

In The


MIDDLE

Volume 29, Number 1


September 2010

SMYA Presents our 30th Annual Conference

BRIDGE THE MIDDLE
2010



Thursday, October 21st • Friday, October 22nd
Saskatoon Inn
Keynote Speaker: Dr. Sharon Faber



The Journal of the
Saskatchewan Middle Years Association

We Believe



The Saskatchewan Middle Years Association believes middle years students require educators who understand and advocate for their students' physical, emotional, social and academic needs. The SMYA provides workshops, speakers for interested groups, resource materials, and an annual provincial conference.

Our organization has the following aims:

- To further understanding of the middle years student
- To further an understanding of programs and teaching approaches for the middle years
- To provide a means of communication for teachers about middle years students
- To develop a positive attitude toward middle years students
- To provide a vehicle for sharing information with all partners in education
- To advocate school experiences that are developmentally responsive to the needs of middle years students

JOURNAL EDITORS: CHANTEL KAUFMANN & GISÉLE POIRIER

In the Middle is published three times yearly. It accepts articles that are practical, accessible, and of interest to teachers of Grades 6 through 9. Articles should be from 2 to 15 pages in length. They can concern curriculum or teaching methodologies, or they can concern middle years children and suggestions for working with them. Articles published by *In the Middle* reflect the views of their authors and are not necessarily those of the editors, the Saskatchewan Middle Years Association, or the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation.

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President's Message

Believe in the Middle

By Mike Spicer



This summer I spent some quality time camping with my family in the mountains. One of our favorite pastimes is hiking and backcountry camping. As we

traveled on one of our journeys we came across a river. Along the way, we were forced to cross the river several times and as I watched the turbulent waters rush by I began to reflect on how hard our travel would have been if it were not for the many bridges that were constructed by the park staff to help us get to our final destination, a beautiful waterfall and mountain lake. Although some of the bridges were simple logs brought over and others were elaborately crafted structures, each made it easier than fording the river on our own.

When it comes to teaching, some of our students can ford the river of adolescence without any assistance but most of them will need some help along the way to get them to the other side. We as middle level teachers help build that bridge that allows students to cross over from childhood to young adults. Whether we simply show them the way to the other side or hold their hand while they cross, it is teachers that help Bridge the Middle whenever they come across an obstacle or problem they can not solve or navigate on their own. We do it everyday through our lessons, units, and most importantly through the relationships we build

along the way. In some cases, these bridges can last for years.

This year in October, SMYA will celebrate the Month of the Young Adolescent by hosting its annual conference in Saskatoon on the 21st and 22nd. Our conference is themed Bridge the Middle to celebrate the efforts of teachers who help our students cross over the rough times of the middle years. Our conference keynotes include Dedra Stafford and Sharon Faber. Both are strong middle level speakers who will offer preconference sessions to go along with their keynotes and breakout sessions. These speakers along with fellow teachers presenting their units, tips and tricks in the classroom will provide conference delegates with the tools to help build the bridges our middle level students need.

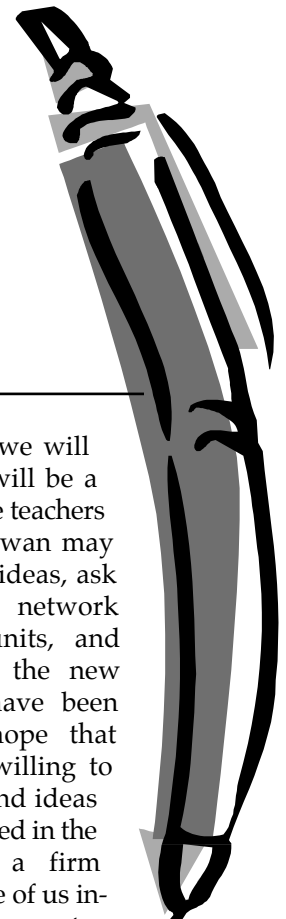
This year is very special for our conference as we celebrate MOYA with our new conference dates that takes the place of our March conference. Make sure you book your hotel rooms and register early to take advantage of discounts and PD money that may not be available later in the year. For more information on our speakers and sessions available, please check out our website, www.smya.ca.

Speaking of websites, SMYA has been given a special grant to redesign and update our webpage. While the address will remain the same at www.smya.ca, the new design will make it easier to navigate and keep up to date. Some

special features we will be working on will be a forum area where teachers across Saskatchewan may be able to share ideas, ask questions, and network their lessons, units, and ideas. With all the new curricula that have been introduced, I hope that people will be willing to share websites and ideas that have been used in the classroom. I'm a firm believer that none of us individually are as smart as all of us put together and teachers don't need to reinvent the wheel when it comes to teaching. Our website will also have other interesting new ideas so please check us out often for teaching and conference information.

Lastly, I want to congratulate our executive members for all their hard work to date. Each has put in extra time to help support middle level education in Saskatchewan and should be commended. Our volunteer executive and myself are here to support teachers because we feel that the middle level is the most difficult and special time of student development. To help you build the strongest bridge you can for your students in your classroom, please join us for our conference on October 21 and 22 in Saskatoon and if you have any questions or need help, please contact us through our new website.

Best of luck and I hope to see you in October.



Editor's Corner

Getting Ready...

By Chantel Kaufmann

Another school year is upon Saskatchewan teachers...again... hopefully teachers are feeling refreshed and reenergized to tackle the challenges of another school year.

As we get ready for another school year, and another year of our journal, *In the Middle*, I want to encourage all teachers to submit articles and ideas for our journal. We also really want to showcase middle years artwork throughout our journal and hope you will take some pictures of the work or send it to me. There are some great things going on in Saskatchewan classrooms, let's show it off!

We also want to encourage teachers to nominate colleagues who are "Teaching from the Heart". Let's share the names and accomplishments of the many fabulous middle years teachers we have in our

province. It only takes a minute, and teachers receive a middle years shirt as a gift to honor their contributions to middle years students.

The SMYA Executive has been hard at work over the summer preparing for their 30th annual Conference, *Bridge the Middle*. Booking hotels, setting up schedules, searching for presenters, planning social festivities, prepping welcome bags and gifts...the list goes on and on. We have all been past attendees of the conference and loved it so much that we got involved to help organize the Conference and become a member of the executive. Not only have we made new friends by joining, but we've been given extremely valuable professional development opportunities. Whether it's through making new contacts, exchanging ideas, or attending national conferences, we

have all benefitted greatly from our SMYA Executive experience. We will be looking for new members at our Annual General Meeting on October 22 at our conference where we hope some of our members who have been thinking about it, will let their name stand for a fabulous opportunity. Contact us through our new web page, www.smya.ca, for any questions you may have.

Don't forget, **Early bird registration, is due up until October 1, 2010** for the conference and your cheque must accompany the registration form. You can register and pay online, or get the form from our poster which is hopefully hanging in your school, or at the back of this journal.

We look forward to celebrating our 30th Annual Conference with you! See you in Saskatoon!

Contributors

Thanks so much to executive members, **Angela, Gisele, Andrew, Jackie, Tamzen, Lana, Mike and Chantel** who took the time to find some great ideas for teachers starting back to school in September. A special thank you to **Meredith Cherland** who gives as an outstanding review of Good Books for middle years students. Also, to **Dr. Gregory Bryan**, from the University of Manitoba, for sharing his research on the adequacy of children's literature portrayal of the suffering of the Irish famine.

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Mike has been teaching for 12 years and has served five years on the SMYA executive. Mike teaches technology at Pilot Butte School. Mike is a well-rounded middle years teacher who is known affectionately as the computer geek with a messy classroom.

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Andrew was born and raised in Regina with Post-Secondary Education completed at the U of R. He has used his education to travel some of Europe while teaching in London for a year and has seen much of Southern Saskatchewan in the past seven years. The majority of his career he has taught Middle Years and presently is the Grade 8 homeroom teacher at Robert Southey School. Andrew is proud to take on his most exciting role this summer when he becomes a father for the first time.

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Ryan is one of those teachers that came to teaching later in life, having lived and worked abroad, he developed an understanding of global consequences for individual actions. He has spent time teaching science, math, health and English to middle years students and is about to take on technology for his new position at Grenfell High Community School.

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Tina has been teaching with the Regina Public School Board for 12 years and is serving her second year as a member of the SMYA

executive. Tina teaches grade 8 at Elsie Mironuck in Regina. Ready school and loves middle level education. She believes in young people and the rights of children. She enjoys spending time with her husband and her two wonderful kids!



Angela Byrnes – Member-at-Large

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Angela is a teacher and vice principal at Montmartre School in Montmartre, SK. Though she has taught subjects at grades 2-11, her heart lies with middle level students and that is where I consider home. I love the spontaneity of a middle years' classroom and that no two days, or two students are ever the same.



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Brett lives in Saskatoon, where he went to both grade school and university. He is in his fifth year of teaching where he presently teaches a split grade 5/6 class in Delisle, Saskatchewan. He enjoys being a teacher because of the variety of challenges that each day brings.

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Jackie is currently a grade 7 homeroom teacher at Hepburn School, north of Saskatoon. Previously, she taught overseas in Seoul, South Korea, Istanbul, Turkey, and Leysin, Switzerland. She enjoys teaching "Middle Years" because she loves to encourage students and build their self-confidence as they prepare for the demands of high school.

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Karla teaches at the Weyburn Junior High in Weyburn. She is a grade 7 homeroom teacher who loves teaching "in the middle" because no day is ever the same and the kids have so much energy.

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Start the Year with...

By Tamzen Kulyk

Who Are You?

Do you have any siblings? Pets? Tell me about them.

What was your favourite text from elementary school? What made you like it?

What is your favourite text now? Why?

What is your favourite movie of all time?

What is so great about that movie?

Culminating Project Ideas

By Tamzen Kulyk

Formal Writing

- Arguments
- Extended Definitions
- Process Descriptions
- Classifications
- Narrative retellings
- Fables
- Stories
- Picture Books
- Brochures
- Public Service Announcements
- Dictionaries/Glossaries
- Guides
- Newspaper articles
- Travelogues
- Design and produce a music c.d
- Produce an original comic book
- Themed Magazine
- Produce an original cartoon, comic, or graphic novel

Multimedia Compositions

- Video documentaries
- Video how-to guides
- Websites
- Digital Stories
- Multimedia personality profiles
- Digital scrapbooks
- Web quests
- Museum exhibits
- Public service announcements on video or dramatized
- Timelines
- Murals
- News show/talk show
- Dance performance
- MTV videos of poems
- Create a podcast
- Digital Essay Book
- Create a magazine
- Create an animated film
- Lit trips

Social Action Projects

- Show video documentaries publicly
- Volunteer Work
- Peer Meditation Project
- Local Hero Celebration
- Park cleanup project
- Create and maintain in local exhibit
- Senior citizen visits/help days
- Present proposals to school board, city/town council, service groups
- Letter writing campaign
- Build: repair or rebuild something
- Physical experience or challenge: learn to scuba dive, run a marathon
- Organize activities for children
- Collect foods for food bank

Adapted from, *Inquiring Minds Learn to Read and Write*, Wilhem, 2009.

