

# HACKMATAACK 2016

## 5 Elephants

by Rob Laidlaw

Elephants are truly remarkable, unmistakable animals. Their huge size, giant ears, amazing trunk and incredible intelligence make them unique in the natural world. They are highly active, complex, wide-ranging animals who play a key role in the ecosystems they inhabit.

*5 Elephants* provides readers with many fascinating elephant facts and figures, and an introduction to some of the serious challenges that wild and captive elephants face. To truly understand elephants however, it is important to know them as individuals. That's why *5 Elephants* also features profiles of the lives of five famous elephants. Readers will meet Echo, a wild elephant who thrived in her natural environment, surrounded by her family. They will also read about Lucy, an elephant living alone in a Canadian zoo, and Tarra, an entertainment elephant who is now living out her days at a sanctuary. They'll discover why Tusko, a travelling entertainment elephant, had such a tragic life, and how Thandora, a zoo elephant was given a chance at a new life in the wild.

*5 Elephants* also offers solutions to elephant issues and explains to readers how they can get active and involved in helping to make the lives of elephants better in both the wild and in captivity.

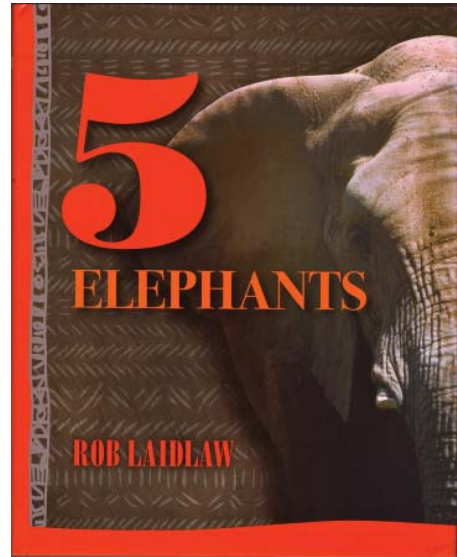
### Thematic Links:

Animal welfare and animal rights  
Wildlife Conservation

Making a difference in the world/activism  
Geography

### Activity Ideas:

- Create a display about wild elephant issues and challenges, including poaching for ivory, habitat degradation and human/elephant conflict. Do the same thing for captive elephants.
- Write a description of a wild elephant life and a captive elephant life and then compare the two. Try to figure out how their lives are different.
- Make a list of all the countries where wild elephants are still found and the kinds of habitats they live in.
- Start an essay writing contest. Ask kids to write about what they think an elephant in the wild or in captivity would experience on a day to day basis.



# HACKMATAK 2016

## Rob Laidlaw author of *5 Elephants*

I've always been intensely interested in animals. In fact, I can't remember a time when I didn't want to help them. While I was growing up I got involved in a wide range of animal-related initiatives. Eventually I started my own wildlife protection organization called Zoocheck. That was 30 years ago. The work that I've done since that time has taken me across Canada and to many other countries around the world. I've been able to meet and work with a wide range of fantastic people, including many kids. My Zoocheck job is difficult because a lot of people still don't care very much about animals, but that doesn't mean they can't be helped. I've been able to change policies and laws to better protect animals, as well as rescue elephants, bears, monkeys and big cats. I hope that *5 Elephants* and my other books about animals encourage people, both young and old, to learn more about animal issues and inspire them to get active in making the lives of animals better.



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### Selected Awards

Hackmatack Children's Choice Book Award English Non-Fiction nominee (2015)  
Red Cedar Book Award nominee (2015)  
OLA Silver Birch Non-Fiction Award nominee (2015)  
Hackmatack Children's Choice Book Award English Non-Fiction winner (2014)  
OLA Silver Birch Non-Fiction Award nominee (2014)  
OLA Silver Birch Non-Fiction Award winner (2013)  
Skipping Stones Honor Award (2011)  
OLA Silver Birch Non-Fiction Award nominee (2009)

### Some Other Books by Rob Laidlaw

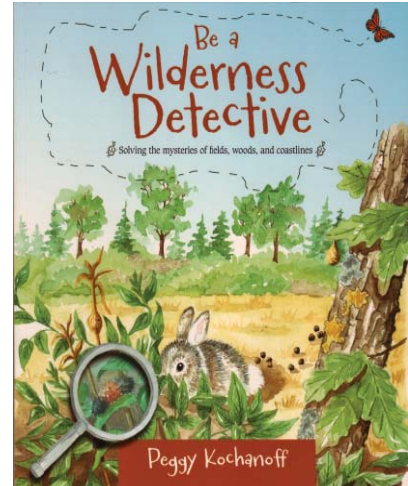
*5 Elephants* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2014)  
*Saving Lives and Changing Hearts, Animal Sanctuaries and Rescue Centers* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2013)  
*No Shelter Here, Making the World a Kinder Place for Dogs* (Pajama Press, 2012)  
*On Parade, The Hidden World of Animals in Entertainment* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2010)  
*Wild Animals In Captivity* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2008)

# HACKMATAACK 2016

## ***Be a Wilderness Detective***

by Peggy Kochanoff

*Be a Wilderness Detective* is part whodunit and part field guide. It aims to get kids outdoors in nature solving the questions the author asks (how to identify different animal scat, how do animals make it through the winter, what use are lichens, who chewed the holes in the bindweed leaves, etc). When people find out how much fun nature is, they want to spend less time on the computer and the TV!



