpm) \pm 15 during fluency training. For fifth grade and beyond, an appropriate goal is between 120

See **Fluent Reading** on Page 5

Retreat *Continued From Page 2*

Connie Peters, Program Vice President, brought to the table some exciting ideas for the spring conference. This year it will need to be moved to a larger meeting place because of the increase in attendees year after year. This is another sign of progress, and undoubtedly a result of excellent planning, and choosing challenging speakers.

Elizabeth Cantrill reported that plans for the alliance of accrediting and certifying

organizations is moving smoothly along. Representatives of these groups will meet at IDA in Albuquerque in October to begin to formulate some of the organizational structure.

Another interesting project is nearing completion, according to Nancy Redington, who is leading a committee to put together a Spelling Bee Kit to

make available to local groups of therapists or schools. They are using materials and ideas from past spelling bee leaders to produce a set of notebooks, folders, and tapes to guide teachers as they plan locally for events to give their students a chance to apply their spelling rules. ✍

Decoding *Continued From Page 3*

on his composition skills along with the aid of the *Paragraph Writing Strips* that are sold through Region XIII Education Service Center.

Ryan's parents did not feel that it was necessary to retest him this summer. His fourth-grade academic year was a positive experience for him especially during the third and fourth quarter when he was on the honor roll. I am pleased with his improvement in fluency and we plan to continue our work next year. In addition

to his academic success, I witnessed a most exciting change in Ryan. He was transformed from being a very insecure writer to one who finds a great deal of enjoyment in writing. His first major writing assignment in fourth grade was a book report on Jim Bowie. Ryan was not proud of the grade he received on that report due to his lack of details and elaboration. On his last writing assignment for the year, Ryan wrote a book report on *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator*. With his mother's help, he made note cards on

the many characters (who), the incredible settings (when and where), the major events (what) and why these events were important. When Ryan wrote this final book report for the year he not only had details, but he had elaboration as well.

It is exciting knowing that, in addition to having the tools to help students with decoding, we also have the tools to help them in the areas of fluency, comprehension and composition. ✍

Fluent Reading *Continued From Page 4*

and 150 wpm. The Holland article describes the calculation of accuracy and fluency rates.

Comprehension is an important component of fluency training. The goal of fluency training is not simply speed. The goal is speed with prosody and understanding (Torgesen et al., 2001). As a student works on fluency, comprehension activities ensure that the student is extracting meaning from the text, which is the ultimate goal of reading. Additionally, comprehension is important because it stimulates the recognition of words. Comprehension activities that can accompany fluency practices are described in the article in this issue by Mary Lou Slania.

When a reader instantly recognizes the words on a printed page, he or she can attend to meaning. Appropriate phrasing and intonation render a perfect imitation of spoken language to the reader and aid the melodic flow of reading and understanding. Although it seems as if it will

never happen, fluency will develop with practice, persistence, and a little dash of patience.

Adams, M.J. (1990). *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Carreker, S. (1999). Teaching reading: Accurate decoding and fluency. In J.R. Birsh (Ed.), *Multisensory teaching of basic language skills*. Baltimore, MD: P.H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Meyer, M.S., & Felton, R.H. (1999). Repeated reading to enhance fluency: Old approaches and new directions. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 49:283-306.

National Reading Panel (2000). Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction. Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Neuhaus, G.F., & Swank, P.R. (in press). Understanding the relations between RAN letters subtest components and word reading in first-grade students. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*.

Tan, A., & Nicholson, T. (1997). Flashcards revisited: Training poor readers to read words faster improves their comprehension of text. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 89 (2), 276-288.

Torgesen, J.K., Rashotte, C.A., & Alexander, A.W. (2001). Principles of fluency instruction in reading: Relationships with established empirical outcomes. In M. Wolf (Ed.), *Dyslexia, fluency, and the brain*. Timonium, MD: York Press.

Suzanne Carreker, CALT, director of teacher development, Neuhaus Education Center, is a board member of the ALTA Centers Council. ✍

Comprehension: Fuel for Meaningful and Fluent Reading

By Mary Lou Slania, CALT, Dyslexia Specialist Preparation Program Coordinator Neuhaus Education Center

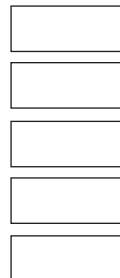
Comprehension and fluency are reciprocal skills. Fluency practices that integrate repeated readings and comprehension strategies increase reading speed and understanding of text (National Reading Panel, 2000). Deriving meaning from text makes it easier to read fluently. When you read a set of directions for programming your new DVD player or the description of a medieval battle, do you find that you read slowly, stumble, re-read, or exhibit other characteristics of a non-fluent reader?

In order to get meaning from text, students need strategies. Students benefit from an understanding of the structure of the text that they are reading. Asking certain questions will help students determine the text structure. Is the text narra-

tive? Does it include characters, a setting, a problem, a sequence of events, and a resolution? Is the text expository? Is the text written to inform, explain, describe, report, or persuade? After determining the structure of the text, students can then use a multisensory strategy that will help them construct the meaning of the text.

