

September 2017

Volume 25, Issue 1

THE Teaching Librarian

The Magazine of the Ontario School Library Association
ISSN 1188679X



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THE Teaching Librarian

Volume 25, Issue 1 September 2017 ISSN 1188679X

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creatures @ your library

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TingL mission

The Teaching Librarian

The Teaching Librarian (TingL) is the official magazine of the Ontario School Library Association (OSLA). 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. 25, issue 2	"Time @ your library" Deadline: September 30, 2017
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V. 25, issue 3	"Mania @ your library" Deadline: January 30, 2018
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V. 26, issue 1	"Anxiety @ your library" Deadline: May 27, 2018
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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. Images or graphics can be printed or digital (minimum size and quality are 4" x 6" and 300 dpi, in .jpeg, .tiff, or .ai 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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The Editor's Notebook



Diana Maliszewski

Early in the morning during this summer, I'd open my front door to find that an ant convention was being held on my front porch. The swarm of insects would always dissipate by mid-morning, but it was unnerving to see so many little creatures scurrying all over the stairs leading to my domicile but not quite entering.

Speaking of bugs even closer to my library home ... although I have not seen the video in a very long time, a short film we were shown early in my career about booklice convinced me to enthusiastically and regularly weed my collection. I cannot find the exact movie we were shown, but [wikihow.com/Get-Rid-of-Booklice](http://www.wikihow.com/Get-Rid-of-Booklice) conveys a similar message in a less creepy-crawly way.

These are just a couple of the possible creatures in and around your school library. Contributors to Volume 25 Issue 1 had a great time playing with the open-ended nature of our theme. We have not one, but two zombie-related features, by Kathy Archer and Caroline Freibauer. I co-wrote an article with long-time editorial board member Brenda Roberts on the various pets you can find in the library. I hope your school library start up for the 2017-18 school year will be a smooth and successful one and that many creatures—of the student and staff sort—will invade your library learning commons regularly!

P.S. Two regular fixtures in *TingL*, “Idea File” and “Ask Rita,” have been revamped to create a new *TingL* fixture: “Crowd Sourced.” ■



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President's Report

Welcome back to your 2017-2018 school year! The OSLA Council has continued to be busy advocating for school libraries. Here are a few highlights:

Summer Professional Learning Led By OSLA Council Members

The OSLA Council members applied to teach two ETFO Summer Academy courses and one OTF Summer Institute back in July so that our OSLA members could have an opportunity to connect to other school library professionals from Ontario. I would like to thank Kelly Maggiras, Diana Maliszewski, Joel Krentz, Kate Johnson-McGregor and Caroline Freibauer, who took time out of their busy summers to plan and run engaging summer sessions for their peers. The three-day sessions were filled with practical ideas and allowed participants to further develop their personal learning networks.

Alanna King was also busy this summer with her TeachOntario Book Clubs. If you didn't get a chance to participate in the discussions this summer you are welcome to read them on the TeachOntario Explore portal.

Time to Renew?

Although you may renew your OLA membership at any time, many of us choose to renew in the fall as we return to our school libraries. Renewing or joining OLA, and thus supporting OSLA initiatives, is easy. Simply click here or type this URL in your browser to join or renew: bit.ly/oslarenew.

Why Should I Become An OLA Member?

Here are all the benefits that you can take advantage of once you join OLA:

- Access to the OLA website containing advocacy and teaching resources to support you in the library
- Volunteer opportunities in committees/council to promote reading and librarianship across Ontario
- Discounted registration to OLA Super Conference
- Discounted Forest of Reading® registration

- Award-winning *The Teaching Librarian* magazine
- Wilson Web database access
- OLITA Tech Lending Library
- Access to mentoring support through online MentorMatch program
- Personal perks-discounts with GoodLife Fitness, Rogers, Perkopolis and The Personal Insurance

Do You Know Someone Who Is New To The School Library?

I joined OLA in 2001 (my first year in the school library) and I have been a member ever since! I have accessed many perks and professional learning opportunities and connected with like-minded school library people from all across Ontario to enhance my school library program.

Don't forget to ask new teacher-librarians about accessing their free OLA membership. If they have not been part of OLA before and have completed an AQ in Librarianship recently, then they may be eligible for a free OLA membership this year. Email Michelle Arbuckle (marbuckle@accessola.com) at the OLA office for details.

Registration for the Super Conference 2018!

If you have not been to our annual Super Conference before, then you must go this year! The theme is Fearless by Design and registration opens in November! There are approximately 5,000 delegates from all library sectors who attend each year. The vendor displays, keynote speakers, and peer-led workshops are always engaging, practical, and thought-provoking. This year's conference is Jan. 31 – Feb. 3, 2018 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Upcoming Changes to the OSLA Council

Council members volunteer for a three-year period. There are a few positions that will be opening up for November elections for the February 2018 cycle. Are you passionate about school libraries? Why not nominate yourself or others for a council position? The advocacy initiatives are worthwhile and the professional growth opportunities are limitless!



Melissa Jensen

Congratulations to Kelly Maggiras who is now the OSLA Council President. She accepted the role of President a little early as I stepped down in June. I accepted a new position as the teacher-librarian at the Canadian International School in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. My husband and I moved in July, and I began my new teacher-librarian role on August 1!

I have renewed my OLA membership so that I can keep in touch with all of the great happenings in Ontario and promote the Forest of Reading in my new school library. It was a great honour to be the President of the Ontario School Library Association. I am very proud of the advocacy initiatives we created and nurtured during my time on council and I know that the next council will continue to build on our successes! ■

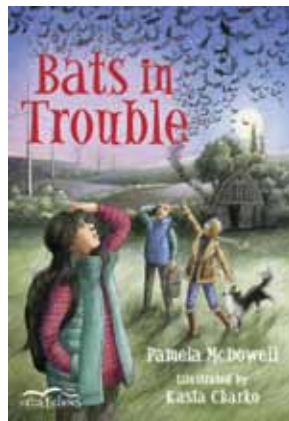
GROW A READER



Through the Festival Fund, the Ontario Library Association delivers new Canadian books to rural, Indigenous, and at-risk communities and bring readers from those communities to the Festival of Trees. Help grow a reader today.

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Book Buzz



Bats in Trouble
by Pamela McDowell,
Illustrated by Kasia Charko
Victoria: Orca Books, 2017
ISBN 9781459814035

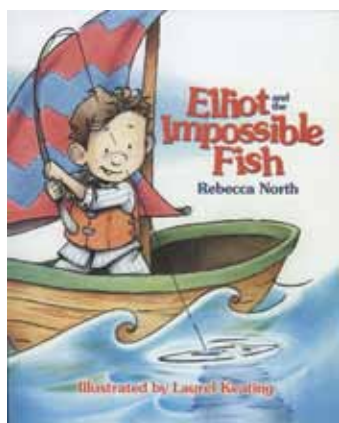
Much to my surprise, most of my reading for the “Book Buzz” for Creatures @ Your Library ended up saying as much about humanity as about the “creatures” featured on the covers. I had expected to be discovering “creature-from-the-Black-Lagoon” type monsters, but I found interesting subjects much closer to everyday reality. That is not to say that this column lacks a suggestion for those who are seeking grisly details: check out *Inside Your Insides*. Other books in this list engage in anthropomorphism to give the reader a chance to see our kind as other living things might see us. Such books help us to see how we are similar to, and how we are different from, the creatures around us, and remind us of the importance of finding ways of coexisting with the other inhabitants of the world around us. All of these suggestions illustrate some of the connections between humanity and the other creatures that can be discovered at your library.

White-nose syndrome has brought bats into the news by killing them in the millions, but that syndrome is not the obvious suspect when Cricket McKay and her friend discover that something is killing the migratory hoary bats on Grandfather McKay’s farm. In the few weeks before her summer vacation ends, Cricket must investigate her prime suspect: new wind turbines. Whether or not her suspicions are confirmed, she needs to get to the bottom of the mystery and develop a plan to save the bats. Black and white illustrations help to engage readers of this chapter book for 7-to-9 year olds as they discover how Cricket and her friends will work together to educate her community, get business on her side, and save the bats that, as Cricket learns, play an essential role in controlling insects.



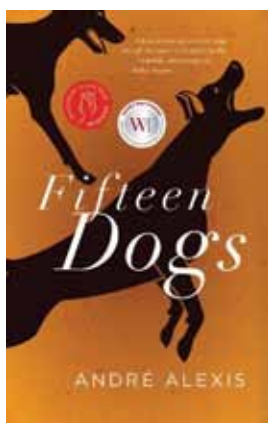
Consider Her Ways
by Frederick Philip Grove
Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977
ISBN 077109244x

Originally published in 1947, Frederick Philip Grove’s final novel explores the world from the point of view of an ant who leads an expedition from her Venezuelan home to North America. She telepathically relays her account of the expedition to a sympathetic myrmecologist (entomologist specializing in the study of ants). Details of ant biology and culture are interesting as are the ant’s observations about humanity. It is noted that man is “a very wasteful animal” (88). The ant is confused by humanity’s obsession with money. The ant editorializes, “Just what it [money] is, I do not know; and neither, I suspect, does man himself” (281). It may be a challenge to find a copy of the novel republished in the New Canadian Library in 1977 and, with a foreword by Robert J. Sawyer, by Insomniac Press in 2001, but the reward for the quest will be an understanding that an ant can give us of the world and of ourselves.



