A young boy and girl are sitting at a table, looking at a book together. The boy is on the left, wearing a blue and white striped shirt. The girl is on the right, wearing a blue shirt. They are both looking down at the book with interest.

THE **TEACHING LIBRARIAN**

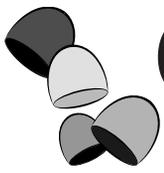
The magazine of the Ontario School Library Association

volume 14, number 1

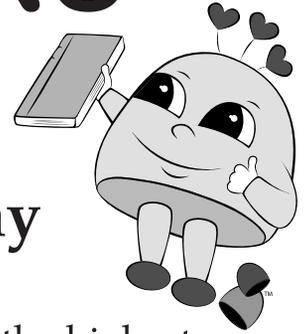
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THE TEACHING LIBRARIAN

volume 14, number 1

ISSN 1188 679X



Across the Curriculum @ your library®

- 10** ESL = EVERYONE SUCCEEDS (IN) LIBRARY!
A Collaborative Literature Program
for Second Language Learners
by Brenda Dillon
- 12** ONTARIO BLOGS:
WHY IT'S CATCHING ON IN THE PROVINCE'S CLASSROOMS
by Paula Boon
- 14** BE THE CHANGE: FAIR TRADE
by Sybille Parry
- 16** MEET THE AUTHORS...GAIL SIDONIE SOBAT AND ANITA DAHER
An Interview with Gail Sidonie Sobat
by Anita Daher
- 20** TREASURES FROM THE TOOLKIT
by Bobbie Henley
- 22** DRAWN TO THE FORM: GRAPHIC NOVELS @ YOUR LIBRARY
by Diana Maliszewski
- 24** MEET THE AUTHORS PART 2
An Interview with Anita Daher
by Gail Sidonie Sobat
- 28** ART? IN THE LIBRARY?
by Gina Brohm
- 34** MUSIC IN THE LIBRARY
by Frank Loreto
- 37** ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS? WE NEED TO KNOW!
- 38** MEANINGFUL RESEARCH ASSIGNMENTS
YIELD VALUABLE LIFE-LONG LESSONS
by MaryElise Citton
- 48** I LOVE YOUR JOB:
from the Key Note Speech of the TDSB Banquet
by Marnelle Tokio

6 TL The Editor's Notebook

8 TL Ask Rita

45 TL Highlights and Dateline

36 TL Idea File

42 OSLA President's Report by Michael Rosettis

7 TL School Library World
by Brenda Dillon

32 TL Professional Resources
by Esther Rosenfeld

40 TL BOOK BUZZ
by Martha Martin

Thanks go to the contributors to *The Teaching Librarian*, volume 14, number 1



PAULA BOON

is the ENO/REO literacy forum moderator and Ontario Blogs co-ordinator



ROBERTA HENLEY

is the teacher-librarian at Brantford Collegiate in the Grand Erie District School Board and one of the creators of *The Teacher-Librarian's Toolkit for Evidence-Based Practice*.



ESTHER ROSENFELD

is the former head of the Library and Learning Resources Department of the Toronto District School Board and the editor of *Teacher Librarian* magazine.

GINA BROHM

is a teacher-librarian at Angus Morrison Public School with the Simcoe County District School Board.



FRANK LORETO

is a teacher-librarian at St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School in Brampton.



BRIAN SASAKI

is a student at the Etobicoke School for the Arts.



MARYLISE CITTON

is the teacher-librarian at Cardinal Carter Catholic High School in Aurora, Ontario.



DIANA MALISZEWSKI

is a teacher-librarian at Agnes Macphail Public School with the Toronto District School Board and the editor of *The Teaching Librarian*.



GAIL SIDONIE SOBAT

is the author of several books, including *A Winter's Tale* and *The Book of Mary*.



ANITA DAHER

is the author of several books such as *Flight From Big Tangle* and *Flight from Bear Canyon*.



MARTHA MARTIN

is a teacher-librarian at Lasalle Public School in the Greater Essex District School Board and one of the contributing editors to *The Teaching Librarian*.

ZACHARY THOMAS

will soon graduate from the Ontario College of Art and Design.



BRENDA DILLON

is the teacher-librarian at Philip Pocock Catholic Secondary School in the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and one of the contributing editors to *The Teaching Librarian*.



SYBILLE PARRY

is a teacher-librarian at Kew Beach Public School in Toronto and one of the members of the *Be The Change* writing team.



MARNELLE TOKIO

is a poet and author of books such as *More Than You Can Chew* and *Room 207*.

TL mission

THE TEACHING LIBRARIAN

is the official magazine of the Ontario School Library Association. It is published three times a year to support OSLA members in providing significant and effective library programs and services. *The Teaching Librarian* promotes library program and curriculum development that further the objectives set out for students and teachers by the province, school boards, administrators, teachers and parents. It fosters effective partnering with teachers and administrators, and provides a forum where teacher-librarians can share experience and expertise.

THE TEACHING LIBRARIAN BOARD

Robert Baxter	Langstaff Secondary School York Region District School Board Robert.Baxter@yrdsb.edu.on.ca
Wendy D'Angelo	Wells Street Public School York Region District School Board wenmar@rogers.com
Brenda Dillon	Phillip Pocock Catholic Secondary School Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board brenann@sympatico.ca
Derrick Grose	Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School Ottawa-Carleton District School Board derrick.grose@ocdsb.ca
Peter Huang	Lorne Park Secondary School Peel District School Board peter.huang@peelsb.com
Martha Martin	Lasalle PS Greater Essex District School Board mmartin34@cogeco.ca
Sharon Mills	Library and Learning Resources Toronto District School Board Sharon.Mills@tel.tdsb.on.ca
Michael Rosettis	St. Augustine Catholic High School York Catholic District School Board michael.rosettis@ycdsb.ca
Janine Schaub	Humber Valley Village Junior Middle School Toronto District School Board Janine.Schaub@tel.tdsb.on.ca
Shelagh Straughan	Trinity College School Independent School, Port Hope sstraughan@tcs.on.ca
Sya Van Geest	Retired Peel District School Board syavg@rogers.com

THE TEACHING LIBRARIAN EDITOR

Diana Maliszewski	Agnes Macphail Public School Toronto District School Board Diana.Maliszewski@tel.tdsb.on.ca
-------------------	---

OLA DESIGNWORKS

Lori Knowles/Jennifer Marriott/Larry Moore/Andrew Rytner

TL guidelines

V. 14, no. 2	"Change and Renewal @ your library", Deadline: October 6, 2006
V. 14, no. 3	"Media @ your library" Deadline: February 16, 2006
V. 15, no. 1	TBA Deadline: June 2007

Articles of 150–250 words, 500 words or 800–1300 words are welcome. Articles, when approved, should be accompanied by good quality illustrations and/or pictures whenever possible. Text must be sent electronically, preferably in a MS Word (or compatible) file. Pictures can be printed or digital (minimum size and quality are 4" x 6" and 300 dpi, approximately 700 MB and in JPEG format if electronic). With photos which contain a recognized individual, please secure the individual's permission in writing for the use of the photo. Photos taken at public events, or crowd shots taken in a public place do not require permission from the subjects. All submissions are subject to editing for consistency, length and style. Journalistic style is preferred. Articles must include in the body of the text the working title, name of author, and e-mail address. OSLA reserves the right to use pictures in other OSLA publications unless permission is limited or denied at the time of publishing. Any questions about submissions should be directed to the Editor:

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Across the Curriculum @ your library®

Diana Maliszewski



Welcome to Volume 14, Issue 1 of *The Teaching Librarian*. As you flip through these pages, you will notice a lot of changes. I am one of them. My name is Diana Maliszewski and I am the new Editor-In-Chief.

Along with six new editorial board members, we have new columns appearing in our magazine. Our TL Profile has been replaced with an Author Profile; this issue features not one, but two Canadian authors—Anita Daher and Gail Sidonie Sobat. In this and future issues, you'll find our new column on graphic novels called Drawn To The Form: Graphic Novels @ Your Library. And to complement the OSLA kit of lessons integrating global citizenship with information literacy, we are introducing a column called Helping You Be the Change.

Of course, we have retained some of your favourite sections. Our helpful advice columnist, Rita Resourceful, returns, as do our Book Buzz and Professional Resources columns. As always, we will continue to bring you interesting and informative articles from writers within and outside of our library community.

If our publishing schedule works out as planned, you will be perusing this magazine in September. September—a time for library orientation tours, new classes, fresh starts, and so much more. As a student, I was always excited and slightly nervous when starting school anew in September. As an educator, I have similar feelings of anticipation each year, as Labour Day grows closer. What will the new school year hold for me and for those around me?

This issue, *Across the Curriculum @ your library*®, demonstrates how school libraries can be involved in all subject areas in a variety of ways, from the tried-and-true research units, to non-conventional arenas such as visual arts, and onward into the era of blogs. This is the key to our survival: we must strive to integrate ourselves in all aspects of the curriculum, not just reading. To paraphrase one of my mentors, the incredible Carol Koechlin quoting Doug Johnson (2002), we teacher-librarians must “make ourselves indispensable.”

Happy first days of school! May your shelves be straight and your students eager! ■

My mother passed along this photo of me as a child in my elementary school library, enjoying a “cross-curricular moment”. My mom, Gloria DeFreitas, began volunteering in the school library at Birch Cliff Heights P.S. when I first enrolled there in junior kindergarten, and she’s never left. Thanks Mom!



Although it's true that each school library is unique—as is each teacher-librarian – it's also true that we have much in common with our colleagues across Canada and around the world. It's both interesting and useful to be in touch with the world of school librarianship beyond Ontario's borders.

Celebrate School Library Day!

International School Library Day, first celebrated in 1999, is celebrated each year on the fourth Monday in October. ISLD 2006 will be celebrated on October 23. The theme will be Reading, Knowing, Doing. For more information, see the ISLD section of the IASL Web site, at www.iasl-slo.org/isld.html.

In June, 2003, Roch Carrier, Canada's National Librarian, proclaimed the fourth Monday of October National School Library Day, and the first NSLD was celebrated on October 27, 2003. This national celebration is linked to the international celebration. For information on our own National School Library Day – coming October 23, 2006 – check out the NSLD section of CASL's Web site, at www.nsls.ca.

Gain a National Perspective

Don't forget to check out *School Libraries in Canada* (SLIC), Canada's national school library journal. It's now publicly available online, at www.schoollibraries.ca.

And if you're looking for documents, information, or ideas, check out SLiP: Canadian School Library Information Portal, at www.cla.ca/slip.

It's a Big World – Think Globally!

The easiest way to gain an international perspective on school librarianship is to check out the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL), at www.iasl-slo.org.

If you like the idea of sharing professional development with colleagues from around the world, but can't actually travel to an international conference, then keep your eye on the Australian School Library Association's Web site, at www.asvla.org.au. In both 2005 and 2006, ASLA offered an online conference, open to participants from around the world. The 2006 conference featured Ontario's own Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan! Both years, the conference was held in early May, with information posted in the winter and registration in early spring. Interested? Watch the Web site for news! ■



"THEY SAID THEY'RE DOING RESEARCH
 BUT I CAN TELL THEY'RE NOT USING SEARCH SKILLS."

illustration by Brian Sasaki

Dear Rita,

I am a new teacher-librarian (not new to the teaching profession) in a K-6 school. This year I have a half timetable, half of which is prep time coverage. Last June I met with my staff and principal (who is also new to her position) to determine how that prep time will be handled. I'm not thrilled with the outcome, but realize I have it better than many of my colleagues across the province.

So... I'm not writing to complain, but rather to ask for your expertise and advice as to how to get off on the right track and advocate strongly for the library program here at my school (with the goal of more 'real' library time in sight!) I know a little about evidence-based practice and want to track my collaborative efforts with the teachers and show how much of an impact I've made to their students' achievement levels. Any suggestions?

*Yours in advocacy,
A determined TL*

Dear Determined,

You sound like the kind of teacher-librarian any school would be happy to have. It's your job to show your staff just how happy! You want to make the most of your open time. Begin the year by meeting with all grade teachers or divisions and discover where a colleague's lesson or research projects could fit. If you can, create a long-term plan of these lessons/units. Both your principal and staff will be impressed when you show them this.

Because of your limited time, you may only be able to work on developing research questions or locating the best resources or teaching HyperStudio for the final product. You can't do it all on this timetable, so make the most of the time you have!

What better time than September to also tap into the toolkit on evidence-based practice and start collecting some proof? Go to www.accessola.com/osla/toolkit to the *Here's*

How tab to *Gather and Document* and print out a copy of the following *Collaboration Log*. In this article, I've shown you parts of it, just so you know what I'm referring to. Obviously, in this first section you simply record, over a selected time period, which teachers you have partnered with, what the focus of the unit was, what grade you worked with, etc. By keeping the chart handy and completing it on an ongoing basis, you are avoiding what could be an onerous task

I like the next part because it involves some analyzing. After all it's not just about the numbers, it's about what you do with them! Try going to the Analyze and Relate section of the Toolkit, and check out the questions in the *Analyzing Your Evidence Worksheet*, which will only take a few minutes to guide your reflection.