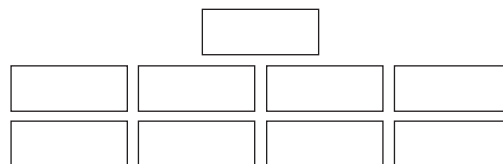
Wh-Question Cards provide a multisensory outline of the basic elements of narrative text. To use the Wh-Cards, give each student five index cards. On each card have the students write one of the five wh-questions. If students can answer these questions, they have a fundamental understanding of the text. Have the students place the cards in a column down the left-hand side of their desks in this order: *Who?*, *What?*, *When?*, *Where?*, *Why?*. This order trips nicely off the tongue and helps students

remember these five important questions. Students think about these questions as they read a story. *Who* is the story about? *What* happens in the story? Of these events, which is the most important event in the story? *When* does the story take place - time of day, time of year, time span? *Where* is the location of the story? *Why* does the most important event in the story happen? After reading, students again think about the five wh-questions. As they can answer each question, students move the cards from the left side of their desks to the right side of their desks. When all of the cards have moved from the left-hand side of their desks to the right-hand side, they have identified the essential elements of the narrative text.



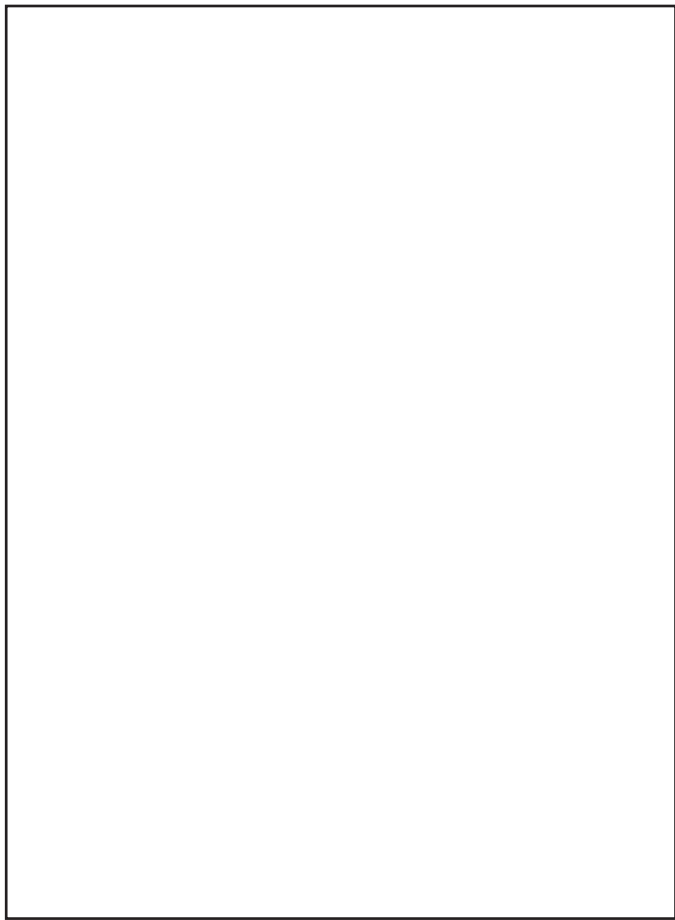
Building a card pyramid provides a multisensory outline of expository text. The card pyramid includes the main idea, supporting ideas, and details which are the basic elements of an expository text.

If students can identify these elements, they have a rudimentary understanding of the text. Give the students nine index cards. Then have the students read the text. After reading, they determine what the entire text is about and write the idea on one index card. They place this card at the top of their desks. This card represents the main idea. Students brainstorm three or four ideas that support the main idea. They write each idea on separate index cards. Students line up these cards in a row under the main idea. These cards represent the supporting ideas. Students brainstorm details about each supporting idea and jot down details in words or phrases for each idea on separate index cards. Next, they line up these cards in a row under the supporting ideas. These cards represent the details. The students have formed a "pyramid," representing the essential elements of expository text.



Comprehension is necessary for learning. Comprehension, like decoding, requires explicit, systematic instruction. As students use these multisensory strategies, they will become

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Ben Buchanan: A Gifted Dyslexic

By Nell Carvell

Ben Buchanan is an unusually gifted, dyslexic, sixth grader who recently published his first book. During elementary school, he worked for two years with Certified Academic Language Therapists. Ben's candid discussion of his experiences in learning to read is included in his book, *My Year With Harry Potter*. I highly recommend this book to parents, therapists, and their students.

Lantern Books, New York, New York, published *My Year with Harry Potter* by Ben Buchanan. This excerpt is reprinted by permission of the publisher. *My Year with Harry Potter* is available in bookstores, or online from Lantern Books, at <http://www.lanternbooks.com>.

Reading Harry Potter

By Ben Buchanan



I am dyslexic. Dyslexia means having difficulty reading. For me dyslexia has meant that from the middle of second grade until the end of third grade, I was pulled out of my regular class to go to a

special tutor who taught me how to read. Because of dyslexia, I had to learn things most kids take for granted.

I remember that I didn't think I was going to the tutor because of my dyslexia; I thought I was going there to learn cursive. I didn't like leaving class because I enjoyed reading. I just wasn't good at it.

Sometimes I forget that I ever had trouble reading at all. But the feelings I had when I couldn't read were, well, upsetting and weird. They were weird because I wasn't used to not being able to do something I wanted to do. And yet with reading, I wanted to read, but I couldn't. I remember in first grade I couldn't even read a word like "cookies." I remember I couldn't pronounce it. When I pronounced it wrong, my teacher corrected

me and I thought, "how come the other kids don't have problems like this?" I knew the word cookie and I used the word cookie (and I ate cookies!), but looking at the letters that spelled cookie, I could not tell what the word was.

