



# Book Beat

Keeping in Step with Sylvan Dell Publishing

Science and Math Through Literature

December/January 2009



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## Celebrate the Holidays with Sylvan Dell Publishing!

Brrr.....it's December already! Thanksgiving has come and gone, and holiday decorations have taken over the store fronts. You've done all your shopping, right? Right?! Don't worry; there's still time to order your favorite Sylvan Dell picture book for that curious little one in your life! We're staying busy, busy, busy with all our upcoming events and Spring 2009 releases. So get ready to step into a NEW YEAR, filled with exciting new books, new awards, and new dreams here at Sylvan Dell Publishing!



Happy Birthday to US!!!!!!

November 2008 meant four years in business for Sylvan Dell Publishing.....but it also meant four new awards!

(See the full story on page 2!)

## A Wetland is a Pillow! What Wetlands Are and What They Do

By Donna Love

Not too long ago, wetlands were misunderstood and undervalued. Swamps, bogs, and marshes were often viewed as unsightly, mucky, and stinky. Farmers and ranchers thought of them as unproductive areas that could be better used for crops or grazing. Land developers thought of them as areas where new businesses and homes could be built. This led to wide spread destruction of millions of acres of wetlands. Today we recognize the ecological importance of wetlands. And, yes, in some instances they are unsightly (in the eye of the beholder), mucky, and sometimes stinky. But what is a wetland?

Technically speaking, the federally recognized definition of a wetland is *"Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency or duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions."*

In other words, for a wetland to be a wetland it must have water, wetland plants, and wetland soil. But why are

they important and what do they do? Wetland educators have developed wetland metaphors to help explain the importance of a wetland. Here are a few....

**A wetland is a pillow.** The slow moving water in a wetland provides perfect resting spots for many species of migrating birds where they can find food or wait out a storm.

**A wetland is a sponge.** Gravel, fine sand, and peat (which is decaying plants and animals) under a wetland form a giant reserve like an underground sponge, where a great amount of water can be soaked up before being released. This helps control floodwater and slows stream erosion.

**A wetland is an antacid.** Algae in wetland soil and plants act as an antacid to remove toxic poisons from water by absorbing the poison. A chemical reaction inside the plants neutralizes the poison. Then the toxic substance is released back into the water as a less toxic substance.

**A wetland is a mixer.** Fish and other aquatic animals breathe dissolved oxygen gas. Some of the oxygen gas comes from the air near the surface of the water. Much of the oxygen gas comes from plants. Plants grow

(Cont. on Pg. 2)

(Cont. from Pg. 1)

through a process known as photosynthesis and a by-product of photosynthesis is oxygen gas that mixes in the water when it is expelled from the plant.

**A wetland is a cradle.** A wetland is a perfect place for baby animals. Many hide in the wetland's thick plants until they are bigger. In addition, a wetland's slow moving water is warmer with fewer temperature fluctuations than fast moving water. This keeps the air around the wetland warmer, which is perfect for newborns.

**A wetland is a box of cereal.** When wetland plants die and decompose, the plant matter is released into the water, which provides important food for many invertebrates (animals that don't have backbones, like insects, worms, and shrimp). These in turn are excellent food for larger animals like fish, ducks, and mammals, such as muskrat. They in turn are food for many animals such as great blue herons, foxes, and bears that love to eat fish.

**A wetland is a watering can.** In summer, water stored underground in a wetland is slowly released into streams that otherwise might dry up during hot weather or in times of drought. This provides water for plants and animals downstream. It also fills aquifers, which are underwater wells that store drinking water for people.



**A wetland is a bar of soap.** A wetland has a large amount of good bacteria trapped in its soil and vegetation. This bacterium scrubs or breaks down the pollution, eliminating it from the environment.

**A wetland is a filter.** A wetland filters suspended or floating solids, such as leaves and stems from the water. Water flowing out of the wetland is free of floating debris.

