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Editor's Note

Favorite Things

Sharon Korbeck Verbeten

Remember the song "My Favorite Things" from *The Sound of Music*? I love that film and find the song positively joyous . . . although I'm not really that big on "whiskers on kittens" or "crisp apple strudel." I thought I would share with you some of my favorite things, at least as far as being editor of *CAL* goes.

- **ALA Conferences.** From what I've witnessed, most librarians who go to the conferences feel it is a privilege, never drudgery. That's a refreshing attitude; I've been to some shows and conferences where the feeling is opposite. I'm especially excited about next year's destinations.
- **Award speeches.** I think I may have written last year about how thrilling it is to read the Caldecott and Newbery speeches before they are delivered at Annual Conference. I always think the written versions are extremely thoughtful, but hearing them delivered is even better.
- **Author interviews.** In almost every issue of *CAL*, we try to bring you an interview with an insightful author. It's a treat to speak with them and share the stories of their beginnings and their methods with you.

Thanks for letting me share a few of my favorite things. Summer is almost over, so enjoy the "raindrops on roses" and the last lazy days . . . those are favorite things, too. ☺



Executive Director's Note

Malore I. Brown

It is with heavy heart that I write this farewell note. Effective July 15, I resigned my position as ALSC Executive Director. After four years of service, I decided to pursue other opportunities.

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with dedicated ALSC members and staff. I believe I have accomplished a great many things. My first years in ALSC were during a time of great change, as the division transitioned to a new journal and a fresh logo and identity and implemented a new communications plan. Over the past four years, ALSC has received numerous grants that have allowed us to develop and provide valuable resources and opportunities to our members. The division has strengthened preexisting relationships with like-minded organizations and has fostered exciting, new partnerships and collaborations as well. My experiences have been challenging, rewarding, and enriching.

I thank you all for your support of ALSC and wish you the best as you continue your work with children in libraries. I leave the office in the capable hands of Interim Executive Director Aimee Strittmatter and the ALSC staff; I have no doubt that they will continue to work hard to serve you and the association well. ☺

Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for Library Service to Children

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Outgoing President's ALSC Message

Gretchen Wronka
ALSC President, 2004-05

ALSC Ahead to 2010

According to John Chrastka, ALA's membership marketing manager, more than 850 ALSC members responded to *ALA Ahead to 2010*, the all-member online survey conducted from May 15 to July 5, 2004. While the questions related specifically to ALA activities, John noted that our members' responses can be evaluated as "ALSC member views on ALA level activities."

After several long conversations with John, I extrapolated some interesting information from his sophisticated statistical analysis of ALSC members' responses. Our highest value is ALA's legislative advocacy, and our second highest is accreditation. We value the networking and continuing education opportunities of conferences, and we are quite satisfied with the resources ALA allocates to awards that encourage reading by recognizing authors and creators of outstanding books and other media. John and I wondered if ALSC members put their perception of ALSC on this ALA survey. Maybe some of you will answer.

ALSC Immediate Past-President Gretchen Wronka is Youth Services and Outreach Coordinator at Hennepin County Library in Minnetonka, Minnesota.

ALSC members' responses indicate that we need to do a better job of recruiting new members. But I am not surprised that access to group rates on auto, life, and health insurance are not ALSC member priorities. The board will continue to inform our strategic planning with the rich information gathered from the survey. We will be giving you a more detailed analysis soon. Finally, John emphasized, "Survey results indicate that ALSC has a very involved and engaged membership." But of course!

How does the board incorporate this data into its routine and decision-making? One effective way is to cultivate our working relationship during the board orientation at Midwinter Meeting as new and experienced board members coalesce to begin the year's work. Last January, pens and minds racing, the board absorbed a dynamic message from Susan Fox, executive director of the American Association of Law Librarians. She urged the board to do many things:

- Practice improvisational leadership.
- Be agile and responsive to members.
- Be nimble and transparent.
- Dream big.
- Foster a culture of trust.
- Realize that the days of hierarchy are gone.
- Teach committees they don't have to ask permission.
- Define and delegate rather than reacting and ratifying.
- Eliminate all corporate speak.
- Never break a promise.

Powerful and persuasive, Fox advised association leadership to speak with a human voice and have confidence in the competency of ALSC members. A board's role is to inspire and challenge this "community of like-minded people" by establishing big goals and sending them back

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Incoming President's ALSC Message

Ellen Fader
ALSC President, 2005-06

Is It the Best or Worst?

I recently spent a glorious two and one-half hours in the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall in Portland, Oregon, in the company of the vibrant entertainer Lily Tomlin. Tomlin's monologues display her incredible ability to deliver insightful social commentary in a way that allows us to laugh with her. What a great reminder she gives us to keep trying to improve our world, yet not to take everything too seriously.

At some point in the evening, between visits from many of Tomlin's trademark characters—Edith Ann, Ernestine, Judith Beasley, the bag lady Trudy—she told a joke I'm sure I've heard before but had forgotten.

"Mr. Dickens," said his editor. "You'll have to make up your mind. It cannot be both the best of times and the worst of times."

Incoming ALSC President **Ellen Fader** is the Youth Services Coordinator at Multnomah County Library in Portland, Oregon. She can be reached at (503) 988-5408 or via e-mail at federalasc@comcast.net.

As I started to write my first column as your new ALSC president, Tomlin's joke hung on and wouldn't let go. In some ways, this is the best of times: communities continue to open new libraries

or debut expanded, remodeled buildings, often with inviting areas for children and teens. Authors and illustrators offer us an unending supply of creative children's books that continue to catch the attention of the book-buying public, including adults associated with the film industry. Educators apply targeted techniques to help our children learn to love reading. The best and brightest professionals show a passion for working with children in public and school libraries.

Yet we often feel we are in the midst of the worst of times. Public library operating budgets aren't rebounding as quickly as the rest of the economy, forcing children's library staff to compromise excellence in collections, literacy initiatives, and public programming. Libraries shorten their hours or face the direst of consequences: complete closure. The ranks of teacher librarians in schools continue to shrink, putting pressure on classroom teachers and public library staff to help students learn to evaluate information and find the best books to read. Government policies threaten library users' rights to privacy, and government initiatives, especially related to testing mandates, cause anxiety among educators, parents, and students.

So what are we to do in such a time of such highs and lows? Our professional organization supports us. "The mission of the American Library Association is to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all." ALA focuses its energy and resources in five key action areas: diversity; education and continuous learning; equity of access; intellectual freedom; and twenty-first-century literacy. Know that there is strength in numbers. Our nearly 65,000 members—plus our dedicated office staff, including those in the Washington office—power our organization's efforts in many critical areas to ensure the long-term health of ALA and our nation's libraries. ALSC, as a division of ALA, concerns itself with all the same issues and how they affect children from birth through age fourteen.

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Newbery Medal Acceptance

Cynthia Kadohata

I was looking recently at my increasingly messy night table, and I noticed a white strip sticking to the wood. I scraped at it and realized it was a piece of soft, foamy tape that I had been wrapping on my broken glasses. But because I didn't want to appear on the *Today* show with tape on my glasses, I'd finally gotten them fixed in a mall in the frenzied hours after the call from the Newbery committee. I ended up wearing my contact lenses on the show, but I still would like to thank the committee for the fact that I can now unembarrassedly go out in public with my glasses.

Reading some speeches by former Newbery winners, I noticed that Christopher Paul Curtis mentioned he was the first Newbery winner to wear dreadlocks. That got me thinking about what might be my own first, or what might distinguish me from the others. The answer

I might be receiving a phone call soon. On the other hand, like just about everybody else in children's books, I knew who Susan Faust was. When the phone rang at 4:26 A.M., I thought it might be a friend who lives in Japan. Her son had just started school in America, and she had been calling a lot with concerns over his big move.

When I heard the words, "This is Susan Faust," I don't know if you would say I screamed exactly; it was really more of a screech such as you might hear from a seagull. When Susan said I was the winner of the Newbery, the seagull seemed to become completely hysterical. It flapped its wings and jumped up and down. Susan talked, I screamed some more, and we hung up.

I believe she told me not to tell anyone about the Newbery yet, since the public announcement hadn't been made. I'm ashamed to admit that I quickly called my brother and sister. My brother sleepily said, "Is it an emergency?" I said, "It's a good one." He said, "Did you win the lottery?" I said, "It's better."

After that a number of people called to talk to the seagull. They told me I was flying to New York that day to be on the *Today* show the next morning.

As I talked on the phone I kept noticing how the floor needed vacuuming, just as it had the day before. I thought, *Everything's exactly the same, yet everything's totally different.*

My boyfriend, George, came with Sammy and me to New York. We missed our first flight and ended up settling into our New York hotel room at two in the morning. Sammy and George seemed to be snoring within minutes. I remember feeling annoyed at how noisy they were. I had set the alarm for seven so I could shower before the car picked me up the next morning.

Every so often that night I would glance at the clock and think things like: *If I fall asleep by three, I can get four hours of sleep.* What if I'm only imagining all this? It would be so embarrassing if I only thought I'd won the Newbery, and I really hadn't. But if I were imagining



photo courtesy of George Miyamoto

Cynthia Kadohata is the winner of the 2005 Newbery Medal for *Kira-Kira*, published by Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Her acceptance speech was delivered at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago on June 26, 2005.

came quickly. I believe I hold the distinction of receiving the earliest Newbery phone call ever.

My son, Sammy, was seventeen months old in January, and he doesn't always sleep well. On the Sunday night before "the call," I went to bed as exhausted as ever. It wasn't a situation where I thought

all this, I wouldn't be in New York. But what if I'm not really in New York? Wait a second. Obviously, I'm in New York. . . . If I fall asleep by 3:30, I can get three-and-a-half hours of sleep. The last time I remember seeing the clock, it was 3:40.

When I arrived at the studio the next morning, Kevin Henkes was sitting on a couch. I sat next to him. Two weeks earlier, I had been on the phone with the royalty department at Simon & Schuster, begging them to overnight a check to me, and now I was sitting next to *the* Kevin Henkes. Was the world going completely insane? I seem to remember several people shaking my hand and saying, "I've read Kevin's book, but I haven't read yours."

Later that day I walked back and forth several times from various goings-on to my hotel room. The temperature in New York was thirteen degrees, and I was dressed California-warm and wearing shoes with heels. By the end of the day, I was loaded down with a bouquet of white roses, a battery-operated Teletubby, and a bag full of Simon & Schuster books for Sammy. My shoes were growing tighter every second. George was wearing only a windbreaker. Sammy was completely covered up in a pile of coats, scarves, and blankets. The only way you knew he was in the stroller was by the wailing emanating from beneath the blankets. We must have looked pretty pathetic, because several people asked whether we needed help. And, this being New York, some people just shouted out their advice: "Get that baby inside!"

At the hotel, Sammy didn't care much about the Newbery. He wanted to be fed. He wanted to play in his bath. He needed to work off some energy walking up and down the hotel hallway. That night he and George again seemed to be snoring within minutes. And again I lay in bed awake, with thoughts nearly exactly the same as I'd had the night before.

The next evening we were back in Los Angeles. During the car ride home from the airport I felt a sort of quiet elation; it was maybe the first time since Monday that I felt quiet inside myself. The freeway was calming, like water rushing around me. Just as I was starting

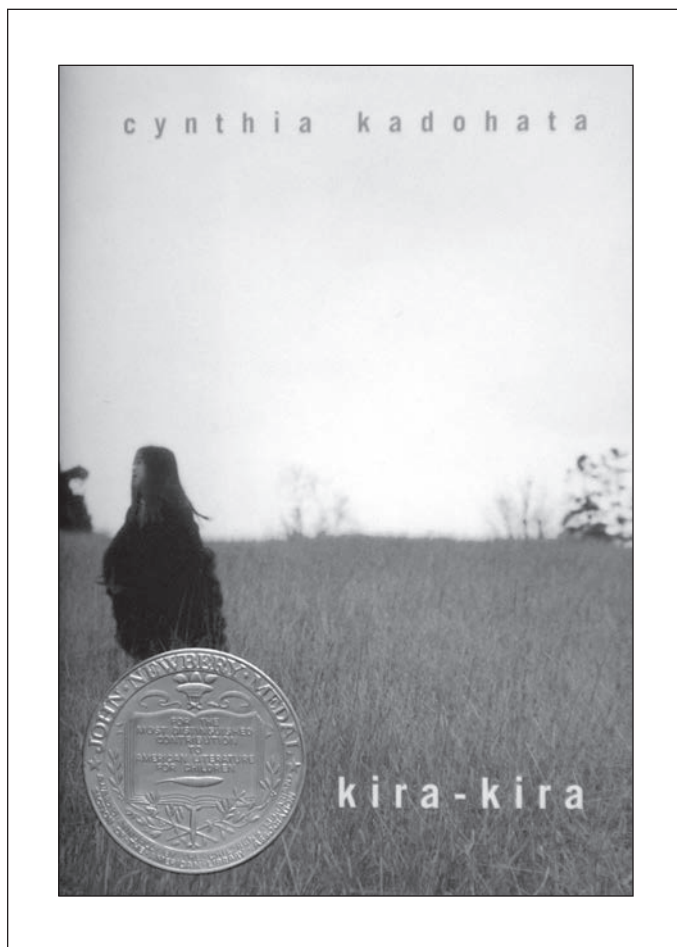
tried to kill me in a long time." But this was different. This was the Newbery. The astonishing thing about the Newbery is that it spans your life: you first read a Newbery book as a child and you're still reading Newbery books when you retire. So the very word "Newbery" encompasses the world you live in today and the world you left behind.

People have asked me, "Where did you get the idea for your novel?" I have basically been answering, "From the world I left behind."

My first real-life home was Chicago, where I was born in 1956. My family moved to Georgia for a while, then to Arkansas for seven years. As in *Kira-Kira*, I really did talk with a heavy Southern accent. My sister's name was Kim, which I pronounced "Kee-uhm," and I never said, for instance, "You should see that cloud," but rather, "Y'all should see that cloud." And the entire staff at the hospital really did come to look at my brother because they had never seen a Japanese baby before.

My father says we were raised rather freely in Arkansas. We didn't wear diapers when we played in the back yard, just did our thing whenever and wherever we felt the need. When my mother told my father to make us soft-boiled eggs, he fed us raw ones instead because, he says, "You didn't seem to care one way or the other." My nickname was Nee, and I liked dogs, playing chess, reading, and complaining. Today I like dogs, reading, and complaining.

When I think of my father in Arkansas, I think, *my father worked*. When I think of my mother, I think, *my mother read*. When my mother began taking us to the library, she discovered a love of reading at the same time we did. Someone once said to me, "The problems between your parents began when your mother started reading." My mother quoted Kierkegaard and the Bible with equal fervor to my sis-



to feel satisfied, and maybe even self-satisfied, regurgitated orange airplane food appeared all over my clothes. Sammy looked up at me with a puzzled expression and orange lips.

I looked at George. He too seemed puzzled. He said, "Monday was supposed to be a perfectly normal workday."

I had never seen George as stressed as he'd been the previous three days. Let me explain something about George. He has the body type, the courage, and the heart of a bear. He is a police officer. People have shot at him. He once crawled into a fiery building to save a woman. He has chased killers through the streets. He once said to me wistfully, "Nobody has

ter and me. She made us read *Scientific American* articles we scarcely understood. I remember one article about peer pressure and another about monkeys who became warped because they didn't have love. One of my favorite childhood memories is of when my mother became obsessed with the stars. She made charts of the constellations and lay with us in the backyard at night to look at the clear skies of our small Arkansas town. One of the family activities I remember most vividly is burning our garbage together in the incinerator in back at night, the ashes sparkling through the air as the fire warmed our faces. All of that is part of my real-life home, as well as my home as a writer. Out of our homes, I believe, grow our stories.

My father worked as a chicken sexer, separating the male from the female chicks at hatcheries. Some weeks he worked one hundred hours, and some days the only time we saw him was when he was asleep. I remember peeking into my parents' bedroom at 2 P.M. and giggling as he snored.

As an Army veteran, my father had learned chicken sexing under the GI bill after the war. Because of the brutal hours in his profession, he took amphetamines to stay awake and tranquilizers to go to sleep. But he made enough money to buy us a house. Later, when my parents divorced, he said he laid in his tiny apartment with sheets on his windows and believed that his life was over.

When I say *Kira-Kira* grew from "the world I left behind," I'm usually referring to those years in the South. But in writing this speech, I realized another impetus from a world left behind. One day, near the start of what I expected to be my senior year in high school, I walked off my Hollywood, California, high school campus and didn't return. Something I haven't mentioned in interviews is that I was a high school dropout. And I believe the way I felt when I dropped out was a little the way Katie Takeshima felt when her sister got sick, like she didn't know what to do or where to go. My English teacher, Mrs. Stanley, had given me an A. But mostly my grades were bad, my attendance was worse, and I had just been told by the administration that I

was being held back a year. Mrs. Stanley was one of those people you meet every so often in life who seem to have been sent from a divine source to guide you. But Mrs. Stanley retired, and I didn't return to high school.

My mother worked as a secretary by day and attended law school by night. When I told her I'd dropped out, she told me I had to either go back to school or get a job. Thus began my brief careers as a salesclerk and a hamburger waitress. I was a bad salesclerk, but I like to think I was a splendid waitress, with just the right balance of good manners and sassiness.

I started out tonight by discussing what distinguished me from other Newbery winners. I believe what we all have in common with one another and with everybody in this room is that we search out libraries like heat-seeking missiles.

After I'd dropped out, I sought out the library near my home. Seeking it out was more of an instinct, really, not a conscious thought. I didn't think to myself, *I need to start reading again*. I felt it. I rediscovered reading — the way I'd read as a child, when there was constantly a book I was just finishing or just beginning or in the middle of. I rediscovered myself.

At eighteen I began attending a two-year college. I decided to major in journalism because I thought it was more "practical" than English. To quote Joan Didion, "Was anyone ever so young?"

Many of the students at the journalism program in the two-year college were older. Most were like me: people with a lot of confusion and a little hope.

