#### Partnership members recommend summer reading, pages 4-5

### MAY 2009

THE PARTNERSHIP

# Breaking news:

# **Qwest grant supports transitions**

The Wyoming School-University Partnership learned last week it has been awarded a \$15,000 grant from the Qwest Foundation to support the "Lost in Transition" project.

The project dates back to the 2005-06 school year, when superintendents and higher education faculty began working together to examine the teaching and learning of students moving from high school to community college and university science courses. concerned that students were not meeting as high a level of success as hoped for as they entered postsecondary study," said the grant request. "At the same time, university teachers also examined student performance data in introductory level science courses as part of a revamping of the curriculum aimed at student success."

Educators at all levels have continued working together to review student work and better communicate expectations and standards between

### **Related stories:**

- Writing colloquium identifies issues and strategies, page 3
- Update on science transitions, page 3

educational levels.

"Lost in Transition" work has expanded in recent years to include science and writing, and the grant will help work continue in these areas, as well as in math and world language.

"School superintendents were

# Wyo. presenters earn NNER scholarships

The Wyoming School-University Partnership's governing board has awarded \$20,000 to support Wyoming presenters at the 2009 National Network for Educational Renewal annual conference. The scholarships support registration, lodging and airfare for Wyoming residents who will present a session at the conference.

To be eligible, presenters had to

### **Related story:**

Complete list of scholarship winners, begins page 2

participate in a conference call about the conference themes and scholarship application process. They had to have a proposal accepted for the NNER



10th Anniversary In Praise of Education: The New Three Rs Reflection, Responsibility, Renewal conference and complete a multi-stage scholarship application process for the Partnership support.

Awardees will present their sessions at the NNER conference Oct. 15-17 in Bellevue, Wash., and they will be required to share their work at other state, regional and national venues.

The scholarships will support 20 proposals and 32 presenters.

# How to go if you're not a presenter

Register online at http://depts. washington.edu/nner2009/

Early bird registration for the threeday meeting is \$300 until Sept. 8.

Student discounts and one-day registration rates are available.

# Statewide reading institute planned for fall

levels of

preparedness.

Discussions

will center

on creating

connections

across

As literacy habits evolve with the explosion of technology, adolescent reading practices and preparedness for 21st Century jobs become key issues for teachers. Building on discussions at the 2008 and 2009 Teaching Writing in Wyoming colloquiums, this institute will offer helpful information on current reading practices and pedagogical strategies for teachers across disciplines.

Secondary and college participants will engage with national, as well as local experts, discussing effective practices for readers of varying



**David Jolliffee** 

disciplines and levels. This event will particularly target high school and early-college instruction, though all are welcome. Professional

Understanding the Reading Landscape for Students and Teachers September 13-14 Laramie

Teaching Standards Board renewal credit will be provided.

Featured speaker and workshop leader, David Jolliffee, is the author of *Reading and Writing Analytically* (2008), *Everyday Use: Rhetoric at Work in Reading and Writing* (2008), and *Academic Writing: Genres, Samples, and Resources* (2005)

Register online <u>www.uwyo.edu/</u> <u>lrn/tww/readinginstitute.htm</u>

# Barker to chair governing board

Dave Barker, Guernsey-Sunrise (Platte County School District No. 2) superintendent, assumed chair responsibilities immediately following the April 17 Governing Board meeting. He takes over from Trish Cook, (Converse #1), who has resigned her position in Douglas to assume the principalship of Laura Ingalls Wilder Elementary School in Colorado's Jefferson County School District.

Other members of the executive committee include Kay Persichitte, Dean, College of Education, Audrey Shalinsky, Associate Dean, College of Arts & Sciences, and Superintendent Ray Schulte, Torrington (Goshen #1) past-chair.

A chair-elect will be elected at the July 22 Governing Board meeting. For a complete list of Governing Board members, go to <u>www.uwyo.edu/wsup</u>.

Board membership comes from member school districts, the College of Arts & Sciences and the College of Education at UW, all seven Wyoming community colleges, the Wyoming Department of Education, and the Wyoming Education Association.

> Partnership dues for 2009-10 are due by Aug. 15. Invoices are in the mail to current members. The fee for school districts is \$2,500.

