

Resource Links Excerpts
V. 18, # 2
December 2012

Picture Books

CHAULK, Wayne

Saltwater Joys

Illustrated by Dawn Baker. Pennywell Books, 2012. Unp. Illus. Gr. K-6. 978-1-77117-028-4. Pbk. \$12.95

Rating: G

*I was born down by the water and it's here I'm going to stay.
I've searched for all the reasons why i should go away.
But I haven't got the thirst for all those modern-day toys,
so I'll just take my chances with those saltwater joys.*

The song *Saltwater Joys* written by Wayne Chaulk in 1989 is probably one of the best-known and best-loved songs to ever come out of Newfoundland and Labrador. It's expression of the simple pleasures of living in a small outport contrasted with the hustle and bustle of big city life "on the mainland" rings true for many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who have been faced with the decision of leaving the province to find work or to "stay and take their chances with those saltwater joys". Chaulk is a member of the popular band *Buddy Wassiname and the Other Fellers* and this song has been a part of their performance repertoire for many years and is just as popular now as it was when they first performed it.

Now with the publication of this book the words and images evoked by the song are being made accessible to a younger generation of readers. The beautiful full colour paintings by Dawn Baker which accompany Chaulk's lyrics beautifully portray the places and people mentioned in the song. As Chaulk mentions in his introduction, he and Baker collaborated on the illustrations with Chaulk providing Baker with many family photographs from which she was able to create such wonderful images in her own unique style which has brought her much success in the art community of Newfoundland and Labrador. In speaking recently with Dawn, she told me that most of the people portrayed in the book are based on real people from Wayne's photographs and the places like Clayton's Wharf and Platter's Island are authentic.

Chaulk and Baker have done a great job on bringing this beloved song to a whole new generation. I am sure that it will be a popular purchase for many children this Christmas, not only in our home province but in many other areas of Canada where ex-Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are living and working but still have strong memories of growing up in an outport setting. This book will also give others an insight into the strong ties that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have with their home province.

Thematic Links: Songs - Newfoundland and Labrador

Victoria Pennell

Fiction Grades 3-6

FREEMAN, Jean

Terror on Turtle Creek

Your Nickel's Worth Publishing, 2012. 139p. Gr. 4-6. 978-1-894431-77-4. Pbk. \$14.95

Rating E

Barry has a reputation as a chicken. As his hometown is threatened with flooding, he thinks he can overcome this reputation by volunteering to help fill sandbags. While filling the sandbags, he finds himself partnered with his nemesis. When frustration overcomes him and he tries to cool off, he finds himself in a dangerous situation on the flooded river. In a fight for his life, he ends up stranded with four other children and in danger from the flood. The story gives reader the thrill of trying to survive a raging river.

There are 13 black and white illustrations throughout the book. This story brings to life the experience of living in a lowland area during a flood and how the community works together to survive. I recommend this book to readers Grade 4 and up.

Thematic Links: Realistic Adventure Story; Suspense

Colette Schneider

Fiction Grades 7-12

STINSON, Kathy

What Happened To Ivy

Second Story Press, 2012. 146p. Gr. 8-10. 978-1-926920-81-8. Pbk. \$11.95

Rating: G

In 2000, Terry Trueman published *Stuck in Neutral*, written from the perspective of a teenaged boy suffering from cerebral palsy so badly that he cannot communicate at all. The novel is brilliant, causing the reader to really think about what it must be like, to be an intelligence locked in a body with no controllable outward responses. In the final scene, Shawn is about to enter a fit, unsure of whether or not his father is - at that very moment -intending to “put him out of his misery.” Kathy Stinson’s ***What Happened to Ivy*** tells a similar story, from a different perspective, and is, I think, more successful for that. While *Stuck in Neutral* shows the internal perspective of the cerebral palsy sufferer, ***What Happened to Ivy*** tells the equally troubling tale of Ivy’s brother, David, and the father who might or might not have been instrumental in his daughter’s death.

