

**VANCOUVER**

*Children's Literature Roundtable*

**N E W S L E T T E R**

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**VANCOUVER CHILDREN'S LITERATURE ROUNDTABLE**

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## ROUNDTABLE'S SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

2002-2003 SEASON

### 2002

*Saturday, September 21st*, 8:30 a.m. **The Mem Fox Breakfast.** Hyatt Regency Hotel.

*Monday, October 28th*, 7:30 p.m. **Arthur Slade** Governor General's Award Winner  
Room 201 Leonard S. Klink Building, UBC (7356 Agricultural Road)  
This is the old Computer Science building, directly behind the old Bus Stop Café (now 99 Chairs). It is on the corner of Agricultural Road and West Mall, kitty corner (SE) to the First Nations House of Learning. Parking in Fraser Parkade. Entrance #4 south of the Museum of Anthropology and turn right leave by left south entrance. (\$3)

*Tuesday, November 5th*. 7:00 p.m. **Gala Celebration of Children's Book Festival.**  
Special Guests: **Gillian Chan** and our **B.C. children's authors and illustrators**, many of whom will be sharing their new books.  
Vancouver Museum & Space Centre in Vanier Park, Kitsilano  
1100 Chestnut Street. Lots of free parking.

### 2003

*Monday, January 27th*, 7:00 p.m. **"Oh, Sweet Poetry"** – Dessert Party in North Vancouver.  
Join poets **Avis Harley**, **Robert Heidbreder**, and **William New**  
at Artists for Kids Art Gallery at Leo Marshall Media Centre, 810 West 21<sup>st</sup> Street  
(up the hill from Capilano Mall).

*Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup>*, 4:30-6:00 p.m. **Author Fest.** Hebb Theatre, UBC  
Come and celebrate 4 of our local writers.

*Saturday, February 22nd.* **Serendipity Conference.**  
**Katherine Paterson.** Newbery Medal & Hans Christian Andersen Award winner  
**Linda Sue Park.** 2002 Newbery Medal winner for *A Single Shard*.  
**Dinah Stevenson,** New York. Editor, Clarion Books.  
**Chris Riddell,** UK. Illustrator, 2002 Kate Greenaway Medal winner  
... and the **Winner (TBA)** of the **Children's Literature Roundtables of Canada**  
**Information Book Award**

**MEM FOX**



interview with Mem Fox.) Roundtable members will, I hope, enjoy the contributions of many student voices to this article.

Teachers in the mid-Missouri area—including Shelli Thelen, Jenine Loesing, Carolyn Dye, and Marilyn Andre (primary); Marilyn Soucie (intermediate); and Patricia Jenkins and Virginia Pfanenstiel (college)—read all of Fox’s children’s books.

And, members of the Roundtable are encouraged to look at Fox’s glorious (yes, that’s the word) website at <http://www.memfox.net/>. Ed.

### Talking about Books

#### “Mem’s the Word”: Examining the Writing of Mem Fox

by Carol Gilles

“She writes books to help me read,” wrote one six year old about Mem Fox. A primary teacher, after hearing Fox talk about literacy issues at a sold-out conference, declared, “She took a stand for all of us in there! We were on our feet, clapping and feeling empowered.” Fox, a children’s author, college teacher, and prolific writer, creates books that touch young children, their parents, and teachers alike.

The following article will introduce Roundtable members to some features of Mem Fox’s work that they might enjoy pursuing. Carol Gilles of the University of Missouri at Columbia contributed this article to *Language Arts* as an account of preparations for Mem Fox’s visit to the TAWL (Teachers Applying Whole Language) Conference held there in November 1999, before the appearance of *Reading Magic*. In this article Carol Gilles explores Fox’s life in order to better understand her work, examines the books she has written for teachers, and then reviews her children’s books, emphasizing the children’s and teachers’ comments. (The materials that appear in quotes without citations came from Gilles’

### The Life and Times of Mem Fox

Fox’s delightful autobiography, called *Dear Mem Fox, I Have Read All Your Books, Even the Pathetic Ones*, (Harvest, 1992), chronicles her life, beginning with a description of her ancestors.

Methodist preachers and speakers of great eloquence . . . with naval officers and judges in the early colonization of Australia; . . . with teachers and storytellers; and even with a great-grandmother who it seems, laughed as often and as loudly as I do. (4)

With relatives who were gifted in both writing and telling stories, it is no wonder that Fox became a writer. However, she came to writing and teaching in a roundabout way. Born Marion Partridge in Melbourne, Australia in March of 1946, her mother and father left in October to be teaching missionaries in Hope Fountain Mission in Rhodesia. Mem was the first of three sisters growing up and attending school in Africa:

I do remember having some lessons in the open air and learning to write by drawing letters in the earth. We would watch as our teacher drew the shape of a letter in the air before wrote it with one finger in the dust. . . . Later we advanced to slates and slate pencils. (14).

After graduating from high school, she volunteered for six months at a conference center for the World Council of Churches outside of Geneva. She spent 12 hours a day cleaning, dusting, doing laundry, and reveling in the orderliness of it all. Fox laments,

I had arrived in Switzerland as a tidy, well-organized and relatively well balanced school-leaver (graduate). I left it as a crazed young woman who would forever seek after cleanliness, tidiness and order in the way that nuns seek after righteousness and truth. (44)

Mem Fox had always dreamed of a life on the stage, and finally convinced her father to send her to drama school in England. He reluctantly agreed, but only if she would attend Rose Bruford's school in London that also included a compulsory teaching degree, so she would be employable.

The experience of attending a drama school far from home was filled with new people, challenging expectations, and hard work. She soon discovered that she didn't really want to act, but she did want to be known. She

states, "I spent three years at drama school engrossed in learning how to act, being forced to learn to teach and accidentally learning how to write" (56). There Mem met her future husband, Malcolm Fox, who also was studying drama. They married, and moved to Rwanda where Mem reluctantly began teaching.

Eventually, Mem and Malcolm moved to England, and from there to Australia as "ten-pound migrants" (The fare was only ten pounds—about \$25.00). They decided on Adelaide to be close to Mem's grandfather, Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partidge, who was 90 and lived in a retirement home. He was, of course, the inspiration for her book, *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* (1984). In Adelaide, Fox was sure she would finally get a radio job, and she actually applied at ABC. She did receive odd parts in radio plays, but since that didn't bring in enough money, she gain turned to teaching jobs. She also bore her first and only child, Chloe.

By 1973 Fox had signed on full-time to teach Drama at Sturt Teacher's College. She loved teaching drama and hadn't yet considered being an author. It wasn't until Chloe was seven that Fox decided she must take a children's literature course to keep up with Chloe's voracity for reading. One assignment in the class was to write a children's book. She wrote a story called *Hush the Invisible Mouse*, which her professor encouraged her to publish. She found a student in the Art department, Julie Vivas, to illustrate it, and sent the story to nine different publishers over the next five years. Fox laments:

Nine rejections. Very discouraging indeed. The tenth publisher: Omnibus Books in Adelaide, accepted it but asked me to cut the story by two-thirds, re-write it more lyrically, make it even

more Australian and change the mice to possums.

It was with the publication of *Possum Magic* that Mem Fox's writing career had begun.

In 1979, Fox attended the Perth Australian Reading Association's annual conference, and reported, "It changed my life" (121). As a drama teacher, she had no need to learn about literacy *per se*, but she was fascinated with the emerging ideas. Coincidentally, Sturt College needed a literacy professor and gave her a year's leave of absence to become tooled in that area. Learning about literacy brought her to the idea of writing children's books that parents could read to children, and children could read themselves.

By her own account, Fox has written over 30 books for children, and published over 20 articles for teachers in prestigious journals such as *Language Arts*, *Reading Teacher*, and *Reading and Writing Quarterly*. She recently retired from teaching Writing and Literacy Education at Flinders University in South Australia to devote more time to her writing and international consulting.

