FINDING OUR PLACE
Reflecting the lives of readers in books

Mike Boldt: Unleashing Unique Magic

Bookmark! Great books to celebrate Canada’s 150th Birthday

Reviews of over 40 books by Gord Downie & Jeff Lemire, Kathy Stinson & Dušan Petričić, Moira Young and more
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BOOKS ARE

AWESOME

YOU CAN READ

HELMAINE BECKER & MARK HOFFMANN

AND SO ARE THE PEOPLE WHO READ THEM.

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Welcome to the first issue of Canadian Children’s Book News for 2017! This year marks Canada’s sesquicentennial anniversary, and we plan to introduce you to as many great Canadian titles as we can over the course of this special year. I think Gillian O’Reilly’s article is a fitting piece to mark Canada’s 150th birthday and hope that more writers and illustrators will be inspired to set their stories in the towns, cities, provinces and territories of our great nation.

Our cover on this issue features the stunning poster image created by Ian Wallace for the 2017 TD Canadian Children’s Book Week. This is the 40th anniversary of Book Week, and Ian was one of the first participants to go out on tour all those years ago. Be sure to read the interview with Ian found on pages 16 and 17.

In this issue, we are making a few changes and have introduced a new column entitled “Red Leaf Literature.” In this column, we will feature titles chosen by Canadian Children’s Book News’ reviewers who have deemed these books to be of the highest quality and of exceptional calibre. And, while we recommend all the titles listed in the magazine, we found these titles had a little something extra. Perhaps they feature exemplary writing, perhaps the artwork is masterful or perhaps the topic covered has been done so with great skill. And whether you’re a parent, teacher or librarian, our reviewers feel that these books would make an excellent addition to your home, school or library collection. We hope you will enjoy this addition to the magazine.

We also feature a profile of author / illustrator Mike Boldt, who hopes to inspire a love of reading and creativity in the children he meets on his Book Week tour, and we discover what eight of our first-time Book Week participants are looking forward to as they head out to visit students across the country in May. You’ll also find our regular “Bookmark!” column, featuring titles set in Canada, a chat with Monique Gray Smith, author of Tilly: A Story of Hope and Resilience and My Heart Fills With Happiness (illustrated by Julie Flett), in our “Keep Your Eye On” section and reviews of many new and recommended books. Venture into a new book today!

Sandra O’Brien

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How do we reflect the lives of our readers in our books?

If books are both windows and mirrors, we have become much better at offering mirrors — allowing kids to find their families, their sexuality, their heritage or skin colour, their abilities and their experiences in Canadian children’s literature. But, too often, we forget that finding their “place” in a literal sense is also important.

We don’t talk about “place” as much as we talk about the other facets of childhood that we are eager to reflect and present. Perhaps we think it sounds too nationalistic, too limiting or a little old-fashioned — too redolent of Earle Birney’s awkward, unconfident Canada, “a high-school land, dead-set in adolescence.” Consequently, “place” is something that gets lost in the shuffle, and it shouldn’t.

As a lifelong nationalist, I look back to my childhood — a time of burgeoning Canadian nationalism. We got our own flag; a couple of years later, we rejoiced in our country’s centennial. We enthusiastically celebrated all things Canadian, even though much of our cultural development was in very nascent form.

I grew up in a family that prized reading — and with a mother who prized Canadian culture and who intensely disliked the attitude that literature or art that came from somewhere else had to be better by its very nature. My mother’s centennial project was to read nothing but Canadian literature for the whole of 1967 — Margaret Laurence, Mordecai Richler, Morley Callaghan, Irving Layton, Leonard Cohen and other writers — allowing herself only the occasional Agatha Christie mystery for light relief.

My paternal grandmother, despite being a fourth-generation Canadian, wouldn’t have thought much of any literature that wasn’t British unless it was by one of her relatives. She nevertheless told all sorts of stories of her ancestors in Canada — her grandmother whose house was almost burned down in the 1837 Rebellion, the great-uncle who, at the age of five, chopped off the tip of his sister’s finger when he was splitting kindling — and of her own childhood in Toronto.

My childhood reading consisted of many wonderful books both from our collections at home and from the library: Beatrix Potter, Marjorie Flack, Virginia Lee Burton, A. A. Milne, Arthur Ransome, Enid Blyton, Eleanor Farjeon, Elinor Estes, E. Nesbit, Edward Eager, Rudyard Kipling, Rosemary Sutcliff, Noel Streatfield and Norton Juster among others. I read lots of Puffin books, by both British and American authors, and I read a huge amount of historical fiction (mostly English history). My maternal grandparents sent us books from Australia where
they were working for the Canadian diplomatic service, so we read The Magic Pudding and the Australian Children’s Annual (full of stories about bunyips and wombats and children who attended school by radio).

You will note that, so far, none of these are Canadian books.

What did I read that I knew was Canadian? Anne of Green Gables and all the sequels, and I remember being told it was Canadian and being proud of that. The same was true of Susannah, a Little Girl with the Mounties by Muriel Denison (published in 1936).

The first book that I knew was by a contemporary Canadian writer was Swann & Daphne, a story about two babies who mysteriously appear in a suburban garden: a boy with feathers instead of hair and a girl with leaves instead of hair. As they grow up, the children encounter prejudice and bullying from other children, and curiosity from adults who treat them as interesting freaks. They respond by running away from home to a "clear blue lake whose shores were white with birch trees and green with pine." You can read the book at the Toronto Public Library’s Osborne Collection; I defy you to do it without weeping. The book was written by a cousin of my grandmother’s — a noted Canadian poet named Anne Wilkinson. She died at the age of 50, a year after I received the book as a gift, and I never met her. However, this book suggested to me that there were real contemporary Canadian writers for children — people who could actually autophrase the books I was reading.

My mother, the nationalist, did buy us contemporary Canadian titles. We had seven of the titles in McClelland & Stewart’s Secret Circle series — mysteries set in places across Canada and written by noted Canadian journalists with a storytelling bent, such as Scott Young, Max Braithwaite and Robert Thomas Allen. We had the elegantly designed history book, O Canadian, and the beautiful collection, The Wind Has Wings: Poems from Canada.

Three books made a difference
There were three books, however, that really fostered my sense of being Canadian and spoke to me about where I lived — two positively and one negatively.

The first book is Paddle-to-the-Sea by American writer and illustrator Holling Clancy Holling. Holling was from Michigan — not far away from where I lived in Windsor, Ontario — but the story of Paddle-to-the-Sea seemed utterly and purely Canadian. Crafted by a First Nations boy north of Lake Nipigon, the little wooden man and canoe — "Please put me back in the water. I am Paddle-to-the-Sea." — makes his way through the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River to the ocean. As an adult, I can see that it is a stellar example of how to use the power of story in writing non-fiction. As a child living in Windsor, half a block from the water, I could see lake freighters passing through the Detroit River every day, and Paddle-to-the-Sea’s journey seemed to take place in my own backyard. It spoke to me in a way that no other book did.

The next book was quite different. When I was 10, the Windsor Public Library celebrated Young Canada’s Book Week with a "read across Canada" competition, where every book you read got you farther across the country. One Saturday afternoon, those of us who came first at our own branches gathered for the city final to write a test on all the books we had read. (None of which was Canadian, as I recall, except possibly The Incredible Journey.) I didn’t win first prize, but I was awarded a Canadian-authored book for finishing top at my own branch.

The book was The Bushbabies by William Stevenson, a globetrotting Canadian journalist and author who went on to write A Man Called Intrepid, Ninety Minutes at Entebbe and some adult novels. I was excited to receive a book by a Canadian author, and it was a good story, but, even now, I can remember keenly my disappointment when it turned out to be set in Kenya and the main character was a white girl who appeared to be English. The book seemed to say that even though the writer was Canadian, it wasn’t worth actually setting a story in Canada. (To be fair to the British-born Stevenson, he was drawing on his own expat family and writing what he knew.)

Of the Canadian children’s books I read in my youth, the one that was most resonant as a Canadian story — and that I recall with the fondest pleasure — was Robert Thomas Allen’s The Mystery of the Missing Emerald, one of the Secret Circle Mysteries.

I read and re-read The Mystery of the Missing Emerald after we moved back to Toronto from Windsor. It was set in contemporary (i.e., 1960s) Toronto — at “Ryerson’s” department store at Queen and Yonge (i.e., Simpsons, now The Bay) and also in pre-gentrification Cabbagetown, in the rooming houses near Kensington Market, on the Toronto Islands and, especially important to a history lover and aspiring archaeologist, the Royal Ontario Museum. I could go to the museum’s Greek and Minoan galleries and see the very statue where the jewel thieves arranged to meet or the Chinese galleries with the huge bell under which Beth, one of the young amateur sleuths, hid to avoid the same thieves. I had visited the Riverdale Zoo (now Farm) and had seen the enclosure where Beth’s brother, John, was nearly killed by a polar bear.

Knowing those sites and seeing them captured in a book was utterly magic. That sense of place — being able to recognize your own city, your own town, your own region in a book — is an exciting and extraordinarily validating experience for a child or teenager.

I’m not alone
Nearly 20 years ago, I gave my goddaughter, an 11-year-old living on Cleveland Avenue and attending Maurice Cody Public School, a copy of a fairly new book by first-time author Teresa Toten. The Onlyhouse is about an 11-year-old girl living on Cleveland Avenue and attending Maurice Cody Public School. My goddaughter read it again and again.

Bookseller Lisa Doucet of Woozles in Halifax remembers receiving a book prize in Grade 6 — My Grandfather’s Cape Bret on by Clive Doucet. In it, a boy goes to the Acadian community of Cheticamp in Cape Breton to visit his grandparents who still live there — just as Lisa did every year. Reading about this boy’s experience of spending a summer in a place he hadn’t grown up in but which had shaped his heritage and was so much a part of him — and finding her own experience so mirrored — was a very powerful literary journey for this young girl.

In 2010, Nancy Hartry’s Watching Jimmy was part of the CBC’s TD Kids Book Club of TD Award nominees. The kids at
Toronto's Valley Park Middle School won the contest to have Nancy visit their school. When their teacher was interviewed on the radio, he said that one of the reasons they loved the book was that it was set in Toronto. Now, Watching Jimmy is set in the very WASP Toronto of the 1950s — a Toronto that was a far cry from the urban experience of these kids who live in the extraordinarily multicultural area of Thorncliffe Park within a multicultural metropolis. But for them, it was important to read a book set in their city.

**Amy’s Marathon**

Given my thoughts on the importance of “place,” you can imagine how dazzled I was by Amy Mathers’ proposal for a cross-country reading marathon that included books by authors from different parts of Canada as well as books set in particular places. I probably drove Amy and Meghan Howe crazy with suggestions for books that took place in towns or cities or regions all over Canada. Because it is so exciting that kids today can read books set in Jack Fish, Ontario; Inuvik, Winnipeg; a cottage on the Bay of Fundy; or the corner of Vancouver’s Main and Hastings. In historical fiction, kids can discover their homes among the woollen mills of Almonte, the streets of 19th century St. John’s or near Toronto’s Palais Royale. They can find their places in contemporary stories: the Toronto of Paul Yee’s What Happened This Summer; Halifax’s Hydrostone buildings in Sue MacLeod’s Namesake; the Estevan of Maureen Ulrich’s hockey-players; the streets of Yellowknife in Anita Daher’s Spider Song or the Calgary Zoo in David Poulsen’s Last Sam’s Cage. There are even some fantasy and dystopian novels that manage to work in Canadian settings, like E.K. Johnston’s The Story of Owen: Dragon Slayer of Trondheim, set in southwestern Ontario, or like Janet Naughton’s dystopic, post-Technocaust Terra Nova in The Secret Under My Skin.

And even though the school isn’t set in a real town, how many kids can confidently declare that Macdonald Hall is east of Toronto along the 401?

A few years ago, I encountered a fun and lively book, set in Ontario during a real festival in a real town I knew — or so I thought. Partway into the story, the narrator mentions that his sister is a “state-wide” champion in some such field. I was so disappointed. The opportunity to read about this real town seemed to have been snatched away from me. Now, for most kids reading this book, it made no difference where the town was. But for kids in that area of Ontario — one not often covered in fiction — it would have been as disappointing to them as it was to me.

**Not criticizing the “placeless” books**

Of course, there are many books that don’t have or need a specifically Canadian setting. Sometimes, taking the time and words to set a book in a particular place would detract from what the book is about. Even my own books — non-fiction with a story element — are rooted in no particular place (although we did, by accident, include a character who says “eh?” in the new edition of The Great Number Rumble).

There are novels that obviously have to be set elsewhere — Sri Lanka, Paris, Bombay, Uganda, Iran or southern Africa. Historical novels and fantasies must bow to the various demands of their stories: the details of Victorian London, 1947 Brooklyn or the ancient Mediterranean or the worlds created in dragon-filled kingdoms or on other planets. Some of these books are charming, some are entertaining, some are truly tremendous pieces of writing and imagination. They are all an important part of Canadian literature.

**Literary landscapes matter**

If you think that “place” doesn’t matter, consider how much we recognize its importance in other nations’ literature. We all enjoy going to cities like London or New York — walking the very streets where Sherlock Holmes did his detecting, gazing across the pond in Central Park where Stuart Little sailed his boat or standing at King’s Cross Station and — I don’t even have to tell you what platform number you are looking for.

Here at home, in 2009, we saw the installation of Project Bookmark’s first plaque at Toronto’s Bloor Street Viaduct. It featured a passage from Michael Ondaatje’s In the Skin of a Lion, a novel about the building of the viaduct. The fall of 2016 saw the first plaque for a children’s book, Dennis Lee’s The Cat and the Wizard, featured on a plaque at Casa Loma. I’m delighted they have a children’s book although, no offense to Dennis Lee, I would have loved to see Sheldon Oberman’s The White Stone in the Castle Wall featured at Casa Loma. I am sure you can think of many other places where children’s book plaques should be posted. And I look forward to more from Project Bookmark Canada and similar groups.

**Conclusion: A Plea**

So, as a lifelong nationalist and a children’s book lover, I make a plea to authors and publishers: Where you can, have the courage to write the street, write the city, write the landscape into your books. Do not snatch away from your readers the opportunity to find their place in a book. Don’t feel that your book needs some universal and unnamed setting to find a large audience. Allow the meeting of real and imagined landscapes.

We know the magic of literature and the power of stories. We love to walk in places where real historical figures walked and see the locations where the dramas of history have been played out. And we feel much the same way when we walk in landscapes where works of fiction are set. The power of “story” is such that, even when we know that the tales are fiction, they imbue very real places with an extra resonance, a history and a pedigree that shapes and enriches our perceptions of them as much as a “true” story of that place does. So there is a particularly delightful magic and emotional kick when the stories are about the very places where we live.