David both loves and resents Ivy. He feels that his parents focus entirely on her, ignoring the things in *his* life that matter, the things most teenaged boys can share with their parents and siblings. David, like his parents, is little more than a caregiver for the severely disabled Ivy; nonetheless, the three of them love her dearly, and work unceasingly to ensure her comfort and safety. Holidaying at their cabin, while David is walking with his new girlfriend and their mother is napping, Ivy has a seizure in the water and drowns. David is understandably traumatized by the combination of guilt and relief he feels, and this is what gives the novel its power. Reading David’s story, I felt so strongly that he really needed to talk to someone his own age, who would listen and understand and give sage advice; then it occurred to me that very few people his age would have any sage advice to give: his situation was relatively unique, although survivor’s guilt itself is not. That is a role that Stinson’s book can perform admirably. There are very few books out there that can be successfully bibliotherapeutic in the strictest sense of the term, but this I think is one. David struggles both with his own guilt and with his resentment of his father, who admits in his distress that he let Ivy go as she struggled in the water during her fit. David himself points out the philosophical difference between *killing* and *letting die*, but that is not enough to heal his own wounds. In the end, as in *Stuck in Neutral*, we are left not knowing what the criminal and social ramifications of the situation Stinson constructs will be, but we are given ample evidence of the possibilities. We also know the direction that David’s thoughts have taken, and we see him move towards self-healing, the final step in the bibliotherapeutic process. We watch as his family’s tenuous balance and security is wrenched apart, and we watch as his mother and father and girlfriend, Hannah, help him to slowly weave together his own revised pattern for his life. When he admits the most profound source of his own guilt to Hannah, she thoughtfully remarks, “You’re human, David” (139). Simple, honest, and non-judgmental, her comment solidifies the healing process David has begun. In the penultimate scene, David is finally able to extend that healing to his suffering father. While the practicalities are not resolved, David’s own inner turmoil has been calmed, his emotional energy directed away from his own grieving towards that of his parents. He

has grown into an emotional maturity that we know will help him to survive whatever happens next.

Thematic Links: Cerebral Palsy; Euthanasia; Bibliotherapy

Karyn Huenemann

Non-Fiction Grades K-6

MACDONALD, Hugh

I is for Island; A Prince Edward Island Alphabet

Illustrated by Brenda Jones. Sleeping Bear Press, 2012. Unp. Illus. Gr. 3 up. 978-1-58536-367-4. Hdbk. \$17.95

Rating: E

I is for Island gives you a great and timeless snapshot of the quaint and interesting province of Prince Edward Island. By using the standard format that Sleeping Bear Press has used with its' other provincial alphabet books, MacDonald succeeds in giving us a poetic and informational slice of Prince Edward Island. Even though PEI is our smallest province, this book helps us realize how beautiful, unique and complex it really is. Most of the alphabet based poems are written in a 2 line rhyming format, with a few letters done with alternating lines of rhyme. Both patterns work well although the reader needs to be conscious of this change especially when reading the poems aloud. The informational text will appeal to older readers for more details and specific content. The sidebars' informational text coordinates well with the poems and pictures. In terms of information and learning about PEI, we are exposed to a wide variety of subjects in this book. We learn about the varied geography and climate - beaches, red soil, winds, rivers, oceans and cities. History comes alive with the Acadians, the Mi'kmaq, Jacques Cartier and Confederation. Cultural icons such as Anne of Green Gables and her creator, Lucy Maud Montgomery are effectively featured under the letter M. Lesser known topics such as Old Home Week, an annual fair and clams called quahogs are enlightening.

The overall feel of the book is warm, cozy and inviting. Most letters have a one page spread while some letters with wide topics are spread effectively across two pages. This is seen in the pages with the Confederation Bridge, the red fields of potatoes and the wind along the shores. The paintings by Brenda Jones effectively portray the poems and the text with vivid and subdued colours as needed, interesting details and focal points. Many of the landscape paintings could be used for art lessons - to show the strong colour, texture and details in the foreground as compared to the softer, hazy backgrounds. Throughout the book, Jones cleverly inserts wild animals, birds and the provincial flower (Stemless Lady's slipper) into her paintings. The connections to the land and sea and the beauty of the different seasons are two distinct focal points that are captured in this book.

Children, youth and adults who want to learn more about PEI will have a pleasant and informative experience as they view, and read and wonder how great this distinctive province must be for real!

Thematic Links: Social Studies; Culture; History and Geography of Prince Edward Island

Vivianne Fogarty

Non-Fiction Grades 7-12

SCANDIFFIO, Laura

People Who Said NO; Courage Against Oppression

Annick Press, 2012. 168p. Illus. Gr. 6-10. 978-1-554551-382-6. Pbk. \$14.95

Rating: E

People Who Said NO; Courage Against Oppression is a global composite of profiles of resistance workers who

fought to free their people from oppression and social injustice. These humanitarians took a courageous stand against the violation of their human and civil rights and freedoms. Some died for their cause, others continue their work to this day.

