

# HIGHLIGHTS

of the Minnesota Reading Association,  
an International Reading Association  
affiliate

## President's Message

*Jessica Crooker*

Greetings MRA members,

I hope this first newsletter of the 2013-2014 school year finds you knee deep in a pile of crispy fall leaves!

Recently, I had the opportunity to hear leadership guru, Drew Dudley, speak at a conference. He began his talk to a crowd of over 1600 people by asking: How many of you are comfortable with calling yourselves leaders? About a third of the hands in the room went up. In the 10 minutes that followed, Dudley went on to challenge us with the premise that the title of 'leader' does not have to be reserved for the elite or the extraordinary. He shared a personal experience in which an act of his leadership had a life-changing impact on a fellow college classmate during an exchange that he does not even remember. (Watch [Dudley's TED Talk](#) to hear the whole story!)

Then, he asked a second question: How many of you have had a moment when someone said or did something for you that fundamentally made your life better?

I'd actually like you to take a moment and answer that question for yourself.

I can think of a few moments in my life—a conversation with a boss at the retail store where I once worked, a phone call with my dad while I was driving down I-94, and a text message from a friend that said just what I needed to hear in that moment. What is interesting to me is that these life-changing moments were not planned or orchestrated at times during which I was expecting great inspiration. In fact, they were rather accidental and spontaneous, which makes me think maybe Drew Dudley is right.

*Continued on page 12*

## FALL 2013

### What's inside

President's Message	1
Reading Councils	2
Events Information	6
Building Motivation	8
Technology	10

**Thank you for being  
an MRA member!**

## MRA's Mission Statement and Goals

*Minnesota Reading Association's mission is to actively promote lifelong literacy for all citizens. We encourage professional interaction among all organizations involved with literacy and provide resources for exemplary literacy practices and habits.*

- Supporting, Recognizing, and Celebrating Literacy Efforts across the State of Minnesota
- Promoting Networking and Collaboration in the Area of Literacy
- Providing Resources and Opportunities for Professional Growth and Leadership Development

## **Executive Committee**

**PRESIDENT** Jessica Crooker

**PRESIDENT-ELECT** Debra Peterson

**VICE-PRESIDENT** Sue Paasch

**PAST PRESIDENT** Jennifer McCarty Plucker

**TREASURER** Linda Snowberg

**SECRETARY** Kate Kelly

**IRA COORDINATOR** Kari Ross

**MEMBERSHIP** Stephanie Brondani

**WEB MANAGER** Scott Voss

**GRANT CHAIR** Katy Ploehn

## **Local Council Presidents**

**ARROWHEAD READING COUNCIL** Pam Tomassoni

**CENTRAL MINNESOTA READING COUNCIL** Beth Laudenbach and Michele Rogers

**SOUTHEAST READING COUNCIL** Heather Willman and Jill Magnuson

**SOUTHWEST READING COUNCIL** Cindy Whaley

**TWIN CITIES AREA READING COUNCIL** Kathy Fox

**MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF READING** Kate Kelly and Karen Moroz

**SECONDARY READING INTEREST COUNCIL** Risa Cohen

Copyright 2013. *Highlights* is the quarterly publication of the Minnesota Reading Association. All rights reserved.

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR** Kathryn Bannon

Opinions expressed are those of the author and are not necessarily those of:

**Minnesota Reading Association**  
PO BOX 904, St. Cloud, MN 56301

**MNREADING.ORG**

# **Reading Councils**

## **Central Minnesota Reading Association**

### *Talahi's Roll and Read Summer Book Mobile*

Sara Martini

Talahi Community School

As a media specialist in a low income school, I had been thinking about a way to get library books into the hands of my students during the long summer months for many years. Last spring I attended the International Reading Association conference in San Antonio, Texas and got the idea I had been waiting for! I went to a session presented by an elementary school outside of Washington DC. This group of teachers started a summer book mobile in their neighborhoods and got unbelievable results. They kept track of the students who came regularly to the book mobile and those students made more growth over the summer month than their students who attended summer school. These teachers were my inspiration to try this at my school!

