

# The Connection

## SIRC Fall Meeting to Feature Illinois Lt. Governor, Sheila Simon

Mark your calendars for Wed., Oct. 19, from 6:30 - 8 p.m. SIRC is proud to present Illinois Lieutenant Governor, Sheila Simon at our Fall Meeting.

The event will be held at the Lawson building in auditorium 161 on the campus of SIU-C. Visitor parking is allowed in any lot after 4pm. Lots #1, #44, or #329 are preferred.

According to the Lt. Governor's website, Illinois is different from other states when it comes to overseeing education. Illinois does not have a single official or cabinet position that oversees preschool through higher education. Lt. Governor Simon has been asked to fill this role by Governor Quinn as his point person on education reform. Simon served as chair of the Joint Educational Leadership Committee and participates in various commissions and task forces that focus on improving learning opportuni-

ties for students.

Lt. Governor Simon is a member of the state's Complete College America team, which is working to increase the proportion of working-age adults with college degrees or certificates to 60 percent by 2025.

Simon also serves on the Performance Funding Committee. It is tasked with creating a performance funding system for community colleges and public universities.

Chairperson of the Classrooms First Commission is also an enormous role for Lt. Governor Simon. This state commission is charged with cutting school district administration costs and redirecting those tax dollars to students and classrooms. This legislation was signed by Governor Quinn in August.

With higher standards being made for Illinois schools, but less



Lt. Governor Sheila Simon

money in the budgets, it will be very interesting to hear Lt. Governor Sheila Simon's thoughts and suggestions for education reform.

This is a FREE event. Please invite your fellow colleagues to attend. An RSVP is appreciated. Please send plans of attendance with your name and school/affiliation to:

cindypender@yahoo.com  
or  
pamelarichteacher@yahoo.com

## SIRC Board Members Attend IRC Leadership Conference

Three SIRC board members spent a few of their summer vacation days at Grand Bear Lodge in Utica, IL with IRC leaders from across the state.

Regional Director, Kathy Merz from Desoto; SIRC Secretary, Kathy Stegle from Anna; and SIRC co-president, Pamela Rich from Jonesboro represented SIRC at the IRC State Leadership Conference.

The ladies attended

presentations about IRC committees and grants, running a local council, increasing membership, and using technology for council benefits. Guest speakers and authors were also heard. The executive SIRC board also planned the events for our council for the 2011-2012 school year.

If you are interested in serving on the SIRC Board, please contact Pamela Rich or Cindy Pender.



Pamela Rich, Kathy Merz, and Kathy Stegle represented SIRC at IRC Leadership Conference in July.

# “Literacy in the Land of Lincoln” SIRC Summer Mini Conference

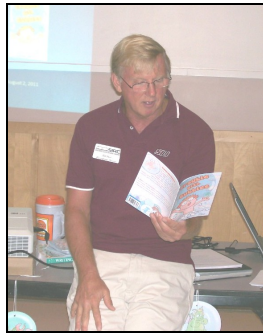
Area educators throughout Southern Illinois attended the SIRC Summer Mini Conference at Carbondale Civic Center on August 2.

Several educational professionals presented sessions. Topics included: Meeting the Core Standards, Technology for Today’s Classrooms, 2012 Rebecca Caudill Nominees, Great Elementary Books, Differentiated Learning, and Grouping in Elementary Classrooms.



Conference attendees loved all of the door prizes that SIRC gave away!

Two local authors were also in attendance and gave wonderful presentations!



Author, Bob Davis reads from his book, *The Trouble with Bubbles*.

Bob Davis, author of *Trouble with Bubbles*, entertained several elementary teachers with his picture book. Darrel Dexter, award winning teacher, and author of several books including, *Abe Lincoln: A Trot Down to Egypt*, presented several ideas and methods of teaching about Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War era in Southern Illinois.

The Scholastic Book Fair was also back at the conference. Many teachers took advantage of the convenience of viewing and purchasing new books on

site.

Even though our attendance was not as high as we had hoped, we feel that this was one of the best SIRC Mini Conferences yet! The SIRC board is weighing the possibility of changing the time of the year that we host a mini conference. What do you think? Email one of the co-presidents if you have a suggestion!



Area teachers enjoy conversation, collaboration, and breakfast before the sessions begin.

