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**IRC
President**

Donna Monti



Greetings,

I hope this note finds you well and excited about the New Year ahead! On behalf of the entire executive board, I want to thank Dr. Chris Koch, our State Superintendent, for writing an informative and timely article, which you will find in this issue of the Communicator.

At the end of December, after a lovely Christmas celebration, and while visiting with my daughter, her husband, and new granddaughter in Ohio, I sat to write this column. I had one thing on my mind: **time**. As a collector of quotations (I keep an eloquence journal), I came across one about **time**. It simply said, "*Make time matter.*" Now, I'm not a lady who makes New Year's resolutions. In fact, I usually chuckle at people who make those hollow promises and then break them by the end of February. Let me say again, at the beginning of each year, I *do not* make resolutions. What I have decided to do in 2008 is to be a bit more discriminating with the little "free **time**" I have. (This isn't a resolution, right??) Like most of you, I keep track of my **time** on a calendar. Every year I make a point of purchasing a lovely calendar. I have two requirements; it must reflect my outlook on life and it absolutely must have extra-large spaces for writing. This year as I wrote down all the important dates, like birthdays, anniversaries, and appointments, I found myself being a bit stingy with my **time**. I did not pencil in *every* fundraiser, party, or discretionary gathering. As Harvey MacKay said, "*Time is free, but it's priceless. You can't own it, but you can use it. You can't keep it, but you can spend it. Once you've lost it you can never get it back.*" As president of the Illinois Reading Council, I hope to visit as many local councils as possible. It's heartwarming to see just how much you positively impact the lives of educators and children throughout Illinois. I've penciled in many trips to see all of you; I will gladly spend **time** with you. Another important item on my calendar is our annual conference. Having been to many conferences, I know the benefit of **time** management. Just like you, I need to plan ahead so that I can make the most of my **time** at the conference. I've experimented with various methods, but I've found one that seems to work best for me. I pour over the

Continued on page 3

2008 Conference
March 13-15, 2008
Springfield, Illinois



**Register
Online
Today!**

www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org

**IRA
State
Coordinator**

Susan Cisna



This year has really been a busy year as Coordinator. These past few months have flown by. I have visited some truly wonderful council meetings since September. Councils all over the state have “Unleashed the Power” of literacy with some exciting ideas for these winter months. If you truly want to recharge those dead “teacher” batteries and “power-up” for the remainder of the year, visit some of your local council meetings and then plan on attending the IRC Conference in March.

Secondary Reading League kicked off their year with a truly wonderful endeavor! Their annual conference hosted a wealth of presenters with keynotes from Jim Burke and Alex Flinn. Middle school and secondary educators don’t miss this one next year!!! SCIRA hosted a terrific mini conference in November with an amazing speaker, Ralph Fletcher, and wonderful food!! East Central/EIU welcomed Candace Fleming who talked about her writing experiences and new books. Many councils hosted membership meetings to meet and greet educators and potential members. Western provided wine, appetizers, and an introduction to new books for all ages. They increased their membership with approximately twenty new members. Lewis and Clark also hosted a wine and snacks reception to meet new teachers. Central Illinois held a “Make and Take” program that was extremely well attended in Springfield. Traveling to so many wonderful programs this year has been very rewarding. I also came away with so many good ideas, not to mention the new books I purchased!!! (One of my great weaknesses!)

Many of these councils applied and received money from IRC through Program Grants to fund these wonderful meetings. IRC still has money for grants for large programs. Encourage your council to write the \$1000 program grant and ask for money to help fund a local function, bring an author to the area, or provide a mini conference. These grants are simple to write, take very little time, and are almost never rejected. Don’t let the

money go unused! Add “Power” to your council activities with funds from IRC!!!! The deadline for the program grant is June 1, 2008. The form can be found in your IRC binder.

Several councils have established connections with Barnes and Noble book stores. If your council is near any bookstore, it would benefit you to make the contact. Barnes and Noble holds a Teacher Appreciation Week every fall. I attended three of these this fall. Teachers were given large discounts on the night the councils met in the stores. Reading Councils provided speakers and refreshments, and the stores provided prizes, books, and other give-aways during the evening. Another connection for councils to consider is with the Habitat for Humanity groups. Starved Rock is providing books for the new habitat!!! What a terrific idea. And, of course, don’t forget to make those connections with the Rotary International Organizations near you.

You still have time to connect with some super local council programs before the IRC Conference in Springfield in March:

- **February 16, 2008:** □ MID-State Reading Council and Barnes & Noble Booksellers will sponsor “YA? Y Not?!”
- **February 21, 2008:** Illinois Valley Reading Council will host a Poetry Presentation by Pam Nelson at 5:00 PM at the First United Methodist Church, 1315 Court Street, Pekin, Illinois.
- **February 23, 2008:** Lewis and Clark Reading Council will hold a Mini-Conference from 9:00 to 11:30 AM at McKendree College.
- **February 23, 2008:** Vermilion Valley Reading Council will hold a Special Education Program Event at 1:00 PM at Pizza Inn, 305 W. Williams Street, Danville, Illinois.
- **February 26, 2008:** South Eastern Reading Council will host an event featuring authors Judy Burreis and Wayne Richards presenting Life Cycle of a Butterfly at 6:00 at Ty’s Family Buffet, 1065 W. Main, Olney, Illinois.

- **February 28, 2008:** Will County Reading Council will host an event featuring Roberta Sejnost presenting Strategies to Foster a Brain Compatible Classroom at 6:00 PM at Lewis University, One University Parkway, Romeoville, Illinois.
- **March 1, 2008:** Blackhawk Reading Council will host an event on Phonemic Awareness featuring Michael Heggerty from 9:30 AM to 12:00 PM at the ROE Office, 3430 Avenue of the Cities, Moline, Illinois.
- **March 4, 2008:** South Suburban Reading Council will host an event featuring Maureen Reichel presenting Reading First at 5:00 PM at DiNolfo's, Mokena, Illinois.