When I pick up a book that is set in Canada, past or present — or even future — that gives me a view of my country that is engagingly familiar or engrossingly new — I get that same frisson of excitement that I did as a young reader and I find the same magic of discovery and validation that my country is worth being written about.

I believe that every young reader — child or teen — in Leamington or Regina or Halifax or Smithers or Winnipeg or Yellowknife — deserves to read stories set in their own place and deserves to feel that same pleasure and enchantment.

Gillian O’Reilly is an author and the former editor of Canadian Children’s Book News. This piece is adapted from her speech to the 2016 Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Children’s Book Centre.
News Roundup

AWARDS, BOOK LAUNCHES, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND THE LATEST NEWS

Andrews, Ellis, Guest and Slaight named to Order of Canada

Congratulations to Jan Andrews, Deborah Ellis, Jacqueline Guest and Annabel Slaight who were named to the Order of Canada on November 18, 2016. Andrews was named for her contributions to Canadian culture as a children’s book author and as a pioneer of Canada’s storytelling movement, and Ellis for her acclaimed work as a young adult author and for her philanthropic support of many humanitarian causes. Guest was named for her contributions as a children’s book author who promotes multiculturalism, youth literacy and Indigenous culture, and Slaight for nurturing a passion for science and nature among generations of Canadian children.

25th Anniversary Announcement

The Ann Connor-Brimer Award for Atlantic Canadian Children’s Literature celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2016. To mark the occasion, the 2016 Connor-Brimer Award added an annual presentation of $250 to each of the two shortlisted titles, in addition to the $2000 prize for the winning title. This new funding is thanks to the generosity of Ann’s son, Gavin Brimer. The 2016 award will be presented at the Atlantic Book Awards Gala in May 2017, in Halifax.

Also in 2016, the Connor-Brimer Award will begin alternating its scope and focus from year to year between children’s and teen books. This means that in 2016, and in even years from then on, the award will celebrate outstanding teen books published over the last two years. Beginning in 2017, and in subsequent odd years, the award will celebrate outstanding books, published over the previous two years, for children up to 11 years of age.

Details regarding eligibility and submissions may be found on the Atlantic Book Awards website: atlanticbookawards.ca/awards/ann-connor-brimer-award.

Lisa Doucet celebrates 20 years at Woozles

The Canadian Children’s Book Centre would like to congratulate Lisa Doucet as she celebrates her 20th anniversary at Woozles in Halifax. Lisa has been a regular contributor to Canadian Children’s Book News, a jury member for various awards and was a board member for many years.

Colleen MacMillan retires

In February, after nearly 40 years in the publishing industry, Colleen MacMillan retired from Annick. MacMillan opened Annick’s West Coast office as Associate Publisher in 1999. Since that time, she has worked with owner Rick Wilks to acquire books and has brought a stellar list of creators to the publishing house. Her work acquiring and developing books for Annick has led to publications that have been recognized for their excellence throughout North America and around the world.

Before joining Annick, MacMillan worked for nearly 10 years as editorial director and then acting publishing director at Western Producer Books in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and also spent nearly a decade as publisher of Whitecap Books in Vancouver, British Columbia. Upon retirement, MacMillan plans to volunteer for the North Vancouver District Public Library Board and the Special Olympics.

Gillian O’Reilly, who has done two books with Annick since 2004, has known Colleen as a colleague since the 1980s. “Over the years, I’ve watched as Colleen, always alert to what could make a good book for kids, brought new and interesting voices to Annick’s list. I always imagine her sizing up people wherever she goes — established authors for adults, experts in their fields or just writerly types — and then suggesting, ‘So….. have you ever thought of writing for children?’ I know that’s what she did to me.”

Jim Munro, 1929–2016

Jim Munro, co-founder of Munro’s Books in Victoria, B.C., passed away on November 21, 2016, at the age of 87. Jim is survived by his wife Carole, three daughters, four grandchildren and a step-grandson.

Jim and his first wife, author Alice Munro, founded Munro’s Books in 1963, on Yates Street in Victoria, and the first book he sold was Shelia Burnford’s The Incredible Journey, he told the Times Colonist in 2001. The store moved to Fort Street for several years before moving to its current location, a former Royal Bank of Canada building constructed in 1909. Munro bought the building, which allowed him to weather the storm when the first box stores arrived. In 2014, he handed the store over to employees Jessica Walker, Sarah Frye, Ian Cochran and Carol Mentha.

Munro was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2014, for “his championship of countless Canadian writers and for his sustained community engagement as an independent bookseller.” He will be sadly missed by all those who frequented Munro’s Books.

Congratulations to Joanne Naslund

We would like to share the following announcement from Dr. Wendy Carr, Associate Dean, Teacher Education, UBC, about the CCBC’s former president,
Jo-Anne Naslund. “Jo-Anne Naslund is the 2016 recipient of the Murray Elliott Service Award for Outstanding Service to the Teacher Education Program. Jo-Anne’s many contributions to Teacher Education at UBC are characterized by her passion and commitment to supporting every teacher candidate in developing an understanding of the resources available to help them in their journey toward becoming an exemplary educator. Jo-Anne’s practice is based on the needs of teacher candidates in the 21st century: she both embraces technology and finds ways to provide teacher candidates with the support they need to integrate technology into their practice. An exemplary librarian and teacher-librarian, Jo-Anne provides leadership by working closely with instructors and their students to keep abreast of new curricular and pedagogical developments. She mobilizes community resources, acts as an ambassador at various off-campus events, and is unfailingly helpful to all who seek her assistance. She is also to be commended for her commitment to showcasing literary events, Canadian authors and multiple resources to support learning.”

New School named for author / illustrator Barbara Reid
A new elementary school in Whitchurch-Stouffville will be named Barbara Reid Public School. The new school will open in September 2017. What a lovely honour for Barbara.

TD Grade One Book Giveaway
The Canadian Children’s Book Centre is proud to announce that  Good Morning, Canada  by Andrea Beck has been chosen as the 2017 TD Grade One Book Giveaway title. Beck will add a few more details to extend the text so children will learn about the Canadian icons she mentions in the book. She will also tour the country in the fall of 2017, reading and signing copies of the book for Grade One students. The book will be published in both English and French.

Tell us about your newest book. I feel very blessed to have three books coming out in 2017. The first one is a flip book that will be out in the spring. I’ve written half the book, a story about twin girls and examples of reconciliation they experience as they spend a summer on Gabriola Island with their grandma. The other half is a story written by Richard Van Camp. I’m really excited about this project and feel quite honoured to be working with Richard.

In the fall, I have two books coming out with Orca Books: the first, entitled You Hold Me Up, was illustrated by the brilliant Danielle Daniel. The other is a non-fiction book called Reconciliation Is a Journey. It will take young readers on a journey through our history in this country. Not Indigenous history, but our history. That is an important distinction to make.

Tell us about the process of writing. My process starts with paying attention to what is going on around me, the situations I find myself in and the people I cross paths with. There are so many catalysts in our world for book and story ideas, but we have to be paying attention and listening to our intuition. I actually find it much easier to write by telling a story. I use my phone to record ideas, stories or dialogue. I then send that to myself via email, and voilà, I have the first draft. As I am not a formally trained writer, I rely heavily on the gifted editors I have the privilege to work with.

How did you first get published? My story of getting published the first time is really one of miracles. I had been getting messages about writing a book for many years, but I didn’t listen until I got very sick. As I lay in bed recovering from major surgery, I began to write. The result of that was a self-published novel called Hope, Faith & Empathy. Nikki Tate reviewed it on CBC and sent the book to Diane Morris at Sono Nis Press. As a result, we created Tilly: A Story of Hope and Resilience, which won the Burt Award for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Literature.

What do you like about writing for young people? What I love most about writing for young people is reading, visiting or being in a classroom or library with them. I am always in awe of the young citizens we are raising in our country. Their empathy, ability to think critically and problem solve, and their knowledge and wisdom are deeply inspiring to me.

Tell us about writers who inspire you or what inspires your writing. I have 13-year-old twins, and so between them, their friends and my nieces, I have a lot of ‘material’ to inspire ideas, characters and their unique traits, dialogue, etc. The writers who inspire me are Maria Campbell, Marilyn Dumont, Tracey Lindberg, Lee Maracle, Patti Laboucan-Benson, Richard Van Camp and Leo Buscaglia.
2. Kevin Sands, author of *The Blackthorn Key*, accepts the John Spray Mystery Award.
3. Danielle Daniel, author and illustrator of *Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox*, accepts the Marilyn Baillie Picture Book award.
4. Cory Silverberg and Fiona Smyth, author and illustrator of *Sex is a Funny Word: A Book About Bodies, Feelings, and You*, accept the Norma Fleck award for Canadian Children’s non-Fiction.
5. Erin Bow, author of *The Scorpion Rules*, accepts the Monica Hughes Award for Science Fiction and Fantasy.
6. Karen Bass, author of *Uncertain Soldier*, accepts the Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction for Young People.
7. Ashley Spires meets Nathan Barnes at Romeo Dallaire Public School in Ajax during the TD Grade One Book Giveaway Tour.
8. Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch with Tuan Ho and family at the launch of *Adrift at Sea: A Vietnamese Boy’s Story of Survival* (illustrated by Brian Deines), held at the Station Café in Brantford.
Mike Boldt Inspires Love of Reading and Creativity

BY MARYLYNN MILLER OKE

In what world do numbers, letters, shapes and colours toss aside their uncooperative egos to discover that, by working together, they indeed have the power to transform themselves into anything they can possibly imagine?

How do you teach ABCs and numbers to children without their realizing it? By inviting unsuspecting alligators and sombrero-toting robots into a madcap tale. That’s how. It’s the literary equivalent of Mom hiding spinach in the brownies.

When does the sudden growth of a tiger tail on the first day of school turn from catastrophic to celebratory for a little girl who, in turn, discovers her unique identity and realizes that everyone is a little different?

These miracles emerge when Mike Boldt, author and illustrator of A Tiger Tail, 123 versus ABC and Colors versus Shapes, is unleashing his unique magic at the writer’s desk, the drawing board or both. Having worked on many titles in both English and French, he knows how to capture the imagination of children and instil a love of reading, just like his favourite authors did when he was young.

A blank piece of paper invites imagination out to play

Whether writing and illustrating his own stories or creating the artwork for many other well-known children’s authors, his sense of joy, and often the ridiculous, gets kids’ brains in gear while tickling their funny bone.

Boldt has been drawing characters and imagining the vivid stories that surround them for as long as he can remember. For this Albertan father of three, thinking like a kid is key in order to resonate with children. In this line of work, it’s a crucial job requirement.

As a child with crayon or pencil in hand, he passed over the restrictive nature of colouring books for the allure of creative freedom that only blank pieces of paper, often scraps from his dad’s office, could provide.

“It was always just waiting there with endless possibilities,” recalls the author and illustrator.

An unexpected plot twist

Developing his love of drawing and storytelling throughout his childhood, Boldt initially planned to devote his artistic talents to animation, with hopes of working for video game companies or giants like Disney. However, fate took over and, just as he was accepted into an animation school, he was presented with an opportunity at a small publishing house. This change in direction led him toward a career in a medium that he has loved since he was a child.

“I love character design, storytelling, story boarding, concept work and final work,” states Boldt. “It was at this small publisher that I learned all these aspects are part of picture books, and can all be done by one person. I had always been crazy for children’s books and reading growing up, and I knew right away that was the direction I wanted to take my career. So after gaining a few years of experience, I left on my own to pursue this dream.”

Illuminating the illustration process

Now with many illustrator and author credits to his name, Mike Boldt is forging a unique literary trail in his own right. His vibrant animations weave colourful whimsy through stories that remain true to the author’s vision — whether his or someone else’s. Among many other respected children’s authors, he has worked with Dev Petty, Troy Wilson and, ultimately, Robert Munsch.

“Illustrating another author’s story is a very different experience than illustrating my own,” reveals Boldt. “Once I’ve read the manuscript a few times, I’ll start doodling some
According to Boldt, who initially entered the world of publishing as an author and illustrator, the idea of only illustrating other authors’ books was never a part of his vision. To him, it has been a wonderful bonus.

Creating the story

As an author, Boldt naturally entrenches silliness in stories that teach valuable life lessons, such as defiance giving way to acceptance and gratitude, as portrayed in *A Tiger Tail* and *I Don’t Want to Be a Frog*.

"I believe we tend to be drawn toward communicating in the fashion that fits each of us best," he said, "Personally, I probably lean toward a side that has the ridiculous and funny because I just love to laugh and see others laughing, too. It is a pure and raw form of joy to behold. I believe there’s also a time for seriousness for subjects in life."

According to Boldt, he has been writing and creating stories as long as he has been drawing and reading. He feels writing a good story may be the hardest thing he has to do in this career, a great story even more so.

"Reading talented authors’ work in raw form has really taught me a lot about writing good stories, but I still have a lot to learn." He continues, "I’m always learning from the process. There’s a lot of reward in finally achieving a story that you recognize as good work. There’s even more reward, though, if others also enjoy the end product as that’s why I write these books in the first place."

Inspired works

Out of all of the titles he has worked on, it is difficult for Boldt to pick just one favourite as they are all special to him.

"The first FROG book with Dev Petty was one of the most natural and joyful experiences," he states. "The book with Robert Munsch was an honour like no other for fairly obvious reasons. 123 versus ABC was my first book that ever got picked up by a publisher. And finally, *A Tiger Tail* is a very personal message not only to my own children, but to everyone."

With one son and two daughters, Boldt finds inspiration for his work close to home. He feels his children definitely imprint his work.

He recalls, "In fact, when I did *Loud Lula* by Katy Duffield, it felt like I was reading a story about my youngest who has quite a powerful voice, so she was my model for the main character."

As for his kids, Boldt says they have all grown up with him doing his “job” in that other room in their home.

"It’s pretty normal for them," he said, "Probably no different than the kid whose dad or mom works at the bank or construction site. I hope one day they see what I do not as a cool job, but a career that I love to do and put everything into pursuing — and hopefully they do the same."

In the broader picture, Boldt understands that the love for his work and his art transfers to the learning experience of his young readers as they discover how great being a frog can be, celebrate underwear or learn how intimidating it is to compete in a beauty pageant against Tina Saurus Rex because she always wins.

"I really love what I do and so I hope to be able to do this as long as I can," said Boldt. "But more than that, it’s my goal to inspire a love of reading and a creative imagination in the same way my favourite authors and illustrators did for me when I was young."

In his downtime away from his office in the other room, Boldt enjoys board games and cards. He likes to build and fix things and enjoys playing most sports, while watching the ones he can’t. For him, the joy in all of these activities is doing them with his family and friends.

