



Literacy Leaders

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1 SEPTEMBER 2014

Our Annual Fall Conference

The Chautauqua County Reading Council is teaming up with the State University of New York at Fredonia, the Phyllis W. and Lawrence A. Patrie Endowment for the Sciences, the Institute for Research in Science Teaching, and Project MAST²ER for a science education meets literacy event: the Western New York State Science Education Conference and Fall Literacy Conference. This conference embodies the principle that Richard Vacca presented: every teacher is a teacher of reading (now literacy). Sessions will focus on technology supporting literacy across the curriculum, developing academic language, technology to engage learners, non-fiction speed dating, science literacy centers for elementary classrooms, and much more!

In addition, two sessions will address science and the common core and aquaponics at a school in western New York State. Participants will have the opportunity to tour the New Science Center and sample a variety of foods during the lunch break. Please plan on attending the fall conference. Expect helpful



ideas and lively discussions! Have the chance to win one of several prizes!

It's hard to believe that registration, which includes a continental breakfast, lunch, and materials is only \$20! Don't miss this event. Register online through a secure site: https://secure.touchnet.com/C21465_ustores/web/store_main.jsp

STOREID=94&SINGLESTORE=true

**October 4th,
8:30 am - 2:30 pm**

**State University of New York at Fredonia,
New Science Center**

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As we start another school year...



Microsoft Office, 2010

Labor Day seemed to suddenly appear this year. With, the lawns staying green throughout August, the transition to early September seems misplaced.

Shouldn't we have scorched lawns and hot humid nights by now?

Hopefully, you have had a restful and enjoyable summer. The beginning of the school year

is always exciting. We are fortunate in our area, as teachers tend to run into their former students. They seem to see us out within the first few days of the school year. Who knew they would grow so much in 2 ½ months?

And what about the group of students facing us this year? Can we ignite their learning spark? Let's roll up our sleeves and get cracking!



Microsoft Office, 2010

NYSRA Annual Conference

The annual NYSRA conference is relatively close to Western New York this fall! Instead of driving most of the day to make it to Saratoga Springs, Albany, or a downstate location, the conference is being held at the Holiday Inn in Syracuse (Liverpool) NY on November 9th through 11th. If you have never attended a state literacy event, you are in for a treat. Typically, the presenters include national and international experts in literacy as well as literacy professionals and classroom teachers committed to literacy practices. The conference theme, *Seamless Integration of Literacy and Content*, addresses an important practice if our students are going to improve their literacy concepts and skills.

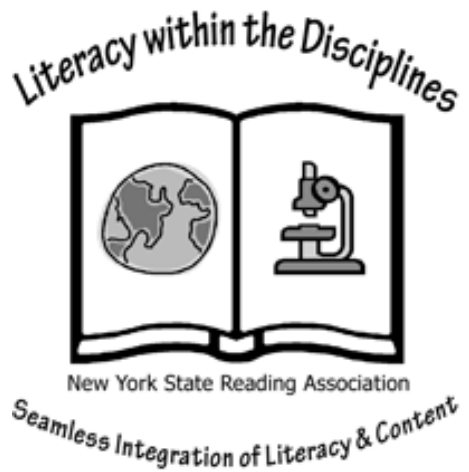
Donald Leu, Tim Rasinki, Chris Lehman, Doug Fisher, Doug Fisher, Maureen McLaughlin, Barbara Stripling



<http://dev.virtualearth.net/REST/v1/Imagery/Map/Road/43.046940,-76.144440/10?ms=265,150&key=Ajm->

and Tim O'Shei are just a few of the noted speakers that support this year's theme, *Literacy for within the Disciplines*. A number of authors of children and young adult books will be participating in conference events; such as Christopher Paul Curtis (*Bud Not Buddy* and *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*).

Check the NYSRA website (www.nysreading.org) for more information on the 2014 conference, including registration, session, and lodging details.



<http://www.nysreading.org/Conference/2014>

It's Bill Nye, the Science Guy



<http://ww2.fredonia.edu/news/Portals/17/2014%20Spring/Bill-Nye-for-web.jpg>

The State University of New York at Fredonia has been fortunate to secure one of the most noted scientists as its convocation speaker. Bill Nye, *the Science Guy*, is coming to Fredonia on Thursday, September

18th in Steele Hall at 3:30 pm. Nye's presentation is free and open to the public but tickets are required. Tickets are available from the Fredonia Ticket Office in the Williams Center. Please note that this event is expected to "sell out."

