

# FLORIDA Reading NEWSLETTER ASSOCIATION

Leading the Way to Literacy

AN AFFILIATE OF THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION VOLUME XXVIII, NO. 2

Winter 2008

Dear FRA members,

As I write the winter newsletter, we are having one of the rare cold snaps where it actually feels like "my definition" of winter. I am stretched out on my couch with an old family quilt wrapped around my legs for the sole purpose of keeping my feet warm. Instead of curling up with a great book, I'm trying to help my computer beat out the cat for lap space so I can write you a note.

Four years ago on a January day, I was in my office trying to put the finishing touches on my syllabus when my phone rang. On the other end of the phone was a father desperate for someone to help his high school son improve his reading. I asked the father a series of questions and determined that his son probably did not need tutoring or additional reading classes but instead needed a boost of enthusiasm toward reading. I offered to form a "book club" with his son and four or five of his buddies. The father thought this was a marvelous idea and asked me to repeat my proposal so his wife could hear my idea on their speakerphone.



I went home that evening excited about this new opportunity that I had already turned into a research project. I explained the day's events to my husband and he chuckled to himself and said, "Deb, you aren't going to get five jocks to come read with you every Wednesday night!" The air shot right out of my sails as I realized what sounded like a great idea to this young man's parents and to me probably wouldn't be an exciting venture for five 16 year old Lacrosse players.

The following Monday, I received a call from the Mother saying she had rallied four boys and wondered if I could start on Wednesday. At our first meeting, I realized that even though the term 'rallied' had been used, 'coercing' would have been more accurate. I asked all four of the young men why they were sitting in my office and the answers ranged from, "If I didn't come, my Dad said I couldn't have the car this weekend" to "Mom made me come." I asked the boys to give me one

month. If they weren't enjoying themselves I would cancel the Wednesday night book club and take the responsibility for ending our time together. They enthusiastically agreed.

I had carefully perused my bookshelf for a book that might catch the interest of four adolescent male lacrosse players. I had no idea of their reading level and wanted to find a book that would interest them and that would be easy for them to read without help. I chose *Echohawk* (Durrant, 1998) because I remembered a scene in the book where the Native American boys were engaged in a Lacrosse match. I handed each of them a copy and let them determine how much of the novel they would read by the next week. One of the boys commented how "cool it was they got to choose." They did not like me referring to the group as the boys book club so after a short discussion, they changed it to the Guys' Book Club.

To make a long story short (because my editor limits my words with you) it was a great success. I won them over when I gave them full responsibility for choosing the third novel. They chose the biography *Whatever You Say I Am: The Life and Times of Eminem* (the rapper, not the candy). After Book Club ended, one of the fathers told me they were testing me and were actually shocked that not only did I say OK, but I read it and made it an interesting discussion. We argued, discussed and criticized this piece, um, writing. It was one of the best book club discussions I had witnessed.

We continued book club from January through August and then ran into scheduling problems with the senior school year. I sought permission from all the guys' parents to send a proposal to IRA where they would be my co-presenters. The proposal was accepted but IRA fell the same week as the lacrosse regional tournament and I was fully aware of the ranking of their priorities. I asked them to meet one additional time so I could videotape their discussion for the presentation and they all agreed.

As the discussion wound down, I asked them why this had been such a success. What they said astonished me because in a short span of three minutes, they stated exactly what the research literature said about book clubs:

- Guys like to have control of how much they read.
- Guys like to work with their friends.
- Guys like (really) like expository texts.
- Guys like to choose what they read.

What I learned most from this research project was that guys have a real enthusiasm for reading but it isn't the same as mine, or most other female teachers. Literature circles, or book clubs have the potential to engage adolescent males in quality literature. I know this is true because the father that started all this, called me at 10:00pm one summer night to tell me for the first time in his life, he walked into his son's room to say good night and he was reading a book, and not one that had been assigned!

Sincerely,

Dr. Debra Wellman  
President, Florida Reading Association  
Associate Dean of the Faculty, Rollins College

## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR .....

Hello, Everyone, Happy 2008 to you all!

A belated Happy New Year, but no less heart felt. I hope the first month of 2008 has brought you health, new endeavors and a surprise or two. I started 2008 thinking of poetry. I miss poetry.

As FCAT is just around the corner, I thought it might be fun to find a poem about FCAT. I searched the Web, but all I found were practice pieces for FCAT poetry reading. This was not quite what I had in mind, so I kept searching.

