

## THURSDAY CONNECTION TEACHER BIOS 2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR

GENE AKERS (Mr. Akers)

7th-12th *American Tragedies*

7th-12th *Exploring the Civil War*

Mr. Akers has owned and operated two companies with multiple locations and supervised more than thirty-five employees. He was responsible for training employees and looks forward to trying to impart the knowledge he has acquired to his students. For the past twenty years he has had a passion for history with an emphasis on the Civil War and World War II. He also enjoys the study of the Middle Ages and American history. He has traveled to many battle sites both in the United States and Europe. What motivates him to teach? "I would like to see the education of our children brought up a notch and I believe I can do that. Our children deserve nothing less." Mr. Akers loves spending time with his grandchildren and telling them stories and reading to them. He says, "I love to watch them grow and develop." Mr. Akers is a self-proclaimed bibliophile. He loves collecting books and has about 4,000 in his library: "Mysteries, history books, books of poetry, and classics are my favorites. I enjoy memorizing favorite poems and often do recitations for civic groups." Mr. Akers also loves to play golf, though he says he's not a good golfer. He enjoys the outdoors and being with friends in nice scenic locations.

TRACIE ANCELET (Mrs. Ancelet)

7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> *Becoming*

Mrs. Ancelet taught school for 3 years and did a Professional Development Schools (PDS) program in college with one full year student teaching. She has worked with youth for 12 years and been involved in Children's Church for 4 years. She has homeschooled for 4 years and taught at TC for three years. Her areas of special interest include math, literature, Bible study, and social studies for younger kids. Of her motivation for teaching she says, "I really do feel like the Lord has gifted me in teaching children. I enjoy it. I connect with the students and yet they respect me. I enjoy getting ready for my classes and I love to see the light bulb go on while they are learning. Also, I love to see them having fun while learning!" Mrs. Ancelet loves Africa and has a heart for adoption. She and her husband recently adopted a baby from Africa. She says of her husband, "I'm crazy about my husband! He's my best friend. We've done a lot of growing up together . . . We've seen some hard times but God has taught us so much through them. I adore this sweet family he has given me." She is "all about relationships," loves to get to know people (her neighbor calls her "Oprrie" meaning Oprah), and loves to hear what makes people tick. She is THRILLED to be a part of TC!

ROBIN F. BEEBE (Mrs. Beebe)

<i>K-3rd, 4th-6th</i>	<i>Timeline Travel</i>
<i>2nd-3rd, 4th-5th, 6th-8th</i>	<i>Shurley English</i>
<i>4th-6th</i>	<i>Astronomy</i>

Mrs. Beebe has homeschooled her four boys for six years. After taking a break for several years due to personal illness, she has returned with renewed enthusiasm and excitement. She has taught in various homeschool co-ops in NC and TN. She greatly enjoys seeing children learn through a variety of teaching methods, including hands-on activities, music, drama, models, etc. Her work history is predominantly in sales, which integrates into the classroom because teaching children is much like making an effective sales presentation, i.e. teachers must know the material and the audience. One of her main goals is to get children excited about learning. “Witnessing the magic of children learning!” is what motivates Mrs. Beebe to teach. She says, “I love teaching subjects where I can implement a variety of teaching methods. However, I love any class where I have the privilege of watching kids ‘get-it!’ It may be English, a science topic, or an art project. I love to see children excel in the areas where God has gifted them.” She enjoys using the unit study approach to science and history. She is passionate about writing and communication skills. She loves creating altered art projects using mixed media. Favorite hobbies include scrapbooking, reading, camping, blogging and being outside. She wants TC families to know that “I am a Christian, and worshipping Christ is the goal of my life (2 Cor. 5:9).” She is also “madly in love” with her husband of 13 years. Having been blessed with four sons, she says, “I am learning how to live as the only estrogen producer in the home!” She also says, “I am thankful to have this opportunity to teach your children. We will all enjoy our time together!”

GINGER BETHMANN (Mrs. Bethmann or Miss Ginger for the younger kids)

<i>K-12<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Physical Education</i>
<i>K-3<sup>rd</sup></i>	<i>Beginning Science</i>
<i>5th-7th</i>	<i>Word Roots</i>

Mrs. Bethmann has a B.S. in Education with a specialization in Health and P.E. for K-12<sup>th</sup> grades. Before she married, she taught middle school and high school, and coached basketball, and track and field. She teaches because she loves kids and likes to see kids “really understand concepts and have fun.” She is particularly interested in helping homeschooled kids learn social skills, work in groups and have opportunities to play group sports. Mrs. Bethmann has 5 children and taught 4 of them through high school over the past 20 years. She also has 2 daughters-in-law and “3 WONDERFUL & MARVELOUS grandkids – all girls☺! She enjoys family, church, laughing, and girlfriends.