### **Mem Fox's Writing for Teachers**

Fox is extraordinary because she writes for both children and teachers. *Radical Reflections: Passionate Opinions on Teaching, Learning and Living* (1993) offers insights into teaching and learning from a writer's perspective. Readers learn that she consciously uses rhyme, rhythm, and repetition in her stories to make them accessible to young children and their parents. Although her main goal is to bring joy and "touch the hearts of readers," she admits, "I weave a million little teaching points in and out of my stories to nurture accidental literacy" (123). Fox carefully considers

her characters, who are often inspired by people she has known in her own life. Since she is aware that 85% of the characters in children's literature are male, Fox intentionally creates strong female characters, including vital elderly women as protagonists. Her male stars paint, dance, and weep. She advises, "We who write children's books, and we who teach through literature, need to be sure we are opening the doors to full human potential, not closing them" (*Radical* 153).

Fox offers her forthright ideas about pedagogy in an accessible, direct manner. She challenges us to make language and literacy real to children. Many teachers worry about the tension between explicit teaching and more indirect instruction. In her chapter, "Conveying the Inexplicit: The Problem of Teaching What Can't Be taught," Fox insists that language itself is a teacher, and that we must share great literature with children and then talk with them about what made it great. She offers an example of indirect teaching when she worked with at-risk students for 75 minutes twice a week. She decided to read aloud *Indian in the Cupboard* (1991) by Lynn Reid Banks to these students instead of doing fragmented skill activities, because

The plot was gripping, the writing style highly sophisticated, the vocabulary advanced and diverse, the sense of rhythm superb, and the characterization subtle. The book, as a satisfying whole, taught much more in our seventy-five minutes than we could possibly have taught without it (*Radical* 111).

Although she realizes that some things need to be taught directly, she also makes a case for immersing children in literacy and language.

Fox makes a passionate plea to let the story stand for itself in "The Story

Fights Back,” (*Radical*, 1993 119-134) by giving frightening examples of how some teachers have misused her books—distilling *Hattie and the Fox* (1986) into worksheets, for example. In doing so, these teachers have “stolen time from the writing of real English, for real purposes, for real people, for real responses with real consequence” (*Radical*, 129)

Patricia Jenkins recently shared “Concluding Ideals” (*Radical* 1993 162-166) as the read-aloud with the graduate class she was teaching on Reading Miscue Analysis. This article contains advice Fox has given to herself to be a perfect teacher, such as “You ought to be a reader, Mem,” “You should throw out all the unreal language activities you have acquired over the years, Mem” and “You should remember that every piece of teaching is a piece of research, Mem” (*Radical*, 163-165). Jenkins shared,

At first the graduate students were surprised, because this wasn’t the usual children’s book. However, as I began reading, the room became silent. I had everyone’s total attention. I could see that the teachers were hanging on every word and measuring themselves in the advice that Mem gave. When I finished, no one spoke. It almost was like the end of a symphony, when the audience tries to hang on to the last note a little longer.

Now that the pendulum has swung back to phonics and “decodable” texts in some parts of the United States, it is refreshing to read the word of Fox and remember that learning occurs only when children’s hearts and minds are engaged. Finally, she reminds us that the “nature of the human relationships that occur around and through books” is vital to instill in children a love of reading (*Radical*, 136). Readers will notice that Fox’s philosophy about teaching and learning comes alive in her books.

## Best-Loved Books

Fox’s first book, *Possum Magic* (1983), is a family story about Hush and her Grandma Poss. Grandma magically makes Hush invisible. At first Hush has such adventures: sliding down kangaroos and walking right up to snakes. However, when Hush wants to become visible again, Grandma is stymied, as she can’t remember how to reverse the spell. She recalls that it has something to do with food, so Grandma and Hush begin a journey all over Australia to find the right food. From Anzac biscuits in Adelaide to steak and salad in Sydney, they try it all to no avail. Finally they sample a Vegemite sandwich (a salty yeast sandwich spread) and a tail appears. Other foods produce other body parts until finally Hush is completely visible.

Julie Vivas’ soft, whimsical illustrations add charm to this journey through Australia. A glossary explains the unusual foods and a map helps children locate the cities. Children love the rhythm of the book and the unusual words. This book has sold over a million copies in Australia, a country with a population of only 18 million, making Fox a national treasure.

A common theme in Fox’s books is dignity and respect, which she accords to the young and the old alike. *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge* (1984) is an exemplar of this theme. Wilfred, who has four names, is sad to hear that Miss Nancy (age 96) has lost her memory. Wilfrid talks to the folks in a retirement home to discover just what a memory is. Using their advice Wilfrid gathers things that represent a specific kind of memory: a shell, a puppet, a medal, a football, and a fresh farm egg. As Miss Nancy examines the objects, she recalls the memories that each triggers, and at the end, “. . . the two of them smiled and

smiled because Miss Nancy's memory had been found again by a small boy, who wasn't very old either." Again Julie Vivas' illustrations are captivating. Each person is drawn from the perspective of a small child, with long legs, big stomachs, and colorful clothes.

Although this book was inspired by her grandfather, her mother has also been an important influence. She shared a story about her mother, at age 84, strolling with a walking stick toward the sea to swim.

She gets into the sea and swims with the walking stick, because she can't walk without it. She needs it the moment she gets to land. Even if you've got osteoporosis, you can have an inner spine. Not all people cave in to being a sweet strawberry-cake character. (M. Fox, personal communication, May 3, 1999)

Fox's characters have pluck, determination, and a special relationship with the young.

Fox believes in the power of language. As she states, "the more words children hear, the better readers and writers they are." She is concerned that "we take away so much time from actual reading. We need to just keep reading. How many books can kids hear in a week, if you read only one and then do a thousand activities on it?"

Shelly Thelen offers an example of using *Wilfrid Gordon* in her kindergarten classroom, following Fox's advice. Shelley's students listened to the story through repeated readings over many days until they were familiar with the rhythm and the flow of the story. Only then did Shelly suggest that perhaps they might like to create their own "memory baskets." Shelly relates,

This home project excited students as they found a few artifacts that reminded them of special memories. One boy included a snapshot of his preschool teacher and himself to celebrate his preschool experience, while a girl shared her sister's baby blanket—the one used to bring her sister home from the hospital.

Listening to one another's precious memories helped to create and sustain a community in Thelen's classroom.

Another all time favorite is *Koala Lou* (1988), about sibling rivalry and winning an important competition. It is Fox's favorite, because it is about her. The book came about in an interesting way. Olivia Newton-John had opened up "Koala Blue," a Los Angeles store, which sold Australian clothing and Fox's first book. She asked Fox to write a book about a koala named Blue to market in her store. Fox, inspired by the Olympics, did write the book, but unfortunately Newton-John found it impossible to publish it independently. However, she still retained the copyright to the name Koala Blue. So Fox reworked the story, changed the sex of the koala and, forty-nine drafts later, *Koala Lou* was born.

*Koala Lou* traces the story of a well-loved koala. All the animals love her, but especially her mother, who says daily, "Koala Lou, I do love you!" When Koala Lou has baby brothers and sisters, her mom becomes busier and doesn't have as much time to spend with her. Lou decides to enter the Bush Olympics to get her mom's attention. She trains hard and feels confident in the gum tree climbing even. However, when Koala Klaw climbs faster and wins, Lou is devastated. She hides, being sure her mother won't be proud of her now. Finally, her mom hugs her and reminds her, "Koala Lou I do love you. I always have and I always will."

Pamela Lofts' fluffy, colored-pencil koalas look real enough to pet. *Parent's Magazine* cited this book as one of the ten best books of 1989.

