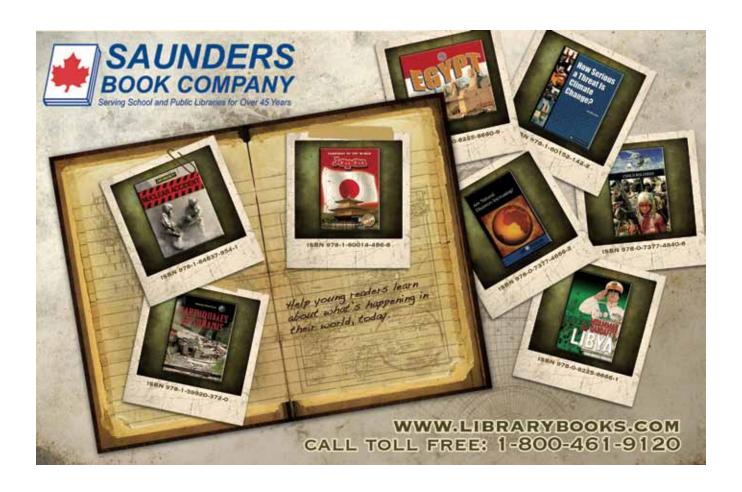
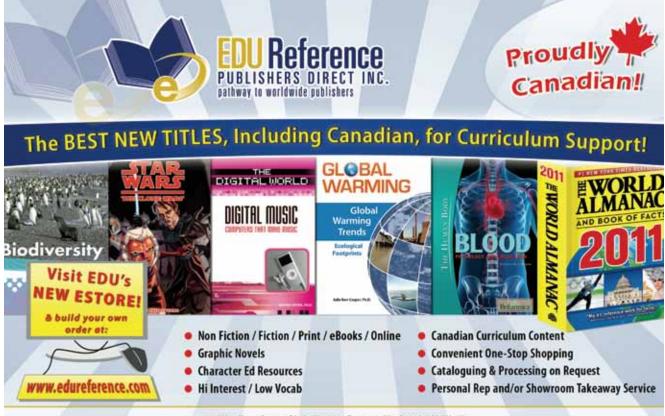


The Magazine of the Ontario School Library Association volume 18, number 3 ISSN 1188679X

heritage @ your library

M. B. Scott







volume 18, number 3

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heritage @ your libraryTM



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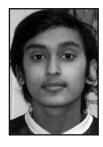
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L mission

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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Amanda Braun

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guidelines

V. 19, no. 1 "Sex @ your library"

Deadline: May 10, 2011
V. 19, no. 2 "Literacies @ your library"

Deadline: September 22, 2011

V. 19, no. 3 "Power @ your library"

Deadline: January 21, 201

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, preferrably 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.

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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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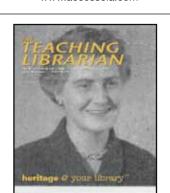
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M. B. Scott

Cover Photo Credit:

A 1950's-era yearbook photo of Margaret Scott.

Photo submitted by: Lois Lorimer Nunn.

heritage @ your library

Diana Maliszewski

efore I joined my current school, I was the teacher-librarian of Pringdale Gardens Jr. P.S., an inner-city school in the east end of Toronto. When I first arrived at that school, many of the students had one very important question for me: "Miss, what ARE you?" The question wasn't to determine if I was animal, vegetable, or mineral, but it addressed my cultural background—my heritage, so to speak. They were surprised to learn that both of my parents were born in British Guiana because my last name (my married name) is a Polish one. For some kids, I rose in their esteem because I was "like them" and shared a common Caribbean ancestry, even though I was born in Canada and have never been to Guyana.

I have to admit that I never considered my heritage to be of vital importance to me—I valued my actions in the present, not my pedigree in the past. However, when I expand my notion of heritage to encompass history, that is not just the one I was born with but the one I adopt, then I can see why examining and preserving and learning from heritage is helpful. Edmund Burke said, "Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it." Discovering the past helps us to appreciate how things have changed.

Today's current events are tomorrow's history lessons, so included in this issue are snapshots of today's school libraries. Several of the articles in this issue stem from presentations made during the Ontario Library Association's 2011 Super Conference. Enjoy exploring the rich heritage found in Ontario's school libraries!







Diana's mother, Gloria Defreitas (nee Vincent) poses with her siblings in British Guiana.

7_

77

TingL

Lingo

[ting-guhL] [ling-goh

cloud computing

\`klaüd\ [kuh m-pyoo-ting]

Simple Definition

"Cloud computing occurs when all programs and data are held on Internet servers or "the cloud" as opposed to individual computer hard drives. This means that word processors, spreadsheets, presentation software (like PowerPoint), calendars, web pages and other data are all accessed through a browser, so users are not tied to one computer running specific software. Users can also access the cloud using a browser running on a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) such as an iPod Touch or a smart phone."

Advantages

Cloud computing is popular because it has many advantages over traditional computer systems where programs are located on a computer's hard drive.

- Software is available for free and it does not have to be installed. Also programs do not take up hard drive space on the computer.
- Software versions are automatically updated when new features are added
- Documents are automatically saved. No more lost documents even if the computer crashes.
- Documents can be shared in real time with other users. Students can easily collaborate when working on group projects and teachers can access their students' documents while they are working on them.
- Documents can be published as web pages.
- It reduces the need to print. This helps the environment and saves schools money."

This definition comes from Roger Nevin's paper *Improving Learning, Engaging Students and Changing the Collaborative Culture of a School Though the Learning Commons,* for the Canadian Scholarly Literature and Research Regarding School Libraries in Canada in March 2010.

Origin: "The term "cloud computing" was launched into the mainstream in 2006 when Eric Schmidt, CEO of Google, used the term when describing Google's own services during a Search Engine conference."

Pingdom. "Royal Pingdom » The Origin of 9 Popular Web Buzzwords." Royal Pingdom. 7 Apr. 2009. Web. 11 Mar. 2011. http://royal.pingdom.com/2009/04/07/the-origin-of-9-popular-web-buzzwords/>.



ONTARIO SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

President's Report Ruth Hall

President's Report for 2010

Presented at the Ontario School Library Association (OSLA) Annual General Meeting, Thursday, February 3, 2011

he Ontario School Library Association (OSLA) Annual General Meeting is our opportunity to share the work of Council during the past year, invite conversation and to have one heck of a party as we honour our OSLA annual Award Recipients. The theme of Super Conference 2011 was "The Power of C". This President's Report shares the results of Council's collaborative work to support School Libraries in Ontario.

OLA created a new strategic plan in 2010. OSLA is in the process of aligning its efforts through the new plan, work which will continue over the coming years. Professional development and strategic partnerships form a part of that plan.

In 2010 OSLA again partnered with the Ontario Teachers Federation (OTF) to offer a summer professional development experience. OSLA organized and led this 3-day workshop in Toronto with funding from OTF. For a \$50 fee, participants were provided with 2 nights accommodation, breakfast and lunch. This partnership provided teacher-librarians, who might not have been able to attend Super Conference, with opportunities to connect with OSLA and its support. Registration closed early as our session was fully subscribed by May. Participants came from both public and separate school boards across the province. Presenters included Garfield Gini-Newman, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) and the Critical Thinking Consortium (CTC), Carol Koechlin, Treasure Mountain Canada (TMC), Roger Nevin, OSLA, Karen Beutler, Toronto District School Board (TDSB), and Joanne Laforty, OISE. Plans are in the works for summer 2011 with anticipated dates of July 6 to 8.

Our school library document *Together for Learning*, launched in February 2010, lives online at togetherforlearning.ca where it is available in both English and French. The document was sent out to all school boards in Ontario along with a letter to all principals and directors of education. Professional development to explore and implement the document has been undertaken by many boards throughout the province. Next steps are for OSLA and The Association for Learning Consultants of Ontario (TALCO) to begin the work of populating the website with tools to use in bringing the learning commons to schools in Ontario with the help of our members.

A joint effort to hold a research symposium on school libraries in Canada involving OSLA, the Canadian Association for School Libraries (CASL) and others resulted in TMC (Edmonton, June 2010). The learning commons model was explored and 3 OSLA Council members presented their work: June Rysinski, Diana Maliszewski and Roger Nevin. Resources to support individual teacher-librarians and to use with administrators in moving to the Learning Commons can be found at tmcanada.pbworks.com. You can also purchase a bound collection of the TMC research papers from OLA store.

These partnerships represent OSLA's work to support school libraries as we move from an Advocacy to a "Change Agency" focus. We continue to provide representation with the OTF and the Ministry of Education at Subject Association and Curriculum Forum meetings. We continue to add our voice to support Knowledge Ontario (KO). Working jointly with TALCO, we created a process for renewing the school library representative on the KO Board resulting in Philip Jeffrey, Hamilton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB), becoming the new OSLA-TALCO rep on KO. OSLA



Photos by Sarah Lewis

Left: David Thornley and Peter Rogers accept their award for Special Achievement; Below: Michael Bowman receives his "Administrator of the Year" award



represented its members working with People for Education, Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA), the National Reading Summit, the International Education Summit and the Ontario Education Research Symposium. Several Council members had "media moments"—Diana Maliszewski and Paul Kay represented school libraries on TVO's *Future of Reading* program and Lisa Dempster was interviewed by CTV's Carlene Bradford.

Council also took on a review of our roles with a goal to create greater clarity and accessibility to membership. After creation of a new application process, our new web master, Steven Nagy, helped us greatly in improving our online communications, for which Council is extremely grateful. Thanks also to our Teaching-Librarian Editor, Diana Maliszewski for her boundless energy in producing 3 successful magazine issues and aligning web and print publication dates. A realignment of roles has shifted the Secretary role to Lisa Dempster, Metro Toronto Councillor and the Treasurer role to the Past President portfolio to ensure continuity and "institutional memory" on Council. Special thanks to OLA Super Conference Co-Ordinators: Ann Perez, TDSB, and Kristin Hoffmann, University of Western Ontario (UWO) and to OSLA Planners: Isabelle Hobbs and Nancy Dalrymple for their work in creating another successful Super Conference.

Finally, congratulations to our OSLA Award Recipients: **Special Achievement**: Peter Rogers (Chairman of the Board), Knowledge Ontario and David Thornley (Executive Director), Knowledge Ontario; **Administrator of the Year**: Michael Bowman, Principal at Sir John A. Macdonald Public School, Durham District School Board; **Teacher-Librarian of the Year**: Paula McNamara, Simcoe County District School Board. Our Award Ceremony gives us the opportunity to acknowledge individuals as catalysts for collaboration, cooperation, creating community engagement for the common good, who cultivate connectivity, collegiality, and conversations. "Collaboration captures creativity, it challenges us to be greater than the sum of our constituent parts." It has been an amazing opportunity to serve OSLA as President; thank you to Council for all of their work, which has made this year's achievements possible.



