

**Belleville Area District Library Board
Regular Meeting Agenda
April 13, 2021 at 7:30 PM**

The Belleville Area District Library Board will hold a virtual meeting due to the Wayne County Declaration of Continued Emergency Due to COVID-19 dated 3-29-2021.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/97476800096?pwd=QUIWaUVsZnJYno2SEtRdjRBcnJnQT09>

Meeting ID: 974 7680 0096

Passcode: 900777

One tap mobile

+13126266799,,97476800096# US (Chicago)

+16465588656,,97476800096# US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Agenda:

1. Roll Call: Cichewicz, Dawson, Hughes-Grubbs, Juriga, Peters, Priest, Stoudemire
2. Approve Agenda (Roll call vote)
3. Approve March 13, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes (Roll call vote)
4. Public Comments
5. Committee Reports
 - A. Building-Cichewicz
 - B. Bylaws-Juriga
 - C. Finance-Stoudemire
 - D. Marketing-Hughes-Grubbs
 - E. Personnel-Priest
 - F. Policy-Dawson
 - G. Art
6. Approve Accounts Payable (Roll call vote)
7. Director's Report/Comments/Communications
8. Trustee Comments
9. Chair Comments
10. Adjournment (Roll call vote)

Any citizen wishing to provide input or ask questions about any agenda item may speak during the meeting's Public Comments section or forward comments to the Library Director in advance by leaving a message at 734-699-3291 or via the Contact Us link at www.belleville.lib.mi.us. Any citizen requesting accommodation to attend this meeting may contact the library at least 24 hours prior to the meeting, using the above contact information.

Next Regular BADL Board Meeting: May 11, 2021 at 7:30 PM

**Belleville Area District Library
Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2021**

Chair Sharon Peters called the meeting to order at 7:32 pm via Zoom teleconference.

1. Roll Call

The following board members were present and stated the locations from which they were attending the meeting: Joy Cichewicz, Sumpter Township; Mary Jane Dawson, Belleville; Alma Hughes-Grubbs, Van Buren Township; John Juriga, Belleville; Sharon Peters, Van Buren Township; Linda Priest, Dallas, TX; and Tanya Stoudemire, Van Buren Township. Also present: Library Director Mary Jo Suchy and Adult Services Dept. Head Amy Greschaw.

2. Approve Agenda

Motion by Stoudemire, seconded by Priest, to approve the agenda as presented. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Cichewicz, Dawson, Hughes-Grubbs, Juriga, Peters, Priest, and Stoudemire. Nays: None. The motion carried unanimously.

- 3. Approve February 9, 2021 Minutes:** Motion by Juriga, seconded by Dawson, to approve the January 12, 2021, minutes as presented. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Cichewicz, Dawson, Hughes-Grubbs, Juriga, Peters, Priest, and Stoudemire. Nays: None. The motion carried unanimously.

- 4. Public Comments:** None.

5. Committee Reports

A. **Building:** AT&T moved the remaining lines and the old power poles have been removed from the parking lot. O'Neal Construction is completing a number of small projects including stack lighting adjustments and donor wall floor caulking. Interior donor signage details are being finalized, and a donor key will be added to the donor wall. It was determined that the best location for the beehives would be on the south side of the equipment screen on the roof. Additional changes will be made to the HVAC system in order to mitigate COVID and improve air quality. A humidification system will be installed which will require three units on the roof. The mechanical engineers are also working on plans for bipolar ionization, a move to MERV 14 filters, and the addition of a fan in the boiler room to draw some of the heat out of that room and into other areas in the library. The estimate for all of the HVAC projects is \$125,000. Recommendations from the art committee for specific components of the hanging art system were forwarded to Dan Whisler. A locked display case will be purchased for the first floor.

O'Neal Construction needs to finish moving their site office out of the museum.

