



**PENNSYLVANIA  
COUNCIL OF  
TEACHERS OF  
ENGLISH AND  
LANGUAGE ARTS**

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# THE PCTELA NEWSLETTER

Summer 2011

## Conference 2011 Keynote Speakers

Allison Irwin  
Conference 2011 Co-Chair

Our conference line-up this year is exceptional! We will be hosting Chris Crutcher, Gareth Hinds, Linda Christensen, and Carol Jago over the weekend. Don't miss this opportunity to mingle and schmooze with some of the biggest names in literacy education. Our intimate setting of just 200-300 people allows for plenty of discussion, book signings, and one-of-a-kind, "I just met...!" moments. The conference this year will be held on October 14-15, 2011 at the Four Points Sheraton Pittsburgh North in Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania. Please join us!

**Chris Crutcher**  
[www.chriscrutcher.com](http://www.chriscrutcher.com)

On his website, Chris Crutcher "admits he was a popular teacher, but not a good one. However, once offered the chance to direct a 'last chance' alternative school in Oakland, CA, he thoughtfully served at-risk K-12 students for almost a decade before returning

to the Pacific Northwest to write his first book." Now his fiction draws heavily from his experiences as therapist and child protection advocate. His fiction "is known for its expert balance of comedy and tragedy, as well as its unflinching honesty and authentic voice." Crutcher also knows well the trials of having his books banned from libraries and classrooms across the country due to their realistic content.

**Gareth Hinds**  
[www.garethhinds.com](http://www.garethhinds.com)

Gareth Hinds is the creator of several critically-acclaimed graphic novels based on literary classics, including *Beowulf* (which Publisher's Weekly called a "mixed-media gem"), *King Lear* (which Booklist named one of the top 10 graphic novels for teens), *The*

*Merchant of Venice* (which Kirkus called "the standard that all others will strive to meet" for Shakespeare adaptation), and *The Odyssey* (which received four starred reviews and has been placed on numerous "best of 2010" lists). His books can be found in bookstores and English classrooms across the country, and his illustrations have

appeared in such diverse venues as the Society of Illustrators, the New York Historical Society, and over a dozen published video games.

**Linda Christensen**  
[www.lclark.edu/graduate/faculty/members/linda\\_christensen](http://www.lclark.edu/graduate/faculty/members/linda_christensen)

Linda Christensen is the Director of the Oregon Writing Project (OWP), located in the Graduate School of Education at Lewis & Clark College. Linda is the author of *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up: Teaching about Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word*, *Teaching for Joy and Justice: Re-Imagining the Language Arts Classroom*, and co-editor of several publications including, *Rethinking School Reform: Views from the Classroom*. She has given keynote addresses at local, national, and international conferences about her work on literacy and social justice. Her articles about literacy and social justice have appeared in numerous journals. For the last thirty years, she has taught high school Language Arts.

...continued on next page.



## Conference 2011 Keynote Speakers

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She has received numerous awards, including the Fred Heschinger Award for use of research in teaching and writing from National Writing Project and the U.S. West Outstanding Teacher of Western United States.

**Carol Jago**  
[www.caroljago.com](http://www.caroljago.com)

Carol Jago is currently serving as past president of the National Council of Teachers of English and was the Program Chair for the 2009 NCTE Convention in Philadelphia. She has written numerous books and articles in the fields of education and literacy. She “has taught English in middle and high school for 32 years and directs the California Read-

ing and Literature Project at UCLA.” She also “edits the journal of the California Association of Teachers of English, *California English*, and served on the planning committee for the 2009 NAEP Reading Framework and the 2011 NAEP Writing Framework.

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## ACT 48 Credits - How Do I Earn Them

Deborah Peters  
 Language Arts Teacher  
 Northwestern Lehigh  
 Middle School

The PA Dept of Education requires all certified teachers to continue their education. This is documented through the acquisition of ACT 48 hours. To earn these hours, one must attend workshops or conferences held in PA that are certified to offer these hours. The other option is to take graduate and undergraduate classes at approved higher-level institutions.