The 2011 OSLA Council

Photo by Shelagh Paterson

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he theme of this issue of *The Teaching Librarian* is Heritage @ your library. In today's fast-paced, progressive-obsessive world we sometimes forget to pause and honour the past. When I asked some of my library regulars what "heritage" meant to them, they told me the word reminded them of "really old and boring things." Hmm...I thought, I have to admit that in the past I've occasionally mirrored that very sentiment. As a student "way back when" I think I must have felt that way because the only "heritage" experiences I had landed me at the same Pioneer Village three times twice in grade school and once on a weekend trip with my family. Now, however, the wide and wonderful world of technology allows us to visit global heritage sites, as well as some pretty cool local ones, taking in as much of the past as our hearts desire. The following links are just a small sample of some of the more comprehensive heritage sites that exist. Hopefully, they will help you inspire your students to think about the past in a whole new light.

Ontario Heritage Trust

This is a great place to start when thinking of all things heritage. You'll find information on educational programs, resources and even how to go about renting heritage buildings.

www.heritagefdn.on.ca/

Ontario Ministry of Culture

The Ontario Ministry of Culture has several web pages full of interesting and useful information on Ontario heritage. One caveat, however, it has a text heavy and informational format, which is geared more toward teachers and organizations than students.

www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/heritage/heritage.shtml

Ontario Government—Arts and Culture - Heritage and History

This site offers a list of information and resource links such as Doors Open Ontario, which is dedicated to bringing communities together so they may showcase and share the pride of their heritage.

www.ontario.ca/en/communities/arts/ONT03_020903.html

You may also want to have a look at the Archives of Ontario site which is filled with great resources including a section for educators called *All About Teaching With Primary Documents* (found under Education and Outreach).

www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/index.aspx

Canada's Historic Places Register

While this is not an exhaustive register of all of Canada's historical locations (this site is a work in progress), you can search many places of local, provincial, territorial and national significance.

www.historicplaces.ca/en/pages/register-repertoire.

Library and Archives Canada

www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/index-e.html

Of course we can't forget about the Library Archives of Canada, which collects and preserves Canada's documentary heritage, making it Canada's largest national collection of diverse resources. Of particular interest might be the **Canada's Continuing Memory** collection, which has great educational resource links such as these virtual exhibitions:

First Among Equals, The Prime Minister in Canadian Life and Politics

www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/primeministers/kids/index-e.html

The Kids Site of Canadian Trains

www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/trains/kids/index-e.html

Beyond the Funnies: The History of Comics in English Canada and Quebec

 $www.collections canada.gc.ca/comics/index-e. \\ html$

What are Public Libraries doing?

Many public libraries partner with their nearest school library to offer complementary heritage based services or events. Here are a few examples:

Mississauga Library Historic Images Gallery

www.mississauga.ca/portal/residents/ historicimagesgallery

Markham Library Heritage Week

*Since 1985 the Ontario Government designates the third week in February every year to Heritage week

www.markham.ca/mpl/subjguides/HotTopics/ Heritage_Week.asp

Heritage Month at Halifax Library

www.halifaxpubliclibraries.ca/ahmonth.html

Looking for a place to actually take your students? Try one of following locations:

Milton Heritage Park

Milton, Ontario www.countryheritagepark.com/

Canadian Transportation Museum and Heritage Village

Kingsville, Ontario www.ctmhv.com/The_Village/village.htm

South Western Ontario Heritage Village

Harrow, Ontario

http://members.tripod.com/swo_heritage/heri_vill.htm

For even more historical sites worth visiting in Ontario, including French communities, Underground Railroad sites, forts and castles, **check out the History page under the Things to Do tab at**

www.ontariotravel.net

Ontario Heritage Tree Program

Do you or your students have a green thumb? Are you interested in nominating a tree for heritage recognition? Then this site might be of interest to you:

www.treesontario.ca/programs/index.php/heritage_tree_program

Canada's Heritage Act

Lastly, anyone interested in Canada's Heritage Act can get access to the full act by visiting:

www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90o18_e.htm



TL Professional Resources

ur theme for this issue is Heritage @ your library, so I've selected a variety of titles related to various interpretations of "heritage", including historical fiction, Canadian biographies, and the heritage each student brings to the classroom. Happy reading!

Read On... Historical **Fiction: Reading Lists for Every Taste**

(Read On Series)

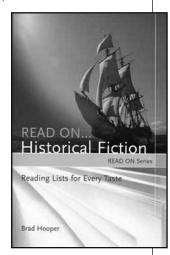
Brad Hooper 2006 1591582393

Read On...Historical Fiction is a collection of annotated book lists divided into five groups: Setting, Character, Story, Language, and Mood and Atmosphere. Each group of lists is subdivided into a number of more specific topical lists. The annotations are quite brief. The single index combines author, title, and topical entries.

Hooper has written this book to facilitate both collection development and readers advisory work and has made it very accessible to library patrons as well as librarians.

Canadian teacherlibrarians will have two problems with *Read On...* Historical Fiction. The first is the lack of Canadian content. The second is the fact that Hooper created his booklists with adult readers in mind, so, although children's and young adult's historical fiction certainly exists, it is not included here.

Since this is an optional purchase for collection development, interested teacher-librarians might want to first see whether their local public libraries have copies they can access.



Historical Fiction for Young Readers (Grades 4 - 8): An Introduction

(Children's and Young **Adult Literature Reference** Series)

John T. Gillespie 2008 9781591586210

In Historical Fiction for Young Readers, Gillespie provides a guide for anyone interested in introducing historical fiction to children

in grades four through eight.

The first three chapters provide background and theory, including an introduction to the genre and criteria for evaluating historical fiction, a brief (55 pages!) history of the genre, and some suggestions for bringing children and books together.

The rest of *Historical* Fiction for Young Readers consists of annotated entries divided into geographical sections, including Europe, Asia and Oceania, Africa, Latin America and Canada

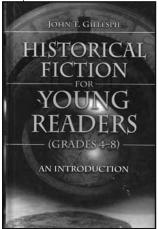
(which seems an odd pairing), and the United States. The sections on Europe and the US are further divided into chronological subsections. Each section includes four to nine titles with extensive annotations as well as additional selections with brief annotations. The long annotations provide bibliographic information. an introduction to both the author and the work, historical

background, a list of principal characters, a plot synopsis, suggested passages for booktalking, and information about themes and subjects. The brief annotations provide bibliographic information.

Historical Fiction for Young Readers is a useful guide for anyone interested in introducing historical fiction to children. However, Canadian teacherlibrarians will be sorely disappointed by the serious lack of Canadian content—a total of 14 suggested titles, with long annotations for only three of the fourteen (as a point of interest, only one of these three authors is Canadian). Compare this to thirtysix long annotations for Europe and thirty-five for

the United States (plus the additional selections for each section). Having developed a Canadian historical fiction unit ("A Novel Approach to Canadian History"), I found it interesting that NONE of the titles I've found—and I've found quite a few - are included in Gillespie's collection.

A recommended purchase for district professional collections. A school library copy will be useful if there's ongoing local interest in European and/or American historical fiction (such as a fiction unit to complement the history curriculum). Would have been highly recommended had there been more Canadian content.



Canadian Scientists and Inventors: **Biographies of People Who Shaped Our** World, 2nd ed.

Harry Black 2008

9781551382227

Canadian Scientists and



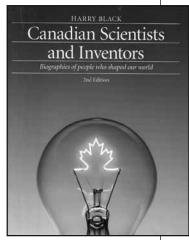
Inventors is a collection of 45 short (2-5 pages) biographies, each illustrated with a pencil sketch portrait, of Canadian scientists and inventors. The profiles include both historical and contemporary men and women, some of whom are famous while others have remained obscure. An appendix groups discoveries by theme, including Communication, Discovery, Electronics, Health, and Transportation. The bibliography also serves as a useful list of resources for further study. The detailed title page and an index provide easy access to all of this information.

Although the writing style makes this title most suitable for high school students in Academic level courses, the biographies are short enough to be unintimidating for students in Applied level courses or for students in grades 7 and 8. The book design, in particular the page layout, is quite traditional—the pencil sketch, a "quotable quote", and a few pages of text; no colour, no sidebars or fact boxes, no diagrams... it's almost relaxing after so much exposure to the "visually dynamic" layouts that have become so popular!

This second edition of Canadian Scientists and Inventors will be very useful for biography assignments, especially in science, history, and civics. The recommended Culminating Performance Task for the grade 10 Civics course in my board is a Famous Canadians

assignment and I'll be adding this title to my collection with that topic in mind.

Very highly recommended purchase for high school library collections.



Breaking the Silence: Recognizing the Social and Cultural Resources Students Bring to the Classroom

Catherine Compton-Lilly, editor 2009 978872074668

In my experience, one of the consequences of standardized testing—in particular the grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test—has been a narrowing of the definition of literacy. In far too many cases, literacy has come to mean the set of skills and understandings necessary to pass the OSSLT. This has occurred in an educational system using a standardized curriculum, standardized

texts, and even, at least in

some boards, standardized assignments (e.g. board-wide Culminating Performance Tasks). Ironically, at the same time as teachers are faced with all of this standardization, we are also expected to acknowledge,

understand, and support diversity, incorporate multiculturalism, and ensure that equitable educational opportunities exist for all of our students, regardless of their individual backgrounds, strengths, and needs. Incorporating these polar opposites into a harmonious whole to create successful teaching and learning experiences is a tall

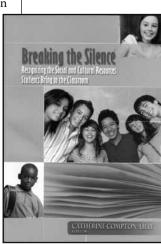
order indeed! *Breaking the Silence* was written to help us do just that.

Breaking the Silence consists of ten chapters divided into two sections: Considerations for Sociocultural Teaching, and Working with Diverse Students and Families. The contributors share their own research and experience in a combination of theory and practice designed to help teachers reflect on their own classroom realities and experiences. Collectively, the contributors make the point that learning generally, and literacy in particular, happen in a context which, because it includes the world beyond the classroom walls, differs for each

student. They argue that this must not only be recognized by teachers (and by the educational system as a whole) but must also form the foundation of teaching and learning if students are to succeed. Diversity has to be more than a buzzword.

As is typical of publications from the **International Reading** Association, Breaking the Silence, while quite theoretical, is also practical. The contributors write in the first person, present classroom examples and applications (both elementary and secondary), provide tips and recommendations. and suggest resources. In fact, each chapter ends with a section called "Recommendations for **Educators and Classroom** Applications" as well as both reference and suggested reading lists.

An essential addition to district professional collections and a worthy consideration for use by Professional Learning Communities.



Meet Your 2011

By Diana Maliszewski and the members of the OSLA Council

our Ontario School Library Association Council exists in part to listen to your needs and to speak on your behalf to decision-makers about school library issues. You may recognize our faces from Super Conference or from the OSLA website—here is an opportunity to learn a bit more about your council representatives. We can be reached at firstname. lastname@oslacouncil.org



Ruth Hall Past-President

I am the Assistant Curriculum Leader of Library at Earl Haig Secondary School in the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). In my first career I worked as a business researcher, using libraries but often working outside

the traditional library setting, employing the exciting technologies available at that time, which included a 2.5K baud modem attached to a dumb terminal where I performed database searches using the pre-graphical Internet to access electronic information. When my searches were complete the information was mailed to me because it was too expensive to print out. What a world of change has come our way.

