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Greetings:

I hope everyone is back in the swing of a new year with renewed enthusiasm and excitement for finishing the last semester and completing all of those yearlong plans you have for your students. I have to admit that I miss being in the classroom; however, since last September, I have been really busy traveling all over the state meeting as many IRC members as possible at local council meetings. By March, I hope to have visited every local and special interest council. I have met such wonderful educators and attended some fabulous programs. Our local councils bring some amazing programs right to your door, complete with CPDUs. Our members are so lucky to have famous authors, fabulous workshops, innovative programs, and even mini conferences right close to home. Please take time to attend your local council meetings. You will find them truly rewarding.



**IRC
President
Susan Cisna**

As we get through these dreary winter months, I hope you are all anticipating the 2011 Illinois Reading Council Conference, *Literacy Outside the Box!* This year's conference chair, Cindy Wilson, and her conference committee have been working diligently to bring you the most extreme conference you can imagine! Want to know how to use a SMART Board? Like to know how to use technology in your classroom? Want to clog to poetry? How about taking part in a Literacy Cabaret? You won't want to miss all of the fun this year. Come join all of your IRC friends and be prepared to be inspired, changed, and rejuvenated as this conference erupts in March! It is so easy to register online at the Illinois Reading Council website.

In addition to our *Literacy Outside the Box!* conference, IRC is also coming into a new era in other ways this year. Our wonderful technology committee is exploring numerous possibilities to bring us into the technology arena. Each council can now email blast all of its members. We are officially on Facebook and can do promotions, announcements, and chats with all of our members any time. If you have not joined us yet, please do so immediately. We also have a Ning! We hope to be able to notify you during the conference if there is a program cancellation, change, or announcement. By joining the Ning, you will receive these important updates via email during the conference.

Literacy



OUTSIDE THE BOX!

**Registration and
Housing for the
2011 IRC Conference
is available now!**



IRA
State Coordinator
Roberta Sejnost

You're the same today as you'll be in five years except for the people you meet and the books you read.
Charlie "Tremendous" Jones

As I read the quote above, I realize how clearly this characterizes IRA,

IRC and its 32 local councils! Through these we do meet new people and discover new books. And, we reap even more benefits. Through our local councils, our state council and our international association and the meetings, conferences and conventions they sponsor, we are welcomed into a global community of professionals who are committed to bringing literacy to all. In addition, the structure of this family of literacy volunteers fosters leadership opportunities for its members. In short, membership in this entity does change us, all for the better! And, as Illinoisans, we have great potential for this change because Illinois has the greatest number of IRA members, 4247, and the greatest number of IRA student members, 1176, of all the states!

And, in line with these outstanding membership numbers, I see an outstanding increase in council activities. It is especially gratifying to see Mississippi Valley, National Road and Sauk Valley, councils who once toyed with disbanding, now gaining members, planning events and having meetings. And, how exhilarating it is to see members staying after each Board of Directors meeting to attend committee meetings and Honor Council/IRC Council of Excellence workshops. Hopefully all of our councils will receive the distinction of being awarded the IRA Honor Council or IRC Council of Excellence or both. If you need help to do this, please contact me or your Regional Director or attend the January workshop.

Now, for more shout-outs! Congratulations to:

Prairie Area Reading Council, which was able to hold a very successful meeting, featuring Ellin Keene, the day after Labor Day and had an amazing attendance, and Chicago Area Reading Association, Prairie Area Reading Council and South Eastern Reading Council who have submitted and received speaker program grants. The Regional Directors and I are busy reviewing some additional applications, so if your council sent one in, you'll hear from us soon! Also, bravo to the many councils who have utilized IRC's Speakers' Bureau to book outstanding IRC members to present at the council meetings. Keep up the good work, councils, and be sure to share such good works with the press so the world learns of your good deeds in literacy!

"...we are welcomed into a global community of professionals who are committed to bringing literacy to all."

Speaking of meeting new people and learning about new books, remember, you are always welcome to visit other councils where you can gain some terrific ideas and wonderful moments of learning. Check out the IRC website, www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org, for the most current information about the many wonderful council activities that are planned.

Yet another way to meet new people is to become a council officer or board member. On that note, if you have not volunteered yet to be a new officer, why not call your council president and do just that? Remember that new officers need to attend the Leadership Training in July where they learn about their duties and join other council officers in planning their year's meetings, activities, and service programs all the while having FUN and collegial camaraderie. And, while councils are making these plans, Regional Directors and IRC Officers are on hand to make suggestions and offer help.

Speaking of July's Leadership Training retreat, this year's keynote speaker is Illinois author and local Kankakee resident Gary Moore, author of *Playing with the Enemy* and the soon to be released *My Buddy*, the story of Buddy Holly. A talented musician, dynamic speaker, award-winning author, successful business leader, and a creative entrepreneur, Gary knows how

Continued on page 3

IRA State Coordinator continued from page 2

to energize, entertain, educate and captivate audiences. I know his dedication and passion will energize us all! And, you can help energize others as well. I am looking for some current council officers who are willing to share their successful ideas with incoming council officers at Leadership. Let me know if you would be interested in presenting a session. Don't let your good ideas waste away—share them at our Leadership Retreat.

Finally, here are some dates to remember. More specific details and applications for each can be found on the IRC website.

March 1, 2011: **IRA Celebrate Literacy Award** verifications are due.

