



**IRC**  
ILLINOIS  
READING  
COUNCIL

# Communicator

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Spring is finally here! The very successful IRC Conference *Literacy Outside the Box* opened the spring season for all IRC attendees. What a fun and exciting program! Congratulations to Cindy Wilson for planning such a magnificent conference. Cindy's conference vision inspired nearly 3,000 attendees with fabulous authors and remarkable educational professionals who shared their passions for literacy. So many of us returned to the classroom refreshed with new ideas and strategies. Conference is also a time for all of us to meet with a common interest, to renew friendships, and focus on the educational issues that confront us all during our school year. Once again IRC has proven that our conference is one of the best conferences in the nation because of the dedication and initiative of those hundreds of volunteers who make the "great plan" come together for three energy-packed days.



**IRC  
President  
Susan Cisna**

If you have not yet become an active participant in IRC, I urge you to become involved in your local council activities. There are so many opportunities available to you. When you think you do not have time, consider Margaret Thatcher's words:

*Look at a day when you are supremely satisfied at the end.  
It's not a day when you lounge around doing nothing,  
It's when you had everything to do and you've done it.*

I know how busy we all are; however, so many IRC jobs require very little time, but are so incredibly rewarding. These IRC jobs promote what we as educators hold dearest. What you do in your local council will impact teachers and children in Illinois for years to come. Your local councils are the basis of IRC because they provide the foundation upon which IRC lives and works. Local councils offer workshops, programs, and support to teachers, children and community members in your immediate area. Seek them out and become an active part of this great organization!

And now, as I come to the end of my year as IRC President, I cannot help but reflect on the past few years I have spent serving this remarkable organization. So many times I have been asked, "Why do you do this?" My first reaction to

*Continued on page 3*



**Plan now to attend the  
2012 IRC Conference  
March 15-17, 2012**



**IRA**  
**State Coordinator**  
*Roberta Sejnost*

*“The task of leadership is not to put greatness into people, but to elicit it, for the greatness is there already.”*

John Buchan

To begin this issue of the Coordinator’s column, I chose the above quote because it

so captures the essence of IRC; greatness is alive and well among us! Every council I visited, every event I attended, every person I met and spoke with was alive with greatness. One only needed to attend the conference in March to see this greatness in detail with so many IRC members and councils the recipients of awards. As IRA State Coordinator, it was a special treat to award a record number, 20 in total, Council of Excellence Awards. This award, similar to IRA’s Honor Council Award is given to those councils who exhibit service in a variety of ways across the year, and in addition to their certificates, each council receives a \$100 check. This year’s winners are:

- Blackhawk Reading Council
  - Chicago Area Reading Association (CARA)
  - College Instructors of Reading Professionals (CIRP)
  - East Central-EIU Reading Council
  - Fox Valley Reading Council
  - Illini Reading Council
  - Illinois Title I Association (ITA)
  - Illinois Valley Reading Council
  - Lewis and Clark Reading Council
  - Mississippi Valley Reading Council
  - Northern Illinois Reading Council
  - Northwestern Illinois Reading Council
  - Prairie Area Reading Council
  - South Eastern Reading Council
  - Secondary Reading League (SRL)
  - Starved Rock Reading Council
  - Two Rivers Reading Council
  - Vermilion Valley Reading Council
  - Western Illinois Reading Council
  - West Suburban Reading Council
- Congratulations to these councils. In addition to this

wonderful honor, some of our councils were also awarded Honor Council status by IRA. These councils are:

- Chicago Area Reading Association (CARA)
- Lewis and Clark Reading Council
- Prairie Area Reading Council
- Illinois Title I Association

And, we are not done: our Illinois Reading Council itself was awarded IRA’s Award of Excellence. We are, indeed, a collection of great councils!

Now we need to keep this greatness growing. By the time you receive this issue you will have elected your officers for 2011-2012. To assure that councils get off to a great start, be sure to register for our Annual Leadership Retreat to be held July 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> at Grand Bear Lodge.

Registration forms are available on the IRC website. Local Council Officers, State Committee Chairs, Regional Directors, and Executive Officers are all invited to attend this comprehensive training and team-building workshop developed to provide councils with everything they need to have a successful, productive year. There will be breakout sessions for each office; training on developing programs,

*“...greatness is alive and well among us! Every council I visited, every event I attended, every person I spoke with was alive with greatness.”*

membership drives, available grants, council awards, Council of Excellence, Honor Council and much, much more. And, as at last year’s retreat, you will be given lots of time to meet with your council as well as other councils to plan, plan, and plan! Finally, councils with five or more officers in attendance will receive a villa for just their council. And this year we have a special treat in our keynote speaker, Gary Moore. Gary is the author of the critically acclaimed book, *Playing with the Enemy*, which is soon to be a movie, as well as *Hey Buddy*, the story of Buddy Holly. In addition, he is also a contributing author for *Chicken Soup for the Father and Son Soul*. Having heard Gary speak, I am confident you will come away from his message energized and ready to build a strong council.

Have a marvelous end of the year; see you at Leadership! And, as always, thanks for all you do for IRC, your local councils and the children of Illinois.

Yours,  
*Bobbie Sejnost*

*President's Message continued from page 1*

this question is one of bewilderment! Why would I **not** be involved in this organization? I have come to believe that many people do not remotely understand the commitment, dedication, and service that the members of the Illinois Reading Council have. I have been truly blessed to meet so many fantastic members who are dedicated to improving literacy in the state of Illinois. I am in awe of the countless hours that so many of you give without pay or recognition in order to improve reading in our state. I am honored to be able to be a part of this organization and to call so many of you good friends. For many of us, our only reward is our own satisfaction that we are making a difference in this world in which we live. "Why do I do this?" I BELIEVE in US! I BELIEVE we are the best promoters of literacy in Illinois. I BELIEVE we are innovative leaders in the field of education. I BELIEVE we CAN and DO make a difference! ...AND I BELIEVE I have been truly blessed to be a part of this great organization!

Keep your Literacy Lighthouses Burning!

*Susan*

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



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and join us on Facebook!

## 2012 IRC Conference LITERACY IN THE LAND OF LINCOLN March 15-17, 2012

Featuring outstanding literacy leaders and award-winning authors who will help you explore literacy including:

**William G. Brozo**  
**Nick Bruel**  
**Kristin Brynteson**  
**Michael Buchanan**  
**Debbi Chocolate**  
**Sarah Cohen**  
**Peter Fisher**  
**Candace Fleming**  
**Jack Gantos**  
**Sally Hampton**  
**Laurie A. Henry**  
**Jacqueline Kelly**  
**Diane Lang**  
**Patricia MacLachlan**  
**Liz Nealon**  
**Maria Nichols**

**Donna Ogle**  
**Meg Ormiston**  
**Gary Paulsen**  
**Ruth E. Quiroa**  
**Anne Grall Reichel**  
**Victoria Risko**  
**Rhonda S. Robinson**  
**Seymour Simon**  
**Kristina Springer**  
**Terry Thompson**  
**Cris Tovani**  
**Katie Van Sluys**  
**Sally M. Walker**  
**Sonya L. Whitaker**  
**Katie Wood Ray**  
**And More to Come!**



Housing and Registration will be available in the Preliminary Program in October 2011!

