

A photograph of a female teacher with dark hair, wearing a red short-sleeved top, standing in a library. She is holding an open book and looking down at it. Two young boys are sitting on the floor in front of her. The boy on the left is wearing a red shirt and is looking at the book. The boy on the right is wearing a dark blue shirt and is looking up at the teacher. The background shows wooden bookshelves filled with books and a purple bulletin board with a white sign that says 'Yes'.

THE TEACHING LIBRARIAN

The Magazine of the Ontario School Library Association
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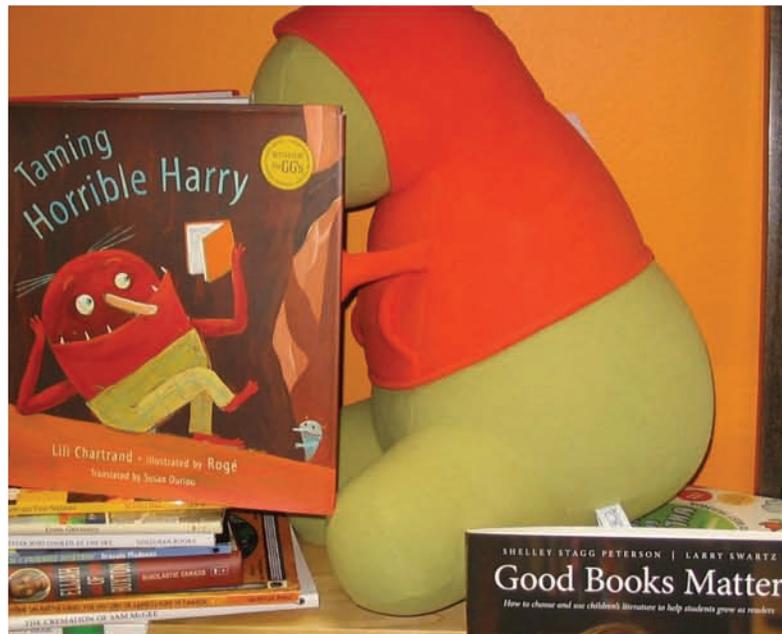
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ON THE COVER:
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collaborate in the library at
John Wanless Public School.



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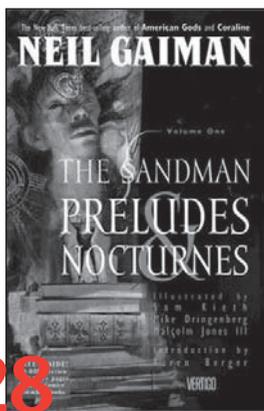
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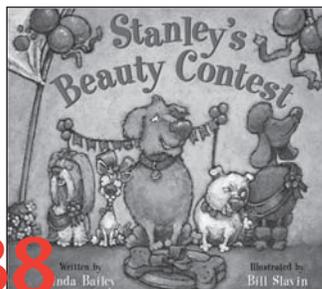
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TL mission

THE TEACHING LIBRARIAN

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 programs and curriculum development that furthers exemplary educational objectives. The magazine fosters effective collaboration within the school library community and provides a forum to share experience and expertise.

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Natalie Marlowe

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- V. 17, no. 2 "Freedom @ your library"
Deadline: September 21, 2009
- V. 17, no. 3 "Celebrate @ your library"
Deadline: February 2, 2010
- V. 18, no. 1 "What Works @ your library"
Deadline: May 10, 2010

Articles of 150–250 words, 500 words, or 800–1,300 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 the working title, name of author, and email address in the body of the text. 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 of *The Teaching Librarian*: TingLeditor@gmail.com.

THE TEACHING LIBRARIAN REFERENCES

The Teaching Librarian is a general magazine for OSLA members and not a scholarly journal. If your article does require citation of sources, please provide them within the text of your article or column with as much or as little bibliographic information as necessary for identification (e.g. book title, year). If you feel that the works you are citing require full identification, please provide a bibliography at the end of your piece, formatted according to the latest Chicago Manual of Style (15th edition) or APA Style.

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Photo : Julie Millan

Collaboration @ your library™

Diana Maliszewski



Jennifer Marriott has left the building.

“Jennifer who?”, you may ask. Jennifer was the layout person and OLA link to *The Teaching Librarian*. In May of this year, Jennifer left the Ontario Library Association to work for a new company. I am very happy for her, with her new career venture, but I am very sad to see her leave OLA—her work on the magazine was absolutely exceptional. She has that bird’s eye view, that foresight, that unique perspective in addition to her diligence, dedication, and talent. Jennifer was a “behind-the-scenes” kind of gal, not one to trumpet her achievements. And if you asked her, she’d stress the importance of us working together to create the best school library association magazine in Canada. It was a successful collaborative relationship, one that grew with some nurturing by Jefferson Gilbert (former OLA Deputy Director) and Peggy Thomas (current OLA president). We worked well as a team, and it showed. We welcome Natalie Marlowe as our new Coordinator of Programs and Communications to *The Teaching Librarian* team. This is her inaugural issue and we are glad to have her.

Working together can produce some absolutely exceptional results. Check out www.libraryng.com—the Library Network Group, an electronic meeting space for librarians and the information profession. Articles, blogs, podcasts, webcasts, forums, network groups... all of these are here. Click on the school library link, and on any particular day, you can find a wealth of information. The day I wrote this, I toggled to the page and found an IPAC tutorial, free for the taking; a discussion on the merits of Twitter; a notice about a pilot project implementing Google Apps; media lessons; and a request for a book list for older teens. These online contributors collaborate not because it is expected, mandated, or required, but because it helps others, helps them, and saves them time and effort. Two heads are better than one!

In this issue of *The Teaching Librarian*, you will read about many different types of collaborative ventures, with a variety of groups. May your collaborative efforts be as fruitful and fun. ■



Jennifer Marriott



ONTARIO SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

President's Report

Ruth Hall

Since you're reading this article, you are likely one of the people who works in, works with, supports, or oversees school libraries. In my new role as OSLA president I've been thinking a lot about the work we do in school libraries, and, perhaps more importantly, how to convey the scope of that work to those "outside" the library. This issue of *The Teaching Librarian*, with its focus on collaboration, provides a timely opportunity to take stock of our relationships: relationships with students, teachers, administrators, and parents within our library communities; and relationships in the larger community. Many of us work alone in school library facilities. Our community relationships inform our professional practice and help us as we make choices, in our time-challenged work lives, about where to place our energies.

So what is going on in the school library community? In the current economic climate it's only natural to worry about budgets and cutbacks and libraries. However, there are good news stories, notably in the public library sector, showing that when the economy goes down, library usage goes up. I suspect the same is true in our school library sector. In spite of the economic downturn, the Ministry of Education has continued its support by including OSLA in Ministry consultation sessions and by allocating an additional \$10 million for elementary school libraries. Working together with vendors, the ministry is monitoring spending by school boards to ensure that these funds are used to provide additional print resources for elementary school libraries as intended and not to replace existing budgets.

We'd like to hear your experiences with this round of funding. Consider posting to the LNG (Library Networking Group) meeting space to share the experience with your library or board. Like our existing OSLA listserv, the LNG is a way for us to meet and share information online where you can both ask for and find information on a variety of relevant topics. The beauty of the LNG is that alerts are emailed to you, but all posts are saved and can be searched at any time. This is invaluable if your email has space restrictions, or just gets plain cluttered. Join the LNG space at www.libraryng.com/user_registration.

Another good news story has been the expansion of Knowledge Ontario, with five additional databases, including French language materials. This publicly funded service is invaluable because it provides equitable access to subscription databases across the province. In order to maintain this access, we need to use it. Be sure your staff and students know about the rich resources available to them from school or home for free. Find information at the LNG (www.libraryng.com/node/1703) or the KO (www.knowledgeontario.ca) website. For connection information or answers to your questions contact lisa.weaver@tdsb.on.ca or jeffreyp@hwcdsb.ca. Remember to think of the KO resources when you are looking for non-fiction reading materials.

Of course, libraries aren't just about "stuff" (physical/virtual resources and spaces). The resources don't mean a lot without humans (trained library staff) to make connections, form relationships, and

continued on p. 8...

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President's Report

Ruth Hall

collaborate with the people in our school library communities. This is the clear message in People for Education's latest report on Ontario schools: "Wanted: A Renewed Vision for Public Education" (www.peopleforeducation.com/annualreportschools09), which links the continued decline in reading enjoyment reported in EQAO surveys of Grades 3 and 6 students to reductions in library staffing (12). The report echoes the findings in *Exemplary School Libraries in Ontario* (www.peopleforeducation.com/exemplarylibraries/2009), linking successful school libraries to teaching and programming (18). What this looks like will be different in each library setting depending on many factors. One thing is for certain—our libraries are changing as we evolve and as our communities morph into new realities. A common thread in exemplary school libraries is "the need for teacher librarians [library staff] to be highly adaptable, changing their manner of approach to suit the styles of the teachers with whom they work and their current school context" (36). This means that those of us working in and with school libraries must meet the challenges of constant change and profit from the ongoing opportunity to refine and reinvent our work.

I remember reading many years ago about a teacher-librarian in Australia who was experiencing a crisis in confidence. Feeling overwhelmed, she decided to create a clean slate for herself and her school library. Rather than trying to figure out how to juggle the daunting number of tasks in her library, she decided to take everything off her "to do list". Starting afresh, she made a plan for her library dedicating time only to tasks directly connected to the library mission and goals. This made decision-making and prioritizing simpler. Given that none of us can do it all, the challenge becomes deciding what to do. In the spring issue of OLA's *Access* magazine, Anita Brooks-Kirkland past OSLA president and winner of this year's Larry Moore Distinguished Service Award, says the following: "I do believe that it is mostly up to us who work in school libraries to get past the past, and go about demonstrating our worth within the broader context of education. We get a lot farther by demonstrating in very practical ways how we move

learning forward" (Spring 2009, p. 13). I'm taking that as my personal challenge, to look for those "very practical ways" to ensure what is happening in my school library is enhancing teaching and learning.

October is International School Library Month. The theme for October 2009 is *School Libraries: The Big Picture* (www.iasl-online.org/events/ism/index.htm). What's yours? See postings of what school libraries around the world have done. Celebrate! ■



Photos : Julie Millan



Sandra Ziemniak

Today, collaboration is a “buzz word” not only for educators, but also for businesses and social networks. Have you ever had trouble getting all members of a committee to attend an important meeting? What about the cost or the inconvenience of physically moving people from place to place? In this increasingly digital and incredibly busy world, it is often difficult to have face-to-face meetings where everyone can share ideas, concerns, and duties in an organized and timely fashion. Online collaboration tools can support collaboration by providing user-friendly, real-time, and convenient common workspaces that facilitate effective teamwork between teachers, and also between teachers and their students.

Take the plunge and experiment on a small scale (with 1 or 2 library staff or teachers) using one of the following free, collaborative programs:

Want to collaborate with vendors?

Gale and Chapters make it easy to market your library and reach out to your community:

Gale

www.gale.cengage.com/power/k12.htm

Gale has a great section on “tools to increase usage” which provide free, colourful promotional items such as school posters or bookmarks that you can use to promote Gale databases in your library.

www.gale.cengage.com/webinar/

Gale also offers free product previews and tutorials or webinars (the new technical word for “web” seminars) designed to help you understand their digital products. You can participate in live, online discussions with other users to hear their feedback.

Chapters

<http://community.indigo.ca/find/community-groups/1.html>

Chapters offers many community group blogs such as the popular *Twilight* group blog where students and teachers alike can discuss their favourite movie online. You can create your own online discussion group about books or movies.

www.chapters.indigo.ca/fundraising-main/fundraising-art.html

Chapters also offers opportunities for school fundraisers. This link will provide you with all the information you need to get started.

What about collaborating with your colleagues and students?

Blogs can be great forums for chatting, sharing ideas, discussing lessons or homework, and keeping in touch with like-minded individuals. Try connecting with colleagues and students using one of the more popular blogs:

<http://edublogs.org/>

Edublog has user-friendly tutorials to help you get started. Start blogging with teachers, students, or anyone with an educational interest on almost any subject. For use with students, you will want to limit your “community” to just yourself and your students so you have privacy and security.

www.wordpress.com

WordPress is easy to use, has nice aesthetics, and promotes itself as being a “state of the art publishing tool.” Peel teacher and technology lover, Elona Hartjes loves blogging and has both educator- and student-centred blogs. Visit Elona’s educator blog at www.teachersatrisk.com to see how professionally worthwhile blogging can be.

Want to collaborate using images?

For anyone dealing with images, here are a couple of sites that make learning and collaborating interesting and fun. This is great for art class!

www.voicethread.com

VoiceThread software allows users to share and discuss images, documents, and videos. You can upload a picture and have others comment on it at their own convenience. In art classes, upload art images and have students submit comments in their own voice, at their own convenience.

www.slideshare.net

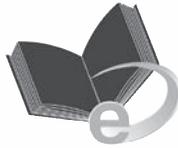
Slideshare allows users to share PowerPoint presentations and Word documents. You can also add audio to your slideshow to create your own webinar. Users can respond to your slideshows, or post them to other tools such as WordPress, Twitter, or Facebook.

Don’t forget to collaborate with your public library system!

Many public library systems also see the value in reaching out to their community through both elementary and secondary school libraries. For example, many public libraries send out monthly e-newsletters, set up information booths at school parent nights, and run interesting child and teen programs such as poetry slams. You can add the public library link to your own library web page for easy access. Contact your public library and start up a partnership today.

Want to read more on library collaboration?

Check out this online book review for *Collaboration and the School Library Media Specialist* by Carol A. Doll, 2009: http://books.google.com/books?id=8iD_TeGd9BoC&prinsec=frontcover&dq=library+collaboration. ■



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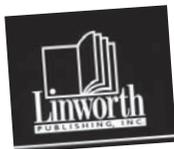
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Dear Rita,

My principal wants me to collaborate with every class, and for the most part, everything works fine—except for one teacher, whom I'll call "Mr. X". When Mr. X and his class come to the library, he leaves them and acts like it's an additional prep. We are supposed to be working together, but Mr. X avoids making time with me to plan anything. On the rare occasion when he bothers to stay in the library, he doesn't interact with the students and brings marking to do in a corner. We really don't "click" well as a team—so how do I team-teach with someone who really doesn't want to be there?

