



The Village School's Children's Book of the Month



'The Big Night for Salamanders' By Sarah Lamstein



Book reviewed by Katrina Walton, Village School K-1 science teacher

My copy of this book is well worn. I read it to our kindergarten and first grade science classes every spring when the peepers are singing and vernal pools are brimming. Salamanders and frogs alike make their way to vernal pools during the first good warm rain of spring, back to where they were born. This is what is referred to as 'The Big Night.' This takes place around mid-April in the North Quabbin region.

What's wonderful about this book is that it's told from a young boy's perspective. Every year, the boy anticipates this night when salamanders travel through their first heavy rain of spring. Flashlight in hand, he is prepared to watch the small animals make their journey. He does his part to help them cross the road safely. As we read, we share the wonder and innocence of a curious young observer.

"The Big Night" is educational as well as beautiful to look at with its rich bold illustrations, created by Carol Benioff. The book also includes annotations, an index, a glossary and detailed information about the life cycle of the spotted salamander and vernal pools. This book will encourage children to wonder about amphibians and maybe they too will anticipate this important night for salamanders.

"The Big Night" is a lovely read-aloud for children ages 4 to 8, and fun for ages 7 to 12 to read on their own.

You can meet the author Sarah Lamstein and other children's books authors at the Central Mass. Children's Book Festival on Saturday, Nov. 12, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Mount Wachusett Community College. For more information about the Book Festival, go to www.centralmasschildrensbookfestival.org.