

# YAACING

The Newsletter of the Young Adult & Children's Services Section of BCLA  
Fall 2011



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## Message from the Chair

Hello YAACERS,

I hope everyone has enjoyed their summer and Summer Reading Club festivities!

YAACS has lost a Vice Chair but miraculously gained a new one in Tara Williston of Burnaby Public Library, North Vancouver District Public Library, and Vancouver Public Library – welcome Tara! We wish our former Vice Chair, Sara Hathaway, luck in moving and thank her for serving valiantly on the executive.

Tara will bravely serve as YAACS representative on the BCLA Conference Planning Committee and it isn't too early to begin thinking about session suggestions for the next BCLA conference! For those disappointed by last year's centennial focus in Victoria, the conference planning process has been reviewed this summer and we'd love to hear your ideas and suggestions for children's and youth sessions. Share your thoughts with Tara at [twilliston@gmail.com](mailto:twilliston@gmail.com).

We would still like to have an LTAIG Rep and a Northern Rep on the executive so please harass and cajole anyone you think would be a good fit for this new position. (Poke, poke!)

You are also welcome to attend/tele-attend YAACS executive meetings. We usually meet about four times a year and we post our meeting dates and times on the YAACS website. Instructions for calling into meetings go out on the listserv with the meeting announcements. Sign up for the listserv here if you haven't already: <http://www.bclibraries.ca/listservs/bcla/>

What do you think about YAACS? Check out our brief web survey and encourage other children's and YA people to do the same (we really would like feedback from people who we aren't reaching!). <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WLQKNFQ>.

Cheers,

- Darby Love  
YAACS Chair

## Message from the Editors

School is starting up again and our fall programs are just getting off the ground. This issue we're featuring a number of felt stories and program ideas to inspire you as you settle into your fall routine.

If you're in the lower mainland, make sure you don't miss out on the Signing Storytime workshops offered by YAACING, and wherever you are, start thinking about nominees for the new YAACS Outstanding Librarian Award.

This issue is full of news and new ideas, but we're also introducing something old this time around. Our latest column, *Vintage YAACING*, will feature articles selected from our past publications. Today we're going all the way back to the beginning, 27 years ago when Terry Clark launched the first issue of YAACING.

As usual, we'd like to thank our talented colleagues across the province for sending us such great submissions. Keep it coming.

- April Ens and Pamela Fairfield  
YAACING Editors



## YAACS Outstanding Librarian Award

The YAACS executive wants to raise the profile of children and teen librarians in the library community. To that end, the YAACS executive is looking for 4 or 5 stellar volunteers to be part of a selection committee that will look at nominations for the most Outstanding Librarian. We are hoping that this will be the beginning of an annual award, which will be presented each year at the BCLA conference, starting next year in 2012. This committee will be on the ground floor for developing the nomination criterion. We are hoping to begin the process this fall, so that requests for nominations can be sent out early next year. If you, or someone you know, are interested in being part of the committee, please contact Susan Redmond ([suered@shaw.ca](mailto:suered@shaw.ca)). Thank you!

- Susan Redmond  
YAACS Executive

## SRC 2011 Wrap-Up: Sweet!

The early reports are in and by all accounts, the 2011 Summer Reading Club, "Savour Each Word," was a delicious smorgasbord for all. Highlights at libraries around the province included cookie-making, growing sprouts and vegetables, a Teddy Bear's Picnic, kitchen chemistry experiments, farmer's market events, treasure hunts and much more. Kaslo & District kicked off their program with a concert featuring food-related songs like "Chaos in the Kitchen!" and "Squishy Banana!" And kids at the Rossland Public Library\* enjoyed a library visit from some chickens. (I wonder if the hens requested a book, book, BOOK! while they were there.) And of course there were many exciting medal-award ceremonies and lots and LOTS of reading.

Keep an eye on your in-boxes in the next month for an SRC survey so we on the committee can find out what you liked best, what you'd like more of and what we could do differently to improve the SRC in the coming year. We're starting work on the 2012 SRC program: an announcement of the new theme and illustrator will be coming later this fall.

\* For more details about Rossland's SRC events, take a look at their blog at <http://rossland.bclibrary.ca/kids/summer-reading-club-2011>. If anyone else has an SRC blog or write-up of events, I'd love to see it!

- Els Kushner  
SRC Coordinator

## TeenRC 2011

TeenRC had a fantastic summer in Act II of Getting Into Character! Teens showed a lot of enthusiasm on the forums, exercised their critical muscles in book reviews, were keen participants in the *Mystery Monday* live chats and shared their wonderful creative writing efforts with each other, too. Here are some facts and figures from the summer:

- Over 520 teens from BC alone signed up to join TeenRC between June and August
- 729 new books were added to our genre booklists by BC teens between June and August
- 1037 book reviews were written by BC teens between June and August
- We gave away 120 prizes to teens across Canada for doing a TeenRC user survey
- We gave away 9 signed books by noted teen authors to teens who submitted questions for author blog interviews
- We had six *Mystery Monday* chats that were immensely popular, with teens clamouring for more chats throughout the fall (several have already indicated they want to be mystery guests!)
- We gave away 12 Chapters gift cards and 2 Kobo Readers as prizes for book reviews over the summer (for both BC and non-BC teens)
- Over 30 teens submitted to the *Act II Readers' Choice Writing Contest*, with two finalists and one Grand Prize Winner of a Future Shop gift card and a package of books generously donated by Vancouver Kidsbooks
- In the forums, an average of 45 posts were made each day, with at least four active topics. One popular topic was the "Six Word Story" category, which saw some fun literary efforts from teens—all of them told in six words!

We look forward to continuing TeenRC in the fall!

- Ellen Wu  
TeenRC Coordinator



## Picturing Canada Honoured

As SLAIS students, many of you worked as graduate research assistants for one or two years on the website, database and background research for this book; and so, we want to share with you this great information and once again thank you for all the work that went into it.

We have just learned that the International Research Society of Children's Literature at the recent Congress in Brisbane, Australia, announced that the IRSCS Book Award for 2011 goes to PICTURING CANADA.

"IRSCS Award

This award honours a distinguished book by an IRSCS member published in the two years prior to the Congress. The winners for 2011 are:

Gail Edwards and Judith Saltman for *Picturing Canada: A History of Canadian Children's Illustrated Books and Publishing*, University of Toronto Press, 2010.

This book comprises an account of the history of children's English-language publishing in Canada, concentrating on illustrated works and picture books, from the beginnings of Canadian children's literature to 2005.

The authors have plotted the evolution of Canadian publishing for children against the cultural and political shifts which have characterised Canadian history. They focus in particular on how illustrated books and picture books have negotiated Canadian debates over nationhood and national identities, with particular reference to Indigenous peoples and texts, and ethnocultural diversity. The distinctive contribution Edwards and Saltman make is that this is not merely a literary history, but *Picturing Canada* investigates the networks of publishing, librarianship, education, retail, reviewing and research which attend the production and reception of Canadian books for children."

Cheers and hurrah for Canadian children's literature recognized internationally

- *Gail Edwards and Judi Saltman,*  
*Authors of **Picturing Canada***

## New Westminster Public Library's Teen Library User Survey

In the Spring of 2011, the New Westminster Public Library administered a library user survey to local teens. The objective was to find out how teens are using the library and what we could do to encourage them to use the library and its services more. As part of our strategic plan, we are looking for ways to better serve this important patron group and the survey provided a great starting point.

Over 10% of New Westminster teens between the ages of 12 and 18 responded. The final tally for analysis purposes was 399 responses which yielded some very telling information. Not surprisingly, the teens' top requests include more space, better access to wireless and computers, being allowed to eat in the library and more programs! Many also reported being perfectly satisfied with what the library is doing already.

If you would like to see the final summary documenting the results, the PDF is available under the Teen section of the New Westminster Public Library website ([http://www.nwpl.ca/teens/teen\\_survey.php](http://www.nwpl.ca/teens/teen_survey.php)). There you will also see how we have been addressing the issues raised in the survey.

- *Liz Hunter,*  
*New Westminster Public Library*



**TWO DATES: October 27 @ Maple Ridge Library  
or November 2 @ City Centre Library, Surrey**

**Time: 1 to 4pm**

# YAACS Presents Signing Storytime Workshop

Come to a Signing Storytime Workshop. Learn sign language you can use in your storytimes. Educator Sharon Cooper has 30 years experience teaching sign language to children and families. The session incorporates stories, poems, songs, body language and facial expression that are great to use with young children.

Handouts, Snacks,  
coffee and tea provided.

Get your registration in early.

**Space is limited** to 25 people.

Learn some signing  
to enhance your storytimes!

**Registration due by**

**Thursday October 13, 2011.**

To Register email Chris Conroy  
[chrisconroy@shaw.ca](mailto:chrisconroy@shaw.ca). Include your  
name, home library, whether you are  
a YAACS/BCLA member or not  
& workshop preference.

Cost is \$25.00 for YAACS/BCLA  
members and \$30.00 for non-members.  
Payment is due on day of the workshop  
by cheque or cash.

Exact amounts would be appreciated.

For Further information Contact  
Chris Conroy 604-637-7087



Young Adult and Children's Services



## Teens Only

### 2011: A Summer of Experiments

By Amy Dawley

I like to think that I take risks and try something new for teens every summer, but 2011 was **the** summer of change. Not only did we create a “made in Prince George” summer reading program for young and school-aged children but this was the first year that I organized the teen programs to follow suit. How could I not get teens involved? Our theme this year was awesome and fit in nicely with what teens are interested in: reducing waste, going green, and becoming more aware of the world around them, both globally and locally, right here in Prince George.

