

Empowering
Lives
Through
Literacy

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**"Books are the carriers of civilizations. Without books,
history is silent, literature dumb, science crippled."**

~ Barbara Tuchman

FROM THE DESK OF IRC PRESIDENT

Cindi Koudelka

Happy August! As we have been enduring a heat wave in these final days before we return to school, it is a perfect opportunity to lie by the pool or in the cool air conditioning to enjoy some great books. After the conference, my TBR stack was piled pretty high, so I especially appreciated some stolen moments this summer to dig into them. As we shift into our new year, the Illinois Reading Council has a lot of amazing opportunities and resources to help you navigate the journey in your classrooms. I squealed like a six-year-old when many of the presenters we contacted agreed to present at our monthly [Wednesday Webinars](#). We have an array of voices and topics to share with you that will help you stay the course to provide support and joy for all of your students. Our first speaker, the brilliant Lindsey Moses, will be sharing a plethora of evidence-based strategies for supporting our multilingual students on September 3rd. You will not want to miss it.

Leadership was also a highlight of my summer as I had the opportunity to engage in thoughtful

It is far too easy to lose our way and feel adrift when we face heavy demands due to negative media narratives about education, the layers of data, multitudes of committees, and hours of lesson planning and grading, all while juggling our personal lives. That is why I am so grateful for each of you—my literacy people—who keep me going through whatever storms (or heat waves) may try to slow me down.

Cindi

RESOURCES

By Donna Herman and Deb Augsburger

[illegible]

- Early childhood and the primary grades: Use storytelling and interactive read-alouds,

rather than passively reading aloud to children. Encourage children to talk about and use new vocabulary, instead of merely memorizing new words for a test.

- Intermediate grades: engage students in talking about their ideas before writing, as well as thinking aloud and discussing ideas before, during, and after reading. Students receive teacher and peer feedback on their speaking as well as the content of their writing before presenting orally.
- Middle school: Students research a topic of interest and present as experts, developing their Oracy skills through spontaneous Q & A and debate instead of reading a “report.”
- High school: Teachers utilize Oracy practices by engaging students in current events or content discussions, first teaching students how to read and listen and then how to respond to peers as they consider multiple perspectives on a topic, rather than scripted speeches.

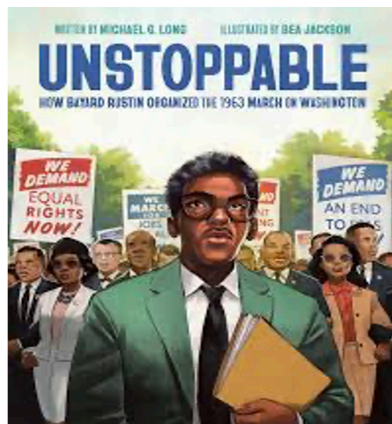
See resources on the [ISBE](#) website for the [ICLP](#), as well as here: <https://tinyurl.com/25dh3juc>

In the next issue, we will discuss Phonological Awareness in the [ICLP](#).

Family Literacy Bookshelf

By Barb Ashton

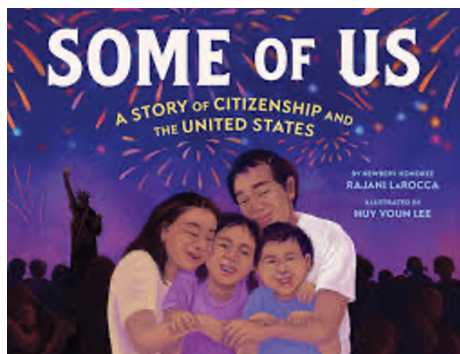
Although August has no major holidays to celebrate, it is Family Fun Month and National Picnic Month. There is still time to enjoy your local summer fest or your local county fair, and the Illinois State Fair. So grab your favorite summer beverage, relax, and enjoy the remaining days of summer.



Every August, we are reminded about The March on Washington and Martin Luther King’s famous *I Have a Dream* speech and the effect this event had on the Civil Rights Movement and America. To understand how this event came about, read [*Unstoppable: How Bayard Rustin Organized the 1963 March on Washington*](#) by Michael G. Long. This is the biography of Bayard Rustin, a civil rights activist who planned and organized this event for jobs and freedom. Prior to this event, Bayard organized protests against war, nuclear weapons, racial segregation, and discrimination with nonviolent action. Bayard was also a friend and mentor to Martin Luther King. Although Bayard faced opposition and failure, he wouldn’t be stopped and the event became the largest protest in the history of the Civil Rights Movement.

Unstoppable is an informative and engaging read and serves as a nice introduction to the Civil Rights Movement but also lets the reader know about a lesser known figure who played an important part in the success of The March on Washington. The beautiful illustrations capture the emotions felt by the main character. While this book is geared to younger readers, it can also be

used with all grade levels. The back of the book provides additional information for further reading on this time period and event.



