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A Newsletter from the Illinois State Library — Jesse White, Secretary of State & State Librarian



# INSIGHT

## Secretary White announces "Essays About Lincoln" winners

Secretary of State Jesse White has announced the winners of a statewide essay contest for students as part of the Abraham Lincoln Birthday Bicentennial celebration in February. Participants of "Essays About Lincoln" were asked to write a modern-day version of Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* in 300 words or less, allowing students to share their personal thoughts and dreams about where the United States is as a nation, and their ideals for freedom, democracy and equal opportunity.

The Illinois Center for the Book, for which Secretary White serves as honorary chair, provided judges for the contest, who selected first-, second- and third-place winners in three grade categories. Winners will attend an

awards presentation in Springfield where they will read their essays and tour the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum. Winners also will receive a plaque and a cash award: \$200-first place, \$150-second place and \$100-third place. Winning essays will be published in the 2009-2010 *Illinois Blue Book*, published by the Secretary of State's office.

The Illinois State Library, the Illinois State Archives and the Illinois State Board of Education co-sponsored the essay contest along with the Illinois Center for the Book. The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and the Lincoln Illinois Bicentennial Commission endorsed the contest. The Lincoln Illinois Bicentennial

Commission awarded a \$5,000 grant to the State Library to pay for the contest. Winning essays are available at [www.illinoiscenterforthebook.org/projectsa.html](http://www.illinoiscenterforthebook.org/projectsa.html).

### "Essays About Lincoln" Winners

#### Level I (grades 5-6)

**First place:** June Kreml  
Cornerstone Christian School, Caseyville  
**Second place:** Grace Elizabeth Moran  
Earl Hanson Elementary, Rock Island  
**Third place:** Summer Wu  
(individual entry) Lake Forest

#### Level II (grades 7-8)

**First place:** Bryce Peters  
Independence Jr. High School, Palos Heights  
**Second place:** Sara Serritos  
St. Daniel the Prophet School, Chicago  
**Third place:** Evan R. King  
Paxton Buckley Loda Jr. High, Paxton

#### Level III (grades 9-12)

**First place:** Emiko Gomez  
St. Scholastica Academy, Chicago  
**Second place:** Teresa Cooper  
Schlarman High School, Danville  
**Third place:** Kate Pond  
Cisne High School, Cisne

**10 YEARS AGO ...** Nearly 10 years ago on April 15, 1999, during National Library Week, an Illinois state senator named Barack Obama presented a signed copy of his book, *Dreams From My Father*, to Secretary of State Jesse White and then-State Library Director Jean Wilkins for the State Library's Illinois Authors Collection. The book is housed in the library's first-floor Illinois Authors Reading Room, and a plaque commemorating the event was recently placed in the room. We at the Illinois State Library are very proud of this link to Obama's Illinois roots and wish President Obama our very best.



January/February  
**2009**

## “Try-It! Illinois”

The ninth annual program “Try-It! Illinois” ran from October 1 to November 30, 2008. Try-It! offers staff and library users of the more than 5,000 ILLINET member libraries the opportunity to survey and evaluate a wide variety of electronic resources. Thanks to partnerships between the Illinois State Library and the participating electronic resource vendors, there was no charge for accessing these databases. Nearly 50 electronic resource vendors allowed Illinois users access to nearly 500 databases.

During the two-month trial period, 30,771 users logged on to the various electronic resources. Top trial usage went to ProQuest, EBSCO and Gale/Cengage. Other vendors included: Accessible Archives, OCLC, Greenwood Publishing, The World and I, Standard and Poors, Newsbank, Polling the Nations, CQ Press, Oxford University Press, CABI, ABC-CLIO, Plunkett Research, Lexis/Nexis, Taylor and Francis, LearningExpress, Heritage Microfilm, Public Record, Alexander Street Press, Scholastic, Grolier Online, Bookflix, Capstone Publishers, U.S. Business Journal, Value Line, Morningstar, World Book, Encyclopedia Britannica, Facts on File, Thomson Reuters, Web of Knowledge, Rosen Publishing, Naxos USA, Teaching Books, TumbleBooks, Dun and Bradstreet, BioOne, and Mango languages.

