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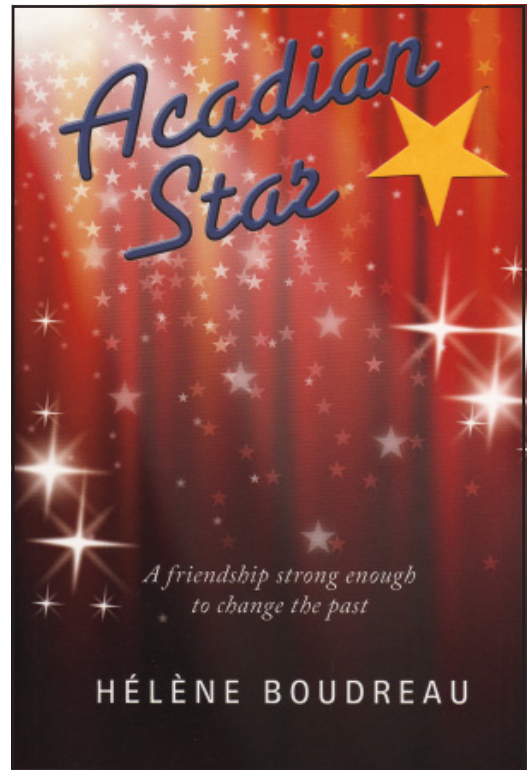
2010

Acadian Star

by H el ene Boudreau

The Acadian Star competition is the biggest thing to ever happen in Meg Gallant's small Cape Breton town. Meg dreams of performing onstage with her best friend N eve. If they're lucky, they might even make it to the finals in Halifax. But Meg's weird old aunt, Tante Perle, has been acting stranger and stranger-and just before the finale of the competition, she whisks Meg away from everything she knows.

Meg suddenly finds herself trapped in the time of the tragic Acadian Deportation-where she must choose between escaping to her own time and saving a girl who looks remarkably like N eve. Why is she trapped in the eighteenth century? Will she be able to save this stranger, so quickly becoming a friend? And where does Tante Perle fit in?



I wrote *Acadian Star* because I always wondered what it would be like to travel back in time. My mom judged an Acadian Star competition during our town's Acadian Festival. I thought it was a neat way to celebrate our culture, but it also made me wonder: what would it be like for a modern-day kid to be transported to the time of the Deportation? How would they react? How would they feel?

Thematic Links:

Cape Breton Geography and History
The Acadian Deportation
Genealogy
Traditional Music and Dancing
Time Travel

Activity Ideas:

- Mme Galland packs a trunk as the family awaits deportation. In it, she places articles for their voyage. What would students put in a trunk if they were in the same situation? What if they could only bring ten things? Why would they choose the things they have chosen?
- Meg Gallant is related to Perle Gallant and Marguerite Gallant of the past. How far back can each student trace his/her family tree? Do names reoccur from generation to generation?
- Draw a picture of your favourite scene in the novel.

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2010

Hélène Boudreau

author of *Acadian Star*

I write fiction and non-fiction for kids. *Acadian Star* is my first novel. I also have three non-fiction science books for kids called *Crimebusting & Detection*, *Miraculous Medicines*, *Sports Science: Swimming*.

I now live in Markham, Ontario, but a lot of the scenery from my novel, *Acadian Star*, is based on the Acadian village where I grew up, Petit de Grat, Nova Scotia. Petit de Grat is a small island off the coast of Cape Breton. I grew up with four sisters and three brothers and there was always plenty of singing and dancing in our family, and just like Meg and Nève in the novel, my brothers and sisters sometimes competed in talent shows at our local parish hall.

Tante Perle, from the novel, is based on my own great aunt, Tante Marguerite. She also lived in a little shack next to the ocean and believed that whales were magical. The relics from that shack are now housed in the Marguerite Gallant Museum at Trois Pignons in Chéticamp, Cape Breton.



Selected Awards

Acadian Star received Second Place in the 2008 New Brunswick Writers' Federation Literary Competition for juvenile fiction.

