The Gryphon

The Newsletter of the Friends of the
Osborne and Lillian H. Smith Collections

Fall/Winter 2026–27

FROM THE CHAIR

It's an exciting time to be stepping into the role of chair of the Friends of the Osborne Collection. This collection has been a through-line of my life since I moved to Toronto in 2016, and I feel so lucky to be able to work with the Friends to champion it. I'm grateful to Nancy Hartry, as outgoing chair, to Mary Anne Cree, as incoming vice-chair, and to the whole Friends of the Osborne executive committee for helping me through the transition. I'm also very happy to announce that two new members joined the executive at our annual general meeting in April. Lizz Kidd, who has been volunteering with us for a year already, has officially accepted the communications position—if you send the Friends an email or interact with us on social media, it's Lizz behind the curtain! And Kevin Sylvester, award-winning author and our 2025 Stubbs lecturer, has agreed to take on the role of member-at-large. Welcome, Lizz and Kevin!

Immediately following the AGM, we were honoured to have Barbara Reid give the 22nd Annual Albert & Clara Lahmer Memorial Lecture. Barbara shared stories from her life as an author and artist, from her childhood to her first author tour to her latest book, *The Story Hunter*. The auditorium on the lower level of the Lillian H. Smith Branch was filled with Barbara's countless friends and fans, including me! I remember Barbara's books from my own childhood, especially *The Party*, so it was really special to me to hear from someone who has had a place on my bookshelf for so long.

Coming up on November 8, Brenda Clark will give the 19th Annual Sybille Pantazzi Memorial Lecture. Brenda is another iconic Canadian illustrator, best-known for the *Franklin* series. Her lecture "Imagining a Turtle Named Franklin" will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the first book, *Franklin in the Dark*, which was published by Kids Can Press in 1986. I won a Franklin colouring contest at my local pharmacy in Calgary when I was just five or six years old, but I'm sure Brenda will have many better Franklin stories to share!

Welcome to the Osborne Collection

The Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books has four areas of concentration. The Osborne Collection contains literature published before 1910. The Lillian H. Smith Collection comprises books of literary and artistic merit published in English from 1910 onward. The Canadiana Collection is 19th- and 20th-century children's books in English, related to Canada, or whose authors, illustrators, or publishers are associated with Canada. The Jean Thomson Collection of Original Art has over 5,000 illustrations for children's books in watercolour, pen-and-ink, woodcut, and other media.

As part of the Toronto Public Library system, the Collection is open to all.

facebook.com/FriendsoftheOsborneCollection

instagram.com/friendsoftheosbornecollection * osbornecollection.ca
www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/osborne/

Email the Friends at: FriendsOsborne@gmail.com

Lillian H. Smith Branch / Toronto Public Library, 239 College Street, Toronto, ON, M5T 1R5, 416-393-7753. See the website for hours.

JOIN/DONATE:
www.osbornecollection.ca/donatemembership.html

I want to end my first chair's report with another thank-you, to all of you, our supporters. The Osborne is so special, and one of my very favourite places in Toronto. I know that it wouldn't be the same without all of you.

— *Kirsten Brassard*

Will You Be a Friend?

Becoming a Friend is easy and inexpensive!
A membership donation may begin at any amount, and is per year.
See link on page 1. Benefits include invitations to lectures and events, members-only tours, *The Gryphon* newsletter, and more.

FALL/WINTER EVENTS

LECTURES

38th Annual Helen E. Stubbs Memorial Lecture

Sarah Ellis: "Paper Trail—Writing and Walking"
Thursday, October 8, 6:30 p.m.

Thelonius Mthombeni
Sarah Ellis.

The word that best describes the writing career of award-winning author, teacher, and librarian Sarah Ellis is *meander*. In this presentation Ellis will tell stories about her work and her wanderings, including the pleasures of flâneur-ing, both on the page and on her feet. She will discuss her winding journey from grade-four essay to Substack via a long divergence in children's fiction; her beloved companions along the road; the importance of good socks and good colleagues; the inevitable, frightening, and productive experience of getting lost; and the odd tendency of humans to walk counterclockwise when left to wander freely (true fact!). Come prepared for detours.

Sarah Ellis is the author of over 25 books for children and young adults. In 2013 she was awarded the BC Lieutenant Governor's Award for Literary Excellence. She's a three-time Canadian nominee for the prestigious Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. Having retired as a children's librarian and from college teaching, she is now writing and reading full-time in the rain in Vancouver, sharing her bookish thoughts online at "Wild Reading" on Substack. Her latest book for children is *As Glenn as Can Be*, illustrated by Nancy Vo, (Groundwood Books, 2022) and she has written an adult memoir, *My Year in Fairyland: Grief, MAID, and a Lifetime of Books* (Stonehewer Books, 2026).

19th Annual Sybille Pantazzi Memorial Lecture

Brenda Clark: "Imagining a Turtle Named Franklin"
Thursday, November 12, 6:30 p.m.

Lee Higginson
Brenda Clark.

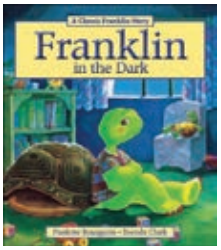
Award-winning picture book illustrator Brenda Clark is the original illustrator of the beloved *Franklin the Turtle* book series, by author Paulette Bourgeois. In this lecture, Clark will share how she became an artist and how Franklin was created. Brenda's illustrations have played a key role in Franklin's worldwide popularity, inspiring an animated TV series, merchandise, spin-off books, a children's garden on Toronto Island, and a postage stamp. She will discuss the process of designing and painting the art and explain how it takes amazing teamwork to meet the challenges of Franklin's success.

Over 70 million *Franklin* books have been sold in more than 30 languages worldwide, making it the most successful picture book series in the history of Canadian publishing. In 2011, the archives of Brenda Clark were donated to the Osborne Collection and recognized by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board as cultural property for their "Outstanding Significance and National Importance." In 2014, Brenda was named a Member of the Order of Canada.

NOTE: The Clark book signing will take place *before* the lecture, from 5 to 6 p.m., on the fourth floor.

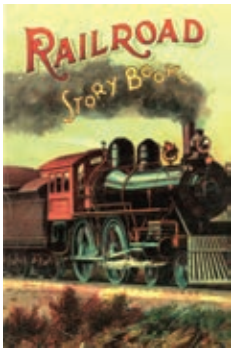
EXHIBITIONS

Franklin's 40th Birthday
September 13–November 29



Franklin in the Dark (1986). By Paulette Bourgeois; illustrated by Brenda Clark.

Franklin the Turtle turns 40 this year! To celebrate the occasion, items from the archives of Paulette Bourgeois and Brenda Clark are featured in this exhibition.



Railroad Story Book (1907), published by the McLoughin Bros.

On the Move

December 13, 2026–February 21, 2027

From trains, planes, and automobiles to spaceships and magical flying cars, explore transportation in both the real and fictional worlds. Through various items from the Osborne Collection, discover the many ways transportation has shaped our lives and fuelled our imagination.

GROWN-UPS READING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE BOOK CLUB

For more information about book club meetings this fall and winter, see under Exhibits & Events at: https://tpl.ca/downloads-ebooks/specialized-collections/osborne/. Meetings are on select Saturdays at 2:30, on the fourth floor of the Lillian H. Smith Branch.

The events listed on pages 2 and 3 are in-person. The lectures are in the lower-level auditorium, and the exhibitions and book club are on the 4th floor at the Lillian H. Smith Branch, 239 College St., Toronto.

All events are free and everyone is welcome. After the lectures, you're invited to the 4th floor for a reception. You can also buy our merch (see page 19) while you're there.

See Exhibits & Events at torontopubliclibrary.ca/osborne/.

