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**IRC  
President  
Roxanne Owens**



As the President of the Illinois Reading Council, I should probably focus on books when I write the front-page column, but I'm going to divert from that for this issue. Okay—I won't divert completely. If you still haven't read Brian Selznick's *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*—the 2008 Caldecott winner—you really must. I have yet to meet anyone (adults, teens, children, reluctant readers, avid readers...) who hasn't been consumed by this book. It's one of those "can't put it down" books. Trust me. Read it and let me know what you think. I'd also love to hear your other "can't put it down" book recommendations. Feel free to email them to me at [rowens@depaul.edu](mailto:rowens@depaul.edu) and I'll compile a list for our website. Now I'll divert.

In addition to reading, one of my other favorite pastimes is watching movies. At the risk of having people worry about my intellectual capabilities, I will admit that I especially love movies that star Will Ferrell. They are not exactly highbrow entertainment, but they are amusing (to varying degrees) and they often have a worthwhile message (really, they do).

A couple weeks ago, my family watched *Kicking and Screaming* and it immediately catapulted its way into my top 5 movies. In addition to Will Ferrell, this movie also stars Mike Ditka. Yes, the Mike Ditka who plays himself (and his acting is about as good as you'd imagine it to be—even playing himself). Will Ferrell and Mike Ditka coach a youth soccer team that has little hope of actually winning any games. The coaches discover that two talented young soccer players from Italy are apprenticing at their uncle's butcher shop for the summer. Will and Mike approach the butcher and ask if the boys can join the soccer team. The uncle decides that yes, he will let them join the soccer team, but all must remember that "Meat Comes First!" In other words, they must know their priority and must act accordingly. Get the important work done first.

As reading professionals, we are immersed in the world of seemingly endless debates about standards, best practices, programs, and assessments. We're pulled in so many different directions by so many different stakeholders. The demands are overwhelming. It is easy to become mired in tasks that may or may not be worth our time, particularly things that may not have a direct benefit to our students. We know in our hearts what we need to do to be the best educators we can be, to be the best people we can be, but

*Continued on page 3*

**2009 IRC Conference  
March 19-21, 2009  
Springfield, Illinois**



**ENGAGE! EXCITE! IGNITE!**

Register online at  
[www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org)!

**IRA  
State  
Coordinator**  
*Roberta Sejnost*



*“In seed time learn, in harvest teach, in winter enjoy.”  
~ William Blake*

Suddenly it is November; school routines have settled in, and the “stay inside and keep warm” mantra begins to whisper in our ears. But, don’t give way to that. Instead, listen to the advice of William Blake and “in winter enjoy” by taking advantage of the terrific local council meetings that have been planned. Remember, you are always welcome to visit councils other than your own. And, to help you begin that venture, here are some of the wonderful programs you can choose from. Be sure to check [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org), the IRC website, for more information about each of these great opportunities.

#### Northwest Area (Region 1)

**November 22nd** finds **Blackhawk Reading Council** hosting Word Recognition Skills with Michael Heggerty at 9:30 AM at Moline Public Library, 3010-41st St. in Moline. And, **Northwestern Illinois Reading Council** continues their tradition of following Father Christmas, Santa and Mrs. Claus around by hosting reading hours at libraries in Mt. Carroll and Freeport on **December 6th** and in Thomson, Savanna, and Stockton on **December 13th**. (Bravo to NWRC for reaching so many places within their council area, especially before the busy holidays.)

#### North Chicago Area (Region 2)

On **November 5th**, **Lake Area Reading Council** presents Tracy Tarasiuk, who will speak on Increasing Reading Performance through Technology, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at Park School in Round Lake. Then, **Fox Valley Reading Council** will feature Roxanne Owens at their Winter Conference “Ignite - Encouraging Family Literacy” from 5:30 to 8:00 PM on **January 26th**.

#### West Central (Region 4)

If you know any pre-service teachers, encourage them to attend **Western Illinois Reading Council’s** Fall

Pre-service Teacher Reading Night on **November 18th**, 5:30 PM at Western Illinois University’s Horrabin Hall in Macomb. And, on **January 29-31, 2009**, **Central Illinois Reading Council** hosts a 1/2 Price Scholastic Book Sale at the Capital Area Career Center in Springfield. In addition, do take advantage of **Illinois Valley Reading Council’s** Literacy Make & Take It at Advent Lutheran Church, 1211 S. Main St., Morton at 5:00 PM on **January 29th**.

#### North Central (Region 5)

**Starved Rock Reading Council** will “Snuggle Up With a Good Book” from 1:00 to 3:00 PM on **November 15th** at the Peru Mall while on **December 5th**, **Two Rivers Reading Council** will participate in the Gallery of Trees Gala from 6:00 to 8:30 PM at the Kankakee County Historical Society, 801 S. 8th Avenue, Kankakee. Then, on **January 21st** at 5:30 PM, **South Suburban Reading Council** hosts “Building Bridges Between Physical Education and the Classroom (With a Strong Focus on Reading)” with Kathy Houston and Colleen Smith at Orland Chateau, 14500 LaGrange Road, Orland Park.

#### East Central (Region 6)

On **November 6th**, **Macon County Reading Council** asks you to “Grab Your Suitcase for a Poetry Getaway” presented by Pam Nelson at 4:15 PM at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1360 W. Main in Decatur. Then, on **November 18th**, **Vermilion Valley Reading Council** hosts a Children’s Book Event with Barb Nolan from 4:00 to 6:30 PM at the Danville Public Library, 319 N. Vermilion. Finally, **January 31st** finds **Illini Reading Council** increasing our knowledge of RTI with Sandy Beherns from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

#### Southwest (Region 7)

**Lewis and Clark Reading Council** will host a Piasa Pizza Party (featuring Dr. Ralph Cordova’s Piasa Writing Bluffs Project) from 5:30 to 7:30 PM at Belleville District #118, Belleville on **January 15th**, and on **January 28th**, Boomer Crotty visits **Mississippi Valley Reading Council** from 7:00 to 8:30 PM to present all he knows about “Math and Mirth.”

#### Southeast (Region 8)

On **November 3rd**, **South Eastern Reading Council**

*Continued on page 3*

*IRA State Coordinator continued from page 2*

will host “Reading Rules of the Road - Teaching Fluency” with Pam Miles from 5:30 to 7:30 PM at Ty’s Buffet, 1065 W. Main in Olney.

