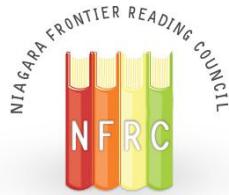


SPOT LIGHT



VOLUME LVIII, NO. 2 IRA HONOR COUNCIL - #35575 WINTER 2017



President's Message by Dana Comas-Baez

Happy New Year and welcome to 2017! The new year is a time to reflect on what was great and what we can do better, in our personal lives and as educators. The same is true for the NFRC. Our officers, board members, and committee chairs are always working hard, reflecting on the past, and looking for new ways to make our organization more valuable for our members and community. As always, we welcome fresh ideas from our members. If you are interested in becoming more involved by volunteering for events or becoming a board member, please contact me at comasbaez@gmail.com.

Something to think about as you embark on your resolutions for a better tomorrow and embrace changes:

*Snow is falling
and books are
calling...*

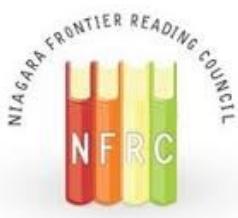
"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but building the new" - Socrates

Also do not forget to register for our upcoming Winter Brunch on February 4, 2017. Please see the following pages for more details, and be sure to invite your friends and colleagues! Looking forward to seeing everyone and reconnecting in 2017 at our upcoming events...





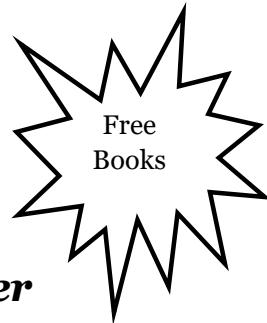
Niagara Frontier Reading Council Winter Brunch



February 4, 2017 @ 8am
Classics V (2425 Niagara Falls Blvd, Amherst, NY)

[Click here for directions:](#)

[Classics V](#)



Amy Ludwig VanDerwater
Come join us and get a *sneak-peak of her*
upcoming book.

Poems Are Teachers: How Poetry Helps Strengthen Our Writing in all Genres

Come learn how studying poetry allows readers to understand a poem's design all in one look. From one handful of carefully chosen words, students can see how a poem works line-by-line, discovering ways to both find ideas and play with sound. Come study poems, the most elegant writing teachers of all.



Agenda:

- 8:00-8:30 am Registration
- 8:30-9:30 am NFRC Welcome & Brunch
- 9:30– 11:30 am Presentation
- 11:30-11:45 am Q & A, discussion
- 11:45– 12:00 NFRC closing remarks
- 12:00–1:30 pm Professional Book Discussion:
Writers ARE Readers by Lester L. Laminack
and Reba M. Woodsworth

Donate new or gently used school supplies to support the Nicaragua Mission Project and be entered into a drawing to win a prize.

More information:

Cost: \$30 members / \$35 nonmembers

Register at www.thenfrc.org/ by 1.29.17

Questions? Contact Kathleen Montesanti
kmontesanti5@gmail.com



A former fifth grade teacher, Amy Ludwig VanDerwater is author of FOREST HAS A SONG, EVERY DAY BIRDS, and the forthcoming READ! READ! READ!

She is also co-author of POETRY: BIG THOUGHTS IN SMALL PACKAGES and the forthcoming POEMS ARE TEACHERS. Amy has taught writing to teachers and students for eighteen years and blogs at The Poem Farm and Sharing Our Notebooks.



February 2016 – NFRC Winter Brunch Speaker Amy Ludwig VanDerwater

Bio:

Amy Ludwig VanDerwater is author of FOREST HAS A SONG (Clarion, 2013), EVERY DAY BIRDS (Scholastic, 2016), READ! READ! READ! (Wordsong, 2017), DREAMING OF YOU (Boyds Mills Press, 2018), and WITH MY HANDS (Clarion, 2018). A frequently anthologized children's poet, she is also co-author of the second grade poetry book in the UNITS OF STUDY and author of the forthcoming POEMS ARE TEACHERS (Heinemann 2017).. Amy has taught writing to teachers and students for eighteen years and blogs poems and lessons at The Poem Farm.