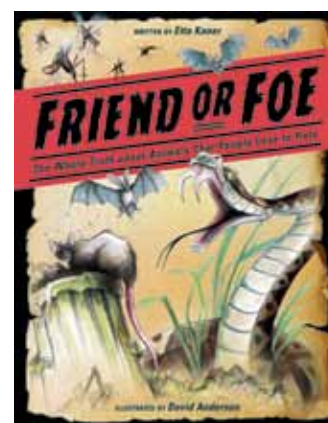
Elliot and the Impossible Fish
by Rebecca North,
Illustrated by Laurel Keating
St. John's: Tuckamore Books, 2017
ISBN 9781771031026

Did you know that a jaeger is a bird that harasses other birds until they drop their prey so that the jaegers can get free meals? This is only one of the discoveries that Elliot makes in his dream quest to catch the biggest fish anyone has ever seen. Elliot also consults with a puffin, a seal and a whale only to find out that they are naturally adapted to the fishing techniques that they use. Resigned to the fact that determination and his fishing line are the only tools he can use, Elliot finally manages to land his fish, only to wake up to discover that the fish was a dream, but not the inexplicable debris from his adventure that has cluttered up his room.



Fifteen Dogs
by André Alexis
Toronto: Coach House, 2016
ISBN 9781552453056

What is love? What does freedom mean and how much is it worth? What is the meaning of life? What is the role of language in giving meaning to life? These are some of the profound questions explored in André Alexis' novel in which capricious Greek gods imbue a pack of fifteen feral dogs in Toronto with human sensibilities and language as part of a bet about the possibility of dying happy. Both the themes that are explored and the content render this book appropriate for mature high school readers. Although they may not be as confused as the dogs by some aspects of human behaviour, high school readers and adults alike may identify with many of the questions the dogs face as they deal with their human consciousness. The dog's eye view of humanity will help that audience experience a new perspective on many aspects of their own world.

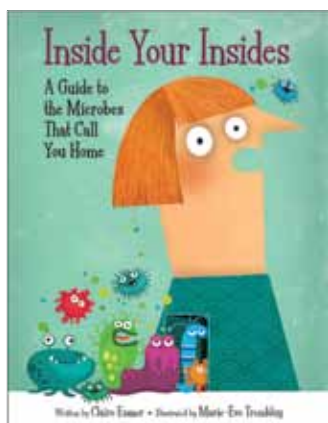


Friend or Foe: The Whole Truth about Animals That People Love to Hate
by Etta Kaner,
Illustrated by David Anderson
Toronto: Owlkids Books, 2015
ISBN 9781771470643

In its presentation of facts about rats, cockroaches, snakes, leeches and six other creatures people love to hate, this book invites critical thinking and debate by presenting two sides to the argument about whether or not each animal is deserving of disdain. The language that is used on each side of the argument is almost as interesting as the trivia about each animal that is presented. On one side, rats give rise to phrases such as "Dirty Rat," "Rat Fink" and "Pack Rat." On the other side, the rats are introduced by a magazine advertisement where the merits of a creature with "teeth of steel, able to dodge speeding cars" who "leaps from great heights in a single bound," echo those of Superman. Targeted at 8-to-12 year old readers, this book is an engaging exploration of creatures with a bad reputation and how language shapes our attitudes towards them.

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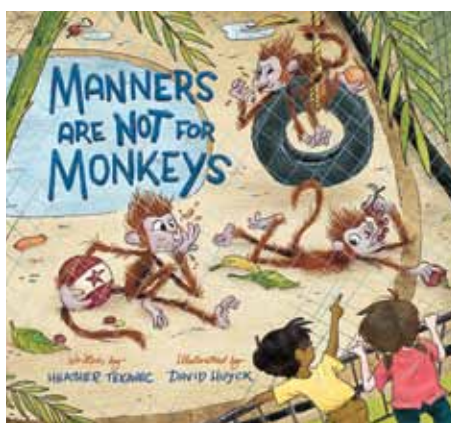
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Inside Your Insides: A Guide to the Microbes That Call You Home

by Claire Eamer,
Illustrated by Marie-Ève Tremblay
Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2016
ISBN 9781771383325

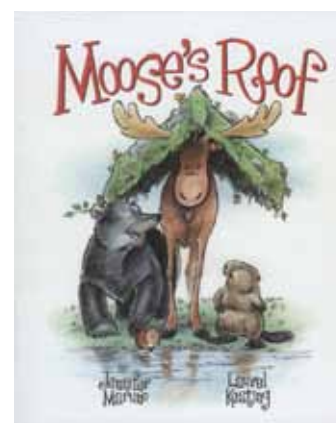
Imagine that your body is an entire planet covered with a multitude of landscapes with different creatures adapted to each landscape. Using similar, easy to understand analogies, Claire Eamer guides young readers through an exploration of their own microbiomes. Rather than avoiding technical language, she explains the jargon in simple terms. Colourful illustrations give a cartoonish character to the microbes that are the subject of the story. “Did you know?” inserts interesting trivia such as “Some bacteria can eat electricity” and additional entertainment value comes from jokes such as, “Not sure you like your microbes?—Don’t worry—they’ll grow on you.” All of this serves the central purpose of this book, educating readers about the importance of good nutrition, avoiding unnecessary use of antibiotics and generally taking care of the microscopic creatures that are part of all of us.



Manners Are Not For Monkeys

by Heather Tekavec,
Illustrated by David Huyck
Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2016
ISBN 9781771380515

The normal human perspective on the creatures housed in zoos is reversed in *Manners Are Not for Monkeys*. When the monkey cage is relocated adjacent to a playground, the young monkeys start observing the human children and are influenced by their good manners. They start playing quietly, taking turns, chewing with their mouths closed and they stop littering the ground with banana peels. Children lose interest in the monkeys, and the monkeys’ mother becomes very concerned, urging her babies to act like monkeys. When a particularly rambunctious group of students visits the zoo and expresses its outrage at the boring deportment of the monkeys by demonstrating how monkeys are expect to behave, the zookeeper finds a surprising solution to the excessive decorum in the monkey house.



Moose's Roof

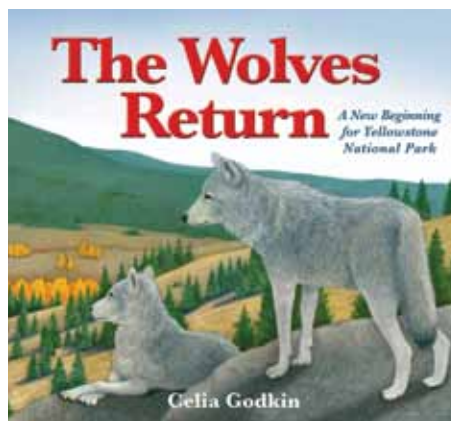
by Jennifer Maruno,
Illustrated by Laurel Keating
St. John's: Tuckamore Books, 2017
ISBN 9781771031004

When he hears the noises of a new camping pavilion being constructed in Butter Pot Park, Moose investigates and sees a building with a roof that becomes the target of admiration of his friends, Squirrel, Beaver and Bear. When he learns from his friends how they are protected from the elements in their nests, lodges and caves, Moose decides that he too, needs a roof over his head. The creatures collaborate to engineer a clever addition to Moose’s antlers to protect him from the rain and sun. It doesn’t take long for Moose to realize that his new possession is a significant burden and that the sky over his head is enough of a roof for him. This picture book for younger readers would be a great way to initiate discussions about animals and where they live. It could also launch a discussion about that familiar expression, “It seemed like a good idea at the time ...”



Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox
by Danielle Daniel
Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2015
ISBN 9781554987504

The Métis author and illustrator of this picture book for 4-to-7 year olds dedicates it to “thousands of Métis and aboriginal children who grew up never knowing their totem animals.” She then dedicates one page with four lines of text spoken by a child identifying with and describing the associated characteristics and behaviours to each of twelve totem animals. The colourful and expressive illustrations of children wearing masks on the facing pages enrich the experience of reading the text and invite comments. The book concludes with a list of totem animals and their qualities and an author’s note explaining the Anishinaabe doodem or clan system and the role of animal guides. The central message is that we are interconnected with all of the creatures around us.



The Wolves Return
by Celia Godkin
Toronto: Pajama Press, 2017
ISBN 9781772780116

As human settlement expanded into the western frontiers of the United States, a conflict arose between the indigenous wolf population and farmers who wanted to protect their livestock. By the 1920’s over-hunting had resulted in the virtual elimination of wolves from the area of Yellowstone National Park. In 1995 and 1996, 23 Canadian wolves were released in Yellowstone National Park in an effort to control the elk population. In words and pictures, Celia Godkin documents the positive effects of the introduction of this predator on the entire ecosystem including, surprisingly, the elk population. By demonstrating the complexity of seemingly simple problems and apparently simple solutions, this clear explanation of cause and effect relationships will encourage its 6-to-9 year old audience to think critically about humanity’s interventions in the environment. ■

Meet the Author

Philippa Dowding

Philippa Dowding is an award-winning copywriter, poet and children's author. Her books have been nominated for the Diamond Willow, Hackmatack, Silver Birch, and Red Maple awards. Her third book, *The Gargoyle at the Gates*, was named a White Raven Book by the International Youth Library in Munich. Philippa lives in Toronto.

TingL: When did you know that you wanted to be a writer?

P.D.: When I was nine years old, I read *Charlotte's Web*. I finished the last page, and thought: I want to write a story like that. So I knew at that moment that I wanted to be a writer. I started writing my first book then and there, but it turned out to be quite hard! Or harder than I was expecting.

Someone has recently asked me what it was about *Charlotte's Web* that inspired me, and it's this: it was the first time that a book made me feel something. In the case of that story, it was a profound sense of loss.

What and/or who influences your writing?