PCTELA is certified to offer these hours. Whenever you attend a PCTELA sponsored activity, be sure to bring your PPID# with you. That number was issued to you by PDE. If you do not know it, you may access it on the PDE website. You are asked to complete a form and submit it to verify the specific hours of your attendance.

When completing the form, you are asked to provide your name as it appears on your certification, your home address and email address, your PPID#, and

the hours you have attended. Sometimes you are asked to provide the school district for which you work (if applicable).

PDE requires each teacher to earn 180 hours in five years. If you were employed as a teacher when this requirement was put in place, the “new wave” began July 1, 2010. If not, your five-year period began upon certification. You are expected to earn hours even if you do not have a job. PCTELA sponsored activities are the PERFECT way to earn those hours!

### ACT 48 CREDITS

**Newsletter Submissions:**  
**[pctelanews@gmail.com](mailto:pctelanews@gmail.com)**

## Used Bookstores

Tom Crochunis  
Shippensburg University

Send us the name and contact information for your local used bookstores!

As teachers, when you build your classroom libraries, many of you probably rely on some of the independent used booksellers in your part of the state. I know that I frequently visit Book Junction in Shippensburg to build the adolescent literature reading collection in our English education reading room at the university.

I am writing to invite you to share the name of a local used bookstore or library

used book store in your area. Who do you draw on in your area to build your classroom library, or maybe even to partner on literacy activities?

Write to Tom Crochunis (tccroc@ship.edu) with the subject heading "PCTELA Used Book Sellers" and provide the name of the bookstore, the contact name, phone, address, and email (if available). I also encourage you to write a sentence or two about what you especially like and value about your local bookseller.

We will contact the bookstores suggested and solicit one or two interest-

ing donated used books. Then, at next fall's PCTELA conference, each person attending the conference will receive one donated book with a bookplate with the name of the donating vendor. We will also provide conference participants with a list of all contributing bookstores and their contact information. In addition to sharing our love of books, we aim to introduce language arts teachers around the state to this part of our state's literacy network.



## Author Visit

Allison Irwin  
Toby Farms Elementary  
Chester Upland  
School District

Author Jake Halpern Visits  
Philadelphia Area Schools

Jake Halpern spoke to my students today and greatly exceeded all of our expectations. My 8th grade students, admittedly a hard group to please, were actually yelling and complaining about having to go to

"another assembly" before his presentation. Many were devising ways to skip it. But Jake swooped in with his animated and jovial style of story-telling to quiet their animosity. Within minutes he had them on the edge of their seats in suspense listening to his stories.

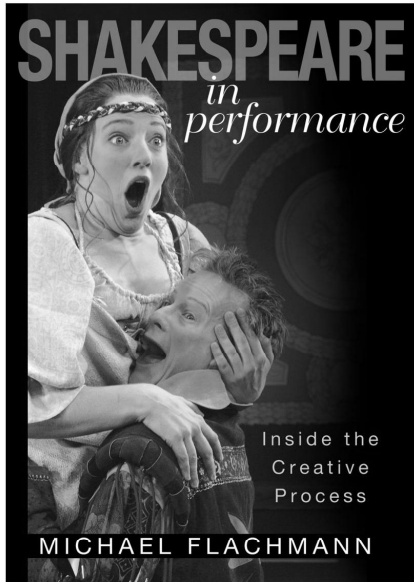
Teachers, please consider contacting him to speak to your students. The World of Dormia series ([www.worldofdormia.com](http://www.worldofdormia.com))

is a cross between Harry Potter and The Lightning Thief. Many students gave me money to order the first book in his series before he even left the building. Whenever a teenager is willing to offer his or her own precious dollars to buy a book, I know I've met an instant success.

