



Read Aloud West Virginia

of Kanawha County

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Read Aloud has 20th birthday; Bond returns as leader

Read Aloud West Virginia is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year as founder Mary Kay Bond returns to serve as chairwoman of the board, making 2007 a year to celebrate.

As Bond resumed her position, she observed that over the past two decades technology and everyday life have changed, but the mission of Read Aloud has remained the same: the organization seeks to instill in children a lifelong love of reading by reading aloud to them.

"After 20 years we feel our mission is still relevant," she said. "We have a role to play within the school system, with students, teachers and parents," she said.

Read Aloud, which began with a group of friends meeting in Bond's living room, soon was operating throughout Kanawha County and then across the state. They based much of their work on *The Read-Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease.

"Next to hugging and talking to children, reading aloud is the greatest gift we can give them. Beyond the positive role modeling and physical bonding that takes place, we are stimulating imagination, enriching vocabulary, building listening skills, and whetting an appetite for a love of reading," he wrote.

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Charleston Gazette photo by Kewey Kemp
Mary Kay Bond believes Read Aloud's mission is basic, more relevant than ever.

BrickStreet gives employees time, training to read aloud

If you ask an adult what BrickStreet stands for he will probably reply, "A leader in the insurance industry." Ask a student, though, and you might hear something different, something like, "That's the company that gives my Dad (or Mom) time to come to my classroom and read aloud to me."

You can count on him or her to say it with pride, too. After all,

what could be better than having *my Dad* or *my Mom* (or Grandmother or Grandfather or friend) come to *my* class because *I* matter to them?

"Serving as a volunteer reader is a powerful affirmation of both our students and of reading, as well," said Mary Kay Bond, Read Aloud chairwoman. "Many parents would like to read aloud in

their child's classroom, but their work schedules prevent them. BrickStreet has paved the way for its employees to achieve that goal in a very positive way."

BrickStreet President Greg Burton is inspired by the West Virginia Business Volunteer Council led by the state's First Lady Gayle Manchin. The council's purpose

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The Book Club wants to know *Can you take our challenge?*

Members of a Charleston book club are so energized by reading aloud to Glenwood Elementary students that they have issued a challenge: "We have thrown down the gauntlet," said Dina Mohler. "We are challenging books clubs throughout the Kanawha Valley to begin reading aloud to students in schools near them, just like we do."

Bound by friendship and a love of reading, the group simply calls itself The Book Club. Six members including Mohler, Ruth Joseck, Ruth Sheff, Sandie Merrill, Cyndi Murray, and Danita Nellhaus began reading to fourth graders three years ago. They enjoyed the students so much that when they progressed to the fifth grade, book club members moved right along with them.

"These kids are eager. They are learning and retaining, and they deserve this opportunity. It's important for students to see adults who love to read," she said.

This year the club is reading to a group of third graders who are enjoying *Hoot* by Carl Hais-

After reading aloud Dina Mohler says, "I come away thinking, 'That was so much fun!'"

sen. "This is a great fit," Mohler said. "The kids snuggle up to us, and some of them have copies of *Hoot* of their own and follow along." She chuckled a little. "Sometimes when I come to a 'bad word' I skip it, and those stu-

dents will giggle and say 'Aahhh.'

"If someone is in a jam, another reader will substitute for her," she said. "This isn't that hard. With six people reading, we each read about four times a year." And how does Mohler feel after she has read? "I come away thinking, 'That was so much fun!'"

The group has read books as diverse as *Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis to Norton Juster's *The Phantom Tollbooth*. "We look for something different from the book we have just finished reading," she said. "We look for a different genre."

Their approach works. She said, "In three years not one of our readers has dropped out. No one has *wanted* to. We are definitely not losing steam."

