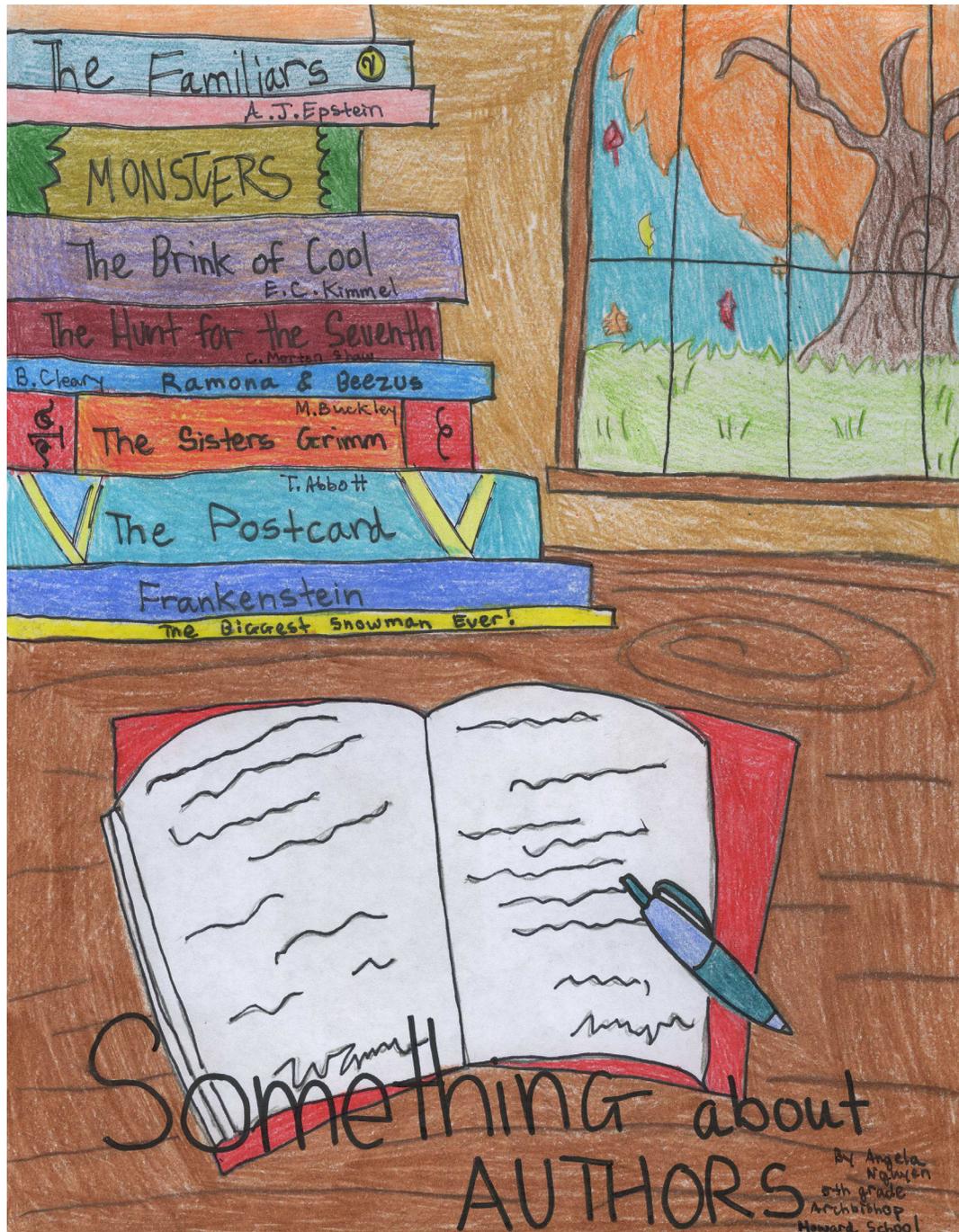
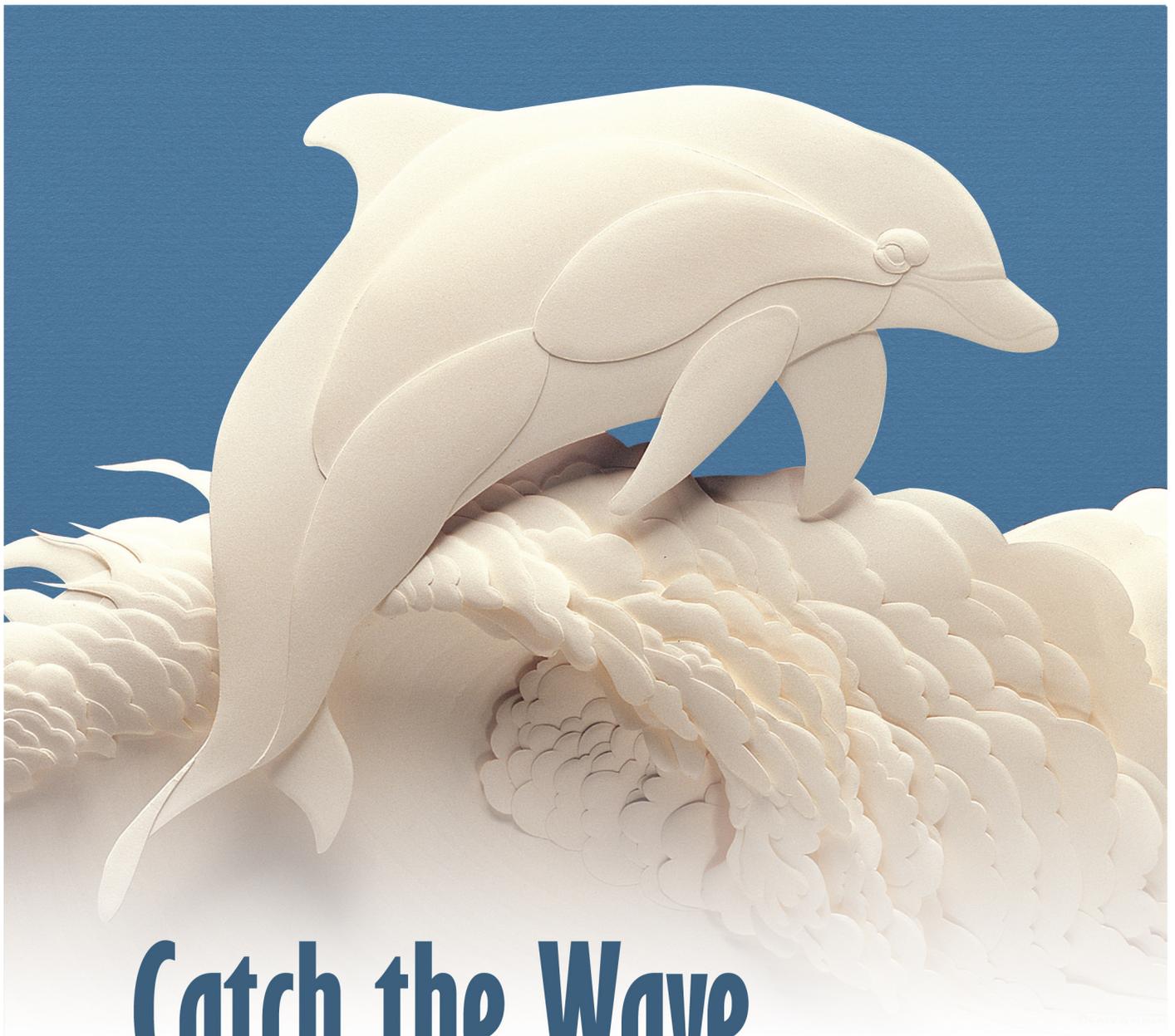


INTERCHANGE

Journal of the Oregon Association of School Libraries

Spring 2012





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**OREGON ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES
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MISSION STATEMENT OASL provides progressive leadership to pursue excellence in school library media programs by:

- advocating information literacy for all students;
- supporting the highest levels of library media services in schools;
- supporting reading instruction and enjoyment of literature;
- strengthening member professionalism through communication and educational opportunities;
- promoting visibility in education, government and the community

INTERCHANGE: JOURNAL OF THE OREGON ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES is published three times each year by the Oregon Association of School Libraries, 860 S. Clematis, West Linn, OR 97068 and is sent to all member-subscribers. Single issues can be obtained by contacting the editor. Contributions to *INTERCHANGE* are welcome and all opinions stated are those of the author unless bearing clear OASL endorsement. Subscription rate for the print version is \$15.00 per year. The Oregon Educational Media Association was formed through the consolidations of the Oregon Association of School Librarians and the Oregon Instructional Media Association on June 30, 1971. The Oregon Educational Media Association was renamed Oregon Association of School Libraries on March 1, 2007. *INTERCHANGE* continues *OEMA INTERCHANGE* Vol. 8, No. 4 and *OASL OREGON SCHOOL LIBRARIAN AND MEDIA SPECIALIST* Vol. 13, No. 1.

INTERCHANGE

Volume 40 Issue No. 3

Spring 2012

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From the Guest Editor

Connect with an Author Make a Difference *by Donna Vandiver*

As peers in the Oregon Association of School Libraries we need each other to gain fresh perspectives and new ideas. The Spring 2012 *Interchange* “Something About Authors” hopefully will inspire each of us to reach out and find a way to bring an author to every school. Whether the author visits in person or through technology, authors can make a difference in the life of our library programs, the community, and our students. Each of the *Interchange* articles offers a different perspective, but the common theme is overarching. Bringing students in contact with authors is worth the time and effort it takes and the benefits far outweigh the work. Speaking from personal experience, as an adult and a teacher librarian, I still feel a sense of wonder and thrill when meeting an author

I want to personally thank the fourteen OASL members who answered my plea for articles. Taking time out of your busy schedules to share your knowledge and experience is critical to the success of our Oregon school libraries.

Donna Vandiver is the library media teacher at Archbishop Howard School in Portland, Oregon and was the guest editor for this issue. You can reach her at library@archbishophoward.org.



Me at the OASL Conference meeting author Nick Bruel.



Me with the authors of The Familiars, Adam Epstein and Andrew Jacobson, at Archbishop Howard School.



From the... **President's Desktop Laptop**

Thank Goodness for Spring *by Susan Stone*

Spring. Thank goodness for spring. Thank goodness for the sliver of blue sky I espy when I leave my office after an unreasonable day's work. Thank goodness for spring's daylight savings time, which seems to give me a few more hours of the day to play, even though it's really just the same 24 hours I've always had. And thank goodness for the feelings of hope that spring brings. I've been in need of spring all winter long. You, too?

There have definitely been days this year, days in a row even, when I've wondered about my work, our work, our mission “to provide progressive leadership to ensure that Oregon students and educators are effective users of ideas and information, and to pursue excellence in school library media programs.”

Are we faring well? As an organization? As individuals in our libraries? I know this year (if not last year and/or the year before...) has been very tough for many of us. This, in fact, is the first year in five that I have not been cut from my position—yes, I've found my way back each of those five years, but the sinking feeling I've felt each time is not a feeling I wish for anyone else. It's a bit like being seasick on an ocean fishing boat, trusting that I'll be fine when I get to the new land, but that just now and for the next x-number of hours/days/weeks, it's going to be hell. I know that sensation, and I feel just awful for those who may be hanging over the boat railing again this year.

continued...

Thank Goodness for Spring *continued...*

Still, it's spring and I am hopeful. In the midst of budget cuts, program cuts and staff cuts, there are still so many great examples of incredible library programming in our state, and those programs are led by some pretty fantastic librarians, who indeed are fulfilling our mission: advocating information literacy for all students, supporting reading instruction and enjoyment of literature, and promoting visibility in education, government and the community. In fact, April sprouted several articles about the importance of school libraries. Did you happen to see the article in this month's *Today's OEA*, "Can you help me find a book?: Oregon's leading advocates of literacy refuse to let the chapter close on public school libraries." The article discusses the results of district cuts to libraries across the state and shares the challenges our library staff face because of these cuts—any one of us could be relaying the stories in the article. But what's also in the article, reading between the lines, are examples of library staff forging ahead with information literacy (Dan Lawson at West Albany HS); teacher collaboration (Anita Endresen at Woodburn HS); and reading promotion (Becky Kleinhesselink at South Medford HS). Yes, each of them shared concern about the lack of credence given to the import of the role of the library in the overall fabric of K–12 education, but they nevertheless are driven to deliver the best program they know now.

