Read to Remember: Linda Granfield, Sharon McKay, Recent WWI titles, Book Week touring authors

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Shortlisted for the Ann Connor Brimer Award

Shortlisted for the SYRCA Snow Willow Award

OLA Best Bets Honourable Mention

Nomination for the OLA White Pine Award

oli minus one

Nominated for the CLA Young Adult Book Award

OLA Best Bet

Nominated for the CLA Young Adult Book Award

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Winner of the 2014 Preschool Reads Award

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Opinion: Remembering Not to Forget
Author Linda Granfield on writing about war.

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Writing about conflict, war, friendship, loyalty and laughter.

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Reviews of the latest in fine Canadian books for children and teens.

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COVER: Illustration from the 2014 TD Canadian Children’s Book Week poster by Brian Deines © 2014. TD Canadian Children’s Book Week takes place May 3 to 10, 2014. For more information, visit www.bookweek.ca.

MEDIUM: Oil

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR: Brian Deines is an acclaimed children’s book illustrator who has been nominated for the Governor General’s Literary Award for Illustration, the Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Children’s Book Award and the Lillian Shepherd Memorial Award for Excellence in Illustration, among others. He has illustrated such varied titles as The Hockey Tree, The Road to Afghanistan and On a Snowy Night.

A native of Red Deer, Alberta, Brian graduated from the Alberta College of Art. Before becoming an artist, he spent time as a “roughneck and a rigger” on the oilfields of Alberta and as a groundskeeper at a golf and country club.
In a Land Not So Far Away...

Mooncakes
Loretta Seto
Illustrated by Renné Benoit
9781459801073 • $19.95 hc

“A lovely, touching story that functions well as both entertainment and an introduction to a snippet of Chinese culture... A treat as sweet as the titular pastry.”
—Quill & Quire

2013 CCBC BEST BOOKS

Once Upon A Balloon
Bree Galbraith
Illustrated by Isabelle Malenfant
9781459803244 • $19.95 hc

“Children will be delighted as Theo persists (and succeeds) in trying to help Frank, and adult readers may be reminded of something too easily forgotten: that a childlike sense of wonder is something to be treasured.”
—Starred review in Quill & Quire

Best Friend Trouble
Frances Itani
Illustrated by Geneviève Després
9781554698912 • $19.95 hc

Who needs a best friend anyway?

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Last year, Second Story Press publisher Margie Wolfe took early pages of the planned book, *Every Day is Malala Day*, to the Frankfurt Book Fair (a huge international rights fair). She hoped to interest publishers in seeing more finished PDFs later, with a view to eventually purchasing rights. When a Korean publisher took a look at these early pages and said he was ready to purchase rights immediately, Margie says she knew the book would be an international success. (To date, it is being published in North America – in both French and English – Australia, Japan, Korea and Brazil and there are other deals in the works.) You will find our reviewer’s take on *Every Day is Malala Day* on page 26.

Canadian publishers have had lots of international success with both their non-fiction and fiction titles. I believe that one of the reasons is that they and their authors and illustrators tackle challenging topics with intelligence, sensitivity and a certain amount of fearlessness. One of these topics is war and conflict – reflected in the 2014 theme of TD Canadian Children’s Book Week “Read to Remember.” In the pages of this magazine, you will find noted writers who have written thoughtfully and powerfully about this subject. Author Linda Granfield has contributed a challenging opinion piece; our profile of fiction writer Sharon McKay begins with her firsthand understanding of conflict zones; and our Bookmark! list offers some recent and classic books about World War I on the 100th anniversary of its commencement.

As we were preparing this issue, we heard that bookseller Judy Mappin had died. Founder of The Double Hook Book Shop of Montreal, Judy was one of the pioneers in supporting Canadian literature. Her store (now happily the site of Livres Babar bookstore) stocked only Canadian books for adults and, in her children’s section, a mix of Canadian and non-Canadian books. She was a good businesswoman, a champion of Canadian books and a lovely lady.

This issue also offers a fascinating look at how authors who are also editors have juggled their two roles, the thoughts of some first-time Book Week touring authors and one illustrator and lots of reviews of new books to enjoy.

Happy reading.
Grey clouds filled the sky and sheep quietly grazed nearby on the day I walked upon Vimy Ridge in France. The newly restored pylons stood crisp and white in the autumn light; students on a day trip from England climbed about the steps. Their laughter broke the otherwise silent majesty and sorrow of the place. I picked up a small piece of hard chalk, the very stone the soldiers of the First World War had chiselled through for miles to make the dark tunnels that led them up onto the Vimy battlefield. With that pebble in my pocket, I walked to the nearby military cemetery.

Visits to such places are very much about mood: the sudden rush of breeze through the tangled growth and denuded trees on the other side of the cemetery wall, the muffled sound of the cars on the road beyond, cars filled with people going about their daily business while I made this cancer-delayed first trip to a place I had read and written so much about.

I had another item in my pocket that day — a Canadian red poppy pin to place upon one of the graves as a gesture of thanks. But as I stood at the gate of this small cemetery, I was overwhelmed by the number of gravestones. How could I decide which one to choose? As I was pondering my selection, a butterfly passed over my right shoulder and flew into the cemetery.

I am not one who is much given to ‘signs’ as determinants of what course I should take; however, on that October day, I remembered that a butterfly is a symbol of the soul, of transition, and of rebirth after death. My decision was made; my poppy would be left on the grave where the butterfly alighted.

There are about eight long rows of graves in the Vimy Ridge cemetery. I watched that butterfly with its luminous “eyes” (a peacock butterfly/inachis io, considered the most beautiful butterfly in the world), and followed it until it settled on a purple wild aster. The stone next to the plant marked the grave of an unknown soldier. And there I left my poppy, and soon after left Vimy Ridge, once the site of an onslaught of battle noise on Easter Sunday, April 17, 1917, and now a tranquil spot visited by millions of boisterous students and solemn older tourists each year.

So why do I begin this article with a recollection of an important, emotional, unforgettable personal moment? There are many reasons.
Brian Deines’s “Read to Remember/Lire pour se souvenir” poster invitation
The poster for the 2014 TD Canadian Children’s Book Week wonderfully brings to mind all the elements important to this year’s Book Week tribute — the colours, the children, the books and the magnificent use of the image recalling “The Brooding Soldier” of the St. Julien Memorial (Belgium) to Canadian First World War soldiers. For those who rush to pronounce any “soldier statue” as proof of the worship of war, I would ask them to do a bit of research about such memorials and then reconsider.

Look at the poster image; you see this pose during Remembrance Day ceremonies as service members stand at cenotaphs and memorials during the “11th hour” vigils. The rifle is pointed towards the earth in a gesture of peace; the head is bowed in reflection rather than raised in confrontation. The poppy is huge, but the book, and what it has to share with us, is even larger. As does any successful piece of art, Brian’s poster educates the viewer and brings us emotionally into the subject.

The journeys of the Book Week participants
While 2014 marks the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War (1914-1918), the books written by many of the Book Week authors cover other conflicts Canadian families and new Canadians, have experienced. I’ve participated in Book Weeks myself — I know the journey taken throughout a province is valuable to the children and youth met and to the author/illustrator who takes part. In the quiet moments at the end of the busy Book Week days, there is time for reflection upon the stories shared by both the presenter and the audience.

When I wrote In Flanders Fields: The Story of the Poem by John McCrae in 1995, there were no factual books about wars or the home front available for young readers. I went to the library, expecting to find lots of “youth-appropriate” materials about war in both fiction and non-fiction, but I found nothing. So I sent out the proposal for that “Red Poppy Book,” as it has become known. The publisher who had the ‘right of first refusal’ replied to my proposal quickly. She sincerely believed there was no audience for such a book, that no teacher/librarian would buy it, no student would read it, and, besides, it was mentioned, our veterans were passing away. The same day I received that refusal, I sent the proposal out again to another publisher. It was accepted immediately. (There’s a lesson in this about not accepting a rejection letter when, in one’s heart, one knows the book must be written.)

This year, after being in print constantly for 20 years, In Flanders Fields will be published in a new edition. Janet Wilson will paint a new cover image. The revamped book will be released to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the poem “In Flanders Fields” in 2015. There were teachers, librarians and students who wanted, needed, to read the book. They also had the opportunity to engage with our last veterans of the First World War, today no longer with us. Now, as thousands of our veterans, our family members, who served in the Second World War, the Korean War, the War in Vietnam, on peacekeeping missions around the world, and in the War in Afghanistan, pass away or cope with the physical and mental turmoil caused by the conflicts, the books written and illustrated by Book Week authors connect us to them and our shared past.

Since 1995, we have had an abundance of well-researched and well-written books to use all year, not just on Remembrance Day. Canadian writers for youth have told the stories of conscientious objectors, of Guest Children living in Canada during wartime, of families surviving (or not) at home while fathers and sons were abroad. We have learned a lot about the Holocaust, the treatment of homosexuals and prisoners of war, and life for those in whose countries the conflicts took or continue to take place. Each Book Week visit, to me, is an invitation to all to continue their journey to understanding conflict and resolution through books and informed discussion.

“Have we become so lazy, or so politically correct (the latest in getting-off-the-hook excuses used by the uninformed) that we no longer recognize what has gone before us and continues to occur?”

WARNING: we are forgetting more than we are remembering
The Book Week touring authors are committed to remembering, honouring and recognizing, and they will be visiting communities this spring, just as the last of Canada’s service members will return home from Afghanistan. For over 10 years, men and women have served in that war, and I have met their children in libraries and classrooms across the country. Those children had stories they wanted to share, and their peers and I sat and eagerly listened.

There are other stories, too, often told after I’ve left a classroom or community. Teachers and librarians write to me about what happened — children who emigrated from wartorn countries felt comfortable enough to share their truths and their experiences. They felt it was safe to speak of their personal war recollections. An Ontario girl from Bosnia spoke about how her family had to spend a winter in a roofless building that had once been a home. A boy on Vancouver Island shared what it was like to have both his parents serving
And suddenly she said, “I don’t get what you do. Why don’t you write a book about peace?”

To be honest, I thought she was teasing me and I replied accordingly. “Peace,” I said. “Oh, you mean a book about the failed League of Nations, or resolutions that never pass, or maybe the life cycle of a dove?”

I looked up from my boots and saw her face — and realized she had not been joking. I quickly added my actual belief about the subject: “the more facts we know about war the more we know about and desire peace.” I might have added that understanding, not judging, the past can also make us more determined to achieve peace, on a world scale or even in terms of bullying in a schoolyard, but it was time for us both to leave for our appointments.

I’ve never forgotten that dialogue.

I’ve thought of it every time I’ve written another book connecting our dwindling number of veterans, their family members and their communities. I recall it every time I see media stories suddenly trotted out for public consumption the second we flip our calendars to November. And I’m thinking about it as I write this commentary, realizing that the Book Week authors will be touring, not in November as they once did, but in glorious May. And I’m jealous of the experiences those authors will have as young readers step forward and share their stories, empowered by the literature they have been brought to by parents and educators who ‘get it.’

“Read to Remember / Lire pour se souvenir” — ah, there are so many family stories still to hear, so much community history we simply must not forget.

Author of 30 books, Linda Granfield has explored and explained aspects of war to young readers through books such as In Flanders Fields: The Story of the Poem by John McCrae, The Unknown Soldier, High Flight: A Story of World War II and, most recently, The Road to Afghanistan.

in Afghanistan; they had both come home safely from their tours. His relief was palpable; her grief was felt by every student in the room, and by me.

Given these powerful interactions, imagine my incredulity when I’m told that fewer schools are observing Remembrance Day in any way. Teacher-librarians were often the staff members who organized such ceremonies, and we all know the scarcity of teacher-librarians in Canadian schools today. So, it was/is left to another staff member to take it upon him/herself to utilize the library materials and knowledge of the school’s student population’s background and devise an inclusive, meaningful hour in November. During work-to-rule situations, remembrance ceremonies are ‘extras’ that are often not done; I’ve been told the ceremony is held at the discretion of the principal. I’ve been informed that younger, “new” teachers who do not feel any connection to past wars aren’t interested in organizing remembrance events. Here I would argue they must not be very aware of their own family history — I have yet to meet a Canadian who does not have at least one meaningful story of a relative’s service during wartime.

A teacher once called me to discuss my possible visit to her school. Regrettably, I had to say I was fully booked for November, the month she wanted, but that, since I believe every day is Remembrance Day, I was available for any number of other school days. I offered to come in April if she liked, with a veteran the children could meet.

“Why would you want to come in April?” she said. “It’s nowhere near November.”

I mentioned that we could connect the visit with Vimy Ridge Day.

“What’s that?” she asked. And I explained it was officially recognized as a day of remembrance in Canada.

