

# Adult Learning Network

*The Adult Learning Network is a quarterly publication of the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center.*

## *A Festival For All The People Who Say The Book is Better Than The Movie*



Are you one of those people? If so, mark your calendars for the second annual Arkansas Literary Festival, April 16-17, 2005, in Little Rock's River Market District! The festival is presented by Arkansas Literacy Councils, Inc. (ALC) and its 53 local literacy councils as a way to raise awareness and financial support of adult literacy efforts. Although there are many book festivals throughout the country, the Arkansas festival is the first designed to benefit a cause – literacy.

In 2004, nearly 6,000 people attended the festival in Little Rock's Riverfront Park. Guest authors such as Garrison Keillor, General Wesley Clark, Kaye Gibbons, and Grif Stockley led presentations and panel discussions.

Many literacy council staff from throughout the state and people in the central Arkansas area volunteered their time and talents in greeting festival participants; stationing book signing, author signing, book sales, merchandise, and other tents; and providing overall support to the festival.

The festival is coordinated by a volunteer Steering Committee and several subcommittees. Members are once again working hard to plan the 2005 festival. In addition to subcommittee meetings the Steering Committee has been meeting monthly since July.

What's new for 2005?

- ALC is pleased to announce that Lieutenant Governor Win Paul Rockefeller will once again serve as Honorary Chairman of the festival's Steering Committee. Warwick Sabin, Associate Editor of the *Arkansas Times*, is also serving a second year as chairman.
- New Media Sponsors include Citadel Broadcasting Company, KUAR/KLRE Public Radio, the Arkansas Business Publishing Group/*Arkansas Times*, and the Arkansas Educational Television Network.
- As mentioned above, the festival will now take place in the River Market District, headquartered at the Main Library of the Central Arkansas Library System (CALs). Because of the success in 2004, the CALs is providing all of its space inside and outside of the Main Library for festival activities. Also, the Historic Arkansas Museum staff will be on hand to host author presentations and discussions at the museum.

We look forward to having many literacy council and adult education staff, students, and volunteers with us in April! Stay abreast of festival updates and announcements by checking the festival Web site at

[www.arkansasliteraryfestival.org](http://www.arkansasliteraryfestival.org)

See you there!

Marie Bruno, Executive Director  
Arkansas Literacy Councils, Inc.

## Professional Development News



### Tuition Reimbursement Program

Contact your Program Advisor at the Adult Education Section or Marsha Taylor at the AALRC for more information on this program. Reimbursement is applicable to courses taken for Adult Education Licensure ONLY! This form is available on the AALRC website ([www.aalrc.org](http://www.aalrc.org)).

Remember: (1) The application form must be submitted to the AALRC **10 working days before class begins**. (2) Your class grade and receipt of payment must be received **within 30 days of class ending**.

#### NOTICE:

If you are unable to attend a workshop you have registered for, please contact the AALRC as soon as possible. Participants are often placed on waiting lists because workshops fill up. If you find that you cannot attend a workshop and you call ahead, this gives us time to notify wait-listed participants that they can attend.

**There is a new requirement: Applicants must provide documentation that the class will count for adult education licensure.**

**For a list of courses available in adult education, please contact:**

Arkansas State University  
Jonesboro  
Dr. David Agnew  
(870) 972-3943

University of Arkansas  
at Fayetteville  
Dr. Buddy Lyle  
(479) 575-5119 or  
(479) 575-4578

University of Arkansas  
at Little Rock  
Dr. Charlotte Robertson  
(501) 569-8933

University of Central Arkansas  
Conway  
Dr. Sherry Roberts  
(501) 450-5431

### *AALRC Staff*

*Director*  
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*Disabilities*  
*Project*  
*Manager*  
*Patti White*

### Upcoming Training Events

- Jan. 20-21 – Literacy Strategies – AALRC
- Jan. 26 – LD Policy Manual –Monticello – SEARK Co-op
- Jan. 27 – LD Policy Manual – Jonesboro – Adult Ed. Center
- Jan. 28 – LDTD – Jonesboro – Adult Ed. Center
- Jan. 28 – AALRC Numeracy Project – AALRC

### Committee Meetings

- Jan. 11 – LD Policy Meeting – 10:00a.m.
- Jan. 14 – AACAE Conf. Committee – 10:00a.m.
- Jan. 19 – Technology Committee – 10:00a.m.
- Feb. 25 – WAGE – 9:30a.m.

