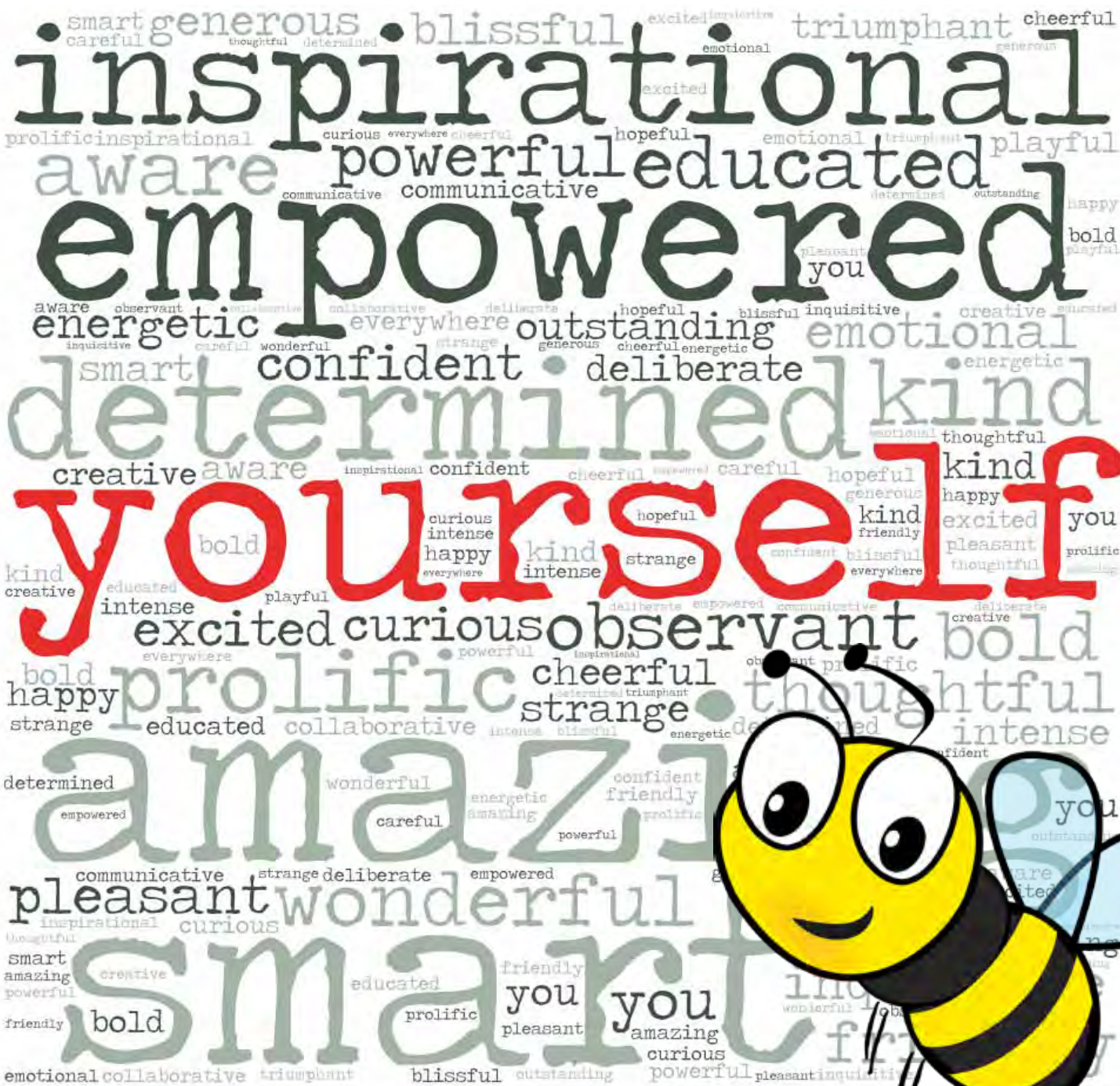


Teaching Librarian

The Magazine of the Ontario School Library Association

ISSN 1188679X



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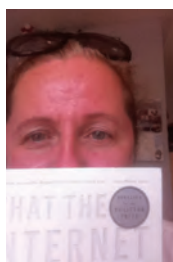
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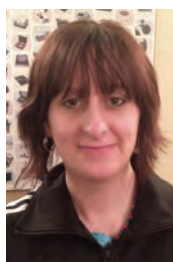
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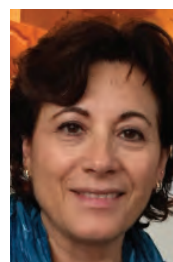
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TingL mission

The **Teaching Librarian**

The Teaching Librarian is the official magazine of the Ontario School Library Association. It is published three times a year to support OSLA members in providing significant and effective library programs and services. *The Teaching Librarian* promotes library programs and curriculum development that furthers exemplary educational objectives. The magazine fosters effective collaboration within the school library community and provides a forum to share experience and expertise.

TingL references

The Teaching Librarian is a general magazine for OSLA members and not a scholarly journal. If your article does require citation of sources, please provide them within the text of your article or column with as much or as little bibliographic information as necessary for identification (e.g. book title, year). If you feel that the works you are citing require full identification, please provide a bibliography at the end of your piece, formatted according to the latest Chicago Manual of Style (16th edition) or APA Style.

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TingL guidelines

- V. 23, issue 1 “Trending @ your library”
Deadline: May 8, 2015
- V. 23, issue 2 “Numbers @ your library”
Deadline: September 25, 2015
- V. 2, issue 23 “Healing @ your library”
Deadline: January 22, 2016

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

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Page 3: OLA 2015 Super Conference. From left: Deb Kitchener, 2014 OLSA President; James Saunders of Saunders Book Company; Rachel Kerr, Durham DSB Teacher Librarian; Hon. Liz Sandals, Ontario Minister of Education; and Judith Andersen, Durham DSB Teacher Librarian and OSLA 2014 Teacher Librarian of the Year.

Page 31: Photo provided by Trev Grant on Flickr (www.flickr.com/photos/trevgrant/13982702464/), and has been modified for reuse.

The Editor's Notebook



Diana Maliszewski

I am old enough to remember the 1980's and '90's recruiting campaign created by the American army. Commercials based on their slogan used to run on television, extolling us to "Be all that you can be". What does it mean to be a teaching librarian? What does it mean to be in or at our school libraries? What does it mean to "be all that you can be"?

I am taking an Additional Qualification (AQ) Course right now, my first "official" professional learning course since I completed my Masters of Education degree with the University of Alberta (My learning has been ongoing, but none of what I've done since then until now appears on my Ontario College of Teachers Qualifications record—but that's another argument for another day). The AQ course is on Mentoring, and it's a fantastic course to take, especially for school library professionals, who need to consult, collaborate and coach

colleagues and students regularly. This course makes equity education a priority and makes explicit connections between who we are and who we serve, and notions of culture, equity, and identity.

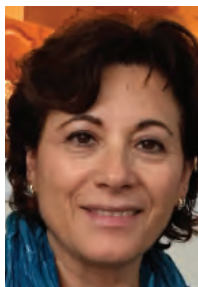
Teacher-librarianship is part of "who I be". My professional identity is closely intertwined with the role, so much so that I think I've ignored several advancement or new job opportunities because I couldn't picture myself as being outside the school library. I've been a teacher-librarian for my entire career (18 years and counting in 2014-15) and I don't regret a single moment. In what other school occupation can you BE so silly, organized, influential, creative, innovative, reflective, far-reaching, far-thinking and accessible?

When our editorial board team decided on the topic for Volume 22 #3, we realized that it might have many interpretations. We weren't wrong. We have many fantastic feature articles that

explore the BE theme: Carol Koechlin extols us to BE learning leaders, Allison Hall encourages us to BE present and supportive of our colleagues, while Jennifer Goodhand describes how Shakespeare can BE fun for elementary school students. Our regular fixtures (Book Buzz, Professional Resources, Meet the Author, President's Report, Connected Library, Drawn to the Form, and Ask Rita) also demonstrate what can BE possible @ our libraries. I hope this will BE a useful edition of our magazine for you. ■

“ In what other school occupation can you BE so silly, organized, influential, creative, innovative, reflective, far-reaching, far-thinking and accessible? ”





Jeanne Conte

President's Report

It is with a degree of humility and excitement that I step into the role of president of the Ontario School Library Association. During my year as vice president, I was humbled by the energy and dedication of the team of leaders who sit on OSLA Council. With the support of the Ontario Library Association (OLA), I am committed to continuing the fine work of Deb Kitchener and other past presidents who have advocated tirelessly on behalf of Ontario school libraries.

Admittedly, these are not easy times. However, we as an association have remained active and indeed bullish about advocating for the important role school libraries play in education during this era of rapid change. The OSLA has representation on the Subject/Division Association of the Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat of the Ontario Ministry of Education, representation at the OTF Curriculum Forum, and has participated in a day of action at Queen's Park where a team of delegates met with MPPs, the Deputy Minister of Education and representatives of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Education for the purpose of raising

awareness of the evolving role of school libraries. The OSLA has engaged in collaborative projects with The Association of Library Coordinators and Consultants of Ontario (TALCO) to create educational resources that can be located at www.talcoontario.ca. With the support of the OLA and the Ontario Ministry of Education, the OSLA developed *Together for Learning: School Libraries and the Emergence of the Learning Commons* [2010], available in print and as a living document located at www.togetherforlearning.ca. In addition, the OSLA and other provincial school library associations across the nation worked closely with the Canadian Library Association (CLA) to develop *Leading Learning: Standards of Practice for School Library Learning Commons in Canada* [2014]. Finally, it was gratifying to see how well represented school libraries were at OLA Super Conference, 2015. The theme of the conference this year was suited to 21st Century learning...Think it! Do it! That's how we roll these days, isn't it?

With so much happening in school libraries these days, it's almost impossible not to get caught up in the excitement! In fact, I wonder if there

was ever a more exciting time to *be* at your library?

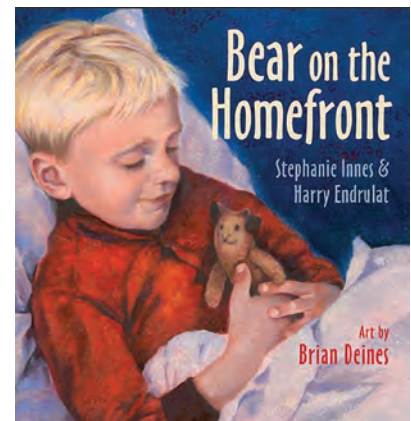
A wordle of the traditional school library might include words such as quiet, books, reading, research, study, learn, literacy, story, genre, fiction, nonfiction, reference... all great words that describe the many ways school libraries met the needs of learners prior to the pedagogical shift evident in today's educational landscape. As the heart of the school, it is inevitable that in order to remain current, school libraries have also changed with the times. Today, the school library learning commons offers all the traditional opportunities and so much more to entice learning communities to *be* at their libraries.

Be at your library to question, discover, and learn! *Be* at your library to explore, play, and create! *Be* at your library to collaborate, communicate, and build knowledge! *Be* at your library to read, reflect and rethink!