I hope by now your councils have started filling their slate of officers for next year. If you have not volunteered yet to be a new officer, pick up that telephone and call your president to grab that council job. Remember that new officers need to attend the Leadership Training in June. This training is where officers learn what is expected of them as a council officer and where councils get all those great ideas to use during the year. In addition, this year at the Leadership Training your council officers will have planning time to actually organize and schedule meetings, activities, and service programs so you won't have to use precious time in the fall when school starts. While local officers plan, your Regional Directors and IRC Officers will be on hand to make suggestions and offer help. Because it is extremely important for **all** of the local officers to attend this training, it is offered free to those attending.

The plans for June's Leadership Training are moving along quite well. The keynote speaker will be our very own Steven Layne. We have some wonderful treats, some super surprises, and tons of information to help get your councils ENERGIZED for next year. I want the training to be fun as well as a learning experience. At the present, I am looking for some current officers who have had some superior successes to help provide ideas for the incoming council officers. Let me know if you would be interested in helping with the training. Don't let your good ideas waste away – share them at the retreat.

President's Message continued from page 1

preliminary conference booklet, talk with my friends about their recommendations, highlight my first session choices for each day, and then I put the whole thing into a color-coded spreadsheet. (Thank you, Susan Cisna!) Especially at the conference, **time** matters. I encourage you to plan ahead so that you can **Unleash the Power** of literacy *and time* at the conference!

In closing, I would like to share a few book titles that have been worth the **time** I spent reading them. Janet Allen's *Inside Words*, a text about teaching academic vocabulary, looks promising. After all, has Janet ever let us down? *Eat, Love, Pray* by Elizabeth Gilbert is the perfect book for those with wanderlust in their hearts. I can't share my copy with anyone because I've written copious notes in the margins and underlined all of the meaningful quotes. Another is *Dairy Queen* a YA novel by Catherine Murdock. D.J., the heroine, is one of those characters that you miss long after the book has ended. Anthony Horowitz's book 3 in the Gatekeepers series, *Nightrise*, is filled with twists and turns that kept me up one night until 2 AM! *The Power of Experience: Great Writers over 50 on the Quest for a Lifetime of Meaning* introduced by Gail Sheehy is at the top of the stack by my bed. I'm anxious to read what Billy Collins, Amy Tan and others have to say. I have so many more, but the editor told me my space is limited. I can't wait to see you all in Springfield!

Warmly,
Donna Monti

Obama Literacy Fund

Thanks to Senator Barack Obama who is donating an **additional \$5,000** to add to the IRC Barack Obama Literacy Fund Award. Senator Obama is very pleased how IRC developed the Obama Literacy Fund from his first donation of \$25,000 from a children's book he is writing. The IRC has established an endowment by investing the capital and allocating the interest (\$1,000) for an annual literacy award given to create classroom libraries for African-American middle-school students to have access to "culturally relevant" books.

Writing Rocks

By Keta Foltz, Janell Hartman, and Amber Findlay

“Sometimes I don’t like to write because it makes the side of my hand hurt. Does it hurt your hand Rocky?”

“I like to write about stories I already heard and make up new ones.”

“I like to write about Nascar. My book is going to be about dogs. Will you read it Rocky? I’m sorry my dad hunts you.”

“Rocky, you rock!”

These comments, and many more, were written to Rocky ‘the writing’ Raccoon, our writing mascot and devoted pen pal. Rocky has a hard time writing with his small paw so his penmanship was, well, about what you would expect from a stuffed raccoon. Nevertheless, Rocky loves to write and shared his enthusiasm with our first graders heading into summer vacation.

Rocky was first introduced to our first graders and their parents at our spring literacy night. Our local Education Foundation provided our students with summer writing boxes filled with writing supplies and a bare book to write in over the summer. Parents were given a variety of ideas and writing tips to support the project at home.

Rocky (a.k.a. a team of first and second grade teachers) kept his promise to write to each and every first grader over the summer. When Rocky wrote to them, he asked about their summer book. He wanted to know what they were writing about and how it was going. He also tucked in a blank piece of paper and a self addressed stamped envelope so they could easily write back to Rocky.

In the fall, when our first graders came back to school as second graders, Rocky was there to greet them and write them one more letter. The letters were used to motivate the students to keep writing but also to evaluate their interest in writing. Rocky couldn’t get all this done on his own, so we asked for the support of our

Illinois Reading Council in the form of a Literacy Support Grant.

With their support we were able to invite a local author, Barbara Santucci, to speak at our Author & Me Celebration. Barbara is the author of *Abby’s Chairs*, *Anna’s Corn*, and *Loon Summer*. During the month of September, all K-3 students and teachers geared up for the Author & Me celebration by reading and listening to the books the students wrote over the summer. They also read Barbara Santucci’s books, purchased by the grant, in class, and studied her craft.

When the day finally arrived, our entire school had the chance to appreciate all the hard work our second grade authors put into their summer books. During a school assembly, second grade authors were presented with certificates and prizes. K-3 students also had the opportunity to listen to Barbara Santucci speak of her motivation and enthusiasm for writing. Barbara taught us that writers don’t always know what they’re doing, they just do it. When they’re having fun writing it usually works out. She told us that she starts with the characters and lets them come to life.

That evening, we continued our celebration with family and community members. While guests browsed through the second grade young author books, students were provided with opportunities to read their summer stories aloud in a ‘coffee house style’ setting. Next, everyone continued into the gym where approximately 250 parents and students listened to Barbara Santucci speak on motivating and encouraging children to continue to explore their writing talents. Through the Literacy Support Grant, our second graders were given a new bare book to encourage and continue their writing enthusiasm. So, you see, Rocky couldn’t motivate young writers all by himself. However, with a community of dedicated teachers and the support of the Illinois Reading Council, our writing scores have improved and our students are excited about writing. Come and hear more about our project at the Illinois Reading Conference!

31st Day of Reading

By Barb Chrz-White

Are you passionate about reading, writing, and literacy for grades six and up? If you weren't at the 31st Day of Reading in Tinley Park on November 3, you missed a great day. Educators from Wisconsin and as far south as Carbondale joined in the festivities.