B. **Bylaws:** No report.

C. **Finance:** No report.

- D. **Marketing:** The committee reviewed three options for a new logo designed by Michele Montour and chose to recommend one option to the board. The logo is reflective of the new building. It contains a spiral inspired by the circular staircase and a square inspired by the accent bricks in the building. The Optima font is the same font that is used in the exterior building signs. The logo is meant to evoke motion and movement. Motion by Juriga, seconded by Cichewicz, to accept the new logo design proposed by the marketing committee. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Cichewicz, Dawson, Hughes-Grubbs, Juriga, Peters, Priest, and Stoudemire. Nays: None. The motion carried unanimously.
- E. **Personnel:** No report.
- F. **Policy:** No report.
- G. **Art:** Michele Montour reported that most of the art committee members agreed to serve a second term with the exception of Doug Peters and Barbara Miller. The Belleville Area Council for the Arts has appointed Cheryl Wagner to replace Barbara Miller. The library will appoint an artist to replace Doug Peters. The art committee recommended specifications for the Walker hanging art system. The committee recommends the donation of sculptures from Howard Puchalsky for use in the children's room. A release form will need to be drawn up for the donation noting that the art will be the property of the library to use or sell. The committee also recommends accepting the loan of an oil painting owned by Sheena Barnes that is in the style of Jackson Pollock. Doug Peters is willing to work on an official agreement for the loan. It was the consensus of the library board to move forward with the agreement.
6. **Approve Accounts Payable:** Motion by Stoudemire, seconded by Priest, to approve the accounts payable as presented. A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: Cichewicz, Dawson, Hughes-Grubbs, Juriga, Peters, Priest, and Stoudemire. Nays: None. The motion carried unanimously.
7. **Director's Report:** See attached. Circulation Services Department Head Michelle Wloch has retired, and Lindsay Lore has stepped into the role of Circulation Supervisor. Suchy thanked Barbara Miller and Doug Peters for their work on the art committee. Amy Greschaw reported on upcoming programs being presented by the adult services librarians including a pop-up book discussion group, a cook book club, a virtual escape room and plans for the summer reading program.
8. **Trustee Comments:**
Priest – Will return home this week. She remarked on what a great asset Michelle Wloch has been.
Juriga – Will miss Michelle a great deal. Commented that the 4th Street concrete should be completed this week.
Stoudemire – Said good bye to Michelle and congratulated Lindsay.

Cichewicz – Thanked the art committee for all of the work they have done. Commended Mary Jo for promoting from within the library staff with Lindsay.
Hughes-Grubbs – Thanked Michelle for her assistance and helpfulness.
Congratulated Tonya Stoudemire for her recent job promotion.
Dawson – Will miss Michelle. Commented that Lindsay is delightful. Mentioned that Michele Montour is a great asset to the art committee.

9. Chair Comments:

Peters – Called upon Barbara Miller for comments. Barbara thanked Mary Jo for the beautiful thank you card she received for her work on the art committee. Peters thanked Barbara Miller, Doug Peters, and Michele Montour for their work on the art committee and commented that it has paid off to have an art committee in such an artistic community.

10. Adjournment:

Motion by Juriga, seconded by Dawson, to adjourn. A roll call vote was taken.
Ayes: Cichewicz, Dawson, Hughes-Grubbs, Juriga, Peters, Priest, and Stoudemire.
Nays: None. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm.

