

# Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for  
Library Service to Children

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THE AWARDS ISSUE • Lois Ehlert • Remembering Mr. Rogers • Maurice Sendak

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**ALSC**  
Association for Library Service to Children

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## Editor's Note The Joy of Meeting an Icon

Sharon Korbeck

How does one feel when meeting an icon? I got the opportunity to find out recently when I attended a speech by Maurice Sendak at the Art Institute of Chicago. I could not travel to the East Coast to hear his Arbuthnot lecture earlier this year (the speech is included in this issue). So when I learned he'd be speaking a mere five hours from my home, I knew I couldn't miss it.

At the event, Sendak spoke proudly of his impossible fervor and admiration for William Blake. That's exactly how I feel about Sendak. I used *Outside over There* as the basis of a high school speech. I wrote my college senior thesis on the impact and influence of his illustrations (I got an A!). I have a growing collection of his works. And I used all my professional contacts to get him to autograph one of his *Wild Things* action figures for me a few years ago.

While I still haven't gotten the chance to meet Sendak face-to-face and voice my admiration, I feel especially honored that my position at *Children and Libraries* has opened up a new field of opportunities to meet the icons of children's literature that I revere.

In this issue, you'll also read about a truly charming author I had the chance to interview, Lois Ehlert, who lives in my hometown, Milwaukee. What a great job I have! ☺



## Executive Director's Note Speeches Highlight This Issue

Malore I. Brown

Our second issue of *Children and Libraries* features the acceptance speeches delivered by this year's ALSC Award winners, including the Newbery, Caldecott, Wilder, and Sibert medalists as well as the Arbuthnot speech by Maurice Sendak. We've also included an up-close-and-personal interview with children's author and illustrator Lois Ehlert, and a tribute to longtime friend of children and libraries, Mr. Rogers. An article on the informational needs of children will keep readers up-to-date on the latest scholarly research in children's librarianship.

In this issue, you'll also learn about the A+ Partners in Education program, Kent State University's new Children's Library Center, and the tenth anniversary of the Americas Award.

The ALSC staff continues to work hard to create a better association for our members and we need your help! How can we serve your needs better? What do you think of our new publications, *ALSCconnect* and *Children and Libraries*? What features would you like to see in print? Please contact us with your questions and comments. We are always glad to hear from you! ☺

# Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for  
Library Service to Children

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## Statement of Purpose

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

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## Manuscripts

Manuscripts and letters pertaining to editorial content should be sent to Sharon Korbeck, editor, E1569 Murray Lane, Waupaca, WI 54981; (715) 258-0369; e-mail: [toylady@athenet.net](mailto:toylady@athenet.net). Manuscripts will be sent out for review according to the journal's established referee procedures. See the author guidelines in each issue for further information.

## Indexing, Abstracting, and Microfilm

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# Letters to the Editor

## Letters Guidelines

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

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



John Stewig's article "Get the Picture?" (vol. 1, no. 1) is a useful, if somewhat simplistic, introduction to some of the complexities inherent in picture-book creation. I hope that his words encourage readers to look more profoundly into this multicharactered genre.

However, when he writes, "An artist can work several ways to relate visuals to words and extend ideas found in the text," he contributes to the already widespread prejudice that the visual content of a picture book is subservient to the words. Further declarations such as "artists sometimes enrich the story line" underwrite this prejudice.

He would serve his readers better were he to explain that a typical picture book is driven by two engines, two narratives: the words (if there is text) offer a literary story while the illustrations (pictures, page design, typography, etc.) provide a parallel visual narrative. In the main, the dominating narrative is the visual one. We might just as reasonably ask: How do the words "enhance" the visuals, extend ideas found in the visuals?

Stewig points out, however briefly, many of the ways the visuals interact with the words. I believe he needs to be much more forthcoming in pointing out the dominance of the visual narrative.

*Kenneth Marantz  
Professor Emeritus  
Ohio State University*

I just read your "Last Word" column in the Spring 2003 issue. You ask for thoughts and suggestions of characters that should be made into toys. First of all, I would

love Lemony Snicket action figures or a Lemony Snicket game. Those books draw a crowd of readers that I don't see reading very often, and that's great. As a librarian I would love to have characters for the book *Mouse Count* by Ellen Stoll Walsh.

I think kids would love a plush Olivia (Ian Falconer) doll or Henry and Mudge characters. Thanks for your column—very interesting!

*Natalie Clark  
Children's Services Librarian  
Johnson County Public Library  
Franklin, Indiana*

I'm pretty happy with almost any literary character that has been made into a toy or soft sculpture, but what I've had a hankering for, for years, are nicely made, preferably not expensive, ornaments of characters in children's literature that can be hung on trees or set in display cases next to books.

Usually when I find ornaments that allude to children's literature, they depict the Disney or movie version or else they're so prohibitively expensive and/or fragile that it precludes using them in a public library children's room.

In our library we still decorate for Christmas, since our community would find it odd if we didn't, and I have maybe a dozen plastic or paper literature-related ornaments on the children's room tree. Children and their parents like to locate and identify the book characters. It would be so much fun to have forty or fifty book characters to identify! Plus we would use them in displays year round. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have all Laura Ingalls

## Call for Manuscripts

### Got a story to share?

ALSC's new refereed journal, *Children and Libraries*, is soliciting manuscripts for its 2004 issues. We'd love to feature practical advice, research theories, scholarly reviews, interview features, and "best practice" articles from children's librarians (and others involved in the field) from across the nation.

Do you have a scholarly paper or research manuscript you'd like to have published? Have you conducted research on a particular aspect of children's librarianship or library service? Any topics of interest and import to children's librarians are welcome.

Please contact *Children and Libraries* Editor Sharon Korbeck at [toylady@athenet.net](mailto:toylady@athenet.net) or (715) 258-0369 for more information on how to submit articles for consideration. **Visit our Web site at [www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc).**

Wilder's Little House family, Lloyd Alexander characters, Avi's characters, Dick King-Smith's animals, and Beverly Cleary's characters?

It was so nice to receive the inaugural copy of *Children and Libraries* today—I've missed the ALSC journal, and this one looks great!

*Willa Jean Harner  
Head, Junior Department  
Tiffin-Seneca Public Library  
Tiffin, Ohio*





# Outgoing President's ALSC Message

Barbara Genco  
ALSC President, 2002-03  
b.genco@brooklynpubliclibrary.org

## ALSC Hail and Farewell

There are a few things every one of my ALSC presidential predecessors has agreed upon.

- The ALSC member leaders and volunteers are the real stars of any ALSC presidential year.
- The preconference committee, president's program planners, and local arrangements team are the unsung heroines of any successful ALA Annual Conference.
- The breadth and depth of the support of the ALSC headquarters staff cannot begin to be quantified.
- The year goes by far too fast.
- Just as you get the hang of it—it's over!
- You can never say "thank you" enough.

Despite the specters of bad library budgets, health risks, and travel fears, ALSC has had a productive and a successful year. Thanks to all who contributed.

## Improved and Expanded Member Communications

### New ALSC Logo

ALSC introduced our new logo in the fall of 2002. Recommended by the ALSC board of directors as part of the ALSC Member Communications Plan (developed at Annual Conference 2002), our new logo was designed to convey a vigorous, visionary, and professional image of the association and its members. The arts-and-crafts font is clean and classic; the reading child conveys the purpose of our members' work while maintaining a professional, rather than childish, appearance. We love the look. Kudos to designer Mary Grace Range of Paper and Paperless in Chicago. (Her design work also includes the 2001, 2002, and 2003 Banned Books Week materials published by the ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom.)

### ALSCConnect Launched

Our ALSC newsletter was also graphically redesigned to incorporate our new look and was launched with a new name—*ALSCConnect*—with the March 2003 issue. Our June 2003 issue was the first to appear both in print and on the ALSC Web site.

As you recall, the September 2002, December 2002, and March 2003 newsletters featured an expanded format to fill the gap during the absence of an ALSC journal. Issues included new features such as the ALSC member profile, ALSC time capsule, and a meet the scholarship winners feature along with more photos and more bright idea stories. These new elements focus on human interest and practical ideas as called for in the ALSC Member Communications Plan.

### Children and Libraries Launched

The inaugural issue of *Children and Libraries* (*CAL*) mailed in May. With our creative new editor Sharon Korbeck at the helm, updated graphic design, and inviting features, *CAL* promises to be a welcome, dynamic forum for children's librarians and all those interested in library service to children.

*CAL* replaces the *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries* (*JOYS*), the former division journal co-published with the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). *CAL* is solely an ALSC publication.

The first issue of *CAL* featured some familiar items such as professional book reviews and ALSC news, but also provided exciting new diversions such as author and illustrator interviews. The positive member buzz has been great!

### ALSC Web Site Redesign and ALSC E-mail Lists

The transition to the new ALSC Web site took place in April. All of ALSC's and our Great Web Sites for Kids Web content was converted. Our site includes new top-level navigation items (such as Board and Committee Work and Resources) to help our visitors find what they need faster. The pages, which incorporate our new logo, have an updated look and feel. The home page features a Breaking News section with links to our latest news, projects, and events.

Our home page address remains [www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc). Many of ALSC's most popular sites—Newbery, Caldecott, and Great Web Sites for Kids—retain their old addresses with redirects to the new system.

### ALSC Electronic Discussion Lists Updated

A new graphic that links users quickly to instructions for joining our ALSC discussion lists was added to the ALSC home page. The ALSCBOARD and the ALSCPGCCHR (consultants and chairs) discussion lists were updated to include read-only subscriptions. Individuals can now subscribe to these two lists without being member leaders. Such subscribers have the ability to read posts, but cannot post messages to either list. By their request, forty-three individuals have been subscribed as read-only participants on the ALSCBOARD list; seventeen individuals have requested and been subscribed to the ALSCPGCCHR list. This is a great way to stay connected and involved.

## ALSC National Institutes 2002 and 2004

In October 2002, ALSC held its fifth national institute in St. Louis—our very first without another division as a cosponsor. More than two hundred people attended. Great synergy was afforded by a preconference presented by the St.

Louis Public Library. Institute tracks included Guys Read featuring Jon Scieszka and Patrick Jones; an update on the research and best practices highlighted in the ALSC/PLA Early Literacy Initiative; and a day-long session on critical issues and tasks for materials selection. Attendance at this session is a great way to ramp-up for those coveted appointments to ALSC Awards and Notables Committees.

Enthusiastic Hennepin Public Library staffers showed attendees how to make their library into a “kid magnet.” A reception was held at the St. Louis Public Library, and keynote speaker Paul Zelinsky showed an enthralled audience how he created his newest pop-up book.

The next national institute will be held from September 29 to October 2, 2004, in Minneapolis.

## Improved Organizational Support for Major Initiatives

We continue to offer support (financial, organizational, and member-leaders) to our ALSC/PLA Early Literacy Initiative. We view this sort of interdivisional partnership as essential to the health of ALA and hope that we can continue to grow and develop this sort of collaboration.

The ALSC Board voted to contribute \$25,000 to the ALA Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) fund. We see free and unfettered access as a basic right for our child constituents, and we await the Supreme Court ruling with high hopes.

We also worked with our member leaders on the revision of our Newbery, Caldecott, Sibert, and Belpré medal manuals.

We hope the new committee chairs and all member leaders will also receive their new and fully revised division leadership manual after the Annual Conference. Member leaders continue to work on a new Carnegie Medal manual. Thanks to all who have devoted hours to this task.

We have also appointed an ALSC Task Force on Virtual Participation. The board feels we need to find ways to effectively use technology to perform the work of the

organization year round as well as great ways to involve members who cannot always attend face-to-face meetings but want to participate and contribute. Stay tuned!

### Cultivating External Partnerships— Old and New

**IMLS Grant: The Continuum Begins with Early Learning.** The 21st Century Learner national symposium is scheduled for September 18–19, 2003, in Washington, D.C. This grant was awarded to ALSC and the Association of Children's Museums. Among the confirmed speakers are: T. Berry Brazelton and Gene Cohen. Registration information can be found at [www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc) under “Breaking News.”

**NASA @ Your Library Grant.** The NASA exhibit began traveling to libraries this summer. The exhibit will visit 120 sites within two years. The application and guidelines were distributed to ALSC members and interested libraries in April. In May they were mailed to the more than sixteen thousand public libraries in the United States. A training program was held at the ALA Annual Conference. Also, a Web site for children and their caregivers went live on July 1, 2003, and is at [www.ala.org/NASA](http://www.ala.org/NASA).

**W. K. Kellogg Foundation Grant.** In February, ALSC received a grant extension of \$30,000 for one year from Kellogg to conduct further informational outreach of *El día de los niños/El día de los libros*, celebrated April 30 each year. ALSC printed and distributed a much-awaited Spanish version of the celebration brochure and reprinted and distributed the English 2002 version.

New this year, one copy of each brochure was mailed to every library in the United States and to the membership of the Public Library Association and the American Association of School Librarians. As in 2002, the mailing was also sent to members of ALSC, the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking (REFORMA), and the National Association for Bilingual Education. More than 44,200 people were reached this year.

*continued on page 57*



# Incoming President's ALSC Message

Cynthia K. Richey  
ALSC President, 2003-04  
richeyc@einetwork.net

## Toward the Future ALSC Begins Another Year of Challenges

Across the country, libraries face many challenges in the current adverse economic climate. Slashed library budgets particularly threaten library services to children. From California to New York, from Florida to Colorado, we have witnessed the most severe funding cuts in our memory. In Pennsylvania, the governor's current budget reduces public library funding by 50 percent, a much greater rate than that for other state-funded services or institutions.

Until the economy recovers, some diminution of our budgets is inevitable. In the meantime, how can we prevent inequitable cuts to library services, particularly those that directly affect children and families? How can we keep our work from being diminished, neglected, or ignored amid the many other claims on local or institutional funds? How do we reconcile the soaring demand for library services with crushing budget cuts and how do we continue to provide quality service to children within those newly constrained budgets? And,

finally, how do we continue our own education and professional involvement, which are critical to the library services we provide, in our own institutions?

As the saying goes, we don't see problems—only challenges to be met and overcome. We must develop creative ways to cope with the consequences of slashed budgets. We must also communicate the value of our services and urge those who use them to send the message that our libraries are essential and our services are, in large part, unduplicated by any other agency or institution.

ALSC plays an important role in surmounting the challenges facing us. We need only look at the first four goals of our strategic plan to see how ALSC will

- advocate assertively and work collaboratively with other child advocacy and child-serving groups;
- promote research in the area of library service to children and the evaluation of youth services programs and projects;
- promote the profession of library service to children and recognition of the expertise of children's librarians; and
- advance professional education through its scholarships and continuing education opportunities.

Over the years the committees, discussion groups, and individuals comprising ALSC have developed strategies for carrying out these and other goals—a fluid, continuous process that engages many members. Examples of some of this work include the ALSC/PLA Early Literacy Initiative that articulates the role that libraries play in early childhood literacy efforts; the partnerships created with national groups such as PTA, Scouts, 4-H, NCTE, Children's Defense Fund, and others who willingly advocate for libraries; the children's librarian's competencies we have published; and the programs and publications that offer suggestions for library services—even on a shoestring. In addition, the ALSC electronic discussion list provides an opportunity for members to exchange ideas.

As I receive the gavel from Barbara Genco this year, I am mindful of the incredible ALSC legacy that we all share, that long history of promoting quality in print, audio-visual, and Web-based materials; creating programs that help us meet the needs of our patrons; providing wonderful profes-

*continued on page 58*

## Writing Is Naming the World

Avi

*Crispin: The Cross of Lead*  
Hyperion Books for Children  
2003 Newbery Medal Winner



## Award Acceptance Speeches

*Delivered at the  
American Library Association  
Annual Conference  
in Toronto, June 2003*

I have lived a life of books. Family tradition says that at the age of five I breathlessly announced, “I can read! I can read!” Perhaps the book was *The Poky Little Puppy*. Maybe it was *The Story of Ferdinand*. Both were books I adored.

By the time I left high school I had already decided to be a writer. When assembling our senior yearbook (my school was so small we only needed a year-pamphlet), classmates used Shakespeare to define me by placing right next to my graduation picture Prospero’s words: “[I was a] poor man, [but] my library / Was dukedom large enough.” Indeed, I worked in libraries some twenty-five years.

Now, at the age of sixty-five, instead of contemplating retirement, I’m receiving from you the honor of this award. In so doing you have energized me, deepened my commitment—and alarmed me. For, once the immediate hubbub of the announcement subsided, all I could think was, “Oh my God! The next book better be really good!”

For most of us who write novels for young people, to win a Newbery is manifestly the summit of achievement. Its brightness seems to illuminate all of one’s work. Indeed, the award is described as honoring the “most distinguished” work of children’s literature.

I hope you won’t think me churlish when I say in all honesty I am not comfortable with that word, *most*. Here tonight are many writing colleagues of mine who, I assure you, write as well as if not better than me. The notion that

my book is better than the work of Nancy Farmer, Patricia Reilly Giff, Carl Hiaasen, Ann M. Martin, or Stephanie S. Tolan is doubtful. No question, there are kids out there who will like their books better than mine. More power to them. The democracy of reading taste, particularly among the young, is something I applaud.

Let’s not forget that enduring books, such as *Charlotte’s Web*, *Tuck Everlasting*, and *Hatchet*, did not win a Newbery. Nor have extraordinarily gifted writers like Walter Dean Myers won this award. Nor has the children’s own choice (if one looks at bestseller lists), the nefarious Lemony Snicket, won this award. In the past year the Boston Globe–Horn Book Awards, the National Book Awards each selected different books. And what about all those state awards? To all this I say, bravo!

In a culture that is forever proclaiming (and selling) this or that as the best-ever, a culture that promotes unanimity and conformity, I say let us celebrate diversity of every kind. Let us revel in the fact there is so much good writing for young people that we can-

*I may be the ship’s skipper, but it is my pilot—my editor—who recognizes the dreaded shoals of clichés, the bays of bathos, the perils of prolixity, who guides the boat to a safe harbor.*

not agree on a single best book. Let us celebrate how rich in talent we are. Why look back to a golden age of writing for young people when we are living in one right now?

We writers cherish the award because no one sits down to write a Newbery book. Indeed, no one deserves to win in a field where so many fine writers write so many fine books. It comes as a gift—a mix of luck, the right moment, the right people, and, I’m proud to say, a good book.



But, since you have bestowed this award on me, it appears I must answer the question that I quickly discovered is part of the established ritual attached to this prize: how did it feel to win?

I was in Philadelphia for most of ALA Midwinter, introducing another book. I was sick with some kind of flu and dared not eat for three days. It was bitterly cold, too, so I spent as much time as I could in my hotel room with a blanket around my shoulders working on a laptop on one project or another. The image of the lonely, sick writer in his garret almost fits.

When I was obliged to take part in proceedings and chanced upon Newbery committee members, they turned away in haste, eyes averted—as if I were some pariah. How humiliating! How depressing! I was so happy to get on the plane home that I arrived at the airport two hours early. Why stay for Monday's announcements and become even more depressed? Had I not recently worried that *Crispin* had not done as well as I thought it might? Had not my wife said to me as I left for Philadelphia, "If you think you might win an award, stay another day." And had I not answered, "Honey, if I were really smart, I'd stay home and write something good."

Where was I when the call came? I was sitting where every self-respecting writer who is also a parent should be at 5:30 in the morning—at my desk, working, editing my college-age daughter's application for a summer job.

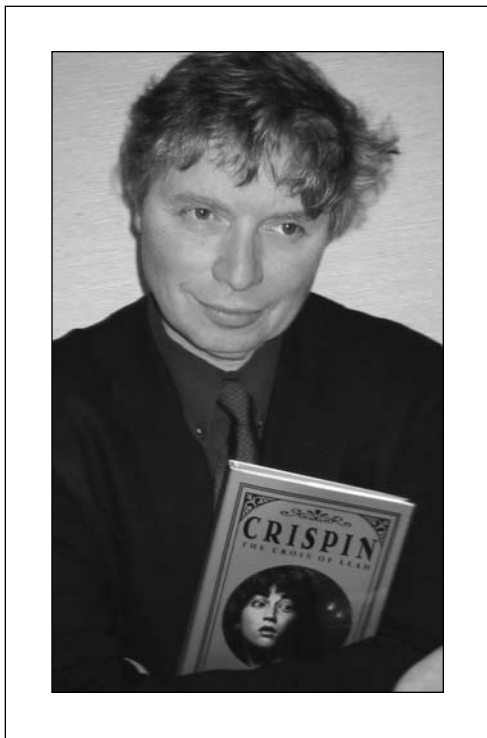
In truth, when I got the news I was surprised, elated, humbled, and deeply moved. Once I accepted the news—it took a bit to believe—what did I do? I burst into tears. It required some time for me to sort out the meaning of those tears. Were they tears of grief? No. Tears of joy? Not really.

I have thought hard: The only vaguely comparable moment of ecstasy in my writing career occurred when I hooked up my first computer and discovered how to use a spell checker.

Indeed, those were tears of relief. My

world was telling me an extraordinary simple but powerful thing: I had been recognized as a good writer.

Why relief? Because, friends, writing is hard. And writing very well is very hard. Never believe any writer who suggests otherwise. Scratch the surface of any successful author and you'll find just below—



Newbery Award winner Avi

in fetal position, sucking a thumb—is an insecure writer. Writing well for all of us is always a struggle.

How has the award affected me? First off, it immediately cured me of the flu. My daughter secured a better summer job (on her own). My wife said I was mellowed around the house—for about a month.

To the extent that I thought about it, I had always believed that winning a Newbery might be like standing on a summit and having the world at your feet. It's not been that way at all.

Instead of an isolated, windswept, and splendid peak, I felt as if I had stumbled into a dark room. The lights go on and I discover a surprise party—for me. People shout, "Surprise!" and laugh at my bewilderment and joy. Who is there? All my friends, publishing colleagues, and you

librarians, who are all excited with me, who, once the surprise is over, go on to have a really great party. To hear from so many writing and publishing friends that they were glad I had won was deeply satisfying and provided the sense of community and camaraderie we in publishing cherish.

At such a literary celebration, there is a natural tendency to focus on the individual author, the celebrity name on the book, even as our culture commemorates the myth of the isolated writer. There is some truth to both images. I work best in our Colorado mountain retreat surrounded by miles of stone-still wilderness. At nine thousand feet, there is none of civilization's chatter save what's in my head. But I am hardly working alone.

I think we need to celebrate more the collaborative nature of bookmaking. For of course there is another name affixed to the books: the publisher's name. Its one name encompasses many. While I have no qualms about saying the story is mine, every book that bears my name is an intensely cooperative work of art in which I, the author, play a part. It's no different in your libraries. There's the reference librarian front and center. The great skills of the technical service people are out of sight to the general public. But that reference librarian could not function without those others.

Bookmaking is a complex art and business. Many are involved. Most are invisible. It's a little like that credit listing at the end of a movie. You see the many names only if you bother to stay. A book does not provide such a list. All the same, there are dozens of real people involved.

To begin, I have the remarkable Gail Hochman as an agent. She's astonishing for any number of reasons. First, she holds the record for being New York City's fastest talker. Second, she's one of the city's smartest folks. She's also kind, funny, and—not beside the point—the best agent in town.

Then there are book designers, illustrators, marketing people, publisher, assistants, copyeditors, publicists, proofreaders,

printers, binders—folks who are passionate about what they do but who, I suspect, are underpaid for all the care they put into their work. They, too, are skilled book makers who deserve our thanks and admiration, as do even the book reviewers. And of course there are thousands of booksellers and librarians who bring our books to the kids.

And while we writers travel upon the rough terrain of the earth in search of a destination, our editors—like astronauts—see the world whole. I may be the ship's skipper, but it is my pilot—my editor—who recognizes the dreaded shoals of clichés, the bays of bathos, the perils of prolixity, who guides the boat to a safe harbor.

Throughout my career I have been blessed with good editors. Over the years there have been some twenty-five of them. My early years were with the truly fabulous Fabio Coen of Pantheon Books. With Richard Jackson I have engaged in creative daring and gained a special friend.

Anne Dunn and I crafted books that excited readers. Elise Howard trusted my visions and empowered them. I have laughed (and sometimes even worked) with Allyn Johnston and Anne Schwartz. Sally Doherty has always been a demanding editor and a good friend. And how lucky I was to have as editor for *Crispin* Donna Bray of Hyperion Books for Children. She is so smart, so articulate and discerning, so determined to get the best book possible out of me. Like the best of editors, she demands excellence while helping me get there—with a wry sense of humor that is always enabling. And of course she is patient when she has to read yet another of my endless revisions.

As for Hyperion Books for Children, they are in many respects a new kid in the publishing world, just ten years old. The image of Disney (the giant corporate entity) might mislead people, but this is one solid-gold publishing company. Small by today's publishing standards and led by Lisa Holton, they are tight,

focused, and amazingly good at what they do—producing books of the highest quality for kids. I predict I won't be the last Hyperion author to be giving this speech.

My family is deeply involved in my life. Not, I hasten to say, with my work—but my life.

about dogs than anyone in this room.

