

Children's Literature Network presents



Autograph and Activity Book

2011 Alphabet Forest at the Minnesota State Fair

Welcome to the Alphabet Forest

... in the Minnesota State Fair's Baldwin Family Park where letters swing from the trees!

Visit any day to collect words and win a ribbon, make your own name in a mini-banner, snap a photo with the giant letters, Take-a-Book-Break on a shaded bench, or talk with one of our Minnesota Homegrown Authors.



How did this lovely literacy oasis come to be? Working with the Minnesota State Fair Foundation in 2010, with additional funding from Target, I asked families to collect words around the fair, just as I had for my book, *A Fabulous Fair Alphabet*. This little idea grew into the wondrous Alphabet Forest where we are able to model vocabulary collecting within daily experience for Minnesota families.

A rich vocabulary is one of the strongest indicators of a successful student. I have long thought this is something we can work on all together—with fun and spunk. What better place to play with words than at the Great Minnesota Get-Together! Look around! Gorgeous words, short words, long words, silly words, surprising words—they are all around us, free for the taking!

Debra Frasier, 2011

Author and Illustrator
Alphabet Forest founder



What a talented crop of authors and illustrators we can claim as Minnesota's own!

We have twelve intriguing, homegrown book creators with us at the 2011 Minnesota State Fair ... and there are ten times that many living in our Great State. People around the country often ask, "Is it something in all that lake water? How does Minnesota keep turning out so many excellent books?"



Children's Literature Network is a homegrown organization based right here in Minnesota, conceived by a group of children's literature enthusiasts ten years ago, and proud to be a sponsor of the Alphabet Forest.

www.childrensliteraturenetwork.org

Today, you'll find a website brimming with information about good books to read, the authors and illustrators who write them and fill them with beautiful art, and innovative ways you can use them in your home, classroom, and library.

Children's Literature Network provides connections between you, your favorite books, the books you haven't yet discovered, and the diverse group of individuals who create those books and work with the children who are avid and not-yet-avid readers.

- **Reading lists**
- **Birthday bios**
- **Recommendations**
- **Online magazine**
- **Event calendar**
- **Video interviews**
- **Author information**
- **Bookscope**
- **Debut!**
- **Book trailers**





Pat Bauer & David Geister

find great joy in playing with history. They met and married when they were guides at Historic Fort Snelling and continue to appear in costume at schools, libraries, and historic sites. Pat brings history alive to students at Black Hawk Middle School in **Eagan** while Dave creates historical paintings and book illustrations in their home studio in **Minneapolis**. Visit davidgeister.com.

Author's Autograph:

Books You've Read:

- B is for Battle Cry (Bauer/Geister)
- The Legend of Minnesota (illustrator)
- Riding to Washington (illustrator)
- S is for Scientists (illustrator)
- Voyageur's Paddle (illustrator)



Try This!

Keep a record of your travels by making a blank alphabet book and adding to it over time. Use a sketchbook or staple sheets of paper together, one for each letter. For instance, if you visit Fort Snelling, sketch the round tower or whatever strikes your fancy. Draw from observation if at all possible. Writing a short poem (it doesn't need to rhyme) is a creative way to record your thoughts.



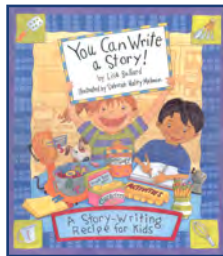
Lisa Bullard

Her first publication was a letter to the **Bemidji** newspaper when she was in 5th grade; from that day on she knew she would be a writer. Her award-winning books often draw on her experiences growing up in towns like St. Cloud, North Mankato, Moorhead, and Spicer. Lisa now lives in Minneapolis, where she teaches other writers of all ages. You can learn more at www.lisabullard.com.

Author's Autograph:

Books You've Read:

- Choose to Reuse
- Earth Day Every Day
- Not Enough Beds!
- Trick-or-Treat on Milton Street
- You Can Write a Story!



Try This!

You can find a story anywhere: at the lake, at the baseball game, out the window of your car, or in your own backyard. You just need three things: a character (a person or creature), a conflict (a problem), and a setting (a place). Mix them together, and you've started a story! Try it yourself: What might happen in a story about a puppy that is afraid to swim in the lake?