## Fourth Senate Forum on Intergenerational Leadership

*By Larry Pennie, IRC Strategic Planning Committee Chair*

On a beautiful spring day, April 5, 2011, nine members of the Illinois Reading Council traveled to the Capital Building in Springfield to take part in “The Fourth Senate Forum on Intergenerational Leadership.” There they joined about 40 other men and women from across the state to discuss the role of different generations in relation to reading education from preschool through grade three. Those attending were Susan Cisna, Cindy Wilson, Larry Pennie, Mike Ellerman, Helen Bryant, Kathy Merz, Tracy Tarasiuk, April Flood and Ingrid McCallister.

The Forum was held in the Illinois Senate Chambers which is an awesome working environment. Rows of rolled-top desks and heavily padded chairs dominated the room. The Sergeant-at-Arms, a retired Marine, gave us all instructions on how to show respect to the surroundings. Men were required to wear ties and jackets (Mike was given a tie and jacket since he didn’t have either). Helen sat at the desk that President Barack Obama used when he was a Senator from Illinois.

A variety of speakers presented views of aging, education and leadership throughout the day along with a series of breakout sessions focusing on questions that had been sent to each participant. Among the speakers was our own IRC President, Susan Cisna. She did a wonderful job of explaining the role of IRC in the State of Illinois. She also presented information about reading in the state and how IRC is assisting teachers and schools in

keeping up with current research and innovations within the state and around the world.

The breakout sessions were divided in two ways. One of the sessions was based on age while the other mixed the age groups. The morning session was made up of six groups based on age: 2 Generation Y (born 1981-2000), 1 Generation X (born 1965-1980), 2 Boomers (born 1946-1964) and 1 Veterans (born 1922-1945). The questions that were discussed by each group focused on cultural values including leadership, communication, historical events and emotions. The results were then shared and it was noted that there were many similarities between generations on values even though the specific answers differed. The afternoon session used mixed generations for questions dealing with how intergenerational groups can support reading in communities, discussion of what reading programs exist in our communities and what organizations support those programs. Mike and Larry were selected as group leaders for two of the afternoon groups.

The final activities for the day were a talk from Senator Ed Maloney, Chair of the Higher Education Committee of the Senate followed by a discussion of a “Resolution on Intergenerational Leadership” that was to be read on the Senate floor and entered into the minutes. The day ended with a thank you from the coordinator of the event, Jane Angelis, Director, Intergenerational Initiative Center for Health Law and Policy, SIU School of Law, Carbondale.



**Pictured: Susan Cisna, IRC President, speaking at the Fourth Senate Forum on Intergenerational Leadership.**



**Pictured: Helen Bryant, IRC Legislative Committee Co-Chair, sitting in the former Senate seat of Barack Obama.**

## Adult and Family Awards

By Pam Ciwan and Sue Sokolinski,  
IRC Adult & Family Literacy Committee Co-Chairs

It is an honor to announce the recipients of the 2011 Adult & Family Literacy Grant Awards and the winner of the Adult and Family Literacy Project Award.

In 2009, Ladka Khailova developed “*Off to a Good Start*,” a family literacy project aimed at promoting emergent literacy in the homes of Hispanic families. The project was funded in part by an IRC Adult & Family Literacy grant award. “*Starting Ahead, Staying Ahead; Developing Hispanic Children’s Early Literacy Skills Through Continuous Parental Home Involvement*” is an expansion of Ladka’s original program. This year Hispanic parents with children from birth through age 5 will be taught how to use materials and strategies to promote emergent reading development in their homes. A goal of the program is to increase the participating parents’ abilities to independently and confidently engage in reading activities with their children.

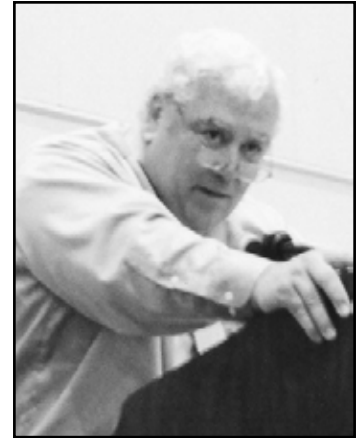
The goal of Suzanne Evans’s family literacy program, “*Increasing Parental Involvement in Reading Support for Children in Low Socio-Economic, Limited English Speaking Homes*” is to teach parents how to create a “literacy-friendly home environment.” An additional goal of the program is to increase parents’ confidence in their abilities to assist their children with homework. Books written in English, Spanish, as well as books that feature dual languages will be available for parents to take home to read with their children. Program workers will teach the parents strategies to use at home to promote their young children’s emergent reading development.

Congratulations to Kristen Stombres and Mary Gardner from the College Instructors of Reading Professionals (CIRP), the first recipients of the new Adult & Family Literacy Project Award, for their creative project entitled “*Trick or Treat—Give Me Something Good to Read*.” The project used a fall theme to promote the literacy of preschool through second-grade students by engaging them in a morning of reading, listening, dramatic play, art, and other hands-on activities using a variety of modalities. Parents enjoyed a morning of ideas and strategies designed to help their “reader” at home.

## 2011 Hall of Fame Award

By Chris Moen, IRC Past President

Lou Ferroli received the Illinois Reading Council’s 2011 Hall of Fame Award at the annual IRC Conference. Lou has been an untiring volunteer and IRC promoter since 1976, and his service to IRC is vast. Lou served as president of the West Suburban Reading Council (1981-1982) and also the College Instructors of Reading Professionals (2003-2004). Additionally, Lou served as IRC’s treasurer on two occasions (1997-1999 and 2007-2009) and served IRC as its corresponding secretary and newsletter editor (1996-1997 and 1999-2000). Lou also served as chair of various IRC committees including the Studies and Research Committee (1982-1983), By-Laws Committee (2000-2001), the Intellectual Freedom Committee (2006-2007). Currently, he is chair of the Barack Obama Fund, which awards classroom libraries to schools in different locations throughout Illinois.



Lou is a well-known presenter not only in Illinois but at national literacy conferences and has published in the *Journal of Reading Education* and the *Illinois Reading Council Journal*. Lou is most known for his “Cool Studies” column in the *Illinois Reading Council Communicator*—a column he has written for the past twelve years.

Congratulations to Lou Ferroli!

Nominations for the 2012 IRC Hall of Fame Award are due November 1, 2011.

To find out how you can nominate individuals from your area for IRC Awards, please visit the IRC Website at [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org).

## Meet Two IRC Researchers

By Judith A. Barbour

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 Pam Godt:** Pamela Godt has been a professor of reading at Western Illinois University for the past 18 years. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in reading literacy and leadership. Before coming to WIU she worked with the U.S. Department of Education as the Director of the Technical Assistance Center for Chapter I/Title I Programs. Her work consisted of teaching reading improvement in nine states from Indiana to the East Coast, including Appalachia as well as large cities such as Detroit, Chicago, and Washington D.C.

**Pam's Project:** Pam's latest research is entitled "Literacy Leaders in Illinois Rate What's Most Important and Least Important in the Field of Reading Education Today." Stemming from "What's Hot/What's Not," the annual survey of 25 literacy leaders published in *Reading Today*, Pam's survey aimed to find out what our local leaders in Illinois thought about some of these same topics. However, Pam chose to focus on what Illinois reading educators felt was the "Most Important" and "Least Important."