March 1, 2011: **IRA Award of Excellence** materials to IRA are due.

March 1, 2011: **IRC Council of Excellence Award** requirements are due to Roberta Sejnost, the IRC IRA State Coordinator.

March 1, 2011: **IRA Honor Council materials** are due to IRA.

April 15, 2011: **IRC Council Officer lists** are due to the **IRC Office**.

NOTE: This process is different this year; councils will submit officer reports to our IRC office, and the office will send the reports on the appropriate form to IRA.

Have a marvelous spring!

Bobbie Sejnost, IRA State Coordinator

President's Message continued from page 1

Our state committees have been developing some exciting changes this year, too. The Legislative Committee is not only reporting information about legislation issues, but they are also working on promoting IRC to our state legislators. The Publicity Committee is working on new ways to promote literacy within the state, while the Newspapers in Education Committee has made contact with USA Today to discuss a cooperative program with IRC. We have a newly formed Retired Teachers Committee which met for the first time in January, and our Publications Committee is working on translating some of our brochures into Spanish. So far, this has been a very busy year for everyone.

No matter how busy the spring is for you, I hope you can take time to meet with us in Springfield. See you then!

Susan

Join IRC on
facebook
today!

Visit the IRC Website at
www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org
for a direct link to our page!

Mission
The mission of the Illinois Reading Council is to provide support and leadership to educators as they promote and teach lifelong literacy.



Illinois Reading Council
1210 Fort Jesse Road, Suite B2
Normal, IL 61761
Phone: 888-454-1341
Fax: 309-454-3512
E-Mail: irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org
Website: www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org

2011 IRC Conference March 17-19, 2011

By Cindy Wilson, 2011 IRC Conference Chair

If you are an IRC member, you have received your Preliminary Program by now and have had a chance to peruse the complete list of featured speakers and sessions that are planned for the 2011 conference. Pretty exciting, isn't it? From the opening Welcome Reception on Wednesday night through Marc Brown's luncheon on Saturday, there are constant opportunities to grow professionally, become acquainted with several celebrated authors, network with other literacy experts like yourselves, and have fun!

Here are a few important points to remember about the conference.

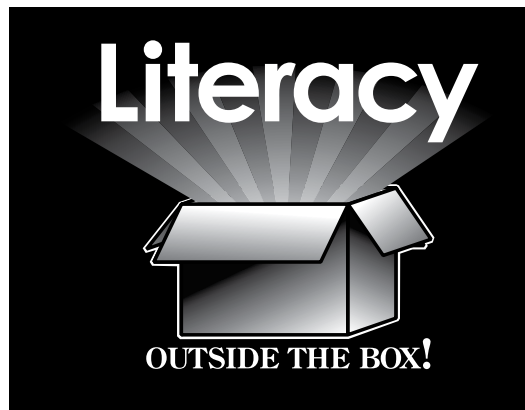
(1) Don't forget to invite your legislators to the Wednesday night welcome reception. It is especially critical right now for us to maintain strong relationships with those who are making changes that have such strong impact on our profession. (2) You may certainly register after February 1st, but registration fees increase after that date, so get yours in as soon as you can. (3) If you have a student teacher or know a friend or relative who is a preservice teacher, encourage him/her to attend Friday night's Preservice Teacher Pizza Party—or give a registration as a gift. It's incredibly affordable (\$50 before February 1st gives a preservice teacher one year's membership AND registration for the conference). (4) On that same note, bring your new and gently used items to the conference to donate to preservice teachers (contact Carol Owles or the IRC office). (5) Sign up for fun and music at Barry Lane's Literacy Cabaret Friday night! I've been to one of these, and it was so much fun! (6) Bring a story to share at Storytelling on Thursday and/or a poem to share at the Poetry Coffee house Friday—or just plan to enjoy others' stories and poems. (7) Sign up to volunteer for some aspect of the conference. If you did not sign up when you registered, you can always contact the IRC office and let them know you're interested. It's easy, painless, and makes you even more proud to be involved in this organization and in the teaching profession in general. (8) To learn more about the authors and professionals

who will be speaking at the conference, follow the blog at literacyoutsidethebox.blogspot.com—and look for the new IRC 'Ning,' where presenters may post their notes and you will be able to carry on discussions about literacy topics, both before and after the conference. (There is a link to the Ning on the IRC web page as well as on the blog.) (9) You can order conference shirts up until February 18th—and they come in four different styles, so there is something for everyone! (10) The IRC 2011

Conference, Literacy Outside the Box!, promises to be more of the great professional development and camaraderie that you have come to expect from the Illinois Reading Council Conference every year. I hope to see you there!

One last note—if you go to the blog, you will discover a really easy way to win a door prize at the conference. The directions will be in a December post. And

did I say it's *really* easy? Let me just repeat that: it's **REALLY** easy!



Plan now to attend one of the New IRC Strands



**at the 2011 IRC
Conference
including the
Career Strand,
the Librarian
Strand, and the
SMART Board
Strand!**

Bring Your Laptop to the IRC Conference in March!

By Tracy Tarasiuk, IRC Technology Committee Chair

IRC's Technology Committee was formed during the summer of 2010. Members of this new committee include Barbara Ashton, Deborah Augsburger, Stephanie Benson, Terri Coyler, Leslie Forsman, Stacie Rossiter, Sheila Ruh, Sherry Sejnost, Carrie Sheridan, Donna Soukup, Patricia Tylka, and Chair Tracy Tarasiuk. The committee has met at the last two board meetings in Bloomington. This committee has several goals: to help local councils improve communication with members by using technology, supporting technology use in Illinois classrooms, and helping IRC improve and expand its use of its website and the internet.