Mary Casanova

grew up in **St. Paul**, but now lives “up north” near **International Falls**. She is the author of 25 books, from picture books to novels, including *Moose Tracks*—and *Chrissa* for American Girl. Along with national awards, her books have won two Minnesota book awards.

Visit this true home-grown Minnesota author at www.marycasanova.com.

Author's Autograph:

Books You've Read:

- The Day Dirk Yeller Came to Town
- The Hunter
- One Dog Canoe
- Some Dog!
- Utterly Otterly Day



Try This!

Draw a picture of a canoe and who or what you would take along on a canoe trip. Act out the different action words used in the story ... and remember that your canoe is in the water. How will you act out words such as teetered, tottered, hopped, climbed, dropped, and leap? Are you making waves? Don't let your canoe tip over!



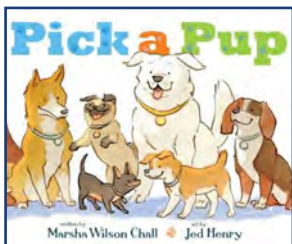
Marsha Wilson Chall

has published a chapter book and eight picture books, honors for which include the NAPPA Gold Award and Smithsonian Notable recognition. When she's not writing or sharing her love of good books at schools or conferences, Marsha enjoys teaching in the MFA program in Writing for Children and Young Adults at Hamline University. She lives on a small farm in **Delano** with her husband, dogs, and barn cats. www.marshachall.com

Author's Autograph:

Books You've Read:

- Libraries of Minnesota
- One Pup's Up
- Pick a Pup
- Sugarbush Spring
- Up North at the Cabin



Try This!

In my book *Pick a Pup*, the pup picks Sam. Sometimes our pets or family are chosen *for* us and not *by* us. If you have a pet, write the story of how you came together. Did you pick your pet or did your pet pick you? Draw pictures of your pet or use photos to illustrate your own *Pick a Pet* book. If you don't have a pet, imagine how you would pick one and write that story. Happy pickings!



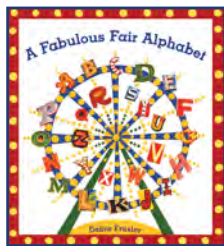
Debra Frasier

has flourished in the sunshine and soil of **Minneapolis** for more than 25 years. She writes and illustrates picture books and her efforts have won numerous awards, including a Parents Choice Gold Award. Well known for weaving together academic material and heartfelt stories, Debra supports all her books with extensive curriculum for teachers and caregivers, much of which can be found at her website, www.debrafrasier.com.

Author's Autograph:

Books You've Read:

- A Birthday Cake is No Ordinary Cake
- A Fabulous Fair Alphabet
- Miss Alaineus, a Vocabulary Disaster
- On the Day You Were Born
- Out of the Ocean



Try This!

You can play the Fabulous Fair Alphabet word game at home, while on vacation, even shopping at the grocery store! Make up your own rules: find nouns, verbs, or adjectives specific to the place you're visiting. Write one sentence using some of the words you've collected. Now try a second. Every day I collect words in my notebook—an entire story can grow from a single word!



Catherine Friend

has been writing for children and adults for twenty years. The author of two memoirs, *Hit By a Farm* and *Sheepish*, she won a 2009 Minnesota Book Award for *The Compassionate Carnivore*. Her most recent book, *The Perfect Nest*, was named one of the five best “read alouds” by the *Wall Street Journal*. Catherine lives near **Zumbrota**, where she raises sheep and cattle. Her barn cats inspired *The Perfect Nest*.
www.catherinefriend.com.

Author's Autograph:

Books You've Read:

- Barn Boot Blues
- Eddie the Raccoon
- My Head is Full of Colors
- The Perfect Nest
- Silly Ruby / Funny Ruby



Try This!

A nest can be built from anything, and it can be used by anyone—or anything—as a place to sleep. Write a short description of a dragon's perfect nest. Where would you find it? What would an alien's perfect nest look like? Can you imagine the places you might find it? What would your perfect nest look like? And where would you find it?



