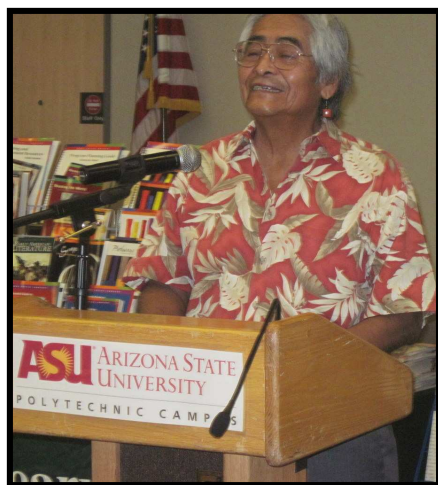




# CONNECTIONS

FALL 2010 VOLUME 10, ISSUE 1

## LOCAL VOICES TELL A STORY



Our voices are as varied as our stories, our experiences, our cultures. As English teachers we are experts in stories, experts in teasing them out of rowdy tweens, suspicious teenagers and scarred young adults. The stories we hear in our classes originate from across the border, a small town in the Mid-West or a battle zone in Africa. Still, we teach on knowing we can help students find their own voices, and we teach on knowing that we will still be surprised by our students' words and stories. Our fall conference reflected that Arizona is full of newcomers, and only a few of us were born on this land. Yet that yields an Arizona that is diverse in its peoples and talents. Our community was united and vibrant as we met at ASU Polytechnic campus at the busy start of our 2010-2011 school year. Led by the

local talent of **Dr. Simon Ortiz, Dr. Laura Tohe, & Dr. Marlinda Kaulaity**, we were

inspired over and over by the message that our voices have strength and power. That we all have stories that can bridge any cultural divisions. Dr. Ortiz reminded us that *"we are more than ourselves, we are a community."* His call to sing out and use our gifts is beautifully reviewed on page 2 by co-editor, Siiri Julian. Dr. Tohe read from her book, *No Parole Today*, which began as a seed of an assignment by poet/professor Rudy Anaya to respond to a prison riot in their home state of New Mexico. Binding chains are not only found in prisons—bondage crosses all strata of history and human experience, material mined in insightful ways by our Arizona writers. Dr. White has continually championed Native American poetry in the classroom and her cry for inclusion is inspiring.



**Dr. Beverly Ann Chin** may not be an Arizona native, but has a place at the head of our table anyway. Her moving spirit reading had us echoing "tell me a story" over and over throughout Cooley ballroom a the crowning moment of unity. Powerful voices with a powerful mission: Go Forth!

### IN THIS ISSUE:

Reflections on Fall Conference	1-3
Sharing Treasures	4
AETA Author Panel	5
Handshakes at NCTE	6-7
10-11 Teachers of Excellence	8



# FROM THE CO-EDITOR

## *Shuutih*

### *Shu-u-tih*

Simon Ortiz intoned the clear notes of the wren's celebration of the dawn; then, in a lower key, almost as soft as the reverberation in a canyon, the wren's song spread throughout the conference room: *Shuutih*.

In keeping with the Acoma Pueblo oral tradition, keynote speaker Simon Ortiz counseled attendees at the AETA fall conference by reciting his poem, which narrates the story of the wren and its song. The wren's simple song awakens creation to the new day and to purpose. Ortiz encouraged English teachers to listen to the wren's song—to hear the song of our purpose. As Ortiz sang in Acoma, the silence of the crowd indicated many were listening.

In his address, Ortiz opined that educators do more than “educate”—a term which to him connotes a “sterility” or “technicality” completely foreign to what we are called to do. Instead, he averred that “imparting cultural knowledge” is a more accurate phrase. Culture is the all-encompassing understanding or acquisition of wisdom that is bound within the land and community. He remarked that teachers pass down knowledge and culture to their students. To illustrate, Ortiz reflected on what his instructors had taught him in BIA schools: Being Acoma was not good enough; he had to be Americanized according to the hegemonic notions defining “American.” According to Ortiz, the impact of colonialism on the indigenous peoples' lives has been a strong force, shaping how these peoples view themselves and their world. And so, like the wren of his poem, Ortiz discovered his purpose: to sing in his native tongue and awaken indigenous peoples to the power of their land, their culture, and their community. He remarked on the powerful significance this knowledge has for all Americans: “The indigenous knowledge predates all other knowledge of the Americas. The white way of knowing followed after the indigenous; the Europeans were dependent upon the native peoples who knew the land, their culture, and their community.” For so many young native peoples, the cultural knowledge of former generations has been usurped by other cultures. Ortiz smiled when he recounted speaking in

