



Virginia State Reading Association

We Teach Virginia to Read!

The mission of the Virginia State Reading Association is to lead in the promotion of literacy through collaboration, advocacy, and professional development and to further the mission and goals of the International Reading Association.

President's Message

Leading for Literacy was the theme of our VSRA Governing Council meeting in Richmond this November. At the meeting, Past President Vickie Oakley provided food for thought in regard to the characteristics of excellent literacy leaders, such as being knowledgeable, flexible, collaboration-oriented, organized and passionate. To highlight the importance of being informed, knowledgeable literacy leaders, Dr. Kelly Cartwright, President of the Virginia College Reading Educators, shared important research conducted by JLARC on strategies to promote third grade reading performance in Virginia. VSRA members are encouraged to take the time to review the study briefing package at <http://jlarc.state.va.us/meetings/September11/Reading.pdf>, or the full report available at <http://jlarc.state.va.us/meetings/September11/Reading.pdf>.

Literacy Leaders must also be knowledgeable in order to advocate for important issues. Sue Hirsh, Co-Chair of the Legislative Committee for VSRA, highlighted VSRA's Legislative Day in Richmond, which is planned for Monday, January 23, 2012. This is an exciting day for VSRA members to observe an Education Committee meeting at the General Assembly and to meet legislators to promote literacy issues in Virginia. As a VSRA member, if you are interested in attending Legislative Day, please contact your local council president or Troilen Seward for more information. Everyone is welcome!

VSRA is also Leading for Literacy around the world. Jenny Bisha, Co-chair of VSRA International Projects shared creative ways to promote international literacy in our Virginia classrooms, such as the Amy's Travels Project and partnerships with local Rotary clubs through Rotary International. Sharon Eshler showcased VSRA's longstanding partnership for literacy development in Ghana, Africa. Since 2004, VSRA's International Project in Ghana, has conducted teacher workshops, built libraries and filled classrooms with print. Through VSRA, we are changing lives with the gift of literacy.

In March, VSRA members will have another Leading for Literacy opportunity as we Blast Into 21st Century Literacies at the annual conference in Richmond, Virginia, March 15 – 17, 2012. This is an excellent opportunity to collaborate, advocate and grow through professional development and networking opportunities, leading for literacy in our classrooms, our state, our country and the world! Register at www.vusra.org today! Looking forward to seeing you in Richmond.

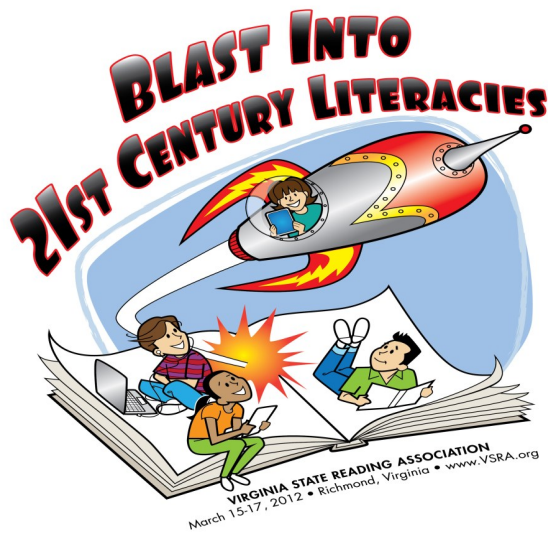
Volume 12, Issue 2

Winter 2012

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Jennifer Jones
VSRA President



2012 VSRA Conference Update

Mark your calendar for 45th Annual VSRA Conference to be held March 15-17, 2012 at the Richmond Convention Center and Richmond Marriott Hotel! We have an exciting slate of speakers and events. The General Session keynote speakers will be **Dr. Sharon Vaughn, Dr. Nell Duke, and Dr. Taffy Raphael. Dr. P. David Pearson** will be the speaker at the Administrator's Tea on March 16. Other professional featured speakers are **Shane Templeton, Marcia Invernizzi, Laura Robb, Julie Coiro, Sharon Walpole and Mike McKenna.**

On March 16th, the Author Breakfast will highlight **J. Patrick Lewis**, U.S. Children's Poet Laureate, and the Annual Banquet author will be **Patricia Reilly Giff**. On March 17th, **Sharon Draper** will be the Literacy Brunch author to bring the conference to a wonderful end. **Kevin O'Malley, Shelia Moses, Kwame Alexander, and Ginjer Clarke** are some of the featured speaker children's authors who will be at the conference. Please join us in Richmond for rewarding professional development and networking with teachers and other literacy professionals from around Virginia and the country!

