

# Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for  
Library Service to Children

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**ALSC**  
Association for Library Service to Children

2013 Awards Speeches  
Early Literacy: In Concept and Practice  
Everyday Advocacy: Just What Is It?

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## NOTES

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- 2** Editor's Note  
Sharon Verbeten
- 3** Outgoing President's Message  
Highlights, Thank-Yous, and Looking  
Forward  
Carolyn S. Brodie
- 5** Incoming President's Message  
Making Friends, Influencing People  
*The Power of Partnerships*  
Starr LaTronica

## FEATURES

---

### Award Acceptance Speeches

- 6** Newbery Medal  
*"You, My Friend, Have Potential"*  
Katherine Applegate
- 10** Caldecott Medal  
*They Read My Book!* Jon Klassen
- 13** Batchelder Award  
*A Tale of Two Cities* Heather Alexander
- 14** Geisel Award  
*Lighting Up Kids' Eyes* Ethan Long
- 15** Robert F. Sibert Medal  
*Too Many Stories* Steve Sheinkin
- 16** Andrew Carnegie Medal  
*Respecting Our Environment* Katja Torneman
- 18** Wilder Award  
*A Warm "Thanks to You"* Katherine Paterson
- 20** Repeat after Me!  
*Repetition and Early Literacy Development*  
Betsy Diamant-Cohen, Tess Prendergast, and Christy Estrovitz
- 25** Every Child Ready to Read  
*Engaging Parents, Reenergizing Librarians*  
Dorothy Stoltz

- 27** The B.E.A.R. Essentials  
*Designing a Fun Literacy Challenge Any Time  
of Year*  
Ellen Jepson
- 29** ✦ An Inconvenient Truth  
*The Underground Railroad and Quilts in  
Children's Picturebooks*  
Yolanda Hood
- 35** Building Bridges for Global  
Understanding  
*Cultural Literature Collection Development  
and Programming*  
Judi Moreillon
- 39** Tea for Two Hundred?  
*Hosting a Fairy Tea Party at Your Library*  
Carla Morris
- 44** Draw and Write What You Know  
*Robert McCloskey's Ohio*  
Stephanie Bange and Gratia Banta
- 47** Who Wants to Host an Arbuthnot  
Lecture?  
*The Long Road of Planning, Preparedness,  
and Pride behind the Scenes*  
Brenda Dales
- 54** The Producer of "Fun"  
*A Chat with the Whimsical Sandra Boynton*  
Erin F. Reilly-Sanders

## DEPARTMENTS

---

- 12** Call for Referees
- 57** EVERYDAY ADVOCACY  
Ten Things You Can Do Today to Learn,  
Share, and Make a Difference  
Jenna Nemeč-Loise
- 60** ALSC News
- 63** Index to Advertisers
- 64** The Last Word  
Mara Houdyshell



## Editor's Note

By Sharon Verbeten

It was the best of times...OK, let's face it—that's all there is to say about the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago in June. It may be trite, but it's true.

Of the 11 years I've been attending ALA conferences, this ranks up there as one of my favorites—for many reasons. Here are just a few of the highlights for me:

- Being able to share the conference experience with three of my friends—all of whom were attending their first ALA conference—and to see and hear the convention with a fresh perspective.
- Meeting Caldecott Medal winner Jon Klassen's lovely family at the exhibit hall during his signing; his parents were genuine and sweet in talking about their son's growth as an artist.
- Getting a backpack full of books signed for my daughter—her collection of autographed first editions is growing and now includes books signed by Peter Brown, Loren Long, Lois Ehlert, and Jon Klassen.
- Getting a good laugh, later, at one of my (private) banquet faux pas: Upon meeting an author who introduced himself only as "Christopher," I went on to chat with him excitedly—all the time believing he was Christopher Paul Curtis, when he was actually Christopher Myers (never mind that the two are about 30 years apart in age!).
- Feeling very Calde-cocky after drinking my first Calde-cocktail and strolling into this foursome—an entourage of Kadir Nelson, David Diaz, Chris Raschka, and Christopher Myers (see above!)—and saying, "Look at this awesome quartet of talent!" They were all very gracious, and I tried to be despite my nerves!
- Tearing up at the iconic Katherine Paterson's very touching Laura Ingalls Wilder Award acceptance speech about the "shadows" of the women who have helped her in her award-winning more than 40 years in publishing.
- Sharing a moment of embarrassment when I asked a woman why I recognized her name; when I explained who I was, she said I had rejected an article submission for the journal several years earlier.
- Finally, exhaling after the fabulous Caldecott 75th anniversary celebration on banquet night—tuxes, ball gowns, silly garb, Calde-cocktails, old friends, new friends, and a million-calorie chocolate bomb dessert...and an evening that didn't end until morning.

I know everyone isn't able to attend ALA conferences—for many reasons—but I hope that sharing some of these memories will give you an idea of what it's like to be there. Hope to see at least some of you in Philly in January. &

# Children & Libraries

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# Outgoing President's ALSC Message

Carolyn S. Brodie  
ALSC President, 2012-13  
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*Carolyn S. Brodie, PhD, is Professor at Kent State (OH) University School of Library and Information Science and Director of the Reinberger Children's Library Center & Marantz Picturebook Collection at KSU.*

## Highlights, Thank-Yous, and Looking Forward

I am truly amazed at all that has transpired this past year due to the collective good work of our membership. We have a truly vibrant organization made possible by enthusiastic, talented, energetic, and dedicated members.

In this column, I would like to thank all of you who made our events, programs, initiatives, and partnerships such great successes this past year. I will include just a few highlights here.

- The ALSC board has worked to align activities related to the ALSC Strategic Plan, 2012-2017, with a special ALSC Board Task Force working on our

"Access" goal areas. We're moving forward!

- In 2011, ALSC Immediate Past-President Mary Fellows initiated the quarterly ALSC Community Forums. We continued those this past year with discussion topics on the ALSC dues adjustment, advocacy, e-books, and the 75th anniversary of the Caldecott Medal. Mary also initiated a monthly post from the ALSC president on the ALSC blog; the eleven blog messages I have posted thus far have been on a range of topics.
- Our social media connections continue to thrive and grow through Twitter and Facebook. And our ALSC board made the decision to increase the frequency of *Children and Libraries*, beginning next year. All of our communication channels continue to keep our membership aware of ALSC initiatives, continuing education opportunities, ways to get involved, and professional issues and information.

- We hosted inspirational speakers at the Leadership and ALSC meetings held during Annual Conference and the Midwinter Meeting. Just before I took office in Anaheim, California, we hosted Dr. David Lankes, Virtual Dave blogger and professor at Syracuse University, who shared ideas for advocacy and working within our communities. His presentation can be found at <http://quartz.syr.edu/blog/?p=1657>. More recently Sue Polanka, No Shelf Required blogger from Wright State University, provided a session on children and e-books. Her presentation (and a handout) can be found on the ALSC Professional Tools page at [www.ala.org/alsc/professional-tools](http://www.ala.org/alsc/professional-tools), scroll down to Ebooks and Digital Content.
- Last fall began with a successful, informative, and exciting ALSC Institute in Indianapolis. The event was full of great programs, wonderful networking events, and the opportunity to meet and hear many children's book authors and illustrators. It was indeed a highlight of the year. Oakland, California, will be the site for the 2014 Institute, with Nina Lindsay serving as planning committee chair. I hope to see all of you there.
- We have all enjoyed the many opportunities to join in the 75th Caldecott anniversary celebration that the anniversary task force planned this year. This memorable year of festivities concluded with the events at the 2013 Annual Conference in Chicago, including a sold-out pre-conference, the Newbery-Caldecott-Wilder Banquet, and the Charlemae Rollins President's Program.
- In May, through the efforts of the ALSC Advocacy Website Task Force and the excellent work of ALSC Program Officer Laura Schulte-Cooper, the Everyday Advocacy website launched at [www.ala.org/everyday-advocacy](http://www.ala.org/everyday-advocacy). Thanks to Mary Fellows for her leadership on this effort, which was her idea; it will serve as a part of her leadership legacy to the association. This resource will benefit all of those working on behalf of children and libraries.

### 365 Thank-Yous (and many more . . .)

A couple years back, I picked up a book about a gentleman who sent a thank-you note to someone each day of a particular year. After reading his story, I have made a concerted effort to share my thanks with others every single day for things both big and small.

This practice has truly made my life richer and more meaningful just by always sharing those words with others. In the classes I have taught at Kent State, I ask my students to often and always thank their families and supporters. As they go through school, many of our students have family members, friends, and coworkers who pick up the slack to make it possible for them to move forward with their career goals.

First, I'd like to thank *all* 4,200-plus members of our association for working hard to move the goals defined in our 2012–2017 strategic plan forward. Thanks to every single ALSC member for renewing your membership every year and for staying involved at national, state, and local levels to create a better future for children through libraries. Your dedication and devotion makes a difference in the daily lives of so many and certainly is at the heart of ALSC. *Thank you!*

Thank you to the ALSC board for your leadership. The Executive Committee includes Immediate Past-President Mary Fellows, President-Elect Starr LaTronica, Fiscal Officer Tali Balas, and Division Councilor Andrew Medlar as well as our 2012–13 ALSC board members Rita Auerbach, Ernie Cox, Lisa Von Drasek, Nina Lindsay, Jaime Campbell Naidoo, Michael Santangelo, Megan Schliesman, and Jan Watkins. Each played a special leadership role in moving the association forward through meetings, conversations, and decisions that were conducted in a professional environment as we chart our course with the guidance of the ALSC strategic plan.

A very special thank you to Mary Fellows for all of the generous advice and also for being at my elbow this past year during meetings. And thanks very much to Starr LaTronica, who has

the perfect name and has been such a joy to work with these last months. *Thank you!*

ALSC is so very fortunate to have Aimee Strittmatter, with her grace and a very deep knowledge of the association, and the staff members aligned with particular projects, including Marsha Burgess, Joanna Ison, Caroline Jewell, Jenny Najduch, Dan Rude, and Laura Schulte-Cooper. Our work is supported by each member of the dedicated staff. Each time I needed to reach out to one of our staff, there was an immediate and sincere desire to help. *Thank you!*

Our Priority Group Consultants play a special organizational and leadership role with our committee chairs. We were fortunate to have this stellar group of ALSC members who each agreed to serve: Barbara Klipper (Child Advocacy), Julie Roach (Evaluation of Media), Carol Doll (Professional Awards and Scholarships), Carol Phillips (Organizational Support), Judy Zuckerman (Awards), Laurina Cashin (Partnerships), and Kay Weisman (Professional Development). *Thank you!*

Thanks to all the committee chairs who agreed to either renew their appointment or to serve for the first time when I made calls to them in spring 2012. I was able to reach most of them by phone and talk to them personally; it was so rewarding to hear over and over from them of their commitment to ALSC and to our profession. It has been great to meet so many of you and spend a bit of time at your table in Seattle during all-membership meeting time. *Thank you!*

Thanks to the process committee members and appointed award committee members from this past year for serving the profession through your work. Thank you for completing and sending in the ALSC volunteer form so I knew to call on those who were willing to serve. Thank you for saying “yes” to your appointment and especially thank you if it wasn't your first or second choice. We needed you then and we need you now. ALSC is a membership-driven association; we count on you! The work turned out by our committees is phenomenal. Just one the countless examples of the broad reach of committee work is our

ALSC Summer Reading List (available at [www.ala.org/alsc/compubs/booklists/summerreadinglist](http://www.ala.org/alsc/compubs/booklists/summerreadinglist)), which is compiled by our ALSC Quicklists Consulting and School-Age Programs and Services Committees. I was honored to distribute this list electronically through Ohio discussion lists and received back so many grateful notes from librarians across the state. *Thank you!*

And a very special thank you to the ALSC past-presidents who shared their advice with me at various times during the past year (either big or small); it was all so very valuable. Many of them stepped in from the first day of my election in May 2011 with congratulations, so it seems fitting that I would conclude this column with a thank you to all of those who came before me. Their support and encouraging words have been much appreciated over this last, quickly paced year. Past-President Gretchen Wronka (2004–05) told me early on that the year would go by so very fast, and she was so right. Some of the most memorable days of my life were those I spent with some of our past-presidents; we share a special connection that I will never forget. In spring 2012, I joined three ALSC past-presidents at the ALSC office looking through photographs for the 75th Caldecott anniversary scrapbook. Thanks to Past Presidents Peggy Sullivan (1976–77), Jane Botham (1986–87), KT Horning (2006–07), as well as former ALSC Executive Director Diane Foote. I am so grateful to them all for such lovely memories. *Thank you!*

### Looking Forward

I graduated from high school as a member of the 1976 bicentennial class in England, Arkansas. Our class motto was, “Look backward with pride, look forward with hope.” I've thought about that motto many times this past year. I certainly believe that we can apply that phrase to all that our association has accomplished while thinking about all the possibilities in the future of ALSC. We have a lot of great days behind us and many of the best days still lie ahead.

continued on page 9



# Incoming President's ALSC Message

Starr LaTronica  
ALSC President, 2013–14  
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*ALSC Vice-President/President-Elect Starr LaTronica is the Youth Services/Outreach Manager for the Four County Library System in New York State.*

## *Making Friends, Influencing People The Power of Partnerships*

You and I both know that no one subverts the stereotype of the shy, quiet librarian better than an ALSC member. Given a dynamic picturebook and a group of lively preschoolers, we can instigate a wild rumpus in no time.

We are loud and we are oh so proud of what we do, and we seize every opportunity to extol the importance of libraries in the social, emotional, educational, and cultural development of children.

It just stands to reason, then, that youth services librarians are at the forefront of creative, clever, and concerted library advocacy efforts across the country. Our activities range from providing exemplary service to riding public transportation in proactive pursuit of bringing new families to the library.

Each time we engage in discourse about the library, virtually or in person, we are

advocating. Our collective conversation elevates the visibility of library services and the awareness of what we do.

ALSC recognizes the commitment of its members to this endeavor, adopting advocacy as one of three goals in its current strategic plan. We began to explore effective tactics of increasing advocacy last fall via community forums and a discussion on the ALSC-L electronic discussion list (archived at <http://lists.ala.org/www/arc/alsc-l/2012-12/thrd1.html>).

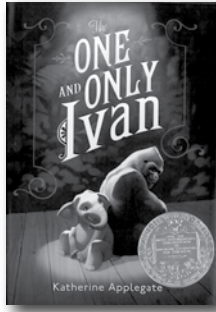
I was inspired and impressed, as always, with the dynamic ideas and innovations of the ALSC members who contributed. Immediate Past-President Mary Fellows chaired a task force that built upon the momentum initiated in those sessions by establishing a website to collect the stories and strategies of advocates for library services to youth ([www.ala.org/everyday-advocacy](http://www.ala.org/everyday-advocacy)).

*“Each time we engage in discourse about the library, virtually or in person, we are advocating. Our collective conversation elevates the visibility of library services and the awareness of what we do.”*

In May, I joined then President Carolyn Brodie, Executive Director Aimee Strittmatter, and Advocacy and Legislation Chair Penny Markey in Washington DC, where we met with officials to emphasize the importance of library experiences in early childhood education and literacy development.

A critical component of our advocacy efforts is collaboration with others who serve children—educators, health

continued on page 17



# Newbery Medal Acceptance Speech

“You, My Friend, Have Potential”

*Katherine Applegate*



**Katherine Applegate** is the winner of the 2013 Newbery Medal for *The One and Only Ivan*, published by Harper, an imprint of HarperCollins Children's Books. Her acceptance speech was delivered at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Chicago on June 30, 2013.

There is a romantic moment, of sorts, in *The One and Only Ivan*, when Ivan, a gorilla who has been without the company of others of his own kind for almost three decades, finds himself sharing a quiet interlude with a female gorilla named Kinyani. “Is there anything sweeter than the touch of another,” he asks, “as she pulls a dead bug from your fur?”

Long before I wrote that bit of primate romance, I wrote another kind. As a matter of fact, I believe I can stand before you tonight and say, with some confidence, that I am the first Newbery medalist in history to have coauthored not one but two Harlequin Temptation romances. (The Temptation imprint—not to be confused with any of the so-called “sweet” imprints—was distinguished by a considerable amount of what Ivan would have called “face licking.”)

There are some amazingly talented writers in the romance genre.

I was not one of them.

In the interest of full disclosure, you should know that your 2013 Newbery medalist, in collaboration with her husband, planted redwoods like this in the literary forest:

Laura laced her fingers through his. “Time for night school.” Wordlessly she stationed him next to the water bed. “Lesson number one. A woman’s body is like a piano.”

Alex smiled roguishly, scalding her with his gaze. “Then you’re definitely a Steinway, baby.”

And so on.

I should probably note here that it’s way too late for you to reconsider your choice of medal winner.

Recently I saw a blog post that described me as a late-blooming, sprightly fifty-six-year-old. (You have no idea, by the way, how much comedic mileage your spouse can get out of a word like *sprightly*.) “Late-blooming” is perhaps not quite the right description, though.

I’ve been a working writer for quite a while, as it happens.

I was in college when I started to enjoy writing and to think I might even be able to string words together for a living. After graduating, among the words I effectively strung together were: Hello, my name is Katherine, and I’ll be your server tonight.

I didn’t like being a waiter, and I was, alas, an indifferent and incompetent one, but the alternative—writing—seemed like a terribly public way to fail. One night, however, after dropping a tray of strawberry margaritas on a man wearing a completely white suit, I decided to reconsider my options. I’d like to tell you that I was motivated solely by my love of language and passion for story, but the truth is, I was really tired of Top Ramen and one-ply toilet paper.

With my talented husband, Michael Grant, I began to write. People even paid us sometimes. And I did fail, but I learned, too. I learned that writing is excruciating. I also learned that writing is exhilarating.

Michael and I wrote together, we wrote individually, and we wrote a lot. After the romances, I was a ghostwriter for years. I ghosted so much I was positively ectoplasmic for a while. I wrote Sweet Valley Twins books, Little Mermaid and Aladdin and Mickey Mouse books, books about girls who loved horses and horses who loved girls. Eventually, Jean Feiwel at Scholastic took a chance on a concept we’d created called Animorphs, and it became a long-running, best-selling, middle-grade series. There were so many books in that series that eventually we, the former ghostwriters, found ourselves hiring ghostwriters.

So, “late-blooming?” I’m not sure. It’s quite fair to say that it took me awhile to locate my literary sea legs. After so many series books, I wanted to write a book with a beginning, a middle, and an end. I wanted to take risks with writing, to challenge myself. I wanted to find a unique voice (and eventually I did, even if it did belong to a gorilla).

Perhaps that’s why, on this evening of celebration, the epigraph in *The One*

and *Only Ivan*, long attributed to George Eliot, seems so apt: “It is never too late to be what you might have been.” It’s a sentiment, I think, that appeals to anyone who has ever dreamed a foolish, daring, it’s-never-too-late kind of dream. Which is to say: most of us.

And it’s why it’s especially gratifying to be here with you tonight, celebrating remarkable books like *Three Times Lucky*, *Splendors and Glooms*, and *Bomb*, and glorious illustrated books like *One*

husband.” At which point Steven asked me if there were any other life events I wanted to add. I assured him I was quite through.

With the Newbery come many delights, including champagne enough to float the *Queen Mary* and the joy of knowing your little book won’t be heading straight to that great remainders table in the sky anytime soon. But it wasn’t until I attended the wonderful children’s literature conference at Western Washington

little guilty about the 47 percent, but hey, I’d won the Newbery, people.

It’s a heady and joyous time, those weeks after the Newbery is announced, but eventually, reality sets in. You realize that someone still has to clean the litter box.

And that someone is you.

\* \* \* \* \*

If I had a dollar for every person who has come up to me this year and said, “You know, I really loved *The One and Only Ivan*, but I’ve always despised talking animal books,” I could buy—well, maybe a used Prius, anyway.

I loved animal books as a child, and if the animals talked to each other, or to humans, so much the better. One of the first books I remember my dad reading to me was *The Story of Doctor Dolittle*. When my second-grade teacher read *Charlotte’s Web* to my class, I was enchanted and heartbroken, in equal measure. That so many people were allergic to animal fantasies was news to me.

Interestingly, those people were always, without exception, adults. Children were willing to give me the benefit of the doubt. Where adults see problems, children see potential. First-person gorilla? Sure, why not?

*“I believe I can stand before you tonight and say, with some confidence, that I am the first Newbery medalist in history to have coauthored not one but two Harlequin Temptation romances. . . . I should probably note here that it’s way too late for you to reconsider your choice of medal winner.”*

*Cool Friend*, *Sleep like a Tiger*, *Creepy Carrots!*, *Extra Yarn*, *Green*, and *This Is Not My Hat*—and, of course, celebrating the amazing Katherine Paterson herself. E. B. White wrote in *Charlotte’s Web* that “it is deeply satisfying to win a prize in front of a lot of people,” but it’s even more satisfying when you get to share the stage with the creators of such brilliant and lovely books.

\* \* \* \* \*

I was in a hotel room in Richmond, Virginia, where I’d been celebrating my sister Martha’s fiftieth birthday, when I got *The Call*. We were supposed to fly home to California that morning, but my daughter, Julia, had a temperature, and I was Googling urgent-care clinics when the phone rang. I remember hearing Steven Engelfried say, “Newbery Medal,” and I think I blurted, “Are you sure?”

I did manage to remember Neil Gaiman’s tweet-heard-round-the-world and, with some difficulty, rein in my desire to echo his phrasing. I told the committee, “This is the most amazing thing that’s happened to me since the birth of my son and adopting my daughter.” Belatedly I added: “Oh, yeah, and marrying my

University, a few weeks after winning, that I realized the real, the ultimate, perk conferred by a Newbery Medal.

It was the middle of the day and there was a long line at the women’s restroom. (Clearly—just as an aside—the world needs more female architects.) When I got there, the line parted like the Red Sea and everyone said: Go ahead,

*“That so many people were allergic to animal fantasies was news to me . . . Interestingly, those people were always, without exception, adults. Children were willing to give me the benefit of the doubt. Where adults see problems, children see potential. First-person gorilla? Sure, why not?”*

you won the Newbery. To which I of course responded: I can’t do that. I’m a Democrat.

A couple of hours later, a similar scene unfolded. I was the next scheduled speaker, and time was short, and, well, let’s just say I exploited my power. I felt a

“You have to write the book that wants to be written,” said Madeleine L’Engle. “And if the book will be too difficult for grown-ups, then you write it for children.”

It’s easy for children to embrace animal characters, I think, because they’re kindred spirits: wild-hearted and possessed



of powers others don't fully appreciate—be they the hidden talons of the domesticated cat or the hidden imagination of the domesticated child. Both live in a world controlled by tall, erratically behaving humans who subscribe to arcane and random rules.

At its heart, of course, an animal fantasy is as much about humans as it is about animals—about the things we most fear and the things we most love, about pain and sadness, but also about redemption and hope. Stories about animals don't have to be sad, but many are, perhaps because they are so often about powerlessness. And certainly *The One and Only Ivan* has tragic moments. It was, after all, inspired by a dark and true story.

The real Ivan was shipped as a baby to a shopping mall in Tacoma, Washington, where he served as prop and punch line for twenty-seven years. I've talked to countless people who visited Ivan as children, and, to a person, they all remembered the pain they felt, watching this lonely, magnificent animal in his desolate cage, seemingly beyond help.

After *The One and Only Ivan* was published, a bookstore contacted me about a pending elementary school visit. One of the parents was worried about using Ivan. She hadn't read it (they never have, as librarians know better than anybody), but she gathered that it was sad, and might make some of the children cry.

The bookstore, to its credit, reassured her thusly: absolutely it will make them cry.

And, oh—by the way—that's a good thing.

We live in a world where children are bullied into despair, and even suicide; where armed guards in a school hallway are considered desirable; where libraries are padlocked because of budget cuts; where breakfasts and backpacks, for too many children, are unaffordable luxuries.

Children know all about sadness. We can't hide it from them. We can only teach them how to cope with its inevitability, and to harness their imaginations in the search for joy and wonder.

Nothing, nothing in the world, can do that better than a book.

In Ivan's story—both real and fictional—there is hope. During his years in the mall, the world changed, as it has a way of doing, and our understanding of the needs of animals in captivity grew. Eventually, Ivan was released to Zoo Atlanta, where he lived out his days. It wasn't the perfect answer—it was still, after all, a world with walls—but Ivan was surrounded by people who loved him, and grass and trees, and, most of all, other gorillas.

*“Children know all about sadness. We can't hide it from them. We can only teach them how to cope with its inevitability, and to harness their imaginations in the search for joy and wonder. . . . Nothing, nothing in the world, can do that better than a book.”*

So, no: not a perfect ending. But things aren't black and white in the world, and they shouldn't be in a children's novel, either. What makes children, at the end of the day, better people than the rest of us is that, despite everything, they're buoyant, unrepentant optimists.

\* \* \* \* \*

I've always thought that the best part of being a writer is getting fan letters, although I tend to feel a little guilty when I receive them. The letters are so sweet and effusive, so humbling, and the truth is, we writers are a sketchy bunch—we are, after all, navel-gazing, whiny,

full-grown adults who sit around in our sweatpants all day, talking to imaginary friends.

I particularly treasure this fan letter, which I shall read to you in its entirety:

*Dear KA Applegate. It's me again the huge fan. I wanted to know if you can send me some of your books and the dvd seasons of animorphs if it's not too much to ask because I don't wanna be a bother to ya. If anything you're my best friend in the whole wide world and I've never had any with your quality and imagination I mean I have a big imagination, too, just not that huge to imagine people turning into animals and alien slugs trying to rule earth.*

*You, my friend, have potential.*

*From your biggest fan*

“You, my friend, have potential.” I've been lucky enough to hear that many times in my own life, when I've needed most to hear it. How do you say thank you for something like that? “Humans have so many words, more than they truly need,” as Ivan says, and yet there don't seem to be enough.

Still, I will try. Thank you—

- To my dad, for his quiet courage and sly wit, and for tolerating a chaotic menagerie of pets, including an unremitting stream of baby gerbils.
- To my mom, for showing me that it really isn't ever too late to be what you might have been, when she went to art school after her four children were grown—and permanently rechristened the “ironing room” her “art room.”
- To my sisters, Martha and Lisa, my brother, Stu, and my dear friends Lisa and Suzanne, for their love, their patience, and their laughter.
- To John Schumacher and Colby Sharp and the Nerdy Book Club and all the many librarians and teachers who've enriched my life and the lives of their students.

- To my agent, Elena Mechlin, and my lawyer, Steve Sheppard, for making even contracts in triplicate entertaining.
- To Jean Feiwel, Liz Szabla, Dinah Stevenson, Jennifer Greene, and Elise Howard, for letting a middle-aged dog try some new tricks.
- To the HarperCollins crew for their skill and support, especially: Susan Katz, Kate Jackson, and Katherine Tegen; to Amy Ryan, Sarah Hoy, Renée Vera Cafiero, and Lucille Schneider for their amazing attention to every last detail; and to Laurel Symonds, Jenny Sheridan, Kathy Faber, Suzanne Daghlian, Lauren Flower, and Patty Rosati and her whole wonderful team for all the TLC.
- To *Ivan's* brilliant illustrator, Patricia Castelao, for bringing *Ivan* and his friends to life with such humor and grace.
- To my dear friend and editor, Anne Hoppe: Thank you for making *Ivan* the book it was meant to be. Anne loves words passionately. Anne loves books purely. *Ivan* would not be *Ivan* without her. There are so many wonderful writers in the world. I wish they could all have the chance to work with Anne Hoppe. She'd be very tired, granted. But they'd be better writers—and better people—because of it.
- To my amazing children: Thank you for reminding me what really matters and for keeping me humble. Julia, who has always ready with a comforting hug and the world's best sandwich, said, when I announced I was finally done with *Ivan*: "Oh, so you mean we exist again?" Jake, who has a passion for justice and an ear for truth, recently texted his sister, when she asked me a question about her English homework: "Sorry, Julia. Mom's only written poetic stuff. That's useless in the real world."
- To my husband, Michael Grant: Thank you for . . . everything. Thirty-four years ago, Michael knocked on my door to borrow a can opener, even though he already had one. He told me back then that we could approach our lives as comedy or tragedy. I'm glad we chose comedy. I've learned so much about writing from Michael, and even more about life. We've shared a long and crazy and wonderful history, and now we share this award . . . although, apparently, we still don't share litter box duty.
- To Steven Engelfried and the 2013 Newbery Committee, thank you for your dedication this past year, for heroically tolerating the bookshelves, the closets—and no doubt, the bathtubs—full of books to be read, the long meetings, the reading till the wee hours. That you love books wholeheartedly is quite evident. What may not be quite so evident is that most of you could probably use some new bookshelves.
- And finally, to all of you who've come here tonight to celebrate children's books: Every time you find the right, the necessary, book for a child—a book about sadness overcome, unfairness battled, hearts mended—you perform the best kind of magic.