My taste has always leaned toward fantasy. As a pre-teen, I read the *Narnia* series until my books fell apart, then Tolkien (*The Hobbit* is still one of my favourite books of all time). I read and re-read *The White Mountains Trilogy* by John Christopher, a middle-grade dystopia from the 70s, and John Wyndham's *The Chrysalids*, and then *Lord of the Rings*. In university I studied English and discovered stories like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Le Morte D'Arthur*, one of the greatest fantasies of all time, I think.

Where do you get your ideas?

My very first book, *The Gargoyle in My Yard* (2009), was written because one day my children and I saw gargoyles in an antique store on Queen Street East in Toronto. A stairway up to the roof had a gargoyle on each step. I turned away and when I looked back, I had the weirdest feeling that each gargoyle had moved a little when my back was turned.



That night, I told my children a bedtime story about a gargoyle who followed us home.

That bedtime story went on for weeks, since my kids had questions. Where was he from? What was his name? What did he eat? Did he have any friends? What was he doing in Toronto? Did he speak English? Eventually my daughter said, "That's good Mum, you should write that down." And so I did. Once I started, the rest of the gargoyle books came quickly.

Brenda Roberts

Since then, new ideas usually start as a question that gets louder and louder until I have to write about it. For instance, I wrote *The Strange Gift of Gwendolyn Golden* because I couldn't stop wondering what it would be like if you were a totally normal teenager, but woke up one morning with the gift of flight. I wrote *Jake and the Giant Hand* because I've always wondered what happened to the giant's body after Jack cut down the beanstalk (and why didn't anyone notice a giant body rotting in the field)?

So basically my influences are classical fantasy, and my ideas come from my surroundings or from a relentless curiosity.

How do you structure your writing time? Do you have a routine? What do you do to you relax?

I've been a copywriter all my working life, and more recently a children's author, so I've been working freelance from my home for almost 20 years. I've always had an office in my house, tight deadlines, and a strict work schedule.

I work as soon as everyone leaves the house in the morning. I write until lunch, take a break, then write again until 3. I got into the habit of stopping work around 3 to pick up the kids from school, and it's stuck. I'll sometimes work at night, but I'm useless past about 10 p.m., so I'm not a late-night writer.

To relax in my working day, I usually leave the house. I walk the dog, go to the gym, or proof or read at a local coffee shop. The rest of the time, I play guitar, sail, visit friends, hang out with my family, go to movies and enjoy the city, or get obsessive about a Netflix series.

We really enjoyed having you as a visiting author at Edenbrook Hill Public School in Brampton. One of the things that resonated with teachers was the important role telling bedtime stories to your children had on your development as a writer. Could you describe this routine and explain the impact it had on you as well as your children?

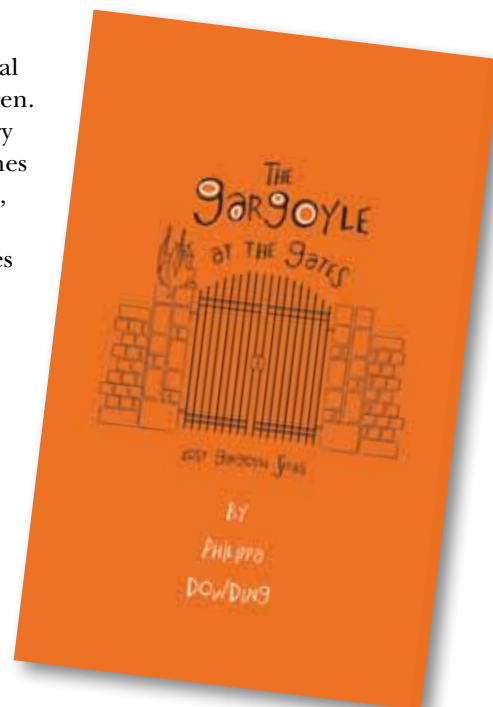
Thank you! I had a great time at Edenbrook Hill Public School as well. Your students had really thoughtful questions.

I always had a story at bedtime as a child, and it was natural

to carry on the ritual with my own children. I read to them every night, and sometimes we made up stories, too. I also play guitar, so sometimes that was part of the bedtime mix. The impact it had on my own children was profound, I think. They grew up loving stories and music. They both read for pleasure, and have been good students.

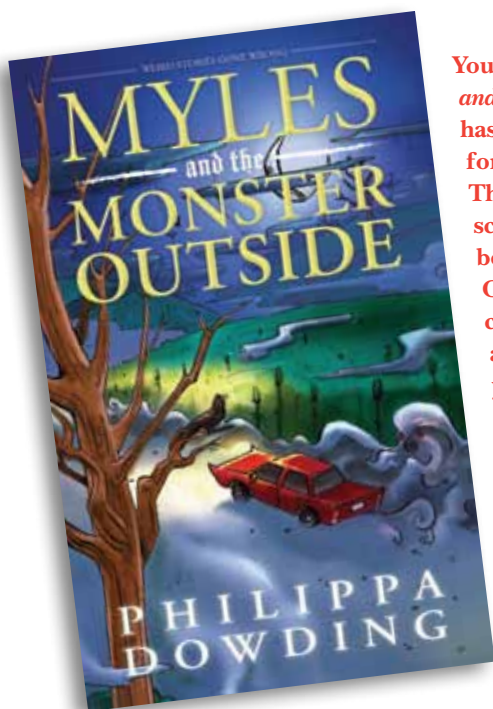
The impact of reading and telling bedtime stories was profound for me, too. It got me writing children's books, as I've described above. But, we were also lucky enough to inherit an older cousin's fantastic library, so we had this incredible collection of the best books from the 80s and 90s, most of them by authors I had never read. Suddenly my children and I were introduced to fantastic picture books (we read *Mable Murple* until I had to buy another copy), poetry by Dennis Lee (I can still recite a lot of the *Jelly Belly* poems from memory) and Jack Prelutsky, books by Robert Munsch, *Franklin the Turtle* and *Corduroy Bear* stories, *Goosebumps*, *Berenstain Bears*, Rick Riordan and on and on. Then of course, along came *Harry Potter*, which we all devoured. All these books just fell into our laps, and while we used the library and I bought books, this treasure trove of the best stories was already curated for us, plus they were ours to read and re-read at our leisure.

Reading to my kids at bedtime, caught me up with decades of the best writing for children, and was the last piece of the puzzle I needed to write my own children's stories with confidence.



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Your latest book *Myles and the Monster Outside* has been nominated for several awards. The teachers at my school read it aloud before your visit. Our students were completely hooked and wondered if you deliberately left each chapter with a cliff-hanger or if it just happened. How do you go about organizing your material so cliff-hangers occur?

That's such an interesting

question! The short answer is that cliff-hangers are carefully crafted, and are put in certain spots to keep the tension of the story high, and building.

I can't say that I always know exactly where they're going to fall though, and sometimes I do write a chapter, and make it shorter because the cliff-hanger happens earlier than I anticipated. So the rest of the material for that chapter might get cut, or massaged and moved to the beginning of the next chapter.

It's whatever feels right, and therefore, quite fluid. The first two chapters usually have pretty big cliff-hangers to build interest, then I make them a bit less scary for a while, then build them up again to a crescendo in the final chapters.

It's a lot like writing music! Also, I mentioned earlier that I'm a copywriter as well as a children's author, and writing copy teaches you how to keep people reading, how to get them to turn the page, fill out a form, subscribe, give to a good cause and so on. It's good training for writing cliff-hangers.

What are some of the most important and memorable aspects of being nominated for the OLA Forest of Reading awards?

The first time I received the call that I had a Forest of Reading Silver Birch Express nomination for *The Gargoyle Overhead* (in 2012), I actually said to the OLA member on the phone, "Okay, very funny, who is this?" She laughed, and said, no, no, this is real. No kidding. And I had to sit down.

It's a life-changing moment, to be honest. You're going to tour, you're going to meet thousands of kids, your book is going to be in schools, libraries and bookstores across the province, and across the country. It's always an incredible surprise, an immense honour, and a delightful experience.

I think the biggest take-aways for me from the Forest of Reading are ...

... meeting the wonderful librarians and teachers who promote our work ...

... connecting with fellow Canadian children's authors, who have devoted their careers to writing kids' books ...

... talking to the young readers at the Forest of Reading festivals, that's always so fun!

There are so many great memories, but here is a standout memory from the Red Maple ceremony in 2015:

A young boy asked me to sign his copy of *The Strange Gift of Gwendolyn Golden*. He said, "Thank you so much for writing this book. It's my favourite book this year." I asked him why. His answer, after thinking for a moment: "It got me through a really terrible winter."

I'll never forget it. If there's a better reason to write children's books, I honestly can't think of it.

Thank you to the OLA, for the amazing gift of the Forest of Reading, for so many reasons.

Which of your own books is your favourite or holds a special meaning to you? Why?

This is always a tough one to answer! It feels a little like choosing which of my children I prefer. I guess the best answer I can give, is that my favourite changes from time to time. I used to say that it was my first book (*The Gargoyle in My Yard*), because everything started there. Then for a long time, my answer was, “I like the book I’m currently working on,” which is also true.

These days, I answer that my favourite book is *The Strange Gift of Gwendolyn Golden*, because Gwendolyn is the closest character to what I was like as a teenager (but without the gift of flight). It was the fastest book to write (about four months), and Gwendolyn just came to life with her own voice, her own mind, right from the start.

You've written that it's important for authors to “love their monster.” Please explain what you mean.

I love creating monsters. Most authors probably do, since they’re the most fun!

When writing my latest book, *Everton Miles is Stranger than Me*, I went looking for inspiration for my monstrous antagonist, a bitter, dangerous, fallen character named Abilith. I re-read Mary Shelley, Melville, Dante, Milton, Lovecraft, and others.

