

Interview with Lisa Riebe, author of the *Pond Punkies* series.

Q: Did you always want to be an author?

A: No. Actually, what I really wanted to be was an inventor. I was always trying to invent something.

Q: How did you come up with the idea for *Pond Punkies*?

A: Once my son was old enough, he caught the inventing bug. We would sit around trying to think of things to invent. One day while sitting around our pond in the backyard, my friend Sue, my son, and I came up with the idea for a toy. Not just any toy. It had to be a toy related to ponds. It would be a pond punkie action figure.

I decided no one would want to play with the pond punkie action figure if they didn't know anything about pond punkies. I wanted to write a book showing where the pond punkies came from, but also try to pull in the younger reluctant boy readers.

Q: Why would a reluctant reader choose *Pond Punkies*?

A: Because it's exciting! No, really it's an awesome book for the struggling reader. They tend to get frustrated with too many words on the page. Intimidation sets in and they close the book. The *Pond Punkies*' series are intentionally printed in a larger font and to really capture the reluctant reader's attention, there are eighteen to twenty full page illustrations in each book! It doesn't get much better than that.

Q: How long did it take you to write the first book?

A: From the time we came up with the idea for pond punkies until the time the book came out in print, it was six years

Q: What are you working on now?

A: I'm working on new pond punkie books. There are three in the current series, but I feel a prequel brewing within me!

Q: Are you a full-time writer?

A: No. I'm a full time jack of all trades. I'm a homemaker and substitute teacher by day, writer by night, mother to a teenage son, and foster parent to a parakeet we found in the backyard – any takers?

Q: Will *Pond Punkies* ever be a movie or a TV cartoon?

A: Wow! I like your thinking. That would be my goal. I can hear the theme song now.

Q: Are any of the characters in your book a good role model?

A: Yes. Blaze, the main character is a good role model. Maybe not at first, but he comes to realize he has to make some pretty important decisions that don't just affect him, but everyone around him. He makes mistakes and bad decisions just like any other young boy.

Q: Do you do school visits?

A: Yes. I really love meeting my readers. All the information about author visits can be found on my website at www.PondPunkies.com.

Q: Do you do book signings?

A: Yes. I occasionally visit bookstores. It would be great for you to come out and meet me!

Q: Did you share *Pond Punkies* with any of the students when you were substitute teaching?

A: Yes and then I didn't do that anymore. You have to realize these are elementary grade students and once you get them off track, it's really difficult to get them back on track. Right now I try to sub where they don't know me. Otherwise, the students want to talk about Pond Punkies.

Q: Why do you think people, and children especially, are so drawn to science fiction?

A: If I think back to when I was a kid all I wanted to do was escape reality. I wanted to go on adventures and do amazing things. I wanted to Travel to places that no one has ever been to before. Of course I wasn't able to do those things unless I was reading a book. Times are tough for a lot of children and if just for an hour or so they can pretend to be someone else and travel to another world, then so be it.

Q: Tell me something people don't know about you.

A: I love to fossil hunt. There's nothing like the thrill of cracking open a fossil and finding a treasure hidden inside!