Some Other Books by Hélène Boudreau

Crimebusting & Detection, Crabtree Publishing, 2008

Miraculous Medicines, Crabtree Publishing, 2008

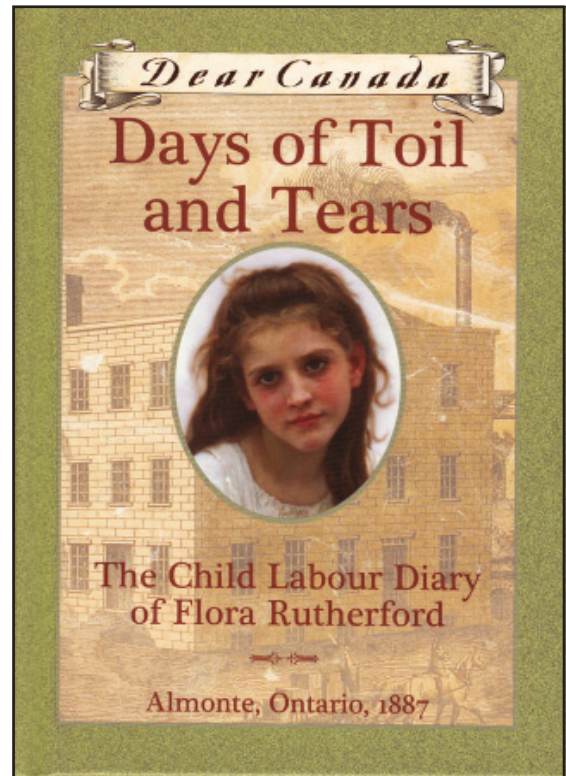
Sports Science: Swimming, Crabtree Publishing, 2009

Days of Toil and Tears

by Sarah Ellis

Young Flora is happy to leave the orphanage behind and join her aunt and uncle, even though it means working at a textile mill where there is the constant threat of being injured or going deaf. She writes about her feelings in her diary, addressing her father and mother who died when she was five. Then her uncle loses several fingers at the weaving machine leaving him unable to work, and money is very tight. Can Flora help her aunt and uncle survive?

These days we think that the “job” of children is to go to school and to play, but in 1887 many people thought it was normal for children to work in tedious, dangerous and unhealthy mills and factories. What was it like to be one of those children? How did they feel about the work they did? What were their sorrows and their dreams? What can the future hold for Flora?



Thematic Links:

Child labour
Canadian labour history
Industrialization
Textile mills
The manufacture of woolen cloth

Activity Ideas:

- Hand spinning and weaving.
- Compare a detailed record of a typical day in your life to a day in Flora's life.
- In Flora's day many people did the same work that their parents did. Mill work was a family affair. Do a survey of your class and find out how many parents ended up doing the same work as *their* parents.
- Is having a paper route child labour? What about baby-sitting? What about working in the family store? What's the difference between that and the kind of work Flora did? Debate.
- Look at some photos by Lewis Hine who recorded child labour and compare them to family photos of your own.

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2010

Sarah Ellis

author of
Days of Toil and Tears



Sarah Ellis was born in Vancouver and although she has travelled and lived elsewhere, she always misses the sea and the rain and has to come home. As a child, she read everything in sight and when she grew up she was lucky enough to find a career where reading is allowed. During her years as a children's librarian she discovered a delight in performing — in puppetry and storytelling. At the same time she became interested in writing about children's books, spending a year at The Center for the Study of Children's Literature at Simmons College in Boston. She now reviews children's books for Quill and Quire, The Hornbook, and occasionally for The New York Times. She lectures internationally on Canadian children's books and has travelled to Japan, Venezuela, England, Ireland and various Canadian and American locations in this role. She began writing her own fiction in a spirit of curiosity. Could she do it? Fifteen books later she is well and truly hooked.

When she is not telling stories, whether on paper or in the air, Sarah teaches writing at Vermont College of Fine Arts, gives readings in schools and libraries, gardens, cooks, reads, plays the ukulele, goes for long walks and putters around the basement.

Selected Awards

The Mr. Christie Book Award

The I.O.D.E. Violet Downey Award.

Short-listed for the Governor-General's Award for Children's Literature

Short-listed for the Ruth Schwartz Children's Book Award

Short-listed for the Canadian Library Association Children's Book of the Year Award.