The survey appeared in the summer 2010 issue of the *Illinois Reading Council Journal*. It was also administered to 92 officers of local IRC chapters who attended the 2010 IRC Summer Leadership Retreat, as well as to 32 graduate students in reading classes at two Illinois universities. Respondents were asked to rank reading topics from "most important" to "least important." A total of 161 responses were received. All of the survey groups had remarkably similar responses.

**Pam's Findings:** When combining the topics listed as "most important" and "important," the highest scores were given to *Comprehension, Writing, Motivation/Engagement, Informational/Nonfiction Texts,* and *Early Intervention*. The topics that were listed as the "least important" were *High Stakes Assessment, Political/Policy Influences on Literacy, New Illiteracies/Digital Illiteracies* (typo for the intended word "literacies") *Adult Literacy,* and *ESL/ELL*.

Compared to the "What's Hot/What's Not" survey findings

published in the *Reading Teacher*, there were several similarities, such as the high rating for both *Comprehension* and *Vocabulary*, but there were dissimilarities, too. The two items that received the most media attention according to experts in the field, *Response to Intervention (RtI)* and *Adolescent Literacy*, did not make the top five list for Illinois' literacy leaders.

Pam's article which appears in the spring 2011 issue of the *Illinois Reading Council Journal*, Vol. 39, No. 2, offers further details of her survey findings. Be sure to watch for future issues in which she plans to share interesting findings from the open-ended questions on the survey.

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

**Who Might Be Interested?** Teachers in general as well as reading specialists would be interested in seeing what Illinois colleagues feel is important in the field of reading instruction. University professors who prepare future reading teachers need to know what direction to point their students. And any literacy leader could benefit from knowing what Illinois educators deem as most or least important topics. For additional information Pam may be reached at [PT-Godt@wiu.edu](mailto:PT-Godt@wiu.edu).

**Meet Betsy Niemiec:** Elizabeth Niemiec, better known as Betsy, has been teaching in Bloomingdale, Illinois, District 13, for the past 21 years. She is a Reading Specialist for grades K-5 who has recently completed her doctoral work at National-Louis University. Along with teaching elementary students full time, Betsy serves as an adjunct faculty member at both the University of Illinois-Chicago Circle and at National-Louis University. The Beginning Reading and Reading Diagnostic courses she teaches are part of the Reading Specialist Certification program. She also supervises the students' practicum experience.

**Betsy's Project:** Betsy's research was entitled "Children's Developing Sense of Story from Kindergarten through Grade Two." Betsy worked with 40 of her elementary students in District 13 who were tested and considered to be in need of additional reading support.

Betsy's research was grounded in Vygotsky's theory of the

*Continued on page 7*

**Meet Two IRC Researchers continued from page 6**

importance of internalization of story elements as children grow to be readers. Since struggling readers are not good at comprehending stories, Betsy felt that helping them to internalize the characteristics of a story might help them become good storytellers themselves and therefore better at understanding stories presented to them. Betsy offered them not only many models of good stories but, more importantly, the freedom to experiment with stories themselves. For her project she used a tabletop sandbox, toy figures and other tactile and kinesthetic items which proved to be important elements in the process of helping students tell their own stories. Betsy formed a focus group of fellow teachers who listened to the stories of children, analyzed the transcripts, and prepared a rubric which she used over the course of a year for data collection and analysis. This rubric data was added to her personal observations and anecdotal records.

During the project, the focus was on helping the children develop storytelling techniques such as using past tense, following the beginning/middle/end structure, inserting phrases such as “once upon a time,” speaking to an audience, using time clues such as “then” and “before,” and multiple other storytelling strategies. It was by internalizing and applying all the essential characteristics of good storytelling that Betsy felt the children would come to be better storytellers and therefore to better comprehend the stories that they read or heard read to them.

**Betsy’s Findings:** This research showed that for some children it is really necessary to have the opportunity to experiment with stories. At the beginning of the study, many children, when asked to tell a story, would retell one from television or one they had heard before. By the end of the study, most children could tell a completely original story. The children also demonstrated gains in vocabulary, improved grammar, better comprehension of stories, and enhanced self-esteem.

**Who Might Be Interested?** Although this study might be too small to generalize to a larger population, Betsy’s findings certainly speak to a wider audience. Anyone working with K-2 students would be interested in seeing how something concrete, such as puppets and sandbox toys, can help struggling readers become storytellers themselves, and therefore better readers of stories. Educators interested in oral language skills and storytelling, as well as ELL teachers and pre-school teachers, would find Betsy’s work to be very informative. Betsy’s research was chosen by the International Reading Association as a finalist for their prestigious Dissertation of the Year Award. For more information, Betsy may be emailed at [eniemic@sd13.org](mailto:eniemic@sd13.org).

## IRC Publications

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

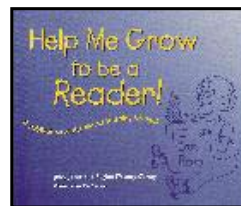
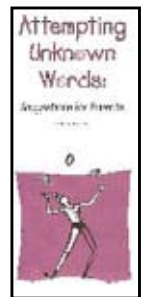


### Some ABC’s for Raising a Reader

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

### Attempting Unknown Words: Suggestions for Parents

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



### Help Me Grow To Be A Reader

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

### Reading Strategy Bookmark

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



## Homeless for Four Hours

By Stephanie Chaplinski and Roxanne Forgrave

As 17 pre-service teachers and one university professor loaded their cars at Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais, on Thursday morning at 7 am, they were so excited. Their first Illinois Reading Conference—three days away from the university—educational leniency from all university courses! There were so many questions—Will we meet many popular authors? What will we learn? Who will we get to know? These were some of the many questions we had while making the two-and-a-half hour trek to Springfield. That trip was actually fun! We slept, snacked, and visited, actually getting to know each other outside the classroom and becoming better friends.

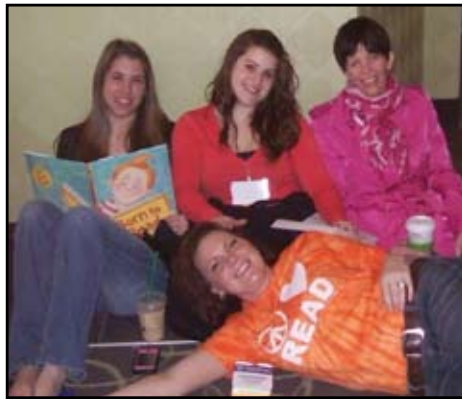
Two-and-a-half hours later we found ourselves parking in front of that big convention center and walking with a little more hop in our step. The sessions were a classroom atmosphere, but these were teachers telling us what it is like in their own classrooms. They informed us about how reading is taught in their own classes, right now. We learned many new strategies and ideas—from how to bring books into the classroom seamlessly to how we should use a word wall efficiently. We also met many of the vendors who will be supplying our future classrooms. They showed us the textbooks and let us play with the manipulatives. The books that we as teachers will be using and stacking on our own book shelves were there as well. The smell and feel of them was invigorating. We all were excited.

The convention and all of the seminars were wonderful, yet we did not know what was waiting for us later that Thursday at our hotel, or what we thought was our hotel. After attending many exciting seminars, we decided around 4 pm to go check into our hotel. Our fearless leader handed over her car keys to her new car and her credit card; we had no idea what was in store for us. As eleven of us drove north to the address given, to the hotel with three reserved rooms awaiting us, we still had smiles on our faces.

