

September 2012 Volume 20, Issue 1

Teaching Librarian

The Magazine of the Ontario School Library Association
ISSN 1188679X



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smokin' @ your library

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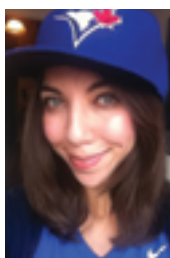
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TingL mission

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.

TingL references

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

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TingL guidelines

V. 20, issue 2	“Choice @ your library” Deadline: September 22, 2012
V. 20, issue 3	“Credit @ your library” Deadline: January 21, 2013
V. 21, issue 1	Do We @ your library” Deadline: May 10, 2013

Articles of 150–250 words, 500 words, or 800–1,300 words are welcome. Articles, when approved, should be accompanied by good quality illustrations and/or pictures whenever possible. Text must be sent electronically, preferably in a MS Word (or compatible) file. Pictures can be printed or digital (minimum size and quality are 4” x 6” and 300 dpi, approximately 700 mb and in jpeg format, if electronic). With photos which contain a recognized individual, please secure the individual’s permission in writing for the use of the photo. Photos taken at public events, or crowd shots taken in a public place do not require permission from the subjects. All submissions are subject to editing for consistency, length, content, and style. Journalistic style is preferred. Articles must include the working title, name of author, and email address in the body of the text. OSLA reserves the right to use pictures in other OSLA publications unless permission is limited or denied at the time of publishing. Any questions about submissions should be directed to the Editor of *The Teaching Librarian*: TingLeditor@gmail.com.

TingL subscriptions

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Photos by Andrew Li, student at Dr. Norman Bethune Collegiate Institute in Toronto.

Photo models: Gun Chong Yang, Kelly Fung, Jinitha Sayanthan, Justin Ye, and Youeel Ataalla, Grade 8 members of the Agnes Macphail P.S. Student Council for 2011-2012.



The Editor's Notebook



Diana Maliszewski

TingL Lingo

Carla Wintersgill



Inside the Ontario Library Association boardroom during the Together For Learning writing day.



Where there's smoke, there's fire — but is it a blistering inferno at full power, or the dying embers of a blaze's last gasps? I have to admit that by June 2012, I was burnt out. It was an exhausting school year. During that last time morsel known as April-May-June, I was out of the building eleven times for worthwhile events such as the Manitoba Library Association's annual conference in Winnipeg (where I met the supremely awesome Gene Ambaum and Bill Barnes of Unshelved fame), our Family of Schools' first ever Red Maple celebration (and our 4th Silver Birch Quiz Bowl) and several other commitments. Add completing the school yearbook, writing report cards, and some ill parents to the mix, and it was no surprise that I spent the first week of my summer vacation sleeping. I was concerned that my promise to help a team of teacher-librarians generate content for the Together For Learning website would not amount to much, as I had little energy left to offer.

Thankfully, Anita Brooks-Kirkland is a metaphorical arsonist. She, Carol Koechlin, and Liz Kerr assembled an amazing team of teacher-librarians (Isabelle Hobbs, Jeanne Conte, Elizabeth Gordon, Sharon Seslija, Derrick Grose, Barbara White, Heather Yearwood, Andrea Sykes, and Cindy Matthews)

to create documents to support the T4L implementation. It was an interesting couple of days. At one point during the process, Heather asked a pertinent and powerful question: "How is this different? How is what we are doing now and what we are trying to do now, different from what has happened before?" We hope that this question is answered on www.togetherforlearning.ca (www.ensemblepourapprendre.ca) and that it ignites some curiosity and spurs some challenge and change in school library programs. To help fan the flames, we have Lori McCannell's article about how a group of teacher-librarians in Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board have tried to implement the Learning Commons in their schools. In addition, many other fixtures and features in this issue of the Teaching Librarian will have you smokin' — hopefully not in rage but with passion and excitement.

P.S. We want to say farewell to Catherine Harris, and Sandra Ziemniak, two hard-working members of our editorial board. Catherine has just retired from William Berczy Public School in York Region and Sandra has accepted a central position in the Peel District School Board. Congratulations to both. Will you be able to help fill the gap their departure has left? Consider applying to become an editorial board member — see Pages 26 & 27 for details. ■

Hot books, easy reads

HI/LO BOOKS

Definition

Hi/Lo books combine high-interest topics with low vocabulary and low word count. By pairing gripping plots with easy text, hi/lo novels create an entry point into the world of books for struggling readers.

Smokin' hot topics are key to making a book interesting, Michael Sullivan writes in *School Library Journal*. "In the world of hi/lo fiction and nonfiction books, that's often synonymous with gritty, urban, edgy subjects like anorexia, body piercing, sexual harassment, divorce, and teen pregnancy." Since it is frequently boys who struggle with reading, many of the plots are geared towards male interests. Some of the most popular topics include action and adventure, and extreme sports. The plots progress quickly, with short time frames.

Looks also matter for hi/lo books. Large font sizes look "baby-ish," Sullivan says, so ample white spaced is used, with large margins and plenty of space between lines. The book's size

and cover mimic adult paperbacks, often using photos instead of illustrations as art to give them a more sophisticated, appealing look.

The "lo" element of hi/lo books is determined by readability, a factor that is carefully calculated by publishers. Shorter sentences, paragraphs and words contribute to an easier read. Hi/los also benefit from straightforward, linear plots which are easier to follow than flashbacks or complicated narrative structures.

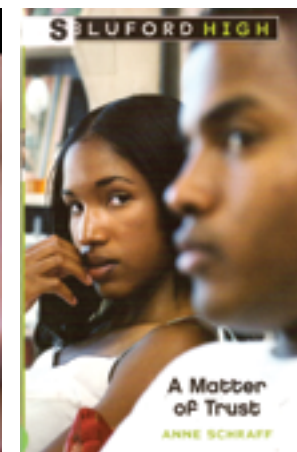
For more

ALA 2012: What's Up with Hi-Lo?

By Shannon Maughan
<http://bit.ly/NSIW9R>

Never A Dull Moment: Body piercing? Extreme sports? Teen pregnancy? Welcome to the action-packed world of hi/lo books

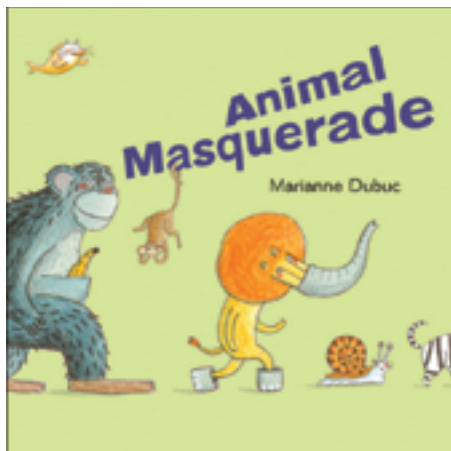
By Michael Sullivan
<http://bit.ly/OjxamC> ■



A sampling of some popular hi/lo titles, including two from Orca Soundings, and one from the Bluford High series.

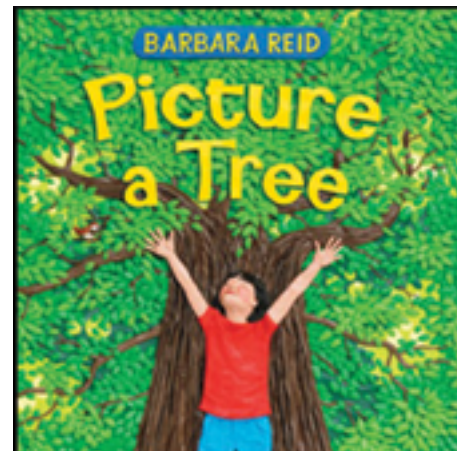
Book Buzz

Derrick Grose



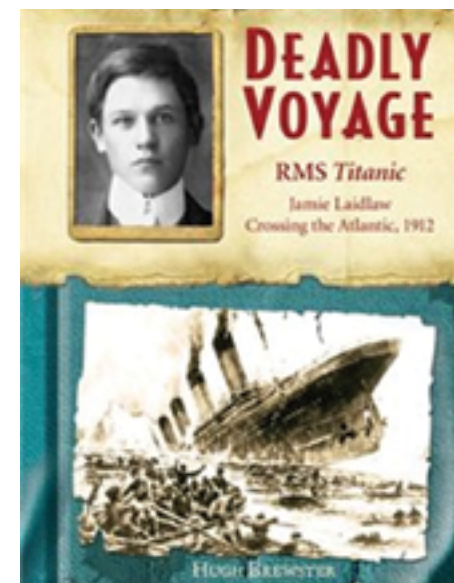
Animal Masquerade
Marianne Dubuc
Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2012.
ISBN 9781554537822

An animal masquerade would certainly be a “lively and exciting” event for students from pre-school to grade 2 to read about. Originally published in French as *Le Carnaval des animaux*, this modern bestiary, written and illustrated by Marianne Dubuc, takes advantage of the humour inherent in the idea of animals disguised as other animals. For example, there is the visual humour derived from the depiction of a tiny ladybug in the guise of a giant hippopotamus. There is also verbal humour such as that of a fish putting on a cat costume to redefine “catfish.” This internationally recognized picture book has been translated into eleven languages.