Clearly, these are exciting times to be the OSLA president. I look forward to serving the membership in the upcoming year! ■

Book Buzz

When a column has buzz in its title and “Be” with its several homonyms as the theme of the issue you might be expecting to read a column focusing on a honey producing insect. I hope you won’t be too disappointed if, for the most part, I follow a different course. Blame *Sesame Street* if you must, but this column will be brought to you by the letter “B”. I hope you will discover some books that will engage your students and encourage them to be @ your library!



Bear on the Homefront
by Stephanie Innes and Harry Endrulat;
art by Brian Deines
Toronto: Pajama Press, 2014
ISBN 9781927485132

This picture book, based on a wartime diary, is a sequel to *Bear at War*. Stephanie Innes and Harry Endrulat tell the story of two of the 10 000 guest children from British cities who found refuge in Canada during World War II. The story is told from the point of view of a stuffed bear that was returned to its owner, a little girl named Aileen Rogers, after her father was killed in action during World War I. Many years later, during the next Great War, as a nurse in charge of getting the children settled in to their Canadian homes, Aileen offers her stuffed bear to console a lonesome young boy, exiled far from his home and family. This story, and Brian Deines’ vivid artwork will help students five years of age and older to understand the Second World War as it was experienced by some of the young people who were not on the battlefield.



Bee Time: Lessons from the Hive
by Mark L. Winston
Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard
University Press, 2014
ISBN 9780674368392

Simon Fraser University professor Mark L. Winston is a bee biologist who has been researching bees for over forty years. He argues that we should learn from the experience of the bees with colony collapse disorder. He believes that we need to be aware of the dangers of habitat destruction and of the unknown cumulative effects of pesticides and other chemicals that, in themselves, should not be harmful. Winston's explorations of collaboration and communication in bee culture and the interactions between bees and humans can be used to help high school students to discover some of what can be learned from the natural world.



The Bees
by Laline Paull
New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2014
ISBN 9780062331151

Flora 717 is the protagonist in this novel about a working class bee who is a lowly sanitation worker assigned to disposing of corpses. She rises above her station in society because her size enables her to produce large quantities of the royal jelly that is critical to the hive's ability to reproduce itself. She rises even further, becoming a forager, but when she discovers that she is able to carry an egg, a prerogative reserved for the queen, she is torn between her social responsibilities and her own desires. She endures this conflict through personal losses and through hardships that devastate the colony, carrying a seed of hope planted in information received from spiders. High school students will learn about the importance of bees in the ecosystem and wonder about the merits of various social structures while reading this engaging anthropomorphic narrative.



Black and Bittern Was Night
by Robert Heidbreder; illustrations
by John Martz
Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2013
ISBN 9781554533022

The nonsense verse in Robert Heidbreder's tale of a children's crusade to liberate Hallowe'en from the threat of frightening "skul-a-mug-mugs" invites readers to join in the fun of making meaning of words by looking at context clues. A dictionary won't help much with the meaning of words like "skelley," "ring-ruckled," or "enclupping" so students who are celebrating Hallowe'en and enjoying the rhymes in the text will also be practicing understanding a text by looking for the clues in front of them. It is a bit early to be planning for Hallowe'en, but make a note to consider using this spooky picture book with your classes from pre-kindergarten to grade three.

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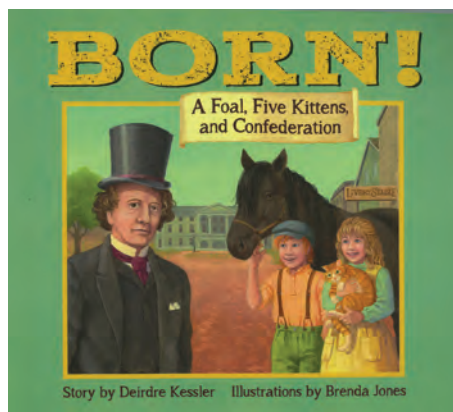
Blue Mountain

by Martine Leavitt

Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2014

ISBN 9781554984237

This middle school novel is the anthropomorphic adventure story of a young bighorn who is born on a mountain, where life is simple. However, the hero, Tuk, is forced to assume a leadership role, taking the herd on a long journey filled with dangerous creatures: wolf, bear, wolverine, puma and man. The herd is depending on him because he has seen the vision of the blue mountain in the distance that will provide them with refuge. Natural hazards include pathless swamps, seemingly impenetrable forests and hungry predators. Although this has the feeling of a very traditional story, complexities are added to this modern version as pristine valleys are infected by highways, machines, buildings, and human beings with tranquilizer guns. Despite all the obstacles and tragedies in the path, Tuk endures, matures as a leader, and ensures the survival of the herd.



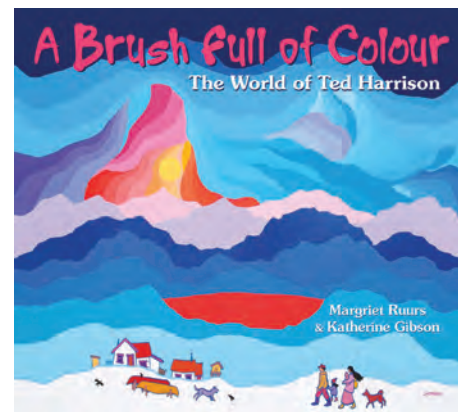
Born! A Foal, Five Kittens, and Confederation

by Deirdre Kessler; illustrations by Brenda Jones

Charlottetown: Acorn Press, 2014

ISBN 9781927502334

When studying history, it can be challenging to remember that important political events take place in the context of ordinary people living their everyday lives. In *Born!*, Deirdre Kessler and illustrator Brenda Jones have told the story of nine year old twins living and working in a livery stable in Charlottetown in the summer of 1864 when the fathers of Confederation were meeting to lay the groundwork for the birth of Canada. One of their friends is the fourteen year old Robert Harris who would be commissioned to produce the famous portrait of the Fathers of Confederation in 1883. This blend of social and political history will help bring the past to life for junior and middle elementary students.



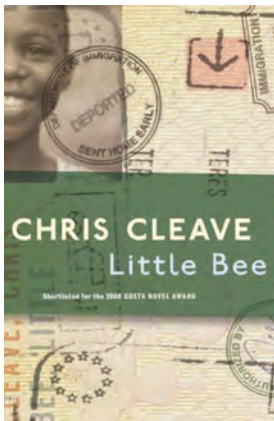
A Brush full of Colour

by Margriet Ruurs and Katherine Gibson

Toronto: Pajama Press, 2014

ISBN 9781927485637

Some have described Ted Harrison's painting as "folk art" but he has described his style as "the school of cheery." In their profusely illustrated biography of the painter, Margriet Ruurs and Katherine Gibson have used the life of the artist to illustrate how to look for the positive dimensions of life and to "try to spread a little happiness" while being true to oneself. Harrison's life took him from a coal-mining town in England, to art school, to post-war military service in India and Africa. Harrison's art evolves when he moves to the Yukon after teaching and painting in Malaysia, New Zealand, England and Northern Alberta. Questions in the captions accompanying Harrison's paintings (mostly of the north) invite students to be critical thinkers as they view the bright acrylic images and learn about the life of an inspirational artist.



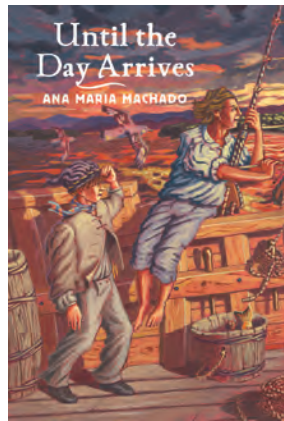
Little Bee

by Chris Cleave

Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2012

ISBN 9780385677783

From the first page of *Little Bee*, the reader is struck by the voice and perceptions of globalization of the Nigerian girl who gives her name to the novel. She has arrived in England as an illegal immigrant and endured two years of detention. She learns that to gain admission to Britain she must “look good or talk even better.” She decides that focusing on learning the language is the safer course of action. Making contact with the English family that she hopes will be able to help her, she finds herself in a much more complex situation than she had expected. Most appropriate for senior secondary school students, this novel explores the dynamics of family relationships and friendships that transcend cultural differences.



Until the Day Arrives

by Ana Maria Machado with translation

by Jane Springer

Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2014

ISBN 9781554984558

You may have noticed that there isn't a “b” in the title of this novel but the inclusion is justified by the fact that this old-fashioned adventure story takes middle-grade readers from seventeenth century Portugal to the author's native land, **B**razil. The narrative tells of siblings orphaned by the plague who are forced into exile where they are able to make lives for themselves thanks to their own personal skills and the patronage of powerful people in commerce and the church. Despite their own good-fortune, they are not blind to the injustices of slavery, racism and sexism in an empire built on the slave trade, and they dream of overcoming the prejudices of colonial society to find happiness and a new life in the New World. ■

Meet the Author

Megan Crewe

Meet Megan Crewe, author of young adult novels *Give up the Ghost*, *The Way We Fall* (nominated for a 2013 Forest of Reading® White Pine Award), *The Lives We Lost* and *The Worlds We Make — The Fallen World Trilogy* — and her latest trilogy, *The Earth & Sky*. The first book, *Earth & Sky*, was released earlier this year, with the release of *The Clouded Sky* coming this May.

TingL: On your website you highlight your early love of reading and, especially, of writing. Can you share that with our readers?

It's hard to say exactly why — maybe because my parents were avid readers and read to me regularly from when I was very young — but I've loved stories as long as I can remember. Reading



them, making up my own, sharing them. My very first “books” were stories I dictated to my mom, who wrote them down for me (because I hadn't learned to print yet) on pages that she stapled together and I then illustrated in crayon. Throughout elementary school, I was always filling notebooks with tales about cats and princesses and the like. It was so natural to me that I never thought of it as something I might do for anything other than fun until I started to get enthusiastic feedback from teachers and friends.

How did your teachers encourage you?

For starters, they didn't discourage me from writing away even when they might have liked it if I was using my spare classroom time in a wider variety of ways! As I got older, it was my teachers who really made me realize that writing was something I could pursue as a career. My fifth grade teacher picked my story out of everyone in the class's to read as an example to aspire to. My eighth grade English teacher recommended me for participation in a writing contest. My first English teacher in high school, Bert De Vries, was hugely supportive from the moment I gave him the first few chapters of the very first novel I finished in the first couple months of grade

nine—he was certain I was going to make it as a writer, and he made sure I knew that and didn't forget it! That sort of feedback from my teachers was more persuasive than enthusiasm from my family and friends, who of course were a little biased in my favour.

You published your work in magazines when you quite young. Was that hard for a 14-year-old to do?

It definitely took a lot of time and practice, and several rejections. I should also note that the first magazines I got published in were specifically for student/teen work, so I was competing on a more level playing field. I was submitting to broader magazines during my teens too, and stacked up a whole bunch of rejections there before I started to have stories accepted in my early twenties. I never expected to get published that young, though, so I didn't actually find the rejections that hard to take. It was easy for me to remind myself that I was only just getting started with my craft and would only get better.

