

Stephanie Tolan

- Visiting Victoria in April 2008



Author of fiction for adolescents and gifted-education expert, Stephanie Tolan, will be visiting Victoria from North Carolina in April this year. She will be giving workshops, bookchats and lectures for parents, educators and young writers as part of a tour to scenic places in Victoria which Stephanie is looking forward to as “the experience of a lifetime.”

Winner of numerous literary awards, including the prestigious Christopher Award for her new book, *Listen!*, she has specialised in writing books which explore the sensitivities of adolescence. Stephanie will be giving a Bookchat on *Surviving the Applewhites* at Belgrave Library on Wednesday 9 April. This book features a home educating family.

She will also give a workshop for a small group of teenagers with a gift and passion for writing and a workshop for parents of gifted students at Dromkeen, Riddells Creek on Monday 7 April.

Stephanie Tolan’s article *Is it a cheetah?* has been translated into over 40 languages. It has made the cheetah an analogy for gifted students all over the world and has become the logo of many groups working on behalf of gifted children. It has also been a powerful symbol to generate networks devoted to the conservation of the cheetah.

Stephanie will be presenting *The Cheetah Analogy* at The Savannah Centre, Werribee Open Range Zoo on Tuesday 8 April.

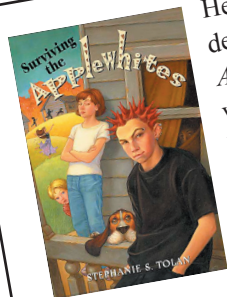
Stephanie Tolan currently lives on a little lake in a big woods in Charlotte, North Carolina with her husband (Bob), two dogs (Coyote and Samantha), Puck, the golden tabby cat, two fish (Blanche and Noir) and plenty of outdoor creatures, enlivened as often as possible by visits from small grandson, Max.

Like so many writers Stephanie’s interest in books and in writing goes right back to her own childhood: “...that joy in reading made me want to be a writer, and from the time that I was nine years old, I never doubted that I would be one.”

Stephanie Tolan’s work challenges traditional thinking and practice. In November 2006 she gave a mini-keynote speech to the NAGC Convention titled *Education for a New Millennium: Recognising Whole Mind*. The program abstract read: “Essential change often requires a shift in perspective that takes us out of our comfort zone. For most of us the word “mind” is synonymous with intellect. But the human mind is far more than that. Medicine is beginning to explore mind/body systems and recent studies have shown thought and emotion to be inextricably entwined. If we wish to prepare the kids we live and work with for meaningful participation in a world we cannot yet foresee, we must move beyond the limits of our current view of mind.”

Stephanie has realised from the feedback of many grateful readers that she has a role as a “story healer” whose work breaks down the isolation and negativity many people feel and helps to heal the stories that they are telling themselves about their lives.

So it is immensely exciting to learn that she has agreed to come to Australia, to work with parents, teachers and young writers – it promises to be a very special time!



Here’s how the *US School Library Journal* described Stephanie’s novel *Surviving the Applewhites* about a home educating family which won the prestigious Newbery Honor Book Award...

“ In this laugh-out-loud novel, a young teen on the fast track to the juvenile detention center suddenly finds himself living in rural North Carolina with the outrageously eccentric Applewhite clan. Jake Semple, 13, has been expelled from a long line of schools before coming to the Applewhites to be home-schooled. This extended family forms what a visiting reporter christens an “artistic dynasty,” with various creative endeavours absorbing the adults’ time and attention. Jake is left largely to his own devices, since the family doesn’t believe in telling their charges what or when to study. He develops a loyal following consisting of an active four-year-old and an overweight basset hound, and his transformation is complete once he becomes enmeshed in the family’s production of *The Sound of Music*... Running beneath the narrative that gently pokes fun at everything from sculpture to TV documentaries, though, is also the story of a boy allowing himself to belong and begin to discover his own potential. This has terrific booktalk and read-aloud potential, and will help fill the need for humorous contemporary fiction. ”

Stephanie Tolan will be hosted in Australia by GIFTED RESOURCES.

You can find all the details of Stephanie’s tour on the GIFTED RESOURCES website www.giftedresources.org
For more about Stephanie herself, see her website, www.stephanietolan.com