

# THE TEACHING LIBRARIAN

The Magazine of the Ontario School Library Association  
volume 17, number 3 ISSN 1188679X

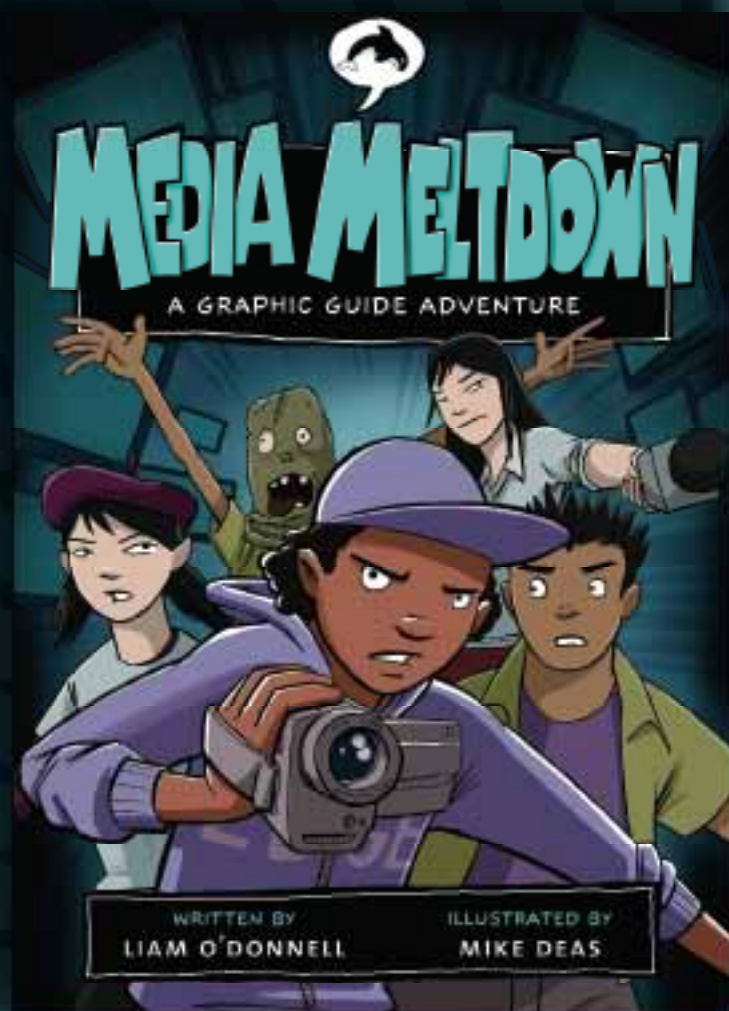
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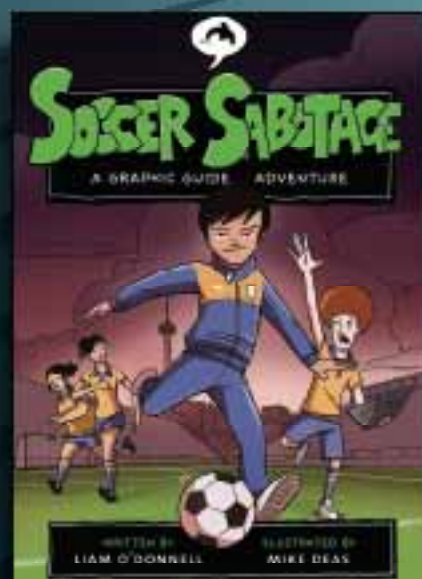
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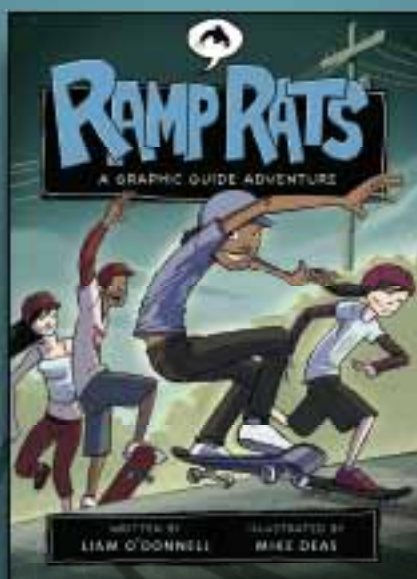
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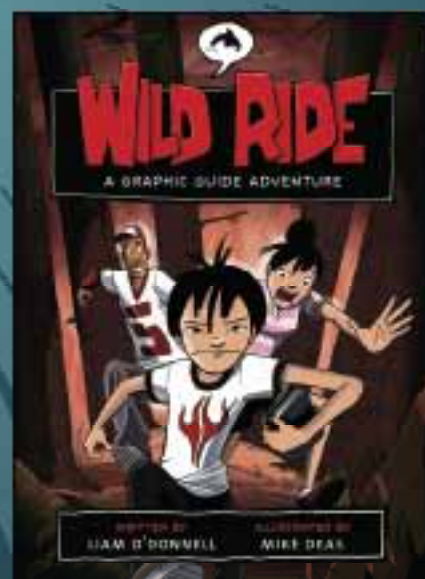
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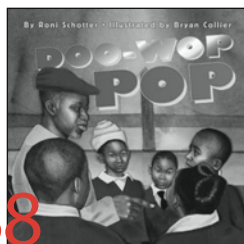
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## TL mission

### 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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## TL guidelines

- V. 18, no. 1 "What Works @ your library"  
Deadline: May 10, 2010
- V. 18, no. 2 "Listening and Speaking @ your library"  
Deadline: September 22, 2010
- V. 18, no. 3 "Heritage @ your library"  
Deadline: January 21, 2011

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, content, 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 (15<sup>th</sup> edition) or APA Style.

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**Cover Photo Credit:**  
A Teacher-Librarian  
holds up her copy  
of the newly minted  
Together for Learning  
Document.

Photo by:  
Diana Maliszewski.

## celebrate @ your library™



Diana Maliszewski

This past November, my parents celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. When I first talked to my mom and dad about planning some sort of celebration they just said, “Oh, we’ll just have the kids over and we’ll order in some Chinese food.” This plan evolved from “just the kids” to “just the kids and a few close friends” to a guest list of 125 at a posh banquet hall. As the eldest daughter and someone who enjoys planning a good party, I was heavily involved in touring facilities, booking DJs, writing (and re-writing, and revising) guest lists with seating plans, and coordinating speakers and visuals. It was a lot of work, but everyone who attended had a delightful time. My parents are at the age where most of their big gatherings of extended family and friends happen at funeral parlours, so it was a pleasant alternative to commemorate such a happy occasion.

We have many reasons to celebrate every day at our school libraries. Whether it is a huge accomplishment, such as a renovation or winning a national contest; or whether it is something simple, like a class that doesn’t have any overdue materials or a student who has read enough Silver Birch books to qualify to vote for the first time, we have reason to rejoice. As the school year draws to a close, I know you will find dozens of reasons to celebrate the successes in your library, from the simple to the elaborate to everything in-between! ■



Celebrating a milestone!

Photo Credit: Al Quintero



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# President's Report

## Ruth Hall

**B**y the time you read this, OLA's major party of the year, Super Conference, will have passed. At this professional development and networking extravaganza, we celebrate: leadership, innovation, and excellence in teaching and learning, passion, and risk-taking. Change is one of the hallmarks of the teaching profession. In school libraries, the ability to embrace change—to continually improve how we deliver programming, access resources, and connect to our learning communities—is vital to our success. It is this capacity to celebrate change, and to work with it purposefully, that continues to make us relevant in the educational landscape and will continue to sustain school libraries in the future.

As 2009 began, we feared the potential impact of our troubled global economy on education and library sectors. A year later, I am glad to report that we continue to hold our own. Membership in the OSLA and attendance at Super Conference have met last year's levels, showing that the folks working in, and for, school libraries continue to challenge themselves to make school libraries the best they can be. School library leaders generously showcased their work in some 50 school library workshops and events. At our OSLA Awards Ceremony we were able to acknowledge contributions to our school library community. This year's winners: Distinguished Administrator of the Year: John Kostoff (DPCDSB); Library Building Award: Kimel Family Education Centre (CS&P Architects and Petroff Partnership); Achievement Award Co-Winners: Tim Gauntley (TDSB, retired) and Marlene Turkington (TVDSB, retired); and Teacher-Librarian of the Year: Marybeth Snyder (WRDSB). It is an honour to be able to publicly celebrate the contributions made by these individuals, their passion, their inspiration, and their leadership.

I had the pleasure of introducing Dr. Chris Spence, Director of the Toronto District School Board, and also my boss, as this year's OSLA Super Conference Spotlight speaker. Chris' recent book, *Leading With Passion and Purpose*, is his call for education reform. It is a book that provides an opportunity to gain insight into the mind of a progressive administrator, one who recognizes the need for leadership by teacher-leaders and administrators in creating positive learning environments, and "the absolute necessity of embracing technology" as "no longer an option, but a necessary tool for student learning" (34). This is a leadership challenge that teacher-librarians can, and should, take on: the role of teacher-librarian-leaders who embrace all technologies with the goal of supporting all learners in physical, virtual, print, and digital environments. It isn't a question of print or digital, it is a question of providing the right tool at the right time for the individual learner and the learning community.

**The vision for school libraries is changing. Where should we be directing our passion, refining our practice, and challenging our ability to be education leaders?** Understanding the school library's potential is the purpose behind our vision document *Together for Learning*, which invites us to reframe the work of the School Library into a Learning Commons. What does that mean? Roger Nevin, OSLA Vice President (2010) describes it this way:

"The Learning Commons is not a school library using technology but a learning 'space' that integrates physical and virtual learning spaces; that not only improves learning but transforms the culture of learning and collaboration in a school. The Learning Commons has no walls."



Dr. Chris Spence's book *Leading with Passion and Purpose*.



