



Featured Speaker Laura Backman *Author, Lemon the Duck*

Laura Backman grew up in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, in a household that included a number of farm ducks. In 2006, Laura decided her kindergarten class, also in Portsmouth, could undertake a project of hatching duck eggs in an incubator in the classroom while studying oviparous animals. A teacher for over eight years in Portsmouth, Ms. Backman was prepared for most school projects, but this one would prove different.

As the eggs hatched, one little duckling named Lemon had obvious physical challenges. Unable to stand or keep her balance, Lemon's human classmates sought ways to assist her. The book is a fictionalized account of Ms. Backman and her class's quest for Lemon's inclusion in her human and duck families. Published by Lobster Press, the book has gone into its second printing in both hard and soft cover versions.

While Lemon's siblings went to different homes soon after hatching, Lemon has been adopted by Ms. Backman and spends her days as a classroom helper, traveling around to book signings and apparently taking the role of the family pet that gets to sleep on the owner's bed. Lemon and Ms. Backman are also completing the courses and requirements for Lemon to be a therapy duck.

Lemon the Duck's editorial director, Meghan Nolan, says about the book "The messages were really nice for kids, about acceptance and embracing differences. We thought it was a fantastic inspiration story.."

Now a Reading Specialist in the Portsmouth School system, Ms. Backman and her family celebrated Lemon's third birthday on April 11th.