What makes their monsters so memorable, I wondered?

Mary Shelley’s monster was lonely. Milton’s Lucifer had pride and rage. Dante’s demons in the Inferno were bored, workaday employees. In *At the Mountains of Madness*, Lovecraft’s monsters returned to bury their dead.

Loneliness, rage, boredom, loss. We can relate.

How to create a memorable monster? I decided that you have to love your monster enough to give them a touch of humanity, a fatal flaw that we can all understand.

What do you read for personal pleasure? Are you reading anything right now?

Oh, guilty pleasure time! My personal reading pile is eclectic.

I read a lot of YA and middle-grade books for pleasure. I pick up whatever looks interesting. I read *The Rest of Us Just Live Here* by Patrick Ness recently, and really loved it.

I like historical fiction, so I’ll admit to a little Diana Gabaldon —dabbling now and then. I also love a good mystery, so I read P.D. James (she’s one of my literary heroes, writing into her 90s), Robert Galbraith/J.K. Rowling and whatever looks good.

I like non-fiction as well. I’m about to start the Jared Diamond book, *Collapse*, on why societies fail. I loved *Guns, Germs and Steel*, and so I’m looking forward to it.

If you hadn’t become a writer what other careers have caught your interest?

I have an M.A. in English. I was really tempted by the academic life at U of T when I was there, and considered doing a Ph.D. But in the end, I knew my real love was writing.

I’ve also played classical guitar since I was 12. I would have loved to be part of the professional music world, but it didn’t happen. I do play baroque music with a flute-player friend, and record my musical compositions with my long-time editor, Allister Thompson, and that’s been fun.

What are you working on next? Have you considered writing a young adult dystopian series?

I currently have two more books coming in the *Weird Stories Gone Wrong* series, so they are at various stages of completion. I’m also pondering writing something to celebrate the ten year anniversary of the *Lost Gargoyle* series in 2019. And I AM working on a middle-grade dystopia, something I’ve had up my sleeve for a while. Stay tuned!

Thank you, this was fun!

Thank you Philippa! I

Stay in touch with Philippa:
Website: pdowding.com
Blog: phdowding.blogspot.ca
Twitter: @phdowding

Professional Resources

Show Your Work! 10 Ways to Share Your Creativity and Get Discovered

by Austin Kleon

Workman Publishing Company, Inc., 2014
ISBN 069251693X

A guide to the process of creativity and how to share so individuals can build supportive creative communities.

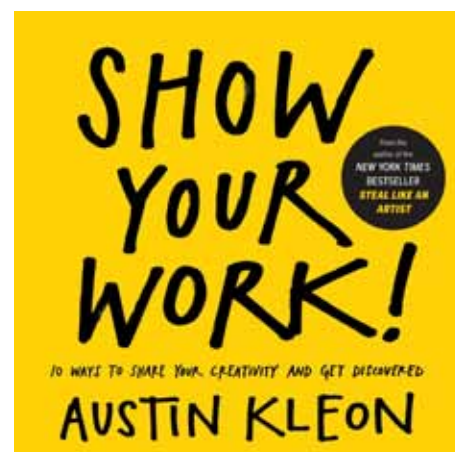
In our classrooms, we are starting to focus on the process of learning and developing ideas. As a writer who has built his brand by giving us a glimpse into the world underneath the end product, Austin Kleon, in *Show Your Work*, illustrates how to share that process to build a supportive community. Along the way, he reinforces the importance of three of the four Cs of 21st Century Learning and the development of digital literacy skills.

One goal of 21st Century Learner is to be a “creator” of high quality work. Austin Kleon shows us that developing style, craftsmanship and skill take time. In the chapters “Think Process, Not Product”, “Open Up Your Cabinet of Curiosities” and “Stick Around”, he explains the behind-the-scenes work that goes into any creation. He acknowledges we all look at the world through our own lenses and collect the ideas, thoughts and inspirations we are attracted to. He sprinkles examples of successful people who illustrate his points throughout the book. His example of a garbage collector who picked pieces he liked out of the garbage and now curates his collection at The Trash Museum in the Sanitation Department in New York City perfectly showcases that you must work every day to develop your own style and

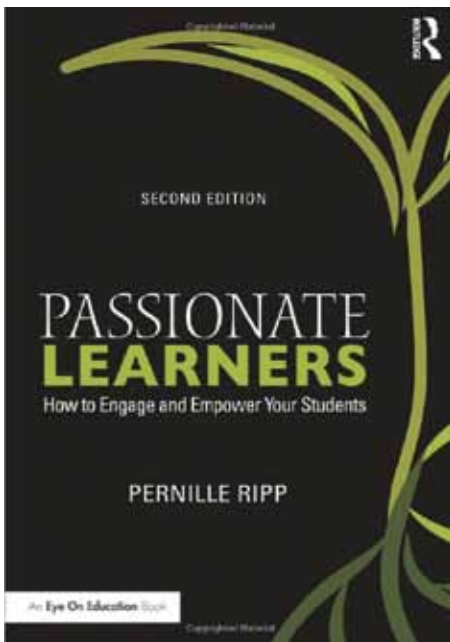
craftsmanship, no matter what it is. He acknowledges you won’t be successful on your first, second, or even third attempt and your work won’t match the quality of those you admire, but with time and energy, you will refine your style.

This leads us to “communication”. Creativity does not grow in isolation. Pre-digitally it was difficult to share the creative process with a wider audience, but it isn’t now. In “You Don’t Have to Be a Genius”, Austin Kleon recommends that once you find your voice, create a platform and share every day, so you can “find a scenius” and attract like-minded people with whom you can learn. He acknowledges the dangers of putting yourself out into the world in the chapter “Learn To Take A Punch.” We know a reality of the digital world is the attention you receive won’t always be the attention you want. He reviews the skills of knowing what to value, what not to respond to, knowing when to turn off the comment feature, and when to block. These are skills our students need.

Finally, he emphasizes that when creating and communicating we must responsibly “collaborate” responsibly by properly attributing work. Austin Kleon absolutely believes in giving credit where it’s due, not only so you don’t “rob the person who made it,” but so you don’t “rob all the people you’ve shared it with. Without attribution, audiences have no easy way to dig deeper into the work or find more of it” (p. 85). Attribution builds collaboration and community by connecting the dots between ideas and allowing others to find their own creative paths.



Who better to help us understand the importance showcasing the process of student work through Inquiry and Project-Based Learning than Austin Kleon? With his concise memes, catchy illustrations, and an awesome website, as well as a very popular TEDx Talk, he knows his stuff and can help us communicate it to our students.



Passionate Learners: How to Engage and Empower Your Students

by Pernille Ripp

Routledge, 2016

ISBN 978-1-138-91692-0

A roadmap for all educators, from those fresh out of a faculty of education to the seasoned professional, looking to embrace a more student-centred practice.

Pernille Ripp started off teaching like many of us; she attended a faculty of education, listened to the methods prescribed, read books that reinforced how to teach and strode into her classroom armed with detailed structures for every child to follow, wielding failure as a consequence for not listening to her lectures, not completing her endless worksheets, and not turning in the hours of homework she assigned a week. When she realized her methods “diminished” students instead of building them up, she knew she had to change her ways so her “future students would leave ... still loving school, with passionate curiosity, not afraid to try something new” (p. 116).

Passionate Learners documents Pernille’s journey. Each chapter tells the story of her original thoughts and actions compared to what she thinks and does now. The end of each chapter contains a list of practical tips and permissions needed to nudge teachers along their continuum towards a more student-centred pedagogical practice.

If you have any nagging concerns regarding setting classroom rules, reimaging yourself as a facilitator in your classroom, creating community, allowing

students to find their own way to achieve standards, releasing homework routines, or giving-up grades, this book is an excellent resource, filled with ideas, surveys, links to e-resources and more.

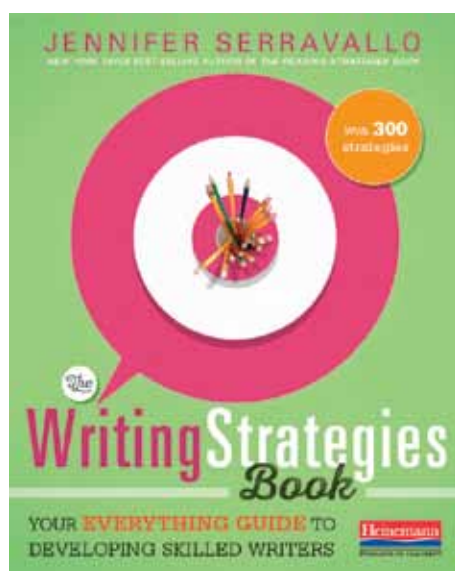
She writes in the same way you imagine she teaches. She knows we can only begin to grow from where we are and lets us know we can use this book to suit our needs, starting with even the smallest change. She encourages and inspires by reinforcing the key lesson she has learned:

Even the smallest changes can make monumental differences. Trusting yourself and your students, and sharing the power of the classroom with them, can lead to great teaching and learning even within the boundaries of our confining standard, testing obsessions, and mandatory curriculums. (p. xviii)

Pick a section that resonates with you and get started. If you like Pernille’s approach, you can follow her on Twitter at @pernilleripp or visit her site pernillesripp.com. You won’t be disappointed.

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The Writing Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Writers

by Jennifer Serravallo
Heinemann, 2017

ISBN 9780325078229

A must-have handbook of 300 concise strategies to support all K-8 teachers through their students' writing progression.