It doesn't matter if it's about a gorilla or a nuclear physicist, a puppeteer, a motherless girl, or a clueless fish. If it's the right book, you've allowed a child to make a leap out of her own life, with all its limitations and fears—and, yes, sometimes sadness—into another, to imagine new possibilities for herself and for her world.

Every time you book-talk a new title, every time you wander the stacks trying to find that elusive, well-thumbed series paperback, every time you give just the right book to just the right child, you're saying, "You, my friend, have potential."

That is a gift. That is a miracle. And that is what you do, each of you, every single day.

For a thank you that momentous, there truly are no words. 🐼

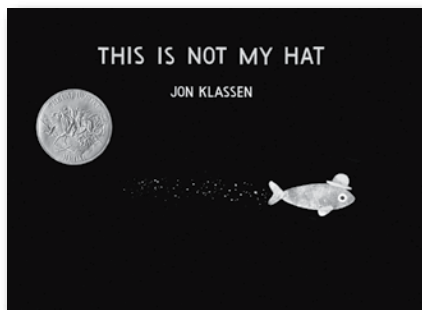
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## OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, continued from page 4

My biography statement on the ALSC website was posted last July. It concludes with the following statement: Looking forward to this year as ALSC president, that is sure to be full of exciting opportunities, interesting challenges, and much promise!

So I'll conclude this by saying that opportunities, challenges, and promise are good words to describe this past year. It was an honor to serve as your president and to work alongside you.

A heartfelt thank you to all of you who have turned your *passion* for creating a better future for children through libraries into *action*. *Thank you!* 🐼



# Caldecott Medal Acceptance Speech They Read My Book!

Jon Klassen



*Jon Klassen is the winner of the 2013 Caldecott Medal for This Is Not My Hat, published by Candlewick Press. His acceptance speech was delivered at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Chicago on June 30, 2013.*

A lot of good creative work is achieved as much by avoiding the things you know you can't do as it is by doing the things you know you can. Choosing picture book illustration as a job was, I assumed, a great way to avoid the things I don't feel especially strong in. It is a long and varied list, but somewhere near the top of it are fielding compliments and public speaking. Giving a speech to everyone I work with and admire within the context of the biggest professional compliment I could ever hope to get is kind of a perfect storm of things I set my life up trying to avoid. I would ask you to wish me luck up here, but it seems like I've gotten enough luck wished to me as it is.

When the Caldecott Committee called to tell me I'd won this award, I was just putting the phone down after getting a call from a cab driver who was waiting downstairs to take me to the airport to catch an early flight. I don't remember what I said to the committee, and I remember even less about what I said when they called again three minutes later to tell me about the [Caldecott] Honor for *Extra Yarn*. The cab could've dropped me off in the Los Angeles River after that and I wouldn't have noticed.

But I felt bad later, sitting on the plane, thinking I'd sort of botched my reaction and hoping I came off as surprised and excited and stunned as I really was. As foggy as my memory is about what I said to them, I have a strangely clear record of my internal reaction, especially to the first phone call. I'd like to break it down in stages here, partly to give the committee my proper thanks and partly because I think it goes some distance toward explaining how I feel about making books in general.

My internal reaction when they were telling me that they'd decided to give *This Is Not My Hat* the Caldecott Medal can be divided into three distinct phases. If you were going to give titles to these phases, the first phase could be called "They Had Been Looking at the Book."

They had been looking at the book. I don't know if I'll ever get used to the idea that all the copies of any book I write and illustrate myself aren't in my own house.

I get a box of them around publication time and I think, "Here are the books!" And I put them on a shelf and glance over at them whenever I walk through the room. And if someone comes over and they see the books and they want one, I give one to them and then *they* have one of the books. And that's as far as it goes. Then later I'm in a library or bookstore and I see copies of the book for sale, and it's like seeing a picture of your family in a frame on a store shelf. You think, "That's not supposed to be outside!" and you glance wildly around the store, as if everyone around you is devoting their whole minds to all the mistakes that might be on the cover alone.

The only way out of this kind of anxiety, now that the book is apparently out in the wild, is to convince yourself, for the moment, that regular people don't concern themselves as much with all the details that might be wrong in these books. It's not that they are incapable of seeing them, but we see so many things all day, we don't have time to pick apart everything we don't like. This argument holds, barely, and it's just enough to stop the impulse to grab all the copies and sprint out the door.

But the realization that the *Caldecott Committee* has had your book amongst them is something this argument has no power against. They are a group of beings assembled entirely to notice things. Here is what the Caldecott Committee looks like: there is a dark stone room, probably underground. It has only one source of light, a hole in the stone ceiling, engineered using long-forgotten mathematics, that lets in a single round shaft of light. That shaft of light comes down and rests on a huge wooden table, and at the center of the table is the book that a group of cloaked and hooded figures is murmuring about in a language reserved only for these proceedings. Their glowing eyes under their hoods scan the pages and widen at problems unsolved and errors hastily patched.

At one point or another, weeks or months ago, I was sitting somewhere, eating a burrito or something, while this huddled and sacred ceremony was being applied to my book, and I didn't know it. What did they talk about? What did they see?

In the bedroom where I was taking the phone call from the committee, there was actually a copy of the book sitting on a pile of stuff, and I glanced over at it accusingly, thinking, “You didn’t tell me any of this happened!” The cover looked back at me. The lettering of the title, and my name under the title, and the little fish. Making this cover had scared me so badly. Interior illustrations are one thing, but covers fall squarely under the heading of Graphic Design.

I love doing covers and lettering, but there’s so much formality that can be applied to these things. There are people who spend their whole lives on lettering and the rules that make it work, and here I am drawing my own letters like a jerk. Who knows what rules of kerning and line width I am running off the road with my shenanigans? And none of the worries about the type go anywhere near the worries about the placement of that fish.

I once bought a book on grid systems as they can be applied to page layout. It was written in English on one side and in German on the other. It was beautiful, and absolutely impenetrable. When the time came to design the cover for *This Is Not My Hat*, there was no grid to decide the placement of the little fish in his

You don’t really come to terms with that so much as you decide not to think about it anymore. And so when you finally decide not to think about it anymore, you move on to the next phase. You’d think that after “They Had Been Looking at the Book” had run its unknowable course, the next logical step would be “They Liked the Book!”—but that would be running too far ahead. That is the last step. There is a step in between, before I allow myself that level of back-patting, and it can be called “The Book Makes Sense!” The book makes sense. That’s a big deal.

The idea for the structure of *This Is Not My Hat* owes quite a bit to a little-known story called “The Tell-Tale Heart,” by an author I think is showing a lot of promise named Edgar Allan Poe. In his story, we have a narrator talking to us in the first person about something he did that was wrong. He is given the whole floor, without narrative interruption, to try to make an argument for his reasonableness and sanity by telling us his version of how things went down. Not only is this the same setup as in *This Is Not My Hat*, but I think it is also very close to what it feels like for anybody to do any kind of creative work at all, because they both involve so much hope.

should be, “What do I hope to get out of my work?” and the answer is that I just want to check with everybody else to make sure I’m still OK.

There’s a spread early on in the book where the little fish is describing to us where he is going to try to hide after having stolen the hat. He is describing where the plants grow big and tall and close together. In the first few drafts, this spread was filled with an illustration of the plants he was talking about. It had already been established that the narration was being used as sort of a voice-over to what we were seeing, accurate or not, and that the little fish didn’t need to be on the page for us to know he was talking.

I thought since this had been established, it would be OK to show these plants even though he hadn’t reached them yet, the idea being that when he did get there, there would be no confusion that he’d arrived at his destination. I thought it was a really cool idea, and I loved the spread. But people who saw the roughs kept reading that page as if it were in real time, as if the fish had already gone behind the plants and was talking to us from there. I was so sad, and confused that my thinking wasn’t lining up with everybody else’s.

*“You’d think that after ‘They Had Been Looking at the Book’ had run its unknowable course, the next logical step would be ‘They Liked the Book!’—but that would be running too far ahead. That is the last step. There is a step in between, before I allow myself that level of back-patting, and it can be called ‘The Book Makes Sense!’ The book makes sense. That’s a big deal.”*

sea of negative space. There were only two or three afternoons of blunt nudging, and grunting, and nudging some more, and then having lunch and coming back and nudging again. Surely these magical Caldecott Committee creatures had held the cover containing the little fish against all of these ancient grids to find that his placement violated all the morality the golden section carries with it, their glowing eyes widening to their widest, glowingest size.

They had been looking at the book. Jeez.

Storytelling, in any form, is an essentially hopeful thing to do. I don’t mean anything as ambitious as hoping you can change your audience or even educate them in any broad sense, but just in the fact that you, as a storyteller, are hoping that your mind and the minds of your audience are close enough that you can know what they need to hear in order to follow along with your story. When I’m asked what I hope people get out of my work, I always feel that it’s kind of a backward question. I never really know what to say, because the real question

It stayed like this for weeks, until finally I was showing it to somebody new, and as I turned the page to the plant spread, I saw it. I saw that it did, in fact, read that the fish had already gone behind the plants. I was so relieved. I didn’t have a solution yet, but the problem was real to me. I didn’t have to pretend to understand it, and I knew what everyone was talking about. As an aside, the solution that involved putting the plants on the endpapers is my favorite idea in the book, and I’ll always be a little bit jealous of my editor, Liz Bicknell, for thinking of it.

The first time you show anything you came up with by yourself to anybody else, you feel the same kind of fear you feel for the narrator in “The Tell-Tale Heart” or the little fish in *This Is Not My Hat*, who has every hope that he is

And the third phase, sometimes, is you asking them, “Do you like it?” I’m beginning to learn that the more you do creative work, the less you ask this question. It’s not that you don’t care about the answer. You care very much. But I think

*“When I’m asked what I hope people get out of my work, I always feel that it’s kind of a backward question. I never really know what to say, because the real question should be, ‘What do I hope to get out of my work?’ and the answer is that I just want to check with everybody else to make sure I’m still OK.”*

talking to like-minded people who will understand his actions as soon as he gets a chance to explain. What makes both characters sort of doomed from the outset is that, even though what they’re saying makes sense to them, they’ve actually drifted off into a place where we as an audience can’t back them up anymore.

Putting out a creative piece of work is sort of an experiment, like the ones sailors might have done to navigate in olden times. When you’re done telling your story, you can look at whomever you were telling it to and ask, “Do you get it?” And every “yes” you get, it is like a shining point of reference twinkling in the sky to navigate by, and there is no feeling like having the sky fill up with those points. I’m still OK. The book makes sense.

you begin to realize that you can’t own the answer either way. It’s not really your question to ask. Your job, and the things you can take credit for, end largely at the previous stage, when the book makes the most sense that it can. I guess this is assuming that you yourself like it. I’ve had the huge luck to be given a position where I can take the time to make sure I like the things I make. And I do like them. These books are my little guys. But that doesn’t mean anybody else has to like them.

One of the things in the book that is still kind of a mystery to me is the crab. The crab’s purpose in the story is not to change or advance the plot. I think the big fish probably would’ve found the little fish anyway, without the crab betraying what he knew. I put the crab in, initially, because I felt like it was too sad that nobody else in the story knew what

had happened. But the crab isn’t simply an observer—he has done something wrong, too. He’s at risk of drifting off into the same place the little fish is, where we can’t connect with him anymore.

But the crab is given a spot on the second-to-last page, where we see him again, watching the big fish swim back home, and we get to see him think about what he did, and I think we get a moment to forgive him. Not because he deserves it, but because we can relate to him. And that, I think, is what makes the book work.

An audience can take in the information they’re given, and understand the events and what the characters do. This understanding, them “getting” the story, and by extension telling you that you’re still OK, feels like a kind of grace. It’s something you’ve asked your audience for, and have mercifully been granted. But when it goes further than that, when they think it’s a good book, and they tell you so, it comes as something like a next step to being declared OK—something extra that nobody really deserves and I suspect very few people get. It feels like a kind of forgiveness, and that’s what that last phase felt like, and still feels like. “They Had Been Looking at the Book,” “The Book Makes Sense,” and “They Liked the Book.” My little guy.

I can’t thank the committee enough for this honor, or my publisher, my agent, my family and my friends, and all of you, for your encouragement and enthusiasm for something I feel so lucky I get to do. Thank you very much. ☺

## Call for Referees

To make *Children and Libraries* a truly interactive publication, we’re looking for ALSC members to serve as volunteer referees for journal articles. Unsolicited articles and those of a scholarly nature must be submitted to at least two referees to judge the submissions on accuracy, style, impact, importance, and interest. Specialists in particular genres (such as technology, literature, intellectual freedom, programming, and so on) are especially needed.

Referees make recommendations to the editor on whether or not manuscripts should be accepted for publication. Interested librarians should contact *Children and Libraries* Editor Sharon Korbeck Verbeten at [CALeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:CALeditor@yahoo.com) for more information on the referee process.

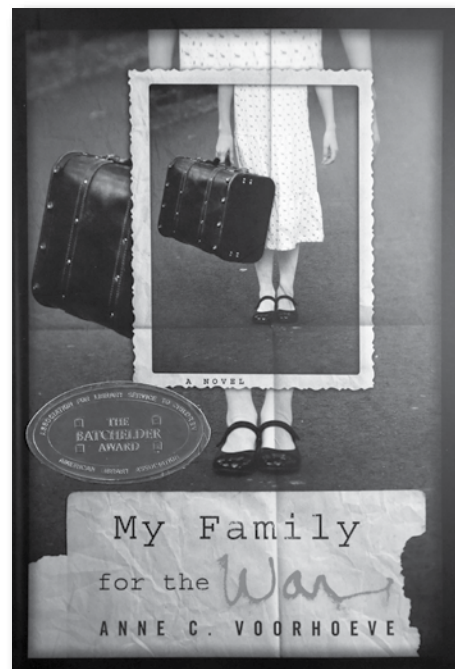
Good morning, everyone. As an editor, it is sometimes difficult to get a grasp on a book in a foreign language based on a partial translation. And then multiply that difficulty by the number of excellent novels set during World War II, and the decision to publish becomes even harder. But when Dial got in the first three chapters of *My Family for the War*, published in Germany as *Liverpool Street*, it was clear right away that this was something very different and very special.

The translator worked in bits. Each month, she would send in another few chapters, and I eagerly awaited each new part. I would get caught up in Frances's story, and then it would be over and I would have to wait again. I began to understand how Dickens's fans must have felt as they crowded the docks waiting for the next installment of *A Tale of Two Cities* to arrive.

In a way, *My Family for the War* is also a tale of two cities—Berlin and London. Frances was known as Franziska, or Ziska, in Germany. Despite growing up Protestant, her Jewish ancestry attracted the attention of the Nazis and she was forced to flee on the Kindertransport without her family. In London, she was taken in by an Orthodox Jewish family and she learned their ways. This is a story of duality. Two girls, two nations, two religions, two mothers, two evacuations, two romances, two lives, two families.

At one point after the Blitz, Frances is talking to her friend Professor Schueler, and he asks about her family.

I hesitated. Did he really want to hear that Papa was no longer alive, Uncle Matthew was missing in France and Walter imprisoned on the Isle of Man, that Gary was being hunted down by U-boats in the Atlantic, and that I hadn't heard anything from Mamu in weeks? "Mrs. Shepard and I are running the theater by ourselves now!" I dodged his question.



Of all the people Frances mentions, only two are her blood family. The rest are the people she has collected, who love her, and whom she loves. They are her family for the war, and beyond.

Anne Voorhoeve has written a beautifully unique and poignant story about a girl who seems to have nothing, but has everything. Two of everything, in fact. Instead of focusing on what she has lost, Frances sees what she has gained. She is a complicated, unforgettable character whose journeys enrich the entire canon of stories set during World War II. And it was definitely worth waiting for.

And I am so pleased to have been able to help bring this wonderful novel to English readers. My heartfelt thanks go to ALSC, and especially to Jean Hatfield and the rest of the Batchelder Award Committee. This recognition does so much to bring attention to foreign language novels in translation. With your continued support, we can keep publishing extraordinary stories from other countries for English readers. Many thanks. ☺



# Batchelder Award Acceptance Speech

## A Tale of Two Cities

Heather Alexander

*Heather Alexander is an Associate Editor at Dial Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers Group, which won the 2012 Mildred L. Batchelder Award for My Family for the War, published in Germany as Liverpool Street, by Anne C. Voorhoeve, translated by Tammi Reichel. She delivered these acceptance remarks at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Chicago on July 1, 2013.*



## Geisel Award Acceptance Speech

### Lighting Up Kids' Eyes

Ethan Long

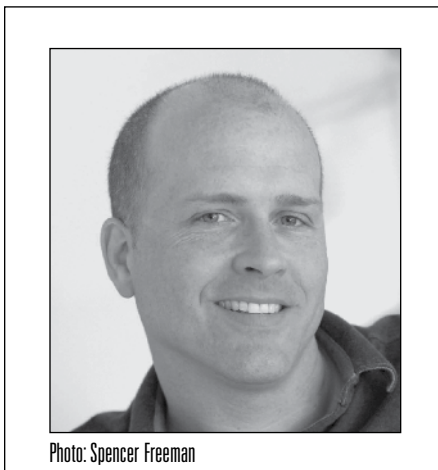


Photo: Spencer Freeman

**Ethan Long** is the winner of the 2013 Theodor Seuss Geisel Award for *Up, Tall and High!*, published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, a division of Penguin Young Readers Group. He delivered his acceptance speech at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Chicago on July 1, 2013.

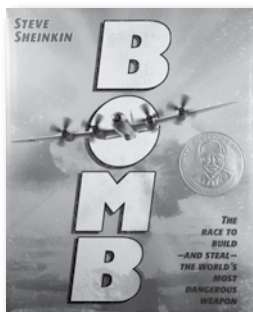


**A**s a child, I loved to draw and create things. I loved to look at books. My eyes lit up as I turned the pages of *Where the Wild Things Are*, *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, and *The Cat in the Hat*. I remember the pacing, oddly enough, and how the rhythm of what I was reading kept me from being distracted by anything else.

Of course, I also grew up in the age of television and newspaper comics where my other favorite characters took me places I had never been. Charlie Brown, Mickey Mouse, and Beetle Bailey kept me laughing and transfixed, even when

I didn't have the maturity to get the joke.

Now as an old man of 45, I stumble every day into my small cave of a studio, and try to write books and create characters half as good as the ones I grew up with. I look for ways to write simple situations with funny characters and work hard to give readers something that they will remember long after they have put my books down. My hope is that the stories I work so tirelessly to create will connect, entertain, and of course, light up kids' eyes. Thank you, Geisel Committee, for this special award. ☺



# Robert F. Sibert Medal Acceptance Speech Too Many Stories

Steve Sheinkin



*Steve Sheinkin is the winner of the 2013 Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal for *Bomb: The Race to Build—and Steal—the World's Most Dangerous Weapon*, published by *Flash Point*, an imprint of Roaring Brook Press. He delivered his acceptance remarks at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Chicago on July 1, 2013.*

About three years ago, I started writing a book. It opened late one night in San Francisco, November 1870, as two dusty miners walk into the office of a prominent businessman, George Roberts. Introducing themselves as Philip Arnold and John Slack, the visitors glance nervously around the room. Arnold pulls out a small leather bag, saying he and his friend need somewhere to stash it until banks open in the morning. Roberts asks what's in the bag; the men won't say. Roberts insists. Finally, reluctantly, Arnold opens the bag and tilts it and out pours a cascade of uncut diamonds.

No, Arnold and Slack did not later become atomic physicists or Soviet spies. The book I set out to write was a Wild West scam caper, starring two veteran gold miners who construct a phony diamond mine in the Rocky Mountains, then show up in San Francisco and begin selling shares, patiently hooking bigger and bigger fish until they've got the financial elite of both coasts begging to buy in.

A fantastic story—but I got stuck. There's just not much information available about the con men Arnold and Slack. There's no way to know what these guys were thinking or feeling at any point along the line, making it tough to build a compelling nonfiction narrative around them.

So after a certain amount of complaining, and a few conversations with Deirdre Langeland, my amazing editor at Roaring Brook, we turned to a totally different idea—spies in the Manhattan Project. Almost as soon as I started digging in, I realized I was facing the opposite problem I'd had with the diamond hoax. There was *too much* source material, too many characters, and stories. Good problem to have.

At the heart of the action is a set of unconventional heroes—the physicists, led by Robert Oppenheimer. Beat up as a kid for writing poetry and collecting minerals, Oppenheimer becomes a new kind of superhero, using the power of his

brain. And some of the physicists turn out to be spies—Klaus Fuchs, the owlish loner, and Ted Hall, the whiz-kid sent straight from Harvard to Los Alamos at age 18.

Scientists and spies—that's more than enough material right there. But as I read on, the stories kept coming. You've got Ruth Werner, a KGB agent in Britain who smuggles radio transmitter parts in her kids' stuffed animals. And Knut Haukelid, a Norwegian Indiana Jones on skis, who is instrumental in sabotaging Germany's atom bomb operation. And Moe Berg, a retired baseball player sent on a secret mission to Switzerland to assassinate Germany's top physicist.

With a first draft deadline coming into view, I tried to cut myself off. But how could I leave out Enrico Fermi and his grad students building the world's first nuclear reactor in a squash court at the University of Chicago? I couldn't. What about the unflappable KGB courier Lona Cohen sneaking bomb plans across the country in a tissue box? Throw it in. How about the moral ambiguity underlying the whole bomb race? Oppenheimer's team “wins” by building a weapon of mass destruction—and must then face the implications as their creation is unleashed on Japanese cities. Can't leave that out.

“Throw it in” may not be a formula for success. I'm pretty sure it's not. But I wanted the book to be a global thriller, with lots happening at once, and I wanted young readers to be as excited and as challenged by this material as I was. My hope was that with careful structuring, and lots of back and forth with Deirdre, it would all come together.

So I owe a huge thanks to Deirdre and everyone at Roaring Brook and Macmillan. And a massive thank you to Sibert Medal Committee Chair Kathie Meizner and the entire committee. The Sibert Medal is an enormous honor, and a great incentive to get back to work and find more stories—with any luck, too many stories. ✂





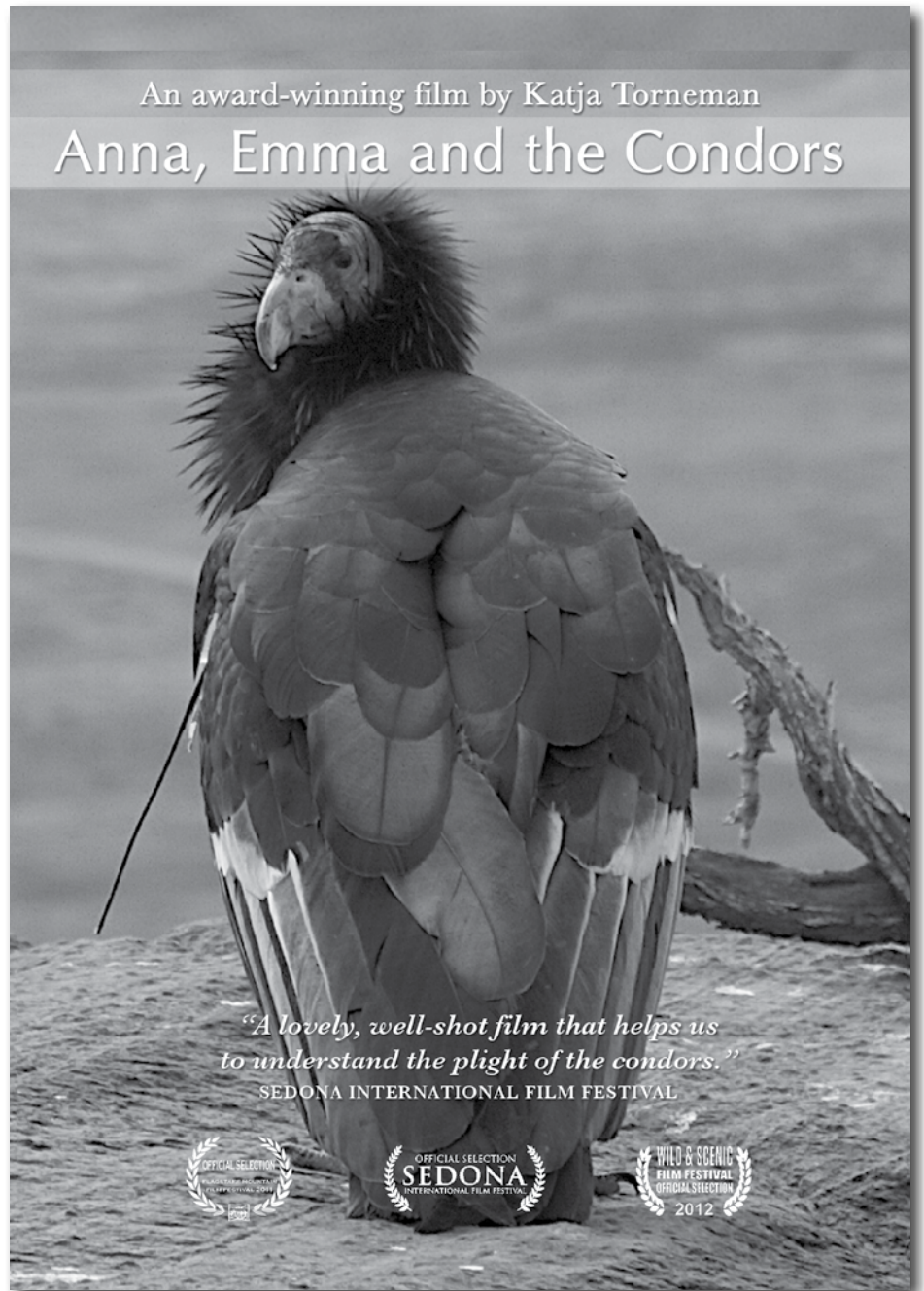
# Andrew Carnegie Medal Acceptance Speech

## Respecting Our Environment

*Katja Torneman*



**Katja Torneman** is the winner of the 2013 Andrew Carnegie Medal for her film *Anna, Emma and the Condors*. She delivered her acceptance remarks at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Chicago on July 1, 2013.



**T**hank you, and good morning everyone. First, I want to thank the 2013 Carnegie Committee members for bestowing this honor on my film *Anna, Emma and the Condors*. Thank you.

What inspired me to make the film *Anna, Emma and the Condors* was because I want to make films about the environment and endangered species that are informative, inspire change, and that express beauty and heart.

Creating films for youth audiences is a big part of why I make films, because

their knowledge and education about the natural world are important to our future.

I grew up in Sweden in a very artistic family. My great grandfather was Axel Torneman, who painted many murals and paintings during the early 1900s in Sweden. One of his murals is located in the Blue Hall in the State House of Sweden, where the Nobel Prize is awarded each year. My great-grandmother was an opera singer from Norway. Through my family, I got to appreciate and learn art and music as a medium to inspire, to create from the heart, and to follow my dreams.

Furthermore, my strong connection to nature and wildlife is because my parents taught me to care for and respect the land, ocean, plants, trees, wildlife, and their habitats. We spent most of our time outside exploring all the beauty around us.

When I was seventeen years old, I left Sweden and became a professional mountain climber and traveled to climb mountains in the Himalayas; big walls in Asia, Africa, the United States, and Europe; and sailed across the Atlantic Ocean.

During that time of traveling and climbing, I was not blind to what was happening to our environment around the world and the effect climate change had on wildlife, the oceans, and land.

I felt overwhelmed and heartbroken. I wondered what I could do to inspire awareness and change in our modern society for a better world to live in.