We arrived at the hotel at approximately 4:30 pm and were in a hurry as two of us had tickets to see an amazing author speak at 6 pm back at the Abraham Lincoln Hotel. As we

tried to check in, the desk attendant explained to us that we did not have three rooms reserved. This deflated our happiness very quickly. He scoured the registration list and only found one room. One bathroom, two beds, and 11 women would not be a good combination. As the gentleman at the desk looked for more rooms, we tried to stay calm, as well as calm our fearless leader over the phone. She was staying at another hotel with the other six students.

As visions of us sleeping in a box outside the convention center went through our heads, we were visited by two gentlemen who had a cooler. They also smelled of pungent sour barley. Oh, this was not good! We politely moved to the other side of the reception area. We did have another gentleman offer us his room, if he was given an upgrade to a Jacuzzi suite; the hotel obliged. This was a better situation, but still not ideal. Now we had four beds with two bathrooms for 11 girls. As the hotel desk attendant continued looking for our “reserved” rooms, we started calling our network of friends. Yes, we women can use our telephone abilities for good! One of the girls had connections in the hotel business, so she started dialing. As her phone started to smoke, we were told at the current hotel that we had one room



for one night and one room for two nights. Since we were staying for two nights this would not work either. We wanted to stay and hear Marc Brown on Saturday!

The two ladies who had tickets to see Robert Burleigh had now missed him speak as well as missed their dinner. But, while they continued looking for rooms, back in downtown Springfield, the fearless leader went to the Lincoln Banquet room and got the three missed meals as take-out, so the food could at least be enjoyed later.

By 7:00 pm the girl with the hotel connections found two more rooms on the other side of town, so we were set, we thought. We checked three of the girls into the current hotel’s one room and packed up the other eight girls. Cheers echoed all around and we left. One car stopped for food, and the other stopped at a local Wal-Mart for supplies. As

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*Homeless for Four Hours continued from page 8*

the car with the credit card drove quickly across town to check into the hotel before they changed their mind, little did they know, someone was left behind. The second car that went for food had stranded a passenger at Wal-Mart. That car only had three passengers in it, and one had requested to be picked up at the Wal-Mart after the others had bought their food. However, as sometimes we can use our phone abilities for good, the phone can also be evil. Others were talking on their phones and did not hear her tell them to pick her up. So, after they picked up their food, they drove straight to the hotel.

About thirty minutes later the first car arrived at the hotel, but they received a puzzling phone call from the lady at Wal-Mart. “You are lost at Wal-Mart?” was all the driver heard and her blood pressure rose quickly. Oh man, not again! The second car was quickly called and told of the problem. They were pulling into the new hotel at that same moment. They quickly decided to check in before the rooms disappeared, as they had before.

The keys to the rooms were in hand; the keeper of the credit card ran into the parking lot laughing and crying at the same time. All the while she was yelling at the rest of the group to grab their bags and place them on their beds before the hotel changed their minds! This sent out hysterics through the group. While running, we realized that our friend was still at Wal-Mart across town. We also realized that the 8:30 pm Author Reading Event was about to begin.

The second car was assigned the duty of going to Wal-Mart to pick up our friend, the “newly hired Wal-Mart greeter;” the rest loaded up to go to the Author Event. Meanwhile we had forgotten to call our fearless leader and break the news to her that we lost someone. As we dialed the phone, the keeper of the credit card was assigned the duty of breaking the news. Silence descended upon the car, and the phone rang. “Hello, how is everything going? Do you have rooms now?” “Uh, yes we do and we have our luggage on the beds, but uh, we lost Sharon; she was left at Wal-Mart.” First there was silence, and then a burst of laughter rang out from the other end of the phone. That was all we needed to start laughing again. We arrived in time to hear the authors, get autographs, and meet many great teachers.

So far, in 12 hours time, we had driven 2½ hours, attended amazing workshops, stood in line for some author autographs, been homeless for about four hours, worried we may have to live in a box for two nights, and left one of our friends at Wal-Mart, but it was all definitely worth it. What would Friday and Saturday bring?

As our first conference night ended at 11:30 pm, we all walked to our cars; someone looked at the date—Thursday, March 17. We decided that since it was St. Patrick’s Day, maybe Leprechauns are real. That night the keeper of the credit card had two distinct nightmares—being pulled from their hotel rooms because the attendant had made a mistake and wondering who would be lost the next day!

Now that we have arrived home safely and processed our experience, the question is—Should we make plans to attend the Reading Conference again next year? The answer is a resounding “YES!” Last year one student from Olivet attended the conference. She returned and shared her experiences; this year we had 17 students attend. Who knows how many we’ll have attend next year!

*“What did they learn?  
Foldables, heart  
mapping, graphic  
novels, new books, and  
strategies for boys.”*

During the conference the ONU students were texting their friends reporting on their activities and generating interest. Since returning home the students have shared their experiences in various teaching methods classes. Several students

have plans to implement strategies they learned at the conference in their teaching field experiences in the upcoming weeks. What did they learn? Foldables, heart mapping, graphic novels, new books, and strategies for boys. What did they attend? Everything! Sessions, banquets, Preservice Pizza Party, author readings & autographing, poetry reading, and the evening Literacy event.

During a “conference debriefing” session with the conference attendees, the consensus was to return, but go on Wednesday night so that they could attend the very first session on Thursday morning—they didn’t want to miss anything. Also, they are already brainstorming some ideas for presentations that they could give. Thank you to all who presented and provided such interesting sessions to help our pre-service teachers experience a real conference, preparing them more for the real world of teaching.

# 2012 PROGRAM PROPOSAL

## Illinois Reading Council Conference

March 15-17, 2012



### PROGRAM FORMAT

Proposals may be submitted for small group sessions.

- SMALL GROUP SESSIONS will be scheduled for 60 minutes. Presenters desiring more time may request a double session.

### CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

- Proposals that emphasize interaction across disciplines, interaction across roles, new issues or topics, innovative or novel ways of viewing traditional issues, topics, materials or methods and evidence of familiarity with current practice and/or research will be given priority.
- Proposals that promote commercial materials or programs will not be accepted.
- Proposals that contribute to the achievement of an overall program balance in the range of topics, the grade levels covered, and the professional and geographic distribution of the participants will be given priority.
- Proposals must be typed, legible, and complete. The Program Committee reserves the right to disqualify incomplete or late proposals.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- Teachers, researchers, librarians, administrators, and others interested in promoting reading and related literacy areas are encouraged to submit program proposals.
- As a professional, nonprofit organization, the Illinois Reading Council is unable to provide honoraria to program participants nor to reimburse for materials, travel, meals or hotel expenses.
- All presenters whose program proposals have been approved must pre-register and pay conference fees no later than the last day designated for pre-registration (February 1, 2012). If not, name and presentation may be removed from the final 2012 Conference program due to printing deadlines.
- The person submitting the proposal must receive advance consent from each listed presentation associate.
- **Only an overhead projector and screen will be provided.** All other audio-visual equipment is the responsibility of the presenter(s). LCD Projectors are not provided.
- Proposals must be submitted online at [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org) or postmarked **no later than September 1, 2011**. Each person submitting a proposal will be sent an acknowledgment by email when the proposal is received. Future correspondence will also be sent by email.
- All applicants will be notified of the Program Committee's decisions by December 1, 2011. It is the responsibility of the person submitting the proposal to relay the committee's decision to each presentation associate listed on the program.