After finishing the program at the two-year college, I transferred to a university. The students were different: younger, with a little confusion and a lot of hope. One summer during school I worked as a salesclerk at Sears. I proudly told the other salesclerks that I wanted to

be a writer. They laughed loudly, and one said, "What are you going to write about, working at Sears?" And I confess I thought they had a good point. What would I write about? Other people suggested I "write a bestseller."

A couple of years after I got my degree in journalism, I moved to Boston to be near my older sister. But before I left Los Angeles, I decided to take a bus trip through parts of America. I think I felt I needed to conjure up some spirits. Whenever I wrote anything for college, I would listen to music or smell perfume from long ago, anything to conjure up the writing spirits.

So I bought a month-long Greyhound pass and started with a ride to Oregon, which I'd never visited.

I remember walking on the beach talking to a former Coast Guardsman who had recently returned from being stationed in Alaska. As we strolled on the sand, he told me that his best moment ever was saving the life of a five-year-old boy. He gave me a green glass fishing float that he said he had found on a beach in Alaska. He believed the float had traveled across the Pacific Ocean. I still have that float. I like to think it once belonged to a fisherman in Russia or Japan.

I met an old woman on the bus who said she had left Oklahoma during the Dust Bowl years to pick fruit in California. She said she was sick and in her eighties, and this was the last trip she would ever take. She told me she'd known a lot of people who'd died over the years. I told her I'd never known anyone who'd died, and she was so surprised she threw her head back and it hit the window. I told her she'd lived a fascinating life, and she said I wouldn't think so if I'd been there. She

emanated kindness. We hugged when she got off at Amarillo, Texas, and she said something like, "I hope you have a nice life." That was nearly a quarter of a century ago. In fact, I can imagine myself saying something similar today to a young girl on a bus, trying to understand who she is and why, and where she should go.

Later that night on the bus, I opened my eyes and saw smokestacks amid an explosion of greenish fluorescent lights. It was a factory, and it was an astonishing sight rising from the barren flatlands. From somewhere in back a man called out, "This is America!"

What those words conjured up in my heart was a sense of what it meant to me to be an American in general, and in particular, an American writer. It did not mean shared history or even shared values with other Americans, but a shared landscape. What all of us shared were the factories, the deserts, the cities, the wheat fields. That sharing was an immense responsibility we had to one another.

I understood then that I could write about my section of that shared landscape.

One of your first realizations when you win a Newbery is that you didn't win it alone. Many things have to happen over the decades in order to reach the magical moment. Twenty years ago, I was going to grad school and living in the attic of a big house on Pittsburgh's south side. I already had one roommate, and my second roommate arrived one late summer day. Her name was Caitlyn Dlouhy, and she later became my editor at Atheneum Books for Young Readers. Caitlyn alleges that I didn't come down to say hello that first day, and also that the first time she saw me I was wearing a glamorous silk robe—and my glasses were held together with tape.

Caitlyn is one of my closest friends and one of the most beautiful, happy people I have ever known. I wrote this novel because of her prodding. She has changed my life equally with her editing and with her happiness.

I want to thank the Newbery Committee for the incredible honor and the incred-

ible miracle of this award. Not long after they called me I was standing at the edge of a swimming pool watching one pink and one yellow rubber duck float around in the water. Sammy was playing beside me. I watched him for a minute, and when I looked up again I couldn't see the pink duck anywhere. I felt a moment of panic and maybe even despair. I thought, *My God, I'm in an alternate universe now. There is no pink rubber duck in this universe, and I haven't won the Newbery.* Being transported to an alternate universe seemed no more or less amazing than winning the Newbery.

I want to thank George, who has sustained me fervently and whose belief in me has often been greater than my belief in myself. I'd also like to thank everyone at Simon & Schuster, who published a book for no other reason than that they believed in it. In particular, thanks to Susan Burke, Caitlyn's assistant and future editor extraordinaire; Michelle Fadlalla, Jennifer Zatorski, and the entire talented marketing and publicity teams; the magnificent Russell Gordon; Jeannie Ng; Rick Richter; and the incomparable Ginee Seo.

Although my son is still too young to understand this, I'd like to say a few words for him on this night that is so important to me. When I was in Kazakhstan adopting him, another single woman and I told each other that the international adoption process was the hardest thing we'd ever done. Do you know why we said that? Because we hadn't become mothers yet.

My plane ride home from Kazakhstan was scheduled for something like 4:20 A.M. I didn't sleep at all that night. Right before I passed through the airport's gates, I turned to say goodbye to the adoption agency's driver. Before I could say anything, he shouted out the last two sentences I would ever hear from him. The first sentence was, "Once you pass through those gates we cannot help you anymore." He pointed to a door beyond the gates. The second sentence was, "If they take you into that room to shake you down, do not give them more than twenty dollars!" I believe I had about \$1,800 in cash on me, since nearly all transactions in Kazakhstan, including

paying apartment rent and adoption-related fees, were conducted in cash. I passed through the gates, staring fearfully at that door. But the guard smiled at me, and after more than seven weeks in Kazakhstan, I was on my way home.

I had a two-hour wait in the airport, a seven-hour ride to Germany, a four-hour layover in Germany, and a twelve-hour flight to Los Angeles. Sammy cried inconsolably nearly the whole way. On the first flight, I tearfully approached a man I thought I'd heard speaking English and said, "Are you an American? Can you help me?" He was. He did. On the second flight, a man told me that because of Sammy's crying the entire airplane was talking about me. A beautiful and generous family from Finland watched Sammy while I slept.

There were many moments after our return when I told myself, I cannot do this. I am not a mother, and I cannot be a mother. I have three more novels scheduled to be published by Atheneum. In the fourth, I quote from the ancient Chinese philosopher Chuang Tzu. For my son, I'd like to quote from Chuang Tzu now:

Once I, Chuang Tzu, dreamed I was a butterfly and was happy as a butterfly. I was conscious that I was quite pleased with myself, but I did not know that I was Tzu. Suddenly I awoke, and there was I, visibly Tzu. I do not know whether it was Tzu dreaming that he was a butterfly or the butterfly dreaming that he was Tzu. Between Tzu and the butterfly there must be some distinction. But one may be the other. This is called the transformation of things.

At some point, without even realizing it, I became a mother who only dreamed she was not. This is called the transformation of things.

I also need to thank my family. When either second or third grade—I forget which—was coming to an end, I had fallen in love with the reader we used in school. I told my parents that I would not return the book. I loved it too much.

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Caldecott Medal Acceptance

Kevin Henkes

The picture book texts I love most are those that are so succinct that not one word can be extracted and not one word need be added. Those that get right to the point and are not overly long. And so I thought it would be fitting if tonight I simply stood before you and borrowed from a character of mine by remarking, “Wow! That’s just about all I can say,” and then sat down.

However, more than one person has informed me that a speech is, in fact, not a picture book. And so I will elaborate.

“It was Kitten’s first full moon. When she saw it, she thought, There’s a little bowl of milk in the sky. And she wanted it.”

In the life of a young child there are many firsts, one right after the next, in a row that seems to stretch to eternity. I recently read through the scrapbooks my wife and I have kept for our children, starting from their births. The word *first* appears on nearly every page in the earlier books, sometimes more than once.

These are some of the “firsts” we noted: First bath. First feeding. First visitors. First car trip. First night away from home. First smile. First time sleeping through the night (not to happen again for about five-and-a-half years). First cold. First flight. First rainbow. First blown kiss. First haircut. First snowfall.

As a child gets bigger, so, too, do the firsts. Here are a few more: First word. First steps. First sentence. First day of school. First time zipping up a jacket with no help.

The list goes on and on. The magnitude of each first, each act, is

staggering when you consider it. Think of them, these firsts, and think of the child experiencing them.

A child—someone who is egocentric, but powerless. Someone whose knowledge is limited, but whose imagination is vivid. Someone whose experience is limited, but who has curiosity to spare. These combinations are complex and difficult by their nature. They provide the perfect setup for a child to misinterpret with great certainty. Northrop Frye wrote, “Nearly all of us have felt, at least in childhood, that if we imagine that a thing is so, it therefore either is so or can be made to become so.” A blanket on a chair at night *can* be a bear. An illustration in a book *can* be as physically real as the book itself. The moon *can* be a bowl of milk.

Back to firsts. The sociologist Erving Goffman made the following observation: “To walk, to cross a road, to utter a complete sentence, to wear long pants, to tie one’s shoes, to add a column of figures—all these routines that allow the individual unthinking competent performances were attained through an acquisition process whose early stages were negotiated in a cold sweat.”



Kevin Henkes is the winner of the 2005 Caldecott Medal for Kitten’s First Full Moon, published by Greenwillow Books. His acceptance speech was delivered at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago on June 26, 2005.

These negotiators are who I write and illustrate picture books *for*. They are also who I write *about*. And Kitten of course, is a child. She is myopic. She is curious. She is persistent. She wants and wants and wants. She makes mistakes. She misunderstands. She gets hurt. She is confused. She is scared. She is also a symbol, a symbol that says: childhood is anything but easy.

Another first. This time, mine. My first trip to New York City. I was Kitten, and Greenwillow Books was the moon.

It was twenty-five years ago next month that I, at age nineteen, flew from Wisconsin to New York in search of a publisher. I was armed with a map of Manhattan (photocopied from a book at my local library), three portfolios filled with what I thought was my best artwork, a dummy for what would become my first picture book, and a list of my ten favorite publishers. Greenwillow Books was my first choice, my number one.

Just to make sure that I wouldn't be late, I arrived at 105 Madison Avenue, Greenwillow's then-home, about an hour before my morning appointment with Susan Hirschman.

I don't really remember Susan looking at my work, although I know she did. Mostly I remember talking about favorite books, many of which we agreed on. And I remember Susan asking, "How old are you? Where are you staying? Why did your mother let you come?" (I think she thought I was twelve.)

Then Susan asked where I was going for my next appointment, and when I told her, she said, "We'll just have to take you before they do. Let's call your mother and tell her we're going to publish your book."

The moon, a bowl of milk—call it what you will, I'd found it. And so I was taken

in by the Greenwillow family—my only publisher in twenty-five years. I walked about a foot above the ground for the rest of my stay in New York.

I suppose you could say that, like Kitten, I was naive. Remember, I was nineteen. I truly thought I would go to New York and come home with a contract for a book. That I did so is a miracle. And I will be grateful to Susan forever for that. Would I have the same confidence now, at age forty-four? I doubt it.



During my early Greenwillow years, I'd travel to New York once or twice a year, usually for a week. Susan would often find an empty office in which I'd write. Some of my early books were composed and polished in New York. If I happened to be in town when my art director, Ava Weiss, was going to press nearby, she'd take me with her. Ada Shearon was managing editor, and Libby Shub was senior editor. I learned so much from these four women about all aspects of American trade publishing for children. I was hungry and they were willing to share what they knew.

The Greenwillow staff changed very little over the years—one of the many things

I love about Greenwillow. It truly has a family feel to it. Phyllis Larkin joined Greenwillow during what I call my "middle Greenwillow years." And now, of course, Susan, Ava, and Phyllis have retired, and Virginia Duncan is the publisher and also my editor.

I think of *Kitten's First Full Moon* as a bridge book, a link from Greenwillow before to Greenwillow now. *Kitten* began with Susan and Ava, but by the time I finished it, I was working with Virginia and my new art director, Paul Zakris.

The influence of all four of them is surely present. The book wouldn't exist without Susan and Ava, and it wouldn't be the book it is without Virginia and Paul.

Books have many beginnings; sometimes they're difficult to pinpoint. But I know this: I've always been drawn to picture books for the youngest child. I love their simplicity and their poetic nature. When I became a parent, this attraction intensified, and so I tried my hand at creating board books. I also became interested in simple concept books and tried without success to write one. One failed attempt was all about circles—a ball, a bowl, a button, a plate, a marble.

One of the lines read: "The cat thought the moon was a bowl of milk." The book idea didn't work, but I liked this line and it stuck with me. Over time—several years—the line expanded and finally became the words for *Kitten's First Full Moon*.

As I was rereading my son's and daughter's scrapbooks to prepare this speech, I stumbled upon what I think might be another link to how *Kitten* began. The entry that made me pause was in my son's scrapbook, describing his first rainbow. This is what I wrote: "There was a huge rainstorm today . . . You watched from the window. Soon, the sun broke through the clouds and we all went out to look at a magnificent rainbow—your

first! It was a double rainbow—one arc curving over the other. I wonder what you must think of it—colors in the sky that aren't usually there."

Obviously, a rainbow is not the same as light reflected off the moon, but a few key elements are similar to those in the book: a very young child, a natural phenomenon, the sky. But most important and interesting is my comment at the end of the entry: "I wonder what you must think of it—colors in the sky that aren't usually there." It's this kind of musing that allows a writer to see things differently, to see things the way a child might—to see, perhaps, the moon as a bowl of milk.

From the start I pictured this book with black-and-white illustrations, bold sans serif type, a square trim size, and soft, creamy paper. I love to use color—even bright color—in most of my picture books, but for this book color seemed unnecessary. I thought that by keeping everything as simple and spare as possible, a better, tighter, more complete book would result. I liked the idea of having a white moon, a white cat, and a white bowl of milk surrounded by the black night.

When I draw, I usually use a crow-quill pen, which makes a rather thin line. This time I wanted a much thicker line, and I wanted the line to vary in thickness, so I drew with a brush—a technique I'd never used in any of my other books. This allowed me a freedom I'd not previously experienced while doing finished art. I'd been used to scratching away for hours making small marks. With a brush I could make broad strokes and long continuous lines. I could define shapes with a single motion.

The art was prepared using black gouache for the line and black and gray colored pencils. But the book was printed in four colors on a full-color press. This gave the illustrations a richness and depth they wouldn't have had if the book had been printed with black ink only.

Although the finished art is very dissimilar to hers, I thought of *Kitten's First Full Moon* as a sort of tribute to Clare Turlay Newberry all the while I worked on it.

The black-and-white illustrations of cats in her books, including *Mittens*, *Pandora*, and *Marshmallow*, are masterful. I've always admired them. And although she isn't given a name other than Kitten, I secretly think of my heroine as Clare.

I also admire the work of Jean Charlot. His illustrations for Margaret Wise Brown's *A Child's Good Night Book* and *Two Little Trains* are some of my favorites in any children's books. His line work is simple, direct, and, in my mind, perfect. I am struck by his ability to capture

I suppose you could say that, like Kitten, I was naive. Remember, I was nineteen. I truly thought I would go to New York and come home with a contract for a book. That I did so is a miracle.

the essence of something beautifully, without one bit of excess. That's what I strove for in *Kitten*.

And, of course, I was thinking of the great Wanda Gág.

Here's another first. 1985. My first ALA. Coincidentally, the first ALA Annual Conference I attended was in Chicago, twenty years ago. My in-laws lived in the Chicago area, so Susan asked if my wife, Laura, and I would like to go to the Newbery-Caldecott Banquet. Laura and I sat at a table with librarians, most of whom were from Kansas, if I recall correctly. None were children's librarians. They were adult card catalogers (perhaps there's a new term now). I had published only four books at the time, each of which had sold about a hundred copies (half to my mother), and no one at the table had heard of me or my books. After the speeches were over and people were rising to leave, one of the women pulled a catalog card out of her purse and asked me to sign it. She had an open face and a kind smile. I did as she requested. And as we parted, she said, "Who knows, maybe one day you'll be up there winning a medal."

For making exactly that happen, my deepest heartfelt thanks to Betsy Hearne and the 2005 Caldecott committee. I

cannot adequately express how much this honor means to me.

Thanks, also, to my parents and siblings, who were there for my "firsts"; to my other family, the Dronzeks; to all my friends at HarperCollins; to everyone from my Greenwillow past; to everyone at Greenwillow present, especially Virginia; to Will and Clara; and to Laura, my first, last, and everything in between.

Thanks to the librarians and members of the American Library Association—all

of you who have understood and supported me and my books all these years. Ginny Moore Kruse and the late Gertrude Herman were there for me from the start. I had intended to name more names, but if I did, we'd be here until tomorrow. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

And, last and most, to Susan—you gave me my work life and so much more.

From "firsts" to last—one last story.

A young man who works in the art department at Greenwillow gave a copy of *Kitten's First Full Moon* to his two-year-old niece when the book was first published. I'm told that the little girl loves the book so much that, over time, she's licked a hole in the page that shows a triumphant Kitten lapping up milk after her journey.

I've rarely been paid so high a compliment. Except for tonight—another first for me, to have a book of mine honored with the Caldecott Medal. I feel as if I've come home to a bowl of milk as big as the moon.

And there really is only one thing more to say: "What a night!" 🐾

Wilder Medal Acceptance

Laurence Yep

First, before I say anything else, I want to thank my wife, Joanne Ryder, because I wouldn't be here tonight without her guidance and support. She was the one who first asked me to write for children and then made sure that my writing kept to a high standard. Even when I decided to concentrate on my writing instead of accepting a tenured professorship at a university (along with a beachfront condo), she did not argue. She simply said it was my decision to make.

I also want to thank the American Library Association, which has been so generous to me in the past. When I work in the solitude of my study, I can never tell how people are going to react to what I've written. Each Newbery Honor has been a surprise, and this award was an even greater one. I never expected to be in such company as the previous winners

my way to give a speech at UC–Davis, so the news reached me belatedly, and it was only later, as I sat on the train en route to the university, that the news finally had a chance to sink in. I want to assure the committee members that even though I didn't get a chance to speak to all of them, I felt just as much excitement and pleasure as if I had found out immediately, and it was only because we were in a crowded train car that my wife and I had to restrain our outward celebration.

However, Joanne and I did say to each other that we have taken a strange, wonderful journey together, and there have been so many others besides her who have helped me along that path that I can't name them all in the short time given me. Over the years, I have worked with so many marvelous people at HarperCollins, Putnam, Scholastic, and Hyperion. But I need to single out three of them: Charlotte Zolotow, Toni Markiet, and Phoebe Yeh. Thank you for putting up with me all these years. I also want to thank two people from Harper who are present with us only in spirit: Frank Scioscia, who taught me how to tie a windsor knot at my first ALA (up until then I'd always worn clip-ons), and, of course, Bill Morris, who did so much for both writers and librarians.