Except for one thing.

Eating ice cream. He doesn’t mind doing that alone. Inspiration for another tale from the silly side perhaps? 🍦
AnnuAl GenerAl MeetinG of
the CAnAdiAn Children’s Book Centre

Monday, June 26, 2017 | 6:00pm
Room 200, Northern District Library
40 Orchard View Blvd. (Yonge and Eglinton)
Toronto, Ontario  M4R 1B9

Reception to follow

For more information, visit www.bookcentre.ca

Guest Speaker:
Elizabeth MacLeod

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 Monday, June 26, 2017 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. There will be four openings on the board 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 15, 2017 in order for them to be considered by the nominations committee of the board.

Qualities we are looking for in a potential board member:
• strong belief in and commitment to the mission and goals of the CCBC
• would be interested in people with background in finance, public relations, fundraising, IT or website specialization
• must work well in groups
• although not essential, a plus would be some background in children’s literature
• able to commit to giving time and energy to the organization

Once a nomination is received by the nominating committee of the board it will issue to the nominee a form of consent that must be completed by the nominee and returned as soon as reasonably possible and in any event prior to the Annual General Meeting. A nominee shall also meet any other requirements for nomination determined by the board of directors from time to time.

PROXY

THE CANADIAN CHILDREN'S BOOK CENTRE (the “Corporation”)
PROXY FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS TO BE HELD ON MONDAY, JUNE 26, 2017

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 Monday, June 26, 2017, at 40 Orchard View Boulevard, Room 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 _____________________________, 2017.

Name of Member ____________________________________________
(please print)
Signature of Member ____________________________________________

Proxies must be received before the calling to order of the meeting.
Heading Out

First-time Book Week participants talk about discovering new parts of the country, meeting old friends for the first time and inspiring young readers and writers.

Thirty talented Canadian authors, illustrators and storytellers will be visiting schools, libraries, community centres and bookstores across Canada throughout TD Canadian Children’s Book Week (May 6 to 13, 2017).

The following eight participants are all going out on their first Book Week tour. They tell us what they are looking forward to and what they hope to share with their audiences across the country.

**Jason Chabot visiting Ontario**

*Beyond, The Broken Sky Chronicles: Book 3* (HarperCollins Canada, 2016)


I grew up in the rural outskirts of a B.C. town called Chilliwack — a Stó:lō First Nations word meaning “quieter water up the river” — where getting a single, unreliable channel on television meant I had plenty of time to let my imagination soar. After graduating from the University of British Columbia with a business degree, I worked as a finance director in Vancouver for over a decade, crunching numbers by day, but writing stories during every spare minute I could find.

Based on my upbringing, I can attest to the enduring benefits that result when the joy of reading is introduced at an early age. I have always believed more people need to know the unlimited potential books offer, whether it’s a broader knowledge of our world, an enhanced capacity to learn, an outlet for artistic expression, or pure entertainment.

Now as an author, I am thrilled to join this year’s 40th Annual TD Canadian Children’s Book Week Tour, with the exciting opportunity to speak to audiences of enthusiastic book lovers. While eager to promote the value of reading and creative writing, I am also keen to share my life experiences to inspire the emerging talents of today’s youth.

**Natasha Deen visiting the Northwest Territories**


*Terminate* (Orca Book Publishers, 2017)

*Lark Holds the Key* (Orca Book Publishers, 2016)

Stories are my oxygen. Listening to other people’s stories showed me that even if I was the only African-Chinese-South Asian-West Indian kid in the class, my friends sometimes felt just as different as I did. Stories were torches that lit the path before me, showing me what I could achieve, if only I tried. They turned the sometimes-frightening journey of my family immigrating to Canada into an adventure of the fantastic.
My presentations celebrate STORY — the funny times when Mom and Dad acted like kids, the scary times when I felt alone — and I love seeing the light of connection in the eyes of those around me. In those moments, we are bonded because of STORY. We become one voice that says, together we can accomplish anything, and everything is possible because we possess the power of one.

Stories put men on the moon, put women in government and erased “white only” signs from storefronts. STORIES CHANGE THE WORLD. I’m excited to get on tour and hear other people’s stories. I can’t wait to see the lights on the path, to experience the world through someone else’s eyes and know that all things are possible through STORY.

Marianne Dubuc visiting Manitoba

*Mr. Postmouse Takes a Trip* (Kids Can Press, 2017)
*Je ne suis pas ta maman* (Comme des géants, 2016)
*The Animals’ Ark* (Kids Can Press, 2016)

I have been writing books for more than 10 years now, and one of the things I like the most about my work is getting the chance to meet my readers. The way I see it, a story doesn’t really have a purpose unless there is someone who reads it.

While touring for TD Canadian Children’s Book Week, I will not only get to meet the readers, young and old, but I will also discover their world. I find that when you visit a city and you have the opportunity to go to schools and meet the children in their classrooms, you get to see a side of the place that is unique and very real.

I am excited to be touring for the TD Canadian Children’s Book Week because I will discover a part of my own country through its classrooms and wonderful children and teachers. In my presentations, I will read my books to them and discuss my creative process (and theirs), and we will create fun and quirky worlds together.

Melanie Florence visiting British Columbia, Northern Region

*Stolen Words* (Second Story Press, 2017)
*Missing Nimâmâ* Illustrated by Francois Thisdale. (Clockwise Press, 2015)

I’m so excited to be given the opportunity to visit kids in northern British Columbia and share my books with them. Depending on the age group I’m meeting with, I’ll be talking about the history of residential schools and *Missing Nimâmâ* (if it’s a group of older kids) or my new picture book, *Stolen Words*, which will be out next year, if the kids are younger. No matter what the age group, I’m thrilled to bring a bit of my culture and my love of books to my visits.

Sending authors to provinces other than their own is such a great idea! Being a writer is a pretty solitary career. As authors, we tend to sit behind our computers and make up stories on our own, so getting out and sharing our books is probably more exciting for us than it is for our audiences. Getting the opportunity to travel to a new place AND talk about writing to kids over the course of a week with the TD Canadian Children’s Book Week Tour is such a unique experience, and it’s one that I am grateful to have been given.

John Martz visiting Alberta

*Burt’s Way Home* (Koyama Press, 2016)
*A Cat Named Tim and Other Stories* (Koyama Press, 2014)
*Who’s on First?* Based on the comedy routine by Abbott and Costello. (Quirk Books, 2013)

When I was a kid, I loved to read and to draw, and so I was naturally drawn to comics and picture books. I exhausted my local library’s collection of books about cartooning and was always excited to learn more. I knew from a young age that this is what I wanted to do when I grew up, and I was lucky to have parents and teachers who always encouraged me to pursue cartooning as a career.

I’m excited to share both my work and a glimpse into my process. It was always an extremely valuable and rewarding experience whenever I had the opportunity to meet authors...
and illustrators as a kid, and I couldn’t be more pleased to have come full circle, and to have written and illustrated my own books that I can now share with a younger generation of story writers and artists.

**Stacey Matson visiting Ontario**

*Notes from the Life of a Total Genius* (Scholastic Canada, 2016)
*Scenes from the Epic Life of a Total Genius* (Scholastic Canada, 2015)
*A Year in the Life of a Total and Complete Genius* (Scholastic Canada, 2014)

Book Week is such a great and important experience for everyone involved, the kids and the authors and illustrators. I grew up in Calgary, and live in Vancouver now, so I’m excited to discover a new province and meet kids who have different backgrounds and experiences than I had as a kid. I can learn so much about their lives, their dreams and what is important to them; this helps me in writing characters that they can connect with.

I like to talk about the terrible writer’s block I suffered from as a kid and the things I did to try and overcome it. I have all my old journals and stories from when I was a kid to share with students, along with funny stories about challenges and successes I’ve had on the path to becoming an author. My journals and experiences were a big source of inspiration in writing the Total Genius trilogy. I hope I can inspire some of the students to persevere past the first paragraph of their own stories and to keep writing and reading.

**Emil Sher visiting the Yukon**

*Away* Illustrated by Qin Leng (Groundwood Books, April 2017)
*Mittens to Share* (also available in French: *Une mitaine pour deux*) Illustrated by Irene Luxbacher (Scholastic Canada, 2016)
*A Button Story* Illustrated by Cindy Revell (Annick Press, 2014)

Readers of all shapes and stripes unwrap an age-old truth every time they open a book: the first page is the first step in a journey. And sometimes — carried by a story, afloat on a beautiful illustration — you will make a discovery by the time you land on the last page. By and large, writing and reading are solitary experiences, as writers write and readers read. But every once in a while, a kind of quiet magic happens when authors and readers gather in the same room: you connect with a friend you have travelled with but never met.

In May, I will fly to the Yukon as one of the lucky authors participating in the 2017 TD Canadian Children’s Book Week. I am counting the days until I am in the same room with readers, young and old, who share my love for stories. Yes, I will read from my work, but I want to hear firsthand about the picture books, the fiction and the graphic novels that shaped them. I know that everyone I will meet is a Yukon storyteller because a story doesn’t have to be published to be real and true. So as I stand in libraries and classrooms, book in hand, I aim to listen, to absorb, to hear voices I have not yet heard.

A first trip to the Yukon, first-hand stories, meeting old friends for the first time — the truth about book tours is they hatch moments that last.

**Gabrielle Prendergast visiting Ontario**

*Zero Repeat Forever* (Simon & Schuster, 2017)
*Pinch Me* (Orca Book Publishers, 2017)
*Pandas on the Eastside* (Orca Book Publishers, 2016)

I’m looking forward to meeting kids in another province and getting their perspective on my books and books in general. One of the books I’ll be talking about, *Pandas on the Eastside*, is set in 1972, a time that some of their parents or grandpar-
Explain the process you went through to create the image you designed for the 40th-Anniversary TD Canadian Children’s Book Week Tour.

The inspiration for the poster sprang from pure serendipity as the stars aligned in one magical moment. In September 2016, I travelled to Italy and Sicily on holiday with my wife, Deb, and eight friends. One morning, we visited the Benedictine Abbey of Casamari, founded in the 9th century. I had been thinking about the poster for several weeks before leaving home while I completed the illustrations for my latest book, The Curiosity Cabinet. In Italy, I continued imagining a variety of concepts, but nothing struck me as distinct or provided a powerful visual impact.

And then as I left the ancient stone church on the abbey’s grounds, I turned to look at the bronze doors that were open to the misty rain. They were exquisitely crafted with a rich patina derived over centuries. My gaze settled on a square bas-relief of a resting, winged and haloed lion holding an open bible in its front paws. Another square illuminated a sitting haloed bird with an open bible clutched firmly in its talons. The two images jolted me like arrows, both timeless and timely all in the same breath. In that single moment, the concept for the illustration emerged fully realized, echoing the Book Week theme, Read Across Canada. Three animals or birds from three regions of Canada, each creature holding an open book under different skies and on different coasts. Eureka!

Moments like that are extremely rare. When they happen, they remind me how precious they are, and why travel can be thrilling and illuminating to the creative spirit. Those moments artistically take the imagination places none of us could envision and make them concrete.

Is this similar to the process you take to create illustrations for books?

The process to design a single poster image is not dissimilar to the process of creating images for a picture book. But the one difference, and it is a prodigious one, is the fact that poster art must accomplish in a single, stand-alone image everything that all the illustrations accomplish in a book.

There is, of course, the difference of the sheer volume of work involved between the two projects. In addition, in the case of the picture book, each of the images must bear its own weighty responsibility interpreting a portion of the text, while at the same time, stand equally alongside the other images in telling the complete story.

Tell us about your training as an artist and how long you’ve been working as a children’s illustrator.

I have been honing the art of illustration for over four decades since graduating from the Ontario College of Art in 1974. It has been a remarkable life’s journey replete with the vicissitudes of life. Today, I am delighted that I still have a publisher who wants to publish what I write and illustrate in an industry where it is typically a struggle to work full-time and make a living.

The beginnings of my creative life began as it does for countless children — at home, colouring in colouring books, drawing on reams of paper and, in mischievous moments, on bedroom walls. Fortunately, I had parents who did not discourage my burgeoning talent. Rather, they gave me their unconditional support (except for those crayoned walls), assuring me that being an artist was courageous and honorable, and if I imagined that reality for myself, they would stand behind me.

The idea of writing books for young people came upon graduation from the art college when I was hired by a publishing start-up called Kids Can Press. I had been hired to illustrate a book, but early that summer I decided to write. Given that I had never written in the genre before, the idea was brazenly audacious. Ultimately, the decision opened a door of possibility I had never imagined — the written word. I was hooked from the moment the typewriter’s metal keys hit the stark white blank sheets of paper.
Where do you draw your inspiration from for your illustrations?
Each book bears its own set of circumstances and parameters, dictating the places and characters I am compelled to research, if I am to bring any degree of credibility and integrity to a particular tale.

Canada has been my muse almost exclusively for more than four decades. Of the 28 books I have published, only four have been set outside the country. There is no other place, landscape or people that inspires me more or invigorates my imagination.

From the many books you’ve written and illustrated do you have a favourite or favourites?
I do not have a favourite book or books. Each book sprang from the same inquisitive imagination, expansive heart, intuitive gut and dogged persistence when a project got stuck. I could say at the risk of sounding cliché that each one is like a child I have created; and like any parent I love each one equally while differently, since each book has taught me something invaluable about the art of writing and illustration.

You were one of the first participants to go out on a Book Week tour; tell us what you remember from that very first tour.
I was a very inexperienced traveller, and a novice presenter with a genuine fear of public speaking. However, everyone I met during that incredible week, was extremely welcoming and generous of spirit, helping to relieve some of the anxiety I felt. There was real excitement in the air that something important was happening in children’s literature across the country and we were all part of a ground-breaking experiment. I recall that that tour of southern Ontario helped build my confidence. I realized that if I listened to kids, they would show me the way to engage them, and I would become a better storyteller for their input.

As time passed, I stilled my hammering heart and slowed a story’s pace, infusing every tale with expression, while looking my young charges squarely in the eye. That is when presenting became pleasurable, tremendous fun and deeply satisfying personally and artistically.

On a lighter note, I recall that a major winter storm hit Winnipeg while I slept on my first night in the province. In the morning when I wakened, I had to travel to Boissevain on icy, snow-swept roads so treacherous that I drove the rental car under 50 kilometres per hour. I remember imagining that I was going to crash and die on the frigid, bald prairie for the cause of reading to kids! What a fool I was to be in this situation when most Manitobans were safe indoors! What a fate! In the end, it was worth the risk, and every kilometre of every tour since.