Photo: Derrick Grose



**Ruth Hall  
presents  
OSLA  
Hot Topics  
at Super  
Conference  
2010.**

The learning commons presents the opportunity to connect learners to physical and virtual resources, and to embrace ICT (information communication technology) and social media tools to engage and connect, enhancing learning opportunities for teachers and students alike. It represents a tall order for us as school library professionals because it demands embracing new technologies and new ways of learning, but our students demand no less of us. To remain relevant in education we must move beyond defining ourselves by traditional library spaces and materials.

As part of this call to a new vision for school libraries, OSLA has joined with other library associations across the country to sponsor a research symposium examining the future of school libraries. We know that “in too many schools in Canada, library programs remain marginal to K-12 education” (“Call”, *Treasure Mountain Canada*). The symposium, called *Treasure Mountain Canada*, is modelled on the work of David Loertscher’s school library retreats, held biannually in the U.S. since 1982. This first ever Canadian event has been created as a catalyst to the development of much needed scholarly studies and grassroots research in order to connect school libraries to the larger education landscape and to identify the practices which will ensure the best school library programs for all students. The retreat will be held in Edmonton just prior to the annual CLA conference in June, 2010.

While the research builds, we can all be working on our individual practice. Once again this summer, for those of you who could not attend Super Conference or who are looking for learning opportunities outside of the school year, OTF will sponsor a 3-day library camp. This year’s theme – School Library as Learning Commons: integrating new technologies with traditional roles. Watch for more information on the OTF website, at your school, and from OSLA. Celebrate the opportunities for ongoing learning that make our work in school libraries exciting, vibrant, challenging, ever-changing and never dull. ■

### Citations

“A Call for Papers.” (January 9, 2010) *Treasure Mountain Canada*. <http://tmcanada.pbworks.com/>

Nevin, Roger. “Improving Learning and Increasing Student Engagement Through the Learning Commons.” Roger Nevin’s Boston presentation (Jan. 2010) about Google Docs, impact of technology, and Google Apps Education Edition, and cloud computing at: [http://docs.google.com/a/adamscott.ca/present/view?id=df4kfnhg\\_25ddftqffb](http://docs.google.com/a/adamscott.ca/present/view?id=df4kfnhg_25ddftqffb)

Spence, Christopher M. *Leading With Passion and Purpose: Creating Schools that Help Teachers Teach and Students Learn*. Markham, ON: Pembroke, 2009.

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**T**he theme of this issue of *The Teaching Librarian* is **Celebrate @ your library**. The school library has been described as the very core of the school, the hub, a veritable hive of excitement where teachers and students alike come to meet, learn, relax, read, and broaden their horizons. That makes the library a perfect place for celebrations! You can celebrate everything from the books you offer to the people who shelve them. So many things can be worthy of a good old-fashioned celebration: people, places, events, or even your very own programming!

Go ahead—think outside the box, no doubt you’ll find that libraries are full of reasons to celebrate. And with the help of technology only a click away, we now have even greater access to fantastic ideas, useful resources, and diverse programming sites. To get you headed in the right direction, check out some of the links below. And don’t forget, any good celebration really does deserve cake ... hmmm ... you might just have to bend that “no food in the library” rule! Happy celebrating!

#### Celebrate Your Volunteers

Volunteer Canada is a great website dedicated to the advocacy of volunteerism. This particular link showcases in creative ways how to recognize and celebrate your library volunteers for all their time and hard work. Ideas range from giving volunteers a small box of raisins accompanied by the saying, “Thanks for raisin all those funds for the library!” to including a personalized “thank you” in the school newsletter.

<http://volunteer.ca/en/volcan/vol-management/hints>

#### Celebrate Canada

Why not celebrate this wonderful country we call home by showcasing information on upcoming cultural events? Canadian Heritage Canada has a wonderful website promoting awareness and participation in cultural events from coast to coast. Follow the link below and click on the “Calendar of Events” tab on the right side of the page for monthly events, such as Asian Heritage Month in May or Tourism Week in June.

<http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/index-eng.cfm>

Depending on your school calendar, you might also be interested in applying for funding from the Canadian Heritage site to host your own cultural celebration. The deadline for this year has passed, but if you are thinking of applying in the future, information on the application process can be found at

<http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/special/canada/invittn/103-eng.cfm>

#### Celebrate with Presents

What is a celebration without presents? If it is in the budget, you can purchase all sorts of cool gifts imprinted with your library’s logo at one of Canada’s largest promotional stores, 4imprint Canada.

Checkout their “Sales and Closeouts” section for really good deals on everything from pens to tote bags. What a great way to introduce your library to parents or new teachers or say thank you to your library volunteers!

<http://www.4imprint.ca/>

#### Celebrate “Curiosity Day” in the Elementary Classroom

No one is more curious than Curious George! Now you can celebrate “Curiosity Day” in your classroom with free Curious George resources from the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Follow the link below to download the Curiosity Day Kit containing lesson plans, colouring sheets, and more.

<http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/features/cgsite/>

#### Celebrate “Ideas” in the Secondary Classroom

Many high school students think that if it isn’t on the Internet, then it isn’t really that important. While this statement is certainly untrue, the Internet definitely has a broad appeal to many of our students, and in some cases can offer up-to-the-minute coverage and cutting-edge discussion on a wide variety of contemporary topics. TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) is a non-profit website dedicated to offering “Ideas Worth Spreading.” One of the great features of this site is that much of what is offered is free (thanks to a creative commons agreement), so students have access to a wealth of “YouTube”-type videos that they will love to incorporate into their school presentations.

<http://www.ted.com/>

#### Celebrate Your Favourite Teacher-Librarian!

Do you know an outstanding teacher-librarian? Someone who works hard to offer innovative programming, foster collaborative planning, and nurture a love of learning? Why not nominate them for an award? The Ontario Library Association has several awards ranging from a Distinguished Service Award to a Media and Communications Award. In addition, OSLA offers a Teacher-Librarian of the Year Award. Access the link below for more information:

[http://accessola.com/ola/bins/content\\_page.asp?cid=130](http://accessola.com/ola/bins/content_page.asp?cid=130)

#### Celebrate OLA’s Forest of Reading

And don’t forget to celebrate the love of reading and Canadian Authors with the Ontario Library Associations’ Forest of Reading program. For the latest scoop on all the Forest of Reading festival activities visit:

[http://www.accessola.com/ola/bins/content\\_page.asp?cid=92](http://www.accessola.com/ola/bins/content_page.asp?cid=92) ■



# Ask Rita Resourceful

Dear Rita,

My library is becoming boring. It seems all I do is sign out books, and most of this is to repeat customers. I have a very limited budget, so I can't afford any more computers. The same teachers bring their classes in, but the rest of the staff use books they have stored in their classrooms. I feel disheartened and discouraged. I want to get things sparked up here, but have no idea where to begin. I have a display area, but I'm not sure changing it regularly would make any difference. I need some ideas that are going to draw in more students and staff. Can you help?

Sincerely,

Drowning in Despair

Dear Drowning,

Hold on! Take heart! I am about to throw you a life preserver, and soon you and your school community will be celebrating a myriad of wonderful literacy events, which are sure to bring in the crowds and revitalize your program!

As teacher-librarians, we have a much bigger role than signing out books and putting up displays. One of the key areas we should focus on is literacy. Do you run any of the OLA's Forest of Reading programs? If not, this is an excellent way to get the whole school involved in the love of reading, with announcements and bulletin board displays, or even a blog or wiki! Go to [www.accessola.com](http://www.accessola.com) and link to the Forest of Reading. All the information you need to register and run your program is here. Many school libraries also run their own reading programs or book clubs, sometimes following Canada Reads or the nominations for the Giller Award (if you are secondary). As a member of the School Literacy Committee, you could also be the initiator of a Drop Everything And Read program in your school; perhaps you could tie in a display for reluctant readers and feature graphic novels as well.

Why not take the opportunity to celebrate national and/or international literacy events? The wonderful Global Literacy Project Inc. site, found at [http://www.glpin.org/Web\\_pages/International\\_Literacy\\_Events.html](http://www.glpin.org/Web_pages/International_Literacy_Events.html), outlines many of these. One example is World Storytelling Day, which is "a global celebration of the art of oral storytelling". Imagine the activities you could run during the day and after hours on this! Another is World Book Day, which was developed by UNESCO "as a worldwide celebration of books and reading, and is marked in over 100 countries around the globe. A main aim of World Book Day is to encourage children to explore the pleasures of books and reading by providing them with the opportunity to have a book of their own." Perhaps you could tie in a book fair here.

In addition to these, and closer to home, make staff and students aware of National School Library Day and International School Library Day. Celebrate our role as teacher-librarians by highlighting some of the research that ties dynamic school library programs in to increased student achievement. Maybe this would initiate some increased funding!

There are several other things you can do to celebrate reading in your school and with your school community. You could hold a family literacy event, and invite parents to come and read to their children and other students. Why not hold a "Dress as Your Favourite Author" Day? Or invite an author to come to your school and involve various grades to come to hear him/her speak? Organize a genre fair and have teachers and community members read from a variety of genres to spark students when they realize books represent a broad range of their interests.

The Simcoe County District School Board has posted all kinds of its successful literacy celebrations at <http://www.scdsb.on.ca/about-us/news-events/index.cfm?i=6628&y=2010>—everything from a read-a-thon to designing bookmarks or playing literacy games. And I'm sure there are many other sites from which you could get more exciting ideas.

Best of luck to you in rejuvenating your school library program through the love of reading!

Rita

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

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

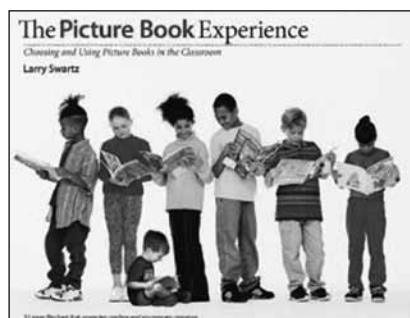
When selecting books for review, I try to select books related to the theme of the issue. Of course, it doesn't always work out and that's what seemed to have happened this time. Our theme is **Celebrate @ your library**, but the review titles are a miscellaneous lot and certainly not about celebration. Then I started reading. It turns out that all four of these professional titles are Canadian, with authors including two of OSLA's own (Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan), an OISE instructor (Larry Swartz), and a teacher/teacher-librarian from my own school board (Laura Mayne, from Dufferin-Peel). Canadian talent—cause for celebration indeed!

