

# **THE TEACHING LIBRARIAN**

The magazine of the Ontario School Library Association  
volume 15, number 1 ISSN 1188679X

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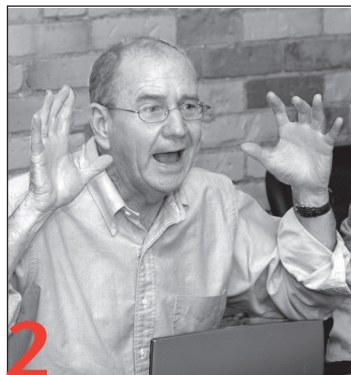
# THE TEACHING LIBRARIAN

volume 15, number 1

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## TL mission

### THE TEACHING LIBRARIAN

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

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## TL guidelines

- V. 15, no. 2 "Inclusion @ your library"  
Deadline: October 5, 2007
- V. 15, no. 3 "The World @ your library"  
Deadline: February 1, 2008
- V. 16, no. 1 "21st Century Learning @ your library"  
Deadline: May 12, 2008

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

## People @ your library®



**Diana Maliszewski**

**E**very year, *Time* magazine declares someone its “Person of The Year.” If *The Teaching Librarian* were to ape this trend, who would be on the cover? Would it be Dr. Don Klinger and his research team from Queens University? They are working on the second phase of the study investigating the impact of school libraries on student success. What about the writing team behind the document that will replace *Partners In Action* for all of us in Ontario? Let’s not forget Larry Moore, the director of the Ontario Library Association, who announced his upcoming retirement earlier this calendar year

and who has led the association through times both good and bad for many years. Another potential candidate is the team of Andrew Ryther and Anita Brooks-Kirkland for the superb work on the OLA/OSLA Web site, updating and morphing it into a lean, mean Web machine. Maybe your nominees would be more local—say, your principal, for augmenting your library budget, or that loyal volunteer who helps out week after week. All of these people would be ideal, and many of them are profiled in this issue. Still, I’d suggest that it would be the students we serve who should have the distinction of being the “People of The Year.” They are the reason why all of us who work in school libraries are there—to help students learn, whether it be as a teacher-librarian providing instruction, as a library technician managing the collection, or in any other capacity. No one can do it alone, in isolation. This magazine is a perfect example, as it is due to the hard work of the editorial board and the OLA staff, the funds provided by OSLA members through their membership fees, and the support of OSLA Council that we are able to produce this fine publication. As you peruse this edition of *The Teaching Librarian*, remember all the people who help you help students—and tell them thanks. ■



Participants of the ‘Think Tank’ for the new document, (from left) Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat Judy Speirs, Ross Todd, Anita Brooks Kirkland, Michael Rosettis, and Tim Gauntley



ONTARIO SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

# President's Report

## Peggy Thomas

### Welcome back!

When I assumed the role of President of the OSLA, little did I know of the experiences ahead! It has been an exciting time to be involved in the Ontario School Library Association, and I would like to share some of the highlights so far with you.

### Research study—Phase two:

The second, more in-depth, phase of the research study is well underway. Representatives from Queens University and People for Education spent a considerable amount of time interviewing, observing, and following a teacher-librarian last May to get a greater sense of the role. In addition, time was spent with students, staff members, and administrators at the same school, determining the impact that an active library program has on the school community. From this experience, research tools will be developed and an additional 20 schools will be surveyed in the fall. It is hoped that the results will be ready for publication in the spring of 2008. We already know that we make a difference at our schools, now that will be qualified, quantified, and published for the public to see.

### International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions:

### That's IFLA for short!

This is just a heads up that on August

10–14, 2008, the IFLA annual conference will be hosted in Quebec City. The theme for this conference is “*Libraries without borders: Navigating towards global understanding*.” OSLA has been asked to plan and host a satellite conference in Toronto on August 7–8. A committee has been struck, and Deb Kitchener is taking the lead. We are also partnering with public libraries to create a rich and interesting program for all to enjoy. We hope that it will be intriguing enough to lure some (many) of you away from your cottages, families, and summer fun to attend this two-day summit. You can go to [www.ifla.org/IV/index.htm](http://www.ifla.org/IV/index.htm) for more information on both the main conference and the satellite conference in Toronto. Hope to see you there!

### Super Conference:

Bobbie Henley, Lisa Teodosio, Pat Elliot, and Ann Perez, our talented planning team, have been working hard to provide a diverse and interesting program for all members of OSLA within the OLA Super Conference. In the spirit of the by-law passed at the last AGM, we are ensuring that there will be sessions that interest all qualified school library staff. (Be sure to read the article in this issue of *The Teaching Librarian* that addresses the roles of both teacher-librarians and library technicians within the school setting.) As of this writing, both Stephen Heppell (back after

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rave reviews last year) and David Warlick will be keynote speakers, Stephen Heppell as a full conference plenary speaker and David Warlick specifically addressing the school library audience. The conference takes place at the Metro Convention Centre from January 30–February 2. Mark it in your calendars. I urge everyone to consider attending this energizing and innovative conference!

### **Nominations:**

Ever think that you would like to be more involved in OSLA? The time is now to consider doing just that. This year there will be openings for the following positions: Vice-President/President Elect, Councillor–Central East, and Councillor–Central West, all carrying three year terms. If you are passionate about school libraries, have four Saturdays to spare during the school year, have ideas that you want to explore and want to be part of the decision making team, consider nominating yourself. The nominating committee for this year is Marilyn Willis (marilyn.willis@peelsb.com), Liz Kerr (lkerr@accessola.com) and Bobbie Henley (henlerob@fc.gedsb.net). They are actively searching for candidates to stand for election and would love to hear from you!

### **Forest of Reading®:**

The selection committees have been reading since January and by the time this is published, the lists will have been selected. The lists will be made public on International School Library Day (October 22, 2007) and registrations will be accepted from September on. Remember, you must register in order for your student's votes to count towards the winner! Harbourfront has already been booked for May 21 and 22 for the awards ceremonies. Last spring's combined celebration was phenomenal, and this year's promises to be even better! We will be able to accommodate nearly 8,000 celebrants, so think about joining the fun.

We are also looking into having a virtual launch this year. Stay tuned to the Web site and listserv for more information on this possibility! In addition, I would like to personally welcome **S&B Books** as the official sponsor for the Forest

of Reading®. They will be happy to work with you to promptly fill your orders for the Forest books. Please consider the incredible amount of work and support that they give to the OLA Forest programs when placing your orders in the fall.

### **A Special Thank You:**

Finally, I would like to extend a special thank you to Larry Moore as he enters the final phase as Executive Director of the OLA. For those who have had the privilege of working with Larry, you will know that it is with mixed feelings, but great joy, that we wish him well in his retirement (starting after Super Conference 2008). Larry, thank you for attending all of those Saturday meetings, being there to listen and offer advice, for your encouragement, your wit, and, especially, your wisdom. On behalf of the entire OSLA Council, I don't know how we could have managed without you, but I guess we will find out. All the best in this next phase of your journey!

And now, some of you are wondering, what about the new School Library Document? But that is such a large issue that we are dedicating an entire article to it. Be sure to read about it further along in this issue of *The Teaching Librarian*!

Thank you for all of your support and encouragement,

Peggy Thomas  
OSLA President, 2007 ■



*'Think Tank' participants (from left) Peggy Thomas, Esther Rosenfeld, Tim Gauntley, David Loertscher, and Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat Judy Speirs*



# Helping You Be The Change

**T**he students and parents at Rosedale Junior Public School in downtown Toronto made change a reality for hundreds of less fortunate children in Sierra Leone. On Valentine's Day the grade 6 students of Bessie Anastopoulos's class held a Dance-a-Thon to raise money for the Free the Children foundation's Adopt a Village campaign. Their aim was to raise enough money to build a one-classroom school in Africa. With parents' support and enthusiasm they exceeded the \$6,500 needed to build the school in a village in Sierra Leone, Africa. The families and supporters of Rosedale outdid themselves and their generosity helped to raise \$11,091!

Ms. Anastopoulos was able to inspire the community to contribute generously by choosing a fund that is highly respected and locally developed. Craig Kielberger runs Free the Children in a nearby community (Cabbagetown). He created the foundation after working for many years to create awareness of child labour around the world. Inspired also by the OLA award-winning learning resource "Be the Change," Ms. Anastopoulos was able to teach the importance of world issues concerning children and what her students could actually do to help.

The students at Rosedale collected donations by asking friends and family to sponsor their participation in a Dance-a-Thon that was held in the school gymnasium. Surrounded by great decorations, strobe lights, and lively dance music via a disc jockey, the students and staff jived and grooved the day away. It was a great party, one that the students have requested happen annually.

After careful collection of all donations, the realization of such a large final amount was overwhelming to the grade 6 class and their teacher. Ms. Anastopoulos made sure that the efforts of her class and school were recognized. Most importantly, the Free the Children representative worked with her class to decide how the money would be spent. In the end, the

## Students at Rosedale Made "The Change" Happen!

**Sandra Anderson**

class decided that the money would be spent in the following way:

- \$6,500 – to build a one-classroom school;
- \$1,500 – to furnish one classroom;
- \$1,500 – to support one teacher's salary and training for one year;
- \$1,500 – to provide teaching resources for one classroom;
- \$91.68 – to provide school supplies for the children.

In a thank you letter to the school, Dianna Chan, International Projects Co-ordinator wrote, "The students at Rosedale Junior Public School are truly shining examples of the power of young people to make positive changes and reach out in solidarity to help children all over the world. You should all be very proud of your efforts and achievements, as they truly have made a difference in the world and in the lives of children! Thank you so much for all your hard work!"

One very proud teacher and one very generous community have made change possible for children in Sierra Leone. Well done Rosedale! As for the students at Rosedale, well, they all want to do it again next year. ■

**A**uthor visits can be extremely powerful, but aren't always possible or practical. So why not set up a "virtual author visit" using some of these resources as starting points? Canada has a very strong presence in the world of children's and Young Adult literature, so I've focused on Canadian resources. However, I've also provided some links to the literary world beyond our borders. I've included links to authors of general and literary works because many teens find themselves moving beyond Young Adult literature. Many of the author and illustrator pages have contact information—usually in the form of an e-mail address. Between e-mail, on-line chatting, webcams, videoconferencing, and so on, you might even be able to make your virtual visit interactive!

#### Canadian Authors and Illustrators

##### *The Art of Illustration:*

*A Celebration of Contemporary Canadian Children's Book Illustrators*

[www.collectionscanada.ca/3/10](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/3/10)

Examples of process and product as well as biographical information.

##### *Author & Illustrator Web sites*

[www.bookcentre.ca/authors](http://www.bookcentre.ca/authors)

From the Canadian Children's Book Centre—an impressive collection of children's and Young Adult author and illustrator pages!

##### *The Canadian Literature Archive*

[www.umanitoba.ca/canlit](http://www.umanitoba.ca/canlit)

See especially the Author List, Texts, and Writer's Resources sections.

##### *Canadian Poets*

[www.library.utoronto.ca/canpoetry](http://www.library.utoronto.ca/canpoetry)

Includes both contemporary and 19th century poets.

##### *Canadian Writers*

[www.collectionscanada.ca/writers](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/writers)

Useful for senior high school English students studying Canadian literature.

##### *Canadian Writers Web Pages*

[www.athabascau.ca/writers](http://www.athabascau.ca/writers)

Useful for senior high school English students studying Canadian literature.

##### *Canadian Young Adult Fiction*

[www.umanitoba.ca/canlit/young\\_adult.shtml](http://www.umanitoba.ca/canlit/young_adult.shtml)

This section of the Canadian Literature Archive will be of particular interest to anyone interested in Canadian Young Adult literature.

##### *Children's Literature Service*

[www.collectionscanada.ca/childrenliterature](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/childrenliterature)

From Library and Archives Canada. See especially the Authors and Illustrators section.

##### *Memorable Canadians*

[www.collectionscanada.ca/8/2/index-e.html](http://www.collectionscanada.ca/8/2/index-e.html)

Select the Field of Endeavour Index and check out the Authors, Authors—Children, and Authors—Short Stories sections.



*The Forest of Reading® Celebration is a great place to meet the authors and illustrators of your favourite books*



*Blue Spruce winning author  
Mélanie Watt signs copies of  
Scaredy Squirrel for excited fans*

*Northwest Passages: Canadian Literature On-line*

[www.nwpassages.com/links.asp](http://www.nwpassages.com/links.asp)

A virtual bookstore operating out of Vancouver, this site includes lots of interesting links.

*Well-Known People Who Happen to be Canadian*

<http://particle.physics.ucdavis.edu/Canadians>

Check out the Authors page.

*Writers' Union of Canada*

[www.writersunion.ca](http://www.writersunion.ca)

Select Writers & Writing, then member pages.