Do you still have the stories you wrote when you were a little girl? Do you still read them, and what goes through your mind?

Evelynne Bernstein

I don't have my very early stories—a couple years after I moved out of my parents' house, I asked my mom about them and she admitted she hadn't realized I'd want them and had thrown them out! I do have most of my work from junior high on, though some of the old computer files are difficult to open these days. I don't look at them very often, but when I do I'd say my reaction is divided pretty evenly between cringing at how much I had to learn and being impressed by how much I was trying to accomplish.

What did you do before you began writing full time? What obstacles did you face as a young writer?

My primary day job since my university days was tutoring and providing school support for children with special needs (mainly autism). It was a demanding job, but I enjoyed working with the kids, and the flexible hours gave me time to write. Lack of time was probably the biggest obstacle. I wrote relatively little when I was in university, other than over summer break, because I just didn't have the energy to stay focused between my course load and working. After I graduated, it was a little easier, but I always had to weigh the advantages of having more free time against the disadvantages of a lower income.

What books influenced you when you were a teen reader?

It'd be difficult to list them all! A few off the top of my head: I started reading Stephen King and Anne McCaffrey's books when I was in junior high, and they introduced me to adult-level speculative fiction. I hugely admired King's ability to create and draw out suspense, and McCaffrey's world-building. Robin McKinley's *The Blue Sword* had a major impact on me—I loved her character dynamics and storytelling so much I tried to write a book modeled directly after it. Then in high school I discovered William Sleator, with his unique scientific "what if"s, which encouraged me to push the limits of my own ideas.

Congratulations on your successes! Your *Fallen World* trilogy is available in translation in a number of countries, and your latest *Earth & Sky* trilogy has sold in the foreign market as well. Why are the genres of fantasy, science fiction and the supernatural so fascinating to you?

Thank you for the congrats! I think speculative fiction appeals to me simply because it allows me to push beyond the possibilities of the life I'm used to. There are so many more ideas to explore and conflicts to play with when I'm not restricted by what could really happen. And the wonderful thing is that those stories can still make powerful statements about the real world through metaphor and allegory, and through the characters' still-human emotions and relationships.

Do you ever face writer's block? How do you plan a trilogy? Can you share a bit about your planning and writing process?

I've never really struggled with what I'd think of as "writer's block." Usually if I'm stuck it's a sign that either I need to take a step back and ease off on the pressure, let my mind play with the characters and situation, and a solution will come to me, or that I'm trying to rush forward with an idea too soon and it needs more stewing time. My process usually involves a lot of stewing. I just finished the first draft of a book I got the initial idea for nearly ten years ago. It took that long for the pieces to come together in a way I was satisfied with. (Thankfully it usually doesn't take that long! A year or two is more average, and occasionally a concept comes together even faster.)

During that stewing time I'm periodically thinking about the idea and jotting down plot possibilities, character traits, settings—all the bits and pieces that add up to a story. When I have a fairly solid sense of the overall plot and character arcs, I start outlining from beginning to end to make sure the whole story hangs together. If I need to do some research (which varies from book to book), I'll get that in there too, as the facts I find out often inform the course of the story. Once I have an outline I feel is solid enough, I dive into the writing. I tend to draft quickly, and repeatedly—I'll finish a rough draft in a couple months, and then do at least one if not two full rewrites before I'm ready to share it professionally.

Writing a trilogy has worked pretty much the same way, other than along with figuring out the bits and pieces of the first book, I'm making notes on the later books as well. I like to know what the basic character arc for the other books will be, and approximately how the entire story will end (in a vague

...continued from page 15

sense — I don't work out the details until I'm ready to actually write those books).

What are you working on next?

At the moment I'm revising the third book in the *Earth & Sky* trilogy, and also working on a brand new project that (shockingly!) contains no speculative elements, though it has a similar tone to my earlier books.

Who or what are your greatest influences today?

Again, it's hard to list all the authors I admire! Some of those I've most enjoyed and learned from: in adult fiction, Connie Willis, Daphne du Maurier, Lois McMaster Bujold, and Peter S. Beagle; in YA fiction, E. Lockhart, Megan Whalen Turner, Jaclyn Moriarty, and Scott Westerfeld. I also get a great deal of inspiration from all the other sorts of stories I consume, from TV to movies to music.

You have a wonderful website, fantastic book trailers, and you are on Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr, just to name a few. How important is it to keep up to date with new technologies?

I try to balance keeping up to date with the platforms that work best for me. For example, I haven't jumped into Instagram yet because I just am not that big a photo-taker (not having a camera phone contributes to this quite a bit, I'd imagine). I love being able to interact with my readers though, and so I try to be available all the places they might reach me.



What advice would you give to young writers today?

I think the most important pieces of advice I could give are:

1. Read a lot, and widely, and think about what you've read. Reading books I enjoy and books I don't and figuring out why they have those effects has taught me more about the craft of writing than anything else. Reading widely also gives you an idea of what's already been done (and therefore what hasn't that you could explore) and exposes you to a variety of ideas and tropes that may inspire you even if they're in genres you're generally not excited about.
2. Write a lot, and get feedback on your writing, and strive to improve. Like any other skill, you hone the craft through practice. It's not enough just to write tons of material though—you also need to practice looking at what you're written, and hearing what others think about what you've written, and figuring out how to make those stories even stronger.

3. Realize that there is no one right way. I know lots of writers and they all approach their writing differently. All that matters is that you find a process that lets you finish stories you're happy with. So try not to worry if you hear about a writer you admire who swears the key to success is doing something you can't imagine working for you (The flipside of this is, there is no sure path to success. That's why points 1 and 2 are so important).

What are you reading for personal pleasure right now?

Unfortunately with a baby in the house and books under contract, I haven't had much pleasure reading time lately! I've been trying to catch up on the many recent YA novels I've heard good things about, like Brandon Sanderson's *Steelheart* and Abigail Haas's *Dangerous Girls*.

Thank you Megan! We're looking forward to *The Clouded Sky*!

Professional Resources

Rob Baxter

The Teenage Brain: A Neuroscientist's Survival Guide to Raising Adolescents and Young Adults

by Dr. Frances E. Jensen and Amy Ellis Nutt

Harper, 2015;

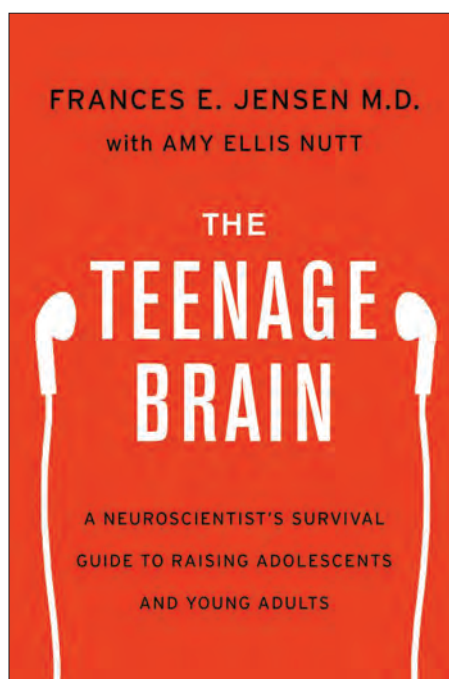
ISBN 978-0-00-744831-9

For educators at all levels, parents and students interested in human behaviour and mental health

Research into the teenage brain is a relatively recent development, growing mainly over the past ten years, since most funding for neurology and neuropsychology studies has been granted to infant and child development, or research into brain diseases affecting the elderly, like Alzheimer's disease.

Dr. Jensen decided to pursue this area as her own two boys were entering their teens, and has managed to debunk quite a few myths about adolescent behaviour: brain growth, for example, is not complete by the time a child enters kindergarten; a surge in hormones is not necessarily the cause of emotional or irrational behaviour; IQ and talents are not completely set at puberty. To help parents and educators better understand the very ones they're responsible for raising, it was also Dr. Jensen's desire to provide them (us) with this book using "real data from real science journal articles," but written for palatable consumption.

The brain, in its adolescent stage, is "both more powerful and more vulnerable than at any other time" in life because of neural plasticity, or the ability



to learn at peak efficiency. "This kind of information needs to get out there: teens need to become aware that this is one of the golden ages for their brains," says Dr. Jensen. The IQ of an adolescent can either stay the same, decrease or increase, but it is not yet known how to improve it. Parents can help the process along, however, by suggesting their teens do just "one thing at a time," avoid multitasking (a topic explored in greater detail below), limit digital socializing to a maximum of two hours a day, and asking them write down their own schedules.

Dr. Jensen's findings have had much influence, extending as far as the U.S. legal system and a better understanding of what happens to the brain when it suffers a concussion as a result of a sports injury, for instance. In addition,

she was contacted by a Washington D.C. law firm that had to explain why adolescents should not be tried and sentenced as adults, setting her off on an "adventure in the intersecting world of juvenile justice and neuroscience." It should be remembered that the U.S., along with Somalia, are the only two countries in the world not to have signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, outlawing the sentencing of juveniles to life in prison without parole. After much debate and a few test trials, however, the Supreme Court finally decided, in 2012, that it was "unconstitutional to mandate a life sentence without the possibility of parole for all juveniles convicted of homicide under 18 years of age at the time of their crime." This brought about a change in sentencing practices in no fewer than 29 states.

For anyone wishing to pursue the topic, Dr. Jensen offers 21 pages of a selected bibliography and copious notes to support her research.

A Deadly Wandering: A Tale of Tragedy and Redemption in the Age of Attention

by Matt Richtel,

William Morrow, 2014;

ISBN 978-0-06-228406-8

A must-read for students, parents, and educators at all levels interested in the cost and effects of technology and multitasking on the brain, attention and lives

This multi-layered account of the death of two Utah rocket scientists caused by a teenager texting while driving reads like fiction, but is still an unfortunate

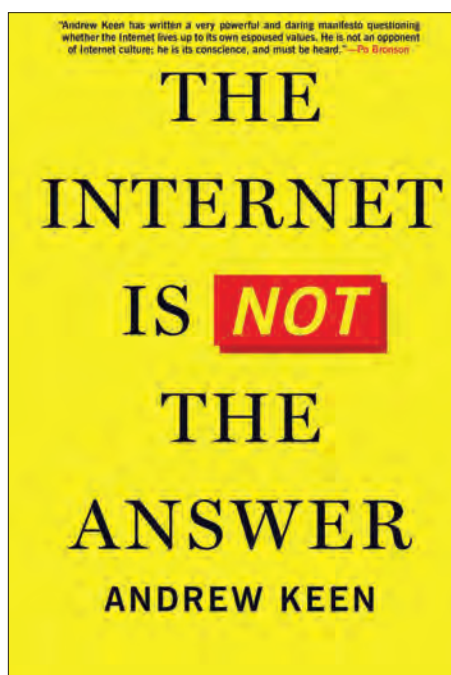
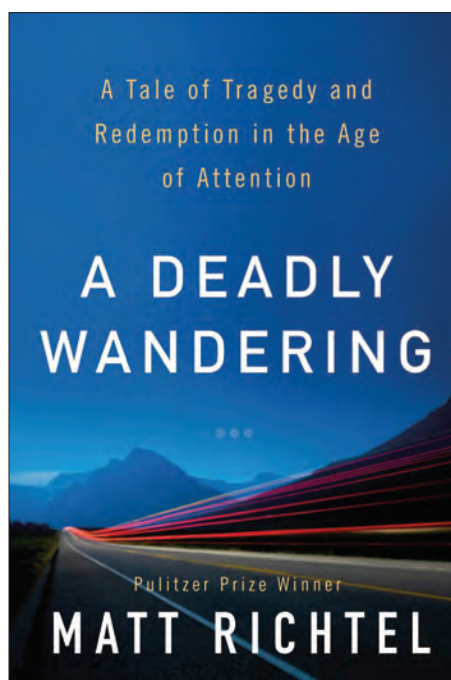
...continued from page 17

everyday occurrence, despite laws created to prevent it. Woven into the narrative is well-documented research by neuroscientists showing that the brain, for most of us, is ill-equipped to handle multitasking: "...the brain is limited, lacks bottomless capacity, and isn't particularly fast relative to computer technology."