For this year’s summer reading program we challenged ourselves to buy nothing, waste nothing, and leave no environmental footprint with our programs. We called the overall program “Make Waves @ Your Library” and our reading challenge this year was called “Words For Wells.” It was to read 2500 books to raise \$2500 to build a well in Uganda through the Northern Uganda Development Foundation. For every book that teens, kids, and their grown-ups read, the Board agreed to donate \$1 to NUDF. I’m happy to report that we met and exceeded our reading goal, and the public liked our summer reading challenge so much that they raised a little extra money themselves to donate to NUDF.

#### The Words For Wells Challenge

This year, teens in Uganda will drink clean water because teens in Prince George read. We’ll be exchanging words for wells! Here’s how it works:

1. Using recycled paper, make a list of books as you read them this summer. Share your list with library staff.
2. For every book you read this summer, \$1 will be donated towards the cost of building a water well in Uganda.
3. We need \$2500 to build the well, so get reading! This summer, teens in Prince George can make a difference in our world.

In addition to the Words For Wells challenge, we had themed events happening each of the 6 weeks that tied in with reducing waste, going green, and being aware of the world around you. Here’s what I had going on for teens:

#### I Used To Be A Library Book

Learn how to repurpose an ordinary looking library book into a top secret hidey-hole. Because who would open a boring copy of “War & Peace” looking for your diary keys, huh? No one, that’s who. Oh, and we’ll also be turning books into cool tote bags.

#### Postcards For Japan

The town of Yamada, Japan has been totally devastated by the tsunami. Let’s get together and send them recycled postcards with messages of encouragement.

#### A Book By Any Other Name

Learn how to repurpose an ordinary looking library book into a fantastic journal you can use to record your deepest thoughts or schemes of global domination.

#### From Glass to Greenery

Learn how to turn some boring old glass into something green and living: a miniature terrarium! It’s a little ecosystem that fits in the palm of your hand.

#### Something New From Something Old

Everyone’s got some clothes in the back of a closet that are just blah. Bring ‘em to this workshop and turn them into something awesome! Why buy when you can recycle?

#### Avatar – Free Movie Afternoon

Wind down the summer with a free afternoon movie! We’ll be showing Avatar to all teens ages 12 – 18. Bring as many friends of you want, it’s FREE! Snacks included.

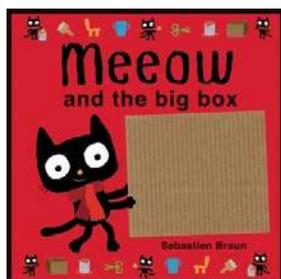
This year’s program was a huge success and it was fantastic to see the different age groups come together around a common goal. Everyone was really supportive of our buy nothing, waste nothing philosophy. And our theme sparked the interest of so many young people who are passionate about caring for our planet and for each other. We’re already hatching a plot for next year’s program and staff are excited to keep the momentum going.

Did you try something new for teens this summer? I’d love to hear how it turned out! Drop me a line any time at [adawley@lib.pg.bc.ca](mailto:adawley@lib.pg.bc.ca).

*Amy Dawley is the Teen Librarian at the Prince George Public Library.*



## Who's on the Felt Board?



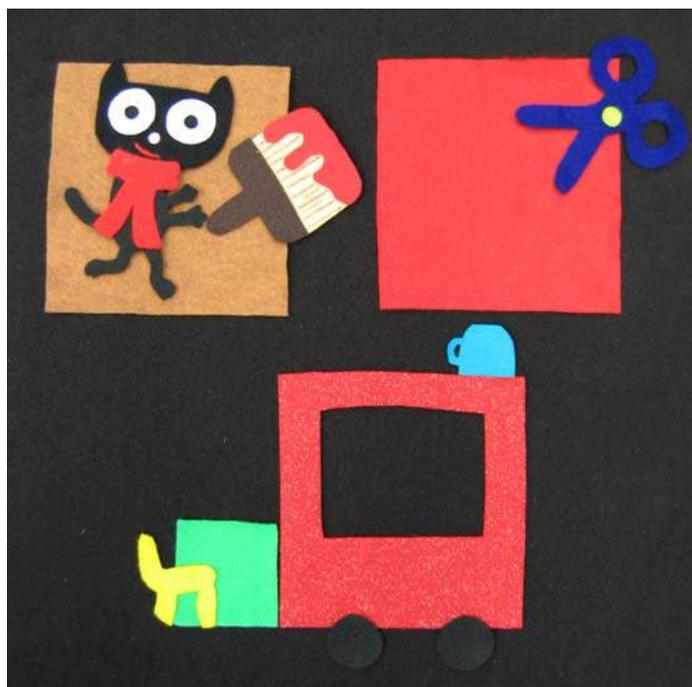
### Meeow and the Big Box

*Original Book by Sebastien Braun  
Felt Pieces by Alicia Cheng and Saara Itkonen*

Meeow is a black cat. He discovers a cardboard box and decides to use it to make a firetruck! To learn how (and for the text of the story) pick up a copy of the book.

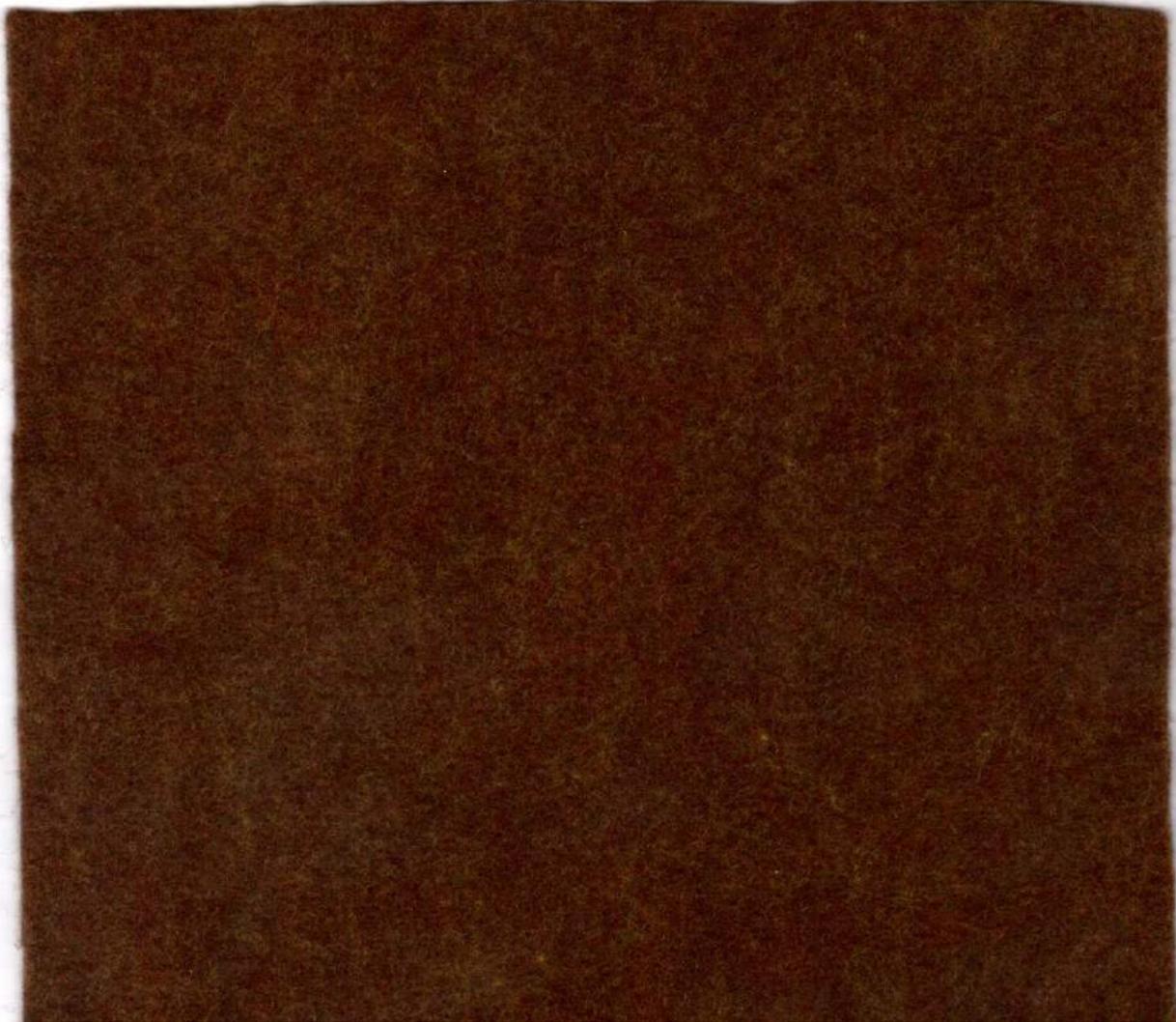
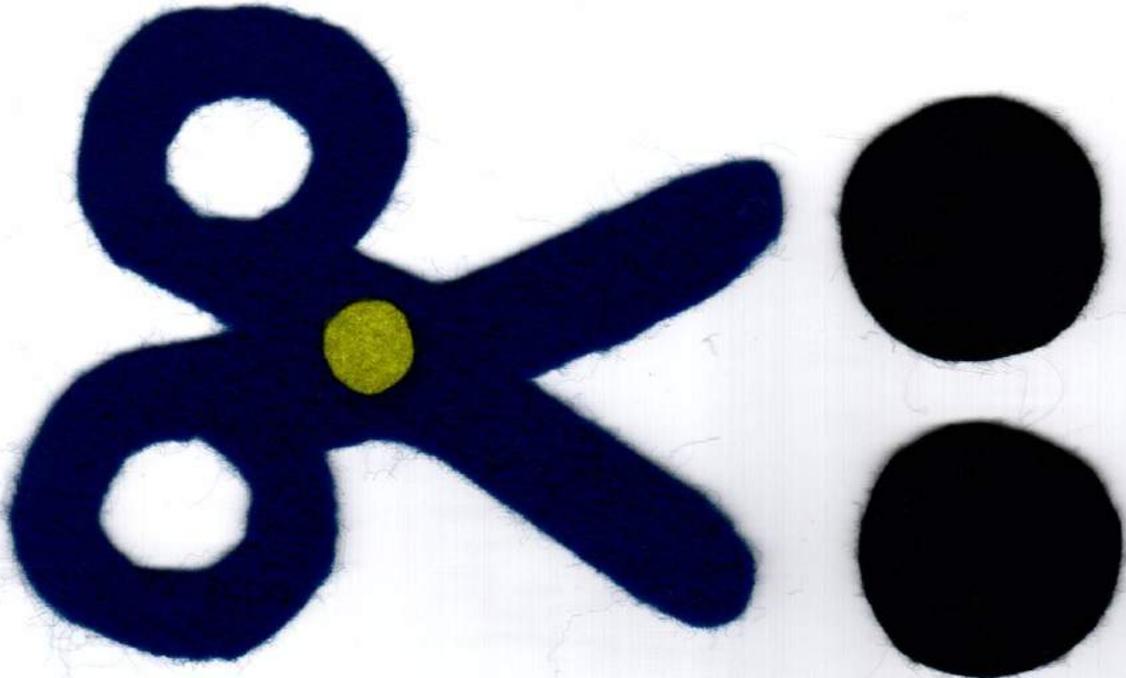
*Meeow and the Big Box* is a story that uses few words and bright imagery. Toddlers, and even older babies, will enjoy the simple plot as they try to guess what Meeow wants to do with the box.

