

News from the **EERC Listserv – TheLiteracyList**

HAPPY VALENTINE’S DAY! May life bless you and your students with a love of literacy (books, reading, and writing) **today** and always.

EERC’s January Shout-Out Award was given to Kate Wagoner, Second Grade Teacher at McCornack Elementary in Eugene. Look for her picture in the next Literacy Line Newsletter. Here is what colleague Judy Davies has to say about her:

Kate is an incredible teacher who uses her many skills and talents to inspire the love of learning in each child she interacts with. She is so dedicated to the gift of literacy and wanting everyone to enjoy its benefits that she goes beyond her classroom by encouraging kids to be part of the literacy club. She is on every possible committee at our school: our school Equity team, site council, IPBS team, OBOB coach, Math PLC group and the Better Teaching Institute leader for our school. She attends every possible workshop, training, and institute available in our district.

Kate’s mentoring skills are truly amazing. She graciously learns with our staff at every Professional Development day, facilitates trainings for our staff, and collaborates with colleagues to ensure that students have the best of learning experiences. She arranged for local author Bob Welch and illustrator Tom Penix to present at our school during two Literacy Family Fun Nights and then coordinated the activities and events to make them a great success for all involved.

Kate is a positive and enthusiastic member of our learning community who is continually involved in instructional growth. Through her exemplified leadership she invites others to be a part of the literacy world we all want to inhabit.

Coming Events and Opportunities:

Writing Contest Announcement – I, Robert Young, hereby designate February as Heroes Month and am launching a writing contest open to Lane County 3rd-5th grade students. Perfect timing, I know, with the birthdays of Lincoln, Washington, Charles Dickens, and Rosa Parks coming up. And yes, the birthday of A.C. Gilbert, too. Gilbert was born in Salem on **February 15, 1884** and grew up to be one of America’s foremost toymakers. But he was more than that: he was also a doctor, professional magician, Olympic champion, and the “Man Who Saved **Christmas**.” That’s why I wrote the picture-book bio, *The Magic of A.C. Gilbert*.

Here's the contest: Invite your students to write about a person they admire, and to "make a case" for that person being a hero (a great argument writing activity). E-mail me your submissions and I'll select a winner or winners based on the development of the idea, organization (beyond formula, please), voice (**), and conventions.

Winner(s) will receive a signed copy of *The Magic of A.C. Gilbert* and a shared-reading set (15 copies) for your classroom as well as Common Core related activities for you to use. Winning entries will be posted on my website. Deadline for entries is **February 27**. Winners will be announced by **March 15**. Email Robert: areswhy@gmail.com

Professional Development Workshops:

Coming soon! "*Utilizing Technology in the Classroom*" will be presented on **February 24, 2015** from 4–6 by Marilyn Williams former 4J Technology TOSA and current Springfield HS Assistant Principal. Learn ways to use technology effectively and efficiently to facilitate teaching and learning. If you have a laptop or tablet, please bring it to the workshop. If you plan to attend and haven't registered, please reply to this message and let me know.

On **March 17, 2015**, join Linda Greenstein for another fascinating workshop combining children's literature models, student writing, and folded books—all new and different from last year's session. These books encourage and inspire students to write and revise so they can display their best work in cleverly created hand-made books.

On **April 21, 2015**, Angie Johnson and Karren Timmermans will present *Close Reading as a Habit of Mind*. They will help us to understand what it means to be a close reader as we explore ways to access complex text.

All workshops are held at the UO Baker Downtown Center at 10th and High, Eugene. They are free for ORA/EERC members and students and just \$10 each for nonmembers so bring a friend. For a description of this and the other workshops, download the flyer on the EERC website: http://www.literacylane.org/calendar_programs.html. **If you would like to attend and have not already registered, please do so by emailing Karen: kantikajian@cvcable.net.**

Conferences/Institutes:

2015 ORA Spring Institute – March 7, 2015, from 8:30–12:00 with Danny Brassell at the University Place Hotel, 310 SW Lincoln St., Portland. Brassell is an uplifting, entertaining, and inspiring presenter—an advocate for books and reading. Only \$40 for members and \$65 for nonmembers. Get inspired in the morning, have lunch with your friends at a favorite restaurant, and visit Powell's Bookstore in the afternoon for a perfect

day! Register now! For a flyer and registration form, visit www.oregonread.org. You may mail in your registration form, pay online with a credit card, or through PayPal.

Patricia Gallagher Award:

Votes needed from Lane County schools! Give your students the opportunity to participate in this great program! If you haven't already, plan to share this year's five wonderful and very different picture books with your students to encourage enthusiasm for reading and choosing a favorite book. After reading the books aloud, **let each student vote for one favorite**. (What a difficult decision!) You can download a ballot from our website or reply to this message to request one. **We have books and packets available for your use**. Just let me know. Don't wait until the end of the year when they might not be available. You can email the votes to me. Please include school and grade level. Take advantage of this wonderful program before it is too late.

EERC's Literacy Leader Award:

In 2009 The Emerald Empire Reading Council established its Literacy Leader Award to honor a literacy leader in Lane County. This person will be recognized with a monetary award of \$50, a one year EERC/ORA membership, and a commemorative mug at the annual Whine and Wine in [May 2015](#). We know there are many deserving individuals who promote literacy in our communities and we would like to do our part to recognize their contributions. So please nominate a person you feel is worthy of this award. The nomination form is available at www.literacylane.org/Awards_Grants.html. The deadline is [April 30, 2015](#).

Schedule an Author Visit:

Robert Young, author of 26 books for children, will help you engage, inspire, and teach your young writers. He conducts school-wide author presentations, classroom author experiences, and Skype visits.

Two of Robert's latest books, *The Magic of A.C. Gilbert* and *Chomp! A Chewer's Guide to Gum* come with Common Core-based activities to use in your classroom. Learn more about his work at www.realwriting.us, follow on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Robert-Young/1516596861910358>), or contact him directly at areswhy@gmail.com.

Book Review:

At the January TAR kids group we discussed *I, Q* by Portland author Roland Smith and *Navigating Early* by Clare Vanderpool. Members of the group gave an enthusiastic two-thumbs-up to the *I, Q* series by Smith. Some of us were so thoroughly hooked we had

to continue through all six books of the series. Here is a review of *I, Q* by EERC member Darlene Head. Her review of *Navigating Early* will be included in the March/April issue of the Literacy Line Newsletter.

***I, Q* by Roland Smith**

Oh, my! What a wonderful spy story, written for middle-schoolers through high school students (and even adults like me) who enjoy a good clean fast-paced adventure! The themes of step-siblings, musicians, technology, and terrorism are blended so well yet stop short of being too over-done, never sliding off into slang dialogue, gore, or too much personal trauma!

Roland Smith really nailed this clever thriller with his great characters, especially 13-year-old Q (short for Quest) and 15-year-old Angela, who are children any of us would like to know, all the way through to the unvarnished roadies and music P.R. people. The book reads authentically and the plot moves along at just the right pace to keep you turning pages all the way to the end. And when you reach the end, you get the teaser of the sequel that propels you right back to the library!!

From the rounded off corners and the cover art which reminds one of “007” to the inclusion of 007 novels, this thriller promotes good activities for students with its references to reading, magic, martial arts, history, and technology. These teens and the characters around them are all good sources of interests for middle-schoolers looking for their place in this world.

The fact that this is a series to keep teens reading is perfect for this age group and I highly recommend that multiple sets be in every middle school library!