I began teaching as a second career, starting out in the primary/junior division and eventually moving to the secondary panel as a teacher-librarian. I have spent 15 years in school libraries in both the independent and the public system focusing on effective integration of technology.

My work includes:

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- Host of 2004 White Pine Ceremony
- Chair of Conference of Independent School
 Librarians
- Technology/Library Coordinator
- Coordinator of Summer Ontario Teaching Federation funded Library Camp
- Demonstration classroom teacher, TDSB
- Member of Treasure Mountain Canada Committee

 Instructor of the Library Additional Qualifications Course



Roger Nevin President

I am President of the Ontario School Library Association, a teacherlibrarian at Adam Scott C.V.I. in Peterborough, and also teach a computer science course at Trent University. I have taught for over 25 years at the secondary, college

and university levels. My main educational interests are implementing the new learning commons, promoting literacy and engaging students in the use of technology. My work includes:

- Co-author of New Approaches For Learning 21st Century Skills, a book funded by the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board.
- Co-founder and editor of connectingeducation. com, engagestudents.ca and boysread.com, nonprofit educational web sites that support the use of technology and literacy
- International and regional conference presenter
- Workshop presenter for Queen's and Trent University teacher-candidates on the use of new technologies in the classroom
- Co-author of 3 published articles on literacy, supporting at-risk students and the use of technology



Elizabeth Gordon Vice President

I am an Instructional Leadership Consultant with Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board in Peterborough. I have been an elementary classroom teacher, teacher-librarian, instructional coach and am currently teaching

Additional Qualifications courses in Librarianship for

OSLA Council!

my school board. I recently co-planned our board's first Vendor display/ Learning Sessions...a very-mini Super Conference for one hundred of our teacher-librarians and hope to make it a yearly event.



Cheryl White Central East Ontario Councillor

I am the teacher-librarian at Prince of Wales Public School in Peterborough. Assisting emergent readers and providing literacy support from kindergarten to grade eight has been my educational focus. I am

looking forward to building a stronger relationship with our local public library.



Lindsay Brennan Central West Ontario Councillor

I am a teacher-librarian and kindergarten teacher for the District School Board of Niagara. I also teach Additional Qualification courses for Brock University and have presented many board workshops focusing on

my two passions: kids and books.



Elizabeth Macdonald Eastern Ontario Councillor

I am a teacher-librarian at Bayridge Secondary School in Kingston. I have held many roles in education including curriculum consultant, secondary school vice principal, math teacher and computer liaison.

Libraries have always been close to my heart, first working at Hamilton Public library and later at Mohawk College and McMaster University Library.

My work includes:

- District Vice President of OSSTF #27
- Co-chair the health and safety committee for the Limestone District School Board
- Additional Qualification Librarianship Instructor at Western, OISE and Queen's
- Graduate Course Instructor in Educational Administration at OISE and Brock
- Wiki, glogs, blogs and podcast support for Queen's University's Faculty of Education teacher candidate programs



Lisa Dempster Metro Toronto Councillor

I am Assistant Curriculum Leader of Library and Learning Resources at Riverdale Collegiate Institute in the Toronto District School Board. I encourage students to effectively, safely, ethically, and creatively

engage in multi-media collaborative online learning. I am an active voice in school and district policy and professional development and participate in several online professional sharing systems.

I am committed to the promotion of lively and relevant dialogue through multiple platforms. Please join me on Twitter @LisaJDempster

June Rysinski Northern Ontario Councillor



I am a teacher-librarian for the Thunder Bay Catholic District School and work half time at Corpus Christi School and half time at St. Paul School. I am pursuing a Masters of Education at the University of Alberta in Teacher-Librarianship. I am part of a leadership team that plans and implements

...continued on page 16

...continued from page 15

the Teacher-Librarian Project for my board. The project created professional learning communities where all teacher-librarians meet and collaborate once a month.



Collette Denomme Southwestern Ontario Councillor

I am the teacher-librarian at H.B. Beal Secondary School in the Thames Valley District School Board. I have been teaching for 25 years, with 15 years working as an English teacher and 10 years working in the library.

My main goal has been to help students and staff stay current with new technologies and resources so that the library is a dynamic, welcoming and collaborative place in our school.

My work includes:

- OSLA Southwestern Ontario Representative
- Member of the Orientation Based on Discrimination Committee Since 2003 (we have presented numerous times at SC and for the TVDSB)
- Second year on the Bullying Task Force to assist suspended students with re-entry
- One of two teacher-librarians for the Thames Valley District School Board updating again the On Your Own Document for secondary students (last updated 2007)
- Co-chair of the Literacy Committee at Beal SS
- Secondary School Representative for the Thames Valley District School Board's Teacher-Librarians' Association
- Member of the Computer Assisted Learning Committee at Beal SS



Steven Nagy Website Editor

I have taught for more than two decades at Earl Kitchener Elementary School in Hamilton. During most of that time I have been the Information Literacy Teacher and/or Teacher-Librarian.



Diana Maliszewski Magazine Editor

I am the teacherlibrarian at Agnes Macphail Public School (K-8) in the Toronto District School Board. In 2010, I finished my Masters of Education degree from the University of Alberta in teacherlibrarianship. Some of

my passions related to school librarianship include gaming in education, graphic novels, popular culture, technology, professional learning communities, and children's literature. I maintain a library-themed blog, "Monday Molly Musings", and also share at various conferences and workshops across North America. I've appeared on CBC Radio, TVOntario, and Global TV to discuss school library issues and technology. My other great love (besides my family) is the Twilight saga by Stephenie Meyer (and FYI, I'm "Team Switzerland"). Feel free to contact me at TingLeditor@gmail.com

My work includes:

- Editor-in-chief of *The Teaching Librarian*, OSLA's official magazine.
- OSLA Representative Editor on the Board of *Access*, OLA's official magazine.
- Past member of the Silver Birch Selection Committee and Red Maple Steering Committee.
- One of the OSLA coordinators of the Ontario Teachers' Federation Library Camp.
- One of the writers of *Together For Learning:* School Libraries and the Emergence of the Learning Commons, the OSLA vision document; one of the vetting team of *Imagine the Learning*, the TDSB Elementary Library Resource Guide.
- Author of articles and essays in School Libraries in Canada, Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research, Teacher-Librarian Today, Graphic Novels and Comics in Libraries and Archives, and Leading Journeys: Papers of Treasure Mountain Canada

(Pending Election) – Mid-Central Ontario Councillor I

Special Heritage Spaces Remembering Margaret Scott

By Lois Lorimer Nunn

few years ago, the library at R.H. King Academy in the Toronto District School Board (http://schools.tdsb.on.ca/rhking/), was given a "paintlift" to update its 1970's look. That one replaced the school's former library in a building that dates back to 1922.

M. B. Scott

While taking down a plaque dedicated to Margaret Scott, a former King teacher-librarian, I was reminded of her contribution to our school, the province, and national school libraries.

A pioneer in school librarianship, Scott served as librarian at R.H. King from 1945 until 1961, when she was appointed Associate Professor of School Librarianship at the Faculty of Education, University of Toronto. Her inspirational vision of what school libraries could become drove the teacher-librarian training programs in faculties of education in the 1960's and 70's.

I really wanted to put a face to the lady who had contributed so much to school librarianship so, in my role of school archivist like many teacher-librarians, I looked through our yearbooks for photos. In his session entitled *Education for Librarians: Ontario's History* at the February, 2011, OLA Super Conference, Larry Moore, former Executive Director of the Ontario Library Association, spoke about Margaret Scott's advocacy for school libraries, her energy, and her reputation as the "Turtle Lady." This moniker came from her belief that "You will never make any progress unless you're willing to stick your neck out." This adage has inspired many teacher-librarians to innovate and move our school libraries forward.

In 2010, we renovated and re-designated Margaret Scott's former library as a special classroom and study hall. Now, the Heritage Room reminds its users that this building has the distinction of being Scarborough's first secondary school - quite an honour.

Brian Wilkinson, teacher-librarian colleague, was charmed by the large room but felt the space could be improved. He took charge of the project, as well as the room's design.

With the backing of Tommy Jutcovich, the school's principal responsible for planning the physical renovation, Brian and I shopped for tables and chairs after looking at pictures from Margaret Scott's era. Its fireplace, tall windows, chintz drapes, armchairs and oak tables inspired us to reflect the old design in the new. We also scoured the building to salvage as many of the original oak chairs as we could.

Our new space has echoes from the past in its tall ceilings and old shelves. We aimed to preserve the architectural heritage of the room while engaging the memory and spirit of Margaret's Scott's legacy in the room's new life for students. We now hold staff meetings, Model United Nations Days, senior study halls, and other special events in this beautiful space.

As we ramp up to R. H. King Academy's 90th birthday in 2012, we are struck by the spirit of former educators and principals who contributed to the school's success over the years. We plan to re-dedicate the Margaret Brodie Scott plaque in the Heritage Room as part of our celebrations. And you can be sure that a turtle of some kind will be included in our interior decorations!



The R.H. King Academy Heritage Room.

Photo by: Lois Lorimer Nunn

Spotlight on the OSLA Spotlight Session at Super Conference 2011

The Great Web

The OSLA Web 2.0 Hockey Faceoff at this year's Super Conference presented an amazing menu of social networking tools. Designed in a hockey game format, each team "took the ice" and presented their favourite tools for learning and instruction.

With pre-game and intermission commentary from Mark Carbone and Carol Koechlin, the audience was given time to digest these generous offerings before a new set of tools was unveiled.

The third period was an amazing display of virtuosity as each team was able to attack the other team by asking them to give an impromptu defense of specific tools. Not only were the arguments concise and realistic, but the delivery was spectacular.

These tools are great because they make learning fun and interactive, they give students experience using real world tools that can help them in school and in life, and of course they're environmentally friendly, reducing paper waste in the classroom.

But equally important is the ability of these tools to capture lessons, activities and groupwork, and save them for posterity.

Teachers and students alike can create a footprint in the digital landscape. Work can be saved and consulted for use in future projects, or by future groups of students. It's a modern way to preserve our ideas, to share our knowledge, and to leave our mark.

OLA has condensed the presentation into a 40 minute podcast—a MUST for any teacher-librarian who couldn't make it to the session in person! If nothing else, you must hear the brilliant performance of Roger Nevin—he had me in stitches with his fast-paced delivery!

A thorough and entertaining session delivered by all of the presenters.

The Great Web 2.0 Face Off
Podcast can be found with the
supplementary materials on the
Super Conference 2011 website. Visit
accessola.com/superconference2011,
and select the 9:05 a.m. session under
Friday on the left hand menu. The link to
download the podcast can be found below
the session description!

The whole crew! From left to right: Mark Carbone, Carol Koechlin, Doug Peterson, Colleen Rampelt, Rick Budding, Roger Nevin, Diana Maliszewski, Zoe Branigan-Pipe, Anita Brooks-Kirkland.