CHECK REGISTER SUMMARY

Belleville Area District Library

Date: 04/08/2021
 Time: 5:16 PM
 Page: 1

Operating

Check Date	Vendor Name	Check Description	Amount
03/09/2021	ALERUS FINANCIAL	Retirement	2,882.64
03/09/2021	BAKER & TAYLOR	Books & Materials	110.59
03/09/2021	CHASE CARDMEMBER SERVICE	Library Supplies	137.20
03/09/2021	DEMCO	Library Supplies	2,366.22
03/09/2021	DTE ENERGY	Electric Service 4th St	2,039.81
03/09/2021	FRIENDS OF THE BELLEVILLE AREA	Febraury Payout	118.30
03/09/2021	KAREN DUBKE	Program Supplies	54.38
03/09/2021	METCOM, INC	Face Masks	852.10
03/09/2021	MICHIGAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION	Membership/ Spring Inst.	180.00
03/09/2021	OFFICE DEPOT	Office/Bldg Supplies	428.64
03/09/2021	THE LIBRARY NETWORK	Fax Services	11,734.43
03/09/2021	UNIFIRST CORP	Maintenance	192.78
03/09/2021	VANTAGEPOINT TRANSFER AGENTS	Deferred Comp Plan	405.00
03/09/2021	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF MI, INC	Waste Removal	288.93
03/09/2021	WIESE'S LAWN CARE INC.	Snow Removal/Salting	1,689.00
03/09/2021	ALERUS FINANCIAL	Retirement	2,882.64
03/23/2021	A PRODUCTION BUILDING SOLUTION	Bldg Maintenance	2,550.00
03/23/2021	ALERUS FINANCIAL	Retirement	3,079.15
03/23/2021	APPLIED IMAGING	Copier/Printer Usage	232.52
03/23/2021	BAKER & TAYLOR	Books & Materials	34.18
03/23/2021	BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MICH	Dental	646.55
03/23/2021	CLEAR RATE COMMUNICATIONS	Fax Services	265.57
03/23/2021	DEMCO	Library Labels	80.78
03/23/2021	DEMCO SOFTWARE	Software 740092741	5,303.66
03/23/2021	DTE ENERGY	Sumpter Branch	176.19
03/23/2021	DTE ENERGY	Heating-Main	1,040.31
03/23/2021	GUARDIAN ALARM	Alarm services Sumpter	43.26
03/23/2021	MOUNT CLEMENS PUBLIC LIBRARY	Lost Book	13.95
03/23/2021	NOVI PUBLIC LIBRARY	Lost Book	4.99
03/23/2021	OFFICE DEPOT	Office/Bldg Supplies	244.32
03/23/2021	OFFICE DEPOT	Bldg Supplies	185.72
03/23/2021	SHARON DUCKWORTH, CPA	Accounting Services	950.00
03/23/2021	STANDARD INSURANCE COMPANY	Insurance	301.80
03/23/2021	UNITED HEALTHCARE	Health Insurance	10,613.19
03/23/2021	UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE	Postage for Permit 103	2,500.00
03/23/2021	VANTAGEPOINT TRANSFER AGENTS	Deferred Comp Plan	430.00
03/23/2021	YP	YP Listing	58.80
04/06/2021	ALERUS FINANCIAL	Retirement Employer Cont	3,079.15
04/06/2021	CHASE CARDMEMBER SERVICE	Library Supplies	619.94
04/06/2021	CREATIVE PRODUCT SOURCE, INC	SRP Prizes	289.12

04/06/2021	DTE ENERGY	Electric-Main	2,570.63
04/06/2021	FRIENDS OF THE BELLEVILLE AREA	March Payout	170.95
04/06/2021	MICHIGAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION	Organizational Membership	1,259.20
04/06/2021	MONTRONICS CORPORATION	Newsletter Design	475.00
04/06/2021	OFFICE DEPOT	Office Supplies	79.97
04/06/2021	THE LIBRARY NETWORK	Feb. Bookbilling & Telecommunications	8,164.05
04/06/2021	UNIFIRST CORP	Maintenance/Mats	96.34
04/06/2021	VANTAGEPOINT TRANSFER AGENTS	Deferred Comp Plan	405.00
04/06/2021	WASTE MANAGEMENT OF MI, INC	Waste Disposal	292.70
		Checks Total:	72,619.65
		Bank Total:	72,619.65

Capital Project Fund

03/09/2021	O'NEAL CONSTRUCTION, INC	Project 1359-00	54,131.00
		Checks Total:	54,131.00
		Bank Total:	54,131.00
		Grand Total:	126,750.65

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

April 2021

LIBRARY PROGRAMS	March: Adults: 6 Youth: 7	
	Mar.	Fiscal Year
LIBRARY VISITS	3,840	25,219
	Mar.	Fiscal Year
TOTAL CIRC	18,406	137,230
	Mar.	Fiscal Year
ADULT PROGRAMMING	41	325
	Mar.	Fiscal Year
CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING	100	1,224
ALL AGES PROGRAMMING:	March: 0	Fiscal Year: 0
	Mar.	Fiscal Year
REF. QUESTIONS	1,215	8,458
	Mar.	Fiscal Year
ADULT INTERNET	663	2,703

STAFF: A couple of employees have been out and quarantining due to having family members who came down with COVID. I am working with staff to get everyone vaccinated who wishes to do so, but we have all been scrambling for shots just like everyone else.