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LOCAL COUNCIL NEWS

Greater Washington Reading Council

Greater Washington Reading Council held its annual conference on November 3, 2011 featuring Dr. Timothy Rasinski. Over 270 GWRC members learned from his presentation, "From Phonics to Fluency to Proficient Reading: Helping All Students Achieve Competence in Two Key Areas of the Reading Curriculum." During our conference, the twenty-sixth edition of our peer-reviewed journal, *Making Literacy Connections*, was unveiled by our editor, Dr. Ann Kennedy. The journal selected nine articles written by GWRC members for this year's edition! Also, during our conference, we announced GWRC's Administrator of the Year, Mrs. Kathleen Hwang who is the principal of Sanders Corner Elementary School in Loudoun County.



GWRC Actively Participates in Guatemalan Literacy Project

Kathy Davin (GWRC, Chair of International Projects) and Jenny Bisha (RVRC, VSRA Co-chair International Projects)

The Greater Washington Reading Council has established a partnership with a literacy project in the rural highlands of Guatemala. The focus is on first language (Ixil) literacy and vocabulary development in the second language (Spanish).

A bit of background: before the 1996 Peace Accords, students who attended school in the Ixil region of Guatemala were immersed in Spanish from the minute they entered the building. There was no instruction in the home language. Few learned to read. This region was disrupted by the Civil War. Life is basically subsistence agriculture. Families earn a little cash by pooling together what little coffee they grow and selling it through a cooperative. But the outside world is about to overwhelm this region of Guatemala with the introduction of improved highway access, dam construction, radio, cell phones, etc. Literacy is essential to the survival and well being of these communities. Literacy is best introduced in the language of the home.

The *Centro Educativo Privado Experimental William C. Botnan* is a Kindergarten – sixth grade primary school located in the village of *Santa Avelina*, municipality of *San Juan Cotzal*, department of *Quiché*, Guatemala. The language is *Ixil*, one of the 23 Mayan languages spoken in Guatemala. The school was built and is funded by the non-governmental organization HELPS International (www.helpsintl.org). The teachers at the school in *Santa Avelina* have worked with a team of multi-national educators, including the GWRC, to establish a program of bilingual literacy. The goal is to introduce literacy in the home language, *Ixil*, and transition to literacy in Spanish by the end of sixth grade using a 90/10 model (90% home language instruction/10% Spanish instruction in *Pre-Primaria*, or kindergarten, transitioning to the reverse by grade six).

The focus is on **Reading By** -- introducing guided reading in grades 2-4, literature circles in grades 5 and 6, and interactive reading in kindergarten and first grade. The in-service presentations built upon previous training in **Reading To** (class read-alouds with a focus on vocabulary development in the second language) and **Reading With** (using songs and poetry charts to reinforce grammar points in the second language).

The Greater Washington Reading Council and an advanced team of teachers have accomplished many milestones. Among them are organized sets of trade books in the library, assessment of 2nd & 3rd graders using the Evaluación del Desarrollo de Lectura (EDL), (the Spanish version of the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)) and the production of a video of a kindergarten class using centers while the classroom teacher conducts individual assessments.

GWRC and fellow VSRA members are encouraged to participate in this international project in many ways, including joining a group of educators in July for a week of on-site teacher training in best practices for literacy instruction. Their visions for this project include compiling a library inventory and identifying sets of books that need more copies. They also hope to purchase books for guided reading in grades 2 and 3 and want to purchase a Reading A-Z (www.readinga-z.com) license for literature circles in the upper grades. In January of 2012, teachers will be completing and publishing sets of Reading A-Z books translated into Ixil for use in Pre-Primaria (kindergarten) & 1st grade (35 titles were selected to begin translation).

The Greater Washington Reading Council would like to extend an invitation to all members of VSRA to join them on their upcoming July 2012 trip to Guatemala. Contact Kathy Davin at kathleen.davin@apsva.us for more information on ways you and your council can support this project.



