Perhaps I keep my nose stuck in books a lot more than I realize. I do read other things in addition to books—newspapers, news magazines, Internet articles, professional journals—even *The Communicator*! I tell you this because I want you to know that I do know America is in a financial mess; however, you can imagine my surprise at the end of July when I saw a retailer putting out Christmas merchandise in an aisle next to the Back-to-School display. OK. So July was a little cold in Illinois this year, but it wasn’t THAT cold!

Christmas stockings hanging next to Back-to-School tube socks made me think of that old 60’s song by The Association, “Cherish.” The words to the beginning of the song are: “Cherish is the word that I use to describe all the feelings that I have hiding here for you inside. You don’t know how many times I’ve wished that I had told you; you don’t know how many times I’ve wished that I could hold you. You don’t know how many times I’ve wished that I could mold you into someone who could cherish me as much as I cherish you.” The lyrics sound a bit “stalker-ish” in light of today’s feminism, but the very word “cherish,” which means to appreciate or to hold dear, has a lot to do with who we are and what we choose to do to advance the cause of literacy. So in honor of Thanksgiving—a holiday we should all hold dear and cherish, here’s my “Cherish List of Literacy:”

- Cherish that you have the ability and desire to read (and write for you writers out there!)
- Cherish that you have the privilege and challenge to teach others how to read and how to write.
- Cherish your freedom to choose what you want to read.
- Cherish your access to community public libraries.
- Cherish your freedom to join organizations like IRC that promote literacy.

At this moment. At this time in your life. At this point in your literacy career. Right now. Cherish all that you are to your family, friends, colleagues, and students and know that all of your friends at IRC cherish you in return!

Have a happy Thanksgiving and a wonderful holiday season! Read On!

*Christine Boardman Moen*
“Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire.”
~ Edith Sitwell

Where did summer and fall go? Suddenly it is November, winter looms, and we begin to think about curling up with a good book beside the fire. But, wait, as Edith Sitwell reminds us, “Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand.” And where better to find these things than at the terrific events planned by IRC’s local councils? 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.illinoisreading-council.org, the IRC Web site, for more information about each of these great opportunities.

**North-Northwest (Region 1)**

November 14th finds Blackhawk Reading Council hosting an Education Expo at the Bicentennial School in Moline, and, on January 30th, will feature Author Gary Metivier at the Rock Island Public Library in Rock Island. Northwestern Illinois Reading Council continues their tradition of following Father Christmas, Santa and Mrs. Claus around by hosting reading hours at the York Township Public Library in Thomson on December 2nd; and on December 5th at Mt. Carroll Public Library in Mt. Carroll, at Stockton Public Library in Stockton, at Savanna Public Library in Savanna, and at Elizabeth Township Library in Elizabeth; and on December 12th at Freeport Public Library in Freeport. (Bravo to NWRC for reaching so many places within their council area, especially before the busy holidays.)

**North Chicago (Region 2)**

Fox Valley Reading Council will feature Crystal Anderson and The Daily 5 and ELL on November 17th.

**Chicago (Region 3)**

January 21st finds Prairie Area Reading Council enjoying a Wine Tasting and Book Talk with Anderson’s Bookshop at the Lisle Hilton in Lisle.

**West Central (Region 4)**

Illinois Valley Reading Council will present Field Trips around Central Illinois to Enhance Your Reading Curriculum on November 10th at the Alpha Park Library in Bartonville while November 19th will find folks enjoying Western Illinois Reading Council’s program, Using Melissa Forney’s Primary Writing Workshop, at Monmouth College in Monmouth. In addition, Jennifer Young and Anita Lovell will share make-and-take writing activities developed by Melissa Forney.

**North Central (Region 5)**

On November 16th, South Suburban Reading Council will host a Share Fair at the South Cook Intermediate Service Center 4 in Chicago Heights, Illinois, and, on January 14th they will present a Book Match with Linda Wedwick and Jessica Wutz at the Silver Lakes Country Club in Orland Park. Starved Rock Reading Council will “Snuggle Up with a Good Book” on November 21st at the Peru Mall, and on January 19th will share A Chat with Ben Franklin at Graves-Hume Public Library in Mendota. December 4th finds Two Rivers Reading Council participating in the Festival of Trees Gala at the Kankakee County Historical Society in Kankakee.

**East Central (Region 6)**

East Central-EIU Reading Council will present Classroom Strategies for ELL Students with Randy Kalal on January 28th at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston. January 30th finds Illini Reading Council learning about The Differentiated Classroom: How Can We Make Learning Accessible for Low Achieving and High Achieving Learners. The location will be announced later so check the IRC Web site. On November 5th, Macon County Reading Council will present The How and Why of Publishing with Lisa Riebe of Ravine Publishing LLC at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Decatur.

**Southeast (Region 8)**

South Eastern Reading Council will feature Vocabulary Strategies for Content Area Studies with Susan Cisna at Ty’s Buffet in Olney on November 9th, and on January 25th will present Books, Bites, and Sites at the East Richland Elementary Library and Computer Lab in Olney.

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

And, no matter where you live in the state, don’t miss Secondary Reading League’s 33rd Day of Reading on November Continued on page 3
IRA State Coordinator’s Column continued from page 2

7th with featured speakers Sharon Draper and Fabiola Ehlers-Zavala at the Holiday Inn Select and Convention Center in Tinley Park.

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 Web site. Note that several deadlines for awards have changed.

**Deadline: November 1st**
- Hall of Fame Award
- Certificate of Recognition
- Barack Obama Library Award
- Parents and Reading Award
- Illinois Reading Educator of the Year Award
- Adult & Family Literacy Award
- IRA Exemplary Reading Program Award

**Deadline: December 1st**
- Council Program Speaker Grant.

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!”

Bobbie Sejnost

**Thinkin’ and Inkin’ About Lincoln**

*A state-wide literacy project invitation from ICARE (An IRC Literacy Support Grant Funded Project)*

Join IRC and ICARE in commemorating the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s birth. Your class is invited to submit a manuscript reflecting information and images about Abraham Lincoln. Your manuscript may use any text/image format (alphabet book, graphic novel, poetry, timeline, informational, pattern book…) to help students in Illinois and in other states learn about Abraham Lincoln.

Manuscript entries are due **January 18, 2010**. All participating classrooms will receive a bound copy of the manuscripts selected for inclusion in the final book.