Picture a Tree
Barbara Reid
Toronto: Scholastic Canada Ltd., 2011.
ISBN 9781443107617

Picture a Tree gives young readers a chance to appreciate the many ways in which trees contribute to life. Barbara Reid’s Plasticine™ sculpture illustrations make trees “lively and exciting” by opening the reader’s imagination to a wide variety of perspectives on trees and the life in and around them. A bonus for teachers and school librarians building lively and exciting activities around the book are on-line videos in which the author demonstrates techniques used in making the books (http://www.scholastic.ca/authors/reid_b/pictureatree_booktrailer.htm).



Deadly Voyage: R.M.S. Titanic, Jamie Laidlaw, April 14, 1912
Hugh Brewster
Toronto: Scholastic Canada, 2011.
ISBN 9781443104654

A century ago, the beginning of the maiden voyage of the luxury passenger liner R.M.S. Titanic would have been regarded as a “lively and exciting” event. No one anticipated the ship’s tragic collision with an iceberg. Hugh Brewster’s fictionalized account of fourteen year old Jamie Laidlaw’s return journey to Canada from England builds an adventure around the historical realities of the famous passenger liner and its disastrous sinking. This entertaining narrative will engage students and give them an opportunity to gain insights into both technological innovation and social history.



Wicket Season
Gabrielle Prendergast
Toronto: Lorimer, 2012.
ISBN 9781459400207

As “lively and exciting” as cricket may be for lovers of the sport, it has been difficult to find Canadian fiction for students who want to read about it. Gabrielle Prendergast has come to the rescue with her novel, written for students ages 10-13. Although a cricket star in Winnipeg’s relatively small West Indian Community, Harry finds himself in danger of not even making the team when he moves to a new school in Toronto. To impress his coach by demonstrating his commitment to the sport, Harry starts coaching a beginners’ team. This means-to-an-end becomes an end-in-itself as Harry discovers the value of his new connection to his community.

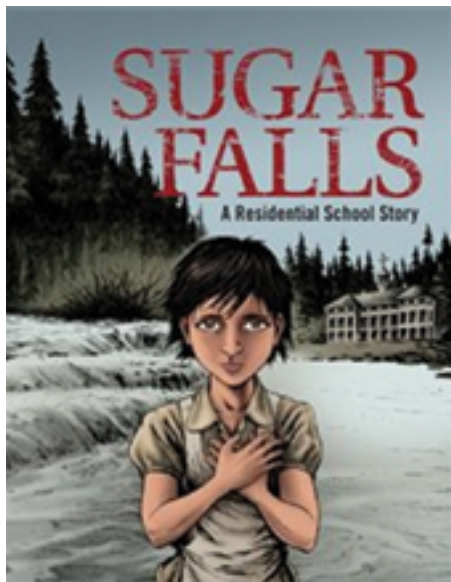


Shannen and the Dream for a School
Janet Wilson
Toronto: Second Story Press, 2011.
ISBN 9781926920306

Although “lively and exciting” is hardly an appropriate phrase to describe the circumstances in Attawapiskat and many of Canada’s other isolated aboriginal communities, Janet Wilson has written an inspiring account of the life of Shannen Koostachin whose work as a social activist helped to bring the problems in her community to the attention of the entire nation. Although Shannen died before her dream could be realized, her story is a useful resource for teaching 9-13 year-olds about Canada’s First Nations, the political system and the influence that students can have in society when they engage in positive social action.

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...continued from page 9



Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story
David Alexander Robertson; Illustrated by Scott B. Henderson
Winnipeg: Highwater Press, 2012.
ISBN 9781553793342

This graphic novel complements *Shannen and the Dream for a School* by describing the experience of one of the victims of a residential school. Written for high school students in grades 9–12, this narrative is based on the life of elder Betty Ross of Cross Lake, Manitoba. Interviewing an elder as part of an assignment given by a teacher, a high school student discovers the story of how a young girl found the strength to endure the hardships of residential school. Robertson and Henderson have also collaborated on a graphic novel about Helen Betty Osborne and the graphic novel series, *7 Generations*, which intertwines the history of Canadian First Nations with the experiences of First Nations people in the twenty-first century.



Under My Skin
Charles de Lint
Toronto: Penguin Group Canada, 2012
ISBN 978-0670065332

For fans of Charles de Lint's urban fantasy novels, whether they are teenagers or adults, *Under My Skin* will be another “lively and exciting” reading experience. Teenagers in the town of Santa Feliz have been shifting from their human form into wild animal form and then back again. The central character tries to conceal his transformation into a wildling; his disguise fails and he must depend on friends, both human and wildling, in order to survive. As the story alternates between a male and a female narrator, readers are compelled to consider which institutions and individuals can be trusted.



Oscar Peterson: The Man and His Music
Jack Patten
Toronto: Tundra Books, 2012
ISBN 978-1-77049-269-1

The word “smokin’ ” has its origins in the jazz world. Therefore, it seems appropriate to end this column by mentioning *Oscar Peterson: The Man And His Music*. Jack Patten opens by describing Peterson's triumphant debut at New York's Carnegie Hall. He then discusses the family background that built the foundation for Peterson's success as well as the challenges and triumphs in his career and in his life. Scheduled for release in September of 2012, this biography has been written to give young audiences an understanding of how a black kid from Montreal's working class became an internationally renowned musician, releasing over 200 recordings, winning seven Grammy Awards, receiving the Order of Canada and being recognized as one of the greatest jazz pianists of all time. ■

Meet the Author

Diane Cipollone

Helaine Becker

Inspired by life, award-winning author Helaine Becker believes that attitude makes a difference. She infuses humour into her writing, entertaining and informing her readers. Writing both fiction and nonfiction, she has worked in a variety of genres spanning different age groups. In a recent interview, here is what she had to say about life, her career and giving back.

TingL: Your books are such fun to read, and humour a big part of your style. Do you have as much fun in your life as you seem to with your writing?

Helaine Becker: Sometimes yes, sometimes no. All lives have rainy bits, don't they? I do think, however, that one can choose one's life, vis a vis by choosing what you focus on. You can choose to focus on the horrible bits (“people really are rotten”) or the good bits (“people really are wonderful”). If you focus on the good bits, that's what you see, and your life will be sweeter

and happier. So that's what I do — look for the marvelous, funny, amazing things that happen around me every single day.

Did you always want to be a writer?

I always wanted to be a writer, but talked myself out of it when I was 12 because I didn't think it was a realistic goal. How many people tell you, “You can't make a living as a writer?” You can make a living as a writer if you are willing to work hard and be persistent and not give up. I think this is true of every dream people hold.

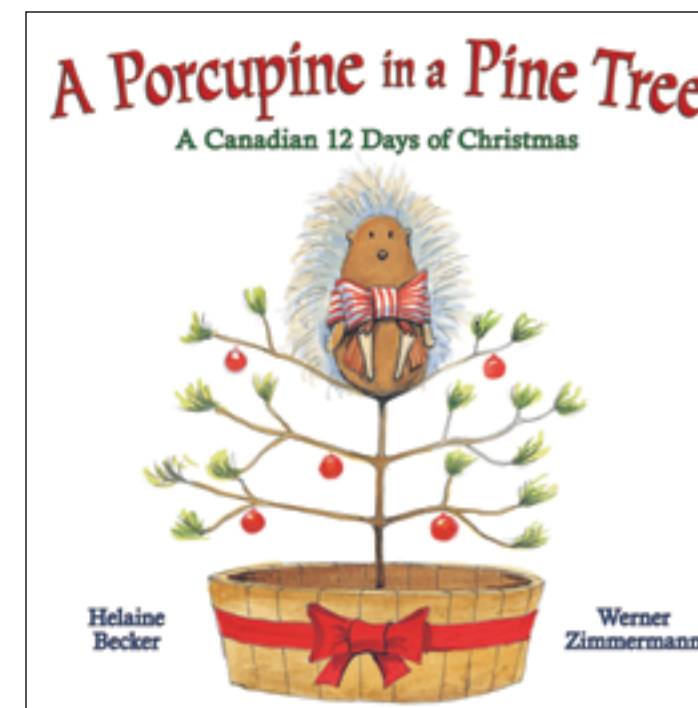
I sit. I write. I go back and rewrite. Repeat three thousand times or until it is time to go to the gym. Then do it again the next day. I've learned to trust that if you keep at something, it eventually gets better, despite yourself.

How do you decide what to write about? Is there a particular genre you prefer?