2.0 Face Off

Michelle Arbuckle

Period 1

The Collaborators

Skype

Roger

Google Docs and Apps

Diana

Voki

Team 2.0 + 1

Google Earth, Maps - StreetView

Colleen

Bitstrips for Schools

Rick

SpringNote

Period 2

The Collaborators

Zoe

Evernote

Roger

Facebook, Twitter

Diana

Wallwisher

Team 2.0 + 1

Rick

Voicethread

Colleen

Glogster

Doug

Popplet

Period 3

The Collaborators

- Flickr
- Google Marketplace
- OR codes
- Wordle
- Piclits
- · Free Realms
- MMORPGs

Team 2.0 + 1

- · Diigo and Delicious
- Quora
- StoryMaker
- Markup
- Zotera
- Stroom

The Experts

Expert Analysts

Dr. David Loertscher Carol Koechlin

Colour Commentary

Mark Carbone

The Teams

The Collaborators (Blue Team)

Captain

Zoe Branigan-Pipe Full time instructor, Faculty of Education, **Brock University**

Elementary Teacher-Librarian

Diana Maliszewski

Secondary Teacher-Librarian

Roger Nevin

Team 2.0 + 1 (Red Team)

Captain

Doug Peterson

Sessional instructor, Faculty of Education, University of Windsor

Elementary Teacher-Librarian Rick Budding

Secondary Teacher-Librarian

Colleen Rampelt

The Crew

Anita Brooks Kirkland

Technical Director

Diane Bédard

Top Tweep

Becky Rouse





Although the OLA Super Conference 2011 has only just passed, there is a chance that some of the discoveries may be lost to time without reflection. If we want our annual conference to be more effective, we need to ensure that the nuggets of knowledge that enter our minds ripple beyond ourselves and even beyond our usual sphere of influence. We asked our members: what was your favourite session at Super Conference 2011? Here's what they had to say:

Diana Swain's message about the power of quiet leadership certainly resonated with everyone in the packed meeting room on Saturday morning. She did not focus her attention on well-known leaders who are constantly in the public eye. Instead, she chose to tell the stories of individuals and groups who have effected change in much quieter ways. These quiet leaders, including many who have experienced incredible challenges, have overcome their obstacles and made powerful contributions to the world around them. Diana ended by encouraging each of us to acknowledge the ways in which we can be quiet leaders. As Teacher-Librarians, we may not always be the ones in the spotlight in our schools. However, we are certainly in a position to be very strong and very effective quiet leaders, making a big impact on the staff and students with whom we work. Let's accept Diana Swain's challenge and see what a strong force quiet leadership can be!

> Marilynne Gilchrist Teacher-Librarian F.E. Madill S.S. Wingham, ON - Avon-Maitland DSB

Top moments @ #SC2011: Michael Wesch: see him at http://www.youtube.com/user/mwesch, brilliant cultural anthropologist looking at social media and learning. Meeting and noshing with peeps and tweeps, best PD contacts around. Fab sessions to keep my brain spinning - so much to learn! Love what they're doing with a secondary information skills continuum @ J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate in Durham http://richardson.ddsbschools.ca/research-links/library.html. And our fantastic teens @ the Youth Panel who helped us understand how today's students use technology in their daily lives. They were articulate, thoughtful and fun!

Lisa Dempster Teacher-Librarian Riverdale C.I. Toronto, ON – Toronto District School Board attended a lunchtime session on Thursday at OLA titled, "Speed Dating with Mystery Writers." It was fantastic, energizing and fun. Since most of us school librarians have had our brains immersed in 50 or more Forest of Reading titles, it was a most wonderful break and opportunity to hear these interesting writers of adult mystery books describe their stories and backgrounds. There were two authors per table who moved around when the (truthfully, annoying but necessary) whistle blew. As an audience we moved all around Canada with them and their fictionalized characters.

Reva Nelson Teacher-Librarian & ESL Teacher Forest Hill Jr. & Sr. Public School Toronto, ON – Toronto District School Board

There are always those gems on the sleepy Saturday morning of Super Conference. It was on that morning that I attended "Aboriginal Literature: A conversation about authors, titles and trends"; what a delight! Sherry Lawson gracefully and amiably moderated the "motley crew" of Drew Hayden Taylor, Lee Maracle, Chad Solomon and Jeremy Diamond through a heartfelt and humourous dialogue. We were reminded of earlier, inspiring writings and considered contemporary portrayals. More than anything what resonated was the truth of voice and the value of laughter. There's much to explore in this fine array of literature and writers.

Cindy Matthews Instructional Leader, Library and Learning Resources K-8 Toronto, ON – Toronto District School Board

OSLA Web 2.0 Faceoff: This highly-charged, example-filled, and idea-rich info session gave practical ways to use great Web 2.0 tools in your classroom. Audience engagement through idea contribution made this the most inspiring session I attended at Super Conference 2011. https://sites.google.com/site/oslahockeyfaceoff/

Paul Kay Teacher-Librarian & Technology Chair Northlea EMS Toronto, ON – Toronto District School Board



I really enjoyed Mike Wesch's presentation because he emphasized the need for us as teachers to go beyond the teaching of critical literacy skills and work on digital citizenship with our students. He said that social media is "nothing more or less than we make of it." We can simply be observers or we can participate in our world.

Melissa Jensen Teacher-Librarian & Literacy Coach Trillium Woods E.S.

Barrie, ON – Simcoe County District School Board

"Embracing happiness in a complex world"? I didn't know if I'd learn anything new from Dr. Sarah Maddocks, but I really did find this session left me feeling 'happier' with myself and my life, and with some insights on how to 'adjust' my thinking in order to be happier. Did you know we are born with a certain 'level' of happiness, which we can adjust slightly, but which often returns to the 'set' state? We should learn to live in the moment, and not in the past, and appreciate what we have, not think about what we don't have. She dispelled any myths about how money can make us happier by supporting the notion with statistics on how the effect usually wears off after about 2 years and this can work with relationships too. All in all, this was a satisfying way to end the conference for me.

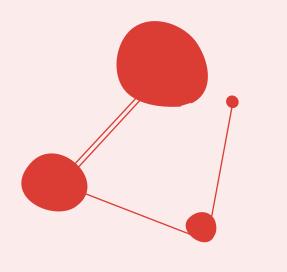
Christiane MacFarlane Teacher-Librarian p.m. (LTO), Riverdale C.I. Toronto, ON – Toronto District School Board

There were so many great sessions, but for pure inspiration I found that Dr. Peggy MacInnis, Teacher-Librarian at Sir Robert L Borden B.T.I., gave an amazing overview of the magic of Manga to reach reluctant readers. In 7.5 years the number of readers and the number of books read has skyrocketed. One of the Book Club student members was also available to share information about the annual buying trip, by TTC, to Beguiling Books in Toronto and the processing of the new purchases. The library is open from 8-5, grads return to read, and the number of volumes signed out over the summer is in the multiple hundreds.

Frances Adam Head of Library & CATC Co-Chair Preston High School Cambridge, ON - Waterloo Region DSB

I love attending the OLA Super Conference because I always return to my school with a renewed energy and enthusiasm for teaching along with a myriad of ideas for enhancing my library program. For instance, I am using all the great information I learned from Ruth Hall's session in my workshop on Turnitin (www. turnitin.com). I am also inspired to reach all the grade eleven students this year with an Academic Honesty seminar. I was also inspired by Terence Kernaghan and friends who presented a Human Library session and I am now collaborating with our peer mentorship teacher to plan a Human Library event for Education week with her classes. Michael Wesch's speech inspired me to join Twitter and I now follow the latest edtech tips on my TweetDeck! A special thank you also to Anita Brooks Kirland and her team's presentation on building an online library learning commons. This presentation gave our Superintendent of Information Technology and our library consultant a clear vision for the kind of library portal we would like to build in our board! The OLA Super Conference is simply the best professional development experience I have ever had and it's why I keep coming back every year!

> Sarah Murray Teacher-Librarian St. Joseph High School Ottawa, ON - Ottawa Catholic School Board





Getting it Together for Learning

A life lived in fear is a life half-lived

Spanish proverb

nticipating my debut as a rookie teacher-librarian, I figured I'd better cozy up to the new school librarianship document, *Together For Learning*, and so, last July, I spent three whole days at an Ontario Teacher's Federation (OTF) PD session facilitated by Diana Maliszewski and Ruth Hall, dissecting *T4L* and considering its implications. Now, looking back at my first semester as a teacher-librarian, it should have been no surprise that I would be constantly surprised in my new position. Despite my two decades of teaching experience, and my rudimentary library A.Q. in the pre-*T4L* era, I feel like I'm flying solo without a safety net. The best advice that both Maliszewski and Hall had was: Don't be afraid to try.

Empowered and emboldened by my new OTF certificate, I headed into the school library in mid-August, knowing that, between the board workshops on differentiated instruction and my training day on the library's circulation system, I'd be hard pressed to make the place feel like mine at all before the semester began. I'd also been asked to fill an hour and a half on our first PD day with a session on digital resources and I was really nervous about presenting to the staff at the small town secondary school where I teach. To top it all off, the calendar dictated that our first professional development day would occur right before the Labour Day weekend. I would be competing with thoughts of barbecuing at the lake. Suddenly it hit me... differentiated instruction, technology... for our 90 minutes, I'd set up an individual course of study for each teacher that would spotlight the three resources I hoped the teachers would implement in their courses.

I arrived to find that the library wasn't a quiet place at all in August as teacher after teacher sneaked in to book classes into the labs, to talk to me about their ideas for the new year, and to begin collaboration for inquiry. I scrambled to arrange a working calendar and make sure our brand new computers were operating, and had no work time left to develop my idea for the PD day. So, as any keen newbie would do, I stayed up all night making my plan come to life, scouring resources—Learn360 and the OERB—for individual items that would appeal

to each teacher. Or not—because no resource can be everything to everybody. I'd invited each of our 85 teachers to join the school wikispace (which I had initiated the previous spring), and I'd emailed everyone to let them know what to expect on the PD day. To my delight, 85% of the teachers attended and stayed to work on their own projects, to ask questions, and to connect with me —their fledgling teacher-librarian.

Since then, I've tried to find out what the teachers are already doing and then to suggest additional or alternative resources their students might use. I don't try to change the teachers' programs but, instead, to support and build on them. I consider it a successful venture if a third of our students try these new resources. To make my efforts even more attractive to teachers, I've tried to move out of the physical library and teach in classrooms whenever possible because the students and teachers feel more comfortable in their own spaces. I usually arrive armed with a basket of books as well as passwords and websites to show them, and I try not to stay longer than 20 minutes (unless, of course, a great discussion ensues).

I've also made it a point to appeal to efficiency. If I can show teachers how a resource or piece of software will simplify their lives, then usually they can see the value for their students—the instant-gratification generation. For example, survey generators, such as SurveyMonkey, and online mind-mapping presentation tools, like Prezi, have been well received. Teachers and students alike have to admit that cloud computing and other digital tools are saving them oodles of time and allowing them to collaborate from remote locations.