You have also participated in many Book Week tours since that first one. Any great stories you’d like to share from those other tours?
How does one choose from a kaleidoscope of memories brimful to bursting from 40 years of travel?
I remember my southern Ontario, circumspect worldview expanding as the Canadian landmass diminished in size, feeling less overwhelming the more I travelled across the country.

In 1984, the CCBC held a nationwide contest for schools, libraries and towns to win an author or illustrator for a week. Jean Little was won by Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and I was won by Fort Nelson, B.C. I had never imagined myself a prize in any manner of the word, so this was a thrilling novelty.

Fort Nelson and its people welcomed me in the true spirit of the north with both arms outstretched in a great grizzly bear hug. From dinners of caribou, elk and moose; to a dogsled ride through the bush; fast-paced hockey games; a helicopter ride over the Rocky Mountains; school and public libraries packed full of excited kids riding waves of laughter and pathos: tobogganing with the First Nations kids of Chalo School before making bannock on an open fire; rounds and rounds of frothy beer; and much more.

Two years later, during a visit to what was then The Northwest Territories, I stopped in Spence Bay, where in addition to presenting in the town’s school I met Inuit carvers working in their homes, a notable privilege indeed. In one particular saltbox-style house, I saw a slab of frozen caribou alongside a piece of soapstone resting on a kitchen countertop. The hefty body of a polar bear was barely emerging from the mottled green stone, while the defrosting meat caused the blood to pool over the Arborite counter and about the carving, and drip onto the floor. In that moment, life and art merged and became one. I have never looked at Inuit sculpture in the same way since.

On the same tour, I went out with the minister of the Anglican Church onto the Arctic Ocean so that I could experience standing on the Arctic Circle. It was something I had dreamed of doing since I was a boy. The temperature hovered at -48 degrees Fahrenheit. I was dressed warmly, but not adequately, something I discovered only when I returned to my host’s home to shower. In the frigid cold of the ocean and Circle, my testicles had retreated completely inside my abdominal cavity, something I never imagined could happen to a grown man. Fortunately, in a steady stream of hot water, my body returned to normal.

Why do you feel TD Canadian Children’s Book Week is an important literary event?
In an age when young people are abandoning books for their electronic devices, Book Week and the ideas it celebrates are more important than ever to children and to our Canadian society. What better way to spark the creative spirit of young people, some of whom will become artists or writers later in life, than putting them in the same room with creators who look like them, fantasize like them, imagine like them, laugh like them and sometimes cry like them? What an invaluable gift of opportunity for authors and illustrators to visit young people. What a gift of opportunity to engage with creators who speak about what it means to be human, who raise critical questions about the values we share as Canadians and global citizens, and who ask us all to consider the stories that define us as a nation, and as important, ask what stories we will tell.
“BOOKMARK!” Highlights Books for a variety of grade levels around a particular theme. Since 2017 marks our nation’s 150th birthday, we thought a list of books set in Canada would be fitting.

Compiled by CCBC library coordinator Meghan Howe.

Reading Across Canada

PICTURE BOOKS FOR KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 5

A Change of Heart
written by Alice Walsh
illustrated by Erin Bennett Banks
(Nimbus Publishing, 2016)

In 1941, a young African American, Lanier Phillips, tried to escape the racism and segregation of his homeland by joining the navy. But tragedy struck one February night off the coast of Newfoundland, and Lanier was the lone Black survivor of a terrible shipwreck. This book vividly depicts the true story of a man’s life-changing experience in Newfoundland and the healing power of kindness and humanity.

Dipnetting with Dad
written by Willie Sellars
illustrated by Kevin Easthope
(Caitlin Press, 2014)

Set in the beautiful landscape of the Cariboo Chilcotin region, this is a delightful story of a father teaching his son the Secwepemc method of fishing known as dipnetting. Together they visit the Sweat Lodge, mend the nets, select the best fishing spot and catch and pack their fish through rugged bush back to the family home for traditional preparation.

Dragonfly Kites
(Songs of the North Wind Trilogy, Book 2)
written by Tomson Highway
illustrated by Julie Flett
(Fifth House Publishers, 2016)

Told in English and Cree, this is the story of two brothers spending their summer in northern Manitoba, exploring the world around them. They love inventing toys and naming all manner of things and animals, but best of all is flying their magical dragonfly kites. As they drift off to sleep after a long day, their imaginations continue to soar high above the clouds with the dragonflies.

Go Home Bay
written by Susan Vande Griek
illustrated by Pascal Milleli
(Groundwood Books, 2016)

In 1914, Tom Thomson spent the summer at a family cottage on Lake Huron’s Georgian Bay, where he taught 10-year-old Helen how to paint. This book imagines that summer through Helen’s eyes, providing the world around them. They love inventing toys and naming all manner of things and animals, but best of all is flying their magical dragonfly kites. As they drift off to sleep after a long day, their imaginations continue to soar high above the clouds with the dragonflies.

Island Morning
written by Rachna Gilmore
illustrated by Brenda Jones
(The Acorn Press, 2015)

A girl and her grandfather take an early morning walk through the fields of Prince Edward Island. On their journey, they see gentle pastures, farm animals, scenic vistas and a glorious sunrise. This is a story about the special bond between grandfather and granddaughter, and how they see the world through each other’s eyes.

Mister Got To Go, Where Are You?
written by Lois Simmie
illustrated by Cynthia Nugent
(RED Deer Press, 2014)

Got To Go has lived at the Sylvia Hotel in Vancouver for seven years, and it is the best home a cat could wish for! Then he sees a man carrying a tantalizing parcel and follows him along the streets until he is lost. Nothing goes right at the hotel with Got To Go missing from his usual windowsill.

“A hotel without Got To Go is not a proper hotel.”

Wild Eggs:
A Tale of Arctic Egg Collecting
written by Suzie Napayok-Short
illustrated by Jonathan Wright
(Inhabit Media, 2015)

Akuluk is not excited about visiting her grandparents in Nunavut; she would rather head south for summer vacation. But after eating wild duck eggs for breakfast, Akuluk wants to travel out on the land with her grandparents to gather more wild eggs. She learns about the different types of eggs and how to collect them properly. Now, Akuluk can’t wait for more Arctic adventures!
**Junior & Intermediate Fiction and Non-Fiction for Grades 3-9**

**Anne of Green Gables**
written by L.M. Montgomery
(Tundra Books, 2014 ©1908)

When Marilla Cuthbert and her brother Matthew decide to adopt a child from an orphanage in Nova Scotia, they don’t quite get what they bargained for. This engaging story of Anne Shirley and her life on a Prince Edward Island farm will delight young readers, much like how Anne charmed her way into the hearts of the Cuthberts and all of Avonlea.

**Ice Storm (Disaster Strikes! Book 6)**
written by Penny Draper
(Coteau Books, 2011)

Alice and Sophie are cousins and best friends but couldn’t be more different. On January 5, 1998, freezing rain begins to fall in the province of Quebec, taking down power lines and trees and leaving homes without heat or electricity. The girls must think and act as they never have before. Young readers will also enjoy Draper’s *Red River Raging*.

**The Madman of Piney Woods**
written by Christopher Paul Curtis
(Scholastic Canada, 2014)

Living in the towns of Buxton and neighbouring Chatham, Ontario, in 1901, Benji and Red aren’t friends. But their fates are entwined. A chance meeting leads the boys to discover that they have more in common than meets the eye. There’s a strange presence in the forest… could the Madman of Piney Woods be real? This is the companion novel to *Elijah of Buxton*.

**Sabotage**
written by Karen Autio
(Sono Nis Press, 2013)

It’s 1915, and while the Great War is raging in Europe, John Mäki is a hard-working newsboy in Port Arthur, Ontario. His older sister, Saara, hopes to become a teacher and worries that people have stopped speaking to her because she’s befriended a German girl. Saara scoffs at John’s suspicions that German spies might try to blow up a bridge in their hometown — not here in Canada!!

**Somewhere I Belong**
written by Glenna Jenkins
(The Acorn Press, 2014)

When P.J.’s father dies, his Ma moves the family from Boston to her home in PEI. The winter is harsh, the farm chores endless, and his drunken teacher bullies him. P.J. lashes out but ends up in a heap of trouble. Then tickets arrive for a charity ballgame with Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig — will P.J. get to see his idols play ball?

**Taking the Reins**
written by Dayle Campbell Gaetz
(Coteau Books, 2013)

This story is set against the majestic landscape of 1860s British Columbia. Katherine’s father has taken his family there in pursuit of free farmland. Emma arrives in Victoria on a bride ship. The two girls meet because of their connection to a bay mare called Nugget. Will the horse teach the girls how to take control of their own lives?

**Through Flood & Fire: A Second Barr Colony Adventure**
written by Anne Patton
(Coteau Books, 2015)

It is 1903, and 10-year-old Dorothy is excited for the final leg of the adventure her family has started, heading to a new settlement. But the prairie is unforgiving — food is scarce, fire and floods and other hazards abound, and many promises made to the Barr Colonists have proven false. Will these settlers have what it takes to put down lasting roots in this strange new world?

**Wow Canada! Exploring this Land from Coast to Coast to Coast**
written by Vivien Bowers
illustrated by Dan Hobbs and Dianne Eastman
(Owlkids Books, 2010)

Join 12-year-old Guy, his sister Rachel and his parents as they travel from coast to coast, discovering Canada. Inside readers will find weird bits of trivia, postcards and emails from Guy and Rachel to their friends, panoramic maps, campfire chats, humorous sidebars, cartoon strips and facts about Canada.
SENIOR FICTION FOR GRADES 7 AND UP

A Blanket of Butterflies
(The Debwe Series, Book 4)
written by Richard Van Camp
illustrated by Scott B. Henderson
(HighWater Press, 2015)
Shinobu, a stranger from Japan, visits the museum in Fort Smith, NWT, to retrieve his family’s samurai suit of armour and sword and learns the sword has been lost to “Benny the Bank.” Together with a young boy and his grandmother, Shinobu confronts Benny and his men. This graphic novel explores the grace of family and the power of the Great Mystery.

Chasing Freedom
written by Gloria Ann Wesley
(Roseway Publishing, 2011)
Sarah’s father steals away in the dead of night to join the British army with its promises of freedom, land and provisions. But before he returns, the American Revolutionary war ends, and Sarah and her grandmother are among the loyalist slaves sent to Birchtown, Nova Scotia — the first all-Black community in North America. Their struggle for freedom is just beginning as they find friends, foes and family secrets.

The Hill
written by Karen Bass
(Pajama Press, 2016)
Jared’s plane has crashed in northern Alberta, and Kyle is first on the scene. Jared insists on hiking up the highest hill, searching for cell service, and Kyle reluctantly follows; his kokum has always forbidden him to go near it. After a night on the hilltop, the teens find everything in the forest has subtly changed… and the plane has disappeared. Even worse, something is hunting them.

I’ll Be Watching
written by Pamela Porter
(Groundwood Books, 2011)
Living in the small prairie town of Argue, Saskatchewan, during the Depression, the Loney children are barely getting by. Their father can usually be found at the bar, and their stepmother is pious and bitter. Left to fend for themselves, they find a way to survive with the help of some unexpected allies, including a couple of watchful ghosts.

Lockdown
written by Maggie Bolitho
(Great Plains Teen Fiction, 2014)
When an earthquake rocks the Pacific Northwest, 15-year-old Rowan is out hiking in BC’s Lynn Canyon Park. Tremors rip the coast from Oregon to Alaska. Wounded and taken to hospital, her father orders Rowan and her brother to stay inside his survivalist home. While the electrical fence offers protection, it isn’t long before mobs gather, desperate for food and water. It is up to Rowan the keep the chaos outside from taking over!

Straight Punch
written by Monique Polak
(Orca Book Publishers, 2014)
Tessa’s tagging habit lands her at an alternative school in Montreal’s toughest neighbourhood. The school is full of troubled kids, and half of every school day is devoted to boxing. The other students think boxing is cool. Not Tessa, who can’t handle violence of any kind. But when a neighbour starts a petition to have New Directions closed down, Tessa discovers something worth fighting for.

Trapper Boy
written by Hugh R. MacDonald
illustrations by Michael G. MacDonald
(Cape Breton University Press, 2012)
JW is a good student with a bright future who lives in a 1920s Cape Breton coal-mining town. As school ends for the year in 1926, JW looks forward to summer, but senses there is something worrying his parents. Slowly, the truth is revealed that his father’s hours have been reduced at the mine, and JW will now have to help his parents make ends meet.
The 2016 TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award winners.

Congratulations to the 2016 TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award winners Melanie Florence, François Thisdale and Jacques Goldstyn.

Read more about these books at tdreads.com
Red Leaf Literature

Red Leaf Literature is a new column for 2017 that features titles chosen by Canadian Children’s Book News’ reviewers. These books are thought to be of the highest quality and signify titles of exceptional calibre. Whether you’re a parent, teacher or librarian, our reviewers feel that these books would make an excellent addition to your home, school or library collection.

PICTURE BOOK TITLES FOR KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 3

**Animals Illustrated: Narwhal**
written by Solomon Awa
illustrated by Hwei Lim
Inhabit Media, 2016
978-1-77227-080-8 (hc) $15.95
for Kindergarten to Grade 2

- Non-fiction
- Arctic Animals
- Narwhal
- Animal Behaviours
- Animal Biology

**Animals Illustrated: Polar Bear**
written by William Flaherty
illustrated by Danny Christopher
Inhabit Media, 2016
978-1-77227-079-2 (hc) $15.95
for Kindergarten to Grade 2

- Non-fiction
- Arctic Animals
- Polar Bear
- Animal Behaviours
- Animal Biology

The first two titles in this new series from Inhabit Media are filled with facts suitable for young children and intricately detailed illustrations that will form a beautiful collection of children’s non-fiction books on Arctic animals. Each volume includes interesting facts on the behaviours and biology of each animal and is written by an author who lives in the Arctic.

Along with many other facts, children will learn that narwhals are medium-sized whales that live in the Arctic all year round, and that they look different from other whales because the males have a tusk that looks like a horn. An interesting fact about the narwhal’s tusk is that it is actually a tooth that grows out of the narwhal’s mouth. Students will also learn that narwhals travel in groups called pods and will be able to view a narwhal skeleton.

In the book about polar bears, children will learn that these huge white bears are unique from other bears in that they live on the land, on the sea ice and in open water, and they can travel great distances when hunting for food. Readers will also discover why polar bears are fantastic swimmers and how they manage to stay warm in the Arctic. The book also introduces students to Nanurluk, a giant polar bear from Inuit mythology, and a host of other interesting information.

This fabulous new series is a must have for primary classrooms and libraries. The information included contains just enough detail for young readers to gain important knowledge about each animal without being overwhelming. The stunning illustrations show the animals in their natural habitat and reflect the content of the text perfectly. The hard covers make the books sturdy, and the size is just right for little hands. Future additions will make this a much sought-after series for early readers. (*Animals Illustrated: Muskox* is also now available.)

