

Asilomar 33

“And the Work Is Play for Mortal Stakes . . .”



Asilomar Conference Grounds
Pacific Grove

September 23-25, 1983

Curriculum Study Commission
Central California Council of Teachers of English



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“And the Work Is Play for
Mortal Stakes . . .” – Robert Frost

Perhaps we don't think seriously enough about “play.” Perhaps we need to be reminded that language itself is play, that the poet is playing with words to create the poem, and that entertainment, enjoyment, and play were all part of the original intent when the stories, dramas, and poems that we teach were composed.

Each year, on the last weekend in September, we English teachers come to Asilomar and engage in an exchange of ideas about literature and language, about teaching and students – about the work that we do all year long. Each year at Asilomar, we are reminded that the work does, indeed, become play, and we find that the commitment to our ideals creates the mortal stakes for both our students and ourselves. And we find that we can forget for a while the difficulties of the work as we discover new writers or new ways to view familiar writers. Play becomes the means by which we renew ourselves.

Perhaps if we were to invest more in the idea of play, the work would become even more pleasurable. The stakes we play for couldn't be more important – for ourselves, for our students, for our culture.

For additional information or extra copies of this brochure, please write:

Arnold Solkov
2216 Cummings Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Gary Phillips
500 Cheshire Lane
Modesto, CA 95350

The Asilomar conference is sponsored by the Curriculum Study Commission of the Central California Council of Teachers of English, an affiliate of the California Association of Teachers of English and the National Council of Teachers of English.



Program September 23-25, 1983

Friday, September 23

- 3:30 p.m. Registration opens
4:30-6 p.m. Reception hosted by the CCCTE Executive Board
7:30-9 p.m. General Session I
CYRA McFADDEN, writer-in-residence
9:15-10 p.m. Workshop Session I

Saturday, September 24

- 9 a.m.-noon Workshop Sessions II and III
12:30-1:30 p.m. Mystery Book Exchange*
1:30-3 p.m. Workshop Session IV
4:30-6 p.m. Reception hosted by the Curriculum Study Commission
7:30-8:30 p.m. READINGS: POETRY AND PROSE
— from the work of Commission members and participants in Asilomar writing groups
8:45-10:30 p.m. SATURDAY NIGHT MOVIE
"Picnic at Hanging Rock"

Sunday, September 25

- 9-10 a.m. Workshop Session V
10:30 a.m.-noon General Session II
WALTER LOBAN, teacher, author, and curriculum developer
JAMES SQUIRE, teacher, author, and publisher

Bookstore

The on-site bookstore is managed this year by Cover-to-Cover, 2254 Clement St., San Francisco, CA 94121, (415) 668-6004; and 3910-24th St., San Francisco, CA 94114, (415) 282-8080, and will be open all weekend in the Administration Building.

*Mystery Book Exchange

Participants who bring one or more used paperback mystery books may exchange with others a like number of books. Details will be provided at Registration on Friday.

Featured Presentations

CYRA McFADDEN

A full-time freelance writer living in San Francisco, Cyra McFadden received her B.A. and M.A. in English Literature at San Francisco State College where she also taught in the English department and administered the campus literacy exam. She is the author of *The Serial*, a novel that parodies the laid-back lifestyle of Marin County. In addition, she has written both fiction and nonfiction for *McCalls*, *Smithsonian*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Tri-Quarterly*, *The Nation*, and other publications. She has also written for television and for the movies. At present she is working on a nonfiction book about rodeos.

"PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK"

An intriguing film, directed by Peter Weir and based on a true story that took place in a girls' school in Australia in 1900. While on a Valentine's Day picnic, three of the girls and one of their teachers disappear, and the film shows the effect of this strange occurrence and its aftermath on the others in the school. Weir dramatizes this enigmatic mystery — which remains unsolved to this day — while probing beneath the deceptively calm surface of Victorian-era Australia. Beautifully photographed in rich but muted colors, the film stimulates lively discussion and speculation.