“Oh, great!” she responded. “Another day we have to do something for?”

I did not visit that school. I leave you to ponder the many ways in which the exchange was unfortunate. It is indicative of our lessening awareness of what we are losing in terms of history and community interaction when we equate remembrance with extra work or warmongering.

What are we afraid of? Have we become so lazy, or so politically correct (the latest in getting-off-the-hook excuses used by the uninformed) that we can no longer recognize what has gone before us and continues to occur? Has observing Remembrance Day become a meaningless chore? Have we chosen to ignore the ugliness of the past, forgetting that it is intertwined with our own families? There was a time, about 10 years ago, when I felt Canadian communities were indeed remembering; I cannot say the same now, at all. If you look around, I believe you will see that all we are increasingly remembering is how to forget.

A few years ago, I was attending a provincial library conference. It was a miserable, winter-stormy day, and I was trying to untie my wet boot laces in the speakers’ lounge. A well-known children’s book reviewer sat beside me, attending to her own soggy gear. We chatted a bit about the weather and the conference.
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE CANADIAN CHILDREN’S BOOK CENTRE

Wednesday, June 11, 2014 | 6:00pm

Room 200, Northern District Library
40 Orchard View Blvd. (Yonge and Eglinton)
Toronto, Ontario  M4R 1B9

Reception to follow at
The Canadian Children’s Book Centre Library
Suite 222, Northern District Library

For more information, visit www.bookcentre.ca

GUEST SPEAKER: HUGH BREWSTER

Members* and public welcome.

* Members are reminded that they may appoint a proxy to attend the Annual General Meeting on their behalf. Any such appointment must be evidenced by a document in writing, signed by the member and received by CCBC prior to the date of the Annual General Meeting.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

To all members: The Canadian Children’s Book Centre’s Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday, June 11, 2014 in Toronto at 40 Orchard View Boulevard, Room 200, Toronto, ON. In accordance with Section 3.04(b) of our bylaws please accept this notice as a formal call for the nomination of directors. The members will elect new director(s) to the board to fill any vacancies at the Annual General Meeting.

Two openings on the board will be available and we welcome nominations from the general membership.

If you are a member in good standing with the Canadian Children’s Book Centre and have someone in mind who you think would be an asset to the CCBC and its mission and goals, please send the name of the person you are nominating along with their mailing address, e-mail address, current telephone number and a short bio to Charlotte Teeple care of the CCBC (charlotte@bookcentre.ca).

Nominations must be received by May 31, 2014 in order for them to be considered by the nominations committee of the board.

PROXY

THE CANADIAN CHILDREN’S BOOK CENTRE (the “Corporation”)
PROXY FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS TO BE HELD ON Wednesday, JUNE 11, 2014

The undersigned Member of the Corporation hereby appoints ___________________________________________________ or, failing him/her, the chair of the meeting, as proxy of the undersigned to represent the undersigned at the Annual General Meeting of Members to be held on the 11 day of June 2014, at 40 Orchard View Boulevard, Suite 200, Toronto, Ontario at 6 p.m. (local time) or at any adjournment or adjournments of said meeting and at such meeting to vote for the undersigned upon any and all matters which may come before the meeting, and to do any and all acts and things which the undersigned might or could do if personally present; provided that, if checked, the following items shall be voted as follows:

1) The director nominee or nominees, or slate, identified in the notice of the meeting on the Canadian Children’s Book Centre website at www.bookcentre.ca is elected as a director of the Corporation:
   ☐ For ☐ Withheld

2) Martyn, Dooley & Partners LLP Chartered Accountants, are appointed as public accountant for the Corporation to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting:
   ☐ For ☐ Withheld

The undersigned hereby undertakes to ratify and confirm all that the said attorney and proxy of the undersigned may do or cause to be done by virtue hereof.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned has executed this Proxy, the _________ day of _____________________________, 2014.

Name of Member  __________________________________________________ (please print)
Signature of Member  _______________________________________________

Proxies must be received before the calling to order of the meeting.
Welcome Sandra O’Brien
Sandra O’Brien has joined the CCBC staff as the interim Program Coordinator, replacing Shannon Howe Barnes during her maternity leave with her new daughter, Molly Grace.

A native of Sudbury, Ontario, Sandra taught for nine years in Toronto and then when her family moved to Australia for four years, she completed her M.Ed. in children’s literature at the University of Technology in Sydney. She has worked with the CCBC in a number of freelance roles over the past five years — regularly reviewing for Canadian Children’s Book News and, since 2010, writing all the annotations for the semi-annual guide, Best Books for Kids & Teens.

Sandra says, “Having done various jobs for the Book Centre over the last few years, I thought the Program Coordinator’s position would provide me with a new challenge and the opportunity to work more closely with the CCBC staff and other members in the field. I am looking forward to the next year and all the wonderful opportunities it will bring.”

IBBY Disabilities Collection opens; IBBY Canada AGM
February 27 saw the official opening of the IBBY Collection for Young People with Disabilities at the North York Central Library of the Toronto Public Library (TPL) system. The collection of books in over 40 languages is a treasure trove of reading for and about children with disabilities. Established in 1985, in Norway, the collection has grown to 4,000 titles contributed from IBBY national sections around the world, including IBBY Canada.

On hand for the opening were IBBY Executive Director Liz Page from Switzerland, IBBY Vice-President Linda Pavonetti from the United States and Heidi Boiesen of Norway, who has been the director of the collection since 2002. A number of international applicants vied for the opportunity to house the Disabilities Collection. In the end, it was TPL’s proposal that was selected, and so began the process of moving the collection. The books were painstakingly packed up and placed on a ship that travelled across the Atlantic to bring the collection to a newly designed area at the North York Central Library. This is the first time since the collection’s inception that it has been moved outside of Norway.

The collection includes books in special formats such as Blissymbolics, PCS, Braille, sign language, tactile and textile books; books that portray children and teens with disabilities as characters in stories and novels; and books for adults with developmental delays, language disabilities or reading difficulties. It provides an opportunity for parents and teachers to discover new books with young readers. It is also an invaluable collection for researchers, illustrators and artists to explore.

For more information on the IBBY Collection for Young People with Disabilities, visit www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/ibby.

On the heels of the launch, the March 1 Annual General Meeting of IBBY Canada was an opportunity for members to meet some of the international IBBY executive as well as Sharon Moynes of TPL and Leigh Turina, TPL librarian for the Disabilities Collection.

Members heard details of IBBY’s international activities, including the important Children in Crisis Fund, which, over the years, has served young people in countries affected by war or natural disasters — and which receives contributions from the Canadian national section each year. Most recently, the fund has been working with Syrian children in refugee camps in Lebanon. Liz Page also encouraged members to attend the 2014 IBBY Congress in Mexico City and the 2016 Congress in Auckland, New Zealand.

Among the IBBY Canada activities for 2013 was the first — and very successful — Joanne Fitzgerald Illustrator in Residence Program, which saw Martha Newbigging in a month-long residency at the Northern District branch of Toronto Public Library. A committee is currently selecting the second illustrator for the fall 2014 residency, which will again be hosted at TPL. After 2014, IBBY Canada will work with the Canadian Urban Libraries Council to move the residency to another library in Canada.

The meeting was also the opportunity to announce the winners of the annual Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Canadian Picture Book Award and the annual Frances E. Russell Research Grant.

The 2014 winner of the Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Canadian Picture Book Award is How To, illustrated and written by Julie Morstad (Simply Read Books). The other shortlisted books are The Man with the Violin, illustrated by Dušan Petričić, written by Kathy Stinson (Annick Press) and Wild Berries, illustrated and written by Julie Flett (Simply Read Books).

The jury noted, “This year was both a difficult year and an easy year to pick a book for the Cleaver Award. There were many fine books in contention and the jury, in the end, had three books as finalists and to select the one took a lot of discussion. It was also an easy choice because [the winning book], from the first time we all saw it, captured our attention and imagination.”

The Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Canadian Picture Book Award was established in 1985, with a bequest from the renowned artist, Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver, following her death at the age of 46. The $1,000 prize goes to the illustrator of the winning book.

The Frances E. Russell Research Grant goes toward research on an aspect of children’s books. This year’s grant goes to Bonnie Tulloch, a graduate student in University of British Columbia’s children’s literature program at the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies. Her continued on page 10
Seen at ...

A PHOTOGRAPHIC LOOK AT CANADIAN CHILDREN’S BOOK EVENTS

What happens when you mix 113 teacher-librarians in Durham District School Board with 17 visiting authors and illustrators? A day of mini-presentations, book talking, autographs and fun.

Rosemary McCarney, author of Every Day is Malala Day, enjoys breakfast with booksellers Eleanor LeFave (Mabel’s Fables) and Sheila Koffman (Another Story).

Kathy Stinson is everywhere! In December, the author of The Man with the Violin appeared at The Bookshelf in Guelph, ON with three students from the Suzuki String School of Guelph; in January she was at Politics and Prose Bookstore in Washington DC with violinist Joshua Bell (the real man with the violin) and her colleague Nan Forler.

Mouse City: Barbara Reid (The Subway Mouse) and friends joined to create a mouse city and transit system in March at Toronto Public Library. Small Print Toronto, organizers of the event, are planning more Mouse City constructions.
Tell us about your newest book. My latest book (my fourth) is called Stupid. It’s about a teen filmmaker, Martin, who has undiagnosed dyslexia. He is reluctant to give in to the label “stupid” given to him by his dad. Martin meets up with Stick, a parkour (free running) practitioner, who uses his parkour philosophy to help Martin find his own path, instead of going down the one set out by his dad. I aimed to make Stupid a really visual experience, using the twists and leaps of parkour. I also wanted to explore how undiagnosed or misdiagnosed learning disabilities can affect a teen’s sense of self. This was such a fun book to write. It has lots of humour, which I love to use in all my books, and some really interesting and charismatic characters.

Tell us about the process of writing. I usually write a book like Stupid in six months. I begin by researching my topic and constructing the characters—documenting their internal and external goals, motives and conflicts. Then I plot the novel in point form. By the time I’m done the plotting, I can usually visualize my novel as a movie. I write out that movie, as I see it, word for word. After that comes editing and editors and much rewriting. In between drafts I work on the early stages of my next project or on curriculum for the youth writing classes I teach.

How did you first get published? I wrote a book called Boiled Cat (now self-published) and sent it to Lorimer SideStreets. It didn’t fit their needs, but they asked me if I had anything else that might work for their series. I thought back to a time when I was hanging with a lot of street kids and punk bands. One of the kids was rumoured to have a schizophrenic mother. I realized there weren’t many books for teens that had parents with mental illnesses. So I pitched Schizo and they accepted it. Since then I’ve been trying to find topics or ideas that haven’t been explored to write about.

Tell us about someone who inspired you to write. My high school English teacher, Mr. Jacobson, helped me through the painfully horrific writing that was my first novel. He went well beyond his classroom duties, showing me the ropes of plotting, research and character development. I still have that dreadful book. It’s way too embarrassing to read, but it was what got me believing I was a real writer.

What do you like about writing for teens? Teens are so excited about the world. They’re learning, growing and discovering. Reflecting their stories and emotions back to them is an amazing privilege. I work with kids and teens all the time — in my Reality Is Optional kids’ writing club, and when I teach at places like WordsWorth youth writing residency. Seeing the impact my books have on the kids is so rewarding.

www.kimfirmston.com
Commemorate the 100th anniversary of **WORLD WAR I** with great Canadian books for kids and teens during **TD CANADIAN CHILDREN’S BOOK WEEK 2014** (May 3-10, 2014)

- Poster and bookmarks feature artwork by award-winning illustrator Brian Deines.
- Free online theme guide features 70 Canadian children’s books on WWI and later conflicts.
- For more information, visit [www.bookweek.ca](http://www.bookweek.ca).
Finding the humanity, telling the story
Sharon McKay’s fiction explores war

BY GILLIAN O’REILLY

When Sharon McKay was staying with relatives in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in her early teens, a bomb went off in the park across the back lane. It was the opening months of “the Troubles,” the name given to the Catholic/Protestant conflict that lasted from 1969 to 1997. McKay was living at her aunt’s house on Cliftonville Road, between the (Catholic) Falls Road and the (Protestant) Shankill Road when there was an explosion in the park’s change hut. Her Irish relatives didn’t want to frighten her so they told her it was a gas explosion. Not used to the gas stoves, gas water heaters and other appliances common in the UK, she was consequently terrified — and only relaxed when she read the paper and realized it had been a bomb instead.

That story, as McKay tells it, is typical of the author and her writing — a story of conflict and a story with humour and a slightly skewed view of the situation. And, as she details in descriptions of her many summers in Belfast, a story of people who love and care for each other.