When I returned home from the IRA conference, I talked to the instructional leader for my school, Beth Lovdahl and she loved the idea too! Next we spoke to our principal, Carol Potter, and she was extremely supportive. She helped us secure the funding for a bus and a bus driver once a week. Beth and I donated our time each week along with many other teachers and para professionals from our building. Our principal, Carol, also came almost every single week.

Beth and I selected about 1000 books from our library to load on the school bus. We used a special education bus because we could load the book shelves up on the lift and display the book shelves in the open area where wheelchairs are parked.



# Reading Councils Cont'd

## Central Minnesota Reading Council

### What has MRA done for you?

Beth Laudenbach  
Council President

I think those of us belonging to Minnesota Reading Association plus a local affiliate council recognizes the benefit of networking with others sharing in the same passion that we have for literacy. The question we seek to find the answer to is this: How do we answer the question for others when they ask, Why should I belong to MRA?

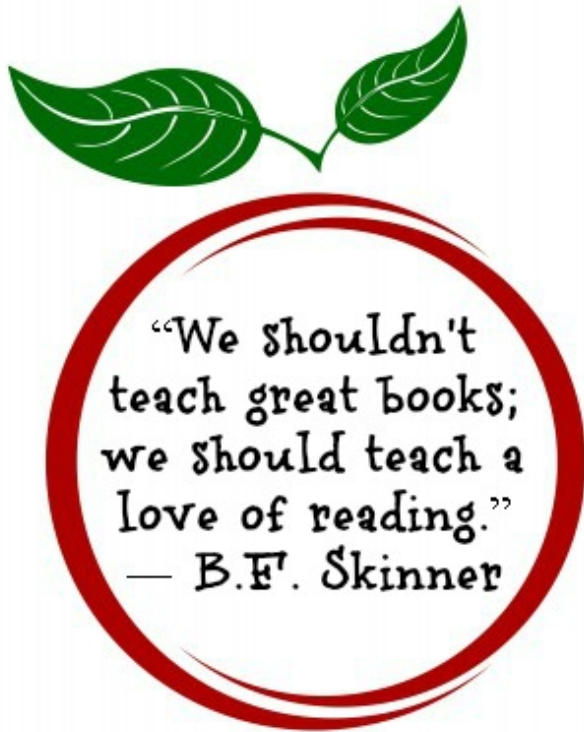
The biggest benefits I have received from MRA have come from serving as an officer in my local council Central Minnesota Reading Council. After the latest MRA conference held at Cragun's, I focused on how much I have gained personally and professionally from this organization. Everything I have learned holds so much value for me. My hope is that something will resonate with you.

- Meeting with authors and professors in higher education. As a kindergarten teacher, I have had the opportunity to sit next to authors and experts that have published research in the field of literacy. Incoming International Reading Association President Jill Lewis Spector sat with me at lunch during an IRA Leadership Training in June that I attended thanks to MRA. Did I mention that MRA put me up in a 5 star hotel?
- I have met and had one on one conversations with all three of our State Reading Specialists: Al Greenfield, Bonnie Hauck, and Kari Ross! My gratitude goes out to all three of them for the incredible work they have done for our state.



- Leadership Training opportunities abound like the one above. But when you attend, MRA also provides valuable leadership training at the Leadership training sessions. Most recently, Jessica Crooker led us through a *Leadership Styles* article. This was insightful for me to identify the type of leader I am, but also in terms of looking at additional attributes of a leader that I would want to possess.
- This training also transfers into my “day” job of kindergarten teacher and Content Specialist for the district where I work. Filling a leadership position seems to come easily and naturally for some. The role of “leader” has always seemed like someone else’s job for me. I appreciate being able to learn from others outside of my school district. I have shared the ideas I learn with the building principal where I teach.
- Learning from other educators in the field. About three years ago, two local kindergarten teachers shared how they were implementing the Daily 5 into their classrooms-they both affirmed what I was doing and inspired me to go further.
- It is through many experiences of this organization that I explore and review the Common Core Language Arts standards helping me to stay current.
- It is through MRA, I learn more about advocacy at state and national levels.