**All Over the State (Region 9)**

And, no matter where you live in the state, don’t miss **Secondary Reading League’s** 32nd Day of Reading on **November 8th** with featured speakers Lois Duncan and Cris Tovani.

Yet another way to put those long winter evenings to work is to apply for an IRC award or grant. Here are the deadlines for some that your council might consider. More specific details and applications for each can be found on the IRC website.

**Deadline: November 15th**

IRA Exemplary Reading Program Award

**Deadline: December 15th**

Parents and Reading Award

Illinois Reading Educator of the Year Award

**Deadline: January 1st**

IRC Hall of Fame Award

Certificate of Recognition

ICARE for Reading Award

**Deadline: January 13th**

IRC Adult & Family Literacy Grant

**Deadline: January 15th**

Static Stick Decal Design Contest

Finally, don’t forget to get your councils working on both IRC’s Council of Excellence Award and IRA’s Honor Council Award. Our Councils do fantastic things; let them be rewarded for all the good things they do for literacy in Illinois and in the nation! And, remember, “in winter enjoy!”

*President’s Message continued from page 1*

the day-to-day business of life in and out of the classroom can divert us unless we consciously remember to act as if we are clear about priorities. What is our “meat?”

The day after watching the movie, I spent some time looking at my calendar. Were my days filled with events that related to my priorities and values, or did I see myself spending the year in endless meetings completing reams of paperwork that would probably end up stuck in a file somewhere as part of an accreditation report? Had I scheduled time with my family? Had I blocked out time to read and to write the kind of things I really WANT to read and to write—the kind of things that will make me a better teacher, and maybe even a better person? I revised the calendar and focused on events and tasks related to family, teaching, research, and service (professional and personal). That’s my meat for this year.

Knowing that I needed a daily reminder, but figuring that a sign stating “Meat Comes First” hanging in my university office might seem weirdly carnivorous, I used the Italian translation. I think we’ll all agree that “La carne viene prima” sounds much classier. (For the vegetarians among us, feel free to adapt the sign to read: “Verdure vengono prima.”) Thus far, none of my colleagues has asked what the sign means. They probably think it’s a scholarly Latin phrase. But Will Ferrell, Mike Ditka, and I all know that it’s a call to remember what is most important.

As we approach the holiday season and the New Year, I offer my best wishes for joy-filled times spent with those who help you remember your priorities, who nourish you, and who warm your heart.

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

By Sue Sokolinski



Definitions assigned to *Family Literacy* are as diverse as families themselves. Family literacy is not simply a program; it's a collaborative approach to supporting readers of all ages. *Intergenerational Family Literacy* programs seek to promote the literacy skills of all family members including adults. On the other hand, in *Parent Involvement Family*

*Literacy* programs, parents are viewed as vehicles through which the literacy development of children can be promoted. Both models view families and educators as equal partners in efforts to promote literacy development.

Family literacy is an approach that can be applied to school-based reading intervention programs, school-wide reading programs and school or community reading events. For example, Literacy in Families Empowers (Sokolinski, *IRC Journal* Spring 2008) is a 10-week family literacy program that supports struggling first-grade readers and their families. First graders who attend LIFE learn specific strategies that promote listening comprehension in a play-based setting. After being taught how to use text features to retell information from a book about volcanoes, first graders construct an exploding volcano with their parents. Family literacy is also an effective approach to promoting literacy at brief events in authentic community settings. Several years ago one especially creative council held a family literacy event in a Laundromat! Why not? Where there are families there are bountiful opportunities to promote literacy.

I challenge you to develop a family literacy program or event in your school. An experienced group of Adult and Family Literacy Committee members is eager to support your efforts. Additionally, Vopat's (1998) *More Than Bake Sales: The Resource Guide for Family Involvement in Education* will expand your basic understanding of *parent involvement* and show you how to "reclaim the family-school connection." Contact me for a comprehensive bibliography of literature on family literacy.

Please submit a 1-page summary describing a new family literacy project you initiated during the 2008-09 school year and at least 2 photographs (Don't forget to get written permission from program participants!) of the program or event by May 1, 2009. Participating councils will be recognized in the August 2009 *IRC Communicator*.

## Illinois Reading Council Adult & Family Literacy Grant Application

By Sue Sokolinski, Chair

There is a need for addressing adult literacy issues. The ramifications of adults with low literacy skills are many. First they are only qualified for minimum wage jobs. This transfers to a poverty-level lifestyle for the children in the family. Because nearly one in four children under age six lives below the poverty line and fifty percent of a child's intellectual development occurs from birth to age four, these children enter school unprepared and with literacy skills far below children from middle income and above families.

There is an urgent need for more help to address adult literacy which in turn will assist their children. Literacy projects that involve adults or adults with their children will be considered for funding.

Grants up to \$750 will be awarded to local councils to develop and implement projects to reach this population. There is no specific amount per grant. The amount awarded may be less than the amount requested. Include the following information in the order below in your application.

Grant guidelines:

- Statement of purpose including needs of the population served. It must be theoretical/research-based and state if the program can be implemented on partial funding.
- Program title and description
- Timeline
- Budget Plan
- Publicity Plan
- Evaluation Plan
- Agreement to be part of a panel session at the IRC Conference, March 19-21, 2009 in Springfield, Illinois or publish an article in *IRC Journal*.

Proposals should be postmarked or emailed by January 13, 2009. Grantees will be notified by February 16, 2009. Proposals will be reviewed by Adult and Family Literacy Chair and Committee.

Illinois Reading Council  
Adult and Family Literacy Grant  
Cover Page

Local Council: \_\_\_\_\_

Council Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work or Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Local Council President** \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach letters of commitment and involvement by other community partners if applicable.

**Deadline for applications will be January 13, 2009.**

**Grant recipients will be notified by February 16, 2009.**

Grants should be sent by **email** or **express mail** so they arrive on or before January 13, 2009. You will be notified that your grant has been received. Contact committee chair if you have questions.

Sue Sokolinski  
Chair of Adult and Family Literacy  
3074 Secretariat Court  
Aurora, IL 60504  
Phone: 630-879-3923  
Email: [sokomom@comcast.net](mailto:sokomom@comcast.net)

Grant applications will be reviewed by the committee.