Long Range Plan

September	February
October Grade 6 - Space - Mrs. Muir	March Grade 4 - Medieval Times
November Grade 5 - Ancient Civilizations	April
December	May Grade 3 - First Nations
January	June

reasonable, rich in experience ...and always right!

Collaboration Log

Week/Month _____

Type of Collaboration and Teacher(s) Names	Unit Title / Curriculum Focus	Grade Level	Library Time	# of Students
Totals/Summaries				
Patterns Observed				
Proposed Actions				

Koehlin/Zwaan 2003 based on
Reinventing Indiana's School Library Media Program in the Age of Technology,
 Loertscher 2001

OSLA TL Toolkit for Student Success

Collaboration Log

The Teacher-Librarian's
 Toolkit for Evidence-
 Based Practice
[www.accessola.com/
 osla/toolkit](http://www.accessola.com/oslal/toolkit)

Reflect on the patterns you have noticed. Are there certain teachers on your staff whom you have overlooked completely? Are there grades that have been missed? Are their obvious gaps in skills instruction? (Perhaps it is impossible for you to remedy some problems due to timetable issues, but if that is not the case, ask yourself why.)

Next, I would go to *Teacher-Librarian—an Agent for Collaboration* to discover other ways to build your collaborative program and to show how this will benefit your students. ■

Do you have any school library concerns or gripes? Need advice?

Just ask Rita! She's reliable, reasonable, rich in experience... and always right!

CONTACT RITA at rita@accessola.com You'll never regret it!



ESL = Everyone Succeeds (in) Library!

A Collaborative Literature Program for

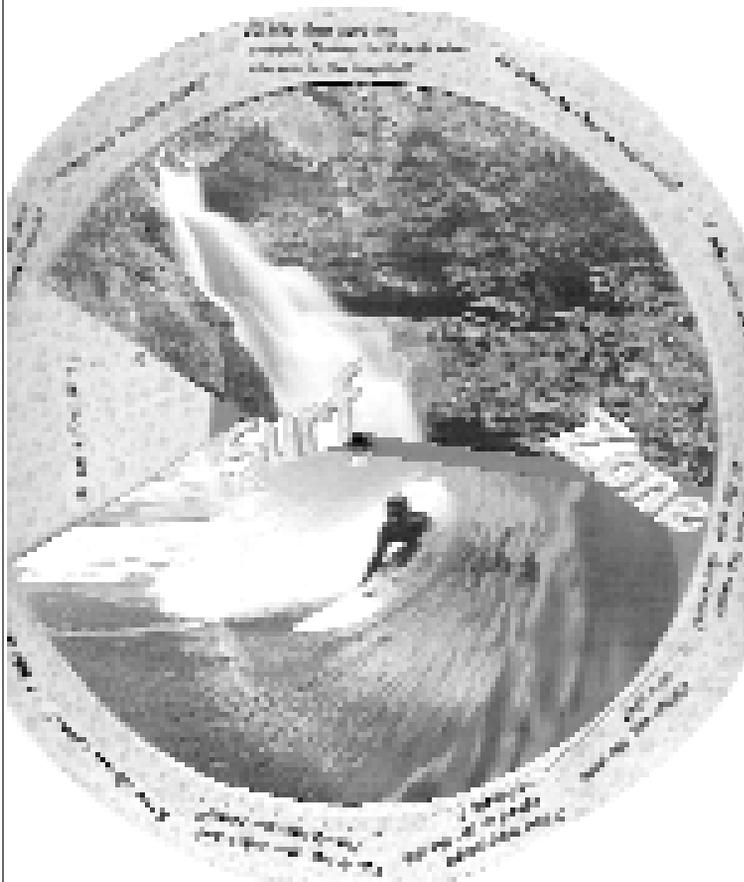
One of my favourite collaborative endeavours involves Charlene Fitzpatrick, an ESL teacher. We've been collaborating on a literature program for her ESL (Level C/D) class for two years now, the program evolving from year to year as we keep things that work well, such as read-alouds and food, and add new things we want to try, such as literature circles.

I work with the class two days a week in the library, for about 20 minutes at a time, and Charlene provides the students with some additional class time for the program.

Assessment and evaluation are collaborative efforts.

Last year, we used the Golden Oak program. I book-talked the nominated titles and the students made personal selections and read independently. They kept reading journals and used the Golden Oak Web site to share their responses. Because we also wanted to work on listening skills, we used read-alouds from *Beginnings* (an anthology of Canadian historical short stories) with a worksheet for each story, which included vocabulary, questions, and creative writing. Each of the students read at least one book and several of them read more—an accomplishment worth noting for a group of students who considered themselves non-readers.

When developing this year's program, we first talked about what we wanted to do and roughed out a schedule, then selected the books and developed the activities. We didn't run the Golden Oak program this year because Charlene felt several of the titles weren't suitable for her students; however, we did use those titles she thought would work, and I recommended additional titles.



Our Book List

Fires!, by Tanya Lloyd Kyi
Kat's Fall, by Shelley Hrdlitschka
The Maybe House, by Lynne Kositsky
Overdrive, by Eric Walters
The Rescue of Nanoose, by Chloe O'Laughlin
Rosie's Dream Cape, by Zelda Freedman
Sticks and Stones, by Beth Goobie
Surf Zone, by Pam Withers
Truth, by Tanya Lloyd Kyi
Titanic (assortment of easy reading titles)

by Brenda Dillon

Second Language Learners

Selected Web sites

Literature Circles

www.literaturecircles.com

www.gecdsb.on.ca/sub/schools/elem/lps/just%20read/litcirclewhy.htm

www.webenglishteacher.com/litcircles.html

www.webenglishteacher.com/litcircles.html

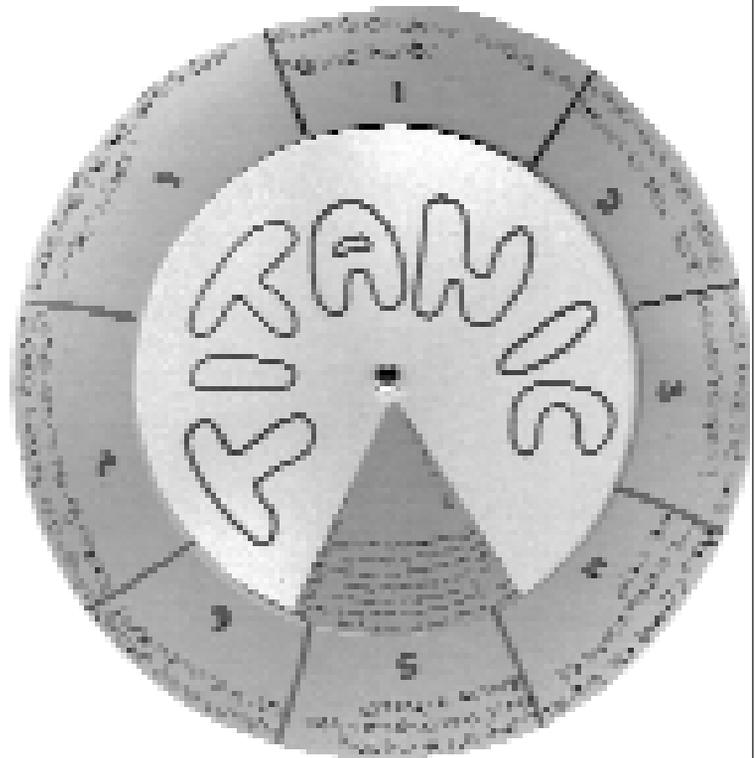
Readers Theatre

www.aaronshp.com/rt/

www.qesnrecit.qc.ca/schools/bchs/rtheatre/teach1.htm

www.comm.unt.edu/histofperf/rt2.htm

www.humboldt.edu/~jmf2/floss/rt-eval.html



I book-talked the literature circle selections, had the students complete a selection form identifying three choices, compiled their preferences and set up the literature circles. We decided to handle the book selection this way because we didn't want students to choose books based on their friends' choices.

By the end of the program, each student had participated in two literature circles. To wrap up the first literature circle, each group was asked to prepare a readers' theatre presentation, which proved to be too abstract an assignment. For their second novels, each group created a question wheel. Each wheel consisted of two concentric circles of Bristol board, fastened with a brass fastener so the upper circle could be turned, decorated to reflect the novel, with questions the user had to match to the answers. This concrete, hands-on activity was a hit and was completed by even the most reluctant students. Each group was

also asked to use newspapers to create an item of clothing symbolizing a character and then participate in a fashion show. Another successful activity!

This collaborative literature program has been worth the time and effort and has grown and developed as we've refined our efforts and experimented with new materials and strategies. We'll continue using treats, high interest books, and hands-on activities. We'll add more direct instruction and modeling for the literature circles and readers' theatre, and evaluate the schedule. The students have demonstrated both improved skills and a positive attitude. Definitely a partnership worth continuing! ■

ONTARIO BLOGS:

by Paula Boon

For many teachers, integrating technology into the curriculum is daunting. It takes time and brain power to figure out what's new, what's useful, and how to apply it in a classroom.

Take blogs, for example. You may have heard of them. You may know that 'blog' is short for 'Weblog,' a Web-based publication normally consisting of articles that are uploaded to a hosting Web page. You may even subscribe to various blogs or keep your own in your free time. But until this school year, if you wanted to take advantage of the obvious educational potential of blogs, you were on your own. Enter the Education Network of Ontario's exciting online publishing project, Ontario Blogs.

Using this free service, a growing number of Ontario teachers are moving writing assignments and group discussions online, where students are motivated by a real audience and the possibility of comments from their classmates and other registered participants.

What makes Ontario Blogs particularly useful as compared to other free online blogging applications is that participating writers and readers are interacting in a controlled environment. Only teachers have the authority to publish student writing, and they also filter all comments received, ensuring students' online safety.

After registering a class by filling out an online registration form, teachers can go through some quick tutorials to learn to navigate the program blog. There's also a human touch to the program, with Diane Hammond ready to answer all technical questions and Paula Boon regularly posting information and inspiration from the world of

edublogs.

And now, not only can student bloggers receive comments from members of other classes across the province, but several faculties of education are getting involved as well. Some pre-service teachers from Western, Windsor and OISE are becoming mentors to specific high-needs classes, while others will be reading all the blogs and commenting on whatever posts catch their eye.

This all sounds wonderful, you may be thinking, but how exactly could it fit into my established curriculum? Ontario Blogs has



Why It's Catching On in the Province's Classrooms

only been in existence since fall 2005, but already teachers have used it in a wide variety of ways.

Teacher-librarian Martha Martin of LaSalle was the first to bring her Grade 6 class's literature circles online. Students posted their reflections on what they were reading and received replies from both their classmates and some Grade 8 students from Orillia. Recently, students in literature circles from Melanie Klimkowski's Grade 8 class in Windsor have also begun posting on Ontario Blogs. In their comments, they have been debating the relative merits of different books and urging each other to read on to get to the 'good part.'

Students of all ages can benefit from constructive feedback about their creative writing efforts. With this in mind, Kirsten Corson of Huntsville had her first semester Grade 12 Writers' Craft students posting to the blog. The students liked the idea of having an audience beyond their teacher, and they posted both finished products and works in progress for feedback. Now, with faculty of education students eager to comment, there's even more opportunity for student growth in creative writing.

Blogs can also be places to post any student writing that might normally go into journals. During last fall and early winter, Orillia teachers Stanley Man and Robert Fitzgerald asked their students to write about what made them unique, who they would like to see as Canada's next prime minister, and why thinking about high school could be nerve-racking, while Ray Macoritti's students from Aurora blogged about news items such as the issue of face transplants and the election.

Newcomer Jennifer Jilks from Ottawa has

provided Olympic-related writing prompts for her students and provided links to her class's home page so others can see what kinds of projects the class has been working on.

In any grade, and with any type of writing, the archival nature of the blogs makes it easy to track student progress, invite parents to see what their children are writing, and/or ultimately create an e-portfolio of student work.

An article by Bob Goodwin-Jones in *Language, Learning & Technology* notes that blogging is an equalizing tool, regardless of how they are used in the classroom, and a tool that encourages universal participation in discussions at a much higher level than face-to-face dialogue. It allows this type of participation, he says, because it is removed from the immediate classroom and provides students with a chance to clarify their ideas and thoughts before committing them to an open environment.

The potential benefits of integrating blogs into your classroom are enormous. They can increase motivation, improve the quality and quantity of writing being produced by students, and provide them with both models of good writing and the feedback necessary to improve their own.

Ontario Blogs has been receiving very positive reactions from teachers at various education-related conferences this year. Why not jump on the blogwagon yourself by heading to www.enoreo.on.ca and see where it takes you? ■

Fair Trade

by Sybille Parry

“You must be the change you want to see in the world.”
Mahatma Gandhi



Inspired by the words of Craig Keilberger and Stephen Lewis at the OLA 2005 Super Conference, a small, enthusiastic group of teacher-librarians accepted the challenge to make a difference and take action, and the Be The Change project was born.