I remember that for summer vacation after first grade, if we read for twenty hours and kept a chart, we would have a pizza party when school started. I really liked pizza but it was hard for me to read, and I was worried whether I would be able to read twenty hours. Now, twenty hours would be easy, especially when I'm reading J. K. Rowling, Philip Pullman, or Lewis Carroll.

In second grade, I knew I wasn't good at reading because I was in the lowest reading group. The teacher would say "go into your reading group" and, though she never said it was the lowest, I could tell because of the size of the books that different groups were reading. In the lowest reading group we were reading *Frog and Toad*. In the medium group they were reading *I Was a First Grade Werewolf*. The highest reading group was reading *George's Marvelous Medicine*. There were only three people in my reading group. My friends wanted to be in the easy reading group because they thought their books were too hard. I wanted to be in the harder reading group because I didn't like being in my group. I wanted to be reading other books.

One of my predictions for the New Year when I was in second grade was "I'll start third grade and not be held back by my reading. I'll get better at my reading." In the middle of second grade, I must have been really concerned about this, because my other predictions were not quite so serious—they were about going to more garage sales with my father.

My father and I have a Saturday ritual of going to garage sales, on those Saturdays when he isn't working. We start off in our neighborhood and go to others. One time when we were looking for garage sales, we were looking for one that was on Grove Street. I thought you spelled Grove "G-r-o-v." But we were on a street that said G-r-o-v-e and I thought we were on a street called "Grover." My Dad hadn't noticed that we were on Grove. I said, "well we are on Grover. How far away is Grove from Grover?" I guess that is an example of my dyslexia.

But although I am dyslexic, I love words! In third grade at the end of the school year, we had to do a report on an "ology" like Egyptology or vulcanology or zoolo-



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My Smallest Student Taught Me the Most This Summer

By Wendy Campbell, CALT

I had the opportunity to work with a 6-year-old this summer. She, I will call her Lark, was enthusiastic and energetic. Her teacher and parents had decided she would repeat kindergarten next year. Lark's mother brought her to me saying, "She really wants to read."

Lark had impressive fine motor skills. Her handwriting was neat and deliberate. She was also a fine artist. Lark often broke into song when we were working together. She has a beautiful voice and a superior ability to remember a tune.

I was surprised to find that she had no idea that letters stood for sounds. This was after a yearlong exposure to letters and sounds in kindergarten. Therefore, I started at the beginning using sections from Neuhaus Education Center curriculum including *Reading Readiness Skills* and *Foundations for Language*. I also used many games I have collected over the years, which stressed letter recognition and listening skills. I have several favorites from Discovery toys.

She could not rhyme so we started every day with phonological awareness activities. At the beginning of every new activity, I had to model the activity while she just copied. She could never do anything independently the first time. By the second or third time we tried an activity, she was more independent. Lark reminded me about the importance of phonological awareness. She showed a lot of progress during the 2 months that I saw her daily.

Lark knew her letters but still tried several times to convince me that there was an "elementopee." It was endearing. You would have thought she was a lawyer pleading a case in court. She also had excellent verbal expression skills. She spent most of her time with adults and an older brother so her vocabulary was well developed. Lark enjoyed anything that was manipulative but lost interest quickly when being read to. It didn't mat-



ALTA member Wendy Campbell works with her student on reading readiness skills.

ter what book I chose. It never held her interest.

In my final report to her parents, I stressed that Lark's short attention span might be improved by reading to her daily. She reported to me her parents never read to her. I also suggested an evaluation might be a good idea to determine if there is an underlying reason for certain language skills to be difficult for her.

I am unable to tutor her this school year and worry about her ability to feel successful in her second year of kindergarten. I also suggested the possibility of a school change, which I think was unpopular. Lark might have taught me the most important lesson which is young children need to be read to and have many opportunities to play with and explore the English language. The rhymes, chants and songs I grew up with as a child were much more than just child's play. They were setting an important foundation I relied upon when learning written language. ✍



Another First for Austin

By Pat Sekel, Ph.D., Qualified Instructor



Pat Sekel is director of the Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin

The Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin first opened in March 1989 to provide second through sixth grade students the Scottish Rite Literacy program. As of January 2001, the Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin has another first - its first director! Pat Sekel, Ph.D., CALT, assumed the director's duties of this non-profit, charitable organization to bring teacher education courses and greater community outreach to Central Texas. Pat brings a wealth of experience to this new position, having been both the Austin and Round Rock Independent School Districts' first dyslexia coordinator.

One of the first additions to the Learning Center's outreach services this year was to offer lower-cost educational evaluations for dyslexia. Currently, contracted professionals complete assessments of elementary through high school aged students on Saturdays by appointment. Pat reports that business is "picking up!"

This summer the Learning Center sponsored its first teacher education courses: both the Advanced and

Introductory courses of Basic Language Skills, an Alphabetic Phonics derivative developed at the Neuhaus Education Center in Houston. The Learning Center is awaiting its site visit to complete the accreditation process to become an accredited training site, recognized by both the Academic Language Therapy Association and International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council.

Another first this summer was a summer student program for current kindergarten through fifth grade students identified with dyslexia. Goals for the session

were maintenance and enrichment of reading skills. Dyslexia teachers from the Round Rock ISD taught classes four days a week for six weeks.

