

# YAACING

The Newsletter of the Young Adult & Children's Services Section of BCLA  
Spring 2012



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## Message from the Chair

Well, spring is just around the corner (at least, I hope so!) and with it come many changes in YAACS. While there is always an annual springtime shift in the makeup of the YAACS executive after our AGM, this year the changes have begun a little early with the recent departure of our Chair, Darby Love. I know I am not the only one who will miss Darby's cheerful presence and dedication; we are all sorry to see her go but wish her all the best. Darby's departure means that I am stepping into the role of Chair a few months early, and I must say I am excited to jump on board with all of you!

I hope I'll have the chance to meet and re-meet many of you in person at this year's BCLA conference in Richmond in May, where YAACS will be getting up to such hijinks as another bound-to-be-fabulously-successful silent auction and, new and exciting this year, a video rhyming station where you'll all be able to film your best storytime song and dance routine (scroll down for more on this fun project under "News"). Of course, the Annual General Meeting will also take place during the conference, and your participation is warmly welcomed. With all the pending departures on our executive, there is lots of room for new voices to be heard -- please come and join us!

At this year's conference YAACS will also proudly be awarding its first annual Young Adult and Children's Services Award. We are eager to hear all about the outstanding work youth library workers are doing all across B.C.

Yes, there's lots in store at BCLA this year, not least of all some really excellent sounding youth services-focused conference sessions from our colleagues across the province, and beyond (is anyone else as excited as I am to hear Brian Deines speak?!). -- But I think that's enough conference talk for now. Keep reading to see what else YAACS members have been to...

- Tara Williston  
*Incoming YAACS Chair*

## Message from the Editors

The first green shoots and flower buds, the songbirds in the trees, and light that lasts long enough to cycle home in... Spring may just be my favourite time of year. Everything feels fresh, clean, and full of promise.

If, like us, you're shaking off the winter blahs and ready for fresh inspiration, you'll love the new ideas collected in this issue. From Amy Dawley and Julianne Mutimer's well-worth-borrowing teen programs, to Anne Tasker's felt story and Rachel Balko's preschool program, there are plenty to make your own.

For those of us who couldn't be there, Pam has written a lively account of the 2012 Serendipity Conference and Chris Conroy tells us about the new YAACS YouTube channel, featuring the participants of the last Rhyme Time event.

We hope that you enjoy these and all the rest of the news, reviews, memories, and ideas, and continue sending them our way.

- April Ens and Pamela Fairfield  
*YAACING Editors*



## The Young Adult & Children's Services Award

The Young Adult & Children's Services (YAACS) Award recognizes exceptional service in the area of children's or teen librarianship in British Columbia.

Outstanding library service to children, teens, and communities depends on dedication from all levels of an organization. YAACS invites nominations of librarians, library technicians, teacher-librarians and others who have, as individuals or teams, demonstrated exceptional dedication in such areas as:

- Commitment to quality service to children, teens, caregivers and supporting organizations
- Collaboration and partnerships with their community
- Promotion of family literacy
- Innovation and creativity applied to the benefit of young people

Nominations may be sent to the YAACS Award Committee at [YAACSaward@gmail.com](mailto:YAACSaward@gmail.com), and will be accepted until **Friday, March 23, 2012**. This year's award will be presented at the BCLA conference in Richmond.

### Please include the following:

- Name and contact information of nominator
- Nominee:
  - Name(s)
  - Contact information
  - Title(s) and place of employment
  - Reasons for nomination

**Individual nominees or institutions (in the case of a team nomination) are required to be BCLA members.**

- Alicia Cheng, April Ens,  
Barbara Jo May, and Tara Williston  
2012 YAACS Award Committee

## Strange... But True: 2012 SRC Update

As of this writing, the final art for the 2012 BC Summer Reading Club, "Strange...But True?" is completed! 2012 SRC Illustrator Mike Deas has done an amazing job of creating a poster filled with wild and wonderful creatures – look for the Sasquatch doing a little background reading on "Humans," and the plain old horse trying to pass him or herself off as a unicorn. The Reading Record this year has lots of room for interactivity, including a comic book where kids fill in the dialogue boxes themselves, and mix-and-match stickers of strange critters' heads and torsos.

You can find all the art, as well as links to the themes, booklists, activities, and other SRC Manual content, at the Librarians' Website at: [kidsrc.bclibrary.ca](http://kidsrc.bclibrary.ca). Mike Deas, this year's illustrator, is also available and eager to do presentations at libraries over the summer. He can be contacted at [deasnutz@hotmail.com](mailto:deasnutz@hotmail.com).

Wondering when you'll be able to order posters, Reading Records, and other SRC Materials? The order forms should be up by the end of March, with materials shipping out in early May. For the latest updates, join the YAACS listserv; I'll be sending out announcements when the order forms are available and when the materials are shipping out!

- Els Kushner,  
Summer Reading Club Coordinator



## Connecting the Library Community: BCLA to Launch Mentorship Program

This spring, BCLA will launch an association-wide mentorship program, an expansion of the existing LTAIG mentorship program. This will be a combined program, offering mentorship opportunities to BCLA members working as librarians, library technicians, library assistants, and other information-related professions, as well as library students. The program will span different types of libraries and areas of work, and aims to connect library workers throughout British Columbia, building and strengthening relationships and discourse throughout the library community and our professional association.

The mentorship program will match experienced professionals (mentors) with those new to the field, new to the province, or those seeking to explore a different area of library work (mentees). Participants will be able to arrange meetings that suit their schedule, needs, and geographical location – while face to face meetings are encouraged, participants will also have the opportunity to connect by phone, Skype, and email. The program will have two intakes per year, and participants will be matched based on their interests and needs for a designated period of time.

Participants in the mentorship program will have the opportunity to learn and gain feedback from their colleagues and explore different areas of library and information related work. Mentorship can benefit both people involved in different but equally important ways. Mentees who are new to the profession or to their area of work can benefit from the experiences and knowledge of mentors who have spent several years working in their given field. They may wish to discuss interview and job search strategies, or explore ideas and issues related to a new job. Mentors have the opportunity to share advice and ideas, gain leadership skills, and pass their enthusiasm for their profession on to others. The hope is that this program will contribute to a culture of open dialogue, knowledge sharing, and support within our professional association and in the work that we do.