For project details and to register to participate, please follow the links to the ICARE Thinkin’ and Inkin’ About Lincoln project at [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org).
Follow the Beacon to the 2010 Conference
By Susan Cisna, 2010 IRC Conference Chair

There are so many wonderful reasons to plan to attend the 2010 Illinois Reading Council Conference to be held in Springfield on March 18-20, 2010! This year’s conference will be new, exciting, and filled with inspiring educational opportunities. But, here are the top ten IRC “beacons” to guide you to the 2010 IRC Conference:

#1: The IRC Conference is centrally located in Springfield, Illinois. Attendees can easily access Springfield from any direction via Interstates, airplanes, or trains. All conference sessions are easily accessed and within short walking distance of the Convention Center. There is no need for busing from one session to another. Attendees can make the most of the conference sessions without fear of missing that special session because of traffic.

#2: For attendees staying overnight at outlying hotels or even those driving in for the day, IRC provides luxury motor coaches free of charge to shuttle from the hotels to the convention center. Information from last year’s conference provided a basis for reorganization of the bus routes this year to insure that schedules will run on time.

#3: Registration fees remain the same as they were for the past six years. IRC has increased the value of the conference experience without passing along those costs to the attendees. There are very few conferences the size and caliber of IRC’s Conference that cost so little and provide so much.

#4: This year, attendees will be offered a time to meet with other educators to network and share ideas at various grade levels and subject areas. Whether meeting old educator friends or making new ones, IRC relationships provide a support group with whom you can share teaching strategies and ideas across the state.

#5: The huge exhibit hall will be filled with a large variety of exhibitors with the newest educational materials for both perusal and purchase. In addition, books from the conference authors will be available for purchase, and the autograph booth will provide an opportunity for attendees to meet their favorite author and get the books autographed.

#6: Enjoy some thoroughly wonderful entertainment! Readers’ Theater will return for all attendees to enjoy in 2010 with Avi, Sarah Weeks, Pam Muñoz Ryan, and Brian Selznick. IRC’s own “Poetry in a Suitcase” lady, Pam Nelson, will host the Poetry Coffee House, and Janice Harrington, an award-winning author and storyteller, will host the Storytelling Hour. For even more entertainment, ICARE will be hosting an IRC talent show.

#7: The IRC Conference offers hundreds of breakout sessions on an array of current educational practices and literacy strategies. Attendees will find the very best speakers, researchers, authors, and educators from Illinois presenting on topics pertaining to literacy.

#8: Featured speakers include educational experts who are published authorities in the field of literacy. In 2010, Linda Hoyt, Debbie Diller, and Kathy Collins will present on topics relevant to elementary teachers. Kelly Gallagher and Cris Tovani will present for middle and high school teachers. To speak on topics of interest to all, the conference will host Peter Johnston, Jerry Johns, Christine Boardman Moen, and David Moore.

#9: Make the most of your conference time by attending the scrumptious meal functions. Have breakfast, lunch, and dinner with some of your favorite authors. On Thursday begin your day at breakfast with the wit and humor of Joan Bauer (Rules of the Road and Peeled). At lunch choose from the amazing Andrew Clements (Frindle and DOGKU) or the marvelous Linda Hoyt (Make It Real: Strategies for Success with Informational Texts). You won’t want to miss the antics of Skippyjon Jones with Judith Byron Schachner at the Prairie State Award Banquet on Thursday night. Friday morning wake up to breakfast with the wonderful Sarah Weeks (Boyds Will Be Boyds and So B. It). Luncheon “Specials” for Friday are the ever-popular Will Hobbs (Bearstone and Downriver) or the great Kelly Gallagher (Readicide: How Schools Are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It). Friday night enjoy the banquet with the wonderful “Wordless Author” David Wiesner (Tuesday, Flotsam, and Sector 7). Finally on SUPER SATURDAY, have breakfast with the Ella Enchanted’s Gail Carson Levine, and luncheon with the FANTASTIC Jan Brett!

#10: In addition to the wonderful authors provided for the meal functions, Mary Amato (The Naked Mole-Rat Letters), Nick Bruel (Bad Kitty), Laurie Friedman (Mallory Series Books), Eric Kimmel (Hershey and the Hanukkah Goblins), Steven Layne (Love the Baby), Pam Muñoz Ryan (Esperanza Rising), Cynthia Leitich Smith (Jingle Dancer), Greg Leitich Smith (Ninjas, Piranhas, and Galileos), and Peter Wellin (Darlene Halloween and the Great Chicago Fire) will be featured throughout the conference.

Plan now to join the spectacular 42nd Annual IRC Conference in Springfield on March 18-20!!!!
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.
4. The winner, after careful consideration, will be informed by February 1, 2010.
5. The award will be presented at the IRC Conference in March 2010.

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.

Tying the Literacy Pieces Together: From Author to School to Home
By Lois Berger

Like the fabrics that make up the Keeping Quilt, the author, home, and school literacy pieces must be carefully tied together to create a meaningful literacy experience. So when Walnut Trails Elementary School received the IRC Literacy Support Grant, a committee of teachers quickly began working out the details of our author event featuring Patricia Polacco. The list of suggested books were ordered for each grade level, so that all the students would be familiar with the books in her presentation. The committee also compiled a list of Polacco’s books with a variety of literature extension activities for the teachers to implement in their classrooms.

The excitement of children’s author Patricia Polacco coming to our school was evident in the posters, graphs, bulletin boards, and activities throughout the school. Through meaningful literacy experiences with Polacco’s books, teachers helped students build the background necessary for a successful author visit, and Patricia Polacco quickly captivated the interest of the students as she shared the real life stories that inspired her books Meteor!, The Keeping Quilt, My Rotten Red Headed Older Brother, and Thank You, Mr. Falker. Students viewed the original quilt that held so many memories and touched the magical meteor. Ten students, two from each grade level, ate lunch with the author. The students were chosen from the short essays they wrote about why they would like to meet the author. After lunch, Patricia Polacco created an illustration for the school (shown here) while the ten students watched in amazement.

The next important piece to tie together was the family connection. For this we planned a “Family Literacy Night.” Parents and their families visited various literacy stations and participated in activities featuring Polacco’s books. Each family also received a handout with ideas to support their children’s reading and writing at home.

An author visit that ties author, school, and home together creates a memorable literacy experience that promotes lifelong readers and writers. A special thank you to the IRC for the Literacy Support Grant that provided the funding to make this literacy event a success!

Reading Rocks
By Jennifer S. Abate-Barrett

Maple Grove Elementary is very appreciative to IRC for the funding they provided for our fall and spring Family Reading Night events this past year! Without it, we would have been unable to host these family-friendly activities that resulted in a better home-school connection and a greater appreciation of literacy. We were able to provide free books from Scholastic for each child in attendance! We also were able to provide a parent booth with lots of helpful informational handouts about assisting students of various ages with their literacy endeavors.

