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From the MRA President's Desk

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From the MRA President's Desk

BY SUE ANN SHARMA

As I write to you, the dramatic story of education reform is on my mind. Well-known education reform measures have long promised progress in the areas of prosperity, culture, democracy, nationalism, and, most currently, global survival. A national effort to close student achievement gaps has initiated an era of rigor, relevance, and reform in American classrooms.

Implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is one reform measure that is sweeping the country. The CCSS align well to Michigan's *Teaching and Learning Framework*, a structure for instructional design in all content areas. The four tenets of the standards are: 1) higher order thinking; 2) deep knowledge; 3) substantive conversation; and 4) connections to the real world. The Michigan Reading Association is here to support educators as we engage with these ideas.

Our annual conference is one support we provide for you. Visit www.michiganreading.org for more information about *Literacy in an Age of Rigor, Relevance and Reform*, Michigan Reading Association's 56th Annual Conference and Research-to-Practice Pre-conference in Grand Rapids, March 9-11, 2012. Our conference is intentionally designed to provide professional development that meets every teacher's needs. Implementing CCSS and differentiating classroom instruction will be the center of attention at the conference.

Notice that Dr. Mike Schmoker, expert on *Changing Practice-Changing Results* headlines our pre-conference. Highlighted throughout the conference are Pulitzer Prize-winning commentator Leonard Pitts, beloved *Book Whisperer* Donnalyn Miller, and many MRA favorites. Learn about the latest practices designed to provide our students with



Sharma

rigorous and relevant instruction; sessions strands will be tailored around:

- Authors and Illustrators
- Instructional Leadership
- Interventions
- K-12 Writing
- K-12 Reading
- Technology for Every Student, Teacher, and Administrator
- Literacy Assessment
- Legislative Updates and Perspectives

While you are on our website...you can register online early and easily!

In addition, the Michigan Reading Association is welcoming 2012 with exciting new happenings. For example,

in this edition of the *Michigan Reading Journal*, our new editor has launched a unique layout for its cover. You can expect to see the same layout with changed images in future issues.

Did you know that the Michigan Reading Association has been cultivating international literacy connections in Afghanistan? Inside this issue, among other outstanding articles and features, you'll find my interview with Captain Bryan Schroeder, currently residing at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan. He is an honorary member of the Michigan Reading Association, extending the mission of literacy overseas through "Operation Outreach."

Best Regards,
Sue Sharma

MICHIGAN READING ASSOCIATION | 56TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Literacy in
an age of rigor,
relevance
& reform

Be knowledgeable. Be inspired. Be a leader.

© Strickland Photography 2008

GRAND RAPIDS, MI | MARCH 9-11, 2012 | WWW.MICHIGANREADING.ORG

2012 Annual Conference Registration News

In order to serve you in a more timely, efficient manner, Michigan Reading Association is moving to an on-line electronic registration for our 2012 Annual Conference, *“Literacy in an age of rigor, relevance & reform.”*

The new “system” will allow for immediate registration application regardless of your payment type. Credit card payments will be processed immediately upon submission, check and purchase order registrants will be required to mail in additional documentation and payment in order to complete the registration process. Multiple confirmations may be bundled together with one payment.

The Michigan Reading Association is a member-based organization. Conference credentials and professional publications will be mailed to the address on each member’s account. To ensure the receipt of your conference materials, it is recommended that each member register for any conference event.

Need to know if we received your check or the purchase order? The answer is available 24/7 using any internet accessible device; just log onto your account for “real time information.” As with any new system there are sometimes a few bugs to work out. Should you encounter any difficulties the office staff will be available to assist you with your registration.

Other helpful registration information....

- On-line registration will close at midnight March 1, 2012
- After February 9, 2012 there will be an additional registration fee of \$30 charged per registration
- If your membership expires or you are not a member of Michigan Reading Association please register at the “New/Renew” registration rate of \$195. If your current membership is valid until April 1, 2012 please register at the “Current Member” rate of \$160.
- Conference name badges, meal tickets and confirmation letters will be mailed approximately three weeks prior to conference. If you register after February 9, 2012 you will have to pick up your name badges, meal tickets and confirmation letter at the Registration Desk in DeVos Place Convention Center.
- Substitutions are permissible with the proper authorization, substitution is considered complete when you have received confirmation from the office
- Replacement cost for badges is \$10
- Conference refund requests must be in writing and received by the Michigan Reading Association office by February 9, 2012. A processing fee of \$30 applies
- Membership fees and meal functions are non-transferrable and non-refundable

Please visit the “Annual Conference page” on our website (www.michiganreading.org) for up to date conference registration information and other conference related news, including “how to register for conference”

