

Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for
Library Service to Children

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ALSC

The Wonderful World of H. A. Rey • Typography in Children's Books
2010 Arbuthnot Lecture by Kathleen Horning

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Editor's Note How Type Enhances Text

Sharon Verbeten

As editor of several magazines, I write quite a few editorials on various topics. But one topic I never write about in my commentary are the stories featured within the magazine . . . until now.

I never thought it made sense to rehash what the table of contents would already tell you. But I am especially excited about the article by Lesley Colabucci and Thomas Phinney on typography in this issue.

Don't get me wrong; *all* our contributors do an excellent job of researching and addressing topics of interest to librarians. But Colabucci and Phinney's discourse on typography in children's books reached me as a writer and editor as well. It made me look at books in a somewhat more critical manner—much in the way those of you lucky enough to have served on the Caldecott Committee do.

After reading their insightful article, I was prompted to dig out Caldecott books that were decades old—and examine them with new eyes, and a new appreciation.

Achieving an interlocking and exemplary marriage of typography, text, subject, and illustration is a core accomplishment of many Caldecott-winning books. I hope you will find not only these scholars' article interesting, but that it gives you, too, a new look at old favorites. ☺

The Dog-Eared Page

In this space in each issue of *Children and Libraries*, we welcome readers to interact, responding to questions we'll occasionally post on our wiki or via the ALSC-L electronic discussion list.

Jen Bigheart, a SLIS graduate assistant at Texas Woman's University provided one of our favorite lists of **the top 10 reasons why the library is a great place to hang out** (for both patrons and librarians!). So, with apologies to David Letterman, here are her top 10 reasons.

10. To get a free book mark.
9. Because your friends hang out there too!
8. So you can listen to babies cry at random all day long.
7. You can read Dr. Seuss at any age without being judged.
6. The librarian always knows what time it is.
5. Because hanging out at McDonald's isn't as cool.
4. To watch returned items slide down the book drop slide.
3. So you can visit that special, quiet corner that is perfect for reading.
2. What other venue gives everyone a chance to practice the Dewey Decimal System?
1. Who doesn't like that new book smell?

Our next issue will feature some of our readers' favorite children's books, both as a child and now as a librarian. ☺

Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for
Library Service to Children

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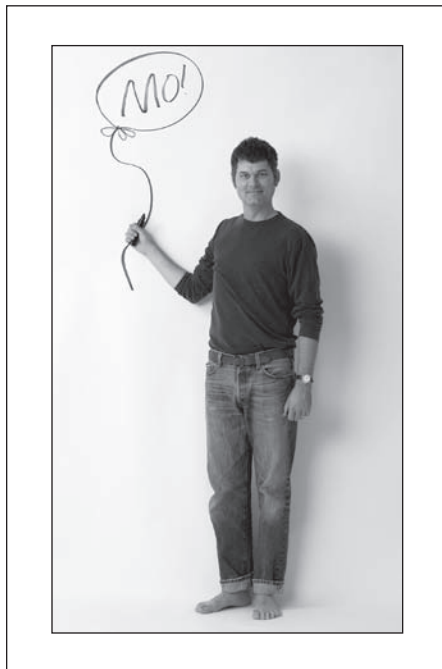
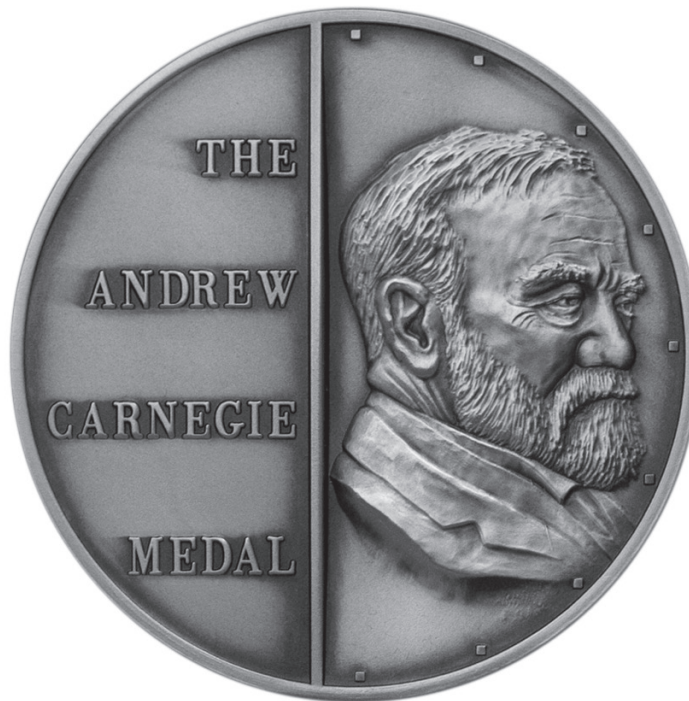
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Carnegie Medal Acceptance Speech

The Man Behind the Medal



Author **Mo Willems** and Paul R. Gagne, Weston Woods producers of the video "Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus" are the 2010 winners of the Andrew Carnegie Medal.

Upon being notified that I had received this august award, I decided to do some research about the man behind the medal.

I was amazed at how much information I could discover about Mr. Andrew Carnegie, or "Andy" as I now like to call him. Childhood lace maker, immigrant, tycoon, philanthropist, Andy had two great loves in his life: home video and the cessation of pigeons operating motorized vehicles.

It was he who bankrolled the publication of what has become known as Pittsburgh's first children's book in 1903. Titled *Let Not Ye Pigeons, Fowl, or Other Winged Beasts Be Permitted Upon Various Engines of Steel Lest Evil Shall Come of It*, the volume was unfortunately ahead of its time—a century ahead to be precise.

Undeterred, Mr. C had the work adapted to steam-powered home video, a costly enterprise that almost sapped his quite substantial fortune. Coming in at a cost, in today's money, of eight gazillion dol-

lars and forty-three cents, or eight gazillion dollars more than what's currently spent on libraries, Carnegie's DVD (or Derluvian Veliscope Defraggleator) was the precursor to today's disks.

It was called "home video" even at that early date, because the contraction was as big as a house. In addition to the structure's size, the fact that it had to be built next to a coal mine proved to be to impractical for many people.

It was then that "the Carnegster," as I now like to call him, created this medal, waiting for a day when both "home video" and films dissuading youths from letting birds operate vehicles could become a reality.

I am immensely grateful to the committee, Weston Woods, Jon Scieszka, Pete List, and my family for this honor. I would be remiss in not pointing out that, in my view, if Mr. Carnegie were alive to see this today he would, indeed, be very, very, very old.

Thank you. &

Good morning. Thank you Joan Kindig, members of the 2010 Carnegie Medal selection committee, and ALSC for this honor. Listening to Mo's [Willems'] remarks, I had an inspiration. It occurs to me that many of the really cool awards out there have these short, catchy nicknames—Tony, Emmy, Grammy. I'd like to respectfully propose that *this* award be known hereafter as the "Andy."

One of the neat things about this "Andy" is that it brings *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* right back to where it started, three years ago, at the last ALA Conference held here in Washington, D.C., Mo and I were here to accept that year's "Andy" for *Knuffle Bunny*, which was the beginning of what has become one of my most treasured collaborations with an author. We've done a number of projects together, and at Weston Woods, we were very eager to add *Pigeon* to that list of projects.

I have a long history of working with Mo's agent, Marcia Wernick, and we've developed the process of expressing interest in a title into its own art form. Usually it's pretty simple. Marcia might call me and drop a subtle hint, like, "So when are you gonna do *Crazy Hair Day*?" Or I might call her and drop a subtle hint, like, "We want to do *The Lion and the Mouse*. Can you talk to Jerry?"

But Pigeon is a special character, and I wanted to take a less subtle, more creative approach to expressing our interest.

So, in what's probably a typical Hollywood story, we invited a young pigeon to our studio and schmoozed him. When he arrived at Weston Woods, all he could say was: (Pigeon doll #1) "Let me drive the bus!" When we got through with him, all he could say was: (Pigeon doll #2) "Let me make a movie!" (There's another version of this story going around involving radical surgery to reprogram and replace his voice box. I'm sticking with "We schmoozed him.")

Anyway, I took this little guy with me to the 2007 ALA Conference here in Washington, D.C., and carried him with me wherever I went, patiently waiting for the encounter with Marcia that I

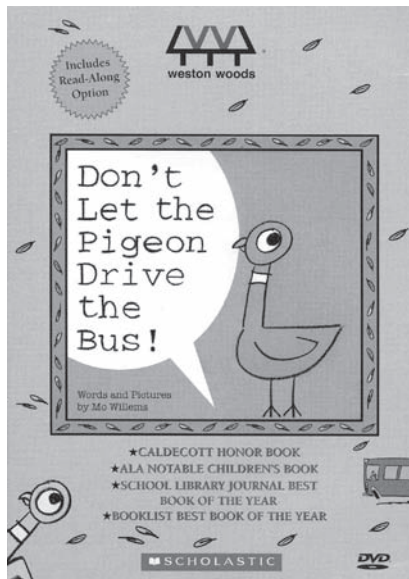
knew would happen sometime over the weekend. Finally, she approached our booth, out came Pigeon, and: (Pigeon doll #2) "Let me make a movie!" Marcia just about dropped to the floor laughing, and said "Okay, we'll talk." (That was actually the second thing she said, but I'm not repeating the first.) And that's how it all started. Thank you Marcia, and Mo, for trusting us with this book.

One of the most memorable moments in the making of this film occurred when Mo and Ambassador Jon Scieszka ([bow]—I saw Jon yesterday and he told me I was supposed to bow when I said that) got together at our studio to record the voices for Pigeon and his nemesis, the Bus Driver. Jon posted a photo from the session on his blog, prompting a delighted e-mail from my friend Mary Burkey saying something like, "I can't imagine a director trying to control those two!" I replied that we didn't even have to try to control "those two," we just had to turn the microphone on and make sure we recorded everything. It was a joy.

I'd like to take a few moments to acknowledge and thank some of the other amazing people who contributed to this project. Mo already mentioned Pete List, our director and animator, who created the animation drawings that brought Pigeon to life. Librarian Sarah Spencer, principal Melissa Paolini, and the children at the Coleytown Elementary School in Westport, Connecticut, graciously allowed us to videotape and record a talk Mo gave to a group of first graders there, which gave us those wonderful children's voices that you hear on the soundtrack reacting to Pigeon and his antics.

Our composers, Scotty Huff and Robert Reynolds, gave the film its musical soul with their Dixieland jazz and piano riffs. I'd also like to thank Mo's editor, Alessandra Balzer. Every time we've done a book that Alessandra had a hand in, it always seems to translate perfectly to film. My colleagues at Weston Woods, including my coproducer Melissa Reilly Ellard; our sound designer, Steve Syarto, for his usual perfect balance of voices, music, and sound effects; and Frank Mangiero, who did such a great

continued on page 6

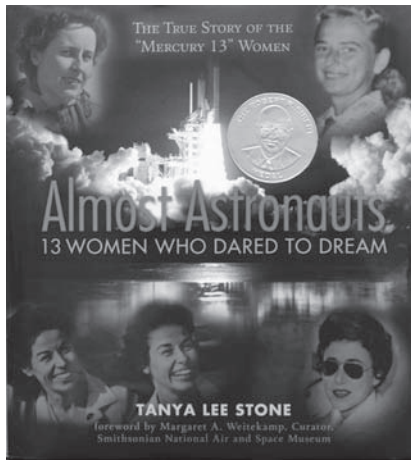


Carnegie Medal Acceptance Speech

Thanks for our "Andy" Award

Paul R. Gagne

Weston Woods Producers **Paul R. Gagne** and **Mo Willems** are winners of the 2010 Andrew Carnegie Medal for the video "Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus."



Sibert Medal Acceptance Speech

“No Victims in Sight”

Tanya Lee Stone



*Tanya Lee Stone is the winner of the 2010 Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal for *Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream*, published by Candlewick Press. She delivered her acceptance speech at the ALA Annual Conference, June 2010, in Washington, D.C.*

Six months ago, the phone rang. It was the Sunday evening before ALA Midwinter, and there was a number I didn't recognize on the caller ID.

In the space between the first and second ring, time crawled slowly enough to experience the hint of an adrenaline rush followed by the smack down of an ego-check. It couldn't be *that* call. I answered the phone.

“Is this Tanya Lee Stone?” the voice said.

“Yes.” *Hello again, adrenaline.*

“You don't know my name, but I'm Vicky Smith, chair of the Sibert Committee.”

What I thought was, “Oh, yes, I *do* know your name, Vicky Smith!” What I said was, “Oh, hello!”

Vicky then went on to deliver the news in what I can only assume were quite articulate sentences, but what I experienced as a crazy haze of words. There is something surreal about receiving this kind of news. Stupefying, really. Because after I stumbled over “thank you” a few times, I realized I wasn't at all sure I had heard her right.

Where was the rewind button? “Wait . . . did you say the *Medal*?”

That was when I discovered that it was not just Vicky Smith on the phone, but the *entire* Sibert Committee, who at that moment burst into laughter and cheers. My nine-year-old daughter heard their cheers and began leaping on the bed and screaming herself. It was truly one of the most jubilant moments of my life.

Now it is six months later, and I am thrilled all over again, especially to be part of this tenth anniversary of the Sibert Award. For me, there is an added layer of meaning in being the tenth recipient because Marc Aronson, my editor for *Almost Astronauts*, was the first.

Marc was invaluable to me from the very first moment he got excited about the manuscript. As with every book, there were issues to be worked out, but Marc could read between my lines and hone in on the exact right question or comment to push me further.

I'll never forget, near the beginning of the process, when he told me, “I don't think you're saying everything you want to say about the women's movement.” He asked me to send him an annotated table of contents and include everything I wanted to. So I did. And then he called me and said, “Okay, okay. Now take some out!” But seriously, he could always see where I wanted to go, and knew how to help me adjust my compass so I could find my way.

And now we come to the other Aronson I have to thank. Because the truth is, this manuscript might not have found its way into Marc's hands had it not been for the chutzpah of my writer-sister Sarah Aronson (no relation).

She believed in me and in this story so much that she approached Marc at a Vermont College event and brazenly suggested he take a look at it. When she told me she was going to come to this awards ceremony, I told her how much that meant to me, and she said, “Are you kidding me? I'm seeing this one through all the way to the end. Otherwise I'm that father who's still parking the car at the hospital while the baby's being delivered!”

The story of these women who were kept from taking part in the space program grabbed me from the moment I learned about it, and never let go. I could not get over the fact that so few people knew of this episode in our American history. It was a complicated story, involving thirteen people—ten of whom are alive—as well as some beloved American heroes behaving badly.

It was rocky territory, and although I knew I would be sticking my neck out, I couldn't stop thinking about it. Through the research and writing process, I grew to understand the nuances of the situation and know the subjects themselves in a deeper way than with any other book I have written.

And the more I grew to know these women, the more passionately I felt about putting the pieces of their complex story together so it would resonate with young readers. I wanted kids to know one more important story about women who have persevered, allowing girls today to

“The more I grew to know these women, the more passionately I felt about putting the pieces of their complex story together so it would resonate with young readers. I wanted kids to know one more important story about women who have persevered, allowing girls today to enjoy more choices in the world.”

enjoy more choices in the world. I'd like to share a personal moment with one of our thirteen women. When I first met Gene Nora Jessen, I must admit I was a bit taken aback by how separate she seemed to feel from the women's movement. She told me that she felt like a fraud when anyone asked for her autograph. But that was *before* she read *Almost Astronauts*.

After she read it, something changed. I think she was finally able to see the context of her own achievement in black and white. She wrote to me, “You really got my dander up. I'm ready to run out and join the women's movement, or am I a little late to jump on that band wagon?”

And when I told her about the award,

she now had this to say, “Others have inferred that we ladies were victims, and you did not make us so. We were the fortunate pioneer women pilots who dipped our toes ever so slightly into our nation's astronaut program and opened the door a couple of inches for the real astronauts who followed. It was fun. It was exciting. And there were no victims in sight.”

Wow, is all I can say. What I hope *readers* will take away from *Almost Astronauts* comes straight from the mouth of another of these fiery ladies, Jerri Truhill. She called me after reading the book, and in her Texas twang, said, “Darlin', the cards were so stacked against us, and you captured the heart of what happened. It's very important for young people, young

girls especially, to know that women were in this from the very beginning.”

Now, before I relinquish this moment, there are a few more important people I would like to thank, including my agent Rosemary Stimola, who shepherds me through the publishing world with wisdom and grace. The entire team at Candlewick was just phenomenal. They not only welcomed me in to the production and publishing process, they welcomed me into the family, with a special thank you to Hilary Van Dusen, my most wonderful in-house editor, and Sherry Fatla, who designed *Almost Astronauts* and found a way to make magic with the unwieldy number of photographs I sent her.

And it cannot go without saying that the love and unwavering support I am afforded by my family makes what I do possible. I am so happy to be able to share this day with my husband, Alan, and our daughter, Liza—our son Jake couldn't be here today, but he is cheering from the home front. And of course, an enormous thank you to the Association for Library Service to Children and the Sibert Committee, for selecting *Almost Astronauts* for this wonderful honor. Thank you so much. 🐦

CARNEGIE MEDAL ACCEPTANCE SPEECH, continued from page 4

job editing the bonus segment on the DVD, *Mo and Pigeon Visit a School*. [I thank] our Vice President Linda Lee, for her constant enthusiasm and support, [and] Dick Robinson and our colleagues at Scholastic for giving Weston Woods the perfect home. And on a personal note, my wife, Lynn, and our daughters, Melanie and Brianna, for supporting me in doing something I still love doing after thirty-two years, even when the hours are crazy.

Going back to that other ALA Conference three years ago, another of our composers, John Jennings, who happens to live

in the D.C. area, came by our booth for a visit on the last day of the conference. John performs in Mary Chapin Carpenter's band. I showed him the Pigeon doll, his face lit up, and he said “You've *gotta* get me one of those for Mary Chapin!” (As a touring musician, the phrase “Let me drive the bus!” evidently has a deep personal significance for her.)

I sent John a pigeon doll for Mary Chapin and didn't think any more about it until last week, when I called him hoping to get an amusing anecdote to end with today.

How cool would it be if Pigeon were spending the summer traveling around on Mary Chapin Carpenter's tour bus?

John said, “The last time I saw that little guy he was sitting on a shelf next to one of her Grammy awards.” I think that's even better than the tour bus. We figure she'd better keep a close eye on him, though. She's likely to come home one day to find that he's kicked the Grammy to the floor and put his “Andy” in its place!

Thank you! 🐦

Chairing the Batchelder Committee *Annette Goldsmith*

Annette Goldsmith was the chair of the 2010 Mildred L. Batchelder Award Selection Committee.

Mildred L. Batchelder understood that when children in the U.S. have access to translations of stories beloved by children elsewhere, we nurture international understanding in a very intimate way, and not just through classics like *Pinocchio* and *Pippi Longstocking*, but contemporary books too.

The award named for her has helped raise the profile of translations, but we still have a long way to go. According to Philip Pullman, “If we don’t offer children the experience of literature from other languages, we’re starving them. It’s as simple as that.”¹ This year’s Batchelder winner and honor book publishers have provided

children—and us, of course—with a rich literary repast, and the promise of sequels!

Chairing the 2010 Batchelder Committee has been my dream job. I would like to recognize the members who all worked so diligently. Their combined expertise, insight, and sense of humor made our book discussions a wonderful experience. Unfortunately, only I could make it in person to this ceremony, but the others are here in spirit. With gratitude and in friendship I thank Catharine Bomhold, Rosemary Chance, Gwen Taylor, and Natalie Ziarnik. *[I asked the audience to clap for the committee members, and they did—loudly enough so that they should have been able to hear in Texas!]*

Our committee thanks the ALSC staff, Executive Director Aimee Strittmatter,

and Priority Consultants Julie Corsaro and Sandy Imdieke for their professionalism and excellent guidance. Both former Batchelder chairs, Julie and Sandy were a font of institutional knowledge for us. We also acknowledge Marianne Martens, whose expertise in Scandinavian languages was very helpful.

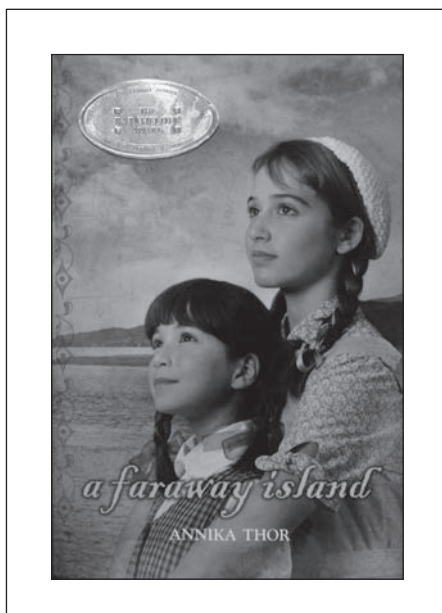
Our committee chose a winner and three honor book publishers. All devoted themselves to the important work of translating and publishing outstanding children’s books from other countries. &

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1. Philip Pullman, “Preface,” in *Outside In: Children’s Books in Translation*, ed. Deborah Hallford and Edgardo Zaghini (Chicago: Milet, 2005), 9.

Batchelder Acceptance Speech

Françoise Bui



Françoise Bui is Executive Editor of Delacorte Press, an imprint of Random House Children’s Books.

Good morning everyone! Those of you who know me are aware that the Batchelder Award is dear to my heart. I’ve always believed in a global approach to publishing, so I love finding amazing fiction from abroad for translation. Yes, it’s a way of introducing American children to other countries, cultures, styles of writing, and ways of looking at the world. But more than anything, it’s simply enriching for them to read wonderful stories

A Faraway Island hails from Sweden, where it is the first book of a best-selling quartet. The story unfolds against the backdrop of World War II, with two Viennese sisters arriving in Sweden for safekeeping. Stephie and Nellie are Jewish; it turns out that Sweden took in five hundred Jewish children from Austria, Germany, and Czechoslovakia combined during the war. Half of them were never reunited with any family member. And adapting to life in Sweden wasn’t always easy, especially for older children, who understood what was happening back home, and who worried about the fate of loved ones left behind.

A Faraway Island is a deeply satisfying novel because author Annika Thor’s narrative evokes the rugged Swedish coast

and island where the action takes place; her characterizations of Stephie and Nellie and the Swedes are beautifully nuanced; her story abounds with texture and layers.

Annika is herself Jewish, though her family settled in Sweden long before the war. She wanted to write a novel about the children her homeland took in, something that isn’t common knowledge. By doing so, she’s broadened the literature of the Jewish experience during World War II. But Annika also wanted to depict the impact of displacement, which, sadly, children still go through the world over today, as well as the meaning of identity, and the universal joys and sorrows of growing up. It’s the universal themes of the novel that make it resonate with all readers. Annika definitely achieved what she set out to do.

My thanks to ALSC and Batchelder Chair Annette Goldsmith and her fellow committee members for recognizing *A Faraway Island*. Because of the award—as well as the wonderful reviews the novel has received—I’m happy to say that I’ll be publishing *The Lily Pond*, book number two in Annika’s moving quartet.

Thank you very much! &

2010 May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture

Can Children's Books Save the World? *Advocates for Diversity in Children's Books and Libraries*

Kathleen T. Horning



Kathleen T. Horning is Director of the Cooperative Children's Book Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a past president of ALSC. She delivered this lecture May 13, 2010 at the University of California Riverside Extension Center.

It is a great honor to be standing here before you to deliver the 2010 May Hill Arbuthnot Lecture. When Arbuthnot Chair Kristi Jemtegaard first called me way back in August of 2008 to give me the news, her first words after identifying herself were, "I bet you can guess why I'm calling."

Actually, I couldn't. The only thing I could think of was that it had something to do with the 2009 Arbuthnot Lecture, hosted by the Langston Hughes Library at the Alex Haley Farm in Clinton, Tennessee, because I had written a letter of support for Theresa Venable and her wonderful committee who had submitted what turned out to be the winning application. I actually thought that Kristi might have a question about the feasibility of a shuttle bus from the Knoxville Airport to the farm.

But Kristi quickly reminded me that, no, she was actually chair of the 2010 committee, not the one that had chosen Walter Dean Myers for this honor the year before. And she was calling to inform me that I had been selected as the 2010 lecturer. That was a lot to take in. And then the next thing she told me was that I would have to keep this news a secret until January of 2009.