...these librarians, again in spite of their reduced hours and negligible in-district funding, have held to a commitment to organize (an) event for their students, some of whom might not otherwise have found a way to shine. That's what a library can do for our students.

And check out the article in *Portland Monthly's* "Bump & Rhyme: a high school librarian launches DIY literature into a citywide competition." (online: www.portlandmonthlomag.com/poetry). Nancy Sullivan (PPS Madison HS librarian, and OASL's president-elect) and nine other PPS high school librarians are staging Verselandia 2012!—Portland's First All City High School Poetry Slam on April 25TH. An event like this takes oodles of energy to plan and execute. But these librarians, again in spite of their reduced hours and negligible in-district funding, have held to a commitment to organize this event for their students, some of whom might not otherwise have found a way to shine. That's what a library can do for our students.

I know there are many, many other wonderful examples of good programming happening in our libraries across our state. We are doing good things. We can stay strong. The boat may still be on the high seas, but we know what we have to do to keep her steady and pointed in the right direction.

Continue to join me in keeping OASL strong and our members committed to our executing our mission. Encourage those around you to join with us and we will hold steady together. Spring is here.

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Werbach, Matt. "Can you help me find a book?" Today's OEA Apr. 2012: 36-41. Print.

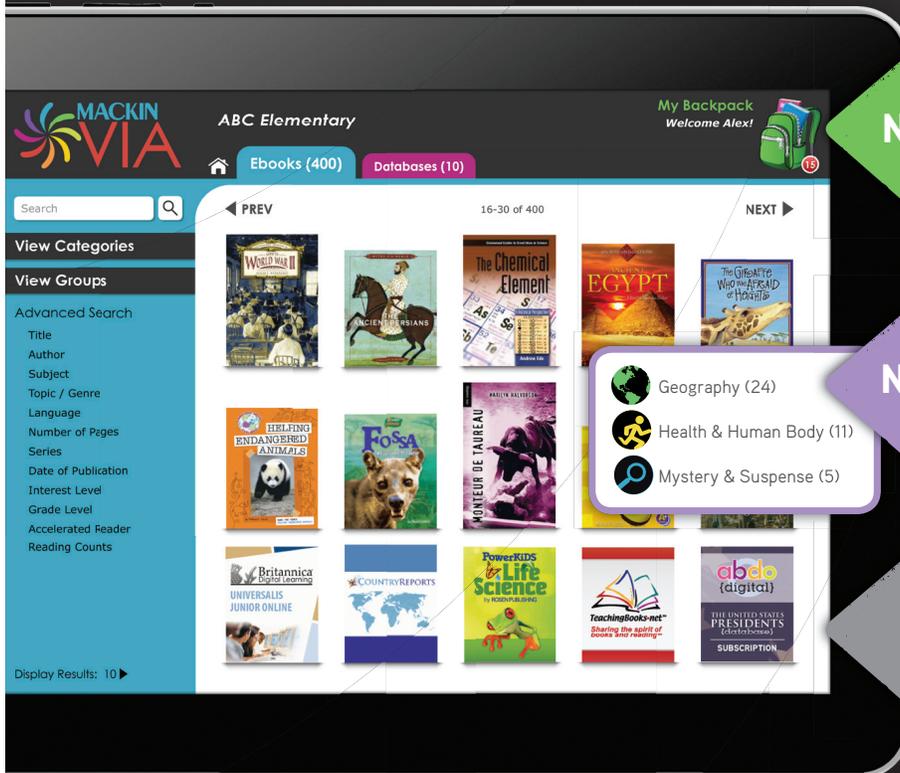
Susan Stone is the OASL President and a Teacher-Librarian for Portland Public Schools. You can reach her at ssstone@pps.net

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Children's Authors are Awful People



Published: Saturday, December 17, 2011, 2:00PM

By Special to The Oregonian, Bart King

Reprinted for the OASL Spring 2012 Interchange with written permission from Bart King



“What a terrific guy. He really tries to make people happy.”

“She’s the nicest person; everyone loves her!”

I cringe when I hear compliments like these. They are the sorts of things people invariably say after meeting a children’s book author. It’s enough to make one’s blood boil, isn’t it? After all, the heartwarming ways of my colleagues set the bar absurdly high for anyone with a below-average quotient of niceness. (Not that I know anything about that.)

More importantly, my lovable comrades-in-print ignore the grand literary tradition of kids’ writers being jerks. Take Aesop, for instance. The ancient Greek fable-spinner may have been the first author for children. As such, Aesop should have been much beloved for his affable manner and fondness for children and small fuzzy animals.

Ha!

Aesop’s neighbors in Delphi despised the writer for his caustic insults, and he was infamous for embezzling money from his patrons. Matters got so bad that one day after Aesop was done trotting out his latest fable, the townspeople chased the children’s author right off of a cliff.

MORAL: Look before you leap. (And before that, try to avoid inciting homicidal rage among your readership.)

Despite his end, you have to admire Aesop’s willingness to resist expectations. For a more recent example, there’s Margaret Wise Brown. You know her as the kindly author of the 1947 children’s classic *Goodnight Moon*. Brown also wrote a book called *Little Fur Family*. The first 50,000 copies of the book were bound with real rabbit fur, which was obtained by skinning 15,000 real rabbits.

Impressive, right? But I’ll bet there isn’t a single modern children’s writer willing to take the artistic stand to skin even ONE bunny. So where others see these authors as merry, big-hearted sweethearts, I see squeamish dilettantes with egg white flowing in their veins.

Do you know who else could act like a jerk? Maurice Sendak, that’s who. When asked about parents who might find “Where the Wild Things Are” too scary, Sendak responded, “I would tell them to go to hell.” His thoughts on children who couldn’t handle the story? They should “go home. Or wet your pants. Do whatever you like.”

I find this candor refreshing.

What lies behind the avuncular grin of today’s writers? The specter of ambition. A.A. Milne, the creator of Winnie the Pooh, made it to only the second book about the bear before trying to kill off the adorable Pooh. This healthy bloodthirstiness is almost unheard-of today. A contemporary author’s fondest dream is to pen an interminable book series, preferably one with franchising possibilities and (cue heavenly choir) a film option.

It’s long been observed that kids’ authors make surprisingly indifferent parents. This may be because the writers are preoccupied with prolonging their own childhoods and plundering their offspring’s lives for material. Perhaps to make up for this, Kenneth Grahame wrote *The Wind in the Willows* expressly for his son.

The boy’s response was to begin hurling himself beneath moving automobiles.

Another member of the Jerk Hall of Fame was Roald Dahl (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*). He was known as an unsavory character with an outsized ego. Dahl’s wife, Patricia Neal, put it as diplomatically as possible: “[Roald] had an enormous appreciation for anything he generated.” Like many children’s book writers, Dahl was frustrated at feeling confined to the genre, which led him to viciously attack his peers.

Hmm, that strikes a little too close to home. Never mind! To get back to the point, the next time I hear superlatives slathered on another scribe, I’ll comfort myself knowing that the winsome writer will never arouse such passions as to be chased off a cliff by an enraged mob.

Not unless I get really, really lucky. —Bart King

Bart King is the author of Cute! A Guide to All Things Adorable, as well as a host of other books for younger readers.
www.bartking.net

What Is the Value of Reading?

[excerpted from a speech given last Spring] by Erin Fitzpatrick-Bjorn



While the work of librarians these days goes far beyond shushing and reading, reading was definitely one of my first loves and a key reason why I chose the career path of school librarianship. Of course, everyone expects a librarian to love reading, but I'd like to talk about why so many people, children and adults, value reading; young people are still reading books—and loving them!

Talking about the value of reading is a little bit challenging because we live in a very data driven society, and the value of reading is not really quantifiable. Yes, we test students to see how well they read, but that's not exactly the same thing. So what is the value of reading? The American Association of School Librarians recently adopted the Learning4Life initiative which says that the most important skills for 21st century learners are the ability to

Think

Create

Share

Grow

Thinking involves inquiry and gaining knowledge. Reading allows us to do that.

Creating involves drawing conclusions, making informed decisions, applying knowledge to new situations, and creating new knowledge. Reading allows us to do that.

Sharing involves gaining knowledge of the world around us and participating ethically and productively as members of our democratic society. Reading allows us to do that.

Growing involves the pursuit of personal interests and aesthetic awareness. Reading allows us to do that.

But these academic ideas miss what I know is the heart of the value of reading. So I turned to readers of all ages who I knew would be able to say so clearly just what the value of reading is. I read some online entries from authors, and I asked my colleagues and my own students. Here's what I found.

In an article, author Meg Cabot wrote that during negotiations with Israel, Anwar Sadat read a Barbara Cartland romance novel in the bathtub every night to relax. I'm not sure whether that's true, but if it is, you've definitely got some value there! Middle East peace, pretty valuable.

I went to Ellen Hopkins' blog and found numerous letters to her where young people talked about the power of her writing in their own lives. I was particularly struck by this thoughtful letter:

Dear Ms. Hopkins,

I finished *Crank* this evening and was stunned at how fast I tore through it. In six hours I had cried and laughed and looked within myself to find my own answers to the questions Kristina asked me as a reader.

Ms. Hopkins' writing deals with incredibly powerful topics, and some of her readers even said that her books saved their lives. Literally *saved their lives*. How can we even begin to put a value on that?

My colleagues said things like this:

I read to...

- stretch my mind, challenge my thinking, and argue with myself
- help me straighten out my thoughts
- experience life from another's perspective
- escape the craziness of my day
- find out what is happening in the world

One particularly poetic colleague said: I read curled up in my favorite reading chair so that I may travel far and wide through time and space to all the places I have ever wanted to see or have ever wondered about, to experience adventures and feel the test of one's strength, breathe in scents and aromas that don't waft from my kitchen or backyard, to feel the warmth of the sun, the cold of the snow, the strength of the wind or the breeze through my hair. I read when I want to go anywhere from my chair in an instant and return safely to drift off to sleep wondering what if . . .

And finally, my middle school students, my 450 students who checked out over 8000 books last year, had these things to say about why they like to read.

I like to read because

- it is fun and interesting
- it gets me entertained instead of watching TV or video games
- I can imagine myself in different places
- books give me an escape
- it keeps me busy and I learn a lot from reading.



continued...

What Is the Value of Reading? *continued...*

- of my mom.
- it takes my mind off of things and just lets me chill
- it takes me to places I would ordinarily never go
- I like to live in an adventure
- it sometimes calms me down after a long hard day at school.
- it makes you smart!

Again, we can't quantify the value of these thoughts, but they clearly convey the influence reading has on the lives of these young people.

I will leave you with a stanza from a poem written by Laurie Halse Anderson, winner of the Edwards Award for significant and lasting contribution to young adult readers. She wrote this poem using lines from responses about her incredibly thoughtful, award-winning book, *Speak*.

Speak changed my life
 cracked my shell
 made me think
 about parties
 gave me
 wings this book
 opened my mouth
 I whispered, cried
 rolled up my sleeves i
 hate talking but
 I am trying.
 you made me remember who I am.

These thoughts highlight the value of reading from readers of all ages. We all want to belong and we all need to escape sometimes. We all want to know we're not alone with our hopes or our fears, our disasters and our dreams. We all want to explore. We all want to know who we are. We all want to think, create, share and grow.

This is the value of reading.

Erin Fitzpatrick-Bjorn is currently the District Media Coordinator of K-8 libraries in the Gresham-Barlow School district. You can reach her at fitzpatrick@gresham.k12.or.us.

Text from Laurie Halse Anderson used with permission.

Read Across America Day: Connecting with Dr. Seuss to Create Enthusiasm for Lifelong Reading *by Amy Richards*



I love celebrating reading! Read Across America Day is a great way to connect readers to an influential and gifted author, Dr. Seuss. As a teacher-librarian, I realize that integration with core curriculum and collaboration with other teachers are important pieces in increasing

students' love of reading.