CHERYL BLANCHARD (Mrs. Blanchard)

3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>     *Making Connections*  
4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>     *Galloping the Globe*  
5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>     *American Foundations*  
6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>     *World Studies*  
9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>    *World Geography*

Mrs. Blanchard has been at TC for six years. She has a Master's degree in social work and has worked as a family counselor and medical social worker. She taught 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Crossroads Christian Cooperative and covered maternity leave for the middle school science and health teacher at Christian Family Cooperative. She loves teaching anything related to Social Studies, as well as researching and teaching anything related to health and wellness. She also writes about purity issues for parents and kids. She says, "I think there is so much to learn from the world and the people around us." She is a lifelong learner, reads all the time, and loves to teach because learning is "so much more than memorizing facts or writing papers. It is gaining understanding, thinking about things in a new way, applying what you learn to your own life, and impacting others by sharing what you have learned. Learning should be exciting. If I can teach in such a way that a student wants to know more, I have created a lifelong learner and that student can change the world." Mrs. Blanchard is married to David and has three children – Brandon (17), Emily (14), and Lexie (6). Mrs. Blanchard loves to sing and can turn ANYTHING into a song. She especially loves singing the Beatles song, "You Can't Always Get What You Want" when her children or students complain. She sings in the church choir and on the praise team. She loves boating and camping, and has traveled all over East TN in her pop-up camper. She says, "I love that homeschooling has allowed my family to see so many beautiful places."

BECKY BOWMAN (Mrs. Bowman or Miss Becky)

9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>     *Forensics*

Mrs. Bowman is currently certified to teach grades 1-8, high school science and special education with a specialization in academically gifted students. She has taught in the public school system at all levels and also at the community college level. She is also an instructor for the American Red Cross, preparing volunteers to work on national disasters. Very simply put, she loves to learn. Some of her many interests include: forensic science, Adobe Photoshop, world geography and current events, oceanography, economics, psychology . . . and giving students the opportunity to expand their creativity. She says, "To me teaching is as natural as breathing. I teach regardless of where I am and try to share my enthusiasm for learning. The students at Thursday Connection are so much fun to teach. Each week I'm fortunate to come to a place where I truly love the kids and look forward to being a part of their lives. When I go home, I've been rejuvenated and usually have lots of interesting stories to share with my family." Mrs. Bowman finds traveling to be a special joy and makes every trip an adventure. She is a singer, and used to sing background on records and make commercials for the radio and TV. She went to Brazil a few years ago as a member of Second Touch, a Christian contemporary ensemble. Photography and photo editing are her passions. She is a disaster photographer for the American Red Cross but, she says, "Much of my free time is spent photographing my gorgeous baby grandson!"

MARILYN CORWIN (Mrs. Corwin)

7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>     *Pre-Algebra*  
9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>    *Geometry*

Mrs. Corwin has worked with children for decades and homeschooled her children for 16 years. She has a Master's degree in Mathematics and taught a computer science course for juniors and seniors at the University of Texas at Dallas. She has also taught 4-year-old kindergarten. She is motivated by her love of students and her love of teaching, geometry in particular. She enjoys helping students learn. She says, "Although I earned a Master's degree in Mathematics, I don't have all the answers. I will work hard to do all I can to help my students learn. I expect my students to do all they can to learn."

LAURA CROFT (Ms. Laura or Ms. Croft)

*K-3<sup>rd</sup> Little House Unit Study*  
*3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> American Girl Unit Study*  
*9th-12th Financial Peace*

Ms. Croft has taught her son at home for nine years and worked at TC for the past few years. She is the part-time Director of Children's Ministries at St. Mark UMC, where she has taught Financial Peace to both adults and youth. She has also taught Sunday school, Vacation Bible School and Children's Church for seven years. She enjoys the research and planning that is involved in teaching and says that "to be able to be with young people and possibly motivate them to learn is honestly a dream job for me!" Ms. Croft has an AS degree in Respiratory Therapy and has worked as a Registered Respiratory Therapist for ten years. She lives in Clinton with her husband Joe, their son Nathan, and dog Minnie. Nathan is attending Lee University, majoring in Political Science/Pre-Law.

CYNTHIA DENTON (Mrs. Denton or Mrs. D.)