WALTER LOBAN

Known for his two landmark research studies — one, a longitudinal study on language development in children, the other on the relation between literature and social sensitivity — Walter Loban also spent many years as a public school teacher of grades 5-12 in Minnesota, Illinois, and Virginia. He received his M.A. from the University of Chicago and his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota which later recognized his unique contributions by conferring on him the rarely-given outstanding achievement award. He also received the distinguished research award from NCTE. Not as well known is the fact that he was a lieutenant commander in the Navy during World War II and was cited by the Commander of the Atlantic Fleet for outstanding performance. He has been a consultant and "helper" in curriculum development all over California, from San Diego to Eureka. He is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Education at UC Berkeley.

JAMES SQUIRE

Asilomar 33 is a homecoming for Jim Squire. He is a native Californian who traces his professional roots back to the very first Asilomar conference that developed from the Hilda Taba group process leadership conference at San Francisco State College. He served as Chairman of the CCCTE Curriculum Study Commission and was a Lecturer and Associate Director of Teacher Education at UC Berkeley, before leaving for the Midwest to become Executive Secretary of NCTE as well as Professor of English at the University of Illinois. His next career change took him to the East Coast where he has been Senior Vice President, Editor-in-Chief, Publisher, and Director of Research for Ginn and Co. in Lexington, Massachusetts. He has twice been national chairman of the Association of American Publishers, and is currently President of the National Conference on Research in English. He has written or edited nine books — most on teaching reading and English/language arts — and more than a hundred articles. (Many California teachers have used *Teaching Language and Literature, Grades 7-12*, by Walter Loban, Margaret Ryan, and James Squire.) While completing his Ph.D. at UC, Berkeley his advisor was Walter Loban.

Workshop Sessions

The Asilomar conference is built on group sharing; each person meets with one workshop group throughout the weekend. Although each group will have a resource person, these people are not intended to function as lecturers. Rather, it is the workshop participants themselves who help determine the direction of the discussion which evolves from the program description. This emphasis on good talking, on pursuing intellectual interests together, has given the Asilomar conference its singular reputation.

Please select the workshop—both first and second choice—in which you will enjoy being a contributing member. (You are asked to submit two choices since continuation of each workshop depends on the number of sign-ups.)

Letters following titles indicate workshops that have a grade-level focus:

E	Elementary
I	Intermediate
J	Junior High
S	Secondary
C	College

1. Talk, Talk, Talk

Why do some students speak, read, and write easily while others do not? Research into the acquisition of oral language skills holds some of the answers. This workshop will consider practical oral language activities for the classroom, both as means of effective communication and as tools for learning.

2. Utopia: No Place to Be in 1984 (I,J,C)

The group will explore utopian themes from such works as *The Republic*, *Utopia*, *1984*, *Brave New World*, and *Walden Two*. Discussions will focus on how politics, education, and science are portrayed, and how study of these works can be incorporated into classroom teaching. In addition, *1984* and *Brave New World* will be available for viewing and discussion. **Suggested readings:** Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*; George Orwell, *1984*; B.F. Skinner, *Walden Two*

3. Short Works of Herman Melville (S,C)

The group will discuss and analyze the short prose works of Melville, including "Billy Budd," "Bartleby the Scrivener," and "Benito Cereno." The group will also read some of Melville's poetry. **Suggested reading:** Richard Chase, ed., *Herman Melville: Selected Tales and Poems*

4. Myths from Around the World (E,I,J)

Mythology provides fantasy and enchantment that can be shared and discussed. The group will explore strategies to enhance the teaching of myths to children and adolescents, including rewriting and dramatizations. Bring a favorite myth or collection to share.

11. Writing Across Two Departments (S)

Beginning with a description of an operating writing program in two departments (English and Social Science, Grade 9), the group will deal with the process of developing a writing program across the curriculum. Group members are encouraged to bring a colleague from a second subject matter area. Group processes will focus on planning, implementation, development of materials, providing teacher training. Materials will be provided.

12. Dylan Thomas (S,C)

A seminar in which to study 12-15 poems that reflect the development of the poet's art, with special attention to those poems that are appropriate for classroom instruction. The group will also explore techniques for analyzing Thomas's more accessible poems. **Suggested reading:** Dylan Thomas, *Collected Poems*

13. Go to the Devil—With Boito, Gounod, and Berlioz

Focusing on three versions of the Faust legend in opera—*Mefistofele*, *Faust*, and *The Damnation of Faust*—the group will explore the workings of the legend and the artistic variations in the three works. Activities will include close analysis of the libretto, listening activities, and various vocal interpretations. Recordings and tapes will be provided. Bring copies of the libretti if you have them.

14. Critical Thinking, Reasoning, Semantics: Weapons Against Doublespeak (S,C)

In a society where taxes are labeled "revenue enhancers," ICBM's named "Peacemakers," and homey anecdotes provide the rationale for major changes in national social policy, intellect is on the defensive. When 30 seconds are considered the optimum length for a political tv ad, critical thinking skills have atrophied. This group will examine research on the teaching of critical thinking skills, techniques of problem solving, defenses against manipulative language. Emphasis will be on applications of critical thinking skills to the teaching of reading and writing.

15. 800 Ocean View Blvd.

Place, people, form, and philosophy in John Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*, "The Snake," and *Sweet Thursday*, all set at 800 Ocean View Blvd., Monterey. Exploration and discussion of story and theme, loneliness and hooptedoodle, then and now. Pre-reading requested. Field trip possible. **Suggested readings:** John Steinbeck, *Cannery Row* and *Sweet Thursday*; Joel Hedgpeth, *The Outer Shores*, Part I and Part II

16. Writing Fiction

Group members will write several times during the weekend, read their work aloud, and participate in constructive critiques. These exercises will include writing effective openings, developing character, experimenting with point of view, and writing from an external stimulus (a picture, a piece of music). Finished short stories or works in progress may also be brought for reading aloud and critiquing.

22. Poetry Writing Workshop

For beginning as well as experienced poets, this workshop will concentrate on poetry that develops a sense of setting or place. On Saturday afternoon, group members will explore the Asilomar grounds and beach in search of their own place and poems. Bring ten copies of one poem in progress that incorporates a sense of place.

23. The Fiction of Milan Kundera

Focusing primarily on *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, this workshop is planned for those who would enjoy spending time with other readers talking about provocative ideas. About the book, John Updike said, "It is brilliant and original, written in a purity and wit that invite us directly in Kundera is able to merge personal and political significance with the ease of a Camus." Group members should read this and perhaps one or more of Kundera's other works available in English—*The Joke*, *Laughable Loves*, *Farewell Party*, or *Life Is Elsewhere*.

24. Short Story Practicum

The short story is the most widely used genre at all levels of teaching—as entertainment in its own right, as an adit to the richer mine of the novel, as a diving board into the symbolic pools of poetry, and as catalyst for the alchemy of composition. Group members will hear and question some presenters about new and varied techniques; they will also read and discuss two or three stories (to be provided), and devise, share, and critique activities or assignments based on these tales. Group members are invited to bring 35 copies of one favorite and successful short story assignment to explain and share with the group. The Friday evening session will begin with a focus on Stephen Crane's "The Open Boat," which all should read before the conference.

25. Shakespeare's Women: Pivotal or Peripheral? (S,C)

Through one comedy (*The Merchant of Venice*), one tragedy (*Othello*), and one history play (*Richard III*), the group will examine the role of particular women, attempting to determine whether they are expendable or essential to the dramatic and/or artistic movement of the play. Bring copies of the three plays.

BAY AREA WRITING PROJECT WORKSHOPS

Teacher-Consultants from the Bay Area Writing Project will serve as discussion leaders in the following four workshops.

26. Christensen Revisited: Beyond Sentence Combining (I,J,S,C)

This group will examine combining and generating techniques that focus on the paragraph and larger structures. Extensions of sentence combining and refinements of Christensen's generative read (or reread) Christensen's "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence" and "A Generative Rhetoric of the Paragraph."

Suggested readings: Francis Christensen, *Notes Toward a New Rhetoric*; James Gray and Robert Benson, *Sentence and Paragraph Modeling*

Membership Fees

Members of CCCTE or any other regional affiliate of the California Association of Teachers of English (CATE) pay the reduced registration fee.