Throughout her teens and into her 20s, Sharon spent all or part of her summers in Belfast — staying with relatives, getting into scrapes on her own and with her colourful uncles who adored her, sailing across the ocean with her grandmother (a real “gambling grandma”) and living among the Troubles.

Her stories include the time she left her Uncle Jim’s tin leg in the road, how one of her uncles set his pants on fire, the bogus story she sold to a reporter and the times she and her uncles got arrested. At the same time, this was a conflict zone.

Normal, she says, was “soldiers patrolling with guns, barbed wire on rooftops,” normal was being told “which shops and restaurants were Catholic and which ones were Prod, big posters telling us not to do things that could get us killed: ‘Do Not Play with Toy Guns.’”

And yet, she adds, “I was never frightened. I felt ‘I’d better get out of here’ many times, but I always felt loved — that I was in a nutty world of crazy people who loved me.”

Finding the humanity, the relationships and the laughter amid the conflict, and even terror, is something Sharon has done with her historical fiction and, more recently, in books with contemporary settings.

With her first novel, Charlie Wilcox, published in 2000, Sharon took a leap into fiction after years of writing newspaper and magazine articles and non-fiction books. Charlie Wilcox is the story of a 14-year-old Newfoundland boy who, during WWI, accidently boards a ship filled with soldiers bound for Europe. Working as a medic, he finds himself at the horrific Battle of Beaumont Hamel, where the Royal Newfoundland Regiment was cut to shreds in 30 minutes. (Of the 780 men who went into battle on July 1, 1916, only 68 answered roll call the next day.)

McKay followed up Charlie Wilcox with Charlie Wilcox’s Great War. The story explores the remainder of his war years from 1916 to 1918. Even in these early books, the combination of grim realism, adventure and humour was noted. Discussing Charlie Wilcox’s Great War, CM reviewer Joanne Peters points to “a dry wit that is not out of keeping with the strangeness of war.”

McKay also published four Penelope books in the Our Canadian Girl series, set during WWI, in the civilian worlds of Halifax (at the time of the Explosion) and Montreal. For all the books, she immersed herself in research — as she did for her next novel, Esther, the story of the first Jewish woman to come to New France.

She also volunteered for years with the Christian-Jewish Dialogue Holocaust Remembrance Committee. That led her to three non-fiction books with author Kathy Kacer — a series of stories from Holocaust survivors, covering experiences in the ghettos, the camps and time in hiding.

At the same time, she was moving away from historical fiction and beginning to travel far afield to explore more contemporary conflict situations. For her 2008 novel, War Brothers, she travelled to Gulu, Uganda, to interview child soldiers and research the story of the Lord’s Resistance Army.

In 2009, she was named a Canadian War Artist, the first children’s/YA author to hold this title. She travelled to Afghanistan, seeing firsthand the life of the Canadian soldiers in
wartime conditions at Camp Mirage and Kandahar Airfield, going on a foot patrol near the Pakistan border and visiting a school and meeting village children. The result was **Thunder Over Kandahar**, the story of two Afghani girls from very different cultures, struggling through conflict in their country and eventually trying to escape over the mountains to Pakistan. This is a tale of friendship between two girls, driven by circumstances to do something brave and desperate — yet also feeling pride in their country and, perhaps, hope for a future.

Staying with friends in Israel and travelling to the Palestinian Territory was part of the research that went into **Enemy Territory**, the story of two boys, one Israeli, one Palestinian, both confined to a hospital with serious injuries, who sneak out of the institution to explore the Old City of Jerusalem. They go from prejudice and mistrust to shared risks and escapades, and McKay never lets us forget that these are 14-year-old boys in all their impulsiveness, desire for adventure and occasional dopey-ness.

“My books,” she says, “are always about friendship, loyalty and adventure. That’s what I care about. Kids solve their own problems, so my writing has that kind of traditional feel.”

There is always a danger, when setting a book in a far-off locale and in a different culture, of simply writing a North American story in an exotic setting. How does McKay avoid this? First of all, she says, she surrounds herself with “the good guys.” In this list, she includes her publisher Rick Wilks and the staff at Annick Press and her editors Barbara Berson and Catherine Marjoribanks. “I make damn sure that there are people on the project who call it as they see it.”

As well, she notes on her website, she is also “careful to have lots of readers — people from the culture I am writing about reviewing my story as I go along. I write slowly. I interview, I read and I listen. Then I have the entire book fact checked all over again. All of my books are read by teacher/librarians after the first edit. I take their comments very seriously.”

In recent years, McKay has been very pleased with the new formats developed for her work. **War Brothers: The Graphic Novel**, released in 2012, was developed with and illustrated by Daniel Lafrance. This came about after McKay met graphic novel author J. Torres at an event in Banff. Torres said he had a friend who was interested in child soldiers. “I gave J. a copy of **War Brothers**, asked him to pass it on and forgot about it.”

A few weeks later, she received an email from Lafrance with sketches. “I opened up my email and — OMG. I printed the sketches out and RAN down to Annick, pushed them under Rick’s nose and HE had the same reaction. And so it began. I consider Dan Lafrance to be not only a master artist, but also a storyteller at the top of his game. I got sooooo lucky.”

**Thunder Over Kandahar**, which was released as an audio book in 2011, is also being developed as a graphic novel with Daniel Lafrance, to be published by Annick, and has been optioned for a feature-length movie by Mind’s Eye Productions.

Currently, Sharon McKay is working on two new books. **End of the Line**, coming in the fall from Annick Press, is the story of a little girl sheltered from the Nazis by two elderly unmarried brothers. It is, she says, a tribute to her uncles. As well, she is working with Amnesty International and the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture on a book called (tentatively) **Prison Boy and Goddess Girl**.

Telling the story, honouring those involved, finding the humanity — that’s what Sharon McKay continues to do.

gillian.o'reilly@bookcentre.ca

**Recent Titles by Sharon E. McKay**

- **War Brothers: The Graphic Novel**
  - co-written with Daniel Lafrance
  - illustrated by Daniel Lafrance
  - ANNICK PRESS, 2013

- **Enemy Territory**
  - ANNICK PRESS, 2012

- **Thunder Over Kandahar**
  - ANNICK PRESS, 2010

- **Whispers from the Ghettos**

- **Whispers in Hiding**

- **Whispers from the Camps**
  - PENGUIN CANADA, 2009

- **War Brothers**
  - PENGUIN CANADA, 2008
  - ANNICK PRESS, 2014 (reissued for the US market)

- **Esther**
  - PENGUIN CANADA, 2004

- **Penelope: Terror in the Harbour**
  - (Our Canadian Girl)
  - PENGUIN CANADA, 2001

- **Penelope: The Glass Castle**
  - (Our Canadian Girl)
  - PENGUIN CANADA, 2002

- **Penelope: An Irish Penny**
  - (Our Canadian Girl)
  - PENGUIN CANADA, 2003

- **Penelope: Christmas Reunion**
  - (Our Canadian Girl)
  - PENGUIN CANADA, 2004

- **Charlie Wilcox’s Great War**
  - STODDART PUBLISHING, 2003

- **Charlie Wilcox**
  - STODDART PUBLISHING, 2000

Gillian O’Reilly is editor of Canadian Children’s Book News.
“Writing and editing are different aspects of who I am, not apples and oranges but blueberries and raspberries,” says Sarah Harvey, Editorial Director at Orca Book Publishers. Many authors and editors are made of this same crazy writing/editing jam, some come at it from the blueberry side (editing), others from the raspberry side (writing). Here are three writing editors who explain how the mixture works.

ANITA DAHER
From Writing to Editing and Back Again
Originally, Anita Daher worked as a flight service specialist, which is how she met her husband, an air traffic controller. The nature of the aviation industry was such that they moved a great deal, which encouraged and developed her powers of observation but also that writer’s sense of otherness. “I suffered from a sense of inadequacy and a lack of confidence,” says Daher. When they moved to Saskatoon, the round-the-clock shift work became too hard on Daher’s two daughters, and she took a leave of absence.

Although constantly changing locations didn’t allow Daher the luxury of taking courses, she immersed herself in the local writing culture wherever she lived, volunteering with arts organizations and chauffeuring touring authors. Diana Wieler, the author of Governor General’s Award-winning Bad Boy, suggested to her that it took seven years of serious, dedicated writing to actually get published.

While posted in Yellowknife, in addition to working as fill-in weekend-show host, researcher and audio tech for CBC Radio, Daher began writing reviews and articles. “I found researching current publications and requesting review copies from publishers helped strengthen my awareness of the current literary landscape, which was very helpful when it came time to find a publisher for my first novel.” In Yellowknife, she met Tim Wynne-Jones and credits him as being the biggest influence on her development as a writer, helping her to take her writing seriously. “With his friendship and excellent example, I developed a strong work ethic of writing every day.”

True to Wieler’s advice, seven years later Daher wrote a story based on a forest fire that occurred near where she had lived in La Ronge, Saskatchewan. Flight From Big Tangle was published as an Orca Young Reader in 2002. It was quickly followed by Flight From Bear Canyon.

When her family moved from Sault Ste. Marie to Winnipeg in 2002, Daher began working as a marketing coordinator for Great Plains Publications, often acting as a first reader. From that position she became their freelance editor.

Her Process
“Good morning, tea is steeped, time to get creative” is a familiar tweet of Daher’s. She likes to get up absurdly early — 4:30 or 5:00 AM — put on a pot of tea, check in on Twitter and answer email; then she shuts down her Internet for two hours, using a program called Freedom. That way she says she can “put on my big buffalo coat,” her metaphor for totally immersing herself in her work. After a couple of hours, she may run, have lunch or do housekeeping chores. If she has a tight schedule, she returns for more writing, and then some more.

Writing vs Editing
“I am a writer first — my own stories are what I think about first when I open my eyes each day — but I feel incredibly lucky to work on occasion on an author’s ‘team,’ helping bring out the very best in their work. No matter what, it’s all about story. I couldn’t imagine living my life in any other way.”

Daher can’t edit and write at the same time; she needs her buffalo coat immersion. She can, however, work on many projects as long as they are at different stages of the process. Often she finds herself taking on so many projects she’s overwhelmed, which is where she found the inspiration for her 2013 picture book. Itty Bitty Bits (Peanut Butter Press) tells the story of Molly, a girl overwhelmed by the task of cleaning her room until she models herself after an ant who takes a crumb of a sandwich at a time.
Currently, Daher has added classroom visits to her list of things to do. Her entertaining presentations on the process of writing include puppets and stories.

What kind of editor does a writer make? Author Jocelyn Shipley worked with Daher on her book How to Tend a Grave, and describes her experience, “Anita understood her role as editor was to help me make my book stronger, not turn it into her book, so she always presented her suggestions as just that – suggestions. And she kept reminding me how much she loved my book, which I’m sure she knew a writer needs to hear when facing revisions.”

“I hate humiliation and editors help me avoid it.”

— Anita Daher

At present, Daher is taking a break from both her editing job at Great Plains, a company she considers almost family, and her administrative position at the Writer’s Collective; she has three novels on the go to which she wants to devote her time. Ice Ponies is a younger YA for Stabenfeldt, a Norwegian-based publisher that offers books in many different languages. The Strand is speculative fiction set in Saskatchewan, unplaced with a publisher as yet, and Elliot Grimm is an older YA she is rewriting for an adult publisher. “I LOVE having a full writing plate! I’ve not worked on more than one project at one time in the past, but perhaps editing novels for others while working on my own was good training.”

Daher feels she is a stronger writer for being an editor. She has developed a far-seeing approach and understands how to step back and look at the story arc and pacing. But she still needs an editor herself. “I wrote what I thought was my most exciting book with a kidnap and a drug cartel, and, and, and… My editor thought it was confusing and the editor inside me instantly realized I had used the ‘pile on’ approach and made the necessary adjustments.” That book, Billeh the Kid, will be published in six countries in 2014.

She adds, “I hate humiliation and editors help me avoid it.”

Hugh Brewster
From Packaging / Editing to Writing
Growing up in a large, devout Scottish family of three boys and one girl, Hugh Brewster originally wanted to become a missionary because, from his reading, it seemed they travelled to many exotic places. However, since English and history were the only subjects he excelled at in school, upon graduation, in what he calls the long-haired days of the seventies, he immediately launched into writing for magazines. He also read part-time for Scholastic Canada, which turned into a full-time job writing educational catalogue copy. He prides himself on having instigated both the teachers’ and parents’ book club. In 1981, he moved to Scholastic in New York. Then, in 1984, he began working for a friend who had started his own book-packaging company, Madison Press. Brewster explains: “A packager develops an idea and concept and delivers it to the publisher as a final disk, the publisher is then responsible for printing and distributing the book.” At Madison, he would dream up a project and help put it together, acting as the supervisor of the creation, sometimes writing sidebars and text. Often the writers he worked with were academics and journalists who didn’t care if he rewrote their work entirely. Most often it was a collaborative effort between himself, the designer and a ghostwriter.

