

# Illinois Language & Literacy Council

**“Proud Sponsor of the Young Authors’ Conference**

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**NEWSLETTER**

**Spring, 2010**

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## **President’s Letter**

Dear ILLC members,

Spring is on its way, I saw my first robins of the season this morning, and the ISATs are almost over. Three great reasons to celebrate the end of a long and snowy winter! What better way to celebrate than to honor the great young writers of our state?

I spend a lot of time in elementary and high schools in the Chicagoland area, and I teach children’s literature to preservice teachers. Through my teaching and professional development workshops, I try to share some of the latest and greatest new pieces of children’s literature that are available for us to share with our students, both as a way to foster a love of reading as well as a love of writing. I know that this time of year is filled with test prep and targeted reading and writing instruction, but my hopes are that we can get back to celebrating reading and writing the authentic way as the last months of the school year come into view.

Following on the heels of this year’s IRC Conference, we continue the effort to “Light the way to Literacy” with our 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Young Authors Conference. We invite and welcome you all to attend this wonderful day of celebration on May 15, 2010, at Illinois State University in Normal, IL. We have a great group of aspiring writers this year and are so excited to hear their works and watch them engage with each other and this year’s featured authors. We are always in need of additional volunteers and would love for you all to join us as group leaders, assistants, author escorts, registration assistants, and all-around helpers. It’s an exciting day for us all, and we look forward to celebrating the writing of children and teens every year.

Stay warm and enjoy the sunshine.  
Melanie Koss

# Join us at the Young Authors' Conference May 15th at Illinois State University

## Registration Information online at

[isbe.state.il.us/](http://isbe.state.il.us/) - Enter "Young Authors Conference 2010" in Search (Top line might say 2009, but 2010 Guidelines are there)

or

[http://isbe.state.il.us/curriculum/html/young\\_author.htm](http://isbe.state.il.us/curriculum/html/young_author.htm)

or

[www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org) - Information on Home Page - with links to ISBE

## Registration Deadline: April 5th

Late registration - \$40 On site - \$50



## Volunteers Still Needed and Appreciated:

This conference is only possible with the help of many adult volunteers who lead or assist small groups, escort authors, or perform other necessary tasks throughout the day. We welcome your participation! CPDU's available.

Please contact Christina Podraza at [cpodraza@lisle202.org](mailto:cpodraza@lisle202.org)

## Special Invitation

As a special thank you, all volunteers are invited to meet the authors at a wine and cheese reception/book-signing Friday night, May 14th, at 7:00 p.m.

## Meet the Authors - Young Authors' Conference

### Grade K-2

**Carolyn Crimi** received her MFA in Writing for Children from Vermont College in 2000. Her publishing credits include **Outside, Inside** (Simon & Schuster, 1995), **Don't Need Friends** (Random House, 1999), **Tessa's Tip-Tapping Toes** (Orchard Books, 2002), **Get Busy, Beaver!** (Orchard Books, 2004), **Boris and Bella** (Harcourt, 2004), **Henry and the Buccaneer Bunnies** (Candlewick, 2005), **The Louds Move In!** (Marshall Cavendish, 2006), **Where's My Mummy?** (Candlewick, 2008), **Henry and the Crazy Chicken Pirates** (Candlewick, 2009), **Rock and Roll Mole** (Dial, 2011), **Dear Tabby** (Harpercollins, 2011), **Pugs in a Bug** (Dial, 2011), and **Principal Fred Won't Go To Bed!** (Marshall Cavendish, 2010). When she's not writing, Carolyn enjoys giving Author Talks to elementary schools all over the country. For more information, visit her website, [www.carolyncrimi.com](http://www.carolyncrimi.com).