All-round and well-liked high school student Reggie Shaw texts his girlfriend multiple times while driving to work early one morning, and crosses the median, resulting in the death of James Furfaro and Keith O'Dell, scientists building rocket boosters at ATK Systems, also on their way to work.

The tragedy took place in 2006, at a time when there was little legislation against distracted driving and might have gone without much investigation except for State Trooper Rindlisbacher's conviction that hydroplaning, Reggie's explanation of the accident, could not have been the cause. Years went by before he finally admitted that he was at fault because of his texting.

On the bright side, however, was that much came to light about the brain's (in)capacity to multitask, including research done by Dr. David Strayer, scientist and psychologist, on attention, information processing and how people become overwhelmed with information. "In whose interest was it," Strayer asked, "to discover that there was a risk to this thing that everyone loved doing, and that was one of the most culturally celebrated activities, multitasking?" In the beginning stages, cellphone and automobile companies, the pushers of



gadgets, were among the top opponents of Strayer's research.

Other findings, based on the work of Dr. Anne Treisman, 2009 recipient of the Grawemeyer Award in Psychology, and the 2011 National Medal of Science, show that human attention is limited because of a clash inside the brain between bottom-up and top-down attention. We need top-down attention for focus on activities such as driving and reading, but bottom-up attention is instant and beyond our control when, for instance, we hear a siren or see a plane flying by. We can be so easily distracted, our brains can be overloaded, and there is a marked decline in productivity when we try to multitask: too much information, the brain is quickly overwhelmed, and humans, just as quickly, lose focus during complex tasks.

The brain needs to be connected to pursuits other than those linked to technology, such as nature, an idea which runs counter to the current "glorification of multitasking" and digital socialization. For suggestions, try www.wisdom2summit.com, with a focus "on living with mindfulness and wisdom in the digital age."

The Internet is NOT the Answer
by Andrew Keen
Atlantic Monthly Press, 2015
ISBN 978-0-8021-2313-8 ; eISBN 978-0-8021-9231-8
Of great interest to students, parents and educators interested in technology, economics and social justice

From the "Christopher Hitchens of the

Internet” and author of *The Cult of the Amateur* (2007) comes *The Internet is NOT the Answer*, Andrew Keen’s latest warning about the Internet and its impact on the individual and the global economy.

Well-written and researched, with over 40 pages of footnotes, Keen argues convincingly that “the Internet has triggered one of the greatest accumulations of wealth in human history” because of companies like Google, Amazon and Facebook. Amazon, despite its convenience and reliability, has significantly reduced authors’ and publishers’ profits. In 2012, the company was apparently responsible for the loss of 27,000 jobs in the U.S. alone. Google, the world’s largest and most powerful advertising company, “is around seven times

larger than GM, but employs less than a quarter of the number of workers.” Apple and Google keep their profits offshore to avoid paying tax which “puts the fate of the world economy in the hands of (a) few cash hoarders.”

Keen recounts the history of the Internet and what it has spawned, but perhaps unfairly highlights Mark Zuckerberg’s personal inability to communicate (claiming he’s “socially autistic”), despite his creation of Facebook, currently the world’s biggest communication tool. To further its goals, Facebook has purchased Oculus VR, a virtual reality company for 3D gaming, as well as Ascenta, the UK-based pilotless drone company, with investments in Vicarious, an artificial intelligence company. According to their founders, the goal of these companies, among others, is to “improve the human race,” but at the expense of employment due to the concentration of technological ownership by just one company. One of the most obvious examples of how technology has affected employment is Eastman Kodak which used to employ some 145,000 people in Rochester, New York. Now, in the midst of our digital revolution, it is estimated that Kodak has only 8,500 employees.

Keen is not entirely negative, however. What he advocates is “an informal Bill of Responsibilities that establishes a new social contract for every member of networked society.” We have been led to believe that the Internet creates benefits and equality for all, but in light of the scenarios described in this book, Keen maintains that our digital economy “translates into massive wealth and

power for a tiny handful of companies and individuals.” For a visual preview of the book: www.ajkeen.com.

The Comeback

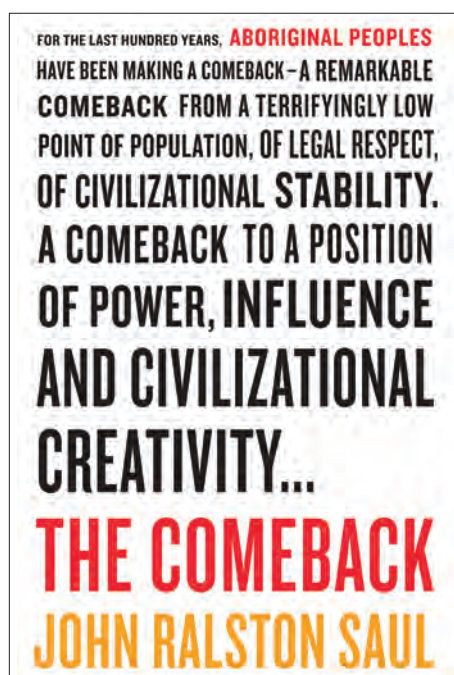
by John Ralston Saul
Viking, 2014

ISBN 978-0-670-06873-9

An acquisition necessary in all primary and secondary school collections of Aboriginal resources for students and educators seeking a better understanding of Canada’s First Nations

Considered by some to be Canada’s leading public intellectual and deemed a prophet by Time magazine, John Ralston Saul succeeds in portraying the country’s Aboriginal communities’ situation as one of a comeback: “To a position of power, influence and civilizational creativity in the territory we call Canada.” It’s time for non-Aboriginals to set aside guilt, sympathy and dismissal of First Nations peoples as failed civilizations, based on the false notion of European superiority (racism) and warped ideas about Darwinism embedded in our curriculum. Says Saul, “We must reinstall a national narrative built upon the centrality of the Aboriginal peoples’ past, present and future.”

Aboriginal rights and recognition are changing for the better as a result of a long court case launched by the Musqueam Band, in particular Chief Delbert Guerin, located on the south side of Vancouver. The community was cheated out of money by the Department of Indian Affairs for land leased to the Shaughnessy Heights Golf Club, like many First Nations



across Canada. In 1984, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in favour of the Musqueam, underlining that the Crown had ignored its obligation to act in the best interests of Native peoples, based on the idea of the *Honour of the Crown*, “an important Aboriginal contribution to justice for all Canadians,” as Saul points out. In a second case, the Supreme Court ruled that the Aboriginal tradition of oral memory was valid when establishing the ownership of land, thus breaking with the European tradition of the requirement of written proof. Thanks to our indigenous peoples, Canada has been provided with a new way of thinking about the laws governing the country. And because they have been betrayed and abused countless times by both the justice system and the Department of Indian Affairs, they, as treaty partners, are asking to deal directly with the prime minister and the Privy Council.

The book is not a retelling of history from the Aboriginal point of view by a

non-Aboriginal, but includes writings and speeches by Native Canadians who, themselves, optimistically explain current indigenous reality. Reprinted is the lecture delivered at the 2009 Lafontaine-Baldwin Symposium by Siila Watt-Cloutier, Inuk leader and International Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council. Entitled “Returning Canada to a Path of Principle,” the lecture highlights the importance of Canada’s Arctic and Inuit in shaping the country’s future: “We occupy a unique position in Canadian society and, increasingly, in world affairs.” Economic development must not take place at the expense of environmental sustainability.

In an excerpt from *Principles of Tsawalk: An Indigenous Approach to Global Crisis*, E. Richard Atleo (Umeek), hereditary chief of the Ahousaht First Nation on Vancouver Island, Professor at the University of Manitoba, explains the practical side of myths, or “origin stories”: “In this sense, myths are not

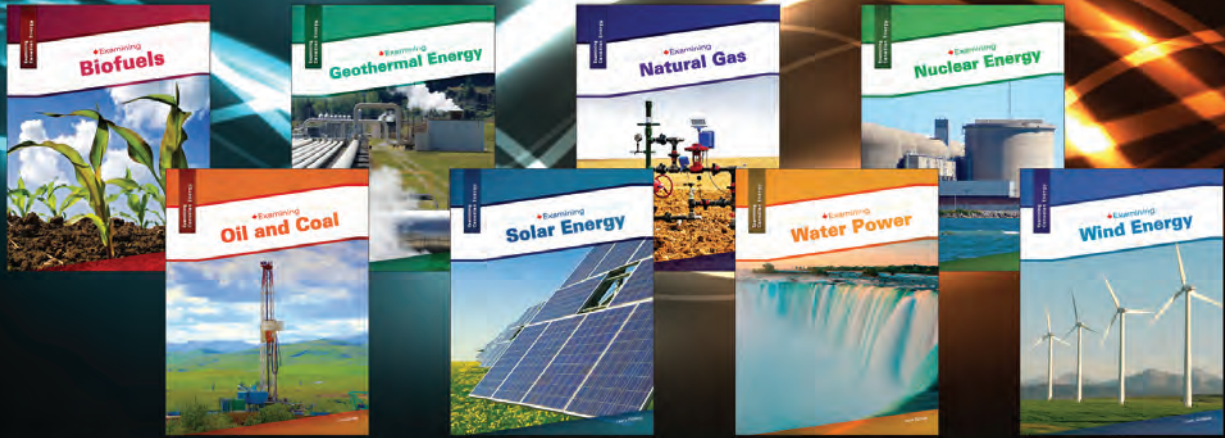
necessarily in opposition to the intent of scientific inquiry...”

Also reprinted is the December 17, 2012, *Huffington Post* article, “Idle No More Is Not Just an ‘Indian Thing’,” in which Wab Kinew, member of the Midewin and living in Winnipeg, explains this political movement triggered by Aboriginal opposition to Bill C-45. It sought to reduce the amount of federally protected waterways and to speed up the way in which reserve lands could be surrendered. Using social media like Facebook and Twitter, Idle No More managed to get young people from across Canada to pay attention to politics at a time when their rights were in jeopardy, and to try to find meaning in life. “Aboriginal people may be the canary in the coal mine. If we overlook one section of the constitution, does that mean others are in similar jeopardy?”