Acoma to a group of children. Hearing Acoma, one of the children asked, “You speak Indian too?” For this child, hearing the words of familiar places and things in Acoma imparted cultural knowledge that he had been lacking. Seeing Ortiz face light up as he recounted this personal moment was evidence that he loves to awaken those who listen.

As English teachers, Ortiz encouraged us to listen to the wren's song as well—to understand our purpose as being a part of the Southwestern community. Ortiz stated, “Without knowing the land, the culture, the community [of the Acoma], I cannot know myself.” As I listened to Ortiz, I couldn't help but think, “I too am a part of this community—as are all teachers and students within the Southwest. Why shouldn't I engage the knowledge found in the literatures of the indigenous peoples of this land, many which are translated and published in English? It would not only empower students who belong to these nations, it would remind, teach, and impart wisdom to all of my students.”

In the close of his session, Ortiz stated, “The literature of indigenous peoples belongs to all people; its purpose is to give knowledge to all, to awaken all of us to our purpose: Let us go forth together.”

*To go forth together.*

Like the wren in the song, teaching the literature of indigenous peoples can welcome in a new day.

*Shuutih*

*Shu-u-tih*

—Siiri Granfelt Julian, Notre Dame Prep





# FROM THE CO-EDITOR



Author Jewell Parker Rhodes has long held an important place in my heart. My cousin, a native of New Orleans gave me Rhodes' book, *Voodoo Dreams*, to read about 15 years ago. This novel about true-life New Orleans institution, Marie Laveau, was a great follow-up to one of my many visits to the French Quarter, and Marie Laveau's spooky Voodoo. (I have a gris-gris from one of those visits to ward off evil spirits in the kitchen and my gumbo has improved exponentially since!). My extended family in the Lakeview and Ninth Ward areas of the city suffered much from the onslaught of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, so I was first in line to get my hands on an advance copy of her first children's book, *Ninth Ward*, at NCTE in Philadelphia. This was a book I needed to read. Like Lanessa, one of my cousins only got out of New Orleans five days after the storm via boat and bus to Texas. Rhodes retelling of the flood and its impact on the people of this city, a city that is magical in so many ways and unique in all the world, was riveting. Rhodes' reading from *Ninth Ward* was also magical—her voice, the voice of a true storyteller, rang out through the classroom and brought the main character alive. Her presentation and the conversations about this book, how it was written, and the place it has in her heart, created a rare experience for the teachers who gathered with her that day. Rhodes' affection for children's lit is contagious—she literally bounces up and down with excitement as she speaks about writing, and the stories and characters that have inspired her since her earliest memories of her grandmother telling stories on their front porch. Through her, the voices of characters, all formidable in their own right, give voice to us all, as we meet the trials and hurricanes in our own lives.

—Kelly O'Rourke, Sonoran Trails Middle School



Summer Institutes generally concurrent with U of A Summer Session: application due January 15.

University of Arizona, English Department  
 Phone: 520-621-3436 Fax: 520-621-5410  
 Website: <http://www.sawp.web.arizona.edu> or find them on Facebook.

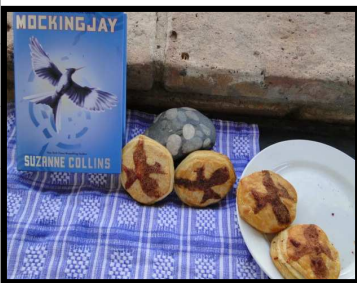
**ASU Composition Conference**  
**Keynote Speaker: Dr. Maureen Daly Goggin**  
**Saturday, February 19th, 2011**  
**ASU, Tempe**  
**Register at:** <http://english.clas.asu.edu/ASUCC/home>



