

READ ALOUD

WEST VIRGINIA

Read Aloud celebrates 30 years at Read-A-Palooza fundraiser

By Lesley McCullough McCallister

Volunteers, friends, community supporters, board members and staff gathered on March 20 for Read-A-Palooza and to celebrate 30 years of Read Aloud in the Mountain State.

Nearly 200 attendees enjoyed delicious food and a lively atmosphere courtesy of Paterno's at the Park in Charleston. This year's "Generation Read Aloud" theme highlighted the stories of individuals who grew up with Read Aloud in their own classrooms, as well as teachers, parents, and readers.

"The fact that we were celebrating our 30th birthday encouraged us to take a look back and reflect on the impact the program has had in the lives of West Virginia's children," said Mary Kay Bond, Read Aloud West Virginia executive director. "We were able to highlight stories from students benefitting from the program in the early years and the role reading continues to play in their lives today as parents of a new generation."

Read-A-Palooza was extra special because Steve Westfall, a member of the West Virginia Legislature and a Jackson County Read Aloud reader, presented RAWV with a citation from the West Virginia House of Delegates recognizing and applauding Read Aloud's 30 years of volunteer service to the children of West Virginia. United States Senator Shelley Moore Capito and West Virginia poet laureate Marc Harshman sent prerecorded anniversary messages.

Thanks to the support of Read-A-Palooza Signature Sponsors BrickStreet Insurance and The Elliot Family Foundation, as well as the generosity of additional corporate sponsors and individual donors, this year's Read-A-Palooza event was the organization's most successful to date. Read Aloud staff expressed gratitude to all who attended, donated or otherwise showed support to help make the 30th anniversary celebration extra special.

Delegate and volunteer reader Steve Westfall presents the West Virginia House of Delegates' Legislative Citation recognizing Read Aloud's 30 years of service to the state.

Visit our Facebook page for more event photos.



Summer 2017

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Read Aloud's work continues

As you see in these pages, the first few months of this, our 30th anniversary year, have indeed been busy. As we wind up the current school year, I am pleased to report that we have placed **1,061 Read Aloud readers in 1,507 classrooms**. Given an average classroom size of 20, that means our readers are able to provide a regular commercial for reading to **more than 30,000 students**. Additionally, in this school year *alone* we have distributed a total of **18,632 books**. We know children who connect reading with pleasure rather than drudgery are motivated to want to read. Our readers provide that important connection. Motivation alone will not improve student reading skills—children need access to interesting reading material. Thus, Read Aloud, through our volunteers and chapters, continues to work to put books in the hands *and* on the minds of West Virginia's children. Our volunteers constitute the village working to raise a generation of readers, and we are deeply indebted to all of you who support us with your time and/or donations.

While much has been accomplished, our work does not end with the school year. The summer months provide time for evaluating the past year and preparing for the 2017-18 school year. In July, chapter representatives will meet at our annual conference to discuss plans and obtain materials for the new school year. I hope you will draw inspiration from these pages to continue to support our efforts as the new school year begins.

~ *Mary Kay Bond, RAWV Executive Director*



Many thanks to Appalachian Power for making this newsletter possible with an ongoing donation of printing services!



SAVE THE DATE!

OCT. 27-28, 2017

Readers, we want to hear from you!

Active readers, watch your inboxes or mailboxes for Read Aloud's year-end Reader Survey. This is the best way for us to know who wants to read again (and who, for some crazy reason, does not), so we can provide those names to schools' Read Aloud coordinators early the next school year. This allows schools to get a jump start on placing readers in the fall, and helps ensure that you get placed where you want to be. It also allows us to identify remaining reader needs at a school after existing readers have been placed, so we can fill those as soon as new readers become available. (Please note that it is the school coordinators who will contact you for placement, not the Read Aloud office; but if you do not want to wait until your school's coordinator reaches out, be proactive. Call your school or teacher directly!)

We also love feedback on your volunteer reader experience! Use the survey to tell us something good, or bad, or funny, or problematic, that happened. If you have ideas to improve the program, let us know! And if you found a book that was a home run with your class, please share it, and tell us why. We created a book list on our website from titles readers have suggested for others to use.