Journal Information

Forward all journal articles and information to Chantel Kaufmann at chantel@smya.ca

First Day Activities: Me Boxes

By Jackie Therres

TEACHER'S NOTE: I have my children bring "Me Boxes" (shoeboxes) to school the second week of school. (They have the weekend to fill it with 6 or 7 things to tell about themselves.)

1) I introduce the homework project by sharing your own "Me Box".

2) Share the boxes with partners the first day and then with the whole class the rest of the week.

3) After everyone has shared their box (it takes a couple of days!) I have students brainstorm all kinds of ideas to write about during Writing Workshop.

TEACHER'S NOTE: The kids write their own list of things they can write about in their writing folders. They refer to these ideas throughout the year. It is a great way to get kids writing about what they know!

Author: Laura Smeltz

Website: www.cbv.ns.ca/sstudies/nactivities/1rstday/6.html

Two Truths and a Lie

By Andrew Longstaff

This is a great activity that I like to loosen the students up by having them talk about what they did over the summer. I even make them become creative by writing a paragraph about each by including three descriptive sentences.

Start by modeling the process by telling two truths and a lie (preferably something that could plausibly be true) about yourself. Ex statements such as:

I have two children.

I once won a pie-eating contest.

When I was ten, I hated science.

- Allow the class to guess which is the lie.

Allow about a minute for every student to think of two truths and a lie about himself/herself.

- Have the students form groups of four, preferably with people they do not know well (or assign at random). They should sit together for the remainder of the activity.
- Within each group, students must first learn each other's names. Then they are to tell each other two things that are true about themselves and one that is a lie (preferably something that MIGHT be true). The others in the group

must determine which the lie is. Allow about five to six minutes for the groups to complete this.

- Tell each group they must choose **two** of the truths about the members of their group and **one lie** to share with the class. Have them write them down legibly. For example: One member of our group once traveled to Russia, one member ... etc.
- I enjoy having the whole class also take turns so we have an overall view of what everyone did.

www.teachersfirst.com/content/knowyou3.cfm

Mirror Mirror on the Wall...

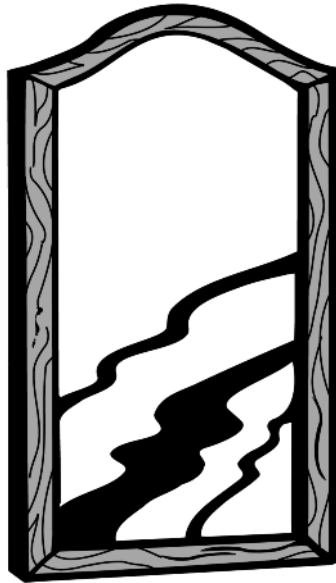
By Gisele Poirier

This is a cool idea that I tried last year with my grade 7/8 French Immersion class. It gave some students a huge confidence boost and really made a difference with classroom setting.

I have used the book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* by Stephen Covey to help guide adolescent students through those difficult years ... THE MIDDLE. A class set of Stephen Covey's book is available in our school. Every two weeks we take a look at one small aspect of each of the 7 habits. Once the students digest this habit, they are asked to write a journal entry reflecting on a variety of examples where they may have been displaying this habit in their everyday lives.

At the beginning of the year, I ask each student to practice being PROACTIVE and I expect them to continue with the first habit all throughout the school year. Stephen Covey states in this chapter that "Your life doesn't just "happen." Whether you know it or not, it is carefully designed by you. The choices, after all, are yours. You choose happiness. you choose sadness. you choose decisiveness. You choose ambivalence. You choose success. You choose failure. You choose courage. You choose fear. Just remember that every moment, every situation, provides a new choice. And in doing so, it gives you a perfect opportunity to do things differently to produce more positive results."

At the end of this chapter, Stephen challenges the students to look into the mirror each day and say something positive to their reflection.



I decided that perhaps if I placed a large mirror in my own classroom, students could practice saying something nice to themselves everyday at school.

Using tin foil, I made a mirror the entire length of my classroom door. On the top, I used large lettering and displayed the title "MIRROR MIRROR ON THE WALL". After the students read the first habit of the seven, I asked them to write, in their journal, what they would say to their mirror on the wall. After reading their responses in their journal I decided to display them on the make shift MIRROR on my classroom door. I made sure that each statement was generic, so they didn't know which student said which response.

At the beginning of the week, I would tell the students to line up, at the door, on by one. I asked them to say something positive about themselves in the tin foil mirror. This of course was done...in their own heads, not out loud. If they could not think of anything positive

to say, they were more than welcome to use a generic statement that was already posted on the mirror.

Sporadically, throughout the course of the year, I would stop the class five minutes early and get the students to line up in front of the mirror on my door.

Every time I asked the students to use the MIRROR MIRROR ON THE WALL, I would see each one exiting my class with a huge, shy, smile across his/her face. For that moment, they believed in themselves and left my class with their heads held high and feeling better inside.

To compliment this activity, I took time to ask each student to leave the classroom, one by one, for approximately five minutes or so. While gone, the remaining students, in the class, would come up with something positive to say about that one individual. I typed out the answers given and laminated their responses. They displayed their "Something good about myself" posters around the classroom. This stayed up the entire year.

When visiting the mirror from March to June, the students started struggling with what they should be saying in the MIRROR. Their "Something good about myself" posters helped them to find one more thing to celebrate and gave them some confidence in front of the MIRROR.

This is an excellent idea to start off your school year. It really sets the tone for adolescents. They learn how to speak proactively and also gain confidence in those struggling years.

PD Opportunity Letter

By Mike Spicer

Dear Colleague,

I would like to invite you to participate in an exciting initiative from the Saskatchewan Middle Years Association.

Each year, SMYA hosts an annual conference in March which has been successful for over 25 years. At the conference, teachers walk away with great ideas, units, and philosophies that they can take directly to the classroom. While we hope to see all Middle Years Teachers at our annual conference next year from March 12-14, our executive understands that budget constraints have limited the number of teachers school divisions can send to large conferences. Our solution to this problem is simple. Instead, we will come to you.

“On the Edge of Becoming – Polishing the Potential of 10-14 Year Olds” is the perfect opportunity for the professional development needs of your Middle Years Teachers. At this one-day conference, our executive will present five sessions on exemplary middle years programs which your teachers can rotate through. Each session is one hour long and our topics include:

Interdisciplinary Teaming – Teachers will be given examples of teaming units and will walk away with the tools they need to implement teaming in the classroom.

Advisory Programs – Teachers will find out the essentials for a successful advisory program and how they can enhance the relationships the teachers have with students. Teachers will explore ways to enhance student self-esteem, social relationships, and promote positive school climates.

Varied Instruction – Teachers will explore ways to integrate learning experiences into real life situations, engage students in problem solving, and emphasize collaboration and cooperation. They will explore ways to adapt the classroom to individual differences.

Exploratory Programs – Teachers will be introduced to the concept of exploratory programs such as survey courses for Practical and Applied Arts and will learn why exploratory programs are valuable

Transition Programs – Teachers will explore the key elements of successful transition programs and how to ease the move from Middle Level to High School for students who may feel overwhelmed.

While our executive is ready to present on the above topics, further topics or issues can be explored or presented to meet the needs of your division including Interdisciplinary Units. Feel free to contact us with other ideas and SMYA will try to accommodate.

In return for our sessions, SMYA only asks that divisions provide a \$500 honorarium, the venue for the conference and cover traveling expenses/sub costs for presenters. To book “On the Edge of Becoming” for your upcoming PD days, or for more information, please contact Mike Spicer at [HYPERLINK “mailto:mike.spicer@pvscd.ca”](mailto:mike.spicer@pvscd.ca) mike.spicer@pvscd.ca or 781-4488.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Mike Spicer
SMYA President

H.E.L.P. Parents from the Start

by Christopher Myers

H.E.L.P. How to Enjoy Living with a Preadolescent

Bundle of 50
Retail - \$25.00
Member - \$20.00

Enjoy Living with a Preadolescent

Bundle of 50
Retail - \$25.00
Member - \$20.00

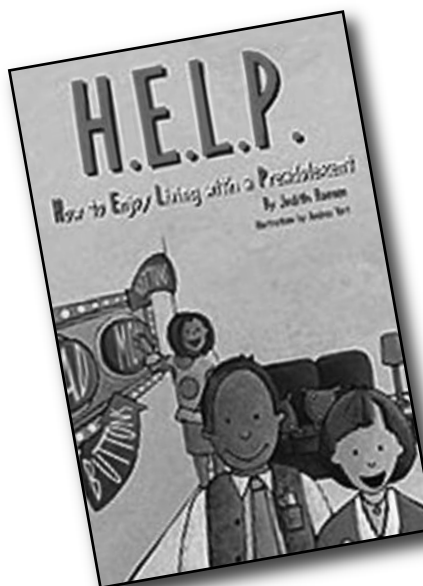
You know from your training and personal experiences that working with young adolescents can have both challenges and rewards, often in the very same moment. As you prepare for a new school year, it is important to remember that many parents will be dealing with these changes in behaviors and attitudes for the very first time. You will also, undoubtedly, encounter caregivers that have been on this emotional rollercoaster for a while but aren't sure what's normal or where to turn for guidance.

NMSA's H.E.L.P. series of pamphlets are the perfect solution!

Offering compassionate, practical solutions to common problems, these pamphlets are perfect for helping parents understand what to expect of their young adolescent and why.

Order today and be ready to hand these easy-to-read pamphlets to parents at the beginning of the school year.

National Middle School Association
4151 Executive Parkway, Suite 300
Westerville, OH 43081
1-800-528-NMSA (6672)
614-895-4730
Fax: 614-895-4750



Parent Questionnaire

By Lana Braaten

Initiating positive communication with parents at the beginning of the school year truly sets the tone for the entire year. However, it can also feel like 'just another thing to do' as well. Below is a quick and extremely useful tool for not only initiating communication but gaining insight into the students that you will be working with.

Dear Parents/ Guardians:

A new school year has begun! I am excited to have the opportunity to work with your child this year. It is my goal that every student in Grades 7 & 8 experiences success in the classroom. In order for this to occur, we must work as a team – student, teacher and parent(s). As a parent, you know and understand your child better than anyone. Therefore, I would like to draw upon your knowledge and understanding to help me work more effectively with your child. Please take a few minutes to answer the questions below and have your child return this sheet to me. I look forward to a great school year full of excitement and learning!

Parent Questionnaire

Parent(s)/ Guardian(s) Names: _____

Child's Name: _____

List five words to describe your child. _____

What personality trait does your child possess that you most admire? _____

What expectations do you have of your child as a student? _____

In a sentence or two, please describe how you think your child learns best. _____

What type of work do you envision your child doing as an adult? _____

Do you anticipate that your child will be participating in extra-curricular activities? If so, what do you hope your child will gain from these activities? _____

Please provide any other information that you believe will help your child achieve success at school. _____

Month Of The Young Adolescent

OCTOBER

The National Middle School Association (NMSA) strongly supports a focus on the needs of our young adolescents. NMSA provides an outline of the importance of The Month of the Young Adolescent and activities that you can do in your school to celebrate the diversity and individuality of our young adolescents.