The first intake of the program will launch in May 2012. If you're headed to Richmond for the annual BCLA conference, a session on Speed Mentoring for Library Professionals will be offered as a means for participants to explore mentorship and what it involves. If you are interested in learning more about services to children and young adults, or interested mentoring someone who is new to this field, please join us. As the program moves forward, we hope that it will provide a valuable opportunity for BCLA members to connect, share, and become more involved in the library community.

- Amy Ashmore  
Co-Chair, Mentorship Working Group

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## YAACing on YouTube!

So you want to do that song about the shark for storytime. You know the one? The one with the doo-da-doo. Well, now you can hop on YAACS new YouTube channel and listen to rhymes:  
<http://www.youtube.com/user/YAACSweb/videos>

During last spring's Rhyme Time Workshop Jane Cobb brought her video camera and filmed the participants (with their permission) as they performed their rhymes.

Our YAACS webmaster, Francesca, then worked on the videos and uploaded them to our own YouTube channel. Voila! A great rhyming resource at your fingertips.

This coming spring watch for YAACS video "booth" at the BCLA Conference. We're hoping to capture some "random acts of rhyming" to add to the new YAACing channel. Stay tuned.

- Chris Conroy  
YAACS Continuing Education  
Coordinator - Lower Mainland



## Teens Only

### Help, I'm Drowning! What To Do When You Need a Program For Teens and You're So Busy You Can't Even Remember Your Own Name

By Amy Dawley

Do you ever find yourself so busy that you feel like you are hopelessly drowning in all the tasks piling up on your desk? Public libraries are busier than ever and we all have to do more with less. We have demands coming at us from all angles, whether it is collections stuff, programming stuff, or administration stuff. And not only do we have to juggle all these demands on our time, we have to do so with a smile on our face, a brain in our head (you know, for those lengthy reference questions), all while keeping that eternal spark of ingenious creativity going. You know, the spark that comes up with the next amazing program we offer for teens? Yeah. That one.

Well, my faithful youth services colleagues, I find myself in this *exact* situation right at this moment. I am due to attend the Northern Exposure to Leadership conference next week and other than being so nervous I can't think, I also am right in the midst of February programming while also planning teen programs through to late Spring. Just as the title says, I am so busy some days that I really *can't* remember my own name! So what's a teen services librarian to do? Two words, my friends: *soft programs*.

A "soft" program is a program that you offer to the teens at your library that doesn't require them to come at a specific time or day. It's a program that happens whenever they're in the library, no matter when they visit! Soft programs require just a little bit of pre-planning and usually a display space of some kind, but the good news is that you can deliver most soft programs for free or for very little money. This makes our library budget fairies very happy!

Here are three of my favourite soft programs for teens that have been winners every time:

#### 1. Where in Prince George is Cosmic Space Frog?

**Details:** I've done this program three times during the summer months and it is very popular. I get our trusty digital camera, pick a zany puppet or stuffed animal, and go around our fair city snapping cryptic photos of the puppet visiting these locations. Every week I post a photo in the teen section and teens have to guess where



the frog is. They enter this answer in a ballot box, and at the end of the week I pick out all the correct answers and draw a winner. They've won books, candy bars, pool passes, whatever I can scrounge up, and they love it!

**Cost:** Free! Or \$ for little prizes

**Program Time & Length of Program:** I did this program over a 7 week summer reading program, switching it up every Friday afternoon before I left work. It doesn't have to be during summer, though!

**Supplies & Tools:** Digital camera, puppet or stuffed animal, printer, entry forms, ballot box.

**Amy's Tips:** The more zany your puppet/stuffed animal/garden gnome, the better your photos will be. Choose something that has a lot of character that will make people laugh when they see the photo. Take the photos in black and white for added mystery and difficulty. Mix in super hard-to-identify photos with ones that are easy. Take photos of common places around your town that most teens will recognize: pools, arenas, parks, popular places to shop, recreation areas, etc. When you are taking the photos, try to frame it from an uncommon angle like sideways or upside down so teens really have to think to identify a place.

#### 2. Art display

**Details:** I do this program once a year when I book our library's community art space in the stairwell to showcase teen artists. I have been limiting it to manga-style artwork but you could do a general display of projects by the talented and artistic teens in your





community. I plan to do a general art display program this coming April.

**Cost:** Free, just a little bit of staff time hanging all the artwork

**Program Time & Length of Program:** I advertise a submission period for a month leading up to when the display will occur. For example, during all of October I accept art submissions from teens with a deadline of October 30<sup>th</sup>. On October 31<sup>st</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup>, I put the display up and it remains there through to the end of November.

**Supplies & Tools:** Most teen art submitted is just on pieces of paper so I use tape and poster-board to adhere their art to something more substantial for the display. It all depends on whether you have a bulletin board available to you or just wall space.

**Amy's Tips:** When teens are submitting their artwork, be sure to have them jot their name and phone number down on the back so you can contact them to come pick it up at the end of the display. Including a little "thank you for letting us borrow your art!" card is a nice touch. I added some handbills for upcoming teen programs to the thank you cards and it let me meet and promote programs to teens I hadn't seen in the library before. Contact your local high schools and art teachers to let them know about this and see if they will pass along the info to their students!

### 3. Poetry Contest

**Details:** I held a "horrorku" horror haiku contest leading up to Halloween that was a huge hit with teens. The prize was a "frighteningly large bag of candy" ... I filled a Prince George Public Library book bag with an alarming amount of candy. The teen who won was thrilled and said she was going to share it with all her friends and that it was the best prize ever! I held a submission deadline and then announced the winner on Halloween. I asked a co-worker to choose the winning poem.

**Cost:** Free or \$ (if you decide to buy a small prize)

**Program Time & Length of Program:** 2-3 week submission period, deadline day, and then time to sort through, pick the winner, and display the poems.

**Special Materials Shopping List:** Candy, candy, and more candy for a grand prize

**Amy's Tips:** Next time I will just have a horror or scary poetry contest... not haiku. Many teens didn't know what a haiku was and so chose not to enter. I displayed the

submissions and winning entries up on a bulletin board for a few weeks after the program. This program could be adapted to a sappy love poem or best break up poem around Valentine's, or various other special occasions and holidays. I scored a *lot* of candy for *cheap* by waiting until after Halloween on November 1 to purchase the prize.



**The Horror Haiku Challenge**

teens: we're looking for the creepiest haiku ever. submit your gruesome entries to the children's information desk.

all haikus will be posted in the teen corner and the winner will be announced on october 31.

the prize will be a frightening amount of candy.