*Continued on pg. 4*



## What has MRA done for you?

*Continued from page 3*

- I learn about grants and awards that I can share with others. So many Celebrate Literacy recipients come right out of our Local Reading Council.
- I learn about great new children's books and professional titles! Recommendations coming from real people mean more to me than reading a review.
- Newsletters and emails informing me of additional literacy events across the great state of Minnesota.
- Plus discounts on attending events; all for a \$35 membership. Well worth the investment.

Thank you Minnesota Reading Association!

**CMRC is excited about the new members that have joined our CMRC Executive Board to help us plan this year's literacy events.**

October 5, 2013                      9:00-11:30

**Fall Membership Drive and Free Common Core Reading Workshop  
Talahi Elementary, St.Cloud, MN**

January 25, 2014                      8:00-Noon

**Kathy Bumgardner visits Central Minnesota. Breakfast will be served. Media specialists deliver book talks.**

Pine Meadow Elementary, Sartell, MN

March 20, 2014                      6:00-7:00 p.m.

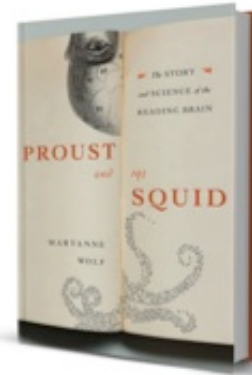
**Join us for this Dinner with an Author featuring Minnesota Author: Chris Munroe Sauk  
Rapids/Rice Middle School**

If you'd like more information, please contact Beth Laudenbach  
[balauden@charter.net](mailto:balauden@charter.net).

# Reading Councils Cont'd

## Minnesota Academy of Reading

This summer members of the Minnesota Academy of Reading facilitated regional book clubs with teacher educators and literacy leaders from around the state. The discussions focused on *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain* by Dr. Maryanne Wolf. The goal of these professional conversations was to apply brain research to our teacher preparation programs, professional development, and reading instruction. This research is especially pertinent to anyone who supports students who struggle to read.



Dr. Maryanne Wolf is a cognitive neuroscientist, child development and literacy expert from Tufts University. Her ground-breaking work at the Center for Reading and Language Research has been highly acclaimed. Her book, *Proust and the Squid: the Story and Science of the Reading Brain*, elegantly captures the magic and mystery behind how exactly the brain functions during the reading act. She masterfully weaves in information about neurological structures, processes, and behaviors along with the chronology of written language development. She does this artfully and coherently for readers of all backgrounds.

As a culminating event for the book clubs, Dr. Maryanne Wolf met with participants to further discuss her work. The session was held on Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup> at the Minnesota Department of Education building. Dr. Wolf presented a keynote address sharing her current work and then she participated in small group discussions with the audience. The professional dialogue was relevant, stimulating, and thought-provoking. Thank you to all who participated!

This event was the result of collaborative effort by the Minnesota Academy of Reading, the Minnesota Center for Reading Research, the Minnesota Reading Association, the International Dyslexia Association/Upper Midwest Branch, and by the generous support from the June Stern Family Foundation.

---

## SAVE THE DATE

Please plan to join the **Minnesota Academy of Reading** for the annual Winter Event

*“Policy Issues in Literacy”*

which will be held on Monday, January 13, 2014 from 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