After almost fifteen years as a professional climber, I decided to do something about it. So I decided to make films about our connection to the natural world and went to a film school in

Arizona to learn how. *Anna, Emma and the Condors* is my first film, and it is my student thesis film project.

I want to give my gratitude to Brian Reinhart, Jeremy Hawks, and Rue at Sedona Film School for being my inspiring and very knowledgeable teachers.

I also want to give thanks to my sister Sanna Torneman. She was my biggest supporter (and still is) while I made the film *Anna, Emma and the Condors*.

There would not be a film without the Parish family. They invited me into their lives to film with them and their important work with the condors at Vermillion Cliffs in Arizona. It was an inspiring and educational experience that will be in my memory forever.

How did I get to be here? In Chicago, at the ALA Annual Conference? And being honored with the Andrew Carnegie Medal?

I met film distributor Suzanne Harle at the Wild & Scenic Film Festival in California, when my film was screening there. She is the founder of Green Planet Films. She asked if *Anna, Emma and the Condors* could be included in the Green

Planet Films catalog for distribution to the educational community.

Suzanne's hard work and dedication to get the film out to the educational market in the United States has been very successful. She became a part of the film because she believed in it and its message. Thank you Suzanne Harle for giving it an opportunity to be where it is today, and to the various film reviewers who recommended it to other librarians.

My dream has come true, and now thousands of people have seen the film and have been inspired by the family, showing that we *can* make a difference in this world and change is possible.

One week after I was awarded the Andrew Carnegie Medal, I was alerted that *Anna, Emma and the Condors* has been selected for a PBS broadcast series called "Natural Heroes," so starting later in the summer, the film can be seen on PBS stations across the country. This medal, in part, has made that upcoming broadcast possible.

Thank you again for this honorable award. 🐾

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## INCOMING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, continued from page 5

care providers, cultural institutions, media, social service agencies, and creators and producers of material for children such as authors, illustrators, and publishers. The benefits of combining forces with others are two-fold: together we enhance and expand opportunities for the children we serve, and we increase our influence by disseminating information about the library through alternative channels to an extended audience.

During this next year, I am committed to building on my predecessor Carolyn

Brodie's commitment of "Connecting Communities" by exploring the "Power of Partnerships." To begin that process, I invited Brigid Hubberman, executive director of the Family Reading Partnership (FRP) of Tompkins County (NY) to address those at the Leadership and ALSC meeting during Annual Conference in Chicago.

The FRP is a grassroots organization that has gained international recognition for its success in "Creating a culture of literacy—one book at a time," by bringing together diverse facets of the

business community, schools, agencies that serve families, artists, and of course, the library, to bring families the experiences, skills, and materials needed to support literacy. Brigid is a remarkable force and an inspiring speaker. The FRP has truly infused its community with the importance and the pleasure of reading for all. For more information, visit [www.familyreading.org](http://www.familyreading.org).

Finally, I look forward to spending the next year with you, my partners in ALSC, as we all work together to create a better future for all children through libraries. 🐾



# Wilder Award Acceptance Speech

## A Warm “Thanks to You”

*Katherine Paterson*



©Samantha Loomis Paterson

*Katherine Paterson is the winner of the 2013 Laura Ingalls Wilder Award. Her acceptance speech was delivered at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Chicago on June 30, 2013.*

When Martha Parravano called me one Sunday afternoon back in January to say that her committee had selected me as the 2013 Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal recipient, I was both surprised and thrilled. And before I go any further, I do want to say thank you to Wilder Committee members Martha, Darwin Henderson, Heather McNeil, Margaret Tice, and Sylvia Vardell for this lovely honor.

Martha said, amidst the chorus of cheering in the background, that I must watch the awards announcement the next morning. Unfortunately, when I got up on Monday, the house was freezing cold, and I soon realized that the furnace, despite a full oil tank, had gone on the blink. When I called the company, they said that lots of homes in central Vermont were out of heat that morning and they would try to get around to our house before nightfall. So my husband and I huddled in the one room with an electric heater. I brought my laptop downstairs from my study so we could watch the awards announcement together, but that far away from the router, the Wi-Fi refused to work.

John can no longer do the stairs, so when the hour approached I left him in the care of our part-time helper and went upstairs in the chill to watch the webcast alone. Although hearing myself announced as the Wilder recipient warmed the cockles of my heart, the rest of my body was pretty cold, so as soon as the broadcast ended I rushed back to the one warmish room. At about four in the afternoon, the phone rang. “So when were you going to tell us?” demanded my son John. “Do I have to find out on Facebook that my mother has won the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award?”

I felt apologetic enough to go back up to my chilly study and e-mail all the children. I got an immediate reply from my son-in-law Stephen Pierce: “So. Let’s see . . . no heat, no email, sounds like you’ve got a Little House in the Big Woods thing going.”

By nightfall the furnace was humming again, but then, without any warning, all the lights went out. It was several hours before the electricity was restored. I began to feel that the shade of little

Laura Ingalls had indeed decided to haunt her latest award recipient. Well, all I can say, Laura, is “rest, rest, perturbed spirit.” I’m doing the best I can standing here tonight, not only in your shadow but in the very long shadows of all the previous winners of your award.

The Japanese have a wonderful expression: *o kage sama de*. I was told initially that the English equivalent is “Thanks to you.” But, as is often the case, a great deal is lost in translation. The word *kage* is the word for “shadow” in English. *O* and *sama* are both honorifics, and *de* is an article that can indicate either place of action or means. So my own translation of the phrase is: “By virtue of your most honorable shadow.” Now isn’t that a lot more elegant, not to say eloquent, than a simple “Thanks to you”?

During the last forty-three years, I’ve had the benefit of many generous shadows, beginning with my very first novel. I began to write *The Sign of the Chrysanthemum* when no one wanted to publish the stories or articles I was writing. But it occurred to me that if I could write a story or an article in a week, I should be able to write a chapter in a week, and if I did that, by the end of a year I’d have a novel, and I would have accomplished something, even if no one wanted to publish it.

Well, for a couple of years, no one did. I suppose I should have recognized that a story for young people set in twelfth-century Japan would be a hard sell, but I was a little bit homesick for Japan and the days when I was a competent single woman and not the harassed mother of four tiny children. As I wrote the book in the slivers of time allotted me, I could, for a few minutes, leave dishes and diapers behind and enter the exotic world of Heian Japan.

After the seventh or eighth rejection, a miracle happened. A young Sandra Jordan (yes, *that* Sandra Jordan) found my book in the slush pile of unsolicited manuscripts, liked it, and took it to her boss to read. Her boss, Ann Beneduce, had just returned from a visit to Japan. I’m sure Ann had no illusions that my book would be a bestseller, but she felt American children should have a chance

to read about feudal Japan, and she thought the author of the book should have the chance to write other books.

Ann Beneduce turned my manuscript over to an editor just coming off maternity leave, and since 1970, that editor, Virginia Buckley, and I have worked together on sixteen novels. It is by virtue of the most honorable shadows of these three great women that I stand on this stage tonight. Truly, Sandra, Ann, Virginia, *o kage sama de*.

My guess is that most of you in this room tonight have never read *The Sign of the Chrysanthemum*. Looking at it from the distance of forty years, it's not hard to see why the book had trouble finding a publisher. This was well before the flourishing of young adult literature as we know it today. Not only were the time period and setting exotic, but my book told of a thieving bastard looking for the father he never knew.

The closest thing to a heroine in the story ends up in a brothel, and my teenaged hero is powerless to rescue her. A bit of trivia that I enjoy sharing with folks who want to know the difference between books for adults and books for the young is that in 1973 when my book was published, the number one adult bestseller of the day, with forty-six weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list, breaking all hardcover sales records since *Gone with the Wind*, was the tale of an overachieving seagull.

When I told my husband that the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award was to be given in Chicago, he said: "Well, give my regards to Chicago." John is no longer able to travel with me, but our whole family remembers our first trip to ALA in Chicago when *Bridge to Terabithia* was the Newbery recipient. We love Chicago. And if it had not been for the loving shadows of my husband John and those four terrific children, I would not be here again.

I look out at you tonight. Some of you weren't even born when I began the long journey to this stage, and few of you are as old

as I am. But my thanks are due to all of you and all the librarians and teachers who through the years have shared my books with the young. Many of those children would never have found my books without your help. *O kage sama de*.

So tonight while you celebrate the 2013 Newbery, Caldecott, and Wilder honorees, we are also celebrating all of you who make our lives as writers and illustrators possible—you who believe in what we are trying to do and whose aim in life is to nourish the lives of the young. You know the children and youth in your care and you know books, so you are able, time after time, to put the right book into the hands of the right child. The children you touch will have the chance to be more than mindless consumers. The books you introduce to them will help them grow to be thinking, compassionate members of the human race. And if our democracy survives, it will be in no small measure by virtue of your most honorable shadows.

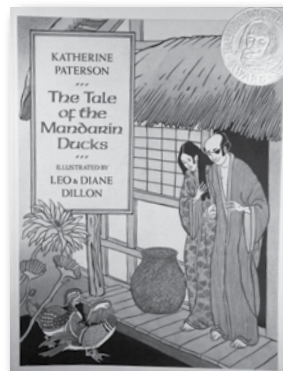
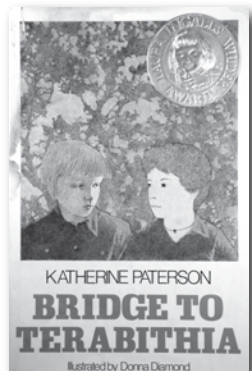
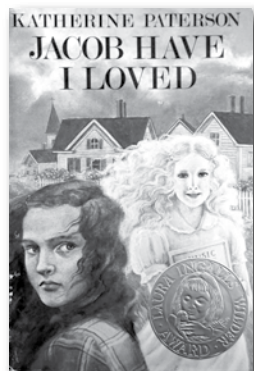
Tonight I'm going to repeat something I said in Chicago in 1978. It relates to another Japanese expression. That night I explained the Japanese word that is on the dedication page of *Bridge to Terabithia*.

The word is *banzai*. The literal meaning of the word is "ten thousand," as in, "Live ten thousand years!" Or "Live forever!" It was originally the salute to royalty, which in our own time has become more like the hooray you yell for your favorite sports team.

On that magical night in 1978, I said: "It is a cry of triumph and joy, a word full of hope in the midst of the world's contrary evidence." It was the word I wanted to say, not only through *Bridge to Terabithia* but through all of my books. And it is again my salute to each one of you tonight whose lives are bridges for the young. Hooray! And may your courage, your tenacity, and your caring live for ten thousand years.

*Banzai!* &

*"You know the children and youth in your care and you know books, so you are able, time after time, to put the right book into the hands of the right child. The children you touch will have the chance to be more than mindless consumers. The books you introduce to them will help them grow to be thinking, compassionate members of the human race."*



# Repeat after Me!

## Repetition and Early Literacy Development

BETSY DIAMANT-COHEN, TESS PRENDERGAST, AND CHRISTY ESTROVITZ



**W**hat happens when preschoolers are introduced to a book that they really like? They want their parents and caregivers to read it to them over and over again, of course!

Research about reading to children has repeatedly demonstrated this phenomenon, although researchers are not sure why some children develop such strong attachments to particular books. What seems clear, though, is that children's preferences drive learning, and repeated exposure to a story can deliver benefits in several developmental domains, including vocabulary and motor areas.<sup>1</sup>

After the first few hundred readings, parents start to wonder if their child will ever get bored of hearing the same story, since the parents are certainly tired of it. But the preschooler will simply ask for it to be read again and again and again. Since nothing in the world happens exactly the same way twice, each time the book is read, it is slightly different. And each time the same story is read aloud, the child's connection with the story grows.<sup>2</sup> Research demonstrates that children benefit most from read-alouds that actively involve them,<sup>3</sup> yet a child hearing a book only once has much less to say about it than a child who has experienced the same book in multiple ways.

Librarians and other early-literacy-program facilitators know that it takes a few weeks before everyone learns the words and actions to the opening and closing songs. We usually sing the same opening and closing songs to give kids a sense of the structure and routine. But if we consider that repetition is actually the developmental strategy that children take to learn new things, then we may wish to consider also repeating the books and stories we present during our storytime sets.

A few weeks before the 2012 ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim, California, a question arose on the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) electronic discussion list regarding the value of repetition in children's library programs. A lively discussion ensued, and participants were invited to join the Preschool Services Discussion Group at the conference for a conversation about repetition of books and stories in preschool storytime.

Sponsored by ALSC and run by Sue McCleaf Nespeca and Linda Ernst, the Preschool Services Discussion Group operates an electronic discussion list as well an in-person discussion group at each ALA Annual Conference. Diamant-Cohen, one of the authors of the forthcoming book *Transforming Preschool Storytime* from Neal-Schuman, agreed to facilitate this discussion, and about fifteen people joined her for a brainstorming session.



**Dr. Betsy Diamant-Cohen** (far left) is a children's programming consultant and trainer who has worked in children's museums and public libraries for more than thirty years. She has an MLS and a doctorate in communications design. **Tess Prendergast**, (middle) a children's librarian at Vancouver (BC) Public Library for fifteen years, has just begun working on her PhD in early literacy at the University of British Columbia. **Christy Estrovitz** (left) is the Early Literacy Specialist with the San Francisco Public Library and member of the Every Child Ready to Read Oversight Committee.

Diamant-Cohen began by putting the practice of repetition into context by telling the group that some teachers are already using the method of repetition with variety in preschool classrooms across the United States. For example, one successful technique used in special education classrooms features one book for two weeks and recreates the entire classroom based on that book to give the students multisensory experiences with the book.<sup>4</sup> Circle time, snack time, nature corner, dress-up corner, recess, math activities, and music time all are tweaked to have some type of connection with the featured book. During the two-week period, children have the opportunity to experience the book on multiple levels using all of their senses. Instead of simply hearing the book being read once and briefly viewing the illustrations, the repeated exposure to the book, combined with carefully designed purposeful play activities, enables the child to integrate the various learning opportunities found in this particular book across various developmental domains, such as language skills, motor skills, and social skills.

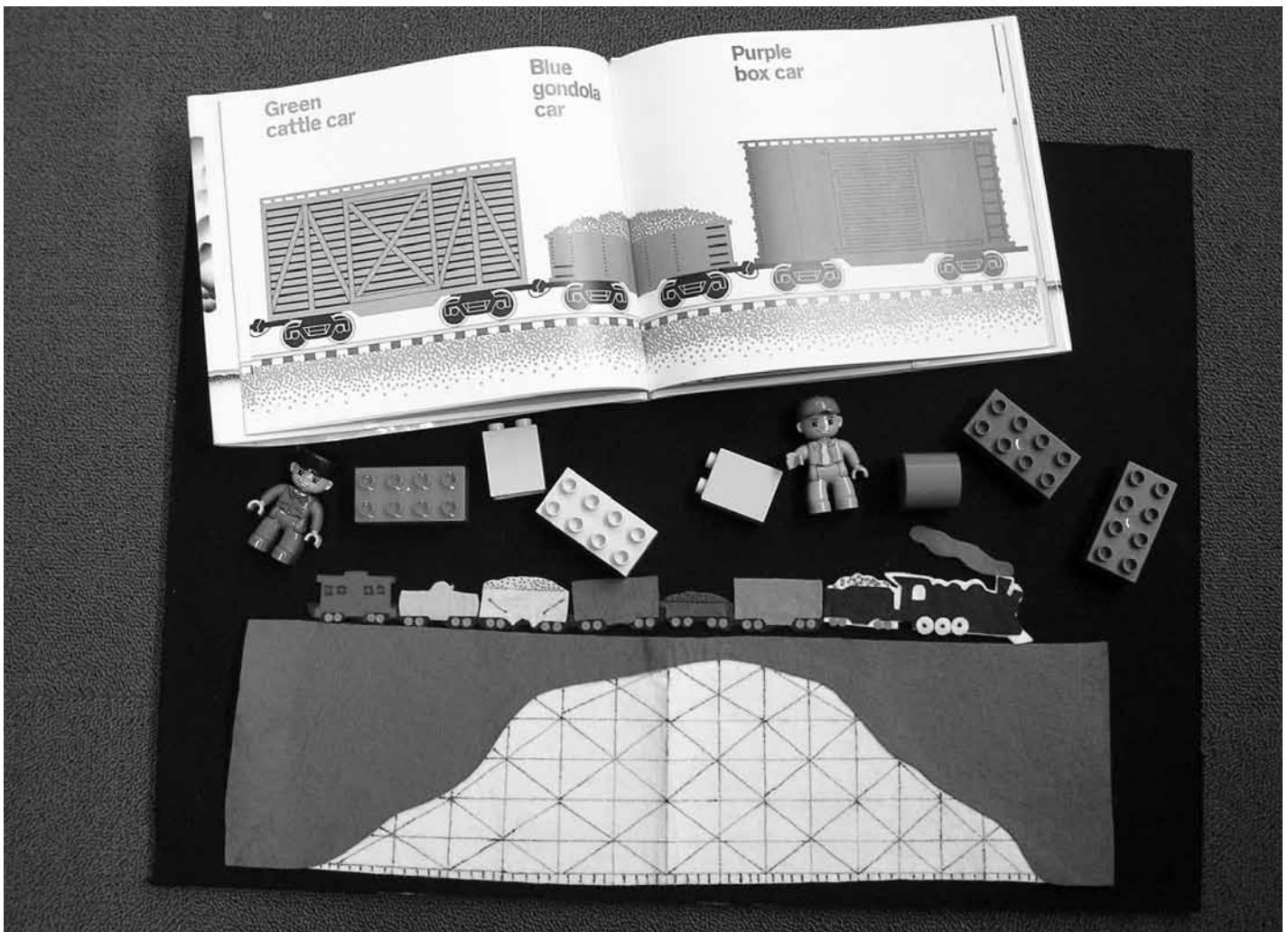
In addition, with the revised Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) at your library®, play is identified as one of the five elements essential to the development of early literacy skills. Storytime is the perfect platform to embellish program planning to include weekly activities that extend the learning experience

surrounding one book through playing, singing, talking, reading, and perhaps writing, too. You will see many of the new ECRR tenets reflected in the ideas presented below. (For more information about ECRR, visit [www.everychildreadytoread.org](http://www.everychildreadytoread.org)).

The conversation started with Diamant-Cohen's brief review of the standard format for a preschool storytime. Then the group discussed this format's applicability to different learning styles, multiple intelligences, and theories of child development. A short explanation about the value of repetition was followed by the hypothesis that preschool storytime could become even more developmentally beneficial if facilitators used more repetition strategies to extend the learning opportunities that present themselves in so many of the great books shared at storytime.

Diamant-Cohen then demonstrated a model of this approach to storytime using Robert Munsch's *Angela's Airplane*. After she read the entire book aloud, she discussed and brainstormed with the group the many ways to use that same book during subsequent storytime programs.

Attendees at this discussion group were then asked to focus on the book *Freight Train* by Donald Crews and to assume that they were going to use this story as a focus for six consecutive



This flannelboard is one way to present a book.

## Repeat after Me!

weeks at a preschool storytime program at a public library. Participants were told to assume that about half of the children, all aged between three and five years old, are new to storytime on any given week and that the other half are regular attendees. In a group of about twenty, participants were also asked to assume that at least one or two of the children have a delay in one or more areas of development and several children are new to the English language.

After a straightforward, traditional, oral read-aloud the first week, the idea was to present the book in different ways for each subsequent week, touching on a different “intelligence” or developmental skill area each time. A short brainstorming session followed, and in a short time, the group came up with the following ideas for repeating elements of *Freight Train* over a set of preschool storytime programs.

### Idea 1 (for week one)

Read the book using traditional read-through, read-aloud method.

### Idea 2

**Use colors** as theme when sharing the book. In preparation for an interactive component, the librarian would use an Ellison or Accucut machine to make die-cut train shapes using a different color for each train car. One complete train with a car of each color would be put in an envelope, and each child would be given an envelope when entering storytime. During the program, the librarian would reread the book and ask the children to pick and hold up the matching color/train (“the red caboose,” “the black engine”) at the appropriate time.

### Idea 3

**Sing the book.** Make up your own tune and sing the text. In addition to being fun, singing the story slows down the sound and helps children hear the smaller sounds in words, which is great for phonological awareness. (At the session, someone demonstrated singing the book to the tune of the theme song from the TV show *The Beverly Hillbillies!*) This works well with one- and two-year-olds as well as older preschoolers.

### Idea 4

**Use a flannelboard.** Before the program, make each train car out of a different color of felt. Then put the pieces on the flannelboard at the appropriate time as you read, tell, or sing the story.

### Idea 5

**Add new colors** beyond primary colors; expand by introducing more sophisticated ones, such as fuchsia, magenta, violet, and bronze. Use these colors to enhance the children’s vocabulary.

An activity related to storytime might be color mixing of paint to demonstrate the color spectrum.

### Idea 6

**Pair the book with a nonfiction title** such as *Trains* by Gail Gibbons. Talk about containers, shapes, and characteristics of the car. Ask open-ended questions to help expand a child’s general knowledge about the world of trains, such as, What does it hold? Where did the cargo come from? What is the purpose of the car? Where is it going? What’s inside the freight train? You can personalize the experience by asking, “What would you put inside the boxcar?”

*Freight Train* can also be connected to nonfiction books that relate to possible cargo, such as agriculture. This kind of activity builds general knowledge as well as vocabulary skills.

### Idea 7

**Model interactive strategies** for making the media experience a rich literacy experience. Demonstrate an app to introduce age-appropriate media. Hold an iPad app day. Visit [www.littleelit.com](http://www.littleelit.com) for ideas about incorporating iPad apps into group storytime sessions. Consult the International Children’s Digital Library ([icdl.org](http://icdl.org)) for a range of videos. Use a smartboard or overhead screen and projector if possible. Focus on the interactive elements of the app. You can also use this as an opportunity to demonstrate to adults (early childhood educators or parents) how to begin assessing quality and appropriateness of apps for kids.

### Idea 8

**Introduce STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) concepts** by talking about force, mixing colors, and cause-and-effect. Focus on physics using words such as “pulling” and “pushing.” Discuss the illustrations that involve steam, clouds, and temperature; these are all linked to science concepts that can be drawn out by using *Freight Train* as a jumping-off point to introduce common core to the young scientists.

### Idea 9

**Incorporate a Lego and/or Duplo building activity.** Use *Freight Train* to inspire 3D, kid-designed creations. Integrate car play into the story. Tell the story while having the children act it out.

### Idea 10

**Use *Freight Train* to illustrate how children learn to read from left to right,** the same direction that the train is moving in the book. Notice how the printed text progresses from phrases to full

sentences to tell the story. Ask children to contribute to the story by saying part of the phrase and inviting them to fill in the blanks.

## Idea 11

**Incorporate gross motor movements** by acting out the train story. Demonstrate ways that moving arms can imitate moving train wheels and make chugging leg motions as you sing the “choo-choo” song while chugging around the room.

## Idea 12

**Foster fine motor skills** and create opportunities to **practice turn-taking** by giving each child a turn to hold a felt train piece and to place it on the flannelboard as you retell selected parts (or the entire story). Manipulating flannel requires dexterity and focus.

## Idea 13

**Group Art Activity.** Hold a “Build a Train Day.” Ask parents and children to bring big cardboard boxes and small boxes, such as tissues boxes and egg cartons, to build a community train. Have everyone make a large train sculpture together using these found art materials, and decorate it with paint and tape. Invite people to bring refreshments and turn this into a family building party. Place the sculpture on display where all library visitors can see it.

## Idea 14

**Create a film with props and costumes.** Build a trestle out of boxes, and make a tunnel by placing a blanket over a table of some chairs in a train formation. Turn some of the bigger cardboard boxes into train costumes by cutting a big hole in the top for heads and one on each side for arms. Tell the story while children wear the train costumes and act it out; arrange to have someone videotape the activity to show later. Have the children take turns being the engine, train cars, and the caboose. Utilize teen volunteers.

## Idea 15

**Encourage parent-child interaction.** Ask families to bring a train set from home, if they have one (have spares on hand). Sing a song that involves interaction between two people. (For example, if singing “The Eency Weency Spider,” one person could be the spider and the other could be the waterspout. The spider could climb up the waterspout by gently walking fingers up the other’s arm and tickling when being washed out by the rain.) Encourage parent and child to take turns being the engine and the train.

## Idea 16

**Read or tell the story backward.** This more complicated way to present a book helps children understand the components

of books and reading. If you’re doing a flannelboard retelling, tell the story backward (caboose at the front, for example), and ask the children to help with placement of flannel pieces as well as retelling. Pair *Freight Train* with *The End by whom?* for a backward-themed storytime. Start with the closing, end with the greeting, and wear your clothes backward.

## Idea 17

**Practice Prepositions!** Reinforce the proper use of verbs and prepositions such as front, back, behind, between, inside, and under.

## Idea 18

**Use colored and colorful scarves** that match the colors shown in the book. Turn *Freight Train* into a musical activity with free-for-all dancing to train tunes, transportation songs and songs about colors. Some examples are, “Do the Locomotion,” “Little Red Caboose,” “I’ve Been Working on the Railroad,” “Flight of the Bumblebee,” and “Put a Little Color on You,” but there are many more you can use.

## Idea 19

**Play the Freeze Game.** Using the same music, read the book aloud, but ask the children to dance when the train is moving and the music is playing. However, when the music stops, that means the train has pulled into a station and everyone has to freeze. Freeze games build self-regulation and listening skills. This activity would work well with both large and small groups.

If you have a smaller group, expand the game by asking the children to use their bodies to become something that is being transported by the train when they freeze. As you walk around and tap each “frozen” child gently, they can tell the group what they are. If space allows, you can also play freeze tag.

## Idea 20

**Another freeze game.** Read the book aloud and ask the children to be a train, but instead of playing and stopping music, use a stop/go traffic sign. When the sign is green, the train chugs along, but when the red side shows, the train must stop. This is a great way for children to have fun by following directions and paying attention.

## Idea 21

**Link colors of train cars to colors of clothing.** Ask the children what colors they are wearing, and sing a song that requires them to stand up if they are wearing a particular color. Distribute colored scarves and repeat, first with the colors they are wearing and then with the colors of the train cars.



## Recommended Websites

- nancymusic.com. Check Nancy Stewart's website for music, ideas, and free downloads.
- wiki.kcls.org/tellmeastory. Consult King County Library's Tell Me a Story storytime companion for parents, caregivers, and librarians.
- perpetualpreschool.com. Get inspired by themes, songs, crafts, games, learning activities, and more.
- thebestkidsbooksite.com. Visit the interactive media channel where children's books, apps, crafts, and web resources intersect.

## Idea 22

Choose an articulate child or group of children to tell the story to the group while you hold up the book and turn the pages.

## Idea 23

Channel your inner engineer through dress-up time at the library. Pull together some simple costumes using hats, nametags, and a few props. Train personnel can be an engineer, conductor, railway worker, ticket agent, porter, ticket collector, and passengers. Make tickets ahead of time out of construction paper and act out an expanded version of the story: a group of passengers going for a trip on the freight train. Narrate the story as the children act it out. If possible, have someone film the story and upload it to the library's website.

## Idea 24

Since this is a good partnership opportunity with the local public transportation service, invite your local engineer to visit storytime. Ask if he can bring ticket stubs, train schedules, or any other realia connected with train travel.

As you see here, just one book generated twenty-four different ideas for harnessing the learning opportunities that presented themselves. Not only do children benefit from being given opportunities to develop skills across several different domains, but facilitators also benefit from the creative work that this strategy entails. It is great fun to think about picturebooks in this multimodal way and to see the possibilities that present themselves that one can channel to support the development of the whole child.

