



# Book Beat

Keeping in Step with Sylvan Dell Publishing

Science and Math Through Literature

February/March 2008

## A Warm Hello from Sylvan Dell Publishing!

2008 is well underway, and we couldn't be more excited about our new books and the enthusiastic authors and illustrators who have joined the Sylvan Dell family. A new crew of interns has also joined the team, so you may be hearing from some new names in upcoming months. In the meantime, we hope you have a wonderful end to the winter!



### Look for Sylvan Dell at these upcoming tradeshow:

◆ Feb. 14-16	GSTA	Athens, GA	Jenna Carlson
◆ Feb. 21-23	SCIRA	Myrtle Beach, SC	Lee, Craig & Kathleen Skotcher
◆ March 8-11	WTHRA	Pomona, CA	Howard Ramer
◆ March 10-12	NCRA	Greensboro, NC	Kathleen Skotcher
◆ March 12-14	SCASL	Columbia, SC	Donna German
◆ March 15-17	ASCD	New Orleans, LA	Lee German
◆ March 26-28	PLA	Minneapolis	Donna German
◆ March 27-30	NSTA	Boston, MA	Lee German
◆ April 6-8	WEMA	Milwaukee, WI	Bruce Moser & Tom Blomquist

- ◆ **Pg. 1-2:** "Keep it Simple" by author Gail Langer Karwoski
- ◆ **Pg. 2:** Play "Categories" with kids for "no batteries required" fun!
- ◆ **Pg. 3:** Introducing our Spring '08 books & what's new at Sylvan Dell!
- ◆ **Pg. 4:** It's Pajama Party Time! (Plus many more themed ideas for story times and lesson plans!)
- ◆ **Pg. 5:** "Which Valentine's Day Heart is Different?" activity for kids!

## KEEP IT SIMPLE

By Gail Langer Karwoski, award-winning author of *Water Beds* and *Julie the Rockhound*



### Simple is good ...

Remember that amusing TV ad for cornflakes? A waiter in a fancy restaurant describes a menu option — a dish made with exotic spices, extravagant ingredients, and complicated cooking maneuvers. Later, after leaving work, the waiter enters a down-home eatery, and what does he order for himself? A bowl of corn flakes! The message? Simple is good.

Sometimes that ad pops into my mind when I see another of those disturbing headlines about a toy recalled because of the danger that it poses to children. We live in a high-tech world, but it's smart to remember that "simple" is good. A wholesome choice for your child's playtime doesn't require batteries or brightly-colored paints.

I taught the classroom for gifted children in public

schools for over a decade. I remember spending many hours in the technology lab with my students, teaching computer skills. But, today, if you were to ask these now-college students what they remember about Ms. K's classroom, I doubt if they'd mention computers. They'd talk about how we watched a chrysalis open into a butterfly or tried a scratch test to identify a mineral.

As a teacher in the gifted program, I didn't use lesson plans generated by a textbook series. Instead, I attended conferences, pored over resource catalogs, and spent weekends in the library to plan a unique curriculum for my classroom. But when I look back, I realize that my most effective lessons were actually very simple - like discussions. Often, these were spontaneous, the result of one student's question about an unfamiliar word or an unexpected twist in a story. During discussions, my students related new information to their lives, connected ideas, and deepened their thought process. We got to know each other, and we developed respect for other people's insights.

(Cont. on Pg. 2)

(Cont. from Pg. 1)

Although I taught the most accomplished readers in school, my students always begged me to read aloud to them. Why? They loved listening to an adult's voice! As I spoke the words of a story, the children recalled those precious moments when a caring parent read them a bedtime story. The sound of the human voice, the time it takes to share a book – these are simple ingredients but they create the most nutritious “dish” in a child's diet: the love of reading.

Don't get me wrong: I'm writing these words on my computer keyboard ... and I love my air-conditioner, my mobile phone, my car's navigation system. I don't want to turn back the clock! But some things grow better with age, and the most important activities that we share with our children – those that make a lasting impression – are often very “low-tech.” Let's make time to read books, talk, and share nature with our children. Simple is good.  
— GK

## CATEGORIES

**No batteries required for this kid-pleaser!**

This game of **mental calisthenics** can be played with children during free classroom time or while waiting in the doctor's office, driving around town, taking walks or finishing dinner!

- ◆ For the youngest child, choose basic categories, like flowers, birds, or animals. You name one item in the chosen category, such as “pansy,” and take turns adding to the list: Your child might name “iris,” and another might say, “sunflower.” This game can be played by two people or many.
- ◆ As your child gets older, adjust “Categories” to a higher level: Instead of simply naming animals, for instance, take turns recalling the names of mammals, dinosaurs, or breeds of dog. Choose a geography category, such as cities in your state or capital cities of the country. Choose a people category, such as presidents, painters, or baseball players.
- ◆ A variation of “Categories” is the wonderful game called “Badger”: To play this game, choose a letter of the alphabet, such as “B” for “Badger.” Take turns naming all the animals that begin with that letter, such as “bison,” “butterfly,” and “brontosaurus.”