Through news and media coverage, along with executive orders, we frequently hear the words immigration, deportation, and citizenship. Just what do these words mean? To help our students understand these words, read the new book [***Some of Us: A Story of Citizenship and the United States***](#) by Rajani LaRocca. So what does citizenship mean and look like? As the author states: "Some of us are citizens by birth. Some of us are born beyond the United States and gain citizenship through immigration and naturalization." This is a story told in lyrical prose of the many paths people have taken to become citizens of the United States. Over the years

these people who live among us have contributed much to our communities and America through their work, knowledge, and skills, etc. They also share their cultural heritage as well. They contribute and participate in our democracy/government at all levels. Through the use of mixed media artwork, the illustrations depict families of various cultures that enhance the message of the book. **Some of Us** is a book that is timely and the back of the book contains an author's note about citizenship along with resources and bibliography for additional reading.



Do you like to solve mysteries or puzzles? If so, then grab your pencil and solve the puzzles/mysteries in the new book [***MURDLE JR.: Curious Crimes For Curious Minds***](#) by G. T. Karber. Join Junior Detectives, Jake, Olivia, Julius, and Buster McPaws, as they present various puzzles and mysteries that need your assistance to solve each case and figure out Who Dunit. Each case starts with a short narrative followed by several clues and logic puzzles that lead to solving the case. *MURDLE JR.: Curious Crimes for Curious Minds* is kid friendly and age appropriate for late primary students and up. So get on board the *MURDLE* craze with humorous illustrations, clues, logic puzzles, and hours of fun while discovering the culprit and solving the mystery. Upon completion of the book you can become a Junior Detective and receive a membership card in the Detective Club. There is also an adult version of *MURDLE BOOKS*.

Looking Ahead

- August 1: Francis Scott Key Birthday** – Wrote America's National Anthem
- August 4: U.S. Coast Guard Day** – The branch of military that protects our waters & coastlines
- August 5: Campfire Day/Night** – Make some S'mores to enjoy with family and friends
- August 9: Book Lovers Day** – Enjoy reading a good book on the patio or a favorite spot
- August 12: World Elephant Day** – Read about elephants and how we can protect them
- August 14: V-J Day** – World War II ends with Japan's surrender
- August 19: Aviation Day** – Attend an air show or read a book about planes
- August 21: National Senior Citizen Day** – Thank a Senior Citizen today
- August 26: National Dog Day** – Give this loveable pet an extra hug or read a story to your pet

This year also marks the 70th Anniversary of Disneyland Theme Park in California. The theme for the yearlong celebration is Celebrate Happy. There is a beautiful new book – ***The Happiest Place on Earth*** by Don Hahn and Chris Merritt that celebrates the anniversary.

Professional Learning and Development Committee

By Laura Beltchenko, Chair

The new 2025/26 school will soon be beckoning us back into our classrooms. As educators, we continue to hone our craft to provide the best possible learning environment and instruction for our students. This starts with quality, targeted, and meaningful professional learning and development. According to the [International Literacy Association](#) "Beyond research and evidence-based standards; high-quality preparation for future and practicing teachers, leaders, and specialized literacy professionals, *there is a great need for robust and ongoing professional learning.*" 2019, p. 4.

With this in mind, the Illinois Reading Council has a staff of outstanding professional development consultants who can customize for your district, school, or grade level professional learning in all aspects of literacy development.

Our literacy professionals are grounded in the [IRC Belief Statements](#). These values include the recognition that:

- educators need access to high quality resources and professional development that prepares them to be flexible and adaptable to best serve their students.
- that education is a valued profession, and therefore educators must be trusted and empowered as decision-makers.

The IRC and the Professional Learning and Development Consulting Services welcome your school district inquiries for professional learning and development. Our consulting staff are experts in educational practices that support the literacy initiatives of our state and your school district. Please consider the services of IRC. This link will take you directly to the [IRC Professional Learning and Development Webpage](#).

IRC, Literacy Learning Links and Resource Padlet of Teaching and Student Learning Tools

If you are in need of updated literacy articles, new professional books or websites that support your needs without having to pay for the resource then the [IRC Literacy Learning Links and Resource Padlet](#) is where you should click right now! This Padlet has been the effort of many IRC Council members around the state who have utilized the materials, websites, and resources that have benefited their delivery of instruction for their students. Updates are ongoing and new categories and resources are always being added. If you have a resource to share please complete the Google Form for [Share a Resource](#) and it will be reviewed and posted in the appropriate category on the Padlet.



UPCOMING PD EVENTS

Don't forget to take advantage of some upcoming PD opportunities planned throughout Illinois.