My paternal grandfather, Lung—or Dragon, as his name means in English—would have been amazed to see his grandson speaking to so many people tonight. He was a humble man who, all his life, cleaned people's houses and cooked their meals, and his ambition was to have his children lead better lives. My father was well on his way to achieving my grandfather's dream when the Depression hit and my grandfather lost all his hard-earned savings.

My father had to drop out of college and was reduced to menial work, including picking fruit. But as he gathered peaches from the trees with aching arms, he promised himself that his sons would get the education he never had. He and my mother taught me to work hard, by word and by example, and my parents made many sacrifices to put my brother and me through school so we both could receive our doctorates.

of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal, and I especially want to thank the committee for including me in that illustrious group.

I'm afraid that I missed the initial call from Janice Del Negro and her committee because I wasn't at home. I was on



Laurence Yep is the winner of the 2005 Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal. His acceptance speech was delivered at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago on June 26, 2005.

And so tonight, through your kindness, you've let me live out something beyond the wildest dreams of my grandfather and parents.

I grew up in an African American neighborhood and went to school in Chinatown, so my whole life has been a process of trying to understand my own place in America as well as the place of my family; but in the late sixties, when I first began searching for answers, there were only a handful of Chinese American writers, no Asian American studies programs, and one single Chinese American history textbook. I quite literally had no map for where I was, where I had been, or what lay ahead of me in that unknown territory.

However, as landmarks for my journey I had my memories of Chinatown and the stories of people like my paternal grandfather and his friends in Chinatown, my paternal grandmother in China, and my maternal grandparents in West Virginia.

And they have led me along two parallel paths. One has been the historical research that became the basis for the novels *Dragonwings* and *Dragon's Gate*. But these novels were never meant to stand alone. The Chinatown that I knew as a child was small and intimate, where everyone knew one another, and it was the same way with the Chinatown that I created in my imagination. The characters from *Dragonwings* and *Dragon's Gate* introduced me to their friends and family, and their stories have grown into the Golden Mountain Chronicles—the record of seven generations of Chinese Americans and their adventures through 150 years of American history. America changed the first Chinese who came here as much as they changed their new country; and America has continued transforming their descendants in ways that I'm still trying to comprehend. And along the way, I have encountered true stories buried by time that were real treasures. A cook in a Montana stagecoach station

may turn out to be a circus juggler. A Chinese American grocer may once have been a professional basketball player.

However, Chinatown is full not only of history but of legends, and I could not understand Chinese American history without understanding the myths that shape and continue to shape a people. So my other path has taken me into a mythology in which four thousand years

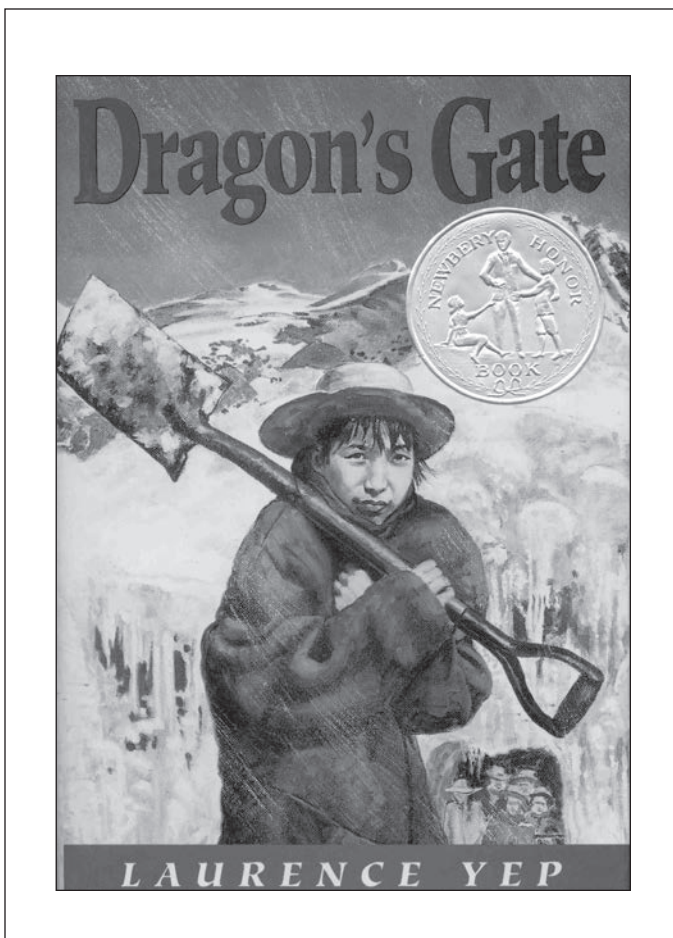
in China who are both more noble than humans but also more arrogant, and who, when I put them into books such as the *Dragon of the Lost Sea* series, have always taken me where they want to go rather than where I tell them to.

But the magical, shape-shifting tigers of Chinese legend have also fascinated me; for these tigers are not only almost as deadly and powerful as dragons but also more accessible, willing to live among humans with whom they can form bonds that reach beyond bone and blood to the very soul. And I've begun to explore that special link in a fantasy series about a tiger wizard and his troubled human companion, beginning with *The Tiger's Apprentice*.

But whether it's science fiction, fantasy, historical fiction, mysteries, or contemporary realism, I have one main theme in my writing, and I learned that lesson both in my African American neighborhood and in Chinatown: A person's true value can be measured neither by a bank account nor by titles but by that person's heart; and I have been privileged to meet people, both in person and in books, who have led lives of quiet heroism and who rose to the occasion when challenged.

Nor are my family and their friends that exceptional. The details may vary, but their stories are the stories of your own grandparents and parents who dreamt the same things for your families and then worked just as hard to make them happen.

As a person and as a writer, I have been shaped by many people, so I accept this medal not just for myself but on behalf of my wife, Joanne, my parents, my grandparents, my family, and the "oldtimers" in Chinatown. It will encourage me to continue on this strange journey into those uncharted territories of history and legend. ☺



of Chinese legends and stories lie on top of one another like the layers of an archeological dig. And just as there were gems to be found in Chinese American history, there were also treasures to be discovered in the folklore—sometimes hidden in the tiniest type in the dullest of scholarly footnotes—such as the story of the boy who escaped deadly, magical snakes not by fighting them or fleeing but by the uniquely Chinese strategy of eating them for dinner. Or the story of why human spit is the secret terror of all ghosts.

And, of course, I have learned some of the marvelous tales of proud, willful dragons

Only the Rarest Kind of Best

One View of Literary Criticism

Susan Cooper

Arguments for distinguished children's literature are numerous and range from pedagogical approaches to aesthetic development. The rationale for employing literary criticism to children's books must be placed within a framework that enables readers to differentiate between exemplary trade books and mediocre publications. "The rarest kind of best" should be the canon to which we adhere, and it should be the yardstick employed by publishers of literature for children.

I sat on the floor of Bloomin' Books in New South Wales and listened as some of Australia's premiere children's authors and illustrators asked why Americans are so afraid to endorse truth in literature. It was a legitimate question, one that both embarrassed and provoked me. I needed to investigate further.

I was aware that some American publishing companies promoted books that promised to be profitable while rejecting controversial topics. I had challenged librarians and teachers for selecting only titles void of controversy, and considered that practice a euphemism for censorship. It was, however, the idea that distinguished pieces of literature were being denied to American readers that astounded me.

These award-winning writers and artists were told that sanitized revisions were often the price for distribution in the States. Stories were shared of rejected manuscripts, diluted

language, nude children completely clothed, and scenarios deleted to meet the public's demand for "safe" books.

So it was that in the fall of 2000, I returned home armed with a suitcase of distinguished titles, many of which were unavailable to American readers, or only available through such independent publishing companies as Kane Miller. More important than the treasures I had to share was the mission I brought home—to spread the word that children in America were being deprived of picture books and stories that could change their worlds in wonderful ways. Censorship to enhance profits is as insidious as disallowing ideas because of controversy.

"Only the rarest kind of best in anything can be good enough for the young" is the canon by which literature must be critiqued.¹ Controversy for the sake of sensationalism is exploitation; the truth within a framework that defines the human experience is not. It is not a question of what is contentious, it truly is a matter of how the material is presented, and most importantly, why. Real life cannot be glossed over, even for the very young. Vehicles for the honest exploration of the journey will enable readers to arm themselves for what may loom ahead.

The ongoing question of whether the book will be profitable must be countered with the query: is it distinguished literature? This discussion will not delineate criticism by genre, explore gender roles, examine cultural or historical perspectives, or consider the psychological underpinnings of the titles in question but will tightly define distinguished literature as that which successfully expands the readers' world lens, presents characters with whom empathy is developed, establishes a sense of place that becomes a visual picture, and employs words in ways that redefine. Titles that accomplish that are extraordi-

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nary—and that is enough! It is enough to counter the censors, to fight the need for profit, and to argue for publication. Within these parameters, I have selected three titles to illustrate why open access must be available.

Exemplary Australian titles have been discussed to demonstrate that international literature of importance is too often unavailable to American Readers. The idea that provocative titles that encourage critical thinking and provide forums for open-ended discourse are barred from readers is unacceptable. The books discussed are among a plethora of international titles that are published to entice readers, but may not guarantee profits. Access to the best books from all cultures should be a guaranteed First Amendment right.

Margaret Wild shared her picture book, *Fox* (Allen and Allen, 2000), that morning in New South Wales. She discussed the difficulty she experienced in getting this riveting tale of betrayal published in the United States. There is no “Disney” promise of “happily ever after . . .” but respect for each reader to come to his or her own conclusion. The visual metaphors created by illustrator Ron Brooks make the marriage of text and illustration seamless. The text is positioned on the pages so the reader is forced to turn the book sideways and upside down, illuminating the fact that the illustrator has shown the story from multiple perspectives. *Fox* is an invitation to think.

Magpie, charred from the forest fire, could no longer fly, and therefore, has no reason to live. Dog, blind in one eye, had a mission: to revive Magpie’s will to live; he does so by becoming her “wings” as she becomes his “eye,” and they form a whole creature. Then Fox appears, viewed by Dog as a lonely figure in need of friendship and by Magpie as a predator. The sanctity of the cave provides the safety of the womb, and in that haven Magpie is safe, but Fox is on the perimeters. It is the larger world, with all of its temptations, that facilitates Magpie’s “fall.”

It is a tale of temptation and succumbing. Fox lures Magpie away from Dog by promising that he can truly provide the euphoria of flying. The seed of doubt

planted, Magpie begins to question Dog’s ability to be her wings. The third call to follow Fox and leave Dog behind proves too tempting, and Magpie “flies” through the desert on Fox’s back. Once Fox has reached the searing, barren terrain, he flicks Magpie “off his back as he would a flea,” and the enormity of her betrayal of Dog overwhelms Magpie. The author and illustrator leave Magpie in the desert, beginning the long journey back toward Dog. The end pages dem-

home of her childhood, and leads her into a past that reveals the secrets carefully guarded by the family matriarch, her great-aunt, Rita. Marsden establishes empathy for Winter, despite her caustic demeanor, as he allows the reader inside of her head during the search for her parents, the eviction of the exploitive caretakers, and the ultimate confrontation with the aristocratic great-aunt. The psychological landscape of Winter’s past forces the reader into an intrigu-

Real criticism . . . cannot be built around the books that are safe and marketable.

onstrate a healed terrain, and promise hope, but do not bring closure, requiring the reader to consider the options.

John Marsden’s *Winter* (Pan Macmillan, 2000) issued an invitation for the reader to join the protagonist in a journey that will answer the questions provoked by the dust cover:

For twelve years, Winter has been haunted.

Her past, her memories, her feelings will not leave her alone. And now, at sixteen, the time has come for her to act—the time has come for her to go back home.

Every journey starts with a single step. But sometimes if you want to step into the future, you must first step into the past . . .

Winter’s intrinsic journey for self parallels that of Joseph Campbell’s *Hero’s Adventure* (Doubleday, 1988); she is on a quest that ultimately leads to her “resurrection.” The passage back began with a physical trip to the homestead, the place of her birth, and the scene from which she had been removed at the age of four. The search for identity took the sixteen-year-old Winter out of the sanitized environment of distant relatives into an arena in which she would discover her history and begin her future.

Winter’s need to reconnect with her parents begins as an extrinsic return to the

ing examination of the mind’s ability to repress and, ultimately, to heal.

The language reflects that of an adolescent forced too soon into adulthood, and yet provides visual metaphors for the pain. Winter painfully pulled the deep roots of the blackberry bushes that threatened to encompass the property as she dug at the roots of her personal tragic history. Sense of place was established as descriptions of Warriewood permeated Winter’s memory and afforded the reader a sensual experience. “Flavors, smells, colors, cold food and hot food, meals and snacks and drinks . . . my mind wasn’t so much like a handful of memories as a smorgasbord.”

Winter’s journey parallels that of many adolescents as they search for an identity that has been shaped from childhood by outside influences. The tenacity with which she approaches the quest for truth provides a model of hope for readers. The route may be difficult, but it is through the journey that epiphanies occur. For Winter, it was her resurrection.

It may be necessary to establish, perhaps even defend, the need for an expanded literary canon that promotes international publications. Real criticism, which stretches the reader cognitively and affectively, occurs within the context of literary knowledge and literary standards and cannot be built around the books that are merely safe and marketable.² It is absolutely essential to afford children opportunities to vicariously experience life

through the pages of exemplary stories. The plight of a four-year-old orphan in rural Australia in *Winter* will assist in the development of compassion and empathy. The propensity to yield to temptation may be reconsidered after reading *Fox*.

The arguments for quality literature are numerous and the continuum may embody points as separate as rudimentary educational tools to aesthetics. It

Censorship to enhance profits is as insidious as disallowing ideas because of controversy.

is not a case for the cognitive versus the affective; good literature enhances academic performance *and* the quality of life. Truly powerful prose offers the reader an enriched vocabulary, an intertextual knowledge base, alternative lives, unexplored worlds, and the aesthetic joy of reveling in something rare but magical.³ Well-written books have the ability to change lives in positive ways, to enlarge the readers' understandings of self and others in ways that break down artificial boundaries, and enable the participants to reach out one to another.

Good books have ideas that extend beyond the theme and story.⁴ Goforth argues that children's literature should have the same literary merit expected of adult literature because quality writing for children authentically and imaginatively expresses thoughts, emotions, experiences, and information in such a manner as to stimulate the intellect.⁵

"When an event is reshaped through literature, it may stimulate action, it may make sense of the experience; the experience often becomes more poignant in the reshaping."⁶ In *Way Home* by Libby Hathorn (Random House, 1994), Shane's crumpled life becomes evident as the reader encounters end pages of furrowed paper. The text—white words transposed on black paper with ripped edges—provides an ominous overtone to the story. A stray kitten, rescued by Shane, is named and renamed as the boy and the tiny feline encounter life on the streets. The cat with no name

becomes Scaredy-cat, Wildcat, Spitfire, Kitten Number One, Bestcat, Catlegs, Cat, Kittycat, Whiskettes, Skinny Minny, Upcat, Blackeyes, Pussycat, Crazycat, Catseyes, Cat Number One, Noname, and ultimately, Mycat. The importance of naming takes on significance as the kitten's title changes with the action. The lens through which the reader sees Shane provides a window into his need for love. The cardboard box that pro-

vides security is deemed home, and the kitten is christened Mycat upon arrival. Hathorn and illustrator Gregory Rogers have given the reader a disturbing look at homelessness through the experiences of a young boy, and his family: a stray kitten. *Way Home* is a call for action because Shane is all children, and the urban area is any place in the world. The message is one that makes the reader vulnerable, empathetic, and hopefully spurred to action.

The single most important attribute of distinguished literature is the ability to develop empathy within the reader.⁷ *Fox*, *Winter*, and *Way Home* succeed in meeting this criterion. Literature is consoling even when it tells the darkest truth.⁸ Each of the discussed titles tells a darkest truth. Thus the question should never be whether to provide outstanding trade books for children, but why anything less would be considered.

The aesthetic joy of language and illustration requires no pedagogical rationale; offering readers the contagious pleasure good books afford needs no further explanation. It is through exposure to "the rarest kind of best" that readers develop standards.⁹

Providing exemplars is essential as readers strive to build their personal canons; we are all critics, for every time we interact with print we pass judgment.¹⁰

Exposure to distinguished literature enables the critic to establish a viable

yardstick. The characters we meet and often befriend through the pages of story are gifts, enriching our lives; the settings are their invitations into unexplored eras or cultures creating new lenses. It may be a journey to medieval England (*Crispin: The Cross of Lead*, Hyperion, 2002), Zimbabwe in 2194 (*A Girl Named Disaster*, Orchard, 1996), or the hills of Appalachia in the twentieth century (*Soda Jerk*, Orchard, 1990), but the readers' ability to accept the invitations will be determined to some extent by the believability factor. The characters and their dilemmas must engage the reader; the locale must draw the participant into the world of story.

Those who have accepted the task and joy of sharing children's literature must consider what it means when children interact with dumbed-down stories. The core of quality literature embodies these universal truths:

- You can never get without giving.
- Through the quest, the protagonists learn their true destinies and missions.
- Any great gift or power or talent is a burden that must be developed.
- Those who seek to find honor will triumph, no matter what the outcome of the test.
- Stories should encourage children to make their own choices, even if imperfect.¹¹

Successful art takes us away from our current world to levels of understanding deeper and wider than our limited lives. The palette may be the pages of a novel, the lines of a poem, or the visual extension of prose and poetry. Children around the world deserve to vicariously view other cultures from the pens and palettes of those reflecting their cultures. Sanitized, watered-down versions of genuine cultural mirrors thwart growth and hinder joy. ✎

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4. Send photos, captions, and your contact information to editor Sharon Korbeck Verbeten at 820 Spooner Ct., De Pere, WI 54115. Questions can be e-mailed to toylady@athenet.net.



Dr. Katherine Schneider

Book Award Patron Tells Her Compelling Story

Sharon Korbeck Verbeten

ALA's Schneider Family Book Award honors an author or illustrator for a book that embodies an artistic expression of the disability experience for child and adolescent audiences. An award recipient is selected in three categories: young children (age 0–10), middle school (age 11–13), and teens (age 13–18). Each recipient receives \$5,000. To nominate titles, e-mail schneider@ala.org.