REOPENING: They say it is always darkest before the dawn, so I hope that the currently increasing numbers of COVID cases in our community, county, and state will soon be behind us once a greater percentage of the population has been vaccinated. Currently, Wayne County and the entire State are at COVID threat level E, which is the highest level. We remain under state and county health department orders as well as a Wayne County state of emergency. Once the numbers come back down (hopefully permanently), we should be able to move along much faster through our reopening stages (which will include limited seating).

YOUTH SERVICES UPDATE: See the attached update from youth services department head Tara McCann. Her staff have been very creative in keeping kids engaged in the library through virtual programs and craft activities.

Youth Services Department – April - June 2021

The library continues to conduct virtual programs during the COVID pandemic, but the youth services librarians are eager for a return to normal, hopefully in the fall. The librarians focus on the following early literacy skills during their storytimes:

- Print Recognition
- Motor Development
- Social Skills
- Group Ownership
- Self-Concept

Family Storytime

March 22 - April 26

Mondays at 11:00 am on Facebook

Toddler Time Storytime:

March 25 - April 29

Thursdays at 11:00 am on Facebook

Pop-Up storytimes... coming soon!

Belleville Lake Fest will be held June 25-27 in Downtown Belleville. Stop by our booth for crafts for the kiddos and pop-up storytimes!

Virtual Teen AniManga Club (Grades 7-12)

Fourth Tuesday of the Month, 6:30 pm– 8 pm

If you're enthusiastic about Anime and manga, this club is for you! Talk about favorite series, watch Anime, and more.

Space is limited. Register on our events calendar at <http://belleville.evanced.info/signup> or by calling the library. A free copy of each month's book will be available at the library for participants. Registration opens for each session on the first of the month.

Please register with your email to receive the meeting link.

Virtual Comic Book Club (Grades 4-6)

Third Tuesday of the Month, 6:30 – 7:30 pm

Do you enjoy reading comic books? Want to create your own comic book? This is the club for you. We will read and discuss a variety of comics and make our own.

Space is limited. Register on our events calendar at <http://belleville.evanced.info/signup> or by calling the library. A free copy of each month's book will be available at the library for participants. Registration opens for each session on the first of the month.

Please register with your email to receive the meeting link.

Little Scientists (Ages 2-5)

Last Saturday of the month. January 30, February 27, March 27, & April 24

Every child is a scientist! Join us each month for a guided sensory science experience with your little ones in mind. We will explore four of the five senses (touch, smell, vision, and hearing) with materials provided in a craft kit and a video. The video will be posted on Facebook at 10 am on the last Saturday of the month, and the kit will be available to pick up from that Saturday while supplies last. Register at <http://belleville.evanced.info/signup> or call the library to reserve your kit today.

Summer Reading Program

June 1—July 27

Sign up for our Summer Reading Program on <https://bellevillemi.beanstack.org> or at the children's Information Desk on June 1 to begin reading for prizes. Prizes are available until July 31, or while prizes last.

All-Ages Virtual Shows

Tuesdays, 11 am

Our weekly Summer Reading Program shows have moved online! Check out the library's Facebook page every Tuesday morning during Summer Reading. Each show will be available for one week:

June 1 – The Music Lady

The Music Lady, Beverly Meyer, wows us with her interactive performance for children and adults to enjoy together. Fun for the whole family!

June 8 – Gratitude Steel Band

Get happy and dance to the live steel pan music of the Gratitude Steel Band!

June 15 – Cameron Zvara Comedy Show

Join us for a hilarious interactive comedy show with Michigan's own Cameron Zvara!

June 22 – Storyteller Judy Sima

Imagine your story with tales woven by professional storyteller, Judy Sima.

June 29 – Baffling Bill the Magician

The Baffling Bill Magic Show presented by this nationally recognized magician will amaze all with professional illusion and comedy.

July 6 – Joel Tacey Comedy Magic Show

Gear up for Reading with Joel as he brings books to life in this hilarious comedy and magic show which will have both kids and grown-ups laughing out loud!

July 13 – Joe Reilly Interactive Music Show

Enjoy songs about nature in this original, interactive music show by Joe Reilly—fun for the whole family.

July 20 – Gordon Russ Magic Show

A magical performance providing hilarious entertainment for all ages with a side-splitting magic show featuring the world-famous Gordon Russ.