**Larry Day** is an illustrator who most recently illustrated **Nanook & Pryce**, by Ned Crowley. You can see the animated short movie at [nanookandpryce.com](http://nanookandpryce.com). Larry received the 2006 Society Of Children's Book Writer's prestigious *Golden Kite* award for **Not Afraid of Dogs** by Susanna Pitzer. Also out this year is **Bye-Bye, Baby**, by Richard Morris, Walker books. He is also the illustrator of **Duel! Hamilton and Burr's Deadly War Of Words** by Dennis Fradin, a Junior Library Guild selection (Walker Books), **Colonial Voices, Hear Them Speak**, by Kay Winters and **George Did It!**, by Suzanne Trip Jurmain, a Monarch Award finalist. Learn more about him at [www.dayhere.com](http://www.dayhere.com)



### Grades 3-4

**Andrea Beaty's** new title, **Attack of the Fluffy Bunnies**, might be considered by some as the next great American novel. Well, some. But probably not many. However, it WILL be considered a laugh riot by 3rd-5th graders with an interest in killer alien rabbits set on conquering the Earth. Illustrated by Dan Santat. Andrea's other books include: **Iggy Peck, Architect**, **Doctor Ted**, **Firefighter Ted** and the mid-grade novel, **Cicada Summer**. Visit her at [www.AndreaBeaty.com](http://www.AndreaBeaty.com). Andrea is one of the Three Silly Chicks and reviews funny kids' books with authors Julia Durango and Carolyn Crimi at [www.ThreeSillyChicks.com](http://www.ThreeSillyChicks.com)

**Beverly Patt** writes from her suburban Chicago home, which she shares with her high school sweetheart husband, four wonderful kids and faithful dog, Hally. Before becoming a writer, Bev worked as a Waitress, Licorice Inspector, Sick-Bird Catcher, Family Counselor and Special Education teacher. Her first novel, **Haven**, tests one boy's limit of what he will do for his own ATV (All Terrain Vehicle). And her just-released, **Best Friends Forever: A WW II Scrapbook** tells of a friendship that even war and Japanese internment camps can't destroy. Bev enjoys giving high-energy school visits - read about her "One Book, One School" Author Visit promotion at [www.beverlypatt.com](http://www.beverlypatt.com).

Chicagoan **Esther Hershenhorn** spends her days doing what she loves and loving what she does: writing picture books and middle-grade fiction, teaching Writing for Children, facilitating Teacher Writing Workshops and coaching writers of all ages.

Esther's latest book **S is for Story: A Writer's Alphabet** provides an A-to-Z journey through a writer's life and process.

A former fifth-grade teacher, Esther teaches at the University of Chicago's Writer's Studio and Chicago's Newberry Library. She serves on the Board of Advisors of The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, an international organization advocating children's book creators. She blogs at [www.TeachingAuthors.com](http://www.TeachingAuthors.com)

## Meet the Authors, cont.

### Grades 5-6

**Julia Durango** is the author of picture books, novels, and poetry for kids of all ages. Julia's picture book titles include: **Angels Watching Over Me**; **Cha-Cha Chimps**; **Go-Go Gorillas**; **Pest Fest**; and **Yum Yuck! A Foldout Book of People Sounds**. Her historical fiction novel, **The Walls of Cartagena**, was named a Sydney Taylor Notable Book for 2009. Her recent adventure novel, **Sea of the Dead**, was awarded a Parents' Choice silver medal, and is the winner of the prestigious Golden Kite Award. Julia lives with her family in Ottawa, where she works as an elementary school librarian. You can read more about her at [www.JuliaDurango.com](http://www.JuliaDurango.com) or [ThreeSillyChicks.com](http://ThreeSillyChicks.com).

**Marianne Malone** was born and raised in the Chicago area, spending many hours in the Art Institute. The Thorne rooms were a particular favorite and she tried hard to recreate a bit of the magic in her own humble dollhouse.

She attended the University of Illinois, majoring in Art History with a minor in Metals, working in the jewelry design business after graduating. She took a hiatus from professional work to raise her three children. In 1994, with another neighborhood mother, she co-founded the Campus Middle School for Girls, in Urbana Illinois and taught Art in the school for 11 years. She now writes full-time. **The Sixty-Eight Rooms** is her first novel.