**Contest Deadline: Oct 30 at 5:00 pm**



The Prince George  
**Public Library**  
www.lib.pg.bc.ca



**Bob Harkins Branch**  
887 Dominion Street • 250-563-9251  
**Nechako Branch**  
6547 Hart Highway • 250-962-9710

Have you ever done any "soft" programs? I'd love to hear about it and any other comments or questions you have about serving teens in your library. Drop me a line any time at [adawley@lib.pg.bc.ca](mailto:adawley@lib.pg.bc.ca). Also, I'd like to send out a huge thank you to those dear readers who sent me so many e-mails of encouragement and support after reading my last column "Teen Services Fail." I really appreciate your kind words! Onwards and upwards, my friends!

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



## Who's on the Felt Board?

### Flip-Flap Jack

By Anne Tasker

This felt story-song is one of my all time favorites and it works on EVERY crowd. I'm not kidding! Perhaps because it's about food, or because of the funny little man who emerges on the felt board, or because of the catchy tune. Maybe because I like it so much, my presentation is always light and easy. I'm not sure where I first got the idea for this ... it's actually a derivative of Aiken Drum, a Scottish folk song. In that version, Aiken Drum lives on the moon and plays upon a ladle and his breeches were made of haggis bags. I heard Raffi's version years ago when my kids were little (we sang it ad infinitum in the car). But that version didn't go beyond his head - his eyes made of meatballs and a mouth made of pizza! Flip Flap Jack doesn't wear breeches; he plays upon the table and he's made of food! There is a "breakfast" foods version of the felt story around – waffles for shoes, bacon for legs, oranges for ears. I prefer vegetables!

I introduce the song with the chorus, and show the kids what I want them to do. As we sing, we slap our thighs, first one then the other, and on the words "Flip Flap Jack", we flip our hands over and back again (palms up, palms down, palms up). This is a tricky maneuver for the little ones, but we get lots of practice by the end!

You could make your own version, change the food types, make him a her, or add a hat. I've considered adding toes made of peanuts, and changing the tie to a parsnip or a strip of bacon. There's lots of scope for making it original!

#### Flip Flap Jack

There was a man made of food,  
made of food, made of food.

There was a man made of food  
and his name was Flip Flap Jack.

CHORUS: And he played upon the table,  
the table, the table.

He played upon the table  
and his name was Flip Flap Jack.

His head was made of a pancake, a pancake, a  
pancake. (1<sup>st</sup> piece of felt goes on the board)

His head was made of a pancake,  
and his name was Flip Flap Jack.



#### CHORUS

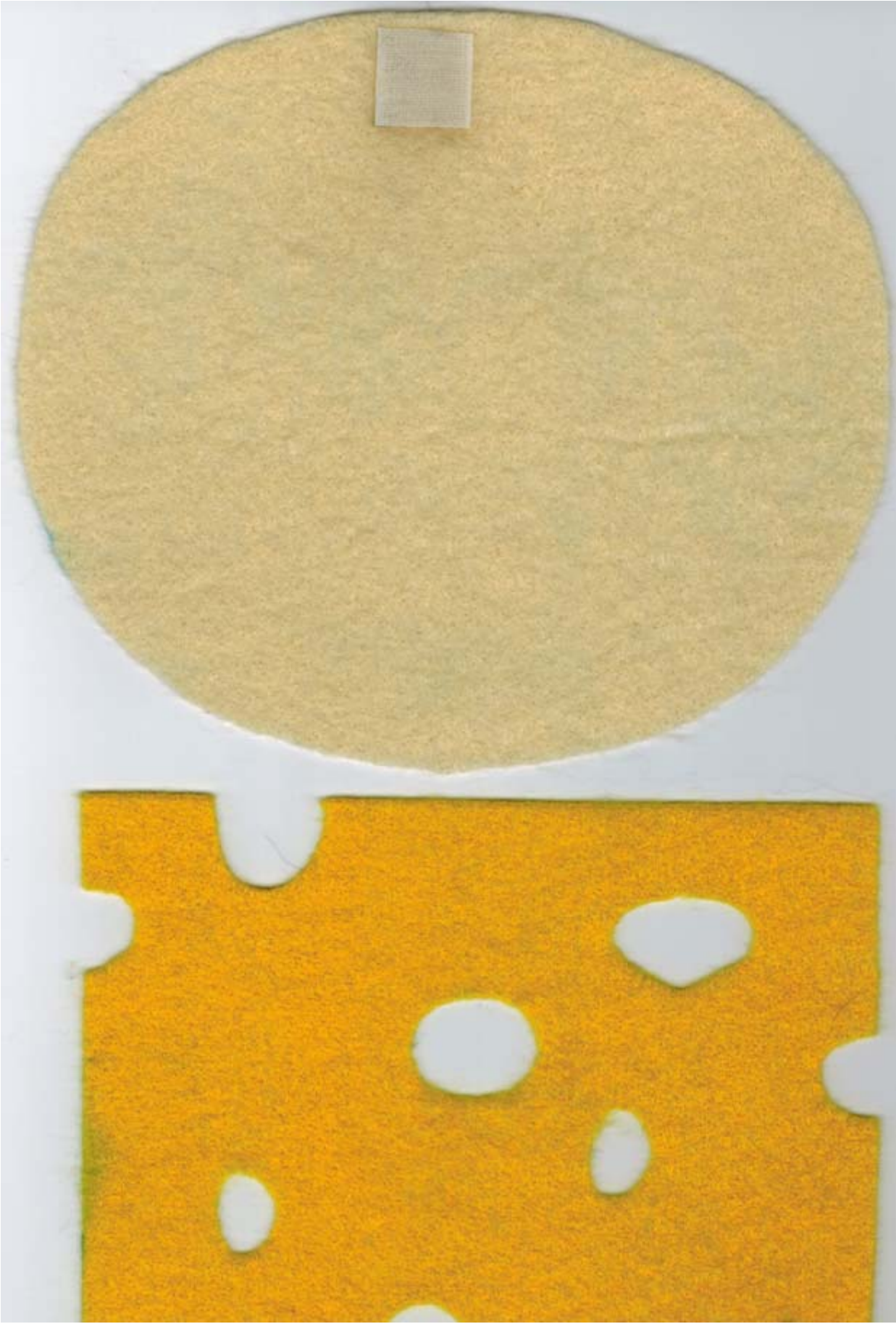
His hair was made of spaghetti .... And his name was  
Flip Flap Jack

His nose was made of a strawberry...  
His eyes were made of blueberries...  
His mouth was made of a green bean...  
His ears were made of broccoli...  
His body was made of Swiss cheese...  
His arms were made of carrots...  
His fingers were made of seaweed...  
His legs were made of eggplants...  
His feet were made of potatoes...  
And his tie was made of a banana!

