



SCIRA SPEAKS

Newsletter of the South Carolina Council of the International Reading Association • 2014-2015 Year in Review



YEAR IN REVIEW...

The old saying, “Time flies when you’re having fun!” sure came true as the 2014-15 SCIRA year came to an end. It seems as if we just began our “race to literacy”! So many wonderful professional opportunities were made available to SCIRA members during the year; and before you could blink an eye, they were gone!

November brought our annual Fall Literacy Workshop held for the third year at Ballentine Elementary. Presenters from across the state shared new and exciting reading and writing strategies that could be implemented in their classrooms the very next day. A special “thank you” is extended to Melissa Nicholson, Fall Literacy Workshop chairperson, for planning this outstanding event. We hope that SCIRA members and non-members will continue to take advantage of these types of workshops in the future.

Engines were “cranking” as we made our way to Myrtle Beach, SC for the 40th Annual SCIRA Conference, ***Racing to Literacy***. Eddie Marshall, conference chairperson, really “revved” everybody up with exciting authors and illustrators, as well as, informative break-out sessions. Featured speakers included Byron V. Garret, who captured everyone’s attention with his topic of Family Engagement: The Next Frontier, and Dr. Katherine McKnight, who shared information on closing the achievement gap with the struggling reader. Nikki Grimes and Lester Laminack, two noted authors, engaged the luncheon audiences with interesting tales about their writing strategies. And who could forget the fun “Pit Party” with Tim Lowry, storyteller extraordinaire, who entertained the crowd with funny and touching stories from his childhood. Overall, the conference was a “roaring” success!

As always SCIRA is proud of the opportunities and benefits its members receive. Grants, scholarships, and many professional growth opportunities are some of the ways SCIRA meets the goal of promoting literacy through the improvement of reading instruction, encouraging reading as a lifetime tool for learning, and fostering the information of the reading habit.

I have enjoyed my years as a state officer for SCIRA and will continue to be an active member in my local council. I encourage everyone to consider becoming more active in local council activities through officer positions or committee chairpersons. The more you are involved, the more you benefit and grow professionally. Thank you to all who have supported and helped me through these years.

Rockin’ and Rollin’ with Literacy,

Gina Mays, 2014-15 SCIRA President

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Taking Literacy Day by Day across SC

Libraries are essential to Family Literacy. In South Carolina, libraries bridge the gap for those who may not have access to resources for a variety of reasons. Libraries educate the whole family by providing computer and internet access, materials such as books and music, access to health information to help them lead healthier lives, and interaction with staff that are skilled in programming to engage young children to learn.



A Head Start Classroom in Aiken, SC receives the Day by Day calendar at a special storytime

In order to assist family literacy efforts, especially in public libraries, across South Carolina, the South Carolina State Library launched the *South Carolina Day by Day* family literacy activity calendar. Recent census data tells us that there are still hundreds of thousands of young children who are living in poverty, living in high poverty areas, in single parent households, who are not attending preschools, and whose caregivers lack secure employment. Many parents and caregivers did not complete high school and often are not exposing their children to developmentally appropriate books and activities. Library staff,

especially children's librarians and parenting center staff, will be able to create new and fun programming for children using the calendar's developmentally appropriate material. Recent articles point to the importance in building vocabulary in very young children, connecting words to actions in order to see greater results as they grow older. This calendar provides hundreds of activities—at least one per day—that provide families and teachers with a variety of different activities based on the early literacy practices of sing, talk, write, read and play. Each month centers on a theme which provides recommended reading, songs, activities, family wellness information and interactive games. If families can only spend a few minutes together, this calendar will give them something they can use to make sure that this is quality time as well as educational time.



