

Empowering  
Lives  
Through  
Literacy

# Communicator

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*"Books are the quietest and most constant of friends;  
they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors,  
and the most patient of teachers."*

~ Charles W. Eliot

## IRC BOOK CLUB

Join educators from all over the state in the online **Summer 2024 IRC Book Club!** Choose one, two, or all three books!

Read, reflect on, and respond to ***Antiracist Reading Revolution: A Framework for Teaching Beyond Representation Toward Liberation*** by Sonja Cherry-Paul and/or ***Liven Up Your Library: Design Engaging and Inclusive Programs for Tweens and Teens*** by Julia Torres and Valerie Tagoe and/or ***Rooted in Strength: Using Translanguaging to***

**Grow Multilingual Readers and Writers** by Cecilia M. Espinosa and Laura Ascenzi-Moreno.

Beginning **June 23**, educators will participate in online discussions for the next seven weeks. With **Antiracist Reading Revolution**, the book will provide an actionable antiracist teaching framework and models how K-8 educators can create opportunities for transformative reading and discussions in classrooms. With **Liven Up Your Library**, participants will learn how librarians can positively effect change in areas like digital equity and inclusiveness, while creating powerful programming for middle and high school students. With **Rooted in Strength**, the book will help demonstrate how our emergent bilingual students who speak two or more languages in their daily lives thrive when they are able to use “translanguaging” to tap the power of their entire linguistic and sociocultural repertoires.



Participants who complete all assignments will be eligible to receive **15 PD clock hours** for each book club. Required for participation:

- **Gmail address** (free at <https://mail.google.com/>). The Book Club uses Google Classroom, which does not work with Yahoo, AOL, Hotmail, etc.
- **Texts:** Books can be purchased from the bookseller of your choice.

Register by **June 23, 2024**, to participate in the book club. Registration is **FREE** for IRC Members. The cost for non-members is \$50, which includes IRC membership for one year. **PLEASE NOTE: The cost of book is not included.**

Register for the Summer 2024 IRC Book Club by June 23rd!

# FROM THE DESK OF THE IRC PRESIDENT

## By Julie Hoffman

Greetings IRC Members,

It's almost summer! This is a time for rest, sunshine, projects around the house, and the thing we look forward to all school year—time to read for pleasure! Have you started building your to-be-read stack? Sometimes I am somewhat random as I select books to read during the summer. I show up at the library, walk straight to the YA section, and grab titles that pique my interest. This summer I want to be a little more intentional. Of course I will mix in some random reads as I come across something new or when a friend or student insists I read a particular book, but I also want to be sure that I make time for a few must-reads.

If you have hung around me at all, you have probably heard me say something like, “Picture books are for everyone.” Therefore, I will definitely be reading picture books this summer. I intend to read all of the [Birth-4](#) and [K-2](#) bands on the [2024 Illinois Reads](#) book list.

There are some great new reads in middle grade books, too. I have a copy of [Mid-Air](#) by Alicia D. Williams on the top of my pile. That will be one of my first reads this summer. I will be re-reading [Louder Than Hunger](#) by John Schu. I read this brave novel-in-verse in the form of an Advanced Reader Copy, and now I have an official copy to read. Also on my list is [Timid: A Graphic Novel](#) by Jonathan Todd.

As far as the newest in YA, a few titles have grabbed my attention. [Black Girl You Are Atlas](#) by Renée Watson, with fine art by Ekoa Holmes caught my eye. Autobiographical, empowerment poetry punctuated by full-color illustrations? Yes, please.

Graphic novelist Gene Luen Yang and illustrator LeUyen Pham collaborated on [Lunar New Year Love Story](#). With a tagline like, “She was destined for heartbreak. Then fate handed her love,” I am all in! The gorgeous cover of [Canto Contigo: A Novel](#) by Jonny Garza Villa grabbed my attention the moment I laid eyes on it. I intend to consume this one in a day, hopefully poolside. [Everything We Never Had](#) by Randy Ribay comes out in late August, but I am still counting it as one of my summer reads.

Summer is also a time for us to stretch ourselves as educators. I plan to read some professional books that will push me to do better and be better. Here are a few on my list:

- [Teaching Fiercely: Spreading Joy and Justice In Our Schools](#) by Kass Minor
- [Start Here, Start Now: A Guide to Antibias and Antiracist Work in Your School Community](#) by Liz Kleinrock
- [Humans Who Teach: A Guide for Centering Love, Justice, and Liberation in Schools](#) by Shamari Reid

I expect each of these titles to push me, elevate my instruction, and transform my pedagogy and practices. I can't wait! As you move toward your own summer, I hope that you find many books to read for pleasure. I also hope that you find books that push you, challenge you, and help you to do better and be better.

Here's to a great summer and happy reading!