VOTE FOR YOUR FAVOURITE CANADIAN CHILDREN'S BOOKS

For decades, longtime Friend and champion of the Osborne Collection Jane Dobell mused about a Favourite Children's Book or Author contest—partly to raise awareness of the Osborne but mostly as a good way to promote childrens' books.

While the Friends of the Osborne never ended up creating such a contest, the Canadian Children's Book Centre has just launched an investigative campaign very similar to what Jane had envisioned. Canada's Favourite Kids' Books is part fundraiser and partly a celebration of the CCBC's 50th anniversary. The last half century has seen huge growth in the numbers and range and quality of this country's books for children and teens and this campaign is a way to honour that.

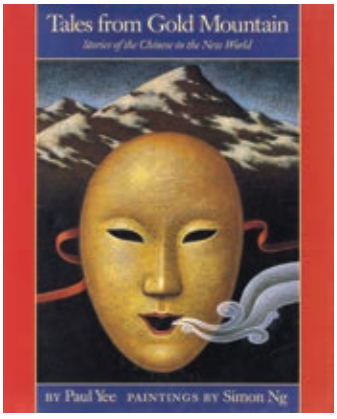
To participate, visit the Canada's Favourite Kids' Books campaign website, make a donation according to your ability, and then nominate up to four of your favourite Canadian books for children or teens.

The campaign runs to the end of this year. In January 2027, the CCBC will announce Canada's 50 Favourite Kids' Books: a list compiled by the CCBC, but created by readers across the country.

I have so many favourites that I have split my donations into a number of smaller donations and am picking four favourites in different categories: books set in my hometown; picture books by a single author/illustrator; non-fiction; and picture books by an author/illustrator team. Even so, it's still hard to choose!

If you're trying to remember the title of a book you loved as a child or trying to narrow down your selection to just four books, the Osborne Collection is the perfect place to turn to for inspiration and information.

—Gillian O'Reilly



Two books Gillian likes a great deal . . . will they be in the final list? Only time will tell!

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025

I am pleased to present the financial statements for the funds supporting the Osborne and Lillian H. Smith Collections for the year ended December 31, 2025. The funds fall into two categories:

- **An operating account**, which receives annual donations, memberships, and other revenues. The account is used to pay for conservation, digitization, cataloguing, and other activities in support of the Collections, over and above what is available in the budget of the Toronto Public Library. It also pays for the cost of publishing and distributing *The Gryphon*, for upkeep of membership records, for website maintenance, for the annual general meeting, and for some administrative costs.
- **Endowments**, which result from major gifts and bequests, support specific activities. Unlike the operating account, endowments are composed of a *capital* component which is invested and intended to be preserved indefinitely, and a *revenue* component, where expenses relating to each endowment's purpose are charged. An annual disbursement, typically 3.5 to 4.0% of capital, is transferred from the capital component to the revenue component and provides a stable source of income in the face of inevitable fluctuations in investment performance. In the long run, this level of disbursement is intended to allow the endowment capital to grow and the revenue to maintain its purchasing power.

In the operating account, donations were about level with the previous year. Interest income decreased due to lower rates on short-term deposits and a lower balance. Sales of merchandise declined slightly. On the expense side, the conservation program continued. Two issues of *The Gryphon* newsletter were published. A supply of themed stickers was added to the wide variety of merchandise available for purchase.

The five endowments that support the Collections enjoyed a third consecutive year of strong investment returns (2025: 10.6%; 2024: 11.8%; 2023: 11.8%). Three successful lectures were held, sponsored one each by the Stubbs, Dobell, and Lahmer endowments. Two major acquisitions of artwork were made for a total of $139,000, funded from the Walker and Stubbs endowments, and a recent bequest.

Working hard to earn money to buy books (and Osborne merch! see page 19). Copper plate illustration from Mary Elliott, *The Rainy Day; or, The Pleasures of Employment* (London: William Darton, 1825).

These statements are based on information from the Toronto Public Library Foundation, which holds and manages the funds. Together, Osborne-related funds total close to $3 million.

—Geoffrey Seaborn

Membership Renewal Tips

To renew online at the Toronto Public Library Foundation's Osborne site, please visit: https://donate.tplfoundation.ca/osborne. Our membership renewal letter will go out later this fall. If you have already renewed this year, our thanks to you. Whatever way you choose to make your donation and whenever you do it, we appreciate your enthusiasm and support for this world-class collection.

—Gillian O'Reilly and Carol Percy

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY FOUNDATION

FRIENDS OF THE OSBORNE AND LILLIAN H. SMITH COLLECTIONS

OPERATING ACCOUNT (Years ended December 31)

	2025	2024
BALANCE, BEGINNING OF YEAR	$282,276	$351,443
REVENUES		
DONATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS	14,590	14,218
INTEREST INCOME	11,220	14,341
MERCHANDISE SALES	3,844	4,255
	29,654	32,814
EXPENSES		
CONSERVATION/DIGITIZATION	62,432	56,008
CONSERVATION SUPPLIES	307	6,504
ILLUSTRATOR-IN-RESIDENCE		8,653
DESIGN/PRINT/MAIL (*The Gryphon*)	17,438	16,910
DESIGN/PRINT/MAIL (Fundraising)	1,545	1,964
MEMBERSHIP RECORDS & WEBSITE	1,084	1,413
MERCHANDISE PURCHASE	538	7,973
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	1,153	1,239
ADVERTISING/OUTREACH	185	
FOUNDATION ADMINISTRATION FEE	729	680
OFFICE EXPENSES & OTHER	581	637
	85,992	101,981
SURPLUS (DEFICIENCY)	(56,338)	(69,167)
BALANCE, END OF YEAR	$225,938	$282,276

ENDOWMENT ACCOUNTS

	LHS Trust Acquisitions	**Dobell** Pantazzi Lecture	**Walker** Acquisitions Exhibits	**Stubbs** Stubbs Lecture	**Lahmer** Lahmer Lecture
CAPITAL ACCOUNT					
OPENING BALANCE Jan. 1, 2025	$785,322	$271,298	$263,144	$906,516	$261,173
DONATIONS	1,115				
INVESTMENT INCOME, net of fees	70,549	24,965	23,703	81,659	23,809
FUND DISBURSEMENT	(31,413)	(10,852)	(9,210)	(31,728)	(10,447)
CLOSING BALANCE Dec. 31, 2025	$825,573	$285,411	$277,637	$956,447	$274,535
REVENUE ACCOUNT					
OPENING BALANCE Jan. 1, 2025	$12,157	$46,468	$10,529	$29,339	$17,443
FUND DISBURSEMENT	31,413	10,852	9,210	31,728	10,447
EXPENSES		(4,275)	(68,721)	(73,156)	(2,671)
ESTATE GIFTS			31,949		
TRANSFER BETWEEN FUNDS			7,316	(7,316)	
CLOSING BALANCE Dec. 31, 2025	$43,570	$53,045	($9,717)	($19,405)	$25,219

VISITORS TO THE COLLECTION

Spring Gathering for the Lahmer Lecture with Barbara Reid

Barbara Reid giving the Lahmer Lecture.

Mary Anne Cree poses with our charming merch.

Katy Dockrill, Andy Rodríguez, and Ellie Arscott.

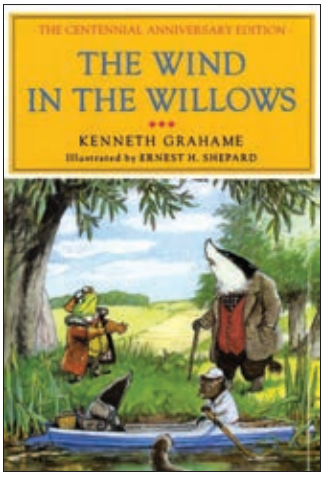
Always nice to see a full house for a lecture.