We are pleased to report that both of our Family Reading Night events were successful! Our theme for our fall event was “Reading Rocks!” We decorated our school and made announcements of the reading events with our weekly newsletters, school website, local newspaper, intercom announcements, and fliers that each child took home. Parents and children took their “Passports” from session to session to hear stories and participate in follow-up activities related to a “rock-n-roll” themed children’s book.

For our spring event, we tried a different format. All attendees gathered in our gymnasium and each class presented a different style of literacy. This included such things as music and rhyme, antiphonal reading, original poetry recitation, and even sharing an original class-created Hinks Pinks riddle book! Our parent evaluations were very positive! Everyone seemed to enjoy the evening’s events.

We are looking forward to next year. We are already making plans to host two more successful family reading nights. It is a good feeling to know that we are teamed with a great literacy organization that is willing to support our efforts! With the help of our IRC grant, we were also able to purchase quality professional development materials for our staff. We were able to build upon previous training we had with the Four Blocks literacy model. We were specifically focused on purchasing professional books to enhance our writing block instruction. These books were purchased through the International Reading Association and through Scholastic.

Once again, we would like to thank IRC for offering these Literacy Support Grants.
In addition, Frank Vellutino and J. M. Fletcher authored a 2005 research report that said, “There is now considerable evidence, from recent intervention studies, that reading difficulties in most children may not be caused by biologically-based cognitive deficits intrinsic to the child but may in fact be related to the opportunities provided for children to read.” Only 2% of the student population qualifies as being Special Education as they have a biologically-based cognitive deficit that interferes with their reading ability.

Allington believes that Special Education has failed those children with reading needs who have no biological cognitive deficits. Allington also believes that with the changing of the law, school psychometrists are no longer needed and that their salaries should be used to provide trained reading teachers to assist students with reading needs. Allington firmly believes that administering DIBELS is a disservice to students. Noted reading researcher, the late Michael Pressley, examined studies on DIBELS and concluded that “If you want to know how fast kids can do things but nothing about reading, choose DIBELS.” (The University of Oregon, where DIBELS was developed and which receives half of the profits of its sales, does not have an Elementary Education undergraduate program. Likewise, it lacks a Master’s Degree in Reading which leads to a Reading Specialist degree for the state of Oregon.)

Allington shared an examination by the federal government of 150 beginning reading intervention programs; only Reading Recovery was found to improve alphabetic, fluency, comprehension, and general reading achievement. No other program including Success for All, Read Naturally, Wilson Reading/Phonics, etc., came close to the improvement of beginning readers’ reading scores. This can be retrieved from What Works Clearinghouse at http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/. Volunteer tutors and paid paraprofessionals often lack the knowledge and training needed to assist struggling readers. Critical for children for reading intervention to be successful, according to Allington, is that they be able to receive one-to-one expert instruction from a trained, qualified professional teacher.
As you begin to settle into the new school year, IRC would like to reintroduce the Intellectual Freedom Committee to members of IRC.

The Intellectual Freedom Committee’s role is to:

- provide resources concerning reading material censorship in the schools of Illinois;
- support IRA’s efforts to promote intellectual freedom;
- support educators and schools when threatened by censorship issues;
- provide, upon request, speakers on the topic of censorship for local council programs.

Choosing books that are appropriate for students is a difficult process. Books for use in libraries, classrooms, units of study, or literature circles need to be chosen carefully. The Intellectual Freedom Committee has listed a few tips educators should keep in mind when selecting books for students to read.

- Read the entire book first, not just a small part.
- Don’t judge a book by its cover. Many books have very middle school covers, but adult content.
- Don’t make your choice based on the author’s previous books. Some like to write for a variety of audiences.

The American Library Association’s website is a valuable resource regarding banned books and censorship. For more information, visit www.ala.org. Some Recently Challenged Books in Illinois are:

**K-5**
- Tango Makes Three
- Olive’s Ocean
- Bridge to Terabithia
- Harry Potter series

**6-8**
- Fablehaven
- TTYL
- It’s Perfectly Normal
- Beowulf (graphic novel)
- Stuck in Neutral
- House of the Scorpions
- The Golden Compass
- The Chronicles of Narnia series
- Alabama Moon

The Intellectual Freedom Committee has assembled a number of knowledgeable professionals willing to assist educators when selecting books for classrooms or media centers. Feel free to contact the following “grade-level specialists” with your questions and/or concerns.

**K-5**
- Nancy Kerr nkerr@plainfield.lib.il.us
- Boomer Crotty 608boomer@sbcglobal.net

**6-12**
- Kathie Murphy kmurphy@plainfield.lib.il.us

**9-12**
- Ceil Carey ccarey@plainfield.lib.il.us
- Susanne Picchi spicchi@jjc.edu

The Intellectual Freedom Committee is very pleased to announce that two outstanding presenters, Ceil Carey and Kathie Murphy, are planning to join the IRC Speaker’s Bureau. They will offer a presentation on book selection and censorship issues. Both Ceil and Kathie have a wealth of public school and public library experience. Your council members will not be disappointed if they visit your council! Contact IRC if your council would like to use the Speaker’s Bureau in the future.

The co-chairs of the Intellectual Freedom Committee are Susanne Picchi and Gail Huizinga. Please contact them with any questions or suggestions you might have at intellectualfreedom@illinoisreadingcouncil.org.
IRC Announces 2009-10 Literacy Support Grant Recipients

Region 1 North-Northwest Region

Northern Illinois  Gail Grabins  $500  Book Bee
Northwestern Illinois  Janis Jones  $550  Teaching Writing to Middle School Students with Picture Books
Northwestern Illinois  Keta Foltz  $2,000  Author & Me
Northwestern Illinois  Patricia Adleman  $1,000  Life in the Middle Ages
Northwestern Illinois  Mary Stayner  $1,600  Story Hour With Santa

Region 2 North-Northwest Chicago Region

Fox Valley  Jennifer Hager  $2,000  Moving From Alliteracy to Literacy Through the Implementation of School-Wide Motivational Reading Strategies
Fox Valley  Laura Krumsee  $1,000  Author of the Month
Fox Valley, ICARE  Steve Layne  $300  Read to Your Buddy
Fox Valley, ITA  Cara Schuster  $480  Middle School Book Clubs/“Battle of the Books”
Lake Area  Allison Olsen  $500  High Interest/Low Level Reading Material for Book Talking Program
LARC, SCIRA  Culleen Siebert  $1,000  Family Home Run Summer Reading Program