The biggest surprise so far is that the library is never really quiet, that there are always questions to be answered and problems to be solved. I did not expect that I would become one of the school's technology experts or that 50% of the questions I was asked would be technology-related. I also didn't expect that so much of my job would be better served by a second degree in psychology, as so much of my time isn't about actually finding resources, but about giving teachers and students the confidence to try it (whatever the "it" might be) themselves.

LEAPING OUT OF THE NEST

Alanna King

This is the beginning of my leap out of the comfortable nest of classroom teaching into the wide blue sky of teacher-librarianship. In the dawning era of the Learning Commons, I have the advantage of not having to adjust my expectations, mostly because I didn't really have any. I came to this new position without any preconceived notions of what it is that teacher-librarians do. I never know what to expect from one week to the next, and I very often get completely side-tracked, starting with what I thought was a priority, only to find myself doing something else that, it turns out, is equally as important, or even more important than, my original focus. It's very scary sometimes, but the tasks I'm given and the exhilaration of handling the many and diverse queries that come my way have my heart pounding in a way that I haven't experienced since I last broke up a fight. I'm juggling all those

tasks and queries as best I can while trying to keep my balance and stay on my feet in order to make the teacher-librarian an integral part of the school. I've already noticed some changes, even in this short time in my new position. For example, I've become a media glutton; I simply cannot shut off my teacher-librarian brain at the end of the work day. If the students and teachers want something, I try to deliver. Of course, I'm also learning to work my own agenda—better teaching design using technology—into their wishes. I could beat myself up about the goals I've set that I haven't yet even started to accomplish, but I need to remember that having the courage to try means that I'm doing more with each attempt. I'm learning that it's making the attempt that matters. "Don't be afraid to try" really has turned out to be great advice!



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TL DRAWN TO THE FORM

Comic Classics Stand the Test of Time

Peter Birkemoe

t The Beguiling, a store that showcases the largest selection of graphic story telling in the country, we spend a good part of our day answering questions about the suitability of certain comics or graphic novels for given grades, particularly from primary schools. Some teachers will reminisce fondly about the comics they read as children, or recall a time when comic books, by definition, were meant for children. We are very lucky that the comics industry is going through a golden age of reprinting classic comics, both for kids and adults, and that one can find books today that will enthrall kids as much as they did in the past.

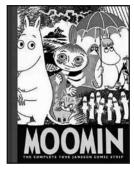
When today's greats of kids' comics are asked who inspired them when they were young, they mention only a handful of names. John Stanley, Charles Schulz and Carl Barks routinely top any list and they have had as much influence on comics as Dr. Seuss, Maurice Sendak and Beverly Cleary have had on kids' books.

John Stanley is the least well known of these names because most of his work was done on other people's creations. Just as you can now buy comic books based on popular children's cartoons, in decades past the same was true of newspaper comic strips. Stanley took the characters of Little Lulu

and Nancy and created comic book adventures that many would say improve upon the originals. Richly characterized and plotted, the stories are also often laugh-out-loud funny. While the candy and soda are ridiculously cheap, and the characters need to stand by a wall to use a telephone, the stories hold up remarkably well considering they are fifty years old. The adventures of Lulu & Tubby or Nancy & Sluggo are nearly all suitable for today's children but, in selecting volumes for schools, we take into account current sensibilities and avoid those in which they play cowboys and Indians. Canadian publisher Drawn & Quarterly is producing marvelous hardcover editions of Nancy, Tubby and some of Stanley's own creations— 0 Melvin Monster (Imagine The Munsters loaded with corny puns.) and Thirteen Going on Eighteen (Imagine if Betty & Veronica had ever been well written.). Inexpensive paperbacks of Little Lulu are also available from Dark Horse Comics.

Loved the world over, the comic book adventures of Donald Duck, his nephews Huey, Dewey and Louie, and Scrooge McDuck are associated most with the name Carl Barks. Whether short humorous stories, or longer adventure stories, his work is known for its flawless cartooning and for giving his











animal characters more humanity than any human characters to grace the pages of comics. These have been reprinted in hundreds of different formats over the years, but are about to get their due in a series of reprints from Fantagraphics starting this year.

My earliest solo reading was aided more by Peanuts than any other single work, and this is not an uncommon recollection. Schulz's work, extending over nearly fifty years, is being reprinted in wonderful two-year chunks also by Fantagraphics, designed (like the Stanley reprints) by Canadian cartoonist Seth. The mixture of humour and melancholy in these strips appeals to young and old, and can be put safely in anyone's hands. The elegant simplicity of the art and the small four panel chunks of the daily strip make this perfect material for a very young reader without ever seeming too juvenile for an older, struggling reader.

While unknown to most Canadians under 40, *Doug Wright's Family* (also known as *Nipper*), one of Canada's best known comics years ago, was a masterpiece of wordless or pantomime cartooning. Fortunately, it has been resurrected by Drawn and Quarterly with both a giant coffee table book and another collection of these strips that is more friendly to young readers. Portraying a suburban

family with two young sons (Why are so many of the boys in great comics bald?), Wright's work is timeless in its appeal, even if many of the cars still have fins.

There are treasures beyond our continent as well. Some people are hesitant to explore classic works of the comic realm because of fears of outdated material. The racial and cultural stereotypes of the earliest Tintin volumes are the most commonly cited examples. They provide reason enough to be cautious, but dismissing the entirety of those generations' work represents a real missed opportunity. The current reprints of the Moomin comics from Finnish cartoonist Tove Janson are a perfect example of children's comic classics. They feature an eccentric family of trolls whose interactions with their neighbours provide a subtle satire of modern life. While the chapter books have been around in English for decades, the comics were known only to academics in North America until

Time is demonstrating that it is an effective filter in helping selectors make good choices when adding comics to their libraries. As lesser comics from ages past simply end up forgotten, many essential comics and true classics, are getting the reprints they deserve.



The Beguiling booth at Super Expo

Photo by: Brian Pudden

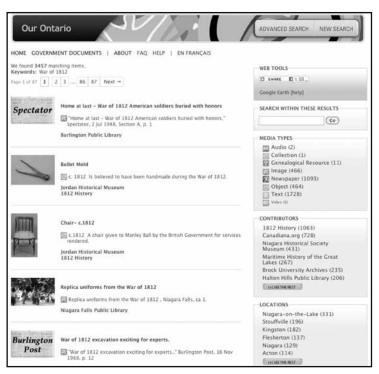
Teaching Digital His for a Web 2.0 General

As your students spend hours online, how can you ensure that you engage them in the classroom?

One such way is to use digital resources as teaching tools, and get students learning and interacting with digital content that meet curriculum requirements. Here are some ideas on using the OurOntario.ca portal, one of the services offered by Knowledge Ontario. The OurOntario.ca portal provides a one-search access to digital collections about Ontario history, culture and people.



OurOntario.ca search page



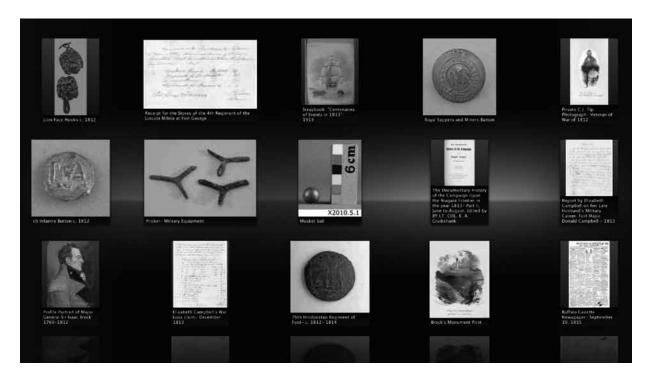
Freely available online, the OurOntario.ca portal (www.ourontario.ca) provides quick and easy discovery of over a million digital photographs, videos, newspapers, objects, maps, audio files and many more primary digital resources that support the K-12 social sciences and history curriculum. The digital materials also provide a great taking-off point for art and media classes. The portal is optimized for a digital generation – designed to work with different applications such as the citation tool Zotero, and making it easy to discover, share and socially connect around our heritage.

War of 1812 search results—over 3400 matches

story and Heritage ration

Loren Fantin

And you can dazzle your students by creating a stunning visual display of your search results.



War of 1812 search results displayed using **Cooliris** app

How it Works

The OurOntario.ca portal is an index that searches the metadata provided by public libraries, universities, museums, archives, historical societies and community groups.

Simple searches can be conducted using keyword, browsing media types (audio, collection, image, object, text and video) or by contributing institution. There is also an advanced search page that enables more focused searching. Search results provide a short description, a thumbnail image and a direct URL to access the object via the contributing organizations' site (similar to Google). Result sets can be further narrowed by a search within the results or by categories such as contributors, location, item types, groups and other facets.

Search Examples

Grade 2: Heritage and Citizenship: Traditions and Celebrations

- 1. A keyword search of Celebration returns over 30,000 results.
- 2. A quick way to demonstrate the breadth of celebrations is to narrow the results by clicking on the media type "Images" (over 1800).
- 3. Then engage a young student audience by clicking on the Cooliris icon (download at http://www.cooliris.com/downloads), which launches the 3Dwall of image results, guaranteed to get oohs and ahs.
- 4. You can then directly access any of the images.

Other keyword searches include:

- Remembrance a wonderful set of results with items spanning from the 1930s to 2010, including parades; or
- Search terms such as Heritage, Tradition, and Centennial all return links to digital items which demonstrate our history in locations all across Ontario.

Display Options for a Web 2.0 Generation

Search results can be displayed in alternate ways – one of the ways to engage audiences of all ages is to turn your search results into a 3D wall of images by using Cooliris (a free cross-browser app available at http://www.cooliris.com/downloads). Alternatively, search results that contain records with geo-data can also be instantly mapped and displayed using Google Earth, just by clicking on the Google Earth link that appears on your search results page. Another "plus" feature is that results are bookmark-able, making it effortless for students and educators to keep track of their favourite or relevant searches.



War of 1812 search results displayed in Google Earth

Grade 7: British North America, Conflict and Change

- A search on War of 1812 returns over 3400 results, from objects of the time like uniforms and weapons as well as cooking utensils, samplers and other items, to pamphlets, letters, books and more.
- In addition, digitized Ontario newspapers such as the Kingston Gazette are key primary sources of the time period that are also accessible through the portal.
- For more details on effectively using the portal resources in teaching the War of 1812, see the lesson plan in "Knowledge Ontario's Digital Delights" in Teaching Librarian vol 17 #1.
- See more lesson plans at the website 1812history.com.

In the Information Flow

It's just a click away to share search results with friends, classmates and colleagues by using the social bookmarking tools accessible from all site pages. Post your search results to Facebook, Twitter or your own personal favourite app.

Grades 9-10: Canadian History since World War 1

There are numerous resources that can be accessed and used to illustrate this topic, including:

- •Video interviews with WWII veterans (some include transcripts) provide powerful testimony of what it is like to be young and heading off to war.
- Numerous newspaper articles, photographs, postcards, and other materials on Agnes Macphail, our first female Member of Parliament.
- Over 3000 speeches from the Empire Club of Canada.
- Over 20,000 records related to farming.
- New content is regularly being added.