### Wyoming presenters and sessions

The following Wyoming educators have submitted proposals and been accepted as presenters at the 2009 NNER annual conference in Bellevue, Wash. For more details on the conference, see page 1.

**Fostering nurturing pedagogies from a distance (On the road again- How to mentor from afar)** Diana Wiig and Kathleen Bruce, College of Education and Sweetwater County #1 and 2

The praxis of democratic leadership: Theoretical and empirical lenses on distributed leadership Tim Rush, Angela Jaime, Christine Rogers, Burnett Whiteplume, Marty Conrad, Amanda LeClair, College of Education and Fremont County #14

**Responsibility and Renewal in American Indian Teacher Education: Three Programs and Effects** Tim Rush, Angela Jaime, Christine Rogers, Burnett Whiteplume, Marty Conrad, Amanda LeClair, College of Education and Fremont County #14

Integrating democracy across the WY teacher education program Judy Ellsworth, Allen Trent, Kevin Roxas, John Kambutu, Kate Welsh, Diana Wiig, William Medina-Jerez, Carol Bryant, Heather Duncan, Joanie James, Barbara Deshler, Edward Janak, William Berube, UW/Casper College Center, UW Lab School, UW College of Education

**Democratic Dialogue: Teachers' Reflections on Learning Lead to New Practices and Nurturing Pedagogy** Heather Duncan, College of Education

PRESENTERS, continued on page 7

# Writing colloquium identifies issues and strategies

The second Teaching Writing in Wyoming colloquium attracted nearly 80 faculty representing K-12, community college, and university settings. The group met April 20 at Central Wyoming College in Riverton. Colloquium participants discussed trends in reading instruction at the secondary and college levels and explored the preparedness gap among secondary and entering college students. One trend discussed by the teachers highlighted the notion that

writing literacy is exceeding reading literacy, because of increased technology use.

Colloquium leader April Heaney from UW's Learning Resource Networks addressed three reading misconceptions. First, students often view reading as something individuals do or do not do, rather than a skill that can be enriched and refined. Second, students see reading as decoding activity, not a responsive activity requiring critical thinking. Last, students might view a text as something to be



From left, Val Zierdon, Lynette Wiginton, Kaijsa Calkins and Nikki Thiel discuss teaching writing.

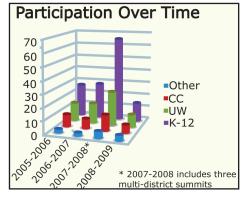
liked or disliked, based on personal preference, instead of a conversation that has a meaningful context.

Colloquium participants read and discussed an excerpt of Alfred Lubrano's *Limbo: Blue-Collar Roots, White-Collar Dreams* and received copies of the book. As a follow up to the meeting, participants have the opportunity to apply for a \$750-1,000 grant running from Fall 2009 through Spring 2009. Professional Teaching Standards Board renewal credit also was provided.

# Life sciences summits draw wide participation

K-12, community college and university life sciences faculty and curriculum coordinators have been meeting since 2006 to discuss student performance in life sciences courses.

Participants examined student work from life sciences courses in the context of the Wyoming state science standard "science as inquiry." The meetings helped create valuable associations among faculty and provided a forum for planning ways to improve student learning. Summits were hosted by the Wyoming School-University Partnership, the UW Life Sciences Program, the UW Science and Mathematics Teaching Center, and host school districts.



Participation Totals								
Year	Event	Date	K-12	СС	UW	Other	Total	Percent
2005-06	Statewide I, Casper	Feb. 23, 2006	23	10	15	3	54	21%
2006-07	Statewide II, Douglas	Feb. 23, 2007	28	8	16	2	54	21%
2007-08	Multi-District I, Worland	Oct. 26, 2007	12	2	6	1	21	8%
	Multi-District II, Evanston	Nov. 9, 2007	10	0	6	1	17	7%
	Multi-District III, Gillette	Dec. 4, 2007	23	4	6	1	34	14%
	Statewide III, Casper	Feb. 22, 2008	21	7	9	2	39	15%
2008-09	Statewide IV, Casper	Feb. 20, 2009	15	7	10	4	36	14%
		Overall Total	135	38	68	14	255	

# Sheridan teacher promotes literacy

### Stewart inspires students with reading groups, faculty with book circles

Over 15 years ago, Carol Stewart was a firstgrade teacher at Sheridan's Meadowlark Elementary School, mentoring a student teacher in UW's then three-phase teacher education program. Since that time, the program has changed and so has Stewart's teaching assignment. Needing a change, she moved to the fourth grade, where she taught for five years. Her interest in literacy piqued, she earned a middle school endorsement in reading and writing. But her latest jump is the biggest. For the last two years, she's been working at Sheridan High School as a Title I reading teacher and reading facilitator. She loves the challenge of assisting highly at-risk students who make up her classes.