*Anne Tasker is a Librarian at the  
Vancouver Public Library.*











\* Duplicate veggies are not all pictured

\* Flip Flap Jack's yarn spaghetti/hair is shown smaller than original



## Vintage YAACING

### The Dawn of the Computer Catalogue, or Northcoast News, 1986

By April Ens

I love the way vintage advertisements and book covers tell us a little about the way we used to think; what we thought was true or important. Websites like Awful Library Books (<http://awfullibrarybooks.net>) can

entertain me for hours, with their lurid glimpse into once-valued items, now considered trash. Likewise, announcements about computer technology from days gone by are riveting and a little awful. I cannot imagine waxing poetic over the "vibrant green letters" on a monotone computer screen, but there it is. Once, this was high technology; and we were thrilled to have it. Tomorrow it will be something else, and I'm sure I'll laugh then too.

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



#### NORTHCOAST NEWS

The Terrace Public Library entered the computer age last October with a computerized circulation system. And while some of our adult patrons have had difficulty adjusting to the change, the kids really seem to have a natural affinity for the computer age. Perhaps adults would have less trouble adjusting to computers if they looked at things from a child's point of view.

Those shiny, new, plastic library cards with the barcode on the front are really classy and the closest you can get to owning a credit card if you are still in elementary school. Kids love to see their names, their full names, flashing on the computer screen in vibrant green letters. It makes them feel important. And if Ms. Laurie-Lynn Sue-Anne Jones-Smith sees not only her name, but also the words INE OWING \$1.50, she's not upset. She thinks it's "Awesome". At the age of eight, she figures she might be the youngest girl in town to have established a line of credit!

And now that the computer has arrived the kids seem to spend more, not less, time with the books. Why a child who used to spend fifteen minutes maximum curled up on a bean bag chair with a book, is now delighted to spend an extra five minutes peeling off the barcode with infinite care and patience. Even the preschool set who have never been inclined to linger over the books (the slowest among them can pick a week's worth of bedtime stories in less time than it takes to say "Don't touch!") have showed a tremendous improvement in concentration and some have been known to spend up to half a minute picking at a barcode.

When you think about it, kids really seem to know how to make the best of the computer age. Their positive attitudes could be an example to us all!

Gillian Campbell, Terrace Public Library

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## Curious George Storytime Script

By Rachel Balko

*This program was originally presented to 3-6 year olds in conjunction with the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre's exhibit, "The Wartime Escape: Margret and H.A. Rey's Journey from France."*

### What You'll Need for This Storytime

- Flannel board (materials: foam core board, flannel, heavy-duty stapler)
- Five Little Monkeys flannel board characters, available from:  
<http://childcare.scholarschoice.ca/products/Five-Monkeys-Jumping-on-the-Bed-Bilingual-Rhyme-Flannelboard-Set-PreCut-p45862/pstart1/>

### Welcome

Thank you, boys and girls, for coming to our storytime today. We're going to be singing some songs and reading *Curious George Rides a Bike*, by Margret and H.A. Rey. Let's sing some songs to get started! For the first song, I need everyone to stand up.

### Head Shoulders Knees and Toes

*[Sing to the tune of "London Bridge Is Falling Down." Touch each part of the body with both hands as you mention it.]*

Head and shoulders  
Knees and toes  
Knees and toes  
Knees and toes  
Head and shoulders  
Knees and toes  
Eyes, ears,  
Mouth and nose

*[repeat two times, singing and moving faster each time]*

Great job! Now for this next one, I need everyone to sit down and gather as close as you can. We're going to sing, "Open Them, Shut Them." Do any of you know that one?

### Open Them Shut Them

*[Hands should do the movements indicated as they are sung.]*

Open them  
Shut them  
Open them  
Shut them  
Give a little clap, clap, clap

Open them  
Shut them  
Open them  
Shut them  
Put them in your lap

Creep them  
Creep them  
Creep them  
Creep them  
To your little chin  
Open up your little mouth  
Do not let them in

*[repeat two times]*

### Introduction to Monkey Theme

How many of you have heard of Curious George? What kind of an animal is Curious George? *[If children aren't familiar with Curious George, show them the book cover to prompt responses.]* That's right, he's a monkey. So we're going to sing some songs about monkeys to get us in the Curious George spirit.

### I'm a Little Monkey

*[Sing to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot."]*

I'm a little monkey      *Beat chest.*  
In a tree  
I love to eat      *Motion of eating.*  
Bananas, you see  
I have lots of friends      *Wiggle fingers.*  
Who come to play  
We have fun  
Every day      *Clap on each syllable*  
*[repeat]*

Well done! Now we're going to sing my favourite monkey song, "Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed." Will you sing it with me?

### Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed Flannel Board Presentation

(can be purchased or made)

*[Note: Can substitute Five Little Monkeys Sitting in a Tree, if desired.]*

Five little monkeys jumping on the bed  
One fell off and bumped his head  
    *Bump self on head.*  
Mama called the doctor  
    *Hold imaginary receiver to ear.*  
And the doctor said,  
"No more monkeys jumping on the bed!"  
    *Shake finger accusingly.*  
(continue with four, three, two, one)





### Introduction to *Curious George Rides a Bike*

Now we're going to read our story, *Curious George Rides a Bike*. Do any of you ride bikes with your mom or dad? Is it fun? Do you think a monkey could really ride a bike? Well, let's see how George does it.

### Read *Curious George Rides a Bike*

Wow! That was a great story. What was your favourite part? Since George spent so much time riding his bike, let's sing a song about bicycles.

### The Wheels on My Bike

[Sing to the tune of "The Wheels on the Bus."]

The wheels on my bike go 'round and 'round  
*Roll hands around each other.*

'Round and 'round, 'round and 'round  
The wheels on my bike go 'round and 'round  
All around town

*Make big circle with hands.*

#### Additional Verses:

The bell on my bike goes ring, ring, ring...  
*Pretend to ring bike bell.*

The pedals on my bike go up and down...  
*Move body up and down.*

The handles on my bike go left and right...  
*Move imaginary handlebars side-to-side.*

So where did George end up in the story? That's right, at the circus. I love the circus! Let's sing a song about the circus and every time we say the word, "hurrah," let's throw our hands in the air and wave them around like this [sing the first two lines of the song and demonstrate motion].