As for my wife, Linda Wright, she is nothing less than the smartest person I know—my best friend, my wife, my lover. Indeed, the only downside of this occasion is that I don't get to sit by her side.

The other day I was reading about the universe in the newspaper. What I discovered, to my astonishment, is that the scientific community has been able to identify only 4 percent of what the universe consists of. Think of it! Ninety-six percent of the universe is as yet unknown. They call it *dark matter*.

That extraordinary fact reminded me of something I once heard the writer Donald Hall say. He was trying to explain—by way of metaphor—what it is that a writer does, how writing works. It is a concept that, from the moment I heard it, I have cherished.

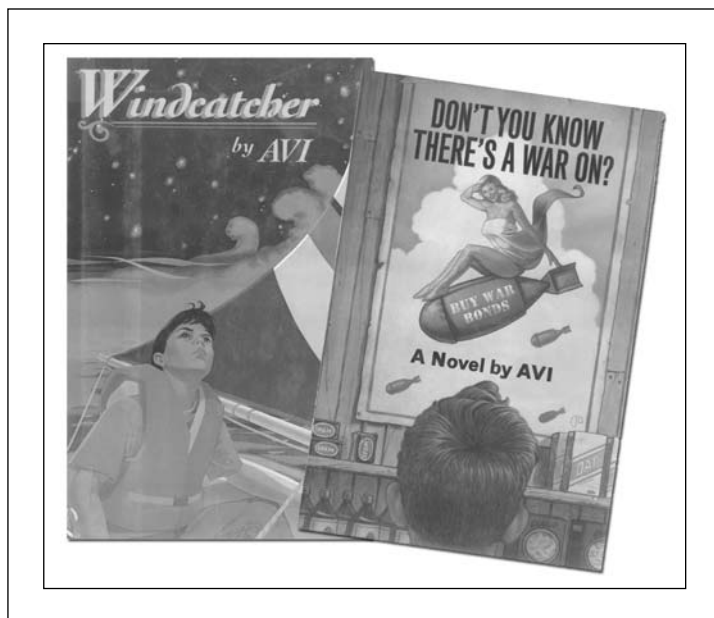
The writer in his writing, tries to create the letter O.

But he does so by writing the letter C. Which is to say there is a gap. Where there is nothing. Dark matter, perhaps. The writer's words on the page create structure, character, and voice—but there are the gaps, the dark matter, the unknown, and the not written. It is the reader who fills this gap.

If the gap is too large, the reader cannot fill it. If the gap is too small, the reader need not fill it. But if the gap is just right, the reader fills it with self and the circle is complete. Thus, writer and reader have joined together to make the writing whole.

In other words, by surrounding what is not written by what is written the writer enables readers to see, feel, and experience some dimension of their own lives in the text.

How does the writer create this dark matter? As I once heard Paula Fox express it, he imagines the truth. Truth is always the



Other books by Avi: *Windcatcher* and *Don't You Know There's a War On?*

Jack, my youngest—though these days he's almost as tall as I am—once said to me, "Avi, sometimes I think of you as my stepfather, and sometimes I think of you as an author. But you know what, I like to think of you most as my stepfather."

In my book, that's the award of a lifetime.

To provide the full roster from eldest to youngest: There is Shaun, guitarist extraordinary and chef supreme. Kevin, who is one tough marshmallow—and loving parent in his own right. There is Katie, who celebrated her high school graduation by parachuting out of an airplane—as smart, adventurous, and beautiful as they come. There is Robert, always his own man, who will take on any wilderness and conquer it. There is Jack with a heart as big as he is (and he's bigger today than he was yesterday) who—though he hardly knows how gifted he is, in class or on a lacrosse field—is our own All-American. Then there is my six-year-old granddaughter Ruby, who knows more

harshest reality, even as it is the most liberating one. For the paradox of writing is this: the greater the writing, the more it reveals the ordinary. That is to say, great writing reveals what we know, but never noticed before. Great writing identifies that most elusive of all things—that which we have seen but had not noticed, that did not seem to exist until it was named. Nowhere is this done better than with children's books. Let us not forget it was a child who proclaimed, "The emperor has no clothes."

Here's my own key example:

Years ago, when I was a seventeen-year-old boy, living in New York City, I was coming home very late from some high school event. I was in the caverns of the

*For what I realized was that I—as is true for everyone in this room—create the world in which I live. Like Adam in the book of Genesis, we name everything. Writing is naming the world.*

city, in an empty subway station. It was 2 a.m. I was alone. I was tired. Standing there, I fell half asleep, my eyes still open. All of a sudden I saw a whole new world. In those nanoseconds, my culture, my biology, my sense of self vanished. In their place I saw the world as I had never seen it before—utterly empty, utterly devoid of meaning, a world that had no name, only matter.

It was a true epiphany.

For what I realized was that I—as is true for everyone in this room—create the world in which I live. Like Adam in the book of Genesis, we name everything. Writing is naming the world.

I love to write. Stories have been my passion, my life. What I truly adore is creating stories that, in my own jargon, work—stories that come to life for the reader, that

name the world.

*Crispin* was my fiftieth book. Since 1975 I've published at least one book a year. Since *Crispin*, I've written and published more. But though I may be tired at the end of a day, I never tire of this great enterprise. I remain in love with the world of libraries, bookstores, and publishing. I have a passion for books, the smell of the ink, the turn of the page; for words; and beyond all else, stories. I love the whole process, from sitting down and writing the first sentence to seeing kids absorbed in my books, my story—not me.

For some twenty-five years I was privileged to have been allowed—as a librarian—to take care of stories. I've been writing some forty-eight years. Best of all, I've been sharing stories all my speaking life.

My friends, we live in a world in which there is so much that is bad. Plain and simple—*bad*. Harm is being done. The young and old are being ignored, kept ignorant, hurt, abused, and killed.

This enterprise—this writing, this reading, this world of children's books in which we are all

engaged—is *good*. Plain and simple, good. My friends, we do no harm. We do good. And that, I think, is a very big thing. Oh yes, we may fail all too often. And I dare say there are a few less-than-sterling individuals among us—though surely none within this room. But—I repeat—we do good. It's not naiveté that proclaims this. It's pride. That's what this celebration is all about—our collective goodness.

For whom do we do good? We do it for kids. Our mission is to bring the marvelous world of literature, of reading, to kids. What a glorious mission it is—helping kids to become themselves—empowering them to name their own worlds.

Here's something about *Crispin* you don't know. The book had an earlier working title, discarded for a variety of reasons, not least of which because I discovered it was the title of a well-known Victorian

novel. But early titles, whatever their deficiencies, often indicate an author's emotional and narrative focus. Think of Robert Louis Stevenson's original title for *Treasure Island*, *The Sea Cook*.

The working title for *Crispin* was *No Name*. It functioned for me as a kind of metaphor for a kid who has no sense of self. There is this exchange in the book between Bear and Crispin in Chapter 25.

"I'll teach you music" [said Bear].

"I won't be able to learn," I [Crispin] said.

"Do the birds sing?" he asked.

"Yes," I said.

"Do they have souls?"

"I don't think so," I said, somewhat confused.

"Then surely you can sing no less than they for you have a soul."

"Sometimes . . . I think I have none."

For once Bear was speechless. "In the name of Saint Remigius, why?"

"I have . . . I have never felt it."

Bear gazed at me in silence. "Then we," he said gruffly, "shall need to make sure you do."

That's all we who write hope to do: create stories that will enable our young readers to find the stirrings of their souls.

I have long believed that as a parent one has essentially just two tasks. One is easy. One is hard. The easy part is to love the child. The hard part is to convince the child that he or she is loved.

We can do that, in part, through our great and shared enterprise: the wonderfully old-fashioned—some say obsolete—book. If we create books out of love, then surely to share them is part of that love.

Some of us here are story makers, others are story sharers. One way or another we provide stories for kids that will entertain, move, engage, and teach. Stories that say again and again that yes, life may be hard, or funny, or perplexing, always risky, but in the end, worth the living.

Dear colleagues, dear friends, you have chosen to bestow upon me this remarkable gift, this Newbery award for 2003. Moreover, you have done it most symbolically, for my fiftieth book, in my sixty-fifth year of life. I accept it with the

deepest gratitude. In return I will offer a hope and a promise. My hope is that *Crispin* is not my best book. My promise is that I will always try to make the next one better.

To live a life of books is to know that life is its own sequel. May there always be more to come.

With a heart full of love and gratitude, I thank you. ☺

## Funny in Real Life, Funny on the Page

Eric Rohmann

*My Friend Rabbit*  
Roaring Brook Press  
2003 Caldecott Medal Winner

What a strange feeling to be up here, standing here speaking to you. For the past few months I have found myself in unknown territory. The truth is, I'm living my usual life, but all things have the tinge of unfamiliarity. Consider me surprised, overwhelmed, perplexed, astonished, exalted, joyful, and humbled by all that has occurred.

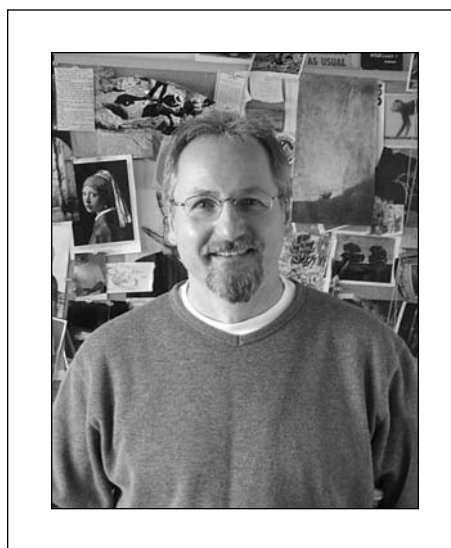
In the breakneck, headlong months of making a book, when you are deeply involved with little choices, when you are propelled by the buzzing energy of the work, when moments of panic rise in the shadow of the deadline, there is not a lot of time for wondering what will happen when the book goes out into the world. In the studio, day to day, you ask yourself small questions. Have I put too much red in that blue? Is the leg of the alligator drawn awkwardly? While working, you never consider that one day people will look closely at your finished book—the result of all those decisions, mistakes, and discoveries—and say, I think this deserves the Caldecott Medal. The imagination encourages such fancies, but the work is always more pragmatic. And then you get a phone call early one January morning.

And speaking of that call, the phone rings at half past six, and I rise to answer. (The verb rise may be a touch too active. On this cold, dark January day I awaken slowly, my limbs bending like stale Twizzlers.) Through the cobwebs of early morning, I hear a voice on the other end of the line—a voice way too enthusiastic for 6:30 A.M.

The voice says, “This is Pat Scales of the American Library Association.” My first thought is that I have overdue books.

And then I think I hear, “Your book, *My Friend Rabbit*, is the recipient of the 2003 Caldecott Medal.”

Silence. If this were a movie, you'd hear a ticking clock, raindrops on the windowsill, a heart beating.



Eric Rohmann

I say, “You mean an honor award?”

“No, the medal.”

“The silver?”

“No, the gold.”

I'm *arguing* with Pat, trying to convince her that this can't be, but she's resolute and I fumble for some articulate response, a meaningful reply, some eloquence equal to the moment, but I got nothing. Silence. More ticking clocks. *My* heart beating.

Even now I'm not sure I know how to respond to this great honor with anything resembling coherence.

I must confess that a few years back I dreamed I was speaking before a crowd much like all of you tonight—and I knew it wasn't my recurring anxiety dream about public speaking because this time I was wearing pants. I stood before the audience and an important man in a blue suit announced that I had won the Caldecott—and the Newbery, the Nobel, the Pulitzer, the National Book Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the Heisman Trophy, an Oscar, an Emmy, a Tony, the Stanley Cup, the World Cup, the Grey Cup, the Pillsbury Bake-Off, and Best of Breed, Westminster Kennel Club, a Grammy, a Juno, the Boston Marathon, the Great Texas Chili Cook-off, and runner-up, Playmate of the Year.

Don't kid yourself, there's something in all of us that wants to be visible from space. But there is also a part of us that is ever-cautious and disbelieving. This doubting part of me is well developed, made muscular through extensive use. Artists and writers are lucky this way. We start with a blank sheet of paper, work until we think the thing is finished, then wake the next day and start all over again. If you're serious, the work teaches humility early and often.

Which leads me to another dream. I had this one during graduate school, the night before I was to read my very first story in my first ever writing class. But in the dream I'm in the fourth grade—Mrs. Cerny's room—and I'm late for class.

“Sit down, Eric,” she says.

I look around and don't recognize any of my classmates.

A bearded kid in a fisherman's sweater sits in Nina Oakrant's seat. Another kid, dressed in a white suit, sits behind me at Alan Holtzman's desk. I turn to him. He looks like Mark Twain.

He *is* Mark Twain. And the bearded kid is Hemingway, and next to him is Faulkner, and Poe, and Melville, and Hawthorne, and Emily Dickinson.

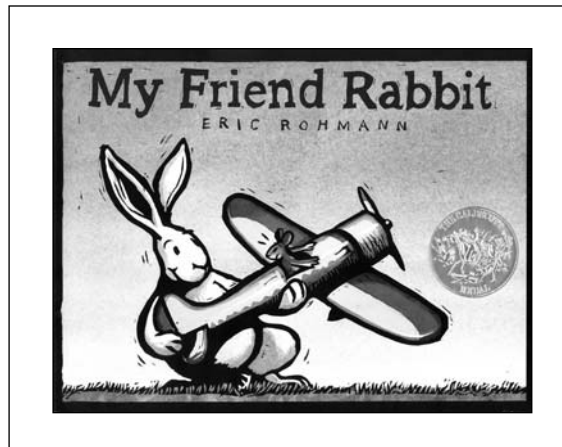
“Now we will read our stories,” Mrs. Cerny says.

One by one the other students read their stories aloud. Stories of courage and human frailty, profound tales of man and nature and the struggles of the heart and soul. Then I read mine, a story about a lost shrimp named Binky. *Binky the Shrimp Comes Home*. The last thing I recall before I wake is glancing around the classroom, the other kids smiling, holding red pens in their hands like drawn swords.

At the time this felt like only a bad dream—I was a novice in a class of graduate writing students—but the dream now appears to have been happily prophetic. Binky probably won't show up in a book anytime soon; then again, every once in a while I wonder how he got lost in the first place.

As a boy, sometime around the fourth grade, I began to read anything that used pictures and words to tell stories. The Sunday funnies, picture books, the illustrated instructions for a model battleship, the airline safety information card (located in the seat pocket in front of you), but I mostly read comic books. I thrilled at all those colored panels and word balloons. And it wasn't just the drawings, it was also that, page by page, the story unfolded before me. Comics always awakened my imagination, drew me into the stories, and suggested further adventures. I was right there with Tarzan or the Green Lantern. Like most kids, I could move between the world of stories and the world around me. I spent my weekends and afternoons after school in the forests and fields just beyond the creek that ran in front of our house. I'd imagine I was in exotic, wild places or on some far-flung planet. The pictures I made at the time were bits of stories, images from a larger, ongoing narrative. My first comic was called *Steve Star—Good Guy of the Galaxy*.

It was also during this time that I became curious about the natural world. I recall that I could never pass a fallen log without turning it over to see what lived underneath. In an effort to understand the things I'd discovered, I began to draw. The pictures I made took place in imaginary worlds by way of the fields and forests across the creek. One time, while playing on the bank of the creek, I mis-



*My Friend Rabbit* by Eric Rohmann

took a snapping turtle for a rock—its prehistoric head slowly tilting, jaws opening to warn me away. I thought that I'd never seen anything so fierce and wonderful. That same day I drew a comic about a kid who discovers a dinosaur emerging from the drain in his grandmother's kitchen. It was Thanksgiving, and no one believed the kid's story—that is, until the beast ate Uncle Earl, who was a bit of an overeater himself. I recall one wordless panel of Uncle Earl sleeping on the couch dreaming of dinner. The drooling dinosaur loomed above, thinking the exact same thing. When I was a boy, the world around me was always a point of departure.

It makes sense that that boy became this man. I still use pictures and words to tell stories, but now my medium is the picture book. And the medium is unlike any other. Although the picture book may look like a typical book—paper pages, between two pieces of cardboard—it's unique in many ways. A picture book is not just a container for text and illustrations. When you make a picture book, you use words, images, and the book form—the book's shape and heft and physical quality—to suggest the reader's path of

movement through the story: right to left, up and down, in and out, page to page. If a painting is two-dimensional and a sculpture is three-dimensional, then a book brings in a fourth dimension—time. The picture book is a sequence of moments that move through time.

The picture book is a physical object. The reader holds the book in her hands, she turns the pages, forward and backward, as fast or slow as she wants. Reading a picture book involves the eye, the mind, and the hand. When you turn the pages, your imagination—your thinking, feeling mind—fills the moments between page one and page two. Imagine a boy holding a paintbrush and a can of green paint. Behind him stands an elephant. If the image is well-made and the story is well-told, the reader is curious, anticipating and wondering what's next. Turn the page and you see the boy standing beside an unhappy, dripping, green elephant.

When I was working on the storyboard for *My Friend Rabbit*, I'd make small sketches inside a rectangle that represented the border of the finished book. Then I'd place that sketch on a larger sheet of paper and draw the action going on outside of the book. When Mouse looks up at the plane stuck in the tree, we don't see the plane, but we understand that he sees the plane. The reader fills those spaces, and the story is told. Not only by the person who's made the book but also by the reader. The story is incomplete without the reader, and therefore making a picture book isn't only about what you put in, but also about what you leave out. Making a book is a collaborative act. At some point you have to trust the child reading the book.

And kids will see things.

I was drawing at the Brookfield Zoo one morning when a girl, she must have been six or seven years old, asked if she could see my sketchbook. “Hippos are my favorite animal,” she said.

I showed her a drawing I had made of a sleeping hippo earlier that day, and she said, “Which one is it?” I must have



looked puzzled because she continued, “There are two hippos in the pen. Two big brown ones.”

I recalled the hippos sleeping in the mud, and said, “I’m not sure. It’s hard to tell them apart.”

“One has a cut on its ear,” she said.

After my talk with the girl, I walked back to look at the hippos, and she was right about the cut on the ear. This is the way children see—fully, with attention to subtlety and engagement with detail. Children are not visually sophisticated—I mean, they don’t have the experience or vocabulary to describe the complexities of what they see—but they are visually aware, more so than most of us adults because it’s what they do. A child’s primary job from birth to eight years old is to observe the world, to learn how things work. Children are hard-wired to be curious.

Over time, I’ve found that children are the best audience. They are enthusiastic, impulsive, generous, and pleased by simple joys. They laugh easily at the ridiculous and are willing to believe the absurd. Children are not ironic, disillusioned, or indifferent but hopeful, open-minded, and openhearted, with an inquisitive yearning for pictures and stories. To a child, every day is a great invention.

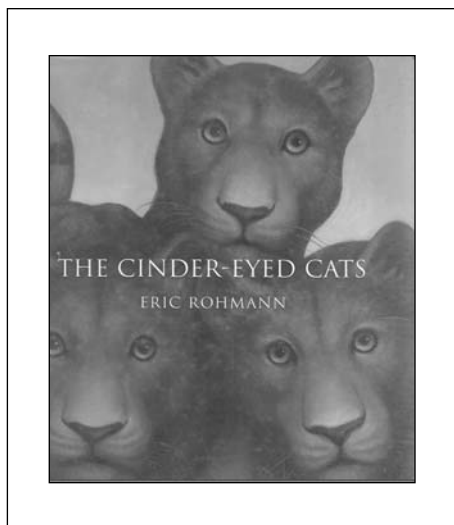
I want to thank Pat Scales and all the members of the Caldecott committee. Thank you for looking at my book and seeing something there. Although I have to admit that a little part of me says, “What were you thinking?” all of me is humbled, thrilled, and deeply appreciative. Also, I want to thank everyone at the Association for Library Service to Children for all their support and assistance.

My congratulations and admiration to the other winners—Peter (McCarty), Tony (DiTerlizzi), and Jerry (Pinkney). I couldn’t ask for better company.

To my family, who never seem surprised when good things happen to me. I treasure their enduring, unconditional support. And then again, my father, who loves only realism in painting, reacted to my news by saying, “They gave an award

to the cartoony one?” Those who love you always keep you from getting beyond yourself.

To my friend Simon Boughton, who also happens to be my editor at Roaring Brook Press. He took a chance on me a few years back and published *Time Flies*. When I spoke with him about making hand-colored relief prints for *My Friend Rabbit*, he



*The Cinder-Eyed Cats* by Eric Rohmann

never blinked. I treasure his steadfast confidence in my abilities even when I doubt myself. The simple truth is my books are far better for having worked with Simon.

Thanks to Lauren Wohl for the seemingly effortless way she turns difficulty into success. And to all my friends at Roaring Brook who put *Rabbit* on their very first list. Incidentally, if anyone here has a manuscript titled *The Little Publisher That Could*, now might be a good time for submission.

Thanks to my agent, Ethan Ellenberg, who also took a chance on a green, unproven artist. I’ve come to rely on his insight and good sense. Thanks also to Isabel Warren Lynch and Tracy Gates, who were in on this book at the very beginning and provided invaluable ideas and guidance.

To Harold Boyd, the best artist I’ve ever known. And not just because of his drawings and paintings, but also because he taught me—by example—how you can live a life as a working artist. He revealed to me what today seems so obvious: that

telling stories with pictures is the way I engage the world.

To all my friends who have encouraged me in spite of my capricious temperament. Especially to my friend Bob Erickson, for listening to me howl and lament ever since graduate school. When I told him of this award, he said, “I feel as if I’ve won something.” And to my friend, the writer Candace Fleming. When I was confused about the ending of *Rabbit*, it was Candy’s keen sense of story and her perceptive eye for humor that rescued the final page from the brink of ordinary.

Thanks to the kids who send letters, enlightening me to all the things in my books that I hadn’t seen, and for providing me with an endless supply of one-liners. To James, the seven-year-old boy who suggested that on the cover I replace the plane with a Torah scroll, put a yarmulke on Mouse, and call the book *My Friend Rabbi*. And to another boy, Steven, who—in a nod to the comic possibilities of spellcheck—wrote, “Congratulations on your award. The rabbit book is good. You must be very impotent.”

Finally, I spend a lot of time with my friends Mark and Mary Anne Loafman and their sons Nicholas, Ethan, and William. A few years back, after dinner one night, the three boys and I got the idea to build a tower of toys. Our building materials were cardboard bricks, toy trucks, action figures, and stuffed animals. We made the pile as high as possible and topped the swaying, precarious structure with a stuffed toy lion. Then we devised ways to knock it down. The boys called the game “Dead Simba.”

I’m sorry to say that I have never had a lightning bolt moment of inspiration. For me, and I suspect for most artists and writers, revelations come slowly, one after the other. You draw a line and then respond to the line. No heavenly flashes, but a slow brightening.

The falling pile of toys did not give me the idea for the tower of animals in *My Friend Rabbit*, but when I made the first tentative drawings of a bear atop a goose atop a rhino atop an elephant, I recalled those nights playing “Dead Simba” and knew that if that moment was so funny in real

life, it had a good chance of being funny on the page. When I made the drawings, those joyful nights with the Loafman boys returned unbidden and clear—the brightening I spoke of—a confluence of

imagination and memory. When I look back over the past few months, that's what the Caldecott has felt like. Receiving this honor has been another kind of brightening, also unexpected, that has

cleared away the chaff and chatter of doubt and uncertainty, making me more sure of my choices, reminding me of the good and true reasons I make books for children. Thank you. ☺

## A Good Picture Writer

Eric Carle

2003 Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal Winner

I have to confess that I had never given much thought as to how the American Library Association awards are chosen. So when Ginny Moore Kruse phoned me and began to inform me of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award, I thanked her and attempted some small talk, interrupting her carefully scripted announcement. Then she, in turn, interrupted me to continue what she had to say.

In the meantime, I have learned that the committee secretly, painstakingly, and in long sessions into the middle of the night, arrives at their decision about whom to honor and then calls the recipient. Therefore I wish to apologize for my rudeness and to thank you for honoring me and my work with the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award.

Even in my earliest childhood, long before I knew the words artist and art, I enjoyed making pictures. My first-grade teacher, Miss Frickey in Syracuse, New York, where I was born, was the first of many people I have to thank for believing in me as an artist. She made an appointment to see my mother to make sure she was aware of her son's talent, making a strong point that my mother and father should nurture that gift. And they always did.

However, I never finished out the happy year in Miss Frickey's class as about halfway through it my parents, German immigrants, decided we should return to

Germany. There I would spend the next seventeen years before returning to the United States, the land of my birth. I still have unpleasant memories of both my art class and my regular classes in grammar school in my new country. I also remember with a shiver something new of which I had previously no inkling: corporal punishment.

ber him as a shining example of what an educator can be.