US visiting teacher takes a running record of a 3rd grader.



Students selecting books in the school library.



Local teachers attend an afternoon work session.



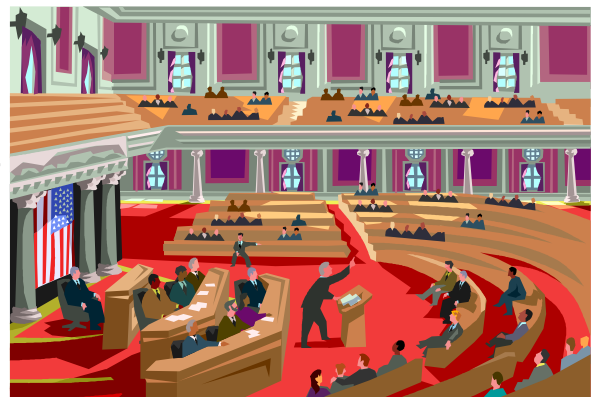
First grader reads a book about his school written in his first language (Ixil).

Legislative News

On November 4, 2011, Marilyn Schempf, Troilen Seward, and Kelly Cartwright from Christopher Newport University, met with Tom Santangelo and Tracy Robertson at the Virginia Department of Education. The results of the JLARC report, *Strategies to Promote Third Grade Reading Performance in Virginia*, were discussed.

Verizon is this year's Friend of Literacy nominee. The company has donated \$250,000 for an Early Literacy Project and has received recognition from Governor McDonnell. The will receive the award at the VSRA Conference in Richmond.

The VSRA Legislative Day will be Monday, January 23, 2012. VSRA members are encouraged to attend the General Assembly Education Committee Meeting in Richmond. We will meet Troilen Seward at 8:30 AM to the left of the lobby of the General Assembly Building. If you plan to come, please let one of the Legislative Chairs know. Also, contact your senator or delegate in advance to make an appointment to see them that day.



The Legislative Committee is working to develop a brochure to define the roles of the reading specialist, literacy coach, and other reading personnel. Please send any comments you'd like to share to the committee chairs.

Legislative Committee Chairs:

Marilyn Schempf (mbschempf@cox.net)

Sue Hirsh (sue.hirsh@gmail.com)

Troilen Seward (troilen@aol.com), VSRA Advocate

Virginia State Reading Association 2012 Ballot

Vice President (Vote for one)

_____Candidate: Kimberlyn C. Lancaster

Career Position: Title I Reading Teacher, Bath County Public Schools

Education: Masters of Education, Reading Education - Special Education, University of Virginia

Bachelor of Science, Special Education, James Madison University

Endorsements: Teacher as Leader; Reading Specialist; Specific Learning Disabilities K-12; Mental Retardation K-12

Reading Council: Shenandoah Valley Reading Council

Virginia State Reading Association: VSRA Board member, Exemplary Reading Chair

Professional Organizations: International Reading Association; Virginia State Reading Association; Shenandoah Valley Reading Council; Virginia Association for Adult and Continuing Education; Delta Kappa Gamma member; George Irby Grant Recipient; RIF Grant Recipient; Bath County Friends of the Library board member and secretary

Personal Philosophy: Learning to read is the framework by which nearly all other academic learning takes place

Goals for VSRA: to increase the use of media and technology to advance the mission of VSRA and enlarge membership; to encourage classroom teachers by recognizing their successes, applauding creativity and research, and providing opportunities for professional networking; to increase involvement of special education teachers in VSRA and local councils by encouraging collaboration with reading specialists and providing support through professional development opportunities; to support continued legislative efforts to fund reading specialists in Virginia schools; to continue to provide cutting edge professional development that promotes best practices in literacy education

Contributions I can make to VSRA: If given the opportunity to serve in a leadership role with fellow reading teachers in Virginia, I would work to continue the history of excellence of the Virginia State Reading Association. I believe that as Vice President of the organization I could offer creative thinking and an open mind to new and innovative ideas. My strengths are as an organizer, problem solver, scheduler, persuader and encourager. In my current role as a teacher leader, collaboration and consensus building are key. I feel that I could be useful as a liaison between a state organization and local school division staff. I would also like to work to strengthen the ties we have built with college educators and preservice teachers. In planning the 2014 Reading Conference, I would like to work toward including sessions that support the full spectrum of reading development--from students with learning disabilities to gifted readers. Promoting literacy among children and families is my passion, and serving as a leader in VSRA is the ultimate way to satisfy this goal.