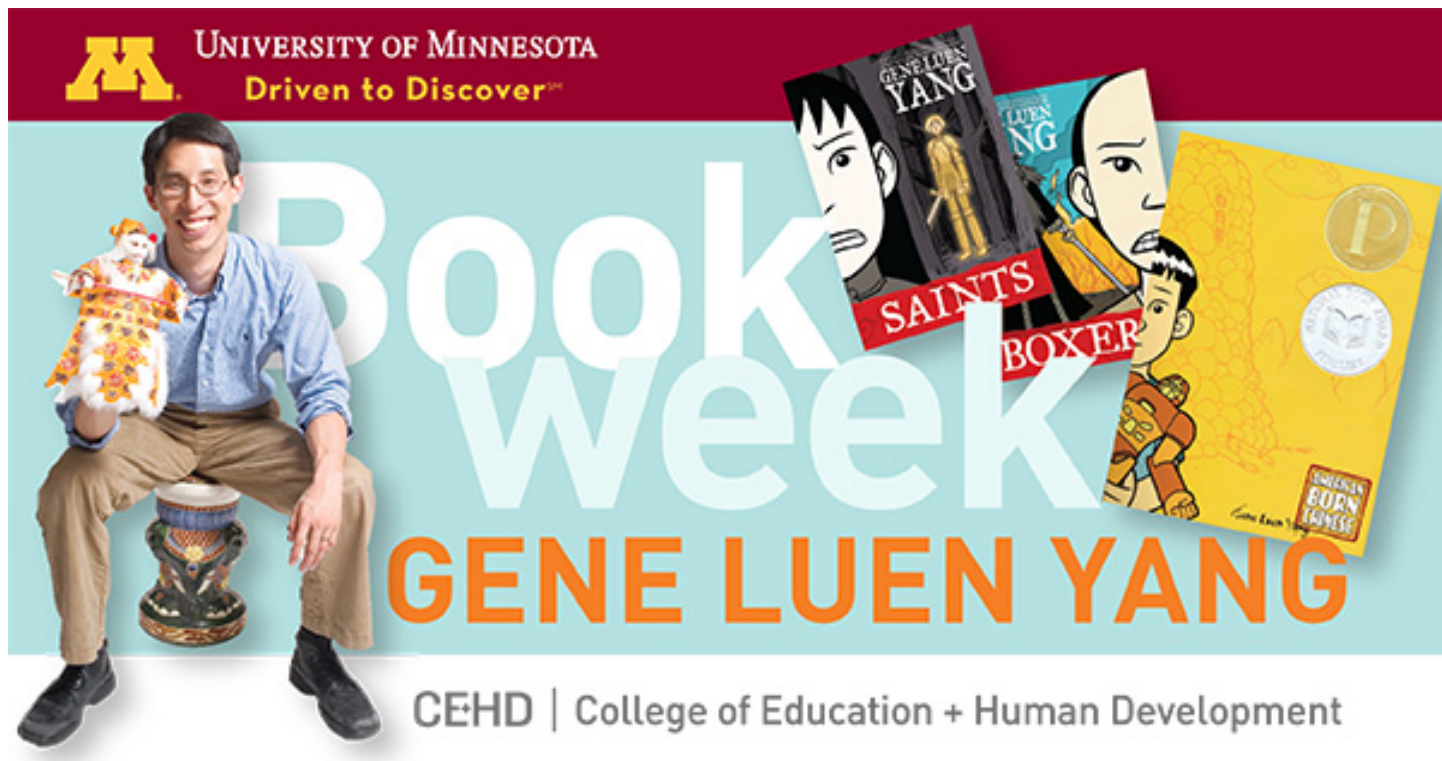
at the Woulfe Hall, Anderson Student Center on the St. Paul campus of St. Thomas University.

A highlight of this year’s event is the recognition **Dr. Gail Jordan** of Bethel University for her contributions to the literacy community of Minnesota.

Watch for more information about this exciting event!



# Event Information



Monday, October 21, 2013

[McNamara Alumni Center](#)-Memorial Hall

4:30-5:30 p.m. Book Bites: Snapshot Reviews of the Year's Best Books

5:30-6:30 p.m. Appetizer/wine reception and book signing

6:30-7:15 p.m. Gene Luen Yang, "Comics, Graphic Novels, and Me"

7:15-8:30 p.m. Post-lecture conversation and Q&A, book signing to follow

[RSVP](#) by October 14

Free and open to the public. CEUs available

For more information, please visit [cehd.umn.edu/BookWeek/](http://cehd.umn.edu/BookWeek/)

LEADERSHIP  
in  
**LiRN**  
READING NETWORK

**A FOCUS ON LEARNING:  
MAKING MINOR ADJUSTMENTS FOR MAJOR IMPACT**

- ▶ **Membership Cost:**  
\$295 (includes a 1-year membership to Minnesota Reading Association)
  
