

JELLA LEPMAN: BRIDGING WORLDS, BRIDGING YOUTH – ONE BOOK AT A TIME

By Laura A. Thompson, Ph.D.
Nova Scotia, CANADA



Who's Jella Lepman and why learn about her?

Grade 6 Social Studies – World Cultures

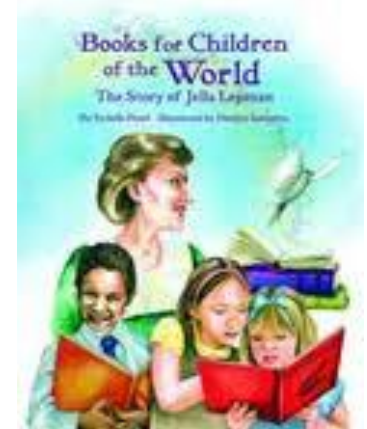
Unit Focus



- The focus of this unit is the remarkable story of Jella Lepman, the founder of the **International Youth Library** (Munich), and the importance of **building bridges of understanding** between and among nations and young people worldwide.

Books for ALL Children of the World

Students will understand that **books can help bridge cultures worldwide and people of all ages**, especially children, and that the International Youth Library in Munich is a unique example of **peace-building** and **intercultural understanding**.

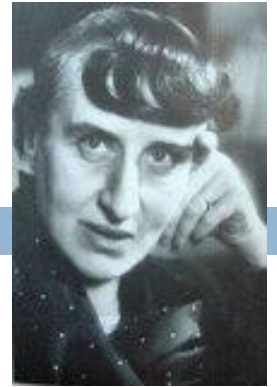


Overview

- Who was Jella Lepman?
- Where is Munich, Germany?
- What is the International Youth Library?
- Why books for children of the world?
- What is Jella Lepman's legacy?
- How can you join Jella's effort in making the world a better, more peaceful place?



Who was Jella Lepman?



- A German Jew
- Founder of the International Youth Library in Munich
- A remarkable woman
- Born in Stuttgart – died in Munich (1891-1970)

Where in the world is...

Munich, Germany?

- Identify the following on various maps:
 - ▣ Continent
 - ▣ Country
 - ▣ City



**NORTH
AMERICA**

EUROPE

ASIA

AFRICA

**SOUTH
AMERICA**

AUSTRALIA

OCEANIA

ANTARCTICA

© Nations Online Project



Locate Germany.

GERMANY



München



Schloss Blumenburg in München



- Home of the International Youth Library (IYL), since 1983
- Where Worlds Meet



Jella Lepman: Gründerin der Internationalen Jugendbibliothek



- Founder of the International Youth Library (IYL) in Munich

Jella Lepman:

A Bridge of Children's Books



- Autobiography
- A story of courage and conviction
- A remarkable story of one woman's vision
- A legacy of peace and hope



How it all began

Books for Children of the World

Books for Children of the World: The Story of Jella Lepman



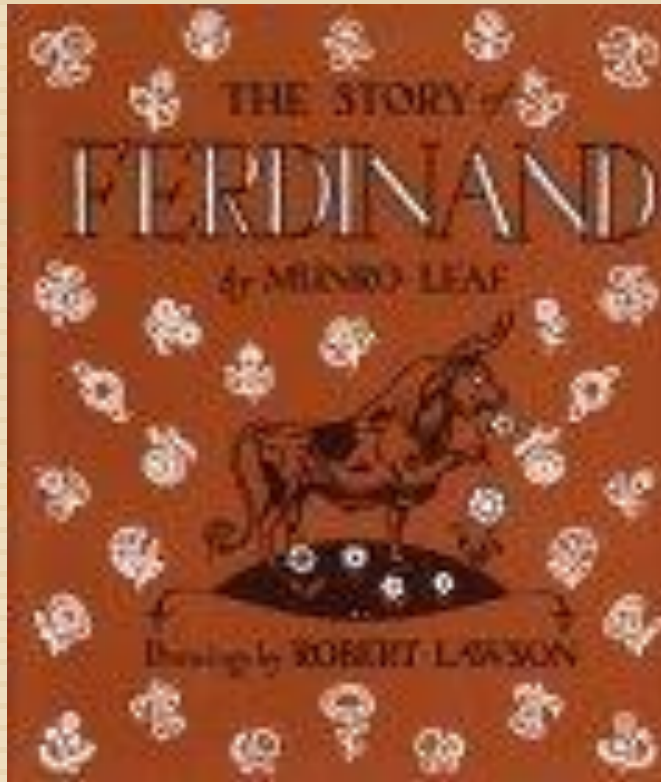
- World War II (1939-1945)
- So many **books destroyed** during the war
- German children were hungry for books
- Jella Lepman **wrote letters all over the world** to ask for donations of children's books

What to do with these donated books?



- Jella Lepman organized an **exhibition of children's books** that travelled throughout Germany.





Jella translated *The Story of Ferdinand* herself!

Jella persuaded a German newspaper to print 30,000 copies of this book so she could distribute them to the children of Germany during the travelling book exhibit.

