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FVRC August Newsletter

Welcome back to school!

Letter from the Presidents

Waiting for a change to set us free

Waiting for the day when you can be you and I can be me

Waiting for hope to come around

Waiting for the day when hate is lost and love is found

Waiting for a change,

Waiting for a change

Christina Aguilera had the right idea with her song lyrics in "Change." As you start the school year there are teacher shortages, new faculty, new jobs, students who are fearful of change, STILL worries about Covid, Roe v Wade, political unrest, changes in gas prices, the War in Ukraine, and countless other circumstances that we have to adapt to as teachers and members of Fox Valley Reading Council. A positive change in teacher salaries and parent respect would be a welcome change, right? You are amazing and change the world-never forget that!

As our year focuses on change, the FVRC theme this year is "We're Not Done Changing." Also, this year's IRC conference theme is Revolution: A Change is Gonna Come." One change for the conference is that it has moved to March 9 & 10, instead of October, in Springfield. It's time to embrace professional development and be inspired to better your teaching practices with some change-something new to learn! Plan to attend. We all know change is a constant in education!

One thing that hasn't changed is our Fall book talk with Anderson's Bookshop in Naperville. We will again be having that awesome event at the Bookshop on Oct. 8. Put it on your calendar.

A survey is going out to members to see if you have any ideas for change. Do you prefer Saturday morning events or weekday evening events? Do you prefer the comfort of home after a long day at work with virtual events or enjoy the chance to make professional contacts at an in-person event? Give us your feedback on the survey so we can respond to any changes as we need to do.

You will have an insight into Co-President Dawn Lutz's life as you read about her in our Board Member Spotlight.

Have the best school year you can have this year, dear friends. We ask for hope, peace, a chance to be yourself, and for you to find love in some way.

Bob Dylan was prophetic in his 2009 song, "I Feel a Change Comin' On..."



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Fox Valley Reading Council

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*We got so much in common
We strive for the same old ends*

Hang in there! We all are striving to do the best we can for our students. Change can be good, embrace it. We really do have so much in common!

Sincerely,

Camille & Dawn Lutz-co-presidents

Book Reviews from Kristen Walsh

Elementary: *This is a School* by John Schu and Illustrated by Veronica Miller Jamison

This is a School is a beautiful reminder that schools are not just buildings, but communities with individuals that work and learn together. The colorful illustrations by Veronica Miller Jamison cheerfully depict a vibrant, loving community where each member is valued.

Schu, J. (2022). *This is a school*. Candlewick

Middle grade and YA: *The Civil War of Amos Abernathy* by Michael Leali

Debut author, Michael Leali, beautifully weaves together the stories of multiple characters: Amos, Ben, Chloe, and Albert. Amos is the openly gay protagonist who loves being a historical reenactor at the Living History Park, where his mother is in charge. He volunteers there with his best friend, Chloe, who wants to be the first Black, female blacksmith apprentice, and newcomer, Ben, a cute new volunteer who Amos likes and he thinks that Ben likes him too.

The text alternates between Amos's first-person narration of events and the letters he writes to Albert Cashier, a Civil War soldier that likely would identify as a trans man today, whom Amos learns about when he begins researching LGBTQ+ people from the 1800s. His letters to Albert revolve around his crush on Ben, who is on his own path of self-discovery while attempting to navigate through his feelings and identity with homophobic parents.

Not only does the plot build suspense, but there are also important messages of white privilege for cisgender males, homophobia, sexism, and racism that are all brought to light through the lenses of identity and empathy. Representation matters and *The Civil War of Amos Abernathy* is a title that allows kids to see themselves and know that they matter. This is a book of the heart.

Leali, M. (2022). *The civil war of Amos Abernathy*. HarperCollins.

Middle Grade: *Odder* by Katherine Applegate

This lyrical novel in verse follows Odder, a delightful sea otter that begins her journey in the ocean and becomes a resident in a rescue and rehabilitation center for sea life after an encounter with a shark. Inspired by the true story of the Monterey Bay Aquarium, which pairs orphaned otter pups with surrogate mothers, this beautiful tale examines the importance of bravery and resilience through the eyes of one of nature's most lovable creatures.