I consider myself a generalist. I am interested in many different topics and areas, and hold a truly eclectic collection of facts in my twisted brain. For example, did you know men can't actually smell their own icky sweat chemical once they start producing it as teens? When you put these unrelated facts together in new ways, well, you wind up with ideas that tend to cross boundaries and genres — and turn funny! Imagine if you crossed that icky sweat fact with a middle grade novel — suddenly they're unable to stand being in the same room with themselves and each other!

My favourite thing to write is humorous poetry like *A Porcupine in a Pine Tree* (expect a sequel next year!) Next I like nonfiction because I find it pretty easy to write. Fiction

continued on page 12





is hardest for me. I do like the variety though, and think I would — no, I KNOW I would — get bored writing only one type of book. The variety keeps me growing as a writer, keeps the challenge alive so I don't start getting "ho hum, been there, done that." What fun is being excellent at something? The fun is in striving to be excellent.

You have a vivacious personality with a "love life" attitude. What inspires you? How does your attitude and approach to life help you to be a better writer? What inspires me? Life inspires me! It's such an amazing adventure, every day. You can't turn your head without seeing something fascinating, can you?

My problem is not in coming up with ideas, it's whittling them down to ones I have a chance of turning into something marketable. My approach to life — to find the good bits — I think affects my writing because I focus on developing ideas that are joyful, fun and funny rather than the darker ones. I think about someone out there reading my book, and I want to think I am bringing them laughter and joy, not tears, even though the tears part is worthwhile too. I don't want to make people cry. Not intentionally, anyway. That being said, I have written a dark YA novel, and am currently writing a horror one. Because they are different for me and ergo a stretch I wanted to try.

In addition to writing, you are involved with many projects to give to communities in need. Can you tell our readers about some of those projects? What inspires you to be actively involved in global communities?

I am such a lucky person. I had the fabulous good luck to be born in a peaceful and prosperous time, in North America, to have received an excellent education, and to have been supported in my goals by a strong family, committed teachers and kind friends. I know that whatever success I have achieved I owe in no small part to these factors and people. Recognizing it, however, makes me also realize that not everyone in the world, who might be just as worthy or talented as I am, has been blessed with these same opportunities and gifts. And that realization confers an obligation: to not squander the gifts I've been given and to not use them selfishly. So that's why a year or two ago I got involved in the Airlift to LA, a project for Canadian children's writers to send books to inner city schools in LA. The Airlift Project was a huge success. We partnered with an LA-based charity and delivered more than 5000 books to a needy school. We also overhauled their library, bringing in new furniture and painting adorable murals. You can see the deets on my blog at <http://www.helainebecker.blogspot.ca/2010/10/library-is-born.html>

I'm currently involved in a new project with Librarians Without Borders (I hope). I was in Cambodia last year and was introduced to someone who builds wells in needy villages. My husband and

I contributed to a well-build, but then I learned about LWB and how they get involved in areas with need to build and support libraries. It just so happens their mandate involves building libraries near wells — since that's where people go to congregate. And my guy in Cambodia has a library program involving libraries in boxes and in tuktuks to go to wells... so a fit was found. I'm working on the grant applications right now to see if we can tie the two together. Check back with me next year to see if it all came together. And if you are not yet a member of LWB, check it out! They are awesome! <http://lwb-online.org/>

You wrote a fabulous letter to the *National Post* in support of teacher-librarians and the work they do. [Editor's Note: a version of this letter appeared in OLA's *Access* magazine.] In the letter you mentioned "it was in a school library [you] first fell in love with books." What experience(s) in your school library were most impactful for you?

I think I read every single book in my elementary school library. What a resource, especially for kids who don't have books at home, or who don't have a public library card or can't get to a public library! It was through those books that the world opened to me — a world of fantasy and fact, which varied from day to day and from mood to mood. As a school supplier (in my previous, pre-writing life) I had the opportunity to deal with school librarians on a regular basis and could see directly the impact they had on the quality of the school. As a result, my long-held love of libraries became not

merely personal, but political. I think a functioning democratic society needs functioning public school libraries. Full stop. I've also seen, from my earlier career, how school libraries have been chipped away at by various governments and organizations. It's criminal that we talk about "we support literacy" out of one side of our mouths and cut school libraries at the same time.

Teacher-librarians are always doing more than one job at once, and it can be overwhelming to keep up. How do you do all you do? What is your secret?

I don't do more than one thing at a time. I am famously not a multi-tasker. I don't know how you folks do it. I just do one thing. Finish it. Then do the next. Try not to procrastinate. And then go laugh at the world. ■



President's Report



Elizabeth Gordon

I hope this current edition of *The Teaching Librarian* finds you rested and rejuvenated from summer vacation, facing the challenges of another school year with renewed energy and enthusiasm. As I'm writing this, I must confess that I am distracted by the opening ceremonies of the 2012 Olympic Games. The good news is, I think I can make a connection to my task at hand! Simon Whitfield, Canadian Flag-Bearer, just repeated the infamous words of football coach Vince Lombardi that "hope is not a strategy," and these words ring so true. As supporters of school libraries, keen to develop and advocate for strong, equitable school library programs throughout the province, we know that our work is to do more than "hope" school library programs will continue to exist. We all need to commit to making it very clear to stakeholders, what we do and how what we do affects student learning. I am excited to share some of the things we as a council are working on this year to support your work in schools across the province.

Together for Learning

With financial support from OLA, OSLA undertook an important project this year to build on the visionary document *Together for Learning*. The goal of the committee is to develop resources that will support school library staff in putting *Together for Learning* into action. A summer working session took place at the OLA office in Toronto, where several people joined forces with the committee to contribute their ideas. I would like to commend the members of this committee (Anita Brooks-Kirkland, Liz Kerr, and Carol Koechlin) for their tremendous efforts and commitment to seeing this project through. Please stay tuned for more to come!

Super Conference 2013

Plans are well underway for the upcoming, annual OLA Super Conference. Thanks to OSLA's selection committee, led by Richard Reid and Lauren Flattery, we can look forward to several sessions covering a wide range of topics for school libraries. Did you know that you could get funding to assist in your costs to attend? Check out your local OSSTF or ETFO associations for details and apply early. Our spotlight speaker, Dr. Michael Stephens (<http://tametheweb.com/>) is sure to deliver a thought-provoking keynote on emerging

technologies and their place in libraries. Don't forget to invite your administrator to attend at least one day of the Super Conference as your complimentary guest. It's imperative that we continue to make everyone aware of the value and impact of school libraries, especially the decision-makers!

Canadian Library Association (CLA)

On behalf of OSLA, I attended The Canadian Library Association annual conference in Ottawa in early June. Although there were not many sessions directly targeted at school libraries, I sat in on a very interesting presentation from Ministry of Education representatives in Quebec. It appears that their province has taken notice and acted upon the numerous studies that link student achievement to properly staffed and resourced school libraries. In doing so, they have adopted a model whereby professional librarians are working in school libraries with teachers to co-plan, combining essential information studies skills with curriculum. They further support the teacher by co-facilitating lessons in classrooms. This experience reminded me that it is important to consider models for staffing school libraries that might look different from our own or what we are familiar with. In times where we continue to be affected by tightening provincial budgets, we need to remember what we value most — school libraries rich in resources, both human and material, or as Dr. Ross Todd puts it: "One Common Goal: Student Learning."

Treasure Mountain

Following the CLA conference was Treasure Mountain, a weekend dedicated to developing standards for school libraries in Ontario. I was certainly humbled to be present among this group of school library leaders who shared highlights of the work being done in their school districts and/or their visions for making school libraries current, relevant and essential. If you haven't already, I encourage you to view and read the submissions to this collaborative "Big Think," (words of David Loertscher). <https://sites.google.com/site/treasuremountaincanada2/>

A goal coming from this important weekend is to begin working on an updated version of "Achieving Information Literacy." Please let me know if you would like to get involved in this project.



Photo by Liz Kerr

Following the CLA conference was Treasure Mountain, a weekend dedicated to developing standards for school libraries in Ontario.

Other Associations

If you are interested in connecting with other school library staff across Canada, asking questions and contributing ideas, you may want to consider joining the "Voices for School Libraries Network" (<http://caslnetwork.ning.com/>), moderated by Linda Shantz-Keresztes and Cindy Matthews. Also, Anita Brooks-Kirkland has developed a very informative website for The Association of Library Consultants and Coordinators of Ontario (TALCO). You can check it out at: <http://www.talcoontario.ca/>. She includes several important links to websites and blogs to help keep you informed and involved.

