

WLMA

# medium

Spring 2015  
Vol. 39 Issue No. 2

*A World of Opportunity at the Core*





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WLMA is excited to announce a new partnership between Scholastic and WLMA for 2015.

What does this mean for members?

- Scholastic will sponsor our keynote speaker, Donalynn Miller, at the 2015 conference
- Scholastic will provide a full bookfair at WLMA with the speaker's books along with their adult and children's book titles.
- Scholastic is donating 50% of the book fair profits to WLMA.
- Scholastic will sponsor a workshop at WLMA. This year it will be Susan Katz presenting on "Writing in the Common Core: Kids are Authors."
- Scholastic will provide professional learning support throughout the year and publicize WLMA events in their Reader Leader eNewsletter.

As WLMA continues to work to support libraries, our partnership with Scholastic will provide financial support as well as create another avenue to promote the good things our members are doing for students in Washington.

# Stronger School Libraries Stronger School Librarians

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### **MEDIUM**

Journal of the Washington Library Media Association

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Jodi Kruse, New Editor (October 2013)  
Cathy Grant, Associate Editor  
Susan Jenkins, Advertising

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# From the Editor

Jodi Kruse

We are half-way through the school year. It is the long stretch between President's Day and spring break, and the glow of recent conference attendance is beginning to fade just a little. It is tempting to review all of the projects I have started in my library learning commons and wonder--will I ever get caught up? The beauty of the question is in its answer. No. There will continue to be a host of projects, programs, teachers, and students who make this journey a daily trove of opportunities.

Our spring issue starts with a communication from our president. Her message is one of opportunity. We have new opportunities to demonstrate our value to our legislators and we have new opportunities to expand our circle of colleagues through our WLA merger. Kathy Ellison's contribution is a qualitative example of how capitalizing on opportunities to serve our users is noticed and lauded. The WSSLIT survey represents an opportunity to communicate the value of teacher-librarians using empirical terms, and Craig Seasholes' article chronicles the project from its inception to its current status. Ron Wagner's article reflecting over the TLC<sup>3</sup> training provides insight into how we can capture opportunities to build knowledge through collaboration. Primary source documents provide opportunities for us to engage students in a living history; Marie-Anne Harkness and Joan Enders share resources and tips for using these valuable tools. Laura Simeon and Connie Pappas encourage us to seek opportunities to enhance our students' reading experiences through thoughtful collection development choices and high-interest activities. Dr. Betty Marcoux inspires us to provide new opportunities to our users through physical and virtual learning commons that enhance our spaces and services. Finally, Karen Williams reminds us to take advantage of the opportunities we have to grow professionally and share our experiences with our fellow librarians at ALA Conferences.

At our fall conference, we emphasized "Teacher Librarians at the Core." In this issue we extend that metaphor and celebrate the way meeting our core functions in leadership, information literacy instruction, reading advocacy, and information and resources management can open a world of opportunity for our users.

# From the President

Sharyn Merrigan



WLMA President, Sharyn Merrigan, advocating for school libraries in Olympia.

I cannot say that I am much of a football fan – I might have rolled my eyes a bit at the bandwagon of Twelves that multiplied during the weeks of January. Yet, I found myself at the Legislative Building in Olympia on the Friday before the Super Bowl in a Seahawks T-shirt feeling pretty excited about the season. Seahawks fans were holding a Moment of Loud at noon on the Capitol steps, while our dedicated team of WLMA (Washington Library Media Association) and WLA (Washington Library Association) members were visiting legislators talking about the importance of school library information programs and the interconnectedness of school, public, and state library systems.

We know how the Super Bowl turned out, but the 2015 legislative session still stretches out before us. Years of strong WLMA advocacy and lobbying have created a connection with the Washington State Legislature allowing us to build on the momentum and relationships to benefit our students. Our members and leadership continue to work with the Legislature to update the WAC definition of a school library program and to emphasize the importance of technology as a part of every student's education. This year six of our members, drawing on their experiences and passion for student learning, testified before the House and Senate Education Committees; they shared with legislators what a 21st Century

library looks, feels, and sounds like. Sponsors and supporters of HB 1331 and SB 5294 are now familiar with the LIT (School Library Information and Technology) framework and the definition of a functioning school library, and included it in the language of the legislation. WLMA members continue to talk to legislators about the MSOC (materials, supplies and operating costs) allocations and the value to school communities when libraries have a funding source that is more stable than what dedicated librarians can raise at a book fair. We have examined the Pennsylvania School Library Study<sup>1</sup> and surveyed teacher-librarians on their per pupil budgets so that we can recommend a separate line item for libraries within MSOC. Our lobbying efforts through our WLMA Lobbyist, Carolyn Logue, past WLMA leadership, and member communications with legislators have made WLMA and teacher-librarians the authority on informational literacy. These efforts have also made WLMA strong allies with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and Washington State Library on these issues. Your feedback and stories from your districts bring the impact of libraries on students alive for legislators.

Our merger with the Washington Library Association (WLA) is another alliance that will build in strength over time. Although WLA's board approved the merger in December, the actual process is an ongoing one. With many details to sort out: finances; procedures; web content; communications; leadership; and committee roles – it is sometimes difficult to keep an eye on the big picture. Nonetheless, this partnership will allow for greater levels of collaboration and connectedness between the WLMA Interest Group and other interest groups and library professionals.

Kudos to the WLA and WLMA board members who have worked tirelessly tracking down details, clarifying procedures, creating forms, and drafting communications and bylaws. WLA leaders have welcomed us with open arms, actively identifying ways in which we might immediately participate in the organization. Our webmaster, Trish Henry, has reviewed, archived, and updated our web content, and organized it into our new WLA interest

group web pages. Our treasurer, Marilyn Tucker, has chased down expenditures, cleared bills, and prepared our finances for the transfer. Anne Bingham, past president, read and reviewed our bylaws and carefully crafted new ones that capture the spirit of our mission, while allowing flexibility and change as we move into the future. Jodi Kruse and Cathy Grant tirelessly worked to put out a quality issue of our own journal the *Medium*, while working with WLA's Alki staff to explore ways in which we may complement their efforts in the future. Lisa Gallinetti, listserv moderator, has made sure vital information has been shared, distributed and accessed by all members. Ron Wagner has worked to make sure that our members renewed their membership before the shift and that our member rolls were accurate before WLA incorporated them into their register. Many people in both organizations have been working on the big and small pieces of this merger. Craig Seasholes, past president and president elect, and others have shepherded the Washington State School Library Impact Study toward a final analysis. The study already shows promise as an advocacy tool at the local, state, and national level. Margy VanDyke and the 2015 Conference Committee are planning another excellent event for October 2015, with the added administrative support of WLA's professional staff. The members of the WLMA Executive Board (now Steering Committee) and the Board of Directors, along with so many other member volunteers, have contributed countless hours and energy to the transition, the day-to-day-operations, and the continued promotion of this profession. I thank you all.

Connecting, collaborating, creating – within our organization and beyond. The Washington Library Media Association has developed strong partnerships at the state level. The support of OSPI and the Washington State Library was invaluable in collecting and analyzing the “Washington State Survey of School Library of Information Technology” (WSSLIT) data. The Teacher-Librarian Common Core Cadre (TLC3) project partnership with the State Library reached hundreds of teacher-librarians. A team is now working to develop the next project to benefit LIT teaching and learning.

Teacher-librarians bring their collaborative spirit to the benefit of their districts and schools. While the teacher-librarian position is sometimes described as isolating, we bring our prodigious energy and knowledge of resources to our teachers and students. Whether it is sharing new technology ideas or websites with teachers, providing Common Core State Standards (CCSS) support and training, or coaching and co-teaching, we benefit from stepping back and looking at our contribution to the bigger picture. A sixth grade English Language Arts (ELA) teacher recently asked me to help her find resources to support a heroes research project for her class. She said that although she had found some starting points, she knew that I would be able to think it through to the next level and help her help students learn about heroes and heroics from a variety of angles. This is one of the gifts we bring to our buildings through collaborations, connections and creativity.

The school year is half over, the legislative session is rolling along, and football season is behind us. However, the season of building and working with a strong team is never over. WLMA members make up a team of dedicated professionals who bring their collaborative energies to efforts both near and far. After all, I love my new Seahawks shirt, but it's those advocacy T-shirts from conference that reflect my true fandom.

#### NOTES:

1. Kachel, Debra E., and Curry Lance. “Latest Study: A Full-time School Librarian Makes a Critical Difference in Boosting Student Achievement.” *School Library Journal*. March 7, 2013.



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Reflections on the 2013

# I Love My Librarian Award

Kathy Ellison

It was mid November and I was already having a good day. I was hosting my school's annual theme-based all school reading program. Over sixty parent volunteers were coming to help facilitate reading groups on books like R.J. Palacio's *Wonder* and Wendelin Van Draanen's *The Running Dream*. There was a reading buzz going around the school and I was basking in the fun.

Between sessions, I checked my voice mail for messages. There was one from the President of the American Library Association asking me to call her back. Nervously, I called her back and she informed me that I was one of the ten recipients of the 2013 I Love My Librarian Award sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and *The New York Times*.

I was beyond stunned. I had known that one of the special education paraeducators at my school had been spearheading my nomination and had been doing this for the last few years. Just being thought well of by this person to the point that she would continue to nominate me year after year was humbling. Winning the award was something that I had never thought would happen.

In less than a month, I got the chance to fly to New York City with my family. The reception was at The TimesCenter near Times Square. Vartan Gregorian (President of the Carnegie Corporation) and Richard E. Ford (2013 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction for his novel *Canada*) both offered words of appreciation for our profession. Then the ten winners got to speak. We were from academic and public libraries, as well as school libraries. Rocco Staino from *School Library Journal* interviewed the two of us who were school librarians. While touring Ellis Island with my family, I got a call from my local newspaper, *The Bainbridge Island Review*, asking for quotes for a

story. When I returned home there was a banner with my name on it near the center of the city, which was sponsored by our local Bainbridge Schools Foundation.

I think that I'm a good librarian. I care deeply about my students. I learn their names and reading interests quickly. I also learn what their particular challenges are and go out of my way to make sure that they know that I want to be a helper to them. I have a great time raising salmon every year and help students monitor the water quality of the stream behind our school for the city where we live. I love my colleagues and try to find ways to make their difficult jobs a bit easier, especially when learning new standards and curriculum. But am I a great librarian?

Since winning this award, I've struggled with this notion. I can point to lots of other fabulous librarians and programs -- many just on the small island where I live and work! I look at the amazing advocacy that many WLMA members are doing at the state level and stand in awe. Also, I can think of lots of times when I've failed to connect with a particular student, despite my best efforts. I can point to other times when I've failed to follow through on my good ideas. Winning this award has been a strange journey for me, punctuated by periods of self-doubt and fears that I am not doing enough to deserve the honor.

As I have wrestled with my perceived shortcomings, I have come to the conclusion that it is because our roles as librarians can become so large! We work with every student and every teacher. We have to know every book, and every great hidden place on the Web to help our users access quality information. Additionally, we have to innovate with technology and be leaders

who know how to guide our students to the desired learning outcomes. It's an impossible task!

