



Independence/ Fort Osage Council International Reading Association

Newsletter
September 2006

From your President

I hope everyone is having a great start to their school year. We have great things planned for the upcoming year. Your council has worked hard this summer to plan some wonderful learning experiences that support our district curriculum. We are excited about the first meeting with the topic of 6-Traits presented by Bryant teachers. I know I'm looking forward to hearing some new ideas on how to implement the traits.

I will be leading the book study at Barnes and Noble, and we will be using the 6-Traits book as our discussion topic. I have already found some great ideas that I'm looking forward to sharing. Last year was very beneficial, and I enjoyed meeting new friends. I hope to see many of you there.

We are looking for someone to volunteer to be our Hospitality chairs for our meetings. If anyone is interested in this "job", please let me know (vstorey@indep.k12.mo.us). This is actually how I first got involved in the local IRA council. It's a great step into being involved and it doesn't take much time. It can be one person, two people or even a group. We know how we all like food at the meetings; please email me if you are interested. Thanks ☺

Thank you in advance for all your support for the upcoming year!

Vicky Myres, Benton Elementary

Your Council Board Members For 2006-2007 School Year

<i>President</i>	<i>Vicky Myres, Benton</i>
<i>Vice President</i>	<i>Dana Smith, Spring Branch</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Sue English, Retired</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Judy Zeih, Mill Creek</i>
<i>Membership</i>	<i>Karol Palmer, Glendale</i>
<i>Past-President</i>	<i>Paula Erdel, Bryant</i>

Membership

[Celebrate the Magic of Literacy](#)
[Join IRA Today!](#)
[2006 Fall Membership Drive](#)
[Now through October 26](#)

[Win cash for your library](#)

[Greatest percentage IRA membership per building](#)

[1st place = \\$100](#)

[2nd place = \\$75](#)

[3rd place = \\$50](#)

[Send dues and completed forms to your building rep or to Karol Palmer at Glendale](#)

"Thank you" to those who have already joined IRA. We currently have 110 members. That's a great start, but it is only about half of what we need to make our goal of 217 members! There is still work to be done. Please promote IRA in your buildings. Ask a colleague to join. A gift membership for a student teacher or for a para is a great way to show appreciation. Thanks again for your support and dedication to literacy and IRA

General Meeting Information

The Independence/Fort Osage IRA is gearing up for a new year. Our first meeting will start at 4:30PM on Thursday, September 21, 2006, at Bryant Elementary. Featured speakers include our very own Bryant teachers! They will be presenting "Six Trait Writing," which will be a great kick-off for this year's Teachers as Researchers book study. October brings the start of Teachers as Readers. I am very excited to lead Teachers as Readers this year and to have the opportunity to share the love of books with others who love to read, too! Please join us at the Glendale Elementary library on Tuesday, October 3 at 4:30PM to share and enjoy some great books. Bring a book and bring a friend! See you there!

Teachers as Researchers also begins in October with the first meeting on Wednesday, October 25, 2006. The group will meet at 4:30PM at Barnes and Noble in Independence to get acquainted with each other and with this year's book study topic, Six Trait Writing.

I hope your year is off to a great start and I look forward to seeing you at the meeting on September 21!

Happy reading!

Dana Smith

Spring Branch Elementary

News From Around the Council

The Missouri State Council Fall 2006 Newsletter has been posted to the web site. Please go to <http://www.missourireading.org> to view the newsletter and photos.

Are you ready to get excited about reading?

Ask your students to get their creative juices flowing by creating a poster about reading. Guidelines and Procedures are posted in the Missouri IRA newsletter at www.missourireading.org. You can also get a form and a copy of the guidelines and procedures from your building representative. Please have posters to Deena Graham at Benton Elementary by October 31, 2006.

A Message from your Past President:

IRA members are better teachers By John Pikulski
Study shows that students of teachers who belong to IRA score 20 points higher on measures of reading achievement

The truth is that I haven't yet conducted such a study, nor, to my knowledge, has anyone else. I wrote that headline primarily to attract attention to this column. However, if such a study were conducted, I would not be at all surprised if findings like that emerged.

Does belonging to IRA make teachers better teachers of reading? I hope and think so. However, the findings would also reflect the fact that teachers who are enthusiastic about their profession and who are deeply committed to their own professional growth, which almost certainly makes them better teachers, are the teachers most likely to join IRA.