Anytime, Anywhere

Make it easy for your students to access the portal by inserting an OurOntario. ca search widget in their information flow. Here's a link to instructions: http://www.ourontario.ca/demo/searchwidget.html. Be sure to check out our Features page for a complete list of applications and how to get the most out of using the OurOntario.ca portal.



Take us with you: Install an OurOntario.ca search widget on any website.

Yes I Can! Science Video Con

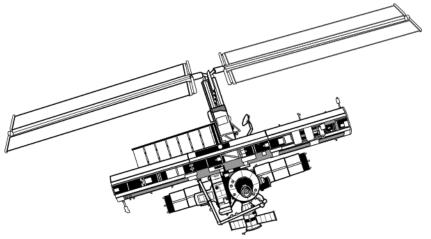
A group of Grade eight students from Maple Grove Public School in Barrie, Ontario had the amazing opportunity to take part in the Yes I Can! Science Video Conference. The students used Polycom video conferencing software in order to learn about Space from specialists in the field. They also connected with other learners by collaborating on the Yes I Can! Blog. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for students to have their questions answered by science experts.

The Yes I Can! Dr. Thomas Stiff and Diane Hammond designed the Yes I Can! Science web site. The site manager is Susan Stiff. The purpose of the site is to provide a database of science materials that promote higher thinking in our future scientists. It is an excellent educational resource for teaching science and technology.

We signed up in September for the video conferencing activity. The project was completed in January. The students met regularly in the library to find out information about the space shuttle program. The last two shuttles will launch sometime this year. Then the International Space Station will rely on the Soyuz rockets to keep them supplied.

The following are excerpts from the student's essays about their experience.

"In Yes I Can! Science we broadcasted with a bunch of other schools from other provinces and the United States and had the chance to talk to astronauts like Clay Anderson and Dr. Bob Thirsk. We were allowed to ask them many questions about their job and what they do in space. One of the questions I wanted to ask was "What is the next planet you're supposed to be going to?" We also got to blog and ask questions and hopefully wait for our questions to be answered if we didn't have enough time to ask them during the broadcast. Students, teachers, and even the astronauts could answer our questions we would write on the blog. We learned about the mission to Mars and a robot called Dexter because he has dexterity in his robot fingers so it's more human like and we can communicate and control it easier and sometimes even get to places faster too. He is also attached to the Candarm and replaces broken pieces on the International Space Station" By Ryan



nferencing

Nancy Pigden

"We talked to Taryn Tomlinson via webcast on Wednesday October 13th. Taryn Tomlinson specializes in Canadian Space Agency robotics. Taryn Tomlinson is from Campbell River, Vancouver Island. She studied at McGill University as an electrical engineer. For Taryn Tomlinson's first project in the CSA she prepared Dexter."

By Makayla

"We had some broadcasts with the astronauts which was pretty cool. We had the broadcasts with other classes from Canada and other places. We had videoconferences with astronauts and asked them questions. Clay Anderson was interesting because he demonstrated how space shuttles dock with the International Space Station. The shuttle mission was delayed due to technical difficulties. They are interested in the safety of the astronauts. Students were able to blog and ask questions and the astronauts wrote back. "Do you have a refrigerator and/or a cooler to preserve your food?" is one of the questions I asked the astronauts. We had asked Robert Thirsk if he could speak Russian. He responded by speaking in Russian. We were surprised by his answer that we did not understand."

By Washkesh

"We got to talk to astronauts and find out what it was like in space. I found it interesting to learn about the food in space, and how it is all wrapped in airtight plastic, and for most of it you just have to add water! It was also kind of gross, because the salt and pepper was liquid! For some things, like smarties and crackers, all you have to do is open up the package and eat them! I also learned that for fun, they would throw the smarties through the air, and the other crewmates would catch them in their mouth. I enjoyed the opportunity to connect with other schools all across the country! It was fun and interesting to hear their opinions and questions that they had to ask the speaker! Some of them were really neat, and would have never even have thought to ask! With the other students in the webcast, I think we learned more! In conclusion, I think that the Yes I Can Science program was really amazing."

By Renee

The intention of this educational activity was to encourage students to open their horizons and become aware of scientific opportunities that exist. The videoconferences were truly inspiring. The scientists were very patient with the students. The students learned to ask higher order thinking questions. Thank you, Yes I Can! Science for running a successful program. The address of the web site is as follows:

www.yesican-science.ca

Infusing Aboriginal Con Home Languages into the

ithin the Peel District School Board, many of us work in very diverse communities and we work together to create welcoming and inclusive school environments.

At Floradale Public School, our students represent more than eighty countries and speak over fifty languages in their homes. At Floradale, we believe that "newcomer students need to be valued and respected regarding their own language, culture, heritage and knowledge base..." (Manners et al., 2010 Summer, p. 30). The immigrant experience is often marginalized and dismissed instead of celebrated, and this, sadly, mirrors many of the experiences of the First Peoples of Canada. Our school has taken positive steps towards infusing the heritages of both the First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada, and our students, into our teaching and learning, and the students have benefited greatly.



We have worked closely with Dr. Jim Cummins, renowned expert in English Language Learners, to affirm the identities of our multicultural and multilingual students and to welcome their heritage as a rich resource and a valued contribution to our multiple perspectives, critical thinking curriculum. When members of the Floradale staff attended the Circle of Light Conference in 2009, we found several resources that proved useful as we worked toward an inclusive, responsive curriculum. This Toronto conference was a partnership between the Ontario Ministry of Education, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and the local First Nation, Métis, and Inuit groups. The Ministry of Education document, Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework (2007), and The Learning Circle: Classroom Activities on First Nations in Canada (2006), from the federal Ministry of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, inspired us. Many of the suggestions aligned perfectly with the curriculum (see sidebar).

At Floradale, we take several approaches to harmoniously wed aboriginal culture to the school climate and the life experiences of our students. Teachers read aboriginal legends and incorporate aboriginal culture and knowledge into science, social studies, drama, art, and language expectations. The

Left and opposite: the "Integrating Aboriginal Content into School Curriculum" Poster Session at Super Conference 2011.

Photo by: Padma Sastri

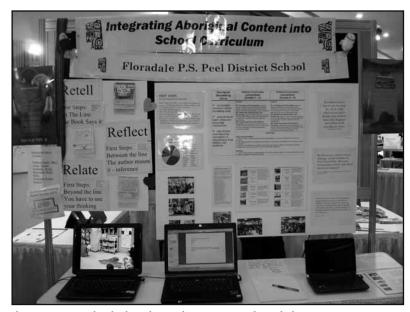
tent and Students' ne School Curriculum

Padma Sastri, Mary Chau, and Patricia Chow

aboriginal oral storytelling tradition is preserved and enriched as our students tell their own stories in both English and their home languages. Jeanne Conte, Library Coordinator for our board, had this to contribute to the conversation after her visit to our monthly aboriginal storytelling performances by multilingual families of children in grade three: "I visited Floradale during one of their evening sessions. I was truly amazed to see parents and students working together on drama presentations portraying First Nation, Inuit, and Métis mythological and cultural stories that were translated into Punjabi, Tagalog, Gujarati, and many more languages. What a wonderful way to introduce Canada's immigrant community to the history of Canada's First Peoples. As I sat in the audience, I felt the barriers often associated with multicultural diversity melt away in the room. Way to go Floradale! Your work with students and the community illustrates well the principles of Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy by eliminating cultural barriers and promoting a sense of belonging which extends to, and honours, Canada's Inuit, First Nation, and Métis cultures."

The partnership with Susan Kimberly, the Readiness Centre teacher at Floradale, has also had a positive impact on the learning of our students. The students look forward to spending recesses presenting their dramas to the Centre's parents and their preschoolers. These student-produced stories are a natural extension of the many Aboriginal-themed stories and works of art shared at the Centre, and our students take great pride in the beautiful certificates recognizing their volunteer work.

In addition to the dramatic performances, our students created dual language reading responses to books with Aboriginal themes and they took pride in making these for authentic audiences. They also retold



these stories in both their home languages and English, as a class or with parents. These stories were recorded using Audacity and saved as mp3 files so they could be uploaded onto the school website to be shared with the community. You can hear some of these stories by going to: myclass.peelschools.org/ele/NA/19927/Default.aspx.

We are very proud of the progress we have made, and the "icing on the cake" was a written comment from George Beaver, an elder of the Six Nations Haundenosaunee. At the Super Conference 2011 poster session, he wrote: "I fully approve of what you are doing as far as telling our Native people's stories. It is a way to let non-Natives know we have ideas - such as the idea of the Earth as being our Mother. We also have ideas about conservation of the earth trees, rivers, lakes etc. Ona (goodbye)"

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Six Nations Elder George Beaver leaves his comments at the Aboriginal content Poster Session at Super Conference 2011.

Photo by: Padma Sastri

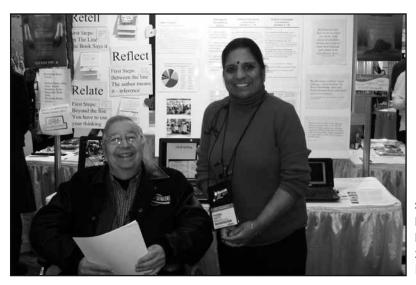
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Thornwood Public School is, like Floradale, a multicultural, multilingual school community, a community in which diversity is celebrated. At Thornwood, embracing parental involvement in the development of multilingual literacy skills and using diversity as a resource have resulted in students experiencing greater academic success while broadening their global awareness and appreciation for different cultures. One of our many initiatives that serve to celebrate the impressive linguistic achievements of Thornwood's students was an end-of-the year multilingual storytelling morning by a parent in the community, two Thornwood teachers, and a professional poet who volunteered to contribute to our event. It was an especially proud moment for six year old Farwaz, as he filed into the grade one pod, proudly stepped out of line, and joined his nervous mother in front of a quarter of the school population. He and his family had toiled over the nearly life-size cardboard animals and listened to their mother rehearse the telling of "It's Mine" by Rod Campbell. She was an intuitively masterful, interactive storyteller. Non-Arabic speaking

students listened attentively and watched intently to glean the gist of the story as his mother told her tale and Farwaz led them in repeating key Arabic phrases. English-speaking students gained a deeper appreciation of the challenges English Language Learners face at school. Arabic students were proud to have their teachers and friends hear their language showcased and to act as the experts in the room, confidently answering whispered questions from nearby classmates.

Another Thornwood initiative is the publishing of dual language books, which are shared on the school website at: thornwoodps.dyndns.org/dual/index.htm. Our experience at Thornwood mirrors that of Floradale; we find that these identity texts help to engage the students and parents of Thornwood's multilingual community and engender a sense of pride.

We hope sharing our positive experiences will inspire you to develop creative, cross-curricular approaches to nurturing respectful, responsible, global citizens. Our students are the leaders of tomorrow. Will our future be in good hands?