July 27 – Kevin Devine Musical Comedy Show

Get movin' with this rollicking, interactive music show with Michigan's own Kevin Devine!

The New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/16/well/family/children-reading-screens-books.html>

THE CHECKUP

How Children Read Differently From Books vs. Screens

Scrolling may work for social media, but experts say that for school assignments, kids learn better if they slow down their reading.

By Perri Klass, M.D.

March 16, 2021

In this pandemic year, parents have been watching — often anxiously — their children’s increasing reliance on screens for every aspect of their education. It can feel as if there’s no turning back to the time when learning involved hitting the actual books.

But the format children read in can make a difference in terms of how they absorb information.

Naomi Baron, who is professor emerita of linguistics at American University and author of a new book, “How We Read Now: Strategic Choices for Print, Screen and Audio,” said, “there are two components, the physical medium and the mind-set we bring to reading on that medium — and everything else sort of follows from that.”

Because we use screens for social purposes and for amusement, we all — adults and children — get used to absorbing online material, much of which was designed to be read quickly and casually, without much effort. And then we tend to use that same approach to on-screen reading with harder material that we need to learn from, to slow down with, to absorb more carefully. A result can be that we don’t give that material the right kind of attention.

For early readers

With younger children, Professor Baron said, it makes sense to stick with print to the extent that it is possible. (Full disclosure: As the national medical director of the program Reach Out and Read, I believe fervently in the value of reading print books to young children.) Print, she said, makes it easier for parents and children to interact with language, questions and answers, what is called “dialogic reading.” Further, many apps and e-books have too many distractions.

Dr. Jenny Radesky, a developmental behavioral pediatrician who is an assistant professor of pediatrics at Michigan Medicine C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital in Ann Arbor, said that apps designed to teach reading in the early years of school rely on “gamification meant to keep children engaged.” And though they do successfully teach core skills, she said, “what has been missing in remote schooling is the classroom context, the teacher as meaning maker, to tie it all together, helping it be more meaningful to you, not just a bunch of curricular components you’ve mastered.”

Any time that parents are able to engage with family reading time is good, using whatever medium works best for them, said Dr. Tiffany Munzer, also a developmental behavioral pediatrician at Mott Children’s Hospital, who has studied how young children use e-books. However, Dr. Munzer was the lead author on a 2019 study that found that parents and toddlers spoke less overall, and also spoke less about the story when they were looking at electronic books compared with print books, and another study that showed less social back-and-forth — the toddlers were more likely to be using the screens by themselves.

GET THE WELL FAMILY NEWSLETTER: *Get the latest news on issues including kids’ health, homework, adolescent development, college, relationships and more.*

Sign Up

“There are some electronic books that are designed really well,” Dr. Munzer said, pointing to a study of one book

(designed by PBS) that included a character who guided parents in engaging their children around the story. “On the other hand, there’s research that suggests that a lot of what you find in the most popular apps have all these visually salient features which distracts from the core content and makes it harder for kids to glean the content, harder for parents to have really rich dialogue.”

Still, she said, it’s not fair to expect parents to navigate this technology — it should be the job of the software developers to design electronic books that encourage language and interactions, tailored to a child’s developmental level.

With preschoolers as opposed to toddlers, Professor Baron said, “there are now beginning to be some smarter designs where the components of the book or the app help further the story line or encourage dialogic reading — that’s now part of the discussion.”

Dr. Radesky, who was involved in the research projects with Dr. Munzer, talked about the importance of helping children master reading that goes beyond specific remembered details — words or characters or events — so a child is “able to integrate knowledge gained from the story with life experience.” And again, she said, that isn’t what is stressed in digital design. “Stuff that makes you think, makes you slow down and process things deeply, doesn’t sell, doesn’t get the most clicks,” she said.

Parents can help with this when their children are young, Dr. Radesky said, by discussing the story and asking the questions that help children draw those connections.

For school-age kids

“When kids enter digital spaces, they have access to an infinite number of platforms and websites in addition to those e-books you’re supposed to be reading,” Dr. Radesky said. “We’ve all been on the ground helping our kids through remote learning and watching them not be able to resist opening up that tab that’s less demanding.”