## The Picture Book Experience: Choosing and Using Picture Books in the Classroom

Larry Swartz  
2009  
9781551382357

Hmm...let's see...you value picture books and would like to incorporate them into your teaching more effectively, but you're too busy to take a course or do a lot of professional reading... If you recognize yourself in this description, then *The Picture Book Experience* is the book you need!

In a 32-page flip-chart format, Swartz provides everything you need to



know to make effective instructional use of picture books, including teaching tips, learning activities, useful charts (e.g. patterns), and lists of recommended titles. This information is divided into six chapters: Why Picture Books?; Picture Books for Learning; Choosing Picture Books; Picture Books Out Loud; Responding to Picture Books; and Picture Books in the Classroom. A detailed table of contents and an index make finding information quick and easy. Swartz also includes reproducible pages, including a student response form; an observation checklist so teachers can quickly and easily assess students' reading of and response to picture books; and a chart students can use to record their picture book reading. And—just in case you do find some time—Swartz also includes a list of recommended professional reading.

*The Picture Book Experience* will be welcomed by busy teachers and teacher-librarians looking for accessible, practical, easy-to-use professional resources to support their literacy efforts.

Highly recommended for

elementary school teachers and teacher-librarians. Secondary teacher-librarians interested in encouraging the use of picture books in high school classrooms will also find *The Picture Book Experience* useful.

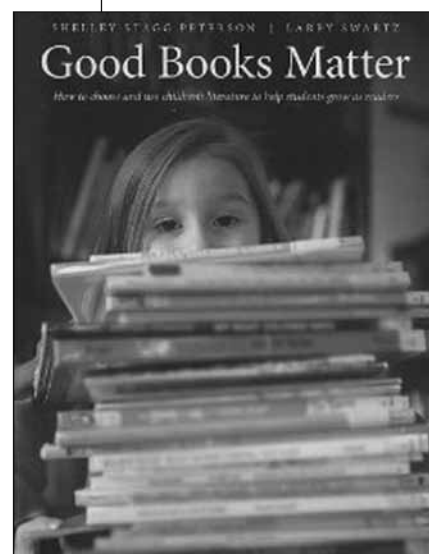
## Good Books Matter: How to Choose and Use Children's Literature to Help Students Grow as Readers

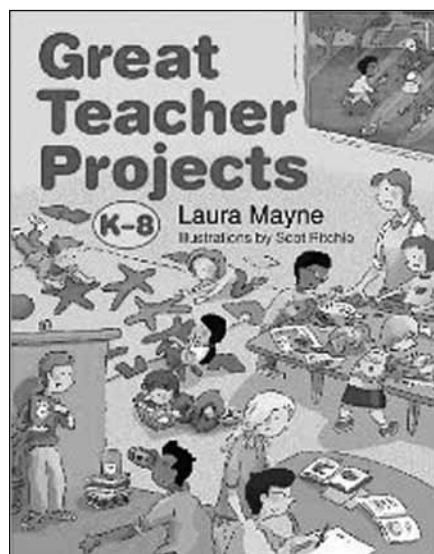
Shelley Stagg Peterson and Larry Swartz  
2008  
9781551382326

The seemingly impossible has happened—you've actually managed to get so organized that you have some time to read! Having discovered *The Picture Book Experience* and realized its value, you decide to check the list of recommended professional reading, where you find... *Good Books Matter*.

Writing for both new and experienced teachers, and taking into consideration the needs of both younger (5-9 years old) and older (10-14 years old) readers, Stagg and Swartz share a wealth of knowledge in only

seven chapters: Teaching with Children's Literature; Poetry; Fairy Tales and Other Traditional Literature; Picture Books; Novels; Multicultural Literature; and Nonfiction. The Introduction covers selecting books for children as well as why it's so important to provide good books. Appendix A deals with censorship and selection. Appendix B covers children's literature awards in Australia, Canada (including OLA's Blue Spruce, Silver Birch, and Red Maple), New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as international awards. A detailed table of contents and an index make information easy to find. It's worth noting that *Good Books Matter* is a Canadian title and so includes many Canadian children's books, which adds to its value as a professional resource for Canadian teachers and teacher-librarians.





Teacher-librarians will be pleased to know that Stagg and Swartz recognize their role as both resource specialists and co-teachers. "School librarian" is an entry in the index.

Highly recommended for elementary and middle school teachers. Although written for classroom teachers, teacher-librarians interested in providing leadership or collaborating with teachers will also find *Good Books Matter* valuable.

### Great Teacher Projects, K-8

Laura Mayne, illustrations by Scot Ritchie  
2009  
9781550465105

*Great Teacher Projects* is a collection of 75+ classroom-tested projects contributed by teachers. These projects are, generally speaking,

simple and easy to do—specialized equipment is not required, nor does the teacher need access to a computer lab. All of the projects have been classroom tested—vetted by practicing teachers and their students.

Each project begins with a "quick facts" box listing suggested grade levels, subjects, project time frame, and materials. The directions are simple and easy to follow. Book tie-ins are identified for every project, which make literacy extension activities easy to plan. These projects are designed to engage and motivate students and can be adapted for students of different ages and abilities.

*Great Teacher Projects* has three tables of contents in which the projects are listed alphabetically, by subject area, and by grade. There's also an index. Together, these features make it quite easy for readers to find the projects they want. Although Scot Ritchie's illustrations don't really add to the content (that is, they don't explain or illustrate the projects), they are cheerful and charming.

Highly recommended for elementary school teachers and teacher-librarians. High school teacher-librarians, as well as teachers of special

education, ESL, and locally developed classes will also find *Great Teacher Projects* a source of lots of neat ideas. Belongs in every board professional collection.

### Building Info Smarts: How to Work with All Kinds of Information and Make It Your Own

Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan  
2008  
9781551382265

If you've decided you like the practical, easily-accessible flip-book format, then you'll certainly want to check out *Building Info Smarts*, by the OSLA's very own Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan.

Written for students (but certainly useful for teachers), *Building Info Smarts* presents a wealth of information in six short chapters: Ways of Learning; Exploring to Learn; Reading to Research; From Information to Learning; Learning Together; and Learning for Life. Koechlin and Zwaan also provide a list of useful websites and encourage students to build their own web banks to support their learning.

Pages are well laid out, with good use of heading, bullets, boxes, charts, webs, and other visual organizational strategies, including judicious use of

colour. A detailed table of contents and an index help readers find information quickly and easily.

Ideally suited for high school students, but also suitable for students in grades 7-8, *Building Info Smarts* is a book that belongs in the hands of every high school student, teacher, teacher-librarian, and administrator. At the very least, perhaps teacher copies and a few class sets could be purchased for every high school.

An absolutely essential purchase for students, teachers, teacher-librarians, and administrators in high schools and, if possible, middle schools. ■



# ***Celebrate @ your library with an Authors' Booking Service!***

## Martha Martin and Marsha Skrypuch

**T**here is no better way to celebrate your library than with an author visit!

Canadian award-winning authors Valerie Sherrard and Marsha Skrypuch know this well. Three years ago, they formed Authors' Booking Service. When they began, they had a mere handful of presenters, but they have grown with the demand. They now represent close to 100 high profile creators who are known for their first-rate presentations, as well as their outstanding books. Talk about a reason to celebrate!

In that time, the two have noticed some trends. "Boys' literacy is a hot topic," says Valerie Sherrard. "Our male authors like Michael Kusugak, Matt Beam, Robert Weston, and Shane Peacock are good role models. Not only do boys love their books, but they can see themselves [reflected] in these authors."

"Creators of graphic novels are also popular," says Marsha Skrypuch. "For older elementary and high school students, Svetlana Chmakova is wonderful. She's the author and illustrator for the *Dramacon* series. And we have Liam O'Donnell and Martin Springett for younger students."

Current nominees for the Forest of Reading programs are always sought after for school and library readings. Marsha and Valerie have a policy of accepting every current Tree nominee who asks for their help. Authors' Booking Service keeps tabs on their schedules, so by simply emailing [abs@authorsbooking.com](mailto:abs@authorsbooking.com), a teacher-librarian can book a Tree nominee!

Marsha and Valerie pride themselves on helping their authors and illustrators as well. The average income for a Canadian children's author or illustrator can hover around the poverty level. School visits are key

to keeping the wolves at bay. But if an author is invited for one reading in London and another in Peterborough, how can they logistically fulfill those requests? They ask Authors' Booking Service to spread the word. Making sure that authors have the income to write means that teacher-librarians have more books to choose from and students have more books to read. Another reason to celebrate!

### **Who Are the Most "Celebrated" Authors and Illustrators?**

There are certain categories that are always popular:

- High-profile fiction writers
- Picture-book authors and illustrators
- Authors who give writing workshops
- Illustrators who give art workshops
- Presenters who can do an entire elementary grade spread over four sessions
- Presenters who will do JK
- Authors and illustrators who can do "Family Literacy" events during the evening or on weekends
- Fresh new illustrators and authors who charge less than their more seasoned colleagues

### **Trends for the Future?**

When asked what they think will be "celebrated" in library visits in the future, Marsha and Valerie are quick to reply.

"Non-fiction," says Marsha. "Boys who are turned off by novels will pick up Helaine Becker's *Super Agent Y.O.U.* or Larry Verstraete's *Lost Treasures: True Stories of Discovery*. They are enthralled by Jan Thornhill's presentation with her "museum in a bag" and Jake

# Author Visit Arranged by

Berkowitz's unique 30 minute theatrical performance of *Jurassic Poop*. To meet the author behind a non-fiction book can be a life-changing experience."

