

Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for
Library Service to Children

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Ready to Read Grants • Mother Goose Goes Global • Imaginative Illustrations

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The Ever-Growing Beanstalk of Books

Editor's Note

By Sharon Korbeck

Do you have a beanstalk of books piled six high on your desk or coffee table? I need to know I'm not the only one with this habit.

Right now, in my queue, I've got the first book in the Lemony Snicket series and Harry Potter #3 (OK, so I'm *really* behind!), two adult novels, one book of wedding poetry (my wedding's next April), and *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Chess* (my latest, albeit unsuccessful, pastime). Next to that pile are the *Modern Bride* and *Vogue* magazines and a stack of unpaid, but not late, bills.

Then there's my nightstand—right now, it still holds the two-pound biography of Alfred Hitchcock being used more as a coaster than a sleep-inducer.

Reading is one of my greatest joys; it's one of yours, too, I'd imagine. But can there ever be enough time to read all we want? I have friends who don't read at all and that's an enigma to me. Not reading would be like depriving me of air or water. I just wish I treated it like that and had more time to consume!

As winter thickens, cozy up to all those books you've been meaning to read, and don't forget to share one with a child. Happy new year! ☺



Reading for All Seasons

Executive Director's Note

By Malore I. Brown

As we prepare for the winter holidays, a new year, and Midwinter in Boston, the sunny 2004 Orlando conference seems like a distant memory. In this Winter issue, we share more highlights of Orlando for those who were unable to attend and for those in attendance who'd like one final look back. We present Rosemary Wells' stirring talk, given at the ALSC Preconference luncheon, a recap of Mem Fox's preconference presentation, the Sibert, Carnegie, and Batchelder award acceptance speeches, and a photo spread of memorable conference moments.

Also, as you plan your programming for the upcoming year, be sure to check out the articles on Oregon's Ready to Read program, Queens Borough's Math and Science program, a multilingual Mother Goose program, and "Story Times That Rock!" Enjoy these articles and a whole lot more in this issue. Be sure that *Children and Libraries* is among your beanstalk of reading materials! ☺

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Library Service to Children

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Statement of Purpose

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

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Letters to the Editor

Letters Guidelines

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

Letters should be no longer than 350 words and must be signed. The editor reserves the right to edit letters for clarity and space. Send letters to Editor Sharon Korbeck at toylady@athenet.net or via mail to 820 Spooner Ct., De Pere, WI 54115.



Special Thanks for Special Needs

I was thrilled to read the article entitled “Autism, Literacy, and Libraries” by Lynn Akin and Donna MacKinney (Summer/Fall 2004). Libraries should, of course, be ready to serve all patrons.

I would, however, like to point out that the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore has created programs for autistic children since the fall of 2000. We have worked with a school for specifically autistic children, as well as programming for children with developmental disabilities. Recently, I have also been able to present programs for deaf children.

We have been using many of the techniques mentioned in the article in our programming for children with autism. For instance, I created a series of flannel board pieces, in conjunction with the teacher, that are used the same way activity schedules are used. I can say they certainly helped the children transition from one activity to the next.

I hope that this article, as well as the fact that library programs for autistic and special needs children have been implemented, will encourage other librarians to create their own programs. I would be most happy to answer questions about any of our programs and look forward to hearing more about service to special needs children.

*Mairi Ellen Quodomine,
Children's Department,
State Library Resource Center,
Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, Md.*

More Kudos

Thank you so much for two wonderful articles which have appeared in the past two *Children and Libraries*, “Autism, Literacy and Libraries: The 3 Rs=Routine, Repetition and Redundancy” (Summer/Fall 2004) and “All Kinds of Flowers Grow Here: The Child’s Place for Children with Special Needs at Brooklyn Public Library” (Spring 2004).

As a children’s librarian, I have a special interest in special needs inclusion. I was terrifically pleased to read these conscience-raising, inspiring, and functional articles. The library is an *ideal* place to incorporate folks with special needs into the mainstream of daily community life.

I feel bolstered and encouraged by the ideas expressed in these articles.

Thank you for choosing to highlight this area of library life! As the editor of *Children and Libraries*, you have the opportunity to impact the children’s library world. I would like to applaud you for emphasizing what we can do for children and families with special needs.

Thank you and keep those great articles coming!

*Liza Purdy, Children's Librarian
Mt. Lebanon Public Library, Pittsburgh, Penn.*

Correction to Last Word Essay

A significant error appears in the conclusion of the “Last Word” essay in the Summer/Fall 2004 issue. In the conclusion, the word “my” was mistakenly changed to “her,” and it incorrectly reads as if the mentor identified her own place. In Cheryl Wires’ original text, the mentor identified the protégé/author’s place.

Below is the conclusion as it should have appeared:

“... Smuda inspired the choice of Rowling’s work for this project and, in an epiphany moment, identified the podium as my place. That is why, in telling this story, my first thought—and last word—are devoted to the late Janice Smuda and her inestimable blessings.”

We apologize for the error.

Ready to Read in Oregon

Building Best Practice in Library Service to Children

MaryKay Dahlgreen

The Ready to Read Grant program of the Oregon State Library targets all state aid funds to “establish, develop, or improve public library services for children, from birth to fourteen years of age, with an emphasis on preschool children.”

The program was created to help meet the Oregon benchmark of all children starting school ready to learn. Ready to Read Grants have been in place since 1993. In 2003, the Oregon State Library youth services consultant completed an evaluation of the impact of the program on library service to children in Oregon. This article provides a short history of the program, how it operates, the impact the program has had on library service to children, and the results of a review of the literature as it relates to basic services and best practices in children’s library service.

... as red as a happy heart . . .
... as purple as a love that would last forever . . .
... silver shoes shining like promises that are always kept . . .
... as green as a satisfied mind.

—Julius Lester, *Sam and the Tigers*

Every children’s librarian would like every child in the community to have access to the kind of language Julius Lester uses in his picture book *Sam and the Tigers*.¹ They would like children to have opportunities to listen to, read, and talk about a wide variety of books. They would like parents to have the resources and information necessary to be their children’s first and best teacher. Every children’s librarian wants children to have access to high quality library services that provide information, recreation, and opportunity for growth. In 1993, public libraries in Oregon were offered another tool to provide those services.

A Joint Interim Committee on Education work group made a report to the Oregon Joint Interim Committee on Education in November of 1992. Recommendation 2 was:

- Recognize the crucial role of libraries in the education of children. Correlate state policies and actions concerning school



and public libraries to the goals established by the Oregon Benchmarks and Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century.

Recommendation 2(A) was:

- Target the existing program of per capita state aid to public libraries for purposes of improving services to children, with an emphasis on reaching more preschoolers and their parents with readiness-to-learn programs and resources.

Oregon State Librarian Jim Schepcke, the Oregon Library Association (OLA), and the Oregon State Library (OSL) Board of Trustees saw the wisdom, both practical and political, of targeting state aid to public libraries on Oregon’s urgent benchmark that all children should arrive at school ready to learn. A Fact Sheet for House Bill 2056 prepared by the OSL Board of Trustees points out: “Public libraries have the potential to reach every Oregon child with services that promote language, literacy, and cognitive development.”



MaryKay Dahlgreen is a youth services consultant at Oregon State Library in Salem. She can be reached via e-mail at marykay.dahlgreen@state.or.us.

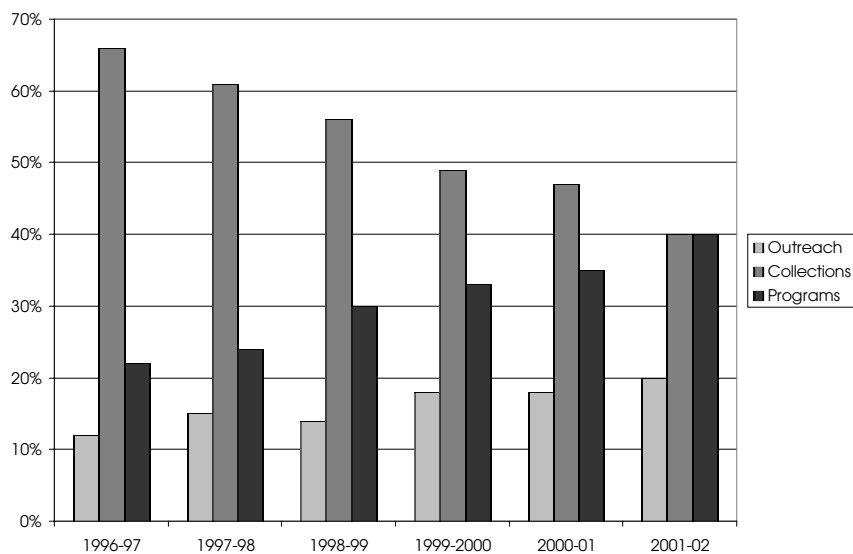


Figure 1. Spending by Program Category

The Oregon Legislative Assembly, with the endorsement of the Oregon library community, passed legislation to provide state aid to “establish, develop, or improve public library services to children, ages zero to fourteen, with an emphasis on preschool children” during the 1992–93 Oregon legislative session. The Ready to Read Grant program began in July 1993 with \$692,767 for the 1993–95 biennium. A consultant position was created in the state library to administer the program and to assist libraries in planning their use of the Ready to Read Grant funds.

The Oregon library community and the Oregon Legislative Assembly have been very supportive of the project, and in the 2001–2003 biennium, funding was \$1 per child. Budget deficits in the 2002–03 fiscal year reduced funding to eighty-three cents per child. Funding for the 2003–05 biennium remains eighty-six cents per child.

Every legally established public library in Oregon is eligible to apply for the annual Ready to Read Grant; it is not competitive. To receive the funds, the proposed project must “establish, develop, or improve public library service to children from birth to fourteen years of age with an emphasis on preschool children.” It must also meet the Maintenance of Support requirements, which stipulate that the library’s operating expenditures for the year just completed cannot be less than one of the previous two years. This provision was included so that local governments would not reduce a library’s budget because it was receiving state funds. If libraries do not qualify, the funds are redistributed to the libraries that do qualify.

Oregon has a relatively small population but a large land mass. The funding formula was developed to take into consideration variations in population density and land mass. The grant amounts are calculated at 80 percent on the number of children ages zero to fourteen in the library service area and 20 percent on the square mileage of the library service area. Our largest county, Harney, has 1,631 children ages zero to fourteen

and occupies an area of 10,228 square miles. Our most populous county, Multnomah, has 127,926 children ages zero to fourteen and occupies an area of 465 square miles. The applications are submitted by September 1, and the grant checks are mailed before the end of December each year. Each library is required to complete a report on how it spent its funds, which is compiled into a final report each year. The state library Web site includes final reports and other information about the project for the last several years at www.osl.state.or.us/home/libdev/r2r/r2r.html.

One objective of the Oregon State Library for the 2001–03 biennium was to evaluate the impact of the Ready to Read Grant program on children’s services in public libraries. In January 2002, we began that process. We analyzed how the funds had been spent from 1996 to 2002, if library service to children had increased, and how other local funds were leveraged by Ready to Read funds. We

also wanted to assess the outcomes, but since it is very difficult to evaluate a program that encompasses so many libraries with so many different projects, we examined the professional literature dealing with early literacy and other aspects of library service to children, determined what were “best practices” in children’s librarianship, and ascertained if library use of “best practices” had increased. Our thinking has been that best practice is defined by the research in the field and related fields. If we could define best practices based on that research literature, we could use that information to determine if libraries were using Ready to Read funds for best practice. If they were not, we could use our report to encourage the use of these funds for best practices and encourage libraries to use local funds to support the basic services for children in their communities.

Let’s look at how libraries spent their funds. For the purpose of the Final Reports, Ready to Read activities were divided into three categories: outreach, collections, and programs. Within each of those categories, the activities were broken into smaller categories. For example, outreach was broken into preschool and school age; collections into preschool, school age, home school, languages other than English, and parenting; and programs (in-library programs) into preschool, school age, family, parents, and other. A library could have spent money in each of these categories. We counted libraries that provided each of these activities. Figure 1 consolidates information gathered from the 1996–2002 annual reports.

In 1996–97, 12 percent of the libraries reporting provided some kind of outreach activity with Ready to Read funds, and by 2001–02 that percentage had reached 20 percent. Interestingly, the number of libraries that used Ready to Read funds for collections decreased, while the number that used their funds for in-library programming increased. This is considered progress, as those libraries that did not have children’s services and were using their Ready to Read funds to “establish” library service for children were then able to provide local funding for basic serv-

ices and use their Ready to Read funds to “develop” and “improve” library services to children.

Some of the projects that have been underwritten with Ready to Read funds have demonstrated a creative use of small amounts of money. In Athena, a very small town in eastern Oregon, with a child population of 298, the librarian used her \$300 to purchase picture books, then created a birthday club so that for each child’s birthday they got to pick one of those books and have their nameplate put in it. The book was then placed in the collection. The Seaside Public Library, on the Oregon coast, uses its funding to provide giveaway books and information packets to the family of every child born in Seaside, as well as to Head Start students. The Cedar Mill Community Library, in the Portland metro area, has expanded on an extensive child-care outreach project with its funds. The Jackson County Library, in southern Oregon, has used funds in past years to provide book talks to third through fifth graders in twelve elementary schools.

The Spanish-speaking population of Oregon has increased dramatically in the last ten years, and some libraries have used their funds to create a Spanish language collection. Others have hired Latino and Spanish-speaking staff to interact directly with the Latino community.

Each year the state library staff also selects a small number of outstanding Ready to Read projects. The selection is based on adherence to the original intent of the program, partnering with other community organizations, and creating an opportunity for children to become lifelong learners and readers. Several years of outstanding Ready to Read projects are presented on the OSL Web site. When a library is honored for an outstanding project, the OSL development staff makes a presentation in the venue of their choice (City Council, County Commission, Library Board) to share the information about the grant and the excellent work their local library is doing.

To measure the impact of the Ready to Read program, juvenile circulation figures from each public library in the state and the attendance at children’s programs in each public library are added to determine “library services to children.” The state library began using this measure during the 1993–95 biennium, the first biennium of the Ready to Read Grant. The results were gratifying.

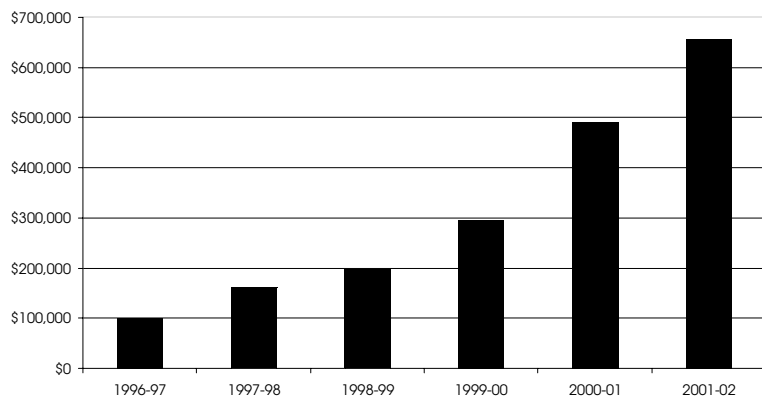


Figure 3. Local Funds Leveraged by Ready to Read Grant Funds

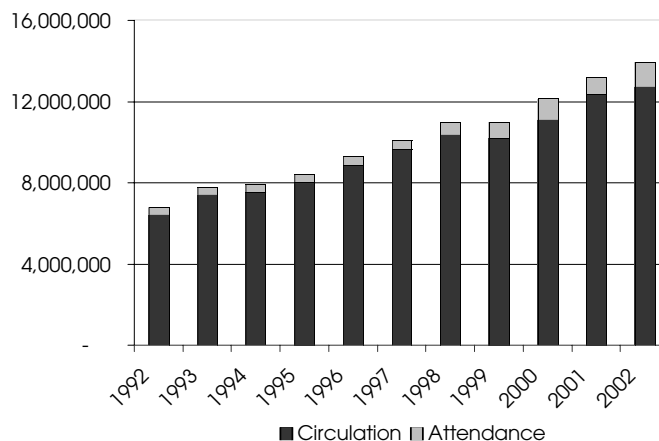


Figure 2. Library Services to Children

Statewide library services to children (circulation plus program attendance) increased 19 percent from 1993–95 to 1995–97. The most recent figure shows that, since the Ready to Read program began in 1993, library service to children has increased 80 percent. Figure 2 shows that the Ready to Read program has been a very important component in the increase in children’s services, although not the only factor.

In addition to providing enhanced library services for children in local communities, the Ready to Read Grant has leveraged local dollars. While we don’t track where the leveraged funds originate, anecdotal evidence tells us that they come from local governments, county government, private nonprofits, and community organizations. Due either to better reporting or increased fund-raising savvy on the part of local librarians, the amount of local funds leveraged has increased significantly since 1996. In 1996–97, for every \$3 spent in state money \$1 was provided locally. By 2001–02 that ratio was \$1:\$1 (Figure 3).

To develop a list of basic services and best practices to assist in the analysis of the program, the youth services consultant developed a reading list based on several other bibliographies. The primary sources were the bibliography of the Oregon study done by Keith Curry Lance and his associates about the importance of school librarians in the effectiveness of school libraries as well as the bibliography of a report commissioned by the Pennsylvania Library Association to evaluate the role of public libraries in Pennsylvania in children’s literacy development.²

The list was expanded as other resources were discovered in the course of reading.

The research literature of children’s librarianship is not as rich as some other disciplines. Therefore, literature on early brain development and early cognitive development research, research relating directly to library service for children and families, and research on how children learn to read were included,

followed by a look at the focused area of research that examines the importance of access to reading materials and free reading time. Finally, the relationship between libraries and educational reform was reviewed.

As a result of that literature review, we compiled a listing of basic services and best practices (see Table 1).

The 1996–2002 reports submitted to the Oregon State Library by the grant recipients were analyzed to determine if the library had used Ready to Read funds to provide basic services or best practices, or both. Most libraries use their funding for several activities and were therefore counted both in basic service and best practice. Figure 4 shows the amount of Ready to Read funds used each year exclusively for basic services, exclusively for best practices, or for a combination of basic services and best practices. The sidebar on page 8 shows the number of libraries

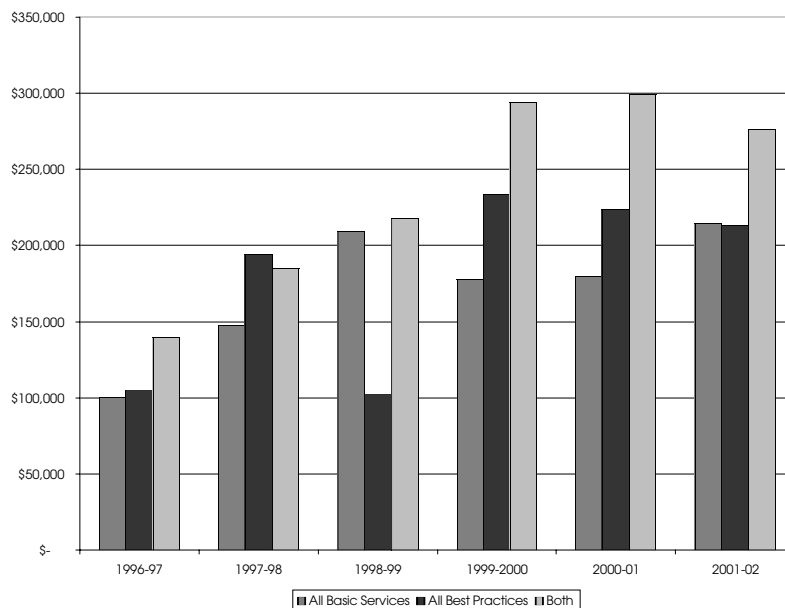


Figure 4. Fund Distribution

Basic Service

1. Interaction with children in the library
2. Child-friendly, literacy-rich environment
3. Trained staff
4. Story time for preschoolers
5. Summer reading program
6. Materials collections

Best Practice

1. Story time for babies, toddlers, and their parents and caregivers
2. Giveaway books
3. Parent training and mentoring
4. Programming with families
5. Outreach to child-care facilities
6. Child-care provider training and mentoring
7. Partnerships with community agencies
8. Partnerships with schools
9. Materials in languages other than English

Promotes

- Socialization, language play, independent reading, joy of reading, access to materials, recreational reading.
- Early/emergent literacy, motivation, joy of reading, access to materials.
- Knowledge of early childhood and books.
- Hearing language, being read aloud to, socialization, cognitive development for building later learning, modeling reading aloud and interaction for parents and caregivers, reading motivation, playing with language.
- Access to reading materials, independent reading, recreational reading, reading motivation, enjoyment of reading, interaction during reading, playing with language, reading practice, building vocabulary, reading fluency.
- Access to reading materials, enjoyment of reading, reading motivation, independent reading, recreational reading, lifelong library use, frequent and intensive opportunities to read, reading fluency.

Promotes

- Hearing language, being read aloud to, socialization, cognitive development for building later reading, modeling reading aloud and interaction for parents and caregivers, reading motivation, playing with language.
- Access to reading materials, opportunity for parent/child interaction.
- Socialization, language-skill building, book selection, motivation, joy of reading.
- Lifelong use of library, motivation, parent/child interaction, independent reading, access to materials, early/emergent literacy.
- Reaching the unserved/underserved, access to low SES children, model for providers, access to materials.
- Early/emergent literacy, book selection, motivation, joy of reading, playing with language.
- Parental involvement, access to low SES families, access to nonlibrary users, early/emergent literacy, reading motivation.
- Reading motivation, access to materials, independent reading, joy of reading, reading practice, fluency, recreational reading.
- Opportunity to build literacy in first language, then learn English.


Table 1. Basic Services and Best Practices

that used Ready to Read funds each year exclusively for basic services, exclusively for best practices, or for a combination of basic services and best practices.

There are periods of time when Ready to Read funds are spent more heavily on basic services. That seems to coincide with periods of economic downturn or the passage of tax limitation measures. In our case, 1997–1999 is an example. While there has been some increase in use of Ready to Read funds for best practices, most libraries still use their funds for basic services or for a combination of basic services and best practices.

Of course, as with any program that does not have a rigorous evaluation component attached to it, we cannot say that Ready to Read funds have caused these changes. Other factors have contributed to the increase in children's library services. In 1993, when Ready to Read Grants began, the state library created a staff position to develop and carry out a youth services consulting program. That program included a biennial institute for library staff who do not have an MLS degree, which is the case with many who work with children. The three-day institute provides training on both the philosophical and practical aspects of youth services.

The Oregon Library Association Children's Services Division has improved upon an already strong statewide summer reading program (SRP) by joining the Collaborative Summer Library Program. A one-day workshop to share programming ideas is offered in two regions of the state, and when funding is available, libraries can apply for grants to fund special summer programming.

The current research on brain development, the understanding of the importance of the first years of life in laying a foundation for learning, and the increased emphasis on early literacy have impacted the way community leaders and policy makers view the need for support for programs that serve young children. Our next step for the Ready to Read Grant program is to take the results of this analysis and determine how to improve the program so we can continue to make progress toward our goal of providing excellent library service to children. 