Brewster started the children’s line at Madison and ended up being the editorial director for 20 years. While there, he helped create many books on the Titanic — The Discovery of the Titanic, Titanic: An Illustrated History (the book James Cameron carried around to pitch his film), Polar the Titanic Bear and On Board the Titanic — becoming an expert on the subject. This would serve him well when he imagined young Jamie Laidlaw’s experience of the sail and sinking in his 2011 novel, Deadly Voyage, in the I Am Canada series from Scholastic Canada and his 2012 adult non-fiction RMS Titanic: Gilded Lives on a Fatal Voyage. But he wrote his first book, Anastasia’s Album, only because the writer scheduled to write it was overextended and the book needed to be finished to a schedule. That first book earned Brewster the Red Cedar Award and the Silver Birch Award and led to many school visits that he genuinely enjoyed. From then on, he was hooked.

From all the school visits, Brewster realized how dire the need was for Canadian history books, especially Canadian military history books, and he began writing and packaging
them for Scholastic Canada through his own company, Whitfield Editions. At Vimy Ridge: Canada’s Greatest World War I Victory earned him the 2008 Norma Fleck Award for Canadian Children’s Non-Fiction. Writing Dieppe: Canada’s Darkest Day of WWII helped with the research on his first fiction project, Prisoner of Dieppe (I Am Canada).

Process
Unlike many writers, Brewster doesn’t like to launch into writing early in the morning, preferring clerical duties or edits as his warm-up activities. At 10 AM, he starts by reading the previous day’s work, revisiting and revising, and then continues writing till about 4 PM, at which time he visits the Y to run, swim and be with people. Brewster likes working at night, too, and will often put on a second sprint in the evening.

He conducts his research both before and during a project and finds he must struggle with the temptation to head for the library to waste time over details that may only affect a single line. Instead he tries to push on with a note to check on something later. One of his favourite tricks is one he attributes to Hemingway’s A Moveable Feast, and that is to not write himself out, to always save something good to write the next day.

“Everyone in publishing should be a writer for a year; it changes your perspective entirely.”

— Hugh Brewster

Editing vs Writing
“The editorial and design experience Hugh brings to his projects definitely makes a difference,” says Diane Kerner, Vice President of Publishing Scholastic Canada. “Right now we are working on From Vimy to Victory: Canada’s Fight to the Finish in WWI, which releases in the fall. The manuscript came in very clean, and from the very beginning he was thinking about the images and captions and how all the elements were going to work together.”

While Brewster enjoys coming up with an idea and seeing it through to fruition, he says “A bad day of writing is infinitely better than a good day at anything else.”

After his many years as an editor, he says, the sins of his past are finally visiting him and he’s way more sympathetic to the writer. “Everyone in publishing should be a writer for a year; it changes your perspective entirely”. While everyone needs a second pair of eyes, Brewster feels children’s editors can be the most heavy handed. “There should be a sign over every editor’s desk that says, ‘It’s the author’s book.’”

SARAH HARVEY
From Bookselling and Buying to Editing and Writing
While Sarah Harvey never had ambitions to become a writer, she always loved reading and, as a teen, worked in a bookstore. As her children grew up, she attended University of Victoria (UVic), earning a degree in English. She then worked for The Malahat Review, UVic’s literary journal, and attended the Banff publishing program in 1988, because she realized she wanted to work in publishing. After Banff, Harvey started reviewing for The Globe and Mail, The Edmonton Journal and Quill & Quire. She also wrote a books column in the local daily, The Times-Colonist, and in a weekly, Monday Magazine. When she became a single mother, she took a job in the UVic bookstore and after a year became the trade book buyer.

A film director friend challenged her to write a short story that ended with a sentence he gave her; that experience opened up the possibility of writing fiction. At about the same time, Harvey returned for a visit to a childhood home in Victoria that Carol Shields had bought. Shields asked her if she wrote and Harvey answered, “If you call book reviews writing.” Shields looked at her with a level gaze and said, “Of course it’s writing. When are you going to do something else?”

With that encouragement, Harvey penned a piece for Dropped Threads, a series of anthologies edited by Shields on what women aren’t told. Harvey was published in the third collection, Beyond the Small Circle in 2001.

When Harvey inherited some money, she took a six-month leave of absence from the bookstore and wrote what she now knows was a bad adult novel. Still, those characters were well developed and did not go wasted. She revisited them just recently in her 2013 young adult novel, Three Little Words (Orca Book Publishers).

In 2005, Harvey fictionalized an experience she had at 19 staying on a fishing boat where the dog had 11 puppies. At that time, Orca editor Maggie de Vries was renting a room from her and read early drafts of the manuscript with great encouragement. That fictionalization became a picture book called Puppies on Board. In 2006, she started writing The Lit Report, a YA novel about a teen who helps her pregnant friend find a place for herself and her child when her religious parents kick her out. Harvey says she’s passionate about writing about family — and the infinite variety of families that exist. In 2008, it was published and Maggie de Vries left Orca. Harvey jumped into the deep end, applied for her job and got it, initially taking over some Orca Echoes and juvenile and teen titles, later adding Orca Limelights and the non-fiction series, Orca Footprints.
“Writing and editing are different aspects of who I am, blueberries and raspberries, I love them both. I love them equally”

— Sarah Harvey

Her Process
Currently, Harvey acts as Editorial Director, working 8:30 to 4:30 four days a week on site at Orca Book Publishers, with an additional day editing from home. She feels privileged because she only acquires books she likes. Her burning question when she reads a submission is “Can I stand to read this 10 times?” She always reminds the writer that she likes the book or she wouldn’t have bought it, but often asks for three to six substantive edits, her goal being to help the author make everything abundantly clear to the reader. Says Monique Polak, author of So Much it Hurts, “Sarah is a straight shooter with impeccable judgment. She pushes me past where I think I can go.” Harvey prides herself on her excellent memory, which was needed in particular for editing Seven, the series (seven interlinked books written by seven different authors). She kept a visual of a puzzle-piece map glued to the wall over her desk so that it would all make sense in the end.

For Harvey, writing is like a vacation. At her bedside she keeps a pad and paper because ideas come to her first thing in the morning. She doesn’t outline or plan but writes on weekends and holidays when she feels like it, awakening to read perhaps her favourite author, Meg Rosoff, for a while and then, when she catches the mood, writing for a couple of hours with no hard word-count goal. She uses what she calls the slinky method, endlessly looping back to what she wrote the day before, rereading, rewriting and polishing and then continuing. Afterwards she may meet a friend for lunch or do some shopping, and then come back to the work later. The beginning of a story is often difficult to write, but a third of the way through she becomes a fast writer as everything falls into place. Harvey acknowledges that she’s away from her writing work more than she’s at it but “You write because you have to.”

Writing vs Editing
“I love writing and editing both. I love them equally.” For the books she edits she feels no ownership, just pride. For example, she is most proud of the Orca Limelights performing arts series she envisioned and then acquired for and edited. The series includes Attitude by Robin Stevenson, a writer and now friend whose first manuscript Harvey discovered in her slush pile. Harvey says, “It was super exciting to watch a larger idea of mine, born out of my brain in a different way than my own books, come to fruition.”

Karen Krossing, author of Cut the Lights, another Orca Limelights, says she was able to email Harvey back and forth on a couple of premises, and she helped her tweak the idea before she wrote. “Because Sarah is a writer it makes her a more collaborative and insightful editor. She has awareness and respect for the writer’s process.”

To date, all Harvey’s books are published with Orca. She’s happy with the company and says, “It is a highly valued, good publishing house.” In particular, she loves the short format and linear action of the Orca Soundings series. Occasionally she’ll ask authors she’s close to, to act as first readers for a project. “Sarah gave me the honour of reading early drafts of two of her own YA novels, and I must admit I took particular pleasure in the opportunity to reverse roles and mark up those manuscripts!” says Monique Polak.

Bob Tyrell and Andrew Wooldridge (Orca’s President and Publisher, respectively) acted as Harvey’s final editors but they never asked for major rewrites, and she believes it’s because her books come in clean as a result of her own editing experience.

“In writing,” Harvey laments, “measuring success is not quantifiable. Do you measure it by the books you sell, how your peers feel or the awards you win?” In editing, good sales, reviews and awards give her that measurement.

Note: Anita Daher and Sarah Harvey are both touring for TD Canadian Children’s Book Week in May. For more information, visit www.bookweek.ca.

Sylvia McNicoll used to edit for Today’s Parent Toronto but now strictly writes. Her latest novel is a historical fiction for readers aged nine and up called Revenge on the Fly (Pajama Press).
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Second Story Press www.secondstorypress.ca
Heading Out

First-time Book Week authors talk about touring, stories and the kid at the back of the class

Twenty-nine wonderful Canadian children’s authors, illustrators and storytellers will be visiting schools, libraries, community centres and bookstores across Canada throughout the week. Some of the participants have toured for Book Week previously and are returning to enjoy the sometimes exhausting, but always exhilarating and inspiring, week. Others are heading for their first experience with the CCBC’s national tour. What are they looking forward to? Four authors and one illustrator — all Book Week “first-timers” tell us.

James Leck visiting Saskatchewan


Writing can be a lonely job. Unlike the stereotype of the introverted author, happily spending his days alone with his imagination, I’m actually a people person. All those hours I spend alone with my imagination can drive me a little batty. Not that I don’t like my imagination, I kind of need it around if I’m going to continue writing, but it can be fickle sometimes and doesn’t always cooperate. It’s kind of like a wonderfully disobedient dog that’s a blast to play with, but then when you’re not looking it goes and pees all over your favourite rug.

So, what I’m looking forward to most during my first Book Week tour is meeting some people. Especially people who enjoy talking about stories, reading stories, watching stories, writing stories... I think you get my point.

I’m also looking forward to visiting Saskatchewan, the only province in Canada I haven’t had the chance to visit yet. It’s a trip that’s definitely long overdue, and I can’t wait to meet many a Saskatchewanian, smell some western red lilies, maybe sit under a white birch, and spot a few sharp-tailed grouse! (As long as they don’t pee on my favourite rug.)

Beverley Brenna visiting Prince Edward Island

_The Bug House Family Restaurant_, illustrated by Marc Mongeau (Tradewind Books, 2013)


I am delighted at the prospect of the upcoming TD Canadian Children’s Book Week tour where I will spend a week doing various readings and storytelling presentations across Prince Edward Island.

Key for me is the chance to meet and work with students, hearing about and hopefully inspiring their reading and writing endeavours. With younger students, one of my goals is to support oral language development as well as share my own early writing examples (of which I have many, beginning at about age seven). With older students, we may delve into literary perspectives and examine social justice themes in familiar resources, encouraging critical literacy.

Charlottetown, Montague, Murray River, Tignish, O’Leary, Kinkora, Summerside, Souris... these are places new to me and I am excited about exploring them. I don’t have a strong visual memory and so, rather than inventing settings for my work, I rely on real landscapes that I know from experience. This way I can go back again and again through memory (and photographs), working towards solid continuity. Thanks to the Canadian Children’s Book Centre, I know this tour will support my writing in many ways, including my future work, and I am very grateful for the opportunity!

Matt James visiting Northwest Territories

_From There To Here_, written by Laurel Croza (Groundwood Books, 2014)

_Northwest Passage_, written by Stan Rogers (Groundwood Books, 2013)

Whoa!

This feels like it’s gonna be a real adventure and I can’t wait!
This will be my second visit to the spectacular Northwest Territories. The first trip left me spellbound. I have never experienced anything like it. A road trip though a truly alien place where the sun didn’t set and time seemed to stand still; I saw porcupines, moose and a pair of grizzlies and I recall thinking that I wouldn’t be surprised to see a herd of brachiosaurs, woolly mammoth or some other creature come crawling out of prehistory.

I’m eager to revisit that landscape, a serious feast for the eyes. I’m excited to see new faces, hear new voices and to make art, share stories and hopefully learn something from students whose life experiences are profoundly different than my own.

I hope to visit the Ulukhaktok Arts Centre. I would very much love to see some of the printmakers there at work. And I certainly wouldn’t turn down the opportunity to try to catch one of the beautiful Arctic char I saw being pulled from the Mackenzie River!

Jill Bryant visiting Alberta

*Phenomenal Female Entrepreneurs* (Second Story Press, 2013)

*Medical Inventions: The Best of Health* (Crabtree Publishing, 2013)

When I was asked to speak to undergraduates and faculty members at the University of Alberta, I thought that sounded more-than-a-little daunting. I’m much more accustomed to talking to children. But, now that I’ve given this some thought, I’m starting to look forward to it, along with all the other parts of Book Week. I feel very fortunate to be part of this year’s list of creators. It’s very affirming to be recognized in this way. Thank you!