One way I have challenged myself is to connect each teacher's current curriculum to a Dr. Seuss book and help the teachers make the connection in their lesson plans on Read Across America Day. In early February, I presented my idea to the faculty. I asked teachers to share their big themes, projects, or areas of focus with me, so I could help them find a Dr. Seuss book and help them make the connection with their curriculum.

The 8TH grade teacher was skeptical and emailed his curriculum topics, saying, "I'm not really up on Dr. Seuss literature. If there is a Dr. Seuss book that fits with Civil War, Lent, Protestant Reformation, graphing equations, or operations with polynomials, those would work. Take your pick." Of course, I responded with, "We can connect the Civil War to *The Butter Battle Book!*" I suggested that after reading the book aloud, he could lead a class discussion comparing and contrasting the motivations of each side in these wars. The 7TH grade teacher will be reading *The Sneetches* and connecting it with *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor. The students will examine the role of prejudice and racism in both books. In 6TH grade, students are studying the environment as they prepare for Outdoor School. What better book than *The Lorax*? Read Across America Day falls the day after our Science Night. The science teacher will be sharing *Oh, the Things You Can Think* to inspire further scientific inquiry. The 1ST graders are studying what makes a community. As part of their study, they focus on all the different members who contribute to the community. They will be reading *Horton Hears a Who* and discussing the contributions of all members of the community regardless of size, ethnicity, importance, wealth, etc.

continued...

Read Across America Day *continued...*

The celebration will include many other events, as well. We will begin the day with a *Scrambled Eggs Super!* breakfast, and I will read the book as students enjoy their eggs and toast. Local firefighters will visit our K–3 classrooms to discuss fire safety and read to the students. We will conclude the day with a thirty minute, school-wide Drop Everything and Read time.

Helping students learn to love reading is not only part of my job, it is a passion. I hope that this celebration of Dr. Seuss and his timeless books will inspire teachers to integrate more literature into their curriculum, which will support our students' desire to read.

Amy Richards is the library media specialist at The Madeleine School in Portland, Oregon. You can reach her at arichards@themadeleine.edu.

Your Local Author Wants to be Asked

by Amy Clark



As a large public library system, Multnomah County Library has worked with authors in a wide variety of ways. For many years, we hosted a Children's Author Lecture and a Teen Author Lecture. These were

annual programs with a similar format. We hired a nationally known author to come to town and present an evening lecture to a paying audience. Another component of these programs was to partner with local schools: authors would give presentations at schools. They reached many kids and families. We were fortunate to be able to provide these large-scale, expensive programs through the generosity of our community partners like The Library Foundation and Riverdale Grade School. But this is not the only way to bring authors to your library.

Over the years we have brought authors to library programs on a much smaller and less expensive scale. We have asked local authors to make appearances at book groups when we have been discussing their book. It tends to be a very different discussion than if the author had not been there, and an eye-opening

continued...

Your Local Author *continued...*

experience for the readers. They can see that the author is maybe not so different from themselves. I like to think that these experiences have inspired kids to consider writing and maybe even try to get their own work published.

At our neighborhood library, we recently tried something new. Members of our staff wanted to highlight local authors and bring patrons into our library. The idea was quite simple and the results were rewarding. We invited a number of local authors to come on a particular Saturday to talk with patrons and sell their books. We had a wide variety of authors, genres, and reading levels represented. There were guidebooks, cookbooks, local history, and books for kids and teens. For the children's and YA authors, we set up tables around the children's area of our branch for each author. They were able to set up their materials and talk with patrons about their work, then make some sales, too. It was a comfortable spot for patrons to have one-on-one conversations with authors they were familiar with and authors who were new to them. I enjoyed watching kids talk about writing and publishing with professional authors that live and work locally. We also partnered with a local bookseller to support sales for authors that were not set up to do their own sales. We hosted this program in December, and it played well during the gift giving season. We also invited a local craft organization to do gift wrapping. This setup might also be fun at a back to school night, family literacy event or in conjunction with a book fair.

It is so satisfying to work with local authors. We find that when we ask for their time, many are willing to give it. Consider featuring local authors in your school and your community. And don't be afraid to dream big—asking is easy. Your local authors may be willing to come to your school and meet your students.

Amy Clark is a youth librarian with Multnomah County Library. She has been with the library since 1997 and worked as a youth librarian since 2003. She currently works at the Hollywood branch library.



Oregon Battle of the Books 2012-2013 Initial Titles

For Further Information: <http://oboblista.pbworks.com>



2013 OBOB 3-5 DIVISION

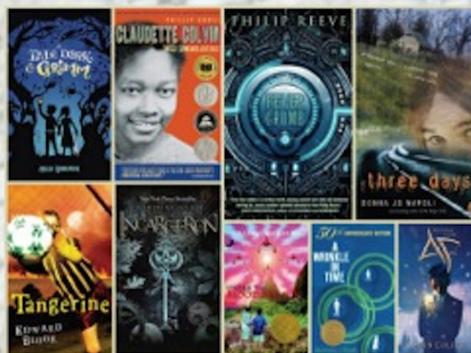
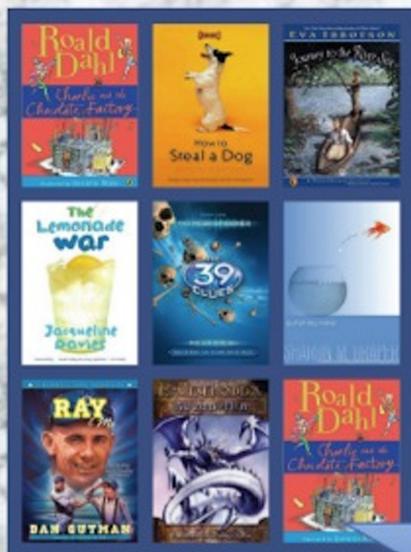
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Science Fiction



Final OBOB Title Lists
announced 5/12



The Oregon Battle of the Books (OBOB) is a statewide program for reading motivation and comprehension sponsored by the Oregon Association of School Libraries in conjunction with a Library Services and Technology Act grant. The goals are to encourage reading for enjoyment, broaden reading interests, increase reading comprehension, and promote cooperative learning.



Students Benefit from Meeting Authors *by Donna Vandiver (Guest Editor)*



Two Archbishop Howard School students participated in a taped session of the OPB radio program *Think Out Loud* on a Monday afternoon in early November. Rosebud and Madeleine, 8TH grade students at AHS, were in a live audience of about 40 students for the broadcast session, which aired on Friday, November 24TH. The show's topic was a book discussion of *Wildwood*. Students from many schools around the area were invited to discuss the book with author Colin Meloy and illustrator Carson Ellis. The session took place at the Literary Arts Office in downtown Portland and was hosted by David Miller. The questions and comments were asked directly from the students.

I believe the benefits of meeting an author are multi-faceted. Meeting an author can give students a real sense of connection and purpose. Students can readily identify with a real person standing in front of them talking about a favorite experience or character from one of their written works or something they have read by another author. Meeting an author helps students realize that writers are regular people who write and create stories from their imagination that draw on life experiences. It is a job that they mostly love but sometimes hate and when all the stars are aligned their hard work gets published. Writers make their audience laugh and cry and marvel at the written word, at the ability of language to connect and explain what is important about the story.



Student statements about their personal experiences meeting authors.

Rosebud: “When you read a book that catches your attention, it is hard to believe it came from someone’s imagination. I feel like it is an honor to meet any author or illustrator. When you meet them, you get a more detailed insight on how they were able to dream up the ideas and the details to support the story. Another reason I enjoy meeting authors/illustrators is to get more information about parts of the book that you felt unclear about. You can ask a question and get more details and clarity. Meeting an author/illustrator of a book makes the book even more special because you can dig deeper into the pages of a book and discover hidden meanings or facts that you missed before.”

Madeleine: “When I was asked to go to an interview with the author and illustrator of the book *Wildwood*, I was delighted. Before the interview, I prepared by reading the book and making notes about what I would ask at the interview, and I also was prepared to talk about my favorite parts of the book. After the interview we stayed to talk with Colin Meloy and Carson Ellis. They spent time signing our books and allowed us more time to ask questions. This personal contact was the most important part of the event for me. Both Colin

and Carson were kind and genuinely seemed interested in what I had to say. I can honestly say that every time I have the opportunity to meet an author, I learn something from each experience. I think it is important for students to meet authors and have great experiences.”



Donna Vandiver is the library media teacher at Archbishop Howard School in Portland, Oregon, and was the guest editor for this issue. You can reach her at library@archbishophoward.org.

Author Visits? A Remote Possibility: Using Skype to Connect is Fun and Affordable *(Reprinted with permission from original article from School Library Journal on February 17, 2012 by Kate Messner)*

It started with a Tweet. A couple weeks before World Read Aloud Day (WRAD) 2011, a teacher tweeted a request, asking if an author would be willing to read to her students that morning to celebrate the annual event. Read the rest of the story by Kate Messner online at School Library Journal –The Digital Shift.

<http://www.thedigitalshift.com/2012/02/k-12/author-visits-a-remote-possibility-using-skype-to-connect-is-fun-and-affordable/>



Background for Author Visit Makes All the Difference *by Linda Campillo*



Would Wilson High School be interested in using one of Tom Brokaw's books for classroom study and receive free tickets to his lecture? Well, but of course.

As the liaison for Portland's Writers in the Schools program, I received this question at the end of last school year, and I thought it was a no brainer. I talked to a U.S. History teacher, and we decided to have her classes read Brokaw's *The Greatest Generation*.

She would start the year off with World War II, and I would take them to the Library of Congress Veteran's History project so they could research West Coast veterans' stories to gain a personal perspective about the War.

The students really seemed engaged in examining the veterans' stories (both males and females), and they created scrapbook pages for a specific veteran. In addition to learning about the War, they also realized the effect war had on individual lives, the values of the time, and the language of the period. Although most of the students gained a lot in content knowledge, we found out that they didn't know anything about Tom Brokaw. They didn't know that he was a journalist who had interviewed many people including dignitaries and had been an evening fixture on national television for years.

Then the added opportunity came along for a small group of students to actually meet and have a Question and Answer session with Brokaw before his lecture in December. At first, the classroom teacher thought this opportunity could be a prize for students who worked hard on their WWII projects. However, since the students didn't know who Brokaw was, it didn't seem like such a big deal to them. They really couldn't wrap their heads around how many hours, days, months or years, Brokaw spent working on this one book or that he might be a fairly significant person.

continued...

Background for Author Visit *continued...*

We found that we had to step back from WWII, and teach students about Tom Brokaw. Students had read his book, but they still really didn't know about him. Thanks to YouTube, students could see footage of him as a journalist. We also had students brainstorm what type of questions Brokaw would ask people in order to get them to talk about their war experiences. We asked students to talk to their parents to see what they knew about Brokaw. Through this work, student interest began to pique, and we decided to approach certain students who seemed to be "getting" it. Once the first few students grasped the opportunity, more students came on board, including an exchange student from Germany.

At the same time, Writers in the Schools expressed nervousness about students beginning the Q & A session. They requested to have the classroom teacher ask the first question to get things rolling. However, once we had a group of seven or eight committed students, we had a brainstorming session for questions, and one student volunteered to ask the first question. The students came up with great questions at the brainstorming session. On the day of the event, students really rose to the occasion. They came dressed nicely and asked thoughtful questions led by their own curiosity. Afterward, they commented on how nice Brokaw was, and that they felt as if they were sitting at a dinner table talking to their grandfather because he told such interesting stories. All turned out well, but we learned that people who might be famous to us may not carry the same status with high school students.

Linda Campillo is the Teacher-Librarian at Wilson High School in Portland, OR. You can reach her at lcampillo@pps.net.





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Odd Fish, Films and Fans: James Kennedy by Erin Fitzpatrick-Bjorn



It is not every day that one gets to sit down to lunch with the man who stole Neil Gaiman's Newbery medal (<http://tinyurl.com/7jguofj>), but recently I was lucky enough to do just that. James Kennedy, author of *The Order of Odd Fish*, was in Portland for the 90-Second Newbery Festival sponsored by Multnomah County Public Library and agreed to meet for lunch.