"[Another emerging trend is] presenters who write adult literature that is suitable for older students," adds Valerie. "For example, Jessica Westhead, author of the comic novel, *Pulpy & Midge*, does amazing Writers' Craft workshops. And CBC investigative reporter John Chipman talks about how he wrote *The Obsession*; he also gives insights about his career as a journalist."

Being able to hear an author in person can have a huge influence on a student's passion for reading. And that's something for us all to celebrate!

To learn more about Authors' Booking Service, visit their website at [www.authorsbooking.com](http://www.authorsbooking.com).

*continued on p. 16...*



(Above) Mahtab Narsimhan reads to Anson Taylor Public School.

(Left) Marina Cohen talks to a group at Hartman Public School.



Photos: <http://www.authorsbooking.com/other/absauthorphotos.html>



**(Above) Helaine Becker challenges students at St. Thomas School.**

**(Below) Anita Aher with students at the launch of *Racing for Diamonds*.**

**(Right) Shane Peacock shows a student at Newcastle Public School how to walk a highwire.**

## Testimonials for the Authors' Booking Service

I would like to thank you two for all of your help in organizing authors' visits for my school. It was my goal this year to have each student in our school have at least one author visit and with your help, it has happened. By using your Authors' Booking Service I was able to bypass all of the time and work it would have taken to select an appropriate author, then find out how to contact that author, only to discover that they weren't available. You not only suggested authors for each of my grade groupings who you knew would be available in my area at any given time, you also made the initial contacts for me so that the whole process of booking an author was effortless on my part. An added bonus was that my name was entered into your monthly draws for free books and luckily I won twice!! Frieda Wishinsky was a perfect choice for our primary grades and Jan Thornhill kept the junior students focused with the "museum in a bag" that she brings to visits. However, it was the author for the intermediate students that I was hesitant about. You suggested a relatively unknown author and that age group either "buys into" a presentation or you've lost them. You suggested Matt Beam and he was perfect for our Grade 7's and 8's. Thank you both for all of your time and effort organizing this authors' booking service and for sending your weekly newsletter letting us know which authors will be available in our area throughout the year. You're the best!!

*Frances Parker  
Teacher-Librarian  
Rogers P.S.  
YRDSB  
Newmarket, ON*

Using Authors' Booking Service is like being a promoter booking rock concerts! They've made it easy to find out who's available and who's on tour from out of town. Thanks to them, I'm able to be a go-between for each of our branches and the authors, without a lot of time spent tracking them down.

*Todd Kyle, B.A., MIST  
CEO  
Newmarket Public Library  
Newmarket, ON*



Photos: <http://www.authorsbooking.com/other/absauthorphotos.html>

Since using Authors' Booking Service, I've been struck by Marsha and Valerie's commitment to and partnership with libraries. They will work with you individually to find a way to match your busy Library schedule with that of your prospective author in order to support your literacy objectives. They seem to really understand the needs of the school Library when it comes to preplanning author visits, and when problems do occur, they make it their business to accommodate your needs. They are prepared to be flexible and to spend time to prepare a creative solution that works for you. They listen carefully to suggestions from Teacher-Librarians about how to best support Libraries. As a busy secondary school Teacher-Librarian, I greatly appreciate this service and their website because it saves me trying to find the time to track down available authors and their presentation details. All of the authors I have booked through Authors' Booking Service have been extremely successful at providing a terrific literacy event by engaging students with their unique presentation styles. I wish Marsha and Valerie continued success with building lasting relationships with school Libraries, as they have done with George S. Henry Academy Library. Happy Third Anniversary Authors' Booking Service!

**Julia Ross**  
*Teacher-Librarian*  
*George S. Henry Academy*  
*Toronto District School Board*

#### Testimonials from Authors

I love the fact that they are experienced authors themselves, not just "booking agents," and so they know exactly what makes a presentation successful.

**Mahtab Narsimhan, (Toronto) author of *The Third Eye*. Silver Birch 2009 nominee**

Marsha and Valerie have arranged several tours for me in the Greater Toronto Area, and I have loved every minute of each of them. I value not only their uncanny ability to connect me with just-right audiences but also their organizational expertise and incredible senses of humour, which make my association with ABS immensely enjoyable as well as rewarding. The work that Marsha and Valerie do through ABS has helped introduce me to hundreds of young adult readers, and I'm very grateful for the service they provide.

**Don Aker, (Nova Scotia) author of *The Space Between*. White Pine winner, 2004, nominee 2008**

I feel valued by both Valerie and Marsha and always feel like I have a cheering section, championing my presentations and my writing. In just a short amount of time, ABS has scheduled presentations for me, allowing me to reach hundreds (soon to be thousands) of readers I would never have been able to connect with on my own.

**Hélène Boudreau, (Toronto) author of *Acadian Star*. Hackmatack 2010 nominee**

Authors' Booking Service was a great idea, beautifully executed. Before they came along, it felt pretty much impossible for a Vancouver-based author to navigate Ontario (and especially Toronto) schools and libraries. The invitations came, but the logistics were formidable. How to get around? How to fill a schedule? ABS has proved to be a highly functional link between children's book creators and those-who-would-like-to-book-them. They know the territory. They make it work. They bring us together.

**Linda Bailey, (British Columbia) author of *Stanley's Party*. Winner of *Blue Spruce* and *Silver Birch* and multi-nominated.**

Valerie Sherrard & Marsha Skrypuch  
 Authors' Booking Service ■



# ONLINE Referencing



Julie Millan and Sara  
Vartanian

As I sat down with one of my colleagues to plan out a Grade 6 Literature Circle unit, we decided to break away from the traditional group discussion format. We were ready to try something new. In addition to the usual benefits of teaching reading through literature circles, we really wanted to be able to focus on explicitly teaching non-fiction writing with our students. Earlier in the year, I attended a workshop focusing on the use of online conferencing as a method of discussion with students. We wanted to make a link to the knowledge acquired in the workshop and put it to practical use. Immediately, we began to see the potential for turning our traditional literature circle discussions into online communities including blogs and wikis. Students would be using conferencing as a way to build knowledge, improve on each others' ideas, have an authentic audience for their work, and write lots and lots of non-fiction.

## What is Online Conferencing?

Online conferencing allows students to meet and discuss their thoughts, questions, and opinions by posting responses in a central conference through email. Every member of the class has access to the conference and participates by posting questions, comments, opinions, and reactions to topics of discussion. While this unit was originally created using a program called First Class, the same type of conferencing, emailing and discussions could be replicated using a Wiki instead.

## What were we hoping to achieve?

We decided that the following outcomes were important to us during the teaching of this unit.

- Increase our students' motivation to participate, read, and write about their selected reading materials through the use of technology.
- Allow students a variety of different ways to respond to their readings and discussions. For example: How can we involve those quiet students that rarely participate orally in group discussions? How can we provide students with more time to think and respond effectively to the questions posed?
- Provide an authentic audience.
- Improve communication between the parents, teacher and students.
- Collect student work to be assessed and evaluated over time.

## How did we start?

1. Set up student accounts and teach them how to use the software.
2. Address expectations to students and parents around the use of email and online conferencing for educational purposes.
3. Collect some initial data from students around their feelings about reading, writing, and the use of technology at school. We used the website *surveymonkey.com* to collect student responses.
4. Model with students how to respond effectively to a question that has been posted for discussion. Model and re-teach this skill after students' first attempts.
5. Finally, introduce how the literature circle discussions will take place and explain how to post and respond to each others' questions in the conference.

## Unexpected Benefits

Overall, the work produced by our students was better than we could have expected and their work exceeded our beginning objectives and expectations. To begin, the



Photos: Julie Millan

students were extremely motivated to participate in the online discussions and were engaged and focused while working on the computers. When we asked students how they felt about using online conferencing for doing their school work we received some responses such as

*"It is so great to be able to use email conferencing at school because you can use new technology (computers etc) instead of writing on paper. It is a different, fun way of doing work."* ~ Lauren, Grade 6

What surprised us the most, however, were the huge improvements we saw in their non-fiction writing. Initially, the students' responses were surface answers with little depth of thought. Their writing had many spelling and grammatical errors and were full of text messaging terms (i.e. cuz). They were barely writing one or two sentences.

Once students could see the public nature of their work and the fact that their entire class could read their answers, spelling and grammar improved dramatically. In addition, once we had the opportunity to take some of those initial posted responses and discuss how to improve their answers, how to make deeper connections, and how to expand and defend their opinions, we were suddenly seeing three- and four-paragraph responses. In addition, the students were building upon one another's responses, adding thoughts, comments, and suggestions to their classmates' answers. Students learned how to respond respectfully to one another's answers and develop more refined responses.

From an assessment and evaluation point of view, we as the educators were able to collect pieces of written work from every single student and assess their growth over time. We were able to conference with students both in class, and through email. It allowed us to provide students with much more individualized

attention and support. One of the challenges of literature circles has always been how to accurately assess students' discussions around the books because so much of the work is oral. By using online conferencing, we were able to see exactly what each student was thinking and effectively evaluate the group process. It improved participation in group discussions and allowed all students an equal voice in the talks. As one student wrote:

*"I really like using on-line conferencing at school because it is a really fun way to communicate with the whole class, without having to have a big group discussion where it's hard not to talk out of turn because you want to share your ideas so much! Instead, we can all just type our answers and ideas, and no one gets left out."* ~ Emma, Grade 6

Overall, online conferencing provided us with so many more benefits than we ever imagined, and we discovered that the educational possibilities are endless. What a great way to teach students to write clearly and precisely, to respond respectfully to their classmates' thoughts and opinions, while also providing authentic tasks and an audience for non-fiction writing. The question from our students is no longer "What do we have to do now?" but instead "What can we do next?" ■

# Media Meltdown Author Takes a Digital Risk

Jefferson Gilbert

**T**oronto-based author Liam O'Donnell recently took a new approach to selling his graphic novel, *Media Meltdown*, by releasing it as a digital download in September. In conjunction with Orca Book Publishers, and taking advantage of their massive email list, he and his publisher contacted young readers and teachers, urging them to read his book about media literacy. The result, according to the author, was an “online feeding frenzy” of more than 25,000 downloads in the first three weeks.