Here is just a bit of the information you can receive if you check out www.nmsa.org and visit the MOYA link!

October is the Month of the Young Adolescent (MOYA)! Initiated by National Middle School Association (NMSA), Month of the Young Adolescent brings together a wide range of organizations to focus on the needs of this important age range, ages 10-15.

Throughout the month of October, four key messages should be promoted within your school and your community. They are:

- The importance of parents being knowledgeable about young adolescents and being actively involved in their lives;
- The understanding that healthy bodies plus healthy minds equal healthy young adolescents;
- The realization that the education young adolescents experience during this formative period of life will, in large measure, determine the future for all citizens; and
- The knowledge that every young adolescent should have the



opportunity to pursue his or her dreams and aspirations, and post-secondary education should be a possibility for all. Why should we focus on our young adolescents? The general public has lacked an adequate understanding of youth in the transition period between childhood and adolescence. As a result, young adolescents often have been "growing up forgotten."

Ways to get involved for Schools & Communities

- Celebrate the Month of the Young Adolescent with a kick-off party.
- Plan weekly activities for parents and students such as a carnival night, an open house, a math game night, a read aloud night or a crafts night.
- Have local places of worship hold informational services concerning the importance of adolescents in the community.
- Encourage local businesses to have an open house and share information concerning future career opportunities.

- Suggest that local community organizations offer open recreation times.
- Provide informational nights at the local school, highlighting the diverse needs of young adolescents.
- Work with young adolescents to create a community garden.
- Organize a mentor program for young adolescents in your community
- Visit, tutor or volunteer in middle level classrooms.
- Learn to celebrate all of the good things that young adolescents can bring to your community.
- Urge your community to proclaim October as the Month of the Young Adolescent.

"No other age level is of more importance to the future of individuals, and, literally, to that of society; because these are the years when youngsters crystallize their beliefs about themselves and firm up their self-concepts, their philosophies of life and their values - the things that are the ultimate determinants of their behaviors."

*Understanding and Appreciating the
Wonder Years*

John H. Lounsbury

The Adequacy of the Children's Literature Portrayal of the Suffering of the Irish Famine

Dr. Gregory Bryan
Department of Curriculum Teaching and Learning
Faculty of Education
University of Manitoba

The move toward a literature-based approach to classroom instruction (Morrow & Gambrell, 2000) has generated a clamour of voices advocating the use of juvenile literature across the curriculum. Such literature has been promoted as a supplement, or even alternative, to textbook instruction. Nevertheless, in advocating the use of trade books, the question seems rarely to have been asked if children's literature is sufficiently powerful and graphic to serve as a medium through which specific, dreadful, events of the past might accurately be taught. For the purposes of this article, I am interested in how books written for young readers capture the individual and collective suffering of the Irish Famine. During the repeated potato crop failures of the mid- to late-1840s, over a million Irish perished, and a further two million fled their country to avoid the almost certain agonized death that awaited them if they did not. The Irish Potato Famine or, as the Irish call this time in their history, *An Gorta Mor*—The Great Hunger—was a period of incredible suffering. At the start of the Famine in 1845, over eight million people lived in Ireland. In less than a decade, the population was decimated. Ireland lay in ruin. Such was the lasting impact of the Hunger that in 1951, a century after the Famine ended, the country's population stood at just a little over four million people—still only half its pre-Famine level. The Great Hunger was one of the

greatest human calamities in world history. In 1845, three million Irish people depended on the potato to survive. They ate potatoes with every meal. As the potato farmers prepared for what they expected to be the usual bountiful harvest, a horrible stench arose from the potato beds. When farmers began to dig their fields they discovered the potatoes had started to rot beneath the soil. In the fall harvest of 1845, almost half the crop was lost to *Phytophthora infestans*, a fungus that invaded the potato plant and caused it to decay. The blight destroyed the crops again in 1846, 1848 and 1849. The misery was compounded by the bitter winter of 1847—"Black '47"—that was one of the most severe ever recorded in Ireland. Snow covered the corpses abandoned by the roadside. Death and disease was everywhere.

In preparing this article, I conducted a thorough examination of books written for children and young adults on the topic of, or with the backdrop of, the Great Irish Famine. There exists, after all, a veritable feast of Famine material amongst literature for children (Bryan, 2005), with Pignat's (2008) Governor General's Award-winner, *Greener Grass*, and Perky's (2009) *Bridget's Black '47* merely the latest of children's books on the Famine. I was interested to know how a collection of such books might serve to portray the events of this period of hunger and suffering, compared to my own understanding of that period of Irish history. My own un-

derstanding has been developed and refined through various experiences over a number of years. These experiences include the study of many "adult" histories on the Famine, a recent visit to Ireland's National Famine Museum, time spent in reflection amidst the unmarked graves of a number of Famine cemeteries, and the fact that my own ancestors were forced to abandon their Irish homeland in the desperate hope of fleeing the horrors of the Famine.

A Subject Not Fit For Children?

"The things I've seen!"

Seemingly mindless of squeamish sensitivities, or deliberately and descriptively confronting them, the "adult" histories of the Famine leave us in no doubt as to the horror of the time. I took as a standard for comparison with children's books, the following extracts from four "adult" histories.

Eye-witnesses reported corpses lying unburied in the streets for days, sometimes gnawed by dogs and rats. Whole families were found dead inside cabins, children abandoned by their parents, and cases were documented of people eating dead and decaying livestock, even human flesh. (Campbell, 1994, p. 36)

Death was everywhere. The sick and the starving died in their hovels or in ditches; the

living stripped the land of anything that might be edible –weeds, berries, even the grass itself. (Golway, 1997, p. 16)

I heard my grandmother saying that the worst sight she saw was, she saw a woman laid out in the street (in Kenmare) and the baby at her breast. She died of the famine fever. Nobody would take the child, and in the evening the child was eating the mother's breast. (Poirteir, 1995, p. 105)

A woman and her two children were found dead and half-eaten by dogs; in a neighbouring cottage five more corpses, which had been dead several days, were lying; and Father John O'Sullivan, parish priest of Kenmare, found 'a room full of dead people'; a man, still living, was lying in bed with a dead wife and two dead children, while a starving cat was eating another dead infant. (Woodham-Smith, 1991, p. 182)

None of the above four extracts make for an enjoyable reading experience. They do, however, make for powerful, moving and even heart-breaking reading. It is my contention that, in order for the children's literature on the topic to provide an accurate reflection of the Famine, and to promote an adequate understanding of its horrors, it also needs to provide similarly powerful, moving, and heart-breaking reading. Yet, how might such a graphic depiction of the events of the Great Hunger be received by children? After all, in one of the children's novels of the Famine, the family gathers around an Irish tailor who has been traveling the country, peddling his wares. "The things I've seen!" he exclaims, shaking his head in sorrow. "After that he refused to say any more. He said it wasn't a fit subject for children" (Lutzeier, 1991, p. 92).

The Great Hunger

"No one would ever throw food away."

Before the start of the Famine, often even the poorer Irish farmers kept chickens and an occasional pig to add variety to their staple diet of potatoes. It was not uncommon for these animals to share the cottage with the family, especially during cold winter nights. When the Hunger started, the farm animals quickly disappeared. Occasionally the hungry family devoured them, but most animals were sold in order that the tenant farmers could pay rent. After the disappearance of the farm animals, however, the Famine victims turned their hungry thoughts elsewhere. After a visit to the village in *Under the Hawthorn Tree* (Conlon-McKenna, 1990), Mother O'Driscoll wonders aloud about how quiet the village seems. Barely a soul is to be seen out of doors. There are no children playing. "The strange thing is there seem to be no animals either, the only ones I saw were Patsy's horse and cart and Dan's old Moses. Even the dogs have disappeared" (p. 37). In the time-travel tale, *The Grave* (Heneghan, 2000), the deserted village streets also initially perplex Tom Mullen. "Except for the small crowd of people the unpaved street was empty. There were no animals—cats, dogs, hens, pigs... . The village, like the landscape, had a clean, bare, windswept look to it" (p. 29). Tom's understanding is illuminated later when Tully explains, "There are no cats and dogs. There's not an animal left in the village; anything with the bit of meat on its bones is eaten long since" (p. 48).

The disappearance of the family pets is portrayed elsewhere in the literature too. In the fictional journal, *How I Survived the Irish Famine: The Journal of Mary O'Flynn* (Wilson, 2001), Mary writes of a

neighbour family, "The family had eaten the dog the day before" (p. 21). In the award-winning informational text, *Black Potatoes*, Bartoletti (2001) writes, "People killed and ate horses, donkeys, dogs, and cats. They even ate the carcasses of animals they found" (p. 94). Hunger was everywhere, and anything that could be eaten was eaten.

Mother O'Driscoll and Tom Mullen found out, however, household animals soon expired as a source of food for famished families. It was then that the Famine victims began to look toward others' animals as a possible source of sustenance. In the juvenile literature, one of the more commonly described methods of securing food from limited supplies was that of bleeding the landlords' cattle. In *Under the Hawthorn Tree*, nine-year-old Michael O'Driscoll bleeds a cow to obtain blood that he and his siblings can then cook and eat. Mary O'Flynn's journal (Wilson, 2001) also records, "Michael took blood from one of Major Lloyd's cows tonight... Mother baked it into a cake" (p. 20). Pignat (2008) has Da bleeding the family cow, Musha (p. 115). Lyons' (2001) short novel, *Knockabeg: A Famine Tale*, is a blend of history and fantasy. Even here, Jimmy bleeds Lord Shank's cow (p. 45) while faeries and other mythical creatures contest a great battle, upon the outcome of which the fate of the little village of Knockabeg lies.

For those living near the ocean, the coastline provided an additional source of food. "The coastal natives also captured and killed seabirds. They gathered eggs of seafoowl in the lofty cliffs and rocks" (Lyons, 2002, p. 19). Nory Ryan combs the beach for anything edible. Eventually she finds herself dangling precariously from a cliff face searching for birds' eggs to devour (Giff, 2000, p. 127). Indeed, with a relentless hunger, those near the coast sought whatever it was

that their surroundings could yield. "They scoured the beach for limpets (small shell snails that cling to rocks or timbers) and seaweed, and the countryside for whatever it could surrender—weeds, roots, nettles, flowers, and the remnants of animal feed" (Dolan, 2003, p. 21).

As the hunger intensifies, so too does the characters' desperation. *The Potato Eaters* (Branson, 1979) is a heart-wrenching story of a family struggling to stay alive and stay together during the Great Hunger. Set in County Cork in 1846, the O'Connor family watch helplessly as their community crumples around them as friends, neighbours, and family members die or flee Ireland. As he struggles to preserve his family, Sean O'Connor finds a father and son dead on the road. "The boy's mouth was open, and stuffed with grass" (p. 154). Mary O'Flynn is another who encounters a boy, although this one is still living, whose mouth is stained green from the grass he has eaten in forlorn attempts to satiate hunger (Wilson, 2001, p. 19). It was not unusual "to see corpses lying by the roadside with pieces of grass or leaves in their mouths. Their faces were stained with the juice of plants they were chewing to satisfy their hunger" (Lyons, 2002, p. 24).