## The Illinois Reading Council Communicator

### IRC Announces 2008-09 Grant Recipients

#### Region 1 North-Northwest Region

Northern Illinois	Gail Grabins	\$500	RIBET - Reading is Bringing Everyone Together
Northern Illinois	Carla Raynor	\$1,000	The ART in All of Us!
Northwestern Illinois	Janis Jones	\$1,500	Life in the Middle Ages
Northwestern Illinois	Keta Foltz	\$1,225	Author & Me
Northwestern Illinois	Sue Lamoreux	\$1,500	Poetry Connection: Laughter, Inspiration, Appreciation

#### Region 2 North-Northwest Chicago Region

Fox Valley, ITA	Cara Schuster	\$600	Middle School Book Clubs/Battle of the Books
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#### Region 3 Chicago Region

CARA	Erin Walter	\$1,100	Open Books Creative Writing Field Trips
CARA	Kathleen Kelly	\$2,000	Parents as Partners
CARA	Stephanie Lavia	\$1,200	Caldecott Character Capers
CARA	Nancy Pierce	\$1,200	Expanding the Borders of the Library
Prairie Area, NIRC	Christine Kipp	\$1,100	Chatterbooks' Book Club
West Suburban	John Signatur	\$2,000	School-Family Book Club

#### Region 4 West Central-Central Region

Illinois Valley	Ginny Moore	\$2,500	Prairie Tales
Illinois Valley	Chris Downey	\$2,000	Dragon Tales
Illinois Valley	Pam Ritter	\$1,558	Beyond Bars: A Guided Autobiography Project for Female Inmates
Illinois Valley	Pam Ritter	\$779	Y Not Read? Book Club for Adult New Readers
MID-State	Sheila Diaz	\$1,959	Partners in Parenting "Read to Your Baby" Project
MID-State, ICARE	Larry Pennie	\$1,950	Helping Hispanic Adults with English
Western Illinois	Carol Lock	\$990	Motivating with Graphic Novels
Western Illinois	Jennifer Young	\$830	Got Books?
Western Illinois	JoEllen Pensinger	\$964	Making a Reading PACT (Parent and Child Together)
Western Illinois	Thelma Webb	\$900	Book Buddies
Western Illinois	Carol Holland	\$1,000	Laurie Lawlor: Author Visit/Family Reading Night
Western Illinois, ICARE	Juanita Scott	\$4,990	Reading @ the Crossroads II

#### Region 5 North Central Region

South Suburban	Kathryn Dennis	\$425	Writing Portfolio
Starved Rock	Pat Urbelis	\$1,500	Hop Into Literacy
Two Rivers	Christina Basham	\$850	Bingo: Family Reading Night
Two Rivers	Holly Grabow	\$2,600	Promoting Family Literacy Through Books
Two Rivers, Will County	Melody Mathers	\$950	Friday's Fluency Friends
Will County	Lois Berger	\$2,500	Author Visit Featuring Patricia Polacco
Will County	Karrie Hartman	\$1,200	Book It with the Book Club

#### Region 6 East-East Central Region

East Central-EIU	Sara Hess	\$1,600	Voices from the Prairie
East Central-EIU	Pamela Green	\$850	The Magic of Reading
East Central-EIU	Pamela Green	\$700	Believe and Achieve
Illini	Cheryl VanHoy	\$850	School to Home Literacy Lessons for Families Pre-K through 5th Grade

#### Region 7 Southwest Region

Lewis and Clark, ITA	Cheryl Walker	\$2,000	Diving Deep into Writing
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#### Region 8 Southeast Region

South Eastern	Diana Woods	\$1,000	Fourth Grade Book Club
Southern Illinois	Jennifer Abate-Barrett	\$800	Family Literacy Celebrations/Expanding Expertise: Professional Development
Southern Illinois	Carey Schmeink	\$750	Saddle Up and Read, Bookaroo!
Southern Illinois	Tammy Cripps	\$1,136	Meeting a Real-Life Author
Southern Illinois	Tammy Vicenzi	\$2,000	Wild About Reading!

#### Region 9 Statewide Region

ICARE	Christine Boardman Moen	\$1,000	Reliving the Past to Affect the Future: A Holocaust Survivor Tells His Story
ICARE, CIRP	Roxanne Owens	\$1,500	About the Beautiful Communities of Illinois: An ABC Book Created for Illinois Students, By Illinois Students
ICARE, CIRP	Roxanne Owens	\$1,000	We R: Fab! (Web enhanced Reading: Families and Books! An Intergenerational Book Club Initiative)
SRL	Alan Holtz	\$1,200	One Book, One Grade

**Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education**  
**GENE CRAMER ICARE FOR READING AWARD**  
**NOMINATION FORM**

The Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education (ICARE) is accepting nominations for the annual Gene Cramer ICARE for Reading Award. This award has recently been renamed in honor of Gene Cramer, the founder of ICARE. ICARE recognizes the importance of educators in modeling the love of reading and the printed word for today's students who are constantly presented with a vast array of other media. Thus, the purpose of the Gene Cramer ICARE for Reading Award is to honor an educator who has performed in an outstanding manner to show concern for the affective domain and who has promoted lifelong reading habits among students. The award is given annually at the March meeting of ICARE to be held in conjunction with the Illinois Reading Council conference in Springfield.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Inform IRC members of the award. (Note: The person nominated NEED NOT, however, be a member of IRC.)
2. Distribute Gene Cramer ICARE for Reading Award forms.
3. Return form by January 1, 2009 to Larry Pennie, President-Elect of ICARE, 1902 Quail Run Court, Normal, IL 61761.
4. The winner, after careful consideration, will be informed by February 1, 2009.
5. The award will be presented at the IRC Conference in March 2009.

**CRITERIA**

1. Educator in good standing in the profession.
2. Educator who contributes to the spread of the joy of reading and promotes reading habits among students.
3. Educator who serves as an exemplary model for others in promoting the affective domain of reading.
4. Educator recommended for the award by other educators.

**CANDIDATE FOR NOMINATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**REASONS FOR NOMINATION**

Please submit your reasons for nominating this educator on a separate sheet of paper and attach it to this form. Provide specific details that illustrate your nominee's qualifications.

**NOMINATOR**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for helping ICARE circulate the message about this award. Please feel free to make copies for your colleagues. We are confident that your enthusiasm and participation in this program will help ICARE and IRC foster the love of reading among all our children here in Illinois.