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2. Lance, Keith Curry, Marcia Rodney, and Christine

Success Stories

Harney County, in southeastern Oregon, is the largest county in area at 10,228 square miles. The total population is 7,609 and the population of children ages zero to fourteen is 1,631. Two-tenths of 1 percent of Oregon's population live in Harney County (Loy 2001, 26) and 20.9 percent of the children under age eighteen live in poverty (Loy 2001, 45). There are only a few towns, and the economy is based on agriculture (cattle ranching) and natural resources. It is the only county in the state that has a state-supported boarding school. There is a small Paiut reservation near the county seat of Burns. In the last several years, as the summer reading program has grown in popularity, the librarian has allowed children to report their reading each week by phone since the distance to and from Burns is so great that families don't make weekly trips. The longtime library director retired in 1999. The new library director had experience in school libraries and an enthusiasm for children and libraries. The following progress, using Ready to Read funds and other resources of the state library, has been made in Harney County:

- From 1993 to 2000, Ready to Read funds were spent on basic services.
- In 2000–01, 5 percent of Ready to Read funds were spent on best practices.
- 2001–02, 22 percent of Ready to Read funds were spent on best practices.
- 2000 and 2002, staff from Harney County attended the Focus on Children Institute.

Years	Children's Circulation	Children's Programs	Children's Program Attendance
1996–97	5,444	28	1,400
2001–02	8,205	92	4,681

Located along the Oregon Trail, on the border of Oregon and Idaho, Baker County has a total population of 16,741, which is approximately 0.5 percent of Oregon's population (Loy 2001, 26). At 3,089 square miles, 3,226 children ages zero to fourteen live in Baker County, and 24 percent of children under age eighteen live in poverty (Loy 2001, 45). The economy of Baker County is also based on agriculture and natural resources. In addition to the library in the county seat, Baker City, there are several branches in small communities and a bookmobile. Baker County Library is a special library district serving the entire county and independent of county government, with a very energetic and forward-thinking library director. Staff from the Baker County Library attended the Focus on Children Institute in 1993 when it was first offered and again in 2002. Their Ready to Read funds have been spent on outreach to child care, a best practice, since they began receiving funds. The following progress has been made in Baker County.

Years	Children's Circulation	Children's Programs	Children's Program Attendance
1996–97	26,894	236	2,550
2001–02	30,549	648	5,941

Hamilton-Pennell. 2001. *Good Schools Have School Librarians: Oregon School Librarians Collaborate to Improve Academic Achievement*. Salem, Ore.: OEMA. Celano, Donna, and Susan Neuman. 2001. *The Role of Public Libraries in Children's Literacy Development: An Evaluation Report*. Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Library Association.

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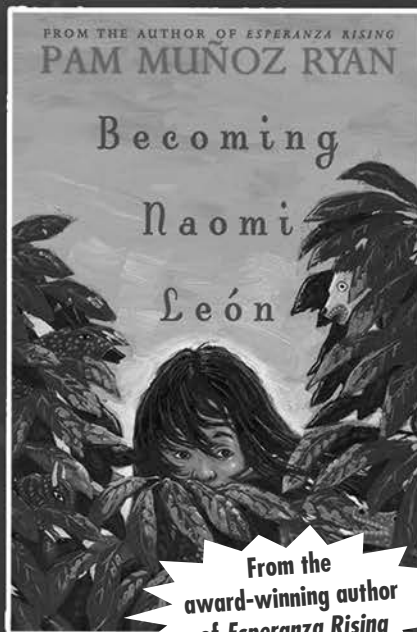
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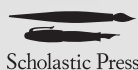
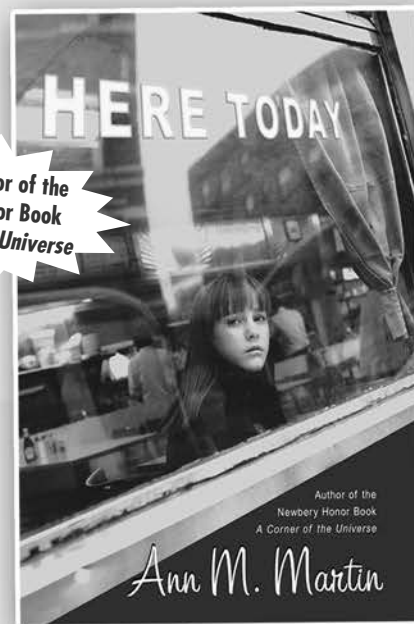
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Getting kids to love reading is one challenge. Want an even tougher one? How do you get kids—especially toddler age—interested in math and science?

That's the challenge that faced the Queens Borough Public Library in Jamaica, N.Y. With a \$20,360 grant from the New York State Library Division of Library Development, the Queens Borough Public Library borrowed some ideas and implemented their own program to allow tots to learn lots.

How Tots Learn Lots

Queens Borough Takes on Math and Science

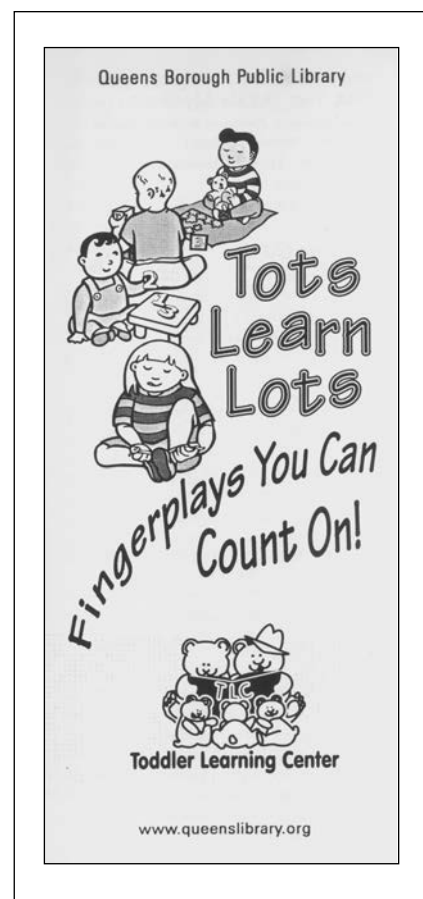
By Rosanne Cerny

In 2002, one of our challenges was to design a program that would deliver maximum impact for our patrons with minimal staff disruption. The children's librarians in our agencies were working with reduced staff and facing possible layoffs and restricted service hours because of New York City's financial difficulties following Sept. 11, 2001.

Assistant coordinator Carol Katz and I had seen programs at professional conferences about the Vermont Center for the Book's "Mother Goose Meets Mother Nature" science and math programs. We were intrigued and wanted to do something similar. Since most of our children's librarians conduct regular toddler programs for children ages two-and-a-half to four, we decided to simplify the Vermont model. Instead, we encouraged our staff to conduct more math and science thematic programs based on their own book preferences under the rubric of helping preschoolers enter kindergarten "ready to learn."

The grant proposal was built around the following issues:

- Training our staff
- Introducing basic math and science concepts to young children
- Preparing a publication for parents offering tips on creating math and science activities for their children
- Evaluating the program
- Acquiring money for books and storytelling aids



We wanted to do as much of the additional work in our office so our librarians could concentrate on programming. To that end, we convened a librarians' advisory group from the branches to design the training, select the books and storytelling aids, and develop the evaluation tools. These librarians were all interested in early childhood education.

The group met in person for several hours over the course of a month and by e-mail the rest of the time. Together, we decided on two in-service programs, one on each topic, which would begin with an attitudinal survey of the staff.

How did they feel about math and science as adults? Did they share the common phobias of most liberal-arts-trained people on these topics? Did they think young children had the capability to learn math and science concepts? Did they use math or science concepts in their current programming?



Rosanne Cerny is coordinator of children's services at Queens Borough Public Library in New York.

We opened the first training session with a simple game. As the coordinator outlined a typical early morning scenario, we noted on a blackboard how many times math (M) or science (S) concepts cropped up. The following text gives a summary.

The alarm clock rings to wake me up (M). I go to the bathroom and wash my face, I have to adjust the water temperature (S), measure out the cereal (M) and, listen to the radio weatherman (S) to decide how to dress. I select pants, blouse, and a matching jacket (M). I wait for the #44 bus (M) . . .

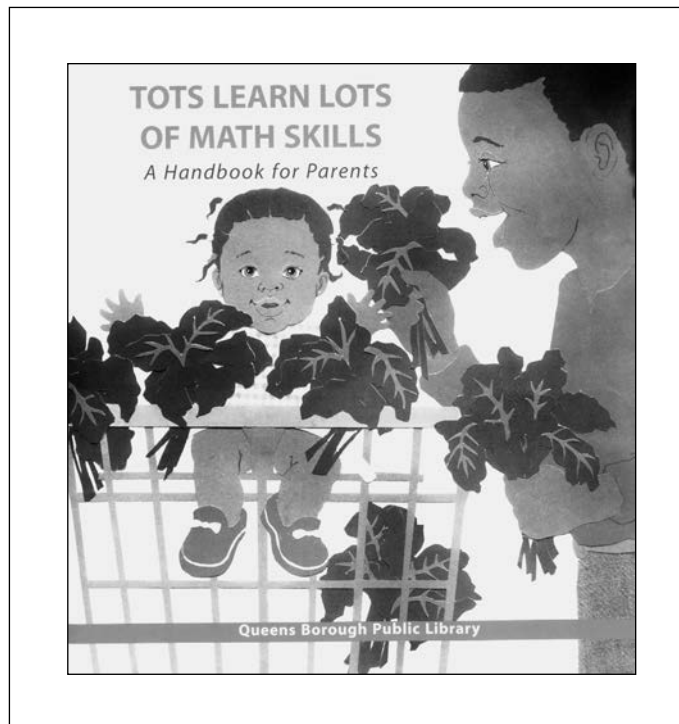
The program continued with a discussion of mathematical competencies taken from the United States Department of Education Web site. These competencies include problem solving, patterns and relationships/sorting, numbers and counting, shapes and spaces, and measuring. We reviewed psychological and educational philosophy relating to math learning and displayed familiar books, nursery rhymes, and finger-plays that illustrated math concepts beyond the obvious counting books. Some examples include Charles G. Shaw's *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* (HarperCollins, 1947), Margaret Miller's *Big and Little* (Greenwillow, 1998), and Bruce MacMillan's *Eating Fractions* (Scholastic, 1991).

Other interactive activities added humor and interest. For example, we asked librarians to sort collections of miscellaneous objects, and then explain their method. We did a "tall and short" walk around the room, pointing out tall or high objects, and short or low objects. And we asked the librarians to suggest math and science programs they had already used.

For the second in-service meeting, we discussed the basic principles of science learning, which were more difficult to research than the math standards. Although there were many suggestions for activities from various museums,

early childhood programs and schools, most of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) standards only address children in grade school or later. Interestingly, when researching the topic a year later, we found a very useful book from NAEYC (The National Association for the Education of Young Children) called *Guidelines for Pre-Kindergarten Learning and Teaching* that included standards for science learning. The full

- Predicting what will probably happen (form a hypothesis)
- Experimenting, testing ideas and predictions
- Communicating information and ideas
- Designing and making models of actual things or inventions
- Using simple scientific tools (e.g., scales, magnifiers, etc.)



This brochure was used by the Queens Borough Public Library.

Thanks to grant funding, we invited the education staff from the New York Hall of Science to demonstrate one of their early childhood programs. The museum educators discussed how they develop ideas for families to demonstrate specific scientific ideas. Since many of our librarians incorporate crafts or other activities into their toddler programs, they were delighted with the museum educators' presentation based on the Dr. Seuss classic *Bartholomew and the Oobleck!* Using a cornstarch-based glop, we were encouraged to play with, experiment with, and then try to define what Oobleck was. It was a lot of fun!

The other key components of the grant included new books, story aids like puppets and flannel board sets, and publications and booklists for parents. Then it was up to our public service librarians to tailor themed programs as part of their regular presentations.

Our publications began with revisions of three popular concept picture book lists: "Colors, Shapes, and Sizes," "It's About Time," and "1,2,3, A,B,C." Titles listed on the bookmarks and books used in the displays and demonstrations at the meetings were ordered and put up for grabs so our librarians could select what they felt were most needed at their agency. These could be fresh storytelling copies or circulating copies as needed. Each branch got about eighteen books. For the training sessions, we prepared two lists of professional books and Web sites.

Because of our multicultural population,

text is downloadable from the Web site www.ctb.com/prekstandards.

The process skills needed to learn scientific principles led to a brainstorming session. We discussed topics that most interest young children, such as:

- Observing and gathering information
- Raising questions
- Finding patterns and relationships
- Noticing change over time
- Classifying and sorting information (especially by groups)
- Measuring with numbers or comparisons
- Estimating, using numbers or categories

we like to have the most commonly used fingerplays and nursery songs in inexpensive publications that parents can take home. Half of our population was born abroad, so many parents are not familiar with the common American and British rhymes used in our preschool programs. We selected two brochures of rhymes (*Fingerplays You Can Count On* and *Discovery Rhymes*). These were printed in-house and will be stock items indefinitely.

Finally, we designed two attractive eight-page parent handbooks. They were professionally printed, and we even acquired publishers' permission to illustrate the handbooks with art from Shari Halpern's *What Shall We Do When We All Go Out?* and Cathryn Falwell's *Feast for 10*.

Except for requesting raw attendance figures, we usually do not require librarians to file detailed program reports. Because we had stipulated that we would present at least fifty public programs for the grant, we posted an evaluation form on our Web page, and asked staff to send us an out-

line of the program(s) presented. We asked how the programs were received by the target audience and whether the librarians thought they would use them again. These anecdotal reports were used along with two attitudinal surveys of the staff to prepare the final report on Tots Learn Lots.

We were delighted with the results. There was actually a slight attitudinal shift in our staff to a more positive view of math and science! They were pleased with the training sessions and the books and other materials selected for them, and their programs were well received by parents and children. Several librarians noted that there seemed to be more audience response from the toddlers to activities that showed off counting skills, the ability to name animals, or the ability to successfully match objects.

The forty-seven programs reported on in detail were very creative, and most of the staff plan on using math and science themes regularly. The topical categories broke down as follows: Numbers and

counting (11), shapes and related concepts (8), colors (7), animals, insects, etc. (7), weather or seasons (5), and the body and senses (5). Less frequently used topics were astronomy, transportation, time, and plants. The combined attendance at these programs was 1,004 children and caregivers.

In a large system (sixty-three children's rooms) like ours, the grant was a definite boon to planning and upgrading our toddler programming. But what's even more impressive is how much our staff enjoyed learning new information, experimenting with new programs, and being able to educate parents.

Even without the funds for new books or puppets, librarians anywhere can broaden their library's educational impact on preschoolers by fostering and modeling math and science literacy as much as print literacy. ☺

Editor's Note: Samples of print materials are available on request from Rosanne Cerny@queenslibrary.org

Thanks to our Refs

A big thanks goes out to all the referees nationwide who volunteered to read manuscripts submitted to *Children and Libraries*. We really rely on the expertise of library peers to help us get the best, most accurate stories in our publication. Referees for 2003–2004 included Cathryn Mercier, Linda Ward-Callaghan, Lynne Russo, Andrea Pavlik, Diane Scofano, Kathy Isaacs, Kathleen Odean, Pamela Baxter, Katie Odell, Sylvia Vardell, Kay Weisman, Elizabeth Timmins, Victor Schill, Betsy Hearne, Mary Smith, Judith Lechner, Kate Todd, Sue Abrahamson, Carole Fiore, Peg Burington, Anne Callaghan, Barbara Huntington, Rebecca Sheridan, Denice Agosto, Carrie Banks, Barbara Klipper, Jennifer Smith, Marcia Sarnowski, Anna Healy, Cindy Lombardo, KT Horning, Betty Marcoux, Kathy Latrobe, Ginny Walter, Kristen Anderson, Eliza Dresang, B. White, Genevieve Gallagher, Denise Matulka, Kim Olson-Kopp, Jeanette Larson, Ellen Riordan, and Kimberly Venzon. I think that's all of you, but please accept my apologies if I overlooked your name. I look forward to working with you, and new referees, in the coming year!

—Sharon Korbeck

Literature and Technology Skills for Entry-Level Children's Librarians What Employers Want

By Denice Adkins and Linda Esser

Children's librarianship has traditionally been geared toward connecting children and literature. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, libraries started adding computer-based media. Children's services were seen as an area in which computer technology was inappropriate, a "refuge of calm in a turbulent world."¹ However, children growing up in the twenty-first century multimedia world accept and embrace technology, sometimes to the exclusion of books.² For the children's librarian, therefore, a question arises: is it more important to know books or to know computers? Do employers privilege knowledge of one over knowledge of the other?

The questions have implications not only for new librarians, but also for their employers and library school educators. To determine how much emphasis employers placed on knowledge of children's literature and knowledge of technology, an analysis of children's librarian job advertisements was performed, and library administrators from several libraries that advertised for

children's librarians were interviewed. Several research questions guided this investigation.

- Is knowledge of children's books still an essential criterion for new children's librarians?
- Has knowledge of technology in any way superseded knowledge of print sources as an employment criterion?
- When did technology skills start being required of children's librarians?
- How do employers measure candidates' knowledge of the literature?
- How do employers measure candidates' technology skills?

Literature Review

Children's librarianship is a relatively young field with its origins extending barely two centuries back.³ "Youth services librarianship began with specialized collections" of children's literature and with the women hired to take care of those collections.⁴ From the establishment of the Bingham Library for Youth (Salisbury, Conn.) in 1803 to the middle part of the twentieth century, children's librarians focused their efforts on books as the primary medium for transmitting information and culture. The "foremothers" of children's librarianship have had a huge impact on children's book production, through reviews, awards, and the promotion of quality children's books, and they helped shape the children's book publishing industry.⁵

As children's librarianship focused on literature as a vehicle for increasing children's intellectual curiosity, the training of chil-



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dren's librarians has been more focused on children's literature. A 1987 issue of *Top of the News* was devoted to the subject of library education for youth services, and the teaching of children's literature was treated as an accepted educational norm. One author mentioned an increased need for coursework in audiovisual materials and computer software.⁶ In Melody Allen and Margaret Bush's survey of youth services library education, there were eighty-two references to literature courses being offered, compared to forty-nine references to "services" courses.⁷ Continuing education was also dominated by literature and storytelling courses, with thirty-eight offerings in these areas compared to eight continuing education courses on microcomputers.⁸ A later survey by Susan Steinfir and Pauletta Bracy also reported a majority of youth services courses dealt with literature.⁹ Almost half of all respondents to a 1996 survey of library school alumni reported taking a course in children's or young adult literature.¹⁰ This suggests that American librarians recognize the importance of familiarity with said literature. Knowledge of children's literature is valued internationally as well. Respondents to an international survey about library and information science (LIS) competencies desired moderate to extensive coverage of children's literature.¹¹ An earlier survey of LIS faculty in the United Kingdom found children's literature covered at eight out of ten schools surveyed.¹²

While children's books have been wholeheartedly embraced, youth services librarians have not responded as warmly nor as readily to computer technology for youth. Pauline Wilson suggested that the new "electronic utopia" would undermine children's reading abilities and that library school students would be too busy catching up on technological skills to take youth services classes.¹³ Respondents to Steinfir and Bracy voiced a similar concern by mentioning that youth services courses were getting short shrift in the attempt to maximize students' technological skills.¹⁴ Nonetheless, computer technology has so pervaded library services that one librarian wrote, "Whether the [LIS] graduate will be a cataloger, bibliographer, children's librarian, systems librarian, or archivist, he or she will need to be comfortable using computers and knowledgeable enough to assist patrons in navigating multiple sources of computer-based information."¹⁵ Technology is here to stay, and technological skills are essential for librarians.

However, relatively little study has been done on technology training for children's librarians in the public library. Neither Steinfir and Bracy's 1996 survey nor Allen and Bush's 1987 survey reported on the presence of children's technology courses. A 1997 study of electronic resources reported that electronic resources were covered in seven LIS youth services courses. Four of those courses were related to children's and young adult literature.¹⁶ Additionally, records of course additions reported in the *Library and Information Science Education Statistical Report* indicate that such courses are becoming a part of the LIS curriculum. Courses added have had titles such as "Children and Electronic Media,"¹⁷ "Children and Technology," "Evaluating Digital Resources for Children,"¹⁸ and "Wonders of the WWW for Youth Services."¹⁹ While courses on children's computer technology have been available, they are additions to a youth services curriculum already heavily oriented toward literature,

reading, and library promotion. Course offerings such as "Electronic Resources for Children and Young Adults"²⁰ and "Multimedia Texts for Young People"²¹ also suggest a broadening orientation toward technology as a purveyor of story. This orientation is supported by the development of the International Children's Digital Library, a computer-mediated source of children's texts, and children's CD-ROMs, which combine the features of a story and a game. Technology, as it relates to children and libraries, is story-focused.

Method

Two methods were used to gauge literature and technology competencies for children's librarians: a content analysis of job change, and interviews with public library employers. The content analysis used 285 youth services job advertisements published in *American Libraries* in five-year intervals, from 1971 to 2001.²² Ads for teen and young adult librarians were excluded from analysis, leaving 269 ads for children's librarians. The job preferences or requirements of those ads were reviewed to determine whether the positions indicated that the incoming children's librarian should have either knowledge of children's literature or technological skills.

After reviewing the advertisements, a follow-up study was conducted to determine the preferences of libraries currently hiring for children's librarian positions. In issues of *American Libraries* published between June/July 2002 and May 2003, twenty libraries advertised for children's or youth services librarians. Library administrators and human resources staff from seven of those libraries were interviewed about their hiring preferences. Employers were specifically asked how important it was for their new children's librarian candidates to know children's literature, current technologies, and how such knowledge was assessed at the interview. To preserve the privacy inherent in the hiring process, employers' names and libraries have not been revealed.

Results

Job Advertisements: Youth services advertisements in 1971 were concise and to the point. In eighty-five words or less, they indicated the type of position advertised, salary, and community amenities. Frequently, the only special knowledge mentioned in 1971 ads was knowledge of children's literature. The number of ads appearing in 1971 was relatively small; this number has increased significantly in the past thirty years, starting with a low of thirteen ads in 1971, peaking at seventy-nine ads in 1986, and settling at forty-nine ads in 2001. Compared to a 1971 advertisement, ads from 2001 go into more detail about the traits and features of the ideal children's librarian. In 2001, ads were likely to request interpersonal skills, love of children, ability to manage resources, and technology skills as well as knowledge of children's literature. For most years analyzed, between 10 and 20 percent of ads appearing each year request children's librarians with knowledge of juvenile literature. This percentage dropped to 7 percent of ads in 1976, and shot up to 37 percent in 1996. Figure 1 indicates the percentage of children's services ads requesting knowledge of children's literature and computer skills.

From 1971 to 1981, all ads that requested knowledge of children's literature specified that as a required competency for children's librarian candidates. "Sound," "extensive," and "broad" were the terms used to describe the desired depth of knowledge. In 1986, one advertisement out of fifteen indicated that knowledge of children's literature was preferred; other ads required someone with "substantial knowledge," "a good understanding," and "demonstrated knowledge" of children's literature. Only 12 percent of ads indicated knowledge of children's literature as a criterion for employment in 1991, and only one ad required knowledge of children's literature. Other ads indicated that knowledge of children's literature was "desirable," and that the employer was seeking a candidate "interested" in children's literature. However, by 1996, all but three advertisements were requiring knowledge of juvenile literature and were again using terms like "comprehensive," "broad," and "extensive" to describe that knowledge. The percentage of ads requesting knowledge of juvenile literature declined from thirty-seven to twenty by 2001, but only one ad indicated that such knowledge was preferred rather than required. However, by this time, libraries were not asking for comprehensive or broad knowledge, and only one ad requested "solid" knowledge.

