First Nation Communities READ & Periodical Marketers of Canada CONGRATULATE

Julie Flett
Author / Illustrator of the 2014 – 2015 First Nation Communities READ title selection
Wild Berries / Pakwa che Menisu published by Simply Read Books and first recipient of the Aboriginal Literature Award sponsored by Periodical Marketers of Canada

First Nation Communities READ
Your Go-to Resource for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Reading Recommended by First Nation Librarians

www.sols.org/firstnationcommunitiesread
Opinion: Reading Across the Country, Reading Across the Centuries
Amy Mathers reflects on her marathon of reading and book reviewing.

News Roundup
Clark and Walters named to Order of Canada; New Governor General’s Literary Awards; Second Story Press announces Aboriginal Writing Contest; More excitement for Eric Walters and Walking Home; The Ghosts of Baccalieu, a community bookmaking project; La courte échelle escapes bankruptcy; Chirp teams with Kids’ CBC TV.

Seen at …
A photographic look at book events

Keep Your Eye On … Jennifer Dance

Profile: Always a Writer
Tanya Lloyd Kyi’s path from sappy poetry to punchy non-fiction and more

Let Books Be Books: A Canadian Conversation
An author, an editor and a marketer share their thoughts on the international discussion on gender stereotyping in books.

Meet Julie Flett, Book Week Illustrator
A chat with Cree-Métis author and illustrator Julie Flett, creator of Wild Berries, the 2014 First Nation Communities READ selection.

Try This Quiz!
Test yourself on 12 questions (and one bonus question) about French Québecois children’s literature.

Bookmark! World Religions and Traditions

The Classroom Bookshelf
Pioneering Women, Brave Girls and Young Heroes

Book Bits: Chewables!
Board books for the very young.

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

Index of Reviews

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MEDIUM: Watercolour, ink and gouache.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR: Award-winning artist Kady MacDonald Denton is the illustrator of over 40 books for children, including five books in the the Bear and Mouse series. Among other honours, she has been the recipient of the Governor General’s Literary Award (Illustration), the Elizabeth Mrazik-Cleaver Canadian Picture Book Award (twice) and the Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator’s Award.

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The Beauty of Board Books
Poetry reflected in art for the youngest of readers

By Susan Musgrave
Illustrations by Esperança Melo

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CCBC Best Books

Love You More
Susan Musgrave

9781459802483 • $9.95 BB
BC Books for Babies winner
CLA Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Award nominee
CCBC Best Books
“A lyrical ode to a newborn child.”
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Coming March 2015!

By Richard Van Camp
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ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS
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A recent article in *The Atlantic* magazine stated that gender stereotyping is worse in the toy industry than it was 50 years ago — so the rise of the “Let Toys Be Toys” campaign is no surprise. Growing out of that movement was “Let Books Be Books” — a conversation that has continued throughout 2014. In this issue, Rachel Seigel talks with a writer, an editor and a marketer about the reality in Canada today.

The 2015 TD Canadian Children’s Book Week theme explores First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) writing and stories. This is a vital and rapidly growing part of Canada’s literature. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal writers with strong connections to FNMI history and culture are helping us explore and understand important stories through fiction and non-fiction. We will have much more on this subject in our Spring 2015 issue. In the meantime, enjoy a thought-provoking interview with Book Week illustrator Julie Flett (page 18) and reviews of some groundbreaking new books.

At the end of 2014, Amy Mathers finished her astounding and inspiring marathon of reading teen literature, a marathon that has resulted in a new book award in her name. She shares her thoughts with us on page 4.

Freedom to Read Week takes place February 22 to 28, 2015 ([www.freedomtoread.ca](http://www.freedomtoread.ca)). Since 1984, the Book and Periodical Council (representing all sectors of the book and magazine industry) has organized this celebration of and commitment to intellectual freedom. Take time to observe Freedom to Read Week — get involved, spread the word and read!

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Reading Across the Country,
Reading Across the Centuries

WHAT I LEARNED ON THE MARATHON OF BOOKS

As character Mary Urquhart observes about Canada in Janet Lunn’s *Shadow in Hawthorn Bay*, “… the old ones who dwell in the unseen world, are not here. But we are not to grieve. The old ones came to our hills in the ancient times. It began somewhere. It began there long ago as it begins here now. We are the old ones here.” Her story is set in the early 1800s, just after the War of 1812, and Mary has followed her cousin Duncan all the way from Scotland to Upper Canada, only to find herself in a country not yet officially organized, living in a land just starting to be tamed by settlers.

Lunn’s book is just one of the 365 Canadian teen fiction books I read for my Marathon of Books in 2014, yet her exploration of a country and a people claiming the new world, making mistakes and trying to find a place to belong is a recurring theme. While reading my way across the country, I also found myself reading across the centuries from the time when this land was still solely inhabited by Aboriginals, all the way to an apocalyptic future where Vancouver Island is home to Aboriginals immune to a deadly plague.

Canada is a vast country of just under 10 million square kilometres, but with a population of nearly 36 million, it works out to about four people for every square kilometre. We have a lot of space, and a plentiful, resource-filled land shaping the people who live here. With landscapes ranging from mountains to prairies, forests to tundra, sea to sea to sea, there is so much here to inspire creativity, and I firmly believe the combination of the above factors is directly responsible for our thriving writing community.

That, and something I finally realized when I hit my last couple of weeks of British Columbia reading. Everyone besides the Aboriginals in Canada has a story of how they came to be here. Even if the story lies generations back, it’s still there. In a population of millions, what unites us most is how we are all immigrants in a sense, seeking a new and better life for ourselves and our progeny by moving to an unknown land. The sheer number of stories I read reiterating this was astounding, from Sharon E. McKay’s Esther, the story of the first Jewish girl coming to Quebec in the 1700s, to the more recent *Child of Dandelions* by Shenaaz Nanji, a powerful story acting as a parallel to the situation of many of Canada’s residents by telling about what it means to be a part of a country you weren’t necessarily born in. These stories beg to be told, and our writers explore the many facets of the theme in thoughtful ways.

A year of steadfastly reading Canadian teen fiction has enlightened my perspective of our country in various ways. I have enjoyed the regional diversity of the provinces and territories and now I know and appreciate that Newfoundland and Labrador were built on cod (*A Sky Black With Crows* by Alice Walsh) and Nova Scotia on coal (*Last Chance Bay* by Anne Laurel Carter) in a way I didn’t before. A book set in Prince Edward Island seems to have a prerequisite of mentioning *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery somewhere along the storyline and, while New Brunswick has some reflective and beautiful writers, I encountered a three-book run featuring werewolves.

Quebec is simply epic because it contains a great deal of history (*The King’s Daughter* by Suzanne Martel), but it also has a religious bent and a somewhat dark tone at times (*Miracleville* by Monique Polak and *Lily and Taylor* by Elise Moser). As the largest province, Ontario was hard to pin down, except to say I thought it was the most diverse from a multicultural perspective, especially during my 40 days of Toronto reading (*The Tiffin* by Mahtab Narsimhan).

Manitoba truly introduced me to the concept of community. I read story after story about people reaching out to take care of those they weren’t related to, whether the stories were historical fiction, based in other countries or set in Manitoba (*Sandbag Shuffle* by Kevin Marc Fournier). Skipping up to the territories, all five of my Nunavut books were about survival (*The White Archer* by James Houston).

Saskatchewan made me feel like I was on an existential trip. I both loved and hated it because the majority of the books made me question the purpose of life and the role of evil in the world. I read Arthur Slade’s work for the first time, and I fell in love with Rick Book’s writing. By comparison, Alberta was a riot, and a great mix of science fiction, thanks to Monica Hughes, and stories about cowboys and stoic young men (*Cowboys Don’t Cry* by Marilyn Halvorson).
In the Northwest Territories, *Daughter of Strangers* by Marjory Gordon gave me a unique insight into Aboriginal ways, and Jamie Bastedo’s *On Thin Ice* showed me just how messed up things can get when we don’t respect the environment. They were both a departure for me, and reading about living in the True North was awe-inspiring and eye-opening. The Yukon brought adventure with themes of the gold rush and survival.

Last but not least, British Columbia. So many fantastic authors live there, and the books examine many societal concerns such as Canada’s treatment of Aboriginals, gender equality, gender identity and prejudice against social class and racial identity. It seems to be a very socially minded province, with a flair for science fiction and fantasy (*Half World* by Hiromi Goto).

I like Canadian teen fiction as a way to explore Canada itself because, in many ways, Canada resembles a teen. We’re a relatively young country still, and have a history of questioning our identity. Inexperience and arrogance has led us to commit some grievous mistakes as we strive to make our way in the world, but slowly we’re learning. Part of learning means asking for forgiveness when we’ve lost our way and hurt others (*Red Wolf* by Jennifer Dance and *Ravensong* by Lee Maracle).

This is all wonderfully mirrored in our teen literature. I read a great deal about Canada, but I also found I read about the whole world through the viewpoints of our writers (*Forbidden City* by William Bell, *The Darkest Corner of the World* by Urve Tamberg, *Chanda’s Secrets* by Allan Stratton).

Going forward, I’ve been asked where I think Canadian teen fiction can do better. After reading as much as I have this year, and getting to talk to countless authors and members of the publishing industry, I find myself incredibly thankful for the support of our provincial, territorial and federal governments in providing grants for our writers as they do the crucial work of reflecting and creating. I sincerely hope the support continues in the future because the results speak for themselves.

Also, I wish our Canadian teen authors got more respect and recognition. I learned this year from author Kevin Sylvester that one of the best things you can do to support authors is to talk about their work. Getting more reviews back into our media is also a direction I hope we will take because it is a challenge to make people aware of our authors in the first place. For me, our teen authors are a source of national pride, and I hope to continue helping the rest of Canada see them that way, too.

For more information on Amy Mathers’ Marathon of Books or to donate, visit www.amysmarathonofbooks.ca

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**Amy Mathers Teen Book Award established**

The money raised by Amy Mathers will fund the Amy Mathers Teen Book Award for the next five years. The first award will be presented in the fall of 2015, at the TD Canadian Children’s Book Awards Gala. The CCBC will be working to increase the endowment for the award to ensure its continuance.
More excitement for Eric Walters and his new book, Walking Home

Eric Walters is excited about his latest book, Walking Home. It is not only because the book is selling well and not just because of an intriguing and extensive web component, but also because it is raising money for The Creation of Hope, the Kenyan orphanage he co-founded over seven years ago. His publisher Doubleday (a division of Penguin Random House Canada) is donating $1.30 to the orphanage for every copy sold. Walters says, “This book is special to me in so many ways. It’s been selling so well that it has singlehandedly managed to support our residence and its 55 children over the past month.”

Walking Home tells the fictional story of two children, driven by tragedy to walk over 100 miles across Kenya in search of their last remaining family members. Throughout the novel are symbols that invite the reader to visit www.ericwalterswalkinghome.com to discover photographs, video clips, audio readings of sections of the book, author commentary, bonus chapters, referenced research articles about aspects of the journey and subjects in the novel and information about the four orphans from The Creation of Hope who were part of the walk, and to learn about the writing/editing process of crafting a novel. It is an intriguing opportunity for young readers to discover more about Kenya and the lives of young people there, and about the process of writing itself.

New categories for Governor General’s Literary Awards

After much consultation with the literary community, the Canada Council for the Arts has announced the revised criteria for the children’s book prizes within the Governor General’s Literary Awards, effective for the 2015 edition of the awards.

The new Children’s Literature — Illustrated Books category will recognize the best illustrated book for children or young adults, including picture books, graphic novels and works of fiction, literary non-fiction and poetry in which original illustrations occupy at least 30% of the book’s space. This new category will recognize the best illustrated book of the year, honouring the text and the illustrations as forming one creative work. The author and the illustrator of the winning book will share the monetary prize of $25,000.

The Children’s Literature — Text category will recognize the best book for children or young adults with few (less than 30%) or no illustrations. The monetary prize of $25,000 will be awarded to the author.

Second Story Press announces Aboriginal Writing Contest

Celebrating its 25th anniversary, Second Story Press announced its new Aboriginal Writing Contest for works of fiction and non-fiction. The company is seeking contemporary writing for young readers that reflects the modern experience of Canadian Aboriginal — First Nations, Métis and Inuit — people. The jury will be looking particularly for stories with an urban setting.

Canadian writers who identify as Aboriginal are invited to submit their original, previously unpublished manuscripts by March 31, 2015. The winner of the contest will be announced in April 2015, and will be offered a publishing contract from Second Story Press. For further information, visit www.secondstorypress.ca.

The Ghosts of Baccalieu — a community book creation

An interesting writing, bookmaking, art and community project all in one, The Ghosts of Baccalieu drew together the children from Kindergarten to Grade 6, led by author, editor and now publisher Charis Cotter. It was a year-long project that culminated in the production of a book and a community presentation at the end of the school year last June.

