

Arnot McCallum: Storyteller on a mission

BY BILL GAY

If you want to see enthusiasm and exuberance in an educator at its peak, then check out Arnot McCallum, the former English co-ordinator for the Windsor Board of Education. If Arnie can't give kids the desire to read, no one can.

In a sparkling presentation to a local writer's group in Leamington last week, Arnie explained how he created English materials for grade school teachers. He said he frequently left his office in the stratified school board office to go out and teach – the use of adjectives, for example – in the form of a play.

Arnie's imaginary characters abound. There is Super Rex, the caped wonder dog, and his girlfriend, the terrier Tammy Terrific (you know her by her bark). Over the years, Arnie McCallum has written poems for the kid in all of



Storyteller extraordinaire Arnot McCallum, right, stands with Writer's Group co-ordinator Brian Sweet. McCallum not only writes and publishes stories and poems for kids, he is also a mentor to many other aspiring writers.

us.

His presentation included poems and prose like I Am Not A Brat, and the true story of how his best friend, Billy Jarvis, helped a poor player like Arnie make the

hockey team. No kidding, Arnie was the world's worst hockey player, but he scored the winning goal using his head.

Arnie's Super Rex reading program has helped

local kids read over 21,000 books. He did this by creating a fictitious reading contest between the schools, rewarding "the winners" with a pizza party, T-shirts and copies of his many books. His goal was to get Grade 1 and 2 students excited about reading. Arnie has had support from the corporate sector, in particular Woodslee Credit Union, but many times used his own resources to buy the kids gifts to recognize their reading achievements.

Now a retired teacher, McCallum is still on a mission to help kids read. Listen to him read his children's poems like, I'm Not a Brat, Darn It Arnot, and There's a Dragon in My Wagon, and you'll agree that basic grade school education doesn't have to be boring.

For more information on Arnot McCallum's children's books, send an email to arnot@mnsi.net

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