**Return form by January 1, 2009 to Larry Pennie, 1902 Quail Run Court, Normal, IL 61761.**

## Sharing Our Success: A Special Thanks to IRC's Literacy Support Grant

By Jennifer Abate-Barrett

We, at Maple Grove Elementary, would like to express our most sincere thanks to the Illinois Reading Council for making it possible for us to hold two Family Literacy Nights this past school year. Our small Southern Illinois district is pleased to be able to say that we value the opportunity to teach our students to read. We strive to incorporate best instructional practices on a daily basis to enable them to become strategic, successful readers. We also consider it of great importance to instill within our students a love of reading! Throughout each school year, we celebrate literacy in a number of ways. At the beginning of each year, our staff comes together, dresses up, and performs a skit to kick off a new year of reading excitement. We feel that it is important for the students to get to see the enthusiasm of teachers and staff. This helps to establish a positive atmosphere that motivates them to spend time with great books. With the help of a local community sponsor, we hold monthly "Book Break Club" meetings for all students who have met their reading goals for the month. During these meetings, we have guest readers, DEAR time, and, of course, SNACKS!! We are also able to take our students on field trips in recognition of attainment of yearly reading goals.

However, over the past several years, an important component was missing in our literacy efforts. This was our ability to offer family literacy events. We realized that it is extremely important to make parents and caregivers an integral part of our team as we work to build a strong reading foundation for our students. Yet we were financially limited in our ability to provide these opportunities. IRC's Literacy Support Grant allowed us to host two Family Reading Nights during the 2007-08 school year! Thanks to their financial support, we got to "Saddle Up and Read" last fall. Families visited our school and were able to visit a number of literacy sessions, including "Read to Your Cowpoke," "Circle the Wagons Story Time," "Cowpoke Caudill," "Rootin', Tootin' Hayride," and "Read 'Em Up! (Book Walk Event)." This spring, we got to celebrate Dr.

*Continued on page 9*

## Adults + Books + Clubs = Joy!

By Pam Ritter

The Book Club Class and what it mean [sic] to me:

*This has been the most helpful and healing class that I have ever participated in, in the three years of my incorporation [sic]...[O]ur teacher... has given me courage to look within myself and face so many things I had stored away... Through this class I have come to believe that I must deal with these feeling [sic] face to face and then move on to complete healing.*

With funding from the Illinois Reading Council to support two of its Hallmark Initiatives, the YWCA of Pekin was able to further its mission of eliminating racism and empowering women. The YWCA Adult Literacy Program received IRC Literacy Support Grants for our Y Not Read? Book Club and Beyond Bars guided autobiography project at the Federal Women's Camp.

The Y Not Read? Book Club allowed 24 adult new readers access to the joys of reading and talking about books—for many, for the first time in their lives. Literacy and English language learners began with picture books such as *Gathering the Sun*, *Jack's Garden*, *The Carrot Seed*, and *The Tiny Seed* before culminating with *Seedfolks* over the summer. Students received a book each month, which they learned to read with the help of volunteers in their weekly one-on-one tutoring sessions before meeting in small groups at the library for discussion. They delighted in the vibrant artwork in Lois Ehlert's *Planting a Rainbow* and Steven Kellogg's goofily ghoulish illustrations in *Jack and the Beanstalk* as they practiced decoding, using word identification skills and activating schema. After a lifetime of frustration and failure, these adult learners have experienced the fun of reading good books.

At the nearby FCI Pekin, meanwhile, women met weekly for a very different kind of book club. Inspired by *What I Want My Words To Do To You*, a documentary of playwright Eve Ensler's work with incarcerated women, our Beyond Bars project featured a guided autobiography format to help the women prepare for their future release by analyzing their pasts. Armed

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*Adults + Books continued from page 8*

with blank books and copies of *Bars Coming Near*, an anthology by new writers in prison, and *Couldn't Keep It To Myself*, "testimonies from our imprisoned sisters" by Wally Lamb, three groups of 15 women met with a literacy tutor to read, write, and talk about the mistakes and regrets of the past and their hopes for the future.

As Brenda, the woman quoted in the opening, continued in her final journal entry of the twelve-week class:

*[Our teacher] actually see [sic] us as real people who made a mistake and no [sic] as cast-aways that has never had any value...[S]he has given me courage to look within myself and face so many things I had stored away...*

*Without..her, I may have never considered the break through [sic]. I thank God for sending her. Thank you Ms. Teacher.*

And thank you, IRC, for giving the power of reading to empower women through literacy! We are grateful to the Literacy Support Grants committee for their help.

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*Sharing Our Success continued from page 8*

Seuss and other children's authors whose Birthdays fell during March. Once again, we had a number of story sessions around the school. Each session included a read-aloud and follow-up family activity related to the quality piece of children's literature written by one of the featured authors.

Overall, we were very excited about the turnout and the responses of our families! Our exit surveys were positive. Parents appreciated having the opportunity to spend a relaxing evening at the school with their children, and each family left with AT LEAST one (usually two or three) new books to add to their home libraries, as well as a number of souvenirs from the sessions they had attended! Our biggest success was the feeling that we had accomplished an important goal. We had been able to lay a foundation for more extensive family involvement in our literacy quest. We are looking forward to the upcoming year and the fun that we will have with great children's literature and family reading events!

## Your Participation is Needed for a National Literacy Study!

*By Roxanne Owens*

Would you like to know how other reading teachers in Illinois use technology in their classrooms? What skills do they think are important to develop literacy online? What obstacles do they face in integrating technology into their instruction? These questions relate to important goals identified in IRA's 2002 position statement on integrating technology into language arts instruction.

Our state has been invited to participate in a national online survey that addresses these questions, and we're seeking your assistance. Please go online and complete the 15-minute survey at the following address:

**[www.nationalliteracystudy.blogspot.com](http://www.nationalliteracystudy.blogspot.com)**

For assisting in this project, the IRC will receive a summary of the national results when it is available early next year. Further, if at least 15% of our members complete the survey before November 15th, IRC will receive a customized report of findings and recommendations for our state.

This national survey is being supervised by Dr. David Reinking, who has edited IRA's Reading Research Quarterly and is a leading researcher in the area of technology and literacy. You may contact Amy Hutchison, his assistant at Clemson University ([arcarte@clemson.edu](mailto:arcarte@clemson.edu)), if you have any questions about the survey.

## Lost and Found

If you lost books or other items at the 2008 IRC Conference, please contact the IRC Office at 888-454-1341.

We have collected many items including sunglasses, bracelets, and an autographed copy of *So B. It* by Sarah Weeks.