Every student at Tricon Elementary School in Newfoundland was asked to collect ghost stories from family and friends, and was rewarded with traditional tales handed down through the generations. Each child contributed either drawings or stories to the book. Under the
1. The 2014 recipient of the Vicky Metcalf Award for Children’s Literature, author Cary Fagan celebrates with juror (and 2013 recipient) Barbara Reid. 2. Sue Ann Alderson (The Eco-Diary of Kiran Singer) was one of the many authors at the annual Celebrate Science event staged by CWILL BC with the Beaty Biodiversity Museum. 3. Author Kevin Sylvester (the Neil Flambé series) hams it up at Inspire! Toronto International Book Fair in November. 4. Taking her author visits to new heights! Author Joan Marie Galat (Branching Out: How Trees Are Part of Our World) shows off a newly acquired skill to reinforce the importance of literacy. She tells students “It’s not enough to know how to read, you have to actually do it. I would never have learned to stil walk if I didn’t choose to read.” 5. Editor Carolyn Jackson and publisher Margie Wolfe share a moment at the Second Story Press 25th anniversary party. 6. Author Kari-Lynn Winters and illustrator Pierre Pratt, creators of No-Matter-What Friend, at Inspire! Toronto International Book Fair.
direction of Cotter, a ghost-story enthusiast herself, they explored the process of creating a book through its various stages. The project was supported by an ArtsSmarts grant from the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council.

Charis Cotter conceived the project and began her own publishing company, Baccalieu Books, to publish The Ghosts of Baccalieu, which includes an introduction, an appendix and an index. “I felt it was important for the students to experience everything that goes into making a real book — the fun, the creativity, the hard work — in order to better understand its value,” says Cotter. “I hope that this process will encourage a love of books and reading by making it all very personal.”

La courte échelle rescued from bankruptcy

There was good news in the Quebec publishing world in December when it was announced that new owners had been found for La courte échelle. The company, a pioneer in Québécois children’s book publishing, went into bankruptcy protection in September. In early December, it was announced that the trustees had found new owners to take over the financially challenged firm: Marie-Eve Talbot and her father Raymond, former owner of the bookstore Librarie Champigny.

La courte échelle, with sales of over 10 million books around the world (in both children’s and adult books), was reported to be $4 million in debt, including royalties to creators.

Over the years, La courte échelle has published many authors and illustrators whose work has also appeared in English, including Marie-Louise Gay, Christiane Duchesne, Gilles Tibo and Marianne Dubuc — as well as French editions of English books, such as Susin Nielsen’s Word Nerd and Caroline Woodward’s Singing Away the Dark.

Chirp teams with Kids’ CBC for new TV show and books

The Chirp TV show — a collaboration between Chirp Magazine, Kids’ CBC and Sinking Ship Productions — will see 52 11-minute animated episodes airing five days a week starting in April. Owlkids, publisher of Chirp and its sister publications chickaDEE and OWL, is releasing four books, each based on an episode, where Chirp and his friends Squawk and Tweet work together to solve problems.

Tell us about your newest book. Paint is the story of a black-and-white mustang born wild on the Great Plains of North America. Paint’s story is linked to the humans who capture and own her during the historic settlement of both the American plains and the Canadian prairie, so it’s more than just a horse story. Through Paint’s experiences, I’m able to describe the near extinction of the buffalo, the brutality of the US Cavalry toward the Lakota Nation and the struggles of ranchers and homesteaders who claim the “empty” land. Throughout the story, we see that both overgrazing and overplowing set the stage for the Dust Bowl of the 1930s.

Tell us about the process of writing. I can only write about topics that, in one way or another, have touched my own life. But even so, the process doesn’t start until I get that gem of an idea. I’ll worry for months that I’ll never write again since I can’t think of an inspiring idea. But once the right concept drops into my head, I’m off and running. First the research and then the writing. I don’t stop until I finish! The story takes over. The first draft takes about six weeks. Then I let it settle. A few months later I read it with fresh eyes and make substantive changes, which takes much longer than getting the first draft on paper! Then I beg friends and family to read it, and I try very hard to listen to what they say. It takes quite a few drafts to get it right.

How did you first get published? It took 10 years to get a contract for Red Wolf, my first book. I had years of rejection. Sometimes I got feedback and I weighed that carefully. After all, the manuscript was still my baby and I couldn’t make it fit everyone’s idea of what constitutes a good story. On the other hand, advice can be very beneficial. I never gave up, though. And I think that’s key. You have to keep going until your manuscript gets on the right desk, in front of the right acquisitions editors. For me that was Allister Thompson and Allison Hirst at Dundurn.

What do you like about writing books for young people? I’ve raised five children, so I know that kids have an innate sense of fairness. But as they get older, it can become jaded into resentment or apathy. I try to reach children before that window closes. It’s so neat to take a really thorny subject and present it in a way that kids can relate, feel the pain and say, “That’s not fair!”

Tell us about writers who inspire you. Foremost, I’d say Anna Sewell for the English classic, Black Beauty. Her novel affected my childhood, helped me become a horse person and set the stage for writing Paint. Also Michael Morpurgo. Like the warhorse in Morpurgo’s book, Paint lives during a time of great human upheaval and she sees it all.
Congratulations to the 2014 TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award winners.

In amazing stories, kids find inspiration and a lifelong love of reading. This is why we are thrilled to announce Kathy Stinson with illustrator Dušan Petričić and Andrée Poulin as the winners of the 10th annual TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award – the largest prize of its kind honouring both English and French language books.

Read more about these books at tdreads.com
Always a writer: Tanya Lloyd Kyi’s path from sappy poetry to punchy non-fiction and more

BY CAROLYN HART

When Tanya Lloyd Kyi was in Grade 11, the teacher-librarian at her Creston, British Columbia, high school started a creative writing course. There were four students in the class — two girls writing sappy romantic poetry and two guys writing Dungeons and Dragons-influenced fantasy.

It’s a long way from sappy romantic poetry to punchy non-fiction about survival, fire, denim and more, but writing has been a major part of Tanya’s life since those high school days.

The small town of Creston, situated in the Kootenay Mountains in southeastern BC, was an ideal place to grow up. Tanya and her sister could take off on their bikes for entire afternoons. They spent their summers swimming and building forts in the forest, never far away from colourful fresh-fruit stands laden with apples, peaches, pears and plums. In the winter months, Tanya and her sister loved to spend time in the chilly outdoors. They especially loved to sled. But, by her mid teens, Creston began to feel like an outpost far from civilization. She wanted to live in a city. After graduation from high school, Tanya left her family home to attend the University of Victoria.

While at university, Tanya studied English and Writing, primarily focusing on non-fiction. She then moved to Vancouver for a publishing job with Whitecap Books. She fell in love with Vancouver the first time she drove along the Stanley Park causeway and emerged into sunlight and skyscrapers. A friend’s aunt took her to a reading at the magnificent Orpheum Theatre, and she stared up at the spectacular domed ceiling and decided she wanted to live in Vancouver forever.

Discovering Non-Fiction

Tanya’s first book was Canadian Girls Who Rocked the World, published in 2001. She had been working at Whitecap Books for a year or two, and they were looking for someone to write that book. To this day, she wonders if it was serendipity that she happened to pass by the publisher’s office at just the right moment.

“Writing for children wasn’t a genre she had considered previously. When she left university, she had thought that she was destined to write poetry. However, she discovered, while working on Canadian Girls Who Rocked the World, that she loved writing for kids. “I liked the opportunity to read and research widely and eccentrically, and then tell only the most exciting stories, in the most interesting ways possible.”

The majority of Tanya Lloyd Kyi’s published books are generously illustrated non-fiction and are intended for 8-to-13-year olds. Although she did not study much history while in school, she now finds that she enjoys researching a variety of topics and following threads of information. Sometimes she feels like a detective as she uncovers random intriguing facts and sees where they take her. One thing leads to another, and soon she is researching blood or denim or poison and helping young readers discover amazing facts about how the end of World War I led to today’s physiotherapists or why, in 1978, the East German government ordered 800,000 pairs of jeans.

“Sometimes, book topics are suggested by me, and other times by my publisher. I started writing fire books after my husband Min said, ‘Write about fire. Kids like fire.’ Really, I think he likes fire. The Blue Jean Book was suggested by my publisher when I was massively pregnant and no longer fit into my own jeans. Rescues! True Stories from the Edge began as a suggestion by my publisher to research a phenomenon called ‘polar madness.’ That concept grew into a book about why some people fail in extreme situations, while others succeed. Often, I look for topics with two sides. Fire, poison, blood — these are all things with creepy or destructive aspects, along with useful or life-giving sides. They’re subjects that offer lots of fodder for research and thought.”

Exploring Fiction

Apart from creating intriguing, informative and eclectic non-fiction for middle grade children, Tanya is an accomplished author of fiction for young adults, including the emotionally charged Anywhere But Here, which is about a teenage boy who is dealing with the death of his mom and can’t wait to escape his small hometown. Tanya also has two novels in the Orca Soundings series for reluctant teen readers: Truth and My Time as Caz Hazard. Both novels are relatively short con-
Tanya is aware that this is the type of student who may have difficulty in school, and she artfully finds a way for Jared to channel his energy and special talents.

Truth (published in 2003) was Tanya's first attempt at writing fiction, and she didn't intend it to be a high-interest, low-reading-level book. It was simply a fast-paced story about a teen investigating a death at a high school house party. She showed it to a co-worker who knew about Orca Book Publisher's new (at the time) Soundings series, and she suggested that Tanya submit it. Like many things in publishing, it seemed like a happy accident.

"One of my favourite things about Truth," she says, "was the way it was appropriated by adult literacy groups. I had the opportunity to meet with one such group in Toronto. To talk about storytelling with people who were learning to speak and write English for the first time — and who had views on the subject that arose at least partly from different cultural backgrounds — was really inspiring."

Tanya gets several letters a year from students in Germany who are studying the German version of the book in class.

Two different genres, two different brains
In retrospect, Tanya often wishes that she'd spent more of her university hours on fiction-writing courses. She finds herself drawn more and more to novel writing, and feels that she is still learning the secrets of the craft. She says it is almost as though she uses two different brains when she writes, depending on which genre she is focused on.

Lately, Tanya has been alternating (in four- or six-month phases) between writing fiction and non-fiction. When writing her non-fiction titles, she begins by reading some general books on a subject before moving on to journal articles and newspaper reports that provide specifics. Tanya says that she used to spend hours and hours at libraries, but today she accesses many of her sources online. She loves reading and hearing adventure stories as much as she loves writing them, so the process is often surprisingly fun.

Tanya and her husband have a 10-year-old daughter and a seven-year-old son, so there's no lack of activity around their house. But she is protective of her morning quiet. She tries to write from 9 a.m. until noon every weekday. By lunchtime, she's ready to think of other things. She admits that she's strict about reserving her mornings for creative work. She tries not to check Twitter or answer emails or do laundry until she's written for at least an hour or two. She works on one project at a time, and she saves any intruding ideas in a Word file for future consideration.

Tanya loves giving school presentations. In many of her non-fiction books, she writes about people who took big risks and accomplished big things, and she loves sharing those stories with students. She's very excited to be going to Ontario as part of the TD Book Week tour this May, although she admits some trepidation about leaving her family to their own devices for an entire week.

Tanya's best advice for an aspiring writer? "You need two groups of supporters. First, you need friends or family members who will unconditionally love whatever dreck you produce. You also need slightly more critical readers who will offer real feedback — a writer's group, ideally. Don't submit anything until it's done the rounds with both groups!"

Teacher and workshop leader Carolyn Hart is passionate about introducing wonderful books to Canadian youth and the adults who work with them. Her website is www.StorytimeStandouts.com.

Books by Tanya Lloyd Kyi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When the Worst Happens: Extraordinary Stories of Survival</td>
<td>Annick Press, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anywhere But Here</td>
<td>Simon Pulse, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lowdown on Denim</td>
<td>Clayton Hanmer, Annick Press, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 Underwear Questions: A Bare-All History (50 Questions)</td>
<td>Ross Kinnaird, Annick Press, 2011</td>
</tr>
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**FOCUS GENDER ISSUES**

**Let Books Be Books**

A roundtable on gender in writing, editing and marketing

**BY RACHEL SEIGEL**

What are little boys made of? Snakes and snails, and puppy dogs’ tails
That’s what little boys are made of!
What are little girls made of? Sugar and spice and all things nice
That’s what little girls are made of!

From a very young age, children have had the lyrics to this old 19th-century nursery rhyme burned into their minds, promoting the gender stereotypes that exist about boys and girls. Boys are rough and tumble; girls are sweet and gentle. Recently, there has been a lot of discussion about how these stereotypes are extending into children’s books, and the necessity of allowing children to choose for themselves what kinds of stories and activities interest them. There is no question that boys and girls have different interests, but as the UK-originated “Let Books be Books” (www.lettoysbetoys.org.uk/letbooksbebooks/) campaign suggests, when a label that says for boys or for girls is put on a book, children receive extremely limited messages about what is supposedly appropriate. In one publisher’s Quiz Book for Boys and Quiz Book for Girls, the girls’ version has pink lettering, hearts and flowers, while the boys’ version is darker, scarier and far more interesting. When these kinds of distinctions are made before the book is even published, children are being told that they are or aren’t supposed to like something based on gender.

