

**English Language Arts Council/UFT/NCTE**

Annual Report 9/2005 - 6/2006

12/22/05 - "Vic's Picks" - The 16th annual survey of contemporary drama, film and other cultural events in the NYC area - was scheduled for December 22, 2005. The speaker was to have been Victor Gluck, theatre critic for *Backstage East* and *Backstage.com*, and vice-chairman of ELAC. Unfortunately, a transit strike brought the city to a halt and this eagerly anticipated meeting was canceled. Since the talk was intended to make suggestions for enjoying NY at Christmas, rescheduling after the holiday break was impractical.

The next scheduled meeting, on March 16, 2006 begged for an Irish theme as a celebration of St. Patrick's Day. Therefore we scheduled a showing of the 1975 film *Philadelphia, Here I Come!*, based on the Brian Friel play. (Last year we showed Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*.) Victor Gluck, resident theatre critic, introduced the film with a talk on the life and career of Brian Friel, and conducted a post-screening discussion of the themes in the movie, their relationship to Friel's other works, and their contemporary relevance. References were made to other works by Irish writers. Viewers commented on the theme of immigration and its relevance to American society today.

April has been traditionally Poetry month at ELAC. This year, Vita Rosenberg suggested "Narrative Poetry" for the "Bring Your Favorite Poem That You've Chosen To Read" meeting of April 27. Among the poems presented were a selection from Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" read by Carole Friedman, and Auden's "O What Is That Sound" read by Victor Gluck. Vita brought a note of levity with her selections from A.A. Milne.

Resident critic Victor Gluck closed the ELAC school year with a talk on June 1 entitled "Vic's Picks 2006: Exploring New York in Summer." He touched on museum exhibitions, and Broadway and Off Broadway award-winning shows for the 2005-06 season. He also offered descriptions of films scheduled for summer release. In addition, he recommended books for summer reading, including the 2006 Pulitzer Prize winner, Geraldine Brooks' *March*, a companion novel to *Little Women*, telling Alcott's story from the father's point of view, and *The Book of Lost Books: An Incomplete History of All the Great Books You'll Never Read* by Stuart Kelly.

As a consequence of Victor's presentations, he was invited to participate in the Adult Continuing Education Program for Older

Adults at La Guardia Community College in Queens, NY. He will offer a workshop called "Inside Scoop On the New York Theatre Scene" this October, adapted from his ELAC presentations.

Another one of our Board members, Pamela Humphrey, is helping teachers with planning instructional techniques as a consultant in her Bronx district.

August 23, 2006, was the date of the NYC Department of Education New Teachers Chancellor's Welcome and Fair. The ELAC table was manned by Dorothy Williams, Victor Gluck and Vita Rosenberg. Several hundred new and prospective teachers came to our ELAC table to learn about teaching English in the NYC schools. We hope to see them at future ELAC/NCTE meetings, and that they become active professionals. We invited them to our meeting on Oct. 19, "Already I Have A Problem: Advice From Your Colleagues."

**Part II: NCTE SCOA Region #1 General Questions:**

1. What are the major concerns of our affiliate?

- a. standardized testing;
- b. micromanagement by administration;
- c. union bashing by the Klein school administration.

2. In what ways is our affiliate addressing teachers' needs/concerns?

- a. seminars in classroom management for new teachers;
- b. seminars in standardized testing at different levels;
- c. seminars addressing teaching genres by the use of multiple styles (e.g. film, drama, poetry;)
- d. cultural enrichment for staff development (e.g. visit museum exhibits, attend theatre parties, etc.)

3. What are the purposes of our conferences, symposia, after school gatherings, etc.?

- a. give support to new and veteran teachers;
- b. introduce and reinforce strategies for effective teaching;
- c. network with veteran teachers;
- d. disseminate information on UFT, NCTE, NYSUT activities and concerns;
- e. provide an outlet and forum for teacher concerns and problems;
- f. introduce latest techniques and materials.

4. How do we use the Internet to help with relationship building within our affiliate and to reach out to non-member teachers?  
postings on the UFT website including all ELAC announcements and relevant materials.

5. What would we like NCTE to do to help build and strengthen our affiliate?  
support the NYC teachers in opposing micromanagement by the current NYC school administration.

Respectfully submitted by Vita Rosenberg, ELAC chair  
October 2006

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