**A wetland is a strainer.** When a river reaches a wetland, the water slows, and sediments that the water carries drop and settle. This prevents the dangerous build up of gill clogging and egg damaging silt to fish downstream. This is especially important during flooding when the river is carrying more sediments than usual.

As you can see, wetlands perform some very important functions. So next time you go by an unsightly, mucky, stinky swamp, bog, or marsh, just remember, a wetland is a pillow!

\* \* \*



Donna Love is the author of the upcoming Sylvan Dell release [Henry the Impatient Heron](#). To learn more about wetlands, get your own copy of *Henry* in Spring 09 or check out Kevin Kurtz's [A Day in the Salt Marsh](#) from Sylvan Dell.



## More than just a fourth birthday in November...

### Sylvan Dell Publishing garners four 2008 awards in two weeks!

Lee German was a retired Navy man; his wife, Donna, was a *New York Times* bestselling author. After a six-month cross-country trip with their three daughters, it was decided—they would follow their dreams and create children's books that were not only exciting to read but also part of a cross-curricular learning adventure. In November of 2004, the dream came true, and this month, four years later, Sylvan Dell Publishing has four brand new awards to show for it.

"From the early onset, we wanted to provide children with books that they would enjoy reading and that would encourage them to WANT to learn more about science and math," said co-founder Donna German. "After watching how our own children loved the hands-on activities at science museums and national parks, we wanted to include some type of hands-on activity in each book to help the children to cement the learning. All the awards that keep pouring in seem to be acknowledging that we are on the right path!"

Three of the awards went to new releases, while one award went to the company as a whole. *Scholastic's Instructor Magazine* gave Sylvan Dell a Teacher's Choice Best of 2008 Award, in celebration of their mission of "science and math through literature." The 2008 release *Sort It Out!* won a Moonbeam Gold Medal and a USA Book News Best Book Award, while another 2008 release, *Whistling Wings*, won Moonbeam Bronze.

The Moonbeam awards are held annually and are sponsored by the Independent Publisher Online Magazine. This year, the Sylvan Dell winners were among 1,085 other entries. The Best Book Awards are sponsored by USABookNews.com, the premiere online magazine and review website for mainstream and independent publishing houses. Now in its fifth year, awards were given out in 140 different categories.

The successful tides show no sign of turning as this small company rolls toward 2009. Ten new titles are already scheduled for publication, and preorders have started flowing in. So as they celebrate their fourth birthday, how does co-founder Lee German feel about all this?

"In speaking with teachers, you sense the excitement," he said. "Now we hope and pray that the enthusiasm translates into increased sales and company growth. Having a mission that is focused on actually producing and providing educational tools that are really appreciated by our customers adds a positive spin to our long hours and hard work."

# 2009 Introduces TEN NEW TITLES from SYLVAN DELL!

## Meet the first five of Spring.....

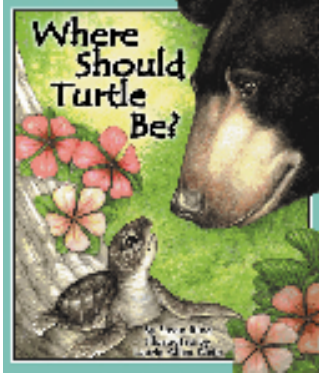


### [Paws, Claws, Hands, and Feet](#)

**Publication Date: Feb. 2009**

Get off on the right foot! Join the animals in their foot-frolicking fun—running, jumping, leaping, and hopping...and then resting, just like the critters and creatures featured in Kimberly Hutmacher's ***Paws, Claws, Hands, and Feet***. Go

along on the exciting dream journey from morning to night, using hands and feet just like squirrels, monkeys, rats, spiders, frogs, penguins, elephants, lions, kangaroos, pandas, and eagles. Travel to the lush jungle, the African savannah, Australian outback, and to frozen Antarctica. Finally, as the sun sets, snuggle beneath the covers and snooze, with recollections of animals at play, inspired by the imaginative illustrations of Sherry Rogers. After all, even the wild things need some time to rest after a day of fast-footed play!