**Want more ideas from Gail Langer Karwoski?**

Visit [www.GailKarwoski.com](http://www.GailKarwoski.com).

Or check out [Water Beds: Sleeping in the Ocean](#) & [Julie the Rockhound!](#)



## Want More Simple, Fun Ideas?

**Try these activities with the young ones in your life!**

- ◆ Drag your sleeping bags out of storage and set up camp on your living room (or classroom) floor. Enjoy some microwave-made s'mores while strengthening your kids' storytelling skills. Start a story with one wacky sentence, and go around the circle with each person responsible for the next few until everyone's giggling.
- ◆ Let your children's inner stars shine and help them write their own play script. Recruit neighbor kids as needed, reuse old Halloween costumes and remember to pop some popcorn for the opening night!
- ◆ “Are you smarter than a 5th grader?” Find out! Let the kids try to stump you with what they've learned at school. If you lose, serve dessert before dinner. Talk about motivation to study....

## Sylvan Dell Display Fairs

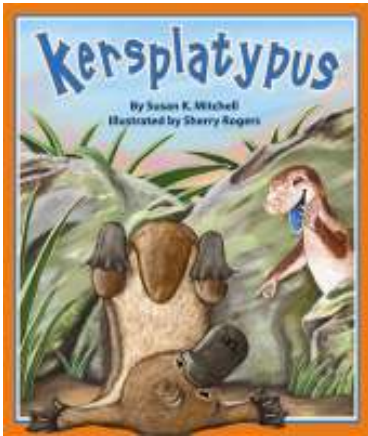
**New! For Schools & Bookstores!**

- ◆ Arrange for Sylvan Dell's new Display Fair to visit your elementary school's media center or PTA meeting. Organize as a book sale fundraiser or as an opportunity for parents and educators to buy discounted copies for classrooms and home libraries!
- ◆ Bookstore and gift shop owners will find success and save space by incorporating the Display Fair into the children's section of their stores.

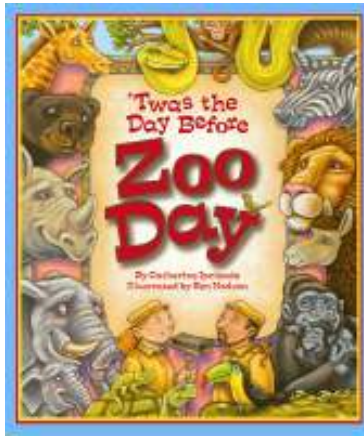
For more information, please e-mail:  
[info@SylvanDellPublishing.com](mailto:info@SylvanDellPublishing.com)



We are excited to announce that our Spring 2008 books are now available!



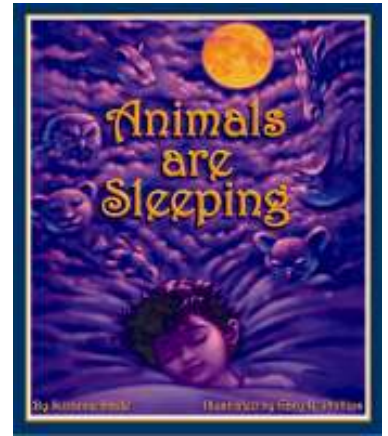
HC: 978-1-934359-07-5  
PB: 978-1-934359-23-5



HC: 978-1-934359-08-2  
PB: 978-1-934359-24-2



HC: 978-1-934359-09-9  
PB: 978-1-934359-25-9



HC: 978-1-934359-10-5  
PB: 978-1-934359-26-6

Click the book covers to view the book homepages, author/illustrator bios and more!

### Matching Stuffed Animals Also Available

Go to [www.SylvanDellPublishing.com](http://www.SylvanDellPublishing.com) for details.



All 2008 books are Accelerated Reader titles, and [reading comprehension and math quizzes](#) are now online!

### Tips for Reading with Children of All Ages:

#### Infants & Toddlers:

- ◆ Start while pregnant or as soon as they're born! They won't understand the words, but they will feel the rhythm.
- ◆ Board books should be in the toy box.
- ◆ Have toddlers help turn the pages.
- ◆ Let toddlers and preschoolers "read" to you by making up stories to go along with wordless books!

#### Just Learning to Read:

- ◆ Follow the words with your finger so your children begin to understand that the words have meanings, that we read from left to right and how to turn pages.
- ◆ Books with repetitive phrases are good for children to chime in and repeat with you — they'll begin to anticipate the phrases.