I found, <http://www.unf.edu/~nstanley/fcat.htm>, this website is from the *Reading Reptile* our former FRQ editor, Niles Stanley. Take a look, it has great interviews and poetry too.

Then I remembered a conversation I had with a friend, just last week, about the US poet laureates. We just do not seem to think much about the poet laureates, do we?

- Did you know that Florida has a poet laureate? He was appointed with this lifetime honor in 1980.
- Do you know who the current US poet laureate is? He is a native of Yugoslavia
- Do you know who the first female poet laureate was? She was known for her poems of long sentences made up of nouns and action sentences.

You'll find the answers someplace in this newsletter. Just a little scavenger hunt to get you thinking about poetry.

Whew! After 24 Google pages of searching for children's poetry about FCAT, I found not one children's poem about this test. But I did find this Valentine poem by Shel Silverstein

### LOVE

Ricky was "L" but he's home with the flu.  
Lizzie, our "O", had some homework to do.  
Mitchell, "E" prob'ly got lost on the way.  
So I'm all of love that could make it today.

*Happy Valentine's day!*

Remember April is National Poetry month.

Dr. Joyce V. W. Warner, Editor  
[jvwarner@gate.net](mailto:jvwarner@gate.net)

Supported by Dr. Nancy Masztal, Consulting Editor



## AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Pam LaRiviere, chairperson

For **Awards and Scholarships** see the **link** on FRA's website <http://www.flreads.org/>. All awards and scholarship information is listed there with their criterion and deadlines. One award is waiting for you!

Marie Silverman Scholarship Award

Elementary Reading Teacher of the Year

Secondary Reading Teacher of the Year

Marguerite Cogorno Radencich Award

Marilyn Sharp Classroom Action Research Award

Distinguished Service Award/FRA Hall of Fame

FRA Beginning Teacher Conference Grant

FRA Local Council Grants Program

Membership Award

Celebrate Literacy Award

## CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARD

Coordinators Shannon Ayrish and Becky Beran

For the **Children's Book Award** see the **link** on FRA's website <http://www.flreads.org/>.

### Children's Book Award Timeline

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>January 1</b> | Web site allows schools to enter their votes online. Schools may send tally sheets via web, email, fax, or US mail. |
| <b>April 15</b>  | Voting closes for the Book Award.   |
| <b>May 1</b>     | Winners will be announced on the web site.  |

*Don't forget to vote!*

## CONTESTS and LITERACY PROJECTS

### **Adolescent Literacy:**

See four projects on the **Adolescent Literacy Link** on FRA's website <http://www.flreads.org/>.

**Annual Florida Reading Association Poster Contest**, Dr. Ellis Somers, chair

Secondary students in Florida schools are invited to create reading posters that will be exhibited at the Secondary Reading Council (SRC) State Conference held in Panama City, April 2008. Entries will be judged by conference attendees and fabulous prizes will be awarded as well.

We would like to express our gratitude to all those who participated and hope this project is both beneficial and motivational for adolescent readers. Thank you for supporting literacy in this very creative way.

Go to [http://www.flreads.org/contest/poster\\_contest.htm](http://www.flreads.org/contest/poster_contest.htm) for all the details:

- Announcement Flyers to download and distribute
- Contest flyers to download and post
- Poster Slogans
- Rule and Regulations

**Deadline: April 7, 2008**

**Florida Teen Book Map Project for Adolescent Literature**, Dr. Terry Cavanaugh, chair

The **Florida Book Map Project** is designed to help Florida teachers, reading coaches, and students find high interest books that take place in Florida. The Florida Reading Association invites you to recommend novels that teens and tweens enjoy and which have Florida settings and you have found to be of high interest. Join FRA in celebrating our Sunshine State through adolescent literature by submitting your suggestions to this resource. Submissions will only be used to create a Florida Teen Book Map available on the FRA web page. For details, ideas and possibilities see:

[http://www.flreads.org/adolescent\\_lit/FL\\_book\\_map/index.htm](http://www.flreads.org/adolescent_lit/FL_book_map/index.htm)

**Motivation Matters: Quick Tips for Adolescent Literacy**

A new project: Contribute your teaching tips to Motivation Matters. You can share your successful experiences as well as discover a place to collect new teacher tested approaches

**Elementary and Tween Literacy**

**Book Hook Contest** deadline was January 31, 2008. See the **Book Hook link** on FRA website <http://www.flreads.org/>, Dr. Michelle Kelley, chair

## STUDIES AND RESEARCH

Artis Gray, Chair

### **Teachers on the Cutting Edge**

The 2008 issue, Volume 20, is our anniversary issue. The "hot topic" for the very special issue is **Differentiating Instruction for Literacy**. Contact Dr. Artis Gray, [artisgray@comcast.net](mailto:artisgray@comcast.net), with your suggestions for articles you would like to see featured in a future Teachers on the Cutting Edge, please let us know by contacting any of the FRA Board members. The committee members are currently in the process of selecting the articles to be included in the 2008 edition of *Teachers on the Cutting Edge*, to be published in April 2008.