Supporting Ministry Initiatives

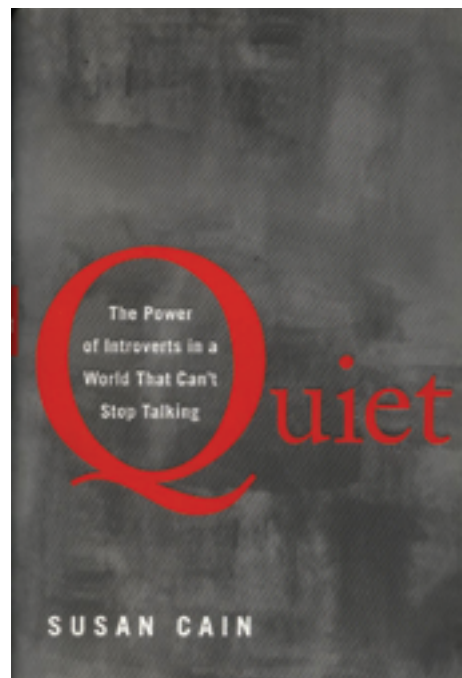
An important leadership role school library staffs can take is to help teachers embed Ministry initiatives into their regular curriculum. Refer to the Ministry website under "curriculum"

for links to resources already created to help you with this. Also, check out "Major Programs & Initiatives," on the home page <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/>. Recently, OSLA received funding to complete a Financial Literacy Resource for students and teachers grades 7-12. The result of this project, created by Roger Nevin (Past President, OSLA) can be found at: chirpy.ca.

When we hear about cuts to school library programs, it often comes to light that the people making these decisions really haven't a solid understanding of what school library staffs do to contribute to student learning and success in achievement and overall well-being. I believe the contributions you are making in the lives of students are indispensable. I challenge you to make it obvious to others every day, keeping in mind that "hope is not a strategy!" ■

Opposites attract

THE BOOKS REVIEWED SHOW YOU THE FLIP SIDE OF CURRENT BELIEFS PREVALENT IN EDUCATION AND SOCIETY AT LARGE



Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking

Susan Cain

2012; ISBN 978-0-307-35214-9 or ISBN 978-0-307-45220-7

Suitable for students, parents, administrators, elementary and secondary teachers, English Language Learner (ELL) teachers.

Much more than mere research on introverts and shyness, *Quiet* is a highly readable and refreshing study which runs counter to popularly-held beliefs about personality and current trends in education. Author Susan Cain strongly supports her points of view with many examples personally observed in classrooms across North America, in addition to documented psychological research.

One of the most surprising findings Cain reveals is that group work in both the classroom and workplace doesn't actually work. Cain explains that, "performance gets worse as group size increases: groups of nine generate fewer and poorer ideas compared to groups of six, which do worse than groups of four. Including research from the organizational psychologist Adrian

Furnham, the author suggests that "if you have talented and motivated people, they should be encouraged to work alone when creativity or efficiency is the highest priority."

Cain makes the point that introversion is not something to be cured. Introverts form one third to one half of the population and this means that we probably have more introverts in our classes than we realize. Introverted students' talents and passions do not necessarily fit into the mainstream and these students need differentiated instruction and independent projects to thrive. Cain writes, "In many fields, it's impossible to gain mastery without knowing how to work on one's own. Have your extroverted students take a page from their introverted peers' playbooks. Teach all kids to work independently."

Honours graduate of Princeton and Harvard Law School, corporate lawyer and teacher of negotiation skills, Susan Cain is a writer about introversion and shyness with works published in the *New York Times* and on PsychologyToday.com.



The Better Angels of our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined

Steve Pinker

2011; ISBN 978-0-670-02295-3

Suitable for students, parents, teachers, administrators, facilitators of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) groups, anti-bullying and character education committees at both the elementary and secondary levels

As Canadian educators and politicians are preparing to implement anti-bullying legislation (Ontario's Bill 14, The Anti-Bullying Act, 2012, amending The Education Act), Steve Pinker presents us with his book about the declining violence in our culture.. Pinker refers to many thinkers who have had a civilizing effect on society throughout the centuries, as well as drawing upon current research to support his claims. Using the commonly cited example of teenage bullying on the rise, Pinker writes, "Contrary to yet another scare that has recently been ginned up by the media, based on widely circulated YouTube videos of female teenagers pummeling one another, the nation's girls have not gone wild. The rates of murder and robbery by girls are at their lowest level in forty years, and rates of weapon possession, fights, assaults, and violent injuries by and toward girls have been declining for a decade. With the popularity of YouTube, we can expect more of these video-driven moral panics in the years to come."

Harvard College Professor of Psychology, Steve Pinker is a two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist and recipient of many awards for his leading-edge research, teaching and books. He has been named one of *Time* magazine's "The 100 Most Influential People in the World Today" and *Foreign Policy*'s "100 Global Thinkers."

New Directions in Restorative Justice: Issues, practice, evaluation

Elizabeth Elliott et al.

2005; ISBN 1-84392-132-4

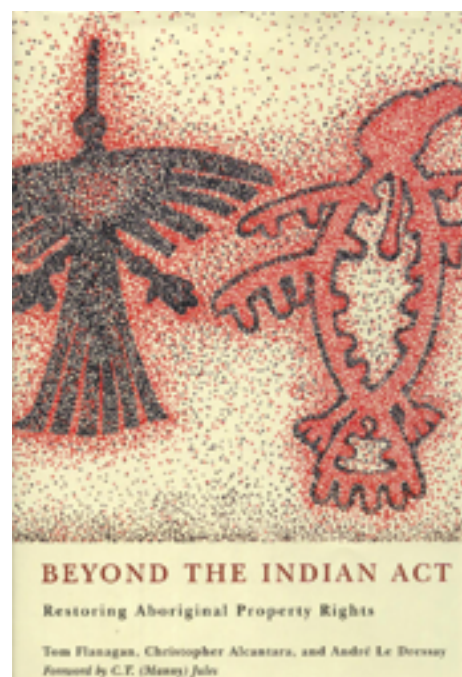
Suitable for educators, administrators and parents

Editors Elizabeth Elliott and Robert M. Gordon focus on Youth and restorative justice, Aboriginal justice and restorative justice, Victimization and restorative justice and Evaluating restorative justice. These issues will be of interest to educators across the province as they grapple with the implementation of Ontario's new anti-bullying legislation. Chapter 2, Restorative justice in schools, details the use of conferencing, citizenship, peer mediation and problem-solving circles.

Complementing this book, *The Handbook of Restorative Justice* (G. Johnstone, editor), could also be useful.

continued on page 18

...continued from page 17



Beyond the Indian Act: Restoring Aboriginal Property Rights

Tom Flanagan, Christopher Alcantara, and Andre Le Dressay

Foreword by C.T. (Manny) Jules
2010; 978-0-7735-3686-9

For teacher-librarians, teachers of Native Studies, History, Geography or Native Studies, administrators

Poverty and social challenges afflicting Canada's aboriginal citizens get lots of attention, but how best to remedy these challenges? With Native Canadian issue long mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Education, finding fresh new resources to address these issues can be helpful.

More a scholarly work than a textbook, the information in *Beyond the Indian Act* can supplement and enhance classes, particularly at more senior grades, dealing with Native Canadian issues. The book focuses on Aboriginal land claims and property rights, which are in the news almost every day.

The book has attracted substantial public attention, including nomination for the Donner Prize in 2001. As a result, there are internet resources discussing the book which can also help to expand the classroom experience.

In order to escape chronic, systemic poverty — to go beyond the Indian Act — the book's solutions, among

others, aim at providing First Nations with a property rights regime that can attract private investment. The authors propose reform in the registration of the land-title system to recognize individual property ownership on First Nations Land. With sufficient certainty, aboriginal people would be able to invest in their own homes and establish an infrastructure for business. The book proposes the transfer of property tax jurisdiction on aboriginal land to the local, i.e., native level, for strengthened local decision making.

Tom Flanagan is a frequent commentator in the *Globe and Mail* and many other media outlets, a professor of Political Science at the University of Calgary, translator and editor of Métis leader Louis Riel's diaries, did a stint in politics as manager of Stephen Harper's Conservative 2004 election campaign, and is currently a Senior Fellow of the Fraser Institute.

Christopher Alcantara is assistant professor of political science at Wilfrid Laurier University.

André Le Dressay is director of Fiscal Realities Economists and holds a PhD in economics from Simon Fraser University.

C.T. (Manny) Jules is chief of the First Nations Tax Commission and a former chief of the Kamloops Indian Band. ■

How can we strengthen Ontario's school libraries?

Take action!

Ask your Member of Provincial Parliament to endorse designated library funding for every school in Ontario. Currently, funding for the school library program is at the discretion of each school and/or school board.

A library is much more than books in a room.

A properly resourced school library program includes a teacher-librarian with library qualifications, a library technician, and support staff. It also includes access to a robust digital media centre, e-resources, and a current print collection.

Did you know?

- * Only 56% of elementary schools have a teacher-librarian and most are allocated part-time.
- * Only 19% of elementary schools in Eastern Ontario and 10% of elementary schools in Northern Ontario have teacher-librarians, compared to 92% of elementary schools in the GTA.
- * Some schools do not have a library or a library program at all.
- * Students who are in schools without a staffed and properly resourced library program are not receiving the same education as students who have these advantages.
- * There has been a dramatic decline in the percentage of Ontario students who report that they "like to read." However, in schools with teacher-librarians, students were more likely to report that they enjoyed reading.