And don't forget to check out the Ontario Writers-in-the-Schools program (see the Readings section)!

**Beyond our Borders...**

*Author Yellow Pages*

[www.authoryellowpages.com](http://www.authoryellowpages.com)

Searchable alphabetically or by genre.

Information includes links to official, fan, and publisher Web sites.

*Children's Literature Web Guide*

[www.ucalgary.ca/~dkBrown/index.html](http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkBrown/index.html)

An old site with lots of dead links, but still worth checking. Select More Links, then Authors on the Web.

*EdSelect*

<http://edselect.com/index.htm>

Check out the Authors and Novel Studies pages in the Literacy Links section.

*Internet Public Library*

[www.ipl.org](http://www.ipl.org)

See Kidspace: Author Pages, Teenspace: Authors, Special Collections: Literary Criticism, and Special Collections: Native American Authors.

*Kay E. Vandergrift's Special Interest Page*

[www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kvander/index.html](http://www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kvander/index.html)

Check out the Author Site. Many dead links, but still worth checking.

*Web English Teacher*

<http://webenglishteacher.com/>

Check out the links in the Children's Literature and Young Adult Literature sections. And, while you're at it, subscribe to the free newsletter!

**In Conclusion...**

Meeting the authors and illustrators of the books they're reading can be an incredibly exciting and powerful experience for our students. These resources should help you and your students make virtual connections when personal visits just aren't possible. ■

# Fairy Tales Do Come

**O**nce upon a time (1982) there was a resource document, *Partners in Action: The Library Resource Centre in the School Curriculum*. It was good, it was celebrated, and it made a difference. It was a beacon showing teachers and librarians how they could work together. Sadly, the clouds of budget cuts, the funding formula, and staffing restraints began to obscure the view of the Partners document. The days of school libraries dimmed and we entered a gloomy wasteland (welcoming the Harris government, solidifying the dark and dreary forest already encircling the school library), and many despaired.

Surrounded by gloom, we realized we had to get to work. For 10 years, OSLA, in conjunction with teacher-librarians, consultants, and parents, laboured to inform everyone about the state of school libraries. Research was conducted, conversations took place, letters were written, and some glimmer of hope emerged. School libraries were mentioned in the revised curriculums, year-end money was given to all school libraries for collection renewal two years in a row; we were being discussed again in places where it mattered.

*'Think Tank' participants (from left) Roberta Henley, Ray Doiron, Michele Regina, Hetty Smeathers, Peggy Thomas, Lisa Weaver*



Then a chance encounter: the President and Vice President of OSLA were invited to a soiree at the Ministry of Education, and had a wonderful opportunity to talk face-to-face with the Minister of Education. The Minister was understanding, interested, and wanted to know more.

The above reads like a fairy tale, and in some ways it is. But that chance encounter with Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Education, did lead to a meeting between representatives of OSLA, TALCO, the Ministry of Education, and the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. At the end of the meeting further information was requested, and that information was provided. The possibility of a support document for school libraries seemed close.

In late April 2007, the OSLA executive received a letter from the Ministry of Education informing them that a grant of \$70,000 was being issued to the OSLA to enable the writing of a Support Document for School Libraries. A management team consisting of the executive of the OSLA and representatives of the OLA was struck, and work began.

A writing team representing a cross-section of the educational community was created. Included are representatives from OISE, OSSTF, administrators, teacher-librarians, TALCO, OSLA, and OLA. Through initial meetings, a proposed outline was produced, and initial research and writing took place. Then, a think tank took place bringing together four outstanding leaders in school libraries and education and the writing team. The experts: Ross Todd, whose work on evidence-based practice in Australia and in the United States has changed the advocacy and evaluation processes of school libraries around the world; David Loertscher, virtual professor at San José



State University, author of several seminal works in school library practice; David Warlick, whose reputation rests on ground-breaking technological applications in teaching and learning; and Ray Doiron from the Faculty of Education at the University of Prince Edward Island, now a national and international influence in school libraries looked at what the team had produced and through discussion and brainstorming, turned many of the premises upside down.

It is important to note that it was never the intention to re-write *Partners in Action*. The mandate given to OSLA, and explained to the think tank, was to provide a new vision of teaching for the 21st century that includes the reality of the changing nature of information and the shifting landscape of how learners learn. It is one in which all participants are both teachers and learners, and requires redefining collaboration to include everyone: students, teachers, teacher-librarians, administrators, parents, and community members.

The strongest impact on the thinking of the writing team during the think tank came with the concept that the emphasis is on the learner, whose methods of learning are often radically different from those taught in schools. No longer are we preparing students for learning; they are already learning. The library of the future will be an environment that recognizes the tension between how learning takes place inside and outside the school and that provides multiple learning spaces, encourages multiple learning modes, and addresses multiple learning styles. It is a place where the convergence of real and virtual learning will create a true intellectual space. In this context, technologies will be raw materials for creation, not isolated objects for single use and one point of view. These libraries and schools will open windows

on the real world, on the virtual world, and, most of all, on the student's world. In this scenario, the student builds his or her own library where the environment is participatory and user-controlled, where learning is self-directed—guided and orchestrated by the teachers and teacher-librarians.

The writing team has been working all summer to develop the first draft, which should be finished by late fall. Once that is accomplished, the draft will be made available on-line for comment by all interested parties. Once the final edit of the document is made, it will be printed in both English and French.

To support the document, it is intended that an on-line resource will also be developed with templates, examples and ideas for implementation. The on-line presence will ensure that the use of technology is buoyant and current, able to adjust in response to the rapid changes in technology applications in today's world. In a sense, able to keep up with what the students will already be doing.

The document, when it does come out, will not be policy. It will not affect funding, nor will it delineate staffing. It, like its predecessor *Partners in Action*, will be about vision, the future of school libraries in education. So it is critical to continue your work as advocates for school libraries to build the evidence of the impact of school libraries on student learning (see The Teacher-Librarian's Toolkit for Evidence-Based Practice, [www.accessola.com/osla/toolkit](http://www.accessola.com/osla/toolkit), for some ideas on how to gather that evidence). That, together with the work being done by the writing team will be the foundation for changes necessary in our school libraries, and the education system, to be strong and relevant to our learners in the 21st century.

■

# Authors' Booking Service

## Free Help for Connecting Authors and Libraries

by Valerie Sherrard & Marsha Skrypuch

**W**hen we decided to launch Authors' Booking Service, we knew that there were going to be hurdles. But we also realized that book creators needed a service to help co-ordinate their visits. And it was a given that educators and librarians would benefit as well. From selecting to contacting to booking—arranging an author visit can be a frustrating experience for an educator whose days are already so full. And what can be more annoying than finding out—too late—that your students' favourite author is in town?

For teachers and librarians, Authors' Booking Service provides, at no cost:

- ◆ advance information about Ontario author visits to all areas of the province
- ◆ assistance in selecting and booking an author for a specific event
- ◆ help in matching an author to your curriculum themes and subjects
- ◆ particulars about relevant grants and subsidies
- ◆ assistance in planning the most cost-effective visit
- ◆ an information forum where you can quickly and easily research authors before making a

decision to book.

- ◆ advance notice when out-of-province authors are planning a visit to Ontario. This provides the opportunity to book high profile authors without having to worry about excessive travel costs.

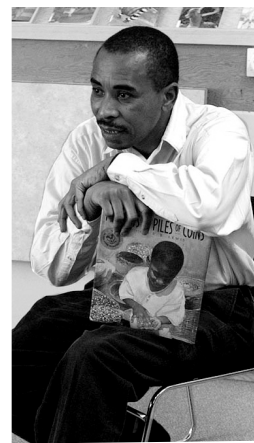
We send out a weekly e-mailed newsletter that includes all of the above information, as well as tidbits on our authors' new releases, tours, nominations and so on.

Word spread quickly, not only among educators, but authors and illustrators as well. It wasn't long before we were receiving regular requests for representation. With no formal screening process, we asked each applicant to provide a testimonial from a recent school or library visit. Our objective, in doing so, was to ensure that our members were crowd-pleasers. We wanted authors who could not only write, but who could also captivate an audience.

We quickly noticed that, in providing feedback on author visits, many of the remarks from teachers and librarians focused on the students' reactions.



*Author  
Anne Dublin  
with Eliana  
and Nicole*



*From Left:  
Freida Wishinski  
with a class;  
Anita Daher;  
Tololwa Mollel*

We heard things like: “Since your visit to our school, your books are flying off the shelves! Even some of our reluctant readers are visiting the library.”

And: “Thank you so much for your visit. The kids are still all abuzz! We were all so impressed with your presentation and the fact that you shared with us the difficulties you had as a child. It is so important for children to realize that adversity can be overcome and that there is always hope. I am going shopping on the weekend. The kids have given me a list of books they absolutely HAVE TO HAVE!”

Clearly, a strong author visit makes for passionate readers.

Here’s a sample of feedback after a writing workshop:

“Your visit has had a profound impact on both our students and my daughter... who turns five today! As soon as we got home after your visit she wrote a story beginning with “suddenly”! Our principal... is still receiving completed stories! The children are as thrilled to read them to her as she is to listen to them.”

And in the face of school library cutbacks, the following testimonial by a vice-principal who is also a teacher-librarian is especially encouraging:

“Thank you so much. Your presentation was excellent and you have motivated me to get our library up and running again in spite of the cuts to libraries in [our board]. You are so right, our kids need to be motivated to read, not made to read and I believe that you were the quick start that we needed at our school. I am getting on the fundraising trail right away in September and this is just the beginning of author visits to [our

school]. I am looking forward to sharing your books with our kids. We will be looking for your new book to come out.”

But students aren’t alone in benefiting from the service. Many authors depend on bookings to help supplement their income. The average yearly income for authors in Canada is at the poverty level and an author may work on a manuscript for years without pay and then wait even longer to receive a contract. Professional speaking opportunities offer authors what is often an essential form of support for their work.

Of course, income isn’t the only positive for authors, as the following quotes reveal:

“The librarian was really organized and made me feel incredibly welcome—she even had the kids make a ‘Welcome’ sign—very cool. One of the best welcomes I’ve ever received.”

“Teachers were present and participated enthusiastically... great role models for the students!”

As a small token of thanks to these teachers and librarians, we recently began holding five draws a month for a free, autographed book. Each session booked through Authors’ Booking Service earns an automatic ballot and winners have been delighted to learn that they select the book of their choice from an extensive list.

Thus far, in spite of the obstacles, difficulties, and occasional frustrations, operating Authors’ Booking Service has still been an awesome and inspiring experience. As we continue to grow and learn, we hope your path will cross with ours. ■

*To receive a weekly newsletter, or simply for more information about this service, please visit their Web site: [www.authorsbooking.com!](http://www.authorsbooking.com!)*



## Reviving Reading: School Library Programming, Author Visits and Books that Rock!

Alison M. G. Follos  
Libraries Unlimited, 2006  
ISBN 10: 159158356X  
ISBN 13: 9781591583561  
\$42.24

*Reviving Reading* is a timely book, one that will add value to the work we do to promote reading and develop literacy skills. While it was the chapter on author visits that garnered *Reviving Reading* a spot in this issue's collection of reviews (remember, People@your library), the entire book is well worth your time.

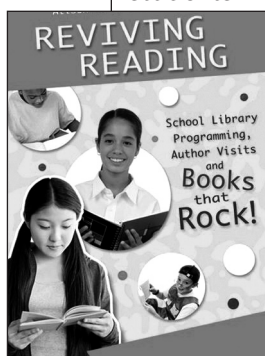
Follos divides her book into three parts. Part I, Why Literature, includes chapters 1 through 4: "Why Literature is Important NOW," "Mass-Communication Pile-Up," "The Importance of Literature in the School Library," and "Co-operative Planning." Part II, Setting Up the Foundations for Literature Programs, includes chapters 5 and 6: "Integrating Literature into the Curriculum," and "Collection and Adolescent Development: What Is 'Appropriate.'" Part III, Programs, includes chapters 7 to 12: "Title Trekking: A Reading Incentive Program," "Reader's Workshop: Story

Time Enhancement for Young Adults," "Reader's Workshop and Journaling," "Visiting Author Program," "Raising Cash (aka: Budgets R Bogus)," and "Young Adult Literature to Grab Adults." Encouraging staff members to read Young Adult literature could be quite interesting—and powerful!

While Follos focuses on students in grades four through eight, she also talks about extending her programs to older students. Teacher-librarians working with students in grades four through ten will find these ideas of interest.

Of course, the reaction from many readers is likely to be that this is all very nice but rather ambitious and impractical. In that case, *Reviving Reading* could prove a useful tool in our ongoing campaign to convince others of the importance of school libraries—after all, if Follos has published a book then she must be an expert (they'll think), and she's arguing for the importance of teacher-librarians and school libraries!