I’ve been finessing a new talk about researching. As with my other presentations, I aim to involve the students as much as possible, using questions, games and silly props. For example, a toy shovel, a pair of oversized glasses and a magnifying glass will feature in this presentation.

It’s always fun to have a chance to share my books and see how inspired the kids can get when they hear about these extraordinary women. I’m excited about encouraging the shy, quiet kids to be brave and try something new. And, as for me, I will be brave and bold, too!

Kyo Maclear visiting Quebec

*Julia, Child*, illustrated by Julie Morstad (Tundra Books, July 2014)

*Mr. Flux*, illustrated by Matte Stephens (Kids Can Press, 2013).

I’ve tried not to be the kind of presenter who spends the whole time blathering on like an adult in a *Peanuts* comic, so I’m looking forward to leaving time for open-format questions and activities. When I’m presenting a lot, this helps keep things lively and interactive. It’s also a nice way of getting a sense of a school’s character.

I always like to meet the quiet kid in the back of the class because that was me. I may ask individual children what they like to read. Sometimes I’ll mention an idea I’m working on and see how they react. It’s like having an anarchic focus group.

I’ve never toured Quebec but I know the children I meet will be amazing. What I love about presenting to kids is the absence of aloofness. They are not afraid to tell you what they think or to show their yearning. They may be aspiring artists, zoologists or clowns. Their yearning is like dandelion fluff. All I have to do is blow gently and their creativity scatters and pollinates.

For further information on Book Week, visit [www.bookweek.ca](http://www.bookweek.ca).
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2011 Winner
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“BOOKMARK!” HIGHLIGHTS BOOKS FOR A VARIETY OF GRADE LEVELS AROUND A PARTICULAR THEME.

This year marks the centenary of the onset of the First World War. Here are 23 new and classic titles, selected by CCBC Library Coordinator Meghan Howe, that foster a thoughtful understanding of this period in history and Canada’s place in it.

WORLD WAR I

PICTURE BOOKS FOR KINDERGARTEN & UP

A Bear in War
written by Stephanie Innes and Harry Endrulat
illustrated by Brian Deines
(Pajama Press, 2012 ©2008)

During WWI, a young girl slips her teddy bear into a care package for her father, a medic posted to the trenches of France. Although her father dies in the battle of Passchendaele, his belongings are shipped back to his family, along with the toy bear, which today sits in the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa.

Forget-Me-Not
written by Maxine Trottier
illustrated by Nancy Keating
(Tuckamore Books, 2008)

In the summer of 1917, Bridget spies a stranger in their small Newfoundland outport. He is a mysterious soldier who hides on an island. Bridget learns the truth of what is inside him when a terrible storm forces him to make the hardest choice he’s ever made.

A Poppy is to Remember
written by Heather Patterson
illustrated by Ron Lightburn
(Scholastic Canada, 2007 ©2004)

Soothing words aimed specifically at young children explain the symbolism of the poppy. A gorgeous book with magnificent illustrations by an award-winning illustrator.

The Road to Afghanistan
written by Linda Granfield
illustrated by Brian Deines
(North Winds Press/Scholastic, 2013)

A soldier’s recollection of three generations of military service — WWI, WWII, Afghanistan — begins with a family reminiscence and transforms into a moving tribute to all soldiers who have served with the Canadian forces over the past century. By one of Canada’s key historical writers, coupled with evocative, glowing illustrations.

JUNIOR & INTERMEDIATE NON-FICTION AND FICTION FOR GRADES 2 TO 8

At Vimy Ridge: Canada’s Greatest World War I Victory
written by Hugh Brewster
(Scholastic Canada, 2007)

Vimy Ridge was a pivotal World War I battle that many historians view as the battle that defined Canada as a nation. Contains photographs, illustrations, glossary, index and selected bibliography.

Fire in the Sky
(I Am Canada)
written by David Ward
(Scholastic Canada, 2013)

Paul Townend is a pilot in the Royal Naval Air Service in the early days of aerial warfare. This action-packed adventure, full of dogfights over France and the English Channel (and even a run-in with the infamous Red Baron), leaves Paul shaken but also proud of what he and his fellow pilots achieved.

Halifax Explodes!
(Canadian Flyer Adventures)
written by Frieda Wishinsky
illustrated by Patricia Ann Lewis-MacDougall
(Owlkids Books Inc., 2011)

In this, the final book in the popular Canadian Flyer Adventures series, Emily and Matt fly to Halifax, Nova Scotia, just as the Mont-Blanc explodes in the harbour. Young readers may also want to read Julie Lawson’s No Safe Harbour: The Halifax Explosion Diary of Charlotte Blackburn in Scholastic Canada’s Dear Canada series. Older readers may enjoy Barbara Haworth-Attard’s Irish Chain, which also deals with the 1917 disaster.
In Flanders Fields: The Story of the Poem by John McCrae
written by Linda Granfield
illustrated by Janet Wilson
(Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2005 ©1995)
Carefully researched paintings combine with gripping narrative to tell the story of the famous poem, “In Flanders Fields.” Includes dramatic stories of soldiers, as well as archival materials. This extraordinary book, which celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2015, is an important addition to libraries. Readers may also enjoy Granfield’s Where Poppies Grow: A World War I Companion and The Unknown Soldier.

Shot at Dawn
(I Am Canada)
written by John Wilson
(Scholastic Canada, 2011)
A shell-shocked soldier leaves his unit and believes he is getting help for a friend. Taken in by a band of real deserters, he realizes what he has done. His mistake leads him to be sentenced to death for abandoning his unit. During the last night before he’s scheduled to be shot by a firing squad, he recounts the events leading up to his arrest. Non-fiction fans may also want to read John Wilson’s Desperate Glory: The Story of World War I.

Silent in an Evil Time:
The Brave War of Edith Cavell
written by Jack Batten
(Tundra Books, 2007)
A noted hero of WWI, Edith Cavell — nurse and resistance fighter — was executed for sheltering British and French soldiers trapped behind German lines. Black-and-white photos, illustrations, bibliography and index included.
Generals Die in Bed: A Story from the Trenches
written by Charles Yale Harrison
(Annick Press, 2002 ©1930)
Based on his own experience in WWI, Harrison writes a stark and poignant novel. First published in 1930.

Hold the Oxo! A Teenage Soldier Writes Home (Canadians at War)
written by Marion Fargey Brooker
(Dundurn Press, 2011)
Seventeen-year-old Jim Fargey volunteered to serve for Canada in the First World War. Jim’s letters to his mother rarely told of the true hardships he faced, but the text, photos, sidebars and poems that accompany those letters reveal a much bleaker picture of what he must have experienced and help us to understand what it must have been like to serve in that war.

A Kind of Courage
written by Colleen Heffernan
(Orca Book Publishers, 2005)
Tension mounts when Hattie’s father hires a conscientious objector to help run his prairie farm during WWI. This compelling first novel deals with prejudice, fear and forgiveness.

Megiddo’s Shadow
written by Arthur Slade
(HarperCollins Canada, 2006)
A prairie boy enlists in the war but is totally unprepared for the horror he is about to encounter as his travels take him to the Palestinian front in the shadow of Megiddo (also known as Armageddon).

Passchendaele: Canada’s Triumph and Tragedy on the Fields of Flanders
written by Norman Leach
(Coteau Books, 2008)
This thoroughly illustrated, readily accessible account of the Battle of Passchendaele tells the story of the heroism, leadership and horrors of this Canadian story.
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The Classroom Bookshelf

Science, Math and Malala

BY SANDRA O’BRIEN

This month’s collection of books is somewhat eclectic in nature, but there is something that will appeal to all grade levels from primary to senior. First is a book dedicated to Malala Yousafzai, the young woman who was shot by a member of the Taliban in October 2012, for speaking out in public about the right of all girls to have an education. Next we look at a math book written for junior and intermediate students that focuses on shapes in math, science and nature. Finally, we look at the “Do You Know?” books and the “Disgusting Critters” books, two series for younger students that explore the world of creepy, crawly creatures.

Every Day is Malala Day
written by Rosemary McCarney with Plan International
Second Story Press, 2014
978-1-92758-331-9 (hc) $18.95
for Kindergarten to Grade 8
Non-fiction | Courage | Self-Respect | Education | Empathy

This beautiful book is dedicated to Malala Yousafzai who was shot in the head by a member of the Taliban in Pakistan on October 9, 2012. Malala had been speaking out in public about the right of all girls to have an education, and the Taliban thought that shooting her would stop her campaign. It did not! Malala was flown to England for life-saving treatment and has recovered. She continues to work for every child’s right to an education and has received numerous awards for her bravery and effort.

The Plan International Communications team produced a short film depicting girls all over the world writing to Malala to tell her how important she was to them. The incredible photographs in this book were taken from that video — bringing the girls’ words to life in the form of a letter to Malala. The girls express their gratitude to her for speaking up for herself and other girls, too. They explain that early marriage, poverty, discrimination and violence all play a part in keeping girls from going to school all over the world and that girls everywhere are behind Malala and what she stands for.

The book begins with an introduction entitled “Who is Malala?”, and an excerpt from Malala’s speech to the United Nation’s Youth Assembly is included at the back of the book.

This moving tribute to an amazing young woman is a must for every classroom and library in Canada and around the world. The photographs are stunning, and the message is simply and eloquently stated. It is important for students to understand how fortunate they are to have the right to an education and imperative that the children of today band together to ensure this right is realized by all children all over the world. This book could be used in classrooms from the primary grades right up to the end of high school. Many thought-provoking discussions and action plans will arise from the use of this book.

Shapes in Math, Science and Nature: Squares, Triangles and Circles
written by Catherine Sheldrick Ross
illustrated by Bill Slavin
Kids Can Press, 2014
978-1-77138-124-6
for Grades 4 to 8
Non-fiction | Math | Measurement & Geometry | Science & Technology | Engineering

This is a math and science book that delves into some fascinating information about geometry. Divided into three sections, the book takes a look at squares, triangles and circles and reveals historical, mathematical and scientific information about each one. For example, the section on squares tells us that in the Middle Ages people used to believe that squares had magical powers, the section on triangles explains why builders cannot get along without triangles to measure heights and distances, and the section on circles talks about the most famous circle of all, Stonehenge.

Each section is also filled with fun and educational activities, puzzles and experiments that can be conducted in classrooms or at home. An answer section is included at the back of the book as are a section on formulas and a glossary. The book is chock full of information that is well balanced with the illustrations by Bill Slavin.

All of the instructions are accompanied by illustrations as well. This book has been written for junior and intermediate students and is an excellent resource for math and science teachers. I was impressed by the content as it was interesting and quite extensive. I can see students who are fascinated with geometry picking this book up and reading it for pleasure. I would strongly recommend this book to teachers who are looking to enrich their math and science programs or to parents who wish to show their children how much fun math and science can be.
Do You Know? Series
written by Alain M. Bergeron, Michel Quintin & Sampar
illustrated by Sampar
Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2013
All books (pb) $9.95 for Grades 2 to 6

Do You Know Chameleons?
978-1-55455-299-3

Do You Know Toads?
978-1-55455-303-7

Do You Know Spiders?
978-1-55455-302-0

Do You Know Rats?
978-1-55455-319-8

Do You Know Porcupines?
978-1-55455-321-1

Do You Know Leeches?
978-1-55455-318-1

Do You Know Crows?
978-1-55455-320-4

Do You Know Crocodiles?
978-1-55455-304-4

Non-fiction | Reptiles & Amphibians | Insects | Mice & Rats | Mammals | Marine Life | Birds

At present, there are eight titles in this series that looks at toads, spiders, rats, porcupines, leeches, crows, crocodiles and chame-
leons. The information is limited to two or three sentences per spread, which makes these books the perfect resource for younger children and for reluctant readers. Words that are written in bold can be found in the glossary at the back of the book and will be of great assistance to readers. The cartoon-like illustrations are quite humorous and will draw children into the books immediately. The information will fascinate and entertain readers — for example, did you know that crocodiles communicate by whistling, humming and roaring or that crows can reproduce several human words?

Sandra O’Brien is a former teacher with an M.Ed. in Children’s Literature and is the interim Program Coordinator at the CCBC.

Disgusting Critters Series
written and illustrated by Elise Gravel
Tundra Books, 2014
All books (hc) $12.99 for Grades 1 to 4

The Worm
978-1-77049-633-0

The Fly
978-1-77049-636-1

Non-fiction | Science & Technology | Zoology | Humour

In this series of books, the intent is to entertain while teaching young children a thing or two about disgusting critters. The comical illustrations coupled with the, at times, humorous information will definitely bring smiles to the faces of young children and the adults sharing these books with them. While the information on each spread is brief, it does contain some vocabulary that may be difficult for young children, and a glossary of terms would have been helpful. Children will discover interesting facts, such as a fly’s body is covered with hair, flies can walk on ceilings and they eat really disgusting food. Worms on the other hand have been around for 120 million years, sometimes live inside other animals and recycle nature’s waste.