*Alicia Cheng and Saara Itkonen are Auxiliary Children's Librarians at the Vancouver Public Library*









## Vintage YAACING

### Introducing Our Newest Column...

By April Ens

As a personal summer project I've been digitizing the YAACING archives. After innumerable hours of scanning, image cropping, and file conversion, there are 60 beautiful PDFs (almost 2000 pages!) sitting on my laptop and ready to go. Once the BCLA website redesign is complete I'll upload these files to the YAACING page.

Meanwhile, we're launching our new *Vintage YAACING* column. Each issue we'll feature something from the archives that we think you'll find useful, interesting, or funny. Computer tips from the mid-90's, anyone?

This time we're going right back to the beginning: YAACING Volume 1, Issue 1 from October 1984. On the next pages you can read founding editor Terry Clark's introduction to the first issue, plus a classic Halloween storytime featuring rhymes well worth stealing.

#### How You Can Help

Digitization is going well, but the collection is still incomplete. If you have any old copies of YAACING at your own home or library, please check whether any of these issues are among them:

- Volume 1, Issue 3 (July 1985)
- Volume 2, Issue 1 (Nov 1985)
- Volume 2, Issue 2 (March 1986)
- Volume 3, Issue 2 (May 1987)
- Volume 4, Issue 3 (1988)
- Volume 5, Issues 1-3 (1988/1989)
- Volume 6, Issue 1 (March 1990)
- Fall/Winter 1990
- Winter 1992
- Spring 1993
- Winter, Spring, or Summer 1998
- Winter 1999

Some of these dates are guesses based on publication gaps, so the issues may or may not exist. Others have been found as bound copies which scan poorly so we are looking for alternate sources. Please contact me at [YAACING@gmail.com](mailto:YAACING@gmail.com) if you uncover any gems.



Cover of YAACING Volume 1, Issue 1

#### Gratitude

I'd like to thank Judi Saltman and Philippa Brown for lending me their personal collections of YAACING to scan, and to Allie Douglas at the BCLA office for tracking down the oldest issues of YAACING in the depths of the BCLA archives. Thanks also to the VPL staff who allowed me to borrow bound reference copies from 1984-1994 which filled in a few gaps in the record.

*April Ens is the Children's Librarian at the Kitsilano Branch of the Vancouver Public Library*



October, 1984

Hello fellow children-and-book lovers,

This is the complimentary first issue of YAACing, an idea-sharing and information-exchange newsletter to be produced three times a year (October, February and June) by the Young Adult and Children's Services division of B.C.L.A. In future, only members of YAACS will be mailed complimentary copies, so if you are not a member please consider joining us.

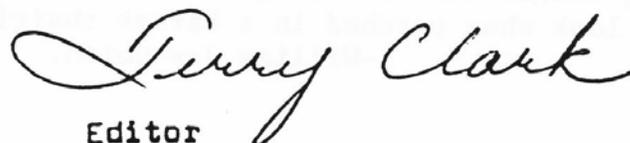
YAACing is an informal attempt to share expertise and concerns outside of the conference forum. Contributions and comments are very welcome (especially from those of you from outside of the Lower Mainland). Please send your ideas, news, plans or anything of interest to others in the field to:

Terry Clark,  
Vancouver Public Library,  
Boys' and Girls' Section,  
750 Burrard Street,  
Vancouver, B.C. V6Z 1X5

Clear, typed copy would be appreciated. Deadline is the first week of the month prior to the month of publication.

We hope you find the newsletter useful. You are welcome to borrow ideas and reproduce freely.

Enthusiastically yours,

  
Editor



Theme: HALLOWEEN

Story: A Dark, Dark Tale by Ruth Brown (this also works well told)

Fingerplay: One little, two little, three little witches (raise fingers)  
 Fly over haystacks, fly over ditches, (fly hand in up and down  
 Slide down moonbeams without any hitches, motion, then glide it  
 Heigh-ho, Halloween's here. down)  
 (sing to the tune of 'Three Little Indians')

Circle game: Here we go round the neighbourhood, neighbourhood, neighbourhood,  
 Here we go round the neighbourhood on Halloween..  
 This is the way we knock on the door...  
 This is the way we say 'Trick or Treat'...  
 This is the way we say 'Thank-you'...  
 This is the way we go back home.. (improvise actions)

Story: One Dark Night by Edna Mitchell Preston (also good as a felt board story,  
 simply photocopy and mount illustrations)

Fingerplay: See my big and scary eyes (circle thumb and index finger around  
 each eye)  
 Looking at you --  
 BOO! (Even babies love this one)

Action: "The skeletons are out tonight, (march about in a line,  
 They march about the street, Yaarrhh! and shout/roar)  
 With bony bodies, bony heads  
 And bony hands and feet Yaarrhh!

Bony bony bony bones  
 With nothing in between, Yaarrhh!  
 Up and down and all around  
 They march on Halloween! Yaarrhh! (from It's Halloween by Jack  
 Prelutsky)

Story: Humbug Witch by Lorna Balian (also works great as a felt board story.  
 Make her felt clothes and mask, hair, etc.  
 Have her in disguise on the board before you  
 start to tell the story. They love the dis-  
 robing!)

(The Bed Just So by Jeanne Hardendorff makes a wonderful told ghost story.)

Terry Clark, VPL



## Summer Reading Club in Rural Libraries: A Pilot Project

By Joëlle Samson

### History:

Every summer the TNRD Library System hires 3 summer students for the Summer Reading Club, with help from the Canada Summer Jobs Grants; one for each of the big three libraries (Merritt, Kamloops and North Kamloops).

In 2010, the Youth Services/Literacy Librarian (a brand new position within the TNRDLS) was hired. This position was mandated to support the TNRD Library System's rural libraries (10 library branches and 1 bookmobile) with Children's programming, among a number of other roles. During SRC 2010 she was able to support the outlying branches by visiting elementary schools in Ashcroft, Cache Creek, Clearwater and Vavenby. However, schools in Chase, Westwold and Pinantan were missed due to a lack of resources – mainly time. The Youth Services/Literacy Librarian was also able to provide programming for the Bookmobile in Spences Bridge, Birch Island and Vavenby, but was unable to provide programming in other libraries. A number of libraries provided programming on their own, but had requested help with special events that they are unable to prepare for and coordinate with their current resources. There were a few TNRD Libraries that had never offered programming during the Summer Reading Club and a couple that had not offered the Summer Reading Club in any form for a number of years.

### The Grounds for Change:

British Columbia statistics (BCStats) estimates that in 2009 the population of Kamloops was 87,017; which would roughly equal 43,500 people served by each of the Kamloops and North Kamloops libraries. Merritt was estimated to have a population of 7,450. By adding the populations of the rest of the municipalities served by the TNRDLS (Ashcroft, Barriere, Cache Creek, Chase, Clearwater, Clinton, Logan Lake, and Lytton) the total population for these areas was 12,383. This number does not include the populations found in unincorporated areas served by our libraries and the bookmobile; that number was much higher at 24,825. The total population served by TNRD Libraries outside of Kamloops and Merritt therefore equaled 37,208 and was comparable to the populations served by both the Kamloops and North Kamloops libraries. It was concluded that the children in these areas should have reasonable access to summer programming comparable to children served by the three largest TNRD libraries.

The solution agreed upon was to hire a 4<sup>th</sup> summer student who would be supervised by the Youth Services/Literacy Librarian out of the Outreach Services Department. The goals of this pilot project were as follows:

- 1) The Summer Reading Club be available to all children within the TNRD and be available in all TNRD Libraries
- 2) To promote the SRC in all elementary schools that are served by a TNRD Library
- 3) To support summer programming in all TNRD Libraries

### Implementation:

With the promise of a Summer Student for our rural libraries, there was no problem in getting consensus that all libraries should now offer the Summer Reading Club. In its simplest form, the Summer Reading Club included an Elementary School visit by the Outreach Services Summer Student; reading records, stickers, medals, etc.; a Read-to-Me booklet (created in-house), stickers, and ribbons; a branch grand prize, plus a few smaller prizes; a Puppet-Mascot naming contest; at least one event-type program (although most of the libraries received two); weekly themed materials such as colouring pages, word searches, cross-word puzzles, etc.; and a system-wide Grand Prize (there were actually two, one draw for Kamloops and North Kamloops, and another draw for Merritt and the rural libraries, including Bookmobile).