*9th-12th Chemistry*  
*6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Dissection Enthusiast*  
*6th-8th Physics Phun*  
*8th-10th Physical Science*

Before adopting her daughter (Genavieve, now 4), Mrs. Denton was a full time middle school science teacher at a Christian school in California. She taught for five years, coached swimming for three years and "loved every minute of it!" She is particularly interested in the life sciences. She says, "I am fascinated by God's creation of life in all aspects – the intricacies of His Design in all creatures, and how we all interact together. I believe as a teacher I have a unique opportunity and honor of speaking into young people's lives at this critical stage; just as others spoke into mine. I also believe that teaching is what the LORD has called me to do." Mrs. Denton met her husband in the teachers' lounge at her last school. They have two beautiful children, Genavieve (4) and Jonas (3). Mrs. Denton really likes to sing "off key and loud." She says, "Hey, the Lord said to make a 'joyful noise.' He didn't specify on the quality!"

JOHN FARMER

*5th-12th Fencing*

John Farmer is the Coach and Instructor at the Knoxville Academy of the Blade (KAB), coach of the Hardin Valley Academy Fencing Club, and Instructor of Advanced Tactics at the Maryville Fencing Club. He started fencing in college in 1979, but dropped it for married life. He returned to fencing in 2000 when his son became interested. He soon found himself teaching the beginner classes at the Oak Ridge Fencers Club. When that closed in 2008, he founded KAB and offers classes for beginners to advanced national level competitors.

PENNY HARRIS (Mrs. Harris)

*K-2<sup>nd</sup> Bugs, Bears, and Bookaroos*

Mrs. Harris taught pre-school and primary grades in public and private schools for 8 years. After leaving teaching and becoming a mom, she began to home school her children. She has been a home-schooling mom for the last 8 years. Her motivation to teach has been her own family: "When my boys were diagnosed with dyslexia, it really made me look at teaching in a different way. I have really been challenged to help my boys have success in reading. I have gone beyond my usual teaching methods, to find ways to teach them and others how to read. It has been a very rewarding experience!" The Harris family are foster parents and have had many "heart changing experiences" through foster parenting.

LISA HASKELL (Mrs. Haskell)

<i>K-3<sup>rd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Junior Naturalist</i>
<i>K-3<sup>rd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Ultimate Kid Concoctions</i>
<i>K-3<sup>rd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>You Wouldn't want to be a Civil War Soldier!</i>
<i>K-3<sup>rd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Exploring Creation</i>

Mrs. Haskell taught for Knox County Schools, Alcoa Schools and Berean Christian Schools before starting homeschooling. She says, "I think I have been teaching all my life!" She has a B.S. in Elementary Education (grades 1-8) and a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction. Mrs. Haskell's passion is teaching: "I feel blessed that I get to do what God gave me a passion for. I love teaching anything!" Her favorite subject to teach right now is history. Mrs. Haskell often chooses her classes based on her own children's needs. She goes "all out" creatively at TC, something she doesn't necessarily do at home. She is motivated "by the challenge to teach in a way that kids learn, and to make the 'hard' or 'boring' stuff easier and fun! I never had teachers teach me that way. Sad . . . but true! I never thought I was 'smart' at school. I think that's why I became a teacher. I knew there was a way to teach where anyone could 'get' it." Three things you probably don't know about Mrs. Haskell: 1) She graduated with a specialty in German. ("Go figure!") 2) She almost majored in psychology, but all the science scared her off! If she had to do something else besides teach, she'd want to be a Christian counselor. 3) The things she dislikes most: mopping, ironing . . . and broccoli!

DOUGLAS KIMBALL (Mr. Kimball)

*6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>*      *Drawing*

Mr. Kimball has a BFA from Ball State University and an MFA from Syracuse University, where he taught 2 assistantships in illustration. In addition, he has been a freelance commercial/fine artist for 29 years. He has been involved in children and youth ministry for 13 years and is a homeschooling parent. He is motivated to teach by his desire to share his knowledge and experience in fine arts (drawing, painting, sculpture and photography) with TC students. Mr. Kimball enjoys outdoor activities such as walking, camping, hiking, biking and horseback riding. He also enjoys good music, good food and good friends. Mr. Kimball wants us to know: "I love Jesus and I love my family."