Short-listed for the Manitoba Young Readers Choice Award

Some Other Books by Sarah Ellis

The Several Lives of Orphan Jack, Groundwood Books, 2003

Ben Over Night, Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 2005

The Queen's Feet, Red Deer Press, 2006

Odd Man Out, Groundwood Books, 2006

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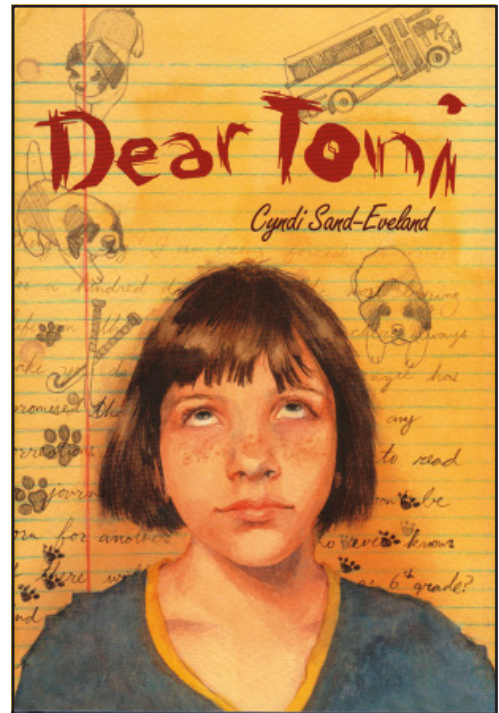
2010

Dear Toni

by Cyndi Sand-Eveland

I am continually inspired by young people and their ability to cope with all the learning, growing, and changing that comes with being a kid. A common thing for me to say is, “Being a kid is the shortest stage of life—it’s also the most important”. I want anyone who reads *Dear Toni* to walk away believing that they have a life that is worth writing about. You don’t have to climb any mountains, jump off any bridges, or win the lottery to be worthy of the written page. I hope everyone who reads *Dear Toni* can relate, in some way, to any of the characters in the book. I hope if you’re a kid whose family is living through hard times, this story helps you see your way out of it. If you are a parent who’s hoping your kids will be okay without the latest gadget, you’ll feel that they can be. If you’re a kid who’s a little bit different, you stay true to yourself and know that you are worthy of friendship.

Sometimes, when I’m talking with kids they say things like: I’m no good at that, or I can’t do that, or something else they’ve already decided they can’t, or they’ll never be able to do. It always makes me sad, because what you know when you get older is that those things really keep you from being all you can be. I was so glad that somewhere along the line Gene started to enjoy writing, really I was!



Thematic Links:

Coping with change

Connecting generations (ie: grandparents and pre-teens)

Bullying

Dealing with loss

Belonging

Courage

Activity Ideas:

- Write or brainstorm about what you think happens next. Who does Gene become and why?
- Write about a humorous event.
- Write poetry as documentation of an event, to capture a feeling etc. etc.
- Write letters to next year’s Grade 4, 5 or 6 at the end of the year and have an opening of the mail on the first day of the following year.
- If Gene and Toni met in forty years what would that look like?

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2010

Cyndi Sand-Eveland author of *Dear Toni*



I am a very curious person and for as long as I can remember I have been that way. That alone probably explains why I have so many interests. I spent the first years of my life in a very tiny community in the middle of the Alberta prairie, but it did have a pop machine and a post office! In the middle of summer we'd wander over the texas gate, (they are used to keep wildlife or domestic animals in or out of a certain area) and out onto the prairies to pick the always prickly, but delicious cactus berry.

In fourth grade we moved. There I met a girl there who actually had an old A-frame that was used as a doghouse for St. Bernards. That town had a general store, a gas station and a hotel. But overall my family wasn't very happy living there and so we moved again.

The new town had a main street with shops. My first job—I was twelve at the time, was slicing bread in John's Bakery with an electric bread slicer that had about a million extremely sharp knives all going about a million miles an hour. I tried more than once to get stuck bread out of those knives while they were still whizzing. I'm lucky I still have all my fingers—it would be difficult to write without them.

The very first time I remember any teacher encouraging me to write down my own thoughts, or put my imagination on the written page, was in Grade Seven. When I look back at those partial journals from that time I knew then I wanted to be a writer. It took me a long time to follow that dream. Don't do that! Now is the time to begin that journey.

At times I was a well behaved kid and other times, well, I was not. Even though my life was very ordinary it was full of some wonderful, some happy, some scary, and some sad stories, and although my family never travelled to any exotic countries there were many adventures.

Today I live in a little house at the base of Morning Mountain near Nelson, BC. I love to wake up really early and work, often I watch the sun rise over the mountain. I am married and the parent of two great kids who often find themselves, in the summer, wishing I would stop writing and make them breakfast. Needless to say they are both good cooks!

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2010

Dog Lost

by Ingrid Lee

One day I came home from work. A big dog ran down the hall. It stopped in front of me and barked. “Dog,” I said. “This is *my* house.”

That big barky dog sat down and put up her paw. I swear.

My son had brought the dog home. It was a pit bull. I didn’t want a big dog in the house, especially a pit bull. “Give her a chance,” my son said. So the dog stayed.

That dog saved our family in so many ways.