Highly recommended for elementary and middle schools. Recommended for high schools.



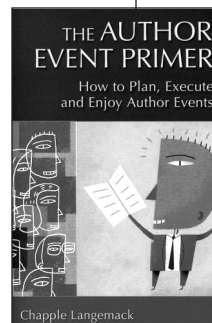
## The Author Event Primer: How to Plan, Execute and Enjoy Author Events

Chapple Langemack  
Libraries Unlimited, 2007  
ISBN 10: 1591583020  
ISBN 13: 9781591583028  
\$46.20

Don't be fooled by the ugly cover—this is an excellent guide to organizing and hosting successful author events. Langemack's primer covers all aspects of author events, from rationale to proposal, through planning, to the event itself and beyond. Even virtual visits are covered! A detailed table of contents and an index make information easy to find. The author also includes appendices with sample proposals and forms as well as a list of additional resources.

Langemack's style is conversational and her sense of humour is evident. The book includes a wealth of anecdotes and examples, which make the advice come to life. In *The Author Event Primer*, Langemack manages to achieve the perfect blend—lots of valuable information and an easy, enjoyable read.

Given everything I've just written, it's likely to come as quite a surprise that I'm suggesting *The*



*Author Event Primer* be considered an optional purchase. That's because Langemack is a public librarian writing for other public librarians and for those working for organizations and corporations which host author events. Schools are mentioned twice—once as possible partners for public library author events and once as institutions that organize their own author events. This book is excellent, but teacher-librarians are not the intended audience. If you happen to work for a school board that offers author visits for staff as part of a professional development program, then whoever is in charge of that program should definitely get a copy of this book. On the other hand, teacher-librarians will find school

library-focused titles more useful and that's an important consideration given budget limitations. Buy the school library titles first, then, if there's a need for more and funds permit, buy this title.

An optional purchase for district collections.



## Mini-Reviews a.k.a. The Classics Corner

### ABCs of an Author/Illustrator Visit, 2nd ed.

Sharron L. McElmeel  
Linworth, 2001  
ISBN 10: 1586830341  
ISBN 13: 9781586830342  
\$48.77

Everything you need to know about author/illustrator visits in one handy resource! McElmeel begins with the benefits of author/illustrator visits and then provides a very thorough guide that covers everything, from the planning and organizing, through the big day itself, to the follow-up. She also includes a section on how to connect with authors/illustrators when in-person visits simply aren't possible. The last two sections include forms and resources. Unfortunately, there's no digital version of the forms, so they have to be photocopied and used as-is or used as a source of ideas for your own forms. The resources are all elementary and the focus is American. Creating a Canadian resources supplement would be a worthwhile project. It's also worth noting that, because this book is already six years old, many

of the resources, especially the on-line ones, will be out of date. However, these two considerations—forms and resources—are relatively minor when the book is considered as a whole.

This book is an essential purchase for elementary schools that have (or are planning to have) author/illustrator visit programs. Although the focus is elementary, the general principles and the organizational information will be useful to secondary teacher-librarians.

### Premiere Events: Library Programs That Inspire Elementary School Patrons

Patricia Potter Wilson  
and Roger Leslie  
Libraries Unlimited, 2001  
ISBN 10: 1563087952  
ISBN 13: 9781563087950  
\$52.80

### Igniting the Spark: Library Programs that Inspire High School Patrons

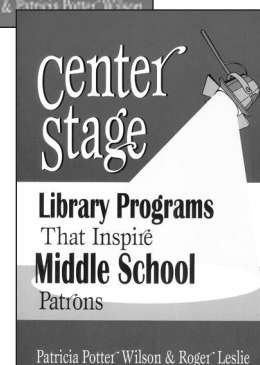
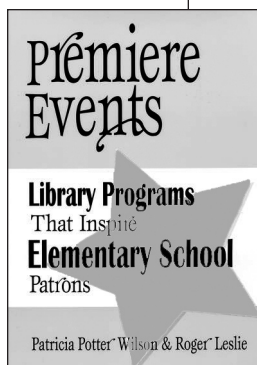
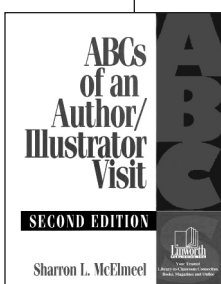
Roger Leslie and Patricia  
Potter Wilson  
Libraries Unlimited, 2001  
ISBN 10: 1563087979  
ISBN 13: 9781563087974  
\$52.73

Wilson and Leslie provide jam-packed guides to all sorts of library programs and cover everything from proposing the program to assessing its effectiveness. Each of the books covers various types of library programs, including exhibits and displays, featured speakers or entertainers, learning/interest centres, demonstrations, and media. The authors emphasize the importance of library programming and the fact that it's central to what we do, not an optional extra. Wilson and Leslie assure their readers that such programs are possible even with limited time, staff, resources, and budgets—and, to prove it, each book includes lots of anecdotes as well as several model programs.

These books will prove quite useful to teacher-librarians looking for inspiration and ideas, as well as the practical information necessary to bring those ideas

to life. Recommended for school library collections.

NOTE: There's also a middle school title by Wilson and Leslie, called *Center Stage: Library Programs That Inspire Middle School Patrons* (2002, ISBN 13: 9781563087967, \$50.16). This title was not available for review, but, based on the two I have read, teacher-librarians dealing with middle school students will likely find it useful.



# Biography: People (in the 920s) @ your library

“The Art of Biography  
is different from Geography.  
Geography is about Maps,  
But Biography is about Chaps.”

—Edmund Clerihew Bentley (1875–1956) *Biography for Beginners*

Experience teaches that gossip is a temptation that should be resisted, yet most people do find themselves drawn to stories about other human beings. A relatively safe and guiltless way to indulge this temptation is by reading biography. As the Victorian biographer Lytton Strachey wrote, “Discretion is not the better part of biography.” Who knows what secrets a biography will reveal? At least part of the attraction of biography is the way in which it describes either current or historical events as the experiences of individual human beings. Thomas Carlyle helped to explain this value of the genre in building an understanding of broader issues when he wrote, “History is the essence of innumerable biographies.” By reducing the complexities of history and other subjects to the actions of identifiable people, biographies sometimes make it easier for people to connect with the subjects about which they are reading.

Of course readers of biographies must have critical reading skills to recognize the limitations implicit in the telling of any person’s story. As Mark Twain warned in his autobiography, “Biographies are but the clothes and the buttons of the man—the biography of the man himself cannot be written.” Novelist Bernard Malamud’s skepticism about biography led him,

in *Dubin’s Lives*, to challenge its placement apart from novels and short stories: “The past exudes legend: one can’t make pure clay of time’s mud. There is no life that can be recaptured wholly; as it was. Which is to say that all biography is ultimately fiction.” Despite its limitations, biography remains a popular genre and it seems fitting that the 920 section of the library receive some special attention in an edition

of *The Teaching Librarian* dedicated to “people @ your library.” A few suggestions regarding resources and approaches to using biographies follow.

Elaine Fortune, a former CBE teacher-librarian, had students read biographies, then prepare introductions to the persons profiled as if they were introducing the person as a guest at a major event. Real life situation and application!

Linsey Hammond  
John McCrae Secondary School, Ottawa

Working in a secondary school library, I find the students’ choices of personalities for biography assignments both unpredictable and changeable. Therefore, we have tended not to purchase often expensive individual biographies, in favour of *Current Biography Yearbook* (ISBN 13: 9780824210748, H. W. Wilson Company, New York). Although admittedly American in focus, so are many of the personalities chosen by our students, who are influenced by American media. In the 2005 edition (my most recent) the selection ranges from Rachael Ray (television host and chef) to Tangerine Dream (German music group) to Tex Hall (president of the National Congress of American Indians) to Mos Def (musician) to

## Derrick Grose

Steve Fossett (businessman and adventurer) to Jennifer Doudna (Biochemist at Berkeley) and Duane Chapman (the bounty hunter “Dog”). At the back, the publishers provide a classification by profession (i.e. business, film, literature, philanthropy, science, social activism, etc.) which may help with assignments for specific courses such as Careers. There are also shorter obituaries for that year. The individual *Yearbooks* cost about \$160 US, but contain hundreds of sufficiently long articles, which are very well-researched and include primary source quotations, and a suggested readings list, and so can truly be considered an appropriate academic print research source.

My favourite and most invaluable resource for biographies is *The Dictionary of World Biography*. The Index is organized by Area of Achievement, Geographical Location, and Subject, which makes it a very useful resource. Students love this reference and use it regularly.

Karen Marsh

Teacher-Librarian

Glenforest Secondary School, Mississauga

**“Discretion is not the better part of biography.”—Lytton Strachey**

Pat Jerney

Teacher-Librarian

Henry Street High School, Whitby

## SCHOOL LIBRARY SEEN—A COMIC PERSPECTIVE

Callen Schaub



***“It makes for fast reading and speedy shelving.”***

# THE DAY of Facebook, You



In February 2007, Robert F. Hall Catholic Secondary School located in Caledon East faced widespread publicity surrounding the use of the Internet by certain students. It started out as an opportunity for students to vent about their principal. As more and more students logged on to the popular social networking site Facebook.com, the venting became vulgar.

The postings included sexually explicit, derogatory, and demeaning remarks about the principal. As a result of the cyberbullying, 11 male and female students of the school were suspended for up to eight days.

The school took the position that the postings violated the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board's Code of Conduct. It states that "using computer technology to communicate inappropriate, demeaning, harassing or threatening messages shall be subject to disciplinary action. Police may be contacted." The disciplinary action taken by the school

## Welcome to the world of cyberspace where the rules are changing rapidly.

attracted considerable controversy. Some students argued that because they sent comments from home computers and away from school property, they should not have been suspended.

In this new age of Internet technology, cyberbullying and harassment have been widespread among students from elementary to

university age. For example, a group of Pickering elementary students recently apologized for posting a video on YouTube mocking a schoolmate who had suffered a stroke. A 16-year-old student at Birchmount Park Collegiate Institute was recently suspended for creating a site on Facebook that targeted the school's vice-principal, using degrading and offensive language. This was part of an ongoing attempt to undermine the authority of the vice-principal.

Cyberbullying has been defined by educator Bill Belsey as the use of information and communication technologies, such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal Web sites, and defamatory on-line personal polling Web sites, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others.

Cyberbullying, like other forms of bullying, is about human relationships, power and control. Bullying is a form of aggression used from a position of power. The child who bullies is attempting to use power to control and cause distress to another. The child who is victimized may become trapped in a relationship in which he or she is being abused.

Young people are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unfamiliar to adults and away from their supervision. Cyberbullies can communicate their hurtful messages to a very wide audience with remarkable speed. Cyberbullies often do not take ownership for their actions, as it may be difficult to identify them and they do not fear being punished for their conduct.

A recent study conducted by the University of Calgary found one in four students in Grade 7 reported being a victim of cyberbullying. In her



# RK SIDE Tube and MySpace

Eric Roher

study, Professor Quing Li surveyed 177 students in two middle schools. She found that more than half (53%) of the students reported that they knew someone being harassed or intimidated on-line. Fifteen percent said that they bullied others using electronic communications tools. Recent studies reveal the following facts:

- ◆ 48 percent of Canadian students spend at least an hour a day surfing the World Wide Web;
- ◆ almost 60 percent of Canadian students use chat rooms and instant messaging;
- ◆ only 16 percent of students say they talk to their parents about what they do on-line;
- ◆ a 2004 British Columbia study of Grades 4 to 8 students found that 35 percent of students reported that they were threatened on-line.

From a school perspective, this may be a particularly difficult issue as, unlike physical bullying, cyber-threats are often sent anonymously and from home computers. And while cyberbullying can be as devastating as traditional forms of bullying, some students won't complain for fear that adults may overreact and the students will lose their mobile phone or computer privileges. In addition, victims of cyberbullying are afraid of reporting it, as they are fearful of possible reprisals and retaliation. They are afraid that the bullying will become worse if they report it.

## Prevention and Early Intervention

Principals, teachers, guidance counsellors, and teacher-librarians all share the responsibility of keeping our students safe from bullies. It is important for schools to educate students and

parents about the seriousness of cyberbullying. In this regard, teacher-librarians can take the lead in promoting curriculum-based, anti-bullying programs and ethical use of technology. These programs should focus on improving relations among members of the school community and creating a peaceful school culture. School council meetings, family literacy nights, and newsletters from the school and the school library can all support parents in understanding the problem and taking proactive steps to both protect and teach their children responsible on-line behaviour.

Software applications such as NetSupport (as described in the last issue of *The Teaching Librarian*) can help monitor students' communications while they are in school. Unfortunately, some of the most hateful messaging is done from home, and so it is important that teachers and teacher-librarians assist parents by noticing students who shy away from the computers, who seem withdrawn from their classmates, or who indicate that something is troubling them.