While knowledge of children's literature has been consistently requested, knowledge of computer skills is a more recent development. The first mention of computers in children's services occurred in 1981, when an ad indicated that the library had a microcomputer club. However, that ad did not ask for computer skills from the children's librarian. In 1986, three ads out of seventy-nine said that the ideal candidate would have computer skills; however, these skills were preferred rather than required. Two of these three ads suggested that the need for computer skills was motivated by the installation of an online public access catalog (OPAC). Another ad mentioned the future installation of an OPAC as a selling point for the library. Between 1986 and 1991, the percentage of ads requesting computer skills increased by 18 percent. Even so, 1991 ads indicated that computer literacy was a preferred qualification rather than a required one. By 1996, 24 percent of ads asked for computer skills. However, by this time, all but one ad specified that computer skills were required. While 1991 ads asked generally for computer knowledge, 1996 ads tended to be more explicit, indicating what kinds of knowledge were needed: "basic PC applications," CD-ROM skills, Internet, and specific library automation packages. The number of ads requesting computer skills jumped another 8 percent between 1996 and 2001, and again, all but one ad indicated that computer skills were required of children's services staff. By 2001, children's librarians were being sought to provide computer instruction to youth, run children's computer centers, select electronic materials for children, and maintain library Web pages in addition to Internet searching

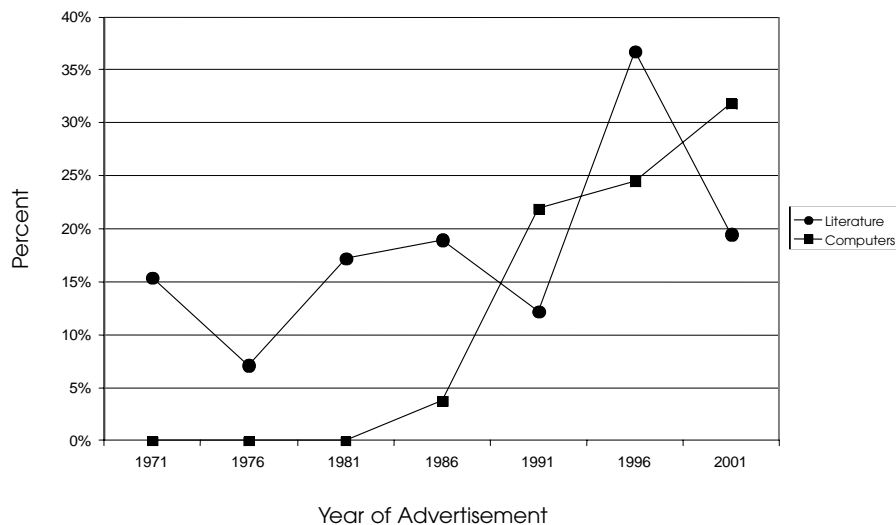


Figure 1. Percentage of children's librarians ads seeking candidates with knowledge of children's literature, compared with percentage of ads seeking candidates with computer skills

skills and basic applications. Technological skills seem to have become as important as knowledge of children's literature.

Employer Interviews: While job ads present a précis of the job, employers control access to that job. To more fully investigate what employers want to see from children's librarian candidates, seven public library directors and human resources personnel were interviewed about what they expected from candidates and how they measured candidates' skills. Employers were asked whether candidates were expected to have extensive knowledge of juvenile literature and how the employer assessed that knowledge during an interview. Two employers indicated a desire for extensive knowledge of children's literature; however, the remaining five indicated that while extensive knowledge was 'somewhat' important, they were really looking for an enthusiasm about children's literature. Said one employer, "We're looking for someone that has a passion about children's literature ... to watch them get excited and passionate about a particular piece of literature or a bibliography they've put together is really inspirational."

Employers' emphasis on enthusiasm appears to rank that quality before extensive knowledge of children's literature. However, a candidate who is excited about children's literature is not necessarily conversant with the depth and breadth of books written for children, even at the most basic level. Enthusiasm, tempered by knowledge, implies the ability to critically assess both current and previously published children's literature for collection development and reader advisory purposes. The enthusiastic librarian can recommend a great book; the veteran children's librarian can assess the book's potential for literature extension activities, suggest how the book might affect children at different developmental stages, and compare that book to books for similar age groups and on similar subjects. The growth or extent of that knowledge occurs over time as youth services librarians become more experienced. Employers' comments indicate that being excited about children's literature is at the top of the list of

candidate considerations. Nonetheless, employers want to know how much knowledge the candidate actually does have. Employers ask questions and pose problems that probe the depth of candidates' knowledge about children's books.

Employers use a variety of methods to determine the applicant's knowledge of children's literature. Four of the employers indicated asking questions about children's literature. They asked interviewees to name their five favorite children's books published in the last year, their favorite authors, and which children's books they have enjoyed. Some employers said they asked open-ended, problem-based questions, such as, "A teacher called and said, 'Give me fifteen to twenty-five good books for third graders.' What do you put into the pile?" One employer recalled asking open-ended questions about the selection process to determine candidates' understanding of the principles of quality literature. Several employers acknowledged that they were recruiting people directly from library school and were aware that "not everybody knows everything about children's literature." To evaluate students' knowledge of children's literature, these employers checked transcripts for previous coursework in children's literature. Three employers asked the candidate to put together a story time presentation during the interview to assess the candidate's ability to share literature and to select literature appropriate for particular communities. "When I ask someone, 'What book would you build a preschool story time around?' and they say, 'Tomie dePaola,' well, I've got nothing against Tomie dePaola, but I'm not sure that's where I'd start if I wanted to make an impression on an African-American teacher in a school that's 80 percent black." A sample of seven employers may not indicate a dramatic shift in the views of all employers, but these employers, at least, are seeking a balance between enthusiasm for and knowledge of children's literature.

In addition to asking about employers' preferences for knowledge of children's literature, employers were also asked what sorts of computer skills they sought and how they assessed those computer skills. In general, the computer skills sought by employers were fairly minimal. One library administrator said, "We're not looking for [our children's librarian] to be a computer programmer or a network administrator, but it's hard to imagine we would hire anyone who didn't have basic Internet skills or the ability to use Microsoft software." Another employer from a large metropolitan system said when youth services candidates discussed their computer hardware and software skills at great length, "it can be a flag that they're not going to be happy here because we don't allow anybody to do that [i.e., install and configure computer technology]. We have a separate department" for computer-related work such as installing software, setting up networks, and designing computer interfaces. However, representatives from smaller libraries indicated that increased computer ability would be a plus. Said one employer, "A children's librarian who could come in and implement technology to improve service to kids, that would be a huge plus." Employers see a connection between children's services, professional librarianship, and technology skills. The professional children's librarian, in their view, uses her technological knowledge to improve service to children.

Beyond children's services, employers seek candidates who can operate effectively in an increasingly technology-based profession. All employers sought people who could use office software such as word processing. During the interviews, five employers mentioned Microsoft products such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Three employers said they wanted candidates who could search for information from online databases as well as the Internet. Two employers mentioned that they sought familiarity with integrated library systems, and one wanted a candidate with the ability to imagine how a database was structured. One employer mentioned special graphic design software, but indicated that the library was willing to train an employee on that package. All employers sought candidates who were comfortable and confident in their abilities without being arrogant. One employer shared a cautionary tale about an interviewee who called the library's platform choice "stupid." That employee did not get the job. When assessing candidates' computer skills, most employers said they relied upon asking the candidate about her or his experience with computers. "We rely upon the honesty of the candidate," said one, "and if they don't mention a [program or product] that we're specifically interested in, we'll ask." However, another employer mentioned a brief computer test at the interview stage, and a third questioned a candidate's technological skills upon receiving a typewritten resume. Based on these results, employers seem to want someone who can help patrons with their computer problems, work with their colleagues who use e-mail and office automation products, and who can apply their technological expertise to serving children.

Conclusion

For the aspiring children's librarian, which is more important: knowing children's literature or knowing computers? In recent lean economic years, this question takes on a new significance. A review of *American Libraries* shows why. While forty-nine public libraries placed unique advertisements for children's librarians in 2001, less than half that number placed ads between June/July 2002 and May 2003. Empty public library positions are being frozen and new hiring greatly reduced. These are the places where children's librarians are most likely to be employed. It becomes imperative for job candidates to present themselves in the best possible light, demonstrating their knowledge of the skills employers demand. In this case, it seems that employers demand basic computer skills and a solid foundation in children's literature, upon which a career can be built.

Knowledge of children's literature has been a historic criterion for children's librarians and remains highly desirable today. In the 1970s and 1980s, ads requested considerable knowledge of children's literature. These requests dropped off in the early 1990s, but rose again in 1996 and 2001. However, employers indicate that they are recruiting applicants directly from library school, and they seem to realize that those applicants will not have the comprehensive knowledge of children's literature that a twenty-year children's services veteran might. Because comprehensive knowledge of children's literature is hard to come by, employers indicated that they often look for enjoyment of children's literature and enthusiasm for sharing that literature with children.

Based on published job advertisements, it seems that computer skills worked their way into children's services in the late 1980s as a supplementary skill to complement the installation of integrated library systems. Between 1991 and 1996, computer skills became a children's services requirement rather than a supplementary skill. The introduction of the World Wide Web in 1994 probably spurred this new requirement. Children's librarians had always mediated the relationship between children's materials and adult librarians' understanding of those materials; 1996 job ads suggest that they were also being required to mediate the relationship between new technology, patrons, and staff.

While one cannot say that knowledge of technology has superseded knowledge of literature in terms of importance, some technology knowledge is now assumed from the population of children's librarian applicants. What should the children's librarian know? Word processing, database searching, and Internet search skills are considered mandatory by most employers. Knowing spreadsheets, presentation software, and integrated library systems helps to sweeten the deal. Some libraries look for experience designing Web pages and creating Internet applications, but this is generally not necessary for the children's librarian. Judging by several employers' spontaneous mention of Microsoft products, the aspiring children's librarian would do well to have some familiarity with Microsoft software. Even so, office software skills are transferable across platforms.

The results of this study inform various stakeholders in children's services. Job seekers benefit from knowing what sorts of skills employers expect before they are interviewed. Knowing the importance of computer and literature skills will help them prioritize their coursework, and will encourage them to play up the technological skills they may have thought were irrelevant to youth services positions. This study also has implications for practicing youth services librarians, employers, and library educators who wish to maintain a relevant curriculum. Practicing librarians and their employers benefit from knowing what skills are being sought from new candidates. Knowing what other employers are seeking helps employers gauge the field and develop expectations for children's services personnel. This helps them assess the skills candidates possess when they interview for youth services positions. Librarians who are changing positions at this time learn which skills are expected from their competition, the new library school graduate. Library educators, particularly those who influence youth services curricula, also benefit from knowing what employers expect. They can use this information to advise students, plan new courses, or refine curriculum from older courses. The ultimate goal of library education is to produce a product that employers want and that they will hire.

Advice to the Applicant: Prospective applicants to children's librarian positions should be prepared for several questions about children's literature, including what they have read, what they have enjoyed, and what books they would recommend in specific situations. Applicants would benefit from investigating demographics of the communities to which they apply, and reflecting on the children's literature most appropriate to those communities. Applicants might also want to create general lists

of books appropriate for particular audiences and review those lists before they are called to interviews. Employers want to see the candidate's ability to creatively connect children with literature. Enthusiasm is good. The holistic application of children's literature to the entire mission of children's services is better.

In terms of technology skills, applicants should be their own best advocates during the interview. Most of the employers interviewed did not test for computer skills in the children's services interview. Applicants should be ready to share information about the software they have used and which applications can be adapted to youth services. The interview is not the place for false modesty. The candidate may mean that she doesn't know the protocol structure by which packets are transferred across networks when she says, "I don't know anything about the Internet!" However, her potential employers will assume that she means she knows nothing about accessing or searching the Internet. At the same time, the applicant should demonstrate an interest in learning more about the software used at the library. The employer who has just learned that his library's platform choice is "stupid" is not positively impressed with the applicant's technological skills so much as he is negatively impressed with the applicant's arrogance. Basic technological skills are good. Connecting technology to children's services is better. For both aspects of children's librarianship, the desired goal is the candidate's ability to apply skills and knowledge, in traditional and new ways, to the improvement of children's services. ☞

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Growing Up Latino in the U.S.A.

A Bibliography

The following bibliography was prepared by the 2003/2004 ALSC International Relations Committee. Members included Chair Susan Cooper, Stephanie Bange, Helen Kay Kennedy, Kathy LaRocca, Charlene McKenzie, Gina Moon, Andrea Pavlik, and Carolyn Phelan.

The Children's Services Committee of Ethnic & Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT) planned the program, which took place June 24, 2004, at the ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida. REFORMA, and PLA aided in the preplanning of the program. This bibliography offers a selection of recommended books related to the program's theme.

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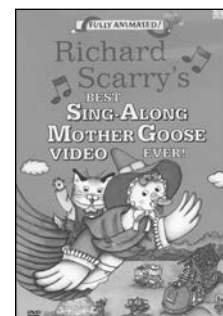
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Playing with Clay

Crafting Images with Clay Seems Like Play for These Illustrators

by Carol-Ann Hoyte



This work by Amy Vangsgard was used on a Great Art for Great Kids poster.

Playing with modeling clay isn't just for kids. Just ask grown-ups Barbara Reid and Amy Vangsgard, two artists specializing in making picture-book illustrations from clay.

They belong to a small group of North American picture-book artists, including Kim Fernandes, Stephanie Garcia, and Victoria Raymond, who use this technique. Prior to appearing in children's books, clay illustration had been used in U.S. print advertisements. It's uncertain how long the art form has been featured in picture books, but clay illustration is an easily recognizable style of art rich in kid appeal and easy and affordable to try at home, school, or the library.

Reid's relationship with plasticine dates back to her childhood. As a girl, she used the medium to construct a range of creations and complete school projects whenever she could. The Canadian illustrator finds an appeal to working with plasticine. "It's fun and easy to use and a great medium for learning with as it is so easy to change and reshape until you get the desired result. When I used it professionally, it helped that aspect of my work stand out from the crowd; it was fun to look at," she said.

Reid explored illustrating with clay during her studies at the Ontario College of Art and Design, where she graduated in 1980. With plasticine, she reproduced Botticelli's "Birth of Venus" for an assignment that required her to re-create a famous painting using a different medium. When she unveiled her piece, her instructor and classmates laughed. "For me, laughter is a great reaction. Later, I won a calendar contest in the same medium, and from then on, plasticine was part of my portfolio," she said.

The Toronto-based artist, whose clay illustration style is self-taught, counts Toulouse-Lautrec, Breugel, N.C. Wyeth, Ernest Sheppard, Arthur Rackham, and William Joyce as some of her artistic influences.

Reid wasn't aware of any children's materials featuring the technique. She had seen some clay art from Britain, but it was three-dimensional and very realistic. She works mainly with plasticine and began

doing so after the publication of *The New Baby Calf* by Edith Newlin Chase (Toronto: North Winds Press/Scholastic-TAB Publications, 1984).



Barbara Reid (top) and Amy Vangsgard

Plasticine, the tool of Reid's trade, is a nonhardening modeling clay which is minimally affected by temperature.

Before Reid starts illustrating, she familiarizes herself with the manuscript and collects required reference material. She works out characters, draws a storyboard for the book, and does full-size rough drawings which must be approved. To create illustrations, she first creates a background by spreading out plasticine with her thumbs into a thin layer on a heavy illustration board. Then she models shapes by hand and attaches them to the background. Finally, she adds texture by scratching, poking, or pressing the clay using various tools.

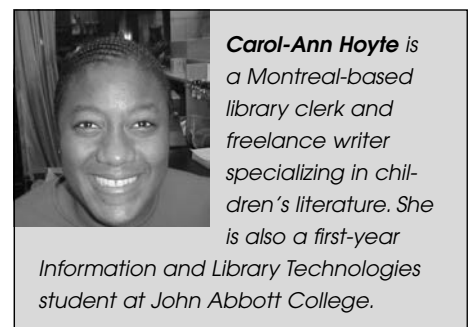
"Because each detail is an added layer, it takes some planning to build up the picture in the right order, a little like print making," Reid said. Completed pages are

stored in individual boxes to protect them from damage. When the book is complete, Reid and her husband spend a day or two photographing its pages onto transparencies, which are then forwarded to the publisher.

Reid believes that plasticine's limitations also count as advantages. "Plasticine gives my work a very identifiable, uniform look. The limitations of clay give the artwork a naive quality that suits the subjects I work with for children's books," she said. One drawback common to creating multidimensional artwork is photographing it for reproduction. Luckily for Reid, her husband, Ian Crysler, is a professional photographer.

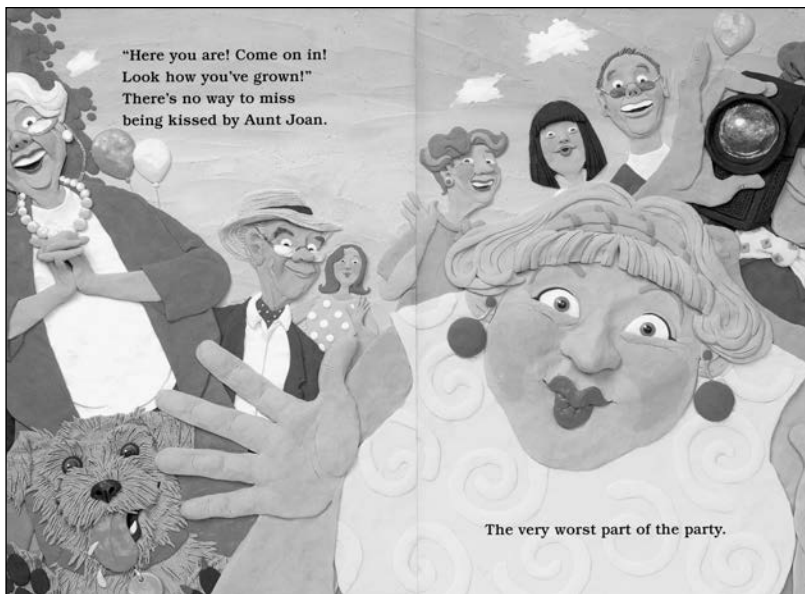
"I think a lot of the appeal of my work is in the medium. It is something that children are very familiar with, and it is pretty easy for them to look at the work and figure out how it was done. There are no secrets, what you see is what it is. Plasticine is not at all intimidating to work with because it is so easy to change, and working with it is really like play. I am always thrilled to see artwork that students have done with plasticine."

In classrooms, the only limit in creating plasticine artwork seems to be the imagination of students and the initiative of teachers. "When kids look at my work, they realize just how far they can go with the clay, and the results I see are always outstanding. Sometimes older students freeze up and decide "I can't draw," Reid said. But plasticine is so informal that most of the barriers are lowered, and they are nearly all able to produce amazing artwork. I have been very impressed at the ways creative teachers and students have used plasticine to great effect in many areas of the curriculum: art, language, science, math, geography, etc. And I receive lots of pictures of plasticine



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The Party by Barbara Reid

artwork from kids just doing it on their own.” Reid advises children interested in illustrating with clay to experiment with plasticine. “Look hard at the clay illustrations you like, and see if you can copy them. All artists learn by observing, copying good examples, and then experimenting with their own techniques. It’s really just practice.”

Reid’s book, *Fun with Modeling Clay*, contains most of the techniques she has learned as well as techniques and ideas she has culled from children’s art she has seen. *Playing with Plasticine* (Toronto: Kids Can Press, 1988), written by the artist, is another resource available to those keen to try their hand at clay illustrating.

Another Clay Crafter

When Amy Vangsgard started working with clay, Reid and Garcia were the only artists she knew working with the medium. Coincidentally, *Have You Seen Birds?* illustrated by Reid, was the first picture book she spotted featuring clay illustration.

The Los Angeles-based artist is best known for and started her career creating clay artwork for the magazine, newspaper, advertising, entertainment, and giftware industries. She has also worked on proj-

ects for several educational publishers. Though Vangsgard is a relative newcomer to the picture-book illustration world, she is no stranger to working on other children’s publications. Her list of children’s magazine credits includes *Sesame Street Magazine*, *Disney Adventures*, *Boy’s Life*, *Club House Jr.*, *Scholastic News*, *Let’s Find Out*, and *Time for Kids*.

“To me, all illustration is visual problem-solving. So my experience in these other areas has broadened and enhanced my abilities to solve visual challenges. For example, the work I’ve done in character development for advertising and giftware has helped me to create new characters for picture books,” she said.

Back in 1984, Vangsgard started incorporating some clay pieces in her work while employed as an assemblage illustrator. She discovered that she enjoyed working with clay the most “because of its fluidity. I was able to create anything I could imagine dimensionally. That was the joy of it.”

Vangsgard studied at Pasadena’s Art Center College of Design and graduated with honors in illustration in 1985. Although there weren’t classes offered specifically in dimensional or clay illustration back then, she emerged with a strong background in drawing and painting, skills that she employs daily in her work. Later,

she enrolled in a few classes in traditional clay sculpting with live models at L.A.’s Otis College of Art and Design.

Her material of choice is polymer clay. The medium, in which she is mainly self-taught, is oil-based and doesn’t dry out like water-based clay. It can be baked which prevents it from shrinking. Once baked, it can be decorated with acrylic paint.

For Vangsgard, sculpting is not the first step in creating her illustrations. First, she draws pencil sketches of the illustrations on paper, which are then faxed or e-mailed to her clients for approval. Second, she sculpts the illustrations from polymer clay into a relief and bakes them. Next, she paints the clay illustrations with acrylics and places them onto painted, masonite backgrounds. And then, if requested by her clients, digital photos of the illustrations are taken and e-mailed to them to check the work. Finally, the finished clay illustrations are photographed.

Polymer clay allows Vangsgard the opportunity to create illustrations that have a true dimensionality, with highlights and shadows. The method is more time-consuming, however, and illustrations take up more space when stored.

Clay animation has been and still is a main source of inspiration for Vangsgard.

“Starting with Gumby when I was a child, then the California Raisins, and the great work of the Ardman Studios, with Wallace and Gromit and then *Chicken Run*, when they teamed up with Dreamworks. *The Nightmare Before Christmas* by Tim Burton has also been a great inspiration to me. Most recently, Disney’s Playhouse has several cartoon series, such as ‘Jo Jo’s Circus.’” Other inspiration comes from collecting children’s books, looking at toys, cartoons, and advertisements to inspire character development, and fine art sculpture.

“Most children are familiar with clay, and it is something that they can enjoy in a hands-on experience. The educational market seems to recognize this and use this familiarity with the medium as a way to reach children.”

There are a handful of North American artists creating picture-book clay illustrations, and an even smaller number of those who are well known. “The children’s book market has a strong history of using traditional illustration styles. Second, clay illustration may be perceived by publishers to be both time-consuming and more expensive, principally because of the photography. Recent advances in digital photography will reduce these costs and make clay illustration more accessible.

“Also, with the recent popularity of clay animation, we will see more demand for clay illustration in picture books, and more notoriety for clay illustrators.” &

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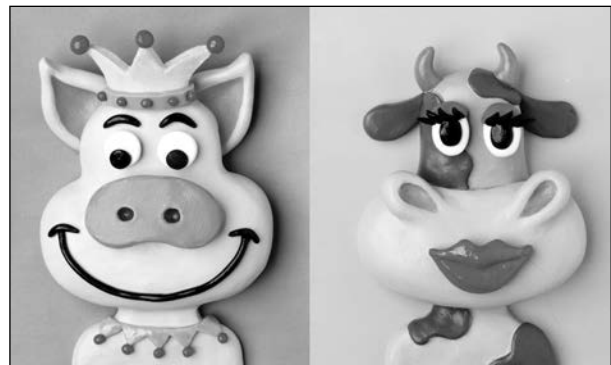
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Amy Vangsgard designed these animals for use on greeting cards.

Rhyme Time

How Mother Goose Speaks Many Languages

Miriam Lang Budin

One morning about two years ago, I looked out at the children and their caregivers assembled for a nursery rhyme program at the Chappaqua Library in New York and realized that, with the exception of Antarctica, every continent on the globe was represented in the room. Wanting to capitalize on this richness of cultural diversity, I proposed an experiment with a new program called Multilingual Mother Goose.

