



# The Reader

Promoting Literacy in Our Community

Metropolitan  
Reading  
Council

Volume 33, Issue 1

Fall 2009

## Collaboration and Engagement: Promoting literacy through partnerships and joy of learning.

Marilyn Kerkhove, MRC President

The Metropolitan Reading Council's theme for the 2009-2010 year is fostering professional collaboration of literacy initiatives in our community and emphasizing the fun and joy that can come from engaging in literacy activities. Our goals for this year are

- \*To increase membership in MRC,
- \*Foster new relationships with community organizations that have similar goals,
- \*To provide information about best practices in literacy to our members and community.

On Saturday, October 3, MRC will offer resources to the community by cosponsoring an event with the University of Nebraska at Omaha's College of Education. *Engaging in Literacy* will be held at the UNO Alumni House. The event will feature book signings by several authors, poster sessions on various literacy topics presented by local area teachers from pre-kindergarten through college, and an information booth from The Midlands Literacy Center. Book donations will be accepted to distribute to Habitat for Humanity and other organizations in need. The Bookworm, local independent bookstore, will be present with book selections for purchase appealing to a wide range of ages and offering popular favorites and new releases. MRC will provide information on the benefits of becoming a member and the programs and activities planned for the year. The event is open to all MRC members, potential members, families and businesses.

On Saturday, March 6th, 2010, MRC will host metro area children and their parents at our annual "Meet the Author" to be held at Omaha Northwest High School. *Engaging in the Fantasy of Literacy* is our theme for the event and will feature author and guest speaker, Roderick Townley, noted for the fantasy "Sylvie" series. He will also present the awards to the winners of the Young Writers contest.



Yin and Chris Soentpiet  
Author and Illustrator  
October 3  
UNO Alumni House  
Book Signing



Roderick Townley  
Featured Speaker  
Meet the Author  
March 6, 2010  
Northwest High School

## The Reader

Published since 1966  
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Chartered in 1965

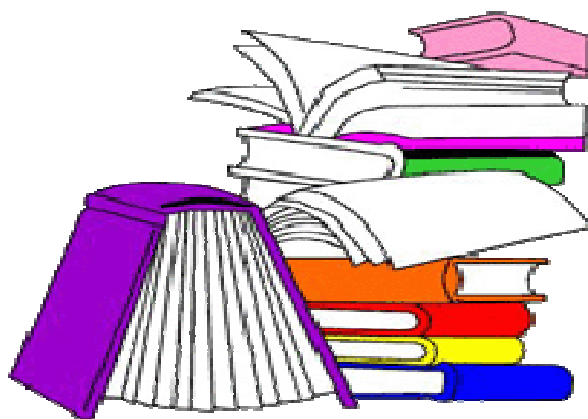
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### Metropolitan Reading Council Executive Board 2009-10

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Vice President	Janet Larson Millard
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Executive Secretary	Audrey McNamara Bellevue
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## Collaboration and Engagement

(continued...)

Leadership Night will be on Thursday evening April 22, 2010 and will honor local leaders who work to support literacy efforts in the community. The night will also embody our goal of *Collaboration for Literacy* as we will feature guest speaker Learning Community Chairman, Dr. Rick Kolowski. Dr. Kolowski has been a leader in education for many years and his knowledge about the new initiatives of the Learning Community will be especially interesting to not only educators, but parents and business leaders as well.

MRC will also continue our work with local branch libraries to promote reading with summer reading programs. To promote and support literacy needs in the community MRC will distribute books to organizations in need, such as Habitat for Humanity and other local agencies and shelters.

### State Update:

The State Leadership meeting was held on a scenic bluff overlooking Cozad, Nebraska in the middle of July. Metro members Linda Placzek, Lynn Thurber, Janet Larson, and Betsy Tonniges attended in their various state capacities. One highlight was the presentation of the Star Award for our council. Thank you to Ruth Schoonover for her hard work in putting this together for us. This award showcases our council and all the great activities we accomplished last year.

Get your calendars out and save the date for the Nebraska State Convention, February 25-27 in Kearney. Janet Allen will be a featured presenter. She has written numerous professional books on guided reading and vocabulary. I personally love *Yellow Brick Roads: Shared and Guided Paths to Independent Reading*, and *Words, Words, Words: Teach Vocabulary in Grades 4-12*. I have put many of her ideas to work in my middle school classroom. She is also an entertaining speaker. Greg Tang, author of *Math Appeal*, and *The Grapes of Math* among others, is also coming. Check out the NSRA website at:

<http://coe.unk.edu/nsra/Index 2010.html>.