**Individuals seeking conference information should contact:**

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

**Phone: 309-454-1341  
Toll Free: 888-454-1341  
Fax: 309-454-3512**

**Email: [irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org](mailto:irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org)  
Web: [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org)  
Ning: [illinoisreadingcouncil.ning.com](http://illinoisreadingcouncil.ning.com)**

**Submit Program Proposals Online at [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org)!**

# 2012 PROGRAM PROPOSAL

## Illinois Reading Council Conference

### March 15-17, 2012



Please type or print all information.

#### I. PERSON SUBMITTING PROPOSAL

Name(Last) \_\_\_\_\_ (First) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Telephone: Work \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_\_\_

Position and/or Title \_\_\_\_\_

School/District/Professional Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ALL NOTIFICATIONS WILL BE SENT BY EMAIL!**

#### II. PRESENTATION ASSOCIATES

Please list the names, complete addresses (including zip code), telephone numbers, and institutional affiliations and addresses of the presentation associates. Please secure advance permission from each individual. A separate sheet with this information may be attached.

Name(Last) \_\_\_\_\_ (First) \_\_\_\_\_

School/District/Professional Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name(Last) \_\_\_\_\_ (First) \_\_\_\_\_

School/District/Professional Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

#### III. STRAND NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

All proposals should relate to one of the strands below:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Literacy Skills (fluency, word identification, comprehension, vocabulary) - ISBE Standard 1</li> <li>2. Literature Studies - ISBE Standard 2</li> <li>3. Extending Literacy through Speaking and Listening - ISBE Standard 4</li> <li>4. Extending Literacy through Writing - ISBE Standards 3 and 5</li> <li>5. Technology in the Classroom</li> <li>6. Diversity (multicultural, multiple intelligences, gender issues, ESL, gifted, at-risk)</li> <li>7. Coordinating/Administering a Reading Program</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Adult Literacy</li> <li>9. Literacy Initiatives (inclusion, teaming, literacy coaching, RtI)</li> <li>10. Research-Based Practice</li> <li>11. Standards, Assessment, and Evaluation</li> <li>12. Early Childhood and Emergent Literacy</li> <li>13. Literacy Across the Curriculum</li> <li>14. Administration</li> <li>15. Title I</li> <li>16. Family Literacy</li> <li>17. Library Information Skills Curriculum</li> <li>18. Visual and Critical Literacy</li> </ol> |
|---|---|

**IV. SESSION LENGTH: Sessions will be 60 minutes in length.**

Presenters desiring more time may request a double session.

**V. INTENDED AUDIENCE** (Check each category that applies.)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educators of Pre-Schoolers (PreK-K)            | <input type="checkbox"/> Educators of Special Needs Students       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educators of Primary Students (K-3)            | <input type="checkbox"/> Educators of Adults                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educators of Intermediate Students (4-6)       | <input type="checkbox"/> University Professors/Adjunct Instructors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educators of Middle/Junior High Students (6-9) | <input type="checkbox"/> Administrators                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educators of High School Students (9-12)       | <input type="checkbox"/> Librarians                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educators of English Language Learners         | <input type="checkbox"/> All                                       |

**VI. SPONSORSHIP:** If a conference exhibitor is sponsoring the presentation, please indicate the name of the company. **Please remember that all sponsored presenter(s) must be registered through the exhibitor registration packet and that your session may not promote specific products or packaged programs.**

**VII. AUDIO VISUAL EQUIPMENT:** Overhead projectors and screens are the only audio visual equipment available to presenters. Other equipment must be supplied by the presenter. LCD Projectors are not provided.

**VIII. TITLE OF PRESENTATION** (as you wish it to appear in the program book; please be succinct)

**IX. ABSTRACT**

Describe the content of the program in 20-35 words. **The abstract must be clearly stated and reflect the actual presentation.**

*In accordance with IRA and IRC policy, program participants will not be reimbursed for any expenses by the Illinois Reading Council. I understand that presenters must pre-register for the conference by February 1, 2012. If not, names and presentation may be removed from the final IRC conference program due to printing deadlines. I also understand that only an overhead projector and screen will be provided and that the printing of handouts is the responsibility of the presenters.*

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person Submitting Proposal

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Proposals may be submitted online at [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org) or mail **one** copy of completed proposal postmarked **no later than September 1, 2011** to:

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

To help prevent scheduling conflicts, please identify all presenters listed in this proposal who are also included in other proposals.

Name	Person Submitting Other Proposal
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

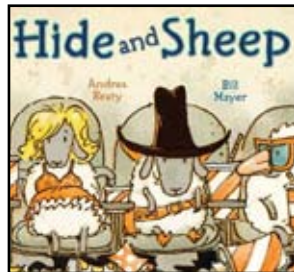


Welcome to the “*Illinois Authors’ Corner*,” showcasing new releases from our fabulous Illinois Authors and IRC members. If you’d like to include your new release, please visit the IRC website to find out how to submit information.

***Hide and Sheep***

Written by Andrea Beaty [www.AndreaBeaty.com](http://www.AndreaBeaty.com)  
 Illustrated by Bill Mayer  
 McElderry Books May 2011  
 Category: Picture Book Ages: 3-8

*Hide and Sheep* is a humorous counting book by Andrea Beaty, author of *Iggy Peck, Architect* and *Firefighter Ted*. In this rhyming read-aloud, Farmer McFitt must round up his escaped sheep—which are hiding everywhere from the circus to the library. Farmer McFitt must seek his silly sheep at the beach, the zoo, the library and all around town.



***The Rough-Riding Adventure of Bronco Charlie, Pony Express Rider***

Written by Marlene Targ Brill [www.marlenetargbrill.com](http://www.marlenetargbrill.com)  
 Adapted by Amanda Doering Tourville  
 Illustrated by Zachary Trover  
 Graphic Universe April 2011  
 Category: Graphic Novel Ages: 8-12

Charlie Miller, or Bronco Charlie, learned to tame wild horses when he was only ten. But his real dream was to deliver mail on horseback for the Pony Express. This is the true story of how Bronco Charlie became the youngest Pony Express rider in 1861. The story, which is a graphic novel, also called comic book, is an update of my original award-winning *Bronco Charlie and the Pony Express*.



***Deltas***

Written by Kimberly M. Hutmacher [www.kimberlyhutmacher.com](http://www.kimberlyhutmacher.com)  
 Capstone Press January 2011  
 Category : Picture Book Ages: 4-8

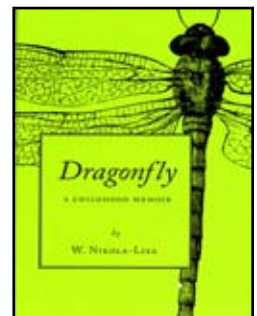
***Islands***

Written by Kimberly M. Hutmacher [www.kimberlyhutmacher.com](http://www.kimberlyhutmacher.com)  
 Capstone Press January 2011  
 Category : Picture Book Ages: 4-8

***Dragonfly: A Childhood Memoir***

Written by W. Nikola-Lisa [www.nikolabooks.com](http://www.nikolabooks.com)  
 Gyroscope Books October 2010  
 Category: Memoir Ages: 12+

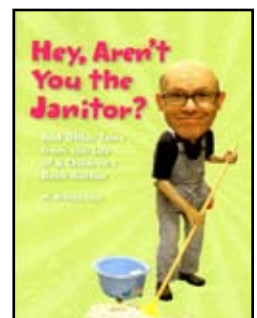
W. Nikola-Lisa explores new terrain—his childhood experiences growing up in south Texas during the early 1960s. Unlike previous books, this is not a book for young children as the author explores the darker elements of growing up in a harsh family environment. Although the work feels like a memoir, it reads like a novel with the author’s spare, unrelenting narrative a perfect accompaniment to the time, place, and underlying family issues.