Dr. Katherine Schneider, for whom the Schneider Family Book Award is named, has been a patron of the Library of Congress' National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped for forty-five years. She is a senior psychologist and coordinator of training at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire Counseling Service.

Schneider started receiving Braille books from the Library of Congress when she was nine and talking books soon after that. "I spent many happy summer afternoons lying in my room reading classics like *Little Women*." However, since popular books like Nancy Drew mysteries

and comic books were not available in Braille, she could only wonder "what the other kids were talking about in these realms."

An avid book-lover ever since, she describes librarians as "superheroes," not only for sending her Braille and recorded books, but also for steering her to information she longed to discover. She read, for example, most of the *World Book Encyclopedia* when it was first published in Braille in 1959. "I read most of it, thinking I'd know as much as librarians assuming they knew everything in every book they had," Schneider said. She also joined a teen book discussion group at the library, even though most of the books being discussed were too current to have

been converted to Braille or recorded. Still, for Schneider, "just being around book readers was exciting."

Technological advances have been a boon for her—as for others—albeit with some caveats. For example, she leapt at the chance to be one of the first testers of scanners when they were initially developed in the mid-1970s to turn printed words into speech. At that time, she recalls, a scanner "was as big as a desk, very temperature-sensitive, and had a machine voice with a Swedish accent" that was hard to decipher.

"There's a trade-off for being able to read any book I want before it comes out in Braille or on tape. I have to scan it page by page and listen to it in machine-speak. For poetry or books with a lot of dialect or foreign words, it isn't worth it. A human reader is far preferable. It's like the difference between taking a vitamin C pill and enjoying a glass of freshly squeezed orange juice. The vitamin content may be the same but the experience is not."

Despite her incessant quest for knowledge, Schneider is conscious of big gaps in her base of incidental information, such as the color of a ruby (a question that appeared on some intelligence tests she took in the past). She also feels behind on product information touted by advertisements. Braille magazines don't carry ads, public radio and television stations (her

2004 Winners

Young children: Glenna Lang, *Looking Out for Sarah*, illus. (Charlesbridge Publishing).

Middle school: Wendy Mass, *A Mango Shaped Space*, (Little, Brown).

Teens: Andrew Clements, *Things Not Seen* (Philomel Books).

2005 Winners

Young children: Diane Gonzales Bertrand, author, and Robert L. Sweetland, illustrator, *My Pal, Victor* (Raven Tree Press).

Middle school: Pam Muñoz Ryan, *Becoming Naomi León* (Scholastic).

Teens: Samantha Abeel, *My Thirteenth Winter: A Memoir* (Orchard)

principal media sources) advertise very little, and her talking screen reader can't decipher Internet ads for the most part.

Similarly, she depends on sighted people's opinions when it comes to matching colors, choosing a style of lamp, and "knowing how beautiful my seeing-eye dog is."

Occasionally a picture can be worth more than a thousand words, she acknowledges. For example, when searching the Internet for information about cats to help her goddaughter with a report, she somehow got into a pornographic site. A photo with the title "Hot Kitty" quickly let her know this site was not one she was seeking—and left her chuckling about "an advantage of being blind, not having to deal with those images."

Schneider wants sighted persons to share their perceptions of visual beauty with her. Her advice? "When a blind friend comes to visit, find beauty you can both enjoy. Does your town have a rose garden, a symphony, a farmer's market, a bookstore, or a library with a good collection of books on tape? Beauty is even better when it's shared." ☺

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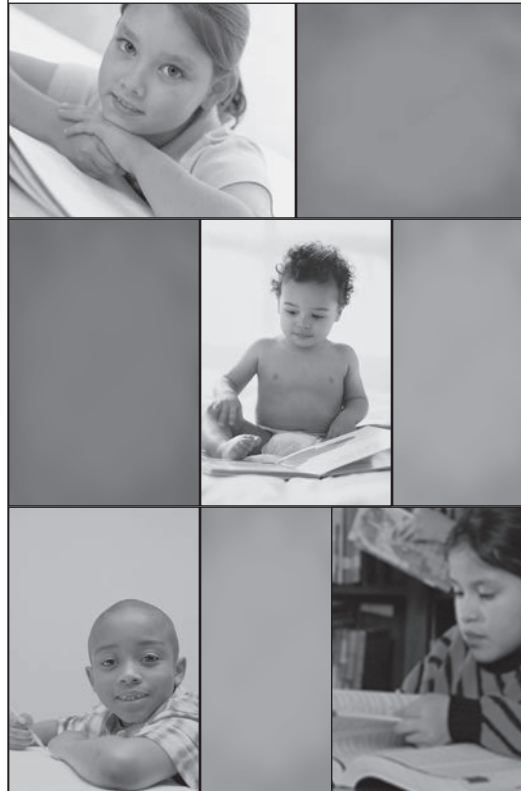
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Information Needs

Learning More about What Kids Want, Need, and Expect from Research

Andrew Kenneth Shenton and Pat Dixon

This article is intended to complement a paper that previously appeared in this journal ("Just What Do They Want? Just What Do They Need? A Study of the Informational Needs of Children, Children and Libraries, Summer/Fall 2003). It explores the information needed by young children and teenagers in their everyday lives. The focus is not the subjects of the information, nor the purposes for which it is required—both of which have been commonly investigated in previous need typologies—but other situational factors that must be appreciated if an adequate understanding of youngsters' needs is to be gained.

The criteria discussed emerged from research undertaken in England with four- to eighteen-year-olds. The situational factors identified may be grouped into five categories: those pertaining to the stimulus that has given rise to the need, those relating either to the manner in which the need develops or to its time-scale, those concerning the nature of the information itself desired by the individual, those associated with the user's situation, and, finally, those involving the end product for which the information is required. The article closes by presenting general conclusions and implications for practice.

Existing typologies of the information needs of youngsters developed by Minudri, Gratch, Walter, Latrobe and Havener, and Shenton and Dixon tend to devote particular attention to the purposes for which information is required and to the subjects of that information.¹ The former frequently provide the basis of the main divisions, and the latter are discussed to clarify the scope of each category. Coverage of further issues that should be appreciated in order to understand these needs in more detail is usually lacking. Indeed, in the late 1980s, the DOMensions Consulting Party Ltd. commented that the literature was, for the most part, limited to listing "general areas in which young people reportedly need or require information."² More recently, however, the inadequacy of such an approach has been recognized. Choo writes that experiences giving rise to information needs include elements that relate not only to subject matter but also to situational conditions and should be considered.³ Moreover, Nicholas's eleven "major characteristics of information need" are representations of these situational issues.⁴

The intention of this paper is to examine such variables within the context of the needs experienced by the youngsters taking part in an empirical research project, thereby complementing the typology of information needs that has already been



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presented by the authors and which was itself largely centered on the purposes and subjects of the information required by the participants.

Aims, the sample, and the methods employed

The results discussed in this article emerged from a qualitative, British Academy-funded Ph.D. study that explored the information universes of young people. Insight into the situational factors pertaining to their information needs was gained by investigating the ideas of youngsters as they expressed them. Informants were drawn from six schools in a small town on England's Northeast coast. Three were first schools (for children from four to nine years of age), two middle schools (for nine- to thirteen-year-olds) and one high school (for youngsters between thirteen and eighteen). In each organization, youngsters from one form in each year group contributed data. The form sampled and the individual pupils approached within that class were chosen at random. Each form teacher verified that the sample taken from his or her class embraced a wide range of ability. In total, 188 pupils from fourteen year groups were involved. Data was collected via twelve focus groups and 121 individual interviews conducted during the 1999–2000 academic year. Each informant was asked the following:

Think of a time recently when you needed help, when you needed to decide what to do, when you were worried about something or when you needed to find something out or learn something, either for school or your own interest. It might've been at home, at school, or anywhere else. Could you tell me about what you remember of that time?

This approach was based on a strategy devised by Dervin et al. for their study of the information needs of Seattle residents.⁵ After providing stories relating to the needs they had experienced, informants were asked to describe the action they had taken in response. Each dialogue was tape-recorded, and verbatim transcripts were prepared soon after its completion.

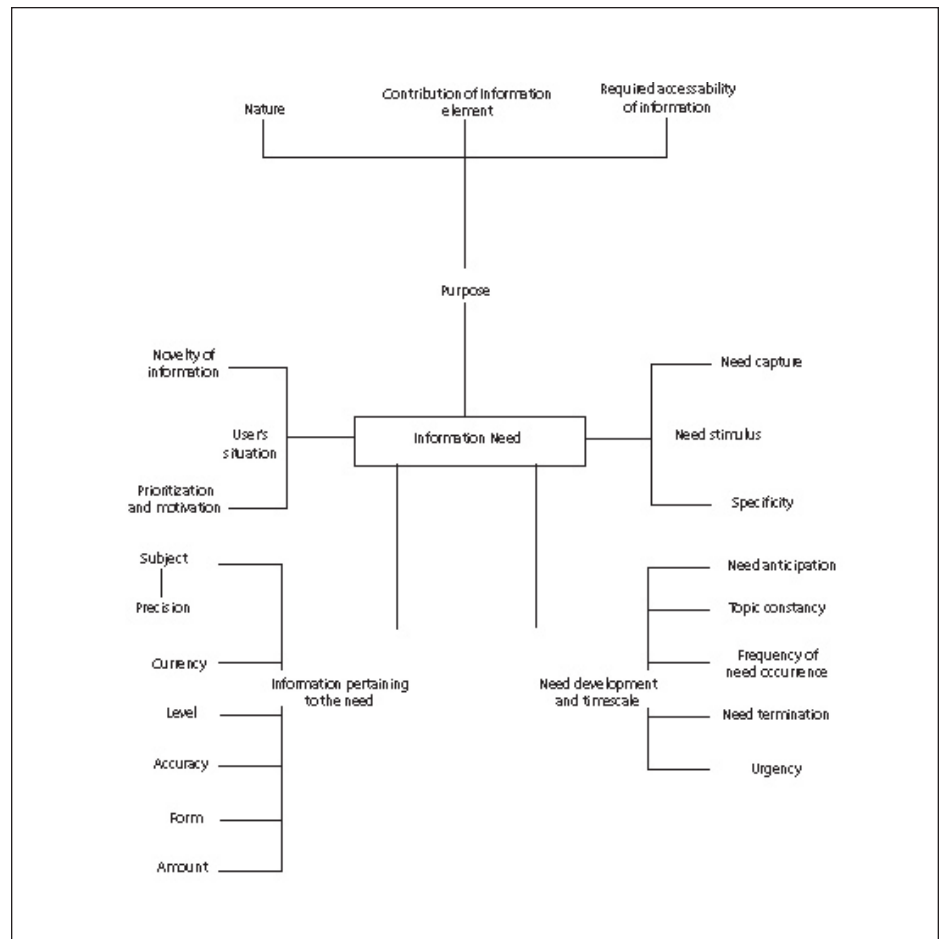


Figure 1. Visual Representation of Identified Need Variables

Although individual interviews and focus groups were the principal methods of data gathering, the data contributed by the youngsters was verified against documentary sources where possible. In particular, data was triangulated against internal school documents and England's national curriculum requirements.⁶ Ultimately, data was coded inductively using the constant comparative method of Glaser and Strauss.⁷

Conceptual boundaries of the project

For the purposes of this study, an information need was considered to be the desire or necessity to acquire the intellectual material required by a person to ease, resolve, or otherwise address a situation arising in his or her life. In accordance with widespread assumptions among writers and researchers involved in library and information science, information was perceived to include facts, interpretations, advice, and opinions. Unlike some authors, however, the

researchers considered "information need" to embrace needs and wants alike, partly because to concentrate exclusively on what the investigators might consider "necessary information" would involve the introduction of a judgmental approach that seemed incompatible with the aim of examining information needs from the youngsters' own perspectives. It may also be argued that because a researcher cannot experience the emotions and thoughts of an informant, the making of such distinctions is, as Line implies, virtually impossible.⁸ Only those needs that the study participants actually felt were explored within the project. Needs that were preempted by teachers, who provided information in advance of such feelings emerging were beyond the scope of the work.

Discussion of findings

Broadly, the situational factors identified in the study relate to the need stimulus, the development and timescale of the

need itself, the information that was sought, the user's situation, and the nature of the end product for which the information was required. These areas are shown in figure 1. The principal aim of this illustration is to represent the variables associated with information needs addressed in this paper. To ensure greater completeness and to place them in a broader context, however, the additional criteria of the subject of the information required and the general purpose for which it might be needed are also shown. As explained previously, these issues formed the basis of the typology of information need outlined in a previous paper in this journal.

The need stimulus

Need capture

Many youngsters sought subject information in response to a desire or awareness within their heads that such material was necessary. Others, especially those pursuing information for school, were guided by documentary material, such as an assignment brief, which provided a less subjective construct of the need.

Specificity

This may be understood on a scale from high to low. The former end encompasses situations where information was required for producing a school assignment, solving a problem, or making a decision. "Low specificity" may apply in circumstances where youngsters sought information simply because of a passing, personal interest in a subject. Situations within the middle ground include those in which pupils, realizing the need to develop knowledge of a topic for their studies at school, undertook background reading during their course without purposely revising for an exam.

Need development and timescale

Need anticipation

Many youngsters were able to define their needs before information-seeking action, and their searching concentrated entirely on these areas. Some began with

a rough idea of the need topic, but it was only with time that more detail about it became known to them. Sometimes this was achieved through a photograph. Olivia (age eight) required more information relating to a Roman coin, which she photographed, and Joshua (age eight), a keen birdwatcher, took pictures of the creatures as he observed them so he could find out more about them. In each case the photograph, when developed, provided further information about the subject of the need.

For other informants, needs relating to certain aspects of the overall subject emerged during the seeking process. This was often the case when a detailed school assignment was being prepared. Needs of a broad nature were initially identified but, when work was undertaken, more specialized information on particular aspects was required. Harrison (age seventeen) explained how, while writing an essay on Nazi Germany, he eventually looked for information specifically on areas "that hadn't been covered particularly well" in sources he consulted and the importance of which he now realized.

Comparisons may be drawn between the way in which some youngsters gradually decided that they needed more material on matters that they were coming to believe were integral to their main area of concern and Belkin's Anomalous States of Knowledge (ASK) hypothesis with regard to adult information seekers.⁹ Belkin postulates that, in contemplating a problem (which, in this case, may be a homework assignment), an individual recognizes that his or her existing knowledge (or here the information that has already been retrieved) is insufficient to provide a solution. In the context of the study, the youngster could not at this point complete his or her work satisfactorily. The inadequacy, according to Belkin, may take many forms, including gaps, lacks, uncertainty, or incoherence. The person seeks information in order to rectify such an anomaly and solve the problem. Initially, he or she may struggle to articulate precisely the information that is required. As Belkin, Oddy, and Brooks write, it is common for an individual not to know in advance what is appropriate for his or her purpose, since

it is the inquirer's very lack of knowledge that has prompted action.¹⁰ During the search, however, the information gathered causes the individual's state of knowledge to change and, increasingly, a clearer grasp of what is required is developed.

Topic constancy

When a particular need emerged in relation to schoolwork, most youngsters sought information solely on the subject nominated by either themselves or their teachers at the outset of the work, and their subsequent information-seeking did not deviate from the overall area. A few, however, recalled occasions when the whole topic shifted during the course of their assignment work. Usually such "topic reorientation" resulted from the youngsters' redefining the area of need after early information-seeking difficulties. Kirsty (age thirteen) first sought information on "poltergeists," but after finding little information on the topic, considered it too restrictive and broadened it to "ghosts." This runs contrary to what Irving considers to be the typical problem for youngsters engaged in work where they select their own topics, namely that the area initially nominated is too *broad*.¹¹

In two further cases, unforeseen events outside the youngsters' control led to "need expansion." Here the subject embraced by the need again increased beyond the person's original expectations, although not in these instances because of initial information-seeking failure. Required to produce work on the English Civil War, Tanya (age thirteen) planned to work with a partner. The pair divided the topic into areas so each person was responsible for particular aspects. But when her partner was absent from school, Tanya had little alternative but to investigate the whole topic herself. Similarly, Pamela (age thirteen) recounted how unexpected information needs arose after problems she encountered during a geography field trip. Little work had been possible during the visit because it rained much of the time. The local studies assignment that had already been set was then widened to include areas that would have been addressed in the fieldwork had this been possible.

After her difficulties in finding information on poltergeists, Kirsty encountered a similar problem when investigating a topic relating to outer space. Here, however, she changed the subject considerably, rather than merely widening it. Kirsty first selected “the moon” for scrutiny, then shifted toward “rockets and things that people use to go into space” because most of the information she discovered pertained to these areas rather than the moon. Emily (age sixteen) took similar action. Her original topic was witchcraft, but noting that more material seemed to be devoted to witch hunts, she, too, changed her area.

The only problem of this kind that emerged in the context of interest-driven needs was experienced by Hilary (age eleven). She admitted that her “real interest” was in the work of a veterinarian but, as her CD-ROMs at home did not provide such information, her computer-based searches concentrated on animals in general. Needs of this type, where what is actually desired is reshaped by youngsters in accordance with their perception of what is available, may be understood as a form of the “compromised need” described by Taylor.¹² Eastman, Friel, and Lyons et al. have also found evidence of “topic reorientation.”¹³

Frequency of need occurrence

On the basis of how often particular needs arose, three variations of need were detected:

- *Isolated.* Many needs, especially those relating to advice, were of this type, with information required on a single occasion, often for a highly particular purpose;
- *Ongoing.* Information was required on the same overall subject progressively over time. Most needs of this type related to support for skill development, subject information for school, or matters of personal interest, and involved requirements for information either of increasing detail or on different aspects of a general topic; and
- *Repeating.* This category is reminiscent of the ongoing type, with infor-

mation required over a sustained length of time although it differs in that the same need emerges in bursts in response to events that recur. Examples include sports results (Victor [age seven], Antony [age eighteen]) and team news in soccer (Bob [age fourteen]).