The Writing Strategies Book is Jennifer Serravallo's much-anticipated companion book to her 2015 *The Reading Strategies Book*. Visiting an old friend in a new format can be nerve-wracking, but you don't need to worry. Even the "Getting Started" section reassures you that you will not be disappointed. Here, Serravallo explains her thought process behind the goal-oriented structure of this volume, and you immediately know that her use of current pedagogy based on the effective practices of teaching masters will provide you with the support you need to "create independent writers."

The "you don't need to read-every-single-page" structure recognizes that teachers are busy people. Serravallo has organized the ten main goals of the book in a simple hierarchical structure to help you prioritize what skills your students need. A glance at the fore-edge of the book shows that each goal is colour-coded so you can quickly flip to the section you want. Once there, a table of contents reveals 18 to 40 one-page strategies you can use within your class in either a whole group, guided or one-to-one situation. Each strategy lists recommended grade levels, genres and section of the writing process supported.

The real strength of the book lies in its simplicity. Each of the 300 strategies is laid out on one page with "Teaching Tips", "Prompts", a supporting anchor chart, and a "Hat Tip" to the master who created the strategy. There might even be a "Mentor Text" to support your learners or a QR code to show you the strategy in action. Find what is most relevant for your students and try out a proven lesson.

One of the joys of Jennifer Serravallo's work is the community that has built up around it. Heinemann is a teacher-supportive publisher sharing sample chapters, videos, companion materials and more at heinemann.com/writingstrategiesbook. As well, Jennifer Serravallo is accessible through Twitter, and you can listen to her answer teacher questions on the podcast, "Teachers Ask Jen Serravallo". Finally, there is an active Reading and Writing Strategies Book Community found on Facebook filled with teacher conversations as individuals explore Serravallo's work, their students' learning and their growth as language teachers.

This book directly hits its target on every level. ■



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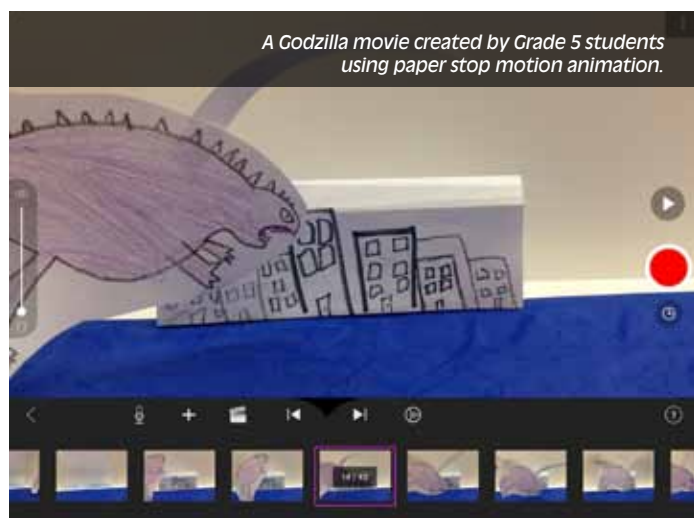
Movies and television bring creatures to life. Many of these creatures are able to move and interact through the magic of stop motion animation. In 1898, the founders of Vitagraph Studios, J. Stuart Blackton and Albert E. Smith, created the first stop motion animated short entitled *The Humpty Dumpty Circus*. Since then, many films have used the medium. In 1933, *King Kong* roared onto the big screen using stop motion and in 1993 Tim Burton and Henry Selick brought the eclectic character of Jack Skellington to life in *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (stopmotionmagazine.net). Though Computer Generated Imaging (CGI) is used more often now, stop motion is still a valuable animation technique for students to explore and the Library Learning Commons is a perfect place to introduce the skill.

Whether using paper, clay, Lego or other toys and objects, students can use stop motion to show their learning in many different subject areas. I recently worked with a group of Grade 2 students and their teachers to create stop motion public service announcements (PSAs) for healthy living. The students researched a topic of their choice, made a plan by putting together a storyboard and then created plasticine characters and props for their project. We used a stop motion app that included a green screen feature, allowing students to choose a background image for their PSAs. This meant they didn't have to create the sets themselves. Once the students were ready, we began filming.

During the process, the students used several of the 21st Century Competencies:

Critical Thinking: Students used critical thinking and problem solving to work through issues that arose during the creation of their stop motion projects. It took a few tries before the students figured out how to make the characters look like they were moving smoothly. Some students wanted to have characters fly or show two characters throwing a ball back and forth. They discovered that using green straws, green string and even pencil crayons helped to achieve this effect. Students also figured out that slowing the frame speed down would make their characters look like they were moving naturally.

A few of the students were challenged by the fact that their



narration was longer than the scene they had created. Their solutions included adding extra titles, slowing the animation down further and adding more stop motion images.

Communication: Throughout the stop motion process, students needed to think about how to communicate their message clearly to the audience through the use of images, titles, sound effects, music and narration.

Collaboration: The students had to work together in order to complete the project. They quickly figured out it was much easier for one student to act as the camera person, while others moved the characters and stayed on the lookout for images that included student hands. These would need to be deleted. They brought different strengths to the table and soon realized that working together was the most efficient way to achieve the best product.

Creativity and Innovation: Stop motion is a great medium for creativity and innovation. It was fascinating to see the different approaches that the students took. One group used a green straw to show a character walking up the stairs. Another group made a mouth with teeth and moved the toothbrush gradually, shot by shot, over the tooth so it looked like it was being brushed. Several Grade 2 students got creative with the end credits by adding images as well as text to show who made the film.

Stop motion animation can be used across many different subject areas and is a great way to incorporate media into other curricular strands. Here are a few ideas:

Retell: Have students retell a simple story by creating characters out of paper and using stop motion.

Narrative: Students can create their own narrative movies using stop motion. Be sure to use a storyboard for planning before the students begin filming.

Procedural Writing: Have students build a simple object out of Lego and then explain how they built it using transition word titles like first, then, next, finally.

Commercial/Book Trailer/PSA: Students can create a commercial, book trailer or public service announcement using stop motion animation. After they come up with a topic, prompt students to determine the purpose, audience and message of their media piece before they begin the planning process.

Math Patterning: Using pattern blocks, have students create growing and shrinking shape patterns and film them using stop motion.

Life Cycles: Ask students to recreate a simple life cycle in stop motion – egg to chick, seed to plant – using paper, plasticine or even stones.

Cell Mitosis: Show the process of cell mitosis using paper animation or plasticine.

There are numerous stop motion apps available in the app store. Here are a few free ones to try:



Stop Motion Studio

- easy interface for students
- onion skin
- grid
- built-in sound effects and music library
- microphone for voice over
- can add text



Stikbot Studio

- simple interface
- onion skin
- built-in sound effects and music library
- green screen feature
- video and image mode
- microphone for voice over
- can add clip-art and text to images



iMotion

- grid
- onion skin
- time-lapse feature
- interface for older students

Stop motion animation is a wonderful way for students of all ages to get creative with their projects and bring creatures to life. ■

Stop Motion Tips

1. Make sure the iPad doesn't move during filming. Use a tripod or prop the iPad up securely.
2. Give students time to play. Students need to practice the technique before they can begin their final project.
3. Make a plan. Use a storyboard to help students plan their project.
4. Keep it short. It takes time and patience to make a stop motion film. Aim for a minute or less on the first attempt.
5. Keep it simple. A simple plan will result in a better end product.
6. Add sound. Even if there's no narration, music and sound effects will help enhance the film.
7. Use the onion skin. If the iPad moves by accident, you can line up your next shot properly.
8. Create a background. If you're not using a green screen, have students draw or create a background set.
9. Use green straws or green string to help move characters and props when using a green screen for the background.
10. Have fun!

Crowd Sourced

Teacher-Librarians are, at heart, opportunists and catalysts. They always are looking for ways to connect. Whether it is connecting teachers to students, students to students, students to the world, people to technology, information to people — the combinations are endless.

Here are a few stories of teacher-librarians making a connection.

TED Talk Connection

When Janice Feller decided to try introducing TED Talks at Martingrove Collegiate in Etobicoke, she carefully groomed the school community so that teachers would be receptive to the idea.

Beginning in the fall, this teacher-librarian introduced them to the idea showcase where presenters explore topics in 18 minutes or less. She began sharing TED Talks during professional development sessions and asked teachers to recommend at least one TED Talk that they liked to use in class. She created a Google Docs database of recommended talks and gathered lesson plans. As well, she purchased wireless equipment, including headphones and speakers, so that students would have the full “TED” experience.

“By January, TED was the word” at Martingrove, a Toronto District School Board high school of about 1,200 students, and Feller began sharing her plans to run a TED Talk program in the school. At the same time, three female students approached her with plans of their own. They had attended a TED youth event in the summer and wanted to recreate the experience at their school.

Feller capitalized on the students’ enthusiasm by introducing a TED Talk Challenge at Martingrove. She said a full TED event would be too much to begin with. She thought that if they started small in the first year, then they could build, eventually inviting other schools and, finally, opening it to a full event in two years.

Meanwhile, they invited students to submit five-minute videos on any topic of their choice. Of seven students who entered, three were chosen and the finalists presented full talks live at

the school’s first TED Talks event in front of a panel of teacher and student judges, as well as selected guests.

Feller worked to make this first event a success by helping the three finalists expand and practise their talks. The three talks were videotaped and uploaded to Vimeo so that others could see them. The winner received \$100, plus the opportunity to present live at the farewell assembly. The runners-up were awarded \$50 each.

“When the whole school sees one of their own giving a talk, it will be the best advertising.”

Feller believes that providing an avenue for students to speak passionately about something they believe in will benefit the entire school. “Our board focus is on global citizenship and student voice. This is the perfect platform for that.”