**Send your ideas for this outstanding anniversary issue to Artis today !**

## FRA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE from Florence Brainerd . . . FRA's Legislative Advocate

### January 2008 update

The Florida Legislature will convene March 4 for the 2008 Session. For the past several months interim committee meetings have been held, customary for this time of year. The big issues of discussion and concern are tax spending, insurance, and how Amendment 1, if passed, will affect education and its budget.

Of the many education bills filed to date and heard in early committee meetings, one of interest to reading educators is SB 286 by Senator Steve Wise of Jacksonville. Its House companion is HB 491 by Rep. Jennifer Carroll, of Duval and Clay countries. The bill specifies in-service requirements for educators who provide instruction in ESOL. If you recall, the Governor vetoed this bill last year. However, this year, it has the approval of Education Commissioner Eric Smith. The Senate Education Committee and Senate Appropriations Committee recently passed the bill. Requirements are:

- (1) For the primary English instructor (Basic ESOL) who is an English/Language Arts teacher, 300 in-service hours or equivalent.
- (2) For an instructor teaching the basic subject areas of reading, mathematics, science, social studies, or computer literacy, 60 in-service hours or equivalent.
- (3) For an instructor teaching other subject areas other than basic ESOL or basic subject areas, 18 in-service hours or equivalent.
- (4) For a school administrator or guidance counselor, 60 in-service hours or equivalent.

Other filed education bills of interest are:

- SB 132 – Sen. Wilson – Elected Cabinet position for the Commissioner of Education (a joint resolution proposing an amendment to Constitution).
- SB 148 – Sen. Wilson – Increase in instructional hours for PreK program.
- SB 158 – Sen. Wilson – Intensive Reading requirements – lab hours.
- SB 172 – Sen. Wilson – Increase salary for beginning teachers.
- SB 180 – Sen. Wilson – Cost of living increase for teachers PreK-12.
- SB 242 – Sen. Wise – Single gender classrooms (optional to schools).
- SB 254 – Sen. Wilson – Progression – Eliminating mandatory retention. (Much language deleted from statute.)
- SB 702 – Sen. Rich – Mandatory requirements for increased levels of education for PreK instructors.
- SB 1170 – Sen. Lynn – Assessment – End of course testing for high school students.

Be sure to go on line and read the entire content of these listed bills at [www.flsenate.gov](http://www.flsenate.gov) and [www.myfloridahouse.gov](http://www.myfloridahouse.gov). Also, take time to acquaint yourselves with your legislators, and let them hear from you on issues that are important to you.

### Other News -

Education Commissioner Eric Smith has named Frances Haitcock as the new Chancellor of K-12. The former Chancellor Cheri Yacke left DOE to pursue other educational challenges. She has been a good friend to Florida Reading Association.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Seeking a new IRA Coordinator

Shirley Gibson's three year term as IRA Coordinator is ending. The IRA Coordinator is FRA's liaison with FRA's District Directors, FRA and IRA. The Coordinator's tasks are many. To list just a few, the Coordinator:

- assists in the chartering and development of local councils
- encourages and supports local council projects
- monitors the status of local chapters
- trains district directors
- acts as the primary facilitator for the annual leadership workshop
- communicates regularly with state and local council leaders
- disseminates information from IRA to local councils
- attends state board meetings and delegates meeting
- maintains accurate records of chartered councils
- carries out duties as assigned by state board of directors

Shirley has been our stalwart coordinator and leaves behind an organized, clear focus for this very important position. If you have an interest, or would like to nominate someone for the IRA coordinator position, please contact Debra Wellman at [dwellman@Rollins.edu](mailto:dwellman@Rollins.edu) or Joyce Warner at [jvwarner@gate.net](mailto:jvwarner@gate.net). Please put IRA coordinator position in the subject line.