Such was the lack of food available during the Famine, the Irish often were compelled to resort to great risks in order to keep their emaciated bodies alive. "They ate anything, even rotted potatoes they knew had killed pigs and cattle" (Meltzer, 1992, p. 50). Yet, "no matter how the potatoes were washed or cooked, the people suffered from stomach cramps and bloody diarrhea" (Bartoletti, 2001, p. 40).

In *The Coldest Winter* (Lutzeier, 1991), 11-year-old, Eamonn Kennedy, and his brother, Dermot, search for any wild plants that might be eaten. They chew on the

leaves of dandelions "to fool their stomachs into thinking they were getting a good meal," and then take home any nettles that they find for their mother to make soup. One day they meet a boy near the poorhouse who boasts he once found "a whole loaf of bread" on someone's pile of rubbish. "There was only a bit of mould on it," he grins. Inspired, Dermot and Eamonn begin to search rubbish heaps but never uncover anything to eat. Dermot concludes, "We were daft to believe that boy...No one would ever throw food away" (p. 51).

The Kennedy boys' father secures relief work at the canal. Despite being paid each evening, he earns only enough money for one meal a day, leaving the boys with an insatiable hunger. Famine children quickly learned the futility of asking for more. As Michael O'Driscoll realizes, as desperately as his parents would like to provide more food, there simply is none. "The first few times he had asked for more, his father or mother had lifted the wooden spoon and brought it down on the palm of his hand. Later, his pleas had been met by a sadness in his father's eyes and his mother bursting into tears" (Conlon-McKenna, 1990, 12).

Peel's Brimstone

"In Poland,' he said slowly, his anger building, 'they feed this to the pigs.'"

One of England's early responses to the impact of the potato blight was for the British Prime Minister, Robert Peel, to ship large quantities of Indian corn meal, or maize, from North America to Ireland. Despite Peel's seeming good intentions, the new food was so foreign to the Irish that it caused as many problems as it solved. It became known as Peel's brimstone.

For some, the impact of the potato blight was not immediately evident.

In Kositsky's (1998) novel, 15-year-old Rebecca is the daughter of a well-to-do city merchant. Rebecca first notices the arrival of the Famine at the markets in town. Reflecting on a shopping excursion, she muses:

There was something different about this place today, something that made me hug my shawl around me tighter and sink into myself: fewer stalls and customers, a rotten foreboding of disease, and an almost acrid stench around the pitifully small mounds of vegetables, mostly withered cabbages and turnips from the previous winter. Hardly a potato to be seen, and what there was lay blackened and soft. (p. 9)

The impact of the Hunger was beginning to be felt, even amongst those in the cities, and those who, like Rebecca, were from wealthy families. On a later excursion to the markets, Rebecca finds even less food for sale and she resorts to purchasing some of the imported meal. When she prepares it for her father, it is not enthusiastically received:

"Rebecca," roared Father, gesturing to the contents of a bowl I was setting on the table, "What in the blessed name of God is this?"

"Indian corn, Father. It was all I could obtain."

"In Poland," he said slowly, his anger building, "they feed this to the pigs." (p. 28)

While they may have fed corn meal to pigs in other places in other times, for many now, Indian meal was all that was available. It was attacked with fervour:

People were so desperate from starvation that they didn't wait for it to be cooked properly. They ate it almost

raw. That brought on intestinal troubles. It killed a lot of them that otherwise might have survived. They just grabbed the meal and swallowed it down almost raw. (Lyons, 2002, p. 21)

Not being familiar with the new food, the Irish had not learned how it needed to be prepared. Because of their unfamiliarity with it, the Irish “often ate corn that was undercooked and then suffered severe abdominal pain” (Gallagher, 2001, p. 44). After eating the yellow meal, Mary O’Flynn complains that her bowels “turned to water. It is brimstone indeed!” (Wilson, 2001, p. 19). In another novel, young Annie Quinn remembers not only that meal gave her stomach cramps and diarrhea, but that she also hated it because it was tasteless and failed to fill her stomach. It was a poor reward for her father’s tireless labours splitting stones on road works (Schneider, 2001, p. 49).

After all their suffering after dining on meal, the Irish became suspicious of the unfamiliar food. Given the bitter history of English-Irish conflict, some suspected that Indian meal might be another means of further decimating an already dwindling Irish population. Some would not even taste it until someone such as a trusted priest had tried it first to demonstrate that it was safe (Gallagher, 2001, p. 44).

An Abundance of Suffering

“This must be hell, thought Eily.”

The unavailability of food created all manner of suffering throughout the Great Hunger. This suffering is, indeed, portrayed in considerable detail in books written for young readers.

We went through places where everyone was starving. Ragged scarecrows twitched helplessly in ditches. Little kids sat on the roadside in a silent stupor,

every rib starkly visible, no hair on their heads but thick downy hair on their faces that made them look like monkeys. You wouldn’t want to know all the sights we saw, believe me, it’d make you weep.

We came on a tiny skeleton of a woman walking the road with a small boy. Ma spoke to her in Irish. The kid was sick, with paper-thin yellow skin shrunk and stretched over his skull, and eyes that stared at nothing. (Heneghan, 2000, p. 108)

As a time traveler transported back to the Irish Famine, Tom Mullen takes with him a modern perspective. He sees the suffering surrounding him in a manner in which many of today’s young readers might similarly view the situation were they to find themselves suddenly conveyed back through time. Desperate to find a place of refuge for his weary companions, Tom investigates a scalpeen, or shelter, on the edge of town. It is little more than a dark hole in the ground covered with sticks. “Inside, there was a man asleep. With Tully and Hannah, I took a closer look at him: Stick-thin like a skeleton, he lay without a sound, the joints of his legs and arms swollen up like balloons and a bad smell off him” (Heneghan, 2000, p. 129). The suffering was not quickly alleviated. Later, Tom sees people dying, “their swollen faces black with disease, limbs puffed up like balloons, a few of them like raving lunatics, twitching and shouting and screaming. The smell was the worst; I held my nose and retreated” (p. 166).

Evicted from their homes, having pawned their clothes for money with which to try to purchase food, people often were left without protection from what could be fierce cold.

Halfway up the hill I stopped in horror. Propped against a

church wall, fully exposed to the storm, was a little family: a destitute mother and her three tattered children. They sat so curiously quiet and still that they resembled the image of a daguerreotype—so frozen that the smallest looked as though his arm, held out to beg, would snap off if I dropped a penny in his cap. He gazed back at me without blinking. Then, I suddenly realized with terrible dismay that he, his mother and sisters were all dead, transformed into icy statues by the wintry elements. (Kositsky, 1998, p. 34)

One of the most powerful of the historical fiction novels is Conlon-McKenna’s (1990) *Under the Hawthorn Tree*. The book takes its name from the place the O’Driscoll family buries their deceased ten-month-old baby girl, Bridget. This is a story of courage, love, and loyalty as three children struggle to keep one another alive.

In line at the soup kitchen, Eily O’Driscoll searches the crowd, hoping to identify familiar faces.

The faces—the faces—she would never forget them. They all had the same look. The cheeks were sunken, the eyes wide and staring with deep circles underneath, the lips narrow and tight, and in some the skin had a yellow tinge. Hunger and sickness had changed these people. Now they were like ghosts. Old women clawed and tried to push their way to get further up the line. Mothers stood staring ahead as scrawny toddlers pulled and whined against their filthy skirts. This must be hell, thought Eily. (Conlon-McKenna, 1990, p. 79-80)

Perhaps one of the most heart-rending of all scenes from children’s literature is that depicted after the death of baby Bridget in *Under the Hawthorn Tree*. Mother O’Driscoll

masks her distress and calmly instructs the other children to return to their beds to rest. "At first light, Michael, you must run down to Dan Collins and ask him to get Father Doyle," Mother says, before adding as she cradles the tiny body in the darkness, "I'll just sit and mind my darling girl for a little while yet" (Conlon-McKenna, 1990, p. 22).

Later, the valiant Mother O'Driscoll disappears while searching for her husband. Twelve-year-old Eily is forced to assume the roll of mother for her two surviving younger siblings—Michael, nine, and Peggy, seven. The children encounter the rotting corpse of a starved man. "Suddenly the stench, with an even fouler undertone, washed over them." Eily sees the body and, turning Peggy away, tries to protect her young sister from the gruesome sight. Alas, Peggy's fear-stricken face reveals what she has seen. "It was a man—well, what was left of him. The skin was rotted and all different colours. He was thin, so thin that his bones already showed" (Conlon-McKenna, 1990, p. 85). When others insist they enter the dreaded workhouse, the children flee. Their abiding hope is to find their great-aunts, who featured in so many of their mother's stories. On their long and hazardous journey, they endure extreme heat, a severe thunderstorm, wild dogs, and the deadly fever. Conlon-McKenna pulls no punches. The O'Driscoll parents make no miraculous appearance to give the book an unrealistically happy ending.

The death of babies and younger members from the protagonists' families occurs in other books as well. In *Greener Grass* (Pignat, 2008), Kit Byrne's father and a newborn sibling both perish. In *The Coldest Winter* (Lutzeier, 1991), Eamonn's grandmother and father succumb to the ravages of the Famine, but it is the death of his baby sister,

Rosaleen, that is the most disturbing. With the help of a wealthy friend named Kate, Eamonn struggles to sustain his family. Kate's hard-hearted grandfather is, however, reluctant to share with the poor. The old man's heart softens at Rosaleen's death, when he realizes the cost of his greedy ways. Kate sees that her grandfather is crying. "It was too much for him when he turned back again to the baby. He stroked her head gently, as if he was afraid he might wake her. 'The babby's dead,' he said" (p. 72).

In *The Potato Eaters* (Branson, 1979), little five-year-old Rosheen O'Connor dies while the O'Connors struggle to reconcile their love for their beautiful country with the human cost of the Famine. Mary O'Connor, Rosheen's heart-broken mother, turns to her husband and tells him their daughter is dead. She asks God to have mercy on Rosheen's soul. Then Mary looks past her husband, vaguely seeing "a time long ago, before the famine had stolen the joy from her" (p. 150-151).

Even a picture book does a good job of depicting the horrors of the Great Hunger. In *Katie's Wish* (Hazen & McCully, 2002), Caldecott medalist, Emily Arnold McCully's earthy watercolour paintings reflect the hardship of the Famine, particularly in the dark and moody interior paintings. One of the major strengths of *Katie's Wish* is that the picture book format makes this episode of history accessible to even very young children. Katie lives with her grandparents because her mother has died and her father is in America. When Katie wishes that the "boring" potatoes that she eats every mealtime would disappear from her plate, she is certain that she is the cause of the blight that spreads across Ireland. The potato crops begin to turn black and rot, leaving Katie to cope with her guilt. After a trek to town, Katie's cousin reports, "This is fearful

famine... I've seen bloated bellies and babies too weak to blink. And a strange fever is turning people's tongues black" (unpaged).

The Irish people truly were going through hell.

The informational non-fiction children's texts also provide ample evidence of the suffering of the Great Hunger. Gallagher's (2001) and Dolan's (2003) texts both contain particularly graphic depictions.