Region 3 Chicago Region

CARA  Joan Leber  $1,440  Step Into American History
CARA  Jacque Mileusnic  $1,300  Poetry Pals: A Collaborative Approach to Teaching Poetry
CARA  Nancy Pierce  $1,500  Expanding the Borders of the Library
CARA  Kateri Routh  $3,000  Book Groups For Pregnant and Parenting Youth at an Alternative School
CARA  Erlinda Salas  $350  Family Literacy Night/Fall into Reading!
PARC, SCIRA  Judy Heller  $2,400  READ WITH ME! “B.E.A.R.” (Be Excited about Reading Bags)
West Suburban, Two  Patricia Braun  $615  Grappling with Graphic Novels and Middle School Readers at the Public Library

Region 4 West Central-Central Region

Central Illinois  Deana Metzke  $750  Getting to Know President Obama - YES WE CAN!
Central Illinois  Bev Wunderlin  $2,000  To Read, To Rhyme, To Have a Good Time
Illinois Valley  Stacy Baker  $300  Roaring Readers
Illinois Valley  Shirley Dresden  $1,800  Imagination Stations
Illinois Valley  Ann Kluesner  $1,000  School Home Connection Book Bags
Illinois Valley  Pam Ritter  $1,000  A E I O and You
Illinois Valley  Pam Ritter  $1,000  “Y Not Read?” Book Club for Adult New Readers
MID-State  Sheila Diaz  $800  Be a Star! READ! Program
MID-State  Sheila Diaz  $1,900  Partners in Parenting “Read to Your Baby” Project
Western Illinois  Jean Davenport  $1,220  Parent and Child Reading Together
Western Illinois  Carol Holland  $800  Educational Visit with Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd
Western Illinois  Jennifer Young  $900  Got More Books?
Western Illinois  Jennifer Young  $800  Books for Boys Club
Western Illinois  Jennifer Young  $1,000  History Alive!
Western Illinois  Jennifer Young  $400  The Breakfast Club
Western Illinois  Juanita Scott  $2,500  Avi Author Visit – Students, Staff, and Community Working Together to Make Dreams Happen

Region 5 North Central Region

Starved Rock  Sharon Sovey  $1,500  Tiger Talk Battle of the Books
Two Rivers  Christina Basham  $500  Bingo: It’s Family Reading Night
Two Rivers  Cheryl Broderick  $1,000  Pickin’ Perfect Poetry for Presenting!
Two Rivers  Mindy Ghere  $2,000  Books Build Futures
Will County, SRL  Donna Herman  $300  Adolescent and Family Literacy in the 21st Century

Region 6 East-East Central Region

East Central-EIU  Pamela Green  $850  Be a Reading Hero
East Central-EIU  Pamela Green  $350  Our School Needs U
East Central/EIU  Brenda Logan  $1,950  Voices from the Prairie
Macon County  Kathleen Jensen  $1,000  Meet Famous Historical Women: Betsy Ross, Martha Washington and Mary Todd Lincoln

Region 7 Southwest Region

Lewis & Clark, ITA  Kristin Heap  $2,000  Wild About Books
Lewis & Clark, ITA  Cheryl Walker  $1,500  The Magic of Writing

Region 8 Southeast Region

Southern Illinois  Jennifer Abate-Barrett  $700  Family Literacy Celebrations
Southern Illinois  Marsha Garrett  $1,000  Captured by a Caudill
Southern Illinois  Pamela Gawrzych  $4,000  Read to the Roof!
South Eastern  Mary Ann Ricker  $1,500  Super Sleuths

Region 9 Statewide Region

ICARE, CIRP  Roxanne Owens  $1,500  Thinkin’ and Inkin’ About Lincoln: A State-Wide Literacy Project
ITA  Linda Schulthes  $1,100  Family Reading Night
SRL  Alan Holtz  $500  Lightning Can Strike Twice
# IRC Conference 2010
## Registration Form
**March 18-20, 2010**  
**Springfield, Illinois**

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

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

**REGISTRATION**  includes meetings on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Menu</th>
<th>On or Before February 1, 2010</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday Breakfast</td>
<td>Bacon &amp; Eggs</td>
<td><strong>Joan Bauer</strong></td>
<td><strong>Linda Hoyt</strong></td>
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<td>Turkey Cranberry Waldorf Salad</td>
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<td><strong>Andrew Clements</strong></td>
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<td>Thursday Prairie</td>
<td>Roasted London Broil</td>
<td><strong>Judith Byron Schachner</strong></td>
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<td>State Award Banquet</td>
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<td>Turkey Croissant</td>
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<td><strong>Vegetarian</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday Night Pizza</td>
<td>for Preservice Teachers Only!</td>
<td>FREE</td>
<td>FREE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday Breakfast</td>
<td>Lemon and Herb Chicken</td>
<td><strong>David Wiesner</strong></td>
<td>**Salmon **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>French Toast with Berry Sauce</td>
<td><strong>IRC’s Got Talent!</strong></td>
<td><strong>Vegetarian</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frangelica Chicken</td>
<td><strong>Gail Carson Levine</strong></td>
<td><strong>Vegetarian</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday Author</td>
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<td><strong>Jan Brett</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Luncheon (Hilton)</td>
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**METHOD OF PAYMENT**  
(Sorry, no P.O.’s accepted!)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check (payable to IRC)</th>
<th>Visa</th>
<th>MasterCard</th>
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Credit Card  
Expiration Date  
Mo. Yr.  

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED  
$ __________  $ __________

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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.  
Cancellation/Refund Policy – Requests must be made in writing by March 1, 2010. Please see the complete policy under General Conference Information or at IRC Website.
Over 1,200 rooms have been reserved for the 2010 IRC Conference. Because of the large number of rooms needed each year, IRC utilizes the assistance of the Housing Bureau at the Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau. Special room rates have been negotiated at the hotels/motels listed below. To obtain these special rates, reservations must be made through the Online Housing Reservation System by February 24, 2010.

Go to www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org
Select Conference on the menu, then click on Reserve Housing Online!

**ON-SITE HOTELS**

President Abraham Lincoln Hotel.......$107
701 East Adams St., Spfd., IL 62701
Located adjacent to the Convention Center

Hilton Springfield Hotel...............$118
700 East Adams St., Spfd., IL 62701
Across the street from the Convention Center

Meetings and meal functions are held at both the Abraham Lincoln and the Hilton Hotels.

