



May, 2013

Dear Readers of Maple Leaf,

I am unsqueakably happy to hear that you are reading *THE WORLD ACCORDING TO HUMPHREY* for your One School, One Book event. I hope you have as much fun reading it as I did writing it!

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO HUMPHREY was my first middle grade novel. It was inspired when I was in my son's science classroom where the walls were lined with cages and tanks for all kinds of animals. They even had a boa constrictor! I remember thinking, "I wonder what these animals see and hear in the classroom?" I thought it would be fun to write a book looking at a classroom through the eyes of an animal. That's how Humphrey was born.

The best part of being a writer is the chance to see the world through other people's eyes, or, in Humphrey's case, through the eyes of a hamster! We may be different species, but Humphrey is quite a bit like me: easily excitable, longing to be helpful, (though I'm not nearly as successful at it as he is), and VERY-VERY-VERY curious!

There are nine books now following Humphrey through his first year in Room 26 and beyond: *THE WORLD ACCORDING TO HUMPHREY*, *FRIENDSHIP ACCORDING TO HUMPHREY*, *TROUBLE ACCORDING TO HUMPHREY*, *SURPRISES ACCORDING TO HUMPHREY*, *ADVENTURE ACCORDING TO HUMPHREY*, *SUMMER ACCORDING TO HUMPHREY*, *SCHOOL DAYS ACCORDING TO HUMPHREY*, *MYSTERIES ACCORDING TO HUMPHREY* and *WINTER ACCORDING TO HUMPHREY*.

I've just finished book 10, which will be out next year. If you want more info on me and the books – and HUMPHREY – please visit my website at www.bettybirney.com. Humphrey even has a Facebook page you can *Like*!

I'm sorry I can't get to Ohio and meet you in person, but we are still connected through the pages of a book – and that's the real reward of writing for me.

HAPPY-HAPPY-HAPPY reading!