The summer student was hired in the middle of May, when she began to create large displays for all of the rural libraries to help promote SRC. At the end of May, the Youth Services/Literacy Librarian organized a meeting of all of the Branch Heads from the rural libraries, the Branch Head of Merritt Library, the Children's Department Heads of both Kamloops and North Kamloops Libraries, the Head of Outreach Services and all 4 summer students. A large scale SRC meeting had never been held before, and it was a chance for everyone to meet the Outreach Services Summer Student and to plan the schedule of events, school visits, and start and end dates for SRC. It was also a chance for everyone to share resources and ideas and was a great help to the Outreach Services Summer Student and the Branch Heads of the rural libraries who do not have dedicated Children's staff hours.



**School Visits** - The 2011 Outreach Services Summer Student visited all 14 elementary schools in the catchment areas served by the rural libraries that were not covered by North Kamloops, Kamloops or Logan Lake Libraries. The schools visited were Ashcroft Elementary School, Barriere Elementary School, Blue River Elementary School, Vavenby Elementary School (bookmobile), Pinantan Elementary School (bookmobile), Discover Centre for Balanced Education at Sun Peaks (bookmobile), Haldane Elementary School (Chase), Cache Creek Elementary School, Raft River Elementary School (Clearwater), David Stoddart Elementary/Secondary School (Clinton), Stein Valley Elementary School (Lytton), Lytton Elementary School, Savona Elementary School, and Skeetchestn Elementary/Secondary School (Savona).

**Puppet Plays** – The summer student developed and presented 9 puppet plays in 9 libraries (Ashcroft, Barriere, Blue River, Cache Creek, Chase, Clearwater, Clinton, Lytton and Savona). The puppet plays consisted of 3 skits and 3 stories, along with supervised play time with the puppets. A total of 124 children and 40 adults participated in these programs.

**Bookmobile Storytimes** – The summer student provided 3 storytimes for the Bookmobile at the Birch Island, Spences Bridge and Vavenby stops. Each storytime included stories and a couple of crafts. A total of 15 children and 4 adults participated in these programs.

**Gaming Days** – The summer student brought our system's Wii and board games to 9 libraries (Ashcroft, Barriere, Chase, Clearwater, Clinton, Logan Lake, Lytton, Savona and Cache Creek). This program was meant for older children although younger children were also welcome. A total of 66 children and 17 adults participated in these events.

#### **Outcomes:**

As of September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 complete statistics are not yet available; however, it is known that the number of participants at the Chase Library increased by more than 50% from 2010 to 2011 and that this increase can be directly attributed to the school visit, which had never before occurred, as well as the two programs offered by the Outreach Services Summer Student and the increased enthusiasm of the Branch Head. In addition, modest increases occurred for the Bookmobile, which has always had high participation rates. Clearwater Library, which experienced a large increase of more than double in 2010, due in part to the efforts of the Branch Head and the Youth Services/Literacy Librarian, was

able to maintain and slightly increase its numbers in 2011.

Anecdotally, the Outreach Services Summer Student expressed that the children were excited about SRC and had developed a relationship with her, despite only seeing them for a maximum of three separate occasions (school visit, puppet play, and gaming day). Many remembered her name, and one little girl gave her a forceful invitation to go home with her to watch movies, which of course, she had to turn down.

#### **The Future:**

As with all new projects, there were some lessons learned which will result in minor changes for next year's SRC. Overall, feedback from rural branches has been positive. Having a Summer Student serve the TNRD Library System's rural libraries generated enthusiasm from staff and patrons and laid a solid foundation for SRC to continue to improve in the summers to come.

*Joëlle Samson is the Youth Services/Literacy Librarian at the Thompson-Nicola Regional District Library System*



## Halloween Storytime

By Becky Stark

This program is best for children aged two to five.

1. *Welcome Song*: Hello and how are you?
2. *Warm-up Song*: Hit the floor
3. Criss cross applesauce
4. 5 crows all shiny black
5. *Felt Story*: The mixed-up pumpkin
6. Monster feet
7. Just for Halloween
8. *Story*: Black cat, black cat, what do you see?
9. There's a spider on the floor
10. *Goodbye Song*: Now it is time to say goodbye

### Hello and How are You?

To a marching tempo.

*Tell the kids, "get out your waving hand!"*

*(Waving with right hand)*

Hello, hello, hello and how are you?  
Hello, hello, hello and how are you?

*("Now your other hand!")*

Hello, hello, hello and how are you?  
Hello, hello, hello and how are you?

### Hit the Floor

From Mother Goose on the Loose

*("Get out both your hands and put them on the floor, hit as hard as you can!")*

We'll hit the floor together, hit the floor together, hit the floor together because it's fun to do!

*("Now jump them both up to your knees")*

We'll slap our knees together...

*("Now crawl them up to your tummy, or the tummy of the person next to you, and TICKLE!")*

We'll tickle our tummies together...

*("Now crawl them all the way up on top of your head and tap your head as gently as you can")*

We'll tap our heads together...

*("Bring your hands together and make a duck mouth or a frog mouth, and open and close it")*

We'll close our mouths together...

*("Now here's the last one – use your fingers to smush up your mouth, and do it with your mouth closed!")*

Hmmm mm hm hm hm mm mm...

### Criss Cross Applesauce

Criss cross applesauce

*(take one finger and draw an X twice)*

Spiders crawling up your back!

*(crawling fingers up the back to the neck)*

Cool breeze...

*(blow gently on the back of the neck)*

Tight squeeze...

*(hug)*

Now you've got the SHIVER-IES!

*(tickle all over)*

### 5 Crows All Shiny Black

To the tune of 5 Green and Speckled Frogs

5 crows all shiny black

Sat on a scarecrow's back

Eating some most delicious corn – YUM YUM!

Scarecrow, he hollered BOO!

Scared one crow and off he flew

Now there's just 4 black shiny crows

*(continue on down to no crows left)*

### Felt Story: The Mixed-Up Pumpkin

Variation on *The Mixed-up Chameleon* by Eric Carle  
Pattern following on pages 15-18.

Pumpkin lived on a farm with lots of other pumpkins and all kinds of other fresh growing things like corn and carrots and apples

He looked at the apples and said,  
"I wish I was beautiful and red like them"  
*(He turns red)*

He looked at the corn and said,  
"I wish I had a warm strong husk jacket like them"  
*(He suddenly is wrapped in a husk like the corn)*

He looked at the carrots and said,  
"I wish I had lovely curly hair like them"  
*(He suddenly has long curly tufts of leaves on his head)*

Then all the people started coming to the farm to buy vegetables, but no-one wanted to take him home because they didn't know what he was

He started to cry and wished to just be his regular pumpkin self  
*(He turns back into himself)*

One little girl came along and thought he was the most beautiful pumpkin ever, and took him home



**Monster Feet***To the tune of Jingle Bells**Tell the kids to get up and put on their big stomping monster feet and stomp around saying:*

Monster feet, monster feet, they are so much fun  
 Monster feet, monster feet, watch out here they come  
 Monster feet, monster feet, stomping all around  
 Monster feet, monster feet, monsters all fall down  
 (*everyone falls on the floor*)

**Just for Halloween***To the tune of Mary Had a Little Lamb*

Jack-o-lanterns smiling bright, smiling bright, smiling bright  
 Jack-o-lanterns smiling bright just for Halloween

Witches flying in the night, in the night, in the night  
 Witches flying in the night just for Halloween

Goblins giggling out of sight, out of sight, out of sight  
 Goblins giggling out of sight just for Halloween

Ghostly ghouls all dressed in white, dressed in white,  
 dressed in white  
 Ghostly ghouls all dressed in white just for Halloween

*(in a whisper voice)*

Time for bed, turn out the light, out the light, out the light  
 Time for bed, turn out the light – BOO! – Happy  
 Halloween!

**Story: Black Cat, Black Cat, What Do You See?***Variation on Brown bear, Brown bear, what do you see?  
by Bill Martin Jr.**Tell this story with felt or coloured and laminated paper pieces:*

Black cat, black cat, what do you see?  
 I see an orange pumpkin looking at me!

Orange pumpkin...  
 Brown bat...  
 Purple witch...  
 White ghost...  
 Green goblin...  
 Blue monster...  
 Children!

**There's a Spider on the Floor***Give each child a cut-out spider glued to a popsicle stick and move the spider around as you sing each verse*

There's a spider on the floor, on the floor  
 There's a spider on the floor, on the floor  
 Who could ask for anything more than a spider on the floor?  
 There's a spider on the floor, on the floor

...On my knee...  
 Oh mercy mercy me, there's a spider on my knee...

...On my tummy...  
 Oh I'm gonna tell my mommy, there's a spider on my tummy...

...On my head...  
 Oh it fills me up with dread, there's a spider on my head...