For more information, facts, and resources on this issue, visit www.accessola.com



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Connected Library

Jill Kelsall

Need to know health resources @ your library



Not long ago, a brave young girl who I knew for her spirit, her mischief and her smile, shyly approached my desk as the day wound down in the library.

“Do you have any books on wingy worms?” She asked. She mumbled something about worms, which I didn’t quite catch.

Wingy worms?? I had NO idea what she was asking and I couldn’t think, for the life of me, how to help her. Was this a new mass-marketed, slimy, winged, plastic bracelet available in 29 different colours?

I’m sorry to say that after a few cursory attempts, I gave up and closed up and away she went. Just as I turned out the lights, however, the light went on — she had ringworm and she needed to know if there were worms inside her body! The best teaching opportunities happen when kids need to know.

The next morning, I prowled the halls until I found her

and she and I returned to the library to dig for the truth about ringworm. Our library has a subscription to Rosen Publishing’s Teen Health and Wellness database (<http://teenhealthandwellness.com>) where we began our search. It’s a great database with all the topics you’d expect — lots of words and a few analogies to help students connect to the content — did you know your heart weighs about as much as a tennis shoe? However, there’s not much visual appeal and the search for ringworm was frustrating — Excema, Rashes and Irritations — was this what she needed to know? Probably, but the word ringworm appeared once at the end of a long sentence. She didn’t read much and this was doing nothing for her.

So began the search to find the web resources that offer the most to kids who need to know: the search for resources that are organized to appeal to these young minds and, most importantly, the resources that performed the best on the “Ringworm Test”.

continued on page 22



Forest of Reading®

by the Ontario Library Association



Look for the 2013 nominated titles this fall!

NEED TO KNOW SITES



BBC Health

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/>

For health, science and history, the BBC is unparalleled. We were both enthralled by the interactive body and the “place your organs, bones and muscles” game in the interactive skeleton. Also impressive is the Puberty Interactive, which begins with the Star Trek-like label “loading the teen species.” Who among us does not consider teens a species of their own?

If you do nothing else, take a few moments exploring the BBC Science site where links to topics including Nature, Wildlife finder, Science, Human Body and Mind, Prehistoric Life and Space lead to wonderful, playful, informative well designed resources.

Ringworm test

A+++

The first sentence, “Despite the name, ringworm has nothing to do with worms,” says it all.

US National Library of Medicine — Medline Plus

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/videosandcooltools.html>

Medline Plus is the public site of the US National Library of Health [which is, by the way, probably the world’s best site for health research]. This public face of the NIM is organized into Health Topics, Drugs & Supplements and Videos and Cool Tools. Lots of wonderful videos and text based information on a huge variety of topics.

Ringworm Test

A

Informative, not super kid-friendly

Kidshealth

<http://kidshealth.org/kid/>

Sponsored by Nemours, the world’s largest non-profit dedicated to children’s health, Kidshealth is bright and kid friendly, with lots of interactive video.

Ringworm test

B-

It goes to a page on fungal infections—dig three paragraphs to find out if this pertains to ringworm.



EXCELLENT GENERAL INTEREST HEALTH SITES

Discovery

<http://kids.discovery.com/>

Not really much help on Ringworm — but for a kid this is a spectacular source of information about all things gross. It’s fun, easy, and audio-rich — where else can you hear a fart when doing your health research?

One Life Many Gifts

<http://www.onelifemanygifts.com>

Simply a heart-breaking site full of stories about organ transplantation — if you want to engage students in understanding the real effect of health challenges, this is the place. This site is for secondary students only as it contains very upsetting, sensitive material.

Link to Learning

http://www.linktolearning.com/health_PE.htm

Provides a list of websites connected to the Ontario Curriculum.

EdHeads

<http://www.edheads.org/>

This is a site where 10-year-olds can virtually replace a knee or do simulated deep brain stimulation, heart and hip surgery — and they love it.

Health Canada: It’s Your Health

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/index-eng.php>

Searchable alphabetically and by category. Great for learning about health regulation, but when a search under Parents and Children finds topics such as Cool Mist Humidifiers, Anti-biotic resistance and Smart Meters — I’m not sure this is the place to go when I want to find out about a plantar wart.



Personally, I’d add a RED CROSS link to these health resources right to the front of a library web page. These young people have a civil war waging in their bodies, aging parents and grandparents, and they go to school in a petri dish of infectious disease — they need reliable information to answer their health questions! I

Ask Rita Resourceful



We welcome any questions you may have for Rita Resourceful. To protect Rita's identity, please email them to tingleditor@gmail.com, with the subject line "Ask Rita", and we'll be sure to pass them along!

Dear Rita Resourceful,

This year the Parent Council at my school donated some funds to the library. I was delighted to use the money to order some much-needed graphic novels. One of the books I bought was an encyclopedia of various influential authors' and illustrators' work. When the books came in, I put them out for the Parent Council meeting after school.

The next morning the principal came to see me with the very book I just mentioned flagged with dozens of sticky notes. Flipping through the pages, and making "tisking" noises, my principal asked, "Is this a Ministry-licensed

book?" I could see that the head of the Parent Council and the principal had spent considerable time finding and earmarking each illustration that depicted anything racy.

I managed to convince the principal that the book would remain part of the "professional resource" collection to assist teachers in their understanding of the graphic novel genre.

Did I do the right thing?

*Signed,
Indignant*

Dear Indignant,

Book controversies are delicious and often get people reading. Job well done. If you still feel indignant about the incident, however, many school boards offer assistance, resources and professional development opportunities focused on collection development. These items may help you to articulate your decisions for purchasing any book for your library collection. In addition, if a learning resource is formally challenged, your board may have procedures in place for dealing with public concerns.

Dear Rita Resourceful,

I'm a high school teacher-librarian who has lost confidence in my book-buying acumen. For years I've purchased books based on my observations of student reading trends, reviews of new books and my personal experience but now I wonder whether I'm irrelevant and should just use online user communities, search engines, databases like Novelist,

and commercial sites like Amazon.ca that can suggest books based on past purchases by dedicated users.

*Signed,
Amy Irrelevant*

Dear Amy,

The Internet does provide librarians with a vast quantity and quality book recommendation resources but that doesn't make you irrelevant. You still know your students' interests, their personalities, and you are uniquely positioned to recommend books from different genres to help your students explore literature. They trust your judgment. In your letter you mention many of the key ways to find books online. Many students need your help to become familiar with and stay abreast of online tools.

Dear Rita Resourceful,

At the end of June my school principal insisted that I print out a full list of overdue library books and post it on the bulletin board outside the library. This isn't at all how I've handled overdue books in the past and I flatly refused. Any suggestions on what I can do to patch things up this year?

*Signed,
Miffed*

Dear Miffed:

You were right to refuse to post overdue books outside the library because this is a breach of student confidentiality. You may want to take some time, however, to help your principal understand your reluctance. Here are a few fictional

scenarios of what could happen:

1. The boys' physical education teacher has an overdue book on body piercing and now the entire school is discussing whether or not he has had work done and where.
2. A Muslim father walks past the overdue list and discovers that his daughter, against his wishes, has been reading the Koran.
3. A shy grade 8 boy is "outed" when his overdue notice is posted.

Suggest to your principal that an alternative end-of-year overdue book procedure might be to print out a confidential list for each classroom teacher and then fold and staple individual student notices so only the students' names are visible.

Dear Rita Resourceful,

While weeding recently I came across an old picture book called, *I'd Rather Get a Spanking Than Go To The Doctor* by Karen Frandsen and promptly removed it as inappropriate. Is there some kind of central list that professionals use to weed books like this one?

*Signed,
Bemused*

Dear Bemused:

Some truly awful books should be removed from the shelves but could be kept for teaching purposes. Frandsen's book might, for example, be used to discuss just how much cultural norms around child rearing, discipline and health care have changed since the 1980s.

As there is no central list for weeding, you must instead use your own good judgment and that of your colleagues. The general rule for weeding is to get rid of misleading, ugly, superseded, trivial, or irrelevant material. When you are weeding for a school library here are a few more tips that might help:

- Weed resources with outdated, biased, stereotypical or offensive illustrations
- Keep your collection current — a school library is not an archive
- Keep good statistics so that you can demonstrate increased circulation numbers after weeding and the improvement of the average age of the collection
- Do a little bit of weeding on a regular basis all year
- Access the support of experienced teacher-librarians or library specialists to help you in this process, especially if this is a new experience for you. ■

“The general rule for weeding is to get rid of misleading, ugly, superseded, trivial, or irrelevant material.”



TingL Wants You!

THE TEACHING LIBRARIAN SEEKS WRITERS, EDITORS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

On page 5 of every copy of *The Teaching Librarian* is our mission statement. For those of you that skip ahead to the articles — and we don’t fault you for that — the mission statement declares:

“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.”

Our mission cannot be accomplished without the support of volunteers — especially writers, photographers, and members of our editorial board.