Jill Kalz

grew up in **New Ulm** (which explains her fondness for sauerkraut and her high tolerance for polka). She is the author of more than 50 children's books, including *Farmer Cap*, finalist for a 2008 Minnesota Book Award and winner of the Readers' Choice Award. Jill works as a children's book editor and lives with a charismatic Bichon named Tuckerbean. Visit Jill's author page on Facebook!

www.jillkalz.com

Author's Autograph:

Books You've Read:

- A-MAZE-ing Adventures
Fun Finger Mazes
- Farmer Cap
- Henry Shortbull Swallows the Sun
- No Snow for Christmas
- Tuckerbean



Try This!

List a first name, a color, a job, an animal, a made-up word, and a holiday. Now write a story using those words. For example, what happens when *Betsy Blue*, a *dentist*, meets a talking *horse* named *Puddledoo* at a *Valentine's Day* party? Do they solve a mystery together? Fall in love? Use magic to turn people into marshmallows? When you're done, choose new words and write another story.



David LaRoche

loves to explore the natural beauty of our state and has visited all 68 state parks as a member of the Minnesota State Park Passport Club. He is the proud recipient of both the Minnesota and Northeastern Minnesota Book Awards. A popular visiting author at schools, David resides in **White Bear Lake**, where he carves prize-winning jack-o'-lanterns that you can view at his website www.davidlarochelle.com.

Author's Autograph:

Books You've Read:

- 1 + 1 = 5 and Other Unlikely Additions
- The Best Pet of All
- The End
- The Haunted Hamburger
and Other Ghostly Stories
- Minnesota's Hidden Alphabet



Try This!

Step outdoors and look for your own “Hidden Alphabet”! Can you find the shape of a letter hidden in the branches of a tree, the outline of a cloud, or the markings on a leaf? Use a camera and photograph your discoveries. Maybe you’ll find enough letters to spell your name. Slow down, take a close look, and you’ll be amazed at what you discover in nature!



Lauren Stringer

writes and illustrates picture books in her big pink Victorian House in Minneapolis, where she lives with her family and three cats. Her books have received many awards including three Minnesota Book Awards. From mud to snow to origami animals, her books celebrate the natural world around us and the imagination. Learn more about her books at:

www.laurenstringer.com

Author's Autograph:

Books You've Read:

- Fold Me a Poem
- The Princess and Her Panther
- Scarecrow
- Snow
- Winter is the Warmest Season



Try This!

If you like folding animals in the Alphabet Forest, try folding an animal for each letter of the alphabet to make an Alphabet Zoo! Any paper will do, a square cut from a brown paper bag or a newspaper. Wrapping paper makes for excellent folding! Visit your local library for Animal Origami books or download some instructions from my website—just click on “Fold Me A Poem.”



Catherine Thimmesh

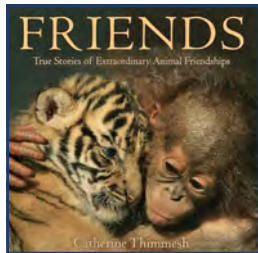
has lived in and around **Minneapolis** for most of her life. Her creative nonfiction has won numerous awards, including the Minnesota Book Award and the prestigious Sibert Medal. She is known for making complex subjects accessible, fascinating, and fun for her readers.

www.catherinethimmesh.com

Author's Autograph:

Books You've Read:

- Friends: True Stories of Extraordinary Animal Friendships
- Girls Think of Everything
- Lucy Long Ago
- Madam President
- Team Moon



Try This!

Friends can be different ... and most times they are! Randomly pick two people that look nothing alike. Then create a friendship story for them: how did they become friends? What do they do together? Try to incorporate the differences you noticed into their friendship: does the taller friend reach something up high for the other? Does the louder friend make the other friend laugh?



Catherine Urdahl

was a shy child trembling in her saddle shoes on the first day of school. She stood quietly, watching the other children and daydreaming about what she'd say if she could find her voice. Catherine's not so shy anymore. She's found her kindergarten voice and uses it to write picture books. Catherine grew up in **Litchfield** and now lives in the Minneapolis area with her husband, daughters, and pet rabbit. www.catherineurdahl.com

Author's Autograph:

Books You've Read:

- Emma's Question
- Polka Dot Fixes Kindergarten



Try This!