So before I begin my speech, I'd like to thank Kristi Jemtegaard, and the members of the 2010 Arbuthnot Committee with whom she worked—Marian Creamer, Peter Howard, Joyce Laoisa, and Lauren Liang—for giving me this great honor, and for selecting the Riverside County Library System as the host. It's been a pleasure working with Mark Smith, whom I've known for several years for his amazing work with *El día de los niños / El día de los libros*, the annual celebration of family literacy, created by the author and advocate Pat Mora and members of REFORMA and administered by ALA's Association for Library Service to Children. Mark's commitment to diversity and to serving *all* families in his community is an inspiration. The members of the local planning committee have also been very helpful in making this happen. I'd also like to thank everyone in the ALSC office, most especially Executive Director Aimee Strittmatter, as well as ALSC President Thom Barthelmess, for

all his work within ALSC on behalf of children's librarians, children, and books.

As soon as I got the news that Riverside County Library System had been selected as the host site, I contacted Mark to find out why, exactly, they had applied to host a lecture that I would write and deliver. He told me that it was due to my work in multicultural literature, since the community here is a diverse one, and they, too, are passionate about books that reflect that diversity. I was very happy to hear this from Mark because—if you don't know it by now you will within the hour—multicultural literature is my passion, and I love to talk about it.

I told Mark that I was thinking of using the title "Why Multicultural Literature Matters." There was a little silence on his end of the phone, and then he told me he'd like to run it by his Planning Committee and he came back to me a few weeks later with an alternative title that they had agreed on. They wanted something with a bit more punch. How about "Can Children's Books Save the World?" I thought about it for a few days and decided I could take that on.

It's a rather grand title, perhaps, that conjures up images of children's authors and artists in capes with superpowers, flying in to save the day. But when you think about it, isn't that why we're all here, those of us who care about children and children's books?

I have found over the years that children's librarians have an almost missionary-like zeal about getting books into the hands of children. I think it's because we hear so many stories in our profession about how a book changed someone's life. Just a few weeks ago, for example, I was having dinner with a group of people, seated next to a seventy-four-year-old woman I had never met. She had just returned from serving in the Peace Corps in Peru, so I immediately knew I was in for some interesting conversation.

When she asked me what I did for a living and I told her I was a librarian, she said quite soberly, "A librarian saved my life." Well, I was thinking that maybe a librarian had rescued her from falling off a mountainside in the Andes, perhaps, or

had performed some such heroic deed. But then she elaborated.

“I grew up in rural Montana, and there was nothing for miles around. But there was a bookmobile that came every two weeks, and the librarian would bring me new books to read. I used to ride out into the countryside on my horse, far away from home, and I would just lie on top of my horse and read for hours on end. That’s how I learned about the world. And that saved me.”

Now, we’ve all heard stories like that—maybe not from seventy-four-year-old Peace Corps volunteers—but there are other stories, just as dramatic or compelling.

I think that every children’s librarian I have ever known has had a firm belief that children’s books have the power to save—if not the whole world, at least individual children. Like much in our field, this can be traced back to Anne Carroll Moore, the formidable head of children’s services at New York Public Library from 1906 to 1941.

If you know anything about Anne Carroll Moore, you probably know about her eccentricities, such as her strong dislike for *Charlotte’s Web*, which allegedly kept the book from winning the Newbery Medal back in 1952 . . . in spite of the fact she wasn’t on the committee that year, and that, by then, she had been retired from her position at New York Public Library for ten years.

You may have heard stories about Nicholas, the little wooden doll she carried with her everywhere. You may have heard that she spoke to other people through this doll and expected them to respond to him. But you may not know that she supposedly coined that famous phrase, “The right book for the right child at the right time.” Getting great books into children’s hands. This, in fact was her guiding philosophy, first articulated back in 1902, before she even started working at New York Public, when she was teaching a summer course in children’s librarianship for the Iowa Library Commission.¹

It quickly became the children’s librarian’s mantra. “The right book for the right child

“Can Children’s Books Save the World? . . . It’s a rather grand title, perhaps, that conjures up images of children’s authors and artists in capes with superpowers, flying in to save the day. But when you think about it, isn’t that why we’re all here, those of us who care about children and children’s books?”

at the right time.” I like the precise clarity of the phrase. We children’s librarians spend a lot of our time and energy selecting the “right books” and in knowing them and the communities we serve so we can place the right book into a child’s hands right when it is needed.

But let’s consider for a moment this idea of a “right child.” Just who is the right child? To me, the implication is that if there is a right child, then there must also be a wrong child. But is there? Is there ever a wrong child whom we would pass over and exclude? Not if we expect children’s books to save the world. That’s why, as children’s librarians, another key part of our philosophy is to include *all* children in the services we provide.

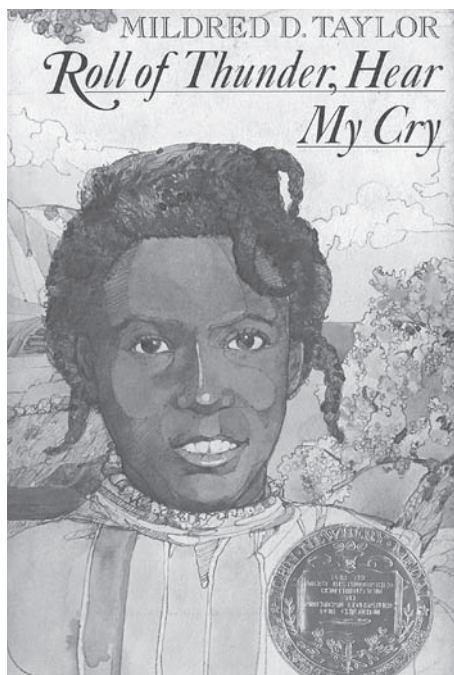
And, in fact, I was so troubled by this idea that our foremothers in the field of children’s librarianship started with a concept of “the right child” that I sought out the original quote from Miss Moore, and found that she never said anything about a “right child.” Instead she said that librarians must assure that “*every child [be given] the right book at the right time*” (italics are my own).² That’s much more in keeping with the values of the children’s librarians I know, and it was true a hundred years ago, as well.

I believe that the best way to put these beliefs into action is by sharing books with children that reflect the diversity they see in their everyday lives, and in the world around them. As it turns out, that’s harder than it sounds. There simply are not many multicultural books out there to select from and to put into children’s hands. And we’re also paralyzed by attitudes about race and ethnicity in this country that keep us from moving forward, even in 2010—and maybe most especially in 2010, given the tenor of the political conversation swirling around these days.

We live in a world where elected officials, members of our representative government, feel free to state publicly that one can identify undocumented workers by the way they dress. And policy can be passed to exclude people with foreign accents from teaching English in public schools—never mind that they often speak the language better than the native English speakers. Still, one would hope to see progress in the past sixty years, given the hard lessons we learned from World War II, from the Holocaust in Germany, and from our own national disgrace, the Japanese-American internment camps.

In looking specifically just at multicultural literature, we see the same sort of issues being grappled with today that we saw generations ago. To demonstrate this, I want to give you all a brief overview of multicultural literature for children and teens: how it developed, what challenges we faced, how it was promoted—or not promoted, as the case may be.





I think many of us—myself included, at one time—have a tendency to believe that authentic multicultural literature was invented in the 1970s. Perhaps this is because we measure so much by “firsts” in our field, and we all know that Virginia Hamilton was the first African-American author to win the Newbery Medal in 1975 for *M. C. Higgins, The Great*, and Mildred D. Taylor two years later for *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*. At around the same time, in 1976 and 1977, Leo and Diane Dillon won back-to-back Caldecott Medals for *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* and *Ashanti to Zulu*, marking the first—and second—Caldecott Medal that went to an African-American artist.

But they were not the first authors of color to be so awarded. Dhan Gopal Mukerji, an East Indian-American, had won the Newbery Medal nearly fifty years earlier for *Gay-Neck: The Story of a Pigeon*, back in 1928. I have read a lot of critical articles and reviews from the 1920s about the children's books of that era for a book on the history of the Newbery Medal that I am working on, and never have I found anything in the literature that suggests the choice of Mukerji was considered unusual or surprising in its time. The closest thing I have found is a description of the lengths librarians had to go to keep his winning a secret.

In those years, the winner, although the decision was made in March, was

not revealed until June, at the Newbery Banquet, and the author of *Gay-Neck* could not have remained anonymous in a crowd of mostly white women. His brown skin and turban would have made him immediately recognizable, so poor Dhan Gopal Mukerji had to stay hidden behind a bush on the hotel grounds where the banquet was being held until the announcement was made.³

Although it would be nearly fifty years before another author or illustrator of color won either the Newbery or the Caldecott (and there really weren't many children's books published at all that were by people of color), the literature of the 1920s and 1930s—and certainly that selected by the Newbery Committees of that time—shows that there was definitely an appreciation of cultural and ethnic diversity. In fact, many if not most of the children's novels published in those years were set in other countries—and not just in Europe. I have often suspected—although I haven't yet been able to find proof—that publishers in the early years of the children's book industry, the 20s and the 30s, were encouraged and rewarded for publishing books reflecting diversity so that librarians could put them into the hands of children from the various immigrant populations who were coming into the library.

We know, for example, that Anne Carroll Moore hired a young Puerto Rican woman named Pura Belpré and sent her to work at the 115th Street Branch of New York Public Library in 1929 to meet the needs of the growing Latino population in the neighborhood. There she offered bilingual story hours and advocated for Spanish-language book collections. She even published a picture book herself, *Perez y Martina*, from her own storytelling repertoire, in both Spanish and English, and in 1932 it became the first book published in English in the United States by a Puerto Rican writer.⁴

We get a good portrait of Pura Belpré and her impact on Spanish-speaking families in New York City with Lucía González's excellent picture book from 2008, *The Storyteller's Candle / La velita de los cuentos*—which incidentally was an honor book for the Pura Belpré Award. Here

is the book's young protagonist's first impression of her:

That afternoon, a special guest came to Hildamar and Santiago's class. She was a tall, slender woman with dark eyes that sparkled like *luceros* in the night sky. When she spoke her hands moved through the air like the wings of a bird.

“*Buenos días*, good morning,” she said. “My name is Pura Belpré. I come from the public library and I bring stories and puppets to share with you today.”

Ms. Belpré told stories with puppets, in English and in español. Everyone laughed at the end of the story of silly Juan Bobo chasing a three-legged pot. At the end of the show. Ms. Belpré invited the children to visit the library during winter vacation.

“The library is for everyone, *la biblioteca es para todos*,” she said.⁵

One of the most tantalizing tidbits I came across when doing the research for this lecture was found in Frances Clarke Sayers' biography of Anne Carroll Moore. Sayers mentioned that, in its early years, the Central Children's Room of the New York Public Library was funded privately, and so Moore did not have to abide by the personnel rules of the New York Public Library System. Essentially, she could hire whomever she wanted to hire, even people who had no formal professional training as librarians (but who would certainly get it under her direction!), and, most interestingly, people who were not citizens of the United States, as was required by the system. She strategically placed her employees in communities where they would have the greatest affinity—an Italian librarian in an Italian neighborhood, a Russian librarian in a Russian neighborhood, and so on. As Frances Clarke Sayers described them, “They were young women with unusual gifts, aptitudes, manifold backgrounds, and varied educational experiences.”⁶ In a word, diverse. They were the right *librarians* to put the right book at the right time into children's hands.

One of these women was a young African-American librarian named Augusta Baker,

whom Miss Moore had summoned to her office in February of 1937. She was looking for someone for the children's department in the Harlem branch at 135th Street, twenty blocks uptown from the branch where Pura Belpré had been working for the past eight years. The African-American librarian who had been working there as a children's librarian had left to become a school librarian, and somehow Miss Moore found out that Augusta Baker had a library degree. In fact, she had already applied three times to the New York Public Library, and had been passed over, she believed, because of her race.

In the midst of her interview with Anne Carroll Moore in the personnel office at New York Public Library, Miss Moore got up and went next door to the director's office, and tore a strip off of him, loudly scolding him for not passing the application on to her, as he was supposed to do with applicants who expressed an interest in children's work.⁷ Well, you probably know that Augusta Baker was indeed hired and she went on to become head of children's services at New York Public Library in 1961.

I don't want to give the impression that all the influential children's librarians worked in New York City. There were many, many others, and among those who most strongly stressed the importance of serving all children by offering authentic multicultural literature, we can count Charlemae Rollins, who was at Chicago Public Library and Effie Lee Morris at San Francisco Public. They all not only advocated for diversity, but each one shaped many, many of the children's librarians with whom they worked. Each one trained dozens of young librarians, and they imbued all of us with a sense of the importance of our work. They convinced us of our ability to save the world through children's books. And of our ability to change children's books through careful selection. Anne Carroll Moore liked to quote an ancient Persian proverb, "Choosing is creating."⁸ Through critical analysis and careful selection, they helped to shape children's literature.

In her groundbreaking book, *Shadow and Substance: Afro-American Experience in Contemporary Children's Fiction*, Rudine Sims (now Rudine Sims Bishop) characterizes the theme of the socially con-

scious fiction of the 1950s and 1960s, written mostly by white authors, as "how to behave when the Black folks move in."⁹ In 1955, Augusta Baker published her own version of this, addressed to her white colleagues. This article appeared in *Top of the News*, the professional journal of the Children's Services Division of the ALA, what is today known as the Association for Library Service to Children. It was entitled "The Children's Librarian in a Changing Neighborhood." After describing a typical library in a white, middle class neighborhood with a homogenous user group, she wrote:

Then, one day, you notice a group of your "old regulars" standing together, whispering and watching the stairway. As you have worked at the desk, you have been unaware of someone intently watching you. A round, brown face peeps in the doorway—eyes wide, frightened, questioning—the rest of the body comes into view, poised for instant and headlong flight. How do you look? Does a really warm, sincere smile come to your face or does a quick frown shadow it? Do you go over to that child and welcome him or do you continue with your work, hoping he will go away?¹⁰

Augusta Baker's description of the way a welcoming librarian should behave reminds me of the librarian in Pat Mora's 1997 picture book *Tomás and the Library Lady* who welcomed a young Chicano boy from a migrant family into the public library in Hampton, Iowa, in the early 1940s. The following passage from the book sounds eerily like the scenario Mrs. Baker played out in her article, but from the perspective of the child.

Tomás stood in front of the library doors. He pressed his nose against the glass and peeked in. The library was huge!

A hand tapped his shoulder. Tomás jumped. A tall lady looked down at him. "It's a hot day," she said. "Come inside and have a drink of water. What's your name?" she asked.

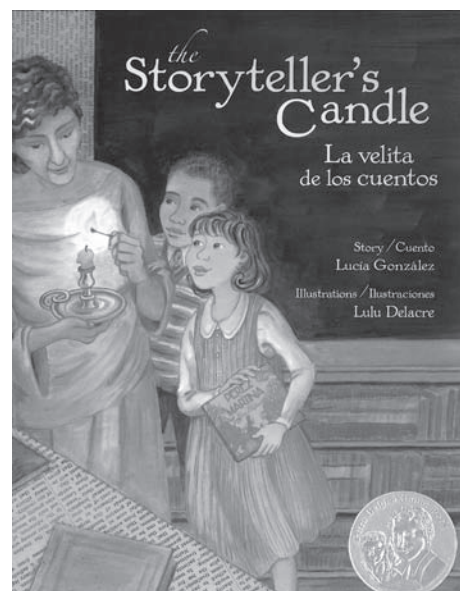
"Tomás," he said.

"Come, Tomás," she said.

Inside it was cool. Tomás had never seen so many books. The lady watched him. "Come," she said again, leading him to the drinking fountain. "First some water. Then I will bring books to this table for you. What would you like to read about?"¹¹

Mrs. Baker's article had not yet been published, but the librarian in this small town in Iowa knew instinctively to let a warm, sincere smile come to her face, and to go over to him and welcome him. She even let him take books back to his family, checked out on her own card. The boy grew up to be a famous author, poet, and educator named Tomás Rivera. I know those of you from around here have heard of him, since he was the chancellor here from 1979 until his death in 1984, and there is a campus library named after him.

But who was the librarian? If Dr. Rivera ever knew her name, he had forgotten it by the time he grew up. My friend Tim Wadham, an amazing librarian in his own right, traveled to Hampton, Iowa, to try to track her down when he was doing background research for a children's play based on the book while he was working as a youth services librarian at the Maricopa County Library District in Phoenix, Arizona. None of the people he talked to in Hampton was exactly sure who it could possibly have been until Tim mentioned one detail Dr. Rivera had remembered—that she had worn tennis shoes. And then everyone thought of the same person. The tennis shoes were



a dead giveaway. A librarian who had worked there named Bertha Gaulke was known for the tennis shoes she always wore when she walked to and from the library, although she never wore them while on duty. This suggests that she may have interacted with young Tomás while the library was closed, perhaps even opening the doors after hours to let him in. The truly odd thing was that Bertha Gaulke wasn't a children's librarian at all. And she wasn't even particularly friendly, as those who had known her recalled. But she had been a German immigrant and those who had known her thought that perhaps she might have empathized with a young child who was also a stranger in a strange land.¹²

In "The Children's Librarian in a Changing Neighborhood," Mrs. Baker also wrote about the books these children would find on library shelves.

Are there books on the shelves which will hurt and alienate your newcomers while at the same time they perpetuate stereotyped ideas in the minds of your regular library users? Get a good list of recommended books in the area of your minority groups and use this list with your book stock. Learn the criteria for this literature and discard the titles which may be obsolete in their ideas. Watch the illustrations for caricature, the language for unnecessary epithets and dialect, the characterization for stereotype. Make your book stock inviting and worth while for all groups who may use your room.¹³

Ah, but where to get the aforementioned criteria for evaluation and the "good list of recommended books?" Well, that's where Charlemae Hill Rollins comes in. Another African American pioneer of children's services, Mrs. Rollins joined the staff of the Chicago Public Library in 1927, and throughout her career she strove to eliminate painful stereotypes and promote authentic children's literature. She published what I believe is the first booklist of recommended multicultural literature—specifically African American literature—in 1941, with her pamphlet *We Build Together*. In the introduction to the book's second edition, published in 1948, she wrote, "Whether books are

written for Negro children or about them for other children, the objective should be the same. They should interpret life. They should help young people live together with tolerance and understand each other better."¹⁴

Mrs. Rollins was president of the Children's Services Division in 1957 and, as such, was also a member of the 1958 Newbery Committee. Among her personal papers in the Black Librarians Archive at the University of North Carolina, Professor Holly Willett found fascinating correspondence between her and Elizabeth Riley, the children's book editor at Crowell. The correspondence demonstrates how she worked quietly behind the scenes to try to improve the image of blacks in books. The book in question was *Rifles for Watie*, written by Harold Keith and edited by Elizabeth Riley, which had just won the 1958 Newbery Medal. In her correspondence, Mrs. Rollins gently but firmly outlines the concerns that she and other African American children's librarians had about specific lines in the book, for example, an African American woman in the story was described as having teeth "like a row of white piano keys," and about a young African-American male character the author had written, "He even smelled clean."¹⁵

She knew the book would be going into a second printing after it won the award, and this would provide an excellent opportunity for a slight revision. Ms. Rollins even supplied the suggested text to use in the revision. The fact that the editor agreed to make the suggested changes for the second printing is a testament to the power and respect Charlemae Rollins garnered, at least within the publishing world. I say "at least" because once author Harold Keith got wind of the changes that were made, he demanded they be changed back for the third printing.¹⁶

She was also highly regarded by the community she served, and Christopher Paul Curtis paid tribute to her in his 2000 Newbery Medal winning book, *Bud, Not Buddy*. When ten-year-old Bud runs away from his foster home, he turns toward the library, hoping to find his friend, the children's librarian, Miss Hill:

I knew a nervous-looking, stung-up kid with blood dripping from a fish-

head bite and carrying a old raggedy suitcase didn't look like he belonged around here.

The only hope I had was the north side library. If I got there, maybe Miss Hill would be able to help me, maybe she'd understand and would be able to tell me what to do.¹⁷

And, of course, I can't leave this discussion of early pioneers in the library field without mentioning Effie Lee Morris, who started out at Cleveland Public Library in 1946 and was hired as the first children's services coordinator at San Francisco Public Library in 1963. Miss Morris sadly passed on several months ago, and one of the last conversations I had with her was about May Hill Arbuthnot herself. We were sharing a cab together between meetings at the annual ALA conference in Anaheim a couple of years ago, and I brought up the upcoming Arbuthnot Lecture at the Langston Hughes Library, which we were both planning to attend. She told me that at Case Western, she had studied children's literature with her.

"May Hill Arbuthnot," she said in her characteristically clipped, emphatic voice. "I could tell you a thing or two about May Hill Arbuthnot." It was one of those rare times I wished a cab ride could have lasted for hours, instead of minutes.

These amazing women devoted their careers to promoting diversity, in libraries and in literature, helping to shape the future.

Two years after Charlemae Rollins retired, Nancy Larrick published an article in the *Saturday Review* that got white people—particularly those in the publishing industry—to pay attention to the issues that had been raised by librarians of color for nearly thirty years. "The All-White World of Children's Books" outlined the problem by providing statistics. Ms. Larrick looked at 5,206 children's books published by 63 publishers from 1962 through 1964, and found that only 349 of them, or 6.4 percent, included one or more Blacks in the illustrations. Of these, 60 percent were placed outside the United States or took place before World War II, which meant that only four-fifths of one percent of the children's trade books published in the

United States from 1962–64 were about contemporary African-Americans.¹⁸

The feeling of what it's like for a child of color to be completely omitted from the cultural life of the nation during this time period is vividly captured in Rita Williams-Garcia's brilliant new middle-grade novel set in Oakland, California, in 1968, *One Crazy Summer*. Here is the eleven-year-old protagonist, Delphine, talking about how she and her younger sisters experienced the all-white world of network television:

Each week, Jet magazine pointed out all the shows with colored people. My sisters and I became expert colored counters. We had it down to a science. Not only did we count how many colored people were on TV, we also counted the number of words they were given to say. For instance, it was

At the end of Nancy Larrick's article, she talks about a new organization that had just come into being, called the Council on Interracial Books for Children. The council, or CIBC as it was known, published a regular newsletter that offered critical reviews and articles. The CIBC didn't cloak any of their criticism in niceties. To give you an idea of their perspective, here's a sentence from Elinor Sinnette, one of the CIBC founders who was quoted in "The All-White World of Children's Books" about the all-white world of children's books: "Publishers have participated in a cultural lobotomy."²⁰ There was no beating around the bush for the Council on Interracial Books for Children. Many in the children's book world found their tone strident, and even hurtful. But it was necessary for us all to take a good hard, critical look at ourselves and where we were going in order to move forward.

Flynt Greer and Mabel McKissack, and publisher John Carroll, were discussing the sad fact that no African American author had ever been awarded a Newbery or a Caldecott Medal, and it was out of this discussion that the idea for the Coretta Scott King Award grew.²¹ The award was established to encourage and acknowledge African American authors and illustrators, in the same way the Newbery Award had been created nearly fifty years earlier, to help create a body of distinguished children's literature. Remember: choosing *is* creating.

The 1970s were a time of great growth and change in children's literature. Thanks to the efforts of the Council on Interracial Books for Children and the Coretta Scott King Award, as well as a growing social consciousness in our nation as a whole, we began for the first time to see African American literature flourish, and to a

“Thanks to the efforts of the Council on Interracial Books for Children and the Coretta Scott King Award, as well as a growing social consciousness in our nation as a whole, we began for the first time to see African-American literature flourish, and to a lesser extent, we saw a bit of development in other areas of multicultural literature, as well. This all happened in the midst of a sea of change in children’s literature as a whole, as the romanticism that marked children’s books of the first half of the century started to be replaced by what was then called the ‘new realism.’”

easy to count the number of words the negro engineer on *Mission Impossible* spoke as well as the black POW on *Hogan's Heroes*. Sometimes the black POW didn't have any words to say, so we scored him a "1" for being there. We counted how many times Lieutenant Uhuru hailed the frequency on *Star Trek*. We'd even take turns being her, although Big Ma would have never let us wear a minidress or space boots. But then there was *I Spy*. All three of us together couldn't count every word Bill Cosby said. And then there was a new show, *Julia*, coming in September, starring Diahann Carroll. We agreed to shout "Black Infinity!" when *Julia* came on because each episode would be all about her character.¹⁹

In addition to its critical articles and reviews, the CIBC held annual contests for unpublished authors of color. There was the promise of a \$500 cash prize, and the attention brought to the authors usually got the manuscript read by a children's book editor, which often led to a publishing contract. As a result, the field of children's literature was greatly enriched—and when I say enriched, I do mean enriched. Authors who got their start in children's books as a result of winning the contest include Kristen Hunter, Walter Dean Myers, Sharon Bell Mathis, Mildred D. Taylor, Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve, Minfong Ho, and Ai Ling Louie.

Not long after the CIBC was founded, two African American librarians, Glyndon

lesser extent, we saw a bit of development in other areas of multicultural literature, as well. This all happened in the midst of a sea of change in children's literature as a whole, as the romanticism that marked children's books of the first half of the century started to be replaced by what was then called the "new realism."