Those who pay the non-member fee automatically receive a one-year membership in CATE, effective October 1, 1983, which entitles them to reduced rates at other conferences (including the annual CATE convention) and a one-year subscription to **California English**. (Those who do not wish to become members may so specify at the conference registration desk at Asilomar.)

Current CATE members or those whose membership has expired recently may renew their membership at the Asilomar conference registration desk.

Lodging and Meals

The accommodation fee includes two nights' lodging and six (6) meals (Friday dinner, served at 6:30 p.m., through Sunday lunch).

The fee varies with the type of accommodation requested. **Please note:** Only a limited number of single and lower priced double rooms are available. All room assignments are on a first-come, first-served basis.

Local residents may register for the conference on a nonresidential basis by paying the off-grounds fee of \$10. Meals are not included; however, individual meal tickets may be purchased at Asilomar.

Saturday Reception

For an additional \$3, participants may attend the reception on Saturday afternoon. (Both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages will be available.)

We hope all of the registration procedures are self-explanatory; however

if you have questions . . .

About registration or lodgings:

Write to Sister Katharine Emery, O.P., 474 W. Estudillo Ave., San Leandro, CA 94577

About CCCTE/CATE membership:

Write to Norma Fifer, 947 Lathrop Place, Stanford, CA 94305.

Registration Form

5. "What Do You Make of It?" Responding to Literature

Group members will share and discuss a variety of methods and materials for stimulating student responses to literature. The approaches presented include ways to check comprehension, encourage personal interpretation, and enhance enjoyment. Group members should bring 25 copies of one assignment that elicits writing or some other form of response to literature.

Suggested reading: Louise Rosenblatt, *The Reader, the Text, and the Poem*

6. Whither Education: Shifting American Values

Social and cultural changes as well as changes in attitudes, values, and expectations are affecting schools in general and student attitudes and expectations in particular, causing the erosion of literacy and, thereby, the fading of the humanities. Through discussions, group members will seek definition and focus for this baffling problem that challenges all teachers.

Suggested advance reading: Fritjof Capra, *The Turning Point: Science, Society, and the Rising Culture*

7. Noble Literature: Five Laureates (S,C)

An opportunity to talk about great literature, focusing on the Nobel Prize-winning authors of the last five years—Isaac Bashevis Singer, Odysseus Elytis, Czeslaw Milosz, Elias Canetti, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The group will discuss why these writers won, connections and interrelationships among the writings, and ways to use some of the works in the classroom. **Suggested readings:** Singer, *Shosha*; Elytis, *Poems*; Milosz, *Visions from San Francisco*; Canetti, *The Tongue Set Free*; and Marquez, *100 Years of Solitude*

8. Managing the Numbers/Shuffling the Papers

What do you do when there are too many students and too many papers? This workshop is designed to help teachers develop ways for effectively increasing student practice in writing without increasing the paperload.

9. Eudora Welty: A Southern Imagination

Group members will discuss short stories dealing with the Gothic, the mythic, the casual, and the haunted in Eudora Welty's south. **Suggested reading:** *The Collected Short Stories of Eudora Welty*

10. The Detective as Hero

The fictional detective brings order out of chaos, stands for a fixed set of values. He is, as Raymond Chandler said, "... a man . . . who is not himself mean. . . . He is the hero." This group will examine the heroic qualities of the classic sleuth, the hard-boiled dick, and the police detective. For background material, group members should read *Detective Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by Robin Winks, and for specific application of critical insights, P.D. James's *The Black Tower*.

17. Teaching English as a Second or Other Language

English is one of the easiest yet most difficult subjects to teach to non-native speakers: easy, because there are language facts that can be taught directly; difficult, because students often don't comprehend or incorporate these facts into their actual use of English. This workshop will investigate ways to integrate form (the language facts) and function (incorporating the facts into students' use of spoken and written English). Group members are invited to bring along samples of student work, texts, exercises, and anecdotes.