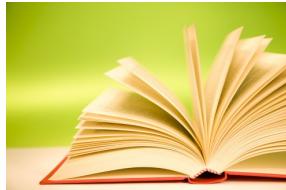
Amy Ludwig VanDerwater
Photo Credit – Melissa Deakin

Brunch Talk Description:

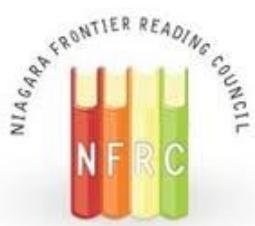
Poems are Teachers: How Studying Poetry Strengthens Writing in All Genres



Because poems are generally short, a reader can study a poem to learn about beginnings and endings, topic selection and language, structure and technique, all without turning a page. From one handful of carefully chosen words, students can see how poems work line-by-line, and they can bring this understanding of craft to their narrative, information, and opinion writing. Poetry is not a fun extra genre or a form to fill out. Rather, it is the most elegant writing teacher of all.



Niagara Frontier Reading Council Spring Brunch



Saturday, April 29, 2017 @ 8:00 am
Michael's Catering & Banquets
Emerald Room
4885 Southwestern Blvd.
Hamburg, NY 14075



Lester L. Laminack

When Books Become Best Friends: One Book/Many Visits—Explore the potential of revisiting a small collection of carefully selected books through focused read aloud experiences across time. Imagine slowing down to explore a small set of books in layers, one layer at a time with a clear focus for each read aloud experience. Lester will take you through the potential of a few picture books to demonstrate what can be done with numerous well-loved books from your own classroom library.

Lester L. Laminack is Professor Emeritus from Western Carolina University where he taught writing workshop, children's literature, and reading. He has written several professional books as well as books for children. He served three years as coeditor of the NCTE journal *Primary Voices* and as editor of the Children's Book Review Department of the National Council of Teachers of English journal *Language Arts* from 2003-2006.



Donate new or gently used school supplies to support the Nicaragua Mission Project and be entered into a drawing to win a prize.

Agenda:

- 8:00-8:30 am Registration
- 8:30-9:30 am NFRC Welcome & Brunch
- 9:30– 11:30 am Presentation
- 11:30-11:45 am Q & A, discussion
- 11:45– 12:00 NFRC closing remarks
- 12:00–1:30 pm Professional Book Discussion:
Writers ARE Readers: Flipping Reading Instruction into Writing Opportunities.

More information:

Cost: \$30 members/ \$35 nonmembers

Register at www.thenfrc.org/ by April 22, 2017

Questions? Contact Kathleen Montesanti
kmontesanti5@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE and REGISTER for the 2017 NFRC Spring Brunch!! By Kathleen Montasanti

Scholastic is sponsoring for the NFRC another excellent speaker and prolific author, Lester Laminack. His books include several professional books as well as books for children. He is the coauthor of this year's book club book, Writers ARE Readers and will designate time after his presentation for questions relating to our PD.

Lester's topic for the NRFC Spring Brunch will be *When Books Become Best Friends: One Book/ Many Visits*. He will demonstrate the potential of revisiting a small collection of carefully selected books through focused read aloud experiences across time. Learn to better use your classroom favorites to enrich students understanding of content and craft. Read Aloud is a key component to improved reading.

Bio: Lester L. Laminack

Lester L. Laminack, Ed.D., is professor emeritus of Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina, where he received two awards for excellence in teaching. Laminack is now a full-time writer



and consultant working with schools throughout the United States.