Need termination

In instances in which the need ceased, three patterns emerged:

- *Termination on action.* The need continued until it was satisfied by effective information-seeking activity and resolution of the situation triggering the need;
- *Termination on event.* The need disappeared with a particular development in the life of the youngster that was outside his or her control. For school-required information, this might be the submission date for an assignment; in the case of advice, the time at which a decision had to be made; or with effective support, the passing of an event causing anxiety. For some informants, the stage of termination was not clear-cut. Penelope (age seven) admitted being shy and sought advice on “how to make friends at school.” Only gradually, as youngsters made friends with her, did her need dissipate;
- *Termination on interest depletion.* Where information was required on an ongoing basis for a personal interest, the need often continued until the individual’s enthusiasm for the subject waned. Piers (age ten) recognized that his interests changed, and drew attention to how his information-seeking was directed towards “anything that was interesting at the time,” as well as other subjects he considered long-term interests. In another reference to interest depletion, Zoe (age fourteen) described going to an afterschool club until its subject no longer appealed to her. In her own words, “It just became boring.”

Agosto isolates a number of factors that may lead to the termination of information-seeking action in relation to the use

of the Web.¹⁴ It must be stressed that her territory is slightly different from the concern here since ending information-seeking action is not entirely the same as the termination of an information need. Nevertheless, Agosto, too, notes how information-seeking may cease when action has resulted in a satisfactory outcome. She also highlights the effects of “physical discomfort associated with excessive computer use,” “boredom onset,” the setting of time limits for information-seeking action, repetition of information and “information snowballing.”¹⁵

Urgency

This issue was highlighted by two informants who had two very different types of information need. Ross (age fifteen) confirmed his choice of topic for an English talk the day before it was due and thus required his information for the following day. Although many instances were reported in which youngsters were working with school deadlines, this was the only case where it was specifically stated that the information was needed *urgently*. The second situation involved the need for advice to inform a decision that had to be made “on the spot.” Cathy (age eleven) said her veterinarian asked if she should have her terminally ill rabbit “put to sleep,” so she required guidance from her mother but “I could only talk for a few minutes because I needed to tell her [the vet] there and then.”

Information pertaining to the need

Precision

The specificity of the information required may, once more, be understood as a continuum. At one extreme, youngsters sought highly focused information relating to quick reference questions, like the query of Ian (age nine): “How many stars are there in the galaxy?” General information pertaining to topics may be seen as lying at the opposing end. In one such case Tessa (age eighteen) described how she initially required information on the background of the French Revolution that would help her make sense of the actual events. This information need is comparable to the “enlightenment” type

defined by Taylor and is characteristic of the “prefocus exploration” phase within Kuhlthau’s information search process model.¹⁶ A similar continuum is presented by Armbruster and Armstrong in relation to reading goals. They identify its opposing poles as “very specific” and “very general.”¹⁷

Currency

Few youngsters specified that the information they sought should be up-to-date, and those who did make such a stipulation introduced this requirement only when the initial information they retrieved did not match their expectations. Wes (age nine) was searching for population figures for the United States and was dismayed by discovering only a 1996 estimate. Victor (age seven) expressed similar dissatisfaction when he learned that the information dealing with the television program, *Blue Peter*, provided by the BBC’s teletext service Ceefax, did not relate to the latest edition. “I get annoyed when it just talks about last week’s and doesn’t do this week’s,” he admitted. In both cases the boys assumed up-to-date information would be provided. Like many variables emerging in the project, the issue of the currency of the material required has been given little attention in most studies of young people’s information needs, but the matter is raised by Callaghan and Meyers.¹⁸ Hirsh’s study of “relevance criteria” adopted by teenage users of electronic materials also offers further insight into the importance of this factor. Hirsch explains how some of her participants selected a particular resource specifically because its material was more up-to-date than that offered elsewhere.¹⁹

By its very nature, some information desired by youngsters had to be up-to-date—the latest sports results and team news, consumer information dealing with new computer games, details of presently erupting volcanoes, current affairs, reports of innovations in information technology, and stories breaking in Germany and the financial world.

Level

This dimension embraces both conceptual complexity and (if the material is

in text form) linguistic readability. Once more, the issue emerged only when retrieved information proved unsatisfactory. Norman (age thirteen), who was interested in alternative medicine, explained how he struggled to grasp the content when his mother had shown him her college notes on the subject. He admitted, “It’s really submolecular stuff. I can only understand the basics.” Whereas Norman found his mother’s material to be too challenging conceptually, Tony (age seven) recognized certain literature devoted to a particular topic of interest to be inappropriate in its readability. Keen to learn about Newcastle United’s past soccer players, Tony realized that his father’s volumes on the subject were beyond his reading level and commented ruefully that few books on the topic seemed to be written for young children. Again, the level of information youngsters require has received scant attention in existing projects devoted to their information needs, although Minudri, Callaghan, and Fourie note its importance in terms of school-related subject information, and Lyons et al. and Wallace and Kupperman highlight it within the context of material found on the Web.²⁰

Accuracy

Only Wendy (age nine) stipulated that the information she sought must be accurate. In all other cases accuracy, like currency, seemed to be assumed. Wendy’s understanding of accuracy, however, was rudimentary. To her, information was either correct or wrong. She showed no understanding of either a middle ground or the concept of bias. Once more, the importance of accuracy as a factor in relation to the information needs of youngsters has scarcely been addressed in past work.

Form

Few youngsters specified that the desired information should take a particular form but where such a stipulation was made, pictures were usually indicated. Unless otherwise stated, the informants assumed that the information they found via computers and books would be textual. In some instances youngsters sought information of a certain

type in response to demands made by their teachers. Norman (age thirteen) explained how, in answering questions about Kalapalo Indians, “We had to do a page of writing and a page of diagrams for each question.” This led to Norman seeking a map that he could copy in order to “show where Brazil is.” Pupils were also instructed to obtain pictures for use in relation to subjects such as French, design technology, and art. Usually these served as stimuli for the youngsters’ own creative work. Occasionally informants undertaking topic work decided to seek illustrations of their own volition. Sasha (age nine) identified early on that a picture of a hippopotamus was a prerequisite for her study of the animal.

Where youngsters were responding to their own interests, some again determined for themselves that they needed an illustration. For several, this arose from a belief that such material provided the most appropriate form for the information they desired. Vicky (age nine) considered that the best way of learning about “how people see” would be to locate a diagram showing the process, and Rod (age eight), who wanted to know “what UFOs are like,” believed that a picture would be most useful. Others sought information not for understanding but for a future practical activity. Rick (age twelve) wanted pictures relating to the television program *Pokemon* in order to make his own Pokemon cards, whilst Kylie (age nine), a talented artist, sought pictures of animals as stimuli for her own drawing work. The importance of form as a criterion of information need is discussed by Callaghan.²¹

Amount

Believed by Callaghan and Wallace and Kupperman to be an important factor pertaining to information needs, the issue of amount needed was introduced by two informants with contrasting attitudes, both related to answering an essay question.²² Marcus (age eighteen) indicated needing “enough information to be able to answer the question properly.” His judgment of what constituted sufficient material was largely a qualitative assessment that “by going any deeper and getting any more, I’m going off the point.” Marcus’s opinion on the amount required to satisfy

his need was thus formed during interaction with sources. Several youngsters in Limberg's study took a similar approach.²³ A contrasting view, in which the amount believed necessary was driven by quantitative requirements, was held by Wayne (age eighteen), who considered that he needed "enough information to give me two thousand words," the stipulated length of his essay. Despite their differences, the attitudes of Marcus and Wayne both support Fourie's argument that the nature of the task is critical to the amount of information needed.²⁴

The user's situation

Novelty of information

Three varieties of subject information were required:

- *New.* The youngster had no preliminary knowledge of the topic and any information on it was welcomed;
- *Extension.* Informants sought more detail about areas that were familiar to them and about which they already had some information; and
- *Complementary.* Some informants identified aspect gaps in their existing information or knowledge relating to a particular area and sought to plug these.

Information of the last two types was often required by youngsters who had been given opportunities during lessons to use resources at school, such as textbooks or the Internet, or had their own class notes. The information that these youngsters obtained during their work at school, however, was insufficient to meet the requirements of their assignment. Indeed, Joy (age seventeen) asserted that work in class "only covered part of what you need" in many instances.

Prioritization and motivation

Several youngsters believed that, generically, needs of some types were more important than others. Gillian (age ten) felt needs relating to her own interest to be "less important" than those for school, and Emily (age fifteen) described how her

motivation to seek information was lower when presented with optional academic work than when the task was compulsory. Emily reported one particular occasion when she undertook optional work simply because "I had nothing better to do." Eileen (age seventeen) had a similar attitude. Nevertheless, even when work was obligatory, the motivation of some youngsters varied from task to task. Corey (age eight), for example, was less inclined to seek information for school when it was not required for written work.

The way in which Gillian categorized her information needs into those for school and those that were associated with her own purposes echoes a similar division made by Gross, who distinguishes between imposed and self-generated queries.²⁵ In the former, the inquirer acts on an imposition made by a party external to the searcher, such as a teacher who has set a homework assignment, whilst in the latter the youngster addresses his or her own concerns.

Source-dependent needs also emerged. These developed in relation to subject areas not because the youngster was especially interested in the topic or motivated by external pressure, but rather because a source known to provide information on a particular area of passing interest was readily available. Dominic (age nine) relished reading his grandmother's books on the Romans; Norman (age thirteen) enjoyed listening to his grandfather's true stories of World War II, which the old man remembered from his youth; Sandra (age eleven) was interested in following her uncle's singing career in Australia via the Internet; Kirsty (age thirteen) watched animal programs on television. The youngsters were not sufficiently enthusiastic about the subjects in any of these incidences to investigate them in additional ways and would not have sought other sources had the information not been available from their favored providers. Some information needs relating to the content of television shows emerged in response to cues during or after the program. Such information was sought through teletext in relation to cooking programs, specifically "what you need, the full recipe, and how you do it" (Victor [age seven]) and activities discussed on the children's magazine program *Blue*

Peter (Victor, again). Sometimes the need disappeared when the source ceased to be available. Zoe (age fourteen) had attended a range of afterschool clubs to increase her skills in many areas where she had a passing interest but when the clubs ceased to take place, Zoe made no attempt to look elsewhere.

The end product

Nature

Youngsters seeking subject information for school had usually been asked to produce some form of end product. Consideration of its nature leads to perhaps the most tangible answer that may be given to Choo's question, "What does your problem look like?"²⁶ He asserts that this matter must be addressed if a proper understanding of the information need is to be gained. End products took various forms, including the completion of word searches, answers to quick reference and more open-ended questions, essays, reports, portfolios, talks, role-plays, and artifacts. Usually, these products were to be submitted to the teacher by a deadline and formally assessed. An exception was the scrapbook of stories relating to Germany that was kept by Eileen (age seventeen). Although assembled on the instructions of her teacher, it served merely to increase her understanding of life in the country she was studying and was not marked.

While most youngsters seeking information out of personal interest simply wanted to know more about the subject, others prepared their own information books. During each summer holiday, Cathy (age eleven) produced a book on a particular animal, and Malcolm (age eleven) created work devoted to different countries for his own amusement. Other youngsters sought information that was necessary for another pleasurable activity. Kylie (age nine) sought artwork—she wanted pictures of animals that she would then draw.

Contribution of information element

The role of information required for a written school assignment fell into one of three categories:

- *Re-presentation.* Many first- and middle-schoolers needed information they could copy or paraphrase in order to answer given questions or write about a particular topic. Project work often involved the re-presentation of information in both textual and pictorial forms. The need for information for this purpose was rare among high-schoolers, although a few situations emerged. The scrapbook of stories about Germany kept by Eileen (age seventeen), for example, involved merely the recording of stories.
- *Use for analysis.* Many high-schoolers required information to answer essay questions dealing with cause and effect relationships or the importance of a particular factor in terms of a certain event.
- *Integration in creative writing.* In this, the least common of the three categories, youngsters were asked to write, from their own perspective, an imaginary account of an event, the detail of which was expected to have a factual basis. Here youngsters were required to “personalize” the work in the manner described by Gross.²⁷ Maureen, Linda, and Clint (all age twelve) explained how, in the “Hajj Diaries” that they were writing for religious education, they were to imagine undertaking an Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca and needed information in order to provide their account with authenticity.

This work is comparable to that of the role-play on drug usage devised by Emily (age fifteen). The storyline was again fictitious but the detail was to have a factual grounding.

Required accessibility of information

Just as the nature of the end product directly affected the use to which the information was to be put, this factor also determined the manner in which the material must be available at the ultimate point of need. Information was required for “in the head” storage when it had to be applied in tests and examinations, as well as when youngsters were looking to develop particular skills. However, in most cases where

subject information was needed for the individual’s interest or for homework, youngsters were content to find a source that provided them with the information they wanted when they desired it. No memorization was necessary.

Conclusions

It is inadequate to investigate youngsters’ information needs purely in terms of the subjects of the desired information and the purposes for which the material is required. There is an increasing realization that an array of other factors must also be considered if a more multi-dimensional picture of information needs is to be gained. The study forming the subject of this paper has revealed such variables to emerge in relation to:

- the manner in which the need is initially represented;
- the specificity of the purpose for which the information is needed;
- the extent to which youngsters can define the totality of their need before seeking information;
- the degree to which the overall topic changes during the information-seeking process;
- the frequency with which information on a particular matter is needed;
- the way the need is terminated;
- the urgency with which information is required;
- the precision of the subject on which information is desired;
- whether highly up-to-date information is necessary;
- the required information’s levels of conceptual complexity and linguistic readability;
- the degree of accuracy necessary within the information sought;
- the form the information should take;

- the amount of material that is appropriate;
- how far the information pertains to a topic entirely new to youngsters, extends what they know, or complements it by filling in blanks within their knowledge;
- the motivation of youngsters and the priority they attach to a particular need;
- the nature of the end product to be prepared;
- the contribution that the desired information makes to the end product; and
- whether the information is to be memorized or if it is sufficient simply for it to be available in a source that may be consulted on demand.

Perhaps the most striking overall pattern in these criteria lies in the way that information needs and information-seeking behavior frequently appeared to be inextricably intertwined. This was particularly evident in the phenomenon of the source-dependent need, where some information needs emerged only during information-seeking activity and how several information needs changed entirely as a result of such action. Furthermore, in some instances, it was not until initial information-seeking work resulted in information that was somehow unsuitable for the inquirers’ purposes that their true needs became apparent, especially with regard to the material’s currency and level.

Implications for practice

Not all the situational variables addressed here emerged as factors in every instance of information need described by the informants. Clearly, the initial challenge for information professionals who conduct reference interviews with youngsters lies in developing a questioning method that is not based around a series of pre-conceived areas but rather one that allows them to draw out the young patrons’ *real* concerns regarding the information they seek, beyond the obvious matters of its subject and purpose.

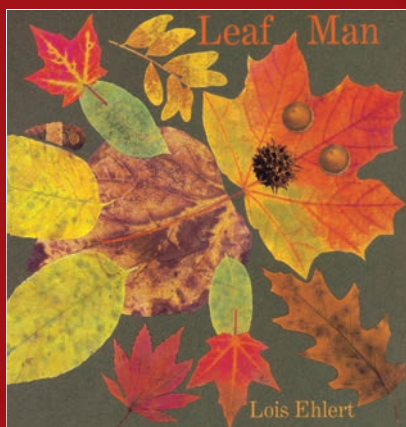
A neutral questioning strategy, reminiscent of that advocated by Dervin and Dewdney as far back as the mid-1980s, may be highly appropriate for giving reasonable ownership of the dialogue to the youngsters and enabling them to express the true characteristics of the information they want.²⁸ As Dervin and Dewdney indicate, however, once staff members gain satisfactory knowledge of the material being sought, the fact that they now know the information must satisfy several criteria means that it may be difficult or time-consuming to find, thereby placing an added burden on the professionals. Furthermore, with the findings of the study revealing that in some cases, the youngsters developed a proper appreciation of the nature of their needs only when the first material that they consulted proved to be unsatisfactory, the importance of the information professional maintaining an open dialog with the inquirer even after sources have been presented is firmly underscored. ☺

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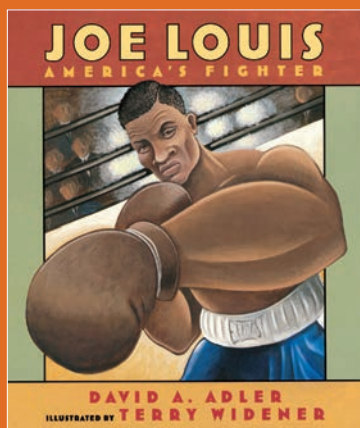
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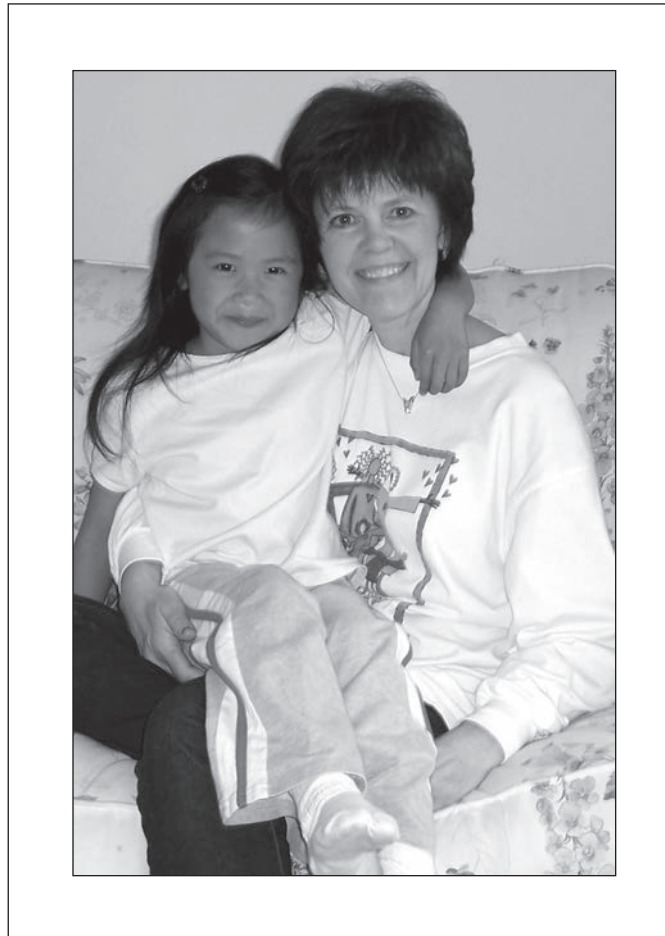
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"Forty Hundred Books"

A Single Mother's Year with the Newbery

Heather McNeil



Heather McNeil and her daughter, Jamie.

