

# Conference Report: Ain't on the Globe and Mail Bestseller List

By Heather De Forest.

The *Ain't on the Globe and Mail Bestseller List* session, now in its 5<sup>th</sup> year, is a fast-paced review session presented by a large panel of library staff. The intent of the session is to generate interest in building diverse collections. Taking various library association statements on Intellectual Freedom as a jumping off point, the session aims to inspire library workers to acquire and make available the widest variety of materials.

## This year's theme: non-mainstream

This year's session highlighted books for children and adults, zines, blogs, DVDs, and magazines. All materials were either from independent or small publishers or distributors, controversial, underpublicized, or otherwise 'non-mainstream'.

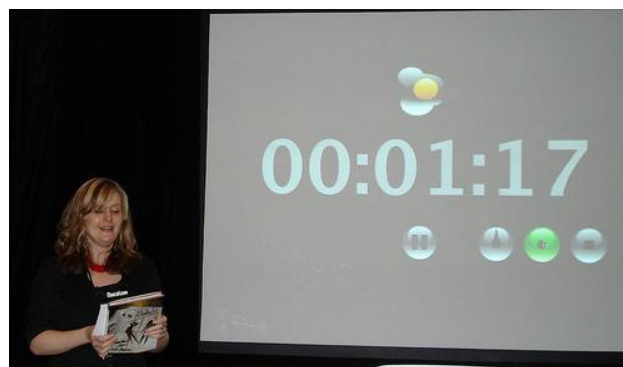
What gives this session its spark is that the reviews are presented in 90 seconds or less – and a larger than life count-down clock is projected behind the reviewers so that the audience can share in the nail-biting tension as the presenters try to constrain their enthusiasm for their choices to a mere minute and a half!

## The band of reviewers

The session relies and thrives on the energy of both presenters and audience members. The reviewers this year were: Valerie Patrick, Dana Putnam, Brie Grey-Noble, Tara Stephens, Janis McKenzie, Greg Tourino, Julie Jones, Heather De Forest, and Christopher Kevlahan. This band of nine library workers – many of whom were participating in this session for the first time -- presented 60 items in approximately 70 minutes. As we approached the end of the allotted 75 minutes, Shirley Lew, the expert timekeeper, sped up the clock and the reviewers gamely picked up the pace to meet first a 60-second and then a very tight 30-second time limit. The audience was enthusiastic and participatory, with some members asking for the materials to be passed around and others sounding noise-makers when the clock ran out.

Each year, a full list of highlighted items is posted on the Intellectual Freedom Committee section of the BCLA website.

(<http://www.bcla.bc.ca/IFC/default.aspx>)



The countdown clock looms ominously in the background as Janis McKenzie reviews a title. Photo by Sandra Wong.



Books, magazines, DVDs, zines, and more! Some of the seventy colourful items that were reviewed in this session. Photo by Sandra Wong.

Heather De Forest is a librarian  
at Simon Fraser University.