# ILLINOIS READING COUNCIL HOUSING APPLICATION FORM

**Conference Dates - Thursday, March 19; Friday, March 20; Saturday, March 21, 2009**

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, 2009.**
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-served 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, 2009 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, 2009, 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, 2009 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 3/09)

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.**

**List all room occupants including yourself:**

Abraham Lincoln	\$106.00-\$117.00
Springfield Hilton	\$115.00
Crowne Plaza	\$115.00
Drury Inn & Suites	\$96.00
Hilton Garden Inn	\$95.00
Holiday Inn Express	\$95.00
Comfort Suites	\$89.00
Hampton Inn	\$89.00
Ramada Limited North	\$78.00
Route 66 Hotel	\$77.00
Pear Tree Inn	\$76.00
Northfield Inn	\$75.00
Microtel	\$74.00

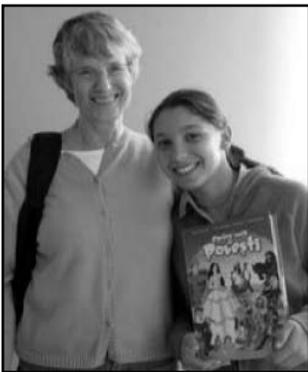
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3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail form directly to:  
SCVB/IRC HOUSING  
109 North 7th Street  
Springfield, IL 62701**

## WIRC Provisions: Romanian Children Speak English

By Frances Steward

Mrs. Diana Goff, Vice President of Western Illinois Reading Council (WIRC) 2007-2008, coordinated the book sharing efforts with Livada Orphanage in Romania. Diana made contacts about book donations to meet the children's second language (English) learning need. Sally Roberts, a missionary who delivered WIRC donations to Livada Orphanage, suggested that WIRC donate the funding of \$100.00 for new books. These books were purchased and distributed to children living in group homes (Casas).



Each Casa is to have a library that has begun with the WIRC book donation. Ten children from each of the Casas loaded onto a truck and personally selected books for their new libraries. This was their first time to buy books in a city bookstore, and they felt like it was Christmas! The children were all thrilled with their new books to read

and appreciated the time that they were able to spend with Sally!

The WIRC Board Members are continually keeping their eyes open for new locations and students who need reading resource assistance. Through the books donated, students will be better able to contribute productively in our current world by reading in their native language and applying the English language and verbal skills through literacy connections. What a special way to help industrious learners living in another country!



## Illinois Reading Educator of the Year Award

By Jennifer Young, Chair

The Illinois Reading Council may present up to three awards recognizing outstanding teachers who make contributions in promoting literacy among students, colleagues, and school communities. One teacher may be chosen from each of the following categories, K-5, 6-12, and Reading Specialist. Each award winner will receive \$500, an engraved plaque, and recognition at the annual Illinois Reading Council conference.

Self-nominations and nominations by others will be accepted. Nominee must be a current member of IRC and IRA.

### How to Apply:

1. Complete the application form.
2. Attach three letters of recommendation.
  - a. Recommendations can be written by a colleague, an administrator, a parent, or a student.
  - b. Letters should address reasons why you are an excellent reading teacher.
3. Address your reading philosophy and contributions in a typed response no longer than four double-spaced pages.
  - a. Discuss your philosophy about literacy instruction including the theories that guide and shape it.
  - b. Explain how you implement your beliefs about reading.
  - c. Describe your community activities connected to enhancing literacy.
4. Send the completed application form, letters of recommendation, and your philosophy statement by **December 15, 2008** to:

Jennifer Young  
28633 Manley Road  
Avon, IL 61415

# Illinois Reading Educator of the Year Award Application Form

(Please Print)

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

School Name \_\_\_\_\_

District \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Check area of teaching responsibility \_\_\_\_\_ K-5 \_\_\_\_\_ 6-12 \_\_\_\_\_ Reading Specialist

Are you a member of the Illinois Reading Council? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If yes, list council(s) to which you belong \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of the International Reading Association? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

List any IRC Council(s) to which you belong and offices held.

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List any other reading or reading educational organizations to which you belong and offices held.

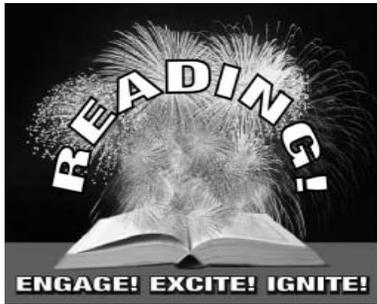
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## Conference 2009 Update: Getting Ready to Engage, Excite and Ignite!

By Christine Boardman Moen,  
President-Elect and 2009 Conference Chair

Preparations for the 2009 conference are well underway, and many of these preparations fall into the categories of “additions,” “repositions,” and “submissions.” Let me explain.

### Additions

Since receiving your 2009 Conference Preview Booklet in your 2008 conference tote bag, many wonderful speakers have agreed to join us for 2009 and get in on the fun and excitement! One of the most notable speakers who has recently agreed to speak at the 2009 conference is **PATRICIA POLACCO!** Ms. Polacco will be our speaker for Saturday’s luncheon, and she is sure to engage, excite, and ignite your passion for reading.

Other notable additions include members of the International Reading Association’s Board of Directors. We will be privileged to hear from **Alfred Tatum**, Associate Professor and Reading Clinic Director at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and **Marsha M. Lewis**, an elementary teacher from Kenansville, North Carolina.

Songwriter-poet-performer **Mike Mennard**, who will not only be giving each conference attendee a free CD of his clever, engaging songs but will also be performing a FREE sing-along concert on Thursday afternoon in the Hilton Ballroom, is another wonderful addition to IRC.

Another spectacular addition is **Raymond Bial**, whose nonfiction photo-essay books have won numerous awards. Some of his titles include *The Underground Railroad*; *A Handful of Dirt*; and *Tenement: Immigrant Life on the Lower East Side*. His latest book, *Where Lincoln Walked*, will be a must-have book for every classroom.

A final addition of note is ICARE’s Friday evening comedy show “**Night at the IRC Improv**” featuring

comedians who also appear at Chicago’s famed Second City. The show will take place in the Hilton Ballroom after the Friday evening banquet.