Excellent lessons and information on cyberbullying are available at:

- ◆ Media Awareness Network  
[www.media-awareness.ca](http://www.media-awareness.ca);
- ◆ Be Web Aware  
[www.bewebaware.ca](http://www.bewebaware.ca);
- ◆ Cyber Wise  
[www.cyberwise.ca](http://www.cyberwise.ca). ■

# cyberbullying in schools

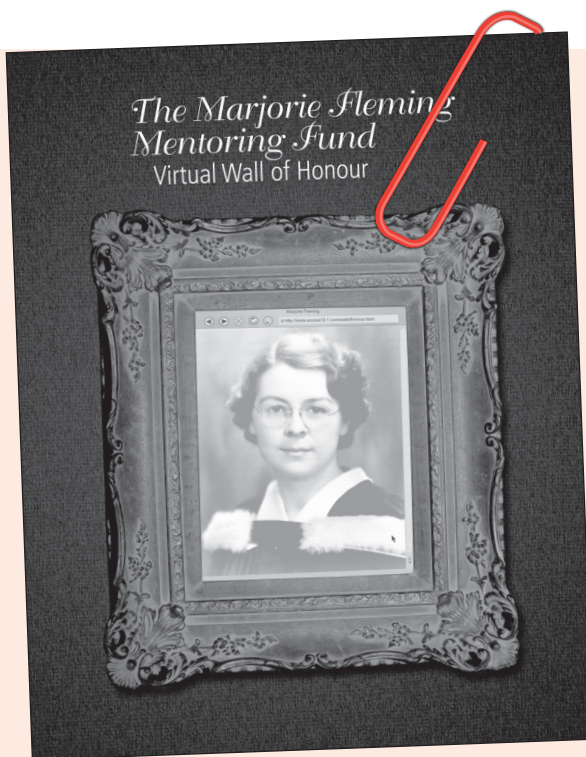
We stand on the shoulders of giants. Every experienced pro began as a “newbie,” needing guidance, support, and assistance. The Marjorie Fleming Mentoring Fund and Virtual Wall of Honour, found at [www.accessola.com/fleming](http://www.accessola.com/fleming) was created to pay homage to those who have helped us in our school library careers. We asked OSLA members to name persons who have influenced them and these are just some of the responses.

I'd have to nominate Gene Burdenuk—my first teacher of school librarianship and mentor. Although I haven't seen him for ages, I still hear his voice as I welcome classes into the library seminar room with an individual hello—just like he did to us each morning.

I entered the program at Althouse not knowing anything about school libraries, and thanks to his excellent teaching, I'm hitting year 20 in the library and year 27 in teaching. It has been a wonderful ride so far (a few bumps, of course) and I plan to keep on going until it stops being fun.

Frank Loreto  
St. Thomas Aquinas  
Secondary School,  
Brampton

Jo-Anne Laforty  
(Learning Resources  
Instructional Leader,  
Toronto District School  
Board) has been a  
tremendous mentor  
and role model for me  
in my nearly two-year



old library career. She's a cheerleader, a spark plug, and a personal delight. Time and again she's gone out of her way to make sure I have all the tools needed to succeed. She does this nitty-gritty work

seemingly effortlessly without ever taking her eye off the real job of inspiring and challenging us all to tackle the big responsibility of fostering critical thinking that lies at the heart of the job.

Jean Sonmor  
Don Mills Collegiate Institute, Toronto

I was fortunate to have had two former teachers as mentors when I first entered the school library profession. They both guided my early teaching years and to them I owe lasting thanks. Jean Vale was my Grade 12 English teacher at North Toronto Collegiate Institute who instilled in me a love of literature and the necessity for detailed analysis of a text. “Miss Vale” encouraged my writing and guided me to enrol in the University of Toronto for its scholarship and diversity. Jean later became a teacher-librarian of renown in the Toronto Board of Education, a formidable reviewer for

our libraries, and my colleague on many a Board committee and library project. Jean taught me to respect the power of a good theory and the warmth of a kind word.

Arthur Livingston  
was my Grade 13  
English teacher, also



at North Toronto. He was a man of mystery and surprises, whose old-school ways endeared us to him (girls by their first name, boys by their last!). He worked over my submissions to literary contests and later, after we had become friends and he was dying in hospital, insisted on reading and editing my latest school play written for my students at Western Technical-Commercial School. Arthur had also become a teacher-librarian of great rigour and flair. When he found out I had gone into school librarianship, he insisted that I do my practicum at his library, Monarch Park Collegiate Institute. On the day of my final evaluation he asked me to answer only one “culminating” question: “Tell me what you have taught ME these last two weeks.” Typical Arthur! A year after his death, I managed a fundraising project to honour him. Arthur now has a “living stone” in the forecourt of London’s Globe Theatre, next to Alan Bates and Sir Lawrence Olivier.

Timothy Gauntley  
Program Co-ordinator,  
Library & Learning Resources, TDSB, Toronto,

My mentor and role model as a teacher-librarian is Mr. Greg McPhee. Without his wisdom and sage advice, I would not be in this role today nor would I have ever considered taking this career path. Greg was an exemplary leader, teacher, and colleague to so many of us at Glenforest Secondary School. He taught us about the importance of resources, research, and readiness for the working world. Greg’s commitment to students, lifelong learning, and libraries will always resonate in these hallowed halls; indeed, his shoes are too big to fill.

Karen Marsh  
Glenforest Secondary School,  
Mississauga

Fay Blostein, former professor of librarianship at the University of Toronto, is by far the person who has influenced me most in my career as a teacher-librarian. She mesmerized me from the first day of my course in teacher librarianship at the Faculty of Education University of Toronto in 1970 as we sat in the science lab made over into a model library and listened to this passionate and intelligent woman talk about books and kids.

She both inspired and mentored me, as I took on my own new library in my second year teaching. Her vision is never far from my thoughts even today, 35 years later. I especially think of her when a student says to me, “this is the best book I have read” or, “I never read but this was pretty good.” Striving to achieve her vision in my libraries has given me a rich and rewarding career.

Judith Andersen  
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate, Ajax



IDEA FILE

# Between Boards: York Region Boards Unite, Find Strength in Numbers

Rob Baxter

*“I am the Library. I am neither walls nor shelves, nor even the books that stand in rows. I am the wisdom of the universe captured and I am an open door. Enter...”*

About 30 York Region teacher-librarians from both the Catholic and Public boards were greeted with these words, early on February 28th, when they walked into the St. Joan of Arc Catholic High School library for their first annual combined heads’ meeting.

Unique, perhaps the first of its kind in Ontario between the two school boards, this gathering came as a result of a four-year co-operative effort in the co-hosting of their White Pine Reading Celebration which includes all participants from both boards in what is now an annual event.

The advantages of this kind of joint venture were obvious to everyone: in addition to its informational and inspirational tone, it had the encouragement of the superintendents from both boards, Ms. Debra Cormier, York Catholic District School Board, and Mr. Bob Harper, York Region District School Board. Ms. Cormier spoke briefly about the value of this type of partnership and Mr. Harper

supported her view by emphasizing that, “The future belongs to optimists, to people who see opportunities before they become obvious.” Not only did these teacher-librarians share their ideas, they also committed themselves to working more closely together in future events of this kind.

One of the highlights of the day was a presentation given by Tim Gauntley, Program Co-ordinator, Library and Learning Resources, Toronto District School Board, who provided insight into the workings and design of TDSB’s award-winning Web site, Library and Learning Resources, [www.tdsb.on.ca/libraries/Links.asp?schoolNo=9](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/libraries/Links.asp?schoolNo=9).

Mr. Gauntley made a strong point for site simplification in an age where people are overwhelmed with the amount of knowledge and choice. “TDSB might have an exceedingly boring site, but it’s crystal clear. A site should be attractive, but is it necessary to reinvent it every five weeks?” And the design they wanted didn’t come without a struggle. “It’s





ows.  
arranged for you.

not promoted as a thing of beauty, but one of usefulness: it stays the same so students know where to look. It should have a *raison d'être* and be a pedagogical device, with kids being able to see the structure, the template," Mr. Gauntley pointed out. "It also incorporates some of the best quality sites, with an emphasis on Canada: Canada's Digital Collections, CBC Archives, Research Tool Kit, Career Paths, Knowledge Ontario...."

Kudos to Hetty Smeathers, teacher-librarian at St. Joan of Arc Catholic High School, for hosting the event, along with teacher-librarians Ann Cape, Markville Secondary School, and Sabine Sonneman, Keswick High School. Without their planning, organization, and dedication, this event would not have taken place. ■



# New Beginnings

Maria Ripley with Diana Maliszewski

*I have a confession to make. When I first heard that my children's school library was no longer run by a teacher-librarian, but instead by a library technician, I was disappointed.*

Who runs our province's school libraries? Does it matter? As the article by Glenn Turner in this issue indicates, there are many different service models in place throughout the province, with a mish-mash of staffing models. Staffing is a contentious issue and the manner in which the boards and some principals have historically handled school library personnel has unfortunately helped to create a rift between two groups that should be close allies. These two primary groups are teacher-librarians and library technicians.

What's in a name, and how do these two jobs differ? Each position has its own role and responsibility. Teacher-librarians are first and foremost teachers with a specialist in Librarianship. They provide comprehensive instruction in information literacy to students independently through classroom teaching or collaboratively with the classroom teacher. They choose appropriate materials that directly link to the Ministry of Education curriculum; they maintain library policies and manage library budgets. Library technicians have a two year college diploma and are trained to perform various hands-on tasks that include cataloguing and classifying of materials, data input to assist in acquiring print and nonprint materials, and circulation procedures. In a school library, a library technician would provide support to, and work in partnership with, the teacher-librarian to provide a harmonious welcoming library for all students.

*I work in a different board than the one in which my children are enrolled. At a parent council meeting, I offered to volunteer in the school library and the principal put me in touch with Ms. J, the library technician. She said she could use some help weeding the professional collection in the school library, as she was not familiar with the Ministry documents.*

*When I came in during part of a professional activity day, I was surprised to see the condition of the non-fiction shelves. "Don't the students borrow non-fiction books?" I asked. "Yes, they do quite a bit" she replied, "but I always fix the shelves after classes visit." The shelves would have made Melville Dewey proud; every single book*

*was in order and aligned precisely—this was a big contrast to my school library, with its untidy shelves (despite having student library helpers and a senior volunteer in once a week to help maintain order).*

## TL & LT, not TL vs LT

The distinction between the role of the teacher-librarian and library technician often gets blurred and disconnected. In some school library settings, especially elementary schools, budget cuts force the staffing component of the school library to be limited to one person. In many cases this is a library technician due to the lower salaries. Library technicians have the expertise to train and assist students, such as locating resources and one-on-one research assistance; however they should not be expected to teach a class information literacy skills as they are not qualified to teach under the Ontario College of Teachers' policy. At the same time, expecting teacher-librarians to maintain the school library collection to professional standards, all within the confines of the instructional day, is not feasible with all the other teaching responsibilities. While researching this article, we have heard of

many exceptions—of library technicians who do incredible things with the classes and students they see, and of teacher-librarians who keep immaculate shelves and pristine collections—but think of the possibilities, to paraphrase Rick DuFour, beyond “the tyranny of OR” into “the genius of AND”! With a divided focus, something has to give, and running a school library should not be a one-person task. *Achieving Information Literacy*, the Canadian School Library Association’s standards, states that an acceptable level of staffing in elementary schools with 300–499 students is 1.0 teacher-librarians and 1.0 clerical/technical staff.

A helpful analogy would be that of doctors and nurses in a hospital. Although each profession can do the work of the other, it is not often expected that the nurse would perform the duties of a doctor and vice-versa. Both professions are within the health sector and are trained differently for different purposes but the same goal. Hospital environments would not choose one profession over the other—both doctors and nurses work in harmony to provide the best service to their clients.

Cynics and realists are probably chuckling at this point in the article—how is this realistically possible, considering that having any qualified personnel in a school library is more of a gift than an expectation? Battling for the meagre placements and misunderstanding the roles of each profession has bred tension and antagonism. Teacher-librarians have worked so long to advocate for the position of teacher-librarian as library instructional leader that the advocacy inadvertently ignored other school library personnel who matter. Library technicians exist in a netherworld of being support staff but viewed in a different light than office administrators.

The OSLA has begun the reconciliation with changes to its by-laws. The new by-law wording states:

2. The objects of the Division are:
  - a. to further the development of school library programs and school libraries in Ontario,
  - b. to strengthen and unify the voice of teacher-librarians as curriculum leaders,
  - c. to work with the full library community on shared issues and programs,
  - d. to represent the profession of teacher-librarianship as a subject association

recognized by the Ontario Ministry of Education,

- e. to provide professional development opportunities for teacher-librarians and other qualified school library staff, and
- f. to promote research related to effective school libraries.