“All through the fall I was constantly helping families manage getting their child off YouTube,” Dr. Radesky said. “They’re bored, it’s easy to open up a browser window,” as adults know all too well. “I’m concerned that during remote learning, kids have learned to orient toward devices with this very skimmy partial attention.”

Professor Baron said that in an ideal world, children would learn “how to read contiguous text for enjoyment, how to stop, how to reflect.”

In elementary school, she said, there’s an opportunity to start a conversation about the advantages of the different media: “It goes for print, goes for a digital screen, goes for audio, goes for video, they all have their uses — we need to make kids aware that not all media are best suited to all purposes.” Children can experiment with reading digitally and in print, and can be encouraged to talk about what they perceived and what they enjoyed.

Dr. Radesky talked about helping children develop what she called “metacognition,” in which they ask themselves questions like, “how does my brain feel, what does this do to my attention span?” Starting around the age of 8 to 10, she said, children are developing the skills to understand how they stay on task and how they get distracted. “Kids recognize when the classroom gets too busy; we want them to recognize when you go into a really busy digital space,” she said.

For older readers

In experiments with middle school and university students asked to read a passage and then be tested on it, Professor Baron said, there is a mismatch between how they feel they learn and how they actually perform.

Students who think they read better — or more efficiently — on the screen will still do better on the test if they have read the passage on the page. And college students who print out articles, she said, tend to have higher grades and better test scores. There is also research to suggest that university students who used authentic books, magazines or newspapers to write an essay wrote more sophisticated essays than those just given printouts.

With complex text in any format, slowing down helps. Professor Baron said that parents can model this at home, sitting

and relaxing over a book, reading without rushing and perhaps generally de-emphasizing speed when it comes to learning. Teachers can be trained to help students develop “deep reading, mindful, focusing on the text,” she said.

For example, students can be trained in digital annotation, highlighting but also making marginal notes, so that they have to slow down and add their own words. “We’ve known that for years, we’ve done it with print, we have to realize that if you want to learn something from a digital document, annotate,” she said.

There are also studies that suggest that reading comprehension is better onscreen when readers page down — that is, when they see a page (or a screen) of text at a time, and then move to the next, rather than continuously scrolling through text.

Seeing information on the page may help a student see a book as something with a structure, rather than just text from which you grab some quick information.

No one is going to take screens out of children’s lives, or out of their learning. But the more we exploit the rich possibilities of digital reading, the more important it may be to encourage children to try out reading things in different ways, and to discuss what it feels like, and perhaps to have adults reflect on their own reading habits. Reading on digital devices can motivate recalcitrant readers, Professor Baron said, and there are many good reasons to do some of your reading on a screen.

But, of course, it’s a different experience.

“There’s a physicality,” Professor Baron said. “So many young people talk about the smell of books, talk about reading print as being ‘real’ reading.”

The New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/26/books/review/beverly-cleary-ramona-quimby.html>

Beverly Cleary Wrote About Real Life, and Her Readers Loved Her for It

The creator of Ramona Quimby and Henry Huggins constructed a world that children recognized — one that changed with the times.

By Elisabeth Egan

Published March 26, 2021 Updated March 27, 2021

“Today the letters that fill an author’s mailbox often begin, ‘Our class is studying live authors,’” wrote Beverly Cleary in “Why Are Children Writing to Me Instead of Reading?,” an essay published in The New York Times Book Review in 1985. “Why only living authors, I wondered. Then I caught on that the answer was the expectation of a reply or what children refer to as ‘free stuff.’”

The much-adored author of 42 books for children, who was declared a “Living Legend” by the Library of Congress in 2000, died on Thursday at the age of 104.

To borrow a response from Cleary’s most famous character, Ramona Quimby: “Guts! Guts! Guts!” What else is there to say?

Cleary’s novels — “The Mouse and the Motorcycle,” “Henry and Ribsy” and “Ralph S. Mouse,” just to name a few — are now in the hands of a third generation of readers. Her books are a cornerstone of modern children’s literature, front and center in the bedtime canon, and among the first that many young children enjoy on their own. She was the recipient of every accolade available to authors of books for young readers — from the Newbery Medal to the National Book Award — and will remain alive in the imagination of every child who met Ramona and Beezus Quimby, Henry Huggins, Otis Spofford, Ellen Tebbits or any one of her dear, flawed, funny characters, and thought: “That’s me.”

