

Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for
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ALSC

SPECIAL FOCUS: The New Age, New Face of Graphic Novels
Great Collaborations • Bechtel Fellow Studies ABCs

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Editor's Note Heated Discussions, Great Insights

Sharon Verbeten

In late January, after the much-anticipated ALSC awards were announced, the buzz and excitement immediately erupted for the winners—with the Newbery going to a first-time author and the Caldecott

to a first-time illustrator. Laudable, indeed. And no one in our library community would likely beg to differ.

But after NBC's *Today Show* opted not to feature the winners this year, the ALSC electronic discussion list was abuzz with talk about the perceived "snub."

While the discussion drew comments from members nationwide, more interesting, perhaps, was the turn that the conversation took: away from the *Today Show's* decision and on to the very reasons behind the awards themselves—what they mean, how they are selected and what they do—and *should*—mean to readers and to the books.

I found it fascinating—albeit at times a bit heated—to hear scholars, librarians, professors, students, and others weigh in with their thoughts. Among the questions raised, in essence, were:

- Is the selection criteria for the awards outdated? Relevant?
- Should a book's popularity play a role in award selection?
- Does the media only care to publicize what sells, what's popular, or what everyone has heard of?

Though members can't agree on all counts, that very diversity and discourse is what makes ALSC such a vital organization. Without such thoughtful and impassioned commentary—both the positive and the negative—we likely wouldn't be as strong a group as we are. Our members know that. Our leaders know that. And hopefully those we serve will know that through the decisions we make—both in awarding quality books . . . and in introducing them to our eager audiences.

The Dog-Eared Page

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

Lots of librarians love details, and that includes trivia. Since the ALSC awards have generated so much interest of late, here's a brief test of your Newbery/Caldecott knowledge.

1. Which five authors have won the Newbery Medal twice?
2. Which father and son have each won a Newbery Medal for their respective works?
3. Which two Red Riding Hood tales have won Caldecott Medals or honors?
4. Which author/illustrator holds a Caldecott "threepeat," winning the coveted award three times?

For answers, see page 16

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Good Comics for Kids

Collecting Graphic Novels for Young Readers

EVA VOLIN

After looking around and not finding an online source for solid reporting on comics written for young readers, intrepid comics reporter and blogger Brigid Alverson reached out to a diverse group of well-respected authors, bloggers, and reviewers, and in April 2008 the Good Comics for Kids website was born.

Now hosted on the School Library Journal website (www.school-libraryjournal.com), Good Comics for Kids is a place where young readers, parents, teachers, and librarians can find information about new comics and graphic novels for children and teens. Since the beginning, the team has gotten as many questions about the what, how, and why of collecting graphic novels as they have gotten about the books themselves. Based on a presentation given at the American Library Association's 2010 Annual Conference held in Washington, D.C., this article answers those questions. In putting together this article, the team has drawn on their own experiences establishing, collecting, and using graphic novels in library settings, as well as the knowledge they have gained from their readers.

Today, articles and studies seemingly everywhere note how graphic novels benefit reluctant and experienced readers alike. And graphic novels are enjoying new visibility, thanks to nominations (and even wins) for such prestigious awards as the Printz, Sibert, Geisel, Alex, Hugo, Pulitzer, and even the National Book Award. But as



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readers visit libraries to find graphic novels, they're discovering that many libraries are adding graphic novels only to their teen collections.

Even before graphic novels went mainstream, children loved them. Whether they are comic strips, comic books, single-panel comics, or full-length graphic novels, it's rare to find a child who won't give one a try. The format has moved far beyond superheroes and Snoopy.

Although comics for kids have been around for years, the market for graphic novels written specifically for children is fairly new, and many children's librarians are left wondering how to satisfy the demand for a format they may know little about. Let's begin by laying some groundwork.

What is a Graphic Novel?

A comic or graphic novel tells a story, either fiction or nonfiction, using sequential art. In *Comics and Sequential Art*, Will Eisner defines sequential art as "the arrangement of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatize an idea."¹ In other words, graphic novels are a storytelling format, just like magazines or DVDs, and not a genre. There are as many genres and subgenres within the graphic novel format as there are within fiction (e.g.; mystery, science fiction, horror, medical drama) or film (e.g.; action/adventure, romantic comedy, documentary). And just as with fiction or film, there are graphic novels written and illustrated with children as the intended audience.

If you're met with skepticism from colleagues or parents, remember graphic novels and comics are not a replacement for other kinds of reading. They are one more option for readers,

neither better nor worse than listening to an audiobook or diving in to a heavily illustrated DK Eyewitness title.

Readers use a different, complex process to read graphic novels. In a world layered with visual media, from picture books to television to the Internet to videogames, graphic novels require and encourage a facility with the interplay between words and pictures. Skill in processing sequential art helps young readers navigate all kinds of stories and learning experiences with ease.

There are several varieties of source material for graphic novels. Graphic novels are often collections of stories originally distributed as single-issue comic books. Today most modern superhero stories are intended for older audiences, so this variety is less commonly aimed at kids. Examples of comic book collections for kids include *Bone*, *Marvel Adventures*, the Courtney Crumrin series, and *Mouse Guard*.

This category can be stretched to include manga, as most Japanese comics are originally published chapter-by-chapter in monthly or weekly anthology magazines. (The word “manga” simply means “comics” in Japanese, and therefore is not a genre.) Some great manga titles for kids are *Yotsuba&!*, *Happy Happy Clover*, *Animal Academy*, *Ninja Baseball Kyuma*, and the mighty and all-powerful Pokémon series. The key is that all of these stories are serials, written via multiple installments.

Next are the reworkings of popular prose novels into graphic novel form. Examples include *Artemis Fowl*, *Alex Rider*, *Warriors*, and *The Baby Sitters Club*. The category can also include “animanga”—graphic novels created by screen-capping a television cartoon and adding word balloons. Tokyopop and, to a lesser extent, Del Rey and VIZ, have been doing this for quite a while with popular television series and animated movies. These are some of the most popular titles with reluctant readers and kids who won't read anything with which they aren't already familiar. Because they're already familiar with the brand, they are more likely to give the graphic novels (and reading!) a try.

Last, but not least, are what many people consider to be true graphic novels—long-form stories originally written and published in the graphic novel format. Examples include *Storm in the Barn*, *Crogon's Vengeance*, *Rapunzel's Revenge*, and the Salt Water Taffy series. Don't forget nonfiction and informational titles like *Zeus: King of the Gods*, *Clan Apis*, *To Dance: A Ballerina's Graphic Novel*, or the various collections put out by educational publishers. Most of these were created and published as stand-alone stories.

The important thing to remember is that whether originally published as a series or as a stand-alone work, the format is the same. Sequential art uses panels, word balloons, sound effects, and symbols to tell stories, and all of these origins result in the same reading experience.

Where do I Put the Books?

Some of the most commonly expressed barriers to creating a graphic novel collection focus on resources. How much

time will it take to create a collection? Where will the books be housed? Will graphic novels require special handling from catalogers and processing staff? Most of these worries can be alleviated by looking at the big picture.

Many public and school libraries already have collections that facilitate casual browsing; fiction, biographies, DVDs, magazines, and large print books are commonly found outside their Dewey ranges. A children's collection should be organized in the most user-friendly way possible, so it makes sense to have a browsing section that is format-specific.

Once the catalogers have established a category for graphic novels—the way they have for other browsing collections—getting the books shelf-ready isn't hard.

- After the decision to create a browsing collection has been made, the next step is to **find shelf space** for the books. Since most libraries don't have ranges of open shelving awaiting new collections, this step in the process will likely be time-consuming and require physical effort.
- **Start by identifying the location** of the new collection. A graphic novel collection will act as a draw for male readers, visual learners, television cartoon fans, reluctant readers, and other patrons who don't often frequent libraries. Don't hide the books in the back of the library behind the dictionaries! If a prime location isn't available, display the new collection as front-and-center as possible so that these underserved clients can find it.
- Once the location has been determined, **it's time to make space**. In general, librarians are aces at collecting things, but aren't great at letting things go. Now is the time to get over that fear. Start by weeding for condition or last time circulated. Doing this will often free up one to two bays of shelving; this is plenty of room to house a starter collection.
- Next, **decide how to shelve the books**. There are many different shelving variations, all of which have their pluses and minuses. Some libraries keep the graphic novel browsing collection consistent with the rest of their library, shelving fiction by author and nonfiction by Dewey call number within the graphic novel collection code. This system often works best in libraries where there is no graphic novel expert to help sort books by character name (e.g., keeping Spider-Man books together under “S” and books featuring Batman together under “B”).
- For libraries where there is someone knowledgeable about the format, shelving books by title or character family can work well. This way, readers who are looking for the next book in a series written by multiple authors (e.g.; Spider-Man or X-Men) are able to find what they are looking for easily.
- Nonfiction graphic novels should be included as part of the browsing collection as well. Many librarians have reported that nonfiction titles as important and well-respected as

Maus, *Persepolis*, and *Ethel and Ernest* get lost in the stacks when left within the prose collection. Moving the nonfiction graphic novels into the graphic novel collection puts the books in front of the patrons most interested in reading them, keeping the books alive and available for all nonfiction readers to find.

Which Books Should I Choose?

Most libraries already have graphic novels in their collection, whether identified as such or not. A picture book like *You Can't Take a Balloon into the Metropolitan Museum* by Jacqueline Preiss Weitzman and Robin Glasser is an example of a graphic novel most public libraries own.

The Elephant and Piggie series of easy readers by Mo Willems operate as graphic novels, with each page serving as a separate panel of the story.

The Captain Raptor books, *Silent Movie*, and *Adventures in Cartooning* are all books often found on library shelves. Whether these books are shelved out of their established locations is up to the individual library, but they are a place to start.

Next go to the 741.5s and find the Garfield, Peanuts, and Calvin and Hobbes books. Sure, collections of comic strips are different from comic books and graphic novels—just ask any teen or adult. But kids don't care. To a child just learning about the format, a comic is a comic is a comic. Since kids will be the primary users, consider adding books of collected comic strips to the graphic novel collection in the children's section. If you must differentiate, distinguish the collections by classifying them as “comic” versus “graphic” and shelve them near each other for ease of access.

Now that the books the library already owns have been identified and moved to the graphic novel area, it's time to start buying new books. Before spending any money, first think about the patrons. If the collection is for a public library, a broad range of titles and subjects is best when trying to serve a large community. If the collection is for a school or private library, the customer base may have special needs or restrictions. Secure cooperation from teachers or school administrators and begin reviewing curriculum standards.

Regardless of the library type, a collection development policy that covers graphic novels needs to be established. If the library already has a collection development policy, make sure graphic novels are included. This will both inform the collection strategy and protect the library, the selector, and the collection if someone challenges a book. As several libraries around the country have learned, not having graphic novels expressly mentioned in the policy can lead to heartache.

Once you're ready to buy books, you'll find a wealth of resources and assistance. The Good Comics for Kids team has put together a core list of recommended titles (see sidebar). But new books are released every day, so it's great that traditional review sources like *Booklist* and *School Library Journal* now regularly review graphic novels, both in the pages of the magazine and online.

When ordering from distributors like Ingram, Baker and Taylor, or BWI, consult their lists of forthcoming books. Pick up catalogs from graphic novel publishers when attending library or bookseller conferences. Don't be afraid to look online for professional-quality reviews. Many blogs and websites regularly review comics and graphic novels. YALSA's Great Graphic Novels for Teens list is a useful tool for finding books that appeal to tweens—a difficult age group to serve, with some readers looking for more sophisticated material and others seeking more kid-friendly fare.

When considering titles, think about them as you would movies or videogames. Would this graphic novel be rated G, PG, or PG-13? Where would you shelve a TV

Good Comics for Kids Contributors

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Katherine Dacey has been writing about comics since 2006, first as the senior manga editor at *Pop Culture Shock*, then at her own site, *The Manga Critic*.

Lori Henderson has been reviewing manga at *Comics Village* and at her own site, *Manga Xanadu*, where she caters to parents interested in knowing more about what their kids are reading.

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Snow Wildsmith is a writer and former teen librarian. She reviews graphic novels for *Booklist*, *ICv2's Guide*, *No Flying*, *No Tights*, and also writes booktalks and creates recommended reading lists for *Ebsco's NovelList* database.

show with similar content? Think about the similar stories you have in chapter or picture books, and be consistent. Don't be scared of the impact visuals can and do have, but be aware that images have a different impact from the same story in text.

How do you determine whether a book is for kids when reviews for the book in question aren't available? Many graphic novel publishers put age ratings on the backs of their books. Proceed with caution, however, as there is no industry standard for rating books. What Tokyopop rates as "Older Teen" (generally 16+), Oni Press may say is fine for thirteen-year-olds. And what VIZ may rate as perfect for thirteen-year-olds, DC Comics will rate as E, for everyone. So the next step is to find someone who knows about the topic and ask questions. This could be someone on staff, perhaps a teen shelper. Go online to PubYac, GN-LIB, Good Comics for Kids, or Twitter. Visit other libraries that collect comics for kids. Use WorldCat.org to see where other libraries are shelving such books.

Don't forget to check with your readers, too. Offer a suggestion box for their recommendations. They need to see that you respond to their enthusiasm for genres and creators by purchasing more of what they love, and it will give you credibility when steering them toward other titles, both in sequential art and outside the format.


Now that I Have One, How do I Maintain My Collection?

It's not uncommon for a reader to proclaim he has read every single graphic novel in the library and not be exaggerating. Graphic novels can be read very quickly, so it's essential to keep the collection fresh.

Consider budgeting for graphic novels as if they were periodicals. Most paperback graphic novels run about \$10 each. (That's the same as two issues of a magazine, so be flexible.) As one series ends, pick up a new series, as you would do when a magazine ceases publication. If a book falls apart, stops circulating, or turns out to not be a good fit for the library, withdraw it and move on to a new title.

Don't be afraid to weed, but at the same time, don't have unreasonably high expectations. Some graphic novels will handily outperform the rest of the books in the library. Some won't. If the books in the 400s are allowed to sit idle for years, then cut the graphic novels some slack, too.

Some books, particularly the more literary ones, won't circulate as quickly as *Dragon Ball Z*, but there's an audience for those titles as well. Be fair and stick to whatever weeding procedure is used for the rest of the collection. This will give slower moving titles a chance to find an audience.

As libraries and librarians become more familiar with graphic novels, the mechanics of creating new children's graphic novel collections will become a matter of course. Until then, children's librarians will experiment, question, and debate the best ways to build collections for young readers. We at Good Comics for Kids hope to continue to be part of the conversation. 

References

1. Will Eisner, *Comics and Sequential Art*. (Tamarac, Fla.: Poorhouse, 2001, 5).

Recommended Graphic Novels for Children's Collections

Grades K-2

Western Comics

Alley, Zoë. *There's a Wolf at the Door*. Illus. by R. W. Alley. Roaring Brook, 2008. 40p.

Bliss, Harry. *Luke on the Loose*. Illus. by the author. TOON, 2009. 32p.

Davis, Eleanor. *Stinky*. Illus. by the author. TOON, 2008. 40p.

Faller, Regis. *The Adventures of Polo*. Illus. by the author. Roaring Brook, 2006. 80p.

Hayes, Geoffrey. Benny and Penny series. Illus. by the author. TOON, 2008-2010. 3 vols.

Kochalka, James. *Dragon Puncher* series. Illus. by the author. Top Shelf, 2010-ongoing. 2 vols.

Kochalka, James. Johnny Boo series. Illus. by the author. Top Shelf., 2008-ongoing. 5 vols.

Labatt, Mary and Jo Rioux. Sam and Friends Mystery series. Illus. by the author. Kids Can, 2009-ongoing. 3 vols.

Luciani, Brigitte. Mr. Badger and Mrs. Fox series. Illus. by Eve Tharlet. Lerner/Graphic Universe, 2010-ongoing. 3 vols.

O'Malley, Kevin. Captain Raptor series. Illus. by Patrick O'Brien. Walker, 2005-2007. 2 vols.

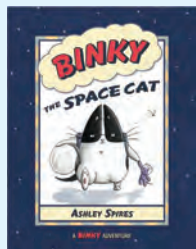
Pien, Lark. *Long Tail Kitty*. Illus. by the author. Blue Apple, 2009. 51p.

Runton, Andy. Owly series. Illus. by the author. Top Shelf, 2004-ongoing. 6 vols.

Slade, Christian. Korgi series. Illus. by the author. Top Shelf, 2007-ongoing. 3 vols.

Smith, Jeff. *Little Mouse Gets Ready*. Illus. by the author. TOON, 2009. 32p.

Spiegelman, Nadja. *Zig and Wikki in Something Ate My Homework*. Illus. by Trade Loeffler. TOON, 2010. 40p.



Spires, Ashley. *Binky the Space Cat* series. Illus. by the author. Kids Can, 2009-2010. 2 vols.

Venable, Colleen, Guinea Pig,

Pet Shop Private Eye series. Illus. by Stephanie Yue. Lerner/Graphic Universe, 2010-ongoing. 3 vols.

Wheeler, Lisa. *Seadogs: An Epic Ocean Operetta*. Illus. by Mark Siegel. Atheneum, 2004. 40p.

Wiesner, David. *The Three Pigs*. Illus. by the author. Clarion, 2001. 40p.

Grades 3-5

Non Fiction

Hughes, Susan. *No Girls Allowed: Tales of Daring Women Dressed as Men for Love, Freedom, and Adventure*. Illus. by Willow Dawson. Kids Can, 2008. 80p.

Manning, Mick and Brita Granström. *Tail-End Charlie*. Illus. by the authors. Frances Lincoln, 2009. 40p.

O'Donnell, Liam. Max Axiom, Super Scientist series. Illus. by Richard Dominguez and Charles Barnett III. Capstone, 2007-ongoing. 22 vols.

Sis, Peter. *The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain*. Illus. by the author. Farrar, 2007. 56p.



Sturm, James, Andrew Arnold, and Alexis Frederick-Frost. *Adventures*

in Cartooning: How to Turn Your Doodles into Comics. Illus. by the authors. First Second, 2009. 112p.

Western Comics

Archie and Friends All-Stars series. Various authors and illus. Archie, 2009-ongoing. 8 vols.

Baltazar, Art and Franco Baltazar. *Tiny Titans* series. Illus. by Art Baltazar. DC, 2009-ongoing. 5 vols.

Barks, Carl. *Donald Duck Classics: Quack Up*. Illus. by the author. BOOM! Studios, 2010. 112p.

Baum, L. Frank. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Retold by Eric Shanower. Illus. by Skottie Young. Marvel, 2009. 192p.

Cammuso, Frank. *Knights of the Lunch Table* series. Illus. by the author. Graphix/Scholastic, 2008-ongoing. 3 vols.

Chantler, Scott. *Three Thieves: Tower of Treasure*. Illus. by the author. Kids Can, 2010. 112p.

Collicutt, Paul. *Robot City Adventures* series. Illus. by the author. Templar, 2009-2010. 4 vols.

Crane, Jordan. *The Clouds Above*. Illus. by the author. Fantagraphics, 2005. 216p.



Giarrusso, Chris. *G-Man* series. Illus. by the author. Image, 2009-2010. 2 vols.

Gosciny, René. *Asterix* series. Illus. by Albert Uderzo. Orion, 2004-2005. 24 vols.

Gownley, Jimmy. *Amelia Rules!* series. Illus. by the author. Atheneum, 2009-ongoing. 5 vols, ongoing.

Guibert, Emmanuel. *Sardine in Outer Space* series. Illus. by Joann Sfar. First Second, 2006-2008. 6 vols.

Harper, Charise Mericle. *Fashion Kitty*. Illus. by the author. Hyperion, 2005-2009. 3 vols.

Hergé. *The Adventures of Tintin* series. Illus. by the author. Little, Brown, 1994-1997. 7 vols.

Holm, Jennifer. *Babymouse* series. Illus. by Matt Holm. Random House, 2005-ongoing. 14 vols.

Hunter, Erin, et al. *Warriors* series. Various illustrators. Tokyopop, 2007-ongoing. 10 vols.

Krosoczka, Jarrett. *Lunch Lady* series. Illus. by the author. Knopf, 2009-ongoing. 5 vols, ongoing.

Kruse, Jason. *The World of Quest* series. Illus. by the author. Yen, 2007-2008. 2 vols.

Lobdell, Scott. *Hardy Boys* series. Illus. by Lea Hernandez and Daniel Rendon. Papercutz, 2005-2010. 20 vols.

Loux, Matthew. *Salt Water Taffy* series. Illus. by the author. Oni, 2008-ongoing. 4 vols.

Martin, Ann. *Baby-Sitters Club* series. Retold and illus. by Raina Telgemeier. Graphix/Scholastic, 2006-2008. 4 vols.

Morse, Scott. *Magic Pickle*. Illus. by the author. Graphix/Scholastic, 2008. 112p.

Nykko. *Elsewhere Chronicles* series. Illus. by Bannister. Lerner, 2009-2010. 4 vols.

Parker, Jake. *Missile Mouse* series. Illus. by the author. Graphix/Scholastic, 2010-ongoing. 2 vols.

Petrucha, Stefan and Sarah Kinney. *Nancy Drew* series. Illus. by Sho Murase. Papercutz, 2005-2010. 20 vols.

Renier, Aaron. *The Unsinkable Walker Bean*. Illus. by the author. First Second, 2010. 208p.

Sava, Scott Christian. *Ed's Terrestrials*. Illus. by Diego Jourdan. IDW, 2008. 88p.

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Park, SoHee. *Goong: The Royal Palace*. Illus. by the author. Yen, 2008-ongoing. 11 vols.

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Suggested Hybrids

Hybrids are a mix of traditional prose and graphic novels. While we don't recommend shelving them in your graphic novel collection, they are great transition books for kids interested in learning about the format or for parents who'd like to see their kids read something other than comics:

Barshaw, Ruth McNally. Ellie McDoodle series. Illus. by the author. Bloomsbury, 2008-ongoing. 3 vols.

Ignatow, Amy. The Popularity Papers series. Illus. by the author. Amulet, 2010-2011. 2 vols.

Kinney, Jeff. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series. Illus. by the author. Amulet, 2007-ongoing. 5 vols.

Moss, Marissa. *Amelia's Notebook* series. Illus. by the author. Simon & Schuster, 2006-ongoing. 23 vols.

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Peirce, Lincoln. Big Nate series. Illus. by the author. HarperCollins, 2010-ongoing. 3 vols.

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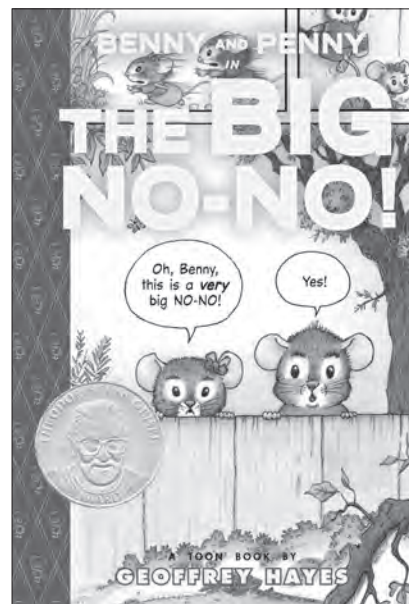
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When a “Graphic” Won the Geisel

A Critical Look at *Benny and Penny in The Big No-No!*

SUSAN VELTFORT



The Theodor Seuss Geisel Award is given annually by ALA’s Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) to the author(s) and illustrator(s) of the most distinguished American book for beginning readers published in English in the United States during the preceding year.

But why would an award be given to a comic book—a genre that for many years has been associated with nonreaders, inferior illustrations, abridged content, and no literary merit?

A quality comic, or graphic novel, as they are popularly called today, is not only an appropriate book for the beginning reader, a comic can very much provide, “a stimulating and successful reading experience for the beginning reader containing the kind of plot, sensibility, and rhythm that can carry a child along from start to finish, a criterion of the Geisel Award.”¹

Benny and Penny in the Big No-No! by Geoffrey Hayes, the 2010 Geisel Award winner, is an outstanding example of a distinguished book for a beginning reader. In this book, the features of a comic blend with the criteria needed to make for a successful emergent reader experience. The story and characters are appealing and engaging. There are visual connections between illustrations and words. The book is a page-turner—the reader is engaged in story sequencing and plot trajectory through the flow of illustrations and the written words. The comic genre is one of the best ways to utilize the concepts of visual clues as an entrance to literacy.

Upon picking up the book, the reader is immediately propelled into the adventures of this brother and sister through the employment of all the outstanding qualities of a comic. On the cover of *Benny and Penny in the Big No-No!* the circle motif

of the big “Os” in No-No, combined with Penny’s and Benny’s round heads peeping over the fence and their dialogue in the bubbles over their heads, provides a visual cohesiveness to the story. Their worried expressions convey the tone of intrigue and concern. We can only wonder: What is going to happen?

Through the wonderful use of perspective, the reader is on the other side of the fence, in the neighbor’s yard, engaged right away. On the title page, Benny and Penny, encircled, study the mysterious mud footprints, a material piece to the plot. The reader joins Benny and Penny in peering through the knot hole in the fence which appears throughout the book, providing a view into the neighbor’s yard, the setting for the story. The occasionally circled illustration gives the reader’s eye a break from the rectangular panels and reinforces the circle motif. When Benny and Penny need to climb over the fence to get into the neighbor’s yard, the reader shares their first glimpse into the new world they will be exploring.

The illustrations are intrinsically connected to the dialogue in each panel, and a character may appear many times on the page. With each appearance, various emotional nuances are expressed, adding depth to the characters and movement to



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every page. With the wealth of illustrations in a comic, there are many opportunities to express not only a range of emotions, but also to emphasize plot, add volume to the dialogue, bring physical activity to the characters, and provide overall drama to the story.

The comic artist employs an inkwell full of illustrative tricks to express so much. The lettering of the text (bold font, capital letters, squiggly lines, added color) tells much more than the mere words and, more importantly, conveys meaning even if the child cannot, just yet, decode the word (as found on pages 7 and 11).

Additional words besides dialogue add the sound effects necessary to create drama. The illustrations show what these words would sound like, and the words are often repeated throughout the story. Penny, mouth wide open, tears sprayed above her tilted back head, lets out a "WAAAAA!!!" (p. 8). In several panels, mud is thrown and hits a target, "SPLOP!" (pp. 20–21). Stepping on a board, Benny is hit on the head, "WAPP!" (p. 28).

The organizational structure of a comic creates a page-turning dynamic and a rhythm to the text. Each panel is a package that flows from one to the next. The emergent reader is guided from panel to panel and page to page. Some panels are bridged by a dialogue bubble, thus increasing the speed at which the page is read (pp. 9, 24). Other panels, set at an angle in a Z construction (p. 17), guide the reader's eye on the page from left to right, top to bottom, in the same way written text needs to be read. What perfect training for the beginner reader!

Dramatic pause, as in a climax to the story, is created by the judicious use of a single panel on one page (p. 23), when Benny and Penny find Benny's pail in their *own* backyard!

The challenge to writing and illustrating an outstanding beginning reader is to create a book with compelling story and illustrations and enough visual clues so the story can "read" while new words are slowly introduced. The comic genre, as exemplified in *Benny and Penny in the Big No-No!* is a perfect means to provide new readers with a love of reading from the first time they pick up a book to "read" independently. ☺



A page from *Benny and Penny in the Big No-No!* by Geoffrey Hayes. ©TOON Books/RAW Junior, LLC.

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Call for Referees

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

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

Visual Literacy

Exploring This Magical Portal

FRANÇOISE MOULY

Editor's Note: CAL asked Françoise Mouly of TOON Books, one of the presenters at a graphic novels session at last year's ALA Annual Conference, to provide some context and background on the methodology behind producing graphic novels. Here we get some insight—from one publisher's perspective.

"Comics are a gateway drug to literacy." —Art Spiegelman, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of MAUS, a Survivor's Tale.¹

Nowadays, children have to master many kinds of literacies, but comics have a unique claim on their imagination. They don't need to be told, "Go read a comic book!" Because the stories of comics are spelled out visually, children intuitively figure out how to read them. If we understand, and take advantage of, children's love of comics, that love will help us on our quest to share our love of books and reading with the new generations.

The recent interest in graphic novels is, in fact, a rediscovery of a medium that has thrived for more than a century. Comics continue to be surprisingly modern and of the moment, maybe in part because they are a hybrid of old and new, the printed record of our intensely fluctuating visual world. The combination of hand-drawn visual and written narrative—what we know today

as comics, graphic novels, or "manga," the Japanese form—was invented in the mid-1830s by Rodolphe Töpffer, a Swiss schoolmaster trying to amuse his students.²

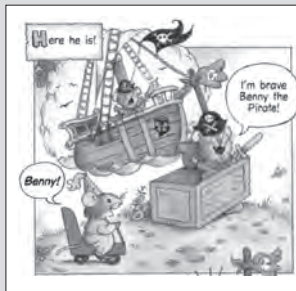
Currently, the growing acceptance of comics under the guise of graphic novels in universities, museums, libraries, and schools is an echo of the massive acceptance that greeted the first newspaper comics in the early 1900s, the ubiquitous spread of ten-cent comics among children growing up in postwar America, or the way "underground comix," such as R. Crumb's *ZAP*, became mandatory cultural artifacts for the baby boomer generation in the late sixties. The history of comics is the history of fads.

Comics' *raison d'être* is to tell stories in pictures. Reading pictures calls upon many more intuitive processes than reading words—no child has to be taught how to look for Waldo. Babies recognize a happy face before they even recognize their own mother's. As librarians, parents, and teachers have always known, even very young children will sit still for story time if there is something to look at.

The value of picture books for young children is uncontested, and yet the facts that comics are of great value as books to read



Françoise Mouly was the founder, publisher, and designer of the pioneering avant-garde comics anthology *RAW*, which she coedited along with her husband, cartoonist Art Spiegelman. In 1993, Mouly joined the *New Yorker* as art editor and has been responsible for more than eight hundred magazine covers. In 2008, Mouly launched TOON Books, her own imprint of hardcover comics for emerging readers.



An image from *Benny and Penny in Just Pretend* by Geoffrey Hayes, ©TOON Books/RAW Junior, LLC.

aloud to toddlers and are often the first printed matter purchased by the nine- to twelve-year-olds with their own pocket money, are less widely known.³

For decades of American history, comics were synonymous with illiteracy. In 1954, Congressional hearings denounced publishers of children comics.⁴

Now it's time to turn some of the notions about comics on their head. With the TOON Books collection, we are actually convinced that the reverse is true, that comics designed for the six- to eight-year-old have definite advantages over picture books, and can propel elementary school students into a lifelong love of reading.

Comics Provide Context

In early-reader comics, the visuals allow the emerging reader to encounter new words in context. English words follow errant rules (phonetics alone account for barely 50 percent of spelling), so closely associated pictures can greatly help a new reader narrow down the possibilities.

When we develop the TOON Books, we divide the books into three levels, with Level One geared at K–1, Level Two at 1–2, and Level Three at 2–3. Using only vocabulary appropriate for each stage, we go back and forth between educators and the author-artist, to highlight the words that can benefit from picture support.

For example, in *Benny and Penny in Just Pretend* by Geoffrey Hayes, a Level Two TOON Book, the first time the word “pirate” is introduced, the artist also shows a pirate ship, two pirate hats, and two pirate flags. Young readers, especially those who have not been read to very much, have far more experience with speech than with written forms of English. In Level One and Two TOON Books, we use few captions and many speech balloons, so readers can make guesses based on their firsthand knowledge of what somebody would say.

Comics Guide the Readers' Attention

Comics are to be read left to right, top to bottom. One of the big challenges for emerging readers is that reading is often their first encounter with a rigidly structured task. Whereas before they were asked to read, the child could use trial and error to figure out how things worked, the trial and error approach doesn't help much anymore: one can't read words right to left, or even the right page before the left. Comics order information following the same rules that apply to reading, but the artist can

also further guide the reader's eye and attention, as Hayes does with the footprints on the left hand page of the spread below.

The artist also can highlight a moment through the shape of a panel, as Hayes does on the right-hand page, using a circle to show Benny's surprise. The cartoonist has many other unique ways to communicate nuances of the story to the reader, including facial expressions (in these two pages, Benny is alternatively curious, hesitant, surprised, disgusted, shocked, and shushing), body gestures (such as Benny's “SHHH” gesture at the bottom of the right-hand page), the sweat marks in the first panel, the sound effect bridging the top two panels, or bigger type for the exclamations “MUD!” and “POOIE!”

Comics Help Readers Build Connections

In a comic, a good cartoonist can build strong connections between words, pictures, sound effects, and so on. This goes beyond what happens in illustrated books, in which the writer's narrative runs on one track, and the visuals provided by the artist run on another.



A spread from *Benny and Penny in the Big No-No!* by Geoffrey Hayes, ©TOON Books/Raw Junior, LLC.



A spread from *Stinky* by Eleanor Davis, ©TOON Books/Raw Junior, LLC.

As one of our advisors, Barbara Tversky, professor of psychology at Stanford University, explained,

Comics use a broad range of sophisticated devices for communication. They are similar to face-to-face interactions, in which meaning is derived not solely from words, but also from gestures, intonation, facial expressions, and props. Comics are more than just illustrated books, but rather make use of a multimodal language that blends words, pictures, facial expressions, panel-to-panel progression, color, sound effects, and more to engage readers in a compelling narrative.⁵

Comics are an Interactive Medium

The reader is an active participant in a comics story. Because of its ability to boil things down to their essence, cartoon language (like poetry) is a medium that can summarize complex emotions, but also needs to be understood and interpreted by the reader.

In the twin panels of Stinky and Nick coming face-to-face, the reader sees the two of them presented side-by-side. In the next, larger panel, Nick, the boy running after Stinky, is not menacing (maybe because his left arm is folded back), but Stinky is still clearly scared. On the next page, when Stinky comes down from his tree, the panel shows Nick walking away, but the composition has Stinky in the foreground, looking at Nick, demonstrating that he is finally able to see the boy as nonthreatening. The reader is in the story *with the characters*: in the running away panel, the point of view of the reader has him standing closer to Nick. In the next page, the reader is up in a tree with Stinky, then standing beside him as Nick moves away. In this story, about two characters who each think the other is very different, the reader gets to experience the two points of view first hand.

While this multimodal way of storytelling in literature is helpful for all emerging readers, it can be especially helpful for children who have difficulties processing purely verbal information. On the TOON Books blog, the mother of an autistic ten-year-old boy explains why she finds comics so helpful for her child:

Many books designed as early readers, especially chapter books, offer little picture support. And some illustrated books show incorrect information, or include pictures haphazardly. TOON Books give readers picture support that corresponds exactly to the story. This may sound like a small thing, but if you've ever tried to explain to a child why the pictured dragon is the wrong color, or encountered a picture two pages before or after the incident it illustrates, you know how confusing mismatches can be to the child reader. For the child reader with autism, such an error can ruin a book.

Most children with autism have difficulty "reading" the emotions of others. TOON Books can help with this because the exaggerated comic style shows mouse Benny's happiness or monster Stinky's anger so clearly.⁶

Comics Help Readers See Story Structure

Much of a comic's narrative flow can be read at a glance; in comics, emerging readers also get to see the rhythm of storytelling. They see the progression from a narrative's beginning to middle to end.

When I was reading one-page gag strips with my young son, Dash, he always wanted to jump to the last panel, the one that would make him laugh, the "punchline" panel. I had to point out that what made him explode in laughter had been accumulating throughout the entire page, a valuable lesson in storytelling. Since comics are all about using space to represent time passing, they are valuable tools to make the structure of a story clear to a young reader.

Not only do children love to read comics, they love to reread them as well. They can relive the story in their minds and savor all the details. The young reader who will have gone through all the stages of Jeff Smith's Little Mouse getting dressed will want to reread the book again and again to get to the punchline panel where the mouse "explodes" out of his clothes.

To get young children to love to read is a goal that can be accomplished by providing emerging readers with comics designed for them. To build the foundation of their literacy, we can harness kids' natural ability to make sense of visual narratives.

Comics can be a magical portal to literacy. In a world where there is less and less attention paid to books, librarians' recent interest in comics and graphic novels is a welcome corrective, one that can help children discover the magic of reading and encourage them to share our love of books. ☺

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A Comic Book Surprise

The Library of Congress and Graphic Novels

JANET WEBER

The following article is based on the program “Back to the Future: Comics and Graphic Novels in Special Collections”, held during the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., June 26, 2010.

This past summer at the ALA Annual Conference in Washington D.C., the Special Collections and Bechtel Fellowship Committee presented “Back to the Future: Comics and Graphic Novels in Special Collections.” Panelists included Georgia Higley from the Library of Congress and Françoise Mouly of Toon Books, and panels were moderated by committee member and children’s graphic novel enthusiast, Janet Weber. The presenters explored and discussed the value of acquiring and maintaining special collections of comics and graphic novels. As the presentation unfolded, the committee realized how much Higley and Mouly were learning from each other.

Comic Books at the Library of Congress: Discussion from Georgia Higley

Georgia Higley is head of the Newspaper Section of the Serial and Government Publications Division of the Library of Congress. She is responsible for the newspaper and comic book collections of the division, among the largest in the United States. She is a member of ALA and the Special Libraries Association (SLA), and is active in the International Federation of Library

Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Newspaper Section. Higley described the evolution of comic book collections and their use by researchers at the Library of Congress. She discussed the comic book collection at the Library of Congress, how collections are dispersed, how comics are preserved and cataloged, and current trends in comic book research.

The Collection

The comic book collection at the Library of Congress is a part of the Serial and Government Publications Division, which is housed in the Madison Building. There are 7,700 titles in the collection, with 120,000 individual issues, making it the largest comic book collection in the country. Holdings date back to the 1930s.

The collection is very diverse in its subject holdings and contains publications from a wide variety of publishers. The collection includes numerous special issues, such as those from Free Comic Book Day (annually held on the first Saturday in May), limited editions, and variant covers. The collection also contains single issues, bound volumes, and color microfiche.

The Disbursement of Collections

The Library of Congress maintains multiple collections of comics and graphic novels; however, not all collections are housed together. An example of these collections include origi-

Janet Weber is Youth Services Librarian at Tigard (Ore.) Public Library. She is a member of the ALSC Special Collections and Bechtel Fellowship Committee, which also includes co-chairs Marianne Martens and Ellen Ruffin, Christine Jenkins, Charmette Kuhn-Kendrick, Jeanne Lamb, Angela Leeper, Mary Lois Nicholls, Dorothy Stoltz, and Amanda Williams.

nal cartoon and comic art, which is housed in the Prints and Photographs Division; comic strips, which are housed in the Prints and Photographs Division and in the newspaper collection of the Serial and Government Publications Division; graphic novels and reprints, which are housed in the general collection; selected historical titles, which are kept in the Rare Book and Special Collections Division (includes dime novel collections); and papers, which are housed in the Manuscript Division (such as the Wertham Papers). Print reference materials are housed in the Serial and Government Publications Division and the Prints and Photographs Division.

Collection Development

Approximately 2,500 comic book issues are added to the Library of Congress each year. Purchases for the collection are based on factors from the Comics and Cartoons Collection Policy Statement, which include quality, significance, popularity, trends (and predicting pop culture), and originality. A majority of the comics added to the collection are via the copyright depository program at the Library of Congress. Underground comics are not registered for copyright, making it difficult to obtain these specific titles and issues. However, the acquisition goal of the collection is to purchase comic books first, then fulfill incomplete runs of core titles. The Library purchases comics through a number of comic book dealers, Ebay, and other internet sources, as well as through auctions. The Library also accepts donations.

Preservation and Cataloging

New additions to the collection are sent off site for a high-volume deacidification process. Each comic book is placed into a plastic slip case and numbered using comic book control numbers. While the titles receive at least a minimum level of cataloging (such as only the description of the item), a majority are cataloged in OCLC. Holdings are available in the library cat-

alog for all re-housed comic books. All item records provide an inventory control number and collection security. The Library of Congress control numbers are generally grouped by age and/or type of comic, and they use limited subject headings for titles. The issues are then kept in special housing that is inventoried and secured in a climate-controlled vault. Currently there are 1,500 boxes kept in this environment.

Researching Comics at the LC

Since the Comic Book Special Collection is a restricted-use collection, researchers can do a lot of preparatory work using the LC catalog by identifying titles and holdings and discovering related materials. Researchers may fill out a request form to obtain titles and should expect to spend a good amount of time doing their research, as it takes time to retrieve materials from a secure area. Many researchers who use the collection are individuals working on a thesis or publishers.

Many topics of research have been obtained using the comics collection. Past research topics have included reflections of real-world politics in comics, effects of the comic book code on the comic book industry, Walt Disney comic books (a very popular topic), science in comic books, gender in WWII-era comics, advertisements in comics, and rabbits in comic books of the 1940s and 50s.

Anyone who would like to research the comic book collection must bear in mind a couple of important rules, such as no photocopying and refraining from the use of a flash with cameras. However, the Library of Congress owns a scanner that can scan a full-sized page of a newspaper, making a simple job of scanning and saving items to a flash drive. ☺

For more information regarding the LC Newspaper and Current Periodical Reading Room of the Serial and Government Publications Division, visit www.loc.gov/rr/news/ncp.html.

THE DOG-EARED PAGE, continued from page 2

Answers:

1. Joseph Krumgold for *...And Now Miguel* (1954) and *Onion John* (1960)

Elizabeth George Speare for *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* (1959) and *The Bronze Bow* (1962)

E.L. Konigsburg for *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* (1968) and *The View from Saturday* (1997)

Katherine Paterson from *Bridge to Terabithia* (1978) and *Jacob Have I Loved* (1981)

Lois Lowry for *Number the Stars* (1990) and *The Giver* (1994)

2. Sid Fleischman won the Newberry Medal in 1987 for *The Whipping Boy*; his son, Paul Fleischman, won two years later in 1989 for *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices*.

3. Ed Young's Chinese version of the Red Riding Hood tale, *Lon Po Po*, took home the 1990 Caldecott Medal. Trina Schart Hyman's lushly illustrated *Little Red Riding Hood* was a 1984 Caldecott Honor Book.

4. David Wiesner won the Caldecott Medal in 1992 (*Tuesday*), 2002 (*The Three Pigs*), and 2007 (*Flotsam*).

Making Learning the Library Fun

One Library's Kidz Connect Program

MONICA SANDS

Were they attracted by the prizes, the performers, or just excited to learn more about their library? Whatever their reasons, more than one hundred seventy people descended on the Covington Library in Washington state for Kidz Connect.

We hosted the event in September, while families were thinking “back to school” and we could get them thinking of the library for their homework help needs. The end of the month seemed a better choice in that most of the back-to-school hubbub would have died down and families would have settled in to their routines.

Although this large event fell at the heels of our Summer Reading Program (SRP), with our extensive preplanning and fastidious attention to all of the details (outlines are your friend!), this was not a problem. Much of our Kidz Connect supplies began to arrive as summer reading was winding down and storage space was being freed. Funding for the event came from many sources and did not impact our SRP budget or planned activities.

The program was inspired by King County Library System's (KCLS) Tech Connect programs, which were held at several

branches and highlighted technological resources. Staff at several stations introduced participants to databases, downloadable materials, and other electronic resources. As added incentive, participants who visited all the stations could enter a grand prize drawing.

Three children's librarians applied the concept to children and families, and Kidz Connect was designed to entertain families while educating them about all of the things KCLS offers just for them.

Hosting entertaining programs at the Covington Library is a sure-fire way to lure families to the library. Attendance for children's programs at the Covington Library generally ranges from 75 to 250 people, depending on the type of program and the weather. With that in mind, we booked two performances for Kidz Connect. Participants enjoyed the musical adventure *The Board of Education* and the comedy team *The Brothers from Different Mothers* while they visited informational stations highlighting four key areas:

- Self Check-in, Automated Materials Handling (AMH) and back room tour. “I put them in the slot. Now where do they go?”
- Kid-friendly databases. “Time to do my homework—Help!”
- New OPAC. “I want it! Does the library have it?”
- Early Literacy. “My child doesn't read yet. What does the library have for us?”

Most stations were staffed by two people—one who taught participants about library resources and services and one stamping



Monica Sands is Children's Librarian at the Black Diamond and Covington Branches of King County (Wash.) Library System.



Even the youngest got involved.

passports, handing out prizes, directing participants to informational brochures, and answering questions. The AMH/Self-check-in station, however, required three people. One person was stationed in the lobby to line up tour participants and stamp passports, a second person in the back room to demonstrate the sorting machine, and a third person outside to teach people how to check in their own materials using the two self-check-in stations.

Because many regularly scheduled staff members were working at the stations, additional substitute staff were hired to work the service desks for the afternoon. Each station was designated by a colorful sign and helium balloons. After visiting the stations, participants went to the Finisher Center to collect their prizes and refreshments, and to enter the grand prize drawing.

Kidz Connect was also an opportunity to involve community members who might not normally connect with the library in a library event. The local Fred Meyer store provided overflow parking, and as a thank-you for their assistance, we purchased our grand prizes—six \$25 Fred Meyer gift cards—from them with money from our Friends group. Our team worked with our



Local teachers hosted the goodies table.

SOAR/Getting School Ready teams at three local elementary schools, and five volunteers from those teams provided assistance during the event. We couldn't have done it without them; however, I felt we could have prepared them better by providing clear and concise instructions prior to the event.

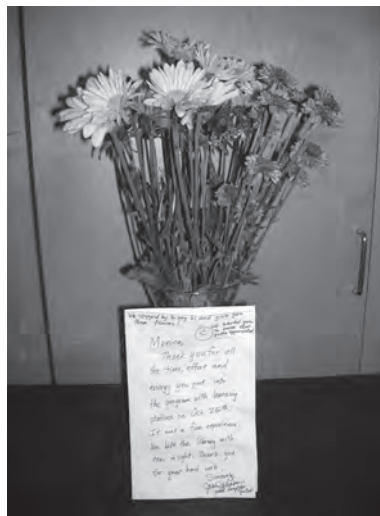
To add to the festive atmosphere, the day was full of prizes. The Friends of the Covington Library generously purchased stickers, bookmarks, and temporary tattoos to give out as station prizes. Finishers were able to choose either a pair of binoculars or a bug book provided by the King County Library Foundation.

Staff working during the event received their own "prizes," supplied by KCLS—tiaras featuring flashing LED lights, so staff were easy to spot and looked sufficiently festive. What could be better than being library royalty for the afternoon?

The KCLS graphics department created bright, cheery, kid-friendly promotional pieces, including posters, flyers, passports, and signs—all using a fresh new logo. Our team promoted the event on our fall storytime schedule (which was handed out at three different branches), the printed monthly calendar,



Board of Education musician gets the kids moving.



Appreciative parents said "thanks!"



Staff member Renae sports her tiara.

and our electronic newsletter (which is sent to area schools). Information about the event was sent to community contacts, including many homeschoolers. In addition, flyers were sent home with each student at the three Getting School Ready schools and distributed at community events. Posters were distributed to area schools and displayed around the three libraries. Announcements were made at community events, programs, and storytimes. The event also was included in the list of Early Literacy Fairs through The Foundation for Early Learning. Any chance we got to tell people, we did!

Getting Down to Business

With a high of 75 degrees on the program Saturday, we were pleased with attendance. A total of 172 people completed all 4 of the stations to enter the drawing, and we gave out about 300 finisher prizes.

Tech Connect numbers were calculated a bit differently, by number of station visits, so it is hard to compare our results to Tech Connect. For instance, the largest of the Tech Connects held at the Bellevue Library had 10 stations and a total of 680 station visits. If we assume each person visited all 10 stations, then that would mean there were 68 people participating.

Judging by the number of completed passports, we were well above that number. If we compare those same results to the number of finisher prizes handed out, Kidz Connect had more than four times as many participants as the largest Tech Connect.

As a further output measure, participants under the age of thirteen were asked to provide the name of their school on their grand prize entry blank. We did this to ascertain whether or not families from the three SOAR/Getting School Ready elementary schools attended in greater numbers than other area schools. To our surprise, those three schools did not have more participants than other area schools. While sending flyers home seemed like a good way to get the word out, it did not seem to make a difference in getting them to the library for our event.

Each of the four stations reported a steady stream of learners, and it would have been a challenge to accommodate more visitors. We heard positive comments from all the parents regarding the many new things they learned about how the library could help their children with homework, reading, and early literacy. It is clear from the feedback we received that we achieved our goal to inform families and educators about library services and resources.

With fastidious planning and teamwork, Kidz Connect went off without a hitch and could not have happened without the many people who helped pull it together, pull it off, and clean up in the days following including staff from several departments, other libraries, and our own local staff. ☺



Prize binoculars provide a new perspective on the jugglers.

Quick Tips to Planning a Program

- Plan, plan, plan.
- Allow enough time for set-up and take down the day of the event.
- Collect supplies, prizes, and flyers in advance.
- Allocate lots of storage space.
- Provide and advertise a parking alternative.
- Plan the event around one stellar performance, not two.
- Appoint one person ringmaster for the event.
- Prepare thank-you gifts for volunteers and community partners in advance so you can present them at the event.
- Make sure everyone involved knows what's going to happen *in advance* so they have time to ask questions, adjust schedules, and get excited.
- Thank everyone often and keep it fun!

Beyond Storytime

Children's Librarians Collaborating in Communities

TESS PRENDERGAST

Since 2005, many children in Vancouver have been afforded a bonus learning opportunity: a professional children's librarian has joined them where they and their adult caregivers hang out. Responding to research that showed large numbers of the city's children were arriving at school unprepared to learn, the Vancouver Public Library Children's Services directors proposed a concrete way to be part of a citywide solution. The result was the Early Years Community Program—a five-member team of professional children's librarians who work with community members and other family service agencies. They reach young children by first reaching their parents and caregivers in a wide range of community settings. The librarians usually work in partnership with a variety of community groups, helping to strengthen early language and literacy and overall family literacy practices.

Program Rationale

The public library as an institution is well positioned to provide citizens of all ages and backgrounds with their information and entertainment materials in a variety of formats. Joining book clubs, attending storytimes, and borrowing books, CDs, and

DVDs are some of the ways that people may choose to engage in all that the library has to offer everyone—all for free.

Since the economic downturn, North American libraries have seen increases in usage, indicating that public libraries are well used by people of all ages and all walks of life. Also, feedback from communities all over the continent suggests that libraries are an integral and valuable part of people's lives and always have been.¹

However, not everyone uses the bricks-and-mortar library. Some people prefer to buy their reading and viewing material or use Web-based information sources from home. Still others do not use the library for a number of reasons that can be referred to generally as barriers. Whether the barrier is a lack of knowledge about libraries, mistrust of government institutions, or any number of other factors, the social result is the same: some people are not accessing library collections, programs, and services that might positively affect their lives.

The Early Years Community Program was created to respond to a well-established need for young children to grow up in environments rich in language and literacy learning opportunities.



Tess Prendergast leads the Early Years Community Program at the Vancouver (Canada) Public Library. When not assisting with the administration of the Children's Services division, she is usually thinking up new ways to both ask for and spend grant money on early literacy projects for young children and their families.

The author thanks the Vancouver Public Library administrators and board of directors for their support of this unique program over the last five years.

Ongoing research provides practitioners with a rationale for supporting early literacy in our youngest citizens. Many studies indicate that children who have deficits in language and literacy in their preschool years tend to have more difficulty learning once they start school. Early literacy experts now emphasize that a strong vocabulary is a positive indicator of learning success in kindergarten and beyond. Children with rich vocabularies who have been read to, sung to, played with, and most importantly, *talked to* are set up for success when they go to school.²

In reality though, children's librarians, like other community workers, know that many families are isolated. Poverty and health issues have impacts on families' daily lives, making activities that others take for granted simply impossible to provide for their children.

The Early Years team places vulnerable families at the top of their priority list. The Early Years librarians are equipped to meet the needs of families who need extra support in their children's early years because they are able to be out in the community for long periods of time. They have both the time and flexibility to work within a wide range of community settings and adapt as the needs of the community they are working with change. Traditional in-library children's librarians, while providing vital, responsive, and excellent service, may not have this flexibility.

Above all, like their in-branch colleagues, the Early Years team members focus on the family as the conduit for early learning and support parents and caregivers in their role as the child's first "teacher" of language and literacy. Research confirms what people have known all along—children learn best through their interactions with their loving caregivers, whether they are parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, nannies, or childcare providers. Contemporary children's librarians are both trained and encouraged to work together with caregivers to help set young children up for success throughout their lives.³

While taking research into practice, the Early Years team works in partnership with other family-serving organizations to provide opportunities for families and other caregivers to experience language together in fun, safe, and supportive environments. They also actively seek participants' feedback about how the library can best meet their needs, in ways that make sense to them.

The Early Years Community Program adheres to a philosophy of service that is strength-based and respectful of the diversity of Vancouver's many communities. As such, they

- offer all families free resources to support their children's language and literacy development in both heritage and second languages (library access and materials, skills, and community resources);



A sister and brother share a giggle at an Early Years community program.

- support early literacy, language, and cognitive development with an emphasis on the whole child;
- support multicultural early literacy approaches that value heritage cultures and languages;
- encourage the magic and love of language, stories, learning, and literacy;
- use community-led approaches wherever and whenever possible; and
- connect caregivers and families to the community resources that suit their needs.

They believe this strength-based philosophy, as well as their collaborative and community-led service model, results in programs, services, and collections that respond to and reflect the needs of the families they serve and will best prepare young children for later learning success in school and in life.

History

The creation of the Early Years Community Program came about on the heels of a national public library initiative called "Working Together," (www.librariesincommunities.com) a four-year (2004–08), federally funded project that investigated and recommended new and promising practices in community development in the public library world. Now referred to as "community-led library service," this has been integrated into the key tenets of this project and into the current work of the Early Years Community Program.

Working Together was a service directed at socially-excluded adults. The Early Years team has had to adapt the approaches to suit children and caregivers. When it began in 2005, the Early

Years team went by the name Ready to Read: Children's Outreach Program. This name was initially selected because it was catchy and was in keeping with the Every Child Ready to Read @ your library® initiative by ALSC and ALA's Public Library Association.

While the Early Years staff were and are committed to the focus on parent and caregiver roles in supporting early literacy, after a few years they began to feel limited by what the name Ready to Read seemed to imply. They were not comfortable being seen as professionals who were tasked only with getting young children ready to learn to *read*.

While the type of programs and family support they offer may indeed help prepare children to learn to read, they believed that they needed to reflect the larger goal of supporting healthy child development in partnership with parents, caregivers, and other organizations. In addition, by the time the team's name had changed, they had begun to integrate more community-led approaches and wished to have that reflected in their new name. The Early Years Community Program identifies them as community librarians who focus on the early years of child development.

Early Years Program Stories

The Early Years Community Program librarians have, over the past five years, collected a number of stories that illuminate the impact of this kind of work. In all the stories, some barrier or vulnerability was addressed, and many illustrate the importance of community partnerships. (Program participants' names have been changed to protect their privacy.)

Chinese Language Mother Goose Program

The Parent-Child Mother Goose Program® (www.nald.ca/mothergooseprogram/) is an established international program for parents and their babies and toddlers. Vancouver Public Library has been instrumental in expanding this program into multilingual communities and has been offering such programs in Chinese for many years. Many participants in the Chinese Mother Goose Programs are low-income immigrants. They tend to be very isolated, living without support from extended family or friends in their new communities. Many of them do not speak English very well and often they do not use the library and the services that the library provides.

Karen Lai, a Chinese-speaking Early Years librarian, noticed a young mother named May with a small baby. She had seen her walking past the library many times but had never seen her inside. So she approached May and learned that she never



Puppets are popular at a community family literacy program.

came into the library because she was too shy and timid, and she could not speak or understand English very well and did not feel that she belonged there.

Karen immediately invited her to join her Chinese Parent-Child Mother Goose Program and was thrilled when May attended the program regularly, never missing a session. As part of the Mother Goose Program, Karen always takes the participants on a short tour of the library, helps them to get library cards, and shows them the Chinese language collection, among other things. A few months later, Karen had this to say about May.

I saw May in the library browsing through the Chinese collection. I also introduced her to other family services provided by the local service providers. On another day, during my program visit to the neighbourhood house, May was there too, participating in another family program.

She even made tasty snacks for the Mother Goose Program and shared her recipes with others. In her evaluation form, she mentioned that she has become more sociable, and even her baby became friendly with those who attended the program.

Before May and her baby attended the program, the baby would not let anyone else besides her mom carry her. At the end of the Mother Goose Program, all the mothers, including May, who had been so isolated before, exchanged contact information to arrange to meet in the summer.

Nanay Gansa

The Early Years Community Program has had the good fortune of having a librarian originally from the Philippines work on the team for several years. Erie Maestro's forays into Vancouver's Filipino community left her with the impression that many young and newly arrived Filipino families were isolated and lacking both family and community support systems.

There were already family support and early literacy programs being offered for Chinese families, and the Filipino families were beginning to ask Erie if they, too, could have culturally specific programs.

This self-identified community need led to the creation of Vancouver's first Tagalog Language Mother Goose Program, also known as *Nanay Gansa* (which means Mother Goose in Tagalog). It drew mothers and grandmothers, and, later on, fathers, with their babies and toddlers, all of whom saw a difference in their children's development throughout their participation in the program.

The Filipino community in Vancouver is diverse, with both class and regional differences that could, in other circum-

stances, have been difficult to surmount. However, the *Nanay Gansa* program of shared songs and stories from a range of Filipino languages' oral traditions helped to overcome initial insecurities, shyness, and apprehensiveness. Families who previously had no support systems began to look to each other for mutual support, and friendships flourished. They exchanged parenting ideas, problem-solved things like sleeping and eating issues, and shared food, laughs, and mutual support. Erie heard this comment by one mom to another one day after the program:

"I used to wait for my husband to drive me to where I wanted to go. But now, I can go anywhere. I take the bus, I walk with the baby, and I don't have to depend on him for this," she said.

After attending *Nanay Gansa*, families started to go together to regular storytime programs in the library and at the family drop-in centers in their communities. The outcomes of this program are not restricted to early literacy, but extend to positive impacts for parents, as they are able to extend their networks in areas that involve employment, continuing education, and recreation.

The risk factor of isolation was minimized by the opportunity to connect and truly build social capital within a group of peers. One of the moms even started a Mother Goose blog for the group, which led other participants to start their own blogs and share support with each other online as well as in person.

Supporting Parents of Children with Disabilities

Nanci is a professional mother of three who lives on Vancouver's affluent West Side. Her oldest child, five-year-old Andrew, has a significant developmental disability and requires caregiver support for all aspects of his daily life.

Based on her own experience of raising a child with significant extra support needs, Nanci identified a gap in service for families of children with special needs in her own neighborhood. By bringing a number of service providers together 'to talk' at a community health center, Nanci helped launch a new partnership program called West Side Mother Goose.

At the initial planning sessions, Nanci articulated the experience of a parent whose baby needs extra support. Although they would be welcome to join in any baby storytime at any library, Nanci told the planning table attendees (a librarian, two nurses, an infant development consultant, and a community planner) that most parents of children with significant developmental or medical needs do not choose to attend regular library baby storytime programs because they feel conspicuous, pitied, and often overcome with emotions.

Nanci and her friends who share the experience of having a baby with a disability or whose babies are medically fragile confirmed that such programs are often just too painful for them to attend. However, as demonstrated in the story of the *Nanay Gansa* program, there is much to be said about the power that social cohesion has in building resilience within a group of peers.

Nanci asked us *why not* have a program in this neighborhood just for families whose children have extra support needs? No diagnoses need to be given, no explanations offered; these families would welcome a chance to attend a program that simply allowed them to be there, without the feelings of exclusion and loss that they feel at other programs geared to typically developing babies and toddlers.

Once the logistics of the partnership were worked out (a children's librarian and an infant development consultant pair) and an appropriate space, a church's multipurpose room, was found (neither of the local libraries had space available in the mornings), the program took off and was almost immediately filled up. The shared language play of rhymes, tickles, bounces, songs, and stories formed the program's glue—parents revelled in their children's smiles, the adults all visibly relaxed in one another's company. After the songs and rhymes were finished, generous healthy snacks were provided, and social connections began to thrive too.

Parents were soon able to help each other through difficult stages. Rosa brought her son, Micah, who had spent the first two years of his life in a neonatal intensive care unit. Because of his disabilities, Rosa seemed resigned that her child would never be able to attend preschool or daycare, but, at the same time, she was clearly overwhelmed with his care needs.

Nanci, whose own child is now older and in a supported daycare, slowly, over the course of several weeks and many supportive conversations, convinced Rosa that daycare was indeed an option for Micah. Rosa eventually began to see that it would mean a stimulating environment for her son, with professional caregivers to take care of his medical needs, and a much needed break for her.

By the end of that session, she asked for a referral to a special needs daycare, which was provided to her. She also seemed much more positive about her son's potential after meeting other parents who had "been there." In her evaluation at the end of the program, Rosa wrote, "Thank you. Meeting other parents with a special needs child makes me feel that I am not alone."

This program grew out of a community member's knowledge of a gap in service for a unique group of people. Using the vehicle



Kelly Clark reads a favorite picture book to kids and their parents at a community program.

of a fun, literacy, and language-based program, the Early Years' program staff were not only able to support these children's language and literacy development but were, perhaps more importantly, able to bring these parents together and let them give one another what they needed most.

Young Parents

The Early Years Program works with a community health service in a program that supports young, often teenage, parents. Although the program activities change each week, depending on what the young people are interested in, the visiting librarian always has a conversation about library cards.

They have found that initiating this topic in a supportive, judgement-free zone often leads to a flood of stories about library card disasters from these young parents. Almost all of them have had lost items or insurmountable overdue fines on the cards they had as kids or teens. Several have told the librarians that they had library cards while in foster care, and due to frequent moves and other chaos, their library books were lost or stolen.

One young mother told the librarian that she had recently lost a backpack full of library material; she had been struggling to get her son (who was in his stroller) off a crowded city bus, which pulled away before she realized the backpack was still on board. Despite calls to the transit company lost and found, her backpack was never turned in, and she was very upset about not being able to use the library.

This was a mom who, unlike many of her peers, was already keen to read and sing to her child, a mom who generously shared with the group her own personal lullaby for her son. She was, however, afraid to find out how much she owed the library since it would have been impossible for her to pay for the lost items. The librarian immediately allayed her fears by reassuring her she would have the lost item charges cleared that same day and given a fresh start with no more questions asked. Her baby got a new card as well. She was thrilled, as are all the young moms who are presented with their shiny new fine-free library cards as well as their children's first library cards.

The Early Years Community Program librarians have the support of the Vancouver Public Library to offer fresh starts for those who are unable to pay for lost items. This support makes it easy for the program staff to get young parents to speak up about what problems they may have experienced in the past and then be able to offer immediate solutions. The financial barrier is removed, and the young parents are free to use the library again for themselves and their new babies.

Food Security

Programs such as food banks and community kitchens are effective draws for isolated families experiencing food insecurity due to low income levels. As a fundamental human need, the drive to satisfy hunger brings families who don't attend more mainstream events out into the community in order to

access food supports, such as grocery vouchers, food bags, and hot meals for themselves and their kids.

In a unique partnership in a vulnerable south Vancouver neighbourhood, the Early Years team has partnered with a local family service agency to offer a welcome "add-on" to a weekly food bank program that takes place at a local church. Before going to the church hall to collect their groceries, families with young children go to the small cozy choir section of the church where, led by two facilitators (a librarian and a trained family support worker), they sit on the floor and sing, read, rhyme, and play with their children.

This program has drawn a wide range of needy families, some of whom have never participated in groups before. The librarian who runs this group reports that many parents and children who were initially withdrawn are now participating with enthusiasm and are telling her that they are better able to soothe their children by singing to them, feel better about themselves, and better understand the developmental stages that their children are going through.

Since this is a multicultural group, the facilitators encourage participants to share rhymes, songs, and stories from their own backgrounds. The common thread in all the feedback from these participants is that parents *feel better* about themselves and their children's overall development, in addition to the fun of actually attending the program each week.

Week after week, the ideas and suggestions of the participants who are now confident about speaking up are woven into the fabric of the program, and the group has grown to more than fifty regular participants, singing, rhyming, reading, and supporting one another.

Recovery from Addiction

Early Years librarian Anna Swanson visits a residential harm-reduction program for women dealing with addictions. All the participants are either in the late stages of pregnancy or have just given birth. This program provides medical, psychological, and social support for women who wish to succeed in recovering from addiction and retain or regain custody of their babies.

The librarian was initially invited to this program's parenting class to talk about what the library can offer, and what parents can do to support their baby's language and brain development. From this initial contact, a monthly program evolved that focuses on the power of rhymes and songs to help build bonds between mother and child. The participants learn ways to connect with their babies, soothe them when they cry, and find comfort for themselves through lullabies and stories.

Although it is typical for the moms in this group to start out by saying that they refuse to sing anything, they often end up being active participants. Thalia, the nurse who runs the program, has provided both feedback and encouragement as she has seen firsthand the benefits of this open-ended, supportive approach. She voiced her appreciation of this supportive approach when emailing the librarians about how the program was going.

Many of these mothers have never had the experience of being parented by their families, have little in the way of formal education and do not always get treated with dignity and respect by those they meet in their daily lives. Drug addiction alienates and frightens many people. You are teaching the women to connect, to bond with their babies. Teaching women to speak, read to, sing, and gently touch their babies is a valuable gift for these women who so want to be the best parent she can be.

It is, however, what happens among the mothers themselves that is the most remarkable thing about this program. Once they are comfortable with the practice of singing and rhyming, they begin to feel safe enough to share their memories of how songs have helped them. They are safe telling their stories here, and safe in an atmosphere that truly supports what they can do, and do well, with their new babies.

Women's Shelter Program

The Early Years Program librarians offer a weekly visit to a ten-unit apartment building that provides up to one year of housing for women who have left abusive relationships. They receive services from social workers, lawyers, and other service providers to help them stabilize their families.

The Early Years Community Program staff was invited to provide the parents with preschoolers a Mother Goose Story and Rhyme Program to support family literacy, provide resources, and offer the children a quality group experience in a safe and comfortable setting.

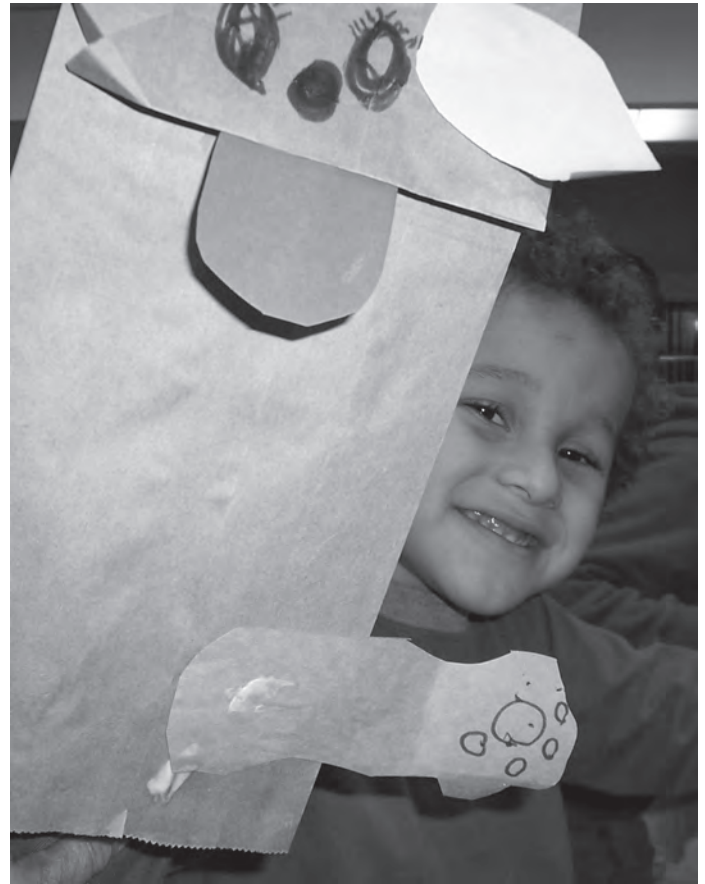
A few months ago, a mother asked if they could make their own feltboard stories; she had noticed how much the children enjoyed them during the storytime, and she mentioned she was studying to become an early childhood educator. Some of the other mothers there quickly caught on to this idea and asked for more patterns.

They recently told facilitator Nona Avren that they try to get together and create felt stories in the evening once a week. Nona now brings felt and new patterns to her weekly storytime program there. She leaves the felt and some sample patterns, and lets the moms decide when and how to create stories. The moms report that they use these felts "all the time," and the kids love them.

Also, Nona has observed that a child with significant challenges in speech has really taken to storytime and is talking much more clearly and confidently. He is thriving and thoroughly engaged with books, oral stories, rhymes, and action songs. His mother told the facilitator that she reads to him more than ever now. This child does not attend any other preschool-age programs in the community, so this weekly storytime is his sole exposure to group early literacy.

Subsidized Housing Community Program

The Early Years team also runs a family program in the community room of a subsidized housing community in southeast



Hands-on art activities are a huge draw!



I like that color!

Vancouver. Although it is difficult to get parents to bring their children to this program, when they get there, the librarians are always impressed by how quickly the children soak up the stimulation of the art activity, the free reading time, and the storytime.

This is a mainly child-led program; parents are not pressured to participate if they are reluctant. As long as they are in the room, the children can partake of all the activities led by two energetic librarians. This no-pressure tactic works well; parents can relax a bit, read the paper, and have a cup of tea while their children

participate in art and storytime. Thanks to the support of the institution and board, the facilitators are able to purchase and serve healthy snacks and a small hot meal. The generous provision of healthy food and stimulating language activities fill bellies as well as minds. Although time consuming, providing hands-on art activities has proven to be a real draw for many participants, one that has elicited the following response from program facilitator Erie Maestro:

The little projects that the library program provides for the children not only teach them the skills of wielding scissors or of squeezing the glue out of the tubes. But they also give these kids the pride and confidence of making something beautiful with their own hands.

Perils and Pitfalls

The Early Years team members, although experienced, dedicated, and passionate children's librarians, have all struggled to some degree with the need to embrace the ambiguous in their evolving roles as community workers. They consciously cast themselves as equals and learners alongside their community members and deliberately downplay any perception that they have "expertise."

While they see the value in bringing people together with the services, programs, and collections of the public library, they need to take the time to hear from people about what is meaningful to them and then respond accordingly. One of their main issues, however, is the fact that many of their community partners have mandates that differ from the Early Years Program's community-led approach. This clash of mandates has been a significant challenge over the years.

Community service providers, often called "gatekeepers," are viewed as an essential and valuable resource in the community-led library service approach. However, some gatekeepers provide programs that are driven by mandates that do not include room for participant input or collaborative program planning.

While some service providers seem enthusiastic about having the library on board, they have at the same time excluded Early Years staff from program planning or evaluation meetings. The Early Years team members believe there needs to be a paradigm shift in how all community service providers do their work with families. They believe that all family-serving organizations need to progress along the continuum of traditional "outreach" service to more community-led practice. That way, partnered organizations will both be asking for and listening to feedback from participants and therefore be able to truly collaborate with families in the provision of responsive, relevant programs and services.

Fortunately, community development and community-led models of service are gaining both attention and momentum, and the Early Years Program librarians believe that as time goes on they will find it easier and easier to speak the same community-led language with their program partners in the family support field.

The last five years of the Early Years Community Program have been inspiring and challenging for staff. They have all felt both elated by some of their successes and deflated by some of their less-than-successful experiences. They do not, however, look at setbacks as failures, but as learning opportunities. In general, the team members are buoyed by the many programs that truly highlight what their work is all about.

Giving Families the Last Word

The Early Years Program librarians want their work to be meaningful to their participants, and they solicit feedback from participants with both evaluation forms as well as anecdotal stories. Here is what a number of our participants have had to say about their work, demonstrating the effect the Early Years Program is having in their communities:

The Mother Goose Program helped me through a difficult time. When my mother passed away, I found this was the one place that focused on my relationship with my own daughter and it really helped me remember the joy of motherhood.
—Janine, mother to Samantha, 6 months, North Area Mother Goose, Spring 2010

Our little family is "on our own" in the sense that we don't have any family in town and don't have any friends with small children. I suspect many new families are in a similar situation nowadays. This program has been amazing for enabling us to interact with other babies/parents and hear about what other activities there are in the neighbourhood, how other people deal with problems, what other people do as a routine, etc. . . . There is more opportunity for interaction, which creates a much stronger sense of community.
—Katrina, mother to Ricki, 9 months, North Area Mother Goose, Spring 2010

Having a team of friendly and knowledgeable facilitators is very helpful; they create a family atmosphere which helps us to find and utilize resources in our community.
—Marie, mother to James, 2, and Thea, 8, Unitarian Food Bank Mother Goose, Spring 2009

It is a happy social experience for the parent and child, and a great way to talk to other parents that may be going through similar things that you are.
—Cindy, mother to Chloe, 10 months, West Side Mother Goose, Spring 2008

A community-led program targeting the early years is adaptable to a variety of communities. Librarians who can speak the languages heard in their communities are valuable, but not essential. It is more important to have institutional support for the value of this kind of work, and an abiding faith that these approaches will benefit families in meaningful ways.

It may not be possible to quantify that this work is churning out children who are ready to learn at school entry, but the Early

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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 a vehicle for continuing education of librarians working with children, and showcases current research and practice relating to library service to children and spotlights significant activities and programs of the association.

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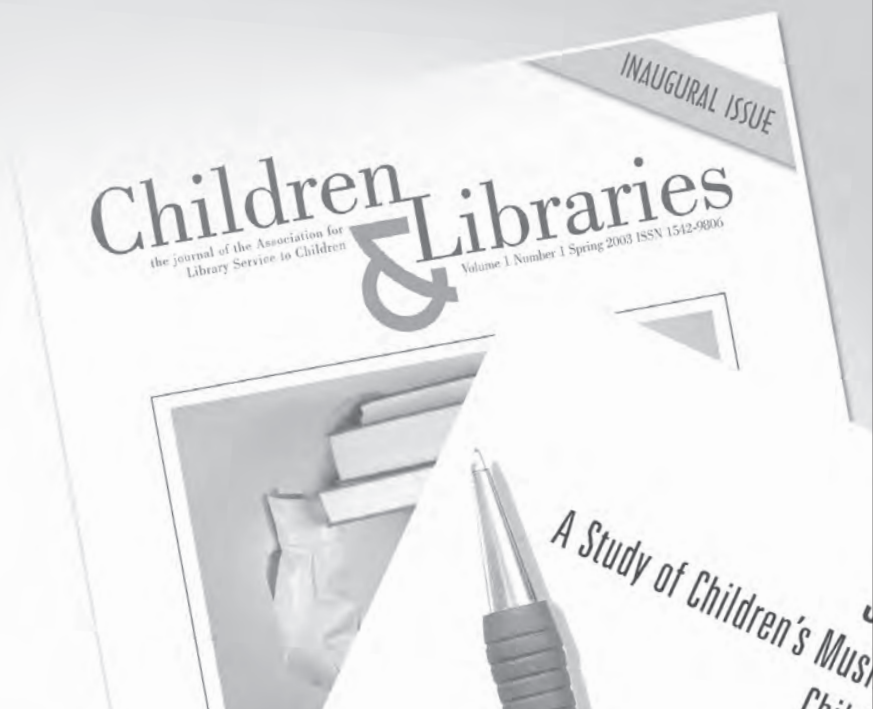
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“A” is for Alligator

Or How a Bechtel Fellow Learns the Alphabet

JOYCE LAIOSA

All images from the Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature Digital Collection. (<http://ufdcweb1.uflib.ufl.edu/ufdc/?c=juv>)

“A” is for Alligator
A ferocious reptile beast;
The mascot for a university
Found in the Southeast.

Perhaps it would be best to leave the rhymes and alphabet writing to others! In 2005, I studied illustrated alphabet books for one month on a Louise Seaman Bechtel Fellowship at the Baldwin Library for Historical Children's Literature at the University of Florida, Gainesville. I pored over illustrations, took notes, and compared older alphabet books from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to newer books currently on library shelves. I also took photographs for almost every book I touched. I reverently held books that little children had read and played with some 250 years ago.

My interest in historical children's literature began during my graduate studies at the University at Albany, State University of New York (SUNY) when I took History of Children's Literature

with Dr. Millicent Lenz in 1996. This class revealed, among the many lessons, the importance of preserving books that were loved by children—books that were read over and over again, stained, colored with crayons, and dog-eared.

The historic literature and illustrations serve as miniature history lessons, from the clothes worn by boys and girls to playthings by their sides. My enthusiasm for these books led to a part-time job with David Mitchell, the curator pro bono of the Miriam Snow Mathes Historical Children's Literature Collection in the M. E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives at the University at Albany, SUNY. It is a smaller collection (about 12,000 items) than the Baldwin Collection (about 100,000 volumes), but it set in motion an interest in historical children's literature that led to the fellowship I received in 2004.

In viewing 220 alphabet books over the course of 4 weeks, questions emerged: what words are used with each letter, how is the “X” portrayed, and will the book help children learn to recognize letters and increase their vocabulary?

I observed enough variations—good and bad—to learn that alphabet books are important for reading skills, they should be



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fun, and they should be visually stimulating for a child to want to read them many times. Studying books from two centuries ago through the present allowed me to focus on language, the visual representations of words, and the joy of a good alphabet book. What follows are some of my observations.

Oldest to Newest

I studied the books by publishing dates, from oldest to newest. The oldest original (not a reproduction) alphabet book was *Tom Thumb's Play-Book* from 1786. The book fit into the palm of my hand, and the binding was barely held together by a thread. This tiny book held the alphabet tale: "Aa Apple Pye; Bb Bit it; Cc Cut it," and so on. This was followed by a rhyming tale with no illustrations, only uppercase and lowercase letters: "A was an Archer, and shot at a Frog; B was a Butcher, and had a great Dog."¹

When reading the entire rhyme, it could be called an alphabet of careers, jobs, and judgmental observations: for example, "D was a Drunkard, and had a red face," "O was an Oysterwench, and a sad Scold," or "V was a Vintner, a very great Sot," and "X was expensive, and so became poor."² The letter "U," interestingly, was not used for either of the alphabet rhymes.

It was *The New England Primer* (a twentieth-century facsimile from Ginn and Company, originally published between 1785 and 1790) that shaped and molded a new American nation. Most children at the end of the eighteenth century were taught from this book. According to Peter Hunt, the precursor of the *New England Primer* could have been a hornbook which shaped the primer; "alternatively an alphabet, syllabary, and spelling lists might be included alongside a church catechism in what was known as an 'abcie' book."³ Children were reading and learning the same sample words for each letter of their alphabet: "Apple, Bull, Cat, Dog . . . Top, Vine, Wale [sic], Xerzes [sic], Young Lamb and Zany."⁴ The primer also used the alphabet for one of the more famous verses:

"In Adam's Fall
We sinned all.
Thy life to mend
This Book attend.
The Cat doth play,
And after slay . . .
The idle Fool
Is whipt at School.
As runs the Glass,
Man's life doth pass . . .
Time cuts down all
Both great and small . . .
Xerxes the great did die
And so must you and I."⁵

Each of these verses is illustrated by a woodcut. Death, a part of everyday life back then, is a common theme in these verses. Seth Lerer notes in *Children's Literature: A Reader's History from Aesop to Harry Potter* that "writing, speaking, preaching, and reading about death became the constitutive experience of

Puritan literacy. The fear of death gripped even the youngest of readers."⁶

The New England Primer went through innumerable editions and reflected the seriousness of the young country's mission to mold and contribute educated citizens to govern, guide, and build a new nation.⁷ There are some fun words. For example, a "Zany" seems to be a jester, based on the picture. I also learned that Xerxes was a king of Persia in the 5th century.



The Royal Alphabet, Or, Child's Best Instructor (1793) surprised me with a new word for the letter "X." It was "Xantippe, a famous old scold."⁸ I referred to more than one dictionary to find that Socrates' wife, Xantippe, was known for her proverbial peevish scolding and quarrelsome temper.⁹



The Cries of London, As They Are Exhibited Every Day (1814) was a delight! It was as if I had opened up a page of *Oliver Twist*, where "the characters that daily through the streets of this great city, form the strongest contrasts and greatest variety."¹⁰ Each picture has a copperplate engraving and is hand

colored. Some of the cries are "Buy a Broom!" "Mop, Brush, or hair Broom?" "Fowls live Fowls, or fat Chicken?" "Oars, or Sculler, have a boat?"

"X" was handled as "Buy a Box, Bonnet, or a lock Box?"¹¹

A similar alphabet book was *Turner's Pictured Alphabet*, a book of trades published about ten years later. Oh, but what palatable trades would you like your child to aspire to—Actor, Dustman, King, Pedlar [sic], Rat Catcher, Undertaker, or Vagrant?¹²

In books published around 1840, I noticed detailed engravings of children dressed in fine clothes. There were pictures of toys (dolls, tops, kites) and everyday objects (bellows, augers, baskets, churns, and axes). These illustrations may have been made for people who could afford to buy books for their children, so the children may have been from the wealthy class. Some objects named in these early alphabet books might be used today—words such as "boat," "cake," "drum," "fox," "horse," "owl," or "queen." Words one may not see in present-day alphabet books are "inn," "lyre," "pump," "urn," "whip," and "yew."

Many alphabet books were simply a list of nouns, leaving the reader to wonder why each word was chosen. The *Christmas*

ABC (1844) pictured "butterfly," "comet," "grapes," "ink jug," "macaw," "quarrel," and "zebu." It also included the first reference I found to "Negro."¹³ The hand colored illustration is of an African American man, sitting on a dock in front of luggage. He appears to be waiting to load the luggage when a ship becomes ready. I was surprised at the miscellany of nouns; including a new "X" word, "ximensis," which I have been unable to find in a dictionary (including the Oxford English Dictionary), or online.

The Holiday ABC Book (1844) also used primarily nouns, but added adjectives that described feelings and actions accompanied by detailed pictures of these actions. "Joyousness" was illustrated with children playing, and one can see the different games and how boys are more active and girls less so. The boys are running with a hoop, playing with a bat, and teasing a dog, while one girl is playing with a badminton and shuttlecock, and the other girl is sitting with the dog.



Published in 1845 was an alphabet book with illustrations and maps of countries around the world. *The Geographical Alphabet or First Steps to Geography* brings children, through pictures, to other cultures and countries. "H Hindostan, where the Ganges doth

flow" has a map of India and people in native costume.¹⁴ The alphabet begins in Arabia, moves through the Caribbean, Europe, and touches on Asia as well. One learns where to find tea, spices, wine, rum, sugar, port, and rum. The colored plates made this a book to enjoy over and over again.

As I continued to request alphabet books from the staff of the Baldwin Library, the books were becoming more diversified in subject matter, and new words were being introduced for different letters. I did major detective work when I came across a "J" reference for Johnny Gilpin in *Keller's Illustrated Primer* (1848). I knew of Johnny Gilpin from Randolph Caldecott's illustration of Gilpin that decorates the face of the Caldecott medal. I learned

that "Johnny Gilpin" is a ballad written by William Cowper, first published in 1785.¹⁵ Caldecott's "Johnny Gilpin" was written in 1878. Obviously, Johnny Gilpin must have been famous for the reference to make any sense to children.

In the same book, right under Johnny Gilpin was "K" for "Knife Grinder." I was confounded by the incongruity of using a word with a silent letter



"K." With every new book I opened, my expectations were to see letters and words to help children learn to read. I found a book that used "K" with "Knight."¹⁶ The word not only has a silent "K," but also it is a homophone for an "N" word, "night."

Animal Alphabets

Animal ABC books were very popular hundreds of years ago, and they still are. The first true animal ABC book at the Baldwin was *My Own ABC of Quadrupeds* (1848). I liked this book very much, but I failed to verify the animals I had never heard of. Until I compared this book to today's animal alphabet books, it never occurred to me that some of the animals might be extinct.



The letter "Q," for example, is represented by a "quagga," which I thought was an imaginary animal that looked like a cross between a zebra and a horse. At the time that I saw this book, I was only interested in "X" represented by "Xury's Lion," in a reference to *Robinson Crusoe*.¹⁷ As I looked at ABC books from the twentieth century, I came across Ann Jonas' *Aardvarks, Disembark* (1990), and, to my surprise, there among the extinct animals was the quagga!

"A" for "Apple Pie" is a familiar alphabetic subject matter in books from *Tom Thumb's Play Book* (1786) to *The History of an Apple Pie; Written by Z* (circa 1850) to the sweet, idealized children of Kate Greenaway's *A Apple Pie* (1873). In a lovely set of illustrations, Greenaway transforms the story of the apple pie into that of an idealized imaginative home life from an earlier time (earlier than late nineteenth century). It is a world of pin-afores and pantaloons, and the pie itself becomes an object of desire never really eaten but always out of reach. It is fought over, longed for, peeped into, sang for, and finally the "U," "V," "W," "X," "Y," and "Z" all have a large slice and go off to bed.¹⁸

By the middle of the nineteenth century, many trends were introduced that continued throughout the twentieth century. Quite possibly my favorite alphabet book is *Letters Everywhere*,



Stories and Rhymes for Children; with Twenty-Eight Illustrations by Theophile Schuler (1869). These detailed engravings look similar to *Anno's Alphabet: An Adventure in Imagination* (1974). The first book uses the illustrations with the letters "carved" into your imagination. Each letter is depicted in wood (trees, barrels, branches, or a bridge) with striking details illustrated; each picture is accompanied by a poem and a story.

Anno uses illustrations to trick your eye with his "carving" and to hide many other pictures in the borders of each illustration. Both books will keep a child occupied with repeated reading. And Stephen Johnson's *Alphabet City* (1995) brings his detailed cityscape illustrations into present day.



Another popular alphabet theme is railroads. *The Railway ABC* (1868) is part of *Aunt Louisa's London Picture Book*. The copy owned by the Baldwin Library is a book that has the "Apple Pie" alphabet rhyme, nursery rhymes, and the railroad alphabet. We see "N for Newspapers," "O for Officers," "P for Platform," and "Q for Queen" (here it is obvious that "Queen" refers to Queen Victoria in her typical mourning clothes).¹⁹

Father Tuck's Express ABC (1895) is not as easy to decipher from the pictures alone. For example, the text reads "I for In-coming train drawing nigh; J for the Journey—they now say good-bye; K for the Kiss, with a tear in the eye."²⁰

The best visuals, in my opinion, go to *Railroad ABC* (1944) for bright, bold, contemporary illustrations by Denison Budd. Here we have "P is for Porter" (an African American) and "X is the crossing used night and day."²¹

Noah's Ark was a subject matter used in two different centuries. *The Noah's Ark Alphabet* (1874) was illustrated by Walter Crane.²² It has the most formal, elegant line to the illustrations. In the two-page spread encompassing the letters "K," "L," "M," "N," "O," and "P," there are twelve different animals, both large and small, plus Noah leading a donkey that his wife is riding. It is an old-fashioned "I Spy" game to find and name them all.

Written more recently, *A for the Ark* (1952) by Roger Duvoisin is playful with a funny exchange between the grizzly bears asking to be called by their Latin name, Ursus (on the "U" page).²³

Patriotism and Other Themes

Patriotism was and is in no short supply as an alphabet theme. The Baldwin Library has some McLoughlin Brothers books from the early twentieth century. *Starry Flag ABC* (1896) pictured each letter with white stars on a blue background, and some parts of each letter were done in red and white stripes. However,

the words for each letter have nothing to do with patriotism; rather, the graphic representation of the letters is patriotic. The word for "F" isn't "flag", it is "fire".²⁴ On the last page, the words are "Wood," "X-ray," "Yacht," and "Zebra."²⁵ X-rays had recently been discovered by German scientist Wilhelm Röntgen while investigating the properties of cathode rays.²⁶

Young America's ABC: Pretty Picture Book (1900) depicts the stars and stripes letters again, but this time, illustrations are of children playing. For example, "H" is a child on a sawhorse, with a toy sword and a newspaper hat. Every letter appears on a page with seemingly upper-class children (as discerned by their dress and hair styles) and their leisure play time.²⁷

Maud and Miska Petersham created *An American ABC* (1941) with a history lesson in alphabet form. Two colonial children sit on a bench, looking at a hornbook (with the alphabet visible) on the cover. Each letter is given a full-page illustration with several paragraphs explaining the history. Christopher Columbus, Daniel Boone, George Washington, Henry Hudson, and Abraham Lincoln are among the subjects. There is also a page about Native Americans, with "R" for "Redskins." A new "X" word in this book is "X-mas" for Christmas.²⁸

Politically Incorrect Books

Among my findings in the collection were books now considered politically incorrect, and I could not believe they were made for children. But Rita Smith, curator of the collection, assured me they were, in fact, created for children.

A Coon Alphabet: by Kemble (1898) included the sentence, "A was for Amos what rides an ole mule so he can be early each monin ter school."²⁹ The picture shows the mule bucking Amos into the school entrance. One of the rhymes shows a gun going off.

ABC in Dixie: A Plantation Alphabet (1905) was not as harsh, but included this example, "N is for Noah we like him de mos,' He tells us de story 'bout seein' a ghos.'"³⁰ "X" was used for "Xtra," but the rhyme is too offensive to transcribe.

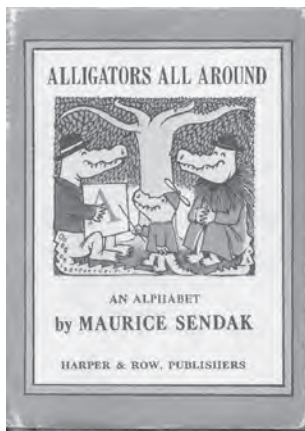
Little Black Sambo Linen ABC (1930) goes into extra details from the original Sambo story by Helen Bannerman, including the rhyming sentence "K is for kinky like Black Sambo's hair, Which when tigers met him, stood straight in the air."³¹

As I studied familiar books from the twentieth century, I enjoyed looking at favorites and noting details that I had previously overlooked. Wanda Gag's *The ABC Bunny* (1933) has so much personality and energy as the story proceeds through the book.³² *The Little Golden ABC* (1951) is also filled with energy.³³ Each page has one letter in uppercase, lowercase, and lowercase in cursive with at least five or six nouns illustrated on that page. The objects don't actually go together, but the colors and objects give the reader a thorough reading of each page.

Hilary Knight's *ABC* (1961) is filled with a whimsical sentence for each letter, such as "A is for acrobatic alligators in airplanes."³⁴ It

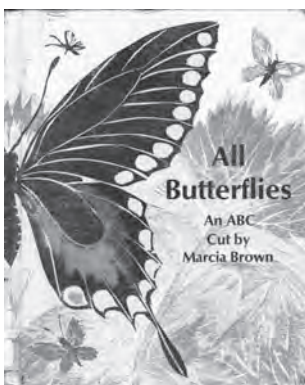
is bright, colorful and fun. "I" is still for Indians dressed in full 1961 typical headdress and a mostly unclothed "chief." "Z" is for "Zouave, zither and zebra."³⁵ I doubt today's children, however, would have any knowledge of what a Zouave is. (They were either French Foreign Legion troops or French troops serving the army during the American Civil War.)³⁶

Maurice Sendak's *Alligators All Around* (1962) will always delight (especially if sung to the music of Carole King), even when the alligators are "Imitating Indians," wearing headdresses.³⁷



Evaluating and Using Alphabet Books

All Butterflies: An ABC by Marcia Brown (1974) deserves attention for its artwork.³⁸ Each spread is a search for the "butterflies" somewhere in the picture. There is a butterfly in the Northern Lights on the "Ice-cold Jumpers" spread. But does it work as an alphabet lesson? Have you ever called a polar bear an ice-cold jumper? Another "butterfly" is two scallop shells at the bottom of the sea for "Octopus pants." Again, searching for the butterflies is delightful, but trying to follow the alphabet may not be the main point of this book. But using this in an art lesson or language lesson may be exactly how we can utilize this book in a classroom.



On Market Street (1981) by Anita and Arnold Lobel uses the simple idea of a child buying presents from A to Z in the shops along Market Street.³⁹ Tana Hoban's *A, B, See!* (1982) is simple and clear with good use of black and white.⁴⁰ Lois Ehlert's bright and colorful *Eating the Alphabet* (1991) has always been a favorite recommendation of mine, even though the letter "J" is used for two vegetables that use uncommon "J" sounds—jicama and jalapeño.⁴¹ However in our multicultural country, that particular "j" sound is no longer uncommon.

Alphabet books in the twenty-first century are still a place for imaginative illustrations. Children will use alphabet books to reinforce vocabulary and learn phonetics. One recent example is Lisa Campbell Ernst's *The Turn-Around, Upside-Down Alphabet Book* (2004), which helps a child visualize each letter. "C pretends to be an angel's halo, macaroni and cheese, a hoop earring."⁴² The book must be turned around and around on every letter to see how each picture becomes something else from the different points of view. It is brilliant! It is also how visual learners remember.

The second example is Roberto de Vicq de Cumptich's *Bembo's Zoo* (2000).⁴³ It began as a book using the Bembo font to make a picture out of letters spelling an animal's name. Therefore "Lion" is composed of the letters "L," "I," "O," and "N," arranged into a picture of the animal. The illustrations are the actual letters of each animal, graphically manipulated into a picture. We started with the letters of the alphabet, and we end with the letters of the alphabet. After all, it is the letters that are the path to reading.

Letter recognition is one of the six Early Literacy Skills, one that many librarians use at storytimes. We need alphabet books for the youngest children with easy representations of words and bold, bright colorful representations of the letters.

As I purchase new alphabet books, I look at what I want a child to understand. Can they see the letters clearly? Are the words depicted familiar or a challenge? Will the book help solidify their knowledge of letters, or will they be as confused as ever?

After my Bechtel experience, I look at all alphabet books with new eyes. ☺

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What I Learned from the Bechtel Experience

I applied for a Bechtel Fellowship because I love historical children's literature. I researched the collections of the Baldwin Library to help me choose a topic to study. What were the strengths of the Baldwin Library? What were their largest and deepest collections?

From the list I found on the library's website, I chose to study alphabet books, especially since I've always enjoyed their illustrations. I had no idea that I would look at more than two hundred books.

At the time that I finished my study, I was told by curator Rita Smith that no one had asked for as many books during their fellowship study.

In closed stacks, every volume must be retrieved by a librarian or someone trained to handle the materials. The books are arranged in accession order. There is no way one can browse the collection.

When my month-long study was over, I actually felt it was only a beginning study of these books. I have found that it is important to look at these books from different perspectives, considering the etymology of the words, how history and culture is depicted, and how children are depicted. Are they idealized, or do they represent children in normal activities?

Also, do the words chosen to represent the letters of the alphabet help or hinder a child in learning the alphabet and learning to read?

I love alphabet books more than I ever imagined, and I continue to be amazed by the latest alphabet books. You might think that there is nothing left to illustrate or no new words to incorporate in an alphabet book, but you would be wrong. Artists, authors, publishers, editors, and children still enjoy and delight in putting the picture and words together on the page, all in a familiar sequence.

Lastly, the Bechtel Fellowship gave me time to reflect, research, and to develop criteria for evaluating picture-books. I hope I can continue seeking out historical children's collections and searching for even more alphabet books, as well as adding new books to my library's collection.

My fellowship would not have yielded as much information if it was not for the guidance and assistance of Rita Smith, curator of the Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature, and John Cech, professor of children's literature, at the University of Florida, Gainesville.

To view some of the alphabet books in their entirety, check out the Baldwin's digital collection at <http://ufdcweb1.uflib.ufl.edu/ufdc/?c=juv>.

Mistaken Identity

Really, I Am a Professional . . . I'm Just Young

Katie Bradley

I'm young . . . just not as young as you think I am.

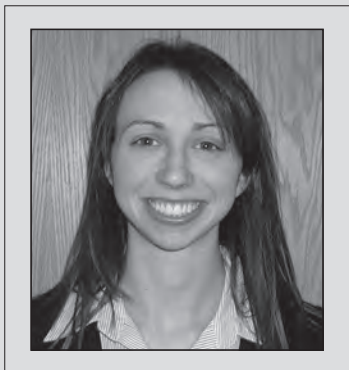
It's a warm afternoon last summer, and my coworker and I are sitting at the children's room desk going through the masses of summer reading slips and prizes. A patron comes up and asks my coworker a question. As they walk away into the stacks, I hear the patron ask, "Is that your summer volunteer?"

At first, I look around. Our library does take on younger teens for volunteers in the summer to deal with "Craziness"—otherwise known as the summer reading program. However, as I look about I realize that at this time there are no volunteers on hand. The patron is talking about me, and I'm a bit annoyed.

I know I look young. I get that a lot. In fact, I am young. I graduated with my MLS at twenty-three. Thankfully, I received my full time position as a children's librarian a few months after that. And I know when I am older (maybe thirty?) I will appreciate people thinking I am younger than I am. I am okay with people thinking I am a few years younger, but when they think I am still in high school—which I have not been in several years—it irks me.

When it comes to my career, I don't want to be looked upon as a teen volunteer instead of what I am, a degreed and qualified librarian.

It is true that I am the youngest member of my children's room staff. In fact, I am quite possibly the youngest full-time staffer at my library. However, before graduating with my MLIS, I had worked in libraries as a page, an intern,



and a children's associate. I have worked hard to have more than three years' experience before graduating and before coming to work as a full-time librarian. So even though I am young, I am also prepared.

Volunteers are a vital part of libraries. However, I am not a volunteer, but a professional. Being called a volunteer is really the worst part of being a young librarian. There are good parts. Do not get me wrong. I am willing to do things (dress up, move, groove, etc.) that other members of the staff

would not think to do. And let's be honest, I make a cute elf. And during storytime, I can make a fool out of myself like no one's business.

I know odd and obscure titles from my youth that other older librarians might not have heard of. I'm young—right now I am willing to try almost anything and that is usually a good thing for my career, my library, and my patrons.

The other day, another patron insisted that I could not possibly be a librarian. I'm simply too young. And although it might have displeased me when she said this, I was the one who knew what book she was talking about and where we kept it.

I might be young but I know what I am doing. Age alone does not make a great librarian. Experience, the openness to grow, and a passion for what you are doing makes a good librarian. And this is true, even when you are being wrongfully called a volunteer all day long. &

Katie Bradley is Children's Librarian at the Downers Grove (Ill.) Public Library.

My Year with Geisel

JAMES K. IRWIN

You're alone at the reader's advisory desk, and a mother carrying a squirming baby ushers in her other child in his Superman outfit.

"Do you know any good books for my boy here? He just started second grade. Oh, and could we please hurry? My parking meter in the lot only has about ten minutes left!" she adds.

"By any chance, do you like Superman and Spider-Man books?" you ask the boy. He excitedly nods and beams a big grin.

"Great—it sounds like the early readers section is right where we should go," you say as you jauntily lead the family to the superhero books. But wait—all of the Superman and Spider-Man early readers are checked out. As you relay this sad news to him, his face melts into a frown.

"What other series books do you like . . . funny ones, scary stories, animal books?"

"Animal stories, I guess," he replies, seemingly somewhat complacently.

"Fantastic . . . have you seen these books before?" you ask as you hand him a copy of Cynthia Rylant's *Henry and Mudge*

and *the Great Grandpas*. Opening it to the first page, you ask, "Here, how does this page look—too easy, too hard, or somewhere in the middle?"

"It's okay, I guess," he says.

"That's good! See this shiny sticker on the cover? That means some people thought it's such a great book that it deserved to win the Geisel Award . . . in honor of Dr. Seuss. And see this picture of the great big lovable dog? That's Mudge. He gets into all kinds of hilarious episodes with Henry—who's just about your age."

A slight smile flickers then grows wider on this young Superman's face. It soon seems as if his mom will avert another parking ticket today, and all is well as the family runs to the circulation desk with their story of Henry and Mudge in hand.

One question colleagues have asked me over the last two years is, "How did you get on the 2008 Geisel Award Committee?"

Since I had been on the 2003 ALSC Library Service to Special Population Children and their Caregivers Committee, the ALSC executive director already knew who I was and knew that I love to inspire all children with the joys of reading. So shortly after volunteering in 2006 to be on another committee, I was delighted to receive an invitation to serve on a committee connected to the lovable and venerable Dr. Seuss.

Our committee could only consider books published in 2007, and we were showered with books during almost the entire year. In fact, a typical scenario was dragging my feet up the stairs to my apartment at the end of a long work day and seeing several boxes of books on the porch. It soon felt like getting gift-wrapped boxes of little chocolate cupcakes!



Librarian **James K. Irwin** was formerly with Evanston Public Library in Illinois. He served on the 2008 Theodor Seuss Geisel Award Committee and is now on the AASL/ALSC/YALSA Interdivisional Committee on School/Public Library Cooperation.

Especially in the spring and summer of 2007, they seemed to appear magically three or four days a week. While I opened up each box of scrumptious goodies, my heart would sometimes skip a beat, as I initially thumbed through each one hoping to find strong candidates to list on the next monthly suggestion list we sent to our chair, Cindy Woodruff. These strong contenders were the ones that best matched the award criteria spelled out in our manual.

One of our key responsibilities was to be looking out always for possible new contenders that matched the criteria. So besides

perusing the publishing journals, I would often go to a bookstore to eye the really new titles; those journeys themselves were like zesty mini adventures as I kept digging for gems.

As a committee we met twice in 2007, first in Seattle and then in Washington, D.C. Meeting at the ALA Annual Conference in D.C. provided us with a great opportunity to discuss all of the books we had been putting on our suggestion lists for the

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Sure-To-Please Early Readers Booklist

Over the eleven years I've worked in the youth services room, children have consistently sought out these tried-and-true early reader titles. Each one sparkles with a charm that many budding readers find irresistible.

Adler, David A. *Bones and the Birthday Mystery*. Illus. by Barbara Johansen Newman. Viking, 2007. 32p.

Sheer fun for young super sleuths with colorful cartoon illustrations supporting flow of text meanings.



Capucilli, Alyssa Satin. *Biscuit Meets the Class Pet*. Illus. by Pat Schories. HarperTrophy, 2010. 28p.

Take one adorable puppy, add a winsome looking bunny, and spoonfuls of fun for the youngest of emergent readers, and you've whipped up a tried and true reading adventure.



Chaconas, Dori. *Cork & Fuzz: Finders Keepers*. Illus. by Lisa McCue. Viking, 2009. 32p.

An early chapter book with luscious ink and watercolor illustrations enhancing text and rounding out the story.

Eastman, P. D. *Sam and the Firefly*. Illus. by the author. Beginner Books; distributed by Random House, 1958, 1986. 62p.

The light of the firefly as he draws out words in the night sky and the rollicking plot have been captivating the youngest of readers for generations and will probably continue to do so for many years to come!

Hillert, Margaret. *Cinderella at the Ball*. Illus. by Janet LaSalle. Norwood House, 2007. 32p.

Like the fairy godmother from the original story, Hillert has waved her own magic wand on this and several other classic fairy tales and transformed them into a perfect fit for budding readers.

Hoff, Syd. *Danny and the Dinosaur*. Illus. by the author. HarperCollins, 1993. 64p.

Danny and the winsome series of adventures with his dinosaur friend will probably still be around in some form twenty years from now on library shelves and in stores.

Little, Jean. *Emma's Magic Winter*. Illus. by Jennifer Plecas. HarperCollins, 1998. 64p.

Perfect for slightly advanced first graders, with serene watercolor illustrations playfully reinforcing the words.

Lobel, Arnold. *Frog and Toad Are Friends*. Illus. by the author. Harper & Row, 1974. 64p.

Unique series in that this title won a 1971 Caldecott Honor, and *Frog and Toad Together* won a 1973 Newbery Honor. Early reader classics to cherish forever.

Minarik, Else Holmelund. *A Kiss for Little Bear*. Illus. by Maurice Sendak. Harper & Row, 1968. 32p.

Classic jewel of an early reader showing perfect marriage of patterned language supporting droll pictures.

Parish, Peggy. *Dinosaur Time*. Illus. by Arnold Lobel. Harper & Row, 1974. 64p.

In simple text backed up with earth-tone pictures, this Reading Rainbow early reader is sure to captivate many young dinosaur lovers!

Silverman, Erica. *Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa: Spring Babies*. Illus. by Betsy Lewin. Harcourt, 2010. 38p.

The first title of this series was a Geisel Honor Book in 2006, the year of the award's inception. Kate and her talking horse are a sheer delight for early readers, especially for those who love horse or pony stories.



Rylant, Cynthia. *Henry and Mudge and the Great Grandpas: The Twenty-Sixth Book of Their Adventures*. Illus. by Suçie Stevenson. Simon & Schuster, 2005. 40p.

Winner of the first Geisel Award; an early reader book that perfectly exemplifies all the criteria.

When it Rains Stuffed Animals

A Lesson in Handling the Unexpected

DEANNA ROMRIELL

Some performers claim it's hard to work with props or animals. This past summer, our library had a lesson in working with both—so to speak.

My colleague, Paul Musser, and I decided to hold a “stuffed animal sleepover” at our main library in the heart of Salt Lake City. We had heard of the idea from a neighboring library system and thought it would be fun for our youngest patrons and get them excited about the library and all it has to offer.

We publicized the event in our library newsletter, on our website, and on the gameboards given to all of the children who joined the summer reading club.

Setting the Plans in Motion

The children would drop off their stuffed animals on Friday, during the day. Then, on Saturday, they would return to pick them up, enjoy juice and doughnuts, and watch a slideshow chronicling the antics of the stuffed toys during their overnight stay at the library. We created name tags to be filled out and attached to each submission, and I rounded up a large bin to keep all of the critters together.

We made our assignments for the evening, which included picture taking, creating the slideshow, putting together a souvenir booklet for each child to take home, and planning refresh-

ments. Feeling pretty good about the program, I headed home on Thursday prepared to return to work Friday evening to be greeted by a bin full of stuffed animals and a fun-filled evening of posing them throughout the library.

When I opened our office door on Friday, however, I froze in shock. That single bin had grown to twelve, and stuffed animals were still pouring in with a half-hour until closing. My dream of posing several dozen stuffed animals doing silly things at the library was swallowed up by the reality of lugging around 140 creatures.

Bringing in a little juice and a few doughnuts now became a logistical problem of buying and transporting large quantities of both. Creating a simple slideshow and small booklet morphed into a huge project involving wading through hundreds of pictures from four different cameras to pull them together in a cohesive manner. Even returning the stuffed animals to their owners became more complex, requiring careful planning to prevent a stampede.

Overnight Antics

To prepare for the overnight antics of the scores of stuffed animals, four staff members armed with cameras faced off with the well-loved toys. We began with a couple of large group shots, including one of the animals sitting around a campfire (a fan fixed with crepe paper), a storytime featuring a large stuffed bear reading a book to all of the others, and the animals snuggling down for the night under blankets and sleeping bags. These large shots took a great deal of time, however. Each toy had to be individually placed and posed so it could be seen in

Deanna Romriell is Manager of the Children's Department at Salt Lake City (Utah) Public Library.

the shot. Some wanted to steal the spotlight while others were shy. And, of course, we had to watch out for the dinosaur that kept sneaking more marshmallows!

Following these first shots, we placed all of the creatures back in their bins and split them up. One librarian took a few bins up to the city library's roof-top garden to photograph. Another headed into the craft room for some evening fun with stuffed animals coloring, cutting, and getting into mischief in the many drawers and shelves (the monkey was crazy for the ribbons!).

A third staff member took on the difficult task of posing a group of animals as they "slid" down the banister to the children's department of the library. I headed off to The Attic and The Crystal Cave (two fun reading rooms located in our children's department) so the stuffed animals could have some fun playing, exploring, and reading.

We wanted to be sure each toy appeared in several shots so that no child would be disappointed when watching the slideshow in the morning. So we created a tracking system—as each stuffed animal was used in a photograph, we put a checkmark on the back of its name tag. When a toy had been used in several shots, it was placed in a bin that had been set apart from the others, indicating that it was done for the night.

Stuffed animals were posed watching the sunset, getting sodas from the machine, using the library computers, playing and exploring together, watching a movie, enjoying a book, looking at the art work in the gallery, and many more playful scenes. Putting the shots together took plenty of creativity and careful selection. For example, only certain animals could be balanced on the railing for the shot of them sliding down the banister, while almost any creature could be placed on the couch reading a book. A few just seemed to have a mind of their own.

Finally, we carefully placed all the toys in front of our big summer reading wall for one final shot. This was challenging because we wanted even the tiny ones to be seen. So we carefully began by placing the largest animals and then spreading the little ones around them, in their laps, or even on top of their heads. At last, the pictures were complete and the stuffed animals were carefully stored for the night. We, however, were just beginning.

Frustration Follows the Fun

We downloaded the pictures from the four cameras and saved them to a couple of flash drives. My colleague took one home to put together the slideshow, complete with carefully chosen music. I took the other to compile a booklet that would be given to each child in the morning.

Neither project went as smoothly as hoped, however.

Paul was tasked with taking the random pictures from the four cameras and placing them in a cohesive order that would tell a story and match the length of the music for our slideshow. Twice, due to extreme lack of sleep, he closed the file causing the pictures to revert to their original random order. He also faced the challenge of matching the music to the slides so that they flowed well and ended at the same time.

Meanwhile, I was working on a souvenir for the children—a booklet that included a few large group pictures of the stuffed animals with captions so they could have something to remember the event. I created a mock booklet in advance, hoping to add the real pictures and captions that evening.

However, I soon realized the booklet I had made was too long. So I cut it down and sent it to my printer—which chose that exact moment to break down. During work hours, this would have been easily remedied. But, since it was after midnight, I packed up and headed home, where I printed the booklet on my home computer, planning to return to the library early the next morning to make copies.

Finally, Saturday arrived. Families poured in. Parents, siblings, and proud stuffed animal owners (happy to be reunited with their friends) came into the room—one family at a time—for a happy reunion. Once the several hundred eager patrons were settled, the slide show began.

Images of the stuffed animals enjoying the library filled the room. The pictures captured the toys watching the staff leave and then showed them off to explore the library from top to bottom. Some rode the glass elevator to the roof; others checked out the collection, reading books and using the computers; and still others snuck off to find a phone to call home.

Standing off to one side, my exhaustion slipped away as I listened to the ensuing laughter, thrilled gasps, and expressions of delight at the animals' library adventures. As they left, parents and children alike thanked us profusely for our efforts and begged us to please do it again. The moment was perfect.

The library received more patron praise for this event than any event held in years. One child wrote in her sweet child scrawl, "Thank you EVERYBODY for the big animal sleepover! I think I saw some funny things happening! I bet it was hard work. Pooh Bear loved it and made too many friends! Love Phoebe and Pooh."

This ensuing goodwill toward the library was just what we had hoped for. Children saw the library as a fun place to visit, and parents were extremely grateful for the staff's effort in putting together an enjoyable, free family event. Both parents and children clamored for a repeat, which we plan to offer in a few months.

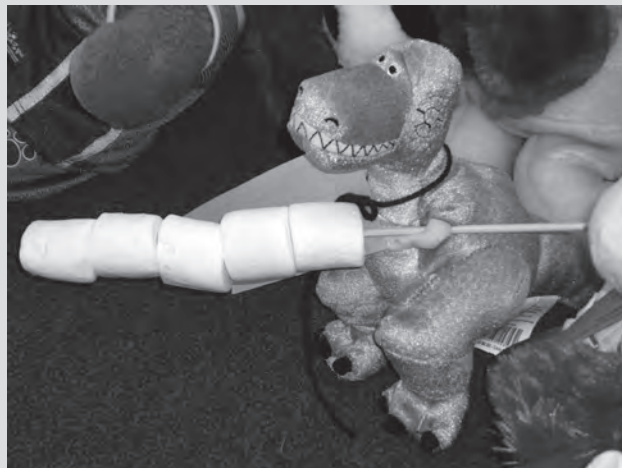
The day it "rained" stuffed animals had become the day it poured goodwill for the library in our community. 🐻

Lessons Learned

I later realized there were some lessons to be applied to the even greater challenges we are currently facing at our library. The Salt Lake City Public Library has been fortunate in the current difficult economic climate. We have been facing years without raises and soft hiring freezes rather than closures and lay-offs. Reduced staffing and increased patron use and workload, combined with the lack of monetary increase, have taken its toll on employees.

With patrons pouring through our doors and fewer staff to meet their needs, I sometimes feel as I did looking at that stack of stuffed animals—stunned into inaction. And, as with our event, I believe there are some things we can do to help staff get through the dark, cloudy days:

- First, **recruit help**. With reduced funding, we may not just be able to hire extra hands or call on other overloaded staff members as we did for our sleepover. However, we may be able to make use of dedicated patrons, volunteers, and community partners. I often rely more on volunteers to help prepare for storytimes, to keep collections in order, and to assist with some of the more mundane aspects of weeding the collection. Doing so frees staff for the more essential elements of their responsibilities.
- Second, **divide and conquer**. My colleague and I certainly could not have successfully lugged around 140 stuffed animals, taken decent pictures, and pulled together the morning program on our own. We relied on a whole host of helpers, and everyone needed specific directions. When faced with fewer staff and extra work, it is more essential than ever to focus in on the most important priorities. As a staff, decide what *must* be done and make specific assignments. That way, no one feels overwhelmed, and employees are less likely to get caught up in incidentals.
- Third, **get to work!** When I faced our stack of teddy bears, fluffy puppies, worn-out bunnies, and on and on and on, I was momentarily paralyzed. When looking at an increasing pile of work, supervisors and staff may feel much the same. However, once we have recruited some help and have set specific goals and assignments, it is time to dig in and do what we are able to do. We may be surprised by what staff can accomplish once we all get going. If we tackle the stacks one item at a time, things will get done. We will meet the most essential needs of our patrons, and we will find success in our service.
- Finally, and perhaps most importantly, **enjoy the moment**. It's easy to get caught up in the day-to-day challenges. Sometimes we work so hard, we forget what we are working for. In pulling off our sleepover, I focused on the nuts and bolts of getting it done to be ready



A beloved dinosaur roasts marshmallows at the library's stuffed animal sleepover.



Dogs, dinosaurs, dollies, and more—140 in all—took part in the library's stuffed animal sleepover.



Pictured left to right are Jenny Ho, library assistant, librarian Paul Musser, and Deanna Romriell, assistant manager of the children's department at Salt Lake City Public Library.



My, that George sure is one curious little monkey indeed!

for the morning crowds. However, once those crowds arrived, it was essential for all of the staff involved to enjoy that moment—to watch the happy faces, to hear the sounds of delight, and to absorb the keen gratitude of our patrons. Moments such as this keep us going and remind us of the reasons that we are working so hard in the face of enormous obstacles. Such moments remind us of what librarianship is all about.

Sharing the Idea, Spreading the Fun

The Central Branch of the Brown County Public Library in Green Bay, Wis., also hosted a teddy bear sleepover in January, 2011.

In a bit of a different spin on the Salt Lake City sleepover, the BCPL children's librarians created a PowerPoint presentation and posted the sleepover antics on their webpage so kids (and their parents) could see what the bear they "friended" was doing overnight.

Children's department head Sandy Kallunki helped spearhead the idea, and librarians Katie Guzek and Jessica Pyrek helped develop and photograph the concept.



Snoozing and reading were just two of the activities the bears enjoyed on their sleepover at the Brown County Central Library.

BEYOND STORYTIME, continued from page 26

Years Program staff can prove, qualitatively, that this work is increasing the value placed on literacy, language, and learning in many of the families they work with.

Families are more connected to their communities, are able to make friends who are able to offer lasting support, are learning from one another, and are sharing their new knowledge about what is available in their communities to support them in their work raising their children. They are respected as the experts in their own lives, and they see that the library is an organization that is flexible and responsive to their needs. They learn that a library program, whether it is in a library or in another community setting, is a welcoming place, where they are not judged, but rather encouraged to speak up and participate. Their children are valued, and their role in their children's lives is validated and applauded.

The librarians who are involved in this project are constantly learning about and from the communities; they learn what fami-

lies need, what is important to them, and how the library can play a more significant and meaningful role in their lives. They have learned and are constantly learning that they are *not* the experts, but rather they are the conduits for community members to all that the library has to offer them and the children in their lives. &

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A Viable Venue

The Public Library as a Haven for Youth Development

KENNETH R. JONES AND TERENCE J. DELAHANTY

In most neighborhoods and towns, the local library is often the center of community activity, offering residents access to a host of facts, figures, and records.

Although many libraries lack some of the assets needed to serve as venues for after-school programming, many already provide the high-quality activities necessary. While they are not often considered by the general public as places to foster positive youth development, libraries are an important learning environment. Libraries have been described by those in the youth field as a diverse asset with a dedicated mission to serve the community.¹

In turn, they provide fertile ground to cultivate positive youth development, providing access to the resources necessary for youth to achieve meaningful and constructive experiences.² This is critical if youth are to become competent contributors to society as adults.

With this in mind, we must capitalize on the public library's potential to maximize learning opportunities beyond the walls of formal education. This article presents findings of a study that assessed how library staff members were inspired to take

steps toward establishing their facilities as youth-serving partners and providers in their communities.

When School is Not Enough

Youth need places where they can develop the skills necessary to be productive members of society. This is most likely to occur in an environment that is youth-centered.

Young people are masters at finding places where they are not confined to a highly-crafted lesson plan, but rather can be self-guided and pursue their personal interests. They're inclined to seek facilities where young people congregate.

However, many of these places, libraries included, may inadvertently create climates that are unsympathetic to young people's needs. In order to nurture the development of youth, scholars agree that we must promote more innovative learning collaborations between schools and public libraries.³

Libraries offer what is described as free-choice learning, an opportunity for youth to engage in educational experiences



Kenneth R. Jones (pictured) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Community and Leadership Development at the University of Kentucky. His research aims to address specific issues, such as assessing youth-adult relationships in various contexts and the role of youth-adult partnerships within communities. He has conducted trainings around the country helping youth workers, educators, and other practitioners better understand how to nurture youth as leaders and implement youth programs that promote positive development.

Terence J. Delahanty is an independent youth development consultant with twenty years of experience working with several youth-serving organizations.

with peers and their families outside of school.⁴ While formal schooling provides the lion's share of their education, a significant amount also stems from what they are intrinsically motivated to learn on their own.

Free-choice learning is critical and can play a vital role in youth development.⁵ The library can be a viable venue for youth to engage in this paradigm—from providing computers for Internet searching to hosting discussions on a documentary to the traditional practice of lending books and other resources.

However, for youth to engage in everything that libraries have to offer, staff must first be willing to show young people that they are considered worthy and respected patrons. Research indicates that there are specific environmental features young people need to experience positive development and that libraries can provide all of the features pertinent to positive development.⁶

The Forum for Youth Investment conducted a study focusing on how libraries across the country can and have provided suitable development settings for young people (see table 1 for more details).⁷ Similar to that study, this article offers insight on how libraries perceive their role in providing social service opportunities.⁸ This article further highlights the perceptions staff working at libraries have about the youth that frequent their facilities, as well as those living in the community. It also addresses how specific interactions between library staff and young people who frequent libraries can impact youth development either positively or negatively.

The National Center for Education Statistics provides details on how community-based organizations and businesses must begin considering themselves as major players in the field of youth development.⁹ Libraries can play an instrumental role. One route is to offer more youth programming. However, with limited resources, many libraries are turning to existing agencies and organizations for assistance. Although libraries in many areas are facing budget cuts (particularly when it comes to youth services), they can offer a learning environment to host effective after-school programs. Researchers and practitioners have presented various examples of how libraries can engage youth after school.¹⁰

And youth are taking notice. Gone are the days where the library was a quick stop for checking out books; libraries now often serve as a preeminent location for free access to computers and the Internet, for finding resources for school assignments, and for socializing with peers.

However, in some areas, the way youth use the library has been scrutinized. Some libraries have not welcomed the increased gathering of young people, viewing their social time as more distracting than constructive.¹¹

Some staff are not trained to work with youth and are even less adept at providing them with structured out-of-school time. As a result, they may establish limits and boundaries for youth, instead of channeling their energy via meaningful after-school program experiences.

Unfortunately, the decision to shut down heavy youth gatherings instead of embracing youth culture and providing appealing programs is very common.¹² This often stems from a poor or misguided relationship between youth and adults.

One study found that adults based their perceptions of youth on their own negative experiences of adolescence.¹³ Adults may erroneously believe the problematic situations of the past continue with today's youth, instead of centering on the positive potential that exists. Supporting evidence has also shown that the media not only has a powerful influence on young people, but it can also sway the opinions adults have about today's youth.¹⁴

Adults who understand and nurture youth leadership, however, can help them enhance their abilities.¹⁵

Small Study Provides Sampling of Views

Library staff in this survey participated in youth development training to increase awareness of the traits of after-school settings necessary to ensure that youth have positive developmental experiences. The evaluation team consisted of one academic researcher and two youth development professionals working with a youth policy organization.

The population was comprised of a homogeneous sample of staff from public libraries throughout Kentucky. Participants were identified with the assistance of the Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives, which had an interest in determining the prevalence of connections between library staff and young people at the library and determining whether libraries (urban and rural) are youth-centered, thus providing a supportive setting for youth development.

Participants included reference librarians, library assistants, supervisors, and directors. The participants either participated in focus group discussions or provided a written response to questions.

Questions were created by library staff who were not participants in this assessment. Staff members were asked for information on their background, work experience, years of service, and extent to which they work directly with youth.

Participants from 61 public libraries were surveyed over the course of six months, with a total of 239 participants sharing insight on youth in the community who use their facilities. The sample consisted of Whites (84 percent), followed by African Americans (6 percent), Hispanic/Latinos (1.7 percent), Asians (1.3 percent), Native Americans (0.4 percent), and others. Approximately 80 percent of the participants were females and 20 percent were males. Most participants had pursued education beyond high school, obtaining an associate's degree or higher. More than 80 percent were over the age of thirty, having a minimum of one to three years of experience. More than 67 percent lived and worked in the same community.

While the libraries varied based on geographic location and the clientele they serve, all recognized the common challenge

of providing meaningful experiences for young people. To gain a better understanding of the needs of youth, staff attended a youth development training conducted by Kentucky Child Now, a youth policy agency. The training team developed a model to help librarians in engaging youth in a library setting. Three key components included

- forming influential relationships with youth;
- creating an engaging environment that supports youth; and
- utilizing best practices for working with youth in all aspects of programs and activities.

To overcome barriers that often prevent strong youth–adult relationships, the training team focused on helping staff intentionally build stronger relationships.

A preliminary analysis collected a general sense of the data, and codes were later used to categorize the data into themes that capture specific ideas, suggestions, or opinions.

After the training, library staff discovered the need to form community partnerships, to expand upon youth engagement efforts, and to create or enhance relevant after-school initiatives for young people.

Many were reminded that just because adults were once youth, that doesn't automatically qualify them as youth experts. They recognized that those young people are indeed the experts themselves.

Staff also revealed that among the greatest barriers to successful engagement with youth are the stereotypes that both young people and adults hold about one another. These perceptions, which were often negative (“teens using our facility often vandalize library property,” “youth frighten elderly patrons,” etc.) hindered effective communication and could greatly influence the learning environment.

In addition, staff said they understood the seriousness in how perceptions could directly affect how young people are treated by adults, how young people behave towards adults and peers, how decisions are made, how policies are enforced, how disputes are handled, and most importantly, how relationships are fostered.

Soliciting Input from Youth

What's the best way to assess the needs of youth? Simply ask them. As obvious as it may seem, many communities do not consult with youth on the problems they face or the assets they lack in the neighborhood. This small step is a start for any library, but it is imperative to have staff willing to hear what youth are saying as well.

Having a teen serve in a decision-making role is an ideal way to administer this concept. However, this does require a paradigm

Table 1. How Libraries Can Serve as Appropriate Developmental Settings for Young People

Features of Developmental Settings	What Libraries Can Offer
Physical and Psychological Safety	Safe places where youth feel comfortable
Appropriate Structure	Potential to host age-appropriate activities
Opportunities to Belong	Activities are of interest to youth, stimulating a sense of connection
Supportive Relationships	Chance for peer interaction and adult support
Positive Social Norms	Rules and procedures that encourage positive behaviors
Support for Efficacy & Mattering	Youth having a voice in programs and activities for peers
Opportunities for Skill Building	Youth given a chance to put skills into practice
Integration of Family, School, and Community Efforts	Space for all local residents to engage in community affairs that aid the youth development process

Sources: National Research Council; Forum for Youth Investment

shift. Libraries operate under the mantra that they are to provide a service to youth and not necessarily function based on a young person's suggestions.

With so many young people not feeling as though they are welcome to be civically engaged, now is the time to utilize community resources to build skill sets so youth can emerge as competent citizens. There are many tasks that may welcome the assistance of a responsible young person. Whether serving on an advisory council or on a committee to host a community event, youth can be a tremendous asset. Moreover, their expertise on youth culture is paramount to the success of any staff member's attempts to enhance existing services in hopes of creating a youth-centered environment.

Instituting Policies that Support Participation


Evidence-based programs have revealed the frequent nuisances that can occur when libraries serve youth in settings outside of school.¹⁶ Without the structure that exists in schools, it is more challenging to regulate and monitor learning in after-school programs. However, these programs serve a worthwhile purpose in the development of today's youth, offering young people the chance to exercise leadership skills and creating a sense of purpose and belonging.

Another way of connecting youth with programs is by targeting their interests, ideally through self-directed learning that affords autonomy. Youth could serve on a library council or advisory board.

Young people who may not be ready for more complex roles that include major decision making can serve as volunteers, hosting tutoring sessions or assisting patrons with computer challenges.

This study revealed that due to the demographics represented among library patrons and locations, library staff members' perceptions of youth are extremely varied.

Based on the data, library staff were consistent in their neutral feelings toward youth in the community, as well as their experiences interacting with young people in the local libraries. Although they acknowledged the role local libraries play in the educational process for youth, this did not dissuade them from having mediocre perceptions toward youth. This resonates with the work of scholars who have argued that perceptions can affect the development of young people.

A library's open atmosphere presents an ambiance that can offer youth a sense of belonging. Equally important is the foundation available to nurture positive interaction among youth, their peers, and adults. When caring relationships exist between youth and staff, libraries not only support grounds for experiential learning, but also provide a chance to foster stronger interpersonal ties. 

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From Research to a Thrill

An Interview with Margaret Peterson Haddix

TIMOTHY CAPEHART

Margaret Peterson Haddix graciously agreed to squeeze in some time before a book tour last fall to answer some questions about her writing, her career, and her books. Children's love of her novels and series is evident in the myriad state and regional readers' choice awards the books have received. Her name regularly appears on YALSA Best Books and Quick Picks lists and Junior Library Guild lists. She's the author of *Running Out of Time*, the *Shadow Children* series, *Just Ella*, and *The Missing* series among many others.

You've written a variety of fiction for a range of age groups. How does the way you prepare for a book like *Say What?* differ from the way you approach a book like *Claim to Fame*?

Haddix: Writing *Say What?* was mostly just fun and whimsical—I did virtually no research, unless you count my years of (1) being a kid; and then, later on, (2) being a mom. Really, all I had to do for that book was just put myself back in the mindset of being an elementary-school kid.

For *Claim to Fame*, I read a lot about transcendentalism and spent quite a bit of time trying to figure out Lindsay's unusual talent. For some of my other books, especially the ones with major historical or scientific elements, I've ended up doing



Photo of Margaret Peterson Haddix courtesy of Simon & Schuster.

even more research. I think that's important for imagining the different worlds I want to create in my books. Usually I enjoy it, so often I keep researching far beyond just getting the information I need.

In researching those books that demand it, what are some of the more unusual titles you have had to consult? Any tidbits that come to mind you found interesting but just couldn't use?

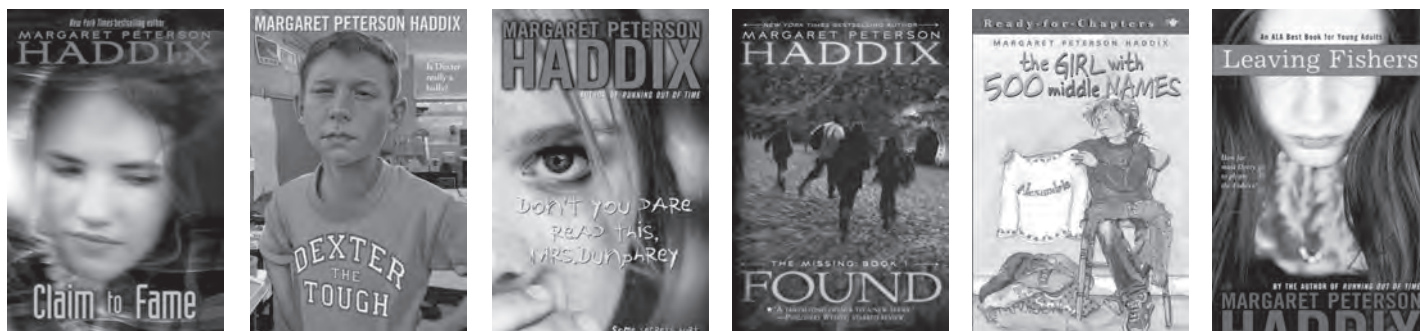
Haddix: I have to give a shout-out to the Columbus (Ohio) Metropolitan Library System here because they have helped me through many, many weird searches and requests. When I was working on *Uprising* a few years ago, I almost began to believe their library system was magical. I was looking for information about the state of the women's suffrage movement in the United States in 1910 and 1911—and I found a book on their shelves called *Women's Suffrage, Arguments and Results, 1910–1911* with actual brochures used in those years.

I was also trying to research both Eastern European Jewish immigrants and Italian immigrants to the United States in the early 1900s, and I was getting frustrated that the information available about the Italian immigrants was so minimal. I'd come across a reference to a 1919 book called *The Italian Emigration of Our Times*, but I didn't think I'd ever be able to find a copy. Of course I was wrong—it was at the library.

Many of the fascinating tidbits I haven't been able to use fall into the category of unsubstantiated gossip about historical icons, such as allegations that Albert Einstein might have beaten his first wife. Even though I found that allegation in a reputable reference book, as far as I can tell it was based solely on two facts:



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(1) one acquaintance once saw a bruise on the wife's face, and (2) they ended up getting a divorce. That's not exactly the kind of evidence I'd want to trash an icon for. Otherwise, the tidbits I don't use are the things that would require way, way, way more explanation than many kids are going to want to read.

Several of your novels and series deal with parallel and unequal milieu and societal secrets. Can you trace the genesis of your interest in conspiracies and injustices?

Haddix: Well, conspiracies—how could anybody *not* be interested in conspiracies? They're fascinating. I think it's intriguing any time someone tries to keep something secret.

As for my interest in injustices and people being treated unequally or unfairly, I think there are a couple of sources to that. First of all, it's connected to my religious beliefs. You don't have to spend too much time reading the New Testament to notice the many, many times Jesus said, essentially, "You see all these people that society says don't matter? They do matter. They're important. They're the ones you should be concerned about."

Secondly, I think I was also heavily influenced by my time as a newspaper reporter. I interviewed people who were powerful and famous, and I interviewed people who were homeless, who were caught in poverty, who had been beaten down again and again by life. And often the most interesting stories—the ones I really wanted to tell—belonged to the people who would normally be overlooked.

Last year you had a big part in the grand finale to *The 39 Clues* series. What were the most interesting differences (to you) between working in a shared fictional world and creating your own?

Haddix: Working on the *39 Clues* series was definitely the most collaborative novel-writing I've ever done. I had worried ahead

of time that it would be hard to write about characters that I had not created myself. But, if anything, I found myself becoming almost too possessive of them. I had to tamp down a lot of my control-freak tendencies. Sometimes that was difficult; sometimes it was kind of nice to just let somebody else make some of the decisions.

In *Turnabout*, Amelia (not entirely of her own volition) takes a serum that makes her age backwards. Let's say forty years from now such a thing exists, would you voluntarily take it? How about if you could halt the backwards aging at any stage, would you then? If you would take it and if you could halt the process, where would you halt?

Haddix: I think it's impossible to predict how I'll feel about this in forty years. When I was researching *Turnabout* I talked to several friends and relatives who were in their eighties and nineties about what they would choose. The responses were extreme. One woman I knew from my church said, "Oh, yes! Then I could do all the things I haven't had a chance to do this time around. I'd travel the world! I'd learn new languages! I'd love it!" My own grandmother said, quite poignantly, "What? And spend decades more missing all the people I love who are already dead? No, thank you."

I think my own response in forty years would come down to where I fall on that spectrum, between longing for second chances and new opportunities, and wanting to avoid more years filled with loss and grief. It would probably largely depend on who would be taking the serum with me.

Choosing the proper age to stop at would be a very difficult decision. Late twenties? Early thirties? I'd want that balance between healthy youthfulness, and not having people treat me as "too young." But if an "un-aging" serum were generally available and lots of people who looked 20 were actually 180,



maybe society wouldn't judge people on their appearances so much.

You do many school visits. Is there a recurring question students ask you that you are fond of answering?

Haddix: There is a recurring question that I get asked at almost every presentation—"What's your favorite book that you've written?" I don't actually have a favorite, but it's certainly an easy question to deal with because I've answered it so many times.

I do sometimes wonder if the reason kids ask this is because they don't want to bother with the books that aren't my favorites!

On the flip-side of that most frequently asked question, which of your literary "children" was the most troublesome? Was one of your books more difficult to write than the others?

Haddix: I get this question a lot at school visits too, and I usually say that there's a three-way tie for "hardest book"—*Leaving Fishers* (because I was so worried that the religious element would offend people) and *Uprising* (because I was dealing with so much history and writing from three very different perspectives) and the *39 Clues* book (because I had to start writing the tenth book before there were final versions available of the seventh, eighth or ninth books.) But really it was mostly the revision that was so hard with the *39 Clues* book. And there were a couple other books where the revision was also very, very challenging: *The House on the Gulf* and *Sabotaged*. So the books that gave me trouble had a lot of company.

You have created a number of memorable characters. Is there one especially close to your heart?

Haddix: How about three? Jessie in *Running Out of Time* and Luke and Jen in *Among the Hidden* are probably the ones I feel the most sentimental about. *Running Out of Time* was my first book, and I feel like Jessie and I got through that whole "trying to get a first book published" difficulty together.

Among the Hidden was the second book that I wrote after my kids were born, but it was the first one where I felt almost motherly toward my characters. As a mother, I wanted to shout at Luke and Jen, "No, no, don't take those risks! Be careful! Stay safe!" But I knew they wouldn't be careful. Like real kids, they were determined to choose their own path.

I am guessing (and correct me if I'm wrong) that when you wrote *Among the Hidden* you probably didn't have the whole arc of the series in your mind. *The Missing* series is going to be of similar length; do you know how things will end? And—um—any hints where (or when) you'll send us after Roanoke?

Haddix: You are correct—when I wrote *Among the Hidden*, I didn't have the whole arc of the series in mind. In fact, I had no intention of writing anything else about Luke or the other Shadow Children. Deciding to do the series came much later. And, because I'd never done a series before, I found it easiest just to plan things on a book-by-book basis. It wasn't until the last two or three books that I began thinking much about how details in one book would affect the next.

With *The Missing* series, I've tried to be more intelligent about the whole process. I've had the series as a whole planned almost from the very beginning. But the plans for some of the books were fairly sketchy, and I have made a lot of changes as I've gone along.

And, yes, I can reveal more about where Jonah and Katherine are going after Roanoke. They're going to end up in Canada in 1611, in the middle of the mutiny on Henry Hudson's ship. He and his teenaged son and seven others were abandoned in a boat in icy waters and never heard from again. My take on the mutiny will be in the series' fourth book, *Torn*, which I've already finished. It's due out August 23, 2011.

I'm just now starting to write the fifth book, tentatively titled *Caught*. It deals with Albert Einstein's missing daughter.

"For some of my other books, especially the ones with major historical or scientific elements, I've ended up doing even more research. I think that's important for imagining the different worlds I want to create in my books. And usually I enjoy it, so often I keep researching far beyond just getting the information I need."

So we know there will be other volumes in *The Missing* series, but do you have other projects on the horizon?

Haddix: Besides *Torn*, I also have a stand-alone book due coming out next year (on November 15, 2011). It's called *The Always War*, and it deals with war and heroism and includes several surprising plot twists. Beyond that, I have lots of ideas for future books, but nothing that's definite enough to talk about yet. &

Margaret Peterson Haddix can be found online at www.haddixbooks.com

Summer Reading on Steroids

ALSC/BWI Grant Winner Hosts Superhero SRP

FAITH BRAUTIGAM

Combine lots of kids with some superheroes, stir in the history of comics, add reading, community partnerships, and a pinch of library exploration, and what do you get? For us, it was a summer reading program (SRP) on steroids!

“Be a Hero—Read,” the 2010 SRP theme at Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin, Illinois, and the accompanying exhibit called “Comic Book Mania: Pow! Bam! Read!” attracted kids and families in droves. Our SRP enrollment shot up 27 percent over the previous year’s figures, youth book circulation grew by 10 percent in June and 5 percent in July, and youth program attendance soared. What made our program so successful?

Having a terrific and boy-friendly theme helped, but the real determining factors were applying for and winning the ALSC/BWI Summer Reading Grant. From the moment we entertained the idea of applying, the process shaped our summer. Note that it was primarily the process, not just the relatively modest funding, that had an impact.

Thinking and behaving as if we were award winners from the first glimmers of an idea made our summer soar, and the \$3,000 in grant funding provided the final boost, contributing a significant portion of the roughly \$10,000 out-of-pocket costs. A summary of how we produced a winning summer follows. Many can be replicated even without extra funding—this is what the grant process did for us . . .



Photos courtesy of the Gail Borden Public Library District.

Required Us to Plan Far Ahead

People who work with kids in libraries tend to plan ahead. We have to. The schedule of the ALSC/BWI grant, however, pushed this up several notches.

By December 1, 2009, we had to know not only our summer theme, but the entire structure of our summer program, and we had to be confident enough about the way things would work that we could “sell” it to people who had no previous knowledge of our library or our programs.

In October, we met with our marketing and graphics staff and came away with an agreement to use original artwork, designed in-house. By November, we had a hand-drawn, very rough mock-up of a summer reading log. There were notes so we’d understand what we meant, such as the one next to a superhero sketch that said, “Flying, not dead.”

That first draft led to a concept draft that made our plans clear—not just to the award committee, but also to our own graphics staff. In terms of the exhibit, the award entry deadline forced us to be proactive in confirming the loan of exhibit pieces from the Children’s Museum of Indianapolis and a nearby museum. The major components of our summer were well on their way to being planned before 2010 even arrived.

Faith Brautigam is the Director of Youth Services at Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin, Ill. She served on the 2001 John Newbery Award Committee and has been a long-term reviewer for School Library Journal.

While it was hard to find the time to plan summer so far in advance, the benefits were enormous. We would never have had so many summer events, nor would they have gone so smoothly, if we had used a more traditional planning calendar.

Encouraged Excellence

How could our reading programs, our exhibit, and our summer events be excellent? This question caused us to rethink everything we did. One by one, we addressed the reading logs, our programs, and the role the SRP plays in our community as we tried to improve every aspect of our summer.

Superheroes make choices, so the reading logs invited young listeners or readers to participate in decision making as they moved through each panel of the reading log. The pre-reader and independent reader logs offered options for kids to find less familiar items at the library. Thus the Every Child Ready to Read early literacy station was “noticed” by far more families, and the fact that the library has toys and learning materials, such as flashcards, to use at home became common knowledge.

Heroes of all sorts permeated our thinking, so special events for third through sixth graders featured real heroes. For example, there was a program with military heroes, including the chance to sit in a Humvee, to make a card for those cleaning up the Gulf Coast oil spill, and to meet a World War II veteran.

At another program, kids learned about our local Habitat for Humanity and created their own hands-on buildings. Since they couldn't travel to a building site, we did that in advance for them (visit our video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQGukuDC71A).

Our community is full of local heroes. We also featured organizations that rescue animals, along with some of the animals themselves; wagging tails are a great draw, and kids could be heroes by donating needed supplies to a nonprofit organization.

A reading program is only successful, though, if people know about it. In 2009, to promote the SRP, we produced a mini action movie that was distributed to the local schools. We promised, in our grant application, to do the same in 2010. But how could we make it fun, funny, and engaging for elementary kids of all ages and their teachers? Who was the superhero? What was his superpower? The path wasn't easy, but it ended up starring our city's mayor, a well-known local newsperson, and a gorilla (visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvBNMT-PsAQ).

It was all worth it when an embarrassed-looking mom with three young children in tow came up to the SRP station, gestured toward her first-grader, and said, “He heard about this at school and wants to ‘join the mission.’”

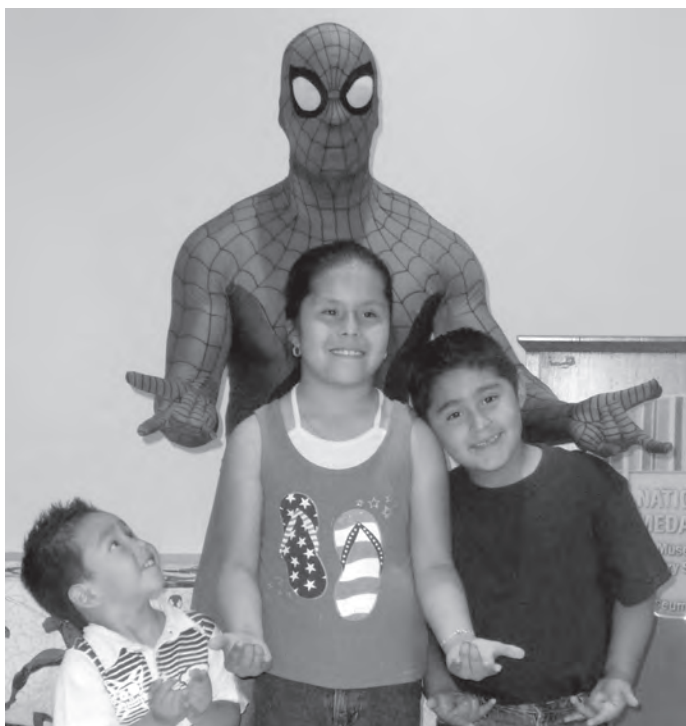
Making the visual story in the reading log match the plot line of the video was one of the small ways in which we strove for excellence.



Each week a community hero puppet was the star of a trading card that sported the puppet's photo on the front and related book titles on the back.



A young visitor brings the Read-to-Me Summer Reading Program to life by wearing a preschool-sized “Be a Hero—Read” cape while playing at the library.



The opportunity to meet Spider-Man and pose for a free photo with him drew a crowd that spanned all the demographics of the library's service population.

Allowed for Extras

Winning the grant paid for things that otherwise would be difficult to fund. Those things that we often see as extras, though, added so much to our program that I'm considering looking for ways to fund them more often.

The idea of the extra money made us “think big” well in advance. The largest event of the summer was under contract with Marvel Comics long before that call from an ALSC committee chair. For a fee of \$1,400, we were promised up to six hours with a Marvel-approved costumed representative who had been fully trained to work with kids and crowds and who knew all kinds of trivia about the character. We hosted a Spider-Man

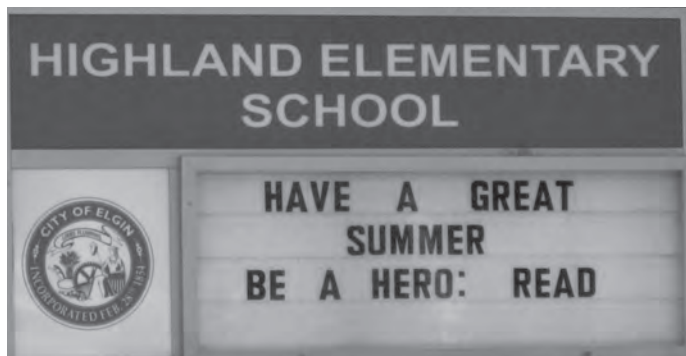


Photo credit: Julie Anne Robbins

oped a program that invited their students to meet at the library once each week to continue learning throughout the summer.

Computerized mathematics lessons, hands-on science, and traditional means such as worksheets and homework were included. Not only did this model partnership serve a diverse array of students, but it also led to stories in three newspapers, including the *Chicago Tribune*.

In addition, we added weekly programs at an additional outreach site, The Boys and Girls Club. We respected their emphasis on character education by offering Characteristics of a Hero programs each week, and provided them with the tools to register their students online for the SRP. Through this additional cooperation, we now have a stronger bond with an organization that already reaches children we want to serve.

Internally, the program also encouraged us to partner across traditional staffing lines. The exhibit and the reading program both included cooperative planning between youth services, community services, and marketing, from the time we wrote the proposal until the exhibit pieces were packed and shipped. When we have high profile projects at stake, we have found that they unify us throughout our organization. Both internal and external partnering makes us a stronger library, and one that is integral to our community.

Netted Us a Higher Profile

It's not often that youth services activities are featured at the monthly meeting of the library's board of trustees, but "Be a Hero—Read" repeatedly made us the star of the show. Our summer reading video and fantastic enrollment statistics gave us our first platform. The next month it was our Super Storytellers, as well as the very popular trading cards distributed at our Next Door Neighbor story times for preschoolers.

Each week, a neighborhood hero was featured in a puppet show. That puppet was photographed and copied onto small pieces of card stock; a brief list of books about the occupation was printed on the back.

Throughout the summer, different trading cards were given out, and by attending regularly, children could collect the whole set. At the July meeting of our library board, each trustee received

a trading card and heard how to view our weekly puppet shows from the library's website.

In addition to raising our profile with our trustees, we know that our exhibit and special events put us on the radar of others who had never visited the library. Not only did we receive calls from people who needed directions to the library, but we were asked questions by people who had never attended a library program before.

Spider-Man definitely drew in new library users, as did the comic convention we held. Our own mini-Comic Con occurred on a Saturday and offered events for all ages and interests, from a chance to meet comic book artists to superhero face painting and a costume contest and much more. Based on our past exhibits and large events, we know that once many of these people discover the library, they want to be a part of what we do, which is one reason our library card registration rate exceeds 82 percent. Many of the flyers, handouts, and crafts we offer invite them, directly or indirectly, to return or remind them of the great time they had during their visit.

“Kids and the comic format make a fantastic combination . . . our hardcover graphic novels for kids maintained a 70 percent circulation rate. An already-popular format was made more visible through our reading program, and the exhibit piqued kids’ interest in both the process and the product.”

Grew Our Understanding

Where would we be if we never learned anything new? Life would be far less interesting. Thanks to all of the things we tried in our quest for excellence, we learned a lot in a few short months.

We learned that we make assumptions and use language that only works for library “insiders.” We attracted many people who had no prior library experience and introduced them to our services. We realized that they had questions such as, “What does it mean to ‘finish’ the Summer Reading Program,” and “Where do you go to do that?”

Thankfully, some asked for help and worked through their puzzlement. Others who didn't understand what it meant or why it mattered didn't give us the chance to explain, which contributed to a lower completion rate than we would have liked.

We also learned that partnering agencies that did the program off-site needed more support if their children who completed the program were going to be included in our official records as having done so. We learned that providing directed activities and

reading options has both benefits and drawbacks. We learned that there are still parents, grandparents, teachers, and other adults who don't think graphic novels and comics count as reading. We were reminded of how generous local collectors can be in loaning us irreplaceable items to be a part of a library exhibit.

One essential thing we learned, however, was simple—kids and the comic format make a fantastic combination. Throughout the bulk of the summer, our hardcover graphic novels for kids maintained a 70 percent circulation rate. An already-popular

format was made more visible through our reading program, and the exhibit piqued kids' interest in both the process and the product.

We also learned that pushing ourselves to exceed our expectations pays off and that there are always new partnerships waiting to happen. ☺

A note to readers: Look only at the first letter of each subhead above, and read those letters vertically. That's what it's all about.

MY YEAR WITH GEISEL, continued from page 36

last several months and collaborate on our understandings. It enriched and expanded my perspectives on what makes a terrific early reader book for children pre-K to second grade.

Another wonderful part of serving on Geisel was visiting a local second-grade classroom over a span of several weeks and reading with the children possible contenders for the award.

Our manual suggested doing this as one possible way to gather more information on both how children learn to read and how to gauge their honest reactions to different books. We staged our own Mock Geisel Award and celebration party. The candid and open viewpoints of these twenty-seven second-graders, as I observed them reading and sharing over thirty different books, opened up new ways of looking at the world of early reader titles and what often makes one book more enticing in the child's eyes.

An important part of being on Geisel is the nomination process. Twice during 2007 we each nominated three strong contenders, justifying in writing why we chose them and sending those nominations to our chair, who then compiled our nominations and put them into a list along with our justification statements so that we had a chance to read over and reflect on each member's thoughts.

The nominated books are important because they become the main subject on the Midwinter discussion list; though books published as late in the year as December can still feasibly get on it. However, no books may be added to this list once the Midwinter Meeting selection meeting has started.

In a nutshell, voting for the award winner involves each committee member listing first, second, and third place votes on a ballot. Then a teller on the committee assigns four points to each first place vote, three points to each second place vote, and two points to each third place vote. To win the award, a book must receive at least five first place votes at four points per vote for a total of twenty points. Plus, that book needs a five-point lead over the book receiving the next highest number of points.

The committee has the option of selecting honor books, by considering titles with the highest number of points or electing to ballot one more time. When I was on the committee, we opted to choose honor books: *First the Egg* by Laura Vaccaro Seeger; *Hello, Bumblebee Bat* by Darrin Lund, illustrated by Patricia J. Wynne; *Jazz Baby* by Lisa Wheeler, illustrated by R. Gregory Christie; and *Vulture View* by April Pulley Sayre, illustrated by Steve Jenkins.

Early Sunday evening is the most exciting—the award and honor book notification phone calling session. When I was on Geisel, Mo Willems won the Geisel Award for his hilarious *There Is a Bird on Your Head*. As we were chatting with this charming author and illustrator, he mentioned that his young daughter was peeking at him over a partition by his computer and telephone, evidently in glee that her dad was hearing some pretty good news!

My year with Geisel was a thrill, and a local newspaper reporter interviewed me to ask how I became a children's librarian, how I share my love of leading kids to books, and once again, how did I get on the Geisel Committee. ☺

ALSC News

Board Major Actions

The following actions were recently taken by the ALSC Board of Directors.

Electronic Actions

APPROVED, a letter of support from ALSC for KQED Public Media's application for a National Science Foundation (NSF) Pathways Grant. The KQED project is a library toolkit, The Cat in the Hat's Learning Library for Science. (December 2010)

APPROVED, the definition of the "New to ALSC" Director position as "a candidate who will normally have been an ALSC member for 2-7 years." If the motion is approved by the membership, this information will be incorporated into the Slate Development Memo sent to the ALSC Nominating Committee. In addition, two candidates for the "New to ALSC" Director slot will appear on the spring 2012 ballot. (November 2010)

Midwinter Meeting 2011 Actions

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

APPROVED, the move of the Draft Strategic Plan to the beginning of the agenda for discussion.

APPROVED, the amended Board Agenda for Midwinter 2011.

RESCINDED, the Scope of Attention Motion to change the words "the eighth grade of junior high school age" to the words "through and including age 13" in Bylaws Article II.

APPROVED, a resolution honoring Carolyn Wicker Field.

ADOPTED, the recommendations of the SPA Subcommittee with the following change: In Recommendation #6, "After successful conversion of the first year's committees, be replaced with the phrase, "After a two-year conversion of the first committees."

ACCEPTED, the Tier 1 suggestions from the Friends of ALSC Task Force: a calendar-based membership year and an expanded annual membership drive letter.

CHARGED, the Quicklist Consulting Committee with creating a core collection development list of graphic novels for children, and, moving forward, a best of the best list.

APPROVED, the sunset of the Great Interactive Software for Kids Committee.

APPROVED, a change to the Terms of the Notable Children's Recordings to align the producers' submission deadline with that of the current Odyssey Committee.

APPROVED, a change to the function statement of the Notable Children's Recordings Committee to remove the words "in disc or tape form" in the first sentence.

RESCINDED, a 2004 Annual Conference Board vote to "provide complimentary registration and \$250 to ALSC members who speak at the ALSC National Institute."

APPROVED, recommendations 2, 3, 4, and 5 from the Banquet Pricing Task Force Report.

APPROVED, the consent agenda for 2011 ALA Midwinter Meeting.

APPROVED, co-sponsorship in name only of ALA President Roberta Stevens' "Why I Need My Library" video contest.

APPROVED, support of Project VIEWS 2 IMLS National Leadership grant initiative, by providing a letter of support and designating an ALSC member or Board member to serve on the strategic advisory board.

APPROVED, support of ALA Council Document #39, "Resolution in Support of the Dream Act," in principle.

APPROVED, the preliminary budget for Fiscal Year 2012.

Carlson Honored with Distinguished Service Award

Dudley Carlson is the 2011 recipient of the Distinguished Service Award, honoring an individual who has made significant contributions to library service to children and to ALSC.

Carlson has been instrumental over several decades in supporting, nurturing, and participating in the evaluation of books, one of the prime and longest-standing services that ALSC provides for libraries, librarians, parents, and the community. As a member, chair and advisor to numerous book award and evaluation committees, including Newbery (chair 1985), Caldecott, Batchelder, and Notable Children's Books, she has provided guidance through reasoned thought and deep expertise. Her work also extends to other ALSC committees, including the Instrumental Budget and Finance Committee. Carlson also has served on the Boston-Globe Horn Book Award Committee and the New York Times Best Illustrated Books for Children Committee.

Carlson has been described as having impeccable judgment and sound rational advice. Because of this she has been called upon at several critical moments to help work through controversial or tough

issues faced by ALSC leadership. In these circumstances, it was always clear that Carlson was in it for the long haul, always willing to roll up her sleeves and pitch in to help where she was needed in ALSC.

Carlson started her career in the mid-1960s as a library trainee at the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore. After receiving her library science degree from Rutgers, she worked for the New York Public Library system for five years before leaving to take over the position of children's librarian at the Princeton (N.J.) Public Library in 1973.

During the twenty-five years Carlson worked for the Princeton Public Library, she enriched the lives of thousands of local children by connecting them with books and instilling in them a love of reading. Her outstanding service to the families of Princeton and the people of New Jersey earned Carlson a 1991 Governor's Award, the Albert Einstein Education Award, from the New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers, for "achievements which produce a significantly improved educational environment."

Through her strong and dignified leadership, Carlson has mentored many others in ALSC, modeling respect and encouragement of participation. ALSC members are richer for her work, her example, and her presence.

The 2011 ALSC Distinguished Service Award Committee includes: Eliza Dresang, Information School University of Washington, Seattle, Wash.; Virginia Gustin, Sonoma County Library System, Sonoma, Calif.; Susan Stan, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, Mich.; Caroline Ward, The Ferguson Library, Stamford, Conn.; and Gretchen Wronka, chair, Hennepin County Library, Minneapolis, Minn.

2011 Award Winners

In addition to the Distinguished Service Award, ALSC confers numerous other grants and awards each year. We are pleased to announce our 2011 recipients!

ALSC/BWI Summer Reading Program Grant: West Palm Beach (Fla.) Public Library

Bechtel Fellowship: Allison G. Kaplan, School of Library and Information Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Victoria Penny, First Regional Library, Hernando, Miss.

Bookapalooza: Houston Elementary School, Spartanburg, S.C., Meade County Public Library, Brandenburg, Ky., and Florence County (S.C.) Library System

Maureen Hayes Author/Illustrator Award: McArthur Public Library, Biddeford, Maine

Light the Way: Library Outreach to the Underserved Grant: Richmond (Calif.) Public Library

Penguin Young Readers Group Award: Patricia Carroll, Shamona Creek Elementary School, Downingtown, Penn.; Allison Hill, Bloomington (Ind.) Public Library; Mellissa Sanchez, Highlands Elementary School, Sugar Land, Texas; and Laura Simeon, The Open Window School/Vista Academy, Bellevue, Wash.

For more information on the winners and how to apply for 2012 awards, please visit: www.ala.org/alsc, click on Awards and Grants—ALSC Professional Awards.

Online Ed Summer Sessions

No matter the amount of time you have, ALSC has your professional development needs covered this summer. Beginning on July 11 and running through August 18, ALSC is offering four multi-week online education courses that are sure to enlighten and engage librarians at any point in their career. Course selections include: *Information Literacy—From Preschool to High School*; *Out of This World Youth Programming*; *The Newbery Medal: Past, Present and Future*; and *Reading Instruction and Children's Books*.

Courses are taught asynchronously using Moodle, an online learning community. An electronic certificate of completion will be sent to participants upon successful completion of the course. Fees are \$95 for personal ALSC members; \$145 for personal ALA members; and \$165 for non-members.

ALSC also is offering a regular schedule of convenient and affordable webinars. Perfect for busy professionals and students, these sessions last approximately one hour and give participants a brief but concentrated look into unique subject areas.

Webinars include *Leveling Easy Readers* (June 15, July 7, and August 5) and *Family Programs on a Shoestring @ your library®* (May 12, June 10, July 22, and August 23). Each is offered multiple times between now and September to allow individuals more flexibility in scheduling; however, participants should only register for and plan to attend one session. Webinars take place in a virtual meeting room on Adobe Connect, and because they are in real-time, participants have the opportunity to take part in a Q&A with the instructor. More webinars are being added to the schedule, please visit the website for more information. Costs are \$45 for ALSC members, \$55 for non-members, and \$195 for groups.

Detailed descriptions and registration information are on the ALSC website at www.ala.org/alsced. For more information, contact ALSC Program Officer Jenny Najduch at jnajduch@ala.org or 800-545-2433 ext. 4026.

Vanderpool, Stead Win Newbery, Caldecott

Clare Vanderpool, author of *Moon Over Manifest* (Delacorte/Random House Children's Books) and Erin E. Stead, illustrator of *A Sick Day for Amos McGee* (Neal Porter/Roaring Brook/Holtzbrinck), are the 2011 winners of the John Newbery and Randolph Caldecott Medals, the most prestigious awards in children's literature.

Moon over Manifest is a big-hearted, multigenerational epic set in small-town Kansas that alternates between World War I and the Great Depression, but never strays too far from the tough-yet-vulnerable heroine Abilene Tucker. With a mix of letters, newspaper articles, and a fortune teller's tales, the eclectic people and mysteries of *Manifest* spring to life.

A Sick Day for Amos McGee, written by Philip C. Stead, is a tender tale of reciproc-

ity and friendship. Zookeeper Amos McGee gets the snuffles and receives a surprise visit from his caring animal friends. Erin Stead's delicate woodblock prints and fine pencil work complement Philip Stead's understated, spare and humorous text to create a well-paced, gentle and satisfying book, perfect for sharing with friends.

Four Newbery Honor Books were named: *Dark Emperor and Other Poems of the Night* (Houghton Mifflin Books for Children, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) by Joyce Sidman, illustrated by Rick Allen; *Heart of a Samurai* (Amulet/Abrams) by Margi Preus; *One Crazy Summer* (Amistad/HarperCollins) by Rita Williams-Garcia; *Turtle in Paradise* (Random House Children's Books) by Jennifer L. Holm.

Two Caldecott Honor Books were named: *Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave*, (Little, Brown/Hachette) illustrated by Bryan Collier, written by Laban Carrick Hill; and *Interrupting Chicken* (Candlewick) written and illustrated by David Ezra Stein.

Members of the 2011 Newbery Committee are: Chair Cynthia K. Richey, Mt. Lebanon (Pa.) Public Library; Samuel I. Bloom, Public Library of Cincinnati/Hamilton County, Groesbeck Branch Library, Cincinnati, Ohio; Madeline J. Bryant, Los Angeles Public Library; Louise A. Capizzo, Falmouth (Maine) Memorial Library; Dan Darigan, West Chester University of Pennsylvania; Julie E. Dietzel-Glair, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, Md.; Brian Fahey, Wilmington (Del.) Friends School; Jana R. Fine, Tuscaloosa (Ala.) Public Library; Marianne Crandall Follis, Irving (Tex.) Central Public Library; Jean B. Gaffney, Dayton (Ohio) Metro Library; Kathryn B. Shepler, Aurora Elementary School, Oakland, Calif.; Karin Snelson, Seattle; Nancy J. Snyder, Derby, (Kan.) Public Library; Pat Stainbrook, Spokane (Wash.) County Library District; and Bina Williams, Bridgeport (Conn.) Public Library.

Members of the 2011 Caldecott Committee are: Chair Judy E. Zuckerman, Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library; Carolyn R. Angus, George Stone Center for Children's Books, Claremont (Calif.) Graduate University; Ruth Anne Champion, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, Md.; Kevin Delecki, Dayton (Ohio) Metro Library; Heidi K. Hammond, St. Catherine University

Library, St. Paul, Minn.; Shelley Haley Huntington, New York; Karen Kessel, Tobias Elementary School, Kyle, Tex.; Megan D. Lambert, Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, Amherst, Mass.; Portia Latalladi, Chicago Public Library; Morgan McMillian, Lake Travis Community Library, Austin, Tex.; Debra Nelson, Prince George's County Memorial Library, Largo, Md.; Vaunda Micheaux Nelson, Rio Rancho (N.M.) Public Library; Gail Nordstrom, Viking Library System, Fergus Falls, Minn.; Elsworth Rockefeller, Martin Luther King Library, Washington, D.C.; and Robin Smith, Ensworth School, Nashville, Tenn.

dePaola Wins Wilder

Author/Illustrator Tomie dePaola is the winner of the 2011 Laura Ingalls Wilder Award honoring an author or illustrator, published in the United States, whose books have made a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children. His numerous works include: *26 Fairmont Avenue* (Putnam, 1999), a 2000 Newbery Honor Book; *Strega Nona* (Prentice-Hall, 1975), a 1976 Caldecott Honor Book; *The Legend of the Poinsettia* (Putnam, 1994); and *Oliver Button Is a Sissy* (Harcourt, 1979).

"Tomie dePaola is masterful at creating seemingly simple stories that have surprising depth and reflect tremendous emotional honesty," said Wilder Award Committee Chair Megan Schliesman. "They have resonated with children for over 40 years."

Tomie dePaola was born in Meriden, Connecticut, September 15, 1934. He received a BFA in Art Education from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, in 1956, and an MFA from the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland in 1969. In a career that spans more than 45 years, he has created more than 200 books for children and continues to write and illustrate today. He currently lives in New London, New Hampshire.

Tomie dePaola has received the Kerlan Award (Kerlan Collection, University of Minnesota, 1981), Regina Medal (Catholic Library Association, 1983), James Smithson Bicentennial Medal (Smithsonian

Institution, 1990), and the Living Treasure Award (Governor's Arts Awards, State of New Hampshire, 1999). He was also one of two nominees of the United States Board on Books for Young People (USBBY) for the international Hans Christian Andersen Award (1990).

Members of the 2011 Wilder Committee are: Chair Megan Schliesman, Cooperative Children's Book Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison; JoAnn Jonas, San Diego (Calif.) County Library; Andrew Medlar, Chicago Public Library; Martha V. Parravano, *Horn Book Magazine*, Boston; and Angela J. Reynolds, Annapolis Valley Regional Library, Bridgetown, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Batchelder Goes to Delacorte Press

Delacorte Press/Random House Children's Books is the winner of the 2011 Mildred L. Batchelder Award for *A Time of Miracles*. The award honors an American publisher for a children's book considered to be the most outstanding of those books originally published in a language other than English in a country other than the United States and subsequently translated into English for publication in the United States.

Originally published in French in 2009 as *Le Temps des Miracles*, the book was written by Anne-Laure Bondoux and translated by Y. Maudet. This sweeping novel tells about a young refugee as he searches for identity, safe haven, and truth from the war-torn Caucasus to the freedom of France over five arduous years. Both people and places are rendered fully with telling detail. Love and hope run deep through this layered examination of the human spirit.

Two Batchelder Honor Books also were selected: *Departure Time*, published by Namelos, written by Truus Matti, and translated from the Dutch by Nancy Forest-Flier; and *Nothing*, published by Atheneum Books for Young Readers/Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing, written by Janne Teller and translated from the Danish by Martin Aitken.

Members of the 2011 Batchelder Committee are: Chair Susan W. Faust, Katherine

Delmar Burke School, San Francisco; Sheila Anne Cody, Chicago; Adrienne Leah Furness, Rochester, N.Y.; Tessa Michaelson Schmidt, Upper San Juan Library District, Ruby M. Sisson Memorial Library, Pagosa Springs, Colo.; and Kristy L. Sutorius, Lakes Regional Library, Fort Myers, Fla.

Velasquez and Ryan Win Belpré

Eric Velasquez, illustrator of *Grandma's Gift*, and Pam Muñoz Ryan, author of *The Dreamer*, are the 2011 winners of the Pura Belpré Illustrator Award and Author Award, honoring Latino authors and illustrators whose work best portrays, affirms and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in children's books. The awards are administered by the ALSC and the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking, REFORMA.

Grandma's Gift (Walker/Bloomsbury), also authored by Velasquez, is a personal tale based on Velasquez's special relationship with his abuela who influenced his dream of becoming an artist. Velasquez's penchant for details and use of oil on watercolor papers complements his amazing use of color and light to reflect the mood of the characters.

The Honor Books for illustration are: *Fiesta Babies* (Tricycle/Crown/Random House), illustrated by Amy Córdova, written by Carmen Tafolla; *Me, Frida* (Abrams Books for Young Readers/Abrams), illustrated by David Diaz, written by Amy Novesky; and *Dear Primo: A Letter to My Cousin* (Abrams Books for Young Readers/Abrams), illustrated and written by Duncan Tonatiuh.

Author award-winning book *The Dreamer* (Scholastic), written by Pam Muñoz Ryan and illustrated by Peter Sís, masterfully imagines the magic-filled youth of Chilean Nobel Prize-winning poet Pablo Neruda. Through her skillful use of language inspired by Neruda's work, Muñoz Ryan weaves this stunning tale of a young boy's discovery of self and the development of his ideologies and artistic voice.

The Honor Books for narration are: *¡Olé! Flamenco* (Lee and Low), by George Ancona, with photographs by the author; *The Firefly Letters: A Suffragette's Journey to Cuba* (Holt), by Margarita Engle; and *90 Miles to Havana* (Roaring Brook/Holtzbrinck), by Enrique Flores-Galbis.

Members of the 2011 Belpré Committee are: Chair Martha M. Walke, Children's Literature New England, South Strafford, Vt.; Floyd C. Dickman, Ostrander, Ohio; Sally L. Miculek, Austin (Tex.) Public Library; Alma Ramos-McDermott, Pollard Middle School, Needham, Mass.; Stan F. Steiner, Boise State University, Idaho; and Ruth Tobar, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Carnegie Honors Weston Woods

Paul R. Gagne and Melissa Reilly Ellard of Weston Woods, producers of *The Curious Garden*, are the 2011 recipients of the Andrew Carnegie Medal for excellence in children's video.

In this adaptation of Peter Brown's 2009 book, young urban explorer Liam discovers a dying garden. With determination he nurtures the besieged plants, transforming the concrete landscape of a bleak city into a vibrant garden and community of people working together. With excellent narration by Katherine Kellgren, this skillfully animated tale shows how the actions of one small boy can make a lasting impact. Liam's passion and curiosity awakens the hopeful spirit in all of us.

Members of the 2011 Carnegie Committee are: Chair Angelique M. Kopa, Harford County Public Library, Belcamp, Md.; Marisa A. Conner, Baltimore County Public Library, Towson, Md.; Stephanie Farnlacher, Hoover, Ala.; Vivian Landfair, DeBary (Fla.) Elementary School; Anna McKay, Darien (Conn.) Library; Danielle Shapiro, Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library Highlawn Branch; Martha Seif Simpson, Stratford (Conn.) Library Association; Joanna Ward, County of Los Angeles Public Library, Temple City, Calif.; and Mary Wilson, Rochester Hills (Mich.) Public Library.

Bink and Gollie Takes Geisel

Authors Kate DiCamillo and Alison McGhee and illustrator Tony Fucile are the 2011 recipients of the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award for *Bink and Gollie*, published by Candlewick.

Bink and Gollie provides a clever peek into the lives of dissimilar friends celebrating the ups and downs of their daily escapades in three lively chapters. Bink and Gollie explore the rocky terrain of compromise, asserting independence, and jealousy, yet their friendship remains steadfast. In this effervescent blend of picture book, reader and graphic novel, text and illustration unite the real and imaginary. Humorous and exaggerated illustrations propel the reader, through a story sprinkled with challenging vocabulary. So much is said with so little.

Two Geisel Honor Books were named: *Ling and Ting: Not Exactly the Same!* (Little, Brown/Hachette) written and illustrated by Grace Lin; and *We Are in a Book!* (Hyperion/Disney) written and illustrated by Mo Willems.

Members of the 2011 Geisel Committee are: Chair Julie F. Roach, Cambridge (Mass.) Public Library; Toni A. Bernardi, San Francisco Public Library; Sheri Boggs, Centralia (Wash.) Timberland Library; Kristen Beauston Fournier, Forest North Elementary School, Austin, Tex.; Steven L. Herb, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa.; Kathy Kirchoefer, Prince George's County Memorial Library System (Md.); and Linda Zeilstra Sawyer, Skokie (Ill.) Public Library.

Listening Library Wins Odyssey

Listening Library, an imprint of Random House Audio, producer of the audiobook, *The True Meaning of Smekday*, won the 2011 Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production.

In *The True Meaning of Smekday*, written by Adam Rex, narrated by Bahni Turpin, Turpin gives an unforgettable performance, seamlessly slipping into the voices of wiseacre eighth grader, Gratuity "Tip"

Tucci, and her alien Boov companion as they embark on a rollicking road trip to track down Tip's missing mother and save the planet. It is a laugh-out-loud presentation of Adam Rex's popular satire.

The Odyssey Honor Audiobooks are: *Alchemy and Meggy Swann* (Listening Library/Random House Audio), written by Karen Cushman, narrated by Katherine Kellgren; *The Knife of Never Letting Go* (Candlewick on Brilliance Audio, an imprint of Brilliance Audio), written by Patrick Ness, narrated by Nick Podehl; *Revolution* (Listening Library/Random House Audio), written by Jennifer Donnelly, narrated by Emily Janice Card and Emma Bering; and *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* (Brilliance Audio), written by John Green and David Levithan, narrated by MacLeod Andrews and Nick Podehl.

Members of the 2011 Odyssey Committee are: Chair Sarah M. McCarville, Grand Rapids (Mich.) Public Library; Catherine M. Andronik, Brien McMahon High School, Norwalk, Conn.; Stephanie D. Bange, Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio; Mary Clark, Greenwich (Conn.) Country Day School; Bradley Debrick, Johnson County Library, Overland Park, Kan.; Kristin Brand Heathcock, Hillsborough Community College, Plant City, Fla.; Patricia McClune, Conestoga Valley High School, Lancaster, Pa.; Alison Ann O'Reilly, Suffolk Cooperative Library System, Bellport, N.Y.; Ellen Rix Spring, Rockland (Maine) District Middle School; and Sue-Ellen Beaugard, *Booklist* consultant, Chicago.

Montgomery/Bishop Win Sibert

Sy Montgomery and Nic Bishop, author and photographer/illustrator of *Kakapo Rescue: Saving the World's Strangest Parrot*, (Houghton Mifflin Books for Children/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) were named the winners of the 2011 Robert F. Sibert Medal for the most distinguished informational book for children published in 2010.

Kakapo Rescue is an inspiring call to action. This visually appealing and engaging book takes readers on an unforgettable journey to New Zealand. Naturalist

Sy Montgomery and wildlife photographer Nic Bishop document the successes and failures of the rescue team dedicated to saving a species of flightless parrot numbering fewer than one hundred.

The Sibert Honor Books are: *Ballet for Martha: Making Appalachian Spring* (Neal Porter/Flash Point/Roaring Brook/Holtzbrinck), written by Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan, illustrated by Brian Floca; and *Lafayette and the American Revolution* (Holiday House), written by Russell Freedman.

Members of the 2011 Sibert Committee are: Chair Barbara L. Brand, Johnson County Library, Shawnee Mission, Kan.; Ty R. Burns, Clear Creek Independent School District, League City, Tex.; Ernie J. Cox, Mark Twain Elementary School, Iowa City, Iowa; Carol A. Doll, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Va.; Randall Enos, Ramapo Catskill Library System, Middletown, N.Y.; Kate Johnson, Sno-Isle Libraries, Monroe, Wash.; Jennifer C. Knight, North Olympic Library System, Port Angeles, Wash.; Carolyn Phelan, Northbrook (Ill.) Public Library; and Sharon Rawlins, New Jersey State Library, Trenton.

Sís to Deliver 2012 Arbuthnot

Peter Sís will deliver the 2012 May Hill Arbuthnot Honor Lecture. "Sís is internationally recognized for his contributions to the field of children's literature and we are thrilled to recognize him and his body of work," stated 2012 Arbuthnot Committee Chair Shawn S. Brommer.

Born in Brno, Czechoslovakia, in 1949, Sís attended the Academy of Applied Arts in Prague and the Royal College of Art in London. He has lived in the United States since 1982. Sís was awarded the 2008 Robert F. Sibert Medal and has illustrated three Caldecott Honor books. Sís's work is admired throughout the world, and in 2003 he was named MacArthur Fellow, an honor bestowed by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Members of the 2012 Arbuthnot Committee are: Chair Shawn S. Brommer, South Central Library System, Madison, Wis.; Betty B. Carter, Coppell,

Tex.; Caroline M. Kienzle, Seminole, Fla.; Debra A. Mitts-Smith, Children's Literature Scholar, St. Paul, Minn.; and Sylvia G. Tag, Western Washington University, Bellingham, Wash.

2011 Notable Children's Books

Younger Readers

April and Esme, Tooth Fairies. By Bob Graham. Illus. by the author. Candlewick.

Back of the Bus. By Aaron Reynolds. Illus. by Floyd Cooper. Philomel.

Big Red Lollipop. By Rukhsana Khan. Illus. by Sophie Blackall. Viking.

Bink and Gollie. By Kate DiCamillo and Alison McGhee. Illus. by Tony Fucile. Candlewick.

Chalk. By Bill Thomson. Illus. by the author. Marshall Cavendish.

City Dog, Country Frog. By Mo Willems. Illus. by Jon J. Muth. Hyperion.

Dear Primo: A Letter to My Cousin. By Duncan Tonatiuh. Illus. by the author. Abrams.

Fiesta Babies. By Carmen Tafolla. Illus. by Amy Córdova. Tricycle.

Grandma's Gift. By Eric Velasquez. Illus. by the author. Walker.

Hip-Pocket Papa. By Sandra Markle. Illus. by Alan Marks. Charlesbridge.

Interrupting Chicken. By David Ezra Stein. Illus. by the author. Candlewick.

In the Wild. By David Elliott. Illus. by Holly Meade. Candlewick.



2011 Notable Children's Recordings

Alchemy and Meggy Swann. Listening Library.

Boom! Listening Library.

The Call of the Wild. Listening Library.

Cantilena: Night Songs from Around the World. Yellow Tail Records.

Chicken Little. Weston Woods.

Clementine: Friend of the Week. Recorded Books.

Crocodile Tears (Alex Rider Series). Recorded Books.

The Curious Garden. Weston Woods.

The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins. Weston Woods.

Epossumondas Plays Possum. Recorded Books.

Forge. Brilliance Audio.

Here in Harlem: Poems in Many Voices. Live Oak Media.

If You Were a Penguin. Live Oak Media.

Jungle Gym. Carpet Square Records.

The King and the Thrush: Tales of Goodness and Greed. Eastern Coyote Recordings.

The Magician's Elephant. Brilliance Audio.

Mockingbird. Recorded Books.

The New Explorers Club. Flannery Brothers.

One Crazy Summer. Recorded Books.

Ranky Tanky. Mayhem Music.

Splat the Cat. Weston Woods.

They Called Themselves the K.K.K. Brilliance Audio.

The True Meaning of Smekday. Listening Library.

The Water Seeker. Listening Library.

What to Do about Alice? Weston Woods.

For an annotated list of the above recordings, including recommended age levels, visit www.ala.org/alsc.

Members of the 2011 Notable Children's Recordings Committee are: Karen M. Perry, chair, RJ Reynolds High School, Winston-Salem, N.C.; Sharon Haupt, San Luis Obispo (Calif.) Coastal Unified Schools; Sharon Levin, Redwood City, Calif.; Susan Z. Melcher, Louisville, Ky.; Daniel L. Meyer, Kew Gardens Hills, N.Y.; Lynda Poling, Brewitt Neighborhood Library, Long Beach (Calif.) Public Library and Information System; Tracy Reid Sumler, D.C. Public Library, Washington, D.C.; and Janet Sue Thompson, Chicago Public Library.

Ling & Ting: Not Exactly the Same! By Grace Lin. Illus. by the author. Little, Brown.

LMNO Peas. By Keith Baker. Illus. by the author. Beach Lane.

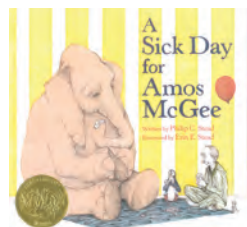
Pecan Pie Baby. By Jacqueline Woodson. Illustrated by Sophie Blackall. Putnam.

Pocketful of Posies: A Treasury of Nursery Rhymes. By Salley Mavor. Illus. by the author. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

The Quiet Book. By Deborah Underwood. Illus. by Renata Liwska. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Rubia and the Three Osos. By Susan Middleton Elya. Illus. by Melissa Sweet. Hyperion.

A Sick Day for Amos McGee. By Philip C.



Stead. Illus. by Erin E. Stead. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter.

Tuck Me In! By Dean Hacoheh. Illus. by Sherry Scharschmidt. Candlewick.

We Are in a Book! By Mo Willems. Illus. by the author. Disney/Hyperion.

Yucky Worms. By Vivian French. Illus. by Jessica Ahlberg. Candlewick.

Middle Readers

Ballet for Martha: Making Appalachian Spring. By Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan. Illus. by Brian Floca. Roaring Brook/Neal Porter.



The Bat Scientists. By Mary Kay Carson. Illus. by Tom Uhlman. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.



Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave. By Laban Carrick Hill. Illus. by Bryan Collier. Little, Brown.

The Fantastic Secret of Owen Jester. By Barbara O'Connor. Farrar.

Growing Patterns: Fibonacci Numbers in Nature. By Sarah C. Campbell. Illus. by Sarah and Richard P. Campbell. Boyds Mills.

Guyku: A Year of Haiku for Boys. By Bob Raczka. Illus. by Peter H. Reynolds. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

The Hive Detectives: Chronicle of a Honey Bee Catastrophe. By Loree Griffin Burns. Illus. by Ellen Harasimowicz. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

How to Clean a Hippopotamus: A Look at Unusual Animal Partnerships. By Steve Jenkins and Robin Page. Illus. by Steve Jenkins. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Kakapo Rescue: Saving the World's Strangest Parrot. By Sy Montgomery. Illus. by Nic Bishop. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Me, Frida. By Amy Novesky. Illus. by David Diaz. Abrams.

Nic Bishop Lizards. By Nic Bishop. Illus. by the author. Scholastic.

The Night Fairy. By Laura Amy Schlitz. Illus. by Angela Barrett. Candlewick.

Ninth Ward. By Jewell Parker Rhodes. Little, Brown.



¡Ole! Flamenco. By George Ancona. Illus. by the author. Lee & Low.

One Crazy Summer. By Rita Williams-Garcia. Harper/Amistad.



Ruth and the Green Book. By Calvin Alexander Ramsey and Gwen Strauss. Illus. by Floyd Cooper. Carolrhoda.

Saltpie: A Choctaw Journey from

Darkness into Light. By Tim Tingle. Illus. by Karen Clarkson. Cinco Puntos.

Shake, Rattle and Turn That Noise Down! How Elvis Shook Up Music, Me and Mom. By Mark Alan Stamaty. Knopf.

Smile. By Raina Telgemeier. Illus. by Raina Telgemeier and Stephanie Yue. Scholastic/Graphix.

The Strange Case of Origami Yoda. By Tom Angleberger. Amulet.

A Tale Dark and Grimm. By Adam Gidwitz. Dutton.

Trickster: Native American Tales: A Graphic Collection. Ed. by Matt Dembicki. Illus. Fulcrum.

Turtle in Paradise. By Jennifer L. Holm. Random House.

Older Readers

90 Miles to Havana. By Enrique Flores-Galbis. Roaring Brook.

Black Elk's Vision: A Lakota Story. By S. D. Nelson. Abrams.

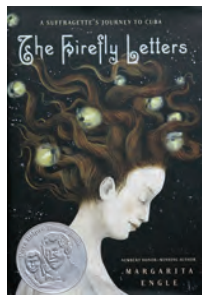
Countdown. By Deborah Wiles. Scholastic.

Departure Time. By Truus Matti. Trans. by Nancy Forest-Flier. Namelos.

The Dreamer. By Pam Muñoz Ryan. Illus. by Peter Sís. Scholastic.

Fever Crumb. By Philip Reeve. Scholastic.

The Firefly Letters: A Suffragette's Journey to Cuba. By Margarita Engle. Holt.



Heart of a Samurai. By Margi Preus. Abrams/Amulet.

Lafayette and the American Revolution. By Russell Freedman. Illus. Holiday.

Mockingbird. By Kathryn Erskine. Philomel.



Moon Over Manifest. By Clare Vanderpool. Random/Delacorte.

Nothing. By Janne Teller. Trans. by Martin Aitken. Atheneum.

Ship Breaker. By Paolo Bacigalupi. Little, Brown.

They Called Themselves the K.K.K.: The Birth of an American Terrorist Group. By Susan Campbell Bartoletti. Illus. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

A Time of Miracles. By Anne-Laure Bondoux. Trans. by Y. Maudet. Random/Delacorte.

Ubiquitous: Celebrating Nature's Survivors. By Joyce Sidman. Illus. by Beckie Prange. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

We Shall Overcome: A Song that Changed the World. By Stuart Stotts. Illus. by Terrance Cummings. Clarion Books/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Yummy: The Last Days of a Southside Shorty. By G. Neri. Illus. by Randy DuBurke. Lee & Low.

All Ages

Bones: Skeletons and How They Work. By Steve Jenkins. Illus. by the author.

Dark Emperor and Other Poems of the Night. By Joyce Sidman. Illus. by Rick Allen. Houghton Mifflin Books for Children/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Farm. By Elisha Cooper. Illus. by the author. Scholastic/Orchard.

Meanwhile. By Jason Shiga. Abrams/Amulet.

Mirror, Mirror: A Book of Reversible Verse. By Marilyn Singer. Illus. by Joséé Masse. Dutton.

Shadow. By Suzy Lee. Illus. by the author. Chronicle.

For the annotated list, visit www.ala.org/alsc.

Members of the 2011 Notable Children's Books Committee are: Katie O'Dell, chair, Multnomah County Library, Portland, Ore.; Miriam Lang Budin, Chappaqua (N.Y.) Library; Dana Buttler, Beaverton (Ore.) School District; Dr. Sue Kimmel, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Va.; Michael A. Rogalla, Champaign (Ill.) Public Library; Ed A. Spicer, SpicyReads.org, Allegan, Mich.; Dr. Tanya Tullos, Houston, Tex.; Andrea Vaughn, Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library; and Mary Voors, Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Ind.

2011 Notable Children's Videos

The American Presidents: 1754–1861. Revolution and the New Nation

Expansion and Reform. Disney Educational Productions.

Anatomy of a Puff. Human Relations Media.

Chicken Little. Weston Woods.

Cliques: Where Do You Fit In? Human Relations Media.

Crow Call. Weston Woods.

The Curious Garden. Weston Woods.

The Dinosaurs of Waterhouse Hawkins. Weston Woods.

Getting to Know Edgar Degas. Getting to Know.

Katie Loves the Kittens. Weston Woods.

Louise, the Adventures of a Chicken. Nutmeg Media.

May I Pet Your Dog? Nutmeg Media

Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed. Weston Woods.

The Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog! Weston Woods.

The Pluto Files. PBS.

Songs of Freedom. Blue Sky Project Inc.

Splat the Cat. Weston Woods.

Spoon. Weston Woods.

That Book Woman. Weston Woods.

Two Bobbies. Nutmeg Media.

For the annotated list of the above videos, including recommended age levels, visit www.ala.org/alsc.

Members of the 2011 Notable Children's Videos Committee are: Angelique M. Kopa, chair, Harford County Public Library, Belcamp, Md.; Marisa A. Conner, Baltimore County Public Library, Towson, Md.; Stephanie Farnlacher, Hoover, Ala.; Vivian Landfair, DeBary (Fla.) Elementary School; Anna McKay, Darien (Conn.) Library; Danielle Shapiro, Brooklyn (N.Y.)

Public Library, Highlawn Branch; Martha Seif Simpson, Stratford (Conn.) Library Association; Joanna Ward, County of Los Angeles Public Library, Temple City, Calif.; and Mary Wilson, Rochester Hills (Mich.) Public Library.



2011 Conference Schedule

(as of March 21, 2011)

See www.ala.org/alscevents for the complete list, including room locations and speakers.

* Denotes a closed meeting.

Thursday, June 23

2–4:30 p.m.

Executive Committee

4:30–6 p.m.

AASL/ALSC/YALSA Jt. Executive Committee

Friday, June 24

3–4 p.m.

ALSC 101. If you're new to ALSC or if this is your first Annual Conference as a children's librarian, then this program is for you! We'll provide you with information about the perks of ALSC membership, tips on how to get involved, and tricks of the trade for navigating Annual Conference.

7:30–9 p.m.

2012 Award and Notable Chair Orientation

Saturday, June 25

8–9 a.m.

Priority Group Consultants

8–10 a.m.

2012 Carnegie/Notable Children's Videos; 2012 Geisel*; 2013 Wilder*

Beyond Fiestas, Calaveras and Quinceañeras: Exploring Relevant Cultural Issues and Daily Experiences of Contemporary Latino Youth via High-Quality Literature. By exploring the cultural and social themes present in recent Latino children's books, this interactive session strives to provide the tools and knowledge that will enable librarians and educators to integrate contemporary Latino themes in their programs and promote reading among multicultural societies. A portion of the program includes a guided discussion on the authentic Latino experience in youth literature with notable Latino children's author René Colato Laínez.

Criss Cross Applesauce: Making Multi-Age (Newborn to Five-Year-Old) Storytimes the Best They Can Be. Expand your understanding as you connect the dots between child development, early literacy skills, and your storytime. Demonstration storytimes will provide you with specific examples of best practices to criss cross through the three developmental levels—newborn, toddler, preschool. As you plan and present multi-age programs, you become an articulate advocate to benefit children, parents, families, and your community.

8 a.m.–12 noon

2012 Caldecott*

9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Division Leadership

10:30 a.m.–12 noon

2012 Sibert*; Notable Children's Books (procedural meeting)

Many Children, Many Cultures, Many Books: Celebrating the 15th Anniversary of Día. Join us for the 15th anniversary celebration of Día! Hear from Día founder Pat Mora about the history of Children's Day/Book Day and author Jeanette Larson about the initiative's future. Learn effective, multicultural programming techniques for year-round Día celebrations and explore new Día resources.

Strange Bedfellows: Unusual Pairings of Artists and Writers. What happens

when an editor thinks outside of the box when choosing an artist and writer for a book? This program will explore the marriage between the image and the word. A distinguished panel of editors and their authors and illustrators will discuss how bringing together an unexpected combination of artists and writers can result in unique and imaginative books.

1:30–3:30 p.m.

Egyptians and Romans and Greeks, Oh My (Gods)! How Rick Riordan's Series Makes Mythology Engaging for Kids.

Engaging readers while exploring world mythology is at the heart of the series created by author Rick Riordan. Hear the author, illustrator, editor, audio producer, and narrator address the evolution of these series and give participants a taste of what's to come from this masterful storyteller. A librarian will offer ways to incorporate these series into the classroom and other settings as well as sharing other high-interest books that explore the rich tradition of mythology and legend.

Sensory Storytime: Preschool Programming that Makes Sense for Kids with Autism.

Learn about these adapted storytime programs and the principles behind them from three experienced public librarians and a Louisiana-based Sensory Integration Occupational Therapist who works with children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and sensory processing problems. Expect to be inspired, educated, and empowered to develop or modify your own storytime programs to serve the kids with autism in your community.

1:30–4:30 p.m.

Notable Children's Books

1:30–5:30 p.m.

Board of Directors I; 2012 Newbery*; 2012 Odyssey*; Notable Children's Recordings

4–5:30 p.m.

2012 Arbuthnot*; 2012 Batchelder*; 2012 Geisel*; 2012 Sibert*; 2013 Arbuthnot*; Organization and Bylaws

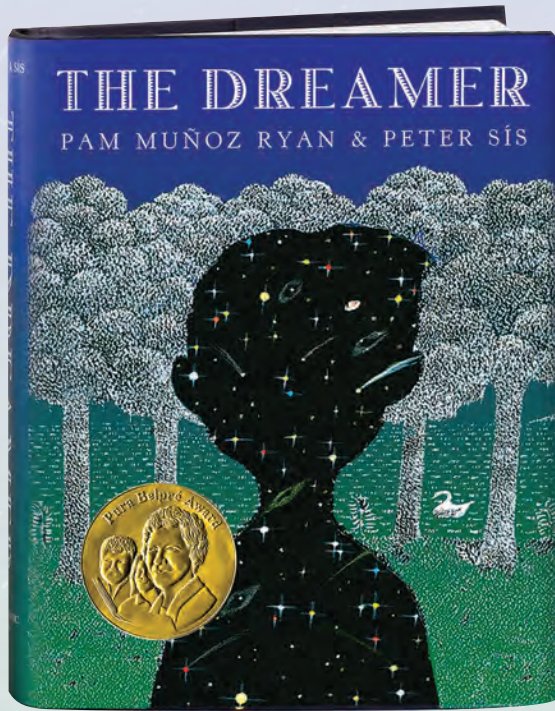
Before and After Harry Potter: Fantasy for Grades 3–5 and 5–8. The boy wiz-

ard swooped into the world of children's literature and made fantasy one of the most popular genres, but what do you recommend for children who aren't quite ready for the seven-book saga? And what about those who have finished the books but aren't tempted by *Twilight*? This PowerPoint program will present the best fantasy for grades 3–5 and 5–8, providing a plethora of all kinds of titles to recommend to young fantasy readers.

The Power of Play. Play is a powerful learning tool, yet today's children get

significantly less play time than their parents had. Although research supports the value of play, schools have been cutting recess from their schedules and parents seem to prefer programmed time rather than free time for their children. Hear about research that supports therapeutic and developmental opportunities offered through play and learn ways to integrate play into library programs for children of all ages. In addition, hear about the value of inclusive play for children with and without disabilities.

**WINNER OF THE 2011
PURA BELPRÉ AUTHOR AWARD**



The Dreamer
By Pam Muñoz Ryan,
Illustrated by Peter Sis
Scholastic Press
978-0-439-26970-4 • \$17.99
Spanish edition: *El Soñador*
978-0-545-17600-2 • \$6.99

★ **“All the feel of a classic...deeply rewarding and eminently readable.”**—*Booklist*, starred review

★ **“Rich, resonant, and enchanting...An inviting, beautifully presented work.”**
—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

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4–6 p.m.
2012 Belpré*

8–10 p.m.
Stories for a Saturday Evening. You have had a long day of meetings, programs, and exhibits. Take a little time for yourself, kick your shoes off, sit back, and relax. Nothing is more relaxing than a good laugh, and we have some great storytellers who will share original and traditional stories that will entertain and delight! Bring a friend—it is *free!*

ALSC Film Screening: *Library of the Early Mind.* *Library of the Early Mind* is an exploration of the art and impact of children's literature on our kids, our culture, and ourselves. From the first stories we hear told to us to those childhood heroes that stay with us a lifetime, the impact on our culture runs deeper than what we might expect. "No one suspects the children's writer," says author and illustrator Mo Willems, a former Sesame Street writer. The film features nearly forty prominent authors and illustrators talking about their work, its genesis and its impact. The number of books in print by the authors in *Library of the Early Mind* exceeds 240 million. A panel discussion with film producer Ted Delaney will directly follow the film.

Sunday, June 26

8–10 a.m.
2012 Geisel*; Nominating*; 2013 Arbuthnot*

Picture Books Go Digital. Come discover the new digital world of picture books. Learn how these can be used in your library's youth department and discover how digital picture books are taking readers to places we could once only dream about.

Nonfiction Book Blast: Booktalks and Activities for Your Library. Start school with new booktalks and activities from ten nonfiction authors: April Pulley Sayre (*Rah, Rah, Radishes*), Kelly Milner Halls (*In Search of Sasquatch*), Deborah Heiligman (*Charles and Emma*), Loree Griffin Burns (*The Hive Detectives*), Carla Killough McClafferty (*The Many Faces of George Washington*), Christine Taylor-Butler (*Magnets*), Shirley Duke (*You Can't*

Wear These Genes), Darcy Pattison (*Prairie Storms*), Carla Mooney (*Explorers of the New World*) and Anastasia Suen (*Read and Write Sports*).

8 a.m.–12 noon
2012 Arbuthnot*; 2012 Belpré*; 2012 Caldecott*; 2012 Newbery*; 2012 Odyssey*; 2012 Sibert*; All Committee I & II

10:30 a.m.–noon
Budget I

Learning from Elmo, Blue, and Dora: Applying the Science of Children's Educational Television to Storytime. Discover how to leverage the science behind children's educational television in developing storytimes to actively engage children. Discuss the characteristics of successful children's television programming that encourage sustained attention and motivation. Apply these effective features to storytimes to improve the educational impacts in terms of literacy learning and general cognitive development. Walk away with numerous techniques that you can implement to develop your own engaging storytimes.

Newbies and Newberys: Three Authors Talk about the Wows and Woes of Winning the Newbery Honor with First Books. Three Newbery Honor-winning authors discuss their experiences as writers when first published novels receive the Newbery Honor. The panel participants will share their own experiences as writers including their thoughts at the time their book was first accepted for publication, the subsequent reader responses to a first book in print, and the next stage of working through the process of publishing subsequent books.

1–4 p.m.
The 2011 Pura Belpré Award and 15th Anniversary "Quinces" Celebración. ALSC and REFORMA are proud to request the honor of your presence at the gala of the Quinces of the Pura Belpré award. Please join our family of winning authors and illustrators, madrinas and padrinos, godparents of the award, in an unforgettable event where we will honor the 2011 medal winners and celebrate the coming of age of the award. Delicious food, music, dance, and other surprises.

1:30–3:30 p.m.
All Discussion Groups; Children's Collection Management Discussion Group

1:30–4:30 p.m.
Notable Children's Books

1:30–5:30 p.m.
Notable Children's Recordings

4–5:30 p.m.
2012 Batchelder*; 2012 Geisel*;

Reach Out and Read: How Libraries Can Work with Doctors Who "Prescribe Reading" to Achieve Common Goals. Extend your library's reach into the community by partnering with a local Reach Out and Read (ROR) site, a pediatric literacy intervention based in doctors' offices that gives new books to children and advises parents about the importance of reading. ROR is interested in partnering with librarians to promote reading and library use. Hear about already existing collaborations and learn how to work with existing ROR programs, or even how to start a site in your community.

Teen Parents and Babies: The ABCs of Early Literacy Outreach. Partner with schools and other organizations to reach teen parents with programs that incorporate the latest findings in early childhood brain development. Presenters will discuss recent research and will share ideas for effective programs.

6–11 p.m.
Newbery Caldecott Wilder Banquet. This gala event celebrates the Newbery, Caldecott, and Wilder Medalists and Honorees, authors and illustrators of the year's most distinguished books for children. Cash bar before dinner; doors open at 6:45 p.m.

Monday, June 27

7–8:30 a.m.
Youth Council Caucus

8–10 a.m.
Charlemae Rollins President's Program: How Libraries Can Best Serve Special Needs Patrons, Especially Those with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Recognizing the increasing number of children with ASD, this program will help

librarians create innovative programming to positively integrate all patrons. Featured speaker, Dr. Ricki Robinson, a leader in developing multidisciplinary treatment plans for children with ASD and author of *Autism Solutions* (in press), will join authors Cynthia Lord and Francisco X. Stork, whose writings have humanized these disorders, and Patricia Twarogowski, a librarian recognized for her effective programming for special needs children, in a panel discussion.

10:30 a.m.–1 p.m.

ALSC Awards Presentation and Membership Meeting. Join your colleagues for the annual presentation for the Batchelder, Carnegie, Geisel, and Sibert Awards. The ALSC Membership Meeting will immediately follow where Julie Corsaro, ALSC President, will recognize the 2011 professional award winners and share the past year's accomplishments and new initiatives.

1:30–3:30 p.m.

Nominating*

Our Youngest Readers. Preschool Storytime has been a staple in libraries for years, but now the audience for programs has become much younger. Librarians model to parents and caregivers how to share great books, rhymes, and songs with the youngest members of our community. What does one look for when choosing the best books for children ages zero to five? How important are developmental stages and what techniques can be employed while sharing books with the very young?

1:30–4:30 p.m.

Notable Children's Books

4–5:30 p.m.

Budget II

Odyssey Award Presentation & Program.

Celebrate the spoken word at the 2011 Odyssey Award Presentation, featuring the 2011 Odyssey winners and honorees. A reception sponsored by the Audio Publishers Association with light refreshments will follow the award presentations and program.

5:30–7:30 p.m.

8th Annual Poetry Blast. Poetry should be heard and not just seen. Poetry Blast celebrates the wonder and excitement of this aural tradition, featuring contemporary North American poetry for children by poets both new and established. The audience will find this enlightening and energizing event a perfect way to end a conference day. Eleven poets will read. Hosted by Barbara A. Genco (*Library Journal*) and Poet Marilyn Singer. Information about current and forthcoming books of poetry will be available.

Tuesday, June 28

10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Board Orientation

2–5:30 p.m.

Board of Directors II 

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THE LAST WORD

My Quest to be Kool

Sue Rokos

Wednesday, June 2, 2010. A small town outside Albany, New York. At end of Swim Team Practice for Kids.

Son Tim, age 12, appears wearing three rubber band bracelets. Girl teammate: "Tim, you've got my bracelets."

"Awwwwwww. Okay, here they are. Mom, will you get some of these for me at the store?"

Me: "Tim just what are those?"

"Silly Bandz."

Where does one get them? Hmmmm, I should look in an office supply store. Maybe this quest won't be so difficult!

Thursday. Commence Quest.

Mention search to colleagues at work. "Sue, don't you remember I asked you a few weeks ago if your kids were into rubber bands?"

"Um, no?"

"My granddaughter asked me if I would take her to Office Max to get rubberbands. Then, we found out she wanted bracelets; they were out. We found them at Walgreen's; at the Yankee Dollar Store; they have them at Hallmark, and they have them at CVS."

Ahhh.

At lunch I go To The Mall.

Yankee Dollar—None to be seen.

Hallmark—Out.

Claire's—Out.

Spencer Gifts—Eureka! They have two styles: "Love" and "Fun." Choose "Fun"—24 for \$4.99. Return to work exultant.



That evening At Home.

"Um Mom? I wanted animal ones. Can you take these back?"

"Animals? What's wrong with Fun? When you have them on, no one can tell WHAT they are anyway!"

Friday. Lunch. Quest Number Two.

Check Yankee Dollar again and ask this time. Oh yes,—they have 7 bags of "garden" (am assured there are animals in the garden bag, I ASKED)

and 3 bags of "band instruments." At Spencer Gifts I discover that Spencer's doesn't refund; BUT "animal bandz" are due in and can trade in my "fun" bag when they arrive.

Back at work. Am told am wasting gas on my quest. Well, not exactly say I. I needed to research this for my member libraries to alert them to possibly the coolest summer reading incentive ever!

"Just what are they?"

We rip open the garden bag (Hey, I bought them) and find 2 ladybugs, 2 frogs, 2 ducks, 2 rabbits—and 2 watering cans and 2 tulips. I decide to wear the tulip and the watering can. These are the cheap imitation (as a sales clerk told me) ones, and I now have rubberband marks in my wrist since they are smaller than the "real" ones. So I open that bag of fun bandz; these are bigger and happily won't cut off my circulation. Besides, no one knows what they are on my arm. But I am kool and darn proud of myself!

At home that night: "This is good, Mom, I can trade the flowers for good stuff at schools. Girls like flowers."

Really, I'm so done being kool. I have alerted my relatives in Wisconsin to the trend; no my sister doesn't know about them, but SHE would like me to get HER the "band" bandz.

Sue Rokos is Assistant Director and Youth Services Consultant at Mohawk Valley Library System in Schenectady, New York.

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