**Cynthia Liu** is author of **Paris Pan Takes the Dare** (Putnam), a humorous mystery novel for grades 4-7. **The Great Call of China** (grades 7-12) is part of Speak's bestselling S.A.S.S. series. Her forthcoming YA novel **What I Didn't Tell You** (Putnam) will be released in 2011. Based in Chicago, Cynthia has spoken to a number of schools in Illinois and across the country. She is also a frequent guest author for national and regional conferences organized by ALA, AASL, ALSC, IRC, and ISLMA, among others. To learn more about Cynthia, visit [www.cyntheliu.com](http://www.cyntheliu.com).

### Grades 7-8

**Kat Falls** was inspired to write her debut novel **Dark Life** by her 12-year-old son who loved reading about the ocean, Wild West pioneers, and (of course) the X-men. Kat combined his interests and created the premise for a story that kept her up nights plotting and world-building.

Kat grew up in Silver Spring, Maryland and attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute as an undergrad and went on to receive an MFA in screenwriting from Northwestern University. She now lives with her husband and three children in Evanston, Illinois, where she teaches screenwriting at Northwestern University, and is currently working on the sequel to **Dark Life**.

**Penny Blubaugh** graduated with an MFA in Writing for Children from Vermont College. She studied with Chris Lynch and Ron Koertge. She has been writing on and off, since age 12. In the off times she had been a grocery store clerk, a flight instructor, and a young adult librarian. Her first YA novel, **Serendipity Market**, is a retelling of fairy tales set in an off kilter world that gets back on track through the power of story. It received a starred review from Kirkus and was chosen as an end-of-year Kirkus Best Book for Young Adults. It was also nominated for the National Book Award and a Cybil. Her second book, **Blood and Flowers**, a story of renegade puppeteers who flee to Faerie, will be out in spring 2011.



## Meet the Authors, cont.

### Storytellers

#### Grades K-2

**Dan Keding**, storyteller of international acclaim, is well known for his telling of traditional world folktales, personal narratives of his boyhood in Chicago, ghost stories and dark tales, and superbly crafted original pieces. As a child he learned the traditional stories that his grandmother brought to this country from Croatia. A well-respected ballad singer, he accompanies himself on guitar, banjo and spoons. This combination of dynamic storytelling and powerful ballad singing has made him a festival and concert favorite throughout the US, Great Britain and Ireland, endearing him to audiences of all ages.

#### Grades 3-4

**Kim Sheahan** has been a central Illinois educator since 1991, incorporating oral traditions into her multicultural programs at the University of Illinois' Spurlock Museum. She added freelance storytelling about ten years later and historical programs in 2009, performing at storytelling festivals, school assemblies, city-wide celebrations, personal parties, and gatherings of all kinds throughout Illinois. Her enthusiasm is both unmistakable and contagious.

#### Parent Speaker

**Ilene Cooper** is the award-winning author of more than 30 books for young people. She writes both fiction and non fiction in a variety of genres—picture books, easy readers, biography, and history. Her readers range from preschoolers to high schoolers. In 2007, the Illinois Reading Council named Ilene Cooper the Prairie State Award winner for Excellence in Writing for Children. A former librarian, Ilene is currently the Children's Books Editor at Booklist Magazine, the review journal of the American Library Association, where she sees the more than 4,000 children's books published each year. A popular speaker at Ilene, for many years, was a consultant to ABC's After School Specials and has written for magazines, the *New York Times* as well as for television. March 7, 2010

***"Open up your mind. Let your fantasies unwind."*** Phantom of the Opera, Andrew Lloyd Weber, Tim Rice

## Encouraging Family Involvement

**SPRING INTO FITNESS!** The Olympics are over and spring training for baseball, track and field, and soccer begins. Now is the time to encourage your students and families to start or continue strengthening their family's physical health through fantastic biographical literature.