A Family Literacy Night in Florence, SC - children received a Day by Day calendar along with other materials

The calendar highlights South Carolina from state symbols to nature and historical sites to state events. The art is all original created for this project by a Spartanburg County book illustrator. The content was selected by professional youth librarians and early literacy practitioners. The online version of the calendar, www.daybydaysc.org, has interactive links for the local county public library system, a readalong story database, links to fingerplays and family friendly videos, and many of arts, crafts and health related links. The calendar will open up a new set of opportunities for parents and caregivers to work at home with their children, to come to the library and expose them to books and educational music, and whether they have a computer in the home or just at the library, introduce them to a multimedia literacy center through the calendar's online version which will engage a variety of learning styles through color, music and activities. *Day by Day* is available free of charge to librarians, educators, childcare providers and those who will use the calendar in an educational and programmatic setting. Please contact the South Carolina State Library at 803-734-8666 or visit us on the web at www.statelibrary.sc.gov for more information.



StoryfestSC—state-wide summer reading program kick off; each child receives a bag with 2 books and a Day by Day calendar

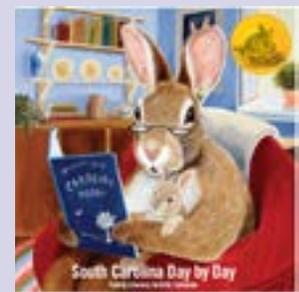
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Everyday Literacy training—attendees receive a Day by Day calendar to use in practice



The State Library's webpage that leads you to information about the Day by Day calendar (main site: www.statelibrary.sc.gov)



The Fifth Anniversary Edition of South Carolina Day by Day released in 2014.

What's New in Literacy Teaching?

Katie Stover, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Furman University

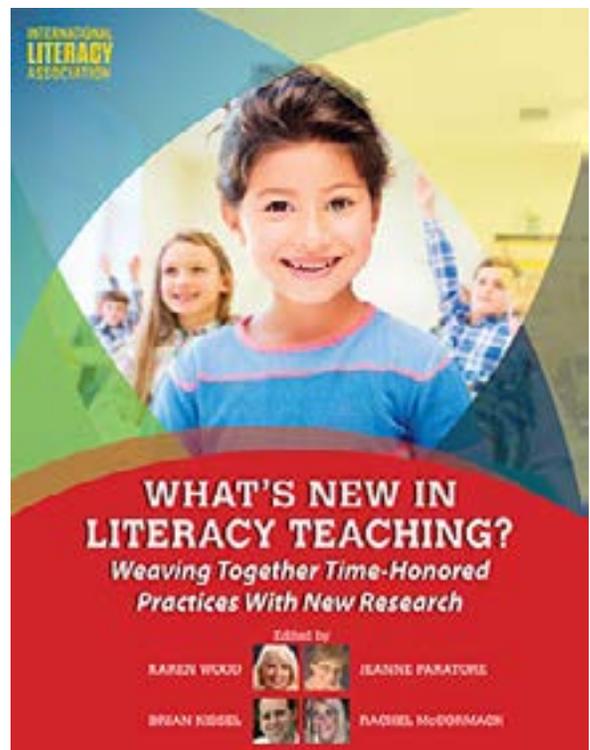
As Chair of SCIRA's Research and Intellectual Freedom Committee, I strongly believe that our instructional practices should be informed by the research in the field. With summer quickly approaching, this is an ideal time for educators to engage in their own professional learning through professional development and reading of the professional literature.

Recently, ILA published a new e-book entitled, *What's New in Literacy Teaching: Weaving Together Time-honored Practices with New Research* edited by Karen Wood, Jeanne Paratore, Brian Kissel and Rachel McCormack. Contributors, including leaders in the field, translate research into meaningful and engaging literacy practices. Included in each chapter are practical classroom examples such as scenarios, transcripts, screenshots and links to online resources.

I am thrilled to have had the opportunity to co-author a chapter in the third section of the book: "Literacy Learning With and Through Technology". In keeping with the role of technology, we felt that it was important to emphasize the role of digital aspects of teaching and learning through the use of various online tools. Our chapter titled, "Digital Discussions: Using Web 2.0 Tools to Communicate, Collaborate, and Create," was co-authored with Brian Kissel and Karen Wood, both editors of the book and Kim Heintschel, a doctoral candidate at UNC Charlotte. In this chapter, we describe various forms of social media that students use outside of the classroom and examine ways teachers can incorporate those online tools in meaningful and engaging ways in the classroom.

We feel that this book will be a great resource for teachers and has the potential to influence classroom practices for many years. Take a look for yourself...