-Julie

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# #WhatIAmReading



I am reading [The Reading List: A Novel](#) by Sara Nisha Adams.

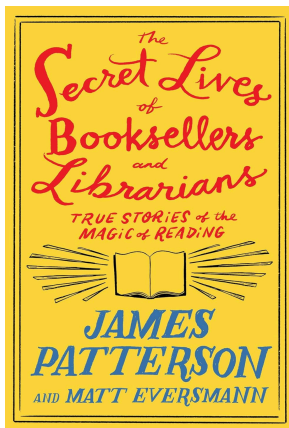
~ Deborah Augsburger, Incoming IRC Vice President



As a retired widower grieves his wife and the changes in his life, and a book-hating teen grumbles into her boring summer job in the local library, they each discover a reading list that brings them together in a mysterious and wonderful way. Who left the list, and why? How do the books on the list have relevance for their lives in this difficult summer? Who else has been impacted by the list? I love the humor, mystery, and humanity in this delightful book. Of course, I will read (or reread) the books on the list!

I am reading [The Secret Lives of Booksellers and Librarians: Their Stories are Better than the Bestsellers](#) by James Patterson and Matt Eversmann.

~ Leslie Forsman, IRC Past President



I just finished *The Secret Lives of Booksellers and Librarians: True Stories of the Magic of Reading* by James Patterson and Matt Eversmann. They gathered stories about these professionals, their patrons, and the connections they have made to and through books. This collection is similar in nature to Patterson's *E.R. Nurses*, *Walk the Blue Line*, and *Walk in My Combat Boots* collections of stories.

I am reading [Rebel Girl: My Life as a Feminist Punk](#) by Kathleen Hanna.

~ Jennifer Martin, Incoming IRC Advocacy Committee Chair

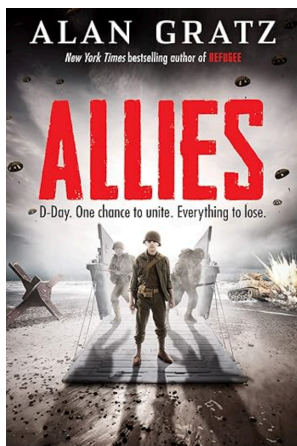


This is a memoir (with photos!) of Hanna's days as the lead singer of Bikini Kill (among other acts), and prominent voice of the Riot Grrrl movement of the 1990s. The chapters are short, and a great read for traveling, to keep by the bedside, or to use as a read-aloud. But, don't get me wrong – this is not a light read. There is depth, pain, joy, feminism, and social action. I had the opportunity to see Hanna discuss her book live at the Chicago Humanities Festival last weekend. The talk was inspiring. Hanna shared how, when writing, she needed to stop for a while and take care of herself before finishing the book. This inspired me to pick up some of my own writing that remains too painful to face at times. I read the book aloud to Dr. Hoffman as she drove us home. I tore through the rest of the book the next day. It is that riveting. Pick it up! I assure you: you will be inspired too! Please also check out the music of Kathleen Hanna!

# Family Literacy Bookshelf

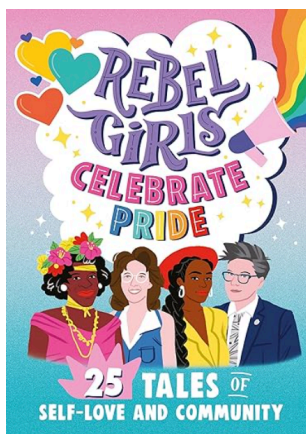
## By Barb Ashton

The school year has come to a close. The classrooms are quiet, the bulletin boards are bare, the textbooks are shelved, and the computers are in sleep mode. June is the month we celebrate graduations, weddings, LGBTQ Pride and Alzheimer's Awareness month. We also honor our fathers on Father's Day and celebrate our newest holiday – Juneteenth.



This year we honor the 80th anniversary of the landing of the Allied Forces on Normandy Beach on June 6, 1944 – D Day. *Allies* by Alan Gratz introduces the reader to the 24 hour period that would change the course of World War II and Hitler's German army's terrorization of Europe. Through the eyes of 5 major characters and several secondary characters the reader experiences and witnesses the realities of war – such as storming the beaches, driving a tank into battle, the spraying of bullets from German guns. And seeing their buddy being killed. Each of the characters' stories demonstrates their strength and responsibilities, courage, bravery and loyalty in the midst of battle and also their friendships, family, and dreams of a future world without prejudices. *Allies* is a very informative historical fiction novel that gives an overview of D Day 1944 and what the allies could do ("**We are stronger Together**"). The author's notes at the back of the book give further information about the various different operations

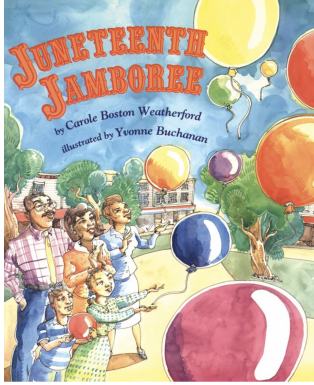
involved with the invasion. A detailed map at the beginning of the book gives the reader a sense of where the landings and events took place. *Allies* can also be teamed with the new graphic novel *I Survived the D Day Invasion of 1944* by Lauren Tarshis.