Jim Burke is one of us...in the classroom everyday, all day, with students. His wit, humor, and knowledge of literacy kept his audience sitting on the edge of their seats. His ideas were so practical, we could take them back to our classrooms and utilize them immediately. Jim spoke of reading as a process and core instructional principles for all levels, which was valuable for teachers of content areas and literacy teachers.

Young adult author, Alex Flinn, related why she believes young adults need to read dark, realistic fiction, how to engage reluctant readers, and how we can use fairy tales in reading and writing. Her most recent book, *Beastly*, is a must read. It's a modern take on Beauty and the Beast.

Besides Jim and Alex, educators like us conducted presentations throughout the day consisting of putting Jim Burke's strategies to work, reading and writing for ELL learners, a roundtable discussion on literacy coaching, YA literature for the reluctant male reader, differentiation, projects for reading and writing, technology for at-risk students, explicit vocabulary instruction, text structure and structural analysis. The day was rewarding and enriching, personally and professionally.

Congratulations to the Day of Reading Steering Committee for a successful, meaningful conference. Thank you Terry McHugh, Liz Strejcek, Sandy Coughlin, Kathy Schmohe, Patty Rieman and Barb Chrz-White.

If you'd like to request a program proposal for the 32nd Day of Reading or serve on a Day of Reading committee, contact Barb Chrz-White at bchrzwhite@comcast.net or 847-699-0797. You can also download one from our website at www.dayofreading.org.

If you'd like to serve as chairperson of the Folder Committee, contact Barb. This chairperson collects the items to be included in the folders given to attendees at the Day of Reading, with the help of those responsible for developing them. Once collected, the folders are "stuffed" and brought to the Day of Reading where we distribute them. You'd need to be able to attend approximately seven meetings a year in Des Plaines. They're usually from 4:30 – 6:30 PM on a weekday.

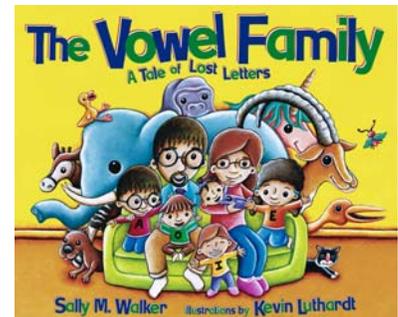
Visit our website at www.dayofreading.org for Day of Reading and SRL updates.

Thanks to those of you who attended the Day of Reading this year. We look forward to seeing you November 8, 2008 when Lois Duncan and Cris Tovani will be our featured speakers. What an exciting day that will be!

Correction to the November 2007 issue

Author Sally Walker, the 2008 Prairie State Award Winner, and Illustrator Kevin Luthardt's newest picture book has been re-named to *The Vowel Family: A Tale of Lost Letters*. The Illinois Reading Council is

looking forward to Sally and Kevin sharing their creative process during the



Featured Session - *From Pen to Paintbrush to Publisher: Picture Book Collaboration* – at the IRC Conference in March.



Literacy: Unleash the Power March 13-15, 2008 Conference Update

By Roxanne Owens

By now IRC members should have received the Preliminary Program in the mail and if you've had a chance to look through it, you probably found yourself utterly amazed and astounded at the range of talented speakers who will be joining us.

Can you believe that Regie Routman, David Booth, Richard Gentry, Kate Kinsella, Linda Labbo, Ruth Culham, Miriam Trehearne, Teri Lesesne, Bill Teale, Taffy Raphael, Christine Moen, Brian Selznick, Christopher Paul Curtis, Ralph Covert, Steve Jenkins, Judith St. George, April Pulley Sayre, Lisa Yee, Kay Winters, Steve Layne, Claire Rudolph Murphy, Laure Halse Anderson, Laurence Yep, Luis Rodriguez, and Ralph Fletcher (just to name a few) will all be gathered to-

gether in one place? Can you believe that you will have the opportunity to join over 50 Illinois authors and illustrators for lunch? Can you believe you'll be able to watch a Reader's Theatre presentation by Avi, Pam Munoz Ryan, Richard Peck, and Sarah Weeks? Can you believe you will laugh loud and long while being entertained by the nationally known comedy troupe Wavelength? Can you believe you'll have over 300 sessions to choose from between Thursday and Saturday? Can you believe you will feel renewed, energized, and enriched by your participation in the 2008 IRC Conference! Yes, you can believe it!

Send in your registration today, right now, before another moment passes!

Illinois Authors and Illustrators Luncheon

Don't miss the Illinois Authors and Illustrators Luncheon on Friday, March 14, 2008 at the IRC Conference in Springfield, Illinois. Attendees will be enlightened and entertained by our engaging Illinois talent and receive a free copy of one of their books. Attendees will also receive *From One Illinois Author to Another: 57 (Six Trait) Tips to Help You Tell Your Story*. Illinois authors grouped 57 writing tips according to the 6 Traits. They picked 57 because I 57 goes from the north part of the state to the south part. Space is limited, so send in your conference registration today!

**Cheryl Bardoe
Andrea Beaty
Raymond Bial
Franny Billingsley
Marlene Targ Brill
Mary Chamberlin
Rich Chamberlin
Laura Crawford
Larry Day
Julia Durango
Jeffrey Ebbeler
Simone Elkeles
Brenda Ferber
Judith Fradin
Bonnie Geisert
Jan Spivey Gilchrist**

**Jamie Gilson
Barbara Gregorich
Stephanie Hale
Esther Hershenhorn
Carol Koeller
Sara Latta
Laurie Lawlor
Deborah Dover Layne
Steve Layne
Kevin Luthardt
Carmela Martino
Alice McGinty
Lorijo Metz
Laura Nyman Montenegro
W. Nikola-Lisa
Janet Nolan
Nnedi Okorafor-Mbachu**

**Janie Lynn Panagopoulos
Gail Piernas-Davenport
Patricia Hruby Powell
Bob Raczka
Aaron Reynolds
Heidi Bee Roemer
Natalie Rompella
Laura Ruby
Deborah Ruddell
Barbara Santucci
Karen Halvorsen Schreck
Catherine Stier
Cynda Strong
Sally M. Walker
Darwin McBeth Walton
Jeff Weigel**

An Invitation for Pre-service Teachers/Student Teachers

By Carol Owles

The Student Membership Committee of IRC extends an invitation to all pre-service teachers to join us at the Illinois Reading Council Conference on Friday evening, March 14, 2008, for our Pizza Party. It will be a fun evening of pizza and pop, sharing ideas with fellow students, learning more about our great professional literacy organizations, IRC and IRA, and just having fun. It is all free, too! Each attendee will also go home with a little gift for their future classroom, with our compliments. Mark your calendars for March 14, and be sure to come to the IRC Pre-service Teachers' Pizza Party!