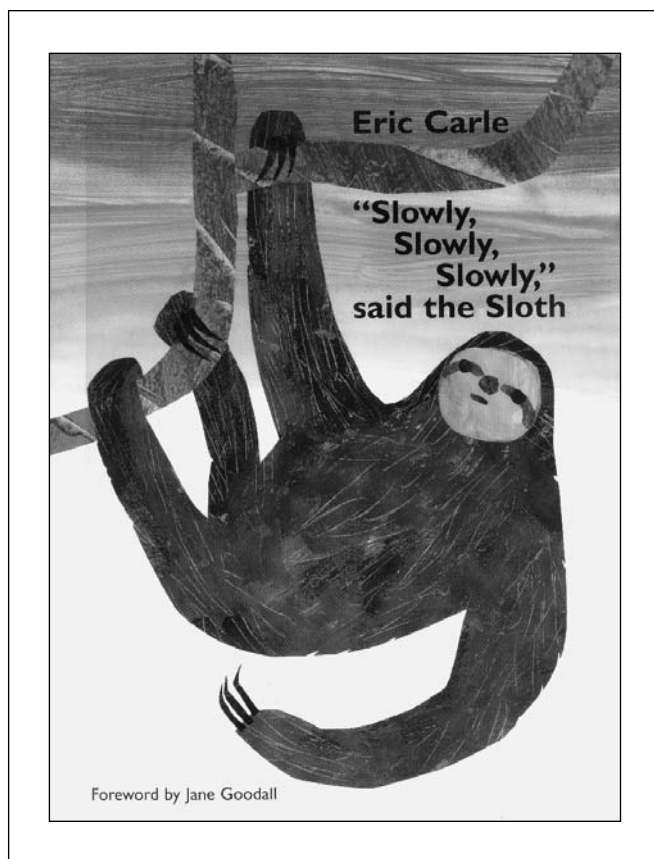
When I was fifteen, the war ended. Much of Stuttgart, where I lived, was reduced to rubble. But life somehow went on and schools reopened. There I began to study graphic arts under Ernst Schneider, my professor and mentor whom I admired so much then and still admire to this day. After my graduation, I went on to practice the art of the poster, an influence that is still evident in my present-day work.

Then, just before my twenty-third birthday, I returned to New York, where I began to work as a graphic designer and art director, mainly in advertising.

When I was in my mid-thirties, the poet and educator Bill Martin Jr. saw some of my work in an advertisement and commissioned me to illustrate his text for a children's book, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* It was an assignment that set me on fire and changed my life.

But what about books and literature and librarians and reading?

Isn't this what ALA is all about? In my childhood home, there were no sagging bookshelves. I don't remember being read to, unless having the funny papers read to me by my father on Sunday mornings counts as such. I did have two fat comic books—one Mickey Mouse, one Flash Gordon. Ah, Flash Gordon. How I loved his space adventures, which often involved beautiful women.



"Slowly, Slowly, Slowly," said the Sloth by Eric Carle

In high school, my art teacher, Herr Krauss, who also believed in my talent, secretly introduced me, an unsophisticated boy of about twelve, to the beauty of abstract, modern, and expressionistic art. This was actually a very risky thing to do during the Nazi years, as Hitler had declared these kinds of art to be degenerate. It was *verboten* (forbidden) to be practiced by artists and forbidden to be shown. Herr Krauss was a dedicated and courageous teacher. I will always remem-

Yes, I remember books over time, but I was not a driven reader. I don't remember really being under the spell of the written word until right after the end of the war and before my studies at the Stuttgart Academy of Applied Arts had begun, when there was an interval of a few months. One day, lucky for me, I decided to visit the library. The library, too, had been heavily damaged: The windows were boarded up, water stains ran down the cracked walls. It was cold inside the library; heating oil and coal were in short supply. Behind the desk sat a librarian with a scarf around her shoulders for warmth. She was slight and friendly. She recommended books, many of them formerly forbidden titles, copies of which had been burnt during the Nazi regime, just as modern, abstract, and expressionistic art had been forbidden and, in some cases, destroyed.

My new friend, the librarian, felt I would enjoy the works of Franz Kafka, Thomas Mann, Andre Gide, and others. My librarian was right. The words of these authors often penetrated my heart if not always my intellect.

But soon I was drawn back to the world of color, line, and shapes. And again the book became a somewhat lesser friend. I admit this to you with a bit of embarrassment.

It is said one cannot write well unless one has read a lot. Well, I didn't have many books, but I did have a large and colorful family full of gifted storytellers.

There was my Uncle Adam, who had flown with von Richthofen, the Red Baron, in World War I. With a jug of apple-jack near his elbow, Uncle Adam loved to tell me stories. When I knew him, he was a brick mason, a plasterer. The book *My Apron* is based on my admiring relationship with him.

There was my Uncle August, the Sunday painter and storyteller. "Wind up my thinking machine," he would say to me

when I was a little boy, pointing to an imaginary crank on his temple. And when I obliged him by pretending to wind the crank, wonderful stories poured out. His best story, too lengthy to repeat, tells how he, already a Catholic, was converted to Catholicism. Unforgettable, but unquotable, is his story about his job in a sauerkraut factory in Hoboken. Hoboken? Yes, Hoboken!

There was my maternal grandmother, who told me the story of how the pretzel was invented, which inspired *Walter the Baker*. In fact, I did have an Uncle Walter who was a baker and also a storyteller.



*Walter the Baker* by Eric Carle

There was my paternal grandmother, who told me many times the story of her father who had left his wife and family when my grandmother was a small child. She told me that he was handsome and rich and owned a beer brewery in Denver, Colorado, and that he drowned in a beer barrel and that she had received in the mail from Denver a bag filled with gold nuggets. Several years ago, I was invited by the Friends of the Denver Library to give a talk there, where I found out that,

as with most good stories, parts of her story were true and parts were invented. It was a touching moment to visit my great-grandfather's grave in Denver.

And then there was my father, who drew pictures for me when I was a little boy and took me by the hand for long walks across meadows and through forests, explaining insect and animal behavior. But when I was ten years old, World War II broke out and my father soon became one of the many faceless soldiers who vanished in the inferno that swept across Europe. Then, eight long years later, when I was eighteen, he returned from a prisoner of war camp inside the Soviet Union, weighing a mere eighty pounds.

So there have been stories in my life. There was my family. They were wonderful teachers. There was the kind librarian. There was and is Ann Beneduce, my editor and friend who has guided me from my first book. There is my wife Bobbie, who has put up with my many creative moods for thirty years and supported me when I most needed that support.

And now, well, it seems things have fallen into place—both my art and my stories—and it has all worked out happily in the end.

Not so long ago, a child told me, "You are a good picture writer." I think that is a very good description of what I do. I like being a picture writer. Someone else has said that my books are "literature for the not-yet and just-about-to-be reader." I like that description, too. Literature! Maybe I deserve the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award after all.

I thank you for honoring me. And I thank all the people in my life who have made it possible. The award is also a birthday gift. In a couple of days I will celebrate my seventy-fourth birthday. But most of all, I am grateful that the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award has not been awarded to me posthumously. Thank you. ☺

## What Sort of Man?

James Cross Giblin

*The Life and Death of Adolf Hitler*

Clarion Books

2003 Sibert Medal Winner

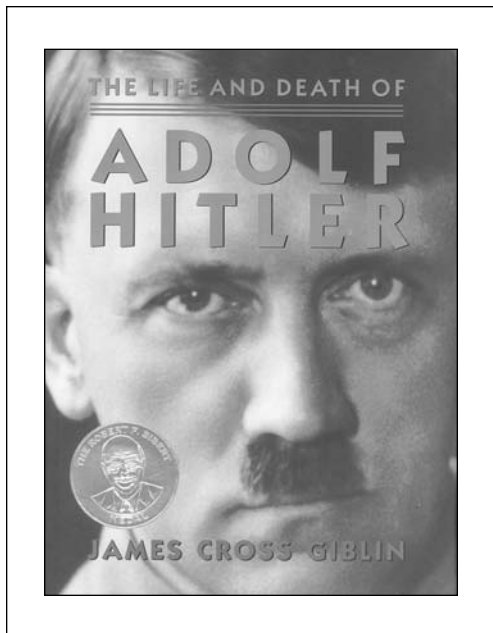
First, I want to express my sincere appreciation to ALSC and to Bound to Stay Bound Books, Inc., sponsor of the Sibert Award. I wouldn't be standing here today if you hadn't decided that children's informational books deserve to be recognized on a regular basis.

Next, I want to express my deep gratitude to Sue Nespeca and the other members of the Sibert committee for singling out my book for this great honor. So many outstanding books were eligible for the award that I was genuinely surprised when Sue called early one morning last January to tell me that my biography of Adolf Hitler had won. I was also speechless—literally—for I was getting over a bad case of laryngitis and could barely croak my thanks.

In the first chapter of the book, I pose three questions about Adolf Hitler that the book sets out to answer: What sort of man could plan and carry out such horrendous schemes? How was he able to win support for his deadly ventures? And why did no one try to stop him until it was almost too late? At the beginning of her call, Sue followed up on this idea and asked three questions about me and my book. At the time I was so surprised—and so voiceless—that I never got around to answering them. So I'll try to answer them now.

Sue's first question was: What sort of man could plan and carry out such an excellent book? Leaving aside the matter of excellence, I'll simply say that I'm a children's book writer and editor who enjoys exploring various topics to satisfy my own curiosity. I hope the end results of these explorations will also help to answer the questions young readers may have about everything from chimney sweeps to the Rosetta Stone to Adolf Hitler.

I'll let you in on a little secret. *The Life and*



*The Life and Death of Adolf Hitler* by James Cross Giblin



James Cross Giblin

*Death of Adolf Hitler* isn't the book I originally set out to write. That book was to be a collective biography of three dictators who left a cruel and lasting mark on the twentieth century—Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Mao Zedong. But when I got deeply into the research and started writing, the abundance of material about Hitler made me realize that he should have a book to himself.

I wondered how my editor would react to this change in concept; would she want a book about Hitler alone? That worry of mine leads naturally to the second question Sue asked me: How were you able to win support to get the book published? Fortunately, Dinah Stevenson at Clarion

is the sort of editor who believes in backing her authors. She accepted the change in direction the book had taken and edited the manuscript with her customary care and sensitivity.

Good design is an important element in any book, and it's essential in a heavily illustrated work of nonfiction. On *Hitler*, Clarion and I were fortunate to have the gifted Carol Goldenberg as designer. It was her idea to blow up the cover photo of Hitler to achieve the effect of a looming monster.

So many others contributed in a major way to the success of the book, but here I'll name just two: Marjorie Naughton, who did her usual sterling job of marketing and promotion, and Michael L. Cooper, who helped me in Washington with the photo research for the illustrations.

Lastly, I want to pay a special tribute to my late parents, Ann and Kelley Giblin. I was a boy during World War II—eight when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, eleven when Hitler committed suicide in his bunker. It was my parents who patiently answered my questions about the war and helped to calm my fears. I only wish they were alive to see the book I wrote about the man who was responsible for that war and the deaths of so many millions. And I hope the young people who read the book will have adults like my parents with whom they can discuss the life of Adolf Hitler and its long-range implications.

The last question the committee asked me was the shortest and the easiest to answer: What are you going to do now that you've won the Sibert? I'm in the midst of writing a joint biography of two brothers who left their own distinctive marks on our history: Edwin Booth, who helped to make acting a respectable profession in America, and John Wilkes Booth, who assassinated Abraham Lincoln. It's another complicated story, and one that I'm delving into with even greater zest and confidence in the wake of this award. ☺

# Descent into Limbo

Maurice Sendak

2003 May Hill Arbuthnot Lecture  
Cambridge, Mass.  
April 5, 2003

May Hill Arbuthnot's pioneering textbook, *Children and Books*, was published in 1947, and although I never read the book or met the lady, since the early days of my career, I have always associated her name with a higher standard, a bright enlightenment, and a passionate, newly sophisticated view of childhood. So I am very grateful, after fifty-six years, for the entwining of our names.

Postwar America—1947—when the world of art seemed to bloom again. It turned out to be an uneasy blooming—a kind of hold-your-breath Limbo that had everything to do with how the war ended. The repercussions of which, of course, are still with us now. In the meantime, my late-forties generation of happy, ambitious young survivors had the benefit of absorbing all the fresh new ideas concerning children and the books published for them. Book publishing then was based on an assumption of quality and craft; a brand-new fidelity to the real child; and a serious, almost holy devotion to beautiful book-making. When it came to children, Freud had opened the closed door, and Bank Street, among other institutions, explored those new ideas and produced people like Ruth Krauss. The joint was jumping!

It was as though we had finally stumbled onto that strange, wild tribe of exciting and excitable monsters called kids: their extraordinary instinctual and intellectual powers; their delicious manipulations of language and people; and their odd, touching support for us memory-bankrupt grown-ups.

Like Ms. Arbuthnot, I too published a book in the year 1947, a book that allowed me to graduate from high school and guaranteed my escape from Brooklyn. During my senior year, I was determinedly indifferent to

everything except drawing, which led to barely passing grades in everything except English. My love of reading helped me there. But it was clear that I was failing physics, and if I did, I couldn't graduate. Then came the miracle! My kindly physics teacher promised me a passing grade and one hundred dollars in cash if I illustrated his and my first book. It was called *Atomics for the Millions*, and needless to say, I understood not a word of it. My very first review, in *The New York Times*, thought my cartoons witty and



*Some Swell Pup* illustrated by Maurice Sendak, co-written with Matthew Margolis

fresh—lightening up a too-somber text. Totally unfair. My teacher had dictated every one of those witty ideas the reviewer spotted in my pictures.

Across the Manhattan Bridge was Oz. My mother disagreed: "A regular Sodom and Gomorrah!" she wailed, and I prayed she knew what she was talking about.

In the summer of 1948, my brother Jack, who was my best friend, mentor, and role model, and a wonderful artist, decided to make, by hand, some movable wooden toys. As usual, I apprenticed myself to him. My job was to sandpaper his carved figures smooth and then paint them. He made six different toys and they were brilliant, and



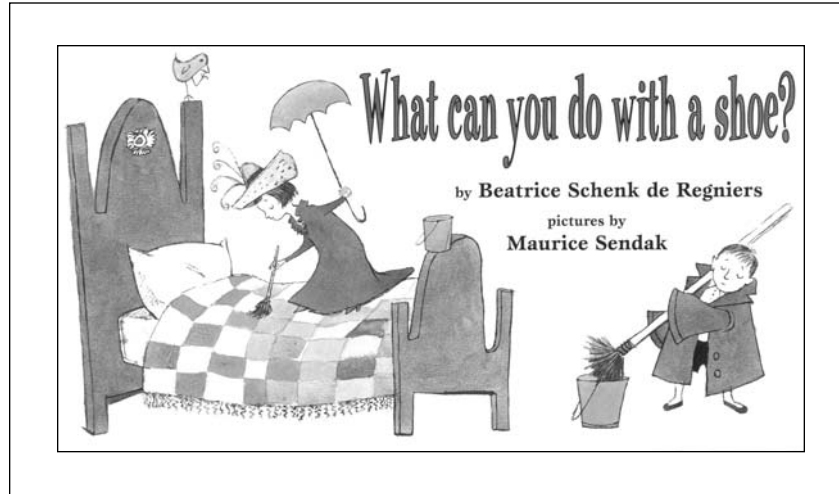
we decided to spend our lives together making more toys. We managed to get someone at F.A.O. Schwarz to look at our toys, and he was impressed, but not enough to manufacture them in quantity. Instead, they offered me a job as assistant to the window-display artist. A great stroke of luck! Instead of schlepping a portfolio around to book publishers (which had proven consistently unsuccessful), I had all the Schwarz windows on the corner of Fifty-ninth Street and Fifth Avenue to show my work in.

At my new job, I “went fishing” and luckily snagged some very fine specimens—one being the celebrated illustrator and writer Leonard Weisgard, who took me under his wing and taught me the technique for making pre-separated color illustrations (during one long night, with his wife Phyllis feeding us). I needed this skill because, astonishingly, Leonard had decided to turn over one of his book-illustration projects to me.

In 1951, the United Synagogue of America published Robert Garvey’s *Good Shabbos, Everybody!* with two-color pictures by yours truly. Unless my memory fails, all that was required was Weisgard’s approval of my work, and my being Jewish and circumcised. Happily, they took my word for it.

My luck held. F.A.O. Schwarz housed perhaps the finest, most comprehensive collection of children’s books in the country. The erudite and beautiful Frances Christie was in charge of the book department, and she befriended me and educated me. Her department was the first in the city to carry American editions of European picture books, so the new, post-war books from France, Germany, and Switzerland were there—thanks mostly to one American publisher, Margaret McElderry. These amazing books introduced a brand-new, vivid world that instantly transformed the American picture-book scene.

I was blessed in my youth with so many mentors—extraordinary grown-ups who took on an uneducated, raw but impassioned kid. Ms. Christie soon introduced me to her good friend Ursula Nordstrom, who offered me an illustrating job the very next day. My life had begun. This was what I consider my real debut in book publishing—my illustrations for Marcel Aymé’s collection of stories called *The Wonderful Farm*, published in 1951 by Harper and Brothers, the very same firm that first published Herman Melville.



*What Can You Do with a Shoe?* illustrated by Maurice Sendak, written by Beatrice Schenk de Regniers

Ursula “gave” me to Ruth Krauss, and in 1952 Harper published *A Hole Is To Dig*. That was the beginning of a six-book marathon with Ruth—surely the happiest years of my twenties. Ruth and her husband, Crockett Johnson, were my best mama and papa, and the weekends spent at their house in Rowayton, Connecticut, were glorious. I learned the business of picture-book making from those two geniuses, and I ate their food and ran errands for them, and withstood Ruth’s hollering and her attempts to scrub me clean of Brooklyn chauvinism—especially the sexist sort. When I drew pictures of girls doing girl things and boys doing boy things, she went bananas and had me fix all the drawings. A careful study of *A Hole Is To Dig* will reward the curious, who will find a number of hastily repaired, hermaphroditic-looking kids.

It was a heady time for a hungry young artist. My great good luck was being there—trained, educated, and mentored by some of the best the children’s book

world had to offer. I used to call the editors in this lovely backwater business the Great Giant Ladies—they seemed so very big and powerful and generous. There was my own Giant Lady trainer, Ursula Nordstrom, and Margaret McElderry and May Massey and Elizabeth Riley and many more. We all kept a low profile. There was not much money to be made, but we could play, experiment. As low men on the totem pole, we were responsible only to ourselves and the children we were trying to reach. And then, too, there

were the Giant Lady Librarians—those guardians of the gates who kept a watchful eye on what we were producing. Their scrutiny could lead to conflicts of taste as they tried to keep our little world uncontaminated and idealistic, but these conflicts only sharpened our sense of mission. And over all of this hovered the spirit of Arbuthnot—the determination to tell the truth.

We stayed away from the suits upstairs, just as they kept clear of us. We were an odd, unpredictable bunch—aren’t all artists?—and without the sexy, sweet clink of coins ringing in their ears, there was no real reason for them to check us out. We were never even invited upstairs to the grown-up book parties!

If only it could have stayed that way! But unwittingly we were too cocky—too confident—and worse, too successful, especially after Lyndon Johnson started pumping federal funds into schools and libraries. Now our coins clinked too loudly and the suits came running. Money is man’s work! Suddenly our weirdo little kiddie-book department seemed much less off-putting.

Here’s how I view the catastrophe. Sometime in the middle-to-late seventies, the suits took over completely. Ursula was one of the first to fall. I was there to witness her fierce decline, her illness and depression as our fine publish-

ing world withered away. The new, conglomerated publishing world laid us flat. We were driven out of our cottage industry and into the land of bottom line, where we survivors now unhappily reside. Many of us did survive, some of the ladies and a few gents—but nothing was the same.

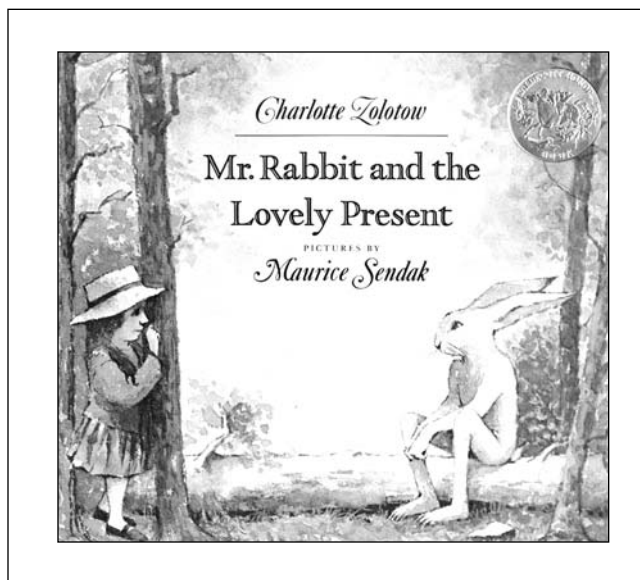
By the early eighties, an immense gulf had appeared, a new Limbo that chillingly separated us from the shrewd, uncaring moneymakers, the masters of the new, coarse, commercial world of children's book publishing. The editors, designers, and artists on my side of the gulf were few, and we were all growing old. We worried about the children and despaired for them: How could they defend themselves against the great glut of cheaply contrived, vulgar garbage that betrayed everything we had learned over the past three decades? Of course the kids would survive—kids have to be tough as nails. They'd wiggle their way to the top of the garbage heap and go looking elsewhere. After all, even our Golden Age produced plenty of junk.

It was a sad time altogether. The AIDS holocaust deprived us of so many of the best people in the business, and what was once considered normal craftsmanship now brought only bewilderment and even disdain to the blank eyes of the number crunchers in the new regime. They seemed to totally disregard our fine old history, and still do. Bottom Liners ain't got much use for such fancy footwork.

There are still a few dinosaurs like me roaming around. We huddle and hiss and yearn for the good old days. We had been a disciplined army of ardent artists and editors and designers with passionate convictions worthy of our brave American soldiers back from the war. Wouldn't we change everything and help shore up a much-battered confidence and culture after the near-fatal morass of World War II? We were close enough to peer into the abyss of lost children, with only the diary of a gifted young girl to remind us of all the stilled voices. Wasn't it

our generation's job to help us make up for all that? We were fired up by an intense, spiritual mission. We had books to offer—what did money have to do with that?

From the first, however, our triumph in World War II had been shadowed by the bomb. We'd been dangled in Limbo, and considering the odds, we had done very well. Our moment in the spotlight had not been wasted—nor, I might add, has it been matched since. Is it too vain and



*Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present* illustrated by Maurice Sendak, written by Charlotte Zolotow

self-pitying to mourn a lost blink of time? Us oldies are still here, but we are long past hauling up another generation of ardent young writers and illustrators. Theirs is a far worse day and age. "Loss of innocence" is too innocent a way of describing it. There is so much more to contend with now—how indeed do the fine young fish fly upstream? They will find their way, though not so easily as we did. I've met some of them and they have cheered me up. They are cautiously tip-toeing their way through Conglomerate Land, watching at every step for Bottom Line mines. And it is a minefield out there. They don't have scary, blank eyes nor do they superciliously sneer. They don't smell of the posh flavor-of-the-month and they do not own SUVs or wish to. In fact—would you believe it!—they look just like we did!

It seems I've tumbled into one form of Limbo or another all my long life, starting

from my birth in 1928—Mickey Mouse arrived five months later—the year before Wall Street crashed. My poor father eyed me suspiciously—someone had to be blamed for the loss of his ladies' garment business. The world trembled on the brink, and there was no hiding, even in infancy, behind the mask of immortality. I nearly died of scarlet fever at the very same time Charlie Lindbergh, Jr., was kidnapped and then found murdered—that was March 2, 1932. Childhood was no place to hide. Limbos loomed everywhere. Five magic little girls—all identical!—all popped out of one egg. Marie! Cecile! Annette! Emilie! Yvonne! The world breathed nervously—five was the magic number. If one took sick and died, we'd all go under. Coincidentally, there were five Sendaks, my father, my mother, my sister Natalie, my brother, and me—a heavy burden for a little boy. I think I'm still holding my breath, in spite of the fact that only two Diones and two Sendaks are still in the world.

There are many varieties of Limbo, and the twentieth century provided us with an abundant sampling. Yes, my generation inherited the legacy of the all-annihilating Bomb, a reality so

unreal we were left wandering in that drear Limbo. But then there are the personal Limbos, the fumbles and false starts of an artist coming of age in a world of uncertainties. How to focus the shapeless creative self? Being young helps you keep the rude world at bay. Denial, in a word, is a snap.

Let me tell you something about how I struggled to liberate myself from a Limbo I faced in mid-career, how I turned all my life efforts toward the only thing that makes any sense to me—the deepening of my work as an artist. Such a paradox! Here I was having what most people would consider a very successful career—even I did! But I realized that—as my Jennie would have said—there must be more to life than having everything.

In 1978 I turned fifty, and for reasons I've already set forth, I was looking for a new job, something beyond the pleasures of

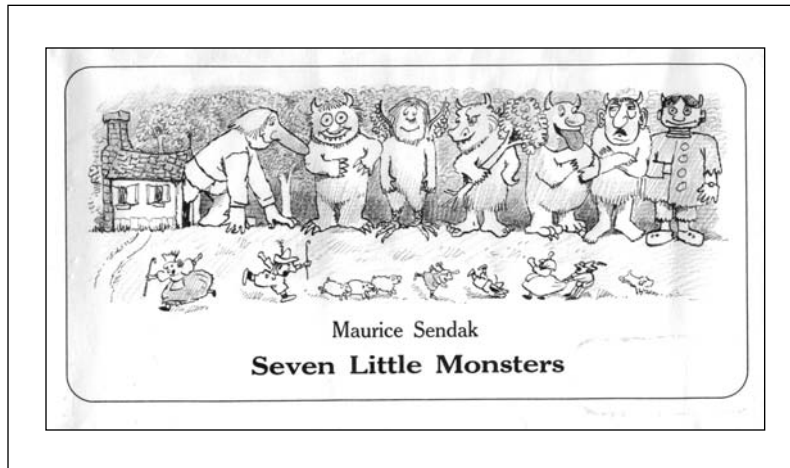
publishing books and splendid isolation and postponed gratification. As far as my creative life is concerned, I have always been lucky. An opera director I much admired, Frank Corsaro, called me out of the blue and invited me to design a new production of Mozart's *Magic Flute* that he was going to direct. I told him of my deep love of that opera—indeed of everything Mozart. I also told him of my complete ignorance of the business of stage and costume design. He knew my books, and like Ursula so long before, he trusted me and promised to surround me with experienced craftsmen who would teach me all matters technical. I had been thrown a life preserver.

Since I was sixteen or so, Mozart has been my savior, and *The Magic Flute* is my favorite of all his perfect operas. It has everything I wish my own work had a scrap of: beauty of shape and design; a comic, low-down vaudeville vitality blended with dark, serious truth-telling; depth of soul; and a generous, unjudgmental view of humankind. In my opinion, only Shakespeare stands with Mozart, and both men had the rarest of all gifts: they melded into their art, leaving no shadow of themselves—their egos dissolved. What touches the heart so deeply is Mozart's fundamental goodness, the *menschkeit* he yearned for.

After my initial flutter of pride and happiness at the prospect of designing *The Magic Flute*, I slowly slid into despair. How, so late in life, could I commit myself to a whole new discipline? In truth, music was and is my first passion; I cannot live or work without it. I have no musical talent whatsoever, except for my ability to whistle, on pitch, and from memory—a goodly chunk of the classical repertory. (Perhaps not so strangely, only my German shepherds have been loyal listeners). Designing, costuming, and sitting through rehearsals would be my extraordinary reward for a life of Mozart idolatry. However, as deadlines approached, living and working inside an opera was a dream come true that turned into a nightmare.

Thus the creative process, which is indistinguishable from depression. The symptoms are weirdly similar. Falling off of appetite, dry mouth, lethargy, contrasting rage, and a manic frenzy to hang on the telephone and wail wantonly to friends who have mostly given up on me and can barely disguise their pleasure at my misery. They've been there before.

Finally, I was face-to-face with the big bad question. Who do I steal from and where do I go to steal it? For those surprised by such a confession, let me quote one of my great hero-geniuses, William Blake, from



*Seven Little Monsters* by Maurice Sendak

whom I have stolen copiously. In answer to the statement, "How incapable those are of producing anything of their own, who have spent much of their time in making finished copies, is well known to all who are conversant with his art," Blake barked back, "This is most false, for no one can ever design till he has learned the language of art by making many finished copies both of nature and art and of whatever comes in his way from earliest childhood. The difference between a bad artist and a good one is: The bad artist seems to copy a great deal. The good one really does copy a great deal." Thus spake my master.

Sometime in the late seventies a brief article in *The New York Times* caught my attention. It was titled "A Mantegna Masterpiece at the Met." It spoke of the rare opportunity to see *Christ's Descent into Limbo* by the Italian Renaissance master Andrea Mantegna. The painting was on brief loan to the Metropolitan Museum from the private collection of

Barbara Johnson. There lies another tale—but let's go on.

To continue from *The New York Times*: "Roughly fifteen by sixteen inches, the work depicts Christ's liberation of the prophets from Limbo. Jesus, his back to the viewer, leans forward on his staff toward the opening of Limbo's cave. Four figures, Adam and Eve among them, languish at his left. A single elderly male figure hunches to Christ's right, and at the mouth of the cave, a prophet reaches up in a pose that mixes anguish with desire. Mantegna has imagined a violent gust of wind blowing out from the stony entranceway; Christ's robes and the garment covering the prophet billow suddenly forward."

This, I realized, was the entirety of *The Magic Flute* in one gulp. Here is how I saw the painting, how it affected me: The thunder and shock of the back wall of this very room we are now in suddenly falling away and only a choking Limbo gaping forth. A violent,

stinking wind swirls out of the pit. Christ is stunned—his hair and robes blast back and his stiffened shoulder blades betray his fear. This is the only Christ I know who is seen from the back—we can only guess at his expression. His blowing robes reveal his form in a way as to make him very human and very vulnerable. He will, despite himself, dive into Limbo and save the despairing prophet.

The Mantegna painting is a perfect metaphor for the incoherence of the creative act, for the artist's perilous dive into the interior of the self—the descent into Limbo. It is a sublime image to steal from, a vision of exceptional theatricality. Its narrow stage has been turned over entirely to the scene's players, who boldly crowd the panel's edges. My *Magic Flute* would open into a yawning cave entrance with rough stone steps leading down to the stage floor. Almost immediately our hero, Tamino, enters, chased by a monster—he faints and tumbles down the steps. He is a young man having his first

mature adventure, and it almost proves too much for him. In the very next scene, our young heroine, Pamina, in her own cave-like setting, comes rushing onstage chased by a rapist—she falls into a faint. Two inexperienced youngsters overcome by their confrontation with the new and incomprehensible. I think of these two scenes as two exquisite eighteenth-century cameos—enlightened kids taking their first steps, an awakening into sexual awareness and confusion. *The Magic Flute* is a vaudeville magic show, meant purely to entertain, but just below the luminous surface is a rather dark tale about the difficulties of exploring and surviving. These kids have unwittingly dived into their not-so-fairy-tale lives.

There are also three little boys in the opera—genies or spirits as they are called in English, *knaben* in German. They guide the hero and heroine as best they can. They are the only characters in the opera who do not lie or exaggerate. At a crucial point, Pamina, in terrible confusion and pain, attempts suicide—the boys stop her and convince her she is loved. She instantly brightens and believes. Why would children lie? It is this trust and faith in the child that breaks my heart. The music Mozart gave the boys is simply unearthly—it is the sound of the purity of childhood.

In the end, Pamina, the frantic and confused girl of Act I, by comprehending the three boys and truly loving Tamino, moves quickly ahead of our hero. She has more than earned her place in Mozartian paradise, and with her gentle strength she leads the young man by the hand. Pamina triumphs! (No mean feat for a mere eighteenth-century girl—in fact, the women in all of Mozart's operas are way ahead of the guys). Together, Pamina and Tamino find their way through a series of subterranean caves and finally to a brilliantly lit inner sanctum, where they are wed in a Masonic ritual.

Some years later I stole from Mantegna's *Limbo* again, this time using it as a metaphor for the terrifying world of lost children. I copied the painting carefully and proudly for the jacket of my book *We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy*.

I've used the word "dive" a good deal

## At 75, Sendak Finds Diverse Career Opportunities

Sharon Korbeck



"I am the last living Sendak."

Those are powerful, heavy words to carry. And no one other than Maurice Sendak, the children's illustrator who has been equally revered and criticized, can utter them.

He did just that, with great pride and responsibility, at a lecture this spring at the Art Institute of Chicago. The lecture was held just prior to Sendak's seventy-fifth birthday, which just happened to take place during the June run of

the Chicago Opera Theater's *Brundibar*. Sendak served as production designer of the project.

"Children are so strong. They're much stronger than we are," Sendak said, referencing the melancholy of the opera. The opera tells the story of the triumph of two children over a greedy organ grinder, Brundibar, who tries to thwart them in their efforts to help their sick mother.

*Brundibar* was originally performed by children incarcerated in the Terezin concentration camp.

English adaptations of the opera were provided by Tony Kushner, who also wrote the text for the book *Brundibar*, illustrated by Sendak, slated for fall 2003 publication.

It's only one of several projects Sendak is involved in this fall. Abrams will be releasing an art book, and Harper will be reissuing Ruth Krauss's 1951 *Bears*. While the original book had a different illustrator, Sendak has been invited to illustrate the reissue, due out this fall. He said he was honored to team up again with Krauss, one of his earliest collaborators.

One of children's literature's most honored illustrators, Sendak discussed some of his professional and personal influences—among them were William Blake, King Kong (the original Wild Thing), Emily Dickinson, Franz Schubert, and Mickey Mouse (who shares his 1928 birthday).

He also spoke of his early struggles with books considered "inappropriate" for children: *Where the Wild Things Are* (too scary), *In the Night Kitchen* (nudity), and even *One Swell Pup* (a doggie bowel movement).

One reason for his unique sense of style in children's books? "My father told us terrifying, unedited stories," Sendak recalled. A young Sendak then retold the stories at school, much to his teachers' dismay.

And yet, despite the many years of controversy, Sendak has risen to the heights of children's literature—due mainly to the nighttime rumpus of pajama-wearing Max and his imaginary friends. By the way, what's Max doing today?

"He's still dressed like that, and he's living with his mother," Sendak said.

today. I'm borrowing it from a favorite comment made by Herman Melville, yet another deity in my personal constellation of gods. In a letter written on March 3, 1849, he said, "I love all men who *dive*. Any fish can swim near the surface, but it takes a great whale to go down stairs five

*It was as though we had finally stumbled onto that strange, wild tribe of exciting and excitable monsters called kids: their extraordinary instinctual and intellectual powers; their delicious manipulations of language and people; and their odd, touching support for us memory-bankrupt grown-ups.*

miles or more." In his correspondence Melville frequently refers to the theme of diving deep—of committing oneself to extreme goals in order to avoid mediocrity. Emily Dickinson, another of my deities, wrote several poems about pearls found only by the deepest divers. And John Keats was in love with the idea of diving deep for the rarest fish. But how my heroes would have scorned me! I can't dive and I can't swim. Nevertheless, when it comes to struggling with my deep-sea fancies and fashioning them into picture books, I am a heroic diver—a regular Greg Louganis. I am fatefully drawn to the drowning abyss. I live contentedly, if uneasily, in the land of Limbo.

How did all this happen? It's in the wiring, I suspect. I was a sickly child, the youngest of three, and to achieve my infant ends, I profited from the hatred my sister and brother bore for each other. It seems that from birth I was apprenticed to my brother, the artist in the family. We spent our childhood indoors, writing and drawing and making toys. We frequently collaborated on books together. My sister was the shrewd marketing department,

binding our stories, lending them out for small change—which she kept. Our masterpiece and probable swan song was a book called *We Are Inseparable*. My brother wrote the story and I illustrated the high points on shirt cardboard.

Freud obviously passed over our house in Bensonhurst. That I chose to live and work in the world of children's books when I grew up is clearly no mystery. I am obsessed with childhood and no good for anything else.

Limbo suggests chaos and chaos denoted childhood and childhood is the armature of all my work. Maynard Solomon, in his biography of Mozart, finds in his music, "an infancy-Eden of unsurpassable beauty but also a state completely vulnerable to terrors of separation, loss, and even fears of potential annihilation." Solomon also refers to D. W. Winnicott's description of a baby as "an immature being who is all the time on the brink of unthinkable anxiety—an anxiety kept at bay only by the mother's validation of the infant's existence. To recall infantile bliss is to reawaken that infantile terror, which is what happens in those Mozartian mood swings. And the music becomes an act of reparation, a security guaranteed, and the archaic anxieties are stilled by this incorporation into the formal beauty of the piece."

Can this be true? Sounds great to me and helps fuse my passion for Mozart and William Blake and his *Songs of Innocence and Experience*.

When Iona Opie and I first met, in London in 1989, we were about to embark on a book together, and we soon discovered that we were delighted with each other. I had all but given up on a publishing life—not out of indifference, but for all the reasons I've mentioned today. My love and respect for Iona rejuvenated me. Our book *I Saw Esau* is a demented grab

bag of foul-mouthed fun and games—tough English kids, city-gritty kids, adorable and insolent. I felt at home in that book, and it remains one of my special favorites.

Like the prodigal son, I am now back at work illustrating a picture book and designing one last opera, both of them named *Brundibar*. The picture book, written by Tony Kushner, is based on the opera *Brundibar*, an opera meant for an audience of children, and designed to be sung and acted by children. It was performed fifty-five times by the young inmates of the Terezin concentration camp, where many of the most important Czech intellectuals, painters, and musicians were trapped. Among them was the young composer Hans Krasá, who wrote the music for *Brundibar*. News of the mass murders committed by the Germans was spreading worldwide, and in a grotesque effort to stifle those rumors, Hitler had the camp spiffed up, then invited the International Red Cross to come in, and—showtime! The last scene of the Nazi propaganda film entitled "The Führer Presents the Jews with a City" captures the children of Terezin singing the jubilant finale of the opera.

These two *Brundibar* projects have occupied me for some few years now, and they have brought me full circle to my uneasy childhood—to the dead relatives I never knew, to all the murdered Jews who haunted my childhood. I'm ready for them now—not so vulnerable, not so weepy and scared.

Over the years, everything in my creative life has gradually been strengthened and newly fashioned. Of course, I cannot understand how that happens, but I believe my life's journey with Shakespeare and Keats and Melville and Blake and Mozart and Dickinson has resulted in what Keats fervently referred to as soul-making—a process that comes about only through an intense observation of life and the use of the brain and the heart as a kind of chapbook to record our experiences. I cannot exclude the experience of Mickey Mouse, King Kong, the Dionne quintuplets, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, Charlie Lindbergh Jr.—or the Holocaust—from my chapbook—all of it cooked to a savory chicken soup that



nourishes me and lifts my spirits. Keats lived only twenty-five years and he knew all this. It has taken me two months short of seventy-five years to begin to figure it out. I'm not complaining; I'm strangely content; perhaps I am even finding my way out of Limbo. Only time will tell.

I want to end with this quote from a letter written by J. R. Ackerley to Stephen Spender, "To speak the truth, I think people ought to be upset, and if I had a paper I would upset them all the time; I think that life is so important and, in all its workings, so upsetting, that nobody should be spared, but that it should be rammed down their throats from morning to night, and may those who cannot take it, die of it!"

One last thing. A while ago I mentioned that there was something more to be said about the painting *Christ's Descent into Limbo*, which had been on loan to the Metropolitan Museum from the collection of Barbara Johnson. Coincidentally, as I was putting this talk together, I read the following headline on the arts page of *The New York Times*: "Mantegna Mystery." And the article went on: "Two telephone bidders at Sotheby's yesterday morning tried to buy *Descent into Limbo*, the last painting by Italian Renaissance master Andrea Mantegna that is still in private hands. George Wachter, director of old master paintings for Sotheby's worldwide, took the winning bid, for \$28.5 million, just shy of the work's \$30-million high estimate. All Sotheby's would say is that the buyer wished to remain anonymous."

Wait a minute! Who cares who paid all those millions? Doesn't everybody realize that this painting obviously belongs to me! ☹

## Kiddo Video ad

# My Own Spot

## Lois Ehlert Shares How Inspiration Colors Her World

by Sharon Korbeck



Sitting at her desk, surrounded by colorful and exotic artwork, is an inspiration for Ehlert, who just completed her twenty-sixth book.

Place a pair of scissors, a jar of paste, and a smattering of colored paper on a table and children will set their creative minds to work—crafting collages of color, shape, and imagination. The same could be said for children’s author and illustrator Lois Ehlert, who has crafted twenty-five books, beginning primarily with that basic, yet ever-challenging, process. “Kids do cut and paste, so I feel like I’m stealing their technique,” said the author, interviewed this spring at her apartment just three blocks from Lake Michigan in Milwaukee.

Ehlert’s well-traveled journey in children’s literature (one which earned her a 1990 Caldecott Honor for *Color Zoo*) began, modestly enough, at a card table in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. Her parents were creative types, although not necessarily in the traditional artistic sense. Her father loved carpentry; her mother sewed. Her clever 1997 book *Hands* (Harcourt) is an homage to her parents’ talents. Shaped like a glove, the book is a playful example of Ehlert’s skillful bookmaking, with fold-out pages, unusually-shaped pages and concise, clean text. That book sprang out of a one-of-a-kind book Ehlert crafted in memory of her parents. In it, Ehlert said, she was “trying to describe someone without taking a picture.”

A book publisher saw the book and asked if she’d be able to replicate it as a children’s picturebook. Initially, Ehlert didn’t think so, but twelve years later, *Hands* was born. In *Hands*, Ehlert writes, “Until then, I’ll be working at my table, because I

know, when I grow up, I want to be an artist. Then I’ll join hands with my mom and dad.” And it appears she has done just that, thanks to the parents who fostered her creativity.

They did so by giving her “my own spot.” “I was always saving things people were throwing away,” Ehlert recalled. Shiny gum wrappers, buttons, and sundry other seemingly disposable trinkets became curious treasures to Ehlert. So her parents soon gave her a place to stash her treasure. “I had a folding table as a girl,” she said. That table became Ehlert’s home base; her own “spot.” Ehlert even included that very special petite wood table earlier this spring at the Milwaukee Art Museum, as part of a temporary exhibit of her artwork. That display included not only her books but sketches, mock-ups, and early artwork to show the process of bookmaking.

Today, her own spot is a design table in her apartment, surrounded by not only the physical tools she needs to create (paper, scissors, and brushes) but also by rooms full of inspirational African, South American, and other foreign weavings, paintings, and statues as well as American folk art. Ehlert’s love of art, folk tales, and travel is intricately woven into several of her books. *Moon Rope* (Harcourt, 1992) is based on a Peruvian folk tale. *Cuckoo* (Harcourt, 1997) is a Mexican tale.

A close tie between her love of gathering treasures and collecting art can be also seen in *Snowballs* (Harcourt, 1995). “I’m a col-

lector of folk art but also a pack rat, so I dipped into my own 'good stuff' to decorate my snow art," Ehlert said.

Ehlert may have known early on that she was an artist, but she didn't exactly follow a direct route from her little table to children's literature success. "I'm a twenty-five-year overnight success," she said. A graduate of Milwaukee's Layton School of Art, Ehlert worked in graphic design before venturing into book illustration. And although she had illustrated books for others (among them, most notably *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* (Simon and Schuster, 1989) by Bill Martin and John Archambault), it



Ehlert's collection of folk art fish are displayed at her Milwaukee apartment. Her counting book *Fish Eyes* feels right at home.



The tools of the artist's trade. Ehlert crafts her books and illustrations by hand, sitting at a studio desk with all the accoutrements. For Ehlert, crafting books is a tactile experience, and she shuns using the computer for her artwork.

## Milwaukee Is Floored by Ehlert's Work

Sometimes children's book authors and illustrators have unusual outlets for their talents. For Lois Ehlert, people literally walk all over her work.

The centerpiece of Milwaukee's Central Library Betty Brinn Children's Room is Ehlert's floor of denim-blue linoleum with green borders and fanciful cutouts of fish, butterflies, birds, snakes, monkeys, crocodiles, and other creatures, all in primary colors.

Ehlert worked closely with Milwaukee Public Library staff and Uihlein-Wilson Architects to create the room, which opened in 1998. The project, part of the restoration of the century-old historic landmark building, was designed to give children a space that is respectful of the past, attuned to the electronic age, and enlivened with playful details.

wasn't until 1987 that Ehlert wrote and illustrated her own children's book, *Growing Vegetable Soup* (Harcourt).

That book, in her own inimitable vibrant collage style, embraced Ehlert's other love—gardening—a theme that would continue in *Planting a Rainbow* (1998, Harcourt) and *Eating the Alphabet* (Harcourt, 1989).

Ehlert's work may look like simple cut-and-paste, but her artistic process goes well beyond the page illustrations. She creates complex book mock-ups to submit to publishers, complete with recommended typefaces and layouts. Because some of her books, like *Color Zoo*, rely on die-cut pages, getting everything to fit and flow "just right" is essential. "It liberates me in the sense that I can figure out the flow of the text and size of the book," she said. "It's like orchestrating."

Ehlert, too, has been fortunate to have had publishers that have been willing to look at books that aren't necessarily the standard. "I don't consider myself in the mainstream," she added. Ehlert's books are, in her words, an "interesting combination of art and literature." And she feels that is important not just for the artist but for the children who read the books as well. "Children's picture books are kids' first exposure to art," she said.

Ehlert is often asked to name her favorite book that she has written and illustrated. She declines, saying it's like picking a favorite family member. She appreciates having had success with twenty-five books, all which remain in print today. "I like that one hasn't eclipsed the others," she said.

Now entering her seventies, Ehlert has just completed her twenty-sixth book, *Pie in the Sky*, scheduled for 2004 release by Harcourt Brace.

*continued on page 58*

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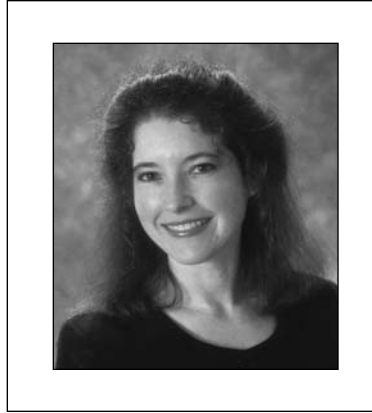
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# A+ Partners in Education

## Positioning Libraries as a Cornerstone in the Education Process

Valerie J. Gross



**M**ust the word “education” be limited to mean teaching in schools? We at the Howard County Library in Maryland didn’t think so. We set out to change that perception and include libraries in the vital education process, through our A+ Partners in Education program, launched in September 2002.

The prevailing image of libraries seldom includes education or educators. Because the general population understands and values education, libraries can only benefit by incorporating the image of libraries as a key component in the education process.

By assisting our county’s sixty-nine schools and forty-seven thousand students through this partnership, we hope students, faculty, and the general public will view our county’s school media centers and public libraries as an integral aspect of our students’ twelve years of required education and as contributors to our students’ overall academic success. So far, the benefits have been gratifying.

In promoting the A+ Partners in Education initiative to the schools, we focus on the vast benefits to students and faculty. Although library professionals, too, care about more complete homework, better projects, improved grades, improved test scores, and increased reading, there are other significant gains for school media centers and public libraries—and for the library profession in general. As with any successful partnership, the equation must be balanced. In this case, the gains are extraordinary for both schools and libraries.

Benefits for libraries can include an increase in the number of cardholders, circulation, visits, reference questions asked, and summer reading participants. This, in turn, has financial relevance, since impressive statistics may translate well at budget time. We are also confident in a longer-term benefit—the students we delight today will go on to become library supporters when they become voters.

The partnership also makes librarians’ jobs easier and leverages funding. For instance, all new students fill out library card applications in their school registration packets, eliminating the need for periodic card drives. Since all students will have a library card, media specialists can now provide additional resources during the school day by helping students access library databases from school computers. This expansion of resources allows media centers to maximize allocated funding. And, since media centers close early, the library extends student research time into the evening, weekends, and during school vacations.

Teachers are encouraged to forward assignment alerts to library staff. Knowing about school projects ahead of time allows library staff or media specialists to better assist students.

Perhaps the most remarkable benefit is that the partnership links libraries to education in a highly visible way, shaping an overall image that libraries are a cornerstone in the education process. This is important because people understand and value education—even people who have never set foot in a library. Being linked with education can only further elevate our



profession and make libraries more visible in the eyes of the community.

Furthermore, being part of a student's twelve years of required education is an excellent way to build a solid customer base. Working with the schools in this manner, libraries can be constantly building the next generation of library customers who use, value, and love the library, ensuring the future of the library.

## The Essence of Partnering

The overall essence of A+ Partners in Education can be summarized with an illustration. A 2002 article in the *Baltimore Sun* last fall began,

Although Dinora Quintanilla is an educated woman in her native El Salvador, when her sixth-grade son José has trouble with his homework, he rarely asks his mother for help. José—out of respect—doesn't want to burden or embarrass her. So he goes to school, sometimes without having finished his homework. Through an interpreter, Quintanilla reveals how that worries her.

I called the principal the next day. Imagine how delighted she was to learn how our A+ partnership will help José complete his homework. Through the partnership, José will know that—in addition to guidance from his school's media specialist—he can receive assistance from information specialists at the library, who will be able to plan ahead for José's projects. Through the schools, José will obtain a library card, and with his new card, he can search full-text databases from school, home, or the library. To help him with specific homework questions, José will learn that he has access to a personal online tutor—for free—from 2 P.M. to midnight, seven days a week, in math, science, social studies, and English through a new library program called Live Homework Help. If José does not have Internet access at home, he will learn that he has access from any of our two hundred public access computers at our six libraries during prime homework time: after school, evenings, Saturdays, and Sundays. If José has a computer at home but no access to the Internet, he can sign up for free Internet access through the library. José will also learn that, for projects that must be typed (or when he can receive extra credit for turning in typed homework—as is the case with my own seventh grader), he can use the word processing workstations at any of our libraries.