His academic publications include *Learning Under the Influence of Language and Literature*, *Reading Aloud Across the Curriculum*, *Climb Inside a Poem*, *Cracking Open the Author's Craft*, *Unwrapping the Read Aloud*, *Bullying Hurts: Teaching Kindness Through Read Aloud and Guided Conversations*, *The Writing Teacher's Troubleshooting Guide*, and *Writers ARE Readers*. His most recent publications from Scholastic are the *Ultimate Read-Aloud Resource: Making Every Moment Intentional and Instructional with "Best Friend Books"* and *Best Friend Fiction Collections: Books, Lessons and Professional Learning for Making the Most of Read-Aloud Time (K-5)*.

Laminack is also the author of six children's books: *The Sunsets of Miss Olivia Wiggins*, *Trevor's Wiggly-*

Wobbly Tooth, Saturdays and Tea Cakes, Jake's 100th Day of School, Snow Day!, and Three Hens and a Peacock (2012 Children's Choice K-2 Book of the Year Award).

He is a frequent presenter at state, regional, and national conferences.

Want a Signed Copy of Lester's Book?

Below is the link for the NYS priced single document that has all the Scholastic published Lester products on it, including his new professional book: [The Ultimate Read A-Aloud Resource](#). If you would like to have one signed, please order and ship to your school site prior to the event, as books cannot be sold at the brunch. By shipping to a school site teachers get NYS contract discounts (40% off, free shipping, and no sales tax).

Purchases can be made with personal funds. A credit card can be used on the NYS Teachers Store website or an order can be called into Scholastic Customer Service.

Click on the following link and search Lester Laminack:

www.scholastic.com/NewYorkState
You will need the NYS contract number (pc66966), your Scholastic name and password for any scholastic account to get into the NYS page.

Nicaragua Mission Project

Once again, new and used school supplies and monetary donations will be accepted to support the Nicaragua

Mission Project. Those who donate will be entered into a drawing to win a prize.

Professional Book Discussion

Following the Spring Brunch will be the conclusion to our Professional Book Discussion for the 2016-17 year. The discussion will be from 12:00-1:30.

We look forward to seeing everyone on SATURDAY APRIL 29, 2017 at Michael's Catering & Banquets on Southwestern Boulevard in Hamburg.

Check-in is from 8-8:30.

Please contact Kathleen Montesanti, VP of Programming, at kmontesanti5@gmail.com with any questions. Registration for this event is already open. Cost to members is \$30, nonmember \$35. Don't miss out on this opportunity to network with teachers from around the WNY area and hear Lester Laminack, a fantastic presenter.



Outreach

By Susan Busch

On Saturday, December 3, 2016, two families were presented with bookcases and baskets of books at their Habitat for Humanity house dedications.

Between them, eleven children were given books chosen specifically for their age levels. NFRC Outreach projects are impacting families every month!



Awards Corner

by Susan Hirsch and Aimee LaRosa, NFRC Awards Co-Chairs

Please look to this article in each Spotlight for information on awards sponsored by ILA, NYSRA or NFRC.

NFRC Awards

NFRC is preparing to present our annual awards.

Here is an alphabetical list with application due dates (month/day).

Certificate of Recognition Award 3/9
Service to Reading Award 3/9

Do you know some wonderful, exemplary folks around you who have made a significant contribution to literacy education in our schools and community?

If you do, please nominate them for the Service to Reading Award (professional educator and NFRC member) or the Certificate of Recognition Award (not a professional educator and need not be an NFRC member).

For additional information and nomination forms; check your email inbox, Winter Brunch folder or this Spotlight.



NYSRA Awards

The New York State Reading Association (NYSRA) sponsors many awards, some of which are co-sponsored with ILA.

Here is an alphabetical list with application due dates (month/day).

Literacy Outreach Award 4/30
NYSRA Senator Donovan Memorial Scholarship 4/30
NYSRA Literacy Educator of the Year 4/30
NYSRA Friend of Reading Award 4/30
NYSRA Literature Based Mini-grant 4/30
NYSRA Literacy and Technology Mini-grant 4/30
NYSRA Richard L. Allington Research Grant 4/30
NYSRA World Trade Center Memorial 4/30
NYSRA Membership Excellence Award 4/30
NYSRA Council Service Award 4/30
NYSRA Literacy Advocate Award 4/30

Do any of this pique your interest? For more information and applications for these awards, please refer to the NYSRA website: <http://www.nysreading.org>

ILA Awards

Additionally, there are many awards available through the International Literacy Association (ILA). Here is a list of awards organized by who may apply.

