



UPDATES TO THE IRC CONFERENCE ON MARCH 9-10, 2023

By the Illinois Reading Council

The Illinois Reading Council is excited to share the updated plans for the

2023 IRC Conference, Revolution: A Change Is Gonna Come, on March 9-10, 2023 in Springfield, Illinois.

To find out all about the conference and the following featured speakers that will be joining us, check out the [2023 Preliminary Program](#) available online now.

New changes include that **Donalyn Miller** will be joining us and will be the Thursday Luncheon keynote speaker at the Wyndham Hotel. **Sara Ahmed** will now be presenting on Friday and the keynote at the Friday Breakfast. IRC is sad to share that Nikki Grimes is unable to attend the conference. On page 6, check out the entire list of **Illinois Reads Authors** who will be at the conference.

- Sara K. Ahmed
- Blue Balliett
- Derrick Barnes
- David Biedrzycki
- Joelle Charbonneau
- Jerry Craft
- Matt de la Peña
- Lynne Dorfman
- Alison Gordon
- Jacob Grant
- Tiffany D. Jackson
- Carol Jago
- Gordon C. James
- Steven L. Layne
- Donalyn Miller
- Lauren Tarshis

2023 Illinois Reading Council Conference Preliminary Program



March 9 - 10, 2023
Springfield, Illinois

- **Becky Anderson Wilkins**
- **2023 Illinois Reads Authors**

[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THE PRELIMINARY PROGRAM](#)

Please take a moment to look through the **2023 Preliminary Program** to find out more about registration rates, housing, and conference shirts. At the conference, you also will not want to miss the **Hear the Authors Read Event**, the **Illinois Reads Author Event**, the **Administrators Academy**, and over **200 PD sessions** planned. And, don't forget to check out the upcoming **Spring 2023 IRC Book Club**, too.

More information can be found at www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org.org. We hope to see you at the 2023 IRC Conference!

REGISTER TODAY!

THE MAGIC QUESTIONS

By **Andrea Mear**

As teachers, we have experienced the nightmare of the deafening silence that comes after a carefully crafted question is left hanging in the air not even attempting to be answered. Uncomfortable silence can throw the whole lesson off and one of two things will most likely happen next: the teacher will either blurt out the answer or help students come to the right answer by using additional questions that eventually give the answer away. I am guilty of doing both of these things. Unfortunately, in each of these scenarios, my students did not have the opportunity to participate in the thinking. Now, professional development will tell us that we need to become comfortable with the silence and practice wait time; I am a proponent of using wait time effectively, but what if it is not more time to think that the students need? If the question is not accessible to all students, then no amount of wait time will help them deduce the correct answer. What do we do then?

Dr. Jen York Bar said, “the person doing the talking is the person doing the learning” and that quote has stuck with me ever since I heard it. It makes me think about how the brain processes new information or how it works out a problem. Most people need to talk something through before reaching a conclusion. Why would we expect our students to be any different? If the students cannot answer the question, then we need to get them talking about the topic until they can.

This is where the two magic questions come into play: “what do you notice?” and “why do you think that?” These questions allow any student to participate in the discussion. Sure, at first, we might get responses like, the paragraph begins with a capital letter. This is not exactly the deep thinking we were hoping for, but it is a start. If we respond with, “Thank you for your observation. Why do you think the writer made that choice?” The student feels validated because we acknowledged their thought and, chances are, that student might feel a bit more confident to answer your next question. Then we keep asking scaffolded questions to get us back to the question we originally asked before the panic-inducing silence.

These magic questions are also highly transferable. A student can ask these questions about anything in any subject. By giving students an opportunity to practice these questions they are, more importantly, practicing being active participants in their learning because they have to prove what they know with evidence. We want to give them as much practice with this skill as possible, because eventually, they will start asking themselves those two magic questions. So, next time that defining silence rears its ugly head, don't panic; just go back to the basics. Ask the students what they notice and why they think that and you might be surprised with what they come up with.

IRC ELECTION BALLOT WILL OPEN FEBRUARY 5, 2023

By the **Illinois Reading Council**



The **Illinois Reading Council Election Ballot** will open on February 5, 2023. IRC Members will receive an email with a direct link to the online ballot provided by Balloteer, Inc. The email will contain a **Voter ID Number** and **Password**.

This will be your opportunity to vote for the **Vice President** of IRC, to become President-Elect in 2024-2025 and President in 2025-2026, **Treasurer** of IRC, who will serve until July 2025, and the **ILA State Coordinator**, who will serve until July 2025.