Why was the International Exhibition of Children's Books so important?

- July 3, 1946 – opening of Exhibition in Munich
- The first international event in postwar Germany
- “...many of the **best children's books** had been **translated into all languages** and thus had become the **common property** of children throughout the world. The children had made them their own.”



Why was the IYL founded after WWII?



- “From 1933 to 1945, the Nazi government declared that only books written in German could stay on the shelves of schools and libraries. **Books in other languages and books showing people of different cultures were taken away and burned.** Books about soldiers marching off to war and books telling terrible lies about Jews were added to the shelves.”

The children of postwar Germany



- The importance of books for the children of Germany
- “Were not Germany’s children just as innocent as children all over the world, helpless victims of monstrous events?”

▣ Jella Lepman

WWII is over — the bridge to peace!



- “If the war is really over, if one is to believe in peaceful coexistence, the first messengers of that peace will be these children’s books.”

□ Jella Lepman



Hope + Peace + Understanding



- In 1946, Jella Lepman started by organizing an international exhibition of children's books.
- In 1949, Jella Lepman founded the International Youth Library in Munich, Germany.
- Her goal was to regenerate hope and promote international and intercultural understanding



Internationale Jugendbibliothek in München

Inside the International Youth Library

Inside the *Internationale Jugendbibliothek* in München



Each country has its own flag.



There is artwork featured, too.





Canada has two sections – and two flags!

One Canada flag for the French section and a second Canada flag for the English section – to represent Canadian children's books in our two official languages!

The Night-time World in International Children's Literature



**Darkness had fallen –
Eerie summer exhibit 2010**



The Night-time World in International Children's Literature





Would you like to read in this library?

Internationale Jugendbibliothek in München

Look inside







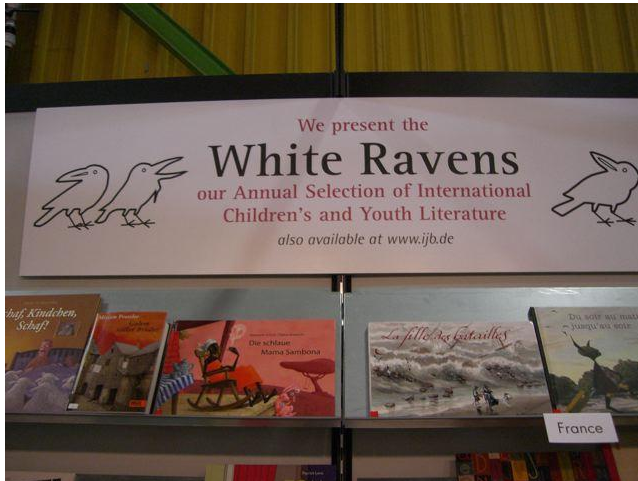
What is special about the IYL?

What is special about IYL?



- It's in a castle – cool!
 - ▣ *Schloss Blumenburg*
- It's international.
- It's for youth & children 😊
- It organizes activities:
 - ▣ Exhibits
 - ▣ Festivals
 - ▣ Reading Museums
 - ▣ Seminars for teachers & librarians

White Ravens



- WR online catalogue
- Features 3557 books from 84 countries and in 60 languages
- Books with:
 - ▣ universal themes
 - ▣ exceptional and innovative artistic and literary style and design

Does the White Ravens catalogue include books from Canada?

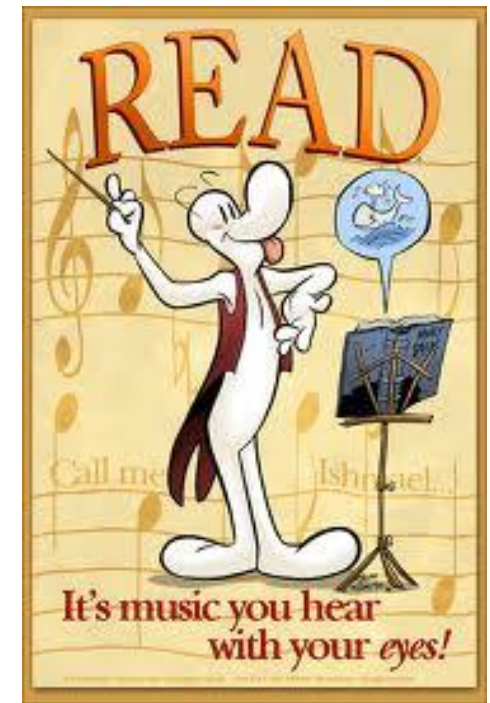
- 157 books are from Canada
- In English and French



Jella Lepman's Legacy

What now?

So, why read?



So, why read?



Jella's Remarkable Legacy: IBBY

- IBBY is one of the **most influential** children's literature organizations **in the world**.