### The Circus Is Coming to Our Town

[Sing to the tune of "When the Ants Come Marching Home Again."]

The circus is coming to our town  
Hurrah! Hurrah!

The circus is coming to our town  
Hurrah! Hurrah!

We'll see acrobats and lions there,  
Some monkeys and a big, trained bear!

And we'll all have fun  
The circus is coming to town!

(repeat)

### Transition to the End of the Storytime

Well, we're coming to the end of our storytime today, boys and girls. What did you learn today? What was your favourite song that we sang? Do you think you'll want to read more *Curious George* stories? Well, I had a good time with you today, and I hope you had fun, too. Let's sing "If You're Happy and You Know It," okay?

### If You're Happy and You Know It

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.  
*Clap hands twice.*

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.  
*Clap hands twice.*

If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.  
*Clap hands twice.*

#### Additional Verses:

If you're happy and you know it, stomp your feet...  
*Stomp feet twice.*

If you're happy and you know it, shout "Hurray!" ...  
*Hoo-ray!*

If you're happy and you know it, do all three...  
*Clap hands twice, stomp feet twice, Hooray!*

### Dismissal

Thank you so much for coming to our storytime today, boys and girls. I hope you had a lot of fun!

**IF TIME PERMITS** - Sing this song before the Transition to the End of Storytime.

Okay, now we're going to sing "Ten Little Monkeys," do you know that one?

### Ten Little Monkeys

10 monkeys in the bed, and the little one said,  
*Hold up 10 fingers.*

"Roll over, roll over."  
*Roll hands around each other.*

So they all rolled over and one fell out.  
*Drop one hand.*

9 monkeys in the bed...

1 monkey in the bed and the little one said,  
*Hold up 1 finger.*

(spoken) "Good night!"  
*Rest head on hands, close eyes.*

*Rachel Balko is an MLIS student at the School of Library Archival and Information Studies at the University of British Columbia. This program was originally developed as part of a professional experience project at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.*

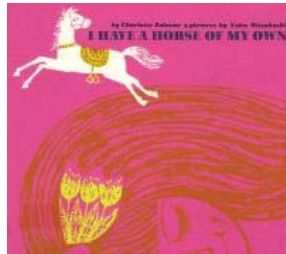




## One Will Do, Thank You

By Mary Afonso

My favourite picture book as a child did not win an award of any kind. Although its author, Charlotte Zolotow, has written over 70 children's stories, this is the only one I have ever come across. I suppose when I was little I was not aware that an author could write more than one book, so the thought never occurred to find others by her. Maybe I simply found other picture books to occupy my interest, but it is strange how a single book can impact you.



I don't recall how many times I read *I Have a Horse of My Own* as a child, I just know that it stayed in my memory long after I stopped being one. When I was in my late teens, I began to think about this book again, so much so, that I eventually went to my local library to see if they still had it. Unfortunately it had long been discarded, so I turned to the town bookstore. The owner — a tiny, curly-haired, ex-ballet dancer from New York, who I adored — searched her computer only to inform me that it was no longer in print, that I was out of luck. I had been hopeful and a little excited but not all together unsurprised when she told me. Still, I was disappointed; and every once in awhile, throughout my twenties, I would think about this book and wish I could see it again.

What exactly made it so special? As a child, I think I was drawn to its incredible girliness. Composed of wonderful illustrations using only four colours — pink, gray, black and white — it is the story of a girl who dreams every night of the adventures she and her horse go on. I am sure I wanted to be that girl, with that horse, in that world. Whether riding in the mountains or swimming in the sea, she and that horse were together. There is no meaning behind the story, no lesson learned; it is just a simple tale of friendship set in fantasy.

Time passed, and as I entered my early 30s, I once again started thinking about the book. Really, it was the emotions it made me feel that I kept returning to. One day it dawned on me that times had changed and that I had new tools at my disposal for finding the book — specifically eBay. While my best friend had bought and sold on eBay numerous times, I had barely touched it. Then it struck me! Maybe this book could be found *there*. After all, was that not the beauty of eBay; this ability to buy and sell *anything*? And so I typed in my entry, and lo, there it was! Not just one, but 3 copies. I could not believe my eyes. But at 34 dollars and being a poor student, I hemmed and hawed. Was I being silly to want this childhood book? What would I do with it now? Weeks passed until finally I gave in and bought a copy. I just knew I would kick myself later if I didn't.

The day I received it, I was only mildly excited. After all, I had seen it before; and maybe, I thought, it was best left to memory. But as I turned the pages, I felt pleased to have the book in my hands again. In fact, I became excited enough to show it to my closest friends and co-workers. Their lack of enthusiasm, however, made me realize how personal a book can be, especially one geared to little girls who love the colour pink! But that was ok, because it still had a special place in my heart, as it does now.

So thank goodness for libraries with their abundance of books that lack awards and prestige. Sometimes, all a good book needs is to speak to the child who finds it.

*Mary Afonso is a Library Technician at the Vancouver Public Library, a Library Assistant at Langara College, and Publications Liaison with LTAIG.*

*Several of Yoko Mitsuhashi's lovely illustrations for Charlotte Zolotow's *I Have a Horse of My Own* can be seen at: <http://www.yokomitsuhashiart.com/artwork/i-have-a-horse-of-my-own>.*



## Creative Teens, Creative Libraries

By Julianne Mutimer

Teen programming, what to do? That is the question when you work in Youth Services. Once again our team got together to brainstorm teen programming ideas. However, before I delve into our final decisions I should rewind a little bit. We all know that libraries are constantly changing so our goal this year is to broaden our community's perception of who we are. We want them to see the library as the inspirational place – yes, the creative place – that information professionals know libraries to be.

Taking all of this into consideration, we decided to offer three new teen clubs: photography, knitting, and crocheting. With our budget in mind, we capitalized on the expertise of our own youth services staff (how's that for being resourceful?) who will organize and run each program. The photography program was an instant success with a full registration and a waitlist to boot. For the first session, twenty teens and I chat about photography and what it means to effectively compose a photograph. For the second session teens return to show and discuss their work. We wrap up each series of classes with a small reception for teens and their families where their artwork is on display in the library.

What did we need for this? Teens provide their own camera (digital or film, any kind) and pay for print processing. We provide the staff, the expertise (moi), picture frames, and small refreshments for the opening. The knitting and crochet programs will debut later this spring and participants will also have the opportunity to display their creations in the branch.