AMY KORNEGAY (Mrs. Kornegay, Amy)

<i>K-3<sup>rd</sup></i>	<i>Music Explorers</i>
<i>5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Band Basics: Woodwind Instruments</i>
<i>5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Band Basics: Brass Instruments</i>
<i>5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Band Basics: Percussion Instruments</i>
<i>5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Private Instrumental Lessons</i>

Amy received her Bachelor of Music degree from Eastern Illinois University where she was principal French horn of the wind ensemble and orchestra as well as drum major of the marching band. She proceeded to teach band and orchestra for six years in Illinois and California. Her bands and orchestras consistently received high marks at competitions and festivals. While living near St. Louis, Missouri, Amy was a member of the St. Louis Wind Symphony, the University City Orchestra, the Belleville Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as the Gateway Brass Quintet. She enjoyed judging various concert band, marching band, and solo and ensemble festivals. During the past five years she has spent time starting her family and has two children, Abigail who is 4 1/2 and Benjamin who is 20 months old. Since moving to Tennessee in 2007, Amy has taught preschool, but is eager to return to teaching music. Amy enjoys helping students set goals for themselves and giving them the information, techniques, and skills to help them achieve those goals. She says, "It is amazing to see a student who begins with little musical knowledge playing an instrument with some proficiency in six months or less." Amy is currently a member the East Tennessee Concert Band here in Knoxville and enjoys playing horn and contributing vocally to the music worship at her church.

JENI LAMM WEBER (Ms. Lamm)

*5th-7th and 8th-12th Acting*

Ms. Lamm has a B.A. in drama and an M.E. She has been a resource teacher and a substitute teacher in the public schools. She has taught a number of acting classes and workshops over the years. Her areas of special interest are acting (of course!), singing, and cats. She says, “I enjoy acting so much and have as much fun as the kids in teaching it. Acting exercises are very beneficial to young people regardless of whether or not they decide to pursue acting as a career. I enjoy the challenge and variety of teaching acting. Also, it is very rewarding to see students expand their imaginations and improve their use of voice and movement to communicate.” Ms. Lamm is the Managing Director of The WordPlayers, a company of Christian theatre artists. Her husband is a professor in the theatre department at UT. They have 3 boys (ages 18, 16 and 14) – “So come on boys, sign up!”

SUZETTE LAPORTE-AYO (Ms. Suzette or Suzette or Senora)

*Spanish I and II for all ages*

Ms. Suzette has been teaching children for over 19 years. Her first teaching experience was teaching French to 8<sup>th</sup> graders right after she took her first set of French classes in high school. “After that,” she says, “I was hooked and kept doing it each summer.” While working on a Chemical Engineering degree at the University of Arizona, she tutored students in Spanish, as well as other subjects, at a center for students with learning disabilities. After receiving her B.S., she worked for a company which implemented an extracurricular language program in public schools. She then worked at a tutoring center in both tutoring and business capacities. Next she started her own Spanish venture, and learned new techniques, methods and ideas which she has incorporated into the programs she has designed and used for the past 12 years. She says, “It has truly been very fulfilling to see my students benefit from these classes.” Ms. Suzette wants to share her native language and the Hispanic culture with her students because she believes that “teaching and showing students about other cultures and peoples is what makes us more open-minded individuals and ultimately results in more accepting and forgiving adults.” She uses a variety of media in her “total immersion” classes, including games, songs, music, reading and listening to books and conversations, as well as videos, podcasts, and internet sites. She is motivated by “human interaction” . . . Every time a student becomes excited about learning something in my class, I get very excited, and it in turn usually gets the other students excited, and we end up having a very successful lesson. I am also always up for a challenge. It is very motivating to see a student who was not interested or who was having a difficult time have the light bulb go on.” Ms. Suzette wants her students to know that although she likes an orderly class and sets some ground rules, she is also flexible if there is ever a problem and, most importantly, she likes for she and her students to have FUN!

MARGARET MANNESCHMIDT (Mrs. Margaret)

*4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Cooking (boys and girls separate classes)*

Mrs. Manneschmidt has home-educated different combinations of her 6 children continuously over the past 17 years. She has taught in TC for 4 years, including Home Ec for high schoolers and Kids Cooking. Prior to teaching at TC, she worked in the TC nursery and has substituted in a variety of classes. She says she had a really hard time selecting a college major because she was interested in just about everything! She got a nursing degree, but spent the summer between her last two years of college doing archaeology in Israel. She has a minor in religious studies. If she had it all to do over again, she might major in nutrition. She says, “Because I like to keep learning and researching and seeing interconnectedness in many disciplines, teaching is a good way to use my gifts for the body of Christ. I also like to encourage people to wholeheartedly pursue the areas in which they are gifted.” Mrs. Manneschmidt grew up in a town with a population of only 1800 (Tracy City, TN). She is the older of two children, her only sibling being mentally retarded. She enjoys camping, hiking, crafts, reading, seeing new places, art, and meeting people. She calls herself an “introverted extrovert – a people person who likes her alone time.”