College of Education Faculty, Cooperating Teachers, Supervisors, and Principals:

We need your help in getting this invitation to our pre-service teachers. If you have student teachers in your building or with whom you work, please extend this invitation to them about our Pizza Party. Also, please encourage them to register and come to the IRC Conference on March 13-15, 2008, in Springfield. **Better yet, bring them with you!!** Student Registration is only \$25.00 for the 3-day conference if they register by February 1, so help our future teachers take advantage of this great professional development opportunity. Our conference is one of the best in the country and a great bargain for the newest members of our profession.

IRC Councils and Members:

We need your help in making sure that every pre-service teacher who attends the conference and our Student Membership Pizza Party goes home with a gift for his/her future classroom. Please consider purchasing a classroom material, children's book, or game when you are at the Teachers' Store and bring it to the conference. A donation box at the conference registration desk will be available to collect your very generous gifts, or you can contact Carol Owles at csowles@ilstu.edu or phone (309)376-7031 for pick-up arrangements. Thank you so much to all who have already donated items and to those of you who will consider doing so!!

Lincoln Strand at the IRC Conference

To help educators prepare to celebrate the Bicentennial of Lincoln's birth in 2009, we will offer a special Lincoln Strand. Presenters from the Abraham Lincoln Museum, the Library of Congress Digital Library Project, and other authors who have written about Lincoln will share insights, tips, and intriguing ideas. In the Final Program Book available at the IRC Conference, look for Lincoln's Hat to find these sessions.

Thursday, March 13, 2008

8:00 – 9:00

Abraham Lincoln Led with Pen and Sword (K-12)

Featured Speaker: Margo Tomaras

The Mystery of History: Finding Our Stories (K-8)

Featured Speaker: Kay Winters

Lincoln Tales and True (4-9)

Presenter: Brian "Fox" Ellis

9:15 – 10:15

Lincoln, Race and the 1908 Race Riots (All)

Featured Speaker: Erin Bishop

10:30 – 11:30

The Mystery of History: Finding Our Stories (K-8)

Featured Speaker: Kay Winters

1:45 – 2:45

The Research and Writing About Another Famous Person, Abraham Lincoln (All)

Featured Speaker: Judith St. George

Abraham Lincoln Led with Pen and Sword (K-12)

Featured Speaker: Margo Tomaras

3:00 – 4:00

History Comes Alive – One School at a Time (4-6)

Presenter: Betty Kay

Abraham Lincoln Led with Pen and Sword (K-12)

Featured Speaker: Margo Tomaras

The Mystery of History: Finding Our Stories (K-8)

Featured Speaker: Kay Winters

IRC Conference 2008

Registration Form



ONE NAME ON EACH FORM (Please print or type.) Form may be reproduced.

March 13-15, 2008 – Springfield, IL

Name (Last) _____ (First) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Telephone () _____ Business Telephone () _____

E-mail _____ Presenter: _____ Yes _____ No _____

Are you an IRC member? ___ Yes ___ No Council Affiliation _____ Are you an IRA member? ___ Yes ___ No

How many years in the education profession? ___ Preservice teacher, ___ 1-4, ___ 5-14, ___ 15-29, ___ 30 and over

REGISTRATION

Registration includes meetings on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

EARLY REGISTRATION

On or Before February 1, 2008

REGISTRATION

After February 1, 2008

Check one:

<input type="checkbox"/> IRC Member		\$150	\$175
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Member (Join IRC for \$40 and register at the member price.)		\$225	\$250
<input type="checkbox"/> Preservice Teacher (with ID)	<input type="checkbox"/> Retiree	\$25	\$50

MEALS Meals are optional. Mark choice of menu. Include payment with registration.

<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday Breakfast (A. Lincoln)	<i>Teri Lesesne</i>	\$18	\$23
<input type="checkbox"/> Bacon & Eggs	<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday Luncheon (A. Lincoln)	<i>Laurie Halse Anderson</i>	\$22	\$27
<input type="checkbox"/> Seared Chicken Breast	<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday Luncheon (Hilton)	<i>Ralph Covert</i>	\$20	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Turkey Cranberry Waldorf Salad	<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday Prairie State Award Banquet (A. Lincoln)	<i>Brian Selznick</i>	\$30	\$35
<input type="checkbox"/> Prime Rib	<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday Breakfast (A. Lincoln)	<i>Ralph Fletcher</i>	\$18	\$23
<input type="checkbox"/> Four Cheese Omelet	<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday Luncheon (A. Lincoln) Lunch with an IL Author/Illustrator (includes book)		\$50	\$55
<input type="checkbox"/> Green Leaf Salad with Chicken	<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian Salad		
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday Luncheon (Hilton)	<i>Regie Routman</i>	\$22	\$27
<input type="checkbox"/> Breast of Chicken	<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday Banquet (A. Lincoln)	<i>Luis Rodriguez</i>	\$30	\$35
<input type="checkbox"/> Pecan Crusted Chicken Breast	<input type="checkbox"/> Salmon <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday Night Entertainment Event (Hilton)	<i>Wavelength</i>	\$25	\$30
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Breakfast (A. Lincoln)	<i>Laurence Yep</i>	\$18	\$23
<input type="checkbox"/> Cinnamon Raisin French Toast	<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Author Luncheon (Hilton)	<i>Christopher Paul Curtis</i>	\$25	\$30
<input type="checkbox"/> Roasted Turkey Breast	<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian		

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____ \$ _____

Return this form with payment to:

Illinois Reading Council

1210 Fort Jesse Road, Suite B2

Normal, IL 61761

Phone: 888-454-1341

Fax: 309-454-3512

www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org

Method of Payment:
(Sorry, no P.O.'s accepted.)