Applegate, K. (2022). *Odder*. Feiwel & Friends.

YA: *Hollow Fires* by Samira Ahmed

Samira Ahmed weaves a story of mystery and Islamophobia in a compelling manner that will engage adolescent — and adult — readers. This book follows Safiya Mirza, a high school senior, as she tries to uncover the truth about what happened to Jawad Ali, a 14-year-old boy who is falsely accused of being a terrorist and goes missing. Safiya is the editor of her school paper with the hope of being a



Ahmed, S. (2022). *Hollow fires*. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers.

Adult: *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* by Taylor Jenkins Reid

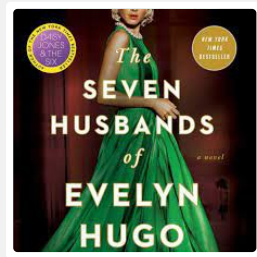
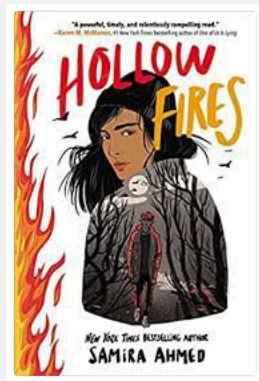
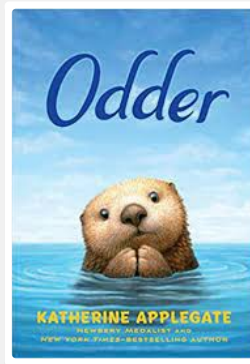
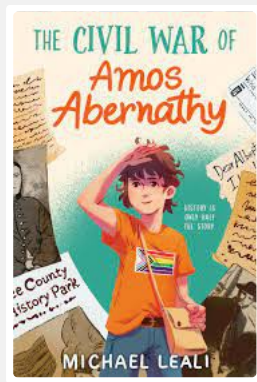
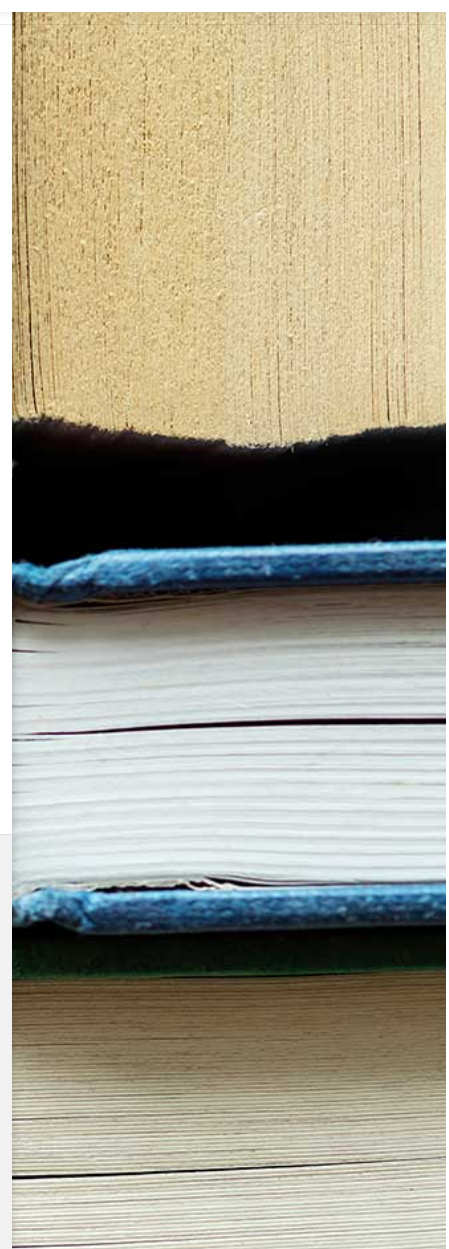
Evelyn Hugo is an aging, reclusive Hollywood movie star – an icon – and she finally is ready to tell the truth about her glamorous and scandalous life. However, she chooses an unknown magazine reporter, Monique Grant, to tell her story, which is a puzzle in and of itself.