ROBIN MARSH (Mrs. Marsh or Miss Robin)

*K-3<sup>rd</sup> and 4th-6th LEGOS: Simple Machines & Motorized*

Mrs. Marsh has a bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Tennessee, has taught at TC for 7 years, and has homeschooled for 15 years. She teaches students at TC about Legos and simple machines because she enjoys "encouraging, interacting, and loving on them to become all God has created them to be. I also love watching the students understand and enjoy the concepts being taught. I love building relationships with the students and having a good time learning with them." Mrs. Marsh is married with three children. Her family enjoys golf ("a major part of our life"), music and dance. She also enjoys a variety of activities from card-making to sewing, being involved in the Church and community, great worship music, and classic movies.

ANDREW MCCOY (Andrew)

*Private Guitar Lessons*

Andrew McCoy began teaching after graduation from Belmont University in 2005 with a degree in Composition and Classical Guitar. One year later, he moved to Kansas City where he taught guitar, theory and ear training at the Forerunner Music Academy. He is currently working on his Master's Degree in Jazz Studies at the University of Tennessee. Andrew enjoys practicing, learning new tunes, jamming with friends, and transcribing. He also enjoys composing and working in the recording studio. He says, "I believe music is a powerful art. The study of music can increase performance in all areas of the brain. This intentional activation of the creativity realm is both personally and socially rewarding." He views teaching as a means of passing along methods and disciplines required to enrich the student's musical life. Andrew plays Acoustic, Classical, and Electric guitars. In addition to jazz, he enjoys blues, rock, country and classical styles, as well as worship music. With his wife Emily he recorded an instrumental album with the Forerunner Music Group. You can hear Andrew play by searching iTunes for "song of Solomon."

EMILY MCCOY (Emily or Miss Emily)

*6th-12th Choir*  
*Any Private Voice Lessons*

Emily McCoy graduated from Belmont University in Nashville with a Bachelor's of Music in Commercial Voice, Voice Principal, Composition and Arranging Emphasis. She is currently working on a Master's Degree in Jazz Studies at the University of Tennessee. Emily has been teaching private music lessons for 12 years in Knoxville, Nashville, and Kansas City. She taught Voice, Violin, and Ear Training at the Forerunner Music Academy at the International House of Prayer in Kansas City in 2007-08. During that time, she also had a choir at the Daniel Academy, a private Christian school. She currently teaches privately out of her home, as well as at TC and the Cedar Springs Music Academy. She enjoys teaching all styles of music, including Classical, Pop, Jazz, Contemporary Christian, and Worship. She says, "I believe that music is a gift from God and that it can have many positive effects on a young person's development: It challenges one to think creatively, it instills a sense of pride and self-confidence, and most of all, it's fun! It brings me great joy to walk alongside students on their musical journey and to see them 'come alive' on their instrument." In addition to teaching, Emily has served as worship leader and teacher at International House of Prayer in Kansas City, Succat Hallel House of Prayer in Jerusalem, for various conferences and events in the US and South Korea, and is currently at Fellowship Church in Knoxville and her sister church Two Rivers.

MARGARET E. MIGAS (Mrs. Migas, Miss Margaret)

*K-3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Art with Margaret*

Mrs. Migas has been an art teacher for nearly 40 years. She graduated from Minot State Teachers College with a major in Art and minor in Art History. She continued her Art education at Renton Liberal Arts College and Green River College in Seattle, extension art classes in Portland, oil and acrylic painting in Los Angeles. After traveling to Mexico, Central and South American for a year, she returned to back home to Seattle to continue her painting career. She married, had three sons and moved to California, where she opened an art school and also taught her K-6 art program at Mission Estancia Elementary School. She continued her art education in pen and ink and other media with famous artists, as well as colored pencils and pastels. After moving to Knoxville, she set up her Art Program and taught at Sequoyah Elementary School. Her program is still being taught today and has been sold to other schools in our area as well as nationwide. She has taught home schooled students at Grassy Valley Church, Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church and a Baptist church. She attends church at First Cumberland Presbyterian where she also teaches Vacation Bible School art classes. Through this church she volunteers to teach KARMS VBS (for the inner city children in downtown Knoxville). She has been teaching at TC for 10 years. She also teaches in her home studio year round for both children and adults. Her special interests include painting, drawing, art history, ceramics, and “every other media possible in the art world.” In addition to art, she enjoys eating healthy and exercising, including sports such as tennis, and traveling. She says, “I love to teach children, actually 5-90 year olds. I believe that to give a student self-confidence is important to their well being and will carry over to all school classes. **Art is a desire not a gift.**”

JODIE MOORE (Mrs. Moore)

*5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Math Counts*  
*6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Interactive Science*  
*9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Biology and Advanced Biology*  
*10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Advanced Math*