The structure of the program is simple: each adult comes prepared to teach the group a song or nursery rhyme in a language other than English. We sit in a circle on the floor with the children on our laps. Each “expert” foreign language speaker runs through the rhyme he or she has brought a few times, after which the whole group tries it together. Because nursery songs and rhymes are traditionally passed from one generation to the next through repetition and mimicking, they lend themselves perfectly to be absorbed this way. Songs with hand motions are especially popular, since they are easiest to learn and remember. We move around the circle until everyone has had a chance to teach a rhyme.

While it is lovely to have numerous foreign languages represented, Multilingual Mother Goose would be very successful with rhymes in only two or three languages. The pleasure of participating stems from sharing the motherwit of various cultures. It’s delightful to recognize the similarities between a fingerplay from Uruguay and “Where is Thumbkin?” or the singularity of a

Gujrati rhyme about a child sitting on a stool in the courtyard while being bathed.

It is not necessary for the librarian presenting the program to be a gifted linguist. In fact, I think it helps set everyone at ease when they hear me struggling to learn the simple rhymes.

Our Multilingual Mother Goose is open to caregivers with children from birth to five years old—an age span wide enough to include as many foreign language speakers as possible. Of course, the older children participate more fully than the babies during the sessions at the library, but many of the adults report that when they repeat the rhymes at home, their children join in. As any librarian who presents programs for toddlers can attest, this is typical of some children attending English language programs, as well.

We run the program as a series of four sessions given during successive weeks. Pre-registration limits the size of the group to a dozen couples. We produce and distribute a booklet of the rhymes and their translations for each couple to take home so they can practice between sessions. Preparing the booklet requires the foreign language speakers to give us written copies of their rhymes a week before the first session of the series. If the rhyme is in a language written in a non-Roman alphabet we include it in its own alphabet along with a transliteration into Roman letters to help us learn to pronounce it.

We have been fortunate to have speakers of Ashanti, Dutch, French, German, Gujrati, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Polish, Spanish, Tagalog, Turkish, Ukranian, Urdu, and Yiddish participate in the program thus far. Some rhymes have been contributed by grandparents, as well as by parents and babysitters. As the population of children and their caregivers changes, we look forward to an ever-increasing number of rhymes in new languages to learn.



Miriam Lang Budin has been honing her foreign language skills at the Chappaqua Library in New York, where she is a children’s librarian.



Photos by Susan E. Mosher

Fingerplay is a universal language! At right, Miriam Budin shares a finger rhyme with Caitlin Roth (held by her grandmother, Sally Roth).

Some of the popularity of the program might be attributed to the stimulation it offers to adults as well as children. It can be enlightening to compare the social implications of similar rhymes from differing cultures. Take “Where is Thumbkin?” and the Uruguayan “*Tun-tun*,” for example. Both are rhymes in which fingers impersonate people who are greeting each other. But how differently they behave! The well-known “Where is Thumbkin?” goes:

“Where is Thumbkin, where is Thumbkin?
 ‘Here I am! Here I am!’
 ‘How are you today, sir?’
 ‘Very well, I thank you.’
 Run away! Run away!”

Each of the other fingers—Pointer, Tall Man, Ring Man, and Pinky—is called upon in turn. Each “converses” with its mate across a distance and then “runs away” behind the singer’s back. Finally, they all come out and speak to each other, only to “run away” again.

In the rhyme from Uruguay, the two hands are held with palms together, each pair of fingers meeting its mate and tapping each other in turn:

<i>“Tun-tun.</i>	<i>(Tap thumbs.)</i>
<i>‘Quien es?’</i>	<i>(Tap pinkies.)</i>
<i>‘Soy yo!’</i>	<i>(Tap index fingers.)</i>
<i>Abre la puerta.’</i>	<i>(Tap ring fingers.)</i>
<i>‘Hola [child’s name]</i>	<i>(Tap middle fingers.)</i>
<i>Como te va?</i>	<i>(Move middle fingers back</i>
<i>Dame un besito y</i>	<i>and forth as if embracing.)</i>
<i>Despues te vas.’</i>	<i>(Tap middle fingers together</i>
<i>(Beso, beso.)”</i>	<i>to make them kiss.)</i>

This translates as:

“Knock-knock.
 ‘Who’s there?’
 ‘It’s me!
 Open the door.’
 ‘Hello [child’s name]!
 How are you?
 Give me a little kiss and
 then you can go.’
 (Kiss, kiss.)”

While adults are free to analyze the information such a comparison can impart, the children simply enjoy the songs and rhymes for their own sake. Five-year-old Dana moved from Israel last summer, speaking not a word of English. She was not very pleased with the change to her life and was an unhappy, silent presence in our regular story hours for about a month until her English comprehension began to grow. But when she attended Multilingual Mother Goose, she really came out of her shell. The program didn’t just level the playing field for Dana, it put her at an advantage.

Not only could she help us to learn “*La Kova Sheli*,” the Hebrew variant of “My Hat, It Has Three Corners,” she learned all the other languages and rhymes far more readily than most of the people in the room.

Her mother recently informed me that she overhears Dana singing “*Arroz Con Leche*” around the house. “I don’t know all the words,” Anat said, “but Dana certainly does!” ☺

Story Times That Rock!

Creating Successful Readers . . . and Attentive Listeners

By Sunny Strong



Sunny Strong

Want success at your library story times?

Some people are naturals at programming. They mix well with others, enjoy the spotlight, have a knack for communicating with children, and are wonderfully creative. Others conduct story times as a requirement of their job.

None of us delight in wasting time and energy. We enjoy the satisfaction of a job well done. Let's learn from the past and predict the future by selecting books that rock! Many of us are trained to recognize excellence in picture books. Whether in academia or in library workshops, we learn quality picture books are a perfect marriage of illustration and text. The words, if present, flow. The illustrations suit the story theme. The content is relevant to its intended audience. The book design advances the intent of the author/illustrator.

However, although we sense story time books should be quality titles with some relevance, we sometimes make an unconscious choice between worthy and popular. The most successful story times are both crowd pleasing *and* enriching. They benefit from

instant approval and result in long-term reflection and vocabulary increase. Their content can be mined, not just enjoyed then forgotten. In other words, they are memorable.

When children beg to hear a book again, they attest to its relevance. Something has connected. Inspired by a familiar setting, character, or feeling, the child relaxes into listening to "his" story.

Betsy Hearne's study of "Perennial Picture Books" identifies several characteristics present in many memorable picture books.¹ One can consider these characteristics when deciding which books to purchase and which of those to use in story time. Not all exemplary picture books work well with a group. The size or style of illustrations must show well at a distance. Religious books or those with a single political viewpoint are inappropriate in a public setting.

This article extends Hearne's work by identifying success factors in books

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used in story times. When you or your audience tire of your favorites list from graduate school, add books to your repertoire that contain the following elements. Train new staff to select books based on children's needs and past delights. When a story is wildly successful, stop to consider why. Apply your knowledge of child psychology and child development. Keep a log of quality crowd-pleasers. Embrace the comfort of repeating these favorites in combination with different titles. Share the list with your colleagues.

You can learn to be an expert regarding your community's needs. By identifying additional components present in your successful story times, you will create a guide for future program planning.

Story Time Success Factors

Action and Plot

Young children are creatures of the senses. They need to move and run and talk. When we ask them to sit down and listen, we must provide stimulating stories where the reader and listeners care about the characters and what happens to them.

Look for picture books with action and suspense. Even after children have heard a book once, they still enjoy the anticipation in a well-told story. The term "page-turner" applies to this type of picture book.

Resolution of the tension will comfort them. By age three, most children are empathetic. They nervously await the rescue of *Tikki-tikki tembo-no sa rembo-chari bari ruchi-pip peri pembo* from the well in *Tikki-Tikki Tembo* by Arlene Mosel (Holt, 1968).

Although *Umbrella* by Taro Yashima (Viking, 1958), *Harry the Dirty Dog* (Zion, 1956), and *Chewy Louie* by Howie Schneider (Rising Moon, 2000) are longer books, the tension in their plots retains interest. We cheat children when we choose shorter books for every program. They need to develop longer attention spans.

Humor

Children enjoy being in on a joke. By the time the peddler in *Caps for Sale* by Esphyr Slobodkina (HarperCollins, 1947) looks up into the tree, listeners already know what he will find. It is funny to see the monkeys mimicking the peddler without his knowledge.

The absurd situations that the title character in *Curious George* by Margaret and H. A. Rey (Houghton, 1966) experiences amuse children. When he breaks a rule, children relate. They know it is wrong to ride a hospital cart like a race car, but it is funny because it upsets everything.

Children laugh at incongruity. When Mrs. McNosh in *Mrs. McNosh Hangs Up Her Wash* by Sarah Weeks (HarperCollins, 1998) hangs the furniture on the clothesline, it is hilarious to them. Miss Nelson's disguise in *Miss Nelson Is Missing* by Harry Allard (Houghton, 1977) tickles their funny bones. The humor in cumulative tales like Audrey Wood's *The Napping House* (Harcourt, 1984) and Bernard Waber's *Bearsie Bear and the Surprise Sleepover Party* (Houghton, 1997) is accessible to children as they can anticipate it. Jules Feiffer's *Bark, George* (Harper-Collins, 1999) is a hit with all ages. However, preschoolers who have just learned which animals make which sounds feel smart and included. Humor that bores adults because it is blatant entertains children who may request a favorite book be read again and again.

Repeated Phrases

Repeated phrases invite children to be a part of the story. Done with expression and rhythm, they help train a child's ear to detect the cadence of speech and music. Keeping time is a reading readiness skill. "Clickedy clack moo," for example, can be heard for days after children are introduced to *Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type* by Doreen Cronin (Simon and Schuster, 2000).

Memorable Language

Children benefit from hearing more complicated sentence structure and a richer

vocabulary. Give them words with which to express themselves more specifically. When we talk with children, we do not construct our sentences as carefully as when we write. Notable authors use language skillfully. Hearing excellent prose enriches children.

The Weaker or Younger Triumph

As they safely travel with the protagonist through trials and on to resolution, children experience a comfortable smugness. When they know of someone with a problem, they cheer to have the problem resolved. Peter Rabbit, although smaller than Farmer McGregor, manages to outwit him in *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter (Frederick Warne, 1901). Children relate to Peter's wish to be naughty and to his vulnerability when he's caught in the gooseberry net.

Cautionary Notes

Using a book you love can spread your enthusiasm as long as the book relates to young children. Beware of wolves in sheeps' clothing! Mood pieces, nostalgic accounts, and art showcases may belong to an adult audience. Another pitfall is choosing a dull or overly long book because it fits a theme. Focusing on the child's needs and interests should keep us grounded. There is no substitute for ongoing reading and observation. Adjust the story time content when the community profile changes. Begin the new season with excellent, but shorter books. Gradually add longer books with richer vocabulary as the attention span grows.

New titles and formats abound. Be open to ongoing quality and relevance improvement. You will be rewarded by children who run to story time and complain when you finish! 🐾

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Reading Pictures

Searching for Excellence in Picture Books

By Gratia J. Banta

Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in The Newbery and Caldecott Awards: A Guide to the Medal and Honor Books (Chicago: ALA Editions, 2004).

First there were cave drawings, then illuminated manuscripts and large paintings telling religious stories. Indian pictographs gave directions. My grandmother told me she used chalk to make drawings on the outside walls of her home to tell hobos she had extra milk for them. Throughout history, pictures have been used to tell stories that change people's lives. All of these visual images were ways to communicate to others without words.

Research shows that visual skills precede verbal skills. Very young children learn to read pictures well before they learn to read text. It has always been easy for me to read pictures. When my mother read to me, before I could read, I memorized each subtle nuance of the pen-and-ink sketches by Ernest H. Shepard that illustrate A. A. Milne's *When We Were Very Young* and *Now We Are Six*. I know I did this because when I look at those sketches today they are like old friends. They reassured me that all of my feelings were valid.

Elizabeth Ann, in the poem "Explained," has a question about God and "she would run round the world till she found" the answer. Shepard draws Elizabeth, her head held high, her hair flying, her body in a spirited run, her fists full of determination. The rabbits sitting by the side of the road and watching Elizabeth can see that she has a question and that it matters very much to her. I read the sketch to mean that a young girl could go on an adventure. I have treasured that image, and my young heart's belief in it, for my entire life. Christopher Robin in "Sneezles" sits patiently in bed with a cold, and I can see that drawing clearly when I have to rest in bed and it comforts me.

In the first grade, when I was taught to read using the Dick and Jane series, I was encouraged again to read the pictures. I was not alone. By the 1950s, 80 percent of the first graders in the United States were learning to read by the whole-word method instead of by phonetically sounding out words letter by letter. We were asked to think about the activities taking place in the pic-

tures and to discuss them in class. The colorful illustrations by Eleanor Campbell were based on photos of real children doing real activities. Over time it is estimated that more than eighty-five million children learned to read that way. Whether they are called decorations, as they were in *Now We Are Six* when it was first published in 1927, illustrations, or paintings, as they are sometimes called in picture books today, they form the visual stories that continue to challenge, enlighten, excite, and satisfy me.

From 1976 to 2001, as a professional children's librarian, I had the opportunity to share new picture books weekly with children. During that time, children's book publishing enjoyed an explosion of creative changes in format and printing along with huge increases in sales and number of titles. In 1969, Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* offered a then-radical format with cutout holes representing where the caterpillar had eaten. In the 1980s, Paul Zelinsky's spectacular pop-up songbook *The Wheels on the Bus* was so well loved that my library could not buy enough copies to keep one on the shelf.

Working in rural libraries, I quickly found that book illustration could be used not only as an introduction to reading but also as an introduction to exploring the larger world of the fine arts. While serving on the 1988 Caldecott Committee, I learned that my lifelong love of reading the pictures



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would help steer other committee members and myself to identify excellence in picture books while selecting “the most distinguished American picture book for children.”

By learning to read the pictures, we librarians, parents, and teachers can:

- Learn about cultures outside our communities.
- Excite our visual senses and challenge our visual literacy.
- Educate the eye and put illustration in the context of all arts.
- Increase our enjoyment of the world as a visual place.
- Share a book on a visual level and thus include reluctant readers and visual learners.
- Enjoy a book with a preliterate child.
- Understand and respect the skills and career of an illustrator.
- Extend the role of the arts in our communities.
- Expand the meaning of the written word.
- Identify excellence in book design.

The best, most rewarding reason is contained in the Indian word *rasa*, which is the moment of heightened awareness achieved when we perceive the ultimate reality of a work of art. It happens to the viewer of the art. (A different delight occurs in the making of the art.) It is like the magical blooming of a flower, a flash of light, an insight, the delight in learning, the sense of wonderment, the sense of the miracle of ourselves. For those of us who love looking at art, *rasa* is the reason we keep coming back for more. It is also the reason that we search for excellence in painting and illustration. Once viewers experience *rasa*, they will no longer settle for inferior work. Young and old search for *rasa* in the visual world and know and cherish its feeling of joy.

By reading pictures with an educated eye, a sense of their intended audience, and a heart open to the feelings they evoke, we can begin our search for excellence in picture books. We can then share our findings by acknowledging the most bril-

liantly illustrated books in our reviews, our selections, and our awards. While serving on the Caldecott Committee, I was asked to address adults about excellence in picture book illustration, so I developed a workshop called “Reading the Pictures.”

We librarians can train ourselves, as adults, to think in pictures again. Such thinking is called visual literacy. Developing visual literacy is much the same as learning a foreign language. I invite you to open a picture book as if you were a child not yet able to read. Ignore the words and look only at the pictures. This is the first step that needs to be taken to identify exceptional book illustration. Second, read the text but continue to notice the illustrations. Third, read both text and illustrations together, taking time to reflect and set aside any adult filters.

When we have learned to read the pictures, we can each find our own voice to describe our personal reactions. The goal is to determine if the illustrations and the book meet the high standard of being distinguished and exceptional. We owe it to the book industry and especially to book illustrators to get beyond describing illustrations as “pretty” or “interesting” and to choose our words carefully. As Pablo Picasso once said, “If you must insult me, at least get your terminology straight!”

How then can we best prepare to identify the most distinguished picture books? I recommend the following:

- Learn the elements of composition and design.
- Understand cultural context and color.
- Determine whether the text has been enhanced or extended by the illustrations.
- Learn how to link book illustration with the other fine arts.
- Recognize excellence in techniques used in a wide variety of materials.
- Identify which materials work well with a text.
- Identify excellence in bookmaking.
- Develop a working knowledge of art terms.

- Cultivate a basic knowledge of art history.
- Know the history of book illustration.
- Look at the original art of book illustrators.
- Listen to book illustrators and read what they say about their own work.
- Allow yourself time to do some of your own drawing or painting.

To illustrate the elements of composition and design, we will compare *Patience*, a painting by Balthus (see www.artchive.com/artchive/B/balthus/balthus_patience.jpg.html), to the illustration in *Bunny Cakes* by Rosemary Wells (Dial Books, 1997), above the text “This time Max wrote ‘Red-Hot Marshmallow Squirters’ in the most beautiful writing he knew.” In the painting by Balthus, we see a young woman bent forward to read a book that is opened flat and lying on a table. In the Wells illustration, we see Max, a rabbit wearing a green striped jumpsuit with a purple T-shirt, leaning forward and scribbling on a lined yellow sheet of paper. In the design of each of their bending bodies, we feel a certain discomfort. In the painting by Balthus, it is about the sensual strength of a pubescent teenager. In the illustration by Wells, because Max cannot write, he is struggling to draw a picture to explain what he needs. There is no unused space in either image; even the blank white space around Max’s frame and the dark curtain near the girl matter. Both figures fill the frame, and they seem to be exploding out of their boxes. The figures are full of passion and energy, and their compositions suggest that they are on the verge of being changed forever. Both works are successful because they clearly tell us about the emotional states of their characters, and we are filled with the energy of those characters’ youth and a sense of their longing.

To better understand how color reflects a cultural context, view the contemporary work of Xenobia Bailey in a provocative article by Sharifa Rhodes-Pitt at www.africana.com/articles/daily/ar20040506xenobia.asp, and compare it to the illustrations in *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold (Crown, 1991). Textile artists like Bailey use the bright colors of Africa. Similar colors are used in *Tar Beach*, a Caldecott

Honor Book, representing a celebration of African heritage. In the 1980s, Faith Ringgold used acrylic on canvas to make paintings of quilts that told about her life. *The Purple Quilt* (www.faithringgold.com/ringgold/d02.htm) is an example. When Ringgold turned to illustration, her sense of color became a cultural experience for all to enjoy. She asked us to take her primitive, or naive, art seriously, as if to say, "This may not be familiar to you, but it's all about my culture, my family, my heritage, and my life as an artist," and offering a lesson in understanding cultural context.

Illustrators employ many strategies in their effort to extend text. Words are few in *Tuesday* by David Wiesner (Clarion, 1991). The entire text, spread over thirty-two pages, consists of "TUESDAY EVENING AROUND EIGHT," "11:21 PM," "4:38 AM," and "NEXT TUESDAY, 7:58 PM." Economy of words forces the reader not to depend on the text for the story. This is, first of all, a visual story. The watercolor images are realistic, but their actions are not. Life is not what it seems, and we are the aliens. The ending picture features flying pigs. Is Wiesner referring to the phrase "when pigs fly," asking us to suspend disbelief? Such mysterious questions extend the text and add to the excitement of the book. Years later, we can look back and say those flying pigs foreshadowed Wiesner's *The Three Pigs* (Clarion, 2001).

Perhaps illustrators who extend the text draw on the work of Randolph Caldecott. In his illustrations for *Hey Diddle Diddle* (George Routledge and Sons, 1882), the pigs seem to be wearing suits and dancing to music, giving us more to enjoy about the pigs than the text provides. On another page, Caldecott draws the moon so low on the horizon that a cow need not jump far for us to believe the rhyme. "Look how the cow jumps over the moon! I wish I had such a clever mind!" exclaimed another brilliant and successful British illustrator, Kate Greenaway, a contemporary and a good friend of Caldecott. The illustrator Maurice Sendak writes about this illustration, noting the additional figure in the frame. "It's Caldecott's drawing of the milkmaid dropping her bucket that makes this even more exceptional, as in her reaction we learn that she sees what we see also," he said.

Again, Caldecott extends and enhances the text, in this case giving credibility to the rhyme. (For more, read Maurice Sendak's *Caldecott and Co.: Notes on Books and Pictures* [Farrar, 1988], and Ina Taylor's *The Art of Kate Greenaway: A Nostalgic Portrait of Childhood* [Pelican, 1991]).

Picture books can serve as a bridge to other arts. Film is a close cousin to picture books. In film and picture books, the images and scenes are repeated to carry out a story. A distinction between the media needs to be made. Films, like picture books, are composed of a series of images that form a story by following the same characters through a variety of settings in which the story unfolds. For example, all of the frogs Wiesner paints remain the same kind of frogs, page after page. A painting does not require this sequence. Except in some narrative paintings, a painting is not about the development of characters over time. In Wiesner's *Tuesday*, frogs are painted in a realistic style; they are not painted from the imagination. But when he paints them flying on lily pads, it defies our scientific knowledge, which gives us the sense of being in a science fiction film.

As we learn more about book illustration, we will find sometimes subtle, sometimes direct references to the great artists. Anthony Browne made references to paintings in *Willy the Dreamer* (Candlewick Press, 1997). Browne informs audiences that the painter Rene Magritte is an influence and that he admires the writing of Lewis Carroll, so it is no surprise that we can find connections to Magritte and Carroll throughout Browne's work. In the second edition of *Willy's Pictures* (Candlewick Press, 2000), the referenced paintings are reproduced at the end of the book.

Some books are about music. *Mysterious Thelonious*, written by Christopher Raschka (Orchard Books, 1997) and dedicated to editor Dick Jackson, is just such a book. Its dust jacket, with grid pattern and musical scale, sets the stage, and I can hear the instruments getting tuned up. The text is spread across several pages. The words "Oh so mysterious Thelonious, mysterious Thelonious, mysterious Thelonious, mysterious, oh so" can be found swimming through Raschka's fluid, floating musical

scale. The placement of the text is a sensuous feast for the eye. We are told on the end pages that Raschka "matched the twelve musical tones of the chromatic scale, e.g., do, re, mi, to the twelve color values of the color wheel, then set paint strokes for notes and color washes for harmonies." It looks and feels like the music of Monk translated into colorful watercolor. The book measures only six-and-one-half by seven-and-one-half inches, inviting small children to hold it and enjoy the colors, and perhaps to hear their own personal rendition of the music referenced and to know about its message before ever listening to Monk's "Mysterioso."

Bridging from book illustration to poetry, Angela Johnson was inspired by *Tar Beach* and wrote this poem.

When it is a warm time
in the evening
and my people are
laughing
and warm
beside me,
it almost feels like
I can fly.
Above the city and
everything
I know.
—And I am happy in
the coolness
as I am in the warmth,
because I can fly as
free as I feel
and watch my people
with love
from
above.

More examples of poems inspired by art appear in Jan Greenberg's *Heart to Heart: New Poems Inspired by Twentieth-Century American Art* (Abrams, 2001).

To further our understanding of visual literacy, museums offer the most excellent examples of a wide variety of materials and techniques used by artists. Labels and exhibit catalogs provide more information. To develop a critical and educated eye takes some work over time. As you learn to recognize the variety of materials used, you might work in reverse and imagine what stories they would complement. For example, the quilts

Faith Ringgold painted would work well in a story about an African-American girl growing up in Harlem. In this way you will be able to determine whether a certain medium works well with a text. Go to “images” at www.google.com to search for paintings and illustrations.