We want:

- Articles about school libraries and library-related issues
- Writers who can create interesting text based on assigned topics
- Reflections and examples of quality educational practice
- Entertaining pieces that make readers think about the profession

If you are interested in writing regularly for *The Teaching Librarian* as a writer-on-call, send an email to TingLeditor@gmail.com with:

- Your name, school board, and phone/email contact information
- A sample of your writing (from a school newsletter, annual report, etc.)

Take advantage of the professional opportunity to share your interesting ideas with colleagues from across Ontario.

Upcoming issues are:

- Choice @ Your Library (Volume 20 Issue 2 – Winter 2013)
- Credit @ Your Library (Volume 20 Issue 3 – Spring 2013)
- Do We @ Your Library (Volume 21 Issue 1 – Fall 2013)
- Crime and Punishment @ Your Library (Volume 21 Issue 2 – Winter 2014)
- Wonder @ Your Library (Volume 21 Issue 3 – Spring 2014)

We desire:

- Engaging photographs for our cover that reflect school libraries
- Pictures for our interior to supplement our articles
- Illustrators who can contribute to “School Library Seen,” our comic
- Visuals that showcase the great diversity in Ontario and embrace the Creative Commons philosophy

If you are interested in taking photographs and/or drawing for us, please send an email to TingLeditor@gmail.com indicating your interest.

We also seek two new members for our editorial board. Editorial board members of *The Teaching Librarian* usually sit for a three-year period of time, decided by the individual member and/or the editor-in-chief, but this is negotiable. Members are expected to come to the majority of meetings, make an active contribution to the magazine and meet the deadlines we have on time. A more detailed list of expectations and duties is available upon request.

Interested people should send an “expressing interest” e-mail stating:

- Your name, school board, and phone/email contact information
- A few sentences suggesting why you’d be a good addition to the team (this is not a resume, so please be brief and informal).

After contacting us, prospective candidates will be sent a short sample piece of writing to demonstrate their editing abilities. The deadline for applying to become an editorial board member is Thanksgiving Monday. Once again, send emails to TingLeditor@gmail.com. **!**



Drawn to the Form

Diana Maliszewski



making decisions in their reading — if they're uncomfortable with something, they'll often stop reading it. I think it's important for parents to be aware of the content that their children are reading and to engage them in dialogue about things like smoking, even at a young age."

"Scholastic didn't want Smiley Bone [from the graphic novel *Bone*] to have a cigar in his mouth, and Jeff Smith had to fight to keep it in," Peter Birkemoe, owner of The Beguiling, described in a phone conversation about this topic. "The cigar was important to help readers tell one character from another — it was a key visual cue."

Birkemoe elaborates that a lot depends on the character seen smoking in the comic. "Is it a good guy or a bad guy smoking — that's key to distinguish. Nick Fury is one of the few heroes to be still seen smoking, but he has the excuse that he's a WWII vet. People didn't care if super villains smoked." There has been a real push to eliminate the portrayal of smoking by "good guys" but, at the same time, readers can get a good indication about how bad a character is supposed to be based on how he/she smokes — is it a cigarette, cigar, or pipe? Does the villain use a cigarette holder? Other characters that used to smoke seem to have "kicked the habit," such as Wolverine. "It's okay to show him killing, but not with a cigar in his hand — that's a tiny bit hypocritical," Birkemoe observes.

The challenge to comic creators and publishing companies is how to incorporate classical characters in popular culture and literature, such as Popeye or Sherlock Holmes, and transition them into family entertainment in a way that maintains their iconic symbols while respecting today's views about smoking. The experts at the Beguiling report that a new Popeye comic has been released, and although the spinach-loving sailor still possesses his pipe, he never lights up. Apparently the new Popeye's creators are hoping that, like Bill Clinton, Popeye never inhaling will make a difference!

Looking for the societal influences in comics and graphic novels makes for a great media literacy lesson. Examining who and how characters smoke, not just in comics but also in film and novels, can give insight to how society has changed ... and encourages critical literacy in your students too! ■

What do Popeye, Wolverine, Nick Fury, Sherlock Holmes and Smiley Bone all have in common? All of these characters have appeared smoking in comics.

The depiction of characters smoking in children's comics is a contentious subject.

A number of years ago, Jim Ottaviani, creator of *Two Fisted Science: Stories About Scientists* spoke at a comic-related event. He talked about the pressure he faced to avoid showing the characters smoking cigarettes, when writing a comic about the space race in the 1950s and 1960s. While it was true and common back then for the scientists characterized in the comic to be smoking, it concerned the publishers. No company wanted to be seen as condoning the habit, even though it was an accurate reflection of the work environment at the time.

There are very few kids' comics today that feature smoking. *Hikaru No Go* contains minor instances of alcohol use and cigarette smoking by adults, and this warranted a "Heads Up" in the book, *A Parent's Guide to the Best Kids' Comics: Choosing Titles Your Children Will Love*. Why is it such a big deal? Scott Robins, author of *A Parent's Guide*, offers his theory. "I don't think there's any easy answer here: Does material that kids read influence their current and future behaviour? Perhaps. Is there a tendency to overprotect and shield children from negative or 'bad' things? Absolutely. Kids are pretty good at

Michelle Brown

Smoke No More

CONSUMER HEALTH SITES FOR TEEN SMOKING CESSATION

We all know that smoking is detrimental to one's health. Teenagers are still developing and need access to resources that are tailored to their unique requirements when they want to quit smoking. These websites are useful:



Quit4Life
www.quit4life.com

This informative, bilingual site is maintained by Health Canada. Teens can create a personal profile and participate in an interactive four-week program aimed at helping them quit. The cost calculator feature shows how much an individual has spent to date on his or her smoking habit.



Nemours Foundation – Teens Health (Smoking)
http://kidshealth.org/teen/drug_alcohol/tobacco/smoking.html#cat20138

The Nemours Foundation is an NGO dedicated to improving the health of children. This site contains detailed information on how smoking affects one's health as well as tips on how to quit. The site also includes a section on the dangers of hookahs and e-cigarettes, which many teens use believing that they are safe alternatives to cigarettes.



Medline Plus — Smoking: The Facts
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/smokingthefacts/htm/index.htm>

This authoritative site is maintained by the U.S. National Library of Medicine. Although it is not created specifically with teens in mind, the content is appealing and makes good use of multimedia. The site contains an interactive tutorial, with audio, which gives an overview of nicotine addiction and explains how smoking negatively affects different parts of the body. ■

