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a monthly newsletter of the Minnesota Educational Media Organization

Did you know?

The 2006 MEMO Fall Conference was the largest MEMO conference in recent history drawing more than 500 attendees!

MEMO PUBLIC RELATIONS UPDATE....

Partners in Boosting Student Achievement has been the MEMO message as we have not only launched our MEMO outreach/public relations campaign, but we have moved full speed ahead with one presentation and three conference booths to date.

On October 19 our booth display and professional handouts were unveiled at the Education-Minnesota Professional Conference at Rivercentre in St. Paul. Thanks to Brook Berg, Melanie Haugen, Mert Thompson, Naomi Shadis, and Barbara Neitge MEMO literature was given to hundreds of conference attendees. We partnered with SCSU in the ED-MN booth.

At that same conference MEMO members Laurie Conzemius, Gina Light, Cheryl Whitcomb, Dawn Nelson and Mary Garlie presented a panel discussion



on the ways teachers and media specialists can work together to boost student achievement. Specific examples and tips were given for all

grade levels pre-K-12. The panel consensus was that the presentation was well received, but because we were one of the last sessions of the day attendance was poor and we did not reach a large audience.

For TIES (December 4-5) MEMO was invited to partner with MDE in the exhibit hall at the Hyatt



Regency in Minneapolis. Sharing the MEMO message at TIES were Mary Mehsikomer, Kathy Abbott, Melanie Haugen, Kathy Wortel and Mary Alice Anderson. According to Mary Mehsikomer, "MEMO representatives

were present in the MDE booth at the TIES Conference for the entire time the vendor area was open. We distributed bookmarks and other information on MEMO as a professional organization, as well as information on the valuable role of school library media centers in student achievement.

Inside this Issue

| | |
|--|---|
| MEMO Calendar | 2 |
| Feeling Grounded, Co-President's Notes | 3 |
| Southeast Region News | 4 |
| Author of <i>Zach's Lie</i> will Visit Buffalo | 4 |
| Remembering Dr. Robert Miller | 5 |
| Fall Award Honorees & Conference Recap | 5 |
| The Classics Question | 6 |
| Children's Literature Conference | 8 |

We talked with several people about the merits of MEMO membership and encouraged people who had been members in years past to think about joining again. We also encouraged visitors to our booth to take back information on MEMO to their school library media specialists not in attendance at the conference."



Our first conference of 2007 was MSBA (Minnesota School Boards Association) held at the Minneapolis Convention Center. "I just returned from the Convention Center after working the booth at the MSBA and I felt it went very well. I passed out a lot of bookmarks, talked with many superintendents and board members. I did pass out the **Check it Out** pamphlets and our **MEMO brochure**. The words partners in boosting student achievement caught their eyes and many made a comment about that, also about how attractive the display was. I enjoyed the day and felt good about being there." (Sue Heather) Sue, along with Lesley Erickson, Doug Johnson and Mary Dalbotten greeted conference attendees and spoke with them about the importance of strong school library media programs.

Special thanks to June Gross who has coordinated the local arrangements for our booths, doing the set-up and takedown of the booths and meeting the needs for booth materials!

Upcoming events include: MASSP (MN Association of Secondary School Principals) – January 25-27, MESPA (MN Elementary School Principals Association) – February 7-9 and MASA/MASE (MN Association of School Administrators/MN Administrators for Special Education) – March 15-16. The proposal we submitted to present at the MESPA conference was not accepted, but we were encouraged that they expressed interest in having us resubmit for a future conference. We are hoping to submit a proposal to present at the MASSP conference during the summer months.

The public relations committee is encouraged by the thanks we have received from MEMO members for our efforts. Your continuing support for getting the message of MEMO and the need for strong school library programs out to those who determine the future of our programs is appreciated. We have been asked to add several more conferences to our agenda and to think about putting together a professional portfolio to be used when school districts look at cutting/eliminating media programs in Minnesota's schools.

It is the work that you do each day in your own school and the support that you give to one another that is the MEMO model. Our outreach campaign is one vehicle for letting our stakeholders know in a more public setting what the research shows about the correlation between student achievement and strong school library programs.