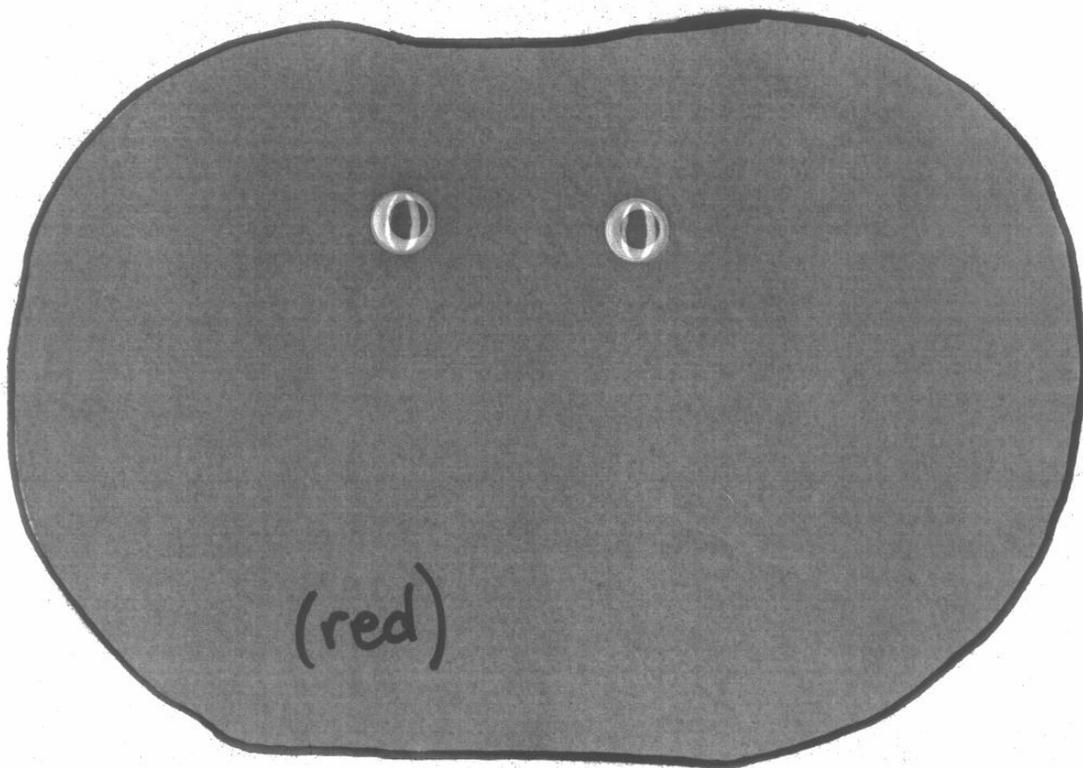
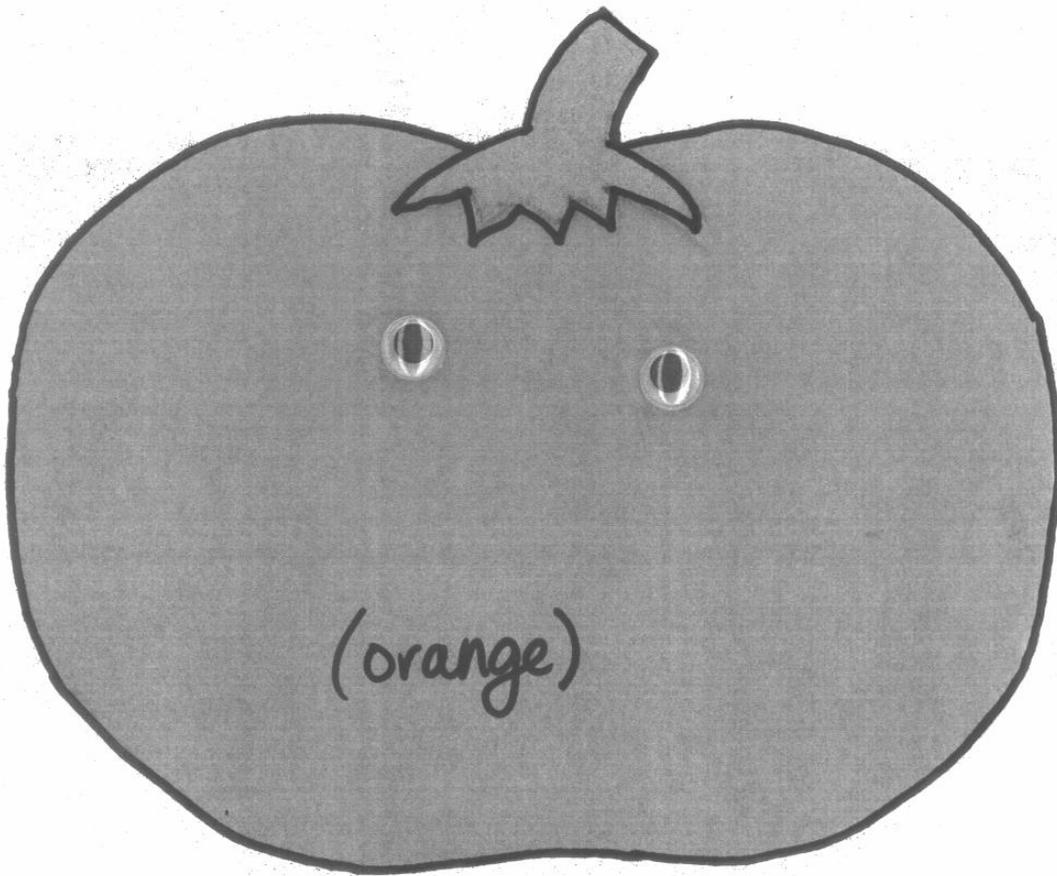
ACHOO!

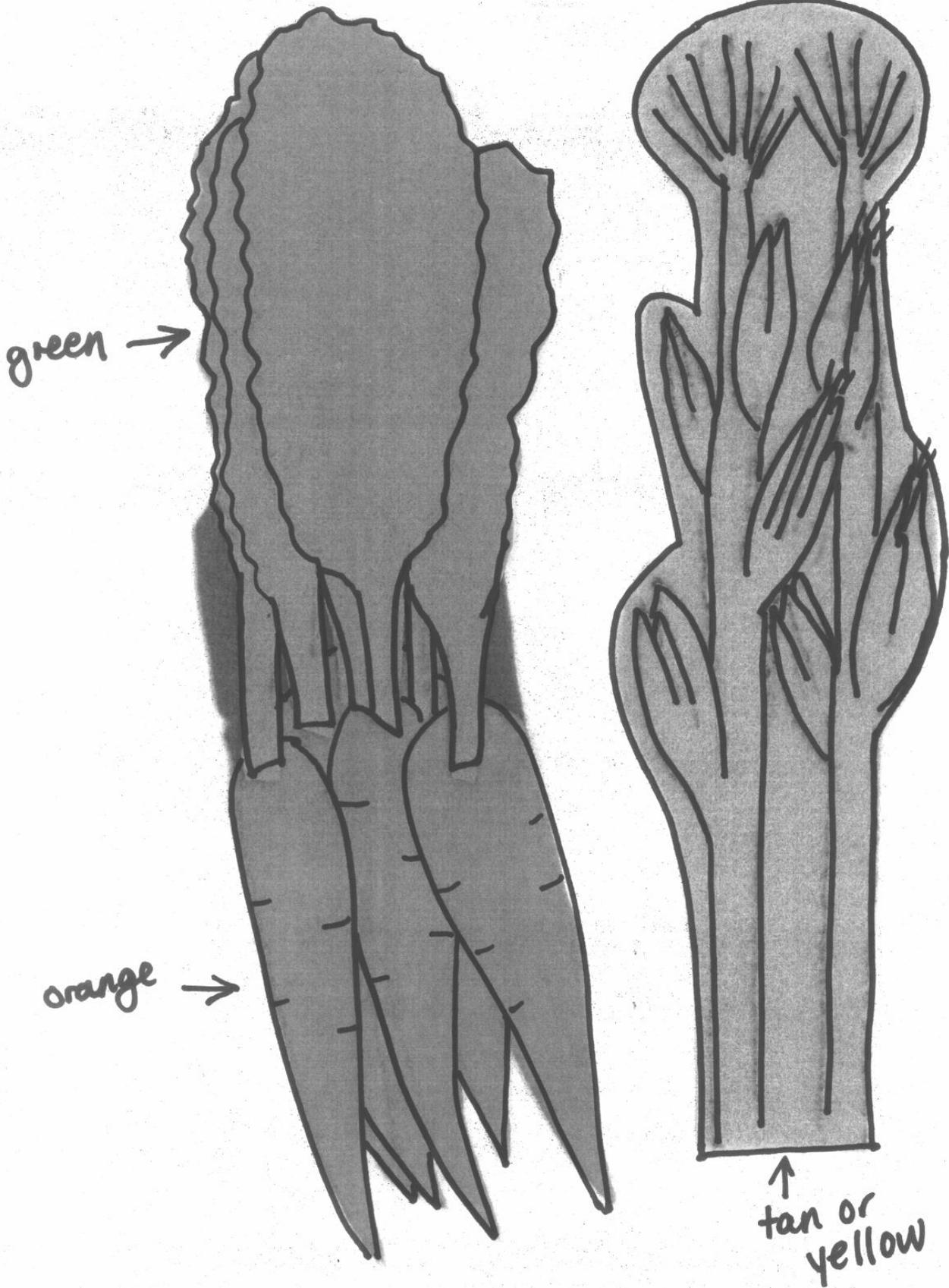
There's a spider on the floor...

