



Greater Washington Reading Council

Spring 2014

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Presidents' Message

Greetings! As we wrap up this year with the GWRC, we look back at what we've accomplished. We had a very successful fall conference, with a presentation by Susan Zimmerman. Our For the Love of Reading (#ftlor) project successfully celebrated reading. It's been exciting this year to engage our members and the broader literacy community through Twitter (@GWRCouncil) and our new blog (www.greaterwashingtonreadingcouncil.com). We are also grateful to be involved with the International Literacy Project. Kathy Davin continues to search for volunteer teachers to spend a month expanding the literacy resources in Guatemala.

GWRC is looking forward to planning future literacy community outreach

VSRA Conference: Roanoke, VA, March

The Virginia State Reading Association (VSRA) Conference was held in Roanoke in March. The VSRA hosts an annual conference each spring which rotates to venues in different areas of the state. Nationally known

projects with the Ashburn Rotary Club. We're just in the beginning stages of this exciting partnership possibility – stay tuned! More information to come.

As we look forward to the coming year, we invite members to become more involved. There are liaison opportunities for the 2014-2015 year for Prince William County, Alexandria, and Manassas Park. See page 3 for a full description.

If you are tech-savvy, we are also asking for help with our new blog! See page 6 for contact details.

In addition, show your support of GWRC programs and professional networking to support literacy in the greater Washington region. Introduce colleagues to our programs and invite



How will you inspire your students to read this summer?

them to join us in our mission.

Enjoy the summer! Read deeply and widely!



GWRC member Patti Waters (2nd from left) sitting at the head table at the Banquet. She is serving at the state level as Co-Chair of the Teacher of the Year Awards.

professional speakers, and children's and young adult authors are featured speakers and provide important professional development to educators from around Virginia. (continued on page 4)

Wow!! During February's For the Love of Reading Book Drive, GWRC members and students collected and distributed over 1,600 books throughout the region. Benefactors included Catactin Elementary School, The Loudoun County Abused Women's Shelter, and the Embry Rucker Shelter in Fairfax County



We asked you to tell us how you were celebrating GWRC's 1st "For the Love of Reading" Month. Here's what you told us...

Sanders Corner Elementary Celebrates FTLOR

Sanders Corner ES (Ashburn, VA) staff and students celebrated For the Love of Reading month by inviting several members of the community and administration to read to the students. Guest readers had thirty minutes to read a favorite book, described how reading had impacted their life, and how reading is helpful in their daily employment. Several career and volunteer fire fighters and EMT personnel attended this event to read and let students tour their

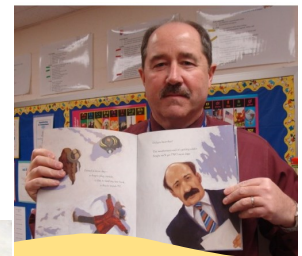
vehicles.

Several top administrators were able to read to the students during a three day period that included Dr. Edgar Hatrick, LCPS superintendent, that stopped by to read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle to Mrs. Brockway's kindergarten class. A second grade class was treated to a rendition of *Snow Day* by Lester Laminaack, by none other, than our county's Public Information Officer, Wayde

Byard. Chairman of the school board, Eric Hornberger was also a guest reader in fifth grade.

The festivities ended with a "Bedtime" reading event. K-2 students and their siblings came to school (while wearing

Special thanks to Donalyn Miller for co-hosting GWRC's #ftlor Livechat with us! @donalynbooks



Wayde Byard (LCPS) holds *Snow Day*



Congratulations FTLOR Contest Winners!

Joanne Casares, Reading Specialist at Broad Run High School, promoted FTLOR month with a book drive, a community focused "Rock the Read" event which included special guests, pre-school children, the entire Broad Run Staff & the Chick-Fil-A mascot. Students posted literacy quotations throughout the school hallways and included literacy statistics on the news and website.

Nancy Bronez, Fairfax County School Librarian at Pine Spring Elementary, promoted literacy activities throughout the month by creating book minute segments on the morning news, having students write valentines to their favorite book characters, and presenting a professional development workshop entitled "Catch the Boys Before They Get Away!"