Red Maple Connection

What started as one intermediate teacher’s request for help with student engagement has turned into a reading success story for hundreds of Grade 7 and 8 students in the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board thanks to the Ontario Library Association’s Forest of Reading and a connection made with the board’s Special Assignment Teacher-Librarian.

“Our issue in Grades 7 and 8 is that we couldn’t get kids to read,” said Sue MacLachlan, special assignment teacher-librarian. “We were bumping our heads against a brick wall.”

After bringing the Forest of Reading’s Red Maple books into 38 classrooms across the board last year, the number of blog posts about the books nearly tripled to 839. And it was clear from what these students – many of them non-readers – were saying about the books, that they were really invested in the experience.

“We changed the culture of reading 180 degrees,” said MacLachlan.

It all began with a teacher wanting to run a “Canada Reads” type of activity in the classroom. MacLachlan suggested tapping into the Forest of Reading program which offers



Caroline Freibauer

“We need to think of it not just in terms of output – how many teachers are using this platform – but in terms of outcomes. Are students more engaged in e-learning?”

curated books chosen for a province-wide vote. It is ready-made for that experience.

An initial group of five teachers across four schools participated with multiple copies of books purchased for the classroom. The teachers created their own professional learning community to help facilitate what was happening in the classroom.

The feedback was so positive that the board applied for – and received – Hamilton Community Foundation grants for individual teachers wanting to enhance programming for intermediate students. Thirty-eight teachers across 27 schools received \$500 grants to purchase three copies of each of the 10 Red Maple books to be used in the classroom.

Although the board's E-Best research department will be analyzing data from surveys and a focus group, MacLachlan said everyone involved in the project is excited about how well it went just based on what the students said in their blog posts.

“We had non-readers finding each other and recommending books to each other,” she said.

The board is hoping to continue this initiative next year, with the possibility of moving into high school with the White Pine books and the junior grades with Silver Birch books.

“The key is the books. The books are written for them, with characters and stories they can relate to,” said MacLauchlan.

E-Learning Connections

Staying connected in a school board with an expansive geographic reach can be a challenge. But the Upper Canada District School Board has had great success linking its numerous library learning commons scattered throughout the

district with its virtual learning commons through Springshare, a library platform used around the world. Now the board is leveraging that success by pushing its virtual library resources out to e-learning teachers through Desire2Learn.

Patricia Sutherland, manager of Learning Commons Services for the UCDSB, said they are promoting good instructional design for e-learning and what is needed to customize and enhance the student experience. And the initial feedback from the online teachers using the resources has been fantastic. She said two e-learning science teachers were excited to discover how they could embed guides and articles in their online assignments with the resources available.

The UCDSB's Virtual Learning Commons offers text, video, audio and interactive games through databases, curated external links and content created by students and teachers. It's a popular site with about 15,000 students logging in during a typical week. To help teachers learn more about how to use these resources to enhance the student learning experience, a D2L course on VLC101 was created to provide step by step instructions. Learning Commons Services also provides direct instruction at the beginning of the semester to make the e-learning teachers more aware of what is available.

“As we get more sophisticated in e-learning, we will be able to provide more customizable resources,” said Sutherland. “It's just good pedagogy and instructional design.”

Sutherland said that data are being collected on the effectiveness of this initiative through exit slips after training. Once they have more of a critical mass of e-learning teachers using the VLC, they also will use D2L statistics.

“We need to think of it not just in terms of output – how many teachers are using this platform – but in terms of outcomes. Are students more engaged in e-learning?” *continued on page 26*

...continued from page 25

Public Library Connection

More than 300 high school students were given an opportunity to make and explore in the Father Bressani Catholic High School library thanks to a connection made by Teacher-Librarian Linda Girardo with the local public library.

Vaughan Public Library brought a 3D printer, circuits, a green screen with video cameras, vinyl design cutting equipment and robotics to the school's library learning commons. Girardo set up her button machine to make it six centres for the day.

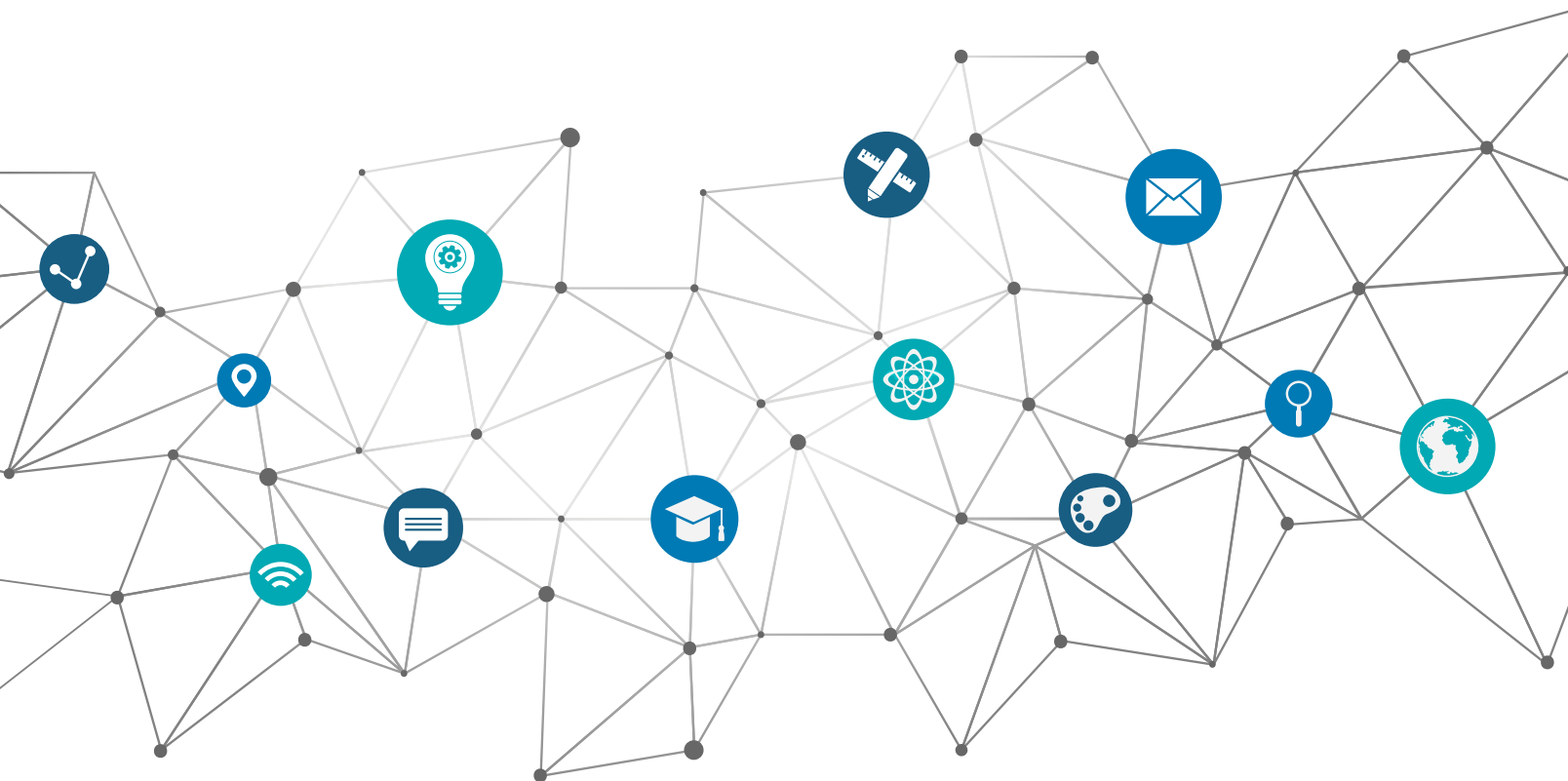
Teachers were invited to sign up to bring their classes – up to three classes at a time for one period. Girardo encouraged classes who don't usually have access to this type of equipment. And the students had a great time exploring and creating.

"The library learning commons is the central place in the school where students have an opportunity to learn outside the classroom," said Girardo. "They can explore, investigate and inquire in one location. Bringing everything in one place makes it easier for the teacher."

One art teacher wanted her student to make something using a 3D printer. Although Girardo already has one in the learning commons, having the Vaughan library staff on hand to help made it easier.

In a survey of students who participated, 90 per cent rated the experience a 4.5 out of 5. And 88 per cent of the students surveyed said they absolutely want to do it again.

Girardo says she plans to organize another creation day in the Library Learning Commons but, next time, would get students to pre-select their centres. ■



ZOMBIES IN YOUR LIBRARY

Kathy Archer



Zombies have become increasingly popular in the past few years with the explosion of zombie-related works of fiction in film, on TV and in print. Teachers often use popular culture to create lessons which are engaging and exciting for their students and, occasionally, these lesson ideas require a little creative thinking from the librarian. What do you do, for example, when your middle school science teacher wants to do a research project on zombies? You certainly don't say no and discourage anyone who would like to use the library for research even as you wonder if he thinks there is a scientific base to zombie lore.

The science project was not to research zombies, but to create a plan for a zombie attack and to find the best location within our school campus to survive this attack. Working with the science teacher we were able to create a research component to his project. The students would research some necessary elements of disease, disease transmission and survival skills in order to have the necessary background knowledge before they began their survival plan. The United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has a website devoted to zombie preparedness. They believe using zombies is a non-threatening way to teach students emergency preparedness skills. I used this site for some of my preliminary research and ideas.

The plan was to create a series of research challenges for the students. The students would work with a partner to complete each challenge. As they correctly completed a challenge, each group would earn items for their survival pack. The more challenges completed in the 60-minute class, the better prepared they would be when creating their zombie shelter. They could earn: first aid kits, matches, batteries, flashlight, blanket, tarp, canned food, two litres of water, collapsible shovel, pocket knife and rope.

