

# Book Fair Author Spotlight On...



## Mike Leonetti

### Wendel and the Great One

#### Q What inspires you to write?

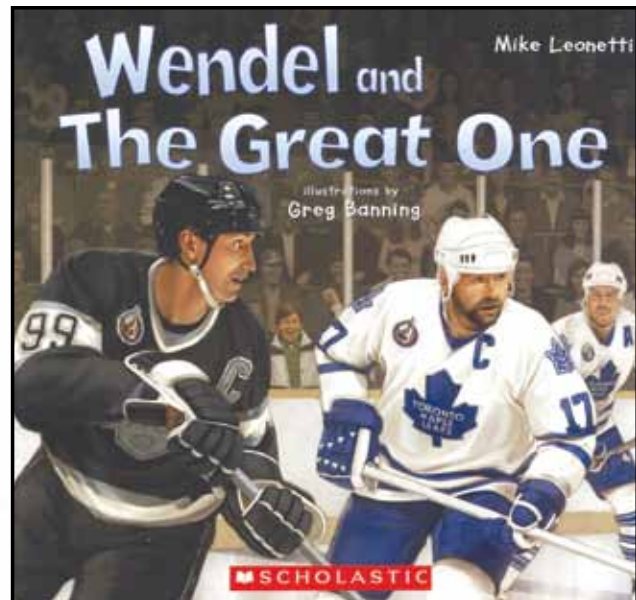
**A** Writing is something that I have always enjoyed since the year I was in Grade 3. I had a very good teacher that year who encouraged me to be creative in storytelling, and I soon realized I could do pretty well. As I got older, I always received good feedback about my writing – mostly from teachers – which inspired me to keep doing more.

Once I became a published author for the first time, I really liked the idea that I could produce a book hockey fans enjoyed. I know hockey fans (young and old) are the group who buy my books, and they inspire me to keep going and get more written about the great game of hockey.

What I do as a writer does not feel like a job but much more like a joy that keeps me going as well!

#### Q What advice do you have for young writers?

**A** I would tell any young person to read as much as possible. You learn so much from others, and their works help you to decide what you like and what you don't like, especially in terms of style and approach.



It is also important to get as much feedback from others (such as teachers, parents, siblings and friends) as possible. Show them your creative writing and listen carefully to what they say. You might also try writing reports on events that happen in your school, community, city or country as a good way to practice your writing skills.

#### Q What was your favourite book when you were growing up?

**A** Just about any hockey book would be on my list. When I was young there were not nearly as many hockey books available as there are today, but I loved to read about my favourite team: the Toronto Maple Leafs. Hockey biographies on players like Maurice Richard, Gordie Howe, Bobby Orr and Bobby Hull were also books I loved to read as I was growing up.

When I wasn't reading a hockey book, I generally liked to read any good fiction novel or something about the space program that led to man landing on the moon.

I also liked *The Cat in the Hat* and *Curious George* from my childhood days.

**Q** What do you like to do when you're not writing?

**A** I enjoy being with my family the most (my wife, Maria, is a school teacher) and watching my son, David, play hockey. I also enjoy most sports (especially football and baseball) and am an avid walker – which is great exercise.

**Q** What has been the biggest achievement of your career so far?

**A** If we are talking about my writing career, I would say it is that I am able to write and comment on the National Hockey League. Growing up, I dreamed of playing for the Maple Leafs, and to be able to write about the team now is still a big thrill. Being involved in hockey is the biggest achievement I could ever have imagined; being able to do it is a great feeling for me.

**Q** Which hockey star from the past or present would you most like to meet, and why?

**A** My hero growing up was Dave Keon of the Maple Leafs. I had the pleasure of meeting him for an interview a number of years ago. I have had the opportunity to talk to or meet many great players from the past over the years I have been writing, and I can tell you almost all of them (such as former Leaf captain, Darryl Sittler) were a great pleasure to work with as I completed stories, articles and books.

Two people I'd like to meet would be Bobby Orr from the past, and Sidney Crosby from the present. Both are great superstars and high achievers. I find such people to be great influences on me, and I think we can all learn something valuable from these very accomplished athletes.