### **Thematic Links:**

General science  
Nature

Biology  
Botany

### **Activity Ideas:**

- Take a lichen walk (at any time of the year) and count how many shapes, colors and sizes you find.
- Count tree rings on several stumps to find the age.
- Find a goldenrod gall without a hole. Cut it open and look for the larva inside.
- Mark the highest point that the water reaches at high tide and the time. Go back several times at the same time and see where the water reaches

# HACKMATAACK 2016

## Peggy Kochanoff

author of *Be a Wilderness Detective*

I graduated from Cornell University with a major in vertebrate zoology and spent a summer at the Central Park Zoo (NYC). After living and traveling in Europe for a year with my husband, we settled in Nova Scotia. I worked on our tree farm and landscape business and raised two sons. Walking my dogs and cats in the fields everyday I found many wonderful things ( antlers, skulls, nests, animal poop) and saw a variety of birds, mammals and flowers. I decided to combine my love of nature and drawing in the form of children's nature books. As a child I spent many happy hours exploring woods , fields and beaches. I really want kids today to experience this fun.



### Selected Awards

*You Can Be a Nature Detective* – 2010 Moonbeam Children's Book Award bronze medalist.

*Be a Wilderness Detective* – 2015 Silver Birch nominee

### Some Other Books by Peggy Kochanoff

*A Field Guide to Nearby Nature* (Mountain Press Publishing, 1994)

*Beachcombing the Atlantic Coast* (Mountain Press Publishing, 1997)

*You Can be a Nature Detective* (Mountain Press Publishing, 2009)

*Be a Beach Detective* (Nimbus Publishing, 2015)

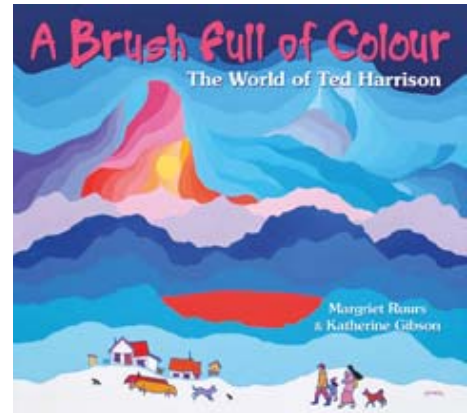
# HACKMATAACK 2016

## ***A Brush Full of Colour***

by Margriet Ruurs and Katherine Gibson

This book is about the life and artistic career of Ted Harrison. Through his paintings, readers see what life is like in Northern Canada and how much fun it is to be Canadian.

Ted Harrison loved painting and he encouraged many children to paint the way they want to. Ted By traveling to exotic countries and by painting in bright, bold colours even when he was taught to use 'regular' styles and colours. By doing so he became one of our country's most recognized artists ever.



This book aims to inspire many readers to express themselves in the art form they most enjoy.

### **Thematic Links:**

Life in the North  
Storytelling through art

Use of imagination to push the  
boundaries of conventional use of  
colour

### **Activity Ideas:**

- Create written and verbal stories based on the pictures in the book
- Create a painting in the the style of Ted Harrison
- Take a class trip to a local art gallery. Discuss how painting styles differ.



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## Margriet Ruurs and Katherine Gibson

authors of *A Brush Full of Colour*

**Margriet Ruurs:** When I was a kid, my mom read many books to me. My dad made up stories and I loved the idea of making up my own stories. When I learned how to write, in Grade One, I started to write stories and poems. I just never stopped.

Now I have had 30 books published. I still love to use my imagination. But I also love to research interesting topics and write nonfiction books. When I visit schools I enjoy meeting kids who love reading all the same books I do - kids' novels are usually much better than adult books!



### Some Other Books by Margriet Ruurs

*Schooldays Around the World*, (Kids Can Press, 2015)

*Families Around the World*, (Kids Can Press, 2014)

*Amazing Animals*, (Tundra, 2011)

*My School in the Rainforest*, (Boyds Mills Press, 2009)

*In My Backyard*, (Tundra, 2007)

**Katherine Gibson:** I am a former teacher who now writes articles and books. My work has been published internationally. My interests centre on fine arts as well as lifestyle issues. I have appeared on national radio and television. *A Brush Full of Colour* is my first children's book.