In time Ireland became a vast graveyard—a graveyard of pits where the dead were wrapped in sheets and covered over with dirt once the country's supply of caskets ran out. There they had to remain until full burial was possible. In the meantime, starving animals fed themselves on the corpses, and there were even some reports of cannibalism. Finally, a new type of casket appeared, a macabre one built especially for the times—a reusable model. It was equipped with a trapdoor that was triggered open in its floor when a corpse was being lowered into the grave. Then it was ready for further use. (Dolan, 2003, p. 24-25)

They starved gradually or contracted diseases caused by a lack of nutrition. Deprived of vitamin C, people got scurvy. Their teeth fell out, black sores erupted on their arms and legs, and some died of gangrene as their bodies decayed. Protein deficiency caused small children to age prematurely while hair began to grow all over their faces. Older people suffered from famine edema, a condition in which their arms and legs swelled to almost twice the normal size. The lack of iron caused anemia, a blood disorder that left its victims extremely fatigued. Reports of men idling on the public

works were likely due to this condition, although the English attributed it to laziness. (Gallagher, 2001, p. 50)

Allan's (2001) informational text is a well organized, heavily illustrated, and easy to read book that provides a powerful introduction to the events of the Famine. Allan writes that, weakened by hunger, "Famine victims fell prey to horrific and often fatal diseases such as typhus, yellow fever, and dysentery. Shocked eyewitnesses described whole villages where much of the population lay sick and starving on the floors of their cabins" (p. 19).

Families Torn Asunder

"I wished him dead so as I could have his food."

The family unit has always been of importance to the Irish. As such, one of the especial pains of the Great Hunger was the way that it tore families asunder. The destruction of families took the form not only of deaths. About two million people emigrated from Ireland during the Famine years, seeking a new life in countries such as the United States and Canada, or trying their luck to the south in countries like Australia or New Zealand. People "began to sail away from Ireland in droves, weeping as they watched the Irish shoreline fade from view," writes Gallagher (2001, p. 71). After all, as Hannah concludes in *The Grave* (Heneghan, 2000), "There's nothing for us here, only hunger and disease" (p. 101).

Other families remained in Ireland but still were separated. With her husband missing, Mother O'Driscoll sets off in a desperate, and ultimately fatal, search for her beloved companion. The O'Driscoll children cannot bear watching another parent depart. "Eily could see Michael was upset. He kept biting his lip until it nearly bled.

Peggy was like a wildcat. She clung to Mother and screamed and fought" (Conlon-McKenna, 1990, p. 41).

Feed the Children First (Lyons, 2002) is a dramatic, heart-rending collection of quotes describing events of the Famine. It is an anecdotal record of a suffering, common people enduring uncommon privation. In the 1940s, the Irish Folklore Commission asked children and grandchildren of survivors of the Famine to recall family stories that had been passed down. Some of these stories were published in a book entitled *Famine Echoes* (Poirteir, 1995). Much of the content for *Feed the Children First* was extracted from *Famine Echoes*. The heartbreak of watching one's family starve to death and remaining powerless to prevent it is one of the saddest of all Famine images. How much sadder is the following extract from *Feed the Children First* of a mother facing death, knowing that she will leave her baby alive and alone after she departs.

On one occasion a mother came with a baby in her arms. The poor little thing was gaunt. She kept whining for something to eat. The mother would persist in putting its lips to her breasts, which were milkless, in order to stop its crying. A drink of milk was given to the baby and its mother. Later the same day the mother was seen dead by the roadside with the baby still alive in her arms. (Lyons, 2002, p. 24)

Loved ones perished, children became orphans, and the wisdom of grandparents was lost. In some instances, family members had to decide between other family members. "It was shocking to hear stories about families so desperate for money to buy food that mothers had to decide between feeding their

infants and feeding their older sons" (Bartoletti, 2001, p. 68). Or this, from the same, powerful book: "It was even more disturbing to hear reports of parents who committed unthinkable acts of infanticide, murder, and suicide, rather than seeing their children suffer" (Bartoletti, 2001, p. 70).

Morpurgo's (2001) *Twist of Gold* tells of a young boy and girl who leave their dying mother and their home in County Cork to search for their father. In a story in which events are occasionally a little too convenient, the best writing is evidenced when young Annie is speaking to a riverboat captain, recalling the horrors she has endured. "'Twas when my little brother Danny was dying back home in Ireland,' said Annie quietly, 'I 'member I wished him dead so as I could have his food'" (p. 185-186).

Conclusion

"'Tis a land full of graves."

The true extent of the suffering of the Great Irish Famine of the mid- to late-1840s is unimaginable. As Lyons (2001) writes, "Who amongst us can measure the pain of starvation? The hungry are too weak to tell of it. The well-fed are too comfortable to imagine it" (p. 49). Across the distance of over 160 years, and the greater distance of our wealthy, materialistic, disposable, consumer society, it is impossible for us truly to understand the horrors of the Great Hunger. It is even more difficult for us to articulate that horror, and more difficult still to record it in a manner that both does justice to the victims, and yet is bearable for younger readers.

My concern was that authors and publishers of books for children might err too much on the side of caution, too much on the side of making the Famine a "readable"

topic. My study, however, has provided me with considerable evidence to the contrary. Irish Famine books written for young readers seem, indeed, to have captured the individual suffering and the general collective horror of that dreadful time in Irish history.

At the end of *How I Survived the Irish Famine* (Wilson, 2001), the fictional journalist, Mary O'Flynn, records, "Some people call Ireland 'the old country.' It makes me think of an old house where no one wants to live any more. Mother tells us not to speak of it at all. 'Tis a land full of graves, she says" (p. 32). Having recently returned from Ireland, I can testify that it is, indeed, "a land full of graves." The Famine cemeteries pop up everywhere, near the major tourist attractions, but also out in the deserted countryside, seemingly in the middle of nowhere. Many thousands of others, of course, lay outside the confines of the official cemeteries. Many were buried where they fell; others were never given the dignity of burial, and were left merely to be absorbed into the earth.

While it is difficult to imagine the horrors of the Famine, we should not downplay those horrors. It would be an injustice to gloss over or sanitize the suffering endured by the unfortunate Famine victims. Accurate depictions of the Famine give young readers the opportunity more fully to understand the enormity of Famine suffering.

It is a disturbing experience to study the literature of the Famine. I am pleased, however, to know that the juvenile literature contains what seems to be an accurate record of events. It does not downplay the suffering, but seeks to provide younger readers with a realistic portrayal of the Great Hunger. By helping children to recognize the dreadful reality of the Famine, we can endow them with a more

thorough understanding of those times when, as Pignat (2008) writes, in Ireland "grief lay like a wet blanket over all the country, smothering signs of life" (p. 239).

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Back to School Bulletin Board Ideas

By Angela Byrnes
Montmartre School

1. Reach for the Moon! Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars!

- Discuss goals with students and have each student write out two goals, one academic and one personal.
- Each student gets two stars, a large one and a small one. (see attached from ClipArt III Carson Dellosa publishing)
- On the large star, students decorate it and then paste on a picture of themselves.
- On the small star, students write out their goals and then decorate the star.

2. Stuck in the Middle With You!

- Divide the class into groups. Assign each group a month of the school year. During that time, that group of students is in charge of updating the bulletin board.
- Give the group a digital camera and have them take pictures of all of the middle level students in your school. (in class, at recess, at noon, etc). Print out the pictures in colour and in black and white.
- Have the group cut out pictures in various shapes.
- Students can use the pictures to design their own bulletin board.



3. Graffiti Board

- Choose a bulletin board and cover it with paper.
- Allow students to decorate it any way they choose. This can be done during free time, at recess or between classes. (This one may need some pre-teaching about appropriateness but I have never had a problem).

4. Mystery Baby

- Have each student bring a baby picture from home.
- Have each student write three clues about themselves. (this will require some pre-teaching on good clues vs bad clues).
- Have students fill out the clues and paste their picture on a universal sheet (see attached)

- Hang the projects on the bulletin board and allow classmates and other classes to guess.
- Be sure to include the teacher's baby picture as well!!

5. Fishing for a Good Book?

- This can either be volunteer or done as a class project.
- As students finish reading a book they think their classmates will enjoy, they get a fish template from the teacher. (this can be found on the Internet or teacher can design their own)
- Using the criteria guide, students fill out their fish (see attached)
- Students then staple their fish to the bulletin board.

If you'd like any of the handouts in colour, please email me and I can send you the originals.
Angela.byrnes@pvsd.ca

Good Books For Middle Years Kids

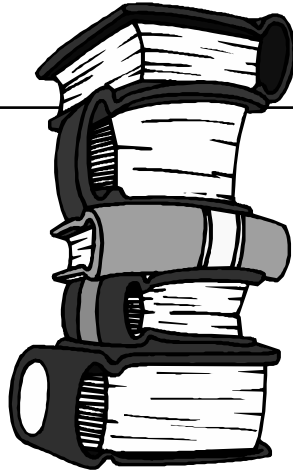
By Meredith Cherland

If this issue's "Good Books" column has a theme, it might be "Things aren't always what they seem." In each of these stories, an early adolescent struggles with not fully understanding something important. Two of these four books have boys as the main character, and two have girls. Three are Canadian, and one is written by an America Newbery medal winner. Two take place in the past, and two in the present. Two center on family life, and two do not. But all four are wonderful, engaging stories of growing up to be a responsible, thoughtful adult with sound values. I recommend them all!

***Living Outside the Lines* by Lesley Choyce. 2009. Red Deer Press. ISBN 978-0-8899-5435-9 (pbk.)**

I have read several other novels by Lesley Choyce and enjoyed them. But they've all been eco-thrillers, about kids struggling to save the environment from big businessmen who value money more than they do the future of the planet. I've reviewed *Clear Cut* and *Burn*. This book is quite different and even more challenging. And yet I think mature middle years readers might like it.

This is the story of a boy named Nigel who loves to write. When his English teacher assigns a short story, Nigel writes one about a world where teenagers become powerful citizens. In Nigel's story,



"older people" retire in their early twenties, and teens provide health care and education, and run the government and the world of business. When a publisher expresses interest in Nigel's story, a mysterious and lovely new classmate (Michelle) encourages Nigel to take advantage of the offer. When the book is published, Nigel becomes a celebrity. Many critics praise Nigel's book, but others criticize it harshly.

So far, so good. Then Problem Realism turns into Fantasy as we find out that Michelle is from the future, and the book Nigel has written has become (in her time) a guidebook for the youth of her day. Nigel falls in love with Michelle, and when she has to return to her own time, Nigel has to choose: Should he say goodbye to Michelle and remain in a world where teens are second class citizens? Or should he say goodbye to his parents and head into the future where his novel has become reality?

It's a weird premise, but it does allow Lesley Choyce to give us

some very interesting themes to think about. Would young people really be able to rule the world? What's the relationship between love and control? What does dying feel like, and what would happen if people could choose the hour of their own deaths? Choyce's answers might surprise you.

To be honest, there were times while I was reading this book when I felt confused by the plot, which is anything but linear. Sometimes I thought to myself, "That's crazy." There's a great interview with Lesley Choyce at the end of the book, which could be read before or after reading the story, and that might help. But for kids who've enjoyed reading Lesley Choyce novels in the past, this is one is just as fast-paced, suspenseful and edgy as the others have been. This book is worth a try.