Check (payable to IRC) Visa MasterCard

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Signature _____

Credit Card Expiration Date: Mo. Yr.

Special Accommodations - Individuals who need special accommodations must make specific requests in writing to the IRC office at least three weeks prior to the conference.

ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL HOUSING APPLICATION FORM

Conference Dates - Thursday, March 13; Friday, March 14; Saturday, March 15, 2008

1. Housing forms will only be accepted by mail. Forms will not be accepted at the Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau office. **Housing forms must be received by February 15, 2008.**
2. Any forms completed incorrectly will not be processed and will be returned to sender.
3. A separate form must be completed for each room requested. Use one form per room, not per person.
4. Do not request a room with two beds unless there are two or more people. Rooms with two beds are at a premium.
5. Hotel room assignments are on a first-come, first-serve basis. If the hotel/motel of your choice is not available, the Housing Bureau will secure reservations for you at another hotel.
6. An acknowledgment from the Housing Bureau will be sent to you upon receiving your housing application form. A hotel room reservation confirmation will be sent from your hotel/motel. **Make all changes with the SCVB/IRC Housing until February 20. After February 20, call the hotel directly to make any changes.**
7. All rooms for the IRC Conference which have not been reserved by February 15, 2008 will be released for general sale.
8. **No rooms will be held without a credit card or check deposit. Please forward any checks for deposit to the hotel assigned. Do not send checks to the Springfield Visitors Bureau. If the hotel/motel does not receive an advance deposit check by February 20, 2008, the credit card will be charged the advance deposit of one night room and tax. All deposits are non-refundable. Cancellation or arrival and/or departure changes must be made by February 20, 2008 to receive a refund. Please note that some hotels charge for early departure.**
9. **The Springfield Hilton Hotel requires a two night minimum.**
10. **The President Abraham Lincoln Hotel was previously the Springfield Renaissance Hotel.**

Type of Credit Card: _____ # _____ Expiration Date: _____
(must be valid through 3/08)

Arrival Date _____ Departure Date _____

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone (_____) _____ Fax (_____) _____

Email _____

Type of room needed: _____ Room with one bed _____ Room with two beds
If rooms with two beds are unavailable, will a room with one bed be acceptable? _____ Yes _____ No

Please number your preference of hotel with a one (1) for your first choice, a two (2) for your second choice, etc.

	Abraham Lincoln (Renaissance) \$105.00-\$116.00
	Springfield Hilton \$111.00
	Ramada Limited North \$76.00
	Northfield Inn \$75.00
	Comfort Suites \$89.00
	Drury Inn & Suites \$94.00

	Pear Tree Inn \$76.00
	Hampton Inn \$83.00
	Hilton Garden Inn \$94.00
	Holiday Inn Express \$90.00
	Microtel \$72.00
	Crown Plaza \$110.00

List all room occupants including yourself:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Mail form directly to:

**SCVB/IRC HOUSING
109 North 7th Street
Springfield, IL 62701**

Response to Intervention and Reading: Implications for the Regular Education Classroom

By Chris Koch, Illinois State Superintendent of Education

As the new state superintendent, I was pleased with the invitation to contribute to the Illinois Reading Council newsletter. When I first became a special educator in the late 1980's and took my first teaching position with high school students, I was immediately faced with the dilemma of a lack of reading skills in students and my lack of proficiency in reading instruction. I returned to the university to gain additional skills so that I could be more effective in addressing reading instruction.

I want to take this opportunity to discuss an important education tool available in Illinois to better address reading instruction statewide – the design and delivery of scientific, research-based reading interventions with frequent student progress monitoring. The progress monitoring component means that decisions are made about a student's progress based on how the child responds to instruction and intervention, which is where the term "Response to Intervention" (RtI), comes into play. As a result, the term RtI is often used to refer to the entire process of identifying student learning difficulties early, designing and providing reading interventions, monitoring student progress and using data to make educational decisions. While leadership for RtI at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) began in special education, it is largely a general education initiative, and we have worked to ensure that the agency leadership for this area involves a strong collaboration between our Curriculum and Instruction and Special Education divisions.

Growing interest in the adoption of RtI models as an opportunity "to contribute to the improvement of instruction for students with disabilities and to the prevention of inappropriate identification of specific learning disabilities" (CFDA number 84.324A) led to my topic for the Illinois Reading Council newsletter.

As a part of ISBE's planning, I have set goals to support Illinois schools in RtI implementation. Currently, training, technical assistance and coaching are provided through Illinois ASPIRE (Alliance for School-based

Problem Solving and Intervention Resources in Education) to support the use of differentiated instruction, school-based problem solving, scientific, research-based interventions and student progress monitoring. Resources such as those provided by Illinois ASPIRE offer the opportunity for Illinois educators to gain the necessary knowledge and skills to assist their struggling students in acquiring the academic skills they must possess to find school success.

What does RtI look like in the classroom setting? The answer contains many elements which call upon the expertise of the teacher to design and deliver an effective core curriculum, to frequently assess the progress of all students and to embed early interventions for struggling students within daily lessons. Such expertise and practices provide an environment where students may find the joy of learning instead of experiencing the pain of repeated failure before interventions are instituted.

RtI is typically used within the context of a three-tier model of school supports. A solid foundation is critical to Tier 1, which means the general education classroom must have an effective, scientific, research-based core curriculum, coupled with effective instruction. The focus at Tier 1 is on the performance of all students, and interventions are oriented toward whole-group instructional procedures. In many Illinois classrooms this month, the teacher or a team of teachers will use some type of universal screening tool to assess their students' levels of reading proficiency. They will then use the data to set group goals for the next assessment period, plan for whole group instructional changes based on the data and identify students who may need further intervention at Tier 2.