To identify excellence in bookmaking, the binding, layout, design, and overall look of a book must be considered. To learn the terms that describe the parts of a book, read *ABC for Book Collectors*, 8th edition, by John Carter and Nicolas Barker (Oak Knoll Press, 2003). View early printed books on display in rare book collections. Examine books made by artists. They help us see books as art objects and demonstrate the creative use of experimental papers and bindings. Helpful Web sites include Minnesota Center for Book Arts, www.mnbookarts.org; the Center for Book Arts, www.centerforbookarts.org; and the San Francisco Center for the Book, www.sfcbook.org.

Once you have developed a working knowledge of art terms, you can more deeply appreciate picture books and more enthusiastically share them with children. If you can write book reviews that include knowledgeable comments about illustration, you will help publishers, authors, and illustrators. Illustrators and art directors read children's book reviews and can quickly spot a charlatan. And they know that starred reviews and awards result in stronger sales. There is, therefore, a great need for responsibility in writing reviews.

Unfortunately, many good books about illustration are out of print, but you can find them at the library. Sources for information about illustration are: *Art and Design in Children's Picture Books: An Analysis of Caldecott Award-Winning Illustrations* by Lyn Ellen Lacy (American Library Association, 1986); *Looking at Picture Books* by John Warren Stewig (Highsmith, 1995); *Lotus Seeds: Children, Pictures, and Books* by Marcia Brown (Atheneum, 1986); *Potential of Picture Books: From Visual Literacy to Aesthetic Understanding* by Barbara Z. Kiefer (Merrill/Prentice Hall, 1995); *Writing with Pictures: How to Write and Illustrate Children's Books* by Uri Shulevitz (Watson-Guptill, 1997); *Picture This: How Pictures Work* by Molly Garrett Bang (Seastar,

2000); and *Ways of Telling: Conversations on the Art of the Picture Book* by Leonard S. Marcus (Dutton, 2002).

Information about art materials and techniques can be found in the *Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques* by Ralph Mayer (Viking, 1991), *The Painters Handbook* by David Gottsegen (Watson-Guptill, 1993), *The Oxford Dictionary of Art* edited by Ian Chilvers and Harold Osborne (Oxford University Press, 1988), and, for more serious study, *Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the Lost Techniques of the Old Masters* by David Hockney (Viking, 2001). It is also helpful to read journals that focus on the communication arts, such as *Print: America's Graphic Design Magazine* and the basic art journals.

To cultivate a basic knowledge of art history, read H. W. Janson and Anthony F. Janson's *History of Art for Young People*, 6th edition (Abrams, 2003). Enjoy Sister Wendy Beckett's *The Story of Painting* (DK Publishing, 1994) in book form or on video. Study *American Visions: The Epic History of Art in America* by Robert Hughes (Knopf, 1997). View videos about individual artists such as Jackson Pollock and Frida Kahlo. Attend lectures on art history. Read children's biographies, such as Ann Kay Beneduce's *A Weekend with Winslow Homer* (Rizzoli, 1996), John Duggleby's *Story Painter: The Life of Jacob Lawrence* (Chronicle Books, 1998), Russell Freedman's *Martha Graham: A Dancer's Life* (Clarion, 1998), Paolo Guarneri's *A Boy Named Giotto* (Farrar, 1999), Sandra Jordan and Jan Greenberg's *Frank O. Gehry: Outside In* (DK Publishing, 2000), Bijon LeTord's *A Bird or Two: A Story about Henri Matisse* (Eerdmans, 1999), Elizabeth Partridge's *Restless Spirit: The Life and Work of Dorothea Lange* (Viking, 1998), Deborah Kogan Ray's *Hokusai: The Man Who Painted a Mountain* (Farrar, 2001), and Diane Stanley's *Michelangelo* (Harper Collins, 2000). Three children's fiction titles that feature artists are Janet Taylor Lisle's *The Art of Keeping Cool* (Simon and Schuster, 2000), Linda Sue Park's *A Single Shard* (Clarion, 2001), and Gloria Whelan's *Homeless Bird* (HarperCollins, 2000).

Book illustration has a rich and global history, from illuminated manuscripts to lift-the-flap books to laser printing. As your knowledge expands, you'll want to learn

about other awards for illustration, such as the Hans Christian Andersen Award, the Kate Greenaway Medal, and the various Bologna international book awards.

Each of us is connected with some piece of that history. For me it is the teacher's guides for my first readers, the Dick and Jane series, which encouraged students to talk about the pictures in class. Reading experts Zerna Sharp and William Gray and an editorial team including May Hill Arbuthnot created a curriculum of reading books that reflected a six-year-old's activities and language. The characters of Dick and Jane represented Everyboy and Everygirl and first appeared in a 1930s Elson Basic Reader pre-primer. Because I was a visual learner, I was an active participant in my first-grade class's book discussions. As I read the pictures, I learned that Jane wore dresses and Dick did things! I learned that Mom was usually in the kitchen wearing an apron and holding the family together. The Dick and Jane books were retired when our concept of the family changed, but, interestingly, baby boomers who learned by that method grew up incorporating pictures into everything they did. For more information, read Carole and Marvin Heiferman's *Growing Up with Dick and Jane: Learning and Living the American Dream* (HarperCollins, 1996).

There are now many opportunities to view original book illustration. I saw a traveling exhibit of original art for the illustrations in the Dick and Jane series at the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, Florida, and then again at the Osborne Collection in Toronto, Canada. Special collections, such as the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, are dedicated to educating the public about book illustration. The following Web sites provide more information on illustrators and their art:

- The Society of Illustrators, Museum of American Illustration, www.societyillustrators.org
- National Center for Children's Illustrated Literature, www.nccil.org
- Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, www.picturebookart.org
- Children's Literature, reviews and interviews with illustrators, www.childrenslit.com

- Every Picture Tells a Story, online gallery of original illustrations, www.everypicture.com
- International Board on Books for Young People, www.ibby.org
- Picture Book, information about the book industry, www.picturebook.com
- Bologna Children's Book Fair, www.publishers.asn.au/book_fairs.cfm?doc_id=82

Also visit the individual Web pages of children's book publishers.

In addition to exhibits, lectures by book illustrators offer insight into their work. They help us understand the collaborative process of making the book. We see a book in a new way when we hear about the process of creating it and learn about the materials and techniques used. What is more, visits and lectures by illustrators can build the self-esteem of children who crave encouragement in the arts.

Recently, in a program at the Portland Museum of Art, David Macaulay told an enthusiastic audience of more than five hundred people about his process of working as an illustrator. He was able to show how drawings and ideas that do not quite work are as much a part of the creative process as those that do. Macaulay's presentation reminded us that as children's librarians, we need to be doubly responsible to the public when selecting award books. If our choices do not meet the highest standards of excellence, our profession and the awards run the risk of becoming trivial. Macaulay also reminded the audience that although a book for children might be playful, there is very serious work behind it. To learn more from illustrators speaking on their own work, read Julie Cummins' *Wings of an Artist: Children's Book Illustrators Talk about Their Art* (Abrams, 1999) and Leonard Marcus' *Ways of Telling: Conversations on the Art of the Picture Book* (Dutton, 2002).

To enhance your visual literacy, do some of your own drawing or painting. Working with something as simple as a few crayons and a blank sheet of paper will break down your inhibitions. If we ask our children to do it, we can too. Use the workbook format

of Marilyn J. S. Goodman and Natalie K. Lieberman's *Learning through Art: The Guggenheim Museum Collection* (Abrams, 2001) to break the ice and get you started. An exercise I suggest in my workshop is to look at Cassie in *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold. Ringgold is concerned about expressing how Cassie feels, not about following rules of perspective. As you view the illustrations, make a self-portrait depicting how you feel. Forget about any "right" way to draw. Show yourself flying over your favorite places. Put in enough details to make your rendering of you and your special places distinctive. Ask a friend to read your picture. Based on your drawing, can your friend describe what you like and what makes you unique? Then ask yourself, "How can I improve my drawing to say what I mean?" Then you will begin to understand the challenge that illustrators face. For more inspiration, read Mila Boutan's *Monet: Art Activity Pack* (Chronicle Books, 1996). Art packs are also available for Cezanne, Degas, Gauguin, Matisse, Picasso, Renoir, and Van Gogh. Also take a look at *A Book of Artrageous Projects*, by Klutz Press and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Klutz, 2000).

Modern painters such as Rothko, Motherwell, and Warhol deserve our attention because they have forged new territories and introduced us to new and sometimes uncomfortable feelings. Museums have retrospective shows to honor their work. Similarly, an illustrator award for a body of work acknowledges a lifetime of creative book illustration. Sometimes one of the books features a breakthrough design that can lead to even more exceptional work in the next book. An award for the body of an illustrator's work is the way to reward illustrations that are experimental. In contrast, when selecting a single book for an award for illustration, the collaborative nature of the book, the text, and the audience needs to be considered. Therefore, the Caldecott Medal, in my opinion, is not exclusively for cutting-edge illustration.

Taking the time to really look at the pictures in books, know the elements of design, understand cultural context, and develop our visual literacy prepares us to undertake our search for excellence. We can then celebrate picture book illustration with our hearts and our heads. ☺

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Conquering the South Pole and Beyond

An Interview with Jennifer Armstrong

By Megan Lynn Isaac

Jennifer Armstrong retired from her career in publishing to pursue writing full time. Clearly, she had an awful lot of ideas to develop because she was only twenty-three when she made this bold decision. Now, twenty years later, it is obvious that her daring was well warranted!

The breadth of Armstrong's work is striking. She has written picture books about a cat who fishes with his tail in *Chin Yu Min and the Ginger Cat* (1993) and one featuring the Second Assistant Rotisserie Turner in *Little Salt Lick and the Sun King* (1994). Her historical novels range from the prairies of South Dakota in *Black-Eyed Susan* (1995) to the gritty streets of nineteenth-century Washington, D.C., in *The Dreams of Mairhe Mehan* (1996). Her nonfiction invites readers to explore the South Pole with Shackleton in *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World* (1999) and the wrenching experiences of WW II Jews and those who protected them through the memoir *In My Hands* (with Irene Gut Opdyke, 1999).

Armstrong knew she wanted to be an author by the time she was in first grade. Visiting the library was a weekly family tradition, and Armstrong was on very good terms with Louise Fitzhugh's Harriet, Madeline L'Engle's Meg Murray, and Carolyn Keene's Nancy Drew. She loved to write too; she could polish off an eight-page note to her best friend a few desks away in her grade

school classrooms without suffering a single wrist cramp. With some prodding from her mother, she even taught herself to type.

But for a long time, she feared she lacked one of the necessary qualities, worrying that her happy, well-adjusted childhood would prevent her from ever achieving her dreams. She had fallen victim to the popular belief that Real Art is a product of suffering, or at least of a good deal of angst and hand-wringing. Fortunately, not only for herself, but also for her many and varied readers, Armstrong eventually decided all she really needed was a good imagination, a healthy dose of sympathy, and well-honed library research skills.

Once she had her craft firmly in hand, however, Armstrong began to research and develop her own ideas more deeply. Soon, instead of just winning over young readers, she began to impress the critics too. Her first independent novel, *Steal Away* (1992), and her first picture book, *Hugh Can Do* (1992), were both well received and won several awards.

Recently I had the chance to talk to Armstrong about how she develops her projects and what readers can expect from her in the future:

One of the most striking things about your body of work is its variety. You've done picture books, historical fiction, nonfic-



Jennifer Armstrong

Megan Lynn Isaac, a former college professor, lives in Auburn, Alabama.

tion, and short stories. How do you decide what to do next? Are there genres you would like to tackle or ones that still feel foreign to you?

I suspect it's not a very flattering answer. I have a short attention span. I kind of hop from one thing to another. Generally there is no grand design to my writing career. I think of something and then I go do that. I mean, for example, I recently did a science fiction trilogy. It was like, "Oh, that's a good idea." It was never my plan. I don't read science fiction. I had an idea that intrigued me. Same with *Shipwreck*. I knew the story, and the reason I wrote that book is that there was some online forum, and someone had posted a message asking if anyone knew a good version of the story for kids, and there was no response. I thought, "Oh I know that story; it's a great story." I wasn't even particularly planning on writing nonfiction.

Are there any genres you avoid?

Not by design. Four years ago, I would have said I have no interest in science fiction. I don't generally come up with fantasy-type novel ideas, so I haven't written any fantasy novels. But I wouldn't be at all surprised if one of these days I come up with a fantasy novel. It is a matter of what my imagination is occupied with. I spend a lot of time reading history and thinking about it. A lot of my work has a historical element about it, both fiction and nonfiction. If I spent more time reading science, I would probably end up writing about science.

*You've won acclaim for *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World*, a nonfiction account of Shackleton's voyage on the *Endurance* to explore Antarctica. I know it led you to make your own trip to Antarctica on a National Science Foundation [NSF] grant. Tell me about that trip and the writing projects it spawned.*

The project I proposed to the NSF so that they would consider sending me to Antarctica is intended to be a middle-school-age nonfiction book about the history of ice. I kind of came to this in a backwards way; basically because of the attention that I got for *Shipwreck*, people were constantly asking me if I had gone to Antarctica, and I said, "Oh God, no. I used the library." They asked then, "Would you want to go?" and I said, "No! Have you read the book?" And it became sort of embarrassing.

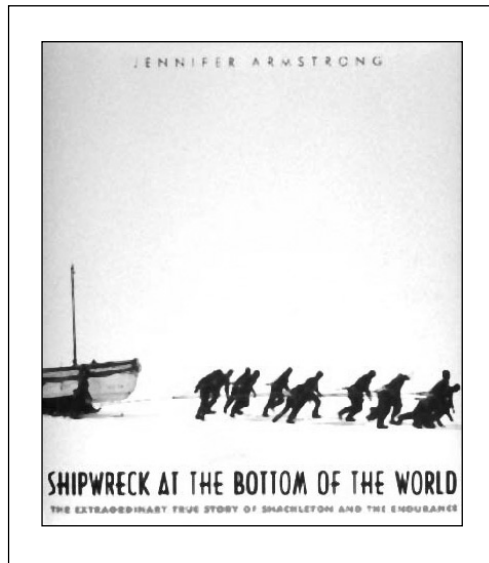
I wanted to hold my head up; I would have to go to Antarctica. And I didn't want to go as a tourist on a \$10,000 cruise where you get to look at Antarctica from the water; and I wasn't going to go study so I could go as an astrophysicist or electrician or engineer. I had heard about the NSF Artists and Writers Grants, so I had to come up with something they would consider worthwhile. And then if I was going to go to all this trouble, I wanted to go all the way to the South Pole.

I actually applied for the grant twice. The first time the project was rather scientific in nature, and they thought it was interesting but that I wasn't qualified to write about science, and I couldn't argue with that. So they asked me to apply again.

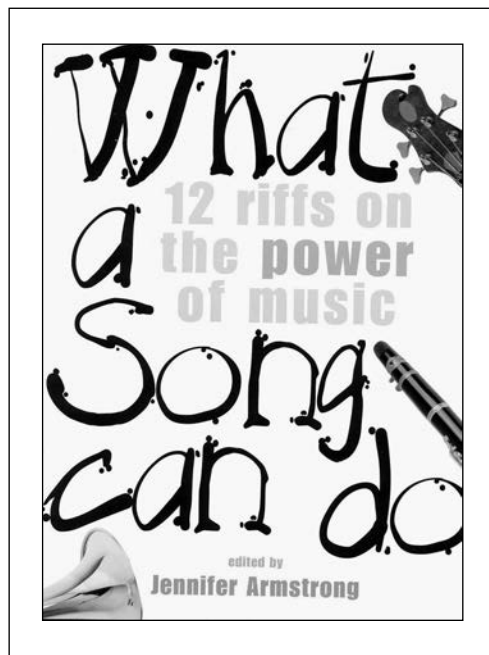
I had to figure out what they would find me highly qualified to write about; and my qualifications, if I have any, are from writing about history. I had already done an explorer story and they aren't interested in another book about penguins, so I had to think what else there had a history. So I came up with this idea of writing about ice and using ice as a lens through which to look at human and planetary history. So this is what I proposed.

It is a book about how ice has played a role in our history. It has cosmogenic connections—the dirty snowball theory of bringing amino acids to earth, the influence of ice sheets on evolution and human migration, the influence of and availability of ice for food preservation and therefore the limits of commercial development. Ice in the imagination. Ice in art and poetry. And then also ice as a matrix for scientific exploration and inquiry; ice cores that give us information about early atmospheric and climate conditions on the planet.

And then the *piece de resistance* is called Ice Cube. It is what is referred to as Big Science. It's a very large and expensive project, an astrophysics project. A cubic kilometer of ice at the Pole is being drilled with a special hot water drill to embed optical sensors in the ice starting at a kilometer deep and coming up. What they are doing is looking downward, and they are looking for a subatomic particle called the neutrino. It is among the smallest particles that physicists are thinking about these days. Every once in a while one collides with a water molecule, sending off a little burst of radiation. I said that I needed to see this project so I could get to see the South Pole.



Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World by Jennifer Armstrong



What a Song Can Do by Jennifer Armstrong

When should we look for this new book on ice?

It's a rather diffuse subject, and what I have learned in my short career is that it is very important to me to have a narrative. I'm trying to find the narrative form to pull together Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and being on an ice breaker and all these strange things. How do I tie it all together? There has to be some organizing reason. So that's what I'm trying to work out. What is the pattern that it all fits into?

What was your experience like on the trip to the South Pole and Antarctica?

It was fascinating. It was very difficult in many ways. One of the things I was just not so prepared for—I hadn't realized I was so shallow—was that everything is really ugly. I don't mean the landscape, which is magnificent but not inviting. It is not the kind of landscape that I can really warm up to, though it is grand and dramatic. The built environment is squalid, beat up—prefab metal buildings with all this volcanic dust everywhere. I found it difficult to be without trees and green things. The population—though the people were fascinating—was very odd. It was odd to be somewhere with no children, old people, pets, or families, per se; there were some couples, but not other families. It was sort of like being in college where everyone is more or less the same age, and you all live in a big dormitory. It was jarring to me.

The challenge was really more about being away from home for so long, and it was a funny place for a children's book author to find herself—a whole culture of scientists or support personnel.

Well, not only do you do unusually interesting research for your books, you also use interesting words when you write them. I'm particularly enchanted by the language in the picture book *Pockets*, about an unusually talented seamstress. It simply explodes with glamorous and exotic words—"bengaline, brabant, abbot cloth, sarcenet, batiste, and armozeen." Where did you come up with all of this?

For *Pockets*, there is a lot of amazing vocabulary, and I basically went to the library and got out a book about historical costume. I don't even know what half those words are. It is like opening a jewelry box. I didn't think it was important to know what they meant; I just loved their sound. I wrote a lot of poetry in college, and I've always been a very auditory writer. I don't see pictures in my head; I hear the sound of what I'm trying to say. I have to be able to hear what is happening in my head because I'm not describing what I see in my imagination.

One of the things I frequently do is think about all the words that are associated with a book I'm working on. I write them all down, so I can see which of the words I can use.

Which of your picture books do you think makes the best read-aloud for library story hours?

Hugh Can Do; unfortunately, it's out of print. It has a repeated line that kids pick up on. And *Chin Yu Min and the Ginger Cat*.

Jennifer Armstrong, a Select Bibliography**Picture Books**

- Hugh Can Do*. Illustrated by Kimberly Bulcken Root. Crown Books, 1992.
- Chin Yu Min and the Ginger Cat*. Illustrated by Mary GrandPré. Crown, 1993.
- Little Salt Lick and the Sun King*. Illustrated by Jon Goodell. Crown, 1994.
- That Terrible Baby*. Illustrated by Susan Meddaugh. Tambourine Books, 1994.
- Whittler's Tale*. Illustrated by Valery Vasiliev. Tambourine, 1994.
- King Crow*. Illustrated by Eric Rohmann. Crown, 1995.
- Wan Hu Is In the Stars*. Illustrated by Barry Root. Tambourine, 1995.
- Pockets*. Illustrated by Mary GrandPré. Crown, 1998.
- Pierre's Dream*. Illustrated by Susan Gaber. Dial, 1999.

Books for Beginning Readers

- The Snowball*. Illustrated by Jean Pidgeon. Random House, 1996.
- Sunshine, Moonshine*. Illustrated by Lucia Washburn. Random House, 1997.

Nonfiction

- Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World: The Extraordinary True Story of Shackleton and the Endurance*. Crown, 1998.
- The Century for Young People*. Written with Peter Jennings and Todd Brewster. Doubleday, 1999.
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- Spirit of Endurance*. Illustrated by William Maughan. Crown, 2000.
- A Three-Minute Speech: Lincoln's Remarks at Gettysburg*. Aladdin, 2003.

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- Steal Away . . . to Freedom*. Orchard, 1992.
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- Theodore Roosevelt: Letters from a Young Coal Miner*. Winslow Press, 2001.
- Thomas Jefferson: Letters from a Philadelphia Book Worm*. Winslow Press, 2001.
- The Kindling*. With Nancy Butcher. HarperCollins, 2002.
- The Keepers of the Flame*. With Nancy Butcher. HarperCollins, 2002.
- The Kiln*. With Nancy Butcher. HarperCollins, 2003.
- Shattered: Stories of Children and War*. (Editor) Knopf.
- What a Song Can Do: Twelve Riffs on the Power of Music*. (Editor) Knopf, 2004.

For many writers, one of the most rewarding things is discovering how readers react to their books. Do you have any favorite experiences that have come out of fan letters or school visits?

Gosh, I do, but they aren't popping to mind. I do a lot of school visits. I spend the spring most years talking to lots of kids. They always say wonderful things. I have had the experience a couple of times of sitting in on a book discussion group with, say, fifth graders in a reading club, and the teacher or librarian has, in anticipation of my visit, selected one of my books for them to read. That is where you hear much more interesting things than just "Oh, wow! I liked your book!" You hear them being wonderfully analytic and insightful. I don't know if all writers feel this way, but as a writer I want to be able to communicate perfectly to somebody. I don't know who it is, but there is somebody out there who will know exactly what I mean. Whenever I see a kid responding in ways that show me he got it, that is very gratifying. I actually succeeded.

On your Web site you list some of the novels you loved as a child, classics like Madeline L'Engle's A Wrinkle in Time and Scott

O'Dell's Island of the Blue Dolphins. What are some of your current favorite books?

Ironically they tend to be fantasy writers. I like Philip Pullman, Garth Nix, and Terry Pratchett.

Collaboration often occurs with picture books. Do you have much input or work much with the artists who have illustrated your picture books?

Every editor is different, and I've worked with so many editors and publishers. Some editors may regularly ask for input or maybe they ask me now that I have more clout, I just don't know. I don't feel any strong desire to participate in that decision because I'm not visual. When I write a picture book, I'm not seeing and don't have any notion of what it ought to look like. I think this makes it a lot easier on the editor and illustrator, so I never say, "No, no, no! You got it all wrong." I say, "So that's what it looks like! I had no idea." ☺

What's Developing?

Photographs and videos have become so commonplace that it is easy to forget what a recent invention they are. What was it like when photography was first popularized? What was it like to be one of those early photographers? Armstrong's forthcoming nonfiction exploration of these questions, Photo by Brady: A Portrait of the Civil War, gives readers a new lens through which to view history. Armstrong is still working on the book, but here's an early peek at what's developing:

"Imagine that you are walking across a field the morning after a battle. The ground is littered with cast-aside haversacks, muskets whose wooden stocks have been shattered by gunfire, forage caps, ramrods, the crumpled paper of used cartridges, a pocket Testament trampled into the mud. With the toe of your boot, you turn over the little book; then squatting, you trace the lines of the stained page with one finger: 'But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.'