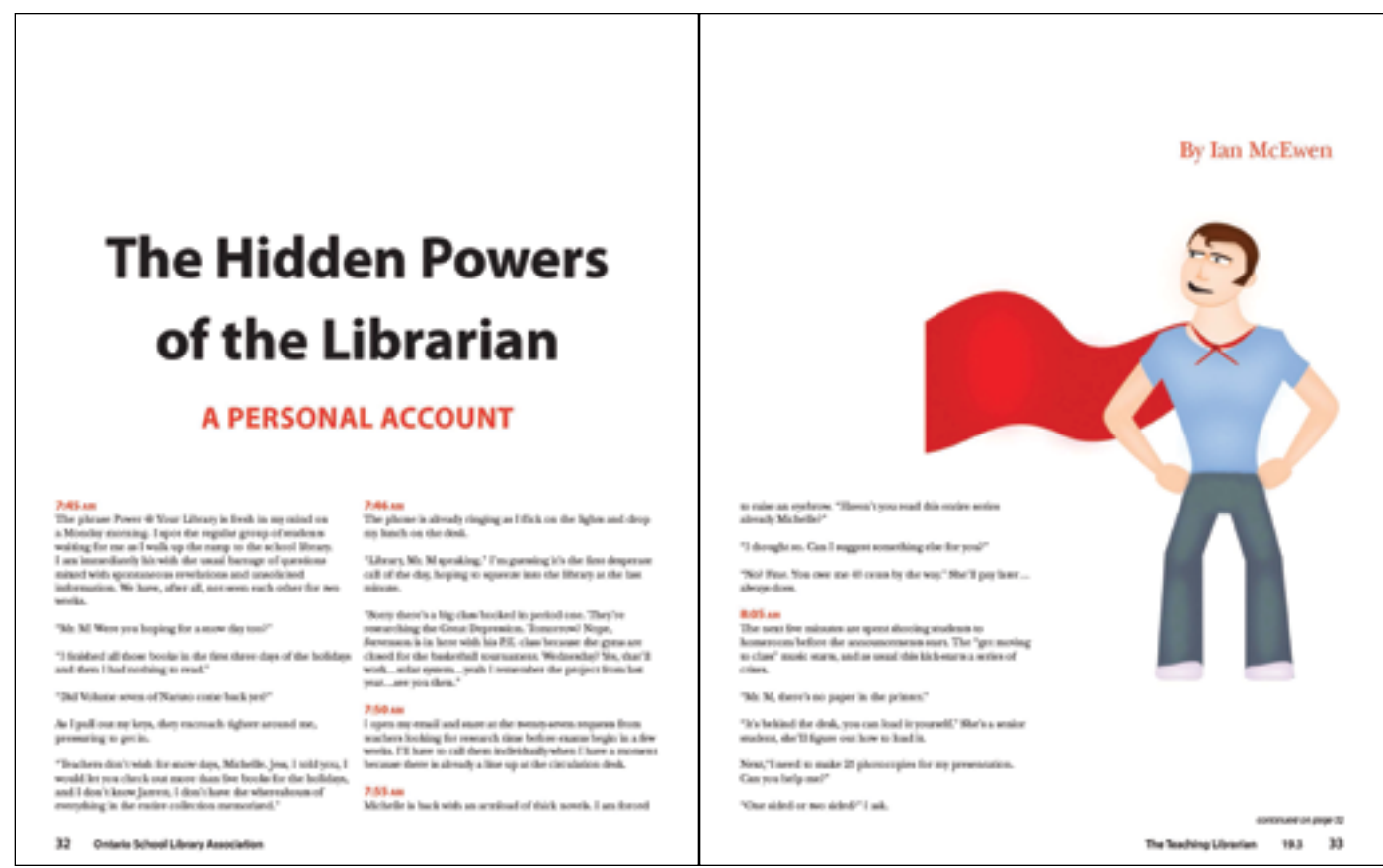
Marilyn Girndt & Ian McEwan

Hot Topic

RESPONDING TO “THE HIDDEN POWERS OF THE LIBRARIAN”

Foreword by Diana Maliszewski

I received this email after Volume 19, Issue 3 of *The Teaching Librarian* came out. The editorial board asked Marilyn for permission to reprint her letter, and invited the author, Ian McEwan, to reply. Here are their words.



Ian McEwan’s feature in *The Teaching Librarian* 19.3, “The Hidden Powers of the Librarian: A Personal Account”

Dear Editor of *The Teaching Librarian*,

I don’t usually write letters to the editors of magazines, but, after reading “The Hidden Powers of the Librarian” (*The Teaching Librarian*, May 2012), I felt that I had to write to you. I am dismayed that the OSLA actually printed this article in *Teaching Librarian* magazine!

I can relate to Mr. McEwan’s busy day, but where in his day is he teaching a class how to research or how to use the library catalogue effectively? Where in his day is he collaborating with a teacher to develop a resource-based learning unit? Where in his day is he teaching a class to use Photostory or Animoto to fulfill a course requirement? We all deal with hundreds of individual questions from students every day, but that is not our real “power.”

Our real power is to teach students how to find the information they are looking for, not to “send them to their respective areas in the stacks...” What a waste of the perfect opportunity for a teachable moment! He has to make a mental note to himself “to teach all students how to search the shelves by looking at the spine labels....” This should not be a side issue; it is a power issue — it is what we are here for!! It is our business to teach students how to search and find information and use technology to meet their needs, but we are not computer technicians! If that’s what we are becoming, it is no wonder some boards are getting rid of teacher-librarians and replacing them with technicians (library or computer, take your pick).

This article does nothing to promote the real job of a teacher-librarian in an elementary or secondary school. After all the work the OLA and OSLA put into our new document Together for Learning, I’m shocked and disheartened that this article was printed in our professional magazine.

Marilyn Girndt
Head of Library
Sinclair Secondary School

Dear Ms. Girndt,

Thank you for voicing your objections to the article “The Hidden Powers of the Librarian.”

Among the (frequent!) points of concern, you have stated that the article “does nothing to promote the real job of a teacher-librarian.” Perhaps you have misunderstood my intent, which was not to promote our wonderful profession, or to extol the virtues of seizing teachable moments, which you seem quite keen on. Nor was it to include detailed descriptions on teaching lessons on Photostory or Animoto. Teacher librarian magazines are full of such articles and I suspect many readers would find it terribly boring to read a minute by minute description of my lesson on how to use the PAC catalogue to search out a book.

Rather, my intent was an attempt at humour. Occasionally one likes to poke fun at one’s own expense so that perhaps others in the profession may see themselves in similar situations and have a bit of a laugh. I will try and make the next article extremely funny so that there will be no confusion.

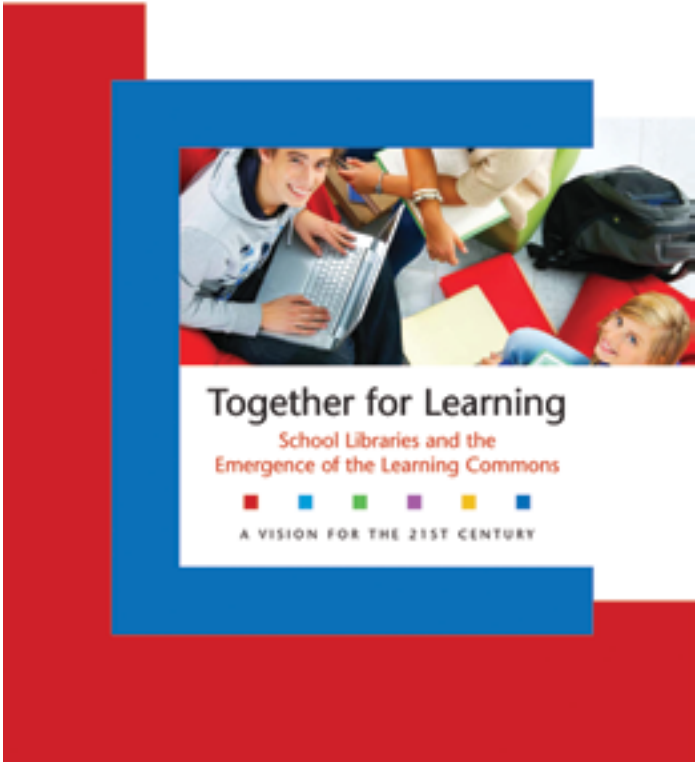
Sincerely,
Ian McEwan

We welcome letters to the editor about any of the content in *The Teaching Librarian*. Please send your thoughts to TingLeditor@gmail.com. Snail mail can be sent to the Ontario Library Association at 50 Wellington Street East, Toronto, ON, M5E 1C8.

Lori McCannel

Foreword by Janine Schaub

Together for Learning... Together We Can



Since the publication two years ago of *Together for Learning: School Libraries and the Emergence of the Learning Commons: A Vision for the 21st Century* from the Ontario School Library Association, teacher librarians across the province have been trying out its ideas as they work to improve their programs. With the help of their Director of Education, John Kostoff, (who won the Ontario School Library Association’s Administrator of the Year Award for his efforts), teacher-librarians in the Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB) have been implementing a three-year plan to use the document. Lori McCannel describes its action plan with our readers. If you wish to read more specific details about her board’s approach, please write to Lori.Mccannel@dpcdsb.org for a copy of the original, 8-page description.

Background on the Board

Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board is a district with 120 elementary schools. Every elementary school library is assigned a minimum of a 0.5 teacher-librarian, with larger schools assigned more. Supporting the elementary teacher-librarians is an active local Teacher-Librarian Association that has played a pivotal role in ensuring that the Together For Learning vision can become a reality.

Year One

At the annual meeting with the Director, we agreed that the initial year was to be a time to become familiar with the document. The Director purchased copies of the T4L document for every TL, which they received at the annual First Day TL In-Service. The document is small in stature but large in scope — it wasn’t possible to implement all

aspects at once with so many of our teacher-librarians staffed part-time and with schedule constraints. In the first year of implementation, DPCDSB teacher-librarians worked on building collaborative relationships, improving the reading engagement of students and creating flexible physical spaces where shelves and furniture could be easily moved.

Year Two

In the second year of implementation, DPCDSB teacher-librarians looked at ways to make their school libraries more accessible to staff and students through virtual spaces, Web 2.0 applications and the fostering of learning partnerships at the school and board level. We examined the virtual spaces that already existed and thought about how to optimize their use, like the new circulation software system, the Board’s media catalogue, as well as the Dufferin Peel teacher-librarian Book Review Site. We looked at online databases as a way to open our school library walls and extol the use of virtual spaces. Wikis were created to allow students to collaborate in a safe password protected virtual space. Wikis were also a vehicle for teacher-librarians to collaborate in a new way.

Sharing the Vision

A key moment of “T4L – Year 2” was when the Dufferin Peel Catholic Elementary Teacher Library Association (DPCETLA) was invited by Director of Education Kostoff to create a presentation about T4L for the Executive Council (Senior Administrators, Superintendents,

and representatives from all Board Departments). After many planning meetings, the T4L committee felt they really understood the document and could do it justice with this important presentation. Three elementary teacher-librarians — Carm Condotta, Peter Graham, and myself (Lori McCannel) — presented to the Council on behalf

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of the teacher-librarians on January 23, 2012. The presentation included an introduction borrowed from Anita Brooks-Kirkland’s “Imagine Your Library” presentation and an overview of the T4L document. Most importantly, we stressed how the vision of T4L meets our board’s pillars/goals and what direction we felt was necessary to implement the vision of 21st century learning.