**Membership:** Please see [http://www.flreads.org/about\\_FRA/membersh.htm](http://www.flreads.org/about_FRA/membersh.htm) for the new membership application and information about the benefits of being a member of FRA. Or contact Nancy Laszlo, membership chair at [nancylaszlo@aol.com](mailto:nancylaszlo@aol.com).

**February is Black History Month:** See this website for reading and books to share with your students. <http://www.justreadflorida.org/BHM.asp>

## CONFERENCE NEWS

### Florida Branch of the International Dyslexia Association Conference

Annual conference:

- Jacksonville, Omni Hotel
- April 6 and 7, 2008
- See <http://www.idafla.org/> for details and registration form

### Secondary Reading Council Conference

Annual conference:

- Panama City, Edgewater Beach and golf resort
- April 18 and 19, 2008
- See <http://www.flsrc.org/> for details; registration, presenter proposal forms and secondary teacher of the year nominations.

## CONFERENCE NEWS (cont'd)

This is your opportunity to come together to network with secondary reading educators from all over the state. There will be awesome nationally known presenters and your own peer educators who will share their knowledge and practice.

### Florida Reading Association Conference

Annual conference:

- Orlando, Shingle Creek Resort
  - September 4 -7, 2008
  - See <http://www.idafla.org/> for details and presenter proposal form
- Deadline for presenter proposals 2/16/08

## NEWS FROM THE LOCAL READING COUNCILS

You may contact any local council through [shirleyJG13@aol.com](mailto:shirleyJG13@aol.com)

**District 5 – Baker, Duval, Nassau, St. Johns, Levy**  
**January 2008 – D. N. Pedro**  
**[duvalreadingcouncil.org](http://duvalreadingcouncil.org)**

**The Duval County Reading Council** activities:

- Festival of Trees program sponsored by the Junior League of Jacksonville. DCRC sponsored a tree, based on the main character of Fancy Nancy by Jane O'Connor, titled *"Fancy Nancy's Christmas"*. Fancy Nancy's signature color is fuchsia and her tree was decorated in shades of pink and purple with lots of accessories. Trees, representing various books, were on display at a Jacksonville Public Library.
- Children's Story Time was held at a library in Jacksonville. Members of the Duval County Reading Council were present to bring a beloved children's story to life. Fancy Nancy, herself, also made an appearance.
- Hubbard House, an annual community service project, was again very well supported this year. Hubbard House is an organization that provides a safe haven for battered women and their children. The purpose of this project is to promote literacy at Hubbard House and support services provided for the children at this facility.

**District 9 – Brevard, Orange, Seminole  
January 2008 - S. Gibson**

[www.orangecountyreadingcouncil.org](http://www.orangecountyreadingcouncil.org), [www.scps.k12.fl.us](http://www.scps.k12.fl.us), [www.scps.k12.fl.us/src/index.html](http://www.scps.k12.fl.us/src/index.html)

**Orange County Reading Council** activities:

- November: Literacy Roundtable for middle school and high school teachers.
- January: Parent Night.
- April: Possible mini-conference
- For additional information, please contact Kristin Abel at [abelk@ocps.k12.fl.us](mailto:abelk@ocps.k12.fl.us).

**Seminole Reading Council** activities:

- December: Holiday Shopping at Borders, Oviedo. Michelle Kelley and Nicki Clausen-Grace signed copies of their book which was featured at SRC's January meeting. Students who are featured in the book attended, also.
- January: Michelle Kelley and Nicki Clausen-Grace spoke on their newly published IRA book and IRA's November Book of the Month, *Comprehension Shouldn't Be Silent: From Strategy Instruction to Student Independence*.
- February: Digital Storytelling.
- For additional information on SRC, please contact Taylar Clements at [taylor\\_clements@scps.k12.fl.us](mailto:taylor_clements@scps.k12.fl.us) or Analexis Kennedy at [analexiskennedy@mac.com](mailto:analexiskennedy@mac.com).

**District 10 – Hillsborough, Pinellas, Polk  
January 2008 – M. Adams**

**Pinellas County Reading Council** activities:

- "Light the Way to Literacy" school supply collection for the homeless shelters
- Inaugural "Jennifer Jones Memorial Scholarship" to be given annually to a PRC member's child who is an education major
- January 29 professional development workshop with Dr. Irene Updegraff

**District 11 – Sarasota  
January 2008 – A. Smith**

**Sarasota County Reading Council** activities:

- Shared the holiday spirit by wrapping gifts at Borders Book Store. Donation proceeds will go towards their International Reading Partner to help support "For the Love of Reading."
- January 15th, guest speaker Carol York from Scott Foresman & Pearson Curriculum gave a presentation on "Writing."
- "For the Love of Reading," the event for which SRC won an FRA Local Council Grant, will take place on February 14th. Members will model reading aloud and will provide a free book. This program is a Community Outreach to mothers who attend Cysis and their toddlers.
- Upcoming events include the Mini-Conference with topics:
  - o Publishing Mini-books,
  - o Balanced Literacy and Reading-Writing Connection, Poetry Reading and Co-Operative Learning, etc.
- March will see the Poetry contest for students. Winners will present their works and be honored at Selby Library.