Some major technological improvements at this year's conference will include free wireless access at the convention center and a social networking site developed specifically for attendees, presenters, and council members. This site, called a NING, is up and ready at www.illinoisreadingcouncil.ning.com. By signing up at the NING you will be able to interact with other attendees and presenters, create your own page and add content, download presenter materials, and form groups based on interests and grade level. This site will be active and available after the conference ends, making it a great place to save materials and resources you learn about at the conference. The site is ready now, so you need not wait until the conference to get set up.

Local council board members are encouraged to attend one of three sessions being offered by Sherry Sejnost and Tracy Tarasiuk at the IRC conference in March. These sessions are titled "Your Council Outside the Box." The purpose of these sessions is to help local councils develop a presence on the Internet. This may be in the form of a blog, or connecting with members on Facebook and Twitter. These sessions will be hands-on and the technology committee hopes to support councils with their technology needs long after the conference is over. SMART Board sessions will be offered as well. These sessions will help teachers make the most of this interactive technology in their classrooms. The technology committee is excited about the upcoming conference and truly believes it will be an experience "Outside the Box" for all attendees!

Come explore

Literacy



OUTSIDE THE BOX!

at the
2011 IRC Conference
March 17-19, 2011
Springfield, Illinois

**Many featured award-winning authors
and prominent literacy leaders
will help you find literacy in
new places including:**

Jeff Anderson	Marion Blumenthal Lazan
M.T. Anderson	Cindy Middendorf
Diane Barone	Cathy Puett Miller
T.A. Barron	Donalyn Miller
Danny Brassell	Vaunda Micheaux Nelson
Marc Brown	Sara Pennypacker
Patrick Carman	Tim Rasinski
Ruth Culham	John Rocco
Patricia Edwards	David Schwartz
Mordicai Gerstein	Frank Serafini
Barry Lane	Rebecca Stead
Jacque McTaggart	Jane Yolen

Don't delay and register today!

You can now find the latest information about the 2011 IRC Conference, download presenters' handouts, or interact with other conferees at the new IRC Ning

www.illinoisreadingcouncil.ning.com

2011 Legislator of the Year Award

By Mike Ellerman, Helen Bryant, and Kathy Merz, IRC Legislative Co-Chairs

Marlow H. Colvin, Phil Hare, Robert W. Pritchard, and Dale A. Righter will receive the 2011 Legislator of the Year Award at the annual IRC Conference Welcome Reception that will be held at the Abraham Lincoln Hotel Ballroom on Wednesday, March 16, 2011. All conferees and Illinois Legislators will be invited to attend.



Illinois Representative Marlow H. Colvin is from the 33rd District with an office in Chicago, Illinois. Representative Colvin is dedicated to increasing educational achievement in his community. His many accomplishments include the sponsorship of legislation

on e-text books and legislation to help young adults succeed in education. Representative Colvin also actively supports literacy education in the schools within his district by sponsoring student trips to visit the Congressional House in Springfield and attending neighborhood schools' family reading nights. He has also spoken at many graduations emphasizing the importance of education and literacy.



Phil Hare is the former Illinois Representative from the 17th District serving the Quad Cities area. While in office, Phil was committed to improving the education system and educational opportunities for every child. He worked closely in drafting a bill to improve the Head

Start Program that had significant changes for the quality of education for students living in rural areas. Phil also supported the reform of the No Child Left Behind Act. He was committed to putting the needs of teachers, students, and communities first.



Illinois Representative Robert W. Pritchard is from the 70th District that serves the residents of DeKalb County and portions of Ogle and LaSalle Counties. His district office is in Sycamore, Illinois. Representative Pritchard has worked extensively to improve early childhood and

all education for his community by serving on many legislative committees focused on improving education. He also has spoken at the Northern Illinois Reading Council's fall literacy conference for the past several years. His support of local schools is also evident, as he has hosted several breakout sessions where he read to families at the Rochelle Elementary District Family Reading Night. Representative Pritchard is also featured on a READ poster.



Senator Dale A. Righter is from the 55th District with an office in Mattoon, Illinois. Senator Righter considers literacy to be an important issue within the state of Illinois and has made education an important issue in his career. Having taught at Lakeland Community College and

Eastern Illinois University, he has a background in education and has a genuine feel for the problems that face Illinois teachers. Besides supporting legislative initiatives on school funding, Senator Righter provides support to the schools and literacy communities within his district. He makes frequent visits to all of the schools and has been a guest speaker in many classrooms. He regularly speaks to government classes at the university level and has taken time to be a "Celebrity" reader at several events within his community.



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.

Share with Brother

Written by Steven L. Layne www.stevelayne.com
 Illustrated by Ard Hoyt
 Pelican Publishing Company January 2011
 Category: Picture Book Ages: 2-10

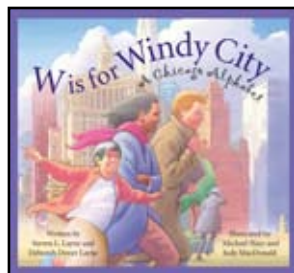
The floppy-eared protagonist from *Love the Baby* is back, and his troubles are mounting. Family members have assured him that his little brother will be lots of fun now that he’s getting older, but nobody said anything about sharing...and sharing with brother isn’t as easy as everyone thinks. In fact, it’s enough to make our furry hero completely lose his cool. But when Brother becomes sick and perhaps even lonely, his older sibling races to the rescue. Along the way, he discovers just how great it feels to give—and that sometimes sharing comes with a catch!