Vice President (Cont'd)

_____Candidate: Charles E. Richards, Jr

Career Position: Teacher, Roanoke City Public Schools

Education: Masters of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, University of Virginia

Bachelor of Science, Early childhood Education and Elementary Education, Radford University

Endorsements: NK - 3 Elementary; 4 - 8 Elementary

Projected Endorsements in 2012: Gifted Education and Library Media Specialist

Reading Council: Roanoke Valley Reading Council

Professional Organizations: International Reading Association; Virginia State Reading Association; Roanoke Valley Reading Council; Blue Ridge Council of Teachers of Mathematics; Virginia Professional Educators

Personal Philosophy: Readers hold the key to many exciting worlds.

Goals for VSRA: to be involved in all areas that affect education in our Commonwealth; continue to strive to advocate for local and state policies that advance literacy and promote literacy habits; to promote advancement in education and research in regard to reading education; provide teachers with a strong voice in which we can research and share through conferences, publications, local councils, and committees to help our teachers promote literacy and communicate the common purpose of devoted educators

Contributions I can make to VSRA: My hope, if elected, is that I will be able to contribute to the Virginia State Reading Association In several ways.

I bring a passion for reading and teaching children to read. VSRA has remained a strong advocate for strong education. It is my hope that I can continue to help foster that excitement and passion for literacy. I will support VSRA goals for literacy by working with local councils and legislators across the state.

I have worked with the Roanoke Valley Reading Council for many years. I also have worked with several civic organizations as a proven leader for twenty years. This experience will help me in VSRA leadership.

I work to stay knowledgeable on current issues in education by reading and attending conferences. This year I attended four conferences and read several books concerning trends in literacy.

I believe that each of us has a skill and talent to bring to our table. As a leader, I believe that I help build a team by encouraging each person to share and grow his talents. I believe that the VSRA team is needed to continue our goals. I am a team leader.

I have taught school for 30 years. I understand how difficult teaching can be but I also understand the wonderful joys that come with the job as well. VSRA believes that children should be the focus of our educational system. I believe that I can help VSRA and the teachers of Virginia keep children as our focus.



Treasurer

_____Candidate: Diane Tsioutsias

Career Position: Reading Specialist, Portsmouth Public Schools

Education: Post graduate, Regent University; Graduate, Old Dominion University; Undergraduate, Norfolk State University

Reading Council: Portsmouth Reading Council

Professional Organizations: International Reading Association; Virginia State Reading Association; Portsmouth Reading Council; Portsmouth Reads; Daycare Administrator's Reading Summit; Carriage Mill Civic League; ASCD; National Education Association; Portsmouth Education Association; PRC School Representative; Virginia Beach Clean Community Committee; Virginia State Association of Adult 4-H Volunteer Leaders; 4-H District Advisory Board; WHRO Volunteer

Personal Philosophy: Of all the subjects that are taught in school, none can be considered more important than reading. Throughout life, the inability to read will affect a person in all areas, both personal and professional.

Goals for VSRA: to assist VSRA by keeping accurate records, preparing treasurer's reports, making timely deposits of funds, processing invoices and statements and following the bylaws of the Association.

Contributions I can make to VSRA: I have worked diligently during my term of office as the VSRA Treasurer. I have kept accurate records, prepared financial reports and paid invoices in a timely fashion. I believe that my past experience and knowledge can continue to benefit VSRA.



IMPORTANT: VSRA elections will be done electronically this year. Members will be sent a link to the ballot at the beginning of February to cast their votes.

Professional Development Opportunity



The **Margaret Sue Copenhaver Institute for Teaching and Learning** welcomes your application to its 13th Annual Conference, to be held June 18-20, 2012, at **Roanoke College**. This year's theme, "Understanding by Design: Prioritizing and Targeting Actions to Improve Student Learning," features keynote speakers, **Dr. Grant Wiggins and Dr. Kay Brimijoin**. Dr. Wiggins is co-author of *Understanding by Design*, an award-winning and highly successful program on curriculum design. Dr. Brimijoin, a twenty year K-12 teacher and administrator, is currently an associate professor at Sweet Briar College and co-author of *Differentiation at Work K-5: Principles, Lessons and Strategies*.