Be The Change is a collection of 25 online units on global citizenship, which support many Ontario curriculum expectations, with a particular focus on the content areas, in conjunction with the OSLA Information Studies expectations. The lessons are strengthened by a rich bibliography, featuring some of the best, newest and most relevant resources available, including supplementary Web sites and Web quests.

This recurring column will share some of the experiences, in which teacher-librarians take to heart Gandhi's words: "You must be the change you want to see in the world."

Christopher is 8 years old. When he arrived at the library with his Grade 3 class this spring, he had never heard of fair trade, just like the rest of his classmates. Over the next six weeks, their understanding of the term and its significance grew. More importantly, they translated their knowledge into action.

Our topic was Urban and Rural Communities. Our school is located in a large urban centre, so student had developed a good understanding of the basic concepts surrounding city existence. Some comparisons based on prior experiences had been made, but the learning had not yet come to life.

My teaching partner and I decided to delve further into the rural side of the topic by focusing on the communities that grow fair trade products. These countries have the right climatic conditions for growing bananas, cocoa, coffee beans, tea, sugar, and other luxury products which we, in the more northern climates, cannot grow, but enthusiastically consume. We began by defining fair trade. Each student received a copy of the fair trade logo. Their task was to

E THE CHANGE

locate the logo on a product in a store in their neighbourhood.

The products were hard to find, so the students really had to hunt for them. Their parents didn't know what "fair trade" was!

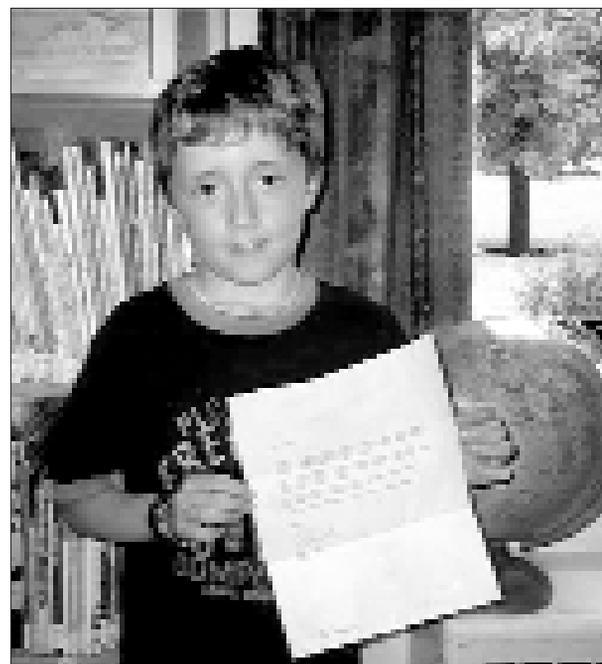
At our next session we examined the fair trade products they were able to find. Using globes and atlases, we located the countries where these products were grown. We started to make connections: hot countries... close to the equator... largely poor, rural populations. Some of our best researchers delved a little deeper on the Web, on the CIA Country Fact File and noticed the low literacy rate of the population, and that started an intriguing new line of inquiry.

To make it all come together, we visited two excellent Web sites—Oxfam's Cool Planet for Teachers and the Dubble Chocolate Web sites. Here we found stories that consolidated our findings, such as the story of a banana, and its journey from tree to supermarket. Perhaps most compelling of all were the farmers' stories. They said that with fair trade, "we get a fair price for our work, guaranteed. Before fair trade, the price fluctuated all the time, and we had no security, no control. Now we can purchase the things we need—school supplies for our children, medicines, chairs for our meetings." That last item had great impact. I asked students to consider the last time their parents attended a meeting where they had to stand because they could not afford chairs. After absorbing and contemplating these

testimonials, the students were ready for action.

The classroom teacher wanted to develop students' letter-writing skills. Opportunity knocked. Students were to write a letter asking the manager of a local retailer to consider carrying one fair trade product and to explain why this was important. We brainstormed the names of area stores, and then they began writing the letters. Their language was beautiful, persuasive, passionate, and informed. Who could resist?

Our big moment came when Christopher arrived at school a few weeks later, proudly bearing the reply he received from the manager of the local grocery store. Not only would the manager consider Christopher's suggestion, he wrote, but also he would take it forward to the regional meeting of his company's sales team. We nearly burst with pride! Every single child in that class did what Ghandi encouraged us to do. With the response Christopher received, we were inspired. Words and ideals had become reality—it really is possible to be the change. ■



Web site Information
CIA Country Fact File
www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html

Oxfam Cool Planet for Teachers
www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/index.htm

Dubble Chocolate
www.dubble.co.uk

Sybille Parry is the teacher-librarian at Kew Beach Public School in Toronto. She is also one of the members of the writing team that created the OSLA *Be The Change* project, found at www.accessola.com/osla/bethechange

Meet The Authors...

Gail Sidonie Sobat and Anita Daher

This issue, we'd like to introduce a new feature that we're calling Meet the Authors. Unlike traditional author profiles, we thought we'd have some fun with this one, so we decided for our maiden voyage to ask two insanely busy professional writers to interview each other. They're wild and wacky women, so it should be a fun encounter. Enjoy...

To say Gail Sidonie Sobat is a little busy is like saying Lake Superior is a bit large. She writes poetry, short stories and longer fiction, and has been published in numerous journals and anthologies. She also teaches, and travels the world giving presentations and readings from her books.

Ingamald (Spotted Cow Press 2001), was the first in her YA popular fantasy series about “a lonely orphan, a misunderstood girl-woman, a shunned and feared adept at magic.” Her follow-up novel, *A Winter's Tale* (Great Plains Publications, 2004), was a finalist for the 2006 Ontario Library Association's White Pine Award. Great Plains Publications will publish the third book in this series, *A Glass Darkly*, this fall (2006).

In addition to *A Glass Darkly*, she has two other recent books. Sumach Press released *The Book of Mary*, a novel for adults, in May 2006, and her picture book, *In the Graveyard*, will be published by Orca in 2007.

Friend and fellow author Anita Daher caught up with Sidonie Sobat in the middle of the woods in Hinterlünd. Inside a circle of stones, they sipped tea and spoke of writing.

Anita: Gail, this tea is delicious, and I thank you for the invite. Since reading *Ingamald* and *A Winter's Tale*, I've been entranced by what I've imagined this land must be. But why do we sit inside this circle of stones? Are there dangers in these woods?

Gail: Woods are always dangerous in stories! That's why witches and trolls and giants live in forests. That's why there's a musical called *Into the Woods*. The woods are a place of peril and transformation. A place you go into to find out something important about yourself, but must get out alive! A circle of stones in pre-Christian times and in many cultures (even today) was a sacred place. Circles are very ancient symbols of unity and protection. Within the circle, one could be safe from the sprites and mischief-makers.

Anita: Every author has a different way of approaching a story. The world you have created in your *Ingamald* series feels so complete and alive. Which came first for you, *Ingamald* or the land of Hinterlünd?

Gail: Ingamald. I tend to create characters first.

Anita: Your language is like music! Others have described your writing as lyrical and rhythmic. Where does this come from?

Gail: I guess from the fact that I'm a singer and have been studying voice since I was 14. Maybe it's also because I memorized many sad and sappy love songs throughout my tortured adolescence. Seriously, I do think the music comes from an ear I was lucky enough to be born with. I also have a thing for poetry, which I read as a very young child and later used to read on the toilet (yes, that's right—poetry as toilet reading).

Anita: Aside from Ingamald, do you have a character that has become a favourite? Why?

Gail: I guess right now my favourite characters are those I'm currently working on. I'm very fond of Reid in the new book (*A Glass Darkly*). He is a librarian and can't stop himself from using too-big words. I find him endearing. I'm also partial to my pirate wenches, largely because they are so ill behaved. I tend to like bad girls in stories, those who take chances and attempt the forbidden. There's also Dame Hildegarde in the picture book. I like her because Spyder Yardley-Jones, my artist friend, has rendered her in a creepy and wonderful way. And finally, there is Mary in my novel for adults. I like her because she is so very strong.



Gail Sidonie Sobat

Anita: You are a published poet, you write books for children, and for adults. Which came first for you? Do you enjoy one more than another?

Gail: I guess writing short stories came first for me, writing for adults. I feel very lucky to be writing, to be published and to be read at all. YA audiences are the best to read to, though. Absolutely!

Anita: What, if any, are the challenges in switching genres? Do you find one genre or age group more difficult to write for than another?

Gail: I try never to talk down to kids. I respect young readers immensely. That they open a book at all is to me a delightful thing. So I don't think there are challenges in switching between age groups. I do for young readers as I do for adults: try to tell a good story. I will say there are challenges in each genre. Switching to short fiction after a novel is sometimes difficult. Moving from a modern setting into a biblical setting is tough, as is moving to a fantasy world with old-fashioned language and customs and magic. I do like crossing genres and my day job has made it necessary to do so, so I guess I've kept up the practice of "genre-jumping."

Anita: Some writers do not read when they are working on a book for fear of picking up another writer's "voice." Others read with abandon. Of which school of thought are you, and if you do read while writing, what do you read?

Gail: I'm always reading, usually two or three

books at a time. I also love the news, so I read two newspapers and check out the alternative presses as often as possible. I get many ideas for writing from the news. However, when I am writing a fantasy, I shy away from reading fantasies. I recently wrote a book about a young gay teenager, so I avoided similar sorts of books.

Anita: Can you think of a book that was most meaningful to you as a younger reader? Why?

Gail: Fairy tales in the original versions because they are spooky and psychologically sophisticated (although as a kid I just liked the stories and the triumphs of the underdogs). Dr. Seuss, especially *Green Eggs and Ham*, because I was always a fan of poetry and rhyme. After about six, I remember reading everything. Books were given as rewards in my family, and were part of many, many shopping excursions. I guess that I'd have to say that Shakespeare captivated me in high school because of an exceptional teacher. I know that Shakespeare is a huge influence in my life.

Anita: You are also an educator. How do you balance your teaching life with your writing life?

Gail: Barely! And many times I don't. Something has to suffer, and it's usually the writing that gets shelved first.

Anita: How does your writing life enrich your teaching life?

Gail: Writing is a very important part of the courses I teach. I also teach young people in a

hospital setting and I am convinced that learning to find one's voice, learning to express inner stuff, is key to healing. So while I'm not a therapist, I am a mentor and I coach and encourage and urge and bug my students into writing and submitting their writing for publication, for contests or simply for their own pleasure and release. I also think that because I've been through the (sometimes painful) process of being edited, I am myself a more sensitive editor. I can prove to students how very many drafts are necessary before something is truly polished or finished. I guess above all, I try to share with students the importance of having a voice and using it. Telling stories is hard work, but it's tantamount to survival. Or so I believe.

Anita: Tell me about Youthwrite. Where did it come from? Why did you want to set this up? What challenges did you face in setting it up and what, if any, challenges do you face in continuing it each year? What are the rewards for you? For participants?

Gail: YouthWrite is a camp for kids who love to write... just about anything! We're 11 years old and going strong since I dreamed it up in 1996! Every summer for two weeks, participants between the ages of 12-18 stay onsite for a week in a beautiful mountain setting. They attend courses on songwriting, illustration and text, cartooning and text, writing comedy, screenwriting, playwriting, book-making, storytelling, journalism, movement and words, drumming and words, drama and words, in addition to traditional courses in fiction and poetry. Well-known writers and artists from across Canada teach the courses. Young writers likewise come

from across Canada (though mainly Alberta) and beyond.

YouthWrite's most important theme is WordPlay, a mixture of playing and writing, so many of the workshops are meant to be "meaningful play." We want young people to be lifelong readers, writers and thinkers. We hope to foster a future generation of thoughtful and literate citizens.

Our ongoing challenges are always financial because we are a non-profit arts organization (YouthWrite is a program of the Writers Guild of Alberta). Making ends meet and using what funds we have in the most effective way are my two biggest challenges.

My reward is the magic of the program and the people I get to work with—youths and adults. What we are able to do in two short weeks is really quite incredible. Check out our Web site, www.youthwrite.ca, to see what we were up to this summer.

Anita: Thank you for your time, Gail, and the tea. But wait...what was that sound? Should we hide?

Gail: Step inside my nice warm cottage, my dearie... ■

*Anita and Gail
continue talking on
page 24*



Treasures from the Toolkit

Bobbie Henley

So the new school year has begun—where DID that summer go?—and you're off to a fresh start. Maybe you are a new teacher-librarian, a seasoned teacher-librarian excited about working with new staff members, or simply a teacher-librarian who has made a commitment to improving the school library program for the continued success of students. There is no better time than September to dig into the OSLA toolkit to find the right tool for the job! Simply go to

www.accessola.com/osla/toolkit/intro.html.

Do your staff members recognize collaboration as an important part of the research process? How many teachers use the library for this purpose? How many disciplines take advantage of the library program? What about grade levels—are they all covered somehow? What is the extent of your role in the assessment of library research units?