W is for Windy City: A Chicago Alphabet

Written by Steven L. Layne and Deborah Dover Layne
 www.stevelayne.com
 Illustrated by Michael Hays and Judy MacDonald
 Sleeping Bear Press April 2010
 Category: Picture Book Ages: 6-14

Welcome to the Windy City—America’s beloved Chicago! From the visuals at the Art Institute to traveling the Loop on the “El” train, the opportunities are endless. Clever poems and accompanying exposition provide little known details as well as in-depth facts about Illinois’ largest city. Whether you are a Chicagoan or a visitor, *W is for Windy City* will leave you not only entertained, but also impressed with all that this dynamic city has to offer.



Eliza’s Kindergarten Pet

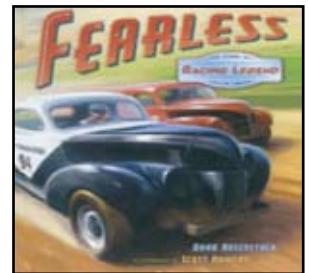
Written by Alice B. McGinty www.alicebmcginty.com
 Illustrated by Nancy Speir
 Marshall Cavendish July 2010
 Category: Picture Book Ages: 4-8

In this sequel to *Eliza’s Kindergarten Surprise*, Miss Summer has a special treat for Eliza’s kindergarten class. It’s a pet guinea pig that the kids name Cookie. But Eliza doesn’t like this kind of cookie—what if she bites? The story of how Eliza overcomes her fear will delight guinea pig fans and gently encourage kids to confront their own fears. Alice McGinty and her sidekick, the real, live version of Cookie, have been visiting schools to celebrate the release of this new book.

Fearless: The Story of Racing Legend Louise Smith

Written by Barb Rosenstock www.barbrosenstock.com
 Illustrated by Scott Dawson
 Dutton Children’s Books October 2010
 Category: Picture Book Grades: K-4

When Louise Smith started racing cars, most girls weren’t even allowed to drive. Follow her adventures as a seven-year-old behind the wheel of her daddy’s Model T to her career as one of the pioneers of stock car racing and the first woman inducted into the Motorsports Hall of Fame. “This debut for both author and illustrator is a winner!” starred review, *Publisher’s Weekly*.



Fort Mose: And the Story of the Man Who Built the First Free Black Settlement in Colonial America

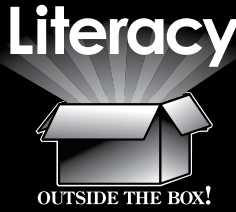
Written by Glennette Tilley Turner
 Abrams Books September 2010
 Category: History Ages 9-12

May 2011 IRC Communicator and Illinois Authors’ Corner deadline for submissions is March 1, 2011!

IRC Conference 2011

Registration Form

March 17-19, 2011
Springfield, Illinois



Return this form with payment to:
Illinois Reading Council
 1210 Fort Jesse Road, Suite B2
 Normal, IL 61761
 Or fax to: (309) 454-3512
 Or register online at
www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org

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

Name (Last) _____ (First) _____
 School/Business _____ City _____
 Home Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Home Telephone () _____ Business Telephone () _____
 Email _____ Presenting at Conference? Yes No
 Are you an IRC member? Yes No Council Affiliation _____ Are you an IRA member? Yes No

REGISTRATION includes meetings on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.	On or Before February 1, 2011	After February 1, 2011
____ IRC Member (Membership Number _____)	\$150	\$175
____ Retiree (Member) ____ Preservice Teacher with ID (Member)	\$25	\$50
____ Non-Member (If you join now with your conference registration, register as a member!)	\$225	\$250
____ Retiree (Non-Member) ____ Preservice Teacher with ID (Non-Member)	\$50	\$75

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

____ Thursday Breakfast (A. Lincoln) <i>Jeff Anderson</i>	\$18	\$23
____ Scrambled Eggs & Sausage ____ Vegetarian		
____ Thursday Luncheon (A. Lincoln) <i>Brassell & Rasinski</i>	\$22	\$27
____ Hot Grilled Chicken Club ____ Vegetarian		
____ Thursday Luncheon (Hilton) <i>Patrick Carman</i>	\$22	\$27
____ Ham & Cheddar Wrap ____ Vegetarian		
____ Thursday Prairie State Award Banquet (A. Lincoln) . . . <i>Robert Burleigh</i>	\$30	\$35
____ Chicken Marsala ____ Vegetarian		
____ Friday Breakfast (A. Lincoln) <i>Frank Serafini</i>	\$18	\$23
____ Cinnamon French Toast ____ Vegetarian		
____ Friday Luncheon (A. Lincoln) <i>Beverly Tyner</i>	\$22	\$27
____ Hot Tarragon Chicken Sandwich ____ Vegetarian Salad		
____ Friday Luncheon (Hilton) <i>M.T. Anderson</i>	\$22	\$27
____ Turkey Cranberry Waldorf Salad ____ Vegetarian		
____ Friday Night Pizza Party for Preservice Teachers Only!	FREE	FREE
____ Friday Banquet (A. Lincoln) <i>Jane Yolen</i>	\$30	\$35
____ Pork Loin with Madeira Sauce ____ Salmon ____ Vegetarian		
____ Friday Night Entertainment Event (Hilton) <i>Barry Lane's Literacy Cabaret</i>	\$10	\$15
____ Saturday Breakfast (A. Lincoln) <i>David Booth</i>	\$18	\$23
____ Three Cheese Omelet ____ Vegetarian		
____ Saturday Author Luncheon (Hilton) <i>Marc Brown</i>	\$25	\$30
____ Teriyaki Chicken ____ Vegetarian		