Choosing new books to use at preschool storytime each week is relatively easy. Using the same book but presenting it in different ways often requires more thought, preparation, and creativity,

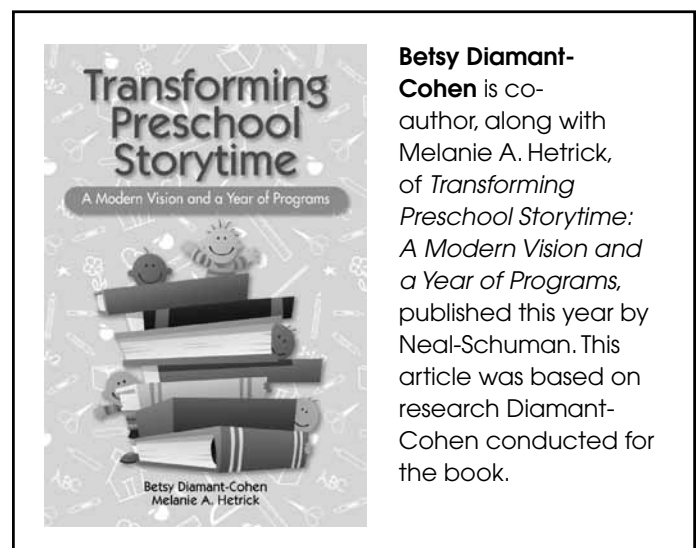
which makes planning for this type of storytime more time-consuming and difficult. The discussion-group participants shared suggestions of useful resources for planning (see sidebar).

Brainstorming together and sharing ideas with other librarians was exhilarating. Since each person has a different way of looking at the world, the rich variety of creative ways to present the book suggested by the participants touched on different domains of healthy early child development and reflected the diversity of the group. In addition to exploring the value of repetition with variety and brainstorming ways to implement the theory of presenting the same book in six or more consecutive preschool storytimes, simply sharing ideas with fellow librarians was wonderful.

The ideas themselves were exciting, but the best part was benefiting from librarians sharing their expertise with one another. We all have a store of knowledge from our experiences, and building on that collective experience was a treat. We invite you to join the electronic discussion list or the in-person discussion so that your voice can also be heard. ☺

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# Every Child Ready to Read

## Engaging Parents, Reenergizing Librarians

DOROTHY STOLTZ

**A**fter opening the revised Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) presentation tool kit in fall 2011, I immediately saw why my colleagues were raving.

It includes research information, but it is much more than research.

It includes astonishingly beautiful and informative PowerPoint slides, but it is more than slides.

It has video clips, talking points, and handouts. However, in a very real sense, it exudes joy—the joy between parents and their young children. The tool kit is meant to focus this joy through the five practices of early literacy—talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing.

My outreach staff and I have used the tool kit frequently to instruct parents, both English and Spanish-speaking, who are mostly low-income, low-educated, and even sometimes homeless.

We've taken it on the road to the family support center and Head Start and have attracted families to ECRR workshops



Using a magnifying glass, mother and son inspect leaves, acorns, and tree bark in Westminster, Maryland.

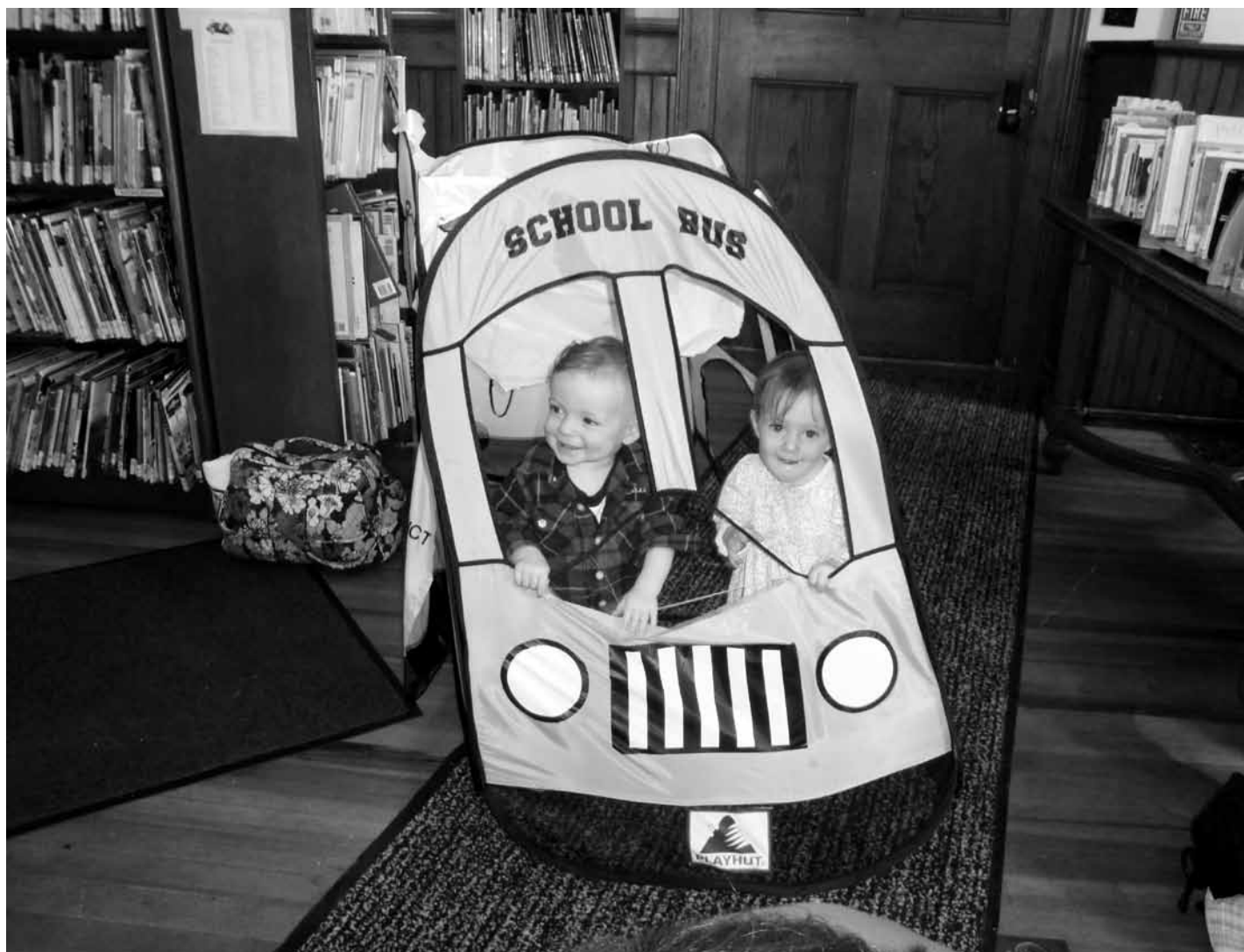
at the library. We've used it formally and informally, with and without PowerPoint slides, but always with fun activities and a sense of pride.

The ECRR committee, a joint ALSC/PLA group, offered a dozen conference programs and webinars in 2012 to demonstrate how librarians across the country are applying the tool kit. Several hundred participants learned about the kit's value, explored common sense tips on training adults, discovered how to build relationships with parents and caregivers, and pondered the joy of the five practices.

Let's focus on play for a moment. Providing play opportunities may seem a little contrary to what we in libraries have traditionally thought about ourselves. The idea of play—teaching parents about the importance of play, changing our library environments to include play, and offering take-home kits of play materials—has worked in libraries and can make the library a more inviting place. Play is the optimal activity for learning. Based on this definition of play, one of our goals as librarians is to motivate adults to whet the appetite of children to play. Let's expand that joyful energy of play to each of the practices.



**Dorothy Stoltz** coordinates outreach and programming for Carroll County (MD) Public Library and is a member of the ALSC/PLA Every Child Ready to Read Oversight Committee, which also includes chair Judy Nelson, Clara Bohrer, Christy Estrovitz, Kathleen Hage, Sarah Hinkle, Maren Ostergard, and Kathleen Reif.



Twins in Aurora, New York, sing the “Wheels on the Bus” song as they “ride” in the school bus in the play and learn area of the library.

Libraries are talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing in their own creative and innovative ways. Calgary Public Library in Canada, for example, produced effective forty-five-second video clips for each practice. Utah State Library developed a popular interactive five-point star handout for parents. Montana State Library collaborated with a local artist to design five cool posters and bookmarks with a special appeal featuring Montana’s beautiful outdoor settings and native animals. You can find information about what these and other libraries are doing on the ECRR Ning, an easy-to-use portal with wiki, blog, and Facebook features (visit <http://everychildreadytoread.ning.com>).

Like everything worthwhile, the tool kit is meant to grow and acquire new significance. A Spanish language module has been developed and is now available via the ALA Store at [www.alastore.ala.org](http://www.alastore.ala.org).

The committee is pursuing grant funding to develop research on early literacy best practices. Finally, the committee is coordinating three programs for PLA 2014 in Indianapolis: a pre-conference called “Every Child Ready To Read Implementation and



Diane Black, Carroll County (Md.) Public Library, takes *Every Child Ready to Read* to the family support center and conducts a make-it take-it ramp activity using cereal boxes.

Early Learning Environments” along with two programs: “ECRR 2.0—Using Apps and eBooks in Early Literacy Programs” and “Every Child Ready to Read 2—Does it Really Work? Evaluating the Program.”

# The B.E.A.R. Essentials

## Designing a Fun Literacy Challenge Any Time of Year

ELLEN JEPSON

How many of us have run summer reading program preregistration for several weeks, offered ten weeks of incentives, two weeks of grace period to finish reading and pick up incentives, only to hear patrons ask why the program ends so early?

How about holding a summer reading program in November to placate those patrons?

Our patrons love the summer reading program and are always sad to see it end. When they ask if we're going to do another similar program before next summer, we emphatically say "Yes!"

For many years, Appleton Public Library has offered a family-driven reading program in November. When I became the school age specialist librarian, I changed the program dramatically from a minutes program called B.E.A.R. (Be Excited About Reading) to B.E.A.R. Bingo.

Children were given a bingo board filled with different activities and genres to try out. Some of the activities included "read a story in your kitchen," "read a true book about animals," "listen to a friend or relative's favorite book," or "read a recipe." While some of the activities were still aimed at reading with someone, many were now driven by the child's desires.

Once children completed five activities in a row (up, down, or diagonally), they were allowed to spin a wheel, which led them to a specific prize—generally inexpensive school supplies or coupons donated by local businesses. Children could earn up to five bingos, and at that point, they received a ticket for a



drawing for a teddy bear. If a child blacked out the board, they received a second drawing ticket.

In 2009, the first year we offered B.E.A.R. Bingo, we had 253 school-age children and 190 preschool children participate.

In 2009, we also opened the program to teachers in public, parochial, or private school settings, as well as to teachers in child care centers. Teachers would pick up the bingo boards at the library and could do the activities together as a class, or they could send the boards home with the students, and the students could return the boards to school. This allowed students to participate in a library-sponsored program without actually visiting the library.

At the end of November, teachers returned their students' boards to the library, and the teacher picked up the prizes to distribute to the students.

Parents told me that children enjoyed the different genres that they may have never before considered, and they liked the



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variety of activities they could choose from. Our staff liked the simplicity of the program.

In 2010 and 2011, we ran the program in a similar fashion, each year increasing the number of participants.

Last year, we made striking enhancements to the program. Prior to 2012, children ages 0 to 12 could participate, but all children used the same game board. Last year, we created two boards, one for children ages 3 to 5, and one for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. Children 2 and under were generally encouraged to participate in a reading program that was developmentally designed for that younger age group based on Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR) principles.

Each board features age-appropriate activities. The school-age board had activities chosen to match the reading requirements of the Wisconsin Common Core State Standards, which include a much greater emphasis on informational texts. The preschool board's activities were easier to follow, allowing much greater choice by the parent or caregiver administering the program, as well as incorporating elements of ECRR.

## Tips and Tricks

The in-house program is promoted heavily in preschool storytimes, and the program is also mentioned on the flyer sent to schools at the beginning of the year. I promote the program to teachers by sending out e-blasts that advertise B.E.A.R. to every grade, along with the appropriate field trip for that grade. Principals of private and parochial schools and child care directors receive emails from me about the program. Teachers who have participated in the past get direct e-mails. Every school in the area also receives a flyer.

The program does not need to cost a lot of money. Our excellent Friends group supplies us with everything we need, but we choose to purchase very inexpensive school supplies such as pencils, small erasers, rulers, and pencil toppers as incentives, as well as a few fun economical items like stickers, temporary tattoos, bookmarks, and bouncy balls. A sticker is always an option for a prize when a child doesn't like what they are offered.

When local vendors offer us coupons for free food items we rarely say no, as these make good prizes, too. We sometimes will get complaints from children and parents regarding the small

incentives, but mostly the child is just happy to earn something for reading.

In 2012, we had 320 school-age children (K to sixth grade) and 117 preschool children sign up, and 699 children were registered through their school or child care center, for a total of 1,136 children. Just to contrast, we had 4,192 children (0 to 12 years of age) participate in the summer reading program in 2012, either on their own or through their child care center.

In 2012, though, teachers did not even need to visit the library at the beginning of the program to pick up the boards. Instead, if they wanted, I emailed each teacher a PDF so they could print out the boards themselves; most chose this option. Most students did the activities at school, and the teacher picked up the prizes at the end of the month.

Amanda Kriewaldt, a fifth grade teacher at Ferber Elementary School in Appleton told me, "The fifth grade students at Ferber were invited to participate and many were dedicated to their reading all month."

Jenise Nolte, a fourth-grade teacher at Riverview Evangelical Lutheran School, added, "Each week, the kids in my class go to our little school library to check out books. Sometimes they don't know exactly what they should be reading or what they want to read. Having the B.E.A.R. bingo card helped them to set a goal and to do some searching in a part of the library they maybe wouldn't have normally visited. It also got the kids asking questions of our librarians for help with finding books. Great fun!"

Two of the schools picked up prizes on a field trip unrelated to the B.E.A.R. program, and these students enjoyed spinning the wheel. One preschool had a field trip specifically created for B.E.A.R. so students could spin the wheel.

B.E.A.R. works for the Appleton Public Library. It gives students the opportunity to continue the summer reading program experience during a winter month. Whether students participate at the library or at school, they are participating in a genre-based program that has the potential to get them interested in reading something they haven't tried before.

B.E.A.R. takes only a small portion of time for staff to administer—the time to explain the program and the time to distribute the prizes. Reading for pleasure during the school year is just as important as reading during the summer, and this is one way to help students find books to enjoy. 📖



# An Inconvenient Truth

## The Underground Railroad and Quilts in Children's Picturebooks

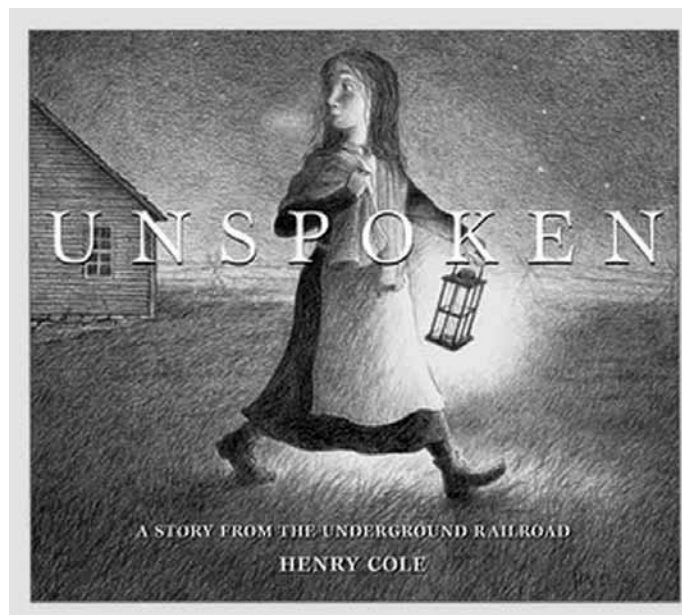
YOLANDA HOOD

A long-standing symbol in children's picturebooks is the quilt. The quilt easily lends itself to vivid illustrations and endearing depictions of intergenerational sewing lessons, grandmother and grandchild bent over fabric pieces sewing together history, memories, and stories. These depictions are quite common in literature, and while scholars consistently suggest the power of the quilt as a rhetorical model in women's literature, very few have examined the quilt's rhetorical impact in children's literature.<sup>1</sup>

Quilt scholar Judy Elsley suggests that quilts in children's literature contain a wealth of cultural, individual, community, and global values that are disseminated through the quilts, "teaching respect for individual lives, as well as instilling the beliefs and traditions of a community."<sup>2</sup> Although seemingly innocent, the quilt sets about to educate and transform young minds, teaching methods of resistance and acceptance as well as providing comfort and reassurance.

So, not surprisingly, the quilt has been used quite often as a symbol in children's picturebooks to further the understanding of one of the darkest periods of American history—slavery. Parents and teachers have eagerly embraced these beautifully illustrated books as a way to understand our country's turmoil.

Many of these books suggest that people who participated in the Underground Railroad (UR) used quilts as a means of communication to help slaves safely escape to freedom. The idea of quilts as communication tools has been well received, and many librarians and teachers have created wonderful programs, guides, and lesson plans to extend the experience with these books and to further explore America's history.



Yet what is depicted in the picturebooks has been consistently contested by quilt historians and folklorists since the publication of Jacqueline Tobin and Raymond Dobard's book, *Hidden in Plain View: A Secret Story of Quilts and the Underground Railroad*.<sup>3</sup>

### Fact and Fiction

Tobin and Dobard's basic thesis is that those working with the UR used an intricate system of quilt patterns to direct slaves to safe houses and eventually to the north to freedom. Tobin began researching this idea in 1994 after a chance encounter with quilter Ozella McDaniel Williams in Charleston, South Carolina; and, in 1997, Williams revealed the "secret code" of quilt patterns to Tobin.

Although Tobin and Dobard's exposure of Williams's secret code set off a fury of debate among quilters, quilt historians, and quilt fans, Williams's code is not the first or only code associated with the UR, and it is not the first dissemination of this information in some form. It has been suggested that special



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quilts (often log cabins with a blue or black center) were hung in front of the houses of those who sympathized with the plight of slaves, indicating that they were safe houses. There is also the belief that some quilts were created as maps of the plantation and surrounding topography. Slaves would study and memorize these “map” quilts before making their escape.

Each of these beliefs about quilts and slaves have been circulated within families, told at quilting circles, and shared as a collective understanding. But no one has provided adequate historical proof that quilts were indeed used in these ways on the UR. As a matter of fact, several of the quilt patterns used in Williams's secret code didn't exist before the early twentieth century. For example, the Drunkard's Path and the Double Wedding Ring patterns weren't developed until after the Emancipation Proclamation. And, according to quilt historian Barbara Brackman, the Log Cabin pattern dates only as early as the 1860s.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, written accounts of quilts being used on the UR have yet to be traced in primary sources such as diaries or letters. Thus far, we only have word of mouth.

Although we cannot hold up picturebooks as true records of historical events, they are still very useful. Besides providing excellent introductions to American slavery, they also offer opportunities to discuss such topics as maps and mapmaking, symbolism, alternative methods of communication, family, friendship, and service. Since 1992, eleven picture books with significant use of quilts as communication tools on the UR have been published. A review of these picturebooks reveals four theories of quilts as communication tools: the safe house, metaphors and symbols, maps, and the Underground Railroad Code.

## Safe House

According to the “safe house” theory, quilts of specific patterns or colors were hung outside of a house that was safe for seeking shelter, food, and further direction in escaping. The earliest depiction of the quilt as a “safe house” code appears in Faith Ringgold's book *Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky*.

In this book, illustrated in Ringgold's trademark paint on quilt style, Cassie and her little brother BeBe are on another flying adventure. While flying in the sky, they come across a train and the weary people who are boarding it. BeBe boards, and the train takes off before his sister can stop him. The conductor, Harriet Tubman, explains to Cassie that the train has left but she can follow her brother by walking the route of the UR.

Cassie escapes the plantation and follows the paths and codes that Harriet whispers to her along the way. Cassie is constantly reminded that she might be caught and punishment is severe. One of the codes for Cassie is a “safe house” that will place a star quilt on the roof when it is safe to enter. She is told to hide in the woods until she sees the quilt.

In the back matter of the book, Ringgold provides a brief history of the UR and Harriet Tubman. She shares her historical knowl-

edge, stating that the quilt was placed by slaves on rooftops for good luck. Although it might have been odd to have a quilt placed on the rooftop of anyone who was helping slaves to escape, Ringgold made the artistic choice to have the star quilt, in the story, placed on the roof to lend more visual clarity to the spread.<sup>5</sup>

Eventually, Cassie makes it to Canada, where her brother awaits her. There, in the sky (as they have regained their ability to fly once they have reached Canada), everyone celebrates freedom and the one-hundredth anniversary of Tubman's first flight to freedom.

Courtnei Wright's book *Journey to Freedom* followed Ringgold's publication two years later. Wright, like Ringgold, does not make the quilt the central idea of escape. It is simply one of the ways that the “conductor” knows whether the next move is safe or not. *Journey to Freedom* contains one quilt that is placed across the porch railing of a home. The conductor tells the escaped slaves that they should stay hidden at the edge of the woods. If the “station master” hangs out a quilt that has the color black in it, then the escaped slaves will know that they may safely enter that home. Although the escaped slaves travel to at least one other “station” or “safe house,” quilts are not mentioned again. Wright also provides brief information about the UR and how it worked, but she does not specifically mention quilts.

Pamela Duncan Edwards also offers a safe house in her 1997 picturebook *Barefoot: Escape on the Underground Railroad*. The story is told in the third person, detailing the perspective of the animals in the forest as they watch the “barefoot” try to escape from the patrollers who are chasing him. In this book, the animals contribute significantly, whether intentional or not, to “barefoot's” escape.

Barefoot is thirsty but has no water. A frog croaks and the barefoot knows that fresh water is nearby to drink. A mouse scrambles in the grass, and barefoot looks down to find berries that he can eat. Barefoot eventually makes his way to a path that leads to a house. Here, he sees a quilt hanging in front of the house. He knows this is his signal of welcome and enters the house, safe for another night.

Another depiction of the safe house is Deborah Hopkinson's picturebook written in verse, *Under the Quilt of Night*. The unnamed narrator is escaping with others. They, too, wait for the quilt to ensure that the house is safe.

The narrator comments, “I stare with all my might / I know what to look for / in most quilts, center squares are red for home and hearth / but these centers are a dark / deep blue / this house hides runaways!”<sup>6</sup> Trusting the quilt, the narrator runs to the house where she and the others are given food and clean clothes and are allowed to rest. Like the other authors, Hopkinson provides a note about the UR and the use of quilts, admitting that there are many stories about quilts but that there are no specifics because the UR involved so much secrecy. Hopkinson does, however, cite Tobin and Dobard in the acknowledgments as well as Cuesta Benberry, a prominent quilt historian who did not agree with Tobin and Dobard's findings.<sup>7</sup>

The most recent depiction of the “safe house” is Henry Cole’s well-received picturebook *Unspoken: A Story from the Underground Railroad*. In this wordless book, shortly after Confederate troops pass by a farm, a young girl quietly discovers that a person is hidden in the family barn. She never sees or speaks to the hidden person but makes efforts to provide food for the stranger over multiple days. We never see the runaway slave enter the barn. But Cole provides clues throughout the book that alert the reader to the fact that the young girl’s farm is indeed a “safe house.”

Cole’s dedication page is a tea-stained double spread of a split rail fence and the corner of a house. A star quilt is thrown across the fence. This image is the most prominent quilt image in the book. This significant display is the first clue to the runaway slave, and the reader, that this farm will provide sanctuary. The reader can continue to draw conclusions about the farm as the quilt shows up in spreads at critical moments throughout the book: before the young girl enters the barn, as the young girl flees from the barn having discovered the runaway, when the patrollers visit the farm in search of the runaway, and when they leave the farm empty handed. The quilt is no longer on the fence once the young girl discovers that the runaway has moved on. It is across her bed, providing her warmth as she rests comfortably in the knowledge that she has helped someone in their quest for freedom.

The adults in this tale never acknowledge that they are aware of a runaway slave hiding on their farm or that the young girl is stealing away food for their guest, which makes for interesting discussion about whether or not the adults are silently complicit in the young girl’s good deed.

Cole provides a thorough author’s note that details his inspiration for the tale. He also briefly discusses “safe houses.”

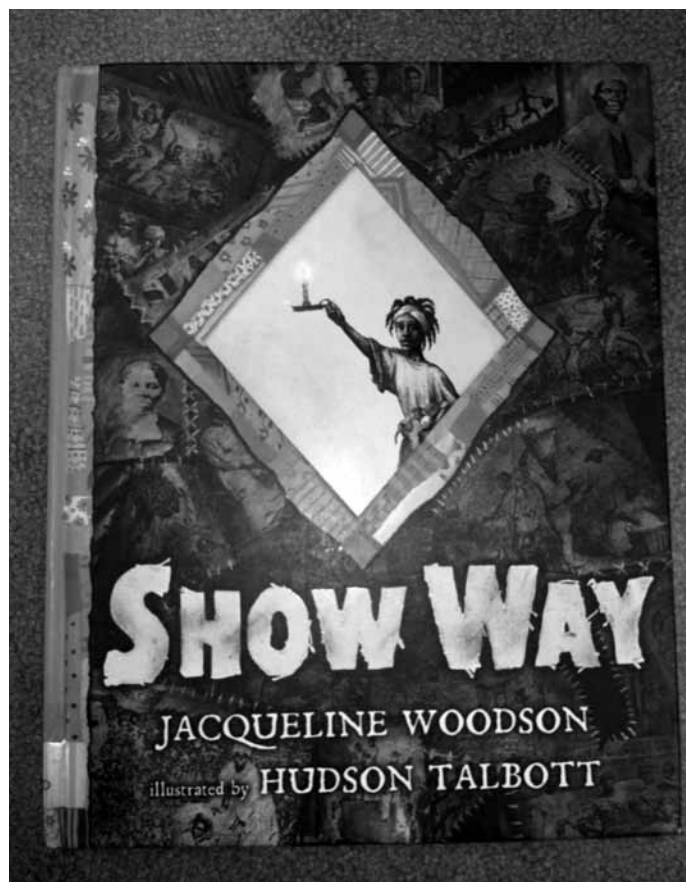
## Metaphors and Symbols

Some quilts are used in the context of slave stories to symbolize home, comfort, and safety. In many ways, quilts and sewing skills are metaphors of freedom because some slaves were able to use their sewing skills to make a small income that would eventually aid in purchasing their freedom.

Tubman sold her favorite quilt to help aid her efforts with the UR, and Elizabeth Keckley worked as a seamstress in her spare time, eventually buying her and her son’s freedom and becoming Mary Todd Lincoln’s personal seamstress.<sup>8</sup>

Although there is an emphasis on the safe house in Hopkinson’s *Under the Quilt of Night*, she does use the quilt as a metaphor as well. Night is a quilt, a covering that will hide the escapees as they travel through the darkness. And throughout the story, the quilt provides protection in various ways. It literally provides physical warmth as well as a tangible direction to freedom.

*Night Boat to Freedom* by Margot Theis Raven also places an emphasis on the quilt as symbol. In the author’s note, Raven



notes that she was inspired by actual slave narratives. She wanted to “focus upon the love within a slave’s family and use Granny’s sewing of the freedom squares to show that stitches of love and selflessness can be stronger than any chains that seek to enslave the human spirit.”<sup>9</sup>

Granny Judith has raised Christmas John since he was born, and because of his undying devotion to her, Christmas John agrees to row a runaway across the river at night. When Christmas John safely returns, Granny Judith asks him what color the runaway was wearing when she reached freedom. Granny Judith begins making a quilt of freedom colors, documenting what each runaway wears on their first step to freedom. The quilt becomes Granny Judith’s “dream-vision” for when all the squares are complete, except for two; she will know that it is time for her and Christmas John to also escape.<sup>10</sup>

When it is, at last, time to go, Granny Judith gives Christmas John a red shirt, for his freedom color will be red. And although Granny Judith tries to send Christmas John alone, he returns and brings Granny Judith along with him to freedom.

Once Christmas John and Granny Judith make the harrowing trip across the river, he is able to wrap her in the quilt “like a big warm hug.”<sup>11</sup> The final spread is of Granny Judith standing with the colorful quilt spread wide between her arms, and she is depicted as if filled with the overwhelming joy of freedom. Raven’s note gives basic information about the UR, weighing in significantly on the importance of sewing and fabric dyeing as symbols of joy and potential freedom in a slave’s life.