Each winner received a \$100 gift card to Barnes & Noble to purchase books for their school. Read all the details about their activities at www.greaterwashingtonreadingcouncil.com



The Chick-Fil-A mascot reads with Broad Run High School's students and faculty.

Have You Tried the Language Experience Approach?

Barb Rohr

The Language Experience Approach (LEA) can be used with individual or groups of students. It encompasses the use of a personal or classroom learning experience. Students are encouraged to talk about the experience using natural conversation.

This conversation and dialogue becomes a story that is co-constructed and recorded through interactive or shared writing.

The text that is created offers opportunities to review learning, reformu-

late oral language, or even a review of a learning experience.

I used the LEA this year with two groups of English language learners. The fourth graders discussed a birthday party one student had attended. We then recorded the sentences and students all took a sentence to identify cause/effect relationships by writing a C or and E over the text. It helped clarify for them. The fifth graders started with a story showing chronological order. I told a story and they asked questions. We constructed the sentences together and identified

signal words. The signal words and text were re-read to determine the text structure. We did this for cause/effect, problem/solution, and compare/contrast. The students were struggling with cause and effect in text, so I decided to start working with text from their own experiences using their language. The students were able to move to paired construction of their own stories and identify signal words on their own. The classroom teachers also reported mastery of text structure based on quick check grades.

My final step in this learning sequence will be to take my students back to the text so they can apply what they have learned.

You can read more about the LEA online. If you have yet to try this strategy, add it to your toolkit!

GWRC: Help Wanted

Are you looking for a literacy leadership opportunity? Consider participating with GWRC. Our board has openings for the following positions for 2014-2015:

Prince William Liaison

Alexandria Liaison

Manassas Park Liaison

Responsibilities: Liaisons are GWRC's point of contact for their district. Responsibilities include attending 4 GWRC

meetings a year and coordinating February "For the Love of Reading" events in their district.

Membership Chair – Please contact Frances Eroraha franchester.eroraha@lcps.org and/or Stephanie Fidler Stephanie.fidler@lcps.org for detailed information.

Virginia Reader's Choice Chair – Please contact Brooks Spencer bspencer@fcpsl.org for more information.

Steps for LEA

1. Begin with a shared experience.
2. Create the text.
3. Read and Revise
4. Read and Reread
5. Extension

<https://k12teacherstaffdevelopment.com/tlb/understanding-the-language-experience-approach-lea/>

Twitter Tips

Have you discovered Twitter as a professional development tool? Check out these handy resources to explore:

Follow these literacy leaders: International Reading Association @IRAtoday, Donalyn Miller @Donalynbooks, Kyleene Beers @kylenebeers, and of course GWRC @GWRCouncil to name a few. Follow us and click to see who we follow for additional suggestions.

Education Policy: Follow @USEDgov

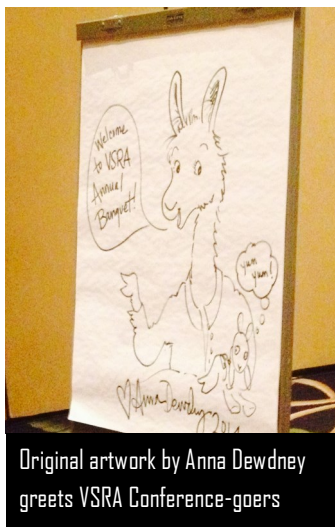
@HuffPostEdu @EducationNext @Edutopia @TeachDotCom

Popular Hashtags: Want to discuss a specific aspect of education? Use hashtags to connect with the particular group having that discussion. Check out #ElemChat #ArtsEd #VSRA2014 #HigherEd #NTChat (new teacher) #EdReform #titletalk #nerdybookclub

GWRC was thrilled that Donalyn Miller agreed to co-host our first Twitter

Chat on February 11th, 2014 all about encouraging a love of reading in students. It was an engaging, motivating discussion where participants shared tips and strategies to hook kids into books in the classroom and beyond. Find out more about participating in other twitter chats for your own professional development here: <http://thejournal.com/articles/2013/09/23/13-twitter-chats-for-educators.aspx>





Original artwork by Anna Dewdney greets VSRA Conference-goers

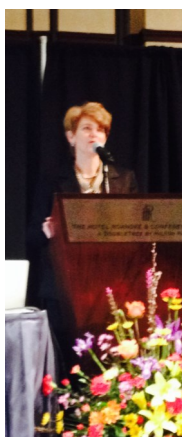
Are you interested in improving the quality of life by increasing literacy in Guatemala?