The books measure 15 cm by 21 cm, which makes them easy for small hands to hold. While they are hard covered, which makes them more durable for classroom and library use, the pages are stiff, which makes them a little less child friendly.

I like the fact that these non-fiction books are geared towards young students and intended to make them laugh while they learn. Although the content of these books is limited, they do contain enough information to get students started on a project and can be used by teachers to support the science curriculum. Two more titles are also being released in the fall of 2014 — The Rat and The Slug — which will help round out the series. These titles would be a valuable resource to have in younger primary classes and to be used in conjunction with the science curriculum.

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SPRING 2014 CANADIAN CHILDREN’S BOOK NEWS 27
Tales of Fins, Feathers and Fur: Four Notable Picture Books

BY SENTA ROSS

What makes stories about animals so popular? Is it because they teach us about survival and life's lessons, or is it because they move us and lead us to contemplate love and devotion? Perhaps we see ourselves reflected in them. Here are four notable picture books about creatures, great and small, which are certain to entertain, educate and cause one to ponder.

What could be more embarrassing for a duckling than to be afraid of water? After confiding her distress to a benevolent frog, Little Chicken Duck is introduced to a variety of forest birds who divulge their own fears to her. So, we meet an owl spooked by the dark, a lark inhibited in her singing, a robin ruffled into discomfort by the rain, a cuckoo with a dread of heights, quails intimidated by snails, and an eagle who cowers from lightning. With frankness these creatures also share how they have managed to conquer their peculiar phobias. Buoyed by their encouragement, Little Chicken Duck finally takes the plunge, loves it and becomes the recipient of a surprising confession from her mentor, the frog.

Author Tim Beiser has composed a rollicking poetic text that will be a joy to either read aloud or listen to. The back-and-forth conversation between the frog and the duckling is clever and energetic: “Ah, but nothing can be better,” said our frog, “than getting wetter/Splashing ‘round a forest pool is cool I think!”?/Peeped the duckling, “No, it’s scary! And I’m very, very wary. I’m afraid that if I wade in, I will sink.”

Using acrylic paint on gessoed paper, illustrator Bill Slavin brings forth a collection of memorable characters, each with its distinctive attributes and disposition portrayed from a variety of perspectives. Young readers will be caught up in their playful antics and may identify with the creatures’ trepidations, thereby realizing that they are not alone when facing their ordinary human fears.

While visiting an animal shelter, a young boy and his parents adopt Norman, a stray dog who has been there the longest. Upon bringing him home, the family soon realize that Norman does not respond to any of their commands, let alone his name. Although he is certainly loveable, they conclude that the dog just isn’t very smart. However, their opinion of their pet is radically altered during an excursion to the park where they witness Norman obeying the unintelligible (to them) instructions of a stranger who informs them, “Your dog understands Chinese. Did you know that?” Realizing that they have been speaking to Norman in a language the dog cannot comprehend, the family enroll in a Chinese language class, determined to communicate with their pet who they now believe to be very intelligent indeed.

**A Fish Named Glub**
written by Dan Bar-el
illustrated by Josée Bisaillon
Kids Can Press, 2014
978-1-55453-812-6 (hc) $16.95 for Grades 2 to 3
*Picture Book | Belonging | Dreams*

**Little Chicken Duck**
written by Tim Beiser
illustrated by Bill Slavin
Tundra Books, 2013
978-1-77049-392-6 (hc) $19.99 for Kindergarten to Grade 2
*Picture Book | Poetry | Animals | Overcoming Fears*

**The Raven and the Loon**
written by Rachel Qitsualik-Tinsley and Sean Qitsualik-Tinsley
illustrated by Kim Smith
Inhabit Media, 2013
978-1-0927095-50-8 (hc) $16.95 for Kindergarten to Grade 2
*Picture Book | Inuit Folktales & Legends | Ravens | Loons*

**Norman, Speak**
written by Caroline Adderson
illustrated by Qin Leng
Groundwood Books, 2014
978-1-55498-322-3 (hc) $17.95 for Kindergarten to Grade 3
*Picture Book | Animals | Pets | Language*
Told from the viewpoint of a young boy, Caroline Adderson’s memorable story is about a family and a dog who grow to understand and love one another. The writing is insightful without being maudlin: “Norman didn’t understand a word we said. Whenever we spoke, he tilted his head and stared. Maybe he kept forgetting his name was Norman. Or maybe nobody had trained him properly. But after a few days with Norman, we knew the truth. He just wasn’t very smart. We loved Norman anyway.” One can’t help but feel affection for the endearing Norman as well as gratitude toward the caring family who give the mongrel a new lease on life.

Qin Leng’s delightfully rendered ink-on-paper and digitally coloured illustrations perfectly convey the tenor of this heartwarming tale. The seemingly simple figures convey a range of emotions. No one will ever forget the joyful Norman as he does his “hula dance of happiness” whenever he sees his owners.

_The Raven and the Loon_ is a retelling of a traditional Inuit folktale about how these two birds evolved into their present-day appearances from their original white plumage. It begins when the boisterous and boredom-averse Raven flies, unannounced, into Loon’s iglu. As the quiet and content Loon sits sewing, Raven jabbers on until he suddenly proposes that they should make beautiful coats for each other. Dipping a needle in lamp soot, Raven commences the creative enterprise: “Loon sat still while Raven painted her with magic strokes. Wherever the needle touched her feathered coat, the soot left amazing patterns.” Proud of his accomplishment, Raven finds it a challenge to sit quietly as Loon designs a new coat for him. Frustrated by Raven’s constant movement, Loon throws her lamp at him, covering him in soot. In retaliation, Raven flings the lamp at Loon’s feet, crushing them. Because animals have long memories, ravens have retained their black feathers and loons have kept their flat feet.

Storytellers Rachel and Sean Qitsualik-Tinsley have preserved this memorable tale for present-day appearances by Glub, an abandoned fish who is living out his days in a glass bowl located on the counter of a diner. Through chance encounters with Foster (the cook) and diner patrons, he discovers they all have unrealized dreams and that he, Glub, has the gift to transform their lives by making their wishes a reality. Fortunately for Glub, his dream also comes true, and one finds him ultimately swimming happily within the sea, far from the confines of a fishbowl.

Kim Smith’s humorous, cartoon-like digital illustrations aptly portray the massive expanse of the frozen Arctic as well as the unique physical attributes of both avian protagonists.

In answer to the inevitable question, “Did this story really happen?”, the tale concludes with the following wise counsel: “Don’t judge Raven and Loon too harshly. After all, none of us were there. What’s said about them might just be gossip. And at least Loon has her pretty feathers. And at least Raven... well, he’s never bored.”

Where do I come from? What do I need? What is a home? What do I do? Where do I belong? These probing questions are asked not by some person but by Glub, an abandoned fish who is living out his days in a glass bowl located on the counter of a diner. Through chance encounters with Foster (the cook) and diner patrons, he discovers they all have unrealized dreams and that he, Glub, has the gift to transform their lives by making their wishes a reality. Fortunately for Glub, his dream also comes true, and one finds him ultimately swimming happily within the sea, far from the confines of a fishbowl.

With insight and sensitivity, Dan Bar-el writes of the importance of finding one’s place in the world and the quest to follow one’s aspirations. Through his perceptive prose, one begins to empathize with the patrons, who seem like family. Witness Foster’s poignant confession to Glub: “I’ve been working this diner my whole life,” whispers Foster, a reef knot in his throat. “But I wanted to be a sailor when I was a kid. Did you know that, fish? That was my dream, to sail the seven seas... You and me, fish, we’re kind of alike, huh? People see us all the time but they don’t know us.”

Josée Bisaillon’s mixed-media illustrations are quirky, fun and interesting. Her mixture of collage, paint, drawings and digital montage well reflects the ambience of the down-and-out diner as well as the feeling of hope reflected in the faces of the patrons after they become acquainted with Glub, the silent witness to their aspirations.

Literature about the animal kingdom, such as these four publications, continues to enrich the imaginations of young readers as they delve into the lives of creatures with fins, feathers and fur, and thereby reflect on their existence alongside them.

Senta Ross is a former elementary teacher and teacher-librarian in Kitchener, Ontario.
We Recommend
NEW AND NOTED BOOKS FOR TODDLERS TO TEENS

Grandmother Ptarmigan
written by Quanaq Mikkigak and Joanne Schwartz
illustrated by Qin Leng
Inhabit Media, 2013
978-1-927095-52-2 (hc) $13.95
for Pre-school to Grade 1

How does one convince a little ptarmigan to go to sleep? This is the challenge facing Grandmother Ptarmigan, who finds that her verbal entreaties and lullabies have no success. Instead, the stubborn baby insists on being told a story. Eventually, Grandma gives in and, to stop him from asking again, relays a tale to her grandson that he will never forget. In fact, the story is so menacing that the little one, who has never flown before, jumps up in terror and flies away. Grandmother Ptarmigan is bereft. “Oh, my poor, frightened little grandson has flown away,” Grandmother cried. “Nauk, nauk. Where did he go, where did he go?” And, as with many traditional Inuit tales, there is a lesson: “And that is why baby ptarmigans fly so young. And that is why female ptarmigans cry nauk, nauk.”

Qin Leng’s digital illustrations portray the animated interactions between the adult and juvenile ptarmigans in an energetic and flamboyant manner. Feathers and excited facial expressions abound.

Nunavut storyteller and throat-singer Quanaq Mikkigak, together with children’s librarian and author Joanne Schwartz, share a charming traditional Inuit story, which also explains a phenomenon in nature. Suitable for young readers, the text for Grandmother Ptarmigan has been kept fairly simple, as it is part of the Inhabit Junior series, which is an initiative to help promote early childhood literacy in Nunavut. Although a majority of the Inhabit Junior titles are only published in Inuktitut, a few books, such as this one, are also published in English.

Inhabit Media’s aims are to ensure that Arctic voices are heard and that the stories, knowledge and talent of Inuit and northern Canada are preserved. Grandmother Ptarmigan does just that!

Senta Ross is a former elementary teacher and teacher-librarian in Kitchener, Ontario.

Anna Carries Water
written by Olive Senior
illustrated by Laura James
Tradewind Books, 2013
978-1-896580-60-9
for Pre-school to Grade 3

The first thing one notices about Anna Carries Water is the cover image’s bold use of colour, intensified by its larger-than-average trim size. In this case it is possible to judge a book by its cover; the pages within are true to its first impression, and the bright illustrations of this picture book are an insightful counterpoint to the story’s tone and message.

Set in Jamaica, the vibrant landscape is captivating. Each page depicts an array of dragonflies, dasheen leaves, meadow flowers, cowbells, butterflies, lizards and colourful clothing. American illustrator Laura James uses acrylic on canvas, which conveys expressive depth and texture. The innumerable visual details engage the reader, making this a story suited to almost any age level.

The protagonist of this story, a compelling girl named Anna, has a goal and an unnamed fear. The two are indirectly related in one of the book’s more interesting surprises. The reader walks with Anna, and her brothers and sisters, as she works her way toward both.

Anna Carries Water explores the harmonies created by dynamic, yet balanced, juxtaposition; if the text is characterized by extremely simple (but not simplistic) sentences, this sparse use of language works perfectly in concert with bold and animated illustrations. Author Olive Senior uses punctuation sparingly in short sentences that, when employing repetitions of words and phrases, lend a poetic quality to the text, especially when read aloud: “Every evening after school, the children went to the spring for water. They walked in a straight line: First Doris then Karen then Rohan then Trevor then Robbie and last of all far behind came Anna.”

This book offers both strong voice and vision. In following Anna’s journey through her hopes and fears, it reminds us of the value of letting go, and that, with any luck, we too might somehow manage to “carry water.”

Lara LeMoual, who holds an MA in Children’s Literature from the University of British Columbia, is a writer, an editor and a teacher living in Vancouver, BC.
This book encourages children to be creative and courageous and do what they like, even if they’re not Leonardo da Vinci. The can-do spirit is very positive.

Robin Sales is a Montreal librarian enjoying a leave with her young son.

Ten-year-old Margaret can barely contain her excitement as she hurries off the boat to greet her family, who have not seen her since she left for the outsiders’ school two years ago. She is shocked at her mother’s cold and angry rejection: “Not my girl!” Crushed, Margaret realizes that she is now a stranger to her family and the ways of her people. And so she begins a challenging journey to relearn her language and customs, thus transitioning from “Margaret,” a name given to her by nuns at the school, to her traditional Inuit name, “Olemaun.”