We are testing electronic (email) delivery of these surveys this year, but we don't have email addresses for everyone. Surveys should be returned no later than June 30 so we can plan for the school year ahead.

If for some reason you do not receive a survey, our recent database conversion is likely the reason; but we still want to hear from you! Contact us to request your survey by email or hard copy.

Thank you in advance for your response. We absolutely cannot do this without you. Keep on reading!

These are just a few of the many book distribution activities that have taken place in Read Aloud schools throughout West Virginia so far in 2017!

Kindergarten Round-Up

In Kanawha County, Read Aloud schools get an added bonus when Kindergarten Round-Up time comes. Kindergarten Round-Ups are held at each school to introduce students and families to their new schools and complete kindergarten entry tests and screenings.

In participating Read Aloud schools, each child in attendance receives a new book from Read Aloud West Virginia. Volunteers are on hand to talk to parents, provide educational materials about reading aloud and distribute library card applications.



Snuggle and Read

Snuggle and Read sessions offer a choice of one to two books and a blanket to children and educational materials and information, as well as an example of a good read aloud, to parents.

Sessions have been held in Cabell, Jackson, Fayette and Greenbrier counties during the 2016-2017 school year.

BOOKS!
BOOKS!
BOOKS!

Read about additional Read Aloud West Virginia book distributions on page 4



Top: Read Aloud of Kanawha County Chapter Board Member Ilene Beckett visits with attendees at Weimer Elementary's Kindergarten Round-Up event. Bottom left: A parent reads with three excited students at a Snuggle and Read event at Smoot Elementary in Greenbrier County. Bottom right: Read Aloud of Jackson County Board Member Cheryl Miller reads aloud to children at a Jackson County Snuggle and Read event.

What's the point of a Read Aloud conference?

By Melody Simpson

The fourth annual Read Aloud Conference will be held July 24-25 at Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, West Virginia. As in prior years, Read Aloud West Virginia will pay for two representatives from each county chapter to attend the conference, but more may attend at personal or county expense. Information on this year's conference has been sent to county chapter leadership, along with a pre-conference survey for registering attendees and seeking input for the content of the conference.

This event offers the only chance each year for representatives from all participating county chapters to gather together and share successes, failures, ideas, plans, and challenges, and to prepare for the year ahead. With 30 West Virginia counties participating in Read Aloud, it is likely that there are 30 different projects, approaches, or ideas being used. West Virginians have always been creative, and this is as true when promoting a love of reading as it is anywhere else. Many participants in past years have reported leaving the conference energized and freshly motivated, with new ideas and partners (both within and outside their county) identified.

In addition to the networking and collaborative opportunities, Read Aloud West Virginia uses the conference to distribute support materials, such as updates to the Read Aloud Resource Kit and new posters or pamphlets, and to introduce other materials being developed for "testing" during the upcoming year. Finally, the conference provides an opportunity for Read Aloud West Virginia to acquaint county chapters with other organizations or programs working to improve reading readiness and literacy, where opportunities for additional collaboration or partnerships at the local level may exist.

The conference will begin at noon on Monday and end around 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday. So, county leadership, be sure to identify and register the two (or more!) representatives from your chapter who will attend this year!

Melody Simpson is an attorney at Bowles Rice LLP, a volunteer reader and a member of the Read Aloud West Virginia board and newsletter committee.

National Book grant books distributed throughout WV

By Lesley McCullough McCallister

Read Aloud West Virginia was selected by the Coughlan Companies Communities Fund, in partnership with GreaterGood.org (GGO), to receive a National Book grant valued at nearly \$200,000. The gift includes thousands of books that will directly benefit West Virginia children and families.

A portion of those books arrived at the Read Aloud office in Charleston at the end of March. For more than eight hours on Saturday, March 25, volunteer students from Bridge Valley Community and Technical College and Charleston Catholic High School helped package and prepare more than 7,200 books for distribution to 32 Read Aloud West Virginia member schools throughout the state.