The second point clearly delineates the role of teacher-librarian as curriculum providers. The fifth point explicitly includes individuals such as library technicians. For the purposes of this article, we focused on library technicians not to exclude other library service providers but to reflect the most common working situation in Ontario school libraries.

Both teacher-librarians and library technicians need to work together, instead of being critical of each other. Some secondary school libraries are models of what is possible when teacher-librarians and library technicians work together. A library technician in York Catholic District School Board reported that “At the secondary level the relationship between the teacher-librarian/library technician I feel is more successful because they both work together everyday as the position is full-time for both of them.” Yes, money is tight, but if both sides keep giving the key message, that both teacher-librarians and library technicians are necessary for a fantastic school library, then like waves on a rock, eventually resistance will be worn away and changes will occur. It may take years, but it is worth the wait. Can a teacher-librarian buddy up with a library technician to exchange services—not as a master and servant relationship, but as equal partners sharing tools and assisting with operations? We think it is possible... let’s think outside the box! Begin with mutual respect and take it from there.

*A few weeks after my visit to my children’s school library, I received a phone call from Ms. J. She wanted to reciprocate and offered to come to my school to help reinvigorate my messy shelves that I had complained about when I compared them to her pristine, immaculate ones. She came and it was wonderful. It just felt... right. I was able to concentrate on my lessons while she shelf-read and managed to put the shelves into order. Both tasks benefited the students—having resources organized made finding needed resources possible, and having lessons on how to use the resources with a critical eye made learning relevant skills possible. ■*



# Inviting

# Guests into the Library

Wendy D'Angelo

**T**here are many benefits to inviting guests into the school library. Foremost, it allows teacher-librarians to create innovative collaborative partnerships with teachers focusing on the curriculum. It also gives teacher-librarians a unique forum to promote the library program. Inviting an author, illustrator, musician, dancer, actor/actress, artist, or historian into the library provides an authentic learning opportunity for students, which may not be available elsewhere.

The following six steps will help you create a successful guest visit to your school library.

## STEP 1: Brainstorming

Teachers and administrators need to be involved in the planning process in order to feel a sense of ownership. A brainstorming session focusing on funding, school initiatives, classroom themes, or divisional units should take place. This initial discussion will give the teacher-librarian a variety of guest options to pursue.

## STEP 2: Book Guest

Teacher-librarians are usually bombarded by promotional program flyers. Word of warning: you should book a library guest through a professional organization such as *Prologue to the Performing Arts*, *Arts Jam*, *Mariposa in the Schools*, *Canadian Children's Book Centre*, or *the Children's Book Council*, or get a reference before booking someone relatively unknown. Guests must be booked months in advance to avoid disappointment. Enquire about special arrangements for a larger audience or special themes geared towards your school's needs. Set the date and time of visit, the size and grade levels of the target audience, ask for permission to record

and photograph the visit, arrange payment, and give precise directions for getting to your school.

## STEP 3: Teacher and Teacher-Librarian Collaboration

Collaboration with teachers is essential to ensure students are prepared for the event. Preparation may be as simple as having the teacher share a read aloud novel with his or her class before the author visit, or having the teacher-librarian giving an introductory lesson on the life and works of the upcoming guest. A simple introductory lesson will insure students are focused during the presentation and ask thoughtful questions.

## STEP 4: Promotion

The guest visit to the library must be promoted within the school and outside the school. Internal promotion includes bulletin board and book displays in the library, posters in the hallways, morning announcements, and school assemblies. Creative promotion ideas can help build excitement for the special event. The local community newspaper can also be a great tool for promoting an event.

*"Tell me and I forget.  
Show me and I remember.  
Involve me and I understand."*

—Chinese Proverb





## STEP 5: Setup

The guest must be contacted a few weeks before the scheduled visit to verify last-minute details, such as the need for special equipment (a laptop, for example, a microphone, or to request student assistants). A student representative should also be chosen in advance to thank the guest officially after the presentation.

## STEP 6: Follow-Up

Just as important as any of the other steps in the planning process, the library guest should be sent a thank-you letter written by the teacher-librarian, students, or principal. Guests also appreciate receiving copies of photos to keep as a record of the event. Students and teachers should be encouraged to reflect on the visit and share responses with the teacher-librarian. Feedback can be included in the library monthly report. Don't forget to submit an article highlighting your guest visit in the parent's monthly newsletter.

Here is a list of some exceptional guests invited to school libraries.

**Medieval Man at Arms—Peter Hurley**  
Anna Farquhar, teacher-librarian at Southwood Park P.S., Durham Board writes,  
*"Peter Hurley makes history come to life when he comes in, dressed in armour. He spends some time explaining what life was like during this time in history and then students are encouraged to handle a variety of weapons and armour he brings in with him. My Grade four classes enjoyed learning about the life and times of medieval people, but mostly they really enjoyed handling the weapons and shields. Mr. Hurley will be returning to our school as a Roman Centurion later in May."*

**Authors—Michael Wade, Mireille Messier, Eric**

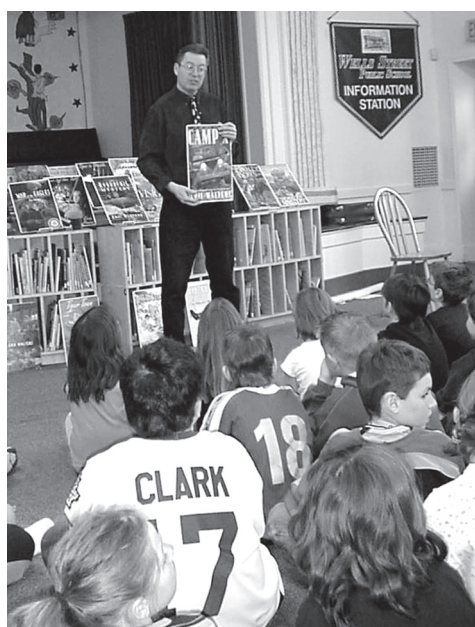
Walters, Shane Peacock.

Coleen Power, teacher-librarian at R. H. Cornish P.S., Port Perry writes,

*"Michael Wade, author of the series 'And Then It Happened,' is an excellent author for both boys and girls in Grades 3–6. His presentation was really engaging, and he made a killing selling his books after the presentation. Each chapter relates funny pranks children can relate to."*

**Musician—Mike Ford**

Mike Ford is a composer-songwriter who teaches Canadian History through song. He highlighted the fact that there are many points of view on historical events, just like there are many styles of songs. He grabbed the students' attention with Stompin' Tom Connor's ([www.stompintom.com/](http://www.stompintom.com/)) version of *The Good Old Hockey Game* and proceeded to sing us songs about Jacques Cartier, the fur trade, and Nova Scotia's Oak Island. He's hilarious and junior and intermediate students will love him. ■



*Eric Walter's discussing his novel Camp X with junior students at Wells Street Public School, York Region District School Board*

# Anybody home?

## Who's really left in Ontario's schools?

**A**lmost every school in Ontario has a library, but, as we know, that doesn't always mean that there's someone behind the counter.

Our thoughts about school library staffing are probably mixed. On the one hand, we're all aware that teacher-librarians and library technicians have been hard-hit by budget cutbacks over the past fifteen years. On the other hand, we—or some of us, at least—still have jobs. What is the actual situation? Who's really left in school libraries?

To get a better picture of how Ontario's school libraries are actually staffed, I called every school board in the province over the 2006–2007 school year. The results are not cause for celebration, but neither are they as apocalyptic as I had feared. Teacher-librarians and library

technicians do still exist in Ontario's schools, though we could wish that they were more prominent.

Some notes about the data. Firstly, School Authorities and First Nations schools are not included. Secondly, the Byzantine complexities of staffing have been reduced to a very simplistic “part-time,” “full-time” or “mix of p/t and f/t.” Thirdly, the numbers of teacher-librarian positions quoted include both part-time and full-time positions, and in at least two cases are approximations. It was difficult to gather exact data from some boards. Lastly, I am not a trained statistician, and my conclusions are therefore unquestionably open to dispute.

Even with its limitations, this survey still provides more information about the school library staffing policies of individual boards than has been previously available. I hope that it will prove useful.

**Table 1 Number of boards with teacher-librarians, by system and panel**

	Public Boards		Separate Boards	
	Boards with Teacher-Librarians	Percentage of Public Boards (%)	Boards with Teacher-Librarians	Percentage of Separate Boards (%)
Elementary	20	57	8	22
Secondary	26	74	21	57

**Table 2 Number of teacher-librarian positions (part- or full-time), by panel**

	Teacher-Librarian Positions
Elementary	2147
Secondary	631
Total	2778

### Numbers

Teacher-librarians are a threatened species perhaps, but they are definitely not extinct. As Table 1 shows, a healthy 74% of public school boards in Ontario still hire teacher-librarians in the secondary panel, though this drops to 57% in the case of the elementary panel. Catholic boards do not fare as well, with just over half of them using teacher-librarians in high schools, and fewer than a quarter of them placing teacher-librarians in elementary schools.

There are 2778 teacher-librarian jobs in Ontario right now. This number includes both part-time and full-time positions, which makes it difficult to compare the number of teacher-librarians with the total number of teachers in the province, but it is safe to say that it is less than 1%. As a subgroup within Ontario's teachers, we barely register. Elementary teacher-librarian

# hool libraries?

Glenn Turner

positions outnumber secondary positions by three to one, mostly because there are more elementary schools (it must be remembered that most of these positions are part-time).

## Staffing formulas

If they staff school libraries at all, most boards do so according to the population of the individual school. In some cases, they follow the Ministry formula of 1.0 Full Time Equivalent/909 students or some other arbitrary formula (1.3 FTE/1000 students, for example). This leads to a wide range of staffing situations within schools, particularly at the elementary level, where numbers rarely warrant a full-time position. The status of a teacher-librarian position in the elementary panel can dip as low as .1 (which represents one half-day a week).

Secondary schools are far more likely than elementary schools to be staffed with full-time teacher-librarians. This is sometimes due to a formula being applied to a larger high school population, but some boards do have a set policy of creating full-time positions in secondary school libraries. A very small number of boards actually supply more than a 1.0 FTE to their high school libraries, so that there is no question of the library closing during the teacher-librarian's prep time.

And then, of course, there are the boards that employ no teacher-librarians at all. If we look at the elementary panel, well over half of Ontario school boards (44 out of 72) have no teacher-librarians, not even for a half-day a week. Some boards are defensive about this situation, one director of education remarking to me that the lack of teacher-librarians was "a red herring," because the board put

a lot of other staff into the schools "for literacy." In most cases, the rationale seems strictly financial—money that could have been used for teacher-librarian salaries has simply been used elsewhere.

I found examples of many different models that boards are using to keep their school libraries functional without actually paying teacher-librarians. In some cases, cheaper "professional" librarians without teaching experience have been hired. In other cases, one teacher-librarian is responsible for several schools, or a department head serves as teacher-librarian in name only while a technician runs the shop. In at least one board, school libraries are entirely staffed and run by volunteers.

## Technical support

As with teacher-librarian jobs, full-time library technician positions tend to be a secondary school phenomenon. The vast majority of positions overall are part-time with a typical range of .2 to .5 per school.

Table 3 Status of teacher-librarians, by panel

	No Teacher-Librarians	Part-Time Teacher-Librarians Only	Mix of Part- and Full-time Teacher-Librarians	Full-Time Teacher-Librarians Only
Elementary	44	10	16	2
Secondary	25	3	15	29

Table 4 Number of Boards with library technicians, by status

	No Library Technicians	Part-Time Technicians Only	Mix of Part- and Full-Time Technicians	Full-Time Technicians Only
Elementary	32	22	18	0
Secondary	21	9	15	27

	full-time
	mix of part- and full-time
	part-time

Board	teacher-librarian positions in elementary panel	Status of elementary teacher-librarians	teacher-librarian positions in secondary panel	Status of secondary teacher-librarians	Status of elementary library technicians	Status of secondary library technicians
Algoma	0	N/A	8			
Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic	0	N/A	7			N/A
Avon Maitland	0	N/A	6			
Bluewater	0	N/A	11		N/A	N/A
Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic	0	N/A	3			
Bruce-Grey Catholic	0	N/A	1			
Catholic Eastern Ontario	0	N/A	10		N/A	
Catholique Centre-Sud	0	N/A	0	N/A		
Catholique de l'Est	0	N/A	7		N/A	
Catholique des Aurores boréales	0	N/A	0	N/A		
Catholique des Grandes Rivières	0	N/A	0	N/A		
Catholique du Centre-Est	0	N/A	6			
Catholique du Nouvel-Ontario	0	N/A	1		N/A	
Catholique du Sud-Ouest	0	N/A	0	N/A		
Catholique Franco-Nord	0	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	
Centre-Sud-Ouest	0	N/A	0	N/A		
Dufferin-Peel Catholic	80		23			
Durham	105		23		N/A	N/A
Durham Catholic	44		7		N/A	N/A
Ecoles publiques de l'Est	0	N/A	0	N/A		
Grand Erie	67		15		N/A	
Grand Nord	0	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Greater Essex County	64		15		N/A	N/A
Halton	76		15			
Halton Catholic	0	N/A	0	N/A		N/A
Hamilton-Wentworth	100		18		N/A	
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic	37		7		N/A	N/A
Hastings and Prince Edward	5		8			
Huron-Perth Catholic	0	N/A	2			N/A
Huron-Superior Catholic	0	N/A	0	N/A		
Kawartha Pine Ridge	81		16			
Keewatin-Patricia	0	N/A	0	N/A		
Kenora Catholic	0	N/A	0	N/A		
Lakehead	0	N/A	4			
Lambton Kent	55		7		N/A	N/A
Limestone	0	N/A	11		N/A	

**Table 5 School library staffing policies, by board**

Predictably, there is evidence of boards saving money by hiring library technicians instead of expensive teacher-librarians. In the elementary panel for instance, out of 44 boards that do not use teacher-librarians, 29 of them do hire library technicians. However, there

are significant numbers of boards that either employ both teacher-librarians and technicians (15 out of 44), or employ neither (11 out of 28). This suggests that it is not simply a question of money. Some boards are committed to school libraries, and some are not.



