

- **Illinois Reading Council**
- **International Reading Association**

South Suburban Reading Council

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Next Board Meeting:
Tuesday, Nov. 8, 2011
4:30 p.m.

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A Message from the President.....

Dear Members,

Every year it amazes me how quickly August arrives. Yet, here we are once again, getting our classrooms ready, overflowing with ideas for the upcoming year. The beginning of the year is filled with such excitement, welcoming new students, catching up with colleagues, and sharing new ideas.

I am honored to be President of the South Suburban Reading Council this year to support you with the latest best practices and ideas in teaching. The executive board of the reading council is here to provide you with new ideas, updated legislation, grant information, and featured speakers.

This year we are fortunate to have wonderful speakers share their ideas on Content Area Reading and Writing, Literacy in Math, and Skype! We look forward to seeing you at these upcoming events. Please watch upcoming newsletters for registration information.

You can also access information at <http://illinoisreadingcouncil.org/localcouncils/southsuburban.html>

Is your classroom overflowing with supplies and materials? Are you looking for new resources? In May 2012, SSRC will be hosting a Garage Sale for teachers. You may reserve a table to sell your belongings to teachers and parents. This is a wonderful opportunity for retiring teachers to pass on their many treasures and for new teachers to begin their collection. Look for information about this event in future newsletters.

This year our newsletter will be sent out strictly digital. If you know someone who has not received their newsletter, please e-mail us at: southsuburban@illinoisreadingcouncil.org so we can put them on the mailing list.

Thank you for all you do to promote literacy in your classrooms, schools, and community. I wish you a successful and peaceful start to the school year.

Megan Wrzesinski



Dates to Remember

- Nancy Steineke—Thursday October 13th, St Xavier—McGuire Hall—5:00 PM Reception to Follow
- Illinois Reading Conference: Literacy in the Land of Lincoln March 15-17, 2012 Springfield, Illinois



IRC Grant Awards

Did you know the Illinois Reading Council offers awards and grants to reading council members? A few of the upcoming awards and grants include:

Illinois Reading Educator of the Year Award. This award recognizes outstanding teachers who make contributions in promoting literacy among students, colleagues, and school communities.

Parents and Reading Award. This award recognizes an IRC member who promotes and supports parent involvement in children's reading

Static Stick Decal Design Contest. 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.

Adult & Family Literacy Grant. The Illinois Reading Council Adult and Family Literacy Committee will award up to \$750 to local councils 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.

For more information and application forms for these awards and grants, please visit <http://illinoisreadingcouncil.org/awardsgrants.html>



Mark Your Calendars—Nancy Steineke October 13th at St. Xavier

South Suburban Reading Council is partnering with the Chicago Area Reading Association and Saint Xavier University School of Education, to offer a workshop by Nancy Steineke. The title of Nancy's presentation is "Reading a Picture, Reading a Text."

Nancy will share how examining visual images opens the door to content area and writing. She believes that creating background knowledge with images addresses differentiation,

the needs of ELL students, and supports struggling readers.

During the session, participants will learn how to develop lessons that intertwine text and graphics. Furthermore, specific strategies for helping students dig deeper into what they see and read will be demonstrated.

Nancy writes practical books for teachers that help them guide their students to becoming lifelong readers, writers, and successful participants in the collaborative discussions.

Nancy has written two books: *Reading and Writing Together: Collaborative Literacy in Action* and *Assessment Live: Ten Real-Time Ways for Kids to Show What They Know and Meet The Standards*.

She has also co-authored multiple books including, *Content Area Writing: Every Teacher's Guide* with Harvey Daniels and Steve Zemelman, and two books with Harvey Daniels entitled: *Mini-Lessons for Literature*

Circles, and Texts and Lessons for Content-Area

Nancy has been teaching English at Andrew High School in Tinley Park District 230 for the last three decades. South Suburban Reading Council is proud to offer an evening with one of our own local celebrities and dedicated educators.



Reading Instruction with a Twist! By Carrie Oswald

Each school year, we are faced with the excitement and challenges of providing our students with a solid reading foundation. Fortunately, in addition to Nancy Steineke, we have presenters this year that will offer many creative reading strategies that we can bring back to our classrooms and implement immediately!

On December 8th, Susan Whited, a K-5 Math Coach and certified Reading Specialist, will build K-5 teachers' confidence in teaching

Math. She will also talk about how best literacy practices translate into exceptional math instruction.

On January 26th, Pam Bartusiewicz, a past SSRC Board Member and Learning Center Director, as well as Linda Tatum, a media specialist with twenty-one years of teaching experience, will demonstrate how teachers can Skype with other classrooms, whether they are down the hall or across the world!

They will also show how to make it possible for our students to connect with a live author chat. Skype has numerous educational opportunities, and in a technological time, the "Skype Sisters" will show you just how easy it is to apply into your every day reading instruction.

Please keep your eye out for more information on these exciting presentations!