## SHARING TREASURES

When I first became a high school English teacher, only a few veteran teachers shared their lessons with me. All the best and most creative student activities were hidden in a well guarded treasure-hoard. And like all treasure hoards, it brought out the dragon in them to protect what they had collected over the years. I completely understand this impulse. I've read *Beowulf*, and I've hoarded a quite a few lessons on the epic poem which were forged after hard battles with the material, students, and administrators. I know that Don & Alleen Nilsen are familiar with dragons, but they are not familiar with the ways of dragons, because every time I turn around, they are giving some bit of treasure away. Just recently Don Nilsen sent out his PowerPoints on humor, encouraging us to use and to forward to colleagues who might enjoy and find them useful. The Nilsens are also known for their fun and creative workshops—this yea at AETA's fall conference, they made Mockingjay pies. This reminded me of the Grendel cookies I used to make—little gingerbread men with their arms snapped off. As the Historian of the International Society for Humor studies, it is Don L. F. Nilsen's function to support humor study and humor research. Any English educator in need of course work and who is interested in humor would definitely enjoy Nilsen's courses at ASU: ENG 414: Linguistic Humor and Language Play (undergraduate) and LIN 655: Linguistic Humor Across the Disciplines (graduate). The PowerPoints that Nilsen uses in ENG 414 and in LIN 655 be found in his web site: <<http://www.public.asu.edu/~dnilsen>>. Some of the materials on these PowerPoint slide shows might enhance a lesson in Shakespeare or allow educator to include other intelligences such as music within a unit. Also the 2011 ISHS Conference is being held at Boston University July 5-9 2011. As far as I'm concerned laughter and pie are good medicine—so indulge!

~Siiri Granfelt Julian, Notre Dame Preparatory School



## CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS FOR THE *ARIZONA ENGLISH BULLETIN*: NOW ACCEPTING ARTICLES FOR FUTURE ISSUES

The Arizona English Bulletin invites English and Language Arts teachers at all levels—elementary, secondary, and college—to submit manuscripts for consideration. We seek manuscripts on any aspect of English and Language Arts teaching. Writers may describe ideas, practices, and issues regarding the teaching of English and Language Arts. We prefer manuscripts that focus on classrooms, classroom practices, students, and teachers, although we are also interested in relevant theory and research as a context for action in the teaching of English and Language Arts. We will also publish reviews of books, programs, and resources.

**Spring 2011:** Making Digital Connections Beyond the Classroom

**Fall 2011:** "It's Alive!" Resuscitating Grammar in the Age of Texting and Tweeting

## GUIDELINES

Please submit your manuscript electronically *by email attachment only* (Please do not mail a hard copy). We require writers to submit a copy of their manuscript as a Microsoft Word attachment. Manuscripts submitted in the body of the email will not be accepted.

The Arizona English Bulletin uses the MLA style sheet. Be sure to include the author's name, address, school affiliation, and an email address on the first page. We would also appreciate a short biography of 2-3 sentences. Manuscripts should be no more than 3,500 words in length. Shorter articles are acceptable. We cannot publish any material that has been previously published in print or electronic form. Please do not submit material to other publishers while your manuscript is under consideration

Mail AEB manuscripts to:  
**Dr. Sandra Raymond**  
[sandra.raymond@nau.edu](mailto:sandra.raymond@nau.edu)





# FRIDAY NIGHT YA AUTHOR PANEL

## AETA AUTHOR PANEL

The Friday night author panel composed of local authors (or authors with local ties, e.g. FOJs—Friends of Jim Blasingame’s) has become a major highlight of the state-wide conference. Moderated this year by President Kris Guy, the authors were asked questions ranging from their inspirations for certain books to their writing process to the importance of YA lit in school and in the lives of our teenagers. Below are some of their voices.

**JEWELL PARKER RHODES:** “this is the one I was waiting to write” of her book, *Ninth Ward*



**TOM LEVEEN:** teen issues are just as legitimate as adult

**BILL KONIGSBERG:** LGBT kids shouldn’t feel alone



**JON S. LEWIS:** fiction needs to be “grounded in reality” to help kids through tough times

**JANETTE RALLISON:** kids need escapism and humor in their lives



**LISA MCMANN:** teens have secrets...

**ROBIN BRANDE:** YA Lit helps kids blossom and feel strong in the world





## Hatchets and Handshakes: *What I learned attending the 2010 NCTE Convention in Orlando*

Early in the Gary Paulsen novel *Hatchet*, after crash landing a plane young Brian Robeson is stranded in the wilderness, alone, with only a hatchet to survive.