Still, it is a job that I love and have loved for over twenty years. When I manage to focus on the effect that I can have on just one student at a time, I start to feel a little more successful and worthy of the honor. On occasion during this experience, I have tried to step back and remind myself of that and have felt proud.

I am hoping that we fabulous and amazing teacher-librarians in Washington State can all occasionally step back and realize just how amazing we are to do the jobs that we do. And that there are many people in our worlds that can say that they "Love Their Librarian."

Kathy Ellison still feels like a young librarian despite the fact that she got her degree when they were still teaching how to properly type catalog cards. She spent fourteen years teaching in independent schools in New York City before moving to Washington State. She loves working with her 5th and 6th graders at Sonoji Sakai Intermediate School on Bainbridge Island; and enjoys helping them raise salmon and release the fry into the stream right behind the school. She can be reached at [kellison@bisd303.org](mailto:kellison@bisd303.org).



### **"I Love My Librarian Award"**

This annual award is sponsored by The Carnegie Corporation of New York, *The New York Times*, and the American Library Association.

Library users nominate candidates from public, school, or academic libraries.

Nominees must hold at least a master's degree from a program accredited by either the American Library Association or the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education.

Ten outstanding librarians are recognized annually. Kathy was one of two school librarians who were recognized for this prestigious award in 2013. Over 1,100 users submitted stories about their librarians.

To learn more about the award and award winners visit:

<http://www.ilovelibraries.org/lovelylibrarian>

To see Kathy's interview visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-RCd-sQALLY>

# The State of Washington State School Libraries: Survey Results and Update

Craig Seasholes

In early 2014, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and WLMA partnered to build and distribute a survey to collect much-needed information about the availability of school library services in Washington. A concerted effort was made to collect responses from every school building across the state in order to generate a thorough snapshot of library staffing, hours, inventory, technology, budget, scheduling, and curriculum and instruction. By early spring, 1,200 of the 2,300 Washington public schools had responded. After a three-day extension, and some determined outreach by WLMA members throughout the state, a final tally of nearly 1,500 replies provided one of the most complete updates on Washington's K-12 library and information technology programs we've seen in quite some time.

### What is the back story for this survey?

An ad hoc team made up of interested librarians (Jenn Fukutaki, Craig Seasholes and Christie Kaaland) initially began designing the survey. After the first draft was created, experienced school library researchers collaborated with the team. Such notables as Dr. Mary Kay Biagini of the University of Pittsburg, Deb Kachel of Mansfield University and Dr. Keith Curry Lance of RSL Research lent their expertise for fine-tuning, analytic troubleshooting, and currency.

### What is the purpose of the survey?

For years librarians, as well as library champions and advocates, have worked to educate administrators, legislators, and others on the impact a well-funded school library program run by a certificated teacher-librarian has on student achievement and to break librarian stereotypes. While many studies in the field have shown a positive correlation between well-funded school library programs and student achievement, it is often

difficult to convince sponsors, particularly legislators, of the relevance a study conducted in Pennsylvania has to the needs of students in Washington. Legislators often ask, "But what does it mean for Washington?"

In order to garner support for library funding and to enact the basic education law passed in 2009, it is imperative that we have evidence of our impact as well as our current status. Among other important data, the results from this survey are expected to provide answers to the following:

- What are the trends either of the erosion or resurgence of school library program funding from both state and local school district budgets?
- Are all students in our schools provided equitable access to resources and technology, as well as information and research skills taught (i.e. by a certificated teacher-librarian)?
- What data demonstrates inequities in library funding and emphasizes the need to address the McCleary decision and the Washington prototype school model?
- Is there evidence of a correlation between well-funded school libraries and student achievement, particularly of Washington students' skills in reading, writing, information literacy and research?

### What have we learned so far?

A full analysis of the data is being conducted; however, an initial review of the data revealed some issues of concern:

- 21st century information technology skills, including database usage, efficient online searching, effective presentation and digital citizenship are a critical need.

- 14% of libraries are closed for testing for more than 20 days per year.
- A majority of libraries are open before and after school and during lunch, but 8% are open a total of 10 hours a week or less.
- Nearly 23% have no district budget and another nearly 23% have less than \$500 budget from other sources.

to convey to both the state and our local districts as we finalize the data and better develop where the correlations exist. “

Look for the WSSLIT data study report online at the WLMA website <http://www.wla.org/wlma-home> and in WLMA media releases then put it to use in your own advocacy efforts.

### Where are we currently in the process?

The results are now being analyzed and correlated with other Washington State demographic and student achievement data by Dr. Liz Coker of UW-Tacoma. Since its completion, the WSSLIT survey has proven a useful tool for savvy librarians as they make district-by-district comparisons and advocate for their programs in both district and legislative arenas.

As WLMA Advocacy Agent, Sarah Glass, reported on the listserv recently, “Initial results are showing a correlation between having a school library program and a teacher-librarian and student achievement on standardized math and reading tests. In addition, there also seems to be a correlation between school library programs with teacher-librarians and five year graduation rates. This will be important information

Dr. Christie Kaaland (center) is on the faculty at Antioch University Seattle. Craig Seasholes (right) is in his 10th year as an elementary teacher-librarian serving Sanislo Elementary School in Seattle. He is a past president of WLMA and diligent advocate for the profession.

Deb Kachel (left) led a similar study in Pennsylvania. She won the 2014 AASL Distinguished Service Award for her contribution to the field of school library promotion.



# TLC<sup>3</sup> Trainings: At the Core of Professional Development Planning

Ron Wagner



How many of the following questions can you answer?

- How many K-12 schools are in Washington State?
- How many teacher-librarians or library paraprofessionals work in those schools?
- How would you contact them?
- What would you consider a good reply rate if you contacted a large number of them asking for a response?

I could answer none of these as the first year of Teacher-Librarian Common Core Cadre (TLC<sup>3</sup>) training came to a close in October 2013. As we reflect on this ambitious professional development project, here are some insights into what our team did to answer those questions and what I have learned along the way.

### **Leverage the Success of Prior Professional Development Experiences through Referrals**

The first step was to look at what we had accomplished in that inaugural year. We had shocked the Washington State Library project manager, Martha Shinnery, by providing trainings in what was supposed to be a planning year. Six trainings were arranged, but the response was so great that sessions filled quickly. We increased to 19 official trainings in August and October, with more district-sponsored trainings using the TLC<sup>3</sup> trainers and curriculum. Over 400 teacher-librarians (TLs) and paraprofessionals attended!

Craig Seasholes and I created a TLC<sup>3</sup> interest survey. I decided that the best way to start the survey would be to contact those who had already attended. I sent an email asking one to two people from each district if they would be willing to endorse the training and email the survey to all teacher-librarians (TLs) in their district. Many agreed to endorse the training and forward the survey, but only 175 TLs completed the survey. Either people were not interested in TLC<sup>3</sup> or my method didn't work!

## Expand the Target Audience

Phase two of the plan was eye opening. Craig and I agreed we needed a second round of contacts. I gained access to Washington Library Media Association's (WLMA) database for the Columbia Gorge Region. This list contains over 130 schools and around 30 of the TLs in those schools. I started by asking TLs I knew to send me their district lists. I then went to every district website I could find and scoured staff lists. Finally, I emailed principals and secretaries of schools that listed no librarian for contact info. The list went from 23% complete to over 90% complete.

I proudly told Craig and WLMA Vice President Carrie Willenbring that Columbia Gorge now had a respectable list. I heard the following response, "Don't assume any of the others are better!" They were not. The complete list has over 1800 schools, but I was disheartened when I saw that it when it came to actual TL names and email addresses, it was only about 20% complete. I repeated the model I used for Columbia Gorge with every region. I sent emails to TLs and secretaries asking for names and searched websites. I realized that not only are all district web sites unique, but within districts there are a wide variety of ways schools list their staff members. What had started as a "I hope to get done by Thanksgiving" project became a Christmas break obsession and a mid-January mad rush to complete. The list increased from 400 to over 1500 contacts!

## Make a Personal Connection

Another round of emails was sent in January 2014 to over 1500 TLs and library paraprofessionals asking them to fill out the TLC<sup>3</sup> survey (representing 80% of schools in our state). Out of this 200 more responded than before (a 13% response rate).

The outcomes were as follows:

- We received over 60 offers to use school libraries for the subsequent round of TLC<sup>3</sup> trainings.
- We planned the next round of TLC<sup>3</sup> trainings based on survey results.

- Over 1,500 TLs and paraprofessionals were notified when registration began. Previously only those on WLMA's listserv or those who had colleagues on the TLC<sup>3</sup> advisory committee were notified about the opportunity to register. The Washington State Library (WSL) sent the information out on their listserv and in their newsletter.
- WLMA now has the most complete list of Washington TLs that they have ever had and we may use it for a membership drive.
- The Washington State School Library Impact Survey (WSSLIS) team used the list to contact TLs regarding their survey.

I will try to ignore the fact that the list is now slightly inaccurate after the 2014 retirements, transfers, and new hires. Keeping it updated will be a continuous process. I learned a lot about the geography of Washington State, corresponded with many new colleagues, and learned not to take being ignored personally. More importantly, I received a lot of thanks from TLs who felt out of the loop. I look forward to maintaining those connections.

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Ron Wagner is a teacher librarian at Felida Elementary School in the Vancouver School District. He has been active in WLMA advocacy and has been a member of the WLMA Board of Directors. He is currently the Membership Chair for the WLMA Interest Group.

Ron and his team completed the TLC<sup>3</sup> trainings in the summer of 2014. Materials and resources from those sessions can be accessed at:

<http://moodle2.ospi.k12.wa.us/course/view.php?id=35>

# HOLOCAUST CENTER FOR HUMANITY:

## A New Museum in Seattle, A Resource for Teacher-Librarians

Marie-Anne Harkness

The Holocaust serves as a prime example of how evil or indifferent individuals played a decisive role in the near destruction of European Jewry in the 20th century. However, there were courageous people who made difficult choices in order to help members of victimized populations survive. For the past 25 years local survivors have been offering their personal stories to schools across the region, illustrating how the actions of one or a few individuals can mean the difference between life and death—bringing history to life.

Teachers and teacher-librarians throughout the state have been using the Center (formerly named the Washington Holocaust Education Resource Center) for more than two decades, taking advantage of meaningful teacher education seminars on how to introduce the Holocaust into the curricula, and how to use the extensive resources available at the center. One such tool is the Pyramid of Hate developed by the Anti-Defamation League, providing a structure for understanding bullying, hate crimes, and more recent genocides in Guatemala, Cambodia, Bosnia and Rwanda.

The Center's primary sources are a valuable tool for educators and include lessons that are aligned with Common Core standards. The Center houses an extensive archive of objects, letters, diaries, documents, film and photographs organized under four headings: Discrimination, Exclusion, Violence, and Rebuilding.