*Yours truly,
Team Player Without the Team*

Dear Team Player,

There always seems to be one who doesn't fit the norm, doesn't there? Like most seasoned teacher-librarians, I've been there and conquered that problem, so I'm quite sure you can, too!

To begin with, "think of collaborative partnerships as the process of developing a trusting relationship between two or more professional colleagues. Collaborative relationships are enabled by recognizing the varied roles served by individuals of the learning community (including the teacher-librarian), modelling desired practices, acting proactively, and providing personal experience and expertise" ("The School Library Media Specialist", <http://eduscapes.com>).

I would suggest that you find a venue to inform your whole staff of your unique role in the school. This could be done with a PowerPoint presentation at a staff meeting, or a brochure in each teacher's mailbox—whatever is easiest, friendliest, and most effective. Make sure you stress the collaborative nature of your job, and give lots of examples of work you've done with other staff members in the past. If your staff is familiar with Professional Learning Communities and their underlying educational principles, you should be able to make a connection between the philosophy behind PLCs and that of collaboration, since the goal of working together for student success is the same.

Outline your expectations (and those of your administration) that classes using the library need to be booked through you, and that they will all be collaborative endeavours to some extent. In this communication, really focus on the benefits for the students and the classroom teacher. Stress the fabulous things that happen when staff members collaborate! After all, "the goal of a true collaboration is to demonstrate that 'two heads are better than one'.

Collectively, teachers and specialists have been able to achieve better results than if they had taught separately." (*The New Learning Commons: Where Learners Win!*, 2008.)

Greet this particular teacher one-on-one before he books into the library. Tell him that you are looking forward to working collaboratively with him on his next research unit. Suggest a time when the two of you can sit down to discuss the expectations, resources, timelines, etc., and to outline who will be doing what. Make sure you let him know that you are interested in taking on part of the assessment as well as the teaching and facilitating, but stress that he knows the students' individual strengths and learning styles. Maybe you could even give him a specific task to do—a part of the lesson and/or a checklist of learning skills.

After trying as many of these strategies as you can, please keep in mind that with this particular teacher, you may never get to actual team teaching. Your time and energy may be better suited to collaboratively planning with those colleagues who are more willing and appreciative of your time and efforts.

Rita

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

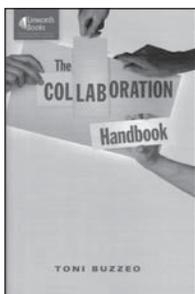
*Just ask Rita!
contact Rita at
rita@accessola.com
You'll never regret it!*



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

The Collaboration Handbook

Toni Buzzeo
2008
9781586832988



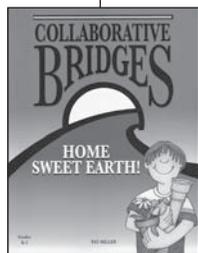
The Collaboration Handbook is divided into four sections: Levels of Instructional Partnership, Recording and Assessing the Work, Overcoming Roadblocks and Advocacy, and New Frontiers.

In section one, Buzzeo discusses the instructional partnership continuum, which begins with cooperation and progresses through coordination to collaboration, and finally, data-driven collaboration. Section two includes unit planning templates and a chapter on assessment. Section three includes chapters on roadblocks to collaboration and advocacy at the school and district level, and with teachers, school administrators, and district administrators. Section four includes a chapter on gathering, understanding, and using evidence of student achievement, as well as a chapter on integrating new technologies such as blogs, wikis, and podcasts.

Highly recommended.

Collaborative Bridges: Home Sweet Earth

Pat Miller
2006
9781932146639



Designed for Grades K–2,

Collaborative Bridges is a collection of ready-to-use collaborative lessons, including library lessons, classroom lessons, and bridges between the two. The six literature-based, cross-

curricular units are: Rocks and Soil, Natural Resources, Water Everywhere, Habitats and Biomes, Weather, and Night Sky. Suggested resources include books (fiction and non-fiction), audiovisual materials, and websites.

The book is well written, but Ontario K–2 teachers should be cautioned that the standards do not match those of the Ontario Curriculum.

Optional purchase.

Collaborative Library Research Projects: Inquiry that Stimulates the Senses

John D. Volkman
2008
9781591586234



Volkman presents a number of collaboratively developed units and research projects in a variety of subject areas. The book's strength is its focus on multimedia projects. However, this isn't enough to save it from being rather mediocre as a model for the student research and inquiry process.

Teacher-librarians will find other books, such as those by Loertscher, Koechlin, and Zwaan (e.g. *Ban those Bird Units* and *Beyond Bird Units*) more useful.

Not recommended.

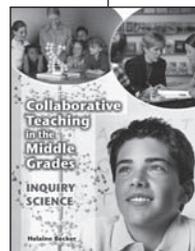
Collaborative Teaching in the Middle Grades: Inquiry Science

Helaine Becker
2005
9781591581918

Designed for Grades 6–8, this book will provide the lessons, assessment tools, and reproducible student worksheets needed to help teacher-librarians and classroom teachers team teach integrated units that meet both science and library expectations. The five units deal with classification of organisms; genetic inheritance; public health; nutrition; exercise and metabolism; microorganisms; the effects of human action on the environment; the effects of geologic processes on human populations; and the composition of sunlight and human vision.

While *Collaborative Teaching* is well written, the content and the standards do not match the Ontario Curriculum.

Optional purchase.



The New Learning Commons: Where Learners Win! Reinventing School Libraries and Computer Labs

David V. Loertscher, Carol Koechlin, and Sandi Zwaan
2008
9781933170404

Loertscher, Koechlin, and Zwaan argue that it's necessary—and possible—to turn school libraries and computer labs into learning commons; learning spaces that are client-centred (the clients are both students and classroom teachers), collaborative, creative, and available any time they are needed (because they exist in both real and virtual forms). The creation of a learning commons involves teacher-librarians, classroom teachers, administrators, support staff, students, parents, and members of the wider community.

Because this learning commons would provide the support, resources, and technological access students and teachers need for authentic learning, this space, in both its real and virtual forms, would be valued and well-used—an integral part of the school, and central to instructional efforts.

The authors argue that this shift, from traditional school library and computer lab to learning commons, makes the goals of school improvement more attainable. Loertscher, Koechlin, and Zwaan invite readers to join in the discussion of

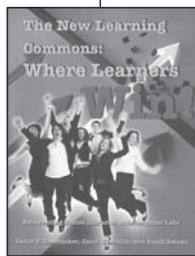
Brenda Dillon

the book by joining a wiki, which is an interesting way to extend the book beyond its covers.

The New Learning Commons Where Learners Win!

is meant to be read, discussed, and used with others and would be an excellent choice for a Professional Learning Community.

Highly recommended. ■



Photos : Julie Millan

ei FALL 2009

EDUCATION INSTITUTE

Welcome back to a new school year!

Readers of *The Teaching Librarian* are familiar with the Education Institute, and know that the distance education program provides great personal learning and leadership opportunities, but the timing hasn't always been convenient.

You will be pleased to learn that the much-anticipated EI-TO-GO service is being launched in Canadian Library Month—October, 2009! The details will be highlighted through the OLA website, and sent to all our member lists.



Here is a sampling of the sessions that will be available in "to-go" formats:

Creating Personal Learning Through Self-Assessment

Jean Donham

Assessment is a word that is typically associated with formal schooling, and with being imposed from external sources: for example, teachers assess student work, administrators assess teacher performance, and authorities assess school and school board progress. Although external assessment strategies are essential, the most valuable assessment leading to productive life-long learning is self-assessment. This session will highlight pertinent strategies to maximize the cycle of continuous improvement: setting learning goals, pursuing the learning, and reflection/self-assessment of one's learning.

Searching 2.0

Michael Sauer

In this fast-paced presentation, Michael applies super-search strategies to the latest generation of Web tools: blogs, wikis, Flickr, Google Books, and more. Have you been frustrated with how to best organize your resources for quick access at the reference desk? Michael will provide tips and strategies in this session!

The Twitch Generation and Jacqueline Guest

Jacqueline Guest

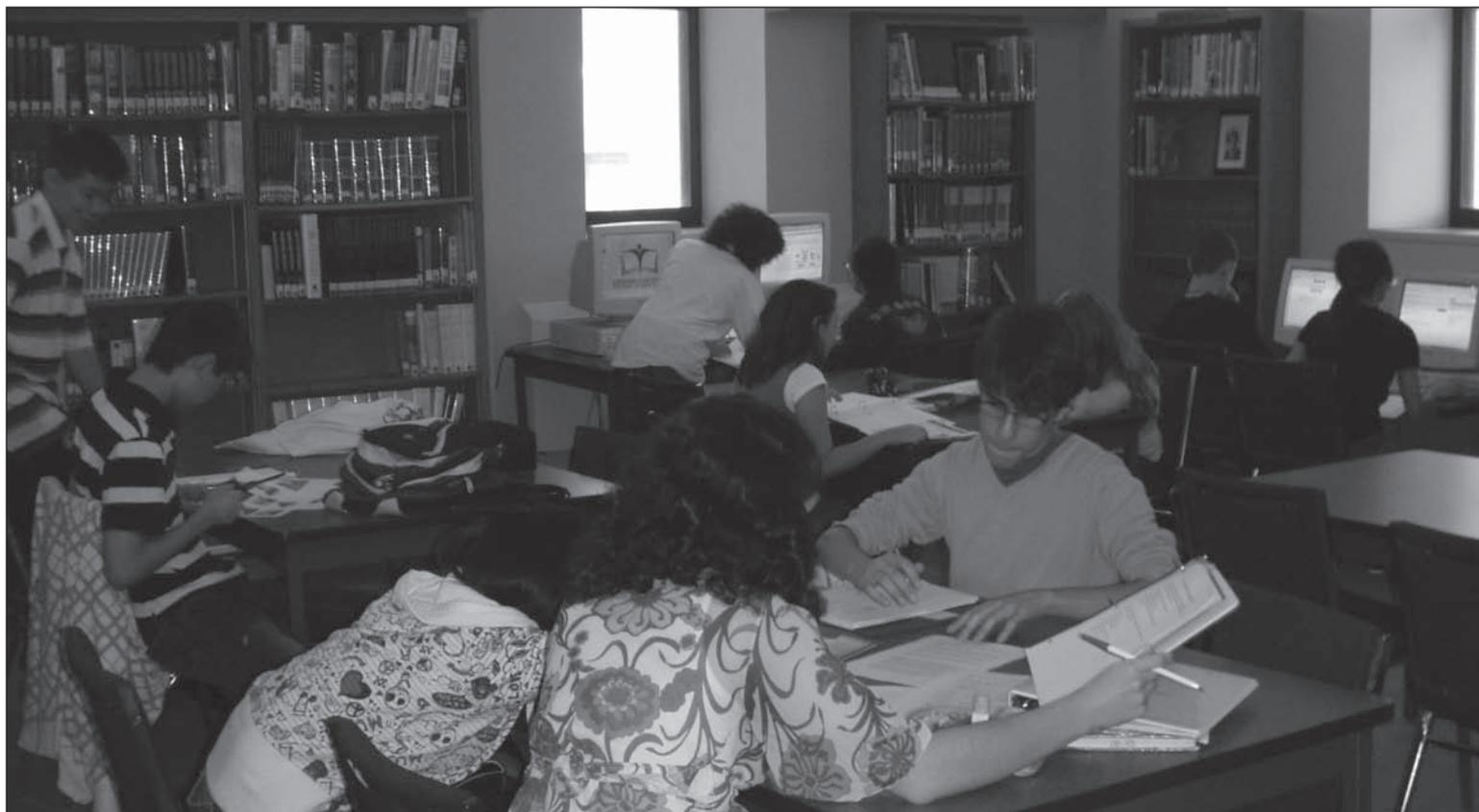
Jacqueline Guest, a youth and young adult author, writes for "the twitch generation"! She is a Metis writer who lives in a log cabin nestled in the pinewoods of the Rocky Mountain foothills of Alberta. Her fast-paced books are unique in that many of the main characters come from different ethnic backgrounds including First Nations, Inuit or Metis. Her characters face issues such as bullying, blended families and physical challenges and are strong role models for today's youth. Her historical novels present Canada's vibrant past as an exciting read every child will enjoy, and her mysteries are guaranteed "page-turners"! In this talk, Jacqueline will discuss where her ideas come from and how her books came to be.

Meeting the Needs of At-Risk Readers

Myra Junyk

How do you encourage at-risk readers to read? This workshop will address strategies to motivate students using specific materials in the library. We need to move beyond the High Interest-Low Vocabulary choices! There are now interesting and engaging materials available to meet the needs of even the most reluctant readers!

To register or for more information visit
www.educationinstitute.ca.



Setting the Stage for Collabora

Sandra Y. Quan-D'Eramo

Close your eyes and imagine you are standing at the doorway to a large square room the size of a small gym. The room is completely empty—void of furniture, books, chairs, tables—not even a circulation counter! You walk in and put your bag down on the one chair you pulled in from the hallway.

Welcome to your new library. What do you do first?

This past year, I have had the opportunity to open a brand new library. Developing a library program from the ground up has been an exciting process. A driving force behind the decisions made in the first year was ensuring that the pieces for a sustainable collaborative model were in place. We all know what the research says—there is no question that team-teaching and collaboration have far greater impact than teaching skills in isolation. We also know that development of information literacy skills is most effective when the teacher-librarian and the classroom teacher are two equal partners in the process. What better place to take these guiding principles for a spin than in a new school?