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## Upcoming Training Events

*Continued from page 2*

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|---|---|
| Feb. 1 – LD Policy Manual – Hope<br>– SWARK Co-op                         | Feb. 22-24 – Payne Jordan<br>– AALRC  |
| Feb. 2 – LD Policy Manual – Little Rock<br>– AALRC                        | Feb. 28 – Teaching the Three Rs<br>– AALRC  |
| Feb. 3 – LD Policy Manual – Clarksville<br>– Johnson Co. Adult Ed. Center | March 3-4 – AALRC Numeracy Project<br>– AALRC                                     |
| Feb. 7-8 – Strategies & Accommodations<br>– AALRC                         | March 8 – LDTD<br>– AALRC   |
| Feb 10-11 – ESL Basics<br>– AALRC   | March 10-11 – ESL Basics<br>– AALRC   |
| Feb. 16 – LDTD – Bentonville<br>– NWACC                                   | March 30 – LDTD – Texarkana<br>– Literacy Council of Miller and Bowie<br>Counties |
| Feb. 17-18 – Literacy Strategies<br>– AALRC                               |   |

## *Professional Development Update*

On December 8, 2004, members of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education, Adult Education Section and the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC) met with Ms. Janinne Riggs and Mr. Ron Tolson from the Department of Education regarding professional development requirements and licensure renewal for adult educators.

Ms. Riggs stated that the definition of professional development given below is the one used by the Department of Education.

*Professional Development: This term refers to a coordinated set of planned learning activities for teachers and administrators which are [sic] standards-based and continuous. Ideally, quality professional development will result in individual, school-wide, and system-wide improvement. Approved professional development activities will be linked to the school's improvement plan, demonstrate research-based best practice, and be subject-specific and site-specific as often as possible.*

Professional development (PD) is a two-pronged situation. One is PD required by the Department of Education (DOE) for licensed teachers that are currently working; the other is PD that Teacher Licensure requires for license renewal. The PD section of the DOE requirement for 60 hours of PD per year is in effect for the 2004-05 fiscal year for teachers who are currently employed. Those teachers who are part of a public school district will have their hours tracked for them by their district and sent to the DOE.

Teachers and administrators who are part of other educational entities, such as community colleges, technical institutes, educational co-ops, and private colleges, must have their local supervisor approve their PD hours for renewal purposes only. The DOE does not need the annual accounting of PD hours for those educational providers. Ms. Riggs stated that those entities don't need to have a school improvement plan, but all certified employees should have a professional development plan.

The draft of *Arkansas Rules Governing the Requirements and Procedures for Renewing a Standard Arkansas Teaching License* had a period of public comment which has ended. According to Mr. Tolson, as a result of comments made, some changes are being considered before going to the State Board of Education. That document could go to the board as early as the January meeting. An update from the AALRC will follow as soon as the document is board-approved.

## Disability News

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### Learning Disabilities Video Wins National Award



The Workforce Development Council (WDC) of Seattle-King County, Washington reported in their recent newsletter that “Learning Disabilities: Learning from the Source,” a new video they have developed, won first place in a nationwide competition sponsored by the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors. It was also a finalist in the 2004 Telly Awards—the premier awards honoring non-broadcast video and film productions. Video production was funded by the National Institute for Literacy as part of its nationwide *Bridges to Practice* learning disabilities training.

The video features eight people—ranging from a 17-year-old to a young professional woman to an older man who is learning to read—who discuss their learning disabilities and the strengths they are building on to achieve success. A second video features more in-depth training for professionals.

“It’s hard to find people who will talk openly about their learning disabilities,” says WDC planner Beth Blanchard, who worked on the video with the Instructional Broadcast Center of Seattle Public Schools. “But coming from them, the message that you can succeed with a learning disability is very powerful.”

