

# Fall 2012 — ALTA bul\*le\*tin

## The Newsletter of the Academic Language Therapy Association

### IDA Conference and News of Interest

**Karen Avrit, M. Ed., LDT, CALT-QI**  
President, ALTA

Wow; how time flies! It is the end of September and almost time for the IDA Conference in Baltimore. I hope to see many of you there. There are exciting things happening in the dyslexia field right now. As things happen in your part of the world, please let us know so we can make the information available to others. Our goal is to have a newsletter published four times a year. Thank you, Janice Robson, for taking on the newsletter project.

The two committees working on Texas Senate Bill 866 have been hard at work. The technology committee has completed their mission and the information will be available in early 2013. The undergraduate program committee has prepared and presented their first PowerPoint on the "History of Dyslexia in Texas." A webinar on this subject was just presented to 130 Alternative Education Programs.

Mississippi will be hosting a Regional Conference in February 2013. Watch the ALTA website for more details.

Collaboration between ALTA, IMSLEC and IDA continues to unfold as we work together to improve the field for the children we serve.

As we continue to move forward and the significance and need for addressing dyslexia is recognized, let's always remember why we do this great job: Teaching children to read opens a whole new world of possibilities!

## Recent Changes

**Lexie Barefoot, M. Ed., LDT, CALT-QI**  
ALTA VP, Website

The ALTA website has been updated, so please check it out at [www.altaread.org](http://www.altaread.org). While the visual look of the website looks familiar, some of the information has been updated and there are numerous features available now to assist members with such things as CEU tracking and Membership search. CEU Requirements, Resources and other Member Area tabs provide information to help answer your questions that arise throughout the year. The Calendar includes events that have been pre-approved for CEUs. There is also general information on the site that is helpful to the public and clients as we strive to provide the highest standard of services. Should you have questions or concerns about the website please contact Lexie Barefoot at [lexiebarefoot@gmail.com](mailto:lexiebarefoot@gmail.com).

## New ALTA Newsletter Chair

**Janice Robson, M.Ed., LDT, CALT-QI**

Hi! My name is Janice Robson. I am the new chair for the ALTA Newsletter, which will be distributed quarterly. I want to extend my appreciation to all those who contributed articles to this particular newsletter; I appreciate the time and effort you put into the information you provided. I am fortunate to have a husband who is currently a Technical Writer and was previously employed in public relations for ten years. He will be assisting me with reviewing and editing of proposed articles before they are submitted for publication. The next deadline for submitting your articles for the newsletter will be December 31st. Please send your article in a Word document; include your suggested title and subtitle for your article; also include your name and credentials, current title, and place of employment so appropriate credit can be given for submitting the article. If you are sending photos, please attach them to your email in jpg format. Please submit future articles to [jerobson2@gmail.com](mailto:jerobson2@gmail.com). I encourage all of you to help us stay informed by sending in your proposed articles.

## **Vigilance in Maintaining CEUs: Importance of Current, Competent Methods and Standards of Practice**

**Dr. Timothy Odegard**  
Associate Professor of Psychology  
The University of Texas at Arlington

### **Importance of Current, Competent Methods and Standards of Practice**

As the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) continues to grow, it is important to remind ourselves of the requirements of certification and professional development. In hopes of keeping ALTA members abreast of current policy and practice, as they pertain to continuing education, we are releasing this summary of policy.

The ALTA membership year begins March 1st and goes through the last day in February of the next year (i.e. March 1, 2012 — February 28, 2013). Each member is required to accrue ten (10) continuing education units (CEUs) during the renewal period or unused CEU hours need to be applied from the previous renewal period. At least two (2) CEUs must be earned by attendance In-Person at an approved ALTA conference, workshop, or seminar each year. If membership is renewed after the renewal deadline, the CEU time period still follows the guidelines of membership renewal (March 1st — February 28).

Requiring CEUs promotes current, competent methods and standards of practice in academic language therapy. It is a hallmark of a professional organization. Contact hours represent the exact time spent in the ALTA-approved events. For example, attendance of a six-hour conference (i.e. 9:00 am — 3:00 pm, with an hour for lunch) equates to five (5) CEU contact hours of credit. Upon attendance of an ALTA-approved event, each member is responsible for obtaining a signed certificate of attendance from the sponsor of the event. Contact hours for CEU credit should also be documented on the form titled, "Record of Continuing Education Hours." This form is available on the ALTA website ([www.altaread.org](http://www.altaread.org)).