These programs are definitely fun, but we saw a need and a demand in our community for people to connect face to face (how many people do you know in a knitting club?). Perhaps they will take a book, perhaps not, but they will likely be back to see their work and to show a friend or family member.

*Julianne Mutimer is a Youth Services Technician at the Newton Branch of the Surrey Public Library*

## Serendipity 2012: Memories of Dancing Dragons

By Pamela Fairfield

I have just returned renewed and inspired by the wonderful Serendipity 2012 event, hosted annually by fellow Vancouver Children's Literature Roundtable volunteers, members and of course the dedicated steering committee.

Being the Year of the Dragon, the symposium celebrated multiculturalism, ethnicity, diversity and issues specifically related to literature arising from the experience of immigrating to North America. The speakers painted sensitive, moving and comical vignettes related to their experience as authors living, writing and illustrating within the melting pot of cultural heritage that North America has become.

The morning brought us Tanya Lloyd Kyi, winner of the 2011 Children's Literature Roundtables of Canada Book Award for *Fifty Burning Questions: A Sizzling History of Fire*, who adorned herself on stage in a pair of underwear—over her original outfit, that is!!—while she gave a rousing talk on the best way for authors to entice young readers into the world of non-fiction. We were definitely happily engaged!

Next, Paul Yee gave an eloquent depiction of the complexities of the Chinese immigrant experience in Canada and what it means to find identity as an author within such cultural intricacy. His understanding of the histories of the communities of Chinatown and the adjoining residential Strathcona neighborhood were illuminating and close to my heart, as I have made them my home for over 22 years. His account of leaving Vancouver to settle in Toronto, where he was able to engage in the process of coming out as a gay man and then incorporate this important issue into his writing, was incredibly moving and brought much warmth and sensitivity into the room, setting the stage for the next experience we were to receive.

One of the highlights of the morning was the moving talk given by Allen Say, culminating with the reading of a letter he received from the wife of his close boyhood school friend. The letter was written in memory of the day her husband received a copy of Allen's newest book, *Drawing from Memory*. The book includes a photograph of Allen's friend with his mother, one of the only photos he had ever seen of her. This was one of the last experiences he would ever have. Within hours of



seeing the photograph, he died. Due to the emotional content of this beautiful letter of thanks, Allen asked Marjorie Coughlan, co-editor of [Papertigers.org](http://Papertigers.org) to read it. We fell under the spell of her melodic tone, allowing us to enter an intimate page of Allen's life.

The lunch break began with wet eyes and noses. Off we went with Kleenex in our hands, at once distracted by a plethora of Serendipitous activities: the wonderful silent auction, the ever-addictive Kids Books' sale and an enticing origami workshop that challenged any of us who experience even a small bit of dyslexia, as we tried desperately with the help of Origami Master, Joseph Wu and Yukiko Tosa to create paper dragons.

Directly after lunch, we channeled our inner dragons as the colorful and charismatic Shiamak's Bollywood Dancers performed for us, then yes, taught us all a Bollywood Dance! Appendages of librarians were flying everywhere, as we practiced with laughter in the true spirit of Bollywood. The less shy and extremely brave joined the dancers on the stage, giving an impressive final performance, while we bounced and flailed by our seats. I learned as a student that librarians love jewelry but I had no idea that I would ever see such joy in the eyes of colleagues, as they danced their lunch off with such passion. I think we all surprised ourselves.

The afternoon was rounded off in perfect counterpoint with a comical yet down-to-earth presentation by award-winning author Lisa Yee, whose passion is to write stories for and about boys. It is clear that Lisa brings the experience of motherhood and the input of her son into her writing, transforming her characters into believable and addictive stories, by paying particular attention to the contemporary dialogue of youth. She stresses the importance of not discussing race overtly within her novels for young boys and girls, moving away from the pedantic while allowing children to identify and find meaning in characters and their accompanying situations.

The day was made complete by the editors of [Papertigers.org](http://Papertigers.org), who navigated us through their magnificent website, featuring authors from around the world encouraging cultural diversity and empathy. Be sure to check out this fabulous site for authors' interviews, book reviews and most poignantly, their water book project. This is an outreach program that supports impoverished communities in need of clean water, while supplying them with a library of high quality books celebrating ethnicity. Each volume is hand selected by the Papertigers' team. Papertigers floods my mind with the reasons why I first began my journey as a children's librarian.

A special mention must go to all those who introduced the eloquent speakers and especially, to Shannon Ozirny, our fun-loving and ever-marvelous M.C.

This was the most poignant Serendipity symposium I have ever attended. The superb talks and sensitive handling of complex issues will resonate with me for a long time to come.

A special thank you from all of us at YAACS to all of the lovely people who made this special day happen, especially Kathie Shoemaker and Dr. Margot Filipenko, the fantastic co-chairs of the steering committee.

*Pamela Fairfield is a Children's Librarian at the Vancouver Public Library and Co-Editor of YAACING.*

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## **The Lost Boys of the Library: Reaching Reluctant Young Male Readers Through Reference Interactions with Parents and Caregivers**

*By Megan Harris*

Children's and youth services librarians are by now well-versed in the widespread discussions about the rising trend of reluctant young male readers. Although parents and caregivers coming into the library to request books for their children is nothing new, there seems to be a growing number of patrons coming in to ask a very specific question: "How can I get my son/grandson/nephew/etc. to read *and* enjoy it?" An often unwittingly complex question, it has become the subject of numerous studies, articles, and books, with one of the most well-known examples being renowned children's author Jon Scieszka's "Guys Read" website.<sup>1</sup>

With such an abundance of materials, parents, teachers, and librarians are well-equipped to encourage the boys in their lives to start reading in new and enjoyable ways. Whether with ideas for book-talking, suggested reading activities for classes, or new formats and media to entice the most stubborn resistors, librarians and educators are full of ideas for getting books into the hands of potential young male readers. Reader's advisory through a parent or caregiver without the presence of the child in question, (an all-too familiar scenario for many youth librarians today), takes on new challenges of its own. This short essay will attempt to outline some of the various strategies and talking points that will help ensure

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<sup>1</sup> Jon Scieszka, "Guys Read," accessed December 2, 2011, <http://www.guysread.com/>.



pleasant and effective reference interactions, reassuring caregivers while at the same time giving boys materials they will really enjoy.