### Bedtime Books

Fox's best-selling book in the United States is *Time for Bed* (1993). The strong rhyme and repetitious line provide a soothing lullaby.

It's time for bed, little mouse, little mouse  
Darkness is falling all over the house,  
It's time for bed, little goose, little goose,  
The stars are out and on the loose

Jane Dyer's large, double-paged watercolors are gentle and cozy. Shelly Thelen described them as, "[the] sleepy eyes of tired baby animals against a star-filled sky capture the beauty of bedtime rituals." The entire effect is a warm, hypnotic experience. This book has great appeal for young children, but Deborah Cunningham, a college student and mother of two boys remembers the book this way:

Imagine, if you will, a queen-size cherry bed . . . with a mom sitting at bedtime between two boys, one eleven and one seven. As usual, at least three books are read; tonight we've selected *Time for Bed*. The lyrical words are easy for the seven-year-old to read and soothing to our ears. We read each page and talk about this beautiful book. Each of us has a favorite part. My oldest son, a self-proclaimed "budding artist," appreciates the illustrations, while my youngest enjoys the fawn with its mother. My favorite part is the mouse mom and baby because the little mouse's expression reminds me of my youngest as a baby. As I wrote this review, I realized how much this story means to our family—our special family-time with an old friend.

As these two boys show us, Mem Fox's books are ageless; they entrance children, adolescents, and adults.

*Sleepy Bears* (1999) is a perfect companion piece to *Time for Bed*. As Fox said, "I kind of imagine a little graduation ceremony at 3<sup>3/4</sup> when children move from *Time for Bed* to *Sleepy Bears*." In this tale, Mother Bear is trying to collect all her six cubs to begin the long winter hibernation. As they tumble over her and one another on the bed, she explains:

But there's plenty of time,  
For your own special rhyme,  
If you climb into bed and snuggle in  
tight,  
Without any fuss and without any fight

Mother Bear finds the sleepest cub and spins each a tale that makes the cub fall "faaaast asleep." Kerry Argent's illustrations in gouache, watercolor, and colored pencil are comforting and fanciful. The quilt on the bed and the bright adventures provide a colorful contrast to the brown bears. Each cuddly bear has a unique facial expression. Children quickly notice that after each story, the cub falls asleep with a hat that is reminiscent of the adventure spun. Children love the repetition and the rhyme in this story that inspires their own sweet dreams.

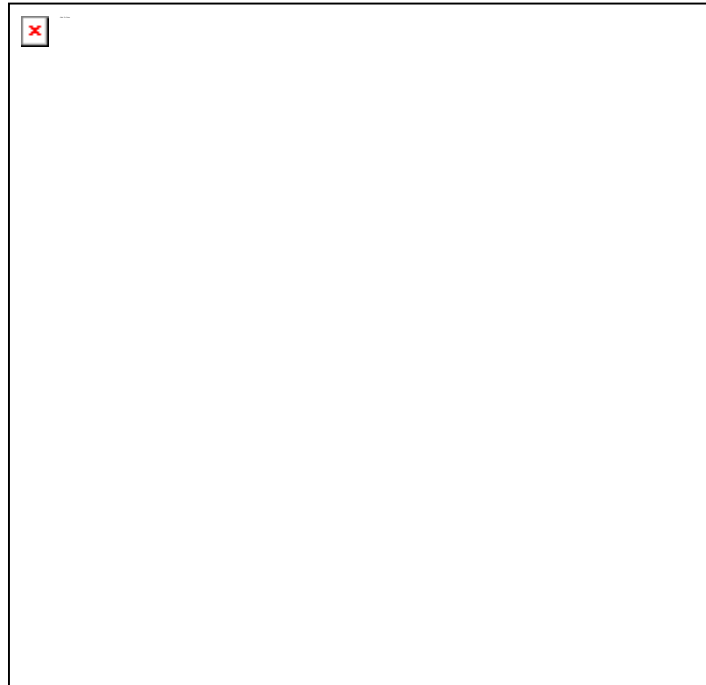
*A Bedtime Story* (1986) explores the power of parents' demonstrations of reading. Polly and Bed Rabbit (her studded rabbit) are ready for bed, but need a story. Both mom and dad are reading their own books, and keep putting her off with comments like, "Have you had your glass of milk?" Dad asked. And quietly carried on reading." Finally, after Polly has had her milk, brushed her teeth, been to the bathroom, changed into her pajamas, and snuggled into the bed, both mom and dad lie on her bed and read to her. The love

radiates through Elivia Savadier's watercolor, color pencil, and cut paper collages. This book demonstrates how parents reading to themselves can be a powerful incentive for a child to read.

### **Predictable Books for Early Readers**

Because Fox knows how children learn to read, she makes a concerted effort to structure her books around features that make language easy to learn. Dorothy Watson, in *Talking About Books* (in *Language Arts* 74:1997, 635-642) has called such books "supportive texts." They are the books that use rhyme, rhythm, predictable language, picture cues, and so on to support a child's engagement with the book. In particular, Fox uses a steady rhythm and rhyme in all of her books that invites children to join in. Each of her books also depends on the illustrations as another cue for children's reading.

A favorite book for emerging readers is *Hattie and the Fox*, brilliantly illustrated by Patricia Mullins (1986), Fox admits that the structure is based firmly on the traditional *The Little Red Hen*, but it also draws on *Rosie's Walk* (1983) by Pat Hutchins. It is delightful to use all three books together as a text set. In this cumulative, repetitive text, a group of farm animals, led by Hattie the Hen, chant together and slowly discover a sly fox hiding in the bushes. This book invites choral reading. By the third page, many of the children in Jenine Loesing's first-grade class were chiming in, using the proper animal voice. After several readings and class discussions, the children were invited to form groups, write their own adaptation based on *Hattie and the Fox* and present them to the class. Notice how Fox's words are so powerful that children use them as part of the pattern in the beginning of this play.



### ***Mouse and the Rattle***

Once upon a time a little mouse was eating some cheese, when all of a sudden he saw something.

MOUSE: Goodness gracious me, I see a tongue in the bushes!  
 DOG: Good grief!  
 PIG: Well, well!  
 SHEEP: What's next?  
 COW: So what?

(Eventually the mouse and the other animals see the snake, but the Boy says, "I'm so big and strong I'll scare it away! BROOOOOR!")

During art period, some of the children decided to make impromptu costumes for their renditions. One optimistic young man lettered "Hello Hollywood," on the front of his costume and "Good-by Hollywood" on the back!

*Whoever You Are* (1997) invites choral reading and thoughtful

consideration of the theme. This book celebrates the humanness that unites all of us. Fox uses simple, repetitive language:

Little one, whoever you are,  
Wherever you are,  
There are little ones  
Just like you  
All over the world

This book helps young children understand peace and equality. The soothing words are surrounded by Leslie Staub's bright, bold oil painting, situated in hand-carved wooden frames. Fox decided to write this book after she read a shocking newspaper article about an 18-year-old girl's inhumanity against her classmate in Bosnia. She decided, "We have to get to these kids, while they're young. Teach them about the similarities between the peoples of the world, not the differences" (Fox, website). This story-poem was the result.

Carolyn Dye's first graders voted this book their favorite for the entire year. As she read it one more time before the last bell of the year rang, her children joined in, grabbed one another's hands and chanted the book with her. As the book ended, they hugged one another with tears in their eyes.

*Shoes from Grandpa* (1989) is a cumulative, supportive text. Grandpa is amazed by how tall Jesse has grown, so he offers to buy her shoes for the winter. Each family member then buys something to "go with the shoes from Grandpa". Of course, no one asks Jesse what she would like, and soon she is dressed in frills and lace. Finally, Jesse can take no more and says, "You're all so kind and I hate to be mean, but please would one of you buy me some jeans?" Jesse is much happier on her skateboard in her comfortable jeans. Patricia

Mullins' watercolor illustrations add humor and details to the story.