Examining your current program with an eye to 'stepping up' the collaboration with your staff in designing authentic research units for

your students is an excellent focus for September. You will soon be able to pinpoint how well your library is being used and whether you indeed have sufficient resources for particular units of study. There are two excellent resources at your fingertips in the toolkit: the *Collaborative Unit Design*, which provides a template for planning research units with your staff, and the *Collaboration Log*. They can both be found in the *Here's How* section, under *Gather and Document*.

Because of time restraints (mostly as a result of not ENOUGH time in the library) the thought of planning and recording research units together with a staff member can be overwhelming; with the help of the template, this becomes much easier. It can be passed back and forth from mailbox to mailbox if face-to-face time is impossible. The subject teacher fills out his/her subject expectations, and you fill out those from the OSLA *Information Studies* document. Together, you can decide upon the assessment and evaluation and determine who does what.

Some staff will need assistance in designing an authentic culminating task that ensures the students are using higher order thinking skills. Don't forget, you've banned those 'bird units!' Filling in the subtasks may take some more back and forth work as well, as you suggest incorporating skills lessons and worksheets on database searching, note taking, etc. Giving yourselves time to complete the form will help to ensure that the unit runs smoothly, and once it's done, adaptations in following years are a breeze.

Keeping a Collaboration Log updated is easy if you use the forms provided in this section of



There's no denying it, everyone in the library business seems to be talking about graphic novels. An object of delight, passion and enjoyment, an object of repugnance, fear or concern; most teacher-librarians have an opinion about these books. In this new regular feature of *The Teaching Librarian*, we'll talk about some of the issues surrounding graphic novels and review some recommended titles (including age guidelines).

The term "graphic novel" was coined by one of the pioneers of the genre, Will Eisner, to describe his 1978 creation, *A Contract With God and Other Tenement Stories*. They are works told in a comic style format. At first the term referred only to fiction and non-serialized literature, but it now incorporates many genres and a wide variety of

subjects. Writers such as Allyson Lyga, Philip Crawford and Scott McCloud have developed more thorough definitions that are worth exploring.

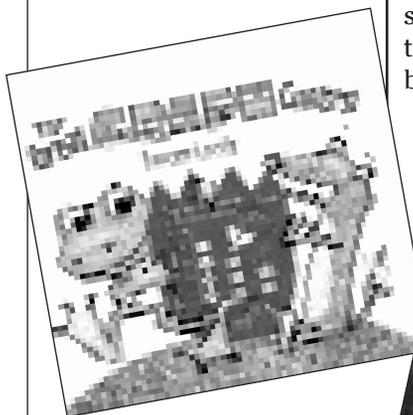
Graphic novels, like videos and magazines, can be used for recreational and educational purposes. The theme for this issue is Across the Curriculum and so we highlight just four of many titles that can be used to deliver subject content.

The Great Graph Contest

by Loreen Leedy,
ISBN: 0823417107

Grade: 1 +
Curriculum Connection:
Math

Gonk the toad and Beezy the lizard are having a contest to see who can make the best graphs. The friends use different scenarios (e.g., favourite pies, surveying people at a store) and different graph types (e.g., quantity graph, bar graph, Venn diagram) to compete.



The snail judge, Chester, declares it a tie, using his own chart and graph. As the inside jacket blurb states, "Clear examples, step-by-step instructions, and plenty of comic relief make this guide to a vital part of math curriculum fun as well as fundamental."

I don't know if "graphic novel purists" would count this as a graphic novel / comic because there aren't exactly panels (panels are those boxes the pictures in comics are contained in, and occasionally break out of). Still, I'm willing to welcome it into the canon of good graphic novels. The author/illustrator does a lovely job of varying her pictures with the use of real photographs and cartoon characters. The back of the book points out some things to watch for when making graphs; for instance, if making a bar graph out of real cookies, it is important for the cookies to be the same thickness for the results to be accurate.

Comics Poetry: The Adapted Victor Hugo

ISBN: 1561633909

Grade: 11 +
Curriculum Connection:
English, Visual Arts

Comics Poetry: The Adapted Victor Hugo features 13 of the author's poems illustrated in comic style.

Each poem has its own illustrator who takes a different approach to the work, and the only text in the comics comes from the poem.

For those of you who sat through English class and found poetry perplexing, a graphic representation would have been (and is) a welcome treat that can help the reader through difficult passages. It was fascinating to compare the visuals in my head with those of the artists. I don't know if reading this book will alter forever my mental conception of the poems, like my personal image of *Harry Potter* now replaced by actor Daniel Radcliffe's face. It did help me comprehend some of the denser text. I'd love to have this kind of book for Shakespeare's sonnets or another poet's work. Victor Hugo's work (think *Hunchback of Notre Dame*, but not the Disney version) is quite dark, and the illustrations can be ominous. Some poems are violent and others have sexual overtones. People and animals are shot at close range and from afar. War scenes involve gruesome views of missing limbs and carnage. Two comics contain bare-breasted women (no genitals) in provocative poses. This compelling book is recommended for students aged 16 and over.

Hooray For Inventors!

by Marcia Williams,
ISBN: 0763627607

Grade: 2 +

(but junior grades would get more out of it)

Curriculum Connection:

Science

This large colourful book is full of two-page spreads devoted to da Vinci, Gutenberg [moveable type], Watt [separate steam condenser], Trevithick & Stephenson [steam railroad], Edison, Meucci and Graham Bell [telephone], the Wright Brothers [flying machines], Marconi [radio], Baird and company [TV], women inventors and some of the author's personal favourites. There are three levels or ways to read the book: the captions, the comics, and the border, which is filled with birds and turtles that give additional facts and comments to support the theme of the page spread.

The quality of the writing and illustrations are excellent! This book is very informative, but still a joy to read. You'd think all the biographies would get tedious after a while, but the main biographies are interspersed with sections that explain many wonderful inventions such as zippers, Band-Aids, concrete, and the Walkman, to

name a few. Illustrations are detailed and helped me understand some complicated things about some of the inventions.

Williams doesn't shy away from some of the controversy about multiple claims to an invention's discovery and has a good attitude about it. She quotes Marconi, who said, "I doubt very much whether there has ever been a case of a useful invention in which all the theory, all the practical application, and all the apparatus were the work of one man."

This book can fit with many of science topics, especially the Structures and Mechanisms strand (e.g., pulleys and gears, motion, and mechanical efficiency being just a few). This book can also be used when reading and writing biographies in Language Arts.

Maus

by Art Spiegelman,
ISBN: 0679406417

Grade: 9 +

Curriculum Connection:

History

The main character and author in *Maus* is Art, a comic artist who wants to make a graphic novel about his family's experience in WWII. His father, Vladek and mother, Anja, Polish Jews, were eventually sent

to Auschwitz. When Art was twenty years old, his mother committed suicide and his father destroyed her diaries written during the war. Art must interview his father, a cantankerous, but resourceful survivor, to hear what happened. The Jews are drawn as mice, the Germans as cats, the Poles as pigs, the Americans as dogs and the French as frogs.

This book has earned international fame and honours, including the Pulitzer Prize, and is a testament to the tragedy and triumph of the human spirit. It is a powerful, readable and understandable book that causes the reader to ponder many questions: Where do the story and historical events depart? Why did Vladek destroy Anja's diaries? How did Vladek determine whom he could trust? The anthropomorphic art choices made by Spiegelman fit, although he even debates the decisions in the book, such as how to portray his wife François, a French convert to Judaism.

This graphic novel is a must-read for adults, and suitable for teens in high school. The images of mice being hanged, screaming as they are burned in pits,



beaten and shot, are disturbing, but do not render the book unreadable. Grade 9s read Elie Weisel's *Night* and this would be comparable. ■

MEET THE AUTHORS PART 2

Gail Sidonie Sobat and Anita Daher



Instead of retreating to that warm, slightly sinister cottage in Hinterlünd, Anita and Gail (ever in search of excitement) have decided to continue their chat in a fire camp set up near the forest fire of Big Tangle.

Gail: *Flight from Big Tangle* is such an exciting adventure, Anita, and I'm still breathless. Can you tell us something about your work, while I take a moment to catch my breath?

Anita: Sure Gail. I write and publish articles and columns in local, regional and national Canadian publications, and I also do reviews for CBC Radio. My first two novels, *Flight from Big Tangle* and its sequel, *Flight from Bear Canyon*, are Orca Young Readers and I'm busy at work on two new books that will be published next year.

Gail: So I guess you have lots of free time! (grinning)

Anita: Yes, loads. I also have two daughters who keep me busy.

Gail: I have to tell you, Anita, I'm a bit nervous sitting here so close to the forest fire. I'm a little concerned that a sudden shift in the wind could send us fleeing for our lives! You are very brave and knowledgeable, however, so I'll take my direction from you. As long as you remain calm, I will, but if you tell me to "RUN," I will. I must warn you, I'm a terrible athlete, and so you may have to save my turtle butt in the end! (No pun intended!)

Anita: (chuckling) Don't worry, Gail! We're quite safe here. Then again, I've thought that before.

Gail: So how do you know so very much about forest fires, Anita?

Anita: Twice I've lived in northern communities during times when they were threatened by forest fire. It was the second fire that inspired *Flight from Big Tangle*.

I'll never forget that day, or the feeling that lodged itself in my belly because of it. It had been a hot, dry May. A few thunderstorms had rolled through several nights before, with plenty of lightning but not much rain. One lightning strike was so close I felt my house shake! At least, that's how I remember it. The next thing that shook my house was the rumble of a low flying CL-215 Water Bomber a few days later. Turns out the lightning had actually struck just two kilometres away. Sparks smoldering in the underbrush for three days, and when the first tree burst into flames, the wind (a good clip that day), carried it on. It wasn't long before the sparks were a wildfire. The flames were actually into the trees behind the house across the street when an RCMP officer threw open my front door and shouted, "Get out now!"

Gail: I understand you come from a family long associated with flying. Can you tell me a little about your family history and background? What's your connection with flying and airplanes, and how has your family background seeped into your writing?

Anita: I'm happy to talk about my family! My father began his career with the Canadian Air Force, is a private pilot, and before retirement, worked for the organization that maintains Canada's navigation aids. My grandfather was a navigator for the Canadian Air Force and flew Avro-652 Anson bombers during World War II as part of Coastal Command out of England and Scotland on "sub-patrol." Later he flew Avro CF-100 fighter interceptors during the 50's and 60's as part of the Cold War NATO force. My Great-Grandfather's cousin, Jean

Stampe, was the personal pilot of King Albert I of Belgium, and co-creator of the SV-4 Stampe bi-plane.

I've lived near airports my whole life, and love the sound of aircraft in flight. I love the way my back teeth buzz when a CL-215 water bomber is overhead. Real life events and people often inspire my writing, and I find stories from my own family history most inspiring of all.

Gail: One of my favourite characters in *Flight from Big Tangle* is Sausage, the basset hound. That's a breed one might not normally associate with forest trekking, yet you make Sausage believable and lovable. Do you have a particular fondness for this breed?

Anita: As my girls would say, "basset hounds rock!" We have a basset hound in our family, though Copper is much older than Sausage. When I was writing the first book, Copper would sit beside me, day after day, watching me, as if wondering when I was going to tell him what was up. In between paragraphs, we would sometimes spend long stretches of time staring at each other. Putting him in the book—as a puppy—seemed natural and right. To let Sausage grow as his own character, however, he needed his own name. Finding it wasn't difficult. When the girls and I used to walk Copper past parks and schools, kids would call out, "Is that a wiener-dog?" "No-no!" we would say. "A wiener-dog is the nickname for a dachshund, which is much smaller. He is more like a sausage-dog!"

Gail: Another colourful character in the novel is Mrs. Morrison, the theatre buff. Is she based on a real person?

Anita: I adore Mrs. Morrison! She is a mix of real people. The name came from my best

friend in high school, Joan. Her grandmother, Mrs. Morrison, was a bit senile, and a sweetheart. I used her name out of respect, and turned senility into eccentricity. The character's theatre background came from a woman I met during my acting days. Director Maria Hughes, a Brit living in Thompson, MB, practically grew up back-stage in London, sewing buttons on costumes, as both her parents were actors. Mrs. Morrison's habit of walking around inside and out wearing fuzzy pink slippers, singing show tunes, is my own (grinning).

Gail: Many writers infuse their writing with autobiographical details, and clearly you're one of them. What sorts of experiences have you drawn upon in your portrait of Kaylee and in your other works?

Anita: I use plenty of real bits in my stories, real life happenings, and twisted and transplanted names. I've never stopped to think too long on autobiographical details, though I suppose they are there. When I was living in Sault Ste. Marie a few years back, my doctor, Dr. Marrack, said to me after reading *Flight from Big Tangle*, "Kaylee needs a friend! Why does she spend so much time alone?" That gave me pause. It never occurred to me that Kaylee might be lonely. As a child I spent quite a lot of time on my own, lost in dreams, exploring physical and imaginary landscapes. I loved being on my own! I suppose that as Kaylee developed into her own character, she borrowed some of my characteristics. Fears too. Though I do not let it stop me from doing something I feel is worthwhile, I definitely have a fear of flying. Kaylee may have worked though much of her fear in the first book. I have not.