Mary Garlie, Public Relations Committee Chair
1-19-07

| MEMO Calendar | |
|---|--|
| Conference | |
| October 4-6, 2007 - Fall Conference | |
| Cragun's Resort, Brainerd | |
| Executive Board & Membership Meetings | |
| Sunday January 28, 2007 | (Executive Meeting) 10:00 am – 2:00 pm Holiday Inn, Alexandria (Winter Conference) |
| Saturday, April 14, 2007 | 10:00 am – 2:00 pm District Media Services, St. Cloud Host: Gary Ganje |
| October 4-6, 2007 - Fall Conference, Cragun's Resort, Brainerd | |

Reflections of a Co-President: Feeling Grounded

I am an elementary library media specialist who is prep time for teachers K-4. I am feeling grounded to my job. Oh, it is not that I don't like my job, I do. Most days I love my job. However, there is so much going on in our state, I am constantly feeling left out.

The MLA/MEMO legislative meetings are every month. At the beginning of the school year, the times alternated between 10-noon and 3-5 pm. The 3-5 pm time was to accommodate for library media specialists in the schools. However, my school does not get out until 4pm, so I would not be able to drive from Shakopee to St. Paul and get there before the meeting was over. In September I did take an afternoon off to attend the meeting and found that there are so many brainy people working on the legislative platform for this year. I have been unable to attend any more of their meetings and now the meetings are held monthly 10-noon only. That would mean taking a whole day off from work. I feel grounded from this interesting meeting.

In October we had the most wonderful conference. I took professional leave for Thursday and Friday. Another two days away from school, but more than worth it. I got rejuvenated, met great people, and shared ideas. I did not go anywhere during November. That is the month I do the book fair. December I asked for time off to attend the Literacy Collaboration at the University of Minnesota. It was an all day event. I paid for the event and my school paid for the sub. This committee will only be meeting yearly (I think I can manage that). Well, January we have the midwinter conference which I will be attending and I know I will go away with knowing more than before. Also, on January 26th MLA and MEMO are jointly sponsoring a reception for Karen Klinzing, Assistant Commissioner with the Department of Education. This will be another half-day off. I don't think I will be able to go to another event the rest of the year. But I will try. After all, Library Day is March 28th.

All of these events are important. I want to be involved and bring that information back to my district and other library media specialists. During years that I am not president, I feel more grounded because I do not feel I have the right to ask to go to all of these wonderful events. In my school, I have been allowed to go every year to the fall conference. Other schools only allow library media specialists to go every second or third year. I know how fortunate I am. I know that many of you cannot go to all the interesting events that I have mentioned. But isn't it a shame?

1. Remember Library Day is March 28. The reception is the night before. It is always interesting and enlightening.
2. Fall Conference 2007 is at Craguns. Be looking for the registration in coming MEMORandoms.
3. The next MEMO board meeting is April 14th.

Gina Light

Southeast Region News

MEMO Southeast Region and SELS (Southeast Library System) had a joint meeting November 8 at Century High School in Rochester. We had a great turnout with 39 people attended, representing a variety of libraries. Public and private schools, public libraries, as well colleges and the Mayo Clinic Library all had members participating in this meeting. Suzanne Miller, State Librarian, spoke on the happenings in her department and Marian Rengel, Outreach Coordinator, spoke about the Minnesota Digital Library. Minnesota Reflections has over 10,000 images and documents shared by over sixty cultural heritage organizations across the state. This site offers a broad view of Minnesota's history for researchers, educators, students, and the public. <http://www.reflections.mndigital.org/>

The winter meetings for the Southeast Region will be divided up this year with various sites hosting informal round table discussions about the newest draft of the Information Literacy Scope and Sequence. Since the winter weather can be so unpredictable, we want to limit the driving distance for our members. There will be different meetings in February in several corners of the Southeast Region. Watch for exact dates, locations and times to be e-mailed

Award-winning author of Zach's Lie will visit Buffalo

Roland Smith is scheduled to do a presentation in Buffalo on Monday evening, February 5, at the Discovery Center Auditorium. Smith wrote *Zach's Lie*, which won the Maud Hart Lovelace Award in 2005. The Discovery Center Auditorium is located at 214 1st Avenue NE (two blocks north of downtown) in Buffalo. If you saw him at the MEMO conference in 2005 you know he's entertaining and interesting. Join us for an evening with Roland.

The evening is sponsored by Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose's library media department. For more information you can contact Mike Quady 763-682-8524 or mquady@buffalo.k12.mn.us

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Remembering Dr. Robert Miller

Dr. Robert Miller, former State Media Supervisor passed away in Jordan, Utah, Tuesday, January 9 following a massive stroke.

Bob began his career at the Minnesota Department of Education in the mid-1970 after a lengthy and involved hiring process involving members MASL and AVCAM, the professional organizations that preceded MEMO's beginnings in 1976.