January 16, 2005

As I begin writing this article, I am looking out from my twenty-fifth floor hotel room at the night that is Boston. There are no stars, but the lights of buildings glitter, reminding me of the book that will be announced to the world tomorrow as the Newbery Award winner of 2005—*Kira-Kira* by Cynthia Kadohata.

The book is a tiny gem, filled with love and family and sparkles of humor amid grief and loss. Its brevity is a camouflage for the strength within. I think about that tiny package and compare its diminutive size to the tremendous responsibility that has been mine for a year. And I look back and reflect . . .

The Past: June 1971

The night that Betsy Byars received the Newbery Award for *Summer of the Swans*, my aunt Georgia was in the audience. She was twice the recipient of the John Cotton Dana Award and creator of The Spellspinners, a roving troupe of storytellers in Sheridan, Wyoming. She was a librarian extraordinaire. She was also my fashion idol with her silk scarves and purple accents. She was the only person I've seen reduce my mother

to helpless tears of laughter as she told tales of their childhood. She introduced me to avocados, took me on shopping trips in the ritzy Cherry Creek shops of Denver, and died much too early from cancer. But she lived long enough to know that I was on my way toward completing a master's degree in library science, so she gave me the acrylic cube of illustrations and photographs that was the table gift for each audience member at that 1971 banquet. Her eyes shone as she told me about that enchanted evening. I still have the cube.

1977

As a library science student, I began my journey through the world of Newbery books. I kept notes on 3" x 5" cards and filed them in a small gray metal box. There were so many I loved: *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH*, *King of the Wind*, *The High King*, and, of course, *A Wrinkle in Time*. There were a few that never attached to my heart, most notably *Caddie Woodlawn*. My opinion frequently shocks other readers who loved it.

Heather McNeil is Youth Services Manager at Deschutes Public Library System in Bend, Oregon.

During my twenty-something years as a children's librarian, I continued the journey of the Newbery, reading the winners and attending a few of the banquets, which are always impressive with their formal beauty and memorable speeches. I assisted many students who were assigned to "read a Newbery" in selecting the one that is most appropriate for their ages and interests, knowing that Newbery books vary widely as to their intended audience. I must also admit that I never—not once, not ever—correctly predicted the winner before it was announced. I, like many other librarians, occasionally responded with, "What were they *thinking?*" when my personal favorite failed to be selected.

I will never ask that question again.

The Present: Fall 2002

I have many library tasks on my mind when I answer the phone in my office that fall morning and hear the warm, cheery voice of MaryKay Dahlgreen, youth services consultant for the Oregon State Library. We chat about her upcoming responsibility on the 2004 Caldecott Committee . . . and then she changes my life.

"Heather, I'm on the nominating committee and want to know if you would consider running for the 2005 Newbery Committee."

Silence. In fact, from the outside, I believe it is a rather long silence. But inside my brain it is extremely noisy with all of the simultaneous and conflicting thoughts:

- Oh, my *gawd!*
- So many books, so little time!
- Wouldn't Aunt Georgia love this?
- Oh, my *gawd!*
- This is wonderful!
- This is impossible!
- Oh, my *gawd!*
- What about my daughter?

After I gasp and stutter all my reservations about being able to find the time while also working as youth services coordinator and branch comanager, plus being a single parent, MaryKay simply says, "Heather, it's the NEW-BER-Y." She carefully emphasizes each syllable of that important word, and I know exactly what she is saying to me.

"Hello! This is only the greatest honor of your library career. Are you brain-dead?"

Still I hesitate, and for one very good reason. Four years earlier, I became a middle-aged single mother when I adopted my daughter, Jamie, from

know . . ." I respond with completely professional behavior. I run screaming out of my office to announce to the world, "I'm on the Newbery Committee!" I have yet to erase that message on my telephone.

June 2003

I receive a handwritten letter from Susan Faust, the 2005 Newbery Committee chair. It's official. I'm in. This personal welcome is indicative of the great care Susan will give to all of us during our year of work together. She will prove to be an excellent communicator and an efficient leader. Above all, her skill at making each

We survive on too much junk food and not enough sleep. It is rewarding, exhausting, exhilarating, and thrilling.

Vietnam. I knew that I would have to set different priorities and limits and occasionally say no. I thought that meant giving up things such as traveling to tropical islands, dining out for long hours of wine and laughter with friends, and buying unnecessary but ever-so-adorable shoes.

But now I know the realities of parenting and making choices. When will I find time to study more than four hundred books and still find time to play with Jamie, help her with homework, attend school functions, and maintain our house? How would I balance my responsibilities? And how would I ever stay awake long enough each night to read?

Despite my concerns, I say yes.

May 1, 2003

Time passes. I convince myself that just being nominated is an honor, and if I'm not elected then I will simply breathe a sigh of relief for all the hours that won't have to be spent reading. Then one May day, I return to my office, check my voice-mail, and hear "Heather, this is Linda Mays with the Association for Library Service to Children. I am calling to let you

of us feel important and respected will gently guide us toward consensus rather than division.

July to December 2003

I spend the next several months familiarizing myself with the meticulous process that ALSC has created, as well as reading books about evaluating and reviewing children's books. I am beginning to consider how incredibly difficult it must be for fifteen people, with strong voices and opinions, to select one winner and a few honor books. I am beginning to think about where I will keep all the books. Each time I walk into a bookstore or my daughter's school library and see Newbery books on display, I glow inside with anticipation and apprehension. But I am also well aware of the fact that my daughter is at an age that requires my constant supervision, focused communication, and frequent transportation. How will I provide that while accomplishing what needs to get done for the Newbery? How will I be able to find a location or time to read without the interruptions of, "Mommy, will you fix this for me? Mommy, look at this. Mommy, watch me! Mommy, can I have a snack? Mommy, let's play." Most

importantly, how will I give her what she needs to assure her that I love her just as much *during* the Newbery as *before* the Newbery?

January 2004

The ALA Midwinter Meeting is held in warm San Diego. Unfortunately, an uncharacteristic ice storm shuts down the Portland airport for two days, and I cannot get out of Oregon. I have to miss this opportunity to meet my fellow readers and pick up galleys from publishers to get a head start. I feel I am already behind.

February 2004

The first book arrives! I look at the mailing label with my name on the first line and "Newbery Committee" on the second line. I am amazed and thrilled, and I can hardly wait for more.

March 2004

Books continue to trickle in. I eagerly welcome each one and add it to the slowly growing collection on shelves in my office. I am able to keep up with the reading, and I think, "This isn't so bad."

April 2004

The trickle is now a flood.

Books in my office, books at home.

Books with other books, and books alone.

Books where I eat, and books by my bed.

Books I enjoy, books that I dread.

Books here, books there,

Newbery books are everywhere!

And it's only April.

The other thing everywhere is a pad of sticky notes. I leave them wherever I

think I might land, book in hand. As I read I jot pages, quotes, and thoughts on the yellow squares, then type those later onto a computer template when I finish a book. The pages are then filed in a notebook, along with reviews.

But the note pads often disappear. Then I have to hunt, mumbling, "I could have sworn I left a pad by my chair . . ." I attribute their disappearance to my own tendency to be absent-minded when I am multi-multi-multitasking.

It was during the spring that I first read each of the four titles that we eventually chose to award gold and silver medals. I did not know they would be the ones, of course, but I clearly remember being swept away with Gary Schmidt's sea breeze in *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*; feeling as if I was at the Lincoln Memorial on April 9, 1939, thanks to Russell Freedman's elegant biography of Marian Anderson, *The Voice That Challenged a Nation*; and gasping with surprise when I read, "Done," the last word in Gennifer Choldenko's novel, *Al Capone Does My Shirts*. And I was haunted by the image in *Kira-Kira* of Mother and Katie carrying Lynne outside on a sheet so she could look up at the glittering stars.

Jamie turns six this month, and I knock myself out with a fairy party for seven girls that involves making wings and crowns, throwing fairy dust in the grass to make wishes, and turning each other into toads with magic wands. They have a wonderful time, I am exhausted, and there is glitter everywhere. Kira-Kira.

May 2004

The Newbery notebooks are getting fatter, and the tension is building in direct relation to the number of books I receive each day. Steve, who works in the mail-room and delivers the boxes to my office, is not always welcomed with joy.

Sometime in May my mother, who was a school librarian and also the world's most supportive and understanding mother, begins inviting Jamie over to her house, the Rose Cottage, for occasional overnight stays. Jamie sleeps in

"the magic bed" (fold-out couch), and I am given hours and hours of uninterrupted time to read books and record notes. Grandmother and granddaughter color, make paper dolls, watch movies, and create stories with My Little Ponies while I focus my thoughts and am able to read during daylight hours. It is such a gift! I am grateful for this generous seventy-nine-year-old grandmother who adores her only granddaughter. They are building memories that will never be forgotten. Whenever I return for Jamie the next day, she greets me with black sparkly eyes and an announcement of what was accomplished. "We made cookies! Are you done with the Newbery yet?"

June 2004

ALA meets in hot, humid Orlando for its Annual Conference. Thousands of librarians scatter like cockroaches, trying to find the right meeting in the right hotel. Our committee meets for a few hours to practice discussion. Susan meticulously reminds us of the criteria we are to be considering, and the air crackles with our eagerness to get started. It is a successful meeting, giving us a delicious teasing taste of what lies ahead during the true discussion in January 2005.

While I'm at the conference, my mother and a nanny care for Jamie. Each evening when I call, we play our "I love you more than . . ." game. "I love you more than dark chocolate," I begin. "I love you more than ice cream," says Jamie. "I love you more than the ocean," I respond, and she triumphantly trumps me with, "I love you more than Bobby!" I am deeply touched. Bobby is her precious, worn-out pink blanket, more holes than fibers, and I know how much it means for her to even say these words. We miss each other greatly for we are so very much each other's world.

At Annual Conference, I attend the Newbery/Caldecott Banquet. Although I have had many "wow!" moments over the past six months, this is when it really becomes, "WOW!" I listen to the gracious words from Kate DiCamillo and Mordicai Gerstein, and I fully realize that our committee, like all the others since 1922, will be making literary history when we care-

fully and wisely select the one book that is "the most distinguished contribution to children's literature of 2004." It is a magical evening, from Gerstein's lovely and whimsical programs to the beautiful gowns that shimmer in the ballroom. And I ask myself the all-important question: what will I wear for our banquet next year in Chicago?

July 2004

Jamie and I pack up our Toyota Highlander and head for Colorado, where I worked for almost twenty-five years and where we will attend the Vietnamese Heritage Camp in the Rockies. I am allowing myself a true vacation, knowing there will be no time to read. We have an absolutely wonderful time, enjoying the diverse scenery of four states, taking a side trip to the Arches National Monument and visiting all my friends and fellow storytellers. The camp is a celebration of Jamie's rich cultural heritage with other adoptive families and Vietnamese counselors. Jamie is a self-sufficient and satisfied traveler, for she has me with her 24/7. For fourteen lovely mother-daughter days, there is no Newbery.

August 2004

I return to work, still on a Rocky Mountain high. I open the door to my office; all I see are boxes. Big and heavy boxes and many large and heavy envelopes. They all have labels with "Newbery Committee" on them. I want to be thrilled; mostly I am panicked.

September 2004

Jamie begins first grade. It is a huge adjustment. She comes home each day cranky and exhausted. I am amazed at all of the social wars that are already occurring in her young life, based on the never-ending power of recess. Jamie is a shy observer, often fascinated by the outrageous behavior of the class clowns and rebels. She wants friends but is not yet secure in how to be one. She is also very aware that her skin, hair color, and petite size make her stand out. Often

hurt or confused, she takes it out on me. I am always one phase behind in my parenting skills, and it takes me a while to figure out what's going on.

Gradually she begins to relax, occasionally willing to answer my questions about her day, and, with her teacher's coaching, trusting me to help with homework. But I know the social part of school will never be easy for my daughter, and I, like most parents, wish that being a loving parent means guaranteed happiness for my child. What it does mean is that our heart is either bursting with pride or breaking with love.

Amid the anxiety of this adjustment, the Newbery continues. I read whenever and wherever I can stop moving. While Jamie is at ballet practice, I read in the darkened hallway, a tiny night-light clipped to the top of the book. Rather than visiting with parents, I read in the car while Jamie is screaming and running with twenty-five other girls and boys for a classmate's birthday party at the gymnastics club. I read during breakfast while Jamie is still asleep. I do a first "reading" of two books by listening to them on tape while doing my early morning treadmill exercise and while taking a long road trip to the other side of Oregon to teach storytelling.

On weekends, for the first time, I resort to using a video as a babysitter for Jamie so I can read. "Don't you want to watch *Aladdin* (two hours long) rather than *My Little Pony: Dancing in the Clouds*?" (Twenty minutes long.) I wonder if the literacy police will be banging on my door.

We establish a routine. Monday through Friday I am up at 6 A.M., exercise, dress, eat, and am ready for work by 7:30. The nanny arrives, gets Jamie dressed and fed, and takes her to school at 8:45. I pick up Jamie at 3:30 P.M. We have a snack, I help her with homework, she plays, I fix dinner, we eat, I read stories to her, I get her to bed, I read. I read as long as my eyes will focus, and it's almost always in the big blue chair. Soft, comfortable, well molded to the contours that are me, I settle between its welcoming arms.

My cat, Oreo, leaps onto my lap and curls himself up for hours of contentment.

The longer the reading, the longer his body stretches until his hind toes are at the tops of my thighs and his front toes reach my ankles. Together we listen to classical music while I r--- (you can fill in the blanks).

On weekends, I double the exercise, clean house, grocery shop, try to do something fun with Jamie . . . and read.

October 2004

I am startled away from my late-night reading when Jamie dances into the living room, too excited to sleep. In science that day, she learned about the sun, the planets, and all that merry-go-round spinning that goes on in the sky.

"I'll show you!" she offers, and runs across the room to grab a yellow sticky pad. "Pretend this is the sun." She draws a circle. "And this is the earth." She draws a smaller circle. "And here's the moon." Another circle, even smaller. "And they're all moving, Mommy, but they don't crash into each other and we don't get dizzy. Isn't that amazing?" I agree with her that it is truly amazing.

Then she says, "Tomorrow we're going to learn about gravel." Long pause. She looks at me with questioning eyes. "Gravel?" she repeats. "Do you mean gravity?" I ask. "Yes, that's it! Gravity!" We continue to talk about how amazing all this is as she continues to draw the entire universe on pages of sticky notes.

Suddenly, I realize the answer to my mystery of missing pads. "Jamie, have you been using the yellow note pads for drawing other pictures?" She has, and they are squirreled away in various drawers with craft supplies and drawings of horses, family, and more horses. I ask her to leave the sticky pads for me, reminding her that she has many other note pads and drawing books. She is satisfied, and the earth keeps right on spinning.

Autumn approaches. Golden aspen leaves are increasing in depth on my lawn (no time to rake) and so are the questions related to facts and eligibility that are sent to our committee chair and then the entire committee. We research

such things as historical accuracy, language, oral tradition, and cited sources, but we do not discuss the merits or demerits of any titles. This meticulous process helps us focus our discussions at Midwinter.

Sometimes, in the dark hours before sleep, I feel the panic rising as I think I have to know everything about every book. I remind myself that there are fourteen other members on the committee, creating a safety net for everyone. We are all thinking, learning, and analyzing, and all that wisdom will come to the table in Boston.

Sometimes, though, my mind is just too full. At least, that is the excuse I use for the embarrassment of October. It is 7:30 A.M. when I leave the house. I finish discussing the "Jamie details," with the nanny, then hurry into the garage, thinking of books read, books still to read, and, oh, yeah, my job as library manager. I enter my car, push the garage door button, immediately back out my Highlander—and completely demolish the garage door.

November 2004

Even more bizarre than the elections this month is my behavior. Neither Jamie nor I qualify for a flu shot, and I remember clearly the horrible Christmas a year ago when my daughter, my mother, and I spent the entire vacation sick with real, honest-to-goodness, lay-you-out-flat flu. I'm worried it will rear its ugly, germ head again this year. That would mean I couldn't read. Gasp! So I decide to try a holistic approach toward boosting my immunity and visit a local health-food store. I take only half the recommended dose, because I am easily susceptible to most drugs, plus I am currently enjoying excellent health.

Two weeks later, I am a hyperactive, jittery, finger-tapping, freaking-out mess. I do not sleep for forty-eight hours. I cannot understand what is happening

to me, but my heart is pumping so hard I am convinced I am headed for a heart attack. I ask my mother to spend the night in case anything happens to me. She takes my blood pressure and it has significantly plummeted.

As I am trying to describe the intense beating of my heart, I realize that this began soon after I started taking the immune system booster, so I immediately quit. Within twenty-four hours, my heart returns to normal, and I am a zombie. My body is so exhausted I can-

I must also admit that I never—not once—correctly predicted the winner before it was announced. I, like many other librarians, occasionally responded with, "What were they thinking?" when my personal favorite failed to be selected.

not move from the couch nor communicate intelligently. I can't even read. Gasp! I pitch the remainder of the pills but not before I look over the brochure that explains the contents. Six different kinds of mushrooms were giving me my own little "trip."

I'll risk the flu, thank you very much.

December 2004

And now the fun really begins. I visit a dozen schools to briefly explain the process toward selecting the Newbery winner, and I booktalk some of my favorites. I do a three-hour workshop at the library for parents and teachers about the Newbery. I reread many of the books and discover that my notes from early in the year are absolutely useless—too vague or too opinionated. So I take more notes, gather reviews, do research, and stay up very late reorganizing my fat and heavy notebooks. In the midst of all this comes Christmas. That means shopping, decorating (not much), and packing for a week in Montana at my brother's home. We will also be celebrating my mother's

eightieth birthday. There is still everyday life, and our committee chair reminds us to celebrate.