## SIRC promotes education at all levels in Southern Illinois: Plans from SIRC’s co-presidents



Greetings from your co-presidents of SIRC, Cindy Pender and Pamela Rich.

Both of us have been past SIRC presidents, and with our hectic lives we decided that this year we would share the responsibilities. We both teach at Jonesboro Elementary, so it is very easy for us to contact one another. Cindy teaches junior high learning disabilities, and Pamela teaches 8th grade language arts. The SIRC board has planned lots of opportunities for you throughout the coming year!

Do you have an SIU-C student teacher in your classroom? SIRC gives an annual \$500 student teacher scholarship to an SIU-C student teacher. SIRC hosted a student teacher pizza party at SIU-C during the students’ orientation in August. Many retired teachers on SIRC’s board hosted the party. New student teachers received door prizes and information

about what SIRC/IRC offers area teachers. Scholarship applications are due by September 30.

SIRC’s annual Fall Meeting is being held at SIU-C. We hope that a big crowd can attend Lt. Governor Sheila Simon’s presentation. Whether you are a teacher at the primary, elementary, high school, or college level, or if you are just a concerned parent and taxpayer, education in Illinois is definitely changing. Come hear the governor’s appointed education point person, Sheila Simon, to shed light on our state’s planned education reforms. Please distribute copies of the flyer to your colleagues. We hope to pack the house for this FREE event.

The annual SIRC Short Story Contest is a wonderful way to encourage your students to be creative and write! Last year, we had several new schools that entered. You do NOT have to be an IRC/SIRC member to participate. Therefore,

please distribute copies of these flyers to your colleagues as well. It doesn’t cost anything to participate. Last year, we had over 100 attendees at our Spring Celebrations. It was great to see and hear the students’ stories. We hope to have even more participation this year!

Ideas are in the works for an SIRC Winter Meeting. Please let us know what would benefit you the most. Would you like to do a “make and take” lesson? Would you like a speaker on a current topic? Please email us and let us know!

Finally, SIRC is very proud to offer classroom grants to SIRC teachers. This information will be mailed with the Winter Newsletter. So, be thinking now of some great ideas for your classroom that needs some extra funding!

We hope that your school year is off to a great start. Please take advantage of all SIRC has to offer you this coming year. We look forward to seeing you!



## 2012 Short Story Contest

**How to Enter** Up to three stories per classroom may be submitted, postmarked by **March 23, 2012**. There will be three Southern Illinois winners per grade level.\* (See back.) To be eligible, **all entries must have an entry blank attached.** (Master on back.) 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 2012** 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 2012 Short Story Contest Yearbook*. **Each first, second, and third place winner will receive a copy of the yearbook, a plaque, and the choice of a book.**

Winners will be notified by April 6, 2012. All winners will be invited to attend Southern Illinois Reading Council's **Spring Celebrations Program and Reception on Tuesday, April 24, 2012**, at the Carbondale Civic Center, where they will receive their awards. First place winners will read their winning stories.

**Attention busy teachers: writing short stories supports ISAT preparation!** Students develop writing fluency and learn in a most meaningful way as they write and edit their stories: story terminology (plot, moral, theme), spelling, punctuation (even dialogue), capitalization, paragraphing, and more. Some teachers have found ISAT week is good time to assign students to write stories as homework.

### Send entries to:

**Second Grade:** Concetta Lamendola, 1308 N. 14<sup>th</sup> St., Murphysboro, IL 62966

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

**Fourth Grade:** Kathy Stegle and Barbara James, 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:** 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 23, 2012.**

#### Questions?

Shiryl Walquist

634-2255

shirylwalquist@gmail.com

**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

\_\_\_\_\_ this story meets the word count limit of **1500 words**

\_\_\_\_\_ the author of this story lives or attends school in Illinois Reading Council Region 9. Please check which county:

\_\_\_\_\_ Alexander    \_\_\_\_\_ Franklin    \_\_\_\_\_ Gallatin    \_\_\_\_\_ Hardin    \_\_\_\_\_ Jackson  
\_\_\_\_\_ Jefferson    \_\_\_\_\_ Johnson    \_\_\_\_\_ Massac    \_\_\_\_\_ Perry    \_\_\_\_\_ Pope  
\_\_\_\_\_ Pulaski    \_\_\_\_\_ Randolph    \_\_\_\_\_ Saline    \_\_\_\_\_ Williamson    \_\_\_\_\_ Union

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.