### Repositions

There are three speakers who fall into the reposition category. First, **Nell Duke** will be speaking at Friday’s luncheon—not Thursday’s. Secondly, a favorite IRC speaker, **Roger Farr**, will be one of our Thursday luncheon speakers; he replaces Peter Johnston, who will be out of the country at the time of our conference. Finally, **Bruce Lansky**, the author of *Mary Had a Little Jam*; *Kids Pick the Funniest Poems*; and *A Bad Case of the Giggles* will be performing-presenting and tickling your funny bones at breakfast on Thursday morning. Bruce, who is the founder of Giggle Poetry, will be “giving you the giggles” while Giggle Poetry is on hiatus.

Another type of repositioning is the new venue for the popular **Poetry Coffeehouse** and **Storytelling**. For the 2009 conference, both events will take place high atop the Hilton in the SKY BAR. The storytelling and performance poetry will be as delightful as the view and as funky as the atmosphere. Refreshments and snacks will be served at both events so come for some engaging entertainment and exciting participation!

### Submissions

The Illinois Reading Council’s annual conference is successful because many of **YOU** present on topics of interest to you and other members. We have received many wonderful session proposals, and if you haven’t been contacted regarding the status of your proposal, you will shortly. Thank you to all who submitted proposals!

So hang onto your hats and your book bags as we gear up for **READING! ENGAGE! EXCITE! IGNITE!**

## Books for Struggling Readers from Grades 5-12

By IRC Studies and Research Committee

Help us create a bibliography for struggling readers and at the same time earn money for your local council!!!

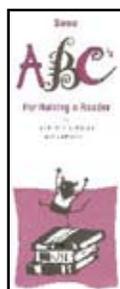
The Studies and Research Committee of the Illinois Reading Council is asking council members to help them create a list of good books for struggling readers in grades 5-12. To contribute to this list, go to the IRC website ([www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org)) and click on the link labeled Books for Struggling Readers. Respondents are asked to limit recommendations to books they have used personally, books that really do engage such students, as opposed to books about which they have only heard or read. Respondents may make up to five recommendations before exiting this survey. IRC members who participate in this survey will have their names entered into a drawing for a \$100 bookstore gift certificate. In addition, two awards of \$300 will be made to local councils. One award will be given to the council with the highest number of its members participating in this survey and the other will be given to the council with the highest percentage of participating members. Announcements of the winners as well as a link to the bibliography that results from this survey will be posted on the IRC website in March 2009. We will also share our results at the IRC conference and in IRC publications. Thank you for contributing to a project that we believe will be of real value to IRC members.

### Join the IRC Research Network

The IRC Studies and Research Committee has developed a network to help researchers find others with similar interests. This network will provide an opportunity to gain insight from other researchers and will offer the possibility of collaborating with those who are conducting, or wish to conduct, research in the same area. The Research Network will also provide modeling for teachers interested in initiating research activities with more experienced faculty and teachers. In addition, it will provide IRC members with names of people they can contact if they have questions about particular topics or issues. Go to [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org) to join our network.

## IRC Publications

The Illinois Reading Council offers many resources to their members. Take advantage of these great materials to share with organizations, parents, or teachers! The items listed below can be ordered from the IRC Office by phone at 888-454-1341. Prices and order forms are available at [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org/ircservices/ircpublications](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org/ircservices/ircpublications).



### Some ABC's for Raising a Reader

Parents are their child's first teachers, and it's never too soon to introduce your child to books. By reading aloud to your child, you provide the sounds of written language, demonstrate book handling skills, develop your child's expectation that the print and pictures carry a message and build positive attitudes toward reading. Use this ABC listing of ways that you can encourage a love of reading and make reading fun for your child.

### Attempting Unknown Words: Suggestions for Parents

As the parent of a young child, you are a very important person for your child's reading and language development. You are your child's first teacher! This tri-fold brochure will provide strategies to aid your child as they attempt unknown words.

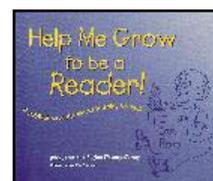


### Non-Sexist Children's Fiction

Non-sexist children's books are those that validate children of both genders, demonstrating to children that boys and girls both can be adventuresome, strong, sensitive, articulate, imaginative, and fun. This tri-fold brochure provides a list of questions to ask as you try to identify stereotypes and non-sexist books. There are also book lists of non-sexist picture books, non-sexist books for middle grade readers and non-sexist books for young adults.

### Help Me Grow To Be A Reader

This little 16-page booklet helps parents understand how children grow to be readers, as told from the child's point of view. Strategies for helping young readers develop their reading skills are outlined in a fun format.



### Reading Strategy Bookmark

This bookmark lists strategies for young readers to use when they come to words they don't know. On the back side of this bookmark, students can list their personal strategies. Use this in classrooms or with parents as a tool to assist their efforts at home!

## Do You Want to Support Research in Reading?

By Anna Sanford

The Illinois Reading Council Foundation is initiating a fund-raising campaign. We are asking for donations to support the research-based endeavors the foundation supports in the State of Illinois.

The Illinois Reading Council Foundation has been created to provide funds to conduct literacy research and/or to develop special projects related to literacy. Examples of grants supported by the Illinois Reading Council Foundation are Dr. Moskal's article in the *Illinois Reading Council Journal* and many of you attended Susan Bohman's presentation at the Illinois Reading Council Conference. Applications are taken in June of even numbered years. Forms may be obtained from the IRC office or on the Awards and Grants page at the IRC website.

Donations can be sent to the attention of IRC State Foundation for Literacy, 1210 Fort Jesse Road, Suite B2, Normal, Illinois 61761 with the below form. All gifts are tax deductible and will be acknowledged.

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**YES! I would like to support the Illinois Reading Council State Foundation:**

Enclosed is my/our check payable to the Illinois Reading Council State Foundation for Literacy for \$\_\_\_\_\_.

I/we hereby pledge the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

This sum will be payable over \_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 or \_\_\_\_\_ 3 year(s).

First annual payment will begin in the month of \_\_\_\_\_.

Please contact me to determine how I can best assist the Foundation to meet its goals through my will, a trust fund, securities, insurance, or other.

---

Name (Please Print)

Signature

---

Address

Date

---

City

State

Zip

Telephone

**Please complete and return this form to:**

**IRC State Foundation for Literacy  
1210 Fort Jesse Road, Suite B2  
Normal, IL 61761**



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.