I can relate.

My name is Billy Gerchick and, 32 years young, this past Thursday, November 18th I flew to my first ever NCTE National Convention, alone, with only a program to survive. I've been asked to share what I learned in Orlando and begin with this: the plane didn't crash.

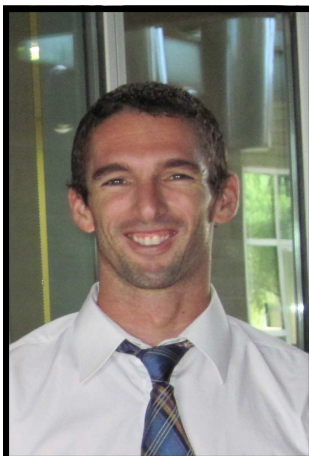
Avoiding Robeson's person vs. nature conflict, Thursday afternoon my solo anxieties were assuaged by a bright English teacher on a shuttle bus to Disney World. I wasn't alone in Orlando.

Like the AETA Statewide Conference, each year the NCTE provides a space for fellow language enthusiasts to gather. My comfort grew that evening when I briefly met with Alleen Pace Nilsen and Don L.F. Nilsen, two ASU professors I had ten years ago. Thereafter, ASU professors Duane Roen (my professor last year) and David Pegram also extended friendly hands which leads to my first lesson learned.

**Lesson #1:** Get outside your classroom and go to language arts events and conventions;

amid teachers' weighty responsibilities, it's refreshing to be face-to-face in a sociable environment.

Friday morn I woke and fumbled through my Convention program; this 369-page navigation hatchet outlined a wide pallet of breakout sessions where language arts minds from elementary teachers to media tycoons shared knowledge. From 9:30 - 10:45 AM, for example, I saw "Using Affinity Spaces... in the English Classroom" and pondered using [2nd Life](#) as a teaching tool. I missed "MacNeil/Lehrer and the News," "Using Rapping, Blogging, Pod-



casting, Social Networking, and Popular Culture in the Middle School and High School Classrooms," and a handful of other concurrent sessions I desired to attend.

Friday afternoon E-line Media Founder Alan Gershenfeld presented on "The Power of Video Games to Teach 21st Century (User-Driven) Storytelling and Critical Thinking." Opening to video games as an emerging ELA medium, I also learned about the [Alliance of Young Artists and Writers](#), a non-profit organization that needs an Arizona affiliate.

**Lesson #2:** Read your NCTE program and plan but be prepared to improvise your convention schedule. Even at your target sessions, you never know what ideas will come. I briefly digress to express interest in chartering an Arizona affiliate for the Alliance of Young Artists and Writers.

On Saturday morning, after late-night socializing, I opened my eyes to see 7:57 AM beaming from my bedside clock. Gary Paulsen, author of the first novel I ever read (*Hatchet*), was set to speak in three minutes. After dashing to a packed ballroom I plopped down and saw Paulsen deliver a colorful take on an author's life.

By his own account, young Gary was a hell-raiser when a librarian changed his path by giving him his first ever library card, "validation of my individual existence," as

Paulsen noted. Afterwards I shook Paulsen's hand, thanked him for influencing my path, and got to walk with another inspiring figure: ASU professor James Blasingame, my first English education methods teacher.

**Lesson #3:** Sleep is overrated when there's much to learn and inspiring people to see.

The coming hours necessitated quarts of Dr. Pepper and a break from breakout sessions. By 11:00 AM the free media sirens called me into the Exhibition Hall where for



nostalgia's sake I bought a paperback *Hatchet*, for gift's sake got a t-shirt declaring that Santa's elves to be "subordinate clauses" (yuk yuk), and for students' sake filled two boxes with books. [Bud the Teacher](#) even taught me Twitter and took [my picture](#) (see below, I'm bearded on the right).