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[www.pctela.org!](http://www.pctela.org)**

**Jake Halpern**  
[www.worldofdormia.com](http://www.worldofdormia.com)

## BOOK NEWS



*"Shakespeare in Performance will be of interest to all Shakespeare enthusiasts—scholars, directors, actors, and audience members—who want to understand the process of producing Shakespeare's plays for contemporary audiences. This book fills a niche in that rarely visited but most important space between scholars and theatre professionals, and between specialists and the general public."*

—Lois Feuer, Professor of English, California State University, Dominguez Hills

*"Fun for all lovers of Shakespeare and theater. Analyses of the plays from a living participation in Shakespeare's characters gives us a wholly penetrating and unique perspective. Fascinating and inspiring reading."*

—Libby Appel, Artistic Director Emerita, Oregon Shakespeare Festival

## Shakespeare in Performance

Inside the Creative Process

*Michael Flachmann*

- Michael Flachmann knows Shakespeare. Not only does he have 40 years experience teaching Shakespeare as an English professor at California State University, Bakersfield, but he spends his summers working at the Shakespeare Festival in Cedar City, Utah, and with other professional companies as dramaturg—a scholar-in-residence who helps actors, directors, and designers bring Shakespeare's scripts to life on stage.

Flachmann's unique and intimate acquaintance with the way plays are created and performed has given him unprecedented insider access to a wide range of fascinating information. In this collection, Flachmann brings the plays to life as he discusses their meanings, and shares the challenges of performing them for a modern audience. Written in language that will engage scholars, directors, theatre-goers, and everyone who loves reading and watching the Bard's plays, *Shakespeare in Performance* takes the reader inside design conversations, rehearsal halls, and actor discussions for a behind-the-scenes look at some of the mysteries of professional theatre usually shared only by those within this cloistered creative process.

**Michael Flachmann** is a professor of English at California State University, Bakersfield, and the author of twelve books and more than eighty articles on Shakespeare and related topics. He has been company dramaturg for the Utah Shakespeare Festival in Cedar City, Utah, since 1986 and was selected as a Carnegie Foundation U.S. Professor of the Year in 1995.

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## PA State Network Leaders Lobby Congress

Diane Waff

Did you know the Federal Government eliminated funding for the National Writing Project? The budget signed by President Obama on March 2, 2011 defunded all national literacy programs including the NWP, Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program, Reading Is Fundamental, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and Teach for America. On March 31, PCTELA colleagues from the eight Pennsylvania Writing Project Network Sites (the Capitol Area Writing Project, Penn State Harrisburg; The Penn Lake National Writing Project, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania; Penn State Lehigh Valley Writing Project, Penn State Lehigh Valley; Philadelphia Writing Project, University of PA; Pennsylvania Writing and Literature Project, West Chester University; Northeast PA Writing Project, East Stroudsburg University; Western Pennsylvania Writing Project, University of Pittsburgh; Endless Mountain Writing Project, Mansfield University of Pennsylvania) joined hundreds of teacher leaders from writing project sites across the country on Capitol Hill to lobby congress to restore funding to the NWP.

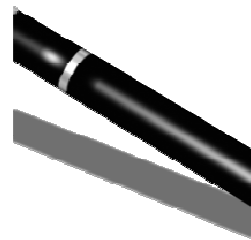
PA State Network leaders visited US Senators Bob Casey and Pat Toomey as well as members of the

House to educate the new congress about the importance of writing and the work our state network sites do in our local communities every day. Teachers discussed national research studies that demonstrated the effectiveness of the NWP, shared student writing, and gave personal accounts of local project successes in the improvement of teacher and student learning at both the school and district level. A first grade teacher from the Capitol Area Writing Project impressed everyone with creative writing from students in his first grade classroom. Despite despair over the cuts, Pennsylvania teachers found their spirits lifted by the strong words of support from our state representatives. Senator Casey, was one of nine US Senators to sign a letter to the US Senate Appropriations Committee, distinguishing the NWP and other authorized literacy programs from earmarks identified for elimination. The letter stated the following:

"Authorized, national programs such as Teach For America, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, Reading Is Fundamental, National Writing Project, and Close Up are quite different from congressionally-directed spending items, which only benefit a specific state, congressional district or region, and change year-to-year." "These programs, on the other hand, have

been authorized and are nationally-structured with many years of bipartisan support. They benefit millions of individuals and families in a majority of states, districts, and regions across the country. In short, national, authorized programs are not what has invoked the public's demand for earmark reform and should not be classified as such."