The novel is about the battle for control of the messages that we hear and say, and helps kids question the media they get and make. Considering students’ participation on social networking and microblogging sites like Facebook, Twitter, and the newly released Google Buzz, it seems apropos that life imitates O'Donnell's art: *Media Meltdown* makes reference to Cory Doctorow's blog [www.BoingBoing.net](http://www.BoingBoing.net) and in turn, Doctorow recently and positively reviewed the book on his site. Doctorow is a blogger, journalist, and activist who favours the liberalization of copyright laws.

The trend towards e-books represents many new challenges for authors, publishers, and readers alike. The author of *Media Meltdown* is still waiting for his royalty cheque since his online launch, but is betting it won't be affected that much by the free download. Thousands of young fans hope he is right! **!**

## Let's Look at Library Layouts!

Diana Maliszewski

**V**olume 18, Issue 1 is all about “what works” at your library. The physical space has a big impact on the day-to-day operations and atmosphere of your school library. We want to peek into your library, if only virtually. Send photos of the inside of your school library to [TingLeditor@gmail.com](mailto:TingLeditor@gmail.com) or [abraun@accessola.com](mailto:abraun@accessola.com) to accompany an upcoming article on how to make the most of your space, be it big or small, old or new. **!**

# It's a Super Sign-Out Day!

Dr. Elizabeth A. Lee and Dr. Peggy MacInnis

## **S**uper Sign-Out Day makes library readers smile.

Why? Super Sign-Out Day means that you bring a big bag to school on the day before a long weekend to carry all the books home with you that you want to read over the weekend. Books really fly out of the library on one particular June exam day as students prepare themselves for their summer holidays. Students have begun to call this day Summer Sign-Out Day! Over the 2008-2009 school year, Sir Robert L. Borden Business and Technical Institute (a school of 500 students) signed out a total of 25,110 books from their library—the highest in all Secondary Level TDSB schools. Last June, 32 students and six staff signed out a total of 1,031 books for glorious summer reading. The average borrowing rate at Toronto high schools last year was 0.5 books per student, per month: at Borden it was 4.4. Today, Borden students describe themselves as avid readers, although this was not the case five years ago, when only 2,450 books were circulated.

### **Context**

Borden B.T.I. is a secondary vocational school, with a strong focus on tech programs. Borden's 500 students study at the Applied and Locally-Developed level. They typically enter Grade 9 with reading, writing, math, and social skills at a Grade 5-6 level. Approximately 41% of them have formal Special Education identification and roughly 65% go directly to work following graduation, with the remainder entering college or an apprenticeship. The school is located within a community that has a high crime rate, substance abuse issues, and a low socioeconomic status.

Five years ago when Dr. Peggy MacInnis took over the library as a full-time librarian, only a small percentage of students were borrowing books. Many openly described themselves as reluctant readers. Peggy, or Dr. Mac to the students, explained, "When I first came here, getting a student to read was definitely a challenge: they wouldn't even touch a hardcover book, let alone read anything more than 100 pages."

The metamorphosis of Borden's library can be accredited to Dr. Mac's quiet building of the library program as one that is non-judgmentally responsive to students' interests, particularly manga. She respects the students and strives to demonstrate that respect for them

as individuals by building a community around reading. "My mandate as a teacher-librarian is to give my students the skill of lifelong reading, it's not my job to choose what they read. My job is to make it available, give them educated choices, and enable them to decide whether or not they want to read it."

Borden's manga section, of over 3,000 books, is a comprehensive collection that has its own corner in the library. These students' interest in manga parallels the enormous growth in the publication of manga in English. Manga sales in the USA grew 35% between 2002 and 2007 (Brienza, 2009).

Students explain, "I like the characters and their personalities and I can relate to some of the situations." Another said, "It's the romantic aspects of the fantasy. I find it gives me an escape from reality at points." They have strong opinions about authors and titles and will critically argue about what was meant in a particular segment of a text. They compare genres of manga with references to aspects of style, both visual and textual. They are able to keep track of characters, their complex names; and a story arc that can stretch over 47 volumes. They describe themselves as readers; they are readers.

A natural spin-off has been the establishment of Borden's Graphic Novel Book Club (GNC) that meets every Friday during the lunch hour in the library. It was requested by the students four years ago, and gives them the opportunity to socialize and talk about manga. The 30-strong member club is organized and run by the students. "I just have to ask them what they are doing on Friday and they come up with their own activities. They understand that it must be related to manga or anime." GNC members have even designed their own Manga Jeopardy Game. There are monthly competitions and challenges for students to win a prize, poster, book, or first dibs to read the newest Shonen Jump. By talking with some of these students it is clear that the library has become a place to belong. "Everyone's friendly, you meet everyone, we can talk about things. It's fun to come here."

Peggy keeps two different request lists by her circulation computer: one for manga, the other for anything else students and staff wish to read. At least once a year, Dr. Mac and a small group of students shop



for manga. Students take these excursions very seriously. At the end of the day when the shoppers arrive back at school, backpacks and duffel bags bursting, they are mobbed like rock stars. The manga readers clamour, hoping that 'their' book or series will appear on the trolley for speedy processing.

What has emerged over time from this context is a culture of reading. When Peggy opens the library door at 8 a.m., 45 minutes before the first class, there are already a few students waiting. They return their books from the day before, sign out other ones, hang out with their friends, and read the daily newspaper. "I open the library so early because if I have a crowd waiting I don't have an opportunity to say good morning to each individual student. Opening early has allowed me to talk with each student. It makes school a better place for them and engages them."

There is always a constant hum about manga. Impromptu book talks amongst the students occur regularly as they search and help each other find their next read. "The kids have total ownership of the library. They have claimed the library as their space", with some staying after school until Dr. Mac goes home, around 5 p.m.

### **Summer Borrowing**

Reading has become an integral component of her students' lives. "Fridays became important sign-out days so that the students could have enough books for the weekend to read... then it was Christmas Break, and the students asked if they could take books out for the holidays, and I was like, why not, isn't the whole idea to get them to want to read, to encourage their reading skills, to encourage them to make reading a part of their life? How can I, as a teacher-librarian justify saying to my students, that no, you can't read during the summer? No, you can't read during your holidays? It didn't make any sense to lock the books up in the library over the holidays. The books need to be in the hands of the readers." This led to a summer borrowing program for those students who regularly borrowed books, "with those students I've built an important level of trust." Peggy explains how the Summer Sign-Out works: "It's a screening process that starts in September. A new student can borrow one book. If they can return it the next morning, undamaged, they have met the criteria and we eventually increase the sign-out to two or three books until we get to a point where the student knows how many books he or she can read in one night." Having a circulation pattern of one-night loans for manga helps students remember to return books on time and results in great school attendance. Peer pressure does wonders too.

Congratulations Borden!  
You have read

**13,919** books

since September 2009.  
For the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row,  
you are still #1 for TDSB!  
Keep on reading!

### Educational Benefits

Voluntary reading, the self-selection of what to read without associated structured activities, is what avid adult readers do. The first step in becoming a reader is engagement with reading (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004). The key factor in producing engaged readers is choice of what to read (Guthrie & Humenick, 2004, Morrow, 2002). The amount of voluntary reading done is a strong predictor of reading performance and academic success (Fielding, Wilson & Anderson, 1986). Greater access to books correlates with better reading scores. Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay & Greathouse (1996) in a meta-analysis of studies that examined the effect of summer holidays on achievement found that low socio-economic students lost ground in reading achievement over the summer while middle-income students gained. Summer reading programs are particularly crucial for less-advantaged students (Krashen, 2006).

All of these factors are present in Peggy's program. Through aligning her program with students' interests, Peggy has developed a framework that fosters students' engagement in reading and voluminous reading. Student reading successes are celebrated by charting the total number of books circulated by month and year. Last year's thermometer flowed up on to the ceiling. This year (September to February 2010) 13,919 books have already circulated and 35 students have read more than 100 books each. Their pictures are posted on the Library Wall of Fame. Last year in June there were 42 students in all. Today, Borden students are engaged readers who can't wait for the next Super Sign-Out Day! ■

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# Celebrating Linguistic Diversity in

Padma Sastri

## Relevant and Inclusive

Many of us teach in schools with students from a variety of different cultures. So how do you deliver a relevant cross-curricular program to a diverse community, including many new Canadians?

Floradale Public School shows us how sound preparation, collaboration, and a commitment to its community resulted in powerful connections to history, literature, and a variety of cultures. Members of the Floradale community called their culminating activity “A Family Reading Response”. That evening, Grade 3 students and teachers made a presentation integrating Social Studies, Library, Language, and Drama expectations to the audience of parents. The core task was to interpret First Nations Legends.

The scene was the epitome of education in action. Families from diverse backgrounds streamed into the library with beaming faces, many carrying bags of homemade props. The Principal and Vice-principal welcomed the community to an evening of sharing stories, and Grade 3 families participated in meaningful communication through the medium of drama, using English, some aboriginal vocabulary, as well as their home languages.

## Early Settlers, First Nations, and the Newest Members of Canadian Society

The Grade 3 curriculum in Social Studies requires students to describe the communities of early settlers and First Nations peoples in Upper Canada around 1800. This defining era in Canada’s history has shaped our nation’s complex identity and presents many opportunities to compare the new immigrant experience to both that of early settlers and First Nations. New Canadians can be encouraged to use their existing knowledge to contribute to classroom discussion. Some students may identify parallels between their previous lives or parents’ accounts and First Nations society. Many students and their families are dealing with the challenges of emigration, so the difficulties facing the early settlers resonate with them. At Floradale, Social Studies lessons drew on the individual and collective experience of the students to make the topic more relevant and interesting and to scaffold student success.

## Literature and the Oral Tradition

Traditional aboriginal stories are among the variety of texts cited in the reading curriculum for Grade 3. A good collection of First Nations legends were chosen by teachers and students and added to the Forest of Reading® titles.