For Authors:

Children's and Young Adults; Book Award 1/15
Dina Feitelson Research Award 1/15
Lee Bennett Hopkins Poet Award 1/15

For Researchers or Graduate School/Doctoral Students:

Constance McCullough Award 6/30
Elva Knight Research Grant 1/15
Ester Zolt Academic Research Grant 1/15
Helen M. Robinson Grant 1/15
Jeanne S. Chall Research Fellowship 1/15
Outstanding Dissertation of the Year Award 1/15
Steven A. Stahl Research Grant 1/15

For Teachers:

Erwin Zolt Curriculum Excellence Award 1/15
Esther Zolt Teacher Research Grant 1/15
Jerry Johns Outstanding Teacher Educator in Reading Award 1/15
Maryann Manning Outstanding Volunteer Service Award 1/15
Nila Banton Smith Award 1/15
Regie Routman Teacher Recognition Grant 1/15
Special Service Award 1/15
Teacher as Researcher Grant 1/15
Technology and Literacy Award 1/15
Travel Grants for Educators 6/30
William S. Gray Citation of Merit 1/15

For additional information and applications for these awards, please refer to the ILA website:
<http://www.literacyworldwide.org/about-us/awards-grants>



Potter Parallel

by Jack A. Agugliaro

Sometimes, parallel worlds collide. As they do, a head may turn toward the subtle meeting and process possible similarities. Having said this, I must tell you that I recently finished rereading Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix, by J. K. Rowling. Wonder and revelation enveloped my mind as I saw what could be construed as a prediction of our present political climate.

Professor Umbridge, the diabolical pink-appareled leader of Hogwarts School after Dumbledore has escaped the Ministry's clutches, attempts to take control of the educational process. She submits decree after decree that place unreasonable and unprecedented demands and restrictions on students and teachers, creating havoc in the learning process. She goes so far as to bury the truth in lies, and bleeds Harry in torturous detentions. The powers that be are blind to the physical and mental abuse she projects on the learning climate, limiting advancement and opportunity in the name of political desire.

That political desire emanates from the Ministry whose leader refuses to recognize disaster in the making (Voldemort, the evil antagonist, has returned!) and wants to hide all evidence that points toward a situation that would make him look bad. “Voldemort has not returned!”; “There is no problem!” The whistle-blowers know otherwise, and it is not until a death and a number of injured parties are discovered that the government, the Ministry, acquiesces and accepts the warnings. Umbridge is deposed as her ambition leads her to the dark forest where magical creatures, centaurs, carry her off.

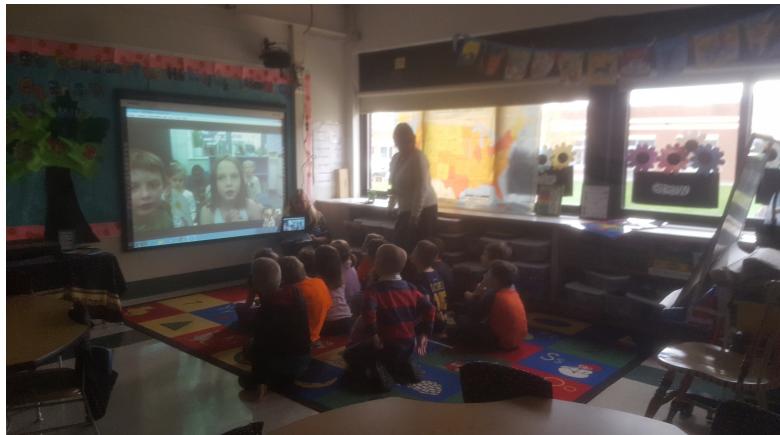
Is Rowling a seer? Was she gazing across the ocean and hinting at possible upcoming events? No matter your political viewpoints, it is hard to deny the common nature of this fiction and reality....