Facts about learning disabilities from “Learning from the Source”:

- A learning disability is a central nervous system disorder that shows itself during the input, processing or output of information.
- Dyslexia, in which people transpose letters when reading or writing, is just one of many learning disabilities.
- More than 15 percent of the general population has some form of learning disability.
- Learning disabilities are unrelated to intelligence. But unfortunately, learning disabilities can keep people from demonstrating their knowledge and skills.
- Because they are so often undiagnosed, learning disabilities lead to frustration and low self-esteem that frequently prevent people from finishing their basic education or going further.
- People with LD do have learning strengths—and with accommodations and strategies that build on these strengths, they can learn like anyone else.

This would be a good video to show to adult students, whether or not they have learning disabilities. Chances are that they know someone with a learning disability or may have an undiagnosed learning disability, and this video is not only inspirational, but also educational.

The AALRC has purchased this video for local programs in Arkansas. Contact Klaus Neu at 800.832.6242 or [klaus@aalrc.org](mailto:klaus@aalrc.org) if your program would like to borrow it.

“Learning from the Source” can also be ordered from the WDC of Seattle-King County for \$40 at <http://www.seakingwdc.org/pdf/videoorderform.pdf>, or call or email the WDC at 206.448.0474 or [info@seakingwdc.org](mailto:info@seakingwdc.org).

*Tech**Talk*

**Note:** To link to any web address (URL) in this newsletter, go the AALRC's home page at <http://aalrc.org>, look up this newsletter, and then just click on the appropriate link.

### *AALRC Technology Advisory Committee*

On November 10 the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center's Technology Advisory Committee was reactivated and met for the first time in three years. First on the agenda was updating the Five Year Technology Plan. It was both informative and gratifying to see the progress adult education centers and literacy councils have made in the use of all forms of technology since 1998. Most of the goals listed in that plan have been met.

Other items on the agenda currently being researched and/or developed by the committee are as follows:

1. Can contact hours for online programs (that track time and progress) where students work away from an adult education center be reported to the Department of Workforce Education? If so, which students (under age 18, court ordered, etc.) should be required to physically be present for their hours to be reported?
2. How should software be evaluated prior to statewide purchases and by whom?
3. What software evaluation forms should be used to fairly evaluate all programs by holding them to the same standards? What should those standards be?
4. What policies and procedures should govern software vendors when they approach the Deputy Director of Workforce Education or his staff to make sales presentations? (As soon as Mr. French, Deputy Director of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education, Adult Education Section, heard this question was being considered, he immediately began referring all vendors to the committee).
5. Do we need another technology survey and if so, shouldn't it be kept to one page if at all possible?
6. Is there any interest in reviving the Technology Institutes and if so, where should they be held?

The committee members are Marsha Taylor, Klaus Neu, Rob Pollan, Dr. Philip Less, Diane Shores, Wes Pillow, Amy Butts, Gayla Feist, Janie Carter, Lynda Bradford, Marie Bruno, Jacob Humphrey, and Billy R. Upton. The committee next meets at the Resource Center on January 19, 2005.

If you have any comments or other input, please share with any member of the committee.

### *AALRC Advisory Committee*

*Charlotte  
Robertson,  
Chair,  
Little Rock*

*Emily Barrier,  
Little Rock*

*Harriet Branch,  
Monticello*

*Dubs Byers,  
Pine Bluff*

*Sharon Ellis,  
Fort Smith*

*Jennifer Hurst,  
Pine Bluff*

*Lloyd Huskey,  
Little Rock*

*Steven Lilly,  
Lonoke*

*Trece Shepherd  
Williams,  
Helena*

*George Stegall,  
Texarkana*

*Nancy  
Whitmire,  
Batesville*

*Tech**Talk*

### *Mozilla Firefox Internet Browser*

Would you like to try a browser that works like Internet Explorer but is more secure? Try Firefox, a browser from the Mozilla team that packs a wallop but steps lightly on your system memory. This free, open-source browser offers a wealth of features, and its developers are constantly working on new ones. Firefox organizes your windows in a tabbed interface, which makes your surfing easier and leaves your taskbar blissfully unburdened. The mouseless navigation and the built-in Google taskbar make your searches shorter. Firefox's pop-up blocker lets you allow important pop-ups through while keeping ads from exploding in your face, and AutoDownload makes it simple to download files from your favorite sites.