### Some Other Books by Katherine Gibson

*Unclutter Your Life*, (Atria, 2004)

*Pause*, (Insomniac Press, 2006)

*Ted Harrison: Painting Paradise*, (Queens Printer, 2009)

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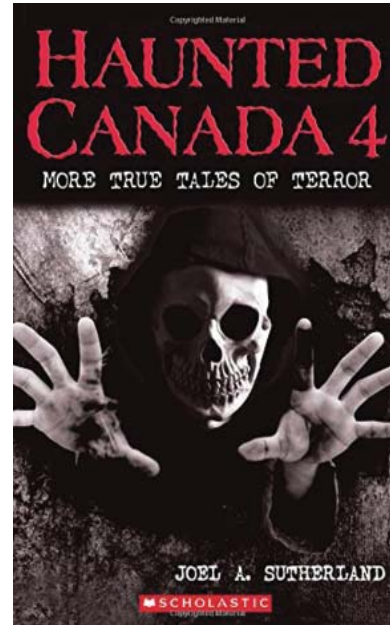
## *Haunted Canada 4*

by Joel A. Sutherland

An abandoned asylum in Victoria, the most filmed site in Canada, is alive with inexplicable sights and sounds. Multiple men are found decapitated in the woods near the Northwest Territories' Nahanni National Park Reserve . . . over a 50 year period. Guests at the Bytown Museum in Ottawa have heard cries coming from the doll exhibit, and report seeing the dolls move and wink. A mysterious figure stands at the edge of the rocky shores of Peggy's Cove, looking as if she is about to jump.

The ghoulishly good fourth book in the Haunted Canada series is full of more than 25 sinister, unsettling, and absolutely true ghost stories from across the country. Settle in for an evening of hair-raising thrills and chills in this brand-new volume of haunting encounters and unexplained incidents!

I love spooky stories, especially when told around a campfire with flashlights held under chins. And when those spooky stories are true? That's even better! Regardless whether you believe in ghosts or not, I guarantee you'll find something to love in this book, including fascinating facts about our country's history, geography and famous people. Just make sure to read it with the lights on...



### **Thematic Links:**

Ghosts

History & Politics

Geography

Famous Canadians

### **Activity Ideas:**

- Read "The Hanged Man", set in Bridgetown, Nova Scotia, aloud as a group. Have all the children make the rat-a-tat-tat sound effect of the finger tapping on the window each time it happens.
- There are many stories in the book set in the Atlantic Provinces. Why do you think this part of the country is well-known for its ghost stories? Research the history of eastern Canada's early inhabitants and their beliefs in the supernatural.
- Each chapter is packed with fun facts and interesting tidbits about Canada, from history to geography to famous people. Make a list of some of the coolest things you learned while reading Haunted Canada 4.

# HACKMATAACK 2016

## Joel A. Sutherland author of *Haunted Canada 4*

Joel is a librarian with a special interest in children's services, and holds a Masters in Library and Information Studies from Aberystwyth University in Wales. He supervises a group of teen library volunteers and is involved with children's programs such as the TD Summer Reading Club and Battle of the Books, among others. His greatest professional satisfaction is getting the right kid's books into the right kid's hands. It could be that Joel's appearance as "The Barbarian Librarian" on the Canadian edition of the hit television show *Wipeout* helped in this mission. But by making it all the way to the third round, he at least proved that "librarians can be just as tough and crazy as anyone else."



Joel's first book for Scholastic was *Be a Writing Superstar*, which features writing tips and interviews with many of Canada's most well-known authors and illustrators. Joel fed his preoccupation with all things spooky in *Haunted Canada 4*, part of the popular Scholastic series. As research for the book, Joel voluntarily checked in to the Olde Angel Inn in Niagara-on-the-Lake in the hopes of determining if the rumours of ghost appearances had any basis in truth. Watch a video of his ordeal on YouTube to see how he fared!

His short fiction has appeared in numerous anthologies and magazines, including *Blood Lite II & III* and *Cemetery Dance* magazine, alongside the likes of Stephen King and Neil Gaiman. He is also the founder of the DarkLit Fest, a literary event that has welcomed Guests of Honour Kelley Armstrong and Joy Fielding, and has been a juror for the Canadian Children's Book Centre's John Spray Mystery Award and the Monica Hughes Award for Science Fiction and Fantasy.

[www.joelasutherland.com](http://www.joelasutherland.com)

### **Selected Awards**

Bram Stoker Award nominee

Black Quill Award nominee

### **Some Other Books by Joel A. Sutherland**

*Frozen Blood* (Lachesis Publishing, 2008)

*Be a Writing Superstar* (Scholastic Canada, 2010)

*Haunted Canada 5* (Scholastic Canada, 2015)

*Summer's End* (Scholastic Canada, 2016)

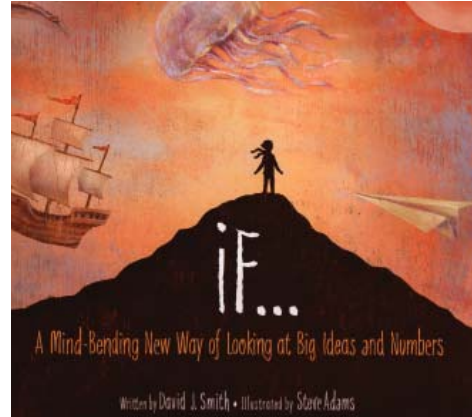


# HACKMATAACK 2016

## ***If...***

**by David J. Smith**

Imagine if you could condense all of the History of the Earth into a 2-hour DVD; the first human being walks across your TV screen in the final second, and all of recorded history occurs in the final 1/16th of a second. This book takes all kinds of big, complex numbers and concepts, and simplifies them. There are many surprising results, such as “if all the world’s water were distributed into 100 glasses, a single glass would contain all the water that is available to us, and which every person on Earth needs to survive”. The topics include Space, Time, Inventions, Resources, and much more, and there is an essay at the end with ideas for teachers and with all the resources used.