Following the presentation, there was an extensive Q&A session. The director requested that the DPCETLA to prepare a “next steps” package.

Year Three

This year marks the third year of implementation and the teacher-librarians are in the process of setting their goals. They will be focusing on Inquiry Learning to assist students in relating their work to their own lives and the culture in which they live.

What can you do?

So what can you do to make T4L a reality at your school library? Take a closer look at Together For Learning. What are you already doing that fits with the vision? Perhaps you haven’t even considered that what you already have a habit of doing is a start. We discovered there were components of our common practice that already fit with the vision. Check off those areas that are already evident and evaluate new areas to explore each year. Are you able to reach out and establish collaborative working relationships with senior administrators who would benefit from the expertise of the library personnel? Establish relationships and create opportunities to discuss what directions would be best for your school libraries. Focus on each area of T4L to develop, one step at a time. Advocate for the school library program and establish open dialogue. You may feel overwhelmed by the prospect of implementing but you might not have realized that you are already on the way to establishing a Learning Commons. Remember that together for learning, together, we can. ■

Marilyn Wagman

Lighting Up Your Library

RENO TIPS FROM A NEW TEACHER LIBRARIAN



Marilyn Wagman in her newly improved school library.

Three years ago I was lucky enough to get the job I had been preparing for my entire teaching career. After twenty-five years in the classroom, I was thrilled to become a teacher-librarian. My key ingredients to create the perfect library would be a warm and welcoming environment that is user-friendly, and most importantly, a magical place for kids to escape into the world of books. I wanted to give my library a sense of time, place and wonder. Where to start?

Since the school was relatively new, the library space was unappreciated and under-utilized. The space consisted of four picture windows, cement walls, industrial ceilings, standard library shelving, and two grey couches. There was lots of room for improvement.

My first inclination was to physically divide the library with shelving to create separate primary and junior/intermediate areas. I stocked both areas with brightly coloured dollar store buckets. Distinct colour schemes for each area were created — hot pink, lime green, and yellow for the primary zone, and bright primary colours for the junior/intermediate zone. Organizing the zones by colour created an easily accessible system for both students and staff.

To showcase the beautiful windows, I bought decals from Walmart and the dollar store related to storytelling, including pirates, fairy tales, children, and animals. Together with groupings of artifacts that line the top of the bookshelves, these extra touches create a sense of unity and reflect curriculum ideas. Using photocopied covers of oversized books, which were laminated and hung along the top of the walls like a wallpaper border, was an inexpensive way to decorate the walls. The book covers created a sense of beauty

and childhood familiarity, contributing to the overall magic of the library.

We displayed student artwork on the walls and ceiling and the origami art installation inspired by the book *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* has been a real show-stopper. In addition to the ceiling art, eye-catching, colourful kites share the space. When you think you’ve run out of space to display things, all you have to do is look up!

One of my biggest challenges was making the non-fiction section more appealing for junior/intermediate students. I welcomed student requests and quickly fulfilled their wishes. Their investment in the content helped them take ownership of the non-fiction section. Inexpensive Muskoka chairs from Canadian Tire and colourful pillows donated by students created a lounge area. It was great to see to see the older kids kicking back in the “lounge” area with the *Guinness Book of World Records* from the reference-only section.

We wanted to create quiet reading nooks throughout the library. Ikea is a great resource for colourful, durable, pint-sized furniture. It is easy to get carried away at Ikea, so when I ran out of money I placed a request in the school newsletter inviting families to donate any pieces they were no longer using. The response was fantastic! Any donated items that looked a little worn only needed a quick coat of paint to look refreshed. Kids love seeing their own pieces in the library and they get a sense of pride from knowing they pitched in and contributed to the overall effect.

For the final touches, I picked up interesting knickknacks at Home Sense. I like to have something interactive next to the circulation computer to engage the kids while they wait in line to check out their books. I like to follow the themes of the changing seasons.

For years I have been collecting children’s books and their corresponding stuffed-animal characters. I now have a collection of about seventy five — including, George and Martha, Frog and Toad, Jillian Jiggs, Wemberley, Lilly, and others. They reside in my office and when students visit, I love to see their delight in searching for their favourite storybook characters. Some even wonder aloud if these characters come to life when the library is closed!

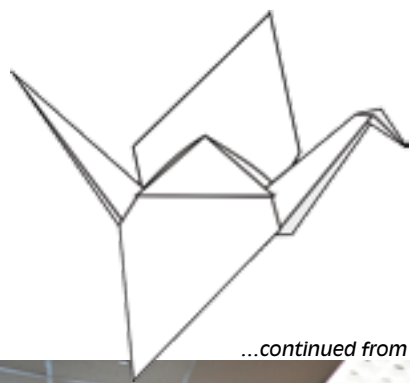
Finally, as the children gather on the bright checked carpet for read-alouds, they are charmed by my “Queen of the Library” crown and magic wand. I love to see them share my joy and wonder as we discover books together. This library inspires me and makes me smile, and I believe it does the same for the students of Thornhill Woods PS. ■

“
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– Together for Learning, page 9



more photos on page 36



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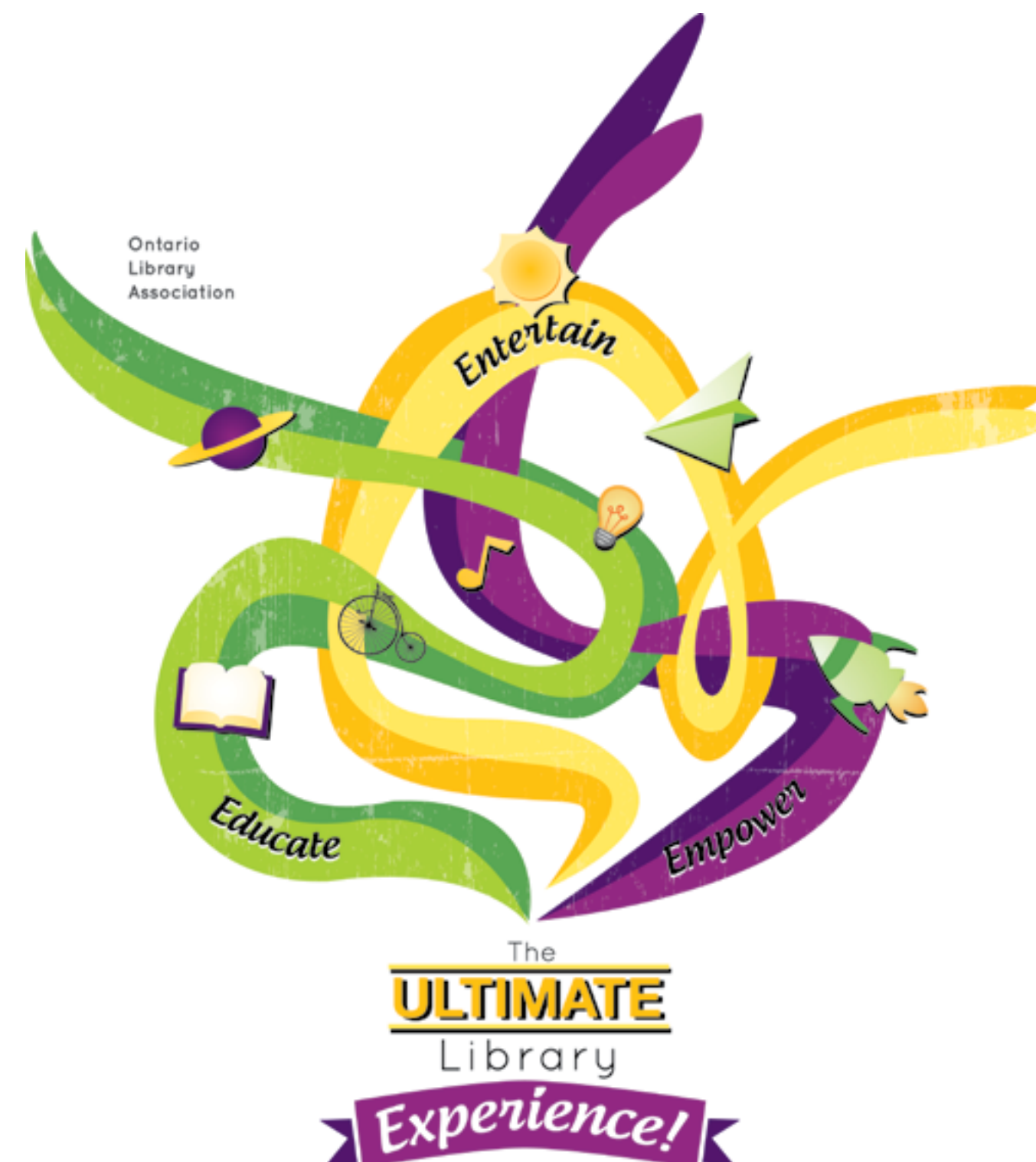


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