Member News

This year the NFRC recipient of the NYSRA Council Service Award was Patty Oliphant. This award was presented at the Fall Assembly of Delegates meeting in Albany.

Congratulations Patty!!!

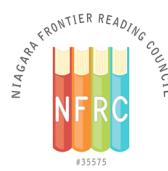


Patty Oliphant with her students, participating in a “mystery Skype” (left), and with author Selina Yoon (above) in November 2016.

Congratulations to Kathleen Montesanti on the birth of her granddaughter this Christmas Eve!

Spotlight Editor Kirsten Burke Smith with keynote speaker Dr. Nell K. Duke (left) and presenting one of two standing-room-only sessions on literacy and educational technology at NYSRA 2016, Rochester, New York.





NFRC CERTIFICATE of RECOGNITION AWARD NOMINATION FORM

A **Certificate of Recognition** will be given to a person or a group not affiliated with the Niagara Frontier Reading Council and ***not a paid, professional educator.*** The Certificate of Recognition is for service to, or promotion of, the council's purposes. This award will be presented at the Spring Brunch by the **Awards Chair.**
The deadline for nomination submission is March 9, 2017.

Submit completed form to: Aimee LaRosa
alarosa@opschools.org (Please list NFRC Awards in the subject line.)
Or US mail at 5962 Lakecrest Dr., Lake View, NY 14085

Person Submitting Nomination

Name: _____
Address: _____

Phone: _____
Email: _____

Nominee Information

Name: _____
Address: _____

Phone: _____
Email: _____

Institutional Affiliation: _____
Position: _____

Repeat the above information for each person if a group is being nominated.



NFRC SERVICE TO READING AWARD NOMINATION FORM

The **Service to Reading Award** will be given to a person, involved in literacy education, who has made a significant contribution to promoting literacy in the community. ***The recipient should be a member of the Niagara Frontier Reading Council.*** This award will be presented at the Spring Brunch by the **Awards Chair**. **The deadline for nomination submission is March 9, 2017.**

Submit completed form to: Aimee LaRosa

alarosa@opschools.org (Please list NFRC Awards in the subject line.)

Or US mail at 5962 Lakecrest Dr., Lake View, NY 14085

Person Submitting Nomination

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Nominee Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Institutional Affiliation: _____

Position: _____

Please provide a description of the nominee's contribution to promoting literacy in the community. (Please limit description to one page, single spaced, 12pt font.)

NFRC Officers 2016-2017

President

Dana Comas-Baez

Past President

Amy Bartell

President Elect

Theresa Andrews

Vice President of Programming

Kathleen Montesanti

Recording Secretary

Jack Agugliaro

Corresponding Secretary

Julie Kuebler

Treasurer

Bonnie Welsted

Director of Membership

Carol Bush

Awards Co-Chairs

Susan Hirsch

Aimee LaRosa

Board Members

2016-2018

Judy Bradbury

Wendy Huss

Jeanne Cummings

Pamela Garabedian



Board Members 2015-2017

Elizabeth Bystrak

Jeanne Komoroske

Mary Beth Scumaci

About the NFRC:

- We are non-profit educational organization chartered by The International Reading Association since 1958.
- We are dedicated to the professional development and enhancement of literacy in our community.
- We are involved in professional issues affecting literacy.

NFRC Mission:

Our mission is to promote literacy education, encourage professional development, and provide community service, which fosters literacy within Western New York. We hope to instill a passion for lifelong learning and encourage readers to build a vision of the future.

Find us on Twitter & Facebook! Click on links below:



Please send any items of interest or information about upcoming speakers/events that you would like to include in

the NFRC Spring Spotlight to:

Ms. Kirsten B. Smith, Spotlight Editor

kirstenbsmith829@gmail.com