Tier 2 includes programs, strategies, and procedures designed and employed to supplement, enhance and support Tier 1. In Tier 2, students who respond poorly to Tier 1 group instructional procedures receive core instruction plus supplemental instruction for their specific area of need. Such supplemental instruction is typi-

cally conducted in groups of three to five students, and may be provided by the classroom teacher, a reading specialist or a trained interventionist. To the greatest extent possible, the educator embeds the interventions in the current curriculum. To monitor student progress, the teacher and/or an assessment team assesses students periodically (one or two times per month), and after each assessment period re-evaluates individual student progress. Students who do not experience success during Tier 2 interventions are recommended for the more intensive and individual interventions of Tier 3.

A process using RtI extends the opportunity for all the children and teachers of Illinois to utilize the best educational practices we know to accomplish our goal of helping every student reach his or her maximum abilities. For more information about RtI please contact Kathryn Cox at kcox@isbe.net or Dawn Camacho at dcamacho@isbe.net or by phone at 217/782-5589. For more information on Illinois ASPIRE, visit the Illinois ASPIRE website at www.illinoisaspire.org or contact a representative of the Illinois ASPIRE Center in your area listed below:

Illinois ASPIRE – Chicago:

Chicago Public Schools, District 299

Contact: Amy Dahlstrom Klainer

Email: ajdahlstromklain@cps.k12.il.us

Phone: 773-553-2209

Illinois ASPIRE – North:

Northern Suburban Special Education District

Contact: Mark Shinn

Email: markshinn@mac.com

Phone: (847) 275-7200

Illinois ASPIRE – Central:

Peoria Regional Office of Education #48

Contact: Sandy Beherns

Email: instruct24u@yahoo.com

Phone: 309-657-9337

Illinois ASPIRE – South:

Southern Illinois University

Contact: Melissa Bergstrom

Email: mbergst@siue.edu

Phone: 618-650-3182

OR

Contact: Michael McCollum

Email: mmccollum@siue.edu

Phone: (618) 650-5182

References

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- Johnson, E; Mellard, D. F.; Fuchs, D.; & McKnight, M. A. (2006). Responsiveness to intervention (RtI): How to do it. National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD)
- National Association of State Directors of Special Education (2005) Response to intervention: Policy considerations and implementation. Alexandria, VA: NASDSE.
- Wright, J. (2007). RTI toolkit: A practical guide for schools. Port Chester, NY: Dude Publishing.

Resources

- <http://www.aimsweb.com/index.php>
- <http://www.ideapartnership.org/page.cfm?pageid=28>
- <http://www.illinoisaspire.org/welcome/>
- <http://www.interventioncentral.com/>
- <http://www.ilispa.org/modules/smartsection/item.php?itemid=6>
- <http://nasdse.org/projects.cfm?pageprojectid=23>
- <http://nrclid.org/index.shtml>
- <http://www.promisingpractices.net/default.asp>
- <http://www.rrfcnetwork.org> (select Topical Link then Response to Intervention)
- <http://www.studentprogress.org/>
- <http://whatworks.ed.gov/>

Using Your Time to Unleash the POWER of Teamwork

By Cindy Wilson

While the bulk of this article focuses on time, teamwork, and power, it wouldn't come from yours truly if I didn't first mention one of my favorite aspects of the Illinois Reading Council Conference: the Hall of Councils! Last year was one of the most exciting for me because of the high percentage of local and special interest councils participating. I've never seen so many displays! What wonderful advertisements you made for yourselves! It was also an exciting time because of the difficulty in judging. We were down to decimal points because the competition was so close. It would be absolutely wonderful to have at least as many councils participating this year and to have the judging be so challenging again – what a great problem to have! If any of you have questions about putting together a display, please do not hesitate to call me.

I'd like to take the opportunity in this article to encourage you to think of those three themes – time, teamwork, and power – in concert with each other. By now you have read President Monti's article, in which she focuses on time. As I'm sure it is for many of you, time is an issue for me as well. This past year I assumed a leadership role at my university, and because of my work there, my time is even shorter than it used to be. President Monti's non-resolution to use her time wisely is good advice: I am making my own commitment (non-resolution) to use my time more consciously and strategically (along with using some of it to exercise more and try to address my perennial non-resolution of losing weight!)

The second of the three themes – teamwork – has been on my mind a lot because of my own recent experiences at the university. In that work, I've been able to draw on my leadership experiences with the Illinois Reading Council and the teamwork through which we accomplish so much. But while the group with which I work at my university is a highly competent and professional team, too, they are just beginning to work together as one. We have set some common goals, brainstormed for some strategies, and are doing the hard, sometimes messy work that is required to get things

done. We also have started to create occasions during which we focus on one important thing at a time.

The other day I found a tip sheet called "When a Team Works" in my IRC membership papers. I'm not sure who authored it, but judging from the content, it must have been an IRA leader. So much of it applies to what I'm experiencing at the University and at IRC. For example, it includes a definition of 'teamwork' from a newsletter from the Center for Creative Leadership, which reads as follows: "... a small group of interdependent individuals who, together, have the expertise, knowledge, and skills needed to complete an assigned task or ongoing work." That certainly describes the faculty at my university, it describes the Executive Board of the IRC, and I'm sure it describes the leadership of every local and special interest council in the Illinois Reading Council. However, I just wonder how many of us have purposefully set aside time to sit down as teams and analyze ourselves in terms of what each individual brings to the table. We know some things intuitively, from working with each other, but we should also set aside time to have those purposeful analytic conversations, which could save us time later, when certain individual skills are most needed. I know that my 'team' at the university is going to start out the New Year this way. I would encourage you to apply the positive teamwork experiences you have enjoyed through active IRC membership to other professional and personal situations as well.

That said, in the face of everything we tout as a working society about teamwork, there is a radical concept afoot: a team is not always the best way to accomplish something. Yes, more heads put together are usually better than one, and sharing the workload means not saddling one person with all of the responsibility; one person should never do all the work. Teams can often provide innovation, simply because of the multiple perspectives that come together. But if we take a few minutes to step back and analyze situations carefully, we can usually recognize where teams are needed and where individuals can complete tasks unguided, unsupervised,

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and unrestricted by the fetters that can accompany bringing a team to consensus. In so doing, these individuals are still working as a part of the larger team.