- **August 8, 2025: Jacob Grant**, Illinois Reads Author of *Umani*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 9, 2025: Candace Fleming and Eric Rohmann**, Illinois Reads Author of *Penny & Pip*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 9, 2025: Ruth Spiro**, Illinois Reads Author of *Love Grows*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 9, 2025: Illini Reading Council and Vermilion Valley Reading Council** will co-host **Engaging with Care: Reading and Responding in Ways that Encourage Mindfulness, Respect, and Empathy** with Karla Moller and Martin Lehrer from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm at the Barnes & Noble Bookstore, Marketview Shopping Center, 65 E Marketview Dr, Champaign, Illinois.
- **August 10, 2025: Mike Petrik**, Illinois Reads Author of *One Cool Duck #1: King of Cool*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 10, 2025: Nadia Ahmed**, Illinois Reads Author of *The Ghost Who Was Afraid of Everything*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 11, 2025: Janet Nolan**, Illinois Reads Author of *Bats Beneath the Bridge*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 12, 2025: Kat Chen**, Illinois Reads Author of *Play Outside With Me*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 13, 2025: Wendy Parris**, Illinois Reads Author of *Stage Fright*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 14, 2025: Jeffrey Brown**, Illinois Reads Author of *Hulk Teach*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 15, 2025: Ray Nadine**, Illinois Reads Author of *I Felt Myself Slipping*, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 16, 2025: Ann Zhao**, Illinois Reads Author of *Dear Wendy*, will be in the

Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.

- **August 16, 2025: Ronni Davis**, Illinois Reads Author of ***This Night Is Ours***, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 17, 2025: Lisa Katzenberger**, Illinois Reads Author of ***A Love Letter To My Library***, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.
- **August 17, 2025: Fiona Cook**, Illinois Reads Author of ***The Wheel Of The Year: An Illustrated Guid To Nature's Rhythms***, will be in the Secretary of State Tent from 1:00 to 3:00 pm at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield, Illinois.

To view the full **IRC Events Calendar**, please visit the [IRC Website](https://www.illinoisreads.org/).

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

AUGUST 7-17, 2025



COME AND MEET THE ILLINOIS READS AUTHORS IN THE TENT OF ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE
AND THE HONORARY CHAIR OF ILLINOIS READS, ALEXI GIANNOULIAS!

FRIDAY, AUGUST 8 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SATURDAY, AUGUST 9 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SATURDAY, AUGUST 9 1:00 TO 3:00 PM	SUNDAY, AUGUST 10 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SUNDAY, AUGUST 10 1:00 TO 3:00 PM	MONDAY, AUGUST 11 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	TUESDAY, AUGUST 12 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM
UMAMI by Jacob Grant Grades K-2	PENNY & PIP by Candace Fleming and illustrated by Eric Rohmann Ages Birth-4	LOVE GROWS by Ruth Spiro Grades K-2	ONE COOL DUCK #1: KING OF COOL by Mike Petrlik Grades 3-5	THE GHOST WHO WAS AFRAID OF EVERYTHING by Nadia Ahmed Grades K-2	BATS BENEATH THE BRIDGE by Janet Nolan Grades K-2	PLAY OUTSIDE WITH ME by Kat Chen Ages Birth-4
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	THURSDAY, AUGUST 14 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	FRIDAY, AUGUST 15 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SATURDAY, AUGUST 16 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SATURDAY, AUGUST 16 1:00 TO 3:00 PM	SUNDAY, AUGUST 17 10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM	SUNDAY, AUGUST 17 1:00 TO 3:00 PM
STAGE FRIGHT by Wendy Parris Grades 6-8	HULK TEACH by Jeffrey Brown Grades 3-5	I FELT MYSELF SLIPPING by Ray Nadine Grades 6-8	DEAR WENDY by Ann Zhao Grades 9-12	THIS NIGHT IS OURS by Ronni Davis Grades 9-12	A LOVE LETTER TO MY LIBRARY by Lisa Katzenberger Ages K-2	THE WHEEL OF THE YEAR: AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO NATURE'S RHYTHMS by Fiona Cook Grades 3 to A Adult



SECRETARY of STATE
ALEXI GIANNOULIAS

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
CENTER FOR THE BOOK
ILLINOIS AFFILIATE



Visit
illinoisreads.org
for more info!



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Members are encouraged to submit articles at any time to irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org.

#WhatIAmReading: Share a book that you are reading, in 3 to 4 sentences. Creative pictures of you and your book in your favorite reading spot are encouraged.

IRC Highlight Reels: Share snapshots of successes in your classrooms in 100 to 300 words. Remember no success is too big or too small to share and pictures welcomed!

Other Literacy Topics:

- Books the Kids Loved This Year
- My New Favorite Professional Books and Resources
- Skills and Strategies
- Current Research in Literacy
- And any other literacy topics that interests you!

Thank you for helping to inspire your fellow educators! Posts will be shared on social media too!

QUICK LINKS

[Visit the IRC Website](#)

[Full IRC Events Calendar](#)

[Latest on the IRC Conference](#)

[Available IRC Awards and Grants](#)

[Bring IRC PD to your School District](#)

[Learn more about the Illinois Reads Program](#)

Questions? Please feel free to reach out to the Illinois Reading Council by email at irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org or by phone at 309-454-1341.

See what's also happening on our social media sites:

