

What are educators saying about the 2004 Authors Tour of Rural Schools?

“Boy, oh boy!! Was Verla Kay a hit in Harrington or what? Everyone is still raving about her presentation down to the dress she wore and how much she knew about the pioneers. Verla went to each classroom K-6 for presentations and was well received by staff and parents. Several books were sold and autographed at the end of the day. Her husband even had a gold panning demonstration for the fourth graders!!”

*Niels Peterson, Language Arts teacher
Harrington Elementary School*

“We thoroughly enjoyed our experience with Dennis [Held] and Tom [Davis]. They brought wonderful energy to their love of literature and conveyed that clearly to the kids. They make an interesting team -- different enough to give two perspectives but enough alike to make it a cohesive experience. They were very flexible and easy to work with, adapting to a variety of situations and making them all work. They were very willing to both share their work and listen to the kids share theirs. It was great for the kids to meet working writers; to help them understand someone can make it a life work. Thank you for this opportunity.”

*Hal Whitman, English teacher
Oakesdale High School*



“Some of us think poetry is like broccoli...it's meant for other people, not me. Why should I bring a poet into my classroom? Some poets use humor, others play it straight. Either way, poetry is a realm of truth-telling – and that involves good, hard work. To translate a slice of our physical world or emotional kingdom into words involves the tools of critical thinking: observation, reflection and connection.”

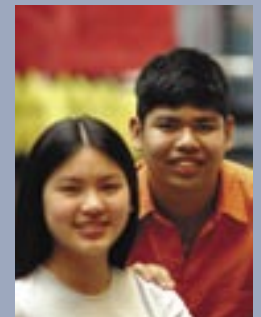
*Marny Lombard, coordinator
Get Lit! Young Writers Programs*

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Authors Tour of Rural Schools



*A Get Lit! Young Writers Program
presented by the
Eastern Washington University Press*

What is the Authors Tour of Rural Schools?

An educational outreach program of the *Get Lit!* Inland Northwest Literary Arts Festival and the Eastern Washington University Press, the Authors Tour of Rural Schools strives to bring published authors to small and remote schools in Eastern Washington where such literary enrichment may be difficult to arrange.

Participating authors spend a full day or multiple days visiting schools, from January through early April. The authors weave three strands into their visits:

- Sharing their work
- Discussing the writing life and their personal stories
- Leading students in writing exercises

Now in its second year, the *Get Lit!* Authors Tour of Rural Schools works to create a hands-on, joyous, 'oh-my-gosh' literary experience for students and teachers.

What types of authors participate?

About a dozen regional authors have made a commitment to participate in the 2005 *Get Lit!* Authors Tour of Rural Schools, including poets, novelists, nonfiction writers, children's authors, naturalists and humorists.

Although not all are household names, participating authors are carefully selected based on three key attributes:

- Published works of compelling prose or poetry
- A sense of passion for their work
- A good touch with young people

We match authors and teachers, depending on the genre and type of content that will most appeal to the students. Authors work directly with teachers to plan the particular emphasis of their visit. Authors understand that their visiting role includes teaching; several have teaching backgrounds.

Spokane author Jack Nisbet visits schools as part of the 2004 *Get Lit!* Young Writers Programs.



Holly Pickett/The Spokesman-Review

How have other schools used the authors?

Visiting authors are expected to offer four or five sessions during a typical day. Arranging a teachers-only session after school is also possible. One scenario used successfully by several schools includes 2-3 classroom sessions in the morning, a general school assembly right after lunch and individual sessions for interested students finishing the school day. We encourage schools to give their author a wee bit of breathing room -- last year one author was literally trailed into the restroom by her enthusiastic hosts!

Some of our authors appreciate the chance to offer their books for sale during their visits. They all appreciate teachers' ability to prepare their students in the weeks leading up to the writer's visit. We can send one author to your school, create a series of visits, or send a team of two or three authors for a one-day literary blitz!

Visit www.ewu.edu/getlit for more information about the *Get Lit!* Festival and Young Writer's Programs

How can I get my school involved?

Getting involved in the *Get Lit!* Authors Tour of Rural Schools is just a phone call away! We are planning up to 40 author visits this year and will complete scheduling by mid-January. Later bookings will be made on a case-by-case basis, only. Our authors are paid \$250 per visit, plus travel expenses – roughly one quarter of what visiting authors earn these days. To help offset this cost, the fee to participating schools is \$225 for a one-day visit. A limited number of reduced-fee scholarships are available, based on demonstrated need. Participating schools are billed through Eastern Washington University; the university in turn pays the authors.

Interested? Contact Marny Lombard, *Get Lit!* Young Writers Programs Coordinator at (509) 927-8865, (509) 623-4284 or getlitkids@mail.ewu.edu.

Tell me about *Get Lit!* and other Young Writers Programs!

The *Get Lit!* Young Writers Programs are an extension of the Inland Northwest Literary "Get Lit!" Arts Festival, now entering its seventh year. In 2005, *Get Lit!* will host internationally known author Salman Rushdie, former U.S. poet laureate Rita Dove, as well as other national, regional and local authors. The festival runs April 17-23, in Spokane and Cheney.

The *Get Lit!* Young Writers Programs launched in 2003 with Writers in the Schools Day. Held on Friday during the week-long *Get Lit!* Festival, Writers in the Schools Day matches volunteer writers with interested teachers and librarians in Spokane-area schools. Writers spend one or two hours in a school. The *Get Lit!* Young Writers Programs expanded in 2004 to include the Authors Tour of Rural Schools. During the tour's first year, 21 rural schools throughout Eastern Washington hosted 28 day-long author visits. Other events of interest to students are the Youth Poetry Slam and the KPBX/*Get Lit!* Kids Concert.