***Johnny Kellock Died Today* by Hadley Dyer. 2006. Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. ISBN 978-0-00-639534-8 (pbk.)**

Rosalie Norman is the youngest child of a big family, and she's just had her twelfth birthday. It's the long hot Halifax summer of 1959, and Rosalie's life is in turmoil. Her mother has just fallen down the stairs and broken her ankle, and Rosalie knows it's her fault because she left her drawing pencils on the stairs. Even worse is the fact that Rosalie's seventeen-year-old cousin Johnny Kellock has disappeared. Rosalie and her sweet older sister Martha both love Johnny, and they are desperately worried about him. But Rosalie's parents won't share any information, and Rosalie sets out to find Johnny on her own.

She enlists the help of David, a new boy in the neighborhood who's been hired to help with her parents' yard and garden. He also works cutting grass in the local

cemetery, and so Rosalie's school friends call him the "Gravedigger". David has a father and brothers, but his mother is dead, and part of the charm of this story is that even though Rosalie starts out being mean to David, she changes her mind and comes to like him better than her girl friends from school.

This is partly a story of growing up. Rosalie begins to realize that her beloved family has some secrets they are protecting her from. They have no idea how she's suffering from not understanding what's happened to Johnny. David and Martha help her uncover some of the secrets, which doesn't take away her sadness, but it does ease her suffering.

What's happened to Johnny Kellock is a mystery to be solved, and middle years kids will enjoy that. They'll also understand Rosalie's point of view, and her confusion as she understands some of what's going on in her family relationships, but not all of it. They'll be interested in her friendships, and in David's family too. They'll like the summer-time adventures the kids enjoy, and Rosalie's fine and loving parents. They may even enjoy the beautiful writing (this novel was the "Canadian Library Association's Book of the Year for Children" for 2006). And Rosalie gets an answer to her questions in the last pages of the book. So satisfying!

Caution: Because this one is set in 1959 and takes middle years readers into an unfamiliar past, it may take kids some time to get into it. I suggest asking kids to read the first 50 pages before they give up on the book. By that time, I think they'll be hooked!

***The Loud Silence of Francine Green* by Karen Cushman. 2006. New York: Random House. ISBN 978-0-375-84117-0 (pbk.)**

Francine Green is a lonely eleven-year-old who attends the Roman

Catholic "All Saints School for Girls" in Hollywood, California. The year is 1949, and when the new girl Sophie comes to All Saints, she quickly becomes Francine's best friend. Francine is silent, compliant, and obedient, caught between a pretty older sister who is "going steady" and an adorable little brother who demands a lot of attention. Francine never disobeys her parents. But Sophie Bowman is an only child, outspoken and rebellious, someone who questions authority and protests against injustice, in and out of school. Each girl has a good effect on the other, although the nuns who teach at All Saints disapprove of Sophie, especially the mean and vindictive Sister Basil. (There's an end note to remind us that not all nuns are bad people.)

This novel is historical fiction. Each chapter's title is a month and a year (the first chapter is "August 1949" and the last is "June 1950"). What's happening in the United States during those months is important to Francine's story. When Sophie and her father encourage Francine to start thinking for herself, she begins to worry about Senator McCarthy and the communist scares in Hollywood. An actor who is a friend of Mr. Bowman's is blacklisted, and can no longer work. When Francine's father builds a bomb shelter in the backyard, she worries about the Cold War and The Bomb, and writes to her favorite actor Montgomery Clift for advice.

This is a complicated story, and I think middle years readers might enjoy this book more after they've had a lesson on historical fiction as a genre. (Maybe some of them have read *Catherine, Called Birdy* by the same author, a novel set in the middle ages.) Teachers can smooth the way for kids by explaining that a lot of what seems strange to them may be part of that moment in history in California, right after World War II. No one says "Holy cow!" and "He's dreamy" anymore,

but in 1949 they did. No one wears saddle shoes and circle skirts anymore, but in 1949 they did. Kids who understand what life was like for kids in 1949 stand a better chance of liking this story. Luckily, author Karen Cushman provides some good historical notes at the end of the book. (Read those first!)

Underneath the details of life in 1949 we have the story of Francine growing up, and learning to see beyond her sheltered life. She tries to tell her father why she's worried about the Bomb, and worried about the government lying to them about what will happen in the event of a nuclear attack. She knows they won't survive, so why is he building a bomb shelter? When Sister Basil begins to persecute Sophie in ways a teacher could never do today, Francine struggles to speak up and defend her dearest friend. And in spite of some sad events, Francine becomes a happier person. She's even able to smile and appreciate her housewife mother's moves toward liberation. She's even able to feel sorry for her older sister and her younger brother.

This is not an easy read, but for some middle years readers it might be a very good and challenging book. We all need to learn to think critically and speak out, and Francine Green sets a good example for all of us.

***Oil King Courage* by Sigmund Brouwer. 2009. Victoria, BC: Orca Book Publishers. ISBN 978-1-55469-197-5.**

This book is a wonderful read! It has plenty of play-by-play descriptions of great hockey games, a fast-moving plot, funny characters who are great friends, an absorbing mystery, and just a bit of romance. Add to all that the fact that it's set in the Canadian North (the western Arctic), mostly in Inuvik, and you have an amazing Canadian sports thriller.

Gear narrates the story. His best friend Reuben Reuben has a great hockey game, and the Edmonton Oil Kings want to sign him, even though he's under age and still in school. Gear's hockey game is OK, but his first love is flying (he wants to be a pilot). His second love is Lizzie, Reuben's sister. Grandma Nellie, who is Reuben's guardian, doesn't want Reuben to go south to play hockey until he understands his Inuit heritage. She prepares to send him on a journey around the Arctic where he will meet Elders who can show him and Gear the old ways, and help them solve the mystery of who his grandfather was and how he died.

Then a local business man decides to sponsor a three-on-three pond-hockey tour around the Arctic. Gear and Reuben and their friend

Godzilla (just a nickname) are off to play hockey, and they soon find that in every town there is an Elder who has had a letter from Grandma Nellie. Each Elder has wisdom to share, and clues to give them about Reuben's grandfather and his mysterious death. I was hooked!

There are so many things I liked about this book. One thing is its humorous tone, and the banter on and off the ice. Middle years kids will love that. I also enjoyed the hot hockey, and the characters' ability to play really well. I liked the way Gear gets furious when his Inuit friends face racism, and the way he makes their struggles his own. Finally, I liked the mystery. I don't want to give anything away, but I will say that it involves a valuable painting by A.Y. Jackson (of the Group of Seven), and an exciting

attempted murder. One thing that would have made me like this book even more, though, would be a good map of the Arctic with the rivers and towns marked clearly. Why doesn't it have one?

Oh well. It's still enjoyable to read. I'm going to look for more books by this author!

Conclusion

In all four of these books, things aren't always what they seem. All four demand careful and critical reading, and attention to the details of the plot. Each one has some special challenges for middle years readers, but is rewarding for careful and dedicated readers. I hope you teachers have plenty of them in your middle years classrooms this year!

Call for Artwork

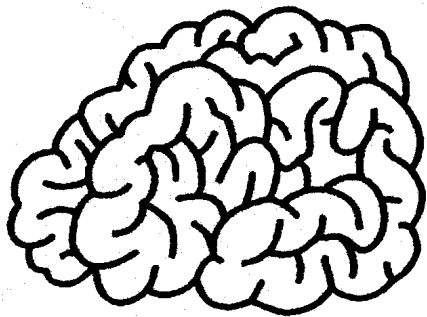
We are looking for student artwork to showcase in the journal. Please send artwork (preferably black and white) to:

Chantel Kaufmann
5148 Genereux Drive
Regina SK S4X 4P2

Please include the student's name, grade and school on the back of work.

BRAIN BREAKS

Brain Boosters for Teachers



By Chantel Kaufmann

<http://brainbreaks.blogspot.com/>

A GREAT website with videos of how to do each brain break. A great visual for students to see how to perform each activity.

Blink Brain Break

1. Stand Up.
2. Blink your left eye and snap your right hand finger and thumb at the same time.
3. Now blink your right eye and snap your left hand finger and thumb at the same time.
4. Go back and forth as fast as you can

Guns and Roses Brain Break

1. Stand Up.
2. Make a gun with your right index finger and thumb. Keep your other fingers tucked in.
3. With your left hand put all your fingers straight up. Then move just your index finger to touch your thumb to make a circle "rose".

4. Now switch and make a rose with your right hand and a gun with your left.
5. Keep switching back and forth as fast as you can.

Elbow to Knee Taps Brain Break

This is a stretching activity where you will be tapping your elbow to your knee in different patterns.

1. Stand up.
2. Hold your ears with your hands.
3. Tap your right elbow to your left knee. Tap your left elbow to your right knee.
4. You will be tapping each knee alternately using this pattern: 1, 1, 2. For instance; 1 tap (right elbow to left knee), 1 tap (left elbow to right knee), 2 taps (right elbow to left knee), and then back to 1 tap (left elbow to right knee), 1 tap (right elbow to left knee), 2 taps (left elbow to right knee). Do this as fast as you can. Be creative with your patterns. Use a pattern like 3,1,2 taps

Hand Shake Energizing Brain Break

You will be doing a lengthy handshake with your partner.

- Stand up and find a partner. Decide who is A and who is B.
- Tap your right elbows together. Tap your left elbows together.
- Person A: Give a crossing over low side five to your partner with your right hand. (right hand to right hand) Now do a fist bump with your right hand. (A fist bump is making a fist, and lightly touching finger sections that are closest to the wrist) Person B: Give a crossing over low side five to your partner with your left hand and then do a fist bump with your left hand.
- Bump your right shoulders together. Bump your left shoulders together.
- Person A: Make an X in the air with your right arm over your left. Person B: Make an X in the air with your left arm over your right. Now while slapping each other's hands move them together back to their correct side.
- Now do a double fist bump. (Opposite hands will be touching)
- Repeat this handshake over and over as fast as you can.

In Common <http://school.discoveryeducation.com/brainboosters/>

Question

What is the one thing shared by all three items in the same group?

| A | B | C | D | E | F |
|--------|-------------------|----------|-----------------|-------------|----------|
| a cow | a doctor's office | a zipper | restaurant goer | a potato | a river |
| a shoe | a post office | a shark | a bird | a hurricane | a person |
| a baby | music | a comb | the Senate | a target | a cave |

Answer

| | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| A. a tongue | B. a scale (or a key) | C. teeth | D. a bill | E. an eye | F. a mouth |
|----------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|

Tom Swifties (STRATEGY: Draw a picture)

Question

A Tom Swifty is a sentence ending in an adverb that both tells how or when Tom said something and applies to the meaning of his statement. Here's an example:

"Don't sit in the back of the boat," said Tom sternly.

Sternly describes Tom's tone of voice. In addition, stern is another word for "back of the boat." So sternly is a particularly appropriate word for ending the sentence. Make a Tom Swifty out of each of the following sentences. The first letter of each adverb appears as a hint.