About the school

Bill Crothers Secondary School opened in Markham in August, 2008. The school has a focus on sports, athletics, and the pursuit of healthy, active living. Students apply for admission through two distinct profiles. The Active Sport students enjoy competing in and training for intercollegiate competitions, or as a part of community programs. They like to be active and are engaged in sport and focused on personal well-being. They may also take part in the management of sport within the school. The High Performance students compete at a highly competitive level and train on average 15 or more hours per week. They are engaged in an intensive, time-committed training program designed to support their sport and athletic aspirations and goals. These students are pursuing competition at the provincial, national, or international level. BCSS is a specialty school, so it has some unique features that have an impact: students will commonly miss class for competitions; lunches are often inconvenient for meetings due to coaching (but we have Shared Thinking Time weekly for staff development); we operate on a balanced school year that begins in August; and imbedded in the schedule for students are Integrated Learning Instructional Periods (ILIP) and Cross Curricular Tasks (CCT) where every course has a culminating task that is connected to a particular school-wide theme.



Photo : Derrick Grose

oration

Key pieces to the collaborative puzzle

As we all know, collaboration does not happen overnight. Like a puzzle, there are many things that must be in place for a collaborative model to really work. These were some of the key pieces that I discovered along the way:

Defining my vision of the library: Defining a vision that includes collaboration has been an ongoing process. Getting advice from staff and other teacher-librarians has been a great help. The trick is identifying what works for our school. Sometimes that means doing things differently from what others expect. It also means standing firmly by some of my own ideas and seeing them through to completion.

Defining room layout and furniture needs: Fortunately, I had the opportunity to provide input into the room layout and furniture purchases. With my vision in hand, I was able to define spaces that would promote a collaborative model. For example, there is a Japanese discussion table that teachers can book to have group discussions. As the teacher works with one group, I can work with the rest of the class in another part of the library. A class might sign up for multiple areas of the library over the course of a few weeks.

Deciding budget allocations: For my vision of a cooperative model to work, I needed the resources to back up the different ways collaboration might occur. Although a large percentage of the budget was allocated to books and media resources, money was also allocated to technology and publishing. For example, money was invested in an e-book collection, databases, and website interface. Other money was put aside for publishing equipment such as cameras, an iMac, and a scanner.

Collaborating with others in the process: We often think of collaboration as the planning and team-teaching of a unit. Collaboration, however, can happen throughout the process. For example, I collaborated with each department head individually before purchasing materials. I also worked with the Library Advisory Team, a group of students who provided input into the library program. Working with staff and students has been a great way to stir up more interest in using the library.

Developing a skills continuum: Our school has been focusing on targets and success criteria. To ensure library programming is aligned with the classes, I am developing a skills continuum of targets and success criteria across the grades. Based on The Big 6 Research Program, information studies, and the Ontario Curriculum, the continuum outlines information literacy skills and matching tasks for each grade. The continuum will be used as a starting point when collaborating.

Being flexible: Due to the unique nature of the school, all teachers at BCSS need to be flexible, including the teacher-librarian. Putting aside time to work with teachers during their preps is key. Leaving the library and going to them proved even more successful. Being flexible about how I could work with them was also important. For example, I might co-introduce the assignment to the whole class, or go outside and help a group film a final product.

Collecting data: Collected data can provide a larger picture of how well collaboration has worked. As a starting point, I will be using an online survey program to survey our Grade 8 students who will be going into Grade 9 in September. The survey will provide baseline data on their understanding of the research process. They will be surveyed again at the end of Grade 10 and Grade 12. Ideally, we will also have data after they leave high school. This data will be used to inform the decision-making process with regard to library programming.

Closing thoughts

Do I have the perfect collaborative model? No, definitely not. My library programming will be revisited and revamped over and over again. That is a reality. I have, however, set the groundwork for collaboration to occur. Once I made the resolute decision that collaboration would be a key part of my program, the rest of the decisions had greater direction. The pieces of that collaborative puzzle are fitting together better and better with each decision that I make. ■

Collaboration Through POETRY

Cindy McGee

“I don’t know anything about this! How can I teach something I don’t understand?” When I hear statements like these from teachers, then I know it must be time to teach the poetry unit—that mandated curriculum topic, a mystery to many, that induces cringes in students and teachers alike.

“When I hear statements like these from teachers, then I know it must be time to teach the poetry unit—that mandated curriculum topic, a mystery to many, that induces cringes in students and teachers alike.”

I’d always found collaboration with the middle school teachers a struggle. Their tight timetables just didn’t seem to allow for scheduled library time. So, when I heard that the Grade 6 teachers at my school were planning to start their poetry unit, I decided this presented both an opportunity and a challenge, and I offered (well, maybe I insisted on giving) help. I understood the fear of teaching something unknown. In fact, I shared those feelings about the poetry unit, but I knew that if I showed any hesitation, I would lose my chance at collaboration, so I took a deep breath and made my partnership pitch. The teachers had decided to set up poetry centres, so I offered to set up an additional centre in the library, where the students could explore Spoken Word, adding another dimension to their experience of poetry.



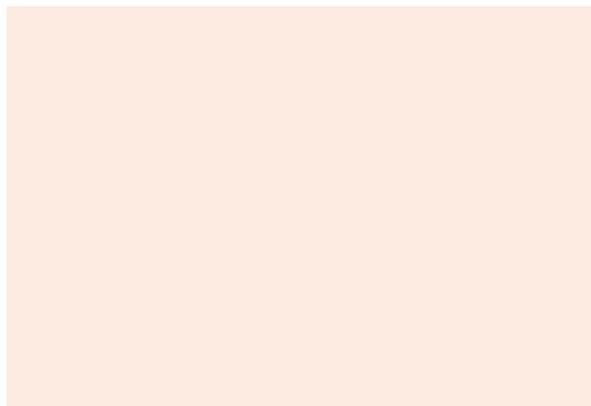
Photo : Julie Millan

Spoken Word was something that I had experienced only once, so it was very new to me. I needed to learn more about Spoken Word before I could feel comfortable teaching at this centre. In conversation with my colleagues, I learned that one of the Grade 2 teachers had done undergraduate work with Spoken Word. She was a fantastic resource! She lent me CD sets and tutored me, and her confidence and her willingness

to share her knowledge increased my confidence. I also discovered that one of the Grade 6 teachers had books of poetry for two voices that I could use as resources.

Now, with knowledge, confidence, and resources, I could set up that library centre I’d offered, a centre at which students could listen to Spoken Word and then select, practice, and perform a poem of their own. Because I worked with the students in small groups, each teacher needed to book five library sessions. I wanted to make this as easy and painless as possible for the teachers, so I went to them, daytimer in hand. It took about four weeks to see all of the groups in each of the three classes. Two of the teachers chose to have the students perform in their own classrooms, at their convenience. The third teacher decided to take it one step further—by booking time in the library for a “poetry café.” We served juice and cookies in an effort to make the students’ experience both more authentic and memorable.

Looking back, I am glad that I recognized the opportunity, accepted the challenge, and persisted in my efforts to become involved in the Grade 6 poetry unit. This effort has led to consistent partnering with teachers and a greater involvement with students. And, as a bonus, I’m more comfortable with poetry and no longer cringe when it’s time to teach that particular curriculum topic! ■



At the heart of any great school, you will find a great library. At the heart of any great library, you will find passionate individuals who understand the true scope of their position as a teacher-librarian.

At Sir Wilfrid Laurier Collegiate Institute, this passion led to an exciting revitalization project involving the whole staff for the 2008-2009 school year.

With the support of our administration, the library team approached the Curriculum Leaders and Assistant Curriculum Leaders and proposed that representatives from their departments come down to the library and help us delve into the different subject areas. The staff agreed to assist with “The Weeding Project” and with nearly every department participating, we were able to discard books that were no longer relevant to the subject areas. Coaxing many into realizing that books could be discarded without guilt was one of the more interesting facets of the project. We were able to weed out over 4,500 books from our library, and also undertook a gap analysis.

Collaborative Weeding

Kenneth Kosowan

By determining what the library was missing, we were able to plan how best to allocate finances towards non-fiction book buying and plan for future purchases.

This collaboration has led to increased interest and excitement in the library. Teachers are booking in greater numbers and are assisting with book talks, as they are now well versed in the great resources that they helped find. Additionally, students are better able to find quality resources on the decongested shelves.

The library has undertaken several other collaborative projects when it came to purchasing resources. By taking the English department to Chapters on a fiction-buying journey (followed by food at a local restaurant), our library now enjoys exciting new fiction selected by nine highly-motivated English teachers. The French department was also eager to work together to purchase resources to revitalize the French collection.

The end result of this collaborative action has been a repositioning of the library, with its revitalized collection, as the heart of the school. The library has classes chomping at the bit to dive into our new and better resources.

Parameters of “The Weeding Project”:

Timeline: About 4–6 months, depending on the size of your collection (Our collection was 17,000 titles, with an average copyright date of 1987.)

It took a whole semester to finish the first five phases of this project. Phase Six should be ongoing and be revisited yearly. At this point, we are hoping to have our subject experts commit to weeding their area every two years. This will ensure that our collection remains fresh, and that it is adequately serving the students under any updated curriculum.

Phase One: Approaching the administration

A project that involves many staff members and a long-term commitment requires strong administrative support. Our administration agreed to provide on-call coverage to teachers who were helping with the weeding project. However, very few on-calls were ever generated, as many teachers were excited to come into the library to ensure that their subject areas were best served.

Informing the Parent-Teacher Council of plans to weed is also advisable to help parents and the community understand that only carefully deselected books will be making their way into the recycling bin.

Phase Two: Selling the plan to the experts

The best way to get the support of the staff was by going through the Curriculum Leaders. In the cases of large departments, the leaders divided the task between teachers who knew their subject areas best. (For example, in Social Studies, there were representatives from History, Family Studies, Geography and Philosophy.)

Phase Three: Scheduling the visits

Phase Four: Weeding with the experts from each department

As difficult as it is, the project is best served when the process can be done with minimal interruption. For this to be possible, we closed the library during weeding.

Phase Five: Gap analysis

During the weeding process, you and the subject expert should be compiling a list of gaps in the collection. By determining gaps in the collection, as well as collaborating on the development of purchasing plans, purchasing strategies can be devised as a team to far better meet the needs of departments than any teacher-librarian could develop alone.

Phase Six: Making the most of our money

Once gap analyses are completed for every section of your library, prioritize the list of resources and develop a purchase plan. ■

Challenges to Collaboration	Challenge Busters!
<p>Time barrier</p>	<p>Creative scheduling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Block timetabling presents opportunities for joint planning that can include the teacher-librarian. • A flexible, open library timetable promotes collaborative teaching that deepens student learning. • Joint assessment of student learning saves time. • Openness to impromptu meetings in the hall or lunchroom provides opportunities to gather information and seek opportunities to assist with teaching.
<p>Limited vision of library program</p>	<p>Reaching beyond the norm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider partnering for subjects like drama, art and music. • Assist with planning field trips related to learning topics. • Arrange visits from community members, politicians, and businesses to bring relevance to student learning. • Offer to trouble-shoot or help “make-over” assignments that lack pizzazz! • Use creative methods to display student work; convert the library into an art gallery or museum. • Assist students in using technology to showcase their learning.
<p>Pressure to cover the curriculum and/or be ready for standardized tests</p>	<p>Sharing the load</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-construct assessment strategies with teachers and students. • Assist with collection of formative assessment data. • Reflect together on and assess student successes and challenges. • Plan for multiple collaborations as part of evidence-based practice. • Model effective teaching practices that incorporate cross-curricular themes. • Offer to coach and model best practices for new teachers.
<p>Differing teacher planning and teaching styles (Zmada, 2009)</p>	<p>Flexibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be open to different “ways” of partnering. • Observe each other teach and offer constructive critical feedback. • Capitalize on each other’s strengths to provide a richer, more-rounded program for students.
<p>Mounting pressures posed by increased preparation time (Klinger, 2009)</p> <p>(The greater the amount of prep coverage delivered by teacher-librarians, the more restraints there are on instructional collaboration with teachers.)</p>	<p>Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strive to engender a culture of collaboration within the school. • Promote the library as the hub of the school where teaching and learning are front and centre. • Develop a learner-centered mission statement that aligns with the school success plan to help establish the role of the library within the context of the whole school. • Keep abreast of research that examines the negative correlation between teacher-librarian prep time coverage and student success—make this available to administrators and teaching staff. • Communicate with administrators about the learning-centered activities that happen in the library—make this official by means of memo or newsletter. • Create a library website to advertise events and activities happening @Your Library. • Be aware of advocacy associations like OLA, OSLA, TALCO, CASL, etc.; visit www.accessola.com for more information.

Challenges to Collaboration

Jeanne Conte

Teacher-librarians have long recognized the importance of collaboration as a key component of successful school library programs. A recent study conducted by Queen's University and People for Education that examined exemplary school libraries (Klinger, 2009) confirmed collaborative teaching as a critical activity within Level 3 programs, according to the Exemplary School Library Program Continuum (Klinger, 2009). Moreover, research has consistently shown that in schools where the teacher-librarian and the classroom teacher collaborate to design, teach, and assess learning experiences, test scores are consistently higher (Lance, 2005). Yet, we all know that effective means of teacher partnering remain elusive. So, what are the persistent challenges and what can be done to overcome them? (Please see "Challenges to Collaboration" chart to left...)



Photo : Julie Millan

Collaboration: A final word...

School libraries DO make a difference! However, in order to remain relevant, the role of libraries must inevitably evolve with the changing needs of the communities they serve. Effective collaboration is a natural way for teacher-librarians to remain connected to their learning communities for the enhancement of student achievement and promotion of school success overall. ■

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Exemplary School Libraries:

**Elizabeth A. Lee
and Don A. Klinger,
Queen's University**

Our observations of exemplary school libraries confirm what one teacher-librarian said about school libraries,

“We are the centre of all action... where teachers and students start their day and travel to the library during the day and end their day.”

Exemplary school library programs provide a central learning and instruction role in a school. The teacher-librarians in such programs commonly collaborate with other teachers and find ways to engage the community to support children's learning. This vision of the library as a classroom and a welcoming place of learning emerges as a key facet of an exemplary school library program.