**Lesson #4:** Come to the NCTE with an empty suitcase and an open mind. Much like the AETA's annual conference, I found many materials to enjoy personally and deploy professionally. I'll even try [Twitter](#).

Sunday morning I focused on solidifying old and new friendships, highlighted when I met up with Devon Adams from Mesa Community College and Blasingame welcomed me in some hallway conversations. This leads to what I learned most in Orlando.



*Note: Billy was selected as this year's Developing Leader, an award designed to honor the contributions and leadership shown by English teachers at the beginning of their career. The Developing Leaders are honored at NCTE for their willingness to lead and inspire their colleagues. A financial grant sometimes accompanies this award. It's never too early to step up and help AETA further its mission to better English education in our state!*

**Lesson #5:** the NCTE Convention is about people. In a world of convergence media, Moodle, and e-mail relationships, this experience brought me in contact with salient people. If you haven't been to an NCTE Annual Convention, no matter your age, I recommend you get on the plane.

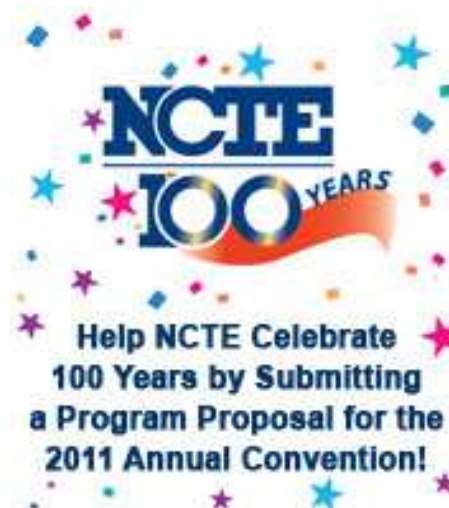
Thanks to the AETA for helping me get to Orlando and I hope to see you at next year's [Annual NCTE Convention](#) in Chicago.

Leave your hatchet; prepare for handshakes.

*~Billy Gerchick, Coronado High School*

## PLAN NOW TO ATTEND THE 2011 ANNUAL CONVENTION!

"Reading the Past, Writing the Future"  
November 17-20, 2011  
Chicago, IL





## 2010-2011 AETA Teachers of Excellence

In 2010, the newly formed AETA Executive Board Awards Subcommittee reviewed and revised the nomination process for both the AETA High School Teacher of Excellence Award and the AETA Middle School Teacher of Excellence Award. We have placed nomination forms for this year's teacher of excellence awards on the AETA website and on page 5 of this newsletter, and we are encouraging anyone whether they be administrators, faculty, or staff to nominate an English teacher they believe deserves recognition for outstanding work in the field. Because we are hoping to increase awareness of the AETA and all the organization has to offer, all English teachers at the high school or middle school are eligible for nomination: AETA membership is not requisite for the award. Additionally, if you are interested in serving on this board, please contact us.

Recipients of 2010 AETA High School Teacher of Excellence Award and the AETA Middle School Teacher of Excellence Award were announced at the fall conference. Also to be honored at the fall conference were the recipients of the 2009 awards: Developing Leader Award, Distinguished Service Award and teacher of excellence awards. Please join us in honoring all these amazing teachers!

—Siiri Granfelt Julian, Notre Dame Prep

### HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR: CAROL WILLIS



Kathi Baron, winner of this year's AETA Distinguished Service award, nominated fellow Flagstaff High colleague, Carol Willis.

*In just three years, Carol Willis has lead FHS towards excellence in technology, forensics and student achievement with her remarkable energy, efficiency, team-building skills, and commitment. She has built a State Championship winning forensics team from zilch, attracting over 50 students to the team and building two Forensics classes. Carol Willis is the cleverest, wittiest, snazziest, most sardonic colleague I have had the luck to work with in my 37 years.*

### MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER OF THE YEAR: BILLIE LAMKIN

Billie Lamkin teaches at Kyrene Middle School and was nominated by former colleague, Kelly O'Rourke. Her current principal had the following praise for Billie:

*Billie Lamkin motivates not only the teachers but the students she works with. Her connections with students have inspired many to become readers, and others to recognize their potential as writers. Billie's work with all manner of students is inspirational. She is caring and compassionate as she helps them recognize their learning potential. Her students show an eagerness to learn, a willingness to take educational risks, and confidence in themselves. Billie encourages seventh graders to take responsibility for their learning, while enticing them with exciting writing experiences in her classroom.*





## AETA TEACHER OF EXCELLENCE NOMINATION FORM

The Arizona English Teachers Association seeks to honor Arizona teachers who consistently demonstrate the highest ideals of our profession. A nominee should consistently demonstrate a deep knowledge of students' needs, implement effective curriculum, and function as a leader/collaborator at his or her school site.