The election will run from February 5, 2023 until March 5, 2023. The voting site will close at **5:00 p.m. CST on March 5, 2023**.

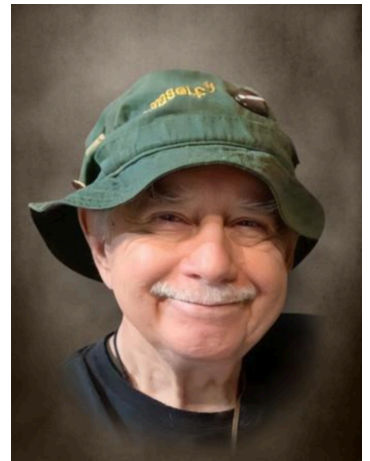
REMEMBERING BOOMER CROTTY

By the Illinois Reading Council

The Illinois Reading Council is sad to share that Boomer Crotty, a long-time member of IRC, passed away on January 9, 2023.

Boomer's passion was teaching and literacy. He was a much-loved fifth grade teacher at Lynne Thigpen Grade School, retiring in 2008 from Joliet Public School District 86. Additionally, Boomer was an Adjunct Instructor in the English Department at Joliet Junior College where he taught introductory/developmental literacy classes for 16 years, retiring at the age of 75.

As a 30-year member of the Illinois Reading Council, Boomer was highly involved in both the local and state levels. He became the President of Will County and an IRC Board of Directors Member in 1994. Throughout the years, Boomer continued to stay very active in various IRC board positions. From 2005 to 2013, Boomer took on the role as the Chair of the IRC Newspaper in Education Committee and these past 16 years has been the Membership Director for the Will County Reading Council. In 2018, Boomer was awarded the IRC Service Award that is only given to the most deserving individuals for their leadership and commitment to IRC. He shared that it was one of the greatest honors of his life.



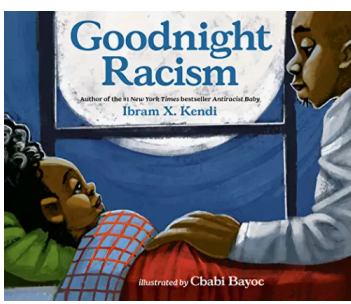
Through the IRC Speaker's Bureau, Boomer shared many engaging presentation about incorporating children's books in the classroom, presenting at the IRC Annual Conference and for various local IRC councils throughout the state. Boomer's topics included "Laugh(ture) and Literature," "Math and Mirth = A Fun Approach to Learning," and "Twenty Five Books that have Changed Children into Readers." And, many of us may also remember Boomer as he led the Orientation Session each year at the conference.

Boomer brought joy to so many lives and will be greatly missed!

FAMILY LITERACY BOOKSHELF

By Barb Ashton, IRC Family Literacy Committee Chair

February, the shortest month of the year, has arrived with its annual frigid temperatures and snowfalls. Will the groundhog see his shadow? Will the Chiefs or Eagles win the Super Bowl? February also lets us celebrate Valentine's Day, President's Day, Mardi Gras, the monthly observance of African American History, and the start of spring training for your favorite baseball team.



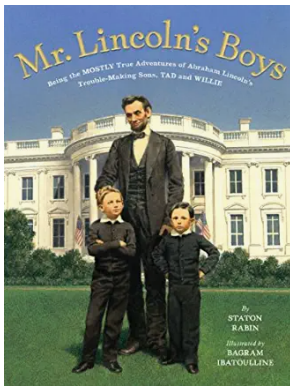
February is African American History Month. A delightful book to share with younger children is ***Goodnight Racism* by Ibram X. Kendi**. Borrowing *Margaret Wise Brown's Goodnight Moon* idea, Kendi likewise uses the moon to watch over the children around the world as they head off to bed. "The moon knows when we sleep we dream and when we dream we imagine what is possible and what the world can be." The dream in this story sees a world free of racism and injustices and people can love, worship, and have the freedom to make important decisions. *Goodnight Racism* has an important message and addresses current topics, issues, and vocabulary associated with racism, enhanced by beautiful illustrations. This book

offers a nice way for educators, librarians, and families to begin a discussion not only on racism, injustices, and other social issues but ways we can make "this imagined world a reality."