Most teachers and their students are familiar with Nye's program, Bill Nye the Science Guy, that ran for years (1993-1998) on public television stations. The live action nature of each episode captivated audiences. Episodes are still being aired in classrooms as the presentation of natural science concepts is concise and

clear. And Nye infuses humor in each presentation of science concepts.

At present, Nye is the executive director of The Planetary Society, the world's largest organization interested in space. He also hosts three television series: *The 100 Greatest Discoveries*, *Eyes of the Nye*, and *Stuff Happens*.

Bill Nye will bring his knowledge of science, space, and environmental issues to the Fredonia stage while donning his usual bow tie. How lucky we are to have such a science presence in our midst!

A Relevant Letter to the Editor

This letter to the editor appeared in the *Buffalo News* this spring; it appears in its entirety here.

I am a mother and a teacher.

My own children grew up before the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Their teachers had standards to frame their instruction (1996 standards: revised 2005) which subsequently prepared them to take the Regents Commencement Exams—exams upon which New York had always commended itself.

Unfortunately, the standards those exams measured were not rigorous enough.

When it came time to start paying for classes in college, two of my children had to spend their student loan money on remediation courses. Their acceptance letter might as well said something along the lines of “Welcome to college, please pay for classes about what you should have learned in grade school.”

My third child was accepted into Albany University and, according to his high school transcripts (which measured his success with the 1996 standards), he was an exceptional student. Unfortunately succeeding at these standards did not prepare him to easily meet university expectations. His Regents diplomas had not prepared him to think critically about college level textbooks or literature. Because those standards did not push him to analyze, interpret, and debate complex texts, he was overwhelmed at college.

All three of my children have become successful, well-educated adults, but all had to overcome obstacles imposed on them by standards that left them unprepared for life—but think of how much further they could have gone or

money they could have saved if their K-12 experience was more rigorous.

As a teacher, I do not want my students to feel that same frustration and shame. And the governors, teachers, and educational leaders who wrote the Common Core felt the same way, and decided to do something about it.

In 2010, when the CCSS were adopted, I immediately studied the new standards and began a self-tutorial. By the time NYS Education Commissioner King asked all teachers for two, Common Core aligned units, I had already rewritten all my English, Social Studies, and Science units to incorporate the new standards. When NYS Education Department started providing aligned curriculum, I begged our district to adopt it.

I had worked hard, but these units were even better than what I had done alone.

As far as New York State’s implementation of the Common Core, I feel no student should have to receive the letter my children did. This year’s seniors should be leaving our schools prepared to think. It has been a refreshing change to have leaders who are prepared to help all our students to succeed now, not years from now.

I invite you to walk into my classroom, and the classrooms of hundreds of teachers who are teaching the Common Core; here teachers’ individual talents are fostering students to think deeply, and students are better off for it. Here, you will find students who are not being standardized.



<http://watchdog.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/2013/05/common-core-feature.jpg>

Just the opposite.

My students are examining literature, articles, memoirs, news feeds, and documentaries. They are developing and defending their own opinions and arguments. They are using connections made between texts to understand how authors construct meaning and influence their audience. My students then become persuasive writers themselves.

When my students go to college they will not have to pay for courses that have no credit. Students who graduate after receiving the Common Core will be ready to think critically and creatively for themselves. Whether they choose a trade school or college, these students will know how to investigate a controversy, understand biased writing, and decide for themselves what they believe based on evaluation of multiple sources of evidence. They will be leaders who will listen to all stakeholders, not just the loudest.

During one of the numerous snow days this year, I watched the Elementary and Secondary Education Hearing. At about six minutes into his questioning of Commissioner King, NY State Senator Terry Gibson said that he is not hearing from those teachers responding positively to the Common Core.

I am one of those stakeholders. I want my voice to be heard.

Karen Kondrick

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Visit us on the web!
<http://chautauquareading.weebly.com>

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact one of the CCRC Executive Board Members:

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Council Events: 2014-2015

Executive Board Meeting

Wednesday, September 24, 2014
Rocco's, Fredonia, NY
5:30 pm

Tuesday, November 4, 2014 Rocco's,
Fredonia, NY
5:30 pm

Tuesday, February 10, 2014 Rocco's,
Fredonia, NY
5:30 pm

Scheduled Activities

Fall Conference, Saturday, October 4, 2014
SUNY Fredonia New Science Center

November 18 – 20th Literacy Networking
event or Educators, at Chautauqua Lake
Central School, Date TBA

March 17-19 Hot Reads, Westfield Central
School, Date TBA

May 5, 6, or 7, 2015 Annual Banquet,
Webb's Mayville, NY, Date TBA