METHOD OF PAYMENT

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED

\$ _____ \$ _____

(Sorry, no P.O.'s accepted!)

Check (payable to IRC)

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Visa MasterCard

Signature _____

Credit Card Expiration Date

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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, 2011. Please see the complete policy under General Conference Information or at IRC Website.

Illinois Reading Council

ONLINE HOUSING RESERVATION SYSTEM

Conference Dates – Thursday, March 17; Friday, March 18; and Saturday, March 19, 2011

Over 1,200 rooms have been reserved for the 2011 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 23, 2011.

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

Candlewood Suites.....\$70

2501 Sunrise Drive, Spfd., IL 62703

Hilton Garden Inn.....\$103

3100 S. Dirksen Parkway, Spfd. IL 62703

Comfort Suites.....\$89

2620 S. Dirksen Parkway, Spfd., IL 62703

Holiday Inn Express.....\$109

3050 S. Dirksen Parkway, Spfd. IL 62703

Drury Inn & Suites.....\$100

3180 S. Dirksen Parkway, Spfd., IL 62703

Microtel Inn & Suites.....\$81

2636 Sunrise Drive, Spfd. IL 62703

Hampton Inn East.....\$103

3185 S. Dirksen Parkway, Spfd., IL 62703

- **Housing Reservations** will only be processed online with a credit card until **February 23, 2011**. 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 cancellations. Please keep this email for your records.
- **Cancellations** or changes to your arrival/departure must be made before February 23, 2011 to receive a full refund. The advance deposit charge is non-refundable after February 23, 2011. Please note that some hotels charge for early departure and some require a two night minimum stay. After February 23rd, please make changes directly with the hotel.
- **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 and Friday. Shuttles run approximately every 45-60 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, there are many parking options available and on-street metered parking is FREE!

An Exclusively Secondary Literacy Conference
For All Teachers & Administrators of Grades 6-12
Holiday Inn Convention Center, Tinley Park, IL

35th Day of Reading

Saturday, November 5, 2011

Featured Speakers:

❧ TODD STRASSER ❧

Young Adult Author, Screen, TV Writer, Journalist

- ☆ Author: *Blood on My Hands; If I Grow Up; Can't Get There From Here; Boot Camp; The Wave; Mob Princess series; Drift X series*
- ☆ ALA Best Book for Teens 2010
- ☆ Notable Social Studies Books for Young People 2010
- ☆ TV films – *The Wave; The Accident*

❧ Dr. JEFF WILHEM ❧

Executive Director of the National Literacy Project

- ☆ Professor of English at Boise State University
- ☆ Boise State Writing Project founding director
- ☆ *Fresh Takes on Teaching Literacy Elements*
- ☆ *You Gotta BE the Book: Teaching Engaged and Reflective Reading with Adolescents*

Come to an expanded version of Dr. Wilhem's
breakout sessions:

Pre-Conference Workshop
Friday, November 4, 2011

Back By Popular Demand!!!

For more information contact:

Barb Chrz-White bchrzwhite@comcast.net
Terry McHugh tmchugh@dayofreading.org

Team Discounts Available
CPS Vendor # 80827



www.dayofreading.org

Benefits of Cooperative Grouping

By Sarah Gabriel

Cooperative grouping or small group learning has been recognized as a teaching strategy that promotes learning and socialization. This method involves students working together to accomplish shared goals. In order for small groups to be effective, teachers need resources and assistance, and groups need to be formed properly. Once this is done, positive outcomes will be achieved among the small group. When resources and assistance are given to teachers, they are more prepared for small group work and more success is had by all. When the administration and school district encourage teachers to use cooperative learning, students achieve more. Teachers need trainings or workshops so they can learn how to form and use cooperative groups in their own classrooms.

Cooperative groups also need to be formed properly. It helps when cooperative groups share a common goal. When every group member is needed to achieve the goal, then every member feels important. This allows the members in each structured group to share ideas, make joint decisions and reach higher levels of academic learning. The group members will also actively listen to what the others say with few interruptions, and then reevaluate their own ideas with what other group members think. Students in small groups feel more comfortable asking questions when they are confused because group members take the time to explain. There is more time for reflection and recall. This allows groups to elaborate on answers and question each other's ideas.

If students have never worked in small groups before it is important to teach them what an effective group looks like. Effective small groups have group roles. Once roles are assigned or decided upon, each member needs to know his or her purpose and role description. Assigning group roles promotes higher-level thinking about difficult concepts.

In summary, studies have indicated when students work in effective small groups higher levels of achievement are seen. These students have experienced a growth in analytical, inquiry and higher-order thinking skills. Therefore, small grouping is a beneficial teaching strategy that should continue to be used in education.