June is Pride Month. The book *Rebel Girls Celebrate Pride: 25 Tales of Self-Love and Community* by Elena Favilli is a new addition to the Rebel Girl series. This is a book about 25 inspiring and proud members of the LGBTQIA community who worked tirelessly to break down barriers, honored their identity, and helped to pave a path of acceptance. Each two-page spread features a prominent female member from the LGBTQ community with a one-page biography accompanied by a colorful and vibrant illustration/portrait of the person. *Rebel Girls Celebrate Pride* is an easy read with engaging stories that help today's students understand about the LGBTQ community. This is a book for girls of all ages but also for teachers, librarians, counselors, coaches, and parents as well, who might need a resource as an introduction to discussing this topic. The back of the book provides space for personal storytelling and reflection. There's

also a glossary (Terms to Know) that provides the reader with the correct definitions and concepts mentioned in the book. Download the *Rebel Girls APP* to learn more about the women featured in the book along with scannable codes to listen to longer stories about other LGBTQ women. Go to [www.glaad.org](http://www.glaad.org) for a website dedicated to acceptance and issues associated with the LGBTQ community.

A delightful book to read about America's newest holiday is



***Juneteenth Jamboree*** by Carole Boston Weatherford. This is a story about a young girl named Cassandra, whose family has just moved to her parents' hometown in Texas and doesn't quite understand why June 19th is so important and why her parents are joining a community celebration. Upon arrival at the Town Square Cassie soon discovers what the day is all about. She learns through various activities and events that this is the day when slaves in Texas finally got their freedom more than two years after Abraham Lincoln signed The Emancipation Proclamation. Thus began the tradition of celebrating on June 19th. The colorful illustrations complement and enhance the tale as they bring the story of Juneteenth to life for children. While *Juneteenth Jamboree* is written for younger children, it can also be enjoyed by all families.

## Looking Ahead

**June is Caribbean American Heritage Month:** Take time to learn about their heritage

**June is Dairy Month:** Enjoy your favorite ice cream along with reading a good book

**June is Audio Book Month:** Pick up an audio book to listen to during your summer travels

**June is the 50th Anniversary of the Watergate Break In**

**June 6: 80th Anniversary of D-Day** – Visit the National D-Day Memorial's Virtual Field Trip

**June 14: Flag Day** – Display our American Flag

# UPCOMING PD EVENTS

Don't forget to take advantage of some upcoming PD opportunities planned throughout Illinois.

- **June 5, 2024:** IRC Webinar on **Swing into Summer with the Tuckers: A Few Strategies to Begin Curating Your Classroom Library to Prepare for Readers, Writers, and Researchers** with Karen Biggs-Tucker and Brian Tucker from 7:00 to 8:00 pm via Zoom Webinar.
- **June 13, 2024:** **Suburban Council of IRA (SCIRA)** will host a Summer Renewal Conference on Biliteracy Instruction in Diverse Educational Settings with Jose Medina from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm at the Holiday Inn Northshore-Skokie, 5300 W. Touhy, Skokie, Illinois.
- **June 15, 2024:** **IRC Prairie State Award** nominations are due.
- **June 23, 2024:** **Summer 2024 IRC Book Club** will begin. Visit the website for more information.

To view the full **IRC Events Calendar**, please visit the [IRC Website](#).

# CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Members are encouraged to submit articles at any time to [irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org](mailto:irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org).

**#WhatIAmReading:** Share a book that you are reading, in 3 to 4 sentences.

**IRC Highlight Reels:** Share snapshots of successes in your classrooms in 100 to 300 words. Remember no success is too big or too small to share and pictures welcomed!

### Other Literacy Topics:

- Tips for Teaching Writing
- Board Games that Teach Literacy Skills
- Trauma Informed Practices
- Strategies for Struggling Readers
- And any other literacy topics that interests you!

Thank you for helping to inspire your fellow educators! Posts will be shared on social media too!

## QUICK LINKS

[Visit the IRC Website](#)

[Full IRC Events Calendar](#)

[Latest on the IRC Conference](#)

[Available IRC Awards and Grants](#)

[Bring IRC PD to your School District](#)

[Learn more about the Illinois Reads Program](#)

Questions? Please feel free to reach out to the Illinois Reading Council by email at [irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org](mailto:irc@illinoisreadingcouncil.org) or by phone at 309-454-1341.

See what's also happening on our social media sites:

