

MSLA JOURNAL

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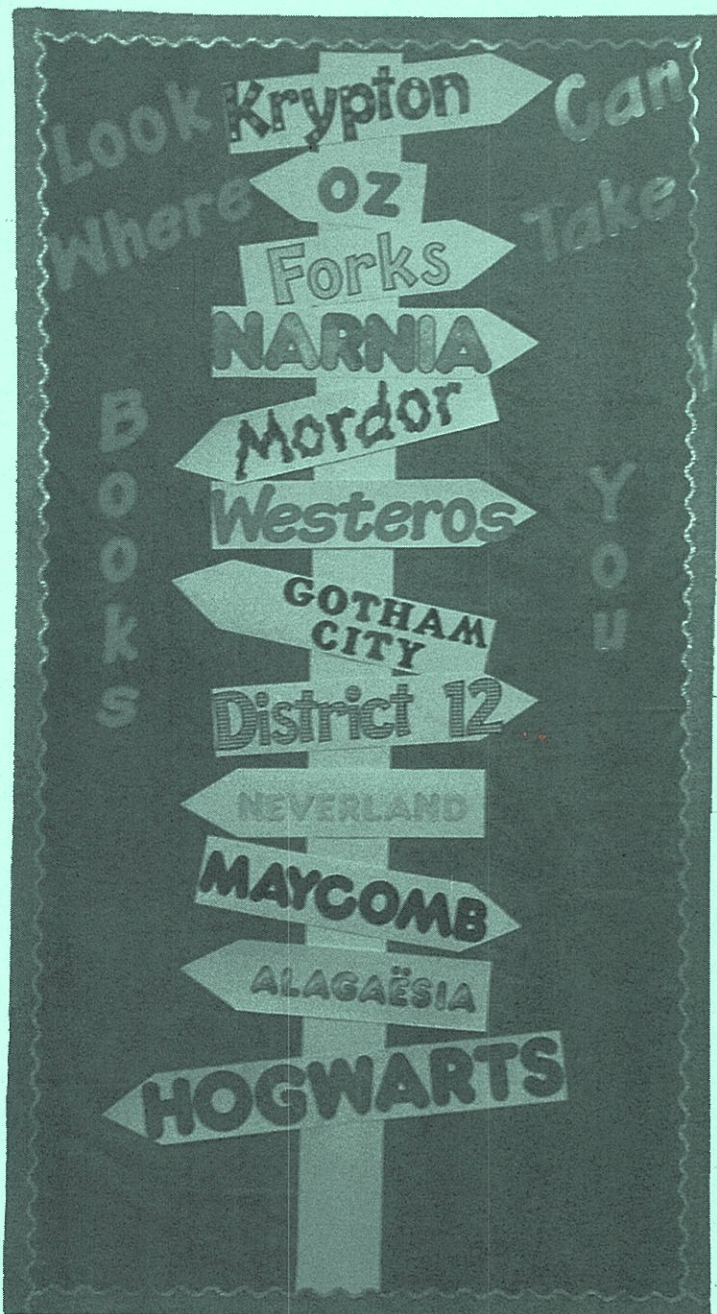


Photo by Mary-Ann Lagace, Sanford Collegiate

MAKING CONNECTIONS

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Acronyms of Interest to School Library Media Personnel

Compiled by G.R. Brown

*No longer operational/combined with another group

AASL	American Association of School Librarians ala.org/aasl/
ALA	American Library Association www.ala.org/
ASLC	Alberta School Library Council aslc.ca/
BCLA	British Columbia Library Association bcla.bc.ca/
BCTLA	British Columbia Teacher-Librarians' Association (of the British Columbia Teachers' Association) bctf.ca/bctla
CACL	Canadian Association for Children's Literature (of CLA)
CASL*	Canadian School Library Association cla.ca
CIC	1. Canadian Images Canadiennes (Conferences)
CLA	Canadian Library Association cla.ca
CM	Canadian Materials: A Reviewing Journal of Canadian Materials for Young People umanitoba.ca/cm/
CSLA*	Canadian School Library Association (see CASL)
DREF	Direction des ressources éducatives françaises edu.gov.mb.ca/m12/biblio/
IASL	International Association of School Librarianship iasl-online.org/
IBBY	International Board for Books for Young People ibby-canada.org/
ILL	Interlibrary Loan
IMC	Instructional Media Centre
IRA	International Reading Association reading.org
IRU	Instructional Resources Unit (Manitoba Education) edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/iru
LAA	Library Association of Alberta laa.ca/
LwICT	Literacy with Information and Communication Technology
MALT	Manitoba Association of Library Technicians www.malt.mb.ca/
ManACE	Manitoba Association for Computing Educators www.manace.ca/

MASL*	Manitoba Association of School Libraries (see MSLA)
MECY*	2. Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth: 3. Now Manitoba Education
MLA	Manitoba Library Association www.mla.mb.ca/
MLC	Manitoba Library Consortium
MLTA	Manitoba Library Trustees Association mla.mb.ca/mlta
MSLA	Manitoba School Library Association www.manitobaschoollibraries.com/
MSLAVA*	Manitoba School Library Audio Visual Association (see MSLA)
MYRCA	Manitoba Young Readers' Choice Award www.myrca.ca/
NBSLA	New Brunswick School Library Association
NSSLA	Nova Scotia School Library Associations
OLA	Ontario Library Association www.accessola.com/ola
OSLA	Ontario School Library Association www.osla.on.ca
PEITLA	Prince Edward Island Teacher librarian Association
QASL	Quebec Association of School Librarians
QLA	Quebec Library Association abqla.qc.ca/
RCGW	Reading Council of Greater Winnipeg
SAGE	Special Area Groups
SLA	Saskatchewan Library Association
SLAM	School Library Administrators of Manitoba
SLIC	School Libraries in Canada clatoolbox.ca/casl/slic/
SLiP	School Libraries Information Portal (of National Library) www.cla.ca/slip/advocacy.htm
SLJ	School Library Journal (US) www.schoollibraryjournal.com/
SSLA	Saskatchewan School Library Association www.ssla.ca/
WCLR	Winnipeg Children's Literature Roundtable sites.google.com/site/wpgroundtable

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President's Report By Jeff Anderson



I have been connected to the MSLA for five years. My first two years were spent in Advocacy, then a year as President Elect, SAGE Chairperson and now President. In my time on the executive I have been fortunate to work with committed and passionate individuals who believe that well funded and well staffed school libraries are essential to student success in the classroom, as a medium to instill in students a love of lifelong learning and as a school program that creates independent learners. Jo-Anne Gibson, Vivianne Fogarty, Joyce Riddell have all devoted their time to advocate for children through better school libraries. Their work has brought us to this point, but a new focus has now become clear.

We must redouble our efforts to advocate for school libraries, but not lose our desire to see a reversal of fortunes in Teacher Librarianship. Teacher Librarians (TLs) are the heart of a well-funded and well staffed school library. Unfortunately, too many funding decisions are based solely on perception and not on research and sound pedagogy. Replacing TLs with a Library Technician (LT) seems financially prudent to accountants, but is it really in the best interest of students? The school community? Society as a whole?

Obviously, Library Technicians are an integral part of a well-run school library and some TLs are fortunate to have a LT as a partner in running a great library program. However, a school library is not going to be a true school program unless the pedagogy of inquiry is part of the program and that can only be delivered by the Teacher Librarian. There is no doubt that we in the school library community are at a crossroads. We must continue to make our voice heard. Grand parenting out TLs or staffing school libraries without a TL is not a pedagogically sound decision for literacy goals, lifelong learning achievement and more importantly, achievement of curricular outcomes by our patrons, the students of Manitoba.

This new focus, I hope, will not be taken as a slight by the amazing Library Technicians that work in many school libraries and all too often work alone. They are often forced by necessity to work in areas where they are not adequately trained. My message today is for the administrators, the superintendents, the trustees who make these staffing decisions. Please re-examine the funding decisions that see school libraries not staffed by a Teacher Librarian. Let's look at the research and we will see that a TL

in a school library has a significantly positive impact on student achievement.

At the last IDLC, Chris Kennedy, Superintendent for West Vancouver, stated that WVSD made the commitment to staff every school in their division with a Teacher Librarian a few years ago and they are proud to say that their rate of high school graduates attending university is as high as 80%. With many divisions having graduates attending university ratios running around 15-20%, their numbers are significant. Mr. Kennedy attributed much of this success to having highly trained TLs in school libraries, TLs that have embraced the concept of the Learning Commons approach to school librarianship. The research also supports Mr. Kennedy's assertions.

"The truth is that Teacher Librarians need to work harder to further their professional prominence."

The truth is that TLs need to work harder to further their professional prominence. Mr. Kennedy's other major point was that TLs need to be the school leaders of today and in the future. TLs must lead students, teachers, parents and administration through the fundamental shift facing education. Societal and technological factors are revolutionizing education, but no more so than in the new realities of research, inquiry and digital media; ultimately TLs must teach students to make sense of this new reality and not only survive in it, but master it and use it to succeed. To this end, it was heartening to see Manitoba Education ask the MSLA to sit on a committee of technology leaders in order to review new software programming for the MTBB.

The MSLA will assist the government in deciding on consortium purchasing of curriculum related software that will provide every student in Manitoba with equitable access. The MSLA's participation may well have been the product of a letter writing campaign started by MSLA Past President, Joyce Riddell and myself. So in essence, advocacy can work. What we need now is continued participation by the school library community in the MSLA. We have a number of positions open and need help with committee work as well. Please volunteer your time. Email the President at msslapresident@gmail.com. Don't ask what other people are doing to make a difference, ask first, what am I doing?

Editor's Message By Heather Eby



It should not be a surprise to anyone that our theme this month is "Connecting." Over the past decade, school libraries are making themselves more and more visible by the connections they are making with their students, staff, administrators, public

libraries and most importantly with fellow library professionals and educators. In fact, even the Canadian Library Association had announced October's Library month theme as "Libraries Connect". It is very timely that this issue of the MSLA journal focuses on connections, as October 2013 was also Connected Educators Month. Teacher librarians, educators, technology gurus, and educational leaders were sharing their thoughts and expertise about the importance of being a "connected" educator. To learn more about the webcasts and how to be a part of the Connected Educator community, check out their website at connectededucators.org

In today's school library, the term literacy is not just referring to reading and writing but includes media literacy, digital literacy, transliteracy, visual literacy and so much more.

This month's issue is full of ways that school libraries are reaching out and making connections. Whether it is a teacher librarian in a middle school who connects with her public library to bring graphic novel sets into her school, or another teacher librarian that connects her students with a published author's personal visit; connections are constantly being made with the efforts of

school libraries across Manitoba. Our SAGE this past month really brought the message home with its theme of "Connecting through literacy". Literacy has and always will be at the heart of school libraries. In today's school library, the term literacy is not just referring to reading and writing but includes media literacy, digital literacy, transliteracy, visual literacy and

so much more. It is the well-equipped, well-trained and well-CONNECTED teacher librarian and library professional that ensures our students and staff are embracing these new literacies. I hope you enjoy this issue of the MSLA journal and it inspires you to make some new connections over the coming school year!

Connect with Twitter

Are you new to Twitter? Are you not sure where to start or who to follow? Begin by creating an account and start connecting with the MSLA.

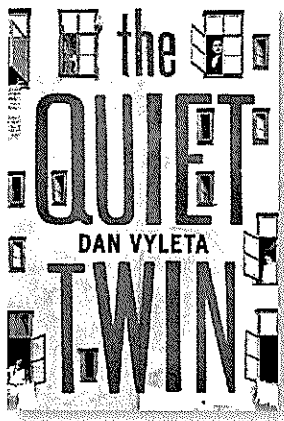
Our twitter handle is [@_MSLA_](https://twitter.com/_MSLA_)





TALK TALK BOOK BOOK

by Harriet Zaidman



Dan Vyleta is an author whose biography doesn't contain much information. His website describes him as the son of Czech refugees who immigrated to Germany in the late 1960s. He received a Ph.D. in History from Cambridge University in England and now lives in Montreal.

That's about it for his life story. Novelists often use their own experiences or backgrounds as the basis for their writing. Either Vyleta was steeped in stories about World War II as a child, or developed a fascination for it as a student. Whatever the case, he now has three novels that explore the effects of the Nazi terror on ordinary people.

His first novel was *Pavel and I*, a post World War II spy intrigue. *The Quiet Twin* followed as a riveting mystery set just after the beginning of the war, but before the Nazi occupation had come into full force. It begins with the death of an old dog, found dismembered in the courtyard of an apartment block. The micro setting of a rundown apartment block and the fear exhibited by each of the characters represents the fear and apprehension every individual felt during that dark time in history.

Unfortunately for the apartment-dwellers, the dog belonged to the local Nazi informant, Dr. Speckstein, who is sure there is a link between the dog's death and the growing pile of bodies appearing lately in the street. He calls upon one of the neighbours in the apartment block to find out who killed his pet.

The neighbour, Dr. Anton Beer, would rather avoid involvement. His wife has just walked out on him. He's got his own reasons for trying to conduct a quiet medical practise from his apartment, but Dr. Speckstein knows that Beer has a background in forensic psychology.

To save himself, Beer must delve into the lives of other residents. His investigations reveal that suspi-

cion lies behind every door and curtain. Anyone who walks down the staircase is followed by several sets of eyes. What activity, what statement is safe? Who will report on whom? Under the New Order even the purest are impure.

The tension of not knowing what is yet to come adds a frightening dimension to Vyleta's story, more so because we know what happened as the Nazi ideology corroded people's minds. A scene in which Beer tiptoes through the broken furniture and shattered glass of a household recently occupied by a Jewish family demonstrates how society deteriorated. Until that day the family had been accepted in the community. Beer "wondered for a moment what the neighbours made of this gutted building, then reminded himself that they were the same people who had witnessed (it) and done nothing. People like him."

Events are complicated when Beer discovers an emaciated woman, paralyzed and mute, staring out at him from a filthy bed in one of the apartments. Eva is the pure, untouched twin sister of a brutish, muscular man. Her brother is a mime with a nightclub act. He uses his whiteface as a mask to make jibes at drunken fascists. He is crude but wily. His sister is obviously in need of assistance, but he refuses to take her to the hospital. "I've heard stories," a hint of the Nazi treatment of the disabled. Eva becomes another secret for Beer to conceal.

Even though each of the residents tries to hide behind the security of his or her respective apartment door, they have a common plight. They are forced by circumstances and their basic humanity to trust each other while they expect betrayal. They display qualities that surprise them, especially at key moments in the narrative.

An historian, Vyleta has also written *Crime, Jews, and News, Vienna 1895-1914*, which examines criminal cases and anti-Semitism at the turn of the last century. He is clearly immersed in the topic of German politics, fascism and anti-Semitism and skillfully creates stories about how politics impacted the life of ordinary people. *The Quiet Twin* is a gripping, masterfully-written book, not a 'pleasing' read, but one that you will remember for a long time.



Photo Credit: Rick Lecoq, Library-Technician

It Changed My Life as a Writer

By Mona-Lynne Ayotte, Teacher-Librarian, Institut collégial Vincent Massey Collegiate

After Lauren Carter spoke to students in our library about her writing career and latest book *Swarm*, a student, who was asked to reflect on the presentation answered, “It changed my life as a writer!”

Ms. C. Wall, ELA Program Leader, who organized this reading and author visit, did so as part of the Thin Air Winnipeg International Writers Festival. Students from ELA Honours and Literature classes as well as those in the Writing Club attended.

As Lauren set up her dystopian novel, she spoke of its origins—it had started with a picture in her mind and evolved as she looked into contemporary issues surrounding apocalyptic events. She spoke of how this novel immersed her so deeply into its story and character development, birthing and caring for characters as if they were her own children. This type of creative birthing was partially guided with the assistance of her Masters’ Advi-

sor within the MFA Program at Guelph University. In Lauren’s case, it was a five year relationship that ended well when her book *Swarm* was published.

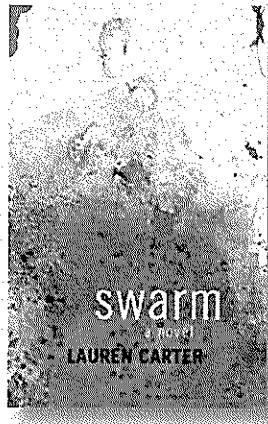
As Lauren read portions of her new novel, we could hear the poetic influences in her writing evoking various images such as: “blue chicory, sumac trees; red paste; ragged corners and mouldy dust; and a homemade bucket eaten by rust.” The juxtaposition of images within a ravaged world like *Swarm* engages the reader into “thinking critically about his or her own world and seeking a fresh new perspective into creating real-world societies from seemingly negative portrayals of alternative societies” (Booker, 2013, p. 5). The images created within the story were enhanced with active research.

Lauren emphasized the value of direct research and as part of her own investigation she went to a dump to explore its treasures. With this in mind, she took this

experience and incorporated it within the novel. As the students began to ask questions about her novel and the writing experience, she shared various practises that amounted to informal wisdom given freely to aspiring writers.

Naming her characters

When asked about naming her characters and giving them a breathing living storyline, Lauren spoke of how her real life experiences had influenced her in merging fiction and reality. Bobiwash, was the name she chose for the native gentleman in her book. In reality, she had heard this name having grown up near a reserve. She chose Sandy, a shortened form of Cassandra from Greek Mythology, to represent a character who had the gift of prophecy and who might feel a little insanity. As she developed Sandy’s character, she decided to write down what her thoughts might be, whereas, the name Phoenix appeared immediately, metaphorically rising out of



Swarm by Lauren Carter

In the not-too-distant future, thirty-seven-year-old Sandy lives a challenging and unfamiliar life. She survives by fishing, farming, and beekeeping on an isolated island with her partner, Marvin, and friend, Thomson. When the footprints of a thieving child start appearing in their garden, the family must come together to protect both the child and their fragile community.

In the face of scarcity, Sandy still dreams of being a mother. This desire compels her to revisit her earlier life in a city plagued by power outages, unemployment, and protests. There she met Marvin and joined his violent cause, initiating a chain of events that led to tragic and life-altering consequences.

dystopian ashes. At the end of her writing process, she changed the name of Jan, to Shannon. For her the name Jan was not sacredly set in stone, and its change was made necessary by the evolving nature and story plot. In this, she unearthed a wisdom that everyone can change their mind. Of course, she said there are “times when you just have to decide and to go with it.” Such decisions assist writers in getting unstuck in the writing process and help to move the storyline and plot forward.

Some authors might take a character from a current novel and add it into another novel’s storyline. Many adolescent writers in Québec, like Marie-Andrée Clement and Susanne Julien, who wrote for the series Collection Fauborg St-Rock and others like Stephen King employ this technique. Stephen King who was asked at multiple writing events what happened to the young teenage boy in *The Shining* decided to finally write the follow-up to it as *Doctor Sleep* (*The View*, 2013). Faced with the fear of sequel failure, he had to reflect in his writing how the character had changed over the years and with masterful editing he was able to even give Danny a life of meaning (*Wiersema*, 2013). Ms. Carter is presently working on a new novel whose character is currently named Jen; she has left behind those from

Swarm to birth a new set of characters and their dilemmas.

Liberating the inner critic

One student, who was concerned that she over edited while writing, asked Ms. Carter how she overcame this anxiety-provoking self-criticism. She urged students to just write without letting in the visitor known as the critical editor. She spoke of timed writing, an activity in which you select a topic, and for ten minutes you simply write. This activity liberates the analytical mind and places you into that creative imaginative place where intuition and magic take over. In that moment, you become ever present, and your visitor has temporarily left so that you can let yourself be divinely inspired. Lauren has adapted this timed writing technique into her writings finding that her characters expand and develop beyond her preconceived ideas. This is the artist’s way with artistry being part of inspiration and practice. Natalie Goldberg refers to this golden practise as the NEVER MIND (Goldberg, p. 37)!



Lauren Carter

PLOT BOOT CAMP

One of the major points in Lauren’s learning to write a novel was in doing what she called PLOT BOOT CAMP. The book starts on an island and moves back in time to the city. The entire plot alternates between Sandy’s present life on the island and past life in the city to reveal how she goes on the island. After plotting the initial setting, she planned the “major points of change making conflicts harder for the people involved in the story.” This not only raises the stakes for the characters to overcome but helps her to come up with three climax points, which amplifies the various challenges the characters face

and solve. By plotting these changes, Lauren makes it much easier for her to know where she is going. Yet, she is always open to making changes that are required in assisting with the final denouement in the story.

The poet and the fiction writer

As a poet, she has found writing fiction has helped her to find a balance between imagery and plot. She learned not to overload a suspenseful scene with too much



imagery so that the story would move along. She uses her poetic license, allowing for more imagery, during contemplative scenes.

Take a break

Lauren also gave students permission to leave the writing of any material behind for chunks of time. When she needed a break from writing her novel, she chose to do some extra research or to read a great book. She researched the collapsing of civilizations, the tar sands oil industry

Emerging writers need points of silence to create, for it is in these moments of struggle and gestation that the inner voice of the writer finds the page to be the right medium in sharing her ideas and thoughts.

in Northern Alberta, and the financial collapse in the United States. By taking a break and doing this research, she was able to give herself integrative time, allowing her to naturally get a sense of writing about human survival and disaster.

Discipline and the writing process

At times, she would leave a project seemingly unfinished, yet she had the inner fortitude to return once a needed break had given her a refreshing perspective. The rewriting process took Lauren 4 years, and rather than do too many things, she found focusing on one project helped her to ground her artistic self. As an artist, she says the key is discipline. Although anxiety can come into play, the writer in her finds new ways to get unstuck. She has found ways to tame her non-editor part and encourages others to find a balance between writing and editing. Writing for her is a habit, but it is also an encompassing process which requires organization and dedication.

After finding a literary agent, the process of bringing her work of fiction into publication (minus 60 rejections) took about a year and a half and several rewrites. Now that the book is published she is touring in provinces like Manitoba and Ontario visiting schools like our own. In Lauren's blog, she duly noted the amazing questions the students asked at Institut collégial Vincent Massey Collegiate – "better than some adults!" Her last question in the presentation about the title was answered in this way:

The title of the book was a reflection of what bees do when they are overcolonized. When some bees leave the hive due to overcrowding or congestion, they leave

all together in a swarm. Scouting bees go slightly ahead of the swarm searching for their new home.

Write, write, write

What made this event life-changing for the student who had taken my creative writing class last year given she had just herself gone public with her own fashion blog? It was the inherent message to take your time in writing from the inside out and to write about your passions. Emerging writers need points of silence to create, for it is in these moments of struggle and gestation that the inner voice of the writer finds the page to be the right medium in sharing her ideas and thoughts. Publicly opening yourself up, removing the invisible disguise, and setting the path for authenticity without inner editorial criticism, allows writers of every age to be themselves. The spirit of writing gives birth to the joy of slow communication... it gives birth to silence, and finally hearing the inner voice of the artist within. Writers need not hurry, they simply need

to write. Lauren left that indelible wisdom imprinted in the hearts and souls of the practising writer. She reminded them that writing has moments of deep thought, of research, of drafting, re-drafting, and finally publishing. And like Kim Rosen, who has written *Saved by a Poem*, writing and reading might just be liberating forces that open your emotional heartfelt imaginative self to the world.

Mona-Lynne Ayotte, B.S. Arts, M.Ed., is currently a teacher-librarian in a Winnipeg school who has also taught creative writing. She has worked with a number of authors and artists, like Margaret Shaw-MacKinnon and Nereo to bring the deeper writing experience to students within her school. Mona-Lynne is currently working alongside Margaret Shaw-Mackinnon on creating a series of writing and expressive arts workshops for adults entitled: The Fountain Pen Writing Club; and yes you will need a fountain pen!

*Lauren Carter's website and blog can be found at: <http://llaurencarter.ca>. She currently lives in The Pas, Manitoba having grown up in Blind River, Ontario. She has published non-fiction articles, fiction and poetry in numerous magazines and literary journals. She was nominated for the Journey Prize and her first collection of poetry, *Lichen Bright*, was long-listed for the ReLit Award. Lauren recommends students read *Fearless Creating* by Eric Maisel to help them get over writer's anxiety.*



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¹ A number of these writing books were selected with the assistance of Margaret Shaw-MacKinnon as part of the 2012-2013 workshop experiences with Artists in the Schools, Manitoba Arts Council. <http://artscouncil.mb.ca/arts-education/artists-in-the-schools/>. Part of this article includes activities and experiences from this workshop and the Slam Poetry workshops with Dawn Knight and Steven Holbrow of Fort Richmond Collegiate, Winnipeg, MB.



CONNECTING

with Children's Literature



Meet Jodi Carmichael

I am a children's writer and live in a big yellow house in the heart of Winnipeg. My dream of becoming an author began to come true when I attended my first Society of

- Reading, Writing and Editing—What it takes to be a good writer
- Accepting Differences—Celebrating our uniqueness and searching for similarities to build acceptance and friendships
- Tips on Developing a Writers' Eyes and Ears—Steps to foster a creative brain

Children's Book Writers and Illustrators conference in Los Angeles in 2007. I was thrilled when my submission was nominated for the Sue Alexander Most Promising New Work Award.

In December 2012, my first book, *Spaghetti is NOT a Finger Food and Other Life Lessons*, was first published as an eBook then launched in May, 2013 in paperback.

Spaghetti is NOT a Finger Food and Other Life Lessons, is a humorous chapter book about an eight-year-old boy with Asperger's Syndrome. Connor struggles to make his way through a typical school day and in his attempt to be as cool as everyone else, he leaves a hilarious trail of destruction. But, by the end of the day, and despite many miscommunications and misunderstandings, Connor realizes that he is exactly as cool as he is supposed to be.

I am a strong advocate for Asperger's Syndrome which led to Connor and his adventures. It is my belief that understanding brings tolerance, acceptance, and compassion for others.

I absolutely love visiting classrooms, libraries or entire school assemblies to talk about reading, writing, and all things books.

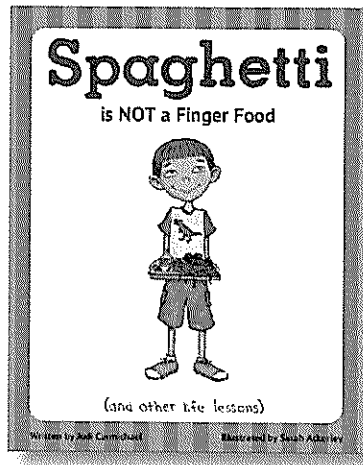
I work in the Pembina Trails School Division as a very part-time secretary which allows me flexibility not only to write but also to visit schools around the province - and beyond!

45-60 Minute Presentations

Grades 2-6:

- How I Became a Published Author—The journey begins in elementary school

*All Presentations include a 15-minute reading from my chapter book, *Spaghetti is NOT a Finger Food and Other Life Lessons*. *Spaghetti* is available in both eBook and paper back. For Manitobans, McNally's is currently where you can purchase copies. *Teachers, remember to bring in your school ID and receive a generous discount.*



Spaghetti is NOT a Finger Food and Other Life Lessons has won the following four awards; a **Gold Mom's Choice Award**, a **Silver Moonbeam Award for Best First Book: Chapter Book**, a **Silver Benjamin Franklin Award**, and a **PPN Book Show Merit Award**. So far, *Spaghetti* has made it to McNally Robison's Best Sellers List for a total of 11 weeks!

If you are interested in having me visit your school to talk on any of those topics, I will be happy to coordinate the **Manitoba Arts' Council Public Readings**

Grant Application. The Maximum grant available is \$300 (for two sessions) per writer per day.

These are my fees:

One Session: \$150 | Two Sessions: \$250

Information about The Manitoba Arts Council and Forms can be found on my website: www.jodicarmichael.com

In addition to in-person school visits, I also provide free 15-minute "Meet the Author" Skype visits for classes that have read my book.



CONNECTING

with your Public Library

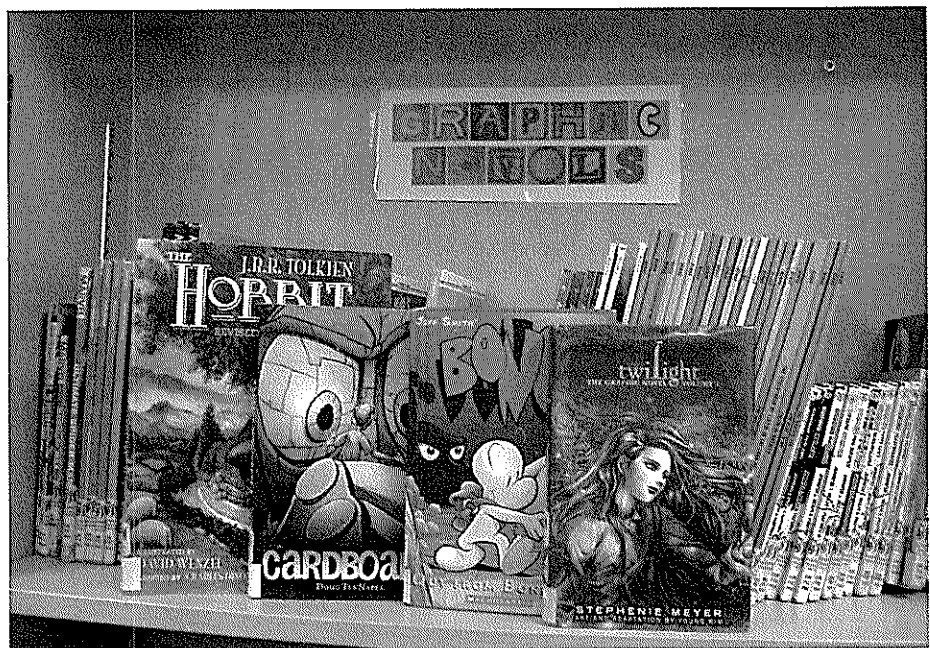
A Partnership with the Winnipeg Public Library: The Graphic Novel Project

By Brandi Nicholauson

In partnership with Jane Bridle from the Fort Garry Branch of the Winnipeg Public Library, I wrote and submitted a grant proposal to the Winnipeg Foundation under the Community Outreach program. The goal of our joint proposal was to support and encourage reluctant middle school readers through the purchase of graphic novels to be assembled into literature circle kits for use in local area schools. We were awarded a total of \$1,500 and this grant allowed the Winnipeg Public library to purchase and assemble 6 Young Adult Graphic Novel Book Club Kits in time for the 2012/2013 school year. Each kit contains:

- 1 Reader's Guide
- 10 copies of a graphic novel title
- 1 Club Kit bag
- The titles purchased include:
 - Twilight: The Graphic Novel Volume 1
 - 7 Generations: A Plains Cree Saga
 - Smile
 - The Hobbit
 - Cardboard
 - Bone: Out from Boneville

As a co-writer of the grant proposal, I was able to have first use of the kits to support a literature circle process at Henry G. Izatt Middle School Library. I selected 30 HGI students from grades 5-8, to participate in grade level literature circles. These students were recommended by their classroom teachers as students who would ben-



efit from a small group literacy experience. Students were able to choose which graphic novel they wanted to read, and we met a total of 6 times to discuss the graphic novel as a literature circle group. Overall, students were very engaged by the graphic novels, and they had high quality discussions about their reading experiences.

The grant also allowed us to hire a graphic novel illustrator, Greg Chomichuk, who visited Henry G Izatt Middle School on May 2, 2013 to give an afternoon session on graphic novels. During the workshop, Greg explained the power of using images and words together, and how graphic nov-

els are created. Students had the opportunity to create some art work of their own; drawing characters and giving them life through both visual imagery and written word. Anne Edwardson from the Winnipeg Public Library, attended the session to make contact with the students and to describe the Graphic Novel collection and Summer Reading program that the public library provides. The graphic novel kits that were assembled with the grant are available for teacher/school use through the Fort Garry Branch of the Winnipeg Public Library.



CONNECTING

with Community

Winnipeg's Thin Air International Writer's Festival

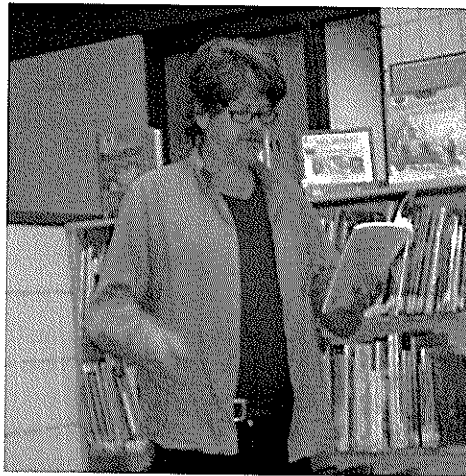
By Vivianne Fogarty

Should you bother getting authors and illustrators into your library? You bet you should! Thanks to those authors and illustrators, you have shelves full of precious objects called books in your libraries. Sometimes we forget that those talented people have toiled long and hard to create our literature and information sources. Students and educators alike need to meet, listen, observe and talk to these real artists that create what we read. Our students are all budding authors that need to be inspired and motivated by real live authors and illustrators.

Winnipeg's Thin Air International Writers' Festival is a perfect fit for getting some new and interesting authors into your school libraries or visiting them at various venues. This festival invites authors from Canada and the world to share their books with adults and children. This year we were lucky to book Robert Priest to visit our two Grade 3 classes. Had I ever heard of him? No. Had I read his material? No, and neither had our teachers or students. This was a great opportunity to learn about a new author and their work. Not only is Robert Priest an author, he's a poet and a musician. His newest book called *Rosa Rose* (about Rosa Park) includes an interesting array of poems about people who have made a difference in the world, including our very own Terry Fox. Coincidentally, our Grade 3 students were performing at our Terry Fox assembly and were looking for materials to present. Robert Priest's poem *Terry Ran* was a perfect match for our class. Robert presented two half hour presentations to our Grade 3 classes. Not only did he read and perform his poems with gusto and humour, he had also brought his guitar and sang us a few

songs. When he recited his Terry Fox poem, our students recited it along with him. It was a magical moment! Our students and staff were delighted with his visit.

Robert Priest also read from his book *The Secret Invasion of Bananas: Poems for Kids*. The students and staff found these poems to be very entertaining as well.



Along with our in school visit, we also booked an author visit at MTYP to go and see Chris McMahan, our MYRCA winner for *Box of Shocks*. All of our Gr. 5 students hopped on a bus in September and headed out to the Forks. Students were able to see and hear Chris talk about his ideas, how he wrote the book and what inspired him. We also saw some great photos of the house he grew up in that he used in his book *Box of Shocks*. Again, this event was organized through the Winnipeg Thin Air International Writers' Festival.

By May or June, writers have been confirmed for the Thin Air Festival and you can start booking them in the spring. Contact them and have them put you on their email list for notifications so that you won't forget. We've had their authors and illustrators at our school for the last few years and we haven't been disappointed yet. We've all met and been exposed to great artists that we normally would not have come across. Thank you to this great organization that promotes writing, literature and literacy!



On Being a Teacher-Librarian

By Nell Ududec (Distinguished Service Winner 2013)



L-r: Vivianne Fogarty, Jo-Anne Gibson, Nell Ududec

I have always felt that being a teacher librarian is the best job you can have in a school. And yet when I first decided to become a teacher-librarian 21 years ago I got some really strange reactions from non-educators and even some educators.

“Oh, you don’t want to teach any more? Is that why you’re going to be a librarian?”

“Does that mean a cut in pay and will you have to work over the summer holidays?”

“Won’t that be kinda boring after being in the classroom? Won’t you miss the kids?”

They really had no understanding of what TLs do. My pat answer of “Oh no, I love teaching and I’ll still be teaching but in the library to help students learn about the library and how to find information and pick the right books...” just wasn’t getting the essence of being a teacher librarian across. So I decided that at this juncture in my career I would come up with a good explanation of what teacher-librarians do.

What Teacher-Librarians Do (with apologies to Taylor Mali)

I am a teacher librarian with emphasis on the TEACHER
I teach students and sometimes I even teach teachers

The library is my classroom and curiosity, creativity, and collaboration my curriculum.
No two days are the same.

I teach young students to be responsible – to care for the books they take home, to never ever eat or drink while reading a book, and to keep them away from pets and younger siblings.

I have the pleasure of seeing a child’s face light up the first time they’re told they can take home the library book, they picked out.

“That’s right you can take the book home but be sure you bring it back next week.”

“Oh honey, don’t cry—you have to bring it back. You can’t keep it forever. But it’s ok you get to take another one home when you bring that one back. That’s the way it works”

I dry tears.

I’m like a dog with a bone when it comes to satisfying those tough customers.

“So have you tried the latest bestseller?” NO

“It’s really scary. Kept me up all night.” I HATE SCARY.

“How about non-fiction? You interested in sports—like hockey NO, football HATE IT, soccer YOU KIDDING ME?, windsurfing DIRTY LOOK, rock climbing, skydiving NOPE.”

“OK, how about comics? DID I SEE AN EYEBROW TWITCH?”

Check out these new graphic novels I just picked up. I’m only letting them go one per student but if you’re interested I’ll let you take two. Just—keep it between you and me.”

I encourage students to be risk-takers, to think outside the box, and look inside themselves.

I teach students to question, to inquire, to find out the truth—the real facts—and then encourage them to share it with the world.

I ride the crest of the technology wave trying to keep up with the kids.

Usually dragging teachers behind in my wake.

I text, Twitter blog, wiki, Google, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Flip Board, Edmodo, Flickr, Digg, and Skype

on my tablet, laptop smartphone, netbook, and desktop computer.

Sometimes simultaneously!

And as for 21st century teaching and learning—I’ve been doing that since the 20th century.



Literacy, lifelong learning, creative and critical thinking, differentiation, student engagement?
Yes.

I coordinate, cooperate, and collaborate with classroom teachers. We plan and co-teach units of learning
for a wide-range of abilities.

To do this I sometimes have to bribe, cajole, flatter, or even threaten some teachers.
But once on board—they see the good and keep coming back.

In my library I create a sanctuary—a refuge of sorts, for students who may feel left out, who don't like recess, who may
prefer a game of chess to a game of ball, who need a quiet spot to relax after a hectic morning in the classroom.
I greet them and welcome them, I listen to their complaints, offer sympathy and help them find guidance if needed.

I make sure all students in my school can see themselves and their lives reflected in the books I select.
But I also make sure to have books to help them escape, to see a brighter future, a better life,
to reach for greater heights.

In spite of my trepidation at the thought of dealing with challenged books I continue to seek out and
purchase resources that some might find offensive knowing that to some students they may literally be life-savers.
And I will fight narrow-minded censorship with grace and determination.

I love teaching and I love the library:
**I AM A TEACHER-LIBRARIAN—WITH THE EMPHASIS ON TEACHER
AND PROUD OF IT!**





Leading from the Library

**Chris Kennedy & Gary Kern, West Vancouver School District, Vancouver, BC
Winnipeg, Sept. 20, 2013**

By Mona-Lynne Ayotte, Teacher-Librarian, Institut collégial Vincent Massey Collegiate

"Students today depend too much upon ink. They don't know how to use a pen knife to sharpen a pencil. Pen and ink will never replace the pencil." National Association of Teachers, 1907

Ironically, when Chris Kennedy shared the above quotation with us at the recent Winnipeg Workshop entitled *Leading from the Library*, I began to laugh. I could not resist sharing with him, that although I was not in a school in the early 20th century, I was however taught to whittle a pencil for those times when a pencil sharpener was not accessible! Today's non-pencil whittling and gel pen generation might laugh at this concept, however, it shows the technological use of tooling in such a way that we are simply adding tools and transferring skills from those old pen and pencil days! Recently, a friend of mine commented that her 17 year old daughter did not have a personal and legible signature...imagine how in the old days we were entering contests for our penmanship. Although I never won any awards, I did develop what is affectionately called as "school teacher script!"

Today, middle years and high school students' writing implements are primarily a keyboard or touch screen. Yet, there is something to be said about holding a pen or pencil. It allows you to slow down and to linger, and you don't have to take formal typing classes either to improve the speed at which you write. Plus math is al-

ways easier with a pencil and eraser if you don't have an erasable program on a tablet or the digital skills to work on the tablet successfully! According to Moge, Paterson, Burk and Purcell of the University of Edinburgh, students who do almost all of their work on computers, and end the semester by writing handwritten essays on their exams can write equally well in both formats.



Gary Kern



Chris Kennedy

However, Burke and Cizek's research (2006) indicated the handwritten essay tends to be of a better quality (Moge, Paterson, Burk and Purcell, 2010 in Relles & Tierney, 2013). Students who were very familiar and comfortable with the programs tended to write equally well as those who completed handwritten evaluations. Academic success redefined in the 21st century requires the ability to write both by hand and to have some "technological proficiency as education migrates from page to screen bringing into question equitable access" (Relles & Tierney, 2013). As students depend more and more on the "ill-arranged keys of the keyboard as extension of their fingers," it may be necessary to give them access to typing their final exams on computers (2010). Given this idea and knowledge, we need to remember to offer multiple services that give way to expressing and accessing information.

School libraries today present an extended way of gathering and working with information creatively by employing a Learn-

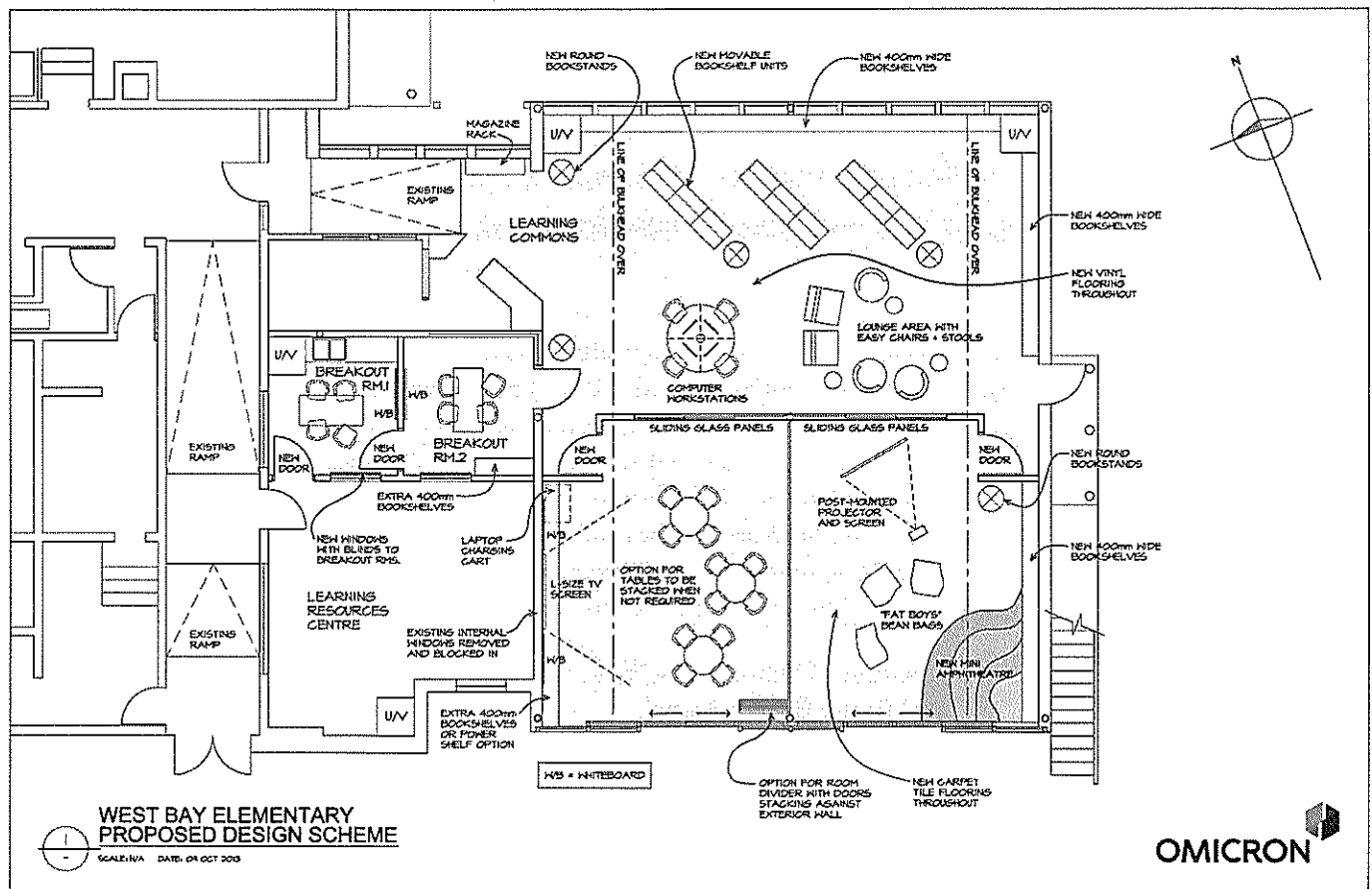
ing Commons approach. Such a place is "defined as a learning space that is both physical and virtual—a place to experiment, practice, celebrate, learn, work and play" (Rosenfeld & Loerttscher in Reirson & Davies, 2012). The former quiet space libraries are livelier, however, some students still prefer a quiet space to work and concentrate. Therefore, new designs should incorporate multiple space options for varying student and teacher research and activity that reflect a "future focus library" (Roberts, 2012).

In the year 2020—Envisioning new library spaces

In order to better facilitate the changing roles of libraries, Chris and Gary have worked with a number of their schools to refurbish the space with a learning commons approach in mind. Schools, with teacher-librarians who were eligible for renovation grants in their school district, worked within a committee inviting teachers, students, parents, administrators and other stake holders, which might include caretakers, to the table. The activities of a library vary and so the committee shared what their needs were and what the ideal space would look like. From this point a drawing of the new space was sketched—things in this library space were more portable and the space designed accommodated performances, reading, writing and research (Kern, 2013).

Talks to everyone in the school

As Chris began his presentation, he shared with us the concept that other than a school principal, it is the teacher-librarian who has the most contact with the staff.



Often they enter into conversations with a simple question: "Have you ever thought about doing this, we could do it together?"

The teacher-librarian's leadership skills include working side-by-side with students and staff on projects and ideas, making such schools the most progressive. Today's teacher-librarian is often quite skilled at infusing the digital pieces and improving the students' digital literacy. "Struggling schools are those who often do not have a teacher-librarian," and with the number of changes in literacy, their addition is crucial in leading the school in the 21st century skills (Kennedy, 2013). Those schools and districts should be doing everything in their power to include a well-trained teacher-librarian on their staff as they are keen networkers within the building. Often they are the ones aware of classroom and extra-curricular projects matching both other teachers and students to those activities. Recently, a French Math teacher

"A tribe is a group of people connected to one another, connected to a leader, and connected to an idea.

Tribes need leadership.

People want connection and growth and something new."

Seth Godin

spoke to me of the new apps he had discovered and been introduced to in divisional workshop sessions. I remembered one of our English Math Teachers was working on a similar project and I suggested she find a way to go down and talk to him about what he had recently learned. Teacher-librarians are at the forefront of gathering and distributing information, often knowing who is working on which projects, making them an ideal person to

connect others working in similar veins.

Tribes need leadership

The teacher-librarian's key role flourishes in schools when collaboration is driven by connection to the staff and not by content alone. Teacher-librarians continue to provide reading materials suited to content and to deliver in both traditional and non-traditional ways. Some of the primary pieces they bring to the table include: the sharing of resources, cooperation between staff and students, and tools of conversation, whether in person or via electronic means.

Many schools try to use too many social media tools and Chris encouraged us to focus on learning and employing well one or two applications to improve digital literacy. Twitter and Facebook have enabled creative pathways for students to experiment outside the regular boxes. Beyond these and e-book readers, teacher-librarians are still teaching the important



As storytellers, teacher-librarians can “draw you into a story world, hold you captive, and take you on a journey with characters you have never met, reveal truths which open you up to insights all the while providing entertainment that matters” (Mass, 2012). Curious seekers of truths via fiction or non-fiction give teacher-librarians the perfect skill set to open doors for staff and students in exploring new domains whether print, nature bound, or electronic (Ayotte, 2013).

organizational research skills, promoting reading, telling stories, providing methods of inquiry and delivering content in a variety of ways. The printed page has evolved onto the screen, however, print still generates significant access.

As students explore diverse ways of finding answers to their questions and enter into the creative side of representing their work, the next generation of teacher-librarians faces the shifting nature of giving feedback. There are multiple global shifts occurring and marks are not the only way to assess student progress. Teacher-librarians often take on the role of cheerleader encouraging the student as they take the journey into locating and digesting information. Students want meaningful work and making content available through a variety of resources helps them to make sense of the world. The process can be messy because issues are complex and digital literacies are only one part of the research picture (Kennedy, 2013).

Chris spoke to the need for more face to face time with people given the online culture. In a recent conversation I had with anthropologist Bill Brunton, Ph.D., he noted many people were now living more “fictionalized lives and moving away from the authentic,” which is possibly due to a higher portion of our lives interfacing within online virtual worlds (2013). In order to bring back the personal and to include human activity in daily living, we as teacher-librarians continue to encourage the personal consultation processes. I often sit down with a high school student in my office and visually graph our research

conversations—they always ask to take away the notes I’ve scribed with real pen in real time! The virtual world can offer places of exploration and research, however, as human beings we have to physicalize our students into the natural world, thusly, leading to living more authentic and real lives of wonder and service.

Outdoor Classrooms—What Anne of Green Gables Knew!

Chris also stated that some schools are looking to include outdoor classroom experiences – nothing new if you were Anne of Green Gables! Did you know a number of teacher-librarians have a tendency to be strong in naturalist intelligences? (Lazear, 2004). This intelligence focuses on the explorer and with it an ability to see patterns in nature, making teacher-librarians natural organizers of information. By connecting to the earth and environment, outdoor learning provides a place to touch, feel and explore in an experiential way. “The direct experience of nature tends to catalyze certain neural centers and networks within the human brain. Some researchers believe that certain clusters of cells within our brains are devoted exclusively to the recognition, appreciations, and understanding of the natural world as opposed to the world of human creation!” (Lazear, 2002, p. 128). As teacher-librarians, we are well-versed in a number of tools, giving the student explorer a number of ways to explore and create meaning in their own world.

Equity

A key issue around providing electronic

services lies in the availability of devices and digital access. Many school districts and divisions have issued new directives which allow students to bring their own devices. These devices and improved wireless access points have liberated some school budgets. Over the summer at Institut collégial Vincent Massey Collegiate where I teach, we upgraded our wireless access points, and students are now able to use multiple school and personal devices with greater ease and less frustration. By opening the doors to bringing in devices, those without can use the other in-school resources creating a different form of equity and accessibility. As we look to restructuring our library, the question of equity will be foremost in our mind as students with digital literacy are more likely to “access the electronic infrastructures of libraries or to e-mail teachers with questions about assignments (Goode, 2010).”

One of the afternoon activities Gary Kern shared with us revolved around composing a key question we would like to explore in terms of our school library. My afternoon partner, who works in the Winnipeg school division, really wanted to work at creating a multi-layered question in regards to the philosophical and educational approach to providing services for all. Given my Cognitive Coaching background, I asked her if she would be willing to let me coach her in creating this question. Using my gel pen and lined paper, I wrote down some notes and helped her navigate the issues she wanted to consider in terms of equal access for all. The question eventually evolved into:



“There will always be new Gizmos, Gadgets and Apps on the market to attract your attention! Do not build a system based on the latest new technological innovation. Instead build a system from bigger ideas and use technology to support that drive.” Chris Kennedy

“Can we as educators use technology to create a more equitable education?”

Prior to developing the final question, we dialogued about what difference it would make if a school had better access for all its students. The belief that most students have multiple devices is a partial fallacy. After doing many informal surveys in classes at the beginning of the year, I have found some students do not have a Smart-Phone or even a cell phone. Few have e-readers, some have tablets and approximately 85% of students have some form of computer access whether at home, school or the public library.

What surprised me in the discussion was how many school districts are now limiting the number of computer labs in their schools. As Gary and Chris shared this information with us, I could see this would impact us positively in the library for others who have less access to computers and devices (Kern, Action Research, Digital Literacy Blog). Although we only have 14 available research computers at our school, students who have personal devices are bringing them to class to do research and accessing successfully many resources which include print books and magazines. Students with devices create equity in the sense they open up computers to be used in the library.

As well, the lessening of computer labs places the student in a position to seek information in a variety of ways. One way we promote the use of academic databases is to mail-out to parents at the beginning of the year addresses and passwords for online services. We subscribe to Ebscohost

and InfoTrac (Gale); they can be accessed both at home and in school through web addresses or apps.

With great teacher support and class presentations at the beginning of the year, we continue to be city leaders in accessing information from the above databases.

In order to extend the resources beyond online research and legitimate academic database searches, I have started new conversations with our Program Leaders. Our ELA team promotes reading and literary criticism by scheduling students into the library to use print and electronic resources. Social Studies teachers, who work in contemporary topics, use the Globe and Mail printed newspaper and other various up-to-date news sources. In order to encourage students to use printed materials for projects, we pre-select a number of books as an introduction to the topic. We also direct them to use Destiny, our library online catalogue. Teachers and cooperating teacher-librarians who design activities together to include a print book (whether from library or e-book version) assist students in locating information written by experts or legitimate writers. Time after time, we prove to students that a book with an index or table of contents that lists directly the topic, decreases their research time. They are able to read, make notes, and use WorldBookOnline to create a citation more rapidly.

Writing and the new blank page

Chris noted the importance of being good writers today. With the increase of shared platforms, either through blogs or online newspapers, students are reading and

Top Five Points

- Teacher-Librarians are leaders in the school as they have the most contact with staff and students other than administrators.
- Libraries are centres of innovation with plenty of face to face interactions.
- Question your library spaces and rearrange them to meet cooperative and individual spaces. Meet with your school stakeholders and help redesign the space.
- What is the reward for reading? “Incentivize” your students towards reading! E-readers are on their way.
- *Have you thought about doing this? WE could do it together.* A great question to ask of your teachers so you can partner with them in classroom through the library.

writing more than ever, resulting in the need for an understanding of multiple literacies. We now are growing beyond functional and basic literacy to include information, media, scientific and visual literacies, to name a few.

Reading and interacting with text, whether in print or online, still requires an application of skill and time. Students preparing for higher education must understand the “keystone to composition lies in argumentative skills” (Relles & Tierney, 2013, p. 478-479). These skills require ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create arguments,” whether presented in written work or online (Livingstone, 2004). In Relles and Tierney’s study, Understanding the Writing Habits



As storytellers, teacher-librarians can “draw you into a story world, hold you captive, and take you on a journey with characters you have never met, reveal truths which open you up to insights all the while providing entertainment that matters” (Mass, 2012). Curious seekers of truths via fiction or non-fiction give teacher-librarians the perfect skill set to open doors for staff and students in exploring new domains whether print, nature bound, or electronic (Ayotte, 2013).

of Tomorrow’s Students, they examine the possibility of online and offline writing as complementary activities. Today’s students have gone beyond the writing solely of papers, and Gee states their literacies are more plural, hybrid and co-constitutive (2004). They face a new blank page,

As I was writing this article, students dropped into the office and shared the following concern: students today struggle with their attention span, feeling more ADD than ever.

In the future, they will need tools to train their mind not to multi-task or allow boredom to take over so that their Smartphones do not become the distraction to learning.

E.S. & L.C., VMC

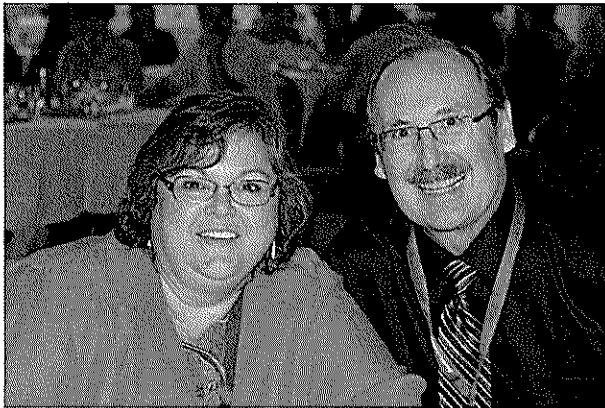
a screen nevertheless that requires “sophisticated cognitive skills and online engagement” (Relle & Tierney, 2013). Their learning community has shifted and their literacy skills are more clearly demonstrated in their writing and representing. Social media has given them a new platform of self-expression engendering this generation into a diverse level of authenticity.

Students read for meaning, employ technological skills to access information and in that require ways to actively participate in brokering knowledge and understanding. With more practice and time to write, students who read can share their knowledge, opinions and proficiency as they seek to educate themselves in a broader sense. “A good infrastructure which supports students networking together through innovation can revolutionize a system” (Kennedy, 2013). Chris went on to suggest we consider getting students into innovation teams to create new ways of using technology and information, increasing the reporting and writing of student assignments.

As literacy shifts the role of the teacher-librarian and the library in the classroom, resources become secondary. The key piece and ultimate goal is the learning which can be messy as student exploration is no longer linear. Once the information is gathered, teacher-librarians are proficient guides in assisting students to organize information into meaningful ways, aiding them to make sense of their learning. As students represent and write this information down in their own ways and words, they become tomorrow’s authors, contributing in culturally sophisticated ways and shaping their generation as communicators beyond the page. Pathways to learning, which are supported in school library programs, elevate the student’s ability to communicate worldly and complex issues of importance to their generation today.

Formal and informal learning

Gary spoke to us about the current trends in learning as it becomes more informal. With such instant access to information, students can receive assistance both in school and from outside digital media, such as Khan Academy. It raises the question: are students moving away from us when they learn more informally? As teacher-librarians, we teach tools of research, tools of inquiry and tools of interpretation. Those same tools can apply outside the classroom as easily as they apply in school. Teaching students basic rules of digital conduct and citizenship are essential and teachers who create class blogs demonstrate a useful application in purveying information about class assignment and updates. Rather than focus on what could happen if programs are used inappropriately, their district focuses on positive applications and experiences which include Chris Kennedy’s Culture of Yes Blog. Many of their students share their work online—publishing for the first time in a public forum. Enabling students to be architects of their own future and current learning is the natural encouragement teacher-librarians offer. By questioning the status quo, removing dogma, and being unorthodox in approach, teacher-librarians are leadership assets for students and staff. They allow the questions to gestate, they give direction in finding legitimate sources, and they help to make fulfilling meaningful assignments to questions of inquiry and life.

*Nell Ududec and Kevin Mowat*

Conclusion

The day provided teacher-librarians, consultants and board administrators a way to dialogue the value of having a teacher-librarian within a school. In the Oc-

tober 2013 Educational Leadership journal, the key theme is “leveraging teacher leadership, (distributive leadership) as today’s principal alone can’t run something as complex as a school” (Berry, 2013 p.15). Teacher-Librarians, who have more “expansive teacher leadership roles, increase student achievement success” (Berry).