It was a delightful conversation with a man who clearly has a joie de vivre. He had just come from a school presentation at Fowler Middle School in Tigard. He said he was energized by the students, with whom he did a dramatic reading of *The Order of Odd Fish* in addition to showing them some of his book-inspired fan art...but more on that later. "He's a *very* enthusiastic author," said my niece Elizabeth Moxley, a student at Fowler who got to attend Kennedy's presentation. There is no question that Mr. Kennedy has heaps of energy and a flair for the dramatic: perfect for an author presenting to middle school.



The Order of Odd Fish is Kennedy's debut novel. It is a fantasy where readers will find humor, adventure, and costumes. So it came as no surprise when he told me he had a costume party/art gallery show celebrating his novel. His fans, which he unabashedly claims are the best in the world, have created some incredible fan art, and he was looking for a way to display it. The fan art, which comes from all over the country, includes cut paper illustrations and drawings, fully decorated cakes, stained glass, a specially brewed beer (assumedly from some of his older readers), and even a shotgun! If you'd like to see the full gallery of his fan art, go to <http://jameskennedy.com/oddfishgallery/>. The Dome of Doom party included the aforementioned art on display, costumes, battle dancing, and the tearing out of a (cow's) heart. One would expect no less from the theatrical James Kennedy.



Kennedy said it was this experience of planning a large event that helped prepare him for his 90-Second Newbery Festival experiences, but I think he may well have gotten his start during childhood, much of which he said he spent "pretending to film movies." The 90-second Newbery is actually a project that started out, like great events often do, as just something to do for fun. James wrote out the script for his 90-second *Wrinkle in Time* video during a meeting (he was bored) and decided to shoot the film with his nieces and nephews. He was not really planning on doing anything special with it. Later, he proposed the idea of a film festival to Betsy Bird of the New York Public Library and School Library Journal's Fuse #8 blog, and the idea, he said, "sort of went viral."

This year, the first year of the project, he received over 200 videos. About ten of those were videos from Oregon. He did a public screening of some of the top videos in New York, Chicago and Portland. At the New York and Chicago events, the event was so popular they had to turn people away. In Portland, it was standing room only in the main room. Portland's event included guest author Laini Taylor as co-host, and guest author Dale E. Basye as a guest on Kennedy's version of the \$20,000 Dollar Pyramid.

When I asked him what was one of the most surprising things to come out of the 90-Second Newbery, he said that Madeline L'Engle's granddaughter had contacted him and asked how she could help with the project. She then helped him secure a grant from the Crosswicks Foundation, a foundation begun by Madeline L'Engle and her husband to support the arts.

Currently, James is working on his second book and is already planning for next year's 90-Second Newbery event. James said he is hoping students will branch out and become even more creative this year. Your students—of all ages—are welcome to enter the competition. Entries are due October 29TH, 2012. To learn more about the 90-Second Newbery Festival or to see some of the videos, go to James's website: <http://jameskennedy.com/90-second-newbery/>.



Erin Fitzpatrick-Bjorn is the K-8 Media Coordinator for the Gresham-Barlow School District. You can reach her at fitzpatrick@gresham.k12.or.us. For those of you keeping track at home, she's met three new authors so far this year.

Bring an Author to Your School by Peggy Christensen



“I didn’t say it was your fault. I said I was blaming you!” is a paraprodikian designed to create amusement (and it almost always does). But, in some instances, this one rings true. One area where this seems to resonate is in failure to make the effort to bring authors to your campus. Admittedly, this can be a formidable goal to people in smaller and/or remote areas. To a degree, the geographical location and economic realities of our school district fits this profile. And yet, we have found ways to make author visits happen.

Over the last 10 years, we have been fortunate enough to have visits from Craig Lesley, Lawson Inada, Jim Lynch, Janna Nickerson, Mitzi Loftus, Rita Golden Gilman, Elgen Long—and coming in April —Jonathan Evison and Matt de la Peña. In all but one case, we have not had the finances to bring the author in. The fact that we have had the luxury of so many visits is due to several reasons.

One is the generosity of our public libraries. Public libraries in our area have formed a district of all the public libraries in the county (with the addition of the local community college and one high school). Collectively, they created a Community Reads program to bring authors into schools. Our library always participates in the program and promotes the author’s works. Every other year, we are included in the author’s schedule for a school visit.

Another way we have been able to bring authors into our school is through the efforts of our departments. The English department connected with poet Lawson Inada to schedule a school visit. One of our history teachers, Jeff Eberwein, brought in author Elgen Long. Our curriculum director, Cathy Chenail, was responsible for securing a visit from Rita Golden Gilman. (This visit was a real small town maneuver! Cathy is a fan of Rita and heard she was in our area. She made a phone call and one week later, “Voila!” Rita was in our library).

The third way we were able to bring an author on campus was to pay the author’s fee. At the OASL Fall Conference I had the opportunity to hear Matt de la Peña speak. He had a great story to tell; I believed it was one to which our students could relate. But, I had never thought about trying to bring him to our campus. Then, in December, an invitation came through OASL Member Clicks offering an opening for a visit. I guess you could say, I found it an offer I just couldn’t resist.

Author’s visits take work and usually this responsibility falls to the school librarian. But for me, in every case it has been worth it. I love seeing the kids press forward after the author has finished the presentation to ask more questions and seek more information. Visiting authors enjoy a kind of “rock star” status. Not all of the students are overly impressed, but most of them are. There are those students whose day-to-day communication could be described as monosyllabic mumbles, but when given an opportunity to talk with an author, their comments and questions are thoughtful and meaningful. It’s like they have been waiting all their life to make this connection and maybe they have.

The proof positive for me is to see students impacted by a book or an author. You never know when a student’s curiosity is going to peak and the learning, engagement and excitement from a single opportunity is going to come to life. The ripple effect of an author’s visit and connection could be seen for months or years to come.

Every school can have an author visit. You can entice a local author with a phone call or note, get on an author’s schedule through a community group or share an author visit with another school. Whatever the means, it is important to connect students with real people who are real writers. The benefits far outweigh the extra work. “I didn’t say it was your fault. I said I was blaming you!” is only funny, if it isn’t true.

Peggy Christensen is the teacher-librarian of Marshfield High School and oversight librarian for Coos Bay Public Schools. She has had the very good fortune of working with some top notch professionals and has been regaled with stories by some mighty fine authors. You can reach her at PeggyC@coos-bay.k12.or.us

**Collectively,
(public libraries
in our area)
created a
Community
Reads program
to bring authors
into schools.**

Make-Believe Becomes Real: Teen Author Ashley Loomis Malin

by Colette Cassinelli



We all have fond memories from childhood of playing make-believe with our friends. We create elaborate imaginary worlds and crown ourselves Queen. We slay ferocious dragons and save our families from impending doom. Ashley Loomis Malin successfully took this one step further: she based her debut novel, *Shattered Peace*, on an imaginary world that she created with two of her childhood friends.

Malin is a senior at La Salle Catholic College Preparatory in Milwaukie, Oregon. She began writing when she was 11 years old when encouraged by a director to keep a diary about her character for a musical production. Malin enjoyed the process and soon began writing other stories. Just for fun, Malin and two friends developed an elaborate make-believe story and each girl created and acted out a fantasy character. She didn't want to forget their fun imaginative play so she started writing down details about the world they had created. This was the beginning of *Shattered Peace*, a young adult fantasy novel that took Malin three years to write.

The story of *Shattered Peace* begins in Tarsha, a medieval kingdom in Ireland. The dragons are causing havoc on the villages and are banished from the kingdom, so a wise wizard named Louis Thorn creates a special world for the dragons by using a magical crystal ball to contain the dragon world's peace. Humans who come from Tarsha to the Dragon World are given the gift of immortality and are known to all as the Far Riders. They live in peace and harmony with the dragons. One of the Far Riders, Liath, is miserable within the Dragon World because he misses the excitement and adventure of fighting, so he wishes the crystal ball broken. With the help of a reluctant princess, Liath must defend the Dragon World from his archenemy, The Fairy Queen.

Malin shared that when she was first writing *Shattered Peace* she outlined all of the chapters and decided which events would happen in each chapter. Even though she knew where she wanted to go with the story, she occasionally had writer's block when she came to a dramatic climax. Don't forget that over the course of publishing the novel, she still had to deal with typical teenager stuff: going to high school, choir practice, chores, and writing her Junior research paper.

While attending a book signing, Malin and her mom met with an editor at the event who had never worked with a 15-year-old girl. After completing the editing process, Malin self-published her book on Lulu.com. Malin was thrilled to finally see her story in print after three long years, but she found marketing and selling her book quite challenging. Her grandmother sent her a news clipping about a young author who had published a novel through Tate Publishing—a Christian, family-based publishing company in Oklahoma. Malin submitted her manuscript to the publishing company and they agreed to publish her book. You can now order *Shattered Peace* online through Tate Publishing or find it on Amazon, Barnes & Noble online and at Powell's bookstore.

Shattered Peace can be read as a stand-alone novel but it is also the first of a four-part series. Malin continues to write and is considering publishing the rest of the series, or she might try to publish some of her poetry. She is not sure if she will major in creative writing in college, but definitely writing will always be part of her future. Malin shared that, "writing is more of a lifestyle for me. It's more about expressing myself than writing to be published." She recently spoke to elementary students at Christ the King school and she encouraged them to write as a way to express themselves too. She now finds it easier to write a story like a screenplay so she can focus on getting her ideas down and will worry about adding in descriptions later when the story is fully developed.

Ashley Malin has come a long way from an imaginative young girl playing make-believe with her friends. She is a published teen author and has a bright future ahead of her—no matter where her stories take her.



Colette Cassinelli is the Teacher Librarian at La Salle Catholic College Preparatory in Milwaukie, Oregon. She is OASL Promotions Chair and co-coordinator of edcampPDX. She has had the honor of knowing Ashley Malin for two years and is thrilled to help promote her book *Shattered Peace*.

Using Skype to Bring Authors (and Others) into your School



by *Kate Weber*

What is Skype?

In the simplest of terms, Skype allows you to make a phone or video call using your computer. It's free as long as the person you're connecting with is also using Skype. And because it's computer-based, you make the calls using your computer's webcam, microphone, and speaker. If you asked anyone in 1985 what the future would look like, chances are this idea was one of the answers, along with flying cars and unisex jumpsuits.



Why use it?



Perhaps you've used Skype to talk with loved ones who live far away or to stay in touch at home while traveling. But beyond these personal uses, it can also be used a number of different ways in education (see sidebar). As a component of a school library's reading engagement charge, it can be a convenient and cost-efficient way to bring authors and illustrators to the classroom.

One of the reasons Skype is a convenient and cost-efficient tool is because authors can "Skype in" without actually needing to travel to your school, meaning you only pay the author's direct fees, not the other travel expenses often incurred when bringing an author into your school. You can book someone in the next time zone over, the other side of the country, or even the other side of the world, for no more cost than speaking with someone two streets away. In addition to saving money, Skype allows you to schedule authors on short notice for just-in-time learning.

Many authors are more likely to say yes if a school visit doesn't require days away from their families but instead just an afternoon in front of the computer. With the cost savings, you can bring in authors more often and for more-specialized groups of learners or book clubs. It is not uncommon for authors to offer a 15–20 minute session free of charge.

Of course, a Skype author visit isn't all sunshine and unicorns. Authors themselves admit that it's more difficult to "read" an audience via Skype, so the visit can seem less personal than a traditional visit. And with any tech product, you might have issues and hurdles, either with the district and their policies or with the hardware/software itself.

Proper preparation and expectations can mitigate many potential drawbacks. And remember, once you've gone through the process successfully the first time, subsequent visits will take even less time and effort to arrange.

So how do you make a Skype author visit a rich experience for all involved?

From an author visit standpoint:

- Schedule the visit with enough advance time for students to become familiar with the author's works.
- Keep groups small—a regular class size at the largest.
- Discuss with students what they want to get out of the encounter.
- Make the visit as interactive as possible.
- Ask the author both about their books and their writing process.
- Plan to spend some time on a question and answer segment.
- Have students write and edit the questions in advance, then assign them to avoid awkward down time during the visit.
- Be clear about time zones with the author.

From a technology standpoint:

- Hardwire in for Internet. This will provide a faster Internet connection than using wi-fi.
- Do a practice chat a day or two before the scheduled visit and test your equipment the day of with enough time to fix things if it isn't working.

continued...