For the first time, Jamie's Christmas list focuses on dolls. She was never interested in dolls, but this year she has discovered the American Girls. She chooses Molly as her favorite (she loves her braids and glasses), so we begin reading the books each night. I find them to be quite well-written, and we quickly travel from the World War II-era of Molly, to the Depression times of Kit, to the pioneer life of Kirsten. I am convinced she truly wants Molly and that this isn't just a phase, so late one night, I order Molly and a few accessories on the Internet.

The day before we leave for Montana Jamie announces, "I don't think I want Molly. I might want Samantha."

There are many things I have learned as a parent. I do not consistently follow them, but I have learned them. One of those things is, when it really, really matters, don't react. Luckily, this is one time I remember that, so I take a breath and remind her that since wish lists were already sent to Santa and family, it's too late to be making a change.

It is a memorable Christmas, full of family love and traditions. Molly is a big hit. She is dressed and undressed, she sleeps each night on the floor beside Jamie's bed, and she rides in Jamie's backpack during the trip home. My gift from Jamie is a jewel-encrusted treasure box she made in her art class. I think of many years when I envied mothers who described handmade gifts from their children. Now the gold, red, and purple box has a place of honor on my dresser and in my heart.

January 2005

By now, almost every request from my daughter for my time or attention receives a response that begins with, "After the Newbery." One evening, I am stretched out on the couch reading,

and she is entertaining herself at her craft table. She quietly murmurs, and I have learned to enjoy that gentle sound, greatly appreciating her willingness to be near me but not *with* me.

Suddenly she is at my side. “Mommy, this broke.” She shows me a red heart, about four inches across, made of fuse beads that were melted together by a hot iron. “Hannah made it for me and it broke. Can you fix it?” Then, suddenly, she lowers her hands, bows her head, and mumbles, “Oh, I know, after the Newbery.”

I pull the knife of guilt from my heart, get up from the couch, and immediately attempt to iron it back together. It doesn't work, but she's OK with that. At least I tried, and it was before the Newbery!

At dinner one evening, a week before I am to leave for Boston, Jamie announces to my mother, “My mommy has to read ‘forty hundred’ books!” I laugh with delight, for not only is this a perfect description of the number of books I feel like I've read, but I also notice that my six-year-old daughter says it with pride. I am quite sure that part of the reason for that are the words my mother has used to explain why I needed quiet time alone this year. My mother is proud, and Jamie has decided she will be, too. I am deeply grateful for this, for it allows me to remember what a great honor and responsibility this is and how lucky I am to have such love to see me through.

The night before I leave I am forcing all my conflicting feelings into a tight place that bulges with emotions. I don't want to leave Jamie, but I desperately want to be in Boston, talking about the books. I know I need to be brave in front of my daughter, but all I want to do is hold her close and be assured that she will be okay.

I tell Jamie that she is to write a list while I'm gone. It is “The ATN List,” all the things we will do together After The Newbery. I tell her I have recorded a story for her to listen to each night and that there are letters from me for each night in the treasure box on my dresser. We are both holding back tears, and I can tell she is trying very hard not to be frightened. So am I.

The trip to Boston is uneventful. I read constantly on the plane. Susan and I arrive at approximately the same time so we share a taxi to our hotel. We are both giddy with relief over what is behind us and the excitement of what lies ahead.

After unpacking and eating in my room (so I can read more), I call home. Jamie answers.

“Hi, Mommy! I got sent home from school today because I have a fever, and pinkeye, and my throat hurts. Are you at the Newbery?”

I am stunned. All my worrying about my health, and Jamie is sick. I listen to her tell me about how her eye hurts, there's pus, and she's going to the doctor in the morning, and I can't believe I'm hearing this. All I want is to be there to wipe away the “gucky stuff” and hold her close to my heart that is breaking.

The next day I spend in my hotel room, reading. I call home to find out about the doctor's visit, and all seems under con-

trol, thanks to my mother and the nanny, who's doing the driving and the laundry. Jamie is quite happy because the medicine is pink and tastes like bubble gum. But that night brings the worst.

I call home to say good night. Fifteen minutes later, the phone rings. It is my mother, and her voice is tense. “I need for you to talk with Jamie. She is really quite uncomfortable with the pinkeye, plus she has a sinus infection. I've done all I can do. But she wants to hear from you what should be done. She's convinced you will know what to do.”

A tiny whisper of a voice comes on the phone. “Mommy, my eye really hurts.” I talk with Jamie and assure her that her grandmother is doing everything possible. I send her my love over and over. I tell her how much I miss her over and over. And I say, over and over, how sorry I am that I am not there.

When I hang up I cry. For a very long time, in the darkness of my hotel room, with the lights of Boston glittering below

The Future

People ask me if I would do it again. . . . In a heartbeat! But I am glad not to do it for a while. I am enjoying reading adult books and putting them down when I want to. I am looking forward to reading the children's books I choose to read, not have to read. I will especially like not having to take notes, so I can immerse myself in the sheer joy of being taken to other worlds through a book.

Here is my advice to future committee members.

- Trust the process. It really, really works if you have a good chair and an open-minded committee.
- Remember that you are part of a team. Everyone will help and work hard.
- Take notes that pertain specifically to the criteria—plot, theme, setting, accuracy, and characterization.
- Don't confuse popularity or marketing with what is distinguished. Remember to look through the Newbery lens.
- Pace yourself and avoid leaving extra duties for the last month. December is rightfully filled with family, and there is only half of January.
- Open your garage door.
- Watch out for the mushrooms.

me, I cry. I am human, I am a mother, and my little girl wants her mommy.

At 8 A.M. the next morning, the committee begins the work of choosing the Newbery Award winner.

January 14–16, 2005

When we sit down at the table, Susan asks each of us to tell what we had given up this year in order to handle all the reading—a clean house, magazines, movies, the newspaper. I agree with all of them, but I add, "play time with Jamie."

The rest of what we say behind our doors is forever confidential, but I will say there are agreements, disagreements, moments of humor, and hours of considerate, thorough, respectful, and honest discussion. Susan makes sure everyone is heard and helps us focus our thoughts when conflicting ideas are presented. Everyone is well-prepared with their reading, brave with their opinions, and respectful of the responsibility. We survive on too much junk food and not enough sleep. It is rewarding, exhausting, exhilarating, and thrilling.

Committee member Thomas Barthelme from Spokane, Washington reminds us that we are looking at these books through a very particular lens. That Newbery lens focuses on the criteria of plot, theme, setting, accuracy of information, and characterization. It is a different lens from the My-Favorite-Book lens or This-Author's-Best-Book lens. It is what we have looked through all year long and what we're looking through now as we come to consensus.

When the choice is made, and we gather to write the press release, Susan goes around the table again and thanks each of us for our contributions. She embraces us with her words, and we are all honored to have worked so hard together.

January 17, 2005

The authors are called at 6:45 A.M. Eastern standard time, the announcement is made at 9 A.M., and the world now knows the result of our year of

reading and three days of discussing. I'm proud that people will be led to discover the touching story of a loving and honorable Japanese American family.

January 18, 2005

The trip home is almost uneventful, except that the computer in Boston misreads my reservation and processes my luggage and me only as far as Portland. So in Portland I dash off the airplane, claim my bags, haul them back upstairs to reticket them to Redmond, proceed through security, then sprint down the concourse to get on my plane that is now boarding.

It is, of course, absolutely breathtakingly wonderful when Jamie is in my arms at 3:30 that afternoon. We simply won't let go of each other. She proudly shows me the posters she and my mother made to welcome me home. "We are so proud of you!" "Yeah, *Kira-Kira!* Yeah, *Lizzie Bright!*" We both especially like the one of Jamie with a bright pink eye, and a speech balloon that says, "I feel sick." Another is a picture of a horse (Jamie's favorite animal) with the words, "I'm glad the Newbery's over!"

A third just says, "I did miss you so much." She shows me the chocolate peppermint cake my mom made for my return. And then she shows me the "After the Newbery" list. Here it is:

- *Buy a bike bracelet.* (The latest fad in her school.)
- *Put tablecloth over table to make a tent.* (We read about this in one of the American Girl books.)
- *Make a story.* (We're going to write a book together about her adoption, with my words and her illustrations.)
- *Tea party with Mrs. Ann, Mrs. Nelson, and Mrs. Cross* (her teachers).
- *Snuggle.*

A week later, Jamie receives a package from Susan. Inside is a LiveStrong bike bracelet. Susan has written on the back of an *Al Capone Does My Shirts* postcard:

Dear Jamie:

Thank you for letting us borrow your mother for the Newbery Committee. She was absolutely wonderful! Now have fun with your ATN list and with this bracelet too. DONE!"

So the year is done, and the earth keeps spinning. I thank all the glittering stars that came together in the right corner of the universe to give me this honor. I wonder if someday, when one of Jamie's teachers gives her the assignment of reading a Newbery book, my daughter will look back, remember the Newbery year, and say, "My mother read forty hundred books!"

I hope she says it with pride. ☺

Libraries Team Up for Tsunami Relief

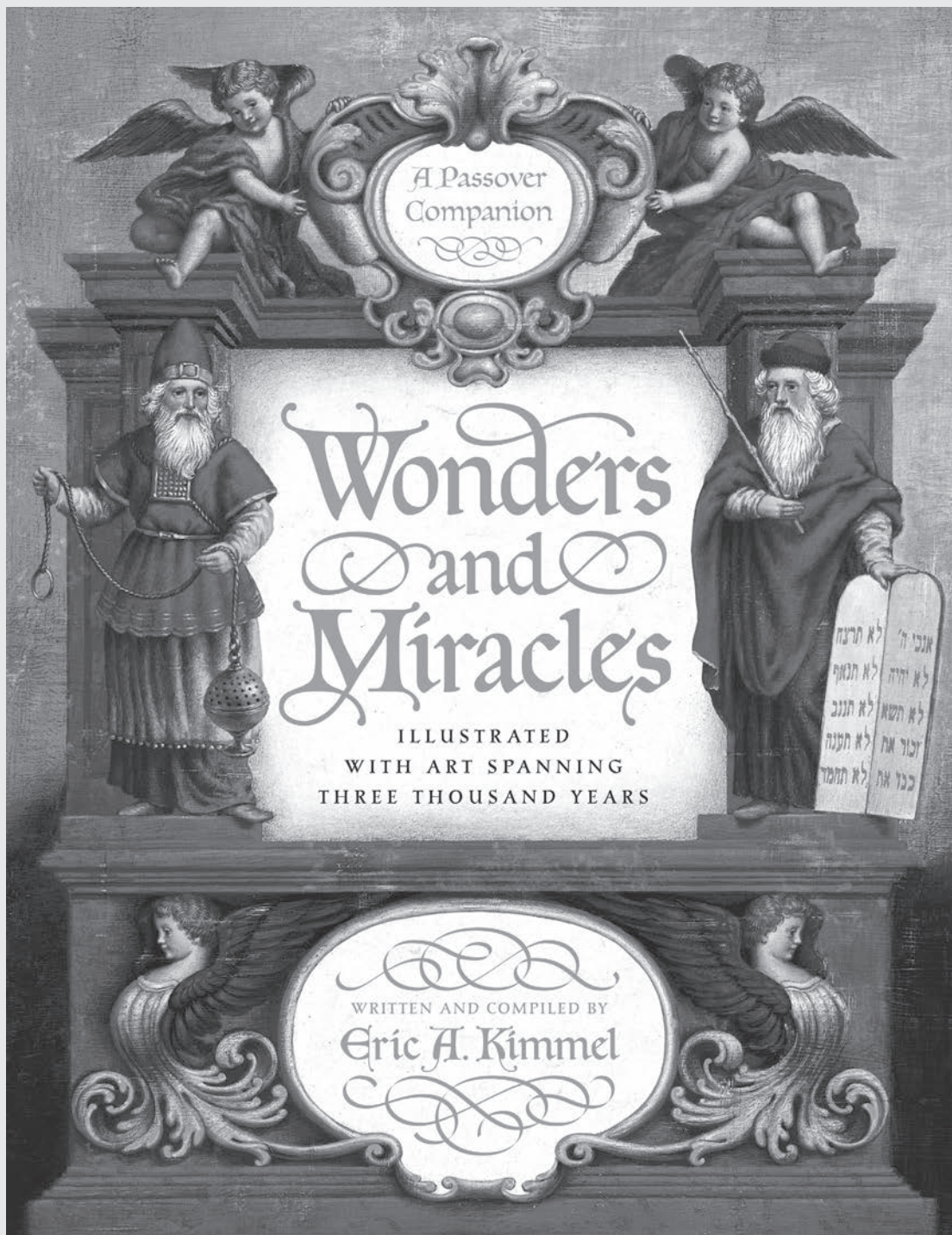
After the tsunami hit Asia last December, many librarians from the United States got involved. Here are a few of the great ideas we've heard:

- The Douglas County Libraries in Colorado donated all fines collected in January to tsunami aid, totalling \$4,167.08 in fines and an additional \$1,158.07 in donations—\$5,325.15 altogether. The libraries also served as donation points for the Red Cross.
- Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Indiana created an interactive book display in its children's department, including nonfiction books on earthquakes and various countries affected by the disaster. A bulletin board featured pictures from the Internet of aid workers helping the needy and displaced.
- The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) collected donations from its national sections to help rebuild libraries and purchase books in the countries directly hit.

Wonders and Miracles

An Editor's, Author's, and Designer's Publishing Odyssey

Dianne Hess



LEFT: The jacket art depicts Moses with the Ten Commandments and his brother Aaron, who is often depicted with sacred objects. This illustration is a twenty-first-century adaptation of a 1734 German Haggadah, which echoes the design of the frontispiece of the Sulzbach Haggadah of 1711, which imitated the Amsterdam Haggadah of 1695. Ironically, the pictures from the Amsterdam Haggadah (which were copied and imitated more than any Haggadah in history) were illustrated by a Jewish convert who copied his illustration from a Christian source. Jacket art copyright 2004 by Bagram Ibatoulline.



LEFT: The famous old spiritual, "Go Down Moses," typically sung at the Seder, tells the story of Exodus. It directly links the African American experience with that of the Jews in Egypt. Painting by Jerry Pinkney from "Let My People Go" section of *From Sea to Shining Sea* (Scholastic, 1993). Used with permission of the artist.

Wonders and Miracles: A Passover Companion by Eric Kimmel is the winner of the National Jewish Book Award. It was recently named a Sydney Taylor Honor Book, and Kimmel received the Body of Work Award from the Sydney Taylor Committee.

For twenty-eight years, I've been editing books for children. And while I love each and every book I've had the good fortune and honor to work on, editing *Wonders and Miracles: A Passover Companion* by Eric Kimmel, illustrated with art spanning three thousand years, has been one of the most challenging and satisfying experiences of my career. Not only because the material itself holds endless fascination for me, but also because the book has been a landmark in my personal journey to understanding my family's past.

I grew up in the South during the 1950s and '60s, in a family of German Jewish survivors of the Nazi occupation. In those days, it was not uncommon for survivors to be silent about their experiences, and my family was no exception. No one ever told me that two of my grandmother's sisters and their husbands had been

killed in Auschwitz seven years before I was born. No one mentioned my grandfather had been released from Dachau before he and my grandmother fled to America. And even still, we have little or no information about the many members of my mother's family who silently disappeared in Europe during the war.

As a child in my safe, suburban neighborhood of Rockville, Maryland (which was constructed in 1952), there was no sign that world history had ever occurred anywhere. I had enough trouble understanding the difference between Maryland and America (they had many of the same letters), let alone the concept of Europe and Germany. But that didn't matter. It was all pretty irrelevant in our sparkling-clean-Howdy-Doody-postwar world, where there was plenty to eat and everyone always smiled.

At school, I felt like a Martian. There were no other Germans or Europeans that I was aware of and only a handful of Jews. I had no reason to be proud of my heritage. My frame of reference was children imitating the cartoonish Nazi soldiers they'd seen on *Hogan's Heroes*, and my religion was discussed by my

peers in context of being stingy or having a big nose.

I wanted no part of that. So I hid my identity, and made no effort to discover my roots until one day, by happenstance, I wrote an English term paper on Adolf Hitler. Puzzle pieces came crashing down on me, and questions were suddenly raised. As time progressed, I went to school in New York, immersed myself in Jewish culture, and became obsessed with history. And most important, I began asking my father questions. My father, a self-taught scholar of Jewish history and a docent at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., has an amazing gift for memorizing facts and family lore. He has also been invaluable in my mission to repair the shattered spirits from my family's past by discovering the mysterious missing pieces.

Yet another big chunk of the puzzle appeared sixteen years ago. My sister married a German and moved to Nuremberg. For a long time, I was repelled at the idea of entering the ghost-filled country where the air smelled like death and horror. But when the wall went down in the East, we couldn't wait to go to Suhl, the town in the former East Germany where my grandmother's family lived since the 1600s. There we discovered a rich cache of family history and evidence of German Jewish life in the days long before Hitler. It was that bridge to the past that reconnected us to the homestead that was so violently and stealthily torn from our family. A healing had begun.

Dianne Hess is Executive Editor of Scholastic Press. Other Jewish-interest books she has edited include *Gershon's Monster* by Eric Kimmel, illustrated by Jon J. Muth; *My Guardian Angel* by Sylvie Weil; and *Miriam's Cup* by Fran Manushkin. She is also the author of "Daughter of Abraham," a short story that appears in a young-adult collection called *Soul Searching: Thirteen Stories about Faith and Belief*, compiled by Lisa Rowe Fraustino (Simon & Schuster, 2002).

How does all of this discovery and family history connect to my editing *Wonders and Miracles*? I suppose you could say the material in this book dealing with Jewish world history took my previous experiences and vaulted them light-years ahead in this journey. It connected me not only to my own personal roots, but it also opened the floodgates to my discovery of Judeo-Christian history, world history, and human history. Beginning in a place where I was the only Jewish person and feeling the need to hide that—also coming from a family where no one ever talked about “what happened”—it was a huge revelation and source of pride to discover Jewish literature and art from all over the world from the past three thousand years.