While this example illustrates how a motivated student whose parents do not speak English is benefiting from the partnership, we are confident that all students—even students who are already doing well in school—will benefit academically.

## A+ Vision

Our A+ vision is to promote scholarship and to expand the educational opportunities for each of Howard County's forty-seven thousand public school students, providing for each student the best possible chance of overall academic success.

## Maryland Librarian Named Educator of the Year

Hope Chase, Head of Youth Services for Howard County Library in Maryland, was named Educator of the Year by the Howard County Chamber of Commerce on June 9, 2003. The award is given to an individual who serves in a teaching or administrative capacity and helps to ensure educational excellence in Howard County.

"It is an immense honor for Howard County Library that Ms. Chase has won this prestigious award," noted Howard County Library Director Valerie J. Gross. "We are proud to be a major contributor to excellence in education in Howard County, along with the Howard County Public School System and Howard Community College."

Gross describes this honor as a new milestone in Howard County Library's quest to be recognized by the general public as a major contributor to education. This is the first year that the award host granted the library the opportunity to nominate library educators, along with educators from the county's school system and community college. Gross lauded Kara Calder, President and CEO of the Howard County Chamber of Commerce, for her vision to include library educators under the eligibility definition: "Anyone who serves in a teaching or administrative capacity as a full-time professional in a Howard County educational facility is eligible."

While Chase was recognized, the collective contributions of Howard County Library employees shape the library's overall image as an educational pillar in the community, especially the efforts to inaugurate the unprecedented A+ Partners in Education initiative with all sixty-nine public schools. "It is this enhanced educational image that allowed us to even nominate candidates this year," Gross said.

Our A+ mission includes ensuring that every student has, and uses, a Howard County Library card to borrow materials and to access databases and Live Homework Help; and developing programs that encourage reading and assist with research and the completion of school assignments. In short, we are taking the library into all the schools, and we are bringing all schools—students, faculty, and staff—into the library.

The partnership is intended to assist with eliminating student achievement gaps, improving grades, and improving test scores in reading comprehension. Working at the library—or at home with a library card—all students have the same access to databases, assistance with school projects, and help with school assignments.

## How the Partnership Began

When I joined Howard County Library in July 2001, individual partnerships were already in place with twelve of the county's sixty-nine schools. Activities included setting up library tables at back-to-school nights, periodic library card drives, and taking library programs into the schools. Some schools also brought their students into the library. Nevertheless, relations were less-than ideal with other schools, where it was our perception that there was little interest in working together. In addition, any brochure or flyer we sent to the schools had to be individually approved, delaying the process and chilling efforts.

We began imagining a countywide partnership where working relations with media specialists, principals, faculty, and staff would be ideal, where students would receive library cards through the schools, and where library professionals would be viewed by the schools as adjunct educators. We pictured a world where students, faculty, and the community would truly view libraries as cornerstones in the education process.

After securing the support of the superintendent of schools, we met with library staff, media specialists, and key school administrators in November 2001. We needed to convince schools (especially media specialists) that this program was intended to supplement and enhance existing school and media center programs, emphasizing that working together would assist the media specialists. To our pleasant surprise, everyone at this first meeting saw merit in a partnership of this nature. The school staff suggested we set up monthly meetings to plan the partner-

*Being linked with education can only further elevate our profession and make libraries more visible in the eyes of the community.*

ship, aiming for a September 2002 launch. The initial handful of ideas blossomed. In true cooperative fashion, all parties shaped the A+ vision, mission, and objectives, which the partnership's title embodies: A+ Partners in Education.

Some ideas required extra convincing. For instance, initially the schools were skeptical about a key partnership component, the schools' involvement ensuring that all students receive a library card. Although they acknowledged this was a good idea, they were concerned about the time this process might take. School secretaries, however, were happy to take on the extra task, so the schools agreed to include library card applications in all new student registration packets. (The schools gather and forward the completed forms to the library and the library generates the cards and mails them to the students' homes.)

We invited media specialists to hold their spring 2002 meeting at our central library. The day's agenda included reviewing and

shaping the A+ partnership objectives. Their experiences that day prompted them to add meetings at the library (for media specialists, principals, and faculty) to the A+ objectives. One media specialist said that a teacher had been taking her students each year to a nearby university library for certain highly-specialized business resources. After she toured our central library, the media specialist accurately informed the teacher that the library has the very same resources!

Library staff also shaped the partnership's objectives. We held a meeting with approximately thirty staff members from all departments to discuss how the partnership would make their jobs easier, such as knowing student assignments ahead of time. We emphasized that we would always analyze any new idea that would come along, determining whether to move forward or to wait for additional funding.

We discussed ways the initiative would make our jobs more satisfying, such as the community's viewing us as educators and true professionals. Staff offered new ideas at this meeting, such as convincing the schools to show a video promotion of our summer reading program, allowing us to reach nearly 100 percent of the students instead of the typical 40 percent through in-person presentations.

We next finalized the agreement, sent copies to the school and library boards, and met with Irene Padilla, state librarian, and Nancy S. Grasnicky, state superintendent of schools, who both agreed to speak at our press conference announcing the partnership. The schools arranged for a signing ceremony where our agreement was signed by leaders in both institutions. We then mailed letters to all principals to inform them about the partnership and the press conference and reception. We also noted we would be calling them to set up individual meetings at each school. Even before we launched the partnership, we received a call from a principal who wanted to include library card applications in packets that all students received the first day of school. She had received her letter about the partnership and wanted her meeting to be as soon as possible.

Approximately 250 guests attended the press conference, including library staff, media specialists, principals, faculty, board members, and elected officials. Speakers included the Howard County executive, the Maryland State superintendent of schools, the Howard County superintendent of schools, and the state librarian.

## Five Reasons A+ Will Succeed

Why will A+ Partners in Education succeed?

- commitment from our respective boards and top leaders of our organizations;
- support of school administrators, media specialists, and library staff, all of whom shaped the program;

- incorporation of library card applications into new student registration packets;
- commitment to regular communication (each school is linked to one of our six library branches, including a staff liaison); and
- development and maintenance of exemplary working relations with the schools.

## Implementation

In four months (September through December), we met with all sixty-nine schools (principals, assistant principals, media specialists, reading specialists) to explain the partnership's objectives and to emphasize how cooperation can enhance student academic achievement. Representing the library at these meetings were the designated library's branch manager and partner-

*In short, we are taking the library into all the schools, and we are bringing all schools—students, faculty, and staff—into the library.*

ship liaison (usually the children's or teen specialist) as well as a representative from the library's administrative team who worked on the partnership's development. Each meeting generated more enthusiasm and ideas. For example, principals suggested we devise a way to inform all new teachers and principals each year about the partnership's objectives, and several suggested that the kindergarten curriculum include a field trip to the library.

We are energized by overwhelmingly positive responses from principals, teachers, and staff. One hurried principal, who said she had only thirty minutes for the meeting, was still envisioning ideas two hours later. Another principal, who initially did not want to attend, requested one thousand library card applications for a library card drive that would aim for 100 percent participation. She also said she would require students to use the library for certain assignments.

John R. O'Rourke, superintendent of the Howard County Public School System, said, "Open communication between the library and the school system can only mean greater success for students throughout the county. When our students succeed, we all succeed as a community. And that merits an A+."

We are elated that principals are now scheduling faculty meetings at their designated library branches, including the A+ partnership on faculty meeting agendas, and inviting library staff to demonstrate Live Homework Help and library databases. Just as important, parent-teacher associations are now holding family nights at the library.

We are already noticing an increase in the number of school-age students at our libraries, and students are using Live Homework Help and library databases more frequently. Additionally, teachers are forwarding assignment alerts. For example, a middle school notified its library that students would soon be required to read books nominated for the Black Eyed Susan Award (an honor bestowed upon a Maryland author each year). As a result, we transferred many titles from our other branches to that library and arranged for a special table so that students could easily browse the titles and select books that interested them. Other assignment alerts included endangered species, folk tales, presidents' biographies, and novels by African Americans.

## Spreading the Word

Schools are now assisting with public relations efforts by publicizing the partnership and other library programs in their newsletters. Even programs not directly related to school assignments, such as an upcoming teen lock-in or the arrival of a new book or DVD in high demand (such as the Harry Potter series) are being included. Schools are beginning to equate increased library use with the increased chance for overall academic success.

Numerous principals have e-mailed their entire faculty, noting the wealth of information available at the library and through the library's Web site, encouraging teachers to ask students to write their library card barcode numbers in their assignment books and emphasizing the importance of library databases and Live Homework Help. In addition, principals are asking teachers to give extra credit to students who use library resources and encouraging teachers to forward assignment alert forms to the library. Schools are printing inserts for student binders that list library databases, along with instructions, as well as information on Live Homework Help. Parent-teacher associations disseminate information about the initiative and the partnership has also received media attention.

## Opening Doors

Even though the program is in its infancy, benefits can be seen over and beyond students incorporating our educational services and our programs into their twelve years of required education. Recognizing the importance of media specialists, the school system has included additional media center positions in budget requests. Library staff have been invited to serve on the school system's district planning team as well as on its library media advisory committee and its technology advisory committee. Library staff are being invited to speak at back-to-school nights.

In his State of the County address, our county executive twice highlighted the county's reputation of excellence in education and the importance of continued funding for education, both times noting consecutively "the school system, the library system, and the community college."

In another first for Howard County Library, the Leadership Howard County program not only included the library as part of its Education Day, we also hosted the afternoon segment. We have been invited to serve on the chamber of commerce's education committee, on the community college's commission for the future, and on a joint committee with the county, the schools, and the community college addressing the direction of technology. And, at a recent citizens budget hearing, one speaker who got up to testify against the funding of a park, stated emphatically, "Don't fund this park, fund education—fund the library!" In short, our community is already beginning to link the library to education in stronger, vital new ways.

## Model Schools

The U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is interested in the A+ partnership as a case study, as is the Maryland State Department of Education and the Division of Library Development and Services (DLDS). IMLS and DLDS are assisting us in applying outcomes-based evaluation methods to analyze partnership activities to determine success through statistics. To measure effectively, three schools have agreed to serve as model schools: a high school (ninth grade), a middle school (sixth grade), and an elementary school (third grade). Serving as a model school involves a greater commitment on the part of the schools' principals and media specialists. Our goal is to achieve measurable outcomes to support our assertion that our partnership effectively bridges achievement gaps, increases reading, and improves grades and test scores.

## By the Numbers

As of June 15, 2003, we have processed 3,500 cards; 75 were for teachers. Since the launch in September 2002, we have presented in-person programs, demonstrations, and book discussions for 47,500 students, staff, and parents, including programs for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) parents and students.

Public libraries and schools stand to reap many benefits from working together. Here in Howard County, we have only just begun, and we are already experiencing many positives.

Our partnership expands the resources available to media specialists, who now view the library as an expansion of their services. Our jobs are more rewarding since there are unprecedented opportunities for staff to utilize their expertise and share their knowledge of resources with new audiences, including ESOL students.

This partnership links us to education in a powerful new way. We want libraries to be viewed by students, faculty, and the community as an integral part of the education process. This is particularly timely as this country is engaged in a national conversation about education thanks to the No Child Left Behind Act and where bridging achievement gaps is a focus across the nation.

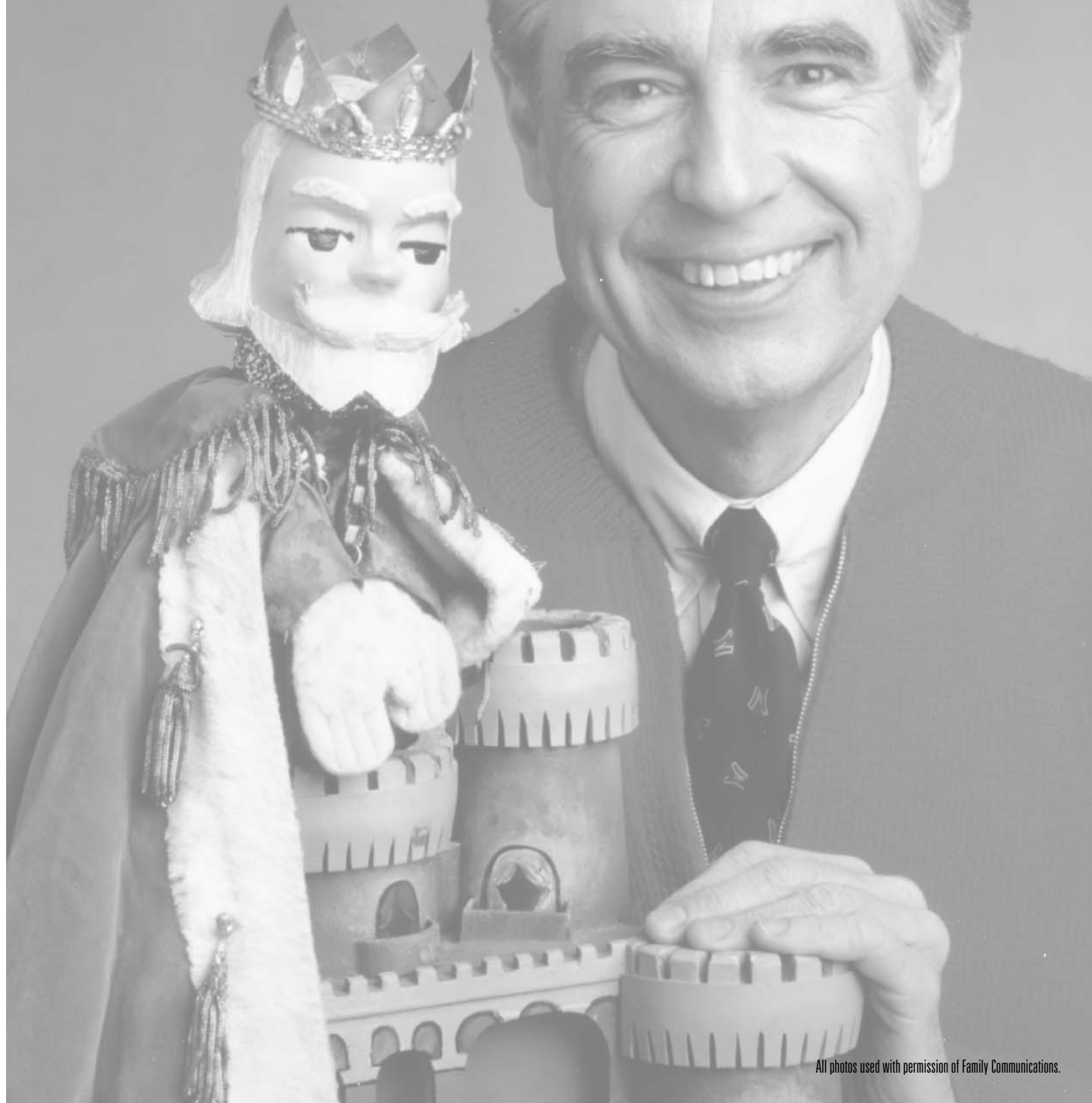
The strongest and most visible statement of the impact the partnership has had in linking the library and education came when Hope Chase, Howard County Library's Head of Youth Services, was chosen as Educator of the Year. This is the first year that the award host, Howard County Chamber of Commerce, granted us the opportunity to nominate library educators for the prestigious award, along with educators from the county's public school system and community college. This honor is a milestone in our quest to be recognized by the general public as a major contributor to education. We celebrate this noteworthy success as an indicator that public libraries in general are fast becoming recognized for the key role they play as partners in education. ☺

*Valerie J. Gross is Director of Howard County Library, Columbia, Maryland.*

# Hyperion 1 1/4 page island

# A Rose for Fred Remembering Mr. Rogers

Margaret Mary Kimmel



All photos used with permission of Family Communications.

Fred "Mr." Rogers died Feb. 27, 2003, at his home in Squirrel Hill, Pa. Memorial contributions can be made to the Fred Rogers Fund of Family Communications, 4802 Fifth Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

A handlettered plaque in Fred Rogers' office said, "What's essential is invisible to the eye." The quote is from Antoine De Saint-Exupery's *The Little Prince*, one of Rogers' favorite books. The phrase is a part of a conversation between the little prince and the fox. The prince is concerned about the rose and wonders if the rose could be a friend.

The fox says, "If you would love me, tame me."

"But what does that mean—'tame'?" asks the prince.

The fox replies, "If you tame me, then we shall need each other. To me, you will be unique in all the world. To you, I shall be unique in all the world."

And with his clear, straightforward gaze, Fred "Mr." Rogers offered that unequivocal love and respect to every child on the other side of the camera.

As I think over the years I've worked with Fred Rogers and company, the old Shaker hymn resonates in my head, especially the second verse.

'Tis a gift to be loving, 'tis the gift best of all,

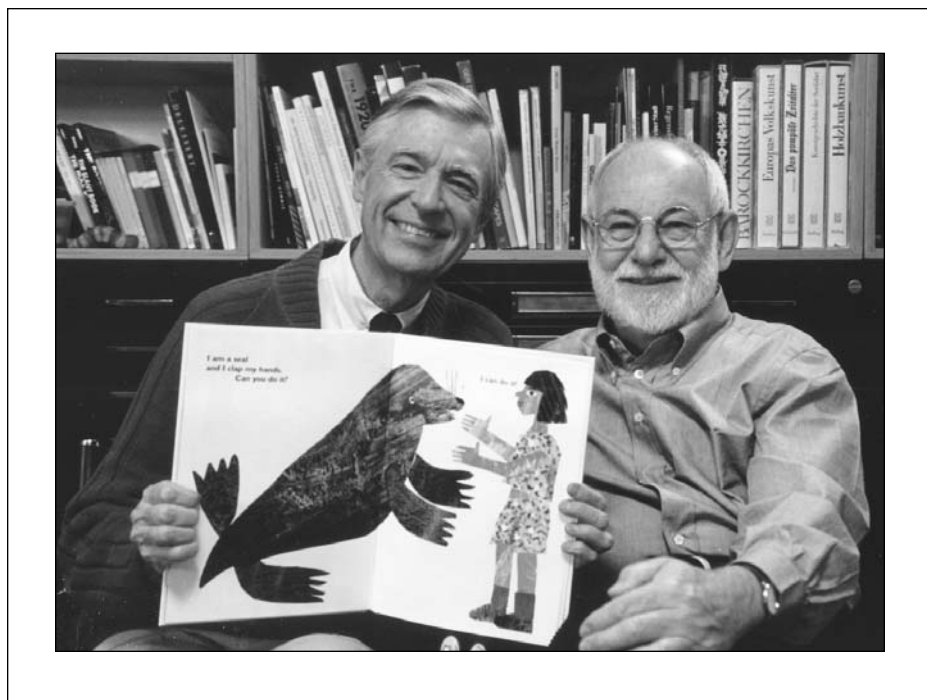
Like a quiet rain, it blesses when it fall.

And if we have the gift, we will truly believe

That 'tis better to give than it is to receive.

It all started when I came to the University of Pittsburgh, first to complete a doctoral degree and then to stay as a member of the faculty. Margaret Hodges was a close friend of Fred Rogers; they had worked together at the fledgling educational television station, WQED.

Hodges told stories as part of her work with the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. When she joined the faculty of the then Graduate School of Library Science, she worked hard to have Rogers recognized as



An ardent supporter of children and libraries, Mr. Rogers visited with many authors, including Eric Carle, pictured here.

part of the school. Around 1976, the tapes and puppets (one duplicate set) from *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* were given to the school, and Rogers became an adjunct faculty member. That was my introduction to Mr. Rogers.

## Cataloging an Icon

After I received a Title IIC grant from the U.S. Office of Education in 1984, my work with Rogers and his staff really began. Without an index, the videotapes were not much use to researchers who wanted to study how Rogers used his background in child development to work out various issues. The scripts were part of the library school's holdings, but it was still cumbersome to search by topic. So my project was to create an index to the programs so that the research community could investigate how Rogers addressed children's issues.

Of course, Rogers never designed his program with librarians in mind, so there were problems with the fixed fields in OCLC. For example, who was a puppet? How were characters that had multiple roles, such as Bob Trow who appeared as a real neighbor but also appeared in the Neighborhood of Make-Believe as either Robert Troll or Bob Dog, to be identified? Were toys, such as Ino A. Horse, charac-

ters as well? And, of course, try cataloging the imaginary friend of a puppet! Just how *real* is Daniel Striped Tiger's friend, Malcolm Apricot Dinko? After the initial project was finished, the University of Pittsburgh's library maintained the index. Now, more than nine hundred programs have been analyzed.

Toward the end of the project, we sponsored a symposium on Rogers' work. About four hundred people attended the one-day session. The speakers included George Gerbner, then dean of the Annenberg School of Communication, and Dorothy Singer from Yale University.

During a panel discussion including Rogers, I asked him if he had any comments.

"Maggie," he began, "I have a present for you. You've been so generous with your time preparing this event." He gestured to one of his staff who put on a tape. It was Yo-Yo Ma playing "Tree, Tree, Tree."

"Now, whenever you hear that, you'll know it is just for you," Rogers said. The audience clapped, and I swallowed hard and send everyone home. What else could I do?

At Rogers' public memorial service in May 2003, a video was playing of Yo-Yo

Ma wearing a red cardigan. Since he was on tour in Europe, he could not attend the memorial, but via videotape he said he'd like to play the first piece that Rogers introduced to him. It was "Tree, Tree, Tree." This time, there was no stopping my tears.

Working with Mr. Rogers and the staff of Family Communications, Inc. (FCI), the producers of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, has been wonderful. My five-minute appearance on the program (on the week of "The Mouth," but please don't tell my family that theme!) is my one claim to fame. I told a version of "Stone Soup" that I revised and called "Button Broth." Mr. Rogers was concerned that the children wouldn't know the term "broth," so in all the subsequent episodes, that segment is referred to as "Button Soup."

There have been other opportunities provided by my connection with FCI. If there was a local event that involved books, I often got a call. That is how I got involved with Reverend Peeplow, for instance.

One day the phone rang in my office and a voice said, "The people at *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* suggested I call you. I'm Reverend Peeplow. My parish is in a small community south of Pittsburgh."

"Uh huh," I said with disbelief, thinking of the time my sister had a friend pretend to be a producer with *The Today Show*.

"We are having a series of ecumenical Lenten services, each one focusing on generations in the family. I have young children as our focus, and that is why I called Mr. Rogers. But they said you could do something."

That's how I ended up in a very small community south of Pittsburgh on a cold, snowy, and miserable Wednesday night in Lent with an absolutely packed house of several generations of families.

"Reverend Peeplow," I said, peering into the standing-room-only church, "do you always get such a turnout?"

"Well, not always," he admitted. "But when they heard about Mr. Rogers, well, they just kept coming."

## The Scarab Ring

### How Aunt Sarah Inspired Mr. Rogers' Love of Books

*The following introduction written by Fred Rogers is excerpted and used with permission from For Reading Out Loud!: A Guide to Sharing Books with Children by Margaret Mary Kimmel and Elizabeth Segel (Delacorte, 1988).*

When someone says to me, "One of my favorite things to do is to curl up with a good book and spend the evening reading," I always wonder, Who read to you when you were a child? Who curled up with you and helped you to feel good about yourself before you ever knew how to read the words in all those books? Who gave you the feeling (and what a gift it is!) that books are good and reading is good and an evening can be a favorite thing in the company of yourself and a book?

One of my childhood heroes was "Aunt" Sarah McComb, the librarian in my hometown. Everyone my age called her Aunt Sarah even though the only way we were related to her was through our love of books, which she helped grow in us. First of all, she herself delighted in books. You could tell by the way she held them and looked at them and turned their pages and smiled when she offered them to us—or put them back up on the shelves. She respected words and authors and thoughts, and when she read to us, it seemed we all were someplace else.

Aunt Sarah wore an ancient scarab ring. It was a mysterious-looking ring, and I often wondered what it would be like to have something from so far away that was made so long ago: before our hometown even had one house in it—long before there were even any printed books. (Aunt Sarah obviously helped us to wonder about such things!) Anyway, through the years, I have often thought of Sarah McComb when I read to myself or to others. I told her so before she died. I told her that I hoped my television "neighbors" would know that I loved books, and I told her I knew for sure that she had helped me love them. She said, "I think they'll know. Children usually know the truth about us."

Aunt Sarah died in her late eighties. Shortly afterwards, a box came to me from the people to whom she had willed her estate. In it was the scarab ring. "I want Freddy Rogers to have this," she had told them. You can imagine what that ring means to me! What it signifies means even more: a lifetime love of books and reading, and knowing how to help people feel good about themselves.

I gasped. "Reverend Peeplow, you *did* tell them Mr. Rogers was *not* coming, didn't you?" There was a slight pause.

"Yes," he said, "I did, but they may not have heard it well because young Samuel was being baptized and was not happy with his outfit and the choir."

"Yes, yes," I said. "But you told the other churches? The ecumenical service . . ."

"Well, I did tell them Mr. Rogers didn't think he could make it, but God moves in mysterious ways."