## Upcoming events for library professionals

**“On the Front Lines” — March 16-18:** “On the Front Lines,” the sixth statewide library practitioners’ conference, will be held March 16-18 at the University of Illinois at Springfield. The conference is designed to equip and enlighten “front-line” library staff with training, exposure and techniques to enable them to deal more effectively and efficiently in their day-to-day activities. Conference sessions will focus on topics of interest to all types of libraries, with many opportunities for networking.

Participants are invited to a reception at the Illinois State Library on Monday evening, March 16, sponsored by the Illinois OCLC Users Group. A Vendor Fair will be held Tuesday, March 17 to allow participants to network with vendors and see new products.

To register for the conference, please visit [www.librarylearning.info](http://www.librarylearning.info). For more information, please contact Gwen Harrison at 217-785-7334, [gharrison@ilsos.net](mailto:gharrison@ilsos.net).

**“Serving Your Public” — SPLMI 2009:** The 16th annual Small Public Library Management Institute with the theme “Serving Your Public” will be held May 31-June 5. The weeklong institute sponsored by the Illinois State Library and hosted by the University of Illinois at Springfield is highly endorsed by previous participants and public library boards across the state. The institute is designed for directors of smaller public libraries and directors new to the Illinois library community to develop and enhance their administrative and leadership skills, with the goal of providing better service to their patrons. Networking, teambuilding, and informal discussions also are vital components of the schedule. (Previous SPLMI attendees are not eligible to attend.)

Fifty participants will be selected, with the intent of maintaining both geographic distribution and some variation in library size. For an application or more information, please visit [www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/whats\\_new](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/whats_new).



**BRADBURY HONORED DURING THE BIG READ** — “The Big Read in West Central Illinois” ended in November with a live satellite interview with legendary Illinois author Ray Bradbury. The Big Read was a campaign involving west central Illinois libraries, schools and other community organizations joining together to read, discuss and celebrate Bradbury’s classic science fiction work, *Fahrenheit 451*, and promote the importance of reading. Dr. Loren Logdson of Eureka College (left), a friend of Bradbury’s and an expert on his writings, interviewed the author at his home in Los Angeles. State Library Director Anne Craig presented Bradbury with the Illinois Literary Heritage Award on behalf of the Illinois Center for the Book. The Big Read was made possible by a \$20,000 grant awarded to the State Library from the National Endowment for the Arts.

# Family Reading Night 2008

The annual Family Reading Night, sponsored by Secretary of State Jesse White, was held throughout Illinois on Thursday, November 20. The event is a night when parents and children are encouraged to turn off the television, computers, video games and other forms of entertainment and spend time reading together. Among those taking part in free Family Reading Night events at libraries, schools, literacy projects and civic organizations across the state were 1) children at Albany Park Community Center and 2) a mother and daughter at Kaskaskia College in Mt. Vernon.



**EMERGING WRITERS COMPETITION** — An awards ceremony was held at Bradley University in Peoria in November to honor the 2008 winners of the Illinois Emerging Writers Competition. The competition was created by Secretary of State Jesse White to provide a creative outlet for emerging Illinois poets and short story writers. Standing left to right are: Kevin Stein, Illinois Poet Laureate and final judge of the Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Award; Bonnie Matheis, coordinator of the Illinois Center for the Book; Short Story second-place winner John Gabriel of Joliet; Short Story third-place winner John J. Flaherty of Bloomingdale; Short Story first-place winner Peggy Stortz of Galena; and Ray Elliott, member of the Illinois Center for the Book Board of Directors. Seated left to right are: Poetry third-place winner Fawn Hoener of Springfield; Poetry first-place winner Thea Chesley of Springfield; and Poetry second-place winner Peggy Davis of Mt. Vernon.