In *Polka-dot Fixes Kindergarten*, Polka-dot packs a fix-it kit with duct tape, runny soap, and dotted bandages. Create your own fix-it kit by decorating a pencil pouch with markers, colored duct tape, stickers, sequins, feathers, and your favorite decorations. Think, think, THINK about what you'll include in your kit. Then you'll be ready for almost anything!



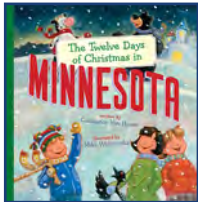
Mike Wohnoutka

is the acclaimed illustrator of many children's books, including the award-winning *Jack's House*, written by Karen Magnuson Beil. Mike was a troublemaker in grade school, and principals make him a little nervous, but he still loves visiting schools and talking with students about illustrating children's books. Mike grew up in **Spicer**, Minnesota, and now lives in **Minneapolis** with his wife and two children. www.mikewohnoutka.com

Author's Autograph:

Books You've Read:

- Can't Sleep Without Sheep
- Cowboy Sam and Those Confounded Secrets
- Jack's House
- Mama's Little Duckling
- Twelve Days of Christmas in Minnesota



Try This!

GIANT or tiny?

Draw a picture of yourself to the side (not in the middle) of a piece of paper. Now make yourself grow or shrink by drawing either a huge flower next to you (this will make you look small) or a skyscraper (this will make you look huge)!



State Fair Word Mashup!

Take two words from your Alphabet Forest game card and mash them together to make a new word or phrase. Draw your new creation, write a story about how it came to be, or do both! Who knows? Maybe this is the beginning of your very own book ...



cotton candy + snake





= cotton candy snake!



Alphabet Forest Partners



The Minnesota State Fair Foundation supports State Fair programs and capital improvements on the historic Minnesota State Fairgrounds, providing educational experiences in areas such as agriculture, history, horticulture, science, industry, art and more. Visit www.msffoundation.org to learn more.



Education is at the heart of Target's giving. Since 1946, Target has given 5 percent of its income — which today equals more than \$3 million a week. As part of its commitment to education, Target is on track to reach \$1 billion in giving to education by the end of 2015. A significant portion of this giving will go toward helping more U.S. children read proficiently by the end of third grade.



Debra Frasier has been long committed to creating books that become part of family life and school/community events. For example: watch the school-wide Miss Alaineus Vocabulary Parade in action at debrafrasier.com.





Alphabet Forest Partners

melsa
metro public
libraries

MELSA (Metropolitan Library Service Agency) is an alliance of over 100 public libraries in the seven-county Twin Cities metro. Our eight member library systems work together to bring the best library services and programs to you.




Working with librarians, educators, homeschoolers, and caregivers; providing connections to good books and their creators; encouraging reading and the love of books for children and teens; believing that reading creates good citizens who are caring, informed, and literate people.

MACKIN
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Located in Burnsville, Minnesota, Mackin has been providing library and classroom books, ebooks, audiobooks and more to schools around the world for 27 years.



Northwood Industries is a family owned and operated business which specializes in custom buildings and handcrafted indoor and outdoor furniture. We combine old world craftsmanship, honest work ethic, and the right materials to achieve heirloom quality products.



Minnesota's Homegrown Authors Autograph and Activity Book

2011 Alphabet Forest at the Minnesota State Fair

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|------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 8/25 | Mike Wohnoutka: | 12 Days of Christmas in Minnesota |
| 8/26 | Debra Frasier: | A Fabulous Fair Alphabet |
| 8/27 | Mary Casanova: | One-Dog Canoe |
| 8/28 | Marsha Wilson Chall: | One Pup's Up |
| 8/29 | Jill Kalz: | Farmer Cap |
| 8/30 | Lisa Bullard: | You Can Write a Story! |
| 8/31 | Catherine Friend: | The Perfect Nest |
| 9/1 | David LaRochelle: | $1 + 1 = 5$ |
| 9/2 | Catherine Thimmesh: | Friends |
| 9/3 | Lauren Stringer: | Fold Me a Poem |
| 9/4 | David Geister and
Patricia Bauer: | B is for Battle Cry |
| 9/5 | Catherine Urdahl: | Polka-Dot Fixes Kindergarten |



You can be a homegrown author, too!