—Photos by Maggie Knaus

OUR ROVING REPORTER AT THE LAHMER LECTURE

Barbara Reid's "Picturing Stories," the 22nd Annual Albert and Clara Lahmer Memorial Lecture, held on April 30, 2026, took us on a delightful journey through Reid's life and career—over forty years now as an illustrator and author. The talk was filled with the kind of magic that we've come to expect from Barbara Reid in her books; we were offered a combination of fascinating insights into the writing and illustration process (with fabulous slides, of course), interesting tidbits about some of the many authors and illustrators whose work has inspired her, her delight in the interaction she has with kids, and, as one would expect, lots of laughter!

What made the talk especially moving was the openness of Reid's approach, beginning with her account of a happy childhood here in Toronto, where reading became absolutely essential to her student days at OCA (the Ontario College of Art, now the Ontario College of Art and Design University). "I didn't have siblings," she quipped, "but plenty of cousins and a street full of kids to play with. We climbed trees and garage roofs, made our own comics that we sold door to door, got bored, put on plays, and fought and made up from morning to dark. A gang of Jillian Jiggses!"



Barbara's love of reading began with her mother reading to her. Books like *The Wind in the Willows*, *The Secret Garden*, and, of course, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and the Narnia books were especially important. "Old books by dead British people." She laughs. "But the best thing," said Reid, "was that every few pages in these books there would be a line drawing, maybe a full-colour illustration, so I could picture the characters and where the story took place and fill in the images that should have been there in between in my mind." Reid was always very aware of the illustrations: Tenniel's for the Alice books; Pauline Baynes's for Narnia; and then work by Arthur Rackham, Edward Ardizzone, and many more.

There were two particularly important moments in Reid's artistic development. One was being given a Jon Gnagy drawing kit (Gnagy was the first art instructor on television) by her grandfather. "I don't know how he found it but he said it was because I was an artist. And that made me think differently about myself," Reid told us. "And equally important was discovering a book about artist N. C. Wyeth, which I pleaded with my parents to get me for Christmas. I think this was the first time that it really clicked that my art heroes were real people. Wyeth had a studio! *It was his job!* I could do that! It could be my job!"

It was as a student at OCA that Reid discovered the magic of Plasticine, which has made her work as an illustrator so unique. She had an assignment to create her own version of a great work of art in a different medium and chose to render Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* in Plasticine; the rest is history.

Her publishing history is equally engrossing. Reid's first book using Plasticine was Edith Newlin Chase's *The New Baby Calf*, published by Scholastic in 1984. "My breakthrough! After lots of textbooks and magazines, this was the beginning of my longtime collaboration with Scholastic. I learned so much from that book—about the pace of a story and the 'holes' in the narrative where illustrations can add depth to the text. Edith Newlin Chase wrote such a good poem, so simple but so good." And you can't talk about Barbara Reid without acknowledging her longtime partnership with photographer Ian Crysler who's been with her since the beginning, taking pictures of the Plasticine art for her books.

Listeners had a chance to revisit some of her most memorable books. For instance: *The Subway Mouse*, where she added found objects to her Plasticine illustrations to make things thrown down on the subway tracks come alive; *Perfect Snow*, based on a family story, where for the first time she included line drawings along with her Plasticine art; and all the sketches and photos of trees that she created as well as the vibrant palette that Plasticine allowed her to draw on for *Picture a Tree*, in which the illustrations are reminiscent of the work of artist Ted Harrison.

Reid talked about mentors like Claire Mackay and how they've all helped her grow as a creator. And Reid noted, throughout her lecture, how inspired she's been by the children she's had the privilege to meet in schools and libraries across the country—she even shared a handful

of the many letters she's received along with examples of the artwork kids have created. It was so clear how important her interactions with young readers are to her creatively. We could tell Barbara was building up to the grand finale, a discussion of her latest picture book, *The Story Hunter*.

She admitted that she has been obsessed with cave paintings for a long time, reminding her audience that there are hand stencils in caves on every continent including Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park in Alberta, a UNESCO World Heritage site. But it's the connection between these prehistoric images, the artists who created them, and storytelling that is clearly at the core of Reid's passion. She quoted photographer Stephen Alvarez: "If you're telling stories with pictures, you're part of a 150,000 year tradition!"

Reid reminded us too that the Lascaux caves were discovered by teenagers. "Imagine that!" she said, describing some of the many sites she's visited, including Font-de-Gaume Cave in the Vézère Valley in France. "The drawing are so fresh. What do they say? I was here, I did this? And there are children's hand- and footprints too. It's a mind-exploding moment! The connection is so physical. And it also makes you realize that adult artists were once kids—Brueghel, Rembrandt, Toulouse-Lautrec. They didn't spring forth fully formed." And then, magically, she walked us through her creation of this extraordinary book.

She showed us how she excavated the story from the multiple drafts she wrote, sifting through the layers to find just the right storyline. She shared a sense of the extensive research she did to create the right clothing and technology for the time and climate, and then showed us some of the many sketches she drew. She explained how she formed the Plasticine models and the palette for the book and told us she'd acted out her story from the perspective of the characters she'd created. There were storyboards and Post-it notes. And then she read us *The Story Hunter*.

It was silent when she finished her reading and she concluded by saying, "Libraries are like painted caves, full of stories. The Osborne Collection is a cave! And each one of us is a cave carrying our own story. Clearly, it's caves all the way down the rabbit hole. We can't know which of our stories will be passed on but we can just keep making marks!" Like her child narrator, Barbara Reid in her career as a story hunter carries stories to young readers across Canada and beyond.

—Jeffrey Canton

FACES OF OSBORNE FRIENDS

Interview with Kirsten Brassard, New Chair of the Friends

Our interviewer Karri Yano recently had a chat with Kirsten Brassard, our new chair, who will hold the position for the next two years.

Karri Yano: How and when did you first become aware of the Osborne Collection?

Kirsten Brassard: It must have been in late 2015 or early 2016—over a decade ago now. I was finishing up my undergraduate degrees at home in Calgary, and researching graduate programs across the country. I wanted to study children's literature . . . but where? I don't remember how exactly I found the Osborne Collection, but ultimately, it was one of the things that drew me to Toronto.

KY: How did you become involved with the Osborne Collection and the Friends?

KB: I started attending Osborne lectures semi-regularly after I moved to Toronto, and eventually, Gillian O'Reilly noticed and asked if I wanted to join the Friends Executive. I said yes—to pay the Friends back for all the cookies and desserts I still happily consume at every reception!

KY: Which items in the Collection are particularly of interest to you?

KB: My favourite items are the movable books, especially the pop-up books! It's so special that because the Osborne is a public collection, anyone can come up to the reading room to turn pages and pull tabs and lift flaps (carefully, of course).

KY: What is your interest in children's books in general?

KB: I loved reading in my early years and again in my teenage years (don't ask about the embarrassing blip in

the middle), but it wasn't until an undergraduate class on children's literature that I really developed an appreciation for children's books as an art form. At the University of Calgary, I wrote my undergraduate Honours thesis on the education of witches in middle grade fantasy fiction, with a special focus on Nnedi Okorafor's then-new Akata Witch.

At the University of Toronto, I somehow managed to make all my research papers about children's books, even in courses as decidedly not children's-book oriented as The Circum-Atlantic Novel: *Utopia* to *Mansfield Park* (I compared early editions of *Robinson Crusoe* from either side of the Atlantic). After my master's, I considered a PhD, but ultimately, I decided that I wanted to be more directly involved with the children's books that I loved so much, which led to my current career in children's publishing.

KY: What is your favourite children's book and/or who is your favourite children's author, and why?

KB: My most favourite picture books are some of the usual suspects: *The Monster at the End of This Book*, *Madeline*, *Curious George* . . . I also love *The Balloon Tree* and all the Robert Munsch classics, especially *50 Below Zero*, *Stephanie's Ponytail*, and, of course, *The Paper Bag Princess*. I had the honour of hearing Robert Munsch share some of his stories at a small event in Guelph a couple of years ago, and my signed copy of *The Paper Bag Princess* is now one of my prized possessions.