VSRA Conference (Continued from Page 1)

The VSRA Conference guest speaker for this year's annual banquet was Anna Dewdney, author of *Llama, Llama, Red Pajama*.

GWRC administrator of the year, Dr. Lori Riley, also received the VSRA award for Administrator of the Year.

Member Kathy Davin and two other members were recognized for their work



Dr. Riley accepts her award for Administrator of the Year

with the GWRC International Project in Guatemala.

Speakers included: Tina Alsop, Ottili Austin, Nan Bryant, Ginjer Clark, Cathy Collier, Laurie Elish-Piper, Beth Estill, Debbi Fewster, Dawn Wilson, Marilyn Garnto, Sarah Horn, Jacqueline Jules, Michele Landry, Jayme Klammer, Marry Beth Libby, Heather Riddell, Kim McGrath, Janet Phillips, Heidi Anne Mesmer, Wendy Phillips, Valerie Robnolt, Joan Rhodes, Jennifer Jones, Thomas Santangelo, Susan Thacker-Gwaltney, and Kelly Wheeler.

VSRA Future Conference Dates:

- March 12-14, 2015 – Richmond**
- March 3-5, 2016 – Norfolk**
- March 16-18, 2017 – Roanoke**

GWRC International Project

The GWRC International Project in Guatemala: A group of educators from Northern Virginia will join teachers from Michigan, Texas, New York, Massachusetts, Oregon and Texas to participate in this summer's Reading In-services in Sta. Avelina, Guatemala, July 5-13.



In the photo, a sixth grader displays some of the signs that students made for the school garden. There is little environmental print in many small communities throughout Central America. These signs, partly funded by GWRC, are an effort towards increasing the ambient print that children encounter in their daily lives.

Coming Events...

- ⇒ It's not too late to register for this year's International Reading Association Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. May 8-12, www.reading.org/annual-conference-2014
- ⇒ GWRC Induction Ceremony and Dinner, May 21, 2014 at 6 PM, Brio Tuscan Grille, McClean, VA
- ⇒ Springtime Scholastic Warehouse Book Sales are wonderful opportunities to fill your classroom libraries with books (without emptying your wallet). Find an event near you: www.scholastic.com/bookfairs/events/warehouse/
 - ⇒ Dulles Expo and Convention Center, VA, May 6-7
 - ⇒ Fredericksburg Expo and Convention Center, VA, May 19-20
 - ⇒ Great Frederick Fairgrounds, MD, May 20-21



Read Every Day. Lead a Better Life.

Literacy and Media in Education: “How the NY Times Saved My Class” by Shannon Doyne

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/01/28/reader-idea-how-the-new-york-times-saved-my-class/>

Margueya Poupko, a teacher at Bru-riah High School, Elizabeth, N.J., wanted to reach her struggling students, so she took a new tack. As she said, “I ignored the dusty tomes my students were refusing to read” in favor of teaching with Times articles to get them thinking, writing and debating. The energy returned to the room and, with it, the students’ ability to see how issues raised in literature — even works written centuries ago — still matter today. As an avid Times reader, I often yank an article here and there to supplement a unit, whether it’s something on cloning when teaching “Frankenstein” or a political piece that ties in with “Antigone.” But never had The Times come to my rescue more than the second half of a grueling school year a while back.

“I was teaching four tracks of 11th-grade English, starting my day with Advanced Placement students and ending with a group of struggling

readers and writers. They had long decided that they couldn’t do any of what I wanted them to do. As I tried to engage them in the classical works the entire grade was supposed to read, their blank stares made those 45 minutes feel endless.”