Board	Teacher-librarian positions in elementary panel	Status of elementary teacher-librarians	Teacher-librarian positions in secondary panel	Status of secondary teacher-librarians	Status of elementary library technicians	Status of secondary library technicians
London District Catholic	0	N/A	0	N/A		
Near North	1		1			
Niagara	99		0	N/A	N/A	
Niagara Catholic	0	N/A	0	N/A		
Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic	0	N/A	1		N/A	
Nord-Est	0	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	
Northeastern Catholic	0	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	
Northwest Catholic	0	N/A	0	N/A		N/A
Ontario North East	10		0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ottawa Carleton Catholic	0	N/A	14			
Ottawa-Carleton	0	N/A	25			
Peel	191		35		N/A	
Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic	0	N/A	6			
Rainbow	0	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	
Rainy River	0	N/A	1		N/A	
Renfrew County	0	N/A	7		N/A	N/A
Renfrew County Catholic	0	N/A	2		N/A	N/A
Simcoe County	91		23		N/A	N/A
Simcoe Muskoka Catholic	42		9		N/A	N/A
St Clair Catholic	0	N/A	0	N/A		
Sudbury Catholic	0	N/A	1		N/A	
Superior North Catholic	0	N/A	0	N/A		N/A
Superior-Greenstone	0	N/A	0	N/A		
Thames Valley	157		30		N/A	N/A
Thunder Bay Catholic	16		2		N/A	
Toronto	420		105		N/A	
Toronto Catholic	60		40			N/A
Trillium Lakelands	43		7			
Upper Canada	1		20			
Upper Grand	52		11		N/A	
Waterloo Catholic	0	N/A	0	N/A		N/A
Waterloo Region	5		16			N/A
Wellington Catholic	16		3		N/A	
Windsor-Essex Catholic	0	N/A	0	N/A		
York Catholic	81		13			
York Region	148		28			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2147</b>		<b>631</b>			

Notes for Table 5

- ◆ “part-time,” “full-time” and “mix” refer to status within each individual school
- ◆ N/A may mean that these positions are not staffed or that there are no schools in that panel

### Staffing policies board by board

The final Table makes clear the staggering differences between Ontario’s school districts. Toronto has 420 elementary teacher-librarian positions while, at the other end of the province, Kenora Catholic has none. Simcoe

County has full-time teacher-librarians in both panels, making it unique in the province, while Nord-Est has no one except for part-time library technicians in one panel. Every board has found its own approach to school library staffing, and every board is different. ■

Some rather interesting characters populate graphic novels, and the readers who gobble them up are just as unique and quirky. The people I want to focus on in this article are the nay-sayers and nail-biters—the school library personnel who are reluctant to bring graphic novels into their collections, and/or the school staff or community members who would gladly see a modern version of the Comics Code of 1954 re-established and rigorously enforced. There are many reasons why people object to graphic novels in school libraries. The following are two of the most common complaints surrounding graphic novels and my somewhat tongue-in-cheek responses, peppered with some references to my favourite series.



**Complaint #1:** There's too much sex! Comics objectify women! There's nudity!

**Response:** Not all breasts are created equal.

I heard a true tale about a librarian who took a black marker and blocked out all the exposed nipples in the books in his collection. A colleague of mine dislikes any sign of cleavage or any particularly buxom females. There's no denying that some genres have very curvaceous characters. This is partly a result of supply and demand. Not all graphic novels are meant for young people. Some graphic novels are also meant to appeal to a wide audience, ergo the skimpy outfits or innuendo that the younger readers may not get. The presence of a bare breast or tight sweater does not necessarily equal sex. Breasts don't always equal titillation (forgive the pun). Some versions of the story *The Little Mermaid* have topless heroines, because not all mermaids have seashell bras. Japanese culture often uses its tradition of the communal baths as a source of humour, with characters accidentally getting glimpses of members of the opposite sex disrobed.

My personal favourite

manga series is *Ranma 1/2* by Rumiko Takahashi. I own all 36 volumes! It is the saga of Ranma Saotome, a teenage martial artist with a rather unfortunate "disability": when he is splashed with cold water, he transforms into a girl! Hot water reverses the change. Ranma's father Genma (who is also similarly afflicted, except he turns into a panda) has arranged for Ranma to marry Akane Tendo, the youngest daughter of his friend and fellow martial artist Soun Tendo. This is a zany, over-the-top, action-filled romp, with a huge cast of bizarre characters. There is a lot of "boob humour" stemming from ill-timed conversions in *Ranma 1/2*. Most of it is silly rather than sexy—there are bare breasts, but no genitals are seen. Ranma comments on his own voluptuous figure (comparing himself favourably to his less-endowed fiancée) and gets smacked for it. Things take a more adult spin on the hijinx whenever the character of Happosai (Happy), who is first introduced in volume 6, appears in the story. The anime version of *Ranma 1/2* plays on North American television stations, but it is a much more toned-down version than the manga—the few episodes that I have seen did not have any nudity in them.

The publisher, Viz Media, recommends a rating of T+ for older teens, and I'd have to agree. I would deem *Ranma 1/2* to be suitable for a high school audience. Having said that, I know of a couple of students in my elementary school who have borrowed copies of *Ranma 1/2* from the public library and loved it. When I've talked to them and to their parents about it, they say that they discovered the series from older siblings, "tune out" the nudity, and are very open with their parents about what they are reading. To paraphrase one of my otaku: "I won't go grabbing girls just because I saw it in *Ranma 1/2*."

This highlights two challenges for people who are happy with graphic novels and wish to carry them in their collections:

- ◆ sometimes a series may change direction after several volumes and veer towards an older audience base
- ◆ students see the Westernized anime versions on TV and expect that the manga will be the same

*Kare Kano*, *Naruto*, and *Inu Yasha* are three other examples of quality manga that, for good or for ill, have a young anime fan base which would not suit the written version.

I believe that graphic novels are worth the

“risk.” Chat with your enthusiastic comic readers to see how a series is progressing. Read reviews. Consult your friendly neighbourhood comic expert for advice.

**Complaint #2:** There’s too much violence! Comics glorify gore and war! There are weapons! **Response:** It depends on “the who” and “the how.”

North American audiences seem to be bothered more by sex than by violence, but there are some graphic novels that do garner a lot of attention for their apparently excessive violence—ironically, it is some of these (*V for Vendetta*, *Sin City*, *300*) that have been turned into movies. I would state that there are different kinds of violence. Violence against a monster is different from human on human violence, and is less objectionable in my eyes. Violence that matches the settings in which it occurs makes more sense than random scenes that serve no plot function. We expect that, in a pirate novel, a character would use a sword or, in a science fiction novel, a character might fire a laser gun. Some of the violence may occur off-screen “in the gutters” (a “gutter” is the term for the space between panels in a

comic). Finally, the comic production impacts the perception of violence—as my students have said “when it’s in black and white, it’s not so bad, because it’s hard to tell where the blood is.”

*Beet The Vandel Buster* is another guilty pleasure of mine. In this series, monsters called Vandels roam the world causing havoc. Beet is a young guy who idolizes a group of Vandel Busters called the Zenon Warriors and wishes to be a Buster like them. In volume 1, a powerful Vandel apparently destroys the team while they attempt to save Beet’s life—Beet ends up absorbing all the powers of their saiga (weapons). The storyline is all about how Beet gains allies and battles various beasts in his quest to rid the entire world of Vandels. As you might expect, the fight scenes are frequent. My adult graphic novel club had a very energetic discussion about the violence in this book. Personally, I did not find the violence as disturbing because they were monsters fighting humans. A few scenes of human suffering (e.g. in volume 1, Beet is nearly killed and in volume 10, a human is used by a Vandel as a living shield) emphasizes the cruelty of the Vandels. I would say that this series would be appropriate for

grade 5 and up, although my colleagues have suggested it would be better suited for grades 6 or 7 and up.

There’s something for everyone in the library, but not everything in the library is good for everybody. It all boils down to your professional, unbiased judgment, the needs of your patrons, the general response of your community when you are trying to determine how far to go, and what is (and what isn’t) acceptable or worthy. Just as we shouldn’t shy away from controversial novels, their graphic cousins should not be outlawed by the nail-biters and nay-sayers.



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**O**n May 9, 2007, approximately 300 York Region high school students, teacher-librarians, and superintendents from both the Catholic and Public school boards gathered for the Fifth Annual White Pine Celebration, the literary event of the season.

The highlights of the day's activities were writers Teresa Toten, author of *Me And The Blondes*, and John Wilson, author of *Four Steps to Death*, neither of whom had any problem catching and holding the attention of the entire audience.

Ms. Toten read excerpts and re-enacted parts of her novel, complete with dramatic accents,

while Mr. Wilson spoke in a more impromptu manner, weaving in stories of his life and family as part of his writing process. Speaking easily and freely after Ms. Toten, Mr. Wilson admitted that he wished he'd read a book like *Me And The Blondes* when he was growing up to help him understand girls a bit better in high school. He was also surprised that a few of the girls confided to him afterwards that they'd never before read a book about war, but enjoyed his book thoroughly.

In addition to writing his award-winning books, Mr.

Wilson handles all his own promotion before and after publication without an agent, keeping up a busy schedule which often takes him away weeks at a time from his home and family in Lantzville (Nanaimo), British Columbia. Teenagers across North America are now his biggest fans, but he readily admits that he didn't much like school himself.

**Rob:** One of your interviews mentions that you are an historical fiction writer, and a Renaissance man, meaning that you "probably earn enough money to have lived comfortably in sixteenth-century Florence." How else would you describe yourself in twenty-first century Canada?

**John:** As a "hidden immigrant" from Scotland, I continually miss Europe, but know if I went back to live there, I would continually miss Canada. There should be an island in the middle of the Atlantic for those like me. Similarly, I live in the 21st century, but continually miss living in the 19th, or almost any other one for that matter, but know that if I were suddenly transported then, I would miss now.

**Rob:** When you first start a novel, do you have a specific audience in mind?

**John:** Yes, very specific. I write the books that I wanted to read as a kid. The reader sitting on my shoulder is me at 12.

**Rob:** What kinds of historical figures and events attract you the most?



# John Wilson



# Meet the Author

**John:** I am attracted to historical figures who realize there are no easy answers, yet still pursue a goal that they believe in. Most of my fictional characters spend their books discovering that life is much more complex than they thought at first. The people to fear are those who KNOW that they are right, regardless of whether they are or not.

As for historical events, I am fascinated by those that put people under stress, Arctic exploration, war, etc. I am interested in the extremes of human behaviour, good and bad, and situations that give participants no time to think, just react, let us see those extremes.

**Rob:** For the sake of our budding young writers in the audience, could you describe a little of the research process you go through before you start writing? What was the process you went through for writing *Four Steps To Death*? Why the Battle of Stalingrad, in particular? Have you ever visited Russia?

**John:** The last question is the easiest. No, I have never visited Russia other than through the pages of books. I think Stalingrad because it was so huge and all encompassing. It was almost like an entire war on its own and it was a struggle, to the bitter end, between utter fanatics.

My research is mostly secondary, books and the Internet, although I have done some primary archival research, primarily for my books on Sir John Franklin

and *And in the Morning*, I spent a week at the Imperial War Museum in London, reading the soldiers' letters from 1914–15. However, I had been reading books on the First World War since I was the age of the audience I was writing for. You could say that I had been researching *And in the Morning* for 35 years.

However I do my research, I feel it is vital to give a sense of the time I am writing about, thus the reading of letters written during the time I am researching. The language does not have to be rigorously authentic, but it must convince the reader that what he is reading is appropriate to the time.

The Internet, with all its shortcomings, is an invaluable tool for discovering details. For example, where else could I easily discover what it was like inside Conrad's Panzer Mark IV in *Four Steps to Death*?



Watch for an interview with Teresa Toten in a future issue of The Teaching Librarian.

**Rob:** What was it like to live in Zimbabwe at the time of the civil war there?

**John:** Interesting! One thing it gave me, which comes out in many of my books, is a sense of how readily we adapt to extreme circumstances. Before Zimbabwe, I never really understood how or why people put up with the hardships of war, exploration, etc. While I was in the country, I adapted because it was the sensible thing to do. For example, I carried a gun on geology fieldwork, never stood before an uncurtained window at night—it still makes me nervous. It was only afterwards, that I realized what a strange and stressful situation it had been. As a result, many of my characters, especially the younger ones, Greta, in *Flames of the Tiger*, and Sergei, in *Four Steps to Death*, adapt remarkably well, if not particularly healthily, to the extreme circumstances they find themselves in.

**Rob:** You were born on the Isle of Skye, and now live on the “left coast” of Canada, on Vancouver Island. Is it just a coincidence that you’ve chosen another island as your current residence? Is there something in particular that attracts you about living on an island?

**John:** Actually, I was born in Edinburgh and moved to Skye when I was 3 months old, but the question still stands. No particular attraction to an island, and certainly not the ferries, but I do have an attraction for the ocean and coasts. I loved living on the prairies, the clear air, the openness, but I did miss the sea.

**Rob:** Who is your favourite author and why?

**John:** George Orwell. I admire his rigorous honesty and commitment to a certain worldview. His writing too, especially in his essays, is superb. It reads as if it’s simple and easy to do, but try it. It’s much harder than a lot of the flashy, word acrobatics that are being lauded today.

For more information on John Wilson and his books, try the following blog: [www.johnwilson-author.blogspot.com](http://www.johnwilson-author.blogspot.com)

**Rob:** What or who has been one of the greatest influences in your life?

**John:** Obviously, Orwell, for his worldview as well as his writing. More personally,

a history teacher I had in high school. I still vividly remember some of the lessons he gave back in the 60s, and the excitement I felt at hearing the stories he made come alive. He’s still alive and lives in Scotland. I found him through Google after I dedicated *Battle Scars* to him.

**Rob:** Do you use a word processor in your writing, and if so, do you use a spell-check?

**John:** I do use a word processor and I do use spell-check, although with reservations. It’s wonderful at picking up my bad typing habits such as putting “teh” for “the” and I use it to standardize US–British spelling since different publishers have different requirements. I wouldn’t be caught dead using a grammar checker, though.

**Rob:** What was (or were) your favourite place(s) on your trip around the world?

**John:** Everywhere, but that’s a cheap answer. India was special because of the connection with my parents, but basically I love anywhere that has a good collection of ruins to rummage around in. ■

*And true to his words, Mr. Wilson, his wife, and one of his daughters will be spending part of the summer in Languedoc (the south of France), exploring the ancient sites of Béziers, Montségur, and Carcassonne, doing research for a novel on the Cathars, a religious sect from the Middle Ages.*



# Central Support—The Often Unsung Heroes

Lisa Weaver

**W**orking in school boards means many of us have the privilege of receiving some form of central support. In some boards this means direct support from a superintendent; in other boards it means having access to a wide variety of people including consultants, centrally assigned teacher-librarians, staff in resource libraries, and central technical service teams. In some cases there are formal relationships and in other cases there are informal alliances that work to achieve common purposes.

Even though these people are not always @ your library, they are available to provide program and technical services and support via phone and e-mail. Whether your central support team is one sympathetic person or an entire dedicated team, everyone contributes to supporting student success. Where there are central support teams in place, teacher-librarians are able to focus on instruction because they have

assistance with time-consuming tasks such as handling videos, distributing novel sets and kits, cataloguing collections, creating professional development programs, organizing book fairs, and advocating for library programs.

Many different provincial organizations represent central support teams—OSLA, TALCO, ECCO, and OALT—just to name a few. *The Teaching Librarian* writes to support the professional sharing of knowledge among all those passionate about libraries and that's why in this issue of *The Teaching Librarian*—People @ your library—we felt it was important to recognize these people @ your library and thank them for their continued support. Their expertise, passion, and genuine willingness to work with teacher-librarians to find solutions to everyday challenges and plan for the future is a reflection of the important role of teacher-librarians and the teams with which they work in our schools. ■

## WHAT'S NEW AT

## *The OLAStore*★



### **Understanding Manga and Anime**

9781591583325 Libraries Unlimited Robin E. Brenner July 2007 \$52.80

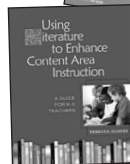
Learn the basics and gain fresh insights for programming ideas. This book is chock full of checklists and sidebars highlighting key points, and the background information to feel confident selecting and advocating manga and anime collections.



### **School Reform and the School Library Media Specialist**

9781591584278 Libraries Unlimited Sandra Hughes-Hassell and Violet H. Harada August 2007 \$52.80

Readers will be able to: identify current school reform efforts; understand the role of the school library media specialist in school reform; and adapt strategies for participating in school reform to their educational settings by acting as change agents. Grades K-12.



### **Using Literature to Enhance Content Area Instruction: A Guide for K-5 Teachers**

9780872076006 International Reading Association Rebecca Olness 2007 \$32.93

Building on the success of *Using Literature to Enhance Writing Instruction: A Guide for K-5 Teachers*, this is a practical resource that focuses on integrating literacy and content area instruction. Extensive annotated bibliographies of children's literature organized by topic and grade level help to quickly identify high-quality books for all learners.



### **Understanding and Using Reading Assessment K-12**

9780872075856 International Reading Association Peter Afflerbach July 2007 \$38.21

This indispensable resource will help you make quick, informed assessment decisions as you link assessment with curriculum and standards. Learn how to assess a variety of outcomes and accommodate the development of learners in the reading assessment process.



# VOLUNTEERS

*making your job more manageable*

## Julie Walter

**H**ow many times have you thought that you've just got too much to do in the school library information centre? We've all been there. School library budgets seem to be shrinking, while the demands on our time are increasing. How can we possibly succeed given these conditions, you may ask? I have found a way.

I recently took over a school library from a retiring teacher, and my current position is a 30% replacement. Without much time in the library, I've been forced to look creatively for help. I can honestly say that I could not have survived this year without my two dedicated library volunteers.

Library volunteers are a way to help satisfy the demands made on your library and, more importantly, maintain your sanity. By no means do I wish to suggest that library volunteers replace paid staff, but given the difficult situations many of us are in, they provide much needed relief from a number of daily tasks

*Volunteers at the Forest of Reading® Celebration in May, helped the 4000 students have an amazing day* (McCune Nelson, 50). When we're able to free up time spent on more repetitive jobs, we come closer to succeeding in our primary goal: educating children. Increased customer service is a good sign, even in a school library environment (McCune Nelson, 51).

## Getting Volunteers

A variety of potential volunteer groups exist, the main ones being high school students needing volunteer hours, parents or caregivers of students attending your school, as well as retired people who would like to give back to their community.

Talk to people you know, and mention that you're looking for volunteers to help you. You never know where that news will spread. Personal connections can go a long way. To capture those possible volunteers in your school community, write an ad for your library and school newsletters, and/or Web sites. Make it eye-catching, more like a job description than a passive request for help ("Getting Help," 1). By treating the position seriously, you give the impression that it's meaningful work from the start. You might also consider hanging posters in the area, or placing an ad in the local paper (McCune, 40). Visits to local senior citizen homes and recreation centres might also get results.

By maintaining positive relationships with current volunteers, and providing them with positive experiences in the workplace, you can ensure they'll most likely talk it up to others they know. The more positive talk generated about your library, the better. Your current volunteers might just be your best recruiters. Word-of-mouth advertising is always the best.

Just like hiring for a job, you have the right to be choosy about whom you invite to work with you. Fewer, but more dedicated, volunteers can help streamline management demands. Criminal background checks for all volunteers working with children are now mandatory. Other considerations include insurance coverage and potential union conflicts, so consult your school board and union about volunteer policies.





## Managing Volunteers

Most of my limited time in the library is spent managing my two amazing volunteers. It takes a lot of time, but cuts down on my work in the long run. I learned quickly that volunteers need to feel like part of a team. Demonstrate tasks for your volunteers. Working side by side goes a long way to making them feel important. Mutual respect and a co-operative climate foster a good working relationship, with flexibility as key in maintaining a positive atmosphere. Be willing to get to know your volunteers and have fun with them.

Little things, like a space where volunteers can keep their belongings, will make them feel more welcome, as well as comforts like tea, coffee, and a few snacks to help them through more repetitive tasks.

New volunteers must be trained well, so teach them the basics of how the library operates, including the rules and procedures (Smallwood, 24). Give them time to ease into their new position with a couple of weeks of easy jobs. You could start with careful coaching on how to shelve books, and don't be afraid to shelve with them in the beginning stages. Not only will you get to know them better, but you can catch and correct any mistakes they might make: Dewey may seem obvious to us, but it's those decimals you have to watch out for!

By knowing your volunteers well, you'll be able to manage them that much better, so get to know their strengths and abilities. With the number of tasks that need doing, it's not difficult to find variety to keep volunteers interested (Smallwood, 24). This is just a partial list of what they might be able to do for you, your students and staff:

- ◆ processing, cataloguing new material;
- ◆ preparing book lists, resources for curriculum-related topics;
- ◆ organizing seasonal, author, or thematic displays;
- ◆ looking after book check-in, check-out, repair;

## *dateline*

Monday September 24th

**Change Minds — Change Lives**

**"Become active citizens for change in the world!"**

Speaker: Peggy Thomas

Web Conference 4:00 pm ET

OLA Members \$75.00; Non-Members \$95.00

Wednesday October 3rd

**Super Teaching!**

**Think Models for Instructional Improvement**

**"A perfect course to strengthen critical thinking skills!"**

Speaker: Dr. David Loertscher

Audio Conference 4:00 pm ET

OLA Members \$54.00; Non-Members \$74.00

Thursday Oct 4th

**Collaboration for Student Achievement**

**"Encourage all partners in the school to collaborate with you!"**

Speaker: Dr. Lesley J. Farmer

Audio Conference 4:00 pm ET

OLA Members \$54.00; Non-Members \$74.00

Tuesday Oct 9th

**Media Literacy Through Media Production**

**"Invite your teaching partners to join you for this one!"**

Speaker: Melissa Jensen, teacher-librarian with Simcoe DSB

Web Conference 4:00 pm ET

OLA Members \$75.00; Non-Members \$95.00

Tuesday Oct 23rd

**Graduating with 21st Century Skills**

**"Invite Administrators to this one!"**

Speaker: Dr. Lori Roth

Audio Conference 2:00 pm ET

OLA Members \$54.00; Non-Members \$74.00

**The Forest of Reading® Sessions:**

**Blue Spruce:** Monday December 3rd at 4:00 pm ET

**Silver Birch:** Monday November 19th at 4:00 pm ET

**Red Maple:** Tuesday November 20th at 4:00 pm ET

**White Pine:** Monday January 7th at 3:00 ET pm

**Special prices for those registered for the Reading Programs!**

- ◆ covering paper or hardback books;
- ◆ evaluating book donations;
- ◆ arranging library events (book fairs, fundraising);
- ◆ weeding the collection;
- ◆ shelving, shelf-reading, grooming the stacks;
- ◆ monitoring the library;
- ◆ designing brochures, newsletters, and promotional materials
- ◆ monitoring and maintaining blogs, and Web sites;
- ◆ completing light cleaning tasks.

It's important to have a library volunteer manual where volunteers can look for instructions and information about different tasks. Even with a manual in place, I found it difficult to keep track and also to let my

volunteers know what was a priority. To solve this problem, we created an additional communications binder where we could write notes to each other to monitor our progress. They began to use it to communicate with each other as well.

### Motivating Volunteers

Motivation is one of the best ways to ensure that you actually keep the volunteers you worked so hard to find and train. It's a good idea to consider where they're coming from, and why they're volunteering in your library in the first place. By ensuring they're satisfied on the job, even though it's unpaid, you can keep them excited by what they're doing. The more important the job, the more valued they will feel as school community members. Make sure you give your volunteers enough to do: their time is valuable, so by keeping them busy with meaningful work, they'll feel their hours are well spent.