Read Aloud to distribute books at Kindergarten Round-Up

Every child welcomed with book about friendly *Tiny*

Children who register for kindergarten this spring are going to make a very special friend. His name is Tiny, but he isn't really, well, tiny. In fact, he is huge and furry and very helpful. Tiny is a puppy and the star of a book every student in the Kanawha County Kindergarten Round-Up will receive from Read Aloud West Virginia. The book is *Tiny Goes to the Library*.

Read Aloud will distribute the books as part of its Reading Round-Up program. Chairman Ilene Beckett worked closely with Kanawha County Public Library

Children's Librarian Terri McDougal and South Charleston Public Library Children's Librarian Linda Hedding to choose a book that is appealing, appropriate and affordably priced. "We bought 2,400 books," she said. The book, written by Cari Meister, fits perfectly with her program, she said. It will be packaged with a library card application, a Read Aloud pamphlet and a suggested reading list. The books are paid for by grants from local foundations, Beckett said.

It is also two books in one. "You flip it over, and there is an-

other story titled *Tiny's Bath*," she said.

Tiny's exuberance is captured in Rich Davis' illustrations as the oversized puppy goes places with his friend. They go to the park, they go to the lake, and then they go to the library where Tiny really helps out. How? "You'll have to ask your favorite pre-kindergarten friend," Beckett answered with a smile.



Food for Thought feeds students' minds one book at a time

Okay, take a moment to sit quietly...relax...let yourself slip back in time, say, to the fourth grade. Come on. We know you remember.

All righty, then. It's snack time. You have 50 cents in your pocket, and you are looking to spend. You peruse the offerings. Are you going for the granola bar, the chips, or, what is that? A book? A whole bunch of books? Yes. On the snack table and available for 50 cents? Exactly.

Read Aloud has been pitting books against snacks since 1990 when its Food for Thought program was launched. Through this effort, Read Aloud puts new books in selected elementary schools at a fraction of the books' cost.

Schools choose the manner in which the books are sold. Some use vending carts. In the past one school even used a vending machine, according to Read Aloud Chairwoman Mary Kay Bond.

"The goal of the program is twofold," she said. "We seek to put books in the hands of students and

help students consider the *value* of those books. As such, we feel it is important to charge a nominal fee (\$.50) to students, a price comparable to many snacks.

"The excitement generated by enabling many students to purchase books for the first time in their lives enhances their desire to read and increases their motivation to improve their own skills."

Librarians like the program, too. "This made all of the children feel equal, something the regular book fair cannot provide," said Connie Miragliotta of Grandview Elementary.

Schools are chosen on Title 1 status, enrollment and specific need, according to Food for Thought Chairwoman Ilene Beckett. Dunbar Elementary, with 355 students, Marmet, with 155, Watts, with 175, and Chandler, with 224, were selected this year.

"We literally 'feed' the minds of our students through this program," she said. It is funded through grants and donations. Read Aloud buys books at a 43



percent discount.

Beckett and committee member Charlotte Richardson worked with Terri MacDougal of Kanawha County Public Library and Linda Hedding of South Charleston Public Library to select a wide variety of books for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Among the selections are *Alexander Used To Be Rich* by Judith Viorst, *Amber Wants Credit* by Paul Danziger, *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo and many more. Two thousand books have been distributed this year.

By Nikki Moses, editor

Bond: Adults who read offer children very effective 'commercial'

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"People have lovingly nurtured this organization for 20 years," she said. "Read Aloud has benefited from all of the people who have come through."

Bond said she is excited about returning. "This is what I truly love," she said. "My three children regard Read Aloud as something of a sibling."

The upcoming year will be a time of both reflection and action,

she said. "April 2 we will move into a new office in the Columbia Gas building on MacCorkle Avenue. The space is provided by NiSource. We are very excited.

"We also are evaluating programs. We will be doing some reorganizing and setting our pegs for the next 20 years," she said. "We are looking at ways to embrace new technologies, including development of our web site. And we are looking at ways to recruit

new readers. Over the years our pool of readers expanded to include many male readers, retirees and even students. We will especially look to businesses in the year ahead."