Image of the Holocaust Center for Humanity Library provided courtesy of the Holocaust Center for Humanity

Some are available for viewing online and some artifacts have been reproduced for the travelling Teaching Trunks. Many of these original artifacts will be on display when the museum opens to the public June 7, 2015.

Teaching trunks are available for a four week loan period free of charge to schools in Washington. The theme of the high school trunk is “Studying the Holocaust Through Primary Sources.” Also available are trunks designed specifically for grades 5 - 6, and middle school. The trunks include classroom sets of books and a full array of age appropriate resources.

Speakers from the Speakers Bureau present first-person narratives to students, either by travelling to the school or electronically via Skype. There are speakers who experienced the concentration camps, were rescued children on the Kinder transports, or hidden during the war. Others are military veterans of World War II or are children of survivors. The transportation cost is the only charge for hosting a speaker at your school unless overnight accommodations are necessary.

Culminating the year is the annual Writing, Art, and Film Contest for student in grades 5-12, encouraging students to synthesize the powerful impact of their Holocaust education. The deadline for submissions is early in April each year. Past winners are on display at <http://www.holocaustcenterseattle.org/education/writing-art-contest/22-education/150-wac2014-winner>.

The extensive library offers many documentary DVDs, books, and audio testimonies of over 200 local survivors all available for loan. Contact [admin@HolocaustCenterSeattle.org](mailto:admin@HolocaustCenterSeattle.org) for further information about access to these resources. Some recent acquisitions are annotated on their blog: <http://holocaustcenter.blogspot.com/search/label/library>.

This January, through the support of individuals in the community, businesses and foundations, the organization has blossomed into a full-fledged museum with a new name, Holocaust Center for Humanity, relocated at the corner of 2nd and Lenora in Seattle.

Situated between the Seattle Art Museum and the Pacific Science Center, the Holocaust Center offers a school field trip opportunity to experience interactive exhibits, docent-led travelling exhibits in the gallery, library resource center and a classroom space for up to 100 students. Opening this fall will be "The Life of Anne Frank." To make reservations for a class visit call the center at (206) 582-3000.

The study of the Holocaust is bound to touch the heart of your students, motivate them to struggle with essential questions, and influence their response to new challenges in today's world. Through the study of the Holocaust students of all ages learn about moral responsibility and the influence one person can exert upon their peers, their community and beyond.

## INTERACTIVE LINKS to RESOURCES

Lesson Activities and Handouts

Pyramid of Hate

Artifacts on Display/Primary Sources

Teaching Trunks

High School

Middle School

Grades 5 - 6

Request a Speaker

Writing, Art, Film Contest

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Marie-Anne Harkness is a retired teacher-librarian who dedicated over 22 years to the Federal Way School District. She has been a past WLMA President and presenter at WLMA conferences. She is currently a member of the Speaker's Bureau for the Holocaust Center for Humanity.

# ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES THROUGH INQUIRY LEARNING:

## ~~A HISTORY~~ MYSTERY LESSON

Joan Enders

Around six years ago Washington State's Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction mandated that social studies classes, health, physical education, well, everything not tested in the state standardized tests, would be tested through classroom-based assessments (CBAs). These CBAs would be augmented with sample instructional units, state standards and rubrics, professional development presentations and a plethora of conference workshops. The guidelines for social studies stressed instruction in cause-and-effect research and problem-solution synthesis to prepare students to dig deeper in research in order to write essays germane to the course. School librarians, particularly leaders of the Washington Library Media Association (WLMA) were instrumental in structuring the instructional examples, providing information about primary sources, and leading teachers' use of information problem solving strategies to maximize students' research efforts.

Hand in hand with these developments, publishers assembled online and print materials rich in historical primary sources which many of us purchased for our libraries or learning commons. The depth and length and complexity of the materials were imposing, with many extremely lengthy documents containing text and a vocabulary complexity foreign to today's norm of 140 character tweets. Fulfilling the new state requirements appeared daunting, indeed. The excellent materials that WLMA leaders had created emphasized local issues and the history of the greater Seattle area, and were not easily connected to the usual content of United State history, or to the lives of high school level students. How were teachers of content-driven social studies classes to implement these CBA requirements in ways that were palatable for our students?

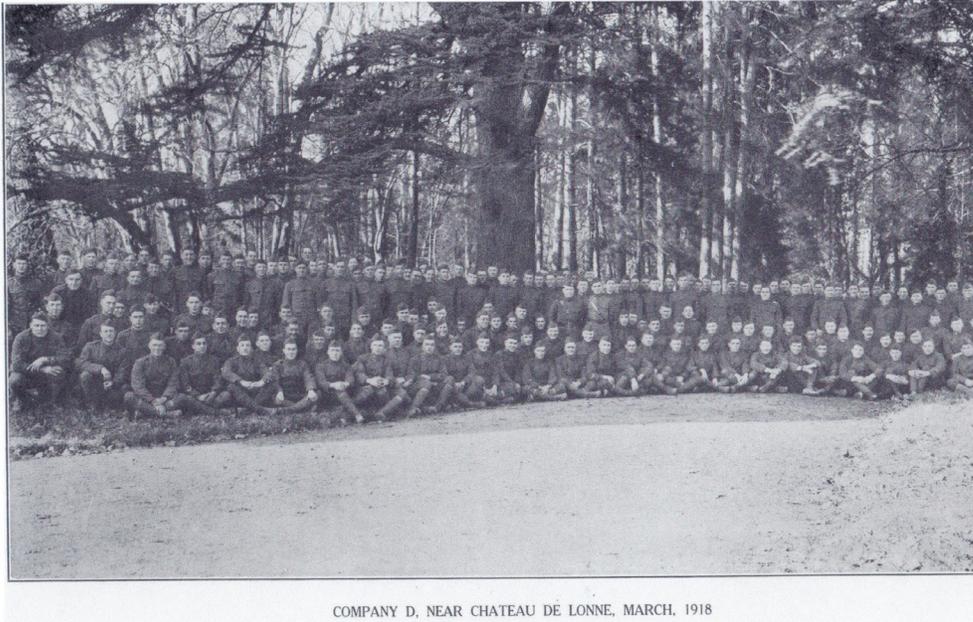
### Serendipity

A cousin visited with a box of letters, photographs, certificates, realia belonging to our uncle, Joshua Henry Bates, 1896-1918. Coupled with materials that my mother saved, we had a document scanning frenzy of genealogically epic proportions. As other cousins discovered what we were doing documents and artifacts began to materialize: a journal Joshua started at age 21 materialized from one family member, a cabinet he had built unveiled by another, missing portraits reappeared. I wished, "If only my students could be so excited about history!"

And why not?

Concurrent with the scanning frenzy, I was awarded an LSTA grant for the purpose of improving my school library's collection thereby increasing the potential for teachers and students to meet the CBA requirements. By this time, even more primary sources were being published in online databases, and even more reference books of primary source documents were being compiled. Non-fiction writers for young adults began creating single subject nonfiction with primary sources included, and with more references to them in bibliographies and webographies.

The advent of nonfiction titles like *Bomb: The Race to Build—and Steal—the World's Most Dangerous Weapon* by Steve Sheinkin; *"The President Has Been Shot!" The Assassination of John F. Kennedy* by James L. Swanson; *The Nazi Hunters: how a Team of Spies and Survivors Captured the World's Most Notorious Nazi* by Neal Bascomb; and *Courage Has No Color: The True Story of the Triple Nickles America's First Black Paratroopers* by Tanya Lee Stone, heralded a turn of the corner in the use of primary sources by authors.



**Photo of Joshua Bates with his battalion courtesy of Joan Enders.**

With one rash decision, and a titch of nepotism, I developed a learning experience in which our U.S. History students would learn about Joshua Henry Bates by digging deeper into the concise, genuine, American primary sources that my family had preserved and that I assembled. He was a young adult. He had a girl friend. He loved going to dances. He was a soldier. There was enough fodder to pique their curiosity.

Was there enough to pique instructor interest?

I decided to take the idea for a test drive by trying it out on our social studies department. To assist the teachers with the information problem-solving process, the Longview Public Library youth services librarian at the time, Jan Hanson, and I collaborated and presented a day-long workshop that included an introduction to and discussion of the state problem-solving strategy students were to employ, the CBA materials provided by OSPI, book talks featuring primary source books, and an overview of the databases curated by both the Robert A. Long High School Learning Commons and the Longview Public

Library. Then, I unveiled the inquiry-learning experience: the teachers dug deep into the primary sources to find and analyze information about the young adult life of... Joshua Henry Bates. They were to research as if they were to produce a scholarly narrative of his life. One teacher was so enthused that he began researching his own family history, but another, JD Ott, responded in the way I hoped: "Joan, what are the chances of my Advanced Placement U.S. History (APUSH) students having this same lesson?" Our first lesson started on November 11, Armistice Day.

### **Students as Academic Research Historians**

JD and I planned the lesson, note taking form, and rubric. Like the teachers in the workshop before them, students were to create a scholarly article about Joshua H. Bates. As we co-presented, I reminded students that professional historians live and die by their original research and the publication of their findings--that there is professional honor in being the first to publish the conclusions of findings in professional history journals. Other student researchers were the compe-

## ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES THROUGH INQUIRY LEARNING:

### Put Yourself in Their Shoes

I posted twelve of the forty-eight documents on my website <http://www.joanenders.com/primary-sources.html>. Using the note taking form below, or one of the analysis resources from Digital History, or a Cornell note, or the back of a napkin, see what information you can discover about Joshua in each source.

Document Type: Year/Title:  Information Gathered:	Document Type: Year/Title:  Information Gathered:
Document Type: Year/Title:  Information Gathered:	Document Type: Year/Title:  Information Gathered:
Relationship of documents:  What inferences can be made about this person based on the documents:	

(Ott)

I challenge you to create an inquiry learning experience for your students. Be forewarned, it involves much “front-loading.” But what a payoff! The project mesmerizes students to investigate and analyze and synthesize as a team. The intellectual involvement and collaboration of your students will motivate you to create another inquiry learning experience for students.

tion for publication; this was an authentic research investigation—students were the historians.

Sam Wineburg maintains that our students need to be historian detectives:

...when you ask historians what they do, a different picture emerges. They see themselves as detectives searching for evidence among primary sources to a mystery that can never be completely solved. Wouldn't this image be more enticing to a bored high school student? Consider introducing students to several specific strate-

gies for reading historical documents: sourcing, contextualizing, close reading, using background knowledge, reading the silences, and corroborating.

### Nuts ‘n Bolts

Students are most interested in inquiry when they initiate the search. Since JD and I orchestrated the inquiry, we had the herculean task to tantalize the students' interest in a teacher and librarian-initiated inquiry. Our lesson dovetailed with the study of The

Great War, tapping into the prior knowledge of students. Kulhthau emphasized the importance of spending sufficient time introducing the project and process so that students have a clear vision of the task. Our task definition phase spanned two days.

