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Dear Special Schools and Programs Network Members,

We are looking forward with great anticipation to the next NAGC convention in St. Louis. We highly encourage all of our network members to join us for this exciting convention that will be full of new initiatives and new formats. When attending NAGC, you will be sure to find something of interest that will help you to grow in your profession.

Within our network, we have re-initiated another opportunity in which we are able to give back to our members. On page 2 of this newsletter, you will find information on the scholarship application for NAGC 2009. The *Article Competition* has been created to reward a member of the Special Schools and Programs Network with a convention scholarship. The deadline is May 31, so don't delay!

If you do attend the convention, be sure to attend the annual Special Schools and Programs work session meeting. We continue to look for new members who would like to join with our officers in strengthening the network's activities during the convention as well as throughout the year.

We look forward to hearing from you. Remember, if you plan on attending the convention, please look us up during your stay.

Gina Lewis
Network Chair

Dates to Remember

May 15	Convention session descriptions available online
May 31	Submission deadline for Article Competition
August 24	Submission deadline for <i>Torrance Legacy Creative Writing Contest</i>
November 5-8	NAGC 56 th Annual Convention & Exhibit

Special Schools and Programs Officers

Chair	Gina Lewis
Secretary	Carol Carter
Program Chair	Mike Postma
Newsletter Editor	Donna Neutze

Updates

Article Competition for Special Schools and Programs

Our network is happy to sponsor a competition for articles on special schools or programs for the gifted. The winning article, or an abridgement, will be published in our network newsletter. In addition, our network will pay the 2009 national convention fee for the author. (If the author(s) cannot attend the 2009 convention, the award may be deferred to 2010.)

Guidelines:

You must be a member of the Special Schools and Programs Network to apply to the competition.

The deadline for submissions is May 31, 2009.

Submit articles to Gina Lewis at:

lewisgi@tulsaschools.org or gina.lws@gmail.com

Or mail to:

Gina Lewis
10842 E 115 Place
Bixby, OK 74008

The winning article will be selected by a subcommittee of the network.

Articles with multiple authors will be accepted. If the winning article has multiple authors, the amount paid for each author will be equal to a single convention fee divided by the number of authors.

All authors must be members of the Special Schools and Programs Network of NAGC.

Subject for the article must be based on one of the following:

“Does a counseling professional work with your special school or program and what is his/her role?”

“What are your funding success stories?”

“What is/are the greatest challenge(s) that have faced your special school or program and how do you overcome it/them?”

“What lessons from a special school or program have you taken back to ‘regular’ school and vice versa?”

“What are best practices in working with parents in a special school or program setting?”

The articles considered for the *Special Schools and Programs Article Competition* may be from authors who are entirely independent, or they may be affiliated with public school systems, with private or parochial schools, or with public or private post-secondary institutions.

Articles may be of any length, but because of space limitations, longer articles may be abridged for publication in the newsletter.

Articles must follow the conventions of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th edition.

The convention fee for the winning author(s) will be paid directly to NAGC, not to the author(s).

Gateway to Gifted

NAGC's 56th Annual Convention & Exhibit will be held in St. Louis, Missouri on November 5-8. With over 250 sessions being offered, there is certain to be something there for everyone. You may have already received information about the convention. If not, you can find out all of the details by going to the convention website at <http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=2692>



Meet the Members

At this time, there are 112 members in Special Schools and Programs. Members represent 36 states, Washington DC, New Zealand, Australia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, England, and The Netherlands. With these demographics, there are not a lot of opportunities to sit down, chat, and get to know one another. Consider taking advantage of the opportunity presented by our newsletter. Introduce yourself to the group and, at the same time, share some information about your school or program. Let's get acquainted. Send a brief bio and details of your school or program (250 words or less) to dneutze@jhu.edu.

