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## OPLA Committee Report

### Committee Name:

OLA Best Bets Committee

### Committee Members:

Kara Miley, co-chair  
Theresa Power, co-chair  
Samantha Dillane  
Frances Hanemaayer  
Kate Morrison  
Emily Bingham  
Meghan Tinmouth  
Serena McGovern  
Katie Vlanich  
Jennie Fallis  
Corina Surcel  
Linda Ludke

### Date of Last Meeting:

Thursday January 7, 2021

### Date of Next Meeting:

Thursday February 18, 2021

### Summary:

In 2020, the Best Bets Committee added five new members: Serena McGovern (Barrie Public Library), Katie Vlanich (Windsor Public Library), Jennie Fallis (Mississauga Public Library), Corina Surcel (Vaughan Public Library), and Linda Ludke (London Public Library). This was to cover vacancies left by departing members.

In addition, we will be saying goodbye at the end of this reading year to Frances Hanemaayer (Burlington Public Library), and Kate Morrison (Hamilton Public Library). Their invaluable contributions to our book discussions will be missed and we wish them all the best in their future career paths. We are currently in the process of advertising the vacancies and hope to recruit new members by the end of February.

2020 was a year of many changes for Best Bets. Our committee expanded membership to members from outside the GTHA, changing the requirement for members to be physically present at meetings and



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allowing members at greater distances to call in. This was a concern in prior years due to the difficulties in shipping reading material to all members. When the pandemic hit in March and all our library systems closed down, all of our members shifted to virtual meetings.

Due to the pandemic, publishers also paused their distribution and started sending us electronic copies of titles for review. We utilized our shared Google drive to store these titles with the caveat that we would delete the copies once we had finished our lists. Due to concerns about members having access to titles, we decided as a committee that we would lower the number of readers required for a title to be considered from 4 to 3 for this year.

Overall we found these changes did not greatly affect the work we did with the committee. Members were still able to get copies of titles, and once libraries were able to reopen, members were also able to gain access to relevant titles in their collections as well. We had originally been concerned about disruptions to the release schedule of books due to the shutdown early last year, but those fears were unfounded as we came to the end of the year with many strong contenders across all of our categories.

Best Bets members also participated in several events for OLA this year. In February we partnered with the Reader's Advisory Committee to present an OLA webinar on Reader's Advisory Tips and Tricks for adults, teens, and children. This was a great success and our members enjoyed the collaboration. In November we were invited to present a panel at the Child and Youth Expo on the topic of Nonfiction reader's advisory for children and teens. Our panel had over 130 participants in the live session and a recording was available for all participants afterwards.

Our 2020 Top Ten lists have been finalized and will be presented Thursday afternoon at the Super Conference. We had a very strong year despite the numerous challenges that we all faced throughout 2020. Our members are looking forward to 2021 and the reading year to come.

Submitted by:

Kara Miley & Theresa Power

Date:

January 30, 2021