

Mississippi Reading Association

2014 - 2015 Newsletter Volume 1, Issue 2 - September p.1

From the Desk of the President

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IMPORTANT DATES AHEAD:

- Mississippi Reading Association Scholarship or Grant Applications are due October 15, 2014! You could be awarded up to \$500.00 to improve literacy in your classrooms and schools.

- Deadline for MRA State Conference Registration is October 24, 2014 for reduced pricing. Come join us in Biloxi on December 3rd-5th. This conference will enhance your instruction in your classroom. Please register today!

Visit www.msreading.org to register for grants, scholarships, or the state conference.

What do you do to revitalize your teaching practice? One thing I enjoy is having conversations with other educators about what is working in our classrooms. You know teachers like to talk about their school days and how they challenge their students (and their students challenge them).

Would you enjoy a stress-free time to share, brainstorm, and learn from colleagues? Your district may offer wonderful professional development or professional learning communities, but I am thinking of another platform for connecting to other education professionals: Local Reading Councils!

I know. Your calendar is full. When do you have time to spend talking about literacy? There are only so many hours in a day. Maybe we can rethink how we share with colleagues. I have a friend who leads an ESL twitter discussion on Monday nights attracting readers and commenters from all over the world. I am not ready for a weekly commitment like that but some of you may like that kind of connection.

Here is what I do try to do to foster literacy conversations in my district. For many years, I have helped with our local reading council. I collect paperback books for door prizes, send out meeting notices, and arrange for speakers or topics.

Our group meets four times during the school year. We meet after school for about 45 minutes. We have snacks and talk about literacy. Sometimes we share good books.

Sometimes we have a speaker share teaching tips or lesson plans that worked. Our group includes teachers of all grade levels and many subjects besides reading/language arts.

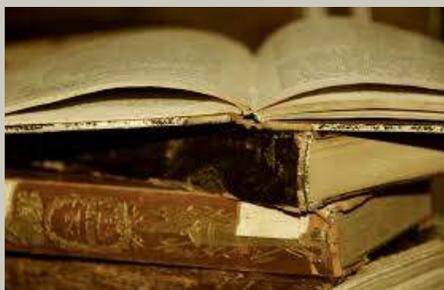
Some good sources of topics are *The Reading Teacher*, *Reading Today*, and the *ReadWriteThink* website all from the International Reading Association. The latest 'What's Hot and What's Not' is always a good conversation starter. See the most recent *Reading Today* for more on that.

Our local reading council is a relaxing, non-threatening place to learn from others. We discuss ways to teach concepts, encourage experimentation, inspire new lesson ideas, and mentor each other. Teachers have discovered professional books, trade books for students, and international projects that may interest their students in council meetings.

Local councils are the foundation of our state reading association. Is there a local council near you? Would you like to find a group of like-minded professionals in your area? Our area directors and state coordinator can help you. Look around your school and district. Seek out book lovers, word nerds, and others who love literacy. We will be happy to publicize your meetings on our Facebook page. There may be a local council in your future.

Janice Cate, NBCT

MRA President

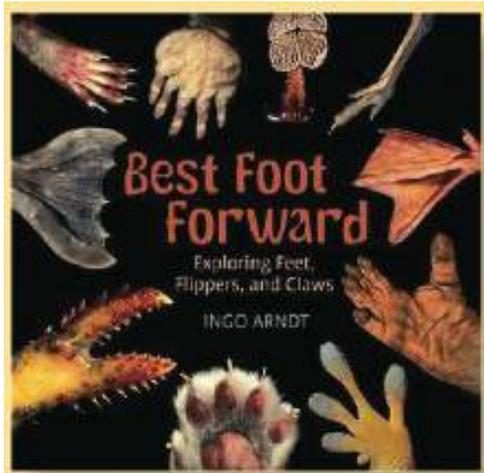


MRA State Conference Spotlight

IRA
TEACHER
PICKS

The 2014 MRA Conference is approaching quickly! We have a great line-up and strongly encourage you to go register early for this event. Our headlining presenters this year will be Gail Boushey and Joan Moser, known to many as "The 2 Sisters". They are passionate educators and collaborators and are working towards the single vision of creating a replicable, reliable way to teach children how to be independent lifelong learners, starting in their earliest years.

methods, and weaving fun into everything they teach and do. The sisters started their careers in Washington State in the U.S. They really are sisters—and elementary teachers with over 60 years of combined instructional experience between them in grades K-6, including Special Education, Reading Resource Specialist and Literacy Coach roles. Joan earned her Master's Degree in Education as a Reading Resource Specialist. Gail's Master's of Education Degree is in Special Education.