### [Where Should Turtle Be?](#)

**Publication Date: Feb. 2009**

Little turtle was lost! Free from his egg, he climbed out into a big, beautiful new world. Lost and alone, he wondered—where did he really belong? The bear told him to live in the woods; the frog said, “The swamp!” But turtle just didn’t feel at home. He needed help, but where could he turn? Author Susan Ring helps turtle in this whimsical story of self-exploration and nature, ***Where Should Turtle Be?*** Detailed illustrations by Laurie Allen Klein give these friendly animals personality, and in the end, an unexpected tickle and tumble help turtle find his place in his new world.

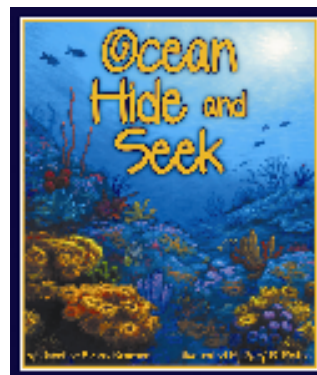


### [Henry, the Impatient Heron](#)

**Publication Date: March 2009**

Henry the Heron couldn’t stand still! He was always moving, and it drove everyone crazy! His brother and sister yelled at

him for stepping on their heads, and Mom and Dad could barely get food into his little baby mouth. But herons have to stand still to catch their food, so how would Henry ever be able to eat on his own? In ***Henry, the Impatient Heron***, Donna Love takes readers along with Henry as he learns a valuable lesson from the King of Camouflage! Hilarious and lighthearted illustrations by Christina Wald complement the important lesson in the text. It is a meaningful lesson for both herons and kids alike, which teaches the importance of just being still!

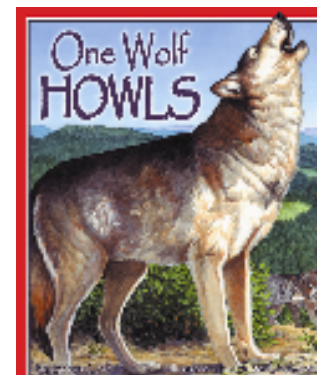


### [Ocean Hide and Seek!](#)

**Publication Date: March 2009**

The sea is a place of mystery, where animals big and small play hide and seek! Can you imagine a shark hiding in the light? What about a clownfish in plain sight? Don’t believe it? Then, sink into the deep blue sea with Jennifer Evans Kramer

and ***Ocean Hide and Seek!*** Surround yourself with the vibrant ocean illustrations of Gary R. Phillips. The ocean is an old, old place, and the exotic animals in the depths have learned to adapt to their surroundings to survive. Can you find the creatures hidden on every page? Or will you, too, be fooled by an ancient, underwater disguise?



### [One Wolf Howls](#)

**Publication Date: March 2009**

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be a wolf? What would you do in the cold winter months? Where would you sleep? What would you eat? Spend a year in the world of wolves with Scotti Cohn and ***One Wolf Howls***. This adventurous children’s book uses

the months of the year and the numbers 1 through 12 to introduce children to the behavior of wolves in natural settings. The lively illustrations of Susan Detwiler complement the rhyming text and bring each month to life. From January to December, howl, frolic, and dance, while learning important lessons page-by-page!



## **Educational Resource Grant Update!**

Since the inception of the Sylvan Dell Educational Resource Grant in June of 2008, we have awarded **over 1800 schools** with this unprecedented honor. The grant is for a free, one-year site license, providing unlimited access to all 35 Sylvan Dell eBooks, featuring flipviewer technology with selectable English and Spanish text *and* audio. The license can be used on all school computers and may be placed on secure school websites, enabling students and their families to log in and have access from their homes. An easy online grant application is available at: [www.SylvanDellPublishing.com/ResourceGrant.htm](http://www.SylvanDellPublishing.com/ResourceGrant.htm).