My son told me to write a book that mattered. I wrote *Dog Lost*. I met a lot of good people in that book, and I learned a lot about fairness too – even though some of the story is made up. In the story, Mackenzie gets a pit bull puppy named Cash. Mackenzie and the dog become a team. One day Mackenzie’s father gets mad and dumps the pup in an abandoned city lot. To make matters worse, City Council outlaws the pit bull breed.

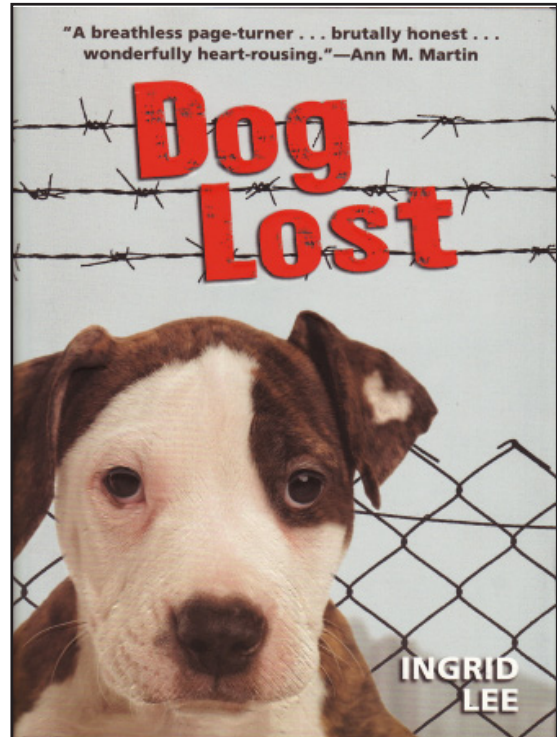
Mackenzie and Cash have to find each other. If you read the book, you’ll understand how lucky our family was to get that big barky dog.

Thematic links:

Importance of Community
Animal rights/ fairness
Loyalty

Activity Ideas:

- Dog Breeds (physical characteristics, personality traits)
- Responsibilities of Dog Ownership
- Dog Heroes
- Dogs in Literature
- Current Public Issues involving Dogs



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2010

Ingrid Lee

author of *Dog Lost*

I live in Toronto in a rather ramshackle bungalow with a big yard. Among other things, it has some Manitoba maples, a spring pond, a raccoon, a skunk and a wild black cat that reminds me of a panther. I'm a mother, which is so many things, and I learn a lot from my kids. I teach in Toronto too. I've taught thousands of children over the years and they have taught me back. And I'm a writer. Now my readers are my instructors too.



Some Other Books by Ingrid Lee

The True Story of George, Orca Book Publishers, 2004

George Most Wanted, Orca Book Publishers, 2005

Dragon Tide, Orca Book Publishers, March 2006

George, the Best of All, Orca Book Publishers, 2006

Maybe Later, Orca Book Publishers, 2008

Feather Brain

by Maureen Bush

More than anything, Lucas loves making dinosaur models. When his birthday parcels arrive in the mail, he tears into them. He's fascinated by the book on making life-sized models, but seriously disappointed with the single test-tube of liquid that's supposed to be his dinosaur-making kit.

Following directions in the book, Lucas makes a papier-mâché Stegosaurus, using some liquid from the test-tube. He leaves the model to dry on the window-sill; when he gets home from school, his Stegosaurus has come to life!

When Lucas decides to make a second dinosaur, he chooses a carnivore, a feathered Sinornithosaurus, hoping it will be fierce enough to take on Kyle, the class bully. But when the beast comes to life, Lucas gets much more than he bargained for.

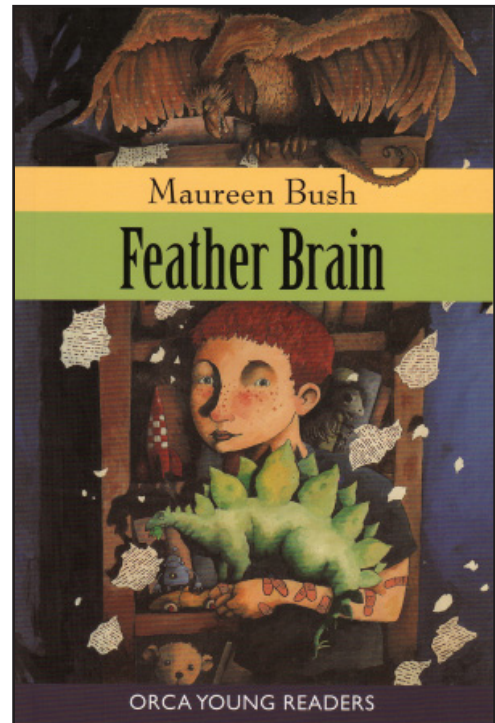
The idea for Feather Brain came from a wonderful book about making dinosaur models. On the cover was a model of a dinosaur that looked like it was leaping off the page, and I thought: what if it really could leap off the page?