***Hey, Aren't You the Janitor?***

Written by W. Nikola-Lisa [www.nikolabooks.com](http://www.nikolabooks.com)  
 Gyroscope Books January 2011  
 Category: Humor, Biography Ages: 8+

W. Nikola-Lisa pulls back the curtain in this tongue-in-cheek look at life on the road as a children’s book author. In his travels, he’s been upstaged by Chicago’s Benny the Bull, searched by airport security, and mistaken for the school janitor. You’ll laugh out loud—and often—with this behind-the-scenes look at what it means to be a children’s book author.



*August 2011 IRC Communicator and Illinois Authors’ Corner deadline for submissions is June 1, 2011!*

## Awards & Grants at the IRC Conference March 17-19, 2011

### Adult & Family Literacy Grants

Ladislava Khailova – Fox Valley Reading Council

Suzanne Evans – Fox Valley Reading Council

*The IRC Adult and Family Literacy Committee will award up to \$750 to develop and implement projects to help address adult literacy issues. Literacy projects that involve adults or adults with their children will be considered for funding.*

### Adult & Family Literacy Project Award

College Instructors of Reading Professionals (CIRP)

*The IRC Adult and Family Literacy Committee will award up to \$100 to IRC Local and Special Interest Councils that promote the literacy development of adults and families in new, unique, and compelling projects.*

### Barack Obama Literacy Fund Award

Shanna Creech, Kolmar School, Crestwood, Illinois

*This award was established from a \$40,000 donation from Senator Barack Obama. An endowment was established with the interest allocated to an annual literacy award given to create classroom libraries for African-American middle-school students to have access to “culturally relevant” books. Harvey or Robbins, Illinois was chosen as this year’s target area.*

#### Runner-up Libraries were awarded to:

Colleen Murphy, Kolmar School, Crestwood, Illinois

7th-8th Grade Team, Gwendolyn Brooks MS, Harvey, Illinois

Tony Gulli, Springfield School, Midlothian, Illinois

Heather Milani, Central Park School, Midlothian, Illinois

Samantha Geijer, Central Park School, Midlothian, Illinois

Amelia Virgil, Central Park School, Midlothian, Illinois

7th Grade Team, Nathan Hale Middle School, Crestwood, Illinois

Megan McNerney, Kolmar School, Crestwood, Illinois

### Gene Cramer ICARE for Reading Award

Lindsay Allen

*The Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education recognizes 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.*

### Hall of Fame Award

Lou Ferroli

*This award recognizes significant contributions to reading or reading education.*

### Illinois Reading Educator of the Year Award

K-5: Debbie Kaczmariski and Chris Urish

Reading Specialist: Mart O’Connor

College Instructor: Mary Miritello

*This award recognizes outstanding teachers who make contributions in promoting literacy among students, colleagues, and school communities.*

### 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

*This award recognizes outstanding contributions toward advocating literacy and education in Illinois.*

### Parents & Reading Award

Ann Harsy and Megan Wrzesinski

*This award recognizes an IRC member who promotes and supports parent involvement in children’s reading.*

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

Robert Burleigh

*This award recognizes an Illinois children’s/young adult author whose body of work demonstrates excellence, engenders a love of literature, and promotes lifelong literacy.*

### Council of Excellence Award

Blackhawk Reading Council

Chicago Area Reading Association (CARA)

College Instructors of Reading Professionals (CIRP)

East Central-EIU Reading Council

Fox Valley Reading Council

Illini Reading Council

Illinois Title I Association (ITA)

Illinois Valley Reading Council

Lewis & Clark Reading Council

Mississippi Valley Reading Council

Northern Illinois Reading Council

Northwestern Illinois Reading Council

Prairie Area Reading Council

South Eastern Reading Council

Secondary Reading League (SRL)

Starved Rock Reading Council

Two Rivers Reading Council

Vermilion Valley Reading Council

Western Illinois Reading Council

West Suburban Reading Council

*This program recognizes local and special interest councils that organize and conduct well-rounded programs serving the council members, the community, and the state association.*

### Councils Awarded Speaker Grants

Chicago Area Reading Association (CARA)

Prairie Area Reading Council

South Eastern Reading Council

Illinois Language & Literacy Council (ILLC)

### Hall of Councils

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Two Rivers Reading Council
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Western Illinois Reading Council
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Northwestern Illinois Reading Council
- The Hall of Councils at the conference allows the councils an opportunity to advertise their activities and accomplishments and to promote membership with a display.*

### Council Anniversaries

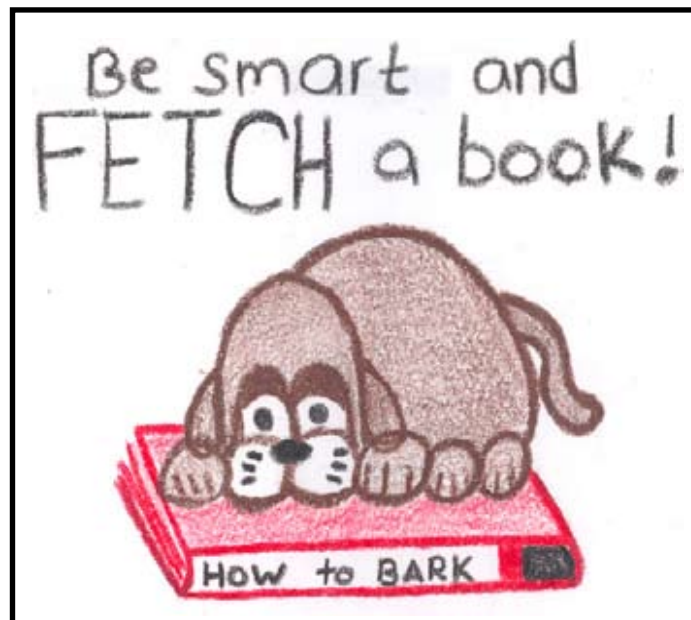
- 55 Years:** West Suburban Reading Council
- 50 Years:** Northern Illinois Reading Council  
Will County Reading Council
- 45 Years:** East Central-EIU Reading Council
- 20 Years:** National Road Reading Council

### Static Stick Decal Design Contest

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Lauren Oberkfell, 6th Grader,  
Columbia Middle School, Columbia, Illinois
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Anna Kuper, 6th Grader,  
Eastland Middle School, Shannon, Illinois
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Sierra Madrid, 6th Grader,  
Columbia Middle School, Columbia, Illinois
- Students in grade 4, 5, or 6 are encouraged to create an original design promoting reading. The winning design is printed on static stick decals.*

### Honorable Mention Winners were:

- Lexy LeMar, 6th, Rochelle Middle School, Rochelle
- Savanna Long, 6th, Our Savior School, Jacksonville
- Evan Hurst, 6th, Unity Point SD140, Carbondale
- Kelsey Weatherford, 6th, Columbia Middle School, Columbia
- Katelyn Jonak, 6th, Columbia Middle School, Columbia