At the Cooperative Children's Book Center where I work, there has always been an interest in multicultural literature since the center's founding in 1963, but we got into it on a greater scale in the mid-1980s. I have spent my career working as a librarian at the CCBC, an examination center and research library that is part of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

I am pleased and proud that my friend and mentor for many years, Ginny Moore Kruse, is here with us today, and I am so glad Ginny could be here with us for this event because so much of what I know about multicultural literature has been part of a lifelong journey I have shared with Ginny. So you may be wondering how these two white, middle-class women from a predominantly white, middle-class city in the middle of the country came to be known for their work in multicultural literature.

It all started with a phone call from a school librarian. She had started a new job at a predominantly African American school and had found the existing library collection to be lacking. What few African American books they did have that were still relevant were worn and tattered, and when she had tried to replace them, she found that they were out of print.

When she looked for new titles that had been published in the past few years, she couldn't find much. "I must be missing something," she said. "Where are the books?" We looked, too, and didn't have any better luck than she did. In fact, I remember clearly the moment of revelation when I looked up "Blacks—Fiction" in the subject guide to Children's Books in Print and found less than a column of listings of in-print titles. But when I flipped back just a bit, there were pages and pages of books with the subject heading "Bears—Fiction."

The point was driven home for us even further the next year when Ginny Moore Kruse served on the Coretta Scott King Award Committee in 1985 and learned the exact number of books that were eligible for the award in that year, since she received copies of all eligible books, that is to say, books written or illustrated by African Americans. There were just eighteen books by black authors and illustrators in 1985, out of about 2,500 children's books published in total. And, of those, only twelve had the necessary cultural content to be considered contenders for the award. We were so shocked by the statistic that we decided to put it into print in our annual publication of the year's best books, *CCBC Choices*.²² And every year thereafter, we documented the number and printed it in the introduction

to *Choices*. Before long, we had people calling us, asking us for the statistics on African American books. *USA Today* even did a feature story on the subject in 1989 that quoted our statistics in a colorful bar graph designed to look like the spines of books lined up on a shelf—for those who couldn't visualize how a shelf of eighteen books would look in comparison to a shelf of thirty books.²³

We also began to experience the phenomenon we have come to call "The Great Information Loop," where our colleagues from around the country, in libraries and publishing houses, would quote the statistic back to us, not realizing we were the source. It started a buzz, just as Nancy Larrick's 1965 article, "The All-White World of Children's Books," had done twenty years earlier. I don't know if it's that we both had statistical data or the fact that white people were making noise about a problem that caused the spotlight to be cast on the issue. Whatever the case, we began to see the number climb slowly over the next few years, from eighteen books in 1985 to seventy-four in 1993. During the same time, the number of children's books had nearly doubled, but even so, the percentage of books by African American authors and illustrators did go up a bit.

By 1995, we were being asked for the statistics for other authors of color, and because at the CCBC we receive review copies of nearly every children's and young adult book published in the United States, we were able to provide them. The number of books by authors of color have gone up and down over the years, but none of the four groups we track—African-American, American Indian, Asian-Pacific, and Latino—none of these groups has ever topped one hundred children's or young adult books in any given year. And the overall statistic for all children's books by and about people of color has never risen above five percent during the time we have been documenting the numbers.²⁴

The biggest change we saw in the 1990s was with Latino literature for children. In 1991, I spoke about Latino literature in the United States at a day-long workshop for bilingual teachers at Columbia University, and in the hour that was allotted to me, I was able to speak about every-

thing that had been published. Most of it, as I recall, came from small presses, such as Children's Book Press and Margarita's Books for Brown Eyes. But soon after that, things started to change. Perhaps the ongoing national dialogue about issues raised by the Columbus quinqucentenary brought this to the forefront for the corporate publishers, but in any case, I always mark 1992 as the year the publishers discovered we have a Spanish speaking population here in the United States. We began to see Spanish/English bilingual books from the corporate publishers, as well as Spanish-language editions of popular titles from their back lists.

And certainly the Pura Belpré Award for Latino literature has had an impact. This award, conceived by Oralia Garza de Cortés and established in 1996, is sponsored jointly by ALSC and REFORMA, and it has done for Latino authors and illustrators what the Coretta Scott King Award did for black authors in the 1970s. And as of 2009, it's gone from being a biennial award to an annual one, as there are now enough books to consider in any given year. In recent years, both the American Indian Library Association and the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association have established children's book awards to encourage more publishing in these areas.

With all these hopeful signs in multicultural literature since the mid-1980s, there is still the reality of those statistics. We hear from our friends in the publishing world that multicultural books are a hard sell. They have trouble pushing a book with a multicultural theme past their marketing department because marketing claims the mega-bookstores won't stock the books. And yet we all know the demand *is* there. We have to get that message across by buying multicultural books and by putting them into the hands of *all* children. As the poet Alexis De Veaux once said, "Buying a book is a political act."

Walter Dean Myers once published an eloquent editorial in the *New York Times* entitled "I Actually Thought We Would Revolutionize the Industry." It was published in 1986, but his words are still sadly true today. He speaks of the hope that was raised with the development of African American children's literature in

the 1970s, only to be quashed in the 1980s by the dwindling numbers. Disillusioned by what he saw, he wrote:

I have changed my notion of the obligation of the book publishing industry. While it does have the responsibility to avoid the publishing of negative images of any people, I no longer feel that the industry has any more obligation to me, to my people, to my children, than does, say, a fast-food chain. It's clear to me that if any race, any religion or social group, elects to place its cultural needs in the hands of the profit makers then it had better be prepared for the inevitable disappointment.²⁵

And going back twenty years earlier to Nancy Larrick's words, written in 1965, which still ring true today, "White supremacy in children's literature will be abolished when authors, editors, publishers and booksellers decide they need not submit to bigots."²⁶

Over the years, I have learned a lot about book evaluation from listening to the children themselves. I love nothing better than to discuss a good book with third graders. They're not always articulate, but they are often perceptive, and always eager to share their opinions. One of the most memorable discussions I ever had with children was one in which we discussed *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry when it was first new. We'd had a remarkable discussion in which the children had discovered, on their own, what a literary allusion was, due to Lowry's expert and child-friendly embedding of the little-red-riding-hood tale into the story.

They had found parallels I had missed between the main character's younger sister, Kirsti, and the young man, Peter, who was a member of the Resistance Movement. Both, they noted, had stood up to the Nazis, but they decided only Peter could qualify as truly heroic because he alone understood the consequences of his actions.

I was just getting ready to wind down the discussion when eight-year-old Erin piped up, "There's one thing I don't understand

about *Number the Stars*." Erin was small for her age. She had that classic Irish look, and her cheeks would turn as bright red as her hair whenever she spoke. "Well," she said, "the Nazis hated the Jews but the author never told us *why*. Why did they hate them so much? They're just people, aren't they? Aren't they just like all of us?"

Erin's question was more perceptive than any answer I could have given her. And it was a good reminder that children can find themselves in books about other children whose lives seem, on the surface, to have nothing to do with theirs.

Early in my career, I heard the British author Penelope Lively say something in a public lecture that has always stuck with me. "The great children's books help free children from the prison of egotism." Children are so naturally and necessarily egotistical, and breaking out of that prison of egotism is an important part

"Children can find themselves in books about other children whose lives seem, on the surface, to have nothing to do with theirs."

of their development. Great books can help them to do just that, as *Number the Stars* did for Erin. And it seems to me that multicultural literature stands especially poised to do just that. It brings characters to life who are both different and the same. A variation on a human theme, so to speak. And they are books to share with *all* children, all year round.

Why do so many insist on giving children books that show them only themselves, sometimes ridiculously so. I once had a mother ask me for a book for her daughter who was just starting fourth grade, who wasn't a great reader but who enjoyed historical fiction set in the United States. She was looking for a short chapter book, preferably with a strong female character. I suggested *Sarah Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan. The mother looked at me as if I had suggested *Valley of the Dolls* for her daughter. "Oh, no, that won't do," she said. "My daughter is short and beautiful."

I have observed this desire to match readers exactly to book characters in action with preschoolers during story hour at the public library. Each week, I would put out books by the same authors or illustrators, or on the same themes, as those I planned to read in the story hour. I would put them face out, around the room, propped up along the walls of the story hour room, at the preschoolers' eye level. What I noticed, again and again, is that the children would pick up whatever book interested them, without regard to the ethnicity or the gender of the character pictured on the cover. But the adults with the children would nearly always choose a book where the character on the cover looked like his or her child. A white father with white daughter, for example, would select a book with a white girl on the cover. An African American mother would select a book with an African American child on the cover, and so on. Often times, I even saw a parent take a book out of his or her child's hands and put it back, if the character didn't match.

These were progressive parents in Madison, Wisconsin, acting with the best of intentions, wanting their children to see themselves reflected in their library books. I can understand that and appreciate it. But what were they really doing? Were they subconsciously teaching their child that they should stick to their own kind? So much of the conversation about multicultural literature over the years has focused on the need for children of color to see themselves reflected in books—and the need certainly is there. But multicultural literature is important for all children—white children, too.

Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman's 2009 book *Nurture Shock* includes an entire chapter on why white parents don't talk to children about race, and the effect it has on them. They've culled together the results of several studies on young children's perceptions of and attitudes toward race, and have found that the vast majority of white parents have never discussed race with children, beyond vague principles such as, "We're all the same underneath the skin," believing that they are raising their children in a color-blind environment.

In one study, white children between the ages of five and seven, who had been raised in this sort of progressive environment where their parents didn't discuss race were asked directly "Do your parents like black people?" Fourteen percent answered, "No, my parents don't like black people," and 38 percent answered "I don't know." The children were drawing their own conclusions from their parents' silence on the issue of race.²⁷

But you can't really blame these parents. We live in a society where race is a highly charged subject. Most adults can't talk about it, even with each other, without getting defensive and sometimes downright nasty. And not everyone can be invited to the White House to discuss it over a beer with President Obama. But books can be a bridge to understanding. For adults wanting to open a discussion with children about race, I'd suggest starting with Sandra and Myles Pinkney's *Shades of Black*. It's not just black children—all children are the right child for this book. Try it. You'll find that children are eager to talk about the differences they observe all around them, in skin color, eye color, and hair texture. They'll be relieved to learn that you have noticed the differences, too, even though you've told them all along that race doesn't matter.

Years after I heard Penelope Lively talk about the prison of egotism, I learned that the expression hadn't actually originated with her. She had probably cited John Erskine in her lecture as the source for the phrase; I wouldn't be surprised if I had been too dazzled by the concept to have remembered that she did.

John Erskine was the founder of the Great Books program, and he first used the term in writing about the underlying philosophy of the program. He wrote that "great books would help people to free themselves from the prison of egotism and take part in the complete citizenship of mankind" and that they would lead to fellowship and human understanding.²⁸

He probably should have been a children's librarian.

I'm going to close with a quote from Erskine because with these simple words, he really did tell us how children's books

can save the world. He wrote, "Let's tell young people the best books are yet to be written; the best painting, the best government, the best of everything is yet to be done by them."²⁹ They will be the ones to save the world—the next generation of children like Hildmar and Santiago, Delphine and Bud, and Tomás—if we can just give them what they need to do it—the right book at the right time for every child. ☺

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The Best Font for the Job

Typography in Caldecott Winners, 1990—2010

THOMAS PHINNEY AND LESLEY COLABUCCI

Teachers and librarians recognize quality picture books when they see them. Selecting and evaluating picture books requires careful attention not only to story and art, but also to design. However, even some picture book experts lack direction and knowledge when it comes to evaluating typography, a key design element.

Most core textbooks in children's literature neglect this topic. Barbara Kiefer's comprehensive textbook gives it a passing mention in the chapter devoted to illustration.¹ In a list of questions to consider when evaluating picture books, it includes the question "Is the type design well chosen for the theme and purpose of the book?"² The book states that "type should enhance or extend the overall design of the book," but does not explain how one might tell whether the typeface is well-chosen or if the typography enhances or extends the design.³

Similarly, typography is rarely discussed in studies of children's literature. Richard Kerper explored the role of typography in one particular piece of nonfiction, while Sue Walker addressed the role typography may play in children's book preferences.⁴ These few exceptions aside, typography is a neglected topic in the study of children's literature. We argue that it should be considered alongside such elements of design as endpapers,

size and shape of the book, cover design, and paper quality. Typography plays a vital and complex role in conveying meaning in picture books.

When we set out to study typography in children's books, we knew we wanted to survey high-quality picture books that teachers and librarians would be familiar with. We assumed that Caldecott Medal winners and Honor Books would offer better and more interesting typography than the average mass-market children's book, and therefore selected this body of children's literature for the purposes of our study. One of the most prestigious awards for children's literature, the Caldecott Medal honors the most distinguished American picture book for children. Criteria for the award include overall design of the book, but no specific standards for design or typography are indicated.

Our research questions focused on the role of typography in these award-winning picture books. We wanted to know how typography contributed to the visual experience offered to the reader, but we also set out to analyze trends in typography in these books, the best children's literature has to offer. To create a simple but large sample, we limited the data set for this study to books that garnered Caldecott medals or honors from 1990



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to 2010. However, of the eighty-eight books in the collection, we eliminated fourteen because they were either alphabet books without any running text, were wordless or nearly wordless (including the 2010 winner), or were hand-lettered rather than typeset. For the purposes of our study, integrating alphabet, wordless, and hand-lettered books seemed to create a comparison of apples and oranges. Thus the remaining seventy-four books formed our sample.

We began our analysis process by inventorying the books both individually and as a set, while keeping careful records of our findings. Books were read and reread as we made iterative passes through the texts and discussed them. Kathy Short explains that “the key to content analysis is the development of specific criteria for interpretation and analysis.”⁵

For us, this emerged over time as we consulted reviews, took notes on each piece, and answered a key set of questions (which expanded over time, necessitating the repeated passes) about each book. Our coding process involved documenting the name of each typeface, as well as its creator and other information about its origins, alongside use of typographic techniques and options in typesetting. Not all of this information contributed to the results.

Our analysis process occurred in several phases. First, we gathered initial information about each book, recording genre and date so we could later look for trends and correlations. We then went through each book looking for various typographic features or their omission. Finally, we began to ask tougher questions, both practical and theoretical, about each book.

Over time we moved from questions such as “When was that font designed?” and “Is the typesetting legible enough?” to more open-ended queries such as “Does the type extend the mood created by the illustrations?” During our last phase of analysis, we constantly asked each other for evidence from the books as we tested our emerging patterns and eventual categories. By seeking negative examples and further refining our descriptions, we finalized our categories. Accordingly, we narrowed our criteria to the key issues of honoring, dishonoring, enhancing, and expressive typography.

Typeface Selection in Recent Caldecott Winners

Typography encompasses typeface selection, typesetting, and typeface design. This paper focuses primarily on the first two issues. The selection, and sometimes manipulation, of type is a critical element of typography, which can help or hinder the quality of a book. In this section we discuss the ways in which a typeface fits the art and story of a picture book.

We also note that besides being appropriate, a typeface must also be of adequate quality, that is to say sufficiently well designed. In our analysis of these eighty-five books, we divided them into four distinct groups by their typographic choices: some compromise the quality of the book by clashing with the content; others deliberately honor the text, enhance the mes-

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In a “super-elliptical” typeface such as Melior, round shapes such as the letter “o” become almost square, creating a modern, mechanical feeling.

Figure 1. Melior Typeface by Hermann Zapf for Stempel AG

sage of the book, or use expressive typography to emphasize specific elements of the story.

Dishonoring Typography

Sometimes the selection of the typeface clashes with the message, themes, or setting of the book. Robert Bringhurst explains that “when the type is poorly chosen, what the words say linguistically and what the letters imply visually are disharmonious, dishonest, out of tune.”⁶ We found many examples, of varying severity, of typography choices which are disharmonious in this way.

Although we love the story of *Lon Po Po*, Hermann Zapf’s 1952 typeface Melior has an uber-modern, super-elliptical design that doesn’t fit the period of this ancient folktale.⁷ *The Gardener* has a similar issue; the story is set in the depression era of the 1930s, but the typeface ITC Zapf International is another super-elliptical Zapf design which would have been unthinkable prior to at least the 1950s.⁸

However, this incongruity is not quite as jarring as that of *Lon Po Po* because of the smaller gap in time period, and because while ITC Zapf International is similar to Melior, it is not as aggressively modern. In fact, it is vaguely evocative of a typewriter, which would be appropriate to this story told in letters—except that it is not at all like a typewriter of the 1930s.

The Man Who Walked between the Towers is a book with a very warm and humanist tone in both the writing and the illustrations. The typeface, however, is Bell Centennial, a sans serif originally designed for the text in telephone books and never intended for lengthy body text.⁹ The intimate story invites readers to hold their breath while Philippe Petit tightrope walks between the Twin Towers that no longer mark the Manhattan skyline, but the cold typeface selected compromises that quiet closeness between the reader and main character.

In other instances, the contradictions between typeface and content are less noticeable. Eve Bunting’s *Smoky Night* is a story of hope set around the 1992 riots in Los Angeles, with illustrations combining stylized collage and bold mural art. The text is set in the bold weight of Syntax, a humanist sans serif typeface with a mannered and almost calligraphic sensibility, which does not fit this edgy, urban story very well.¹⁰

Sometimes it is unclear whether a typeface choice contradicts the feeling or period of the story. *So You Want to be President* has a very informal and friendly writing style and illustrations

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Centaur is an elegant Venetian typeface based on Nicolas Jenson's type of circa 1470.

Figure 2. Centaur Typeface by Bruce Rogers for Monotype

reminiscent of newspaper political caricatures. The typeface is ITC Golden Type, a revival of a late nineteenth-century William Morris design, which was inspired by medieval craftsmanship and aesthetics.¹¹

Depending on how one dates the typeface, that's either five hundred years earlier than the founding of the United States, or more than one hundred years later. Yet this doesn't create a problem for the book because the typeface is historical in more or less the right way, and feels warm in a way that matches the writing and illustrations.

Similarly, *Olivia* features cartoon art and a playful story about an energetic little girl who happens to be a pig. Author and illustrator Ian Falconer manages to work a fair bit of famous art into the background. The text is set in Centaur, a very antique-looking humanist serif typeface much beloved by typographers.¹²

Centaur was originally commissioned for use in signage by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City in 1929, so in both style and history it could be seen as highly compatible with the art reproductions that appear throughout the story. Although the relatively slim lines of the letters echo the fine lines of the book's artwork, the letterforms' classical shapes seem at odds with the story and foreground art; instead, the typeface helps play up the fine art references of the story. Arguably, the typeface selection clashes with one aspect of the book's content, but honors another.

Honoring Typography

Many other typeface choices among these Caldecott books work well with their text in a variety of ways. According to Carol Goldenberg's 1993 *Horn Book* essay on the design and typography of children's books, an appropriate typeface, one that honors the story, gives "the text a visual shape while remaining true to the spirit of the author's message."¹³

For most books outside of children's literature, many typographers believe that the typeface should be invisible, subtly enhancing the text without drawing attention to itself, like drinking wine from a crystal goblet rather than an opaque metal container that hides the wine and changes its flavor.¹⁴ The graphic design of children's books does not always follow this guideline. Particularly among the illustration-driven books that make up the Caldecott winners and honorees, it is not surprising that we often see typeface selection and typography that is more loudly in tune with the work. However, the following are

notable examples of typeface selections that simply honor the text in the quiet spirit of the crystal goblet—in ways which are appropriate, deliberate, and subtle.

Swamp Angel is a 1994 book that lives in the nineteenth century, both in the story and the style of the art. It feels entirely appropriate that the text is set in Cloister Old Style, Morris Fuller Benton's 1897 updating of Nicolas Jenson's 15th-century type to 19th-century sensibilities.¹⁵ It is a wonderful match in that the type does not compete with the story or the art, yet is nicely in period.

Jerry Pinkney's version of *Noah's Ark*, published in 2002, retells the Biblical story with simple, but poetic, language and watercolor-over-thin-pencil art in an almost impressionist style. Again, the typeface is a perfect match; Carmina is calligraphic yet modern, and the face of Carmina used is a light weight that complements rather than overpowers the delicate artwork.¹⁶

In these two examples, the typeface selections live up to Beatrice Warde's ideal of invisibility, what Bringhurst describes as "creative non-interference."¹⁷

The Graphic Alphabet and *Seven Blind Mice* both feature black background art with brightly colored, somewhat abstract, foreground images of solid colors. A relatively cool and abstract typeface, as clean and spare as the art, was chosen for both books: New Caledonia for the former and Optima reversed in white on black for the latter.¹⁸ The result for both is an excellent, unobtrusive fit.

Style and color are complemented by restrained typography in *Ella Sarah Gets Dressed*, which features an obstinate main character and mixed-media art using slightly muted variants of primary colors, giving it an early-to-mid-twentieth-century color palette. The bold weight of ITC Goudy Sans (designed in 1986, after the 1922–29 Frederic Goudy typeface) nicely complements the style and colors of the artwork, and the "loudness" of the protagonist's personality (though a slightly lighter weight might have been even better).¹⁹

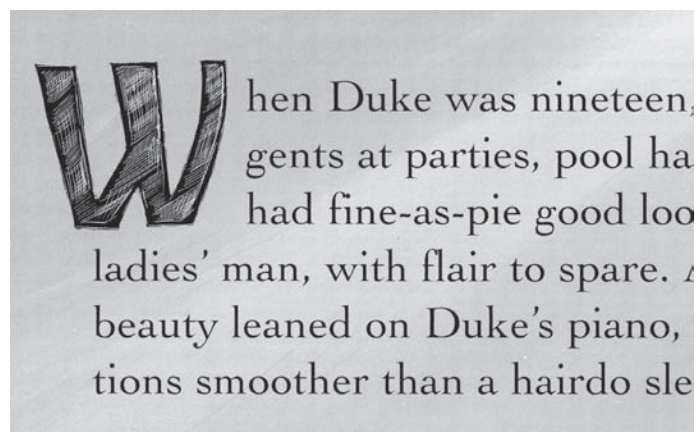


Figure 3. Text in Cochin, from Andrew Davis Pinkney, *Duke Ellington*

From Andrea Davis Pinkney's *Duke Ellington*, ©1999 by Andrea Davis Pinkney, illustrated by Brian Pinkney. Reprinted by permission of Disney Hyperion, an imprint of Disney Book Group LLC. All rights reserved.

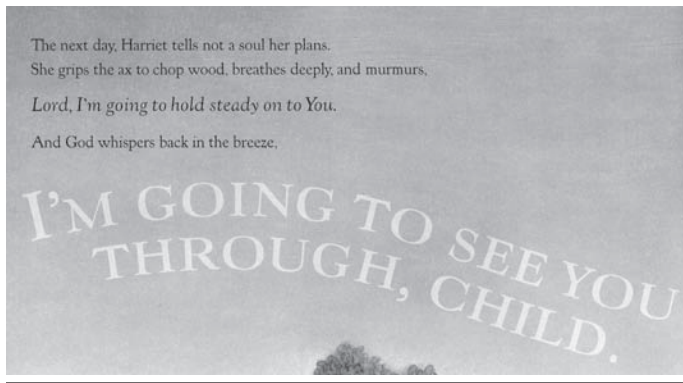


Figure 4. Expressive Typography, from Carole Boston Weatherford, *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom*

From Carole Boston Weatherford's *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom*, ©2006 by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Kadir Nelson. Reprinted by permission of Disney Hyperion, an imprint of Disney Book Group LLC. All rights reserved.

In some cases, selection of a typeface that honors the story is very closely connected to the setting of the book. *Duke Ellington* uses the jazz-age typeface Cochin for this book dedicated to the great jazz composer.²⁰ It's a perfect fit.

Golem, set in the city of Prague in 1580, is a retelling of a Jewish legend about that period. It uses the 1957 typeface Dante, which is modeled very much after the Galalde typefaces of the 1500s.²¹ As Galalde typefaces are still among the most common text typefaces, the choice is "invisible," but still highly appropriate to the setting of the story. While most readers will not be aware of these deliberate choices, recognizing these kinds of connections can extend a reader's understanding and enjoyment of these books.

Enhancing Typography

The typeface selections for *Duke Ellington* and *Golem* honor the settings of those stories while remaining unobtrusive. The average reader is not likely to notice the typography in such books. In our Caldecott collection, some books have typographic choices that go beyond honoring the setting or theme of the book. In these books, the typeface selection enhances the story by becoming a more active part of the visual experience. As a result, the type in these books begins to depart from the crystal goblet theory, contributing more overtly to the reading experience.

The Spider and the Fly is a timeless tale written in the nineteenth century with a presentation evocative of silent films of the 1920s, right down to the display of text as movie intertitles. The typeface is Caslon Antique, a late nineteenth-century design intended to evoke much older printing, and a wonderful match to the style of the book.²²

Another animal fantasy in the collection, *Puss in Boots*, is based on an original story published in the 1600s, with the best-known version dating to 1697. In this version of the story, the designer chose to use Estienne, a Galalde old style serified typeface, named after a famous printing family of the 1500s.²³ Both visu-

ally and in its historical origins, it fits the fairytale story. In both of these examples, text color is also manipulated, making the typography a more dynamic feature on the page than in the examples of honoring typography.

Starry Messenger, published in 1996, is a book about Galileo designed to look like a Renaissance scientist's notebook (reminiscent of Leonardo da Vinci). What we call the "notebook text" features hand-lettered quotes and supporting details, while the body text below is in Phaistos, an unusual high-contrast Venetian old style serified design, inspired by the late 1400s (though designed in 1991).²⁴ Its Renaissance background fits the text quite well and communicates more about the context to the reader.

Expressive Typography

Expressive typography goes further beyond the "crystal goblet" approach, using changes in one or more qualities of the typeface within the same book to emphasize specific elements of the story. Some of the variables that can be manipulated in expressive typography are typeface or the size, style (weight or italics), color, or position of the type. Expressive typography can substitute for other typographic devices, artwork, or even literary devices, to advance the story.

Moses is a fine example of expressive typography. The main body text is the highly appropriate Kennerley, an old style serified typeface.²⁵ Harriet Tubman's thoughts and prayers are set in a larger type size and italicized. When Harriet communicates with God, His words are in much larger print, in caps and small caps, but in lighter colors. Sometimes they roll across the page, imitating the song of a whippoorwill or a babbling brook. Although in some spots these words take a little more work to read, perhaps that is appropriate for the context of Harriet finding the words of God in nature.

Another award-winning piece of African American children's literature uses expressive typography for a similar purpose. *Martin's Big Words* uses quotes from Martin Luther King Jr. to great effect.²⁶ The effect is much like a "pull quote," when a magazine or newspaper takes a bit of text and sets it in a larger size to highlight a phrase, quote, or a key passage, in order to pull the reader in. But pull quotes usually duplicate the body text. Here, the quotes are perhaps double the point size of the text, but they are not duplicates; instead, each is enlarged right in place, to lend extra gravitas to those words right in the context of the story. Finally, the last page of the story integrates key words of Dr. King's with the background of the page.

In other cases, typography is manipulated to emphasize the plot and mood of the story. For example, in *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type*, three typefaces are used to convey the action of the story: one for body text, another for the typewritten notes left by the cows and ducks, and a third for the sounds made by the cows and ducks.²⁷ The changes of typeface cue readers to what is happening in the story, which is why it constitutes expressive typography rather than honoring or enhancing the content.

Multiple typefaces also are part of the strong marriage of typography, art, and literary context seen in Christopher Bing's version of *Casey at the Bat*.²⁸ The book uses a range of typefaces to simulate headlines, subheads, and sometimes body text of a late-nineteenth-century newspaper, which the whole book resembles. The strong flavor is hardly unobtrusive, but the typefaces are carefully chosen to match the design, and the result is first-rate expressive typography. In all of these examples, typography is put to work in telling the story, conveying meaning, and creating an experience for the reader.

Such use of multiple typefaces is not unusual in our sample set, in which twelve books use two or more typefaces and five use three or more typefaces. Books with multiple typefaces seem to have a high proportion of winners (five of the twelve were winners), also and are more likely to have visual issues from lack of ligatures, discussed below under the rubric of "typesetting issues."

Typesetting Issues

In the previous section, we discussed the question of typeface selection and the marriage of story, art, and type. However, once a typeface is selected, book designers must make a range of decisions. Typesetting encompasses the choices made by the book designer in setting the text, including: where the text goes in relation to the pictures, the point size, the length of lines, the use of special typographic characters such as the various kinds of dashes, and the use of additional typographic embellishments, such as initial capitals.

Good typesetting can honor the story, enhance readability, and add to the appeal of a book, but bad typesetting can make a book look amateurish, and at its worst render any typeface unreadable. Of course, the average quality of the typesetting choices in the Caldecott books is considerably above the average for children's books in general, probably often for the same reasons the illustrations were exceptional in the first place. In this section, we introduce several aspects of typesetting and offer our assessment of how well they are executed in both specific books and the sample as a whole.

Typeface Legibility, Contrast, and Color

Previously we talked about the artistic and thematic impact of typeface selection, but the typeface selection in and of itself can become a typesetting issue if the typeface chosen is simply not legible enough or is tiring to read in the quantities it needs to be set in. This is not an overwhelming problem in any of the books in our sample, with the worst being still well within a livable range. Interestingly, this can even be a factor of the *style* of the typeface chosen; for example, *Smoky Night*, mentioned earlier for its choice of Syntax as a typeface, also uses a bold weight of the font that seems too heavy for use in extended text passages.²⁹

Some typefaces are inherently less legible because of stylistic choices by the type designer that make letters harder to tell apart from each other. For example, as one sees in Jen Bryant's *A River*

of Words, the relatively closed "c" and "e" shapes in Helvetica are more like the "o" than is the case with most other typefaces, and this and other closed shapes contribute to Helvetica being a bit more difficult than most typefaces for readability.³⁰

A handful of books are notable for poor legibility due to contrast problems. For example, Vera Williams' 1990 "*More More More, Said the Baby*" poses challenges for readers.³¹ The book features tie-dyed block lettering done by the artist. Unfortunately, the multicolored print is hard to read, and the colorful background makes it even worse.

Some of our sample books make creative use of type color and contrast to enhance the message of the book, but impair legibility in the process. In *Henry's Freedom Box*, the placement and color of the text varies based on the page layout.³² The first sentences of the book are printed in yellow against an olive brown background. As the story progresses, the pages alternate between ones with separate bordered sections for text placement and ones in which the words are simply embedded in the illustration. The pages with bordered areas for the text feature better contrast between the type and the background color. Of the pages with text embedded in the illustration, one features black text on a white background. Unfortunately, many of the remaining pages have somewhat compromised contrast. This is caused not only by the darkness of the background color but also by the texture from the hatch marks employed as part of the illustrator's technique. Shifts in type color are made throughout the book as the artist's palette changes to reflect the action of the story, rather than to compensate for dark or busy backgrounds.

Shifts in type color also are a salient feature in *The Paperboy*.³³ The use of color is notable in this book; it is considered a mood piece, as Dav Pilkey actually tells part of the story through his use of color. Type color seems to be coordinated with the colors in the illustration: yellow type matches the sun or moon, gray type matches the street. Artistically this works beautifully, but some choices—such as black text on a gray background on one page, and light blue print on a green background on another—compromise legibility.

Ligatures

Ligatures are cases where in place of the default shapes for two or more letters, there is a single alternate glyph that merges those letters together so as to create a more pleasing shape and avoid awkward collisions or bad spacing.³⁴ Depending on the software being used, ligatures may be on by default (as in all professional publishing applications), may need to be turned

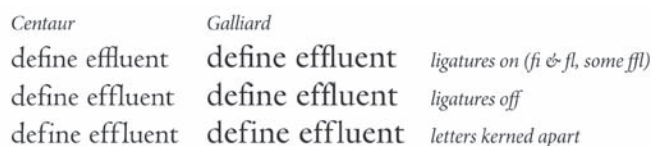


Figure 5. Ligatures on and off.

on, or automatic ligatures may not even be available (as in Microsoft Word prior to Office 2010).

In children's books, especially those for young readers, ligatures may be a controversial option. While most typographers would prefer to use ligatures (as opposed to having colliding letters or excess spacing), it seems many of those involved in publishing for children are concerned that merging the letterforms is confusing to new readers, and ask that ligatures be turned off in the page layout software.

Of our Caldecott sample, eighteen books use ligatures, forty-six do not, and the remainder are either unclear or don't have enough text for the question to come up. In some cases, one can see a typeface in one book with ligatures, and the same typeface in another book without: *Tops and Bottoms* uses Cochin with ligatures, while *Duke Ellington* has it without.³⁵

Of the forty-six books that are obvious about their lack of ligatures, most of them are not beginner books. In eight of the forty-six, the lack of ligatures creates a serious problem with the letter spacing, including in *Bill Peet: An Autobiography*, which is one of the most text-heavy books in our entire sample, and far from being a beginner book.³⁶

Yet several of those eight books with ligature problems feature otherwise exceptional typesetting or typographic design. These include *Tibet: Through the Red Box*; *Click, Clack, Moo*; *Duke Ellington*; *Olivia*; and *The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins*.³⁷ *Olivia* is an especially interesting case because the book designer was clearly aware of the problem created by the lack of ligatures. Instead of allowing the letters to collide as they do in most of the other "problem books," the designer adjusted the spacing between the "f" and the "i" and the "f" and the "l," to avoid the collisions created by turning off ligatures (increasing or decreasing space between specific letters is called "kerning").

How I Learned Geography is a similar case in that with ligatures turned off, extra kerning was required to separate the "f" from colliding with the "i" and the "l."³⁸ Both cases leave an odd-looking gap between letters for the "fi" and "fl" combinations, but somehow it isn't as obvious in *How I Learned Geography*, which uses the Galliard typeface, as it is in *Olivia*, which uses

Centaur.³⁹ Perhaps this is because of the smaller type size in *How I Learned Geography*. A typographer might argue that if ligatures were considered unacceptable, a different typeface should have been used that works well with the standard spacing. Many common text faces have an "f" with less or no overhang to the right, and such typefaces do not fare as badly with default spacing and no ligatures.

All Caps

Typographers tend to avoid all-capitals settings for text in books, saving them for major titles and occasionally headings, but avoiding them as a means of achieving emphasis in running text. Like underlining, using all caps is a means of achieving emphasis in hand-lettered text when italics and boldface are not readily available, as they are in typeset material. But outside of that context, using all caps for emphasis is less acceptable. Fourteen of our Caldecott sample used small caps in typographically reasonable ways, and another thirteen in ways that most typographers would question. Our hypothesis is that all caps are considered more acceptable in children's literature as a naive form of emphasis, similar to what children might use in their own writing.

A good example of appropriate use of all caps is in *Martin's Big Words*, where the only occurrences of all caps in the text are in describing the "White Only" signs used to enact segregation in the southern United States.⁴⁰ The bold, all-caps, sans-serif typesetting of "white only" emulates what the actual signs might have looked like. *Snowflake Bentley* uses a similar approach (albeit without the change of typeface) describing the title character's name being set on a plaque.⁴¹

Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin uses all caps in a less typographically acceptable way. Boldface would not have been an option, as the base typeface choice was already the bold style of Joanna.⁴² But typographers consider italics mildly preferable to boldface for emphasis, anyway, and Joanna has a perfectly good bold italic, which could have been used instead of all caps. One reason for the use of bold caps instead of bold italic might be the richly textured, heavily applied, and somewhat flamboyant gouache colors of the background illustrations; bold all caps survives and remains legible here more effectively than bold italics would.

The use of all caps in ways that typographers might object to, such as in *Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin*, has fallen over time in our Caldecott survey, from 21 percent in the 1990s to 13 percent in the 2000s.

Initial Caps

An initial capital, or initial cap, is a much enlarged letter at the very beginning of a story or chapter. An initial cap that cuts into lines below the one it is part of is called a drop cap. Typographers consider initial caps to be a refinement, not a typographic necessity. Of the books in our sample that have sufficient text for initial caps to be a possibility, about 60 percent feature initial caps. There are many possible styles of initial caps, ranging from simply enlarging the same font used in the

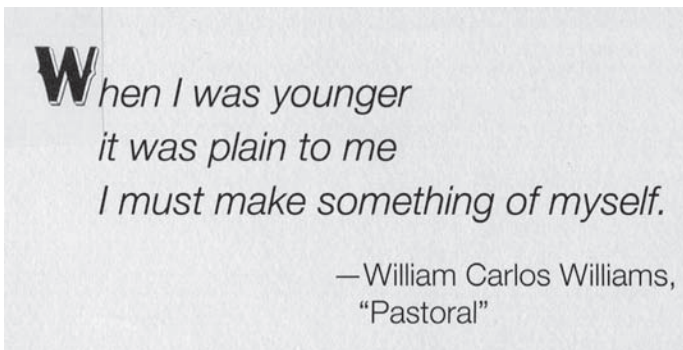


Figure 9. Initial Cap, from Jen Bryant, *A River of Words*

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body text, to switching to a more ornate typeface (*The Three Pigs*), to illustration in the form of letters (*A Couple of Boys Have the Best Weekend Ever*).⁴³

Malcolm Arthur and Fred Marcellino's version of the classic Charles Perrault tale *Puss in Boots* makes especially good use of initial caps both in the body text and on the title page. The initial caps in the elaborate feline script capitals of Phyllis nicely complement the body text set in the archaic Estienne.⁴⁴ The book starts with a four-line drop cap and uses several two-line drop caps to start different sections of the story. On the other hand, *A River of Words* starts with an initial cap, but it's not a very compatible use. The shadowed wood type "W" opening the text is an odd contrast with the modernist Helvetica Neue text, especially given the choice of the light weight of Helvetica.⁴⁵

Perhaps ligatures and other typesetting issues addressed above seem too technical or obscure to be relevant to teachers and librarians. But just because the average reader does not notice something consciously does not mean it has no effect. The average Friday night movie-goer can't tell you about the editing techniques used in the film they just saw, either, but that doesn't make those techniques irrelevant or ineffective.

While two of the three 2010 winners are hand-lettered (and such books might make an interesting topic of research themselves), the 2009 Caldecott selections provided a broad sample of considerations for typographically-aware readers. Readers of such texts might be frustrated by the very modern and hard-to-read Helvetica Neue type design selected for *A River of Words*, a book set in the first half of the twentieth century, and may assess it as poorly chosen based on the standards in Kiefer's 2010 textbook.⁴⁶

Readers might consider what may have been lost in the design of *A Couple of Boys Have the Best Weekend Ever*, had the text not been hand lettered to enhance the playful comic book sensibility that pervades the work.⁴⁷

They might appreciate the simple choice of the classical humanist typeface Galliard in *How I Learned Geography*, which honors the content of the book.⁴⁸

They might notice that reviews of *The House in the Night* tend to overlook the shifts between black and yellow text in the fantasy sequence of the second half of the book, used to highlight the textual references to light and dark.⁴⁹

Of course, it isn't surprising that reviews disregard typography, even when it is integral or critical to the work. Typography just has not been emphasized in analyses of children's literature. Although it would be unthinkable not to credit the artist or writer prominently for a children's picturebook, credit for typefaces and book designers is uneven, even in our Caldecott sample: a quarter of our books name the typeface, a quarter name the book designer, a quarter name both, and a quarter name neither.

Despite this, typography plays a key role in any book—even if it's just the cover of a wordless picture book. As Jon Scieszka

explains, "You may not consciously know it, but when you pick up a book, you are reading its layout and typeface and color palette for clues about the story."⁵⁰ Advocates of children's literature can only benefit from becoming *conscious* of typography: developing a sense of how and why typography works in particular books. ☺

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ALSC Institute, 2010

Sept. 23-25, Emory Conference Center, Atlanta, Ga.

Photos by Sharon Deeds



DeKalb County (Ga.) Public Library Youth Services staff member Fran Weaver meets Caldecott Medal-winning author Brian Selznick for the first time.



Pictured left to right are Shelly Sutherland, Niles (Ill.) Public Library District; Lisa Von Drasek, Librarian, Bank Street College of Education, N.Y.; and Coretta Scott King honor award-winning illustrator R. Gregory Christie.

Do Public Library Summer Reading Programs Close the Achievement Gap?

The Dominican Study

SUSAN ROMAN AND CAROLE D. FIORE

For more than a century, public librarians have designed summer reading programs to create and sustain a love of reading in children and to prevent the loss of reading skills over the summer. However, recently, federal and some state, local, and private funding agencies, along with departments of education, have challenged the effectiveness of public library summer reading programs, especially considering the amount of resources, both financial and human, that are invested in developing and marketing summer reading programs.

The concern also is exacerbated by the dismal reading scores that surface on standardized tests from students in low-performing schools. This then raises the question as to whether public library summer reading programs in fact reach the stated goals and impact student achievement.

A groundbreaking study conducted by Barbara Heyns in the early 1970s concluded that “the single summer activity that is most strongly and consistently related to summer learning is reading. . . . More than any other public institution, including the schools, the public library contributed to the intellectual growth of children during the summer.”¹

For more than thirty years, the library profession has been eager

to replicate this study, and thanks to the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Dominican University’s Graduate School of Library and Information Science received funding over a three-year period to revisit the question “Do public library summer reading programs impact student achievement?”

The Study, the Partnership

Lead agency Dominican University partnered with the Colorado State Library Agency and the Texas Library and Archives Commission to oversee the research, which took place between 2006 and 2009. An advisory committee helped shape and guide the research.

Additionally, Dominican University contracted with the Center for Summer Learning at Johns Hopkins University to conduct the research, and consultant Carole D. Fiore, well known in the field for her work in this area and her publication *Fiore’s Summer Library Reading Program Handbook*, was contracted as project manager. Susan Roman, dean and professor at Dominican University who had conducted research on a summer reading program during her doctoral studies, was project administrator and principal investigator.



Susan Roman, far left, is Dean and Professor of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois. **Carole D. Fiore** is a library consultant from Florida and author of *Fiore’s Summer Library Reading Program Handbook*.

Background and Select Literature Review

Since the Heyns study, research has been sporadic in this area until relatively recently. First we'll summarize some of the findings from education or the school side.

John Schacter and Booil Jo worked with first-grade students over the summer in a reading summer day-camp intervention. What they found is that formal programs in schools over the summer do not work to raise reading scores.² Others, including Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson, found that the growing achievement gap is not due to poor schooling but to cumulative reading loss.³

Indeed, Denton and West found that teachers spend significantly more time reteaching skills to less advantaged children at the beginning of the school year than to their more advantaged peers.⁴ Their findings contribute to the growing body of research that demonstrates that students who are economically disadvantaged experience reading loss over the summer.⁵ Krashen and Shin discovered there is surprisingly little difference in reading gains between children from high- compared to low-income families during the school year. However, during the summer, children from high-income families read more and have more access to books inside and outside the home.⁶ Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson found that children from families with a high socioeconomic status (SES) gain more over the summer—and that gain is cumulative, so that after five years the high-SES children are far ahead in reading ability primarily because of what happened during the summer.⁷

In 2003, Kim found that children who read more over the summer did better on reading tests given in the fall. Students gained several points on standardized reading tests in the fall after reading as few as five books over the summer. Kim challenged us to imagine what would happen if the children read ten books over the summer and if that continued over seven consecutive years. Clearly, those who read more read better during free, voluntary reading.⁸

Neuman and Celano (2001) concluded that children in middle-income neighborhoods were likely to be deluged with a wide variety of reading materials. However, children from poor neighborhoods would have to seek out reading materials aggressively and persistently. Neuman and Celano also found that public libraries located in lower SES communities offer inferior collections and services to children in poverty.⁹

In 2006, Chaplin and Capizzano found that a growing body of evidence indicates that the test scores of low-income children drop significantly relative to their higher-income counterparts during the summer months.¹⁰

Even more recent studies include work by White and Kim (2008) concluding that low-income-minority children and less skilled readers fall behind their high-income, white, and more skilled peers during the summer months when they are not in school. This phenomenon, well known to educators, is referred to as “summer loss.”¹¹

Also in 2008 was work by Neuman concluding that children in low-income neighborhoods were often left on their own without direction over the summer. And when she tested children, Neuman found that for every line of print read by low-income children, middle-income children read three. Neuman also found that summer is when the greatest disparity is seen. Further, she found that income affects how kids use technology and access knowledge.¹²

In their article, “When Schools Close, the Knowledge Gap Grows,” Celano and Neuman acknowledge that the gap is rooted not in the classroom but in the learning children do outside of school, including after-school hours, weekends, holidays, and summer breaks. They found that book availability for middle class children was about twelve books per child, while in poor neighborhoods about one book was available for every 355 children. Like Heyns, these researchers found that the one place that offers all children, rich or poor, equal access to information is the local public library. However, they found that although all children have equal access to resources and books during the summer at the public library, children use the resources differently. Poor children need enhanced direction from adult mentors if they are to keep up with their more advantaged peers.¹³

More individual libraries and library systems are hiring experts to evaluate their summer reading programs, including the Chicago Public Library, the Los Angeles County Public Library, and the Hennepin County (Minn.) Library.

For instance, at the Los Angeles County Public Library, students who participated in the summer reading programs in grades K–3 were followed over a two-year period (2000 and 2001). The study revealed that the students who were in summer library programs retained their reading skills. Program evaluators also found that parents of these children read more to their students during the public library summer reading program than other parents.¹⁴

In Hennepin County, evaluators measured the effectiveness of a specially designed summer reading program for boys only. Boys in the program already valued reading and liked to read. They did, however, see themselves as gaining competence through participation in the program. They liked meeting with a male facilitator/mentor in the program because they felt they were better understood by a male.¹⁵

In a more recent study, Shin and Krashen concluded that free reading works and that summer reading programs could happen all year. Further, they insisted that all children have access to a plentiful supply of reading materials—which is exactly what Celano and Neuman call for.¹⁶

The Dominican Study

The purposes of this study, which was conducted over a three-year period from 2006 to 2009, were

- to explore whether public library summer reading programs impact student achievement;

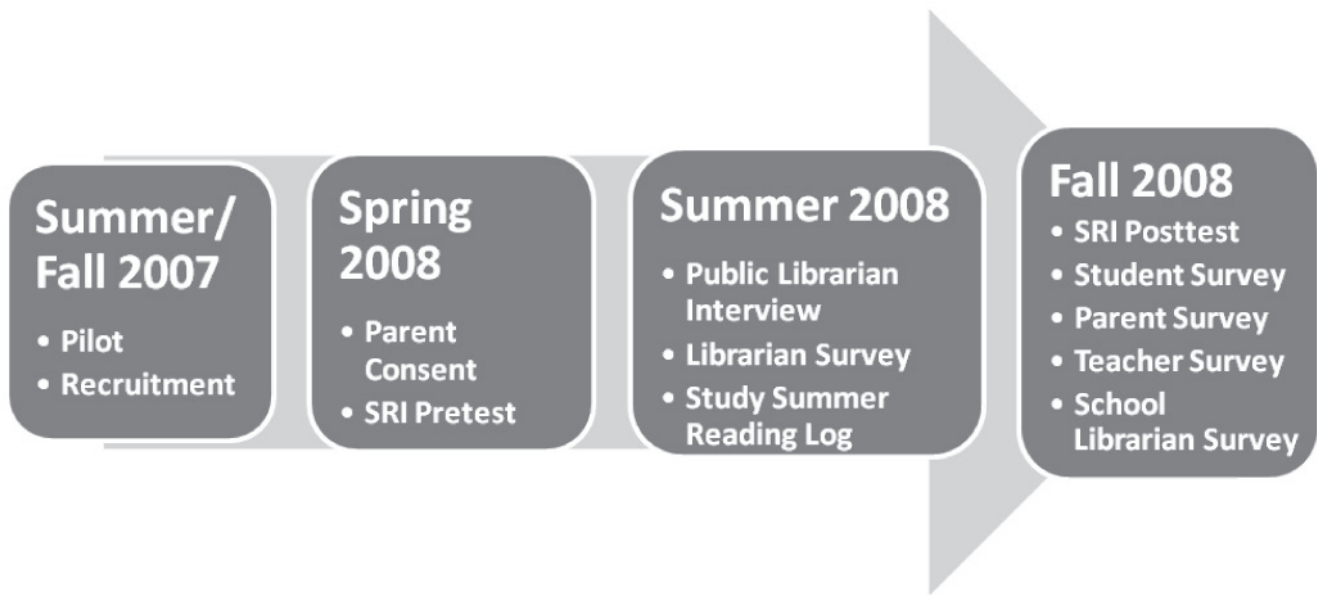


Figure 1. Basic Timeline for Study

Data analysis conducted by the researchers in the winter and spring of 2008-2009.

- to determine if there is a relationship between the intensity of service and student achievement; and
- to focus on partnerships between public libraries and schools in helping children be successful readers.

The advisory committee developed the following evaluation questions:

- Do students entering fourth grade who participate in the library summer reading clubs experience summer learning loss in reading achievement?
- Do students entering fourth grade who participate in the library summer reading clubs have higher reading assessment scores in the fall compared to classroom peers who do not participate?
- Does the level of participation in summer reading programs predict higher levels of reading performance and motivation for students entering fourth grade?