For Qualified Instructors (QIs) and Instructors of Certified Academic Language Practitioners (ICALPs), a maximum of ten (10) extra contact hours may be accrued during a one-year period for credit in the future. These hours may be applied during the next two (2) consecutive membership renewal periods. If extra hours have not been used at the end of the two year period, they will be dropped.

For Certified Academic Language Therapists (CALTs) and Certified Academic Language Practitioners (CALPs), a maximum of 30 extra contact hours of CEUs may be accrued during a renewal period. These may be applied during the next three (3) consecutive renewal periods. If extra hours have not been used at the end of the four (4) year period, those hours will be dropped.

For additional information about CEUs, please refer to our organization's website, <http://www.altaread.org/faq-ceu.asp>. I appreciate your attention to this important subject as it benefits everyone involved in academic language therapy to be vigilant in maintaining CEUs.

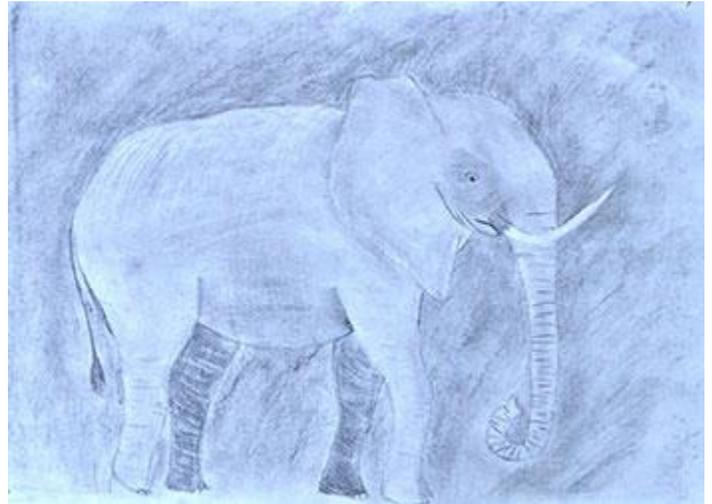
## ***2012 I Believe in Myself* Award Winner Announced**

**Mary Jean Oman, M.Ed., CALT**

ALTA Foundation Announces 2012 *I Believe in Myself* Award Mary Jean Oman, M.Ed., CALT

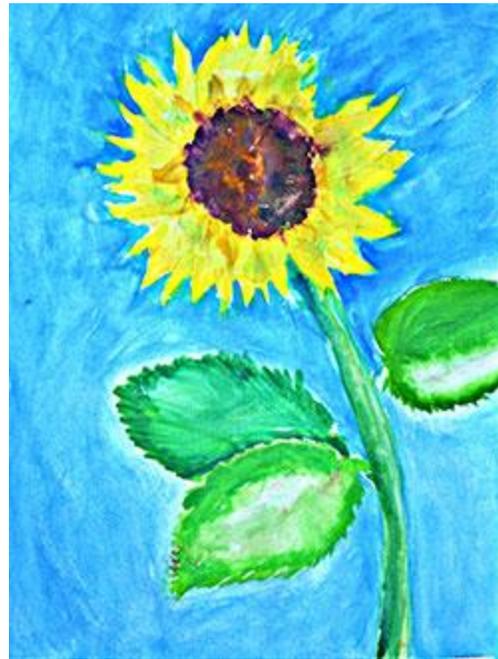
*You may click on any of the images for a higher resolution version of the image.*

Emily Surrell is the winner of the 2012 *I Believe in Myself* essay contest sponsored by ALTA and Joan Hogue. Emily is from Windsor, Vermont and a sixth grade student at the Upper Valley Waldorf School in Quechee. Along with having a gift for drawing, Emily also knits, paints, works with wood and does needlework. In addition, the school community discovered her ability as an actor this spring when she effectively performed the role of Trembling in the sixth grade play *The King of Ireland*. She had a large speaking part and the audience was impressed with the eloquence brought forth from a normally quiet child! She was also knighted, along with the rest of her class, in the school's traditional sixth grade ceremony. For the event, she carried a beautifully crafted sword and shield made in her wood working class this winter.



Emily would like to be a Waldorf art teacher when she grows up. Currently she is working on a children's book about a bear that comes alive in the handcraft room after the students and teachers leave for the day. So far, both the story and pictures are completely charming.