Beginning this fall, the Learning Center will experience another first - students accepted at the Center will work "live" with therapists rather than utilizing the videotape series. Pat will supervise the therapists who are seeking certification as an Academic Language Therapist. She reports that one aspect of the instruction will not change; services will continue to be provided at no cost to students, thanks to the continuing generosity and support of the Texas Scottish Rite Masons.

Another first is still in the initial stage. A premiere learning center will be built on the current parking lot of the Austin Scottish Rite Temple. Preliminary meetings with architects have already been held, and plans are being developed to create over 14,000 square feet of usable space. This will be the first major teaching center for both students and teachers in Central Texas. ☞

ALTA Centers Council News

Training...the word of the summer! By now, all of the centers have completed their summer training courses and the directors and instructors are enjoying some rest and relaxation.

Congratulations to all of the trainees who have persevered and are ready to go out and help meet the needs of the dyslexic population we all serve. ALTA Accredited Centers are very proud to be a part of this endeavor.

On-site visits have begun. Nancy Coffman, Accreditation Chair, will be contacting all centers in the near

future to set up a visit if one has not already been conducted.

With summer training completed, the Council will begin planning for the coming year. Among the plans to be discussed at the next meeting are scholarship opportunities, the IDA "Alliance for Accreditation and Certification," member benefits and other topics submitted for the agenda.

Please take advantage of the workshops and seminars offered by the training centers. We encourage you to gain new skills, sample a variety of perspectives,

and, as an added bonus, accrue CEU's.

Support the ALTA CC member centers that will be presenting at the IDA Conference. The joint presentation with ALTA CC, IDA, IMSLEC, AOGPE, and ALTA will be Thursday, October 25. We would love to look out and see your smiling faces!

The next scheduled meeting of the ALTA Centers Council Board and Council is Thursday, October 25 at the IDA Conference in Albuquerque. The time and place will be announced in September. ☞

What Research Tells Us About Reading, Comprehension, and Comprehension Instruction

What Do Good Readers Do As They Read?

One way that researchers have studied what good readers do has been to ask them to think aloud as they read. From these studies, researchers have determined that the seemingly effortless activity described as “good reading” is made up of a set of highly complex, well-developed, and well-practiced skills and abilities. Particularly impressive is the way in which good readers actively and consciously coordinate these skills and strategies before, during and after reading a text.

Before reading, good readers tend to set goals for their reading. They note the structure, or organization of the text, and often create a mental overview or outline of the text to help them decide whether it is relevant to their goals.

During reading, good readers read words accurately and quickly, and simultaneously deal with the meanings of those words—as well as the meaning of the phrases and sentences into which the words are grouped. Good readers connect the meaning of one sentence to the meaning of another. If something is confusing to them, they use their background knowledge to try to clarify the meanings of words and phrases. Sometimes good readers interact with the text by asking themselves questions about its content and reflecting on its ideas. They are adept at using their background knowledge to make predictions about what might happen next and to understand ideas as they encounter them. Good readers continuously evaluate their predictions and revise them as needed.

Good readers are selective as they read. They are likely to focus more of their

attention on the parts of the text that are most closely tied to their reading goals. They may decide to skip some parts of a text because they already understand the content or because they do not think the parts are important to what they need (or want) to learn from the text. They may decide, after reading several pages, to skip the rest of a chapter because they recently read something similar. On the other hand, they may decide either because they do not clearly understand the content or because they find the topic interesting to reread a passage or chapter before going on. They also may summarize the content of a passage as they read it. In doing so, they may consciously determine what is important, what is supportive and what is less important.

As they read, good readers often make inferences. They may draw on their background knowledge or look for clues in the text to supply information about characters or events that the author has not provided directly. Some good readers may also create mental images, or visualize a setting, event or character to help them understand a passage in a text.

Good readers monitor their comprehension as they read. When they realize that they do not understand what they are reading, they apply procedures to “repair” or “fix-up” their lack of understanding. For example, they may ask themselves questions about the meaning of what they are reading, they may rephrase a passage in their own words, they may look up the meanings of difficult words, or they may outline the content of the text.

After reading, good readers often think about, or reflect on what they read. They may mentally summarize major points or

events in the text or even go to other sources to find additional information about the topic of the reading.

In short, good readers are most often strategic readers. That is, they use a number of comprehension strategies to get meaning from text. Comprehension strategies are conscious plans or procedures that are under the control of a reader, who makes decisions about which strategies to use and when to use them.

In addition, good readers engage in metacognition as they read. Cognition refers to mental functions such as remembering, focusing attention, and processing information. Metacognition refers to people’s awareness of their cognition; that is, their thoughts about their own thinking. From an array of possibilities, for example, readers with metacognitive awareness are able consciously and automatically to select the appropriate comprehension strategies for use with a particular text.

How Do Poor Readers Differ From Good Readers?

In contrast to good readers, most poor readers do not read strategically, nor do they have sufficient metacognitive awareness to develop, select, and apply strategies that enhance their comprehension of text.

Typical poor readers rarely prepare before reading. They often begin to read without setting goals. They seldom consider how best to read a particular type of text.

During reading, poor readers may have difficulty decoding, and so have difficulty reading the words of their texts accurately.

See **Research** on Page 11

Research *Continued From Page 10*

In addition, some poor readers read too slowly, or lack fluency. As a result of their slow, labored reading, they often do not comprehend much of what they read, and the attention they have to give to figuring out the words keeps them from understanding the text's message.