Michigan Reading Association

56th Annual Conference - March 10-11, 2012

Saturday, March 10, 2012

Featured Speakers

- Jeff Anderson
- Mary Bigler
- Jim Burke
- Ruth Culham
- John Dirckx
- Jane Feber
- Ryan Goble
- Doug Hartman
- Troy Hicks
- Maureen McLaughlin
- Tom Romano
- Frank Serafini
- Eric Simons
- Alan Sitomer

Keynote Speaker



Leonard Pitts

In a career spanning 35 years, Leonard Pitts, Jr. has been a columnist, a college professor, a radio producer and a lecturer. If you ask him to define himself, he will invariably choose one word.

He is a writer, period.

Special Events

- Literacy Luncheon with Jeff Anderson
- Made in Michigan Reception

Featured Authors/Illustrators throughout the conference

- Karen and Darrin Brege
- Denise Brennan-Nelson
- Robert Burleigh
- Mark Crilley
- Kelly DiPucchio
- Jean Alicia Elster
- Wendy Halperin
- Leslie Helakoski
- Ryan Hipp
- Michael Lockett
- John Mooy
- Shirley Neitzel
- Kristin Nitz
- Janie Lynn Panagopolous
- Elizabeth Raum
- Nancy Shaw
- Buffy Silverman
- Gijsbert van Frankenhuyzen
- Robbyn Smith-van Frankenhuyzen
- Lisa Wheeler

Literacy in an Age of Rigor, Relevance, & Reform

DeVos Center and The Amway Grand Hotel ? Grand Rapids, MI

Sunday, March 11, 2012

Featured Speakers

- Aimee Buckner
- Nell Duke
- Doug Fisher
- Penny Kittle
- Barry Lane
- Donalyn Miller
- Margo Southall

Meet your favorite author
in the Authors' Garden
on Saturday and Sunday

Keynote Speaker

Donalyn Miller

Donalyn, a teacher-consultant with the North Star of Texas Writing Project, teaches her students to love reading—and they read 50 to 60 books a year.

"Reading is the inhale and writing is the exhale,"



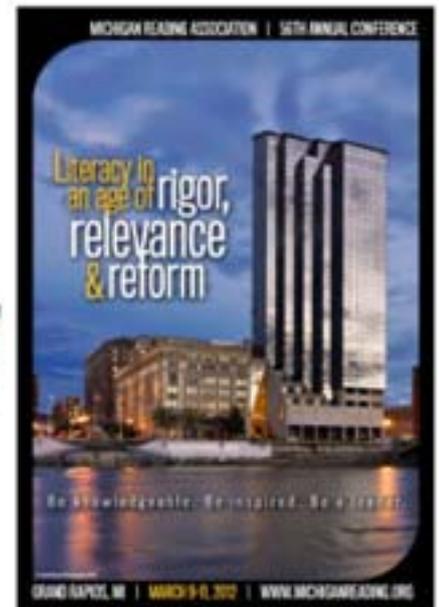
Special Events

- Author/Illustrator Breakfast
- Literacy Luncheon with Doug Fisher
- Young Authors' Luncheon

Panel discussions
Saturday & Sunday

Visit our
fabulous
vendors!!

All registration information can be found at
michiganreading.org



Hotel Accommodations

56th Annual Michigan Reading Association Conference “*Literacy in an age of rigor, relevance & reform*”

March 9-11, 2012

Amway Grand Plaza Hotel and DeVos Place Convention Center
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Important Hotel Information *(Please read carefully.)*

- Make your reservation EARLY and DIRECTLY with the hotel.
- Let the hotel know you are attending the MRA conference to receive the discounted rates below. Remember that an advance deposit or credit card number may be required to guarantee your hotel room.
- Hotels will hold rooms at the conference rates **until February 17th 2012.**
- Please make arrangements for tax exempt rooms with your hotel prior to check in.
- Add 20% (tax exempt subtract 6%) to the room rates listed below for taxes and fees.
- You will be charged one night’s room and tax if you fail to cancel by the hotel’s cancellation date. **Cancellation policies differ: check with your hotel!**

1. **Amway Grand Plaza Hotel**

187 Monroe Avenue NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-774-2000 or 800-253-3590

Single/ Double: \$122 Triple/ Quad: \$145

2. **JW Marriott**

235 Louis Street NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
1-888-844-5947 Toll-free

Double/Triple/Quad: \$158

3. **Courtyard by Marriott Downtown**

11 Monroe Avenue NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616-242-6000

Single/Double/Triple/Quad: \$116

Each Hotel offers discounted parking to all registered overnight guests.