Gail: Whom do you read and admire? Which writers might influence your own writing?

Anita: I adore Tim Wynne Jones,

his creativity, skill, and fearlessness, as well as his sense of play. I love Richard's Scrimger's wit, Beth Goobie's ever-expanding imagination, Ken Oppell's knack for adventure, the profligacy of Eric Walters, and Guy Vanderhaeghe's ability to turn language into a rich and textured tapestry. There are so many writers I admire. I learn from them all.

Gail: Why does writing about northern places and about northern experiences matter to you?

Anita: There are a few reasons, I suppose. Some of my most significant memories of childhood are rooted in northern communities, and much of my heart is still there. Also, I believe it is important for young people to have access to stories that are relevant to them. It is my hope that if they have stories set in their backyards, or otherwise near in similar experience, they will be encouraged to read them. It is also my hope that children in more southern locations might be interested in learning more about less traveled parts of this country that we live in and love so much.

Gail: To your mind, what is the best thing about being a writer, so far?

Anita: Funny thing about a story. When you tell one, it often sparks another from someone else. What I love most about being a writer (other than getting lost in words when the writing is going well), is visiting classrooms, speaking with young people, sharing my stories, my experiences, and theirs.

Gail: In this age of the instant messages, e-mail, chatrooms, and blogs, some argue that the printed word—other than on the Internet—is obsolete and no longer matters. Why does the printed word matter to you? Why does writing matter to you?

Anita: Why do they both matter to me? I can still remember as a young girl embarking on the adventure that reading is. Beyond *Mr.*



Mugs and Curious George, I would devour *The Hardy Boys*, *Nancy Drew*, *Trixie Belden* and anything else I could get my hands on, often with a flashlight under my covers at night. I was a shy girl hungry for adventure, and books offered me that. They opened up my world. I hope my books help feed a hunger for adventure in young readers, firing them onto other stories, other adventures. Writing, for me, is not only a way to continue my own adventure with words, but also how I sort out my thoughts and feelings on any given subject, in any situation. I think best through my fingertips.

Gail: What do you hope your young readers come away with after reading one of your books? What do you hope to be writing in the next short while?

Anita: It's a big and scary world out there, Gail. What I hope readers will come away with after reading my books is that it is okay to be afraid, as long as we don't let our fear stop us from doing anything important or worthwhile. The world is scary, but beautiful too, filled to bursting with fun and adventure.

In the next little while I will be polishing two manuscripts: a young adult psychological thriller to be published by Penguin next spring, and a juvenile adventure, which will be published by Orca, also next spring.

Gail: Oh, I can't wait! I'd love to chat more, but the smoke from the fire seems to be bothering my asthma quite a bit. Maybe the two of us should get out of here...because the fire does seem to be getting closer. I hope we don't have to...

Anita: RUN! ■



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Art? In the *Library*?

By Gina Brohm

This was the refrain from my mild mannered, not often flustered custodian Shirley, who had always supported me in all of my initiatives as a new teacher-librarian.

Yes, I could certainly see this venture from her perspective. A group of 32 large bodied, hormonally afflicted Grade 8 students were to leave the sanctity of their four-walled, sink-enhanced, heavily-tiled classroom to express their artistic flare in our plumbing-void, open concept, heavily-CARPETED Information Centre.

“But Shirley,” I said, “the Grade 8s need to learn about the World’s Greatest Artists!”

“Yes, indeed they do,” was her reply, “however I don’t recall Michelangelo ever painted the ceiling of a LIBRARY. They can use their own room!” And off she went, my former supporter and ally, with nary a glance over her shoulder to view the incredulous look on my face.

Needless to say, I now had to figure out how I would parlay this unforeseen issue with my Grade 8 colleague with whom I had promised to do a collaborative inquiry and research artist unit. The site of this joint venture: our school’s Information Centre, of course.

“Where better to work on this?” I said to Rob,

“We have art books, encyclopedias, periodicals, computers, walls to hang art samples on *and* lots of tables to both research *and* create on.

“I’m in.” he said. “I need both a first term visual art and research mark, so let’s start the art!”

Fellow teacher-librarians, I was fortifying our destiny as experts in curricula, rescuer of harried teachers, truly *masters of our domain*. However, I was unknowingly breaking one of the tacit rules of our school: don’t upset your custodian by doing art in the library!

Why, you may ask, do I want to rock the boat—or in this case, *the school*—with the notion of teaching art in the Information Centre? Aren’t there

**“You Must be Crazy!
You Want to Teach
Art in the *Library*?”**

enough collaborative activities to be doing in the library such as research, novel units, Web quests, literature circles, author studies, and so forth? As a teacher-librarian, isn’t it

my responsibility to review, compare and select exemplary resources for my staff to use from picture books, teacher guides, videos, art books and research materials to support *them* as *they* teach visual arts in the classroom?

Well.....yes.

After much introspection and some recent inspiring art in-services (along with reading

Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*), I realized the root cause of why I was potentially offending one of the key players in our institutional setting: I missed teaching art. With all of my T-L duties—including teaching, planning, facilitating, mentoring and cataloguing—the plain and simple truth was I did not have time to teach art.

Before embarking on this wonderful journey as a teacher-librarian, my last regular classroom placement had been with Grade 1s. I loved sharing my passion for Vincent van Gogh, with photos from a trip to Europe that followed his trail through the south of France to my final destination, the van Gogh museum in Amsterdam.

After van Gogh, we explored Claude Monet and turned his Japanese bridges into the most beautiful gift bags I had ever seen! Following our Impressionistic turn, we experimented with Picasso's Cubist style to produce our self-portraits. Despite having a chin placed where an eye should have been and lips replacing ear space, these self-portraits had an uncanny resemblance to my 25 Grade 1 students!

Eventually, as we craved both a Canadian and female inspiration in our journey, we turned to one of our national treasures, Emily Carr. Our class thrilled at recreating her West Coast totem poles whilst studying Native Canadians during Thanksgiving and harvest studies. I was hooked on art and so were they!

The Plan: The Key Resource

Now, how do I take past successful, but primary-level, art experiences and adapt them to the needs of Grade 8 individuals who are badly in need of exposure to the World's Greatest Artists as well as inquiry and research experiences? And how do I get them to produce artwork ready for report card evaluation?

Well, I am fortunate enough to teach in

Gina's Current Favourite Visual Art Resources (Abridged):

Simcoe County District School Board's
Nipissing University Visual Arts Part 1: Getting to Know the World's Greatest Artist Series
Contact Jennifer Copeland at
jcopeland@scdsb.on.ca

Getting to Know the Worlds' Greatest Artist,
series by Mike Venezia.
Contact The Source at marsha@thesource.ca

Getting to Know the World's Greatest Artist,
video series.
Contact Crystal Productions at
www.crystalproductions.com or
1-800-255-8629

Picasso and the Girl with the Long Ponytail,
by Laurence Anholt.
ISBN: 0764150316

*Meet the Masterpieces. Strategies, Activities,
and Posters to Explore Great Works of Art*,
by Bobbie Chertok, Goody Hirshfeld,
and Marilyn Rosh.
ISBN: 0590492128

Math-terpieces: The Art of Problem Solving,
by Greg Tang, illustrated by Greg Paprocki.
ISBN: 0439443881

Anna's Art Adventure,
by Bjorn Sortland, illustrated by Lars Elling.
ISBN: 157053764

I SPY Animals in Art (series),
by Lucy Micklethwait.
ISBN: 0006644074

Emily Carr,
by Jo Ellen Bogart.
ISBN: 0887766404

The Usborne Book of Art Ideas,
by Fiona Watt.
ISBN: 0439207169

Simcoe County. Many of my colleagues from around the region have participated in the Nipissing University Visual Arts Additional Qualifications courses. Under the tutelage of Shannon Stevens and Kim Campbell, and supported by Jennifer Copeland (a Simcoe County District School Board arts consultant), many teachers in our area have been exposed to Mike Venezia's outstanding series, *Getting to Know The World's Greatest Artists*. Venezia's books are appropriate for Grade 3 to 8 students, and they are filled with interesting personal and historical information, samples of the artists' works, humorous cartoons and captions and listings of where these famous pieces can be found in the world. Venezia's series covers at least 30 artists from Michelangelo and Mary Cassatt to Andy Warhol and Paul Klee. We were fortunate to have 32 copies of these books, with multiple copies of some of the more popular artists like Monet, van Gogh and Picasso.

The Assignment

Once we ensured that we had enough primary sources for research, along with access to the Internet, non-fiction, encyclopedia and other reference materials, we focused on the assignment. Rob and I based it on the Nipissing Visual Arts model, which included both oral and written reports

Some Favourite Web sites:

The Louvre
www.thelouvre.com
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
www.themetropolitan.com
The National Art Gallery of Canada
www.nationalgallery.ca
The Art Gallery of Ontario
www.ago.ca
The McMichael Art Gallery
www.mcmichaelgallery.ca
The Smithsonian Institute
www.si.edu/resource/start.htm
The van Gogh Museum
www.vangoghmuseum.com

and a piece of artwork. In our assignment, the students were to describe their chosen artist and why they selected him or her; to define the artists' style; to identify the medium most often used by the artist; and to produce a reference list. The final component was a re-creation of their favourite masterpiece by the artist they were researching created using their medium of choice. This is when apprehension began to surface for this new teacher-librarian!

As Rob and I drew near to the end of our planning session, we discussed the art media that would be made available to the students from our vast supply room. The students would be allowed to use a variety of paint, clay, pastel, marker, crayon, charcoal, glue, and finger paint, along with any type of canvas they thought would produce the best effect for their audience.

What would we do with the end products after the presentations? Our ever-supportive principal had just purchased a vast number of frames from Ikea and wall supports had been put in place, strangely enough, by my now feared (and fearful) custodian.

We looked forward to seeing the finished products, both with trepidation and excitement. These students had not had a lot of experience with the World's Greatest Artists. What would their re-creations look like? Would the students develop cartoonish, simple caricatures of these stunning masterpieces? Would Rob and I look like foolish conspirators who wasted three weeks on a flawed visual arts research unit? Would the students demolish the library carpet, tables, walls and computer lab with their art creations? Would the students adhere to our strict rules of using newspapers to line the carpet below their tables and on top? Would paint buckets and brushes get to the nearby custodial sink without spilling onto carpets on the way? Would the oil pastels stay off the tables and chairs? Would my custodian Shirley ever speak to me again?

The Aftermath

The results were astonishing to say the least. I was captivated by two distinct versions of Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, one done in watercolours, the other in fine marker. Both their teacher and I were compelled to ask for a copy for our homes if either artist did not want to keep them! Lindsay's *Starry Night* would have astounded even van Gogh himself.

After each oral report, the students' masterpieces began to appear on the walls of our school. Parents, fellow students and teachers could be seen stopping and gazing at the newly framed art.

Near the end of our art adventure, I spotted our custodian peering closely at one of the

student's artwork. She noticed me and started to walk in my direction. I was afraid. I had found some paint spots on the floor outside of the library doors along with some small pastel pieces in the computer lab. I had worked hard to remove all evidence of our project, as had the students, but had I missed something, was this Shirley's chance to chastise me for encouraging visual arts in the Information Centre setting?

I braced myself for my admonishment but... it never came. "I think I like Isabel's *Garden at Giverny* better than Monet's," she said. And with that, she walked away. Will I continue to teach visual arts in the library? You bet! ■



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Q Tasks: How to Empower Students to Ask Questions and Care About Answers

Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan.
Pembroke Publishers Limited, 2006.
ISBN 1-55138-197-4.
\$24.95

Ontario's own Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan have added another useful guide to teaching information literacy skills to their already considerable body of work in the field (*Info Tasks, Build your own Information Literate School, Ban Those Bird Units* and the *Information Power Pack* series). Their latest book, *Q Tasks*, focuses on what Koechlin and Zwaan consider to be the key catalyst to inquiry: questions and the questioning process.

The authors use Jamie McKenzie and Neil Postman as their philosophical underpinnings and refer to McKenzie's belief that in order to be information literate students need to be effective questioners; and also to Postman's notion that learning how to ask relevant questions

is part of learning how to learn.

Koechlin and Zwaan's purpose is to help teachers build a culture of inquiry in their classrooms and to nurture an inquiring spirit in their students. Thus *Q Tasks* consists of practical strategies teachers can use in order to help students become better questioners and to encourage students to develop their own questions.

In five chapters, *Encouraging Curiosity; Understanding Questions; Learning to Question; Questioning to Learn;*

Questioning to Progress and *Moving Forward*, more than eighty classroom task activities are provided, using a skill building approach, which teachers can do sequentially. There

is a standard format for each activity, including a lesson overview and teacher tips, student worksheet templates, reproducible Q tips pages, curriculum contexts, and techniques of evaluation.

The activities offer varied tasks such as evaluating

the reliability of information, analyzing personal issues, setting realistic goals, and testing new ideas. A number of student organizer templates help students build their own strategies for using information. Particularly useful are elementary and high school level question builder frameworks, time management skill organizers, templates for examining and evaluating resources, homework organizers, thesis maps, and frameworks for high school students for building questions using Bloom's taxonomy. Although the activities are described in detail, the tasks are meant to be flexible and are adaptable to many curriculum contexts. The authors also provide a useful list of print and Web resources.

