Battle draws powerful ally

By Daily Courier Staff

The annual Battle of the Books in the Central Okanagan has become so renowned that B.C. Lt.-Gov. Steven L. Point will attend this year.

The fifth annual battle, co-ordinated by the Central Okanagan Teacher-Librarians Association (COTLA), will involve more than 400 students from 16 schools.

"The district Battle of the Books has proven to be a terrific motivator that encourages students to improve their reading skills and celebrate their reading accomplishments," said Brenda Catherall, COTLA president and teacher-librarian at Rose Valley school.

"The competition provides structure, purpose, motivation and teamwork to what is usually a solitary pastime. As teacher-librarians, we know the value of reading for pleasure and we have been very happy with the feedback from students, teachers and parents about the books on their reading lists."

In the early fall, teacher-librarians at each school launch clubs that offer activities to support student reading. Book lists, each with 12 titles, are chosen for three levels: Grades 3-4, 5 and 6-7.

The books, at least half written by Canadians, cover a variety of subject areas, plots, settings and styles, and are meant to appeal equally to boys and girls.

Most schools hold their own Battle of the Books or similar event to choose a team for the district competition. This year, the district battle is at 9:55 a.m. today at Rose Valley Elementary.

Teams will be asked 30 questions based on the books they have read and they have just 25 seconds to agree on their answer. The team with the most correct answers is the winner. "Battles are usually very close; tie-breakers are common and they are very exciting to watch," said Catherall.

The top teams will be awarded medals and gift certificates to a local book store. Each student participant will receive a book prize and a certificate. Point will present the awards and talk to students about his role as lieutenant-governor and the importance of literacy.