After graduating from the University of Toledo, Mrs. Moore subbed in the Toledo school system for one year and then began teaching full-time in a 6<sup>th</sup> grade inner city classroom. After 5 years in that position, she was approached by the principal of the school at her church about teaching in their high school program. She began in the church school teaching all subjects using the ACE system and led the school through the transition to a typical high school program. She then became the math and science department teacher for 6 years. After her husband was transferred to Tennessee, she began homeschooling and has taught in the co-op setting and been a private tutor for the past 14 years. She says, “I am a born again, spirit-filled Christian attending Alcoa Maryville Church of God. I love teaching and believe it to be God’s calling on my life.” Mrs. Moore is wife to Marty for 27 years and mother of three: Tricia (24), Marty (21) and CJ (9). She has two grandchildren, John (6) and Hunter (2). She is actively involved in the Boy Scouts of America and leads a Cub Scout pack and a Venturing Crew, while her husband leads a Boy Scout troop in Maryville.

KERRY OSBORNE

*K-3<sup>rd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Music and Art Alive*  
*2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> The Bible and Christian History*

Kerry Osborne grew up in Knoxville. She graduated from Carson-Newman College with a bachelor of arts degree in both history and English as well as a minor in political science. Kerry is married to John Osborne and has two daughters, Laura (4<sup>th</sup> grade) and Leslie (3<sup>rd</sup>). Kerry is a cancer survivor and runs an outreach ministry providing inspirational T-shirts and chemotherapy kits for people of all ages battling cancer. She is passionate about history and literature. A self-described “history nut,” Kerry and her husband have enjoyed participating as re-enactors in Civil War reenactments. Kerry is in her fifth year homeschooling her children. She enjoys camping, reading, writing, drawing and cross stitching. Her favorite literature includes 19<sup>th</sup> century novels by authors such as Jane Austen and Charlotte Bronte.

DEBBIE OYLER (Ms. Debbie or Mrs. Oyler)

<i>3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Lit/Creative Writing A: Enter the world of Literature &amp; Creative Writing</i>
<i>5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Lit/Creative Writing B: Continue the path of Literature &amp; Creative Writing</i>
<i>7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Lit/Creative Writing C: Explore the world of Literature &amp; Creative Writing</i>
<i>7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Composition I</i>
<i>6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Journey Through the Volunteer State</i>

Mrs. Oyler has her teaching certification in Early Childhood Special Education, Special Education K-12, and Elementary Education K-7. She has experience in teaching Special Education, Preschool Handicapped, and Elementary grades 2 and 3. She has been homeschooling at least part-time for 3 of her 4 children and has taught at TC for 7 years. Of her motivation for teaching she says, "I am very passionate about encouraging students to enjoy reading a wide variety of books to widen their horizons as well as to prepare them for the future. Through the experience of reading good literature, I enjoy teaching the craft of creative writing. My experience in education was not one that really encouraged self motivation in learning, and I desire to help students that I encounter to experience the pleasure learning brings." Mrs. Oyler loves being a wife and mother of four children, as well as being part of two great extended families. Reading and listening to many kinds of music are favorite activities if time allows. Her family loves to camp and travel. She has lived in many places as a child and as an adult and says, "that has opened many doors for me." She and her husband, Bruce, have had the opportunity to travel to Italy and later to the Eastern Mediterranean – they hope to see many more places in the world. Service to God and her church is a great part of Mrs. Oyler's life through several avenues, including Stephen's Ministry, a care giving mission in her congregation. Her family's involvement in foster care and adoption has been a blessing and a calling from God.

MICHELLE ROSENBAUM (Mrs. Rosenbaum)

<i>8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Algebra I</i>
<i>10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Algebra II</i>

Mrs. Rosenbaum has a B.S. in Mathematics and Computer Science from Dallas Baptist University. She worked on a Master's in Mathematics until the birth of her first child. She has tutored students in Advanced Math, worked as a graduate assistant, taught Calculus lab class for business majors, and worked in a math tutoring lab answering questions from any math subject. She began teaching Algebra II in cooperatives 6 years ago. She started teaching Pre-Algebra and Algebra I five years ago. For Mrs. Rosenbaum, "God is the most important thing in my life and I am blessed to know Him. He is my source of strength and courage." She is happily married and has 5 children ranging in age from 9-20 years of age. She has been homeschooling her own children for 14 years. Of her motivation for teaching, she says, "I want to help people learn that they can work abstract math problems. I like to help teach the good ones tricks to get the answer faster. I like to help those who are 'fearful' or reluctant to overcome their fear of math. I want to break the cycle and help them realize that they can work algebra." Mrs. Rosenbaum enjoys camping, horseback riding, bicycling and swimming. She and her husband have been running camps for over 20 years. She particularly enjoys helping people conquer their fears – whether it be a fear of heights, water, horses . . . or math. She says, "Many very good climbers are actually afraid of heights. Two things keep them going back for more: 1) the adrenalin rush and 2) the sense of achievement after accomplishing something which pushed them to their limits." Be it math or climbing, she says, "I believe [everyone] can learn to unlock the rules and learn to work through it taking one step at a time." Her goal in teaching children is to help them "master" the subject matter so that each student thoroughly understands the material and does not feel lost as the class progresses on to more complicated problems. She realizes that "some children must work at it more than others, but as we work hard to achieve that which challenges us, we not only develop perseverance but also self confidence."