This roundtable brings together three different industry people, all of whom have unique perspectives on the challenges of writing, editing and marketing books for different genders.

Ted Staunton is the author of numerous books for children and young adults, including Jump Cut from the original Seven series and the newly released sequel, Coda. He also teaches the Writing for Children course through George Brown College and performs with the Maple Leaf Champions Jug Band.

Judy Brunsek is the Director of Sales & Marketing at Owlkids Books, and has over 25 years of experience in marketing, sales, strategy and leadership in the book and magazine industry. She has also taught extensively about publishing practice and general marketing at University of Toronto, Simon Fraser University, Humber College and more.

Christie Harkin is the Consultant Publisher at the newly formed Clockwise Press, an imprint dedicated to publishing diverse books for children. Previously, she was the Associate Publisher at James Lorimer & Company and the Children’s Book Publisher at Fitzhenry & Whiteside. In her career, she has acquired and/or edited over 50 novels, picture books and non-fiction titles, many of which have been nominated for or won awards.

In labelling books as being for boys or girls, is the publishing industry saying that it is not possible for girls and boys to have overlapping interests? Are we inadvertently excluding certain groups of kids from reading certain books?

**Ted Staunton:** I don’t think that anyone is being excluded or that girls and boys may not have overlapping interests, but it depends how the labelling was done…. the canniest of publishers are going to avoid turning off a segment of their potential market. The Seven series, for example, was dreamed up with boys in mind, but the covers, especially for the sequels, have broader appeal for sure. Lots of girls read those books.

**Judy Brunsek:** The publishing industry does not act in unison. Each company acts in its own way. Many big media-related/owned houses (such as Disney) will use gender to market, but I agree with Ted that we seldom want to turn off a market. However, not every book should appeal to every market. Know who you are addressing, and write/market for that group. We generally think that girls will readily read most books, but that many boys seem to need to be appealed to in particular ways. Cover-design choices (illustration, colours, etc.) are very much made with the target market in mind. In non-fiction, different things like the gross-out factor are used because we know they appeal to boys, and girls have no issue with them either. It’s more about creating an environment where boys feel like they can come in and belong than anything else.

**Christie Harkin:** I don’t understand why publishers would still want to create these gender divisions. Besides excluding groups of kids, it also limits your market. That strikes me as backwards thinking on so many levels.

**How important is gender of the author in determining how a book is marketed/edited/designed?**

**TS:** I don’t think the gender of the author has much to do with it. As an author of picture books and “beginning novels” as well as YA, etc., I’ve never noticed a difference. A book with a girl as a main character might well have a cover that’s more “girlish,” but a book about a boy might have a more gender-neutral cover rather than a “guy” one.
The gender of the protagonist is very pertinent to how a book comes to market. So is the age of the protagonist, who else is around him or her, the setting and so on. It’s all part of what we have to factor in when figuring out how to package and position a book. In a cover design that has a boy protagonist, that boy will be front and centre, even if a girl might be on there, too. But, this is still basic marketing — who’s your target and are you appealing to them? I agree again with Ted, though, that authenticity of character and story are very important. That, too, influences how a book will be marketed.

Do you think this boy/girl distinction begins at the author level, editor level or marketing?

TS: I think author gender means little to readers in those age groups — unless you’re doing an author presentation, in which case librarians, for better or worse, sometimes book a male author to show guy students that, hey, they could do this, too. Protagonist gender is a different deal. Sadly, girls will read boys but boys usually won’t read girls.

CH: Every book, every author and every editor is different. I usually think in terms of the specific audience for any given story. The problem, I think, is in trying to group readers into male and female. There are plenty of girls who wouldn’t read a novel with pink lipstick on the cover if you paid them. Similarly, there are plenty of boys who aren’t interested in books about the misunderstood quarterback who just wants a chance to come off the bench. Will a reader — male or female — recognize the story as authentic? That’s the focus. As an editor, gender doesn’t really come into it for me. Where there is more of a concern for me is the treatment of secondary characters. This is especially important when I’m editing a boy-centred sports-themed book. Does the character exist in an all-male world? What role do the girls play in the story? Is the story actually inclusive or are the supporting characters stereotypical window dressing? If a girl were to read this book, how would she see herself in the story? (and vice versa for a girl-centred book)

continued on page 14
how much do you think the gender of the author/protagonist matters to readers in middle grade and in YA?

TS: One way around the above is something I do all the time: while my protagonist is practically always a guy, the smartest, most capable character is always a girl who has a big role in the story. Thus, guys end up reading about girls and not even realizing it.

JB: I think Middle Grade is where the big difference starts to come into play, and that’s partly because of social and physical development. It’s the first time there are big differences between the kids, although they are all in the same grade and roughly the same age. It’s a precursor to their understanding that for adults there is a lot of variety out there. That’s stressful for a 10-year-old, be they a boy or a girl. However, I think the gender of the author won’t prevent a kid from reading a book, while the gender of the protagonist might.

CH: As for the axiom of “boys won’t read about girls but girls will read about boys” — this is one I’ve heard and seen a lot myself, and I’ve wondered about it. I don’t know how much of that is a chicken-and-egg scenario. Are boys being given the opportunity to read books featuring female characters? In novel studies where the whole class reads the same book, how often are girls featured as the main character? If parents and teachers made a point of giving boys interesting and engaging books about universal themes that featured girls at a younger age — before they have to start choosing novels — would they perhaps be more open to girl-centred books later on?

Is there still or ever a value in labelling non-fiction general interest books (such as activity books, colouring books, etc.) as for boys or girls — especially in the title?

TS: I think gender labelling “non-fiction general interest” books like the activity/colouring books you mention is unwise. Both genders might well like dogs or science experiments. But we’re kidding ourselves if we don’t acknowledge that some non-fiction is going to appeal to one more than the other and probably needs to be marketed that way.

JB: Bang on, Ted! There is a lot of non-fiction that is completely gender neutral and that has to appeal to kids, period. That means it needs to be packaged and presented in a way that inspires curiosity and excitement at the cool thing a kid just learned and wants to find out more about. But, I come back to the marketing thing — who is the intended market? If you aren’t doing a job reaching them, it won’t work.

CH: I think that the only real reason to create activity books with specified gender designations would be books based on “My Body” so kids can actually appreciate physical differences. On the other hand, I would actually love to publish a subversive series of activity books — something along the lines of “Summer Crafts for Boys” and “Summer Crafts for Girls” where the content of the books was almost exactly the same. While the activities would be identical, the illustrations would feature boys and girls.

In the acquisitions side, do you see an imbalance in the number of male to female protagonists, or has it equalized?

TS: I’ve got no idea about the acquisitions side of things, though it’s a great question. I’ve never been told my story isn’t needed because the protagonist is a guy. I’ve been rejected for lots of other reasons...

JB: Publishers have strategies and categories they publish. It’s fundamental to becoming good at something, becoming known for it and not spreading your resources too thinly throughout the company. Why publish one board book unless you plan to do more? You make that book an orphan on a list by not having expertise across the board for it — editorial, design, production, sales, marketing — as well as isolating it in terms of possible marketing efforts without being able to cross collateralize the costs of marketing. So, it’s not about male or female, it’s about what comprises the list and what strategic choices a company makes at any given time.

CH: For the most part, when I look at the sum total of all the books I’ve worked on, I’d say that the ratio has been pretty even. However, I did notice a while back that one picture book series I was publishing had a different protagonist in each
The John Spray Mystery Award is administered by the Canadian Children’s Book Centre. For more information and for jury comments, visit www.bookcentre.ca.
haps — and show kids that things both familiar (archetypes) and new (gender-busting characters) can be appealing. That’s up to a good writer and editor to work out. Then, once marketing gets its hands on it, we need to figure out how to make the most of it.

**CH:** Gee, you hope that there aren’t any stereotypes in any characters, primary or secondary, that you have in your books, whether you’re looking at race, gender, sexual orientation or anything else. I don’t even want a gerbil to be a stereotypical gerbil!

**What role do parents/educators/librarians play in reinforcing or dispelling these labels?**

**TS:** Teachers, parents and librarians can all play a role in either reinforcing or breaking down labelling. Really, though, the key to it all is adult enthusiasm, no matter what the book. My son and I happily read all the brilliant Ramona books together, and what got us started, I’m sure, was that I’m a big fan and brought that enthusiasm to the experience.

**JB:** Ted, once again, I agree with you. You can have it both ways. And whatever the influence is, it will reflect that person’s values. I remember reading Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret (and other books that might not be considered for boys) to my son when he was 10-ish. I thought it was important for him to be exposed to a book like that. But that’s because of who I am — a reader, a publishing professional, a feminist and someone who thinks kids need to be well-rounded. Do I think it’s important to dispel labels? Yes. Do I think it’s everyone’s job? Yes. Is there an easy answer to how to do it? No.

**CH:** This is the crux of the matter, I think. We as publishers need to listen to what our buyers are looking for as well as to the conversations surrounding the direction of children’s literature. We know we need more diverse books. We know that we need strong as well as broken female and male protagonists. We want to make all our books accessible to both boys and girls. The trick is to nudge the buying public in the direction of gender parity. Maybe if the “gatekeepers” were a bit more proactive about giving boys and girls the benefit of the doubt at a younger age, or insisting on better gender diversity in their novel-study assignments, then the readers themselves, especially the reluctant ones, would evaluate the appeal of the story and the themes before the gender of the protagonist when they are selecting their next read.

**Are there stereotypes in the protagonists themselves?**

**TS:** Sure, there can be stereotypes in protagonists. Inevitably, we’re all potentially guilty to a certain extent, because most of us, certainly me, not always but often write a version of the same basic story or character dynamic over and over again. For some reason, that story or those character relationships resonate with us as people and writers and we return to them, disguising them in different circumstances each time. Does this make them stereotypes? Depends how well I/we pull off the trick of making them interesting, believable individuals each time.

**JB:** I like to think of characters who are well developed in books as familiar archetypes more than stereotypes. It’s not that there aren’t stereotypes, but I think sometimes they act in symbolic ways to move a story forward, and there is a comfort and shorthand being used. What’s fun and interesting is to break those stereotypes — effectively to create new ones, per-
Bad Pirate
by Kari-Lynn Winters, illustrated by Dean Griffiths
April 1st | 978-1-927485-71-2 (HC) $19.95

Giraffe Meets Bird by Rebecca Bender
May 15th | 978-1-927485-35-4 (HC) $19.95

A+ for Big Ben
by Sarah Ellis, illustrated by Kim La Fave
April 15th | 978-1-927485-76-7 (BB) $9.95

Uncertain Soldier by Karen Bass
April 1st | 978-1-927485-72-9 (PB) $14.95

Princess Pistachio and the Pest
by Marie-Louise Gay, translated by Jacob Homel
March 10th | 978-1-927485-73-6 (HC) $12.95

In a Cloud of Dust
by Alma Fullerton, illustrated by Brian Deines
March 16th | 978-1-927485-62-0 (HC) $19.95

Illustration © Marie-Louise Gay, Princess Pistachio and the Pest
Meet Julie Flett
Book Week Artist

The award winning Cree-Métis artist, Julie Flett, talks to the Canadian Children’s Book Centre’s Sandra O’Brien about her work, her recent books and her First Nation Communities READ tour.

Explain the process you went through to create the captivating image you designed for the TD Canadian Children's Book Week 2015 poster. Is this similar to the process you undertake to create illustrations for books?

JF: The process was similar to working on children's books. I always start with the text when I'm working on someone else's project. The text I was working with — Hear Our Stories: Celebrating First Nations, Métis and Inuit Literature — made me think about the intimacy of reading to a child, the intimacy of storytelling and how 'hearing' the story, whether being read to or reading, brings the story to life in the process. I often think of Thomas King's quote: "The truth about stories is, that's all we are."

The preservation and revitalization of indigenous languages is important to you. Did you grow up speaking an indigenous language and, if so, which one(s)?

JF: My grandparents were multilingual; between the two of them five languages were spoken. For the most part, the languages were not passed down. Just before my grandfather passed away, I asked him if he would speak to me in his language — he did, he spoke to me in Cree. Although he was in the early stages of Alzheimer's at the time, he had no problem remembering Cree.

I came across a quote recently that made me think about my grandparents — and the reasons that I am drawn to do the work I do with languages:

My grandchild, do not quit...
It will take you a long way but do not forget your Cree language — that will take you home.
John Cabry, Samson Cree

Which of your books have been translated and into which languages?

JF: The first book project I worked on, Owls See Clearly at Night (Li’i Yiiboo Nayaapiwak lî’i Swer): A Michif Alphabet, is an introduction to Michif. The Michif language is one of the languages of the Métis people. It’s a mixed language, combining Cree and French, with some additional borrowing from English and First Nation languages such as Ojibwe and Assiniboine.

The other four books I’ve worked on have been translated into Cree. There are several dialects of Cree — the bilingual version of Wild Berries is translated into the n-dialect, also known as Swampy Cree from the Cumberland House region. We also produced another version, Pakwa che menisu, using the n-dialect Cree, from Cross Lake, Norway House region. The bilingual version has a pronunciation guide and the Cree version has a syllabics chart.