In working with the students, Stewart's goal is

to move from an isolated, tutorial approach to more of a community of readers and writers. To that end, she selected several highinterest books that students could read in common and then discuss together. One of them is Wendelin van Draanen's Swear to Howdy, a book for young readers about friendship and secrets "too terrible to tell and too terrible to keep." Van Draanen also is the author of *Flipped*, a growing up story that begins in second grade and features alternating narrators.

Stewart credits the work of Harvey Daniels in tackling the reality of high school students who come to reading classes "with a chip on their shoulders" and unenthusiastic about reading. Daniels, with Steven Zemelman wrote *Subjects matter: Every teacher's guide to content-area reading*, a book Stewart has used to better understand adolescent readers. She also discovered that it's a good book to use with their teachers in faculty book circles.

During the 2007-08 school year, about the time that Stewart was creating communities of adolescent readers, the high school's English department showed an interest in book clubs, selecting three books to read and discuss. Stewart picked up on their interest and developed it. By the 2008-09 school year, there were eight book studies schoolwide. Now, she regards eight different groups as a little too ambitious, especially for one leader during before and after school sessions.

Each faculty reading circle was comprised of at least four members who also could earn UW Outreach



Stewart

School credit. Teachers are encouraged to mark up the books and really use them, but also are encouraged to share them and pass them along. The groups met weekly for 15 weeks, over the course of a semester. The school paid for the books, about \$1,000.

For more information about the Sheridan High School faculty book circles groups, contact Stewart at <u>carol.</u> <u>stewart@scsd2.com</u>.

#### Carol Stewart's Sheridan High School faculty book circle selections

- Bravo teacher!: Building relationships with actions that value others, Harris
- Fair isn't always equal: Assessing and grading in the differential classroom, Wormeli
- Managing your classroom with heart: A guide for nurturing adolescent learners, Ridenour
- Subjects matter: Every teacher's guide to content-area reading, Daniels and Zemelman
- Rethinking high school: Best practice in teaching, learning, and leadership, Daniels, Bizar, and Zemelman
- Teacher-made assessments: How to connect curriculum, instruction, and student learning, Gareis and Grant
- Teaching content outrageously-How to captivate all students and accelerate learning, Pogrow
- A framework for understanding poverty, Payne

# Summer reading suggestions from around the Partnership

## Who Moved My Cheese, by Spencer Johnson

Kay Persichitte, Dean of the College of Education and member of the Partnership's executive committee, describes the book as a very short read about how we adapt (or don't) to change in our lives. Haw, the main character in the story learns to laugh at himself when he realizes that he'd made a mistake by becoming too dependent on his cheese and being unwilling to move on.

**READING**, continued on page 5

#### *Margaret Mead: The Making of an American Icon*, by Nancy C. Lutkehaus

Anthropology professor Audrey Shalinsky, who serves on the Partnership's governing board, says, "Margaret Mead probably was the most famous anthropologist of the 20th Century, yet her prominence did not come through disciplinary scholarship. She resonated with the American public with collaboration with pediatrician Benjamin Spock and columns in Redbook magazine. This enjoyable book lets readers see changes in 20th Century America-the role of women, knowledge of the world and its diversity, and media manipulation through the iconic figure of Margaret Mead."

#### America: How Successful Political, Business, and Religious Leaders Connect with the New American Community, by Ron Fournier,

Douglas Sosnik, and Mathew Dowd

Ray Schulte, Partnership past chair and Goshen #1 (Torrington) superintendent, says, "We have a prison coming to Torrington, something that's going to affect this community significantly. This book offers us a way to think about that." Schulte also recommends Phil Schlecty's Leading for Learning: How to Transform Schools into Learning Organizations.