"Which man was it who grasped this text in one hand while digging in his cartridge box with the other? That man there, his dead eyes staring at the sky? Both of his cheeks are black with gunpowder, from the frenzy of biting off the ends of the cartridges and tipping the powder down the barrel of his musket. . . .

"Yesterday, as the battle was waged, you waited in the rear with the supply trains. But even at a distance, it was obvious how quickly the air thickened with smoke, like a thundercloud lit by lightning flashes of artillery. You noticed how grapeshot hitting the trees sounded like hitting the side of a barn, and how the rapid fire of mus-

kets recalled to your memory your mother tearing old calico into strips for bandages. Some bullets sounded like nothing so much as the strike of a buggy whip across a broad cabbage leaf; some screeched like a cat whose tail is trodden on. Tomorrow this engagement will be known in the papers by the name of the nearest town, or the nearest creek or courthouse. The Federals favor creek names for battles—Bull Run, Antietam—the Rebels naming them for towns—Manassas, Sharpsburg.

"But today, today the armies are preparing to move on, to another field by another wood and another farmer's house. Today, to you falls the task of photographing this field. You are one of Brady's operators, and over there by that wrecked artillery is your darkroom on wheels, your What-Is-It wagon, and the mule that pulls it is whisking his tail at carrion flies. In the wagon are the bottles of collodion and silver nitrate, the racks of fragile glass plates, the heavy box camera on its tripod. Mr. Brady has mortgaged his successful New York studio to supply you with this equipment, has gotten permission from Father Abraham himself because it must be recorded. It must be captured in pictures. Where will you set up the camera? How will you record what happened here? How will you show to the people back home what terror existed on this field yesterday—the smell, the death screams, the generals gnawing their cigars to bits as they tried to follow the movement of regimental flags through the smoke with their field glasses? How will you know if your picture shows more than just the grisly aftermath of battle, silent and still?"

Find out more in Photo by Brady: A Portrait of the Civil War when it debuts from Atheneum Books for Young Readers in 2005.

There's No "ECT" in a Koala

Mem Fox and the Importance of Reading Aloud

Sharon Korbeck

Mem Fox learned from an early age the importance of her ears.

That's what the Australian author told attendees at the ALSC Preconference at the ALA Annual Conference in Orlando.

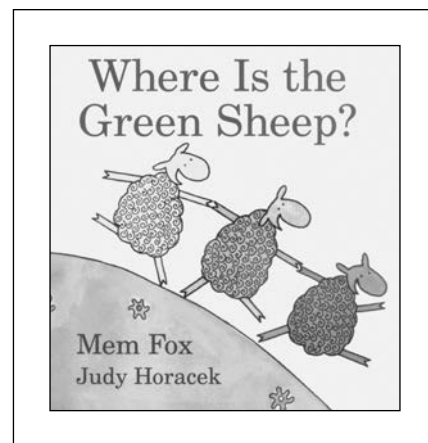
Her ears helped her embrace the importance of sounds—a task especially important, she said, in her twenty-one years of writing for children. "Writing picture books is madness," said Fox of the "fantastically difficult" task that takes up, in her estimation, 10 percent of her life. If it took up more time, she said, "It would be the death of me!"

Fortunately for her legions of fans—both children and adults—the "madness" hasn't gotten to her yet.

But back to those ears . . .

In Fox's case, she was a young woman of sixteen when she read a line from a storybook out loud and it affected her profoundly. The line, Fox said, was "She sat beside me and quacked in flat platitudes."

Fox's ability to craft picture books, she said, is a result of what she learned directly by reading aloud that day. "Sounds in a sentence can paint pictures in words," she said, using some of her books as examples. Fox told the audience how she crafted and recrafted many drafts of her book *Koala Lou* (Harcourt, 1989) to get just the right sounds.



Fox's latest collaboration is *Where is the Green Sheep?* with illustrations by Judy Horacek

As an example, she said, one early draft had her using the word "perfect" as an adjective in the beginning pages. As she read those early drafts aloud, Fox emphasized how harsh that word sounded in the context of a story where all the words were "round." "There's no 'ECT' in koala," Fox said, explaining why *Koala Lou* became soft and round rather than "perfect."

Fox's newest book, *Where is the Green Sheep?*, is a collaboration with illustrator Judy Horacek. As she read several drafts aloud, attendees further understood Fox's thesis that "my best teacher was my ear."

"It isn't children's eyes but their ears that will help them on the road to literacy," Fox said. ☺

Fox spoke at the ALSC Preconference in Orlando. It was her eighty-first trip to the United States.

Read Aloud International

Before signing books at the ALSC Preconference, author Mem Fox spoke of the importance of reading aloud. She's not alone in this crusade.

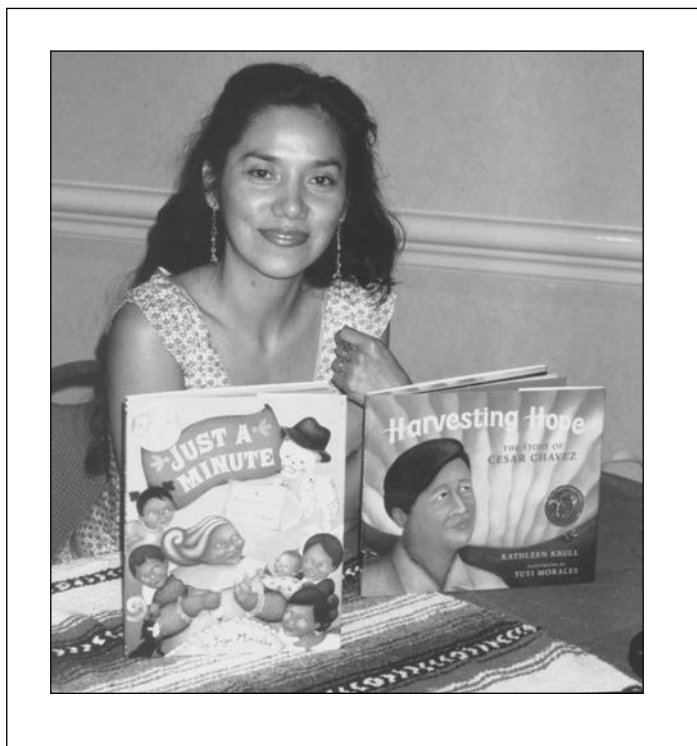
Fox spoke of a new group called Read Aloud International, committed to, according to its brochure, "changing the world, one page at a time." The group aims to make reading aloud to children a regular practice in every home, school, and childcare facility worldwide.

For more information on the group, call (866) 822-5683 or visit www.readaloudinternational.org.

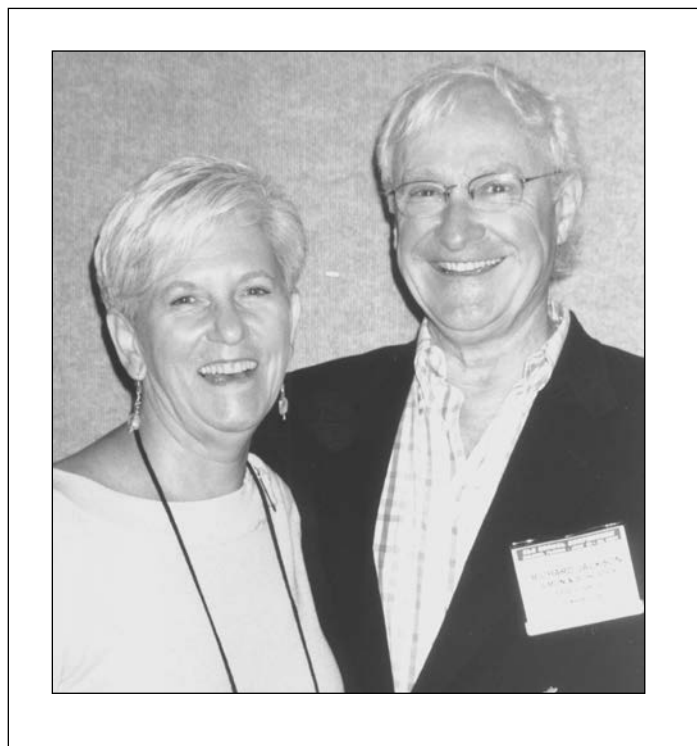


2004 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Orlando, Florida



A young Yuyi Morales beamed at receiving two mentions at the Pura Belpré ceremony.



An exuberant Richard Jackson was pleased to have his picture taken with Pat Scales, chair of the 2005 Arbutnot Committee. Jackson will deliver the Arbutnot lecture next year at Drexel University in Philadelphia, Penn.



ALSC's hard-working Chicago staff includes, left to right, Meredith Parets, Linda Mays, Laura Schulte-Cooper, and Malore Brown.



Then ALA President Carla Hayden poses with Newbery Award winner Kate DiCamillo at the Newbery/Caldecott Awards Banquet.



Helen Raseroka of Botswana, president of IFLA, greeted ALSC members at the Preconference events.

Dancers from the Salsa Heat Dance Company set the stage and mood at the Fifth Biennial Pura Belpré Award Celebración.



Jean Hatfield of Kansas, left, and Joyce Laiosa of New York, were named Bechtel scholarship winners.



Author/illustrators Donald Crews and Lois Ehler served on a panel discussion about picture books at the ALSC program "Attracting the Youngest Patrons: Books for Preschoolers."



Lisa Paulo of Great Neck, N.Y., left, and Karen DeAngelo of Burnt Hills, N.Y., help a guest at the ALSC membership booth.

The Electricity of Story

Rosemary Wells

Rosemary Wells delivered this speech during the ALSC Preconference at the ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, in June 2004.

What a pleasure to be asked to speak to you today. This happens to be the occasion of the publication of my one-hundred-and-twenty-fifth book for young people. It is a good book to present because *My Kindergarten* is a personal Acropolis of the spirit and characters of almost every Wells book that preceded it.

Before I introduce it to you, I wanted to say a word of acknowledgment to my audience. It is because of you that any of us, artist, author, agent, or publisher comes to this convention.

The general public and the politicians who claim to represent them haven't a clue how passionately your hearts beat for our children and their personal and intellectual growth, for our country's future held in their little hands.

If you were properly appreciated, you would be paid like surgeons and your libraries would be stocked like the larders of Louis the Fourteenth. This is apparently not the ambition for which our hugely rich government chooses to spend its money. More power to you, then, for your unflagging commitment to books and the children who read them. You do this work because you love it, and it is a rewarding way to spend one's life.

I like to bring metaphors from history into my writing. I have found one concerning what you do for a living.

I've been reading extensively for ten years in all corners of 1860s American life for a novel on the Civil War. In the course of it, I have strayed into the intimate, such as it is knowable, childhood of Abraham Lincoln. And yes, I will put this in a book of my own, but first I want to tell it to you. There is a whole mythology about Lincoln. The library book ruined in the rain and paid for with rail-splitting pennies. The homemade coffin for the tragically dead mother. The overturned shovel used as a slate.

I call them the Stations of the Cross. Edifying as they are, most of them, alas, are anecdotal nonsense.

The only people who were actually there in Lincoln's youth, and actually talked about it later, were a certifiably crazy cousin and Lincoln himself, who was so secretive that he never revealed a thing. All he ever said about his early years, quoting John Donne, was this: it was that it was typical of the annals of the poor. Once in a while he would joke that he and his people were White Trash, which was a term very much in use in 1860.

What we actually do know about his childhood is astonishing because of what happened after it.

He was born on a dirt floor of a house with no windows. His family comprised a wispy sister who did not live long, a mother who may have been a wrestler who also did not live long, an abusive, randomly employed father, and an eventual stepmother.

He lived in a shack with three sides. The open side was used for a fire because they couldn't afford a chimney. His diet was a scurvy producer. He had one set of clothing. He had only nine months of formal schooling, none of it consecutive, until he was eighteen years old.

Think of these symptoms in a child of today. And they abound, these desperately poor children, living unnoticed in the house trailers of forgotten counties and in our urban ghettos. What will become of them?

If Lincoln had been born in this century, he would be a three-times-over child at risk in a Title One school. He would have qualified for free lunch and free morning milk. He would have a social worker assigned to him.

What became of Lincoln and why? How did this young man become our one American saint?

How did he write and speak so stunningly that his words moved our country safely to the opposite shore of a war that killed a million men and freed a million more?

Lincoln's writing and his speeches

were never equaled for eighty years following his death until the time of Churchill and Roosevelt. How did this brilliance emanate from a little boy with no shoes, no school, and no dinner?

It was in Shakespeare, which he memorized full bore. It was *Pilgrim's Progress* and the *Arabian Nights* and later Blackstone, Catullus and Virgil, Jefferson, Dickens, Walter Scott, Emerson, Henry Clay, and his favorite, Robert Burns, that opened the door of Lincoln's astonishing mind.

It was books. It was stories, poetry and drama, law, history, and exploration that drew him up like a force five storm from poverty, ignorance, and human depletion.

Connecting the child to the book is what a gentle and innocent stepmother did for him and exactly what you do in your careers. There are a million little lives that come into your reading rooms and up to your desks. When you least expect it, one of them is going to borrow the *Arabian Nights*. Keep an eye on that child!

Need I add that had Lincoln been a child in 2004 instead of 1815, a child with no shoes, no school, and no dinner, he would have watched twelve to sixteen hours of television a day, like almost all our children in extreme poverty. That statistic is according to *The New York Times* Poverty in America survey.

Those twelve hours a day would, of course, have emptied his mind entirely. Fortunately for us, Lincoln was born in 1812. Lincoln's life is a great motivator. He was, above all, a lifetime reader.

It's my job, if I do it right, to make lifetime readers out of the children in your story hours. My job is to provide you with stories youngsters enjoy hearing and you love to read. I, the author, have the electricity of a story in my hand. You, the librarian or teacher, take a little girl with a hole in her dress from the back of beyond in the Ozarks and plug her in.

We use each other's talents to perfection. Without each other our hands are empty.

The secret of sharing children's literature is in your voices, which never tire of *Goodnight Moon* or *Alice in Wonderland*.

The secret of writing children's literature is that it is very difficult to write. You have to have the voice for it. You must be able to write prose that stands up to five hun-

to the Kevin Henkes airport!"

Who do you write for? I write for the private individual child. I write for the brightest star child, believing that this bright star lives in a housing project in D.C. or a third-hand mobile home in Speedwell, Oklahoma.

What do you say in your stories? There is only one message. It comes out in many voices, but it is always the same.

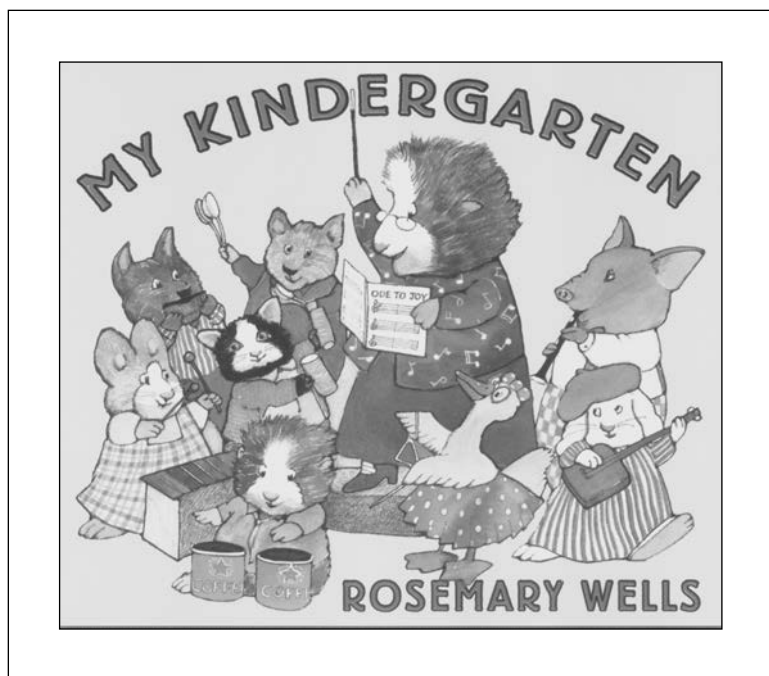
You are not alone.

My books bleed with the insecurities of us all. Timothy cannot dress right no matter how he tries. Benjamin suffers the overwhelming Tulip. Yoko must prevail against philistines who hate sushi. Max ever scrambles out from under the superior Ruby. Edward will never be ready when everyone else is ready. Hazel is rescued from bullies by the power of her mother's love. Charles will forever be shy, despite his parents' incessant character coaching. Claire, Felix,

and Robert are saved from life's indignities and iniquities by Janet, Bunny Queen of the Bunny Planet.

These are the children we were and the children who sat next to us in life's first rite of passage, occurring every September. It is then that a dozen or so five-year-old innocents are thrown together, as if strangers on a train, in the great random accident called kindergarten.

Kindergarten is the first watershed of childhood. My least worried and most cheerful character is Emily. I made her so because of the Kindergarten Ideal. What every teacher wants on that bright and shining first day of school is a child who is ready to learn without fear, a child who trusts and respects others. Out of this readiness comes the whole intellectual development of the rest of the child's life.



My Kindergarten by Rosemary Wells

dred readings aloud because it touches the heart in a handful of words. Tell that to the movie star celebrity authors!

My Kindergarten is my one-hundred-and-twenty-fifth book for children. I like to think of it as just the beginning. Nonetheless one hundred and twenty-five is a lot of books, and I think it's a good idea to try and put a little perspective on this.

All authors are asked where do the ideas come from? No author can answer this.

The ideas line up in the sky like planes in a landing pattern. They hit the runway one after another exactly two-and-a-half miles apart.

If I cannot accommodate them all, they flap their aelirons and say over their loud-speakers: "Give us a gate or we'll fly away

Out of the trust and respect comes a best friend, the first true step of the establishment of self.

These profoundly fundamental stages of development are achieved by parents with three simple and inexpensive components: time, unconditional love, and books.

In kindergarten, these components are split three new ways during the school day. The teacher gives time, the friend gives love, and the librarian gives books.

Emily's class on Cranberry Island, Maine, is only eight pupils big. There is no TV. There are no shopping malls. But these kids are going to make it just fine. They have Mrs. Cribbage. They have the woods and ocean, books and music, and each other.

They learn the seven basics of kindergarten curriculum: math, language, science, art, music, community, holidays.

So far so good, but this is a Wells book, and so it is not a flood of camp counselor all-together-now zeal. Kindergarten is a sylvan, joyful, and free environment. It is also a Petri dish of personal turmoil, worry, and competition.

I never forget that children with the biggest, sweetest eyes and carefree spir-

its can also be little fascists when it comes to others toeing their personal line. It's all part of learning to control your control panel.

So *My Kindergarten* does not stay only on the fruited plain. It takes us over the mountains and through the valleys. Curriculum-based as it appears, this book is ninety-six pages of emotional content.

Now, I want to circle back to our job together.

We have an enormous children's culture in America. Billions of dollars are poured into it every year. In it is everything from theme parks to TV shows to video games, clothing, toys, and food.

We are all contributors to our current culture. It is us.

An American icon comes to mind with these thoughts. She was a gracious first lady, but perhaps the best observation Jackie Kennedy ever wrote on life and children was this one: If you raise your children right, nothing else matters. And if you don't raise your children right, nothing else matters.

In our time, raising our children right has become the most difficult thing a parent can face. The prevailing youth culture is



Rosemary Wells lauds the trials, tribulations, and joys of kindergarten in her new book, *My Kindergarten*.

way too strong for even the most determined parent to cross. It is very often violent, pornographic, and materialistic. Parents can't say no because someone's parents will say yes, and the shell of innocence is broken forever. This culture is like the air people breathe.

It is so easy for good people to do nothing about what is happening to the children and country we love.

We in the book community are a powerful industry. We are good people. We have a huge professional stake in our children's culture.

It does no good to be on the side of the angels if the angels' wings are so clipped that they cannot fly. *Read to Your Bunny* cannot play in the same ballpark as MTV, gangsta rap, and Power Rangers.

We must be more effective and more appealing in the way we present our product, books, to the public. We need dedicated campaigns to fill the cracks in our children's lives with books. Every kindergarten in the country should schedule its one class trip a year to the library to introduce it to children who might never know of its world of wonders. If this requires getting in the kitchen of the head of the Department of Education, so be it.

In real life, every classroom we remember, although we were all in a hundred different classrooms, contained the bully, the terrified geek, the crybaby, the beauty queen, and the boy who always smells a little of pee. Remembering this, my stories are neither saccharine or cute. They are all nonfiction because it is the bumps and warts that make us laugh. That's what grownups enjoy reading aloud. That's what children want to hear about over and over.

America has thousands of Little League sports teams who wear baseball shirts advertising Vivian's Diner and the Kiwanis Club. The local JayCees clean up miles of our highways and post their signs proudly. Not all businesses can afford a Little League team. Books are cheaper. There is no reason why local merchants can't support a bookshelf library in each of their community's classrooms. They only need to be asked. For a couple hundred tax-deductible dollars their names can be proudly displayed on a shelf of twenty-five books for Mrs. Jenkin's first grade.

Snapple and other drink manufacturers sponsor everything from new gyms to scoreboards. We could go far if we involve corporate America and even our politicians to sponsor children's rooms in our libraries. "This bookshelf was donated by the office of Senator John Doe." That would help the libraries. And it would help Senator Doe.

In this convention alone are a hundred writers and artists who can convey ideas with stunning talent to attract attention. Artists and writers also tend to be badly organized. Librarians, on the other hand, are brilliant, tireless organizers. So organize us. Let us use each other's talents to turn this tide, and let us get to Hollywood and corporate board rooms with it.

For my part I try and present a gentler children's world in each book I write. The kids from Cranberry Island, Maine, have a childhood much like my own in a long ago America.

Here in a much simpler life, one lived in harmony with nature and books, I hope to remind my readers of the power of gentle behavior, of the uniqueness of each child, of the failure as well as the success that makes up all of us.

Emily and her friends are not rich. They grow their own vegetables and make their costumes by hand. They don't own expensive state-of-the-art electronic stuff because life is sometimes better without it.

Emily's world, Max and Ruby's world, Yoko's world are all simpler environ-

Wells' Impromptu Artwork Nets \$500

As Rosemary Wells approached the podium for her lunchtime speech, she carried several napkins up with her. But the crowd soon realized they weren't just any napkins.

Wells had scribbled pictures of her famous characters Max and Ruby on five white linen napkins. She later colored the line drawings. The napkins were auctioned after the preconference and the sale raised \$500.

All the money benefitted the Libri Foundation, a nationwide nonprofit organization that donates new, quality, hardcover children's books to small, rural public libraries in the United States. For more information on the organization, visit www.librifoundation.org.



ments than children of today find around them. But the emotional pitfalls are timeless and universal. They are meant to spark recognition in the child in all of us.

In real life, every classroom we remember, although we were all in a hundred different classrooms, contained the bully, the terrified geek, the crybaby, the beauty queen, and the boy who always smells a little of pee.

Remembering this, my stories are neither saccharine or cute. They are all nonfiction because it is the bumps and warts that make us laugh. That's what grownups enjoy reading aloud. That's what children want to hear about over and over.

In finishing I want to leave you with a tiny

gift. Barbara Barstow asked me, in September of 2002, to write a little piece for one of the most sterling professionals ever to fit into a pair of librarian's shoes. She was Jan Smuda of Cleveland. I wrote this for Jan, but I'd like to share it with you because I thought you would like to take it home.