Reported here are some of the highlights from the OSLA commissioned report, *Exemplary School Libraries*, that was completed in conjunction with People for Education. The full report is available on the OLA website, www.accessola.com.

Our work involved eight elementary schools from three Ontario school boards. We carried out two relatively detailed case studies that included observations of the library program, and interviews with teacher-librarians, teachers, administrators, and volunteers. Six smaller case studies omitted the observations from the data collection. We also surveyed 350 students from 21 Grades 4, 5, and 6 classrooms in these eight schools.

Two characteristics identified exemplary programs. First, the teacher-librarian developed a program that maximized the amount of time devoted to teaching. Second, the teacher-librarian continually strove to modify the existing context to enhance the role of the library program.

The Role of Context

While we were able to identify similar characteristics of these exemplary library programs, it was not possible to identify a simple set of desirable school library attributes. Contextual factors within the school and the neighbourhood facilitate or hinder implementation of library programming. Context included factors such as board policy, funding and staffing models, administrative models, demographic characteristics of the school population, principal and teacher knowledge and skills, physical features of the library, history of the school library, and volunteer availability. Hence, exemplary programs were defined as being exemplary within the context in which they operated. The knowledge, expertise, and experience of the teacher-librarian were key to maximizing the role of the school library program within the context that the library program operated.

Classroom teachers' knowledge, expertise, and openness were also essential contextual factors affecting the impact of the school library program on instruction and learning. As teachers become more aware of the instructional supports and roles the teacher-librarian can provide, the quality of the collaborations improve, to the benefit of the students. Hence, context is not static, but rather is shaped by the teacher-librarian's efforts to change it. In exemplary programs, the context evolves through the continuous efforts of the teacher-librarian. We have used these contextual factors to create a continuum of exemplary school library programs.

Continuum

Each level of the continuum describes the contextual factors that facilitate or hinder the library program. These levels represent shifts across library programs. Higher levels on the continuum are characterized by a greater emphasis on student instruction and a deeper integration of the library program into all aspects of the school. Throughout the continuum, an exemplary school library program requires a teacher-librarian who is a change agent, striving to alter both the context and the program.

: The centre of all the action

Level 1 programs face many limiting contextual factors. Teachers and principals have a limited understanding or ability to support the instructional role of the school library. Teacher-librarians typically provide independent instruction that is not typically coordinated with the classroom. Collaborative opportunities are not systematic. Teacher-librarians in these schools recognize the limiting factors and initiate procedures that free time to provide instruction, and continually work to develop partnerships in order to be more directly involved in instruction. As one librarian said, “Sometimes I have to go out and hunt people down.”

Level 2 programs have fewer constraints, with more administrative support. The principal recognizes the potentially important role of the school library program and helps to initiate procedures to incorporate the school library into the broader school culture. Principals provide partial funding of prep coverage so the librarian can focus on instruction. Teachers are more open to working cooperatively, acknowledging the important role of the teacher-librarian, “I can’t even imagine a literacy program without the support of your library and librarian. I think she’s the key; she’ll come in and do anything.” School culture with respect to use of the school library has changed, largely through the librarian’s efforts and these teacher-librarians are increasingly able to coordinate their instruction with classroom teachers.

Level 3 has an enabling context. The library has prioritized support and funding from the administration. The teachers in the school share the vision of the library as a place for learning and teaching; the library is strongly integrated into the school’s teaching. Ongoing collaborative teaching between the librarian and classroom teachers is a given. These teacher-librarians provide ever-changing support to teachers based on shared needs. One remarked, “What I really try to do is to listen to teachers and try to figure out how I can best support them.” Not surprisingly, such teacher-librarians exemplified the notion of life-long learners, seeking opportunities to acquire new skills and enhance their program. As one librarian commented, “I took a full year of drama training and created a literacy through drama program and reported on drama expectations for the teachers.”

Level 4 programs are similar to Level 3 programs, but they also have systematic administrative support at the school, school board, and provincial levels—both in funding and policy. We were unable to categorize any programs as Level 4, as unfortunately, school libraries in Ontario receive intermittent support. This lack of systematic support will continue to hinder the development of exemplary library programs and it is only due to the outstanding professionalism of these librarians that we were able to observe a number of Level 3 programs.

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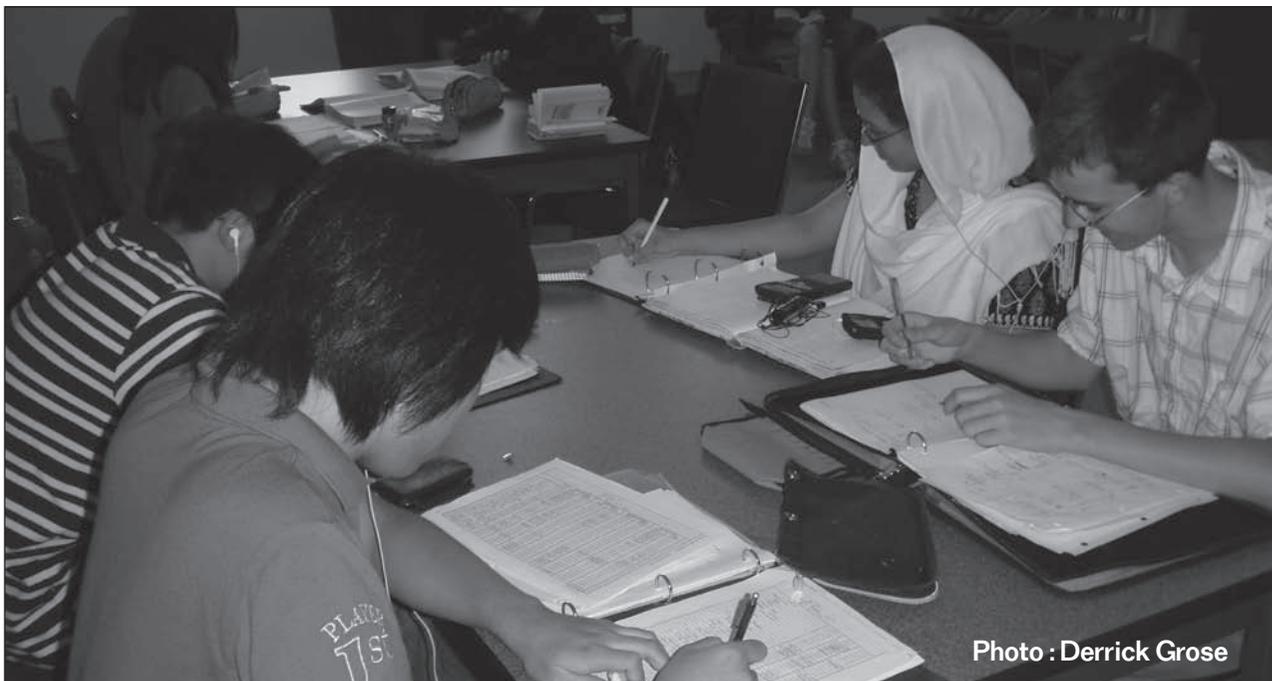
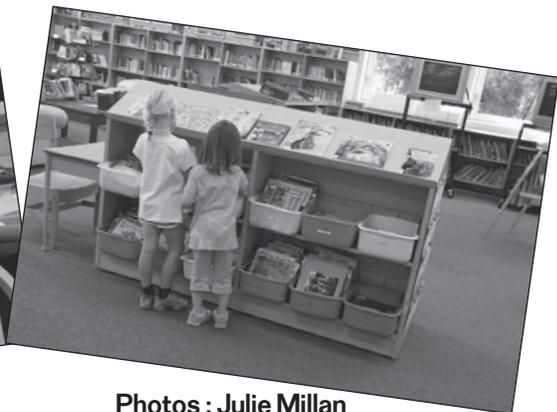


Photo : Derrick Grose



Photos : Julie Millan

Student perceptions of the library

We also surveyed a number of students in each of the schools, typically those in Grades 4 to 6. Our student sample consisted of 57% girls and the average age of the students was 10.4 years. Just under three quarters of the students were born in Canada, but only 50% listed English as their first language, with Chinese (including Mandarin and Cantonese) being the most commonly reported other language. Based on provincially available information, this sample generally represents the diversity of the student population found in these schools.

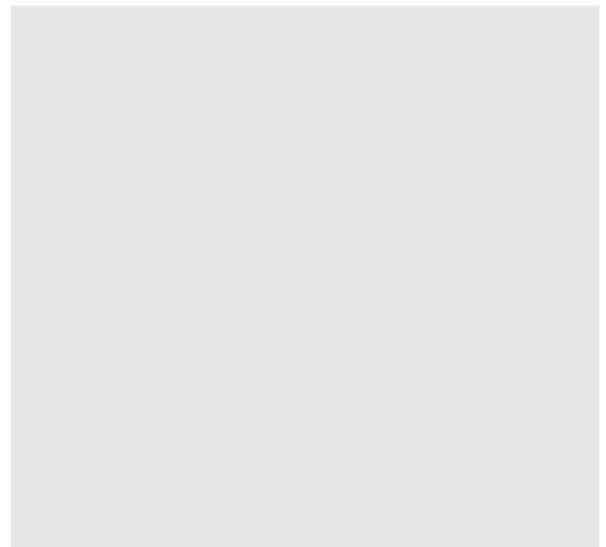
These students were very positive about their school libraries with over 60 % stating they would like to be able to use the school library more often—“It has SO MANY BOOKS!” Students were also very positive about the school librarian and the services provided by the school librarian, “We have a great librarian that is smart, nice, and is always a happy person!” Overall, 80% of the students believe they learned a lot from the librarian, and 90% of students believed their teacher-librarian to be knowledgeable and helpful.

“The single best thing about our library is our librarian, because she is always there to help us find books and always encourages us to learn with books.”

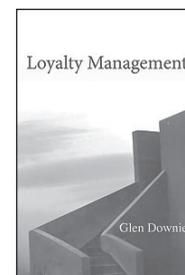
In terms of the librarians’ roles and responsibilities, the students responded that the librarian taught students how to do research (92%), and use the computer (65% to 80%). Interestingly, over 60% of the students reported that teacher-librarians came to their classrooms. Most surprisingly, only 40% of the students thought the teacher-librarian knew what kinds of books they liked to read! This may reflect students’ perceptions about the limitations of a particular school library

collection. When asked about how the library could be improved, the responses varied widely depending upon students’ interests, from “get more NEW novels” to “some teen books” to “more graphic novels and comics.”

There are many exemplary school library programs in Ontario; each of these programs has unique features, reflecting the situations of the specific schools. A key attribute of these exemplary library programs was the outstanding teaching skills and dedication of the teacher-librarians, who worked to maximize teaching and learning opportunities for students. They were strategic and resourceful in creating opportunities to alter the context within which the library program operated, in order to advance and enhance the library program. Under uncertain conditions these teacher-librarians have developed exemplary programs that support the learning of students. Imagine what could happen if sustained support was available for all libraries.



Public and School Libraries Unite under **ONE BOOK**



Sharon Mills and Maureen Casey

Collaboration with the wider community can result in tremendous opportunities. In Toronto, the Toronto Public Library and the Toronto District School Board enjoy a supportive relationship that has led to numerous partnerships over the years. Individual teacher-librarians and public librarians have developed close relationships through branches located near schools, and shared programs such as the OLA's Forest of Reading. This year, secondary schools in the TDSB participated in the TPL's Get Toronto Reading program with ONE BOOK winner Glen Downie's book of poems, *Loyalty Management*.

In April 2009, Torontonians were challenged to read one book selected by the Toronto Public Library. The TPL kindly offered to donate a class set of the book to any school that would use it with students as either a classroom text, or in a book club setting. Twenty-four Toronto secondary schools accepted the offer, and

throughout the city, our young people were introduced to Downie's poems—in which the Toronto landscape and experience are prominently featured. The TPL supported the program with a website and a reader's guide for participants. Our central instructional team created a wiki to promote collaboration and to share ideas for both introduction and extension activities that would engage and motivate students. Glen Downie appeared at schools in each area of the city, and students were also invited to join all public events surrounding the ONE BOOK program.

Teacher-librarians embraced the opportunity to implement and support the program, contacting interested teachers and setting up discussion forums in both face-to-face and online formats. Feedback from the individual schools was extremely positive. The ONE BOOK program successfully wove itself into a variety of April Poetry Month events—poetry cafés, spoken word and open mike forums—that drew students into our school libraries where they eagerly shared their creative responses with their peers.

Susan Anderson, teacher-librarian at Etobicoke Collegiate, hosted one of the TPL sponsored readings by Glen Downie: "He certainly brought the poetry to life with his explication, enabling the students to reach bigger understandings of his work. The students were fascinated with his political and personal themes as he filled in the history of his pieces. Glen Downie brought the students to poetry."

Participating teachers, teacher-librarians, and students are all grateful to Glen Downie for his work, his stories, and the opportunities they provided to our various learning communities to see our city and our daily lives through diverse, appreciative, and keen lenses. Jean Sonmor, teacher-librarian at Don Mills Collegiate Institute, arranged for three senior English classes to be in attendance for Downie's reading. Her words express TDSB's gratitude to their TPL partner: "Thank you again for doing this. It's a terrific initiative for making kids connect school to the world outside and the wonders of the TPL system." ■

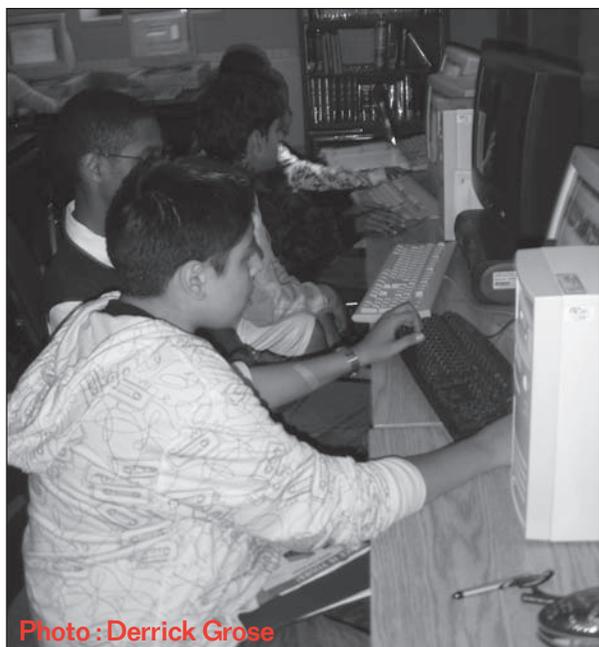


Photo: Derrick Grose

Knowledge Ontario's Digital Literacy

Diane Bédard and Anita Brooks-Kirkland

Considerable research, thinking, and discussion has contributed to the exploration of the “classroom 2.0” and the needed restructuring of the educational experience for students that incorporates the digital literacy skill set. The discussion has percolated through all levels in education and reached a critical mass—even school boards are articulating the need to embrace digital literacy.