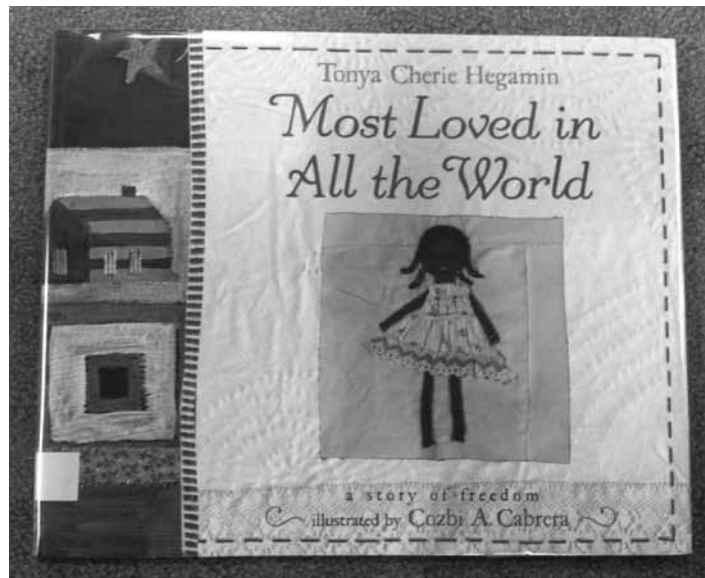


In *Show Way*, Jacqueline Woodson's award-winning fictionalized account of her family history, the author employs the quilt in a variety of ways, but ultimately, it is symbolic of family history, continuity, and promise.

When Soonie's great grandma is sold away from her mother, her mother places a small piece of muslin, two needles, and some red thread in her hands. These articles come to symbolize tools of freedom. Big Mama, who raises Soonie's great grandma on the plantation she is sent to, teaches her to "sew colored thread into stars and moons and roads / that slave children grew up and followed / late in the night, a piece of quilt and the true moon leading them."<sup>12</sup> The illustration depicts Big Mama teaching the code to Soonie's great grandma while holding a finger to her lips, connoting the secret.

Eventually Soonie's great grandma grows up and gives birth to Mathis May, who also learns to sew. When Mathis May is only seven, she is sold away from her mother but takes with her a small piece of her mother's blanket in order to remember her by and her former home. Mathis May's sewing skills continue to improve, so much so that she becomes a seamstress in the plantation big house, but she also sews "moons and roads / tiny patch pieces of stars / and moons and roads."<sup>13</sup> The illustrations depict Mathis May as a young girl holding a candle before her quilt creations as hopeful escapees commit the quilt's patterns to memory. One spread of illustrations depicts the quilt code as described in Tobin and Dobard's book.

Eventually, Soonie is born in this line of strong sewing women. But Soonie is born after emancipation and no longer has to create "Show Ways," as Woodson calls them. Instead, Soonie's quilts of stars, moons, fields, and trees are sold at market to help the family live well by providing an income and to help others to remember the strength and perseverance of the generations who came before. When Caroline and Ann, the twins who follow, are seven, patches of Grandma Soonie's Show Way are sewn into the inside of their dresses. These quilt patches are expected to protect them as they participate in Civil Rights marches. And when Woodson is seven she, too, sews stars, moons, and roads but only as inspiration for her own creativity. And later, as an adult, the quilts are a reminder of the fact that she can make a creative living because of those very quilts that helped others to find their freedom. These quilts also symbolize the strong textile tradition passed down through generations of women in Woodson's family and the secrets that are tied to these textiles.



Although the quilt in Tonya Cherie Hegamin's *Most Loved in All the World* definitely contains some coded information for the young owner of the quilt, the end result of the mother's creation of the quilt symbolizes the sacrifice that so many mothers of slavery had to make and the intense love that they felt for their children. The story is told from the perspective of a nameless child who adores the mother whom she observes working hard in the fields. She wants to be a help to her mother but is still too small.

At night, the mother creates a quilt of fabrics handed down from the plantation house and from scraps of old clothes, and the girl is fascinated. The little girl takes heed of the log cabin, star, a brown tree with green on one side, and a happy little girl. She wonders about the little girl and why she might be so happy, thinking that perhaps this little girl's mother does not have to work so hard.

One night, the little girl's mother returns to the cabin, her back is bloodied from the whip and her shirt is stained. She uses this piece of stained fabric to make a heart shape that she will add to the quilt. On this night, the little girl's mother explains what everything on the quilt means. The log cabin means a safe place. The star will be the brightest in the sky and is the one that she should follow. Moss should only grow on the side of the tree in the direction the little girl is headed toward. And the little girl? She "is the most loved in all the world."<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps weeks or months later, the mother completes the quilt and wakes her daughter in the middle of the night. The mother, a secret agent on the UR, leads the little girl, with the quilt, into the forest and hands her over to another woman, knowing that she will never see her child again. The mother is helping her daughter escape to freedom, a legacy in itself, but she has created the quilt to provide guidelines in helping the young girl to escape and, more importantly, to remind her now motherless child that she is always with her in spirit and love. The mother explains the quilt blocks to her daughter one more time, including the one with the happy little girl, who is now appliquéd on top of the bloodied heart-shaped piece of fabric.

The author's note to parents and educators explains her inspiration for the story. Specifically, she wanted to share the experience that mothers had to endure—the experience of often losing their children to slavery because they were sold away or died of malnourishment, disease, or the elements.<sup>15</sup>

Hegamin wanted to imagine the strength it must have taken to send a child away, holding onto the hope that she was ultimately providing a future of freedom for her child. By creating this book, Hegamin acknowledges quilts as a tool of the UR, but she acknowledges very poignantly how quilts symbolize loving sacrifice.

## Maps

Deborah Hopkinson's *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt*, published in 1993, is cited as an example of quilt coding in Tobin and Dobard's book. Some, like Tobin and Dobard, believe that quilts were pieced as literal maps of local terrain to help guide escapees north to freedom.

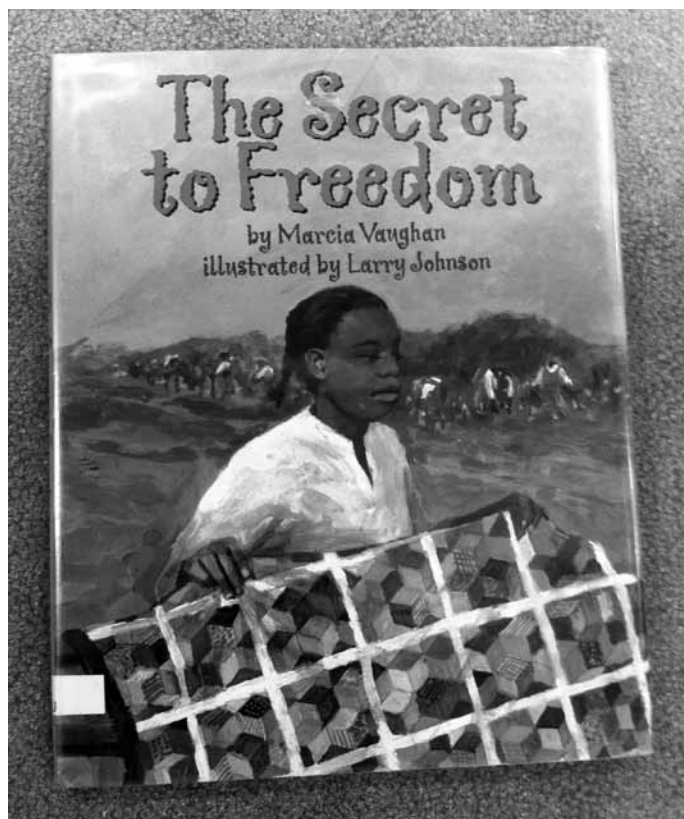
In the beginning of this story, Clara is a field hand, and the work is "killing her."<sup>16</sup> But because she is a gifted seamstress, she is able to work her way out of the fields and into the plantation house. Here, Clara gains useful information overhearing conversations among the plantation owners as well as among various slaves. Once Clara realizes that fabric can be manipulated into shapes and that stitches can be made to look like paths, she begins creating a quilt that will be a map of the plantation and a means of escape. She gathers the tidbits of information from those slaves who are allowed to travel from plantation to plantation, learning the location of fields, lakes, and trees. As members of the slave community realize what she is doing, they come to her with their offerings of the landscape, never asking her what she is doing, never revealing that they know the true purpose of her quilt.

Meticulously matching scraps of fabric with the topography of the surrounding areas, it takes months before Clara can complete the quilt. Before she embarks on her own escape, she entrusts the quilt to elderly Aunt Rachel, who will stay behind and help others read and memorize the quilt to freedom.

Hopkinson provides a general overview of a few quilt patterns that have symbolic meaning. She does not, however, provide information on the inspiration for her book. The back cover provides a mapmaking activity.

## The Code

Both Marcia Vaughan's *The Secret to Freedom* and Bettye Stroud's *Patchwork Path: A Quilt Map to Freedom* embrace Tobin and Dobard's theory of the UR quilt code, although the plots are quite different. Vaughan offers a framed story about Aunt Lucy whose brother escaped slavery many years before, leaving behind Lucy because of her disabled leg. Albert, a blacksmith, is able to gain access to various plantations and invaluable information. He brings this information and an armload of quilts home to share with Lucy. Albert explains that each of the quilts has a message. For example, the Monkey Wrench quilt warns potential escapees to prepare their tools for escape, while the Wagon Wheel warns that it is time to pack their belongings.



Albert and Lucy join the many volunteers on the UR and help many to find freedom. When it is Albert's time to go, Lucy provides him with a quilt square with the North Star sewn on the back for good luck.

The Civil War eventually ends, years pass, and Lucy learns to read and write, becomes a teacher, and marries. Well into her adulthood, Lucy receives, in the mail, the quilt square that she made for her brother, proof that his escape that night long ago was successful—he survived. Lucy and her brother are reunited, along with his family. And Lucy frames the quilt square as a reminder of the bonds of family and the importance of following one's path to freedom.

In Stroud's *Patchwork Path*, Hannah's mother teaches her about a very special quilt that will help her to escape to freedom. Hannah learns the lesson that her mother shares but does not think of the quilt, or freedom, again until after her sister is sold away and her mother dies of a broken heart. But when Hannah's father advises her to air out the Monkey Wrench quilt, Hannah knows she will use the knowledge that her mother shared with her. The Monkey Wrench quilt will inform others that Hannah and her father, who as a wagon driver is quite knowledgeable of the lay of the land, will attempt to escape to freedom. Rather than guiding them directly, the quilt code hints at the steps that Hannah and her father must follow. For example, after walking for many nights, the pair spot bear tracks and decide to follow them because the quilt that Hannah's mother shared with her contained a bear paw pattern.

Following the bear tracks into the valley eventually leads them to fresh water and a cave to shelter them while they sleep. By the time Hannah and her father have traveled for two seasons,

we learn that they have been traveling in a zigzag pattern, much like the drunkard's path pattern found on Hannah's mother's quilt. The pair has walked in a zigzag pattern so as not to invite bad luck (for bad luck follows straight lines) and to make it harder for the patrollers to follow their trail.

Unlike some other picturebook depictions of escapes on the UR, this one provides the reader a better understanding of the amount of time that it could take escapees to arrive in a non-slaveholding state or country. After approximately a year, Hannah and her father make it from Savannah, Georgia, to Canada. There, in her new home, Hannah makes a quilt of old slave clothing and new freedom clothing, a symbol of her family's past struggles, losses, and perseverance, a symbol of her family's new life in a new world.

## Implications

Picturebooks that depict UR quilts are beautifully illustrated and should and can be easily shared with children. However, librarians and teachers need to consider the historical facts and contextualize the information.

Although we can't verify that the tales about these quilts are portrayed accurately, we can clearly convey that these books depict a deep sense of community and family bonds, perseverance, love, and a desire for freedom and justice. They lend themselves easily to programming, provoking thoughtful and critical conversations about the possible means by which slaves may have escaped and make for profound discussions concerning alternative modes of communication and mapmaking. ☞

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# Building Bridges for Global Understanding

## Cultural Literature Collection Development and Programming

JUDI MOREILLON

In the United States, multicultural education was developed in the 1960s as a response to a growing awareness of the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of non-European American descent peoples in educational texts and tenets.<sup>1</sup> Since that time, many librarians have addressed multicultural education through multicultural literature collection development and programming. In the past two decades, libraries have also responded to the arrival of immigrants from countries around the globe as an additional motivating force in broadening library collections and services.

Added to the growing diversity in the school-age population, there is a greater emphasis today on global perspectives in many areas of US life, including economics and politics as well as education. As a result, cultural literatures have become essential resources for engaging in meaningful, relevant literacy learning. Just as multicultural literature has the potential to increase cultural competence about nonwhite Americans, international children's and young adult literature has a key role to play in developing our young people's global understandings. Now is the time to enrich library collections and programs with cultural literature.

Access to diverse voices and multiple perspectives on ideas and information also aligns with current competencies and standards in the library profession. Culturally inclusive and expansive library collections and programming build on young people's understanding of their own cultural identities. These aspects of

library work can also stretch children's and teens' thinking to consider perspectives that are not their own or those of their families. Cultural literature and programming support youth in understanding the rich array of worldviews that will continue to impact their lives throughout the twenty-first century.

### Defining the Terms

- **Multicultural Literature.** Multicultural literature is published in the United States and portrays diverse American cultures. Typically, this literature is related to the major non-European American cultural groups in the United States—African American, Asian American, Latino, and American Indian.<sup>2</sup> Diversity in religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, language, sexual orientation, and physical and intellectual exceptionalities are included in some definitions of multicultural literature.<sup>3</sup>
- **International Literature.** International literature is originally published in countries other than the United States and then brought to this country.<sup>4</sup> Some definitions suggest that this literature can also be written by US immigrants about their home countries and published in the United States, or can include books originally published in the United States by authors from other countries. Other definitions include books with settings in other countries, written by Americans, and published in the United States.<sup>5</sup>



*Judi Moreillon, a former school librarian, serves as an Assistant Professor in the School of Library and Information Studies at Texas Woman's University in Denton. She has taught children's and young adult literature at the university level since 1999. Judi served as the United States Board on Books for Young People (USBBY) 2012 and 2013 Bridge to Understanding Award Committee chair; she is also a USBBY Texas State Ambassador. Judi is also the author of several professional books for school librarians and picturebooks for children. Her latest picturebook is Ready and Waiting for You (Eerdmans Books for Young Readers 2013).*

- **Global Literature.** Global literature, a comprehensive term that encompasses both international and multicultural literature, “honors and celebrates diversity, both within and outside the United States, in terms of culture, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social and economic status, sexual orientation, and physical and intellectual ability.”<sup>6</sup>

Library and education organizations recognize the need for youth and professionals who serve youth to learn and practice cultural competence. The Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) competencies for librarians working in the field include maintaining a diverse collection of resources, understanding and respecting diverse cultural and ethnic values, and promoting programs to underserved children and families.<sup>7</sup>

The American Association of School Librarians (AASL) includes cultural competencies as a descriptor for the teaching responsibilities in the school librarian’s instructional partner role.<sup>8</sup> In its *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner*, AASL suggests students have a responsibility to “consider diverse and global perspectives in drawing conclusions.”<sup>9</sup>

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) includes cultural competencies in the definition of twenty-first-century literacy. Readers and writers “build relationships with others to pose and solve problems collaboratively and cross-culturally” and “design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes.”<sup>10</sup> The International Reading Association’s “New Literacies and 21st-Century Technologies Position Statement” proclaims that students have a right to “instruction that embeds critical and culturally sensitive thinking into practice.”<sup>11</sup> Culture competence is a timely topic both in the library profession and in US society.

## Building Cultural Literature Collections

All types of cultural literature are necessary to prepare youth for living effectively, thoughtfully, and consciously in an increasingly interconnected world. Each year, the Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison publishes statistics related to the number of children’s books they receive written by or about Africans/African Americans, American Indians, Asian Pacifics/Asian Pacific Americans, and Latinos. Out of the 3,600 books received at the CCBC in 2012, 1.8 percent (68 books) were written by Africans or African Americans and 3.3 percent (119 books) were *about* this group.<sup>12</sup> The percentages were even lower in the other three major non-European American categories.

While publication is not nearly as diverse as it should be to reflect the cultural diversity of the school-age population in the United States, the library profession clearly places a value on global literature. ALA, ALSC, and their partners sponsor book awards for authors and illustrators of color and for books focused on themes and worldviews that reflect the cultures of people of non-European American descent.

The Coretta Scott King Award founded in 1969, the Américas Award founded in 1993, and the Pura Belpré Award founded in

1996 honor diversity in literature for young people focused on underrepresented groups that live in the United States. ALSC also established the Mildred Batchelder Award in 1966 to promote the international exchange of books for young people. The Batchelder is given to a publisher that translates and publishes a book in the United States that was previously published in a foreign language and foreign country. Although the number of books in translation from non-Western European countries continues to grow, international books are still a relatively small part of the resources readily available to US students, librarians, and teachers.

Founded in 1953, the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) spotlights international literature through book awards, publications, and project grants. IBBY established the Hans Christian Andersen Award in 1956 and the Andersen Award for Illustration in 1966. These awards are given to international children’s book authors and illustrators, respectively, for their body of work.

Since 2006, the United States Board on Books for Young People (USBBY), an arm of IBBY, has published an annual list of Outstanding International Books that help librarians and other educators identify worthwhile titles.<sup>13</sup> These books, listed by grade levels, were published or distributed in the United States but originated or were first published in another country.

These initiatives of library and education organizations are necessary to help support cultural collection development. Koss and Teale analyzed 370 awarding-winning books and titles popular with US teens published between 1999 and 2005. They noted that fiction was predominant, composing 85 percent of these titles; most of these titles (47 percent) were contemporary realistic fiction. European Americans were the predominant culture at 32 percent with African American characters making up only 5 percent of the characters in these books.<sup>14</sup>

Other groups were even more underrepresented. Although “multicultural titles” made up 20 percent of these books, few portrayed multiple cultures. Thirty percent of the books analyzed were international. Many of the international titles, however, were “culturally generic with the characters’ ethnicity used only for descriptive purposes rather than functioning to depict insights about the culture or cultural practices.”<sup>15</sup>

Culturally authentic literature gives voice to underrepresented people. Librarians and educators who value cultural literature must make a concerted effort to locate, read, review, promote, and integrate authentic and accurate global literature into their collections and programming. However, locating critical reviews of multicultural and international children’s and young adult literature that take cultural aspects into account can be challenging. One place to search for book reviews and conversations that examine both print and illustration is on the Worlds of Words: International Collection of Children’s and Adolescent Literature website ([www.wowlit.org](http://www.wowlit.org)), where reviewers and bloggers critically examine and discuss global titles.

Librarians must also consider the value they place on cultural literature when weeding decisions are being made. A number of

these titles may not achieve robust circulation statistics unless librarians and educators spotlight them in cultural programming. If we agree that global literature has the potential to promote openness toward pluralism and a more just United States and global society, librarians should do their best to make sure these books remain available and reach their intended audiences.

## Cultural Literature in Library Programming

Through engaging with cultural literature, youth can learn different perspectives that may help them prepare for competent global citizenship. High-quality cultural literature can invite readers to educate their hearts and minds.<sup>16</sup> Making cultural literature available for young people's consideration in free, voluntary reading is a first step. However, these books are not easy for youth to locate independently. It is important, then, that librarians and educators spotlight these literatures in their programming and teaching. Library book displays, booktalks, literacy initiatives—such as public library summer reading programs—and literacy events such as author visits are ways school and public library programs can reach out to encourage students to read cultural literature and to increase teachers' awareness and use of these literatures in their classrooms.

Each year, the USBBY sponsors the Bridge to Understanding Award (BtUA), which acknowledges “the work of adults who create programs that use children's books to explore cultures around the world in order to promote international understanding among children. Programs that win the award are based in a broad understanding of culture as ways of living and being in the world, and go beyond the surface features of a culture, such as food, fashion, folklore, famous people, and festivals.”<sup>17</sup> Planning programming that goes beyond the superficial features of cultures is not easy.

Culturally focused children's books are the central component of a successful BtUA program. For many librarians, reading and telling folklore has been a staple of support for young readers' development of cultural competence. While folklore provides a historical perspective on cultures and gives insight into a people's core values and beliefs, these tales do not reflect many aspects of present-day cultures. Integrating current fiction, informational books, and electronic media into cultural programs can help young people connect with the current features of other societies.

There are additional ways to bring authenticity and timely information into cultural programming. Outstanding programs may include guest speakers who are immigrants from other cultures and travelers who recently returned from the country or culture depicted in the literature to share information or their experiences.

On the USBBY website, librarians and other educators will find a slideshow that offers a framework for developing high-quality, high-impact cultural programming.<sup>18</sup> Libraries, schools, scout troops, clubs, and bookstores in the United States are all eligible for the BtUA, which carries a \$1,000 prize.

## One Fine Example

In 2011, the K–8 Nativity School's “The Friendship Journey” earned the BtUA. This program embodies the components of an exemplary international children's literature program—international children's books, classroom projects, and an international exchange.

Begun in 1979, The Friendship Journey at Nativity School has partnered with thirty-six schools in twenty-two countries. As part of its annual Student Exchange Program, the program welcomes students and teachers from abroad. In 2010, delegations from Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, and the Ukraine spent one week at Nativity School to collaborate on The Friendship Journey initiative. That year, the international teams focused on science projects with K–8 students. In addition, a Chinese teacher from Nativity's sister city of Liuzhou, China, came to Cincinnati to work throughout the year to teach students Chinese culture and language.

The school library is the center of the program at Nativity. Each year, students begin learning about their partner countries with books, artifacts, and maps. Integrated across grade levels, this global studies program, for example, might introduce first graders to other cultures through books and visits from native speakers while sixth graders might explore the complexity of Muslim cultures in such nations as Morocco, Bosnia, and Taiwan through books and online resources.

Twice a year, visiting students from other countries visit all Nativity classrooms and engage in age-appropriate activities. Principal Bob Herring notes, “After nine years, students have had opportunities to learn about ten to sixteen countries through face-to-face interaction. These experiences expand students' worldview. Cultural understanding has more meaning when students can put real people's names and stories with their cultures.” Nativity School students also travel to other countries where they must develop cultural competencies in order to live with families whose languages and cultures are different from their own.

Nativity School has made an ongoing commitment to deep learning and global education that has positively impacted students' understanding and continues to earn the praise and support of students, teachers, administrators, and families. The Nativity family believes it is possible to change the world through “The Friendship Journey” one person, one step at a time.

Twenty-first-century literacy is complex. It requires collaborative professionals to ensure that all children and youth, regardless of their backgrounds, develop tools for success. Public and school librarians, other educators, bookstore owners, and club sponsors can increase their commitment to building partnerships with one another to spotlight cultural literature for independent reading selections and programming. These efforts can help prepare youth for living and working in a global society. With the twenty-first-century imperative for cultural competence, cultural literature and programming should have a central role in educating our young people. ☺

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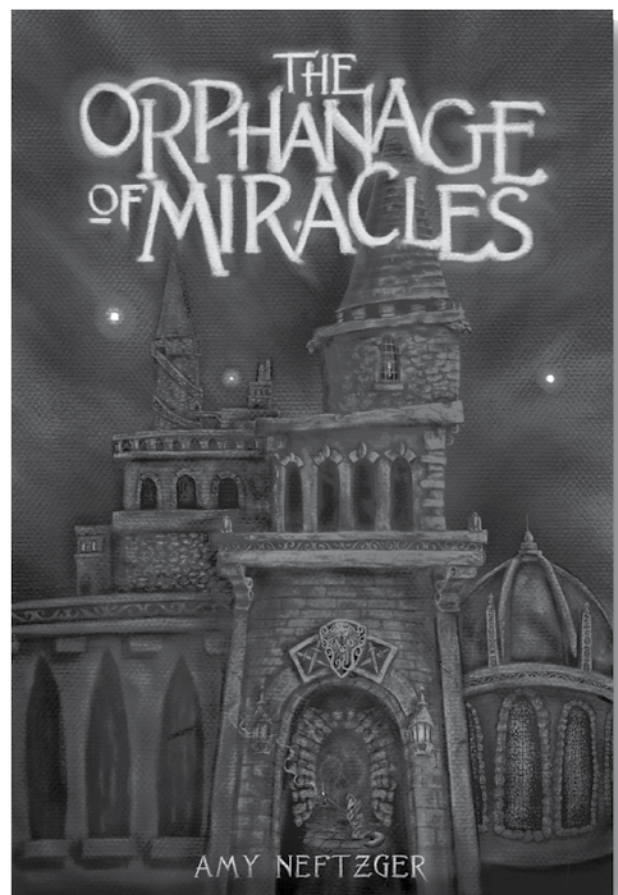
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# Tea for Two Hundred?

## Hosting a Fairy Tea Party at Your Library

CARLA MORRIS

### Sound the trumpets! "All arise to greet the Fairy King!"

*As Library Director Gene Nelson leads the Fairy King's procession, the audience rises from their seats to curtsy or bow.*

*The king then proclaims this the "Day of the Fairies in the Library Kingdom." Children are seated and prepare to watch a short ballet, performed by a local ballet school. Next is the children's favorite, the fairy promenade, followed by the serving of the "tea."*

*The entire program lasts a mere forty minutes, but the memories linger.*

The Provo (UT) City Library recently held its Twelfth Annual Fairy Tea Party. Eight hundred tickets sold out in a record forty-five minutes. Patrons love the tea parties, and we've added a few more each year to accommodate the growing popularity. We now offer four teas over a two-day period; each tea party serves two hundred patrons.

Nelson says, "Hosting fun and exciting children's programs has long been a staple of public libraries. Hosting annual events provide opportunities for children and their parents to anticipate returning to the library for yet another memorable experience."

He adds, "Through long-term planning and budgeting, our Fairy Teas and Big Guy Little Guy events add imaginative and creative possibilities in the lives of our children for years to come. Every dollar spent has been returned through the many smiles and giggles of joy and merriment on hundreds and thousands of little (and big) faces. And they will return to the library because they have such warm memories."



Volunteer trumpeteers add drama to "the king's" entrance.

Provo Library is located in a restored historical building that includes a ballroom and kitchen. We rent the ballroom for weddings and other activities, and that income covers our event staff costs. This ballroom is also perfect for hosting author events and tea parties. However, it's not necessary to have a ballroom to hold tea parties. Tea parties are completely viable in other community buildings, parks, gardens, discounted hotels, or church buildings.

Our first fairy tea, held in the children's craft room, served a small group of thirty. Before moving to the remodeled library, we hosted ten years of library sponsored tea parties at the local Marriott Hotel.

We also hold Big Guy Little Guy events for boys (ages three and up) and their dads (or another adult male) just two weeks after the Fairy Tea. Tickets are \$5 each and cover the cost of a take-home book. Hamburgers and juice boxes are donated by our local Burger King.

We have tried several themes, including knights, Western, and sports, but the space adventure seems to work the best for us. We have a local group of volunteers who dress in Star Wars costumes. Boys can shoot baskets at an indoor, inflatable basketball



**Carla Morris** is Children's Services Librarian at the Provo (UT) City Library. She has done tea parties at the library for more than twenty years.





Gene Nelson, Provo City Library Director, enjoys being a “king”!

hoop (Asteroid Blast), play with a table full of LEGOS (Station Construction), get their faces painted (Alien Transformation), play with pool noodles (Jedi Light Saber Training), “fish” at the Star Fishing Pond, get a Yoda Fortune (Ask Master Yoda), visit the Balloon Armory and pick out a book to take home (Blast-O-Books).

The books and inflatable basketball hoop are paid for by proceeds from our Friends of the Library book sale; everything else is donated and run with volunteers. While the little star troopers are eating their hamburgers, they are entertained by science experiments performed by our local University Chemistry Club.

## Why host a tea party?

Programming brings patrons to the library. (A well-planned annual event will *forever* link good memories with the library.) Before the king enters the scene, I actually give a formal welcome and specifically state our reason for the event. “We are happy to help you create good memories with your children, and good memories of time spent at the library,” I say, drawing their attention to a bibliography of fairy books inserted into their program, and invite them to continue their patronage of the library.

**True story:** I was attending an event at the local high school when a girl rushed up to me and said, “Aren’t you the Tea Lady? I loved those tea parties . . . it was a big deal for me and my sister. We went every year.” I was floating on air for the next few days with that unexpected affirmation. Yes! Tea parties are worth the effort.

## Ideas for a Successful Tea Party—Guaranteed!

Here are some tips for how our library plans and hosts Fairy Teas. Most libraries can adapt these guidelines based on their situations.

- **Keep ticket prices low.** Tickets sell for just \$5 each, but the event is classy and memorable. How do we do it? The tea parties are not meant to be fundraisers or highbrow events meant only for those who can afford it. The food costs approximately \$2.50 for each plate. The fairy favor is \$1, and the remainder covers printing, linen rental, flowers, and decorations. At first it seemed out of character to charge for a library event, since all our programming is free. But in all my years of doing library tea parties, I never had a complaint about the cost. I have had patrons suggest that we charge *more*, thinking that an increase in cost would make more tickets available.

This event is not a fundraiser, and we want to keep it accessible to everyone. Generally, patrons are happy to have an excuse to dress up, have a bite to eat, take something home, create memories, experience some culture, and, of course, take lots of pictures.

You can slowly test your patrons’ ability to support a ticketed event. As a yearly tradition grows and word gets around, you will find that patrons will pay for something they value. Keep in mind, even at the highest cost, the tea is cheaper than a movie. It’s interactive time spent with their children in a library environment. If you hold a tea party *every* year, little girls will be anxious to turn three, just so they can come to the Fairy Tea. Patrons who faithfully come to the library are the very people who will invest in a *party* held in the library.

- **Start small.** Our first tea party was held in a very small auditorium for thirty people. We did not even have tables. Patrons were served a small plate of sweets and witnessed a short fashion show of book characters. The next year we added a second tea party.
- **Include touches of class.** Use real linens, fresh flowers, and live music (hopefully donated). For linens, seek out discount vendors. We rent linen tablecloths and napkins from a laun-



"Space Adventures" was the 2013 Big Guy Little Guy theme.

dry run by special needs staffing. They are half the price of regular linen services, and they mix an extra heavy starch just for our napkins, which are folded to stand on the tables. For fresh flowers, we use surplus flower warehouses, wholesale stores with government discounts, and greenhouse throwaways. We use the discount greenhouse and Provo City's discount. We bought tall glass vases that hold just one flower filled out with bear grass. We only need twenty-five flowers for our twenty-five tables.

- **Involve the community.** Enlist help wherever possible (volunteers, donations, and so on).
- **Choose an inexpensive location.** Hold the tea party at the library, parks, gardens, or other inexpensive venues.
- **Consider adding a boutique.** We provided a "fairy shopping experience," which is not necessary, just a little extra touch. You can seek donations from local or university bookstores, craftsmen, local artisans, and the Friends of the Library. We have offered items including fairy books, inexpensive jewelry, small dolls, puzzles, purses, stickers, candy, wands, and tiaras. Be careful that the boutique does not attempt to sell the same item given as the favor for that year.

- **Be smart about food.** We purchase our food from a small family-owned grocery that offers the items we need for 10 percent over cost. The food plates are assembled and served by the high school culinary class, which has food handler's permits. We pay them minimum wage, and the money funds additional class activities.
- **Select fantastic entertainment.** Each year we use a ballet school, and they showcase their senior students at our tea party. The students dance an excerpt from their spring recital. We also use young harp students who play background music in the entrance. We "pay" these entertainers with small thank-you gifts.
- **Make decorations lovely.** We use lots of discounted white and pink netting and white lights that have been purchased online. We've purchased arches, large flowers, and other items on sale. Watch for fairy items at garage and tag sales. Our large fairies at the bottom of the stairs were former Christmas decorations at the mall, purchased for 90 percent off. Each year we add something new to keep it fresh. This year, we bought seven three-foot high flowers from a craft store for half off. We also use the library Christmas trees, some of them pre-lit, purchased at year-end sales. Adding



Dressing up is more than half the fun.



Left: Simple but elegant with the use of real linens and fresh flowers. Right: Fairy tea boutique book store.

tulle, plastic fruit, and flowers from the local dollar store makes for a fairyland forest. The past few years, we've added fairy houses, decorated and donated by various groups and volunteers. Our Mother Daughter Book Club participants have made fairy houses, donating them to the tea. The houses are small, decorated with flowers, seeds, shells, and jewels, and placed on the tables for viewing.

- **Don't forget the program.** The Fairy King's procession is made up of volunteers, storytellers, and our library director—who is willing to participate in costume. You could involve additional community members such as the mayor, high school drama classes, or city/state pageant winners. We have an emcee who moves the program along, teaches fairy manners, and instructs people to introduce themselves to others sitting at their tables.
- **Prepare the promenade!** This is the highlight of the tea party! Children love walking down a runway, displaying their fairy outfits. To ensure a positive experience, spend a few minutes to teach little fairies how to walk, curtsy, and smile. Volunteers along the runway can keep the pace moving and encourage those who may be a bit shy. We see a few of the same little faces again and again. They love the promenade!
- **Make fairy finger food.** This is probably our biggest secret to share with you. It's what we've learned after throwing away many chicken croissant sandwiches one year and many peanut butter and jelly sandwiches the next. We finally figured out what will make both children and adults happy. What is the perfect fairy tea food? A mini muffin, individually wrapped small piece of cheese, shortbread cookies dipped in chocolate, shortbread cookie with raspberry jelly center, fresh fruit (strawberry or small cluster of grapes), and the "tea," which is simply ice water with a slice of lemon. Our cost, as it has evolved, is about \$2.50 per person.
- **Offer fairy favors.** Over the years, we have given away a variety of favors including wands, tiaras, small necklaces, brace-

lets, fairy dolls, and books—all purchased from Oriental Trading Co., Rhode Island Novelty, or Book Whole Sellers. We have also worked with the local Dollar Tree store. Given enough time, they can usually round up favors from a variety of stores in the area. One year we purchased eight hundred fairy necklaces with vials of fairy dust for just eighty-eight cents each.

- **Cue up the photos!** We have offered staged photography with a local studio. There are a number of grandmothers who would rather have a professional sitting for a small fee. Be prepared for photos to be tweeted and listed on an abundance of blogs.

## Secrets We've Learned over the Years

- **The participants themselves are the decorations.** Emphasize wearing fairy costumes or "best dress" to both child and adult. (We reemphasize this idea on posters, tickets, signage, and our website.)
- **No babies or children under the age of three.** Strollers and crying infants tend to be distracting and can ruin the magic of a tea party. This program is for children ages three and up, who really enjoy having a parent or other caregiver with them and without younger siblings.
- **Provide plenty of photo opportunities.** Facebook, Instagram, and blogging are a top priority with many patrons. The Promenade, posing with the Fairy King and Court, ballerinas, harpists, and other fairy tea decorations provide ample opportunities for unique photos. Great pictures make for a successful event.

As libraries look to define their role within the community, programs that become traditions offer yet another way libraries can become an indispensable place in the lives of their patrons. ☺

*Photos by Brian Gibson, courtesy of Provo City Library.*

## Fairy Reading List

### Picture Books

Carmody, Isobelle. *Magic Night*. Illus. by Declan Lee. Random House, 2007. 40p.

Day, Alexandra. *The Fairy Dogfather*. Illus. by the author. Laughing Elephant, 2012. 32p.

Drescher, Daniela. *Little Fairy Can't Sleep*. Illus. by the author. Floris Books, 2011. 24p.

Falconer, Ian. *Olivia and the Fairy Princesses*. Illus. by the author. Atheneum, 2012. 40p.

Graham, Bob. *April and Esme, Tooth Fairies*. Illus. by the author. Candlewick, 2010. 40p.

Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. *Sleeping Beauty*. Retold by Mahlon F. Craft. Illus. by K. Y. Craft. Chronicle Books, 2002. 32p.

Palatini, Margie. *Gone with the Wand*. Illus. by Brian Ajhar. Orchard, 2009. 40p.

Ray, Jane. *The Dollhouse Fairy*. Illus. by the author. Candlewick, 2010. 32p.

Shannon, David. *Alice the Fairy*. Illus. by the author. Blue Sky, 2004. 40p.

Yolen, Jane. *Come to the Faeries' Ball*. Illus. by Gary Lippincott. Wordsong, 2004. 32p.

### Easy Readers

Boelts, Maribeth. *Sleeping Bootsie*. Illus. by Patricia Cantor. Random House, 2011. 48p.

Herman, Gail. *The Perfect Pumpkin Hunt*. Illus. by Adrienne Brown. Random House, 2012. 48p.

Kann, Victoria. *Pinkalicious: Fairy House*. Illus. by the author. HarperCollins, 2013. 32p.

Meadows, Daisy. *The Rainbow Fairies*. Illus. by the author. Scholastic, 2010. 32p.

Redbank, Tennant. *A Fairy Frost*. Illus. by Disney Artists. Random House, 2011. 48p.

### Beginning Chapter Books

Baker, Cicely Mary. *Lavender's Midsummer Mix-Up*. Illus. by the author. Ware, 2006. 80p.

Barnholdt, Lauren. *Hailey Twitch Is Not a Snitch*. Illus. by Suzanne Beaky. Sourcebooks, 2010. 160p.

Doherty, Berlie. *The Goblin Baby*. Illus. by Lesley Harker. Random House, 2009. 128p.

Duey, Kathleen. *Silence and Stone*. Illus. by Sandara Tang. Aladdin, 2010. 128p.

Jarman, Julia. *Pillywiggins and the Tree Witch*. Illus. by Alex Bitskoff. Andersen Press, 2011. 124p.

McKain, Kelly. *Fairy Friends*. Illus. by Nicola Slater. Scholastic, 2008. 112p.

Meadows, Daisy. *Ruby the Red Fairy*. Illus. by George Ripper. Scholastic, 2003. 65p.

Rodda, Emily. *Charm Bracelet*. Illus. by Raoul Vitale. HarperCollins, 2009. 128p.

### Fiction

Banks, Lynne Reid. *The Fairy Rebel*. Yearling, 2004. 128p.

Blume, Lesley M. M. *Modern Fairies, Dwarves, Goblins, and Other Nasties*. Illus. by David Foote. Knopf, 2010. 256p.

Booraem, Ellen. *Small Persons with Wings*. Dial, 2011. 304p.

Cook, Eileen. *Fourth Grade Fairy*. Aladdin, 2011. 176p.

DiTerlizzi, Tony and Holly Black. *The Field Guide*. Illus. by Tony DiTerlizzi. Simon & Schuster, 2003. 128p.

Durban, Frederic S. *The Star Shard*. Houghton Mifflin, 2012. 320p.

Hanley, Victoria. *Violet Wings*. Egmont USA, 2009. 357p.

Prineas, Sarah. *Winterling*. Harper, 2012. 248p.

Schlitz, Laura Amy. *The Night Fairy*. Illus. by Angela Barrett. Candlewick, 2010. 117p.

Sullivan, Laura L. *Under the Green Hill*. Henry Holt, 2010. 308p.

### Informational

Antram, David. *How to Draw Fairies*. Illus. by the author. Powerkids, 2012. 32p.

Barker, Cicely Mary. *Fairyopolis: A Flower Fairies Journal*. Illus. by the author. Warne, 2005. 32p.

Hague, Michael. *The Book of Fairy Poetry*. Illus. by the author. HarperCollins, 2004. 156p.

Johnson, J. Angelique. *The Truth About Fairies*. Illus. by Carolina Farias. Picture Window, 2010. 32p.

Kane, Tracy. *Fairy Houses . . . Everywhere!* Photos by Barry Kane. Light Beams, 2006. 56p.

Losure, Mary. *The Fairy Ring: Or Elsie and Frances Fool the World*. Photos by Frances Griffiths and Elsie Wright. Candlewick, 2012. 192p.

Morris, Susan J. *A Practical Guide to Faeries*. Illus. by Emily Fiegenschuh. Mirrorstone, 2009. 144p.

# Draw and Write What You Know

## Robert McCloskey's Ohio

STEPHANIE BANGE AND GRATIA BANTA

*"Drawing is most of all a way of seeing and of thinking."*—Robert McCloskey<sup>1</sup>

Caldecott Medal winner Robert McCloskey's words and illustrations about Ohio pulsate with a strong sense of place.

Hamilton, Ohio, where he was born in a two-story white clapboard house in a middle-class neighborhood in 1914, is a few miles upriver from the bustling city of Cincinnati. During McCloskey's formative years, it was a significant industrial city of paper mills, machine tool companies and foundries, and manufacturing of vaults and safes. In this thriving community, McCloskey actively explored art and engineering.

He used this setting for his books *Lentil*, *Homer Price*, and *Centerburg Tales*, to depict life as it was in many small Midwestern towns in the early 1930s. Filled with action and emotion, each provides excellent storytelling for reading aloud. A historical perspective can further enhance the reader's understanding of these works.



Robert McCloskey. Photo courtesy and used with permission of Sally and Jane McCloskey.

While in high school, McCloskey built marionette puppets, performed in the high school play "Reggie Mortimer," served as leader of a harmonica band that performed at local lodge meetings and church socials, led the school band as the equivalent of drum major, and created the art/adornment for his high school's yearbook and other school publications.

When not in school, he would spend his time at Camp Campbell Gard or at the local YMCA teaching classes such as model plane building. His popular soap-carving classes for the Y were held in the shower room, where the water was turned on after class in order to wash the messy soap shavings down the drain.

When he was nineteen, McCloskey was selected to design more than twenty bas-relief carvings and two cast aluminum pieces for the exterior of the new municipal building, a federal works project. About his first professional commission (which took him only six months to complete), McCloskey reflected later, "I can't imagine now an architect with the courage to turn a 19-year-old loose to do the sculpture for one of the most important buildings in town, but he did."<sup>2</sup>



Director of the Charles & Renate Frydman Educational Resource Center at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, **Stephanie Bange** (far left) has been an active member of the Association for Library Service to Children for seventeen years. **Gratia Banta** served on the 1987 Caldecott Committee and as Chair in 2006, and is currently the acting Youth Services Manager for the Lane Libraries, [www.lanepi.org](http://www.lanepi.org). For the last five years, she has been part of the Art Adjunct Faculty teaching art at Miami University.



Copyright © Robert McCloskey, 1940. Renewed 1968. From *Lentil*. Used by permission of Viking Children's Books.

The sculptures helped him win a scholarship to attend the Vesper George School of Art in Boston, so McCloskey moved there to study art. An introduction to the prominent children's book editor May Massee by his childhood friend Stuart Fitton changed his life's direction. When he met Massee, McCloskey took along some woodcuts based on the story of Beowulf.

McCloskey recalled, "She looked at the examples of 'great art' that I had brought along. I don't remember the words she used to tell me to get wise to myself and to shelve the dragons, Pegasus and limpud pool business and learn how and what to 'art' with. I think we talked mostly of Ohio."<sup>3</sup> He continued to study art and developed an idea, which later became *Lentil*.

Starting with illustrations of a boy playing harmonica, the text became the story about a boy who could neither sing nor whistle. McCloskey used bits and pieces of Hamilton for inspiration: He scaled down the Soldiers, Sailors and Pioneers Memorial to fit a smaller sized town; he re-envisioned Daniel Rumple's house, morphing it into Colonel Carter's house by adding a cupola and substituting a brick wall for a wrought-iron fence; he remade local buildings into composites, slightly caricatured.

"As a boy, I had suspenders and dressed rather like my story's hero, though my mother would never permit barefootedness,"<sup>4</sup> McCloskey said.

McCloskey's daughter, Jane, remembers, "I never heard my father whistle. He almost never sang, however, he did play a fine harmonica, so he must have written about what he knew."<sup>5</sup> (An interesting side note: McCloskey plays the harmonica on the soundtrack of the Weston Woods film production of *Lentil*.)

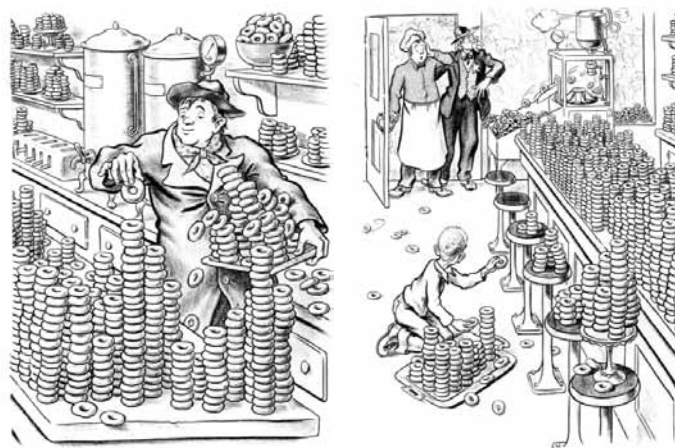
Of all three of his books set in Ohio, McCloskey often commented that these are remembered pictures; they are not actual places, people, or things. "It's odd. A lot of my books are about locale. The locale of *Lentil* is Ohio—but I did that book in New York City."<sup>6</sup>

When writing *Homer Price*, he wanted to write the types of stories that he wished he could have read as a boy, but weren't available at the time. These works endure because they resonate with

readers over the decades, due to their strong sense of place. The stories and drawings are accurate in conception about growing up in the 1940s in a small town surrounded by agricultural communities. Each story is filled with the Midwestern spirit of invention and mischievousness. Consistently, McCloskey was an exceptional storyteller who wrote with humor and affection about his Ohio roots using word and illustration.

Stories of McCloskey playing the harmonica in Hamilton as a boy are local legend. Though he probably didn't mean to, he verbally and visually solidified the memory of these legends when he created the book *Lentil* by making the character Lentil about the same age McCloskey was when he played harmonica gigs for social gatherings in Hamilton. By recording the sound of the legendary harmonica playing on the film soundtrack, listeners can actually hear McCloskey creating music.

Recently restored, Hamilton's Lane Library retains its similarity to the fictional Alto Public Library, particularly in the curved front steps and cupola. In the image of the Alto Library, McCloskey masterfully used a double-page spread to pull the reader's eye toward Lentil with strong two-point perspective drawing. The musical notes on the page make the musical tune visual for the reader; the music causes a man on the street



Copyright © Robert McCloskey, 1943. Renewed 1971. From *Homer Price*. Used by permission of Viking Children's Books.



Copyright © Robert McCloskey, 1951. Renewed 1979. From *Centerburg Tales*. Used by permission of Viking Children's Books.

to turn his head to listen, a little dog to follow Lentil, and the reader to join in the parade.

Good drawing is deceptively simple, yet has layers of meaning. McCloskey possessed a remarkable depth of field, a sense of place, and at the same time was able to capture a moment of humor, as in the story "The Doughnuts with Homer" from *Homer Price*. Every line in the drawing tells just what needs to be told.

In Homer's kneeling figure, McCloskey conceived a boy that had the spirit, clothes, and body structure of a young Jimmy Stewart or of Woody Guthrie. Homer's big ears provide fodder for a giggle, and his heroic attempts to line up all the doughnuts begs readers to laugh out loud.

An industrious problem-solver, Homer sticks to his task of sorting and doing what needs to be done as Uncle Ulysses and the sheriff arrive. Also remarkable about this illustration is the face of Uncle Ulysses; through his eyes, the reader sees the chaos of the situation.

It is evident from the frontispiece of *Centerburg Tales* that McCloskey knew very well how to draw hands and feet, as these are renderings only a skilled artist can achieve. The lines of the drawing show that Homer and his friend Freddy have sensitive, yet functional hands, and that their feet are firmly and responsibly planted on the ground. McCloskey depicted this fleeting moment humorously, drawing Homer slightly bent over, pausing in the midst of his mopping task, and holding his mop at an angle as if it were a "beard" on his face. Freddy holds his broom to make a "moustache" while his playful eyes dart to the right, as if on the lookout for a reprimand due to their mischievous break in chores.

The reader is privy to the boys' inspiration for their joke on the next illustration: they are mocking two busts—one of the

ancient poet Homer (Homer's mop "beard") and the other American author Mark Twain (Freddy's broom "moustache").

A trip to the McCloskey Museum at Heritage Hall in Hamilton, Ohio, is like finding hidden treasure where you least expect it. The treasures begin on the outside the building—including McCloskey's decorative medallions adorning the exterior of Heritage Hall and a life-sized statue of Lentil and his dog, Harmony (commissioned by the Hamilton Community Foundation, with Harmony's name determined by a competition of school children).

The statue of Lentil was created by Nancy Schön, the artist who created other statues based on McCloskey books: *Make Way for Ducklings* (depicted in Boston and in Moscow, Russia) and *Sal's Bear* (Boothbay Harbor, Maine).

More discoveries await inside Heritage Hall—McCloskey's two Caldecott Award medals, in 1942 for *Make Way for Ducklings* and in 1958 for *Time of Wonder*, the doughnut machine from the Weston Woods' film production *The Doughnuts*, several sketches of friends from his boyhood, brilliant original drawings and melodious watercolor paintings by McCloskey, two interior building decorative medallions, high school publications adorned with his artwork, and the totem pole he carved for YMCA Camp Campbell Gard while in his teens.

Museum visitors may opt to pick up a free guide to Hamilton locations referenced in McCloskey's works about Ohio; it includes snapshots of each site and references its importance. For both the seasoned and passionate children's literature lover, a visit to Hamilton is a grand adventure not to be missed because there is something in the museum for all ages. ☺

Take a virtual tour of McCloskey's Hamilton, Ohio, at [www.flickr.com/photos/88275337@N02/sets/72157632798476607](http://www.flickr.com/photos/88275337@N02/sets/72157632798476607) or visit [http://hamiltonheritagehall.org/McCloskey\\_Museum/Home.html](http://hamiltonheritagehall.org/McCloskey_Museum/Home.html).

## References

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2. *Ibid.*, 15:43–15:52.
3. Leonard S. Marcus, *A Caldecott Celebration: Seven Artists and Their Paths to the Caldecott Medal*. (New York: Walker, 2008), 140.
4. Leonard S. Marcus, *Show Me a Story! Why Picture Books Matter: Conversations with 21 of the World's Most Celebrated Illustrators* (Somerville, Mass.: Candlewick Books, 2012), 144.
5. Jane McCloskey, *Robert McCloskey: A Private Life in Words and Pictures* (Kittery Point, Maine: Seapoint Books/Smith-Kerr Associates, 2011), 18–19.
6. Marcus, *Show Me a Story!*, 150.

# Who Wants to Host an Arbuthnot Lecture?

## The Long Road of Planning, Preparedness, and Pride behind the Scenes

BRENDA DALES

A few years ago, when I was in Prague, I walked up to a castle and noticed a tea shop with books by Peter Sís in the window. The tea shop appeared exotic, so I went in. There I saw more books by Sís, and in fact, the shop looked like a tribute to the author.

I went up to the woman at the counter. “Why do you have books by Peter Sís here?” The woman seemed surprised by my question, so I continued. “I love his books! He is a terrific artist, and he draws on his family experiences in some of his books.”

Still, I continued. “I’ve met him,” I stated, hoping to impress the woman. Of course, I didn’t explain I “met” him in an autograph line with about seventy-five other people.

“I know him!” I proudly exclaimed.

She looked at me and spoke. “I know him, too,” she said. “He’s my brother.”

I was standing in the Sís family home.

\* \* \* \* \*

About five years after this incident, on April 4, 2012, to be exact, I stood in Hall Auditorium at Miami University, facing a packed house and told this story as part of my introductory comments to the May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture that was to be shortly delivered by Sís. How was it possible that Sís—born in the former Czechoslovakia, world renowned filmmaker, illustrator, and author, just named to receive the prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Medal for illustration—and I, were not only in the same building, but that I had helped create the reason he



Pictured left to right: Mary Fellows, Angus Killick, Frances Foster, Peter Sís, Brenda Dales, Shawn Brommer, Aimee Strittmatter. Photo by Bert Shepard/Silver Shutter.

was connecting with children’s literature professionals, Miami University students and faculty, community members, and other children’s literature aficionados?

Here are some of the events leading up to Peter Sís’s Arbuthnot Lecture. Each May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture is distinctly different, and this is a behind-the-scenes tour from inception to implementation and creation to closure. It is not meant to be a template, but hopefully this can give a glimpse at one inimitable experience.

### The May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture Award

When committees of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) announce the Caldecott Medal and Newbery Medal books each year at the Midwinter Meeting of the American Library Association (ALA), they also announce the winner of the May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture Award. Named for the woman who wrote the classic textbook *Children and Books* and cocreated the Curriculum Foundation Readers (the “Dick and Jane” books), the Arbuthnot Honor Lecture Award is bestowed to an “author, critic, librarian, historian, or teacher of children’s literature, of any country, who shall prepare a paper considered to be a significant contribution to the field of children’s literature.”<sup>1</sup>

The first Arbuthnot Honor Lecture was given in 1970 by Margery Fisher at Case Western Reserve University, and other prestigious

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past recipients have included Jean Fritz, Leland B. Jacobs, Margaret Mahy, Russell Freedman, Virginia Hamilton, Maurice Sendak, Walter Dean Myers, Kathleen T. Horning, and Lois Lowry.<sup>2</sup>

Soon after the lecturer is named, institutions can submit applications to the Arbuthnot Committee in hopes of being selected to host the lecture. So when Gratia Banta, a friend and former Caldecott Committee chair, sent me an email in early 2011 to ask if we had an auditorium at Miami (OH) University where Peter Sís could give a talk, I knew my life had changed. I may have broken some laws of physics as I grabbed my cell and punched keys to phone Gratia immediately.

After I started breathing again, Gratia explained that Sís had been named the 2012 May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecturer, and there would be a little more work to do in addition to finding a room if Miami University were to apply to host the Arbuthnot Lecture.

### Planning

The idea of Peter Sís coming to Miami University resonated with me. Without knowing who the lecturer will be until just a few months before applications are due—or the role of that person in the field of children's literature—I believed it might be unrealistic to set sights on any particular year prior to the announcement. But once I learned it was Sís, I felt strongly about possibilities to showcase his unique talents while promoting children's literature broadly.

Sís has a high profile as an award-winning artist, animated filmmaker, and creator of books for children. His accomplishments, along with his background, suggested connections both within and outside of the children's literature environment. He grew up in the former Czechoslovakia during Communist control of that country, and his parents encouraged his art and creativity, while at the same time he was growing up in a repressive and conformist society.

Now living in New York, Sís is a children's literature megastar. Among his many distinctions and triumphs, he created three Caldecott Honor books—*The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain* (Farrar, 2007); *Tibet: Through the Red Box* (Farrar, 1998); and *Starry Messenger: Galileo Galilei* (Farrar, 1996)—and he won the Golden Bear Award in 1980 for his animated short film *Hlavy (Heads)*.

Seven times, he won the the *New York Times* Book Review "Best Illustrated Book of the Year." His repertoire of talent incorporates other types of art, such as a mosaic in the New York City subway system, and murals at the Champaign (IL), public library and the Baltimore/Washington International Airport. And as further confirmation of his broad appeal, the world was to learn in April of 2012 that Sís was selected to receive the distinguished and international Hans Christian Andersen Award for illustration.

Thoroughly investigating Sís's numerous accomplishments was like a guilty pleasure for me. Even though I revered this man as a children's literature luminary, his works suggested qualities

that would be vastly desirable for Miami University and the surrounding community. His appeal would encompass art, film, writing, history, and international studies—areas congruous with our Havighurst Center for Russian and Post-Soviet Studies, and more, in addition to children's literature.

Especially noteworthy is the fact that various entities at Miami have established connections with groups, academics, or institutions in the Czech Republic. Our work in the Czech Republic includes an established program in public schools in the town of Olomouc, thus increasing our attraction to Sís as someone who intimately knows the Czech culture.

### Action

I scoured the ALSC website for information about the Arbuthnot Lecture. When Sís's name was announced on the ALSC website, there was also information about applying to host the Arbuthnot Lecture, as well as the application form itself. I also found the *Arbuthnot Honor Lecture Committee Manual*, which outlines responsibilities for the host institution, the lecturer, and ALSC.<sup>3</sup> Some of the important items in the manual are responsibilities, timelines, and the criteria considered by the committee when selecting the site. Appendixes to this manual include a checklist and calendar, and again the application form.

I investigated previous Arbuthnot lectures on the Internet. Since previous venues are listed on the ALSC website, as well as on Wikipedia, it was relatively easy to learn what other institutions had accomplished. I learned how past lectures involved more than just the lecture itself, but interfaced with other projects, activities, and partnerships.

All of this information was daunting at first blush, but valuable. I was beginning to get an idea of what my institution, ALSC, and the lecturer would need to do—and when. I would gladly take on the responsibility of primary author for the application, but clearly a cadre of stakeholders was necessary to plan and carry out a national event of this caliber.

To my relief, the actual application form is not complicated, although it requires depth—centering on the reason for application, site, facilities, administrative support, cooperation with other organizations, and lecture visibility. With input and assistance from stakeholders in this project, I would need to fully develop these areas.

This provided direction as I reached out to departments and individuals at the university, my department (Teacher Education) and division (Education, Health and Society), Miami University Libraries, our local Talawanda City Schools, the public Lane Libraries, and our public school partners in the Czech Republic, in addition to community members and other departments on campus. I also beseeched backing from my personal support system since this would be somewhat similar to planning a wedding. Venue, VIPs, reception, flowers, photos, budget—yes, several similarities to planning a wedding. Not surprisingly, invitations to participate were eagerly accepted.

## From Conversation to Commitment

This was turning into a puzzle. All the pieces were there, and I challenged myself to fit them together. I also remained open to ideas, hunches, and prospects that spoke to the project or seemed to be coincidentally presented. This project would not leave me alone.

Perhaps it was partly because my former mentor and someone whom I had aspired to professionally in aspects of children's literature, Dr. Eileen Tway, received a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Arbuthnot Award prior to her passing; I saw this as a "sign" of sorts to proceed. The actual drafting of the proposal was falling into place.

As the primary author of the application/proposal, it was important to set clear goals and activities and ensure that everyone involved was in agreement with what we were proposing. In brief, our reasons for the application, to be met through activities of the proposal, would provide Miami University students and faculty, community members, and others, opportunity to experience the prestigious lecture.

The Arbuthnot Lecture had not been given in Ohio since its inception in 1970, and now it would be accessible to many. It would interface and reinforce Miami University's goals for liberal education, providing a wide range of students with firsthand exposure to an international figure who lived through Communism and the fall of Communism in his home country, thus situating learning within a personal context.

Further, hosting the lecture would strengthen and deepen connections with our local school district as well as deepening cross-cultural connections with partners in the Czech Republic. Not only would Sís enliven passion for children's literature, but because of perspectives embedded in his books and art, this could be a catalyst to extend and expand international perspectives and understandings.

I created a timeline, with bulleted lists of items and activities, commencing with summer 2011 and continuing through the date of the lecture and beyond. This provided a moment of clarity, showing what might be realistic and what might need to be revisited.

Planned avenues for publicity included local and regional news releases (ALSC publicizes the event nationally); posters for campus, the community, and the Southwest Ohio area; social media; and electronic newsletters—all established sites and media within and extending beyond the university. We also pledged to record the lecture so it could be shared with individuals in the Czech Republic and anywhere in the world.

I received letters of support from administrators, professors, and others from departments and divisions at Miami University; personnel in the local Talawanda City School District; the program coordinator in our partner schools in Olomouc, Czech Republic; a student organization pledging volunteer and other

assistance; an area children's bookstore with experience serving an Arbuthnot Lecture; and also a letter from the director of our Office of Disability Resources documenting our auditorium as compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), plus guarantees for braille programs and/or sign language interpreters as needed. The authors of these letters pledged support in terms of activities, publicity, and/or monetary resources. I included these letters with the application.

I prepared a budget with all associated costs, and responsibilities, for the actual lecture. The Arbuthnot fund provides the honorarium for the lecturer and transportation to and from the host city (a selling point with administrators at Miami University), but all other expenses are the responsibility of the host institution. The main expenses we budgeted were for publicity, programs, ticketing, lodging and meals for the lecturer, ground transportation, a luncheon to honor Sís, as well as to acknowledge the dedication of stakeholders, and a reception after the lecture. We also included student volunteers, use of auditorium, flowers (we borrowed flowers from the university greenhouse), and additional items at no cost.

I organized the application, timeline, and budget, scanned the letters of support, created a table of contents, and obtained an administrative signature for the required responsibility statement. On a sunny Sunday afternoon in May 2011, I tapped the "send" key on my computer, and the application became a passenger aboard electronic bandwidth, destined for receipt by ALSC.

## Thumbs Up or Thumbs Down?

The answer to the application came in a phone call on Sunday morning, June, 26, 2011. Shawn Brommer, Arbuthnot Lecture Committee chair, greeted me direct from the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans. With an undercurrent of excitement, she shared the news that Miami University was selected as the venue for the 2012 lecture. I could hear convivial committee members sharing in the moment in the background, and then I was on the speakerphone. I have no memory of what I said, but I'm sure I sounded more like an excited five-year-old who just received the best prize ever from a gumball machine, rather than someone who could actually carry out a project of this scope.

There was an impromptu and hectic celebration at my house—for about ten minutes. Then reality set in. I was a mixture of *whoohoo!* and *what-have-I-done?* I began spreading the news to all involved with the application.

In summer 2011, I connected with all of the stakeholders, and we began putting plans in place, concomitantly developing or strengthening the responsibilities. I also received guidance from Brommer and Aimee Strittmatter (ALSC executive director), and Lucy Del Priore (School and Library Marketing Director at Macmillan Children's Publishing Group, publisher of Sís's books). These individuals would be essential members

## Who Wants to Host an Arbuthnot Lecture?

of the support system, as the Arbuthnot Lecture is a shared enterprise.

## Engagement

ALSC provides a checklist of responsibilities for the host institution, which I used in conjunction with a timeline I created. I set up a whiteboard on a tall easel, with strands of activities and events to be completed at the university and elsewhere. Sure, it could have been an electronic checklist, but it was hard to avoid that large whiteboard staring at me every day.

A red-letter day was when I first spoke with Sís on the phone. Gracious and affable with a wicked sense of humor, his personality set the tone for the next several months. Along with Sís and his publisher, we set the date for April 4, 2012.

When he supplied us with the title of his lecture, “Reading in the Dark,” we were ready to design tickets and publicity. Those two tasks were significantly more protracted than I would have anticipated.

ALSC stipulates free tickets are required. We chose to use our university’s box office rather than work with a ticketing software program. End of story, or so I thought. Our sponsor list was growing, and finding space on the ticket to list appropriate credits, print the title of the lecture, Sís’s name, and other needed data took more detail work than anticipated.

Did we want reserved seating? *Yes*. What about reserving VIP seating? *Good idea!* It was the first milestone, however, and once ALSC listed ticketing availability on the Arbuthnot website, the event took on a life!

Getting the language “just right” for the publicity poster required numerous iterations, due to the numbers of entities involved. Fortunately, final reports from two previous lectures had been forwarded to us for preview purposes, and while each lecture is manifestly different, the documents in these notebooks provided examples of promotional and publicity materials.

Sís forwarded images, and we chose “The Flying Man,” his tribute to Václav Havel, as the background for the posters. Unlike most electronic media, which can be changed as needed, the print media would be carved in stone, or at least on paper. ALSC, Macmillan, and other sponsors—as well as Sís, of course—put eyes on the drafts. Everyone’s ideas for what to include, delete, emphasize, move, and change contributed to a handsome poster.

## Film Festival

As more attention to the lecture developed, a terrific opportunity for significant and broad involvement serendipitously emerged. In conjunction with the Miami University Art Museum, and with permission from the Mary Ryan Gallery in New York (where Sís is represented), we held a free film festival open to the public. Among the five short animated films we obtained

were Sís’ award-winning *Hlavy (Heads)*, as well as *Ostrov pro 6000 budík (Island for 6,000 Alarm Clocks)* which had been banned in the former Czechoslovakia.

We promoted the festival as a unique opportunity to view visionary and surrealist films with influences from dissident resistance against Communism and artistic influences from Renaissance Italy to Terry Gilliam (Monty Python) and George Dunning (“Yellow Submarine”).

This event helped us raise awareness for the upcoming visit to campus by the filmmaker himself, as well as crossed departmental, campus-wide, and community boundaries. We were thrilled to repeat the viewing of the films at our local retirement community, which followed a booktalk of Sís’s books, and easily gained another audience for the lecture.

## First the Dream, then (Almost) the Nightmare

Aspects of and events for the lecture were falling into place easily—perhaps too easily. We were not to escape a last-minute problem. I had organized enough events to know there is always unanticipated turmoil resulting in some behind-the-scenes gnashing of teeth and wringing of hands.

Well into the inception of the pre-lecture events, I had a vivid nightmare in which I had forgotten to print programs. In my nightmare, I was backstage an hour before the lecture was to commence, the auditorium was filling with people, and I was frantically *typing* a program on a dusty antique typewriter I found among some abandoned scenery and props. Little did I suspect that nightmare would almost come true!

The graphics designer working on the program went out of town, and due to miscommunication, it was not possible to access the program file on her computer. Now it was a week until the lecture; I was suddenly captain of the *Titanic*, and we were going down.

Luckily, I ran into a former student at a mall, and she readily agreed to help out. She was able to rescue and complete the program using an early version of the program file, and it was literally printed a day before the lecture.

*Whew!* Lesson learned: while this was a real nail-biter, anticipating a glitch and adopting a preparedness and problem-solving stance from the beginning might just lessen stress when adversity occurs.

## Showtime!

April 3, 2012

A local freelance photographer donated his time and expertise to shoot the entire event. On the afternoon before the lecture, he and I met Sís; his editor, the famous Frances Foster; and Angus Killick, vice president and associate publisher at Macmillan Children’s Publishing Group, at the airport. As they



Angus Killick, Peter Sís, and Frances Foster arrive at the airport. Photo by Bert Shepard/Silver Shutter.

all made their way to the to the baggage area, there was smiling and ebullience. I could once again begin breathing.

The car service I hired for ground transportation had (surprise!) provided a free upgrade to a limousine, and snacks and beverages we brought along fueled the high-energy and joyous countryside trip from the airport to Miami University.

Later, over dinner at a cozy and quiet restaurant, we reviewed the schedule for the next day and a half. Our spirits were blithe as we discussed final arrangements, while actually relaxing and getting to know each other.

After a final check to see that ALSC and other guests had safely arrived and greeting some of these guests, it was time to anticipate the next day.

## April 4, 2012

We were given a delightful springlike day for the May Hill Arbutnot Honor Lecture, replete with spring flowers around campus and a radiant sun, with only a faint crispness to the air. We assembled for a brief tour of campus led by a former student.

A luncheon on campus arranged by Miami University Libraries was well attended by stakeholders and individuals who contributed greatly and who were eager to meet Sís. He greeted each participant and signed printed cards bearing one of his illustrations.

Persons who would comprise the platform party then headed to the auditorium. We had arranged for a sound check, and we toured backstage and discussed the order of events. The time was getting close!

And then it was a blur.

Sís was given an opportunity to rest and prepare. Meanwhile, signs ordered from our sign shop were installed to direct guests to the reserved parking areas and to the auditorium. The bookstore arrived to set up in the lobby of the auditorium. Display boards created by local children and children in the Czech Republic were decorated with mandalas influenced by Sís's artwork. The videographer set up his camera.

Miami student volunteers showed up to complete special tasks and serve as ushers. Other student volunteers wearing lime-green safety vests were directing traffic and driving golf carts (which had been rented specifically for this event) to and from parking areas for guests needing assistance. The platform party assembled in the backstage dressing room. Podium flowers borrowed from the university greenhouse were delivered, lighting and sound crew members were in place, and the auditorium filled with barely an empty seat.

The lights when down. After preliminary remarks and the introduction, Sís walked onto the stage, and there were more than seven hundred students, professors, community members, librarians, and other children's literature aficionados in the audience.

## Lessons Learned

Planning to host an Arbuthnot Lecture? Here are some resources and lessons learned from Miami University's experience.

- Watch for the announcement of the May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture Award. The person who will deliver the lecture the following year is announced at the ALA Midwinter Meeting during the Youth Media Awards session. Applications are due in spring of the same year (specific date will be posted on the ALSC/Arbuthnot website).
- Visit the May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture Award site at [www.ala.org/alsc/arbuthnot](http://www.ala.org/alsc/arbuthnot). Read about the lecturer, read about May Hill Arbuthnot, access the electronic application and directions for submission, and review and access the Arbuthnot Award Manual.
- Review the "Responsibilities of the Host Institution," which is included with the application on the Arbuthnot website.
- Investigate previous lectures. Discover how past institutions have organized by conducting Internet research.
- Seek broad-based involvement and administrative support. It may be beneficial to include letters of support from partners and stakeholders, and other supporting documents, when submitting the application.
- Determine where the lecture be held. Conduct site visits. Investigate parking, seating, and accessibility. Visit backstage areas and discuss equipment needs. If the venue is used frequently, consider reserving potential dates as soon as possible, perhaps even before submitting the application. Consider lobby or display areas, as needed.
- Plan for reception, dinner, or other hospitality events to honor the speaker. Consider who should be invited to this event.
- Plan ticketing logistics. How will tickets be printed and distributed? Will seating be reserved? Is there a "will call" option? Plan for arranging tickets/seating for ALSC and other VIP guests, as well as last-minute seating.
- Consider publicity. Determine avenues for local and regional publicity, including news releases, print media, and electronic media (including social media). ALSC will publicize the event nationally. Consider information needed for electronic dissemination, such as maps to the venue, information about the lecture, and other relevant details.
- Begin securing personnel and volunteers. Consider which activities will need personnel assistance and volunteers, such as ushers at the lecture.
- Begin developing activities or plans for the lecturer. Also consider activities for VIP guests, such as ALSC representatives and others.
- Create a timeline and budget. Include responsibilities for activities and fiscal items.
- Review the criteria on the ALSC website. Evaluate your own application as if you were a committee member using this criteria.

Sís was stellar in every respect. Images from his iPad were projected to accompany the informative, emotional talk. Even before I left the stage after concluding remarks, some of my teacher candidates approached me, breathless from the talk, explaining how he had brought tears to their eyes.

The reception in the Walter Havighurst Special Collections area of King Library on campus was extremely well attended. This catered event was accented with displays of Sís's books, as well as a display entitled "Avant-Garde and Innocence: Children's Book Illustration by Russian Non-Conformist Artists in the Beginning of the 20th Century" that had been prepared by the library especially for this event.

Everyone in the autograph line (that stretched across the floor of the library) seemed to be in awe of the amazing lecture they just heard, and anticipating the chance to meet the man who had just delivered the moving talk. Each person received individual attention from Sís when they arrived at the autograph

table, and he graciously signed books until almost 11:30 p.m. We were exhausted, yet still riding high on the crest of success.

### April 5, 2013

Without showing even a sign of weariness, Sís was energetic the next day as he visited an art class on campus and spoke to students, as per his request. He also interacted with children in an art class at our local middle school, sharing anecdotes with the children and engaging them in dialogue. Several of these students had created the mandalas displayed at the lecture, and they were mesmerized to meet the artist they had studied.

After a casual lunch, the car arrived to take the group back to the airport. About two hours later, I received a text message

continued on page 59

# Keats Awards Named Earlier This Year

The 2013 Ezra Jack Keats New Writer and New Illustrator Book Award winners were honored at an awards ceremony in April during the University of Southern Mississippi's Fay B. Kaigler Children's Book Festival.

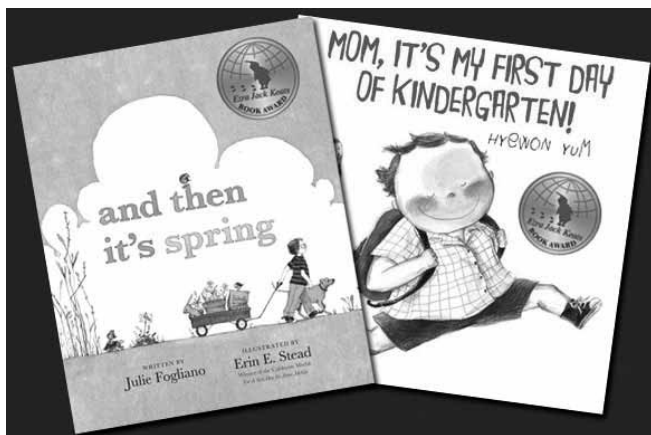
"The Book Award was created to bring attention and recognition to new artists who carry on in the spirit of Keats," said Deborah Pope, executive director of the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation. "The jury looks for new books of beauty that portray the universal qualities of childhood, a strong and supportive family and the multicultural nature of our world."

"The Ezra Jack Keats Book Award is an exciting extension of our work as guardians of important children's literature," said Ellen Ruffin, curator of the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection. "Ezra's legacy lives on in the offerings of these fine new authors and illustrators, whose own books may one day join Ezra's in the de Grummond Collection."

The 2013 Ezra Jack Keats New Writer Award Winner was Julie Fogliano for *And Then It's Spring*, published by Neal Porter Books/Roaring Brook Press, an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group, illustrated by Caldecott Medal winner Erin E. Stead.

Fogliano said, "I was struggling to find an idea for a children's book, and a friend challenged me by asking me to create a thought of the day for him for every day of the year to get inspired. On day 156, I was in my yard and, even though it was April, there was no sign of grass growing anywhere. Suddenly, inspiration struck—*And Then It's Spring* grew from there."

The 2013 Ezra Jack Keats New Illustrator Award Winner was Hyewon Yum for *Mom, It's My First Day of Kindergarten!*, published by Frances Foster Books/Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group.



Pictured are 2013 Ezra Jack Keats award winners, left to right, Hyewon Yum and Julie Fogliano.

"My book is based on a true story," said Yum, who wrote and illustrated her book. "My son was going off to kindergarten, and I was a new mommy. I felt like the five-year-old—he wasn't afraid, but I was nervous. I thought it was better to draw what we were feeling, so I drew the mom in the book small and blue at first and the son large and rosy. Their colors and sizes change as they each get more and less brave throughout the day. My own son said, Mom, that's not how you are! He didn't even notice how nervous I was."

To be eligible for the 2013 Ezra Jack Keats Book Award, the author and/or illustrator will have no more than three children's picturebooks published prior to the year under consideration.

The selection committee is comprised of early childhood education specialists, librarians, illustrators, and experts in children's literature, including Rita Auerbach (Chair), Carolyn S. Brodie, Nina Crews, Pat Cummings, Barbara Genco, Ginny Moore Kruse, Marisabina Russo, Lisa Von Drasek, and Paul O. Zelinsky.

Photos by Kelly Dunn, Southern Miss Photo Services

# The Producer of "Fun"

## A Chat with the Whimsical Sandra Boynton

ERIN F. REILLY-SANDERS

*This interview with children's book author/illustrator Sandra Boynton was originally conducted for WritersTalk at Ohio State University in April 2012. A recording of this interview can be downloaded at <https://cstwmedia.osu.edu/DdSdPb2fG>.*

Sandra Boynton, 59, is a multi-talented producer of fun for kids. While best known for her silly board books for toddlers, Boynton got her start designing greeting cards for Recycled Paper. If you've gotten one of the millions of birthday cards wishing you "Hippo Birdie Two Ewes," you've seen her illustrations. Primarily an author and illustrator, she's also been known to compose music and song lyrics, direct music videos, write for adults, and even assemble a three-hundred-kazoo orchestra. While her four children have generally moved on to other exciting things, Boynton lives on a farm in the Berkshires with her husband, slalom canoeist Jamie McEwan. Her official website ([www.sandraboynnton.com](http://www.sandraboynnton.com)) includes a wide variety of silly information and fun products.

*Sandra, one of your latest projects is a board book called Tickle Time! that's great at getting kids giggling. Tell me about it and how you were inspired to create this ticklish romp of furry cats.*



Sandra Boynton, photo courtesy of Workman Publishing.

**SANDRA BOYNTON:** This book actually comes out of a song, "Tickle Time," from a long ago album *Rhinoceros Tap*. So many people had asked, especially little people, if there was a board book of this, and I decided there should be.

*Many of your board books like Tickle Time! are also songs on your various CDs. Would you recommend that newcomers start with the book or the song, or are they meant to be experienced together?*

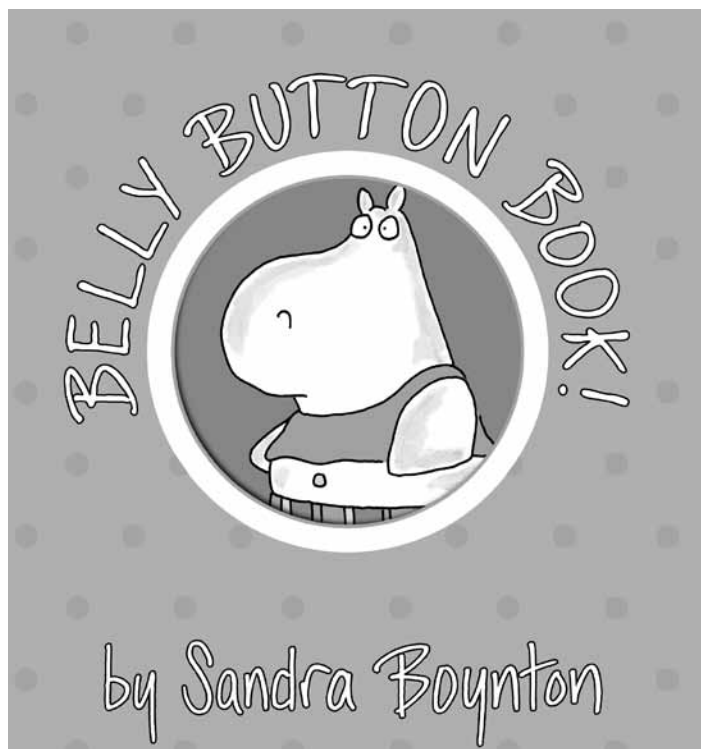
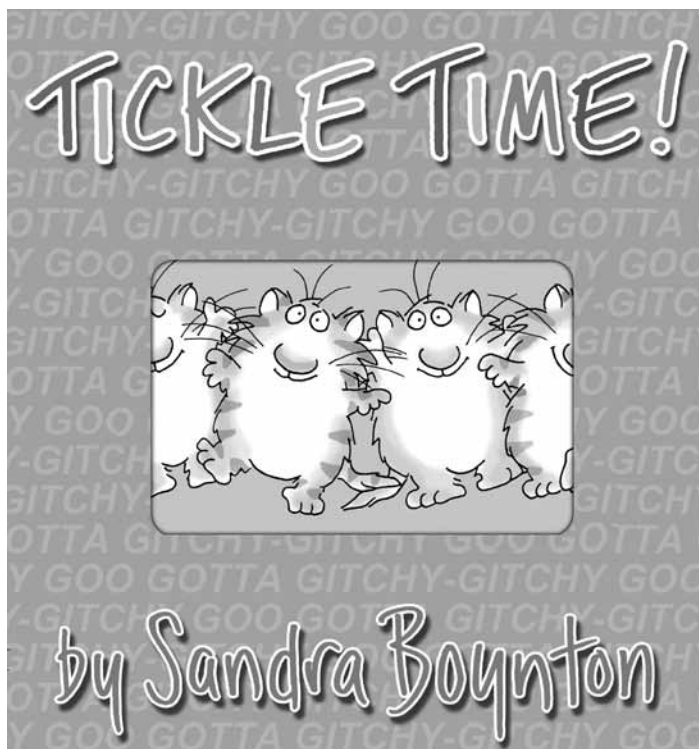
**Boynton:** I don't really intend for them to be experienced together. I think they stand on their own so they complement each other, but they're not really intended as a tandem experience. So I think starting either place is great.

*Blue Hat, Green Hat is one of my favorite board books because its humor appeals to me as an adult while the illustrations and the conceptual focus on colors and getting dressed is perfectly suited for toddlers. How do you address these incredibly different audiences?*

**Boynton:** They're really the same audience. I think the thing I most enjoy and have been lucky in my own work is that I don't



*Erin F. Reilly-Sanders is a PhD candidate in the Literature for Children and Young Adults program at Ohio State University where she teaches introductory children's literature classes. She worked for Columbus Metropolitan Library for six years, mostly in children's services. She was a member of the 2013 Mildred L. Batchelder Award Selection Committee.*



have to really carefully target a market. I don't tend to think of the market that way. First and foremost, I'm writing these books for myself, and I have pretty clear access to myself as a child, as well as I think most children's book writers remember their childhood . . . pretty vividly. There's nothing you need to do differently to make them for everyone.

*In addition to books, you also compose music and write lyrics, often for witty children's songs that are now sung to children far and wide. What songs did your parents sing to you as a child?*

**Boynton:** It's interesting; my parents sang lots of, I think, the songs that everyone's parents sang to them . . . lots of nursery rhyme songs. My mother also particularly loves songs from the twenties . . . so a lot of vaudeville era songs. And both of my parents also loved recorded music so we had a lot of Ella Fitzgerald on and a lot of Broadway show tunes, a lot of Tommy Dorsey. So a little of everything. I think you can actually sort of discern that in my work—a sort of slightly retro and almost big band sensibility that came from my early childhood.

*Did they teach you how to play a kazoo?*

**Boynton:** I seemed to have a natural talent for the kazoo. You know, I think I'm kind of a kazoo prodigy. My understanding of music is mediocre enough that I seemed perfect for the kazoo.

*Oh, excellent! You wrote a board book and accompanying song called Your Personal Penguin. Do you have a personal penguin? Who is it, and how did they convince you they were the right penguin for the job?*

**Boynton:** When I wrote the song "Your Personal Penguin," I realized that I was hearing Davy Jones of The Monkees sing it in

my head as I was writing it, and it occurred to me to find him and ask him to sing it. One of the great high points of my creative life was working with Davy Jones. He truly was absolutely perfect for this song. And like everyone else in my generation, I'd had crush on Davy Jones since the first time I saw him on *The Monkees* [TV show].

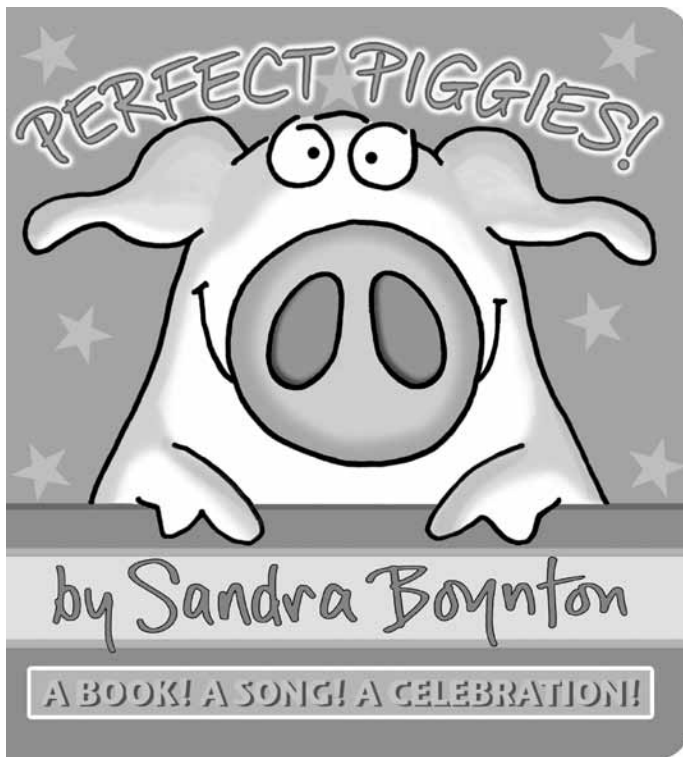
*I'm sure you get asked this a lot about your board book But Not the Hippopotamus, but some of the "big kids" still want to know, why NOT the hippopotamus?*

**Boynton:** [laughter] It's funny—it's a pretty simple book since it's for young children as well as everyone else. To me, this book is very much about fear. Some people have taken it to be about exclusion, and it is a book about non-inclusion, but it's about self exclusion. If you look at the book, that's exactly what's happening—the hippo, she's holding back from joining. It's not that she's being excluded, and, of course, this book ends with, "but not the armadillo." She joins—"but yes the hippopotamus"—and then it says, "but not the armadillo." And I've been criticized for that. The whole point of the book is the way in which we all exclude ourselves out of fear, out of reticence. Anyway, I didn't think I'd have to be in the position of explaining my work [laughter] but that's what that book, to me, means.