- ▶ **Features of LiRN membership:**
  - \*\*NEW THIS YEAR:** discuss and network with a cohort of job-alike LiRN members
  - LiRN members can bring a guest for FREE to each session; recommendation—  
bring the same guest each time
  - LiRN members receive a FREE professional resource
  
- ▶ **Dates and October Session Details:**
  - October 23rd is at Shoreview Community Center, 4580 Victoria St N, Shoreview, MN**
  - Lunch is provided this day
  - Keynote speaker: Sharon Taberski  
(nationally recognized author, educator, presenter)
  - January 8th @ MDE (Minnesota Department of Education)
  - March 5th @ MDE; all from 8 a.m.-3p.m.

LiRN is a collaborative effort between the Minnesota Department of Education, the University of Minnesota Center for Reading Research, and the Minnesota Reading Association.



## Building Motivation Through Reading at Home:

### A Joe Jubert Grant in Action

Beth Flottmeier

“Two summaries of the research on access (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004; Krashen, 2004) decisively find that improving readers’ access to books increases the volume of reading that students do and improves both their motivation for reading and their reading comprehension.” (Allington, 2009)

After reading articles and books by Richard Allington, three teachers were determined to provide more access to books for their kindergarten students. These teachers knew their students needed to have many opportunities during school and at home to read books at their independent reading level.



The school is housed in a district that is a first ring suburb of Minneapolis. The school district has had a steady increase in free and reduced lunch since 2006. In addition, the percentage of diversity is increasing as well as a slight increase in limited English proficiency students. At this school in particular, the increase of students with free and reduced lunch went from 43% to 64%.

Knowing access to literature was an issue for students in their classes. A group of three kindergarten teachers, decided to address the lack of access to books for their students. The Joe Jubert Memorial grant was a perfect fit for their goals and the grant objectives.

The first goal was to provide students with books to read at home to reinforce classroom instruction and for the children to have the opportunity to build additional reading minutes at home. For students to have reading material accessible for them to bring home at their reading level will help with motivation and fluent reading at their independent level. Previously, sending home books purchased by the district was not an option as the books were used by a variety of teachers in the building.



Another goal the teachers had was to get students talking about books. With motivation comes excitement. Once students got excited to read, the teachers knew the children would start talking about their books.

To start the program, the teachers ordered books at reading levels appropriate for kindergartners. The books were not only representative of the children in the classroom but some were written in their native languages. The teachers felt it was important for children and parents to read at home in their native language as

well as in English. Once the books were ordered the teachers made each child a take home folder. Included in the folder were an introductory letter, reading log, list of high frequency words, and some comprehension activities.

*Continued on pg.9*



*Continued from pg.8*

The parents were invited to the school for an introductory literacy night. It was a fun filled evening with pizza and treats. The teachers gave the parents some background information about reading. After the



information was shared the teachers had the children teach the parents some reading strategies. The strategies were then practiced by parents and children.

After this evening, the children started to bring home their book folders loaded with a “good fit” book. The children spent time reading at home without the worry of a deadline that the book had to be returned and the teachers were less worried about the Guided Reading book room books not being returned on time. Once the children returned a book they were able to take home a new book. If books were lost, the children were allowed to take another book. The point of the program was to get books into the hands of the children at home and promote reading at home.

The kindergarten students showed significant gains in reading achievement. In the winter 57% of our students at grade level according to the DRA2 and district standards. However, this spring 92% of our students have completed DRA2 on grade level. We believe that giving our students access to books at their reading level has provided motivation and enough practice time at school and at home to help our students succeed.

Not only did teachers find that reading achievement increased but there was also an increase in motivation and confidence. Teachers observed children reading in the classroom more and choosing to spend time reading. Confidence in reading ability grew and students were more engaged in the classroom during lessons.

Our experience with the take home book program has been so positive for both students and teachers. Our intention is to make it grow in the following years.

