

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 22, 2008
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Three top favourite reads are chosen by thousands of children across Ontario!

TORONTO, ON – Today at Harbourfront, at the Ontario Library Association (OLA) Forest of Reading®, Festival of Trees award event, the crowd of more than 3,000 children went wild upon announcement of the top titles as voted on by more than 200,000 young readers across Ontario.

And the winners are ...

Silver Birch Award Fiction: *The Secret of Grim Hill* by Linda DeMeulemeester (Lobster Press)

Silver Birch Award Non-Fiction: *Secret Agent Y.O.U.: The Official Guide to Secret Codes, Disguises, Surveillance and More* by Helaine Becker, Illustrated by Dave Whamond (Maple Tree Press)

Silver Birch Express: *Things are Looking Grimm, Jill* by Dan Bar-el, (Orca Book Publishers)

The Silver Birch Award categories are for children in grade three to six.

Also announced at the award ceremony were the 'honour books', an additional eight books that also received a high number of votes from young readers. The complete list of nominated, award winning, and honour books are on OLA's web site at: www.accessola.com

Today's festivities were a continuation of the Forest of Reading, Festival of Trees Award program. Yesterday, three authors and one illustrator received awards in the Blue Spruce, Red Maple, and White Pine reading age categories.

"It's easy to understand why this program is so successful when you see thousands of kids cheering and yelling for their favourite author," says Peggy Thomas, Festival Chairperson, and Teacher-Librarian. "There is a great selection of books to choose from and no strings attached – they just read some or all of them and vote, so it is just for fun." Partners, International Readings at Harbourfront Centre (IFOA) commented that at 514 Ontario schools over two days this is the highest attendance ever.

OLA's Forest of Reading is a series of programs each named after a tree and geared towards a variety of age ranges. More than one hundred

professionals from school and public libraries coordinate the programs across the province. Through their library, young readers vote on their favourite Canadian book. The program is designed to encourage reading for fun.

OLA creates programs, advocacy, and promotion for its 5,000 members who work in college, public, school, and university libraries across Ontario. Our mission is to foster free public access to information and to promote Canada's history and culture through the programs and services of Ontario libraries.