The committee then established the selection criteria for participants in the study. This would become increasingly important, because applicants who wanted to participate were selected according to objective criteria. These criteria included the following:

- The entire school population had to have 50 percent or more students qualifying for free and reduced price meals, a common measure for children in poverty.
- At least 85 percent of the school population would be able to take the reading proficiency test in English.
- The public libraries would have a minimum of six weeks of programming over the summer.
- The school and public library applicants would have to apply in pairs and have a history of working together or be willing to work together for the study.

- The school and public library would have to sign a partnership agreement.
- The school and public library personnel would have to participate in training via conference calls.

The Participants

Eleven sites from across the United States were selected on the basis of the above criteria. Many more places applied to participate in the study but were not selected on the basis of the same criteria.

The El Paso (Tex.) Public Library and the Pueblo City-County (Colo.) Public Library served as our pilot sites over the summer of 2007. West Palm Beach County (Fla.) Public Library tested the survey instruments that same summer. Thanks to the directors and staff members in children's services at these libraries, the survey instruments were tested and refined. On the basis of their comments and those of members of the advisory committee, there were modifications made of the research method and the instruments at this point by the researchers.

Because the study involved the collection of data through tests, interviews, and surveys of human subjects, Dominican University and Johns Hopkins Center for Summer Learning both filed for approval with their respective Institutional Review Board (IRB). Further clearance to use children's reading scores involved our seeking the approval from school administration at each site and the approval and consent of parents of the children involved in the study.

During the spring and throughout the summer of 2008, the researchers and management team of the study at Dominican University, working through the librarians, obtained the parental consent forms, conducted the pretest using the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) (Enterprise Edition) and launched the public library summer reading program, including the special

reading logs developed for the study, which were kept by youngsters who participated in the program.

In fall 2008, these same children were tested on the SRI when they returned to school and were entering the fourth grade. In addition, in this same fall, a student survey, a parent survey, a teacher survey, a library staff survey, and a structured library staff interview took place conducted by the researcher.

Method

The student participants being studied were completing third grade in spring 2008 and entering fourth grade in the following fall. Other participants included the librarians delivering the summer reading programs in the public libraries. Parents and teachers were participants through surveys.

There were eleven U.S. sites involving school and public library partners. The research design was causal comparative and the analyses included both descriptive and inferential statistics. The instruments and materials used were the SRI for pre- and post-reading tests, and surveys for the students, parents, fourth-grade teachers, and library staff. The researchers also had access to the summer reading logs and conducted structured librarian interviews.¹⁷

Selected Conclusions

Third-grade students who participated in a public library summer reading program scored higher on reading achievement tests at the beginning of fourth grade and did not experience summer loss in reading.

Indeed, there is a difference between students completing third grade who chose to participate in the public library summer reading program and students who do not participate, wherein:

- more girls participated;
- fewer students on free and reduced meals participated;
- more participants were Caucasian; and
- more students in the summer reading program had higher spring 2008 reading scores.

Regarding whether participation in a summer library reading program maintained or improved student reading ability during the summer school break, we found that students in the summer reading program scored higher on the posttest. For this particular sample, there was no significant decline over the summer for any of the students.

In answer to the question regarding the difference between students who participated in the summer reading program and those who did not,

- those who participated used libraries;
- their parents also had a higher level of library use;
- there were more books in their homes; and
- there were more home literacy activities.

When surveyed, parents of children who participated in the summer reading program indicated that they thought their children were better prepared to begin school at the end of the summer. Not one parent of a student who did *not* participate in the summer reading program strongly agreed that her child was better prepared to begin the school year.

Among the responses by teachers of the fourth graders in relation to those students who had participated in the summer reading program, the teachers found that the students

- started the school year ready to learn;
- had improved reading achievement;
- appeared to have increased reading enjoyment;
- were more motivated to read;
- were more confident in the classroom;
- read beyond what was required; and
- perceived reading as important.

For a full list of the conclusions, see the full study report at http://www.dom.edu/academics/gslis/downloads/DOM_IMLS_book_2010_FINAL_web.pdf.

Limitations

Participation in the summer reading program was self-reported; we did not assign students to a treatment or control group. Children who did *not* participate in the summer reading program at the public library may have engaged in other summer learning activities of which we are not aware.

While there was a formal agreement between the libraries and the schools, the public libraries had full control over summer programs. While the study began with 11 sites and an anticipated 500 student participants, only 367 signed parental consent forms were returned. This number was, however, sufficient for us to draw inferences and to use descriptive statistics in the study.

Implications

Our study confirmed previous studies mentioned earlier in the following ways:

- Students who participated in the public library summer reading program maintained and increased reading skills.
- More girls than boys participated in summer reading programs.
- Recreational reading outside of school made a difference in improving reading scores.
- The public library was accessible to all students, no matter the socioeconomic status.

Summary and Call to Action

On the basis of this study, we recommend the following:

- More money should be invested on summer reading programs, especially in public libraries that serve children and families in low-economic or depressed areas.
 - The education community should be urged to recognize that public libraries play a powerful role in helping children maintain and gain reading skills.
 - The public should recognize that public libraries play a significant role in helping to close the achievement gap in education.
 - Librarians in public libraries need to work with teachers and school librarians to identify nonreaders and underperforming students and to reach out to those students to engage them in library activities.
 - More needs to be done to reach out to boys.
 - More marketing should be done directly to parents to let them know the value of their children participating in summer reading programs and other out-of-school library activities.
 - Public librarians need to work with other nonprofit organizations, such as First Book and Reading Is Fundamental, so disadvantaged children can have books of their own.
 - Public librarians need to partner with schools to reach all students through school librarians and teachers.
 - Public libraries serving children in depressed neighborhoods need to provide more books and reading material for those children compared to their more advantaged peers who may have access to reading materials in their homes and in their more affluent public libraries.
 - The definition of reading should be expanded to include computer gaming, magazines, and graphic novels in order to provide online opportunities for children to log this and traditional reading.
 - Grandparents and other caring adults in a child's life must be reached out to, because they may have the most influence over what a child does outside of school.
 - Libraries must stress the social aspects of summer reading clubs as well.
 - Librarians need to assume a role in influencing a child's love of reading and lifelong learning.
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Acknowledgements

The study's advisory committee members included Susan Roman, Janice Del Negro, and Tracie D. Hall from the Dominican University Graduate School of Library and Information Science; Ronald Fairchild, Susanne Sparks, Brenda McLaughlin, and Deborah Carran from the Johns Hopkins Center for Summer Learning; Eugene Hainer and Patricia Froehlich from the Colorado State Library; Peggy Rudd and Christine McNew from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission; Denise Davis from the American Library Association, Office for Research; Penny Markey from the Association for Library Service to Children; and Consultant Carole D. Fiore. ☺

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Playgrounds for the Mind

Drawn to Delight: How Picturebooks Work (and Play) Today

WENDY LUKEHART

Good morning and welcome to this celebration of picturebooks! To set the stage for this day, I will perform the roles of raconteur and provocateur. My monologue contains the back story to this day; the provocations provide a script from which the play will unfold.

Two years ago, I did not get the Caldecott. I don't mean the call about the bronze medal, I mean the call saying, "You have been elected to chair the Caldecott Committee."

Within hours of absorbing that information and imagining what I would do with all the time that I would now have on my hands, an e-mail came from then-ALSC Vice President/President-Elect Kate McClelland. "Never mind, Wendy dear," she wrote. "Be patient. I have plans for you."¹ The fact that this amazing woman was taking the time to send a condolence letter about an election is indicative of just how much she cared about her colleagues and how her wheels were always turning. I mention this so you will know not only that this preconference was her idea, but that the planning for an event which would have occurred in her year as president, started within hours of her election to the *deputy* slot. The subsequent invitation to chair *this* committee led me to several long and wonderful conversations with Kate, during which we shared our dreams about today. It had been ten years since the last preconference on picturebooks—the one at the Art Institute of Chicago—and coincidentally, ten years had elapsed since the topic had been

Wendy Lukehart is Youth Collections Coordinator at the District of Columbia Public Library. The following comments were delivered at the 2010 ALSC Preconference, held prior to the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., June 2010.



Wendy Lukehart offers introductory remarks. Photo by Nic Lukehart.

treated before that. Kate felt, therefore, that it was important to focus here on the developments in the last decade.

Her other legacy to this day was the choice of four incredible people to serve on the planning committee. There is Nell Colburn, who, having chaired a preconference and a Caldecott committee, was the voice of experience in bureaucratic ways and recent picturebooks. Sharon Hancock offered calming counsel and invaluable insights into a publisher's perspective, and Candlewick's support was early and generous. Kathy Isaacs brought a wealth of knowledge and unrivaled spatial intelligence. As the other local committee member, her energy in coordinating a variety of tasks has been greatly appreciated. Luann Toth's intrepid optimism about and exposure to all things technological at *School Library Journal* affected not only conference content, but also its afterlife. She spurred us on to record highlights, so coverage will be available on the conference webpage, along with the bibliography that Nell compiled. It has been a privilege to work with these women. When we lost our beloved Kate, we vowed to try to make this the "best damned preconference ever," in her honor.

We had a lot of help. I would like to acknowledge the contributions of the folks at ALSC, particularly the all-knowing Aimee Strittmatter and the gracious and thoughtful Thom Barthelmess. To the publishers who have supported this day in myriad ways and have literally made it possible, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thanks to the Corcoran staff—Dean Kirk Pillow; Director of Education Studies Dr. Pamela Lawton; Manager of Special Events Brooke Clinton; and the AV department—all whom have kindly accommodated our many requests, so we could study and celebrate art in a place dedicated to those very missions. I am grateful to my colleagues

from the District of Columbia Public Library and around the region, as well as my long-suffering family members for taking on so many tasks, large and small. Last, but most of all, I thank the illustrators—the reason we have gathered here together.

Now for the provocations—some questions about picturebooks that we hope will permeate your thinking today and in the days ahead. How *do* picturebooks work—particularly those of the last decade? There is a fundamental issue at the very heart of this matter, raised by David Lewis in *Reading Contemporary Picturebooks*. He asked, “If words and pictures are different, what difference does the difference make?”² This leads one to consider all manner of related ideas. What do words do that pictures cannot, and vice versa? What effect do words and pictures have on each other? What is the impact of designs, like some of Laura Vaccaro Seeger’s, in which, with the lift of a die-cut page, text becomes image, and—like magic—returns to text when the frame is replaced?³ What is the effect on the reader when there are no words?

Do you remember Jerry Pinkney’s collection of *Aesop’s Fables* from ten years ago?⁴ There was one magnificent double spread, and one spot illustration decorating *The Lion and the Mouse*, and each fable ended with a moral. Compare the reading of that version to his new, wordless edition, and one has quite different experiences.⁵ Each are products of their time periods, but certainly dramatic examples of the difference “the difference makes.” What marvelous possibilities are present when a scene is quietly ambiguous.

Eliza Dresang predicted this more open-ended approach as a result of children’s experience making decisions in their online games and activities. In a 1997 *Library Trends* article, she wrote, “Children will emerge from the dominance of a limiting adult definition of their capabilities, and in doing so, their abilities to be active partners in the choice and shaping of reading experiences will be further reflected in how their handheld literature is structured.”⁶ Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott concur. In *How Picturebooks Work*, they note that this trend reflects how our life has shifted from “absolutes to relatives, from understood rules of behavior to personal preferences, from shared values to situational ethics.”⁷ Have you noticed that two of the decade’s Caldecott winners are wordless? The other one, of course, is David Wiesner’s *Flotsam*.⁸ There are many other notable wordless titles from our recent past, such as Shaun Tan’s *The Arrival* and Suzy Lee’s *Wave*, which make me wonder about this phenomenon.⁹ What are we enjoying about the silence?

I have a similar question about our appreciation of black-and-white in three of the last ten Caldecott winners (and at least five Honor books). Does the absence of color make us look more appreciatively at line, draftsmanship, positive and negative space, or does black-and-white draw attention, because it’s relatively rare and therefore contrasts with its more plentiful, colorful neighbors?

This afternoon we will probe the current blurring of boundaries between formats, raising the question, “When is a book with pictures not a picturebook?” Who better to help us navigate this fluid environment than children’s literature scholar Leonard Marcus and three people who keep a hand in at least two formats regularly and with great skill?



Brian Selznick’s opening session, “On Visual Education.” Photo by Nic Lukehart.



Megan Lambert explains how to use the whole book in “Gutter Talk and More.” Photo by Nic Lukehart.



Morning panel, “Addition, Subtraction and Revision: Conversations Multiply the Creative Process.” Pictured left to right are David Small, Patricia Gauch, Laura Vaccaro Seeger, Neal Porter, Tad Hills, and Lee Wade. Photo by Nic Lukehart.

If books published as graphic novels for younger children have hard covers, thirty-two pages, and several full-bleed double spreads—like Régis Faller’s *Polo* titles, and books marketed as picturebooks have panels and speech bubbles like Mini Grey’s *Traction Man*—does it matter whether we call them graphic novels or picturebooks (or where we shelve them in libraries or bookstores)?¹⁰ Are they significantly different somehow? The panel will also consider the difference between picturebooks and illustrated books, a boundary that got renegotiated when a certain “novel in words and pictures” received the Caldecott two years ago.¹¹

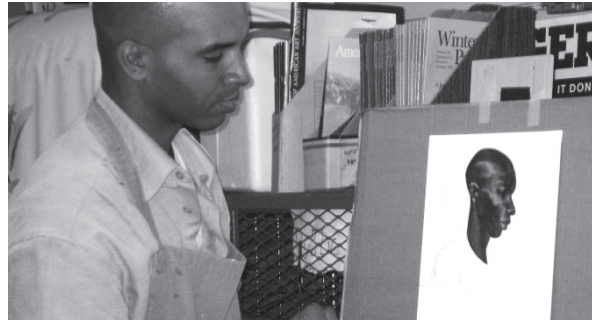
Then there is the digital realm. At what point will visual electronic storytelling make us ask, “Is it really even a book?” When we envisioned this panel two years ago, there was no iPad. We



Artist Javaka Steptoe demonstrates collage. Photo by Nic Lukehart.



Artist Timothy Basil Ering applies the heat. Photo by Nic Lukehart.



Kadir Nelson examines the portrait he created. Photo by Susan Kusel.



Yuyi Morales explains how she creates her puppets. Photo by Nic Lukehart.

scanned the digital horizon, looking at games, comic books, and picturebooks. For the latter, even with the introduction of iPhone apps, the titles were mostly what Scott McCloud calls “repurposed print”—scanned books, their electronic pages turning, often with sound and a little movement.¹² It was frustratingly *not* clear what we might be able to share about truly innovative digital picturebooks. This world is just now beginning to percolate.

In a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, Nick Wingfield critiqued an electronic picturebook, saying, “This app can’t decide whether it’s a book, a movie, or a game.”¹³ He wagers that the best book apps will be built from the ground up, taking full advantage of the digital environment. Time will tell, but let’s see what our panel reveals about all of these hybrids—and let’s keep the conversation going.

Even as we explore the mysteries, mechanics, and meaning of picturebooks, delving seriously into the inner workings, we can’t help encountering a sense of pure delight when we’re in the hands of gifted illustrators. I suspect delight is largely why this conference sold out three months ago. So, another question I invite you to ruminate upon is, “Why are we, children and adults alike, drawn to picturebooks?” There are probably a host of reasons we could name—aesthetic, spiritual, pedagogic, nostalgic, and so on—but we Americans are somehow comforted by scientific explanations. In trying to find an authoritative discussion on this question, I came across a book by English scholar Brian Boyd, entitled *On the Origin of Stories*, published in conjunction with Charles Darwin’s anniversary.¹⁴ When I saw that he included an analysis of *Horton Hears a Who!* I read on.¹⁵

At the risk of vast oversimplification, in Boyd’s worldview, art is a human adaptation that derives from play. Art is to the mind of humans, what play is to the body of two- and four-legged

creatures. Scientists note that as creatures play “repeatedly and exuberantly,” they refine skills, sharpen sensitivities and tone muscles.¹⁶ In the process, they release dopamine—that neurotransmitter associated with pleasure that is a key motivator of behaviors that need to be repeated for survival, like eating—and other enjoyable behaviors that need to be repeated for survival.¹⁷ Play, therefore, has evolved to be highly self-rewarding.

Boyd explains that we humans gain most of our advantages from intelligence, so *our* appetite is for information, especially for pattern.¹⁸ Picturebook professor Lawrence Sipe, in reviewing the research of Aidan Chambers, puts it this way, “Finding patterns is the making of meaning, and ‘when we make meaning, we experience pleasure.’”¹⁹ These patterns can be discovered in picturebook language, plot, composition, design, the behavior of characters, and so on. Boyd defines art as “cognitive play with pattern,” and just as play refines behavior over time for animals, art increases cognitive skills and sensitivities in people, with similar neural responses and benefits.²⁰ He asserts that a work of art acts like a “playground for the mind, a swing or a slide or a merry-go-round of visual or aural or social pattern.”²¹

I love the image of the picturebook as a cognitive playground. Can’t you just imagine children’s minds climbing gleefully up the monkey bars as they interact with an adult and a marvelous book? I think back to the first time, maybe fifteen years ago or so, when I saw the dramatic color differences in the brain scans comparing young children who had been read to and those who hadn’t, and I’m intrigued by this explanation of the rewards of art.

As an aside, I saw those scans at a presentation by the legendary Rosemary Wells, who with Regina Hayes, will pass on more wisdom today. In any event, I hope you will ponder why you are drawn to picturebooks and what is happening within the group

as you share them with children—something we will explore in more depth with Megan Lambert’s inspiring model.

So what techniques do artists and authors currently use to invite and hold our attention in order that our brains can get this invigorating workout? Will they ever run out of ideas? We will spend much of the day on the first question, as we visit the artists’ studios, watch William Low use the latest tools in his session on digital design, and pick up paintbrushes in the petting zoo. We’ll focus on value added through collaboration during the morning panel featuring a stellar lineup and our inimitable moderator, Maria Salvadore. We’ll see what differences may be found in picturebooks created by our international colleagues in the session led by Greenwood publisher Patricia Aldana.

As for running out of ideas, David Lewis assures us that the picturebook format is uniquely built to constantly refresh. One reason has to do with the implied reader. He writes, “Young children are permanently on the borderline between ignorance and understanding, and this very inexperience appears to liberate picturebook makers from pre-existent notions of what a book should look like and what it should contain . . . excepting that it should offer the possibility of meaning and delight.”²²

The second reason picturebooks will never cease to be new has to do with what Lewis calls “genre incorporation.”²³ Picturebook authors and illustrators draw on the pictorial and verbal resources that surround them; therefore the format has the capacity for endless reinvention. I’m already looking forward to the preconference in 2020. As you experience the marvelous variety of this day, I hope you will be moved to ask questions, to talk amongst yourselves, to revel in what Lewis calls “the garden of the picturebook, a riot of strange hybrids and glorious mutations.”²⁴ ☺

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Melissa Sweet’s storyboard sketches for *Rubia and the Three Osos*. Photo by Susan Kusel.



Caldecott Medal winner Jerry Pinkney absorbs a standing ovation. Photo by Nic Lukehart.



Laura Vaccaro Seeger supplements her painting demonstration with digital images. Photo by Susan Kusel.

Gutter Talk and More

Picturebook Paratexts, Illustration, and Design at Storytime

MEGAN LAMBERT

In the summer of 2001, the Eric Carle Museum of Picturebook Art (www.carlemuseum.org) was still more than a year away from its grand opening in Amherst, Mass., and I was four credits shy of completing my MA in children's literature at Simmons College.

I'd spent the prior academic year traveling back and forth between my home in western Massachusetts and Simmons' campus in Boston to take classes. Although it tickled me that the bus line I used to commute across the state was named for Peter Pan, and although I'd put those many hours on the turnpike to good use by completing course readings, I was looking for an opportunity to pursue an independent study closer to home to round out my degree and launch me into a career path. When I heard that The Carle had an information office close to home in Northampton, I was intrigued. I took my then four-year-old son Rory to the office's weekly, volunteer-led storytime and decided to throw my hat in the ring to see what I might be able to do to help The Carle while achieving my goals.

That day, I had the good fortune of meeting The Carle's founding director Nick Clark, and together we devised a slate of projects for me to carry out. This work not only allowed me to complete my degree, it also established the foundation for my development of the "whole book approach," a storytime model

that The Carle has embraced as a cornerstone of its educational and professional development programming and that I've delighted in using and disseminating throughout my tenure with the museum.

Put simply, the whole book approach is an interactive storytime model that invites children to engage with the picturebook as a visual art form by allowing the oral reading of the text to be punctuated by questions and responses to illustration, design elements, and what scholars Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott refer to as "picturebook paratexts."¹ In their book *How Picturebooks Work*, they devote an entire chapter to picturebook paratexts, noting the following:

Almost nothing has been written about the paratexts of picturebooks such as titles, covers or endpapers. These elements are however, still more important in picturebooks than in novels. If the cover of a novel serves as a decoration and can at best contribute to the general first impact, the cover of a picturebook is often an integral part of the narrative, especially when the cover picture does not repeat any of the pictures inside the book. The narrative can indeed start on the cover, and it can go beyond the last page to the back of the cover. Endpapers can convey essential information, and pictures on the title pages can both complement and



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contradict the narrative . . . the contribution of paratexts to the picturebook is clearly highly significant, especially since they frequently carry a substantial percentage of the book's verbal and visual information.²

Because of my graduate studies, I knew about the importance of considering all of the parts of a picturebook (text, art, design, and production elements) in my own writing, reading, and evaluation. But when I started leading storytimes in The Carle's information office, I initially maintained the sort of approach I'd used as a volunteer in my son's preschool or in the public library where I worked part-time—I chose a theme to link the books, songs, fingerplays, and craft activity I'd planned for the day. Children sat and listened to the books, and engaged in the other activities, and we talked about the books when we were done reading them. It was all quite fun.

But then I started thinking intentionally about the fact that I was leading programs on behalf of an art museum, and I stopped and wondered why I was bothering to structure storytimes around snow or bunnies or planes or giraffes, or whatever theme I'd chosen for the week. I wasn't a classroom teacher, after all, so I didn't have curricular objectives to meet through themes. I was working for an art museum, so shouldn't I instead simply focus on presenting the best picturebooks possible to children and inviting them to share what they thought and wondered about them?

Thinking about the intersection between my life as a mother and my storytime practice also made me think more deeply about how I was leading storytimes that fall. At home, I didn't choose books to read with Rory that were all about the same theme. Nor did we sing songs between books to “stay on task.” We just read books together and talked about them as we did so.

I never asked him to hold his questions and comments until the end of the book. I didn't tell him to let me keep reading the page before flipping back to compare it to its predecessor. His comments, questions, ideas, and reactions were just as important to our reading as the words, pictures, and design of the book were. How could I bring this sort of interactive, child-centered feeling into a group program? How could I allow children to experience something of a home-like feeling of reading aloud in a group setting at a museum or in a library or classroom?

Inspired by Abigail Housen and Philip Yenawine's Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), an inquiry-based approach to looking at art that The Carle planned to implement in its galleries, I began shifting myself away from thinking about storytime as performance to storytime as book discussion.³ VTS turns the traditional museum docent tour on its head by having the group leader ask visitors open-ended questions about the art on the wall instead of having him tell the group about the art they view.

The discussion is guided by these questions, “What's going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? What more can we find?”⁴ I certainly knew that I couldn't and shouldn't lead twenty-minute VTS discussions on every page in a picturebook. That would be deadly. But I could shift from what literacy

experts call “performance storytimes” to “co-constructive storytimes.”⁵ In the performance approach, the children and teacher engage in conversation mostly before and after the reading, and the talk that occurs in this approach is mainly analytical. In the co-constructive approach, there is a large amount of talk *during* the reading of the book, and most of the talk involves analyzing the story. This is the sort of model that the Public Library Association (PLA) and ALSC adopted when they embraced dialogic reading as the foundation of their joint Every Child Ready to Read initiative program, and as I learned more about VTS and dialogic reading, I was heartened by the research-based evidence that supported stopping and talking about a book during a reading as ways of enhancing comprehension, engagement, vocabulary acquisition, and literacy skills.⁶

Ultimately, where dialogic reading is often referred to as “hear and say reading,” reflecting the fact that children hear something read aloud or hear a related question and say something in response, I began to articulate the whole book approach as what might be described as “see, hear, and say reading,” by intentionally placing the emphasis of my questions and prompts on the illustration, design and production elements of the picturebook as an art form.⁷ This made sense due to The Carle's focus on visual literacy in its programming and its mission to engage visitors with the art of the picturebook. But this also seemed to make good developmental sense when I considered the children themselves. Most of them, after all, could not read text, but they were working hard at reading pictures. We've all seen babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and emergent readers flipping through the pages of a picturebook “reading” it after all. Children are reading pictures for meaning, for delight, and for information well before they can decode text. In a sense, as I developed the whole book approach for use with pre-readers and with emergent readers, I was trying to meet them where they were and to empower them to realize the potential of the picturebook as an art form that engages them visually and aurally. As I used this model with children who had mastered independent textual reading, I found that I was, in a sense, inviting them back into the artistic realm and encouraging the development of their visual literacy and critical-thinking skills.

My first step in this movement toward co-constructive storytimes was to do away with themes. This was positively liberating! I no longer worried about finding a third giraffe or farm or new baby book to round things out; I simply chose books that I loved. And then I started to think more about why I loved them. After all, if The Carle's objective was to support people's engagement with and appreciation of picturebook art, how could I use storytime as a means to this end? How could I invite children to critically engage with picturebooks while we read them at storytime? Could I create a dynamic at storytime that would allow them to talk and ask questions about what they saw happening in the pictures and how this related to the text as I read aloud? What would happen if I really backed off and let this start happening before the reading of the text in the book proper even began by inviting them to consider picturebook paratexts? And how could I not only facilitate such discussions during a reading, but scaffold their observations and questions with context for the picturebook as an art form?

“My first step in this movement toward co-constructive storytimes was to do away with themes. This was positively liberating! I no longer worried about finding a third giraffe or farm or new baby book to round things out; I simply chose books that I loved. And then I started to think more about why I loved them.”

My questioning required me to make a bit of a paradigm shift in my thinking about my work as a storytime leader as I began articulating the difference between reading *to* children and reading *with* children, and started to shed myself of the role of storyteller to become a picturebook-discussion facilitator for young children. Don't get me wrong—I am not saying that this approach to reading aloud is the best or only way to read picturebooks with children, and I certainly appreciate the importance of and enjoy performance storytimes. This is just another way of thinking intentionally about storytime as it bridges verbal and visual literacy, and it's been remarkably rewarding work.

The biggest lesson I had to learn in starting to develop and lead whole-book-approach storytimes was to slow down my progression into the book proper—to delay “once upon a time,” in other words, to allow children to read all of the visual parts of the picturebook that precede the verbal text. I started with the endpapers of Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle's *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* I simply pointed to them, named them and, following the title's lead, asked children what they saw. At first I simply heard them say that they saw “lots of colors” as they took in Carle's bright horizontal bars of color, and I connected this observation to the book's focus on naming and showing colors to the reader. Then one day, when I slowed down enough to let a child expand upon this observation, I heard, “That's the order of the colors of the animals in the book.”

The other children nodded, but I just sat there dumbly staring at the endpapers. Here was a book I'd read at home and at work hundreds (thousands?) of times, and yet I'd never noticed this. I'd seen that the endpapers comprised Carle's palette, but I'd never recognized that they were a graphic table of contents.

“You're absolutely right,” I responded when I recovered, and I rededicated myself to slowing down and letting storytime become discussion time. I realized that there was a lot I wasn't seeing, and that I needed to give children the time and space to share and explore all that *they* could see. Not only did this enrich their own group reading experiences, it allowed me to see and appreciate picturebooks in ways I couldn't have achieved on my own.



Children have seen prison bars in the stained glass endpapers of Doreen Rappaport and Bryan Collier's *Martin's Big Words* moving our discussion about hope and justice and peace to include attention to struggle and injustice and courage; they've seen the color of the protagonist's dress in Marla Frazee's *Hush, Little Baby*; and they've seen the holes that the caterpillar eats through the foods in the painted tissue papers that decorate the endpapers of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

But back to *Brown Bear* for a moment. During a visiting storytime that I led in a kindergarten classroom a few years ago, just as our discussion about the endpapers was winding down, a little girl piped up and said, “I see a sunset.”

I'd never heard *that* before, and so I asked, “What do you see that makes you say you see a sunset here?”

“At the top it's all dark and then the red and yellow are the setting sun, and then the blue is like water, and the green is grass, and then the purple is flowers, and then the white and black are maybe a road . . .” and she petered out. But this representational reading of a landscape into Carle's abstract endpaper composition set the stage for an hour-and-fifteen minute reading of *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* in that kindergarten classroom, as children imagined the animals depicted in the book frolicking about in the endpaper landscape, seeing each other.

I've found that children much younger than this can also respond to design elements with great gusto. Comparing landscape format and portrait format picturebooks is something that I've invited toddlers and preschoolers to do with great success. They understand and articulate that *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* adopts a landscape format because this best echoes the form of the caterpillar itself and because the horizontal orientation of the book bespeaks the page-to-page journey of the caterpillar as it makes its way through the foods lined up on successive pages.



It's a small leap for them to realize that most picturebooks about journeys have this format because of the horizontal form's visual implication of movement through time and space in conjunction with the page turns. Think about the Polar Express going on its journey or Peter walking through his neighborhood on a snowy day.

On the other hand, books that adopt a portrait, or vertical, format also invite children to make meaning of form. “That

book is so tall because of the Heightful Tower,” a four-year-old regular attendee of storytime exclaimed when I brought out Ludwig Bemelmans’ *Madeline* to read one morning. Indeed, Bemelmans’ depictions of Parisian cityscapes throughout the book demand the portrait format as the city becomes as much a focus of the book as Madeline herself is.

Black Cat and *Harlem*, illustrated by Christopher Myers, also use the portrait format to accommodate and embrace the heights of the buildings in his work depicting the beauty of urban landscapes. His book *Wings* further necessitates the height of the portrait format as it tells the story of a boy who can fly. “The book goes up because Ikarus goes up to fly,” commented a second grader during one reading.

The Front Cover and Beyond

Jacket art is another accessible picturebook paratext to explore with children. Instead of telling children what I see in a book’s jacket art to scaffold their entry into the reading, I often use VTS questions to ask them what they see. This allows them to build knowledge, ask their own questions—and it offers them a reference point as we progress into the book proper.

“That looks like a pizza box, all square and white,” commented a child when we read William Steig’s *Pete’s a Pizza*. Another child built on this observation by commenting on the roundness of Pete’s head saying, “He does look like a pizza!”



Perhaps the most powerful commentary on jacket art came from a group of second grade students discussing Allan Say’s *Grandfather’s Journey*. VTS questions prompted this group to note the dissonance between the titular word “grandfather” and the youthful figure on the front of the jacket.

“He’s too young to be a grandfather,” one child said.

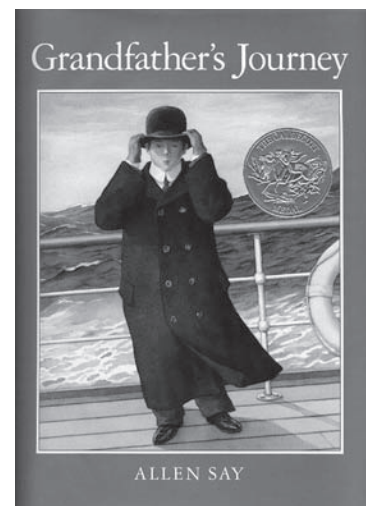
“So maybe that’s when Grandfather was little and the book will be about his whole life,” another offered.

And, indeed, it is—this book is about physical journeys across an ocean and throughout the United States, but it also tells the story of a temporal journey through Grandfather’s lifetime, and about the emotional journey of the mostly offstage narrator (Allan Say himself) coming to understand and appreciate his grandfather and the similarities they share as people navigating a bicultural existence.

On this latter point a child remarked, “Look how the front of the jacket has Grandfather on the ship in the Pacific Ocean,” after we had finished reading the book during an outreach visit

I led in her classroom some years ago on behalf of The Carle. “He really is between Japan and the United States in that picture, and that’s how he always feels even when he’s not on the boat.”

This particularly astute, sensitive remark provoked a discussion in the class about immigration stories from the students’ families which led to the teacher creating a mini-unit about family journeys to embrace her students’ investment in this theme.



Although conventional wisdom suggests that we shouldn’t judge a book by its cover (or jacket), providing children with the time and space to reflect on jacket art can enhance their engagement with picturebooks at the start of a reading and give them rich opportunities to revisit major themes, ideas, and questions at the end of a book.

In evaluating the importance of good jacket design in the picturebook form, here are some questions to consider:

- Why or how does this image (or those images) represent the book as a whole?
- Why do you think the artist used wraparound art? Or why dual image art?
- What meaning can we make of these decisions?
- How does the jacket act as a poster for the book, pulling us in as readers, providing information and provoking questions and anticipation?

Allowing children to consider these same sorts of questions acknowledges that they are learning to read pictures as surely as they are learning to read words and invites them to express what they know and understand, and what they puzzle about at the very beginning of a shared reading. Indeed, I’ve found, time and again, that inviting children to read picturebook paratexts and design elements such as jacket art, the endpapers, and book formats before we even get to the reading of the book proper, creates a tremendous sense of investment in the storytime and in working together to make meaning of words, pictures, and design throughout our shared time.

As I became comfortable with this approach, storytime began to feel a lot less like crowd control or like I was walking a knife edge trying to keep kids’ attention. I attained control by turning a lot of it over to the children themselves: they set the pace for our readings and I began to think of interruptions as signs of engagement—whether comments and questions were provoked by insights or by puzzlements. Of course, I also developed strategies to facilitate our talks since at times children’s comments seemed to come from left field or devolve into what I call “I have a dog” scenarios.

For example, when I turn to the page depicting the white dog in *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* I often hear comments like, “I have a dog!” or “My grandma has a dog,” or “I wish I had a dog.”

To handle this sort of response, I try to quickly identify a child who has been quiet throughout the reading, and I employ a quick set of responses and questions to first validate the personal response and then redirect the group back to the book. For example, “I heard you say you have a dog. Is it white like this one?”

Or, if I feel like part of the group is engaged in our discussion but others are starting to lose steam, I fall back on what I call a “1-2-3 page turn,” by saying something like, “We’ve had so much to say about the endpapers, but I think we’re ready to move to the next page as a group. Everyone count to three with me and I’ll turn the page.” I’ve found that providing children with this semblance of control is much more effective than shushing the group or simply turning the page on my own and telling them to pay attention.

Turning to front matter pages (half title, title, dedication, and copyright pages) often affords the group opportunities to make meaning of art that might identify an important motif in the story or might even begin the story with a visual narrative before the start of the verbal text. I once heard illustrator Robert Rayevsky remark at a children’s literature conference at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, “I am an artist, and so if I see empty space on the title page, I want to fill it.” I took this to mean front matter matters, and it certainly does! Look for example at Marla Frazee’s *Hush, Little Baby*, in which the frontispiece illustration opens the story by introducing the family at the heart of the book and the peddler whose wares (a mockingbird, looking glass, dog named rover, etc.) will be used to hush the baby; the doublespread title page art introduces the conflict (that the little girl is jealous of the attention her baby brother gets from Mama and Papa) with its composition separating the little girl on the verso page from her family on the recto page, with the gutter between them; and the dedication page shows the girl’s willful, emotional response when she gives the baby’s cradle an angry shove and makes him cry. This visual narrative transforms what reads like a delirious, sleep-deprived parent’s catalog of bribes to sooth a crying baby into an actual story. Without these pages, we don’t know why the baby is crying, or where the girl would get the idea of approaching the peddler for things to try to calm her baby brother.

When reading this book with children, we often end up having a very rich discussion about what the little girl should do when she is clearly beside herself with jealousy on the title page. Children usually end up saying something like, “She should use her words and tell her mom she wants attention.”

At this point, I like to turn the book to myself saying, “Let me just take a peek at the next page to see what she does.” I then turn to the dedication page, register my shock at the shoved cradle, close the book and say, “Oh dear! She made a bad choice. We can’t read this book. This is too naughty.”

“Although conventional wisdom suggests that we shouldn’t judge a book by its cover (or jacket), providing children with the time and space to reflect on jacket art can enhance their engagement with picturebooks at the start of a reading and give them rich opportunities to revisit major themes, ideas, and questions at the end of a book.”

I, of course, do read this book with them, but this technique of turning the book to myself works like a charm in both underscoring the power of the sequential narrative and in heightening the group’s engagement. They definitely want to see the naughty thing that the girl has done, and they become acutely invested in allying themselves with her as she seeks out ways to right her wrong on subsequent pages.

But more often than not, I don’t need to implement these strategies. By using picturebook paratexts to invite and validate children’s responses to the books and actively seeking to provoke their engagement with the book as a visual art form, I routinely get comments that spark lively, vibrant conversations with a group.

For example, if I merely invite a group to “watch the gutter” while reading Chris Raschka’s *Yo! Yes?* I get children clamoring to describe how Raschka, like Frazee in the earlier discussed doublespread title page illustration from *Hush, Little Baby*, not only accommodates the gutter, but uses it to inject dramatic tension in his story about two boys who are strangers but become friends by book’s end. One boy is on the verso page, the other on the recto, with the gutter separating them. This holds true until the boy on the recto page accepts the other’s overture of friendship and he crosses the gutter to join his new friend of the verso page. This line of discussion and observation often opens the door to a discussion about expressive versus descriptive use of color as children observe how the background color that Raschka uses shifts from cool blues to warm yellow by the end.

Often, however, I get the most exciting responses to picturebooks when I do absolutely nothing to prompt responses other than read the text and show the pictures. Comments like, “I know it’s a flamingo, but it looks like an elephant.”

I was reading Eric Carle’s *10 Little Rubber Ducks* to a group of children and adults at The Carle, and although I pride myself on leading interactive storytimes and thinking on my feet when questions and comments seem to come from left field, I was stumped by this child’s comment. Holding the book out to face the group in front of me I wondered if two creatures could be more dissimilar in appearance than a flamingo and an

elephant. I mean, really. I resorted to VTS questions and asked, “What do you see that makes you say that?”

“Well, the neck is all curved like an elephant’s trunk, and the body is like the elephant’s head looking sideways.”

“Yes,” another child piped up, “and the bent-up leg could sort of be like a tusk.”

I looked at the picture and suddenly could see the elephantine profile for myself. We spent the rest of the storytime talking about the other pictures in the book, breaking them down into their shapes to see what might be hidden within Carle’s brightly colored collages. I read the words of the story too, but the child who’d seen the flamingo’s inner elephant opened up a new way to consider the book’s pictures even as they worked alongside the words of the story. While the kindergarten class that I mentioned earlier had taken an abstraction and read representation into it with their vision of a sunset sky, this child took representational art and broke it down to abstract parts, inviting the group to do the same and setting the stage for some remarkable visual thinking.

Sometimes allowing children the time and space to talk about what they see during storytime reveals not their insights, but points of confusion. *Brown Bear* was the source of a particularly fascinating discussion about art that bleeds off the page when I read this book with a group of preschoolers. I had planned to use questions to prompt a discussion about how Carle accommodates the gutter of the book in this doublespread composition by shifting the teacher’s face over to the recto page instead of having the gutter bisect her face, but instead this picture provided an opening for discussing something else—how art can bleed off a page.

We take it for granted that they don’t simply see a close-up illustration of someone’s face as a disembodied head, or as in *Brown Bear*, in the case of the picture of the teacher, a very strangely coifed woman. This picture always gets a big reaction—“She looks mean!” is a frequent response, or, “Why is she so angry?” or, “Her lipstick is funny!”

I’d heard all of these comments and slight variations many times. But in one preschool classroom a little boy looked at the picture of the teacher and announced, “She has a really flat hairdo.”

I immediately understood his misperception and bit my tongue to keep from laughing out loud as I wondered how many other children have struggled with this page’s composition and have come to similar conclusions about one teacher’s bad hair day.

You see, this picture, unlike all of the others preceding it, allows the figure to break the page. The teacher is depicted as near-to life-size, allowing the viewer to see her only from the shoulders up to the base of her hairdo. I look at this picture and imagine that she has a bun in the back that forces the hair at the front of her head to poof up. But the child looking at this picture thought that the teacher had a flat-top because we cannot see the top of the poof; we must imagine it rising up beyond the confines of the page.

“Hmmm . . .” I said. “Look at the bottom of the picture. Does her body end right there, or does she have more body outside of the picture?”

“No one just has shoulders. You’d be dead,” another child said to me with a withering look.

“Right,” I continued. “So, does she have to have such a flat hairdo, or can you imagine a style that goes up beyond the edge of the top of the page?”



Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? Illustrated by Eric Carle. Copyright ©1967. All rights reserved. Image reproduced with permission.

“She has an Afro!” another child said.

“No. She has Texas hair,” said yet another preschooler—did I detect a slight drawl? I can’t be sure.

On the flip side of this visual perception quandary, sometimes a doublespread shows too much for children to grasp, rather than too little. Continuous narrative and simultaneous succession are the terms used to describe a series of pictures of a single character in a single doublespread or page opening.

Many young children completely misunderstand this convention and instead of seeing one Curious George gallivanting about the facing pages, they think that there are suddenly many tailless monkeys making mischief.

“Lots and lots of Georges!” one toddler said during a storytime when I read this classic picturebook. And, really, there *are* lots of Georges right there on the pages, right? Who’s to blame a toddler for not understanding that this is just one George depicted over time and throughout space?

At just under four years old, my daughter Emilia had a similar misperception of the sequence of pictures in *And Tango Makes Three* on the page that depicts the hatching egg. She didn’t understand that the many eggs in a row were actually one egg depicted in a time sequence and showing the hatching of baby Tango.

“Now those daddies have lots of eggs for babies!” she exclaimed.

Even separate illustrations of the same character on facing pages can pose a challenge to children learning to understand the conventions of sequential art in picturebooks. While reading Ezra Jack Keats's book *The Snowy Day* at a Carle Museum storytime, I paused at the page opening depicting Peter climbing up "a great big heaping pile of snow" and sliding down the other side. In standard left-to-right progression, the verso page shows the climbing action while the recto shows the sliding. I invited children to act out these motions with their hands, but then a 3-year-old boy announced, "Look. It looks like that boy's mother and father had two little boys."

Two boys out on a snowy day? Or one boy out on a snowy day?

Two daddy penguins with many babies? Or two daddy penguins with one baby?

One teacher having a really bad hair day? One teacher rockin' some serious Texas hair?

Helping children to tease out the visual cues that determine the answers to these questions is a crucial part of helping them to understand how pictures work with words to tell the stories in their books. After all, think of what a different story *Curious Georges* or *And Tango and Her Dozen Siblings Make Fifteen* would be. Because I believe that children are learning to read pictures as surely as they are learning to read words, I want whole-book-approach storytimes to give them the opportunity to build their picture reading skills by inviting them to talk about things they don't understand in addition to what they do grasp. After all, if children get hung up on misperceptions about visual narratives, how will they be able to follow the interdependent verbal narratives of picturebooks?

One day I was reading Mo Willems' *Knuffle Bunny* at storytime, and a young child looked quite perplexed when I read the words, "She did everything she could to show how unhappy she was."⁸ "Why does she have so many arms?" he asked, looking at the picture of Trixie's daddy carrying her, hollering and flailing about, through the park and without her bunny.

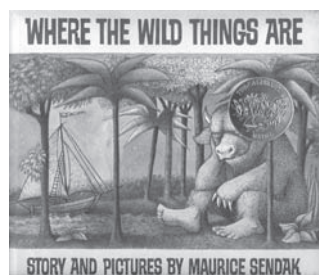
He had clearly misunderstood that Willems was drawing upon the comic art convention of showing multiple, blurred limbs with motion lines to indicate fast movement. Instead, this preschooler thought that Trixie was so upset that she sprouted new appendages! Before I could say anything, another, slightly older child said, "She just has two arms like us, but she's wagging them all around," and then we all waved our own arms about to see how they looked blurry as well.

My goal in engaging children with the whole book isn't to undermine what Hugh Walpole, in his "Reading: An Essay" describes as "ecstatic reading," when one becomes completely absorbed in a book, versus "critical reading" when one is more detached from the book in order to engage in analysis.⁹ Arthur Krystal expands on this duality in an essay from Anne Fadiman's edited collection *Rereadings: Seventeen Writers Revisit Books They Love*, saying,

Walpole conveniently forgot that reading evolves (develves?) into the more or less critical. Schooling and swooning don't mesh, and once we begin to differentiate the rhetorical devices that stylistically and thematically inform different narratives, the innocence, the thrill, and the trusting acceptance disappear. Replaced, to be sure, by the edifying feeling that one is learning something valuable. And of course, there is pleasure to be had from analysis, but it is a more complicated pleasure than giving oneself over completely to stories. However you slice it, reading critically is a more solemn affair than reading ecstatically.¹⁰

After thinking a lot about this, I've decided to question this presumed duality between ecstatic and critical reading. I see my work as aimed at fostering what might be called ecstatic criticism as I try to support children's engagement with the picturebook as an art form. Much of this work involves getting out of the way and slowing down the pace of the reading, in part by directing children's attention to paratexts, design, and illustration and seeing what these visual aspects of the book provoke in children as they merge what they see with what they hear by drawing on prior knowledge and forming what is called the composite text in their minds.

Over the past nine years, I've seen the engagement that this sort of inquiry has provoked in students in outreach programs with more than twenty-five thousand participants to date and in storytimes at The Carle. The children who tend to have a harder time during traditional storytimes seem to get a lot out of thinking visually, stopping and starting the narrative, and working with the group as a whole. The aural learners in the group, however, sometimes are resistant. "Can't you just *reeeead* the book?!" I've heard on occasion. "We are reading the book, we're reading the pictures too," is my standard response.



I had such a back-and-forth with a third grader during an outreach storytime on behalf of The Carle. She told me she'd already read *Where the Wild Things Are* "a million times" and was resistant to my efforts to encourage her and her classmates to watch the airframes

around the pictures. But as we moved forward with reading the book (its words, pictures, and yes, those changing airframes that direct the design of the pages), I started to see a light go on in her eyes.

"They're getting bigger!" she exclaimed after we'd turned a few pages to see the airframes diminish as the pictures take up more and more space on the verso page and then spill over onto the recto, culminating in the three full-bleed doublespreads at the heart of the book before the white space returns and the pictures shrink in size.

continued on page 46

Curious about Them?

Reliving the Magnificent Margret and H. A. Rey

ELLEN RUFFIN AND ANN MULLOY ASHMORE



Margret and H. A. Rey at a book signing, United States, c. 1945. H. A. & Margret Rey Papers, de Grummond Children's Literature Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi.

I never go above 114th St." Hans Rey liked to joke. "That's practically Canada! Everything I need is here—art supplies, book stores. Sometimes my wife drags me up to buy a suit, but [Greenwich] Village is New York to me and has been since 1940."¹

For a few months in 2010, Margret and H. A. Rey were once again in the city they first called home in the United States. "Curious George Saves the Day: The Art of Margret and H. A. Rey," the recent exhibition at The Jewish Museum in New York, highlighted the Reys' lives prior to the Nazi occupation of Paris and the significant role their "child," George, played in keeping them safe from harm during that turbulent time.

Exhibition Curator Claudia Nahson traveled to Hattiesburg, Mississippi, the home of the de Grummond Collection, to research and determine just how she would tell the Reys' story through the use of original materials. Across generations, bonds are made because of the story of the Reys and their little brown monkey.

The exhibition will next run November 14 through March 13, 2011, at San Francisco's Contemporary Jewish Museum. Other sites are planning to host the exhibit, but definite dates and times have not been officially announced.

* * * *

"The Statue of Liberty greeted us through the morning mist," recalled Rey, describing his feelings on that clear, crisp October morning in 1940 when the ship he and his wife were on, traveling from Rio de Janeiro, steamed into New York's busy harbor.

"We had prepared ourselves for a difficult start, but fate was kind—within a month, four of the manuscripts I had brought along were accepted for publication. The autumn sky looked twice as blue the day we got the news."² The story of their escape from Paris just before it was occupied by the Nazi army is familiar to all, thanks to Louise Borden's memorable book, *The Journey that Saved Curious George*.³

A little-known fact is that Rey's manuscripts actually preceded him to New York. The war in Europe had caused severe paper shortages, prompting his English publisher, Chatto and Windus, to seek an American company to print Rey's books for eventual export back to England. To this end, Rey's London publisher mailed two sets of original watercolors for *Fifi* and *Whiteblack the Penguin*, along with a copy of Rey's book *Raffy and the Nine Monkeys* to the Frederick A. Stokes Company in New York in the spring of 1940.



Ellen Ruffin, far left, is Curator of the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection, McCain Library and Archives at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. **Ann Mulloy Ashmore** is Assistant Professor of Library Services, Reference/Bibliographic Instruction at Roberts-LaForge Library at Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi.

In the meantime, as the war progressed, Grace Hogarth, the American-born children's editor at Chatto and Windus, left England with her children and returned to America. Her superior, Harold Raymond, provided Rey with an update as the couple waited in Lisbon for passage to Brazil.

"In the absence of Mrs. Hogarth I opened your letter of June 26th and was very much relieved to hear that you had arrived in one of the few safe spots in Europe. I hope you will be happy with 'England's oldest ally.'"⁴

After Hogarth was hired by Houghton-Mifflin in Boston, she sent Rey a contract for four books to be signed upon his arrival in the United States. By June of 1941, Rey had secured contracts for five additional books—two cut-out books with Houghton Mifflin, two with Harper and Brothers, illustrating Margaret Wise Brown's *The Polite Penguin* and his own *Elizabite: The Adventures of a Carnivorous Plant*, plus a book of French nursery songs for Greystone Press. A relieved Hans wrote to his friend and editor in London, "I think I could not have asked for more."⁵

With survival in their new home assured, the couple settled into their new environs, New York's Greenwich Village. In December 1941, Hans, Margret, and their black cocker spaniel, Charcoal, moved into a third-floor apartment at 42 Washington Square South. It would be their home for eight years, until their move to the other side of the park at 82 Washington Place. The Reys flourished in the Village environment, publishing more than twenty children's books by the time they became U.S. citizens in 1946.

While H. A. worked in a studio in a hotel across the street, Margret resumed her interest in photography. Having studied photography at the Bauhaus in Dessau, Germany, and having worked as a professional photographer in both Germany and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, she used the city of New York as her studio.

In July 1941, Rey received a contract for *Elizabite*, his second work for Ursula Nordstrom, director of the Department of Books for Boys and Girls at Harper



H. A. Rey, final illustration for "This is George. He lived in Africa," published in *The Original Curious George* (1998), France, 1939-40, watercolor, charcoal, and color pencil on paper. H. A. & Margret Rey Papers, de Grummond Children's Literature Collection, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi. Curious George, and related characters, created by Margret and H. A. Rey, are copyrighted and trademarked by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, © 2010 by HMH.



H. A. Rey, final illustration for "George climbed up until he was in the sunshine again, high above the rain cloud," *Raffy and the 9 Monkeys* (1939), later published as *Cecily G. and the 9 Monkeys* (1942), Paris, 1939, watercolor on paper.

and Brothers. Rey's original watercolor dummy for *Elizabite* attributed authorship of the "verses" to Margret (sic) Rey on the title page. This fact is noteworthy for two reasons—first, her name was misspelled, perhaps because the couple felt that to spell it correctly would look like a mistake, and secondly, because it was the first time Margret was given editorial credit for her contributions to their books.

Nevertheless, the title page in the published book never mentioned Margret's contribution, a fact which Margret complained about years later in an interview:

When the books were first published in the 1940s, the writers and editors of children's books were all women. A new trend of children's books was launched, a man, H. A. Rey, was listed as the author. . . Many books later, perhaps because of the women's liberation movement, I [questioned] why I did this. After that, both husband and wife were listed as the authors of the *Curious George* books.⁶

Perhaps this rebuff inspired Margret to become an author in her own right. In August 1943, the couple made their way to the Bread Loaf Writer's Conference in Vermont. Rey viewed the conference as an opportunity to relax and enjoy two weeks in the mountains, while his wife attended the workshops.

"It's a wonderful place, both geographically and spiritually," he wrote to Emmy Payne West, author of *Katy No-Pocket*. "There are writers of all sorts there, gifted and not so gifted, some old and experienced, others young and new to the game."⁷

Margret's efforts paid off, and in 1944, Harper published *Pretzel*. Her submission letter to Nordstrom, by now a good friend, sheds light on their relationship and how each relished a good joke. Posing as aspiring author-to-be Peggy Applejuice, the letter begins "Dear Madam":

I hope you don't mind me writing to you. . . . I am all excited about



Visitors enjoying the Rey exhibit, *Curious George Saves the Day: The Art of Margret and H.A. Rey*, at The Jewish Museum in New York City.

my story and would love to see it published soon. By a happy coincidence I have a husband who can draw very nicely. . . . Since I live in New York I would love to come and show you my story which I suppose you could read while I am there since it is not very long. . . . Maybe we could arrange that you meet my husband too.

She closes, “Hopefully yours, Peggy Applejuice,” then adds a postscript. “And don’t think you can get it cheap!”⁸

Ten days later, Nordstrom sent her a contract for *Pretzel*. Pinned at the bottom of the official cover letter is a hand-written note: “Maggie, this letter is for your files. This politeness is damn near killing me!”⁹

In the spring of 1947, the Reys purchased a Pontiac convertible. It was the first automobile the couple had ever owned. Margret had hinted that she wanted a car in her reply to a Harper and Brothers author information sheet sometime earlier, when asked about her plans to market her books: “You supply the Reys with a car (Oldsmobile convertible) some dogfood [*sic*], and expense account for one year and schedule Chalk-Talks by H. A. Rey in one hundred cities all over the country. I’ll do the driving and promise to keep my mouth shut most of the time.”¹⁰

According to an April 28th letter from Hans to Ursula Nordstrom, Margret’s driving seems to have been as careless as her mouth at times: “Did [she] tell you our new car is already minus a fender, and [has] a big hole in the door? Quick work isn’t it?” he quipped.¹¹

Hans deplored the decision to purchase a car for another reason. He preferred public transportation, especially trains. Each summer the couple would take the “Green Mountain Flyer” to Ripton, Vermont, home of the Bread Loaf Writer’s Conference. Hans enjoyed the train because “you could sit comfortably, chat with the people on the neighboring seats, go to the dining car for lunch, and get off at Middlebury, just a short taxi ride from Bread Loaf. . . . After we got our first car . . . it was good-bye to railroads”—and perhaps to a leisurely trip given Margret’s driving skills!¹²

The Reys attended the Bread Loaf Writers Conference every summer from 1943 until 1951. In spring 1952, however, Hans suffered a heart attack. By August, he had recovered enough for the couple to spend their anniversary in the mountains of New Hampshire. It would be the first of several trips they took to Waterville Valley before deciding to build a vacation home there in 1958.

Five years later, the couple decided to abandon New York for Cambridge, Massachusetts. The move meant not only a shorter trip to their home in New Hampshire, where they now spent most of the year, but also proximity to publisher Houghton Mifflin in Boston.

In 1987, Dorothy Austin, director of the Erik H. and Joan M. Erikson Center (a center for intergenerational and interdisciplinary work in psychology), in Cambridge, Massachusetts,

“When the books were first published in the 1940s, the writers and editors of children’s books were all women. A new trend of children’s books was launched, a man, H. A. Rey, was listed as the author. . . . Many books later, perhaps because of the women’s liberation movement, I [questioned] why I did this. After that, both husband and wife were listed as the authors of the Curious George books.”

—Margret Rey

spoke of the Reys' contribution to children's literature by quoting her mentor, Erik Erikson:

It is human to have a long childhood; it is civilized to have an even longer childhood. . . .Margret and Hans Rey have contributed to that 'longer childhood' for each of us. By giving us books that pull children onto the laps of parents and grandparents, Curious George and the Reys have given us generations of childhood.¹³

Those who were able to see the Curious George exhibit were able to share a longer childhood, so to speak, with their children and grandchildren. If there were no children to hide behind, they found a very fascinating exhibit in which the Reys' story was exquisitely told.

The Jewish Museum has borrowed more than one hundred items from the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection, housed in the McCain Library and Archives at the University of Southern Mississippi, to bring the Reys' complete story to the New York audience. How appropriate for the show to be in the heart of the city they first called home in the United States. 🐒

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GUTTER TALK AND MORE, continued from page 42

"The pictures don't do that in my book at home," she reported, fascinated at this discovery and unable to believe that she'd missed such an integral part of the book's design in her millions of prior readings. I like to think that this was an opportunity to stretch her and others like her as learners, even as the techniques I use foster success in students who typically have a harder time sitting and staying engaged with a reading that does not emphasize the visual elements of a picturebook or promote discussion during a reading.

We spent the rest of that storytime talking about pictures breaking the page and about how a frame around a picture on a page can make you feel like you're on the outside looking in, but a picture without a frame can make you feel like you are right inside the picture world, a participant rather than a spectator. And I guess that's ultimately what I want children to be in whole-book-approach storytimes—participants, rather than spectators, ecstatic critics engaging with all that picturebooks have to offer and delighting in what they hear and see. 🐒

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Child's Play

The Value of Board Games in Your Library

CHRISTOPHER HARRIS AND BRIAN MAYER

I don't want to take my turn," three-year-old Cami told me as the die was passed to her. "What if I roll the raven, and it's my fault that we lose?"

We think of children as being such natural gamers that it is easy to forget that participating within the conventions and mechanics of a game is not instinctual. Play—the free-form activities of make believe, physical play, and even rough-and-tumble—is as natural to a child as a kitten first learning to pounce. Gaming, that structured form of interaction bound by rules with players working towards an end goal, must be learned.

What better way than a game to teach children the complex rules of social interaction? Orchard (HABA) is a modern board game of the style we recommend in our recent book, *Libraries Got Game: Aligned Learning through Modern Board Games* (ALA Editions, 2010). Players roll a die and, depending on the result, either pick a given type of fruit from the board, pick their choice of two fruits, or add a puzzle piece to the raven in the center of the board. The goal is to clear all the fruit from the orchard before the raven puzzle is completed.

Although, at the age of three, Cami saw the risk of rolling a raven on the die as overwhelming, this was a teachable moment that allowed us to have a conversation about recovering from failure and persevering through difficult times. And to think this discussion was pursued on top of Cami having to learn how to take a turn sharing with other players, and how to follow the rules of the game. That's heady stuff for a three-year-old who thought she was just sitting down to collect some wooden fruit from a board.

Board Games, not Bored Games

For many, the subject of games in libraries evokes images of young adults madly mashing buttons on controllers as they sit around a video game. More recently, video gaming in libraries has been enriched by the physical movement involved in Nintendo Wii and by more cooperative, interactive games like Rock Band and Guitar Hero.

But for our youngest library users, even these improved game experiences may not be the most developmentally appropriate.



Christopher Harris, far left, author of the *Infomancy* blog, is the Coordinator of the School Library System for Genesee Valley (New York) Educational Partnership, an educational services agency that supports the libraries of twenty-two small, rural districts in western New York. **Brian Mayer** is a Library Technology Specialist for the Genesee Valley Educational Partnership as well as an Independent Library Consultant. The focus of his work is on the use of modern board games in school libraries as a way to engage students, build literacy, strengthen social skills, and reinforce the curriculum.

Mayer and Harris are coauthors of *Libraries Got Game: Aligned Learning through Modern Board Games*, (ALA Editions, 2010).

Modern board games are another way for libraries to provide rich, highly engaging game experiences for children and adults at all ages.

Cami was able to have such a rich game experience because Orchard is a modern board game. This term refers to a new style of games, stemming from a German game publishing renaissance, that are very different from the traditional American board games with which you might be most familiar. Most of the mainstream board games for children in this country are built around the roll-and-move mechanic where players roll dice, move a pawn, and do whatever the space tells them to do.

Modern board games tend to be much more open-ended; their mechanics often include a higher level of choice with a focus on strategy and planning as opposed to chance.

Perhaps more importantly for library program use, modern board games usually avoid the elimination scoring mechanic that is often found in traditional family games. A number of the games referenced here, including Orchard, are cooperative games where players work together against the game. Thanks to these differences, modern board games are uniquely suited to address the critical thinking, inquiry, and social information skills that are critical to the twenty-first-century learner.

Despite this alignment, don't think that the idea of games in libraries is itself a twenty-first-century invention. From the first chess club in the United States to special collections developed during the Great Depression, games have long had a place in our library spaces.

Modern board games add to the wide variety of resources available for library collections and programs aside from the current trend of electronic resources or the traditional fare of family board and strategy games. Adding modern board games to your library collection and library programming is easier than you might think.

What's the Goal?

The first question to consider is the desired outcome of a game program at your library. Are you looking to add games as individual activities or resources available for loan? Or are you looking to create a more interactive program built around shared game experiences? There are modern board games for either answer, but the differences are one of the ways that libraries can truly excel in the gaming environment.

For example HABA's Orchard is available in a couple different versions. The regular Orchard is perfect for tabletop gaming with two to four players, but if your players are slightly younger, you might want to consider My First Orchard. With bigger fruit pieces (the fruit pieces in regular Orchard are pretty small) and

a simplified raven mechanic, this version is more accessible for two-year-olds.

For a unique library experience, however, consider purchasing the Orchard Floor Game; at more than twenty-seven inches per side, the oversized board and huge fruit add a special touch to library use.

Other games offer giant versions—another great example is Giant Blokus (Educational Insights/Mattel) that lets the library provide a unique experience for a game that will be familiar to many older children. In most cases, however, it is the very game itself that is a unique experience. These are not mainstream games like those our young patrons have seen in the toy department of major retailers.

You will need to venture into your local game store to find many of the titles discussed here. But don't worry; if your local store is anything like Millennium Games and Hobbies here in Rochester, New York, the staff will be more than happy to help you explore modern board games. These games can also be found online on sites like Funagain.com (which takes purchase orders and even offers a grant for schools and libraries) and Amazon, but without the opportunity for interaction with local experts.

And now for the really big question, the one that we are always asked but that we try to put off until the end: Won't the pieces get lost? Well, after two years of running a circulating game library that sends hundreds of games a year into libraries and classrooms, we can tell you that it hasn't been a real problem. Some pieces have been lost, but not enough that we ever felt like the program was threatened. A school librarian in our region who runs a toy library for her students had the right answer to this problem—a box labeled "Spare Pieces" and a positive attitude about the importance of working through problems to provide great services for children.

To further ease any worries, let me also assure you that most of the modern board game publishers are ready and willing to help with this. Many of them already offer replacement pieces for free or at a very low cost. In addition, we have been working with publishers on the idea of creating library editions of games that would use more easily replaced pieces and made of more durable materials.

In the end, it is definitely worth working through any issues. Modern board games provide a unique and authentic opportunity for developmentally appropriate growth through play. Video games are great, and both of us are heavy players of video and computer games, but the video game experience has an inherent passivity with a focus on a screen. With modern board games, the players still enjoy rich and rewarding game experiences, but the focus is much more interpersonal. A subtle blend of social interactions between the players, physical manipulation of the environment, and strategic choices to alter the environment make modern board games a wonderful addition to any children's library program. 🐉

Recommended Board Games

Listed below is a selection of games for a variety of ages. Note, however, that the ages are approximate and many of the games are quite fun for adults as well as children.

Ages 2-4

- **Floor Orchard (HABA).** This large game provides an immersive tactile experience while building color recognition, turn taking, and a cooperative approach to problem solving. The children work together gathering large wooden fruit from the orchard trees, trying to collect them all before the raven puzzle in the center of the board is completed. Also available as Orchard for tabletop gaming and My First Orchard, with larger pieces for younger players.



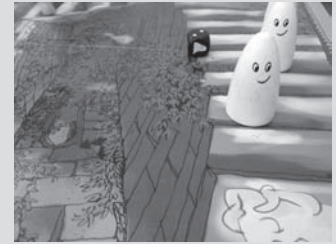
- **Froggy Boogie (Blue Orange Games).** A great example of how the "bits" in a game affect the experience, Froggy Boogie features chunky, two-toned wooden frogs with large, googly eyes that generate curiosity and draw children to the table. Players are trying to be the first to get their baby frog around the pond without being seen by the adult frogs in the middle. On their turn, the children roll two colored dice and pick one eye to pluck out of the corresponding colored frog. If the eye is blank, they can move forward, but if there is a froggy, their turn is over. Froggy Boogie prompts multicolor matching, and the game play has the youngest players learning to organize information for later use.

- **Go Away Monster! (Gamenwright).** A great game for beginning players aged two and up where the children pull tiles from a bag hoping to find all the missing pieces from their room. Mixed in among the different pieces is a host of silly monsters trying to sneak in too. Players use their sensory skills to pull out the appropriately shaped pieces and match them up with the spaces on their board. Whenever a monster gets pulled, players yell out "Go Away Monster!" and throw the piece away (my daughter prefers across the room). If a player already has a piece on his board, he can share that piece with another player to help her complete her room.

Ages 5-7

- **Geistertreppe or Spooky Stairs (Drei Magier Spiele).** This wonderful spin on memory games introduces basic counting skills with sudden switcheroos that leave young

players hoping they remember whose pawn is whose! On their turn, players roll a die, trying to move their pawn up the staircase to spook the ghost at the top. If a ghost is rolled on the die,



one of the pawns is covered with a ghost sheet, and once all of the pawns are covered, any subsequent ghost rolls allow players to swap any two pawns on the board. The game ends when one pawn makes it to the top; with some good information tracking and a little luck, it will belong to the player who moved it.

- **Castle Knights (HABA).** The three Cs: communication, coordination, and cooperation are at the heart of this fun dexterity game. Two to four children work together



using an elastic tool to pick up and stack a variety of wooden blocks and figures in an effort to build towers in preparation for the king's arrival. For an added challenge, the task can be timed,

turning up the pressure and challenging the most skilled players.

- **Dancing Eggs (HABA).** The silliest game on the list. Children try to collect and hold as many eggs as they can before one is dropped. Eggs are sturdy life-sized rubber replicas that will be bounced and dropped as students grasp, cluck, and race around the table claiming new ones. Included in the game are two wooden dice—one tells how an egg is collected while the other indicates where the egg must be kept for the duration of play (under the chin, in the crook of the arm, between the knees). A raucous, fun time for all!



Ages 8-10

- **Snorta (Mattel).** Originally an Out of the Box title (the company that first published Apples to Apples), this card game of barnyard matching raises a cacophony of laughter as children rush to make the noise of animals hidden in the other players' barn when matches are made. As players successfully out-hoot, -moo, and -neigh each other, they give away their face-up cards until one player runs out and wins the game. Snorta

Recommended Board Games, *cont.*

is a great exercise in informational skills as players work with multiple sources of information, mentally organizing it for easy retrieval while disregarding extraneous information present in the game.

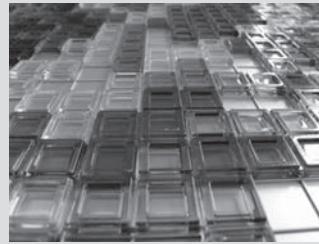
- **Tsuro (WizKids).** A visually beautiful game of survival, winding paths, and occasionally . . . no winners. Played on a grid, children start their player stone on a separate path at the edge of the board. At each turn, they play a card which extends their path into the playing area, sliding their stone as far along the path as it can go. Players try to keep their stones on the board as long as they can, hoping to avoid collision or being sent off the edge. Besides strengthening spatial relation skills, Tsuro presents an opportunity for young players to see the interaction of player choices as the board and the pieces come together.



- **Wits and Wagers Family (North Star Games).** A completely different take on the familiar trivia genre. All of the questions are obscure, number-based facts such as, "How many stairs are in the Leaning Tower of Pisa?" or "What is the longest celery stalk on record?" Players aren't expected to know answers, but instead offer up guesses which are then arranged in order on the table. Looking at the answers, the children then make an educated guess, placing two scoring meeples (wooden pawns shaped like people) out on the answer or answers they think might be closest without going over. Wits and Wagers Family is a great game for large groups and teams and lends itself well to self-created questions focused on areas of special interest.

Ages 10-13

- **Giant Blokus (Educational Insights/Mattel).** This takes a familiar abstract game and provides a unique experience by allowing the children to play on a giant version of the board. Players take turns placing Tetris-



like pieces on a square grid following very simple rules. Game play continues until no one can place any more of their pieces, and the player with the fewest remaining squares

wins. The game is very easy to learn, but features high replayability as game play evolves from the placement of other players. Giant Blokus helps children develop a critical eye for details as they actively seek out the best possible placement for their pieces each turn.

- **Word on the Street (Out of the Box).** This team-based word game is a tactile tug-of-war with letters played across four lanes of traffic. Each team tries to pull as many consonants to their side of the street by working together to select and spell words for a given topic each round before time runs out. Every time a letter appears in a word, it moves one spot closer to the team, so word choice becomes important as the letters start moving back and forth across the board. Also available as a junior version tailored for ages eight and up.



- **Hive (Gen Four Two).** Similar in strategy to chess, but compact, portable, and with bugs. The goal in this two-player game is to surround your opponent's queen bee on all sides by any combination of tiles, either yours or your opponents. Each player has a set of tiles consisting of several different types of bugs, each of which behaves differently—ants scurry,



beetles pin down, grasshoppers leap across, and spiders pivot. A much faster game than chess, Hive allows repeated opportunities for children to play with and refine their ability to evaluate information, explore possible outcomes, and think strategically.

Touring the Children's Literature Center at the Library of Congress

Marianne Martens



Marianne Martens outside the Library of Congress.

On the Friday before the 2010 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D. C., June 2010, Ellen Hunter Ruffin, committee co-chair of ALSC's Special Collections and Bechtel Fellowship Committee (SCBFC) arranged a visit for the committee members to the Children's Literature Center at the Library of Congress.

Greeted by an oversized poster of an owl proclaiming "*Wer Bücher liest weiss mehr*" ("He who reads books knows more"), the tour group met at the center and perused historical children's books including L. Frank Baum's *The Navy Alphabet* (1900), James Janeway's *A Token for Children* (1728), and the early pop-up book displayed in the photo on the next page.

The center provided a handout for visitors titled *A Sampling of Treasures: Rare Children's Books on Display*. Dr. Sybille Jagusch, chief of the Children's Literature Center, escorted the group on a tour, starting in the rare books room, where several group members had difficulty tearing themselves away from material such as *A Curious Hieroglyphick Bible* (1788) and an original hornbook (ca. 1800). While books in the rare books room are propped up on special, pillow-like holders, plush Beanie Babies charmingly serve the same function in the Children's Literature Center.

The center holds approximately two hundred thousand children's books and related materials, including games, maps designed for children, magazines, and books in Braille. But

specialized items, such as maps and rare books are housed with related collections throughout the library.

The Library of Congress provides cataloging-in-publication data for publishers, which is printed on the copyright page of books. In exchange for this service, publishers are required to send a copy of every published book to the library, which is how the Children's Literature Center acquires most of its books. This system results in a collection so large that portions of the collection are warehoused in Maryland.

Many of us were surprised to learn that books in the offsite collections are not stored according to Library of Congress classification, nor according to the Dewey Decimal Classification system, but instead, as a space-saving measure, books are shelved according to size.

Even with the offsite storage, the stacks themselves are seemingly endless, with a conveyer-belt style system that shuttles individual books from the library stacks to desks, such as the desk in the main reading room.

For many of the librarians in attendance, a highlight of the behind-the-scenes tour of the library was exiting the stacks through what looked like a secret door, hidden in the center of the desk in the main reading room. Lining the galley offices on the second floor of the rotunda, were life-sized statues of historical greats. The Children's Literature Center had previously

Marianne Martens is a doctoral candidate at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey and is co-chair of the ALSC Special Collections and Bechtel Fellowship Committee. The committee also includes co-chair Ellen Ruffin, Christine A. Jenkins, Charmette S. Kuhn-Kendrick, Jeanne C. Lamb, Angela Leeper, Mary Lois Nicholls, Dorothy M. Stoltz, Janet Weber, Amanda J. Williams, and past co-chairs Mary Beth Dunhouse and Nancy Johnson.

been located up on the second floor behind the statues, and Dr. Jagusch jokingly noted that advantages with the old office included watching Mozart get his legs washed and being able to belt out “*Stille Nacht*” across the reading room on Christmas.

According to the center’s website, “The Children’s Literature Center serves those organizations and individuals who study, produce, collect, interpret, and disseminate children’s books, films, television programs, or other forms of materials destined for children’s information and recreational use, usually outside the classroom.”¹

Dr. Jagusch’s enthusiasm for the library was infectious, and those on the tour were fascinated by her work. But while Dr. Jagusch said that she had “the best job in the world,” she made it very clear that this job would not be available anytime soon!