I believe we are all put on earth to fulfill some mission, and yours was one of the noblest—the delight of children in the wisdom and brilliance of our best artists and writers. Without this beginning step, taking the book to the child and the child to the book, there is no culture, no further wisdom, and no art. The age of wilderness would settle in.

You are the holder and wielder of the light in the darkness. Thank you. ☺

Deep Impact

Walter Lorraine

Delivered at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Orlando in June 2004.

2004 Batchelder Award

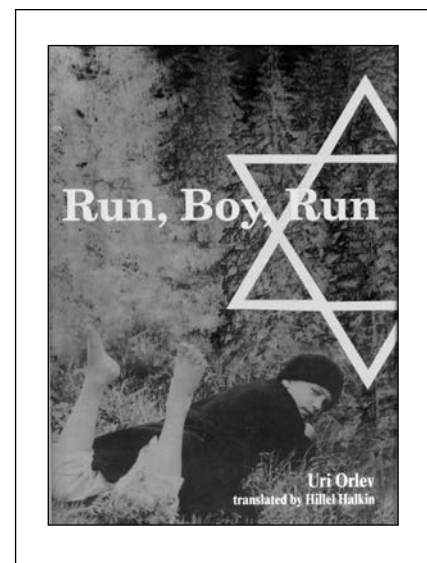
WALTER LORRAINE BOOKS, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin, for *Run, Boy, Run* by Uri Orlev, trans. by Hillel Halkin

First let me apologize for not personally attending this presentation. I do sincerely respect the award and very much appreciate it being given to a Lorraine book. Some years ago, I did personally meet Mildred Batchelder, whom I found not only a force to contend with in literature but a most charming and gracious lady.

I want to applaud the basic concept of the award for encouraging an international exchange of superior writing for children. Otherwise I would not have had my long experience with Uri Orlev, a most talented writer and winner of the Hans Christian Andersen Award. I met the author first in a wonderful book titled *The Island on Bird Street* about a young boy and the ghettos of World War II. Hillel Halkin also translated that book. It too received a Batchelder Award in 1985. Halkin has for years been a personal friend of Orlev's and shares Orlev's feelings about the war, the suppression of the Jews, and the Holocaust.

Over the years Orlev has written many wonderful books, some of which I have had the pleasure to publish. *The Man From the Other Side* (1991), *Lydia, Queen of Palestine* (1993), *The Lady with the Hat* (1995), and now, *Run, Boy, Run* (2003). Hillel Halkin translated each and every one. With only the exception of *Lydia, Queen of Palestine*, they have all received a Batchelder Award for translation.

One strength of Orlev's writing rests with its spareness. Orlev does not waste words. He resists embellishments. We learn what happens but we must construct our feelings about those happenings for ourselves. His work goes beyond racial issues of the Jews. There are often non-Jewish characters. The characterization of the German soldiers in *Run, Boy, Run* is far



from one-dimensional. Orlev wanted a balanced portrayal. Indeed, Hillel Halkin worked to make sure that balance was achieved and that the proper impression came across.

Without the sensitivity of Hillel Halkin, we would not be able to fully appreciate Orlev's eye or voice. As an early reviewer stated, Halkin's wonderfully idiosyncratic translation captures perfectly the vision of the story. It has been stated that Halkin's translation is so well blended with the author's style that the text reads as if it were originally written in English rather than in Hebrew.

Again, I repeat that even though Uri Orlev's writings are based directly on fact—he himself is a survivor of the ghetto—he neither demonizes nor glorifies his characters. His refusal to exaggerate gives his writing unimpeachable impact. Readers here in the United States could not fully appreciate those qualities without the sensitive translations of Hillel Halkin.

So I thank first and foremost Uri Orlev for his writing. And I thank Hillel Halkin for his sensitive and brilliant translation. And, most important, I thank this Batchelder Committee and all Batchelder Committees in the past—indeed, I thank the very concept of the award that has helped to bring so much superior literature from the international community to American readers. Thank you all very much. ☞

It's Never "Old Hat"

Paul R. Gagne and Melissa Reilly

Delivered at the American Library
Association Annual Conference in
Orlando in June 2004.



Paul R. Gagne and Melissa Reilly

2004 Carnegie Medal

PAUL R. GAGNE and MELISSA REILLY,
producers, for *Giggle Giggle Quack*,
Weston Woods Studios

Paul Gagne:

Shortly after receiving the phone call from Malore Brown giving us the wonderful news that *Giggle Giggle Quack* had been selected to receive this year's Andrew Carnegie Medal, I had a phone conversation with one of our co-producers. She made the comment, "After five times, I imagine this must be old hat for you." I immediately replied, "It's *never* 'old hat'—I still get all choked up when I call my wife to tell her the news!"

I'm also very lucky in that the making of each of our films is a completely different experience, so it's always fresh and exciting. The Carnegie medals we've been honored to receive thus far have been for videos based on five different books with five different creative teams and five different directors.

Much of the credit for this production and a special thank you must go to our director Maciek Albrecht, not only for his superb animation, but also for the wealth of truly original and inspired ideas he and his company, MaGiK Studio, bring to each production. Maciek is currently putting the finishing touches on the animation for the third film in the series, *Duck for President*, and it's already shaping up into the best one yet.

We were also lucky to have a virtual "who's who" among country music artists on the soundtrack. Randy Travis, of course, has been the narrator for each of the three videos in this series and did his usual great job. Jon Carroll is best known as the keyboard player in Mary Chapin Carpenter's band, and it was during one of her concerts that I first had the experience of hearing him sing the old Drifters' song "Under the Boardwalk" in a duck voice. You haven't lived until you've heard Jon Carroll sing "Under the Boardwalk" in a duck voice! We had

him do all of Duck's vocal sounds. And the music is the latest in a series of collaborations with the brilliant team of Robert Reynolds and Scotty Huff, which began seven years ago when my wife, Lynn, first approached Robert backstage at a Mavericks concert and asked if he'd be interested in doing music for children's videos. Robert and Scotty have now done the music for four of the five Weston Woods films that have been honored with the Carnegie Medal, which is a testament to their talents. They bring something unique to every production. In the case of *Giggle Giggle Quack*, Scotty made musical "duck" sounds by playing some of the melody using only a trumpet mouthpiece. And their Rodgers and Hammerstein parody for *The Sound of Moosic* is to die for.

The soundtrack elements were completed by our sound editor, Steve Syarto, who uses anyone and anything in the office in his search for the "perfect" sound. Here's a bit of behind-the-scenes Carnegie medal trivia for you: to create the sound Duck makes when he clamps the pencil in his bill, Steve took the wooden case for one of our previous Carnegie medals and lightly snapped it shut!

One of the things I like best about my job is the group of people I get to work with every day. We're like a family. We genuinely like and support each other. No one better exemplifies this than my co-producer, Melissa Reilly; so thank you, Melissa, for being both a trusted and valued collaborator and a dear friend. It has been a pleasure to watch your creative talents emerge over the past fifteen years, and it's an honor for me to now have shared this award twice with you.

I'd also like to acknowledge and thank our associate producer and another dear friend, Leigh Corra, for all of her ideas and input throughout this production; our vice president and general manager, Linda Lee, for the guidance, creative freedom, and complete trust and support she provides every day; our colleagues and associates at Scholastic, Inc., and especially Dick Robinson for his unwavering

support. Once again, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Morton Schindel, who created Weston Woods and set the standards for everything we do today.

Most importantly, I'd like to thank my beautiful wife, best friend, and soul mate, Lynn, and our beautiful daughters, Melanie and Brianna, for their unselfish love and support, and for the many ways they influence and inspire my work and my life. My family was very excited about this award because I had been promising all year that if I got to go to the ALA Conference in Orlando, they'd come and we'd all go to Disney World. As fate would have it, Melanie broke her ankle playing on a trampoline over Memorial Day, which required surgery and forced a postponement of the family trip. (I just found out that the same trampoline has now claimed another child's arm!) So this one's for you, Mel! I'd like to express my deepest thanks to Malore Brown for that phone call back in January, along with Pamela Barron and her wonderful Andrew Carnegie Medal Committee, the American Library Association, and its ALSC division for this very gratifying honor.

A few days after hearing the news of this award, I was shoveling snow from my front walk before driving in to work one morning, and I found myself wondering exactly what it was that Pam and the Carnegie Medal Committee had responded to in *Giggle Giggle Quack*. We like to think of each book we adapt to film as having a "core of meaning"—some important lesson, moral, or value to convey to children. It always struck me that the book could serve as a great springboard for creative writing exercises, even a discussion about ethics—just because Duck *can* trick Bob into catering to his every whim, does it mean he *should*? And I always felt that the book had great entertainment value. Sometime the most important thing you can do for children is simply to make them laugh. But I have to confess that an underlying lesson or moral eluded me. And then it suddenly struck me: Duck never asks for anything for himself. Of course, later on a cynical little voice in my head kicked in and said, "Yeah, that's because he doesn't want to take the blame for anything. Is it any wonder he's gone into politics?" Cynical

voice notwithstanding, I had been given a gentle reminder of the potential these stories have to be a positive influence on the lives of children and of why we make these films to begin with.

Thank you again not only for this honor, but for that gentle reminder, which gives us something to continue to try to live up to.

Melissa Reilly:

Good morning. Life is a puzzle, and with every choice or road you choose, you work toward completing the masterpiece. Well, the role of a producer is basically the manager of a puzzle. And as producers, Paul Gagne and I are in charge of bringing all the pieces together to create something special.

Paul has shared with you the stories of the many people who have made up the pieces of the *Giggle Giggle Quack* puzzle, but I'd like to add a few of my own.

At Weston Woods, the first piece of each puzzle is a great book. We were first introduced to Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin's wonderful series when we produced our adaptation of *Click Clack Moo*. From the start we were completely taken with Farmer Brown and his cows. I especially fell in love with Duck. How can you not root for Duck? The way he tilts his head? The way he holds that pencil in his beak? The devilish look in his eyes?

When we finished *Click Clack Moo*, we felt quite ready to take on anything Doreen and Betsy might come up with as a sequel. But to be honest, when we first saw *Giggle Giggle Quack*, we weren't completely convinced it could be adapted as a film. Whereas *Click Clack Moo* told its story in a pretty linear fashion that was easily adaptable from book language to the language of film, *Giggle Giggle Quack* was a book in which the text and illustrations told only part of the story. Much of what happens in this book is implied, and the story is complete only when the reader's imagination fills in the missing details.

After several months of listening to our colleague and California sales rep John Zick asking us to do the sequel, we finally

decided that it could be done, but we needed to expand the story beyond the book to fill in those missing details for a film audience. So, we assembled the same creative team we had on *Click Clack Moo* and sat down for a brainstorming session with Doreen, Betsy, and our animation director Maciek Albrecht. In talking through the film, we decided to add more hints that Duck was the culprit behind the rather unusual vacation instructions Farmer Brown leaves for his clueless brother, Bob, and a bigger payoff at the end when Bob finally realizes he's been had.

I'd like to thank Doreen and Betsy for their valuable input during this session, which really helped the film take shape, and for their enthusiastic support throughout the productions of all of their films. Mostly I'd like to thank them and their publisher Simon & Schuster for giving us Duck and such an amazing series. I think maybe there is a part of Duck in all of us.

Two other important people I also need to thank are Doreen's agent Holly McGhee and Betsy's agent Dilys Evans. Dilys and I have negotiated many deals over the years, and I'm not sure there are many people who can say how much they enjoy working with agents, but I certainly can say this about you. What can I say about Holly McGhee? For those of you who know her, you know what a great editor and agent she is, but to me she is also a friend. Thank you, Holly, for all your support these years, personally and professionally.

An important piece of my life puzzle turned up fifteen years ago when I walked into Weston Woods and found not only a career but a second family. Paul Gagne is not only my associate and boss, but truly a dear friend. I am extremely honored to be up here with him to receive this prestigious award. He has gently guided me all these years to become the producer I am today. Thank you, Paul, for everything you do. Another vital person in our work family is Vice President and General Manager Linda Lee. Linda has shown us all great support in allowing us to follow our creative dreams but always keeping us on the business straight and narrow.

continued on page 50

Drawn to the Story

Jim Murphy

Delivered at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Orlando in June 2004.

2004 Sibert Award

JIM MURPHY, author of *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793*, Clarion Books

I would like to begin by thanking the American Library Association for establishing, Bound to Stay Bound Books for sponsoring, and the Association for Library Service to Children for administering the presentation of the Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Award. (I hope I got those credits correct.)

I also want to express my appreciation to Cathryn Mercier and the members of the Sibert Selection Committee not only for picking my book out of so many other excellent and worthy titles, but for their dedication and hard work on behalf of nonfiction.

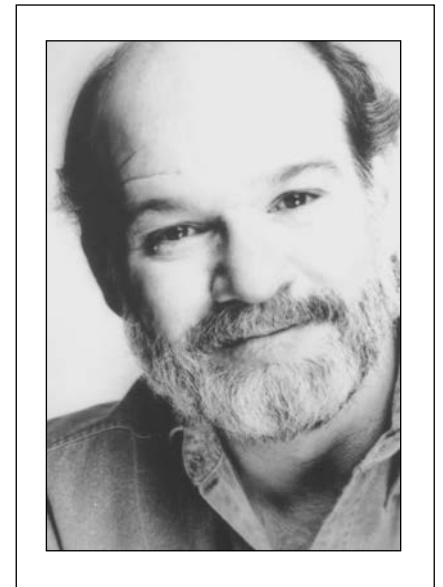
An American Plague would not have happened without Dinah Stevenson at Clarion. Dinah was able to look past what many people might have considered an “old” and disagreeably goeey disease and appreciate its relevance for readers today (long before SARS made for a nervous ALA Annual Conference [in 2003], by the way).

Many other individuals at Clarion helped me with my book, but I would like to single out Lynn Polvino for her fine editorial follow-through, Marjorie Naughton for the book’s excellent publicity and promotion, and, of course, Trish Parcell Watts for her striking design. Writers and illustrators get to take away the awards, but it takes a team of highly skilled and dedicated people to create the actual book.

And finally, thanks to my wife, Alison Blank, for her constant support and invaluable help in gathering research and illustrations for the book, and most of all for putting up with those all-too-frequent grumpy times when I couldn’t get a transition to work. Nothing I do happens without you. I love you, sweetie.

I was initially drawn to the 1793 yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia

because of the story. A mysterious, killer disease with the charming nickname “the Black Vomit”; mass panic in the streets and the flight of over half the city’s population; the virtual collapse of the federal, state, and local governments; doctors—the few who stayed in town, that is—arguing in newspapers over the disease’s treatment and accusing opponents of murder, all accompanied by the ominous death of hundreds of cats and an even more unsettling celestial warning when a meteorite crashed into Third Street. I mean, what more could a boy ask for?



Jim Murphy

I was drawn into the story because of the numerous firsthand accounts left behind by those who experienced the epidemic. In remarkably clear, remarkably dramatic prose they described the fever’s appearance and spread, the empty streets and abandoned sick. Several doctors described the illness in precise detail, then set about bad-mouthing colleagues in colorful fashion; ministers speculated about the “real” cause of the disease, with the Reverend J. Henry C. Helmuth (I love his name) summing up the prevailing opinion that, “After such a merry, sinful summer, by the just judgement of God, a most mournful autumn followed.”

Ordinary citizens, artists, editors and printers, politicians, and priests wrote

about those terrible months and their words—their voices—ring as true and as emotional today as when set down on paper more than two hundred years ago.

I began to love this story because of the heroes who emerged from the chaos. Real heroes, not the kind manufactured by today's reality TV shows. Matthew Clarkson, Philadelphia's mayor, was the only elected official who did not abandon his responsibilities. He stayed at his post despite illness and death in his own family and despite the fact that he had no authorized power to act on his own. Even so, he organized a committee of twelve individuals mostly, as Clarkson himself said, "taken from the middle ranks of life."

These twelve shouldered the entire responsibility of managing the city—from collecting and burying the dead, to operating the pest house, to bringing in food for the shunned city. No chore escaped

their attention. They even administered the estates of the dead and established the city's first home for orphans.

As reward for their valiant service, they were made to repay all of the moneys spent above the amount of donations that came in from other cities. No good deed goes unpunished, as the saying goes.

In 1793, the Free African Society was the only group to volunteer to nurse the sick and perform a number of other difficult tasks for Matthew Clarkson's committee. Absalom Jones, Richard Allen, and approximately three hundred of their followers marched through the infected city every day, even as they themselves took the disease and began to die.

As reward for their truly heroic actions, they were often shunned as carriers of yellow fever, sometimes attacked physically, and even accused of extorting

money for their services (a charge that was proven untrue).

Fortunately for us, Absalom Jones and Richard Allen wrote a stirring account of their group's work during the plague, wickedly nasty when speaking about their detractors, but also stirring in its proclamation of principle and self-worth. What's more, when the fever struck the city again in 1797, 1798, and 1799, the African-American community put aside any bad feelings they might have had to volunteer again.

As you might be able to tell, I had a wonderful time exploring this amazing material and searching for ways to present it to young readers. And this award seems almost like too much of a bonus—but one I'll happily take home and cherish always. Thank you again. 🐾

It's Never "Old Hat"

continued from page 48

Thank you for being a great leader and example for us all.

Last but not least is our Associate Business Manager and one of my best friends, Kim Hayes. Kim and her fiancé, Tom, are here today with me, because that's what great friends do, they support each other, and you two are the best. You both have welcomed me with open arms into your family, and for that I am truly grateful.

I started to think back about the beginnings of my life puzzle and was reminded

that my first job was at age fifteen as a library page at the South Huntington Public Library. I was very lucky to grow up with a library right down the street from my house. I could have never imagined an early interest in visiting other worlds through the joy of reading would help me in my future career! But the most important foundation in my life has been my parents. They are both here with me today and words can't express how grateful I am to them. They are not just my parents but my advisors, guardian angels, admirers, emotional supporters, and, most impor-

tantly, my friends. I thank you both.

So on this day I stand here in front of you all with my deepest gratitude. I would like to thank Cynthia Richey, Malore Brown, Pamela Barron, the members of the Carnegie Medal Committee, the American Library Association, and the ALSC for honoring Paul and me with such a prestigious award. Two years in a row is a tremendous honor. I know this recognition will continue our inspiration and goal of bringing books to life for children everywhere. 🐾

Guidelines for Authors

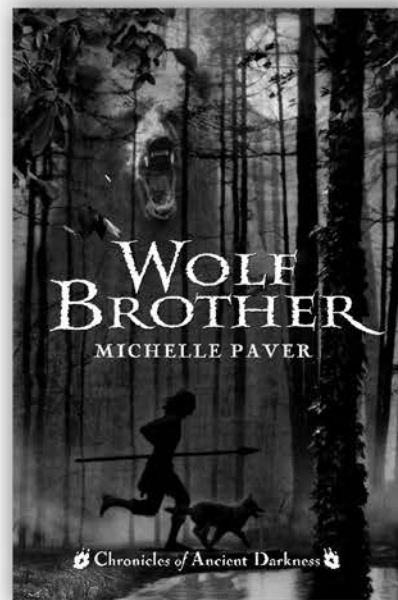
Visit the *Children and Libraries* (CAL) Web site for information on submitting article manuscripts for consideration. The Web site also includes information on the manuscript referee process and CAL policies and procedures. Visit www.ala.org/alsc and click on "Publications & Products" and then "Children and Libraries."

BOOKS TO WATCH FOR



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Lb 0-06-057732-0 • \$17.89 (\$24.89)
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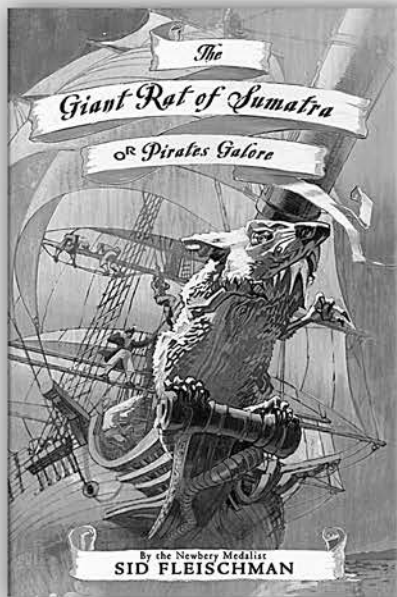
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Book Reviews

Findlay, Diane. *Lend a Hand: Exploring Service-Learning through Children's Literature*.
Guinn, Cindy, and Karen Simmons. *Bags, Boxes, Buttons, and Beyond with The Bag Ladies: A Resource Book of Science and Social Studies Projects for K-6 Teachers, Parents, and Students*.
Piazza, Carolyn L. *Journeys: The Teaching of Writing in Elementary Classrooms*.
Nespeca, Sue McCleaf, and Joan B. Reeve. *Picture Books Plus: 100 Extension Activities in Art, Drama, Music, Math, and Science*.
Feber, Jane. *Creative Book Reports: Fun Projects with Rubrics for Fiction and Nonfiction*.

Resources for Teachers

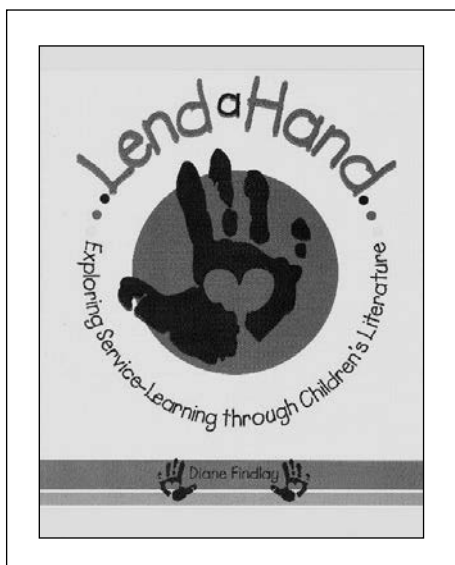
Junko Yokota, Book Review Editor

Most professional book collections include books for teachers to use as resources in planning their teaching. Many are reference books that do not circulate; others are like textbooks for education classes; some are more like "recipe files" of practical ideas. Educators of all kinds rely on many varied resources. Public libraries find that professional book collections are used by parents who are home schooling as well as by classroom teachers. In addition, educators who work with children in religious education, clubs or scouting, and day-care and after-school programs also find such books useful. In this issue, we examine a few of the newer samplings of the resource books that are available.

Findlay, Diane. *Lend a Hand: Exploring Service-Learning through Children's Literature*. Ft. Atkinson, Wisc.: Upstart Bks., 2003 (ISBN 1-57950-086-2).

While writing the earlier book, *Character with Character: Using Children's Literature in Character Education*, Findlay realized the relevance of service-learning to developing character, noting that it is based on understanding that others are as important as you and the need for empathy for each other. In this volume, various social issues are explored, and ways of serving that are appropriate for elementary school students are recommended.

Chapters include Hunger and the Homeless, Animal Welfare, Health and



Lend a Hand by Diane Findlay

Safety, Natural Environment, Aging and the Elderly, Building Friendly Communities, Literacy and Education, and Promoting Justice. Topics are suggested that enable students to pursue further research to develop understanding. A resource section lists and annotates approximately twenty to twenty-five books, other media, and Web resources. A section on "Service-Learning in Action" describes successful experiences in which other elementary students have engaged in service-learning, often including contact information for organizations, and so forth. An activities section suggests discussion prompts, games, creative expression, and research opportunities, among others. The final section of each chapter suggests ways for students to discover the needs of their own community and opportunities for taking action. A few reproducible black-line masters vary from games to tem-

plates for organizing thoughts.

The ideas expressed in the book are thoughtful, well organized, and easy to follow. Adults who work with children will likely find the book a helpful way to get their students to develop empathy for others in their world and to engage themselves in bettering their community.