**Lynn Thurber**

## Community Literacy

Jolene Heibel, MRC Past President

The Metropolitan Reading Council will participate in "Reach Out and Read," a program that places early childhood books in pediatric clinics. MRC uses the \$500 community literacy grant award from the NSRA to purchase books at a reduced price at the Scholastic Book Fair Community Appreciation Day in May. The books are taken to the Midlands Literacy Center, sorted, and then distributed to the clinics. How can you help? We can always use members who want to select and purchase books, or sort books at the Literacy Center. One MRC member, Rosemary Lucky, actually works for books. Rosemary spends a 4 to 8 hour shift selling books at the Scholastic's sale. She is paid \$10 an hour "in books" which she selects and then contributes to "Reach Out and Read." Thanks, Rosemary. If you are interested in helping with this project e-mail Kathleen Hinman at kmhkids@yahoo.com Again this year, MRC will collect books at the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual literacy fest. Teachers and community members who attend Engaging in Literacy on October 3<sup>rd</sup> are encouraged to bring new or gently used books for children and youth. The books will be donated to area youth centers and agencies.

## Honoring Dr. Don Cushenbery

The Metropolitan Reading Council was founded in 1963 by Dr. Donald Cushenbery of Omaha, Nebraska. After Don's passing in January of this year, the council thought it appropriate to remember his influence on literacy. The *Cushenbery Ambassadorships* will be used to sponsor student ambassadors who represent MRC each year at the Nebraska State Reading Conference in Kearney, NE. Through the ambassadorships, these students will be provided memberships in the metro and state reading councils, as well as the International Reading Association.

If you would like to be part of sponsoring the legacy of Dr. Cushenbery, please send your tax-deductible donation to Lisa Bethel-Didamo, MRC Treasurer, 2605 Fairview Street, Bellevue, NE 68147. Please add Dr. Cushenbery's name to the memo line of your check and designate how you would like your name listed in an upcoming edition of *The Reader*. Thank you in advance for your support.

## Facebook, E-Mail, and Technology, Oh My!

Janet Larson, MRC Vice President

Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year! For many of you, this marks the beginning of your career, an important milestone in the field, or another successful year. Whichever one of these defines you, I wish you the very best as you deliver a world-class education to each one of your students.

An exciting way to become involved and stay abreast of current opportunities with MRC is our new Facebook page! Become a fan of Metropolitan Reading Council, Omaha and check out our events and links for upcoming community events, effective and innovative teaching ideas, and opportunities to participate in state and national literacy-related events.

You can also become a Facebook friend of Ima Reader, resident of Omaha, Nebraska. Ima will respond to requests, questions, and suggestions for the coming year. Ima is a great person to contact for quick MRC

# Welcome back!

Betsy Tonniges

The school year is in full swing for many of you and the Metropolitan Reading Council has been planning an eventful year! My name is Betsy Tonniges, and I am your president-elect for 2009-2010. I currently teach 1<sup>st</sup> grade at Bryan Elementary in Millard and enjoy spending time with my family, reading, and traveling. The Writing Contest is a great opportunity for our students in the Metro area to display their best writing. The prompt will be announced in October and students will have until December to create their writing masterpieces. This year the prompt will be a little bit different than in past years. The council has decided to provide a more open-ended approach to the prompt which we believe will allow creativity and voice to shine throughout their pieces. All entries will fall into one of the three grade level categories: K-6, 7-8, and 9-12. After the judging, first, second and third place prizes will be awarded and announced at our annual "Meet the Author" day on March 6, 2010.. Everyone who writes is encouraged to come to the Meet the Author event.

The MRC has gotten better! We have launched a group on Facebook and encourage you to join! This month, Janet Larson, our Vice President, created an account so that we can keep everyone up-to-date on what is happening with information about events that are held throughout the year. If you are a Facebook fanatic, please check us out! If you're not a Facebook fanatic, this could be your chance to try it out. I look forward to seeing you at the "Taste of Literacy" event in October!



## Literacy Matters!

Renee McArthur

Literacy matters! If you are reading this, you know it. Literacy is what the Metropolitan Reading Council is all about. As your local council of the International Reading Association and the Nebraska State Reading Association, we promote literacy in our community.