<http://www.literacyworldwide.org/get-resources/books/166>



CHEROKEE COUNTY READING COUNCIL NEWS

COUNCIL NEWS

The Cherokee County Reading Council planned for a productive year. In August, local building representatives received packets of information for their schools and our membership drive began. Council officers were introduced: Tina Morris, President; Kim Propst, Vice-President; Kim Camp, Secretary; Virginia Scates, Treasurer; and Kristin Mitchell, Membership Director. The South Carolina International Reading Association (SCIRA) theme, "Racing to Literacy," was announced. Building representatives shared ideas for a successful membership drive.

In November, our council sponsored our *Reading Teacher of the Year* Banquet. Each school winner received an engraved plaque and a copy of the digital photo story video that was shown during the banquet. The video highlighted the 20 school winners with pictures of each teacher working with their students. Administrators also play a key role in our council. We recognized our administrators nominated for the SCIRA Administrator of the Year at this banquet. Finally, we announced the district teachers of reading and administrator of the year.



In April, our council sponsored the annual Young Writer's Gala which showcases students' poetry and prose. School and district winners' work was printed in an anthology and distributed at the gala. Over 400 parents, grandparents, principals, teachers, and friends were expected to attend the event. Students received a certificate, medal, anthology, and monetary reward at this event.

The Cherokee Reading Council continued to look for opportunities to "race to literacy" in our schools, county, and state. We are extremely proud of all the accomplishments, dedication, and talents of each of our CRC members and officers, and we are looking forward to continuing another exciting year.

CHARLESTON READING COUNCIL NEWS

COUNCIL NEWS

Submitted by Angie Grimes

The 2014-2015 year was truly an exciting and busy one for the Charleston Reading Council. Our year started off with a wonderful collaborative event with the Berkeley County Council — "Fueling Up with Bargain Books." Members were able to spend the morning browsing books at the Reading Warehouse and purchasing books at amazing prices; a combination of things that all teachers love—books and bargains!

In November, our Distinguished Teacher of Reading event was a fantastic example of collegial sharing of highly effective literacy practices. The caliber of candidates and practices was impressive. The Charleston Reading Council proudly selected Amanda Cook from Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary as our DTR, and she represented us well at the 40th Annual SCIRA Reading Conference.

Our final big event of the year is our "Growing Young Writers" essay contest. We had an impressive number of submissions this year, and had a great evening reading and discussing the essays. Our winning essayists were determined, and our recognition event was held on April 23 at our local Barnes & Noble.

Lastly, we are excited about our new partnership with our local Barnes & Noble. We are looking forward to supporting and attending upcoming author events. We also have plans for two bookfairs for the 2015-2016 year. Proceeds from the bookfairs will allow us to donate books to support the literacy development of local at-risk youths.

We had quite a year, and this year looks like it's shaping up to be an even more successful one!

Berkeley Reading Council Delivers Books

On December 16, 17, 2013 Berkeley Reading Council members delivered books to 13 Berkeley and Dorchester county school district Head Start sites so that each of the 609 children at these sites would take a book home for the holidays. A book they could call their own!

With the help of a grant from SCIRA, Laura Ellis, BRC Membership Director, and Cindy Bise, BRC President coordinated with BRC Treasurer Linda Grant and Jeff Baker, co-owner of The Reading Warehouse, to purchase the necessary 609 books to be distributed. The ladies of the Berkeley Intermediate School PTO then wrapped each book so that the children would have the fun of tearing into a world of reading!

Ms. Ellis, a Family Service Associate with Head Start suggested the idea of using the grant money for the books because she had been on several home visits and noticed there were no books in many of the lower-income homes. The entire BRC executive board helped to coordinate the logistics of delivery and by the end of the day on December 17, and with additional help from Dr.

Karen Whitley, Associate Superintendent of BCSD, and several BRC building representatives, every child in Berkeley-Dorchester Head Start had a book.

The giving didn't stop there, though. When schools reopened after the holidays, several classes of children sent homemade thank you cards to the members of BRC. One young man graciously thanked BRC for the books writing: "Thank u for my bok. I wil love it frevr."