The report, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, confirms what many of us have known for decades: the single most important factor in student learning is teacher expertise. That report also calls for different approaches to professional development, including active participation to professional organizations like IRA.

Why belong to IRA?

This column addresses a question that IRA leaders at all levels have to answer frequently. Why should I belong to IRA? My introduction alluded to commitment to professionalism as the primary reason I believe people join IRA. And what do these people get in return? I see five major benefits:

- 1 Information on important issues in the field
- 2 Opportunities for collegial interaction
- 3 Opportunities to influence policy and legislation
- 4 Opportunities to develop leadership and

communication skills

- 5 Opportunities to build a global perspective on reading and literacy

Gain important information

One of the most outstanding characteristics of a professional is possessing the knowledge base to make informed, complex decisions. Similarly, one of the most outstanding characteristics of a profession is that it is constantly studying its field to arrive at new and better procedures for carrying out its responsibilities.

Interact with colleagues

Belonging to IRA at all levels offers an outstanding opportunity for interacting professionally and socially with colleagues. Some of the most lasting friendships and the most productive professional contacts have been made through IRA colleagues I've met in various parts of the world. I cherish the opportunities to share ideas about challenges that all of us in the field of reading face, regardless of where we work and live. IRA conferences are among the best places to meet colleagues from around the world.

Influence policy

As members of IRA, I frequently think we don't sing loudly enough—we don't make our voices heard to people who influence policy and legislation that affects us as teachers.

Develop leadership skills

Some IRA affiliates have difficulty finding members to assume leadership positions. This is quite unfortunate, because through assuming leadership positions in IRA, our members grow substantially in confidence and professional capability. It is exciting to see classroom teachers, reading specialists, Title I teachers, university faculty and other educators serving as provincial and state council presidents, as members and chairs of international committees and as presenters at major conferences.

Build a global perspective

Reading TODAY includes articles on books that promote global understanding. These books are honored by a committee of the Children's Literature and Reading Special Interest Group of IRA. IRA has established a special division within its Headquarters staff for international development. Space doesn't allow me to even begin to describe the various international activities in which IRA has become involved.

Is it any wonder that students of teachers who belong to IRA score 20 points higher on measures of reading achievement!

Previous excerpt from President's Notebook, Reading TODAY June/July 1997

As Past President of the Independence/Fort Osage Council of IRA, I strongly encourage you to join our local IRA council! Many of John Pikulski's reasons for joining IRA certainly ring true. Belonging to IRA keeps me current about the major issues in reading. The friendships and contacts that I have developed makes me feel a part of a very important family with strong ideals. My state and international officers are 'looking out for me' as a reading educator.

Serving as President, Vice President, Membership Chair, Scholarship Committee, Publicity Chair and Poster Chair for our local and state council has been a truly wonderful privilege. Please consider joining IRA and becoming more involved. IRA needs you!!

Paula Erdel, Past President

Important Dates

September

- 8 International Literacy Day
- 1-10 National Poetry Week
- 21 Indep./Ft. Osage Council mtg. @ Bryant Elem.

October

- 3 Teachers as Readers @ Glendale Elementary
- 4-7 33rd Plains Regional Conference @ Omaha, Nebraska
- 16-20 Teen Read Week
- 25 Teachers as Researchers @ Barnes-n-Noble Café

November

- 14 Indep./Ft. Osage Council mtg. @ Mill Creek Elem.
- 13-19 National Children's Book Week
- 16-18 MSC/IRA State Conference @ Lake Ozark

December

- 5 Teachers as Readers @ Spring Branch

January

- 18 Indep./Ft. Osage Council Mtg. @ Spring Branch
- 31 Teachers as Researchers @ Barnes-n-Noble Cafe

February

- 1-4 Children's Authors and Illustrators Week
- 27 Teachers as Readers @ Benton Elementary

March

- 2 Read Across America
- 2 Dr. Seuss' Birthday
- 5-9 Newspapers in Education Week
- TBA Teachers as Researchers Barnes -n- Noble Café

April

- 3 Teachers as Readers @ Bryant Elementary
- 2-8 National Library Week

May

- 13-17 51st IRA National Convention Toronto
- 1-31 Get Caught Reading Month

June

- 17 Give a Boy a Book Day

***Join us for our next meeting
September 21, 2006 at Bryant
Elementary from 4:30-5:30.***

Hope to see you there ☺