So out we went, the Reverend and I, and I



## Did You Know?

Here are some interesting facts about Mr. Rogers you may not have known:

- Mr. Rogers' trademark red cardigan sweater is part of the collection at the Smithsonian Institution.
- The last original episodes of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* aired in August 2001.
- Mr. Rogers won four Emmy Awards for his television work.
- In 2002, Mr. Rogers was the recipient of the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.
- In 1996, *TV Guide* called Mr. Rogers one of the fifty greatest TV stars of all time.
- In 2004, the Pittsburgh Children's Museum will install a 2,500-square-foot *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* exhibit, which will include the television house, the Neighborhood of Make-Believe, and the neighborhood trolley.
- On his program, Mr. Rogers made field trip visits to a harmonica factory, a bagel factory, a macaroni factory, and a crayon factory.

told "Button Broth." The children brought up vegetables, fresh and canned. Someone spread a tablecloth, bread and cheese appeared, and the proverbial multitudes were fed.



Ezra Jack Keats once visited *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. Here Rogers and Keats discuss some of Keats's works.



Margaret Mary Kimmel was thrilled to have appeared on *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*.

The Reverend asked if there were any questions. Nobody responded for a moment and then a very clear, ringing little voice said, "I really like the story about the soup, but he doesn't look anything like he does on television."

Stunned silence, then raucous laughter! No, I don't look anything like Mr. Rogers does, but if I could have just one small part of Fred Rogers' innate goodness, I would indeed be tamed. What a gift—the gift to be simple.

Children will continue to know Fred Rogers. *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* con-

tinues to air on PBS. And FCI will continue to produce special projects for families. But who will help us be brave? Who will tell us day after day that we, too, are special and needed and respected? Perhaps it is that rose that will remind us of the work of this talented, loving man whose generous nature and sure, steady message graced our lives. &

**Margaret Mary Kimmel**, a personal friend of the late Fred Rogers, is professor in the Department of Library and Information Science at the University of Pittsburgh, where the Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood archives are housed.

# Just What Do They *Want?* What Do They *Need?*

## A Study of the Informational Needs of Children

Andrew Kenneth Shenton and Pat Dixon



Andrew Kenneth Shenton



Pat Dixon

**D**espite the increasing importance of information in the lives of young people today, attempts to develop classifications of their information needs remain rare.

Over the last decade, Walter, Kinnell, Fourie, and Hayter have all drawn attention either to how little is known about such needs or to the necessity of learning more.<sup>1</sup> Many have noted that an understanding of the information needs of children cannot be developed simply from what is known about those of adults. This may be tempting, however, in the absence of a significant volume of research devoted specifically to young people.

Differences between the two groups are highlighted by Druin and Solomon, who write, “Young people have their own likes, dislikes, curiosities, and needs that are not the same as their adult teachers or parents.”<sup>2</sup> Higgins concurs, asserting that some of the needs associated with children are not felt by adults, and Burton indicates that requirements stemming from school assignments, especially, are unique to young people.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, it may be argued that needs such as those relating to reskilling in the workplace and participation in democratic processes are unlikely to be felt by those yet to attain adult status.

A greater awareness of children’s information needs is essential if staff in both school library media centers and public libraries are to satisfy their clients’ requirements. Indeed, the American Library Association ranks knowledge of the needs of children second only to knowledge of “theories, practices, and emerging trends of librarianship” in the delivery of an effective service.<sup>4</sup>

This principle formed a key motivation behind recent research in England that aimed to present a new typology of the information needs of young people.

### Previous Work

A few categorizations of information needs have been evolved for young children and teenagers. In the former area, Farrell describes two forms of need—those of a general nature, relating to oneself, the environment, and other people, and life needs addressing health, nutrition, safety, emotional security, and intellectual stimulation.<sup>5</sup> All the areas of life needs have been covered at least to some degree in Walter’s typology, which is again aimed at younger children.<sup>6</sup> Similar to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, it includes classes devoted to self-actualization, esteem, love and belonging, safety, and physiological needs.<sup>7</sup>

Teenagers have been the subject of more typologies. The way in which separate work has focused on the needs of young children and adolescents reflects the fact that commentators, including Amey and Kinnell, believe the two groups to be fundamentally different.<sup>8</sup> An early attempt to identify the information needs of adolescents was made by Minudri, who isolated five areas: school and curriculum needs, recreational needs, personal development needs, vocational and career information needs, and accomplishment skills and information needs.<sup>9</sup> There is much common ground between Minudri’s divisions and later efforts by Gratch and Latrobe and Havener.<sup>10</sup> From the totality

of this work, needs associated with schoolwork, leisure, and education and training emerge particularly prominently. Fourie and Kruger, too, highlight curriculum information requirements, although they also stress the importance of needs relating to children's biological progress and situations involving their family and social environment.<sup>11</sup>

## Empirical Research

The new typology of information needs presented in this article emerged from a qualitative, British Academy-funded Ph.D. study that explored the information universes of young people. The typology was constructed by investigating the ideas of children as expressed by them, and the understanding of need that was developed was based on their perspectives. Informants were drawn from six schools all located in a small town on England's northeast coast. Three were first schools (children ages four to nine), two middle schools (ages nine to thirteen), and one a high school (ages thirteen to eighteen). In each organization, children randomly selected from one form in each year group contributed data. Each form teacher verified that the sample taken from his or her class embraced a wide range of ability. In total, 188 pupils from fourteen year groups were involved. Data was collected from twelve focus groups and 121 individual interviews conducted during the 1999–2000 academic year.

Each informant was asked to think of a time recently when he or she needed help making a decision, when he or she was worried about something and needed to learn about it, either for school or personal interest. This approach was based on a strategy devised by Dervin et al. for their study of the information needs of Seattle residents.<sup>12</sup> After providing stories relating to the needs they had experienced, informants were asked to describe the action they had taken in response. Each dialogue was tape-recorded and transcripts were prepared soon after its completion.

Although individual interviews and focus groups were the principal methods of gathering data, where possible, the data was verified against documentary sources. In particular, data was triangulated against England's National Curriculum requirements and internal school documents, such as curriculum programs of study and schemes of work.<sup>13</sup> Data was coded inductively using the constant comparative method of Glaser and Strauss.<sup>14</sup>

## Conceptual Boundaries of the Project

For the purposes of the study, an information need was considered to be the desire or necessity to acquire the intellectual material required by a person to ease, resolve, or otherwise address a situation arising in his or her life. It was understood that the information may be conveyed via several channels and in a range of formats, pictorial among them. In accordance with widespread assumptions among writers and researchers involved in library and information science, information was perceived to include facts, interpretations, advice, and opinions. Unlike some authors, however, the researchers considered information needs to include needs and wants alike. This was done, in part, because to concentrate exclusively on what the investigators might consider necessary information would

involve the introduction of a judgmental approach that seemed incompatible with the aim of examining information needs from the children's own perspectives. It may also be argued that since a researcher cannot experience the emotions and thoughts of an informant, the making of such distinctions is, as Line implies, virtually impossible.<sup>15</sup> Only those needs that the study participants actually felt were explored within the project. Needs that were pre-empted by teachers who provided information in advance of such feelings emerging, were beyond the scope of the work.



Some youngsters had to make decisions with regard to money management.

## Project Results: The Typology

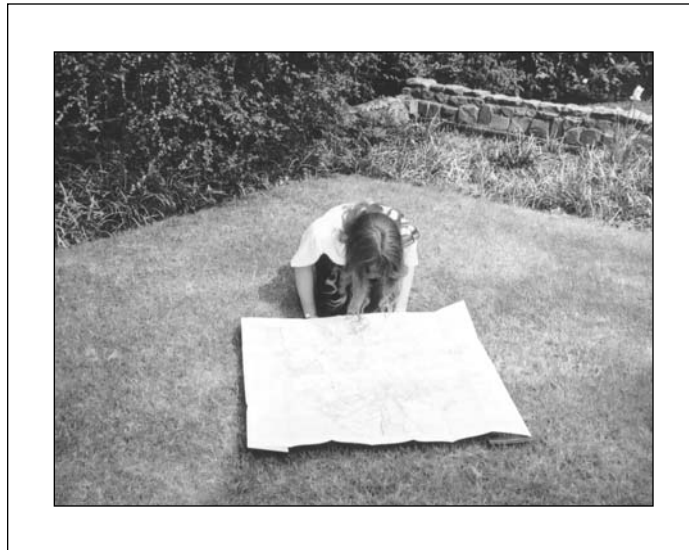
Although the typology that follows relates to the whole body of the children who were investigated in the fieldwork, the frequency with which the types and subtypes emerged vary according to the age of the informant. Needs of some types were especially prevalent among teenagers, while others pertained more to young children. The thirteen main types and subtypes of need that arose in the research are listed here with an indication of whether they were most prevalent among the first (F), middle (M), or high schoolers (H).

### Advice

Students indicated needing advice on the action that should be taken in a certain situation. Such guidance pertained to:

- academic work for school (M, H);
- problems, difficulties, or developments that had emerged in the individual's life (M);

- decisions that must be made in relation to a leisure pursuit (F, M);
  - matters concerning health and welfare, in which the youngster was confronted by a medical condition or another situation that was believed to jeopardize his or her physical well-being (F, M, H);
  - the most effective way of using or managing money in a particular situation (M, H);
  - relationships, involving either the individual's role with another person or close friends of the informant and another individual (F, M); and
  - self-development, in which the youngster needed to make a decision on his or her future (H).
- instances where normal routines and expectations were disturbed by unanticipated events that were considered by the informant to present problems (F, M). These situations involved either other people or the use of equipment or machines;
  - illness or medical conditions affecting the youngster (F, M);
  - personal relationships (F, M). Concerns in this area often emerged after some form of conflict between the informant and another person;



Some youngsters were keen to learn about other places.

### Response to Problems

Spontaneous life situation information in response to emerging problems (F, M), where the youngster's progress in an activity was halted by a barrier, the overcoming of which could be facilitated by facts associated with the events forming that problem.

### Personal Information

Information that might pertain to the youngster directly or to others within the person's social world. Topics included:

- medical diagnoses (F, M, H);
- information about the immediate environment (F); and
- details of times, dates, and places relating to family routines (F).

### Affective Support

Provision of reassurance and sympathy in relation to past, ongoing, and future situations. Affective support pertained to:

- new experiences (F, M);
- the discharge of responsibilities (F, M, H), in which the youngster had to contribute in some way to a situation, usually through either work or behavior;
- self-image (M, H);

- feelings for the welfare of others, often stimulated by an awareness that a particular person was in danger (F, M); and

- phobias—personal fears that the informant was unable to explain rationally (F).

### Empathetic Understanding

Information relating to a person generally or an individual's specific behavior at the time of a certain event (F, H).

### Support for Skill Development

Categories included:

- school-required (F, M, H)—most of the skills within this category were tied to curriculum subjects, although others were more generic, such as skills associated with time management and essay writing;
- otherwise imposed (F)—by parents, for example;
- self-initiated (F, M, H)—in which the youngster sought to increase his or her skills for his own purposes; and
- circumstantial (F, M)—where the individual had chosen to become involved in activities that necessitated the learning of particular skills.

### School-related Subject Information

Information pertaining to schoolwork sought to enable the participant to discharge his or her academic responsibilities (F, M, H), such as the production of an assignment or revision for an examination or to help the student pursue on his or her own initiative topics addressed in class (F, M).

### Interest-driven Information

That dealing with matters of personal appeal and which were unrelated to school work. The topics were as follows:

- living things and life processes (F, M);

- real-life and fantasy environments (F);
- man-made products (F, M, H);
- medicine (M);
- understood natural phenomena (F);
- the unknown (F, M);
- history (F, M);
- places (F, M), often other countries;
- sport (F, M, H);
- nonsporting outdoor pursuits (M);
- the nonsporting entertainment-related areas of film, television, and music (F, M, H);
- literature (H);
- societal events (F), such as the United Kingdom's National Lottery; and
- moral debates (H), including arguments surrounding the legalization of drugs.

### Consumer Information

Assistance in making decisions regarding the possible purchase of goods (M, H). Usually, although not always, the informant was considering buying the product for his or her own use.

### Self-development Information

Information required to determine courses of action affecting the youngster's future. Typically this factual information pertained to jobs and job opportunities (H) and educational courses offered at school or by colleges and universities (H).

### Preparatory Information

Help for the informant contemplating a forthcoming challenge to understand what might be expected of him or her (M).

### Reinterpretations and Supplementations of Information

Explanation to complement information already known to the youngster (F, M, H). These usually related to school work and addressed either the content itself or what was expected by a teacher for a particular assignment.

### Verificational Information

Confirmation or denial of children's existing suspicions (M, H). All reported instances involved homework. Each informant had formed an opinion as to what was expected of him or her for an assignment, and simply wanted confirmation that his or her beliefs were correct.

**Table 1.** Relationships between Concepts of Objective and Subjective Information and Need Types within Typology

Need type	Objective	Subjective
Advice		x
Response to Problems	x	
Personal Information	x	x
Affective Support		x
Empathetic Understanding	x	
Support for Skill Development	x	
School-related Subject Information	x	x
Interest-driven Information	x	x
Consumer Information	x	x
Self-development Information	x	
Preparatory Information	x	
Reinterpretations and Supplementations	x	
Verificational Information	x	

**Table 2.** Relationships between Need Types within Typology and Life Situations Defined by Dervin

Need type	Situation(s) responsible
Advice	Decisions
Response to Problems	Problems, comprehendings
Personal Information	Comprehendings
Affective Support	Worries
Empathetic Understanding	Comprehendings
Support for Skill Development	Problems, comprehendings
School-related Subject Information	Problems, comprehendings
Interest-driven Information	Comprehendings
Consumer Information	Decisions, comprehendings
Self-development Information	Decisions, comprehendings
Preparatory Information	Decisions, comprehendings
Reinterpretations and Supplementations	Problems, comprehendings
Verificational Information	Problems, comprehendings

All the categories and subcategories defined above are grounded in the data collected and analyzed. Readers may however, identify further types of information needs based on their own experience.

## Other Groupings and Their Relationship with the Need Types

Dervin and Nilan distinguish between objective and subjective types of information.<sup>16</sup> They define the former as "something that has constant meaning and some element of absolute correspondence to reality." Subjective information may be understood as less hard and fast, involving opinions and interpretations that may vary from one individual to another. If these concepts are applied to the types of information need defined above, the relationships shown in table 1 may be observed.

Assessing the origins of information needs, Dervin writes that they may be triggered by four different life situations:

- decisions (in which a choice is to be made from the options available);

**Table 3. Relationships between Need Types within Own Typology and Those Defined by Others\***

Need type	Comparable categories
Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elements incorporated within Poston-Anderson and Edwards's (1993) "strategies," "relationships" and "education/work"<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Elements incorporated within Latrobe and Havener's (1997), "relationships"</li> </ul>
Response to Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elements incorporated within Minudri's (1974), "recreational needs"</li> <li>• Elements incorporated within Walter's (1994) "self-actualization" and "love and belonging," and "leisure activities"</li> </ul>
Personal Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elements incorporated within Poston-Anderson and Edwards's (1993), "assessments"</li> <li>• Elements incorporated within Walter's (1994), "physiological" needs</li> </ul>
Affective Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equivalent to Minudri's (1974) "personal development needs," "emotional backup"</li> <li>• Elements incorporated within Latrobe and Havener's (1997), "relationships"</li> </ul>
Empathetic Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elements incorporated within Gratch's (1978), "self-understanding and family problems"</li> <li>• Equivalent to Poston-Anderson and Edwards's (1993), "empathetic understanding"</li> <li>• Incorporated within Walter's (1994) "love and belonging," "emotional awareness," and Latrobe and Havener's (1997) "relationships"</li> </ul>
Support for Skill Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporated within Minudri's (1974), "school and curriculum needs" and "accomplishment skills and information needs"</li> <li>• Elements incorporated within Gratch's (1978), "crafts and hobbies" and "games and sports"</li> <li>• Elements incorporated within Walter's (1994) "self-actualization," "formal education or curriculum needs," "love and belonging" category, "interpersonal skills," "safety," and "basic literacy"</li> <li>• Elements incorporated within Latrobe and Havener's (1997), "course-related information needs"</li> </ul>
School-related Subject Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporated within Minudri's (1974), "school and curriculum needs"</li> <li>• Elements incorporated within Gratch's (1978) "sex education"</li> <li>• Incorporated within Poston-Anderson and Edwards's (1993) "education and work," "schoolwork"</li> <li>• Incorporated within Walter's (1994) "self-actualization," "formal education or curriculum needs," and elements incorporated within her "sex education" category</li> <li>• Incorporated within Latrobe and Havener's (1997) "course-related information needs"</li> </ul>
Interest-driven Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporated within Minudri's (1974) "recreational needs"</li> <li>• Elements incorporated within Gratch's (1978) "crafts and hobbies" and "games and sports"</li> <li>• Incorporated within Walter's (1994) "self-actualization," "love and belonging," and "leisure activities"</li> <li>• Elements incorporated within Latrobe and Havener's (1997) "current lifestyle issues," "health information issues," and "general information"</li> </ul>
Self-development Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embracing Minudri's (1974) "vocational and career information needs"</li> <li>• Equivalent to Gratch's (1978) "educational and career opportunities"</li> <li>• Equivalent to Poston-Anderson and Edwards's (1993) "education and work," "choosing a career," and "choosing subjects"</li> <li>• Elements incorporated within Walter's (1994) "self-actualization" and "formal education or curriculum needs"</li> <li>• Equivalent to Latrobe and Havener's (1997) "future plans"</li> </ul>

\* The need types of Consumer Information, Preparatory Information, Reinterpretations and Supplementations, and Verificational Information have no comparable categories in others' research.

1. Barbara Poston-Anderson and Susan Edwards, "The Role of Information in Helping Adolescent Girls with Their Life Concerns." *School Library Media Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (1993): 25-30.

- problems (where a barrier stands in the way of an individual's progress);
- worries (in which a person is hindered by a lack of predictability or control); and
- comprehendings (where an individual is seeking to understand).<sup>17</sup>

When the typology of need types is mapped against these situations, the pattern shown in table 2 emerges.

Table 3 offers an analysis of how the types within the typology correspond to detailed categories of young people's information needs identified by previous researchers.

As can be seen, some need categories, especially those pertaining to skills, subject information for school, information on personal interests, and self-development information, have been widely identified in previous work. They have emerged as standard categories of need that are now generally recognized.

Indeed, Marshall specifically highlights needs within three of these areas, as well as information in response to personal crises, as particularly commonly experienced by children.<sup>18</sup> Conversely, four types of need have not been explicitly addressed in previous typologies, but it is possible that some of their contents may be understood as lying within investigators' existing categories. In particular, much consumer information may be viewed as a part of types devoted to leisure or recreation, yet not all children seeking consumer information wanted details of products that they were considering purchasing for their own use. Indeed the fact that some informants were involved in buying presents at Christmas indicates that their motivations arose from their roles and responsibilities in relation to others. Similarly, although most needs for reinterpretations and supplementations involved school work, there was one instance that was exceptional and thus the category as a whole cannot be regarded as merely a variety of school-related information. The verificational category is slightly different as all reported needs within this domain involved academic work. Nevertheless, the needs were adjudged sufficiently different in nature from those in all the other categories to merit a discrete group.

Since the principal divisions of the typology are based largely on the purposes for which the information was required, some topics, treated as individual categories in several previous typologies that have pursued a more subject-oriented approach emerge across different types. Latrobe and Havener's group, relationships, includes content that is dispersed within the new typology in categories devoted to advice, affective support, and empathetic understanding.<sup>19</sup>

## Relevance of the Typology

Many of the skills-related information needs that emerged in the study involved work for school. Such needs may indicate either shortcomings in teaching of the skill or insufficient teaching of it. Shortcomings in teaching of the skill were especially the case with mathematics, where children in all phases needed help beyond the provision offered through ordinary teaching. Findings suggest that such additional information is required to develop skills in a diversity of areas of mathematics. A future study specifically examining this issue, with a larger sample, is necessary to investigate whether similar problems emerge among children of the same age or whether the difficulties are specific to the individual. An understanding of which of the two patterns predominates will then determine the balance of the remedial action. The former would imply the need for greater whole-class emphasis to anticipate and prevent the emergence of common problems, whilst the latter situation suggests a need for more one-to-one teaching and greater proactivity in recognizing individual problems at an early stage.

Insufficient teaching of the skill was evident in that some generic skills, such as those relating to time management, essay planning, and oral presentations, were apparently not taught in the schools, perhaps because in the higher phases the curriculum was organized in accordance with subjects. Again, more research is needed to investigate how information relating to these skills should be provided. Despite the fact that they may all be considered generic, i.e., not tied to a particular curriculum area, significant differences emerge.

Whereas skills pertaining to essay planning and oral presentations, for example, may be taught in relation to a certain assignment, those associated with time management are less easy to address in this context. In order to maintain an emphasis on the generic nature of all these areas, it may be that these are best addressed in dedicated study skills sessions. Several of the children's needs for affective support related to anxieties associated with delivering oral presentations and completing homework on time. This suggests educators must take care to ensure that not only do children learn the particular skills that they require but they also have sufficient confidence in their abilities to be undaunted by such situations.

Just as needs for skills-related information often reflected children's problems in particular areas, many needs involving advice, reinterpretations, supplementations, and verificational information arose from children feeling uncertain as to what was expected of them in school assignments. Frequently these

situations could have been avoided had the instructions been clearer at the beginning of the activity. More opportunity must be provided during preliminary briefings for children to voice their real concerns to those who have set the work, thereby reducing their anxieties and needs at a later stage. This may require a more collaborative, interactive atmosphere to be fostered within the classroom. Where concerns do emerge as the work progresses, it is vital that children feel that they can call on adults for sympathy, reassurance, support, and clarification.

Fieldwork for the research that formed the subject of this paper took place in a small town in northeast England. Because of possible differences in the nature of life on the two sides of the Atlantic, it might prove useful if research were undertaken to establish whether the patterns that have been described here are replicated in the United States. In particular, it would be illuminating to identify whether, perhaps as a result of cultural variations, the categories of interest-driven information desired by children differ. The key challenge for any future research inspired by this paper would thus be to highlight types and subtypes of information need that are specific to the English informants sampled here, those that appear to emerge across both countries, and those which are peculiar to American children. ☞

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# Illinois Library Association ad

# Building a Future

## KSU Inaugurates Children's Library Center, Looks Forward to More Innovative Projects

*Megan Lynn Isaac*

**H**ow hard is it in an era of budget cutting and downsizing to find good news about opportunities to celebrate children and books?

It depends, of course, on where you look, but one place where even the gravest pessimist would be forced to break into a smile is the School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) at Kent State University (KSU) in Ohio. This fall, professors Carolyn Brodie and Greg Byerly will formally open the university's new Children's Library Center. The center is funded over the next three years with a \$240,000 grant from Cleveland's Reinberger Foundation, a private family foundation dedicated to promoting cultural and educational projects in the Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio areas. This new resource, located on the third floor of the university library, will serve as a model children's library for students, teachers, and librarians from across Ohio.

The 1,800-square-foot center will house about six thousand titles, include a wireless network composed of thirty moveable workstations, video conferencing capabilities, and feature a central classroom space designed to welcome up to twenty-four children at a time. Of course, the SLIS at Kent State has been investing in books for children for years, but until the advent of this center, the classroom space at the school has always been distinct from the library resources. Now, students on the KSU campus will sit amidst books, puppets, posters, and original artwork as they take some of their classes. Teachers won't merely rattle off a list of titles or write them on the board in response to a student's question about poetry collections for middle-school students or picture books about Ohio history. Now they'll walk over to the shelved collections and pull out examples by the handful.

As Brodie explained, "This room is really a vision of the future; Kent has made a tremendous commitment to children. It will provide opportunities for our graduate students to work with children in libraries across Ohio and beyond."

The primary beneficiaries of the Children's Library Center will be the six hundred students currently enrolled in KSU's Master's in Library Science degree program. Nearly one-third of them are specializing in children's or young adult library services. Local teachers, library media specialists, and children's book lovers are also welcome to use the center's noncirculating collection.

For Brodie and Byerly, however, local students and patrons are only the tip of the iceberg. For a dozen years now, these two professors have been collaborating on various grants, workshops, and publications to help foster the development of professional skills in teachers and librarians throughout the state. They write a regular column together for *School Library Media Activities Monthly*, and for the past six years, they have conducted workshops across Ohio for librarians and media specialists interested in improving their skills in electronic information and new technologies.

The technological capacities of the Children's Library Center will substantially enhance this aspect of their mission. This new site is the second distance-learning classroom at KSU, but it is the first dedicated to library and media studies. Instead of competing for space and time in the university's already popular distance-learning facility, graduate students enrolled from across the state in KSU's SLIS programs will be able to complete their degrees in about two years without attending courses on campus. The genuinely interactive distance-learning courses will allow students not only to watch classes in real-time, but also participate in them. The students at each of three or four participating off-campus sites will have individual microphones synchronized with cameras to transmit their questions and comments both visually and verbally back to the local classroom in the Children's Library Center. Electronic discussion lists and e-mail exchanges will also augment the discussion formats for students enrolled both on and off-campus in this program.