These Native voices, and so many more, speak for all Canadians of every origin. ■

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Beyond Images is generously supported by the Dove Self-Esteem Project

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Connected Library

Be with technology @ your library!

Current research provides many entry points for the teacher-librarian to support current initiatives focusing on mental health and physical wellbeing. As digital literacy leaders, we have an opportunity to support the whole student by modeling and sharing 21st century tools and apps.



BE HAPPY BY GAMING @ YOUR LIBRARY

McGonigal (2011) claims that “games make us happy” (p.28). She has tracked a survey “of more than one thousand gamers to find out what emotions they seek out when they play their favorite games...they range from bliss, to relief, to personal pride, to feeling emotionally close to another player, to surprise, to curiosity, to excitement, to awe and wonder” (McGonigal, 2012, para. 22 & 23). Whether it’s a board game, a simulation or a massive multiplayer online game (MMOG), what games do you provide in the library? Do you have a corner for board games? Do you model the use of SimCity (www.simcity.com) and civilization-type games (www.civ4.com)? Have you started a Minecraft club (minecraftedu.com)? Provide opportunities for your students to experience *fiero*, “what we feel after we triumph over adversity” (McGonigal, 2011, p. 33) by leading the way with challenging game experiences.



Brenda Roberts



BE SELF-AWARE WITH TOOLS @ YOUR LIBRARY

Self-tracking is here to stay. Many tools are available to assist you in tracking your reading choices. Sites like Library Thing (www.librarything.com), Shelfari (www.shelfari.com) and Goodreads (www.goodreads.com) allow you to review, star, tag and recommend books. Not only can you track yourself but you become part of a global reading community. Older students can set up their own accounts. Teachers can model the use of these sites for younger students by hosting a classroom read-aloud account. Fox (n.d.) mentions services like Mint.com, GitHub, Goodreads, OpenPaths.cc (openpaths.cc), and Pocket (I try to only read articles through Pocket so I can accurately track how many articles I am reading and of what variety). These all allow for data tracking, even if it might just be an RSS feed. Combined, they become interesting. I can find out if I read more articles in a particular location by comparing my Pocket data to my Openpaths data...I can find out that on days I play video games I very rarely end up reading or writing (para. 8).

BE BALANCED WITH NATURE @ YOUR LIBRARY

Games, e-books, self-tracking apps — it's easy to become consumed by technology. Carr (2011) suggests a solution. He summarizes research findings that claim technology use decreases our ability to attend, think deeply and even empathize. He goes on to share that researchers found these effects are countered by "spending time in a quiet rural setting, close to nature, people exhibit greater attentiveness, stronger memory and generally improved cognition. Their brains became both calmer and sharper" (p.219). As we promote the use of technology we'd be irresponsible if we didn't model and encourage balance. If "simple and brief interactions with nature can produce marked increases in cognitive control" (p. 220) how do you bring nature into your library?" It could be something as simple as a fish tank, plants or even pictures. ■

...continued from page 23

BE HEALTHY BY READING @ YOUR LIBRARY

The National Reading Campaign (2013) reminds us that “on average, readers have better physical health, empathy, mental health. Reading for as little as 6 minutes can reduce stress by 60%, slow heart beat, ease muscle tension, and alter your state of mind” (infographic). Keep your students healthy by promoting on-line reading. Free e-books are available from sites like The International Children’s Digital Library (en.childrenslibrary.org) and Kobo (kids.kobobooks.com). Recommend online reading by sharing sites like Epic Reads (www.epicreads.com/books) and author sites. Remember to share sites for games, too, like the Minecraft wiki (minecraft.gamepedia.com/Tutorials/Tips_and_tricks).

Carr, N. (2011). *The Shallows: What the internet is doing to our brains*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Fox, E. J. (n.d.). What are variables you can track to get started with Quantified Self? Quora [weblog]. Retrieved from www.quora.com/What-are-variables-you-can-track-to-get-started-with-Quantified-Self

McGonigal, J. (2011). *Reality is broken: Why games make us better and how they can change the world*. Penguin Books.

McGonigal, J. (2012). How might video games be good for us? Big Questions Online [web-log]. Retrieved from www.bigquestionsonline.com/content/how-might-video-games-be-good-us

National Reading Campaign. (October 17, 2013). Reading Research Infographic. National Reading Campaign [weblog]. Retrieved from www.nationalreadingcampaign.ca/research/reading-research-infographic

READING IS GOOD FOR YOU

On average, readers have better:



Physical Health



Empathy



Mental Health

Reading for as little as 6 minutes can



= 60%

↓ **STRESS**



+



reduce stress by 60%, slow heartbeat, ease muscle tension and alter your state of mind

Reading reduces stress:

68%

100%

300%

600%

more than:



Listening to music



Drinking a cup of tea



Going for a walk



Playing a video game

Reading Saves the World infographic, created by the National Reading Campaign and CBC Books (2013).

Ask Rita

Resourceful



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

Dear Rita,

I teach a class half time and operate a small but busy school library for the other half. I am feeling stressed with the amount of work to be done every day. It feels as though I complete one thing only to see that I've left two or three in my 'to do' pile. This is now overwhelming me: my selection list is only half ready for shopping next month, the book repair box overflows, there are books to check in, books to shelve, (Oh my!). Getting time to plan and collaborate ... some days I am nearly brought to tears. I love my job but am so frustrated with falling behind that I am getting discouraged.

Sincerely, ☹️

Dear ☺️,

I understand exactly how you are feeling. It seems that as teacher-librarians we spend more time getting ready to operate our school library than we do teaching. I hear many teacher-librarians talk about the overflowing book carts, return bins and repair boxes not to mention the difficulty finding time to collaborate with teachers. You are not alone!

We teacher-librarians need to identify what we want to achieve in our role as a TL. You might write a personal mission statement to help you identify your priorities. I have written one which covers all areas of a teacher-librarian's role but you will know best what you are capable of doing in your half-time position.

My mission is to create a fully accessible 21st Century Learning Commons by advocating for and actively pursuing change: including new information

technologies and digital tools as resources, assisting all staff and students to access a variety of resources and production spaces, creating products communicating successful understanding in all subject areas, encouraging critical selection and effective use of resources and tools and engaging students in reading for both learning and entertainment. I will meet the needs of the educators and the learners through collaboration in selection, instruction, and presentation opportunities.

A School Library Mission Statement might be considered as well: The XXXXX School Learning Commons supports a community of readers where staff, students and families fully access information in a variety of traditional and digital formats, during and after hours; use information effectively, critically and with a commitment to intellectual rights and freedoms; and learn, understand, create and share in a collaborative, challenging and safe environment. The learning commons aims to cultivate a love of reading and lifelong learning in students leading to excellence in academics and maximization of individual talents and abilities.

Once you have determined your priorities, identify the actions you need to take daily. Consider seeking student, parent or community volunteers to assist with priorities like book returns and shelving. This frees you up for collaboration and teaching. Set aside tasks which you can let go for a couple of weeks and those which can be

...continued from page 25

ignored until you have some “spare” time. Always focus on your mission and fulfill that part of the job. Yes, the book repair box will be overflowing and might eventually need to become a weeding box but your mental health must be the number one priority. In order to continue loving your job, you will need to take a step back and accomplish the things that really matter for your well-being, for your students and colleagues. Remember, managing your time also includes deciding when and if you are able to introduce new initiatives...take your own time for this!

Dear Rita,

I see more and more of my readers heading for the graphic novel shelves in the library. I am becoming interested in using graphic novels in my library program. Can you give me an idea of where to start?

Drawn to this Form (LOL)

Dear Drawn,

Graphic novels almost need no promotion and imagine how engaged your students would be during reading class! Through collaboration, you could encourage the use of graphic novels across the curriculum. I have been chatting with other TingL board members about using graphic novels in the library and we have come up with a few ideas.

Literature Circles: Select 3 or 4 titles and offer the use of these titles to interested class teachers. Start with investigating the terminology/language of graphic novel parts. Next, introduce the titles

with book trailers and a prediction exercise. Have students then read and reflect on curriculum related content with small group discussions as they read. Students could be expected to read two of the titles in order to compare.

Superhero Standoff: Collect an assortment of superhero graphic novels and promote a vote for the “BEST” Superhero story. This might be organized within class or as an extracurricular activity. Tracking might be a Nutrition/ Lunch or after school meeting or might just be a chart with student names and the book titles with a place for a score to be written... or in the case of younger students a sticker for the books they like.

Art: Graphic novel illustrators offer a variety of styles of art in both colour and black and white. Perhaps classes could investigate different styles of drawing and the use of line and colour in the work. The students will want to draw like their favourites.

Graphic Novel Book Club: Offer an opportunity for fans to share and chat about their reading.

Brainstorm with your colleagues to decide how else you might introduce this format of reading into the library program and keep reading our Drawn to the Form column in future Teaching Librarian issues.

Dear Rita and Teaching Librarian editors,

I enjoy reading the articles in this magazine and I am wondering if the issues are

available online. I would like to share some of the articles with a group of educators I meet with. I am trying to go paperless.

Digital T-L

Dear Digital,

Thank you very much for the feedback and yes, our back issues and current issues are online. The link is: www.accessola.com/publications (click on *Teaching Librarian*). ■



Editor's note:

Access, OLA's official magazine, has changed its name to *Open Shelf* and gone completely digital. Check it out or submit an article at www.open-shelf.ca.

Drawn to the Form

Leslie Holwerda

Diversity in Comics and Graphic Novels

Recently, filmmakers announced the film debut of comic book superheroes Black Panther and Captain Marvel. Marvel Studio's Black Panther is a super strong, agile hero with super senses, and is a black African of royal descent. Captain Marvel is a feisty, female fighter pilot with a wide range of powers. Warner Brothers/DC Studios announced that Wonder Woman, the well-known female superhero, will feature in her own movie as well.

What does this have to do with comics and graphic novels? The origin of these superheroes in comic books and their movement to prominence in film is a trend toward more diverse comic superheroes being presented as lead characters. The movie adaptations of the comics ultimately draw readers to graphic novels and comics in the library, where more and diverse titles need to be available to engage readers — and more importantly — to reflect not just the school population but the diversity of the world.

Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009) identifies that “the dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status” (p.4). Each of these attributes should find a place in literature as well as in graphic novels in our school libraries.

Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario schools: Realizing the promise of diversity (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014) recognizes that our students are of diverse and unique backgrounds, and in order to reach their potential must be

provided with resources that reflect their experiences and the diversity of their communities. Comics and graphic novels offer the opportunity to engage students in exploring the diversity of our world through an already appealing format. The question remains: What diversity can we find in graphic novels and comics?