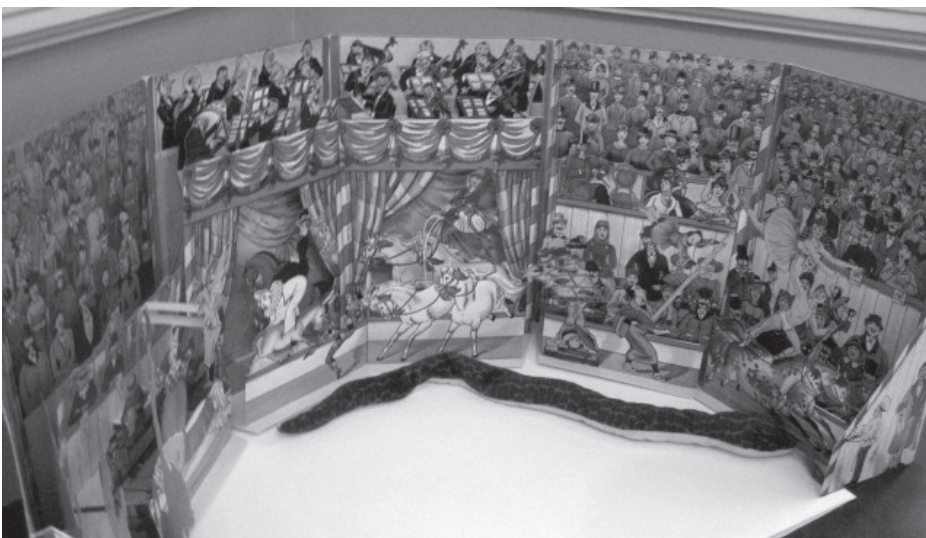
For more information about the Center, visit www.loc.gov/rr/child. ☞

Reference

1. The Library of Congress Children’s Literature Center, www.loc.gov/rr/child (accessed July 26, 2010).



An automated conveyer belt system deep within the stacks of the Library of Congress.



Early pop-up book (supported by a plush snake).



Former location of the Children’s Literature Center above the main reading room.



Poster at entrance to the Children’s Literature Center at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.



Jacqueline Coleburn, left, rare book cataloger at the Library of Congress, and Ellen Pozzi, doctoral candidate at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

Consumerism

How it Impacts Play and its Presence in Library Collections

Jill Bickford

In the Summer/Fall issue of *Children and Libraries*, the Children and Technology Committee discussed the need to limit technology use, specifically screen time, with babies and toddlers, and it encouraged children's librarians to be proactive in helping steer parents and caregivers toward alternative entertainment for young children.

Here we examine marketing targeted at children through media. One of the problems with screen time for young children is the effects of the marketing infused in it. Technology, without appropriate parameters and limits, can hinder the imaginative and creative growth of a child through the infiltration of media characters and consumerism. Susan Linn, director of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood (CCFC) and author of *The Case for Make-Believe: Saving Play in a Commercialized World* and *Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood*, addressed these issues and shared some suggestions for libraries in a recent telephone interview.

As the importance of play continues to be emphasized by child psychologists, it is important that libraries contribute to child's play rather than hinder it. Research indicates that many of the skills necessary for academic and social success are developed through unstructured play. Linn goes a step further and asserts that play is also essential for mental health. Fantasy and creative play provide an outlet for children to make meaning of their experiences, whether those experiences are traumatic or

pleasurable. The ability of a child to employ his imagination in a unique and personal way can help him or her navigate through difficult times in life.

According to Linn, when a child is given a puppet or prop familiar from television, creativity is lost. She has observed children portraying characters rigidly, simply rehashing episodes.¹ When given a generic puppet, with no media tie-in, there is no choice but for the child to be creative. There is no prescribed notion of how the character should act and speak. It allows the child's imagination to run wild, thus creating a meaningful experience full of original storytelling. Television programs and video games can severely limit and stifle children's abilities to create their own unique characters and to engage in fantasy play.

The more children—especially toddlers and infants—are exposed to and become familiar with particular characters, the more they crave them. Parents feel they are satisfying the needs of their children by purchasing the toys and other products which bear the character's face.

While American children are seduced by glitz, glitter, and beloved media characters into forsaking make believe, adults are seduced into depriving them of it—mostly in the name of learning. We fork over billions of dollars each year on electronic media and gizmos claiming to teach young children, even babies, everything from the alphabet to manners.²



Jill Bickford is Youth Services Coordinator at the West Bloomfield Township (Mich.) Public Library and a member of the ALSC Children and Technology Committee. The committee also includes chair Amber Creger, Kelley Beeson, Francesca Burgess, Gretchen Caserotti, Jeannie Chen, Patricia Havrin, Travis Jonker, Joella Peterson, and Patty Saidenberg.

Parents tend to believe that these products are interactive and therefore provide a quality learning experience. Yet such products have limited responses and reactions. They cannot engage in conversation the way another human being can.

Linn notes that infants do not need or request television, nor do they need or request media tie-in products. They respond to the familiarity and repetition of seeing objects or images over and over. Babies respond to the familiar.

In the same way they begin to recognize and respond to the face of a parent or frequent caregiver, after viewing a particular video several times, infants will begin to respond to a familiar object or character from the DVD. They could just as easily become familiar with a particular stuffed animal, picture book, puppet, or even an oven mitt if it is used repeatedly to entertain them.

Children's books, on the other hand, can spark a child's imagination. Even heavily illustrated picture books leave some details to the imagination. Each reader will bring her own voice and interpretation to the story—unlike the case with books adapted from television or movies, which simply trigger the child's memory and lack any opportunity for imagination.

“Reading requires us to imagine both aural and visual images. . . . Screen media does all of that work for us and, in addition, seems to be an aid in remembering content—which may make it a boon to certain kinds of learning, but a bust when it comes to nurturing imagination.”³ Parents often mistake this memory aid as learning and believe there to be educational benefits. This belief among parents persists despite the lack of evidence and research to support it.

However, we need to remember that corporations have found books to be an effective vehicle for product placement, and just like television and video games, many books are full of subliminal ads for toys. Many popular toys have spin-off series that promote the toy and the various accessories available to purchase. Media tie-in books domi-

nate the bookshelves in many popular discount department store chains and have a stronghold in bookstores as well. Consumerism found in books can be just as damaging as that found on screen. Such books can create a strong demand by a child for more tangible items featuring the character or toy—which is exactly what corporations are hoping for.

The use of books for marketing is not limited to toy manufacturers. Even food manufacturers have seen literacy as a marketing tool. Linn recognizes the importance of parents reading to their children but notes that “one assumes that if they are reading the *Hershey Kisses Counting Board Book* or *The Skittles Riddles Math Book*, they are gaining equally warm, Snuggly feelings about certain kinds of food.”⁴

There are some who will argue that children can be educated or trained to recognize marketing and therefore reduce its effects. The Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) online game, Admongo.gov, is designed to help children distinguish content from advertising. While the game appears to be effective and to accomplish the FTC's goal of enabling children to spot ads, Linn pointed out during a recent interview that it does not make children immune or any less vulnerable to ads.⁵ Advertising targets our emotions. Just because children can identify an ad as separate from the content, that does not mean they can resist the emotional pull of the ad. Likewise, children cannot separate themselves emotionally from the lure of marketing placed within media products.

How can libraries achieve a delicate balance between demands of the community for popular and familiar materials while maintaining conscientious collections? How can libraries promote creativity and imagination through services and collections in a world where popular television characters dominate children's products such as toys, books, clothing, vitamins, packaged foods, and toothbrushes. Parents and children request books based on licensed media characters and toys such as Dora, Diego, Barbie, Transformers, and many others. “[Libraries] are in a situation that a lot of public health organizations are in. Do

you lead the community or do you follow the community?” Linn asks.⁶

It is a question we frequently struggle with as we try to balance our collections and services to meet the desires of the community while simultaneously setting an example and providing quality materials. Does your children's area promote free and creative play without the presence of marketing? Do you balance purchases of popular media tie-in materials with quality selections that nurture the imagination? Do your programs promote literacy skills and imagination while keeping consumerism to a minimum?

Realia and toys available for open play as well as those used during programs and storytimes can be generic, rather than promoting television or video game characters. Dress-up clothing can be simple and ambiguous, thus allowing the child to create an original character rather than emulate one seen on screen. Programs can be based on characters derived from literature rather than television. If programs are based on television or video game characters, they should include an element of creativity.

In *The Case for Make Believe*, Linn relates an example of a Pokémon enthusiast creating his own Pokémon characters and cards rather than purchasing the official cards in the store. Programs can encourage children to stray from the prescribed character and create a wholly new and unique one.

Linn suggests that public libraries purchase, prominently display, and promote books for parents that emphasize the importance of play and creativity (see “Bibliography of Suggested Reading”).

Library blogs or newsletters can include references to recent research and discuss how the library is promoting consumer-free play. Additionally, libraries can host a screening of *Consuming Kids: The Commercialization of Childhood*, a DVD available from the CCFC at www.commercialfreechildhood.org. The DVD could also be shown to staff during in-service.

continued on page 56

ALSC Core Competencies Help Managers Set the Bar

Writing the perfect job description and finding the best candidate for a position are never easy, but ALSC's Competencies for Librarians Serving Children in Public Libraries do make a manager's job easier.

ALSC recommends the following Core Competencies to all children's librarians and other library staff whose primary duties include delivering library service to and advocating library service for children ages 0–14. The policy of this organization is that a master's degree in Library and Information Science from an ALA-accredited graduate school is the appropriate professional degree for the librarian serving children in the public library, but ALSC expects the same standards applied to paraprofessional staff. Through specialized coursework in undergraduate and graduate study, on-the-job training, and/or continuing education opportunities, librarians serving children should achieve and maintain the following skills, orientations, and understandings to ensure children receive the highest quality of library service as defined in the ALA Library Bill of Rights, and the ALA and Association of American Publishers (AAP) joint Freedom to Read Statement.

I. Knowledge of Client Group

1. Understands theories of infant, child, and adolescent learning and development and their implications for library service.
2. Recognizes the effects of societal developments on the needs of children.
3. Assesses the diverse needs, preferences, and resources of the community on a regular and systematic basis.
4. Identifies patrons with special needs as a basis for designing and implementing services following the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and state and local regulations where appropriate.
5. Demonstrates an understanding of and respect for diversity in cultural and ethnic values.
6. Understands and responds to the needs of parents, caregivers, and other adults who use the resources of the children's department.
7. Cultivates an environment which provides for enjoyable and convenient access to and use of library resources.
8. Maintains regular communication with other agencies, institutions, and organizations serving children in the community.

II. Administrative and Management Skills

1. Participates in all aspects of the library's planning process to represent and support service to children.
2. Sets long- and short-range goals, objectives, strategic plans, and priorities.
3. Analyzes the costs of library services to children in order to develop, justify, administer, manage, and evaluate a budget.
4. Conducts job interviews, trains, and evaluates staff who work with children, parents, caregivers, and other adults using children's services.
5. Writes job descriptions and encourages continuing education for staff who work with children.
6. Demonstrates critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, and mediation skills and techniques.
7. Delegates responsibility appropriately and supervises staff constructively.
8. Documents and evaluates services and needs assessments through various research methods.
9. Identifies outside sources of funding and writes effective grant applications.
10. Follows federal, state, and local legislation in the development and enactment of library policies and procedures.

III. Communication Skills

1. Defines and communicates the role and scope of public library service to children for administrators, other library staff, and members of the larger community.
2. Listens and interacts actively when speaking individually with children, families, other patrons, and staff, paying genuine attention to what is being communicated, and confirming understanding.
3. Writes proficiently and adjusts content and style to accommodate diverse functions and audiences.
4. Communicates effectively when addressing or presenting to large or small groups of children and/or adults.
5. Conducts productive formal and informal reference and readers' advisory interviews.
6. Successfully communicates library policies and procedures to patrons of all ages.

IV. Knowledge of Materials

1. Demonstrates a knowledge and appreciation of children's literature, periodicals, audiovisual materials,

Websites and other electronic media, and other materials that contribute to a diverse, current, and relevant children's collection.

2. Provides a wide and diverse variety of electronic resources, audiovisual materials, print materials, and other resource materials to best serve the needs of children and their caregivers.
3. Keeps abreast of new materials and those for retrospective purchase by consulting a wide variety of reviewing sources and publishers' catalogs, including those of small presses, by attending professional meetings, and by reading, viewing, and listening.
4. Keeps up-to-date on adult electronic and print reference sources which may serve the needs of children and their caregivers.
5. Develops a comprehensive collection development policy consistent with the mission and policies of the parent library and the ALA Library Bill of Rights.
6. Considers the selection and discarding of materials according to collection development, selection, and weeding policies.
7. Maintains a diverse collection, recognizing children's need to see people like and unlike themselves in the materials they access.
8. Understands and applies criteria for evaluating the content and artistic merit of children's materials in all genres and formats.
9. Addresses materials against community challenges.
10. Demonstrates a knowledge of cataloging, classification, indexing procedures, and practices to support access to children's materials.

V. User and Reference Services

1. Instructs children in the use of library tools and resources, empowering them to choose materials and services on their own.
2. Conducts reference/readers' advisory interviews to assist children and their parents/caregivers with the identification and selection of materials and services, according to their interests and abilities.
3. Respects the patron's right to browse regardless of age, and provides nonjudgmental answers to their questions.
4. Assists and instructs children in information gathering and research skills.

ALSC Core Competencies, *cont.*

5. Understands and applies search strategies to give children the widest possible range of sources.
6. Compiles and maintains information about community resources.
7. Works with library technical services on cataloging, classification, and indexing to ensure easy access to materials for children.
8. Encourages use of materials and services through bibliographies, booktalks, displays, electronic documents, and other special tools.

VI. Programming Skills

1. Designs, promotes, presents, and evaluates a variety of programs for children of all ages, based on their developmental needs and interests and the goals of the library.
2. Identifies and utilizes skilled resource people to present programs and information.
3. Provides library outreach programs which meet community needs and library goals and objectives.
4. Establishes programs and services for parents, individuals and agencies providing childcare, and other professionals in the community who work with children.
5. Promotes library programs and services to underserved children and families.

VII. Advocacy, Public Relations, and Networking Skills

1. Utilizes effective public relations techniques and media to promote an awareness of and support for meeting children's library and information needs through all media.
2. Considers the needs, opinions, and requests of children in the development and evaluation of library services.
3. Ensures that children have full access to library materials, resources, and services as prescribed by the Library Bill of Rights.
4. Collaborates with other agencies serving children, including other libraries, schools, and other community agencies.
5. Lobbies on behalf of children for the highest quality library service, through library governance and the political process.

VIII. Professionalism and Professional Development

1. Acknowledges the legacy of children's librarianship, its place in the context of librarianship as a whole, and past contributions to the profession.
2. Stays informed of current trends, emerging technologies, issues, and research in librarianship, child development, education, and allied fields.

3. Practices self-evaluation.
4. Knows and practices the American Library Association's Code of Ethics.
5. Preserves patron confidentiality.
6. Mentors library school students, paraprofessionals, and new librarians.
7. Participates in local, state, and national professional organizations to strengthen skills, interact with fellow professionals, promote professional association scholarships, and contribute to the library profession.
8. Pursues professional development and continuing education opportunities throughout her/his career.

IX. Technology

1. Possesses up-to-date computer and technology skills necessary for effective communications and presentations.
2. Acquires familiarity with emerging technological trends and tools.
3. Applies technological skills to provide reference services and programs for children and families.
4. Supports access to Internet and electronic resources for children.

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CHILDREN AND TECHNOLOGY, continued from page 54

Libraries can limit the amount of attention given to character books and try encouraging alternatives.

Children's librarians need to reflect on their collections and programs to ensure that they are not contributing to the consumerism of children. Librarians need to challenge themselves to see if this can be done without sacrificing patron satisfaction. ☺

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- Guernsey, Lisa. *Into the Minds of Babes: How Screen Time Affects Children from Birth to Age Five*. Basic Books, 2007. 287p.

Najduch Named Program Officer/ Continuing Ed

Jenny Najduch has assumed a new role within ALSC as program officer, continuing education. In her new position, effective August 23, Jenny manages the division's continuing education programs, including the National Institute, online courses and webinars, Annual Conference programming, and the Bill Morris Book Evaluation Seminar.



Jenny is currently enrolled in Wayne State University's (Detroit) School of Library and Information Science distance program. She has a Bachelor's degree in Public Relations and English from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa.

ALSC Board Action

The following action was voted on electronically by the Board of Directors on the ALSCBOARD electronic discussion list.

Approved, the 2011 ALSC Emerging Leaders project proposal (ALSC Project 2011 update.docx), an outreach program to increase ALSC's visibility and attract potential new members, focusing on increased ALSC presence at state library association conferences and more effective use of online resources to engage members and attract new ones. (August 2010)

ALSC Funds 2010 Spectrum Scholar

As part of its commitment to furthering diversity in librarianship, ALSC is supporting Sylvia Franco as its 2010–11 Spectrum Scholar. Franco is attending the School of Information at the University of Texas at Austin.

"Teaching kids how to read, the books, the handling of information; these things have ever been the most enjoyable part of my work," said Franco about her decision, after a decade as a teacher, to pursue librarianship. "My parents immigrated to the United States from Mexico in 1969. They were poor, spoke little English, and were largely illiterate. However, upon entering the first grade, I was treated to a library card. I credit a small town public library for altering the course of my life," said Franco. "Thanks to the ALSC Spectrum Scholarship, I can open those same doors for the children I will serve as a librarian."

This year, ALSC established the ALSC Spectrum Scholarship, sponsoring one Spectrum Scholar interested in library service to children each year through funding from the Frederic G. Melcher Endowment. In addition, ALSC provides complimentary student membership and active opportunities for involvement and leadership to all Spectrum Scholars interested in children's services.

Save the Date

The 2011 Arbuthnot Honor Lecture, to be delivered by two-time Newbery Medalist

Lois Lowry, will be held on April 15. The St. Louis (Mo.) County Library is hosting the event. Information about obtaining tickets will be posted at www.ala.org/alsc in January or February.

2011 Slate of Candidates

Vice-President/President-Elect

Carolyn S. Brodie, Kent State (Ohio) University
Penny Markey, Manhattan Beach, Calif.

Board of Directors

Toni Bernardi, San Francisco Public Library
Ernie Cox, Iowa City, Iowa
Caitlin Dixon, Schoenbar Junior High School Library, Ketchikan, Alaska
Lisa Von Drasek, Bank Street College of Education Library, New York
Edward T. Sullivan, Oak Ridge, Tenn.
Jan Watkins, Skokie (Ill.) Public Library

Caldecott 2013 Committee

Carin Bringelson, TeachingBooks.net, Madison, Wis.
Elise DeGuiseppe, Pierce County Library, Tacoma, Wash.
Nancy Johnson, Singapore American School, Singapore
JoAnn Jonas, San Diego County Library
Miriam Martinez, University of Texas, San Antonio
Judith Moreillon, Texas Woman's University, Denton
Kiera Parrott, Darien (Conn.) Library
Sherry Rampey, Gaston, S.C.
Beth Sahagian, Fairfield (Conn.) Public Library
Marilyn Senter, Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Kan.

Carol Sibley, Minnesota State Library,
Moorhead
Lawrence Sipe, University of Pennsylvania,
Philadelphia
Beth Wheeler-Dean, Guntersville (Ala.)
Public Library
Michelle Willis, Scotch Plains (N.J.) Public
Library
Maida Lin Wong, South Pasadena (Calif.)
Public Library
Nancy Zimmerman, University of South
Carolina, Columbia

Newbery 2013 Committee

April Bedford, University of New Orleans,
La.
Virginia Collier, Atlanta-Fulton Public
Library System, Roswell, Ga.
Amber Creger, Woodson Regional
Library/Chicago Public Library
Teffeny Edmondson, Atlanta-Fulton (Ga.)
Public Library
Roxanne Feldman, The Dalton School,
New York
Shelley Glantz, Santa Fe, N.M.
Jos Holman, Tippecanoe County Public
Library, Lafayette, Ind.
Caroline Kienzle, Seminole, Fla.
Denise Lyons, South Carolina State
Library, Columbia
Teri Maggio, Assumption Parish Library,
Napoleonville, La.
Amy McClure, Ohio Wesleyan University,
Delaware, Ohio
Elizabeth Moreau, Mountain View
Branch Library, Anchorage, Alaska
Nancy Roser, University of Texas, Austin
Susan Stan, Central Michigan University,
Mount Pleasant
Marilyn Taniguchi, Beverly Hills (Calif.)
Public Library
Stephanie Wilson, GST BOCES School
Library System, Elmira, N.Y.

Sibert 2013 Committee

Martha Baden, Alice Boucher World
Languages Academy, Lafayette, La.
Linda Ernst, King County Library System,
Bellevue, Wash.
Carol Goldman, Queens Library, Jamaica,
N.Y.
Jean Hatfield, Wichita (Kan.) Public Library
Ellen Hinrichs, University of South
Carolina, Columbia
Lauren Liang, University of Utah, Salt
Lake City
Cindy Lombardo, Cleveland Public Library
Toby Rajput, National-Louis University,
Skokie, Ill.

Dean Schneider, Ensworth School,
Nashville, Tenn.
Deborah Wooten, University of
Tennessee, Knoxville

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AASL/ALSC/YALSA Jt. Exec. Committee

Thursday, January 6, 4:30–6 p.m.

AASL/ALSC/YALSA Jt. Intellectual Freedom Committee

Saturday, January 8, 1:30–2:30 p.m.

AASL/ALSC/YALSA Jt. Membership Reception

Monday, January 10, 6–7:30 p.m.

AASL/ALSC/YALSA Jt. Youth Council Caucus

Monday, January 10, 9–10 a.m.

ALA Youth Media Awards Press Conference

Monday, January 10, 7:45–9:30 a.m.

All Committee Meetings I and II

Sunday, January 9, 8 a.m.–12 noon

All Discussion Group Meeting

Sunday, January 9, 4–6 p.m.

ALSC/REFORMA Jt. Executive Committees

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Batchelder Award Committee (2011)*

Friday, January 7, 8 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 8, 8 a.m.–10 p.m.

Sunday, January 9, 8–10 a.m.

Batchelder Award Committee (2012)

Sunday, January 9, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Special Collections & Bechtel Fellowship Committee*

Sunday, January 9, 8 a.m.–12 noon

Belpré Award Committee (2011)*

Friday, January 7, 8 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 8, 8 a.m.–10 p.m.

Sunday, January 9, 8–10 a.m.

Belpré Award Committee (2012)

Sunday, January 9, 4–6 p.m.

Board of Directors

Saturday, January 8, 1:30–5:30 p.m.

Monday, January 10, 1:30–5:30 p.m.

Budget Committee

Sunday, January 9, 10:30 a.m.–12 noon

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Caldecott Award Committee (2011)*

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Carnegie Medal/Notable Children's Videos Committee (2011)

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Great Interactive Software for Kids Committee

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Nominating Committee (2012)

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Notable Children's Books Committee

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 Tuesday, January 11, 8 a.m.–12 noon

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For an up-to-date list of ALSC meetings, visit www.ala.org/alscevents. Always consult your *Conference Program Book* and Supplement onsite for any late changes.

*Denotes closed meeting

2011 ALSC President's Program

Mark your calendar now for the 2011 ALSC President's Program on Monday, June 27, in New Orleans. A response to the increasing number of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), the President's Program, "How Libraries Can Best Serve Special Needs Patrons, especially those with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)," will help librarians create innovative programming to positively integrate these patrons. ALSC President Julie Corsaro states, "It is urgent that youth services librarians develop programs tailored to this population's strengths and challenges."

Featured speaker Dr. Ricki Robinson, a leader in developing multidisciplinary treatment plans for children with ASD and author of *Autism Solutions* (at press), will join authors Cynthia Lord and Francisco X. Stork, whose writings have humanized ASDs, and Patricia Twarogowski, a librarian

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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 for more information on the referee process.

Children and Libraries

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THE LAST WORD

The Conundrum of Choosing Book Levels

Lisa Taylor

See Dick and Jane look at books. Dick and Jane are six.

See Dick pick a Level 1 book. "The cat ran fast."

See Jane pick a Level 1 book. "Throughout the stratosphere, aliens from planet Morgraphaphaneiser fly their hydrohelioplanes in concentric circles."

See Dick smile. See Jane cry.

Okay, so I exaggerate; it's not quite that bad, but the disparity in levels of beginning readers can certainly be frustrating.

Last year, I took ALSC's great online course, taught by Kate Todd, "Reading Instruction and Children's Books." The students were a mixed contingent of public and school librarians. I think every one of us was most interested in learning the various methods used by publishers to set a level on books.

While we learned quite a bit about the many and varied methods, we also learned that most publishers neglect to inform us which method they are using! Lexile, Flesch-Kincaid, whim?

It's hard to explain why one publisher's Level 1 may be so dif-



ferent from another's, but I know that a little good-natured humor often helps to make a point. In that spirit, I've penned this Easy Reader Rap (or rant, you decide!).

Publishers, are you listening?

*Librarians—we're a scientific bunch.
We need more to go on than just a hunch.*

*We help children find books. Some use the
five-finger rule.*

We help teachers and parents, and we work in school.

"This Level 2 is too easy? Well, this one's just right!"

Here's another Level 2—Too hard! Not quite."

*Is it Lexile? Is it ATOS? Is it Flesch-Kincaid?
Please don't keep us guessing, 'cause we need your aid!*

*If you tell us how you level books from one to four, we'll put
them in the right hands and we'll ask for more!*

*Lisa Taylor is Senior Youth Services Librarian at Barnegat
Branch of Ocean County Library in New Jersey.*

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.