***Fly, Cher Ami, Fly!***

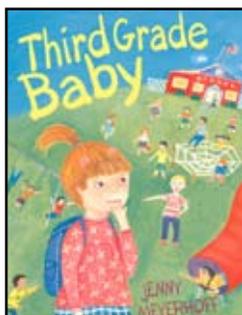
***The Pigeon Who Saved the Lost Battalion***

Written by Robert Burleigh [www.robertburleigh.com](http://www.robertburleigh.com)  
Illustrated by Robert MacKenzie  
Abrams Fall 2008  
Category: Picture Book Grades: K-3

***Third Grade Baby***

Written by Jenny Meyerhoff [www.jennymeyerhoff.com](http://www.jennymeyerhoff.com)  
Illustrated by Jill Weber  
Farrar, Straus & Giroux September 2008  
Category: Chapter Book Ages: 7-9

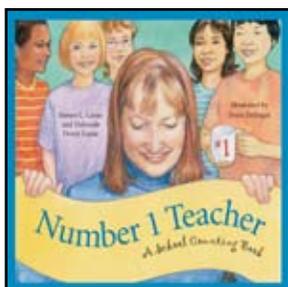
Late-bloomer Polly Peterson is self-conscious about being the only third grader who hasn't lost any baby teeth. Things only get worse when new student Zachary tells her that even when she does lose a tooth, she's too old for a visit from the tooth fairy. Polly wants her visit, but she doesn't want anyone to think that she's a third grade baby.



***Number 1 Teacher: A School Counting Book***

Written by Steven L. Layne and Deborah Dover Layne  
Illustrated by Doris Ettlinger [www.stevelayne.com](http://www.stevelayne.com)  
Sleeping Bear Press April 2008  
Category: Picture Book Ages: 4-8

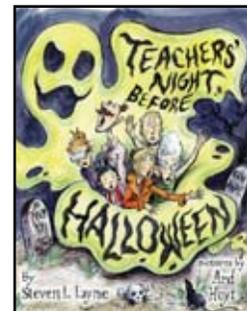
*Number 1 Teacher: A School Counting Book* is the companion to the 2005 award-winning title *T is for Teachers: A School Alphabet*. Written in a two-tiered format with rhyming text for beginning readers and detailed exposition for older students, *Number 1 Teacher* both shows and tells readers about the two geographic poles, the three states of matter, gold rush fever and the 49ers, as well as the beloved 100th day of school! Steve and Debbie Layne's winning combination of poetry and prose is something their fans have learned to count on, and this title is no exception. Illustrator Doris Ettlinger's vibrant watercolor paintings serve as a perfect backdrop.



***Teachers' Night Before Halloween***

Written by Steven L. Layne [www.stevelayne.com](http://www.stevelayne.com)  
Illustrated by Ard Hoyt  
Pelican Publishing Co. September 2008  
Category: Picture Book Ages: 4-8

Halloween and the traditional school festivities that accompany it are beloved by students and dreaded by teachers, and in Steven Layne and Ard Hoyt's newest picture book collaboration the decision to start the festivities a day early seems entirely appropriate to the students! While the classroom teachers are breaking up tiara-trade rings in the girls' bathroom and managing laser sword fights in fourth grade, the art teacher is preparing to unveil her plan for the faculty to dress as giant credit cards for the Halloween parade! There's no end to the hilarity as Layne and Hoyt bring every teacher's greatest nightmare to life with an unexpected ending that's truly a tasty and satisfying treat.



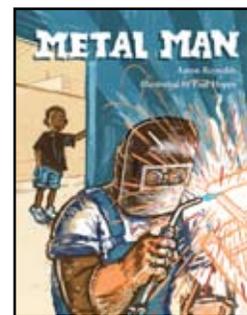
***The Art of Freedom: How Artists See America***

Written by Bob Raczka [www.bobraczka.com](http://www.bobraczka.com)  
Illustrated by Famous American Works of Art  
Lerner Books December 2007  
Category: Non-Fiction Ages: 9-12

***Metal Man***

Written by Aaron Reynolds [www.aaron-reynolds.com](http://www.aaron-reynolds.com)  
Illustrated by Paul Hoppe  
Charlesbridge Publishing July 2008  
Category: Picture Book Ages: 4-8

Summer's hangin' on like a big ol' bear, cookin' up the streets, and Devon's headin' over to see the metal man. Most days Devon's happy to watch the sparks fly as the metal man welds his sculptures. "Makin' junk out of junk ain't a real job." That's what Mama says. But today...Devon's got a hot spark cookin' in his head, that might change all his ideas, and maybe mama's too. "Brilliantly realized..." The Center for Children's Books.



## Cool Studies: Profiles in Comprehension

By Lou Ferrolì

So, do some of your readers give you the oddest answers to your thoughtful questions? For instance, your kids have just read a text in which a family's plans to fly on vacation get reduced to just another car trip to the relatives. Juan was really looking forward to flying. You ask, "Why was Juan upset when the other family members talked about the fun they were having?"

One of your kids offers, "The story didn't say anything about that." To yourself you grumble, "No it didn't say that explicitly." But you press on. Another student offers, "He was really mad because they talked about all the fun they had." And, again, to yourself, "Gee, that answer sure sounds a whole lot like the question!" Just what is going on here?

Understanding our students' comprehension can be slippery business. Diagnostic tests of comprehension have a long history of being mostly useless. We measure comprehension in general pretty well, but identifying more specific kinds of help readers need within the domain of comprehension is much more problematic.

Much of how readers construct meaning is attributable to what they already know about a topic. Many times a breakdown in their understanding is attributable to attention that wanders (or wasn't present in great quantity to begin with). The fact of the matter is that comprehension fluctuates so wildly from one reading event to another that, at times, it seems like diagnosis, in any useful way, is virtually impossible. Friends in reading have even accused me of having a word-level obsession because comprehension is tricky to measure and I have thrown out the comprehension baby with the bath water. Touché.

Is there any way to try to get a handle on the kinds of obstacles some kids face in comprehension? One approach to understanding struggling readers that has seen some success is that of developing composites as done in Riddle and Valencia's "Profiles of Students Who Fail State Reading Assessment." (I know you keep all your *Communicators* on file, so see the April 2004 Cool Studies.) That kind of composite-development has also been done in comprehension recently. It appears in the September 2006 *The Reading Teacher* called "Profiles in Comprehension."

Applegate, Quinn, and Applegate have developed eight profiles of how readers construct meaning based on their responses to comprehension questions. Two of those profiles

were introduced in the second paragraph above. The reader who cannot answer a question unless it is found right in the story is a "Literalist." The one who responds by simply recasting your question into a statement is a "Dodger." Another profile is the "Author" who responds to your question with a story line of his or her own with only a minimal link to what was actually read. Know anyone like that?