This outstanding response to the grant offer spurred Sylvan Dell Publishing to go even further in assisting early elementary educators. Not only is the grant helpful to teachers, but Sylvan Dell books are now **aligned to all US state math and science standards**. Alignment to national and state standards allows teachers, parents, and students to connect with Sylvan Dell titles.

From the Sylvan Dell Office...

### **The Bookshelf: Why is it important to have books around the house?**

By Craig Knowlton

Having books displayed in a home sends an indelible message to children about their importance: reading is a part of life. While teaching English composition to college freshmen, I made them read. I fell back on the classic method, promoted in foreign language classes and middle school, of having my students go around the room, reading stories and essays paragraph by paragraph.

When students struggle to recognize mistakes in their writing, it is because, even at the collegiate level, they often have little feeling for the correct sounds of complete sentences. They do not read enough to instinctively recognize them. Kids frequently grow up and avoid read-

ing beyond the phrases flashing on a monitor, but being a good writer correlates with being a good reader and developing an ear that distinguishes when a word, phrase, or sentence *sounds* right. It begins at home, where the importance of reading is symbolized by the bookshelf.

Of course it's important that kids read and are read to, but they should not be limited to school titles. Families should own books. Get them at the used bookstore, the church fair, or handed down by friends. Books need to be displayed, given prominence alongside the posters and paintings and plates on the wall, and be as available as the computer and television. Let children feel that books are one of life's necessary joys and share space—and stories—with them in a home library.



Craig Knowlton, MA, works as a School and Library Sales Rep for Sylvan Dell. Email Craig: [CraigKnowlton@SylvanDellPublishing.com](mailto:CraigKnowlton@SylvanDellPublishing.com).

### **Quote of the Month**

**"I always wonder how Sylvan Dell will surpass their last published titles. And then I look at and read the current crop and realize that they have wonderful authors, the most talented illustrators, and subject matter that is both fun and informative. The end result is hard to beat." —Armchair Interviews**

## Until next time, fellow book lovers!

Thank you so much for your  
interest and enthusiastic support!

Please look for our next  
issue of *Book Beat* in February

Visit [www.SylvanDellPublishing.com](http://www.SylvanDellPublishing.com) for more.



### TRADE SHOWS

Dec. 7-10, IRA-SE Region, Nashville, TN, Lee

Jan. 23-26, ALA-Midwinter, Denver, CO, Lee

### SYLVAN DELL IN THE NEWS...

Instructor Magazine, National  
ForeWord Magazine Publishing Insider, National  
(To see four new columns from Sylvan Dell Publicist  
Sara Dobie on the ForeWord website, visit [http://  
www.forewordmagazine.com/blogs/insider/  
default,month,2008-10.aspx](http://www.forewordmagazine.com/blogs/insider/default,month,2008-10.aspx))

National Space Society  
School Library Journal, National  
Booklist Magazine, National

Chicago Tribune, Illinois  
Oak Grove Today, Mississippi  
The Reminder, Massachusetts  
Examiner-Enterprise, Oklahoma  
Florida Education Association Newsletter  
Mathematics Teacher Newsletter, Oregon  
Grand Blanc View, Michigan

And so much more.....Check out our website  
[Media Center](#) for more information!



**Our Art Director,  
Heather Wist,  
is leaving us!**

She's moving to  
Baltimore, MD, so wish  
her luck! We'll miss her  
around here!

### It's time to Celebrate!

Let Sylvan Dell be the party (or cross-curricular  
lesson) planners. For free activities for EACH of the  
following holidays, please visit:

[www.SylvanDellPublishing.com/SpecialDays.htm](http://www.SylvanDellPublishing.com/SpecialDays.htm)



### DECEMBER

14, International Children's Day

18, Bake Cookies Day

24, Christmas Eve

27, Visit the Zoo Day



### JANUARY

Hobby Month

1, New Year's Day!

3, Festival of Sleep Day

5, National Bird Day

21, Squirrel Appreciation Day

25-31, Celebrity Read a Book Week

26, Australia Day