**MOTELS NORTHEAST OF DOWNTOWN**

Northfield Inn.................................$77
3280 Northfield Dr., Spfd., IL 62702

Ramada Springfield North..............$80
3281 Northfield Dr., Spfd., IL 62702

**MOTELS SOUTHEAST OF DOWNTOWN**

Comfort Suites.............................$89
2620 S. Dirksen Parkway, Spfd., IL 62703

Drury Inn & Suites.......................$98
3180 S. Dirksen Parkway, Spfd., IL 62703

Hampton Inn East.........................$93
3185 S. Dirksen Parkway, Spfd., IL 62703

Hilton Garden Inn.......................$99
3100 S. Dirksen Parkway, Spfd., IL 62703

Holiday Inn Express.........................$102
3050 S. Dirksen Parkway, Spfd. IL 62703

Microtel Inn & Suites.....................$77
2636 Sunrise Drive, Spfd. IL 62703

Pear Tree Inn...............................$78
3190 S. Dirksen Parkway, Spfd., IL 62703

Route 66 Hotel..............................$77
625 E. Saint Joseph Street, Spfd., IL 62703

- **Housing Reservations** will only be processed online with a credit card until **February 24, 2010**. After February 24th, all rooms that have not been reserved will be released for general sale.

- **Advance Deposit** of one night’s room and tax will be charged to your credit card by some of the hotels. If you would like to pay by check, please forward your **deposit check** to your assigned hotel and your credit card will be credited. Do not send any checks to the Illinois Reading Council or the Springfield Housing Bureau.

- **Confirmation** will be emailed to you from the Housing Bureau upon completion of your housing reservation, as well as any changes or cancelations. Please keep this email for your records.

- **Cancelations** or changes to your arrival/departure must be made before February 20, 2010 to receive a full refund. The advance deposit charge is non-refundable after February 20, 2010. Please note that some hotels charge for early departure and some require a two night minimum stay.

- **Double Rooms** (2 beds) are at a premium. Please do not reserve a double room (2 beds) unless there are 2 or more attendees.

- **Free Shuttle Service** will be provided by the IRC between all the hotels except the on-site hotels listed and the Prairie Capital Convention Center on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Shuttles run approximately every 45-50 minutes from 6:15 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Night shuttles run every 90 minutes from 6:15 p.m. until 10:30 p.m. On Saturday, shuttles run approximately every 50-60 minutes from 6:15 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.
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.

**Hush, Baby Ghostling**
Written by Andrea Beaty  
Illustrated by Pascal Lemaitre  
McElderry  
August 2009  
Category: Picture Book  
Ages: 3-8  
The sun is almost up and it’s time for all good ghostlings to get to sleep. Strange sounds, a missing toy skeleton, and the light in the hall scare Baby Ghostling but Mama is there to set everything right—even when Baby Ghostling thinks there are humans about!

**S is for Story: A Writer’s Alphabet**
Written by Esther Hershenhorn  
Illustrated by Zachary Pullen  
Sleeping Bear Press  
September 2009  
Category: Picture Book  
Ages: 4-8  
Using rhyme for younger readers and prose for older readers, this two-tiered journey through a writer’s life and process celebrates the all-important Reader-Writer Connection. The text offers mini-lessons (on revision, drafts and editing, character development and the four kinds of writing, just to name a few), peeks at how writers work, Writer’s Tips and treasured authors’ helpful words. Zach Pullen’s imaginative illustrations allow young writers to see themselves in their writers’ journeys.

**Firefighter Ted**
Written by Andrea Beaty  
Illustrated by Pascal Lemaitre  
McElderry  
September 2009  
Category: Picture Book  
Ages: 3-8  
When he wakes to the smell of burnt toast, Ted (Doctor Ted, 2008) becomes a firefighter and jumps into action with the help of his whip cream fire extinguisher. Thankfully, Ted is ready when trouble breaks out at the school science fair.

**Better Than Book Reports**
Written by Christine Boardman Moen  
Scholastic  
August 2009  
Category: Teacher Theory  
Grades: 2-6  
This revised and updated edition provides teachers in grades 2-6 with engaging hands-on activities that help students demonstrate and build key reading comprehension skills. Correlated to the language arts standards, each activity includes easy instructions, links to literature, and a completed student sample. Teachers will also find expanded lists of grade-perfect books and quick tips to help them integrate technology into each activity.

**Shattered**
Written by Kathi Baron  
WestSide Books  
September 2009  
Category: Young Adult  
Ages: 14-17  

**Joey Fly, Private Eye: Creepy Crawly Crime**
Written by Aaron Reynolds  
Illustrated by Neil Numberman  
Henry Holt and Co.  
April 2009  
Category: Graphic Novel  
Ages: 9-12
ICARE AND IRC PRESENT

“IRC’S GOT TALENT”

Illinois Reading Council Conference
Friday, March 19, 2010     8:30 PM
Springfield Hilton Ballroom

CASH PRIZES

1ST PLACE - $500  2ND PLACE - $250  3RD PLACE - $100

TYPE OF ACT (vocal, comedy, ventriloquist, etc.) ____________________________________________

DESCRIPTION OF ACT (must fit a PG-13 rating) If it is a musical presentation, include the name of the selection. (Note: The stage is a portable stage with about an 8 foot ceiling.)
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

NAME(S) OF PERSON(S) PARTICIPATING IN THE ACT (LIST ALL PERFORMERS)

Contact person’s name and email _______________________ ______________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

NO GYMNASTICS TYPES OF ACTS. NO ACTS INVOLVING FIRE OF ANY KIND.

ENTRY FEES (nonrefundable unless act is not accepted) Entries due 2/15/10
    $25 for the first performer in the act
    $20 for the second performer in the act
    $10 each for additional performers in the act

Make checks payable to: ICARE and send to
    Larry Pennie, 1902 Quail Run Ct., Normal, IL 617161

The following equipment will be furnished: piano, audio equipment to play CD’s, microphone

Prizes will be awarded following the event based on audience written votes.

Neither ICARE nor IRC are responsible for any injuries, accidents or other mishaps.

Entries are due February 15, 2010
Questions? Email to lapennie@comcast.net
WIRC and WIU Students Partner to Donate Books

By Frances Steward

• During WIU’s Fall 2008 semester, WIRC donated approximately 50 books from Frances Steward’s undergraduate students to KDP for inmate fathers to read books on tape to their children at home. Pamela T. Godt and other Board Members of WIRC and KDP shared the roles of providing books and tapes for the grant funded program, Literacy Alive. Undergraduates love to personally select books for the children and carefully choose their favorite books and age-appropriate books that match children’s interests or reading levels that are appropriate for reading on tapes.