The lesson started in the learning commons. Students were divided into teams of three or four and were assigned to one of nine tables where sets of primary source documents from different periods of Joshua Bates's life had been distributed. Students activated knowledge from prior lessons when I asked them to help me list the various types of primary sources that they already knew from other projects, then I introduced new ones. As they shared the primary sources they had already studied, JD explained the expectations of the investigations for each set of primary documents at nine different tables. We shared some note taking advice: to identify the primary or secondary source title and date first, and then to extract the information. We reminded them often of the end product: a scholarly article they would that would be worthy of submission to either the Fort Lewis Museum or for American History. We stressed that, as actual competitive researchers who wished to publish their findings, they were to keep their investigation results private. JD showed model articles...from a distance. JD and I interjected comments throughout our instruction. Students sneakily inched the materials toward themselves while we talked.

For the first class we used the authentic documents in protective sleeves, but have subsequently changed to colored, laminated copies. The laminated sources were divided into nine groups of four to five items from the relatively same time of Joshua's life, and lay on nine tables in the library. Students, armed with their note taking forms, huddled over the materials, identified what the items were and began to take notes. After twelve minutes at the table, the teams shifted to the next. This continued for three days.

As with any genuine research, materials about a person are not always discovered and analyzed in chronological order, so some students started with the primary sources set about his death, others with

his occupation prior to the war, and yet others with his hospital work while at Camp Lewis.

All the materials had been given an individual identification number. They were available for revisiting until the due date of the students' written article. Groups could still confer during the drafting of their individual articles, but their interpretations of the sources and their conclusions about Joshua's life had to be their own.

As we facilitated (educational nirvana), their comments wafted up from the tables:

"Poor Rena! Her true love never came home."

"He was a handsome guy."

"How could he be a principal at age 21?"

"This makes me cry!"

"One source says October 3rd, and others say October 4th."

"Why did he graduate from high school at 19?"

"His writing is messy."

"This is so stupid" (day one). "No, this is it" (day two).

"An entire letter about French farming? You're kidding me."

Why does this telegram have a September date?"

Students were positive that Joshua H. Bates was a well-known man. They rushed out to search the Internet for material about him. They wondered over the plentiful sources about his life. Joshua was an itch that needed scratching.

Along the way, we discovered one hurdle: cursive writing. As the experience has evolved, we started giving each team samples of cursive capital and lower case letters as a tool for interpreting the early twentieth century cursive writing. They soon were reading cursive with just a few prompts from us, probably due to at least one team member figuring out how to read attached letters.

Teams divided and conquered the materials either by working through each item as a group, or dividing up the sources and then discussing their findings. Teamwork took a level of trust and even the most reticent student started to feel the intrinsic peer pressure to

contribute to the success of the group. No lectures from us were needed. In fact, after five years of working with every junior in the school, there was not even one removed for misbehavior during the inquiry phase. Not that we have not had resistant students. We have. But the intrigue of the instructional setting won out after only one table switch.

Well, that, and JD tickled their curiosity with one little mystery: that Joshua H. Bates was somehow connected to Robert A. Long High School. I had to admit, that this side mystery perplexed and hooked the students.

### **Differentiating Instruction**

At the Brigham Young University Family History & Genealogy Conference in July 2014, I added another synthesis activity for young genealogists participating on the Young Adult Day. The inquiry was the same, but the product for an hour presentation changed. Students created a timeline of Joshua's life. One dated fact was written on one sheet. Students ordered and posted the sheets chronologically around the room. I used the timeline to review and explain events, and to reveal who Joshua Henry Bates was.

In a regular classroom, the timeline sheets can be a pre-write activity or a modified way for ELL and students with special needs to participate. As a pre-write activity, the timeline can be consulted by students for organizing their articles.

### **On To Writing**

Students wrote during class time and at home on their Google accounts. Some tried to find additional materials on Joshua by researching online, but they were always frustrated. To date we have not used historical newspapers online, World War I registrations, state archives, or mega-genealogical sites. I doubt that we will. It would not be as entertaining for us if students actually found information. (I know, information access heresy). Nonetheless my forty-eight primary sources fairly represented his young adult life for a respectable scholarly article.

Once the articles were turned in I graded them for accuracy in interpreting the documents and for logical

conclusions. I examined their attributions. After reading them all, I visited the classes, added information and insight, and fielded questions.

### **The relationship to Robert A. Long High School?**

Joshua Henry Bates was my uncle, firstborn son of seven to a pioneer family of Joshua and Eliza Bates. My mother was number seven, and only two years old when Josh left for Camp Lewis, Washington, a camp hurriedly constructed for the American Expeditionary Force. Her first memory about him was playing cards with the Army captain who accompanied Josh's body back home for burial.

Each year the students gasped when I shared that information. They always wanted to know how old I am, and I shared that... I am. But even more amazing, they persisted in asking more questions about Josh. The teachers graded students on their participation on their research teams, their notes, punctuality of the assignment, and their writing competence. Participation was close to 100%. JD Ott shared that 90% of students submitted their narratives.

### **Beyond the Task**

I was always confident that students would enjoy and learn from this inquiry learning experience. I did not anticipate the level of attachment they would form with Josh. Each year at least one student in each class tears up when reading the official report of his death. Others worry over his girl, Rena. They know from my debriefing that she refused to ever marry. Students are upset over a flawed newspaper report that printed the wrong death date and even assumed the details of his death. Students look at the commendation certificate signed by General Pershing in awe. They point out how the telegram announcing Josh's death is covered in dirt and torn and theorize that maybe his father was in the fields when he received it, ripping it open. One student informed me that she wanted everything I had in my possession about Joshua as she was going to write a book about him.

What was going on here? My students viscerally "adopted" Joshua. JD and I stumbled onto an amazing phenomenon.

The image shows two documents related to the war registration of Joshua Henry Bates. The left document is a 'REGISTRATION CARD' (Form 44, No. 9) with the following details:

- Name in full: Joshua Henry Bates
- Age: 22
- Address: Wanship Summit Co. Utah
- Date of birth: April 2, 1895
- Education: Natural born
- Where born: Wanship Utah U.S.A.
- Occupation: Farming
- Where employed: Wanship
- Married or single: Single
- Race: Caucasian
- Military service: None

The right document is a 'REGISTRAR'S REPORT' (A 43-1-27) with the following details:

- Full name as listed: Joshua Henry Bates
- Color of eyes: Blue
- Color of hair: Light
- Build: Slim
- Signature: J. R. Smith
- City or County: Summit Utah
- Date: June 5, 1917

Joshua Bates war registration card courtesy of Joan Enders.

Young adults are interested in personal history, a history to which they can relate. It goes further. Students want to know who they are, who their ancestors were, what were their stories. Students go home to ask, “Did we have family serving during World War I?”

The effect of family stories has been studied and documented by Marshall P. Duke and Robyn Fivush of Emory University who concluded that “teenagers who know their family histories are more likely to show higher levels of social and emotional health.” They recorded family dinner conversations to learn more about how families shared their stories. They found that greater knowledge of family history, and higher scores on their “Do You Know” scale, were associated with a host of positive outcomes for the teens, including:

- better self-esteem,
- a stronger belief in their capacity to control their lives,
- less anxiety,
- fewer behavioral problems,
- more resilience in hard times,
- better academic performance, and
- better relationships with their parents (Duke).

“One of the big tasks of adolescence is [deciding] who you want to be in the world: occupation, religion, values, what kind of person do you want to be,” said psychologist Robyn Fivush, who co-authored the study published in 2009. ‘Family stories offer lessons that help teens shape their identities,’ she said. The researchers said that it is likely that the knowledge itself does not cause these benefits, but the fact that it reflects a cohesive family structure and systems that benefit the teens” (Chandler).

That first year one class participated. The next year I convinced JD that his regular U.S. History classes would also enjoy the experience. The following two years all of his classes became history researchers. This last school year, every U.S. History teacher and all of their classes participated.

I can definitively state that after five years of primary sources research and scholarly narrative writing about Joshua H. Bates that our students have an appreciation for and connection with the sacrifices of the AEF in the forests of France, particularly one young man. JD and I assess the experience and tweak the plan, forms, delivery, assignment and assessment; but the powerful inquiry experience remains.

Replicating this primary sources investigation will enrich your collaboration with teachers and create a vibrant learning experience for your students. Most educators tell me that gathering a collection of primary sources is just too difficult; not if your eyes are open. Every community has genealogists, many of whom are willing to share their materials with budding family history researchers. Every community has a Family History Branch Library, a satellite of the venerable Family History Library in Salt Lake City, with family history buffs who could assist your educational search. Perhaps you have a shoebox or a trunk that has yet to be open with a plethora of primary sources inside. I saw that eye roll! But that phenomenon happened in my little town. A granddaughter was given a trunk ten years ago that belonged to her grandfather who passed away. After all those years she decided to open it last year. Inside were medals, textiles, letters, photographs, uniforms, weapons, clippings and many more treasures from his service in World War II. Ten. Years. In. Her. Possession. There are veterans who, unlike Joshua, survived war. I have an appointment with a gentleman who survived horrors in the Pacific Campaign in World War II. He has written his life story and has scanned important letters and documents that have been preserved in his book. Do not forget the amazing Library of Congress collection that will provide a macro-view of history in which persons of the time lived. Each individual person does make the big history.

You can enrich your students' capacity to think like a historian. It is worth the effort.

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Joan Enders served as the teacher librarian at R. A. Long High School for 12 years. She continues to work with primary source documents as an Education and Research Consultant. She guest teaches at high school, provides instruction both adult and teen genealogists, and speaks at family history conferences. She currently serves locally as a Family History Center Assistant Director and recently became a Follett trainer. This article has been edited from one submitted by Joan Enders to *Teacher Librarian* and published in the December 2014 (42:2) issue.

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# Growing Empathic Readers

Laura Simeon

Teacher-librarians, myself included, are fond of quoting Jo Godwin, “A truly great library contains something in it to offend everyone.” The hope is that by not playing it safe, we will do justice to the tremendous power of books to open up new worlds. Recent research supports our long-held intuition that engaging with literature enhances empathy. Of course, it is not enough for books to sit on a shelf; they must be read.

Recently I sat down with Seattle author Steven Arntson for a conversation about his work and philosophy as they relate to diversity. Arntson’s second novel, *The Wrap-Up List* was my personal favorite during my first year on VOYA Magazine’s Top Shelf Fiction for Middle School Readers selection committee in 2013. Reading through dozens upon dozens of submissions, I sought books that mirrored the diversity of our contemporary society and that would grab middle school readers who might not typically choose a book with diverse themes.

This was a lot to expect, and my joy at finding *The Wrap-Up List* was enormous. Its main character, Gabriela, is a biracial (white/Latina) high school student whose family and peers reflect a broad diversity in race, culture, sexual orientation, family structure, and socio-economic status. These things matter in the sense that they inform who these characters are and how they experience the world. Yet the plot revolves around fantastical elements of magical realism that transcend the demographic details of mere mortals. The reader comes to care about these characters simply as people who find themselves in a remarkable situation. Through the act of caring

we open ourselves up to understanding the impact these differences have on their lives.