- "Does anyone have a hammer?" asked Tom s_____.
- "I hope you like the gift I brought," said Tom p_____.
- "This poison ivy is making me itch!" exclaimed Tom r_____.
- "I got first prize," reported Tom w_____.
- "I wish I had written down the things I need at the store," said Tom l_____.

Answer

| | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. strikingly | 2. presently | 3. rashly | 4. winningly | 5. listlessly |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|

Two of a Kind

| Question | Answer | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>For each three-letter sequence below, provide two words that include the identical sequence and that are both in the category named. For instance, for the sequence ERI and the category LAKES, you could come up with Erie and Superior.</p> | <p>SEQUENCE BAG COR RON ALE ART</p> | <p>CATEGORY vegetables zodiac signs metals state capitals U.S. Presidents</p> |

1. rutabaga and cabbage
2. Scorpio and Capricorn
3. iron and bronze
4. Salem and Raleigh
5. Arthur and Carter

Whats the Fewest?

| Question | Answer |
|---|---|
| <p>Some kids are playing hide and seek in a park where there are seven trees. One of the kids is "It," and the others are all hiding behind trees. Of course, you can't see them, because they're hiding. See if you can figure out the fewest possible kids hiding, using the following information:</p> <p>A girl is hiding to the left of a boy. A boy is hiding to the left of a boy. Two boys are hiding to the right of a girl.</p> | <p>The fewest kids hiding is 3. A girl is on the left; to her right is a boy; to his right is another boy.</p> |



Michelle Adams

Michelle Adams, from Sacred Heart School in Estevan teaches grade 5 as well as being the Technology Coordinator is a true example as someone who *teaches from the heart*.

She is described as someone who is very organized, creative, and "gets the job done." With students, she always finds creative ideas that keep kids motivated with learning. And, is very involved in various events throughout her community of Estevan that benefit the students and community greatly. With her colleagues, she always has time to here what they have to say. As the technology coordinator, Michelle makes extra effort to find creative resources for teachers to use with their students in all of their units

CONFERENCE UPDATE

OCTOBER 21 & 22, 2010, Saskatoon, SK

NEW THIS YEAR!

In order to better meet the needs of our members, SMYA has moved our conference, *Bridge the Middle*, from March to October. Now you can get great ideas from the conference and then return back to school with enough time to try them out this year!!!

Preconference Workshops

Classroom Management in the Middle-
The Real Secret to Success



Dedra Stafford
Technology and Middle Years
Consultant

Set aside the vision board and the meditation tapes, the real “secret to success” is classroom management and relationships. Best practices like DI, technology, and RTI are all great ONCE YOU MASTER CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT. New teachers and veteran teachers must attend this session. You will keep your sanity once you learn effective management systems, partner plans, teacher timesavers and much, much more.

Come in and bring a pencil; you will want to write this stuff down!

Over 20 displays and booths as well as two keynotes and over 20 small group sessions!!

Literacy and Leadership: Putting it All Together



Dr. Sharon Faber
Literacy Consultant-Author

Are your teachers struggling with what to do with students who lack motivation and the reading skills they need to learn? As the student population becomes increasingly diverse, educators are faced with the challenge of providing academically rigorous instruction to all students. Because this requires teachers to adopt new strategies that challenge learners to think at higher levels; it will subsequently require leaders to intentionally address all aspects of the change process to ensure teachers have the support they need to successfully incorporate the new strategies in their classrooms. How can you help teachers gain skills and set up a literacy focused building? This session will help administrators know what to do even if they don't have a literacy background.

Schedule

| Thursday, October 21 | Friday, October 22 |
|--|---|
| 10:00-12:00 Preconference Workshop | 7:30-8:30 breakfast |
| 12:00-1:00 Lunch and display tables (sandwiches) | 8:30-9:30 Keynote: Dedra Stanford |
| 1:00-2:30 Conference Kick off and Opening Keynote: Sharon Faber | 9:30-9:45 coffee break – tour exhibits |
| 2:30-2:45 coffee break – tour exhibits | 9:45-10:45 Breakout Session #2 |
| 2:45-3:45 Breakout Session #1 | 10:45-11:00 coffee break – tour exhibits |
| 4:00-8:00 S.M.Y.A Social with Beef on a bun, tour exhibits | 11:00-12:00 Breakout Session #3 |
| | 12:00-1:00 Lunch provided and Annual General Meeting (soup and wraps, veggies, desserts) |
| | 1:00-2:00 Breakout Session #4 |
| | 2:00-2:15 Break |
| | 2:15-3:15 Closing Keynote: Sharon Faber |

More information will follow in the near future. For specific questions, please email mike@smya.ca or visit www.smya.ca



Everyone knows a teacher who does an outstanding job in the middle. Please give that person the recognition they deserve. Fill out the attached information, and send it to the address below or email the information to chantel@smya.ca.

Teacher's Name: _____

School: _____

Teaching Assignment: _____

Three words describing the teacher's personality:

A sentence or two describing the teacher's relationship with:

a) Students:

b) Colleagues:

c) Community:

Anything else you would like mentioned?

Application for Membership



WHAT CAN THE SMYA DO FOR YOU???

Members receive:

- Three issues of *In the Middle* – the only professional middle years journal published in Canada
- Three issues of *President's News* – keeping you up-to-date on middle years news
- Inservice up-dates across the province

- I hereby apply for membership in the Saskatchewan Middle Years Association. Membership for one year is \$25.00
- I hereby apply for membership renewal in the Saskatchewan Middle Years Association. Renewal for one year is \$25.00

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Employed By _____

Present Position _____

Are you an STF member? Yes No Teaching Certificate Number: _____

I have enclosed a cheque or money order for \$25.00 I understand this is my membership fee for one year.

I hereby consent to the collection, storage and use of personal information by and for the executive of the SMYA for purposes of receiving "In The Middle", the journal of the Association, the "President's Newsletter" and periodic notification of upcoming professional development opportunities. Information is processed and maintained in a confidential database by the STF.

DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____

Please mail this application form when completed to:

Chantel Kaufmann
Saskatchewan Middle Years Association
5148 Genereux Drive
Regina SK S4X 4P2

SMYA/NMSA Resources

| Title | Quantity | Price | Total |
|--|----------|---------|-------|
| Academic Success Through Empowering Students | | \$15.00 | |
| Authentic Assessment From A-Z | | \$20.00 | |
| A Vision of Excellence | | \$10.00 | |
| Connecting The Curriculum Through Interdisciplinary Instruction | | \$20.00 | |
| Day One and Beyond | | \$25.00 | |
| Drumming To The Beat of Different Marchers | | \$25.00 | |
| Dynamite In The Classroom: How-To Handbook For Teachers | | \$25.00 | |
| Essential Questions- With Answers- for Middle Level Teachers | | \$9.00 | |
| Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessing and Grading In A Differentiated Classroom | | \$30.00 | |
| For the Love of Books | | \$16.00 | |
| Grounded For Life | | \$22.00 | |
| H.E.L.P. For Teachers | | \$1.00 | |
| H.E.L.P. How to Enjoy Living With A Preadolescent | | \$1.00 | |
| How To Become An Exemplary Middle School Principal | | \$12.00 | |
| If You Don't Feed The Teachers The Eat The Students | | \$20.00 | |
| Implementing and Improving Teaming | | \$30.00 | |
| "In The Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents" | | \$24.00 | |
| Inside-Outside in the Middle | | \$30.00 | |
| Integrated Studies in The Middle Grades | | \$25.00 | |
| Integrating Instruction In Language Arts | | \$20.00 | |
| Integrating Instruction In Math | | \$20.00 | |
| Integrating Instruction In Science | | \$20.00 | |
| Integrating Instruction In Social Studies | | \$20.00 | |
| Interdisciplinary Units and Projects for Thematic Instruction | | \$30.00 | |
| Living With A Work In Progress | | \$15.00 | |
| Middle Level Education in Small Rural Schools | | \$12.00 | |
| The Middle Years: A Parent's Handbook | | \$1.00 | |
| Mr. DeVore's Do-Over | | \$12.00 | |
| More H.E.L.P. | | \$1.00 | |
| Not Much Just Chillin': The Hidden Lives of Middle Schoolers | | \$20.00 | |
| Parenting 911 | | \$25.00 | |
| Prescriptions For Success in Heterogeneous Classrooms | | \$25.00 | |
| Reading Don't Fix No Chevys: Literacy in the Lives of Young Men | | \$24.00 | |
| The Rebooting of a Teacher's Mind | | \$21.00 | |
| Reflections From A Teacher's Heart | | \$6.00 | |
| Research and Resources in Support of This We Believe | | \$10.00 | |
| The Roller Coaster Years | | \$22.00 | |
| A School-Wide Approach to Student-Led Conferences | | \$20.00 | |
| Service Learning In The Middle School: Building A Culture of Service | | \$12.00 | |
| Staff Development Kit: Implementing The Middle School Concept | | \$24.00 | |
| Starting Points: How To Set Up And Run A Writer's Workshop | | \$22.00 | |
| Student-Oriented Curriculum: Asking The Right Questions | | \$20.00 | |
| Teacher's Teaming Handbook: A Middle Level Planning Guide | | \$30.00 | |
| Teaching 10-14 Year Olds | | \$30.00 | |
| Team Organization: Promise-Practices and Possibilities | | \$15.00 | |
| The Team Process | | \$22.00 | |
| This I Believe Flyer | | \$1.00 | |

| Title | Quantity | Price | Total |
|---|----------|--------------|-------|
| This We Believe: Successful Schools for Young Adolescents | | \$8.00 | |
| This We Believe In Action | | \$25.00 | |
| Tools for Teaching Content Literacy | | \$14.00 | |
| Treasure Chest: A Teacher Advisory Source Book | | \$30.00 | |
| Turning Points 2000: Educationg Adolescents in the 21st Century | | \$25.00 | |
| Using Portfolios Across the Curriculum | | \$20.00 | |
| Watershed: A Successful Voyage Into Integrative Learning | | \$25.00 | |
| Watershed: Whole Learning Activities Book | | \$27.00 | |
| What Every Middle School Teacher Should Know | | \$30.00 | |
| Writing For Real: Strategies for Engaging Adolescent Writers | | \$25.00 | |
| To Order: Lana Steiner RR 2 9-77 Canora, SK S0A 0L0 email: lana@smya.ca | | TOTAL | |
| | | | |

Plus shipping and handling.

Saskatchewan Middle Years Association

Harold Schultz Middle Years Development Fund

Introduction

The need exists in Saskatchewan to encourage continued development in the Middle Years area. The SMYA is the logical organization to initiate and encourage such development.

This development fund was established to encourage Saskatchewan based projects and/or programs related to the Middle Years child. The fund is named in honour of Mr. Harold Schultz who was a driving force in starting the Middle Years concept in Saskatchewan. It was through his research, his encouragement and his dedication that the philosophy of Middle Years Education took hold and continues to grow today.

Objectives of the Fund

The monies of the fund are to assist, financially, individuals, groups and/or schools in developing programs or research projects that increase the understanding and awareness of the Middle Years child in Saskatchewan.

The monies of the fund may be awarded to those projects, ideas or programs that help to increase the understanding and awareness of the Middle Years child and/or promote effectiveness of the Middle Years teacher.