Please indicate to which level your nominee belongs:

**High School                  Middle School**

Nominee's (Teacher's) Name \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Area or Specialization (Reading, AP English,) \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_, AZ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

School District \_\_\_\_\_

Charter \_\_\_\_\_ Private \_\_\_\_\_

Nominated by \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_, AZ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

School District \_\_\_\_\_

Charter \_\_\_\_\_ Private \_\_\_\_\_

Contact e-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Contact phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Please include a nomination statement of 100-words or less that demonstrates why this teacher is deserving of the AETA Teacher of Excellence Award. Address the effectiveness of instruction as it relates to her/his particular group of students, as well as this teacher's ability to work effectively with colleagues and take on leadership roles. Send this completed form and nomination statement to:

Siiri Granfelt Julian  
 Notre Dame Preparatory High  
 9701 E. Bell Rd  
 Scottsdale, AZ 85260  
[sjulian@notredamepreparatory.org](mailto:sjulian@notredamepreparatory.org)



### AETA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Annual membership is from fall to fall of each year. Back issues of publications will be provided, as available.)

One-year individual membership (within U.S.) • School year 20\_\_\_ to 20\_\_\_ \$40

One-year emeritus/student membership • School year 20\_\_\_ to 20\_\_\_ \$20

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H): \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (W): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

Area of Interest (circle one): K-6      4-8      9-12      Post-secondary

FOR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Dr. Jean Boreen

AETA Executive Secretary

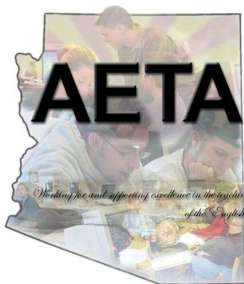
1285 N. Wakonda St.

Flagstaff, AZ, 86004

(928) 523-6765

Webpage: <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jmb5/>

Email: [Jean.Boreen@NAU.EDU](mailto:Jean.Boreen@NAU.EDU)



## ARE YOU A MEMBER OF AETA?

### WHAT IS AETA?

The Arizona English Teachers Association serves as a professional network of English language arts educators across Arizona. It is the state affiliate of the national network,

the National Council of Teachers of English. The primary function of AETA is to foster policies, standards, and goals of NCTE among Arizona's educators of communication skills, language arts, and English from kindergarten through college/university levels. To this aim, it is AETA's goal to serve these teachers by narrowing the national focus to the needs, interests, and goals of Arizona teachers and students.

All AETA business, functions, and special events exist to enhance the quality of English language arts teaching in Arizona by:

- \* DISSEMINATING information pertinent to local issues, concerns, and successes;
- \* ENCOURAGING professional activity among teachers in all regions of the state;
- \* GENERATING interest in students' and teachers' special achievements; and
- \* ORGANIZING statewide and regional "outreach" activities and in-service opportunities.

Visit our **WEBSITE:**

<http://www.asu.edu/aeta/>

### BENEFITS OF AETA MEMBERSHIP

Active membership in professional organizations empowers educators. It is a means for getting voices heard and for sharing the fun and frustrations of teaching. In an effort to address the needs of the diverse population that AETA serves, the following are provided as benefits of membership:

1. 4 issues of *Connections*, the AETA newsletter, an informal publication of news, events, and information of concern to Arizona teachers
2. 2 issues of the *Arizona English Bulletin*, the professional journal of AETA which provides professional reading on a variety of themes, from both theoretical and practical points of view
3. The opportunity to attend state and regional in-service activities, including "outreach" mini-conferences, professional presentations, and the annual statewide conference
4. Contact with teachers with special areas of interest and expertise through a professional network
5. Liaison efforts with the Arizona state legislature and Department of Education