In May of this year, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) released a 30-page report, *What If: Technology in the 21st Century Classroom*, to encourage more discussion about the integration of technology into the classroom, creating “stimulating school environments” for today’s tech-savvy students. To view the full report, visit www.opsba.org. Embracing digital literacy means that teacher-librarians and classroom teachers must change the way they teach, structure learning activities, and choose resources. Access to high-quality digital resources and quality technical support for staff and students becomes a critical component of the twenty-first-century classroom.

Building access to these kinds of educational resources and providing dependable support is the focus of Knowledge Ontario. Listed as a key technology-based resource in Ontario’s education sector by the OPSBA *What If: Technology in the 21st Century Classroom* report, Knowledge Ontario is a combination of projects—each providing a specific, unique approach to build and support digital literacy. Together, these projects can be a powerhouse supporting you and your students.

Canadian Points of View (CPOV) is one of many helpful online tools available to every school and public library in Ontario.

Knowledge Ontario projects include:

- [Resource Ontario](#) adds a rich array of online journals and databases, current and relevant information.
- [Our Ontario](#) is a primary source of digitized text, images, video and audio collections provided through the collaboration of a wide variety of museums, historical societies, public libraries, archives, and other content organizations.
- [AskON](#) provides online “chat” support, focusing on research needs and building critical thinking and research skills.
- [LearnON](#) (in the pilot phase until January 2010) provides technology tutorials to ensure that the software or applications on the site are accessible to digital newbies and tech-savvy users alike.

Not sure how to adequately use these phenomenal resources? Take a look at two examples:

Canadian Points of View Resource Helps Grade 8s Navigate a Bottled Water Controversy

“Water is an important resource that needs to be managed sustainably.” So states one of the “big ideas” or enduring understandings of the Grade 8 Science and Technology unit on water systems. Linking this to the current hot topic in the school, the teacher decided to have her students conduct research on bottled water. Witnessing the teacher’s dismay at the difficulty students were having getting to quality information on both sides of the issue, the school’s teacher-librarian directed her to the new database on offer from Resource Ontario, EBSCO’s *Canadian Points of View Reference Centre* (CPOV). This amazing resource provides context for students to differentiate fact from opinion, see both sides of controversial issues, and ask the deeper questions that will help them to formulate their own point of view. This is how it works:

On opening CPOV, one is presented with a spectrum of categories, from Aboriginal People to Women’s Issues. Students can select a category and then drill down to related topics, all of them current and controversial. For each topic there is an overview, then point and counterpoint articles presenting both sides of the issue. Each article starts with a thesis and a summary, followed by a succinct presentation of the



arguments. The articles conclude with a ponder section. This section encourages students to ask deeper questions to drive further research. A bibliography points them to related books, articles, and websites. For every topic there is also a Guide to Critical Analysis, with excerpts from the text expressing related facts and opinions, providing useful material for teaching the reading literacy skills that will help students discern the difference. From this topic framework, students can link to a host of related magazine and newspaper articles and other materials on the topic for deeper research.

This database provides an instructional framework to help students get to the good stuff, develop the critical literacy skills to make sense of what they're reading, and broaden their perspective on issues. From Grade 8s exploring the controversies of bottled water to Grade 12 students studying difficult world issues—racial profiling, enemy combatants, the case of Canadian Omar Khadr, the “conflict diamond” trade, and more—CPOV is both a topic and a critical thinking pathfinder. Check it out!

Activity to Try: Live the War of 1812

Using the searching capacity of the Our Ontario portal (<http://search.ourontario.ca/search>), the following is a thought-provoking history activity that will engage your students and integrate the digitized primary-source resources into their learning. Live the War of 1812 through the reporters and the newspaper coverage of the day-to-day events from June 1812 to April 1815. You can now access and follow the actual newspaper clippings as they report on the action.

Here's a specific clipping to get started:

Tuesday November 17, 1812, from the *Kingston Gazette*—coverage of the attack by the American fleet on the town of Kingston, and the resulting gun battles and responses of the Loyalists (<http://images.maritimehistoryofthegreatlakes.ca/details.asp?r=vs&ID=1917&number=5>).

Want a truly breathtaking example of the time lag that distance imposed on the flow of information in that era? View the full page this clipping came from on page two of the *Kingston Gazette*, November 17, 1812: http://knowledge.library.utoronto.ca/newspapers/browse/kg/kg1/KG_1812_11_17_1.

On this page you'll discover that in the same day's paper the following news-worthy items are all presented as

current events:

- **York, October 24, 1812**—Major General Sheaffe's arrival at York to take the Oaths of Office of President, commanding his Majesty's Forces in Upper Canada, and his comments on being sworn into office to replace the recently buried Major General Brock
- **Fort George, October 16, 1812**—the funeral procession and interment services for Major General Brock and his provincial aid-de-camp, Lieut. Col. M'Donell (note the early use of text graphics in layout)
- **Halifax, September 25, 1812**—ship log from the HMS *Guerriere* which had seen action, and was damaged
- **Quebec, October 22 by way of St John's, NF; Sept 24 from the captain of the Brig Syren; dated August 29, 1812 from Oporto**—Lord Wellington entered Madrid on the 12th and by the 14th, the garrison had surrendered.
- **London, England, August 12, 1812**—regiments from London and from Barbados were being ordered to Halifax.
- **Kingston, November 17, 1812**—detailed local description of the attack by the American fleet on the town of Kingston

This is quite the range of dates, depending on how far away the news happened. Pin these locations on the satellite view of a Google map for a visual representation, and explore how the information might have travelled. (There were few roads back then, so don't use a hybrid map.) Questions to debate with your students: how would this information lag have affected the decision-making process for political and military leaders? Do you think this had an impact on the war of 1812? Does this happen today?

And finally, note the editor's closing comments about “disappointment in procuring paper obliges us to publish on a smaller sheet... and want of time sacrificing the number of pages”, raising the excellent discussion question of “What's interfering with the usual supply of paper and imposing staffing restrictions?” ■

Educator and teacher-librarian Diane Bédard is the program manager of Learn Ontario, and lives in Windsor. Anita Brooks-Kirkland is the Information Technology Library Consultant with Waterloo Region District School Board, and sits on the Knowledge Ontario board of directors.

Digging the Digital Research: Using Diigo to see out of my world

Leslie Whidden

My job as a High school Information Professional (H.I.P. TL) is to find ways of making information searching as efficient and productive as possible. That means investigating current trends as well as teaching traditional methods of information seeking and evaluation. So, this past summer I began using a new-to-me tool for my Internet research: Diigo, pronounced “dee-go”.

Diigo is a social networking tool, which has transformed my searches from uphill battles to BONANZAS! It is an essential tool for Internet research, *and* it has the added value of teaching the user some basic 2.0 skills and terminology common to other social networking tools. It fits in with the Facebook and MSN culture of my students and gives me a view into my students’ world. Diigo also enables me to effectively engage students in the research process. You can teach students to use Diigo to accumulate and organize digital resources, then teach them to apply the same thinking skills for both print and digital resources: evaluation and judgment, the two most valuable real-world skills they’ll need.

In a nutshell, Diigo is a social bookmarking and annotation tool: social because the users of Diigo generally make their libraries of bookmarked sites public, that is, open to all users. What that means to you is that you get to piggyback on the research results of others. So, for example, if 39 other researchers have previously bookmarked and tagged the site you’ve just saved then they probably share your interest. You are then allowed to peruse the bookmarked collections of these 39 other users and bookmark other URLs they have tagged and saved in that same vein of interest. Voilà, you find yourself with a wealth of sites you may never have had the time or persistence to find on your own.

At an introductory level, Diigo addresses two frustrations in building good online research results: first, finding good sites, and second, saving these sites for easy retrieval later on.

First, finding good sites: it’s a difficult process to hone in on the right keywords needed to find relevant information, and especially frustrating for adolescents who have little patience and perseverance. Diigo users tag their sites with descriptive words that are personally meaningful. These tags link to other users who have tagged material using the same descriptive language. These other users have the potential to become gold mines of research information for the student researcher. Tagging is in itself good practice in learning how to find useful keywords. Students will still need to apply the skills to evaluate the credibility of the information, but that’s another lesson.

Second, saving the sites for easy retrieval: users bookmark (save to favourites) the site to Diigo, which is Internet accessible from any computer. All search engines allow bookmarking, but you can’t access your bookmarks from any but the computer you saved to. Networked school computers don’t allow you to save bookmarks at all. So, saving bookmarked sites to Diigo gives you access to your personal bookmark library from any computer, anytime. That’s something worth paying for, but like all social networking apps, it’s free (www.amphi.com/~technology/techtalks/online/nov08/bestpract.htm).

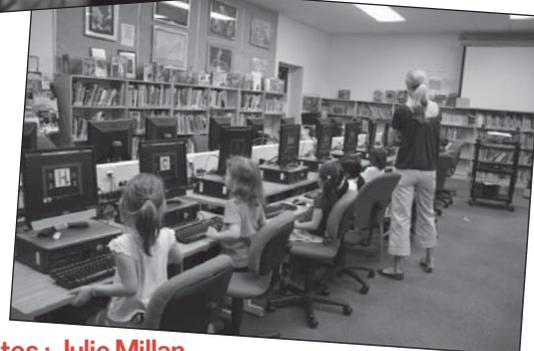
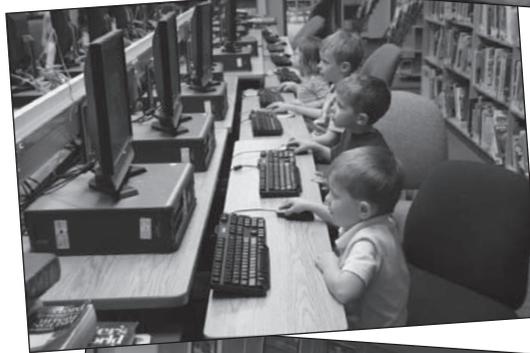
At an intermediate level, Diigo promotes “individual collaboration”. Diigo gives the user tools to highlight text and add comments. You choose whether you want your comments to be private or public. Comments, which appear as yellow sticky notes, become

visible as the cursor runs over top of highlighted text and disappear as the cursor passes. How does this benefit the student or teacher? In the same way we use sticky notes in an essay or book: to make connections, choose good passages, ask questions. It is your choice to make your highlights and notes private or public. Making your comments public allows Internet readers to add their comments and responses to a conversation thread, with speakers identifiable by username.

The highest degree of complexity is in the group structure. In a school setting, teachers can open a Diigo educator account and invite students to join. The teacher chooses the articles to be read and determines student requirements. Students can be instructed to highlight and comment on the articles, discuss, ask questions, and link to further URLs. When designated private all group activity remains visible and accessible to invited group members only—comments visible on an article within the group are invisible to the public looking at the same article. Teachers can monitor student involvement by watching the quantity and quality of the online interaction of each student. For more information the Diigo FAQ centre answers questions most often asked by teachers: [http://help.diigo.com/Diigo_Educator_Account - FAQ](http://help.diigo.com/Diigo_Educator_Account_FAQ).

At the time of this article, I have three ongoing Diigo groups. The most active is Library 2.0: in this group we focus on the direction that library practice is taking in the digital age and how it impacts our practice in school libraries. There is a wealth of information to be gathered online from professional Library bloggers and twitterers. Diigo Group allows us to park the information that we find individually and return to it later to discuss as a group. A common feature with social networking tools is the “similar searches” feature. Related Groups on Diigo provides links to other groups with interests related to the bookmarks your group has accumulated.

Everything you need to know to get started with Diigo can be found by connecting to the Diigo Help Outline (www.diigo.com/help/outline). Take the time to see outside of your world—it really is fun. ■



Photos : Julie Millan

Libraries Come Together Over Comics | Douglas Davey

If the average citizen has a mental picture of what a comics creator looks like, it's probably one of three archetypes. There's the quiet, workman-like graphic artist of the mid-century. He (it's always he) sits at a drafting desk, ink brush in hand, while a cigarette and fedora rest nearby. Or, perhaps, this average citizen imagines the underground indie artist, huddled in a basement working away feverishly at some tortured bit of self-revelation which is destined for the back corner of the local comics shop. More likely, the image is that of the delayed-adolescent fanboy, unleashing his fantasies of lust and power on a distant audience.

What each of these archetypes have in common is the image of a single creator, toiling alone at his or her work. While much of the work of comic creation remains a solitary endeavour, what libraries do to get the creations into the hands of readers is more collaborative than ever before. Through promotion, reviews, articles, presentations, and even word of mouth, librarians are working together to get the best comic literature into the hands of our patrons.

Let's start with book reviews. Book reviews are like relatives: you have to have them, they can even be fun sometimes, but the sheer volume of them can also drive you near to, or even over, the proverbial brink. And, of course, reviews can provoke frustration, confusion, or even anger. (As a book reviewer of some years' standing, I know whereof I speak.) Don't get me wrong, I love reviews, I really do. And when it comes to writing them, I enjoy promoting excellent books while also saving libraries' precious purchasing dollars by warning against inferior fare. What I didn't know when I began writing reviews was that I would soon find myself part of a community. A book review brings together a creator, a journal editor, a reviewer, and a reader—all in a matrix of 250 words or less. And it doesn't stop there. A review might then be referred to, questioned, or used in any of a thousand ways as the collaborative process continues.