References

Manners et al. (2010, Summer). The Circle of Light: Exploring Aboriginal Education in Highly Diverse Schools. *The Register* [online]. Retrieved 3 March, 2011, from http://www.principals.ca/documents/Register Summer Vol12 No2.pdf>

Six Nations Elder George Beaver with Padma Sastri at the Aboriginal content Poster Session at Super Conference 2011.

Photo by: Padma Sastri

Heritage at Your Library — An Elaborate Frame?

By Derrick Grose

Every day, when I turn on the lights at the Lisgar Collegiate Institute Library, I revel in the high ceiling with its gold-coloured embossed tin decorations, tall windows, elaborately-framed, nearly life-sized portraits of former trustees, principals and teaching masters, and walls lined with shelves filled with books. However, it is not long before the morning rush hour begins and the realities of supervising three small but very crowded rooms must be confronted. I see the desperation of the twenty-fourth student trying to print off his work on one of our twenty-three computers. I try to figure out how I am going to reorganize the limited shelving space to accommodate new additions to the collection. I look at the eighteen portraits on the wall and see only white faces (and of those, only three are female—and they are only found amongst the more modestly sized portraits of recent principals). Certainly this is not representative of our current student population with a relatively equal gender mix and roots in more than sixty different countries. Sometimes one feels a sort of historical claustrophobia in this environment.

When I look back at the history of this school library, however, I realize that great progress has been made. As recently as 1960 our school library was a single room with minimal seating capacity for a few individual students. It housed a collection of approximately 6000 titles with one teacher acting as teacher-librarian in addition to teaching history and working as a guidance councilor! The library was closed at lunch time. And this was in the pre-Internet days, when students were more dependent on books than they are now!

The contrast between the past and the present demonstrates how students' information needs have evolved in a relatively short time. The recognition that a collection of books was not enough to empower students to learn was clearly reflected in the OSLA and Ministry of Education document, *Partners in Action*, released in 1982. There is a danger that the progress that has been made will be lost if cost-conscious administrators succumb to the illusion that the Internet (analogous to the collection of books of an earlier period) is, in itself, sufficient to meet the information needs of today's schools. Such beliefs, rather than physical surroundings, may constitute the most dangerous barriers to the development of learning

communities that reflect the realities of the second decade of the twenty-first century.

What is the relationship between heritage at your library and the heritage of your library? Is the latter a sort of dead weight impeding the exploration of the former? What parts of the heritage of school libraries can serve our school communities as we adapt ourselves to the learning commons? Are school libraries redundant in a world where wireless access to information is rapidly becoming taken for granted? The real progress that has been made in school libraries is the change in thinking about the role of the library in student learning: the recognition that literature and information resources must be complemented by library staff who will help students to think critically and creatively as they explore both physical and virtual collections.

In a discussion on boingboing.net of "Cutting Libraries in a Recession" (http://www.boingboing.net/2010/05/05/cutting-libraries-in.html), one commentator argued that the availability of easy access

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A study area inside the Lisgar Collegiate Institute library.

Photo by: Lucie Gagnon

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to information has rendered the library redundant. In response, it was argued that libraries have evolved because of technological innovations through the ages, as books replaced scrolls and printed texts replaced manuscripts. Libraries continue to be essential as a point of access to the information for those who may not have the money to pay for, or the skills to take advantage of, computers and Internet access. A library can be both a physical and virtual gathering place for learning communities.

The focus on the client and on learning is not something new in school libraries, but there is a change that must be made as "the collection" ceases to be the magnet that draws the school community into the room. For a brief time in the history of school libraries, the computer lab seemed to be replacing the book collection as an attraction for teachers and students but, with the advent of wireless technology, even that attraction is likely to lose much of its appeal. In Cory Doctorow's novel, *Little Brother*, a student quotes The Declaration of Independence (which he accesses using

his notebook computer in the classroom) to refute the claim that student activists in the 1960's were terrorists. The likelihood that most students will soon have such information at their finger-tips may seem to call into question the need for libraries.

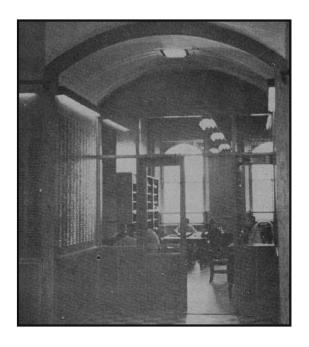
However, it is important to put the incident from Doctorow's novel into context. Clearly, the student is highly literate and a wide variety of experiences and influences have contributed to that literacy. He is aware of his parents' involvement in the student movement. City Lights Bookstore is a significant landmark for him. He remembers seeing a documentary about the Yippies. Very significantly, he also has library books in his knapsack (and has to make a special effort to mask the security tags in the books that threaten to enable school authorities to track him).

School libraries need not feel threatened by the loss of their near monopoly on reference materials as students access them from their netbooks, tablets and cellphones. Libraries can play a key role in preparing students to use these devices effectively. Reading is a key skill



Lisgar Collegiate Institute Library's ornate ceilings and historic portraits documenting the school's heritage.

Photo by: Lucie Gagnon





The library entrance, then and now.

Photos by: Vox Lycei and Lucie Gagnon

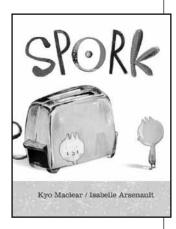
that is cultivated in school libraries through reading circles, book clubs and the provision of engaging material for independent reading. Another key role in the contemporary school library will be to guide users through a maze of information and to help them learn to ask the questions that will make their searches meaningful. The teacher-librarian, library technician, or school librarian has an overview of technology, resources and the curriculum that comes from working with teachers of many subjects and grade levels. Equally importantly, the library, with its diverse resources, can often support independent research in a way that a classroom cannot.

In *Library: An Unquiet History*, Matthew Battles quotes Gugliemo Sirleto, a Vatican Librarian during the counter-reformation, as having observed, "The best place to hide books, often, is the library." The irony in this observation is equally evident in the age of the Internet as students who do not ask the right questions, and who do not know how to use search engines to refine searches, struggle to find the information they need. Rather than rendering school libraries redundant, the proliferation of information has made them ever more important to the process of learning.

In his recently published novel, *The Makers*, Cory Doctorow writes about iconic corporations that transform themselves by using their infrastructure to support innovative entrepreneurial activities. In a sense, traditional school libraries are similar to those corporations, with expertise, infrastructure and goodwill. Building on our expertise in accessing and organizing information, and taking advantage of the resources and physical spaces that are part of the school library heritage, we can respond to rapid social and technological change by supporting individualized and innovative teaching and learning.

School libraries provide an excellent venue for students to learn about their own heritage and to share their expertise with others. The library's value is in its position as an ideal provider of resources and expertise, that in turn enable teachers, students and the community to teach and learn from each other. The institution's value is less vested in books and hardware; the emphasis has shifted to its location as a curricular crossroad where individuals with diverse expertise, experience, age, perspective and curiosity can meet and explore the constantly expanding galaxy of resources to which they now have access.

What does "Heritage" really mean? History? A look back at where you came from, either as a people or as an individual? What you inherit from your parents and grandparents, and how your own experiences alter these legacies?



In this edition of Book Buzz, we've tried to gather the best buzzworthy books that address the concept of Heritage. Enjoy!

Spork

Author: Kyo Maclear Illustrator: Isabelle Arsenault Publisher: Kids Can Press,

2010

ISBN: 9781553377368

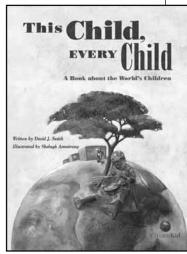
Spork doesn't belong. His father is a fork and his mother's a spoon, and poor Spork is a combination of both. The other kitchen utensils never let Spork forget how different he is...but when a new sloppy eater arrives in the kitchen one day, Spork's unique heritage gives him the particular attributes needed to save the day.

Spork is a fun book with artwork that channels retro kitchens, and yet its message of acceptance – and the implied darker elements of mixed race prejudice – make it a great teaching tool as well.

This Child, Every Child: A Book About the World's Children

Author: David J. Smith Illustrator: Shelagh Armstrong Publisher: Kids Can Press, 2011

ISBN: 9781554534661



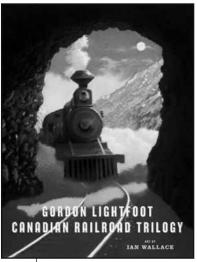
From the same team that brought us If the World Was a Village, this book compares the lives of children around the world. For some, their heritage means starvation and poverty, while for others, food and shelter are not even considerations in their daily lives. Readers will quickly see that the world's children are not treated equally. The appealing artwork, statistics and personal stories make this a powerful teaching tool.

Canadian Railroad Trilogy

Author: Gordon Lightfoot Illustrator: Ian Wallace

Publisher: Groundwood Books, 2010 ISBN: 9780888999535

What better way to celebrate Canada's heritage than with a picture book featuring the lyrics from Gordon Lightfoot's famous song about the building of the Transcontinental Railroad? The text is combined with stunning illustrations by artist and illustrator Ian Wallace who infuses his artwork with symbolic colours



and details to further enrich the power of the story. The book also includes the music for the song, as well as further information about the railroad and its significance.

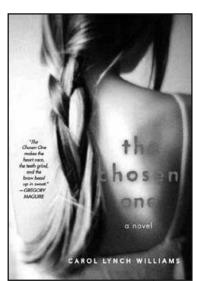
The Chosen One

Author: Carol Lynch Williams Publisher: St. Martin's Griffin 2010

ISBN: 9780312627751

Kyra has grown up in a polygamous cult and is only thirteen when she is told that she must become the seventh wife to her sixty-year-old paternal uncle. Already secretly rebelling thanks to a kindly mobile librarian, she hides a teen relationship with a boy her own age and is well aware that her future is not one she can accept.

"Must Have" purchases for your school's curriculum needs



Unfortunately, leaving the cult is not an option...at least not until Kyra's situation becomes so desperate she is willing to risk her own life and the lives of others to escape.

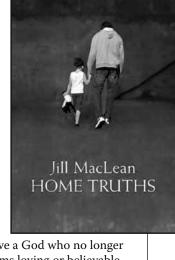
This is a riveting read, as the writing style allows the reader to live through Kyra's reality to see what will be required if she is to escape her heritage as a cult member. The sect has many similarities to that of the one formerly headed by Warren leffs, and it isn't too far a stretch to imagine that real situation provided the ideas for the novel. With television shows such as Big Love and Sister Wives increasing our interest in the social structure of polygamy, the topic should find lots of crowd appeal.

Shaken

Author: Eric Walters Publisher: Doubleday Canada, 2010 ISBN: 9780385670814

In Shaken, protagonist Josh is on his way to Haiti with his preacher father, little sister and a team of Canadian faithful. The plan is for the team to build a dormitory for orphans in the countryside.