With her award money from the contest, Emily will enroll in a summer class at the AVA Gallery and Art Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire, called, "The Delights of Drawing in Pen and Pencil." Her work from this class will be featured on the ALTA website this fall.



## **Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) Events & More**

**Linda Gladden**  
ALTA Legislative Advisory Council Co-Chair

### **Presentations Planned for State Legislators**

The ALTA Legislative Advisory Council (LAC) met in May at the Capitol to plan for the upcoming legislative session. Kim Anderson was introduced as the new ALTA LAC co-chair. She previously served as the state director for Reach Out and Read, and she has experience as an advocate for literacy on the state and the national level. We are pleased to have her join our group.

On October 17th, our council will host a presentation on dyslexia for legislators and their staff members at the Capitol. Topics will include the history of dyslexia in Texas; future goals to help children with dyslexia; current dyslexia programs at universities in Texas; and dyslexia instruction to university undergraduates in the education field. Also, there will be a parent panel discussion on helping children with dyslexia acquire services in public schools. Representatives from the ALTA LAC will hold informal discussions with the legislators over lunch after the presentation.

On February 13, 2013, ALTA will host its second annual Dyslexia Awareness Day at the Texas Capitol. Representatives from the Texas training centers will be on hand to pass out materials from their centers. We will invite legislators and their staff members to stop by early that morning to view the displays and have breakfast tacos. We would like to invite ALTA members to participate in Dyslexia Awareness Day on February 13th. Please let your representatives know about Dyslexia Awareness Day, and we hope to see you at the Capitol!

# Wisconsin Teachers Required to Pass New Exam

Cheryl Ward MSM, CALP

President

Wisconsin Branch-International Dyslexia Association

## Wisconsin Teachers Required to Pass New Exam

Wisconsin is not unlike many states with arcane teacher education programs and the educational institutions that support them. However, for years Wisconsin has been neutralizing or ignoring the measures and impact of poor student reading performance. The widely respected National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) finally exposed the reality that Wisconsin does not teach reading well. No more hiding.

### Legislation

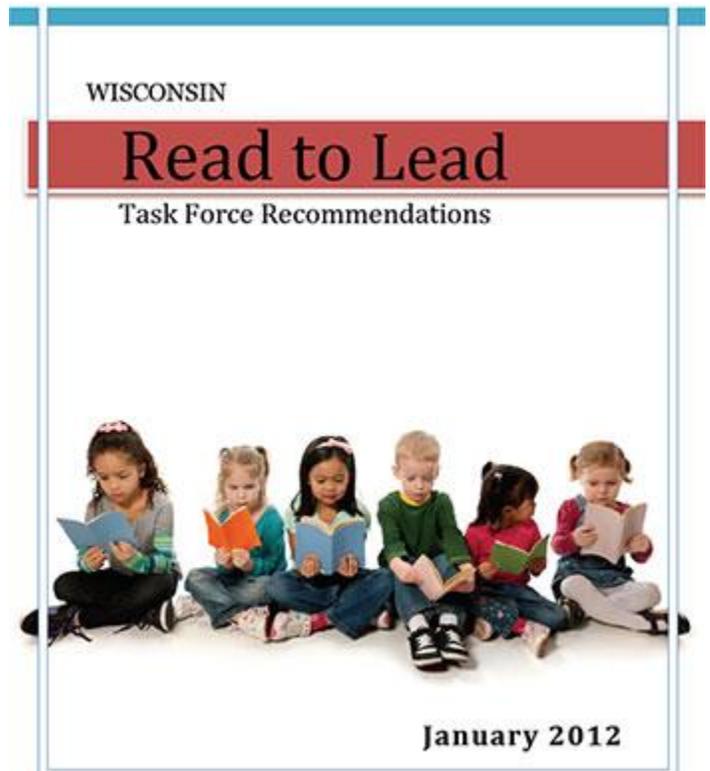
Last March, 2012, Wisconsin legislation passed which will require, beginning January 1, 2014, that all newly prepared general and special education teachers must pass a new reading content examination, one used in the first-place ranking state of NAEP in reading, Massachusetts, before a teacher would be granted a license to teach. This successful effort is a foundational and significant step in supporting our teachers and improving reading student outcomes.

The movement for a supplemental licensure examination in the foundations of reading for elementary and special education teachers and reading specialists was first introduced in the 2009-2010 legislative session. Advocates have long supported and instructed individuals with reading delays and dyslexia, many of whom have shepherded their own child through broken educational systems.