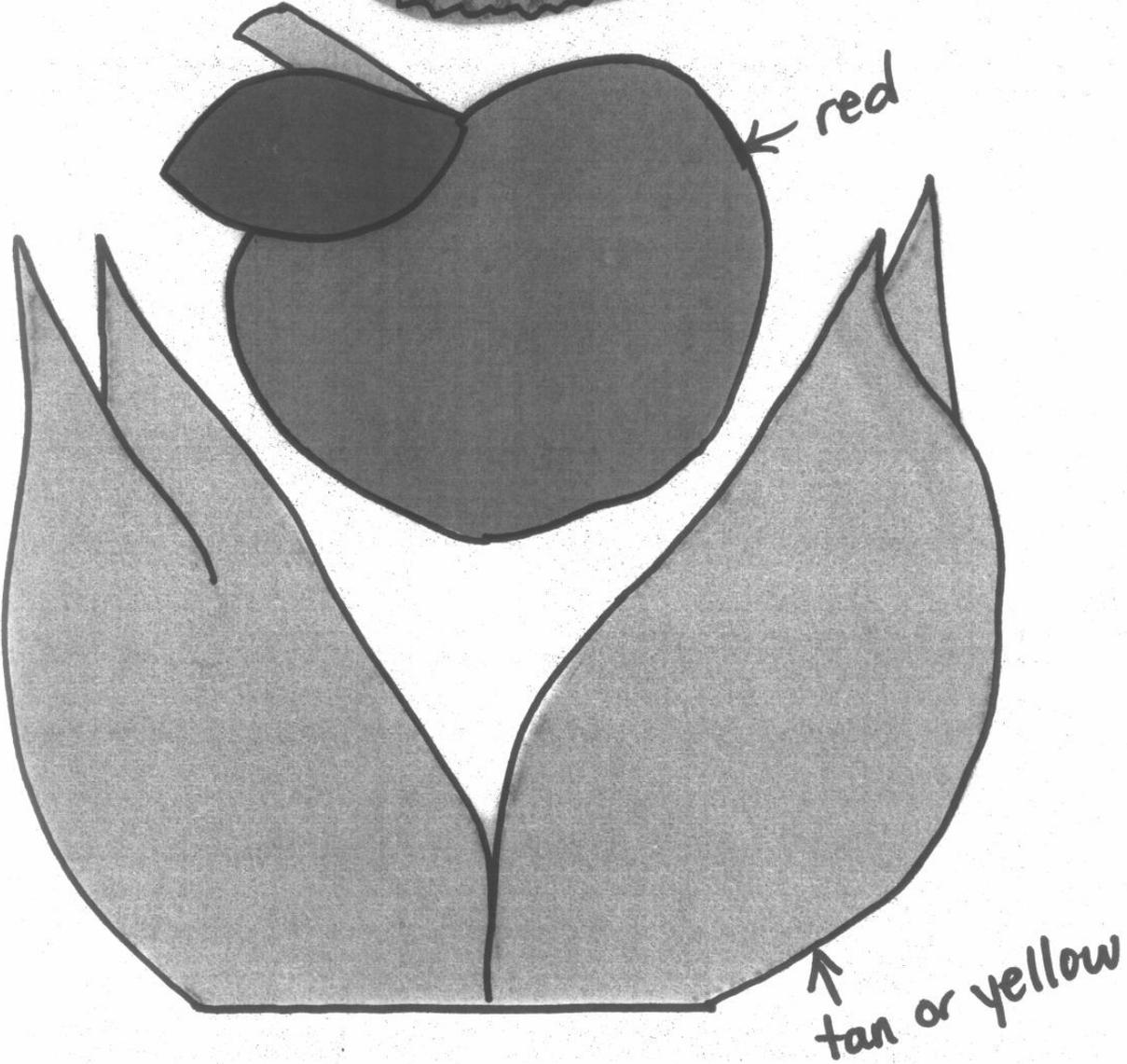
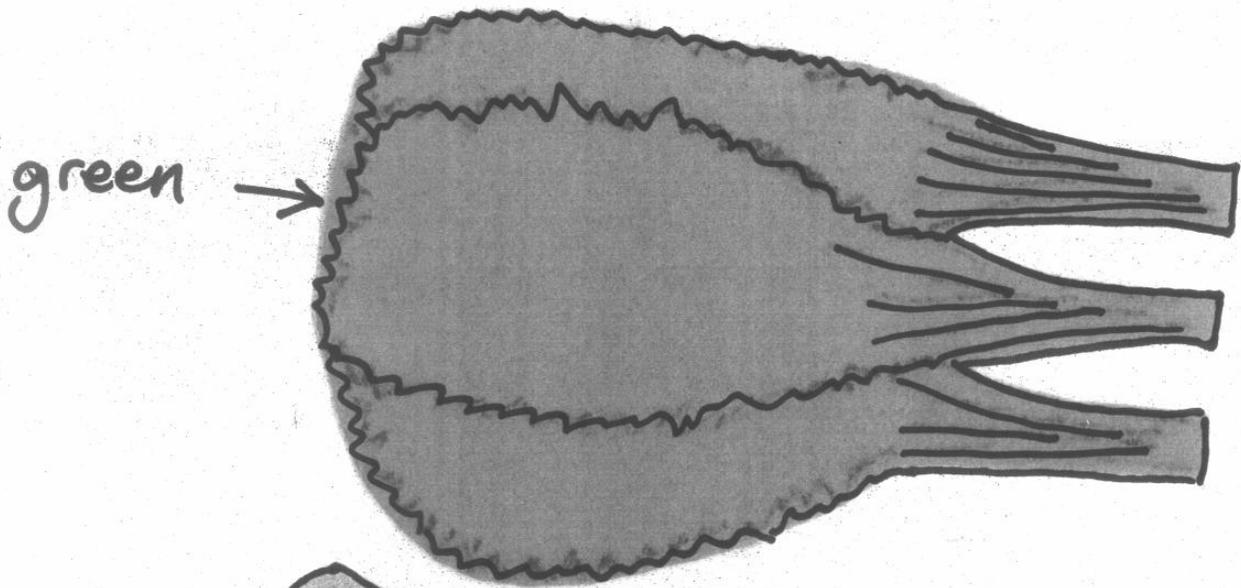
**Now it is Time to Say Goodbye***To the tune of Up on the Housetop*

Now it is time to say goodbye  
 My how fast the time did fly  
 Our time is done so we must say  
 Goodbye goodbye for today  
 Ho ho ho time to go, hee hee wave like me  
 Oh our time is done so we must say  
 Goodbye goodbye for today

*Becky Stark is a Children's Librarian at the Prince George Public Library*







## Here She Comes: Unforgettable Females in Picture Books for Young Children

By Jennifer Goerzen

Each picture book in this list includes a prominent, female protagonist who endears readers by demonstrating personal growth, persistence, determination, courage and/or inner-strength. Some works are comical and light while others tackle serious issues, but all of these books avoid being explicitly preachy or didactic. Most explore timeless themes although a few do contain historical references. This represents a recommended list of read-alouds for young children, but older readers will equally enjoy them.

### Red is Best

Stinson, K., & Lewis, R. B. (1982). *Red is best*. Toronto: Annick Press.

Still popular since its first publication in 1982, Stinson's point of view brilliantly describes a child's reasoning for her rosy colour preference. Using the logic and imagination of a determined young girl, readers will be delighted with Kelly's explanations for why red cups, mittens, socks, pajamas and more are simply better. The honest frustration of her mother and the win-some, lose-some of their battles is also humorous and realistic. Lewis' clean contoured illustrations complement the text perfectly. Using a selective colour palette, the theme is highlighted while simultaneously endearing readers to young Kelly with her chubby arms, clenched fists and stamping red feet. *Red is best* won the 1982 IODE Book Award, Municipal Chapter of Toronto.

### Rose by Night

Levert, M. (1998). *Rose by night*. Toronto: Greenwood Books/Douglas & McIntyre.

A comical story that will draw giggles from a young audience. Every child can relate to the need to go to the bathroom in the night coupled with a strong reluctance to leave the warmth and safety of one's bed. Rose's fantastic imagination takes reader's one step further as she harnesses magic spells to ward off the monsters en route. Levert's surreal, comical artwork adds to the magic with her distorted perspectives and brilliant, exaggerated colours.

### Emma and the Silk Train

Lawson, J., & Mombourquette, P. (1998). *Emma and the silk train*. Buffalo, N.Y: Kids Can Press.

*Emma and the Silk Train* is a beautiful historical piece describing a B.C. child's fascination with the silk trains of the early 1900s. Emma's longing for some silk of her own and her persistent search to claim her prize lead to an unexpected adventure and highlight the young girl's resilience and problem-solving skills. The colourful paintings provide a detailed and historically accurate addition to the work. This book was a 1998 finalist for both the Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award and the Sheila Egoff Children's Book Prize.

### Pink

Gregory, N., & Melanson, L. (2007). *Pink*. Toronto: Greenwood Books.

Nan Gregory's pink metaphor succeeds in revealing nuances of social cliques and class in a modern context. Vivi's search for belonging and her earnest pursuit of a young girl's dream are heart breaking. In spite of her hard work and failed efforts, this endearing girl does discover a different kind of contentment. Melanson's contemporary, stylized illustrations are powerful and bold. The brilliant pink contrasts beautifully, and appropriately, with the other rich earthy tones. *Pink* was a finalist for the 2008 Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award, the 2008 Christie Harris Illustrated Children's Literature Prize, the 2008 Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award, and the 1992 Ann Connor Brimer Award.

### Marja's Skis

Pendziwol, J., & Marton, J. (2007). *Marja's skis*. Toronto: Greenwood Books.

*Marja's Skis* is both tragic and uplifting. The loss of Marja's father makes life extremely challenging for this hardy young girl, but her persistence reveals an inner-strength that her father promised was buried within. Marja is determined to ski to school by herself and when she decides she is finally up to the challenge, her determination is tested to new levels. Though set historically, today's children will easily be engaged by Marton's exquisite illustrations that perfectly capture the mood of the text. This captivating read was shortlisted for both the 2007 Governor General's Award and the 2008 Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Award.



**Please, Louise!**

Wishinsky, F., & Gay, M.-L. (2007). *Please, Louise!*. Toronto: Groundwood Books.

*Please Louise!* is a sweet story of a feisty young girl determined to be near the big brother she adores. Her brother Jake is, of course, desperate for a break from boisterous little Louise and casually wishes she were a dog. A classic 'careful what you wish for' story reveals that Louise might be more important to Jake than he lets on. Younger siblings will feel encouraged by this heart-warming book knowing that they are likely more appreciated than their older brothers and sisters let on. Marie-Louise Gay consistently uses clever detail and a comical, colourful style to depict lovable characters easy to identify with. *Please Louise!* was a finalist for the 2008 TD Canadian Children's Literature Award and won the 2008 Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award.

**Timmerman Was Here**

Sydor, C., & Debon, N. (2009). *Timmerman was here*. Toronto: Tundra Books.

A young girl changes her mind about a new boarder, Timmerman, and learns to trust her intuition rather than listening to local gossip. Debon's illustrations offer a mysterious beauty and unique reflective perspective as readers wonder about Timmerman's late night excursions. Although the story's resolution is potentially predictable, the artwork invites curiosity as to the final visual outcome.

**Willow's Whispers**

Button, L., & Howells, T. (2010). *Willow's whispers*. Toronto: Kids Can Press.