Marilyn Andre's first graders listened to this story being read on tape by Mem Fox, and they explored her web page. When Marilyn asked her students where they thought Mem Fox got her idea for this story, Jordan replied, "Maybe she got the idea from her daughter. Maybe Mem picked out skirts and her daughter didn't want to wear them." In actuality, Fox claims,

One night in May as summer was changing rather suddenly to winter, I lay in bed wondering whether Chloe had enough warm clothes. In my head I said, "I'll buy her some socks from the local shops." The rhythm of the phrase seemed familiar, yet incomplete. After a few minutes I remembered the line I'd been trying to think of—it was from the *House that Jack Built* (traditional). I couldn't sleep. The pattern was easy to conquer, but the rhymes were difficult . . . I spent the next few months honing the story. (Fox, website)

A book that uses a catchy refrain to support readers is *Boo to a Goose*, (1996). Fox explains that in England and Australia they describe a timid person as someone who "wouldn't say boo to a goose!" (Fox, website). She liked the rhythm of the line and created a story around it that young children enjoy. The rhythmic language in the story is supported by the 3-D paper cut-out illustrations of David Miller. Each concept (the bees, the hive, the butter, and the city) is fully depicted. The illustrations almost jump off the page, making this book bright, lively, and inviting.

*Zoo-Looking* (1996) is perfect for reading aloud to small children, choral reading or chanting for primary children. Flora goes to the zoo and finds that as she looks at the various animals, they

“look back,” inviting children to chime in quickly. Candace Whitman’s torn paper pictures add even more clues to this zoo trip.

*Arabella, the Smallest Girl in the World* (1986) uses a predictable line and a fanciful plot to entertain young readers. Arabella is a two-inch girl in a normal-sized world. By using the format “just like yours, just like mine, just like ours,” young readers can quickly read this book independently. The colored-pencil illustrations of Vicky Kitanov are clever and add even more humor to the story. Arabella swings on the house plant, as on a vine in the forest, uses a soap dish as a boat in the bath and uses the mirror as a roller-skating rink! Older students might enjoy creating a similar book for brothers or sisters. They could talk about the way the author engages readers and how she supports young readers with rhyme and predictability.

### Playing with Language

Mem Fox is oh-so-precise with language. She chooses her words carefully, making sure that each one is in the right place. She says “I read aloud every single phrase. I read aloud phrases within phrases, clauses, then I’ll read half a page, then I’ll read a whole page in one run.” Why? “Because I know many children will encounter my books through an adult reading. I want to write with a rhythm that is fool-proof.” No wonder Fox’s books are alive with colorful language that flows easily.

One such book is *Tough Boris*, (1994). Fox uses words like *tough*, *massive*, *scruffy*, and *greedy* to describe the pirate. After Marilyn Andre read the book to her first graders, they initiated a conversation about vocabulary:

COLEMAN: I don’t know what massive is.

COURTNEY: Bossy

MICHAEL: Does it mean strong?

HANNAH: Does it mean he pulls up the mast?

Such wonderful child logic! Letting children initiate a discussion makes them more eager to use the words they have heard in the book in their own conversations. Reading the book dramatically helps children figure out words’ meanings from the context.

At the end of the book, the children were talking about the death of the parrot. Coleman explained, “It’s said ‘cause a pirate’s best friend died. You know how they say a dog is man’s best friend. Well, in those days, I guess a parrot was a pirate’s best friend.”

The children were also intrigued by the parallel story in the colored-pencil illustrations. A little boy, who is never mentioned in the story, steals the violin, makes friends with the parrot and eventually is the “I” on the last page. Fox mentioned that illustrator Kathryn Brown decided independently to add the little boy and the parallel plot to the story.

Fox was inspired by her mother’s 70<sup>th</sup> birthday party to write *Night Noises* (1989). The wordplay in this book comes from the noises that Butch Aggie, Lily Laceby’s dog, hears while old Lily has fallen asleep. “Crinch, Crunch . . . Click Clack . . . Knick Knack Knock”. Butch begins to get curious, but Lily slumbers on. When Butch finally begins to bark, Lily stirs, hears voices and goes to the door. She discovers not prowlers, but a surprise birthday party in her honor. Terry Denton’s bright illustrations are realistic and also highlight the onomatopoeia words in bold red lettering. Fox says it is also her husband Malcom’s favorite book,

because Lily is his grandmother's name and she lives in Laceby, England.

A third book that plays with the sounds and rhymes of language is *The Straight Line Wonder* (1997). There are three straight lines who are the best of friends. However, when one straight line begins to "jump in humps, twirl in whirls and point his joints," the others become embarrassed and want nothing to do with him. This book was inspired by an incident Fox remembers from her youth. Her exceptionally talented cousin decided not to pursue ballet because he was teased so much. Marc Rosenthal's cartoon-like illustrations make this book appealing to older students as well as younger.

After discussing why lines were important in pictures, Linda Algur gave each of her four-to-nine year olds a pipe cleaner to manipulate while they listened to the book. The students bent their pipe cleaners into all the different configurations that the main character in the book represents: twirly, pointed, jumping, and whirling. Later, Jordan wrote: "This book tells you that it does not matter what others think if you believe in yourself." Seven-year-old Olivia asked to read the book to herself after she heard it. "You just need to read good silly books to yourself sometimes," she explained, giving Linda a wink.

### **Books that also Appeal to Older Readers**

Mem Fox's books appeal to young and old alike. However, some of her books appeal even more to upper elementary students. *Feathers and Fools* (1996) is an elegant allegory about two flocks of birds, a muster of peacocks and a bevy of swans, who begin to fear one another because of their differences. The fear begins with observations ("How strange that swans should swim"); continues

with comparison ("It is fortunate indeed that we do not, for we should surely drown"); and escalates into fear ("The peacock says, 'I fear the swans. If they wished they could turn us out of our gardens, or make us fly or force us to swim.'"). Fear leads to weapon making and finally to war, where they destroy one another. In the end, it is the young who realize the universal qualities in each and "they went together, in peace and unafraid, to face the day and share the world." Nicholas Wilton's bright, stylized illustrations offer symbolic interpretations to the story.

Marly Soucie read this book to fifth graders. One young man said: "This book is good for all ages. For adults, they would think of Kosovo. We all need to think about it. The Kosovo people don't like the Serbs and they think they're bad people. The peacocks don't like the swans. Kids are better at this, they see things simpler, like the baby birds."

Fox has given young and old a timely lesson to consider.

Another book that appeals to older children's tastes is *Guess What* (1988). This is a simple story about Daily O'Grady, who is actually a witch. The format highlights questions:

Is she tall?  
Guess!  
Yes!

Vivienne Goodman's gouache illustrations on watercolor paper call out to older children. The witch is quite lifelike, but also comical: a tall, thin, homely lady with buttons like "hot bats" on her lapel, and spiders and a red fox for pets. This book is a natural choice for older students who have had difficulty reading. They enjoy the pictures but the text is short and highly predictable.

*Sophie* (1994) appeals to older students because of the illustrations. The plot is a touching account of a young girl's love for her grandpa. As Sophie grows up, her grandpa grows older and instead of grandpa caring for Sophie, she cares for him. Eventually grandpa dies, but Sophie gives birth and the cycle of life continues. Robinson's powerful illustrations remind readers of the need for families.

Although older children enjoy this book, Atalie (age 5) picked it as her favorite from Mem Fox because, "It is about grandpas and it has babies." Atalie was on her way to visit her grandpa in a retirement home, and perhaps it helped her understand his illness and the cycle of life.