KY: How long have you been publicity manager at Groundwood Books, and what are your main responsibilities there?

KB: I was only recently promoted to institutional marketing and Groundwood publicity manager, but I've worked at House of Anansi Press and Groundwood Books since January 2020—a very precarious time to start a new job! I'm currently responsible for reviews, events, and awards for all our children's titles, as well as a share of conferences and advertising for both our children's and adult titles. I love my job, but it can mean a lot of emails, so please forgive me if I ever miss one of yours.

KY: Is there anything else you'd like to share about yourself, personally or professionally?

KB: I love animals. I grew up with cats and I still consider myself a cat person, but I have a dog right now. Her name is Sheeva, and the unconditional love and loyalty she shows is really special, and really un-catlike. When the Friends sponsored Salini Perera as our first illustrator-in-residence in the fall of 2024, I actually spent the whole spoon doll workshop making a spoon doll version of Sheeva.

I also love to travel. I've been to many cities in North America and to many countries around the world, including the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands, France, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Egypt, and most recently, Japan. A few years ago, I started looking for vintage children's books to bring home from the places I visit.

This interview really goes to show that I can connect almost anything back to children's books!

—Karri Yano

Kirsten Brassard

Kirsten's dog Sheeva.

Kirsten Brassard

Sheeva as a spoon doll.

Kirsten Brassard

Some of the children's books Kirsten has collected during her travels.

A HALLOWEEN READER

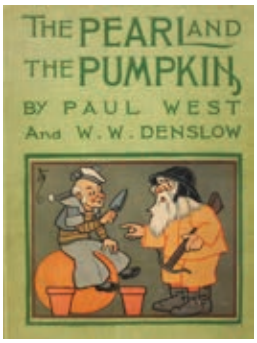
Halloween began as part of the Celtic festival Samhain, when the spirits of the dead were atypically alive. The Christians took it over as a festival held on the eve of All Saints' Day, November 1—not to be confused with All Souls' Day on November 2—and from there it shed its religious trappings. Except for the name: "Halloween" is short for "All Hallow Even [evening]," and "hallow" means "saint," derived from the same root as "holy."

The celebration may be benign these days, but children's books are full of ghosts, goblins, and witches. Not surprisingly, the Osborne Collection has dozens of them. The books, that is.

Consider *Boo!* (Scholastic Canada, 2004), written by Robert Munsch and illustrated by Michael Martchenko. A boy wants to make his face so scary that people will faint at the sight—which they do, enabling him to scoop up candy from their vestibules and even a turkey from one refrigerator. Or *Franklin's Halloween* (Kids Can Press, 1996), written by Paulette Bourgeois and illustrated by Brenda Clark, in which everyone's favourite turtle rummages through his dress-up trunk and emerges as "Franklinstein." At the Halloween party he guesses that Bear has dressed up as the party's ghost, only to learn that Bear is sick at home with a cold. Is the ghost real? I'm not telling . . .

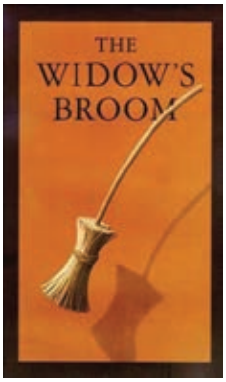
While some books play down the potential horrors of Halloween, others lean in to them. *Halloween ABC* (Macmillan Publishing, 1987), with poems by Eve Merriam and illustrations by Lane Smith (this was his first book), hops from *A* to *Z* (passing by *C* for "crawler" and *D* for "demon") while making no concessions to the faint-hearted. *I* is for icicle, which has stabbed someone, but the police can't find the weapon because "the sun shines down to melt it." *A* is for apple, "delicious / malicious; / one bite and / you're dead." Pleasant dreams.

Osborne has books old (of course) and new (which will become old). New is the pop-up book *Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas* (Insight Editions, 2024), paper-engineered by Matthew Reinhart, illustrated by Rodrigo Tannus, and based on the stop-motion movie in which Halloween's Jack Skellington takes over Christmas. The book consists of one elaborate pop-up Halloween village which, when lifted, reveals an equally elaborate pop-up Christmas village. Handle with care.



For old, consider *The Pearl and the Pumpkin* (G. W. Dillingham, 1904), a saga by Paul West set on "Hallow E'en." Ten-year-old Joe Miller insists on hollowing out all the pumpkins in the patch to make jack o'lanterns, and is turned into a walking pumpkin by the Ancient Mariner, Mother Carey, and the Corn Dodger, "the sprite that rules everything that grows in the ground." Adventures ensue. The chief attraction is the art by W. W. Denslow, the original illustrator of *The Wizard of Oz.*

Readers of French may turn to *Les déguisements d'Amélie* (*Amélie's Disguises,* La courte échelle, 1986), written by Christine L'Heureux and illustrated by Mireille Levert. Halloween is almost incidental, since the main theme is Amélie's desire to dress up and to act out various emotions ("I like disguising myself. To appear to be someone else"), which leads her to dream of becoming an actress. ("But maybe I will never be an actress! No problem. I will do all this anyway.") (Translations into English are my own.)



The illustrations are predictably wonderful in Chris Van Allsburg's *The Widow's Broom* (Houghton Mifflin, 1992), but the real treat is in the subtle ending. A witch's broom winds up in the house of Minna Shaw and helps her with more than sweeping, until the neighbours gang up against the broom and burn it. Or do they? The broom is still there at the end, and the perceptive young reader will figure out how Minna managed this sleight of hand. Halloween is referred to only as "a cold autumn night."

The most charming book is *A Woggle of Witches* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), written and illustrated by Adrienne Adams. There is little text, as Adams devotes double spreads to evocative

scenes of the witches gathering for a feast ("I hope it's bat stew"), riding through the air, circling the moon, and landing in a cornfield littered with pumpkins. Adams uses a muted palette—green, yellow, and brown—to capture the otherworldliness of the witches. When the witches spy a few young trick-or-treaters in scary costumes, they go whirling back on their broomsticks to the dark woods, where they sleep in hammocks in the treetops. Who knew?

Fans of trick-or-treating should know that, according to *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, the first recorded instance of children dressing in disguise on Halloween in North America took place in Vancouver in 1898. The first printed reference anywhere to "trick or treat" was in a Canadian newspaper, either in *The Calgary Daily Herald* in 1927 (says the *Oxford English Dictionary*) or in *The Sault Daily Star* in Sault Ste. Marie in 1917 (says Wikipedia). Wear your scariest face and you may get lucky.

—*Warren Clements*

JON KLASSEN, ASTRID LINDGREN MEMORIAL AWARD WINNER

Friends of the Osborne will remember author/illustrator Jon Klassen's wonderful walk through his creative world in the 16th Annual Sybille Pantazzi Memorial Lecture, "Omission and Connection in Picture Books,"given in October 2023. The talk was memorable for what Klassen shared with listeners about the "power of omission" and how important it is to leave things unsaid (or un-illustrated) in order to give young readers space to find their way deeper into a story, as well as about the subtle emotional cues he uses, such as eye direction and simple shapes, to connect with them.

Klassen is the author and illustrator of the Hat Trilogy, which includes *I Want My Hat Back*, *This Is Not My Hat*, and *We Found a Hat*. *This Is Not My Hat* won both the Caldecott Medal and the Kate Greenaway Medal. He's also the illustrator of the *Now I See* series, written by Mac Barnett. In April 2006, *Shape Island*—a stop-motion production adapted from Klassen and Barnett's book series of the same title—received a nomination for a Peabody Award. Klassen is a recipient of the Governor General's Award for English-Language Children's Illustration and, in 2018, he was named to the Order of Canada.

Maja Brand / Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award

Victoria, Crown Princess of Sweden, with Jon Klassen. Klassen holds up his Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. 2026.