This book is an essential purchase for all school libraries, as the material in it will help all teacher-librarians further build their information literacy program. Bravo to our Ontario treasures Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan

for once again providing teacher-librarians with an excellent, real world, practical, and ready-to-use guide to teaching information literacy skills.

Canadian Fiction: A Guide to Reading Interests

Sharron Smith and Maureen O'Connor.
Libraries Unlimited, 2005.
ISBN 1-59158-166-4. \$79.20

This guide is a welcome addition to the *Genreflecting* series as it is a comprehensive guide and annotated bibliography to modern Canadian fiction and its authors. *Canadian Fiction*

has value as a professional resource for secondary school libraries in several ways. For secondary teacher-librarians, it is a comprehensive selection tool to help build a quality Canadian

fiction collection as the book covers over 650 titles published between 1990 and 2004 by Canadian authors. For secondary English teachers, it is a valuable reference tool enabling them to build reading lists for students. For senior secondary school



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Send your opinion to Esther Rosenfeld esther.rosenfeld@tdsb.on.ca.

students, it is a useful resource to assist them in choosing novels by theme/subject/genre for novel and author studies and for independent study projects.

The book is organized in several main chapters, which list titles according to four Appeal Characteristics: Setting (including Historical Fiction), Story, Character, and Language, with each listed title having an annotation and suggestions for further reading. There is also an additional long section which covers recent



Canadian fiction by genre (Mystery, Science Fiction, Fantasy, Romance, Thriller, and Horror) and similarly includes annotated titles and suggested books for further reading. Notable modern Canadian authors such as Margaret Atwood, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Yann Martel, Anne Michaels, Timothy Findley, Mordecai Richler, Carol Shields, and Rohinton Mistry are all featured in the guide.

This book is highly recommended as an essential purchase for secondary school libraries.

Guiding Students from Cheating and Plagiarism to Honesty and Integrity: Strategies for Change

Ann Lathrop and Kathleen Foss. Libraries Unlimited, 2005. ISBN 1-59158-275-X \$46.20

The authors have written this book as a follow-up and companion to their groundbreaking *Student Cheating and Plagiarism in the Internet Era: A Wake-Up Call*. This time, Lathrop and Foss focus on how to change school culture and teaching practice in order to support, value, and encourage academic honesty and thwart plagiarism.

The book is organized in four specific themes: Focus on Honesty and Integrity, Leadership in Action, Integrity in the Writing Process, and Using Technology with Integrity. Each theme contains a group of articles written by teachers, administrators, and students. A particularly important chapter in the *Leadership in Action* section is titled *Librarians as a Force for Integrity* and features articles by several teacher-librarians on their anti-plagiarism actions.

Adding to the excellent articles are many COPY ME

pages which the authors are allowing readers to reproduce legally for professional development and teaching purposes.

This book is highly recommended as an essential purchase for secondary and middle school libraries. Teacher-librarians can use it as the basis for valuable professional development for their teachers, and as teaching tools with students, and as a tool for helping to change school culture and research assignment practices.

Teen Genre Connections From Booktalking to Booklearning

Lucy Schall. Libraries Unlimited, 2005. ISBN 1-59158-229-6. \$52.80

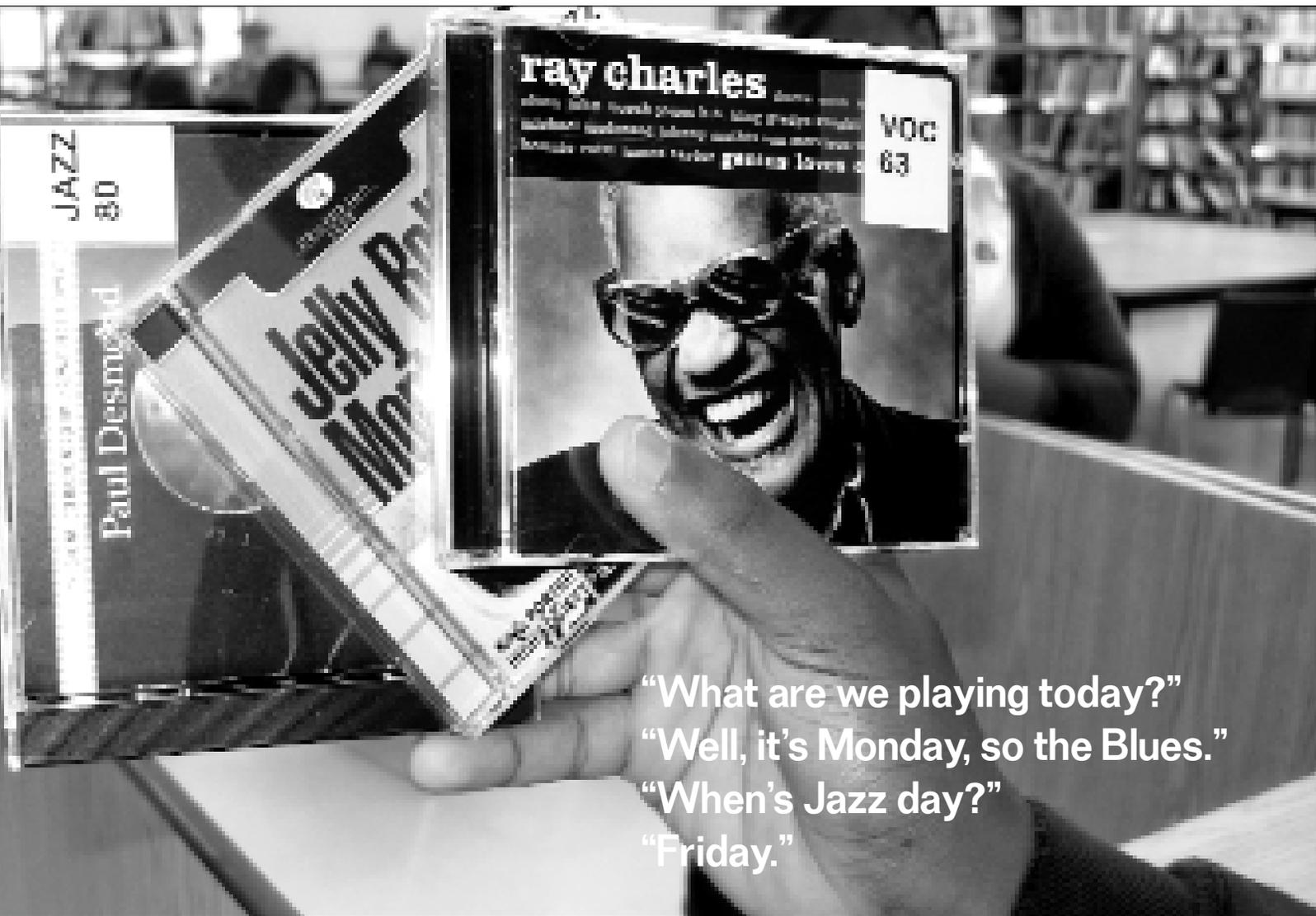
Teacher-librarians in middle school and secondary school libraries will find *Teen Genre Connections* to be a very useful resource in building and promoting their young adult collection. Expanding on the approach used in the 2003 edition of *Teen Genreflecting*, Lucy Schall provides book summaries, ready to use booktalks, background information, activities, and annotated lists of related books for



over 100 YA books. The featured books are organized by genres such as Issues, Contemporary Life, Adventure/Survival, Mystery/Suspense, Fantasy/Science Fiction, History, and Multiple Cultures. The "Learning Opportunities" section for each of the featured books include discussion topics, and ideas for response journals or creative writing or presentations which would be useful for teachers planning literature circles. All the featured books and the books in the related lists have suggested reading/maturity levels indicated.

It should be noted that this book mentions almost no Canadian YA books or authors. I found a mention only of *Martha Brooks' True Confessions of a Heartless Girl*.

This book is recommended as a professional resource for collection building, for booktalking, and for building literature circle activities with the caveat that it lacks Canadian content. ■



Music in the Library

Frank Loreto

Years ago, we decided to play music in the school library throughout the day. Our library has never been quiet anyway, so background music was not a radical addition. We had a revelation that there was no place where students could get a range of musical styles anymore. MuchMusic featured the flavour of the month ad nauseam, radio stations followed a strict, non-eclectic play-list, television programs like *Ed Sullivan*, which featured a variety of styles, instrumentation and artists, were long gone even then. Where would students be able to hear a variety of music? Well, why not here?

At first, we used a donated CD player and featured one album for the whole day. Unfortunately, that poor CD became an instrument of torture by day's end, so we took the plunge and bought a 3 CD stereo. Now, with 3 CDs playing on shuffle and repeat, the music is quite delightful and relatively varied.

The idea of a music theme day developed over time as our classical collection was not that large and, to be honest, I am not that much of a fan. So as we added more kinds of music to our collection, we were able to assign a genre of music to each day of the school week. Monday=blues, Tuesday=open, but generally instrumental and classic, Wednesday=vocal, Thursday=world and Friday=jazz. Our collection now is quite large and so playing variety within each genre is not a real problem. We buy a lot of CDs, so the collection is constantly growing.

Years ago, the drama department offered a musical theatre course. For that we bought most of the more popular Broadway musicals. Sadly, that course did not last, but the buying had begun in earnest and we had an actual tie-in with the curriculum. While the music program at the school did not make much use of our collection, we knew that someday, a new teacher would appear and be thrilled with our collection. That happened a few years ago and now the music is circulating like crazy! Students are required to explore different musical styles, they are sent to listen to a particular jazz or blues great, and they know if they are looking for background music for a classroom presentation, we probably have something that would work. The English department uses our spoken word collection. We have several CDs of poetry such as the Beat poets and some famous speeches by notables such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Now the students are bringing in their own music for us to play. I find that I am being exposed to some very interesting and good contemporary music. When a student asks if we can play Tito Puente or Dizzy Gillespie on Friday, or some Latino Jazz on Thursday or William Shatner on Wednesday (yes, I know, but the album is actually not bad), all is right with the world.

As our student population is ethnically diverse, the World Music Thursdays are quite the hit. One student recognized a song from a Moroccan music CD as one she heard at a

wedding. Another student, listening to Amalia, came to say that her parents play that at home. On Open Tuesday, one student liked one of the songs she heard so much that she decided to use it as her skating performance piece.

Starting a music collection may seem an overwhelming task; however, joining a number of music clubs such as Columbia can help. For classical, jazz and world, the Musical Heritage Society has an excellent catalogue. For world music, we also subscribe to Global Rhythm magazine, which provides an eclectic mix CD with each issue. Haunting delete bins in record stores always pays off—even our local supermarket has a good selection of low cost CDs.

A student came to visit and I had not seen him for some time. To put his time at the school into perspective, I asked if we were playing music when he was a student. He said, “Are you kidding? That was where I first heard Miles Davis. Up to that point, I thought I knew music. Then I realized I didn’t know anything.”

Just this semester one of our students made it to the second round of *Canadian Idol*, but was rejected for not having the “right look.” In an attempt to show her the silver lining of this, the music teacher sent her to the library to get CDs by Sarah Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald and Dinah Washington. He is pleased to announce that she has become so taken by this music that she is moving away from the Idol schlock that she once thought good and is embracing the classics. If this new direction only lasts for a while, that would be enough, but if this passion ignites this student to take on a career in music, then I would know that playing CDs in the library was really worthwhile. ■

Alternatives to Official Forest of Reading Ceremonies

Were you unable to get tickets for the official Silver Birch Awards Ceremonies at Harbourfront last year? Was the cost and/or distance to attend the Red Maple Awards prohibitive? Why not start preparing now? The OSLA listserv and Forest of Reading listservs offer lots of ideas for finding alternative ways to celebrate the Forest of Reading programs. Here are two suggestions.

AN INDIGO VISIT

As one of the culminating activities for my White Pine program, I took my White Piners (Grade 9s and 10s) to our nearby Indigo Book Store (in Lakeshore which is just outside Windsor) for an after-school excursion. We spent two hours there—I had to coordinate the trip around the afternoon busing schedule—and it flew by.

The coordinator, Dana, has a teaching degree and was extremely enthusiastic. Once we arrived, we were taken to a circle of chairs in the teen/YA section of the store where we were served hot chocolate from the Starbucks that was attached to the store. As we sipped hot chocolate, Dana led a book discussion about some of the White Pine books. She then took us on a tour of the store, pointing out the various sections. Some turned out to be less obvious than I thought, and the students really found it interesting to see what others were reading.

We also went into the back processing area and saw how books got processed before they were put on the store shelves. The group was then shown how to navigate the store's Web site to find books. Although all of my students have been on the Chapters/Indigo Web site before, Dana and her assistant Nancy, who was in charge of the YA/Teen section, pointed out how different categories such as best sellers, awards, and genre could aid them when they were looking for books. Dana created a scavenger hunt for my students in which the clues were written in rhyme. This was used to help the students navigate the Chapters/Indigo Web site and to find books in the store. I added the incentive of a prize for the team that finished in the least amount of time with the most correct answers.