Goodnough, K. (2005). Fostering Teacher Learning through Collaborative Inquiry. *Clearing House*, 79(2), 88-92. Retrieved September 4, 2007, from ERIC.

Kuech, R. (2004). Collaborative and Interactional Processes in and Inquiry-Based, Informal Learning Environment. *Journal of Classroom Interaction*, 39(1), 30-41. Retrieved September 4, 2007, from ERIC.

Meet Two IRC Researchers

By Elizabeth Goldsmith-Conley

The Studies and Research Committee continues to build its network of IRC members engaged in research by introducing readers to two more members and their projects.

Meet Deb Augsburger: Deb Augsburger is currently President of the Will County Reading Council and department chair for Reading and Literacy at Lewis University. Deb is also a storyteller, so, in addition to her courses for reading specialists, she teaches courses on literature for children and adolescents.

Deb's Project: Her latest research project, *Multicultural Literature and Perceptions of Diversity*, combines these interests. In this project she focuses on cultivating preservice teachers' awareness of and empathy with diversity through reading adolescent literature. Over the course of three semesters she has measured the personal and professional beliefs about diversity of her preservice teachers using scales designed by Pohlan and Aguila. Each semester she has had half of the group read and discuss books dealing with diverse perspectives. These readings include *Am I Blue: Coming out of the Silence*, a YA anthology edited by Marion Dane Bauer that is devoted to lesbian and gay themes, *Ask Me No Questions* by Marina Budhos, a portrait of the life of an illegal Bangladeshi immigrant teenager and her family in NYC after 9/11, and "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" And Other Conversations About Race by Beverly Daniel Tatum.

Deb's Findings: After administering a posttest to her treatment and control groups, Deb has discovered that although the students participating in the readings are more willing than the control groups to change their personal beliefs, their professional beliefs have undergone no modifications. Although personally they became more accepting of, for example, homosexual teachers, and positive about differentiating instruction, they still see schools as neutral places that treat all students fairly.

Who This Will Help: Deb's findings will help teachers of adolescents and preservice teacher educators and the list of great titles she has compiled will interest all of us who enjoy reading and see literature as a way of broadening our empathy

for others. For more information email Deb at AugsbuDe@lewisu.edu

Meet Lou Ferroli: Lou Ferroli is Professor of Education at Rockford College with over two decades of experience as a classroom teacher, reading clinician, and reading consultant. He is Chair of the IRC Obama Literacy Fund Committee, former president of the West Suburban Reading Council, former president of CIRP, and former Treasurer of IRC. He is a consistent contributor to the *Communicator* of interesting and enlightening articles on current research in reading.

Lou's Project: Lou is continuing his work on developing appropriate assessments for Spanish speaking students. In the past he has constructed a developmental spelling test in Spanish.

Currently he is refining a timed K-2 word list assessment in Spanish that will give a more accurate indication of a child's reading achievement level than current untimed lists. Because Spanish, unlike English, is a phonetically regular language, given enough time to figure out the syllables, students with only the most basic decoding skills can read all of the words on currently used lists.

In addition to a small pilot, Lou has completed a larger study involving more than 100 students. He is currently in the midst of correlating the data he has collected with other assessments the school has used such as the Spanish version of the ISEL (Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy).

Lou's Findings: As he suspected, Lou has found that using a power point presentation that flashes words briefly on a screen more accurately measures a student's sight word knowledge and predicts corresponding reading achievement than using untimed lists.

Who This Will Help: Presently there are few tools in Spanish bilingual programs that can provide accurate progress monitoring or be used to assess newly arrived students. Lou's purpose is to have an effective assessment that can be easily and frequently administered by anyone dealing with kids in early literacy programs in Spanish. For additional information email Lou at LFerroli@rockford.edu

*For more information
about the IRC
Research Network,
visit the IRC Website
under "Committees."*

A Look Back at DSRN 2010

By Mike Schlachter

A Dark and Stormy Reading Night 2010 was a night of mysterious and suspenseful scary stories told by teachers to elementary students, middle school students, and their families. All participants, teachers, and volunteers who attended the A Dark and Stormy Reading Night event were allowed to dress in costumes if they chose to do so. Those who attended the event received an age-appropriate story schedule and proceeded to three different classrooms throughout the evening. A different short story was told in each of the three classrooms.

After the third story concluded, all of the attendees gathered in the gym for a free book raffle. A brief survey was filled out by each of the attendees before the raffle began. Once each survey had been filled out, attendees submitted their surveys to volunteers who then used the surveys as raffle tickets. Once all of the books had been raffled off, parents and students were encouraged to share similar experiences with each other in their own homes with the free books that they received. Finally, everyone was thanked for participating in the event and the evening's activities came to a close.

The results of the surveys that were filled out by the participants of A Dark and Stormy Reading Night 2010 indicate that the event did lead to increases in both personal motivation to read as well as motivation to read with or to another family member. 88% of the attendees who filled out surveys reported that they would be more likely to read as a result of attending the event. 70.5% of the attendees surveyed indicated that they would be more likely to read with or to another family member as a result of attending A Dark and Stormy Reading Night. The Illinois Reading Council helped to make this event possible by awarding me with a Literacy Support Grant. I would like to thank the IRC on behalf of all of the people, including myself, who had a great time at DSRN 2010.