Appreciation of your volunteers' efforts is imperative. Since there's no monetary reward, public and private acknowledgement of their efforts can go a long way (Freund, 33). Recognition can be as simple as a *thank you*, a short note, or more public like a luncheon, tea, or reception with publicly presented certificates or awards.

By writing articles for your library and school newsletters to thank your volunteers at the end of a major project, you can acknowledge their role and make them feel proud of their accomplishments in the library. This is easy to do if they see themselves as key to your library's operation.

The more help you've got, the more positive impact you can have in your school. The more that's heard and seen from the library, the more you'll be recognized for future support. Let volunteers into your library and, as a team, seek and create positive change.

April 27 to May 3, 2008, is *National Volunteer Week*. Consult <http://new.volunteer.ca> for more information. ■

### RESOURCES

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"Getting Help." *The School Librarian's Workshop* 20 no 5 (Jan 2000): 1-2.

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Smallwood, Carol. "Training Student and Adult Assistants, Interns, and Volunteers: Tips for New Librarians Servicing Small Libraries." *Book Report* 17 no 4 (1999): 24-26.

Troisi, Andrea. "105 Things Parent Volunteers Can Do—Other Than Raising Funds." *Library Talk* 11 no 5 (1998): 10-12.

## If I Had To Do It All Over Again

From: Nora Langan  
Subject: If I Had To Do It All Over Again  
To: Teacher-Librarians

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As I prepare to leave the world I love, libraries, and return to the classroom, I have been reflecting on what I would do differently in the school library.

I would:

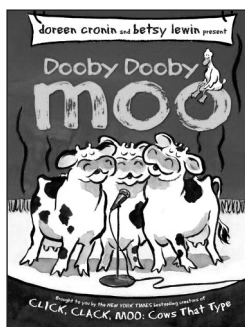
- \* have more fun with silly books and less time with "good" books,
- \* include items that I considered "not good" and let the kids read them all,
- \* worry less about the condition of the shelves and more about the level of conversation,
- \* worry less about voice level and more about voice content,
- \* take time to read more and shelve less,
- \* be a better friend,
- \* connect more with you all,
- \* realize that perfection is not attainable and working toward it a fool's game,
- \* not rest my sense of self worth with administrators,
- \* laugh even more than I do,
- \* love even more than is proper,
- \* live more joyfully as the primary message of life for my students.

In the end, it does not really matter if we shelve a book by author or genre. It is the joy and true respect we show our students and each other that makes the journey worthy of the title teacher.

Good bye and blessing on you all in the most important job you could ever do, teacher-librarian.

Nora Langan

The library is full of interesting people, as this issue of *The Teaching Librarian* demonstrates. In this issue of "Book Buzz," we'd like to introduce you to some of the most fascinating "people @ your library"—authors and characters the "people @ your library" can't stop talking about!



### Dooby Dooby Moo

Doreen Cronin  
illustrated by Betsy Lewin  
2006  
ISBN 13: 9780689845079

#### Sample Curriculum Links:

Primary Language Arts:  
Writing  
Junior Language Arts:  
Media Literacy  
Grades 1–8 Arts:  
Music; Drama and Dance

#### Summary:

The farmyard animals of Farmer Brown are back in this latest installment from the creators of *Click Clack Moo: Cows That Type* and its sequels. In this story, Farmer Brown is once again suspicious about those creative, wacky and independent animals of his, who are never content to just hang around the barn. Duck has spotted an ad for a talent show to

be held at the country fair, and the prize of a trampoline is incentive enough. The animals perfect their renditions of some classic tunes, but it is only when Duck runs out, singing "Born to be Wild," that their win is guaranteed....

#### How to Use This Book:

Fans of the earlier books will love this latest installment purely as part of the collection, but the neat use of fonts, footnotes, and conventions of advertising texts make it a great EQAO resource and media literacy tool. Music and dance teachers would find it a creative and fun way to introduce lessons ranging from "interpretive dance" (though the pigs aren't exactly good role models!) to performance protocol and choral singing.



### Mars Needs Moms

Berkeley Breathed  
2007  
ISBN 13: 9780399247361

#### Sample Curriculum Links:

Grades 1–8 Language Arts: Writing, Media Literacy  
Grade 7 and 8 Arts:  
Visual Arts  
Grade 6 Science: Space  
Grade 4: Healthy Living

#### Summary:

Milo can't understand why moms are so important. They are "giant, summer-stealing, child-working, perfumy garden goblins" whose mission in life is to ruin the fun of children. When Milo's mother fails to see the humour in his "sister-tinting" escapade and sends Milo to his room, his beliefs are confirmed. Unfortunately, Martians have been watching Earth from Mars, and have decided that they indeed do need moms... and they've decided to kidnap some, including Milo's. When he goes along for the ride, he learns just why moms are so valuable... and realizes that Martians aren't the only ones who need moms after all....

#### How to Use This Book:

The illustrations in this book show the Pulitzer Prize winning author's experience as a cartoonist (*Bloom County* and *Opus*), and would appeal to students from JK to 8. Unlike his earlier picture book, *Edward Fudwupper Fibbed Big*, this book alternates through colour illustrations and black and white cartoons. The visuals are a great example of using different media for varying effects. Students in grade 4 health classes can discuss the challenges and responsibilities in family relationships, using this as a humorous introduction. Students studying space

will recognize the planets Milo passes, and enjoy the quirky take on Martian lifeforms. The alliterations woven through the text make this a perfect choice for language arts lessons on descriptive language and humour as well.



### Beware Pirates (Canadian Flyer Adventures #1)

Frieda Wishinsky  
2007.  
ISBN 13: 9781897066805

#### Sample Curriculum Links:

Grade 6 Social Studies:  
Heritage and Citizenship  
Aboriginal Peoples and European Explorers  
Primary Language Arts:  
Reading

#### Summary:

Emily has just moved into her Great Aunt Miranda's old house, where all sorts of interesting artifacts are stored in a cool tower at the top of the house. When she meets her new neighbour, Matt Martinez, he and Emily decide to try out the old Canadian Flyer sled, which Aunt Miranda has mysteriously suggested might be magic. Lo and behold, before they know it, Matt and Emily are being whooshed back in time to 1577 and what

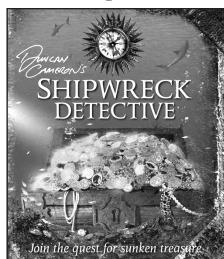


## “Must Have” purchases for your school’s curriculum needs

is now Nunavut, where they meet the privateer, Martin Frobisher. Captain Frobisher and his crew are pretty rough characters, and when Matt and Emily realize he has kidnapped a young Inuit boy from the nearby area, they join forces with their new friend, Minik, to save the day....

### How to Use This Book:

This new series by an award-winning Canadian author is a great historical fiction option for those students who enjoy *The Magic Tree House* series. Based on Canadian settings and history, the books would also appeal to students in special education classes who might need materials at an easier level, yet still enjoy cross-curricular options.



### Duncan Cameron's Shipwreck Detective

Duncan Cameron/  
Richard Platt  
2006.  
ISBN 13: 9780756622183

### Sample Curriculum Links:

Junior/Intermediate  
Language Arts: Reading;  
Writing

Grade 6 Social Studies:  
Heritage and Citizenship  
Aboriginal Peoples  
and European Explorers

### Grade 7 Geography:

The Themes of  
Geographic Inquiry

### Summary:

When professional diver Duncan Cameron finds a mysterious note in a sea trunk belonging to his late uncle, he and his sister Helle are intrigued. Uncle Joe found a treasure in gold on the seabed years ago, but couldn't remove it at the time. Now, years later, he has left Duncan and Helle a list of shipwrecks, a riddle, and a challenge—can they find the treasure, if it still exists?

Duncan's journal records each exploration and clue, as well as diagrams, sketches, photographs, maps, and artifacts found along the way. The riddle guides their search, but as they explore famous wrecks such as the HMS Edinburgh and the Avondster, they find more questions than answers. Like an underwater *Da Vinci Code*, Duncan's quest will eventually lead to a surprising result.

At the end of the book, readers have to put together the clues and visit the Web site [www.dk.com/joesriddle](http://www.dk.com/joesriddle) to get the final verification of what they believe is the answer to Joe's riddle.

### How to Use This Book:

This book is essentially non-fiction, though the quest and letter are

fiction. Readers will go through each of the actual shipwreck sites with Duncan, and learn about marine history and all things nautical from a first hand view. This makes it not only a fabulous non-fiction choice with appeal for reluctant readers, but also a neat way to introduce mapping skills, tie in with historic and geographic inquiry skills, and a fun experience with supposed primary source materials and non-fiction text conventions. It would also be a great non-fiction “lit circle” choice and an example of first-person narrative/journal-writing.



### Twilight and sequels New Moon (2006) and Eclipse (2007)

Stephenie Meyer  
2005.  
ISBN 13: 9780316015844

### Sample Curriculum Links:

Intermediate Language  
Arts: Reading  
Senior English: Reading

### Summary:

*Twilight* begins a series of novels by first-time author Meyer, and recounts the experiences of Bella, who has recently moved to the very rainy Washington rainforest to live with her police chief

father. On her first day of school, Bella notices some startlingly attractive young people, all of whom she later learns are members of the mysterious Cullen family. Edward, the most attractive of the Cullens in Bella's eyes, ends up being her lab partner—and ends up being a vampire, too. Unlike the vampires of modern myth, however, Edward is a kinder, gentler vampire: he refuses to bite humans and is unbelievably noble. Bella and Edward are clearly soulmates, but Edward refuses to compromise Bella's life so they can be together. When an enemy arrives, however, even Edward's love may not be enough to save Bella... from the enemy, and from herself....

### How to Use This Book:

This series is well written, surprisingly chaste, and deserves all the awards it is garnering. It is a prime example of a classic love story, despite the horror elements, and it never sinks to become superficial tripe. It is a perfect choice for lit circles for more advanced readers who are willing to tackle the 500 or so pages in each volume.





## Picture Us In The Library

Colette Denomme

**T**his poster was a joint project between Dan Grass and Student Pathways for Success and Learning co-ordinator, Marlene Turkington. Teacher-librarians from 28 different schools in the Thames Valley District School Board embraced the opportunity to take pictures that reflected the diversity of their schools so as to promote literacy in all its forms. Photo subjects included students, administrators, teachers, and support staff. ■



## elementary level

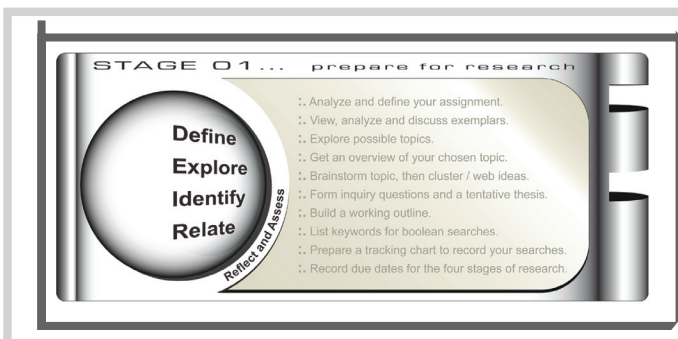


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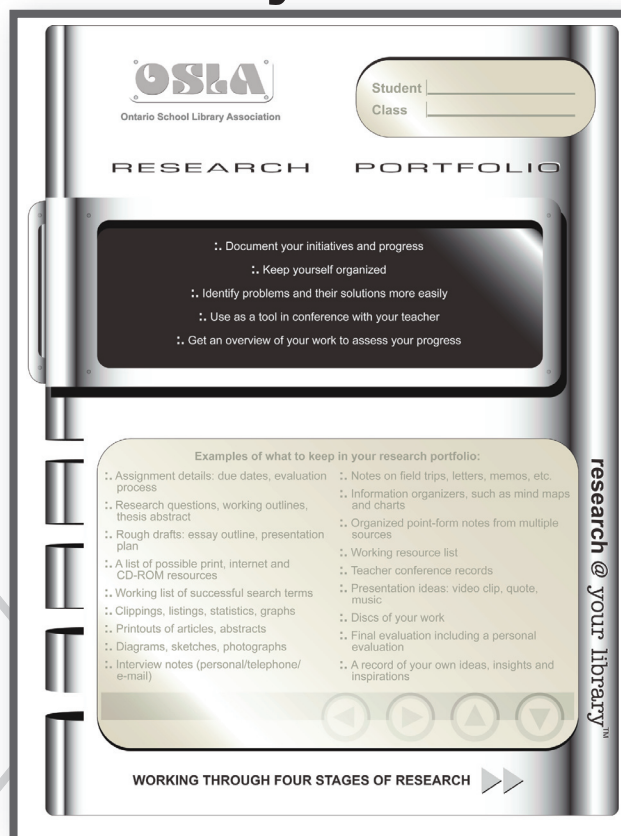
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