Steven says that this approach to diversity in his novel was very much deliberate. He confesses to feeling “terror” as a heterosexual white man, raised in a homogeneous Seattle suburb, who was now writing across race (not to mention gender and age) but he was determined to proceed anyway, depending on innate human empathy to lead the way. This same empathy is what allows a reader to pick up a diverse book and come to understand a radically different viewpoint.

While growing up, Steven says, no one ever spelled out for him the privileges he enjoyed as a white man. Once he began teaching writing in Iowa, he was prompted by a probing question from his wife over the lack of diversity in his syllabus to ask himself, “Where are the gaps?” He experienced “painful and embarrassing moments” of realizing just how much of the world was missing from his awareness. He began to feel a responsibility to address this problem and not pass on a lack of awareness to his own students. He put concerted effort into noticing and getting to know diverse, disenfranchised communities in his area.

Later on, while teaching at a Seattle art school, Steven came up with a lesson that challenged his students to ask themselves why they think what they do. During a visit to the Olympic Sculpture Park, they were required to find a sculpture they did not like and then talk themselves into liking it. As part of the process, students had to educate themselves

about their chosen work — learn about the artist, his or her techniques and intentions, the place of this piece in the overall context of the art world, and so on. This sort of thought experiment forms an important step towards questioning why we hold fast to our beliefs and opinions. It urges the participant to try on other points of view, something that is crucial to cultivating empathy.

In *The Wrap-Up List* Gabriela wrestles with Catholicism and handles her doubts about faith in a mature and thoughtful way. Steven says that he was particularly pleased with how this aspect of the book came out because he has received criticism from both religious and non-religious people alike. Presumably they were bothered because Gabriela did not come to the same conclusions they would have, but surely that is the point. Through this book, and others like it, we can explore and try to better understand differences. However, first we need books that are appealing and we need to get them into the hands of readers.

My conversation with Steven Arntson provoked me to think about my own reading habits, not to mention the books I choose to share with my students. Am I engaging in the equivalent of the Olympic Sculpture Park thought experiment or not? Just as diversity initiatives sometimes go no further than heroes and holidays, the unfortunate truth is that it is all too possible to read books that are diverse in many ways, yet which also reaffirm our existing beliefs and do not change us much at all. It is much less comfortable to ask ourselves, “Where are the gaps?”

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# March Madness is a Slam Dunk with Reading

Connie Pappas

Basketball is not my thing. I know little about it, but I do know books. I could not tell you the difference between a layup shot and a crossover, but I know when students like a book they want everyone to read it. Also, they keep reading.

## Background

In February of 2010 a teacher at my school, Ed Givens, would not take no for an answer. Despite my objections, he would come to the library and tell me he wanted my brackets filled out. An ardent fan of college basketball he was clearly leading the charge for me to “just try” filling in and maybe I would win. All that it would cost was a moment of time and five dollars in the pool.

In truth, I had to get help from my paraprofessional, Terri Dickinson, on how to fill out the brackets. She taught me what the scores in the parentheses meant and other considerations I should make when calculating my selections.

My picks were as random as fate. I chose teams based on cities I had visited or knew had good biking infrastructure. I selected based on colleges my father touted as “supreme institutions of learning” or approved rivals. The last possible criteria included the team colors; I favor orange. In 2010, I remember reading the brackets and somehow I chose Duke to win it all. I knew only one thing about Duke; Uncle Gus and Aunt Julia went there and that was good enough for me.

Coincidentally, that year I was struggling with how to inspire and engage my students to read. For at least a dozen years I always did something with Washington State and Pacific Northwest award nominees. I embraced the Evergreen Teen Book Award and the Young Reader’s Choice Award, often selecting the books from all three tiers because at the middle level the readers are as varied as the current trends. I bought multiple copies of the books, read them all, and came up with a plan of action: read three books and get a prize; read six books get more prizes; and



The modified photo of Baden “Game Time” Basketball is courtesy of davidd and is licensed under CC BY 2.0

read a dozen books and get even more prizes. I was literally more invested in the process than the kids. I was a cheerleader for the books, but I was often cheering alone.

I had gone through countless reading challenges and mileage plus award systems. Reading incentives I tried were okay, but not fantastic. I found out what other librarians were doing to promote reading, but I wanted something that was more my own. I wanted the students to be interested in it! I wanted something fantastic with maximum involvement. I wanted buzz!

I also wanted to plant a seed. Something like when you watch the Academy Awards and then you want to see ten movies you did not even know about before the awards. How could I stimulate that sort of buzz with books? How could I help educate students about the amazing books at their fingertips?

### **The Game**

In 2010, Duke won and I won 78 dollars. Suddenly, I had some brand of “street cred”. No one, especially me, could believe it. Ed Givens was dumfounded. He started calling me Connie “The Greek” Pappas and people began asking my opinions about college teams.

Could that March Madness enthusiasm with books be replicated? How could it be done? I started my research to find out. I let data drive my decisions. Data and March Madness are intertwined. In basketball it is called stats. The stats in the library could be tracked by how often a book circulates. I ran some reports and found a correlation between the books that I were most often checked out and the award nominees. The top 30 books were most often the nominees in the annual display. There were a few odd things that popped up. For example, in my collection it seemed

that *Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne was circulating even though it was not a nominee.

As I reflect on it now, I am not sure what took me so long to try it. I think I was afraid and unsure how to plunge into the depths of a sport and idea I did not thoroughly understand. Then I found a great article on “Battle of the Books” in *School Library Journal* (SLJ)<sup>1</sup>. I devoured it and used it as a template to get started.

In January of 2013, I started looking at the data and chose the sweet 16 based on circulation stats. I used QR codes and pictures of the books. The QR codes would take students to book reviews on the books. Goodreads.com and Amazon.com have customer reviews and readily available stats. Students can see that one book gets a 4.7 and another has a 4.2. You can read the best critical review and the see what people are saying about the books even when you don't personally know the book.

Students were paired up, used an iPad to scan the codes and read the reviews. Then over the course of two weeks start filling in their brackets. I selected the pairings with the help of a few students who were big fans of reading and basketball. I created a blank bracket and students used their library time to fill in their brackets. I set a due date for all brackets to be returned to the library. By the time the first basketball game is played, I have a first round on a Google Form and students vote. I tried to mirror the games. The next day on the school news we announced who won the basketball game and which book won in our March Madness. This year I will have students take a picture of their brackets so they can follow along.

# March Madness continued.

## Book Selection

One thing I noted in the *SLJ* article was that other books were brought back on occasion. *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* was a contender for two years in a row. The teams were defined by genre the second year, so it went up against Ruth Septyus' *Between Shades of Gray* and lost by a dozen votes.

I am letting go of the notion that it is always about the newest book. *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio won in 2013 and this year it will continue to play since the data still says the circulation is high. Also, it happens to be a 2015 Evergreen Young Adult nominee.

## The Data

March Madness is perfect in a library. The data is mined from our circulation applications each and every day. The student population is familiar with the teams since the data drives the selections.

While the data is important, I am also open to other criteria. When I start the year with the award nominees, it might take a year or more for the books to catch on. *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate was as popular last year as *Divergent* by Veronica Roth and both were in the Final Four. We all read *Hunger Games* before it was on a list. Movies have certainly had an impact on circulation. The movie release of *The Hobbit* put it back into circulation. Last year it competed against *Hunger Games* in the "pre game" stage as a way of teaching how to vote.

## No Rules

You have to decide what works best for you and your collection. I use the Readbox (data telling students about the top circulated books) and January and February circulation data to decide which 16 books/

teams will become the foundation for March Madness. Then I generate the QR codes and the brackets. The rest is in the student's hands. That is the best incentive ever!

## Changes

In the future I want to have QR codes for the 30 plus books available earlier. I think doing the foundational work in September will lend itself to more informed choices. When there is a change in the line up, I want to make that piece more fluid.

What I love about March Madness in the library is that it has made participation in voting almost 100 percent. From 2013 to 2014 participation went from 667 to 802 students. That is a slam dunk over anything else I have ever done for reading promotion.

Enthusiasm is an ingredient that motivates. March Madness has an appeal that translates well to the entire school population. It exclaims with unbridled effervescence; I can and I will! If I can sneak a little reading into that equation, everyone wins!

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## NOTES:

1. *The School Library Journal*; "Battle of the Books 2014," blog entry by Elizabeth Burns, February 23, 2014.

Connie Pappas is currently the teacher-librarian at Skyridge Middle School in Camas, Washington. Her experience includes both domestic and internationally-located school libraries. She is a past presenter at WLMA Conference, and helps coordinate staff workshops. Learn more about her at her website.

# Physical and Virtual Learning Commons Status

Elizabeth “Betty” Marcoux



Elementary students are able to create and share knowledge in a physical learning commons designed for them. The photo, St John's Silkwood by franlhughes is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

So much is being written about how “traditional” programs/services of school libraries have to change to be more relevant to today’s student and today’s ways of learning. Standards continue to be developed in the hope that this relevancy can become more available to learning. Even SB 5294 is in play to redefine what the program is called to increase awareness for what teacher librarians are involved in. LIT (library, information, technology) is embraced in this state as a way school libraries develop relevancy and meaning.

One such way to begin that perception change process is to test certain concepts of engagement for learning with students. The concepts of the Learning Commons do just that. Recently a survey<sup>1</sup> was distributed to various people in the school library world. Some had not begun any work on the concepts of the Learning Commons, some had a beginning, and some were well on their way. The responses began to come in and yielded interesting results<sup>2</sup>. They looked at the status of the LC and its value to student learning.

Credit for the entire concept of the Learning Commons (LC), both physical and virtual, belongs to Dr. David Lortscher. Look closely at the traditional school library, and you will see it offers much that is similar to the Learning Commons. There are some physical differences between a traditional facility and a Learning Commons, but this is probably the easiest of the LC concepts. Many of these physical differences can be mediated and altered with some furniture changes. The biggest difference between a traditional school library and a Learning Commons is the two-way street approach rather than directive/one-way learning that many traditional school libraries offer. The LC gets the school library into the creative business, with failure being a learning option. It offers a chance to build, create, make, edit, experiment, and produce – all with mixed results. The meta-cognitive reflection about what has happened becomes a key element to learning – just as much as the product. Rather than a passive connection to learning, the LC adds the creation of knowledge to its world, a much more active learning concept.

Recently a blog post<sup>3</sup> demonstrated the concepts of an elementary LC and distinctly showed the differences the LC can bring to a school library.

Of course a large and often difficult hurdle is the concept of the name change. School libraries are known and suggest a “behavior” while a LC indicates something quite different. Yet in places around the world the term “Learning Commons” (LC) is used commonly used to denote a more active, central, important place as their school library facility. It is an active learning place rather than a destination/function place.

While many survey participants seemed to have a good grasp of the physical Learning Commons concepts, the Virtual LC was another issue.

So what were respondents to the survey stating? Read on....

### **What is the state of the Virtual Learning Commons?**

The concept of the Virtual Learning Commons (VLC) is the least developed concept at most schools where LC work is ongoing, in part because of electronic challenges including policy concerns that each school works with as part of a school district. Safety concerns about developing concepts related to the Virtual Learning Commons are difficult when it comes to developing electronic interaction. From virtual classrooms to interactive websites, many professionals are investing in the concept of sharing, interacting, and connecting with others outside of the classroom, and working concertedly to bring their schools along with these concepts.

