



The **Connection**

February 2009

A Letter from the President

Can you believe it is already February!? I am sure everyone is busy igniting your students for the ISATs. I wish the best for you and your students. I know you are working hard.

SIRC had an awesome Fall Dessert Meeting at Unity Point Grade School. At our meeting we awarded our first student teacher scholarship to Darin Hicks for \$500. Look for the scholarship information and application at the Mini-Conference on Aug 5th at John A. Logan College if you will be student teaching next year and wish to receive \$500.

SIRC will be having our Spring Celebration on April 21, 2009 at 6pm at the Carbondale Civic Center. This celebration will honor the winner of our short story contest. Short Story Contest details attached.

If you are still looking for a workshop to attend this year, the BEST one is just around the corner. The Illinois Reading Conference: Reading...."Engage! Excite! Ignite!" is held in Springfield on March 19-21. Go online to register at www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org.

Happy ISATing!

Cindy Pender
SIRC President

SIRC Spring Celebration

Southern Illinois Reading Council will hold a Spring Celebration on Tuesday, April 21, 2009 at the Carbondale Civic Center. Young writers from across Southern Illinois are invited to send entries for judging, and winners will be invited to attend the Spring Celebration to receive their awards.

Please find the attached Short Story Contest flyer for more detailed information about entries and deadlines for your students.

SIRC Mini-Conference

Mark your calendars! SIRC will host its annual Mini-Conference at John A. Logan College on Tuesday, August 4, 2009.

More detailed information will be announced in the spring issue of *The Connection*.



READ, READ, READ!



"Share Your Success!"

Dear SIRC Members,

I would like to encourage members from **all grade levels** to take a moment and consider their everyday classroom activities and instruction. A strategy that you may have used successfully and might regard as "old hat," could be "just the thing" another teacher in our area has been racking his/her brain to create in order to make routines run more smoothly or give lessons a "boost."

I am hoping to find everyday teachers who will share practical methods and organizational techniques that make instruction more effective. Perhaps it is a weekly literacy routine that works smoothly and accomplishes state goals (Writer's Workshop, Guided Reading, SSR, etc.). It might also be a new way to incorporate technology or music into the reading/writing curriculum.

Teachers here in Southern Illinois are very conscientious and dedicated to making things better for their students. What you have to offer could help the rest of us to reach more students and/or help us to create environments that promote literacy learning.

I would like to invite area teachers to share their strategies or routines during our summer mini-conference. If you are interested, or if you know of someone who may be, please contact me at ibarrett@joppa.massac.k12.il.us.

I look forward to hearing from you!!

Jennifer Abate-Barrett, SIRC President-Elect

Pass it on!

Please make your newsletter available to others by placing it in your teachers' workroom or passing on to a colleague!

**"Enthusiasm is contagious.
You can start an epidemic."
-Unknown**

How can SIRC help you?

Please remember to let us know if you have a question you'd like to ask or an idea you'd like to share. We'd love to hear from you. Also, let us know if there is anything you'd like to see in the newsletter. Your ideas and input are very important to us.

Send questions and ideas to:
Cindy at darrellcindy@earthlink.net



2009 Short Story Contest

How to Enter

Up to three stories per classroom may be submitted, postmarked by **March 16, 2009**. There will be three Southern Illinois winners per grade level. To be eligible, **all entries must have an entry blank attached.** (Master on the back of this sheet.) Identifying information is to be only on the entry blank; only the title may be on the story. Entries will not be returned, so please keep a copy. **First place winners are asked to read their stories at the awards dinner.**

Judging Criteria

Stories will be judged on the *creativity* and *organization* of the short story. *Appropriateness of language, theme, and message* will also be considered. *Conventions* will be considered, but to a lesser extent. Emphasis should be on quality rather than quantity. **There is a word limit of 1500 words.** Illustrations are optional and will not influence the outcome.

Awards for 2009

A first, second, and third place winner will be chosen in each grade, second through eighth. The 21 winning stories will be compiled into an *SIRC 2009 Short Story Contest Yearbook*. Each first, second, and third place winner will receive a copy of the yearbook, a plaque (**new this year!**) and a bookstore gift certificate.