## Talahi's Roll and Read Summer Book Mobile

*Continued from pg. 2*

We called the transportation department and found out where the highest concentrations of our students lived. We came up with six bus stops. We made a route and a schedule for Tuesday afternoons. We started our journey at 12:40 and finished around 3:40. We did this every Tuesday all summer and had fantastic results. Each week, we averaged around 125 children and about 300 books checked out. We originally thought that we would be checking out to all Talahi students, but we quickly learned that our book mobile was popular with children from many different schools.

Since we didn't want to turn anyone away without a book, we let everyone who came check out! Our youngest customers were under one, and we checked out to several high school students. We even had some grandparents come who had grandchildren coming to visit. The excitement was incredible and if our bus was a few minutes late we would have a line of people waiting for us! Sometimes we couldn't even get off of the bus because the children were pushing to get on the bus! They would come running from all directions when they saw the bus coming. My favorite experience was watching a picnic table full of children reading their books as our bus pulled away from their stop. It gave me goose bumps! I can't wait to start up our “Roll and Read” bus again next summer!

## The Continuing Evolution of EBooks

By Scott Voss,  
Web Master

As a regular iPad user, and an avid book reader, I have been in the position to read a great deal of text on my tablet. I actually have had the unique opportunity to use some of the early ereaders, dating back to 2006, when Sony released its Sony Reader. Two years later, I had the chance to try Amazon's Kindle, and then in spring of 2012 I converted to the iPad. It has been fun to watch the evolution of the technology as it had continued to both change the way we read and the way text is constructed. Still, there are challenges that these tablets face as they try to grab a bigger and bigger share of the book market. In this column, I'd like to spend a little time exploring both the benefits of these tablets and some of their drawbacks.

### Benefits

The technology is evolving and becoming more user friendly. Looking back just two years ago, when I first wrote about EBooks, it is good to see that the affordances have improved. The ability, especially on the iPad, to annotate, highlight, and document text is quite easy and functional-- in some ways surpassing that of the traditional print text. After all, once you highlight or annotate an EBook, those annotations are not only designated in the text, but also housed under a "notes" section,

where you can easily browse through your notations at a quick glance, and navigate to the page. Even the touch screen technology that allows the reader to designate which word, phrase or sentence to highlight has become more sophisticated and useable.

Beyond just annotating the text, readers can highlight passages and forward them to fellow readers or to their own email accounts if they so desire. While iBooks (the book version of iTunes) does not allow readers to "share" entire books, the software does allow the reader to identify a page worth of text which can be uploaded to email, text messages, Facebook or any number of places online.



Tablets, or at least those with internet connectivity, also enable readers to click on words for definitions, or to look them up online. So, if one would like to learn more about a given person or concept, they need only click on it, and the option to complete an online search appears. Along these lines, readers can also run "searches" within their texts. So if they want to find the previous use of a term or name, they can click on the term and run a "search" of it within the text.

Publishers as a whole, are getting better at adapting texts to the digital space. In particular, you might notice this in how they use images.

Some books are poor duplicates of the print text. In these cases, the reader can't really manipulate, or zoom in on the images. Images in these poorly published etexts might also mess up the general layout or formatting of the text, requiring editors to move the pictures from within the text to one single section at the end of the text. In contrast, publishers who invest a little more in the EBooks will be sure to provide the reader with more control over the images.

Other benefits of reading off the tablet have been previously stated. It reduces the need for paper, or even the clutter of books-- which can be a problem for bibliophiles like myself. Readers can also access those books from numerous devices. For example, I will buy a book, download it to my iPad and begin reading it. But if I am stuck someplace, I can pull out my phone and pick-up where I left off in the book with my iPhone. Readers can also read in bed at night without having to turn the light on, and tablets are a little less clunky than their print versions.

Perhaps the biggest benefit is the evolving medium itself. Recently I read *Operation Ajax*. It is a graphic novel about the Iranian Revolution in digital text. It not only offers the layout of a comic book, but it has moving text, embedded video (real newsreels from the 50s and 60s) and actual CIA photographs and documents, all of which can be manipulated (moved, enlarged, diminished, etc).