PLEASE NOTE:

There is no application form for this award. Candidates must submit a written application meeting the guidelines below.

General Guidelines for Selection

1. The results of such projects, programs, or practices supported by this fund must be made available for the use of the SMYA and its members.
2. The recipient(s) of monies from the fund must submit a comprehensive typewritten report to the SMYA executive upon completion of the projects.
3. The SMYA journal, *In the Middle*, must be provided with a synopsis of useful and relevant results of the funded project(s) for publishing purposes.
4. The recipients must acknowledge the financial assistance of the SMYA in the text of the comprehensive typewritten report.
5. The executive of the SMYA has the right to change, delete, or add any conditions related to the awarding of monies related to the fund.

Conditions

1. Payment of the monies of the fund will be 50 per cent when the project is approved by the SMYA Selection Committee and 50 per cent upon completion of the project and the submission of an article suitable for publication in our journal.
2. The allocation of the monies granted will be made at the discretion of the SMYA Selection Committee.
3. Applications for the 2009 award can be made any time prior to October 1, 2010.
4. Each application will be acknowledged and recipients will be notified of decisions immediately following the Selection Committee's meeting.
5. The amount of the monies of the fund to be allocated at the discretion of the Selection Committee shall not exceed \$1000.00.
6. Applications will be received in a format approved by the SMYA Selection Committee. Interested persons should forward inquiries to:

Harold Schultz Middle Years Development Fund

ATTENTION:

Chantel Kaufmann

Pilot Butte School, 5148 Genereux Drive, Regina SK S4X 4P2

(S) 781-4488 email: chantel@smya.ca

President's Award

The Saskatchewan Middle Years Association strives to promote an understanding of Middle Years Education within the province of Saskatchewan. Therefore, the President, on behalf of the Association, annually presents "The President's Award" to recognize individual excellence in middle years education.

Members of SMYA are invited to nominate an individual to be considered as a recipient of this award.

Criteria

1. The award will be presented to an educator who has made meritorious contribution to middle years education both locally and provincially.
2. Nomination must be made by a current member of SMYA.



Timeline

Applications for the 2009 award must be submitted to the President by October 1, 2010.

Nomination Form

A. NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name _____
Address _____
Work Address _____
Position Held _____
Telephone – Home _____ Office _____

B. NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Name _____
Address _____
Work Address _____
Position Held _____
Telephone – Home _____ Office _____

C. POINT FORM OUTLINE OF THE CANDIDATE'S CONTRIBUTIONS:

D. ATTACH A STATEMENT SUPPORTING YOUR NOMINATION (MAXIMUM 1,000 WORDS)

Mail all submissions to: Mike Spicer, 343 Fairview Road, Regina SK S4R 6W2
Email: mike@smya.ca

Saskatchewan Middle Years Association

Youth Grant

The SMYA supports and encourages special projects, initiatives, and student conferences. Because of this, SMYA has established a grant fund, which will allow our organization to support such ventures. Money will be awarded in two installments. Fifty per cent of the grant will be paid up front while the remaining 50 per cent will be awarded on submission of a written report that can be published in *In the Middle*, the SMYA journal. Applications should show how the project, initiative, or conference would enhance the education of the middle level students involved. Priority will be given to those applicants which are organized by students, for students, or that go beyond regular classroom excursions/trips.

1. Applications for funds must be made BEFORE the project, initiative, or conference takes place AND before an SMYA executive meeting. The deadlines for consideration at an executive meeting are:
 - a. April 30
 - b. June 30
 - c. December 30
2. Applicants must fill in the form and include a half to one-page summary or outline of the project, initiative, or conference on a separate piece of paper.
3. Applicants must be SMYA members.
4. Funds for grants will be set aside by the executive in the annual budget.
5. The maximum amount available for the grants is \$1000 per year. Amounts awarded are at the discretion of the SMYA executive.
6. All special projects receiving the initial SMYA financial support will be required to provide SMYA with a written report suitable for publication in the SMYA journal in order to receive their second installment.



Application for Financial Assistance for SMYA Youth Grant

Saskatchewan Middle Years Association
 c/o Chantel Kaufmann
 Pilot Butte School
 5148 Genereux Drive, Regina SK S4X 4P2
 (S) 781-4488
 email: chantel@smya.ca

Deadlines for applications are: June 30, December 30, April 30

School Name/Group Name

School Address

School Phone Number

Postal Code

Teacher Contact

Type of Event

Date

Location

Number of Participants

For Students and/or Teachers

Anticipated Costs

Sources of Funding

Food

Amount

Speakers

Source

Accommodation

Travel

Other (specify)

Total

Outline of Event

Please include a brief description of the project including rationale for the project, format and anticipated activities.

Do you have an active SMYA membership? Yes No

Have you received SMYA funding before? Yes No

Are you willing to:

a) Provide a report suitable for publication in the SMYA journal? Yes No

b) Make a presentation at our Annual Conference? Yes No

Please provide any additional information that will assist us in processing your request and attach it to the form.

Date

Signature



**The Saskatchewan Middle Years
 Association Conference**
Bridge the Middle
October 21 + 22
Saskatoon Inn, Saskatoon, SK

Send or Email Call for Presenters to:

Mike Spicer
 343 Fairview Road
 Pilot Butte School
 Regina, SK.
 S4R 6W2
 (F) 306-545-1250
mike@smya.ca

Deadline: September 15, 2010
 If space is available, applications will be accepted after
 Sept.15.

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| Name | |
| Address | Postal Code |
| School | Division |
| School Address | Postal Code |
| Telephone (S) | (H) (F) |

CO-PRESENTER *(if applicable)*

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| Name | |
| Address | Postal Code |
| School | Division |
| School Address | Postal Code |
| Telephone (S) | (H) (F) |

TITLE OF PRESENTATION

OBJECTIVES

DESCRIPTION SUITABLE FOR PUBLISHING IN CONFERENCE PROGRAM
(please continue on another sheet.)

PRESENTATION METHOD
 Check any that apply:

Hands on
 Lecture
 Practical
 Theoretical

ABOUT YOU

First Time presenter
 Presented at **other** conferences/conventions
 Presented at previous SMYA Conferences
 2007
 2006
 Years previous

REFERENCES *(Applications that are accepted for presentation at conference will be confirmed as soon as possible.)*

1.

2.

PRESENTER NEEDS
 Audience size preference

30
 50
 100 or more

PREFERRED TIME **PREFERRED DAY**

One Hour
 Two Hour
 Friday am
 Friday pm
 I'm Flexible

AV MATERIALS -

Overhead/screen
 VCR/DVD/TV
 CD/Cassette/Radio

Materials not listed should be brought by the presenter or specific arrangements must be made

SMYA will provide free conference registration and complimentary membership for the remainder of the year for presenters to a maximum of two. All other expenses are the responsibility of the presenter(s). Conference registration is **not** transferable. All presenters are required to submit a print ready summary for our professional journal, *In The Middle*. SMYA requests all presenters provide session handouts. If this is not possible please contact the Conference Chair by March 1, 2009 to arrange copying procedures. On-site copying will **not** be available.

****This is not a registration form.** You must still register by completing a conference registration form. Visit <http://www.smya.ca/>

Date: _____ Signature: _____

SMYA Presents our 30th Annual Conference

BRIDGE THE MIDDLE

2010



Thursday, October 21st • Friday, October 22nd
Saskatoon Inn
Keynote Speaker: Dr. Sharon Faber



Please print clearly all information so your registration can be processed.
RECEIPTS WILL BE EMAILED TO YOU

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: (w) _____ Email: _____

School: _____

Are you an STF member? Yes - Teachers certificate number: _____ No

Early bird Fee - \$200.00 until Sept. 10, 2010 Regular Fee - \$225.00 after Sept. 10, 2010
Payment MUST accompany registration form and be postmarked on or before Sept. 10, 2010

Student - \$100.00 (includes membership and GST) Presenter - No charge

Make cheques payable to SMYA and mail to Chantel Kaufmann at
5148 Genereux Drive, Regina Sask, S4X 4P2, Fax 781-4530, email chantel@smya.ca

Check for schedule, conference info, and updates at www.smya.ca

SMYA Privacy Policy

From time to time, the Saskatchewan Middle Years Association (SMYA) will gather, maintain, and use personal information about its members. This policy outlines the steps that the SMYA will undertake to safeguard the privacy of this information.

1. Accountability

- a. The Executive shall appoint one of its members as the SMYA Privacy Compliance Officer.
- b. The Executive may appoint other members of the Executive to be responsible for collecting personal information subject to the terms set out in this policy.
- c. Complaints and/or inquiries arising from the collection of personal information shall be directed to the Privacy Compliance Officer of the organization.
- d. Personal information of the membership shall be shared with and maintained by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) for grant purposes.
- e. Personal information shall not be shared with any other third parties.

2. Purposes

- a. Personal information will be used for communication purposes only. These communication vehicles will include the SMYA journal, the President's newsletter, and periodic mail outs, which may advise the membership of upcoming professional development opportunities.

3. Consent

- a. Consent to gather personal information shall be obtained annually from the membership at conference.
- b. Registration forms for new or renewed memberships shall contain a "Consent for Release of Personal Information" section.

- c. This policy shall be made available to all members.

- d. Information collected by the SMYA may be disclosed to the STF for grant purposes and/or to the members of the SMYA Executive only.

4. Limiting Collection

- a. The information collected shall be limited to:
 - i. Name
 - ii. Address
 - iii. Postal Code
 - iv. Teaching Certificate Number
 - v. Telephone Number
- b. Name, Address, and Postal Code information are needed to send communication to the member
- c. A teaching certificate number is required by the STF for grant purposes.
- d. Telephone numbers are required to communicate with members quickly (i.e. in the event of a program cancellation).

5. Limiting Use, Disclosure and Retention

- a. Membership information shall be retained for as long as a person is a member of the organization.
- b. Lapsed membership information will be retained for a maximum of one year.
- c. Lapsed information in electronic or "hard copy" form shall be securely destroyed.

6. Accuracy

- a. Membership renewal information will be checked for accuracy with the individual member.
- b. Individual members of the SMYA shall be responsible for informing the organization's Privacy Compliance Officer with appropriate updates to their personal information.

7. Safeguards

- a. All reasonable measures shall be taken to protect members' personal information against loss or theft.
- b. Access to electronically stored information shall be limited to members of the organization's Executive only.
- c. Executive members shall annually be made aware of the need to protect the privacy of members' personal information.
- d. This policy shall be reviewed annually.

8. Openness

- a. This policy shall be published on the organization's website.
- b. This policy shall be published annually in the Association journal.

9. Individual Access

- a. Upon a request by a member, the President shall confirm the existence of a member's personal information and shall provide a copy of this policy to the member.
- b. If a member deems her/his personal information to be inaccurate, the member shall be given the opportunity to correct any inaccuracy.

10. Challenging Compliance

- a. Complaints and/or inquires regarding this policy shall be directed to the Privacy Compliance Officer of the organization.
- b. Upon receiving a complaint and/or inquiry, the Privacy Compliance Officer shall attempt to resolve the issue as expeditiously as possible.