All too often poor readers lack sufficient background knowledge about the topic of a text. They may have trouble connecting the ideas of a text. They often are not familiar with the vocabulary they encounter and have trouble determining word meanings. Further, even when poor readers possess relevant background knowledge, they frequently are not able to activate it to help them understand what they read.

After reading, poor readers also are unaware of text organization. They do not

know enough about the organizational structure of narratives or the various organizational structures of expository texts to help them read and understand.

After reading, poor readers typically do not think about or reflect upon what they have read. They almost never seek out additional information about a topic.

The cumulative effect of these difficulties is that poor readers often lose confidence in their ability to read. Because reading is difficult for them, poor readers cannot and do not read widely. As a result, they are exposed to much less text than are good readers and so receive much less practice reading. Further, the practice they do receive is often frustrating,

because many of the texts they are asked to read are too difficult for them.

The question then is: How can classroom reading instruction help poor readers indeed, all students become more like good readers? Research suggests that the answer may lie in providing students with instruction that both teaches them the comprehension strategies that work so well for good readers and helps them to develop the necessary metacognitive awareness of how and when to use these strategies.

Texas Education Agency. (2000). *Comprehension instruction: Texas reading initiative*. (Publication Number GE 01 105 01). Austin, TX: Author. ↵

Harry Potter *Continued From Page 7*

gy. I really liked myths, so I wanted to do mythology. But my teacher said that I already knew a lot about myths, so she encouraged me to do something else. I decided to do a report on etymology, which means the study of the history of words. J. K. Rowling seems interested in words, too. I love to read the words she has made up: Quidditch, Azkaban, Diagon, Quaffle.

By the time I got to fourth grade two things had happened. The first thing was that I had learned how to read through special tutoring. And I'd done it just in time! Because the second thing that happened was that *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* was published. When I got Harry Potter for Christmas, all the other kids thought it was just another one of those books I read because I had brought big books to school before.

But this Harry Potter book wasn't just another book. It was the best book that I had read. I wanted everyone else to have a chance to read it, so I spent my March allowance and bought a copy for my teacher to read to the class.

By that summer, another Harry Potter was out. I bought this one in Santa Fe when we were on vacation. I finished it in three days because it was so suspenseful. But still I thought the first book was better. My school librarian lent the third book in the Harry Potter series to me at the end of summer vacation. It wasn't out in the United States yet, but she had a British copy. I took real good care of it because it wasn't my copy. I thought this was the best book I had ever read.

As I was reading it, I told my mother, "I can tell two things about J.K. Rowling:

She is a Christian and she isn't a vegetarian." I knew this because there wasn't much vegetarian food at Hogwarts, unlike some vegetarian places in fantasy books, like Tom Bombadil's house in J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and Medwyn's Hidden Valley in Lloyd Alexander's *The Book of Three*. I knew J. K. Rowling was Christian because Hanukah and Ramadan weren't celebrated at Hogwarts.

When the American copy of the third book came out, I read it and reread it and reread it again.

Reading Harry Potter was easy. Getting up to the point of being able to read it was not. If I hadn't known how to read, Harry Potter might have flown right past my life. ↵

Comprehension *Continued From Page 6*

more skilled at constructing meaning. Increased skill in comprehension results in faster recognition of words (Hall and Moats, 1999). Reading will be fluent and effortless. Reading is enjoyable if it is effortless.

Hall, S.L. & Moats, L.C. (1999). *Straight talk about reading*. Chicago, IL: Contemporary Press.

National Reading Panel (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based*

assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction. Washington, DC: National Institutes of Health. ↵

CEU Calendar

November 2, 2001

Dysgraphia Workshop

Location: Region 10 Education Service Center,
Richardson, Texas

Sponsor: Region 10 Education Service Center

Presenter: Cindy Hipes

Contact: Cindy Hipes

Telephone: (972) 348-1490

Fax: (972) 348-1491

E-mail: hipesc@ESC10.ednet10.net

November 16, 2001

The Identification of Dyslexia Workshop

Location: Region 10 Education Service Center,
Richardson, Texas

Sponsor: Region 10

Presenter: Cindy Hipes

Contact: Cindy Hipes

Telephone: (972) 348-1490

Fax: (972) 348-1491

E-mail: hipesc@ESC10.ednet10.net

**ALTA members are responsible for
maintaining their own personal CEU
records for possible audit.**

November 19-20, 2001

Association of Christian Schools International Convention

Location: Hyatt Regency Dallas at Reunion, Dallas, Texas

Contact: Jane Schimmer

Telephone: (972) 247-6558

Address: 4039 Echo Glen Drive, Dallas, Texas 75244

January 26, 2002

Houston Branch of The International Dyslexia Association, Neuhaus Education Center, The Briarwood School Winter Workshop

Location: DoubleTree Hotel — Allen Center,
Houston, Texas

Sponsor: Houston Branch of The International
Dyslexia Association, Neuhaus Education
Center, The Briarwood