In order to locate diverse titles in this format we need to identify diverse characters with unique attributes, diversity in content, as well as diversity in comics' creators. Although G. Willow Wilson states, “I think we are at a point in comic book history where there is unprecedented openness to diversity” (Sava, Asselin, Bollers, and Wilson, 2014, para. 23), diversity in graphic novels and comics remains somewhat limited. Marvel Comics is promoting:

- a female Muslim superhero, Ms. Marvel,
- a female Thor: Goddess of Thunder,
- an African-American Spiderman, and
- a diverse group of teen crime fighters in *Runaways*.

DC Comics has created a new, more relatable Wonder Woman and a Batwoman who is lesbian; however, DC Comics also made the controversial decision that the latter character was not allowed to marry (Watson, 2014, para.3).

Archie Comics provides us with recurring character Kevin Keller, an openly gay teen, and Harper Lodge, a biracial female who happens to use a wheelchair. The stories told in the *Jinx: Little Miss Steps* series includes a single dad, a lesbian mother and the lead female, who is dreaming of playing on a baseball team.

You will find many series titles with diverse characters presented as members of the cast: *Magic Trixie*; *The ElseWhere Chronicles*; *Ramp Rats*; *Knights of the Kitchen Table*; *Robot City Adventures*; *Secret Science Alliance*; *Lila and Ecco's Do it Yourself Comics Club*; and *Smile*. “And Action” Entertainment has recently introduced an African-American superhero in the three-volume graphic novel series *Legend of the Mantamaji*.

Necessary in the search for diverse comics and graphic novels is accessing titles created by diverse talent: Mariko and Jillian Tamaki are co-creators of *Skim* and *This One Summer*, Marguerite Aboutet has written the *Aya* series about Cote D'Ivoire, Marjane Satrapi writes about Iran in *Persepolis*, Chad Solomon creates the aboriginal series *Adventures of Rabbit and Bear Paws*, and Alison Bechdel uses her own life to create *Fun Home* about the discovery of her sexual orientation. Cece Bell writes of her experiences growing up with a hearing loss in *El Deafo*, and Gene Luen Yang has created a graphic novel about being an *American Born Chinese*. The list is short and our task as teacher-librarians is to locate and promote these diverse creators.

The Internet and social media have been important in leading the comics industry to begin addressing diversity. A press release from We Need Diverse Books states, “What began as a social media awareness campaign quickly grew into a global movement that demanded the attention of the publishing industry, the media, and readers everywhere” (Sousa, n.d.). Campaigns promoting diversity include: #weneeddiversebooks on Twitter and Facebook; and #weneeddiversecomics and #wearecomics on Tumblr. Readers, creators and other comic enthusiasts are asked to post a photo with an identifying sign reading #WeAreComics or #iamcomics to share the diversity of comics readers, creators, publishers, retailers, fans, and professionals.

In September 2014, Banned Books Week in the United States focussed on challenges to comics and graphic novels. “Comics are uniquely vulnerable because of the medium’s visual nature and because comics still carry the stigma of low-value speech” (Baur, Foust, 2014, para.8). Add to this increasingly diverse content that in the past has not been part of the mainstream, a misunderstanding that all comics are meant for children, and ‘knee jerk’ reactions to one panel or page in a comic or graphic novel and challenges result. In our roles as teacher-

librarians we should be educating ourselves first and our colleagues, parents and administration to the variety and benefit of keeping comics in our schools. The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (CBLDF) is a non-profit organization supporting and protecting the intellectual rights of the comic book community. CBLDF was a sponsor of Banned Books Week along with the Freedom to Read Foundation, and has worked with creators, retailers, publishers and readers as well as libraries and educators to promote the reading of comics. Suggestions for addressing issues such as diversity can be found on the CBLDF site: www.cbldf.org/librarian-tools/using-graphic-novels-in-education.

Building a Diverse Comics & Graphic Novels Collection

Selection and acquisition depend on both budget and suitability. Graphic novels and comics are available in thirty-two page single issues (floppy), and multiple issue volumes or graphic novels (bound as trade paperback or hard cover), which, depending on the binding, can range in price from \$5.00 to over \$30.00. Circulation of the comics must be considered before purchasing, as floppies will not maintain physical integrity and some paperback binding is not durable. Reinforcing the spine with a heavy duty stapler and adding protective plastic covering will improve the life of some bound paperback titles.

Accessing comics and graphic novel reviews in journals such as: *The Horn Book Magazine*, *Kirkus Book Reviews* or *Quill and Quire* may be possible. Online comics review sites will more consistently supply teacher-librarians with insight into many graphic novels regarding diverse content and appropriateness. Some of my favourites include:

- Comic Book Resources: Comics Should Be Good
www.goodcomics.comicbookresources.com
- Comic Vine
www.comicvine.com/reviews
- The Comics Journal
www.tcj.com
- The Diamond Bookshelf
www.diamondbookshelf.com
- No Flying No Tights
www.noflyingnotights.com

- School Library Journal
www.slj.com/category/reviews

If more information is needed before a decision can be made, contact Andrew Woodrow-Butcher at The Beguiling in Toronto where his expertise, especially about diversity in comics and age appropriateness, will not disappoint you. The other and better source, especially for final decision-making must be you, the teacher-librarian, and your knowledge and understanding of the content, gained by reading the titles yourself.

In order to promote diverse comics and graphic novels to teachers, an awareness of possible applications is important. Supplementing traditional resources with graphic novels can engage more learners and can offer learners a text that may reflect an image they recognize as “me”. By becoming familiar with the basic mechanics of comics creation, we can help students to read the combination of text, dialogue and images and improve comprehension. English Language Learners (ELL) can put spoken language in a context that will be more easily understood (Derrick, 2008, para.4) and possibly

experience a sense of inclusion. Students can be encouraged to evaluate the accuracy of the portrayal of diversity in the book, identify social issues or disproportionate representation of groups. Krashen (2011) identifies voluntary reading of comics as benefitting readers. By encouraging more reading in general of both comics and books he has found links to an improved interest in reading. Finally, the popularity of comics and graphic novels, whether read voluntarily or as part of a program, will expose readers to the experiences of diverse characters in diverse communities.

As the number and variety of titles available in this format become more available, our shelves should overflow with graphic novels and comics representing diversity.

Our students deserve to know their world in all its diversity. Whether your school is monochromatic or multicoloured, whether it is an elite sports school or a school with a differently abled population, the library must reflect every possible facet of humanity in order to be inclusive and representative of the global community. ■



Students from Loughheed Middle School show their love for diverse comics.

Jennifer Goodhand

#shakespeareforkids

Sex, murder and criminal intentions. Suicidal depression and ravenous desire for power. Slavery, abuse, bestiality, racism, vengeance, bloody warfare and betrayal. As he wrote them, Shakespeare's plays should come with an "R" rating. English-speaking teens, both engaged and confused, sit at desks and unravel the poetry to get at the meat of the Bard's humour, violence and social commentary. However, exposure to the Shakespearean omnibus doesn't have to be age-exclusive. With some creativity, a touch of the adorable, and the right resources, Shakespeare's tales can be made accessible to a much younger audience. The plays can form the foundation of a language program for those who love a good story. There is no better place to find the necessary resources than in a library, and no better place to find those story-lovers than in an elementary school.

Lois Burdett is an elementary teacher in Stratford, Ontario. In that pre-hashtagged, blogged-out educational era called the 90s, she came up with a formula for introducing the magic of Shakespeare to students as young as seven: She began to rewrite some of the plays in rhyming couplets, weaving some of the original lines (often the really famous ones) into the structure of modern language. Through Macbeth's murderous undoing, Viola's disguised quest for love, Hamlet's despondent vengeance, Juliet's pure innocence and Prospero's path to forgiveness, Burdett's students developed their literacy skills and became excited about these characters dreamed up 400 years ago. The series, *Shakespeare Can Be Fun*, includes eight books - A Child's Portrait of Shakespeare followed by seven plays (*Hamlet for Kids*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream for Kids*, *Macbeth for Kids*, *Romeo and Juliet for Kids*, *The Tempest for Kids*, *Twelfth Night for Kids* and *Much Ado About Nothing for Kids*). Surrounding the theatrical text of each book are the often hilarious and always delightful illustrations by Burdett's students, as well as reflective excerpts from their writing such as summaries, opinions and journals describing the innermost thoughts and motivations of the characters. These books are a goldmine of teaching tools and even include suggestions for extensions and cross-curricular activities. The 800s shelf in your library needs them.

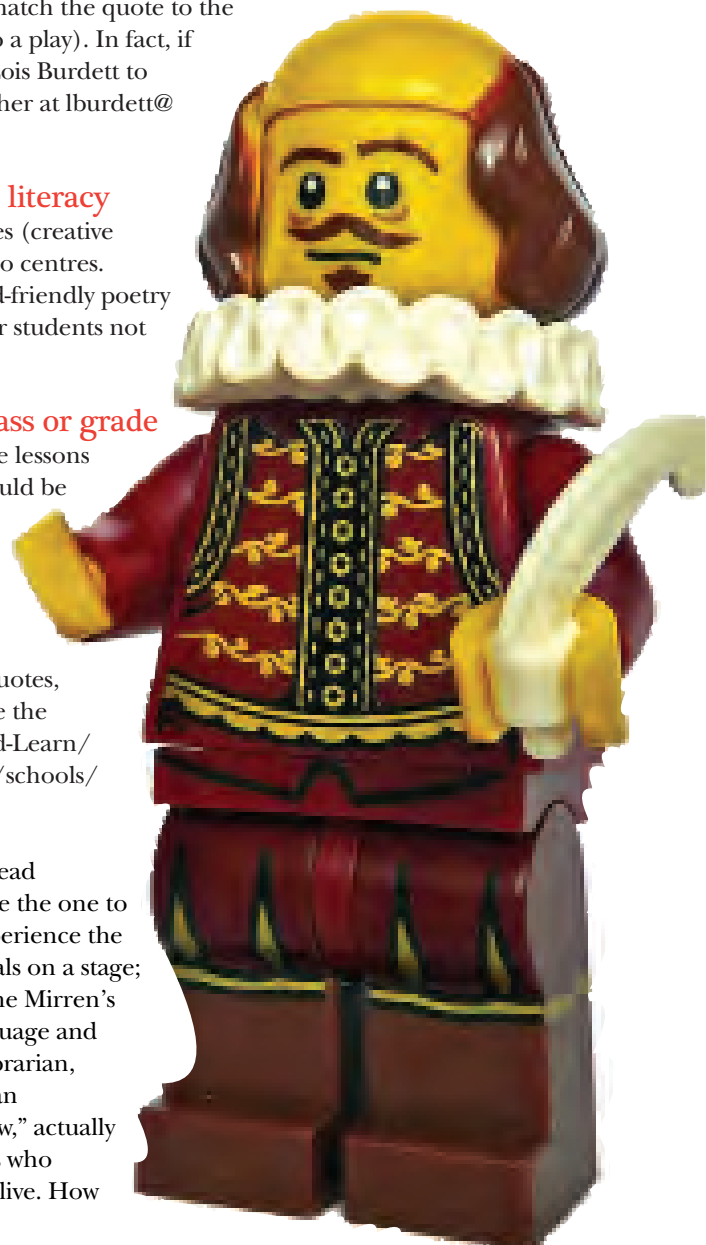
Fast-forward to the year 2015, a digital age in which books are still beloved but technology is a force to be reckoned with. Burdett is in the final stages of developing a digital literacy curriculum for *A Midsummer Night's Dream for Kids*, the first in a series that will include all of the *Shakespeare Can Be Fun* books. She describes the curriculum as a balanced literacy program designed to be implemented over the course of a full term, targeting students in grades 3-6 (though its open-ended nature would make it appropriate for even older students). Divided into two types of lessons that can be accessed digitally, the program includes teacher guides, anchor charts, prewriting models, blackline masters, assessment templates and active learning cards for role-play and cooperative experiences. The "Exploring the Text" lessons guide students through Burdett's narrative, revealing only a little of the plot each day to keep them wanting more (Burdett says that in testing the lessons, students have been so desperate to keep reading that they ask to miss recess). The "Quoting the Bard" lessons highlight passages from Shakespeare's original play. Both types of lessons develop students' writing skills through a study of form, function and focus (Burdett gives the example of writing a "friendly letter" with the function "to persuade" and a focus on "word choice"). Years of work on Burdett's part are making it easier than ever for teachers, in particular teacher-librarians, to make Shakespeare come alive for today's screen-loving iKids.