Using Skype *continued...*

- Prepare the students for the idea of Skype, especially seeing themselves on camera. It can detract from the experience with the author if they're not prepared for it.
- Be sure to talk about online privacy and security with students in the context of meeting and chatting with strangers on the Internet.
- Have students approach the microphone and camera when asking a question.
- Get the author's home phone number—just in case.
- Have a back-up plan in place if the technology fails completely.



Where can I find Skype?

To get started, set up an account at www.skype.com, and then download the Skype program. Also look on Skype's main page for some simple videos explaining what to do once you have an account. Once the program is downloaded, you'll access it through the icon on your computer instead of via the Skype website.

How do I find authors willing to do Skype classroom visits?

The most extensive compilation is "Skype an Author" wiki at <http://skypeanauthor.wetpaint.com>. Here you'll find hundreds of authors who are willing to do an author visit via Skype. They've all filled out the same form, so you get basic information

for all participating authors, such as cost of the visit, who their audience is, prerequisites for the visit, and more.

"Author Skype Tour" (<http://authorskypetour.livejournal.com/>) offers free author visits, though the offer is for a limited time only while the author is getting the word out on a new book. The list of available authors is much smaller because each author only participates for a short period of time. These authors are looking to work with students who have NOT read their new book yet.

"Smart Writers – Authors who Skype" (<http://www.smartwriters.com/content/blogcategory/156/135/>) provides a very short list of authors available for Skype author visits, but it includes Jane Yolen.

Finally, just because an author isn't listed on any of these sites doesn't mean they won't be willing to do a Skype author visit. You might just need to ask.

Kate Weber is the Media Specialist at Lane ESD in Eugene. She is the Listserv Chair for OASL and serves on the Executive Board in At-large Position 1.



Tech Needs:

- Computer
- Skype software (free)
- Skype account (free)
- Email address to create a Skype account
- Microphone
- Webcam
- Speakers
- Projector

Other ways to use Skype in the school:

- Talk to experts in various subject areas
- Invite politicians to speak to your class
- Expand your professional development beyond the walls of your school
- Hold parent/teacher conferences
- Start an international E-Pals program
- Connect with native speakers of a foreign language being taught in your school

Submission Does Not Mean Surrender *by David Michael Slater*



Dear Writer, thank you for your submission. We're sorry to say...
Dear Writer, thank you for your submission. We're sorry to say...
Dear Writer, thank you for your submission. We're sorry to say...



I've seriously considered changing my name to 'Writer.' A personalized letter is so much more promising. And for a while I contemplated titling everything I wrote, "Your Submission," if only to delay the inevitable for one more intern-produced low-toned, crookedly Xeroxed line. Sleeping with my head in my mailbox for six months at a stretch demanded nothing less.

I guess I started collecting rejection letters because I couldn't think of any better way to organize a record of those to whom I'd submitted. When they filled the first binder, I thought it was amusing, in a *Wow-this 'll-be-great-to-show-off-as-a-lesson-in-perserverence-when-I'm-the-most-famous-author-in-the-world* kind of way. When the second reached maximum capacity, I might have begun to doubt exactly what the lesson would turn out to be. Now the third binder is in danger of exploding rain forests worth of phrases like, "Doesn't meet our current needs," "Only the opinion of one house," "Others may feel differently," and "Would encourage you to submit elsewhere." And that inspiring, "Sorry, I want to publish books that matter," one too.

At a school visit recently, a kid asked me why I keep "all those restraining orders," a sad, but perhaps uncannily intuitive slip-of-the-tongue. First, I eyeballed him a while to make sure he didn't know more about me than was legally comfortable. When I determined he was cool, I said I lugged them around hoping to induce a hernia so I could file for Workman's Comp. Which got a snort out of the teacher grading a forty-foot stack of papers in the back. Which is worth something.

It's funny how, for a while, one's quaint little notions of "write and wrong" demand following the "rules," or "Rule," really: ABSOLUTELY NO SIMULTANEOUS SUBMISSIONS! And so, one duly submits. But soon enough, that seldom-heard mathematical voice muses from its long abandoned brainfold: Hmmm. Six months response time. So...hmm...we could submit this to...let's see...two places a year. In ten years, we could have twenty readings!

As a good, decent and patriotic citizen, one tries not to hear this nerdy, number-crunching voice, but it makes a compelling point in the end. And so I will admit to having started to slip the odd extra submission out, together-like. Just two or three per round. At first. You should know it wasn't easy. The tension was nearly unbearable in the ensuing months. I had to make sure not to sit with my back to the door while typing at coffee shops. But when neither I nor my wife and child were whacked by publishing industry assassin (interns), I maybe, possibly, increased the simultaneity. A bit. Or so.

Let's just say my head no longer fit in the mailbox and leave it at that.

But fast forward.

continued...

David Michael Slater *continued...*

“If there is anyone who hasn’t had David Slater come do an author visit, you are missing a treat. We finally booked David at Hiteon. He was so easy to work with -- arrived early, met with a full day of grade level assemblies, made everyone laugh, and left them with memorable, entertaining ideas about what it’s like to write, edit, persevere, and finally publish. Staff and our visiting principal stopped me in the hall to tell me how good David’s presentation was. When I asked students today what they learned about writing, I kept hearing David’s central messages: edit your work, have other people read it, you’ll hear a lot of rejections before you succeed.”

Holly Cohn, Media Specialist, Hiteon Elementary School



Illustrated by Steve Cowden

One fine day, one fine year or so later, I get a call from a publisher who’d just read a picture book story of mine about life in the refrigerator called *Cheese Louise!* And he tells me he loves the book. And that he wants to publish it. And that he’s “been dreaming his whole life of publishing a book with vegetables in it.” How lovely. That wasn’t mentioned in the publisher’s profile, you see. Several years later I accidentally queried a house that didn’t publish fiction, only to get a call from the publisher, who told me, “What great timing, we’re about to launch our first line of fiction. Whattaya got?” So they published six of my picture books. Then they published six more.

I do not wish to disparage purveyors of sound career advice like: “Do your research. Find out what each publisher is looking for. Target your submissions.” But the fact is, I would not have sixteen picture books published; I would not have an on-going six-part teen fantasy series (*Sacred Books*) being developed for film by a former producer of *The Lion King* and *Curious George*; I would not have published an adult literary novel and a collection of short fictions including a story nominated for a Pushcart Prize, if I didn’t approach—What’s the word? Oh, yes: everybody.

Thus, the lesson I have learned: An editor out there is dreaming of you—it’s up to you to find him. Then it’s up to you to find the next one.

My first reading of *Cheese Louise* was for one little girl, dragged over to me by an embarrassed Borders’ employee who didn’t want me to have to perform for an empty chair. She picked her nose the whole time I read (the girl, not the employee).

It was beautiful.

David Michael Slater writes for children, teens, and adults. He teaches high school writing in Portland, Oregon, where he lives with his wife and son. More information about David and his work can be found at www.davidmichaelslater.com

Author Visits Extraordinaire: A Checklist by Nancy Sullivan and Kiva Liljequist



Author visits can transform student perceptions about reading and writing by creating powerful connections between literature and real life. Drawing from our own experiences hosting such fabulous writers and poets as Heidi Durrow, Daniel Beaty, Edwidge Danticat, Matt de la Peña and Wally Lamb, we've prepared the following Author Visit Checklist to help you plan and deliver the best author visit possible.

Before you begin planning your author visit, ask yourself the most important question: Can you make the experience a success? Show respect for the time of your author, students, and teachers by considering the following before committing to a visit...

Can you provide an adequate and appropriate space?

Can you find funding for the honorarium and the travel expenses if necessary?

Can you fit planning, workshops and special assemblies into your schedule?

Can you get your administration and faculty to be excited and supportive?

Can your teachers take the time to prepare students for the visit?

Ideally, **you will confirm your author's visit six months in advance**. With that amount of time, you will be able to do everything outlined below, tweaked for your specific circumstances. However, sometimes opportunities present themselves with a much shorter timeframe – in these cases, you can monitor and adjust (you're an amazing teacher, right?) by focusing on key steps.

Checklist for a Successful School Author Visit

Before The Visit: Logistics

- First things first—determine where you will meet!** If your facilities allow it, the school library is by far the best venue for author visits. A theater, auditorium, black box, or lecture hall can also work, but is sometimes less intimate. The most difficult spaces can be gymnasiums and cafeterias, where acoustics are poor and the environment is not conducive to reading or good audience behavior. **Reserve or sign out the space, and get it on your school's calendar as soon as possible.**
- Many author visits involve a signed contract**—this ensures that details are clear and understood on both sides, and helps avoid misunderstandings or mistakes.
- Make sure your school library has copies of the author's books** for students to check out and teachers to work with.
- If you need additional copies, **borrow books from other school libraries**. Have the author autograph these books as a way to thank the lending library.
- Create a display for your library with copies of the author's books**, biographical information about the author, and perhaps a photo.
- Confirm what format the author will use for the presentation** (file on a flash drive, project it from their own laptop, PowerPoint, Mac vs. PC, etc.).
- Arrange for any special equipment requested by the author**, e.g. photocopies, whiteboard, screen, laptop, internet connection, projector and cart, table for props, extension cords/power strips, podium, microphone, etc.
- If the room will need to be darkened, mark switches** with tape notes to avoid confusion when the event starts – assign someone to be in charge of lighting.
- Test-run special equipment requested before the day of the visit**, so you can troubleshoot any issues that may arise (you'll do this again the day of the event).

continued...

Turn Your Students into Creative Researchers!

If you have time, let students do a project on the author, his or her life and work, or the context of the author's book. For example, when biographer Peter Carlin visited Madison High School in Portland, the Literature & War class focused on the part of the book that takes place during WWII; the Creative Writing class focused on biographical writing; Language Arts was studying biography and the timing was a perfect match; Speech classes prepared by reading a chapter from the book, and then assessing Carlin as a public speaker.

When Francisco Jimenez visited, Spanish classes read his books in Spanish and responded by writing and performing a play based on his life and work; Art classes did paintings inspired by his culture and experiences; and Literature classes studied poetry and the poetic form of a pantoum in particular, composing pantoums in response to his writing. The student poetry was then compiled into a book which was presented as a gift to Professor Jimenez, who was deeply touched.

A Checklist *continued...*

- Send your author clear directions** in advance for how to get to your school. If she/he is driving, be sure to mention any **access issues and/or where to park**.
- Give the author a **reliable contact name and number** in case they are running late or have transportation problems en route to your school.
- Pre-arrange **whether the author is willing to sign books/ autographs**. Organize time in your schedule for book signing if it will be part of the day.
- Ask the author if she/he would be **comfortable being videotaped**, provided that the footage is only intended for use in your own school or school district.
- If you will be providing lunch or snacks for your author, check to see whether she/he has any **dietary requests or restrictions**.
- Let the author know if any **students with special needs** will be attending and may have particular requirements to be aware of.
- Discuss with the author in advance any extra things** you'd like she/he to do such as giving out prizes, opening a new library, or meeting special guests.
- If your author is doing workshops, coordinate with staff and **plan for nearby rooms to be as quiet as possible** on the day of the event.
- Ensure that the office staff knows in advance** that the writer will be visiting and that they know who will be meeting and looking after her or him.
- Plan to take lots of photos**. Better yet, recruit a couple of talented and responsible student photographers to help out (and then post them later to your website).
- Enlist volunteer help**. Having students, parents, colleagues or others help support the event is a wise time investment. You can do a lot, but you can't do it all!
- Invite lots of people**. Let school board members, politicians, administrators, etc. know their presence will impact the audience and reinforce the value of reading.
- Will a book sale will be part of the author visit?** (See the special **bonus checklist** at the end of this article.)

Before The Visit: Engaging Students

- Expose students to the author's work!** Listen to the author online, do a read aloud, or take advantage of audio formats such as Audible or Listening Library.

continued...

A Checklist *continued...*

- ❑ Collaborate with teachers to **introduce students to the author’s book(s) and background**, including doing activities from teaching guides or other curricula.
- ❑ **Hone student online research skills** through finding and visiting the **author’s website**, looking for **online interviews**, or **reading reviews** of the author’s work.
- ❑ Have students **brainstorm questions they want to ask the author** about book plots, character motivations, the author’s process, or simply being a writer.
- ❑ **Arrange for a student to introduce the author.** Provide a profile or short biography, and be sure to have them rehearse the introduction with you beforehand.
- ❑ Have students create a **“welcome” bulletin board for the hallway** or an **author banner to hang in the presentation space**, based on the cover or topic of the book.