18. After the Holocaust: Books About the Bomb (S,C)

Using a humanistic rather than a political approach, the group will discuss the implications of recent anti-nuclear literature, the assumptions the authors make, and the questions the literature raises about the nature and future of the human race. **Suggested reading** (at least two): Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth*; Bernard Malamud, *God's Choice*; Russell Hoban, *Riddley Walker*; Raymond Briggs, *When the Wind Blows*; Norman Cousins, *Human Options*

19. "Errorless Learning:" Strategies from New Research for Teaching Writing (E,I)

New research has identified specific strategies that teachers can use on a daily basis to elicit good student writing. Group members will discuss, design, and practice the following components: systematic curriculum design, effective instructional strategies, successful classroom management, simple record-keeping systems, organization of small groups and independent activities, and a holistic, standardized assessment tool. Bring a favorite language lesson.

20. Literature for New Americans (E,I,S)

Literature identifying the reader with old and new homelands, literature examining the ways one culture views another and how we come to feel at home will be the focus for reading and discussion. Group members are encouraged to bring favorites to share. **Suggested readings:** Mildred Taylor, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*; Eleanor Coerr, *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*

21. Thoreau's *Walden*: The Expectation of Dawn

Walden is especially appropriate for congenial study before a hearth at Asilomar. Because "books must be read as deliberately and reservedly as they were written" (from "Reading"), the group will concentrate on a few chapters, beginning with "Economy." **Suggested reading:** H.D. Thoreau, *Walden and Civil Disobedience*

27. Teaching in the Multicultural Urban School, K-6 (E)

This workshop will consider an interdisciplinary approach to working with children from diverse cultures in the urban school, and will offer specific techniques featuring folklore as a way to explore and to teach.

28. Teaching in the Multicultural Urban School, 7-12 (J,S)

Group members will share insights into understanding and respecting the cultures of all students through specific classroom techniques that use writing to establish connectedness within the group.

29. Teaching the Talented High School Student (S)

The group will explore techniques and exercises that stimulate academically talented high school students to think logically and critically and to become more inventive in making comparisons between reading and writing.

Conference Fees

Registration

Early Registration (by July 1)

Participants will receive a \$5 reduction by paying all conference fees (registration, lodging and meals) by July 1.

Regular Registration (by September 12)

Because a predetermined number of rooms on the Asilomar grounds have been reserved for this conference, registrations are processed in the order they are received until all spaces are filled. To be assured of accommodations, participants must register by paying all fees by September 12.

Refunds

For cancellations, a refund, minus a \$15 processing fee, will be granted if requested by September 12. No refunds will be granted after September 12.

Late Registration (after September 12)

The Asilomar management's more strict procedures now make it impossible to guarantee on-grounds accommodations for late registrants. Participants interested in registering after September 12 must call Arnold Solkov, (707) 545-7808, weekdays, 7-9:30 p.m. to determine whether rooms are still available on grounds.

Please fill out a separate form for each person registering.

Mail this form and your check for the full amount (made out to **Curriculum Study Commission**) to: Sister Katharine Emery, O.P., 474 W. Estudillo Ave., San Leandro, CA 94577

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____
number street

()
 city zip daytime telephone

Roommate(s) _____

School & district _____

Please give the number of the Workshop Session preferred:

First Choice _____ Second Choice _____

Registration Fee	CATE member	Non-member	Please fill in amount
Early registration (fees paid in full by July 1):	\$30	\$50	
Regular registration:	\$35	\$55	
Late registration (after September 12):	\$40	\$60	\$ _____

Lodging & Meals

(prices per person)

Please check accommodation desired:

Lodge/Scripps

- 2 to a room \$59
 Single \$71

Surf and Sand/Sea Galaxy

View Crescent/North Woods

- 2 to a room \$79
 4 to a room \$69
 (Surf and Sand/Sea Galaxy)
 Single \$99
 (View Crescent/North Woods) \$ _____

Smoker Nonsmoker
 Nonsmoker roommate, please

Off-Grounds Fee (required for anyone not staying in Asilomar lodgings) \$10 \$ _____

Saturday Reception (optional) \$3 \$ _____

Total fees enclosed \$ _____

Please check if this is your first Asilomar conference

2216 Cummings Drive
Santa Rosa, California 95404

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
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