*Wombat Divine* (1995) could fit in many sections. However, I have chosen to put it here because it emphasizes an issue that older children often have to face: trying out for something and not succeeding. It echoes the theme of *Koala Lou* (1988). Kerry Argent's illustrations add to the humor of the book. Amanda Erwin, a Central Methodist College student reviewed it this way,

Wombat wants to be in the Nativity play, so he goes to the tryouts. He keeps failing because of his physical characteristics, yet the rest of the animals try to cheer him up and offer other parts. Just when he is about to lose all hope, the most important part becomes available—Baby Jesus. Wombat is perfect; all he has to do is pretend he is a sleeping baby. Wombat reminds me of some children I knew in school. It seemed these children could never do anything right, but many get their chance in the spotlight at one time or another, just like Wombat did.

## And Next?

Fox takes her no-nonsense approach to parents in her upcoming book, tentatively titled *The Read Aloud Miracle* [published as *Reading Magic*], which is to parents what *Radical Reflections* (1993) is to teachers. In this new book, Fox explains to parents how children read, and explores the incredible bonding that goes on when parents read aloud to children. As Fox states,

When you say read aloud to your kids, it sounds like "eat more fiber," "take more vitamins." I've said in the book that I want it to be a "chocolate-type experience" instead of a medicine-gobbling event.

Mem Fox's life and work certainly provide a "chocolate-type experience" for children, parents, and teachers. Her words ring in our heads, echo in our own writing and reverberate in the hearts of young and old alike. For us, "Mem" is the word.

## Bibliography of Fox's books

### Children's Picture Books

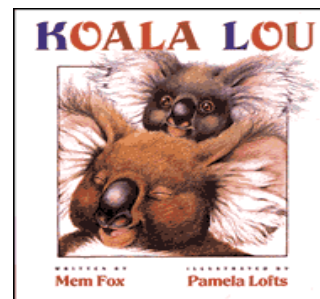
- 2000 *Harriet, You'll Drive Me Wild!*, illus. by Marla Frazee. San Diego: Harcourt. (h/b). Sydney: HodderHeadline (p/b)
- 1999 *Sleepy Bears*, illus. by Kerry Argent. Sydney: Pan Macmillan. Also: San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Co.
- 1999 *Boo to a Goose*, illus. by David Miller. New York: Dial Books
- 1998 *Whoever You Are*, illus. by Leslie Staub. Sydney: Harcourt Brace (h/b edition) and Sydney: Hodder Headline (p/b edition)

- 1997 *The Straight Line Wonder*, illus. by Marc Rosenthal. Greenvale, New York: Mondo Publishing.
- 1997 *Whoever You Are*, illus. by Leslie Staub. San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Co.
- 1997 *Time for Bed* board book, illus. by Jane Dyer. Adelaide: Omnibus Books; also San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Co.
- 1997 *Time for Bed* Bright Stars small edition, illus. by Jane Dyer. Adelaide: Omnibus Books.
- 1997 *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*, Bright Stars small edition, illus. by Julie Vivas. Adelaide: Omnibus Books.
- 1996 *Guilherme Augusto Araújo Fernandes*, illus. by Julie Vivas. Morumbi, Sao Paolo: BRINQUE-BOOK Editora de Livros
- 1996 *Zoo-Looking*, illus. by Candace Whitman. Greenvale, New York: Mondo Publishing.
- 1996 *A Bedtime Story*, illus. by Elivia Savadier. Greenvale, New York: Mondo Publishing.
- 1996 *Koala Lou*, illus. by Pamela Lofts. Hebrew edition. Tel-Aviv: Triwaks Enterprises, Matar Publishing House.
- 1996 *Feathers and Fools*, illus. by Nick Wilton. San Diego: Harcourt Brace
- 1996 *Boo to a Goose*, illus. by David Miller. Sydney: Hodder Headline.
- 1995 *Wombat Divine*, illus. by Kerry Argent. Adelaide: Omnibus Books.
- 1995 *Hattie and the Fox*, illus. by Patricia Mullins. Chinese edition, Indonesian edition and Japanese edition. Sydney: Ashton Scholastic
- 1995 *Shoes from Grandpa*, illus. by Patricia Mullins. Chinese edition, Indonesian edition and Japanese edition. Sydney: Ashton Scholastic.
- 1994 *Sophie*, illus. by Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson. San Diego: Harcourt Brace.
- 1994 *Tough Boris*, illus. by Kathy Brown. San Diego: Harcourt Brace.
- 1993 *Time for Bed*, illus. by Jane Dyer. Adelaide: Omnibus Books; also San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Co
- 1993 *Possum Magic*, mini 10-year commemorative edition, illus. by Julie Vivas. Adelaide: Omnibus Books.
- 1992 *With Love at Christmas*, illus. by Fay Plamka. Adelaide: The Lutheran Press.
- 1992 *Memories*, Adelaide: Era Publications.
- 1992 *Hattie and the Fox* in: Goodness gracious me! New York: Macmillan McGraw-Hill.
- 1990 *Guess What?*, illus. by Vivienne Goodman. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- 1989 *Koala Lou*, illus. by Pamela Lofts. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- 1989 *Sophie*, illus. by Craig Smith. Melbourne: Drakeford Watts.
- 1989 *Shoes from Grandpa*, illus. by Patricia Mullins. Gosford: Ashton Scholastic.
- 1989 *Feathers and Fools*, illus. by Lorraine Ellis. Melbourne: Ashwood House.
- 1989 *Night Noises*, illus. by Terry Denton. Adelaide: Omnibus Books; and San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- 1988 *With Love at Christmas*, illus. by Gary Lippincott. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- 1988 *Koala Lou*, illus. by Pamela Lofts. Melbourne: Drakeford/Watts.
- 1988 *Guess What?*, illus. by Vivienne Goodman. Adelaide: Omnibus Books.
- 1988 *Hattie and the Fox*, illustr Patricia Mullins. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- 1988 *Goodnight Sleep Tight*, illus. by Helen Semmler. Melbourne: Century Hutchinson.

- 1987 *A Bedtime Story*, illus. by Sisca Verwoert. Melbourne: Bookshelf.
- 1987 *The Straight Line Wonder*, illus. by Meredith Thomas. Sydney: Martin Educational.
- 1987 *Hattie and the Fox*, illus. by Patricia Mullins. New York: Bradbury
- 1987 *Oma Possums Zauber-Schau*, illus. by Julie Vivas. Stuttgart: Franckhsche Verlagshandlung.
- 1987 *Wilfrid Alexander Graham Johnson*, illus. by Julie Vivas. Stockholm: Carlsen.
- 1987 *Zoo-Looking*, illus. by Rodney McCrae. Cheltenham: Thormes.
- 1986 *Zoo-Looking*, illus. by Rodney McCrae. Cammeray, New South Wales: Martin Educational and Sydney: Ashton Scholastic.
- 1986 *Sail Away: The Ballad of Skip and Nell*, illus. by Pamela Lofts. Sydney: Ashton Scholastic.
- 1986 *Just Like That*, illus. by Kilmeny Niland. Sydney: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986.
- 1986 *Hattie and the Fox*, illus. by Patricia Mullins. Sydney: Ashton Scholastic.
- 1986 *Morten Storbjørn Alexander Hansen* illus. by Julie Vivas. Copenhagen: Carlsen Forlag.
- 1986 *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*, illus. by Julie Vivas. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Viking Kestrel
- 1986 *Arabella, the Smallest Girl in the World*, illus. by Vicky Kitanov. Sydney: Ashton Scholastic.
- 1985 *A Cat called Kite*, illustr Kelvin Hawley. Auckland, New Zealand: Ashton Scholastic.
- 1985 *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*, illus. by Julie Vivas. Brooklyn, New York: Kane Miller
- 1984 *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*, illus. Julie Vivas. Adelaide: Omnibus Books.
- 1983 *Possum Magic*, illus. Julie Vivas. Adelaide: Omnibus Books.