The challenges focused on different research skills and were presented as a large challenge card attached to an envelope. The cards on the front of the envelope introduced the challenge, and inside the envelope was the question and answer sheet. There was no order to the challenges. Some were quicker to complete than others and students could not move to the next challenge until they successfully completed

the first. The classroom teacher and I sat at the front of the room and evaluated responses, rewarding students with a try again or survival prize for the challenge.

There were five challenges, each focusing on the necessary information to complete the next part of their project, as well as different library skills. The first challenge was to introduce the students to the difference between isolation and quarantine. Using a page from the CDC website, the students were asked to answer a series of questions about isolation and large-scale quarantines in the U.S. They also were asked about the limitations of this site. The second challenge was to use a phone book to create a list of emergency contacts – fire, police, hospital and local power company. Students had to search the phone book to find these numbers. Although an old way to do this, it's a quick and easy lesson on indexes and alphabetization. The third challenge examined zombie myths. The challenge asked students to answer questions about zombie legends using World Book online. The fourth challenge developed some survival skills. Students were required to locate a specific book, and answer questions on cleaning water and signs a plant may be poisonous. The fifth and final challenge was to investigate the spread of disease. Using a map of the bubonic plague found in World Book online, students were required to answer some questions on the origin and spread of the disease.

The zombie research challenge was a highly engaging activity for the students. They were motivated to earn survival prizes and were interested in the information. The knowledge of disease spread and isolation helped them with their projects once they began in earnest. The challenges moved quickly, as most of the students were reviewing library skills, although the phone book proved to be the most difficult. Using games and challenges are fun and effective ways to introduce and reinforce library skills, especially when you need to research zombies in your library. ■

Bibliography

"Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response" *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 4 May 2017, www.cdc.gov/php/zombies.htm

MORE ZOMBIES IN THE LIBRARY

CAROLINE FREIBAUER



Although it involves zombies, this is not a horror story. There is no happy ending, but then again it's not really a sad tale either. I guess you could call it a mystery – something that starts with a question and ends with many more.

It's just that sometimes zombies terrify me; stumbling around, knocking over chairs and pulling random books from the shelf as they drop trails of debris from their pockets, their binders, their lunch bags. Then they turn and fix me with a vacant stare. I am always mesmerized by the line of drool making its way down their chins.

A ninth grader speaks.

"Where is *Hunger Games*?"

"What!" I shriek. "I SHOWED you how to find books in the Library Learning Commons. Don't you remember coming here with your class in September? We learned where everything was and how to look up books? Remember?!"

"No. I've never been here before."

I know what you are thinking. Give the young zombie a break. He could have been away the day his class was scheduled to spend an entire 75-minute period actively exploring the school library. Maybe he was home eating his younger sibling's brain. Possible. But, in my experience, he probably just forgot, despite being spared a long boring lecture from the bespectacled teacher-librarian – me. Instead, students got a scavenger hunt, hands on computer exploration of the online catalogue and our database AND a final review of everything learned. Still, the hapless zombie just erased the entire experience from his memory.

It's a scene that plays itself out time and again. Sometimes



the zombie will squint his eyes as though peering through the mists of ancient history to acknowledge a glimmer of recollection. But mostly it's a blank stare.

My question, the one driving this story, is: Why? Why don't students remember even when I get them to physically experience the space by looking up books and retrieving them from the shelves?

My first thought goes to the evolution of the teenage brain. It has become common knowledge that the brain is considered under construction until about the age of 25. According to "Inside your teenager's scary brain" by Tamsin McMahon, a January 2015 article in *Scientific American Mind*, the brain's neurons are almost completely grown by the teen years but the wiring between the cells continues to develop into a person's 20s. At the same time, the brain is going through a myelination process, which coats these connections with protective fatty tissue. The last part of the brain to be connected is the prefrontal cortex, the part that controls insight, judgment, self-awareness and empathy. Add into the mix hormones triggered by puberty, and this explains why teens tend to have emotional outbursts. Frances Jensen, a parent who studies brains for a living and wrote "The Teenage Brain: A Neuroscientist's Survival Guide to Raising Adolescents and Young Adults," is quoted in the article as saying that this also explains why teens seek emotionally charged situations, from sad movies to dangerous driving. If you add the new wiring, insulation and hormones, you find that teens also are more sensitive to dopamine, the pleasure hormone. This explains why teens take so many risks.

While all of this is fascinating stuff, especially since I work in a building with about 1,500 teenagers, I wasn't sure how it would help me plan a more memorable library orientation. How could I make it more emotionally charged? How could I build in the thrill of risk? More questions.

Luckily, I am working with a group of teachers exploring ways to gather and analyze qualitative data. With a little encouragement from the group, I decided the best way to get answers was to ask the students. Working quickly, I created a survey in Microsoft Forms and shared it with three Grade 9 teachers willing to help. I got 77 responses, which is about one-quarter of the school's Grade 9 population. The results were enlightening.

The biggest surprise is that the majority of students – 58 of the 77 – remembered coming to the library orientation! More surprising were the comments. "The rules were shown in a fun and exciting way," wrote one student. "It was very interactive and I learned how to look for books," wrote another. And, still another: "The orientation was well run in my opinion." I can't tell you how happy I was after reading the results of the survey. And the learning continued for me. The students want to know more about research skills, especially using the database, differentiating between real and fake news and how to avoid plagiarism. Through the survey, students also told me that they were interested in attending workshops, possibly at lunch, led by other students. "How exciting!" I thought, already planning sessions for these knowledge-seeking darlings.

But the survey didn't explain the zombies. How is it that many students are still lurching around in the library, trying to find the well-labelled return slot located by the front door? How could I use surveys and focus groups to reach this group? As I become more comfortable with collecting and analyzing qualitative data, will I be able to improve my program delivery in the library?

I said from the beginning that there is no happy ending. Just more questions. And, in the end, isn't that what the school Library Learning Commons is all about? ■

Meredith Tutching

Creating Readers

An Admin View

Michael Bowman is the Principal at Seneca Trail Public School in Oshawa, Ont. He spoke with Meredith Tutching, the Director of the Forest of Reading, about the program, reading engagement, and total buy-in at his school.

Meredith Tutching: What caused the Forest of Reading to start at your school?

Michael Bowman: My focus on the Forest of Reading began back when I was Principal at Sir John A. Macdonald in 2007/2008. At that time we had a great partnership with our school teacher-librarian – Yvonne Yeoman – and we began to see the opportunity to use this program as a springboard to challenge students to read more.

How has the program changed/grown at your school over the years?

As a result of the program being modified and adapted over the 10 years we have run it, the focus has become more on getting staff attached to the power of the program, to value the Canadian literature that is being showcased, and of course, to continue to hook kids on good reads.

At one point I was reading each book in each category, in a dual track school that could reach into 80-100 books, each year. Now I read a few and ask staff to read a few, so that there are expert readers for students to connect with, regardless of job, as our secretary, custodian and even lunchroom supervisors read the books.

How is the program being run in your school and who is the person in charge?

The program is primarily run by our teacher-librarian and staff are involved as expert readers. I assist in giving book talks, but

have taken a back seat to staff as the program has evolved.

As a principal, how do you feel the program has made a difference with your students?

I truly feel that the program has allowed our students to see that there are some great Canadian authors out there, and that these books are chosen to represent the best of the best each year. I think that through our modeling of the importance of reading, that students, parents and community members have also seen how powerful a good book can be.

What is the advantage of having this program as part of your school programming?

The program has many advantages, but I think the biggest is the ability to get some of our non-readers to take on the challenge of reading some of these books, and hooking them on good literature.

Are there any changes in attitude toward reading as a result of the program? If so, please explain.

I would suggest that students are more apt to pick up these books than they may have been in the past, partly because of the competitive nature of it, but partly because we have grown a culture of readers that look forward to the launch of the new titles each year. We have students and parents who will book the titles out of the public libraries as soon as they are released, so we are seeing more participation each year.

What would be the advice to other administrators you would give to those considering to participate or not to participate?

I would offer to chat with any administrator that is considering participating in this program. I believe that it is important, and that students will appreciate it beginning in schools where it may not have been already up and running.

What has been your favourite Forest of Reading moment?

There are so many that come to mind, but I think back to an email that I received from a parent of a student who was struggling academically at the time. The email went on to explain the frustrations of dealing with the achievement and resulting esteem issues that went along with it. It then explained that the student had come home with a few books and that they had rekindled their connection and the student became excited again to work through some of the challenges, and turned a corner that year. This parent actually followed up several years later with an email to tell me the progress that their child had made in the years that followed. That was powerful for me to see that a parent recognized that something as simple as a good book could allow for a reconnection and change of perspective.

What has been your most memorable Forest of Reading book?

Wow, there are so many great ones that I have read, it is hard to narrow it down to one. The one that does stick out however is *Zorgamazoo* by Robert Paul Weston. It was one of the first years that we began the program and I later learned that it was the author's first novel. It is a book that I absolutely felt connected to as it is written in rhyme and is something that I would not normally pick up. I then read it cover to cover in one sitting and then shared it with my teacher-librarian who, leery at first, began to read it to her Grade 4 class and they too fell in love with the writing style and storyline of a strange connection between Katrina and Mortimer.

If you could describe the Forest of Reading in one word, what would it be?