Beverly Bunn Cleary was a descendant of pioneers, an only child who spent her early years in Yamhill, Ore. Her parents sold the family farm during the Depression, and the Bunnns moved to the northeast Portland neighborhood that would become the backdrop of Cleary’s novels. Her childhood home was on 37th Street, which she renamed Klickitat Street after a real-life city block — and because “it reminded me of the sound of knitting needles,” she told The Times in 1995.

In her second memoir, “My Own Two Feet,” Cleary recalled her mother’s parting words before she left home by Greyhound bus to attend Chaffey Junior College in Ontario, Calif.: “We want to leave you prepared to take care of yourself and any children you might have. Widows so often have to run boardinghouses.”

The author wrote: “Although I was a conscientious girl, a good student more interested in the high school paper, the literary club and sewing than in boys, Mother worried about my ‘going bad,’ as if I were an apple.”

Cleary graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, where she took a class called The Novel, taught by a professor who said: “The proper subject of the novel is universal human experience.” Cleary held onto this wisdom when she became a children’s librarian in Yakima, Wash. — and, later, when she became an author. “A phrase that has also stayed with me,” she wrote, “is ‘the minutiae of life,’ those details that give reality to fiction.”

That minutiae was the backbone of her novels, which are jam-packed with realistic, timeless stories about the small but important moments that make up a childhood: first snowfalls and school plays, disagreements with classmates and misunderstandings with teachers, spontaneous fast-food meals and humdrum trips to the grocery store. Cleary had an eye for the roller coaster rhythms of family life, and for little creatures. The pets she conjured — Ribsy, Picky-Picky, Socks and Bandit, among others — are as indelible as the humans who served their kibble.

Like real people, Cleary’s characters make messes, slam doors, leave nasty notes on the kitchen counter and bicker at

the dinner table. Who can forget the time Ramona refused to eat the “yucky” beef tongue her parents bought on sale and tried to pass off as a prime cut?

Although Cleary never shied away from issues such as unemployment and divorce, she will be remembered for her sly, intelligent wit, which managed to be wicked and kind at the same time. She elevated misunderstandings and near misses into an art form, subtly demonstrating how to turn embarrassment into a funny story without making anyone a punching bag.

“Beverly Cleary is *funny*,” Judy Blume, the author of “Are You There God? It’s Me, Margaret” and “Blubber,” told *The Times* in 2011. “There’s both gentle humor and laugh-out-loud humor.” When Blume’s children were young, she’d come home from the library with armloads of books: “Most of them went into the ‘I don’t want to write books like these, they bore me’ pile,” she recalled. “Then I came to Beverly Cleary and I fell off the sofa, I was laughing so hard. I thought, oh my God, I want to write books like *this*.”

(In the early 1980s, Cleary’s and Blume’s boxes of fan mail were accidentally switched by their publisher, and Cleary was horrified to learn that Blume’s admirers had asked her to send items from her garbage as mementos. “This is ridiculous,” she wrote to Blume after the mix-up. “You must be firm with them and not do these things.”)

Cleary didn’t start writing until she was in her early 30s. She’d talked about it for years and, in “My Own Two Feet,” describes an epiphany she had while working at Sather Gate Book Shop in Berkeley: “One morning during a lull, I picked up an easy-reading book and read, ‘Bow-wow. I like the green grass, said the puppy.’ How ridiculous, I thought. No puppy I had known talked like that.”

In 1948, Cleary moved into a new house and discovered a ream of typing paper in the linen closet. She told her husband, Clarence, “‘I guess I’ll have to write a book.’

“‘Why don’t you?’ asked Clarence.

“‘We never have any sharp pencils’ was my flippant answer.

“The next day he brought home a pencil sharpener.”

On Jan. 2, 1949, Cleary sat down at her kitchen table and got to work: “What was writing for children but written storytelling? So in my imagination I stood once more before Yakima’s story-hour crowd as I typed the first sentence: ‘Henry Huggins was in the third grade.’”

She remembered a boy at the library who complained that there weren’t any books about kids like him. She wrote with him in mind.