The Day Of The Visit:

Great school author visits follow these three key guidelines:

- 1. An administrator takes the time to welcome the author.** This sends the message that reading is important at your school and sets the tone for the day.
 - 2. Kids and teachers know why the author is there.** They have been introduced to the books in the classroom and spent time preparing questions for the visit.
 - 3. The teachers set the example for appropriate audience behavior.** They listen actively and refrain from grading papers, chatting, leaving to do other things, etc.
- ❑ Ensure that the person responsible **meets and welcomes** the author when they arrive.
 - ❑ Remember **your author might have had a long journey.** Show him or her where the restrooms are and offer a snack or a drink.
 - ❑ **If arrangements for the day have changed**, discuss this promptly with the author.
 - ❑ **Pre-test microphones, projectors, laptops, and video or camera equipment**—technical issues are embarrassing and batteries often die 20 seconds into an event.
 - ❑ **Arrange the presentation groups by age.** Putting 4TH and 5TH graders together is fine. Having teens and pre-teens in one group does not typically work very well.

Turn Your Students into Writers!

After they’ve heard about the writing process and career of an author, have your students respond with a creative piece. Compile these works into a classroom anthology, make copies, and hold your own author signing event where the students autograph copies of their work.. Display the student publication in the “Student Work” section of your school library. Arrange a public reading event at a local coffee shop, publish the works online, or submit them to your district for inclusion in newsletters or other communications. Having their writing publicly read, heard and acknowledged can be an empowering experience for students, leading them to see themselves as expressive authors in their own right.

continued...

A Checklist *continued...*

- Seat the students with younger groups in the front and older groups in back.** This is very important—not only can the younger students see better, but their enthusiasm tends to energize the older students behind them.
- If there are lots of books to sign, use sticky notes.** Someone can write each person’s first name legibly and put it on the book. This saves time and helps the author spell names correctly.
- Ensure that sufficient staff members are present** for assemblies and workshops. An author should never be left alone with students.
- Water is good.** That’s really all the author needs to drink during a visit.
- Plan to provide lunch** if your author is on a day-long visit.
- If the author will be moving to different rooms during the day, make sure that **someone is assigned to show the way.**
- Plan **appropriate breaks** for the author to visit the restroom or have a quiet place to sit and collect their thoughts.
- Treat your author like a celebrity/rock star!**

After The Visit:

- Book reviews and student reporting.** Have a student write a book review for the school website or newspaper, or contribute a news report about the author’s visit.
- The author welcomes your feedback.** Let him or her know what you thought of the visit and if you have any ideas or suggestions based on your experience.
- Consider a small gift.** If the author is traveling by plane, remember she or he will have to pack and go through security—i.e., T-shirts may travel better than art work.
- Authors will appreciate a thank-you note** sharing the impact they had. Better yet, **have students write letters to the author.** Find out where letters may be sent.
- Record your thoughts on what went well, what didn’t, and what you would change** for the next time. We think we will remember, but few of us really do.
- Breathe and relax. Congratulations! You did it.**

Once you have coordinated a few successful visits (or even just one), your school community will clamor for more! A successful author visit goes a long way toward your goals of engaging students in literature, collaborating with teachers, and demonstrating the impact and importance of a strong library program.

- Dare we say... start planning for your next author visit!**



continued...

A Checklist *continued*...

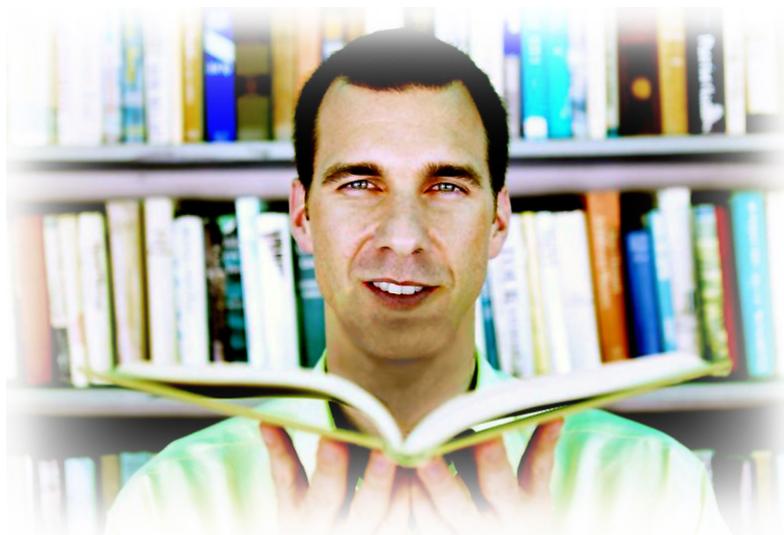
BONUS: Author-Visit Book Sale Checklist

If A Book Sale Will Be Part Of The Author Visit:

Often it is possible to offer the author's book(s) for sale at the event. This is a great way to get books into the hands of students, and can also create an added incentive for the author to visit. Books are generally made available through one of three scenarios: the books are ordered through a local bookseller; the books are ordered through the publisher, or the author may bring books to the event. The logistics and protocols for acquiring and selling books in your school setting may be complicated, and advanced planning is crucial.

- Contact the author**, or the author's publisher or agent, about selling books.
- A Letter of Agreement** will be mailed. Sign and return (keep a copy).
- Clarify whether the **author will bring copies or if you should order** them yourself.
- If advance payment is required**, arrange for a check or purchase order promptly.
- If needed, **contact a bookseller or publisher to order books**.
- Notify the author of arrangements** related to selling books.
- Prepare an **easy-to-use book order form**.
- You may consider taking **book orders in advance**.
- If books will be sold, **send letters to parents** so students can bring payment.
- Send home a book order form** with due date.
- Make a **reminder announcement** to return order forms.
- Clarify **how you will accept payments**. Plan for collection (cash box, change, etc.).
- If **invoices, receipts or other paperwork** are needed, have supplies on hand.

Kiva Liljequist and Nancy Sullivan both serve on the OASL Board and work as teacher-librarians for Portland Public Schools. The genesis of this article was Kiva hosting David Levithan's visit to her school, Metropolitan Learning Center. They had an email exchange about logistics and it turned into this (hopefully) thorough and (hopefully) useful article. You can reach them at kliljequist@pps.net or nsulliva@pps.net.



Oregon State School Library Standards *by Kathryn Harmon*

Last year a small group of school librarians from all over the state responded to an email from OASL president, Susan Stone. Our mission was to create a set of statewide library media standards, built specifically for the library. This call to action came after many years of trying to find our library standards under Language Arts, Educational Technology, and other discipline areas that had written state-mandated standards.

The committee met in July and agreed that four areas were key to every library media program: Information Literacy, Reading Engagement, Social Responsibility, and Technology Integration. The committee split into four sub-groups; each group was assigned the task of writing standards in one of the four specific areas.

We came back together in November to edit, re-write and finalize the document. At this meeting, it became apparent that a crosswalk, showing the relationship between the library standards we wrote and the newly adopted Common Core State Standards, would be beneficial. We have another work session scheduled for the end of April. We plan to attend the annual Confederation of Oregon School Administrators conference in June to present our work to date, and we will present our final product at our Fall OASL Conference.

Our grant includes the visual creation and distribution of the work when complete, but to give you an idea of our direction, here is a brief look at the strands and standards:

Content Area: School Library Learning Standards

Strand 1: Information Literacy

Definition: Implement strategies for locating, understanding, selecting, organizing, evaluating, using and producing information

Standard 1: Use skills, resources, and tools to inquire, research, think critically and gain knowledge

Standard 2: Use skills, resources, and tools to draw conclusions, make informed decisions, create new knowledge, and apply knowledge to new situations

Standard 3: Use skills, resources, and tools to create and share a work that expresses and demonstrates new understandings

Strand 2: Reading Engagement

Definition: Read to pursue intellectual, personal and emotional growth for lifelong learning

Standard 1: Develop an appreciation for reading

Standard 2: Comprehend and interpret informational and fictional text

Standard 3: Build reading skills and behaviors for life-long learning

Strand 3: Social Responsibility

Definition: Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society.

Standard 1: Practice ethical behavior to share knowledge

Standard 2: Practice ethical behavior when using print and digital resources

Standard 3: Participate collaboratively and productively as a member of a democratic society

Strand 4: Technology Integration

Definition: Employ a variety of digital environments and formats to support learning

Standard 1: Use a variety of digital environments and formats to support information literacy

Standard 2: Use a variety of digital environments and formats to enhance reading engagement

Standard 3: Practice ethical behavior when using technology

Questions and comments can be directed to any member of the volunteer committee: Amy Richards, The Madeleine School, Portland; Hazel Smith, Ashland High School, Ashland; Kate Weber, Lane ESD; Kathryn Harmon, Neah-Kah-Nie Middle and High School, RockawayBeach; Linda Bilyeu, Pilot Butte Middle School, Bend; Linda Fukasawa, Canby High School, Canby; Peggy Christensen, Marshfield High School, Coos Bay; Shelby Heiberger, Buckingham Elementary, Bend; Susan Stone, Portland Public Schools

Local Authors—What Are They Publishing Next? by Kira Porton



Oregon is chock full of standout children's authors, who are extraordinary people as much as they are extraordinary writers. Whenever customers come into A Children's Place Bookstore where I work and ask if I can show them a few books by local authors, they are never expecting what they receive in response. The stack on the counter quickly becomes overwhelming, and they have to beg me to stop, even when I have not yet pulled out a fraction of our local authors' books. A local author might sometimes happen to stop by our bookstore when a customer who is a big fan of that author is also here. A moment like that is indescribable. As a native Oregonian, I could not be more proud to support this group of fine Oregon authors, which is ever-growing.

Our Oregon authors have many books coming out in 2012 that fall into just about every genre available to kids today.

Matt Holm knows that kids are crazy about graphic novels, and they are especially crazy about his *Babymouse* and *Squish* books. They are in luck, because in July, they will be able to get their hands on #16 in the *Babymouse* series, and in September, we will already have #4 in the newer *Squish* series.

Graham Salisbury is adding two more chapter books to his award-winning Calvin Coconut series: *Man Trip* on March 13TH and *Rocket Ride* in September.

Adults and teens alike are very anxious to read Laini Taylor's sequel to her brilliant young adult novel, *Daughter of Smoke and Bone*. She was only recently allowed to reveal the title; it is called *Days of Blood and Starlight*, and even though it is not coming out until November, we are already excited.

Eric Kimmel is a prolific storyteller with the gift to create books every few months without once giving us a dud. He has been talking about his two upcoming books for a very long time. Every book he writes seems to be more fun for him than the last project. This month we will see the release of *Jack and the Giant Barbecue*, and in September, I can't wait to see Eric's picture book version of *Moby Dick*.

Deborah Hopkinson is known for her exquisite historical books, both in picture book format and for middle readers. This year she may have outdone herself with two new books that have already received at least three starred reviews each. On January 10TH, we were treated to the release of her new book, *A Boy Called Dickens*, which both librarians and children will swoon over. And in April, when we are buried under many books coming out in time for the Titanic anniversary, I expect that Deborah's middle-level book *Titanic: Voices from the Disaster* will outshine them all. As if that is not enough, she has a book about Helen Keller coming out in September. What a busy woman!

Another local lady who writes beautiful biographies is Carmen T. Bernier-Grand. Her new book in April is *Our Lady of Guadalupe*.

Roland Smith writes the most exciting page-turners and cliff-hangers around, and they are not only for reluctant middle-grade readers. I almost wish I had not started his current series, *Storm Runners*, until all of the books were finished, as I can hardly stand the suspense. At least the third book was released earlier in March to provide me with temporary relief.

Bart King is known for his humorous and goofy nonfiction, with books like *Big Book of Fun and Cute!* But at some point in the future, he may surprise you. . . . Several months ago, he sat in the window of A Children's Place Bookstore for a week, working on his first novel. It's not a joke. We have pictures to prove it.