Teacher librarians have difficulty understanding and implementing the concepts of the Virtual Learning Commons (VLC). Most teacher librarians have a website that is a one-way stream of information from the library to the patron and generally connects the patron to the catalog, databases, and good things to read plus the library open hours and rules. Such a site has little chance of reaching a large percentage of students and staff since Google and the Internet are on any preferred device.

In order to compete with Google, teacher librarians can create a participatory space online where everyone in the school can work, create, build, and share as a community. A few examples might illustrate the major differences between the static library website and the VLC:

- Willard Elementary School VLC<sup>4</sup>
- Athenian Middle School VLC<sup>5</sup>
- Los Altos High School VLC<sup>6</sup>

Actually, the Virtual Learning Commons (VLC) can be the best tool the part time professional, the multi-school professional, or the district level professional has to make an actual difference in teaching and learning as opposed to just being able to handle “administrivia” across the various locations assigned.

Features of the new site can include:

- A literacy space devoted to reading, writing, speaking, and listening where everyone is contributing something such as book talks, book trailers, poetry, short fiction pieces, digital storytelling, and accessing of all types of digital resources including audiobooks, multimedia performances, and video. It is not just a consuming place but rather a place anyone in the school is creating, sharing, critiquing and building rich experiences together. This virtual space is across individuals, classrooms, schools, and anywhere in the world that the learner desires to connect.
- A knowledge building space where all the units being co-taught across the school reside. Websites for particular units are owned jointly by the teacher librarian and the classroom teacher or any other specialist. Adults mentor learning experiences 24/7 – yes, it means being available more than during the school hours – but it is a shared situation between learner and facilitator. These spaces can include more than one class, school, or group across the world and are archived as evidence of the impact both specialists and technology is having on teaching and learning across the school.



An example of a physical learning commons for a secondary school. The photo, learning teaching space by franlhughes, is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

- The information center is where the catalog of owned materials, databases, and links to resources across the world are located. Everyone in the school helps build these resources as a part a policy of shared collection development. This information is available 24/7 also.
- An experimental learning center is developed where virtual makerspaces and experimental projects or initiatives are being tested by groups throughout the school. Such a space centers on self-directed learning, teachers trying out new techniques, initiatives that in the testing period before they go viral around the school. Professional development and genius bars run by students reside here and benefit the entire school. The geek squad is also readily available (online and physically) to both students and staff.
- The information center is a place for school culture which becomes the living school yearbook, The real enticement for students to come to this site regularly is so that they see what is happening and can post events, awards, news – it is the place to find out what’s going on.

A more than one-way website is seen as a way to curate information, connect with others, and develop personal learning. It is also seen as a way to update information, and offer access to free or minimal expense information. A couple great examples to come from the survey is the use of the Virtual Learning Commons as a way to place post-it notes with student questions, likes, aha moments, and changes and offering suggestions for further information at the VRC. Students also participate in lessons, and use this space independently.

**Conclusion: What is the state of the art of the Learning Commons concept?**

What does this all mean? The state of the Learning Commons is ever growing and becoming a significant influence about student learning. It is being embraced by many professionals as a way to connect information and learning with students today. No more is the function of the professional limited to one-way direction/information; rather, it is the responsibility of the learner to contribute and share as much as the professional. To suggest there is a structured approach to changing one’s school library to a learning commons is a fallacy. Instead, there are principles and concepts to be understood and implemented according to the students’ best interest.

Experimentation is welcomed and definitely happening as defined by many respondents, their leadership in doing this is in play and important, and risk taking is embraced by both students and staff. It all seems a

healthy departure from tradition as information and technology change, but it also demonstrates the need to stay relevant, useful, inventive, and responsive. When the teacher librarian co-teaches alongside classroom teachers and brings the resources and technology of the LC to a learning experience, great things happen. Such a movement pushes the “library” toward indispensability; the contribution of a highly skilled professional is valued, and a sense of ownership by the entire school can result.

Start small and go! The physical concepts of the LC are easier as they aren’t as difficult to present/implementation. Perhaps the name change isn’t the place to start, but subtle changes in engagement and programming can drive toward the concepts of the LC. Spend some time with these concepts; see what will work for your situation and then act on them. Don’t let anyone suggest you can’t see the possibilities of them in your situation....

NOTES:

1. Loertscher, David and Betty Marcoux. “Survey Form.” Last modified January 8, 2015. The survey was a collaborative survey done by Dr. Betty Marcoux and Dr. David Loertscher. The survey was offered to teacher librarians who had published in the *Teacher Librarian* over last few years as well as to the AASL forum readers. There were no further criteria for responding, and all responses were given voluntarily by some of the readers of either *Teacher Librarian* and/or the AASL forum.
2. Marcoux, Betty and David Loertscher. “Survey Results.” Last modified February 19, 2015.
3. *Always Learning with @R\_H\_Steele*, “The Journey from Library to Learning Commons,” blog entry by Ryan Steele, January 15, 2015.
4. Willard Elementary School URL: <http://screencast.com/t/UbKf0e-hoLjk>
5. Athenian Middle School VLC created by Julia Chambers: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwZM4U0A5\\_U&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwZM4U0A5_U&feature=youtu.be)
6. Los Altos High School VLC, Los Altos, CA VLC created by Gordon Jack and Vaughn Egge: <http://screencast.com/t/gnk3AbEJkc>



Dr. Betty Marcoux is a part-time instructor at the University of Washington Information School and the co-editor of the *Teacher Librarian*. She is passionate about youth services and has actively worked with YALSA and AASL to improve access for all students to information.

# ALA National Conference!

## Yes, Please.

Karen Williams



Karen with author and actor, Jane Fonda at the ALA National Conference in Las Vegas. Photo courtesy of Karen Williams.

Is it time for you to take your first (or next) trip to the National American Library Association (ALA) Conference? The 2015 National ALA conference will be in San Francisco, California, June 25 - 30. You should attend! Last year I received a WLMA scholarship to attend the conference in Las Vegas, and it was an unforgettable experience.

First timers should attend the orientation session which provides newcomers with ideas for maximizing the benefit of the conference and the opportunities to meet other librarians from across the United States as well as from other countries.

Some of the most memorable sessions are the author's sessions. I went to Jane Fonda's session first. She has spent over twenty years studying and fostering the understanding of the adolescent reproductive health and the empowerment of women and girls. She discussed her new book *Being a Teen* and then spent time signing copies.

Another author's sessions that I enjoyed was that of Stan Lee, guru of comic book characters and creator of Marvel Comics. He talked about his illustrated novel, *Zodiac*, which is about a young Chinese-American teen who is pulled into a mysterious conspiracy with twelve mystical pools of energy and a power-hungry secret organization. *Zodiac* is a departure from Lee's typical graphic novel format, but is sure to find a following within his fan base.

Daniel Handler – better known as Lemony Snicket – gave out his first Lemony Snicket Prize for Noble Librarians Faced with Adversity. Together with Mo Willems, he honored a librarian who had moved to New Orleans from New York after Hurricane Katrina. Her mission: to take books and read to the children who had lost everything. In addition to the prize money, she was awarded 1,000 books of her choice from one publisher's list of titles with delivery to one location included!

In anticipation of the movie release of *The Giver*, Lois Lowry and Jeff Bridges were interviewed by ALA President Barbara Stripling about the making of the movie. Bridges revealed that he had originally purchased the movie rights with the idea of having his father portray the Giver.

J.B. Novak was the final author's session speaker. He shared his new picture-less storybook, *The Book with No Pictures*, and explained that he developed it to show that "the right words can be [as] fun, exciting, and ridiculous as any pictures." Share this book with all ages. They'll get the picture!

I attended sessions, sessions, and more sessions. Each of the divisions such as the American Association of School Libraries (AASL), Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC), and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), are represented in the workshop choices. Each was filled with interesting presentations and enriching discussions.

Finally, the exhibitors' booths were a wonderland of "free": free books and book signings, free posters, and endless exhibitor booth presentations. Most of the titles were Advanced Reader Copy editions, but these are great for previewing titles to **add to one's collection and for giveaways.**

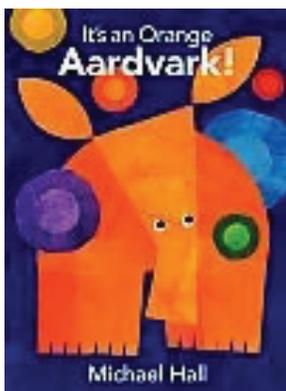
**Some events are just too good to be missed, and the ALA National Conference is one of them. Take advantage of this opportunity to join other library professionals in an atmosphere that fosters rejuvenation, collaboration, and professional growth.**

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Karen Williams has been an elementary-level teacher librarian for the East Hill and Meridian Elementary Schools in the Kent School District. She was the WLMA Vice-President from 2005 - 2007 and has been the Crossroads Region Chair. She is currently the teacher-librarian at Camas Prairie Elementary School in the Bethel School District.

## Book Reviews

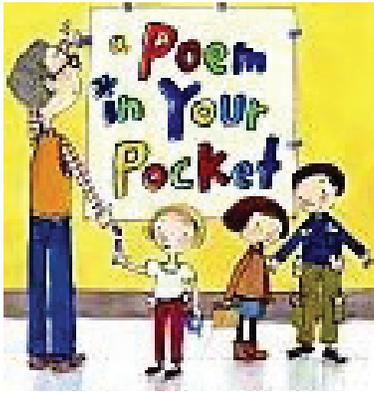
### ELEMENTARY



*It's an Orange Aardvark*  
Author: Michael Hall  
Greenwillow Books, 2014  
ISBN: 9780062252067

**Grades K - 2:** Wowser!!! My hat is off to Michael Hall! What a fantastic plot filled with anticipation and hope and wonder! I loved it and my students love, love, LOVE hearing it over and over and over. Kindergarten kids cracked up and were so disappointed that the ants were eaten--but they still giggled. The ants are in a log and drill holes to see if the Aardvark is out there. Brilliant colors entice them to leave their safe tree to find a rainbow and a special surprise!!! The illustrations are fabulous in brightly cut paper form. I rank this up at the top with Eric Carle books and far beyond Chris Raschka.

