

creating a Learning Commons, where staff and students come together to inquire, investigate and communicate, the teacher-librarian is an integral cog in the information-literacy wheel. If you believe that Shakespeare's timeless works can ignite the imaginations of children today, it is up to you, teacher-librarian, to promote and support their use in the classroom:

- **Host a LiBARDry week** (alternatively with a less cheesy title), highlighting the man and his works through displays, read alouds, lunchtime play-chats and challenges (e.g. match the quote to the character, create a trailer for a play, write an alternative ending to a play). In fact, if you have a vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself, you can book Lois Burdett to conduct a workshop at your school for students or staff. Contact her at lburdett@shakespearecanbefun.com
- **For infinite variety, create Shakespeare centres as a literacy series in the library.** Go nuts: reading centres, writing centres (creative and analytical), discussion centres with prompts, art centres, video centres. *Shakespeare Well-Versed*, by James Muirden, is a handy book of child-friendly poetry that summarizes all of the plays in just a few short pages (ideal for students not studying any particular play in depth).
- **Offer to support a language unit for a particular class or grade level.** Co-planning the activities and evaluations, co-teaching the lessons and co-assessing the products with a willing classroom teacher could be an excellent way to provide a great feast of learning for your students.
- **Post on websites and social media.** Using a library website, Twitter feed or blog, get students and families in the school community excited about Shakespeare by posting links, quotes, questions and competitions. Some links that might be helpful are the Folger Shakespeare Library (www.folger.edu/Content/Teach-and-Learn/Shakespeare-for-Kids) and BBC Primary History (www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/famouspeople/william_shakespeare).

Dame Helen Mirren said, "I do believe children should not be allowed to read Shakespeare until they are 15 years old." I know. I know. No one wants to be the one to contradict the classiest woman in the world. I agree that people should experience the Bard as he meant them to: in a theatre, swept up in the story by professionals on a stage; however, I think that Lois Burdett has given us ammunition to dispute Dame Mirren's contention. According to Burdett, teaching Shakespeare spawns great language and writing. With her resources and the guidance of an impassioned teacher-librarian, children can go beyond reading the plays to performing them. Children can understand what lines like, "False face must hide what false heart doth know," actually mean. In their excitement and understanding, children can become adults who love Shakespeare, thus keeping this little piece of western cultural history alive. How fortunate is the teacher who gets to be a part of that! ■