President Bise, who had dressed as Santa Claus to deliver books at Berkeley Intermediate, commented "Seeing the look in the children's eyes as they received a wrapped book from Santa was such an inspiring moment for the Berkeley Reading Council. It reminded us of why we do what we do."

Berkeley Council plans on applying for grant funding again and is determined to send another round of books home for the holidays.

The 'man' in the Santa suit is CINDY BISE. Of course you recognize Linda Grant. The others in the pictures are Head Start children and 1 teacher (Keal Bristow) and a Family Service Associate (Marilyn Pinckney) from Cross Elementary. You'll also see Linda with Joy Ellington (FSA) and Dora Howard (School Counselor and BRC Building Rep) from Cainhoy Elementary.



Submitted by Wanda Wylie, President

Last spring, the Columbia Area Reading Council was winding down our year. It seemed that we were speeding down the track as we got to the end of the school year's race. In December, we "Celebrated a Winning Team" by inviting current members to our session at Barnes & Noble. Our second event was held at the SC Book Festival. According to the SC Book Festival committee, the festival presents a diversified group of authors, poets, and scholars to the readers and writers of South Carolina free of charge. The SC Book Festival offers panel discussions and presentations on a variety of popular genres and literary topics, from the latest trends in new fiction to regional favorites to outstanding poetry performances.

Unfortunately, we only gained one new member, but had a great time networking with authors and other literary agents and organizations. Through our efforts, we secured additional speakers for our end of the year celebration and found speakers for next year's roster. We even made plans to partner with a local adult literacy organization for a community service project, and to promote the Palmetto Project's initiative to get books into the homes of children from birth to five years old. This event was a great way to meet like-minded people. We were able to introduce Columbia Area Reading Council to those who were unfamiliar with us and reacquaint ourselves with those who were familiar with our cause.

Our final event for the year was a banquet honoring our Distinguished Reading Teacher and members. Dr. Loretta Leaphart, Science Teacher in Richland County School District One, was an awesome motivational speaker who gave teachers the words of encouragement they needed to complete the school year on a positive note. Her focus was on love of children, love of job, and love of self. Despite, previous obstacles, this race is ending on a positive note for our local council. As we saw the checkered flag in the distance, the Columbia Area Reading Council was on the way to constructing an awesome project for the next year. Our foundation has been laid. Be sure to keep watching to see what we become!

Ready...Set...Paint!!!

The Newberry Reading Council held a "paint-n-pour" session for our members in September to get the races started for the 2014-2015 meetings. A local artist and former art teacher from Newberry County guided us in painting a seasonal painting of a pumpkin. The session was one of the largest turnouts we have had in very long time with more than 35 teachers, administrators, students, and district office staff in attendance. We all enjoyed a relaxing fun-filled session painting our own version of a pumpkin, which in turn inspired many of us to let our creative side out. At our next gathering, we give books away to community children during Newberry's Oktoberfest on Oct. 4th.



By Vicki Powell, Foothills President

On December 4, 2014, The Foothills Council was honored to have author, Melinda Long, as our quest speaker. She is the author of many books. A few of her books you might be familiar with are, How I Became A Pirate, Pirates Don't Change Diapers, The 12 Days of Christmas in South Carolina, and When Papa Snores. It was a fabulous evening enjoyed by all! She gave us an overview of how she became a writer and how writing is a process. She read How I Became A Pirate (in a pirate's voice) and the audience had to be pirates and interact throughout the book. It was so much fun! The teachers love her! The meeting was a very interactive and we laughed a lot!

After the meeting, the Foothills Officers took her to dinner and had a lovely time getting to know her and sharing stories.

Foothills highly recommend having her at one of your meetings in the future. I know we will invite her back in the near future. Mrs. Long's information can be found on-line.

Joan Stephenson and Maryann Hoffman provided us with books to purchase and to have autographed. We highly recommend Joan Stevenson as a resource for books. Her company is TKO. She will also be at the SCIRA conference in February. Go by and visit these two wonderful ladies! Joan's email is joanlovesbooks@aol.com.