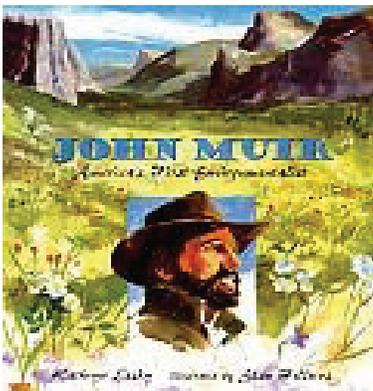
Reviewer: Debbie Johnson, Wallace Elementary School, Kelso, WA



*A Poem in Your Pocket*  
Author: Margaret McNamara  
Random House, 2015  
ISBN: 9780307979476

**Grades 1 - 6:** This book is like an onion with multiple layers, and it's available in time for Poetry Month in April. Although it is a picture book geared for older students, it has application for students all the way through high school. Elinor wants to prepare a poem for Poem in Your Pocket Day that she can share with a visiting poet, Emmy Crane. No matter how hard she tries, the perfect poem seems to elude her. She is able to contribute to academic discussions about poetry and identify forms of poetry, but she just can't seem to pin down the right words for her own poem. After all of the students in Mr. Tiffin's class present their poems, Elinor is left alone. With the help of Ms. Crane, she discovers the poetry that she already has inside of her. Information about literary devices is woven seamlessly into the plot and examples of different kinds of poems is delivered unobtrusively through examples of different kinds of poems written on Mr. Tiffin's chalkboard by the students in his class. The final pages include Elinor's Poetry Page which has four bullet points about poetry and Mr. Tiffin's Pointers which provides a bulleted list about Poetry Moth, Poem in Your Pocket Day, and engaging others in the school in activities related to these two events. This is a title that is supported by Random House's Teacher's Guides at [http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/PoemInPocket\\_Guide\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/PoemInPocket_Guide_WEB.pdf). The Teacher's Guide provides a lesson plan that references the Common Core standards addressed, a list of activities, and a reproducible "My Poetry Checklist"

Reviewer: Jodi Kruse, R. A. Long High School Librarian



*John Muir: America's First Environmentalist*  
Author: Kathryn Lasky  
Candlewick Press, 2006  
ISBN: 9780763664701

**Grades 4 - 5:** John Muir, born in Scotland in 1838, was daring and adventurous. He loved the wild and often chose it over school. At age 11 John's father packed up his family and moved to Wisconsin in America. Forced to work and not go to school, John missed the teachings, so he got up early and read books. He began to invent tools. He left the farm went to the fair with a new invention--a clock that told a sleeper to get up. While he worked, he continued to invent and sell his inventions. At age 29 he packed a small bag and walked 1,000 miles to Florida. He then ventured to California where he fell in love with the mountains. In 1890, he returned to that area and helped to pass a bill preserving the mountainous area as Yosemite National Park. He drew pictures of the nature that surrounded him and wrote about preserving the land. His fascination with glaciers prompted him to travel to Alaska. John became a spokesman for the land and founded the Sierra Club in 1892 to help build a strong conservation policy. He was instrumental in helping to preserve the Grand Canyon and Mount Rainier. This biography is well written and is packed with facts and personal information about a man who may not be a widely recognized public figure, but who contributed in significant ways to our country.

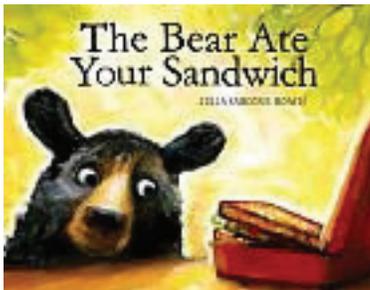
Reviewer: Debbie Johnson, Wallace Elementary School, Kelso, WA

## ELEMENTARY



*I Pledge Allegiance*  
Author: Pat Mora & Libby  
Martinez  
Knopf, 2014  
ISBN: 9780307931818

**Grades K - Adult:** Celebrated author Pat Mora and her sister Libby Martinez collaborate in creating this lovely picture book based their aunt Lobo becoming an American citizen and saying the Pledge of Allegiance at the ceremony. Little Libby is so excited for her great aunt and shares the news with her teacher. Mrs. Adams invites her to lead the pledge on Thursday in the classroom. Not only does she lead her class, but Libby accompanies her great aunt to the ceremony and pledges with all the new citizens. Patrice created the luminous pencil sketches that were painted digitally. This book celebrates the history of the Pledge of Allegiance and illustrates a slice of a personal family history which is now preserved for the authors' family to cherish. We all have a coming to America story; what is yours?  
Reviewer: Joan Enders, Librarian and Educational Consultant

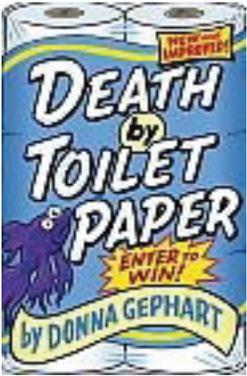


*The Bear Ate Your Sandwich*  
Author: Julia Sarcone-Roach  
Alfred A. Knopf, 2015  
ISBN: 9780375858604

**Grades K - 3:** If ever there were an unreliable narrator, the narrator of this tale is it! It all starts with an explanation involving a bear and “your” sandwich. The use of second person makes for a great introduction to point of view for younger readers. Sarcone-Roach illustrated this intricate story with beautifully colored impressionistic paintings. The blamed/framed bear starts out being lured from its hibernation by the smell of delicious berries. His gluttonous indulgence leads to a nap and a ride in a truck from the forest to a “new” kind of urban forest, and ultimately to the sandwich in question. The urban illustrations feature humans who are completely ignorant of the bear in their midst--which will provide ample opportunity for children to engage and comment. The revelation of the true culprit at the end is as endearing as the dark-skinned little girl to whom the story is being told.

Reviewer: Jodi Kruse, R. A. Long High School

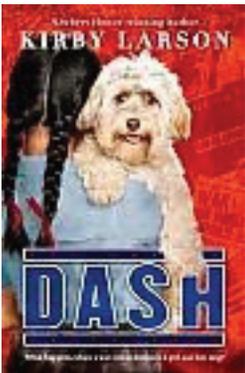
## MIDDLE



*Death by Toilet Paper*  
Author: Donna Gephart  
Delacorte Press, 2014  
ISBN: 9780385743990

**Grades 5 - 8:** Twelve-year-old Ben is still spinning after his father's death. His mom is working and studying to take her final phase of the CPA exam. Financially they are in dire need. They're late in rent and threatened with eviction, have cut back on everything that is not an absolute necessity, and are still going deeper into debt. Ben enters every sweepstake he can in hopes of winning a big prize that will help them. When the Royal-T toilet paper company offers \$10,000 for a winning slogan Ben jumps all over it. Ben comes up with all kinds of ways to help out but they still come up short. To make matter worse, his grandfather suddenly arrives on their doorstep and wants to live with them. Ben and his friend, Toothpick, enter a costume contest and the local museum and win! The prize money is enough to help cover the rent and Ben soon learns he won a prize in the slogan contest – a year's supply of their toilet paper. This is a great read about the realities of poverty and hope and determination. Everyone will be rooting for Ben. This is a great book for upper elementary and middle school readers.

Reviewer: Debby Iverson, Coweeman Middle School



*Dash*  
Author: Kirby Larson  
Scholastic, 2014  
ISBN: 9780545416351

**Grades 4 - 7:** This historical fiction story finds young Japanese American, Mitsi, caught up in the anti-Japanese prejudices that follow the recent bombing of Pearl Harbor during WWII. Mitsi's two best friends now completely ignore her and most of the kids at school are mean. Her teacher does her best to help temper the changing mood. Mitsi's world is further rocked when her family is forced to move from their Seattle home to a relocation camp and she must leave her beloved dog, Dash, behind with a neighbor. Life in the camp is difficult but Dash's frequent letters help make life bearable for her. Mitsi's family does the best in can under the conditions and eventually Dash is allowed to join her in another camp. This heartfelt story will appeal to a wide audience.

Reviewer: Debby Iverson, Coweeman Middle School

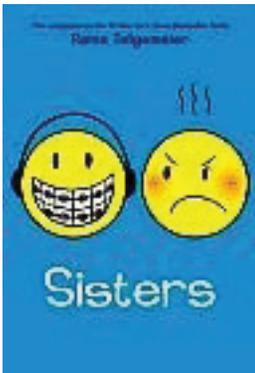
## MIDDLE



*The Scavengers*  
Author: Michael Perry  
Harper, 2014  
ISBN: 9780062026163

**Grades 4 - 8:** Twelve-year-old Maggie, aka Ford Falcon, is living outside of the government sponsored Bubble Cities with her family. She remembers times of plenty and not having to scavenge for a meager life. Her family lives off the grid, along with their new neighbors Toad and Arlinda. Maggie's dad becomes more withdrawn as time passes. Zombie-like beings, GrayDevils, are addicted to a corn-based drink and steal to trade for it. The families must be vigilant against their attacks. One rainy day Maggie spends the night with Toad and Arlinda only to return home and find her parents gone and Dookie injured. Maggie soon learns her dad's secret (he turns into a GrayDevil) and learns her mom is being held in one of the Bubble Cities. Maggie wants to trade her dad for her mom and makes a deal with the leaders to find her dad. Toad helps Maggie as she unravels the mystery and together they fight the Bubble City leaders for her family. Maggie and her parents gain the upper hand and are able to choose their paths. Her parents decide to stay in the Bubble City and Maggie returns to their homestead under the care of Toad and Arlinda. This is a great dystopian adventure for younger readers. Maggie is a spunky, determined character who immediately draws reader in to her story. Thoroughly enjoyable from start to finish. A must have for upper elementary and middle school readers.

Reviewer: Debby Iverson, Coweeman Middle School



*Sisters*  
Author: Raina Telgemeier  
Scholastic, 2014  
ISBN: 9780545540605

**Grades 5 - 8:** Companion to *Smile*. This paperback full color graphic novel depicts the author's memories of a road trip she took with her siblings. Raina wished and wished for a sister, until she got one and Amara wasn't quite what she was expecting. Then along came a brother, a cramped house and tension between her parents. Raina, her mom and siblings pile into the family's van to head to a family reunion, where her dad will join them later. The ups and downs of the trip pull the sisters further apart until spending time in the broken down van helps bring them back together. Ms. Telgemeier is highly skilled at hitting the mark with students. There's something in this story for all to relate to. This is another hilarious story from this author that will appeal to middle school students everywhere!

Reviewer: Debby Iverson, Coweeman Middle School

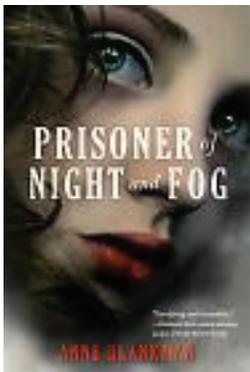
## SECONDARY



*Mortal Danger*  
Author: Ann Aguirre  
Feiwel & Friends, 2014  
ISBN 9781250024640

**Grades 9- 12:** Perhaps I am biased. Ann Aguirre made a personal visit to our school, so if the cover of this book hadn't hooked me, that connection certainly would. It starts rather precipitously with the main character, Edie, preparing to end her life from the top of a bridge when a handsome stranger talks her off the ledge and offers her a Faustian deal: he can facilitate the granting of three favors for Edie. At first, she is tempted to use her favors to gain revenge, but without her request, the students from Blackbriar Academy who bullied her begin to suffer agonizing retribution. Edie finds that revenge is not nearly as satisfying as she had initially hoped. Even worse, the corporate mogul who granted her wishes and his competition have no qualms about killing the people Edie loves as a mechanism for keeping her under control. There is just the right amount of gore and sensuality to keep the attention of high school readers. Kian, the young man who saves Edie, provides the love interest both male and female teen readers seem to crave. Aguirre does an excellent job of balancing profanity with vocabulary that is truly lush. The cherry on the proverbial literary sundae is Aguirre's note to her readers at the end. In it, she discusses her own struggle with suicidal thoughts as well as the admonition that things do get better and resources for teens who may be feeling completely hopeless. Students are loving this title as much as I did, and I am likely to add at least one more copy in order to keep up with demand.