Greg Byerly and Carolyn Brodie

Byerly explained, “The distance-learning capabilities of the Children’s Library Center will significantly expand the school’s capacity to provide graduate education to future librarians, including students who are place-bound and otherwise would not be able to pursue an advanced degree.”

Brodie and Byerly both have experience as school librarians but also have their own fields of expertise, and this is, no doubt, part of what has made their collaboration so successful on this project and all those that have preceded it. Brodie specializes in children’s literature and library services and has been working for

fourteen years to build the SLIS collection of materials for young readers. When she first joined the faculty, the SLIS didn’t own a single book for young readers; today the collection is impressive, growing, and worthy of its own center. In 2000, she served as the chair of the John Newbery Award committee. Brodie modestly credits the recent successes of the library school at KSU to its director, Richard Rubins. “We do what we are able to do because we have an incredible leader,” she explained.

Byerly is especially noted for his expertise in technology. He spent ten years as the head of systems at KSU and worked as a consultant on the development of all three of Ohio’s state library information systems—one for university libraries, one for K–12 school libraries, and one for public libraries—and focuses much of his energy on distance education. Byerly sees the technological components of the center as one of its most innovative features.

Brodie and Byerly are, however, already looking well beyond the grand opening of their new center this fall. KSU has received a \$2 million federal award for a library education project to create the Institute for Library and Information Literacy Education in cooperation with the College of Education, the University Library, and the School of Library and Information Science. This institute will both support and further the goals established by the Children’s Library Center. Plans for making the best use of these new funds are still in development, but one goal of the project is to help support collaboration among K–12 teachers and library and media specialists.

The funding, supported by U.S. Representative Ralph Regula (R-Ohio), comes in recognition of the fact that integrating school libraries and information literacy into the curriculum can best be achieved when teachers and library specialists work together. Having collaborated for so many years on so many projects, it is difficult to imagine a better team than Brodie and Byerly to provide leadership in just this area. &

*Megan Lynn Isaac is the author of Heirs to Shakespeare (Heinemann, 2000). She lives in Auburn, Alabama.*

# Definition Press 1/4 page island

# Weaving Stories

## Celebrating the Tenth Anniversary of the Américas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature

*Julie Kline*

*Ever since Tantie passed on her bamboo beads to me three years ago and told me I'd be the one to tell stories someday, everybody keeps waiting for me to tell a story.*

*But Tantie says not to rush. I have plenty of time to learn how to tell stories. And she says she still have plenty to tell, so all I have to do is watch and listen good. She says that's the best way to learn anything.<sup>1</sup>*

Stories are woven from memory and from the imagination. In the case of books recognized by the Américas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature, the stories are all the more vibrant for the diversity of cultures and lives represented. Up to two awards are given annually in recognition of U.S.-published works of fiction, poetry, folklore, or selected nonfiction (from picture books to works for young adults) that authentically and engagingly portray Latin America, the Caribbean, or Latinos in the United States. By linking the Americas, the intent is to reach beyond geographic borders, as well as multi-cultural-international boundaries, focusing instead upon cultural heritages within the hemisphere.

The award was first bestowed in 1993 to encourage and commend authors, illustrators, and publishers who produce quality children's and young adult books; to provide teachers with recommendations for classroom use; and to offer librarians guidance to develop culturally diverse collections. The Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP) sponsors the award and publishes an annotated bibliography of commended titles annually. CLASP is a national organization of Latin American studies programs and centers generally at U.S. colleges and universities that works to support Latin American studies undergraduate education, and K-12 outreach endeavors.

Titles are judged by four principal criteria: distinctive literary quality; cultural contextualization; exceptional

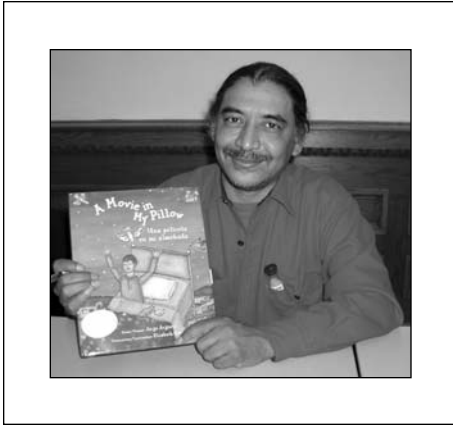
integration of text, illustration, and design; and potential for classroom use. The award is presented each summer in a ceremony at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., hosted by the library's Hispanic Division and the Center for the Book.

In its ten-year history, the Américas Award has recommended some 221 titles that celebrate Latin American and Caribbean cultures, from the U.S. to Tierra del Fuego, the southernmost tip of Argentina. The award complements the efforts of two related children's book awards: the Pura Belpré (given to Latino authors/illustrators for books portraying and affirming the Latino cultural experience) and the Tomás Rivera (focused on Mexican-American culture).

The Américas Award celebrated its tenth anniversary in April 2003 with a public program in Milwaukee. The program, a collaboration between Milwaukee Public Library, Milwaukee Public Schools, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies), featured five authors who have won the Américas award: George Ancona, Jorge Argueta, Amelia Lau Carling, Juan Felipe Herrera, and Lynn Joseph. Of thirteen past winners, these five authors amply represent the cultural diversity that is the Americas, with backgrounds and histories representing African-Caribbean, Mexican-American, Chinese-Guatemalan, and indigenous Salvadoran cultures.

### **George Ancona**

George Ancona is a highly prolific writer and photographer who will have published one hundred books for children by 2004. Perhaps because of his own Mexican heritage, Ancona has produced an incredible range of titles set in the Americas, including: *Harvest*; *Cuban Kids*; *Carnaval*; *Fiesta Fireworks*; *Barrio: Jose's Neighborhood*; *Mayeros: A Yucatec Maya Family*; *Charro: The Mexican Cowboy*; *The Piñata Maker*; *Fiesta USA*; and *Pablo Remembers: The Fiesta of the Day of the Dead*. As readers of his work know, Ancona vividly conveys the worlds of



Jorge Argueta

children whose daily lives reflect culturally rich heritages.

## Jorge Argueta

Jorge Argueta is a gifted poet and teacher who was born in El Salvador. He came to San Francisco in 1980 to escape the civil war in his country. The author of several books of poems, he is active in the cultural life of the city and teaches poetry in the public schools. Argueta's bilingual book, *A Movie in My Pillow/Una Película en Mi Almohada* tells in poetry of his childhood experience of leaving his country and adjusting to a new life. He has had several new titles published this year with Children's Book Press and Groundwood Books.

## Amelia Lau Carling

Amelia Lau Carling was born in Guatemala, the youngest of six children of Chinese immigrants. She learned about the Chinese, Mayan, and Ladino (non-Mayan) cultures while growing up in her family's general store in Guatemala City. Carling first came to the United States to study art; she later served as art director for a major children's book publisher in New York City and now works as a freelance artist and book designer. Her book, *Mama and Papa Have a Store*, was recently published in Spanish by Groundwood Books.

## Juan Felipe Herrera

Juan Felipe Herrera is a poet, teacher, and actor who finds poetry everywhere and



Lynn Joseph

encourages others to do the same. He is an associate professor of Chicano and Latin American Studies at California State University-Fresno, has taught creative writing from third grade to university level and is the author of numerous poetry collections. Herrera's *Crashboom-love: A Novel in Verse* received the 1999 Américas Award.

## Lynn Joseph

Lynn Joseph is the author of many books for children about her island home of Trinidad, including *A Wave in Her Pocket*, *An Island Christmas*, and *The Mermaid's Twin Sister* (1994 Américas Award winner). Exploring a different Caribbean culture and history, *The Color of My Words* (2000 Américas Award winner) was her first novel about the Dominican Republic. Until recently, Joseph worked as an attorney for the city of New York; she now lives in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

These authors' own stories and their writing are woven often of memory, and frequently of family and the role of elders in influencing a love of language and words. Herrera describes learning his sidewalk ABCs.

And then my mother and me, we'd walk downtown, and I'd be holding her hand. I'd be a little tiny guy, a little lizard, little canary, and we'd be walking down the street, and I'd be holding her hand, and she'd be going through the ABCs in Spanish with me. She'd be going "a" and I'd be walking, looking around—I'd call it sidewalk learning. "a?" And then

she'd go "b", and we'd take a couple more steps and go down the street, and I'd be looking at people, "b?", and then we'd get to the hard letters, you know, the "x", the "y", and the "z."<sup>2</sup>

Argueta speaks lovingly of his grandmother, a Nahuatl-speaking indigenous healer, and writes of her in *A Movie in My Pillow*:

My Grandma's Stories

Mita's stories  
filled her shack  
with stars

Mita's stories  
put smiles  
on our faces

Mita's stories  
are old  
like the mountains

Mita's stories  
are like the songs  
of the crickets

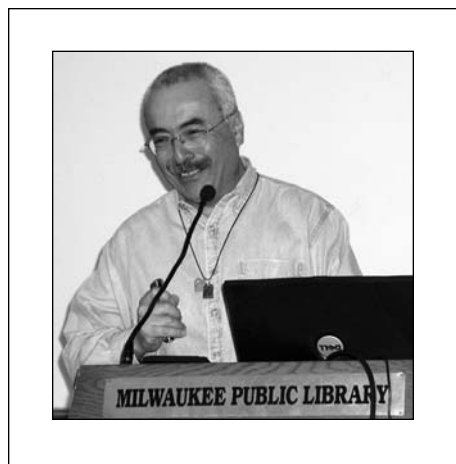
If I close my eyes  
I hear them  
in the wind<sup>3</sup>

Culture suffuses these authors' lives and the stories they tell. Individuals aware of the African, indigenous, and European roots of Latin America and the Caribbean may be intrigued to learn of the many other cultures represented in the region:

Mama and Papa have a store, a Chinese store in Guatemala City. They sell buttons, ribbons, thread, and cloth. They sell paper lanterns, plastic balls, firecrackers, and perfume. Needles, white gloves, tablecloths, bottles of soy sauce—there's everything in my parents' store. It smells of flowers and of the freshly swept moist sawdust they use for cleaning the tiled floor.

Mama knits without looking down and talks with the customers in Spanish. They call her doña Graciela. But in Chinese her name means "Lady Who Lives in the Moon."

Papa at his desk adds and subtracts with his abacus. He is don Rodolfo in Spanish, and in Chinese his name



Juan Felipe Herrera

means “Fragrant Pond.”<sup>4</sup>

These stories weave the patterns of many lives, full of both struggle and dreams. Ancona set his book, *Barrio: José’s Neighborhood*, in the multicultural Mission district of San Francisco, where murals of César Chávez and Rigoberta Menchú on José’s school surely inspire children with their color and meaning:

Because of the murals, a walk through the barrio is like a walk through the history of the people who live here. Very often, immigrants living in the barrio are refugees who fled their countries to save their lives. Many have seen friends and relatives killed, and decided to seek safety in the United States. Others have come to escape poverty. Some are so desperate that they are here without proper permits. This means they have no legal right to work in this country, and so often are paid very little for their work.<sup>5</sup>

Herrera’s *Crashboomlove: A Novel in Verse* conveys the life of his protagonist simply yet vividly; the structure is perhaps a reminder of the poetry in all lives:

Road of black starry grapes  
waiting to crash,  
that burn on wire vines.

Grapes pruned and pulled.  
Grapes thrown cut and dropped dry.

They dry in the fiery red dust of  
Fowlerville.



Amelia Lau Carling

Fowlerville, say it out loud. Say it  
biting my lips.

Father carries me in his arms. A torn  
brown photograph I keep on the  
wall.

Campesino shirt blue,  
our trailer in tin.

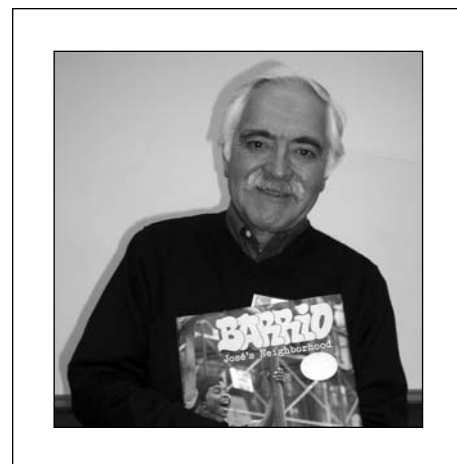
Don’t lose this foto,  
she tells me. Mama Lucy.  
Back at the kitchen window.

Apartment #9—  
“C” Street, Westside barrio. Stare  
with my hard eyes.

Out into the night. Disappear.<sup>6</sup>

For all the differences in background—Ancona growing up in Coney Island, Argueta in El Salvador, Herrera in California, Carling in Guatemala City, and Joseph in Trinidad—the authors’ presentations are striking for their similarities: the weaving of memory and imagination, childhood and family, of words and images from the past carried forward into their stories. The reader can easily picture Joseph’s character, Ana Rosa, so longing to write, that she guiltily steals her brother’s notepad he needs for his waiter job:

I was turning into a little thief—  
always stealing bits and pieces of  
paper to write on. Sometimes it was  
the paper bags that Papi brought  
home his bottles of rum in. Some-  
times napkins or the gray paper that  
the shopkeepers use to wrap up  
goods. But I wanted more than any-  
thing a notepad of my very own. One  
in which I could write “POEMS by



George Ancona

Ana Rosa Hernández” on the first  
page and then fill it up with words—  
long words, short words, words that  
smelled and tasted like something  
new.<sup>7</sup>

Recipients of the Américas Award at the Library of Congress always receive a gift symbolic of the weaving of stories: a backstrap loom weaving from Guatemala, produced by indigenous Maya women. In Mayan culture, particular colors and designs represent different communities; these incredibly vibrant weavings that the women design, weave, and wear as blouses (*huipiles*) remind us that art and daily life are intricately interwoven.

Like a weaving on a backstrap loom, the threads of so many miles traveled, of implausible destinies, of journeys taken across dirt roads and across vast oceans came to intertwine in my parents’ store and were pulled taut in *Mama & Papa Have a Store* by the simple memory of a happy childhood. As in George Ancona’s *Barrio*, it’s a common story, really—a universal one that doesn’t fail to move us because it’s so true.<sup>8</sup>

Why single out this body of children’s literature? Besides the obvious answer that librarians and teachers increasingly work with Latino populations within the U.S., exploring multicultural worlds can engage the reader both by the specificity of cultures described, and by the universality of themes that link us all. As Carling wrote:

The Américas Award matters because it opens doors to views about American life and life in Latin America to people—especially children—who have not been exposed to them, and reinforces in those who already know about them, the importance of our stories in terms of family and culture. These books are very personal, and the young reader will discover how rich the connections can be between the young and the old, between community and self, and will be encouraged to find creativity in his/her own home environment.<sup>9</sup>

For more information on the Américas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature, including the annotated bibliographies, visit: [www.uwm.edu/Dept/CLACS/outreach\\_americas.html](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CLACS/outreach_americas.html).

**Julie Kline** is coordinator of the Américas Award and Outreach and Academic Program Coordinator at the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.

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4. Amelia Lau Carling, *Mama & Papa Have a Store* (New York: Dial, 1998).
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7. Joseph, *The Color of My Words* (New York: HarperCollins, 2000).
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## Américas Award Winners 1993–2002

- 2002** *Before We Were Free* by Julia Alvarez (Knopf)
- 2001** *A Movie in My Pillow/Una película en mi almohada* by Jorge Argueta, illustrated by Elizabeth Gómez (Children's Pr.)  
*Breaking Through* by Francisco Jiménez (Houghton)
- 2000** *The Color of My Words* by Lynn Joseph (HarperCollins)  
*The Composition* by Antonio Skármeta; illustrated by Alfonso Ruano (Groundwood)
- 1999** *Crashboomlove: A Novel in Verse* by Juan Felipe Herrera (Univ. of New Mexico Pr.)
- 1998** *Barrio: José's Neighborhood* by George Ancona (Harcourt)  
*Mama & Papa Have a Store* by Amelia Lau Carling (Dial)
- 1997** *The Circuit* by Francisco Jiménez (Univ. of New Mexico Pr.)  
*The Face at the Window* by Regina Hanson; illustrated by Linda Saport (Clarion)
- 1996** *In My Family/En mi familia* by Carmen Lomas Garza (Children's Pr.)  
*Parrot in the Oven* by Victor Martinez (HarperCollins)
- 1995** *Tonight, by Sea* by Frances Temple (Orchard)
- 1994** *The Mermaid's Twin Sister* by Lynn Joseph (Clarion)
- 1993** *Vejigante Masquerader* by Lulu Delacre (Scholastic)

*Books were originally published in the year they won the award.*

# Hyperion 2

# 1/4 page island



# Urban

vs.

# Rural

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS: Toby Rajput

NORWALK, WISCONSIN: Nicole Medley

## Chicago School Librarian Must Meet Demands of Challenged Students

*Toby Rajput*

I entered the school library world in midlife, after years of experience as a volunteer in city schools, an avid reader, and an active mother of three. In fact, my fourth-grade son, who was excited about me becoming a teacher, articulated my challenge as a school librarian when he moaned, "Don't become a librarian. Everybody hates the library!"

At that time, I knew nothing about National Board standards that urge active engaging learning environments in school libraries, only that "they" would not hate *my* library!

All librarians are expert evaluators of appropriate resources for their communities. Like public libraries, school library media centers offer their patrons access to a wide range of information through a variety of media. But unlike public libraries, school library collections are developed to support the needs of the curriculum and of teaching and learning at that particular school. In fact, the urban school library may be a child's only introduction to the classics of children's literature, the only place a child meets adult readers, the only opportunity for intimate contact with books, magazines, and newspapers, indeed, the only hope for a successful future. I accepted the challenge of teaching in an urban school library because the need is critical.

I work in a large urban system at a school that serves 610 minority students from infancy (as young as six weeks old) through

## Send Us Your Story

How do you fit in?

The historic, bustling city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, has 1.5 million residents.

The pastoral, off-the-beaten-path village of Iola, Wisconsin, has 1,100.

Should library service to children in these diverse areas be the same?

At the heart of the issue, of course, are the children. But just as children are different, so are the ways in which librarians serve them.

*Children and Libraries* would like to feature librarians in urban and rural areas, and share their practices, tips, and views for creating a comfortable, useful haven for children.

Does your city or urban library offer special programs for latchkey kids? Does your country or rural library enhance its services with delivery or book-mobile programs? Can some city-specific programs and offerings be altered to work in the country, or vice versa? What gives your urban or rural library its personality?

If you'd like to share your library's uniquely urban or rural processes, procedures, or personality in this regular column, contact editor Sharon Korbeck at [toylady@athenet.net](mailto:toylady@athenet.net) or E1569 Murray Lane, Waupaca, WI 54981.

eighth grade. Many students are from single-parent households, and all of them live at or below poverty level in one of two nearby public housing projects. Most of our students previously attended a neighborhood school that was suddenly and unexpectedly closed due to nonperformance; only 7.9 percent of third grade students there met or exceeded state standards in reading and 7.1 percent in writing in 2001. Unlike most schools in the system, my school is a new facility that was designed to support the continuing growth of a learning community that includes not only students, but extended families, highly qualified teachers, preservice teachers, and university students, as well as a wide range of community partners.

As a staff, we are committed to helping our children succeed, not only as students, but as future citizens, so literacy is our top priority. Through collaborative conversation, our school staff crafted the following literacy vision:

Students will confidently and willingly read and write for pleasure, knowledge, enlightenment, and sharing from both literary and informational texts to make personal connections, solve problems, appreciate multiple perspectives, and reflect on their learning as they discover their personal voice, identity, and independence.



Views from an urban Chicago library

The school library is thus central to creating a climate where literacy flourishes, both by providing the means to immerse children in print and by creating an environment that stimulates curiosity and independent learning.

In 2001 the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards ([www.npbts.org](http://www.npbts.org)) published rigorous standards that describe what accomplished library media specialists should know and be able to do. Underlying the standards are three common themes—collaboration, leadership, and technology—that are manifested in three primary responsibilities: teaching and learning, information access and delivery, and program administration. As a school library media specialist, I aspire to incorporate them into my practice every day.

Our research-based curriculum demands best practices, which means a flexible schedule in the library, rather than the more common model of fixed, forty minutes per week of teacher preparation time. My patrons therefore use the library (and the librarian) in various ways throughout the day, including scheduled whole group circulation time, stories and enrichment activities, small-group learning activities collaboratively planned with teachers, and open access for individual instruction to use the computers or for a much-needed time out. A typical day's schedule may help illustrate how the school library media center is an essential component of an effective school.

**8:00 A.M.** Coffee! Besides fueling my own addiction, my communal coffeepot invites colleagues into the library for casual or curriculum-related conversation, essential for developing collaborative relationships.

**8:20 A.M.** Outside duty. It may be cold, but this time is important for developing relationships with students. How can we meet student needs if we don't have the opportunity to get to know them?

**8:45 A.M.** Prepare for scheduled classes. I ask teachers to share a simple outline of their curriculum plans. Every month I develop a series of story programs and enrichment activities that build on these topics. I also use this minicurriculum map to research, suggest, and plan small group engaged-learning activities with classroom teachers.

**9:00–11:00 A.M.** One, two, or three classes may visit for twenty to thirty minutes to check out books and audio kits. I have scheduled each class for a weekly circulation time to ensure that every student visits the library at least once a week. They may also read magazines, do puzzles, compose magnetic poetry, use the computers for research, or curl up with an oversized pillow and read. I might read a story or introduce a new series or an author's Web site. Or, I may booktalk new acquisitions, promote participation in a children's choice book award, or just sit down with students and visit.

**11:00 A.M.** Did I mention that it is cold here in winter? Sharing winter poetry makes a real-life connection for a third-grade program. Together we listen for, then list winter words and use them to write our own poems inside the outline of a snowflake. Of course, the results are prominently displayed in the library.

**12 noon.** Small groups of fourth graders are visiting the library three times per week for a crosscurricular project, meeting standards in language arts and social studies. After reading many Cinderella variants and exploring a Grimm's fairy tale Web site, students are researching African countries to serve as new settings for their own, original African Cinderella stories.

**1:00 P.M.** The eighth-grade Civil War unit is being enriched by small-group literature circles. Students are visiting a virtual Civil War museum and then exploring historical fiction at various and appropriate reading levels, and producing creative responses, all in the library.

**2:15 P.M.** Outside duty. Still cold.

**2:30–4:00 P.M.** Curriculum planning meetings, research for future lessons, ordering materials, shelving, professional development, networking.

At the end of the day, I am both exhausted and exhilarated. I am also reflective, considering how to engage a disruptive student or how to better organize a research assignment to ensure success for all.

While I have improved my practice immeasurably by reaching for local, state, and national standards, my greatest reward has been meeting my personal goal—to create a library that is a “portal through which children travel on amazing adventures, empowering their fantasies and their lives.”<sup>1</sup> &

**Toby Rajput** is a Library Media Specialist at the new National Teachers Academy ([www.cps.k12.il.us/nta](http://www.cps.k12.il.us/nta)) in Chicago, a school serving both neighborhood families and preservice teachers through its professional development program. She earned an MLIS from Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois, while working as librarian at the Chicago Public School, Kershaw Elementary, from 1997 to 1999.

## Reference

1. Gene Del Vecchio, *Creating Ever-Cool: A Marketer's Guide to a Kid's Heart* (New York: Pelican, 1997).

## Keeping Kids Interested Is Challenge of Small-town Jack-of-all-Trades

Nicole Medley

My journey to the world of librarianship was roundabout. In fact, with a college degree in English and a minor in creative writing, I had hoped for an illustrious career in publishing. So how did I end up a library director in a rural Wisconsin village?

I attended University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls from 1994 to 1996 after two years in junior college. In 1997, I married and started a family, which detoured my planned career. When I saw a notice for a public librarian in the local newspaper, I sent my resumé. I had a working knowledge of the library, and I was eager to take the classes required for certification.

I was hired the same night of my interview, and my library career began. As library director in a community of about six hundred people, many of whom are Hispanic and speak little English, I do it all—reference, children's, acquisitions, and just about everything else.

The most time-consuming part of my job is programming. When I took my job, the library was new and I had yet to take my state certification courses. Because the new library still had a growing circulation, I was afforded valuable time to learn the basics.

I began working in May, with the summer library program scheduled to begin in June. I looked at the youth system liaison, blinked rapidly and said, "The summer library what?" (Believe it or not, I had not been much of a reader as a child, so I had not been exposed to such programs.)

The library's mission statement and objectives stated, "strive to aid and encourage the young in their pursuit of knowledge and in gaining rewarding experiences through books and other media. And . . . provide materials and services which fulfill educational, informational, cultural, and recreational needs of the entire community."

Unlike school librarians or librarians in urban areas, a rural librarian in a tiny community often does not have a Master's degree. More likely, as in my case, we have a state certificate that requires us to take certain basic library courses and maintain a specified number of continuing education hours over the course of our careers. Of the four classes we take, however, none directly addresses children's services. The summer reading program was going to be a challenge, but I had one overriding goal—these kids were going to have fun!

I never read anything voluntarily until I was in eighth grade, when the right person put the right book into my hands. That book was Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*. It was the not-so-storybook ending that made me connect with it. Rather, it made me feel emotions, and my teacher respected my ideas

about the book instead of imposing her interpretation on me. I have had a passion for classics ever since. Last year, I passed along a copy of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* to a reluctant sixth-grade reader. She had only come to the summer reading program to chaperone her little sister. Now she's a regular reader. I'm pleased to have passed along the power of the pages to her.



Nicole Medley

Now it was my turn. I wanted to instill the same joy and love of reading into these kids. But it was me who was in for the surprise. The kids came to the summer reading program already excited about reading and excited about the library. I was, positively of course, flabbergasted. Some kids, however, attended only because their parents made them. Those kids were my challenge.

Over the past four years, I have attended many workshops on children's services. I've learned that I have to keep the kids who come to story time interested in the library by enticing them to come to other library programs. I have to keep my elementary kids interested in the library throughout junior high school. Then there are those elusive creatures that travel in pack and follow food wherever it may lead, teenagers!

To keep the kids coming back after the sixth grade, I've expanded our collection and media resources to include movies, audio books, and CD-ROMs. I have incorporated a lock-in reading group for junior high girls. There is a teen movie pick each month, usually based on a classic or award-winning book.

In four years, I have grown from doing summer reading programs with first through fifth grades to running programs year-round for preschool through twelfth grade. My youth circulation has increased with the additional programming.

The programming schedule I maintain each year is as follows:

### March

- spring story time (preschool)
- Read-a-Thon (grades 1–6). Kids are asked to read as much as they can and receive prizes based on their reading.

### June/July

- summer library program (grades K–4)
- summer story time (preschool)

continued on page 58

# The ALSC News

## Annual Conference Board of Directors' Major Actions

The ALSC Board of Directors did not have a quorum during the 2003 Annual Conference in Toronto and therefore was unable to vote on division business. However, immediately following the conference, the board met virtually via the ALSCBOARD electronic discussion list and voted on the major actions below.

- Voted to approve the ALSC Division Leadership Manual.
- Voted to approve the Newbery, Caldecott, Sibert, and Belpré manuals.
- Voted to approve the following revisions to the Bechtel Fellowship criteria, pending approval from the University of Florida: REDUCE the number of minimum years of service to eight years (from twelve); ELIMINATE the requirement that the applicant be currently working in direct service to children.
- Voted to elect Floyd Dickman as the Board representative to the ALSC Planning & Budget Committee.
- Voted to approve the proposed ALSC programs for the 2004 ALA Annual Conference in Orlando.
- Voted to co-sponsor in name only the program submitted by the Youth Services Consultants Discussion Group of ASCLA for the 2004 ALA Annual Conference in Orlando.
- Voted to approve the following change in the International Relations Commit-

tee function statement: that the last sentence be changed from "lifestyles and peoples of the United States" to "lifestyles and peoples of the world." Revised function statement to read:

Within the Association's field of responsibility, to encourage and facilitate the use of library techniques and knowledge throughout the world; to exchange professional information, ideas, and literature; to act as liaison with international organizations. To identify individuals and organizations that can serve as a resource for reading and reviewing books in languages other than English. To have the responsibility to develop annotated selective bibliographies of children's books available in the United States: in English that reflect the cultural diversity and/or pluralistic nature of the lifestyles and peoples of the world; translated into English from another language; bilingual; and, in languages other than English.

## Awards across the Board! Nominate Now!

ALSC is seeking nominations and applications for its professional grants and awards:

### ALSC/Book Wholesalers Grant

The \$3,000 ALSC/Book Wholesalers, Inc. Grant is designed to encourage outstanding summer reading program development by providing funding to implement such a program. The applicant must plan and present an outline for a theme-based summer reading program in a public library. The committee encourages pro-

posals with innovative ways to encourage involvement of children with physical or mental disabilities.

### ALSC/Sagebrush/Education Resources Literature Program Grant

This award, made possible through an annual grant from Econo-Clad Books, a division of the Sagebrush Corporation, provides a grant of \$1,000 to support an ALSC member's attendance at the 2004 Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida. The award is given to a children's librarian who has developed and implemented a unique reading or literature program for children (infants through age 14) that brings children and books together to develop lifelong reading habits.

### Bechtel Fellowship

Midcareer librarians, with a minimum of eight years of experience working with children, are encouraged to apply for a Louise Seaman Bechtel Fellowship to finance a month of study at the Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature at the University of Florida in Gainesville. The \$4,000 fellowship is for travel and living expenses during the period of study. A mentor will be assigned upon request.

### Distinguished Service Award

ALSC members are invited to nominate one of their fellow members to be the recipient of the ALSC Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes a member who has made significant contributions to and had an impact on library services to children. Nominees may be practicing librarians in a public or school library, a library or information science educator, a member of the library press, or an editor or other employee of a publishing house. The individual may be active or retired.

## What Are the Best Reads?

### Nominees Sought for 2004 Media Awards

ALSC members are welcome to suggest titles for the 2004 media awards and for the 2005 Laura Ingalls Wilder Award. Please send recommendations with full bibliographic information to the committee chairs listed below.

- The **Newbery Medal** is given to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children. Contact Eliza Dresang at [edresang@mailers.fsu.edu](mailto:edresang@mailers.fsu.edu).
- The **Caldecott Medal** is given to the illustrator of the most distinguished American picture book for children. Contact Kathy East at [eastka@oplin.lib.oh.us](mailto:eastka@oplin.lib.oh.us).
- The **Sibert Medal**, sponsored by Bound to Stay Bound Books, Inc., and named in honor of the company's long-time president Robert F. Sibert, is given to the author of the most distinguished informational book for children. Contact Cathryn Mercier at [cathryn.mercier@simmons.edu](mailto:cathryn.mercier@simmons.edu).
- The **Pura Belpré Award**, cosponsored by ALSC and REFORMA, is presented to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth. Contact Rose Treviño at [rose.trevino@cityofhouston.net](mailto:rose.trevino@cityofhouston.net).
- The **Andrew Carnegie Medal**, supported by an endowment from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, honors an outstanding video production for children. Contact Pamela Barron at [ppbarron@uncg.edu](mailto:ppbarron@uncg.edu).
- The **Mildred L. Batchelder Award** is a citation given to an American publisher for a children's book considered to be the most outstanding of those books originally published in a foreign language in a foreign country, and subsequently translated into English and published in the United States. Contact Kay Weisman at [kweisman@district30.k12.il.us](mailto:kweisman@district30.k12.il.us).
- The **Laura Ingalls Wilder Award** is given in alternate years to an author or illustrator whose books published in the United States, over a period of years, made a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children. Please send suggestions for the 2005 award to Janice Del Negro at [delnegro@alexia.lis.uiuc.edu](mailto:delnegro@alexia.lis.uiuc.edu).

### Penguin Putnam Young Readers Group Award

This award consists of four \$600 awards presented to children's librarians to enable them to attend the ALA Annual Conference for the first time. The 2004 Annual Conference will be held in Orlando, Florida. Recipients must be ALSC members, work directly with children, and have one to ten years of library experience.

For more information about each award and to download award applications, visit

the ALSC Web site at [www.ala.org/alsc/](http://www.ala.org/alsc/) and click on Awards and Scholarships—Professional Awards. To request a form by mail, send a postcard to ALSC, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; e-mail: [alsc@ala.org](mailto:alsc@ala.org). Deadline for all professional award applications is **December 1, 2003**.

### Bridging the Gap: The Gryphon Award

The Center for Children's Books at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana has established the

Gryphon Award for Children's Literature. A \$1,000 prize will be given annually to the author of an outstanding English language work of fiction or non-fiction for which the primary audience is children in kindergarten through grade 4. The title chosen will best exemplify the qualities that successfully bridge the gap in difficulty between picture books and full-length books.

The Gryphon Award aims to focus attention on transitional reading, an area of literature for youth that, despite being crucial to the successful transition of children from new readers to independent lifelong readers, does not receive the critical recognition it deserves.

The first winning title of the Gryphon Award for Children's Literature will be announced on March 1, 2004, on the Center for Children's Books Web site, and via press releases to major library and literature journals and electronic discussion lists.

For additional information regarding the committee, the award criteria, and book eligibility, call Janice Del Negro at (217) 244-9304 or visit the Center for Children's Books Web site at [www.lis.uiuc.edu/~ccb](http://www.lis.uiuc.edu/~ccb).

## BCALA-Wiley Black Books Galore! Contest

The Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) and John Wiley & Sons are proud to announce the **BCALA-Wiley Black Books Galore! Contest**, a contest for public and school librarians to support the most creative library programs that raise awareness and interest in African American children's literature. Tracie D. Hall, Director of the Office for Diversity at the American Library Association, will chair the contest. Eleanora Tate, author of *African American Musicians*, is honorary chair.

The judges for this year's contest include: Tonya Bolden, author; Vivian Bordeaux, Bridgeport Public Library; Josephine Fulcher-Anderson, Ferguson Library; Ron Gauthier, New Orleans Public Library; Chrystal Carr Jeter, Cleveland Public Library; Sherelle Harris, Norwalk Public

Library; Malikah Dada Lumumba, Franko School; John S. Page Jr., University of the District of Columbia; Toni Trent Parker, co-author and founder, *Black Books Galore!*; Sandra Payne, New York Public Library; Veronica L. C. Stevenson-Moudamane, Danbury Library; and Bina Williams, Bridgeport Public Library.

The contest is open to all public and school libraries and librarians throughout the United States and begins **July 2003** and ends **March 31, 2004**. Librarians are required to use titles from Wiley's *Black Books Galore! Guide to Great African American Children's Books* series. The winning entries will reflect original, creative programming that increases community involvement and sparks the interest of children, parents, caregivers, and teachers in African American life and culture. Examples of programs may include: storytimes, parent/teacher workshops, intergenerational events, or other innovative programs. Contestants must submit an application form along with a detailed description of their completed program. Application forms are available at [www.bcala.org](http://www.bcala.org) and [www.blackbooksgalore.com](http://www.blackbooksgalore.com). Entries must be postmarked by **April 15, 2004**.

The winners will be announced at the American Library Association's Annual Conference June 24–30, 2004, in Orlando. The first place winner will have a representative sent to the conference expenses paid courtesy of John Wiley & Sons to accept the cash award. All winning entries will be on display during a poster session and at the BCALA Annual Meeting during ALA.

To enter, send an application form with a detailed description of your completed program along with supplemental materials, i.e. photos, videos, posters to: **Black Books Galore! 65 High Ridge Road, Stamford, CT 06905**. If you have ques-

tions, please contact Tracie Hall, Director of the Office for Diversity (ALA), 1-800-545-2433 ext. 5020.

## Big IDEAS

NASA Office of Space Science and Space Telescope Science Institute are pleased to announce the opportunity to apply for an Initiative to Develop Education through Astronomy and Space Science (IDEAS) grant. A PDF of the Call for Proposals (CFP), which details the proposal guidelines and procedures, is available at the program Web site, <http://ideas.stsci.edu>.

The following are highlights from the CFP:

- The grant provides start-up funding for innovative, creative education and public outreach programs that feature active collaboration between astronomers/space scientists and formal education/informal education professionals.
- Astronomy/space science must be the primary area of focus used to promote science, mathematics, and/or technology education and/or public outreach.
- Proposals may request:
  - Up to \$20,000 for programs to be completed in one year. (Programs may request additional time, up to two years, due to school schedules, etc. which the panel review will consider.); or



Teresa Walls (l), Allen County (Ind.) Public Library, takes time out from her volunteer duties, to pose with ALSC member Cassie Wilson (r), St. Marys (Ohio) Community Public Library, at the ALSC Membership Booth during the 2003 Annual Conference in Toronto.

- From \$20,001 to \$50,000 for programs which may request up to two years to complete.

The deadline for submitting a 2003 IDEAS grant proposal is Friday, October 24, 2003, 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time. If you are interested in more information regarding IDEAS, please send e-mail to [ideas@stsci.edu](mailto:ideas@stsci.edu) or contact the NASA OSS Education Support Network Forum and/or a Broker/Facilitator. Points of contact and addresses for the Education Support Network may be found at: <http://spacescience.nasa.gov/education/resources/ecosystem/index.htm>.

## Need Online Grant Help?

The federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has launched an online tutorial to help libraries and museums develop project plans for its National Leadership Grant applications. This tool is designed to make it easier to develop good, competitive applications for federal IMLS grants.

"We know that applying for competitive federal grants can be daunting," said Robert S. Martin, director of the federal IMLS. "Our tutorial is informative and easy-to-use. Visitors will find real world examples, tools, schedules, exercises, and even reality checks to help assess their readiness to move from one section to the next. This innovative tool exemplifies

## Save the Date

ALSC will host a National Institute September 29–October 2, 2004, at the Hilton Hotel in Minneapolis, Minn.

IMLS' commitment for a more transparent, effective, and useful government."

The tutorial is divided into four sections, taking the user from project planning through implementation. It begins with a step-by-step process for getting projects underway, including analyzing organizational needs, identifying target audience, and formulating goals. The second section helps to develop the components of a project plan, including activities, evaluation approach, schedule, and resources. The third and fourth sections offer tips for writing applications and implementing successful projects. Throughout the tutorial the need to identify and communicate with stakeholders is emphasized.

While this planning tool is designed for developing IMLS grant applications, it can be used by anyone who would like to learn more about project planning and development. Senior program officers at IMLS with years of experience coaching applicants worked together with museum professionals and librarians to develop this powerful learning resource. IMLS hopes that it will be useful in many different settings, including professional education and development, staff training, and a wide array of project planning activities.

Visit the tutorial at [http://e-services.imls.gov/project\\_planning](http://e-services.imls.gov/project_planning). The Institute of Museum and Library Services is an independent federal agency that fosters leadership, innovation, and a lifetime of learning by supporting the nation's 15,000 museums and 122,000 libraries. IMLS encourages partnerships to expand the educational benefit of libraries and museums. For more information, visit [www.imls.gov](http://www.imls.gov).

## Be Free To Read: Celebrate National Children's Book Week

"Free To Read" is the theme of this year's National Children's Book Week celebration, November 17–23. Children and their caregivers are encouraged to exercise their right to enjoy a good book each and every day. Sponsored by the Children's Book Council (CBC) and observed since

1919, this week is dedicated to spreading the word about children's literature and encouraging the joys of reading. CBC is a nonprofit trade association whose membership consists of U.S. publishers and packagers of trade books for children and young adults, and producers of related literacy materials. For more information, visit the CBC Web site at [www.cbcbooks.org](http://www.cbcbooks.org).

## What Do You Do When Something Wants to Eat You?

### Steve Jenkins Wins Nonfiction Award

The Children's Book Guild of Washington, D.C., and *The Washington Post* announced Steve Jenkins as the winner of their 2003 Award for Nonfiction, in recognition of his complete body of work and significant contribution to children's nonfiction. Some of Jenkins's books include *Life on Earth: The Story of Evolution*, *The Top of the World: Climbing Mount Everest*, *What Do You Do When Something Wants to Eat You?*, and *Biggest, Strongest, Fastest*.



ALSC President Cynthia Richey assists a young library patron with the computerized NASA education presentation during the July 1 launch of the NASA @ your library exhibit at the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore. The presentation is part of the NASA exhibit that is touring public libraries for the next two years throughout the United States. The exhibit is managed by ALSC through a NASA grant.

Jenkins will receive his award at the annual Children's Book Guild Luncheon on November 16. Author Andrew Clements and illustrator James Ransome will also speak at the event. For more information, visit [www.childrensbookguild.org/2003award.htm](http://www.childrensbookguild.org/2003award.htm).

Past award winners include Jim Murphy, Diane Stanley, Isaac Asimov, Jean Craighead George, and Jean Fritz. A committee of Children's Book Guild members selects the winner each year. ALSC member Maria Salvadore chaired the 2003 committee.

## Call for Referees

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

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



# ALSC Officers and Board of Directors

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## Outgoing President's Message

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**Center on Aging, Health, and Humanities Grant.** As part of the grant received from the George Washington University's Center on Aging, Health, and Humanities, we prepared a list of children's books that present aging and older persons in a positive light. The list is designed for children ages preschool to sixth grade.

In addition to the list, ALSC will identify thirty libraries (including six in the Washington, D.C. area) where the list will be distributed and evaluated by library patrons and staff. ALSC members will be asked to volunteer for the evaluation process in September 2003.

**Between the Lions Grant.** In March, a CD featuring ideas for Between the Lions campaigns and activities in the library was sent to ALSC members. The CD was also distributed to all *PBS Ready to Learn* coordinators, as encouragement to partner with their local libraries. This mailing concludes the grant received from the WGBH Educational Foundation.

**Carnegie-Whitney Award for Born to Read Brochure.** ALSC received a second Carnegie-Whitney Award to produce a new Born To Read brochure in English and Spanish. The brochures are expected to be ready in August.

### Publications

The 2003 edition of *The Newbery and Caldecott Awards: A Guide to the Medal and Honor Books* was released in April by ALA Editions and ALSC. It features an essay written by ALSC member Kathleen T. Horning called "That Big Old Gold Sticker: Children Talk about the Newbery

Award." Horning shares excerpts from her conversations with third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders at Abraham Lincoln Elementary School in Madison, Wisconsin, revealing what the Newbery Medal means to this group of young readers.

### Friends of ALSC

The Friends of ALSC invitation, redesigned with a fresh look and the new ALSC logo, was mailed to all ALSC members in the March 2003 *ALSCconnect*. As a founding member of the Friends, I encourage you to think of ALSC when you make your charitable contributions or estate plans. ALSC needs your continuing support.

## 2003 Annual Conference Highlights

**ALSC Preconference.** *The Literature of Fact: Informational Materials for Youth* included an opening reception on Thursday night held at the Glenn Gould Studio at the Canadian Broadcast Center, featuring a presentation by Karen Levine, author of *Hana's Suitcase*. Friday's day-long program featured panel discussions on topics including "Selecting and Evaluating Nonfiction for Children's Collections," "The Work of the Writer in Nonfiction," and "Fabulous Informational Web sites for Children." A host of speakers included Robert F. Sibert Award winners Jim Gribbin (*The Life and Death of Adolf Hitler*) and Susan Campbell Bartoletti (*Black Potatoes*).

**Newbery/Caldecott/Wilder Banquet.** This year's event featured stellar acceptance speeches by our 2003 medalists and

whimsical table decorations specially selected by our Local Arrangements Committee.

### Canadian Library Association Book Awards Presentation and Celebration.

This festive event was held at the Lillian Smith Branch of the Toronto Public Library on Saturday evening.

**ALSC Awards and Annual Membership Meeting.** Featured the Batchelder, Carnegie, and Sibert Medal ceremonies.

### ALSC Charlemae Rollins President's Program.

"Boys Will Be . . . the Unique Reading and Developmental Needs of Boys in Libraries" was the title of the talk by psychologist and author Michael Thompson. Current trends that affect young males in literature and society were discussed.

### Circling the Globe: International Collections of Children's Literature.

The program, developed by the ALSC National Planning of Special Collections Committee, was held at the Osborne Collection located in the Lillian Smith Branch, Toronto Public Library. Speakers from France, England, Canada, and Germany highlighted children's collections in their countries.

### Canadian Children's Books: From Print to Screen.

Conference attendees were invited to a screening of several films produced by the National Film Board of Canada. Authors and animators were available to discuss their work. ☺

*Barbara Graves* is Director of Collection Development at Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library.

## Incoming President's Message

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opportunities for networking and continuing education; and advocating for children's services and children's librarians. I am confident that the work of ALSC, powered by its incredible staff and members, will help our libraries thrive in spite of budget cuts, allowing us to continue making a difference in the lives of those we serve: America's children, their families, and all who work on behalf of them.

During the next year, I plan to continue building on the work of my predecessors:

carrying out the strategic plan; ensuring effective member communication; providing qualitative opportunities for continuing education and professional development; and offering source material for members' work through programs, publications, and a content-rich Web site. But I need your help. ALSC is your organization. Your active participation is essential. Please send me your ideas, suggestions, concerns, and comments. Let me know, too, what kinds of programs and activities you would like to

see at conferences, institutes, or regional gatherings, as well as local or state programs that you would like to see replicated.

Together we can create a better future for the nation by providing the best library service to all children—even in challenging times.

*Cynthia K. Richey is Director at Mount Lebanon Public Library in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.*

## Urban vs. Rural

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### September

- Read a Banned Book (all ages)

### October

- Fall Extravaganza (family program). Families come and decorate the library and lawn and play games.
- Pajama Story Time (preschool). Kids come ready for bed and read books about nighttime and bedtime.

### September through May

- Teen Flick Pick (junior high/high school)
- Read a Good Movie Lately? (girls in grades 5–7). Book group focused on books that have been made into movies culminating in a movie marathon lock-in.

The Norwalk Public Library's youth services have come a long way, but many

community members still do not realize the small library's potential. It requires me to be forever diligent in coming up with new and exciting ideas for children and young adults. ☺

*Nicole Medley is Director at Norwalk Public Library in Norwalk, Wisconsin, a community of six hundred residents. Medley studied English at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls with a minor in creative writing.*

## My Own Spot

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Her enthusiasm hasn't waned, as she continues to find inspiration in everything from art to nature. "There's always the fear that you won't have another idea,"

Ehlert admitted. But, fortunately for her, there have been few shortages of ideas in her colorful career.

And even if she does get stuck, all it takes is a look at that little table to jar the memory of why she became an artist in the first place. ☺

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# Get Your Name in Print

## Submit an Article to *Children and Libraries*

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

### Manuscript Consideration

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

### Manuscript Preparation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Writing and Bibliographic Style

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

### Address

Send correspondence and manuscripts to Sharon Korbeck, CAL editor, E1569 Murray Lane, Waupaca, WI 54981, (715) 258-0369, e-mail: toylady@athenet.net.



# THE LAST WORD

## Like Family, the Library Book Bag Fills the World with Joy and Promise

By Catherine M. Sjostedt

I'm not sure exactly when I got it, but shortly after I was married I bought it from an East Coast mail-order emporium. The item, glowingly described in catalog prose, turned out to be all that was promised and more. It was a super-satchel of split, burgundy cowhide with a gusseted bottom, tenacious double-stitching with waxed thread, and brass-reinforced handles. It was reputable, admirable, staunch, sturdy, and volumetric: the library book bag.

Whatever city we lived in among California, Utah, Wisconsin, or Texas, the library card was our passport, our orientation to our new hometown. Community flyers and youth activity sheets shared space with the books and videos that could be stacked and wedged down into the vast recesses of the library book bag's interior. The deal in our family was if you can carry the bag (with a parent) you can take it home. I could tote it single-handedly, but sharing the parcel part of our library expeditions paralleled our early reading experiences. A parent and child linked with books, by hands. I am willing to handle the bag-gage in order to embark on a journey as magical as opening a picture book to the title page. Reading to my children is a sweet pairing, like text and illustrations. Too bad there aren't frequent reader miles.

At the outset, my then-two-year-old could barely manage it, but as soon as her dimpled hand could close around the rolled leather handle, we ventured to various branch libraries for fresh bibliographic supplies. A toddler no longer, fourteen years and countless trips to the library later, my now-teenager in geek chic glasses is checking out William Safire and books on body dysmorphic disorder instead of picture books. Our eight-year-old boasts, with sinewy arms and neck veins distended, that he can manage the voluminous bag himself. His recent summer reading club library foray for mental fodder included C. S. Lewis's *Narnia* series, books on chess, and a video on vertical takeoff and landing aircraft. They all went into the bag.



My practical husband has helped me to translate the bag's dimensions (14¼" by 15" by 3") to 1,095 cubic inches, or .63 cubic feet, which is 4.7 gallons. If the average children's picture book, say *Harry the Dirty Dog*, is thirty-two pages at 8" by 11" by ½", that translates to .2 gallons. Do you thirst for knowledge? You can pour 23½ picture books into the bag per preschool library spree. But measurements don't begin to describe the smell—the amalgam-on-its-

way-to-being-a-Proustian-memory evoked—of the bag, pulled from the bottom of the hall closet, as one sticks his head into its commodious 1,095 cubic literary inches in order to inhale an inimitable bouquet: equal parts leather and library.

Like me, it now has a few visible scrapes and folds. Hands have smoothed and polished the ebony handles. Like me, it cleans up well with (saddle) soap and (leather) conditioner. But we don't really mind it the way it is; we're used to it. It's family.

A Japanese Zen koan frames the question, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" The bag is really a suite for four arms. Put your ear to the bag. Hear something? It's the "hunh" of an understood passage, the warm laugh shared through a lap. It is a chuckle at a joke, the inhalation of end papers for the new book smell, the "oooh" at fine illustrations, the "aha!" of encountering a well-remembered childhood friend. It is a panoply of battles, romance, soliloquy, myth, mystery, poetry, biography, and chapter books.

It is the whisper and crisp of pages turned to a too-late click of bedside clock or crickets. It is a symphony played on the Dewey Decimal System.

It's a library book bag. Grab a handle! ☺

*Catherine M. Sjostedt is a student member of ALSC. A graduate of Pomona College, she is continuing her studies in library science with an emphasis in children's literature at Texas Woman's University in McKinney.*