

English Language Arts Council/UFT/NCTE

Annual Report 9/2006 – 6/2007

10/19/06 – As our first professional development meeting took place during the second month of the school calendar, we titled it “Already I Have a Problem: Advice From Your Colleagues: What do I do when...? What is the best ways to...? How do I handle...?” A lively discussion followed provoking many suggestions for solutions from veterans.

12/21/06 – “Vic’s Picks” – The 17th annual survey of contemporary theatre, film, museum exhibits, and other cultural events in the New York City area was delivered by Victor Gluck, theatre critic for www.TheatreScene.net and vice chairman of ELAC. This comprehensive compendium of suggestions for enjoying NYC’s cultural scene during the holiday season was rewarding and informative for our members who made their own contributions to the listings. Victor also included the outstanding literary publications of 2006, suitable for holiday giving.

2/15/07 – In honor of Washington and Lincoln’s birthdays, we invited our membership to help “Celebrate Presidents in Prose and Poetry.” We invited participants to bring a literary selection in prose or poetry about patriotism or a President to share. Participants offered such selections as Whitman’s “O Captain! My Captain!” and “When lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed” as well as Abraham Lincoln’s own original poems.

3/15/07 – To celebrate St. Patrick’s Day and Irish literature, for the third year in a row we screened a film. This year’s selection was *Nora* (2000), based on the biography of James Joyce’s wife Nora Barnacle. The intense and dramatic presentation recounted their meeting and early married life. The dramatization ended with the publication of Joyce’s first major book, *Dubliners*. At the conclusion of the screening, resident critic Victor Gluck led a discussion of Joyce’s life and career as depicted in the film. We remarked at how much of Joyce and Nora’s life made its way into his fiction.

4/19/07 – Our next meeting was called “April Is the Cruellest Month: How to Write Exam Questions That Work.” ELAC chair Vita Rosenberg distributed copies of a newspaper article, and led a close reading of the text, formulating questions on each paragraph. This included questions on content, vocabulary in context, inference, and anticipation. The session ended with the writing and critiquing of multiple choice questions on the text. As we predicted, even veteran teachers needed to fine-tune their technique in creating questions.

5/17/07 – For the final meeting of the school calendar, ELAC declared “O What Is So Rare As a Day in May: Celebrating Nature Poetry.” Workshop participants were asked to bring copies of a poem they liked, a poem they had taught successfully, or a poem they had written. Among the poems presented was a selection from Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” Edna St. Vincent Millay’s “God’s World,” Robert Frost’s “The Tuft of Flowers,” and Gerard Manley Hopkins’ “Pied Beauty.”

It was a varied and productive year.

Respectfully submitted by Vita Rosenberg, ELAC chair
July 2007