### **Thematic Links:**

Geography

Science

Mathematics

History

Resources

Life Expectancy

### **Activity Ideas:**

- Start a “scale” collection
- Make Time Lines for all the Social Studies you’ve learned about
- Make big scale drawings, such as a blue whale on the school parking lot
- Scale Up: what could your town create in LARGE size to celebrate its culture and customs, the way some towns have a giant bowling pin, or spinach can, or moose.

# HACKMATAACK 2016

## David J. Smith

author of *If...*

I grew up in the US; we moved to BC in 2009. I taught grade 7 for 26 years, and out of my work with grade 7 students have come my books. I have a curriculum for teachers called *Mapping the World By Heart* that helps students (and teachers) create a vivid and accurate mental map of the Earth; I have had 4 books published for primary and middle grades. The first one was *If the World Were A Village*, which reduces the 7.2 billion people of the Earth into a village of 100, to see what we can learn about ourselves and our neighbours; it has been translated into 28 languages. After that came *If America Were A Village*. In 2009 came *This Child Every Child*, a book about the rights of children, based on the UN Convention On the Rights of the Child, and endorsed by UNICEF. And now, *If*.



I can speak 5 languages; I work in customer service at Vancouver International Airport, and can greet and talk with people in English, French, German, Italian, and Japanese.

I have a cat, Chica (the Spanish word for “cute little girl”).

### Selected Awards

Cybil Award for *If America Were A Village*, 2009

The Animation of *If The World Were A Village* won a Gemini Award from the Alliance for Children's Television

The Italian edition of *If the World Were A Village* won the Hans Christian Anderson Award, best book for children, in 2003

The International Reading Association named *If the World Were A Village* Best Book of 2003

The Smithsonian Magazine included *If the World Were A Village* in its list of Notable Books of 2003

The US Department of Education awarded me with their “Breaking the Mold” Award.

### Some Other Books by David J. Smith

*This Child, Every Child*, (KidsCan Press, Toronto, 2011)

*If America Were A Village*, (KidsCan Press, Fall, Toronto, 2009)

*If The World Were A Village*, (KidsCan Press, Toronto, 2002)

*A/OS Emergency Procedures Manual*, (US Dept. Of State, July 2003 and update 2006, 2007, 2008)

*Overseas Schools' Web-Site Manual*, (US Dept. Of State, March 1998)

*Mapping The World By Heart, Curriculum*, (Fablevision Learning, 2011)

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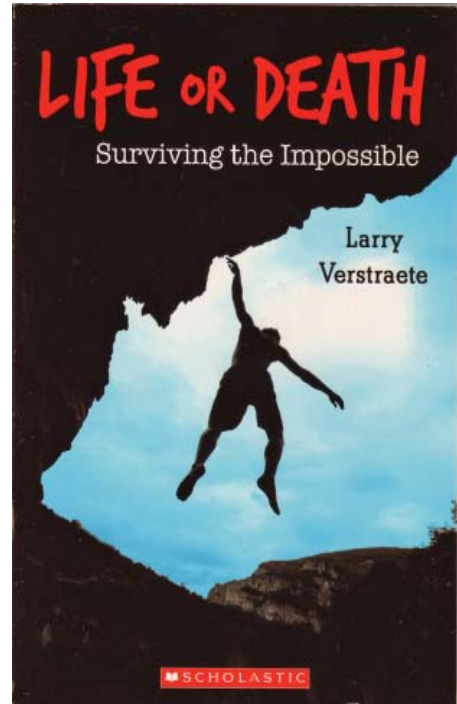
## ***Life or Death*** by Larry Verstraete

One morning about 20 years ago, I ran into a sticky mess while hiking in Colorado with my wife and two young children. We wandered off a mountain trail and became horribly lost. We were ill-prepared and had no water, food or little of anything else. By mid-afternoon, we were desperate.

At one point, we stopped to rest, too tired to even talk. In the quiet, we heard the sound of water bubbling in a distant creek. We remembered crossing a creek at the beginning of our hike. All of a sudden, a plan emerged out of our desperate situation. If we followed the sound, perhaps we could find the creek. Maybe it could lead us back to our starting point.

Indeed it did. The creek saved us. But I've often wondered since then just how things might have turned out if we hadn't heard the creek or made the connection that we should follow it.

That experience led me to write this book. How do other people get out of impossible situations? How do they beat the odds and triumph in the end? Those are the questions I hoped to answer in *Life or Death: Surviving the Impossible*.