All winners will be invited to attend Southern Illinois Reading Council's **Spring Celebrations Program and Reception on Tuesday, April 21, 2009**, at the Carbondale Civic Center, where they will receive their awards. First place winners will read their winning stories.

Winners will be notified by April 2, 2009.

Send entries to:

Second Grade: Concetta Lamendola, P.O. Box 221, Murphysboro, IL 62966

Third Grade: Kathy Merz, 506 Cambridge Dr., DeSoto, IL 62924

Fourth Grade: Kathy Stegle and Karen Hubbs, 2185 Lick Creek Rd., Anna, IL 62906

Fifth Grade: Judy White, 492 E. Industrial Pk.Rd., Murphysboro, IL 62966

Sixth Grade: Debbie Braden. 9985 Old Highway 51N, Cobden, IL 62920

Seventh Grade: Margaret Grueninger and Jennifer Osman, 105 Woodland Trail, Anna, IL 62906

Eighth Grade: Cindy Pender and Pat Searcy, 33964 Wilderness Retreat Rd., Jonesboro, IL 62952

Entries must be postmarked no later than March 16, 2009.

Questions?
Shiryl Walquist
634-2255
shirylwalquist@agristar.net

SIRC Short Story Contest Entry Blank
(Entry blank required; attach to front of story)

Student's name: _____ Grade: _____

Teacher's full name: _____

School name: _____

School address: _____ School phone: _____

Teacher's email address: (optional) _____

Story title: _____

Total word count: _____

Verification:

We verify that this story:

_____ is original work of this student

_____ has been typed*

_____ meets the word count limit of **1500 words**.

Student signature: _____

Teacher signature: _____

Entries failing to meet the above criteria will be disqualified.

Notes:

Three stories may be entered per classroom. If a teacher has more than one section of a class, three may be sent from each section.

Someone other than the student may type the entry. However, no changes in content, spelling, etc. may be made.

*Double spacing, size 12 font is preferable.

Help Create a List of Books of Books for Struggling Readers!

Go to the Illinois Reading Council Website

www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org and complete our survey

The Studies and Research Committee of the Illinois Reading Council is asking council members to help them create a list of good books for struggling readers in grades 5-12.

Respondents are asked to limit recommendations to books they have used personally and see really do engage such students as opposed to books about which they have only heard or read. Respondents may make up to five recommendations before exiting this survey.

IRC members who participate in this survey will have their names entered into a drawing for a \$100 bookstore gift certificate. In addition two awards of \$300 will be made to local councils.

One award will be given to the council with the highest number of its members participating in this survey and the other will be given to the council with the highest percentage of participating members.

Announcements of the winners as well as a link to the bibliography that results from this survey will be posted on the IRC webpage (www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org) in March 2009. We will also share our results at the IRC conference and in IRC publications.

Thank you for contributing to a project that we believe will be of real value to IRC members.

Recognize a Special Teacher

Nominate a colleague for the

Ellen Drake Memorial Award

The Southern Illinois Reading Council established an annual memorial award to recognize an exemplary teacher that promotes literacy. SIRC will award \$100 for classroom use by the recipient of this award.

A one page letter is all that is necessary to nominate a fellow teacher you feel is deserving of this award. Please cite examples of why you feel the teacher you are nominating should receive this award.

Criteria for Selection

Recipient must:

1. Be a teacher; preschool-grade 12
2. Demonstrate exemplary teaching of reading/language arts
3. Be respected and admired by students, parents, and colleagues

Winners will be notified by mail and awards will be presented at the SIRC Spring Celebration on April 21, 2009 at the Carbondale Civic Center.

Letters of nomination should include the following information regarding the nominee: Name, home address, school, grade level taught, and number of years the nominee has taught. Please also include the name and phone number of the person submitting the nomination. Letters should be mailed by April 7, 2009.

Return to: Deanna Diel
11616 Sherry Lynn Drive
Carbondale, IL 62901