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Newest Board Members

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# The Literacy Professional

A publication of ILA's *Specialized Reading Professionals* Special Interest Group

Interview with Heather Bell:

## A New Zealand Star

By Jack Cassidy, Co-editor,  
The Literacy Professional



*Heather Bell is a longtime member of the Specialized Literacy Professionals SIG and a personal friend whom I have known and admired for over 30 years. Currently she is the principal of the Rosebank School in Auckland, New Zealand. Most of the children come from low-income families and over 80% are English language learners. As an educator, she has held many different positions in the New Zealand Schools including: classroom teacher, principal, inspector of schools and education review officer. She has twice served as president of the New Zealand Reading Association and has been the local arrangements chair for the ILA World Congress on Reading 2000 and 2010. From 2011 until 2014, she served as a member of the board of the International Literacy Association (formerly the International*

*Reading Association). This article could just be about her service to children and the literacy community, but it is about Heather Bell, the wonderful person.*

**1. Tell us about your early life.**

I was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, the oldest of five children. Both my parents were peripatetic travellers, and we moved from country to country quite often. It was wonderful! However, periodically my mother would get homesick for Belfast, and we would return to Northern Ireland. We arrived in New Zealand when I was 13, and when I was 16, my mother decided that we should once again return to Northern Ireland. I begged my parents to let me remain in New Zealand. My history teacher persuaded my father to let me stay promising to write my father every month reporting on my progress. Luckily, I had made many friends in New Zealand and they became my surrogate families. I then went to Massey University and North Shore Teachers College, and began my career in education. My parents continued to travel the world, never staying anywhere too long. Their final years were spent in Australia. I married my husband Glynne, a New Zealander, in 1968. I love education and the children and teachers in my school. There is no research in the world that says children from poorer communities are less clever or capable than those from richer areas, and our kids are proving that, so we're very proud of them.

**2. Do you have a person or persons you consider a mentor?**

I have actually had hundreds of mentors, Undoubtedly the most well known, was Dr. Marie Clay of the University of Auckland, a former ILA President and the founder of the Reading Recovery in New Zealand and around the world. She was an incredibly feisty woman with a deep commitment to promoting literacy for all children.

**3. Tell us about your avocations.**

Of course, given my family history, I love to travel and I will get on a plane at the drop

*Continued on next page.*

of a hat. Earlier this year we were in Maui. I am looking forward to ILA in Boston, and I will take a little side trip to Delaware to see former ILA staff members Alida Cutts and Brenda Townsend, who are personal friends from way back.

**4. What do you read for fun? What kinds of books do you read?**

High quality children's literature forms an integral part of my reading for fun. I use children's literature in my work with our children, to stretch their thinking and love of reading. The 'old' favorites are coming back. I've recently shared *I am David* with one Y5/6 class, *The Cay* with another, and *The Pushcart War* is our next term project with a Y4/5/6 class - all chosen to enhance each term's concepts - Identity for *David*, Challenge for *Cay* and Business for *Pushcart*. Other than children's literature, I have no specific kind of fiction that I read although I do like what Jack Pikulski calls "airport books." For non-fiction, I tend to read books about leadership. I am fascinated with the insights I can glean from those in other professions.

**5. What is your favorite food? Broccoli.**

WOW, I don't think I have ever heard anyone say that broccoli was their favorite food. Thank you, Heather. You have led a fascinating life. Your commitment to education and to children certainly rivals that of your mentor Marie Clay

*(Jack Cassidy is the Executive Secretary of the Specialized Literacy Professionals SIG and co-editor with Jennifer Shettel of the newsletter. He is a former president and board member of the International Reading Association and the Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers (ALER). Ideas for newsletters should be sent to dr.jackcassidy@gmail.com)*

## Chair's Message

Dear Members,

Our SIG Board of Directors has been busy this year providing several events and there are more to come!

**2015 Webinars.** Along with the literacy faculty of the University of Texas, San Antonio, we hosted two webinars for literacy professionals. Julie Coiro, current ILA Board Member, Associate Professor at the University of Rhode Island, and dynamic leader of digital literacies instruction, was the keynote speaker for the first webinar entitled, *Online Reading Comprehension: Opportunities and Challenges*, and the second webinar, entitled *Strategies for Supporting Productive Online Inquiry*.

If you were unable to attend our live webinars, they are archived for you to access independently. The first webinar (held February 2) is archived at this address (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9t9zGKZV4c&feature=youtu.be#sthash.oCpI0Dey.dpuf>). The second webinar (held March 30) is archived at this address ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwuyKZMxPJQ&feature=em-share\\_video\\_user#sthash.oCpI0Dey.dpuf](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uwuyKZMxPJQ&feature=em-share_video_user#sthash.oCpI0Dey.dpuf)).

**2016 Literacy Summit.** Our SIG will join with the University of the Incarnate, San Antonio, Texas, and the Texas Association of Literacy Educators (TALE) to host a Literacy Summit February 12 and 13, 2016, celebrating the 20th anniversary of *What's Hot and What's Not*

*in Literacy Education and Leadership!* Co-Chairs are Stephanie Grote-Garcia, Jack Cassidy, and Elda Martinez. Additional information will be shared as the program develops. We will have featured speakers addressing the "hot" topics and offer both large group and small group sessions, with invited and refereed papers and an online published yearbook with refereed papers.