Applications for IRC Literacy Support Grants are being accepted until May 1, 2011. For more information, please visit the IRC Website at www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org.

Thanks to IRC for the Classroom Visit by Candace Fleming

By Juanita Scott

Is the Illinois Reading Council the best professional organization ever? My students and I certainly think so! IRC membership consists of professionals who actively care about helping children and promoting literacy. Their actions daily prove the passion and commitment members have for helping provide Illinois students with positive literacy experiences.

One way they help enrich the educational endeavors of Illinois students is by funding grants for teachers and other educational professionals. The IRC Literacy Grant program helped 6th grade students at Churchill Junior High School by funding a visit from author Candace Fleming. The grant allowed our team of middle school teachers to make learning fun, effective, and authentic for our 6th grade students.

Sixth grade students read Candace Fleming books, wrote math fables and concrete poems, adapted Ms. Fleming's materials to Readers Theater scripts, and are currently in the process of writing and illustrating their own books. They performed Readers Theater scenes for our visiting author. We are planning to take the readers theater troupe on the road to perform for CUSD 205 elementary schools. They used the Fleming book *Boxes for Katje* to inspire our students to study the 1940's. Taking the information from this book they are planning to donate staples to the local FISH Pantry.

Student reflections regarding the author visit routinely told how they planned to implement her writing tips in their writing. Her advice was repeated in their reflections. Not only did students share the strategies she taught our students, they gave concrete examples about how and when they planned to use these strategies. The renewed excitement for the love of writing that sprang from student interaction with Ms. Fleming was evident in these reflections.

The best part of this unit of study is how it has only just started. We have a tremendous amount of work still ahead. Thanks IRC for helping make learning real, fun, authentic, and possible. Without money from these grants, units like these would be out of the question. In the tight budgets schools face today IRC is a real hero for teachers and students at Churchill Junior High School.

America to Zambia

By Mal Keenan

When you walk into one of three classrooms at Shine Reading Academy in Zambia, Africa, you will see students ready to learn, wanting to read. These children arrived at Shine illiterate. They were handpicked as the most vulnerable and most at risk in the community. These chosen students are fed a meal of porridge and receive four hours of literacy and math instruction five days a week. With a timeline of three years, and dedication from Shine teachers, these motivated students will graduate Shine Reading Academy and continue their education at a community school in the area. Learning to read is powerful and will hopefully break the vicious cycle of poverty in the neighborhoods surrounding the school.

Shine Reading Academy is one of A to Z Literacy Movement's partners. A to Z Literacy Movement is one of Illinois Reading Council's selected 2010 international projects. IRC has played a vital role in helping to fund the shipment of over 5,000 books to three schools like Shine Reading Academy, and orphan homes in Zambia, Africa. IRC recognizes the need to support international projects and understands the importance of helping teachers in countries like Zambia. Without the support of the Illinois Reading Council, the children's books gathered by IRC members like Crystal Anderson, Jamie Diamond, Katrina Weber and Cindy Gerwin could not have been shipped. A to Z is grateful for IRC's generous support.

Kofi Annan once stated, "Literacy is the bridge from misery to hope." I believe this statement rings true for so many children living in poverty around the world.



Professional Development Opportunity

Featuring
Candace Fleming
and Cyndi Giorgis

Mark your calendar to attend either

The Mid-State Reading Council Summer Conference in Normal, Illinois on June 9th

or

The Northern Illinois Reading Council Summer Conference in Malta, Illinois on June 10th

Get a jump start on reader response! The conference will address how literature that authors write and teachers read to and with students informs as well as transforms student writing. Presentations on how children's literature, the teacher, and the writer become key components in learning to write will be shared.

Come and learn to write under the influence (of literature)

Registration information can be found in the reading councils' upcoming newsletters or at the IRC website.

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In 1858, on a Georgia plantation a young woman is suddenly sold, leaving behind her husband and their 5-year-old son. Through an evening of storytelling, the enslaved community comes together, not only to comfort father and son but to heal and strengthen themselves. Based on actual slave narratives, as well as African and African-American folktales, the play celebrates the African-American oral tradition as it passes from generation to generation.

For more information or to purchase tickets:
Call Phil Funkenbusch (217) 785-6085

Cool Studies: Do You Know Your Kiddy Lit?

By Lou Ferrolì

So, do you keep up with the latest in children's and adolescents' literature? Mangieri and Corboy tried to find that out in their study in which they asked just three questions. See how you would do on their first question. "Can you list three children's books written in the past five years?" That's right. List just three titles. Can you do it? They have to be recent titles, though, so *Brown Bear* doesn't work. Neither does *The Red Badge of Courage*.

I suspect it is an easy question for a 2011 IRC member. Back in 1981, the number was 91% of the 571 elementary teachers and administrators from urban, suburban, and rural districts across three states. Ninety-one percent of the respondents could NOT name three children's books written in the last five years. Only 9% could do it.

Their survey was also trying to find out if we know how to use children's literature. So question #3 asked the teachers to "identify three or more activities used to promote recreational reading for students." Only 11% of the respondents were able to identify three such activities. Among them, the most popular responses were reading stories to children (Yay!), sustained silent reading, and acting out plays.

The only other question in the survey asked if one could name a children's book written in the past seven years in each of the following categories: fiction, biography, poetry, fantasy/science fiction, picture book, mystery/adventure. "Again, few of the teachers succeeded."