In 21st-century classrooms, teachers can place the text under a document camera for shared reading. They can scan the pages and put them online for guided or independent reading. They can create audio or video recordings of the plays for a flipped classroom. They can create whole cross-curricular units of study integrating language, social studies, arts and math with a comedy or tragedy at their core. Resources and a teacher-librarian combine naturally to inspire learning. Students don't have to learn Shakespeare behind a library's walls, but shouldn't they be able to discover him there? The school librarian of the past would have been responsible for stocking Burdett's series; for the teacher-librarian of today, the books are just the first step. In

creating a Learning Commons, where staff and students come together to inquire, investigate and communicate, the teacher-librarian is an integral cog in the information-literacy wheel. If you believe that Shakespeare's timeless works can ignite the imaginations of children today, it is up to you, teacher-librarian, to promote and support their use in the classroom:

- **Host a LiBARDry week** (alternatively with a less cheesy title), highlighting the man and his works through displays, read alouds, lunchtime play-chats and challenges (e.g. match the quote to the character, create a trailer for a play, write an alternative ending to a play). In fact, if you have a vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself, you can book Lois Burdett to conduct a workshop at your school for students or staff. Contact her at lburdett@shakespearecanbefun.com
- **For infinite variety, create Shakespeare centres as a literacy series in the library.** Go nuts: reading centres, writing centres (creative and analytical), discussion centres with prompts, art centres, video centres. *Shakespeare Well-Versed*, by James Muirden, is a handy book of child-friendly poetry that summarizes all of the plays in just a few short pages (ideal for students not studying any particular play in depth).
- **Offer to support a language unit for a particular class or grade level.** Co-planning the activities and evaluations, co-teaching the lessons and co-assessing the products with a willing classroom teacher could be an excellent way to provide a great feast of learning for your students.
- **Post on websites and social media.** Using a library website, Twitter feed or blog, get students and families in the school community excited about Shakespeare by posting links, quotes, questions and competitions. Some links that might be helpful are the Folger Shakespeare Library (www.folger.edu/Content/Teach-and-Learn/Shakespeare-for-Kids) and BBC Primary History (www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/famouspeople/william_shakespeare).

Dame Helen Mirren said, "I do believe children should not be allowed to read Shakespeare until they are 15 years old." I know. I know. No one wants to be the one to contradict the classiest woman in the world. I agree that people should experience the Bard as he meant them to: in a theatre, swept up in the story by professionals on a stage; however, I think that Lois Burdett has given us ammunition to dispute Dame Mirren's contention. According to Burdett, teaching Shakespeare spawns great language and writing. With her resources and the guidance of an impassioned teacher-librarian, children can go beyond reading the plays to performing them. Children can understand what lines like, "False face must hide what false heart doth know," actually mean. In their excitement and understanding, children can become adults who love Shakespeare, thus keeping this little piece of western cultural history alive. How fortunate is the teacher who gets to be a part of that! ■



Carol Koechlin

Be a Learning Leader @ Your Library Learning Commons

Teacher-librarians have always been key players in schools where time, budget, staffing and vision for collaborative teaching have provided them with a critical role in supporting teaching and learning. Vast amounts of research over the years have proven that we have a positive influence on literacy and learning. Disadvantaged are those schools without excellent library programs. School boards' investments in library spaces, both physical and virtual, along with professional leadership, are vital in supporting teachers and students. Learning today calls for new environments and approaches conducive to working in our networked world where information explodes and knowledge is fluid. Classroom teachers want to help their students become wise, savvy and responsible users of information and ideas. They need your help more than ever before.

Nearly seven years ago, my colleagues and I began to champion the Learning Commons approach for school library transformation with the publication of *The New Learning Commons Where Learners Win!* Early adopters embraced the model and shared their struggles and success and we followed up with more publications, articles, webinars, boot camps and workshops to address evolving needs and the realities of shifts in learning pedagogy. Interest and implementation have now grown from individual schools to whole districts both nationally and internationally. Along the way, we have collected stories, videos, and articles as our success mounted.

Today we notice a new excitement, not just from teacher-librarians who

are enjoying successful results, but by students and teachers who begin to take ownership of library spaces and initiatives. That transfer of ownership seems to be the tipping point as opposed to just a change of physical spaces and a new name over the door. When the shift happens, teacher-librarians know they are working at the centre of teaching and learning and not just on the fringes. It takes courage to risk releasing ownership, but with that step, teacher-librarians help schools embrace the Learning Commons as a whole-school approach and cement their role as leaders of future-oriented learning.

Ontario school library professionals are well positioned to advance as learning leaders in their schools. In our document *Together for Learning: School Libraries and the Emergence of*



Figure 1: Learning Commons expectations.



Figure 2: Collaborative leadership is key to success in a Learning Commons approach. It takes all players in a learning community working together to drive the vision set forth.

the Learning Commons (T4L), teacher-librarians are cast as leaders of whole-school learning through the Learning Commons approach. The document calls for us to contribute our expertise in fostering independent reading, inquiry learning and building information literacy skills, in addition to weaving in the newer competencies and opportunities to the learning table such as participatory learning skills and digital citizenship.

Keep checking the growing T4L website (www.togetherforlearning.ca), ripe with examples of school library learning commons transformations and program that drives the four key components of the document as visualized in Figure 1.

The Teacher Librarian is well equipped to lead learning in partnership with classroom teachers, administrators and other specialists. Because of the teacher

librarian's unique role in the school they also have the potential to help students 'learn how to learn'. We want students to leave our educational institutions having a set of competencies that will carry them on into successful lives after formal school. The Learning Commons can play a significant role in building those competencies (Brooks Kirkland and Koehlin 2014).

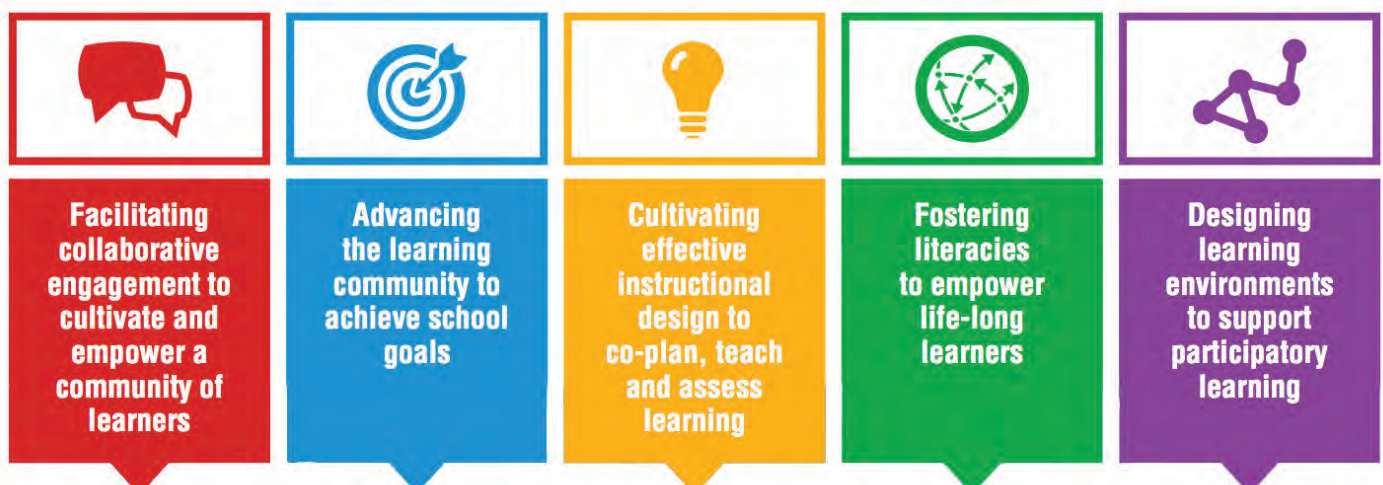
Now we also have a national standards document to add another layer of refinement to our work in Ontario. In June 2014, Canadian school library communities were awarded a long awaited tool to help schools move toward learning for the future. The launch of *Leading Learning: Standards of Practice for Library Learning Commons in Canada* at the CLA Conference in Victoria, British Columbia, last year is an invitation to lead schools into action. The focus of the document is on the learner and building both physical and

virtual learning environments that are conducive to evolving needs now and in the future.

What is a Learning Commons?

A Learning Commons is a whole school approach to building a participatory learning community. The Library Learning Commons is the physical and virtual collaborative learning hub of the school. It is designed to engineer and drive future-oriented learning and teaching throughout the entire school. Inquiry, project/problem-based learning experiences are designed as catalysts for intellectual engagement with information, ideas, thinking, and dialogue. Reading thrives, learning literacies and technology competencies evolve, and critical thinking, creativity, innovation and playing to learn are nourished. Everyone is a learner; everyone is a teacher working collaboratively toward excellence.

Five bold standards of practice for the



Standards of Practice for School Library Learning Commons in Canada

Figure 3: Standards of Practice for School Library Learning Commons in Canada.

...continued from page 33

Library Learning Commons set the stage for future-oriented teaching and learning, ready for you to lead the way in your schools. Each standard is “relentlessly focused on learning” (Oberg 2014), so they are not about the ‘stuff’ in the library, but about how we use the best resources, technologies and environments to boost learning and knowledge building. Every school will have different needs, goals and expectations. The Learning Commons will therefore be different in every school. However, to guide transitions and future growth, these five standards on page 33 serve as clear sustainable targets for design and implementation. When all five standards play a role in the SLLC (School Library Learning Commons), dynamic learning is generated and celebrated.

Leading Learning: Standards of Practice for School Library Learning Commons in Canada (<http://clatoolbox.ca/casl/slic/llosop.pdf>) is currently in interactive PDF format. It is presented in three main sections.