### **Thematic Links:**

Survival

Disasters

Adventure

Problem Solving

Courage

Creativity

### **Activity Ideas:**

- Plain Luck: Construct a value line with one end labeled 'Pure Luck' and the other labeled 'No Luck At All'. After each story, mark a spot on the line to show the role that luck played in the situation. Label the spot with the title of the story. After reading the book, have each reader write a paragraph to answer this question: Does success depend on luck? Use examples from the value line to defend your answer.
- This and other activities can be found in the downloadable teacher's guide under the 'resources' heading on my website [www.larryverstraete.com](http://www.larryverstraete.com)

# HACKMATAACK 2016

## Larry Verstraete

author of *Life or Death*

Writer and educator Larry Verstraete lives in Winnipeg. An author mainly of non-fiction books for young people, Larry began writing for youngsters while still teaching, drawing upon two strong interests for inspiration – science and true adventure. Those elements can be seen, something together, in the subjects Larry explores in his books as well as in his style of writing. Many of his published works are on scientific themes and utilize, to varying degrees, a narrative non-fiction writing style.



### Selected Awards

Silver Birch Award for Non-fiction (*At the Edge: Daring Acts in Desperate Times*, 2010; *Survivors: True Death-Defying Escapes*, 2004)

McNally Robinson Book of the Year for Young People Award (*S is for Scientists: A Discovery Alphabet*, 2012; *Lost Treasures: True Stories of Discovery*, 2007)

Red Cedar Award (*Survivors: True Death-Defying Escapes*, 2006)

Shortlisted for MYRCA - Manitoba Young Reader's Choice Award (*Missing in Paradise*, 2016)

Nominated for the New York Reading Association Charlotte Award & Alberta's Rocky Mountain Award (*Surviving the Hindenburg*, 2014)

Nominated for the Norma Fleck Award (*Accidental Discoveries: From Laughing Gas to Dynamite*, 1999)

### Some Other Books by Larry Verstraete

*Missing in Paradise* (Rebelight Publishing Inc, 2014)

*Surviving the Hindenburg* (Sleeping Bear Press, 2012)

*Case Files: 40 Murders and Mysteries Solved by Science* (Scholastic Canada, 2011)

*S is for Scientists: A Discovery Alphabet* (Sleeping Bear Press, 2010)

*G is for Golden Boy: A Manitoba Alphabet* (Sleeping Bear Press, 2009)

*At the Edge: Daring Acts in Desperate Times* (Scholastic Canada, 2009)

*Lost Treasures: True Stories of Discovery* (Scholastic Canada, 2006)

*Survivors: True Death-Defying Escapes* (Scholastic Canada, 2003)

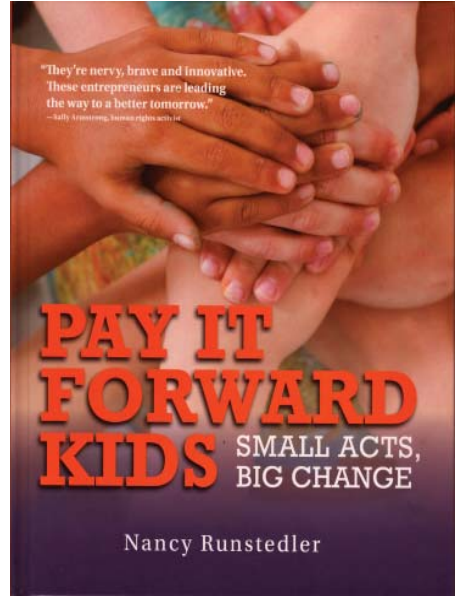
*Extreme Science: Science in the Danger Zone* (Scholastic Canada, 2000)

# HACKMATAACK 2016

## ***Pay It Forward Kids***

by Nancy Runstedler

In *Pay It Forward Kids*, readers will meet ordinary kids from across North America who have done extraordinary things, all on their own initiatives. They have set out to “pay it forward” to someone else, with astonishing results. The ripple effect of their deeds have inspired others to join their causes, and in some cases, to start missions of their own. These kids have raised both money and awareness for causes such as homelessness, human rights, orphans, and literacy. They’ve rescued child slaves, provided hope to the sick, and comfort for the dying. They’ve also enabled others to enjoy pleasures that many people take for granted. These fourteen powerful stories demonstrate that you’re never too young to make a difference or to improve the life of another. Kindness can be done by anyone...you just need to step up and start. Sally Armstrong, award-winning Canadian journalist, speaker, teacher, author and human rights activist has this to say about the book...”At last a book about the young change-makers in North America. They’re nervy, brave, and innovative. Their stories are inspiring and full of hope. These entrepreneurs are leading the way to a better tomorrow.”



### **Thematic Links:**

Social Activism

Social Reform

Kindness

Anti-bullying

### **Activity Ideas:**

- Paying it forward doesn't have to mean doing something big. It includes any act of kindness that makes the life of another person even a tiny bit better. You can start in your own home, school, or community. There are opportunities everywhere. Hold open a door, mow your neighbour's lawn, visit a senior's home, collect canned goods for the food bank, or help a classmate understand their homework. The list is endless and there are numerous ideas to be found on the internet or come up with some of your own. A great source of further information and bigger projects, including some fantastic plans for your class or school, can be found at the Pay It Forward Day website - <http://payitforwardday.com/get-involved/schools-universities/sample-lesson-plans/>.