As part of our visit, each of my students had a small budget and was able to buy books for the school library. They were asked to

choose books that would be enjoyable and appropriate for students at Belle River District High School. We received a 20% discount on book purchases. Afterwards, students could use their own money to purchase books if they wished. All in all, it was very enjoyable and Indigo was very accommodating.

Sharon Seslija, Belle River District HS

A BATTLE OF THE BOOKS

It was a high school happening! Close to 300 high school students from the York Region DSB, the York Catholic DSB, and the Durham DSB gathered on May 9, 2006 at the Première Ballroom and Convention Centre in Richmond Hill for a battle of the books they had devoured over the past few months. These students had participated in their schools' White Pine programs.

Shelley Hrdlitschka (author of *Sun Signs*) and Don Trembath (author of *Rooster*), two Canadian young adult authors, talked about their careers and books, and interacted with the students, who had a chance to ask them questions about their work.

Students then took part in The Readers' Challenge, during which they teamed up with participants from other high schools and answered skill-testing questions about the White Pine nominated books. Win or lose, everyone received a slice of pizza to help tide them over for their afternoon activities, which included fun and prizes for those who responded best to The Challenge.

Every student received a White Pine Certificate of Participation to mark his or her achievement, plus a day full of memories and the inspiration that comes from meeting authors and mixing with peers. ■

Rob Baxter, Langstaff SS

Ann Cape, Markville SS

Hetty Smeathers, St. Joan of Arc SS

Michelle Regina, Holy Cross SS

Kate Kostandoff, Unionville SS



Absolutely Fabulous? We Need To Know!

What makes an outstanding library program? Who makes a significant difference to school libraries through their exceptional leadership? The outstanding vision, commitment and plain hard work of an individual or a group are often the catalysts for positive change in our profession.

Do you know an outstanding teacher-librarian who has made a positive impact on student achievement? Is there an administrator in your school board whose leadership and support has made a difference to library programs? Do you know of an individual or group whose vision and leadership has had a significant impact in the school library field?

Chances are someone's name came to mind as you considered these questions. If so, we want to hear from you. Each year, OSLA accepts nominations for three awards: Teacher-Librarian of the Year, Administrator of the Year and the Award for Special Achievement. These awards recognize outstanding achievement, and raise the public profile of school libraries.

If you are interested in making a nomination for one of these awards, visit the OSLA Web site's awards page for more information on the criteria and the nomination process.

The deadline is fast approaching, so get those nominations in, and please plan to join us at our awards reception at Super Conference 2007!

Visit the OSLA Web site's Awards page for awards criteria and the nomination process: www.accessola.com/osla
Select awards from the menu.

The Teacher-Librarian Of The Year

Purpose: To honour a teacher-librarian, currently a member of the Ontario School Library Association, who has demonstrated leadership in the implementation of the school library program. Projects, programs and activities cited should incorporate the philosophy of resource-based learning and co-operative program planning and have had major proven impact on student achievement and on teaching effectiveness.

Teacher-Librarian of the Year 2006:
Pat Elliott, Simcoe County DSB

Administrator Of The Year

Purpose: To honour a school administrator who has brought his or her influence to bear on the development of effective school library information centres and on the school library program, both in a school board and among his or her peers.

Administrator of the Year 2006:
Pamela Christoff, Durham Region DSB

Award For Special Achievement

Purpose: To honour individuals or organizations outside individual schools or school boards which have provided significant support to teacher-librarians and school library information centre development in Ontario through exceptional projects and activities.

Award for Special Achievement 2005:
Esther Rosenfeld, Toronto DSB ■

Meaningful Research Assignments Yield Valuable Life-Long Lessons

Teacher and T-L Tag Team leaves students with “nowhere to hide”

By MaryElise Citton

Last year, our Social Science teacher, Anthony DiMaio, asked me to be involved in creating a new assignment for his Canadian World Politics class. As it was the year of the double cohort, the assignment had to fit both the old and the new curriculum in its scope and evaluation. We both wanted the assignment to be a valuable experience, one the students would accept as real preparation for their post-secondary life. On the advice of an acquaintance at York University, I read *The Craft of Research* by Wayne Booth, Greg Colomb, and Joseph Williams of the University of Chicago.

I began reading the text thinking, “Not another research guide...” As I read the prologue, I found myself grinning and nodding and genuinely excited about the position being

taken by these three laureates. I have since created five new assignments based on their book and the results have been great. Teachers and I are re-creating assignments with the end in mind and students are thankful for their newfound enjoyment of the ‘hunt’ for information.

So, what is different? Not much, really. The assignments are worded much like any performance task that places the student in a realistic role. The new added and more profound differences are the emphasis on the audience and the idea of questioning the information to the nth degree with “so what”? Who is reading/listening to the information? Why should they listen and what difference is your information going to make to them? How is your information different from anything



they could read on their own? What is it about your information that will cause change?

With this new approach, students at first find it very challenging because they are very comfortable with the Blue Whales Project format. We are all familiar with this, although we may call it different things. It is the project that involves lower-level research skills and answers basic who, what, where, and when questions; information is merely summarized. This may be satisfactory for a student in the earliest grades, but this is hardly sufficient.

The classroom teacher and I become a tag-team. We conference with students in the library seminar room and as one student said, they have “nowhere to hide.” I scrutinize their information sources and their questioning of their own topic. The classroom teacher reflects on the content and questions the value of the research for the intended audience.

Why implement this strategy? We began to

see a direct correlation between the full involvement of the teacher-librarian in the creation, delivery and assessment of research assignments and the student’s achievement in their performance task. There was no room for students to plagiarize or invent their findings. Their position had to be based on primary and secondary sources that were reliable, credible and authentic. During the conferences, the students had to be comfortable and knowledgeable of the information without reading directly from their notes. Had this expectation been left to the final product (their presentation) instead of the conference, I believe the students would not have been as successful.

This experience affirms that when the teacher-librarian is completely involved in the process and assessment of an assignment, students see the value in having a teacher who is the specialist in the School Library Information Centre. They understand that helping them locate and access information is not our only role. ■

WHAT’S NEW AT ***The OLAStore***★

Teaching and Learning Multiliteracies: Changing Times, Changing Literacies

Michèle Anstey and Geoff Bull, July 2006 978-0-87207-586-3 \$27.65

Multiliteracies can help people adapt to the evolving influences of paper, electronic, and “live” texts. All chapters include practical examples of activities you can implement in your classroom or school.

Teen Programs with Punch: A Month-by-Month Guide

Valerie A. Ott, June 2006 1-59158-293-8 \$52.80

A stimulating selection of year-round programs that appeal to teens between the ages of 12 and 18. The ideas represent a broad range of interests, from “Goth Gathering” to “Cyber-Safety”.

Character Builders: Books and Activities for Character Education

Liz Knowles and Martha Smith, August 2006 1-59158-370-5 \$52.80

From the authors of *Boys and Literacy*, comes this new book to fill the need for a K-12 resource for teachers and librarians searching for materials and activity ideas for character education through all grade levels.

Mind Builders: Multidisciplinary Challenges for Cooperative Team-Building and Competition

Paul Fleisher and Donald M. Ziegler, September 2006 1-59158376-4 \$39.60

Mind Builders uses engineering problems that range from simple, to more complex, that are designed to help students learn to work more effectively in teams.

Book Buzz is always interested in books with cross-curricular appeal, and this issue is no exception. Here are some wonderful, fairly recent titles that make it easy to get the most bang for your library buck!



Equal Shmequal

Virginia Kröll
illustrated by
Philomena O’Neill
2005.
ISBN: 1570918910

Sample Curriculum Links:

Primary Math: Numeracy
Primary Math: Patterning
and Algebra
Physical Education: Active
Participation

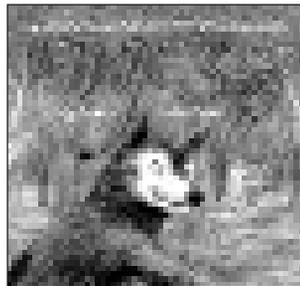
Summary:

Mouse watches school children playing tug-of-war, and decides that the animals should try it. He and Bear play, but it is no contest, since they aren’t “equal.” As more animals join, the group tries various strategies to make the two sides equal, relying on various attributes to help them sort teams. Eventually they realize that no one can win if both

teams are equal, but then Bear is distracted and stops trying, and the opposing team wins. The animals recognize that equal can also mean all of them having to put in their best effort if they want to stay in the game.

How to Use This Book:

The watercolour illustrations help to visually bring home the concept of equality, both in math and in team-building. There’s quite a bit of text, but primary children should enjoy it.



**The Wolf’s Story:
What Really
Happened to Little
Red Riding Hood**

Toby Forward
illustrated by Izhar Cohen
2005.
ISBN: 0763627852

Sample Curriculum Links:

Grades 1-8 Language Arts:
Writing
Grades 1-8 Language Arts:
Reading
Grades 6-8 Visual Arts

Summary:

The Wolf from Red Riding Hood finally gets to tell his side of the story—

essentially a case of mistaken identity and circumstantial evidence.

How to Use This Book:

Besides being a lovely introduction to writing from different points of view, and a great addition to a unit on Fractured Fairytales (or even regular ones), this is a fabulous book for teaching perspective in art. The illustrations are done with pencil and watercolour, and they cover every possible perspective (bird’s eye, worm’s eye, one-point, two-point, etc.) The Wolf’s explanation could even be used creatively in a secondary Law course, and the neat use of fonts and other conventions of text make it a great EQAO resource.



**A is for Algonquin:
An Ontario Alphabet**

Lovenia Gorman
illustrated by Melanie Rose
2005.
ISBN: 1585362972

Sample Curriculum Links:

Junior Language Arts:
Writing
Grade 4 Social Studies:
Canada and World
Connections

Intermediate History

Summary:

As with other books in this series (e.g. *Z is for Zamboni*), the author and illustrator set out to demonstrate what is most memorable, impressive, and significant, in this case about the social and physical background of Ontario. The format follows a basic alphabet book, but additional information is included in sidebars to add to the reader’s knowledge.

How to Use This Book:

Grade 4 students will enjoy studying this book in their unit on the provinces and territories of Canada. Intermediate students will also benefit from the review provided by the content matter. Junior students can follow up the reading by creating their own alphabet books on a suitable subject (the school, community, etc.) using the pattern in the book.

**One Fine Day:
A Radio Play**

Elizabeth Van Steenwyk
illustrated by
Bill Farnsworth
2003.
ISBN: 0802852343

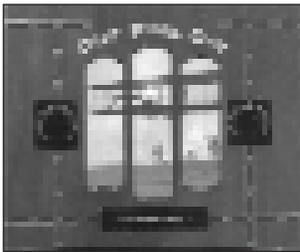
Sample Curriculum Links:

Grade 6 Science: Flight
Junior-Intermediate Drama
and Dance
Junior-Intermediate
Language Arts: Writing

“Must Have” purchases for your school’s curriculum needs

Summary:

With beautiful illustrations, the plot, written in script form and ostensibly to be used as a radio play, recounts the Wright Brothers’ first successful flight.



How to Use This Book:

This is a book that would bring to life a slice of history in a unique way, especially for those students studying flight. It could also be used with any drama class to demonstrate the proper way to write a script, include sound effects, adapt a real event to performance, etc.

Skybreaker

Kenneth Oppel
2005.
ISBN: 0002006995

Sample Curriculum Links:

Intermediate Language
Arts: Reading
Grade 6 Science:
Matter and Materials
Grade 7 Science:
Interactions Within
Ecosystems
Grade 8 Science:
Life Systems

Summary:

Matt Cruse is back for his

second adventure in this award-winning sequel to *Airborn*. While on training duty, Matt encounters the legendary, long-missing airship *Hyperion*. Since *Hyperion* was rumoured to contain riches and mystery, Matt’s temporary captain sets out to scavenge it—only to meet with disaster and peril that only Matt can avert.



Matt suddenly finds himself a source of interest to fortune-hunters and adventure-seekers as he is the only person who can perhaps recall the coordinates and find the *Hyperion* once again. Despite his better judgment, he agrees to accompany Kate on a salvaging mission, traveling on the *Sagarmatha*, a new ship designed to go above safe elevations and “break the sky.”

Unfortunately, danger is never far away when Matt and Kate are together, and soon they find not only treasure and excitement, but enemies, romance, mysterious creatures, and —perhaps—their future.

How to Use This Book:

The Red Maple winner for 2006, *Skybreaker* is a great book for reluctant readers, and a classic adventure novel, much like its predecessor. It nicely blends many elementary and secondary science elements, including some specific aspects of grade 6-8 curricula. The Web site www.kennethoppel.ca has a number of resources for students and teachers to use when reading the book, and it would also make a great literature circle novel.

Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment

James Patterson
2005.
ISBN: 031615556X

Sample Curriculum Links:

Grades 7-12 Language
Arts/English: Reading
Intermediate Science:
Life Systems

Summary:

Maximum Ride is a very special young girl. She has taken responsibility for five other young children, and they have been on the run for months. These aren’t ordinary kids, however. They were all “created” in a lab with DNA mutations... and they all have wings and can fly.