Reviewer: Jodi Kruse, R. A. Long High School



*Prisoner of Night and Fog*  
Author: Anne Blankman  
Balzer & Bray, 2014  
ISBN: 9781467732697

**Grades 9 - 12:** Finding fresh perspectives on history can be a tough challenge, Anne Blankman was up to the task in her creation of Gretchen, a fictional character whose extended family embodies one of the most tyrannical personalities in history—Adolph Hitler. Gretchen, as a close family friend of the furor, sees his activities in a somewhat different light. The daughter of a man who was murdered in the putsch, Gretchen's family appears to be teetering on the brink of poverty. Her older brother is a brute who finds his services appreciated in the new regime Herr Hitler is building, and no one seems willing to attempt to rein him in—even after he beats Gretchen horribly. Gretchen's rescue comes from an unlikely source—a young Jewish journalist who is aware that a doctor has declared Hitler a psychopath. As Hitler's agenda becomes more apparent, Gretchen must decide whether she will continue to support her furor and her family, or whether she will join the resistance. Her discovery about how her father died is the catalyst that changes everything. Carefully researched and beautifully written, Blankman kept me fascinated from the beginning to the end of her story, which is to be continued with another installation.

Reviewer: Jodi Kruse, R. A. Long High School

## SECONDARY

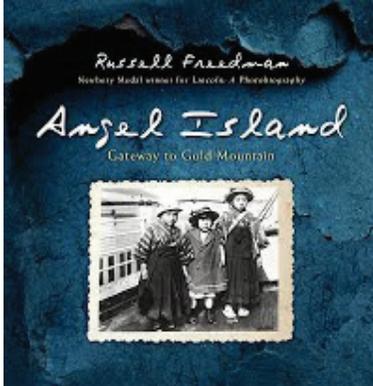


### *Taking Flight*

Author: Michaela De Prince  
Alfred A. Knopf, Borzoi Books,  
2014  
ISBN: 9780385755115

**Grades 9- 12:** This book reads like a fairy tale, except all the wickedness and evil are real. Michaela is born as Mabinty Bangura in Sierra Leone, in year seven of their civil war. She was an only child so her parents loved her in spite of a skin disease that gave her spots. Superstitious people considered a curse. Her father taught her to read and write, a rarity for anyone in that country, but especially for a daughter. After her father was killed by the rebels, her mother died of a fever. Mabinty/Michaela was given up to an orphanage. There she was beaten and starved, but her indomitable spirit prevailed and she survived to be adopted into an American family. In America she learned to dance ballet, a dream she had held since catching a magazine, tossed by the Saharan wind at her orphanage gate and finding a picture of a ballerina en pointe. Her journey and spirit are incredible and we can all learn from her resolve and courage in the face of discrimination, injury and loss. I am recommending this book to all of my high school students; to show them that dreams can be fulfilled by people who show compassion and lived by the people with the courage to dream.

Reviewer: Lisa Sudar, Mark Morris High School



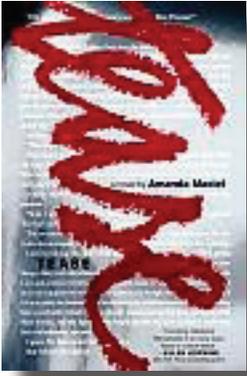
### *Angel Island: Gateway to Gold Mountain*

Author: Russell Freedman  
Harper Collins, 2014  
ISBN: 9780547903781

**Grades 6 - 12:** By show of hands: Where is Angel Island and for what is it known? I did not know either. It was the site of the San Francisco Bay immigration station for most Asian immigrants who were detained, interrogated and scrutinized for extremely lengthy periods of time. In 1970 the buildings of the station were slated for demolition, but the new park ranger, Alexander Weiss, noticed engravings over the interiors of the barracks that were dismissed as graffiti. They were reflections and poems written by the detainees! He told a former professor about them, and suddenly activists in the Asian American community visited, touched and successfully campaigned to save the structures. The former professor was George Araki. His mother had come through the island herself as a Japanese immigrant. I have always admired Freedman's exposure of history that needs to be known, and this is another welcomed addition to his arsenal of shared knowledge. The usual scholarly materials of primary sources, chapter notes, bibliography, index and photograph credits are appreciated.

Reviewer: Joan Enders, Librarian and Educational Consultant

## SECONDARY

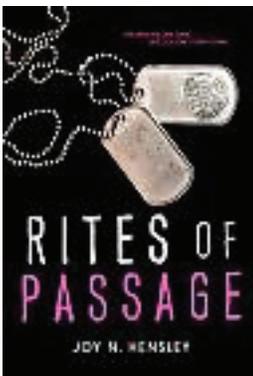


### *Tease*

Author: Amanda Maciel  
Balzer & Bray, 2014  
ISBN: 9780062305305

**Grades 9- 12:** This is the story of bullying gone too far. This is a story of a suicide because of bullying. The protagonist and narrator of this story is a bully. Having established this author does not make Sara a villain, but rather, someone to be understood. Sara and her best friend, Brielle decide not to like Emma, the new girl at school. They strive to make her life miserable. The plot moves forward through alternating chapters occurring before Emma's suicide and then several months afterwards. What we see is Sara moving from a selfish, self-absorbed teen who is just trying to fit in with whatever her friend to someone who realizes, to use a cliché, that doing what is right is not what is always popular. In the beginning Sara is in total denial that she did anything wrong or had anything to do with Emma killing herself. After all, everyone else hated her, too, and harassed her. Emma brought it on herself. Nevertheless, a lawsuit is filed against the bullies most closely involved and Sara finds herself now on the outside, forbidden to contact her friends and shunned by the rest of the school. She then is befriended by another outsider, Carmichael, who has been teased and bullied for dressing and acting differently. Through his insights and those of her attorney, therapist and younger brother, Sara comes to realize she has been misguided by a so-called friend to do things she knew were wrong. By the end, she is willing to face the consequences of her actions and to make amends. This powerful and timely novel would make a good companion to *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher. A worthwhile read for all teens and should be encouraged.

Reviewer: Linda Solberg retired, Castle Rock High School, Castle Rock, Washington



### *Rites of Passage*

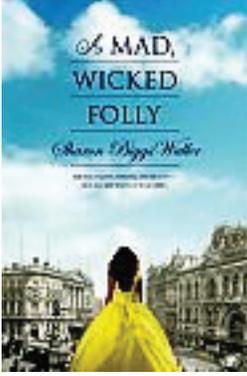
Author: Joy N. Hensley  
Harper Teen, 2014  
ISBN: 9780062295194

**Grades 9 - 12:** No question about it, *Rites of Passage* is the fiction girl power book of the year, and it has gotten stellar reviews from my students who have read and reviewed it. Sam McKenna is tough as nails without being hard, and it is that very quality that make readers cheer for her instead of roll their eyes and reach for the next book. Her father is an Army Ranger with a reputation that precedes him and threatens to overshadow her. One of her older brothers is the highest ranking student at the Denmark Military Academy (located in Virginia—not Denmark). Her oldest brother dared her to take on the hallowed halls of the previously male-only DMA just before he hung himself. Sam is one of five girls who enter during the school year, and she is pushed physically and mentally to just leave. One by one, the girls who enter with her give up. Aided by a mentor and brothers in arms who are willing to take on a secret society, Sam struggles to overcome hazing, hatred, and threats to her life. Hensley judiciously uses vile language to paint a startlingly graphic picture of the cost of being a woman in traditionally male-dominated locations and vocations. This is a book that both genders can appreciate with a protagonist and cast of supporting characters that make it well worth the read.

Reviewer: Jodi Kruse, R. A. Long High School



## SECONDARY



*A Mad, Wicked Folly*  
Author: Sharon Biggs Waller  
Viking, 2014  
ISBN: 9780307931818

**Grades 9- 12:** As students are warming to historical fiction, *A Mad, Wicked Folly* is a book that is worth promoting. It starts with Victoria Darling's decision to pose nude for the students in her art class. Though perhaps not as scandalous in our century, Vicky lives in the early 1900s and her explanation that it is standard protocol for the males in the class to shed their attire when models skip out is not enough to keep her from being expelled from her prestigious boarding school. She returns home in disgrace, and now must face the option of getting married or going to live in the country with her dowager aunt. Neither option is appealing, so she attempts to earn a scholarship at the Royal College of Art. In an effort to rebuild her portfolio, Vicky becomes reluctantly caught up in the Suffragette movement in England. Her engagement to a wealthy young second son seems to be the key to her guaranteed entry into the Royal College of Art but places her growing attraction to PC Fletcher, a penniless constable, in direct conflict with her desire to pursue her art professionally. I have seen few books that have addressed women's suffrage in either the United States or England, so this is a refreshing—if startling—exposure to a little-known topic. Waller also does an excellent job of helping readers understand the context of Victoria's struggle, so readers who might not understand the enormity of the cost of fighting for suffrage are better able to relate to the enormity of Vicky's loss if her efforts failed. A final boon is the author's inclusion of a bibliography so readers can explore the subject further.

Reviewer: Jodi Kruse, R. A. Long High School Librarian



*The Shadow Hero*  
Author: Gene Luen Yang  
First Second, 2014  
ISBN: 9781596436978

**Grades 6 - 12:** This is “vintage” Yang; a little bit history, a little bit magic and a lot Chinese tradition. *The Shadow Hero* is the story of how a disembodied spirit from the collapse of imperial rule in China needs a “host” and becomes the shadow of a drunk. This man is escaping his past by travelling to America in 1911. The man reforms, marries and has a child who aspires to run a grocery store like his father., but the mother is dissatisfied with their life in Chinatown after she is saved by a true super hero. She tries to have her son “train” to be a hero, with mixed results, but when his father is gunned down by the Chinese mob for not paying their “tax” the spirit moves to his shadow and he becomes bullet proof. His career as a Chinese superhero is now truly launched. This is an insight into being an immigrant and an introduction to the stereotypes associated with the Chinese. The interesting part for me was the “post script” in which Yang explains how a real comic book artist was denied the chance to portray a hero as Chinese. The American comic book industry in the 1940's was “a crazy time.” With an excerpt from Hing's original comic, Burma Boy and his clever answer to this type of censorship, Yang explains how an artist overcame the obstacles that were conspiring to keep his race down, but also how he became responsible for perpetuating stereotypes himself. Not just another graphic comic, this features real issues and primary sources in the original drawings from Blazing Comics. This was my favorite Yang so far.

Reviewer: Lisa Sudar, Mark Morris High School