Sandra O’Brien is the editor of Canadian Children’s Book News.

**The Dance of the Violin**
written by Kathy Stinson
Illustrated by Dušan Petricic
Annick Press, 2017
978-1-55451-900-2 (hc) $19.95
for Kindergarten to Grade 2

- Picture Book
- Violins
- Violinists
- Joshua Bell
- Music

As a toddler, violinist Joshua Bell drummed on pots, trumpeted through cardboard tubes and strummed on elastic bands. Being given his own violin seemed a logical progression. At the age of 12, he enters an international competition, playing an impossibly complex piece, just because he loves it. But standing before the judges, he falters and stops playing. It all seems over for Joshua as he forlornly leaves the stage, until on a whim, he asks to start over. Permission given, he finds his stride, the music dancing in his head, as he plays “better than ever before.”

Reading this effervescent book takes a brief moment in time and highlights its significance, making it into a picture book to remember. The spare, deceptively simple language and energetic illustrations parallel Joshua’s innate joie de vivre, first as a toddler and later as an eager 12-year-old, with a passion for music. The text has its own rhythm and implicit melody, while the whimsical illustrations are full of vitality, movement and expression. Stars appear over Joshua’s head, reflecting the joy he finds in the violin, dark tones reflect tension as he prepares for his performance, and spirals of colour become more frenetic as his enthusiasm grows. Explanatory paragraphs give further details about the incident.

*The Dance of the Violin* is written by the same award-winning team as the acclaimed *The Man with the Violin*, which is also about Joshua Bell. The book dances in front of your eyes, just as the music danced in Joshua’s head, and it acknowledges that we all make mistakes but that persistence is a virtue.

Aileen Wortley is a retired librarian living in Toronto.
**The Ferryland Visitor: A Mysterious Tale**
written by Charis Cotter
illustrated by Gerald L. Squires
Running the Goat, Books & Broadsides, 2016
978-1-927917-05-3 (hc), $21.95 for Grades 1 to 3

One October in the early 1970s, Esther and her family move into a lighthouse keeper’s house just outside Ferryland, Newfoundland, a perfect setting for her father to work on his paintings and her mother to make her pottery. Shortly before Halloween, a stranger knocks at the door, saying that the family’s dog asked him to come in. With a creaky voice, he regales them with stories, including ones about the many nights he spent with the previous lighthouse keeper, watching the first television in the area, and also about his time as the Ferryland constable. The next day, a neighbour tells Esther and her father that the man sounds like Dick Costello, someone who died 20 years earlier. The following summer, Esther and her father meet a woman who is Costello’s daughter, and when she hears about what the visitor said upon knocking, she is convinced the person was indeed her father.

Cotter recounts this true ghost story in a compelling and engaging manner, sharing it in a leisurely way with poetic descriptions of Esther’s family, the encounter with the visitor, and the lighthouse’s picturesque landscape, weaving the elements together to create richly textured layers of curiosity, mystery and discovery for the reader. Squires’ artwork consists of gorgeous oil paintings, stunning graphite sketches and many amazing personal photographs. This is a hauntingly beautiful and exquisite book, made more so by the realization that Esther’s father is none other than the celebrated visual artist, Gerald L. Squires himself.

Ken Kilback is a writer and primary teacher in Vancouver.

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**Town Is by the Sea**
written by Joanne Schwartz
illustrated by Sydney Smith
Groundwood Books, 2017
978-1-55498-871-6 (hc) $21.95 for Grades 2 and up

A 1950s mining town in Cape Breton is the setting for this compelling story told from the viewpoint of a young boy whose father digs for coal deep under the sea. At first glance, the boy’s childhood seems carefree. He savours the outdoors and sunshine while playing with a friend, helping his mother with chores and visiting his grandfather’s grave. However, from the moment he wakes up in the morning until he goes to bed in the evening, his thoughts always wander to the sea and the dangers his father faces far underground.

Through her masterful and sensitive prose, author Joanne Schwartz draws readers into a community where generations of men have withstood the dark and perilous conditions of the mine, and families live in constant fear of being torn tragically apart. “I go to the graveyard to visit my grandfather, my father’s father. He was a miner, too... My grandfather used to say, ‘Bury me facing the sea b’y, I worked long and hard underground...’ Today the sea is all calm... and quiet. And deep down under that sea, my father is digging for coal.” The boy’s concluding remarks are powerful and poignant: “I think about the sea, and I think about my father. I think about the bright days of summer and the dark tunnels underground. One day, it will be my turn. I’m a miner’s son. In my town, that’s the way it goes.” As the mine claims the young boys who relinquish their childhoods far too soon, the town’s legacy continues uninterrupted.

Sydney Smith’s digitally edited brush, ink and watercolour illustrations are impressive in their scope. His ingenuity in capturing not only the subdued domestic interactions but also the juxtaposition between light and dark and the sea in its many guises leaves one wanting to examine his riveting artwork again and again.

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

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**JUNIOR & INTERMEDIATE FICTION AND NON-FICTION FOR GRADES 4 TO 9**

**The Adventurer’s Guide to Successful Escapes**
written by Wade Albert White
illustrations by Mariano Epelbaum
Little, Brown and Company, 2016
978-0-316-30527-3 (eBook) $9.99 for Grades 4 to 7

Meet 13-year-old Anne, an orphan with a plan (more or less) involving adventures and finding out where she comes from. She and her best friend, Penelope, are set to leave Saint Lupin’s Institute for Perpetually Wicked and Hideously Unattractive Children, the only home they have known. After that, Anne’s plan gets a little vague... but Anne isn’t discouraged, sure that if she and Penelope stick together, everything will be okay. Except (of course), nothing goes according to plan. Without warning, Anne finds herself handed a gauntlet and sent by fireball to a peculiar quest academy whose headmistress is a cat named Princess Fluffington Whiskers. Now she, Penelope and their newfound adventuring companion, Hiro, have four days to fulfill a Rightful Heir quest and hopefully find her real home.

Anne and her faithful companions must solve perplexing riddles, travel to strange places, defeat devious foes and endure sudden and unexpected plot twists. They are helped (and hindered) along the way by an eclectic set of characters, including witches, a robot, a talking sparrow and a dragon named Nana. Of course, there are an odd assortment of other animals, such as zombie sharks and sand wolves. Luckily, Anne is armed with a copy of The Adventurer’s Guide, which provides useful hints and maps to help them on their way.

Set in a fantastical world of floating tiers, Wade Albert White’s rollicking debut fantasy novel, The Adventurer’s Guide to Successful Escapes, is chock-full of magic, quests, mystery and danger, all topped off with a good dose of hilarity. The diversity of characters is refreshing, and friendship and loyalty are woven into the story.
beautifully. The non-stop action will have young readers cheering on Anne and her courageous companions as they face seemingly insurmountable odds on their journey.

Quirky, funny and utterly charming, this book will leave readers clamouring for a sequel.

Tracey Schindler is a book reviewer and former teacher living in Bethany, Ontario.

**He Who Dreams**
*Orca Limelights*
written by Melanie Florence
Orca Book Publishers, 2017
978-1-4598-1104-1 (eBook) $7.99
for Grades 6 to 9

Fiction | First Nations | Dance | Gender Stereotypes | Cyberbullying

When John McCaffrey drops his sister off at the local community centre, he is beckoned by a noise echoing down a hallway. He follows a drumbeat to an unmarked door, opening it to find an Indigenous dance class. He quickly unearths a passion for dance he never knew he had, setting the scene for award-winning author Melanie Florence’s most recent work of fiction. *He Who Dreams* is a new addition to the Orca Limelight series of high interest novels for reluctant readers that focus on the performing arts.

At first glance, *He Who Dreams* might seem like the simple story of a teen who learns to express himself through dance; however, readers quickly realize its plot is far more nuanced. Drawing from her own Cree and Scottish ancestry, Florence carefully crafts a complex character in John, who struggles to fit in with other Indigenous dancers despite his mother’s Cree heritage, mostly due to his bright red hair — an attribute inherited from his Scottish father. *He Who Dreams* also explores gender stereotypes and cyberbullying as John is taunted and ridiculed about his new hobby by both his soccer teammates and other dancers at the Native Cultural Center.

Through realistic dialogue and concise, yet entertaining, chapters, *He Who Dreams* takes readers from a soccer field to the Grand Entry of a powwow with ease, exploring identity and John’s mixed-race heritage along the way. Powerful and smart, *He Who Dreams* brims with valuable lessons, yet it’s rarely earnest or didactic, allowing young readers to access important issues in a highly engaging way.

Jessica Rose is a writer, reviewer and editor in Hamilton, Ontario.

**Icarus Down**
written by James Bow
Scholastic Canada, 2016
978-1-4431-3913-7 (pb) $14.99
978-1-4431-3914-4 (eBook) $14.99
for Grades 6 to 9

Fiction | Fantasy | Dystopia | Adventure | Genocide | Environmentalism | Steampunk

The colony of Icarus Down — the last hope of Earth’s humanity — includes 13 cities suspended above a forest floor inhabited by unseen beasts dubbed Ticktocks, and sheltered from a merciless sun by the planet’s massive canyons. On the floating city of Iapyx, Simon Daud wants nothing more than to fly ornithopters like his older brother, Isaac. But something goes terribly wrong on his maiden flight, and Isaac is killed. Simon survives and is nursed by Rachel, his brother’s fiancée, when he learns Simon and Rachel were both Grounders — a rebel faction trying to discover the truth.

But what Simon uncovers is a conspiracy stretching back to the Icarus Down herself. Framed for sabotage, Simon finds himself on the forest floor, branded a traitor and alone. He is saved by Eliza, a girl raised by the Ticktock monsters and on a quest of her own. Together, this unlikely pair set out to find the Icarus Down and to expose a genocide committed in the colony’s name.

James Bow has written a fast-paced sci-fi adventure with a good dollop of steampunk flavour. The deft use of two narrators provides the reader with fascinating insights into the colony and its history. As the two protagonists learn to communicate, more devastating secrets are revealed. There are moral implications in this novel, but Bow never preaches, instead opting to paint his richly textured world in realistic shades of grey. There are no easy answers for Simon and Eliza, and redemption will not come without cost.

An enthralling read that incorporates weighty ideas such as genocide, environmentalism, truth and reconciliation, history and responsibility within a blockbuster of a story.

Tracey Schindler

**The Road to Ever After**
written by Moira Young
illustrations by Hannah George
Doubleday Canada, 2016
978-0-385-68743-0 (eBook) $11.99
978-0-385-68742-3 (hc) $21.99
for Grades 5 to 8

Fiction | Orphans | Adventure | Intergenerational Friendship | Hope

Davy David is a 13-year-old orphan who lives in the bushes in a small town ruled by a strict minister. One day, after chasing a ball for some of the town’s boys, he finds himself in the yard of an old boarded-up museum, supposedly also the home of a witch. The witch, an elderly woman named Elizabeth Flint, has planned a ball for some of the town’s boys, he finds himself in the yard of an old boarded-up museum, supposedly also the home of a witch. The witch, an elderly woman named Elizabeth Flint, has planned a ball for some of the town’s boys

Though Davy and the cantankerous Miss Flint make for unlikely companions, they form an extraordinary friendship over the course of their unusual and crazy journey. The language is rich

Tracey Schindler
and descriptive, and Young successfully conveys messages about the need to embrace the twists and turns that life throws at you, to believe that anything is possible and that not everything can or needs to be explained.

Described as *It’s a Wonderful Life* meets *Benjamin Button*, this magical tale is a perfect read aloud for Christmas or any time of year, offering a message of hope and wonder to young readers. Highly recommended for all ages.

Rachel Seigel is a Sales & Selection Strategist at EduCan Media.

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**The Ship to Nowhere:**

*On Board the Exodus (The Holocaust Remembrance Series for Young Readers)*

written by Rona Arato
Second Story Press, 2016
978-1-77260-018-6 (pb) $14.95
978-1-77260-019-3 (eBook) $12.99
for Grades 5 to 9

Historical Fiction | Jewish Refugees | Post World War II | Exodus

A homeland. A place to live in safety and dignity as Jewish citizens. That was what Rachel Landesman, her mother, her sister and 4,500 other Jewish refugees were searching for when they chose to board the *Exodus* on July 11, 1947. While World War II was over, the plight of Jewish refugees was ongoing. This moving book tells the story of 11-year-old Rachel and her family as they join other Jewish refugees making the historic voyage aboard the *Exodus*, bound for Palestine, *Eretz Yisroel* — the ancestral home of the Jewish people.

The voyage of the *Exodus* was fraught with uncertainty and almost insurmountable difficulties. The refugees showed remarkable tenacity even when faced with British prison ships, and being dragged back to France and then Germany. The ordeal of the *Exodus*’s passengers brought worldwide attention to the plight of Jewish refugees and influenced the UN to vote for the creation of a Jewish homeland within Palestine. Finally, just over a year after the *Exodus* first left port, the passengers could go home — to the newly created state of Israel.

Young readers will be pulled into Rachel’s story — her optimism in the face of so many setbacks and hardships is inspirational. Arato has written a compelling story that combines the best elements of fiction — strong characters and setting — within a user-friendly non-fiction format that includes short informative chapters, photographs, sidebars with short biographies and noteworthy facts.

This timely and thought-provoking book could be used to open a broader dialogue about the plight of refugees and how we, as a global community, treat those trying to escape war, violence and persecution. A very worthy addition to all library and school bookshelves.

Tracey Schindler

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**SECRET PATH**

Written by Gord Downie
Illustrated by Jeff Lemire
Simon & Schuster Canada, 2016
978-1-5011-5594-9 (pb) $26.99
978-1-5011-5596-3 (eBook) $13.99
for Grades 9 and up

Graphic Novel | Poetry | Chanie Wenjack | First Nations | Residential Schools | Sexual Abuse

Originating from Gord Downie’s album of the same name, *Secret Path* is a collaboration between Downie and graphic novelist Jeff Lemire that tells the story of Chanie Wenjack, a young First Nations boy who died trying to escape from the Cecelia Jeffrey Indian Residential school in 1966. The lyrics of Downie’s 10 songs, along with sections of graphic narrative, follow Chanie from the time he’s removed from his family, forced into the school, indoctrinated into
the Christian faith and subsequently sexually abused. Having had enough, Chanie takes advantage of the chaos of a schoolyard scuffle to escape. Following the railroad tracks, hoping to find his family home, Chanie recounts his experiences at the residential school, struggles through cold and harsh weather and eventually dies from exposure.

