



*Noteworthy:*  
*The Official Newsletter of the*  
*Waikato Reading Association*  
*November 2008*

**2008 Committee:**

Sandra Neil: President

Judy Benton: Membership Secretary

Wendy Carss

May Daly

Pam Dunn

Joan Gibbons: *Noteworthy* Editor; Editor *Reading Forum NZ*

Marion Hartley:

Christine Jeffs

Wendy Johnstone: Minutes Secretary

Tracey Oleorenschaw

Liz Stewart: WRA Delegate to NZRA

Wendy Telsma: Treasurer

Wendy Carss is also National President of the New Zealand Reading Association and Christine Jeffs is the national NZRA Secretary.

## **Report from Waikato's 2008 Literacy Trust Winner**

I was delighted to be awarded one of the Literacy Trust Scholarships to attend the Bridges to Literacy NZRA Conference this year. It was a great experience for me as a young teacher.

What influenced me the most? Well, I thoroughly enjoyed Tanya Batt's story telling, and have noticed that my style of dress has changed ever so slightly to resemble some of her frock-o-holic tendencies!

Peter Johnston's plenary talk filled pages of my notebook and I now have a pile of post-it notes stuck to my wall to remind me of what to say. He talked about building dialogical classrooms and gave practical techniques for fostering agency. The conversations in my class have taken on a whole new level, as we celebrate problems and use them as a tool for learning. Peter mentioned that the teacher's role is to '*put a layer of language on top to make meaning of events*' and that '*we talk ourselves into being.*' My language has changed to include phrases like: I wonder. Can we build that idea? Wow! Let's take some time to think.

Michele Anstey built on from this theme as she explained that learning comes out of challenge and struggle. She talked about the importance of children defining themselves as learners and that every word and act in the classroom influences how they see themselves. I experienced this first hand today when a five year old child told me that I wasn't needed anymore because she knew about plants and could do the teaching instead of me.

Linda Gambrell's talk entitled The Power of Pleasure Reading inspired me to change my class environment and is chiefly responsible for the bright yellow basket of 'blessed' books which are now the most popular leisure activity in my class.

I can honestly say that every speaker, event and session I attended has had a lasting influence on my teaching. I have come away from conference excited and full of practical ideas on how to build a bridge to literacy for this next generation of multiliterate creative, strategic thinker.

Thanks again for a great experience.

**Anna Carlisle**

### **The Literacy Award**

Each year, the Literacy Trust, which we now know was set up by Dame Marie Clay, awards a registration to the NZRA Annual Conference to a teacher who has been teaching for 6 years or less. The winner for each area is judged by the regional committee for that area. They decide on the winner by looking at the literacy programme of applicants, and getting a referee's report from their principal and/or teachers they have worked with. If you are a new teacher, why don't you apply next year? The only obligations of the winner are to attend all of Conference and write a report to be published in *Noteworthy* or *Reading Forum NZ*.

## **Chairperson's report August 2008**

Now that it is August, I can take the time to reflect back on a successful conference in July. As a conference committee we are really pleased with the feedback we have received and with the way conference went as a whole. Yes, it was a huge amount of work and yes, sometimes things jumped up at us and needed instant attention.

Having cool and calm Christine Jeffs at the helm certainly made a difference for me. Our Waikato committee all warmly thank Christine for the hours of work she did and the way her knowledge and expertise made the organisation flow smoothly. Thanks also to Wendy Carss, the website master! and main programme organiser for all your hours of negotiating and late night emails! The rest of the committee, Joan Gibbons, Judy Benton, Tracy Olorenshaw and I all worked around very busy fulltime jobs to email, phone and organise many behind the scenes details. Special thanks go to other members of the committee and wider council for their support before and during Conference – to Nancy for spot prizes, front desk and Oceania book display, Marilyn Blakeney-Williams and others looking after Oceania Book display when Joan was suddenly unwell, Sarah Jeffs for being the gopher!, Materoa Collins for the wonderful mini powhiri at the beginning of conference, May Daly and Wendy Johnstone for dinner venue preparation and other assorted tasks.

So now it is time to wind up the Conference books and tidy up loose ends. I was surprised at our last Council meeting that we even were able to make some tentative plans about a function at the end of the year! Watch out for information about this in your school.

Council meets every first Thursday of the month at the School of Education at the University of Waikato. Please contact a committee member if you would like to be part of the committee – especially now there's no conference organising for at least 10 years!!!

**Sandra Neil**  
**President**