



GEF Writers' Café Series

by Barb Cashman *The Granby Drummer* November 2010

The mission of the Granby Education Foundation has always been to fund unique educational and artistic opportunities for the Granby community. With the culmination of the October literary series "Writers' Café", it is apparent through the 1000 participants that Granby takes advantage of those opportunities.



On October 29, award winning journalist and New York Times #1 author David Grann presented his work of non-fiction, The Lost City of Z. He spoke to an evening gathering about the science of earth mounds in Bolivia, carbon dating, and theories of agriculture and the sustainability of complex civilizations, set against the romantic backdrop of archaeological expedition, isolated indigenous tribes that control land masses the size of small countries, and the disappearance of Percy Fawcett, arguably the

greatest explorer of modern times, during his search for a golden city of riches. Mr. Grann wove a story that mixed the new technology of satellite imagery with words written a century ago by Fawcett, bringing to life a man, a scientist, who saw the collapse of his own civilization during World War I and became obsessed with the spiritual quest to uncover the existence of a settlement and culture that was literally swallowed up by the jungle. The audience was not only entertained but involved, with questions that sparked discussion about the ego and motivations of an explorer, the preconceptions surrounding building materials, the current thinking about the demise of El Dorado, and of course, the bugs. Perhaps the favorite bug of the evening was the "eye-licker" bee, which according to Mr. Grann will fly right into the pupil of an unsuspecting eyeball.

The David Grann presentation was the final chapter in a series of three authors who reached across the breadth of the Granby population. Mr. Grann spent time earlier that day speaking with approximately 60 English students at Granby Memorial High School. Linda Touchette, English teacher, noted "... it was wonderful to observe students riveted to their seats as David told his stories and answered their questions with clarity and honesty. He also reinforced the precision, hard work, dedication, and impeccable research needed to transform one's creative muse into a reality."



The Writers' Café series began with Granby resident, award winning sports journalist and author Steve Rushin , who on October 1 met with high school journalism students prior to the evening presentation which centered around his newly released work of fiction, The Pint Man. The crowd took Mr. Rushin's 20 year journalism career into consideration during the Q&A portion of the evening, with topics ranging from Tiger Woods to baseball , steroids to candid impersonations of the national and world leaders

that have rubbed his elbows, to the advice that he would give to any aspiring writer, which was “..Read. Read all you can.” This funny presentation left those who attended smiling.

On October 14 children's author Tony Abbott, author of over 80 books including the “Secrets of Droon” series, took to the stages when he met with students at Granby Memorial Middle School, Kelly Lane and Wells Road Intermediate Schools. He ended his day with a book signing and further Q&A at the Granby Youth and Senior Center when over 100 children and their parents visited with the author and took the



opportunity on a one on one basis to ask their burning questions about writing, being a writer, favorite characters, and where to look for inspiration. The smiles and the books clutched in excited hands proved that Granby is home to readers of wild imaginations and creative aspirations.

The GEF estimates that 1000 people participated throughout the course of the literary series. It was only able to reach so many with the help of committed presenting sponsor GoodWorks Insurance, and the additional sponsorship of Lost Acres Orchard, Windsor Federal Savings Bank, and the Kevorkian Family. The GEF would also like to extend sincere thanks to Starbucks, Edward Jones, Granby Pharmacy, Granby Public Schools, and Alan Addley, Linda Powell and Ruth Ann Lobo. Lastly, the GEF would like to thank series co-Chairs Janice Stingle and Deb Ranicar for their tireless efforts to bring this series to the readers of Granby, and the many GEF volunteers who gave of their time and energy to assist.

If you would like to learn more about the GEF, please visit www.granbyeducationfoundation.org.