If you are wondering, the states not represented are Alabama, Alaska, Delaware, Iowa, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

Writing Contests for Students

Teen Ink Magazine is accepting entries for their writing contests. There are no monetary prizes; prizes are usually *Teen Ink* merchandise. However, in the Interview Contest, winners get to conduct a celebrity interview. Winning entries are published in the magazine. For information on current contests, go to <http://www.teenink.com/Contests/>

The Journalism Education Association is accepting entries for the JEA Middle School Student Editorial Cartoonist Award and JEA High School Student Editorial Cartoonist Award. There will be one winner in each category. Prizes include a \$500 award and a trip to Washington DC to attend the JEA convention. For additional details, go to http://www.jea.org/awards/block_cartoon.html

Student writers in grades 4 through 12 can compete in the *2009 Torrance Legacy Creative Writing Contest*. The accepted genres are poetry and short stories. For additional information, go to <http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=4320>

For Your Consideration

Although these articles were published in 2008, their messages are still timely.

The Million Word March by Anika Gupta
Smithsonian Magazine (September 24, 2008)
<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/million-word-march.html>

“What defines a word? Lexicographers and other experts don't always agree.” Read how lexicographers decide if a word should be certified and included in dictionaries.

Numbers Guy by Jim Holt
New Yorker (March 3, 2008) http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/03/03/080303fa_fact_holt?currentPage=1

“According to Stanislas Dehaene, humans have an inbuilt ‘number sense’ capable of some basic calculations and estimates. The problems start when we learn mathematics and have to perform procedures that are anything but instinctive.”

Focus On: Writing Websites

Do you want to learn more about a particular genre? Are you tired of the same old writing lessons and boring journal prompts? Are you looking to add to your collection of supplemental texts? Are you interested in finding out how writing and pop culture can work together? If you answered yes to any of these questions or if you simply want to see some less-familiar writing-related websites, these sites might be just what you need.

Online Texts

The Aesop's Fables Online Collection, <http://www.aesopfables.com/>, has over 655 online fables.

Go to *Classic Short Stories*, <http://www.classicshorts.com/>, to find the full text of stories from Chekhov, Hawthorne, Marquez, Poe, Twain, and many more authors.

Project Gutenberg, http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page, is an online collection of over 100,000 titles.

Poetry

The Academy of American Poets, <http://www.poets.org/index.php>, provides access to over 450 poets and 1200 poems.

Search a database of over 300,000 poems at *PoetHunter*, <http://poemhunter.com/>.

Poetry Magic, <http://poetrymagic.co.uk/>, is a resource center for the theory and writing of poetry.

Prompts

Try some of the writing prompts at <http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/prompts.html> from CanTeach or from Writer's Digest Magazine, <http://www.creativewritingprompts.com/#>.

For fifty story starters that will get students itching to finish the rest of the story, go to http://library.thinkquest.org/J001156/writing%20process/sl_storystarters.htm.

For information on using photographs as writing prompts, go to *Write What You See*, <http://www.creativity-portal.com/prompts/kellner/>, and 52 Stories, <http://www.52stories.net/>.

Writing and Pop Culture

Looking for ways to connect to students' interests? Find out how you can use *Comics in the Classroom*, http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=188.

Locate resources for critical analysis in the study of popular culture at <http://www.wsu.edu/%7Eamerstu/pop/tvrguide.html>.

Check out *Images: A Journal of Film and Popular Culture*, <http://www.imagesjournal.com/>, for articles on diverse topics such as myth and gender in *Gone with the Wind*, the best 30 Westerns, and film noir.

Miscellaneous Sites

Go to http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=961 for an instructional plan for creating a travel brochure.

Nature-writing resources are available for you at <http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/eng385/natweb.htm>.

Find a series of playwriting lessons by playwright/screenwriter Jon Dorf at <http://www.playwriting101.com/>.

First familiarize yourself with screenwriting rules and etiquette before moving on to learn more about script styles, script elements, and other screenwriting basics. Go to <http://www.screenwriting.info/>.

Have You Read These?

Naming the World and Other Exercises for the Creative Writer edited by Bret Anthony Johnston (ISBN 978-0812975482, Random House, 2008). The product description of this book calls it “a delicious book” where “wit and wisdom abound.” It is also described as “useful,” “perceptive,” and as “the equivalent of a master class in writing by some of the best writer/teachers around.” Andrea Barrett, a National Book Award winner writes, “These entertaining and useful exercises, intelligently organized, are a boon for both beginning and experienced writers.”

Writing Magic: Creating Stories that Fly by Gail Carson Levine (ISBN 978-0060519605, HarperCollins, 2006).