On the flip side, another important aspect of teamwork is that it requires us to get outside our comfort zones. The January 2007 Newsletter of the CCL says that "... both teams and team leaders must develop new skills to work in today's complex situations and organizations."* This is also true, and if approached with a positive spirit, only strengthens teams as well as individuals.

The third theme – that of power – is highly dependent upon both time and teamwork. While this year's conference theme focuses on the power of literacy, let me remind you of the power of using time and teamwork together. There are occasions when we don't feel in control of our time, but there are other occasions when we do have that control. I would urge you to use that time purposefully, whether in your down time, your work, or your volunteerism. If we all would take a little of that precious time, we will realize that we have the power within us to recognize when a task needs a team and when it is best done by an individual. And finally, please recognize the powerful potential that can be unleashed by utilizing both time and teamwork strategically and effectively. George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) said it better than I can: "It's never too late to be what you might have been." Now put together that Hall of Councils team – or call on a really talented individual – and get that display together for the conference!

*Retrieved December 20, 2007 from <http://www.ccl.org/leadership/update/2007/JANteams.aspx?SEARCHBTN.X=10&SEARCHBTN.Y=4>

<p>Mission The mission of the Illinois Reading Council is to provide support and leadership to educators as they promote and teach lifelong literacy.</p>	
<p>Illinois Reading Council 1210 Fort Jesse Road, Suite B2 Normal, IL 61761 Phone: 888-454-1341 Fax Number: 309-454-3512 E-Mail: irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org Website: www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org</p>	

International Project: Guatemalan Schools Benefit from Handicraft Sales

By Carol Owles



This February a team of IRA members from across the country will travel to Guatemala to work in their elementary schools and in their "Normales" (teacher training schools) for one week. I feel privileged to be a member of this team. The people of Guatemala are economically poor, but the teachers and parents we met and worked with last year want to provide their students with the best instruction and education that they can. We found the teachers to be eager to learn new strategies and methods of literacy instruction.

The teachers and children in the schools that we visited have very few books – and in some cases, no books! One of our International Projects is to provide as many books as we can to classrooms in Guatemala. To accomplish this, several Reading Councils in the U.S., led and organized by Marcie Mondschein of the Nassau Reading Council in New York, are purchasing handicrafts from small shops and vendors in Antigua, Guatemala, to sell at various meetings and conferences. I will be purchasing and bringing back to Illinois some beautiful handicrafts that will be sold at our IRC Conference in March. The profits from these sales will be used to purchase books for Guatemalan classrooms, teachers, and students. Our project benefits the people of Guatemala in two ways: The purchase of their handicraft products supports local artisans and their economy, and the profits buy more books for their schools.

You will have the opportunity to purchase some beautiful gift items at a reasonable price, while supporting this worthwhile project. Look for the Guatemalan Handicrafts Booth at our IRC Conference in Springfield, and please consider purchasing a few items!!



Welcome to the “*Illinois Authors’ Corner*,” showcasing new releases from our fabulous Illinois Authors and IRC members. If you’d like to include your new release, please visit the IRC website to find out how to submit information.

Puzzle Paragraphs:

Taking the Mystery Out of Writing Nonfiction

Written By: Christine Boardman Moen

www.chrismoen.com

Illustrated By: Corbin Hillam

Publisher: Teaching & Learning Date: May 2007

Category: Professional Grades: 4 to 8

Puzzle Paragraphs takes the mystery out of writing nonfiction. This book contains all the missing pieces for bridging the connection between reading and writing and for reinforcing the interdependence of content and structure.

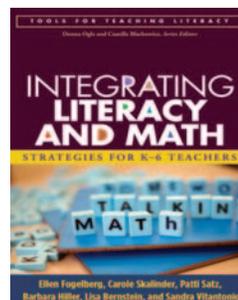
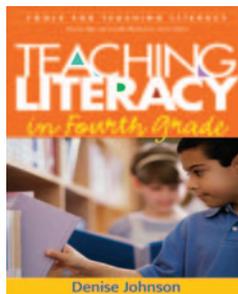
The Tools for Teaching Literacy Series

Series Editors: Donna Ogle, Camille Blachowicz

Publisher: Guilford Press www.guilford.com/TTL

Category: Professional Grades: Pre-K to 8

The series editors are pleased to announce two new books in the Tools for Teaching Literacy series for spring 2008, *Teaching Literacy in Fourth Grade*, by Denise Johnson, and *Integrating Literacy and Math*, by Ellen Fogelberg et al. This highly practical series includes grade-specific books for first-time teachers or those new to teaching a particular grade, as well as books on key literacy topics relevant to all grades. Topical books cover subjects including integrating literacy with technology, teaching literacy through the arts, and fluency. Written by outstanding educators with extensive classroom experience, each research-based volume is packed with hands-on activities, reproducibles, and best practices for promoting student achievement. For complete details about books in the series — including descriptions, contents, and sample chapters — visit www.guilford.com/TTL.



What Is A Zawadi to We?

Author and Illustrator: Vandella Brown

Publisher: Lumen-us Book Publications

Date: September 2007

Category: Children’s Ages: 1 and up

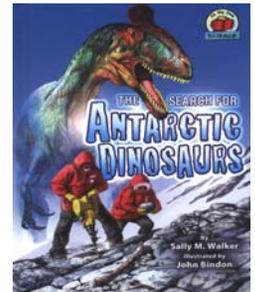
The Search for Antarctic Dinosaurs

Author: Sally M. Walker Illustrator: John Bindon

Publisher: Millbrook Press Date: October 2007

Category: Easy Reader Grades: K to 4th

Dr. William Hammer, a paleontologist at Augustana College, in Illinois, hunts for dinosaur fossils in an unusual place — Antarctica! Hunting for fossils in frigid Antarctica is dangerous business. Sub-zero temperatures, strong winds, and treacherous ice are a few of nature’s forces the scientists must contend with. Young readers join Hammer and his crew as they don parkas and thermal underwear to search for ancient life forms. The fossils they find reveal information about the frozen continent that will surprise and delight children.