MAUREEN SCHENK (Mrs. Schenk)

<i>8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Composition II</i>
<i>9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>High School English A</i>
<i>9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>World Literature</i>
<i>9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>World History</i>
<i>9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Government</i>

Maureen Schenk is certified to teach grades 7-12. She taught for 2 years in California, 4 years at Bearden Middle School, and for 10 years as a part-time instructor in the Pellissippi adult literacy program. Her special interests include English, Government, History and Literature. What motivates her to teach? “Craziness or God.”

DANA SHERRELL (Mrs. Sherrell)

<i>4th-6th, 6th-8th, 9th-12th</i>	<i>Computer Keyboarding</i>
<i>7th-12th</i>	<i>Study Skills</i>
<i>9th-12th</i>	<i>Health and Nutrition</i>

Mrs. Sherrell has taught in the Sevier County School System, as well as in Mississippi. She is certified to teach K-12 with a specialization in Family and Consumer Sciences. In July 2009, she completed her Master’s in Elementary Education. She has been homeschooling for the past seven years. She has three daughters – Danielle (18), Katie (17), and Madison (11). Favorite hobbies include cooking, reading and spending time with her family. She and her family are very involved in their church, The Gathering, where she serves as drama director. Mrs. Sherrell has a wide range of interests and loves to incorporate creative learning opportunities into her classes whenever possible. Her passion is to help students discover and use their God-given talents and to instill in them a lifelong joy of learning. “I’m very excited about having the opportunity to teach at Thursday Connection. The anticipation and the privilege of working with wonderful young people in a supportive Christian environment is one for which I am very grateful.”

JOAN SMITH (Mrs. Smith)

<i>9th-12th</i>	<i>Art History</i>
-----------------	--------------------

Mrs. Smith has been a professional photographer for 19 years. She has also taught at home for 13 years and in a classroom setting for 7 years. She says, “I love the academic environment, and I love to see a student’s excitement about what they are learning.” Mrs. Smith has been married for 26 years and has three children. She loves animals and reading.

TODD SPEIDELL, PH.D. (“Doc”)

<i>9th-12th</i>	<i>The Bible and Christian Theology</i>
<i>11th-12th</i>	<i>Advanced High School English</i>
<i>10th-12th</i>	<i>High School English B</i>
<i>7th-12<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Private Tutoring</i>

Dr. Todd Speidell is a published author and professional educator and editor. He taught at Webb School of Knoxville for seventeen years and at Knoxville College for one year. His diverse areas of interest include theology, ethics, philosophy, and strategy games (especially chess and Scrabble). He enjoys reading, writing, and preparing students for college with solid reading, writing, and study skills. He is also the father of a teenage daughter.

JACOB STOCK (Mr. Stock)

<i>6th-8th</i>	<i>Streams of Civilization II</i>
<i>7th-9th</i>	<i>Great Books</i>
<i>7th-12th</i>	<i>Boys to Men</i>

Mr Stock has been an educator for 10 years now. He attended Houston Baptist University with a major in Christianity and Business and then graduated with his Masters in Christian School Administration from Southwestern University. He is the loved husband of Melissa and father to Ashtyn, Bella Grace, and Adelyn. Although the house is stacked with females, he spends most of his time in the great outdoors and constructing. Birtthed from a vision to see discipleship of Christians, Jacob resides on 40 acres in Strawberry Plains facilitating a retreat/study center. Castle Ministries desire to educate and equip the middle school and high school age allows in his schedule for him to teach classes and pursue homeschooling his own family. The Stocks are members of Fellowship Church.

SHEILA STRINGFIELD (Mrs. Stringfield)

<i>K-3<sup>rd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> -5th</i>	<i>Hands on Math</i>
<i>7th-12th</i>	<i>Math Tutoring</i>

Mrs. Stringfield is a 1989 graduate of Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan. She has a BS Elementary Education with minors in Mathematics and Science. She lived in Michigan until 13 years ago when she moved to Tennessee. Mrs. Stringfield helps with her family's business; Sir Goony's in Farragut, and enjoys crochet, embroidery, gardening, and sewing.