**District 12 – Flagler, Lake, Marion, Sumter, Volusia  
January 2008 – S. Johnson**

**Marion County Reading Council** activities:

- November: Storyteller and author Gerald Hausman provided an entertaining and informative program on Native American, African American and West Indian culture.
- December: Holiday Book Shopping at Barnes & Noble
- The MCRC service project is collecting new or once read books for women and children at The Domestic Violence Center in Ocala.

## Ideas for your teacher bag of tricks

### *Ensuring Engagement During Independent Reading*

By Dr. Michelle Kelley

Have you ever wondered whether your students are really reading during SSR (Sustained Silent Reading)? Do you have students who often switch books or avoid reading? Are there students in your classroom who have difficulty engaging with text? We answered yes to all of these questions and it led us to rethink independent reading. After four years of successfully using R5 (read, relax, reflect, respond, and rap), our structured independent reading approach, with intermediate-aged students, we have identified eight suggestions for making sure all of your kids are avid, engaged readers.

#### **Tips for Implementing Independent Reading**

1. Decide what your goals are for independent reading and explicitly describe your goals and expectations for this time. Explain what you will be doing and what the students will be doing.
2. Make sure that what you are doing during this time supports students in their reading and conveys the message that this time is highly valued. Examples of how you can do this include observing students, taking a status of the class, or conferring. Non-examples would be answering your email, grading papers, or writing lesson plans.
3. Observe your students during independent reading in order to identify those students who have engagement issues, such as pretending to read, frequently getting up, talking instead of reading, or staring into space.
4. Have a predictable structure to your independent reading time and make sure it is something you do consistently.
5. Know what your students are interested in and make sure you have reading materials they want to read. This means you must know their reading levels and are familiar with children's books or at least have a way to find good books. Knowing their interests and reading levels will guide you in assisting students with text selection. Do not limit text selection based on AR or Lexile levels.
6. Build response into your independent reading structure. This can be written and/or spoken.
7. Utilize this time as an opportunity to reinforce comprehension strategies taught. This can be accomplished through conferring with students and during response-related activities.
8. Model your love for reading by enthusiastically sharing what you are currently reading, giving booktalks, and reading aloud.

Michelle Kelley and Nicki Clausen-Grace are Seminole Reading Council Members and authors of *Comprehension Shouldn't be Silent: From Strategy Instruction to Student Independence*, International Reading Association's (IRA) Book Club selection for November 2007. Look for their new title available this spring from IRA, *R5 in Your Classroom: A Guide to Differentiating Independent Reading and Developing Avid Readers*.

#### **Poet Laureates:**

Edmund Skellings: See <http://edmundskellings.com/>

Mona Van Duyn: See <http://www.helium.com/tm/405128/first-female-serve-laureate>

Charles Simic: See [http://www.loc.gov/poetry/laureate\\_current.html](http://www.loc.gov/poetry/laureate_current.html)

And of course Shel Silverstein: <http://www.shelsilverstein.com/indexSite.html>



*Leading the Way to Literacy*

AN AFFILIATE OF THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION

VOLUME XXVIII, NO. 2

Winter 2008

Articles for the next FRA Newsletter should be sent to the newsletter editor:

**Joyce VW Warner, Editor**

Barry University - ADSOE

Andreas 233

11300 NE Second Ave., Miami Shores, Florida 33161

E-mail: [jvwarner@gate.net](mailto:jvwarner@gate.net)

NOTE: E-mailing articles allows the editor to cut and paste your information directly into the FRA Newsletter.

**FRA Newsletter**

Published by the Florida Reading Association, an affiliate of the International Reading Association.

**Deadlines for Upcoming Issues**

Issue	Deadline
June/July	May 15
October	September 15
January	December 15
March	February 15

**FLORIDA READING ASSOCIATION**

1037 Paddington Terrace

Lake Mary, FL 32746

NON PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
TAMPA, FL  
PERMIT NO 2899