Jella's Remarkable Legacy: IBBY

International Board on Books for Young People



- Helping children around the world access books and literacy programs
- Promoting peace

IBBY: The Right to Become a Reader



IBBY: The Right for **Every Child** to Become a Reader

Children in Crisis

Haiti

Afghanistan

Gaza,
Palestinian
Occupied
Territories

Lebanon

Columbia

Indonesia

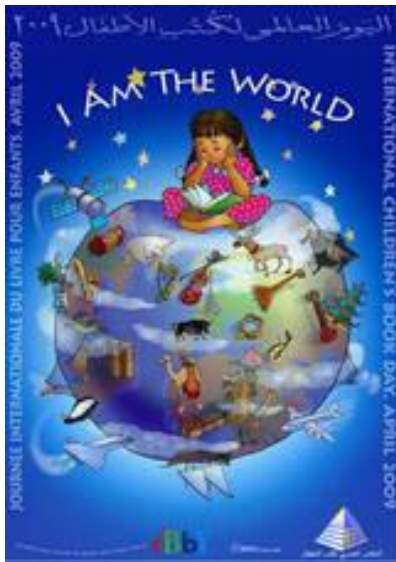
- Supporting children whose lives have been disrupted by war, armed conflict or natural disaster
- What about their right to read?
- What about yours?



IBBY: International Children's Book Day

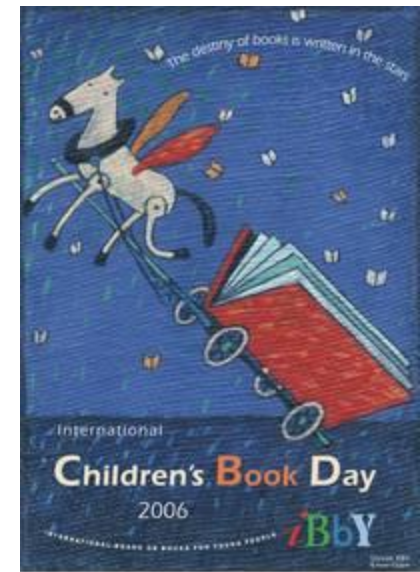
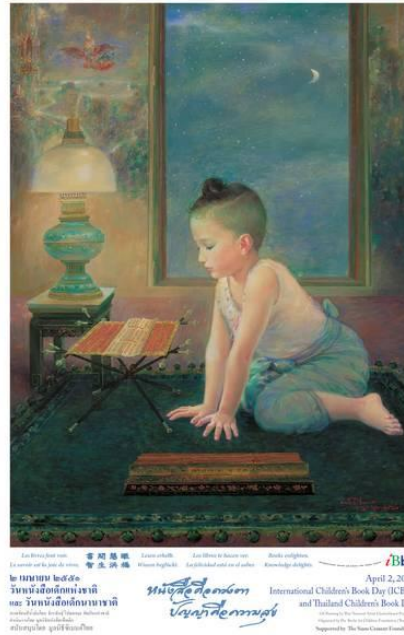
- Since 1967
- April 2nd
- A celebration 😊
- To inspire a love of reading
- To call attention to children's books
- A different theme every year



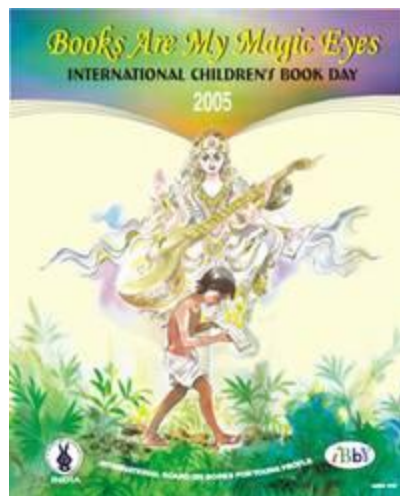


IBBY Egypt
2009

IBBY Thailand
2008



IBBY Slovakia
2006



IBBY India
2005



IBBY Austria
2002

JOIN IN THE CELEBRATIONS!

TD Canadian Children's Book Week 2011 | April 30 - May 7, 2011



Semaine canadienne du livre jeunesse
Canadian Children's Book Week

Celebrate Global Citizenship! *Célébrez la citoyenneté mondiale!*

Changing the World, One Child at a Time
Changer le monde, un enfant à la fois



How are **YOU** going to change the world?



I am going to
read about
current events
once weekly.



I am going to
read a book off
the IBBY list this
term.



I am going to
participate in the
2011 Canadian
Children's Book
Week.



Danke / Thanks / Merci

- laura.thompson@acadiau.ca
- Acadia University
School of Education, Box 57
Wolfville Nova Scotia
B4P 2R6 CANADA



References

- International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY). (2010). *Welcome to IBBY*. Retrieved September 18, 2010 from: www.ibby.org
- Lepman, Jella. (2002). *A Bridge of Children's Books: The Inspiring Autobiography of a Remarkable Woman*. Dublin: O'Brien.
- Pearl, Sydelle. (2007). *Books for Children of the World: The Story of Jella Lepman*. Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing.

Links of Interest

- ❑ www.ibby.org
- ❑ <http://www.ibby-canada.org/>
- ❑ www.usbby.org
- ❑ <http://www.bookcentre.ca/>
- ❑ <http://www.bookweek.ca/>
- ❑ <http://www.bookweek.ca/francais/2011>