

Our Library Story, By Mrs. Stewart's Grade 2

Once upon a time there was a school with no library. The children were bored because they couldn't read anything. There were no books, no magazines, no videos, no CD-Roms or computers to use. There was not even a librarian to read to them.

The teachers were sad too. The teachers couldn't go on the computer or check out books for the class! Boo-hoo!!

One day the Fairy Book Mother arrived in the school mailbag and granted the children three wishes. The children wished for Joke Books, more Halloween books and Robert Munsch books. The fairy waved her wand and poof! — there was a library with all the books in the world. Hooray!!

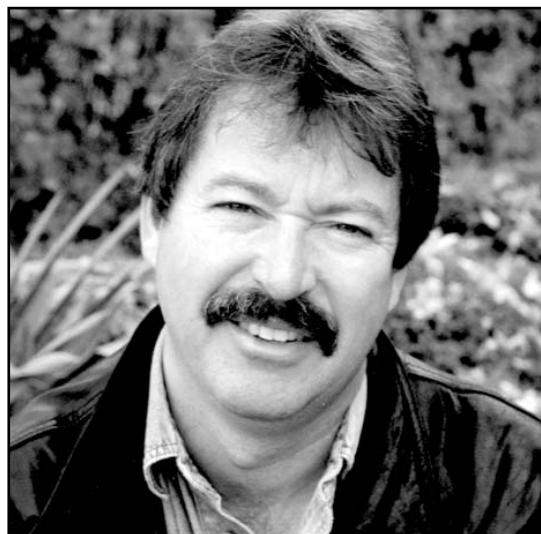
In the Greater Essex County District School Board, events, which varied from school to school, included NHL players reading to junior grades and oral readings over the PA system by principals and support staff. These were very popular with the students. School-wide readings and video-enhanced readings at assemblies also took place, as did daily writing based on opinion or self-exploration. Students in many of the schools were given bookmarks. At Taylor Elementary, not only was a Rate a Book program launched, but, after the teacher-librarian read a mystery over the PA, primary students also illustrated their favourite part while other grade levels wrote solutions to the mystery. A book was awarded to the best/most accurate submission from each division.

Meanwhile, in the Toronto District School Board, author and illustrator Ian Wallace delighted classes with readings at the TDSB's Military Trail Public School. Teacher-librarians with the TDSB also had a special evening event planned for them, with a reception and presentation at the Osborne Collection of Childrens' Books at the Toronto Public Library, during which they were encouraged to bring students to see the Osborne Collection.

Many school boards sent out press releases pointing out the connection between a strong school library program and student literacy, and commenting on what the current erosion of school libraries means to student learning. In an article in the *Hamilton Spectator*, Christine Cox wrote about the literature circles, introduced by teacher-librarian Andy Burns, that were held in St. Ann's elementary school. She went on to say that the "Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic school board wants a literature circle to become a part of the language program for grades 4 to 6. Burns said it's a way to promote a love of reading, as well as teaching skills including critical thinking."

Ian Wilson, the Librarian and Archivist of Canada, congratulated "the efforts made by everyone involved in school libraries across the country. School libraries play a vital role in the development of literacy and learning skills of children and youth in Canada".

If your library or school missed out this year, tuck this article away until school starts next year, then see what marvelous ideas you can build on for National School Library Day, October, 2005! ■



Eric Walters