Willow is painfully shy. In fact, she is so timidly quiet that even the text on the page cleverly changes size and font as she tries to find her voice. A magic microphone and supportive father encourage readers to root for Willow. Howells' simple illustrations add to the effect of Willow's unsure character and capture a feeling of exposure while accentuating the graphic changes in word size and style. An excellent, accessible read-aloud for young children, *Willow's Whispers* was shortlisted for the 2011 OLA Blue Spruce Award.

**Singing Away the Dark**

Woodward, C., & Morstad, J. (2010). *Singing away the dark*. Vancouver: Simply Read Books.

What child hasn't heard their elders override complaints with stories of having to walk miles to and from school uphill *both* ways in the snow? Caroline Woodward's *Singing Away in the Dark* is a beautiful rendering of this timeless tale through the eyes of a brave six-year-old girl. The lyrical verses of text are appropriate given that singing is the medium to stave off a young girl's fear. Coupled with this enchanting text are Morstad's stunning illustrations that evoke a timeless quality with their simple, bold colours and style. They suggest the historical setting of another era, as though the book has been around for decades, though many of today's rural children can likely relate to travelling lengthy distances to school on dark winter mornings.

**Noni Says No**

Hartt-Sussman, H., & Côté, G. (2011). *Noni says no*. Toronto, Ont: Tundra Books.

Noni is an otherwise confident, capable young girl who is struggling to stand up for herself. Though she manages many responsibilities in the home, she is unable to be socially assertive. This is an unpredictable, fresh exploration of friendship and self-confidence. Hartt-Sussman's story succeeds in being both light-hearted and reflective. Geneviève Côté's drawings are naively simple accentuating Noni's youth and vulnerability. They resemble a child's crayon drawings with soft watercolour overtones.

*Jennifer Goerzen is an MLIS student at the School of Library Archival and Information Studies at the University of British Columbia. An earlier version of this article was written for the class LIBR 523: Canadian Literature and Other Materials for Children.*

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## Poetry or Prose? Dissecting the Verse Novel

By Sara Hathaway

### The Verse Novel

Is it  
verse  
or funny-shaped  
prose?  
Does it breathe, dance and sing  
truth  
or does it lay bare a gaudy  
trick?

Does it  
matter? <sup>1</sup>

The verse novel, or novel-in-verse, is a young, albeit controversial, form in the world of young adult literature. Critics seem to be on the fence over this newly shaped form, having labeled it everything from a literary gimmick of poorly written prose to the natural poetry of speech. Just what is this illicit child of both poetry and prose, claimed by neither and yet belonging to both? What is it about verse novels which make critics rise up in arms disparaging its virtues or defending its honour?

### History and Scope

Stories in verse have a long history Campbell argues “a long story told in verse is probably the prototype for all literature” referring back to the epic poets like Homer (Campbell 2004, 612). However, the verse novel was born in mainstream print publishing with Virginia Euwer Wolff’s *Make Lemonade* in 1993 – a novel exploring urban poverty and teenage motherhood through the lives of 14-yr old LaVaughn who babysits 17-yr old Jolly’s two small children. For several years before, authors like Mel Glenn, had been moving towards the form with collections of poetry on a central theme but no one had really married the novel with verse (Campbell 2004). Interestingly enough, Wolff had no intention of starting a new form and was adamant she was not writing poetry when she wrote *Make Lemonade* in natural speech phrases (Sutton 2001). She herself is intimidated by huge blocks of text and wanted white space on the page to give the words “room to breathe” (Sutton 2001, 282). Moreover, she was thinking of her intended audience of teenage mothers when she committed herself to the verse novel form.

<sup>1</sup> In an interview with Roger Sutton in 2001, Virginia Euwer Wolff adamantly insisted that her writing was merely “prose in funny-shaped lines” and not poetry (Sutton 2001, 282).



I wanted young girls in Jolly's situation, maybe pregnant or with babies, and maybe going back to school, to be able to say, "I read two chapters!" In the amount of time they had, with the amount of concentration they could muster, I wanted them to be able to get through the book. (Sutton 2001, 282).

Wolff's novel and motivations were ground breaking but also trend setting for verse novels. A number of authors have since taken up the form in order to reach out to reluctant readers and break into the busy lifestyle of today's teens. Detractors of the form see this as the only purpose of the verse novel, to attract reluctant readers, and not necessarily to convey great literary works of beauty. But, the form of the verse novel is a powerful medium offering immediate access to characters or subjects for all levels of readership. Similar to any other form of writing, the verse novel comes with its own limitations but also its own advantages. Since *Make Lemonade*, an exceptional verse novel in its own right, the form has gone on to win a number of prestigious awards including the Newbery with Karen Hesse's *Out of the Dust* (1997), the Printz Honor with Helen Frost's *Keesha's House* (2003) and the Governor General's award for Pamela Porter's *The Crazy Man* (2005) and Wendy Philips' *Fishtailing* (2010).

The verse novel form is unique in that it currently only exists in young adult literature (Campbell 2004). Although it has been expanding slowly into younger and younger audiences, the form has largely been targeted at ages 12-18 and has seen a steady increase in publishing and recognition since its inception (Campbell 2004). It encompasses a broad scope of subjects, from historical fiction to contemporary themes. But the question remains, what makes a verse novel a verse novel?

### Defining the Verse Novel

Defining the criteria of a verse novel is difficult since most people cannot even agree on what to call the form – verse novel, novel-in-verse, novel-in-poems, stories-in-verse, etc. Some critics, such as Rosenberg (2005) are adamant that verse novels are *not* poetry, merely presented as such by the publishing industry. According to her, verse novels lack the fresh images, lyrical rhythms and beauty of language found in poetry (Rosenberg 2005). Alternately, Rosemary Chance is of the opinion that verse novels are "stories written in a variety of poetry styles" (Chance 2004, 34). Some reviewers straddle both sides and ask whether it matters if verse novels fall into poetry or prose, a well written story will celebrate the beauty of language regardless of form.

Personally, I am of the opinion that *good* verse novels align more closely with poetry than with prose. A well-written verse novel is composed of individual poems, capable of standing on their own, but placed side by side, to form a stronger, more beautiful, narrative. However, I am cognizant that not all verse novels live up to this definition which is why I find myself favouring Campbell's (2004) and Sutton's (2001) criterion for a good verse novel. Campbell requires that a "good verse novel will fit that dictionary definition of 'poetry,'" it will use "condensed language, natural cadences and metaphor" while invoking a "vivid and imaginative sense of experience" (2004, 613). Sutton further clarifies this by determining that the distinguishing feature of the verse novel is its compression of language where "it's impossible to rearrange the line breaks into paragraphs without feeling as if anything has been lost" (Sutton 2001, 283).

A perfect example of what Sutton and Campbell are driving at, is Karen Hesse's 1997 novel, *Out of the Dust*, chronicling 14-yr old Billie Jo's struggle against the endless waves of dust, wind and time of the Oklahoma Dust Bowl in the 1930s. The white space, language and form all work together in this beautiful novel to evoke a sense of the time and place. In a poem entitled "Breaking Drought" Hesse writes,

After seventy days  
of wind and sun,  
of wind and clouds,  
of wind and sand,  
after seventy days,  
of wind and dust,  
a little  
rain  
came. (Hesse 1997, 23).

It is impossible to rearrange this poem into sentences without losing the quality of the form and emotional power of the poem. Visually, the first six lines of this poem, about the seventy days of drought, overshadow and weigh heavily upon the final three lines where "a little/rain/came" (Hesse 1997, 23). This physical image of the lines on the page works with the imagery of the language to create a powerful emotion and sense of time and space all within nine short lines. While a sentence could say the exact same thing, it would lose its power in traditional paragraph prose form.

It is important to reiterate that *Out of the Dust* is an excellent example of a verse novel, and that there are many other titles labeled as verse novels which do not live up to the criteria established here. Some authors make the mistake of feeling tied into the form once they've begun. For instance, in *Love that Dog*, some of



the poems are well done but it often feels like the author just wrote in short lines:

I like that poem  
we read today  
about street music  
in the city. (Creech 2001, 31).

Occasionally, the poems do work as compressed language in *Love that Dog*, but many of them do not and would not lose anything if written in sentences.

It should be said that while verse novels emulate many of the qualities of poetry such as compressed language, they do not conform to all the standards of traditional poetry. The rhythms of the language often reflect common speech patterns instead of adhering to a structured meter, as they do in *Make Lemonade*.

“Jeremy here, he’s 2, and this here’s Jilly,” she says,  
jouncing a gooey baby in her arms  
and something gurgles out of that one’s nose (Wolff  
1993, 6).

Some authors though, do explore and play with a variety of poetic forms in their writing, to varying degrees of success. This leads us to the incessant struggle within the form over how to stay true to character and voice without sacrificing the quality of the poem and writing. Some writers manage it incredibly well, such as Helen Frost in *Keesha’s House*. *Keesha’s House* is a novel of seven teens written in seven voices. Keesha is the lynchpin of the story, and her house becomes a safe place for the teens to come as they work through their troubled lives and build a home for themselves. Although many verse novelists work in free verse, Frost chooses to work within the rigid limitations of sestina and sonnet poetry to bring forward hidden depths and meanings in her words. A talented writer, Frost is able to maintain separate character voices within these poetic forms.

(*Keesha*)  
Stephie walked by this afternoon, holding  
her umbrella in front of her face.  
When it rains like this, all day, into the night,  
that’s when you need a home  
more than you need your pride. She still  
goes home to her folks, but she’s scared (Frost  
2003, 6)

(*Dontay*)  
I’m runnin’ outta couches. Been  
to six places in four weeks. Now  
I’m startin’ over at Jermaine and Dan’s.  
Only trouble is, Dan think I owe

him somethin’ if I stay here,  
so I been thinkin’ hard. (Frost 2003, 66).