Thematic Links:

dinosaurs
making things
bullying
fantasy

Activity Ideas:

- Check out howweirdcanyouget.com. Send in magical ideas for the contest.
 - Find *Make-a-Saurus*, by Brian Cooley and Mary Ann Wilson, and learn about making life-sized dinosaur models.
 - Choose your favorite dinosaur and make your own, of papier-mâché, plasticine, drawings, or origami.
 - Write a story about your dinosaur coming to life.
 - Talk about bullying – being bullied and bullying back. When did Kyle and Luke act like bullies? When were they kind?
 - Play “What if?” as a group, and then write stories.
- There's a teacher's guide for Feather Brain available on the Orca website (www.orcabook.com)



HACKMATAACK 2010

Maureen Bush author of *Feather Brain*



I was born in Edmonton and grew up in Edmonton and Calgary. I loved writing as a child but had nothing to say, so I went on to other things, including a Masters Degree in Environmental Design (Environmental Science). I worked as a public involvement consultant and trained as a mediator; then I discovered that I liked writing even better.

I love writing and reading, gardening and making things, and wild places like the Rocky mountains. My greatest claim to fame prior to writing kids books was knitting two-thirds of a sock for the Jackie Chan movie *Shanghai Noon*. (To admire the sock, check out the grey-haired lady knitting on the train.) I live in Calgary with my husband and two daughters.

websites: maureenbush.com and howweirdcanyouget.com

Selected Awards

Feather Brain was selected as an OLA (Ontario Library Association) Best Bets for 2008 for Children's Fiction.

Feather Brain has also been nominated for the 2009 Silver Birch Express (Ontario Young Readers Choice Award).

The Nexus Ring has been nominated for the 2009 Diamond Willow Award (Saskatchewan Young Readers Choice Award).

Some Other Books by Maureen Bush

The Nexus Ring, Coteau Books, 2007

HACKMATAACK

2010

Hamish X Goes to Providence, RI

by Seán Cullen

From the Sahara Desert to the undersea world of Atlantis to the picturesque town of Providence, Rhode Island, Hamish X and his friends Mimi and Parveen prepare for the final battle with the scourge of children everywhere—the evil Grey Agents of the ODA. Only then will the mysteries of Hamish, his boots, and his past finally be revealed.

Home to ODA headquarters, the very den of evil, as well as the Providence Red Hen

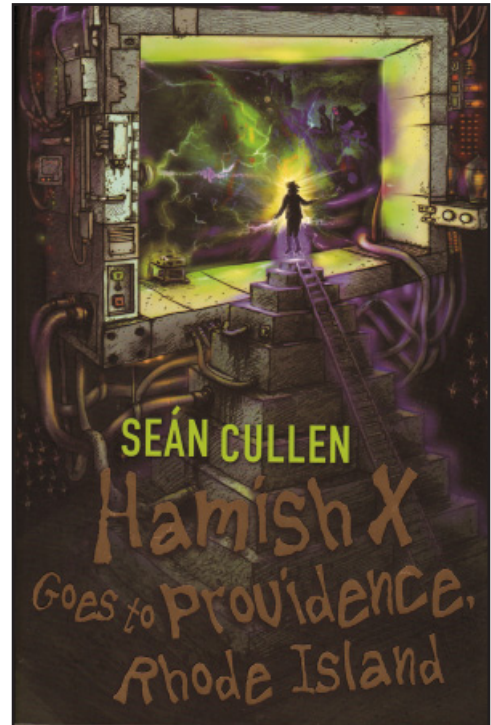
Thematic links:

Spys

Foot notes

Activity Ideas:

- Make up a secret code



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2010

Seán Cullen

author of *Hamish X Goes to Providence, Rhode Island*



Reading has always been one of Seán's greatest passions. After discovering Tolkein's "The Hobbit" in fourth grade, Seán has devoured books from every genre. Seán believes that reading and learning is fuel for his creative processes and he draws on all of the material his brain soaks up and uses it to infuse his work in all fields. When approached to write the first Hamish X books, Seán was presented with an interesting and irresistible challenge. Writing stand-up material and television scripts is very different from writing a novel. Television is really a collaborative process involving many minds and many revisions. Stand up material is very fluid and given to transformation as it impacts with the live audience. Writing a novel is a very solitary business. One is left alone with the work and with only occasional input from an editor. Feedback from a reading audience is months if not years in coming. Having said that, actually completing a book is incredibly satisfying. The books are by far the proudest achievement of his career.