Klassen now (2026) has the honour of being the first Canadian laureate of the prestigious Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (https://alma.se/en). After the announcement at the Bologna Book Fair in April, Klassen travelled to Sweden in May to receive the award at a ceremony in Stockholm. That was followed by a week in Sweden: school and library visits, author talks, and a visit to Lindgren's birthplace in Vimmerby.

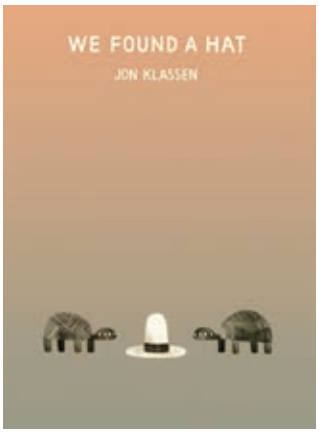
"Just the scale of it was overwhelming," says Klassen, "and I think I was dissociating a little bit, maybe a lot of it, because I just couldn't make it fit. I couldn't make sense at the award ceremony of sitting watching an interpretive dance of my book, done beautifully, by the way, in a building where they give out the Nobel Peace Prize, sitting next to the Crown Princess of Sweden. I can't graft that to my sitting in my garage drawing fourteen turtles and picking the best one."

He laughs and adds, "I think my brain just left the building pretty early on. Because everywhere I went, everyone I spoke to cared so deeply about my work, some of which I did more than a decade ago, and the jury's comments made me think of what I have done in a whole new way."

Klassen is referring to the jury citation, written by

Boel Westin and Per Gustavsson, which reads, in part, "Through his subtle and evocative storytelling in words and pictures, Jon Klassen opens new perspectives on our place in the universe . . . With precision, emotion, and inventive wit, life's challenges of uncertainty and hopefulness are portrayed in an interplay of colour and form. Jon Klassen's brilliant tales stand out for their effortless elegance and ambiguous depth, where the reader becomes a co-creator."

"I remember reading what Boel Westin had written and wondering, is this really me?" Klassen says. The jury also wrote, "Jon Klassen's body of work forms a subtle, astute, and humorous investigation into existential questions, where feelings of anticipation, suspense, and shock play a central role. His books open new perspectives on life's challenges of uncertainty and hopefulness."



"A lot of the people who interviewed me after winning the award were focused on the prize money—$750,000 is an awful lot of money—or how it was going to change my life, but along with the money, it provided so much validation, and the effect of that is also huge. When you are working in a creative industry, you are so often in the business of being your own kind of fuel. Nobody is necessarily asking for these books. You have to wake up and be like, 'This is worth it. I am getting somewhere objectively improving on something in a way that I think is worthwhile and interesting of its own' and you're constantly propping up the validity of the work, finding ways to do that. An award like this helps especially on days when that's harder to do."

Asked what he's proudest about in his work, Klassen pauses and then says, "My favourite thing is building negative space and then using it. It's hard to pick out because it's the invisible space between all the things. It's never the drawing or even the words. It's what you've established that you couldn't. It's what you've named that you couldn't pin down. The space around what you couldn't say or couldn't even draw. And then you're like, 'What exactly is this book going to be about?' or 'I'm not sure how I'm going to be able to draw that.' And sometimes you end up not drawing it, or writing it, exactly. You surround it instead, and it's in between all the parts you made. And hopefully whatever is outlined is relatable to the audience because they can't name it either, but maybe we all know kind of what it is.

"Can I read a quote from my speech?" Klassen asks. "Because I think it fits in with your question." Then he says: "Picture books are excellent vehicles for contradiction. The pictures can say one thing, and the words might say another. The truth is somewhere in the middle. Picture books are, or can be, a way of acknowledging the shortcomings of what we know, or are able to say clearly in either medium. This can be a way to point out the limits of language to an audience who has only recently been introduced to the concept, and is still naturally (and wisely) skeptical of it. What this can all lead to is books that don't always explain themselves, at least not explicitly. Children largely seem okay with this. Adults can be less receptive. Adults often want to know what it is you are saying in your book. 'What is the message?' 'What do you mean?'"

Discussing things said and unsaid, which he is convinced children are quick to pick up on, Klassen moved the conversation to some of the writers and artists who have inspired his work, particularly Arnold Lobel, Maurice Sendak, and Tove Jansson.

He credits Lobel with showing him how to tell stories. "His Early Readers, particularly the *Frog and Toad* books, have such emotional depth, which is astounding given how short the texts are. But that's because, from my perspective, Early Readers have to sound like a Beckett play. Each interchange is made up of so few words—partly because the readers have a limited vocabulary—so how much can we get out of the words they know? Because Lobel suggests we have to get everything out of them! And so there's always this tension there, his interest in that, outside of what he was emotionally working on or allowing to come through. It's something I admire so, so much.

"Ironically," he continues, "there couldn't have been a Lobel without a Sendak because Sendak was *the* great children's book illustrator of that time, he had such a massive personality and his work is just so wide-ranging and he changed the face of children's literature. Sendak never doubted that the work he and other authors and illustrators did in the children's books they created had real value. He never doubted that."

Klassen adds, "I think that especially visually, you can see so much admiration in Lobel's drawings for Sendak and wanting to be Sendak in so many ways. He can't help but be himself in the drawing, but there's so many

choices that were obviously influenced by what Sendak's preoccupations had been."

Klassen believes Lobel aspired to being a different kind of artist from Sendak. He tells me, "It feels to me like, when I read how he talked about the work, that Lobel really did consider himself more of a workman, more of an entertainer. That was his connection, his way into this work and I think maybe he was surprised to find himself so emotionally involved because he considered himself like a journeyman. He had a job."

He pauses before telling me, "I relate more to the journeyman. That's how I consider it myself. I don't think of myself as a guy with something to say. I want to just be really good at this job. It's this really personal way of working. You're just alone in your garage all day."

Tove Jansson is another author and illustrator he especially admires. He tells me about jury chair Boel Westin asking him if he was on Team Lindgren or Team Jansson. He hadn't realized when he first met Westin that she was the author of a book he already admired, *Tove Jansson: Life, Art, Words*—until she gifted him a copy!

"I told a story to the jury about something that happened to me when I was working on the illustrations for Amy Timberlake's *Skunk and Badger* books," Klassen says. "They were done with line work, which I was doing for the first time in a long time and really was enjoying, using a nib pen to do the drawings but I also took a different approach to rendering my own mark-making to figure out how I draw that way. And that took me to looking at Tove Jansson's work generally. I took a good long look at her drawings again for the first time in a little while and became way too preoccupied with them because there was so much in them—so much in her way of organizing an image and putting darks against lights and her clever solutions to things. When I tried to do some of that the way she did, I realized how high on the mountain she was! She had such graphic understanding and technical ability, which I just couldn't achieve and I became very depressed and, for a time, I found I couldn't draw. It was very humbling."

The Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award is certainly going to keep Klassen busy this year; so far 2026 has seen the publication of the *Now I See* board book series with Mac Barnett; a board book of his own, *The House with Nobody in It*; and, most exciting of all, *I Wonder if I'm Growing*, a picture book adaptation of Raffi's song, with Klassen illustrations.

Klassen grew up listening to Raffi and says, "I loved Raffi so much as a child and when I began thinking of which of his songs might make a great picture book, I thought 'Spider on the Floor' would be an excellent choice but when I looked at the lyrics to a number of Raffi's songs it was clear that 'I Wonder if I'm Growing' would be perfect. It's such a sweet song, especially the way Raffi sings it and his voice is so kind in it. And it's just a very—oh my God, it's beautiful. It's a very beautiful, sweet song."