Presenter: William Van Cleave

Contact: Cathy Lorino

Telephone: (713) 664-7676

Neuhaus Education Center Workshops

Location: Neuhaus Education Center

Contact: Amye Derix

Telephone: (713) 664-7676

Fax: (713) 664-4744

November 1, 2002: Advanced Scientific Spelling

November 8, 2001: Reading Readiness Skills

January 10, 2002: Advanced Multisensory Grammar

January 15, 2002: Developing Accuracy and Fluency

January 17, 2002: Advanced Reading Readiness Skills

January 24, 2002: Reading Readiness Skills

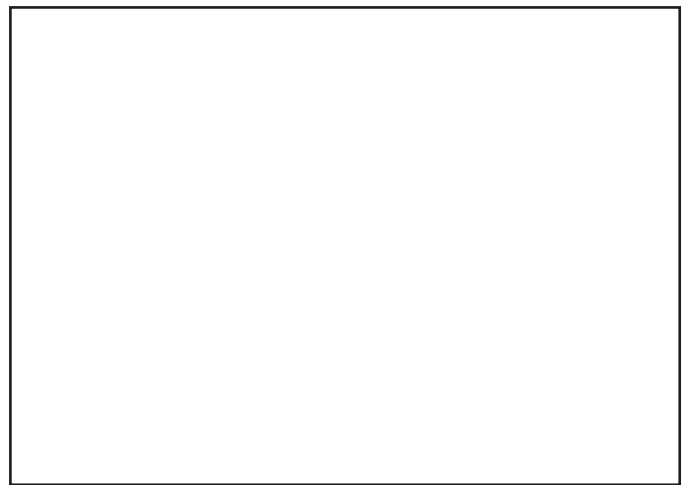
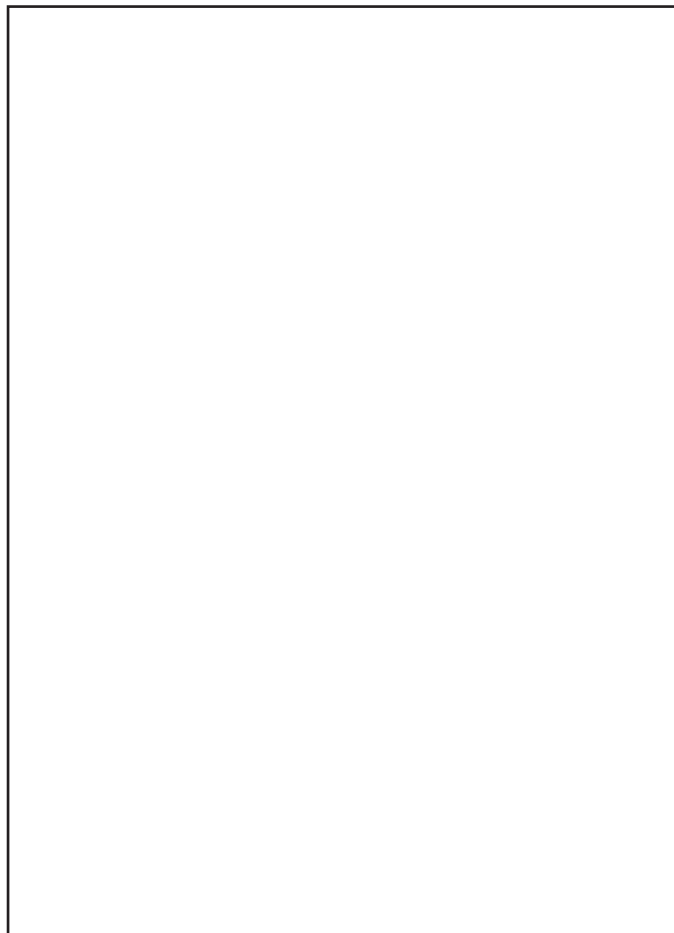
February 21, 2002: Reading Readiness Skills