In this powerful sequel to their picture book When I Was Eight, co-authors Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton have written a compelling and poignant account of the obstacles faced by native children reconnecting with their families following their attendance at residential schools. Through a first-person narrative, readers will empathize with the young Margaret, feeling her loneliness, frustration and eventual joy in her quest to belong. Who would not be moved by Margaret’s opening words in this book: “It was as though the wings of one thousand birds soared in my heart, propelling me back to my family. I leapt over the side of the boat and ran toward my mother. Her face remained as still as stone. ‘Not my girl!’ she called in what little English she knew.”

Not only do Gabrielle Grimard’s alluring watercolour, gouache and oil illustrations conjure up dramatic Arctic landscapes, but they also capture the expressive countenances of each character. Grimard’s panoramas of the iridescent Northern Lights are particularly stunning.

Not My Girl, based on the memoirs of co-author Margaret Pokiak-Fenton, provides young readers with the opportunity to learn about a difficult period in Canadian history that still resonates with so many indigenous Canadians today.

Senta Ross

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The odd and quirky Tweedle family is known in town for being a bit “behind the times.” They are, for instance, one of the only families without a car. One morning, Papa Tweedle decides to join the masses and buy a new car; after all, it is a new century — or an old one, since in The Tweedles Go Electric, it’s 1903! As a result of their idiosyncratic tastes, however, the Tweedles purchase a conspicuously green electric car. This should be terribly exciting, but if Mama, Papa and Frankie are quite pleased, not everyone in the family is enthusiastic about the new acquisition.

Illustrator Marie Lafrance has a distinctive style. In The Tweedles Go Electric, highly engaging illustrations are rendered with graphite on paper and mixed-media collage, and Lafrance’s slightly curved lines lend a relaxed, yet fluid, feel to the images.

Author Monica Kulling writes a text that is whimsical and light in tone with an accessible, musical style. The Tweedles Go Electric is a charming story.

The “green” theme is strong throughout, and while the colour palate reflects this, the spectrum of greens is not overdone, despite being an obvious choice for a book about an electric car. As a result, the environmental message in The Tweedles Go Electric is not over the top. Instead, it gently posits an assertion that change can be good.

Author Monica Kulling writes a text that is whimsical and light in tone with an accessible, musical style. The Tweedles Go Electric is a charming story.

The story within the story is probably the most effective section as a read aloud. The illustrations work well with the text, but are rather detailed and tiny as visual aids for reading aloud to a larger group. However, children may enjoy poring over the illustrations on their own or reading it one-on-one.

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I Wish I Could Draw
written and illustrated by Cary Fagan
Groundwood Books, 2014
978-1-55498-318-6 (hc) $12.95
for Kindergarten to Grade 3

I Wish I Could Draw Cary Fagan bemoans his lack of talent as an artist, decides to give it a try anyway and creates a fun story with a worthwhile message in the process. He begins with a grumbling, cartoonish depiction and description of his lack of skill, and then warms up when he decides to write and draw what he likes and proceeds to create a story within the story.

The book gets off to a rather wordy and somewhat slow start. However, once the author/illustrator decides to do what he likes and let his imagination run free, the story and pace, not to mention humour, become more engaging and interesting in simpler, more accessible language. A dragon, ice cream and a poorly played mandolin perk up this story for primary students.

The story within the story is probably the most effective section as a read aloud. The illustrations work well with the text, but are rather detailed and tiny as visual aids for reading aloud to a larger group. However, children may enjoy poring over the illustrations on their own or reading it one-on-one.
This version of the myth of Persephone recounts the abduction of Persephone; the devastating grief of her mother, which brings winter to the world; and the efforts of Hades, god of the Underworld, to convince Persephone to remain with him as his queen. By the end of this softer telling, Persephone herself decides she loves Hades and wants to stay, so she eats four pomegranate seeds. She has “learned to play the games of the gods” and, as a compromise, spends four months in the underworld with Hades, then returns, bringing spring to her mother and the world above.

This multimedia exploration blends Glen Huser’s narrative and lyrics with illustrations by Philippe Béha, and a full opera composed by Giannis Gorgantelis. It includes a CD featuring the Orchestre symphonique pop de Montréal and narration by Terry Jones. The tale is told in lyrical language with humorous twists, and is embellished with the actual song lyrics. The songs complicate the story somewhat as a read aloud, but are enjoyable as part of the opera on the CD. The effective mixed-media artwork is vibrant and glowing, and often incorporates musical notes. The angular profiles of characters depicted bring to mind early Greek pottery.

The result is an explanation for why we have seasons, revised to suit its young target audience. For the classicist, the liberties taken with the myth can be troubling. However, the result is a more age-appropriate myth that explains the “Magic circle of birth and death, a time for flowers, a time for snow.”

Robin Sales

Since his daughter Aurélia’s birth, the award-winning Poet Laureate, George Elliott Clarke, has been writing poems for and about her. Lasso the Wind, his first children’s poetry collection, was inspired by these poems. The idea for turning them into a book was initiated by the illustrator. Together they have created a deep, thought-provoking collection.

Part whimsical, part philosophical and occasionally political, each verse creates awareness of the bounty and profundity of the world in which we live. Some poems are complex; some are straightforward. Others are delightfully irreverent, containing earthy moments dear to a child’s heart. But they each have in common a richness and command of language that makes one see everyday things anew. The collection ends with a series of poems written for Aurélia on each of her first nine birthdays, accompanied by illustrations based on photographs taken by her mother.

The striking and imaginative artwork of Susan Tooke complements and amplifies the tone and concepts within the poetry. A combination of collage and painting, each-double page spread is rich with colour, detail and vigour. The pictures feature whales “cradled” by the ocean, “the sugary whiteness of the moon” on snow, “jumping trumpets and humming drums,” “lions munching meat that bleats no more” and glorious daisies “bending and swaying.”

In some ways this is a personal book, but the imaginative, evocative poetry, captivating illustrations and handsome clean-cut layout give this title a far wider appeal, piquing the fascination of children but also intriguing adults and teens.

Aileen Wortley is a retired librarian living in Toronto.

Susan Hughes’s slim novel is aimed at young readers who have recently graduated to chapter books. It will find particular appeal with children who are part of blended families. Though the narrative, with its authentic spoken quality, is told from Patrick’s perspective, the reader eventually understands that what Patrick finds abrasive in Claire results from the same adjustment hardships that he is feeling. The use of seasons and pearls in the novel could make a good introduction to metaphor for young readers, and the brief interview with the author at the end offers some insight into her use of this device.

Ailiki Tryphonopoulou is a children’s librarian currently living in Kamsack, Saskatchewan.
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The Camel in the Sun
written by Griffin Ondaatje
illustrated by Linda Wolfsgruber
Groundwood Books, 2013
978-1-55498-381-0 (hc) $17.95 for Grades 3 to 6

Picture Book | Fable | Empathy

Through his sophisticated and sometimes complex lyrical text, author Dan Bar-el beckons readers to enter the dream world of children: “Water is memory; water is dreams... /Take me, Dream Boat, and show me everything I know.” His reference to international mythological and folk figures is particularly fascinating. It is Kirsti Anne Wakelin’s sweeping multimedia artwork that brings the text to vivid life. A feast for the senses, each illustration depicts the grandeur, beauty and mystique of the different panoramas from a variety of perspectives. Her art is detailed and striking, evoking a strong sense of place.

Dream Boats will resonate especially with inquisitive, mature readers who desire to experience world cultures in a most creative manner. Happy sailing!

Senta Ross

Driftwood
written by Valerie Sherrard
Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2013
978-1-55455-305-1 (pb) $9.95 for Grades 3 to 6

Fiction | Storytelling | Friendship | Forgiveness

Eleven-year-old Adam is spending the summer at a rented cottage on the Miramachi River so his mother can recharge her artistic batteries. Adam is thrilled he can take his best friend, but when Billy’s dog gets sick and he backs out, Adam declares their friendship over. He leaves for the summer alone and adrift, feeling angry and betrayed.

Life at the cottage, however, is full of surprises, and Adam meets a rotating cast of new friends with whom he has many adventures. He also befriends Theo, a nearly blind older gentleman who lives up the beach and pays money for driftwood he can carve. For Adam, Theo’s greatest gift is not the money he offers but the stories he sees the beach and pays money for driftwood he can carve. For Adam, Theo’s greatest gift is not the money he offers but the stories he sees, the moral lesson is front and centre. Our protagonist (the camel) has endured great hardship and misery: “Its whole life was spent struggling across the oceans of sand.” The camel’s owner drives him hard and without mercy, while the camel silently endures. Thus, the importance of empathy and the notion that seemingly individual suffering is, in fact, shared comprises the fundamental message.

The story is delivered in a measured cadence, and the spare, deft writing is affecting, despite its simplicity. The formal eloquence of Griffin Ondaatje’s text is perfectly balanced by the candidly emotional illustrations by noted German artist Linda Wolfsgruber.

The illustrations are monoprints (a form of printmaking using singular images or lines) and drawings, which are extremely powerful in their unrefined simplicity. The desert, which functions as a character in its own right, is shown in sandy yellows, oranges and browns. The hints of bright blues, reds and greens scattered sparingly throughout the story read as accents of hope in an otherwise difficult scene, effectively communicating both the universal longing that drives him hard and without mercy, while the camel silently

Lara LeMoal

I have naps. I have adventures.
I don’t sleep in a bed. I ride in a Dream Boat.

Thus begins a series of fantastical nautical journeys undertaken by children from around the world. Rather than go to sleep, they navigate their personal dream boats toward an environment where they encounter mythical figures from their culture and partake in traditional rituals with their families. Commencing with young Maiqui being guided by Mighty Viracocha toward his grandparents’ village in the Andes, the reader is invited to accompany children from Haida Gwaii, Mumbai, St. Petersburg, western Africa and China, by it via reed boat, canoe, fishing boat, Russian frigate or junk boat.
Jean Little’s *All Fall Down: The Landslide Diary of Abby Roberts* recounts the true natural disaster of the Frank Landslide of 1903, in the District of Alberta. After the death of her father, Abby and her family move out west from their home in Montreal to help her mother’s relatives run a hotel in the mining town of Frank.

By using well-placed clues in Abby’s narrative, Little builds suspense, hinting that everything is not what it seems in Abby’s family. Alongside the growing mystery of the family, Little builds the tension and anticipation of the landslide through Abby’s friend Bird, whose grandfather keeps warning of the “Walking Mountain.” Just when Abby is ready to confront her family, the town of Frank is hit by disaster.

While the tragic event doesn’t happen until two-thirds of the way into the book, readers learn much about life in western Canada in the early 20th century. Little gracefully illustrates rural life through the activities Abby learns to do, like baking bread, with specific details about the living conditions, resources available and the technology at the time (using Morse code over the telegraph). Vivid descriptions of the train ride across Canada, the class relationships (between Aboriginal Canadians and the white settlers), and the kind of work that went on in the mine, provide a well-rounded picture of the story’s atmosphere and environment and a fully fleshed-out story beyond the diary, especially on the night of the disaster.

Little amazingly conveys so much information through the somewhat limited diary format — from historic facts to the emotions of characters and their relationships — and is still able to tell a story with suspense and humour. Her portrayals of the relationships between Abby and her siblings are realistic as is that of Davy, her younger brother who has Down syndrome, and Abby’s tender affection for him.

Little based the story on two of her own relatives: one who helped run a telegraph office in the late 1800s, and another who was the inspiration for Abby’s story. An enjoyable read for 9 to 12 year olds.

Karri Yano is a Toronto writer and editor.
From the enticing cover by Arrasmith and the first lyrical sentence the reader is immediately gripped by this dark, haunting read. The book should be read twice: once on tenterhooks for its gripping plot and once to savour the delicious language, rich imagery and wisdom. Molly and Kip are achingly tender characters and yet wise beyond their years. Their richness stays with the reader long after the book is finished as does that of the marvellously complex and strange old storyteller, Hester.

Acknowledging the influence of several classic authors, Auxier has provided us with a Victorian gothic story in his own strong style. It is not only a spirited adventure story but an allegory where resourceful perseverance triumphs over greed and evil and where stories provide direction to two youngsters who have nothing but their wits to live by. An enriching and thought-provoking read and a must have in every library.

Aileen Wortley

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**September 17**

written by Amanda West Lewis

Red Deer Press, 2013

978-088995507-3 (pb) $14.95

for Grades 6 and up

Fiction | World War II

In July of 1940, the British Government sponsored a program called Children's Overseas Reception Board — or CORB — set up to send British children to other Commonwealth countries to protect them from the bombing of British cities. The City of Benares was a luxury liner that was recruited in September of 1940, to transport 90 children to Canada along with the ship’s regular complement. The ship was torpedoed by a German U-boat and sank in about half an hour. Only 13 of the CORB children survived the sinking. September 17 is a novel that tells the story of three of the children who were on board the City of Benares, as they experience and survive the disaster and wait to be rescued.