The Cree numbers for the book We All Count: A Book of Cree Numbers are written in the y-dialect of southern Alberta and Saskatchewan (known as Plains Cree or Nêhiyawêwin) and in the n-dialect (known as Swampy Cree or Nêhinawêwin) spoken in Manitoba and the Saskatchewan communities of Cumberland House and Shoal Lake.

There were so many gracious people and organizations involved in translations for the books. Métis language activist Heather Souter; Grace (Ledoux) Zoldy and Dr. Nicole Rosen, Assistant Professor, Department of Modern Languages, University of Lethbridge, worked on the translations and pronunciation guide for Owls See Clearly at Night (Li’i Yiiboo Nayaapiwak lî’i Swer): A Michif Alphabet. Earl Cook translated the Cree words for Wild Berries, the bilingual version and Jennifer Thomas for Pakwa che menisu. Aboriginal Languages Manitoba helped to create and oversee the syllabics chart. We All Count: A Book of Cree Numbers and the new colour book were translated by Arden Ogg, Solomon Ratt and Arok Wolvengrey of the Cree Literacy Network.

The projects would not have come to be without the support of all of our speakers and Indigenous language scholars, linguists and supporters.

Tell us about your training in fine arts and how long you’ve been working in this area. What inspires your artwork? Do you draw inspiration from other artists?

JF: I studied Fine Arts at Emily Carr University of Art + Design and went on to finish my degree at Concordia University. I studied painting, drawing, film and textiles; most of my work was multimedia based at the time. I was asked to do an illustration project a number of years after I graduated so I had to
When we met, you were receiving the inaugural 2014 Aboriginal Literature Award, sponsored by the Periodical Marketers of Canada, and *Wild Berries* had been chosen as the First Nation Communities READ selection. Tell us what the award means to you and about the tour you went on for the First Nations Communities READ selection.

**JF:** It was an honour for *Wild Berries / Pakwa che menisu* to be selected from the short-listed titles. All of the nominated titles are important acknowledgements. The book selections and recommendations are made by First Nation librarians working in and with First Nation communities. It’s an ongoing project that encourages and reminds libraries across Canada to purchase, display, read and discuss all of the selected titles.

After the selection announcement and Aboriginal Literature Award presentation, we went on a book tour to First Nation communities in Ontario. We were warmly welcomed into each of the communities. We visited Walpole Island First Nation on Lake St. Clair, Saugeen First Nation on the Bruce Peninsula and Beausoleil First Nation in Georgian Bay. On each visit, we spent a full day together; it was a great way of getting to know the communities. The hosts shared the history of their communities and land, we visited the schools and libraries for readings and workshops, and beautiful food was prepared. The story *Wild Berries / Pakwa che menisu* was a fun book to share because everyone had a berry story of his or her own to share after the readings and workshops. The stories were beautiful, and lots of funny stories were told — often including encounters with bears.

Participating in the First Nation Communities READ program really gave me a sense of how important author and artist visits to First Nation communities are — for both the book creator and the community.

We also visited the Hamilton Public Library during the art crawl on our last day, another warm and welcoming visit. The library offered extraordinary programming for the event. It was a full day of readings and presentations, I had a lot of fun reading to a group of the littlest ones there, and we enjoyed the company of a First Nation women’s drumming group toward the end of the evening.

I deeply appreciate the contributions of everyone who was involved: the children we visited at the schools and libraries; the community members; the teachers, volunteers and librarians, and all the organizers; Patty Lawlor of the Southern Ontario Library Service; the support provided by the Southern Ontario Library Service and the First Nation Communities READ program; Goodminds.com; Simply Read Books and the Periodical Marketers of Canada.

Besides illustrations for children’s books, do you illustrate for other publications or work in another field? Tell us about some of the projects you’re working on currently.

**JF:** Right now I’m working on two children’s books, a couple of new writing projects, and I’m also working a series of paintings.

As for the most recent book projects, we released a board book called *We All Count: A Book of Cree Numbers* (Native Northwest) and will release the second in the series, *Colours of the Woodlands*, later this year. *Dolphins SOS*, written by Roy and Slavia Miki, was released earlier this year (Tradewind Books). Right now, I’m working on illustrations for two books, the reissue of Tomson Highway’s *Dragonfly Kites* (Fifth House Publishers) and a collection of stories and poems. A new project for Simply Read Books is also in the works.
Try This Quiz: La littérature québécoise en 12 questions

Test your knowledge of French Québécois literature for children and adolescents. Compiled by Geneviève Brisson, this quiz will challenge your mastery of Québécois classics as well as contemporary works, in French and in translation. Questions are about picture books, fiction and non-fiction. Bonne chance!

Questions

1. Which English-Canadian book was the first novel for children to be translated into French, and is still in print and widely read from coast to coast?

2. Which novel was the first Canadian science fiction published for children?
   a) Le Phare d’Isis
   b) Surréal 3000
   c) Hockeyeurs cybernétiques
   d) Zeckie Zen

3. Published in 1976, La cachette by Ginette Anfousse was an “avant-garde” picture book. What was new and unique about this book?
   a) Jiji, the protagonist, was dynamic and exuberant; she was very different from other well-behaved young héroïnes depicted in picture books at the time.
   b) With this book, and the following books in the Jiji series, Anfousse spoke to children instead of about children. In La Cachette, for instance, Jiji talks directly to the readers.
   c) Adults are absent from Jiji’s world. She talks about her mother, for example, but we never see her.
   d) All of the above

4. Raymond Plante wrote many novels for children and adolescents. One of his novels had a tremendous impact on Québécois young adult literature. Which one?
   a) L’étoile a pleuré rouge (1994)
   b) La fille en cuir (1993)
   c) Le record de Philibert Dupont (1991)
   d) Le dernier des raisins (1986)

5. In 1978, the publisher Pierre Tisseyre created a “collection” consisting exclusively of translations of English-Canadian authors in order to make this literature available to young French-speaking readers. What is the name of this collection?
   a) Deux solitudes
   b) Le Canada en français
   c) Conquêtes
   d) Mille et une histoire

6. In the following list, two of the titles for adolescents are English translations of novels written by well-known French-Québécois authors. Can you identify them?
   a) Words That Start with B
   b) This Side of the Sky
   c) The Road to Chlifa
   d) A Perfect Gentle Knight

7. A famous and prolific Québécois author, well known for the series Noémie, Alex and Petit Géant, began his/her career as a very successful illustrator. Can you identify the author?
   a) Denis Côté
   b) Sonia K. Laflamme
   c) Dominique Demers
   d) Gilles Tibo

8. Which young adult novel (and its translator) won the 2009 Governor General’s Literary Award for Translation, from French to English?
   a) Good for Nothing (Translator: Shelley Tanaka)
   b) Waiting for Jasmine (Translator: Sheila Fischman)
   c) In the Key of DO (Translator: Susan Ouriou)
   d) Pieces of Me (Translator: Susan Ouriou)

9. Savais-tu? is the name of a “collection” published by Michel Quintin (editor). These funny books are full of information on animals, using humour and speech bubbles. Which animal is NOT featured as a hero in this collection?
   a) tapeworms
   b) cockroaches
   c) eels
   d) dogs

10. In 2009, the Governor General’s Literary Award (French language) for illustration and for text was awarded to the same work. Can you identify the work and its creators?
    a) Harvey, text by Hervé Bouchard, illustrations by Janice Nadeau
    b) L’étoile de Sarajevo, text by Jacques Pasquet, illustrations by Pierre Pratt
    c) La vraie histoire de Léo Pointu, text and illustrations by Rogé (Roger Girard)
    d) Simon et le chasseur de dragons, text by Pierre Chartray and Sylvie Rancourt, illustration by Marion Arbona
Answers

1. **Anne of Green Gables**
The first French translation — *Anne ou les illusions heureuses* — was done in Switzerland in 1925. The second translation — *Anne et le Bonheur* — was done in 1964. The first Canadian translation — *Anne... la maison aux pignons verts* — was done in 1986.

2. **Surréal 3000.** According to Sheila Egoff and Judith Saltman, in *The new republic of childhood: A critical guide to children’s literature in English* (1990), the first Canadian science fiction for children was *Surréal 3000* (1963) by Suzanne Martel. It was translated into English as *The City Underground* in 1964.

3. d) All of the above
According to author and television host Dominique Demers, Jiji’s influence on children’s literature was major. If readers are interested, Demers has a complete chapter on Anfousse and Jiji in her book *De petit poucet au dernier des raisins: introduction à la littérature jeunesse*.

4. d) *Le dernier des raisins*
Professor Edith Madore suggests that this book was “un coup d’éclat” (1995, p. 257), and Dominique Demers incorporates the title of this book into the title of her book about Québécois literature for youth. *Le dernier des raisins* opened the way to Québécois realistic novels. To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the first book in the series in 2010, Éditions du Boréal decided to publish the four books in the series in one book.

5. a) **Deux solitudes**
The expression “deux solitudes” probably originates with Hugh MacLennan’s novel, *Two Solitudes*, published in 1945. At first, the expression suggested a shared perception among French and English Canadians; nowadays, it is largely used in French and in English to refer to a lack of communication or to misunderstandings between the two groups.

6. b) **This Side of the Sky** and c) **The Road to Chilifa**

7. d) Gilles Tibo
Gilles Tibo has written more than 150 books and is one of the most prolific authors in Québec (http://www.quebec-amerique.com/index-auteurs.php). He illustrated more than 80 books — among them the Simon series, known worldwide — before trading his brushes for a keyboard in the mid 1990s.

8. d) **Pieces of Me (Translator: Susan Ouriou)**
No children’s book had ever won the Governor General’s Literary Award for French-to-English Translation, until Ouriou accomplished this feat in 2009. On giving Ouriou the award, Canada Council’s jury wrote that Susan Ouriou had created a “magical rendering of the exquisite original.”

9. d) dogs
The three creators of the books — Michel Quintin, Alain M. Bergeron and Sampar — seem to enjoy providing information about animals that are neither cute nor cuddly.

10. a) **Harvey, text by Hervé Bouchard, illustrations by Janice Nadeau**
In this book, translated into English in 2010 by Groundwood Books, Bouchard and Nadeau tell the story of young Harvey and his difficulties when his father dies of a heart attack.

11. a) **Le menteur et la rouspéteuse** and d) **La fatigante et le fainéant**
*Le menteur et la rouspéteuse* tells the story of a father and his daughter; *La fatigante et le fainéant* is told by an elderly lady and her teenage neighbour. François Barcelo won the Governor General’s Literary Award (text) with *La fatigante et le fainéant* in 2007, and many other awards with the book in this series titled *Les deux côtés de la médailles*.

12. **Jane, le renard et moi**
This graphic novel was published by La Pastèque in 2012, and was translated into English by Groundwood Books (for North America) in 2013. According to La Pastèque’s website, the rights have also been sold to Walker Books (English for UK-Australia), Salamandra (Spanish), Reprodukt (German), Booknbean (Korean) and Mondadori (Italian).

**Bonus question:** *La plus grosse poutine du monde* by Andrée Poulin tells the story of a young teen’s efforts to get into the Guinness Book of Records and perhaps find his mother who disappeared years before.

Geneviève Binsson is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia. She has also worked as a teacher-librarian, and enjoys reading and researching children’s and YA literature, in French and English.

IMAGES (left to right) from *La Cachette; from Jane, le renard et moi; Raymond Plante (photo: © Alexis K. Laflamme); 2014 Prix TD winner; Gilles Tibo*
“BOOKMARK!” HIGHLIGHTS BOOKS FOR A VARIETY OF GRADe LEVELS AROUND A PARTICULAR THEME.

Explore this section of thoughtful and informative books on world religions, compiled by CCBC Library Coordinator Meghan Howe.

World Religions and Traditions

PICTURE BOOKS FOR KINDERGARTEN & UP

A Chanukah Noel
written by Sharon Jennings
illustrated by Gillian Newland
(Second Story Press, 2010)

Charlotte’s family has just moved to France. As Christmas approaches, Charlotte pleads with her parents to celebrate Christmas, but, being Jewish, they will not allow this. Charlotte, however, finds a way to share the joys of both Christmas and Chanukah with one of her classmates.

Lights for Gita
written by Rachna Gilmore
illustrated by Alice Priestley
(Second Story Press, 1994)

Recently emigrated from India, Gita has already made some friends in her new home and she is looking forward to her favourite holiday — Divali, a festival of lights with fireworks, laughter and exchanges of sweets. But Gita’s plans soon fall apart. Children from all backgrounds will love this warm and caring story.

Listen, Said the Donkey: Tales of the First Christmas
written by Jean Little
illustrated by Werner Zimmermann
(Scholastic Canada, 2010)

Three familiar animals are gathered at a stable in Bethlehem. The animals miss the baby who was recently born there. To comfort one another, each tells the tale of how it came to be at the stable for the baby’s birth.