These generous volunteers performed a myriad of tasks, including making sure each book received a Read Aloud book plate so the student receiving the book could proudly write his or her name in his or her very own, brand new book. Additionally, students pushed shopping carts around tables in the Columbia Gas building auditorium with "shopping lists" for each school, packaged and labeled shipping boxes, and then loaded the boxes into the rental van for delivery. Each enrolled Read Aloud West Virginia school received 20 books per Read Aloud classroom, and deliveries were made to member schools before the end of the school year.

Executive Director Mary Kay Bond noted the importance of getting these books in the hands of students before the end of the school year, just in time to highlight the importance of summer reading among all students.

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A great gig: a volunteer profile of Joe Biola

By Nikki Moses

How was Read Aloud today, Mr. Biola?

“Swell.” The energy in his voice is unmistakable. He has just returned from reading to three classrooms of devoted kids at North School in Elkins. “Swell.”

Biola, a retired insurance executive, wanted to read aloud to children but did not have an avenue. Then he found out about Read Aloud West Virginia. That was four years ago. Today the veteran volunteer reads to six classrooms each week, half on Tuesdays and half on Fridays. Students range from pre-kindergarten to fourth grade.

“Today I had ‘guest pickers,’” he said. Hmmm? “My grandson picked **Bony Legs** by Joanna Cole. It’s a little scary so the kids liked it. My wife picked **Beautiful Joe** by Margaret Marshall Saunders.” This “pick” is a story written in 1893 about a dog that has had a tough start in life. “It is still resonant today,” Biola explained.

He frequents Elkins’ public library and the Davis and Elkins College library in search of titles, and he keeps a log of books that work well.

Roald Dahl is a favorite, including his **The Enormous Crocodile**. “It’s about a crocodile that likes to eat children,” he said, laughing. He also reads **The Fantastic Mr. Fox** and **The BFG** to his fourth graders. **How to Be Cool in the Third Grade** by Betsy Duffey is another favorite.

He has read from the Harry Potter series, too. These lengthy novels are too long for Biola to read in their entirety. He reads a few chapters and then lets the kids’ appetite for reading take over. “If they want (to finish reading) it, they know where to find it,” he said.

An original title is **Big Butch the Blue Nosed Reindeer**. This is a story Biola created for his children. His daughter, Dr. Holly Biola, turned it into picture book. Another amazing story is **Willa the Caterpillar**, a story written by her father-in-law, the late Dr. Don Roberts. Roberts wrote **Willa** during his time as a doctor serving in World War II and sent it back to his daughters.

Second grade teacher Brittany Scarberry sings Biola’s praises. “He comes faithfully every week, right on time... He reads with wonderful expression, and even does voice impressions for different characters.

“Mr. Biola brings so much joy and knowledge to the students through reading. A consistent example of an

Continued on page 6

Books, continued

“Far too often children lose reading skills over the summer due to a lack of reading,” said Bond. “The result is that teachers have to spend important classroom time at the beginning of the next school year bringing students back to their previous skill level. This remediation time is not necessary if children maintain skills over the summer, and they can do so by reading.”

A second shipment of books is being prepared for distribution at a later time. Once the remaining books are added to the count, Read Aloud West Virginia will have distributed more than 11,000 books from the National Book grant throughout the Mountain State.

Lesley McCullough McCallister is a Read Aloud supporter, volunteer reader, newsletter contributor and a freelance journalist.



Marion County Chapter President Aletta Moffett and husband Bob survey a van full of books being delivered to students.

Importance of Summer Reading

By Sara Busse

Ahhh... summer. Time for kids to kick back, take a break, put away the books. Well, no.

Google “the importance of summer reading” and you’ll see that while it’s good to relax and enjoy the less-structured school vacation days, it’s never a good idea to stop reading.

Jim Trelease, reading guru and godfather to Read Aloud West Virginia, touts the importance of summer reading by citing a study of 1,600 sixth-graders in 18 schools showing that reading four to six books (chapter books) during the summer was enough to alleviate summer loss.