Facebook By Megan Wrzesinski

Will you be our friend? South Suburban Reading Council is on Facebook! Please be sure to visit our page and "like" us. The Facebook page will offer information on upcoming speakers, interesting articles, discussion boards, and raffles!

What Is Adult and Family Literacy? How Can You Help? by Kathleen Puchkors

The passage of *Title II of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998* established a partnership among the Federal, state, and local governments to provide adult and family literacy services on a voluntary basis. The focus of these services was to increase literacy skills in adults so that these adults would be able to finish high school, obtain self-supporting employment, and become partners in their child's education. The Workforce Investment Act was originally designed to be reauthorized every five years but it is now scheduled for reauthorization every year. States, local governments, and organizations develop programs that can make

sustainable changes in a family and fund these programs largely with grant money.

Programs vary in their design but share the common goal of strengthening intergenerational literacy and promoting the concept that parents and caregivers are their children's first teachers and can be successful in this role. The following components are present in comprehensive family literacy programs:

- ✦ Basic skills education for adult family members to help them learn skills for the workplace.

- ✦ Early childhood education for the children to bolster the skills they will need to succeed in school.

- ✦ Parent education that enables adult family members to discuss parenting practices, nutrition, and the importance of literacy learning for their children.

- ✦ Time for the adults and children to participate together in literacy activities that they can also do at home.

www2.ed.gov/AdultEd/familit.html

**South Suburban Reading Council presents:
Nancy Steineke—"Reading a Picture, Reading a Text"
October 13, 2011 Presentation at 5:00—Reception to follow**

St Xavier University
3700 West 103rd Street
McGuire Hall
Chicago, IL

**Hors d'oeuvres will be served following
Nancy's presentation**

Mail this form and
payment to:
Gail Prindle
17203 Parkside Ave.
Tinley Park, IL 60477

Reservations are due September 22, 2011. Late reservations cannot be honored.

Please PRINT clearly and make check payable to SSRC.

Name _____ Email address _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

School _____ District _____

_____ Member (\$22.00)

_____ Non-Member (\$25.00)

_____ Pre-Service Teacher (\$12.00)

**Myelin Good, Pruning Bad
By Justin Opiola**

There is no such thing as forgetting, just late at remembering. Did you know the human brain is not a finished organ at birth? In fact, according to *Science Week*, another ten or twelve years are needed before even a general development is completed (2000). The development of cognitive, motor, and sensory functions require separate regions of the brain and their connecting pathways to go through a maturation process. This maturation ultimately allows neural impulses to flow freely throughout the brain. Consequently, information can be integrated across spatially separate brain regions. The speed of neural transmission is also an important factor in the development of the aforementioned functions. Neural transmission speed "depends not only on the junctions between nerve cells (synapses), but also on the structural properties of the connecting fibers (axons)" ("Myelination in Development", 2000). The two crucial properties of the axons include their diameters and the thickness of the special insulation (myelin) around them. "Axons of the major pathways in the human brain, such as those of the corpus callosum (which connects the two halves of the brain)...continue to develop throughout childhood and adolescence" ("Myelination in Development", 2000).

I apologize if you thought for a moment that you were reading a science journal. Don't be alarmed, this *is* the SSRC newsletter. So what does this all mean when it comes to classroom learning? Let's focus on the term myelin (that special insulation). Myelin grows around the axons, and the thicker the myelin, the better. "As we engage in new learning, our minds are growing a new neuronal network... The more we practice this new information, the more familiar the information in the neuronal pathway becomes, and the less difficulty we

have with retrieval and related learning" (Huizinga, 2011). In simple terms, REPETITION is critical to the growth of myelin! In fact, 7-9 exposures to new information within the first two days are recommended. Without this practice and use, the brain will *prune* (or discard) new information which it views as irrelevant. WARNING -- A lack of repetitious exposures to new content will lead to pruning, not an assumed uninterested student.

The amount of concepts the brain can myelinate varies among different age groups. Start them young! Toddlers can myelinate 9-12 concepts per week. This is considered the maximum point of learning. Primary students can myelinate 5-7 concepts per week. Lastly, in defense of beloved middle school scholars everywhere, only 3-5 concepts can be myelinated per week (Huizinga, 2011).

So, the next time a student doesn't provide the answer you were looking for in a class discussion, don't infer he or she was not paying attention. Simply place the blame on that certain aspect of the brain called pruning.

Sources:

- Huizinga, Gail. (2011, March). *The Keys to Learning*. Lectured presented at Illinois Reading Conference, Springfield, IL.
- Myelination in Development. (2000, December 15). *Science Week*. Retrieved August 6, 2011 from <http://www.cogweb.ucla.edu/CogSci/Myelinate.html>

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New Member Incentive

Do you have a colleague who you think would be interested in joining the South Suburban Reading Council? Encourage them to join and each of you will be entered into a raffle to win an e-reader! One lucky South Suburban Reading Council member will be chosen. The deadline for current and new members to enter the raffle is December 31, 2011. Please let us know if you refer a new member to ensure that both of your entries will be placed in the drawing!