The easy reading narration of this book will appeal to both fiction and non-fiction readers in the intermediate grades. These real-life stories are punctuated with historical data and references to well-known political leaders and social activists which hook the reader to go beyond the biographical profile and engage in the historical framework which created the issues. An excellent resource book and information text supporting research projects, literature study groups studying global social justice themes, and global issues. Highly recommended for school libraries and social studies resources to support curriculum.

Thematic Links: Social Justice; Oppression; Global Issues

Sharon P. Armstrong

Audio-Visual Resources

Darkness and Hope: Depression, Sports and Me

McIntyre Media Inc, 2012. DVD. 45 min., Gr. 10-12. \$159.95 PPR

Rating: E

Darkness and Hope: Depression, Sports and Me paints a real picture of what life is like for individuals affected by depression. This documentary is very engaging and has character. Young adults will connect with the subject material as some Canadian sports icons, including Clara Hughes, Stephane Richer and Darryl Strawberry talk about their experience with depression. Michael Landsberg, sufferer of depression, hosts this documentary which is intended to give hope to those young adults and adults who may be facing depression.

This would be a wonderful addition to any public library collection and guidance counselor's office. As depression is often first felt in adolescence and young adulthood, this video will be an effective tool in allowing young adults to know they are not alone. I wouldn't show this to a full class, as this material is much more of a one-on-one documentary between Michael Landsberg and the viewer. Those possibly suffering from depression may not connect as well in a group setting.

The only drawback to this tool is the packaging. The front and back covers are not very eye-catching and will most likely be lost in the shuffle at a public library. Although the description on the back gives a full picture of the material there is too much information. Unless someone recommends this tool to the guidance counselors or the counselors are actively looking for it, they may pass it by. This is a great tool in helping those with depression in adjunct with other tools and resources for a hopefully successful road to a healthier life.

Thematic Links: Depression; Sports; Hope; Documentary

Michael Rogowski

French Resources

BERGERON, Alain M.

La fabuleuse saison d'Abby Hoffman (Graffiti +, no 76)

Soulières Éditeur, 2012. 382p. Gr. 8-9. 978-2-89607-159-3. Pbk. \$19.95

Rating: E

Prolific author Alain M. Bergeron launches his Abby Hoffman's novelized biography with these words from Robin Morgan, a feminist activist and writer, words which appear on the University of Toronto memorial plaque paying

tribute to Abby Hoffman's unique enterprise, pluck and determination: "Only she who attempts the absurd will achieve the impossible."

A biography, based on facts, which is a delight to read. It speaks of a spunky nine-year old Ontario girl dreaming in 1955 of becoming a hockey player. Already skating when she was still a toddler, she plays hockey with her two brothers. Even though there is no hockey league for girls then, she is determined to fulfill her dream. So, when registration for the boys' Little Toronto Hockey League opens in November 1955, she begs her supporting mom to cut her hair real short and, seizing the opportunity, registers herself under the more masculine name of Ab Hoffman. She trains intensely and makes progress rapidly as a defenseman for the St. Catherines TeePees boys team. Dressing up at home before the game, she avoids getting detected. Her coach is so impressed by her talents, she is selected, at the end of the season the following spring, to play in an All-Star game. When required to submit her birth certificate, her ploy is no longer a secret, and she gets banned by the League, despite all the publicity in newspapers and magazines throughout Canada and the USA. Her parents take the case to the Ontario Supreme Court, to no avail. Her hockey career is over.

Undeterred, she went on, fighting prevailing prejudice, social barriers and sexism preventing girls from practicing sports supposedly meant for boys only. She excelled in track and field where she won the Gold Medal in the 800-metre race at the 1966 British Empire and Commonwealth Games as well as at the Pan American Games of 1963 and 1971.

She became a living model for girls across Canada who, like her, wished to practice sports in which only boys were expected to be interested in. Her influence in the Canadian Sports scene was well recognized. In 1982 she was made an Officer in the Order of Canada and introduced into Canadian Sports Hall of Fame in 2004. The Abby Hoffman Cup for feminine hockey was named after her in 1982.

An excellent portrait of a spirited young girl whose determination is worthy of being emulated by boys and girls who, like her, secretly cherish a dream.

Thematic Links: Sports; Hockey; Prejudice; Sexism; Social Barriers; Determination; Self-confidence; Biography; History; Ambition; Parent/Child Relationship

Louise Melançon