#### Starting to Read:

- ◆ Continue with your nightly reading routine! Have each child read a page, then you read a page.
- ◆ As they become stronger readers, have them read to you.
- ◆ Begin reading longer chapter books to your kids. Listening to books that are above their reading levels boosts their vocabularies!
- ◆ Use closed captioning when kids are watching TV and use subtitles when watching DVDs.

[Click here for more reading tips or tips for developing early math skills!](#)

## Looking Ahead: *Planning an event? A new lesson? Give it a theme!*

### February is National Bird Feeding Month!

Check out the [“Easy Bird Feeder Crafts”](#) in *Christmas Eve Blizzard* or do some [“Bird Math”](#) in *The Best Nest!*

### February is also Library Lovers Month!

#### Feb. 14: Read to your Child Day

Share the love of Valentine’s Day with the children in your life by sharing a book.

#### Feb. 27: International Polar Bear Day

Learn more about polar bears and their arctic friends with *In Arctic Waters* and the [fun facts](#) in the FCM section!

### March is International Listening Awareness Month!

Teach kids about the importance of careful listening with *The Best Nest*, a retelling of an Old English folktale.

### March is also Dolphin Awareness Month!

Generate awareness with [“Dolphin and Reef Friend” fun facts](#) from *If a Dolphin Were a Fish*.

### March 2: Read Across America Day

Sponsored by the National Education Association.

### March 6: Read Aloud Day

Kids of all ages love listening to an adult’s voice. Try rhythmic, rhyming books for sure-fire crowd pleasers.

### March 10: National Napping Day

Go ahead... Curl up with a book and take a snooze.

### March 14: National Children’s Craft Day

Make your own sea turtle, design your own bird’s beak, become a rockhound and more with the free activities in our [For Creative Minds](#) sections!

### March 28: Children’s Picture Book Day

### March 23-30: National Sleep Awareness Week

We may fall into our beds for quick snoozes, but how do animals sleep? Find out with [Water Beds](#) & [Animals are Sleeping!](#) See below for more ideas!

### April 8: Zoo Lovers Day

Take kids on an around-the-world animal adventure with *ABC Safari* and a [memory card game](#), or help them [imagine life as zoo keepers](#) with *’Twas the Day Before Zoo Day!*

## IT’S PAJAMA PARTY TIME!

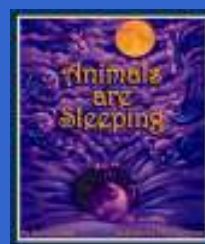
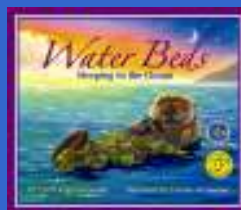
Celebrate [National Napping Day](#) (March 10) or [National Sleep Awareness Week](#) (March 23-30) by having “Pajama Day” at school or inviting kids to wear their favorite PJs to a special event!  
(Fuzzy animal slippers are a must.)



### Make it unique and talk about the many different ways animals sleep:

- ◆ Have you ever wanted to sleep 18 to 20 hours a day like a koala?
- ◆ Harbor seals can sleep while bobbing like buoys in icy water.
- ◆ Did you know that giraffes sleep only 5 minutes at a time about 6 times a day?
- ◆ A common swift bird can even sleep while flying!
- ◆ Dolphins doze half-asleep while wide-awake dolphins protect their dreaming friends.
- ◆ Learn even more by reading [Water Beds: Sleeping in the Ocean](#) and [Animals are Sleeping](#).

Add [Rainforest Cookies](#) to the party plans for more educational (and edible) fun!

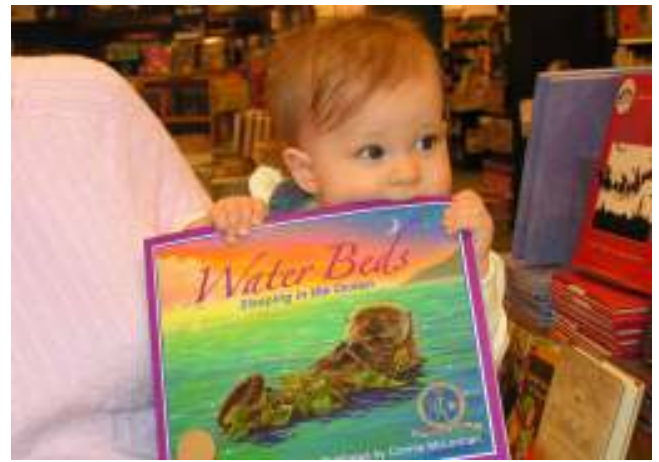


## Until next time, fellow book lovers!

Thank you all so much for your  
interest and enthusiastic support!

Please look for our next  
issue of *Book Beat* in April!

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



A future Sylvan Dell reader at our birthday party!

### For the Kids!

Which Valentine's Day heart is different from the others?

Courtesy of Doris Fisher, [www.abcdoris.com](http://www.abcdoris.com).