In his pamphlet, “Summer Reading,” Trelease, author of *The Read-Aloud Handbook*, discusses reading programs at local libraries as an important tool for parents during the summer. He also explains that, at first, ten to fifteen minutes of sustained silent reading (SSR) is appropriate for children who are not used to reading for more than brief periods of time. Later, when they are used to reading in this manner, the time can be increased.

Scholastic, provider of books and educational materials in tens of thousands of schools and tens of millions of homes worldwide, explains that learning or reading skill losses during the summer months are cumulative, creating a wider gap each year between more proficient and less proficient students. By the time a struggling reader reaches middle school, summer reading loss has accumulated to a two-year lag in reading achievement, according to an April 2007 study by Richard Allington.

Teachers typically spend between four to six weeks re-teaching material students have forgotten over the summer, according to the article “Lasting Consequences of the Summer Learning Gap,” by Karl Alexander, Doris Entwistle and Linda Steffel Olson. And in *The Power of Reading*, Stephen Krashen points out that “reading as a leisure activity is the best predictor of comprehension, vocabulary and reading speed.”

Finally, in the “Kids and Family Reading Report” conducted by Harrison Group and Scholastic:

- Having reading role-model parents or a large book collection at home has a greater impact on kids’ reading frequency than does household income.
- An overwhelming 92 percent of kids say they are more likely to finish a book they picked out themselves.
- Ninety-nine percent of parents think children their child’s age should read over the summer.
- Parents think their children should read an average of 11 books over the summer, ranging from 17 books for children ages 6-8, to six books for 15- to 17-year olds.

So let the kids sleep in, swim, run in the yard and enjoy a little downtime. But make reading a part of the fun and the rewards will be seen in the fall — and throughout their lives.

Sara Busse is a long-time Charleston resident and community volunteer.

Biola, continued

adult reading for enjoyment offers so many benefits to the students,” she said.

Asked about his reading style, Biola said, laughing, “I have a falsetto and a bass. And I can do Donald Duck. There are not many times to use that one, but I am ready.”

He advises readers to vet their books carefully, and “Keep your appointment,” he counsels.

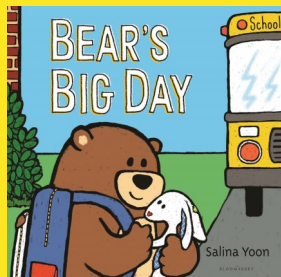
In the end Biola believes he is the one who benefits the most from Read Aloud. “I have a great gig,” he said.

Nikki Moses is the former editor of the Read Aloud newsletter, a Read Aloud board member and an active volunteer in the Charleston community.

Books prescribed to prevent summer slide

Pre-Kindergarten

Tree: a Peek-Through Picture Book by Britta Teckentrup



Bear's Big Day by Salina Yoon
Bear, feeling very grown-up, says goodbye to his stuffed rabbit, Floppy, and starts his first day of school, but soon he is missing Floppy and worrying that he is not ready to be a big bear, after all.

An Elephant in the Garden by Michael Morpurgo

Recommended by Mary Kay Bond

The Pout Pout Fish by Deborah Diesen

Recommended by Mary Kay Bond

Kindergarten to Second Grade

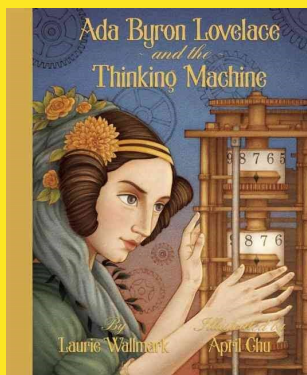


Green Pants by Kenneth Kraegel

Jameson refuses to wear pants that are not green, until he has to choose between wearing his green pants and wearing a tuxedo with black pants so that he can be in his cousin's wedding.