Have you ever taken a walk in a snowstorm or after a storm? It is this setting that Lina, the main character in ***Ten Ways to Hear Snow* by Cathy Camper** wakes up to on a winter day. It's a day she is to visit grandmother (Sitti, the Lebanese word for grandmother) at her assisted living apartment to make a special meal (stuffed grape leaves filled with rice and lamb). Lina is concerned about Sitti, as grandma has very low vision and is going blind. Lina also wonders if grandma knows there's been a snowstorm. As she walks to grandma's retirement home, Lina begins to think about the various sounds snow makes, such as scraape – shoveling snow, pat,pat,pat – smoothing a snowman's head, scritch, scratch – people skiing, stomp, stomp, stomp – cleaning snow off boots, etc. While

eating their meal Lina asks grandma if she knew about the snowstorm. Sitti replies that she opens the window and listens. Since there was no noise and everything was quiet she knew that it snowed. Later that afternoon they went outside to enjoy the snow. *Ten Ways to Hear Snow* is a story about winter but also family traditions and relationships, and a person with a disability. The winter illustrations by Kenard Pak make the story seem real. This book is great for sequencing and use of onomatopoeia. *Ten Ways to Hear Snow* makes a great read aloud on a cold winter day. It can also be viewed on YouTube.



The life of Abraham Lincoln has been well written and documented. However, we haven't heard much about his children. ***Mr. Lincoln's Boys* by Staton Rabin** gives the reader a glimpse into the lives of Lincoln's two younger boys, Tad and Willie. The boys, living in the White House during the Civil War, were full of mischief and pestered just about everyone who crossed their path. The boys had full run of the White House and the outside gardens which included a real goat, even to the point where they interrupted their father's Cabinet meetings. They were known for their pranks and other adventures. *Mr. Lincoln's Boys* is a delightful and amusing story about Tad and Willie Lincoln and their father that can read by students of all ages. It also makes a nice addition to all libraries and a story to share on President's Day or Lincoln's birthday.

Looking Ahead

- February 1: World Hijab Day
- February 1: World Read Aloud Day
- February 2: Groundhog Day
- February 11: National Inventor's Day
- February 12: Abraham Lincoln's Birthday
- February 12: Super Bowl Sunday
- February 14: Valentine's Day
- February 21: Mardi Gras
- February 22: George Washington's Birthday
- February 27: Polar Bear Day

Don't forget to take advantage of some upcoming PD opportunities planned throughout Illinois.

- **February 1, 2023: IRC Webinar on Discovering the 2023 Illinois Reads Books** with Becky Anderson from 7:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom Webinar.
- **February 1, 2023: Central Illinois Reading Council (CIRC)** will host Chill and Chat CIRC Social from 4:30 to 6:30 pm at Harvest Market, 300 S. Veterans Parkway, Springfield, Illinois.
- **February 4, 2023: Fox Valley Reading Council** will host Books, Bagels, and Buddies with Lindsay Currie from 9:30 to 11:30 am at the Geneva Public Library, 227 South 7th Street, Geneva, Illinois.
- **February 7, 2023: MID-State Reading Council** will host The High Five Habit Book Study from 4:30 to 5:30 pm at Gill Street Bar & Restaurant, 3002B Gill Street, Bloomington, Illinois.
- **February 11, 2023: Western Illinois Reading Council** will host For the Love of Literacy Conference from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm at Western Illinois University, 1 University Circle, Macomb, Illinois.
- **February 21, 2023: West Suburban Reading Council** will host a Book Club – Set Boundaries, Find Peace: A Guide to Reclaiming Yourself from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Jim & Pete's Restaurant, 7806 W North Avenue, Elmwood Park, Illinois.
- **February 23, 2023: MID-State Reading Council** will host Teacher Trivia Night at 7:00 pm at Gill Street Bar & Restaurant, 3002B Gill Street, Bloomington, Illinois.
- **February 23, 2023: Northern Illinois Reading Council** will host Nuggets of Literature from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Pizza Villa, 824 W Lincoln Highway, DeKalb, Illinois.
- **February 25, 2023: East Central-EIU Reading Council** will host Literacy & Learning Conference with Mike Lockett from 8:00 to 12:30 pm at Eastern Illinois University Buzzard Hall, 1920 9th Street, Charleston, Illinois. Registration is FREE!

To view the full **IRC Events Calendar**, please visit the [IRC Website](#).

QUICK LINKS

Visit the IRC Website

Full IRC Events Calendar

Latest on the IRC Conference

Available IRC Awards and Grants

Bring IRC PD to your School District

Learn more about the Illinois Reads Program

Questions? Please feel free to reach out to the Illinois Reading Council by email at irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org or by phone at 309-454-1341.

See what's also happening on our social media sites:

