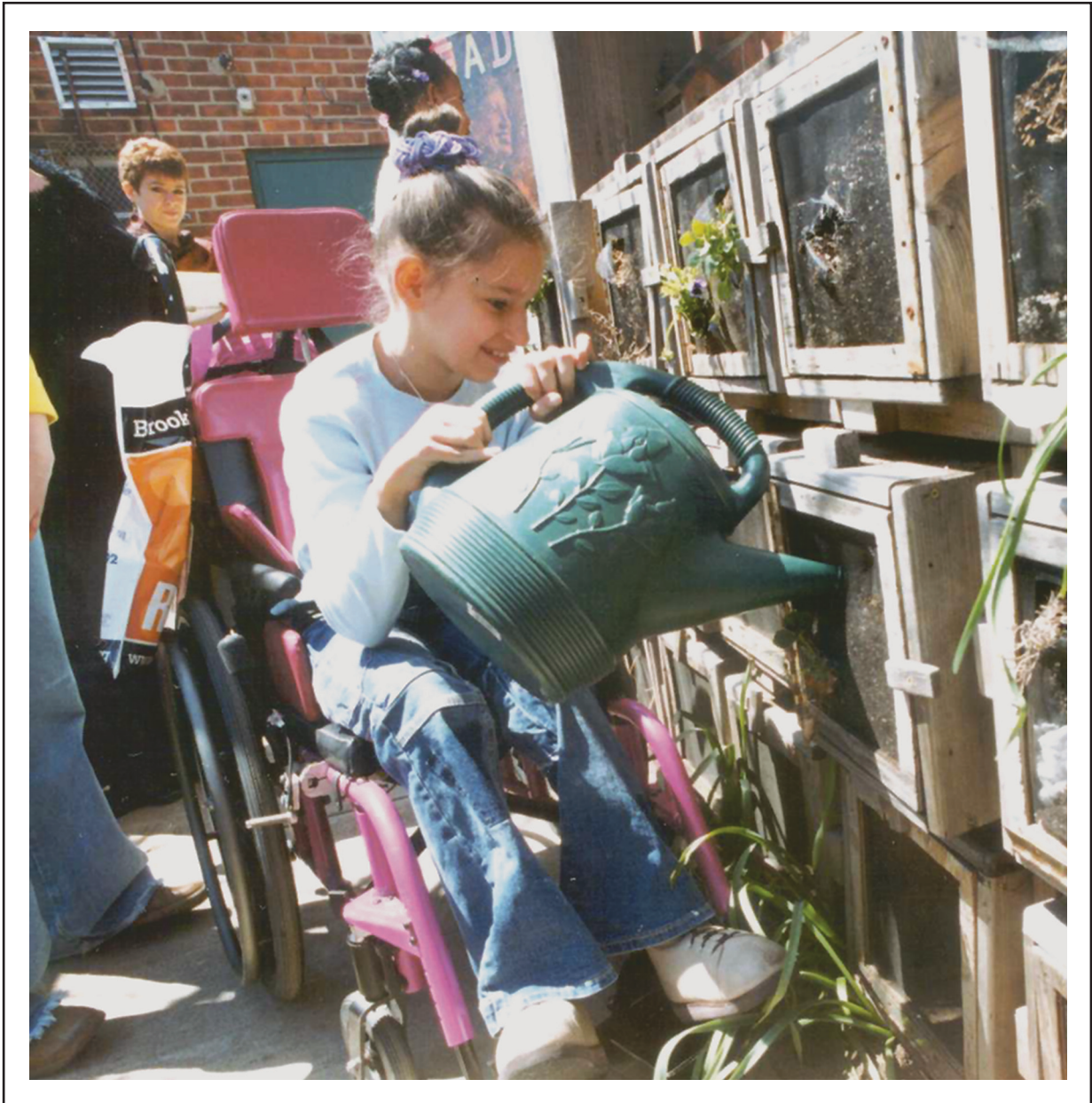


Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for
Library Service to Children

Volume 2 Number 1 Spring 2004 ISSN 1542-9806



A Child's Place • Robert Sabuda Pops Up • Heroism and Our Children • Brain Research and Programming

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Photo by Jerry Speller

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Editor's Note

Now a Patron, I'm a Librarian's Biggest Fan

Sharon Korbeck

Will Rogers never met a man he didn't like. I never met a librarian I didn't like.

I realized that at my second trip to the ALA Midwinter Meeting in San Diego last January. I met Nancy Pearl, who convinced toymakers it was time to laud librarians as an action figure. I met, posthumously through his colleagues, William Morris, who, while not a librarian, revered the profession and its practitioners. I met a young woman with purple hair and black gothic attire who talked about selecting media for young adults.

I like them all. For inasmuch as they all have in common—a strong desire to relay the joys and benefits of libraries to young and old—they are as diverse as their clientele. I miss seeing that diversity on a daily basis. But if I ever need a reminder, I know I have only one place to go.

I can still jaunt a mere five miles to downtown Waupaca, Wisconsin, where reference librarian Dominic Frandrup will fill me in on the latest book club book. Or children's librarian Sue Abrahamson will tell me about the new summer reading program theme. Or associate director Peg Burington and I will chat about the Patriot Act and the upcoming presidential election. Or one of my many clerk friends will ask if I've seen the newest, greatest DVD; listened to *Seabiscuit* on audio; or attended the latest Third Thursday program.

So though I haven't practiced as a librarian for a while, I'm now relishing being a patron again. And I'm proud to say, that from this side of the reference desk, I still never met a librarian I didn't like. And I'm also proud to say I'm one of you—if not in the daily grind, at least in spirit. ☺



Executive Director's Note

Welcome to Volume Two

Malore I. Brown

As we embark on our second volume year of *Children and Libraries*, we are pleased to feature interviews with noted children's author Tom Barron and author/illustrator Robert Sabuda in which they share with us their work and their craft. We bid fond farewell to Robert McCloskey, children's author and illustrator, and Bill Morris, HarperCollins Vice President of Marketing, who both touched our lives and the field of children's literature. We celebrate with the children at the Child's Place at Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library, a unique and inclusive environment for children with special needs. We extend our many thanks to the ALSC Great Web Sites Committee as they continually review Web sites for inclusion and reevaluate existing entries on the invaluable Great Web Sites for Kids pages. Happy reading. And as always, we welcome your submissions to your journal. ☺

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Library Service to Children

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Statement of Purpose

Children and Libraries is the official journal of ALSC, a division of the American Library Association. The journal primarily serves as a vehicle for continuing education of librarians working with children, which showcases current scholarly research and practice in library service to children and spotlights significant activities and programs of the Association. (From the journal's draft "Policies and Procedures" document to be adopted by the ALSC board.)

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Letters to the Editor

Letters Guidelines

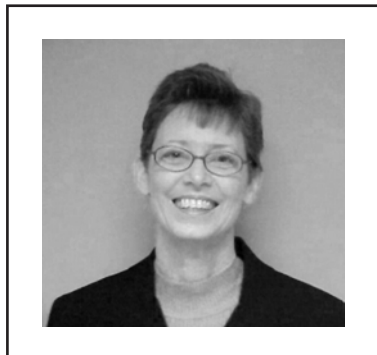
Children and Libraries welcomes readers to submit letters to the editor on topics of general interest to the profession or as comments on topics covered in our pages.

Letters should be no longer than 350 words and must be signed. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and space. Send letters to Editor Sharon Korbeck at toylady@athenet.net or via mail to E1569 Murray Lane, Waupaca, WI 54981.



Caldecott Committee Experience Offered Many Rewards

When I accepted a position on the 2003 Caldecott Committee, the task seemed fairly straightforward—read a lot of picture books and help choose the best one. While I did read a lot of picture books and did, in my opinion, help choose the best one, I also began more than a year of unexpected unique and rewarding experiences. Simply by being a member of such a prestigious committee, I quickly became viewed as an expert on picture books. I was able to share the beauty of this genre and the experience of committee work with a variety of audiences including preschoolers, college students, and colleagues. My enthusiasm led to a newfound confidence.



Barbara Brand

With the help of our library's community relations department, my own professional network, and a supportive library administration, I entered the world of public speaking and "semi-celebrity." And I was not alone.

I began sharing some of my favorite picture books with our library's monthly children's book discussion group. I offered adult programs at our library

branches featuring the best picture books of 2002. I spoke about the committee process and the award winners with college children's literature classes, our own and a neighboring public library's youth services staff, and our local school district's media specialists. I served as "celebrity guest" at a local bookstore for its yearly Caldecott storytime, and, of course, shared the winners at my own weekly library storytime.

Feature stories in local media offered exposure outside the world of children's books and libraries. Suddenly neighbors, library patrons, and family members realized that this was indeed a "special" assignment. I was also asked to write a column on choosing books for children in a local publication, offering me my first opportunity to be published!

Serving on the Caldecott Committee was not only a privilege; it has expanded my professional career. I have met and worked with librarians from all over the country, and we share our "post-Caldecott" experiences regularly. Our committee chair, Pat Scales, was a perfect teacher and leader. By attending the ALA conferences associated with our committee work, I was also able to take advantage

Kudos . . . and Confetti-Filled Thanks!

SHARON KORBECK, EDITOR
toylady@athenet.net

According to my Tomie dePaola 2004 calendar, the first week of May was National Hug Holiday Week. But even though this issue of *CAL* will reach you after that week, I want to send belated hugs, kudos, and confetti-filled thank-yous to some very important people.

Having just completed my first year as editor of *CAL*, I must thank the ALSC staff and board and the *CAL* Advisory Committee for putting me on the track to success. And I sincerely appreciate all the efforts of librarians nationwide who either authored articles for *CAL* or served as volunteer referees. Your input was essential to gearing up a fresh, vibrant look and style for our inaugural year. I especially thank those of you with specialized expertise who were willing to help, sometimes on short notice.

As always, I welcome your feedback, letters, stories, suggestions, constructive criticism, and, of course, chocolate chip cookies! I hope you enjoy our second year of *CAL*.

continued on page 4

Letters to the Editor

continued from page 3

of other youth services workshops and presentations and meet many children's authors, illustrators, editors, and publishers.

This was a phenomenal learning experience, teaching me about public speaking, networking, committee work, and professional commitment—my own and that of my library administration.

I urge anyone who has the opportunity to serve on an ALSC committee to take full advantage of all it has to offer. The year goes by quickly, but the rewards can last a lifetime.

*Barbara Brand
Johnson County Library, Blue Valley Branch
Shawnee Mission, Kansas*

Libraries Should Consider Partnerships with YMCA

The ALSC Liaison with National Organizations Serving Children and Youth Committee wants all ALSC members to know about some of the great organizations that focus on children. The YMCA has been serving children since its inception in London, England, in 1844. It was founded in the United States in 1851 with the opening of the Boston YMCA.

Today there are 2,400 YMCAs in America, serving more than 10,000 communities—a mere 17.9 million people—making it the largest nonprofit organization in the United States.




The YMCA motto is “We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities.” Each center is autonomous, providing the programs and resources needed in each community.

Check out the YMCA at www.ymca.com, where you can peruse the history, explore programs, find a local center, or seek information on the Strong Family Zone.

Like libraries, the YMCA is an integral part of many communities. Partnerships can be rewarding for both. In our community, we have a great relationship with our local Y. Our Pre-School/Day Care Services librarian was asked to take part in the search and interview process for the YMCA's new head of Pre-School Services. Trips to the library are a regular part of the Y program.

Small book collections are housed at the before- and after-school care sites. In Schaumburg Township, Illinois, we feel we are helping the YMCA build those strong kids, strong families, and a strong community.

*Roxy Ekstrom, member
ALSC Liaison with National Organizations
Serving Children and Youth Committee*


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All Kinds of Flowers Grow Here

The Child's Place for Children with Special Needs at Brooklyn Public Library

Carrie Banks



As Ilyana guides her wheelchair down the path, she waters the flowers in the garden. Ron, who is on the autism spectrum, compulsively counts the seeds before he hands them to a straight-A student at the local elementary school.

*Teen volunteer Marcia shocks her mother by announcing that she will cook dinner that night so she could have the pasta salad again. And Marie-Louise's mom and I reminisce about how her first-grader spoke her first three-word sentence in the garden five years before.**

These heart-rending anecdotes may be amazing, but they illustrate a fairly typical day at the Child's Place for Children with Special Needs, a project of the Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library.

When the Child's Place opened in 1987, it embodied the Brooklyn Public Library's philosophy of reaching out to and serving all citizens of Brooklyn. In the sixteen years since then, the service has expanded, both in the types of programming it offers and the number of libraries that offer it. We now have a center with a full-time staff person and five satellite sites with part-time staff coverage. The children who attend our programs have developmental, learning, physical, sensory, emotional, and/or multiple disabilities. The Child's Place uses Universal Design principles and Multiple Intelligences Theory to create inclusive programs for children with and without disabilities. In

*We have changed the children's names to protect their privacy.

2003, we served thirteen thousand children with and without disabilities in Brooklyn, and ten thousand of their parents, educators, caregivers, and other adults.

Beginnings

When the Child's Place began offering programs at the Flatlands branch in October 1987, 846 people were served the first year. In 1996, a second site opened at the Saratoga branch. By May 1999, we added our sixth library, Greenpoint, and in September began hospital storytelling with visits to three local hospitals. In addition to expanding geographically, we have increased services throughout the library system. As needs arise, we provide material for other branches, such as one that is next to a school with a vision education program. We supply both training and individual assistance to all children's and young adult service specialists. We are currently purchasing material to create small special-needs collections for adults and children in all of Brooklyn's fifty-eight libraries.

The Child's Place is grounded in the understanding that every child has the right to use the library and that every person deserves the chance to learn to read. We accept that literacy emerges over the course of a lifetime. Some people learn to read at four years of age, others at seventy. The program is based on the principles of Multiple Intelligences Theory and Universal Design. Multiple Intelligences Theory posits that people have seven different intelligences and seven corresponding learning

styles, which are separate from one another but function inter-dependently. These include linguistic, logical/mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily/kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.¹

At the Child's Place, we try to tap as many of these intelligences and learning styles as we can in each program. In a society that primarily values and tests only linguistic and logical/mathematical intelligences, we give children a chance to shine in other areas.

Universal Design, a concept developed from architectural design, generally refers to the design of products and environments so that everyone can use them without the need for adaptation.² Using these guidelines, the Child's Place can successfully accommodate a variety of children within any given program. We work with children with developmental, sensory, physical, learning, and behavioral disabilities as well as children with mental illness. The key to the project's success is to design every program with the flexibility to accommodate all children, rather than scrambling to adapt a program to the needs of a child with a particular disability.

Programs and Services

Drop-in programs are at the core of the Child's Place. We offer four types of programs on a regular basis. Except for "Weekend Stories," at least one site offers the programs in English, Spanish, or American Sign Language. "Weekend Stories" often have a bilingual component. "Read and Play" is a socialization and language stimulation program for children birth to age five. It begins with a circle time that includes reading aloud, singing songs, word play such as rhymes or clapping out rhythms, and a naming game that introduces the children to each other. After that, children play in a room full of toys, with staff facilitating the play and modeling appropriate language stimulation. The program also provides early literacy and parenting strategies for parents and caregivers. Attendance is limited to twelve children to maintain the quality of the program. Parents and caregivers are required to participate.

Children graduate from "Read and Play" to "After School Stories," which combines reading aloud, music, movement activities, and crafts to impart the theme of the program for children ages five to twelve. Stories are carefully chosen to be of interest to older children and those who function at age level as well as accessible to younger children and children who are functioning below age level. Each program contains a range of stories. We find that stories with a repetitive structure work par-

ticularly well for children on the autism spectrum and children with learning disabilities. Big books can help children with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), learning disabilities, or low vision focus on the story.

Songs can convey the program's theme particularly well to those in our audience with autism; developmental, visual, or learning disabilities; and musical learners in general. Arts and crafts can draw spatial learners into the stories while helping all children become narrators of their own stories.

Crafts include a tactile component so blind or visually impaired children can participate. Finger plays and movement activities pull in bodily/kinesthetic learners. Toys and other things that children can hold and manipulate, which represent illustrations, are given to the children to involve blind or visually impaired children as well as children with ADD, bodily/kinesthetic learners, and others.



Ilyana and friends prepare to cook.

An example of a themed program—for example, winter—might include Jan Brett's *The Mitten*, Ezra Jack Keats's *The Snowy Day*, and Lois Ehlert's *Where Animals Go in Winter*. Stuffed animals and puppets representing the animals in the stories are passed around before or during the stories. We might sing "Over the River and Through the Woods," and act out the making of a snowman. Finally, we would make a collage with white materials on black paper.

"Our Garden Club" (OGC) is a seasonal program modeled on "After School Stories," which includes a book and music component. When the weather permits, the program substitutes a gardening project for the craft and movement activities. OGC is our most fully developed program. It incorporates all learning styles, makes the most of multisensory learning, and is the only program that makes use of smell and taste on a regular basis. Interpersonal and intrapersonal learners can flourish in a garden. At our harvest festival after the events of September 11, 2001, one young girl commented, "I learned I have to look after my plants to keep bad things from happening to them." The experience offered her a sense of control in a suddenly unpredictable world. Gardening also levels the playing field for urban youth. Since few of them have ever gardened, children without disabilities have no advantage over the children with disabilities.

On Saturdays, we bring in outside performers for "Weekend Stories." They may be storytellers, dancers, puppeteers, musicians, or some combination. Many are bilingual in English and American Sign Language or Spanish. These performances are a chance for entire families to participate in library activities. A Cantonese-speaking father once told me that one of his two

daughters had mental retardation, and this was the first time he had ever taken them to the same program.

“Class Visits” and “Hospital Storytelling” are two of the Child’s Place’s collaborative prescheduled programs. “Class Visits” are arranged with special education schools and programs, early intervention programs, and therapeutic nurseries. Classes either come to the library or host Child’s Place staff in the school. Each visit includes an orientation to the library, including issuing library cards to the children, stories, songs, and movement activities. When classes visit the library, they get to play with the Child’s Place’s toys and to check out books. We prefer visits in the library, especially because many children with developmental and learning disabilities have difficulty with abstract concepts. Showing them the library is much more effective than describing it and, of course, leads to increases in circulation.

The “Class Visits” program is our most effective form of outreach. Each child goes home with a Child’s Place brochure and fact sheet, flyers for upcoming programs and, ideally, a library card. Shortly after we launched the program at the Greenpoint branch, a five-year-old with disabilities from a local therapeutic nursery came into the library literally pulling his mother by her shirt tails. He introduced his mother to the Child’s Place staff person, saying, “See, Mom, this is Susan. She is cool and has books. She talked to my class.” The family had never been to the library before.

In the “Hospital Storytelling” outreach program, we work with contractors who read to children in inpatient wards and outpatient clinics and distribute books for them to keep. Money for books is contributed by the national Reading Is Fundamental program. In addition to inpatient wards and nephrology clinics, we reach approximately four thousand children in HIV, developmental, neurobehavioral, early intervention, and well-child clinics.

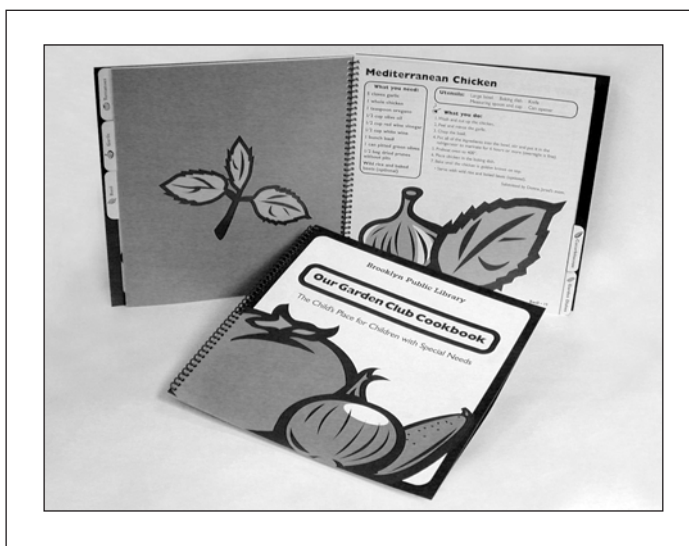
Hospital stays can be mind-numbing and boring. Providing programs and reading material contributes to the overall palliative care children receive. Being read to and reading themselves can distract them from pain and discomfort.

A regular patient at one of the clinics sometimes requests specific books from the hospital storyteller. At a clinic where children often have multiple tests, children will be pulled from the book-reading sessions for their appointments. They usually return, tears in their eyes, to hear the rest of the story before going to the next appointment.

And they always remember to get their books. A first-grader who lived at the inpatient ward of one city hospital for more than a year used to announce the arrival of our hospital storyteller by shouting, “The library book man is here, the library book man is here.”

Volunteer Internships

One of the volunteers at the publication party for the *Our Garden Club Cookbook* was one of our Young Adult Leaders, students thirteen or older who participate in our internships. The New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council funded this project in its pilot year. Then we enlisted pairs of teens with and without disabilities to help with the younger children. They became role models for other children in the community.



Our Garden Club Cookbook

Volunteers can contribute in ways other than working with the younger children, such as stuffing envelopes and working in the garden. We have had interns with Asperger’s Syndrome, Down Syndrome, learning disabilities, cerebral palsy, mental illness, and many other disabilities.

Volunteering has had a significant impact on many of our interns. One student with a developmental disability got a job at Barnes and Noble. More than once, volunteers with

disabilities and volunteers without disabilities have become friends, hanging out at the library together, going to the mall, and driving their parents crazy by staying on the phone for hours. We could not ask for better outcomes.

Parent/Caregiver and Educator Resources

Part of our mission as a library is to provide information and referral for our customers. We accomplish this through our collections and parenting workshops. Our center at the Flatlands Library has a five-thousand-volume collection on exceptional parenting; more than forty periodicals and newsletters; a large vertical file of pamphlets, fact sheets, and current articles; and a separate collection for and about children with disabilities. Each satellite site has a smaller collection that targets known needs in the community.

Materials are available in print, large print, video, audio, and Braille formats as well as in English, Spanish, Chinese, Hmong, Haitian Creole, French, Russian, Vietnamese, Lakota Sioux, and other languages. Families, educators, students, speech therapists, and many others use our collections. We collect materials

Universal Design for Universal Access: A Bibliography

Thomas Armstrong, *Seven Kinds of Smart: Identifying and Developing Your Many Intelligences* (New York: Penguin, 1993).

Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies, "Library Services for People with Disabilities Policy" (Chicago: ALA, 2001).

Sandra Feinberg, Barbara Jordan, Kathleen Deerr, and Michelle Langa, *Including Families of Children with Special Needs: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians* (New York: Neal-Schuman, 1999).

Least Restrictive Environment Coalition, "Still Waiting After All These Years . . . Inclusion of Children with Special Needs in New York City Public Schools" (New York: LRE Coalition, 2001).

Public Libraries 42 no. 1 ("Serving People with Disabilities" issue), Jan./Feb. 2003.

Linda Lucas Walling and Marilyn M. Irwin (eds.), *Information Services for People with Developmental Disabilities: The Library Manager's Handbook* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1995).

Linda Lucas Walling and Marilyn H. Karrenbrock, *Disabilities, Children, and Libraries: Mainstreaming Services in Public Libraries and School Library Media Centers* (Englewood, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1993).

on all aspects of raising children with special needs, focusing on education, advocacy, health care, psychological development, and disability-specific issues. We also have memoirs, biographies, and autobiographies of people with disabilities.

The collection for and about children with special needs is unique. We buy fiction and nonfiction, print, large print, and nonprint formats. Our Twin Vision books (books in print and Braille) with textural illustrations are popular among sighted parents of blind children as well as blind parents of sighted children. The nonfiction juvenile material covers many types of disabilities for all age groups, finding an audience with siblings, cousins, and friends of children with disabilities, students in integrated classrooms, and other students with relevant homework assignments. The fiction includes titles with significant characters with disabilities. It is important for children with disabilities to see characters who reflect themselves and characters whom they can identify with.

The Child's Place hosts many parenting workshops each year. Our standard series of six workshops, which runs from fall through winter, covers educational advocacy, community

resources, and transition planning. Each year we supplement those with additional workshops on specific topics. We have sponsored workshops on asthma management, sickle cell anemia awareness, and child development, among other topics. We also provide off-site workshops on reading aloud to PTA, parent support groups, and other agencies.

Partnerships

Partnerships, both traditional and nontraditional, make the Child's Place work. Our most consistent and closest traditional partners over the years have been special education public schools and museums. In New York City, most special education students attend self-contained classrooms or schools, comprised solely of special education students. Historically, these students often have not been regular library users.

Our goal is to ensure that each student has a library card by the time he or she graduates and that each student has been to a library at least twice. We have long-standing partnerships with several schools, including two that educate children with profound and multiple disabilities, and a Helen Keller program for blind children and children with profound and multiple disabilities.

We visit each class from these schools twice in a school year and offer library cards to all students. I have spoken at graduations for two of these schools and trained staff at all three. We support one another's grants, collaborate on writing grants, and recruit volunteers from these schools.

At one school, I worked with the principal and a teacher to establish a grant-funded school library media center. The library is a model of adaptive and alternate formats; I send my staff there as I believe it is a "best practices" site. In 2002, the library teacher and I spoke at the New York State Library Association on Inclusive School Library Media Centers. To the best of our knowledge, it is the only school library in a self-contained special education school in the city.

In addition to these close partnerships, we work with eight of the eighteen special education programs throughout Brooklyn and with special education students in community schools and inclusion or integrated classes. In 2003, we worked with 28 programs and schools and met with 5,105 students.

We struggle frequently to get the students into the library. Special educators are often reluctant to let students out of the building; this hesitancy has increased since September 11, 2001. Visiting a class in a school does not provide children with the same depth of experience as visiting the library. Cutbacks in library hours have compounded the problem.

Traditional partnerships with museums have taken nontraditional directions. I have provided training in inclusive recreation (recreation for children with and without disabilities) for an art museum and for a consortium of cultural institutions that includes several museums, a botanic garden, and two zoos. Staff

from the Brooklyn Children's Museum have accompanied us to group homes and residential psychiatric facilities to conduct joint programs.

For example, a museum educator brought a traveling exhibit of body ornamentation from around the world to a residential pediatric psychiatric facility. The library staff read stories about hairstyles. Together, we made crowns without using sharp objects. This joint program resulted in ongoing visits by the museum to the facility.

In another instance, we worked with a nautical museum in Manhattan to get schooner trips for children in two group homes. As part of that partnership, our hospital storytellers read nautical stories at the group homes, and the next month the children visited the museum and took a schooner ride. These partnerships have demonstrated the importance and relevance of books to children who have often not had access to them.

Nontraditional library partners have included the Brooklyn Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities Council (BMR/DDC), eleven of Brooklyn's eighteen hospitals, a parent advocacy group, and many others. I attend the monthly meeting of the BMR/DDC and was a founding member of its children's issues committee. The library is the only community agency regularly represented at council meetings. Six years ago, our attendance was a curiosity. Now, we are an accepted part of the council.

In 2003, we held our first children's resource fair at a neighborhood library. I have prepared bibliographies for the council that have gone out with the minutes to the fifty to seventy-five people who attend the monthly meetings, all representing agencies. I have organized presentations for meetings on topics such as inclusive recreation in Brooklyn. The council has made referrals to our program, helped us recruit volunteers, and established new Hospital Storytelling sites.

In 2003, the council cited us as a "best practices program," the first time a nonprovider agency was so cited.

Our Garden Club is largely the result of an ongoing partnership with the Brooklyn Botanic Garden (BBG), which, along with providing expertise and materials on an ongoing basis, completely renovated our main garden at the Flatlands branch. This small sensory garden is fully ADA-compliant, has planting beds at five

different heights, and movable planting boxes that can be brought inside or placed at different heights (see the cover of this issue). Sight, texture, smell, sound, and taste all play an equal role in plant selection. The garden club now stands as a national model of accessible gardening in small, urban spaces. The Child's Place was a founding member of BBG's Horticultural Therapy Round Table.

Funding

While the Brooklyn Public Library system is primarily funded by the city of New York, TCPSN is entirely grant-funded, primarily through the New York State Department of Education, Division of Library Services. This outreach grant has been renewed for the last sixteen years. Grant money from the state funded parent and child literacy and helped establish the Hospital Storytelling project.

The State's Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, which funnels federal money for pilot projects in the developmental disabilities field, has also supported the Child's Place. They funded the pilot for the Young Adult Leaders program and the expansion of Our Garden Club from one to three locations. Ongoing money is provided by a series of private funds and a small endowment.

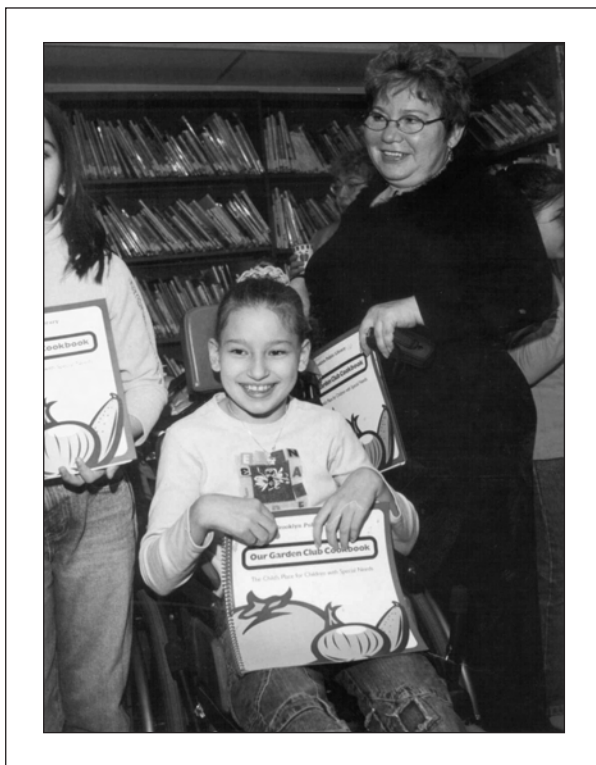
While it is relatively easy to find philanthropists willing to finance pilot projects and one-time initiatives, raising general operating expenses is more challenging. Fortunately, we have two foundations that consistently fund the latter.

Evaluation

The Child's Place has been evaluated twice. In the fall of 1998, when we were only two branches, DLE Associates observed the program, and surveyed the parents, children, and staff, assessing satisfaction. Parents and caregivers, children, teachers, and staff were all invited to participate.

The encouraging results demonstrated the value of the program. Ninety percent of children with special needs interacted with typically developing children. Ninety-seven percent of the parents found the staff and environment supportive. All of the adults who used the parenting collection were pleased with it, but only 55 percent of those questioned had used it.

Many parents told the evaluators they brought their children to the Child's Place programs because it was the only place they



Children, families, and staff all contributed to the *Our Garden Club Cookbook*.

could find age-appropriate playmates for their children. Several parents commented that the location of the program was inconvenient.

These findings helped us expand the program into four additional libraries, focus on outreach for the collection, and expand the collection into the new sites.

Outside evaluator LPResearch conducted two focus groups in spring 2001, consisting of parents of children with special needs involved in the program and others not involved in the program.

While the parents overwhelmingly viewed the Child's Place positively, they had specific comments on the content, structure, and timing of the programs and the format of flyers and communication methods. Based on their recommendations, we restructured Our Garden Club, changed the time, published a parents' manual, and reinforced staff training. We also paid more attention to alternative and assistive communication issues, such as incorporating pictorial communication systems into some programs. As a direct result, we increased the number of staff who use sign language.

The Brooklyn Public Library routinely evaluates its staff training. The most recent training for children's services specialists was held in spring 2003. One person commented that the training "made me more aware of my own behavior." Another stated, "I feel more competent to interact with adults and children with disabilities."

New Directions

Hospital Storytelling is beginning to integrate volunteer "reading troubadours" who will work in teams in the outpatient clinics. Largely due to this shift to volunteers, we have been steadily increasing the number of hospitals and clinics we visit. Budget cuts that resulted in our closing to the public on Mondays have placed more staff in the field visiting schools. While these visits are not of the same quality as the in-library visits, they are a nice introduction to children and increase the number of classes we visit in a given period.

We have sought to create a fourth model of service to children with disabilities. Traditionally, libraries either have a separate service for people with disabilities, make accommodations at the local level, without any particular focus, or provide outreach.³ We combine all three models to provide consistent, appropriate service. The Child's Place is the center of our service to children with disabilities. They are also served at neighborhood libraries and outreach is constant.

We maintain collections at our six sites but also at other sites as needed. For example, two libraries near vision education pro-

grams have large print and Braille collections. I work with the Office of Material Selections to ensure that some books are purchased throughout the system. We recently received a matching grant to establish small exceptional-parenting collections in each of the fifty-three Brooklyn Public Library branches. We offer regular programs at two additional sites and will soon start offering our first programs on a Sunday at a third site to accommodate Brooklyn's many Orthodox Jews. We have offered occasional programs at many other branches.

Future initiatives include working more closely with the Brooklyn Botanic Garden to incorporate more formal horticultural therapy techniques into Our Garden Club, developing simple multisensory reading kits that might include a book and a related toy, and using the bookmobile to reach more children.

Children with disabilities are often isolated from peers without disabilities. They go to separate schools or segregated classrooms within community schools. Out-of-school time is often spent at doctors' offices, at additional therapies, or in segregated after-school programs.

What Brooklyn Public Library offers is unique—the chance to be a child like any other child. We grow all kinds of flowers in our gardens.

Carrie Banks has been working with children with special needs since she was in high school, when she tutored a kindergartener with learning disabilities and interned in a pediatric psychiatric care facility. During her pursuit of her bachelor's degree in developmental psychology, she worked as a teacher's assistant with fifth- and sixth-graders with learning disabilities. While working as a children's librarian at the New York Public Library, she attained her M.L.S. After receiving requests for programs from deaf library users, Banks became interested in American Sign Language. She has been in charge of the Child's Place at Brooklyn Public Library since 1997.

References and Notes

1. See Thomas Armstrong, *Seven Kinds of Smart: Identifying and Developing Your Many Intelligences* (New York: Penguin, 1993), 9–12.
2. See www.design.ncsu.edu for Universal Design in Architecture, and www.cast.org for Universal Design in Learning. See also the TRACE Research and Development Center at <http://trace.wisc.edu/world>.
3. Linda Lucas Walling and Marilyn H. Irwin, *Information Services for People with Developmental Disabilities: The Library Manager's Handbook* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1995), 135.

All photos by Jerry Speier, courtesy of the Child's Place for Children with Special Needs.

Professional Development with a Youth Services Focus

Association for Library Service to Children
2004 National Institute
September 30–October 2, 2004
Hilton Minneapolis, Minneapolis, MN

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2004 Newbery Medal author of
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Association for Library Service to Children

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Thursday, September 30
registration required

Understanding Poverty:
An Overview as it Relates
to Library Service to
Children, their Parents
and Caregivers

All-Day Program Tracks

Friday, October 1

Middle School Readers—
"The Topsy-Turvy
Tween Years"

Outcome Based
Evaluation—
"The ABC's of OBE"

Building Design for
Youth Services—
"Form, Flexibility,
and Function"

Half-Day Workshops

Saturday, October 2

Book Evaluation and
Discussion—with
Capitol Choices™

Every Child Ready
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The PLA/ALSC Early
Literacy Initiative

Make Way for Dendrites

How Brain Research Can Impact Children's Programming

Betsy Diamant-Cohen, Ellen Riordan, and Regina Wade

"Among the overwhelming number of neuroscience facts lies a portal through which we might find a way to enhance the gift of education for every child. A vital collaboration between educators and neuroscientists is the way to get there."—Kenneth S. Kosik, Professor of Neurology, Harvard Medical School

In the last decade, the field of cognitive neuroscience, which focuses on how the different areas of the brain receive, process, retain, and retrieve information, has evolved. Developments in computer science allow computers to model how brain processes work, and the ability to scan the brain through functional MRIs has given cognitive neuroscientists a clearer picture of our brains and the significance of varied brain functions that affect learning, memory, emotion, and sensory perception. Libraries are positioned to play an important role in modeling optimal learning environments based on this new understanding of brain function.

Educators have been exploring the implementation of brain research for the classroom since 1995. Experience changes the way the brain functions. The more positive experiences children have, the more likely they will acquire knowledge and learn. Libraries can benefit from this proven research because it is primary to the mission of libraries. Literally illustrated by the technology available to cognitive neuroscientists, the results become a powerful rationale for public support of public libraries.

As children's services librarians, we believe that it is also important for librarians to be aware of the new information and to plan services for children accordingly. By applying what we already know with the most recent findings in the field of brain research, we have developed a formula for children's programming in public libraries that will help create optimal learning environments. Some of these ideas have been part of children's programming in public libraries for decades, but now through research we have the

scientific evidence to support their implementation. These basic concepts are *creating environment, using repetition and ritual, including movement in literary experiences, working in a group, and building positive personal connections between children and librarians.*

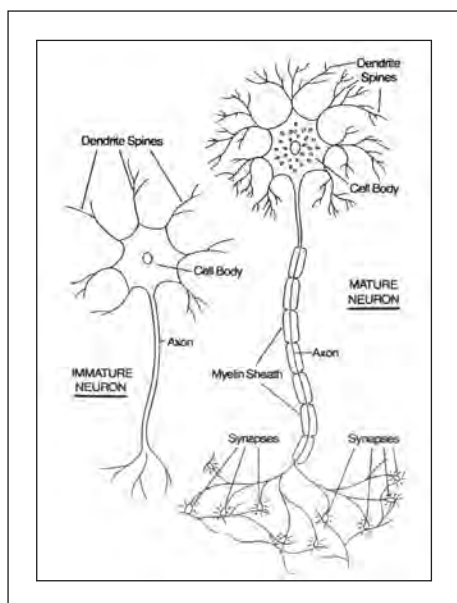
Background

The state of Maryland has created a supportive and progressive library environment promoting emergent literacy.¹ One of the critical pieces is providing support to staff who wish to explore topics related to but outside of their own professional organization. The Enoch Pratt Free Library Children's Programming Specialist, Children's Services Coordinator, and Assistant Children's Services Coordinator are all involved with programming for very young children and have attended professional conferences in related fields such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children and Zero to Three. The most recent conference was the Learning and the Brain Conference.² What the authors discovered was exciting new evidence that the basic tenets of library service to children and program planning actually affect brain function in a positive, lasting way.

Experience affects the brain and can change the way in which the brain functions. Environment, repetition, ritual, movement, and personal connection shape experience. Therefore what public librarians do in relation to these critical aspects of children's library service will impact the effectiveness of their customers' brain function and the learning process.

Creating Environment

As early as 1905, Frances Jenkins Olcott, head of the children's department of Pittsburgh's Carnegie Library, described the ideal children's room as one that was "beautifully proportioned and decorated, and presided over by a genial and sympathetic woman who has a genuine interest in



The Developing Neuron:
Where Learning Begins

Source: Jane M. Healy, *Your Child's Growing Mind*, 1987

the personalities and the preferences of the boys and girls.”³ Recent research on emotions shows that a safe, welcoming, and nurturing environment is important in terms of how the brain develops and how children learn. If library experiences are pleasurable, children will remember and learn from them.

Words and songs used in a supportive, friendly environment are easier for children to integrate and remember. Most children's librarians naturally like to welcome classes with a cheerful hello and to say something positive at the end such as, “Goodbye, I hope you come back soon.” Brain research provides scientific evidence that being warm and welcoming helps the child's brain grow in a positive way. Before providing books, helping with homework, or running programs, the main job of the children's librarian should simply be to welcome children and their caregivers in a genuinely enthusiastic and warm way.

Neurobiologist Carla Hannaford said, “Most neural pathways develop through stimulation and multisensory experience gained from interaction with the environment.”⁴ However, timing is critical. Some abilities are acquired more easily during windows of opportunity. The brain develops certain portions of itself during specific periods. From birth through the first eight months of life, the brain is busy cre-

ating specific potential receptors for certain kinds of stimuli. When the environment provides the specific information, the brain is now wired to accept the data, to integrate it, and to make connections among other brain cells. This creates efficient neural pathways in which learning occurs.

Whether or not a child grows up in an enriched or an impoverished environment determines how easily he or she will be able to learn and retain information in his or her brain later on. For example, if a child is born with cataracts, which prevent the receiving of optical stimuli by the brain, and the cataracts are removed early enough, the child's brain will be able to process optical information, allowing the child to see. However, if the cataracts are not removed until after the window of opportunity for vision integration in the brain is closed, even though the physical impediments to clear vision have been removed, the child will remain functionally blind because the neural pathways, which interpret sight from the optic nerve, have not been created.

Thus, even if a child is living in an impoverished neighborhood in an “at-risk environment,” regular visits to the public library and participation in library programs will provide the very young child with the type of enriched environment needed in order to make learning easier later on in life.

What is an optimal learning environment? “An *enriched* environment offers an experience that cultivates our potentialities for learning and well-being through the mind, body, and spirit.”⁵ Medical science supports that “brain and environment are so continuously and inextricably intertwined that they are inseparable.”⁶ Neuroanatomist Marian Diamond conducted studies proving that sensory-enriched environments are imperative to learning. Laboratory animals developed structural changes in the brain when put in enriched environments, thus demonstrating that environment has the power to improve intelligence. Responses of the human brain to enriched environments include improvements in emotional stability, emotional adaptation, immune systems, stress management, behavior, memory

and learning, and life extension. The public library can provide such an enriched environment through providing colorful children's rooms with child-sized furniture, exposure to art via posters, pictures, and book illustration, the use of music and musical instruments, and nurturing librarians.

Using Art in Library Programs

The brain changes physiologically because of experience. A healthy developing brain springs from genetic inheritance and environmental experience that feed off each other in a systemic way. The environment affects how the genes work, and the genes affect how the environment is interpreted. Color is an important part of the environment. Using picture books during programs with children helps to shape their brains into healthy organs. A picture-book story does not have to be read in order to create positive interactions with the pictures. Very young children do not have the attention spans to hear most picture-book stories. However, creating art-based activities such as singing a song about animal sounds while showing animals from Eric Carle's *The Very Busy Spider* helps to create healthy brains in youngsters.

Music and art develop the brain and enhance learning across all disciplines. However, in some areas, school boards have cut funding for the arts, maintaining that it is more beneficial scholastically to focus on reading, writing, and arithmetic. As librarians, we can make it a point to include art and music in programs.

Many of us have heard the argument of nature versus nurture. Often public librarians serve children from print-poor environments. We can help enrich the minds of these children. Scientific evidence proves that children from socially impoverished backgrounds will benefit through experiences with art in picture books, music, and group activities run in the nurturing atmosphere of the public library.

The fruits of repetition and the value of exposure to picture-book illustrations were recently observed by Regina. A few months ago, she began presenting

“Both of my children have long attention spans and I think it’s because of being involved in library programs that have a beginning, middle, and an end. They know what to do.”

—Kim, mother of Noah and Eli

Mother Goose on the Loose programs for the three-year-olds at the Canton Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. Here is her account of what occurred:

For the last five weeks, my program included “You are My Sunshine,” “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star,” and “Oh Mister Moon,” leading up to reading Eric Carle’s *Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me*. The children love this book, with its warm story of wishes granted by an attentive father, and the moveable illustrations such as papa carrying a looooong ladder to reach the moon. Children love the repeated reading of this book.

Last Tuesday, we did not read *Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me*. Lying on a bench at child tummy height, left over from an earlier toddler class were some display books, including Eric Carle’s *The Very Busy Spider*. As the other children were putting on sweaters and raincoats and lining up to exit the room, Zachary came over to the bench, opened the book, traced the “wooden” frame around the spider web with his finger, and said musingly, “Papa, please get the moon for me.”

I had just observed three-year-old Zachary making the cognitive leap of identifying the style of an illustrator (the colorful collage technique of Eric Carle) and associating the page in *The Very Busy Spider* with the

remembered illustrations from *Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me*. It felt like such a privilege for me to be observing that moment.

Using Repetition and Ritual

How many librarians run storytime series where they work hard to plan six totally different sessions with new books, finger plays, and songs each session? Relax a bit! Studies in the way the brain absorbs information show that repetition increases children’s enjoyment, helps them feel safe, and enables them to better retain the information absorbed. So make sure there is plenty of repetition in your programs.

Jerome Kagan asserts that learning is enhanced by the element of a known thing changing patterns or routines.⁷ The element of surprise in something known enhances the ability to retain and understand. If something is simply repeated the exact same way numerous times, it will become boring and the child will often tune out. Therefore, repetition does not mean rote, and librarians should not be doing the same thing in the same way week after week.

Repeat Finger Plays from One Session to the Next

Rather than finding new finger plays and songs for each storytelling session, repeat at least two or three of them from week to week. Children will recognize them and will learn all of the words. When new finger plays are used in each session, retention rate is not very high. Studies have shown that memorized material that is not consistently reinforced will quickly be forgotten. Real learning takes place when there is repetition even beyond the point of mastery, so that the information can be retained in the long-term memory.

Betsy always starts her preschool programs with “Alligator, Alligator,” a rhyme she learned twenty years ago in New Jersey. She recently traveled on our Book Buggy, presenting preschool storytimes at Head Start centers throughout Baltimore City. She began each session by asking the children to put their hands together to make an alligator’s mouth. One of her last stops was the Jonestown Daycare Center, which had attended her library programs

on a monthly basis in 2000 and 2001. The old director was gone, the children from then had all graduated, and most of the teachers were new.

At an assembly for the entire daycare center, however, as soon as Betsy began instructions for “Alligator, Alligator,” all of the children cupped their hands together and began reciting the rhyme. How surprised and pleased she was when the children chimed right in. Obviously, the repetition had made an impact; the current staff had learned the rhyme from previous and continuing staff who had learned it over two years ago from Betsy’s programs. What a delight it was for her to see them carrying on her alligator tradition!

Repeat Books from One Session to the Next

Choose your favorite book in a program, and think of variations in which it can be presented in the following session. For example, read the book in the first session. Act it out with the children in the second session. Play a game with that story in the third session. Use a flannel board to tell the story in the fourth session. Children will not tire of the story; they will grow to love it as an old friend. You will stimulate their multiple intelligences by letting them experience the book on many different levels. The more ways in which children can sense new information, the more likely the information is to be learned and retrieved efficiently and accurately. Libraries provide an essential link to the learning process by providing additional sensory information of critical literacy skills.

Ritual gives structure to the mind. It is, according to *Webster’s* dictionary, “a practice of symbolic significance regularly repeated in a set manner.” In the library world, ritual can be the greeting and ending activities of a program. If these remain constant, the child will learn to identify the library as a place of constancy, safety, and familiarity.

Start and End with the Same Rhyme

Each week, start with the same rhyme and end with the same rhyme. This will give the children a reassuring structure. They will recognize when the program is beginning and when it is over, and will

recognize it within the defining rhymes. Each of the storytelling sessions will be connected in the child's brain because of the structural repetition. By the end of the series, participating children will know all of the words to the rhyme (or both rhymes if you use a different one for starting and stopping) and will most likely have that rhyme ingrained in their long-term memory.

Use Variety in Programs and Provide Positive Reinforcement

It has been proven that there are many different learning styles. Instead of just visual and auditory learning, include kinesthetic activities. Children will remember better if they use actions with real objects; they can remember better if they are physically involved. Memory increases if a topic is something that is personal or relevant to them and provides some type of good feeling. In Enoch Pratt Free Library's award-winning Mother Goose on the Loose program for babies and toddlers, children are asked to do something physical, such as throw a pig puppet up in the air, tap on a tambourine, or pull Humpty Dumpty off of his wall on the flannel board. Parents are asked to applaud when the child does any of the above activities, thus providing immediate positive reinforcement. Babies as young as two-and-a-half months old who are brought up to the flannel board with their caregiver reach out their hands to pull Humpty off of his wall. They connect

the visual object with the physical motion each time. They look forward to the ritual and enjoy repeated recognition for a job well done.

Librarians can see responses even in very young babies when positive reinforcement is present. By creating this environment of positive feedback through rituals and repetition, librarians are also modeling nurturing behavior patterns for parents.

Movement and Literary Experiences

Carla Hannaford documents the research of many experts on the benefits of incorporating movement into all learning experiences.⁸ From the start, babies explore the world by moving. Eyes follow objects and faces and voices. Babies move their eyes to follow the movements of their hands and feet. They explore space, balance, and the effects of gravity by moving. Through movement, they constantly develop more and more control of their bodies in space and in relationship to still and moving objects in their environment. The tongue and mouth move to speak, hands and arms move coordinated with the eyes to draw and write, the entire body moves while telling the story of an incident that has been personally experienced. Older children are very active, constantly moving to explore the world around them. However, school-age children are often restricted as they work and study. This is contrary to research suggestions that movement is a necessary component of all learning.⁹

Movement is an important way of cementing knowledge in the brain. At the Learning and the Brain Conference, Jeb Schenck cited research proving that movement creates physiological changes in attention; in one study, 45 percent of

material was retained when learned by listening, 43 percent by imagining, and 65 percent after performing.¹⁰ When a concept or a song is learned, if movement accompanies it, it will be absorbed more easily and integrated into the brain. Schenck's studies have also shown that movement creating an accelerated heart rate appears to correlate with increased attention level.

Greater attention correlates with greater memory performance. For young children, acting out a story in a vigorous way will result in longer retention of the

sounds, words, patterns, storyline, and story structure than simply listening to a book being read. For school-age children, movement focuses attention and integrates and anchors new experiences within the memory. Movement reduces stress by removing chemical blocks to learning. Coordinated, balanced movements create a sense of pleasure activating the limbic system and cre-

ating an emotional tone in which memory works more efficiently. Movement also wakes up the senses increasing sensory information received by the brain.

The lymph system, blood, and liquids are constantly in action inside the human body. Neuropsychologist James Prescott conducted studies at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development proving that certain kinds of brain stimulation lead to an increase of dendritic connections and other types of brain growth, while the lack of movement leads to actual physiological deterioration of brain neurons.¹¹ In addition, movement increases levels of serotonin, which is a neurotransmitter that gives people a sense of well-being.

Moving the body activates the brain by increasing oxygen flow to brain cells. It affects the flow of spinal fluid to the brain



"I think it's just great for kids who don't go to daycare and don't have that social interaction with other children. They get to see kids of like ages learning at the same pace, learning the same thing, at the same time. It's excellent."

—Mary, mother of Kennedy

At the *Learning and the Brain Conference VIII*, the authors attended the following sessions:

Welcome address by Kenneth S. Kosik, M.D., Professor of Neurology and Neuroscience, Director, Kosik Laboratory of Cellular Neurobiology, Harvard Medical School

A Sense of Self in Children, Thomas Cottle, PhD

Brain/Body Connection: Creating Enriched Learning Environments, Susan Frey, PhD, ND, RN, LMT

Creating Optimal Learners, Gessner Geyer, MA, EdM

Connecting Mind and Music to Enhance Learning, Todd Machover, PhD

Emotional Experiences and Emotional Intelligence, Lisa Barrett, PhD

How Art Affects the Brain, Margaret Livingstone, PhD

How Memory Works and Ways to Improve It, Philip De Fina, PhD, ABPdN, ABSNP

How Mental Images Can Change Child Behavior, Robert Greenleaf, EdD

How Surprise/Uncertainty Shape Emotion and Behavior, Jerome Kagan, PhD

Introduction to Brain Anatomy, Jane Williams, RN, MA

Mind/Body Medical Institute (MBMI) Relaxation Response: How Stress Reduction Can Improve Memory, Performance and Behavior, Herbert Benson, MD, and Marilyn Wilcher, Sr. VP, MBMI

Movement and Decision-Making in Memory, Jeb Schenck, PhD

Neurology of Learning: Practical Classroom Applications of Cortical (Brain) Timing, Neal Alpiner, MD

Styles, Brain Research and Multiple Intelligence, Harvey Silver, EdD

The Value of Arts in Education, Jessica H. Davis, EdD

Using Brain Research to Leave No Child Behind, Gerald N. Tirozzi, PhD

Using Exercise, Movement and the Arts in the Classroom, Roberta Pasternack, EdM

Why Exercise and Movement Are Critical to Learning, John Ratey, MD

body activities such as “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes,” or smaller movements such as finger plays like “Two Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed.” Programs for older children could include poems or songs in sign language, with motions or even stretches. The more natural, joyful movement incorporated into library programming for children, the more learning will take place, whether it is learning to enjoy a story, remember a poem, or creating memories of the library as a wonderful part of life.

Brain Gym

“Brain Gym” is a series of simple and enjoyable movements that can enhance children’s experiences of whole-brain learning. Developed by Paul E. Dennison and Gail E. Dennison, founders of Edu-Kinesthetics in Ventura, California, the activities can easily be incorporated as stretches in programs or post-program activities. These simple exercises actually stimulate certain portions of the brain, thus making learning easier. They empower learners of any age by using movement activities to draw out hidden potential and make it readily available. For example, one exercise is called “Foot Flex.”¹³ It involves grasping the ankle, calf, and under the knee one at a time while slowly pointing and flexing the foot. It helps to restore the natural length of tendons in the feet and lower legs. It also activates the brain in the areas of expressive speech and language skills.

This particular exercise is related to brain function due to a connection between the calf muscles and the brain. Before beginning, the calf muscles are usually very tight. After performing this exercise, accumulated tension in the calf muscles and tendons is released. There is a direct correlation between the relaxation of those tendons and an increase in the ability to pay attention, listen, learn, and respond orally. This correlation was discovered when Dennison was working with speech-delayed hyperactive children. One result was that children who had not formerly been comfortable with speech began to talk!

Librarians could incorporate this activity into programs, explaining its value and

and stimulates the production of neurotrophins, which stimulate the growth of nerve cells and neural connections. Until recently, it was believed that brain cells could not regenerate, and the older one got, the less one could learn and retain. However, recent studies have shown that aerobic exercise helps brain cells to regenerate. When people exercise and move, they make more of a demand on their bodies and the brain responds by making more pathways. The brain can actually regenerate neurons but only in the hippocampus, the sensing part of the brain that takes in information.

John Ratey states that angiogenesis, the growth of new capillaries from pre-existing vessels, is a natural consequence of

heightened physical activity and the associated increase in neural activity, and can be induced by exposure to a complex environment and/or aerobic exercise.¹² In a fascinating slide show at the Learning and the Brain Conference, viewers were shown brain cells filled with fluorescent dye. One hour after aerobic exercise, the same brain cells were shown again. This time, they were sprouting new dendritic spines to connect to neighboring nerve cells! These slides clearly proved that exercise promotes structural changes leading to regeneration of brain cells.

Since exercise increases blood flow to the heart and brain, some type of movement should always be included in programming for children. This can include whole

purpose to school-age children. Perhaps they could then be encouraged to use this exercise in school before taking an English exam. Or, the exercise could simply be performed before a nonfiction-type program to help children be better listeners and to enable them to better retain facts.

Mother Goose on the Loose

In Baltimore, there are more than 46,000 children under the age of four.¹⁴ More than 60 percent of children have mothers in the work force.¹⁵ Almost 15 percent of Baltimore City children live in poverty.¹⁶ In addition, fewer than 20 percent of children in third grade read at grade level or better. In 1998, the Enoch Pratt Free Library joined the statewide effort to increase the number of children who enter school ready to learn by providing high quality programming that fostered emergent literacy skills in children under the age of two.¹⁷

Mother Goose on the Loose is an interactive nursery rhyme program for parents and their children from infancy to age three. Developmentally appropriate activities are incorporated into nursery rhymes with music, games, and puppets, encouraging emergent literacy.¹⁸ Since 1999, this program has been addressing the pressing needs of Baltimore's birth-to-four community weekly at the Enoch Pratt Free Library. In November 2002, Enoch Pratt Free Library's Mother Goose on the Loose was recognized as an outstanding program with a comprehensive set of library goals relating to children's services.¹⁹

The Mother Goose on the Loose program is book-based but is not a storytime. The program was created with the attention span of babies in mind; it provides activities that complement the recent findings in cognitive neuroscience. It evolved from a free-flowing library nursery rhyme program into a thirty-minute structured program based on the learning theories of the Canadian educator, Barbara Cass-Beggs. Cass-Beggs, a retired Canadian opera singer, had developed a program called "Your Baby/Child Needs Music," which used her "Listen, Like, Learn" method.

The main ideas behind "Listen, Like, Learn" for very young children is that first, children need simply to listen. From listening, they become familiar with the works of music. And once the music is something they recognize, they start to like it—because it's already familiar. Once they like it, their minds are open to learn concepts related to the music such as high and low, fast and slow, tones, notes, and rhythms. In addition, Cass-Beggs felt that security and stability, curiosity, feelings and emotions, imitation, and variety were essential parts of her program. The environment of "Listen, Like, Learn" programs was one full of optimal learning conditions.

Betsy studied with Cass-Beggs in 1988. She integrated the "Listen, Like, Learn" theories into a babies and books program and chose "Mother Goose on the Loose" as the name.

Mother Goose on the Loose programs are now offered on a weekly basis throughout the library system, and training workshops have been held in library systems throughout the state of Maryland and in Texas.

How It Works

In this thirty-minute program, the librarian leads parents to interact with their children through rhymes, songs, finger plays, movement, manipulation of common objects, music and musical instruments, puppets, and colored scarves. There is a structure to follow, but within the structure there is room for variation and creativity. All Mother Goose on the Loose leaders contribute their own unique talents and personality. For example, the same program can vary widely with successful results if the leader is energetic or moves at a slow pace. Each week, 80 percent of the program's content is repeated, giving very young children the sense of stability that comes from knowing what to expect. The 20 percent of new activities introduced each week keeps the program fresh and exciting.

Parents sit in a semi-circle around the flannel board with their children on their lap. The librarian announces that children this age are not expected to sit perfectly still, giving them permission to

Optimal Learning

Environment = accepting

Movement = essential

Hands-on = experience

Personal = application

Meaning = ultimate goal

make noise, get up, or wander around as long as they do not block the flannel board or remove props. Parents are asked to remove children from the program if they are disruptive but are encouraged to bring them back whenever they are ready to try again, even if it is in the middle of the session. This creates an atmosphere of warmth and acceptance, letting parents know that they and their children are truly welcome in the library, and that the librarians understand that babies cannot conform to specific rules of behavior. This introduction is very important to at-risk parents, who may not realize that their babies are not in control of how and when they cry.

The programs begin with librarians, parents, and children reciting the same rhymes and are then divided into six five-minute sections. The first involves reading picture books and/or singing songs. The next engages in "body activities" where children learn through interactive songs about the parts of the body. The third section is devoted to "stand up actions" including songs and dances that teach about syllables. Then, children learn about different animals through illustrations, songs, or puppets. It includes matching animal sounds to book illustrations, puppets, and flannel board characters. At the end of this segment, each child has a chance to throw a pig up into the air. This provides the synthesis between movement, knowledge, sound, and written word. Finally, nursery rhymes that allow children to physically interact are recited such as "Jack be Nimble," where children take turns jumping over the candlestick. In the last activity, children are

invited to come up to the flannel board and pull Humpty Dumpty off of his wall. After participation in this activity, each child is rewarded with applause. Then, two ending songs are sung.

Expanding Mother Goose on the Loose

In March 2001, due to parent requests, a program called "Terrific Twos" was created for children between the ages of two and three. The program expanded on the basic skills and format of Mother Goose on the Loose, using more complicated activities and advanced vocabulary.

Since May 1 is traditionally known as Mother Goose Day, the Enoch Pratt Free Library held a Mother Goose Week from April 27–May 3, 2002. Throughout the system, twenty-one branches held Mother Goose-related activities, including a Mother Goose Weekend at the Baltimore Children's Museum with live sheep, a write-your-own-nursery-rhyme contest, and candlestick jumping. Four thousand one hundred and forty-five people participated in the programs sponsored by the Exploration Center there.

In January 2003, the Enoch Pratt Free Library began offering parent-training sessions once every two months, run concurrently with Mother Goose on the Loose programs. While one parent was in one of the programming rooms participating in the nursery rhyme program, the other parent was across the hall with Regina and Betsy, learning about recent findings in baby brain research and how they can be translated into activities in the home. These sessions now take place after the Mother Goose on the Loose session of each month, with parent and baby together.

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Community Building

All public library programs provide a place where people from different economic, social, racial, religious, and educational backgrounds can come together. Children's programs for infants bring together the children as well as the parents. By bringing together people from different backgrounds and creating a community through library programs, the public library helps to create a healthy, safe, diverse, and friendly world. One father who often comes to Mother Goose on the Loose commented, "Where else can adults go to sing together?"

Group Activities

Studies tell us that the brain is very social; offering group programs such as storytime in the public library makes sense. Children learn more if they interact with each other and with the librarian than by looking at a book by themselves, by watching television, or by reading books online from digital libraries. Older children need opportunities for learning together too. In one study on brain development and memory, different groups of fourth-grade students were asked to look at pictures that were not relevant to them. Some of the students did this individually, and some had a forced one-minute discussion about the pictures. There was a big difference in memory retentions. In the group that had the one-minute discussion, 20 percent of memory was retained after three months, and only 13 percent of the memory was retained in the group with no discussion after the same period of time.²⁰

In 1995, Enoch Pratt Free Library developed a computer literacy service for children called Kids Corner. PC workstations were preloaded with age-appropriate educational software for children from age two to ten. The workstations are equipped with a "buddy chair" to encourage children to explore the software together and with their caregivers. The group experience of participating in programs such as Mother Goose on the Loose and Terrific Twos provides an added benefit in brain development. The social aspect of the group experience provides a solid argument for the continued existence of public libraries and library



The authors (left to right) Regina Wade, Ellen Riordan, and Betsy Diamant-Cohen with (left to right) Guava Duck, Mango Duck, and Papaya Duck on the way home from the Learning and the Brain Conference. The ducks inspired this article's title.

programs for all ages, even in the wake of digital libraries and easily accessible online information.

Challenges Ahead

In a 1999 issue of *The Reporter*, Ann Richardson cautions educators that brain research is not a cure for the challenges of public education that have plagued our country.²¹ The failings of public education that have spilled into our public libraries, such as lower reading levels of children, poor understanding of basic literacy concepts, lack of parental involvement, and underfunding, will not be cured by this new attention to an emerging science. Brain research is a complex scientific discipline and scientists are debating the implications of their findings in terms of comparing laboratory results with classroom and real life situations. In the same way that brain research will not cure public education's ills, brain research will not make up for poor library administrative support, lack of funding, or lack of qualified children's librarians.

There is also a disconnect between public policy and recent findings in cognitive neuroscience. Legislation such as No Child Left Behind focuses on the use of yearly standardized tests to measure how

much students learn. Yet brain research suggests that the learning process is too complex and varied to be accurately measured for all children by a standardized test. Cognitive neuroscience makes the case for careful evaluation of school environment, teacher training, and the inclusion of art and music as an important piece of the curriculum and not a secondary frill.

Despite the fact that we are living in a technological age when children often find information online that does not require personal interaction with a librarian, ongoing scientific research illustrates that personal connections in a stress-free environment are essential to learning. Library programs with group interaction, repetition, and ritual are of critical importance to the learning process. Children's librarians must continue doing more of what they have always done. In addition, educators, neuroscientists, public policy administrators, and librarians need to collaborate to increase opportunities for free-choice learning in their communities. In the meantime, libraries can use well-documented tenets of cognitive neuroscience to improve and create optimal learning environments in their branches and their programming to facilitate the brain potential of the children they serve. ☺

The authors are practitioners at the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore. **Regina Wade** is Assistant Coordinator of Children's Services. Her special interests are Mother Goose on the Loose programs for children from birth to eighteen months as well as encouraging parents and caregivers to create nurturing relationships and optimum learning environments for very young children. **Ellen Riordan** has been Coordinator of Children's Services since 1997. In her twenty years as a professional librarian, she has been in the business and academic library environment but found her true calling as a children's librarian. She is an active member of ALSC's Managing Children's Services Committee and served on the 1995 Newbery Committee. **Betsy Diamant-Cohen** is Library's Children's Programming Specialist and has been involved with children's library work in both the United States and in Israel. Betsy developed the "Listen, Like, Learn"-based Mother Goose on the Loose program in 1989, and has been involved with running programs and training workshops ever since. In addition to full-time librarianship, Betsy is also studying part-time for a doctorate. She is an active member of the PLA Services to Elementary School Age Children and Their Caregivers Committee.

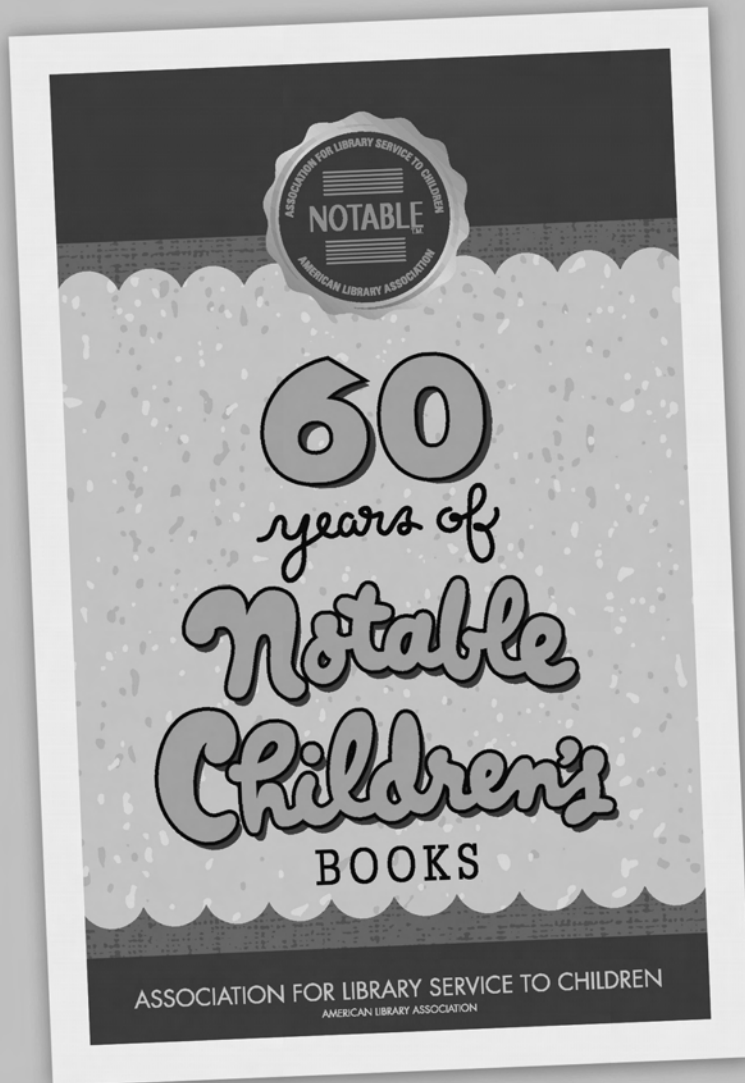
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1. Through the work of the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Library Development and Services, and Maryland Libraries Birth to Four Task Force headed by Kathleen Reif.
2. In early 2003, Stephanie Shauck from Maryland's State Department of Education, Division of Library Development and Services, sent an e-mail on the Maryland library youth

- coordinators electronic discussion list apprising them of an upcoming conference called "Learning and the Brain: Using Brain Research to Leave No Child Behind." The administration of the Enoch Pratt Free Library saw the potential value in this conference and supported conference attendance by the three authors of this article.
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17. Led by Kathleen Reif and the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators (MAPLA) Birth to Four Task Force.
18. Note: The term "parents" in this article refers to caregivers, grandparents, and guardians.
19. The Enoch Pratt Free Library received the second annual Godfrey Award for Excellence in Public Library Services for Families and Children. Created and funded by Providence Associates, library consultants and planners, the award was administered by the School of Library and Information Studies, Texas Woman's University.
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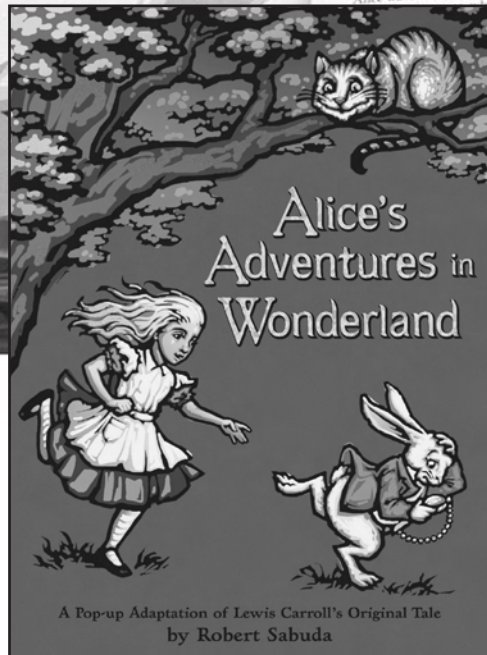
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Perfection and Precision



The Surprising Life of Pop-Up Book Creator Robert Sabuda

Sharon Korbeck

Kids aren't the only ones surprised when they open a pop-up book designed by Robert Sabuda.

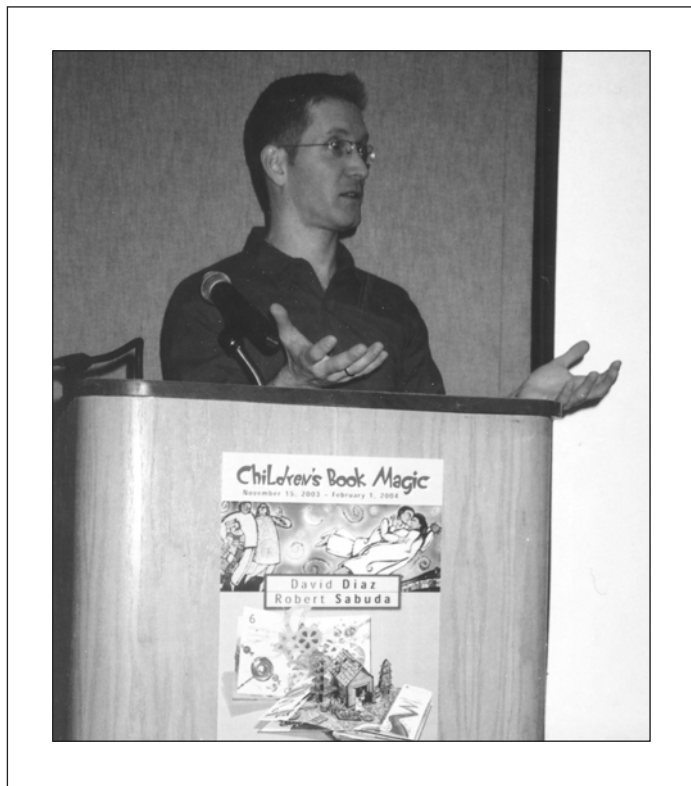
The Michigan native is just as amazed at his creations . . . and at the fact that all his long hours of cutting, pasting, measuring, and planning somehow all fall into place—pop up!—and fall back into place again.

“They’re all a surprise. When they work, they’re a surprise,” said Sabuda, who now lives in New York where he collaborates on projects with children’s book creator Matthew Reinhart. “We love making books. It’s hard work, but the best part is not having to worry about making a mess. When being an artist is your job, you can make as many messes as you want to!” Sabuda said.

Thirty-eight-year-old Sabuda has spent more than a decade getting pop-up books precisely right. But it took a lot of scraps of paper and working his way up the design ladder to get where he is today. “It’s such a strange path in life that finds me here today,” Sabuda said.

As a child in the 1970s, in the small town of Pinckney, Michigan, Sabuda loved reading. Working with his hands came naturally; his father was a mason and a carpenter. Sabuda became entranced with books and created his own pop-up books as a child. His mother worked as a secretary at Ford Motor Company. “When

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Robert Sabuda addresses a group at a Wausau, Wisconsin, museum.

A Brief Timeline of Pop-Up Book History

1536: The earliest “movable books” were created. Intended for adults, they were used to plot astronomical movements. They were so expensive to produce, only the very wealthy or royalty could afford them.

1779: One of the first actual “pop-ups” appeared. It was a three-dimensional book used to teach art students perspective.

1805: *The Woodman’s Hut* (unknown, Great Britain) is published; it is one of the earliest pop-ups designed for children.

1840s: A British firm (Dean & Son, London) devotes its entire business to movable books.

1860s: The Drawing Room Dress Books (E. C. Bennett, London) featured pop-up people wearing fashions made of real cloth.

Circa 1914: Philip’s Popular Manikin (unknown, Bavaria) was released; it was an anatomical study book.

Circa 1952: The Jolly Jump-Ups series (McLoughlin Bros., Springfield, Mass.) provided an idealized view of the American family.

1979: A revival of pop-up books for children occurs thanks to the works of Jan Pienkowski, especially *Haunted House* (E. P. Dutton, New York).

2003: Robert Sabuda’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland: A Pop-Up Adaptation of Lewis Carroll’s Original Tale* (Little Simon) makes *The New York Times Review of Books* list of the ten best children’s books of the year—the first pop-up book ever to make the list.

2004: This fall, Little Simon (a division of Simon and Schuster) will publish Robert Sabuda’s pop-up book *America the Beautiful*, based on the classic patriotic song.

Ready, Set, Collaborate!

How Libraries Can Work with Museums

How does an author from the East or West Coast end up in Wausau, Wisconsin? Just ask Sonja Ackerman, children's services division head at Marathon County Public Library.

Ackerman, along with directors at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau have been collaborating for more than thirteen years to bring the joys of children's literature to the northern Wisconsin city.

"It started almost accidentally," said Ackerman of the collaboration of the two entities. When the museum planned to put the illustrations of Tomie dePaola on exhibit in 1991-92, Ackerman said, "We just knew how interested teachers and students were going to be."

Through the Art of the Heart Man exhibit, Ackerman said, "We learned that an exhibition of children's book illustration provided the ideal catalyst to unite two respected Wausau area institutions that had the capacity to effect change among constituents based on our two favorite things, art and books."

The sharing of information that began with that successful visit (almost ten thousand museum visits, including more than four thousand school children) continued with programs slated every two years.

What Ackerman calls the first "intentional collaboration" between the museum and library was the "Art of Eric

Carle" exhibition, which brought nearly eleven thousand visitors to the museum during six weeks in early 1995. The collaboration included teacher-resource checkout kits, snugly caterpillar toys, a caterpillar snow sculpture (have you ever been to Wisconsin in January? It's cold!), and translations of Carle books to serve a large Hmong population.

"One thing that has been the key for our collaboration is that it's mutually beneficial. Look for one goal that you both share," Ackerman suggested. "That is the strong link. We really appreciate each other. Each [program] has brought some new element, some new twist, added light in another corner."

One exciting program that illustrated this was "Down Under and Over Here: Children's Book Illustrations from Australia and America." This 1999-2000 program was a fourteen-week program that involved 15,066 visitors across two continents via sixty illustrations from more than fifty children's books. Whew!

"For this journey, we took the best of our three previous collaborations and then tweaked and tinkered until a worthy model emerged," Ackerman said. She was especially proud of the fact that the museum and library shared an IMLS Leadership Grant to fund the program.

Some of the programs the museum and library have sponsored have brought authors and illustrators cross-country to Wisconsin. Most recently, author/illustrators Robert Sabuda of New York and David Diaz of California took part in Children's Book Magic at the venues. The tours were organized in part by the National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature in Abilene, Texas.



Sonja Ackerman

"I find it such a treat to have the author or the artist come to our community," she said.

The biannual collaborations have become "routine" for the institutions. And Ackerman said their plans are already underway for a 2005-06 program.

Ackerman, who has worked at Marathon County for twenty years, never tires of the excitement of the next collaboration. "It just makes your professional life very rewarding," she said. She recommends librarians, even in smaller libraries, consider the merits of collaborations. "Sharing resources, as in funding, staff time, and grant writing, is very valuable in these tough economic times," she said.

Of course, there's also the benefit of hearing the children's reactions. Ackerman particularly recalled one of her favorite memories, when a second-grade boy left the museum program beaming and said, "Wow! I haven't had this much fun in a long time."

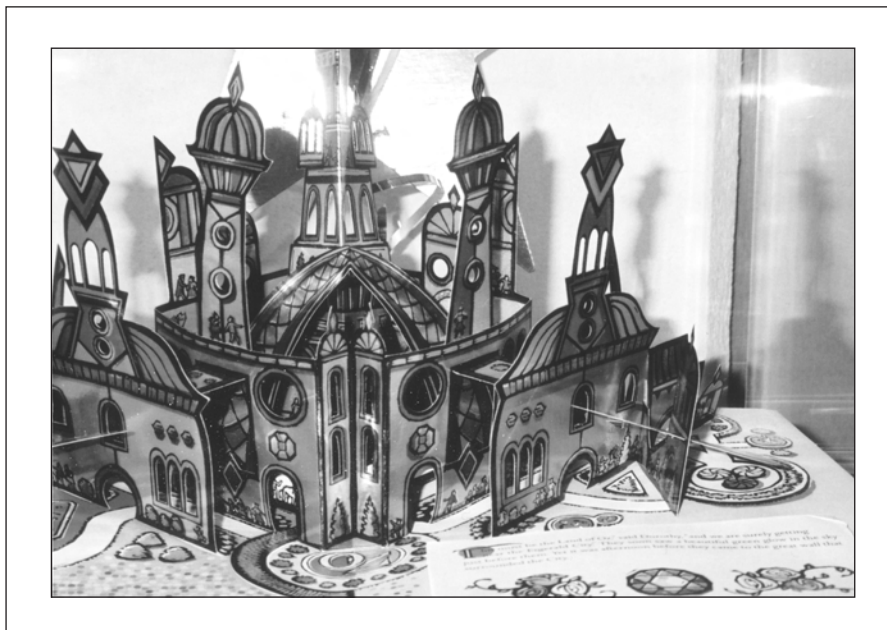
For more information about the Wausau museum and library collaborations, contact Sonja Ackerman at (715) 261-7220 or via the library's Web site at www.mcpl.lib.wi.us.

continued from page 23

people got fired, she'd bring home manila folders," he said. Those folders became the raw materials for his earliest works.

He pursued a degree in art from Pratt Institute in New York and interned his junior year at Dial Books for Young Readers. "This could be for me," Sabuda thought. "This is what I want to do. I really wanted to learn about it, and I really wanted to do it."

As he began his career, Sabuda was faced with many illustrating challenges—including illustrating coloring books and designing packages for women's lingerie. "Eventually, these led to other book projects, and slowly I discovered that I was a children's book illustrator. I began to write my own stories and illustrated them as well. Picture books were wonderful, but I always hoped that one day I could create a pop-up book," Sabuda said.



Welcome to the Emerald City.



An example of Sabuda's mosaic artwork.

How the Process Begins

In creating a new book, Sabuda works exclusively with white card stock and basic shapes. Why only white?

"I want to see how it lives on the page," he said. "I begin to sketch in three dimensions right in the beginning," he added, noting that he might build six to twelve prototypes until he gets it as refined as he'd like. But he continues to hone the piece to make sure the pop-ups all work.

"Sometimes the paper engineering is relatively easy," he said. Other times, it's a mystery, even to a master like Sabuda. "A lot of times, I just wing it," he said. One example of a particularly challenging pop-up is the hot-air balloon in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz: A Commemorative Pop-Up* (Little Simon, 2001). "I was wandering into uncharted territory," he said. In Sabuda's retelling of the L. Frank Baum classic, he creates cyclones that spin, balloons that alight, and a frightful looming castle.

Once the paper engineering is set, Sabuda is ready to create the illustrations, yet another time-consuming process. One method he uses, as illustrated in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, is linoleum cutting and printing. The illustration style with heavy black outlines was inspired by the art of W. W. Denslow, the original illustrator of Baum's 1900 *Oz*.

There are no shortcuts here. *Oz*, for example, has three hundred pieces of artwork, all done by hand-cutting the images into linoleum blocks, dipping the blocks in black ink and printing the design. Color is then added digitally.

Even after Sabuda's precision is physically done and ready to go to the printer, he isn't done yet. He said that all pop-up books are

produced in Asia and South America, and he always attends production runs of his books.

Sabuda discussed the labor-intensive tasks of making dies for the pop-up pieces, counting the thousands of pieces, and assembling the pieces into the book. "It's very much a group effort. Everyone wants to make the best book possible," he said. "I had no idea how fast they put this together," Sabuda said after he attended one production session, joking that he fell behind the lightning-fast production staff. "It's all about speed when you're assembling." At the end of the line, quality control workers make sure the pop-ups work. Page signatures are assembled, covers are glued on by hand, and fans are used to speed drying.

Sabuda's paper-engineering feats are exercises in perfection and precision. And they've paid off. He is a two-time recipient of both the Golden Kite and Meggendorfer Award, and his books have been frequent ALA Notable Children's Books.

Not just a creator, Sabuda is also a collector of pop-up books. He has about three hundred, which he considers a modest collection. He's proud of the heritage he learned from, saying, "I hope that in my life I'm able to contribute to the tradition."

That tradition, as children and adults have witnessed in Sabuda's books, is opening a book to reveal, what Sabuda considers, "the magic that comes out."

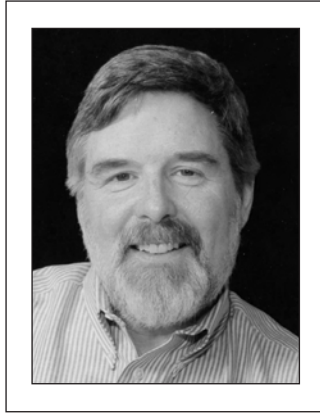
Sharon Korbeck attended a presentation by Robert Sabuda at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, Wisconsin.

For more information on Robert Sabuda, visit: www.robertsabuda.com.

Why Are We Afraid of Our Boys?

A Psychologist Looks at Solutions

Michael G. Thompson



This article is adapted from Thompson's address at the American Library Association Midwinter Meeting in Toronto in June 2003.

In 1999, my life dramatically changed. I wrote a book about boys—and it was published a week before the shootings at Columbine High School. Before the disaster in Littleton, Colorado, I didn't consider myself a national expert on boys. I was a local psychologist with a private practice in the Boston area. In addition, I had worked as a psychologist at four co-ed schools over a period of twelve years. Like many counselors, a majority of my clients were girls who came to my office on their own initiative.

When I went to work as the consulting psychologist at the Belmont Hill School, an all-boys independent school with four hundred students in grades seven through twelve, my patients (obviously) were boys. They almost never self-referred to the psychologist. In fact, of the forty-one boys I evaluated there last year, only one came to see me voluntarily. All the others had to be pushed to talk to me by their advisors, or by the dean, or by the trouble they had gotten themselves into. Tenth-grade boys don't say to their friends, "Gee, guys, I've got to go see the psychologist to talk over some emotional problems I've been having."

I like to joke that if not for the dean and the disciplinary process, a psychologist at an all-boys school would be like the Maytag repairman.

Over the years of my work at a boys' school, I saw boys and more boys for evaluation and therapy. Interestingly, my experience mirrored a trend in my private practice: My patient list grew to be 70 percent boys and men. (This was unusual since women

are the traditional consumers of psychotherapy services.) The experience of talking to lots of boys who were sad, disappointed, and ashamed, but expressed their hurt through anger and irrationality, made me want to write about them.

A similar set of experiences at another boys' school moved my co-author, psychologist Dan Kindlon, to suggest that we write a book about boys. The result was *Raising Cain*. A week after publication came the carnage at Columbine High School. During the next three weeks, Dan and I appeared on NBC's *The Today Show* three times, and I did television and radio interviews for months thereafter.

The journalists I met all tended to ask the same predictable questions about boys, violence, and school shootings. But after the microphones, cameras, and lights were turned off, something more interesting happened. At the end of the interview, the anchor or camera operator would ask me, "How do I know if my son is violent? He doesn't talk to me. I don't know what's going on inside him. How would I know if he were going to hurt someone?" These kinds of questions came more often from women than from men, but the fear that boys are mysterious and potentially violent was visible in many people.

I was startled, because I have worked with and known boys all my life, and I have very rarely experienced them as threatening or potentially violent. Of course, I am not a police officer, nor do I work in corrections or violence prevention.

For the last two decades I have worked in a suburban setting with middle-class and upper-middle-class children, with their parents, and with their teachers. What I found was that many

thoughtful, well-to-do adults who were raising their sons in secure surroundings were nevertheless a bit jumpy about boys. Or, if they were not scared of their own sons, they were scared of other people's. I visit about thirty schools each year, and I have witnessed, unmistakably, this same subtle fear in all of them. And I believe this fear has an impact on the lives of boys. Let me give you some examples.

A couple of years ago, I arranged for a local TV anchorwoman in Boston to meet with five eighth-grade boys. She wanted to interview them alone, and she did. After spending half an hour with them she came back to me and said, with embarrassment in her voice, "I know this sounds stupid, but they were *really very nice*." Implicit in her tone was something like, "I am genuinely surprised. I had half expected that they would be awful, or rude, or aggressive."

Hire people who are not afraid of boys, because adults who are frightened of boys are of no use to them.

More recently, I received a phone message from a mother saying that her four-year-old son was making his Legos into a gun and it was very upsetting to her, her husband, and her daughter. What could she do to stop him from doing that?

Then I received an e-mail from the mother of a five-year-old boy who had been suspended from kindergarten for hitting his teacher with a stick. The school had told her that if it happened again, the police would be summoned and her little boy would be charged with assault and sent to juvenile court.

I recently received a call from an educator in New York who is starting a new all-boys school on the Lower East Side. "What," he asked me, "is the one most important thing I should look for in starting out?" I told him, "Hire people who are not afraid of boys because adults who are frightened of boys are of no use to them."

Connecting with Boys

When we sat down to write *Raising Cain*, Dan and I had some central concerns. As a professor at Harvard School of Public Health, Dan was worried that boys were at risk from a public health point of view. Twice as many boys die from accidental death in their teenage years as do girls, and boys are at a vastly higher risk of suicide. Eighty-five percent of completed teen suicides are boys. There had been a rising tide of male violence between 1975 and 1994, making the United States the most murderous and rape-prone country in the industrialized world. There are 23,000 homicides in the country every year, and 10 percent of them are committed by males under age twenty-five.

Since 1994, boy violence in this country has dropped dramatically as inner-city communities have come to grips with drug problems. There is better policing, and the black community has risen up to save its sons. What we are seeing now is that white suburban and rural America is coming to understand that the problems of the inner city were not specific to blacks and Hispanics, or even users of crack cocaine. We have seen a spike on suburban and rural violence among white boys that has finally aroused Americans to an awareness that perhaps we have been raising our sons in a vacuum.

As we worked, Dan and I focused on the fact that in American culture we raise boys in a way that leaves them emotionally uneducated and inarticulate about their psychological pain. In an effort to make our sons masculine, our culture has forgotten what boys need psychologically. We have lost touch with the work and rituals that connect boys to the adult world and meaningful adult manhood. We often take them at face value and react only to their obnoxious behavior and not to their inner lives. We either treat them like wild animals who need to be controlled or as entitled princes of whom we cannot ask very much on a moral basis. We seem to think they are too *something*—too immature, or morally backward, or fragile, or homophobic, or masculine.

Dan and I felt that boys were emotionally illiterate, burdened by a conception of masculinity that narrowed their lives. They were unable to express their pain, their sense of shame, their sadness, and inadequacy, except through anger. Eighty percent of depressed teenage boys manifest irritability as their leading symptom because they do not feel that they are able to say they are sad. That would be a strike against their masculinity. *Raising Cain* was a complaint against the American conception of masculinity that narrows what a boy can say and reveal about his inner life.

The Education Gap

If you go into any kindergarten class in the country at "circle time" you will see a group of girls patiently waiting for the reading or discussion to begin. But several boys will be wandering around the classroom. "Come on, guys," the teacher will say. "We're ready to start." Or, exasperated, she may say, "Come on, guys! The girls have been ready for a long time now."

Girls outperform boys in elementary school, middle school, high school, and college. At present, 56 percent of college degrees go to women; 55 percent of graduate degrees go to women, and that trend is accelerating. One actuarial statistician took the present trend out to its absurd conclusion and found that the last man in the United States to get a bachelor's degree would do so in 2068.

Twenty years ago there was a significant gap between boys and girls in science and math—with boys ahead. Feminists and dedicated teachers have worked with girls over the years to over-

come their math phobias and their belief that science wasn't "feminine." And it worked.

The gap has closed almost all the way. There is still a gap between boys and girls in math concepts, but it is now quite small. But—according to a meta-analysis of fifteen different academic assessments, including the National Assessment of Academic Progress—the gap between girls and boys, with girls in the lead, is six times greater than the gap between boys and girls in math concepts. It is huge. And in writing, females out-perform males by twenty-five points.

Many writers, including Tom Newkirk and Christina Hoff Somers, have drawn our attention to this gender gap in education. Last summer, *Business Week* magazine reported that girls have achieved almost all of the educational gains of the last thirty years. We owe it to our boys to close these historic gaps.

Fear of Boys

I believe the gender gap in writing and reading is at least partly attributable to the discomfort that normal, helpful teachers experience with boys. Against a backdrop of societal violence, 90 percent of which is male, those of us who work with children have to constantly make judgments about what is good or bad, about which kind of interventions will produce children of character, and about what the things that children are doing right now presage for their behavior as adults. This business of predicting how boys are going to turn out can be tricky if you extrapolate from their first-grade or eighth-grade behavior. I know. I was the class clown in my eighth grade! I am very sensitive to schools that have tolerance for boys, and to schools that seem chronically to distrust them.

What it is about boys that disrupts our world and frightens us?

Boys are active and take more physical risks than girls. They break stuff. Their impulsivity and apparent lack of control scares us because it always threatens to "disrupt the learning environment." By school age, three-quarters of the boys in a class are more physically active, more impulsive and developmentally immature in comparison to girls the same age. Our average boy is also one to two years behind the average girl in his language development and reading. That's not news to anyone—but it does mean that he is going to find school a difficult fit. Think about school from the average boy's point of view. It seems to be a place that is all about sitting down and listening to women talk. And the girls have a decided advantage at that. The level of a boy's physical activity means that he is restrained more often, that he is spoken to more often, than the girls are.

I was once standing on a school playground with some kindergarten teachers who were supervising the children at recess. The boys did something loud and potentially disruptive, but the matter settled down quickly. One of the teachers turned to the other and said, "Oh, it's just the BBC." They laughed. Later I asked what BBC meant. You have probably already figured out that it stands for Bad Boys Club.

Here is a conversation recorded between kindergarten children by Vivian Paley in her brilliant book *Boys and Girls: Superheroes in the Doll House*:

Karen says: "Girls are nicer than boys."

Janie adds: "Boys are bad. Some boys are."

Paul then says: "Not bad, pretend bad, like bad guys."

Karen, undaunted, continues: "My brother is really bad."

Vivian Paley poses a question: "Aren't girls ever bad?"

Paul answers: "I don't think so. Not very much."

Vivian Paley: "Why not?"

Paul: "Because they like to color so much. That's one thing I know. Boys have to practice running."

Karen then adds: "And they practice being silly."

If you ask third-grade boys whom teachers like better, they always say, "The girls." If you ask third-grade girls whom the teachers like best, they'll say, "The girls." And, of course, they're both right. How would you react if you had to go to a place every day where you thought you were destined to be liked less well and where you would be less successful than the other half of the population? You would start to challenge the authority of the people who run the place.

Boys challenge us. Boys often seem to be proud of being bad, and there are moments when they have no use for our ideas of politeness. Boys in groups seem obsessed with things that are rude, crude, and antisocial. I don't know how many times I have heard an adult say that a particular boy doesn't seem to have a conscience.

Boys don't seem to value what we value, especially in literature. Boys value low-class literature; they value TV, comics, and video games. This makes us nervous. We often think this is because we are so moral and high-minded and interested in character. But it is often a matter of taste and educational elitism—and a wish for control. Rousseau, writing in 1762 about his son, Emile, said, "Emile ought to do only what he wants; but he ought to want only what you want him to do." We all have that problem. We all want our children to feel free—but not really.

I was talking with a teacher recently about a boy with a learning disability in her class—a boy who struggles with reading. He had read one of the Captain Underpants series and loved it. The teacher tried very hard to steer him away from reading any more of them. One was OK, she told me, because the boy wasn't a reader. But she was reluctant to have him read more because he was a bad speller and there are many misspelled words in the book. Please! Do you really think this boy was in danger from Captain Underpants?

Last summer, my daughter's seventeen-year-old boyfriend told me, "I know I should read more," in the same tone of voice that people say, "I know I should lose weight. I shouldn't have this dessert." When we tell boys that reading is good for them, it sounds like self-improvement. It sounds like betterment. We do

things to boys to suggest that we are going to improve them, and they resist us.

Tom Newkirk of the University of New Hampshire, in his book *Misreading Masculinity: Boys, Literacy, and Popular Culture*, gives a detailed analysis about how teachers subtly discourage boys from reading, primarily by creating a hierarchy of good literature. He also says that we are never going to get boys to read unless they have the experience of reading as deep pleasure. But we make it like medicine.

Teachers have a “free-choice” reading period, for example; and if a boy wants to read comic books, the teacher says, “Well, perhaps you should save those for home and read something worthwhile.” Where’s the free choice in that?

Newkirk provides another subtle example: A child picks a book on his own and you say, “Oh, good choice.” I’ve said that myself

What it is about boys that disrupts our world and frightens us? Boys are active and take more physical risks than girls. They break stuff. Their impulsivity and apparent lack of control scares us.

and I’ve heard people say it many times. But Tom Newkirk says no, don’t do it. A “good” choice implies that there wasn’t really a choice in the first place because there are good choices, and then, of course, there are bad choices. Any boy worth his salt can hear that undertone in what we intend as positive reinforcement. And any boy worth his salt will be tempted not to make a good choice the next time, precisely because he hears that the “good” part eclipses the “choice” part.

It is different to say to a boy, “Oh, I loved that book!” or “So many kids have loved that book.” That is descriptive, not judgmental.

Our Worst Fear

The thing that really scares us, however, is a boy’s potential for violence. That is the heart of the matter. That is why the Boston anchorwoman expected the eighth-grade boys to be scary. That’s why the mom worried about her son turning Legos into guns. That’s why the kindergarten administrators threatened an impulsive five-year-old with the police.

Why does boys’ play violence make us so nervous? It is because we believe that boys cannot make a distinction between play and reality. We believe that they will be pulled into violence against their will, that they won’t be able to help themselves.

I believe we have never really faced the roots of violence in this society at the deepest level, so we spend our time on trivial stuff

like stopping our children from making Legos into guns. But the truth is that’s not the problem. If we think that making toy guns or playing violent video games is really the problem, and not broken homes or child abuse or the fact that we’re spending 40 percent less time with our children than we did in 1965, then we are deluding ourselves. We’re wringing our hands for no reason. And we’re scapegoating boys.

The impact of our hand-wringing is that we lose credibility with boys. They experience us as either excessively controlling and mean, or they consider us clueless. Or, worst of all, they see that we are afraid of them. When little boys think that adults are scared of them, they become truly terrified.

I believe that children who have been brutalized may find media violence is in tune with them, but I don’t believe that children who come from loving, attentive homes are going to be induced unwittingly into violence.

I also know that boys can tell the difference between play and reality, between games and real violence. Violence is what happens when one person intends to hurt another person and succeeds. When that happens in a classroom, all the kids point to it. Violence is not what happens in movies; that is pretend violence and kids know it.

Yet we act afraid of our boys. We talk as if we are afraid of them. We have to get over that fear. We have to conquer our assumptions and inhibitions if we are going to be truly helpful to our boys. I have five suggestions to get us started.

1. The Bettelheim Solution

The late Bruno Bettelheim was my professor at the University of Chicago, and when I was there in the early 1970s he was working on *The Uses of Enchantment*, his great book about the meaning of fairy tales and the ways in which they help children master the most ferocious conflicts and developmental struggles of childhood. Through his book, Bettelheim asks us to come to grips with the dark side of human life. Now, that’s the problem with boys. They often throw the dark side of life in our faces. They are too open about greediness, competitiveness, lust, murderous feelings, fury, perfectionism. They’d rather urinate on trees in the playground than use the bathroom—and they do that psychologically as well. We don’t always want to deal with their powerful emotions in our quiet settings. We prefer the way girls protect us. It is not that girls aren’t grappling with all the same conflicts. They are, but they make it easy on us.

Bettelheim would tell us that the problem is with us. We have forgotten how ferocious childhood is. And we need to remember.

2. The Paley-Katch Solution

Teachers and writers Vivian Paley and Jane Katch talk to children. They let them dictate stories. They have them act out their deepest conflicts right there in the classroom. They are utterly

fearless in what they let kids talk about. In her book, *Under Deadman's Skin: Discovering the Meaning of Children's Violent Play*, Katch describes a discussion of the rules about talking about violence in the classroom. The original list was (1) no excessive blood, (2) no chopping off of body parts, (3) no guts or other things that belong inside the body can come out.

But one of the girls said it would be unfair to stop the boys from talking about these things every day. So they went to an alternate-day format. The kids had a wonderful, moral, democratic discussion about violence because Katch trusted them. Be afraid of teachers and administrators who won't let you talk to kids this way.

3. The Newkirk Solutions

Acknowledge the complexity of "violence" in art and literature. Keep asking whether it is really violence, or humor, that kids are after. Often, what they seek is the feeling of mastery of violence. We should be able to see this in their choices. And, Newkirk notes, we should allow cartooning as a serious business in the classroom. We should accept youth genres in which fiction becomes a way of assuming freedoms, powers, and competencies that the writer does not possess in real life. It is an act of wish fulfillment, not an accurate and realistic rendering of their experience. The writing is often extreme and exaggerated—and it's funny.

4. The Captain Underpants Solution

Dav Pilkey, the author of the Captain Underpants books, often issues ironic warnings. When Harold and George must confront two evil robots in *The Adventures of Captain Underpants* (1997), Harold worries, "We're not going to have to resort to extreme graphic violence, are we?" George replies that he hopes not. The next chapter is titled "The Extremely Graphic Violence Chapter," and it begins with a label: "WARNING: The following chapter contains graphic scenes showing two boys beating the tar out of a couple of robots. If you have high blood pressure, or faint at the sight of motor oil, we strongly encourage you to take better care of yourself and stop being such a baby."

5. The Thompson Solution

Now, here's mine: Every time you start to worry about boy behavior, think of a

man you love—your father, your brother, your cousin, your husband, or your very own son. And then talk to him. Get in touch with his inner life. Put away your fear. ☺

Michael Thompson, Ph.D., is the author of Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys (with Dan Kindlon; Ballantine, 2000) and Best Friends, Worst Enemies: Understanding the Social Lives of Children (with Catherine O'Neill Grace and Lawrence J. Cohen; Ballantine, 2002). His newest book, The Pressured Child, will be published in 2004.

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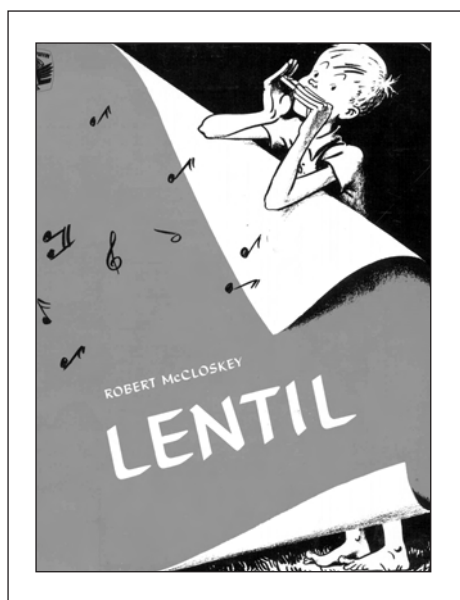
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Remembering a Legend

The Life and Works of Robert McCloskey

Megan Lynn Isaac



Lentil by Robert McCloskey

Like so many of the best storytellers, Robert McCloskey did not begin his career envisioning audiences of small, sticky-fingered folk. Instead, he attended Boston's Vesper George Art School and the National Academy of Design in New York and aspired to produce "great art," the kind filled with bits of Greek mythology, Oriental dragons, deep forest pools, and droopy trees.

During a visit to New York City in the 1930s, renowned children's book editor May Massee looked at the young artist's portfolio and told him to rethink his subject material, to draw what he really knew about.¹ Robert McCloskey initially disliked this advice, but when he did begin to draw the sorts of buildings and people he knew, those of his childhood in the ordinary Midwestern town of Hamilton, Ohio, a fine story emerged titled *Lentil* (1940). The book features not a great hero like Achilles or Hercules, but the young boy Lentil who faces off against the sour villain Old Sneep. Perched atop the rail station roof as gangly and menacing as any classical gargoyle, Old Sneep's lip-puckering lemons nearly devastate the triumphant welcoming concert planned for the town's greatest benefactor, the god-like Colonel Carter, until, Lentil, armed only with a harmonica, saves the day.

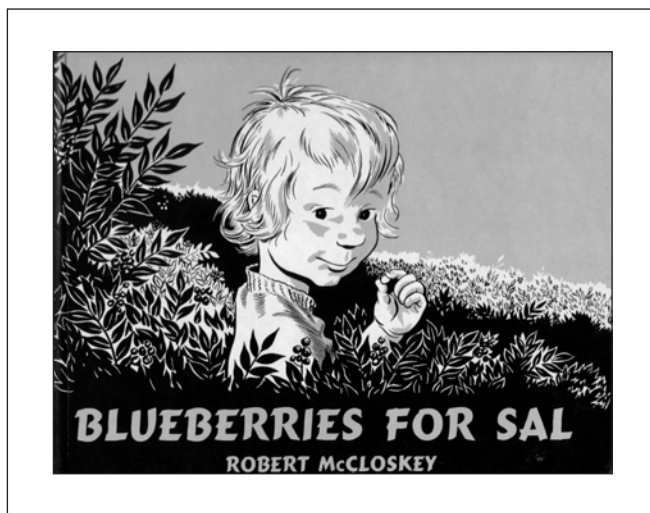
Brimming with energy and humor, Robert McCloskey's first picture book foreshadows many of the themes, literary and pictorial, that mark his work. Additionally, looking closely at this book, along with the other seven volumes he wrote and illustrated, may be the best way to learn about and remember this fine artist, who died in July 2003 at the age of 88. McCloskey was a relatively private man. Although willing to talk to the audiences of children, librarians, and general readers who loved his work, in many ways he revealed more about himself through his books. Nearly every element of his stories is rooted, more or less deeply, in his own biography. Like the protagonists of *Lentil*, *Homer Price* (1943), and *Centerburg Tales* (1951), McCloskey came from a small town in

Ohio, and the buildings pictured in these volumes are close replicas of those in his hometown of Hamilton.

Growing up in Hamilton, he was drawn to both music and machinery. These early interests are easy to find in his illustrations. His picture of Lentil lying comfortably in a dry bathtub admiring the sounds of his own harmonica tunes is more than memorable. McCloskey often narrated a story about his other hobby—invention—during the talks he gave. Fascinated by the sight of a cotton candy machine, he set out as a child to construct one for himself using the motor from a vacuum cleaner. His first attempt to produce the wonderful confection failed when the sugar he poured in refused to melt. Persistence, in this case, did not pay off. His second attempt was an utter disaster when the molasses he chose as a substitute for sugar sailed out in sticky streaks across the kitchen.² But his love for ingenious machines is still reflected in his stories. The Homer Price tales are filled with intricate mechanisms wonderfully depicted, like Uncle Ulysses' donut machine and the Hide-a-Ride contraption described by Grandpa Hercules.

Despite the affection these books all show for the people and places of Hamilton, Ohio, McCloskey left the Midwest when the opportunity to pursue his greatest passion arrived in the form of a scholarship to art school. His adult life was spent on the East Coast, mostly on a small island off the coast of Maine. The landscapes of this region—the shoreside cottages, the harbors, and the small villages that make up the community—are all depicted in his later picture books, especially *One Morning in Maine* (1952), *Time of Wonder* (1957), and, to a lesser extent, *Burt Dow*, *Deep-Water Man* (1963). To understand what moved McCloskey most, what inspired him, and what he valued, readers need only to read and enjoy these books. The characters who figure in these books and even the cats and dogs who prowl along the margins are all based upon his own wife, children, friends, and pets. As his two daughters, Sal and

Jane, grow older, they embark on more exciting and more independent adventures. In *Blueberries for Sal*, the entire plot is based on the idea of Sal's straying just far enough away from her mother to mistake one rustle in the blueberry bushes for another. By the time she has been joined by a little sister in *One Morning in Maine*, Sal looks forward to a day's outing with her father as they



Blueberries for Sal by Robert McCloskey

venture across the water to Buck's Harbor for groceries. Several years later in *Time of Wonder*, the two girls, unnamed in this story, are old enough to spend days out on the water themselves exploring the shorelines and swimming beaches, sailing across the bay, and rowing through the evening dusk.

Oddly enough, McCloskey's most famous book, *Make Way for Ducklings* (1941), is probably the least autobiographical of his stories, although it is certainly possible to see his love of the architecture of Boston, particularly the Beacon Hill District; the high value he placed on family and community; and his witty sense of humor throughout the story of Mr. and Mrs. Mallard and their search for a suitable home in which to raise their family of eight ducklings. *Make Way for Ducklings* was only McCloskey's second picture book, but with it he won his first Caldecott Medal. He went on to win another Caldecott Medal for *Time of Wonder*; and three other books, *Blueberries for Sal*, *One Morning in Maine*, and *Journey Cake, Ho!* (for which he provided the illustrations to accompany Ruth Sawyer's text in 1953), were recognized as Caldecott Honor Books. Despite having produced only eight books (six picture books and two chapter books) and illustrating only a few for other writers, he remains among the most highly honored artists in the history of children's literature.

His preference for doing things well rather than simply finishing them is illustrated by a story told by Annis Duff in

Catholic Library World about a draft of a book set in Mexico that he brought into his publisher's office. It was received with enthusiasm, and McCloskey returned home to continue work on it, but never finished. Eventually he explained that his "understanding of Mexican people was too shallow to give him the right to use them as characters in a story that might seem to be making fun of them," so he had abandoned the tale.³ Obviously, those things that Robert McCloskey did create were always created with the greatest of care.

In his 1942 Caldecott Medal acceptance, McCloskey told the story of how he came to produce the amazingly authentic characters of *Make Way for Ducklings*. He began by going to the Natural History Museum in New York and studying the stuffed mallards that were on display. He learned about their molting and mating habits, both of which figure in the story. He met and worked with an ornithologist who helped him study the subtle markings of ducks and their wing structures. Most importantly, however, he acquired live models.

Visiting the poultry market early one morning McCloskey purchased four ducklings and brought them back to his apartment. Then the real work began, "I spent the next weeks on my hands and knees, armed with a box of Kleenex and a sketch book, following ducks around the studio and observing them in the bath tub."⁴ During the later stages of the story's development he repeated the process with another batch of ducklings. Again,

Books Written and Illustrated by Robert McCloskey

Lentil (Viking, 1940)

1942 Caldecott Medal: *Make Way for Ducklings* (Viking, 1941)

Homer Price (Viking, 1943)

1949 Caldecott Honor Book: *Blueberries for Sal* (Viking, 1948)

Centerburg Tales (Viking, 1951)

1953 Caldecott Honor Book: *One Morning in Maine* (Viking, 1952)

1958 Caldecott Medal: *Time of Wonder* (Viking, 1957)

Burt Dow, Deep-Water Man: A Tale of the Sea in the Classic Tradition (Viking, 1963)

Select Books Illustrated by Robert McCloskey

Yankee Doodle's Cousin by Anne Burnett Malcomson (Houghton Mifflin, 1941)

Tree Toad: Adventures of the Kid Brother by Bob Davis (Frederick A. Stokes, 1942)

The Man Who Lost His Head by Claire Huchet Bishop (Viking, 1942)

Trigger John's Son by Tom Robinson (Viking, 1949)

1954 Caldecott Honor Book: *Journey Cake, Ho!* by Ruth Sawyer (Viking, 1953)

Junket by Anne H. White (Viking, 1955)

Henry Reed, Inc. by Keith Robertson (Viking, 1958)

Henry Reed's Journey by Keith Robertson (Viking, 1963)

Henry Reed's Baby-Sitting Service by Keith Robertson (Viking, 1966)

Henry Reed's Big Show by Keith Robertson (Viking, 1970)

he filled sketch book upon sketch book with drawings of “happy ducklings, sad ducklings, inquisitive ducklings, bored ducklings; running, walking, standing, sitting, stretching, swimming, scratching, sleeping ducklings.”⁵

Reading of this process one former librarian from the Wilder Elementary School in Grand Forks, North Dakota, Yvonne Hanley, adopted McCloskey’s own research methods to inspire her young patrons to greater heights of creativity. After listening to and talking about *Make Way for Ducklings*, each child chose a stuffed animal from the library’s collection and turned it upside down to experiment with drawing an animal from an unexpected perspective. This approach could only have been applauded by McCloskey who spoke directly about the need for better art education in American schools. In an interview with Leonard S. Marcus, McCloskey remarked, “People—adults as well as children—so often just don’t realize what they are looking at. . . . Seeing is really a decision-making process, a matter of evaluating what is around you. And children cannot develop that ability so well as they can by learning to draw.”⁶

Make Way for Ducklings has inspired other responses that might have come as more of a surprise to McCloskey but would surely have tickled his sense of humor. One Ohio mother, Paula Guiler, realized that the book had made more of an impression than she had realized on her twelve-year-old son when she overheard him calling his action figure soldiers by the names of Lack, Mack, Nack, Ouak, Pack, and Quack—a litany he had quite obviously borrowed from McCloskey’s ducklings!

A Boston librarian, Maureen Foley, realizing that Massachusetts had an official state donut but not an official state children’s book, helped organize a campaign two years ago to send nearly three thousand paper ducklings signed by patrons to the state house in support of a bill to remedy that situation. And, now, *Make Way for Ducklings* is indeed the Massachusetts state children’s book!

Librarians, teachers, and parents all agree that McCloskey’s *Make Way for Ducklings*

is among the most reliable read-alouds in any collection. Speaking of her own delight in pulling it from the shelf each year, Eve Kneeland, the head of youth services at the Auburn (Ala.) library, remarks, “Like Margaret Wise Brown and only a handful of others, Robert McCloskey’s material seems to be timeless. Kids still love the good, old illustrators who use line so effectively, despite the affection that they often have for color and zippy modern art.”

The ongoing popularity of *Make Way for Ducklings* is especially surprising given that McCloskey declined in all but a few incidences to allow his artwork to be commercialized in any way. There are no t-shirts, tennis shoes, backpacks, coffee mugs, or bath towels dotted with ducklings for sale. He made only one significant exception to his policy against reproducing his artwork. Visitors to the Boston Public Gardens have since 1987 been able to enjoy what may be the most famous piece of children’s sculpture in the country, a bronze reproduction of Mrs. Mallard, a bit over three feet tall, with her eight small offspring trailing behind her.

Artist Nancy Schön created this sculpture with McCloskey’s permission. To prepare for this work, Schön not only talked with McCloskey but spent time poring over some of his original drawings for the book, which are held by the Boston Public Library. Describing the process, Schön explains, “The whole world is available to you as an artist, and you can call on hundreds of artists as your teachers. And you can copy them. You can copy to learn and sort of get inside the head of the artist. And one of the things I did was copy a lot of Bob’s drawings extremely carefully. So I sort of thought I understood how he felt about drawing.”

Schön’s success at interpreting McCloskey’s ducklings is evident not only in the many

visitors who delight in them, but in the way that her work has helped to extend the influence of McCloskey. Charmed by the statue, Barbara Bush, then First Lady, requested to have another edition of the statue to give to Soviet First Lady Raisa Gorbachev as a gift from the children of the United States to the children of the USSR to commemorate the START treaty in 1991, and McCloskey again agreed. Visitors to Moscow’s Novodevichy Park can see them today where they are embedded in a carpet made of 550 Boston cobblestones intermixed with the basalt natural to Moscow. Most recently, Schön has also created a statue called “Lentil and His Dog, Harmony” and overseen its dedication in the town of

To understand what moved McCloskey most, what inspired him, and what he valued, readers need only to read and enjoy these books. The characters who figure in these books and even the cats and dogs who prowl along the margins are all based upon his own wife, children, friends, and pets.

Hamilton, Ohio, to honor McCloskey’s birthplace. The dog’s name, which isn’t given in the book, was selected by the children of Hamilton.

Perhaps the most amazing aspect of McCloskey’s career is the ironic way that his aspirations to create “great art” have been realized. His enchanting stories and illustrations have entertained readers for more than sixty years and show no signs of going out of style. Children who grew up listening to the “Kuplink, kuplank, kuplunk!” of blueberries landing in little Sal’s pail or laughing at the antics of Mrs. Mallard’s feathered children now share these stories with their children and

grandchildren. And children, as well as more than a few adults, on two continents have stopped to touch, admire, and have their photos taken with Nancy Schön's exquisite sculptural renditions of McCloskey's characters. In 2000 McCloskey was one of only five children's authors and artists to be honored by the Library of Congress with the designation of "Living Legend" as part of its bicentennial celebration. Although he is no longer living, he has indeed become a legend—because of his great art. ✎

Megan Lynn Isaac lives in Auburn, Alabama and writes about both children's literature and Shakespeare. Her book, *Heirs to Shakespeare*, explores how modern young adult novels adapt Shakespeare's plays in their plots and characters. Formerly a college professor, she now spends most of her time chasing her toddler.

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6. Marcus, 115–16.

Interview with Nancy Schön



Pictured is the sculpture of *Lentil and His Dog Harmony* by Nancy Schön of Boston. The sculpture commemorates Robert McCloskey's first book, *Lentil*. The piece, commissioned by the Hamilton Community Foundation, is located in a park at High and Riverfront Plaza.

How did you come to design the McCloskey sculptures?

The twin boys of a friend, Suzanne Demonchaux, were in the Boston Public Gardens and said to their mother, "Where are the ducks?" Suzanne is an urban planner with an interest in how children see the city. She thought it would be wonderful to put the ducks in the Public Garden.

I said it was impossible, that it was sacred ground. But I knew someone who knew Mr. McCloskey, so I talked to my friend, and she talked to Bob about our idea.

He came from Maine to Newton, Massachusetts, and I showed him the model I had made, and he said he was sort of interested. So I set up some life-size prototypes for him to look at. His first visit was to look at my ducks and check my credibility. It is very complicated for one artist to interpret another. You sort of have to believe in each other.

On the second visit, we went out to the studio, where I had made a rough three-dimensional model of Mrs. Mallard and

two ducklings, to give the size and feeling. McCloskey said, "They look awfully big to me. Let's go outside."

So we dragged them outside, even though they were heavy, and it was icy, nasty, cold weather. Several children and their mothers were nearby, and the children ran to the ducks and began hugging and patting them. We just stood around with our mouths open. That was my introduction to the McCloskeys, and we have visited ever since.

How did the Lentil statue come about?

A foundation in Hamilton, Ohio, wanted to do something to honor Robert McCloskey. They wanted the ducks, but Bob said no because he felt they belonged in Boston.

Lentil made more sense with its autobiographical roots. I went to Maine on a terrible winter day and showed the maquette (a scale model) to McCloskey. He was a very shy, humble, and sweet man. He wasn't sure how he felt about the project, but when he saw the maquette, he broke into a smile and said to go ahead with it.



Look at them waddle! Nancy Schön sculpted the *Make Way for Ducklings* piece to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Boston Public Garden. Photos used with permission of Nancy Schön.

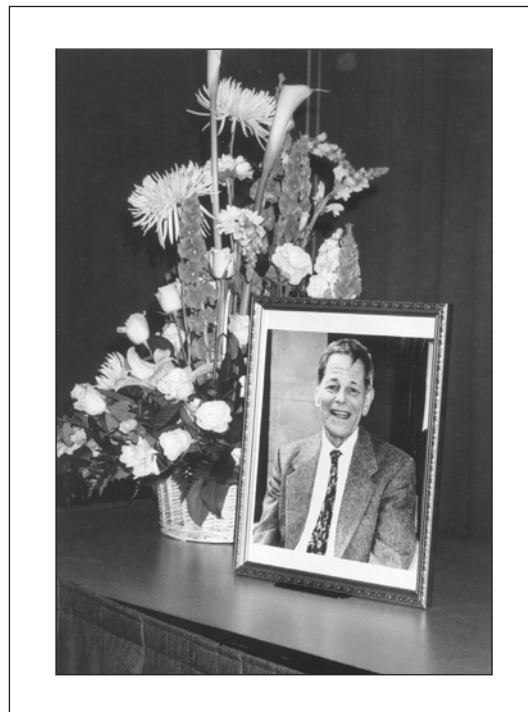
"The Last Civilized Man"

Librarians Remember William Morris

Sharon Korbeck



Morris's love of music, especially Mozart, was reflected by a string quartet.



A playful photo of William Morris sat elegantly near a subtle bouquet of white flowers at Morris's memorial at ALA Midwinter Meeting.

William C. Morris liked elegant neckties, Absolut vodka, and Mozart. And at his memorial service, his friends weren't going to let anyone forget his singular sense of sophistication.

About three hundred librarians remembered Morris, vice president and director of library promotion at HarperCollins, at the ALA Midwinter Conference in San Diego in January. Morris, 74, died September 29, 2003. This iconic figure in publishing and children's librarianship worked at Harper for forty-eight years.

The event embraced the things Morris loved most—librarians, Mozart (a string quartet played during the memorial), and friends (a slide show recalled fond memories). It was fitting, then, that librarians, publishers, and authors remembered Morris as a staunch champion of the world of children's literature. Author Michael Cart called Morris "the last civilized man," heralding his sophistication and cosmopolitan nature.

"Bill Morris cared about books; he cared about people," said Cart, who echoed Charlotte Zolotow's sentiments in calling Morris "the soul of publishing."

Morris's passion for publishing was manifest in his work in children's literature. Authors such as Eve Bunting, Jane Yolen, and Katherine Paterson were introduced during Morris's tenure. "He was so enormously loyal to the authors and illustrators," said Caroline Ward, youth services coordinator of the Ferguson Library.

"Bill loved books and the people who made them," echoed K. T. Horning of the Cooperative Children's Book Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

But why was writing for children so important to Morris? "Bill did believe that books could save children," Cart said. "I think of Bill as a pixie, a mischievous children's book elf," said author and illustrator Thacher Hurd. "He had such a sense of connecting people . . . and a puckish sense of humor."

That sense of humor was echoed by several of the speakers at the memorial, including consultant Mimi Kayden who said she felt like she had won the lottery when she was asked to speak. Kayden, who met Morris in 1958 at Harper, joked that Morris spent his life on the phone, "but you could never reach him!" The *New Yorker*, who was born in Eagle Pass, Texas, "never left Manhattan unless he had to," Kayden quipped. He might as well stay there; according to Rose Treviño of Houston Public Library, Morris always joked that he was "not tall enough to stay in Texas."

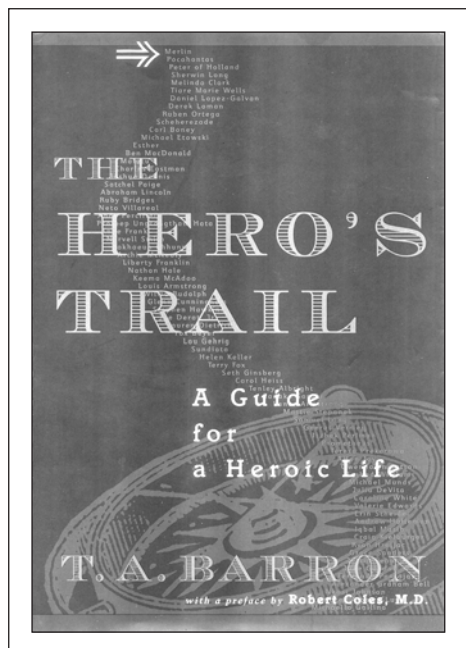
But perhaps most importantly to the librarians assembled, Morris did stand tall as an advocate—always—of librarians. Mary Lankford, library consultant, said Morris once told her that he considered librarians to be "the nicest people in the world." Ward, too, reflected, "There was something about us librarians." Morris certainly had his opportunity to schmooze with the library set. He attended forty-eight years of ALA conferences, ninety-six conferences in all.

Lankford spoke for the legion of librarians when she said, "My sadness is that there will be so many new librarians who will not know him." ☺

Everyday Heroes

T. A. Barron's Trail Leads Youth to Find Their Own Strong Examples

Sharon Korbeck



The Hero's Trail by T. A. Barron

Tom Barron loves to hike. But as much as the children's/young adult author loves to scale the breathtaking terrain in Colorado, he'd much rather navigate another trail—the one populated by everyday heroes. And he wants as many children as possible to come along.

His passion for children and nature as well as the need for strong examples of heroism led him to write the adult/young adult book *The Hero's Trail: A Guide for a Heroic Life* (Philomel, 2002).

Pop music lyricists might have us believe that “we don't need another hero.” But Barron would beg to differ. “There's nothing more powerful than real examples. If this book is about anything, it's to inspire youth to take their lives into their own hands,” Barron said.

Heroes, according to Barron, needn't be famous or rich. In fact, one of the overriding themes in his book is the true definition of heroism. “Heroes and celebrities are often confused in our society, and that is such a serious problem. Heroism is ultimately about character qualities, such as courage, perseverance, or compassion. Being a celebrity, by contrast, is just about fame—having a name or face or number on a jersey that people recognize. To use a camping analogy—which I do often!—one is a real meal in the pan and one is merely a flash in the pan.”

Barron didn't just happen upon the topic of heroism. He was inspired by his own life situation. The father of five children ages seven to fifteen, Barron said, “It wasn't until I had kids of my own that I realized the immensity of this idea.”

Further inspired in his youth, Barron credits his mother, Gloria, with shaping his life and his thoughts about

heroism. “The greatest inspiration she has given to me and my six brothers and sisters is her rock-solid belief in the power of every individual to make a difference to the world. She never lectured us to make that point. Rather, she has always lived that way,” Barron recalled.

His mother, now approaching ninety, is the inspiration for the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes, an award given annually to youth who exemplify leadership, courage, and unselfishness. In the words of 2001 Barron Prize winner Estephania Chavez, “Given the chance, we can do anything, even if we're just kids.”

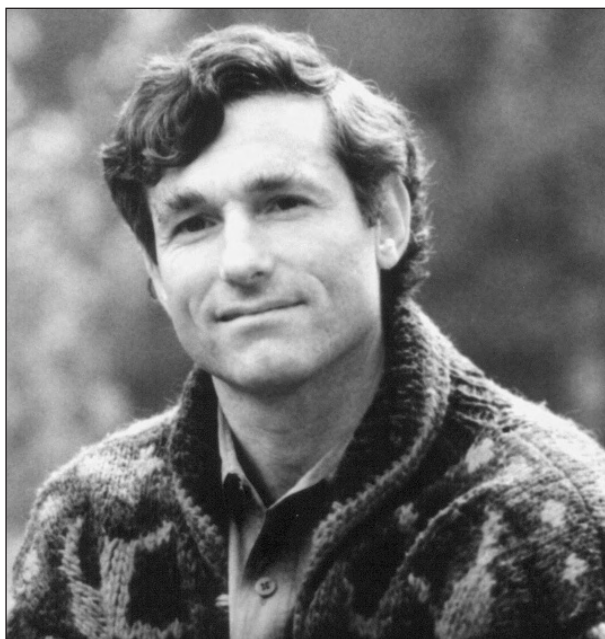
Gloria Barron's own heroism manifested itself in a twenty-year quest to establish a “touch” museum for children at the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind.

The Hero's Trail provides youth with plenty of real-life examples of heroism at work—from the works of famous people to the gestures of the unknown.

All of us need heroes, especially young people because they need to know what amazing things other people have done in order to realize what gifts they may have inside themselves.

Barron relates the stories of champion cyclist Lance Armstrong's valiant battle with cancer as well as that of nine-year-old Sherwin Long, who jumped into a pool to save his brother's life, even though Sherwin himself couldn't swim.

They're just two examples Barron uses to illustrate some of the ingredients of heroism: courage, faith, perseverance, humor, hope, adaptability, and moral direction. “If you could boil all of them



Tom Barron

down to their essence, mix them together in a great stew pot, and cook them over time, what a wondrous feast you'd have! Just one spoonful would be enough to empower a lifetime of heroic deeds," Barron said.

As Barron inspires his own children, he hopes *The Hero's Trail* will offer children everywhere similar heroic examples.

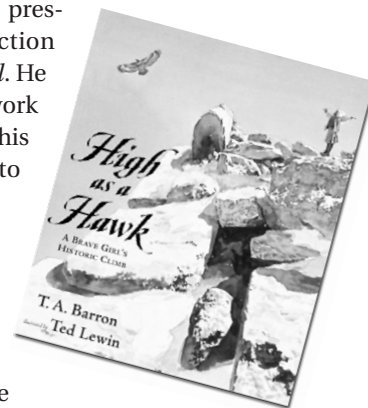
"All of us need heroes, especially young people because they need to know what amazing things other people have done in order to realize what gifts they may have inside themselves," Barron said. "Just as every apple seed holds the power to become a tree, every person, whatever his or her background, can make a positive difference to the world." &

T. A. Barron is the author of the five-book epic The Lost Years of Merlin, as well as other books for children and young adults. For more information about T. A. Barron, visit www.tabarron.com.

For more information about the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes, visit www.barronprize.org. To nominate someone for the prize, e-mail Barbara Ann Richman: ba_richman@barronprize.org.

Barron Introduces New Trilogy and Picture-Book Novel in 2004

T. A. Barron's studies of heroism aren't just present in his nonfiction book *The Hero's Trail*. He has been able to work heroic characters of his own creation into books.



"All my novels focus on a heroic young person—a girl or boy who finds the inner strength to rise above great obstacles. Kids from all over the country respond to these fictional heroes, and they tell me so. Young people yearn for positive role models who can inspire them. And given the chance, kids can do incredible things," Barron said.

This May, watch for *High as a Hawk* (Philomel), illustrated by Ted Lewin. Barron calls it a "picture-book novel" based on a historic event in which an eight-year-old girl climbs Long Peak.

"When they climbed that mountain, they had climbed their own personal mountains," said Barron, again echoing his familiar themes of nature, children, and heroism.

Coming in October, Barron's first book in the Avalon series, *The Thousand Groves of Avalon* (Philomel), will be released as part of Barron's seven-year trilogy project. The story takes place halfway between earth and heaven. The lead characters include a young roof thatcher with a surprising connection to Merlin and a former slave girl who becomes a priestess.

Heroes on the Library Shelves

Are you looking for examples of heroes to share with children in your library? The Gloria Barron Prize organization has compiled a bibliography of nonfiction and fiction titles that include ancient, modern, and mythic heroes. For the list, visit www.barronprize.org.

The Talespinner of Ghana

An Interview with Adwoa Badoe

Carol-Ann Hoyte



The culture of a distant world isn't too far away when Adwoa Badoe takes pen in hand or prepares to present an African folk tale to eager listeners.

Storyteller and children's book author Badoe grew up in Ghana, so she brings an African flavor to her four picture books, which have been published in her new home, Canada.

Her books include *Crabs for Dinner* (Sister Vision Press, 1995), *The Queen's New Shoes* (Women's Press, 1998), *The Pot of Wisdom: Ananse Stories* (Groundwood Books, 2001), and *Nana's Cold Days* (Groundwood Books, 2002). Badoe, a former doctor, lives with her family in Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

Describe your childhood in Ghana.

I am the fifth child in a family of six kids. My mom was an elementary school teacher, and my dad was a university professor. We read a lot. We lived in Kumasi and Accra, the two biggest cities in Ghana, but when I was still little we lived for awhile in my parents' hometown, Kibi, where we were influenced a lot by our larger extended family and the rural culture. My older siblings were mostly away in boarding school, and when they returned, life was suddenly more vibrant, with stories of their school lives, love interests, and other teenage interests. Then there were the cousins, aunts, new babies, funerals, festivals, and more stories all the time. Thinking about it now, life was rather colorful.

What drew you to the art form of storytelling?

Storytelling was part of the whole fabric of our lives growing up in Ghana. I never even thought of it as an art form. As far as I know, I have always been drawn to it and enjoy it immensely.

While working as a physician in Ghana, how much time were you able to dedicate to storytelling?

No time at all. I only ever told stories with family and friends, much as we might have watched TV together.

What skills, knowledge, and experience from your medical career help you as a storyteller and children's book author?

As a doctor, I learned to listen intently with my ears, my eyes, and my mind. When I tell stories, I try to encourage people to watch, listen, and be a part of the story. A physician must also have good powers of reasoning and deduction, and this helps in plot preparation.

What brought you to Canada?

I moved to Canada in late 1992 on the invitation of my brother-in-law, plus my husband was adventurous. Moving to Canada was rather scary. We had lived for a little while in England, so it wasn't that much of a culture shock. Our greatest problem was getting into the work force with our qualifications and figuring out what to do. It proved more difficult than we had thought. We are still making the transition eleven years later. I've finally figured out the key to winter though: stay warm.

How is it that you ended up living in Guelph, the same city where children's author Robert Munsch lives?

My brother-in-law was already residing in Guelph when we moved to Canada. We have remained in Guelph ever since.

How did Munsch play a role in the early stage of your career as a children's book author?

I was introduced to Robert Munsch by my son's preschool teacher who knew him quite well. Robert agreed to read through my manuscript and came back with an edit of *Crabs for Dinner*. He has remained a good friend and mentor.

What inspired your desire to write children's books?

Several things came together to make me a children's author. I had a lot of time on my hands once we immigrated to Canada, then I learned to use a computer and couldn't stop myself from writing with it. Most importantly, I had a four-year-old son with whom I loved to share stories.

What can you tell us about your books?

Crabs for Dinner: My nephews must have felt swamped by what must have seemed to them a sudden immigration of uncles and aunts to Canada. Suddenly there were all these people speaking a strange language, and who in conversation would give in to loud, belly-shaking laughter. At dinnertime, these relatives took great pleasure in making all kinds of weird-looking, strange-smelling foods and eating them with apparent relish. This idea came about one dinnertime with our extended family in Guelph.

The Queen's New Shoes: I wanted to enter a children's story competition. I searched my mind for ideas, then I remembered a news item I had seen many years ago on TV when I lived in Ghana. The cameras exposed the closet of a certain first lady of a certain poor country. And she owned more than 3,000 pairs of shoes! I was impressed then as I am now.

The Pot of Wisdom: Ananse Stories: One evening at bedtime, I told an Ananse story, "The Pot of Wisdom," to my son. He loved it. I wrote it down and tried to publish a picture book. When I was done, I still had the urge to write, so I did. Then I sent the stories off to first one publisher and then another. I wrote a few more down, and one rejection followed another. Then one publisher asked, "Do you have more of these stories?"

Nana's Cold Days: In the group home where I worked, I knew a lady who had many blankets and would refuse to get out of bed during the winter. That could have been the story, but then one

winter my children's nana visited, and that's all I'll say about that.

Did your children's books stem from oral stories or were some of them ideas for books from the very beginning?

Apart from the folk tales I have written, *The Pot of Wisdom* (Groundwood Books) and *Stories from East and West* (Macmillan Educational), all my other books were planned as books from the beginning.

Of all your books, is there one that holds special significance for you?

I love *Crabs for Dinner* for its simplicity and because it is a bridge between my new home and the old. *The Pot of Wisdom: Ananse Stories* is also significant to me because it connects me to the voices of my ancestors over hundreds of years.

At what point in the creation of your books do you see the illustrations?

It depends on the publisher. I was involved with the illustrations for *The Pot of Wisdom* from the beginning. With the other books, I only saw the illustrations when the books were just about to go to the printer.

I am usually surprised. It's a bit like having a baby in your womb for months and then seeing her for the first time when she is born. You like your baby because it's your baby, but sometimes you're not altogether sure about the wrinkled face peeping at you, and then you think, "Ooh, she's so cute."

How often does work of the illustrator match the visual images you have of the books?

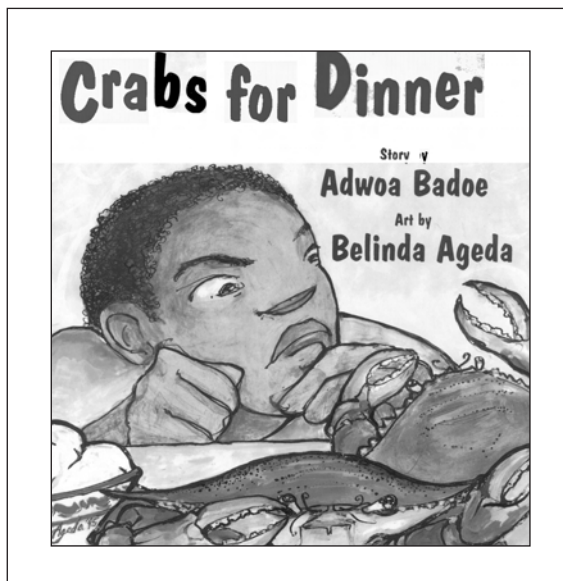
Hardly ever. The illustrators are creative artists just like the writer. When they read your manuscript, they process it and then they create. The wonder is that one story is actually created twice.

How does telling stories differ from sharing them in books? Do you have a preference?

Although some books may read almost as though they were being told, there is generally a difference of distance and approach. A book may almost ignore the author in reaching its



Adwoa Badoe



Crabs for Dinner by Adwoa Badoe

audience, but in the telling of a story, the audience cannot ignore the teller.

I'm lucky to be able to do both. Writing is solitary and comfortable until your publisher contacts you. Storytelling is lively and adrenaline-intense but full of the joy of community.

How would you compare audiences of Canadian versus Ghanaian children listening to you tell stories?

I often tell stories in the Akan tradition with a lot of audience participation in the form of call-and-response songs and interruption chants. In Ghana, people are used to this as a part of their culture; in Canada, they may be tentative at first, but then they realize how much fun it is and you can't stop them!

Tell us a bit about your family.

I have a busy family. My husband Fulé commutes each day to work but still teaches drum lessons and performs with Jiwani (Badoe and her husband's performance troupe). I have two sons, Wynne, 14, and Matthew, 10. Wynne plays the piano and likes to breakdance; Matthew writes poetry and likes having friends for Playstation sleepovers. Our daughter Stephanie is 9, and she loves to swim, dance, and dress up fancy.

In what ways do your children inspire ideas for your stories or books?

When I had my first child, I connected with childhood again and could savor every bit of it. My children's reactions to life and events have me laughing or marveling all the time. The ideas behind *Crabs for Dinner* and *Nana's Cold Days* were inspired by family events.

What has been your children's reaction to your career?

My kids mostly enjoy what I do. They are always excited when a new book comes out. Often I take them with me when I perform storytelling or dance, and I have visited their schools and classrooms for book-reading events, storytelling, drumming, and dancing. They have developed a keen interest for all the African cultural arts.

When you're not telling stories or writing books, what keeps you busy?

I specialize in teaching fun, interactive, black history workshops for schools, using storytelling, drumming, and dance. My husband and I teach a vibrant group of adults and children dance and hand drumming in Guelph. Our performance troupe, Jiwani, performs at various benefits and community events.

What are you currently working on?

During the last year, I worked on one folk tale, four picture-book manuscripts, and two short stories; but most of my time was spent on my first novel, *Sunset in Asante*, a historical fiction novel for adults. I am also preparing for the Toronto Storytelling Festival.

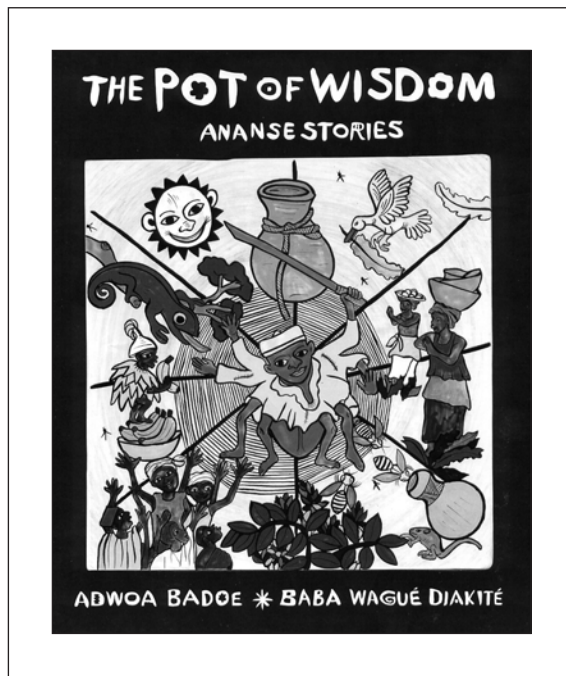
What are your plans for 2004?

I would like to mature as an African teller of stories in both the spoken and written word. I love the stories and the histories that ring from Africa and involve black people in the Diaspora. ☺

Carol-Ann Hoyte is a library clerk in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. She is also a children's book reviewer and the Quebec regional coordinator for Canadian Children's Book Week, Canada's largest children's literature event.



The Queen's New Shoes by Adwoa Badoe



The Pot of Wisdom: Ananse Stories by Adwoa Badoe

Untangling the Cobwebs

Choosing Great Web Sites for Kids

Genevieve Gallagher



Fifteen years ago, librarians didn't have to worry about the use or appropriateness of the Internet or consider the ramifications of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Those days are gone.

The fast-paced and exciting world of the Internet has provided new challenges for children's librarians. And sometimes all the questions and concerns become a veritable cobweb of confusion.

The ALSC Great Web Sites for Kids Committee (GWS) was created to help untangle those cobwebs. The group is charged with administering, maintaining, and evaluating the ALA Great Web Sites for Kids (www.ala.org/greatsites) using established selection and reconsideration criteria.

The committee is made up of seven members and two co-chairs. Each participant is appointed for a two-year term, and many return for an additional two years. Because the committee

functions electronically, this community of membership helps to keep workflow moving smoothly. We receive Web site recommendations on an ongoing basis and evaluate submissions three times per year. In addition, the fluid nature of the Internet requires that we reevaluate all sites twice each year to ensure they are still active, updated, and that their content and focus have not shifted dramatically, which would necessitate re-evaluation.

The GWS Committee receives close to 1,000 submissions per month from our site suggestion page. Sites are submitted by a variety of sources including children, Web site creators, and librarians, as well as committee members; each member is encouraged to suggest three or more sites each voting cycle.

To identify sites, committee members read many print journals, such as *Booklist*, *School Library Journal*, and *Library Media Connection*, as well as online sources. Outgoing committee chair Mary Voors also notes that she tries to read "anything by Walter Minkel," an original member of the Great Sites Task Force who generously conducted an online in-service discussion for committee members with questions about evaluation and accessibility issues.

When choosing sites for inclusion on the Great Web Sites page, committee members review sites for obviously inappropriate content. Each committee member is given a portion of the sites to evaluate; the individual committee members then vote "yes" or "no" on the sites they have been assigned.

Many sites that are submitted are already on the GWS page; others turn out to be incorrect URLs; and many more simply do not conform to the committee's mission, which is to choose sites of

Sites to Reference

Net-mom's Internet Safe House: www.netmom.com

Blue Web'n Site Evaluation Rubric:
www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/bluewebn/rubric.cfm

The Librarian's Guide to Cyberspace (ALSC publication):
www.ala.org/greatsitesbrochure

Website Usability for Children (by Jakob Nielsen):
www.useit.com/alertbox/20020414.html

Crafting Your Library's Site

Many library and school Web sites feature pages for children, but the quality and depth of the sites can vary greatly. In some cases, there is a specific department or fund to develop, promote, and maintain the Web site.

Many library sites will contain extensive original content, such as found on the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County's site where they have Story Place, an interactive site with games, stories, and activities (www.storyplace.org).

Smaller libraries may have little flexibility in the appearance of their library pages due to either their contracted Internet service provider or financial constraints. Some libraries use basic templates as their home-page framework, but they are unable to create anything more sophisticated than lists of links for their patrons. Links should be carefully selected, ensuring they are appropriate and active.

high quality for children up through age fourteen and their parents, teachers, and caregivers. This initial evaluation is fairly straightforward. More in-depth site evaluation takes more time. The games are played, the links are followed, and the site content is checked for bias, accuracy, and ease of use.

In addition to these basic requirements, committee members examine a site's advertising, clarity of the presentation, speed with which pages load, reputation of the site's author or the organization that maintains the site, and general page design. Committee members usually find only a few sites worthy of further evaluation. These sites are then voted on by the entire committee. All sites approved by at least two-thirds of the committee are added to the GWS pages.

When sites are selected, the site's webmaster is sent an e-mail notification by the committee chair alerting him or her that the Web site has been chosen as a GWS site, and including a link to the GWS seal for inclusion on the selected site. The committee hopes this seal will be recognized as a symbol of quality by both parents and children.

Evaluation criteria is available on the GWS page. The committee uses the four main criteria listed there, as established in 1997 by the ALSC Children and Technology Committee. Although these are not all-inclusive, nor do they all apply to each and every site chosen, they are a solid reference point for evaluating Internet sites for children:

The importance of site authorship. It should be clear who created and maintains the site, and there should be a method for contacting the site author or manager with comments or questions.

The site's purpose. The goals and objectives of a site, whether it is to entertain, persuade, educate, or sell, should be clear to users.


Promotion

No matter how well crafted your library's site is, users will not know about it unless you tell them. Here are some tips.

- Create signage in the library announcing new features.
- Write an article for your local paper with your library Web address and teasers about your page.
- Offer Internet classes for children with their caregivers.
- Children and their Internet use have been making headlines during the past year. Many libraries are evaluating the effect of the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) on their institutions. Regardless of whether your library implements filtering software or not, as children's librarians, we can put our collection development skills into high gear and search out the best sites that we can and provide easy access to them for our patrons.



Advertising should be appropriate to the content of the site. In addition, advertising should be clearly separate from the site's content and should not overshadow the body of the site. Children often have difficulty differentiating between the content and advertising on the Internet.

These sites should not promote social biases, and they should use the medium to expand the users' experience. Although many sites contain material that may be found in traditional print sources, a good site will expand this using links to further information or definitions, streaming video, or interactive opportunities to create a richer understanding. 

Genevieve Gallagher, of the Orange County (Va.) Public Library, is chair of ALSC's Great Web Sites for Kids Committee.

NEW!



EVERY CHILD READY TO READ @ your library[®]

Now there's a research-based and proven program to help children from birth to age five develop early literacy skills.

PLA and ALSC have packaged everything you need to offer three Every Child Ready to Read workshops into one, easy-to use kit that includes:

- ★ Training DVD or video and scripts for each of three programs (one for babies, toddlers and preschoolers)
 - ★ Supplemental resource materials
 - ★ Program brochures — 100/age group
 - ★ Four videos that reinforce workshop content
 - ★ *Every Child Ready to Read* poster
- ★ 180 bookmarks to promote the program, early literacy and your library

Cost: \$295 plus shipping

PLA/ALSC can also provide on-site program training. Call for details and cost.

For more information about early literacy and the Every Child Ready to Read initiative, go to www.pla.org/earlyliteracy.htm

Order the kit online at :
www.pla.org/earlyliteracy.htm Or email: pla@ala.org

THE BRIGHT MIDWINTER

ALA Midwinter Meeting, January 2004



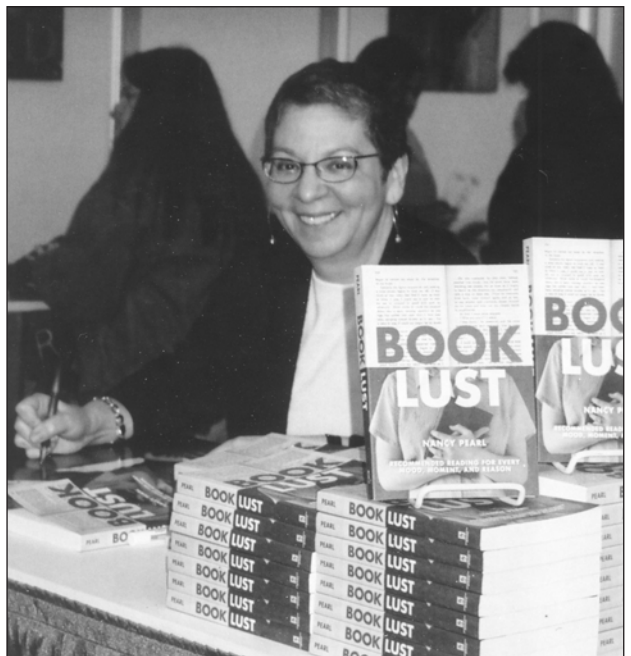
Does she ever slow down? ALSC President Cynthia K. Richey is caught working diligently in the Convention Center corridor between meetings.



Rosanne Cerny of the Queens Borough Public Library in New York is the newest member of the *Children and Libraries* Advisory Committee.



This group was busy during the ALSC All-Committee Meeting planning this fall's ALSC Institute. Imagine their surprise on hearing that featured Institute speakers, Kevin Henkes and Kate DiCamillo, were honored with ALSC book awards. The group includes, from left, Gretchen Wronka, Hennepin County (Minn.) Library; Luann Toth, *School Library Journal*; Penny Markey, County of Los Angeles Public Library; and Caitlin Dixon, Pierce County (Wash.) Library.



Author and librarian Nancy Pearl signed lots of copies of her book, and even more of her popular librarian action figure, at the ALA Store.

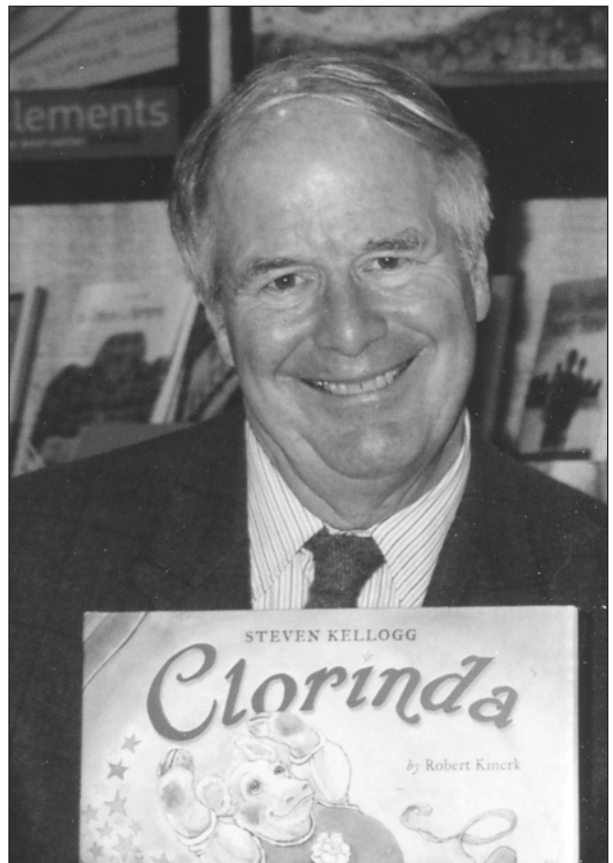
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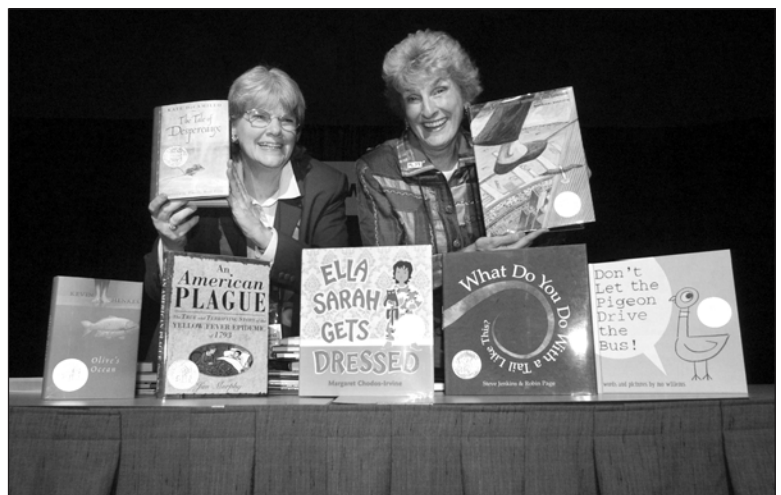
Librarians seeking nightlife in San Diego may have found the popular, historic Gaslamp Quarter, just a short jaunt from the Convention Center.



Giggle, giggle, quack? Did these ducks find their way out of Doreen Cronin's picture book and into a pond in a San Diego park?



Steven Kellogg looks just as happy as jubilant cow *Clorinda* in his latest book, published by Simon and Schuster.



Eliza Dresang (left), chair of the 2004 Newbery Committee, and Kathy East, chair of the 2004 Caldecott Committee, show off their winners after the Midwinter press conference.

Book and Media Reviews

Abbey, Cherie D., and Kevin Hillstrom, eds. *Biography Today: Profiles of People of Interest to Young Readers/Authors*, vol. 14.

Fleming, Denise; photographs by Karen Powers. *Maker of Things*.

Marcus, Leonard S. *Ways of Telling: Conversations on the Art of the Picture Book*.

Good Conversation! A Talk with Pam Muñoz Ryan (videotape)

Connecting with the Creators

The Lives and Works of Authors and Illustrators

Junko Yokota, Book Review Editor

Who is the person behind the name on a book cover? Young readers may notice a name of an author or illustrator, but rarely will they have a chance to meet the people who have created the books they enjoy. The following books (and video) are useful additions to the professional bookshelf, but they may also be productively used with children and adolescents. Reading and learning about the lives, backgrounds, and craft of successful authors and illustrators helps young people gain a perspective on what influenced their eventual careers.

Abbey, Cherie D., and Kevin Hillstrom, eds. *Biography Today: Profiles of People of Interest to Young Readers/Authors*, vol. 14. Detroit, Mich.: Omnigraphics, 2004. 443p. \$39 (ISBN 0-7808-0652-2).

The Biography Today series features people of high interest to young people today. The subjects are contemporary people who are making a difference in the world of young people through their respective work. In addition to the main series that presents biographies more generally, the subject area series is divided into artists, authors, performing artists, scientists and inventors, sports figures, and world leaders. There is no duplication between the subject series and the main series. Subject series are published three times per year in paperback, and an annual cumulative edition is available in hardback. Featured in volume 14 of the authors series are Orson Scott Card,

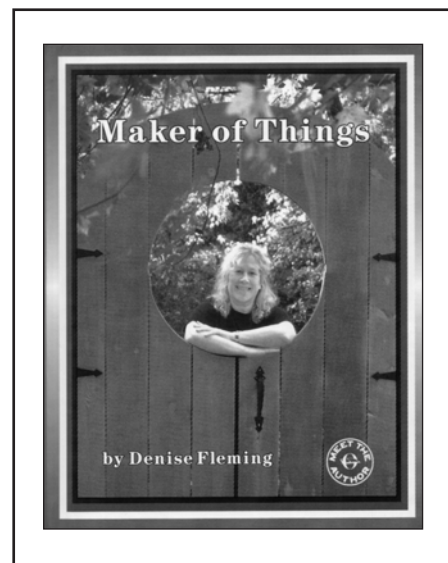
Russell Freedman, Mary GrandPré, Dan Greenburg, Nikki Grimes, Laura Hillenbrand, Stephen Hillenburg, Norton Juster, Lurlene McDaniel, and Stephanie Tolan. Each very readable entry presents an author in a format intended for both pleasure reading and research.

Sections of each biography include childhood, favorite books and authors, education, career highlights, featured books, family, hobbies and interests, selected writings, honors and awards, further readings, Web sites, and more. (See www.biographytoday.com.)

Fleming, Denise; photographs by Karen Powers. *Maker of Things*. Meet the Author series. Katonah, N.Y.: Richard C. Owen, 2002. 32p. \$14.95 (ISBN 1-5724-596-7).

This book is one of the newest in the "Meet the Author" series. A "Dear Readers," in which the author shares information with readers as though writing a letter to a young fan, opens each book. Appropriately, the books end with the salutation, "Your Friend, <author's signature>."

In the book featuring artist and author Denise Fleming, Fleming presents a brief look at her childhood and her life, sharing photographs as though the reader were sitting beside her and looking into a photo album while discussing childhood stories together. Children will likely find it humorous that Fleming shares a grade school report card indicating that she did well academically but needed to improve her behavior, specifically listening attentively and talking out of turn. Also interesting is hearing how family members

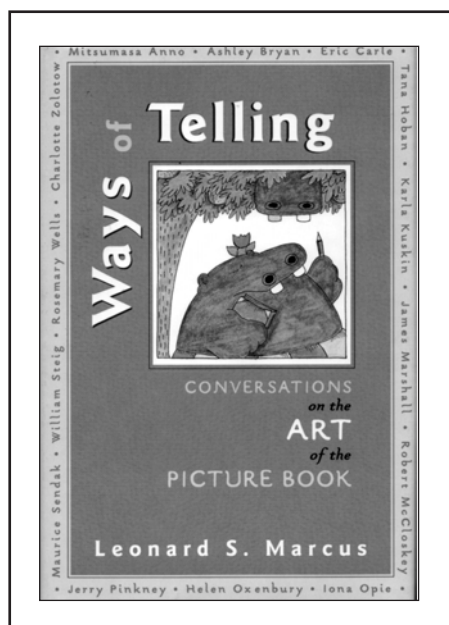


and childhood classes and activities contributed to her journey toward becoming an artist. These descriptions help child readers imagine how their own childhood lives may be helping to shape their future.

Fleming then gives a thorough explanation of how she goes about her work. Her description of her personal writing process—from inspiration to ideas recorded on note cards through many drafts of the text—is presented understandably for a young audience. Photographs show images that inspire her, from her backyard flora to the many creatures in her life. Her fascinating process of creating illustrations as single sheets of handmade paper is clearly depicted through close-up photos.

Through the series, readers have the opportunity to meet authors in as personal a way as possible through the medium of the book. There are twenty-nine books in the series thus far. Another

recent title in the series is *If You Give an Author a Pencil* by Laura Numeroff (ISBN 1-57274-595-9).



Marcus, Leonard S. *Ways of Telling: Conversations on the Art of the Picture Book*. New York: Dutton, 2002. 256p. \$29.99 (ISBN 0-525-46490-5.)

This engaging book is a compilation of critic Marcus's interviews with fourteen picture-book creators including Mitsumasa Anno, Ashley Bryan, Eric Carle, Tana Hoban, Karla Kuskin, James Marshall, Robert McCloskey, Iona Opie, Helen Oxenbury, Jerry Pinkney, Maurice Sendak, William Steig, Rosemary Wells, and Charlotte Zolotow. True to his style, Marcus poses questions that show the depth of his knowledge and his ability to make connections; all in all, the interviews offer "portraits" that reveal much about the authors and illustrators. Marcus's informed questions draw out aspects of these book creators' lives in ways that will interest young readers as well as adults. Marcus explores the typical areas of early influences, art training, work as an illustrator, working with child audiences, and so forth.

But depending on his interviewee, he customizes his focus on issues such as racism, culturally influenced artistic style, historical connections and inspiration, relationship of illustrated work to theater staging, etc. Marcus said his intent was to seek the thread that connects people's life

work with their life stories, and it is evident that he has been very successful in making those connections clear to his audience.



Good Conversation! A Talk with Pam Muñoz Ryan. Scarborough, N.Y.: Tim Podell Productions. 20 min. videotape. \$49.98 (ISBN 1-58543-061-7).

This video features an interview with Pam Muñoz Ryan, creator of many books for children and adolescents. Producer Tom Podell visited Ryan in her home in Arcadia, California. Comfortably attired, she invites viewers in. She picks oranges from her backyard, plays with her dog, and offers a tour of her home office where she writes. Viewers see the desk where she writes, her computer, and even the Japanese daruma doll on top of it.

Ryan explains how she follows the Japanese custom of painting in one eye of the daruma doll when she makes a wish—at the start of each novel—and painting in the other eye when the novel is completed—the granting of her wish. It is details like this that give the video impact beyond the facts typically found in a biographical sketch about the author. She talks about how she developed as a writer, as well as shares her writing habits. Noting how diligent writers must be, she offers encouragement for those who want to pursue their own writing.

The camera shifts to a beach only three minutes from Ryan's house, where she and her family have spent much time. Sitting on the sand, Ryan reads from one of her picture books, *Hello, Ocean*. This setting serves as a perfect backdrop.

Podell asks Ryan about her Pura Belpré Award-winning book, *Esperanza Rising*, and she explains how the story was inspired by her own grandmother's story. She also shares some of her other books—from picture books for the very young, to award-winning informational books such as *When Marian Sang*, to novels. This video allows her personality to shine through. Children and adults will enjoy meeting Ryan in this delightful video. ☺

Call for Referees

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

Referees make recommendations to the editor on whether or not manuscripts should be accepted for publication. Interested librarians should contact *Children and Libraries* Editor Sharon Korbeck at toylady@athenet.net or (715) 258-0369 for more information on the referee process.

The ALSC News

Newbery Winner, Honoree to Grace ALSC National Institute

The excitement was palpable at the ALA Midwinter Meeting. Committee members had no sooner finished ALSC National Institute planning meetings when they learned two of their guest speakers had just won major ALSC honors.

Newbery Medal and past honor winner Kate DiCamillo (Thursday dinner) and Newbery Honor and past Caldecott Honor winner Kevin Henkes (Friday lunch) will speak at the 2004 National Institute at the Hilton Minneapolis, Thursday, September 30, through Saturday, October 2.

Program tracks will cover topics including middle-school readers, outcome-based evaluation, and successful building and renovation projects. Saturday morning workshops will focus on the PLA/ALSC Early Literacy Initiative and book evalua-

tion and discussion with Capitol Choices. A free pre-conference on "Understanding Poverty: An Overview As It Relates to Children, Their Parents, and Caregivers" will be offered on September 30 to paid registrants. For registration information, visit www.ala.org/alsc and click on "Events and Conferences."



TLC presents PLA and ALSC leaders with a \$5,000 check for the "Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library" project.

The Library Corporation Donates \$10,000 to PLA/ALSC

At the Midwinter Meeting, TLC (The Library Corporation) representatives presented PLA and ALSC with a check for \$5,000 to benefit the joint PLA/ALSC project "Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library." For every conference attendee badge scanned at the TLC booth, the company donated \$5 to the project. A \$25

TLC donation was made for each attendee who attended a product demonstration. The donation was part of a fundraising program TLC created to celebrate its thirty-year anniversary. TLC continued the program at the PLA National Conference (Seattle) in February, raising an additional \$5,000. Be sure to visit the TLC booth at Annual Conference (Orlando) as the program continues.



Stephanie Anton (center) with President Cynthia K. Richey (left) and Executive Director Malore I. Brown (right).

Anton Retires

ALSC members, friends, and colleagues gathered at the joint ALSC/AASL/YALSA membership reception in San Diego to bid fond farewell to Stephanie Anton, who retired on January 30, 2004, after sixteen years of service with ALSC.

Anton began her career with ALSC on May 18, 1987, as a program assistant. In 1989, she became a program officer, and in 1997 was promoted to deputy executive director. Anton also served as acting executive director from June 2000 to August 2001. Among her many responsibilities over the years, Anton managed the ALSC conference meetings and programs, preconferences, the national institute, and the Newbery/Caldecott Banquet.

ALSC thanks Stephanie Anton for her dedication, good humor, and wisdom. We will miss her!

Great Web Sites Cited by NEH

ALSC's *Great Web Sites for Kids* (GWS) (www.ala.org/greatsites) has been selected for inclusion on Edsitement (<http://edsitement.neh.gov>), a Web site that serves as a gateway to exemplary humanities-related resources on the Internet for students, parents, and teachers. GWS was reviewed by a peer review panel and a Blue Ribbon panel made up of educators, education administrators, and higher education institutions. Both panels determined that GWS met the project's criteria for intellectual quality, content, design, and classroom impact.

Edsitement features links to online humanities resources from museums, universities, libraries, and other cultural institutions; lesson plans in art, history, literature, and social studies; and engaging activities for children and their parents. The Edsitement project is partnered by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH); the National Trust for the Humanities; and the MarcoPolo Education Foundation.

Morris Remembers ALSC

The late Bill Morris, former vice president and director of library promotion at HarperCollins Children's Books, has remembered ALSC in his estate plans through the establishment of the William C. Morris Endowment. The net interest income of this \$183,000 endowment is designated to be used by ALSC for the funding of programs, publications, events, and/or awards in the promotion of children's literature as determined by the ALSC board in conjunction with the ALSC Planning and Budget Committee. Morris, whose publishing career spanned fifty-eight years, passed away on September 29, 2003, at the age of seventy-four. He was the first recipient of the ALSC Distinguished Service Award.

Keep Connected by E-Lists

ALSC offers four new electronic discussion lists. ALSCCOLMGT provides an online forum for public librarians who are engaged in the development and management of children's print, audiovisual, and electronic collections. Subscribers

can ask questions, post suggestions, and share new ideas. PRESCHSVCS provides an online forum on any topic related to pre-school services, programs, or materials related to children from ages infant through the preschool years, and the adults who serve them. Subscribers to the list can share successful programs or outreach efforts, highlight quality new materials, ask questions, or share new services that they have instituted. CHILDTECH is devoted to the discussion of technology issues as they relate to youth services in libraries. MANAGINGCS is a forum for sharing issues, ideas, queries, solutions, and best practices in administration, supervision, and management of children's and youth library services.

ALSC-L, ALSCPUBSCH, ALSCCOLMGT, PRESCHSVCS, CHILDTECH, and MANAGINGCS are now available in digest format. Rather than receiving each post on a list as it is made, subscribers can choose to receive one mailing per week that includes all of the posts for that week. The digest version will be sent out each Friday. To request the digest format, send the following message to listproc@ala.org: set listname mail digest (substituting the name of the list). For example: set ALSC-L mail digest

Subscribers must follow this procedure for each list that they would like to receive in digest format. Current subscribers who prefer to continue receiving messages in the regular manner, when they are actually posted by subscribers, need not do anything. Your subscription remains as is.

For subscription instructions and additional information on digests and all of ALSC's electronic discussion lists, visit www.ala.org/alsc and click on the "Stay Connected" graphic near the bottom of the homepage.

Want to Study This Summer?

The Barahona Center for the Study of Books in Spanish for Children and Adolescents at California State University San Marcos announces three workshops:

June 21 and 22: "Books and Reading Strategies for Bilingual Students in Grades K-8" This workshop will focus on reading, selecting, and using appropriate

literature to teach reading strategies to bilingual students. Activities will include: selecting appropriate literature for language proficiency, cultural learning style and reading ability, using literature to teach reading strategies such as reader's theater, reciprocal teaching, SQ3R, vocabulary strategies, and the directed reading thinking activity. (Two-day workshop to be conducted in English.)

July 12, 13, and 14: "Current Issues: Books in Spanish for Young Readers." Introduction to and analysis of current practices and problems in selecting and using books in Spanish for children and adolescents. (Three-day workshop to be conducted in English.)

July 26, 27, and 28: "Literature in Spanish for Children and Adolescents/La literatura en español dirigida a los lectores infantiles y juveniles." Introduction to the literature in Spanish for children and adolescents, including selection criteria and reading promotion strategies. (Three-day workshop to be conducted in Spanish.)

Workshop sessions will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Students have free use of center resources in the afternoons. Enrollment is limited; early registration is recommended. For further information, call (760) 750-4070, e-mail Dr. Isabel Schon at ischon@csusm.edu, or fax: (760) 750-4073.

Morales, Alvarez Snare Belpré Award

Yuyi Morales, illustrator and author of *Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book* (Chronicle Books, 2003); and Julia Alvarez, author of *Before We Were Free* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2002) are the 2004 winners of the Pura Belpré Illustrator Award and Author Award respectively, honoring Latino authors and illustrators whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in a children's book. The awards are administered by the ALSC and REFORMA, the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking.

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2004 Notable Children's Books

Younger Readers

- Ella Sarah Gets Dressed* by Margaret Chodos-Irvine, illus., Harcourt
- I Face the Wind* by Vicki Cobb, illus. by Julia Gorton, HarperCollins
- Surprising Sharks* by Nicola Davies, illus. by James Croft, Candlewick
- The Racecar Alphabet* by Brian Floca, illus., Atheneum/Simon & Schuster
- Diary of a Wombat* by Jackie French, illus. by Bruce Whatley, Clarion
- Little One Step* by Simon James, illus., Candlewick
- What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?* by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page, illus., Houghton Mifflin
- How I Became a Pirate* by Melinda Long, illus. by David Shannon, Harcourt
- Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book* by Yuyi Morales, illus., Chronicle Bks.
- My Name is Yoon* by Helen Recorvits, illus. by Gabi Swiatkowska, Farrar
- One Is a Snail, Ten is a Crab: A Counting by Feet Book* by April Pulley Sayre and Jeff Sayre, illus. by Randy Cecil, Candlewick
- Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus* by Mo Willems, illus., Hyperion

Middle Readers

- Silent Movie* by Avi, illus. by C. B. Mordan, Anne Schwartz/Simon & Schuster
- Mack Made Movies* by Don Brown, illus. Roaring Brook Pr.
- The Shape Game* by Anthony Browne, illus., Farrar
- George Washington's Teeth* by Deborah Chandra and Madeleine Comora, illus. by Brock Cole, Farrar
- Vote!* by Eileen Christelow, illus., Clarion
- Granny Torrelli Makes Soup* by Sharon Creech, illus. by Chris Raschka, Joanna Cotler Books/HarperCollins
- Iqbal: A Novel* by Francesco D'Adamo, Translated by Ann Leonori, Atheneum/Simon & Schuster
- The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread* by Kate DiCamillo, illus. by Timothy Basil Ering, Candlewick
- The City of Ember* by Jeanne DuPrau, Random
- Snowed in with Grandmother Silk* by Carol Fenner, illus. by Amanda Harvey, Dial
- Bruh Rabbit and the Tar Baby Girl* by Virginia Hamilton, illus. by James E. Ransome, Bluesky Pr./Scholastic
- Horse Hooves and Chicken Feet: Mexican Folktales* edited by Neil Philip, illus. by Jacqueline Mair, Clarion

- Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez* by Kathleen Krull, illus. by Yuyi Morales, Harcourt
- The Man Who Made Time Travel* by Kathryn Lasky, illus. by Kevin Hawkes, Melanie Kroupa/Farrar
- Hana's Suitcase: A True Story* by Karen Levine, illus., Albert Whitman
- The Man Who Went to the Far Side of the Moon: The Story of Apollo 11 Astronaut Michael Collins* by Bea Uusma Schyffert, Translated by Emi Guner, Chronicle Bks.
- Locomotion* by Jacqueline Woodson, Putnam

Older Readers

- Colibrí* by Ann Cameron, Frances Foster Bks./Farrar
- Jack: The Early Years of John F. Kennedy* by Ilene Cooper, Dutton Children's Books
- Ben Franklin's Almanac: Being a True Account of the Good Gentleman's Life* by Candace Fleming, illus., Anne Schwartz/Simon & Schuster
- In Defense of Liberty: The Story of America's Bill of Rights* by Russell Freedman, illus., Holiday House
- Inkheart* by Cornelia Funke, translated by Anthea Bell, Chicken House/Scholastic
- Olive's Ocean* by Kevin Henkes, Greenwillow
- Keeper of the Night* by Kimberly Willis Holt, Henry Holt
- The Merlin Conspiracy* by Diana Wynne Jones, Greenwillow
- Theodore Roosevelt: Champion of the American Spirit* by Betsy Harvey Kraft, illus., Clarion
- Mosque* by David Macaulay, illus., Walter Lorraine Bks./Houghton Mifflin
- Stop the Train!* by Geraldine McCaughrean, HarperCollins
- An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793* by Jim Murphy, illus., Clarion
- Ruby Electric* by Theresa Nelson, Atheneum
- Run, Boy, Run* by Uri Orlev, translated by Hillel Halkin, Walter Lorraine Bks./Houghton Mifflin
- Cuba 15* by Nancy Osa, Delacorte
- East* by Edith Pattou, Harcourt
- The River Between Us* by Richard Peck, Dial
- The Wee Free Men* by Terry Pratchett, HarperCollins
- Remember the Lusitania!* by Diana Preston, illus., Walker & Co.
- Mortal Engines* by Philip Reeve, EOS/HarperCollins
- Don't Hold Me Back: My Life and Art* by Winfred Rembert, illus., a Marcato Book/Cricket Bks.

- Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* by J.K. Rowling, Arthur A. Levine/Scholastic
- The Tree of Life: A Book Depicting the Life of Charles Darwin, Naturalist, Geologist and Thinker* by Peter Sís, illus. Frances Foster/Farrar
- The Amulet of Samarkand* by Jonathan Stroud, Miramax Bks./Hyperion

All Ages

- Tell Me a Picture* by Quentin Blake, illus., Millbrook
- Roller Coaster* by Marla Frazee, illus., Harcourt
- The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* by Mordicai Gerstein, illus., Roaring Brook Pr.
- There's a Frog in My Throat! 440 Animal Sayings a Little Bird Told Me* by Loreen Leedy and Pat Street, illus. by Loreen Leedy, Holiday House
- Kensuke's Kingdom* by Michael Morpurgo, Scholastic
- Blues Journey* by Walter Dean Myers, illus. by Christopher Myers, Holiday House
- Alice's Adventures in Wonderland: A Pop-up Adaptation of Lewis Carroll's Original Tale* by Robert Sabuda, illus., Little Simon/Simon & Schuster
- The Hidden Alphabet* by Laura Vaccaro Seeger, illus., a Neal Porter Book/Roaring Brook Pr.

For the annotated 2004 list and past Notable Children's Book lists, visit www.ala.org/alsc and click on "Awards and Scholarships."

Members of the 2004 Notable Children's Books Committee are Marion Rutsch, chair, Our Lady of Lourdes School Library, Bethesda, Md.; Carolyn R. Angus, George Stone Center for Children's Books, Claremont, Calif.; Jerene D. Battisti, Renton Public Library, Wash.; Peg W. Cizek, Niles Public Library, Ill.; Elizabeth Guldseth, Arlington, Va.; Susan Link, Colony Bend Elementary School, Sugar Land, Tex.; Elizabeth Long, New York; Micki Nevett, Westmere Elementary School, Albany, N.Y.; Maria Salvadore, Washington, D.C.; Victoria J. Smith, McArthur Public Library, Biddeford, Maine; and Maureen White, University of Houston at Clear Lake School Library.

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In *Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book*, Morales's energetic and playful illustrations capture the essence of Mexican culture with bold and humorous motifs that illuminate Grandma Beetle's vitality and Señor Calavera's expressiveness.

Before We Were Free is an engrossing account of twelve-year-old Anita's life amidst the fear that consumes her family. This powerfully written story reflects the sense of uncertainty and danger that hung in the air during this time in the Dominican Republic's troubled history. Exquisitely written testimonial, sometimes in diary form, immerses readers in the details of life under dictator General Trujillo during the political upheavals of the early 1960s. It is an engaging story of one girl's coming of age set against a backdrop of fear and secrets.

The committee selected three Honor Books for Illustration: *First Day in Grapes*, illustrated by Robert Casilla, written by L. King Pérez, and published by Lee and Low Books, Inc. (2002); *The Pot that Juan Built*, illustrated by David Diaz, written by Nancy Andrews-Goebel, and published by Lee and Low Books, Inc. (2002); and *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez*, illustrated by Yuyi Morales, written by Kathleen Krull, and published by Harcourt (2003).

First Day in Grapes vividly and realistically portrays the human characters in the story about a child of migrant workers. The use of watercolor, colored pencil, and pastel creates a warmth and sensitivity to Chico and his school experiences.

The Pot that Juan Built is a picture biography that combines a variant of *The House That Jack Built* with the story of Juan Quezada, who rediscovered the ancient method of pottery making in Mata Ortiz, Mexico. Diaz's original type font and computer-generated art exudes a rich palette that glows like jewels and reflects the hot desert sun.

In *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez*, Morales uses brightly colored acrylics, handmade stamps, and computer-created cutouts to depict the life of this civil rights leader. Golden, earth-

They Sure Sound Good: 2004 Notable Children's Recordings

ALSC's 2004 list of Notable Children's Recordings for youth age fourteen and younger includes:

African Playground. Putumayo World Music
Amber Was Brave, Essie Was Smart: The Story of Amber and Essie, Told Here in Poems and Pictures. Live Oak Media

The Carnivorous Carnival. Harper Children's Audio
Charlie Bone and the Time Twister. Listening Library
A Corner of the Universe. Listening Library
Dreamland: World Lullabies and Soothing Songs. Putumayo World Music

Ella Fitzgerald: The Tale of a Vocal Virtuosa. Weston Woods Studios

Get Ready for Second Grade, Amber Brown. Live Oak Media

Giggle, Giggle, Quack. Weston Woods Studios

Indian Elephant Tea. Rounder Records

Inkheart. Listening Library

Midnight for Charlie Bone. Listening Library

Most Perfect Harmony. Big Canoe Records

Nicky's Jazz for Kids. Dominick Media

Noah's Ark. Weston Woods Studios

Rodzina. Listening Library

Sahara Special. Listening Library

Songs from the Street: Thirty-five Years of Music. Sony Wonder

Sweet Dreams: Lullabies for Guitar. Goatscape Music

The Tale of Despereaux. Listening Library

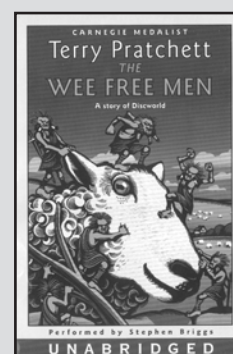
The Trail of the Jedi: Star Wars Jedi Quest #2. Listening Library

The Voyage of the Dawn Treader. Harper Children's Audio

The Wee Free Men. Harper Children's Audio

Where I'd Like to Be. Listening Library

Winnie-the-Pooh. Harper Children's Audio



For an annotated list, including recommended grade levels and running times, see www.ala.org/alsc, "Awards & Scholarships."

Members of the 2004 Notable Children's Recordings Committee are Thomas J. Barthelmess, chair, Spokane County Library District, Wash.; Mary Burkey, Olentangy Local School District, Lewis Center, Ohio; Adrienne Furness, Webster Public Library, N.Y.; Virginia M. Gustin, Sonoma County Library, Santa Rosa, Calif.; Kathleen Apuzzo Krasniewicz, Perrot Memorial Library, Old Greenwich, Conn.; Linda W. Lewis, Free Library of Philadelphia; Amy Lilien-Harper, The Ferguson Library, Harry Bennett Branch, Stamford, Conn.; and Glenna M. Sloan, Queens College School of Education, Flushing, N.Y.

toned colors and wide, flowing brush strokes lend depth and honesty to the history and struggle of migrant farm workers in California.

Two Author Award Honor Books were named: *Cuba 15* by Nancy Osa and published by Delacorte Press (2003); and *My Diary from Here to There/Mi diario de aquí hasta allá* by Amada Irma Pérez,

illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez, and published by Children's Book Press/Editorial Libros Para Niños (2002).

Cuba 15 humorously and poignantly tells the story of Violet Paz as she prepares unwillingly for her *quinceañero*, the traditional Latina fifteenth birthday celebration. Her journey into self-discovery leads her to truly value and understand her Cuban heritage for the first time.

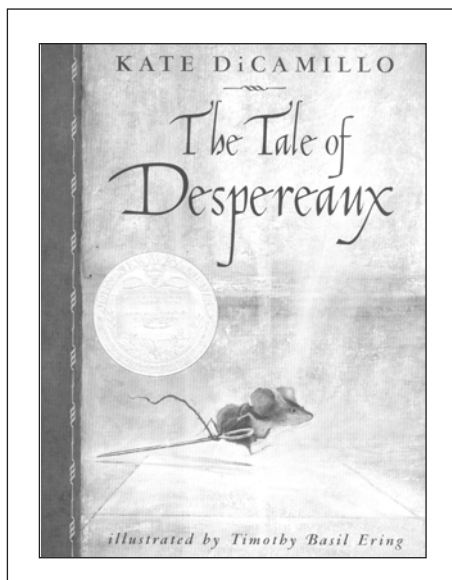
My Diary from Here to There/ Mi diario de aquí hasta allá is a touching account of a family emigrating from Mexico to California. A bilingual picture book, this young girl's diary chronicles the family's anxiety, excitement, and uncertainty as they leave home on a journey made by many families.

Members of the ALSC/REFORMA Belpré Committee are: Rose Violet Treviño, chair, Houston Public Library; Ilene Abramson, Los Angeles Public Library; Salvador Avila, Las Vegas–Clark County (Nev.) Library District; Roslyn Beitler, Barrett Elementary School, Arlington, Va.; Linda Caycedo, New York Public Library; Ana-Elba Pavon, San Francisco Public Library; and Tammy Pineda, Hennepin County Library, Minnetonka, Minn.

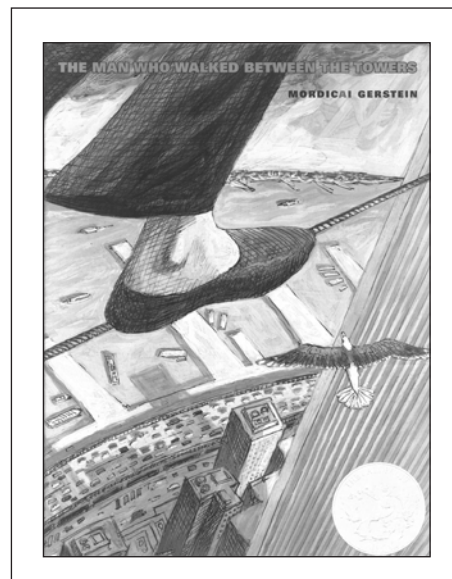
DiCamillo, Gerstein Take Top Honors

Kate DiCamillo, author of *The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread* (Candlewick Press), illustrated by Timothy Basil Ering, is the 2004 winner of the John Newbery medal; and Mordicai Gerstein, illustrator and author of *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers* (Roaring Brook Press/Millbrook Press), is the 2004 winner of the Randolph Caldecott medal. DiCamillo and Gerstein were among the award winners announced January 12 by ALSC during the ALA Midwinter Meeting in San Diego.

The Tale of Despereaux draws the reader into an enchanting account of a smaller-than-usual mouse in love with music, stories, and a princess named Pea. This tiny hero faints at loud noises but gathers the courage to fulfill his dreams. With character and plot far more complex than the



The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread by Kate DiCamillo



The Man Who Walked Between the Towers by Mordicai Gerstein

traditional fairy tale, separate stories introduce Despereaux, condemned for talking to the princess; the evil rat, Roscuro, who loves light and soup; and Miggery Sow, a farm girl with royal aspirations. Their fates are threaded together as Despereaux undertakes a hero's quest that culminates in mice, rats, and humans living almost happily ever after. The lyrical language of this distinctive tale is as savory as the palace soup.

The Man Who Walked Between the Towers is a true story of the daring feat of a spirited young Frenchman who walked a tightrope between the World Trade Center

twin towers in 1974. His joy in dancing on a thin wire high above Manhattan and the awe of the spectators in the streets far below is captured in exquisite ink and oil paintings that perfectly complement the spare, lyrical text. Gerstein's skillful compositions and dramatic use of perspective make this a book that literally takes your breath away. He ensures that this extraordinary event is imprinted on readers' minds and creates a powerful, transforming memory.

Newbery Honor Books are *Olive's Ocean* by Kevin Henkes, published by Greenwillow Books; and *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793* by Jim Murphy, published by Clarion Books.

Olive's Ocean opens as twelve-year-old Martha receives a page from the journal of a classmate, Olive, who has died in an accident. Olive's entry about a desire to be Martha's friend, to see the ocean, and to become a writer propels Martha into a journey from childhood to the brink of adolescence. Beautiful and powerful imagery drawn from the sun, sand, and sea of Martha's summer with her family and friends at Cape Cod skillfully reflects the pain and joy of Martha's coming of age and awareness of her own mortality.

An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793 dramatically recounts the true story of the yellow fever epidemic that nearly decimated the population of Philadelphia at the end of the eighteenth century. Integrating newspapers, diaries, personal testimonies, and period illustrations, the narrative delivers a social and medical history of the times and raises chilling questions about the disease today.

Three Caldecott Honor Books were named: *Ella Sarah Gets Dressed*, illustrated and written by Margaret Chodos-Irvine and published by Harcourt, Inc.; *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This* illustrated and written by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page and published by Houghton Mifflin Company; and *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*, illustrated and written by Mo Willems and published by Hyperion.

In *Ella Sarah Gets Dressed* a young girl stands in front of her wardrobe to select her attire and makes her own fashion statement. Elegant in its simplicity, this perfect picture book uses a "variety of printmaking techniques." Cheerful, bold colors outlined in white emphasize Ella Sarah's freedom and confidence.

What Do You Do With a Tail Like This? is an innovative guessing book that delivers a fun and playful science lesson on thirty animals' body parts: ears, eyes, mouths, noses, feet, and tails. The artist uses exquisite cut-paper collage to detail basic forms combined with clever placement of the spare text to create an interactive visual display.

In *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*, a persistent pigeon asks, pleads, cajoles, wheedles, connives, negotiates, demands, and uses emotional blackmail in attempts to get behind the wheel. Pigeon will not take no for an answer, and puts the reader on the spot, using an escalating series of tactics. Perfectly paced, every line and blank space in the deceptively simple illustrations is essential.

Members of the 2004 Newbery Award Committee are: Eliza T. Dresang, chair, Florida State University, Tallahassee; Thomas L. Bush, Southwest Georgia Regional Library, Bainbridge; Georgene DeFilippo, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh; Dorothy Evans, Chicago Public Library; Crystal W. Faris, Nassau (N.Y.) Library System; Anna R. Healy, Skokie (Ill.) Public Library; Sarah J. Howard, Daniel Boone Regional Library, Columbia, Mo.; Nancy S. Kraus, Council Rock School, Rochester, N.Y.; Nina Lindsay, Oakland (Calif.) Public Library; Kathy McLellan, Johnson County (Kan.) Public Library; Sylvia Mora Oña, Miami-Dade (Fla.) Public Library System; Diane G. Person, Brooklyn, N.Y.; Martha Seif Simpson, Stratford (Conn.) Library Association; Virginia Walter, University of California, Los Angeles; and Carol Ann Wilson, Westfield (N.J.) Memorial Library.

Members of the 2004 Caldecott Award Committee are: Kathy East, chair, Wood County (Ohio) District Public Library; Khafre K. Abif, Columbus (Ohio) Metropolitan Library; Karen Breen, Kirkus Reviews, New York; Nell Colburn, Mult-

nomah County Public Library, Portland, Ore.; MaryKay Dahlgreen, Oregon State Library; Carol Doll, State University of New York, Albany; Debra S. Gold, Parma Heights (Ohio) Library; Linnea Hendrickson, Albuquerque (N.M.) Public Schools; Ellen Loughran, Brooklyn, N.Y.; Carla Morris, Provo (Utah) City Library; Bianca Roberts, St. Louis County (Mo.) Library; Nancy Snyder, Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County (N.C.); Bettye L. Smith, District of Columbia Public Library; Anitra T. Steele, Mid-Continent (Mo.) Public Library; William H. Teale, University of Illinois at Chicago.

Tale of Plague Given Sibert Award

Jim Murphy, author of *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793* (Clarion Books/Houghton Mifflin), was named the winner of the 2004 Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Award for most distinguished informational book for children published in 2003.

Murphy draws material from primary sources, such as private diaries, newspapers, and books, to give insight into the political, social, and cultural challenges of the yellow fever epidemic. The compelling narrative pulls readers into the crisis, illuminates the community's responses, and shows the best and worst of humanity.

One Sibert Honor Book was named: *IFace the Wind*, written by Vicki Cobb, illustrated by Julia Gorton, and published by HarperCollins.

A Vicki Cobb Science Play book, *IFace the Wind* asks its young readers to think like scientists as it leads them through experiments and observations about wind. Cobb's simple text and Gorton's dynamic illustrations invite participation.

Members of the 2004 Sibert Informational Book Award Committee are: Cathryn M. Mercier, chair, Center for the Study of Children's Literature at Simmons College, Boston; Betty Carter, consultant, Coppell, Texas; Bruce Farrar, Nashville Public Library, Tenn.; Peg Glisson, Pittsford Central Schools, N.Y.; Ruth Gordon,

2004 Notable Computer Software and Online Subscription Services for Children

The 2004 Notable Computer Software and Online Subscription Services for Children lists recognize high-quality computer programs and online services for children fourteen years of age and younger.

Computer Software

Exploring the World of Thomas

Day. Thomas Day Project/New Hope Pub.

Form Wild: Birds, Insects, African Animals. Kaulfuss Designers

Garfield's Typing Pal. DeMarque

I Spy Fantasy. Scholastic

Learn to Play Chess with Fritz and Chester. Viva Media

Math Missions: The Amazing Arcade. Scholastic

Math Missions: The Race to Spectacle City. Scholastic

Online Subscription Services

Authors4Teens: Greenwood, www.authors4teens.com

Cobblestone Online: Carus Pub., www.cobblestoneonline.net

Facts on File Online: Facts on File, www.fofweb.com

Unitedstreaming: United Learning, www.unitedstreaming.com

World Book Online: World Book, www.worldbookonline.com

For the annotated list, including age recommendations, see www.ala.org/alsc, "Awards and Scholarships."

Members of the 2004 Notable Software for Children Committee are Barbara Scotto, chair, Brookline (Mass.) Public Schools; Dianne Baasch, IMediaSource, New York; Julie Cohen, Berkshire Country Day School, Lenox, Mass.; Kirsten G. Cutler, Sonoma County Library, Rohnert Park, Calif.; Caren S. Koh, Queens Library, Jamaica, N.Y.; and Bina Williams, Bridgeport (Conn.) Public Library.

Critical Reviewing, Unltd., Cloverdale, Calif.; Tina Hubert, *Lewis and Clark Library System, Edwardsville, Ill.;* and Kathy Simonetta, *Indian Trails Public Library District, Wheeling, Ill.*

Translated Hebrew Story Wins Batchelder Award

Walter Lorraine Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin, was named the winner of the 2004 Mildred Batchelder Award for the most outstanding children's book originally published in a foreign language and subsequently translated into English for publication in the United States for *Run, Boy, Run*. Originally published in Hebrew in 2001 as *Ruts, yeled, ruts*, the book was written by Uri Orlev and translated to English by Hillel Halkin.

Run, Boy, Run is the extraordinary account of one boy's survival of the Holocaust. At the age of eight, Srulik is left alone in the Warsaw ghetto and must fend for himself, even forgetting his name, in order to survive the Holocaust. With dangers all around him, he must fight off starvation, the danger of capture, brutal Polish winters, and the ever-present anti-Semitism. He escapes into the countryside where he spends the ensuing years hiding in the forest, dependent on the sympathies and generosity of the poor farmers in the surrounding area. Despite the seemingly insurmountable odds, several chases, captures, attempted executions, and even the loss of his arm, Srulik miraculously survives.

The Batchelder committee selected one Honor Book, published by Chronicle Books. *The Man Who Went to the Far Side*

of the Moon: The Story of Apollo 11 Astronaut Michael Collins, by Bea Uusma Schyffert, was translated into English by Emi Guner. The book was originally published in Swedish in 1999, as *Astronauten som inte fick landa*.

Reminiscent of a scrapbook, this extraordinary book chronicles what Michael Collins did, saw, and thought about in space. What was it like to go to the moon and be the only man in the mission not to walk on the surface? Collins orbited the moon fourteen times, while surrounded by 701 power switches and twenty pounds of checklists. Through fascinating facts, quotes, checklists, original drawings, and photos taken both in space and on Earth, the book tells how the astronauts prepared for their historic journey, what they brought with them, and what they left behind.

Have You Watched Yet? 2004 Notable Children's Videos

ALSC's 2004 list of Notable Children's Videos for youth age fourteen and younger includes:

Bark, George. Weston Woods
Bread Comes to Life: A Garden of Wheat and a Loaf to Eat. Informed Democracy
Chiefs. Active Parenting Publishers
Come On, Rain! Weston Woods
Coral Seas (Blue Planet: Seas of Life). Discovery Channel
Dem Bones. Weston Woods
Ella Fitzgerald: The Tale of a Vocal Virtuosa. Weston Woods
Everyday Signs (Signing Time! vol. 3). Two Little Hands Productions
Giggle, Giggle, Quack. Weston Woods
I Want a Dog. National Film Board of Canada
Leonardo da Vinci. Kiki & Assoc.
"Let's Get a Pup!" said Kate. Spoken Arts
Showa Shinzan. National Film Board of Canada
Snowflake Bentley. Weston Woods
The Teacher from the Black Lagoon. Weston Woods
The Velveteen Rabbit. Billy Budd Films

For the annotated list, including recommended ages and running times, see www.ala.org/alsc, "Awards and Scholarships."

Members of the 2004 Notable Children's Videos Committee are Stephen A. Zampino, chair, *The Ferguson Library, Stamford, Conn.;* Elizabeth Jane Abramson, *Los Angeles Public Library;* Patricia S. Arnold, *East Baton Rouge Parish Library, La.;* Edith Ching, *St. Alban's School, Washington, D.C.;* Martha Edmundson, *Denton Public Library System, Tex.;* Helen Foster James, *San Diego, Calif.;* Molly Krukewitt, *Fort Bend County Libraries, Tex.;* Margaret Tice, *New York Public Library;* Kathryn Lee Whitacre, *Free Library of Philadelphia;* Lucinda Whitehurst, *St. Christopher's School, Richmond, Va.;* and Susan Wray, *Kansas City Public Library, Mo.*

Committee members included: Kay Weisman, chair, *Willowbrook Elementary School, Glenview, Ill.;* Lynn Hoffman, *Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Ind.;* Louise L. Sherman, retired, *Leonia, N.J.;* Silvia Kraft-Walker, *Glenview Public Library, Glenview, Ill.;* Martha K. Flotten, *Multnomah County Library, Portland, Ore.*

Carnegie Committee Thinks Ducks Are Just Quacky!

Paul R. Gagne and Melissa Reilly of Weston Woods Studios, producers of *Giggle, Giggle, Quack*, based on the picture book by Doreen Cronin and illustrated by Betsy Lewin, are the 2004 recipients of the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Children's Video. The video is narrated by Randy Travis with music by Scotty Huff.

When Farmer Brown leaves home for a vacation in the tropics, he warns his brother Bob to "watch out for Duck—he's trouble." But the mischievously opportunistic duck can't resist taking full advantage of the situation: securing pizza, bubble baths, and movie night for all his barnyard friends. This engaging animated adaptation of Cronin and Lewin's whimsical picture book features flawless narration, subtle but highly evocative background music, quirky



Virginia Walter, 2004 Distinguished Service Award Winner

sound effects, and characters that burst with personality.

Members of the 2004 Carnegie Award Committee are: Pamela Petrick Barron, chair, Dept. of Library and Information Studies, University of North Carolina-Greensboro; Sharon Grover, Arlington County (Va.) Dept. of Libraries; Peggy Hagen, Fairport (N.Y.) Public Library; Joyce R. Laiosa, Voorheesville (N.Y.) Public Library; Jeanette Larson, Austin (Texas) Public Library; Amy E. Sears, Teaneck (N.J.) Public Library; Sharon K. Snow, San Jose (Calif.) Public Library; Catherine Threadgill, Charleston County (S.C.) Public Library; and Lynn K. Vanca, Richfield Branch Library, Akron-Summit (Ohio) County Public Library.

Walter Receives Distinguished Service Award

Virginia Walter, an ALSC past president, is the 2004 recipient of the ALSC Distinguished Service Award. The award honors an individual ALSC member who has made significant contributions to, and had an impact on, library service to children and to ALSC, as well as a sustained contribution over time to the understanding or expansion of library services to children.

Walter has been involved with children and libraries as Children's Services Coordinator at Los Angeles Public

Library. As Professor and Chair of the Information Studies Department at the University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA), she has reinvigorated UCLA's program of education for future children's librarians and been a valuable mentor, guiding students to the successful completion of Ph.D. degrees.

As a member of ALSC, she has served on the Research and Development Committee, the (John) Newbery Award Committee, and the Board of Directors. She was president of the association from 2000 to 2001. Currently, she serves as ALSC's representative to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Section on Libraries for Children and Youth.

Walter brought the process of outcome evaluation to children's and young adult librarians through her influential books *Output Measures for Public Library Service to Children: A Manual of Standardized Procedures* (ALA Editions, 1992) and *Output Measures and More: Planning and Evaluating Public Library Services for Young Adults* (ALA Editions, 1995). Her book *Children and Libraries: Getting It Right* is in its second printing at ALA. Children's librarians frequently cite her research on library summer reading programs and children's use of electronic library catalogs. Her book, *Hi, Pizza Man!*, published by Orchard Press in 1995, has become a storytime classic. In 1998, *Making Up Megaboy*, a moving and acclaimed young adult novel, was published by Dorling Kindersley.

"Her work has influenced library services to children both nationally and internationally," said committee chair Patsy Weeks. "We are pleased to present this award to such an outstanding member of the Association for Library Service to Children."

Members of the award selection committee were Patsy Weeks, chair, Heart of Texas Literature Center, Howard Payne University, Brownwood, Tex.; Amy Kellman (ret.); Margaret Kirkpatrick, Irving School, Wichita, Kan.; Kate Todd (ret.); and Blanche Woolls, School of Library and Information Science, San Jose State University, Calif.

New Hampshire Media Specialist Honored

Nancy J. Keane, library media specialist at Rundlett Middle School in Concord, N.H., is the 2004 recipient of the ALSC/Sagebrush Education Resources Literature Program Award. The award, donated by Sagebrush, is designed to honor a member of ALSC who has developed and implemented a unique and outstanding reading or literature program for children (infants through age fourteen). Keane will receive \$1,000 to support her attendance at the upcoming ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida.

A tireless advocate for bringing kids and books together, Keane evolved a multifaceted approach to discussing books that culminated in the development of *The Kids Book Beat*, a public access television show which features students enthusiastically sharing their opinions on the books they have read. Keane had previously produced one-on-one booktalks, a Web site containing more than 1,400 booktalks, and a radio call-in show. *The Kids Book Beat* TV show brings middle school students together to discuss books for their grade level, as well as books for younger children. Viewers can, and do, make suggestions via e-mail for additional books to be discussed on the show. Keane has noted an increase in the circulation of the books featured on *The Kids Book Beat*, and publicity for the show has resulted in a weekly column for a local newspaper.

"With *The Kids Book Beat* TV show, Keane and her students demonstrate a passion for books and literature that reaches beyond the classroom and brings books immediately alive for kids," said selection committee chair Marge Loch-Wouters. "Keane's enthusiastic encouragement and can-do attitude contribute to the energy the students put into their innovative television show. In addition, Keane's determination to provide access to the show's book reviews to children throughout the state via the school Web page is especially noteworthy."

Members of the award selection committee were Marge Loch-Wouters, chair,

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2004 ALA Annual Conference Schedule

*Designates a closed meeting.

Thursday, June 24

2-4:30 P.M.

ALSC Executive Committee

4:30-6 P.M.

Joint AASL/ALSC/YALSA Executive Committees

7-9:30 P.M.

Great Beginnings! ALSC Preconference Reception

Friday, June 25

8 A.M.-5:30 P.M.

Great Beginnings! Libraries and Early Literacy Preconference. Early literacy is a hot topic in the library world these days. Learn about the latest research and best practices from your colleagues and some of the nation's experts in early learning. Go home with practical ideas for building partnerships, adding a proven program to your services, and influencing public policy to support early literacy @ your library!

1-5 P.M.

NASA @ Your Library Training

2-4 P.M.

*2005 Sibert Committee

2-5:30 P.M.

Notable Children's Books Committee

Saturday, June 26

8-9 A.M.

Priority Group Consultants

8:30-11 A.M.

*2005 Sibert Committee

9-11 A.M.

ALSC Connections. Make connections with new ALSC members and officers. Learn about committee opportunities, conference programs, and more at this informal coffee/tea reception.

9:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.

Division Leadership

10:30 A.M.-12 P.M.

Attracting the Youngest Patrons. "There is no frigate like a book," said Emily Dickinson—and preschoolers make great sailors. We know that it's good to introduce books early to children. But which ones? What makes a great preschool book? How can libraries highlight and support activities for babies and toddlers? A panel of authors, illustrators, and librarians, moderated by author Marilyn Singer, will discuss these and other questions.

1:30-3:30 P.M.

Living Legends: You're So Famous, I Thought You Were Dead. Steve Herb, ALSC Past President, will moderate a panel of "living legends in public library service to children." Following a question-and-answer period, each panelist will describe his or her biggest challenges and success stories.

Program This: After-School Programming 101. Come and hear basic ideas and practical advice on producing and promoting after-school programs for school-age kids.

Seeing the Whole Picture: Evaluating Youth Services—Pardon Me for Being a Manager VI. Evaluation is critically important to everything we do. A PowerPoint retelling of Ed Young's *Seven Blind Mice* will illustrate this management principle in the final stand-alone program in the Pardon Me for Being a Manager series. Dr. Virginia Walter of UCLA and Jerry West of the U.S. Department of Education are featured speakers, along with a panel of library experts discussing their successful local evaluations.

Serving the Reading Needs of Latinos in the U.S. through Children's Literature. This panel will present an overview of Latino literature for children in English and Spanish. Criteria for examining Spanish-language books for children, as well as a discussion of the Americas Award, will be included.

Yuyi Morales, Belpré Award winner, will conclude the program. A book signing will follow.

Striking Gold with Golden Books: The Significance of Little Golden Books in the History of the Family Literacy Arena. Little Golden Books made a significant impact on children's access to books, and several renowned authors got their start illustrating the sweet, charming stories. This program traces the history of little Golden Books, their significance to children's early literacy and learning, and their impact on children's publishing. Participants will also discover the "science and theory" behind this publishing phenomenon.