Universal screening of all students in Kindergarten for possible risk factors in reading was first introduced in the 2009-2010 legislative session and passed in the March 2012 bill. The State will now provide funding for all schools to implement a basic literacy screening for children coming into kindergarten.

### Banning Together

Since 2009 members of the Wisconsin Branch of the International Dyslexia Association (WIBIDA), ALTA and the Wisconsin Reading Coalition (WRC) have reached out to both sides of the political aisle. Our efforts first paid off in 2010 when we successfully introduced language into Wisconsin's new Specific Learning Disability (SLD) Rule, approved in 2011, which will require using the Response to Intervention (RtI) process to guide the identification of students with Specific Learning Disabilities beginning January 1, 2014. Students in general education will be screened periodically in reading and other academic subjects. Students found to be at-risk would receive intervention and have their progress monitored. Students not on track to return to grade- or age-



level performance in a reasonable amount of time, or requiring a level of support that cannot be maintained in general education, will be considered for special education.

## Read to Lead

Tenacious advocates have influenced all of these efforts, leading to the bipartisan *Read to Lead* task force that kicked off in the spring of 2011. The task force, co-led by Governor Scott Walker and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Tony Evers, attempted to do what many in education would not do — unveil the science and evidence of effective reading practices for all children. Our hard work paid off: advocates Marcia Henry, Past-IDA President; Anthony Pedriana, Retired Milwaukee Public School Teacher and Principal; and Steve Dykstra, adolescent psychologist from Milwaukee, were asked to be serve on the task force to represent views rarely expressed. Despite a cut to State support in education spending and a politically divided atmosphere in the State, there was a tone of collaboration and cooperation that allowed significant recommendations, leading to law and becoming reality.

As stated in the Read to Lead Report, many in Wisconsin did not realize how far student-reading outcomes had fallen relative to the nation as a whole because state standards had been set so low. In fact, the Fordham Institute called Wisconsin's English Language Arts standards "among the worst in the country." The aim of the task force was to make recommendations to improve reading achievement in Wisconsin after years of student outcomes slipping.

Because the qualifications and expertise of instructors responsible for teaching foundational reading in our schools of higher education are so limited, schools of education do not know the extent of how the new examination will affect courses, syllabi, texts and their own need for education. Making only "subtle changes" in the content courses for reading will doom students taking the test; students will not be prepared sufficiently to pass the exam. Advocates know this law is not a cure-all and does not measure how well a teacher translates content into practice.

Going forward, there are many hurdles to cross; no, actually we have a mountain range in front of us. It will get tougher and this completely apolitical issue will continue to be mired in politics. Having a seat at the table, but without media and news coverage, advocates will have a long journey. But we trudge on for the kids, our teachers and the economy, counting on science and data to show — *we know how to teach ALL kids to read, we are just not doing it.*

## TEA Establishes Technology Committee

Virginia Gonzalez  
State Dyslexia Consultant  
Region 10 ESC

## SB 866 provisions include integrating technology to help students with dyslexia

Texas Senate Bill 866, "Public School Students with Dyslexia," was passed during the 82nd legislative session. This very necessary bill, ". . . amends the Education Code to require that any minimum academic qualifications for a certificate issued by the State Board for Educator Certification requiring a person to possess a bachelor's degree also require that the person receive, as part of the curriculum for that degree, instruction in detection and education of students with dyslexia." As part of the bill's requirements, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has

established a technology committee to develop a plan for integrating technology into the classroom specifically to help accommodate students with dyslexia. The following members make up the technology committee: Dorina Bennett, Socorro ISD; Jennifer Brock, Region 4 ESC; Suzanne Carreker, Neuhaus Education Center; Virginia Gonzalez, State Dyslexia Consultant; Christian Hill, San Angelo ISD; Jayne Knighton, Region 10 ESC; Sandy Maddox, Region 10 ESC; Tricia Quisenberry, Texas Scottish Rite Hospital; Dora Rodriguez, PSJA ISD; Brenda Taylor, Texas A&M; Mary Wines, Midwestern State University; Kelly Callaway, TEA; and Karin Miller, TEA.

The committee has come together on three different occasions to discuss the benefits of integrating technology into the classroom, compile a list of technologies, and determine a methodology for providing the technologies to students with dyslexia. This plan will be available via the TEA website in 2013.