Firefox offers a number of tools to ease the transition from Internet Explorer (IE). For example, the application asks if you want to import your bookmarks from IE, then it automatically transfer them to Firefox. Most of the Firefox interface labels are intuitive, although users may need to learn a few different menu terms from those in IE: Options instead of Internet Options, Cache instead of Internet Files. In fact, at a glance, Firefox looks and works almost exactly like Internet Explorer. Firefox 1.0 does not reinvent the browser, but it does provide technical enhancements that make Web browsing faster, safer, and easier.

One major interface difference is Firefox's tabbed browsing feature, which lets you open several Web pages within a single browser window. Quickly move among pages by clicking the tabs at the top of the window. Compare that to IE, in which you must open several instances of the Microsoft browser, each requiring system resources. So viewing multiple Internet pages in IE can tax your computer, while tabbing through multiple pages within Firefox will not. Tabbed browsing is also available in the Apple Safari and Opera browsers, but not in Internet Explorer.

Firefox is more secure than Internet Explorer, in part because most criminal hackers look for holes in the industry leader--that's just efficient business. But there are also structural differences that make Firefox an inherently more secure browser. For example, Firefox doesn't support VBScript and ActiveX Controls, which are often the source of attacks and vulnerabilities within IE. Unfortunately, the lack of ActiveX support also affects the performance of some Web sites. While its lack of ActiveX support might prevent some sites from working properly, the lack of security loopholes sufficiently makes up for it. If you're fed up with the latest Internet Explorer security patch issued from Microsoft or with the latest virus to capitalize on some flaw in IE, you should try Firefox. If you have trouble using a certain website, you can easily switch back and forth between the two.

### *Adult Education Advisory Council*

*Sharon Ellis, Chair,  
Fort Smith*

*Diane Shores,  
Vice-Chair, Helena*

*Marsha Taylor,  
Secretary, LR*

*Jim Allen,  
Fayetteville*

*Patricia Bates,  
El Dorado*

*Dubs Byers,  
Pine Bluff*

*Pat Collins,  
Russellville*

*Ashli Fortune,  
Stuttgart*

*Lloyd Huskey,  
North Little Rock*

*Steven Lilly,  
Lonoke*

*Becky Linsky,  
Hot Springs*

*Paulette Martin,  
Little Rock*

*Sheri Rogers,  
Arkadelphia*

*Flora Simon,  
Dumas*

*Billy Upson,  
Texarkana*

*Peggy Weir,  
Pocahontas*

*Ruth Ann Williams,  
Conway*

*Disability News**Continued from page 4*

*ESL/ESOL and Learning Disabilities*

Robin Schwarz, M. Sp.Ed., has published a document online (.pdf file with live links) available at [http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu/pdf\\_files/esl\\_ld.pdf](http://ldlink.coe.utk.edu/pdf_files/esl_ld.pdf) that includes information about how learning disabilities affect an English language learner, the problems in identifying LD in an ESL/ESOL learner, and how adult education programs support these learners.

Included in the publication are questions that ESOL/ESL instructors may use to informally screen students for possible learning disabilities. The screening process includes observations and interview based on the framework of the essential questions targeted: (1) Has the problem persisted over a long period of time? (2) Has the problem persisted despite normal, appropriate instruction? (3) Does the learner show a clear pattern of strengths and weaknesses both in and out of the classroom? Ms. Schwarz discusses these questions in-depth and follows with two case studies to illustrate how the screening process would be conducted in an adult education setting.

*GED Accommodations for AD/HD*

Although the L-15 form is used for requesting accommodations for both learning disabilities (LD) and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD), some instructors may not be aware that the documentation differs greatly depending on the diagnosis. To request accommodations for LD, the student must have documentation from within the last five years that includes an I.Q. test; e.g. the WAIS-III and an achievement test such as the WJ-III. (Details at <http://www.aalrc.org/resources/ld/referralProcess.aspx>) But to request accommodations for AD/HD, the student only has to provide a letter from the doctor who diagnosed the disorder that states when the student was diagnosed and what accommodations would be necessary during instruction and testing. Statistics show that about 30% of people with LD also have AD/HD, so if the student does not have current documentation for the LD, and does not want to go through the process of obtaining new documentation, the accommodations received for the AD/HD will sometimes be sufficient for the student to pass the GED tests. For more information, contact Patti White, AALRC Disabilities Project Manager at [prwhite@madisoncounty.net](mailto:prwhite@madisoncounty.net) or 800.569.3539.