Illinois Reading Council  
Illinois Council for Affective Reading Education

## Other Awards Announced

**2011 Abraham Lincoln Illinois High School Book Award**  
*The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins

**2011 Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award**  
*The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins

### 2011 Monarch Award

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place – *Rhyming Dust Bunnies* by Jan Thomas
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – *Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship and Survival* by Kirby Larson
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – *Bad Kitty Gets a Bath* by Nick Bruel

### IRA Exemplary Reading Program Award

Victoria Kieffer, Lisa Schaffer, Mary Bragiel  
Woodland Elementary East School,  
Gages Lake, Illinois

*The IRA Exemplary Reading Program Award recognizes outstanding reading and language arts programs at all grade levels (elementary, middle, and high school). Each state or province can choose one winning school.*

*Plan now to attend one of the*

## Summer Conferences

on

## Writing Under the Influence (of Literature)

featuring

Cyndi Giorgis and Candace Fleming

Thursday, June 9, 2011

MID-State Reading Council  
Kingsley Junior High School  
Normal, Illinois

Friday, June 10, 2011

Northern Illinois Reading Council  
Kishwaukee College Conference Center  
Malta, Illinois

*For more information, please visit the IRC Website  
Events Calendar at [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org).*

## 2011 IRC Conference Highlights

By Cindy Wilson, 2011 IRC Conference Chair

Once again, the middle of March saw a vast influx of extraordinary people in downtown Springfield, accompanied by wonderful weather and including a throng of fascinating, talented, and entertaining authors, teachers, and educational professionals. If you had the good fortune to be a part of this group, you know exactly what I'm talking about.

*Literacy Outside the Box* was a theme that was not only embraced by the wonderful folks who provided sessions, but also by some new tools and events. From requesting the special speakers and reading presentation proposals, I knew we were in for a treat. Obviously the authors and educational speakers were ones I had selected because I thought their work was extraordinary and would invite conference attendees to think a little differently (off the grid), but I was also amazed by the wide variety of ways in which the teachers of Illinois shared their expertise with others. You rock, Illinois teachers!

One bad thing about the conference is that no one can be in all places at the same time. However, thanks to the addition this year of a "Ning" and to the benevolence of IRC members and friends with cameras much better than mine, I have seen evidence of what was going on: there were dogs; a raccoon; dogs with a raccoon; the new additions that I never got the chance to see in person (such as the Internet Café, Nooks, Apples, and SMART Boards); the cloggers, singers, mathematicians, tag teams, and many other 'outside the box' ideas for increasing the literacy skills and interest in reading and writing for the children of Illinois. Thanks to the gracious authors and other featured speakers who autographed books for hours on end and posed unfalteringly for picture after picture (I've seen a picture

of teachers standing in the middle of a street with author Patrick Carman!). Thanks to the dedicated professionals who didn't hesitate to strike up conversations with attendees and encourage them in the complex work that they do every day.

So what final words do I have about the 2011 conference?

**Who I could never thank enough for the parts they played:** In addition to the featured speakers and authors mentioned above, of course, the incredible – and incredibly patient – office staff (Arlene Pennie, Carrie Sheridan, Kendra

Kornfeld, and Brenda Ferrara); the much-appreciated mentorship of last year's conference chair, Susan Cisna, as well as advice from those who presided over the conference in previous years; the support and unfailing hard work of Pat Braun, next year's conference chair; the constant, dedicated work of every single volunteer; the volunteer work done by *husbands* of IRC members (everyone gets in the game!); all conference attendees, who make all of

the work worthwhile; and last but not least, my wonderful and patient husband, Pete Molt.

**What I learned from some of the featured speakers and authors:** That grace and dignity are embodied in Marion Blumenthal Lazan; that M.T. Anderson speaks as eloquently as he writes and inspires me to be a better communicator; that we should have adjustable chairs in the autograph booth for people of differing heights (thank you, Jane Yolen); that Jeff Anderson has a wicked, wicked sense of humor; that Patrick Carman has become an author in spite of some

*Continued on page 17*

*"...I was also amazed by the wide variety of ways in which the teachers of Illinois shared their expertise with others. You rock, Illinois teachers!"*



*2011 IRC Conference Highlights continued from page 16*

very unusual early literary experiences (or maybe because of them!); that Marc Brown lives on a farmette and has livestock; that Vaunda Michaeux Nelson will get out there and cut a rug with the rest of us; and that featured speakers don't just show up and do their thing—they offer great ideas for future conferences (thank you, Danny Brassell!)

**What I wondered about the conference:** Did I forget anything critical? Did I annoy anyone by enjoying myself too much? Was everyone else having as much fun as I did?

**What I appreciated about the conference:** The opportunity to meet the authors and featured speakers that I had not yet been able to meet, and the random hugs I got from old friends, new friends, and complete strangers who I hope will also become new friends.

**What made me smile about the conference:** All of the smiles I saw on other people's faces!

**What I loved about the conference:** Everything except that it had to come to an end!

Here's to next year's conference, which I'm sure will be one more roaring IRC success under the leadership of Pat Braun! Tell your friends and colleagues about this wonderful conference so we can all come back next year and do it again!



More conference pictures are posted at [illinoisreadingcouncil.ning.com/](http://illinoisreadingcouncil.ning.com/)!

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

## 35<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:bchrzwhite@comcast.net)  
Terry McHugh [tmchugh@dayofreading.org](mailto:tmchugh@dayofreading.org)

Team Discounts Available  
CPS Vendor # 80827



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

## Buddy Reading Project

By Sarah Carlson

Picture this! A classroom full of thirty-two fourth grade students all eager to learn and improve their reading skills. Each student is looking for some time to read with the teacher and get the personalized instruction he/she deserves. Realistically, there are thirty-two fourth grade students, one teacher, and six subject areas to teach each day.

Now imagine this! A special person sent to read with each individual child on a one-on-one basis each week. This is what the Illinois Reading Council made possible for one very fortunate classroom in Elgin, Illinois.

Students enrolled in the Children's Literature course at Judson University were each assigned a fourth grade buddy in a classroom at a local elementary school as part of their course work. The students were required to do a reading interest inventory on their buddy and select appropriate reading material for a thirty-minute one-on-one session each week. This requirement soon became a pleasure rather than a task for the university students as they learned how to select reading materials that fit interests and needs and saw how quickly their time was making an impact on the learning of the fourth grader.

The project concluded with a whole-group celebration. After contacting local community resources for discounts and donations, we were able to use the grant from the Illinois Reading Council to cover the remaining cost of the project along with a personalized chapter book for each fourth grader with a note inside from their university buddy, and hardcover picture books for their classroom library. What a phenomenal impact this small project had on all students involved.

*To read about other IRC Literacy Support Grant projects, visit the IRC Website under "IRC Committees."*

## Pen Pals for Literacy

By Janis Jones

Seventy-five students, twenty-two community pen pals, five novels and the project was launched. The reasoning behind the project was to get students to read and write about what they read. It began by choosing five high interest novels supplied by funds from an IRC Literacy grant. Students were divided into groups of 2-4 based on the novels they chose. Letters were sent to contacts in the community asking for volunteers who would be willing to read the novel along with the students and correspond with them via email about what they read.