Selected Awards

Hamish X and the Cheese Pirates has been nominated for several awards and even won a couple including The Rocky Mountain Book Award, and The Arthur Ellis Award in the Juvenile Crime category.

Some Other Books by Seán Cullen

Hamish X and the Hollow Mountain, Penguin, 2007

Hamish X and the Cheese Pirates, Penguin, 2006

Martin Bridge in High Gear!

by Jessica Scott Kerrin

Martin Bridge returns for more slice-of-life adventures in the sixth book in this widely acclaimed chapter-book series about an elementary schooler and great big fan of superhero Zip Rideout, Space Cadet.

In the first story, Martin faces all the problems inherent in group projects. The teacher saddles Martin's science-fair team with Gibson, a classmate with a reputation for doing little work but having uncanny luck. Everything comes easily to Gibson, while Martin and the rest of the team have to struggle to complete their tasks. Whether Gibson is truly avoiding work or is a master of efficiency is anyone's guess, but nobody travels the road of life without hitting a few mud puddles.

In the second story, Martin's brand new bike is stolen — and he'd only taken one ride! Yet, his Aunt Laverne, who's visiting, doesn't have a lot of sympathy for Martin. She thinks kids these days are spoiled senseless. Aunt Laverne makes a suggestion that helps a downcast Martin realize the importance of volunteering his time to help kids who are less fortunate than he is, and gaining intangible rewards besides.

These stories are based on personal experiences: the irrational anger one feels when team mates don't work particularly hard but somehow get better results; and the unfairness of having something stolen, even when one took precautions to lock it up!!

Thematic links:

Hard work and team effort

Volunteerism

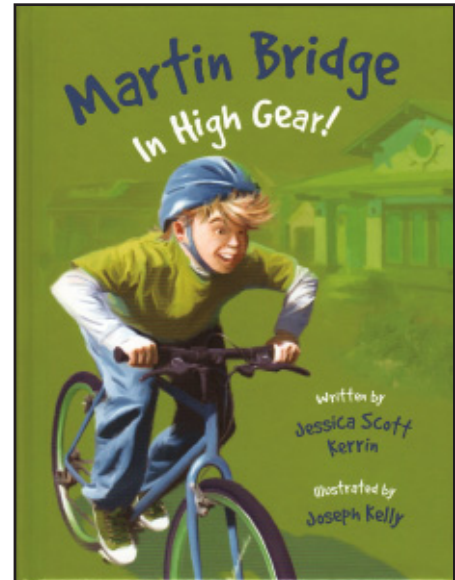
Environmentalism

Recycling

Science fair

Activity Ideas:

- Organize a beach, park or playground walk and conduct a litter clean-up
- Based on descriptions in the story, draw portraits of some of the main characters.
- Develop a schoolyard anti-litter poster campaign
- Develop a list of rules for team work
- Develop a profile of the qualities you look for in a good team member
- Address the question: is it better to be hardworking or lucky? Why?



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2010

Jessica Scott

Kerrin

author of *Martin Bridge in High Gear!*



I grew up on the Canadian Prairies, and although I enjoyed school, I had a terrible secret. I was a lousy speller. This made it tough because I really liked to write. It turns out that a lot of writers can't spell, and I figured this out when I got my first award for creative writing, back in grade three. On the trophy, my writing teacher had misspelled my name! Since then, I have tried, as much as I can, to write about experiences I find funny, like that one.

I created *Martin Bridge* after my husband, Peter, who was a leader of a boys' troop, came home with our son, Elliott, to describe their latest misadventure that involved exploding rockets. 'Smither-eens' is the result of that story.

Today, I live with my family and our pet tortoise in downtown Halifax in a house so old, the floors slope, and all the marbles end up in one corner. We like to share outdoor adventures, including a jungle trek in Costa Rica, a sailing tour in Croatia and riding around Halifax on our tandem bike. In addition to writing, I have managed galleries, dance schools and museums, and I have worked with artists, performers and curators. Now that I have staff, I get them to check my spelling. Some things never improve.

Selected Awards

Nominated for the 2008 Hackmataack Award (Nova Scotia Children's Choice Award).