# HACKMATAK 2016

## **Nancy Runstedler** author of *Pay It Forward Kids*

Nancy Runstedler has lived in three provinces but grew up in Wellesley, Ontario. After an array of different careers, including office manager, waitress, and travel agent, she finally found her calling among books. She has now worked in both public and school libraries for the past 14 years, and enjoys travelling, music, movies, the arts, and all things chocolate. Although her home library is overflowing with books, she intends to keep collecting. She never leaves the house without two “pay it forward” bracelets on her wrists – one as a constant reminder to do good, and the other to give away when opportunities present themselves. She claims that everything she ever learned about kindness was by her mother’s example, and dedicates her acts and this book in her memory. She currently lives in Paris, Ontario with her daughter.



### **Selected Award Nominations**

2015 Forest of Reading Red Maple Nonfiction Nominee

2014 Children’s Literature Roundtables of Canada’s Information Book Award – Honour Book

2014 Skipping Stones Honor Award

### **Some Other Books by Nancy Runstedler**

*Beautiful Goodbye* (Dundurn Press, 2013)

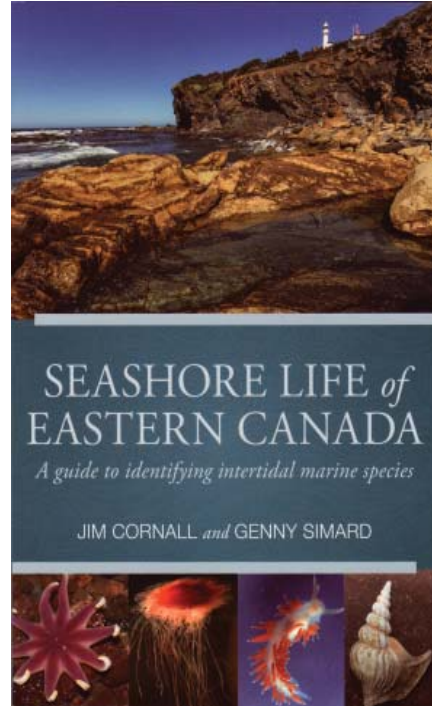
# HACKMATAACK 2016

## ***Seashore Life of Eastern Canada***

by Jim Cornall and Genny Simard

Have you ever walked on the ocean floor? Many of us have, at low tide, and discovered all kinds of animals and plants hiding under rocks and seaweed. This field guide can show you who they are, and answer many questions about their lifestyles and unique features. The intertidal zone is diverse with living creatures that are able to survive without the sea water before the tide rises again. Watch a periwinkle hide in its shell when you pick it up, or gently caress the back of a green crab while he looks up at you. Get squirted by a clam, or hold a colourful seastar in your hand. The beach is there for you to explore.

On a beautiful warm summer day, there is nothing better than to go out on the beach and discover its ecosystem. With vivid colour photographs, we wanted you to be able to identify the creatures that live in this zone, and learn more about what makes them so special. Good for anywhere you go along the coast of the Maritimes!



### **Thematic Links:**

Eco-systems  
Science  
Nature

Identifying species  
Biology  
Ecology

### **Activity Ideas:**

- Take a stroll on the beach. Find as many different shells as you can. What makes them different?
- Collect some empty shells and put together a collection
- Write a journal of what you can find on the beach that day, including drawings of what you observed
- Take an inventory of all animals and plants you find on the upper part of the beach, and then closer to the water's edge at low tide. Explain why there is a difference.
- Learn more about the area you are in, and what can be observed there.

# HACKMATAACK 2016

## Jim Cornall and Genny Simard *authors of Seashore Life of Eastern Canada*

**Genny Simard:** I'm a biologist living in a beautiful seaside resort town, St Andrews-by-the-Sea, NB. I grew up on the shores of the St Lawrence seaway in a Montreal suburb, always birdwatching and investigating all things plants and animals. Even as a young child, I would create my own field guides with my own illustrations. I went on to Mt Allison University, where, you guessed it, earned my biology degree. While there, I took the marine biology course offered by the Huntsman Marine Science Centre, and I fell in love with marine wildlife. I was known as *Enthusiaster inverte*, my given scientific name, as I would flip seastars upside down with enthusiasm to study their reactions for a report. I now teach kids the same fun facts at Huntsman in the winter, and offer guided tours and beachwalks to tourists in the summer with my own business, Turtle Shore Adventures. I wrote my first field guide in French with my friend and co-worker, Jim Cornall, and soon put together an English version. My favourite activities include sailing and whale watching.



**Jim Cornall:** I was born and raised in Yorkshire, England, and left for Canada in the 1990s for a career in the media. I've been a magazine and award-winning newspaper editor, photographer, author, and broadcaster. My writing and photography has been used by hundreds of publications around the world on a variety of subjects including music, photography, travel, sport and biology. I've also edited and designed books for other writers. Outside of writing, I am an avid musician and, being from England, obsessed with soccer, even though my favourite teams are generally rubbish. I hike every week with my family, although this is often simply an excuse to take more photographs... please don't tell.