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

The Diary of Laura’s Twin
(Holocaust Remembrance Book for Young Readers)
written by Kathy Kacer
(Second Story Press, 2008)

Preparing for her Bat Mitzvah, Laura is assigned to read the diary of Sara Gittler, a girl imprisoned by the Nazis in the Warsaw Ghetto during the Holocaust. Laura shares her coming of age with her “twin” by speaking about Sara’s life.

Guru Nanak: The First Sikh Guru
written by Rina Singh
illustrated by Andrée Pouliot
(Groundwood Books, 2011)

Guru Nanak founded the Sikh faith more than 500 years ago. This biography, illustrated in the Indian miniature-painting tradition, tells the story of his spiritual journey, his miracles and his poetry. Also included is a map of his travels, a brief history of the gurus who followed him, a glossary and suggestions for further reading.

Jewish Fairy Tale Feasts: A Literary Cookbook
(Fairy Tale Feasts)
retold by Jane Yolen
recipes by Heidi E.Y. Stemple
illustrated by Sima Elizabeth Shefrin
(Tradewind Books, 2012)

In this collection of wise folktales and delicious recipes, Jane Yolen and Heidi Stemple present fun facts about the creation of the stories and the history of the dishes. Sima Elizabeth Shefrin’s colourful collage illustrations add a whimsical touch to the book.

The Kids Book of World Religions
(Kids Book of…)
written by Jennifer Glossop
illustrated by John Mantha

From Judaism to Taoism, children learn about different religions and trace their history. This timely and extensive volume is presented in an objective, engaging manner, and explores themes of commonality and diversity in world religions.

Lighting Our World: A Year of Celebrations
written by Catherine Rondina
illustrated by Jacqui Oakley
(Kids Can Press, 2012)

This book takes children on a journey around the globe, introducing them to the many cultures that use candles, bonfires or fireworks to mark significant events. Each two-page spread, surrounded by colourful illustrations, discusses at least two festivals or celebrations.

Many Windows: Six Kids, Five Faiths, One Community
written by Rukhsana Khan with Elisa Carbone and Uma Krishnaswami
illustrated by Patty Gallinger
(Dundurn, 2008)

A collection of seven stories about six children who are in the same class at school, each one from a different faith. Each one centres on a celebration within the faith of that child and represents that child’s window on the world.

Muslim Child
written by Rukhsana Khan
illustrated by Patty Gallinger
(Dundurn, 2001)

A collection of short stories, poems and prose that examines the world through the eyes of Muslim children. Each story represents a tenet of Islam in a way that is both entertaining and enlightening. Non-fiction sidebars help to explain and amplify the Islamic references.

Religion in the Ancient World
(Life in the Ancient World)
written by Hazel Richardson and Paul Challen
(Crabtree Publishing, 2011)

This important book provides a snapshot of religion across various ancient civilizations. Engaging illustrations, detailed timelines,
World War II. His mother had to raise the family alone. When army runaways threatened them, Larry’s courage and knowledge of tradition kept them safe. A true story. Photos and glossary of Cree words included.

**Shifting Sands: Life in the Times of Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad**
written by Kathy Lowinger
illustrated by Wylie Beckert
(Annick Press, 2014)

Fiction and fact intertwine in the tales of three young people: Dina, a slave in Egypt; Mattan, in search of a life beyond Roman oppression; and Fallah, a Bedouin fleeing his desert home. These stories recreate how life might have been for young people living in the tumultuous times that gave rise to the world’s great religions.

**Stories from Adam and Eve to Ezekiel**
retold from the bible by Celia Barker Lottridge
illustrated by Gary Clement
(Groundwood Books, 2004)

Cain and Abel, Jacob and the Flood, David and Goliath… 32 best-loved stories that make up the oldest part of the Bible, by an award-winning author and storyteller.

**Stories from the Life of Jesus**
retold from the bible by Celia Barker Lottridge
illustrated by Linda Wolfsgruber
(Groundwood Books, 2004)

Lottridge provides an eloquent retelling of the events in Jesus’ life and the stories he told. These gospel accounts will familiarize readers with a vital part of their cultural heritage.

**What is Religion? (Our Multicultural World)**
written by Bobbie Kalman
(Crabtree Publishing, 2009)

Introducing children to the world’s most popular religions, this book looks at the origins, special heroes and teachers, basic beliefs, sacred text and symbols, ways of worship, special dates and places of worship associated with each religion. The book also highlights the basic principles of religions such as truth, kindness, acceptance and love.

**When the Spirits Dance**
written by Larry Loyie and Constance Brissenden
(Theytus Books, 2006)

Young Larry wrestled with the meaning of war when his father headed overseas during World War II. His mother had to raise the family alone. When army runaways threatened them, Larry’s courage and knowledge of tradition kept them safe. A true story. Photos and glossary of Cree words included.
In this month’s Classroom Bookshelf, we look at three books about individuals who have striven to change the world we live in. You will be introduced to the first woman to be elected to the National Academy of Engineering, meet girls from around the globe who are overcoming great odds to improve their own lives and those of their families and, finally, discover a group of young heroes who are trying to change the world with incredible acts of kindness.

**Spic-and-Span! Lillian Gilbreth’s Wonder Kitchen** (Great Idea)
written by Monica Kulling
illustrated by David Parkins
Tundra Books, 2014
978-1-77049-380-3 (hc) $19.99
for Grades 1 to 4
Non-Fiction | Biography | Science & Technology

Lillian Moller Gilbreth was born into a wealthy family in 1878, in Oakland, California. She, however, did not want a pampered life and, unlike most girls of her time, decided to go to university and seek out a life of adventure and challenge. When she married Frank Gilbreth in 1904, they became efficiency experts, showing factory workers how to get the most done in the least amount of time. She and Frank also had 11 children and ran their house on the “Gilbreth system,” with charts that listed the “work” each child was responsible for completing. Sadly, Frank died suddenly in 1924, and Lillian was left to raise and support her family on her own. Lillian finally found work at Macy’s department store, redesigning their cash room, and then was hired at the Brooklyn Borough Gas Company, designing kitchens that were organized, efficient and comfortable to work in. Lillian would eventually go on to design an electric mixer, a garbage can with a lid that opened when you stepped on the foot pedal, compartments in the doors of refrigerators and a desk for the homemaker to sit at while making her weekly schedules and paying her bills. She was the first woman elected to the National Academy of Engineering in 1965, and the first woman psychologist to have a US postage stamp issued in her honour.

This is the sixth book in Tundra’s Great Idea series by Monica Kulling, with this title being beautifully illustrated by David Parkins. While the text has a rather serious tone to it, the illustrations add some fun and whimsy to the story, which will make it all the more appealing to children. This series can be used in many areas of the curriculum from science and social studies to language arts. Kulling’s books offer wonderful examples of biographical writing that include just enough details to introduce primary students to scientists and inventors while not overwhelming them with too much information. This book, along with the others in the series, would make an excellent addition to any classroom or library.

**Because I am a Girl: I Can Change The World**
(Plan Canada International Books)
written by Rosemary McCarney and Jen Albaugh with Plan International
Second Story Press, 2014
978-1-92758-344-9 (pb) $16.95
for Grades 3 to 8
Non-Fiction | Citizenship | Social Justice | Female Role Models | Diversity | Health | Conflict

This new book by Rosemary McCarney, President and CEO of Plan International Canada, tells the stories of individual girls around the world. The purpose of the Because I am a Girl movement is to end gender inequality, promote girls’ rights and lift millions of girls out of poverty. In this book, you will meet girls from many parts of the world who tell us, “Because I am a girl, I watch my brothers go to school while I stay home; I eat if there’s food left over when everyone is done; and I am the poorest of the poor.” The later sections, however, are about hope — with chapters like “Because I am a girl, I will share what I know; I am the heart of my community; I will pull my family out of poverty if you give me the chance; I will take what you invest in me and uplift everyone around me; and I can change the world.” Each story is also accompanied by photographs of the girls and their communities and ends with a “Did You Know?” section, with facts and information about the lives of girls around the world.

As Rosemary says in her introduction, “If you are a girl the world can be full of promise and possibility, or it can be a world of barriers and danger.” And, as we hear from the girls in this book, the future for many girls in the world today can be very uncertain. Many will be denied an education, go hungry, work in unsafe conditions, be forced to marry too young to a person who is not of their choosing and will become mothers when they are still children themselves. Plan International works in partnership with millions of people around the world to end global poverty, and its one agenda is to improve the lives of children. This beautifully photographed book should adorn the shelves of every classroom and library and should be shared with children in the junior and middle grades throughout the world to increase awareness of the Because I am a Girl movement.
Our Heroes: How Kids are Making a Difference
written and illustrated by Janet Wilson
Second Story Press, 2014
978-1-92758-341-8 (hc) $18.95
for Grades 1 to 6
Non-Fiction | Citizenship | Social Justice | Courage | Homelessness | Prejudice | Self-Respect

This book tells the true stories of children from around the globe who opened up their hearts and minds to the unfairness of the world and decided to try to make a difference. Wilson starts the book with the story of Ubuntu, which describes a way of living that encourages us to treat each other with kindness because all humans are connected. Following this introduction, 10 children are featured who have tackled issues such as hunger, homelessness, bullying, discrimination, the rights of women and girls, food for dogs and cats in shelters and much more. In two sections at the back of the book, Wilson also introduces us to many other young heroes who are regular people of various ages, gender and financial status and are admired for their qualities of giving, sharing, helping and caring. The final section of the book talks about what “YOUth” can do to make the world better: help others, donate, volunteer, fundraise, spread the word or create or join an organization.

This is a wonderful book that can be used to inspire children and adults to treat each other with kindness and do what we can to help one another. The children in this book all followed different paths to make a difference, but the underlying message is that the path you choose is not important but the act of giving is. This is another excellent resource to have in classrooms and libraries and would be suitable for late primary and junior grade students.

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

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNER OF THE
2014 Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award

Established by Charles Baillie in the name of his wife, author Marilyn Baillie, this $20,000 prize, shared between author and illustrator, honours excellence in the picture book format for children aged three to eight.

How To
written and illustrated by Julie Morstad
Simply Read Books, 2013
978-1-897476-57-4 (hc) $18.95

The Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award is administered by the Canadian Children’s Book Centre.

For more information and for jury comments, visit www.bookcentre.ca
Chewables! Reading to babies is simply delicious!

Board Books for the Very Young

BY ROBIN SALES

Chewables — the books that introduce our little ones to the lifelong pleasure of reading! Who doesn’t like to devour a good book at any age? Early on, books may even have teeth marks, but board books are rugged for a reason. Teeth marks are sometimes part of children's discovery of the physical book. However, with gentle guidance, chewing can be a swift rite of passage as little ones embark on a lifelong journey — and a love affair with — discovery through books. When tiny children and the grownups who care for them open a book together, so much is possible! Stories, love songs, forays into the wide world beyond or closer-to-home simple celebrations of new accomplishments or tickly tours of kissable spots... all this and more awaits.

Let’s start with some kisses! *Lots of Kisses* by award-winning poet Lorna Crozier is a simple action book that guides loving parents or caregivers and their lucky kids through a sweet storm of kisses to wash away tears. This gently rhyming exploration is replete with cute photos of babies and their caring adults (most likely their mamas and papas). There are bound to be giggles and squeals of delight as the reader moves through the book, kissing each baby body part as they go. This is a very sweet simple book to read to just one child in a cozy setting. However, a group of giggly toddlers, pointing to each body part as you read it aloud to the group, could also be great fun. It would be a nice addition to a story time about the human body.

*Lots of Kisses*, written by Lorna Crozier
Orca Book Publishers, 2014
978-1-45980-745-7 (board book) $9.95
for baby to toddler

*Look at Me Now!*, written by Carol McDougall and Shanda LaRamee-Jones
illustrated by Carmen Mok
Nimbus Publishing, 2014
978-1-77108-207-5 (board book) $9.95
for baby to toddler

*Look at Me Now!*, written by Carol McDougall and Shanda LaRamee-Jones and illustrated by Carmen Mok, is a rhyming celebration of the successes of a very young child in the course of a busy day. This cheerful book reads like a journal entry of a toddler’s daily accomplishments. These range from eating alone to learning new words, making friends and having new experiences. Straightforward text with cheerful illustrations will keep young children who can relate to these important daily events engaged. The book could work aloud either for an individual child or for a very young story-time group. Engaging children by repeating actions like finding belly buttons, touching noses, clapping, wiggling and pretending to climb stairs might add to the excitement.

In addition to the physical pleasures of a good read accompanied by tickling or cuddling, or celebrations of the daily accomplishments in a young child’s life, there is so much more to discover in books, even board books for the very young. The next three books are simple steps toward adventure and discovery, and even a mystery for the very young.