The cost to each participant is \$120, which covers:
participation in all Institute events

- Understanding By Design text materials
- Two nights lodging at Roanoke College
- Breakfasts, lunches and receptions

Please apply online at www.roanoke.edu/msci/ or call for a brochure (540) 375-4937.

Acceptance is competitive, with enrollment capped at 100.



Additionally, the Institute will offer breakout sessions, technology workshops, discussion groups, and time allotted for designing programs to implement in schools. There will be opportunity for collegial interaction, including breakfasts, lunches and afternoon receptions. The Institute's closing luncheon will feature **Mr. Taylor Mali**, one of the most well-known poets to have emerged from the Poetry Slam movement. Mr. Mali is the author of three books of poetry, including *What Learning Leaves* (2002), and *What Teachers Make* (2012). He is a vocal advocate of teachers and the nobility of teaching, having himself spent nine years in the classroom teaching everything from English and history to math and S.A.T. test preparation. He has performed and lectured for teachers all over the world.

Parents in Reading Committee

Attention all bloggers! The Parents in Reading Committee is in need of contributors to our blog located on the VSRA Web site. Do you have a great parent activity you would like share with other educators? Perhaps you have a great idea for how parents can support their children as they learn to read. If you like to write and see your ideas in print, you are the perfect volunteer for this activity. You will be asked to write one short entry during the academic year for posting on the site. Please contact Joan Rhodes, at jarhodes2@vcu.edu if you are interested! Information sending your submission electronically will be uploaded to the VSRA Web site!

Parents and Reading Blog

Submission form

Email submission to VSRAParentBlog@yahoo.com

Name:

Contact Email:

Contact Phone Number:

Address:

School Affiliation:

Include 300-500 word blog entry below. Please use Times New Roman 12 pt font.

8 Exciting Reasons You'll Love Submitting Honor Council ON-LINE

By Cathy Collier, VSRA Vice President

For the first time ever, IRA is requiring councils to submit Honor Council documentation on-line. I'll be the first to admit...I was worried. HOWEVER, you are going to love it! Let's start at the beginning.

1. At www.reading.org, council leaders can access everything you need to make a plan and submit documentation for Honor Council.
2. There is a link for Honor Council Guidelines.
3. There is also a link for an Honor Council Checklist.
4. Most importantly, there is an Honor Council Planning Tool. It is a 6-page planning tool is perfect for councils that have never submitted before, or councils that have someone new submitting their documentation. It has all of the options for each category and columns to help you set up an action plan.
5. You don't have to be a computer genius to figure it out. It is pretty self-explanatory. If you get in a jam, call me.
6. You can save a little at a time. You are allowed to create an account and return to this form and add as you go. You are able to partially complete the form and return to finish the form at a later date. However, you will only be able to submit the form once.
7. You can only submit one form of documentation for each section. You may not think this is an advantage, but as educators we tend to believe we can never have too much documentation. Well, we are making more work for ourselves than is necessary. It's the old adage – work smarter, not harder. If a section requires 2 documents...you can save the document pages under 1 file name, then you can upload the file for that section.
8. You don't have to plan a trip to the Post Office, no postage, and no waiting for delivery confirmation.

P.S. Although Honor and Merit Council are aligned...Merit Council to VSRA will still be submitted in notebook form to me. We aren't on-line with that...but...maybe...



Virginia State Reading Association

We Teach Virginia to Read!

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Virginia State Reading Association
(An affiliate of the International Reading Association)

The mission of the Virginia State Reading Association is to lead in the promotion of literacy through collaboration, advocacy and professional development and to further the mission and goals of the International Reading Association.

GOALS:

1. Support and disseminate knowledge of best practices in literacy instruction
2. Support and disseminate literacy research
3. Foster interaction on literacy issues through collaboration, networking and partnerships
4. Advocate for policies and legislation that advance literacy
5. Provide quality professional development opportunities in the area of literacy education
6. Foster lifelong literacy habits