Children model the behaviors they see in adults, Bond said. "We are offering our children commercials every day. If we model the importance of education and reading, that is a very effective commercial."

All people touched by Grandmother Peggy Clendenin in her years as a Read Aloud volunteer at Pt. Harmony Elementary School are invited to a special event celebrating her memory and Read Aloud 's 20th Anniversary.

A Tribute to Grandmother Clendenin

Cross Lanes Public Library

May 12, 2007

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Please bring a new children's book so that we may continue to pay forward Peggy's love of books, reading, and children. You may wish to share your favorite read aloud story or recollection of this very special lady. Contact Kanawha County Public Library's Terri McDougal at 343-4646 for more information.

Sponsored by the Cross Lanes Public Library and Read Aloud West Virginia Kanawha County

14 BrickStreet employees reading in 10 schools

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is to support businesses in their volunteer and community involvement efforts.

"Volunteerism has become part of the culture at BrickStreet," said Ombudsman Kristi Rhule.

Employees are given two hours a month for up to 10 hours a year to volunteer in the community. To prepare them BrickStreet invited Bond to lead a reading orientation and training session billed as a "Lunch and Learn" seminar. As a result, 14 employees, now trained as Read Aloud readers, are volunteering in 10 schools across the valley.

Eleven are reading in elementary schools. Bill Meek and Linda Fosco are reading at Bonham; Catherine Skaff, Kim Javins and Lisa Lewis-Smith, Piedmont; Diane George, Point Harmony; Kim Lannan, Kanawha City; Mary Robinson, Belle; Ray Whiting, Chamberlain; Sandi Gill, J.E.

Robins, and David Walker, Richmond. Pam Wiley reads at Shining Light Daycare, while Marcia Moore volunteers at Kids Den Daycare. Melanie Adkins reads at Dunbar Intermediate.

"Employees choose any

school they want and what works for their schedules," said Rhule. "It is a great incentive when they can select the schools their kids attend, and it is a great personal connection." BrickStreet plans another training session soon.

Reading more than "fun," Moore learns at Lunch and Learn seminar

Marcia Moore had this to say after participating in the "Lunch and Learn" training: "I realized many things from the meeting with Mary Kay. As a mother I have read stories to my child since birth just because it is fun. Mary Kay pointed out the valuable skills I am imparting to my daughter such as expanded vocabulary, enhanced creativity, stronger social skills and developing complex thought processes. I had never realized how powerful this 'fun' behavior is for my daughter..."

After reading in a classroom, she added, "I almost cried when the little boy closest to me stood up and walked over and hugged me, saying, 'Thank you, Marsh.' Then each child followed in turn to hug me and thank me. How rewarding. Thanks, BrickStreet, for this learning experience...I just thought I was volunteering to read a story."

Moore works in Quality Assurance & Training.

Worth the risk: Doing Shakespeare in 4th grade

By Dawn Miller

On a whim, I carried Bruce Coville's picture-book adaptation of *Macbeth* into a fourth-grade class at Piedmont Elementary School. I wasn't sure the story would go over well, even summarized as well as it was. But to my surprise, the students were already somewhat familiar with Shakespeare, thanks to recent films.

"Is that the guy who talked like, 'art, thou, wilt?'" one student asked.

Why, yes.

"Is this the one with the skull in it?" another student asked.

No, that's *Hamlet*.

The students loved it. They marveled at the evil, dominating Lady Macbeth. They discussed Macbeth's culpability. Was he to blame? Or were the crimes his wife's fault?

When they puzzled out the prophecies - how the forest moved closer to the castle, for example - they saw Macbeth's fate before he himself did. "Ahhh!" came the collective realization.

It went over so well, I decided to try something lighter, Coville's adaptation of *Twelfth Night*. Comedy was more difficult, but still a success.

