

April 28, 2005

Dear Parents and Guardians of TES Fifth-graders,

Hello! We would like to take a moment of your time to tell you about an exciting educational adventure that we are sharing with your children. First, let us introduce ourselves. We are Mrs. Emaly Conerly, Reference & Instruction Librarian, and Mrs. Melodi Goff, Serials & Systems Librarian, at Carson-Newman College.

Mrs. Conerly has many years of experience in libraries of all types and sizes and locations, from public to academic, rural to urban, Knoxville to Tallahassee. She has served as everything from Children's Librarian to acting assistant director of University Libraries. Mrs. Conerly joined the staff at Carson-Newman three years ago.

Some of you may remember Mrs. Goff from her work at Talbott as a substitute teacher prior to her joining the CN library as Serials Assistant. She spent the past academic year in Pittsburgh completing the MLIS degree, and is now a full-time librarian at Carson-Newman. Name sound familiar? She's also Mr. Goff's wife!

So, what are these two college librarians doing at an elementary school? Introducing the children to a necessary skill for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – information literacy! What is "information literacy"? The American Library Association has a long definition which you can find on their website at <http://www.ala.org>. We'll give you a summary: information literacy is recognizing that there's something you need to know, being able to find accurate, useful answers to that need, and using that information responsibly. We firmly believe that if students are introduced to the necessary skills and techniques of information literacy at an early age, their educational future will be greatly enhanced.

How are we doing this? We are working with Mrs. Moates, Mrs. MacLennan, and Mr. Goff to introduce the students to a wonderful web-based resource made freely available to all schools in the state of Tennessee – the Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL). TEL is a select collection of databases containing information about a large variety of quality resources such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, journals, magazines, and newspapers. Most of the resources in these databases are full-text, which means you can find not just the reference to an article, but the entire article, in the database. After meeting with the teachers in two planning sessions, we met the classes for the first time today. The PowerPoint presentation that we used can be found on the Talbott Library website at <http://jc-schools.net/tes/library/classroom>.

Although we are, of course, showing the children how to use the databases that are especially designed for use by youngsters, TEL is by no means only a children's resource. We would like to encourage you to use the TEL databases for your own information needs. Any computer with internet access can get you to the Tennessee Electronic Library.

We will be holding two more instruction sessions with the students, one next Thursday, May 5, and the third and final one on Monday, May 9. Mrs. Moates and Mrs. MacLennan will be reinforcing the skills taught, and giving assignments that will require the students to use the TEL databases. We are all delighted with this opportunity to work together and help your children become savvy information users in an age of information (and *mis*information) overload. If you have any questions, or would like additional information on using the TEL databases, please feel free to contact us!

Sincerely,

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