Mary Dalbotten, former Department Media Specialist wrote: "It's to his credit that he unified a department and to all of your credit that you got out all over the state. . . [He provided] a very important type of leadership and it helped raise the media profession's level of importance."

Bob was energetic and supportive in his countless visits to schools and participation in media meetings throughout all of Minnesota. MEMO was fortunate to have active support and leadership from Dr. Miller throughout his tenure in Minnesota.

Bob and his wife Maggie moved to Florida following his retirement from the Department in 1987. A memorial service will be held in St. Petersburg February 5.



Bob and Maggie during a visit to Minnesota in 2004

MEMO Fall Conference Recap: Leaders in the Field Honored with Awards

On October 14, 2006, Minnesota Educational Media Organization (MEMO) celebrated the end of a very successful 2006 conference. The theme of the 2006 MEMO Fall conference was, "To Teach and Inspire."

Speakers included:

Gopal Khanna, Chief information Officer for the State of Minnesota

Kit Hadley, Director of the Minneapolis Public Library

Scott McLeod from the University of Minnesota Department of Educational Technology

Dr. Constance A. Steinkuehler, Assistant Professor in the Educational Communication & Technology, UW-Madison.

Dr. Peggy Sharp, reading motivation specialist and speaker

Among the highlights of the conference was the annual awards presentation. The Minnesota Educational Media Organization (MEMO) bestowed the following awards on Friday, October 13th at conference dinner in Bloomington, Minnesota.

Lynette Cargill was named Library Media Specialist of the Year. Ms. Cargill is from Folwell Middle School, part of the Minneapolis Public Schools. She has been the Folwell Library Media Specialist for 13 years. When contacted about her nomination, she said:

"I am breathless with the honor!"

Reflecting on the unique job and changing role of Library Media Specialists, Ms. Cargill said,

"I believe that all school Media Specialists wear at least three hats: librarian, classroom reading supporter, and teacher. Each hat has at least two sides: print and non-print."

This award is sponsored by Vendors SIG of MEMO, who provide the winner with a check for \$500.00.

Marsha Timlin, was named Library Media Assistant of the Year. Ms. Timlin is from Woodcrest Elementary School in Spring Lake Park, School, Independent School District 16

Other awards presented:

The MEMO lifetime achievement award was given to Judy Bull, legislative lobbyist. Judy has worked for many years on behalf of libraries and K-12 education issues. Ms. Bull retired in 2005.

In addition, co-presidents of MEMO, Barbara Theirl, Gina Light and State Librarian, Suzanne Miller presented the Coughlan Award and Kenneth C. Pengelly/Capstone Press Scholarship to two Library Media Education students.-- Andrea Ellenberger and Joseph Hunter.

Saturday, October 14, at the closing luncheon, the Minnesota Youth Reading Association (MYRA) presented the Maud Hart Lovelace award to Minnesota author, Marion Dane Bauer for her book, Runt. This award is conferred by student votes. For more information about the award visit the website: <http://www.maudhartlovelace.org/>

The **2007** MEMO Fall conference is scheduled for Oct 4th through the 6th, 2007. It will be held at Cragun's resort, at Brainerd, MN. Visit the MEMO website: <http://www.memoweb.org/> for more details.

**Visit MEMO's web site
-- www.memoweb.org --
to learn more about YOUR
professional organization!**

The Classics Question

by Roger Sween

The question of the role of the classics is hot right now. This issue is not new. As long as there has been literature, the audience has been at odds as to what is worthwhile and what is not. But in time, certain books and certain authors gain canonical influence; we regard them as the standards.

The argument over the classics is without resolve and difficult to bring to application; the facts evade and challenge any easy generalization. Instead of a quantity approach as to how many people read what, let us start from quality, an approach based on admitted observations and values. Here the predisposition is that some books are better than others are, and accordingly, it is better for readers to pay attention to them. Cues come from a couple of authors who are "classic" in the original sense; they wrote in Latin and came from the first class of citizens.

Cicero, an industrious provincial, so rigorously applied himself to study and self-improvement that he became the most noted Roman orator of his day. In so doing, he gained great political influence and suffered many enemies. In his later years, he labored to preserve the republic against dictatorship and to pass on to his compatriots the learning inherited from the Greeks. Towards the end of *On the Orator*, he says

To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain forever a child. For what is the gain in human existence, unless it be woven into the lives of our ancestors through the records of history?—*De Oratore*, III, 120 (55 BCE).