*Look at Me Now!*, written by Carol McDougall and Shanda LaRamee-Jones and illustrated by Carmen Mok
Nimbus Publishing, 2014
978-1-77108-207-5 (board book) $9.95
for baby to toddler

*An Pebble Story* and *A Button Story*, written by Emil Sher and illustrated by Cindy Revel, both benefit from simple language and bright images that suit the seemingly simple parent-child “adventure” stories. In *A Pebble Story*, an art project leads to adventure and discovery when a young boy discovers he is missing some key green pebbles. Mother and son embark on an adventure to find some. From road and river pebbles to skipping pebbles, their clearly enjoyable adventure spans pebble day into pebble night, but yields
no green ones. The next morning, a bright idea saves the day and brings the story and the project to completion. The search that yields the solution, if not the sought after green pebbles, is in fact the treasure in the end. This is also a gentle reminder to slow down and enjoy the process.

A Button Story is another upbeat cheerful story of a lost button that leads to adventure and discovery. When a sweater is missing a button, a search begins, and one thing leads to another. Parent and child visit the button store and discover its many colourful buttons — so many shapes, colours, sizes and forms! A selection leads to a repair then leads to a discovery and a surprise ending. In the end, an adventure is shared; discoveries and a choice are made. A sweater is repaired, a button is found and so is an original solution to go with it. Mystery solved. Governor General’s Literary Award-winning illustrator Cindy Revell’s cheerful illustrations in oil bring the story to life, complementing and supplementing the very simple text. Because of the wonderful small details in the artwork, both these books might be better for a close reading together. Details in the art will be especially fun to study and talk about together. The stories may even inspire some rock-and-button-hunting expeditions or art projects.

Often story sessions for the very young happen at bedtime, and what better way to finish a session than with a sweet song for baby? Love You More, written by Susan Musgrave and illustrated by Esperança Melo, is just such a “love song for baby.” Luminous pictures complement gentle rhyme that leads the reader through the changes of a calendar year while emphasizing the profound and unchanging love of parents for their children. The rhyme makes it an almost musical expression of love, as each month is depicted in vibrant colourful illustrations. Though ideal for reading to one child, this could also be an effective story to incorporate into a toddler or preschool story time on seasons or St. Valentine’s Day. This is just a small sampling of the many pleasures for young and old to be found among board books. The pleasure of discovery, the intimate shared experience and the potential for some sweet snuggling are all part of the magic of board books for the very young and the adults who care about them. These sturdy, lovely and, yes, sometimes chewable, books are a great encouragement to read early and read often. Though the stories are short, the impact of sharing them will endure.

Robin Sales is a Montreal librarian.
Rafaela Was My Robot, written by Alexandra Dellevoet, is a kind and honest book about love and loss. Jacob has a robot he adores, and Ken Turner’s soft watercolour illustrations show how much Rafa loves Jacob back. The robot’s one-of-a-kind battery is a large red heart the boy holds in his hands. Jacob takes Rafa everywhere—to swim lessons, to school, to other countries and other galaxies. But, eventually, Rafa’s one-of-a-kind battery begins to fail. The doctor can’t fix Rafa, and there is nothing Jacob can do. Rafa dies.

The young boy’s grief is respectful and true. “Jacob cried and cried, until he filled the tub with all his sadness. He wondered how he would go on without Rafa.” Dellevoet provides a window to Jacob’s sadness without offering platitudes. We watch as Jacob builds a memorial for Rafa and as he makes a Rafa-shaped pillow. Jacob promises the Rafa pillow that he will meet him in his dreams.

It’s not often in North America that we see a book with this level of honesty about death. My seven-year-old read my copy before me. She took it in stride, declaring it to be “a good book.” It was only upon reading it myself that I realized the book’s theme. My daughter’s reaction surprised me and that caused me to wonder why. I’m glad she had a chance to engage with this story before she needed it. I’m glad other children will have the chance to engage with this book, too. We all need it.

Good Morning, Canada, written by Andrea Lynn Beck, is a kind and honest book about love and loss. Jacob has a robot he adores, and Ken Turner’s soft watercolour illustrations show how much Rafa loves Jacob back. The robot’s one-of-a-kind battery is a large red heart the boy holds in his hands. Jacob takes Rafa everywhere—to swim lessons, to school, to other countries and other galaxies. But, eventually, Rafa’s one-of-a-kind battery begins to fail. The doctor can’t fix Rafa, and there is nothing Jacob can do. Rafa dies.

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Out of the classroom, this is a sweet read—a nice book for cuddling up with your little one. Good Morning, Canada is a good book for young children who have learned to read independently. The simple rhyme and use of sight words make it easier for emergent readers to become proficient ones. This book is a complement to Beck’s Goodnight, Canada (2012).

Jody Holford is a teacher and author in Chilliwack, BC.

Mr. Frank, written and illustrated by Irene Luxbacher, weaves together modern history and the tailor’s memories of piecing together designer clothes over many decades of fashion as he mended, cut, sewed and created. But before he hangs up his measuring tape, he endeavours to complete one last challenging design that would be “stylish... dazzling... special and comfortable” yet “so simple it was elegant and so strong it could be washed a thousand times” — a design for his grandson.

Luxbacher’s use of family photographs in the backgrounds of the last few pages results in an endearing display of warmth amongst Mr. Frank’s family and the love for his grandson. The author/illustrator cleverly grasps our attention with layers of colour and collage, whether it be digital photo scans of sunflowers or the sketchy hand-coloured illustrations of grandfather and grandson or the rainbow of costumes hanging on a clothes line that exude life and vivacity over the black-and-white pencilled illustrations.

Mr. Frank sews together relationships between grandparents and their grandchildren, touching on memories and connecting their relationship through heartfelt actions. Worthy to snuggle up with and read together, this is a book for parents, grandparents and children, especially at bedtime!

Lara Chauvin is a creative writer and co-founder of a children’s arts and crafts workshop company.
Replete with enthusiasm, fishing equipment and a lunch of “fire pie” (pizza), Gramps and his young granddaughter, Gracie, head out into the early morning fog toward a favourite fishing spot. Although Gracie has looked forward to her special time with her grandfather, she grows doubtful about her ability to catch a fish when she realizes that she has to attach a worm to a hook all by herself. Secretly allowing the worms to escape, the young girl questions her grandfather. “Do you think I am too young to be fishing?” and provides him with several reasons why she might be. While Gramps catches one fish after another, Gracie creatively solves her dilemma by placing a crust of “fire pie” on the hook. In short order, she is rewarded for her ingenuity with the capture of a trout—a fire pie trout. Gracie realizes that she is not too young to go fishing after all!

Not only does author Melanie Mosher successfully portray a loving relationship between generations, but she also conveys the quiet strength of a little girl whose insecurity gradually gives way to a newly found sense of confidence. The conversation between the granddaughter and grandfather sounds so natural that it almost feels as if one is listening in: “Are you sure I’m not too young to be fishing? I’m too young to stay up late.”/“I reckon the fish don’t know how old you are, Gracie. All they know is how tasty that worm looks.”

Besides providing expressive depictions of the two protagonists, Renné Benoit’s watercolour, coloured pencil and gouache artwork also beautifully illustrates the natural environment and the gradual transformation of the sky from a fog “…as thick as your gramma’s pea soup” to becoming “…as bright as a blue jay.”

Senta Ross is a former elementary teacher and teacher-librarian in Kitchener, Ontario.
Sam & Dave Dig a Hole, the latest gem by Mac Barnett and Canadian author/illustrator Jon Klassen, is the story of two friends who decide to go on a search for something spectacular. They start digging a hole, with a pet dog in tow. They take occasional breaks to refuel with chocolate milk and animal cookies, and persist even when they don't find anything — they try splitting up and digging in different directions. Eventually, they get progressively dirtier, run out of snacks and end up deeper and deeper underground...

The text is kept deadpan simple, and the charming artwork doesn’t just serve to illustrate it. Sam and Dave keep missing out on large gemstones as they change directions while digging, a great gag only apparent in the illustrations. Their dog tries to steer them in the direction of treasure — a detail you might miss if you don’t look carefully — but is ignored throughout, until it finally digs too deep while trying to reach a bone. At this point, Sam and Dave fall and fall through a hole and land back home, where they first started digging. Or so it seems.

Satisfied that they’ve experienced something spectacular, the boys go about their business, but everything is just a little bit different in this universe: the apple tree is now a pear tree, a red tulip is now a blue flower. Both adults and children will wonder: where did the boys end up? Sam & Dave is an exceptionally fun read that is perfect for inviting discussion at home or in the classroom.

Camilla Kahrizi is the Marketing and Website Coordinator for the Canadian Children’s Book Centre.

Soapstone Signs (Orca Echoes)
written by Jeff Pinkney
illustrated by Darlene Gait
Orca Book Publishers, 2014
978-1-4598-0400-5 (pb) $6.95
for Grades 2 to 4

Fiction | First Nations | Soapstone Carving | Seasons | Nature

A nine-year-old Cree boy looks forward to the spring when a travelling soapstone carver visits the lodge his parents run. Lindy, the carver, gives him four pieces of soapstone, telling him that the stone itself will answer when he wonders what to carve. After dreaming of a bear, the boy carves a crooked bear (“My brother says it looks like roadkill.”), but Lindy approves.

Throughout the seasons, the young narrator looks for signs of what to carve next, finding inspiration in the world around him — from the beluga whales he sees while blueberry picking with his mother to the migrating snow geese at the fall hunt and finally the otters playing in the winter snow.

Darlene Gait, an artist from the Coast Salish Esquimault Nation, has contributed beautiful black-and-white illustrations that show the reader the tiny carvings, the real animals that inspire them and activities of the young boy’s life.

This is a beautiful story of creativity and response to nature, neatly joined to a story of life in the north and its seasonal activities (camping out while blueberry picking, accompanying elders on the goose hunt, playing hockey both in the arena and on the frozen river). Children are shown learning to use shotguns with care and respect, in the context of the important hunt for food. Within the confines of a short novel and with gentle humour, Pinkney nicely depicts the teasing competition and camaraderie between the two brothers and the lessons the narrator learns from community elders. Bravo to the author and illustrator.

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

Audrey (cow)
written by Dan Bar-el
illustrated by Tatjana Mai-Wyss
Tundra Books, 2014
978-1-77049-602-6 (hc) $21.99
for Grades 3 to 6

Fiction | Farms | Cows | Survival Stories | Adventure | Humour

The cow I spied was silent and still / Her smile serene, her mood tranquil / Oh to be she, without worry or fear / Empty of dread and full of good cheer / Familiar she seemed and on closer inspection / It was me that I spied in the water’s reflection.

Mooove over, Wilbur, there’s a new celebrity on the farm! Her name is Audrey and this poetic, free-thinking bovine has no intention of becoming someone’s steak dinner! Audrey’s contemplative, pastoral life on Bittersweet Farm ends the day Madge (cow) gives her the bad news: Audrey is a food cow, and someday soon a truck will take her on a one-way journey to ’Abbot’s War,’ the slaughterhouse. To escape her dark destiny and pursue her dream of going on a clover-tasting tour of France, Audrey and her barnyard family hatch a perilous escape plan. Mayhem, including a sheep tornado, a dancing cow and a crazed crow ensues.

Inspired by the true story of a cow that fled its fate and eluded capture for 11 days, Dan Bar-el masterfully constructs Audrey’s story through cleverly narrated oral accounts by all those involved in her epic adventure. Each of the over 30 characters, animal and human, has a distinct voice, and their various (and often hilarious) personalities shine through. Charming black-and-white illustrations highlight key moments beautifully. Readers young and old will cheer for Audrey as she navigates the many dangers of life beyond the farm in her search for freedom.

With so many unique characters and voices, the read-aloud possibilities, whether at home or in the classroom, are nearly endless. At times poignant and at others laugh out-loud funny, this insightful, touching story is a wonderful addition to any bookshelf.

Tracey Schindler is a book reviewer and former teacher in Ajax, Ontario.
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNER OF THE

2014 Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction for Young People

Established in 1988 in memory of historian and author Geoffrey Bilson, this $5,000 prize is awarded annually to the Canadian author of an outstanding work of historical fiction.

Graffiti Knight
written by Karen Bass
Pajama Press, 2013
978-1-927485-53-8 (pb) $14.95

The Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction for Young People is administered by the Canadian Children’s Book Centre.

For more information and for jury comments, visit www.bookcentre.ca

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In 1942 Amsterdam, five-year-old Beatrix witnesses a Nazi soldier forcing her Jewish mother off a tram. The soldier then turns his attention to Beatrix, but the ticket taker Lars impulsively blurs out that she is his niece, and with his brother Hans, the tram’s driver, they rescue her. The two elderly brothers realize that they are now in charge of the little girl, but are at a loss as to how to care for her. Knowing that harbouring a Jew could cost them their lives, they turn to a neighbour, Mrs. Vos, for help. But even these kindly rescuers cannot completely shield Beatrix from the horrors of war.

Author Sharon McKay takes readers to Nazi-occupied Holland in her novel for young readers, based on a true story. Writing at a level that is accessible for younger readers, McKay does an excellent job of creating nail-biting moments where readers will be worried for Beatrix and all of her protectors, but the author is always sensitive to the age of her audience, and the novel never gets too graphic or violent.