- The first section, “Transforming School Libraries to Learning Commons”, highlights the focus and rationale for the document. This succinct overview is a great entry point for administrators and staff who need a background.
- The “Leading Learning Framework” follows with standard charts, themes and indicators for each standard. The standards are not hierarchical as schools may be at different points in each standard – leading in some areas, emerging in others. To help schools find where they are on the growth continuums, each indicator is illustrated with authentic examples linked via the “See it in Action!” phrase in each box. Shared from schools across Canada, these examples add richness, depth, visualization and life to the document.
- The third main part of the document, the “Moving Forward” section, presents school leadership – principals, Teacher Librarians, leadership teams – with steps, charts, additional key resources for implementing, evaluating and sustaining the standards

An invitation to be a learning leader:

The new standards document will give you specific indicators and examples to help you accomplish the vision outlined in *Together for Learning* (T4L). Both documents are rich with ideas to assist you in moving your School Library Learning Common and school into learning that addresses the needs today and for the future. The following are suggestions:

- Form a SLLC Leadership team to help you explore and plan.
- Review the standards and indicators with your leadership team and join this journey from whatever point you find yourself on in the standards transition continuums.
- Use the suggestions and appendix tools in the Moving Forward section to analyze where your school library is now and where you want to head next. Develop a growth plan.
- Facilitate physical and virtual transformations of learning spaces and programs and measure the impact.
- Target specific indicators that match your school improvement goals and begin implementation and review of progress. Share the results.
- Form or join a network of other educators and library professionals who have the same concerns and interests.
- Watch for further growth of the standards work and T4L website. Contribute your achievements and leadership to these projects to advance the future of school libraries in Ontario and nationwide.
- Write a paper for TMC4 (Treasure Mountain Canada 2016) and share your experiences here: <https://sites.google.com/site/tmcanada3>
- Participate in the Year of the Learning Commons 2015 – 2016 here: <https://sites.google.com/site/schoollearningcommons>

Bottom Line: Explore the potential, network with others, ask questions, start documenting your progress, gather the evidence of your success, experiment with solutions, get creative and enjoy knowing that the library learning commons is a journey worth leading. **I**

Brooks Kirkland, A. and Koechlin, C. (2014). Collaborative Leadership – A Learning Commons Model. The Trillium, Ontario ASCD. Retrieved from https://gallery.mailchimp.com/bcaf6a70830c89548ca687b39/files/Trillium_Newsletter_WEB_July_2014_.pdf

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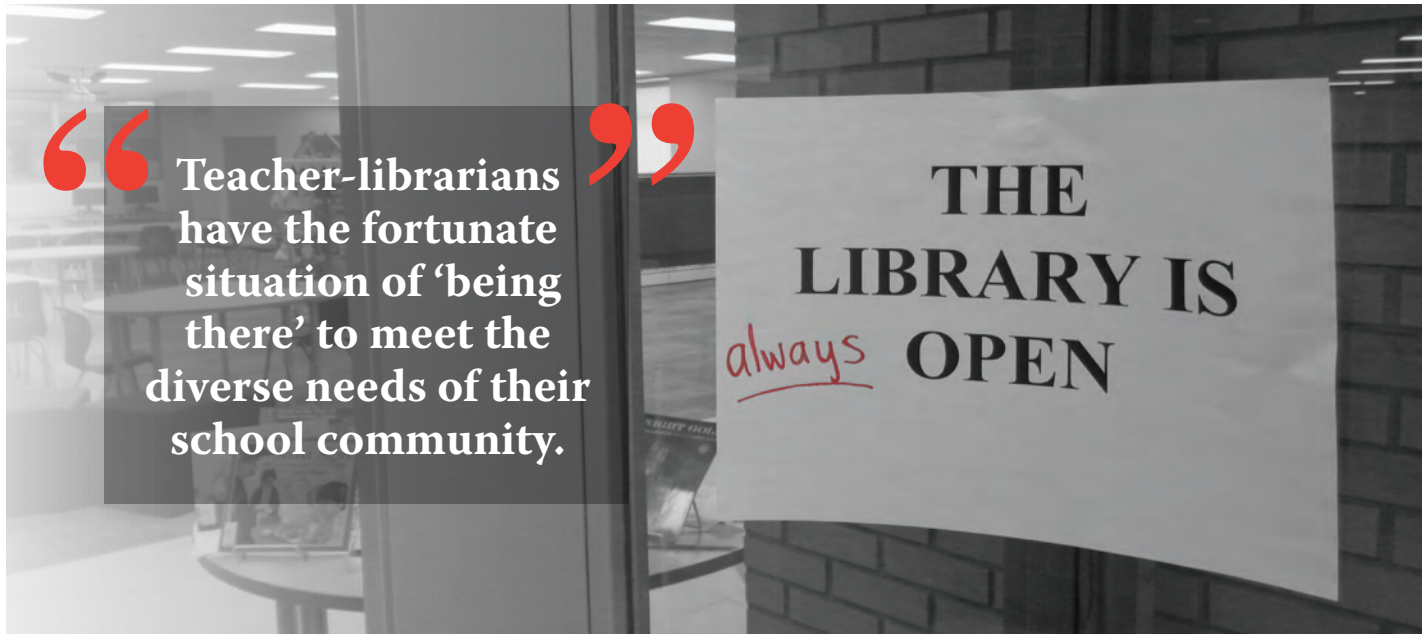
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Being There

Allison Hall



“Teacher-librarians have the fortunate situation of ‘being there’ to meet the diverse needs of their school community.”

It was halfway through the first week of my much anticipated full-time teaching job when I realized that I was in over my head. I did not have the professional knowledge or the experience to deal with the class I was assigned to teach. Fortunately, I had the help of a wonderful teacher-librarian. He helped me to develop my lesson plans, he took groups of students out of my classroom to work with them and more importantly, he was there to listen, to offer advice and to talk me down off the precarious ledge I found myself balanced upon daily. It is because of him that I decided to become a teacher-librarian.

The role of teacher-librarian in 2015 is a diverse one, especially when both technology and numeracy are a big focus of some school boards, prompting librarians to adapt their programs in new and dynamic ways. The perception of the stern librarian in an oversized rocking chair, peering over her glasses to make sure that the students looking through the card catalogue are silent from the

moment they walk in the door, has long been put to rest. These days, the job is more akin to that of an octopus, our many arms busily instructing, organizing, collaborating and inspiring. Although the teacher-librarian job description comes with a long list of duties, the one thing that never seems to come up, at least in any interview I’ve experienced, is the actual physical and emotional presence in the library that a teacher-librarian must have. We are in our libraries before school, during nutrition breaks and after school. We are there for students, teachers and parents when they need us.

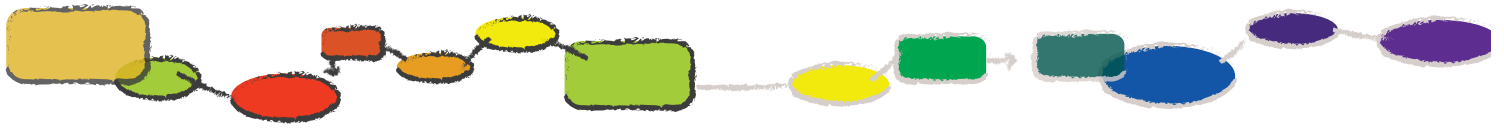
There have been several articles published in the last couple of years about teacher stress and the overwhelming demands of the profession. As teacher-librarians we are in a unique position to help. Whether it is seeking out teachers to work on collaborative projects, keeping an eye out for those who may be struggling, or simply acting as a good listener, our doors are always open. We have the ability to

make a classroom teacher’s work a little bit easier.

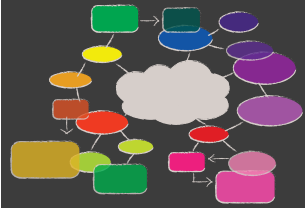
As mental health becomes an issue for more and more of our students in schools today, again our doors are open. We are there for those kids who can’t handle another recess standing outside alone by the door. We are there for the students who don’t have a computer at home and need some extra time to finish their homework. We are there for the kids who just need to talk things through and for those who need a quiet spot to curl up and escape with a good book.

Libraries have always been the central hub of a school, where people come to learn, to explore and often, to find solace. Teacher-librarians have the fortunate situation of ‘being there’ to meet the diverse needs of their school community.

So who does the teacher-librarian go to for advice? Personally, I pay a visit to the music teacher down the hall. ■



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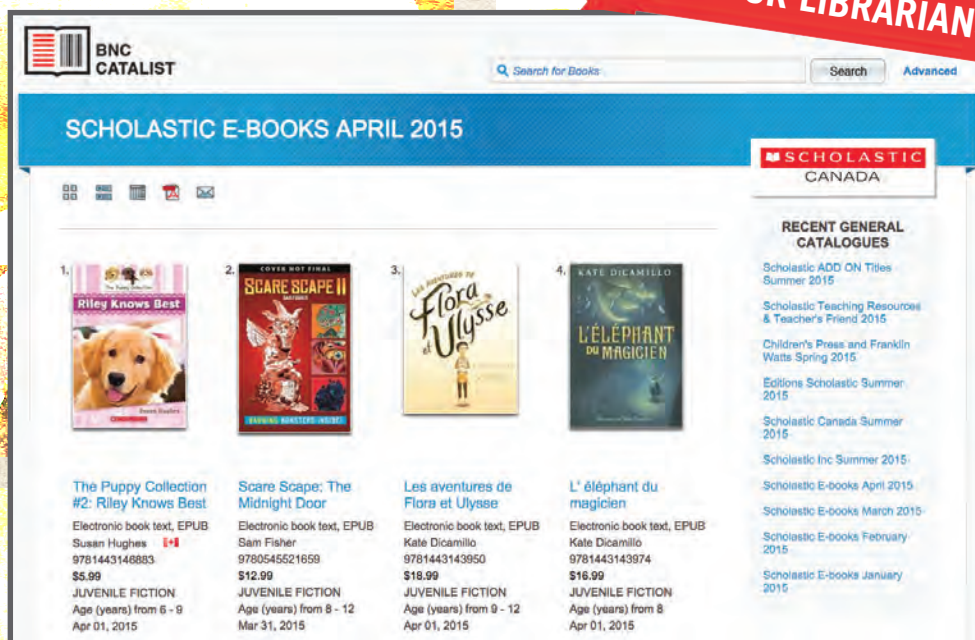
1. 2014 OLA President Anita Brooks-Kirkland addresses the crowd. **2.** Caroline Freibauer speaks about the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program. **3.** OSLA Past President Deb Kitchener shows the Hon. Liz Sandals, Minister of Education, an OLA banner pen. **4.** Aretta Blue and Tara Phillips of Thames Valley DSB pose for a photo before the All Conference Networking Event. **5.** Keynote Seth addresses a full room of Super Conference attendees. **6.** Melissa Poremba speaks to a crowded room on supporting a culture of numeracy. **7.** James Saunders, Sharon Seslija, Deb Kitchener and Dr. Clara Howitt, winner of the OSLA Administrator of the Year Award.

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