If you are already a member of MRC, thank you! We applaud your commitment. If you are not a member, we encourage you to join us in supporting literacy in our community.

For an investment of only \$25, you will help to make a difference in our community and make connections with other professionals who value literacy as much as you do. MRC provides reading materials and services in our own community and beyond, celebrates young authors, and provides professional development opportunities. Please join us in supporting literacy in our community. Complete the membership application in this newsletter and return it with your \$25 fee. It 's a small price to pay to advance such an important cause... because literacy does matter!

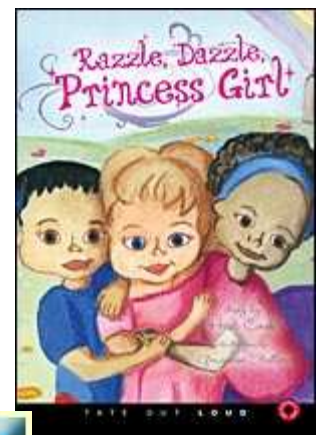
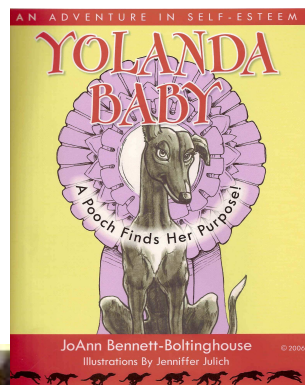
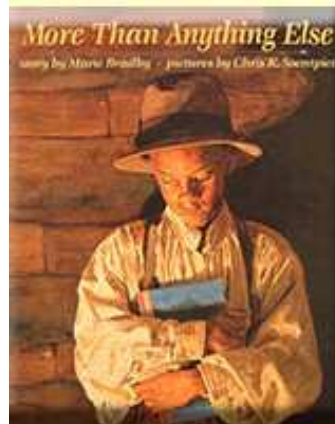
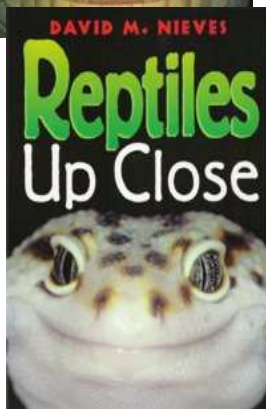
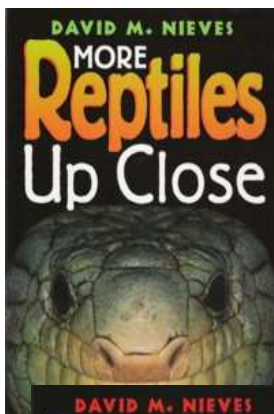
**Metropolitan Reading Council  
presents  
“Engaging in Literacy—A Fest for All Ages”**

**MRC’s 2<sup>nd</sup> annual literacy fest features an array of authors and activities to provide extensive resources for building reading and writing talents.**

**When: Saturday, October 3, 2009**  
**Where: UNO Alumni House, 67<sup>th</sup> & Dodge**  
**Time: Anytime between 9 A.M. and 11:30 A.M.**  
**Cost: FREE!!!**

**Come at your convenience to find...**

- **Authors including Chris and Yin Soentpiet, David Nieves, Tracy Lovett, JoAnn Bennett-Boltinghouse, Laura Reavis, Dante Salvatierra, and Heidi Cook (available for informal conversations, autographing, and setting up school visits)**
- **Poster sessions discussing topics ranging from early childhood to young adult literature**
- **On-going story times for children by Omaha Public Librarian Nancy Chmiel**
- **The Bookworm with popular selections for purchase**
- **Door prizes galore!**
- **MRC membership opportunities for school year 2009-2010**
- **A collection site for new/used book donations for MRC’s charity of choice**
- **“Sweet treats” to energize and refresh!**





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## Metropolitan Reading Council: Engaging in Literacy!

**Join  
Or  
Renew  
Your  
Membership  
Today!**

**MRC  
Is An  
Honor Council of the  
International Reading  
Association**

### *Purposes:*

- Outreach:**  
Provide reading materials and services
- Celebration:**  
Celebrate leadership literacy and young authors
- Growth:**  
Professional development for literary educators
- Advocacy:**  
Literacy promotion in Omaha and surrounding areas
- Networking:**  
Meet with colleagues and other literacy professionals
- Research:**  
*Research based information and resources for members.*