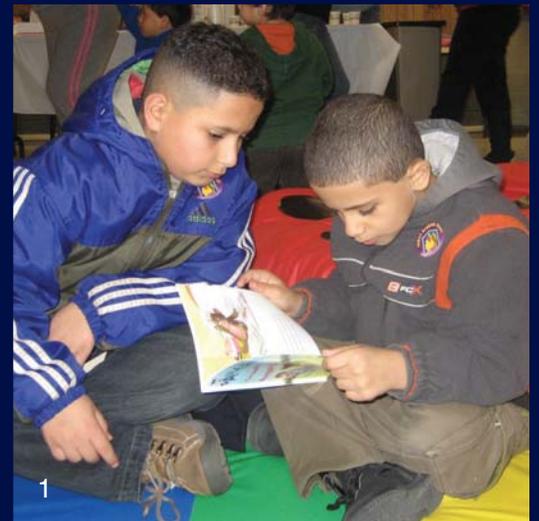
## Major “weeding” operation under way at ISL

The Illinois State Library’s collection is the sixth largest in Illinois. A fundamental aspect of any library’s collection development plan is the process of weeding, or streamlining, the collection. As part of the State Library’s strategic plan to provide a quality general collection to support state government, the Reference Section has undertaken the monumental task of weeding through the collection’s commercially published materials, which comprise the bulk of the fourth- and fifth-floor library stacks.

As Reference staff pours over the approximately 800 items per week they have been examining since early 2008, there are certain criteria they carefully consider in determining whether to remove an item from the collection:

- **How much has the item circulated, and how recently?** This tells how much the item has been used and helps define its relevance. A number of books were heavily used in the 50s and 60s but have been untouched in recent years.
- **What is the condition of the book?** Some materials are so old and used that the spine may be broken or pages might be falling out. Over the course of the 20th century, different types of paper were used to publish materials, and some books have not held up under the ravages of time.
- **Is there more than one copy at the State Library and, if so, does the current environment require the library to hold more than one copy? Do other Illinois libraries have a copy of the item, or is this the last copy in the state?** Reference staff is mindful of the need to maintain final copies of particular items, which may be hard, if not impossible, to obtain in the future.

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## Major “weeding” operation under way at ISL

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One of the most important criteria to consider is an item’s *relevance*. Does the material still pertain to the needs of Illinois state government? Is the material current, or are there more up-to-date materials? Is the format current, and does the library or borrower still possess the equipment to use the material? Are there other editions, or have the materials been replaced by more current information? Is the information accurate, or have changes in society and culture, through new innovations or procedures, rendered the item obsolete or incorrect?

The vast weeding project is proceeding at a rapid pace in part because the strategic plan also calls for moving the library’s Talking Book and Braille Service into the Gwendolyn Brooks Building. TBBS currently occupies a building several blocks away from the library. The space needed to add TBBS’ staff and items into the State Library is one of the largest undertakings since the library moved from the Howlett Building (formerly the Centennial Building) to its current location in 1990.

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## State Library staff news

Marking their 10-year anniversaries recently were **Robert Jones**, a library technical specialist in the Reference Section, **Helen Knecht** in Circulation, and **Beth Tate** in the stacks and mailroom.

**Bob Long**, an Information Systems technician in the Automation and Technology Division, retired in December after 10 years of outstanding service. Also retiring was **Susan O’Connell**, assistant to the director in the ISL Chicago office.



Insight

Jesse White, Secretary of State & State Librarian  
Illinois State Library, Gwendolyn Brooks Building  
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Springfield, IL 62701-1796

Produced by the Secretary of State Communications Department.

# SAVE THE DATE

**March 12**

Illinois State Library Advisory Committee  
Illinois State Library

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**March 16-18**

“On the Front Lines” Conference  
University of Illinois at Springfield

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**March 26**

ILLINET Network Advisory Committee  
Illinois State Library

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**March 31-April 2**

Synergy Leadership Conference  
Starved Rock Lodge and Conference Center, Utica

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**May 31-June 5**

Small Public Library Management Institute  
University of Illinois at Springfield

### ELI NEEDS E-MAIL ADDRESSES!

ELI (Every Library in ILLINET) is the State Library’s master database of contact information for ILLINET libraries and library systems. Please help us by entering or updating your e-mail addresses for your library on ELI.