February 28, 2002: History of the English Language

March 2, 2002: Written Composition

March 21, 2002: Scientific Spelling

March 26, 2002: Multisensory Grammar



ALTA CEU Information For 2001-2003

- I. The next CEU period runs from March 1, 2001 to February 28, 2003. Therefore, in the spring of 2003, you will again be responsible for documenting that you have completed 20 hours of continuing education credit. Another 2% of our membership will be chosen for audit the same as it was in 2001.
- II. At least five (5) of the hours must be earned by attendance IN PERSON at conferences, workshops, or meetings during the next two-year period. You may attain the remaining CEU hours through alternative means (see below) if you choose.
- III. Conferences/Workshops/Meetings
- A. You will find appropriate conferences on the ALTA web site calendar (altaread.org) and in each edition of the newsletter.
 - B. Events sponsored by the following organizations are always approved, even if they are not listed on our calendars:
 - ALTA
 - ALTA-affiliated training centers
 - The International Dyslexia Association and its branches and other organizations concerned with dyslexia and related learning disabilities
 - College and University programs regarding dyslexia and related learning disabilities
 - Public education service centers (in Texas) that are concerned with dyslexia and related learning disabilities
 - C. You can also earn CEU credits for many meetings that are not on our calendars. You need to apply to the CEU committee for approval for any meetings that you plan to attend.
 - D. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO BE SURE TO RECEIVE A SIGNED CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE FROM THE SPONSORS OF THE EVENT YOU ATTEND. IF YOU DO NOT THINK THEY WILL OFFER ONE, ALTA HAS A GENERIC FORM AVAILABLE FROM THE ALTA OFFICE, THE WEB SITE, OR THE CEU COMMITTEE.
- IV. There are alternative ways to earn some of your CEUs.
- A. Give a presentation. You will earn two hours of credit for each hour of presentation. The guidelines for doing so are:
 - 1. You may earn CEUs for any given presentation one time only.
 - 2. You must have done significant research of CURRENT (within the last three years) information on the topic.
 - 3. Compile a bibliography of your sources.
 - 4. Save an outline of the presentation.
 - 5. The content must follow ALTA guidelines as to appropriate topics (see the ALTA by-laws).
 - 6. Keep this information in your files. Do not send it to ALTA unless you are chosen for audit.
 - B. Read journals or books.
 - 1. The 2001 or 2002 Annals of Dyslexia journal published by The International Dyslexia Association
 - a) You earn four hours of CEU credit for each issue.
 - b) Write a summary of each article.
 - c) Do not send the summaries to ALTA unless you are chosen for audit.
 - 2. Books published 1998 or later.
 - a) A list of suggested books will be posted on the web site and in the newsletter.
 - b) The CEU committee welcomes your recommendations for appropriate books.
 - c) You earn three hours of CEU credit for each book.
 - d) Book report forms are available from the ALTA office or the CEU committee.
 - e) Do not send the reports to ALTA unless chosen for audit.
 - C. Listen to current audio recordings.
 - 1. An audio recording of the ALTA spring conference will be available.
 - 2. The International Dyslexia Association annual conference (2001, 2002) will be available on audio tape from Convention Recordings, Inc., 6983 Sunset Drive South, St. Petersburg, FL 33707; (727) 345-8288.
 - 3. You earn one hour of CEU credit for each hour of recording.
 - 4. Write a review of each talk you hear.
 - 5. Keep these in your files. Do not send reviews to ALTA unless chosen for audit.
 - D. Watch a current (1998 or later) video of a conference or workshop.
 - 1. May be available from a training center, The International Dyslexia Association, or other sources.
 - 2. Suggested choices will be posted on the ALTA web site and in the newsletter.
 - 3. The CEU committee is interested in your suggestions.
 - 4. You earn one hour of CEU credit for each hour of video.
 - 5. Write a review of each presentation.
 - 6. Keep these in your files. Do not send reviews to ALTA unless you are chosen for audit.
 - E. Organize an ALTA professional group in your area.
 - 1. Several groups have formed that periodically meet to hear speakers and exchange news and ideas. It is a great way to meet other therapists as well as earn CEUs.
 - 2. Contact the ALTA Membership chair for further information on how to set up a group.
- V. If you are aware of an appropriate conference, please encourage the sponsor to apply to offer ALTA CEUs. There is an application form on our web site.

Milestones

WELCOME, new student members:

Elizabeth Bahner, Jene'e Barnes, Sara Beer, Caroline Bezner, Cynthia Bosley, Davina Burdick, Elise Cameron, Charlotte Clevenger, Alta Davis, Louann Dollarhide, JoAnn Handy, Ann Hicks, Melody Hoglan, Tammeria Klinkerman, Dawn LayCindy Looney, Linda Neal, Deborah Nelson, Carla Parker, Judy Rockley, Vivian Skruggs, Nancy Sherrill, JoAnn Sibley, Roseann Thomas, Dorothy Thompson, Cindy Weiss, Karen Walker, Kathy Weaver and Debbie Wise.

WELCOME, new active members:

Charline Adams, Linda Baird, Patricia Banks, Lydia Barber, Joan Blair, Diana Bokelman, Tonya Bryant, Cathy Cook, Tracey Cox, Robin Debenport, Evelyn Drake, Larissa Fernandes, Heidi Gieseking-Young, Cathy Hodges, Angela Hollowell, Cathy Hurd, Vicki King, Michele Knauf, Cheryl La Freniere, Sharon

Laney, Margaret Law, Cynthia Lawhon, Lorna McLemore, Sharon Moore, Marianne Morgan, Betsy Nanny, Linnea Oxley, Mary Payne, Marilyn Quaintance, Clare Rossetter, Karolyn Rusch, Michelle Saltamachia, Virginia Sawyer, Jill Schultz, Susan Shands, Paula Shields, Denise Smith, LeeAnn Tarpley, Janet Thompson, Kelly Thompson, Kelley Tiffany, Patricia Tilton, Dede Toney and Lannie Turner.

CONGRATULATIONS, new qualified

instructors: Sue Kirk, Jill Remick and Terri Zerfas.

RETIRED: After 13 years as director of the Scottish Rite Learning Center of West Texas, **Jan Morris** is retiring as director. She will continue as a therapist at the center, teaching two classes of students each day. She will also continue as a Qualified Instructor and consultant in

the center's therapist training program. At a special reception on September 21, the Lubbock Scottish Rite recognized Jan's contributions, and former students, teachers, parents and friends enjoyed sharing time with her. Doris Haney succeeds Jan as director. She has been associate director since 1995, and has been on the staff since 1988.

PASSAGES: **Lynn Stempel-Mathey**, charter member of ALTA, passed away on June 4, 2001. Her contributions to ALTA were extensive. She served on the ALTA Board of Directors for a number of years in several

capacities. Perhaps her most significant contribution to ALTA was co-authoring the Registration/Certification Examination and serving for many years as Chair of the Exam Committee.