A great example of comics-related collaboration amongst librarians is the Graphic Novels in Libraries (GNLIB) listserv, where participants can discuss ideas, share thoughts, make recommendations, request opinions, or just read what others have to say. There is now a substantial archive of posts that can be mined for all sorts of information: booklists, recommended titles, organizational questions, etc.

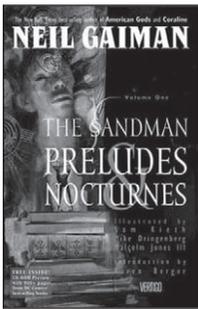
Recently I sat on a panel (on Mother's Day—shame on you, organizers!) at the Toronto Comics Arts Festival entitled "Can Libraries Save Graphic Novels?" Also on the panel were other librarians who felt strongly about the value of graphic novels in libraries. Now, if someone had told me when I was a kid that the comics I loved so much would become a topic of such high-level discourse or would be so embraced by libraries, I would have told you that you had eaten too many Pop Rocks™. But, there we were, librarians and bibliophiles of every stripe, sharing ideas about how to make our libraries better. And, at the risk of sounding corny, isn't that what library collaboration is all about?

Now, considering how well comics and librarians can go together, here are some comics that feature librarians:



Birds of Prey, Vol. 1: Of Like Minds by Gail Simone

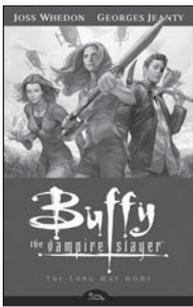
It's a sign of the times: long-time librarian and superhero Batgirl is now Oracle, a computer-tech information specialist. Having lost the use of her legs, she uses her keen intellect and techno-wizardry to battle Gotham's never-ending supply of baddies. Along the way she recruits some other super-powered ladies and together they form the Birds of Prey. (teen/adult)



***The Sandman, Vol. 1: Preludes and Nocturnes* by Neil Gaiman**

OK, Lucien may be a skinny, bookish, stereotype of a librarian, but that makes sense in the archetypal dream world of Sandman, where the bespectacled librarian watches over all of the books that have ever been dreamed, or ever will

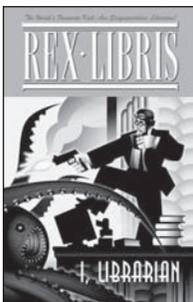
be. (adult)



***The Long Way Home (Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Season 8, Vol. 1)* by Joss Whedon**

Just because the TV show is over doesn't mean you have to give up on the idea of ever seeing Giles again. Buffy creator Joss Whedon picks up where the show left off, continuing the story in this volume, which features yet

another British, bookish (and lovable) stereotype of a librarian. (teen/adult)



***Rex Libris, Vol. 1: I, Librarian* by James Turner**

No account of librarians in comics would be complete without a tip of the hat to Rex Libris, Head Librarian at Middleton Public Library. If you took the *Men In Black* concept, threw in some righteous anger, and set it in a library, you would get *Rex*

Libris. (adult) ■

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www.wintergreen.ca

Forest of Reading 2009

Winners

Blue Spruce Award: Mélanie Watt, *Chester* (Kids Can Press/University of Toronto Press)

Silver Birch Express Award: Alan Cumyn, *Dear Sylvia* (Groundwood Books/HarperCollins Canada)

Silver Birch Fiction Award: Mahtab Narsimhan, *The Third Eye* (Dundurn Group/University of Toronto Press)

Silver Birch Non-fiction Award: Kevin Sylvester, *Gold Medal for Weird* (Kids Can Press/University of Toronto Press)

Red Maple Fiction Award: Norah McClintock, *Out of the Cold* (Scholastic Canada, Ltd.)

Red Maple Non-fiction Award: Elizabeth MacLeod, *Royal Murder: The Deadly Intrigue of Ten Sovereigns* (Annick Press/Firefly Books)

White Pine Award: Cory Doctorow, *Little Brother* (Tor Books/H.B. Fenn and Company)

Honour Books

Blue Spruce Award:

Honour Book #1—*Such a Prince* by Dan Bar-El, illustrated by John Manders (Clarion)

Honour Book #2—*Stanley at Sea* by Linda Bailey, illustrated by Bill Slavin (Kids Can Press)

Silver Birch Express Award:

Honour Book #1—*Feather Brain* by Maureen Bush (Orca Book Publishers)

Honour Book #2—*Boy in Motion: The Rick Hansen Story* by Ainslie Manson (Greystone Books)

Silver Birch Fiction Award:

Honour Book #1—*Swindle* by Gordon Korman (Scholastic Canada, Ltd.)

Honour Book #2—*Eye of the Crow: The Boy Sherlock Holmes* by Shane Peacock (Tundra Books)

Silver Birch Non-fiction Award:

Honour Book #1—*Everything But the Kitchen Sink: Weird Stuff You Didn't Know About Food* by Frieda Wishinsky and Elizabeth MacLeod (Scholastic Canada, Ltd.)

Honour Book #2—*Brave Deeds: How One Family Saved Many* by Ann Alma (Groundwood Books)

Red Maple Fiction Award:

Honour Book #1—*Egghead* by Caroline Pignat (Red Deer Press)

Honour Book #2—*Frost* by Nicole Luiken (Great Plains)

Red Maple Non-fiction Award:

Honour Book #1—*SOS: Stories of Survival* by Ed Butts (Tundra Books)

Honour Book #2—*Fire on the Water* by Wendy Lewis (James Lorimer & Company, Ltd.)

White Pine Award:

Honour Book #1—*After River* by Donna Milner (HarperCollins Canada)

Honour Book #2—*Gravity Journal* by Gail Sidonie Sobat (Great Plains Publications)



Mélanie Watt talks Blue Spruce.



The S line up



Check out Kevin Sylvester's Silver Birch Non-fiction Award!

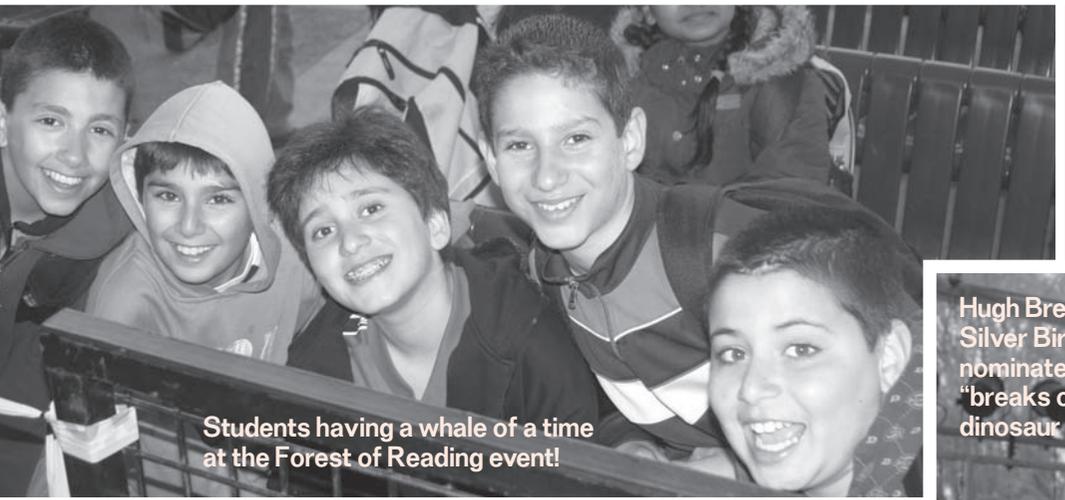
Festival of Trees



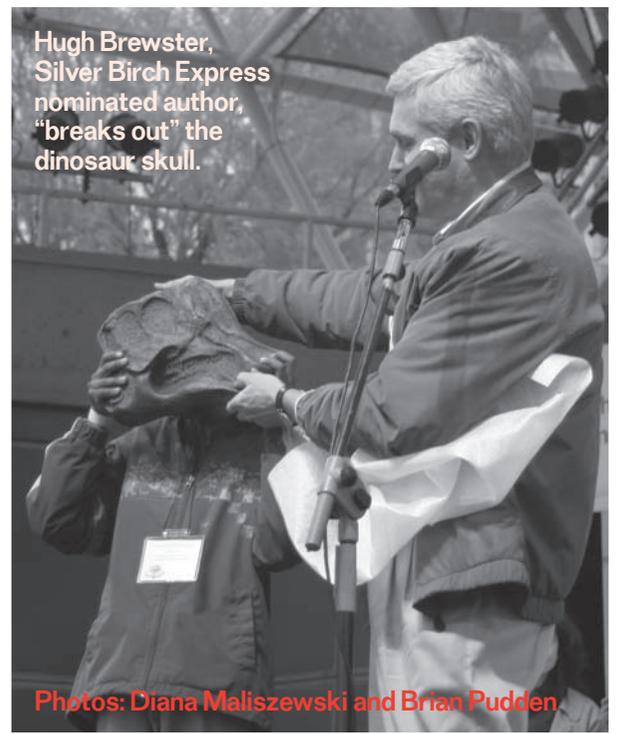
The Silver Birch Express nominated authors line up for the award ceremony.



A student feels the reading power!



Students having a whale of a time at the Forest of Reading event!



Hugh Brewster, Silver Birch Express nominated author, "breaks out" the dinosaur skull.

Photos: Diana Maliszewski and Brian Puddlen



Students get collaborative on the Story Starter Wall.



Mahtab Narsimhan receives the Silver Birch Fiction Award.



A few moves from the *So You Think You Can Dance* breakdancing crew...



Katherine Holubits for the White Pine student.



Some students snuggle up to the Toronto Maple Leaf's bear.



A little entertainment from MuchMusic's Video on Trial comedienne, Sabrina Jalees.



Elizabeth MacLeod is happy to receive the Red Maple Award for Non-fiction.



The nominated authors for the Red Maple Award for Fiction and Non-fiction participate in the award ceremony.



bitsky, nominated author
Pine Award, poses with a



Norah McClintock accepts her
Red Maple Fiction Award.



Gina McMurchy-Barber shows us
how to "read the bones".



Students build a Jenga™ tower as fast
as they can to win free books!



and



Kevin Sylvester, Silver Birch
Non-fiction Award winner,
signs copies of
Gold Medal for Weird.

Photos: Diana Maliszewski and Brian Pudden

Looking for D

Derrick Grose and Diana Maliszewski

If you're reading this article, it might be because you recognize that different types of media can be important allies in boosting the image of your school library. On the other hand, you could be wondering why library staff should take valuable time from other activities to work on building a positive public profile with the media.

Media collaboration doesn't guarantee your school library "fame and glory". It is unlikely to inflate the number of requests for your autograph, or increase your library's ultimate value in the eyes of your patrons. It can have several practical effects, however.

Media recognition of work done by students and teachers in libraries can be a powerful motivating factor: it reinforces the message that their work is valuable. Most school libraries are publicly funded, so they are accountable to the community. The media can help give taxpayers an understanding of how the school and its library serve the interests of students and the broader community. The publicity generated by a dynamic school library may attract new students, as well as additional funding to a school. Stories from, and about, school libraries can also raise the general public's awareness about issues researched and studied in the library, such as literacy, social justice, and the environment.

Ross Virgo, Manager of Public Affairs and Communications for the York Region District School Board, explains just why the media might be interested in your school library: "Events are newsworthy when they command attention, pique curiosity, or provoke emotional responses. News editors are always on the lookout for stories that feature unusual or unexpected human behavior: exceptional generosity during hard times; outstanding achievement in the face of adversity; deep compassion in response to anger and conflict. These are the 'hooks' that capture the interest of news people and make them want to cover an event."

In media training workshops, Sharlene Hunter, Coordinator of Communications at the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, notes that issues and events that affect children's education and lives are frequently

550 students sign petition to lengthen library hours; Principal says staff constraints.(GTA)

"550 students sign petition to lengthen library hours; Principal says staff constraints.(GTA). ." The Toronto Star (Toronto, Ontario). (May : Periodicals). Gale. SOLS - Oakville Public Library. 16 July 2009 <<http://find.galegroup.com/itx/infomark.do?&contentSet=IAC- Documents&type=retrieve&tabID=T004&prodId=CPI&docId=CJ1990>

Full Text: COPYRIGHT 2009 Torstar Syndication Services, a division

Byline: Kristin Rushowy

The students at York Mills Collegiate love their library - so much so they demanding the school reinstate morning hours so they have more time

Two Toronto Star articles that dealt with
(© 2009 Torstar Syndication Services, a division)

newsworthy. She explains that reporters are looking for stories that are new or timely. They are attracted to conflict and controversy and to stories that will appeal to a wide audience. They like stories that are relevant to other events in the news or that are "simply surprising."

Jeff Keay, Head of Media Relations at CBC English Services, sums it up nicely: "It has to have that magical interesting 'hmmm' factor when you see it, hear it, or read it."

Having identified a newsworthy event in the school library, library staff can assist the media in bringing the story to the public's attention. Anna Caputo, Communications Officer for the Toronto District School Board, suggests preparing stories for the media. "If you have an event happening, or you want to share some good news, write an article and send the editor photos to accompany it. This way, if they have space, they can drop in the story. Photos really add to a story. However, it's important to have signed media release forms for photographs of students."

Ms. Caputo also suggests that it is a good idea to develop a relationship with the editor of the local community papers to share information about school events. A media advisory or news release should be sent out a week before the event. News editors review the releases and choose which events they will attend. Even if a reporter cannot attend an event, if enough detail is provided, a media advisory will sometimes form the basis of a story.

Not every story will win the competition for media attention, unfortunately. Jeff Keay says that in his

Dividends? Invest in the Media!