**Advocacy.** We have three information pieces related to advocacy for you to pursue. **First**, the results of the National Survey of Literacy Professionals (sponsored by our SIG and ILA) and conducted by Dr. Rita Bean and our SIG colleagues is now posted online at this address (<http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/AZG7Py84TaTNJuBQZKFI/full>). This research was published this spring (2015) in the *Literacy Research and Instruction Journal*, 54(2), 83-114. Don't miss this paper as it provides information on the current status of the roles and responsibilities of literacy specialists. **Second**, ILA has several postings related to our SIG members. First, there is the position paper with recommendations related to the Reauthorization of the ESEA policy. (search for: esea-advocacy-position.pdf). Second, there is the paper coming from research of Dr. Rita Bean and colleagues' national survey that identifies the multiple roles of school-based specialized literacy professionals. (Search for: literacy-professionals-position-statement.pdf). **Take Action.** Please study these recommendations carefully and share these with your colleagues, legislators, and policy makers. **Third**, we want to hear from you. Please send suggestions on how we can address policies and actions that are most troubling to you and that seem to impede rather than support your professional work. Addressing our mission of advocacy, we want to take a proactive stance on these issues and communicate with those that may be open to listening to our perspective on the professional work of specialized literacy professionals. Additionally, please send suggestions on how our SIG can support your professional efforts. We will be planning projects for the next few years and will appreciate your advice on how we can support you. You can email me directly in response to this request at [victoria.j.risko@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:victoria.j.risko@vanderbilt.edu) And please like our Facebook page, Specialized Literacy Professionals! We want to hear from you.

Vicki Risko  
Chair, Specialized Literacy Professionals  
Special Interest Group

*(In addition to being chair of the SIG, Dr. Risko is a former ILA President and former president of the Association for Literacy Educators and Researchers. She is a member of the Reading Hall of Fame.)*

## Literacy Research and Practice – 2016 Celebrating 20 Years of What's Hot

Literacy Summit – San Antonio, February 12 & 13, 2016

The Specialized Literacy Professionals Special Interest Group (SIG) of the International Literacy Association (ILA), the Texas Association for Literacy Education (TALE) and the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio will be hosting an international summit for all of those interested in reading and/or literacy (<http://literacysummit.weebly.com/>). The summit will be held on Friday and Saturday, February 12 and 13, 2016 on the University of the Incarnate Word (ICWU) campus. Shuttle service from the headquarters hotel (Hyatt Place) to the airport and the ICWU campus will be provided free of

charge. Registration for the conference i(\$150) includes a Friday wine and cheese reception and a Saturday lunch.

The Friday Keynote speakers include former IRA/ILA presidents and Reading Hall of Fame members Jack Cassidy, Linda Gambrell and Victoria Risko. Other keynote speakers will be up-and-coming scholars Estanislado Barrera IV, Stephanie Grote-Garcia and Evan Ortlieb. All six of these presenters have been involved as respondents or co-authors of the annual “What’s Hot in Literacy” study. Some of the topics to be discussed include: Common Core State Standards/Texas Standards; Close Reading; Motivation, Literacy Coaching, Motivation and Writing.

The Saturday keynote speakers include “What’s Hot” responders: Marcie Craig Post, of the International Literacy Association and Reading Hall of Fame member and former IRA/ILA Board member Donald Leu. The conference concludes with noted children’s author Guadalupe Garcia McCall. In addition to the keynote speakers on Friday and Saturday, there will be dozens of sessions, roundtables, and poster presentations on a variety of topics. Contact summit chair **Dr. Stephanie Grote-Garcia** ([grotegar@uiwtx.edu](mailto:grotegar@uiwtx.edu)) for more information

February in San Antonio is gorgeous with temperatures in the sixties and sunny skies. The famed Riverwalk is one of the country’s foremost tourist destinations along with the Alamo, and the other Spanish missions. So COME ONE, COME ALL.

## Our Members Publish! 2014

By Jennifer Shettel, Millersville University, PA

**Rita Bean** (University of Pittsburgh) published:

- Bean, R. M., Dole, J. A., Nelson, K. L., Belcastro, E., & Zigmond, N. (2015). The sustainability of a national reading reform initiative in two states. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 31(1), 30-55.

**Camille Blachowicz** (National College of Education of National Louis University):

- Cobb, C. & Blachowicz, C. (2014). No more ‘Look up the List’ Vocabulary Instruction. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Blachowicz, C. L. Z. & Fisher, P. (2014). Best practices in vocabulary instruction. In L. Morrow & L. Gambrell (Eds.), *Best practices in teaching vocabulary* (5th ed.). New York: Guilford.

**Jack Cassidy** (Millersville University of PA) and Stephanie Grote-Garcia (University of the Incarnate Word) collaborated on the annual “What’s Hot” column:

- Cassidy, J. & Grote-Garcia, S. (2014). What’s hot... & What’s not - While some things remain unchanged for 2015, new areas of interest emerge in ILA’s annual survey. *Reading Today* 32 (2), 8-12.