Guinn, Cindy, and Karen Simmons. *Bags, Boxes, Buttons, and Beyond with The Bag Ladies: A Resource Book of Science and Social Studies Projects for K-6 Teachers, Parents, and Students*. Illus. by Cindy Guinn. Gainesville, Fla.: Maupin House, 2004. (ISBN 0-929895-72-X).

Very often, teachers and other adults who work with children collect everyday objects for their potential usefulness. "The Bag Ladies" are two teachers who have put together a book of ideas for creative uses of those objects. Brown bags, cereal or pizza boxes, file folders, and empty CD cases provide the beginnings of each project. Supplies needed include staples like scissors, glue, crayons, and markers. More unusual (but still readily available) items



Junko Yokota is a professor at National-Louis University in Evanston, Ill., where she teaches courses in children's literature. She has worked

on a variety of projects with school districts, governmental and nonprofit organizations, and foundations on issues relating to literacy development.

like tennis ball tubes, survey tape, or wiggle eyes are also represented. Each project description is contained within one double-page spread. Listed are materials needed and potential ways of using the projects in social studies or science. Step-by-step directions are accompanied by line drawings and, sometimes, photographs of finished samples.

None of the ideas is specific to a particular learning experience. Rather, they offer opportunities for many different uses. For example, Two-Sided Accordion Pictures have the following listed: Social Studies—map/scenic view, Science—animals young/old. Some ideas are generic enough for use across all areas of the curriculum. “Cereal Box” depicts a cover picture featuring the person being studied and a template for the back of the box to organize information about the person, while suggesting that side panels can be used to compare yourself to the person researched.

A sample project rubric and a list of general books related to science and social studies are also included. At the back of the book are black-line masters that can serve as templates for some of the projects. They are helpful but not necessary in order to create the projects. The more than sixty projects are said to be “kid-tested” and will appeal to teachers who are looking for creative ways to stimulate project-based learning.

Piazza, Carolyn L. *Journeys: The Teaching of Writing in Elementary Classrooms*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Merrill/Prentice Hall, 2003. (ISBN 0-13-022144-9).

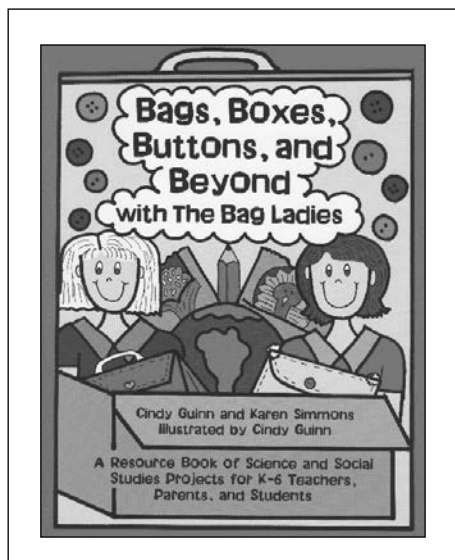
This is a comprehensive book on teaching writing, one that is perhaps more typically used as a college textbook than a library book. Nevertheless, it has an appeal as a reference book for those interested in teaching writing, whether novice or veteran teachers. Curriculum planners and workshop leaders will likely find this book useful, too.

Chapters include: The Writer's Workshop, Journal Writing, Personal Writing, Story Writing, Poetry Writing, Expository Writing, and Persuasive Writing. Tables, charts, and samples of students' work pack

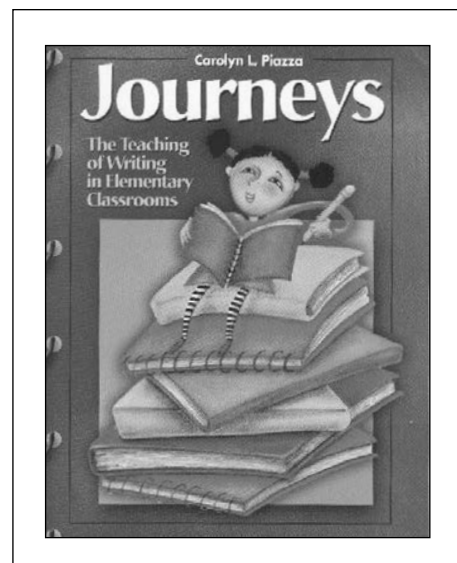
each chapter with valuable information and quick reference. The first chapter sets the stage by explaining the components of a writer's workshop: reading, composing, sharing, and continuous assessment. Each subsequent chapter addresses a different type of writing and then follows with narratives from teachers in grades 1, 3, and 5 who describe how that type of writing is taught to children in classrooms and then share insights and tips along with actual student writing.

The text is dense with well-organized information that is easy to comprehend. One quality that makes the book engaging is the amount and variety of boxed inserts, sidebars, and visual information. Not only do they include student work, but they also provide samples of marked drafts that show teacher response to student writing. Many sample checklists indicate ways students can independently keep track of their progress, as well as show how teachers can efficiently manage the information that needs to be recorded. Throughout the book, lists of trade books that exemplify various aspects of teaching writing are organized by topics and are included. Graphic organizers are shown filled in so that readers can see how a student might use them to prepare for writing or to respond to reading.

Examples of games that extend student learning are shown. The bibliographies at



Bags, Boxes, Buttons, and Beyond with The Bag Ladies by Cindy Guinn and Karen Simmons



Journeys by Carolyn L. Piazza

the end of each chapter have extensive lists of professional resources as well as children's trade books. This book is so packed with information that it is likely to offer something for anyone who is interested in the teaching of writing to elementary-age children.

Nespeca, Sue McCleaf, and Joan B. Reeve. *Picture Books Plus: 100 Extension Activities in Art, Drama, Music, Math, and Science*. Chicago: ALA, 2003. (ISBN: 0-8389-0840-3).

Teachers, librarians, and others who work with preschool children through early primary grades will discover a wealth of ideas in this book. In the introduction, the authors explain how extension activities enrich students' understanding of picture books and motivate them to read more literature. Engaging children in the literature helps them “catch” the reading habit.

The first chapter introduces and emphasizes just how important picture books are and how children actually use them. Young children “read” illustrations before they learn to read printed words. Picture books aid young children's language development, expose them to excellent art and literary elements, and increase their desire to continue reading.

Since art is an integral part of a picture book, quality illustrations are critical when selecting books for new readers. To

help adults evaluate picture books, Nespeca and Reeve detail several key elements that illustrators use in their art. These include visual elements, various formats, and different types of media.

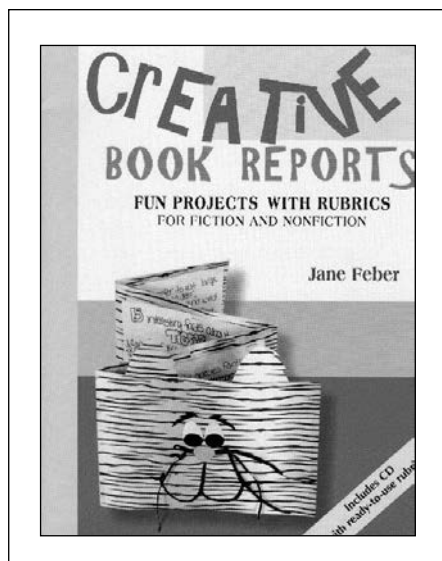
The remaining chapters describe various innovative “how-to” instructions. Each section is based on one of the following disciplines: art, drama, music, math, or science. Included are thorough descriptions of each discipline, philosophical reasons for using a particular subject for extension activities, and the materials, tools, and techniques necessary for planning a successful program.

Twenty different picture book titles, with exciting extensions from the specific discipline, help summarize each chapter. This is supported by brief story summaries, materials required, procedures to follow, and other key recommendations. Each chapter focuses on hands-on activities so children can relate the literature to everyday experiences.

Complete bibliographic citations for all the picture books, musical recordings, and resource books used in the extensions appear at the end of each chapter. Author/illustrator and title indexes at the close of the book compliment the user-friendly format of the book.

Feber, Jane. *Creative Book Reports: Fun Projects with Rubrics for Fiction and Nonfiction*. Gainesville, Fla.: Maupin House, 2004. (ISBN 0-929895-69-X).

Teachers often want to find ways for students to show that they understand what they have read. Sometimes students are required to take a quiz or write a book



Creative Book Reports by Jane Feber

report. This book of creative book reports explores thirty-nine alternatives for students to respond to their reading. In fact, the title of the book is not as broad as the concepts explored within the book.

Through the projects, students find ways of showing their understanding of the literary elements, comprehension of the concepts in the book, and the freedom of expressing their thoughts in creative ways. Students are encouraged to engage in critical and creative thinking, and are shown how to translate their thoughts into concrete, visible ways. Rubrics for assessment are provided, both in print as black-line masters in the book and on an accompanying CD that allows users to manipulate the templates and customize them. Rubrics provide ways for students to know what’s expected of them, and make objective how their work will be assessed. They also provide specific information on what areas were clearly shown as well understood, and what areas need improvement.

Although the book is targeted for grades four through eight, many of the projects are easily adapted to other grades. Directions are written for an entire class reading the same book and completing the project, but can be adapted for small group literature circles or for individual students self-selecting books. The end goal for most of the projects is presenting to an audience in a variety of ways. Visual displays in libraries connect student learning from classrooms to libraries. Oral presentations offer students opportunities to learn how to express what they learned. Projects are organized alphabetically by names that describe the presentation media (e.g., award, brochure, postcard, Web site) and allow the projects to be applicable across many books and many subject areas. Because the projects typically take one or two class periods of twenty to thirty minutes, it is possible for them to be completed during library times as well as in classrooms.

The introductory matter includes a section on classroom management tips that encourage students to take responsibility for planning and organizing their work in a methodical way. Each project has a reproducible student page and a teacher page; both are organized for easily following the step-by-step directions. Photographs of completed sample projects are included on many pages.

This book is likely to be useful to many teachers and librarians who look for ways to engage students in creatively showing what they have learned in response to what they have read.—*Linda Tiffany, Children’s Librarian at Columbus (Ohio) Metropolitan Library.* ☺

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War is coming to a library in Iraq....



The Librarian of Basra

A True Story from Iraq



WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED BY
JEANETTE WINTER

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The Librarian of Basra

A True Story from Iraq

Jeanette Winter

January 2005

This true story about a librarian's struggle to save her community's priceless collection of books reminds us all how the love of literature and the respect for knowledge know no boundaries.

A portion of the proceeds from the sale of *The Librarian of Basra* will be donated to a fund administered by the American Library Association to help rebuild the collection of Basra's Central Library.

*"In the Koran,
the first thing God said to Muhammad was 'Read.'"*

—Alia Muhammad Baker

From the *New York Times*, July 27, 2003



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Price and availability are subject to change without notice. Price is higher in Canada.

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ALSC News

2005 Slate of Candidates

Vice-President/President-Elect

K.T. Horning, Cooperative Children's Book Center, Madison, Wis.
Sue McCleaf Nespeca, Kid Lit Plus Consulting, Youngstown, Ohio

Board of Directors

Jean Gaffney, Dayton (Ohio) Metro Library
Marina Starr LaTronica, Four County Library System, Vestal, N.Y.
Kate McClelland, Perrot Memorial Library, Old Greenwich, Conn.
Caroline Parr, Central Rappahannock Regional Library, Fredericksburg, Va.
Pat Scales, South Carolina Governor's School of the Arts and Humanities, Greenville, S.C.
Susan Veltfort, King County Library System, Issaquah, Wash.

Caldecott Chair, 2007

Janice Del Negro, Dominican University, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, River Forest, Ill.
Wendy Woodfill, Hennepin County Library, Minnetonka, Minn.

Newbery Chair, 2007

Kristi Elle Jemtegaard (formerly Kristi Thomas Beavin), Arlington County (Va.) Library
Jerianne Kladder, Columbus (Ohio) Metropolitan Library

Sibert Chair, 2007

Kate Houston Mitchoff, Multnomah County Library, Portland, Ore.

Tina Hubert, Lewis & Clark Library System, Edwardsville, Ill.

Caldecott Committee, 2007

Carol Baughman, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort, Ky.
Shawn Brommer, South Central Library System, Madison, Wis.
Marci Davis, Multnomah County Library, Portland, Ore.
Linda Ernst, King County Library System, Bellevue, Wash.
Mary Fellows, Upper Hudson Library System, Albany, N.Y.
Saroj Ghoting, Early Childhood Literacy Consultant, Moscow, Idaho
Patricia Gonzales, Los Angeles Public Library
Swalena Griffin, Indian Trails Public Library District, Wheeling, Ill.
Catherine Howser, Arkansas State Library, Little Rock, Ark.
Helen Foster James, Consultant, San Diego
Richard Kerper, Millersville (Pa.) University
Debra Nelson, Prince George's County Memorial Library, Upper Marlboro, Md.
Angela Reynolds, Washington County Cooperative Library Service, Hillsboro, Ore.
Mary Jane Wiseman, The Catholic University of America, School of Library & Information Science, Washington, D.C.

Newbery Committee, 2007

Roxane Bartelt, Kenosha (Wis.) Public Library
Beverly Bass, Leon County Public Library, Tallahassee, Fla.

Tim Capehart, Dayton (Ohio) Metro Library
Edie Ching, Saint Alban's School, Washington, D.C.
Mary Furlough, Laman Public Library, North Little Rock, Ark.
Jean Hatfield, Johnson County Library, Shawnee Mission, Kan.
Marilyn Hollinshead, West Tisbury (Mass.) Library
Betsy Orsburn, Free Library of Philadelphia
Jackie Partch, Multnomah County Library, Portland, Ore.
Lauralyn Persson, Wilmette (Ill.) Public Library
Jennifer Ralston, Harford County Public Library, Belcamp, Md.
Sharon Salluzzo, Potomac, Md.
Martha Shinnors, Washington State Library, Olympia, Wash.
Margaret Tice, New York Public Library

Sibert Committee, 2007

Melody Allen, Office of Library and Information Services, Rhode Island Department of Administration, Providence
Roxy Ekstrom, Schaumburg (Ill.) Township Library
Diane Lettieri, East County Regional Library, Lehigh Acres, Fla.
Wendy Lukehart, District of Columbia Public Library
Maren Ostergard, Bellevue (Wash.) Regional Library
Penny Peck, San Leandro (Calif.) Public Library
Melissa Rowse, Orange-Ulster Board of Cooperative Educational Services, Monroe, N.Y.
Jewell Stoddard, Politics and Prose Bookstore, Washington, D.C.

Save the Dates

ALSC's preconference "Teachers, Parents, and Librarians: Working Together So Children Can Learn to Read" will be held Thursday and Friday, June 23-24, 2005, at the ALA Annual Conference. How are children learning to read in 2005? Phonics, intensive drills, computerized quizzes, and standardized testing seem to have taken over the process. How has the public librarian's role in helping kids become literate changed? Building on the successful 2004 "Great Beginnings" preconference, this year's preconference focuses on early literacy research, library programming, the roles of school and public librarians in the process of learning to read, and bridging the literacy gap from preschool through middle school.

Join the Discussion

In September, ALSC introduced a new electronic discussion list: ALSCTCHLIT. The forum focuses on the discussion of issues that relate to teaching children's literature. For information on all of ALSC's discussion lists and to subscribe, visit www.ala.org/alsc and click on the "Stay Connected" icon.

Birth To 6 Resource

Hennepin County Library (HCL) has announced a new Web site that comple-

ments early literacy efforts. Language development, creativity, cognitive development, and school readiness are all critical to academic success. HCL's new "Birth to Six" Web site at www.hclib.org/BirthTo6 is designed especially for parents and caregivers of children age six and younger. The site includes early literacy tips, booklists, storytime information, and links to many early literacy resources, while also adding another dimension to the library's other interactive preschool programs.

On the Web

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's BAM! Body and Mind™ Web site has launched a new issue designed to help children between eight and twelve years old deal with bullies, peer pressure, and other unpleasant situations. Bullying has become a common and serious threat to children and their physical and mental health. Some highlights on the site include: "The Bully Roundup" game, which helps kids learn how to identify a bully, what to do if bullied, and how to avoid falling victim to a bully; "Grind Your Mind," an animated quiz on peer pressure; and the "Solve Your Problem Plan," a guide to help kids resolve conflicts with family members and friends. Visit the BAM! Body and Mind™ Web site at www.bam.gov.



Children participate in a craft program during a NASA @ your library event at Houston Public Library (HPL). The NASA @ your library Exhibit ran at HPL throughout the month of July 2004.

2005 Midwinter ALSC Meeting Schedule

Executive Committee

Thursday, January 13, 2-4:30 p.m.

AASL/ALSC/YALSA Jt. Exec. Committee

Thursday, January 13, 4:30-6:00 p.m.

ALSC Past Presidents' Breakfast

Saturday, January 15, 7:30-9 A.M.

Division Leadership

Saturday, January 15,
9:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.

All Committee Meeting I & II

Sunday, January 16,
9:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.

Planning and Budget Committee

Sunday, January 16, 9:30 A.M.-
12:30 P.M.; Tuesday, January 18,
9:30-11 A.M.

All Discussion Group Meeting I and II

Sunday, January 16, 3:30-5 P.M.

ALSC Board of Directors

Sunday, January 16, 2-4:30 P.M.
Monday, January 17, 2-4:30 P.M.
Tuesday, January 18, 2-5:30 P.M.

AASL/ALSC/YALSA Jt. Youth Council Caucus

Monday, January 17, 7-8:30 A.M.

ALSC Award Winners Press Conference

Monday, January 17,
8:15-9:15 A.M.

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For a complete list of ALSC meetings, including the "closed" award committee meetings, please visit the ALSC Web site at www.ala.org/alsc and click on "Events & Conferences."

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Children and Libraries (CAL) is the official publication of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA). CAL is 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.

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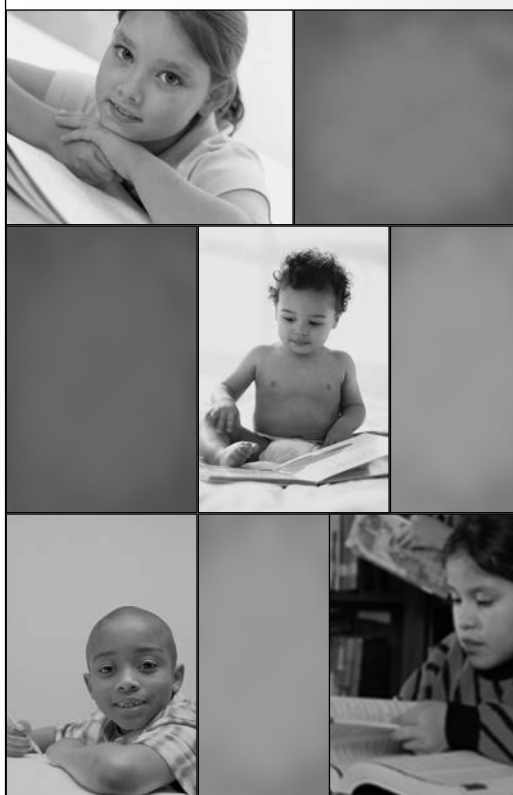
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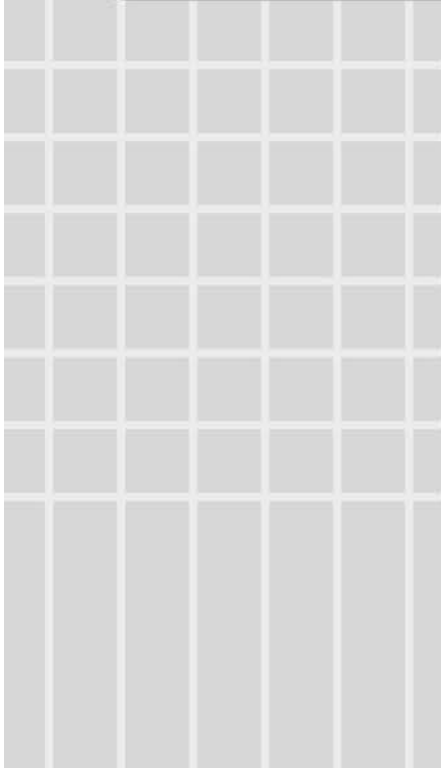


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THE LAST WORD

DINING WITH AN OOGABOO: Relating the Long-term Joys of Oz

By Denise Sciandra

I had dinner with an Oogaboo! The curious creature proudly identified herself when she sat down. No one else seemed startled. *Was I the only one in touch with reality?* That's the question I asked myself that fateful weekend in 2003 at a Winkie Convention in California. The convention is hosted annually by the International Wizard of Oz Club.

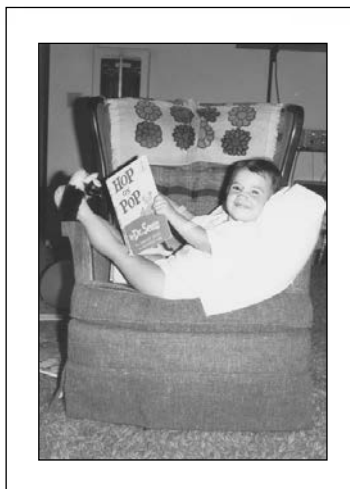
What's an Oogaboo? After the laughter died down, I was informed that Oogaboos live in a small northwestern corner of Winkie country in the land of Oz, so that for purposes of the convention, Oogaboos come from Oregon and Washington whereas Winkies live in California.

I attended the Winkie Convention through my association with Angelica Carpenter, self-professed Oz nut, at the Arne Nixon Center for the Study of Children's Literature at California State University, Fresno. She's the curator for the center and is the newly elected president of the Oz Club. Hanging out with Angelica and her Oz friends has been enlightening and fun. But I'm concerned . . . they make dining with Oogaboos seem normal.

The Oogaboo who dined with me appeared in the talent show where she stood on her head and played "Over the Rainbow" on the kazoo. She later dressed as a snail when all the Oogaboos posed as Slow Pokes from *The Royal Book of Oz*. Their slow-motion entrance while singing "Slow Down, You Move Too Fast" was unforgettable.

Angelica has characterized *me* as a "crazed fan" of Beatrix Potter. Even with these perhaps more pastoral tendencies, I did manage to raise an avid Oz fan.

In 1976, my then two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Lisa, fell in love with *The Wizard of Oz* movie. She cried when it ended, and before the days of VCRs, watching the



Sciandra's daughter was very young when she fell in love with Oz.

movie on TV became an annual family ritual.

Lisa eventually had a Wizard of Oz bedroom filled with books, dolls, and posters. Family trips took us on searches for out-of-print books. Lisa read the fourteen-book series by L. Frank Baum and some of Ruth Plumly Thompson's sequels in Del Rey paperbacks. It took a dedicated fan to read those unusually plain editions.

I first read the entire series in 1990 when I was bedridden while recovering from deep vein thrombosis. My daughter said, "Mom, I think you'd really like these," and then patiently brought them to me two at a time until I had read them all. These Oz fantasies were a welcome contrast to being

trapped in a hospital bed for two weeks with a life-threatening condition.

I'd like to introduce Lisa to the Winkie Convention and to the Oogaboos, who are relatively unknown except to the most diehard Oz fans. It may be a while before this happens though. She is a newly married law school student. Her collection is neatly packed away in the attic, perhaps waiting to be discovered by a second generation Oz fan.

Interested in meeting an Oogaboo yourself? The International Wizard of Oz Club was established in 1957 for fans of Oz and L. Frank Baum. It now has more than thirteen hundred members. Find out more about them at www.ozclub.org.

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Got a great, lighthearted essay? A funny story about children and libraries? Books and babies? Pets and picture books? A not-so-serious look at the world of children's librarianship? Send us your Last Word to Sharon Korbeck at toylady@athenet.net.