Quintillian, an admirer of Cicero, came along a century later. He headed Rome's foremost school of oratory, the first to be paid at state expense, taught the Emperor Domitian's grand-nephews, and received from Emperor Vespasian the designation "Professor of Rhetoric." In retirement, he wrote *The Training of the Orator* that is in part a technical work. Of greater value is his declaration on the principles of education, including character formation from earliest childhood, and reviews of prior Greek and Latin literature.

...I have already said that some profit may be derived from every author. But we must wait till our powers have been developed and established to the full before we turn to these poets. Similarly, at banquets we take our fill of the best fare and then turn to other food that, in spite of

its comparative inferiority, is still attractive owing to its variety. ...But until we have acquired that assured facility of which I spoke, we must form our minds and develop an appropriate tone by reading that is deep rather than wide.—*Institutio Oratoria*, X, 1, 58-59 (ca. 95 CE).

The values implicit in the classical approach are that each individual lives in the long run of history, shares an inherited culture, and develops in association with the others who surround and interact through everyday life. So to mature into the society and to equip oneself for the fullest opportunity and development, learners will necessarily, as appropriate to them, hone in first on the best sources of the human experience to gain knowledge and understanding. Since young learners have no way to know what is best for them, it is left to their seniors to responsibly lead the way.

You can see that the classical position is based upon an enormous assumption: parents, teachers and other exemplars know their duty and will tend to it. In fact, the upper classes of Rome often left their children in the hands of unlettered slaves, just as today children are babysat by an indifferent television. And so we must admit that routine reading has always been a minority activity, and intensive reading of the classics, as Quintillian wanted, an activity with an even smaller minority.

We are hard pressed to find any book that is shared among the population as a whole or among any majority of it. The 39 books of the *Old Testament* canon, a library of varied writing in itself, likely come closest, but even this possibility does not quite fill the bill. When was the last time any random group of people launched into a discussion on the anguish of Job, the bravery of Esther, the tragedies of King David, or the wondrous poetry of the *Psalms*?

We are so imbued with notions of equality; as educators and librarians we want everyone to have every opportunity and consequent success in equal proportion. We castigate ourselves when we fail at this goal; we hang back from initiatives unless they are going to reach everyone. Yet what can we do in the face of the undeniable realities that daunt us?

Are the classics in decline? Quintillian 1900 years ago thought so then. Yet they do not go away in total. In 1998 an advisory panel to the Modern Library imprint of Random House selected the 100 best English language novels of the Twentieth century. See *Newsweek* (3 August 1998) 64-65. That August I owned 69 of the 100 and my local public library had a comparable number, though a different mix of titles. However, the combined public libraries of the southeast region had all but one. That was Henry Green's *Loving* (1945), not a title on the tip of anyone's tongue.

A standby guide for library acquisitions is *The Readers Adviser* that over the 20th century grew to 6 volumes comprising approximately 45,000 entries. All of the titles listed in a full range of subjects are judged to be "the best" of their particular field or genre. Another more focused volume, *Literature Lover's Companion* (2001), calls itself "the essential reference to the world's greatest writers – past and present, popular and classical." It touts the works of

over 1000 authors from Homer, 9th century BCE, to Ben Okri, a Nigerian, born in 1959. Most authors are represented by five to eight titles. These two guides recommend items for first purchase in greater number than most libraries hold.

We need also to recognize that one influence of the classics is an indirect one, through their effect on the writing of other authors. About twenty years ago, two Minnesota state university professors surveyed entering students at Mankato state as to their favorite authors. Hands down, the favorite was Stephen King. These students as seniors answered the same survey four years later to show how their tastes had changed. And the favorite was Stephen King, a discovery that brought considerable alarm to academics. In 2000, King published “a memoir of the craft” *On Writing*. In an appendix, he credits his reading of other authors as making him a writer and lists about 100 entertaining books. Most are contemporary to King, but among them are *Heart of Darkness* (1902), *The Moon and Sixpence* (1919), *As I Lay Dying* (1930), *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), *A Death in the Family* (1957) and *Our Man in Havana* (1959).

Currently, Francine Prose, a well-established writer, but no Stephen King, harked back to Quintillian’s emphasis on intensive reading by pointing out how a number of classic authors achieved their successes. Her appendix of 115 titles in *Reading Like a Writer* (2006) is definitely more literary than King’s and shares only two titles with his preferences, Raymond Carver’s *Where I’m Calling From* and Richard Price’s *Freedomland*. Among the older titles Prose lists are Sophocles’ *Oedipus* in the Young translation, the medieval *Song of Roland* in Sayer’s translation, Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Two by Austen, now enjoying a great revival of interest, start off the 19th century—*Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*. Curiously, she also lists *Loving*, the absent title mentioned above, along with another of Green’s novels, *Doting*.