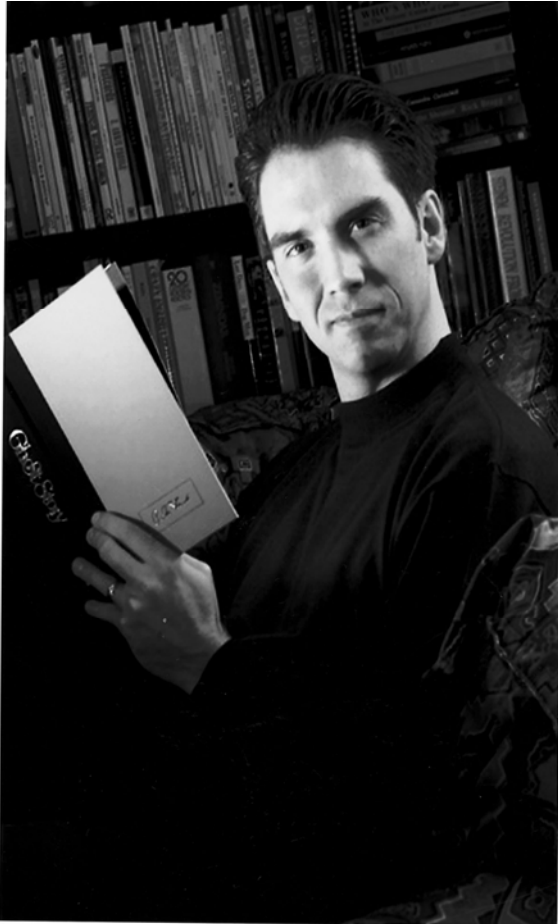
### Books for Adults

- 2001 *Reading Magic: How reading aloud to our children will change their lives forever* (Due Sept 2001). San Diego: Harcourt.
- 2001 *Reading Magic: How your child can learn to read before school—and other reading aloud miracles* (May 2001). Sydney: PanMacmillan.
- 1993 *Radical reflections: passionate opinions on teaching, learning, and living*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace; and Sydney: Harcourt Brace.
- 1993 Co-author: Wilkinson, L. *English Essentials: The wouldn't-be-without-it handbook on writing well*. Melbourne: Macmillan.
- 1992 *Dear Mem Fox, I have read all your books, even the pathetic ones*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- 1990 *Mem's the Word*. Melbourne: Penguin. (O/P)



For a complete bibliography of Fox's books, including chapters contributed to other books as well as articles published in refereed journals, consult her web site. There you will find more materials on teaching reading, on journal writing, on politics and literature for children, on gender issues in children's books, and other literacy-related matters.

# ARTHUR SLADE



Arthur Slade, winner of the 2001 Governor General's award and the Saskatchewan Book Award for children for *Dust*, was born in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, and raised in the Cypress Hills. He graduated with an honours degree in English literature from the University of Saskatchewan. He is the author of *Northern Frights*, a series of novels for young adults, based on Icelandic folk tales. His novel *Draugr* was nominated for a Saskatchewan Book Award and a Small Press Award in the U.S. His comic book, *Hallowed Knight*, was an international success. He also writes for adults. Some of his stories have been broadcast on CBC and published throughout North America.

Slade writes full time from his home in Saskatoon.

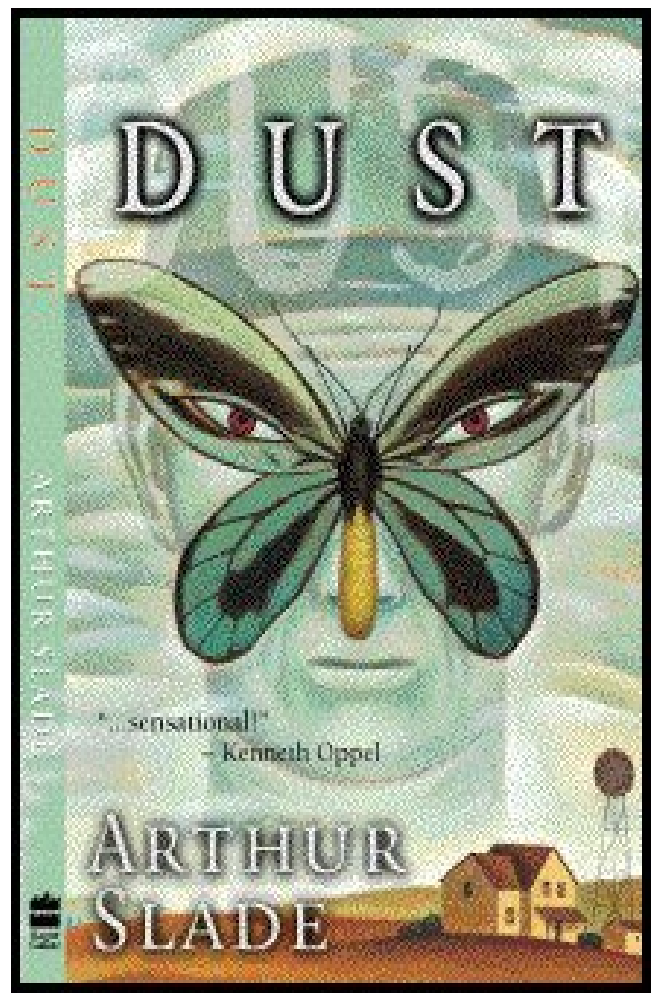
The Governor General's Award Jury said of *Dust*, "It is a brilliantly-conceived novel of a small town swept up in a dream, hypnotized by the quintessential snake-oil salesman. It takes a brave boy to upset his plan. Such a boy is eleven-year-old Robert. What can be said of the hero can also be said of his creator: Arthur Slade's writing is tough, compassionate, clear-sighted and daring. The result is stunning."

*Dust*. Toronto: HarperCollins Canada, 2001.

*Northern Frights. The Haunting of Drang Island*. Victoria: Orca Books, 1998.

*Northern Frights: Draugr*. Victoria: Orca Books, 1997.

*Hallowed Knight*. Shea Publishing, 1997; comic book.



**Roundtable Celebrates Canadian  
Children's Book Week**

***Tuesday, November 5, 2002***

Again this year, Roundtable members will celebrate Book Week at the Vancouver Museum in Vanier Park, Kitsilano. As a consequence of the response and enthusiasm for this venue last year, the Museum has offered to open all of its special exhibit areas this year at 6:00pm for members to enjoy. Although the program will begin at 7:00pm, members are encouraged to come early to take advantage of this special viewing opportunity. "Through the Eye of the Needle" featuring the crafts of the desert people in India, and a First Nations' exhibit, "Honouring the Basket Makers" are just two of the fascinating exhibits. Internet users may enjoy visiting the Museum's website [www.vanmuseum@bc.ca](http://www.vanmuseum@bc.ca) for more detailed information.

**Program:** The program will feature our visiting author, GILLIAN CHAN, who is sponsored by the Canada Children's Book Council. We will also be honouring our B.C. authors, illustrators and poets, a number of whom will be introducing their new 2002 books. There will be refreshments and KIDSBOOKS will have presenters' books available for sale.

**GILLIAN CHAN**



**Biographical**

Gillian was born in England in 1954. Her father was in the Royal Air Force which meant that the family moved every two or three years, travelling all over England and spending three memorable years in Germany. Before the age of eleven, she went to five different schools and she quickly discovered that a good book was a useful thing to have until you settled in and made new friends. The pace slowed down once she became a teenager and she went to only two high schools. Although there is a family story that she announced her intention to be a writer when she was only five, Gillian's intended career changed constantly throughout her childhood and teenage years and was normally influenced by whatever she had just read. By the time she was sixteen, she narrowed it down to two possible careers - an archaeologist (she still has a passion for Vikings) or an English teacher.