Frost works within her chosen poetic forms to create individual characters and a larger story while managing to balance multiple voices with quality writing. However, some authors choose to favour character voice over the quality of writing as a method of revealing character. For instance, in *Shakespeare Bats Cleanup*, Ron Koertge writes the novel as though it is the journal of 14-yr old Kevin Boland. Kevin has recently been diagnosed with mono and has begun to explore poetry in his journal to entertain himself while he is recovering. Kevin’s voice is believable and consistent throughout the novel, yet it exemplifies the push and pull of quality verses character voice. The writing in the journal improves slowly as Kevin’s own poetic skills improve, but it never reaches the powerful, moving level of language in other verse novels such as *Out of the Dust*.

### Home Alone

Well, not exactly. Dad’s here, that’s why  
we don’t have to get somebody to come  
in and take care of me.

First of all, I don’t need much care. I sleep  
all the time, or at least it feels that way.

Dad works at home. He and I pass  
each other in the hall –  
I in my sweats, he in his cap.

When I was little and I got sick, Mom used  
to read to me.

Thinking about that’s not going to help. (Koertge  
2003, 4).

Although Kevin sounds like a 14-year old boy, the writing leaves the reader wanting more since a good portion of the book could easily be reordered into sentences without losing much of its meaning. Luckily, there are numerous examples of good verse novels which are successful at balancing voice and quality writing, such as *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse, *Keesha’s House* by Helen Frost, *Frenchtown Summer* by Robert Cormier, *Fishtailing* by Wendy Philips, and *Stop Pretending: What Happened When My Big Sister Went Crazy* by Sonya Sones.

### Common Traits

Although they vary in quality and depth, verse novels often share a number of common traits. They are different from a traditional novel “which is built with rising conflict toward a climax, followed by a denouement. The



verse novel is often more like a wheel, with the hub a compelling emotional event and the narrative referring to this event like spokes" (Campbell 2004, 615). I have found this to be true in every verse novel I've encountered. For example, *The Crazy Man* revolves around the main character's accident which loses her her father, her dog and part of her leg (Porter 2005). *Love that Dog* by Sharon Creech (2001) returns again and again to the main character's traumatic loss of his dog, Sky. *Shakespeare Bats Cleanup* (2003) focuses on Kevin's mother's death. Sometimes, the spokes of the wheel lead back to the hub in subtle or different ways. *Keesha's House* (2003) is about loss and discovery of home, but it is about this event appearing in different forms in seven lives, rather than a single, compelling event affecting all the characters. David Levithan's *The Realm of Possibility* (2004) centres around senior year of high school and questioning the possibilities, and impossibilities, of life. However, each of the twenty characters only gets one poem, so their take on the theme is limited by space and voice.

Despite the different treatments of the central point, emotions are always at the core of the verse novel (Campbell 2004). The novel typically revolves around this central emotional event exploring the teen's feelings before, during and after this event. Obviously this is occasionally limited by form choices, such as in *The Realm of Possibility*, where each teen has a limited amount of space to speak. However, even here, the combined voices of the teens explore the questions raised from a variety of angles and perspectives.

Verse novels are nearly always written from the first person point of view offering the reader access to the internal monologue of the speaker. Often the speaker is a teen; however, *Keesha's House* includes the voices of adults in the teens' lives, an exception rather than a rule (Frost 2003). Because the themes are often very weighty in verse novels, this immediate access to the internal monologues of the characters make the narrative very personal and intense at times. The white space on the page of a verse novel is used to mediate the intensity of the emotions in the narrative and sometimes to heighten them. Either way, the white space on the page is a part of the narrative structure and plays a role in the novel. The prevalence of white space also makes verse novels characteristically "quick" reads containing poems which are not typically longer than a page or two.

## Conclusion

While this paper has tried to set forth criteria and common traits of the verse novel, it still remains a growing and shape-shifting form. The criteria and traits

mentioned here have been distilled from what is currently published in the form. But the verse novel is bound to change and push the boundaries established here, especially as the publishing rate of this form has only been increasing.

What will survive is the criterion that a good verse novel will work so fluidly in its form that it will be impossible to envision it in any other way. The struggle between voice and quality of writing will always exist, but hopefully, examples of good writing in this form will help push the level of writing ever higher. But as in every form, so much depends on the author and how they tell the story.

*Sara Hathaway is an Auxiliary Children's Librarian at the Vancouver Public Library. An earlier version of this article was written for LIBR 520: Survey of Literature and Other Materials for Children while she was still an MLIS student at the University of British Columbia.*

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## Reviews

**Press Here** by Hervé Tullet  
Chronicle Books, 2010.  
Audience: Preschool

This book will delight young readers. Each page demands interaction, and delivers magic.

The illustrations are as simple as can be, consisting of nothing but circles in various sizes, shades, and configurations, resting on a white or black background. On each page, the reader is given a direction such as pressing on a particular circle, shaking the book gently, or clapping. Flip the page, and the circles have changed, seemingly as a result of this action. For a taste of the story, you can view the book trailer here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kj81KC-Gm64>

I anticipate that this book will work best when reading with a single child or small group of children, but I think it will translate to a storytime as well. I'm planning to use a puppet as a stand-in for the children, pressing or shaking the book when I ask it to. Once we reach the clapping at the conclusion, however, I'll need all the help I can get.

- April Ens, Vancouver Public Library

**Anna Hibiscus** by Atinuke. Illustrated by Lauren Tobia.  
Walker Books, 2007.  
Audience: Primary Grades

*Anna Hibiscus* is my favourite new discovery in the chapter book section of my library. The writing is gentle and compelling, and should make a fantastic read-aloud. It should surprise no one to learn that the author is a storyteller. The rhythms of her book are exquisite.

Each of the four chapters is a self-contained story about Anna Hibiscus, a happy, curious child who lives with her extended family in an unnamed African country. She loves living with her mother, father, baby brothers, aunties, uncles, cousins, and grandparents in one big compound, and she cannot imagine the loneliness of being *forced* to sleep all alone in one's own room, as her Canadian mother had as a child. When her immediate family heads out on a camping trip, just the five of them, it soon becomes evident how much they depend on the rest of their family for company and sharing their workload. Luckily Anna Hibiscus' father knows just what to do to improve their vacation.

Elements of Anna Hibiscus' life may be unfamiliar to Canadian children, but Atinuke succeeds, as a good storyteller should, in making the foreign familiar and bringing her readers to Africa with her. We may not see children selling fruit in the street, or understand the "proper African" way to do things, but she can show us.

There are three further Anna Hibiscus books that I am waiting to get my hands on: *Hooray for Anna Hibiscus*, *Good Luck, Anna Hibiscus*, and *Have Fun, Anna Hibiscus*.

- April Ens, Vancouver Public Library

**Love That Dog** by Sharon Creech  
Joanna Cotler Books, 2001.  
Audience: Intermediate Grades

This is the story of Jack, a school-aged boy who does not want to write poetry "because boys/don't write poetry. / Girls do." Beginning in September and written as a school journal for Jack's English teacher, Miss Stretchberry, each poem is entered as dated weekly entry documenting Jack's responses to the poetry his class is reading and his own efforts at poetry.

An interesting feature of *Love That Dog* is the inclusion of the poems Miss Stretchberry reads the class at the end of the book – a great way to help readers make the step to reading poetry. Jack is not given a defined age or grade, which allows this work to be relatable to a wider range of ages and grades. However, Jack's first person narrative emphasizes how young he is through the vocabulary choices and word order. The poems that Jack writes are mediocre but honest in their emotions. Creech uses very short lines, often without seeming reason for the breaks, and repeats certain words three times in-a-row to indicate Jack's young voice and inexperience at poetic writing. It works for maintaining character, however it makes the poems rather stilted and draws attention to a prime issue in verse novels – how to remain true to character and voice without sacrificing the quality of the poem and writing.

- Sara Hathaway, Vancouver Public Library



**Fishtailing** by Wendy Phillips

Coteau Books, 2010.

Audience: Teen

Winner of the Governor General's in 2010, *Fishtailing* is a haunting story of the intersecting lives of four students during their senior year of high school. Tricia is struggling with her mom's remarriage. Kyle is torn between his father's expectations and his own desires. Miguel is a refugee from a war-torn South American country, and Natalie is a disturbed and abused newcomer to the school who delights in manipulating the lives of those around her, regardless of who gets hurt or how badly.

Set in Vancouver, the novel is written largely in free verse monologues from the first person perspectives of the four main characters. Poems written by the characters in Mrs. Farr's English class are included in the text along with teacher's comments from Mrs. Farr and emails from Ms. Nishi the guidance counselor. Interestingly, each of the characters has been assigned their own font to re-emphasize their separate voices. Phillips writes with direct, cutting language and careful phrasing to create maximum impact in only a few words. What separates this novel from the other school voice verse novels are Natalie's subversive schemes and twisted motivations. A dark, memorable read, *Fishtailing* will be popular with teens and verse novel fans.

- Sara Hathaway, Vancouver Public Library

## Call for Submissions

YAACING is published four times per year and is always looking for submissions that might interest children's and teen specialists in BC libraries. We accept news pieces, articles, program descriptions and ideas, conference reports, and much more. If you would like to write a regular column, send us a brief pitch.

Submissions should be no more than 2200 words, sent as .doc or text files. Please include a byline with your job title and workplace, or for students: your school, program and class information, if applicable.

YAACING invites your contributions to our new Review and Felt Story sections:

**Reviews:** Please send us reviews of books, blogs, websites, or other resources. Submissions should be no more than 300 words. Longer reviews may be considered for publication as featured articles.

**Felt Stories:** Share your creativity! YAACING is looking for felt story patterns. Submissions should include a printable pattern, photograph of the finished product, and related rhyme or note about the origin of the story.

The deadline for the Winter 2011 issue of YAACING is November 15, 2011. Email your submissions to the editors at [YAACING@gmail.com](mailto:YAACING@gmail.com)