Our council began Racing to Literacy with Legislators on October 23 at Eastside Elementary School. Three of the representatives from the Laurens area joined our council to discuss the pertinent issues facing our community during the legislative session. Senator Danny Verdin and Representatives Mike Anthony and Mark Willis spoke passionately about the necessity for educators to voice their opinions and concerns. The meeting provided a wealth of information, and the gentlemen were gracious and eloquent guests.

On November 6, Robin O'Bryant from Sanders Middle and Robin Patterson from E B Morse Elementary were chosen as the Distinguished Teachers of Reading. We celebrated the tremendous accomplishments each of these ladies has experienced this year. Mrs. O'Bryant and Mrs. Patterson will represent the Laurens County Reading Council during the SCIRA conference at Myrtle Beach in February.

On November 20, Laurens County Reading Council met at Laurens Elementary School. Our theme was "Racing to Literacy" with author, Jerry Pallotta. Mr. Pallotta graciously provided copies of his latest *Who Would Win?* book. He shared information about his writings, as well as student work embracing the Who Would Win? theme. Mr. Pallotta visited several of the schools in our district during his stay, and students were thrilled to meet the author.

The next meeting of the LCRC was on March 20 at Laurens Elementary School. The theme was be "Rockin' and Rollin' with the Public Library." Our own, Mrs. Lisa Lyons, shared the exciting events taking place at the Laurens County Library. Our council also held a drawing for a Kindle during this meeting.

Our final meeting of the year hosted all of our Distinguished Teachers of Writing. "Rockin' and Rollin' with DTRs" centered on the amazing teachers that are shaping the lives of children throughout our districts. These reading teachers are inspiring and molding future writers in their classrooms every day.

Last year the Pee Dee Reading Council had three meetings. At our first meeting in August which was at Southern Hops the 2014-15 officers were introduced. They were Marcia Hargrave as President, Lindsey



Herring as Vice President, Linda Dowling as Treasurer, and Nathaniel Marshall as Membership Director. Lots of information was shared with members. From the Francis Marion Performing Arts Center and the Florence Little Theater the 2014-15 calendars were shared. Members were surveyed to gain insight for future council planning. Information on scholarships and grants was given out. Orderves were served. Gift bags were given to members. The meeting was concluded with a drawing for Barnes and Noble gift cards and prizes.



The year's Distinguished Teacher of Reading was Robyn Heffernan who teaches at Moore Middle School in Florence.



Our next meeting was a Barnes and Noble night at the Magnolia Mall store in Florence. Distinguished Teacher of Reading nominees shared best practice ideas that could be used in the classroom. Our nominees first set up project boards and table displays, and then shared classroom best practices, and finally were interviewed. It was also Barnes and Noble's Teacher Appreciation Night. Stations were set up for members to visit. Refreshments were provided. The night was one of our best meetings all year. The meeting concluded with drawings for Barnes and Noble gift cards and prizes.



Our third and final meeting was in March at Southern Hops. It was a time of awards and recognition. The Distinguished Teacher of Reading nominees were given certificates and gift cards. Grant winners were awarded grant money and certificates. Congratulations teachers for a job well done! Refreshments were served at all meetings and members had



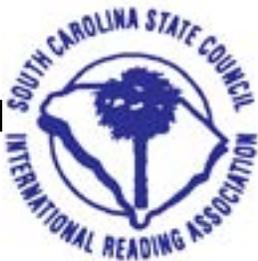
Submitted by: Melissa Nicholson - ERC President

Edgefield Reading Council kicked off the New Year with a membership drive. The building reps gave each person in their building a membership application along with an invitation to join the pit crew and help ERC "Race to Literacy". Each person also received a nice treat bag as a special thank you for joining. Edgefield Reading Council plans to have their first meeting on October 14th at W.E. Parker Elementary beginning at 3:30 with the business meeting. After the business meeting Candice Walsh, the Read to Succeed Coordinator at the State Department, will present and answer any questions that attendees have about literacy endorsement in South Carolina. The Edgefield Reading Council board is looking forward to choosing two Distinguished Teachers of Reading in November along with many other activities throughout the year to promote and encourage literacy in Edgefield County.

Spring Leadership Awards, In Pictures...



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