

For immediate release

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Author and illustrator regales families with stories of art and adventure

Birmingham, Michigan – April 24, 2008 – Rosalyn Schanzer has made some new fans. Grace and Kathleen Sleder grabbed seats in the front row to hear Schanzer, a nationally acclaimed author and illustrator, discuss her art at the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center on Wednesday evening.

Both mother and daughter first encountered Schanzer at a reading she gave at West Maple Elementary School earlier in the week, a part of the Authors and Artists in Residence program made possible by the Birmingham Education Foundation. “She was amazing,” said Kathleen Sleder. “She had all these first graders wearing fake mustaches and singing. They had a ball.” The book Schanzer presented to the first graders, *On the Chisholm Trail*, was based on a traditional cowboy song.

Grace Sleder, a third grader, said *How Ben Franklin Stole the Lightning* was her favorite book. “I really like the pictures because they showed his inventions, like the electric bottle.”

Schanzer likened the inclusion of period details like the electric bottle in the Ben Franklin book to that of a set designer placing the right vintage lamp on a movie set. In fact, Schanzer said her creative process is similar to that of movie making, except she takes on every role, from writing the story to costume design to casting her characters.

Research takes the most time, said Schanzer, and it’s clear from her illustrations that she doesn’t skimp on it. For her forthcoming book, *What Darwin Saw*, she traveled to the Galapagos Islands to take photographs of the landscape. She’ll use them to authentically recreate everything from plants to animals to insects. For her book on the California Gold Rush, she read the journals of people who had taken part in the frenzy for gold as primary sources.

A prolific illustrator, Schanzer went to work for Hallmark after graduating from college with a fine arts degree. She said it was at Hallmark, surrounded by so many talented people, that she truly honed her art. Since then she’s written and illustrated fourteen of her own books and illustrated many more.

Schanzer credits an editor at National Geographic’s trade imprint for steering her toward real live adventurers and explorers as a topic. Her historically accurate, non fiction titles can take as long as two years to complete and her lively, detailed illustrations reflect that dedication. She uses a variety of medium in her work, from acrylic on canvas to painting on paper and even on wood as she did in her story about cowboys and the old west.

At the end of the presentation, Schanzer signed books for the students present. Amy Klezek another new fan from West Maple watched solemnly as Schanzer topped off her signature with an illustration of a sailing ship. As Schanzer’s fans waited in line, many popped open the sketch pads they’d each received and, inspired by what they heard, began to draw.

This event, from complimentary sketch pads to dessert reception, as well as Schanzer's presentations to nine schools was organized by the Birmingham Education Foundation (BEF) and the Birmingham Public Schools Library Media Department. The BEF fund the Author & Artist in Residence annually to bring world class writers and illustrators into district schools. To find out more about Schanzer and her books, visit www.rosalynschanzer.com.

The Birmingham Education Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to enhance learning for all students in the Birmingham Public Schools. Since its inception in 1993, the Foundation has provided privately raised funds to support innovation and excellence in the areas of Academics, Arts and Athletics.