While it may be tempting to start picking off the shelves the tried-and-true books that usually work for reluctant male readers: the Guinness Books of World Records, the “grossology” non-fiction, the Captain Underpants series, or the Calvin and Hobbes volumes, for example, a proper reference interview should be conducted for these kinds of queries whenever possible, even though the reader himself isn’t present. In fact, a major part of the interaction might be used as a kind of “teachable moment” in itself, before any discussion of particular materials even begins. If the parent is receptive to talking about the reasons why their son doesn’t read, as well as learning about some of the resources available on this subject, then this is an excellent window of opportunity to have a natural and meaningful discussion about all of the different factors that can create fun and fulfilling reading experiences.

The phenomenon of parents coming to the library to find books for their kids, who are not present, is becoming more and more common,<sup>2</sup> partially due to the fact that children are managing busier and more complex schedules than ever (not to mention their parents). While this is not an ideal environment for reader’s advisory, it does not mean that a successful reference interaction cannot take place. As part of the conversation, librarians should always encourage caregivers to bring their children to the library with them the next time they come in, or if they are old enough, to encourage the children to visit on their own. This can be framed by talking about upcoming programs or events at the library, or by suggesting that the child come back after reading the selected books, in order to give feedback and find something that might suit his tastes even more. Heather Booth points out that it is important to remember that parents coming into the library on behalf of their children is inherently “a good thing” because it means that they are already beginning the process of encouraging reading at home.<sup>3</sup> Even if the parent comes in with an attitude that is disparaging of their child’s choices (“He only reads junk,”)<sup>4</sup> it may be simply because they are not aware of the much wider variety of materials and genres available to children today, or of recent research on literacy and reading reluctance. Whatever the initial framing of the question, it is important always to maintain a respectful and friendly tone with parents, and to treat

them as allies in the process of reaching their young readers at home.

The discussion might begin by asking the patron why they think their son does not read or does not like to read. With any luck, they’ve tried to engage their child in this discussion already. Jobe and Dayton-Sakari, when they asked children why they didn’t read, cited the following five most popular responses: “I’m a slow reader,” “I’m too busy,” “Only girls read!,” “It’s boring,” and “It’s easier to watch a video or TV.”<sup>5</sup> What is extensively reflected in the research on this subject, is that boys in particular, choose not to read because of a lack of confidence in their reading skills, because their previous reading experiences have failed to adequately engage them, or because they see reading as a gendered interest. Determining the reasons for a child’s lack of interest in reading will go a long way to achieving the goal of shedding a new and more appealing light on the activity.

If the parent or caregiver has time and is open to discussion, it will be helpful to mention the research that has been done in this area, and some of its findings. If a child is struggling to read or feeling unengaged at school, the librarian might broach a discussion about the ways in which boys have different learning styles and educational needs, which often are still not being met in classrooms.<sup>6</sup> If the child doesn’t think reading can be interesting, the librarian can explain some of the reasons behind these very common feelings: a) that teaching and youth librarianship are overwhelmingly dominated by females, b) that many boys lack male reading role models and are discouraged from sharing their thoughts or feelings, c) and that many are unaware of the materials aimed at reaching boys.<sup>7</sup> Without lecturing or wandering too far into the realm of academia, letting parents know that their sons are experiencing something very common, and that there are many professionals in many different fields working to fill the gaps in education and service to boys, can be reassuring, and can help place their need into a larger context, even facilitating better discussion.

An important point to make when parents shrug hopelessly and express, “He only reads junk. Can you recommend some quality literature?”<sup>8</sup> is that emerging

2 Heather Booth, “Reader’s Advisory by Proxy: Connecting Teens and Books Through Positive Interactions with Parents and Caregivers,” *Young Adult Library Services* (Fall 2006), p. 15.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

4 *Ibid.*

5 Ron Jobe and Mary Dayton-Sakari, *Reluctant Readers: Connecting Students and Books for Successful Reading Experiences*, Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers, 1999, p. 12.

6 Elizabeth Knowles and Martha Smith, *Boys and Literacy: Practical Strategies for Librarians, Teachers, and Parents*, Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2005.

7 Kathleen A. Baxter and Marcia Agness Kochel, *Gotcha for Guys: Nonfiction Books to Get Boys Excited About Reading*, Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2007, p. xvi.

8 Booth, p. 14.





and alternative forms of books and literacy are extremely helpful in engaging reluctant readers. If time allows, the librarian might choose to contextualize the discussion in terms of recent research that has been done on the new ways that both children and adults read. As Jobe and Dayton-Sakari write, "We read in a different way now... These days, many people prefer to sample newspapers, magazines, listserves of Web pages, rather than tackle big chunks of print."<sup>9</sup> It will be worthwhile to emphasize that encouraging any kind of reading is crucial for reluctant readers. Reading magazines and websites may not be what parents recognise from their own experiences of developmental literacy, but they are representative of the ways that people are reading in today's cultural environment. They are valuable sources of information, escapism, and self-exploration. Beyond this, research has shown that engaging with non-traditional materials like comics, websites, and magazines – even movies and video games – can help children build confidence in their reading skills, make connections with their peers, and gain exposure to new kinds of materials and experiences, all of which can act as bridges to more traditional forms of reading.<sup>10</sup> As well as encouraging open-mindedness about the kinds of materials boys should be reading, it is also helpful to point out that in the process of encouraging confidence and enjoyment of reading, there should be minimal pressure placed on the reading level. Again, there should be emphasis on encouraging any kind of reading. Forcing boys to read above their natural reading levels will only further damage their reading confidence and make reading feel like more of a chore. The same line of thinking applies to parents who may want to discourage a child from re-reading a favourite book over and over again. It is essential to communicate that in the process of encouraging reading, no kind of reading should be discouraged.<sup>11</sup>

There is a plethora of ways that reading can become a more social, experiential and appealing activity for boys. Through participation in groups like boys-only books clubs or reading circles (with or without male caregivers), reading can become a less intimidating, more relatable, and more social activity.<sup>12</sup> Reading male role models play an important part in encouraging the joy of reading for boys. Attending the library together can strengthen this important bond. Consider participation in a program like "Reading with Dogs", which utilises the de-stressing benefits of an animal presence to provide fun and low-pressure environments in which kids can build their

reading skills and confidence,<sup>13</sup> or attending storytelling sessions, which are similarly unthreatening and offer a kind of gateway to reading.<sup>14</sup> As another example, the Vancouver Public Library offers a "Lego Block Party" program, which integrates storytelling with active play, facilitating the action-oriented listening and learning styles of boys and other kinetic learners. If such social groups are not available in the library or another local community centre, the librarian can encourage parents to try themselves to engage with their children about what they are reading. This may not appeal to all children, so also suggest tools like peer reviews and websites. Scieszka's site, as already mentioned, is an excellent and appealing resource that provides opportunities for boys to read reviews and recommendations by other boys, to write their own, and to find out about subjects and materials that are likely to pique their interest.