Together Is Better: Creative Collaborations Help Libraries Reach New Audiences. Three diverse projects demonstrate how public libraries can promote literacy and reach new and underserved audiences through creative partnerships with family literacy programs and government agencies. Audience members are invited to bring flyers highlighting collaborative programs for distribution at a literature table.

2-4 P.M.

*2005 Arbuthnot Committee

*2006 Arbuthnot Committee

*2005 Batchelder Committee

*2005 Wilder Committee

*2005 Caldecott Committee

Organization and Bylaws Committee

2-5:30 P.M.

*2005 Carnegie Committee

*2005 Newbery Committee

Notable Children's Recordings Committee

Notable Computer Software for Children Committee

8-10 P.M.

Stories for a Saturday Evening. Please join us for ALSC's annual evening of storytelling, featuring renowned storytellers from around the country and the world.

Sunday, June 27**8:30–11 A.M.**

*2005 Caldecott Committee

9:30 A.M.–12:30 P.M.

All Committee Meetings I and II

*2005 Wilder Committee

*2006 Belpré Committee

Notable Children's Videos Committee

Planning and Budget Committee

10:30 A.M.–12 P.M.**Reading or Cheating? Using Research to Support Audiobooks in the Literacy Landscape.**

Current research dictates that engaging different learning styles is crucial in a successful literacy program. A panel will discuss theoretical as well as practical issues related to audiobooks while researchers will share current information supporting the use of audio in literacy instruction as a means of meeting learner needs.

1:30–3:30 P.M.**New Perspectives on School Outreach Programs.**

How can school outreach programs presented by the public library improve literacy? Learn how public libraries, school districts, universities, and funding agencies can work together to support literacy.

Pura Belpré Award Celebration. Join the winning and Honor Book authors and illustrators of the 2004 Pura Belpré Medals for an afternoon of celebration.

Storytelling 101. A panel of lively and experienced storytellers will share the basics of storytelling, along with ideas for storytelling programs at your library.

2–3:30 P.M.

All Discussion Group Meeting I

2–4 P.M.

*2005 Caldecott Committee

*2005 Newbery Committee

2–5:30 P.M.

Notable Children's Books Committee

Notable Children's Recordings Committee

3:30–5 P.M.

All Discussion Group Meeting II

6:30–11:30 P.M.

Newbery/Caldecott Banquet and Post-Reception. Join award-winning authors and illustrators at this annual event celebrating the year's most distinguished books for children.

Monday, June 28**8:30–9:30 A.M.**

ALSC Awards Program. Enjoy a continental breakfast, followed by the presentation of the ALSC Batchelder, Carnegie, and Sibert Awards.

8:30–10 A.M.

Joint Youth Council Caucus

Youth Privacy Matters: Practical Approaches to Implementation.

Youth privacy laws can be confusing, given the complex laws and policies in effect at all levels of government. In this program, panelists and audience members will discuss scenarios from public and school library settings that best illustrate the practical dilemmas that librarians face in attempting to implement these regulations while adhering to the ideals of intellectual freedom rights for youth.

9:45–10:15 A.M.

Membership Meeting

10:30 A.M.–12 P.M.

Native American Literature for Children: Evaluating and Developing a Collection for Schools and Public Libraries. There is a wealth of books and media that accurately portrays native peoples in exciting and life-affirming ways. We will present examples of this literature along with the tools needed for both the evaluation of your present collection and the selection of new materials.

Who Owns Snow White? Copyright Issues for Youth Services Librarians.

No need to get in trouble with the law! Noted copyright expert Carrie Russell, ALA Washington Office, will discuss the dos and don'ts for children's and young adult librarians in public and school libraries. Whether you are presenting a program, designing a Web page, or con-

ducting a storytime or booktalk, be safe and know what is legal.

10:30 A.M.–12:30 P.M.**Notable Children's Books Committee****Charlemae Rollins President's Program.**

Discover the myths and realities of how net-generation youth actually use technology in the public library. Learn about successful technology-related library programs and services and the marketing techniques to promote them. Create a personal plan of action for your own library.

1:30–3:30 P.M.**From Landmark to DK: The Life and Times of Children's Nonfiction.**

Author and critic Leonard Marcus will present an illustrated lecture on the changing trends in nonfiction for children from the 1960s to today. The program will feature a reactor panel of publishing's most noted editors of children's nonfiction.

A (Scary) Success Story: The First Online Serialized Novel for Kids.

Wondering how to reach children who are glued to their home computer screens? Explore how libraries can help children build literacy skills using an online novel as an integral part of programming and services. Author James M. Deem and Youth Services Director Tim Wadham describe a unique online novel project developed by Arizona's Maricopa County Library District. Their project involves a scary mystery novel, written by Deem and posted serially on the Library District's Web site, and a series of related programs. Hear how librarians in other systems used the Maricopa online novel as a key outreach program for their patrons. Come away motivated to take your library reading events in a new, online direction.

Mind in the Making: The Science of Early Learning.

Through an intensive outreach campaign and a thirteen-part television series, the Mind in the Making communications initiative aims to provide resources to early childhood

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2004 ALA Conference Schedule, cont.

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caregivers working in a variety of settings. Speakers will share methods for presenting research in formats accessible to families, communities, and the media.

Summer Reading Initiatives: Research and Best Practices. Hear an overview of current research demonstrating the positive impact of public library summer reading programs on students' academic achievement. Discuss the ways librarians are helping eliminate summer learning loss in reading through innovative services to children and their families. Learn what other librarians are doing to ensure that low-income children have access to nutritious meals during the summer, and how they are using such efforts to engage children who might not otherwise visit the

library or participate in summer reading programs.

2-4 P.M.

Notable Computer Software for Children Committee
*2005 Nominating Committee

Talk about Books! The art of book discussion is a learned skill: one must practice, read, and practice some more. Participants will pre-register and be assigned a small list of books. Each person reads his or her titles, takes notes, and prepares for a critical, facilitated discussion of those books. To register for the discussion group, call the ALSC office at 1-800-545-2433, ext. 2166, or e-mail Meredith Parets at mparets@ala.org. Link to the book list on the Web

site at www.ala.org/alsc; click on "Events and Conferences."

2-5:30 P.M.

ALSC Board of Directors I

5:30-7:30 P.M.

First Annual Children's Poetry Reading. Poetry demands to be heard—and what better place to hear it than ALA? Join us at the first annual ALSC-sponsored Children's Poetry Reading. Poets include host Marilyn Singer, Doug Florian, Nikki Grimes, Helen Frost, Lee Bennet Hopkins, Jane Yolen, and many others.

Tuesday, June 29

2-5:30 P.M.

ALSC Board of Directors II

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Menasha (Wisc.) Public Library; Jane Gardner Connor, South Carolina State Library, Columbia; Patricia Dollisch, DeKalb County Public Library, Decatur, Ga.; and Susan M. Knipe, Everett (Wash.) Public Library.

Long Beach PL Receives Summer Reading Grant

The Long Beach (Calif.) Public Library and Information Center is the 2004 recipient of the ALSC/BWI Summer Reading Program Grant. The \$3,000 grant, donated by BWI, provides financial assistance for public libraries to develop outstanding summer reading programs for children. The grant also recognizes ALSC members for outstanding program development.

The winning program is an off-site version of the library's in-house summer reading program. Recognizing that a significant portion of the community is not being reached by the traditional summer reading program, the library will establish partnerships with family daycare providers, healthcare providers, and youth recreation programs that serve area

children who might not otherwise take part in a summer reading program. Community partners will be trained to administer the off-site summer reading program and be provided with resources including game sheets and reading logs. Because of the community's demographics, efforts will be made to reach the Spanish-speaking and Khmer-speaking populations.

The Long Beach Public Library and Information Center will use the grant to make printed summer reading materials, including promotional materials and activity sheets, available in English, Spanish, and Khmer.

"This innovative summer reading program proposal takes summer reading into new directions," said Meaghan Battle, chair of the selection committee. "The proposal recognizes that there are parts of the Long Beach population that are not being served by the traditional summer reading program and undertakes real problem solving to address this issue in several ways."

Members of the award selection committee were Meaghan Battle, chair, Farmington Community Library, Farmington Hills, Mich.; Caroline Ward, The Ferguson

Library, Stamford, Conn.; Jean Hatfield, Johnson County Public Library, Merriam, Kan.; Jill Walker, Baker and Taylor, Bridgewater, N.J.; Alison Grant, West Bloomfield Township District Library, Bloomfield, Mich.; Bettye Smith, District of Columbia Public Library; Cindy Lombardo, Orrville (Ohio) Public Library; Lynn Vanca, Akron-Summit County Public Library, Akron, Ohio.

Penguin Putnam Awards \$600 Grants to Four Winners

Four librarians have been named winners of the 2004 Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers Award. The recipients are Kathy Clair, Shepherd Middle School, Ottawa, Ill.; Kimberly DeStefano, John J. Daly Elementary School, Port Washington, N.Y.; Nicole Sparling, West Babylon Public Library, Babylon, N.Y.; and Terry W. Warner, Miami-Dade Public Library, Miami Beach, Fla.

Each librarian will receive a \$600 grant, donated by Penguin Putnam, to attend the 2004 ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, Fla., June 24-30, 2004. Recipients of the annual award must have one to ten

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Creative Quest Snares John Cotton Dana Award for Halifax Public Libraries

For the strategic design and promotion of its challenging Summer Reading Quest program, Halifax (Nova Scotia, Canada) Public Libraries received one of this year's John Cotton Dana (JCD) Library Public Relations Awards.

The 2003 Summer Reading Quest invited Halifax area children ages five through twelve to become active participants in an interactive program. The libraries significantly increased participation by the target audience and were hailed as a smashing success by children, parents, and corporate sponsors. For more information about the program, especially the striking graphics, contact Halifax Public Libraries' Communications Officer at (902) 490-5852.

What made this program stand out? The JCD award rewards library public relations, and while public relations is often closely intertwined with library programs and events, it is not the same thing. It may seem difficult at first to separate programs from the public relations tools and techniques that support them.

The basic hallmarks of a solid public relations campaign include:

1. Needs Assessment. An identified issue based on research and analysis.
2. Planning. Strategic messages to each target audience, including coordinated, comprehensive PR and carefully tailored program elements to achieve specific objectives.
3. Implementation through an appropriate mix of strategic communications tools and techniques.
4. Evaluation. Thoughtful assessment of results and ideas for improvement.

The JCD Award Committee and award sponsor H.W. Wilson hope these guidelines will help readers develop their own future successful entries.

Here's how the Halifax Summer Reading Quest combined key PR techniques with the development and implementation of its successful award-winning program.

Evaluation

An in-depth evaluation of its previous summer reading programs showed that programs were traditionally successful in the aggregate, but some groups, such as those in the inner city, had been underrepresented.



Trading cards were part of the Halifax quest.

Assessing previous programs also showed a high percentage of returning participants, but few newcomers each year. The assessment also showed low participation among boys ages ten through twelve.

Armed with this knowledge, Halifax Public Libraries developed strategic objectives to balance participation between communities, especially increasing participation by inner city youth and boys ages ten through twelve, and to boost completion rates across the service area.

Planning

Collaborating with program planners, librarians, and community partners, Halifax staff designed a strategic PR plan and coordinated program components to address the following issues raised in their initial evaluation:

1. Attract and hold the attention of older children through a sophisticated and multilayered interactive program and age-appropriate content.
2. Brand the program with strategic messaging and appealing visuals.
3. Establish corporate sponsorships to support and enhance visibility.
4. Market the program with strategic partners Boys and Girls Club and YMCA day camps near libraries to reach target age and site audiences.

Implementation

Throughout the program, Halifax staff used strategic PR/promotional tools to reinforce program and strategic messaging. Public relations materials promoted the program to kids and pitched the strategic reasons behind the program—literacy—to parents, partners, and sponsors. Marketing connected the library with the branded program images, strategic message of excitement, involvement on all program materials, and supporting information directly aimed at target markets. Advertising ensured maximum library visibility through a cost-effective advertising investment.

Success

After the rush was over, the Halifax crew looked at the program, tallied the measurable results, and compared the results to the original goals. They scored direct hits on all counts: statistical highlights; parent, child, partner, and staff feedback; issues to address; and ideas for future improvements.

The 2004 John Cotton Dana Public Relations Award-winning entries will be on display at the John Cotton Dana booth at the ALA Annual Conference in June in Orlando, Fla. After the conference, the entries can be interlibrary loaned from ALA.

—Marsha Iverson, King County Library System, Issaquah, Wash., and Floyd C. Dickman, Columbus, Ohio, members of the 2004 John Cotton Dana Award Committee

ALSC Seeks Authors, Ideas

Want to see your name in print? Interested in helping your division?

The ALSC Publications Committee is looking for authors as well as ideas for publications that youth services librarians would be interested in buying for your libraries and professional collections.

Are there subject areas you feel should be addressed? They can be book ideas, like the book of "best practices" that you needed when you started your career. They could be shorter pieces, like brochures, that would target hot topics such as the importance of family literacy, or different learning styles. Send us your brainstorm!

Contact Jennifer Duffy, ALSC Publications Chair, at jduffy@kcls.org with your ideas or if you are interested in becoming an ALSC author. We look forward to hearing from you!

Board Major Actions

Electronic Actions

The following actions were voted on by the board on the ALSCBOARD electronic discussion list. The month/year of the vote is in parentheses after each action.

VOTED, to increase the honorarium for the Arbuthnot lecturer from \$750 to \$1,000 effective immediately. (February 2004)

VOTED, to add the following statement to the Duties and Responsibilities of Board Members:

5. To select, when a vacancy exists, an interim ALA/ALSC Councilor, and to inform the secretary of ALA Council in advance of the interim Councilor's first meeting. (January 2004)

VOTED, beginning with 2004, to include the Sibert medal and honor books, and the Belpré medal and honor books with a copyright date of the previous year, on the annual Notable Children's Book List. (November 2003)

VOTED, to approve the charge for the Children's Collection Management in Public Libraries Discussion Group:

To provide a forum for the discussion of common issues and concerns in children's collection development and maintenance. (September 2003)

Midwinter 2004 Actions

VOTED, to endorse the resolution proposed by the ALA Committee on Legislation's Subcommittee on Privacy and endorsed by ALSC's Legislation Committee: "Resolution on USA Patriot Act-Related Measures that Infringe on the Rights of Library Users."

VOTED, to modify the function statement of the ALSC Research and Development Committee to read: "To discover areas of library service to children in need of study and development, and to stimulate and encourage such research. To advance library service to children through the use of research and statistics. To educate children's librarians on the value and use of

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years of experience as a children's librarian, work directly with children, and have never attended an ALA Annual Conference.

Members of the award selection committee were: Kathie Meizner, chair, Chevy Chase Library, Chevy Chase, Md.; Patricia Gonzales, Los Angeles Public Library; Helma Hawkins, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Mo.; and Amanda Williams, Central Texas Library System, Austin, Texas.

Two Bechtel Winners Announced

Jean Hatfield and Joyce Laiosa are the 2004 recipients of the Louise Seaman Bechtel Fellowship.

The Bechtel Fellowship is designed to allow qualified children's librarians to spend a month or more reading and studying at the Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature, part of the George A. Smathers Libraries at the University of Florida in Gainesville. The fellowship provides a stipend of \$4,000, which must be used in 2005.

Hatfield, youth and outreach services manager for the Johnson County Library in Merriam, Kan., will study the literature

of L. Frank Baum at the Baldwin Library in February 2005. "The land of Oz is a familiar theme in our state, but there is a dearth of knowledge on the Oz books and their place in children's literature at the turn of the century," explains Hatfield. Her proposal, "L. Frank Baum: A Wizard with Words," involves the creation of a selected annotated bibliography of writings by and about Baum, as well as the development of oral presentations on Baum's work.

Laiosa, head of youth services at the Voorheesville (N.Y.) Public Library, will study alphabet books of the nineteenth century. "I want to study the illustrations as well as the illustrators of alphabet books," said Laiosa. "Looking at these books from long ago, I might find many clues to the way children were treated, the toys or playthings of long ago, and where adults fit into these scenes. It will be fascinating to see how girls and boys were portrayed in their daily activities, and how we see them today."

Members of the award selection committee were Karen Nelson Hoyle, chair, Children's Literature Research Collections, University of Minnesota Libraries, Minneapolis; Adele R. Bennett, Brentwood (N.Y.) Public Library; Sana P. Daliva, Kahului (Hawaii) Public Library; Kathy East, Wood County Public Library, Bowling Green, Ohio; and Nancy Gifford, Schenectady County (N.Y.) Public Library.

research and statistics. To serve as a liaison to the ALA and division research committees as appropriate.”

TABLED, a motion to further modification of the Research and Development Committee function statement.

VOTED, to modify the function statement of the Legislation Committee to read: “To serve as a channel of communication on legislative matters between the ALA Legislation Committee and the Division, recommending to the ALSC Board changes as necessary in federal, state, and local legislation proposed by the ALA Legislation Committee. To call to the attention of the ALA Legislation Committee and to recommend to the ALSC Board endorsement or revision of legislation affecting children that might be proposed or supported by the ALA Legislation Committee.”

VOTED, to modify the function statement of the Quicklists Consulting Committee to read: “To serve as consultants and to promote books and other resources through recommendations, compilations of lists, and related services for mass media, individuals, and institutions/organizations in the production of programs, films, and other materials/services for children, their families, caregivers, and teachers. Requests will be made through the ALSC office. Quicklists Consulting Committee will function electronically. Attendance at conference will be optional with the exception of the committee chairs.”

VOTED, to amend the function statement of the Library Services to Special Population Children and their Caregivers to read: “To speak for special population children and their caregivers; these may include those who have learning and physical differences, those who are speaking English as a second language, those who are in a nontraditional school environment, those who are in nontraditional family settings (such as teen parents, foster children, children in the juvenile justice system, and children in gay and lesbian families), and those who need accommodation service to meet their needs. To offer leadership in discovering, developing, and disseminating information about library materials,

programs, and facilities for special population children and their caregivers; to develop and maintain guidelines for selection of useful and relevant materials; and to discuss, develop, and suggest ways in which library education programs can prepare librarians to serve these children and their caregivers.

VOTED, to add the investigation of a Research Award to the charge/responsibilities of the sitting ALSC New Awards Task Force.

VOTED, to modify the eligibility requirements for the ALSC Melcher and Bound to Stay Bound Scholarships to allow applicants to have earned up to twelve graduate credits.

VOTED, that ALSC will partner with project CATE in submitting an IMLS grant to fund "Reducing the Digital Divide: Outcome-Based Public Library Guidelines for Technology and the Young 21st Century Learner (Project CATE2)." If grant is awarded, ALSC, and in particular the ALSC Research and Development Committee, will implement the grant.

VOTED, to ask the sitting New Awards Task Force to create guidelines and develop criteria for award proposals that may be received by ALSC in the future. To charge the sitting New Awards Task Force to evaluate the current award proposals under consideration by ALSC.

VOTED, to approve the 2006 Nominating Committee: Nell Colburn, chair; Richard Farley; Carole Fiore; JoAnn Jonas; Rhonda Puntney; Kathy Simonetta.

TABLED, a motion on the award eligibility of books originally published by their authors or very small presses and subsequently republished by larger or 'mainstream' publishers.

VOTED, that the use of the Caldecott winner or honor book seal (or those of other awards) on updated versions of award winners by their publishers be permitted, provided (a) that it be clearly noted on the book's cover that the book in question is a revised or updated edition, and (b) that the book jacket (or cover, if applicable), and copyright information page clearly state, "The original [2000/appropriate year] edition was awarded the [Randolph Caldecott Medal/appropriate award]."

VOTED, that in manuals for the following awards, the phrase "IN ENGLISH" be inserted into the terms of the awards: Batchelder, Belpré, Caldecott, Newbery, Sibert, Wilder. And further, that wording in the Belpré Manual be such as to allow for the inclusion of as many words and phrases in Spanish, as is appropriate.

VOTED, that \$5,000 be transferred to the Wilder and the Belpré Endowment Funds in August of FY 2004 and again in August of FY 2005. Total amount of these transfers: \$20,000.

VOTED, that ALSC establish a Theodor Seuss Geisel Award. First award to be given in 2006. First committee to be appointed in fall 2004. First committee sits in 2005. Membership: one chair and six members. Charge: To select author(s) and illustrator(s) of a book who demonstrate great creativity and imagination in his/her/their literary and artistic achievements to engage children in reading.

Jackson to Deliver 2005 Arbuthnot Lecture

Richard Jackson, editor of books for children and young adults, will deliver the 2005 May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture. Each year, an individual of distinction in

the field of children's literature is chosen to write and deliver a lecture that will make a significant contribution to the world of children's literature.

Through his editing, Jackson has brought young readers the fine words of award-winning writers such as Frances Temple, Paula Fox, Gary Paulsen, Virginia Hamilton, Angela Johnson, and Nancy Farmer. A publishing powerhouse, he founded Bradbury Press in 1968, Orchard in 1986, and DK, Inc. in 1996. Jackson now works as editorial director of Richard Jackson Books, an imprint at Simon & Schuster's Atheneum division. In more than four decades as an editor, he has sought out and nurtured new talent.

"With the 1970 publication of Judy Blume's *Are You There God? It's Me Margaret*, Jackson daringly made it acceptable to publish previously taboo topics," said Arbuthnot Committee Chair Pat Scales. "Readers responded, and the market was changed forever."

Jackson, who was born in 1935, studied at Yale and New York Universities. He recently moved to Maryland so he can personally, and on a daily basis, share fine literature with his grandchildren, he said.

Members of the selection committee were Pat Scales, chair, South Carolina Governor's School of the Arts, Greenville; Connie Champlin, Media Tech Consulting, Indianapolis, Ind.; Candace Deisley, College of St. Rose, Albany, N.Y.; Joanne Jonas, Chula Vista (Calif.) Public Library; and Susan Pine, New York Public Library.

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Get Your Name in Print

Submit an Article to *Children and Libraries*

Children and Libraries (CAL) is the official publication of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA). CAL is the vehicle for continuing education of librarians working with children, which showcases current research and practice relating to library service to children and spotlights significant activities and programs of the Association.

Manuscript Consideration

Submit manuscripts that are neither under consideration nor accepted elsewhere. Send four copies of the manuscript to the CAL editor at the address below. (One copy if sending by e-mail.) Editor will acknowledge receipt of all manuscripts and send them to at least two referees for evaluation. Accepted manuscripts with timely content will have scheduling priority.

Manuscript Preparation

For information on formatting your manuscript, editorial style, guidelines for text and art, and copyright forms, contact the editor at the address given.

For citations, use endnotes as described in the 14th edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, section 15.

Submit manuscripts and text (including references, tables, notes, and bibliographies) to the editor by e-mail as a rich text or Microsoft Word file attachment or copy the text directly into the body of an e-mail message, or send on a 3½" disk or on CD. Illustrative material (such as high-resolution digital images) MUST be sent via disk or CD. Disks and CDs must be PC-formatted.

Full length features (e.g., scholarly, research and "best practice" articles): fifteen to twenty pages, double-spaced.

Short features (e.g., interviews with authors, librarians, or others involved with library service to children): three to ten pages, double-spaced.

The Last Word: 500–750 words, double-spaced.

Long and short features should be well researched with themes relevant and of interest to children's librarians and all those involved and interested in library service to children.

"The Last Word" is an end-page feature that will run in each issue and highlight brief, light, or humorous essays from children's librarians, such as: a humorous story about a library experience; a short trivia quiz or puzzle about children's literature; a brief, creatively written insight on library service, children's literature, or programming; a very short question-and-answer interview with a popular author; a funny story about what kids are overheard saying in libraries. "The Last Word" will be a place for children's librarians to share these stories and get their name in print. Please send your ideas or finished stories to the editor.

Attach a cover sheet indicating the title of the article and the full name, title, affiliation, phone number, fax number, e-mail address, and complete mailing address of the first author. Include a 200-word abstract.

Place tables on separate pages. Notations should appear in text for proper table and figure placement (e.g., "insert table 1 here"). Provide a title and caption for each table and figure.

Supply charts and graphs as spreadsheet programs or as graphics (TIFFs or high-resolution JPEGs). Camera-ready copy is also acceptable. You need not provide graphs in final form. If you prefer, you may provide a rough version, or even a sketch. If so, please mark all data points clearly. We will create the graphic. You will have a chance to review the graphic when you review your typeset pages during the proofing stage.

Photos can also be included with manuscript. Color or black and white photos are acceptable. We also can accept digital images of at least 300 dpi resolution. (Pictures from the Web are not of sufficient quality for printed material because their resolution is too low.) Photos will be returned to author(s) after publication.

Submit either Microsoft Word or WordPerfect files. Double-space the entire manuscript, including quotes and

references. Insert two hard returns between paragraphs. Number all pages.

Use a minimal amount of formatting in files. Specialized formatting may be lost in translation from one program to another; mark specialized formatting with text instructions such as <extract>. Do not use the automatic footnote/endnote feature on your word processing program; create endnotes manually at the end of the article.

If sending a disk, label it with the first author's name and all file names.

Writing and Bibliographic Style

Children and Libraries follows the 14th edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Authors are responsible for accuracy in the manuscript, including all names and citations. Editor may revise accepted manuscripts for clarity, accuracy, and readability, consistent with publication style and journal audience.

Address

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THE LAST WORD

FROM GRISHAM TO MOTHER GOOSE: Who's to Say What Kids Should Read?

Sharon Korbeck

Abby Gerbers is only eight, but don't be surprised to find her hunkered down with a copy of John Grisham's latest book. She may not be able to read all the words—*litigious*, in particular, slips her up—but she relishes feeling “all grown up.”

One afternoon last year, while visiting my sister and her three kids, I asked my niece, Abby, to pick out a book she could read to me. Books by Rosemary Wells and Mercer Mayer jutted out of her bookcase. Dr. Seuss books were scattered on the floor. And a well-read copy of *Miss Alaineus* by Debra Frasier was on the nightstand (I got the latter for my six-year-old niece, Alaina, and had since adopted the book's title as her affectionate moniker).

But instead of selecting one of copious books in the playroom, Abby left and returned with Grisham's *The Brethren*, which she had unearthed from my sister's nightstand.

Initially stunned at her selection, I was proud when she actually began to read the legal thriller aloud. She didn't get very far before a word, I can't recall what, stumped her. Soon she put down Grisham, triumphantly vowing to read it on her own. I'll check back with her next year.

How does her sister, six-year-old Alaina, choose her favorite read?

“It was the book lying on the couch,” her dad quipped. That day, it was *It's Halloween, Dear Dragon* by Margaret Hiller. The well-thumbed copy told me it was read a lot, even in the non-scary months of February and May. No matter. Alaina just wanted me to know, “I like reading to

my mom and dad and my sister and brother.” And she loves going to the library, “cuz I learn new stuff.”

As for Steven, well, he's just five now, and his biggest literary influences to date have been *SpongeBob SquarePants*,

Bob the Builder, and the *Cat in the Hat* (he still wears the gloves and bowtie months after Halloween). While he isn't ready to pick up a book as mature as Abby's legal thrillers genre, he's always willing to be read to. As only he could put it, Steven said books and going to the library make him feel “special.”

Last year, the kids continued to feel special as they donned their Dr. Seuss-inspired garb as a diminutive *Cat in the Hat* and his blue-haired comrades, *Thing 1* and *Thing 2* (Abby's older, so she got to be *Thing 1*, of course!).



(left to right) Abby, Steven, and Alaina Gerbers prove that no reading tastes are too mature or too ridiculous for children. The Wisconsin trio was dressed in Dr. Seuss garb for Halloween 2003.

I'm thrilled my nieces and nephew are growing up around books. And I feel I've played a part in that. As those in our profession know, learning starts at home, and what's better than having a librarian in the family?

So as much as I hope I've fostered their reading readiness and love of literature, I realize the learning is reciprocal. Hanging out at my sister's house one Sunday afternoon last winter, I lounged on the couch wondering aloud what to do. Subzero temperatures trapped us inside. There were no good movies on TV. The DVD player was broken. And I was tired of getting beaten at *Chutes and Ladders*.

Abby had the perfect solution. “Whenever you're bored, you've always got a book to read,” she said. I couldn't have said it better myself.

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 us your Last Word to Sharon Korbeck at toylady@athenet.net.



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