“Henry Huggins” was published in 1950, followed by “Henry and Beezus” two years later. At first, Ramona Geraldine Quimby was an incidental character — Beezus’s annoying little sister, who ruins an after-school art class, a game of checkers and a box of apples (she takes only one bite out of each piece of fruit because “the first bite tastes best”). Ramona eventually elbowed her way to center stage, commanding the attention of Generation X with “Ramona the Pest” (1968), “Ramona the Brave” and “Ramona and Her Father” (1975), “Ramona and Her Mother” (1979), “Ramona Quimby, Age 8” (1981), “Ramona Forever” (1985) and finally “Ramona’s World” (1999).

One could argue that Ramona was the forerunner of what is now known as “girl power.” Before Junie B. Jones and Ivy and Bean arrived on bookshelves, before words like “fierce” and “boss” migrated from zoos and office parks onto girls’ T-shirts, she was strutting around with her hands on her hips, signing her name with a flourish — whiskers, pointy ears and a tail on the Q. No heart over the “i” for this girl.

“She was not a slowpoke grown-up,” Cleary wrote in “Ramona and Her Mother.” “She was a girl who could not wait. Life was so interesting she had to find out what happened next.”

The members of the Quimby family reflect the time they live in. Mr. Quimby loses his job and has trouble finding a new one. He struggles to quit smoking. Mrs. Quimby goes back to work, and everyone worries about money, including Ramona and Beezus. Some reviewers criticized the later Ramona books for being dark, but Cleary told *The Times* in 1995, “I just think Ramona is more aware of the world beyond herself. She became aware that her parents had

problems, and that's part of growing up."

To read Cleary's books as a child in the 1980s was to feel not just seen, but noticed by a benevolent soul. The country was rebounding from a recession; divorce was on the rise; anti-bullying initiatives were as far in the future as the internet. If you grew up during this time, you may remember an every-kid-for-himself vibe (perfectly captured in "E.T.," where a 10-year-old boy hides an extraterrestrial in his closet, and his mother is too distracted to notice). Yes, today's helicopter and tiger parents were once latchkey kids, nuking solitary French bread pizza dinners in the microwave.

Beverly Cleary tackled the loneliness of the era in a way that helped readers find brightness and humor in their circumstances. In "Dear Mr. Henshaw," she introduced Leigh Botts, a sixth grader who is struggling with his parents' divorce and trying to get his bearings at a new school. The book is a collection of letters Leigh writes to his favorite author — first for an assignment, then at his mother's behest and finally in the form of a journal that helps him make sense of what's going on in his life.

It's a wistful story punctuated by notes of optimism. In Leigh's voice, Cleary writes, "'You know,' said Mom, 'whenever I watch the waves, I always feel that no matter how bad things seem, life will still go on.' That was how I felt too, only I wouldn't have known how to say it, so I just said, 'yeah.' Then we drove home."

Revisiting the book as an adult, you notice something you might not have noticed when your teacher read it aloud to your fifth-grade class (prompting two boys to put their heads down on their desks and sob): Leigh is never alone. There's a cast of adults looking out for him — Mr. Fridley, the teacher who makes sure students don't throw away their retainers after lunch; his mother's boss, a caterer, who saves festive leftovers so Leigh can bring them to school (no wonder his lunch keeps getting stolen!); and, finally, the elusive author, Boyd Henshaw, who encourages the boy to keep reading and writing.

Henshaw also informs Leigh that his favorite animal is a purple monster that eats children who send authors long lists of questions for reports instead of using the library.

In 2011, at the age of 95, Cleary was still fielding missives from fans. She told *The Times*: "Sometimes I get very moving ones. One little girl wrote recently that she had to hurry home from school and lock herself in because her mother was working and the neighborhood wasn't safe; reading helped her through many a long, lonely night."

What did Cleary do? "I wrote her back," she said.

"This emphasis on living authors may be partially responsible for so many excellent books going out of print. Their authors are no longer around to answer letters or make public appearances," Cleary once wrote. "Celebrity is fleeting; good books should endure."

To borrow from a favorite title: Beverly Cleary forever.

Follow New York Times Books on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, sign up for our newsletter or our literary calendar. And listen to us on the Book Review podcast.