Best Books of Exceptional Caliber, Canadian Children's Book Centre, 2008

Junior Library Guild Premier Selection Award, Spring, 2008

Best Books of Exceptional Caliber, Canadian Children's Book Centre, 2008

Some Other Books by Jessica Scott Kerrin

Martin Bridge: Ready for Takeoff! (Kids Can Press, 2005)

Martin Bridge: On the Lookout! (Kids Can Press, 2005)

Martin Bridge: Blazing Ahead! (Kids Can Press, Fall, 2006)

Martin Bridge: Sound the Alarm! (Kids Can Press, Spring, 2007)

Martin Bridge: Out of Orbit! (Kids Can Press, Fall, 2007)

Martin Bridge: The Sky's the Limit! (Kids Can Press, Fall, 2008)

Martin Bridge: Onwards and Upwards! (Kids Can Press, Spring, 2009)

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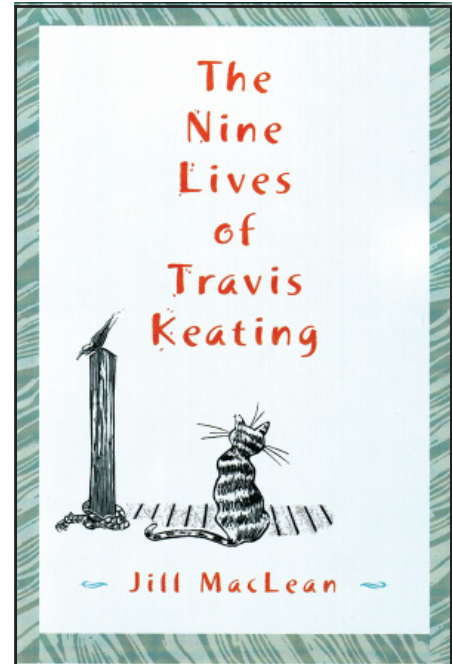
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The Nine Lives of Travis Keating

by Jill MacLean

After his mother's death, Travis Keating and his father move to Ratchet, Newfoundland, to start a new life. Some life. Travis soon discovers that only a few oddballs show any interest in him: Hector, a strange kid whose ears stick out; and Prinny, a girl as scraggly as her skinny ponytail. Nobody you can really call a friend. And then there's Hud, the toughest, nastiest bully in school, who hates "townies" and promises to make Travis's life an utter misery.

Travis decides to visit the dangerous Gulley Cove, with its treacherous wharf and its tumbledown fish shacks, which some of the kids say are haunted. Instead of ghosts, Travis discovers a colony of feral cats, sickly and starving, and unused to kindness. Putting aside his own problems to care for them is about to bring Travis more satisfaction—and more danger—than he ever would have thought possible. Jill MacLean wrote this book for her grandson—because he asked her to!



Thematic Links:

Bullying issues
Character building
Decision making
Animal welfare
Friendship and loyalty
Honesty

Activity Ideas:

- Design a pamphlet entitled *Caring for your Cat*.
- Research feline leukemia.
- Volunteer at or tour an animal shelter.
- Act out a scene from the book.
- Create a bookmark with five ideas to end bullying listed on it.
- If you had to cook for your family, what sorts of meals could you cook? Using the Canada Food Guide and other recipe books or sites, create a short cookbook of recipes for kids. Include at least two recipes for each meal (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) plus a dessert.

HACKMATAACK

2010

Jill MacLean

author of *The Nine Lives of Travis Keating*

Jill writing has always drawn on experiences in her life. Like the cats in her book, Jill's cats have always been strays, and she has volunteered both in Manitoba and Nova Scotia at animal shelters. Her books are set in Newfoundland, where her son and his family now live. Over the years, she's canoed, kayaked, hiked, and snowmobiled there, travelled the coves by boat, and stayed in the outports. Little did Jill realize at the time that these experiences could all be called "research," or that her love of the province would translate into words.



Selected Awards

Nominated title for the Ann Connor Brimer Award, 2009

Nominated title for the Canadian Library Association Children's Book of the Year, 2009

Some Other Books by Jill MacLean

The Past Tense of Prinny Murphy (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, September 2009)

HACKMATAACK

2010

The Secret of Grim Hill

by Linda DeMeulemeester

I love stories that have mystery/ adventure and are spooky but not super scary. While watching a soccer game, I began to get an idea for my own story. What if a Halloween soccer match had a lot more at stake than winning the game? What if there was something diabolical going on?

That's when the characters sprang into my head. Cat has just moved to a new town and has trouble fitting in, so she'll do almost anything to make the team and win the soccer match. She has to be extremely brave to put her dream on hold and figure out the mystery surrounding the strange hill in town. The idea of her little sister Sookie, who is rather mysterious herself, jumped into my head almost at the same time. I had all the pieces after that, so it was time to put the puzzle together and create THE SECRET OF GRIM HILL. It's been a wonderful time, and I'm glad there are more secrets to come...