From *Best Foot Forward: Exploring Feet, Flippers, and Claws* by Ingo Arndt. Photographs Ingo Arndt.

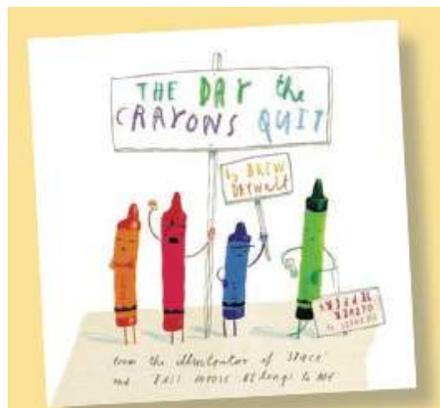
To that end, Gail and Joan are published authors of the best-selling books *The Daily 5: Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades* (now in its Second Edition) and *The CAFE Book: Engaging all Students in Daily Literacy Assessment and Instruction* and many related online articles. They've created over a dozen professional development DVDs, including *Good-Fit Books*. They established the Daily CAFE website in 2008 as a learning and sharing hub for educators and have curated its growth ever since. I strongly encourage that you check it out before the conference!

Learn more about Gail Boushey and Joan Moser's teaching approach at The Daily CAFE, www.thedailycafe.com.

Check our website, www.msreading.org, for updated presenter information and concurrent sessions starting in November. Are you in the zone? See you this December!

LeAnn Carter, Ed.D.

2014 MRA Conference Chair
MRA President-Elect



From *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Daywalt. Ill.

The 2 Sisters
Gail Boushey & Joan Moser

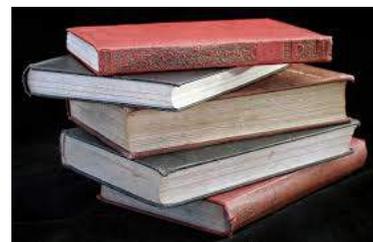


Sponsored by:



- ✦ *The Daily 5: Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades*
- ✦ *The CAFE Book: Engaging all Students in Daily Literacy Assessment and Instruction*

They established the Daily CAFE website in 2008 as a learning and sharing hub for educators and have curated its growth ever since. Learn more about Gail Boushey and Joan Moser's teaching approach at The Daily CAFE, www.thedailycafe.com.



Conference
BeauRivage
Technology
TextComplexity
CommonCore
December 3-5
JohnGrisham
MississippiReadingAssociation
TheDailyFiveBiloxi
InternationalReadingAssociation
Children'sLiteratureRigor
TeachingWilliamFaulkner
MikeArtell
TheTwoSisters
WordNerd

From the editor...

How many of you dread teaching poetry? I can remember the days early in my career where I fled from iambic meter, rhythm, and rhyme scheme. The main problem was my confidence. I can not even remember writing a poem until my senior year of high school in creative writing with Mrs. Susan Edwards in Eupora, Mississippi. Mrs. Edwards taught me about haiku, cinquains, and I Am poems. Even after her instruction, I still felt at a disadvantage teaching poetry early in my career. I polled my fifth grade students and asked them what they thought poetry was all about. Their answer, you know it, RHYMING! They all had the same preconcieved notion that poetry was all about rhyme. Due to my participation in the University of Mississippi Writing Project Summer Institiute and taking an American literature class at 30 years old, I finally realized that poetry wasn't a difficult concept or challenge, and

it wasn't all about rhyme. In modern poetry, free verse reigns. I had to now convince this to my students. After polling, I mysteriously introduced a type of poem. I did not tell them that this was a poem; I just told them to write down eight excuses not to write a poem. I used the diagram (right) from:

<http://ettcweb.lr.k12.nj.us/forms/cantwrite.htm>

The students did not realize by listing those eight excuses into this diagram that they were writing a poem. I then was able to show the students that the words did not have to rhyme. The students could not wait to write another poem. Their fears were conquered. So, teachers, don't shy away, adapt.