• During the Thanksgiving week of November 2008, Jim and Pam Epperson (two of an 11-member missionary team from The First Christian Church in Monmouth, Illinois and The Crossing Church, Macomb, Illinois) picked up a bag of 25 WIU student-donated books for a Cambodian safe girls’ home. These books were placed in their suitcases and taken to the English teacher who would be helping girls to have job skills training and a better life in Cambodia. The team was taking hope and medical supplies to girls who had been rescued from slave trade trafficking. WIRC is honored to help with this tragic situation and uplifting ministry. (Co-authored with Pam Epperson)

• Western Illinois University’s student organization, Students Today, Leaders Forever, The Pay It Forward Organization, conducted a community service tour across our nation during spring break at WIU in March 2009. Students on tour actively participated and experienced community leadership and collaboration opportunities, as they joined other Americans who are demonstrating efforts of care to individuals and families finding themselves in unfortunate circumstances. Fiction, nonfiction, and fantasy books for elementary age children, donated by students in RDG 433, and books sponsored by WIRC were given to the Rome-Floyd County Community Soup Kitchen.

• At the beginning of May 2009, Michelle Detrick and Dechet Miller received a WIRC check for $100.00 for members of the Association of Bilingual Bi-cultural Ed. Students (A. B. B. E. S.) to purchase Spanish books for children in Honduras. June 2009, Michelle traveled with the books to Honduras. Dechet Miller, a student in RDG 433, Corrective and Remedial Reading, worked with Michelle on the behalf of the WIRC and A.B. B. E. S efforts.

• In May 2009, WIRC donated books to the Prairie Hills Resource Conservation and Development program called R. E. A. D. Y. Bus. The Pre-school through 8th grade, Reaching, Educating and Developing Youth program provides educational presentations on conservation, wildlife habitat, and the environment. Other goals include reducing illiteracy in Pre K-8 by giving each child a free book and encouraging summer reading. Melissa Stinnett coordinated all contacts, aspects, and distribution of the book donation for the R. E. A. D. Y. Bus. Frances Steward’s undergraduate students in reading and parent and community involvement courses donated 56 children’s books spanning a variety of genres. (Co-authored with Melissa Stinnett)

• On July 15th, 2009, Frances Steward delivered 36 children’s books to the Macomb Public Library. The books were happily received and will be placed on the shelves, included in the summer reading program, and may replace worn out books that are the same as some new books donated. WIU students in literacy, reading, and parent and community courses really enjoy sharing their favorite books with children in many diverse settings.

• The Western Illinois Reading Council and Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education donated money to Sara Dooley to purchase books for an orphanage, Sidai Children’s Rehabilitation Center, in Ngong, Kenya where the children range in age from 18 months to 14 years old. There are between 30-35 children at the orphanage, with new children entering and leaving all of the time. With our donation, Sara purchased a variety of books for them. Some were picture books to be read to the younger children, some were books geared toward teaching the children how to read, and others were novels for the older children to enjoy reading on their own. (Co-authored with Pamela Godt)
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 again received IRC Literacy Support Grants for our Y Not Read? Book Club and the Beyond Bars Book Club at the Federal Women’s Camp.

The Y Not Read? Book Club allowed adult new readers access to the joys of reading and talking about books—for many, for the first time in their lives. Adult learners received a book each month, which they learned to read with the help of volunteers—who were trained in a three-hour workshop to teach the components of reading using the book club titles—in their weekly one-on-one tutoring sessions before discussing the books with other learners.

Fifteen literacy and English language learners and ten tutors began with wordless picture books such as Wiesner’s Tuesday and Van Allsburg’s The Mysteries of Harris Burdick before enjoying classics like Barrett’s Animals Should Definitely Not Wear Clothing, Carle’s The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Brett’s The Mitten, and McDermott’s Anansi the Spider. Book club members also selected their own Dr. Seuss books for Read Across America. The highlight of the project was the final book, Brian Selznick’s The Invention of Hugo Cabret. After a lifetime of frustration and failure, these new readers experienced success—and the joy of reading good books!

A book club of an entirely different kind occurred at FCI Pekin’s Women’s Camp. Forty-one women (unduplicated) participated in the Beyond Bars Book Club (affectionately renamed The Great Escape by the participants). In each of four twelve-week book club sessions the women read, discussed, and wrote about books ranging from classic mysteries to contemporary fiction and nonfiction, led by a volunteer tutor trained both in adult literacy and corrections education. In one session focusing on women’s issues, for example, participants read Jean Kilbourne’s Can’t Buy My Love and viewed the documentary films Killing Us Softly, Slim Hopes, and Mickey Mouse Monopoly.

Thirty-one (76%) of the participants had below-grade level reading abilities, with 11 of these (35%, or 27% of total) reading at levels below functional literacy. An incredible 100 percent improved their reading abilities by 0.8 to 3.7 grade equivalents on the Tests of Adult Basic Education.

The participants also perceived a difference in their reading abilities. One said, “she had never read a book before the class.” Among their responses to the prompt “I am better at” were “finishing a book,” “reading a book more often,” “reading a book thoroughly,” and “paying attention to details,” and even “listening to others’ opinions.” To “I learned,” the women noted “how great book discussions can be,” “how to appreciate classic books,” “to read a more diverse type of book,” and “that a book gets more interesting when you discuss it as a group.” One stated, “I really would like to join a book club when I get out and it really is interesting hearing other people’s opinions. I got a lot more out of the book by discussing it and hearing how other people saw it.”

In addition to increasing reading skills and greater content knowledge, women reported increased self-esteem and other indicators of success. One reported, “I am better at carrying myself with respect;” others stated they were more “open,” better at talking to others about their issues, listening to others’ opinions, and seeing things with a different perspective—all in the safe place that is a book.

One woman, echoing the response of many of the woman to the project, summed up Beyond Bars this way: “If I could change one thing about the book club, I would ask for more time with the volunteers to read and discuss! I loved it!”

I really hope that the funding for the program continues—and my sincere thanks to all who made it possible. My gratitude cannot be expressed in words. We are grateful to the Illinois Reading Council and the Literacy Support Grant committee, for your continued support of literacy programs for children, adult new readers, and lifelong learners. Thank you!
The Studies and Research Committee, chaired by Elizabeth Goldsmith-Conley, is continuing to work on developing a network of IRC members who are engaged in research. The network has several purposes:

- to help researchers connect with other researchers with similar interests;
- to provide models and mentors for people such as teachers and graduate students interested in initiating research activities;
- to provide IRC members with names of people they can contact if they have questions about particular topics or issues;
- to share research findings that can improve our practice and provide insights about education;
- to encourage discussion and questioning that can improve our research.