*Continued on pg. 11*

*Continued from pg. 10*

### Drawbacks

Of course, there are some bugs that still need to be worked out. Perhaps the most significant is the inability to share books freely -- at least with the iBook. This makes little sense to me, as in the print text version, you have every right to give the book to another person, to pass it along. You essentially have one license to that book and the software will not let you transfer that license to another reader. This makes me very wary of purchasing certain books, books that I suspect I would like to share with another person, especially professional development texts.

Libraries have started to offer people the chance to download books digitally as well. And this is a benefit. However, any notes you may take in the book are lost once the book gets "returned" to the library. This means that if you want to take any notes, you will have to type them out from the screen of your tablet using a computer or (heaven forbid) you actually have to write them out by hand.

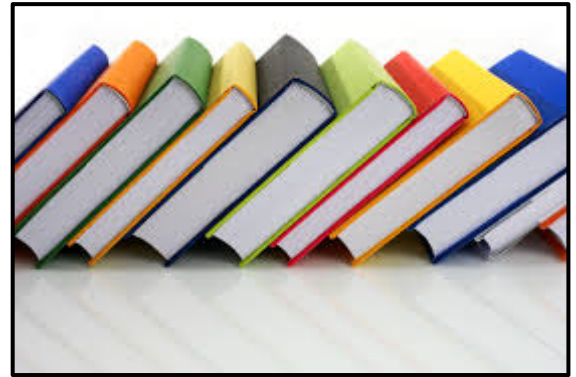
The last drawback is that the bright light of the tablet may cause some sleeping problems if read at night before bed. There is some early research to suggest that the bright light suppresses melatonin, a hormone that helps to regulate our sleeping patterns (Wood et al. 2013; Cajochen et al, 2011). The samples of these various studies are small, but the early research is certainly enough to give pause to cuddling up with our electronic devices.

A final drawback is the actual tactile experience of holding a book versus a machine. From the pleasure of page turning to the joy that comes with seeing your bookmark make its way through the text, there is something to be said about holding a good old fashioned book. Even the smell of an old volume that has been kept too long on a dusty old shelf evokes a simple pleasure that is lost with today's technology.

Though I enjoy reading texts off my tablet, and having instant access to all my books, I do still read about half my books in print. I'm not sure that those print copies will disappear any time soon. Let's face it, they are still cheaper than an expensive tablet, and they are much easier to pass along to other book lovers. Additionally, most of our schools do not offer universal access to technology, and until we do, textbooks and copies of *To Kill a Mockingbird* will still be a part of our annual budgets.

Cajochen, C. Frey, S., Anders, D., Spati, J. Bues, M., Pross, A., Mager, R., Wirz-Justice, A., Stefani, O. Evening exposure to a light-emitting diodes (LED)-backlit computer screen affects circadian physiology and cognitive performance. *Journal of Applied Physiology*, 110 (2011), pp. 1432–1438

Wood, B., Rea, M.S., Plitnick, B., Figueiro, M.G. Light level and duration of exposure determine the impact of self-luminous tablets on melatonin suppression, *Applied Ergonomics*, Volume 44, Issue 2, March 2013, Pages 237-240, ISSN 0003-6870, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.apergo.2012.07.008>



### President's Message

*Continued from page 1*

Life-changing moments happen every day at the hands of people who might never consider themselves leaders.

As educators, we relish the occasional letter, email, or card from former students telling us we made a difference. It feels great to hear that and it's okay to save them in a folder called 'smile file.'

However, a moment ago, you read that my former boss, dad, and friend said something to me that was *life-changing*. Unfortunately, I never told any of them that their words had a significant impact on how I lived my life from that moment forward, but I should. Dudley encourages us to honor 'everyday leadership.'

*"It can be frightening to think that we can matter that much to other people, because as long as we make leadership something bigger than us, as long as we keep leadership something beyond us, as long as we make it about changing the world, we give ourselves an excuse not to expect it every day from ourselves and from each other."*

So, consider sharing your moments with those who made them happen and help them discover the leaders in themselves by letting them know they have said or done something for you that made your life better.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Crooker  
MRA President