In her new middle-grade novel, Amanda West Lewis covers a little-known tragedy of WWII. Told from the perspective of three different CORB children on board the ship, this is a story of courage, hope and resilience. All three of the main characters have different but equally compelling reasons for being part of the program, and Lewis does an excellent job of capturing the hope and excitement that each of them felt when getting on board the ship. For many of the children, the voyage was to be an adventure, and the war was part of it.

In the days leading up to the bombing, the children make friends, play games, eat and sleep with barely a hint of the tragedy that is in store. When the torpedo hits, the pacing speeds up dramatically, capturing the confusion and terror that everybody felt as the ship sank, lifeboats malfunctioned, and the surviving passengers waited and prayed to be rescued.

While some of the incidents in the book may be disturbing to young children, this novel excellently covers the terrible cost of war to not only the individual, but to an entire nation. Highly recommended for classroom use.

Rachel Siegel is Sales and Selection Strategist at EduCan Media in Toronto.

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**The Rule of Three**

(The Neighborhood, Book 1)

written by Eric Walters

Penguin Canada, 2014

978-0-67006-705-3 (hc) $19.00

for Grades 6 to 9

Fiction | Disaster | Dystopia

One afternoon, computers around the globe shut down, creating a viral catastrophe. At first, the problem seems to be a typical outage, until students discover that cellphones are down, utilities are failing, and the only vehicles that function are a few ancient, computer-free cars like Adam Daley’s 1981 Oldsmobile Omega. Soon, as resources dwindle, crises mount, and chaos descends, he will see his suburban neighbours band together for protection. And, before long, Adam will discover that having a police captain mother and a retired government spy living next door are not just the facts of his life, but the keys to his survival.

In the first book of his new apocalyptic series, Eric Walters paints a scenario that feels all too possible and frighteningly real. With the world’s increasing dependence on computers for everyday living, Walters creates a worst-case situation of what happens when technology fails.

At first when the power goes out, the situation doesn’t seem overly grave. Yes, it’s a nuisance not having cell service or working cars, but there is still an assumption that the problem is temporary. When the people start to realize that this is not the case, the story increases in intensity. With the help of his neighbour Herb, Adam’s community slowly starts executing a plan for long-term survival, but Adam also witnesses looting, extreme violence and cruelty, and discovers how fear drives people to extreme behaviour.

The novel is fast paced and thought provoking, and while the rapidity of society’s deterioration seems a bit exaggerated, it doesn’t detract from the enjoyment of the book.

There are several questions that are left unresolved in book one, but this will only leave readers even more anxious for the next instalment.

Rachel Siegel

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**Destination Human**

(Orca Currents)

written by K.L. Denman

Orca Book Publishers, 2013

978-1-4598-0371-8 (pb) $9.95

for Grades 7 to 11

Fiction | Aliens | Point of View | Humour | Reluctant Readers

Welkin is a Universal — a non-physical being from another dimension — who is in danger of failing bioethics for the second time. The only way to pass is to enter the body of a primitive life form for three days to observe it. There are detailed instructions for the project, but Welkin isn’t exactly paying attention in class, so entry into the life form goes badly.

Consequently, the life form, a teenaged girl named Chloe, can hear all Welkin's thoughts. Once she has got over the horror of having an alien in her body, the interaction between the two is illuminating for both of them and very funny for the reader. Welkin
is completely mystified by humans' obsession with hair, often bewildered by language, fascinated with human metabolism — and reports on them all with scientific curiosity. Chloe finds Welkin exasperating, amusing and somewhat nerdy, regularly responding, "Don’t lie, Welks" when the Universal claims to understand some baffling element of human behaviour.

Of course, Welkin’s inattention to detail makes leaving Chloe’s body difficult, and some moral dilemmas arise that put bioethics front and centre. By the time the task is accomplished, Welkin has learned some interesting lessons, and Chloe has, too — plus she gets to kiss the guy she has a crush on.

Orca Currents, written to engage middle grade readers reading below grade level, often offer gripping mysteries, crime or tough contemporary issues. But teens need humour as well, and Destination Human provides them with an offbeat, entertaining and thought-provoking comedy.

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Gillian O’Reilly is editor of Canadian Children’s Book News.

In the opening pages of The Boundless, Will Everett meets rail baron Cornelius Van Horne, is invited to hammer the last spike in the great CPR railroad and survives an avalanche. From there the story really begins. Three years later, Will and his father are on the inaugural voyage of The Boundless, the world’s largest luxury train with 987 carriages. As their journey begins, Will’s biggest concern is convincing his father to let him follow his dream and go to art school. But when he witnesses a murder and stumbles upon a plot to rob a special funeral car at the front of the train, he finds himself running (oftentimes atop moving train cars!) for his life. As he tries to make his way back to his father at the front of the train, Will cleverly eludes his would-be captors with the help of a circus troupe on board. He encounters sasquatches and the fearsome Muskeg hag, discovers courage he never knew he possessed and makes some interesting discoveries about society and human nature along the way.

This latest tour de force from Kenneth Oppel has it all. It features heart-stopping adventure with a dash of mystery, an appealing and sympathetic protagonist and an original and beautifully imagined setting. The story is filled with vividly realized characters whose hopes and dreams and motivations are often complex and are realistically explored, creating a richly nuanced and thought-provoking tale. As Will travels aboard The Boundless, he encounters the best and worst of humanity and confronts head-on the ambiguities of good and evil. He experiences friendship, betrayal and first love in a novel that combines history with a hint of steampunk and a healthy dose of the fantastical. Destined to become a new Canadian classic, The Boundless is a train that readers will not want to miss: it is a glorious ride!

Lisa Doucet is Co-Manager of Woozles in Halifax.
herself for, falling into a cycle of abuse and self-doubt. Iris catches Mick in a series of lies, but continues to make excuses for him and to take on his violence and explosive moods, assuring herself that their love is worth it.

Polak misses the mark with some details — in particular, it comes out that Iris’s theatre teacher who has brought Mick in to work with her students was once in an abusive relationship with him herself. Iris’s tangle of lies also seems too fast and too severe to have gotten past her overbearing mother and best friend quite so easily. Ultimately, So Much It Hurts is a good conversation starter for a difficult topic.

Tara-Michelle Ziniuk

Blues for Zoey
written by Robert Paul Weston
Razorbill, 2014
978-0-14-318328-0 (pb) $15.99
for Grades 8 to 12

Fiction | Love and Betrayal

It is summertime and Kaz is working at Mr. Rodolpho’s laundromat in his less-than-glamorous Evandale neighbourhood. He and his mother and little sister have lived in the apartment upstairs from the laundromat ever since his father died five years ago. Kaz misses his father, and he misses the life they had before his father died. But more than anything, he wants his mother to be well. She suffers from a rare condition known as somnitis, and Kaz is secretly saving to send her to an outrageously expensive clinic for treatment. He figures that by summer’s end he’ll have enough. But his summer takes an unexpected turn when Zoey Zamani walks by the Sit’N’Spin window. Zoey with her pink dreads and crazy, cross-shaped stringed instrument that she plays on the street. As he starts to spend more time with her, he begins to fall for this intense and mysterious girl. And yet there is just so much that he doesn’t know about her...

A bittersweet coming-of-age story, Weston’s latest young adult novel features an immediately likeable, believable protagonist who tells his story in a voice that is wry and true. He creates a strong sense of place with his vivid descriptions of this gritty urban neighbourhood and its inhabitants, as well as capturing Kaz’s earnestness and his determination to help his mother. Ill-fated though Kaz’s relationship with the enigmatic Zoey is, he learns some poignant life lessons: the danger of only believing what you though Kaz’s relationship with the enigmatic Zoey is, he learns some poignant life lessons: the danger of only believing what you

Lisa Doucet

If This is Freedom
written by Gloria Ann Wesley
Roseway Publishing, 2013
978-1-55266-571-8 (pb) $19.95
978-1-55266-602-9 (eBook) $19.95
for Grade 8 and up

Fiction | Black History | Nova Scotia | Loyalists

This gripping, sophisticated story sheds light on a little-known piece of Canadian history — the lives of black Loyalists in Nova Scotia in the years immediately following the American Revolution.

Sarah is a black indentured servant in a well-to-do white Nova Scotia household, but, despite her employers’ wealth, they do not always pay Sarah’s wages. She, her unemployed husband and her unborn baby are starving. Taking matters into her own hands, she states her views to her employer and quits. Thus begins a journey of debt and desperation that will take Sarah and her family to increasingly dark places, as trickery and manipulation force her to make sacrifices and suffer the unjust consequences of one small action.

The abuse of position and power, the entrapment of necessity and the powerlessness of the freed slaves, despite a “free” status, bring to life the challenges and hardships faced during that period generally, not only by this maritime community in the 18th century.

Gloria Ann Wesley gives her characters depth and humanity, no matter how small their role. They are nuanced and layered, their complexity demonstrating the binds that circumstances place on people, and the impossibilities they often face. Sarah’s determination keeps the reader hooked throughout her struggles, and the payoff is worthwhile!

Dealing with issues of social justice and oppression as well as economic history and development, this novel offers opportunities for great talking points and discussion for upper secondary students. Black history, Nova Scotia, indentured servants and racism are the more obvious elements to connect. Eighteenth-century piracy, economics and society in the post-Revolution period are all integrated and could spark further exploration as well.

Shannon Babcock is a consultant with the Action Plan on Reading in Schools with the Quebec Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport.

Year of Mistaken Discoveries
written by Eileen Cook
Simon Pulse, 2014
978-1-44244-022-7 (hc) $19.99
978-1-44244-024-1 (eBook) $11.99
for Grade 9 and up

Fiction | Adoption | Identity

In her new YA novel, author Eileen Cook explores themes of identity, friendship and loss. As first graders, Avery and Nora bonded over the fact that they were both adopted. Now seniors in high school, the girls never interact, until the night Nora approaches Avery at a party. Avery brushes her off and the next morning finds out Nora has overdosed on pills. Left to cope with Nora’s loss and questioning her actions, Avery decides to honour her friend by seeking her birth mother. Aided by Brody, a friend of Nora’s, Avery begins an emotional quest. But what she’s seeking might go further than genetics…
Avery is smart, popular and seems to have it all together. She has the right boyfriend and she’s set her sights on getting into Duke University, her parents’ alma mater. But Avery’s togetherness is really just a shell, and Nora’s death forces her to recognize the superficiality with which she lives her life. A great deal of her identity is wrapped up in what will look good on her application to Duke, and she becomes convinced that finding her birth mother is the ticket to getting in.

Avery tries to pretend that she’s doing it purely to honour Nora’s memory; tunnel vision allows her to push aside any consideration of how her friends and family might be hurt. As she gets deeper into her search, Avery becomes more self-aware and begins to realize that her identity is not defined by genetics.

Avery’s voice is sincere and authentic, and the journey that she takes to find her birth mother, as well as the developing romance with Brody, will keep teens turning the pages. Both entertaining and insightful, this novel is perfect for fans of contemporary YA.

Rachel Seigel

Phenomenal Female Entrepreneurs
written by Jill Bryant
Second Story Press, 2013
978-1-927583-12-8 (pb) $10.95
for Grades 5 to 9

Non-fiction | Women in Business | Entrepreneurs

Meet 10 ground-breaking female leaders who challenge our conventional understanding about women in the business world. In this latest volume of Second Story Press’s Women’s Hall of Fame series, Phenomenal Female Entrepreneurs celebrates the lives and accomplishments of historical and contemporary women entrepreneurs in Canada and around the world. The book embraces a diverse selection of women, from Madam C.J. Walker who built her own hair care company in the early 1900s to Tanzania’s Susan Mashibe who overcame great odds to become a licensed pilot and to start her own company operating private jets for businesspeople, dignitaries and diplomats.

There is a separate chapter devoted to each of these inspirational women, complete with photographs (all black and white), insightful quotes, and sidebars with thought-provoking facts. Each mini-biography includes information regarding family life, schooling, interests and how these influential leaders built their businesses. Each emphasizes the passion, drive and sacrifices required to become a successful entrepreneur. The broad range of women included gives readers the opportunity to consider how women are breaking from traditional roles and expanding their sphere of influence. There is also an emphasis on the positive humanitarian and environmental impact these women have made and continue to make.

These short but informative biographies would make great reading for young girls looking for examples of “girl power” and female role models in the business world. A great starting point for essays or projects in career education or as a teaching tool for students learning to write biographies, Phenomenal Female Entrepreneurs would make a valuable classroom resource.

Tracey Schindler
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