Several students were not pleased with shipwrecked Viola's dressing in boy's clothes. They were relieved to learn that she did it only to secure a job at the duke's court. Crossed lovers and mistaken identity are weak threads with which to weave a story, at least in the eyes of these fourth-graders. They prefer murder, mysticism, deception and tragic flaws. So when Coville's version of *Hamlet*

was published last month, I rushed a copy to the same class.

Their eyes lit up. They applauded. "Is this the one with the skull in it?"

Yes.

"Yesss!"

So we embarked on Shakespeare's tale of young Hamlet, who comes home from school to find that his father, the king, is dead



and his mother has married the king's brother, perhaps a bit too quickly. His father's ghost bids Hamlet to kill his uncle, his father's murderer. Leonid Gore's gray, drizzly illustrations are a perfect match for the text.

Like all the books in this series, Coville includes genuine snatches of the dialogue, including well-known and lesser-known quotations. To fit an entire play into a picture book, he must summarize, but even his summaries are faithful to the language and tone of Shakespeare's words.

At one point, Hamlet is summoned to his mother's chamber. Hamlet is angry with his mother. He suspects her of conspiring with his uncle to kill his father.

"I will speak daggers to her," he says. We paused to sort out the meaning. From one side of the room, from a student who had dropped pencils and ruffled papers throughout the story, came the explanation. "He means that he will speak mean to her," the boy offered.

"That Shakespeare," another student observed knowingly. "He always has to make up words."

Coville may be better-known for his elementary novels in the vein of *My Teacher is an Alien*, reliable comedies sometimes used to nudge reluctant readers. But his Shakespeare series, which includes *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*, is priceless.

I was worried that even the summarized plays would be too distant or too complex for such young listeners. But students wanted to know about their funny Elizabethan pants and their funny words.

They giggled at the protestations of the drunken Sir Toby Belch. They clasped their foreheads sympathetically as the plots became ever more tangled and the characters more confused and misled.

Timeless.

Miller is editorial page editor of *The Charleston Gazette* and publicity chairwoman of *Read Aloud*. This article first appeared in the April 25, 2004, *Charleston Gazette* and is reprinted with permission.

Clip and save these reviews of books that are sure to get you big applause

By Linda Hedding
South Charleston Public Library
Children's Librarian



Visit us on our website

Do you want to become a reader in a school, set up a Read Aloud training session, or get some great ideas for Read Aloud books? We are here to help. You'll find us at our new website. The address is:

ReadAloudWestVirginia.org

It has been created by Dawn Miller, public relations chairwoman, with generous assistance from Greg Wood of Charleston Newspapers Interactive. This site will answer many of your questions, and it will continue to grow as we continue to grow. Happy browsing!

Adventures of Old Bo Bear by Alice Schertle. After his toy bear comes out of the washing machine with an ear missing and not smelling "right," a boy takes him outside to play until he looks and smells familiar once again. PreK-1.

Library Lion by Michelle Knudsen. A lion starts visiting the local library but runs into trouble as he tries to both obey the rules and help his librarian friend. PreK-2.

Big Chickens by Leslie Helakoski. While trying to escape from a wolf, four frightened chickens keep getting themselves into the very predicaments they are trying to avoid. PreK-2.

Grandma Lena's Big Ol' Turnip by Denia Lewis Hester. Grandma Lena grows a turnip so big that it takes her entire family to pull it up and half of the town to eat it. Includes a note about cooking "soul food." PreK-2.

The Louds Move In by Carolyn Crimi. When the Loud family moves into the neighborhood alongside Mr. Pitterpatter, Miss Shushermush, and Miss Meekerton, things begin to change. Ages 4-8.

Max's Words by Kate Banks. When Max cuts out words from magazines and newspapers, collecting them the way his brothers collect stamps and coins, they all learn about words, sentences, and storytelling. Ages 4-8.

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Read Aloud West Virginia seeks to introduce children to the pleasure of reading through a variety of programs in both the home and the school. As a result, Read Aloud hopes to nurture a lifelong love of reading in children and improve the basic educational foundation of West Virginia.