Evelyn Hugo, also known as Evelyn Elena Herrera, is the daughter of Cuban immigrants, raised in poverty. She's not only beautiful; there's something different about her and her enigmatic personality. She knows what she wants for her life and she's competitive and determined enough to get it by leaving her life in Hell's Kitchen and moving to Los Angeles.

Now she's 79, has been married seven times, is a Hollywood legend, and is ready to share her life story and scandalous secrets she kept for years. She befriends 35-year-old Monique Grant, an unknown reporter who works for "Vivant" in Los Angeles. Even the boss of Monique has no clue why this Hollywood legend demanded to work with her.

As soon as their interview begins, Evelyn takes Monique on a journey filled with entertaining, heartbreaking, emotional stories starting from the glamorous '60s of La La Land, the productions of her famous movies, how she became involved with her multiple partners, how she saved them and they saved her, how she got hurt, how she was a star, and eventually a huge secret that will change everything about the true identity of Evelyn and the choices she has made throughout her life.

Jenkins Reid, T. (2018). *The seven husbands of Evelyn Hugo*. Washington Square Press.



- What's one professional skill or concept you are passionate about?

I loved doing reading conferences with my 3rd-grade students and teaching them how to use post-its to share their thinking as they read independently. So fun to talk and listen to students' reflective thinking! I miss those student connections now that I am retired.



- What behavior or personality trait do you most attribute your success to and why?

I truly cared about each and every student and it showed. I found out about their activities outside of the classroom and attended some of these activities. I loved personally connecting with students and sharing smiles, jokes, hugs, verbal encouragement, and sharing a story to make learning concepts fun and meaningful. Anyone can teach content, but it really does take something special to make a difference with kids!

- What led you to this career? What was your first job?

My dad was a PE teacher, A.D., and coach and my mom was an elementary librarian so school was in my blood. My first job was as a second-grade teacher in Williams Bay, Wisconsin. Their school board prioritized early childhood and put a cap on classroom numbers for grades K-2. I was grateful to begin my teaching career with an average of 16 students each year for 17 years. What a gift!

- What energizes you at work?

The smiles of students energize me as they enter your classroom for the day!

- What's a work-related accomplishment you're really proud of?

I loved leading the One School, One Book program at my school, with a supporting team of great ideas. It was so fun to see students connected in grades K-5 to one book and see culminating activities such as lemonade stands popping up around Geneva, a hamster who came to live at our school, and therapy dogs who visited classrooms.

- Tell us about your family.

Sadly, my husband Jon passed away unexpectedly this past year. Gratefully, we have four sons (3 in Chicago) and two lovely daughters-in-law. Unfortunately, my three grandchildren live too far away in MO. (My newest grandson carries on my husband's name.) Family is everything.

- What's one thing people don't know about you?

I am terrible with house plants!

- Dog or cat person?

Both

- What's your guilty pleasure?

Almond Kringle

- If you could snap your fingers and be an expert in something, what would it be?

Being an expert typist would be amazing!

- What's one of your favorite memories from the past year?

I have an amazing group of caring, kind, and thoughtful friends and family who have helped me navigate the past months one day at a time. I cherish the most recent trips I had with my husband as we visited friends, family, Sonoma, and Cancun.

- What do you bring to FVRC? Are you learning anything now that might help the group?

As I share this presidency with my friend Camille, my goal has been to personalize our group and make it a friendly and social place to be and learn. I think professional development is so important to keep current and make yourself a better teacher. I have learned how to use Google Drive as a meeting place for information and it has helped keep everything so much better organized and informative for groups.





Kids are silly!!!

We are starting a new section in our newsletter for members to share funny stories or anecdotes about their students or things that happen at school. Please feel free to email us with your laughable moments at illinoisfrc@gmail.com. Here's one to start us off:

I have naturally curly hair and I always wear it curly. I had my hair done one day and decided to straighten it for a change. At school, one of my students walked up to me and said, "What did you do to your hair?" I was amazed he had even noticed it was different! I looked at him and told him I straightened it. The kid looked at me carefully and said, "Don't ever do that again!"