The story is told from a third-person point of view, and readers will gain excellent insight into how difficult it was to survive the occupation, particularly for those who risked their lives by sheltering Jewish children. As the war progresses, so does the danger increase. But no matter how bleak the situation becomes, the story always promotes hope and empathy — two traits that make this novel a standout and an essential addition to any collection of Holocaust fiction.

Rachel Seigel is Sale and Selection Strategist at EduCan Media.

**The End of the Line**
written by Sharon E. McKay
Annick Press, 2014
978-1-55451-659-9 (hc) $21.95
978-1-55451-658-2 (pb) $12.95
for Grades 3 to 6

Fiction | World War II | The Netherlands | Holocaust | Heroism

The author of *Bud, Not Buddy* returns with a companion novel to *Elijah of Buxton* (his TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award winner and Newbery Honor Book). Set 40 years later, *The Madman of Piney Woods* connects the lives of two very different boys, Benji and Red.

Aspiring journalist Benjamin “Benji” Alston lives in the Black community of Buxton and enjoys playing in the woods with his friends. Alvin “Red” Stockard lives in nearby Chatham and spends much of his time using “the scientific method” to determine the cause and effect for certain situations, including his Irish grandmother’s bizarre behaviour.

Both boys have heard the scary stories about someone who lives in the woods. In Buxton, it is thought that he may be an escaped slave who cannot function in the civilized world, while in Chatham he’s rumoured to be a dangerous Lion Man. But a chance encounter leads both boys into the woods where they come face to face with the real human being. When the “Madman” needs their help, the boys work together, unearth some of the harsh truths about Red’s grandmother’s past—and the reason why she is so afraid.

While the plot of the book moves a little slowly for a middle grade novel, Curtis’s sense of humour and humanity creates an atmosphere where legend and history merge to show that things aren’t always what they seem. Benji and Red are witness to how the adults have dealt with the horrors of their past, as both the “Madman” and Grandmother O’Toole have made decisions out of fear. Now it is up to the two boys to make a new choice, one that will hopefully connect people in understanding, rather than hate.

Melanie J. Fishbane is freelance writer and the Co-ordinator for Children’s Book Reviews for the National Reading Campaign.

**Stealing Time**
written by Anne Dublin
Dundurn Press, 2014
978-1-45970-973-7 (pb) $9.99
for Grades 3 to 6

Fiction | Time Travel | Science & Technology

Jonah Wiley is struggling with his parents’ divorce and his father’s swift remarriage. Against his wishes, he has to go to stay with his father and his new family while his mother attends a conference. During the visit, he steals a rare watch from his father that once belonged to his grandfather.

In an unexpected twist, the watch transports both Jonah and his stepbrother Toby through time. I use the word twist intentionally! Each time the watch is wound, the boys are whisked off to share adventures, misadventures and glimpses of how timekeeping evolved as they visit Egypt, China, France and other locations. They arrive in these places at key moments in the history of timekeeping. The good and bad experiences they share also strengthen their relationship. In the end, Jonah finds the strength to admit his theft to his father, to accept his present circumstances and to face the future.

Stealing Time could be useful as a complement to a history unit exploring time keeping and will appeal to readers who enjoy fantasy with a twist of history. Jonah is a bewildered young time traveller, muddling through unusual situations that defy ideas about linear time. In the process, he also finds the strength to cope with adversity in many forms and his changing family situation, and to accept and appreciate a new step sibling. This may resonate with young readers who are struggling with changes in their own lives, even if they are not being hurled through time.

A tendency to pop off to a new time and place, leaving exciting plot twists unresolved, was a bit disconcerting, leaving the reader craving more information about that time and place and the characters who played a fleeting role in the boys’ story. Desire for more information is often a positive sign. Overall, Stealing Time is an enjoyable read.

Robin Sales is a Montreal librarian.
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNER OF THE

2014 Norma Fleck Award for Canadian Children’s Non-Fiction

Established by the Fleck Family Foundation, this $10,000 prize recognizes exceptional non-fiction books for young people. The award honours Norma Fleck (1906-1998) who inspired a deep love of reading in her children.

The Last Train: A Holocaust Story
written by Rona Arato
Owlkids Books, 2013
978-1-926973-62-3 (hc) $16.95

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNER OF THE

2014 Monica Hughes Award for Science Fiction and Fantasy

Established in 2011, this award honours excellence in the science fiction and fantasy genre. The $5,000 prize, awarded annually to a Canadian author, is sponsored by HarperCollins Canada, in memory of the late Monica Hughes.

Sorrow’s Knot
written by Erin Bow
Arthur A. Levine Books/Scholastic, 2013
978-0-545-16666-9 (hc) $19.99
978-0-545-57800-4 (eBook) $17.99
Hate Mail
(Orca Currents)
written by Monique Polak
Orca Book Publishers, 2014
978-1-45980-775-4 (pb) $9.95
978-1-45980-776-1 (hc) $16.95
for Grades 5 to 8
Fiction | Prejudice | Courage | Family | Disability

Jordie is a quintessential young teen, obsessed with how he is viewed by his peers and with not being marked as different in any way. When his aunt and uncle move back to Montreal, Jordie is faced with his autistic cousin, Todd, attending his high school. Todd is different — he doesn’t like to be touched, he “stimms” by scratching his armpits and is obsessed with all things aviation-related. Jordie does everything possible to distance himself from Todd at school, refusing to admit that they are related. Even when Todd is being bullied, he finds it nearly impossible to stand up for his cousin, instead becoming a bystander, watching Todd suffer. Then his aunt and uncle receive a hate-filled letter calling Todd a freak and suggesting he should be kept in a zoo. The letter precipitates a family crisis in which Jordie is forced to reflect on his own behaviour and to find the strength to stand up for Todd.

This book was written as part of a project called “Libres comme l’art” in which Polak worked as a writer-in-residence at Riverdale High School in Pierrefonds. Polak’s collaboration with the students gives the story an authentic feel, eloquently capturing the attitudes of many teenagers toward issues of status, peer pressure, special needs and bullying. Inspired by a true story, this is a candid portrait of the struggle teens (and others of all ages) encounter when they are confronted with difference.

Polak delivers a powerful message about hate, prejudice and the power of acceptance and standing up for what is right. Written in an accessible style that never sacrifices the story, the book will appeal to young teens at a variety of reading levels.

Tracey Schindler

Julian
written by William Bell
Doubleday Canada, 2014
978-0-38568-205-3 (hc) $19.95
for Grades 7 and up
Fiction | Identity | Mystery

Through a near-tragic event in which he saves a young boy’s life, Aidan earns the gratitude of Mr. Bai, the boy’s grandfather who uses his numerous resources and connections to give Aidan a new identity and apparent control over his destiny. Aidan, now Julian, soon finds himself at the centre of forces he doesn’t understand. Who is Mr. Bai, and who are the mysterious people who come and go without a trace from the apartment below? And most mysterious of all is the beautiful Ninon — a girl who reveals a dimension of life Julian never thought possible.

William Bell’s new novel, Julian, is a fascinating and suspenseful read that touches on themes of identity that will intrigue young adult readers. Aidan/Julian is realistic, savvy and easy to like. Having gone through a number of foster homes, he longs for the chance to strike out on his own. When his current family announces that they are moving, he sees his chance. With Mr. Bai’s help, he is outfitted with a new name, new ID, his own apartment and a job. For most readers, a teenager living on his own seems like an ideal situation, but Bell does an excellent job of not romanticizing the situation. Julian has no family or friends, and he is lonely.

Julian is also understandably both curious and afraid of what is going on with the revolving door of guests in the downstairs apartment. He suspects that Mr. Bai’s business is something dangerous and shady, and he questions the ethics of what he’s become involved in. Added to the mix is the homeless teen Ninon, who adds romance to the story and pierces through Julian’s tough façade.

Enthralling, mysterious and reaching a satisfying conclusion, this masterful new novel will fully engage readers to the final page.

Lisa Doucet is Co-Manager of Woozles, the Halifax children’s bookstore.

A Year in the Life of a Total and Complete Genius
written by Stacey Matson
Scholastic Canada, 2014
978-1-4431-3317-3 (hc) $14.99
for Grades 5 to 9
Fiction | Humour | Grief | Bullying

Written entirely in the form of letters, emails, school assignments and journal entries, this book chronicles the events of Arthur Bean’s Grade 7 year in which he vows to win the newly announced story-writing competition; is chosen for the role of Romeo in his school play; starts writing for the school newspaper; becomes friends with his long-time crush, Kennedy Laurel; and finds himself reluctantly tutoring his nemesis, school bully Robbie Zack.

It is a busy year indeed for Arthur Bean, whose wit and breezy self-confidence prove to be highly entertaining. However, as his story progresses, readers soon see that his self-assurance often masks his sadness and uncertainty, as both he and his father struggle to come to terms with his mother’s recent death. In fact, much to his surprise, he discovers that even someone like Robbie Zack has more going on than it appears on the surface. Although he makes his share of mistakes, Arthur navigates this eventful school year with inimitable aplomb, making many valuable discoveries along the way.

Combining laugh-out-loud humour with a profoundly insightful look at grief and the typical trials of middle school life, Matson has created a book that succeeds in every possible way! Despite his audacity, Arthur is a sympathetic and utterly endearing character, and the unlikely and grudging friendship that develops between him and Robbie Zack is a heartwarming and quietly powerful reminder to young readers that things are not always what they seem. Throriously hilarious, heartfelt and genuinely touching, this surprisingly reflective book offers something for every reader.

Rachel Seigel
On the barren plains of Below, a teenage boy named Hokk lives in isolation amid the remnants of our modern world. On the floating islands in the skies of Above, Elia and her family are enslaved in endless drudgery. When a natural disaster in Above causes the islands to crumble, Elia falls to Below. There she is rescued by Hokk, who realizes she might be the key to ending his exile. Both teens are desperate to return to the homes they’ve lost, and their journey will propel them into a centuries-old battle for the earth and sky around them.

In this first novel of his debut futuristic fantasy trilogy for young adults, Jason Chabot paints a picture of two very different worlds. Below is bleak and desolate, and its inhabitants scavenge the human bodies that fall from Above, hoping to find treasures that will help them to survive. Hokk, a teenage criminal living in exile, is tough and resourceful and is biding his time in Below until his banishment is up and he can return to the city and his family. In contrast, Above is a bustling metropolis on a system of islands in the sky in which Elia and her family are enslaved.

The worlds of Above and Below are vividly written, and Chabot immediately hooks readers by enshrouding them in mystery and raising questions about the worlds and their inhabitants. Throughout the story, there is a definite sense that every thread is leading up to something important, but the author doesn’t get there quite fast enough to fully engage readers who prefer a quick reveal. Yet, in spite of the sometimes slow pacing, Below is a promising start to an original new series that is sure to engage fans of dystopian fiction.

Rachel Seigel

Dance of the Banished
(Broken Sky Chronicles, Book 1)
written by Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch
Pajama Press, 2014
978-1-927485-65-1 (pb) $15.95
for Grades 8 to 12

Fiction | Historical Fiction | World War I | Ottoman Empire | Canada | Genocide | Internment

It is June 1913, when Ali breaks the news to his fiancee Zeynep that he will be leaving their Anatolian village to go to Canada. Once there, he hopes to finally be able to save enough money to pay for her passage, and to build a new life for them there. But the world is on the brink of war and everything soon changes. The two record the events that they witness in journal entries to each other, even though they both fear that they will never see one another again.

Alternating between these two sets of journal entries, readers learn Zeynep’s story of going to live and work with Christian missionaries. As World War I looms, she witnesses first-hand the horrors of the Armenian genocide at the hands of the Young Turks who now control the government. Conditions for her and the other Alevi Kurds are only marginally better, but that is small consolation as she watches Armenian men, women and children being cruelly treated and marched to their deaths. Meanwhile, in Canada, Ali and the other Alevi Kurds who had tried to settle in Brantford, Ontario, are falsely accused of a crime and sent to an internment camp in northern Ontario. As these two separate stories unfold, a vivid and devastating picture emerges.

This latest work is an outstanding testament to Skrypuch’s mastery as a writer of historical fiction for young readers. She has created forthright and dramatic accounts of two little-known events from that time period, inviting readers of all ages to try to understand the depth of suffering that these groups have experienced. She has put a profoundly human face on the horrors of war while also creating an insightful portrait of the Alevi Kurds. Zeynep and Ali are both forced to mature very quickly, and their development is convincing. Skrypuch skillfully captures their voices, their longing, their heartbreak and their courage.

Lisa Doucet

The Art of Getting Stared At
written by Laura Langston
Razorbill, 2014
978-0-67006-750-3 (hc) $18.99
978-0-14319-298-5 (eBook) $11.99
for Grades 9 and up

Fiction | Physical Appearance | Hair | Alopecia

Sixteen-year-old Sloane Kendrick is given the opportunity of a lifetime after she produces a school video that goes viral on YouTube. Invited to apply for a film scholarship at a renowned film school, she must produce a video in less than three weeks and work with Isaac Alexander, a flirtatious classmate who usually doesn’t do his share of the work. And if that isn’t enough to deal with, Sloane discovers a bald spot on her head and is diagnosed with alopecia areata — an autoimmune disease that has no cause, no cure and no definitive outcome. For a girl who never thought appearances mattered, nothing could be further from the truth as she attempts to deal with her hair loss. Determined to keep her disease a secret and get her video recorded, Sloane learns that she needs to stop judging the people in her life and let them help her.