Unique.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

I believe that the Forest of Reading program should be a part of every school and community in Canada. ■



CREATURES IN THE LIBRARY

Brenda Roberts and Diana Maliszewski

Skinny pigs? Mice? Fish? Frogs? Whether they are just visiting or permanent fixtures, we highly recommend having animals in the library. Before setting up, be sure to read your board's guidelines for live animals. While there is some work involved, bringing Mother Nature into your library instills a sense of calm and wonder. Students take responsibility for caring for their needs and opportunities for observation, creativity and inquiry abound.

Here are a few species that Diana and Brenda have been guardians and hosts to:

PERMANENT PETS



Fancy Mice

Brenda has had several sets of fancy mice in her library over the years. Reputable pet stores will only sell young, female mice, so you have no worries about babies. For less than \$100 you can purchase a decent cage, bedding material, food, and two mice (never buy one as they are social). A naming contest helps to build excitement. As students observe their antics they are motivated to write about them. Picture books like Daniel Kirk's *Library Mouse* series spur all kinds adventurous narratives, while comics and graphic novels fashioned after the *Babymouse* series were churned out at record speeds. Poems, songs and paintings were all inspired by the mice.

A scientific journal was kept on a clipboard by the cage and students were encouraged to note what the mice were doing each time they came in. Small group and individual inquiries also took place.

Mice are industrious and model co-operative teamwork in maintaining their habitat.



Skinny Pigs

Diana first came across this unique creature (with Canadian origins, see en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skinny_pig) at the pound and has enjoyed bringing them to the library as honorary houseguests ever since. Skinny pigs make wonderful school pets because they don't have fur like their guinea pig brethren, although some are fuzzy on their feet and faces. The lack of fur means that allergies aren't triggered by their hair or dander. (Just use caution with their timothy hay.) Skinny pigs are very vocal and interactive – they will squeak or even purr. Skinny pigs seem to have a higher metabolism rate, so they go through their food quickly; be sure to arrange to have someone take the skinny pigs home each weekend and over the holidays so they do not run out of water, pellets, or hay.



Because many students have never encountered a skinny pig before, they will be inquisitive and this is a great inquiry stance! Collect student questions about these animals and use them as springboards for research. Our primary division teachers visit the library to use the skinny pigs as part of their lessons on Life Systems, such as Growth and Changes in Animals.

Geckos

Diana's school has owned geckos — technically the same gecko — for a very long time. These sturdy reptiles eat meal worms or crickets, so budget accordingly. Geckos require a small heat lamp with their habitat. You can read more about their needs at reptilesmagazine.com/Care-Sheets/Lizards/Leopard-Gecko and groups such as Reptilia (see next page) can help with set up.

TEMPORARY PETS



White's Tree Frogs

For several months Brenda had a large terrarium right inside the library door. It was fabulous! Inside were six lumps of chocolate pudding...that were actually White's Tree Frogs. Sarah Crawford, a Kindergarten teacher, had them in her classroom and was kind to share them for about six weeks. Immediately, the noise in the library diminished as the frogs were not only hard to find, but nocturnal. They were also, easily startled by noise so students were amazingly silent in the hopes of getting a glimpse of these creatures. Not only was camouflage a hot topic, but because they change colour to match their surroundings, an investigation into other animals that can change colour ensued. Feeding time was a spectacle as what appeared to be a pile of wood chips would swiftly leap to nab a live cricket. Students were completely riveted and came up with inquiry questions that quickly linked to other frogs and amphibians, their tongues, and their eating habits.

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Butterflies

Although technically not pets, many of the classes in Diana's school have raised and released Monarchs and/or Painted Ladies Butterflies. In 2016-17, three Kindergarten classes reached out to butterfliesandroses.com and obtained classroom kits. The kits contained 25 caterpillars and the food they require. The students were eager to see their development from larvae to pupae to adults.

Atlantic Salmon

Diana's colleague Farah Wadia raised 100 babies with her Grade 7s and 8s — salmon babies to be exact! In conjunction with the Toronto Zoo, the Aqualinks Program, and the Toronto District School Board Science/Technology and STEM departments, Farah's class took part in a salmon hatchery project. The tank was housed in Ms. Wadia's classroom because of the light and sound considerations, but everyone in the school and beyond were welcome to visit the aquatic additions. Ms. Wadia and her intermediate division students raised the salmon from the eyed-egg stage to alevin and then fry. They were released as fry into Duffin's Creek in the Greenwood Conservation Area. Ms. Wadia did a fantastic job incorporating the salmon hatchery experience into all areas of the curriculum. One of the most popular outreach projects was the creation of video games in Scratch that allowed younger players to have fun and learn about the situation facing salmon in the wild.



VISITING PETS

OSPCA

Call or visit your local OSPCA (ontariospca.ca/what-we-do/humane-education-and-animal-care/humane-education-programs.html). They run a "Humane Education" program. A new Grade 2 program is about to launch.

Therapeutic Paws of Canada

Therapeutic Paws offers a variety of children's programs including the "Paws to Read" program. Visit their website for contact information and to find out what is available in your area: tpoc.ca/programs/for-children.

Reptilia

Reptilia is Canada's largest fully indoor reptile zoo. They have many educational programs that come directly to the school (see reptilia.org/education-programs). ■

Festival of Trees in Photos

Photos by Robert Nishimura

This year, a record number of attendees came to the Festival of Trees in London, Toronto, and Sault Ste. Marie. More than 13,000 readers, chaperones, teachers, teacher-librarians, library staff, parents, authors, publishers, and other guests attended in total.



Honouring Our Own

If you did not attend the 2017 Ontario Library Association Super Conference, you may have missed the OSLA Awards Ceremony. These were our winners for 2017. The plan at *The Teaching Librarian* is that from now on, all OSLA award winners will be featured in the next issue that appears after the conference – the third issue of each volume, otherwise known as the “Spring Issue”. We did not want this calendar year to pass by without highlighting the 2017 recipients.

For more information on how to nominate someone for one of these awards, go to accessola.com/awards and selection OSLA Awards from the left column. Nominations for this year’s awards are due November 1.



2017 Teacher-Librarian of the Year

Carmen Milani Condotta

Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board

Through Carmen’s dedication and hard work, thousands of students and hundreds of teachers and all of the teacher-librarians have benefited from the expertise and vision that has been supported and implemented not only by Carmen’s own school but throughout the board. Innovative teaching methods, collaborative development of inquiry-based learning and instilling a love of the school library have all been a part of Carmen’s mandate.

Nominated by Lori McCannel, Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board



2017 Administrator of the Year

Colin Anderson

Principal, South Carleton High School, Ottawa Carleton District School Board

Colin's willingness to tackle difficult projects and assignments, coupled with his persistent determination are a true testament of his character. Upon his transfer to South Carleton, Colin identified the need for students to have a common, safe, and inclusive area where they could work, collaborate, express their creativity, and be innovative. He put together a team that sought input from parent council, students, the trustee, and teachers. Because of his understanding of students' needs and a willingness to listen to stakeholders, as well as to delegate responsibility, resources were allocated to redefine an underutilized library into a Learning Commons. Colin was a tireless advocate for change from South Carleton's traditional library into a vibrant Learning Commons that has served as a model for other schools in our District. This space, bright and welcoming with a "café" type feel upon entry, is now a thriving hub of student and teacher activity.

Nominated by Brett Reynolds, Superintendent of Instruction, Ottawa Carleton District School Board

The TeachOntario logo, featuring the word "Teach" in a dark blue font and "Ontario" in a lighter blue font, both in a sans-serif typeface.

2017 Award for Special Achievement

TeachOntario

TVO in Partnership with the Ontario Teachers' Federation and affiliates, and the Ontario Ministry of Education.

TeachOntario has reminded the participants in Ontario's education system that school libraries are important; that the people who run school libraries are needed, that the elements of a library learning commons (integrated technology, choice, critical thinking, flexible and equitable access) are achievable. TeachOntario really believes in building a community of educators, and even financed visits by teacher-librarians to meet preservice teachers at faculties of education to again emphasize the importance of school libraries. ■

Nominated by the 2016 OSLA Council



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THE Teaching Librarian Event Calendar

For more information on OLA events and programs, visit accessola.com/events

SEPTEMBER

ALL MONTH Voting for the Forest of Reading® Evergreen Award™ program	12 Evergreen Talks Presents: David Goldbloom, <i>How Can I Help?: A Week In My Life As A Psychiatrist</i>	14 Evergreen Talks Presents: Alice Zorn, <i>Five Roses</i>	19 Evergreen Talks Presents: Kate Taylor, <i>Serial Monogamy</i>	21 Evergreen Talks Presents: Katherena Vermette, <i>The Break</i>
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OCTOBER

26 Evergreen Talks Presents: Peter Behrens, <i>Carry Me</i>	28 Evergreen Talks Presents: Gail Anderson-Dargatz, <i>The Spawning Grounds</i>	1 Registration for Forest of Reading opens (school-aged programs and Golden Oak)	3 Evergreen Talks Presents: Duana Taha, <i>The Name Therapist: How Growing Up With My Odd Name Taught Me Everything You Need To Know About Yours</i>	5 Evergreen Talks Presents: Diane Bracuk, <i>Middle-Aged Boys & Girls</i>
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NOVEMBER

12 2017 Ophea Conference	15—21 Ontario Public Library Week	16 2018 Forest of Reading nominated lists announced (excluding Evergreen)	1 Deadline for OSLA Award Nominations including Teacher-Librarian of the Year Award, Administrator of the Year Award, and Award for Special Achievement
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DECEMBER

3 Children and Youth Services EXPO	7 Registration for Super Conference Opens	9 Science Teachers' Association of Ontario Annual Conference	11 People for Education Annual Conference	1 Elections Open for OLA Board and OSLA Council
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If you have an event or conference you would like to share with *The Teaching Librarian* readers, please email communications@accessola.com.

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