Students and their families will choose a biography of an athlete to read together. Presentations will be done at a Friday Family Fitness Day. Family members will demonstrate the physical training activities involved in the athlete's sport dressed as their athlete and give the usual biographical information. If a family member isn't able to attend, they could tape their presentation or take photographs of their family's physical training for the athlete they read about, and the child could present the biographical information alone.

Everyone could bring in healthy lunches and snacks, and you could have an outdoor picnic with an indoor alternate depending on the weather. A Friday Family Fitness Day could do much to spur a sense of a healthy, book-reading community!

Remember it is important to include families in the educational triangle of child, parent and teacher.

Gina Teresa Orazi

## Even Middle Schoolers Can Learn to Love Writing

Suggestions from a power point presentation by Carole Pelttari, ILLC Past President

### FIVE KEYS TO MOTIVATION

#### 1. RECOGNIZE OBSTACLES

Writing is hard work. Fears abound because self will be revealed, mistakes will be made, and someone may reject my writing.

#### 2. PROVIDE AUTHENTIC PURPOSE

“No one writes for no one to read.” Mem Fox

Students need to have a reason to write. For example, students could write to pen pals or write poetry for a greeting card, or a topic such as persuade your parents to \_\_\_\_\_, students will fill in their choice.

#### 3. ALLOW CHOICE OF TOPIC

Students pick their own topic.

#### 4. PROVIDE AND DEVELOP ACCEPTING AUDIENCE

Boys think and write differently than girls.

Respect the person behind the writing.

Train students to respect peers' writing.

Can point out errors if praise is liberal.

#### 5. PROVIDE PROPER TOOLS

TOOL 1 “Write what you know.”

Use as a great opportunity to collaborate with content area teachers.

Reading, writing and LIFE are connected.

TOOL 2 Grammar Instruction

Teach in context

Expect increase in mistakes at first

TOOL 3 Common Language (as used in the 6 Traits plus 1, [www.thetraits.org](http://www.thetraits.org))

Focus on ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, concentration, and presentation. These are simply the basic parts of the writing process.

TOOL 4 Word Play

Five minutes whole class brainstorm of synonyms of overused words

Paraphrase a peer's sentence or paragraph

Word collections

Encourage students to use these products

## ILLC GOING GREEN

Our newsletter will be accessible online beginning with the Fall 2010 issue. We don't want anyone to miss an issue, so please make sure that ILLC has your current E-mail address. If for some reason you are not able to receive the newsletter via the internet, please contact our representative. Requests for a mailed newsletter and updated E-mail addresses should be sent to Gina Orazi at [gto215@yahoo.com](mailto:gto215@yahoo.com) .

## ILLC Board and Committee Members 2009-2010



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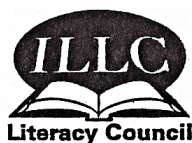
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Newsletter Editors: Heather Van Meenen,  
Gina Orazi, Ruth Stevig

**Next Board Meeting -  
Monday, June 28  
11:00. - 1:00  
Lou Malnati's, Naperville  
Check with Secretary for updated information**

# Illinois Language & Literacy Council

“Proud sponsor of the Young Authors’ Conference”

c/o Heather Van Meenen  
1 Patriot Court  
Cary, IL 60013



## ILLC Welcomes New Members!

If you have a friend or colleague who might be interested in joining ILLC, encourage them to join IRC and ILLC. Once they’ve joined, please notify Membership Chair, Ruth Stevig, at [stevig@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stevig@sbcglobal.net). Include your name and their name. We will enter you in a drawing for a free renewal of your IRC/ILLC membership. The drawing will be held at our next meeting.

You can join IRC and ILLC online by going to [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org) or you can print a copy of the membership form. Be sure to check ILLC as one of your council choices!

To read is to empower  
To empower is to write  
To write is to influence  
To influence is to change  
To change is to live  
-Jane Evershed