Sophie's Squash Goes to School by Pat Zietlow Miller & Anne Wilsdorf

Third to Fourth Grade



Ada Byron Lovelace and the Thinking Machine by Laurie Wallmark

This book offers an illustrated telling of the story of Ada Byron Lovelace, from her early creative fascination with mathematics and science and her devastating bout with measles, to the

ground-breaking algorithm she wrote for Charles Babbage's analytical engine.

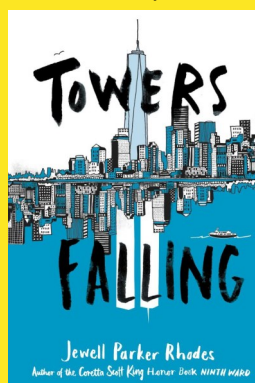
Sojo: Memoirs of a Reluctant Sled Dog by Pam Flowers

Nancy Clancy Late-Breaking News! by Jane O'Connor

Fifth to Sixth Grade

Crenshaw by Katherine Applegate

I Dissent: Ruth Bader Ginsburg Makes Her Mark by Debbie Levy



Towers Falling by Jewell Parker Rhodes

While learning about September 11th, fifth grader Dèja (born after the attacks) realizes how much the events still color her world.

Unless otherwise noted, recommendations are by Terry McDougal, Kanawha County Public Library's Head of Children's Services. See more about these books and others on our website.

SPOTLIGHT RECOMMENDATION

By Bob Fleenor

Because of Mr. Terupt, by Rob Buyea (grades 4-6)

"Please let my teacher be okay." In a harrowing split second, the lives of Anna (the shy one), her Snow Hill School classmates, and their inventive, perceptive, and enigmatic new teacher are forever altered. Yet, even in his absence, Mr. Terupt continues to teach his class the importance of looking beyond stereotypes, and the value of forgiveness. Rob Buyea's debut novel won an E.B. White Read Aloud Award and has spawned two popular sequels.

Bob Fleenor is a retired journalist, volunteer reader and member of the Read Aloud of Berkeley County board.



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Is your school ready for 2017-2018 Read Aloud enrollment?

While our children are enjoying the lazy days of summer, teachers, principals, coordinators and readers throughout West Virginia (as well as the Read Aloud staff!) are looking ahead to fall *and a new school year of reading*. Here is a brief rundown of enrollment procedures and what schools can expect in the coming months.

Each August (typically in the first week), RAWV sends enrollment packets to schools in participating counties. The packets consist of a cover letter, enrollment form, School Coordinator's job description, and a stamped, addressed return envelope. It is *very helpful* if these are returned ASAP so readers can be recruited and placed in classrooms. There is usually a deadline of the second week of September so that is ample time, but RAWV likes to get them sooner, if possible.

Why do schools need to enroll each year? Principals and staff change from year to year. The program needs the support of the principal to be successful. RAWV wants to make sure the principal and school are committed to participation in the program each year. Also, the principal may wish to name a new school coordinator, and the enrollment form offers him/her the chance to do that.

Read Aloud Executive Director Mary Kay Bond compares the process to an insurance re-enrollment. "You need to do it once a year," she explains.

After the enrollment form is received by the RAWV office, the school coordinator (named by the principal) receives a cover letter, a list of the previous year's readers with their intentions about returning in the fall, and a sign-up sheet for teachers.

Coordinators then ask teachers if they want readers and the best days and times for readers to come to their respective classrooms. Coordinators then contact last year's readers and arrange for their return! Newly trained readers are placed, as well.

"Timing is important. If readers indicate they want to return and aren't contacted, they feel unwanted," Bond explained. "Also, if we do not know which schools (and which classrooms in those schools) will be participating, we do not know how many readers we need. We want this to be a full-year program so students get the full benefit, and that a consistent message is sent."

Finally, there are many advantages of enrollment:

- A consistent "commercial" for reading in the form of a dedicated volunteer who has attended a Read Aloud orientation and knows classroom expectations.
- Eligibility to participate in the Book Distribution program.
- Eligibility to receive parent education materials.
- Eligibility to borrow book trunks to supplement class libraries.

Watch your mailbox for your packet, and get ready for reading during the 2017-2018 school year!

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