Growing up by the coast, I've always loved making discoveries on the beach, whether it's unusual glass, fossils, or creatures I've never seen before. I studied plant science at university, and then education. After moving to New Brunswick from Ontario in 2000, I once more had the opportunity to check out the beaches and tide pools, and a few years later started working at the Fundy Discovery Aquarium. This gave me an opportunity to work with all kinds of plants and animals from the Bay of Fundy and the Atlantic, and also to share that knowledge with the public and the many school groups that visited the aquarium.

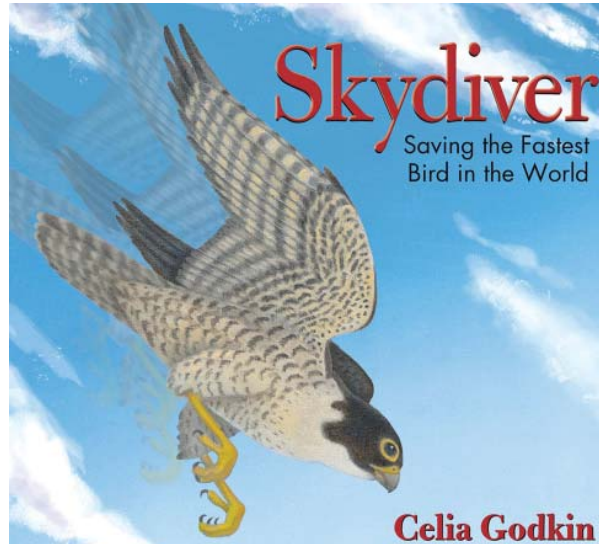
While there, I worked with my co-author, Genny Simard, and we put this book together for budding beach explorers who want to know not only what the weird, wild and wonderful things they are finding on the beaches and around wharves throughout Quebec and Atlantic Canada, but also a few interesting facts about them that we've learned over the years. It was a lot of fun creating a book that people can find useful when they do something families have been doing - and enjoying - for centuries, and that's paying a visit to the beach!

# HACKMATAACK 2016

## ***Skydiver*** by Celia Godkin

*Skydiver* tells the story of a peregrine falcon and her family. She and her mate return to the same cliff each spring to hatch and raise their young. This year they lose most of their eggs. A climber collects the first clutch. The peregrines lay a second clutch, but only one chick survives. What is happening to this unfortunate falcon family?

We learn that the climber is part of a team dedicated to saving peregrines from the harmful effects of the pesticide DDT. We follow the fate of the eggs collected by the peregrine rescue team and learn how the plight of the peregrines and other birds like them helped to kick-start the environmental movement.



We live in a time when human beings are destroying the environment like never before. Yet nature is resilient. I'd written books about how nature recovers from natural disasters like volcanic eruptions, forest fires and hurricanes. With *Skydiver*, by telling the story of DDT and the peregrine rescue effort, I wanted to show that, with a helping hand from us, nature can recover from man-made disasters too.

### **Thematic Links:**

Birds of Prey

The Environmental Movement

The Environmental Movement

Biodiversity and the environment

### **Activity Ideas:**

- Find videos on line of a peregrine falcon dive bombing its prey. Share the videos with your class. Discuss what special features make the peregrine the fastest animal on earth. How fast can it go?
- If possible, visit a local bird or wildlife rescue centre. Learn how you can best help orphaned or injured wildlife.
- Have your class look up Rachel Carson and learn how her book *Silent Spring* started the environmental movement. Books can be powerful!



# HACKMATAACK 2016

## Celia Godkin

author of *Skydiver*

I've always been interested in nature. After studying zoology at university I found a job looking after endangered reptiles. I spent most of my time cleaning out dirty animal cages and feeding mice to the snakes. I don't enjoy cleaning and I like mice better than snakes. That's when I decided it was time to do something different.

I'd always been good at art and I loved drawing plants and animals, so I went back to school to study illustration. My first job after art school was to illustrate the signs at the Winnipeg Zoo. That job led to my first book as illustrator (*Endangered Species: Canada's Disappearing Wildlife* written by the Zoo Director, Clive Roots).



I'd written *Wolf Island* many years earlier but hadn't found a publisher for it. After *Endangered Species*, I did the illustrations for *Wolf Island* and tried again. The success of *Wolf Island* has meant I've been able to write and illustrate many more children's nature books. I've learned that there's a lot of luck involved in this business and that timing and persistence are very important.

I feel very lucky that I've found a way to work at the things I like best. I love drawing and painting and doing the research part of my work, learning more about nature, especially when I get to meet the animals I'm writing about, as I did with *Skydiver*. I also love sharing what I've learned through my books, which I hope will inspire future generations of nature lovers.