Through the reference interview process, the librarian should be able to determine some of the reasons for the boy's reluctance, as well as some impressions about his interests, including sports and extracurricular activities, school subjects, movies, games, etc. These tips should guide the librarian's selections in terms of media type, reading level, and subject matter. While the selections themselves will vary widely from child to child, and while a list of individual recommendations is outside the scope of this paper, it is useful to outline some general guidelines.

The librarian should send the parent/caregiver home with a wide variety of materials to maximize the chances of providing something that will succeed in capturing the child's interest. These selections will certainly be guided by the information obtained about the child's individual needs and interests, but librarians will find that common threads will appear in similar reference interactions. If the child struggles with the ability to read, providing easy readers with appealing content (known as high/low books) will be appropriate, as well as easy-reader-level graphic novels or joke and riddle books. If the boy is known to be capable of reading at his age level but is simply uninterested, then magazines, comics, or intriguingly-themed non-fiction could work to entice him. In most cases, providing both fiction and non-fiction selections is recommended, as it can be very difficult to gauge this kind of preference second-hand.

Together, these talking points should help to create an effective reference interaction. The librarian will be able to reassure the parent or caregiver, giving them some helpful tips, not only about how to encourage their son's

<sup>9</sup> Jobe and Dayton-Sakari, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Wendy Huot, "Reluctant Readers: Who They are and How Librarians Can Help," *YAACING* (Spring 2006), p. 32.

<sup>11</sup> Baxter and Kochel, p. Xvi.

<sup>12</sup> Caitlin Fralick, "From the Skateboard to the Checkout Line: Boys and Literacy," *YAACING* (Spring 2006), p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> Based on the author's own experience.

<sup>14</sup> Melanie Au, "Storytelling: The Key to Getting Reluctant Readers Reading," *YAACING* (Spring 2006), p. 12.



reading, but also to better understand his experience and the broader social-cultural context in which it takes place. This might involve giving the caregiver a selection of materials on the subject, if they are interested. But, the real goal of the interaction is to provide books that engage the absent young reader. The best case scenario here is for the boy to find something that he is able to read and enjoy and feel inspired enough to visit the library himself. The aim is to reach the child's need even though he is not present, and the easiest way to do this is by engaging the caregiver in a collaborative way. When possible, the librarian should try to provide non-traditional reading options, in addition to less appealing books the parent might insist upon. Be sure to emphasize the benefit of the boy coming into the library himself, with or without an adult, to achieve the most successful book selection. Sending the parent home with information about the library's email address, website, and online catalogue, as well as lists of suitable books and resources, may, in the end, be the best strategy for reaching the young patron indirectly. Finally, the librarian should thank the parent or caregiver for coming to the library and taking the time to help build their child's reading skills and enjoyment. State that they hope to hear about how the selections were received, and to talk to the child about his reactions and preferences.

Emphasizing to the caregiver that both they and their children are actively encouraged to visit the library and to seek reader's advisory services will deliver an important message that the librarian is a partner in what is often a struggle to connect boys with reading. By engaging in respectful, thoughtful, and friendly interactions with parents and caregivers, the librarian will provide an outlet for parents to express their anxiety, allow them to relate their experiences to a larger context, and reassure them that they are not alone. By working to enlist them as allies in turning their reluctant young readers into confident ones, and by providing a varied selection of fresh and exciting materials, the librarian will succeed in the most important aspect of this process: to reach the young male patron-at-large in a meaningful way, helping to foster his literacy skills and a genuine love of reading.

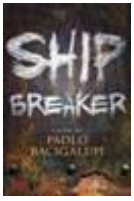
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## Reviews



**Ship Breaker** by Paolo Bacigalupi  
Little, Brown and Co, 2010.  
Audience: Teen

This jagged, sometimes violent and thrilling YA dystopian novel tells the story of Nailer, a teenage boy who salvages scrap from broken freighters in a post-oil, global-warmed future. He and his crew live in a hopeless world, and his life is further plagued with an addicted, abusive father. Now the chance discovery of a shipwreck, with a beautiful, mysterious survivor, leads him to flee on a high-tech clipper, pursued by powerful forces he must confront in a stunning climax. This is a well-written page-turner for mature teens who have handled *The Hunger Games* and want to go further.

- Jon Scop, Burnaby Public Library



**The Realm of Possibility** by David Levithan. Alfred A. Knopf, 2004.  
Audience: Teen

*The Realm of Possibility* takes a contemporary look at the lives of twenty different teens with twenty different voices.

The book explores a diverse mix of characters, genders, sexual orientations, race and social standings all within the same high school. Each of the poems shares the perspective of a particular character as they explore their questions on life, love, meaning and possibilities.

The book is divided into five sections of four voices each, with the names of the four voices appearing only on the section title page. This lax attachment of character names to the corresponding poems emphasizes the universality of the questions raised. But it also makes it difficult as a reader to keep track of the characters and how they relate to one another as they appear and reappear in one another's poems. Levithan uses a variety of poetic forms in his writing, from song lyrics, to free verse to sculpted poems on a page. Some poems work better than others in their style and execution, but all can stand on their own. Readers will find inspiring, provoking lines in the thoughts of these characters and be drawn to question the realm of possibility in their own lives. Despite its minor flaws, this book is excellent in its treatment of a variety of sexual orientations, questions and depiction of complete acceptance among friends.

- Sara Hathaway, Columbus Metropolitan Library



**A Dog is a Dog** by Stephen Shaskan.  
Chronicle Books, 2011.  
Audience: Preschool

A delightful circular story; perfect as a storytime read-aloud. A dog is dog no matter what it does... except when it's not dog at all. What will you see when it unzips its costume? A cat? A squid? A moose? The rhyming text will give older preschoolers enough clues to guess, and if they're anything like my storytime crew, they'll happily shout it out. Need a taste? Head to the author's website to view the trailer:

<http://www.stephenshaskan.com/books-by-stephen-shaskan.html>

- April Ens, 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 2500 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 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 Summer 2012 issue of YAACING is **May 15, 2012**. Email your submissions to the editors at [YAACING@gmail.com](mailto:YAACING@gmail.com)

