

starting afresh with Red Maple organized in a systematic manner with well-thought out structures and special events. One of the first things done was asking the principal for her support in September, which she gave immediately and enthusiastically. Money was received from the School Council.

Teacher-librarian Beth McEwen presented Red Maple at a staff meeting in the fall with the schedule of presentations in the school library later in November, complete with book talks, readings and the history of Red Maple in the province. This was followed up by morning announcements, (often read by the principal), and special displays.

Beth McEwen's warm, open, and welcoming rapport with students made this new club, the Red Maple Reading Club an appealing new addition to the many extra-curricular activities at King George. Each Wednesday at lunch the students met in the library for conferencing. Students were clustered in groups by book. It was difficult for the two of us to keep up, especially following the winter break holiday, but soon there were students who had read all ten. That qualified them to become conference leaders. Beth and I ran a workshop to teach them how to conference and they designed interview questions for each book to guide their talk.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose this year was five-fold.

1. To measure students' participation in Silver Birch and Red Maple reading programs in two different schools.
2. To calculate the total number of books read.
3. To compare the participation and reading preferences of boys and girls.
4. To compare fiction and non-fiction reading in Silver Birch.
5. To document these reading programs as seen through the eyes of students, parents, and classroom teachers.

Note: This was never meant as an exhaustive study but a start and both sites will pursue a similar log and expanded reflection by parents, students and teachers next year.

General guidelines for Silver Birch and Red Maple as we offered it:

1. All reading was free, voluntary, and extra-curricular.
2. Students conferenced each book when read, not to test but to facilitate their analysis\*.
3. Books were recorded as read after successful conferencing.
4. Students who successfully completed all books were taught to conference their peers, and created interview questions to guide them.
5. Since school library budget could not afford this program, special funding was sought and acquired.
6. Readers participated in award celebrations with peers and authors, in school and OLA Awards Ceremonies Toronto.

\*Students could also respond to a book through e-mail to teacher-librarians or volunteer or submit a written response. Only a handful chose an option other than conference.

See charts at right to see:

- Percentage participation by grade and gender
- A profile of the readers and what they read
- A breakdown of the interest in fiction vs non-fiction