Max has managed to evade her enemies for months, but as the story begins, the bad guys are getting too close. When the evil

mutants known as “Erasers” kidnap the youngest member of her little “family,” Max has to go to drastic lengths to get Angel back. In the process, she begins to see glimpses of her past, and eventually learns where her true destiny lies.

How to Use This Book:

This is a fabulous, action-packed book that any reluctant reader will eat up, size notwithstanding. The reader will empathize with Max and her flock as they constantly have to escape increasingly brutal attacks by their enemies. Max’s own voice tells the story, and it’s a powerful cross between sarcastic teen and injured little girl. The book is also a great discussion-starter, raising important questions about the ethics of scientific experimentation and what constitutes “family.” It would be a fabulous literature circle book and a great novel for discussing literary themes. The sequel, *Maximum Ride: School’s Out Forever* is also available in stores now. ■



2006
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lwhite@tvdsb.on.ca



ONTARIO SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
President's Reflection

Michael Rosettis

A Reflection from the OSLA President

A New School Year Brings Great Opportunity

The new school year presents an opportunity to renew our personal commitment to communicating and articulating the role of the teacher-librarian, supported by qualified library staff, and the role of the school library program to students, parents, staff and administrators.

School libraries are an essential part of a “balanced literacy program”, and there is growing evidence that our Ministry of Education recognizes the school library’s contribution to literacy development. Self-selected and independent reading, scaffolding and differentiated instruction, and equity of access to resources and technology are all a part of what school libraries and teacher-librarians have to offer.

While the Ontario School Library Association continues to strive for significant advances on a provincial level, the personal practice of local lobbying and communication can effectively function to advance the profile of school libraries in local decision making and contractual

priorities that most affect local educational conditions.

The theme of this issue of *The Teaching Librarian* is extremely relevant for the onset of this new school year: Across the Curriculum @ your library®. School libraries are pertinent to all areas of the curriculum. By their very nature, they provide a multitude of cross-curricular resources. Teacher-librarians and school library staff deliver valuable services that support curriculum and student learning. We address issues such as

student literacy development and boys’ literacy, the integration of technology, social justice, and inquiry and research skill development. We maintain an accessible and

inviting facility, and work to attract patrons and active partnerships. School libraries support the curriculum and enrich and extend classroom curriculum, technology usage, reading for pleasure and more!

The Importance of Articulating Your Role

One of the best pieces of advice that I have ever received concerning the advancement of our

“School libraries are places where students can develop a passion for reading and learning ... [and] inspire our students and help them succeed.”

Premier Dalton McGuinty

profession was to have a prepared elevator speech about school libraries and my role as teacher-librarian. This has proved very useful any time that I have found myself with a willing audience.

From experience, I can testify that it is well worth taking the time to identify and articulate what it is that you do well, and how you impact on student learning and achievement. I have developed a vision of my role, based on more than 22 years of teaching practice, 10 years as teacher-librarian, and extensive board and provincial involvement with school libraries.

Whenever the opportunity presents itself, whether with administration, staff members, parents, or just when someone asks me what I do for a living, I articulate the aspects of my central role in such activities as:

- ◆ the timely integration of information literacy skills with course curriculum to enhance student learning;
- ◆ planning and collaborating with classroom teachers to scaffold learning and target specific skill development;
- ◆ delivering of a continuum of skills that spans across grade levels and builds in complexity;
- ◆ integrating technology into curriculum delivery;
- ◆ building, maintaining and promoting a relevant and

current resource collection, in print, digital, and media formats;

- ◆ fostering specific skills in students such as knowledge and application of the research process, note making skills, report writing, thesis development, essay development, outlining, and more!;
- ◆ instructing students in improving personal presentation skills, the creation of multimedia presentations, Web site development, and accessing online subscription databases;
- ◆ facilitating literature circles, running provincial reading programs, and promoting recreational reading with students;
- ◆ maintaining a central and dynamic “hub” of learning that ultimately supports, enhances, and extends student learning and achievement.

Speaking from past experience, being able to articulate the role of teacher-librarian and school libraries has worked wonders on many levels. Within my school, there is increased recognition of the importance of the library and resource-based learning. There has been an increase in funding from the principal, use of the library facility, and collaboration between classroom teachers and the teacher-librarian. At the board

level, school libraries have seen the full amount of the Ministry grant for school libraries make its way into library resource collections.

In my district, teacher-librarians are a part of every school staff and they are complemented by library technicians, dependent upon school enrollment.

Our school board has just recently revised its *Handbook and Daily Use Manual for School Libraries*. At the provincial level, thanks to the combined efforts of many dedicated individuals, there is an increased awareness of the role school libraries play in supporting student literacy.

There is also recognition of the need for centrally accessible resources to promote student success and literacy development, and an increased acknowledgement of teacher-librarians and school library programs in recently revised Ministry curriculum documents.

Additional Information Worth Articulating

The following overview may provide you with valuable information that you may wish to weave into your dialogue with colleagues, administrators and parents:

***Advocacy with the
Minister of Education,
Hon. Sandra Pupatello***

The Ontario School Library Association has been corresponding with the Minister of Education pertaining to the Ontario research study on school libraries, *School Libraries & Student Achievement in Ontario*. Our correspondence has emphasized recognition of the role of teacher-librarian in the Ministry of Education's Student Success focus. OSLA has requested a face-to-face meeting to discuss current school library issues with the Minister and we are optimistically awaiting a reply to discuss issues such as the need for a current Ministry Resource Document on school libraries, and designated funding for library programs and resources.

***The Research:
School Libraries & Student
Achievement in Ontario***

The first phase of this study was completed by Dr. Donald Klinger of Queen's University in March 2006. The press conference to announce the study's release on April 6th, 2006 was a resounding success. A substantial amount of media coverage was generated by the research study. This initiative received notable support from People for Education and the Ontario Coalition for School Libraries. The Ontario Library Association Board of Directors has approved funds for a second stage of research. Proposals were submitted during the summer months, and the study should commence early in the school year.

We are hopeful that results from the second phase of research will be completed by December 2006. At the present time, models of implementation are being

considered, and seem to be placing an emphasis on qualitative research in the school setting. We look forward to the results of this second phase of research.

***Investment in School Libraries,
Kindergarten to Grade 12 Grant***

Toward the end of the 2005-06 school year, school libraries received a \$15,000,000 funding grant from Ministry of Education. The June 16, 2006 media release from Premier Dalton McGuinty provided public acknowledgment of the importance of school libraries. He stated, "School libraries are places where students can develop a passion for reading and learning ... [and] inspire our students and help them succeed."

Immediate, detailed communication with our membership on the OSLA listserv immediately following the Ministry memo to Directors of Education proved to be a very effective means of ensuring that our members were provided with accurate information in the timeliest manner. Correspondence with the Literacy & Numeracy Secretariat and Minister of Education in response to the grant commended these parties for their support of school libraries and the recognition of the important role they play in student literacy and learning; however, the correspondence also identified the need for increased timelines for grant implementation, requesting increased clarification for implementation protocol and board reporting mechanisms to ensure that all funds are received at the school level and used for their intended purpose.

Knowledge Ontario

Knowledge Ontario (KO) is the new name and vision for the former

Ontario Digital Library initiative. OSLA is monitoring the formation of this new Ontario-wide information portal with great interest. The current funding of \$8,000,000 by the Ministry of Culture will benefit all Ontario libraries and citizens, including school libraries, students, school staff and parents. Access to this portal should be available in late 2006 or early 2007 and we are looking forward to learning more about the benefits that this resource will offer our school communities.

***Ongoing Professional
Development Opportunities
for Teacher-Librarians***

Super Conference 2007: Planning for this event is well on its way, thanks to this year's planning team led by Roberta Henley, Pat Elliot, and Lisa Teodosio. Approximately 60 sessions will address school library issues, as well as an additional four preconference sessions that will focus on the use of educational technology in school libraries.

The Education Institute: The Education Institute will feature the inclusion of an increased number of sessions related to school librarianship. In an effort to facilitate this goal, an OSLA Education Institute Committee has recently been established to liaise with Super Conference planners in an effort to provide current, relevant input for institute session development.

The Teaching Librarian: Our professional association's magazine now features a new Editorial Board that has expanded to 12 members. Congratulations to the board, led by Diana Maliszewski, for their excellent efforts in revitalizing the magazine and providing an excellent source

of professional reading for our members. The magazine is aiming to increase its Web presence through featured articles and archived content on the OSLA Web site.

The OSLA Web site: Our provincial association's Web site, www.accessola.com/osla, has a new appearance and clarified content, thanks to the commitment of our past president, Anita Brooks-Kirkland and OLA staff member Andrew Ryther. There is an increased availability of resources in an electronic format: *The Teacher-Librarian's Toolkit for Evidence-Based Practice*, *Be the Change* curriculum development for global citizenship, and the *Think Literacy Subject Specific Approaches: Library Research* document. OSLA aims to continue expanding its curriculum content on the Web, and facilitate the sharing of best practices on our Web site during the coming year.

Advocacy with Teachers' Federations

Members of OSLA Council are currently lobbying teachers' federations to address issues of funding formula, staffing and resources. Members are advocating for reduced teacher preparation time coverage of classes for teacher-librarians, addressing the need for qualified staff in school libraries, and are placing a focus on teacher-librarians and curriculum through ongoing participation in Ontario Teachers' Federation Curriculum Forum with other Subject Associations.

Optimism with New Ministry Funding Model

The new funding model for Ontario schools, announced at the end of last school year, may mark the

beginning of an improved situation for school library and teacher-librarian funding. The reality of fiscal limitations can impose restraints on instructional time, staffing levels, and funding for facility and resources. However, regardless of such constraints, one can remain hopeful about increasing public and Ministry recognition of the link between school libraries, student literacy and lifelong learning. Personally, I remain hopeful that the Ministry funds allotted for school library resources, program and staffing will be more readily available at the board and local school level with the recent change in the Ministry's funding model.

As teacher-librarians, we can, and must, be leaders and catalysts for positive educational change in our province. That change involves increased support for school libraries. Renewed advocacy and lobbying at the union, board, and local school level needs to parallel OSLA's provincial level advocacy. There is power in unity, and I believe that together we can make a difference in advancing school libraries. I wish you the best of success in your teaching endeavors and advocacy efforts throughout this school year. Thank you for your continued dedication to school libraries in Ontario.

Sincerely,



Michael Rosettis
President, Ontario School Library Association ■

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i love your job

by Marnelle Tokio

I love your job

I Love your Job.

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And what it might be like on Mars.

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Where The Wild Things Are.

Little by Little, You sell Belonging Places.

You sell Reluctant Dragons and Ugly Ducklings,

Runaway Bunnies and Big Red Barns

Winnie The Pooh and Piglet Too,

Once Upon a Potty, Mrs. Cat and Little Noddy.

You sell someone's Childhood, But they can get it Back. (even renew it!)

You sell Hockey Sweaters, Cats on Skis,

Dogs named Winkie and turtles called Skipperdee.

You sell Blubber and Bedknobs and Broomsticks,

Flying Birthday Cakes and Lollipop licks.

I feel like Willy Wonka.

You sell Fairytales and Sluggish Snails,

Rhymes and Riddles and Terrible middles

(with very happy endings.)

You sell Heroes of Lesser Causes,

big deep breaths and dramatic pauses.

You sell Junk and Holes and Rats and Moles,

Black Stallions and Pit Ponies.

Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry,

You can help me find The Lost Boys.

You sell the Bravest Things.

The Watsons Go To Birmingham

But all can come to your Library,

For Rainy Day Magic and see Moonbeam On A Cat's Ear.

You sell the realest things.

You sell Stories.

I Love your Job.

And I thank-you.

From the Key Note Speech of the TDSB Banquet by Marnelle Tokio

The teacher-librarians of the Toronto District School Board gather together each May to celebrate a year of hard work, dedication, and creativity. Over the past three years, we have had excellent guest speakers at the banquet, all of whom brought personal anecdotes from their experiences in education. This year, Marnelle Tokio, the 2005 White Pine Award-winning author, presented us with a special gift in the form of a poem, which she generously allowed us to share with all of you. ■

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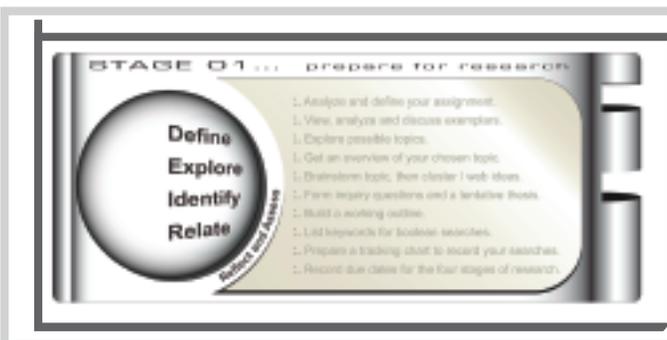
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