Loving Frank. Nancy Horan This fiction recommendation from Chicago native Mary P Sheridan-Rabineau isn't exactly a surprise given the Chicago context of the novel. Sheridan-Rabineau directs the composition program at UW and has been instrumental in the 2008 and 2009 Teaching Writing in Wyoming colloquiums. The "Frank" of Horan's title is the architect Frank Lloyd Wright; the "Loving" came from a woman who has been all but erased from history's roles: Mamah (pronounced

MAY-muh) Borthwick Cheney scandalized Chicago when she left her husband and two young children to flee to Europe with Wright — who left behind a wife and six children of his own. The two fell in love in 1907, while Wright was building a "prairie house" for Mamah and Edwin Cheney in Oak Park.

#### The Untied States of America: Polarization, Fracturing, and our Future, Juan Enriquez

**Bill Anthony** chairs the Wyoming State Board of Education and is a retired science educator in the Natrona County School District. He read this book following the 2004 election but says the ideas are even more powerful in the current political context. "Sticks with you; it's most engaging," he said.

#### *Slumdog Millionaire*, Vikas Swarup

John Durkee, State Scholars Initiative staffer and retired Laramie High School speech and English teacher, says, "In addition to all the learning about a different place, it is about how we learn, what kind of learning is rewarded, and the media, both television and movies. It is a different story than the movie, a much different theme, and wonderful read."

### *The War of 1812,* Donald R. Hickey

Also recommended by John Durkee: "While it is a war book, it is really all about early politics and social life. The conflicting Federalist and Republican (read, early Democrats) philosophies, one pro-British and the other pro-Napoleon, are fascinating. In addition, the early federal congress is practicing the 'rules' of Congress we now take as written in stone, like the role of the Vice-President in the Senate and how to stack committees to get your party's position adopted. Forget everything you think you know about this war, it is likely not true or only part of the story."

#### American Born Chinese, Gene Luen Yang

Leslie Rush, associate professor of secondary English education in the College of Education, recommends this graphic novel. She explains that three plot lines converge. They involve the childhood of Chinese-American Jin Wang, the mythological Monkey King and his desire to become a god, and white student Danny's Chinese cousin Chin-Kee. Quite suited to the genre of graphic novel, this is a fantastic exploration of identity through both visuals and words.

#### Infidel, Ayaan Hirsi Ali

Savs assistant professor of educational leadership. Heather Duncan: "I bought this autobiography to read on a plane journey and couldn't put it down. It took me to a world that I had no conception existed - female genital mutilation, beaten women, arranged marriages, the compulsive need to hide the feminine, and the complete loss of individual freedom. It is the powerful story of a war-torn childhood in the male dominated society of Somalia and of womanhood that takes the author to Netherlands and to the US." Duncan also recommends Jack and Diantha States' book, Wildflowers of Wyoming. "Last year, a friend got me hooked on hiking the wild places of Wyoming, and I was amazed at the diversity of wildflowers - different ones each weekend - and so this summer I'll take along this book so that I can identify them."

#### *Home*, Marilynne Robinson Norleen Healey, Vice

President for Academic Affairs at Sheridan College, calls this one of the best books she has read this year. She said it is a novel about an English teacher who gives up her career to return to the small town of her youth to care for an aging father. She struggles to come to terms with many issues including loneliness and acceptance. "The characters are wonderful. The only thing is that I want people to have read *Gilead* (by the same author) first because it introduces many of the characters encountered in *Home* and establishes the background (and is equally wonderful)." She also recommends *The Birth House*, a novel by Ami McKay, about a midwife in Nova Scotia in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## *Nothing Like It in the World*, Stephen Ambrose

Mark Lyford is UW's director of Life Sciences and model train enthusiast with his 8-year old son. Derk. He also has been the chief worrier for the statewide and multi-district science summits, 2005-2009. He says the book offers "a great view on the building of the transcontinental railroad and its impact on our nation and world, as well as an interesting (and timely) view on the relationship between the government and private industries that made it all happen."