Principal says hours cut at York Mills Collegiate due to
May 5, 2009): GT03. CPIO (Canadian Periodicals)
199063839&source=gale&srcprod=CPI&us
Division of Toronto Star Newspapers Ltd.
so that half of them signed a petition
e time to study.

with school libraries in a positive way.
Division of Toronto Star Newspapers Ltd.)

Library's secret Volume! Volume! Volume!; Bitten by the reading bug, Scarborough high school students borrow up to 100 books for summer.(GTA)
"Library's secret Volume! Volume! Volume!; Bitten by the reading bug, Scarborough high school students borrow up to 100 books for summer.(GTA). ." The Toronto Star (Toronto, Ontario). (June 19, 2009): GT01. CPIO (Canadian Periodicals). Gale. SOLS - Oakville Public Library. 16 July 2009 <<http://find.galegroup.com/itx/infomark.do?&contentSet=IAC-Documents&type=retrieve&tabID=T004&prodId=CPI&docId=CJ202064033&source=gale&srcprod=CPI&us>>
Full Text:COPYRIGHT 2009 Torstar Syndication Services, a division of Toronto Star Newspapers Ltd.
Byline: Kristin Rushowy
More than 24,700, and counting.
For a high school with just 550 students, the number of books borrowed from the library at Sir Robert L. Borden Business and Technical Institute is the highest in the Toronto board, higher than secondary schools four times its size.

experience, editors get a lot of media releases and phone calls. He reminds library staff, "What is important to you or your organization may not be important to the media outlet. This is the most fundamental and frequent miscalculation that occurs when organizations pitch to media." To improve the odds, he advises, "Keep it simple. Keep it relevant. Have your facts, dates, events, and points of contact all available." Whenever a school library event does get coverage, it's a good idea to notify the board's communications department so that it can be included in daily media clippings. Media successes should be shared, and you can often append electronic newspaper coverage to your library website.

It is important to know why you are seeking media attention. Sharlene Hunter observes that whether they are giving an interview or preparing a media release, library staff can influence the shape of the story the public will read, hear, or see. Reporters put the most important information or the "lead" at the beginning of their stories; so key messages should be delivered first in a clear, digestible form. They should be followed by appropriate details and quotable quotes. It is helpful to the reporters if sources remember to include the elements of a good story, such as the 5 Ws, human interest, drama, conflict, or controversy.

Keep in mind that the goal of interaction with the media should be to provide "positive drama," rather than to "fuel controversy." Focus on the message you want to send about your school library and avoid buying into a negative question, speculating, getting defensive, or commenting on something outside your area of responsibility.

This last point is particularly important. When dealing with the media, remember your position within the school or school district. Although advocacy is an important part of work in school libraries, staff are subject to policies mandated by employers and elected politicians. Most boards encourage their staff to share good news and information with the community, but it is a good idea to discuss plans for contacting the media with the school administration so as to avoid conflicts with other school activities, and to give administrators a chance to become involved and support the library's efforts. Principals can recognize sensitive issues and help staff steer clear of potential conflicts of interest. It is advisable to refer questions about board policy, government funding, incidents at the school, or anything that would be controversial with implications beyond the school, to the staff in charge of communications at the board's central office where they may have key messages prepared or be able to put reporters in touch with the correct spokesperson who is an expert in a particular area.

So, what are you doing in your library? More importantly, what are teachers and students and other members of the community doing in your school library? You know, and they know, better than anyone. Wouldn't it be great if more people knew? The media can help you get the word out, to engage more people, and to win more resources and support for school libraries. Communicate with the media about your school library. A thoughtful investment in time could bring many dividends. ■

Weighing in on Wikipedia

Pat Jermey

Warning: this article contains information verified through Wikipedia, and has been edited by online collaboration.

Full disclosure: I am a dinosaur. I did my undergraduate research with books, and sometimes cutting-edge microfiche. I produced my written work with a typewriter, with footnotes—the Waterloo of many an error-free page. I remember the technological advancement brought with the IBM Selectric: a typewriter with the ability to change fonts by substituting a different mechanical “type ball” and, miracle of miracles, correction tape!

I became a computer user through word processing. Imagine being able to correct typing errors without any visible evidence, and make copies without carbon paper or onionskin. Files were somehow kept—although sometimes lost—right inside the machine. It was true progress.

At about this time, my pioneering colleagues were experimenting with the Internet. Remember the “freenet”—Internet service without an Internet provider? Free! And when researching, you would type in predictive URLs. For example, a search for Gordie Howe probably began by typing www.gordiehowe.com. If that didn't work, you substituted various extensions.

Then along came Yahoo! The exclamation mark indicated the relief that someone had finally brought order to the Wild West. Yahoo! was technically an indexed site, not a search engine. An index: sort of like a library catalogue. Now, we were talking! I recall being proudly informed that librarians even had their own Librarians' Internet Index, at www.lii.org—“websites you can trust”.

But Google has evolved as the big player. Although we used to encourage that a variety of search engines be used for more complete results, Google has become the undisputed market leader. At my school, Google is a quick link on the Internet home page. It is an indispensable tool for accessing information quickly and effectively.

Evolution is a slow and passive process, but eventually the quickest and most effective survive. My own technological expertise has gradually evolved. I am definitely not an early adopter; I still don't text, Facebook, or use Web 2.0. When—or if—I need to, I will adopt those technologies. Meanwhile, like many of our students, I am a passive consumer, waiting until the most user-friendly products have emerged from the

primordial sludge.

And from that sludge, Wikipedia has crawled. It is now the 800-pound gorilla in the academic research room. As with so many technological shifts, it has enthusiastic supporters and wrath-of-God naysayers. As with so many technological shifts, I think evolution will eventually determine Wikipedia's fate. But in the meantime, what is its role in school libraries and research?

I have heard teacher-librarians say that it should be de-listed from student access. I have heard teachers threaten classes that it had better not appear on their monitors during research time. Academics bemoan the laziness of the Wikipedia generation. However, when I am researching basic information, I often use it. Yes, my name is Pat Jermey, and I use Wikipedia.

As teachers, we are often reluctant to welcome change. This sometimes begins as a fear of the unknown, and then evolves into a concern for academic rigor. We are justified in that reluctance. The public education system acts for society as weight on a pendulum: by slowing down extreme or rapid motion, we create the opportunity for more thoughtful reaction. Looking back, I remember the panic when students dared to transfer files on floppy disks brought from home. Now we encourage flash drives and e-mail to improve learning opportunities. Teachers reference YouTube and post assignments on websites. Our pedagogy has evolved to stay current with students' interests and experiences.

So, as with cell phones and iPods, Wikipedia is technology we must learn to live with by informing ourselves, and developing appropriate guidelines and restrictions. When I was a student, encyclopedias were considered an invaluable beginning, but you would never submit a formal paper with a mere encyclopedia in the bibliography. Today, Wikipedia is often a useful starting point for research, but should never be the finish. The old rule of multiple sources still applies, and Wikipedia can provide excellent sources through its references and external links. For research requiring popular culture analysis or really current information, Wikipedia is certainly the source to check. Of course it can contain inaccuracies, but so can print material. Of course, content can change, so it must be accurately cited with date. Of course there can be bias in entries, which is what we teach in media studies. Students need to understand the wiki editing process, and to decode the revision history of a site. Just as we teach our students Internet awareness skills when using Google to select research sites, we need to teach Wikipedia skills.

In evolutionary terms, you ignore the 800-pound gorilla at your peril. ■



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Meet the Author & Illustrator

Janine Schaub

Teaching Librarian: Collaboration is the theme for this issue of *The Teaching Librarian*. Linda, can you describe the nature of the collaborative work that took place between you and illustrator, Bill Slavin, in your recent picture book, *Stanley at Sea*?

Linda Bailey: I'm not sure that what we do can be called "collaboration," at least in the traditional sense of the word. Collaboration to me means that we would get together, brainstorm ideas, discuss characters, storyline, etc. In fact, we work quite separately. I live in Vancouver; Bill lives in Millbrook, Ontario. For *Stanley at Sea*, I wrote a manuscript based on watching my dog down at my local dog beach. The manuscript went to Kids Can Press, and when they accepted it, they sent it to Bill, who set to work on the illustrations, which he created in his studio in Millbrook. That doesn't sound very collaborative, however, Bill and I did talk about the idea for this story a long time before he ever received the manuscript. He was visiting Vancouver for an awards ceremony for one of our books, and I was delighted to have a chance to show him and his wife Esperanca around my city. As part of the tour, I included a walk down to Vancouver's dog beach. I outlined my yet-unwritten idea for a dogs-in-a-boat story, and Bill liked it a lot. Neither of us knew whether Kids Can would go for it, but just in case, Bill took photos of the Dog Beach and the Burrard Street Bridge and Vancouver skyline. I'm sure he had to hold onto the photos for a long time 'til the accepted final manuscript showed up at his house. But when it did, he was ready.

TL: Bill, most publishing companies limit the amount of collaboration between authors and illustrators. What was your publisher's stance? Has the nature or the amount of collaboration changed as you and Linda have worked on different book projects together?

Bill Slavin: Certainly in my experience, our publisher has preferred to keep collaboration to the minimum. However, over the many books Linda and I have worked on together, a friendship has grown that includes frequent e-mails back and forth. As a result, I would say that our collaboration has increased. Linda, however, is very respectful of the autonomy of the artist, and most

of her input comes through anonymously via our editor. On the flip side, she is a very visual writer, and there have been occasions where we have hashed things out directly if she feels something is crucial to the story that the art has missed. But that is the exception.

Linda can be very convincing, so I'm always cautious as to how much "face-to-face" I want to see happen! Fortunately for me, as illustrator, she writes with a strong sense of the visual, and that is clearly communicated, in most cases, through the words of the story. I think our partnership also works well because we share a similar way of looking at the world. That partnering of like-minded people is the true art of effective collaboration. Although I know Linda would like to collaborate more closely, and perhaps some day we will, so far we seem to have struck a balance that works.

TL: Some writers and illustrators prefer minimal contact with each other during the process of publishing a book. What works best for you and why?

LB: Mostly, writers and illustrators work separately, and often they never meet. Bill and I have shared in the creation of ten books, so we have been brought together at awards, festivals, etc. over the years, and have gotten to know one another as friends. We do talk about our books when we meet, and we e-mail each other frequently, but usually the books we discuss are either future books or already published books. It's rare for us to talk about a book as it's actually being written or illustrated, other than a comment such as "I'm having fun." For myself, I don't really talk to anybody about my writing until it's at firm first-draft stage.

Note, too, that during the publication process, there are other people involved—primarily the editor and the book designer, but also other voices at the publisher's that have comments on both text and art. It's the job of the editor to be the conduit and arbiter of all communication, so that we will end up with a unified vision for the book. Comments from Bill about text or from me about art are therefore best directed to the editor, and not to each other.

Linda Bailey & Bill Slavin

BS: If I fall into one camp or the other, I'm the sort of illustrator who prefers less, rather than more contact. The reason for this is that I'm very impressionable. I think that's a quality that probably helps my illustration, as I trust my first impressions as the clearest and most sincere response to a text. Too much communication with the author can have the effect of muddying that first impression, imposing the author's vision over my own. Although some would say, "Good, that's as it should be," I sincerely believe that picture book creation is a true partnership of equals, and just as the author has responsibility to the written narrative, the illustrator has the ultimate responsibility to the visual narrative.

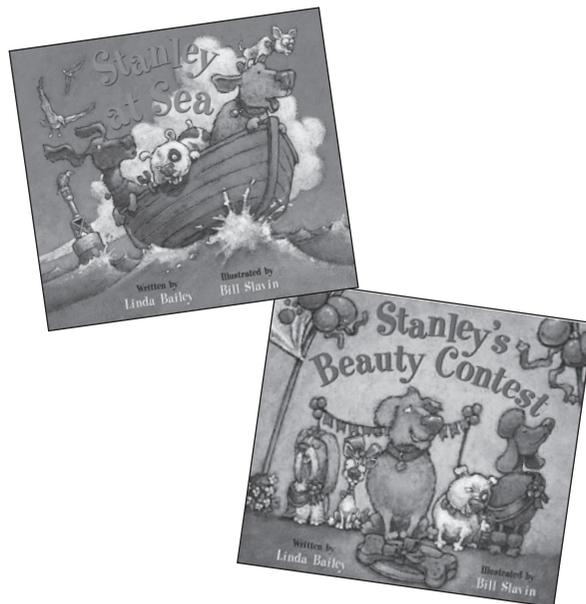


TL: What are some of the concerns you have as a writer when you hand off your story to be illustrated?

LB: As a writer, I am blessed (or maybe cursed) with a highly visual imagination. I see pictures as I write, and as a humorous writer, I often "see" funny gags. I also sometimes envision possibilities for telling parts of a story visually without any words. As a writer, I'm not always sure how best to express these non-textual ideas, and I occasionally feel concern about the possibility of losing visual jokes or story elements that seem integral to the story. At the same time, I want to leave lots of room for the illustrator to add wonderful new visual jokes and story elements—especially when the illustrator is a hilarious and hugely gifted artist like Bill. In the best of all possible worlds (which I think Bill and I often achieve), the humour and the narrative ideas of both writer and illustrator come together in a mutually enriching way, making for a complex "whole" that is much stronger and funnier than the individual parts.

TL: You've been involved in art direction and layout work when you worked for a publisher in Ottawa, Bill. How has this experience influenced your work as an illustrator?

BS: When I illustrate a book, I really look at the book in its entirety: pictures and text. I don't think I'm unique in this approach, but my experience with the production end of bookmaking early in my career perhaps gave me more of a sense of this than some. Right from the start



continued on p. 40...

of a project I'm thinking about where the text will fall on the page, how the art will relate to it, etc. I've worked with designers who were reluctant to provide me with set type at the layout stage of my artwork, and I found that very frustrating, to say the least, and counter-intuitive when one is working with type and pictures as closely integrated as they are in picture books. On occasion, I have even gone as far as to set the type myself, especially when it has been an important visual element to the page.

TL: Illustration is an act of interpretation. Was there anything about Bill's interpretation of your writing that intrigued or surprised you?