Oregon has so many other local authors; I have no room to list the dozens of books they have coming out in 2012 and beyond. But I will continue to hand sell every one of them and to share them with each unsuspecting customer who wonders if we have any books by local authors.



Kira Porton is the manager and buyer at A Children's Place Bookstore. She has especially enjoyed working with teachers and librarians over the past nine years, helping to meet the needs of children of all ages. Kira also loves to connect her favorite local authors with schools for fun events.

Author Connections with Twitter, GoodReads, and Facebook by Debbie Alvarez



I admit it: authors are my superheroes, and I appreciate every opportunity to connect with them. From enjoying their book treasures to learning about new book releases to reading about their other interests, I embrace those connections. I love being able to ask questions, share ideas, hear from authors, and additionally keep up communication with authors I enjoyed welcoming to my school library.

Here's how I enjoy connecting to my author superheroes online: Facebook is the source I am most comfortable with when communicating with authors. I've asked questions, shared ideas, and heard from authors about resources they appreciated that I've shared. What a boost of energy to receive! Also through Facebook, I've heard about a variety of literature events, such as events from Wordstock and Flap Flap in Oregon. These events connected me with local authors that led to fabulous author visits.

I enjoy communicating with the talented author and illustrator Nina Laden on Facebook because I want to see what books she's creating in addition to reading her fascinating blog and keeping up with inspirations in her life. She just revealed that a new book is going to be released soon. I was quite excited about this release because her role was different this time: Nina Laden is the author, not the illustrator, of the book. When I inquired about this, she responded and then posted an updated blog post comparing the illustrator's style vs. her own with a beautiful, thorough explanation. <http://thenightifollowedtheblog.blogspot.com/>

Here's an additional recent example of connecting with Facebook: Oregon Battle of the Books recently identified the initial OBOB title list for 2012–2013 and one book was by an author, Barbara O'Connor, that I communicate with on Facebook. I was able to instantly communicate and congratulate her on her book *How to Steal a Dog* being selected.



Twitter provides me with another instant connection to authors and I enjoy every minute of the connections. From comments about author book videos to sharing various reviews to learning how they are creating new treasures, Twitter has been a wonderful resource. Sometimes the most inspiring articles and library media specialist lessons are shared on Twitter, including articles and podcasts by authors I admire. What a wonderful dose of inspiration it can provide,

I read the book *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park around a year ago and was in awe of the real life story, point of view, and inspiration beyond the rich language in the book.

I found out about a YouTube video which featured Linda

Sue Park explaining background information about the book, which was fascinating. I shared the video on Twitter and then actually heard from her. It was such a wonderful surprise!

continued...

Nina Laden

A new blog post about the decision to NOT illustrate my new picture book, "Does A Feather Remember?" Check it out if you're interested. (and now off for a much needed hair cut...) <http://thenightifollowedtheblog.blogspot.com/>



The Night I Followed the Blog
thenightifollowedtheblog.blogspot.com



Debbie Alvarez Will look forward to the release! Interesting someone else is illustrating!

18 hours ago · Like · \heartsuit 1



Jan Pt WOW!

18 hours ago · Like · \heartsuit 1



Nina Laden Debbie- we decided that my style was just not right for this- and Renata Liwska does beautiful work that is softer and warmer- I think it's a great combo of the two of our talents.

17 hours ago · Unlike · \heartsuit 1



Linda Sue Park @LindaSuePark replied to you:



LindaSuePark Linda Sue Park
@stylinlibrarian @HMH-Kids Thanks and say hi to your student for me!
Feb 21, 8:19 AM via web



stylinlibrarian Styling Librarian
Handed to student who wanted world view. Loved it! *@HMH-Kids: A Long Walk to Water by @LindaSuePark now in paperback. ow.ly/98r/3
Feb 19, 12:43 PM via Twitter for iPad

Author Connections *continued...*

The Styling Librarian's Reviews > Bigger than a Bread Box



Bigger than a Bread Box
by Laurel Snyder (Goodreads Author)

The Styling Librarian's review
★★★★★
bookshelves: favorites, kids-books
Read from December 22 to 25, 2011

This was one fabulous book. Had me sitting and thinking of ethics questions and "digging deeper" discussions for book clubs...

The Styling Librarian's review of Bigger than a Bread Box > Liked By

(showing 1-1 of 1)



Laurel
273 books
534 friends

GoodReads is terrific for tracking, organizing and sharing about books you've read, but it also a channel by which you can keep track of favorite authors' blogs. Furthermore, it is quite useful for keeping up on new book releases from favorite authors, getting book suggestions, and discussing literary topics in a forum. One day, I read the brilliant book *Bigger than a Bread Box* by Laurel Snyder and reviewed it on GoodReads. I was honored when the author actually "liked" my review within a day. After this, I was able to connect with her and enjoy communications on a different level.

We know that new technology and social media is for much more than following reality stars or your closest friends; it is highly useful and practical for our literacy work and professional development. It turns out that it can also help you connect with your favorite superheroes!

Debbie Alvarez is the library media specialist at Ridgewood Elementary School in the Beaverton School District, and the Oregon Battle of the Books (OBOB), Chair for OASL. You can reach her at: deblalvarez@gmail.com

Debbie's Work Webpage: <https://sites.google.com/a/beaverton.k12.or.us/rdgwd-library/>

Debbie's Personal Webpage: <http://www.thestylinglibrarian.com>

OBOB Webpage: <http://oboblsta.pbworks.com>





Transliteracy and the School Library Program is designed to help school librarians articulate the range of skills known as transliteracy skills and create opportunities for students and teachers to engage in the contemporary online environment. As school librarians redesign their roles in learning as online and offline information facilitators and strategists, they must provide instruction on new media literacies, such as distributed cognition, transmedia navigation and collective intelligence alongside traditional literacies.

PARTICIPANTS AT THIS 2-DAY INTENSIVE WORKSHOP WILL:

- Identify the skills required for young people to successfully navigate the new media ecology and information landscape.
- Learn about current research in the field of youth and social media.
- Develop strategies to collaborate with teachers to effectively integrate transmedia skills and participative online tools into the subject-area curriculum.
- Create opportunities for students and teachers to engage in the participatory online environment through the library program.



HENRY JENKINS, KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Renowned media studies scholar and author, Henry Jenkins believes that research skills are more important than ever as school librarians work to bridge the gap between the informal learning accomplished in what he calls “participatory culture” and the formal learning occurring in K–12 classrooms. Jenkins will work directly with attendees to develop strategies that leverage students’ online behavior for integrating transliteracy skills into the curriculum.



SATELLITE SITE, BAY AREA CALIFORNIA (SAN JOSE)

The AASL Fall Forum is an intimate event which focuses on one topic of importance to the profession for concentrated study and discussion. This year AASL is extending the reach of this unique professional development opportunity. Attend the 2012 Fall Forum in Northern California at one of AASL’s four regional satellite site locations where the multi-day institute will be broadcast live from Greenville, SC. Attendees will participate in breakout sessions with the help of site facilitators and have the ability to virtually interact with the keynote, speakers and attendees at the Greenville location.

To learn more about the Bay Area California (San Jose) location and what to expect from this focused and interactive learning event, visit www.ala.org/aasl/fallforum/sites.

AASL 2012 FALL FORUM
OCTOBER 12-13

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
WWW.ALA.ORG/AASL/FALLFORUM

Classified Observations

For Paraprofessionals In School Libraries
By Laura Friesen

The students filed into the library whispering their excitement to their neighbors. Before them stood a magician, whose running patter and pet rabbit kept them amused, entertained, and excited for the next hour. Emphasizing the importance of reading, Curt Nelson of *Slightly Illusional* set the standard of expectation for author visits to come.

There is something very special about having an author visit the school. The kids get excited and the teaching staff appreciates the connections to the curriculum. The focus on the writing process and reading as much as possible reiterates what all classroom teachers tell their students.

One of the goals in our library is to provide different author experiences for our students. Each year we invite someone new to highlight different genres, writing techniques, and subject matter. Even though they all talk about the writing experience, each author's presentation is unique. Past author visits have included Kevin Kurtz (*A Day in the Salt Marsh*), Margriet Ruurs (*My Librarian is a Camel*) and Rob and Laura Sams (*A Pirate's Quest*). We are looking forward to having Tom Birdseye present to our students this spring, and this coming fall, we have Graham Salisbury scheduled.

How to finance these visits is a continuing issue. We are fortunate to have an active, involved parent group that provides funds for many enrichment activities, and author visits are a top priority. We also have staff and parents willing to write grant proposals, tapping into a wider monetary base. As we struggle with budgets, time constraints, and apathy, inviting authors to speak to students in schools is money well spent.

Our teaching staff works diligently on the writing process; having authors visit the school is a great way to emphasize the importance of developing good writing skills. Promoting the author's books in the library helps the students familiarize themselves with that person's body of work and style of writing. After the visit, teachers may choose to generate activities and lessons in the classroom that focus on the author's work.

Our author selections often come through one of three channels: attending conferences (both regional and state), through local events, and/or searching the Internet. At conferences, authors are invited to speak at general sessions and also may run small group sessions. This is a fantastic way to get an indication of who these people are first hand. Almost every conference dealing with reading, libraries, and education has an author presentation.

To find out about more author possibilities, local events and the Internet are excellent means by which we can find potential author-visitors. Our public library hosts local author presentations several times a year. Going to these events is a way to meet writers who may be less well known but are also less expensive to book. Searching for Oregon authors on the Internet, both through publishers and individual websites reveals a wealth of talent close to home. Their websites may help you make decisions about the appropriateness and excitement-level for your school, and how to best support their visit.

We haven't tried Skype visits yet, but for individual classrooms this looks like a wonderful alternative to a whole school assembly. Rural, small, or hard-to-reach schools may find their limited funds would go far with a live Skype chat with a new or beloved author. Authors may have flexible options for time and cost.

One of my favorite Oregon authors growing up was Evelyn Sibley Lampman. Beverly Cleary became a favorite of the next generation. Who will follow in their footsteps? Invite an author to your school and make new favorites.

Laura Friesen is a paraprofessional at Bertha Holt Elementary in Eugene. You can contact her at friesen@4j.lane.edu



Intellectual Freedom *By Leigh Morlock*



In January of 2011, the State of Arizona found Tucson Unified School District in violation of section A.R.S. 15-112, a statute prohibiting instruction that “promote(s) the overthrow of the United States government” or “resentment toward a race or class of people” or classes that “are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group” or that “advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals.” Per the state, TUSD had one or more classes that violated the statute on all counts.

As a result of these findings, *Mexican White Boy* by Matt de la Peña was among the titles removed from the school district’s classroom curricula. *Mexican White Boy* has been lauded by numerous organizations for its quality and authenticity. *Booklist* declares that the protagonist’s “struggle to find his place will speak strongly to all teens but especially to those of mixed race.” Wow. Imagine that. Imagine what it must take for a writer to create a piece of art that speaks strongly to young people. Why would anyone limit access to such a fine work?

Perhaps the answer lies in what makes it fine. When we’re introduced to Danny, the protagonist in *Mexican White Boy*, we learn that his skin is brown, “half-Mexican brown,” that he’s just a tad darker than the other kids at his private school, the ones who live in neighborhoods where “Mexican people do under-the-table yard work and hide out in the hills because they’re in San Diego illegally.” Danny is too dark at school, but when he visits his extended family he feels too light. And this kind of dilemma is what *Booklist* is talking about. Don’t you feel your throat tighten at the thought – too dark to fit there, too light to fit here? Don’t you feel it even if you’ve never given the shade of your skin a second thought? Of course, because we’ve all – especially as teens – felt we didn’t fit in, that we didn’t belong anywhere, that we just weren’t quite *right*.

These qualities of verisimilitude and emotional resonance are exactly what Picasso meant, I think, when he famously called art “the lie that tells a truth.” In *Mexican White Boy*, de la Peña tells the truth. He doesn’t truckle. Doesn’t shy away. Imagine the courage it takes: to look at something squarely, to feel the pain of it the whole time you’re creating, to keep writing anyway. I’m with E.B. White who said, “I admire anybody who has the guts to write anything at all.”