### Picture Book

*The Legend of the Lady Slipper: An Ojibwe Tale*  
retold by Lise Lunge-Larsen and Margi Preus  
ISBN 0-395-90512-5

*How the Loon Got Its Necklace*  
by Elizabeth Cleaver  
ISBN 0-19-540278-2

*Mwâkwa Talks to the Loon: A Cree Story for Children*  
by Dale Auger  
ISBN 978-1-894974-32-5

*Coyote Christmas: A Lakota Story*  
by S.D. Nelson  
ISBN 9789-0-8109-9367-9

*Grandmother Spider Brings the Sun*  
by Geri Keams  
ISBN 0-9-87358-597-6

*Turtle’s Race with Beaver*  
by Joseph Bruhac  
ISBN 0-142-40466-7

*Fire Race: A Karuk Coyote Tale*  
retold by Jonathan London  
ISBN 0-8118-0241-8

# the School Community

Groups explored the myths and legends of different First Nations groups and these stories, songs, and poems addressed other language tasks such as: retelling, sequencing, and identifying plot, character, climax, and resolution. The teacher-librarian encouraged the reading of dual-language books, accessible to both students and parents, from the library. One of the sub-tasks for the unit was to produce a reading response and reflection in the form of a flipbook, which could be written in two languages. Aboriginal stories often use repetition and rhythm and are particularly suited to English Language Learning (ELL) students. These reading activities were conducted by the teacher-librarian in the library and also by language teachers. Families were encouraged to actively support this process, even by contributing to the reading responses themselves. Through all these channels, students and their families were exposed to reading quality Canadian children's literature reflecting the rich imagery and themes of First Nations culture.

## **Drama and Purposeful Communication**

Drama was an important part of the unit so that students could interpret their understanding of the texts while contributing their own creativity. Again, the curriculum guided the focus with attention being paid to using tone, pace, pitch, and volume appropriately. Facial expression, gestures, and eye contact were explored as part of the presentation, with sensitivity to cultural differences. Floradale pushed this further and allowed the students to include their home language in the presentation and gave the students the opportunity to perform in front of a live audience—their families. Videotaping the proceedings demonstrated how the school treasured the efforts of the students.

## **Establishing a Dialogue with the Community**

Anyone who works in a multi-cultural environment will recognize the many barriers to communication with families—starting with language itself. Floradale cleverly packaged the culminating activity as part of a school-wide occasion, which added relevance and a sense of belonging to the school community. A speaker from a First Nations group was invited. Invitations were sent out, refreshments were ordered, staff and volunteers were given their duties, and the evening's entertainment unfolded in the hub of the school: the library. Families, of course, were eager to see their children perform, but this situation was much more potent than other performances. The families were invested; they had shared the readings and contributed to the drama preparations with their children. They were showcasing their own heritage at the same time as they were becoming familiar with that of the First Nations. They were participating in Canadian life and their children were engaged. The school library provided a safe, non-threatening venue and they felt welcome. Frequently, school is totally separate from family for recent immigrants and this breeds isolation and disempowerment, and dilutes the efficacy of teaching, however good. Family Reading Response is an excellent vehicle to bring a number of pedagogical strands together with emotional and cultural support. This can be used to grow a school community together and achieve student success. This occasion also celebrated the cultural treasure created by the First Nations and fostered an appreciation and respect for all cultures and languages. ■



## Family Literacy Day/Book Fairs/Holidays

I just finished celebrating Family Literacy Day on January 27th. Support staff, the administration, and the secretaries went into classrooms to read for 30 minutes. I also had members from the library support team, our superintendent, parents, and a police officer visit the school that day to read to classes.

I hold two book fairs a year and each one is an “event.” I decorate the library according to the theme and have my library leaders in to paint props to decorate the ceiling. Each library leader wears a hat, scarf, or some item that suggests our theme when they come to work at the book fair. I hide “golden tickets” in the morning before students arrive. The student who finds the ticket wins a prize at the book fair.

There are always book displays for celebrations such as Black History, Ramadan, Christmas, etc.

Linda Longfield  
Morton Way P. S.  
Brampton, ON

## Fighting Lackotosis with Scheduled Events

A few years ago, my library was suffering from “lackotosis”—lack of students using the facilities. I needed to do something fast. So after evaluating the future of libraries generally and my space specifically, I presented an action plan to my administration. With their support, I surveyed the staff to learn their talents, interests, and expertise to help me create events and activities using our library space.

These are some of our activities and events:

- SCAS Theatre in the Library—we hold dramatic presentations performed by staff and/or students. This usually is an extension of classroom learning.
- We have musical concerts designed to explore the history of music, style, instruments, etc.
- We have literary events such as “Stories: Short & Tall” (short story read-out-loud sessions);

“Fabulous Fables” (ethnic fables read out loud); “Play on Words”—a day-long event filled with word games, readings, and poetry using words in unusual ways and designed to generate excitement about language.

- We hold spelling bees at different skill levels to include all our staff and students.
- We hold career workshops (resume writing, guest presentations, job searching, etc.); health workshops (nutrition, parenting, yoga etc.); and lunch-and-learn workshops (how to create an electronic resume, etc.).
- Sometimes, we specifically highlight global celebrations such as the Chinese New Year. We decorate the library, present the history of the celebration, have stories, snacks, etc. to expose our students to other cultures. Our students get involved in preparing for these events.
- We have miscellaneous activities such as daily riddles, board games, the literacy lounge (English tutoring), and math mania (math tutoring).
- Some activities are created as a direct request from teachers and/or administration to encourage learning in specific areas. We are currently creating a math event (“Building a Model Home”) that highlights geometry, trigonometry; calculations of volume and area, measurements, conversions, scales, keys/symbols, and glossaries. This will be a lunchtime, week-long activity that will be judged for accuracy, design, and speed. Our Fix-It Shop (carpentry) instructor will be a judge, as well as our principal, and math curriculum leader. We will use this opportunity to promote this program to the students, and we will also bring in guests who use math in their careers supported by a display of math-related books.

As a result of this consolidated effort to make our library space more student/staff friendly, our lunchtime usage has jumped from a daily average of twenty students to well over a hundred students. With a lot of promotion and collaboration, the SCAS Library is now the community hub of our school.

Lillian Hutchins  
Scarborough Centre for Alternative Studies  
Toronto, ON

What events do  
you celebrate  
at your library?

### School Wide Book Swap

Every spring we have a book swap. Staff and students bring in their gently used books several weeks before the swap, and, in return, receive a coupon. On the day of the swap everyone arrives, coupons in hand. The participants take away a book for each coupon they have. Students are also encouraged to bring in up to two magazines to swap for books as well. This allowance ensures that all students who have a love of reading can join in the fun. It should be noted that we do add to the swap inventory by purchasing books at used books sales.

Stephanie Alexander  
Woodlands School  
Peel District School Board

### Haute Couture in the Library

Loud vibrations from a carefully selected soundtrack, dramatic stage lighting, and an invitation-only audience created allure and excitement for our first ever “Fashion Show in the Library.” This amazing event was the brainchild of Fashion Technology teacher Sharon Irving. Ms. Irving’s students had to design and produce clothes along the following themes: sleepwear, recycled clothing, and accessories. Teachers and selected students were invited to give feedback on the creations. The staff then selected the most promising young designer.

This is just another example of a culminating unit for a real audience. The students were not just performing for a mark: the deadlines and time management issues were firm; the show had to go on just like it would in the real competitive world of high fashion. The intimate setting of the library was just right for this new event. Let’s hope this tradition will continue!

Simone Nieuwolt White  
Sir Wilfrid Laurier Collegiate  
Scarborough, ON

### Bibliotekkie Pizza or Popsicle Day / Lilac Tea

To celebrate the great work done by my library volunteers (Bibliotekkies), I hold three or four small parties at morning recess or lunch recess throughout the year. It seems that the mere act of eating in a usual no-food zone confers nefarious delight associated with breaking the rules. The fare is simple and the time is short, but this reward is well appreciated, and in fact a draw for future volunteers. I take the opportunity to give a pep talk and sometimes highlight the efforts of a particular individual or grade. These events foster a feeling of belonging to a core group—one that spans several grades—and bolster students’ desire to demonstrate continued leadership.

Each year our school holds a “Lilac Tea” to thank our parent volunteers for the work they have put in throughout the year to help both students and staff. Many of these volunteers work in the library or help with the book fair. A few weeks before the date, names are gathered and official invitations are prepared. The lilac paper is rolled into a scroll and tied with purple ribbon. The staff is invited to sign up to bring punch, savoury or sweet treats, and lilac blossoms. On the day, the library is transformed. Tables are covered with lilac tablecloths, each with a large punch bowl in the centre and surrounded by scrumptious delicacies. Best of all, the library is redolent with the fragrance of freshly cut lilac. The parents and staff come together after school and socialize for a while. The principal and the librarian say a few words to express their appreciation for the parents’ contribution to school life and the bond between school and the community strengthens. ■

Catherine Harris  
William Berczy Public School  
York Region District School Board



IDEA FILE

## Check It Out! Graphic Novels Break the Shelf!

**C**RASH! BANG!

**“Excuse me Miss Faraj. I just want to get a book off the shelf there.”**

Moving the chart stand and two chairs that are blocking the shelf, I encourage the student to go ahead while I continue the Grade 6 research lesson. Out of the corner of my eye, I see another student tiptoeing along the perimeter of the room to join his friend who has given the “all clear” signal to approach the graphic novel shelf.

It hasn’t always been a covert mission for students to get to the books. But to understand the adventure, we’ll have to go back to the beginning...

For two years, the graphic novels sat on a shelf on top of the magazine rack in my library. It doesn’t seem that long ago now, but there was a time when space for only twenty books was enough for the graphic novels—and that was when all the books were on the shelf. Then, seemingly overnight, the collection grew and the magazine counter no longer offered enough space. It was time to find a new home for the graphic novel section.