The committee is doing the following:

1. Including write-ups of interviews of IRC members engaged in research in each issue of the Communicator. (See this issue’s interviews of Pat Braun & Melissa Stinnett.)
2. Inviting IRC researchers to join our newly begun Wiki Page. If you are an IRC member engaged in research and would like to share your research and join our wiki page discussion, send an email to the committee at studiesandresearch@illinoisreadingcouncil.org.

**Interview of Patricia Ann Braun about her research project listed in the IRC Studies Research Committee’s Research Network for 2009-2010.**

Patricia Braun is a 6th-grade reading/writing teacher and also an Adjunct Professor for National-Louis University in their Reading Department. She lives in Oak Park, Illinois. Her research, which is her doctoral dissertation, is entitled, “The Effects of Reading Nonfiction Aloud on the Vocabulary Acquisition of Middle School Students.”

Pat’s research is a follow-up with older students of some earlier work done by Steven Layne on incidental vocabulary acquisition by younger students using fiction. Patricia’s research was done with older students using nonfiction material.

Patricia Braun read nonfiction physics articles to 8th-graders about interesting topics (such as about roller coasters, super heroes, various sports—golf, basketball, etc., and also famous persons, such as Einstein and other scientists) which were not already being covered in their textbooks or lessons. She read fourteen different articles to them, for about 10 minutes at a time, on fourteen different days. She came into their classroom and read the article to them and then left. There was no discussion, no peer interaction, and she was not the classroom teacher. She read to three separate sections of students. In addition, she also gathered data from three additional sections of students who were not read aloud to by her, to use as a control group.

Patricia Braun did pre- and post-testing of the students in both the experimental and control groups on both technical and non-technical language. Each of the stories that she read aloud to the children contained multiple exposures to technical vocabulary, but there was no discussion of the vocabulary by her with the students.

One of the most interesting findings was that although there was no increase in students’ acquisition of non-technical language, there were significant increases in the students’ knowledge of the technological vocabulary terms that were used in the stories. The students did a matching vocabulary task and the higher-performing students made more growth in their vocabulary on this task than did lower-performing students. In addition, students were asked to generate student-created definitions for six of the new vocabulary words. In those groups of students who had the interesting physics stories read to them, there was significant growth in the quality of their definitions, whereas there was barely any growth at all among the control group students who had not been read to orally.

IRC members who might find these findings especially helpful would include: 1) content area teachers, 2) reading teachers, and 3) college professors. Patricia Braun has said that she would be willing to have IRC members contact her for more information about her project. Key words to describe her project would include: 1) vocabulary; 2) content-area reading; and 3) read-alouds.

**Continued on page 17**
The Autographed Director’s Chair from the 2009 IRC Conference was purchased by MID-State Reading Council for $186.

All proceeds went to purchase books for a family in the Habitat for Humanity Program from the MID-State Reading Council area.

Interview of Melissa Stinnett about her research project listed in the IRC Studies & Research Committee’s Research Network for 2009-2010.

Melissa Stinnett is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction at Western Illinois University, teaching courses in literacy. She lives in Macomb, Illinois. Her research is entitled: “Podcasting for Comprehension Strategies.”

Melissa’s research involved taping herself doing demonstration teaching of four key reading comprehension strategies (Inferencing, Questioning, Predicting, and Summarizing) in front of second graders. These demonstration-teaching lessons were then converted to vodcasts (podcasts containing a video component). Her undergraduate preservice teachers then put these vodcasts onto their iPods and watched them in that format. As an additional task, the students were then asked to teach a similar lesson to their peers, using the information learned from the vodcast. Similar information was presented to new groups of students in undergraduate methods classes over three semesters. Afterward, the preservice teachers filled out questionnaires discussing the effectiveness of learning the information in this format and the time involved compared to just receiving lectures in class (comparing the time to watch/listen to the vodcast vs. lectures in class).

Some of Melissa’s most interesting findings were that the students said that they learned better by watching the vodcast on their iPods and that they were much more motivated to learn the information knowing that they would be teaching a similar lesson to their own peers. They really liked that! The teaching of the peer-lessons really seemed to make a difference.

IRC members who might find these findings especially helpful would include professors and researchers. Melissa Stinnett would be happy to have IRC members contact her if they are interested in any further information about her research project. Key words that describe this project: 1) Vodcasts; 2) Technology; 3) Comprehension strategies.

The Illinois Reading Council Communicator
November 2009

Award-Winning Authors
Mary Amato, Debbie Diller, Eric Kimmel, and the Teaching Authors (founders of www.TeachingAuthors.com) are interested in visiting your school during March 2010! Please contact the IRC Office for more information at (888) 454-1341.

ISLMA/LBSS Book Grants
The Illinois School Library Media Association/Library Book Selection Service Endowment Fund Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that 160 Illinois school and public libraries will receive the second annual ISLMA/LBSS Endowment Fund book grants. Grant recipients will be shipped one set of books for the 2010 reading campaign at the level (Monarch, Caudill, or Lincoln) indicated on their grant application. A complete listing of grant recipients is posted in the ISLMA/LBSS Endowment Fund web site at www.lbssfund.org.
Anyone who has ever taken a class in Tests and Measures has heard the saying that “All that exists, exists in some amount and can be measured.” Whether E. L. Thorndike ever actually said that or not, I have always believed it. That belief was reinforced when I came across a study by Janice Dressel that appeared in *The Reading Teacher* in which she actually measured the depth of students’ engagement with text as they wrote in dialogue journals. She scored things like whether or not kids were “operating within the story world” and if the reader revealed “increased understanding of oneself and one’s cultural values.” Whether we like it or not, there are some literacy activities that cannot be measured in sixty seconds.

Context for the study comes from Louis Rosenblatt’s Reading Response Theory and how literature is often read “aesthetically—for the human experience reflected in it” as opposed to reading “efferently, or primarily to recall, paraphrase, or analyze.” Dressel cites research on aesthetic response that shows that readers who become personally involved in the story also obtain a higher level of understanding than students who read efferently.