*Arkansas Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities Scholarship*

The Arkansas Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities awards several \$1,000 scholarships each year to high school and GED graduates with disabilities. Applications are available through the Governor's Commission and are graded on the basis of achievement, community involvement, goals, and the student's disability challenges. The deadline this year is January 28, 2005. Contact the Governor's Commission at (501) 296-1626 or (501) 296-1623 for an application form. If you need any more information, please contact Klaus Neu at (501) 907-2490 or [klaus@aalrc.org](mailto:klaus@aalrc.org).

*Experience with Reading Plus Program*

Mela Dee Gillespie, Instructor, Fort Smith Adult Education Center (AEC)

I have been using the Reading Plus program in the Learning Lab at Fort Smith AEC since 1999. I have been very impressed with what Guided Reading, the bare bones reading program, can do. At first we purchased only the first 6 reading levels. After the first few months of using Reading Plus, I realized we needed more. Unfortunately, because of budget constraints, we were not able to purchase the upper reading levels until 2 years had passed. We then purchased up to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. Finally, in 2003 we purchased the remaining reading levels for Guided Reading. It's sad that money is always such an issue in education.

I recommend Reading Plus (RP) for all readers reading below the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level. I also recommend RP for students that need a higher reading level on the TABE test to obtain a job. (They usually need at least a 10<sup>th</sup> grade level.) From my experience, if a student will use the program, their reading will improve. One of our problems in Adult Ed. is that our students are not a captive audience. We can't force them to come or to do anything they don't want to do. However, the ones that have used Guided Reading on a regular basis have improved their reading scores.

An example of success is Henry. He took the D level TABE test on 11/3/03 and scored 3.6 in reading. Henry came to the Learning Lab and I gave him the VTA, which stands for Vision Therapy Assessment. (It is a series of simple tests that indicate if the person's eyes are working together. If they are not, the person will experience several kinds of uncomfortable symptoms while reading.) Henry failed several parts of this test. Every day that he came I had him do both of the PAVE exercises that are part of the RP program (SCAN for five minutes and FLASH four groups of ten). Then I instructed him to read as many stories in Guided Reading as he wanted to read. (I recommend that students do a minimum of two stories.) Henry was trying to get a job, that's why he was taking the TABE test to start with. Since he had plenty of time after being laid off a job, Jerry came in the Learning Lab every day at 8:00 a.m. and stayed until 1:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. On 2/19/04 his unemployment ran out so he retook the TABE test. This time he scored 6.6 on it. I wish Henry could have continued using the program. I feel quite confident that, if he had been able to continue, he would have reached his goal of 10.0 on the TABE. I wish for him that we would have been able to offer the online version, so Henry could have continued at home if he wanted to. However, I also think gaining three grade levels in the three months Henry used the program was an impressive gain.

Another example of a good success is Tim. Tim was like Henry; he needed a job. Tim took the D level TABE test on 1/29/03 and scored 5.4 in reading. He didn't use PAVE because his eyes tested OK on the VTA. I put him in Reading Plus. Like Henry, Tim was out of work, so he came to the Learning Lab at 8:00a.m and left about 1:00p.m., Monday through Thursday. On 4/9/03 Tim retook the level D TABE and scored 9.4 in reading. I'd say gaining four grade levels in a little over 3 months was very impressive.

This year I am very excited that we are going to be able to obtain the "Reading Around Words" section of Reading Plus. Reading Around Words is a vocabulary program that interfaces with Guided Reading. It uses vocabulary words from Dr. Fry and Dr. Spache. (They are the ones who do the spell check and thesaurus for Microsoft.) According to these experts, if a person knew these particular words, they would be able to read with better comprehension. I think the combination of these two sections will greatly increase the speed at which my students will gain proficiency. I am looking forward to documenting this.

My Christmas wish is for every Adult Education program in Arkansas to obtain the Reading Plus program. It is a mainstay in our Learning Lab. I am not aware of any other program that does what Reading Plus does.