He smiles as he tells me, "I love the lines 'My mom says eat your sandwich. It'll make you grow up tall. But when I eat my sandwich, I'm hardly bigger at all.' That's such a funny two pages where you see he's got a sandwich and is looking at it on his table. And then you turn the page and he's eating it and it's as if he's saying 'What the hell? I'm exactly the same size.' And I thought, 'That's it. That's the book: it's that this kid is just like, 'This isn't happening. Why isn't it happening?'" This project, Klassen adds, is a high-water mark in his career.

Before our interview came to an end, Klassen wanted to talk about the Osborne! He tells me, "I'm very proud of the fact the Osborne has some of my work including material that doesn't have anything to do specifically with the books. They have some book work, but they also have some things that every now and then I get up the nerve to do something that's just for its own sake. I don't quite know what to do with it. It comes in fits and starts. But the Osborne acquired some of that, and we've talked about my donating more. Because of the nature of my work, my 'archive' takes the form of a lot of disparate pieces. I don't have folders with all my finished pages in it. It's just a lot of ephemera and things that don't look complete unless you put those pieces next to the page and suddenly you go, 'Oh yeah, I can kind of see that piece in there.' That's the nature of this artist anyway."

Klassen is quick to add, "The Osborne represents home. And I can't think of a better place for my work to be! It's Toronto. It's the Osborne. It's everything."

—Jeffrey Canton

FROM THE COLLECTION

In the spring 2018 edition of *The Gryphon*, former head of the Osborne Collection Leslie McGrath bade farewell to her role, in which she had spent a considerable part of her career. It is now my turn to bid adieu to the seat, as I embark on another adventure in a different area of the organization. This contribution to the fall 2026 issue of the newsletter is my final one as senior department head of Osborne Collection and Merril Collection, and I am full of gratitude for the experience.

I have worked as the senior department head of all three areas of Special Collections at Toronto Public Library, as well as in the senior services specialist role. The Merril Collection has been my longest tenure and the dual responsibility for Merril concurrently with Osborne Collection has occupied most of it. It has been truly rewarding to work with these spectacular collections and to share them with everyone. Eye-catching and nostalgic, there is an endless parade of wonders with countless first editions and prints, original works of art, and one-of-a-kind curiosities. The holdings at Osborne Collection tell the story of the development of literature expressly for children, starting with the evolution of the written word, through the technologies involved in the printed word. The journey progresses from moral and cautionary tales, and instruments and tomes of instruction, to the eventual development of literature intended to captivate, inspire, and entertain, as well as educate. The chronology of Osborne's holdings also tells us much about social mores and trends over time, helping us to understand the mistakes of the past so we do not carry them forward, and helping the modern user to contextualize them.

All the lectures at Osborne are special, and I will always fondly remember the ones in which I first participated as a staff member. The first, in 2018, was the 15th Annual Albert Lahmer Memorial Lecture (renamed to include Clara Lahmer after she passed away later in 2018). I had the pleasure of introducing guest speaker Judith Dawson, whose collection of advertising cards was a superb addition to the Collection. Later that year, Jan Thornhill was the guest speaker for the 31st Helen E. Stubbs Memorial Lecture. Jan said in her lecture that she wrote the kind of books that she herself would have liked to read as a child, and she captured so beautifully all the different types of readers and reading interests. The smiles and nodding heads among the audience members told me that they could see their childhood selves in many of her works, too.

One of the questions I have been asked with less frequency than one might imagine over the years is about my favourite Collection items. I have several, including *The Blue Fairy Book* (1889); Henry Justice Ford's pen-and-ink drawing "The Sun-Hero Guards the Apples of the Sun" for *The Yellow Fairy Book*, edited by Andrew Lang (1894); Anita Lobel's illustrations for *On Market Street*; Margaret Bloy Graham's illustrations for Gene Zion's *The Sugar Mouse Cake* (1964); Arthur Rackham's original watercolour "He passed under the bridge and came within full sight of the delectable Gardens" (1906); and absolutely anything by Edward Gorey.

I am grateful to have worked in a collection that has been so generously supported by the Friends of Osborne and many gracious benefactors. Several of the items I highlighted as favourites are here as a result of their remarkable contributions.

As autumn ambiences slowly wash over us, I will have already departed for my next role, knowing from experience that every season is a busy one at a specialized library collection. As the fall months are greeted at Osborne Collection, there is the anticipation of a gentle rise in the number of visits as researchers return to their explorations and instructors reach out to book visits for their students. Staff accommodate as many requests as they can, as programs and class visits are an important part of their work, and relate to several of the library's Strategic Plan priorities, including social connection, shared spaces, learning and growth, and awareness and availability. They work diligently to provide experiences that are informative and illuminating, but also a bit of fun.

—Sephora Henderson

Signed pen-and-ink drawing "The Sun-Hero Guards the Apples of the Sun" by Henry Justice Ford (1860–1941) for *The Yellow Fairy Book*, ed. Andrew Lang (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1894). This donation to the Osborne in 2018 was certified as Canadian cultural property.

NOTABLE ACQUISITIONS

Books

The Fairies' Baby and Other Stories (1919)

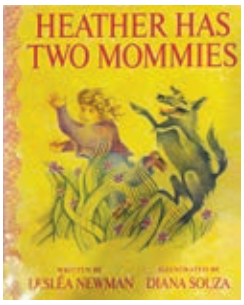
Elizabeth Goudge's *The Fairies' Baby and Other Stories* (Amersham, Bucks.: Morland; London: W. & G. Foyle, 1919) is a collection of stories centred on fairies and magical creatures. It was 19-year-old Goudge's first published book. This impressive feat was a commercial failure, however, that resulted in a pause in her writing career. After 15 years, Goudge was ready to publish her next work, *Island Magic* (London: Duckworth, 1934). Copies of her first book are incredibly rare as the author was deeply ashamed by its lack of commercial success and personally destroyed any copies that came into her possession.

Goudge's *The Little White Horse* (London: University of London Press, 1946) is one of her most notable works. The success of the book led to her winning the Carnegie Medal. The novel shares the story of a recently orphaned girl, Maria Merryweather, who leaves London and relocates to Moonacre Manor in rural England. While settling in at the manor, she discovers the secrets of the estate, its mystery, and magical creatures—such as a little white horse that helps Maria uncover the truth.

One of Goudge's most famous admirers includes J. K. Rowling, who has stated in interviews that *The Little White Horse* had a direct influence on her *Harry Potter* series.

Heather Has Two Mommies (1989)

Lesléa Newman's *Heather Has Two Mommies* (Northampton, MA: In Other Words Publishing, 1989) is an early children's picture book on same-sex parenting. A girl named Heather, raised by a lesbian couple, realizes her family isn't like everyone else's when other children share with her that they have a mom and a dad, instead of two moms. Heather experiences a mix of emotions—anger, confusion, and sadness—but she eventually learns that families can be different and appreciates her own family that includes two moms.



Newman was motivated to write the book after she was approached by a lesbian couple who shared that they would like to see families like themselves represented in children's books. The book was originally co-published by Newman and her friend Tzivia Gover. First editions were published under Gover's desktop publishing business called In Other Words, Ink. Later, the book was picked up by Alyson Publications. Another early example from the publisher includes *Daddy's Roommate* (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1990) which is also among the Collection's holdings.

In 2010, Alyson Publications wanted to celebrate the book's 20th anniversary with a special edition replacing the original illustrations with more modern artwork by Diana Souza. In late 2010, operations at Alyson folded, leading to a pause in plans for the reissue. By 2015, Candlewick had secured the title and reprint rights, and carried out Alyson Publications' anniversary plan, with new colour illustrations by Laura Cornell. For the 2015 reprint, Cornell used Newman as a model, drawing one of Heather's moms in her likeness.

Read Me a Story, Stella (2013) fonds

Acclaimed Canadian children's writer and illustrator Marie-Louise Gay has gifted the fonds attached to her book *Read Me a Story, Stella* (Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2013). In *Read Me a Story, Stella*, Stella loves to read and shares her love of it with her little brother, Sam. Initially Sam is curious and cautious around Stella's passion, but she eventually wins him over as they explore the wonders and adventures that reading can bring.