Josh is wrestling with the recent death of his mother, his animosity towards his father – who continues to



serve a God who no longer seems loving or believable – and his own understanding of himself and his place in the world. The mission trip

> introduces Josh to a variety of people who offer him new perspectives on both his family and his beliefs. When the country is shaken by the catastrophic earthquake of 2010, however, Josh finds he can no longer simply exist and question – he must act.

This book continues Walters' habit of featuring teens in real-life disasters (*We All Fall Down, Wave,*

Safe as Houses), but it offers something more. In Josh's search for spiritual understanding, Walters tackles the hard questions that are a part of growing up. He does so without giving pat answers, letting the reader interpret Josh's understanding. This religious questioning may offend some readers, but most will find it refreshing and honest.

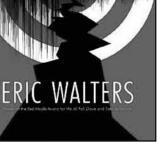
Home Truths

Author: Jill MacLean Publisher: Dancing Cat Books 2011

ISBN: 9781897151969

Brick MacAvoy is a fifteenyear-old bully, but he is also a victim. Forced to act as caretaker to his younger sister as he lives in constant fear of abuse from his white collar, ostensibly-perfect father, Brick takes out his aggression on the dogs and younger kids of the community.

With thanks to Marilyn Willis from Whitehots and Maria Martella of Tinlids for pointing out some new titles that found their way into this review!



Meet the Author

Interview Conducted by Parth Shah and Jesegan Jegananthan

Supervised by Katherine Farquhar-Lalonde
Transcribed by Amanda Braun

Red Maple winner Susin Nielsen, author of Word Nerd and the recent Dear George Clooney, Please Marry My Mom, was speaking recently at Super Conference 2011. Two of her most determined fans, along with their teacherlibrarian, decided to interview her for our Meet the Author feature.

Jesegan: We've been chosen to

Jesegan: We've been chosen to interview you and I've enjoyed your book so much! I read it three times and I love it.

Parth: Me too. And you probably heard us "Woo-ing" in the crowd.

Susin Nielsen: I totally did, thank you so much!

J: Okay, so let's start with number one okay? Number one: is there going to be a second book?

SN: There's not going to be a second *Word Nerd* book, but my next book, *Dear George Clooney, Please Marry My Mom*—

J: Yeah, I read the preview. I loved it.

SN: So you know then that Amanda and Cosmo are in it, and that even Ambrose makes a little tiny cameo? That's what I try to do in my books because they're all set in Vancouver. I try to keep in touch with my characters and Ambrose is actually in the third book too, just a tiny bit, so that you know that they're doing okay.

P: Alright, next question. How old were you when you wrote this book?

SN: How old was I when I wrote Word Nerd?

P: Yes.

SN: That's a bit personal, boys. <laughs> I was 22...no I was...

Katherine: We talked about these personal questions, didn't we? Not to ask them?

SN: He's smooth! Did you hear? I said I was 22 and he said "Oh, that's recent then."

J: What inspired you to write this book? Like kept you motivated and all that?

SN: Well I always knew that I wanted to write an original Young Adult novel. Many many years ago I wrote four books in the <u>Degrassi</u> series of books—Shane, Snake, Wheels and Melanie. First I thought it was gonna be about a curmudgeonly old man that the character met at the library. Then I thought there'd maybe been a lot of stories about kids befriending curmudgeonly old people and it doesn't feel real enough for me somehow. I thought well why does he have to be an old guy? What if he's the neighbour's son and what if he's not actually that many years older than Ambrose and he's really trying to get his life together? So that was where Cosmo started to form in my head.

K: Do you boys have any questions about what Ms. Nielsen has spoken about today?

J: Where did you get your honesty and your humour from?

SN: That's a really good question. I think I've gotten a bit braver the older I get. But also I do think that I've probably always been somebody who speaks my mind for better or for worse. Sometimes it gets me into trouble, sometimes I don't think before I speak. And then my humour. You know when I was a teenager, everything I wrote was very maudlin; very very depressing. So I think the humour developed over time, and I guess I just think that when I look back at being your age, it was really hard sometimes, right? But there's also a lot of humour too. I personally think that there's a lot of books out there for young people that have no humour at all, and then there are books that are sort of just straight-on humour. I really wanted to work in that world where you could do a bit of both. Where some of the stuff that happens to Ambrose, you just, you really feel for the guy, but life is also funny, right? So I like to be funny, and I like to look at life in a funny way.

J: We searched on the Internet and we found out you're optimistic, your ice cream flavour is cookie dough, and

Susin Nielsen

yeah, lots of things.

SN: And I like a good fart joke.

P: And you wore inside-out pants and penny loafers like Ambrose.

SN: Yes, yes, I did. I was so proud of those pants, they were corduroy. Until a very cute boy I liked said "heh heh your pants are on inside out," and I never wore them again.

J: Do you use like a special pen or pencil or a typewriter when you write?

SN: I use my laptop. When I started writing, before there were computers, I used a typewriter, and I remember when we got the first computers at the Degrassi office. I was, like, "Oh my God! This is horrifying; I'm never gonna learn how to use this thing. This is crazy!" I"ll make notes to myself in pen now, but I really do almost all my writing at the keyboard.

P: Is there anything that's happened in your life similar to what's happened in the book?

SN: Umm...just trying to think. You know it's funny. I was at a school on Tuesday and one of the kids asked "were you bullied in school?" And it was funny because it brought back a couple of memories...I never got beat up, although I did have a girl in high school tell me she was going to beat me up. She was terrifying. I didn't know what I'd done, and she told me, "You. me. After school. I'm taking you down." And I was thinking, "What? What did I do?" And another girl, who was friends with her but also liked me, called her off, so she didn't beat me up.

But I remember the girls at school being quite mean, and I remember my best friends showing up at school and they were skipping in the school yard. Part of their little song was "five, six, seven, eight, we hate Susin by the garden gate" (in a sing-songy voice). I still remember that.

Intrepid interviewers Parth Shah and Jesegan Jegananthan

Photo by: Katherine Farquhar-Lalonde

And I definitely grew up with a single parent mom.

J: Just like me.

P: Me too.

SN: My mom wasn't really like Irene too much, but we moved at some key points in my life like Ambrose and I had a terrible sense of fashion like Ambrose. So I think that there were quite a few little similarities in there. Did your moms read *Word Nerd*?

J & P: No.

J: I never showed her that. Page 42.

P: Yeah, I love page 42.

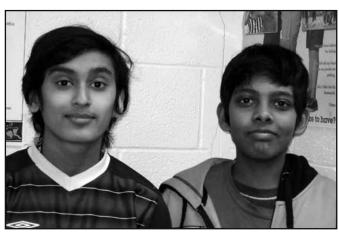
So, um, are you going to make a movie out of this book?

SN: Well interestingly, just before I came here I signed a contract with a company here in Canada. They've just optioned the book so all that means now is that they're going to shop it around and see if there's any interest in turning it into a movie. I think it would make a great family movie...a great family movie.

P: So can I be Ambrose?

SN: You'll have to get an agent and audition with all the other wannabe Ambroses. https://example.com/lumnabe-name="https://example.

...continued on page 42





Susin receives the Red Maple™ Award at the Festival of Trees 2010

Photo by: Brian Pudden

...continued from page 41

P: Who in your book can you most relate to?

SN: Who in my book can I most relate to? I can probably most relate to Ambrose... and Irene actually. Because of course I am a mom and so there were many many things about Irene that I could sympathize with and some people thought she was a little over the top and a little too mean sometimes...but I had a lot of sympathy for Irene because of everything she'd been through. And then Ambrose, because I just so identified with his emotional journey, I guess. And not having a dad and having no friends for awhile. All that sort of stuff.

J: Did you ever get writer's block? And how did you beat it?

SN: I do...I have like really bad days, and bad chunks of time. Sometimes I deal with it by not writing for awhile, if I have something else that I can do instead. Like, if I'm doing a bunch of school visits, or working on something in the world of TV. I wound up getting a "full time job" <uses air quotes> on a show for about two and a half months, while I was working on my present book. I went "Oh thank God I don't have to work on the book anymore. I can go do this job," and it's a good excuse, right? But what I try to do if I'm feeling that way—the best thing I can do—is try to write a couple of pages and push through.

J: This question's maybe a little personal, but how old is your son? Because you really have the mind of a teenager...

SN: <chuckles> Wait a second....I do have the mind of a teenager. I do, it's true. And my son is 14 now, so he was 11 when I finished writing *Word Nerd*. And he's honestly nothing like Ambrose, but he was my first listener. Now he's less interested in my books. It's like no big deal now that his mom's an author.

P: So how did you feel when your book was nominated for the Red Maple award?

SN: Well it was amazing, and you know to be perfectly honest, I didn't actually know that much about the Red Maple award. Coming here to Toronto, and the awards ceremony...that was *unbelievable*. It was actually kind of overwhelming. I think it was the first time I realized, "oh my God, my book has an audience, and that audience is

actually waiting for my next book." And so I was so glad that I had already written the second book, because I think I might've frozen with terror after that. You work at home, you're by yourself, and you don't think about the people who are reading and appreciating your work. But it was awesome.

J: If you had to do the whole story over again, is there something you'd like to change?

SN: Well you know it's interesting you ask me that, I think there are two things. And this comes from having to read the same stuff at schools over and over.

One is that...I'm not sure but I think I should have had the principal, Mr. Achison, give a bigger punishment to Troy, Mike and Josh, only because I've had moments where I've thought, "Would Irene really date this guy, who only gave these kids a 48 hour suspension?" or whatever it was, because she was so protective of her son. I think I just needed to have their punishment be a little more severe. Had them expelled for a week, and have to write letters of apology, and that sort of thing.

And then the other thing that I will admit, I think if I were doing it over, it's actually the word "fag." I wrote it coming from one of the bullies to Ambrose as a hateful word, but I think, especially because of everything that's been in the media lately about several young people committing suicide who were young homosexuals being bullied at school, (and believe me, I have a lot of gay friends)... Even though, in the context of my book, he is being bullied, I think that that's the one word I would change. There's nothing else in terms of the language in that book that I regret. But I think if I were doing it over, I would want to choose a different hateful word. I don't know what the word would be, because it would still have to be a mean word, right, like a really hateful thing... but I'd like to find one...

P: This is a bit personal, but is it okay if I email to stay in contact or something?

SN: Yeah, I've got a website, www.susinnielsen.com and on that website, under "contact" it's chat@susinnielsen. com. You can email me there. And I answer my emails. I enjoyed this very much! It was a pleasure to meet both of you boys!



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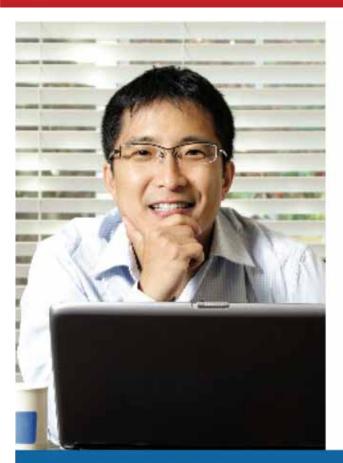
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