Budget restraints meant I had to purchase a low cost shelf and, to no one’s surprise, it proved inadequate. Sadly, it just fell apart, unable to handle so many eager middle schoolers leaning on it, sifting through the books looking for their favourite new graphic novels. If the shelf could talk, I’m sure it would say that, while it was great to be popular, it really needed more support to handle all the attention.

So, with the best of intentions, I sent the broken shelf to the woodpile and started looking for a new, sturdier one. But where could I put all the books in the meantime? I didn’t have money to purchase a new shelf right away, and there was no longer enough room for the graphic novels on the magazine rack.

The collection had grown from twenty books to four shelves of graphic novels! Gazing across the library, pondering the problem, I spotted some shelving space that would do as a temporary home until I could find the money to buy permanent shelving for our growing—and very popular—graphic novel collection.

I have to say that one of the coolest parts of being a teacher-librarian is being there in the moment when students discover books they want to read; because the new shelf happens to stand in the middle of my teaching area, I find myself there, at that moment, with increasing frequency. In fact, the new graphic novel shelf is just beneath the screen on which I project my lessons. Sometimes, students have to manoeuvre around furniture because, as we all know, to create a drama space, the chairs and tables need to be pushed to the side. But I have to keep reminding everyone, please, not in front of the shelf.

**“Excuse me, Ms. Faraj, can I go to the bookshelf?”**

Now middle school readers don’t always want to be announced to the world, especially in front of a Grade 8 class. So when I spot the students making their way down the non-fiction bookshelves, hoping no one will notice them, I simply move the chart stand out of the way, and continue teaching, letting the students get to the shelf without any interruption.

A funny thing about the graphic novel section is the fact that the library helpers rush over to that shelf first. Why? Well, it is true that the shelves always need to be organized—there’s always a book party on these shelves and clean up has to be done before the next book party, which generally happens within the next twenty minutes—and series have to be put in order. But I suspect the real reason for the helpers’ enthusiasm is the possibility of finding books to read, and the opportunity to check whether the books they want are available.

Middle school students love their graphic novels. They choose series they want to follow, characters with whom they connect, and stories in which they believe. So when the new shelf arrives (hopefully sometime in the next few months), I'll miss being right there while students complete their missions to the graphic novel shelf....

"Excuse me, Ms. Faraj?"

"Yes?"

"May I get a book off that shelf?"

"Absolutely!"

These are three of the most popular graphic novels (and some of my favourites!):

*The Plain Janes* by Cecil Castellucci and Jim Rugg  
ISBN: 9781401211158

An excellent story about being the new girl in town, finding an identity, and being a survivor. The females in this story have strong, authentic voices. Girls will identify with many of the characters, who are involved

in sports, arts, and academics. I would recommend this book for middle and secondary students as the main characters are high school students facing typical teenage issues (identity, rebellion, etc.).

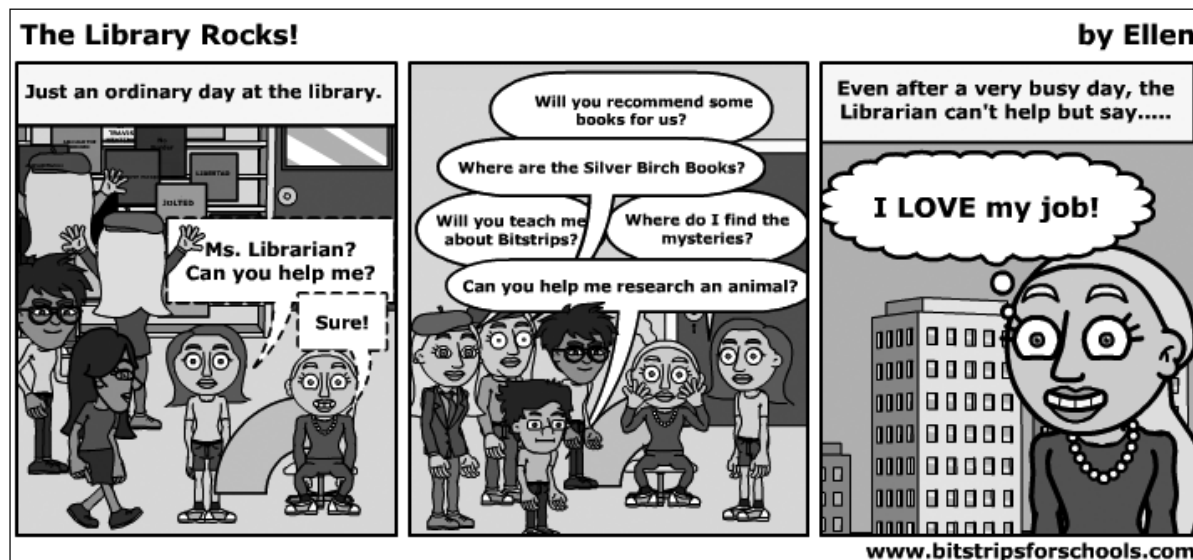
*Smile* by Raina Telgemeier  
ISBN: 978-0-545-13203-0

A true story based on the author's experience with braces, finding her own voice as an artist, and growing up through the middle and high school years. I laughed out loud in some parts and others made my heart break as I accompanied Raina on her journey through some of the toughest years of her life.

*Lunch Lady and the League of Librarians* by Jarrett J. Krosoczka  
ISBN: 978-0-375-84683-7

Librarians up to something? The Lunch Lady is to the rescue as the League of Librarians tries to steal all the money and take over the world. Will she be successful? It's another fun adventure with the Lunch Lady (and of course, Hector, Terrence, and Dee). Hmm... that's an idea... a League of Librarians. !

## TL School Library Seen





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Storytime!



Adam Taves, Cynthia McKeich, Ca  
Kinder glow at the Banned Book C



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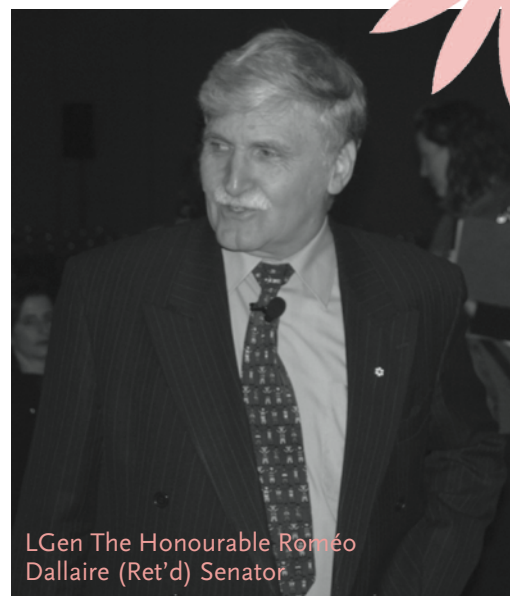


Jane Urquhart, Mark Kingwell, Adrienne Clarkson, and Nino Ricci discuss some other Extraordinary Canadians

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keeps the atmosphere lively at the Friday-night party.



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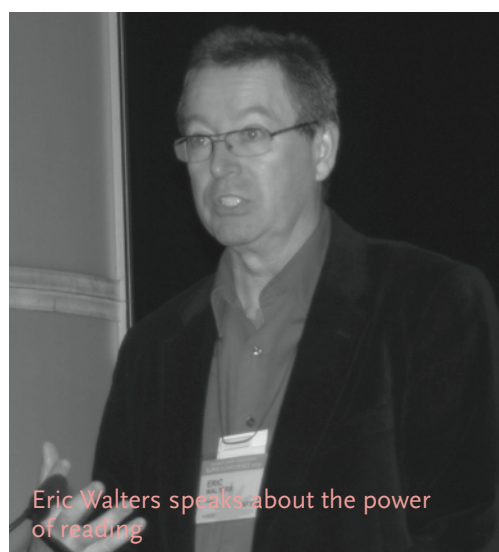
Blue Spruce Author Mélanie Watt signs some books on Chester's behalf.



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Dorothy Macnaughton, Lahring Tribe and Jami Van Haaften share a smile.



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with old friends!



Volunteers work on growing lifelong readers at the Forest of Reading booth on the Expo floor.

# Meet the Author ... Marina Cohen

## Martha Martin

**Marina Cohen** has a lot to celebrate lately. Her middle-grade fantasies have been selected for Battle of the Books in York Region three years in a row, she was awarded ETFO's 2009 Curriculum Development Award-Women's Program for her teachers' guide for *Shadow of the Moon*, (one of her two fantasies), and her first young-adult novel, *Ghost Ride*, came out in November, 2009. As well, since August 2009, she's written nine high-interest non-fiction books for Crabtree Publishing. With a set of five-year-old twins and a teaching career, the one thing Marina Cohen doesn't have is free time...

**Martha:** You're ridiculously busy. How do you manage to fit writing time into your daily life?

**Marina:** I'm chuckling, because lately I haven't been able to fit it in at all! But to answer your question, I write whenever I get a few free minutes—mostly after my kids have gone to bed and before my head hits the keyboard. I suppose I could be cleaning my house instead of writing, but my motto is "cleanliness is fleeting". By the way, don't drop by unannounced.

**Martha:** Hear, hear! You must be an excellent time manager, though, to have been so prolific, and in so many different genres. Which do you enjoy writing the most?

**Marina:** That's a tough question. My first passion has always been horror and fantasy. I grew up reading authors like Edgar Allan Poe and Tolkien, and later Stephen King, Anne Rice, and Dean Koontz. I loved curling up with books that made me afraid to turn out the lights. Maybe that's why I slept with my younger brother's plastic Light Sabre beside my bed for many years! So, I have to say I had a lot of fun writing my Y/A thrillers, *Ghost Ride* (Dundurn, 2009) and *Mind Gap* (Dundurn, 2011). Hopefully they will give my readers a few chills. On the other hand, I recently discovered the joy of writing non-fiction. I found myself jumping up and down when I uncovered a really cool fact. It was really exciting to see these books spring to life with amazing colourful photos, diagrams, and artwork. Writing non-fiction has definitely given me a profound respect for deadlines.