The National Writing Project, a casualty in the quest to eliminate earmarks, will continue to lobby congress for funding restoration and to have the NWP included as an authorized program in the reauthorization of NCLB. PCTELA members are urged to write, call and email PA congressional representatives to support the National Writing Project. Without federal support, the NWP---the only national, federally funded program to focus on writing---will be limited in its ability to support the work currently underway in Pennsylvania through our state network, and the other 200 writing project sites nationwide.

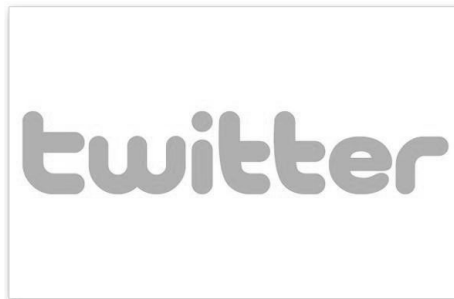


***"...In short, national, authorized programs are not what has invoked the public's demand for earmark reform and should not be classified as such."***

PCTELA  
PO Box 2327  
Butler, PA 16003-2327

# PCTELA is on TWITTER!

In a continued effort to reach our members in the most efficient ways possible, PCTELA is proud to launch our own Twitter account! To follow the latest information concerning PCTELA and the issues that matter most to our members, follow us under the username **PCTELANews**. Together, we can grow our online community and presence! Look for updates and Tweets to begin rolling out at the start of the school year in the fall!



[pctela.org](http://pctela.org)

## NOTICE

Moving forward, as long as we have your current e-mail address on file, we will send you the newsletter issues electronically. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE A PAPER COPY OF THE NEWSLETTER, send your name and address to PCTELA, PO Box 2327, Butler, PA 16033-2327

## PCTELA Executive Council

### Janice Spohn

President & WPCTE Liaison  
520 Herman Road  
Butler PA 16001  
jerspohn@zoominternet.net

### Barbara Rahal

Vice President for Colleges and  
NWPCTE Liaison  
110 Beau Drive  
Edinboro PA 16412  
brahal@edinboro.edu

### Elizabeth Shannon

Vice President for Secondary Schools  
929 Fairfield Lane  
McDonald PA 15057  
eshannon@westasd.org

### Deborah Peters

Vice President for Middle Schools  
10030 Weiss Road  
Breinigsville PA 18031  
petersd@nwlehighsd.org

### Jennifer Fleeger

Vice President for Elementary Schools  
1245 West Liberty Road  
Slippery Rock, PA 16057  
jfleeger@moniteau.k12.pa.us

### Nathan Grippin

Secretary  
29 Maple Avenue  
Walnut Bottom PA 17266  
ngrippin@westperry.org

### Jennifer Fox

Treasurer  
1359 Becthel Street  
Monaca PA 15061  
jfox@westasd.org

### Glenda Daulerio

Membership Secretary and 2011 Conference Co-Chair  
7028 Lafayette Avenue  
Fort Washington, PA 19034  
glenda.daulerio  
@germantownacademy.org

### Allison Irwin

2011 Conference Co-Chair  
7 Pelham Drive  
Coatesville, PA 19320  
airwin@chesteruplandsd.org

### David Long

SLATE Representative  
217 East King Street  
Shippensburg PA 17257  
dlong@westperry.org

### Diane Waff

Writing Project Liaison  
4000 Gypsy Lane #324  
Philadelphia, PA 19129

### Jonathan DeBor

Newsletter Editor  
228 Hastings Avenue  
Oakdale, PA 15071  
jonathan.debor  
@theneighborhoodacademy.org

### Bob Dandoy

Executive Director  
431 North McKean Street  
Butler, PA 16001  
bdandoy@zbzoom.net