Secret Path is a powerful collaboration, combining Downie’s poems, which provide narrative framework with ideas and emotions, and Lemire’s comics, which flesh out and ground the story with events and visuals. Downie’s poems are stripped down, stark and repetitive, resembling traditional children’s songs or chants. Lemire’s use of heavy black lines and shades of grey and blue watercolours highlights the book’s tone of hopelessness and despair. Dynamic panel layouts enhance the atmosphere of the story, with multiple small panels inside large ones to illustrate the slow, excruciating passage of time during Chanie’s journey. The use of large full-page panels to either depict the scope of a scene or to highlight characters’ facial expressions simultaneously creates a distant and an intimate tone meant to confront the reader. Secret Path uses strong imagery throughout, including the central image of the Raven, a traditional First Nations figure known for clarifying and exposing truth, an essential theme when writing about the atrocities in Canada’s residential schools. As a mostly wordless graphic novel, this book is packed with meaning. Readers should take time to digest everything, yet they will still have a desire for further discussion.

Scott Robins is a Children’s Services Specialist at the Toronto Public Library and co-author of A Parent’s Guide to the Best Kids’ Comics.

Swan Riders
(Prisoners of Peace, Book 2)
written by Erin Bow
Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2016
978-1-4814-4274-9 (hc) $23.99
for Grades 9 and up
Fiction | Science Fiction | Dystopia | Artificial Intelligence | Bisexuality | Identity

The Swan Riders is an exciting sequel to The Scorpion Rules, winner of the 2016 Monica Hughes Award for Science Fiction and Fantasy. In this novel, we learn more about the sinister Swan Riders, Talis’s foot soldiers who kidnap — and occasionally kill — The Children of Peace. We also discover Talis’s backstory, of how a power hungry AI was once human.

Princess Greta does not follow the traditional princess-in-distress trope. After her tribulations in the first novel, she is now an AI. Her memory is overwritten with a copy of itself, which presents physical and emotional challenges. Greta is held hostage by an “insane AI” — as she calls Talis — a being who holds children hostage in the name of world peace. Greta wants to save her lover, her country and the world while dealing with internal pressures to stay sane as her mind and body slowly deteriorate.

Greta’s adventures in this dystopian vision of a ruined Canada explore themes of identity, self-sacrifice and what it means to be human. With a combination of logic and humanity, she learns to help her people by befriending her captors and outwitting a computer.

This book would be a great read for lovers of dystopian fiction or Canadian science fiction, and readers who want to see an LGBTQ protagonist in a position of power. It’s a great read for teens looking for a strong, bisexual heroine, or a blend of horror/science fiction in their dystopian reads.

Naomi Szeben is a Toronto-based writer and blogger.

Wonder Women: 25 Innovators, Inventors, and Trailblazers Who Changed History
written by Sam Maggs
illustrations by Sophia Foster-Dimino
Quirk Books, 2016
978-1-59474-926-1 (eBook) $21.99
for Grades 7 and up
Non-fiction | Feminist History | Fighting Oppression | Innovation | Courage

From the fields of science and medicine, espionage and adventure, to innovation — women have been changing the world since humankind began, often without credit. Using detailed biographies, mini biographies and in-depth interviews with present-day industry leaders, Wonder Women includes the stories of 60+ women who have shown the world they are just as capable as men are (sometimes even more capable).

Author Sam Maggs infuses the stories of her subjects with obvious enthusiasm and a healthy measure of wit and snark, creating a biased but realistic view of feminist history that is a joy to read. Highlighting obstacles of societal restrictions and family responsibilities, outright disbelief in women’s capabilities and men who passed off women’s ideas as their own, this rich collection features heartening tales of women pushing boundaries on a daily basis.

What is most impressive about this assortment of biographies is how comprehensive it is. While a distinct lack of disabled female role models is noticeable, it only stands out because women from almost every other walk of life are represented. Various racial backgrounds, economic situations, marital statuses, sexual preferences, gender identities, national identities — they’re all included.

Also included is the lone tale of the Canadian woman, Sarah Emma Edwards. Escaping an arranged marriage in New Brunswick, she fled to the United States, chopped off her hair, dressed as a man and became a soldier in the Union Army during the Civil War. When it was all over, she was the only woman to receive a military pension after showing up to a reunion of her infantry division dressed as a woman.

Empowering a new generation of girls by educating them about the different perspectives at your school have. You can celebrate diversity at your school by learning about the differences between people. Think about the differences between people. Think is about recognizing and celebrating the same despite their differences, diversity is important in a lot of different places. Diversity is a valuable thing! When everyone is free to create unique projects and learn about perspectives.

A person’s culture is often comes from the festivals they celebrate, the language and expressive aspects of who they are, where they grew up. A person’s culture is important to them, especially if they no longer live in the place they grew up. A person’s culture is a made up of the traditions and the beliefs that are important to them.

CRABTREE
Diversity is important in a lot of different places. Diversity is a valuable thing! When everyone is free to create unique projects and learn about perspectives.
This exciting series introduces and reinforces for readers some of the most important values in today’s world. Clear, simple language and expressive photographs help readers understand what it means to be part of a society. With emphasis on consideration and respect for others, children will learn to appreciate the cultural and spiritual diversity that life has to offer. The books are divided into three reading levels, so that readers can progress in their understanding of values as they increase in complexity beyond their own personal experiences.

LEVEL 1
Reading Level: Gr. K-1
Interest Level: Gr. K-3
24 pages | 10 x 10”
$18.36 RLB
$8.95 PAP

LEVEL 2
Reading Level: Gr. 2-3
Interest Level: Gr. 1-4
24 pages | 10 x 10”
$18.36 RLB
$8.95 PAP

LEVEL 3
Reading Level: Gr. 5-6
Interest Level: Gr. 5-9+
32 pages | 8 x 10”
$21.56 RLB
$9.95 PAP

Equality is about understanding when the differences between people aren’t important, such as when everyone deserves the same rights. Diversity is about understanding when and where these differences are important.

What is DIVERSITY?
Diversity means “a range of different things.” When thinking about different people, it’s important to recognize the importance of both diversity and equality. While equality is about treating everyone the same despite their differences, diversity is about recognizing and celebrating the differences between people. Think about the different cultures, backgrounds, languages, and traditions that the students at your school have. You can celebrate diversity at your school by learning about everyone’s differences. When diversity is celebrated in a place such as a school, everyone feels comfortable to share their perspectives. When everyone is free to share their thoughts and ideas, you can create unique projects and learn about something from many different viewpoints. Diversity is a valuable thing!

Diversity is important in a lot of different ways, but it is most commonly used to talk about the differences between people’s cultures. A person’s culture is made up of the customs and ideas that they believe and practice. It can involve things such as the food they eat, the festivals they celebrate, the language they speak, and the way that they act. A person’s culture often comes from the community, such as the country, city, or neighborhood, that they grew up in.

DIVERSITY IS ABOUT RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT CULTURES IN SOCIETY AND PROTECTING A PERSON’S RIGHT TO PRACTICE THEIR CULTURE.

Some Indigenous peoples celebrate their cultures with Powwows—festivals that showcase cultural art, dance, music, food, and more. This is a Powwow celebrated by the Squamish Nation in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.
We Recommend
NEW AND NOTED BOOKS FOR TODDLERS TO TEENS

**Animals Do, Too!**
How They Behave Just Like You
written by Etta Kaner
illustrated by Marilyn Faucher
Kids Can Press, 2017
978-1-77138-569-6 (hc) $17.95
for Preschool to Grade 2

*Non-fiction | Animals | Behaviour*

Etta Kaner’s *Animals Do, Too! How They Behave Just Like You* is a rich addition to the abundant genre of animal books for kids. Through a question-and-answer format, readers discover that animals, much like children, dance, play, blow bubbles, grow food and even have babysitters. These activities are critical survival skills for animals. “Do you like to dance?” asks the author. “Honeybees do, too!” The simple structure captures the attention of children, making it a fun and interactive read aloud. Teachers and parents will find helpful the short explanatory information that follows for introducing children to the behaviour of living things. For youngsters wishing to learn more, additional information about the habitats of and a surprising fact about each featured animal are included at the back.

Marilyn Faucher’s illustrations have a whimsical quality to them that will delight readers of all ages. Beautiful large spreads on the query pages celebrate everyday activities of children, such as birthday parties and playing tag. The reply pages contain large spreads of animals dancing, chasing and playing in their natural habitats. Children will enjoy pointing out and discussing details in the illustrations. They may even observe subtle hints about which creature will appear on the following page.

Heather Tekavec’s *Different? Same!* engages younger children and introduces them to animals and the characteristics of living things. Each spread focuses first on how the four animals pictured are different from one another, then asks readers to “look closer” and find a characteristic that all of the creatures share. The action-oriented language and simple format engage young readers. Teachers will find the additional information at the end useful, and students will enjoy the gameplay quality of this book.

**Away**
written by Emil Sher
illustrated by Qin Leng
Groundwood Books, 2017
978-1-55498-483-1 (hc) $18.95
for Kindergarten to Grade 2

*Picture Book | First Time Away From Home | Summer Camp | Family | Memories*

In this heartwarming story, messages on sticky notes are the mode of communication between a mother and Skip, her young daughter. Reluctant to leave home for the first time to go to an overnight camp, Skip receives lots of encouragement in written form. “You won’t be gone forever. Just two weeks,” writes her mother. “I told Eli I only need to borrow his sleeping bag for ONE night,” is Skip’s firm reply. Notes continue to be sent back and forth.

What to pack? Wouldn’t Lester, Skip’s beloved cat, miss her too much? When Skip’s grandmother Mimsy visits, she shares an old photograph of Skip’s mother, which was taken when she was off to her first overnight camp. “Mimsy showed me a picture of you. A nine-years-old you. A crying you. Holding a suitcase. And a fuzzy walrus.” “I remember that walrus,” responds Skip’s mother. “My tears didn’t last. My memories are as warm as biscuits.” Skip does set off for camp with the photograph in hand and, surprisingly, has a wonderful experience.

The thought of leaving home for the first time may produce anxiety-filled moments. Author Emil Sher adds just the right amount of empathy and humour to the messages, which will elicit smiles and, most likely, even a glimmer of recognition.

Qin Leng’s cheerful and animated watercolours depict the nuances and hurly-burly of family life, thus adding to the story where there are no words. Do keep an eye out for Lester, who manages to find himself in nearly every picture.

Senta Ross

Pippa Curnick’s playful illustrations, reminiscent of Maurice Sendak, will delight young and old alike. The more attentive readers will notice that one animal from the previous page is repeated on the next page, but illustrated in a slightly different way. Teachers will appreciate that care has been taken to ensure that each living thing is illustrated in its natural habitat. This book is meant to be shared with preschool- and kindergarten-aged children and would work well as a read aloud shared with a small group.

Both books are wonderful resources to introduce young children to the world of animals and would make excellent additions to preschools or primary classroom libraries.

Krista Jorgensen is a former public librarian currently residing in Richmond Hill, Ontario.
My Beautiful Birds
written and illustrated by Suzanne Del Rizzo
Pajama Press, 2017
978-1-77278-010-9 (hc) $19.95
for Kindergarten to Grade 4

Picture Book | Family | Refugee | Moving On

Every year, more and more families find themselves forced to flee their homes and relocate. Recently, this has become more relevant than ever with the war in Syria displacing hundreds of thousands of families to nearby countries and refugee camps. My Beautiful Birds tells the story of a family escaping Syria from the perspective of a little boy named Sami. Through his anxiety and confusion, Sami’s thoughts remain focused on the pet pigeons he left behind, and whether or not they were also able to escape. Slowly, he becomes familiar with his new home and routines, and learns to move on from the loss of his most cherished pets.

This is a wonderful story for all children, as learning about the growing-up experiences of others is always helpful. The book would be especially useful, however, for children who are going through major life changes themselves. It contains not only lessons on relocation and moving, but also on making new friends, acclimatizing to new environments, moving on from the past, and much more!

Suzanne Del Rizzo weaves the story together beautifully with the help of her own illustrations done in a variety of mediums, including clay and Plasticine. The images are multi-dimensional and seem to almost jump off the page. They are extremely captivating and add even more depth to the already engaging story that accompanies them. In addition to all of its many amazing aspects, My Beautiful Birds is a stunning tool to teach children about what goes on in the world outside their own backyards.

Trista Rakochy is an English Rhetoric student at Laurentian University.

The Boy & the Bindi
written by Vivek Shraya
illustrated by Rajni Perera
Arsenal Pulp Press, 2016
978-1-55152-668-3 (hc) $17.95
for Kindergarten to Grade 2

Picture Book | Hindu Traditions | Self-Esteem

The Boy & the Bindi, written by Vivek Shraya, tells the rhyming tale of a young boy who, fascinated by the dot on his mother’s forehead, asks her to explain its significance. When she tells him, “My bindi keeps me safe and true,” he asks her if he can wear one, too — and she happily agrees. The boy wears his bindi proudly from then on, and shows no fear of judgment from his inquisitive classmates as he describes what the bindi means to him: “Making sure I don’t hide / Everything I am inside / And everything that I can be.”

The Boy & the Bindi is a lovely introduction to this aspect of Hindu culture. The boy explains the bindi’s significance with great depth of meaning, and the characters’ disregard of gender norms and their embracing of differences add greatly to the story’s value. It is worth noting that the book does not provide additional...
Young Chris dreamt of becoming an astronaut. His adventure-filled days were spent exploring the universe in his handcrafted cardboard rocket while valiantly and dutifully protecting the planet filled days were spent exploring the universe in his handcrafted cardboard rocket while valiantly and dutifully protecting the planet. As a story, however, it is beautifully told, and the bright and colourful hand-painted illustrations by Rajni Perera complement the text perfectly. The Boy & the Bindi would be a great addition to a classroom bookshelf or home library.

Camilia Kahrizi is the CCBC’s Marketing and Website Coordinator.

**The Cranky Ballerina**
written and illustrated by Elise Gravel
Katherine Tegen Books, 2016
978-0-06-235124-1 (hc) $21.99
for Kindergarten to Grade 2

*Picture Book | Performing Arts | Dance | Humour | Emotions | Feelings*

“Arabesques are grotesque.”

Every Saturday morning, Ada wakes up cranky because she has to go to ballet class, and she HATES ballet. She isn’t interested in practising, even with the encouragement of a patient teacher and her little stuffed sidekick. After one more enthusiastic attempt, Ada careens out of her class and crashes into something that is a better fit.

Gravel gives Ada the voice to dislike something with great ferocity, which is quite empowering, not only to younger readers, but for all who interact with this text. Frequently, protagonists are torn as they attempt to make everyone happy or to find the positive in their situation, but not Ada. She is outspoken and owns her feelings. Young children who are still seeking out their niche and finding what interests them in the world will be delighted by the way the book challenges gender stereotypes while still maintaining a humorous lilt.