**Martha:** It sounds like you enjoyed the research process. That's music to the ears of teacher-librarians! Do you ever see yourself branching into the genre of picture books? It sounds like it's one of the few areas you haven't yet covered.

**Marina:** Ah, the magical and elusive picture book. Writers always say it's the single most difficult thing to write. I'm not sure if I'm ready for that challenge yet, though, I am challenging myself in other ways. My middle-grade fantasies and my Y/A thrillers are all written in third-person from a male point of view. I wanted to try something different, so I'm writing a new middle-grade

novel in first-person, from a female point of view.

**Martha:** That is a change for you. You've made a name for yourself as a writer of great "boy books." Is it hard to wrap your head around writing in female first-person?

**Marina:** You'd think it would be easy, being female and all, but the tom-boy in me keeps rearing her scraggly little head.

**Martha:** How important do you think it is to give readers characters that are real and flawed?

**Marina:** I LOVE flawed characters. They're my favourite characters to read and write about. Everyone who loves the Harry Potter series, loves Harry—I mean, what's not to love? But I adore Snape. I find him infinitely more complex. I'm also a sucker for a reluctant hero and a tragic villain. I once heard author Kit Pearson speak. She said that if writers examine their works, they will find the same themes reoccurring. I've examined my writing and it's true! I seem to be perpetually writing about redemption. I think it's because of my fascination with the flawed nature of human beings and also with the fundamental belief that we can rise above our shortcomings. I think it's extremely important to provide young readers with these real and flawed characters. If we read about people, who, despite their flaws, are able to succeed, or at least grow in some significant way, we ourselves will gain a deeper understanding of those around us and become generally more tolerant human beings. And after all, adversity strengthens character.

**Martha:** As a writer, do you think about those kinds of things—the lessons and messages you hope your reader will glean from your book—as you're writing it? Or do they happen intrinsically?

**Marina:** I don't think I think about lessons or messages while I'm writing—being overtly didactic is the kiss of death in children's or Y/A literature. Kids—especially teens—can smell a lecture a mile away. I think I just begin by taking a flawed character and placing him/her into a situation that is in direct opposition to his/her flaw. Then I begin writing to see what happens. *Ghost Ride*, for example, is about a crazy teen stunt that goes ghostly wrong. It's a real and dangerous stunt that teens actually (and quite sadly) participate in. The message of *Ghost Ride*, though, is pretty clear—don't do it!

**Martha:** Creating a generation of readers who are compassionate, tolerant human beings sounds like a great goal for teacher-librarians. Thanks for doing your part to help us accomplish it with your many books. And here's to you having more time for writing (and house cleaning) ...and more things to celebrate in the future! ■

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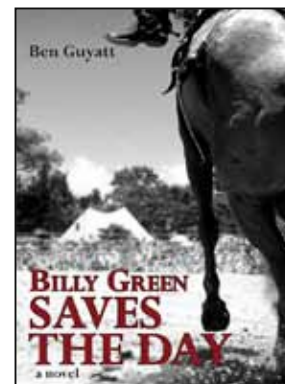
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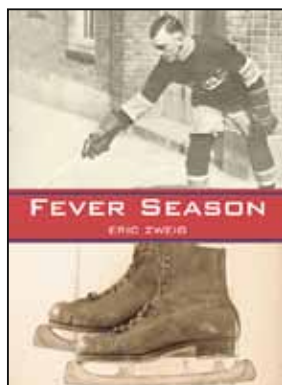
— CM Magazine, Nov. 2009



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— CM Magazine, Oct. 2009



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"Zweig, who lives in Owen Sound, Ont., and has publishing ties to the NHL, has written an informative soft-covered read that moves along at a quick pace. Younger readers, especially early teens, might find it the perfect company while recovering from the flu bug."

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"Sam and his acquaintances ring true as sarcastic, image-conscious youth who know what's right but often make the wrong choice."

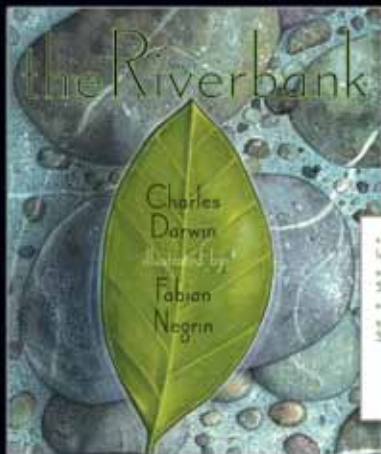
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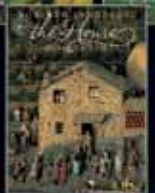
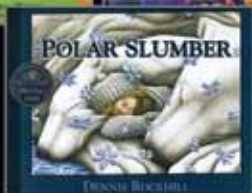


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One of the best ways to “celebrate” is with music... so we decided to feature some great buzz-worthy books that make music magical!

## Doo-Wop Pop

Roni Schotter  
Illustrated by Bryan Collier  
9780060579685

Sample Curriculum Links:  
Primary-Junior  
Arts: Music  
Primary Language  
Arts: Reading

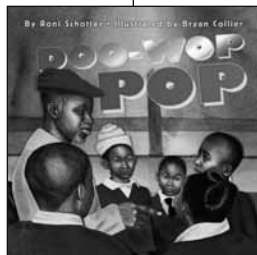
**Summary:**  
The school janitor, Mr. Searle, is known as “Doo Wop Pop” by the students of the school, who can’t help but watch as he sha-booms and sha-bops with his mop. He has been watching, too, and has kept his eye on his “carrots”—five super-shy students he pulls out of the crowd to form their own Doo-Wop group. With his encouragement and guidance, these five introverted youngsters learn to support each other and develop a confidence they might not have found on their own. With beautiful illustrations, this book delivers to readers an inspiring story while sharing the heart and soul of this harmonizing genre of music.

## This Jazz Man

Karen Ehrhardt  
Illustrated by R.G. Roth  
2006  
9780152053079

Sample Curriculum Links:  
Primary Reading  
Primary-Junior Arts:  
Music

**Summary:**  
Playing on the melodic rhythm of the classic children’s tune, “This Old Man,” *This Jazz Man* carries the tune with a jazzy beat of its own. The colourful, snazzy illustrations by R.G. Roth are eye candy for the reader, who cannot help but tap a foot while reading this tale. The very cool illustrations feature



nine legendary jazz musicians, including Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington. The end of the book features short biographies about these legends, further enriching the reading experience.

## Drumbeat in our Feet

Patricia A. Keeler  
& Julio T. Leita  
Illustrated by  
Patricia A. Keeler  
2006  
9781584302643

Sample Curriculum Links:

Grades 1-8: The Arts: Dance  
Primary-Junior Language Arts:  
Reading  
Grade 11 and  
12: Dance

**Summary:**  
“Hear the beat: Doom, doom, da!” The lyrical words in each chant come to life, with the help of colourful and lively illustrations in this introductory book about African dance. A narrative description of the type of dance accompanies each chant, and combines with the imagery to give the reader a rich cultural experience. The story ends with a real-life connection to “Batoto Yetu,” a New York-based African dance troupe.

Primary students will enjoy listening to the rhythmic, musical chants while older students will appreciate learning the meaning behind each ritualistic dance.



## The Composer is Dead Lemony Snicket

Illustrated by Carson Ellis  
2009  
9780061775154  
Sample Curriculum Links:  
Primary Language  
Arts: Reading  
Grades 4 and 5: The Arts: Music

## Summary:

The composer has died, and his death is very suspicious. The inspector is called in to investigate, questioning the various instruments. As they are questioned, their characteristics and contributions to the magic of the orchestra are revealed. This beautifully illustrated book, narrated in the whimsical style of Lemony Snicket, is accompanied by a music CD, composed by Nathaniel Stookey and performed by the San Francisco Symphony. An enriching introduction to orchestral instruments in a unique



the life of John Lennon. *John’s Secret Dreams* gives the reader an unexpected perspective on the feelings and thoughts of John Lennon, and an understanding of how the events in his personal life impacted his view of the world. Caldecott

Award winner Bryan Collier provides vibrant and sometimes (appropriately), psychedelic imagery, transporting the reader, who spins and floats between image and text. Reading this biography will be a well-remembered experience and will spark many engaging discussions and lessons.

## Learn to Speak Music

John Crossingham  
Illustrated by Jeff Kulak  
2009  
9781897349656

Sample Curriculum Links:  
Grades 4-8: The Arts: Music  
Grades 9-11: The Arts: Music



“whodunit” narrative, this book will entertain many grade levels.

## John’s Secret Dreams: The Life of John Lennon

Doreen Rappaport  
Illustrated by Bryan Collier  
2004  
0786808179

Sample Curriculum Links:  
Grade 7 and 8: The Arts: Music  
Grades 7 and 8: Media Literacy  
Intermediate Language Arts:  
Reading

**Summary:**  
Doreen Rappaport has broken the mold of a traditional biography. This dramatic and powerful book, which goes beyond merely factual accounts of dates and events, is the result of the effort Rappaport put into researching

**Summary:**  
This well-designed book guides music-loving tweens and teens along their own musical journey to create, perform, and promote their own songs. There is an excellent balance of illustration and text which provides sufficient information alongside eye-catching illustrations to keep the reader’s interest. Quotes and expert tips from professionals in the music trade give the text a true-to-life flavour. This book is sure to stay off the shelves as it circulates from student to student! ■



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Illustration by Mélanie Watt



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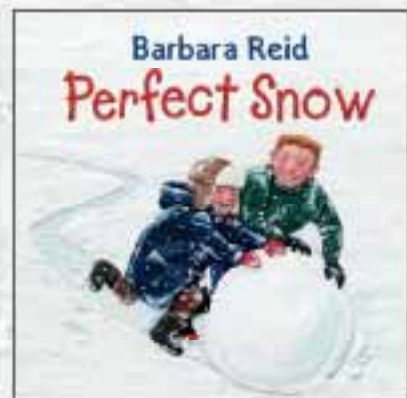


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