Marie-Louise Gay's self-portrait from *Any Questions* (2014). Credit: Marie Louise Gay.

The fonds are the last story from Gay's *Stella* series, and the donation completes the series oeuvre. Gay has also donated earlier titles in the series.

A few highlights of the fonds include a substantial collection of original final and draft artworks and manuscripts. The fonds offers great insight into Gay's creative process—her thoughtful approach in developing her books.

Gay has received many awards, including three Governor General's Awards and two Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Illustrator's Awards. She has also been nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award and twice for the Hans Christian Andersen Award.

In an interview with the Canadian Children's Book Centre, Gay noted: "Colour plays a vital role in any book that I have illustrated. Colour reveals the mood, the atmosphere, the emotions of a story. It plays with light and shadow. It illuminates parts of the story, directing the reader's gaze to notice certain important details. As I begin illustrating a book, I spend a long time choosing and exploring my palette of colours. I find the contrast of empty white areas beside colour-filled sections makes the colours glow as if they were lit up from the inside. The white space offers room to breathe. Room to imagine."

Generously donated by **Marie-Louise Gay**.

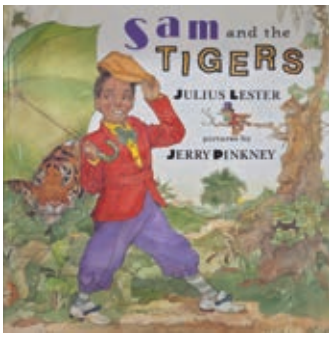
Original Artworks

In 1977, the Osborne Collection established the Jean Thomson Collection of Original Book Art in memory of the former head of Boys and Girls Services at the Toronto Public Library. A spectacular selection of original artworks was acquired this year from artists Jerry Pinkney and Lauren Soloy.

Jerry Pinkney

Pinkney had a prolific career, providing illustrations for over 100 books. Adding to Pinkney's impressive bibliography, his skilled artistry and achievements have been celebrated in five Caldecott Honors, a Caldecott Medal, five Coretta Scott King Book Awards, five Coretta Scott King Book Honors, and the 2016 Coretta Scott King–Virginia Hamilton Award for Lifetime Achievement.

In recent years, the Collection has acquired a few pieces from Pinkney's Uncle Remus series (1987–1999) and this year we've expanded our Pinkney holdings by acquiring works from *Sam and the Tigers: A New Telling of Little Black Sambo* (1996), *The Little Match Girl* (1999), and *Puss in Boots* (2012).



Sam and the Tigers (1996)

Pinkney collaborated with author Julius Lester on a number of projects in which the two created respectful adaptations of controversial stories. One of these is their reimagining of Helen Bannerman's *The Story of Little Black Sambo* (London: Grant Richards, 1899). Bannerman wrote the story for her daughter, basing it on her own childhood in British-occupied India. A South Indian boy named Sambo goes on a walk in his fine new clothes, catching the eye of a few hungry tigers. To prevent himself from being eaten, the young boy outsmarts the tigers. The story is problematic for its inaccurate portrayal of people of colour and illustrations depicting racist stereotypes. In addition, the choices of character names are derogatory terms used to describe people of African descent. Pinkney and Lester's *Sam and the Tigers: A New*

Jacob Bickenstaff

Jerry Pinkney.

Telling of Little Black Sambo (New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1996) removes the problematic imagery and language of early editions while keeping the playful nature of the story in a respectful approach.

The Collection recently acquired the original cover art for Lester and Pinkney's 1996 retelling, an important contribution to *The Story of Little Black Sambo* canon.

Generously funded by the **Helen E. Stubbs Trust Fund**.

The Little Match Girl (1999)

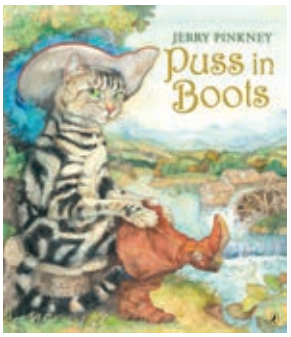
Our next acquisition is the cover art from Jerry Pinkney's adaptation of *The Little Match Girl* (New York: Phyllis Fogelman Books, 1999). Pinkney's version is set in early 1920s America, where a little girl who is unsuccessful at selling matches and artificial flowers on the cold winter streets is determined not to return home without making a sale. She lights one match at a time to keep herself warm, and fond early memories are sparked as an additional

comfort. Sadly she is no match for the elements, and dies. In heaven, she is reunited with her dear grandmother.

The original fairy tale was written in 1845 by Danish author Hans Christian Andersen, and includes themes that Pinkney successfully addressed in his adaptation: the struggles of poverty and the harshness of a life unprotected from winter weather.

The Collection had the opportunity to add Pinkney's original cover art for *The Little Match Girl* to its holdings.

Generously funded by the **Margaret Wentworth Endowment** and **Helen E. Stubbs Trust Fund**.



Puss in Boots (2012) fonds

Jerry Pinkney died in 2021, but left a wonderful legacy that his family would like to share. His son Scott and Scott's wife, Kimm, have generously donated Jerry's fonds for *Puss in Boots* (New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2012).

The story of *Puss in Boots* was popularized by French author Charles Perrault in the 17th century, and is a fairy tale about an anthropomorphic feline who outsmarts others to improve his master's life with status and riches. Pinkney delivers stunning visuals to his adaptation, set in France in 1729. The origins of the tale date to the 16th century.

In the book's artist's notes, Pinkney shares many aspects that helped shape his version of this classic fairy tale, including visits to his local library to borrow all the visual adaptations of Perrault's story that they had available. In fact, the fonds includes the library staff's memo of his research request: a clear indication to readers of his deep passion in researching the fairy tale. Additional treasures include original sketches in Jerry's signature brown ink, manuscripts, dummy books, and original final illustrations.

Scott and Kimm Pinkney.

Generously donated by **Kimm and Scott Pinkney**.

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, Massachusetts, is showing an exhibition dedicated to the work of Jerry Pinkney, on until January 3, 2027. See more about *Soul, Sound, & Voice: The Art of Jerry Pinkney* at https://carlemuseum.org/art-books/exhibitions/current-exhibition/soul-sound-voice-art-jerry-pinkney.

Lauren Soloy.

Lauren Soloy.

Lauren Soloy

Original art for *When Emily Was Small* (2020) and *Etty Darwin and the Four Pebble Problem* (2021).

These original artworks by Lauren Soloy are the first of her works added to our holdings and are from *When Emily Was Small* (Toronto: Tundra books, 2020) and *Etty Darwin and the Four Pebble Problem* (Toronto: Tundra books, 2021).

Lauren Soloy has committed herself to projects that centre on female historical figures such as Tove Jansson, Maud Lewis, Emily Carr, and Etty Darwin (one of Charles Darwin's daughters). Soloy's original artworks are done in both digital and traditional formats. Soloy gave the 2025 Pantazzi Lecture, sharing her creative process.

For *When Emily Was Small*, Soloy was inspired by the writings of Emily Carr and paid homage to her style—bold imagery, vibrant colours, and the sense of a spiritual connection with nature.

For *Etty Darwin and the Four Pebble Problem*, Soloy shared that she travelled to England to visit Charles Darwin's home in Kent so she could see his "thinking path," known as the Sandwalk. Soloy's passion for extensive research shows in her art and, naturally, the Sandwalk was featured in the book. The artwork featuring the Sandwalk was selected for acquisition.

Gifts-in-Kind

The Osborne Collection received some exceptional gifts-in-kind. We thank the following donors for their generosity in enhancing the collection with their treasured items: **Marie-Louise Gay**, **Andrea Lenton**, **Marsha Pine**, **Kimm and Scott Pinkney**, and **Kathy Stinson**.

