

Pupils find write stuff in their lives

Give others 'your world,'
author tells DODDS workshop

By C.S. ALLBRIGHT
Staff writer

GEINHAUSEN, Germany — Clifton Taulbert, a successful author who has written about growing up in the South, is touring Europe and encouraging pupils to write about their own experiences.

"Your story is a very important part of the American story," Taulbert told the would-be writers at a Department of Defense Dependents Schools seminar.

About 150 pupils from 15 schools in the Hanau district attended the young authors conference last week to learn more about writing.

Taulbert is the author of *Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored*, which was made into a movie released stateside in April. He has been on a tour of DODDS-Europe schools talking to youngsters about writing and of AAFES bookstores promoting his latest book, *The Last Train North*.

Taulbert told the youths that living in Europe and around the world gave them experiences far different from his own, growing up in the Cotton Belt in the pre-civil rights era.

His book *Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored* recounts the memories of "ordinary people from the Mississippi delta who impacted my life."

The 49-year-old Taulbert said he spent many hours listening to members of his family and community describe their lives.

For him, his world and the "white world" co-existed in something resembling parallel dimensions that only occasionally touched. When he left his home in 1963 for St. Louis, he said he was "totally unaware of the changes" happening in the country.

Taulbert, who was in the Air Force from 1964 to 1968, said that before he started writing he had "no idea that I would write and that people around the world would read what I wrote."

He encouraged the pupils from first through 12th grades to observe their surroundings, ask questions of previous generations and listen.

"When you write, it gives your world to someone else," Taulbert said.

Taulbert told homespun tales of growing up before the days of indoor toilets, automatic ice makers and



Author Clifton Taulbert signs autographs at the young authors conference in Gelnhausen, Germany.

convenience stores.

Kristin Alcantara, 13, an eighth-grader at Hanau Middle School, said talking with Taulbert "made me think about my own memories that I would write about. I try to think more about the details, the way he (Taulbert) remembered the details of his life."

Sixth-grader Daniel Rush from Butzbach Elementary said he liked Taulbert's stories, particularly the one about chipping ice from blocks and making ice cream.

"The things that we take for granted today were neat back then," he said. "You couldn't just get ice out of trays in the freezer, or go to the store and buy ice cream."

Among workshop participants was David Schuster, a second-grader at Argonner Elementary in Hanau. Like

other participants, he had to write a story or a poem in order to attend. David wrote a story called *The Wishing Well*, about a boy "who wishes for a friend and gets a miniature dinosaur as a companion."

His mother, Christine, said she was surprised that her son was interested in attending the conference. "It's kind of a shock for him to have written this," she said. "He's pretty active, and more interested in sports. But this was a really good program, because it has them writing and using their imaginations."

Taulbert, who runs a small marketing company, lives in Tulsa, Okla., with his wife and two children and is a frequent speaker on the lecture circuit. He is continuing his tour through Germany and England, and on May 31 will address another young authors workshop in Würzburg.

High schools plan to mark their closing

Two of the largest U.S. military high schools in Europe will celebrate nearly 50 years of existence each as they shut their doors forever at the close of this school year.

Graduates of Frankfurt High School between 1946 and 1995 are invited to a reunion from Monday through next Wednesday. Contact Leslie Spear at DSN 320-5738/1700 or civilian 069-550641/6412/6413 days or 069-56-5902.

In Fürth, Germany, former faculty, staff and students of Nürnberg High School are invited to celebrate "End of an Eagle Era."

The ceremony will begin at 9 a.m. next Wednesday with a welcome reception in the school library for invited friends and dignitaries. A formal closure ceremony will be held at 10 a.m. in Kalb Theater.

A barbecue picnic will begin at noon, followed by games and entertainment.

Additional information is available from Mayme Crawford, deputy principal, at 460-7275 or 0911-700-7275.

Cable TV industry helping deliver high-tech teaching to classrooms

DALLAS (AP) — Instead of blackboards there are video screens, instead of textbooks, computers.

A peek inside the classroom of the future shows these high-tech devices, once considered the domain of business, as standard learning tools — just as textbooks are today.

That was at least one vision emerging from the National Cable Television Association's convention, where an exhibit of the classroom of the future is on display.

While the exhibit is forward-looking, it also highlights how existing cable technology now is being used to enhance education.

Since 1989, the cable industry has hooked up thousands of elementary and secondary schools to cable. It provides more than 525 hours of commercial-free educational programs to schools each month.

Since last May, Turner Educational Services, a division of Turner Broadcasting Co., has been offering schools the opportunity to take electronic field trips.

Pupils using TV sets or computers connected to cable and satellites have been able to "visit" a national park in Kenya and tour a battlefield in Gettysburg, Pa., all without leaving the classroom. It's all done live with experts on hand to field pupils' questions relayed by computer, fax or phone.

"It melts the barriers of time and distance in the classroom," said Gary Rowe,

'We're bringing the classroom right into the living room.'

— Harrison Miller,
Lightspan vice president

a senior vice president at Turner.

For an entire school to go on one trip it would have to pay \$395. But Turner, which does not offer the service for a profit, charges prorated fees based on the number of students who participate. The money is used to cover production costs.

In another project, Lightspan Partnership Inc. is working with cable and telephone companies to link schools and homes together so that parents, using a computer or specially equipped TV can tap into a data base at the school and check on their children's homework assignments, send and receive messages from teachers and get other information.

"We're bringing the classroom right into the living room," said Harrison Miller, Lightspan vice president, adding that research shows that pupils do better when their parents are involved. Lightspan develops reading and math materials that are distributed over cable and telephone lines for classroom use.

To help teachers, who still find programming a VCR troublesome, Cable in

the Classroom, an educational group backed by the cable industry, and a division of Philips Consumer Electronics Co. have created a new VCR, said Bobbi Kamil, executive director of Cable in the Classroom.

By following a couple of simple commands on a computer, a teacher can select from an array of educational TV programs to record. With the click of a mouse, the selections are downloaded to the special VCR, which is connected to the computer. The VCR records the programs selected.

For others who need more intensive help, Tele-Communications Inc., the nation's largest cable company, recently opened a training center in Denver for teachers, parents and school board members to learn about new technologies, how to use them and how they can help in the classroom. About 400 people have used the center, said Hattie Owen, who oversees it.

Some companies are working on making the classroom more accessible from home. Jones Education Networks, a division of cable company Jones Intercable, is putting together a system that would let people buy education courses on demand from their TV sets — meaning they wouldn't have to sign up in advance. They would select a course, ranging from Spanish and guitar lessons to college credit courses, and pay for it over the TV set, said Jim Carlson, a vice president at Jones Intercable.