Then throw into the mix multicultural literature. Dressel wanted to find out what happens when dominant culture children read literature by or about people of cultures different from their own.” So, the idea was to have kids engage deeply and personally with text and see if reading literature by or about people of other cultures increased their degree of cultural understanding. And, if measuring depth of engagement wasn’t enough, she also created a measure of “cultural understanding.” No kidding.

Dressel’s data collection occurred in the literature classes of a middle school teacher using a unit that involved reading multicultural novels. The teacher provided a list of six books from which students could select their three top choices. The teacher then assigned them to read one of their three choices. In my part of the state we call that “controlled choice.” Some of the data took the form of a pre- post-survey which asked the kids their feelings about reading in general and about reading novels about people different from themselves. A second form of data came from “Book Club Organizers” which were used to give shape to students’ discussion time and to give practice with literary elements.

An especially interesting data source was the children’s entries in response journals. Each student was paired with a classmate-partner who was reading a different novel. That way, each student experienced two of the six books. Their journal entries were written in the form of a friendly letter, a pretty common practice. But the students wrote the letters in the voice of one of the book’s characters. That seems like a pretty cool way to promote students’ identifying with their books’ characters. At the same time, when they responded to their partners’ letters, they used their own voices.

The final data set, then, included the surveys, Book Club Organizers, and the journal writings of 123 middle school students. It amounted to 20-25 pages per student which were read and analyzed by both Dressel and another reader independently. Do the math. How would you like to read and carefully analyze between two and three thousand pages of middle-schoolers’ handwriting? At just under an hour per student, it took them four months to read all the writings. Four months!

In order to quantify the data, she made an “Evaluation Instrument” to score the writings, to look for evidence of how the children were reacting to the characters and events in the multicultural novels. Try as I might, I just could not picture how journal writings and Book Club Organizers could be scored. Finally, I called Janice Dressel, and she was gracious enough to dig out one of the Evaluation Instruments and send it to me. (Researchers tend to keep these things around in case one gets a call from an obscure columnist years after the study is actually published.) The instrument consisted of 47 questions directed to the scorer.
about an individual student’s writings. For example, “In the Book Club Organizer, does the reader generalize from non-European characters in the story to all members of that group?” Or, “In the dialogue journal, is it clear that the reader is operating within the story world?” The scorers, after training and practice, were able to reach a high rate of consistency in the scoring, a necessary step when using measures that involve a degree of judgment.

Having gone from the pages and pages of students’ writings to the Evaluation Instrument’s set of questions about each student, the next step was to construct composite scores. That is, Dressel combined responses to a set of questions about depth of aesthetic response. Then, she made another composite from the questions about cultural understanding. Now she had her two variables. From there, the statistics are easy. (Say that with me, IRC members, “The statistics are easy.”) She calculated a simple correlation to show that kids who had high scores on “depth of aesthetic response” also had high scores on “cultural understanding.” The same was true of the low scorers on both measures and of the middle scorers on both. The correlation was statistically significant. She concluded that “readers who had a strong aesthetic response to their books also learned the most about culture.” Amazing! And, once again, Thorndike is right; anything that exists can be measured.

In addition to the impressive feat of data analysis, there is one more thing cool about this study. Dressel described her findings as “bittersweet.” I’ve read my share of research, quantitative and qualitative, and I’ve never encountered a “Bittersweet Results” section before. She said that although the positive correlation in the data contributes to the view that having kids engage in aesthetic response aids depth of learning, for the most part the readers were reluctant to acknowledge the experiences of the characters from other cultures. They often merely treated the characters, who are different from themselves, as anomalies, as kids who are “over there in that story.” Response to literature can be powerful stuff. It can also be insufficient for getting readers “to extend their range of empathy.” Teaching reading is complicated business.


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**The Illinois Reading Council Communicator**

**Annual Early Literacy & Illinois Reading Recovery® Conference**

January 20-22, 2010

Chicago Marriott Downtown

Featuring an extensive line-up of presenters including:

- **Felicia Hobbs**—award-winning principal of Gibbs Magnet School of International Studies & Foreign Languages, Little Rock, Arkansas.
- **Nancy Anderson**—Professor and Reading Recovery Trainer, Texas Woman’s University
- **The 2 Sisters**—authors of The Daily Five: Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades

- Graduate credit and Continuing Education credit available
- Full-day Pre-Conference designed especially for school/district teams with Carla Soffos-Literacy Coach, University of Arkansas-Little Rock
- Full-day School-Leadership Institute for educational administrators

**CONTACT:** Ellen Swengel, Conference Coordinator eswengel@comcast.net or 217-359-7434

www.illinoisreadingrecovery.org

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**Cool Studies continued from page 18**

This article is in rebuttal to a column published in the May 2009 issue of the Illinois Reading Council Communicator titled Cool Studies; SBMI, written by Lou Ferroli. In the column, Ferroli discusses and refutes the need for interventions to be grounded in scientifically based reading research (SBRR) and the concept of intervention fidelity. ... The author’s understanding of these two key components of RtI is skewed and incorrect, thus leading many professionals astray who may not, yet, have a full or accurate understanding of RtI. ...

To read this article, please visit the IRC Web site at www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org on the IRC Communicator page under Publications and Services.

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**The Efficacy of Peer-Reviewed Research-Based Interventions When Conducted with Fidelity**

*By Amber Crews*

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www.illinoisreadingrecovery.org

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**The Illinois Reading Council Communicator**

November 2009

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Congratulations to Laurie Lawlor, the 2010 Prairie State Award Winner!

The Illinois Reading Council is pleased to announce that LAURIE LAWLOR has been selected as the 2010 recipient of the Prairie State Award for Excellence in Writing for Children. LAURIE LAWLOR is the author of more than 35 fiction, nonfiction, informational, and picture books. Her titles include the popular Addie Series; the American Sisters Series; The Two Loves of Will Shakespeare; Helen Keller: Rebellious Spirit; This Tender Place: The Story of a Wetland Year; The School at Crooked Creek; Wind on the River: A Story of the Civil War; Where Will This Shoe Take You?: A Walk Through the History of Footwear; and Old Crump: The True Story of a Trip West. Laurie’s newest title, Muddy As a Duck Puddle and Other American Similes, will be released in February 2010. Laurie’s books have been selected for several accolades including the Carl Sandburg Literary Award for Children’s Literature, the Golden Kite Honor Book for Nonfiction Award, and the American Library Association Best Books for Young Adults Award.

Laurie’s writing captures the reader’s attention and brings history alive. Laurie notes, “Creating convincing characters and exciting adventures for children remains for me the ultimate challenge of imagination and craft.” Please join IRC in congratulating Laurie Lawlor on this award.