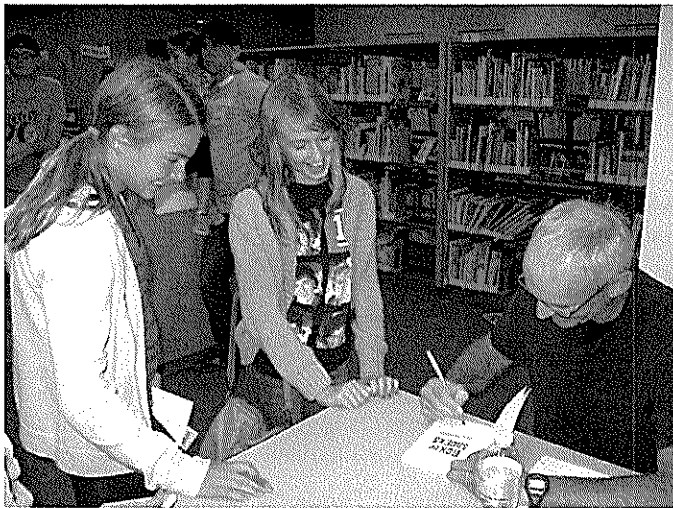
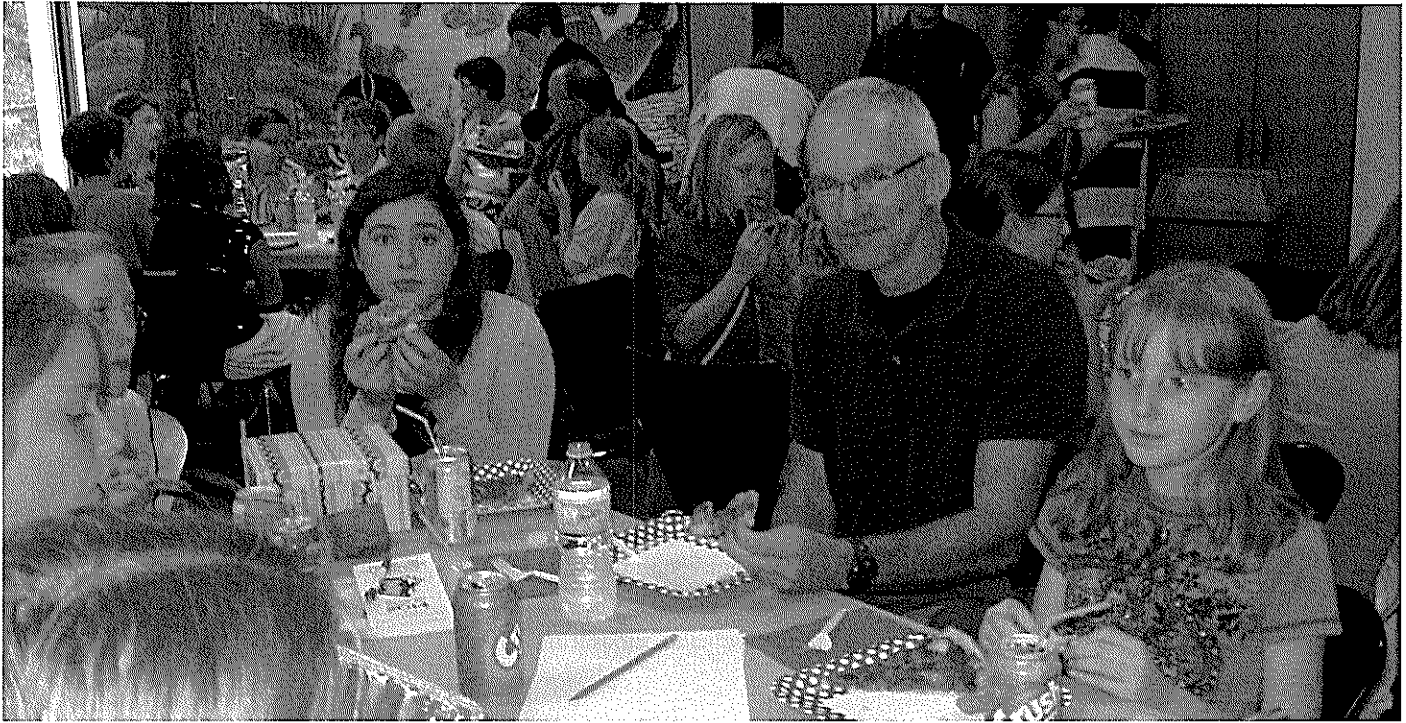
As leaders, teacher-librarians continue to evolve their practices relying on ways to synthesize and gather information regardless of the tool at hand. The modern teacher-librarian is open to innovation and

working with teams of students and teachers in creating new and inventive ways to represent learning as we move from information to imagination (Roberts, 2012). They promote reading and incorporate new practises in literacy going beyond the printed page.

As they move into the 21st Century, the ever-evolving teaching librarian will continue to shape-shift into multiple roles, increasing the literacy of students and reopening the imagination. And they will always be the ones with stories to tell, for it is in the stories that we continue to live alongside our ancestors into an undetermined but hopeful future.

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WCLR MYRCA Dinner

By Paulette LeClerc

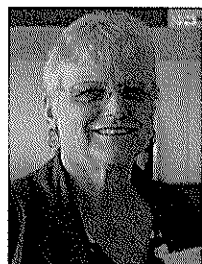
On Wednesday, September 25th, the Winnipeg Children's Literature Roundtable (WCLR) hosted a presentation dinner with Manitoba Young Readers' Choice Award's 2013 winning author Chris McMahan. The event started with a group activity: creating stories about how/why a variety of objects were placed in their 'box of shocks'. Then a delicious pizza & salad dinner was enjoyed by the 68 attendees. Two grade 6 students from Valley Gardens School introduced the author and provided a snapshot of his life and works. Chris delighted his listeners by reading the first chapter of "Box of Shocks". He then engaged the students with a couple of participation games. He presented the background for some of his novels, including his MYRCA award book: *Box of Shocks*. The evening concluded with book sales and autographs. Door prizes added fun and excitement to the event. Thank you Chris McMahan for entertaining us and piquing our interest in young adult literature!



Connecting through Literacy at SAGE 2013: Highlights of the day

By Heather Eby

*Edna Johnson—
Murder in the Library:
teaching OPAC use*



*John Tooth—
From Copyright to
Open Educational
Resources*



Spotlight Speakers, Dean Shareski and Kathy Schrock



Brandi Nicholauson—It's not just words on paper: Multimodal Literacy



Jonine Bergen and Cathy Bilyk



Jo-Anne Gibson, Joyce Riddell, Vivianne Fogarty—What's going on in Manitoba School Libraries

A full day of networking, learning and meeting with like-minded educators could not have gone much better at our annual MSLA SAGE conference this year. Beginning with a full auditorium of MSLA and MALT members, Kathy Schrock dove into her keynote speech, "The Future is Now: Following Change to Lead Change." As a former media specialist herself, her message to an audience of educators and teacher librarians focused on the need to stay ahead of the curve as social leaders and stressed the importance of building our PLNs (Personal Learning Networks). Kathy shared many tools and avenues for gathering ideas and making connections with other educators with the use of technology, everything from Twitter to Google Plus Hangout to a review of Aggregators. However, as Kathy pointed out, for many teachers the biggest hurdle in pursuing these amazing learning opportunities is the need for time. Time to read, time to explore, time to share and more importantly, time to learn!

Along with learning from the expertise of Kathy Schrock, the

MSLA was proud to host Discovery Education's educational technologist and Digital Learning Consultant, Dean Shareski for the day. Dean shared his endless knowledge of resources offered through Discovery Education, his wisdom on assessment practices with digital learners and engaged his audience with his witty humour and charisma.

The breakout sessions that took place throughout the day were filled with ideas for both Teacher librarians and Library Technicians along with the many teachers infusing technology into their curricular areas.

The day was complete with a vast array of publishers and some great prizes to round out the event. A big thank you to our organizers and SAGE committee chairs, Jonine Bergen (Librarian at St. Pauls) and Cathy Bilyk (Teacher-Librarian at Shaftesbury). It is no small feat to organize such a big event! Well done!



The Manitoba Young Reader's Choice Awards Ceremony 2013

By Heather Eby

"...and the winner of the 2013 MYRCA is Chris McMahan for his book, *Box of Shocks!*" announced Priya and Sargun simultaneously.

It was with great pride and honour that my school, Linden Meadows, had been asked to host the 2013 MYRCA ceremony that was held on September 26th at the Manitoba Theater for Young People this year. Being my fifth time attending a MYRCA ceremony, it was definitely a new (and rewarding) experience to be a part of the actual production. Along with hosting the ceremony, my students were asked to introduce the 18 nominees for the 2014 MYRCA shortlist. Following in the footsteps of a fellow Teacher librarian colleague and friend, Jo-Ann Gibson, my students created book trailers to engage and entertain the throngs of students and teachers that were in attendance that day. In quick preparation for creating book trailers to promote the 2014 MYRCA nominees, I had requested several gr. 6, 7 and 8 student volunteers to read a nominated book in a very short span of time. Using the Web 2.0 tool *Animoto*, twenty six of my students began the fun and educational task of producing a book trailer in less than 3 short weeks to entice an audience of middle schoolers to



read their nominated book. It was a thrill for my students to not only be a part of such a momentous day but to also meet an amazing author.

This year's MYRCA winner, Chris McMahan, was a well-deserved candidate. Not only was his book, *Box of Shocks*, full of adventure, character development and genuine humour but Chris's acceptance speech and reading of his book captivated the young audience seated before him. With his visual interpretation of the amount of time it takes to render a book from first

thought to final product, Chris had the students filled with questions about his life as a writer and much more. It was a wonderful morning as Chris McMahan graciously accepted his award and inspired many young readers and writers to continue to pursue their dream whether it was writing or filling their own box of shocks!

If you'd like to view the trailers my students created for the MYRCA ceremony, you can find them on Youtube at this link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=OcPk-8gN-Le4. Enjoy!



How to vote

- All young Manitobans in grades 5-8 who have read or heard read at least 5* titles from the list can vote.
- Voting deadline for the 2014 MYRCA winner is **Wednesday, April 9, 2014.**
- Voting procedures for 2014 will be available in early 2014 on our website www.myrca.ca
- * The minimum number of titles to be read to vote in 2014 is 5, an increase from the previous 3.

The Award Ceremony

The MYRCA award is presented annually at a ceremony held in the Fall. Only those who participated in that particular year's vote are invited to attend.

As in 2012, the 2013 MYRCA award ceremony will be held in conjunction with the Thin Air International Writers' Festival, where the MYRCA winner will also be a featured author in the schools' programme.

Check their website at www.thinairwinnipeg.ca/2013-school-program

Website

For more information about MYRCA, visit our website at

www.myrca.ca



Supporters

MYRCA is a registered charity. Go to www.myrca.ca to find out how you can make a donation to support MYRCA's activities.



Reading Council of Greater Winnipeg, Inc.
A Council of the International Reading Association
A Special Area Group of the Manitoba Teachers' Society



ST. JOHN'S LODGE #4
ON THE GREAT PLAINS OF MANITOBA, SASK.