# Isabel Dalhousie Mystery series

Carol Kirkwood, Wyoming P-16 Education Council member and long-time Laramie High French teacher, says, "After having read and loved all of the Alexander McCall Smith novels in the Ladies No. 1 Detective Agency, I've begun reading the Isabel Dalhousie Mystery series. Although the stories, so far, aren't quite as poignant at the Ladies No. 1, they're a fun read at the end of a long day." She added, "For Christmas, a friend gave me Omnivore's Dilemma by Michael Pollan. I've just read isolated parts of it, but hope to read the entire book come summer. It's giving me little insights into American eating habits, which I'm sure impact classroom problems. And finally, when I'm hungry for beautiful language, I can always pick up Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching."

# Shrinking the Distances Student teaching, growing mentors in Fremont

At 221 miles, Fremont County might not be the farthest partner school district from the University of Wyoming in Laramie (Sheridan is), but it's a good, long way.

According to Christine Watne, Fremont County partner district facilitator, the distance from Laramie worries some students at first. But soon enough, mentor teachers fully involve them in teaching, and everything that comes with it, including Rendezvous Elementary School's Literacy Luau. And along the way, concerns about the distance from Laramie are replaced by concerns about student achievement gaps.

Student teachers in the Wyoming Teacher Education Program receive their placements almost a year before student teaching. This enables them to anticipate housing and other needs. Then, the following fall semester, student teachers complete two one-week-long practicum experiences by meeting their mentor teachers and spending time in the classroom. The student teachers also participate in a detailed workshop led by the local partner district facilitator, Judy Ellsworth, the Director of Teacher Education for the University of Wyoming, and the UW methods faculty assigned to the partner district. In the case of Fremont County, those faculty members are Kim Miller, Tim Rush, and Diana Wiig.

Watne's role is complex. She focuses her attention on the 16 elementary and 9 secondary student teachers placed in Riverton and Ethete partner sites, with additional placements in Lander, Wind River,



Mary Jo Chouinard, left, and Christine Watne

and Shoshoni. At the same time, Watne works closely with district administrators, keeping them involved in the placement process, evaluation, professional development, and a variety of planning meetings. One such building administrator is Mary Jo Chouinard, the 2009 Wyoming National Distinguished Elementary Principal.

Watne and Chouinard, both veteran English teachers, exhibit an easy going, confident working relationship. They state emphatically that the change in student teaching is dramatic. Chouinard recalls her own student teaching with a rueful laugh, "I walked in and the teacher walked out!" Chouinard and Watne agree that the two weeks in fall help set the stage for a confident start in January when students begin their 16-week student teaching experience. Both also agree that the district's children and youth benefit from the model. Explains Watne, "The student and mentor keep exchanging roles, sometimes leading, sometimes following. One's checking on misconceptions while the other's leading the lesson."

Student teachers are also active in professional development. Chouinard claims that they ask more questions and "bring enthusiasm and idealism. It reminds you why you went into education in the first place." Chouinard also asserts that, in general, student teachers are much better prepared than (in) the past.

In all partner district sites, not just Fremont County, student teachers are expected to do whatever their mentor

FREMONT, continued on page 7

# **FREMONT** continued from page 6

teacher might be doing. That includes fundraisers, staff dinners, and after school obligations. In this way, the student teachers become part of the life of the school community. Perhaps most important, the student teachers are visible in the school and the community, participating in dances, back-to-school nights, and literacy events—all of the things teachers do.

"It's a rich experience for student teachers, adds Watne, "especially when they go out to the Wind River Reservation. At Wyoming Indian Schools, they've been a part of the joy of increased student achievement and the high school Chiefs (both boys and girls) basketball success. "Student teachers also share in a community's sorrow," explains Watne. "As the community has been saddened by deaths, the mentor teachers include and instruct their student teachers in a new cultural mourning ritual."

Watne maintains close connections with the College of Education, in particular, a team of elementary education teaching methods faculty who include Kim Miller, Diana Wiig, and Tim Rush. Watne also credits Office of Teacher Education staff, Cindy Fronapfel and Michelle Hansen, along with Ellsworth, its director, for making the long-distance connections work.

For more information about the Fremont County partner district collaboration or the University of Wyoming Teacher Education Program, contact Watne at chrischjw@tribcsp.com or Ellsworth at jze@uwyo.edu.