The Seldom-Ever-Shady Glades

Author and Illustrator: Sue Van Wassenhove

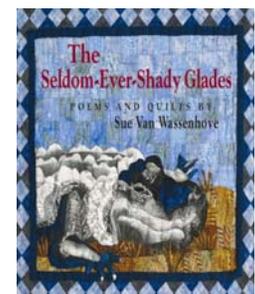
www.suevanwassenhove.com

Publisher: Wordsong of Boyds Mills Press

Date: February 2008

Category: Children’s Poetry Grades: 4 and Up

The Florida Everglades’ unique birds and wildlife come alive in this book of poems about bungee heron necks, blue cormorant throats, and alligators sneaking through swaying sawgrass. Musical, often humorous poetry paints these colorful scenes, and, in an unusual twist, the illustrations are each breathtaking handmade quilts. Sue Van Wassenhove has lovingly created a book to help anyone share a love of Everglades’ ecology, birding and poetry with the children in one’s life.



Submissions deadline for the May 2008 IRC Communicator and Illinois Authors’ Corner is March 1, 2008!

Cool Studies: Handwriting and the ISAT

by Lou Ferrolì

So, do we care much about handwriting these days? Let's see. We have to raise those ISAT scores. We have to get kids to read more words in 60 seconds. We have to test them 45 times in the next 30 days to see if they're responding to intervention. We even have to figure out how to get them to observe a daily moment of silence. There's way more to worry about than handwriting. But what if you could raise ISAT scores through improved handwriting?

I received a flyer a couple months ago from Zaner-Bloser which says that there is evidence that the quality of handwriting influences the scores of essays evaluated by trained raters. Of course that's what a handwriting company would want us to believe, so I needed to see this evidence for myself. It was a little tricky because Zaner-Bloser didn't provide the full citation. Instead they cited a 1994 pamphlet written by Illinoisans Linda Lamme and Pam Farris. Zaner-Bloser published the pamphlet; that's how they knew about it. Fortunately, Linda and Pam are good scholars, so I tracked down their work and got the original citation. It ends up that the study is pretty cool.

Sloan and McGinnis (1982) wanted to know if handwriting affects grades on essays. Over in Streamwood, Illinois, at the high school, the English teachers had been trained in scoring essays, and every year they scored over 500 themes from the freshman class to determine the best placements for their sophomore-level work.

The researchers randomly selected 45 of these essays and took them down the road to the Schaumburg home of the Palmer Handwriting Company. They had the themes rewritten by Palmer Handwriting experts who took "care to change only the handwriting." Handwriting experts! How cool is that? Can you imagine a cocktail party? "Hi, what do you do for a living?"

"Oh, I'm in handwriting."

"Really? You mean you examine people's handwriting and then testify about forgeries and stuff?"

"No. I just have really, really good handwriting."

"And you do that for a living? Maybe I should have worked harder at that when I was in school."

Anyway, the themes (45 original and 45 rewritten) were mixed in during the annual scoring session so there was a "realistic grading situation in which the teachers graded papers as rapidly as possible." It was a slick research design as "the quality of the student writing varies from neat and legible to sloppy and nearly illegible, while the expert writing was constant in quality."

The scorers used a 50-point analytic scale that included: organization, ideas, wording, flavor, usage, punctuation, spelling, and handwriting ("8-Traits"?) with the first two carrying double weight. The result was that "the papers written in expert handwriting were evaluated by the teachers as significantly better papers." Although handwriting was one of the traits scorers considered in their evaluations, it counted for only 5 points while the rewritten papers were scored, on average, 9.8 points higher than the originals. The advantage to the rewritten papers held consistent whether the original paper was in the lower-third in overall quality, the middle-third, or the upper-third. In other words, poor themes got higher scores when rewritten, and themes that were good in the first place got still higher scores when rewritten.

For years I have thought of doing this very same study. One difference in my design, though, is that I would have the original essays rewritten into bad handwriting. I'm sure I couldn't go to the Palmer people for some expert bad handwriting. But I'll bet I could find some kids who can write badly if I ask a few teachers for nominations. Do you know any candidates?

Does this study convince you to work on handwriting instead of ISAT practice? No? I wondered what our State had to say about handwriting and ISAT scoring, so I went to the ISBE website. Lo and behold I found a cute PowerPoint which showed some "ISAT Facts". One

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Cool Studies continued from page 15

of those facts is: “It is **NOT** true that the quality of handwriting affects scoring.”

Wow! Apparently our state’s assessment leaders know about the research, and they train their scorers to disregard the handwriting. I was impressed. But I wanted to know for sure. There was an ISBE contact person identified at the end of the PowerPoint. So, I wrote to her and asked her to explain a little further: “How do you know there is no relationship between the quality of handwriting and one’s score?” Drawing together all

her psychometric acumen, all her knowledge of theory and practice, she carefully explained: “Scorers are accustomed to looking at all kinds of handwriting.”

That’s it? Please tell me there’s more to it. That’s your basis for assuring Illinois educators that handwriting does not count on the ISAT? You know, the high school teachers in Streamwood were accustomed to looking at all kinds of writing, and they still gave higher scores to expert handwriting.

I have an idea. How about if we suspended all ISAT practice, and replaced it with handwriting instruction? What’s that? You think it is wrong to try to raise scores without genuinely improving the underlying skill? OK. How would it be if we just improved the handwriting of the “bubble kids”? Then when the ISATs roll around, the kids will get higher scores, plus they will have a skill that might actually do them some good in life.

The study was not easy to locate, but you’ll find it at Sloan, C. & McGinnis, I. (1982). The effect of handwriting on teacher’s grading of high school essays. *Journal of the Association for the Study of Perception*, 17(2), 15-21.

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ISAT Facts

- It is **NOT** necessary to have a five-paragraph formulaic strategy.
- It is **NOT** true that more words are always better.
- It is **NOT** true that every persuasive response must have three reasons.
- It is **NOT** true that the quality of handwriting affects scoring.
- Writing is **NOT** currently an AYP subject.
- Students **CANNOT** use a dictionary while testing.

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