—Jennifer Yan

OUR ACADEMIC LIAISON REPORTS FROM IBBY 2026

The 40th IBBY World Congress, in Ottawa, August 6–9, had the theme "Listening to Each Other's Voices," and featured children's literature scholars, literacy advocates, and children's authors and illustrators. The Congress launched the IBBY-UNESCO Collection for Books in Indigenous and Endangered Languages and included exhibitions such as *Reading with Pride: Stories for Everyone*, displaying 2SLGBTQIA+ children's picture books collected by Senator Dr. Kristopher Wells; and a show of titles from the 2025 IBBY Collection for Young People with Disabilities.

The Osborne Collection featured in a number of ways. Jennifer Yan, services specialist for the Osborne, attended with the support of the Friends and presented a poster, "The Osborne Collection: Its Rich History and Curatorial Journey." She highlighted how the Osborne Collection "seeks to listen to each other's voices by amplifying and including previously unheard voices through its collection and exhibition development practices. Selection and showcasing of materials related to diversity and inclusion provide an opportunity to contrast contemporary items with historic materials, providing visitors with a broad range of ideas and perspectives."

As academic liaison for the Friends, I presented a lecture titled "Curating Diversity: Exhibits of the Osborne Collection and IBBY Collection for Young People with Disabilities," exploring how these exhibitions offer new modes and opportunities for engaging with the collections and expanding literacy through curatorial choices and exhibit design. Some highlights were new acquisitions and the *Child Friendly Cities* exhibition (2025), which shared texts on the theme of urban childhoods, with representation by BIPOC authors and illustrators; and a 2019 exhibit at the North York Central Library that focused on the IBBY Collection for Young People with Disabilities. Ariana Ferrone, senior services and children's services librarian at TPL presented "Disability and Change: A Retrospective Examination of the Toronto Public Library's IBBY Collection."

Following the conference, IBBY organized a children's literature tour day in Toronto, with a visit to the Osborne Collection and to the TD Gallery exhibition *Toys Alive!*

at the Toronto Reference Library, which included items from Osborne. The Friends supported and attended a post-congress talk and viewing of the children's literature Special Collections at Toronto Metropolitan University with a lecture, "Moominalism: Tove Jansson and the Art of the Miniature," given by Dr. Björn Sundmark, professor of English Literature at Malmö University (Sweden).

These posters, presentations, talks, and tours were well-attended, offered access to the Osborne Collection, and promoted upcoming events and initiatives. We're looking forward to more academic and library partnerships and showcases for the Collection in the future.

—Naomi Hamer

FAREWELL TO SEPHORA

A big thank-you from the Friends to Sephora Henderson, senior department head of both the Osborne and Merril Collections, as she moves to a new position within the Toronto Public Library. Over the past eight years, Sephora inspired us with her enthusiasm for the Collection, and for special collections in general. Some of her favourite books, cited in a 2018 interview in *The Gryphon*, are still on her list (page 14), and it's fun to see her additional favourites, too. She also brought her exquisite penmanship, and it was always a delight to receive something handwritten from her. Thank you, Sephora, for your valuable suggestions and the wonderful assistance you have given to the Friends as we work to support the Collection. We wish you all the best in your new role.

—The Friends

Great Gifts . . . Support the Collection

Our Osborne merch includes greeting cards (classic and modern images), stickers (Harry the Dirty/Clean Dog, Alice, Stella, a Louis Wain cat), and 100% organic cotton tea towels (Harry the Dirty Dog and Alice). The items are on sale at lectures and at the Collection, on the 4th floor of the Lillian H. Smith Branch.

ALL THE "TEA" FROM IBBY 2026

"The IBBY World Congress in Ottawa already feels like the best kind of dream. I was part of one of the planning committees, but my contribution was minimal compared to the work that the core team put into educating and entertaining over 500 delegates from 60 different countries. Some highlights for me were meeting Sydney Smith, Andrée Poulin, and other Groundwood creators from across the country; hearing from the Hans Christian Andersen Award winners, Michael Rosen and Cai Gao; and, of course, dancing the night away at the Saturday-evening costume party. I was dressed as Stephanie from *Stephanie's Ponytail*, and a little girl outside immediately recognized the character and ran up to give me a big hug! It was a really special moment that reminded me why we do what we do—as authors, illustrators, publishers, librarians, teachers, and children's book champions."

—Kirsten Brassard

"Being part of the launch, at the opening ceremonies, of 'Reading with Pride: Stories for Everyone,' Senator Kris Wells's remarkable gift of over 300 2SLGBTQIA+ picture books to IBBY Canada was my highlight of the IBBY World Congress. And if that wasn't exciting enough, I then had the pleasure of moderating a panel with Kris and the IBBY Canada team that created the monograph that makes the collection available around the world. We had a chance to talk about why this collection is so important historically and archivally as well as about Kris's hope that the congress participants would be able to help to grow this collection and perhaps even find it a home in Toronto! Hearing Hans Christian Andersen Award–winner Sydney Smith was pretty damn fabulous too!"

—Jeffrey Canton

"Four days of sessions, keynotes, dinners, awards presentations, and discussions with people from across the globe. The first IBBY Congress held in Canada was intense but so rewarding. It was great being able to refer people to the Osborne and introduce them to Jennifer Yan. And a special pleasure, at a post-congress event in Toronto, to hear an Italian IBBY member rave about her visit to the Osborne that day and her plans to return the next day."

—Gillian O'Reilly

The Origin of Our Gryphon

Maurice Sendak was a Life Member of the Friends. His connection spanned the tenures of three Collection heads: Judith St. John, Margaret Crawford Maloney, and myself. I recall with delight his cheerful call giving permission to use the gryphon logo he had drawn for Osborne in 1979. Our gryphon is witty and benevolent despite its fierce appearance. Gryphons are known for guarding treasure and are emblems of valour and magnanimity (Pseudodoxia Epidemica III in *Brewer's*). We owe a great deal to Maurice Sendak for creating such an evocative, inspirational logo.

—Leslie McGrath

CALL FOR STORIES

The Gryphon welcomes stories for our "A Donor's Story" column. If you've given items or funds to the Collection, we would love to feature a story about what you donated and why, and your history with Osborne. You may write the piece yourself, or the *Gryphon* editor will write it with you. If you prefer to be anonymous, the story can be written without identifying details. Please contact us at the email address below if you're interested, with "A Donor's Story" in the subject line. Thank you in advance!

CONTRIBUTORS

Kirsten Brassard is the institutional marketing and Groundwood publicity manager at Anansi and Groundwood, and the chair of the Friends.

Jeffrey Canton has been reviewing children's books since 1988 and is the children's book columnist for *The Globe and Mail*.

Warren Clements was on the editorial board of *The Globe and Mail* for thirty years, and is now the publisher of Nestlings Press (nestlingspress.com).

Naomi Hamer is associate professor of English at TMU. She researches children's literature and cross-media cultures, and is the Friends' academic liaison.

Sephora W. Henderson was senior department head of the Osborne Collection and of the Merril Collection. This past summer she left the Collection to take a new position in TPL as senior department head of Bibliographic Services.

Gillian O'Reilly is an award-winning non-fiction author and the former editor of *Canadian Children's Book News*.

Geoffrey Seaborn worked in the public and private sectors, and spent 26 years as Bursar of Trinity College, Toronto. He retired in 2016 and now spends time with his family and assists charities with their finances.

Jennifer Yan is a services specialist with the Osborne.

Karri Yano lives in Toronto. She writes and edits by day, and teaches piano by night.

You are always welcome (and encouraged!) to send ideas for *Gryphon* articles as well as general comments or questions to: FriendsOsborne@gmail.com.

If you would like to learn more about the Friends Executive and how you might contribute or get involved, please feel free to contact us at the email address above.

To join the Friends, renew your membership, donate, or learn more about what we do, visit www.osbornecollection.ca/.

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