White spaces in the illustrations help the characters to pop off the page; the illusion is given of its being a self-portrait drawn by the reader. In addition, speech bubbles complement the story and give a sense of ownership to the voice of the narrator. Gravel’s ability to tell the story in Ada’s own voice sends a powerful message to young readers, especially girls, that it is okay to give voice to your feelings. Overall, this story is great fun and embraces the spirit of following your gut, or pirouette in this case.

Ashley Pamenter writes programming for Girl Guides of Canada — Guides du Canada and is a former elementary teacher in Toronto, Ontario.

**Happy Dreamer**
written and illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds
Orchard Books, 2017
978-0-545-86501-2 (hc) $21.99
for Preschool to Grade 3

*Picture Book | Children | Inspiration | Creativity | Emotions*

Happy Dreamer is a celebration of creativity, uniqueness and optimism in a world that, even for children, doesn’t always prioritize those things.

While Reynolds’ well-known books, *The Dot* and *Ish*, also embrace the creative self, this title is less of a story and instead speaks directly to the reader. “What kind of dreamer are you?” it asks, acknowledging the many types of dreams and dreaming that can provide a happy place for young people.

What grounds Happy Dreamer from becoming too abstract is its relatable narrator, who explains that he’s often told to “sit still, be quiet, pay attention [and] focus.” At one point, he cleans his room, only to feel less present in it without his things surrounding him. He moves on, encouraging readers to do the same in such situations. *Happy Dreamer* blends the realism of Nancy Carlson’s *This Morning Sam Went to Mars* with the lyrical and whimsical qualities of Dallas Clayton’s *An Awesome Book* (to which it is more similar, though more accessible). One wide fold-out section gives kids four pages of dreamers to choose to identify with, or not.

The pictures are soft and colourful, in line with Reynolds’ previous work and well-suited to the themes of dreaming and creative
thinking. The book talks about emotions, but avoids the heaviness that often accompanies the topic. *Happy Dreamer* will be a fun read for younger children and more concrete to those in their early school years, those more likely to struggle, balancing being well-behaved with dreaming big.

Tara-Michelle Ziniuk is a writer and editor based in Toronto.

*Hat On, Hat Off*
written by Theo Heras
illustrated by Renné Benoit
Pajama Press, 2016
978-1-927485-34-7 (hc) $15.95
for Toddler to Preschool

*A toddler’s big sister tries to get him ready to go out, but there are so many hats to choose from. And so many things to remember. Shoes? Sippy cup? Pail and shovel? Potty? And just when we think we’re all set and ready to go, we find that someone very important is missing… Bunny. Trying to leave the house with a toddler is always an adventure. And the thing about hats is that sometimes when you think they’re on, they’re actually off!*

Theo Heras uses spare and simple language to tell a story that toddlers and preschoolers (and certainly their parents and caregivers) are sure to recognize. Renné Benoit’s soft illustrations bring the antics to life. From the assortment of fun and funky hats piled up in a basket to the facial expressions of the toddler in question, Benoit demonstrates an eye for the details that matter.

Is the hat on? Or is the hat off? And which hat is it? This book has a potential interactive quality that little ones are sure to enjoy.

Ildiko Sumegi is a reviewer from Ottawa and the mother of two young readers.

*How Do You Feel?*
written and illustrated by Rebecca Bender
Pajama Press, 2016
978-1-77278-013-0 (hc) $16.95
for Toddler to Preschool

*A little hedgehog sets off on a voyage of sensory discovery in the picture book, *How Do You Feel*, by Rebecca Bender. Along the way, the hedgehog meets a variety of other animals who describe how they feel, not only with a simple adjective like smooth, fluffy or silky, but with rich imagery that fills all the senses. Once the hedgehog has explored a variety of textures, the question is posed back to it and the story twists to look at the other meaning of “How do you feel?”

When an animal announces its texture, the illustration matches with a physical description to help build the imagined experience of the reader. For instance, when the toad is described as feeling “bumpy like the trunk of a gnarly tree,” the reader is shown the hedgehog rubbing its little paws along the root of such a tree. Through an elegant simplicity, the author is able to use richer language, which becomes accessible to even the youngest of readers.

This is a lovely story for young children, as it explores the complexities of the world in a simple format. Few will have experienced physically touching all the varieties of animals in the story, and Bender creates an opportunity for children to use the natural world around them to build richer experiences to add to their imaginary worlds.

Ashley Parmenter

*Hungry Bird*
written and illustrated by Jeremy Tankard
Scholastic Press, 2016
978-0-545-86417-6 (hc) $19.99
978-1-338-09560-9 (eBook) $19.99
for Preschool to Grade 1

*Bird, also in Tankard’s *Grumpy Bird* and *Boo Hoo Bird* books, is out walking with his animal friends when hunger strikes. He has not brought snacks for himself, but refuses the snacks (which range from sticks to sandwiches) his friends offer, deeming them disgusting. Eventually, he has a meltdown and must make a choice.*

With gentle humour, *Hungry Bird* succeeds in capturing the passionately irrational way young children are known to behave in this sort of situation. Bird’s friends are patient, even as he declares, from the ground, that he may die of starvation, and are kind when he finally comes around.

This book is easy to make animated as a read aloud, with Bird’s emphatic ways — kids are likely to want to join in as he yells “yuck” and “gross!” Tankard’s art is consistent with his previous books — bold, bright and busy, with a cut-and-paste quality to it. The digital component of Tankard’s work makes it easy to imagine as a cartoon or video game, which may draw attention from kids less likely to veer toward cutesy depictions of animals.

While recommended for younger children, *Hungry Bird* could also work as an early reader, given its bold lettering and relatively short text (there are exceptions, but most pages have two to five lines). The story structure — Bird asking a friend for food, the friend making an offer, Bird declining — also works well for new readers. A recommended read for anyone who is, has or knows a kid that gets “hangry.”

Tara-Michelle Ziniuk
King Baby
written and illustrated by Kate Beaton
978-0-545-63754-1 (hc) $22.99
978-0-545-63755-8 (eBook) $22.99
for Preschool to Grade 1

King Baby, written and illustrated by Kate Beaton, follows the journey of a little baby who knows he’s the king of his castle. He has visitors who bestow gifts upon him, whom he blesses in turn, “You will have smiles and laughs and kisses” and parents who respond to his every wish, “FEED ME! BURP ME!”.

As he learns to walk and talk, and finally become a big boy, he will develop other skills to impress and enthral his audiences, “It is good to be the king,” says King Baby. It all goes very well for him, until his parents announce that someone else is coming along to dethrone him — Queen Baby!

King Baby is a worthy follow-up to Beaton’s excellent first picture book, The Princess and the Pony. The story feels fresh; the text is simple but effective and witty. King Baby is illustrated in Beaton’s funny, memorable style, which will feel warmly familiar to fans of her work. The visual of the chubby baby, swaddled into the shape of an egg, with a look of superiority on his face as he orders his subjects around, is as funny as it gets. King Baby will be a fun read for both children and their parents, who will find discussion points in the true-to-life childhood behaviours depicted in the story.

Camilia Kahrizi

The Wish Tree
written by Kyo Maclear
illustrated by Chris Turnham
Chronicle Books, 2016
978-1-4521-5065-9 (hc) $23.99
for Preschool to Kindergarten

The Wish Tree is set in a small farming community on the island of Sri Lanka. Today is the day that Malini will learn how to plant the rice. The rice crop is of particular importance to the community, and Malini worries that she may not be up to the task. But before any planting can be done, a sudden storm resulting in a flash flood finds Malini all alone, holding the reins of an enormous ox harnessed to a cart full of rice seedlings. Cut off from adult assistance, Malini musters her courage to bring the ox and precious seedlings to safety. A page at the back of the book provides some background on the subject of Sri Lanka and its people.

Alma Fullerton tells the tale in free verse. She successfully conjures up the sights and especially the sounds of a day in Sri Lanka — the song of the bullock-cart driver, the clop of the ox, the pounding of rain and the cracking of thunder. Kim La Fave’s illustrations magically transform a bedsheet into a flock of birds. He convincingly whips up the wind and slashes rain across the page to convey the frightening immediacy of a flash flood.

Young readers will identify with Malini’s trepidation in facing her new task, and they will cheer for her as she overcomes her own fear to save the day. When the Rain Comes is an engaging story in its own right but could also be used in a classroom setting to spark interest in Sri Lanka, its people, culture, geography and climate.

Ildiko Sumegi

When the Rain Comes
written by Alma Fullerton
illustrated by Kim La Fave
Pajama Press, 2016
978-1-77278-012-3 (hc) $19.95
for Kindergarten to Grade 2

When the Rain Comes is set in a small farming community on the island of Sri Lanka. Today is the day that Malini will learn how to plant the rice. The rice crop is of particular importance to the community, and Malini worries that she may not be up to the task. But before any planting can be done, a sudden storm resulting in a flash flood finds Malini all alone, holding the reins of an enormous ox harnessed to a cart full of rice seedlings. Cut off from adult assistance, Malini musters her courage to bring the ox and precious seedlings to safety. A page at the back of the book provides some background on the subject of Sri Lanka and its people.

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Ildiko Sumegi
Belgian nurse Manon Wouters leaves her hometown as the first wave of World War I begins. Trained as a spy in London, she uses her medical training as a cover to glean information from injured enemy soldiers. She is sent back to Damme to uncover rumours of giant airplanes and underwater boats that would change the nature of warfare. Once home, Manon learns that her home has changed politically as well as physically: the Flemish Movement divides the people, and the countryside and its waterways are turned into barricades for soldiers and docks for U-boats. Her home is similarly divided. Her brother supports the Germans, while Manon is motivated to avenge the death of their father at the hands of German soldiers.

Manon Wouter’s first-hand account of the Great War would be suitable for both girls and boys. The occasional mention of a past love interest for Manon serves to show her concern for the well-being of her Canadian “tunneler” boyfriend, which spurs her to fight for the safety of those she loves. Wilson uses themes like family conflict and revenge to create a believable heroine. The addition of archival photographs brings detail and life to the past. Teachers will like the addition of a glossary to help them teach the history behind now-antiquated terms like ‘Gotha’ and ‘Boche.’ This could be a great tie-in for the 100th anniversary of the Armistice, as well as a good book for those studying themes like nationalism and world wars.

Naomi Szeben is a Toronto-based writer and blogger.
of people.” But all the girls must do is participate in a few dares, and someone could win some serious cash. The rules of the game are simple: Complete the dare and move to the next round. Fail and be eliminated. Tell anyone or cheat and be punished. Refuse to play and we think you know what will happen!

Each dare requires Hope and the other girls to face their worst fears, becoming ever more frightening, with the final dare alerting Hope to a more sinister plot. There is more to The Society than any of the girls originally thought!

Michelle Krys introduces us to an eclectic cast of characters that teenagers will easily relate to. In Hope, she has developed a character for whom readers will feel empathy and understand her desire to ignore her illness and experience a bit of adventure. Krys has crafted a fast-paced, thrilling suspense story with a dash of romance that will keep readers absorbed and reading late into the night.

Sandra O’Brien

**Eyes & Spies: How You’re Tracked and Why You Should Know**
written by Tanya Lloyd Kyi
illustrated by Belle Wuthrich
Annick Press, 2017
978-1-55451-911-8 (hc) $22.95
978-1-55451-910-1 (pb) $14.95
for Grades 5 to 8

**Non-fiction | Electronic Surveillance | Privacy**

Whether we are aware of it or not, we are watched and monitored every day. This comprehensive title covers data collection in different environments: school, home, the street, the Web, shopping and by government agencies. Each segment describes who monitors us, how it’s done and why individuals, companies and other organizations find it useful. Although the advantages of increased security are stressed, the reader is also alerted to areas that might be construed as an invasion of privacy, even to ‘creepy’ extremes. Suggestions throughout encourage readers to be proactive and aware of surveillance in their own lives.

This is a current, thorough examination of the complex issues around electronic scrutiny, using examples from many countries, including Canada. It touches on such diverse issues as cyberbullying, baby monitors, biometrics, Edward Snowden, the Arab spring and much more. There is a plethora of material, but a readable, logical text and a careful, imaginative layout keep the information clear and manageable. Repetitive devices such as ‘Action Alerts,’ ‘Security Says v Privacy Says’ and ‘Creepy Line’ sidebars, the use of humorous cartoons and the unifying colours of orange, black and green, engage the reader. An introduction, conclusion, bibliography, source list and index add to its usefulness.

Aileen Wortley

**Finding Jade**
(Daughters of Light)
written by Mary Jennifer Payne
Dundurn, 2017
978-1-49373-300-2 (hb) $12.99
978-1-49373-302-6 (eBook) $8.99
for Grades 7 to 12

**Fiction | Fantasy | Dystopia | Environment | Family**

I really enjoyed this novel. It was nicely paced, and the teenage main characters were relatable and honest. The story takes place in Toronto in 2030, at a time when the world is in crisis as a result of extreme climate change, and we meet Jasmine — a twin, who lost her sister to an unsolved abduction four years ago. She also has a mother who is very ill. Just beginning high school, at a time when so many are struggling to find themselves, she’s about to find out what she never expected and be thrown into action.

This is a great sister story set in a dystopian time with dashes of historical fiction; I really enjoyed where I was taken. Accessible language and a clear plot make this a great book for older teens whose first language is not English, reluctant readers and younger teen readers. The subject matter would also be appealing to teachers wanting to open a dialogue on the future of our environment.

A touch of forbidden romance, a few Alice in Wonderland references and a twist of heavenly proportions have left me glad that this is the first of what will be a series.

Erin Crittani is the Education Manager at Mabel’s Fables Bookstore in Toronto.

**Hand in Hand**
written by Jean Little
illustrations by Norman Lanting
Scholastic Canada, 2016
978-1-4431-4693-7 (eBook) $6.99
978-1-4431-3923-6 (pb) $6.99
for Grades 3 to 6

**Fiction | Martha Washington | Helen Keller | Friendship | Overcoming Challenges**

Martha Washington lives with her mother on the Keller plantation. While her mother cooks for the Keller family, Martha finds herself often helping out with their young daughter. Helen, a precocious, busy child even after the terrible fever that took her sight and hearing, must be watched at all times, and Martha is often singled out for companionship duties.

Being a friend and playmate to Helen is not easy, and Martha often resents the task. Helen is willful and bossy. She has no sense of right and wrong because her parents refuse to discipline her, instead allowing her to run wild and simply suffering through her tantrums. Martha must endure being hit, pinched and even having her hair cut off by Helen. Despite these insults, Martha continues to try and help Helen be part of the world. She brings Helen to hold new kittens, gives her feathers and flowers to feel. She learns to see through Helen’s belligerence, knowing how hard Helen struggles to make sense of her world. She forgives Helen’s misbehaviour and celebrates small moments when Helen reaches out in friendship.