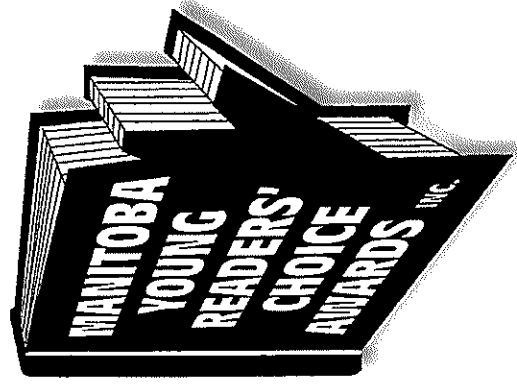
Disclaimer

From time to time issues arise regarding the appropriateness of one or other of the titles. The selection process is rigorous, but not all titles are appropriate for students in the entire age range of MYRCA readership. Approximate grade-based interest levels are provided; however, schools should be aware that these are subjective judgements. Teachers should assess the suitability of a title particularly before using it as a class read-aloud.

If there is a title you feel is inappropriate for your school, please remove it from your list and work with a smaller selection of books. In such instances, we would appreciate being informed if you have deleted a title.

**READ AND VOTE
FOR YOUR FAVOURITE
CANADIAN BOOK**

www.myrca.ca

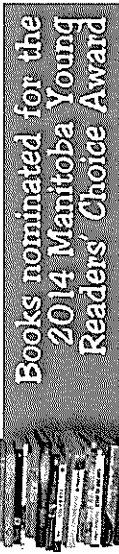


**Choose the
winner for**

2014

**Manitoba Young Readers'
Choice Awards Inc.**

aims to promote reading and Canadian literature by giving young people the opportunity to vote for their favourite Canadian book from an annual preselected list. The books are nominated based on their quality and reader appeal.



Circle of Cranes by Annette LeBox
Penguin, 2012. 9780803734432
Interest Level: Grades 5 and Up

Thirteen-year-old Suyin's story begins with her nearly losing her life to save a young crane in the marshes of a poor Chinese village. The bond that she forms with cranes and their mystical world of He Shan is all that sustains her in her struggle to survive being smuggled across the ocean to work in a North American sweatshop and to discover her roots.

crush, candy, corpse by Sylvia McNicoll

Lorimer, 2012. 9781459400627

Interest Level: Grades 7 and Up

Sunny is a high school student who has to complete 40 hours Community Service in order to graduate. She is assigned to a residence for Alzheimer's patients, and quickly develops a crush on a fellow volunteer. The novel opens with Sunny on trial for manslaughter because a resident has choked to death on a hard candy. The story flips back and forth between the trial and Sunny's journal of her experiences.

Grave Robber's Apprentice by Allan Stratton

HarperCollins, 2012. 9781554688258

Interest Level: Grades 5 and Up

Thirteen year old Hans learns he was washed ashore in a wooden box as a baby and adopted by grave robber, Knobbe the Bent. Fate throws him together with young Countess Angela Von Schwannenberg, who's fleeing the evil intentions of Arnulf and his dreaded necromancer. Their quest to discover Hans' identity and rescue Angela parents allows for adventure, intrigue, and skill. Together they learn anything is possible with luck and imagination.

Guiltily by Norah McClintock

Ora, 2012. 9781554699896

Interest Level: Grades 7 and Up

Finn Newsome was only a child when Mr. Ouimette shot and killed his mother. Now 15, Finn looks out his window during an argument between his father, his new stepmother and Mr. Ouimette who is newly released from prison. Finn then can't believe his own eyes: Ouimette shoots his stepmother, the men struggle for the gun and his father shoots Ouimette dead. Why would someone want to kill both his mothers? Be the detective and solve the crime.

The Lynching of Louie Sam by Elizabeth Stewart

Annick Press, 2012. 9781554514380

Interest Level: Grades 6 and Up

While walking home from Sunday school, 15-year-old George Gillies makes a gruesome discovery: Old Timer Bell has been murdered! The suspect is quickly apprehended and, just as quickly, several locals decide to take justice into their own hands. As George learns more about the circumstances surrounding the murder, he begins to question the suspect's guilt. But in the old west of 1884, speaking out for the truth can have terrible consequences.

Making Bombs for Hitler by Marsha Foretjuk Skrypuch

Scholastic Canada, 2012. 9781443107303

Interest Level: Grades 5 and Up

Lida is only 8 years old when she is arrested and separated from her younger sister, Larissa during WWII. Although officially she is too young to be useful to the Nazis, she convinces them she is 12 and is

sent to the work camps where the living conditions are terrible rather than to the gas chamber, but can she survive with only her skill as a seamstress and her wits?

Margaret and the Moth Tree by Kari Tragen

Kids Can Press, 2012. 9781554538232

Interest Level: Grades 5 and Up

After being shipped from one family member to another 10-year-old Margaret Grey believes that in Hopeton Orphanage she has finally found a place she can call home. However the orphanage turns out to be quite different from what it seems, and its Matron, Miss Switch, is not the kind sweet lady she pretends to be. Margaret, with an unlikely group of co-conspirators, make plans to rid the orphanage of Miss Switch and change it into the home they know it can be.

Middle of Nowhere by Caroline Adderson

Groundwood Books, 2012. 9781554981328

Interest Level: Grades 5 & Up

After his Mom does not come home from work for a week, 12-year-old Curtis begins to panic. Afraid of being sent back into foster care, Curtis and his 5-year-old brother befriend a crotchety old neighbour, Mrs. Burt. At first Curtis is happy when Mrs. Burt takes them to her idyllic lake cabin, but he becomes suspicious when he begins to realize she has no plans to take them home!

Mr. and Mrs. Bunny-Detectives Extraordinaire by Mrs. Bunny-trans-

lated by Polly Horvath

Random House, 2012. 9781554981809

Interest Level: Grades 5 & Up

Ten-year-old Madeline is used to looking after her flaky parents but when they are mysteriously kidnapped by foxes, she needs more help. Her uncle, a professional code-breaker, falls into a coma leaving her nowhere to turn but Mr. and Mrs. Bunny who have recently bought themselves fedoras and become detectives. The helpful bunnies and Madeline's recently discovered ability to understand all the animal languages assist her on her quest to get her parents safely home.

My Name is Parvana by Deborah Ellis

Groundwood Books, 2012. 9781554982974

Interest Level: Grades 5 and Up

In post-Taliban Afghanistan, American soldiers have just imprisoned a teenage girl. But who is she? Why was she found wandering alone in a bombed-out school? Could she be a terrorist? In Parvana's world, four years after The Breadwinner, the war is far from over and many still continue to regard the education and freedom of girls and women with suspicion and fear.

The Prisoner of Snowflake Falls by John Lekich

Ora, 2012. 9781554699780

Interest Level: Grades 5 & Up

Raised by a thief to be a thief, 15-year-old Henry Holloway nevertheless has a strong code of slightly crooked ethics. When he finally gets caught in a B&E and apprehended by the courts, he gets put into care with an endearing family of misfits in Snowflake Falls. Just as he is beginning to settle in with this peculiar group, his Uncle Andy turns up wanting his help. Is "once a thief always a thief" always true?

Redcoats and Renegades by Barry McDivitt

ThisIsTown Press, 2012. 9781897235973

Interest Level: Grades 5 and Up

After a member of the newly formed North West Mounted Police catches fifteen-year-old Hamlet Hamlin picking pockets, Hamlet finds himself employed by a grumpy old wagon master who is accompanying the inexperienced Redcoats on their 1874 expedition to bring law to the Canadian West. Being a city kid, Hamlet is unprepared for the physical hardships and surrounded by the unruly characters and the wild situations he and the troupe encounter along their way.

The Reluctant Journal of Henry K. Larsen by Susin Nielsen

Tundra Books, 2012. 9781770493728

Interest Level: Grades 7 and Up

Thirteen-year-old Henry's family life has been torn apart as a result of his brother Jesse's decision to take their father's rifle to school. As part of his recovery, Henry reluctantly agrees to his therapist's urgings to write a journal. Sometimes humorous, sometimes tragic, the entries reveal Henry's insight into coping with grief and adversity, the importance of accepting and being accepted, and the challenges of creating a new life.

Seraphina by Rachel Hartman

Random House, 2012. 9780385668392

Interest Level: Grades 6 and Up

Sixteen-year-old Seraphina's gift of music is inherited from her dragon mother. But, when a dragon becomes the main suspect in a royal murder, Seraphina's closely guarded secret code is revealed, undermining her growing relationship with Prince Lucien Kiggs, destroying her family and, perhaps, throwing the kingdom into war.

Small Medium at Large by Joanne Levy

Penguin Canada, 2012. 978159908366

Interest Level: Grades 5 & Up

When a freak accident leaves 12-year old Lilah with the ability to talk to ghosts, her already complicated life becomes even more difficult. Can Lilah find a way to deal with her new abilities while sorting out school bullies, her crush on Andrew, and finding a new girlfriend for her dad?

Such Wicked Intent by Kenneth Oppel

Simon & Schuster, 2012. 9781554683420

Interest Level: Grades 7 & Up

Sixteen-year-old Victor Frankenstein is grieving the loss of his twin brother Konrad. When he stumbles over the materials and instructions that may give him a few more moments with his brother he becomes obsessed with working out how to achieve this goal. Victor drags his cousin Elizabeth and friend Henry into a terrifying, dark, and wicked place that will demand the ultimate sacrifice.

Ungifted by Gordon Korman.

Scholastic Canada, 2012. 9781443119207

Interest Level: Grades 5 and Up

Academy of Scholastic Distinction, surrounded by gifted kids who do math for fun? After pulling a prank that should have gotten him into major trouble, Donovan needs to hide out where no one would ever think to look for him. It will take dodging a grumpy dog, fooling suspicious teachers and building a fighting robot to help Donovan discover some new friends in the most unlikely of places.

Yesterday's Dead by Pat Bourke.

Second Story Press, 2012. 978926920320

Interest Level: Grades 5 and Up

Young Meredith, thirteen but pretending to be fifteen so as to be able to get a job, is unhappy that she has had to leave school and abandon her ambition to be a teacher. She thinks that living as a servant in Toronto's high-end Rosedale suburb will be an adventure, but can't know that it will mean having to cope with a whole household of people struck down by the 1919 Spanish flu epidemic.



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