**Jerry Johns** (Northern Illinois University Emeritus, DeKalb) published:

- Johns, J. L., & Lenski, S. D. (2014). *Improving reading: Strategies, resources, and Common Core connections* (6th ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.

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- Manderino, M, Berglund, R. L., & Johns, J. L. (2014). *Content area learning: Bridges to disciplinary literacy* (4th ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.

**Evan Ortlieb** (St. Johns University, NY) published:

- Ortlieb, E. (2014). *Theoretical models of learning and literacy development*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group.
- Ortlieb, E., Sargent, S., & Moreland, M. (2014). Evaluating the efficacy of using a digital reading environment to improve reading comprehension within a reading clinic. *Reading Psychology*, 35(5), 397-421.

**Jodi Pilgrim** (University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton, TX) published:

- Pilgrim, J., Vasinda, S., Leavell, J., Hollier, D.R. (2014). Case studies of one-to-one iPad initiatives in teacher preparation programs. *The Texas Forum of Teacher Education*, 4(1), 19-42.
- Pilgrim, J., & Berry, J. (2014). Technology integration with teacher candidates in a summer camp setting. *Journal of Digital Literacy in Teacher Education*, 30(4), 131-138.

**Victoria Risko** (Vanderbilt University) co-authored a book chapter:

- Risko, V. J., & Walker-Dalhouse, D. (2015). Best practices to change the trajectory of struggling readers. In L. Gambrell & L. Morrow (Eds.), *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction*, Fifth Edition (107-126). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

**Misty Sailors** (The University of Texas at San Antonio) published:

- Sailors, M., Hoffman, J. V., Pearson, P. D., McClung, N., Shin, J., Phiri, L., & Saka, T. (2014). Supporting change in literacy instruction in Malawi. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 49, 2, 209-231.
- Sailors, M., & Hoffman, J. V. (2014). Evaluation, Change and Program Improvement: The Role of the Literacy Specialist. *The Administration and Supervision of Reading Programs* (5th ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

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**Laurie Sharp** (Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas) published:

- Sharp, L.A. (2014). Literacy in the digital age. *The Language and Literacy Spectrum*, 24, 74-83.
- Sharp, L.A. (2014). The effect of explicit instruction with writing conventions among preservice teachers. *Georgia Journal of Reading*, 37(1), 18-22.

**Jennifer Shettel** (Millersville University of PA) published a group book review:

- Napoli, M., Berger-Knorr, A., Colabucci, L., & Shettel, J. (2014). Read all about it! Introducing multimodal nonfiction text sets. *PA Reads*, 13 (1), 5-9.

**Wolfram Verlaan** (University of Alabama) collaborated on a publication with **Evan Ortlieb** (St. Johns University, NY):

- Verlaan, W., Ortlieb, E., & Verlaan, S. (2014). Developing argument through evidence-based responses to student-generated questions. *Voices from the Middle*, 21(3), 34-40.

**Shelley B. Wepner** (Manhattanville College) published:

- Wepner, S. B. (2014). The role of leadership in the PDS. In J. Ferrara (Au.), *Professional development schools: Creative solutions for educators* (pp. 121-128). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Wepner, S. B. (2014). Developing partnerships through collaboration to promote professional development. In S. Kragler, L. Martin, K. L. Bauserman, & D. Quatroche (Eds.), *The handbook of professional development, PK-12: Successful models and practice* (pp. 339-358). New York: Guilford.

Please submit your publications for 2015. to Jennifer Shettel ([Jennifer.Shettel@millersville.edu](mailto:Jennifer.Shettel@millersville.edu)) Submissions must be published during the 2015 calendar year.

## Newest Board Members

The newest Board members for the Specialized Literacy Professionals (a Special Interest Group SIG of the International Literacy Association) are already hard at work.

**Evan Ortlieb** Chair-elect Dr. Evan Ortlieb is a professor and graduate literacy coordinator at St. John's University in New York City. He recently completed four years at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. Prior to that he taught at universities in Texas and Georgia. A prolific author, he is a graduate of Louisiana State University and previously served as a Board member for SIG. He will be a keynote speaker at the Literacy Summit in February, 2016.



**Stephanie Grote-Garcia** Dr. Grote-Garcia is an Associate Professor at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio where she also holds The Sister Theophane Power Endowed Chair in Education. A graduate of Texas A&M university-Corpus Christit, she is the coordinator of the SIG's upcoming Literacy Summit and also coordinated the SIG's 2012 summit. She was instrumental in forming the Texas Association for Literacy Education (TALE).



**Diane Kern** Diane Kern is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at the University of Rhode Island, USA. Her research interests include comprehension strategy instruction, transformative pedagogy, and improving reading specialist/literacy coach teacher education. Dr. Kern was a lead writer of the *ILA Standards for Reading Professionals—Revised 2010* and currently serves as the International Literacy Association's SPA Coordinator for CAEP accreditation.



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