It is extremely thoughtful work, which I think has some real value as a framework for thinking about how kids make sense of text. For that reason, I wanted to know more about the validity of the profiles. What is the evidence? Are these eight profiles really distinct? Can readers struggling with comprehension be reliably classified by you and me? Do these kids truly respond differently to instruction?

The article said only that in developing the profiles they worked from the responses from some 300 kids who were given informal reading inventories as part of the authors' reading assessment course. "The authors analyzed thousands of these students' responses to questions that required them to think about, react to, and respond to text. As a consequence of that analysis, we identified the eight distinct profiles of comprehension..." That seems like extraordinary work to me, pouring over all of those question-and-answer events. I understand that *The Reading Teacher* isn't the usual place for great detail on research methodology, but there was no citation to other work, so I went right to the source.

Anthony Applegate's graduate students were having some difficulty scoring Inference and Critical Response items as they tested kids with the Critical Reading Inventory. Applegate wanted to help his students better understand the scoring. He had lots of CRI protocols in storage and started looking through them, seeking out unusual or particularly creative and challenging responses kids had given, which he could use as teaching examples. He tells me he found the work addicting and began inputting these responses into an ever-growing file. Once he had 3500 entries, his colleagues joined him in "scoring and annotating the responses with explanations whenever we had some free time." In doing so, they came to see patterns of thinking in the students' responses, and that formed the basis for the Profiles.

Quite a story! They never did publish their work on validating the profiles as they turned to developing the next edition of their CRI. To me, this research provides a wonderful

*Continued on page 19*

*Cool Studies continued from page 18*

framework for instruction even if the profiles do need further work to establish their validity. The authors provide detail on how each of the eight profiles can be linked to specific instructional procedures that you and I know and can use. For instance, the Literalist should benefit from knowing about Question-Answer Relationships (QAR's) so s/he can see the link between questions and text information. Likewise, the Dodger can benefit from instruction in Visual Imaging to help remember text information that would relate to the question the teacher actually asked. The Author might benefit from discussion webs where one marks out the actual story line (as opposed to creating one's own). Imagine understanding our readers' thinking and having a plan for instruction to help them adjust the way they approach text. Now that's cool!

I can't provide the citation for this study as it is unpublished work, but what you want to know about the framework and the corresponding instruction is at Applegate, M., Quinn, K., & Applegate, A. (2006). Profiles in comprehension. *The Reading Teacher*, 60, 48-57.

## JUST WHAT IS THE YOUNG AUTHORS' CONFERENCE?

By Ruth Stevig

The Young Authors' Conference, held each year in May at Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois, is an event sponsored by the Illinois Language and Literacy Council, in conjunction with the Illinois State Board of Education. Designed as a celebration to honor exceptional writing by students in grades K through 8, the conference provides an opportunity for these young writers to meet published authors and to hear how the authors themselves create the characters and stories that have become their books.

The daylong event, held on a Saturday, actually begins on Friday night for students, parents, or volunteers who wish to come early to attend a panel discussion by the authors in the Bone Center bookstore. This is an informal chance to meet all of the authors at the conference, and to ask them questions about themselves and their work.

On the actual day of the event, which will be **Saturday, May 16th, 2009**, the students register in the ballroom where they receive their room assignments and a book bag containing a pencil and gold seal, which they can later place on their own story. After hearing an introductory speaker, parents take off on their own until the afternoon, and students head for small group sessions headed by volunteer parents and teachers. Students spend the next several hours sharing their stories, eating lunch, listening to authors speak. The day ends with students and parents reunited in an awards ceremony where students receive certificates for participating in the Young Authors' Conference as well as copies of the books written by the author they heard speak. The gifted young writers have had a full day, and often leave with stories for next year's Young Author competition starting to take shape in their heads.

Young Authors' materials will be sent by ISBE to school districts across the state later this fall. Notify your district office to watch for these materials so your district will be included in this celebration of young writers! The materials will also be posted on the ISBE and IRC Website later this fall.

**Volunteers are needed!** This conference can only be held with the help of the many adult volunteers who lead or assist small groups, escort authors, or perform other necessary tasks throughout the day. If you can help in any way, please contact Christina Podraza at [cpodraza@lisle202.org](mailto:cpodraza@lisle202.org).

Please join us for our



## 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Early Literacy and Illinois Reading Recovery Conference

**Pre-Conference: January 14, 2009**  
**Conference: January 15-16, 2009**  
**Chicago Marriott Downtown**

For more information, visit the website

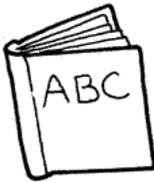
[www.illinoisreadingrecovery.org](http://www.illinoisreadingrecovery.org)

or contact

Ellen Swengel, Conference Coordinator:  
[eswengel@comcast.net](mailto:eswengel@comcast.net) or 217-359-7434

or

Jeanne Palzkill, Registrar  
[jpalkill@comcast.net](mailto:jpalkill@comcast.net) or 217-359-7570



**ABC's of Illinois**  
**About the Beautiful Communities of Illinois**  
**A Book For Illinois Students, By Illinois Students**  
*By Roxanne Owens*

The Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education (ICARE) is pleased to announce a state-wide literacy project—"ABC's of Illinois: About the Beautiful Communities of Illinois—A Book Created For Illinois Students, By Illinois Students." This project is open to ALL grade levels across Illinois.

Create an alphabet book about your community (your neighborhood/town/city) and send an electronic or hard copy to ICARE by April 7, 2009. Focus on what makes your community interesting, unique, and special. Select an illustration style that enhances your text. The ICARE Board will select manuscripts that represent the various regions of Illinois and will compile them into a book.

ALL schools submitting an ABC manuscript of their community will receive a copy of the final book (even if their particular manuscript is not included in the final published book). Additionally, the final book will be posted on the IRC website so teachers and students from across the state can use it as a resource.

We would love to have participants from every region of Illinois. This would be a great collaborative project for upper and lower grade students to work on together. Or, it might be fun for schools within the same district to work on together, or for parents and children to work on together...

For project specifications, please see the ICARE link on the IRC website, [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org) or contact Roxanne Owens at [rowens@depaul.edu](mailto:rowens@depaul.edu).

Illinois Reading Council  
1210 Fort Jesse Road, Suite B2  
Normal, IL 61761

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