--Tracy Beling

2023 Illinois IRC Conference

It's time to start thinking about this year's reading conference. It will be in Springfield, March 9-10, 2023. The theme for this year is *Revolution: A Change is Gonna Come*. Please click the link for more information: <https://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org/conference-information>

This is such a great chance to energize your teaching and add more best practices to your instruction. If you're interested in presenting at the conference, you need to submit your proposals by September 1st.

Illinois Reading Council Benefits

As a member of the Illinois Reading Council, you have access to many wonderful, FREE, resources through the IRC website.

Book Clubs (<https://irc.memberclicks.net/book-clubs>)

IRC BOOK CLUB will begin on October 23, 2022! Choose one or two books!

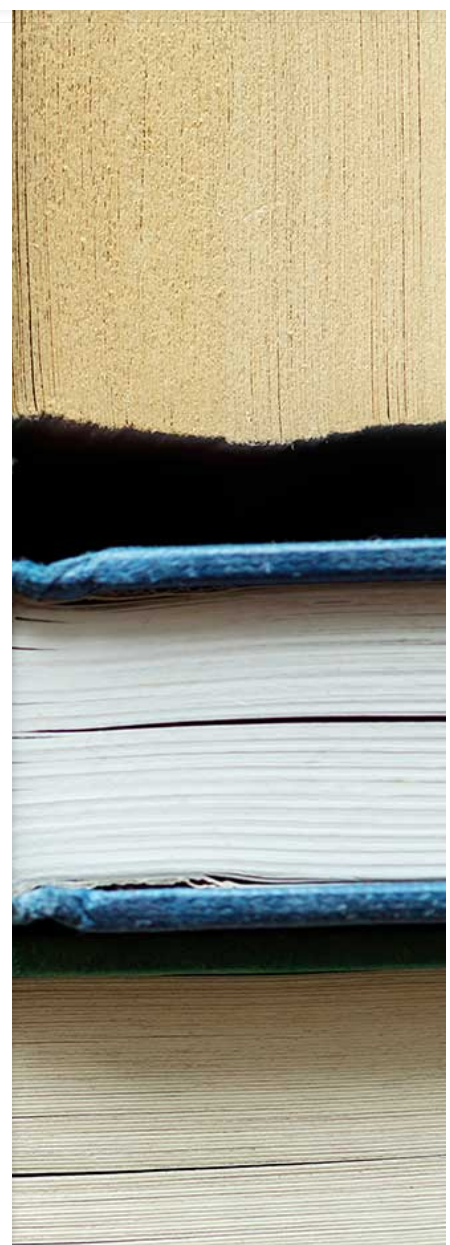
Read, reflect on, and respond to ***Textured Teaching: A Framework for Culturally Sustaining Practices*** by Lorena Escoto German and/or a pairing of ***Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You*** by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi along with ***Stamped (For Kids)*** adapted by Sonja Cherry-Paul. Beginning October 23, these seven-week online discussions will help you build traditional literacy skills while supporting students in developing their social justice skills and/or exploring race and racism in America with hope for an antiracist future. Participants who complete all assignments will be eligible to receive 15 PD clock hours for each book club.

Webinars (<https://irc.memberclicks.net/irc-webinar-series>)

There are several topics to be discussed in the next few months:

- writing and photography
- social/emotional learning
- nonfiction readers
- inclusive texts

Again, these webinars are free for members. If you register for a webinar but cannot attend, they do record them so you can watch at a later date. You can also earn one CPDU for each webinar you attend.



Social Media

Your Fox Valley Reading Council is committed to providing you ongoing professional learning, opportunities to network, resources, instructional strategies to implement with your students, and a bit of motivation from time to time....Did I mention we are doing this from the comfort of your own couch?!?! No, not ANOTHER Zoom meeting, rather we are upping our social media presence!! If you don't follow us already, be sure to head over to your favorite social media platform and give us a "Follow" (@illinoisfvrc) so you don't miss out on any, of the almost daily, posts to help you in your literacy journey.



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