# **PRESENTERS** continued from page 2

Instructional models that emphasize 'learning' rather than 'teaching' Joseph Stepans, Kate Welsh, Ty Flock, Clark Coberly, Lee McCoy, Weston County #7 and College of Education

**Beginning principals explore democratic practices** Heather Duncan, College of Education

**Connecting theory with practice: Real practices in real classrooms** Joanie James and Barbara Deshler, UW Lab School

Re-thinking the social and civic goal of schooling in a complex democratic society Lydiah Nganga and John Kambutu, UW/Casper College Center

Environmental stewardship and active democracy in pre-service teacher education Carol Bryant, William Median-Jerez, Carie Green, College of Education

Reflecting upon pre-service teaching using Elluminate meetings: A rural partnership tool? Linda Hutchison, Carol Bryant, Marcia Patton, Debbie Fanning, Leslie Rush, College of Education

Compelling instructional work: The pathway to student engagement and achievement qualitative research: Engaging all students in learning Tim Blum, Jacob Blum, UW Lab School

Democratic governance in practice: Multiple perspectives of messy work Jim Lowham, Jennifer Grooms, Verba Echols, Anne LaPlante, Doreen McGlade, Natrona County School District #1, Casper

Sustaining democratic, multiage classrooms in the age of accountability Jennifer Grooms, Deyonne Jackson, Nicole Roden, Woods Learning Center, Casper

Pursuing excellence and equity using professional learning communities to strengthen educators Sarah Willis, Jonna Johnson, CY Junior High, Casper

Leadership associates program: A model that expands leadership roles through multipartite approaches Audrey Kleinsasser, Wyoming School-University Partnership

A web of readers: Enhancing critical reading through creative networking Mary P Sheridan-Rabideau, April Heaney, Evie Hemphill, UW English Department, and Learning Resource Network

Educating responsible citizens in elementary grades Jean Davies, Joyce Chalstrom, Goins Elementary School, Cheyenne

National Board Certification and the 3 R's as they occur in Wyoming public schools Joanie James, Theresa Williams, Margaret Hudson, Teddi Benson, Rae Lynn Job, UW Lab School, College of Education, Wyoming National Board Certification Initiative

Students as citizen scientists: Developing democratic values and skills while learning science Sylvia Parker, UW Science and Mathematics Teaching Center

Praising preparation, practice and participation: A qualitative research study examining K-8 multiage small group communities practicing democracy Cammy Rowley and Nicole Roden, Casper College and Woods Learning Center, Casper

The praxis of democratic leadership: Theoretical and empirical lenses on distributed leadership Jim Lowham and Elizabeth Lowham, Casper and Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo

Art and democracy: Fostering collaboration and creative thinking with visual art Allen Trent, College of Education

Social justice teaching: A conversation with the social justice reading group Kate Welsh, Stella Nowell, Sonja Browe, Andrea Hayden, Kate Kniss, Slade Elementary School, UW Lab School, Laramie and College of Education

# Coming Up ...

**June 1, 2009** Fall 2009 School Improvement Conference proposals due

**July 19-24, 2009** NNER Summer Symposium Seattle

**July 22, 2009** 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Governing Board UW Outreach Center, Casper

September 13-14, 2009 Reading Institute Grades 10-14 Laramie September 21-23, 2009 Instructional Facilitator State Conference Casper

September 28-29, 2009 Fall 2009 School Improvement Conference Cheyenne

October 15-17, 2009 NNER 10th anniversary In Praise of Education Conference Bellevue, Wash.

### Math, science, social studies, world languages, writing charts online

Over the last year, the Partnership has helped develop and distribute five charts showing the instructional features of secondary and postsecondary classrooms.

Go to <u>http://www.wp-16.</u> <u>org/projects.asp</u> for high and low resolution versions to print.

The Wyoming P-16 Education Council paid for their development.



#### Who We Are

The Wyoming School-University Partnership includes K-16 faculty and administrators statewide along with other education stakeholders. The stakeholders study and promote the role of education in preparing students for life and work in a democracy.

#### Learn More

Wyoming School-University Partnership

**National Network for Educational Renewal** 

Wyoming National Board Certification

Wyoming P-16 Council

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