Murray Collum, MRA Newsletter Editor

Sample "I Can't Write a Poem"
Poem by Murray Collum (below)

"I Can't Write a Poem" poem

Line 1: Forget it

Line 2: You must be kidding

Line 3: Excuse #1

Line 4: Excuse #2

Line 5: Excuse #3

Line 6: Excuse #4

Line 7: Excuse #5

Line 8: Excuse #6

Line 9: Excuse #7

Line 10: Excuse #8

Line 11: Time's up? Uh oh!

Line 12: All I have is a dumb list of excuses.

Line 13: You like it? Really? No kidding.

Line 14: Thanks a lot. Would you like to see another one?

Forget it

You must be kidding

I need more coffee to think about poetry

This is going to make no sense

Is it time to go, yet. I do not want to do this.

I want to use my computer, but I don't know if it will be frowned upon.

Dickinson, Whitman, Frost, come on... I don't want to be that solitary menace

I am a Spinelli, a Dahl, a Clearly - not a famous Master Manipulator Like Hughes

My lead keeps breaking.

I may just have to pee.

Time's up? Uh oh!

All I have is a dumb list of excuses.

You like it? Really? No kidding.

Thanks a lot. Would you like to see another one?

- Murray Collum

LOCAL COUNCIL SPOTLIGHT

The Blue Mountain Council:

So, how does one decide on a council's focus for the upcoming year? For the Blue Mountain council, we rely on the individual member's expertise, the make-up of the communities in which the council serves, and the International Reading Association initiatives. Our capabilities are based on instructional facilitators at various levels in our profession. Some are undergraduate students, while others are either classroom teachers or college instructors. Each has his or her unique gifts that address the myriad of differences in our school communities. As spectators in our communities, our members understand the advantages and disadvantages of socioeconomic means, the practicality of everyday experiences, and the diverse cultural thresholds that lead to learning and teaching. Based on the diversity in our schools and communities, our focus for the upcoming year will include several of the IRA's cultural resolution initiatives. These initiatives include encouraging and assisting in recognizing cultural diversity and its relationship to literacy development, making literacy accessible to all, and becoming culturally sensitive in interactions with all learners.

In keeping with the theme of recognizing cultural diversity and its relationship to literacy development, we will host Literacy on the Lawn, one of our main projects, on the campus of Blue Mountain College in the spring. Anywhere from 400-500 area kindergarten and/or first graders will arrive in shifts from 8:30 A. M. until 1:00 P. M. to participate in literacy activities, such as reader's theater, an engaging play, and stories read from different perspectives integrated with other curriculum areas. For a sneak peek into this year's theme, *Once upon a Time*. . . , children will become absorbed in fairy tales from long ago and far away. The classroom teacher will get a book set, as well as each child will receive his or her own book, thus aiding in making literacy accessible to all using culturally sensitive themes. The best is yet to come!

Lela Hale,
BMLC Council President

From the CORE GURU...

PARCC recently released updated versions of the rubrics that will be used to score the writing tasks on the PARCC assessment. Students in grades 3-8 and English II will write three texts as part of the Performance Based Assessment. Each of these texts will be scored by humans using the rubrics and anchor papers, or papers that have been scored by a group of PARCC state representatives that serve as examples of each score point. For the Literary Analysis Task and Research Simulation Task, students will write informative/explanatory texts or opinion (grades 3-5)/ argumentative (grades 6-11) texts. These texts are scored in three constructs: reading comprehension, written expression, and writing conventions. The PARCC assessment is the first high stakes assessment that Mississippi students will be scored for reading comprehension through their written responses. Teaching students to analyze text and to report this analysis effectively through writing will be a major shift for our students. Furthermore, this will also impact instruction. Teachers will need to change instruction to ensure that students are learning to show effective analysis of text in their writing.

Students will also complete a Narrative Task as part of the Performance Based Assessment. While students will be scored for written expression and writing conventions on the Narrative Task, they will NOT be scored for reading comprehension. Because students are writing a narrative story (fiction) for the Narrative Task, it is tremendously difficult to score a student's writing for reading comprehension.

These rubrics are written to score writing on an assessment. Because the rubrics were created to be general, used across multiple grade levels and different genres of writing, the rubric are not specific enough to be used for classroom use. Writing rubrics used in the classroom should be specific to the grade-level standards.

Vincent Segalini, MDE ELA Office Director

MRA Public Relations Co-Chair



TRANSFORMING
LIVES
THROUGH
LITERACY

Annual Conference & Exhibits
July 18-20
Institute Day
July 17