When Gillian didn't get into university to study archaeology, she decided to work for a while before trying teaching. She had a variety of jobs which included working in stores, in banks, and in restaurants, all of which have provided material for her writing. In 1976, she started teacher training, graduating with a degree in English and Education in 1980. In her last year of university, Gillian worked as a bartender, which was useful in two ways: first of all, she made enough

money to live on; and, secondly, she met her husband Henry Chan, whom she married in 1982.

Gillian taught English for ten years in high schools and then came to live in Canada in 1990, settling in Dundas, Ontario where she still lives.

Gillian reviewed books for *Books in Canada*, contributed reviews and articles to the *Hamilton Spectator*, and had articles on Canadian children's fiction and on James Houston and the Canadian North published in *Journal of the British Association for Canadian Studies*.

Ever since she can remember, Gillian has always written. (She says she has a drawerful of really embarrassing poetry that she wrote when she was a teenager.) However, she never thought about getting her work published until 1991 when she took a course on writing short stories and people really liked one story she had written about a boy who watches a bully pick on another kid. Everyone who read the story kept asking questions about the characters and this gave Gillian the idea of writing a series of linked stories in which the same characters kept appearing. At a Blue-pencil room, run by *Hamilton and Region Arts Council*, she met an editor from Kids Can Press who liked the story and said she might be interested in publishing it. A year later in 1994, Kids Can Press published *Golden Girl and Other Stories*. She soon began work on another collection of stories.

Both *Golden Girl and Other Stories* (1994) and *Glory Days and Other Stories* (1996) have won the Hamilton and Region Arts Council Literary Award for Best Children's Book for the years in which they were published and both were shortlisted for the Mr. Christie's Book

Award. *Glory Days* was short-listed for the Governor General's Award.

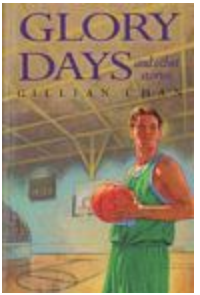
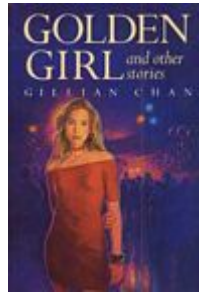
In 1995, Gillian's son, Theo, was born and this slowed her down a little, so her second book of stories, *Glory Days and Other Stories* (1996) took two years to write.

Theo is now in grade one, so Gillian has much more time to write. *The Carved Box* (2001) an historical fantasy which features two of her great loves—Dundas and dogs—was published in 2001. *A Foreign Field* will be published in the fall of 2002. Two more projects are in the works, including a modern fantasy about a Canadian boy who, while living in England for a year, is drawn against his will into the world of English legends.

Email: [gillian.chan@sympatico.ca](mailto:gillian.chan@sympatico.ca)

***Welcome to my world! . . . some words from Gillian Chan, from her website for young readers***

As a writer, I'm hard to pin down. I've written stories with a contemporary setting: *Golden Girl* and *Glory Days*. Recently, I have been obsessed with the past, and have been exploring Canadian history: *The Carved Box* and *A Foreign Field*. I also love fantasy and science fiction and a fantasy element worked its way into *The Carved Box*. The book I am working on at the moment is set in the present day but it deals with what happens when a very modern boy is forced to confront creatures from legend.



I use the internet a lot—mainly for research, but also for fun—so I have also included a page of links in my website that I find useful. I love word games, particularly scrabble

I love being a writer and talking to people about that. I have tried to answer some of the questions that I often get asked in the [FAQs page](#), but if you have other questions or comments please contact me at [gillian.chan@sympatico.ca](mailto:gillian.chan@sympatico.ca).

### Chan's Books

*A Foreign Field*. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2002.

*The Carved Box*. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2001.

*Glory Days and Other Stories*. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 1996.

*Golden Girl and other Stories*. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 1994.

TWO BOOK LAUNCHES AT  
KIDSBOOKS ON BROADWAY

Tradewind Books' *My Animal Friends* will be launched on Thursday,

September 26<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. Both author **David Stephens** and illustrator **Kathryn Shoemaker** will be present.

Singers will be there to sing the lovely children's song which the book is based on.

Please come one and all! See the book on Tradewind's website:

<http://www.tradewindbooks.com>

Harbour's *Boys, Girls and Body Science* will be launched on Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7 p.m. Both author **Meg Hickling** and illustrator **Kim La Fave** will be present.

There will be refreshments

TWO AUTHOR EVENTS AT  
KIDSBOOKS

**Deborah Ellis**, author of the international bestseller *The Breadwinner* will be speaking about her books *The Breadwinner* and *Parvana's Journey* on:

Friday September 27 at 7 p.m. at Highlands Church in Edgemont Village, and on Saturday September 28 at 11 a.m. at the Hollywood Theatre on West Broadway.

Tickets are \$10.00 each. Included in the cost is a copy of *Parvana's Journey*. \$3.00 of each ticket sold will be donated to Women for Women in Afghanistan, an organization dedicated to the education of Afghan girls.

Kidsbooks on Broadway is proud to host an Author Breakfast on Saturday October 5 at 8 a.m. Our special guest is **Coleen Salley**, storyteller extraordinaire from Louisiana. Tickets cost \$25.00. Included in this price are a copy of her new hardcover picture book *Epossumondas* (illustrated by Janet Stevens), a dynamic presentation by Queen Coleen, and a delicious

continental breakfast. You cannot lose! As seating is limited, please reserve your space(s) soon.

For more information on these events at Kidsbooks' call the Broadway location at 604-738-5335, fax 604-738-5362 or email [events@kidsbooks.bc.ca](mailto:events@kidsbooks.bc.ca).

*Canadian IRA Regional Conference Luncheon Series*

at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Vancouver

**October 24 – 26, 2002**

### Be Enlightened and Entertained

*With Luncheon Speaker*

*BILL RICHARDSON*



**Friday, October 25, 2002**

12:00 noon – 1:30 p.m.

Regency Room E  
Hyatt Regency Hotel  
655 Burrard Street  
Vancouver, BC

- Author, Humourist and Radio Personality
- Host of CBC radio's *Richardson's Roundup*
- Winner of the Stephen Leacock Award for Humour for *Bachelor Brothers' Bed & Breakfast*

- Author of *After Hamelin* (Annick, 2000)

Enjoy Bill's irrepressible wit over a first class lunch!

#### Contact:

Shirley Choo, 1784 Pepperidge Court  
Burnaby, BC V5A 3V9

Phone: 604-903-3650 (office)

604-420-7967 (home)

Fax: 604-903-3651

e-mail [tschoo@direct.ca](mailto:tschoo@direct.ca)

Download the Canadian/IRS Literacy Conference flyer from [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org). This is the International Reading Association's web site.

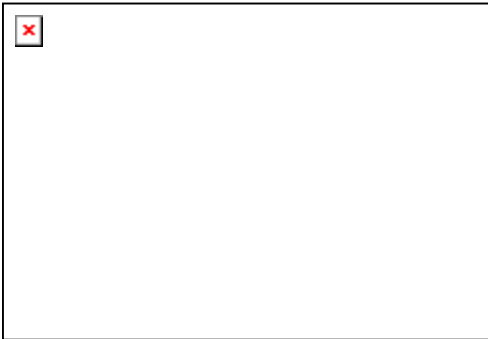
### VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL WRITERS AND READERS FESTIVAL TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22 TO SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27

Great news! The Writers Festival information is now available online at [www.writersfest.bc.ca/schools/school\\_events.php](http://www.writersfest.bc.ca/schools/school_events.php) for listings of 32 school events within the festival. Among those authors coming to speak to children from primary ages to secondary are: Paul Yee, Susan Coyne, Eric Walters, Linda Bailey, and Robert Priest. As well, Cree writer Larry Loyie will appear with Constance Brissenden, Laisha Rosnau will talk about teenage rebellion as contributor to her fiction, and Sarah Waters will speak on historical fiction.