The project began with adults reading the first chapters of the novel and writing to their pen pal groups about it. Adults' letters covered the material students would be reading over the next few days as a pre-reading strategy. Students received their letter, read the chapters, and emailed their pen pal. Each student letter covered comments about what they read, answered any questions asked by their pen pals, and discussed

a literary term. (Students covered character foil, cause and effect, characterization, prediction, theme, conflict, and summarization.) This back and forth process went on for the duration of the reading schedule, approximately 3 weeks.

During the project, students also had the opportunity to meet with their pen pal groups to discuss the action in their novel, talk about character attributes, and chart plot points. Having three methods to build comprehension for their novels added to students' overall understanding of their reading, keeping frustration levels low. The uniqueness of the project kept high readers from becoming bored and low readers from becoming frustrated. Every student looked forward anxiously to their letters, sharing comments made by their pen pal with other groups. Making the connection between school and community was a special perk of the project.

Organization is the key to successfully pulling off this project, and the effort it takes to set up the schedules and recruit the pen pals is worth it to get students excited about reading!

*More information about IRC Literacy Support Grants is available at [illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://illinoisreadingcouncil.org) under "Awards & Grants."*

## Cool Studies: Buy Me an Intervention

By Lou Ferrolì

I'm at a session at this year's IRC conference and the presenter is talking about an intervention that wasn't working. Finally, in exasperation she said, "So, what are you going to do? You can't afford to buy another one." I did a double take. Did I hear that right? Buy an intervention?

A Title I teacher that I know is frustrated because a Tier 2 intervention isn't working. "I know what the kid needs," Barb says, and she mentions a couple excellent teaching procedures. So why doesn't she intervene and give the little girl the help she needs? "I can't be an intervention," she says. "In my district, an intervention has to be something that comes in a box." And now I put 2 and 2 together, sadly. If the material comes in a box, then it's an intervention one can buy.

I've long been aware that some reading teachers think in terms of instructional procedures (things they know and can do) while other reading teachers think in term of instructional programs. But how and when did it happen that the "procedures people" got on the outside looking in? I know of a study that might help us learn how to define an intervention as something done by a teacher who has knowledge and ideas.

A team of researchers at the Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts at the University of Texas led by Meaghan Edmonds were responding to the call for attention to adolescent literacy and to the implementation of RTI in upper grades. They wanted to get a better handle on "effective interventions and reading instruction for students with reading difficulties in the middle and high school grades." They did a meta-analysis, a study of studies, where they sought out research done in grades 6-12 that used experiments with treatment and control groups which measured the effect of an intervention on reading comprehension. They found 29 such studies. There were four kinds of interventions used in those studies: comprehension instruction, fluency, word study, and

multicomponent interventions. Three of the intervention types worked. "Results from the meta-analysis indicate that students with reading difficulties and disabilities can improve their comprehension when provided with a targeted reading intervention in comprehension, multiple reading components, or, to a lesser extent, word reading strategies."

One finding of this summary, then, is that we can, indeed, help struggling adolescent readers. Early intervention is great, but later intervention can be productive, too. An additional benefit of this study is simply the fact that it is a meta-analysis. I know research is not the favorite reading of some of my IRC friends, and a study of studies might seem nightmarish, but a meta-analysis is usually an easy read.

The hardest part of a meta-analysis is the exhaustive search for which studies to include. The researchers do that and give detail about exactly how they did it. That's hard work, but it doesn't take long to tell about it. The actual narrative is usually short, and there are many tables.

In this 39-page study there are more tables than text, which is merely 16 pages. But the coolest part of a meta-analysis is that these tables can function like a restaurant menu. "Let's see. I need an intervention to increase comprehension for my struggling adolescent readers. I'll start with an appetizer from the list of fluency studies (table). I'll see which interventions had the strongest effect (narrative). I'll follow that with a main course off the list of comprehension interventions. And for dessert, I'll look at word study interventions."

I tested out the menu approach with the Edmonds, et al synthesis, and I looked at the word study interventions. One of the studies on that list used a procedure called the Glass Analysis. It is a personal favorite. The narrative said that it had a moderate impact on comprehension. The citation was provided, of course, and I tracked down

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*"...the coolest part of a meta-analysis is that these tables function like a restaurant menu... I'll start with an appetizer from the list of fluency studies..."*

*Cool Studies continued from page 19*

the study. (These days, with so much of our professional journal literature available full-text online, this “tracking down” involved use of the index finger on my right hand and not even getting out of my chair.) Voilà. I’ve got a detailed explanation of a teaching procedure, and I have at my fingertips the research-basis.

Our Texas friends are serious about getting research information into our hands in useable ways, so they created a much more readable “report” (available at [www.centerforinstruction.org](http://www.centerforinstruction.org)). This version of the study actually begins with the Findings and buries the Methodology at the back of the report (an organization that’s a little creepy for my traditional tastes but quite easy to read). And right after the Findings are the Tables which are even juicier in this report as they are more fully annotated. The researchers say the report is meant for use in “crafting evidence-based guidance” for interventions. Ooooo! “Crafting evidence-based guidance for interventions.” I like it. It doesn’t come in a box, and it’s free, so I can’t buy it.

One more thing cool about the Edmonds, et al study is that some of the procedures they reviewed were just teaching procedures, but some were commercial materials. So, you really can buy an intervention, but you don’t have to.

In kindergarten and first-grade it’s easy enough to “monitor” kids’ knowledge of their ABC’s or a couple hundred-sight words every 2-3 weeks. And through the elementary grades we can use 60-second measures of rate pretty frequently. But as students get older, measuring comprehension on a biweekly basis and improving comprehension with kits just isn’t so easy. I know many IRC members are engaged in pretty sophisticated RTI implementation and probably laugh

at the naïve idea that interventions have to be bought and can’t just be teaching procedures that one knows, but the idea has, in fact, taken hold in some places. I’m optimistic that as the adolescent literacy folk join in on RTI, they are going to bring some useful perspectives. I take as evidence of this evolving perspective a book just out by O’Connor and Vadasy, *Handbook of Reading Interventions*. If the online sample chapter is typical, each chapter is like the Edmonds, et al meta-analysis. There is a summary of research on a topic and then descriptions of teaching procedures shown to be effective interventions.

So, let me rewrite a paragraph above with a different ending. *A Title I teacher that I know is frustrated because a Tier 2 intervention isn’t working. “I know what the kid needs,” Barb says, and she mentions a couple excellent teaching procedures. I CAN be the intervention, she says. I will use a procedure included in a meta-analysis done at the University of Texas.* (Or she can say that the procedure’s effectiveness was reviewed in the *Handbook of Reading Interventions*.) If we sling around enough of that kind of I-know-how-to-and-I-have-the-evidence talk, two good things can happen. One, we can get back to thinking about intervention procedures and not just programs. And two, Barb can go help that little girl by using what she knows.

Edmonds, M., Vaughn, S., Wexler, J., Reutebuch, C., Cable, A., Tackett, K., & Schanckenberg, J. (2009). A synthesis of reading interventions and effects on reading comprehension outcomes for older struggling readers. *Review of Educational Research*, 79, 262-300.

Scammacca, N., Roberts, G., Vaught, S., Edmonds, M., Wexler, J., Reutebuch, C., & Torgesen, J. (2007). Interventions for struggling adolescent readers: A meta-analysis with implications for practice. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.