Booklist’s Ilene Cooper suggests the book would be “a terrific item to have on hand for writing groups or for individual young writers who want to improve.” In a starred review for *School Library Journal*, Beth Gallego describes the book’s tone as “friendly and direct” and calls it a “must-read for young writers.” The short, targeted chapters on various topics can be selected according to your need or interest. The writing is inviting, informative, and encouraging—just the thing for any writer. The exercises will make you want to put down the book and pick up a pen!

1001 Books for Every Mood: A Bibliophile’s Guide to Unwinding, Misbehaving, Forgiving, Celebrating, Commiserating by Hallie Ephron (ISBN 978-1598695854, Adams Media, 2008). According to Chuck Leddy (for *The Boston Globe*), this book “offers a literary prescription for whatever ails you.” Leddy writes that the book “must best be described as a reference guide to great reading that acts as a best friend or a friendly, phenomenally well-read librarian who’s there to point you in the right direction for reading pleasure.” *Library Journal*’s Stacy Russo calls the book “a pure delight for book lovers.”

Test Yourself

Famous People Named John and Mary

Naming trends for new babies come and go, but the names John and Mary have been the choice of many new parents. While they may not currently rank among the most frequently selected names, from 1880 to 1920 they were the most popular first names. John and Mary held onto top-ten spots until Mary dropped out in 1980 and John followed in 1990. Even though today’s birth announcements introduce more Jacobs and Madisons, many well-known people have gone by the names of John and Mary. See how many of them you can identify.

John

- 1) This “Fawlty” actor was headless in two Harry Potter films, married a title character Wanda, and might be able to tell you “The Meaning of Life.”
- 2) This 1934 “public enemy number one,” who was betrayed by the lady in red, picked a bad day to go to the movies.
- 3) This linguist and longtime professor of language and literature spent a lot of time with dwarves, elves, and wizards.
- 4) Many people march to the beat of this always faithful composer.
- 5) He may have been fine as a dentist, but he was more than “O.K.” as a gambler and gunslinger.

Mary

- 1) This author is known for her monster of a book.
- 2) Although she was not a mother, this painter is known for her impressions of children and mothers.
- 3) She flipped but was not a flop, vaulting to Olympic fame in 1984.
- 4) This author once worked as a stewardess, but nowadays it is her mystery/suspense novels that pay her bills.
- 5) Critics crowed about this Tony-Award winning star of stage, film, and screen. She is buried in her home state of Texas; by the way, her son Larry is very fond of Dallas.

The answers are on page 6.

Letter from the Editor

Dear Special Schools and Programs Network Members,

This is my first edition as the newsletter editor for “The Alliance.” It is my hope that some of the features in this issue, such as “For Your Consideration,” “Focus On,” “Test Yourself,” “Meet the Members,” and “Have You Read These?” will become staples of the newsletter, at least for my duration as editor. From issue to issue, the section names would remain the same, but the particular theme or focus would change.

I have also been considering several other possible recurring sections, but wondered whether they would be of interest to all of you. They are:

- A survey question having to do with gifted education—responses would be shared in the next edition of the newsletter.
- “Good News Reports” would be an area in which we could all share our accomplishments, announcements, publications, and any other good news.
- “Wanted” would provide you with the opportunity to solicit assistance from fellow members—a lesson, a book recommendation, or whatever else you have been searching for but just cannot find.

Of course, each newsletter would include “Updates,” where you will get the latest information on what is taking place in NAGC and gifted education.

This first edition is only a starting point that will grow from your suggestions and feedback. It is my hope that future editions reflect your interests and contain your contributions. To that end, please let me know what you would like to see included in the newsletter, either on a regular basis or as a special feature. How can this newsletter best serve your needs? Your input and ideas are both welcomed and encouraged. Please share your thoughts by email to dneutze@jhu.edu.

I look forward to hearing from you,
Donna

Answers to Test Yourself: Famous People Named John and Mary

John

- 1) John Cleese
- 2) John Dillinger
- 3) John Ronald Reuel Tolkien
- 4) John Philip Sousa
- 5) John Henry “Doc” Holiday

Mary

- 1) Mary Shelley
- 2) Mary Cassatt
- 3) Mary Lou Retton
- 4) Mary Higgins Clark
- 5) Mary Martin

Every student can learn, just not on the same day, or the same way.—George Evans

