



SHARON ARMSTRONG

A MODEL WAVE MAKER

by Sandra Hughes

An energetic professional, Sharon Armstrong has emerged in the Grand Erie District School Board as a model of the proactive teacher-librarian. She makes positive waves for teacher-librarians within our board and the province because she knows "Information specialists, the teacher-librarians, teach information literacy to students, giving them the tools they need to succeed". Students Deserve Tools to Succeed, *Simcoe Reformer*, Tuesday, February 27, 2001.

Sharon's background is one that makes her sensitive to the issues of differentiated staffing while being a dedicated teacher-librarian. She worked in the former Haldimand Board of Education at Hagersville Secondary School as a Library Secretary/Technician for 16+ years before she obtained her B.A. in 1990 and her M.S.Ed. in 1992. She began teaching at Waterford District High school in 1992, obtained her School Library Specialist qualifications and Honour English Specialist qualifications. By 1997 she was Acting Library Head, and by June 2000, Library Head.

While working towards this goal Sharon chaired committees to write two pieces of library curriculum, the *Norfolk County Board of Education Transition Years Library-Information Skills Program* and the *Norfolk Board of Education Transition Years Integrated Curriculum Unit: Multicultural Studies, Canada's Native People*. She became proactive in speaking for the role of teacher-librarians with her

monthly and annual reports to her principal, trustees, superintendents, and the director. She created school library updates for her colleagues and principal. She began to create a dialogue and sharing of ideas between and among teacher-librarians. While she was doing all of this, she designed and implemented a pro-active library program focusing on literacy and information research skills in her school.

When amalgamation blended Brant, Norfolk and Haldimand boards to create the Grand Erie District School Board, Sharon became Chair of the GEDSB Teacher-Librarian Association. She embraced OSLA's *Information Studies* document in co-operative planning, teaching and evaluation with colleagues, and advocated it to colleagues who were less enthusiastic. She worked with our IT consultant and a committee of TLs to inservice the OSLA document for our Board. With a committee of teacher-librarians, she offered professional activities for TLs through the GEDSB Teacher-Librarian Association and she served on the GEDSB writing team for "Putting the Pieces Together" *Information Literacy: Resource Document for Teacher-Librarians JK-OAC*. Sharon took the opportunities that change offered her and set about making a difference.

Sharon pursued her own professional growth and worked to share her learning with the teacher-librarians in our Board. She attended Ideashop, now Super Conference, annually to interface with other TLs, to learn and to update and generate new ideas for her own library program. She attends OSLA workshops as often as possible to learn and to pass along the ideas and learning to