“After winter break I was determined to set things right in the classroom. I put aside the poetry and the canon and brought in “Ah, Yes, More About Me? Here Are ‘25 Random Things.’” an article from The New York Times about what was then a new trend on Facebook, in which people list 25 details about themselves. The students read the article aloud, laughing and relating to much of it. I then had them write and share their own 25 things — and on a whim, I wrote and shared my own. Inspired by how well the class went, I postponed our next official unit on “The Crucible” and instead brought in another article. We ultimately debated the issues raised in these Times

articles:

“My Monkey, My Self”: Where do we draw the line with love for animals?

“Never Too Young for That First Pedicure”: Is there something wrong with little girls getting pedicures? At what age is it appropriate?”

Ms. Poupko then asked students to write letters to the editor addressing their point of view, using the articles to substantiate and synthesize their points as well as to refute the articles’ arguments.

In addition to presenting a new article each day, sometimes pairing two that matched thematically, she asked my students to bring in their own and “teach” a class. She was gratified to see that they brought in articles far weightier than those she had brought in initially, and soon the conversation became more politically driven and substantive.

Sometimes it is difficult to engage students in expressing their opinions constructively and to teach them how to write critical analyses of issues they care about. A teacher in N.J. found a way, using human interest articles from The New York Times as their text.

Transition Back to Literature:

In just a few days, my students went from surly, frustrated and tuned-out to eager, engaged and opinionated. The same young people who wanted nothing to do with [Hester Prynne](#) or [Nick Carraway](#) suddenly had no end of thoughtful and intelligent things to say about the role that social media plays in our lives and how dependent we have become on technology. Suddenly looking at Thoreau made more sense, and when I did bring back “The Crucible,” the students were ready to read, write, and learn. They loved it. The level of writing in The New York Times is something my students aspire to, but it doesn’t alienate them. And at no time did they feel marginalized because their class had taken a

detour on its way to “The Crucible”: They felt proud to be reading such a prominent and sophisticated paper, and they loved coming to class because it became an opportunity to form and share their ideas and views, something teenagers can’t get enough

of — and something canonical works won’t necessarily inspire in quite the same way. While she now uses more of a balance in her classroom, she continues to use Times articles to help students grasp the themes of a work and to create energy in the classroom.

Ways to Prepare the Unit:

1. Search The New York Times yourself to find articles on topics that will get your students talking. Look for those that will inspire debate and impassioned views. You might also consult the frequently updated list of [Most Popular articles](#) or the articles linked to Learning Network features [Student Opinion](#), [6 Q’s About the News](#) or [Teenagers in The Times](#).
2. Ask students to read and [annotate](#) each article.
3. Use articles as mentor texts, or models for students’ own writing. Point out elements like quote integration, hooks, conclusions, transitions between paragraphs and points of view, along with the writer’s decisions about the summarizing of the issue. Discuss why the article “works.”
4. Have students incorporate text from the article in their own written responses. These can be Op-Eds, letters to the editor or their own articles on a given issue.



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Dr. Karen Banks

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<http://www.gwrc.net>



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We are looking for contributions from members!

If you have a program, instructional strategy, or news item you would like to share, please email us:

Karen.Banks@lcps.org
Laura.Gray@lcps.org

The Greater Washington Reading Council sets its mission as promoting literacy and literacy education in this Northern Virginia region. A local affiliate of the Virginia State Reading Association, the Greater Washington Reading Council members are committed to supporting teachers, administrators, and the general public in the best practices of literacy instruction, pre-K to college and beyond.

Through professional conferences, our newsletter, an evolving online presence, and a members-only journal, the Greater Washington Reading Council supports the goals of the Virginia State Reading Association and the International Reading Association. By providing local professional development opportunities for educators, annual literacy celebration events, and establishing dynamic community partnerships, GWRC proudly supports reading achievement and a love for learning.

GWRC Blog!

Have you found our blog? <http://greaterwashingtonreadingcouncil.com>

Check it regularly for detailed information about current events and to find out more about what our members are up to. If you'd like to share exciting, successful instructional strategies or events with other members, please submit your write up for consideration to Tanya Zinn Jones tzjones@fcps.edu

Twitter is like a calling card. Facebook is like a phone call. Blogging is like a full-fledged conversation!