In addition to being a Certified Academic Language Therapist, Lynn was an Educational Diagnostician. She was a pioneer in the assessment of children with learning disabilities. She was regarded as an expert in teaching children's handwriting. Additionally, she co-authored the Children's Handwriting Evaluation Scale, which is used widely as an objective measure of handwriting, rate, and quality. Lynn was a contributing author to the landmark publication, *Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills*, published in 1999. Her chapter on handwriting is used by ALTA accredited centers training programs across the country. Lynn's interest in children with learning disabilities extended beyond their school years. She gathered information about graduates of the Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children dyslexia laboratory and reported their education and career accomplishments at the national convention of the International Dyslexia Association and in its publication, *Perspectives*. After retiring from Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children, Lynn continued her work in learning disability assessment focusing on the needs of adolescents and young adults. She also contributed to the hospital's research program in dyslexia by evaluating children receiving remedial training in school districts near Dallas. Lynn provided us with an inspirational role model because of her heartfelt commitment to students with dyslexia. She never tired of learning and expanding her knowledge of the field. She will be missed by all of her friends and colleagues and we will always be grateful for her contributions to our profession. 🙏

ALTA Members Needed to Staff Booth at The International Dyslexia Association Conference

October 24-27, 2001, Albuquerque, New Mexico

By Diana Bass

Once you have registered for The International Dyslexia Association conference, select 30 minutes during one of the conference days that you are available to spend in the Academic Language Therapy Association information booth. Operating the booth requires ALTA members to volunteer to spend 30 minutes in the booth Wednesday 5:30 p.m.–7:00 p.m., all day Thursday, Friday or Saturday of the conference. If you are unable to spend 30 minutes in the booth, consider a 15 to 20-minute block of time. Working in the booth has always been enjoyable for me. I have met interesting peo-

ple from all over the country and a few outside of the USA. I have learned about their experiences in training and teaching in the field of dyslexia. While working in the ALTA booth, I share information about our unique organization and the important services it provides members and the community. Many of the visitors ask me how to join. The booth sits on a long table and exhibits a pictograph of information about ALTA. I hand out informational brochures, lapel pins, pencils and other ALTA goodies. Donating your time in the ALTA booth will not only be appreciated but prove worthwhile for you as well! ☞

New Degree Opportunity at SMU *By Nell Carvell, CALT, QI*

Southern Methodist University will offer a master's of education degree beginning in the fall of 2002. This graduate degree will offer specialization in learning therapy, bilingual education, and reading.

The Learning Therapy Program (LTP), a 21-hour graduate certificate program that addresses the needs of teachers of children with dyslexia and related learning disabilities, was established in 1986. The offering of this new M. Ed. degree will serve to enhance the educational interests of the many LTP students.

A \$1.5 million gift from the Texas Instruments Foundation to SMU will endow a faculty chair to be held

by a reading specialist of national stature. The chair holder also will serve as director of a new Graduate Institute for Reading Research. This Institute will merge several graduate certificate programs. In addition to learning therapy, it will include the University's Head Start language and literacy program (LEAP), bilingual, and master reading teacher certificate programs.

For more information about the Learning Therapy Program, call Karen Vickery, Director, 214/768-7323 or email: Learning.Therapy@mail.smu.edu ☞

Christmas in October? *By Rae Cromeens*

Here is a thought for Christmas shopping. Think www.altaread.org. When you buy your books, music and videos using the Amazon.com links found on the ALTA web site, you help ALTA with the web site operating expenses. ALTA receives 5% of the purchase price if you buy an item by going to www.altaread.org first, then linking to Amazon.com to make a purchase. ALTA receives 15% if you go directly from a book review to purchase online through the link. It's easy. Here is how to do it. Go to the web site home page; scroll down to the Amazon.com link button in the middle of the right hand

column. Click on the button. It will take you directly to Amazon where you can browse to your heart's content. Another way is to go to the book review section of the ALTA web site and click on the book you might be interested in purchasing and then click on the Amazon.com button there. Clicking on the Amazon button for a particular book does NOT obligate you to buy that book. However, if you decide to do so, it will enable ALTA to receive 15% of the purchase price. So, be adventurous. Try something new. Consider Amazon.com through www.altaread.org when shopping for your holiday gifts. ☞

On - Line Instruction

Often when teachers take a workshop at Neuhaus Education Center, they say, "I wish someone else from my campus had come to hear this information." As Neuhaus staff members travel around the country presenting at conferences, they hear teachers say, "I wish your Center were closer so I could attend workshops." Neuhaus Education Center now has a perfect solution to these two dilemmas — on-line workshops. On-line workshops offer learning to anyone in any place at any pace. Neuhaus Education Center began offering two on-line workshops in June. Teachers in Houston and as far away as Massachusetts have participated in the workshops *Developing Fluency for Reading Success* and *Reading Comprehension: The Ultimate Goal of Reading*. Don't let time or place keep you from attending a Neuhaus Education Center workshop. Visit the Neuhaus web site at www.neuhaus.org to find out how you or a colleague can participate. ✍

bulletin Calendar

September — February

Scottish Rite Learning Center of West Texas, Lubbock, TX: Alphabetic Phonics Training Program - Introductory Seminars on Sept. 28, Nov. 30 and March 1, 2002; Advanced Seminars on Oct. 5, Nov. 9, Jan. 18, 2002 and March 22, 2002. C.J. Davidson Lecture Series "Fostering Motivation, Hope and Resilience in Children with learning Disabilities," Robert Brooks, Ph.D., Harvard Medical School, Feb. 8, 2002, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Lubbock Civic Center Theater, admission free. Call 806/765-9150.

**ALTA's Hopeline
number has changed.
Please make a note of
the new TOLL-FREE
number,**

1-866-283-7133



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