Michele Marineau, Zachary Richard (contes cajuns et contes quebecoise), and Raymonde Plante are among those writers for Francophone students wishing to attend the festival.

Check it out online! And, of course, there are all those spectacular writers coming for the big folk.

## Phoebe Gilman



The Canadian Children's book community learned of the death of Phoebe Gilman on August 29, 2002.

Phoebe Gilman was the author of 11 children's books, including the popular *Jillian Jiggs* books and the award-winning *Something From Nothing*. Her stories were marked by a zest for life and compassion for the creative minds of her young readers.

Phoebe Gilman grew up in New York City and studied at Hunter College and the Arts Students' League in Manhattan. She lived in Europe and Israel for some years before coming to Canada in 1972. Before the publication of *The Balloon Tree*, she was a painter and an instructor at the Ontario College of Art. She considered herself a painter who happened to like writing stories for children.

### Selected Publications:

- The Gypsy Princess*. Richmond Hill, Ontario: Scholastic Canada Ltd., 1995.
- Jillian Jiggs to the Rescue*. Richmond Hill, Ontario: Scholastic Canada Ltd., 1994.
- Something From Nothing*. Richmond Hill, Ontario: Scholastic Canada Ltd., 1992.
- Grandma & the Pirates*. Richmond Hill, Ontario: Scholastic Canada Ltd., 1990.
- The Wonderful Pigs of Jillian Jiggs*. Richmond Hill, Ontario: Scholastic Canada Ltd., 1988.
- Jillian Jiggs*. Richmond Hill, Ontario: Scholastic Canada Ltd., 1985.
- The Balloon Tree*. Richmond Hill, Ontario: Scholastic Canada Ltd., 1984.

### Awards:

- The Ruth Schwartz Children's Book Award, for *Something for Nothing*, 1993.
- Sydney Taylor Award for *Something from Nothing*, 1993.
- Vicky Metcalf Award for a Body of Work, 1993.

For more information about Phoebe Gilman, visit <http://www.writersunion.ca/g/gilman.htm>.

### CALL FOR NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

We invite submissions. Please share with us news of speakers, authors on tour, special exhibitions, articles, etc., which you think may be of interest to your other members.

Send your news items to:  
Dr. Wendy Sutton, Language Education  
Faculty of Education  
2125 Main Mall, Neville Scarfe Building  
University of British Columbia,

Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z5

If you aren't a member of the Roundtable, and you would like to join, contact Keith McPherson at the Language Education address above, or call Keith at 822-5368.

**2002 INFORMATION BOOK AWARD**

***PRELIMINARY LIST***

1. **Adventures with the Vikings**, by Linda Bailey. Kids Can Press
2. **Animals at Work**, by Etta Kaner. Kids Can Press
3. **Animals Eating: How Animals Chomp, Chew, Slurp and Swallow**, by Pamela Hickman. Kids Can Press
4. **Baa! The Most Interesting Book You'll Ever Read About Genes and Cloning**, by Diane Swanson Kids Can Press
5. **Born To Be A Cowgirl**, by Candace Savage. Greystone Books/Douglas & McIntyre
6. **Building Canada**, by Bonnie Shemie. Tundra Books
7. **Burp! The Most Interesting Book You'll Ever Read About Eating**, by Diane Swanson. Kids Can Press
8. **Eco-Fun: Great Projects, Experiments and Games for a Greener Earth**, by David Suzuki and Kathy Vanderlinden. Greystone Books
9. **A First Book of Canadian Art**, by Richard Rhodes. Owl Books
10. **Footnotes: Dancing the World's Best-Loved Ballets**, by Frank Augustyn and Shelley Tanaka. Key Porter Books
11. **Gold Rush Fever**, by Barbara Greenwood Kids Can Press
12. **Growing Up Royal: Life in the Shadow of the British Throne**, by Jane Billingham. Annick
13. **Hmm? The Most Interesting Book You'll Ever Read About Memory**, by Diane Swanson. Kids Can Press
14. **House Calls: The True Story of a Pioneer Doctor**, by Ainslie Manson. Groundwood
15. **The Kids Book of Canadian Firsts**, by Valerie Wyatt. Kids Can Press
16. **The Kids Can Press Jumbo Book of Music**, by Deborah Dunleavy. Kids Can Press
17. **The Kids Winter Cottage Book**, by Jane Drake and Ann Love. Kids Can Press
18. **Lucy Maud Montgomery: A Writer's Life**, by Elizabeth MacLeod. Kids Can Press
19. **Money - Make It, Spend It, Save It**, by Jo Ellen Bogart. Scholastic Canada
20. **Nibbling on Einstein's Brain: The Good, The Bad and the Bogus in Science**, by Diane Swanson. Annick
21. **97 Orchard Street, New York**, by Linda Granfield. Tundra Books
22. **Soccer: The Winning Way**, by Bob Macklin. Greystone/Douglas & Macintyre

23. **The Technology Book for Girls**, by Trudee Romanek. Kids Can Press
24. **To The Top Of Everest**, by Laurie Skreslet with Elizabeth MacLeod. Kids Can Press
25. **Volcano**, by Cynthia Pratt Nicolson. Kids Can Press
26. **Where Poppies Grow: A World War One Companion**, by Linda Granfield. Stoddart

**The Children's Literature Roundtables of Canada**

proudly announces the

**2002 INFORMATION BOOK AWARD FINALISTS**

**Where Poppies Grow: A World War One Companion**, by Linda Granfield. Stoddart

**A First Book of Canadian Art**, by Richard Rhodes. Owl Books

**To The Top Of Everest**, by Laurie Skreslet with Elizabeth MacLeod, Kids Can Press

**Burp! The Most Interesting Book You'll Ever Read About Eating**, by Diane Swanson. Kids Can Press

**The Kids Book of Canadian Firsts**, by Valerie Wyatt. Kids Can Press

**Remember to vote! Mail or fax your votes.**

**The last page of this Newsletter is your ballot form.**

**Mem Fox signs books for Vancouver Children's Literature Roundtable Breakfast**



SEPTEMBER 21, 2002 – Renowned Australian children's author and literacy advocate Mem Fox <<http://www.memfox.net>> visited Vancouver and presented at a Vancouver Children's Literature Roundtable breakfast. Her presentation emphasised that parents must read to young children with love and enthusiasm. Her spirited readings of her books brought laughter and tears to the audience, which had travelled from as far as Prince George to hear her speak.

***Children's Literature Roundtables of Canada*****2002 INFORMATION BOOK AWARD BALLOT**

\*Mark your first three (3) choices (1, 2, 3)

**Where Poppies Grow: A World War One Companion**

by Linda Granfield  
Stoddart

**A First Book of Canadian Art**

by Richard Rhodes  
Owl Books

**To The Top Of Everest**

by Laurie Skreslet with Elizabeth MacLeod  
Kids Can Press

**Burp! The Most Interesting Book You'll Ever Read About Eating**

by Diane Swanson  
Kids Can Press

**The Kids Book of Canadian Firsts**

by Valerie Wyatt  
Kids Can Press



**April Gill  
National Chair  
Roundtables Information Book Award  
Committee  
4100 Burkehill Road  
West Vancouver, B.C.  
V7V 3M2**



**Fold over. Staple or tape. Add a stamp. Send before November 1, 2002.**