Matt de la Peña’s work touched the students of the Tucson High Magnet School so profoundly that they fundraised to bring the author to their school as a speaker. De la Peña then used his speaking fee to buy copies of *Mexican White Boy* for the school, an act that certainly put a grin on this librarian’s face. It also reminded me of another truth-telling writer, Dorothy Allison, whose brave novel dealing with violence and sexual abuse and poverty, *Bastard out of Carolina*, was rejected by certain school boards in both California and Maine. Like de la Peña, Stephen and Tabitha King bought extra copies of the novel for Maine libraries to show their support. This act shouldn’t come as too much of a surprise. In his memoir, *On Writing*, King talks about the angry letters he receives because of, among other things, his use of profanity in dialogue. King responds that a writer must tell the truth as he sees it, is absolutely obligated to do so. He says that “writing fiction in America...is no job for intellectual cowards. There are lots of would-

“...writing fiction in America...is no job for intellectual cowards...”

continued...

Intellectual Freedom *continued...*

be censors out there and...they all basically want the same thing: for you to see the world they see... or to at least shut up about what you do see that's different. They are agents of the status quo. Not necessarily bad guys, but dangerous guys if you happen to believe in intellectual freedom."

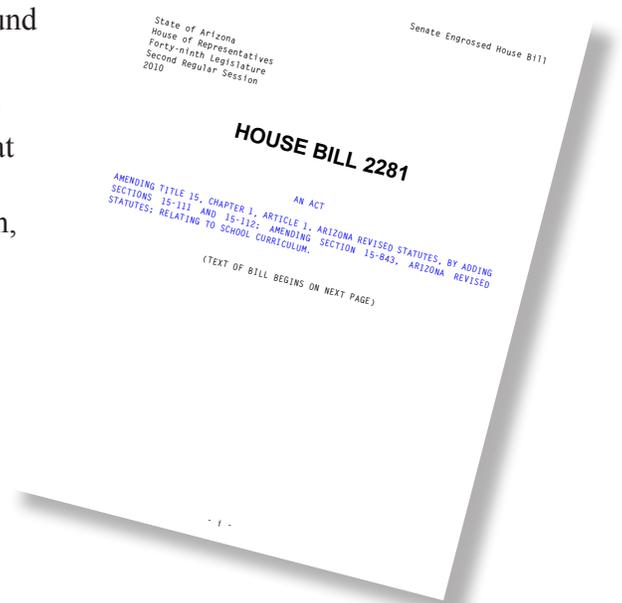
And we do, of course. Believe in intellectual freedom. Believe in the lie that tells a truth. Believe in protecting art. Believe in supporting artists, like Matt de la Peña and Dorothy Allison, artists who in turn believe in showing us the world as they see it. And Matt de la Peña sees a world of kids who struggle to find a place; he knows the struggle intimately, has scouted ahead and sent back *Mexican White Boy* and other novels that tell the truth of what he sees -- that there truly are different shades, that these shades have meaning in the world, that it's important to put words around the meanings so we have a way to start a conversation.

And as for overthrowing the government and inciting riots and creating resentment and all the rest? I can say only that shining the light of truth on *any* topic—poverty, slavery, violence, racial conflicts, love, immigration, war, addiction, sexuality, oppression—is our right, a right people fight for in every part of the world, a right the founding fathers of this country thought so important that they added it to the Constitution in the form of the First Amendment, a right we as librarians have no intention of seeing trampled.

Read on, truthseekers. Read on.

<http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/49leg/2r/bills/hb2281s.pdf>

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Read more on this issue in these articles from Matt de la Peña's blog and The New York Times:

<http://mattdelapena.com/blog/?p=210>

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/19/education/racial-lens-used-to-cull-curriculum-in-arizona.html?_r=1&pagewanted=1

NEW FAVORITES • BY JOANN S. LUM • NEW FAVORITES • BY JOANN S. LUM • NEW FAVORITES



New Favorites

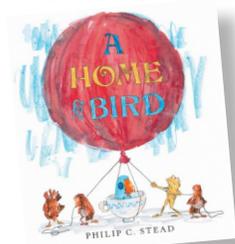
Book Reviews by Joann Lum



Fogliano, Julie. *And Then It's Spring*. Illus. Erin E. Stead. 2012. Roaring Brook Press, an imprint of Macmillan. 32p. \$16.99. 978-1-59643-624-4.

Ages 4–8. Newcomer Julie Fogliano and Caldecott medalist Erin Stead have created a

magnificent book celebrating a child's passion for the earth and hope for a spring. A young boy and his devoted dog have had enough of brown, so they plant seeds and wait for rain to nourish them: "*And the brown, /has a greenish hum/that you can only hear/if you put your ear to the ground/and close your eyes.*" They persevere through the cold winter, tending to their seeds and waiting. The intricate and distinctive woodblock and pencil illustrations in muted colors punctuated with deep red depict a rural farmland covered with brown earth, white snow, and eventually green grass. Stead's unusual use of margins adds to the story's beauty. Cleverly placed on each two-page spread, a rabbit and turtle find their places as part of the landscape, e.g., the turtle looks for sprouts with his oversized magnifying glass, and the rabbit waters the carrot seeds. The book masterfully conveys the innocence and beauty of childhood as the boy ventures out with his dog in nature. The boy and his faithful dog exude patience, diligence, and hope in this tender story that is sure to resonate with young children.



Stead, Philip C. *A Home for Bird*. Illustrated. 2012. Roaring Brook Press, an imprint of Macmillan. 32p. \$16.99. 978-1-59643-711-1.

Ages 3–6. In this quirky tale, Vernon the toad ventures out on a journey to help his new friend find his home.

Throughout their travels, Vernon shows Bird many different places, always asking him if this is his home: "*Vernon sighed. 'Bird will speak up when we find the right home.' /But no matter how many places they tried, Bird said nothing. And Vernon was sad.*" After tying a balloon to his

teacup boat, the two catch the wind and travel a long way to a farmhouse. After entering the house, Vernon places Bird to bed in a house on a post. "*Vernon awoke with the morning light. He liked this house and the cheerful sounds it made. 'I wonder if Bird likes it too?' thought Vernon. And Bird said... Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo! And Bird was happy.*" Once again, award-winning Philip Stead has created remarkable, compelling colorful illustrations using pastels and watercolor washes that readers will pore over. Sequenced actions as well as full two-page spreads tell the story of Vernon's quest for a home for Bird. Themes of friendship, loyalty, persistence, and love permeate this book celebrating pure devotion to a friend. Young children are sure to be surprised that Vernon's silent friend is a wooden cuckoo bird!

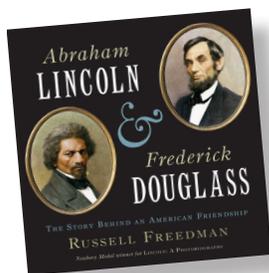


Evans, Shane W. *We March!* Illustrated. 2012. Roaring Brook Press, an imprint of Macmillan. 32p. \$16.99. 978-1-59643-539-1

Ages 4–8. On August 28, 1963, more than 250,000 people gathered in Washington D.C. to participate in the March on Washington for Jobs and

Freedom where Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech. "*The morning is quiet. /The sun rises/ and we prepare/to march.*" Acclaimed author and illustrator of *Underground*, Shane W. Evans, has created a powerful book with simple text and meaningful images capturing this historic event. The magnificent illustrations explode off the pages, depicting a child's perspective and the power of the movement. A father, mother, and two children start off early in the morning and meet at church to join the others for the march. The compelling full-bleed illustrations depict boxy-rendered participants of all ages. Greens, blues, and deep burgundies permeate the pages, capturing the crowds of people resolutely participating in the march. The text's simplicity-- only nine sentences across the pages of this book-- punctuates the significant impact and spirit of this historic day: "*We follow our leaders. /We walk together. /We sing.*" On the last page, the author provides additional information about the march and its impact on future legislation.

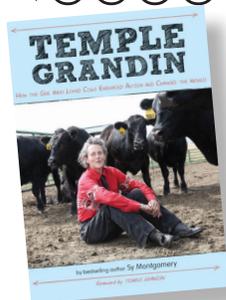
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Freedman, Russell. *Abraham Lincoln & Frederick Douglass: The Story Behind an American Friendship*. 2012. Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 128p. \$18.99. 978-0-547-38562-4

Ages 9–12. *Heads turned when*

Frederick Douglass walked into the White House on the morning of August 10, 1863. It was still early, but the waiting area leading to Abraham Lincoln's office was crowded with politicians, officials, patronage seekers, and citizens of all kinds seeking an audience with the president. In this captivating book, award-winning Russell Freedman merges the biographies of two great men who significantly influenced the course of the Civil War as well as race relations in the United States. Although Lincoln and Douglass met only three times, they forged a friendship based on their values and mutual respect. The dense text is easily read with the over sixty photographs, drawings, and copies of documents, allowing the reader to understand the historical events and political concepts. Frederick Douglass' early years of slavery and escape to the North provide the needed framework for understanding his adult vocation of public speaking on behalf of freedom for slaves. Likewise, Abraham Lincoln's early years as a lawyer in Springfield, Illinois and as a U.S. Congressman in 1846 (when the territories gained through the Mexican War impacted how slavery might be expanded) greatly influenced his political decisions with regard to slavery. Students who are looking for a comprehensive treatment of the issue of slavery in the Civil War will devour this thorough book.

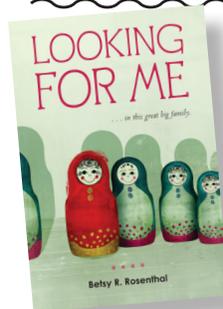


Montgomery, Sy. *Temple Grandin: How the Girl Who Loved Cows Embraced Autism and Changed the World*. 2012. Houghton Mifflin. 160 p. \$16.99. 978-0-547-44315-7

Ages 9–12. *“Thanks to her autism, she is able to put herself inside the emotional and sensory system of a cow or a horse or a pig, to*

dwell in the world of animals and know, as few others can, what they think and feel.” In this compelling and intelligent biography, this award-winning author makes Temple Grandin's fascinating life understandable to middle-grade readers. Temple's accomplishments have revolutionized the livestock industry by helping

to design cruelty-free facilities. Told in a narrative/time order manner with over fifty photographs and drawings, Temple's life from birth, through her school years, and to adulthood unfolds as the author combines factual information about autism with Temple's tenacious love of animals. At the end of five of the thirteen chapters, two pages of additional information is given, i.e., *Autism Disorder: A Few Fast Facts, Thinking Differently: Changing Views of Brain Differences, When a Door Opens, The Abnormality of Genius, Factory Farming by the Numbers*. In the Appendix, Temple gives advice to kids on the spectrum, as well as a selected bibliography and resource list. In this page-turning biography, children will be encouraged to embrace their perceived weaknesses and pursue their passions as they look at Temple's success as a brilliant scientist and professor of animal science who has given animals their “voices.”



Rosenthal, Betsy R. *Looking for Me*. 2012. Houghton Mifflin, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 176 p. \$15.99. 978-0-547-61084-9

Ages 10–14. In her debut novel based on her mother's life, Rosenthal writes a heartwarming story about a young Jewish girl's identity in a very large family. Eleven-year-old Edith is one of

twelve children living in Baltimore during the Depression in 1936. Throughout her sixth grade school year, she tries to figure out who she is in this large Jewish family: *“After school/Mom's looking right at me, /fumbling for my name, /Marian, Sylvia, Mildred, Annette.../I mean Edith, /can you empty the ice pan? /If my mother doesn't even know who I am, /how am I supposed to?”* Cleverly and beautifully written in free verse, each chapter quickly draws the reader into Edith's large family and her struggle to find her sense of individuality. Mixed with humor, warmth, and deep sadness, she reflects about working at the family diner until two in the morning, feeling dumb next to *“smarty-pants Helen Krashinsky”* in her sixth grade class, and crying when her brother, sweet, curly-headed Melvin, dies unexpectedly from bronchitis. Edith's feelings of sadness, invisibility, resentment, stubbornness, pride, and sisterly love all ring true. Photographs from Edith's life are included as well a glossary of Jewish words. In addition to lessons from the themes of family, belonging, and individuality, children will seamlessly learn about the Jewish culture, including Shabbos, Seder, shuls, as well as foods: challah, gefilte fish and knishes.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Becky Firth • bfirth@ncce.org

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