In this lovely middle school novel, Jean Little has gathered details about Martha from Helen Keller’s book, The Story of My Life, in
order to imagine the possibility of Helen’s only friendship before she was given the gift of words by Annie Sullivan. The texture and tone of Helen and Martha’s unique friendship is vividly rendered with tenderness and authenticity. Little clearly portrays how difficult life was for Helen, who had no language, and for Martha, who often suffered at Helen’s hands. Young readers will appreciate the hurdles the two girls had to overcome to become friends.

A wonderful story of friendship, tenacity and overcoming challenges, this is an engaging introduction to the story of Helen Keller.

Tracey Schindler

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**The Lotterys Plus One**

written by Emma Donoghue
illustrations by Caroline Hadilaksono
HarperCollins Publishers, 2017
978-1-44344-557-3 (hc) $19.99
978-1-44344-559-7 (eBook) $11.99
for Grades 4 to 6

Fiction | Diversity | Family | Intergenerational Relationships | Dementia | Acceptance

With seven siblings, four parents and an eclectic assortment of pets all living under one roof, Camelottery is a home always bustling with love and chaos. When PopCorn’s father accidentally sets fire to his place and needs somewhere to stay, the Lotterys must find a way to take him into a house that’s already full to bursting. Nine-year-old Sumac takes the hardest hit when Grumps moves in, having to give up her beloved bedroom for a man whose nickname reflects his attitude. Deciding her family would be better off without him, Sumac starts plotting ways to make Grumps want to leave on his own.

Donoghue packs diversity into every square inch of her story — pushing the boundaries of believability in the process — but what emerges is a message about accepting those who are different from us and caring for family no matter what. Young readers will enjoy the circus-like aspects of such a large family, the particular quirks of each character and the unique parenting styles and approaches the Lotterys use to handle their brood.

Through Sumac’s young perspective, harsher issues of racism, homophobia and dementia are eased as she only views Grumps as disrupting the natural flow of her family. In the process of trying to restore her family’s equilibrium, Sumac learns to consider different perspectives and put the good of others before her own. In the end, while the Lotterys are changed by Grumps’ presence, there always seems to be enough love to go around.

Amy Mathers
**Making Canada Home: How Immigrants Shaped This Country**
written by Susan Hughes
Owlkids Books, 2016
978-1-77147-202-9 (hc) $24.95
for Grades 5 to 8

*Non-fiction | Canada | Canadian Immigration | Canadian History*

Making Canada Home illuminates the often harsh realities surrounding immigration to this country. Starting with Canada’s first Aboriginal inhabitants thousands of years ago, the book launches into the initial impact of European explorers and fur traders on the First Nations people who lived here.

This non-fiction work continues to examine the political, religious, economic and cultural circumstances that drove many groups of immigrants, over several eras, to Canada. It also recounts the obstacles faced upon arrival.

The book contains many captivating images for young readers aged 10 to 13. From Canada’s early immigrants to modern-day Syrian refugees, paintings and photographs illustrate the centuries-old immigration experience in full-colour.

Historic maps, wartime posters, poignant testimonials and documents belonging to slaves and orphaned children comprise some of the imagery that reinforces the reality of Canada’s immigration history. Inclusion of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canada’s varying immigration laws, a timeline of Canadian immigration and world events and additional educational resources provide further context.

The book unflinchingly reveals several dark chapters in Canada’s past, ranging from abuse in residential schools to implementation of head taxes to refusal of immigrant ships. With over 30 fiction and non-fiction children’s books to her name, including *Incredible and Unusual Schools around the World*, Susan Hughes serves up provocative text that is sure to stimulate discussion about cultural perceptions and prejudices.

From the establishment of Chinatowns in major cities to the Ukrainian settlers in the West, from the *filles du roi* to World War II war brides and many more, *Making Canada Home* celebrates the diversity of our nation’s builders and their enduring impact.

As we mark Canada’s 150th birthday, *Making Canada Home* pulls no punches as it takes readers on a vivid and informed journey about our country and its values.

Marylynn Miller Oke

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**A Month of Mondays**
written by Joëlle Anthony
Second Story Press, 2017
978-1-77260-026-1 (pb) $10.95
for Grades 4 to 8

*Fiction | Siblings | Family | Relationships | Humour*

When Suze Tamaki was only three, she and her older sister, Tracie, signed a pact: If Caroline, the mother who abandoned them, ever returned to Victoria from Vancouver, they’d never speak to her. However, when Caroline returns unexpectedly after a decade, Suze feels conflicted. She quickly realizes that never is a long time.

A plucky and rebellious bookworm, Suze is the protagonist at the centre of *A Month of Mondays*, novelist and playwright Joëlle Anthony’s quick-witted novel that explores fractured familial relationships through humour and, at times, adventure. In the wake of Caroline’s return, Suze seeks a distraction, springing into action in an attempt to save her school janitor’s job. “This was exactly what I needed right now to take my mind off Caroline,” she says. “A cause. Someone else’s fight.”

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**MiNRS2 (MiNRS, Book 2)**
written by Kevin Sylvester
Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2016
978-1-4814-4042-4 (hc) $22.99
978-1-4814-4044-8 (eBook) $11.99
for Grades 6 to 8

*Fiction | Science Fiction | Adventure | Grief | Space | Survival*

“They are coming to get you. Hide. Hide. Hide.” Following this ominous warning at the end of *MiNRS*, Christopher, Elena and their group are on edge, waiting for the next threat to face them on Peres. When Major Kirk Thatcher arrives on the planet, his intention to leave no rebels alive is clear, despite the fact they are children. As the kids get information from an Oracle, they realize it is up to them to stop Thatcher from spreading lies about the Peres attack to the people of Earth. As the only ones who know the truth, it is up to them to fight.

Part action-adventure story and part psychological thriller for kids, *MiNRS2* considers the cost of war and the ability of innocents to become soldiers. While the group now has a formidable enemy to fight against, they also have to deal with conflicts of leadership, the mistrust of the Grinders, questionable motives and the sometimes fatal consequences of their actions.

The result is a page-turning and thoughtful read as Sylvester uses Christopher’s introverted nature to reflect on the terrible choices he and the others are faced with in their battle against Thatcher. Darcy, the six-year-old in their care, serves as the canary in the coal mine, letting the others know when things have gone too far, but also giving them hope and someone to fight for.

The master of the cliffhanger, Sylvester is kinder to his readers this time, leaving them with the promise of a new adventure in the upcoming *MiNRS3*.

Amy Mathers
At over 300 pages, *A Month of Mondays* is a hearty work of juvenile fiction, but Anthony’s ability to create natural, funny dialogue makes it a fast, engaging read. Through carefully crafted main characters with great depth, Anthony also makes the most complex and flawed characters likeable and relatable. However, at times, the many additional characters introduced to readers — Suze’s friends, staff at her school — can be cumbersome.

*A Month of Mondays* is, above all, a novel about relationships between parents, friends and extended families, but it’s the relationship between Suze and Tracie that makes it most memorable. Despite silent treatments and hurling insults, the pair share an underlying tone of solidarity, which at times is tested. Their relationship will surely resonate with any reader with a sibling.

Jessica Rose

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**Optimists Die First**
written by Susin Nielsen
Tundra Books, 2017
978-1-77049-782-5 (hc) $21.99
978-1-77049-784-9 (eBook) $11.99
for Grades 7 to 10

**Fiction | Grief | Healing | Forgiveness | Art Therapy | Family | Friendships | Humour**

The world is a dangerous place, and Petula De Wilde is determined to take every possible precaution against it. Since the tragic death of her three-year-old sister, Petula has become obsessed with the perils lurking around every corner. But when a new boy joins her weekly art therapy class, things begin to change. Jacob draws this ragtag group of misfits together, helping each of them to face their own demons. And as he and Petula become friends and then more than friends, he even manages to help her begin to open up to the world again. Then the truth about Jacob’s past is revealed, and Petula must find her own strength and the courage to trust and to forgive.

Susin Nielsen once more brings readers a story that is infused with light-hearted humour, even as it touches on numerous weighty issues. She skilfully covers a lot of ground, injecting moments of levity without making light of any of the characters’ fears or feelings. Petula’s anxiety and guilt following her sister’s death are believable, and Nielsen’s depiction of the entire family’s struggle to move forward is equally authentic. The quirky individuals from her art therapy class are surprised to discover that they have actually become friends, but that bond is also touching and true to life. Petula’s gradual journey toward healing involves seeking forgiveness from people whom she has hurt, accepting that she can’t make everything better for her parents, opening herself up to friendship and love and summoning both the compassion and courage to forgive someone who has hurt her. These are life lessons that every teen will relate to in their own way as they savour this ultimately hopeful tale.

Lisa Doucet

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**Stormy Seas: Stories of Young Boat Refugees**
written by Mary Beth Leatherdale
illustrated by Eleanor Shakespeare
Annick Press, 2017
978-1-55451-895-1 (pb) $14.95
978-1-55451-896-8 (hc) $24.95
for Grades 5 to 9

**Non-fiction | Refugees | Boat Refugees**

Despite topical headlines, boat refugees have existed for centuries. Through the eyes of five young people from Germany, Saigon, Cuba, Afghanistan and Libya respectively, we learn of heart-rending circumstances under which they fled their homes. Their stories represent those of millions seeking asylum by sea, many who never return home. They describe the terror and obstacles experienced in their own words, and we learn what has become of them. These narratives pertain to exoduses since World War II, but a brief history of boat refugees from 1670 is also included.

More than half of all asylum seekers are children, often orphans travelling alone, and the focus on their experiences will resonate with readers of similar ages. The inclusion of conditions prevailing in their homelands through persecution, war or disaster, gives a global context as well as a personal story, creating historical and political awareness. The introduction provides background and
raises questions regarding societal involvement. There are brief references to those seeking refuge in Canada as well as to the current Syrian refugee crisis.

With various information styles, including first- and third-person narratives, the book reads engagingly. The layout, comprised of a range of fonts, quotes, sidebars, definitions and a photo montage of illustrated elements complementing the text, adds to the reader’s involvement. Colours are brooding and sombre, in keeping with the darkness of the subject matter.

This glimpse into the lives of oppressed people seeking freedom provides insight into historical and current events and is a discussion starter on many levels both in and out of classrooms.

Rachel Seigel

And Then the Sky Exploded
written by David A. Poulsen
Dundurn Press, 2016
978-1-45973-637-5 (pb) $12.99
978-1-45973-639-9 (eBook) $8.99
for Grades 6 to 9
Fiction | The Manhattan Project | World War II | Japan | Hiroshima | Redemption

While attending his great grandfather’s funeral, 9th grader Christian Larken learns that he was part of the Manhattan Project — the team that designed the bombs dropped on Japan during World War II. Wanting to understand more about his grandfather’s role in the project, he orchestrates a class trip to Japan. There, he meets 81-year-old Yuko, who was only 11 when the first bomb exploded and severely injured her. Christian is desperate to do something to make up for what his grandfather did, but after all this time, can a single teenager do?

Christian first hears of the Manhattan Project when protesters at his great grandfather’s funeral call him a killer, and Christian has no idea what to think. His parents are dodging his questions, and the idea that his beloved grandpa Will might have helped cause the deaths of innocent people is devastating. Alternating with Christian’s story are the flashbacks of an 11-year-old girl named Yuko, who was horribly injured when the first bomb fell on Hiroshima. It’s in her chapters that readers truly gain an understanding of the horrors and impact of war. Yuko’s life as she knew it was shattered when her father announces her betrothal to a man she will never love. She flees her home in a fit of grief and rage, and that is when her troubles truly begin. She soon finds herself abducted by slave traders who bring her to the last place she ever wanted to be: Rome. There she is sold to a school for gladiatrices, a school that belongs to Julius Caesar himself. Secrets and lies, cruelty and betrayal abound as she tries to find her way and face her future. But to her surprise, love and loyalty, honour and sacrifice are also to be found. As she discovers that things are not always as they seem and oftentimes there are no easy answers.

Livingston’s latest novel creates a vivid portrait of the Roman empire: the bone-chilling brutality, the awe-inspiring achievements and the cunning political machinations that enabled Caesar to achieve such mythic status. Set against the backdrop of a gladiator school for girls, this is also a tale of fierce friendships and self-discovery that depicts the bond that forms between the girls along with the jealousies and bitter rivalries that develop. A complex family drama, and a story of unexpected alliances, this tale also explores the depths of cruelty that humanity is capable of and raises questions about the nature of honour and courage in the face of all these things.

Lisa Doucet

When They Fade
written by Jeyn Roberts
Alfred A. Knopf, 2016
978-0-385-75413-2 (hc) $23.99
978-0-38575-415-6 (eBook) $12.99
for Grades 9 and up
Fiction | Suspense | Ghosts | Bullying | Murder

After reporting her best friend, Claudette’s, troubling affair with a married teacher, Tatum is painted as a liar and a rat, and the school turns against her. Tatum assumes that they’ll eventually grow bored with bullying her and move on, but their pranks grow increasingly malicious, making no place feel safe anymore. Molly, also a teen, was brutally murdered 40 years ago, and now haunts the road and field where she was killed, hitchhiking and sharing premonitions with those who pick her up. When the girls meet on the highway, their stories converge, and it turns out that Tatum isn’t the only one in need of saving.

Molly is stuck in limbo, living in a kind of purgatory on a stagnant island where she and its other inhabitants wait to fade into existence for brief hauntings. It’s a lonely, hopeless existence, yet
they are helpless to do anything else. When Molly meets Tatum, she feels an unusual connection to the girl and is determined to find a way to help her survive. Tatum, who largely discounts how much danger she’s in, makes it her mission to figure out what’s keeping Molly from crossing over, and to help free her.

Told through interwoven narratives and in alternating points of view (Tatum in the third person, Molly in the first), Roberts creates compelling characters who have both suffered trauma at the hands of people they trusted. Their suffering is brutal and heartbreaking, and as the tension builds, so does an increasing sense of dread over both of their fates. As the girls struggle to help each other, they also find a way to change the worlds they live in and make things better.

While the ending felt a bit too tidy for the level of danger that each girl was in, this was a suspenseful, compelling story that will appeal to fans of *Lovely Bones*.

Rachel Seigel

**Correction**

In our Winter 2016 issue we mistakenly displayed the cover for the first edition of *The Great Number Rumble: A Story of Math in Surprising Places* by Cora Lee and Gillian O’Reilly. This is the new cover designed by Lil Crump, the illustrator for the revised edition.

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