Thematic links:

Celtic mythology

Fairy lore

Soccer

Halloween

HACKMATAACK

2010

Linda DeMeulemeester

author of *The Secret of Grim Hill*

I'm a teacher and a writer, and I like both jobs because they're both very creative. I live in B.C. in a decrepit, writer-like old house...yes; it looks a bit spooky...



Selected Awards

The Secret of Grim Hill, winner of the 2008 Silver Birch Award, Ontario Readers' choice award

The Secret of Grim Hill, Canadian Toy Testing Council, Great Books of 2008, readers' choice award

The Secret of Grim Hill is currently nominated for the Diamond Willow, Saskatchewan's Readers' choice award

Some Other Books by Linda DeMeulemeester

Grim Hill: The Secret Deepens, Lobster Press, 2008

Grim Hill: The Forgotten Secret, Lobster Press, 2009

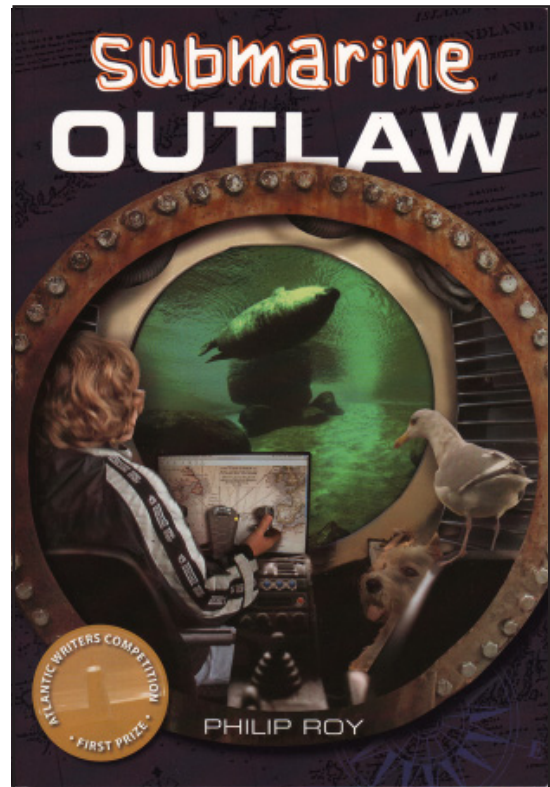
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2010

Submarine Outlaw

by Philip Roy

Alfred, a fearless young explorer, builds a submarine with a junkyard genius and goes to sea. He becomes an outlaw when the coastguard chases him, thinking he is a Russian spy sub. A homeless dog and a freakishly intelligent seagull become his crew and help him find treasure, rescue a drowning family and escape a navy shelling exercise. Wanting only to sail the high seas for exploration and adventure, Alfred is tracked by newspaper, radio and T.V., becoming unwittingly known as the notorious *Submarine Outlaw*.



Thematic Links

Outlaws: definitions of and interest in. Famous outlaws in westerns.

Submarines: military and civilian. Submarine construction; history and development. Famous accidents at sea.

Topography of the sea. NL and N.S. geography.

Storms at sea. Wind, waves and currents.

Free diving and holding your breath. Ocean pressure and its effects.

Working with recyclable materials.

Activity Ideas:

- Construct a model submarine out of recyclable materials.
- Examine an atlas and plot a course for where you would like to travel in a submarine.
- Design your own perfect submarine and what it would look like inside. How would you power it? What and who would you bring along on a long voyage at sea?
- Examine the topography of the sea around Atlantic Canada. Create a topographical model out of papier-mache or other materials.
- Debate the presence and activities of outlaws. Should they be accepted? Why, or why not?

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2010

Philip Roy

author of *Submarine Outlaw*

Philip Roy grew up beside the ocean in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. He loves the sea and everything about it. He has traveled around the world and lived on a tiny island in the Pacific, near the Marianas Trench, the deepest seafloor in the world. Philip also loves submarines, has built his own model sub out of recyclable materials and hopes to build a real one for travel in shallow waters. *Submarine Outlaw* is his first published book.



Selected Awards

Submarine Outlaw was 1st Prize Winner of the Atlantic Writers Competition. It was also nominated for the Ann Connor Brimer Award and the Diamond Willow Award.

Some Other Books by Philip Roy

Journey to Atlantis, the sequel to *Submarine Outlaw*, will be available in September 2009.