Laura Langston has written a YA novel that grabs your attention from the get-go and keeps you engaged until the very last page. We watch as Sloane transitions from a teenager who doesn’t care about her looks to a teenager battling a disease that drastically changes her appearance and has her terrified of what others will say. This novel brings to the forefront the emphasis society places on the importance of physical appearance and how that affects teenagers’ identities. The novel also deals with many other issues (bullying, parental relationships, romance) that teens deal with on a daily basis, making it an ideal resource for high school classrooms and libraries. A highly recommended read!

Sandra O’Brien is the Interim Program Coordinator at the Canadian Children’s Book Centre.
Amy Bright’s second novel, *Swimmers*, dives into the emotional anxiety of survivor guilt, suicide, and how the most unlikely of friendships can save someone from self-destructing.

Hunter is drowning in the grief and shame over what his best friend Niall did, and the part he played. Shutting himself off from his girlfriend Lee, his family and schoolmates, Hunter deals with his pain by doing drugs. When he is required to go to counselling, Hunter is forced to look back on all that led up to Niall’s attempted suicide.

Unable to cope, Hunter takes too many pills — unwilling to admit to himself and others that he took them on purpose — and his parents send him to Lethbridge to live with his Aunt Lynne. There, he is homeschooled with 12-year-old Poppy, who is sinking under the weight of her father’s legacy. As Hunter and Poppy’s unlikely friendship develops, they are able to resurface and start over.

The novel begins when Lee comes to Lethbridge to bring Hunter back to Victoria, BC, to have closure with Niall. Having just discovered something about Poppy’s father, Hunter brings the girl along. As the three journey across Western Canada on a Greyhound bus, each person has to come to terms with the fallout of how other people’s actions have affected them.

As the story shifts back and forth between the previous year and the bus, it is sometimes confusing where we are in the timeline; however, Bright’s compassionate exploration of the questions around suicide makes this a worthwhile read. What surfaces is a story of healing, friendship and letting go.

Melanie J. Fishbane

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The photo-collage illustrations by Josée Bisaillon complement the story exquisitely. Her judicious choices subtly reflect the scientific information in the text as revealed by the story. This visual information is essential to the reader solving the mystery of how Lily will prepare for the coming of winter.

As a read aloud, the text of *Winter’s Coming* exudes a hushed reverence. For teachers, the connections to the science curriculum are obvious (and there are more animal facts provided as an addendum). But the author’s use of vocabulary — slightly beyond the knowledge of most primary children — provides an excellent opportunity for contextual word study of such words as “racket,” “glimpse” and “nimble.”

Personally, I plan to use *Winter’s Coming* together with Thornhill’s other book, *Is This Panama? A Migration Story*, as part of my integrated science and literacy program in Grade 3. *Winter’s Coming* is a rare volume that parents, teachers and children will want to read again and again.

Nancy Rawlinson is an elementary teacher in Toronto and recipient of the 2014 OTIP Teaching Award.

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Lily, the young snowshoe hare, does not understand the concept of winter. Her naïve understanding has her thinking winter could be some sort of a monster arriving to scare the woodland creatures to the point where they must hide both food and themselves. She worries about how she is supposed to prepare for winter, but in the end, Lily realizes that, unbeknownst to her, nature has already helped her.

Author Jan Thornhill masterfully tells a deceptively simple story whilst seamlessly interweaving scientifically accurate details of the over-wintering habits of an impressive array of different animals.

Jody Holford
Patient Zero: Solving the Mysteries of Deadly Epidemics
written by Marilee Peters
Annick Press, 2014
978-1-55451-670-4 (hc) $24.95
978-1-55451-671-1 (pb) $14.95
for Grades 5 and up
Non-Fiction | Medicine | Medical History | Diseases | Epidemics

Patient Zero: Solving the Mysteries of Deadly Epidemics explains how diseases spread and how scientists and doctors have tried to understand and stop them over time. Each of its seven chapters covers one epidemic: The Great Plague, the Soho Outbreak, Yellow Fever in Cuba, Typhoid in New York City, Spanish Influenza, Ebola in Zaire and AIDS in the US. The book features tales of scientists who laid the groundwork for modern epidemiology, with interspersed sidebars and anecdotes that provide further historical context and more information about the diseases and epidemics.

Peters presents an account of each outbreak written like a mystery or thriller, which will keep young readers gripped, and the book is absolutely packed with information. It also contains a glossary, suggestions for further reading, a list of sources and an index.

The only downside is the layout and design; the text is very densely packed, and the long one-page anecdotes often break the flow of the narrative. Though it is designated as appropriate for ages 10 and up, it might also be too text-heavy for younger readers. That said, it would make a strong resource for the classroom. Patient Zero is definitely a timely book, helpful to any teacher or parent of a child who wants to learn more about epidemics they might hear about on the news — Ebola being a prominent example.

Christina Minaki

Dreaming in Indian: Contemporary Native American Voices
edited by Lisa Charleyboy and Mary Beth Leatherdale
Annick Press, 2014
978-1-55451-687-2 (hc) $19.95
for Grades 7 and up
Non-Fiction | First Nations | Biography | Multicultural | Stereotyping | Acceptance | Community | Prejudice | Self-Esteem | Tolerance

In Dreaming in Indian: Contemporary Native American Voices, editors Lisa Charleyboy and Mary Beth Leatherdale give us a strikingly honest, thought-provoking collection, made up of the perspectives of more than 60 First Nations contributors of various ages and walks of life, who express themselves through diverse forms of literary and visual arts.

Dreaming in Indian does not hide from disturbing truths in First Nations experience — the horrors of residential school assimilation and emotional and sexual abuses, and the realities of poverty, depression, drug abuse and poor health. But this difficult honesty is mixed with hope and even gratitude. Renowned throat singer Tanya Tagaq Gillis, for instance, is quoted as saying, “I would like to thank all [those] who tormented me for teaching me resilience. Later in life, I came to... feel compassion for those who had a hard life and feel that the only solution is to take it out on others.” This book contains many moving example of hardship turned on its head. We also read passages that show First Nations anger, such as a piece about a teen driven to prostitution after residential school, and another about a woman’s loving and deeply conflicted feelings when reunited with her teenage daughter after giving her up for adoption. Bearing witness to this pain provides an important window into the harshness of much First Nations experience, but also the dignity and raw honesty with which they voice their own stories.

This book also tells stories that attest to the importance of family and the value of respect in First Nations culture, offering hope, connection and rejuvenation. Joseph Boyden writes about his troubled youth, including the pain of a suicide attempt. He writes about finally breaking free of his past and discovering that his tumultuous teen years were a blessing in disguise, having taught him about the beauty of the world and people, and about the reward of reaching out.

The First Nations’ respect for nature is a bedrock belief, as evidenced by many works in this collection. In an interview about her vibrant painting, “A Song to Water,” Christi Belcourt says that when she painted this piece, she thought about the importance of protecting water as the planet’s most important natural resource. In turn, “Indians in the City,” a poem by graduate student Henry Heavy Shield, illustrates the often jarring contrast between urban life and the rural one, connected to land and family.

The Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Derek Nepinak, explains the importance of First Nations youth’s exposure to cultural outlets as a way to encourage them to develop a positive identity and achieve their goals — most essential, he asserts, in the face of systemic racism faced by so many Natives. The truth of his words rings out in stories of successful First Nations young professionals. Former Olympian Waneek Horn-Miller discusses how her love of sport and the support of family brought her through the trauma of being stabbed during the Oka crisis. First Nations actress Michelle Thrush describes the transformative power of the arts in helping her recover from her painful childhood, teaching her what she now teaches students — to channel their emotions to lead their audience on a healing journey.

It is fitting that this anthology ends with photographs of and quotes from a few recent First Nations high school graduates. Beginning with thoughts of home, family, roots and Native tradition, this work concludes with the aspirations of the next generation — moving forward, not despite their roots but because of them. Heartbreaking and uplifting by turns, this anthology will capture the attention of mature, socially conscious young readers.

Christina Minaki is a Toronto writer and reviewer.
Residential Schools, With the Words and Images of Survivors: A National History
written by Larry Loyie with Wayne K. Spear and Constance Brissenden
Indigenous Education Press, 2014
978-0-99393-710-1 (hc) $34.95
for Grades 7 and up

Non-Fiction | Aboriginal | Residential Schools | Canadian History
Residential Schools, With the Words and Images of Survivors is a history of the residential schools in Canada by award-winning Cree author Larry Loyie, himself a survivor of St. Bernard Mission residential school in Grouard, AB, writing with Mohawk author and educator Wayne K. Spear and author and editor Constance Brissenden. The book gives voice to the experiences and memories of more than 65 former students or family members across Canada. Loyie’s ninth book — that took 21 years to research and three years to complete — puts the residential school system into historical and political context without sensationalizing the events that affected all of Canada’s Aboriginal people and their communities.

This book covers a range of issues in seven chapters, including the importance of culture, traditions and families; life at school; the neglect and abuse of the students; friendship and laughter and the power of healing and education in a changing world. It also tries to answer questions such as these: Why did the residential schools happen? How did they continue? Why did they stop? How did they affect the children that attended the schools, as well as their families and communities?

Included are full-colour photos as well as archival images of the schools, students and historical people and places, with explanatory captions that illustrate what the conditions were like. There are also present-day photos of former students and important events.

Interspersed amongst the chapters are sidebar boxes, such as “Survivor Speaks,” that give personal accounts revealing survivors’ memories, which include being taken away by plane to a residential school and the morning routine of one student. “Facts and Figures” boxes give such important historical facts and statistics as the number of students, number of schools, number of trained teaching staff, etc. “Highlight” boxes highlight significant events in the history of the residential schools.

The book contains good reference material, such as a map showing the locations of residential schools across Canada; a list of key dates, highlighting important events in the history of the residential schools; a glossary that provides terms and definitions and an index that includes the names of schools and the names of the survivors mentioned in the book.

The material presented is a balance of historical facts and personal experiences. While thorough in its overview — timeline, politics behind the events (racist attitudes in society and politics) — it is not explicit in the details of the neglect and abuse, but specific facts and personal testimonies reveal the deplorable conditions the children who were taken away and living far from any family support had to endure while also demonstrating the incredible resilience of the survivors and what they did to cope.

The book is suitable/appropriate for students 12 and up as a resource for one period of Canadian history that reveals the struggles of Aboriginal people to self-identify and their fight for equal rights and survival as a culture in Canada.

Karri Yano is a Toronto writer and editor.

New Editions

On the 50th anniversary of the creation of Canada’s flag comes the updated and revised version of Our Flag: The Story of Canada’s Maple Leaf, a lively and accessible book for elementary classes, written by Ann-Maureen Owens and Jane Yealland, illustrated by Bill Slavin and Esperança Melo (Kids Can Press).

Fitzhenry & Whiteside has released a new, commemorative edition of In Flanders Fields: The Story of the Poem by John McCrae, written by award-winning author Linda Granfield with illustrations by Janet Wilson. The new edition includes the original text, maps and powerful paintings of the acclaimed 1995 edition and also features an introduction by noted historian Dr. Tim Cook of the Canadian War Museum and striking new cover art by Janet Wilson.

Alligator Pie now comes in a slice for the little ones. A 40th-anniversary board book takes the verse from the groundbreaking poetry collection of the same name and serves it up with new art by Sandy Nichols, winner of a nationwide competition to find the perfect illustrator for the reptilian classic.
IN OUR NEXT ISSUE ...

Publishing Aboriginal stories: who is leading the way and what the future holds

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24
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Janet Wilson
Spic-and-Span! Lillian Gilbreth’s Wonder Kitchen
(Great Idea)
Monica Kulling, David Parkins

26
BOOK BITS
A Button Story
Emil Sher, Cindy Revell
Look at Me Now!
Carol McDougall, Shanda LaRamee-Jones, Carmen Mok
Lots of Kisses
Lorna Crozier
Love You More
Susan Musgrave, Esperança Melo
A Pebble Story
Emil Sher, Cindy Revell

28
WE RECOMMEND
The Art of Getting Stared At
Laura Langston
Audrey (cow)
Dan Bar-el, Tatjana Mai-Wyss
Below
(Broken Sky Chronicles, Book 1)
Jason Chabot
Dance of the Banished
Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch
Dreaming in Indian:
Contemporary Native American Voices
Lisa Charleyboy, Mary Beth Leatherdale, ed.
The End of the Line
Sharon E. McKay
Families Around the World
Margriet Ruurs, Jessica Rae Gordon
Fire Pie Trout
Melanie Mosher, Renné Benoît
Good Morning, Canada
Andrea Lynn Beck
Hana Hashimoto, Sixth Violin
Chieri Uegaki, Qin Leng
Hate Mail
(Orca Currents)
Monique Polak
Julian
William Bell
A Library Book for Bear
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