*Do you think that your choice of the animals to represent those two characters—the hippopotamus and then the armadillo—reflects that sort of self-closed-off-feeling that they're both presenting?*

**Boynton:** That's an interesting question—certainly not consciously. You know, I guess you're right, it has a shell—to me it was really more the sound, "but not the armadillo." It's such a terrific





melodic, poetic sound. But you're probably right—on a preconscious level I might have chosen those characters for that reason.

*Could you tell us a little bit about your creative process. With such a variety of media, do you approach each the same way or is it really a different type of task for each thing?*

**Boynton:** I'm amazed how similar all of the creative projects feel to me. So whether I'm doing greeting cards or a book or music or I've now done some video—they all feel like the same process to me. In any of those media, you need to find the shorthand that presents the work in a way that makes it flow. To me, it's interesting when people say to me, "Oh, you do so many different things," and it makes me feel a little like a fraud because they really do all feel like the same kind of thing.

*Do you do anything to enter into that process—to get yourself ready for writing these really silly things? Like listening to certain music or putting on silly hats or anything?*

**Boynton:** Um, no, not at all. I think the space is sort of my natural space. I have a sort of slightly quirky . . . I don't know, I think I'm naturally kind of a joyful person with a certain amount of skepticism and even "outsiderness." I think my work is pretty comfortably a reflection of where I naturally reside, if that makes any sense.

*Some people just seem to have a sort of sense of humor that always is within them perhaps. You dedicated your first picturebook, *Hippos Go Berserk*, about a forty-five hippo party, to your parents with the note "I/ didn't invite them. Did /you/ invite them?"<sup>1</sup> What's the story behind this dedication?*

**Boynton:** My parents . . . had a wonderful humorous relationship; my dad was much more gregarious than my mom, but both were social people with a lot of friends who also liked their quiet time. So I think that that story is somewhat autobiographical, in a way, about me too. This hippo is alone and wanting company, has the company, is a little overwhelmed by the company, the company leaves, he's a little relieved . . . this was very much the household I grew up in.

*Your online autobiography mentions that you have "designed many other wry and/or cute but largely irrelevant things."<sup>2</sup> What are some of the most fun things that you've designed and how do these items fit in with your other creative productions?*

**Boynton:** The most fun thing I've done recently is probably the least commercially successful, and I would do it again in a heartbeat. It's a three-hundred-kazoo recording of Ravel's "Boléro"—seventeen-minutes long with full orchestra. I think it's one of the funniest things that I've ever done, but I think that it has a curious power about it too that eventually the piece, which is, of course, a wonderful piece of music, comes through. It's a little difficult to explain unless you take the time to listen to this very curious recording. But it's a curious celebration of the human spirit because the piece is beyond the capacity of the kazooists, and they render it nonetheless. &

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# Everyday Advocacy

## Ten Things You Can Do Today to Learn, Share, and Make a Difference

JENNA NEMEC-LOISE

*This recurring column encourages ALSC members to embrace their roles as library advocates by focusing on their daily efforts to serve youth and families. We'll feature easy-to-implement strategies and techniques for asserting the transformative power of libraries both within communities and beyond them. Please contact the ALSC Advocacy and Legislation Committee with comments and ideas for future topics.*

Dental work.

Public speaking.

Spiders, centipedes, and their counterparts.

Nothing stirs fear in the stoutest of hearts more than visiting the dentist, addressing a large group of people, or finding creepy crawlies where they don't belong (like in the bathroom).

But we're children's librarians, and we're made of some tough stuff. Endless reference questions, ringing phones, and lines at the circulation desk? Done.

Mounting budget and staffing cuts? We manage somehow.

And wrangling toddlers during storytime? Bring it! In fact, we should have T-shirts made that read, "You can't scare me. I'm a children's librarian."

But that claim isn't 100 percent true for all of us, is it? You know who you are. There's one eight-letter word that makes your blood run cold, and I dare you to say it with me: advocacy.

Now I'm no shrinking violet myself, but I get it. The word "advocacy" seems big, vague, and mystifying. Seriously, what does it even mean? And let's face it—you're already swamped. Surely advocacy must be someone else's job.

Well, here's the truth, plain and simple—you're already an advocate, so let me be the first to congratulate you!

### The Everyday Advocacy Mind-Set

Surprised? Understandable. Doubtful? Fair enough.

It's tempting (and daunting) to associate advocacy with all things political, like talking to administrators, legislators, and



**Jenna Nemeć-Loise** is Member Content Editor of the ALSC Advocacy Website and electronic newsletter. She is the immediate past chair of the ALSC Early Childhood Programs and Services Committee, collaborating with the ALSC Advocacy and Legislation Committee on this debut column.

## Asserting the Role of Early Learning at Your Library

Earlier this year, President Obama outlined White House plans to improve outcomes for the nation's youngest children. Emily Sheketoff, executive director at the ALA Washington Office, offers the following easy-to-implement strategies for talking with your local legislators about the role of early learning at your library:

**Paint a vivid picture of what early learning looks like at your library.** This picture differs from library to library, so be sure to detail and personalize it for your location.

**Invite legislators to your early learning programs.** Let them see you in action by giving them a firsthand look at what you're doing for the children and families in your community.

**Tell them whom you're serving.** Describe your library population and who you typically reach through your early learning programs and services. How many children and families do you reach on a weekly, monthly, and annual basis?

**Tell them how you're doing it.** Are you serving your children and families through library-based programs and services? Outreach? Partnerships? All of the above? Something else?

**Outline your library's comprehensive plan for early learning programs and services.** You're doing more than the one program they've come out to see. Let them know the details of all the early learning programs and services you provide

within and beyond your library on a weekly, monthly, and annual basis.

**Provide them with testimonials and impact statements.** When it comes to talking with legislators, there's nothing more powerful than a statistic and an anecdote. Complement the numbers you're offering with impact statements. Tell legislators what you've heard from children and families about your library's early learning programs and services. Better yet, ask parents and caregivers to do it for you. Empower them to speak about the personal impact your early learning programs and services have had on their children and families. (Note: This approach can be a delicate balancing act, so tread carefully.)

policy makers. While that's definitely part of the advocacy equation, it's by no means our entry point here.

For now, let's focus on Everyday Advocacy, a grassroots effort that starts with you and the things you're already doing for the youth and families you serve. This idea is actually so simple you might overlook it completely. Ready?

Anytime you champion libraries and their power to transform people's lives for the better, *you are an advocate*.

Or how about this? Instead of viewing "advocate" as yet another role you have to take on, consider it *the* part you were born to play. When you think of advocacy at stage center of everything you do as a children's librarian, the hard part is over.

### Everyday Advocacy in Action

So if advocacy is something you're already doing, maybe it's not as scary as it seems (or maybe you're braver than you thought).

Need more convincing? Here are ten things you can do today to learn, share,

*"Anytime you champion libraries and their power to transform people's lives for the better, you are an advocate."*

and make a difference in your library community.

1. **Ask questions**, and use your answers as starting points to focus your efforts. When you think about who *isn't* coming to your library and how you can reach them, *you are an advocate*.

2. **Introduce yourself** to a family who's new to your community. When you smile as you mention all the great things your library has to offer children and adults, *you are an advocate*.

3. **Model your enthusiasm** for literacy, libraries, and lifelong learning. When you show families how much you love books and demonstrate the fun of shared reading, *you are an advocate*.

4. **Listen** to what your community is telling you. When you invite stakeholders to help you shape the pro-

grams and services offered at your library, *you are an advocate*.

5. **Start a conversation** about the role of the library in your community. When you encourage families, teachers, community groups, and local business owners to share what the library means to them, *you are an advocate*.

6. **Promote a library program or service** at a neighborhood school, a nearby senior center, or even at the park. When you bring the library—and yourself—into the community, *you are an advocate*.

7. **Talk to a local business owner** about a possible partnership. When you have a great discussion with a stakeholder about the mutual benefits of working together, *you are an advocate*.

8. **Visit the alderman's office** to say, "Hello!" When you lay the foundation for a strong relationship just by being the library's friendly, familiar face, *you are an advocate*.
9. **Collaborate with a colleague** on a new approach to library advocacy. When you generate ideas for fun ways to market the library among school administrators, community groups, and elected officials, *you are an advocate*.
10. **Ask for help** because it's out there! When you capitalize on the wealth of available ALSC resources and empower community members to become library ambassadors themselves, *you are an advocate*.

I hope by now you're thinking, "Maybe I really *can* do this whole advocacy thing!" You're right, of course, because you already do it every day.

### Introducing the ALSC Advocacy Website

Want even more tips, techniques, and tools for asserting your role as a library advocate? Look no further than Everyday Advocacy: Learn, Share, Make a Difference, the new ALSC Advocacy Website launched this past spring (see [www.ala.org/everyday-advocacy](http://www.ala.org/everyday-advocacy)).

Here you'll find everything from advocacy basics such as getting those first meetings and composing brief "elevator speeches" to more advanced strategies for addressing policy makers and working with elected officials.

You can even help us keep the content fresh and dynamic by sharing your own advocacy ideas and success stories with colleagues.

As you embrace your advocacy role, do yourself a favor—try not to overthink it. Everyday Advocacy means recognizing the simple things you can do today to assert the vital role of libraries in strong

or struggling communities.

Repeat after me: *I am an advocate*. Let that be your mantra, and there's no telling where your ideas can take you. ☺

## WHO WANTS TO HOST AN ARBUTHNOT LECTURE?, continued from page 52

from the ever-courteous and amiable Sís, saying how much he missed Miami University already.

### The Ecstasy

There was no agony in the extended events of the May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture. We began with a solid idea, but receiving the opportunity to host Peter Sís attracted additional involvement and participation. We were awed and gratified that receiving the opportunity spawned additional visibility, events, and broad involvement across disciplines, as well as throughout the community and geographical area. We were especially pleased to have strengthened the connection between Miami University and the Czech Republic and that we were able to facilitate making the lecture available electronically worldwide. Of prime importance, we were honored to have been able to facilitate such an auspicious event.

Thank you, Peter. Thank you, ALSC. ☺

*The 2012 May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture, "Reading in the Dark," by Peter Sís is available at <http://sc.lib.muohio.edu/handle/2374.MIA/4489>. A print copy of the lecture is available in the Winter 2012 issue of Children and Libraries, Volume 10, Number 3, pages 3–8.*

### References

1. Association for Library Service to Children, "The May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture Award," accessed April 10, 2013, [www.ala.org/alsc/arbuthnot](http://www.ala.org/alsc/arbuthnot).
2. Association for Library Service to Children, "May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecturers," accessed April 10, 2013, [www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/arbuthnohonor/pastlecturers/pastlecturers](http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/arbuthnohonor/pastlecturers/pastlecturers).
3. Association for Library Service to Children, "Arbuthnot Honor Lecture Committee Manual," accessed April 10, 2013, [www.ala.org/alsc/sites/ala.org.alsc/files/content/Arbuthnot\\_Manual\\_Dec2007.pdf](http://www.ala.org/alsc/sites/ala.org.alsc/files/content/Arbuthnot_Manual_Dec2007.pdf).

# ALSC News

## Next Stop: Oakland

ALSC's 2014 National Institute will be held in Oakland, California. More than three hundred children's librarians and educators will participate in this two and a half day event that features programming, keynotes, networking, and much more—all in one setting!

The Institute is one of the only conferences devoted solely to children's librarianship, literature, and technology and is designed for frontline youth library staff, children's literature experts, education and library school faculty members, and others.

For information as it becomes available, visit [www.ala.org/alsc/institute](http://www.ala.org/alsc/institute). We know budget planning happens early; if you have specific questions about price estimates, please contact Jenny Najduch, 800-545-2433, x4026 or [jnajduch@ala.org](mailto:jnajduch@ala.org).

## 2013 Publications

ALA offers the following 2013 products through the ALA Store at [www.alastore.ala.org](http://www.alastore.ala.org).

- Librarians and teachers everywhere have come to rely on *The Newbery and Caldecott Awards: A Guide to the Medal and Honor Books* for quick reference, collection and curriculum development, and readers' advisory. The annual guide gathers together the books deemed most distinguished in American children's literature and illustration since the inception of the renowned prizes. The essay for this 2013 edition recognizes the 75th anniversary of the Caldecott Award. Essayist Ellen Fader, past ALSC president and retired youth services director, Multnomah County Library, Portland, Ore., shines the spotlight on the Caldecott Medal Selection Committee. How do those fifteen individuals who make up each year's committee arrive at this position of a lifetime? Fader shares insights into



Celebrants meet 2013 Belpré winners.

what it takes to prepare for the job of choosing the year's most distinguished picturebook for children, and the highs and lows of a year in the life of a committee member.

- Engage youngsters with *Caldecott Fun* by Nancy Polette. A professor of education at Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Missouri, and former classroom teacher and director of Library/Media Services and Gifted Programs in St. Louis County, Polette has selected 40 of the most popular Caldecott award winners and assembled an exceptional array of activity sheets to use with the books to enrich classroom, afterschool, and storytime programs. Enhanced with whimsical illustrations by Paul Dillon, this resource includes word search puzzles, songs, story strips, fill-in-the-blank fun, arts and crafts projects, and other activities all tailored perfectly to the content of each award book. *Caldecott Fun* is available as a digital download.

## Major Board Actions Electronic Actions

- APPROVED, a request for partner-

ship from the Lunar and Planetary Institute (LPI). (May 2013)

- APPROVED, revisions to the Selection Criteria for Great Websites for Kids (GWS) as submitted, with the following change: the sentence, "We will be selective in choosing sites that offer reviews from other sources for any type of media." is modified to read: "We will be selective in choosing sites that offer reviews from other sources for any type of media. Sites must be consistent with the Library Bill of Rights." (May 2013)
- APPROVED, changes to the membership statement of the Budget Committee to read:

"Six members plus chair. The chair is appointed for two years, with the option to be reappointed, from among members with Board or Budget Committee experience and familiarity and interest in fiscal management."

"The committee will consist of the Chair, three Members-at-Large, the Fiscal Officer, and the Past President. The Executive Director and Vice President are ex-officio members." and to update in the membership statement all instances of "Budget & Finance Committee" to "Budget Committee."? (May 2013)

- APPROVED, providing a letter of support for the Lunar and Planetary Institute's proposal for a grant to the NASA Solar System Exploration Research Virtual Institute (SSERVI). (March 2013)

## 2013 Annual Conference Actions

Board documents are posted on ALA Connect (<http://connect.ala.org>) and provide complete details about the issues listed below. Go to the ALSC section of ALA Connect and click on "Online Docs." Board documents are usually posted about two weeks prior to Annual Conference.

During the 2013 Annual Conference, the Board voted to take the following actions:

- ACCEPTED, the 2013 Annual Conference agenda with flexibility.
- APPROVED, proposal to initiate a formal planned giving program to coordinate with ALA's 15x15 campaign.
- APPROVED, the creation of a task force to study the possibility of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award being given annually.
- APPROVED, the creation of a joint task force between ALSC and REFORMA to address concerns about the Belpré Manual raised by the 2013 Belpré Award Committee.
- ACCEPTED, the Every Child Ready to Read Oversight Committee's report with the understanding that the committee will move forward in the framework of the ALSC bylaws.
- ACCEPTED, the following recommended language revisions from the Organization and Bylaws Committee regarding the Liaison to National Organizations Serving Children & Youth Committee's name and function statement:

Liaison to National Organizations—To explore, recommend, initiate, and implement reciprocal ways of working with national organizations that serve children and youth or work for their benefit; to communicate to these organizations the role libraries and reading



A warm reunion for 2008 Newbery and Caldecott Medal Winners Laura Amy Schlitz and Brian Selznick at the Newbery Caldecott Wilder Awards Banquet.

play in promoting education, development, and civic engagement of youth; to promote the services and resources of ALA and ALSC to these organizations; to promote awareness of these organizations, activities, services, and informational materials to ALSC members.

- ACCEPTED, the following recommended language (additions/changes in bold) from the Organization and Bylaws Committee, regarding Bylaw V, Sec. 3, to appear on the spring 2014 ALSC Ballot:

In the event that the office of president becomes vacant, the vice-president shall become president and shall continue to fulfill the duties of the vice-president until the results of the next election are certified. In the event that the office of vice-president becomes vacant, the Board of Directors shall elect from among its members in the second or third year of service a person to assume the responsibilities of vice-president and succeed to the presidency. In the event that the office of fiscal officer becomes vacant, the Board of Directors shall elect from among its members in the second or third year of service a person to assume the responsibilities of fiscal officer for the remainder of the three-year term. **In the event that the office of ALA/ALSC**

**councilor becomes vacant, the Board of Directors shall elect from among its members in the second or third year of service a person to assume the responsibilities of ALA/ALSC councilor for the remainder of the three-year term. Due to the unique nature of the position, the New-to-ALSC director shall be excluded from eligibility for interim appointments.**

- ACCEPTED, a proposal to transfer \$262,271 in Fiscal Year 2017 to Endowments/Long Term Investments.
- ACCEPTED, the 2014 proposed budget as edited.
- APPROVED, the creation of a task force to address issues of pricing and access for web continuing education.
- SUPPORTED, the creation of an ALSC mentoring program as presented.
- APPROVED, the ALSC Corporate Sponsorship Guidelines.
- APPROVED, transition to executive session for the purpose of evaluating the ALSC Executive Director's performance.
- APPROVED, a call to end the executive session and resume the regular session.



Shawn Walsh and Melanie Lyttle of Madison (Ohio) Public Library at the ALSC Membership Booth during Annual Conference in Chicago. Photo by Dan Rude.

## 2013 Election Results

Spring election results were announced on May 3. Ellen Riordan, chief of Planning, Programs and Partnerships, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, Md., was elected vice president/president-elect of ALSC. Riordan received her MLS in 1983 from the University of Michigan and has been an ALSC member for twenty-six years. She currently serves on ALSC's Advocacy and Legislation Committee and has served on numerous other committees. She also served on the ALSC Board of Directors, 2009–12 and on ALA Council, 2006–09. She also is active in Baltimore's education community and has received several awards from the Enoch Pratt Free Library.

Two members were elected to serve on the ALSC Board of Directors: Megan Schliesman, Cooperative Children's Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison; and Gretchen Caserotti, Meridian (ID) Library District, ALSC's first New-to-ALSC board member. Diane Bailey Foote, Dominican University, River Forest, Ill., was elected ALSC fiscal officer.

The newly elected vice president, board members, and fiscal officer were seated to the Board in July, at the close of the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago.

Individuals elected to serve on the 2015 Newbery, Caldecott, and Sibert Committees are:

**2015 Caldecott:** Lucia Acosta, Princeton (NJ) Public Library; Bradley Debrick, Johnson County (KS) Library; Shilo Halfen Pearson, Chicago Public Library; Jonathan Hunt, Modesto (CA) City Schools; Barbara Klipper, Stamford, Connecticut; Susan Kusel, Rodef Shalom Library, Falls Church, Virginia; Amy Lilien-Harper, Ferguson Library, Stamford, Connecticut; and Angela J. Reynolds, Annapolis Valley Regional Library, Bridgetown, NS, Canada.

**2015 Newbery:** Armin R. Arethna, Berkeley (CA) Public Library; Stephanie Bange, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio; Jennifer M. Brown, Shelf Awareness, New York; Lolly Gepson, Northbrook (IL) Public Library; Abby Johnson, New Albany-Floyd County (IN) Public Library; Stan Steiner, Boise (ID) State University; Janet Thompson, Chicago Public Library; and Lucinda Whitehurst, St. Christopher's School, Richmond, Virginia.

**2015 Sibert:** Erlene Bishop Killeen, Stoughton (WI) Area School District; Sam Bloom, Blue Ash Library, Cincinnati, Ohio; Ann D. Carlson, Oak Park & River Forest (IL) High School; Dona J. Helmer, College Gate Elementary School,

Anchorage, Alaska; and Christopher Lassen, Astoria, New York.

Carolyn S. Brodie, immediate past president, appointed the following award committee chairs: Junko Yokota, Evanston, Ill., 2015 Caldecott Award Committee chair; Randall Enos, Ramapo Catskill Library System, Middletown, New York, 2015 Newbery Award Committee chair; and Deborah Taylor, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, Md., 2015 Sibert Award Committee chair. Starr LaTronica, current president, will appoint the remaining members of these three committees, as well as members of ALSC's other prestigious award committees this fall.

ALSC membership also adopted a dues increase and the addition of several new membership categories, including Support Staff, Non-Salaried Librarian, Retiree, Advocate, and Corporate. Two bylaws changes were also adopted involving: Bylaw Article X, Section 2: Nominations and Elections; and Bylaw Article IV, Section 3: Board of Directors. For more details, visit [www.ala.org/alsc/2013elections](http://www.ala.org/alsc/2013elections).

## Wanted! Award Applications

ALSC seeks nominations and applicants for its professional awards and grants. *Please note individual submission deadlines for each award below.*

**Baker & Taylor Summer Reading Grant.** This \$3,000 grant provides financial assistance to a public library for developing an outstanding summer reading program for children. Submissions due November 1.

**Bechtel Fellowship.** This award provides a \$4,000 stipend to allow a qualified children's librarian to spend a month or more reading at the University of Florida's Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature, which contains a special collection of 85,000 volumes of children's literature published mostly before 1950. Submissions due October 1.

**Bookapalooza!** This program offers selected libraries a collection of materials, including books, videos, audiobooks, and recordings. The materials are pri-

marily for children age birth through fourteen and have been submitted to ALSC award selection and media evaluation committees for award and notable consideration. *Applications open October 1; submissions due February 1.*

**Distinguished Service Award.** This prestigious award honors an individual member who has made significant contributions to and had an impact on, library services to children and ALSC. The recipient receives \$1,000 and an engraved pin at the ALSC Membership Meeting during the ALA Annual Conference. Submissions due December 1.

**Hayes Award.** This \$4,000 award, established with funding from Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, in honor of Maureen Hayes, brings together children and nationally recognized authors/illustrators by funding an author/illustrator visit to a school or public library that has not before had the opportunity to host one. Submissions due November 1.

**Light the Way Grant.** This \$3,000 grant, sponsored by Candlewick Press, is awarded to a library with exceptional outreach to underserved populations in efforts to help them continue their service. Submissions due October 1.

**Penguin Young Readers Group Award.** This award provides a \$600 stipend, provided by Penguin Young Readers Group, for up to four winners to attend their first ALA Annual Conference. Applicants must have fewer than ten years of experience as a children's librarian and work directly with children. Submissions due October 1.

Additional information and applications are available at [www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/profawards/](http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/profawards/).

## Suggestions Welcome

ALSC members are encouraged to suggest titles for the 2014 book and media awards. Send recommendations with full bibliographic information to the award committee chair.

- **Newbery Medal**—given to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children. **Betsy Orsburn**, [eco519@comcast.net](mailto:eco519@comcast.net)
- **Caldecott Medal**—given to the illustrator of the most distinguished American picture book for children. **Marion Rutsch**, [marionhr@aol.com](mailto:marionhr@aol.com)
- **Batchelder Award**—given to an American publisher for a children's book considered to be the most outstanding of those books originally published in a language other than English in a country other than the United States, and subsequently translated into English and published in the United States. **Maureen White**, [white@uhcl.edu](mailto:white@uhcl.edu)
- **Arbuthnot Lecture**—features a speaker who is an individual of distinction in the field of children's literature. Send recommendations for the 2015 lecture. **Sue McCleaf Nespeca**, [sue@kidlitplus.com](mailto:sue@kidlitplus.com)
- **Belpré Awards** (cosponsored by REFORMA)—presented to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth. **Ruth Tobar**, [rtmcoqui@gmail.com](mailto:rtmcoqui@gmail.com)
- **Carnegie Medal**—honors an outstanding video production for children. **Joan Atkinson**, [jnjatkinson@hotmail.com](mailto:jnjatkinson@hotmail.com)
- **Geisel Award**—given to the author and illustrator of the most distinguished contribution to the body of American children's literature known as beginning reader books. **Penny Peck**, [pikly@aol.com](mailto:pikly@aol.com)
- **ALSC/Booklist/YALSA Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production**—given to the producer of the best audiobook produced for children and/or young adults. **Ellen Spring**, [espring@roadrunner.com](mailto:espring@roadrunner.com)
- **Sibert Medal** (sponsored by Bound to Stay Bound Books, Inc., and named in honor of the company's longtime president Robert F. Sibert)—given to the author and illustrator of the most distinguished informational book for children. **Cecilia McGowan**, [cmcgowan@kcls.org](mailto:cmcgowan@kcls.org)
- **2015 Wilder Award**—recognizes an author or illustrator whose books have, over a period of years, made a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children. **Karen Nelson Hoyle**, [k-hoyl@umn.edu](mailto:k-hoyl@umn.edu)

We also welcome suggestions for the Notable Children's Media lists. Send titles with full bibliographic information.

- Notable Children's Books, **Wendy Woodfill**, [notables2013@gmail.com](mailto:notables2013@gmail.com)
- Notable Children's Recordings, **Lynda Poling**, [Lynda.Poling@lbpl.org](mailto:Lynda.Poling@lbpl.org)
- Notable Children's Videos, **Joan Atkinson**, [jnjatkinson@hotmail.com](mailto:jnjatkinson@hotmail.com) &

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## Index to Advertisers

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AASL..... Cover 3  
 ALSC ..... Cover 2  
 Fields of Gold Publishing .....38

Upstart Promotions/Demco, Inc. .... Cover 4  
 YALSA ..... Cover 3



# THE LAST WORD

## Full Circle

### Reflections of a Former Children's Librarian

Mara Houdyshell

My three years as a children's librarian were the best accident that ever happened—my library career would have been much different had it launched according to my original plan, to obtain my MLS and work as an academic librarian.

That didn't happen. My graduation coincided with an economic downturn in California, and universities were among the hardest hit. This required me to rethink my immediate career plans and broaden my employment search. By doing so, I stumbled upon an opening for a children's librarian in a small public library.

Although I will safely be excluded from any Children's Librarian Hall of Fame, the knowledge and skills I acquired during those years proved invaluable, although not without challenges.

My immediate predecessor had been *the* consummate children's librarian—artistic in every way and endearing to children and the community alike—a tough act to follow. Still, I persevered, parlaying my high verbal skills and sense of humor into a package that allowed me to connect with the younger set. I enjoyed being a mini-celebrity and knew that I had truly "arrived" when students actually cheered my classroom entrance. Come on! How could anyone not like that?

As my presentation skills evolved, I often played hangman with students to guess my uncommon name. My first name seemed easy—except for the final "a"—they were expecting a "y."

I told them that guessing my last name would be easier. They were doubtful. To help them out, I split my name in half and asked, "What do cowboys say when they say 'Hello?'"



"Howdy," they said (I explained the spelling variation).

For the second half, I asked, "What do you sometimes see in the sand as you walk along the beach?"

The guess? "A shell."

On return school visits, I often heard, "Howdy-shell!" as I walked through the hallways. Students may have not remembered my first name, but they sure remembered my last name.

My favorite memory is when an elementary school student visited the library and recognized me from a classroom visit. She was so surprised

upon seeing the children's librarian in her natural environment, that she ran through the stacks, shouting, "Mom! Mom!" then dragged her mother across the library, came to a halt directly in front of me, and announced, "Mom. *This* is a librarian!" To which I added, "Yeah, Mom. And *this* is what we look like."

Being a children's librarian was an exceptional opportunity and prepared me, not only for working with college "kids," but also for my current position where I purchase books for the library's juvenile literature collection.

Who said you can't go home again? It is like being reunited with old friends. ☺

*Mara Houdyshell is the Reference & Instructional Services Department's Education/Child and Adolescent Development Subject Specialist and Director of the Teacher Curriculum Center at the Oviatt Library in Northridge, California.*

Got a great, lighthearted essay? A funny story about children and libraries? Books and babies? Pets and picture books? A not-so-serious look at the world of children's librarianship? Send your Last Word to Sharon Verbeten at [CALeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:CALeditor@yahoo.com).