MERYL VAN DER MERWE (Meryl)

<i>5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Disease Detectives</i>
<i>5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Playing around the World</i>
<i>7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Media Literacy and Production</i>
<i>7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>Intro to Programming</i>

Meryl has tutored ever since she was a high school student. As a college student she and her now-husband started the first-ever summer computer camps for kids in South Africa. She has also taught in Vacation Bible Schools and Sunday Schools since she was a teenager. She has coached various academic teams for Cedar Springs Homeschool Group and has taught at TC for 4 years. She has taught her own children for the past 7 years. She is motivated by a desire to “inspire my students to achieve beyond what they think they are capable of achieving.” Meryl is originally from South Africa. She was born in England and lived there for a short time while her father was studying for his PhD. Her husband was born in Zimbabwe (at that time Rhodesia). She majored in English and German at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in South Africa, then worked for years as a computer programmer before moving on to run her own software business. She also managed a children’s clothing store and had a small business that made homemade muesli which they sold to guesthouses and at craft fairs. Her family moved here in 2003. Meryl loves reading – “classic literature and fantasy are my favorites”; traveling around the world, especially to places off the beaten track; and chocolate – “I am a chocoholic, but only for non-American chocolate as the chocolate here tastes so different to what I grew up with!”

PIERS VAN DER MERWE (Piers)

7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>            *Web Development*

Piers was the President of a software development company (Saratoga) with offices in Tennessee (3 locations) and South Africa. The company worked extensively with Microsoft to develop products that complemented their range of products. He also founded other companies in the computer industry that consulted in business software. He has extensive experience in computer training dating all the way back to his college days when he and his wife (Meryl) ran computer programming courses for school children on Apple computers. His desire to teach stems out of a concern that students enter the working world with sufficient computer knowledge to be able to compete in the workplace. Piers is currently Director of Global Mission at Cedar Springs Pres. Church, but is also responsible for the church's Information Technology. He likes snow skiing, biking and reading.

PENELOPE WHALEY (Mrs. Whaley or Ms. Penelope)

K-3rd                    *American Pride*  
3rd-6th                *Oh! Snap First Aid & Safety*  
3rd-5th and 6th-8th   *Earth Odyssey*

Penelope has been married to an amazing husband, Randy, for 21 years. She was blessed with two awesome kids - Amber (16) and Jonah (15). They have been on their homeschooling journey for the past 11 years, both will graduate in just three short years. She calls it "the experience of a lifetime" and she has cherished every moment. She has taught since her teen years in Sunday school classes and Vacation Bible schools. In addition, Mrs. Whaley has taught other homeschoolers in classes at her home for the past nine years as well. These classes at her house have encompassed on average twelve children per class in a wide range of courses ranging from students in Kindergarten to twelve graders. She started out teaching unit studies, which she wrote herself, and advanced to full year, graded courses. She has also headed up PE and supplemental classes at Deane Hill for the last 8 years. Most importantly she says I honestly feel teaching is my God given talent, it is something I am very passionate about.

JOAN WHITESIDE (Mrs. Whiteside or Miss Joan for younger kids)

*Private Flute Lessons*

Mrs. Whiteside has a Bachelor of Music and Master of Music in Flute Performance with minors in Music Theory from UTK. She was awarded a Graduate Assistantship for the Master's Program and fulfilled it by teaching the UTK secondary and elective flute students there. After her 2-year assistantship, they asked her to stay on to teach the same for two more years while they searched for a suitable grad assistant to take her place. During this time, she married and soon began having children. She continued to teach private flute students in her home and also taught flute majors at Maryville College for 2 years. The time away from homeschooling her children became an issue, so she resigned from the Maryville College position and kept only her home studio. With her children now grown, she accepted a position 3 years ago at Pellissippi State to teach flute majors and minors. She says, "I really enjoy music and love to see kids become musically literate, both in reading and writing music and also playing an instrument. I also love to introduce kids to music from all periods and see them fall in love with it, thus becoming educated music appreciators." She continues to play in area orchestras, ensembles and solo positions per diem for various programs, churches, parties, weddings, etc. She especially loves when her whole family gets to perform together. Having met her husband in the Music Department at UTK she says, they "forced" their kids to be musicians, providing piano, voice, and violin lessons for them. As a result, her oldest two daughters majored in music in college and her son continues to play area jobs – "it is fun to have that in common in our family." Mrs. Whiteside is the Missions Assistant at Fellowship Church, a position which keeps her busy 3 days per week. It also gives her the opportunity to go on missions trips to participate in ministry, service and missionary care. She has recently been named to Who's Who in College and University Teachers.