That King and Prose have two entirely different takes on reading and writing is typical and highlights the basic situation. We are so overrun with good books that the constant question remains: how do the classics fit in?

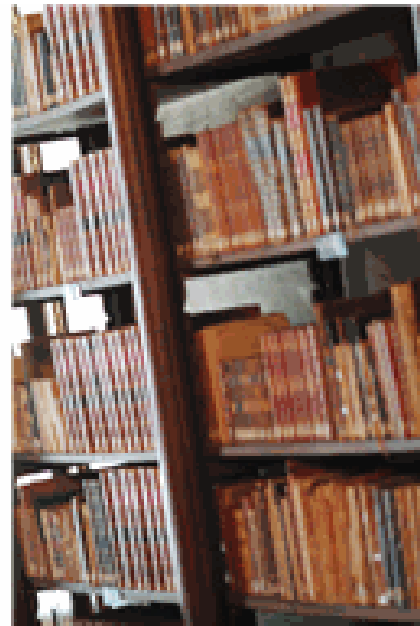
While many choices as to title emphasis are possible, I recommend the following overall principles and objectives.

- Everyone should come to understand that relatively few books out of the millions published have lasting influence.
- Books of the past have more than historical importance when they speak to the continuance of human experience; these are the books that continue to affect and change lives.
- These books provide a common ground to understanding ourselves amongst others.
- As works of art, classics are meant for enjoyment, not study and never picked to pieces.

- Because such books last through time, one can reread them during a lifetime with increased pleasure and greater understanding.
- To whet the appetite for such reading, families, libraries and teachers need to provide, model and encourage quality choices as their charges develop their own personalities, interests and abilities.
- Worthy titles are those that provide readers both enough attainment for satisfaction and additional enticement for more books.
- Everyone should recognize that it takes more than a lifetime to read all the most highly recommended books.
- Everyone should learn how to pursue and obtain more books than are readily or easily available.

I believe that to some extent, we all work towards these ends. The challenge is to do it more consistently, with more resources, and more enthusiasm.

Roger Sween, who has quit 40 years employment in the library field to read and write, favors the classics and believes he is up to the 12th century in reading them.



28th Annual Children's Annual Children's Literature Workshop

The 28th Annual Children's Literature Workshop, sponsored by the Center for Information Media at St. Cloud State University, will be held on **June 18-19, 2007**, at the Holiday Inn in St. Cloud. The keynote presenters will be **Richard Peck** and **Karen Ritz**. Richard is the author of *A Year Down Yonder* (Newbery Medal) and *A Long Way From Chicago* (Newbery Honor), among many other titles. He is the only children's book author to receive a National Humanities Medal.

Karen is an author, educator and artist who has illustrated *Ellis Island* (a Minnesota Book Award winner), *Snowboarding on Monster Mountain*, and other picture and chapter books. Several of her books have been chosen for exhibit at the annual Society of Illustrators' Show in New York City. See Karen's website at www.karenritz.net.

Gertie Geck will bring us up to date with new books for 2006-2007, and **Karen Ritz** will lead a storytelling and interactive drawing session. We will also offer four small-group sessions from which participants will choose three to attend:

- Award-Winning Books of 2006-2007, **Pat Heine**
- Book Making for Teachers, **Julie Notsch**
- Children's Films from Children's Books, **Angie Revier**
- Two Boys & Their Books, **Mike Borka and Jake Knaus**

Workshop Fee: \$175 if postmarked on or before June 1, 2007; \$200 if postmarked after that date.

This fee includes lunch days, breaks, and all materials. One semester credit will be available at either the graduate or undergraduate level. Tuition may be paid at the workshop on Monday, but the registration fee must be paid in advance to hold your place.

Please note that this workshop may meet the requirements of the 8710.7200 clock hour requirement for reading by increasing knowledge of children's literature and higher order thinking skills. Check with your district.

For information about the workshop, please contact either **Chris Inkster** (cinkster@stcloudstate.edu) or **Sandra Q. Williams** (sqwilliams@stcloudstate.edu) at St. Cloud State University.

You may register by mail, fax or email. Contact Lu Ann Rice (rice@theodysseygroup.com) at The Odyssey Group at (320) 202-1831. We expect a record number of participants this year. Register early to avoid disappointment! We hope to see you there!

-- Chris and Sandra

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Submissions to the newsletter may be sent to Mary Alice Anderson, MEMOrandom Editor. Send to Marylalicea@mac.com
Submissions in MS word processing are particularly welcome.

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