Mangieri and Corboy graciously conceded that maybe teachers couldn't name recent titles because they are using older books due to limited funds. They worried, though, that the deficiency in teachers' knowledge regarding recreational reading suggested that it was

because recreational reading had a low priority in classroom practice. Their short, three-page study ended with a very cool challenge to the reader. "Ask yourself the three questions contained in our questionnaire. If you are unable to respond to one or more of the items, what will you do to overcome this deficiency?" You have to love research that concludes by telling us to overcome our deficiencies.

Twenty years later Mangieri, along with Cathy Collins Block, replicated the study. They speculated that events of the century's last two decades could have led to teachers' being more knowledgeable about children's

literature and how to promote recreational reading. For starters, the Becoming A Nation of Readers Report (the previous generation's equivalent of the National Reading Panel Report) had been released, and it endorsed reading literature aloud to kids as one of the most important ways to increase achievement. Another reason to expect increased familiarity with children's literature was that the number of books

published each year had increased significantly. Finally, a series of studies showed that recreational reading impacts favorably on comprehension, on grade point average, on writing skill, and on incidental learning of vocabulary.

At the same time, there were events that could have led to a decrease in teacher familiarity with children's literature. For starters, the increasing weight given to high-stakes tests caused an emphasis on teaching skills and strategies likely to raise test scores. Research evidence showed that kids were spending less time on leisure reading. There was less time spent on SSR in schools. The number of high school graduates who reported reading no books in their senior year had doubled. And students' attitudes toward reading

"Can you list three children's books written in the past five years? That's right. List just three titles. Can you do it?"

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were shown to decline continuously across grades K through 5. In sum the researchers wondered if teachers were *keeping up with* or *giving up on* literature and recreational reading.

They assembled a sample of 549 teachers similar to the 1981 group (although they left out the administrators this time). They asked these teachers exactly the same three questions. Additionally, when teachers turned in their surveys “those who provided three or more recreational reading activities in response to question 3” were interviewed to get their input about the kinds of professional development that might help to increase educators’ knowledge of children’s literature and ways to use it.

This time the number of teachers who could list three children’s books written in the past five years had quadrupled from 9% to 36%. Similarly, the respondents who could identify three or more activities to promote recreational reading jumped from 11% to 20%.

Another interesting finding occurred in both studies. In 1981, of the 9% of the teachers who successfully listed three children’s books written in the past five years “many named appreciably more than the requested three books.” In other words, a large proportion of the teachers didn’t know many kids’ books, but lots of teachers knew a great many kids’ books. In the replication study they called that same finding “a bimodal distribution.” Teachers were either not knowledgeable regarding recent children’s literature titles or they were very knowledgeable.

This finding of a bimodal distribution helps me understand the behavior of our own IRC members. I am witness to what happens at an IRC meeting when it is announced that a certain author will be coming to speak at a local council or presenting at our state conference. The name is revealed and some of you audibly gasp. Others literally squeal: “Did you hear who’s coming?” And some of us, I mean some of you, not many mind you, but a few, whisper under your breath, “Who’s Patricia Palooka?” Or, “Who’s Sharon Drooper?”

I’m sure the IRC is heavily represented on the side of

those who are very knowledgeable, but both groups are out there among us. And that makes the conclusion of the replication study that much more interesting.

In the original study the researchers challenged us to overcome our deficiencies. In the replication study, they tried to be more helpful by interviewing the teachers who successfully responded to the survey. How did they learn about literature and ways to use it?

Many participants noted that a fast way to invent uses of current literature was to actually hold new books in their hands. Some use a “one-minute pass around” where teachers bring new literature to a professional development session and in thirty minutes circulate the books among their colleagues with sixty seconds to examine each book and consider when it could be used with content that they teach. Pretty easy.

What did these well-informed respondents say about how they keep up with the newest literature? A common theme was that they increased their awareness of children’s literature by attending author sessions at annual state meetings of the International Reading Association. You keep up by going to the state conference. So, if you don’t know who Patricia Polacco and Sharon Draper are and you want to overcome those deficiencies, try a one-minute pass around or find time at the IRC Conference for just one author session. You’ll probably gasp and squeal.

Block, C. & Mangieri, J. (2002). Recreational reading: 20 years later. *The Reading Teacher*, 55, 572-580.

Mangieri, J. & Corboy, M. Recreational reading: Do we practice what is preached? *The Reading Teacher*, 34, 923-925.

ILLC and IRC will co-sponsor the

37th Annual Young Authors Conference May 21, 2011

at Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois.

The 2011 Guidelines and Registration packet is available at www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org/yac.html.

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Hall of Fame Award

Lou Feroli

Friday Banquet with Jane Yolen

Illinois Reading Educator of the Year Award

K-5: Debbie Kaczmariski and Chris Urish

Reading Specialist: Mart O'Connor

College Instructor: Mary Miritello

Friday Luncheon with M.T. Anderson

Legislator of the Year Award -

Representative Marlow Colvin, District 33

Former Representative Phil Hare, District 17

Representative Robert Pritchard, District 70

Senator Dale Righter, District 55

Welcome Reception on Wednesday evening

Parents and Reading Award

Ann Harsy and Megan Wrzesinski

Thursday Luncheon with Patrick Carman

Prairie State Award for Excellence **in Writing for Children**

Robert Burleigh

Thursday PSA Banquet