### Selected Awards

*Hurricane!* - 2009 A Bank Street Books Best Children's Book of the Year selection  
*Fire! The Renewal of a Forest* - 2007 Norma Fleck Award for Canadian Children's Non-Fiction Honour Book; 2008 Silver Birch Express shortlist; 2007 Canadian Science Writers' Association Science in Society Journalism Award nominee, Youth Book category; Canadian Children's Book Centre Our Choice 2007 finalist; 2007 A Bank Street Books Best Children's Book of the Year selection; 2006 Book Link – Best Book for the Classroom Selection.

### Some Other Books by Celia Godkin

*Hurricane!* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2008)

*Fire! The Renewal of a Forest* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2006)

*When the Giant Stirred: Legend of a Volcanic Island* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2002)

*Flying Lessons* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1999)

*Sea Otter Inlet* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1997)

*Ladybug Garden* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1995)

*Wolf Island* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1989. Second edition 2006)



# HACKMATAACK 2016

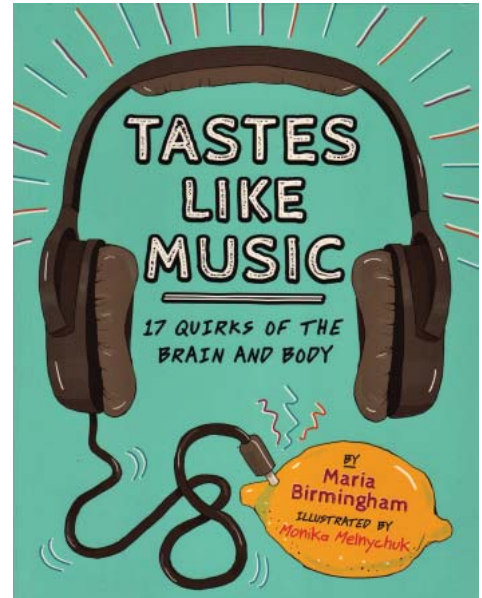
## ***Tastes Like Music***

by Maria Birmingham

Humans may look pretty similar on the outside, but sometimes it's what you can't see that's all the more amazing. Whether it's having no fingerprints at all (adermatoglyphia), hearing music every time you taste chocolate (synesthesia), or being able to see one hundred million colours (tetrachromacy), some people have unique conditions and amazing abilities. My book looks at the hows and whys of these extraordinary human conditions.

I came up with the idea for *Tastes Like Music* after watching a TV show about a woman who can remember every detail of her life from the time she was about 10 years old. Her condition is called Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory – what a mouthful! It's known as HSAM, for short. It got me thinking that there must be many other unusual human conditions and abilities that we don't know much about. So I got busy researching. Funnily enough, my own unique condition – anosmia (an inability to smell) – didn't make my final cut. I suppose since it's not so unusual for me, I didn't even consider it. When my editor asked me to track down a few other ideas, I came across anosmia in an article and that's when I realized that it deserved a spot in my book!

I hope my book gives you a new appreciation for all the weird and wonderful things the human brain and body can do



### **Thematic Links:**

Life Science  
Life Systems

Human Body  
Diversity

### **Activity Ideas:**

- Do a bit of research to find some other interesting facts about the human body. (There are lots of them!)
- Learn about one of the systems in your body, such as: skeletal, muscular, circulatory, respiratory, nervous, immune, or digestive. Present your findings to your class.
- A few of the conditions in my book have to do with sleeping. Keep a sleep log to learn about your sleep behaviours. Include things like: how long it took you to fall asleep, the number of hours you slept, whether or not you woke up during the night, and how rested you felt in the morning. See if you remember your dreams. You can keep a dream journal to track them.

# HACKMATAACK 2016

## Maria Birmingham

author of *Tastes Like Music*

I have always loved to read and write. So I'm grateful that I get to spend day after day sitting in front of a computer researching and writing. Even better, I get to share all the incredible facts and stories that I find with kids through my articles and books. When I held my first book in my hands, I was incredibly excited. And when I went into a bookstore and saw it on a shelf – wow! I'd never dreamed that 'little old me' would ever publish a book. And then it got even better. I started to meet kids who had read my book and loved it. They were able to rhyme off facts they'd read in it. And they had so many kind and positive things to say. What



a privilege to create something that someone else might enjoy! It goes to show that a lot of hard work and a little luck can lead to amazing opportunities.

When I'm not writing, I'm usually hanging out with my two kids. They make even the brightest day brighter! And my mind is always turning – wondering what other stories I might have to tell. You can find out more about me and my books at my website: [www.mariabirmingham.com](http://www.mariabirmingham.com)

### Selected Awards

2014/2015 Hackmataack Children's Choice Book Award Winner

2014 Silver Birch Award, Non-fiction nominee

Best Books for Kids and Teens Starred Selection (Canadian Children's Book Centre), 2013

Best Bets Top 10 Junior Non-Fiction List, Ontario Library Association, 2013

Junior Library Guild Selection, Fall 2013

### Some Other Books by Maria Birmingham

*Weird Zone: Sports* (Owlkids Books, 2013)

*A Beginner's Guide to Immortality: From Alchemy to Avatars* (Owlkids, October 2015)