LB: I have been lucky that Bill's visual interpretations have generally been very close to my own imaginings. I have been surprised at times—and delighted—to see an "extra story" told only in the pictures. An example is the little "romance" that Bill created for Gassy Jack in *Stanley's Party*, in which Gassy Jack progressively courts a big-eyed, be-ribboned female dog—sharing spaghetti, doing a tango, and then unceremoniously dumping his

new girlfriend when the people come home. I have also loved what Bill has added to the dogs' characterization: Nutsy as bug-eyed, neurotic Chihuahua; Gassy Jack as vaguely unsavory bulldog; and most of all, the genial good nature and goofiness of Stanley. Once in a while, Bill and I have had different notions of some element of story, and we have had to work things out, generally through the editor, but once (because we were together in the same place) directly. However, different viewpoints are rarer than one might imagine, given that we don't ever actually talk stories through.

Fans can continue to enjoy Stanley's antics—his most recent adventure, *Stanley's Beauty Contest*, was released in the spring of 2009. ■

Linda Bailey and Bill Slavin's picture book, *Stanley at Sea* was one of the Ontario Library Association's Blue Spruce nominees for 2009.



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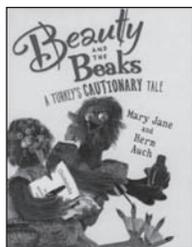
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Collaboration is vital in literature. Books are by nature a collaborative effort—authors, illustrators, editors, publishers, and bookstores have to work collaboratively to get their masterpieces into the hands of readers. But, perhaps one of the best examples of collaboration in literature involves the writers and illustrators of picture books. Even the reader becomes part of the collaborative process of picture books!

Here are some of the most intriguing new picture books we heartily recommend.



Beauty and the Beaks

Written and Illustrated by
Mary Jane and Herm Auch
2007
9780823419906

Sample Curriculum Links:

Primary and Junior Language
Arts: Reading and Media
Literacy
Intermediate Arts: Visual
Arts

Summary:

In this delightful tale, Beauty,

a pretentious chicken, owns a beauty shop where “chicks” can get the full beauty treatment: hairstyling, pedicures, and manicures. One day a newcomer named Lance makes his way into the beauty shop. Lance, a gorgeous, plump turkey, boasts that he’s been invited to a special feast. All the other chicks in town discover they haven’t been invited, and feel jilted.

Beauty sets out to discover why only Lance has been invited—and learns Lance IS the feast! Beauty uses her beauty shop skills to give Lance an “eggstreme” makeover so that he does not “eggspire.” Using light humour and a wonderful play on words, this book will be a hit with all ages.



Help Me, Mr. Mutt!

Janet Stevens
Illustrated by Susan Stevens
Crummel
2008
9780152046286

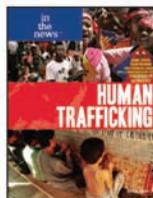
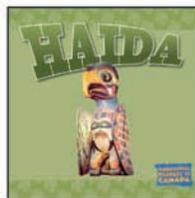
Sample Curriculum Links:

Primary Language Arts:
Writing and Media Literacy
Junior Language Arts: Media
Literacy
Primary Math



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Summary:

This book is for dog and cat lovers everywhere. It gives children an insightful look at the typical “problems” encountered by their furry canine pals. Letter-writing is the featured type of text, as dogs write in a humorous way about their concerns. Mr. Mutt is the “Dear Abby” to his fellow furballs, and he responds with sound, comical advice. “Famished in Florida,” asks for advice on what to do when people put him on a diet. “Confused in Connecticut” requires advice on when to bark or not bark. “Sleepless in South Dakota” wants to know why the snooty cat gets the fluffy, puffy, comfy bed while he gets to sleep on “the coold, haaard floor.”

Each letter includes comments about the injustices felt by the dogs, compared to the perceived favoritism of their owners towards the cats in their lives. This is a fun read for all ages, including reluctant readers. It provides a great option for teaching writing from different perspectives. And with a number of graphs included, it becomes an appropriate book for building math connections as well.



Z is for Zeus

Helen L. Wilbur
Illustrated by Victor Juhasz
2008
9781585363414

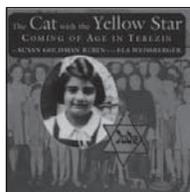
Sample Curriculum Links:
Primary Language Arts:

Reading and Writing
Grade 5 Social Studies:
Heritage and Citizenship:
Ancient Civilizations

Summary:

This is an easy-to-read junior picture book, where vivid illustrations greatly enhance the text. The author uses the alphabet as a way of describing the nuts and (lightning) bolts of Greek mythology. C is for chaos, H is for heroes, O is for Olympus, and the list goes on.

Students will learn about Greek myths and Greek culture as they expand their understanding of Greek symbols, words, and their meanings.



The Cat with the Yellow Star: Coming of age in Terezin

Susan Goldman Rubin, with
Ela Weissberger
2006
9780823418312

Sample Curriculum Links:
Intermediate Language Arts:
Reading
Grades 9 and 10: Canadian
and World Studies

Summary:

This is a true story told from the perspective of an eleven-year-old girl. We learn about the invasion of the Nazis during the early 1940s. The details of Hitler’s regime are recounted from this young child’s perspective.

Ela talks of being forced to leave her home, being banned from attending school, of starvation, dehumanization, killings, and constant threats to her life.

As Ela explains to the reader, the concentration camps are deplorable: with no prisoner rights, no electricity, little food, and no medicine. Despite this, Hitler cannot take away the friendships that form or the comfort these friendships provided to one another. This is a story about the survival of the human spirit and a part of our history that needs to be told.

The historical photographs and other conventions of non-fiction used in this book make it a perfect tool for modelling non-fiction writing as well as the teaching of history through picture books.



Picturescape

Elisa Gutierrez
2005
9781894965651

Sample Curriculum Links:
Junior Language Arts:
Reading and Writing
Grade 4 Social Studies:
Canada and World
Connections: The Provinces
and Territories of Canada
Junior and Intermediate Arts:
Visual Arts
Grade 9 Visual Arts

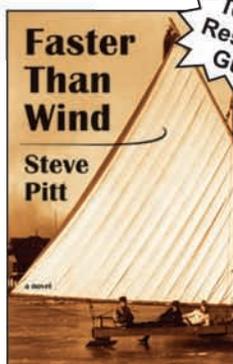
Summary:

In this wordless picture book, the reader experiences

a journey across Canada through landscape paintings. Using a young boy’s imagination, the reader travels from the West Coast to the Maritimes, through paintings by some of Canada’s best-known artists. The reader “collaborates” with the author/illustrator to make sense of the journey.

This book also has great examples of colour mixing, gesture drawings, gradation paintings, tinting/shading combinations, and focal-point masterpieces. The concepts of foreground, middle ground, and background are also skillfully modeled through this beautifully illustrated picture book. ■

Canadian Authors Telling Canadian Stories



Teacher Resource Guide

Faster Than Wind
by Steve Pitt
978-1-55002-837-9
\$11.99 paperback
Historical Fiction, Ages 10+

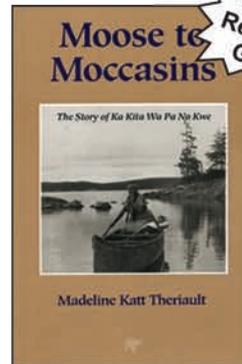
It's 1906 in wintry Toronto, and fifteen-year-old "newsie" Bertie McCross's family has fallen on hard times; to make matters worst he's being hassled by the Kelly Gang. Lucky for him, he's saved by two new friends who introduce Bertie to the thrills of iceboat racing on Lake Ontario.



Teacher Resource Guide

Mackenzie, Lost and Found
by Deborah Kerbel
978-1-55002-852-2
\$12.99 paperback
Fiction, Ages 12+

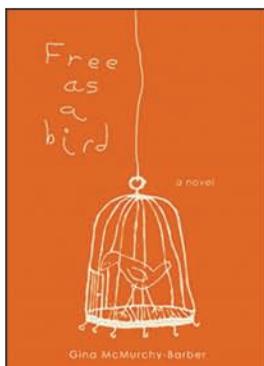
Tackles the political and cultural differences in the Middle East from a teenagers point of view. This moving young adult novel, with its emotionally charged climax at the Western Wall, will resonate with readers long after they have finished reading it.



Teacher Resource Guide

Moose to Moccasins
The Story of Ka Kita Wa Pa No Kwe
by Madeline Katt Theriault
978-1-89704-515-2
\$16.95 paperback
Historical Fiction, Ages 12+

Born in 1908, Madeline delivers a story about a way of life, in the part of the country, most non-Natives know nothing about and the ways of traditions that are quickly disappearing. An educational read that follows the life of an Ojibwe woman in her own words.



Free as a Bird
by Gina McMurphy-Barber
978-1-55488-447-6
\$12.99 paperback
Fiction, Ages 12+
January

"My name's Ruby Jean Sharp an' I grewed up in Woodlands School. That wasn't a nice place for a liddle kid — nope, not a nice place a'tall." A gripping young adult story told by a girl with Down Syndrome who learns patience and perseverance from an old crow.



Ghost Ride
by Marina Cohen
978-1-55488-438-4
\$12.99 paperback
Fiction, Ages 12+
October

Sam McLean is the new boy in town and anxious to make friends. During a daring stunt, ghost riding their whip, his friend is left for dead and Sam flees. Yet, someone else knows and the stakes are rising.



Girl on the Other Side
by Deborah Kerbel
978-1-55488-443-8
\$12.99 paperback
Fiction, Ages 12+
October

Tabby Freeman and Lora Froggett go to the same school, but they live in totally opposite worlds. Although they've never been friends, a series of strange events causes their lives to crash together in ways neither could have ever imagined.



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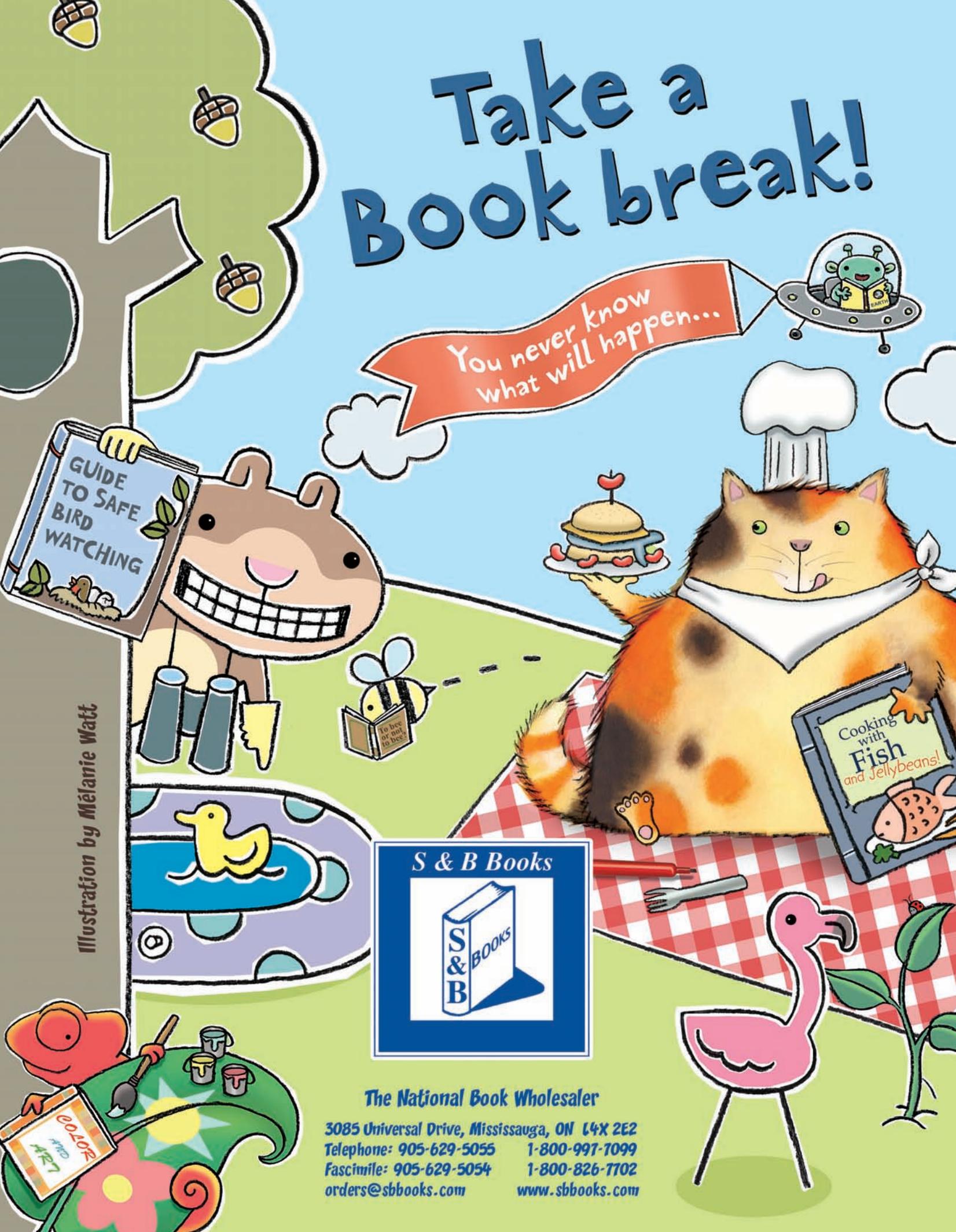
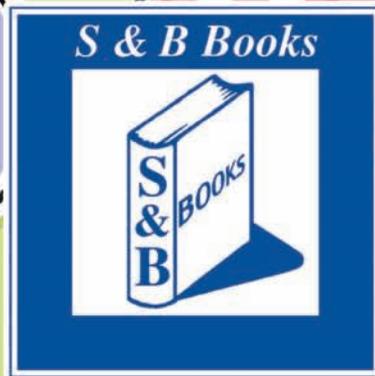


Illustration by Mélanie Watt



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