Like our counterparts in the Christian world, we, too had illuminated manuscripts in the medieval world. Our music reflected the music that was created in every part of the world we lived in. We were in Asia, Africa, and all over Europe.

We were a part of a bigger picture, of world culture, with art and music and writings that reflect our existence through time. This is where *Wonders and Miracles* led me—and the many other friends and colleagues who have worked on it and read it. It is our very own *Mayflower*. Our *Roots*. Our past was no longer only about hardship. There was a profound beauty and a romance that belonged to all of us. We had unearthed the world that went far beyond the familiar shtetls in Poland or Russia. The canvas of our ancestry had broadened. My only hope now is to pass this great new puzzle piece along to others in hopes that they, too, will fill their own empty spaces with new meaning. ♪



Writing *Wonders and Miracles*

Eric Kimmel

I'm often asked if writing *Wonders and Miracles* was a way of recapturing fond memories of childhood Seders at my parents' house. Not exactly. The Seders of my childhood were interminable. Grandma insisted that everything had to be done exactly the way they did it in the Old Country. My father, who led the Seder, had no Jewish education to speak of. He tried his best, but he read Hebrew with difficulty and even the simplest blessings took a long time. My brother and I, bored out of our heads, amused ourselves by kicking each other under the table. Mother hid out in the kitchen.

Unfortunately, my experiences were not unusual. Many other people have shared their own similar family Seder stories with me.

I was much older when I discovered that Passover didn't have to be this way. Rabbi Eddie Feld, the Hillel director at the University of Illinois, opened my eyes. Eddie explained things. He encouraged us to ask questions and he could answer them. Everyone at his Seders was a graduate student or a professor from a wide spectrum of disciplines.

Our discussions became heated and exciting.

The Seder becomes a ritual of beauty and meaning once you understand its parts and how they fit together. This is what I set out to capture when I wrote *Wonders and Miracles*. My editor, Dianne Hess, and I worked closely together on the project for five years. We shared the same goal—to create a beautiful book that would open the Seder to anyone who might ever attend one. There would be something for everyone: children and adults, those with a great deal of prior knowledge, and those with little or none. We wanted a book that would include Jews from the whole spectrum of modern observance, as well as non-Jews attending a Seder as guests. We also kept in mind Christians seeking to connect with their Jewish roots. The Last Supper may well have been a Passover Seder.

The project succeeded beyond anything we could have hoped for. As my brother said, “Dad could have used this book.”

Dianne and I hope families will make use of it at Passover, and that its beautiful pages, illustrated with the art of thousands of years of Jewish history, will become stained with wine and dusted with matzo crumbs as the years go by. ♪



FAR LEFT: During the Seder, many periods of Jewish persecution are remembered: the slavery in Egypt, the Spanish Inquisition, and more recently, the Nazi Holocaust of World War II. This Haggadah commemorates the Egyptian enslavement through the metaphor of a concentration camp. (Munich Haggadah, Noar Halutzi Edition. Germany, 1948.) *Photo courtesy of the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York.*

MIDDLE: The conical hat, or the Judenhut (Jew's hat), was worn by Jewish men to distinguish them from the rest of the population. It is thought that birds' heads were used because it was forbidden for artists to depict the human face. (Bird's-head Haggadah, Southern Germany, fourteenth century.) *Photo courtesy of Israel Museum, Jerusalem/Kid's Books, Chicago.*

ABOVE: Miriam's cup, the feminist counterpart to Elijah's cup, is a modern Passover ritual that honors women at the Seder. This Miriam's cup, titled "The Dance with Timbrels," is by a contemporary American artist and is rich in symbolism. The chains and beads make music when they are moved, and woven textures remind us of Moses' basket. *Photo courtesy of Kathy Hart, Southborough, Massachusetts.*

The Art of Wonders and Miracles

Dianne Hess

One of the bigger challenges of editing the book was deciding how to illustrate it. We looked at different art styles. Should the book look medieval? Should it look modern? After all that goes into getting a text right, the look of a book can completely alter everything—for better or for worse.

The answer came to me one night while listening to a professor of Italian medieval Jewish art from the University of Michigan give a lecture and slide presentation on medieval Italian Haggadot, the prayer books used for the Passover service. I was astounded that such a thing existed. I decided right then to ask her if I could borrow her slides to use for a book. It was a perfect plan. The artists were all dead, it was all public domain, and we could have a book ready for the upcoming spring list!

But alas, things are never so easy. The slides were too light and damaged and not suitable for reproduction. And besides, she informed, me, I'd need to get permission from the museums that owned the many pieces of art.

After a day poring through medieval Haggadot from Yale University's Beinike Library collection, I was overwhelmed by the amount of material. I also realized that I wasn't always sure of what I was looking at. Medieval art has a language of its own. For example, Jews could be easily identified by the conical hats they wore, or by the yellow circles they were made to wear on their jackets. I enlisted Scholastic's photo research department to help me gather art and my professor friend to help with the interpretation. Our odyssey was underway. Hundreds and hundreds of pictures came in. We sifted through the ones we had, and led many a rigorous search through obscure places to find others. Two years later, when we were satisfied with what we'd found, we cleared the rights and were on our way. From the photo of Ramses II, who was the "Let my people go" pharaoh; to medieval Haggadot from France, Spain, Italy, Denmark, and Germany; to a matzah cover from India; to a Seder plate from Baghdad—the art we found was an endless source of revelation. ☞

RIGHT:

This unusual Haggadah picture shows women studying with men. It is possible that this may have been painted by a nun, who would have been accustomed to seeing women with books. (Darmstadt Haggadah, Germany, fifteenth century.)

Photo courtesy Darmstadt Technical University, Germany.



ABOVE: This white Star of David, shackled with a heavy chain and padlock, symbolized the struggle for religious freedom for the Soviet Jews. Photo courtesy of the Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry, New York.



Designing the Book

Marijka Kostiw

The challenge in designing this book was to make somewhat intimidating material into a beautiful, exciting volume that was also intriguing and yet accessible to people who may not have been familiar with the subject. There was an enormous amount of text, which contained many disparate elements, but it was important that the book have an open and inviting look. At the same time, each of the different elements needed to be easily identifiable. We used facsimiles of medieval Haggadot from various countries for our inspiration as to how the book should look and for the essence of the layout. Because most of the art was of varying sizes and mediums and came from a great variety of sources, we also had the added challenge of making it look "of a piece," as if it really belonged together graphically.

Tying everything together in spreads was a challenge. Poetry and songs were set in one narrow, centered column. Stories and some of the longer pieces were set in two columns for ease of reading across the wide

pages. The nonfiction pieces and the Haggadot sections were set in wider single columns. To make the Haggadot sections easy to find (so the book could actually be used at the table to conduct a full Seder), we used a small square iconic picture and a vertical border at the edge of the pages so readers could identify those sections quickly and easily. The varying elements in the book are also reinforced in the table of contents with use of color, type size, and fonts.

Initial caps, calligraphy, ornaments, border edges, and the use of color also served to guide the reader through the various sections of the book. The case cover was inspired by a medieval French Haggadah. We were thrilled to be able to add a satin ribbon marker as well as gold foil to the jacket and cover. We wanted to create a book that would look like a gift that you would want to bring to a Seder, and at the same time be a keepsake book you would want to own yourself. I feel we realized our goals with a truly unique book for readers of all ages. ☺

Marijka Kostiw is Art Director of Scholastic Press. She worked closely with the book's designer, David Caplan.

Best of Beginning Readers

ALSC Launches the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award

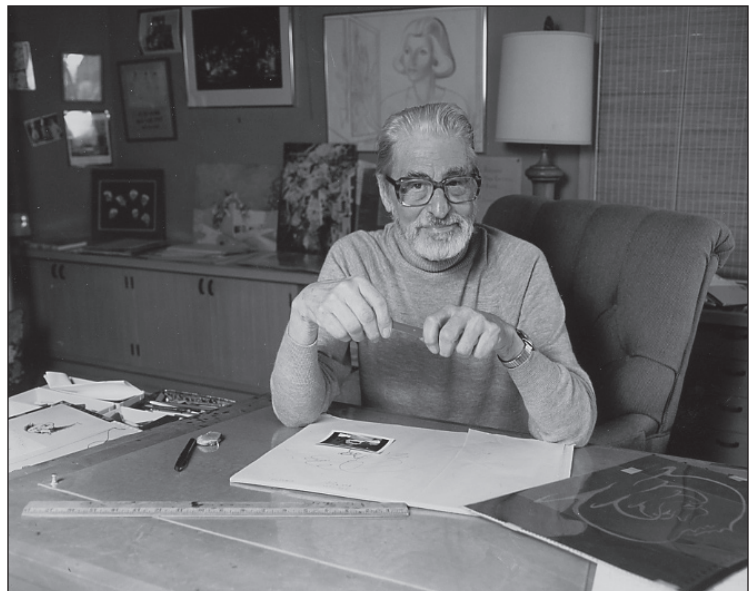
Caroline Ward

There are few things more amazing than watching a child solve the mystery of letters, words, and sentences to enter the world of reading. Beginning reading books play a key role in this process, and librarians have long acknowledged their importance. With the establishment of ALSC's Theodor Seuss Geisel Award, this sometimes-overlooked genre will receive the public recognition it deserves.

Funded by The San Diego Foundation's Dr. Seuss Fund and administered by ALSC, the award will be given to "an outstanding book for beginning readers," joining ALSC's preeminent family of awards recognizing the most distinguished children's literature published each year.

Several years in development, the award is the brainchild of Kate Klimo, the vice president and publisher of Random House/Golden Books Young Readers Group. Klimo recalled that during the planning for Dr. Seuss' centennial, she examined the rich Geisel archives at the Mandeville Special Collections of the University of California at San Diego.

"I was smitten by his wit and intelligence and wanted some way to acknowledge his widespread influence," she said. Random House then approached Dr. Seuss Enterprises to support an award that would memorialize this iconic writer, who created the concept of beginning readers. Random House editor-at-large Janet Schulman, Geisel's editor for the last eleven years of his life, said, "He set the tone for a whole industry."



Theodor Seuss Geisel

In early 2002, Dr. Seuss Enterprises contacted ALSC suggesting the creation of an award in Geisel's name. The committee (six members and a chair) is charged with examining books published during 2005 to select the first award, which will be announced during the ALA Midwinter Meeting in January 2006.

The award criteria specify that the text of the book must be directed at readers from pre-K through grade two. According to Cynthia K. Richey, past-president of ALSC, "This is not an award for early chapter books or transitional books; it is directed towards those beginning books that engage children in learning to read."

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Caroline Ward, Librarian at the Ferguson Library in Stamford, Connecticut, is chair of the 2006 Theodor Seuss Geisel Award Committee.

Jack Gantos on Writing

Digging Up Creative Juices from Restaurants to Graveyards

Alison Follos

Author visits can have surprising results. Beyond enlivening their stories, authors may inspire young writers. When Jack Gantos speaks to students, he doesn't short-change himself or downplay his profession. He makes it alluring, possible, and realistically *doable*.

"I write books. That's all I do is write books. It's a smart, cool thing to do. Basically I get to stay home all day. I can stay in my PJs all day long. I have a drawing table, so I draw. I have a refrigerator in my office, so I eat. I write. I eat. I draw. I write; all day long. It's a great job! And do you know what the best part of it is? I'm my own boss. I love that," Gantos said at a visit to our library.

He spoke enthusiastically about the journal process, which is the beginning phase of what eventually become his books. "I write in my journal everyday. Don't try to write a novel. First write a little bit every day," he advised. "Start with fifteen or twenty minutes a day. Writing is a cumulative process, and eventually those daily entries will become stories."

Journaling also allows would-be writers a way to be inspired by people and events outside of themselves. "I love journals

because you can be sneaky," Gantos explained. "I overhear conversations at restaurants, airports, I even find material from graveyards. Joey Pigza's name (*Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key*) came from a tombstone I saw while driving around with my mother."

He lent students some tips on setting up their journals like a "professional."

"First you need to have journal supplies. You go to the dollar store. They have great little notebooks and journals there. Then you confiscate rubber bands from the mailman. I meet my mailman at the door and say, 'Hand 'em over.' I don't know where they get them, but they're the best. And finally, you get your pens from the hotels. Holiday Inn is my middle name," he jokes. "Then you need two basic skills: content and structure. Content is first. I like to draw so I draw a map of a whole neighborhood, a place where good things and bad things happen. Or just draw your thoughts; these will be your 'action.'"

Gantos' educational influence is powered by his storytelling—a dynamic part of his instruction. His flare as an entertaining educator is awe-inspiring. His advice is practical, his words comprehensible, and his delivery hysterical.

He candidly illustrated the foibles of family life to his best advantage. At the overhead projector, he put an image of a hand-drawn map on the screen behind him. "For my maps, I might include the airport on Barbados. The airstrip was too short. My dad took us to watch the planes crash," he said, moving on to another "landmark." "Here's the church where

People love to read about the vulnerabilities and screw-ups of others. Gantos makes the most of that.



Alison Follos is librarian at North Country School in Lake Placid, N.Y.

he would wait for us out in the car. Then he'd take us to the beach where we would look for body parts washed up from crashing on the rocks—was disappointed that I never found any."

He paused. "Sometimes you're just blessed to have these nutty parents. Write about what you do know; you don't have to write what you don't know."

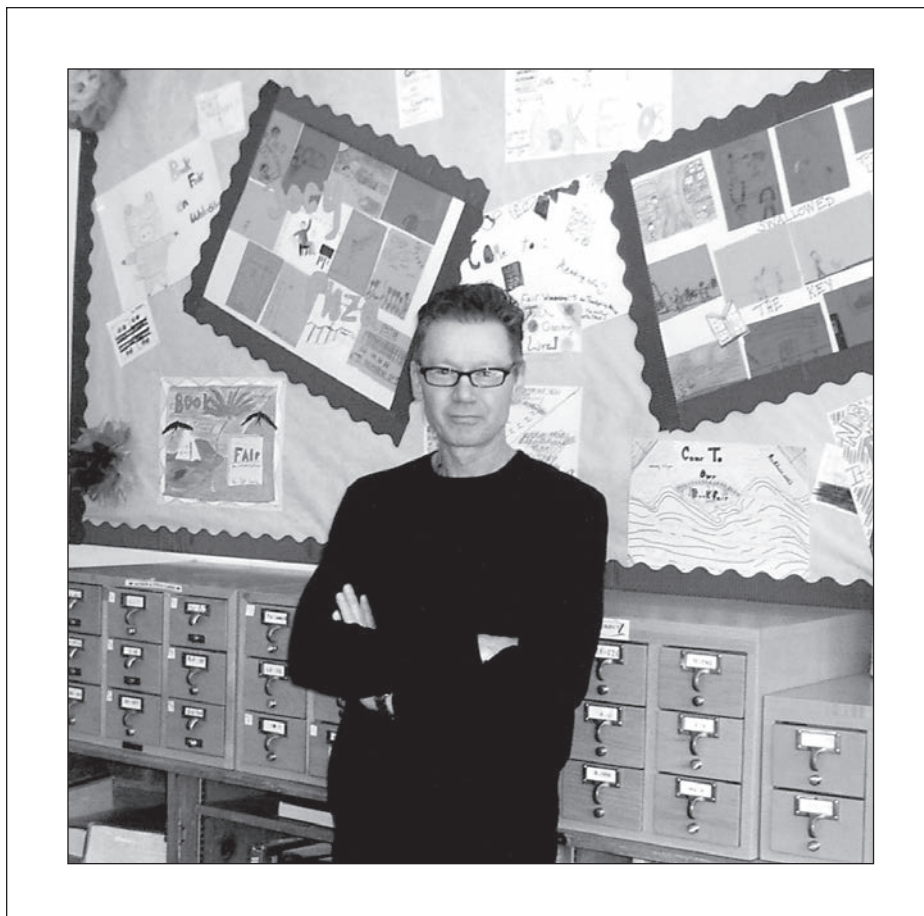
He switched easily between his storytelling and advice.

"Once you have the content, then you apply it to the structure. Applying content to structure, that's all that writing is. Type it up, print it out, mark it up, and make your corrections. Do this again . . . until you get it right," he said, before launching into another personal story. "I used to have to type up my manuscripts on a typewriter. I would end up with piles that looked like pillars all around the room. Now it's much easier with the computer. But again, I do between twenty to thirty drafts before I have my finished story. Perfection is the pleasure of the work itself."

Gantos' fiction is real and timeless. His adroit power of observation and his ability to spin-in his own interpretation make his stories original and personal. He injects difficult material with wit and never shies off his vantage point. His stories ride a cockeyed track, derailed by underlying stories within stories—diced up mini-adventures sprinkled into a trip in and of itself.

His Jack Henry stories unfold like hallway conversations, daring bits of personal information in the midst of the crowd. Of these "autobiographical fiction story cycles," Gantos said, "All the stories in the Jack books have at least two layers—what goes on on the surface (which is generally pretty wacky) but beneath the surface is a counterpoint theme which is like the bass line in music—and that is where the bones of the story can be found. And the Joey [Pigza] books too, a lot of action up top, riding the surface and a lot of tension below."

Gantos has a flair for connecting with the common man and madman in all of us. His seemingly irreverent stories



Jack Gantos

chip at the fallacy of normal family life and applaud individual imagination and ambition.

When his name is mentioned at educational conferences, there is an energy that buzzes through the air. What does this guy have that causes an almost revered reaction from kids and adults alike? How does he command such a genuine voice? Why is there a curiosity that wants to understand and define a bit of him?

To be sure, the fact that he aired his turbulent young adult years in *Hole in My Life* (Farrar, 2002) instills a sense of public affinity. People love to read about the vulnerabilities and screw-ups of others. Gantos makes the most of that. He heralds his misdeeds and actions to the forefront and curls the unsuspecting reader around the emotion. Wild action and drama strike with a flourish. Endings are a circuitous arrival at thought-provoking resolution—not an easy task to accomplish. As he said,

"There's no magic involved, just a lot of misdirection."

There is also his supreme conviction toward his art. Gantos will not produce anything less than his best, even if it takes twenty manuscript drafts and a lifetime of gritty stuff mined from his journals. His books capture a guileless and unabashedly funny soul. His material has an unspoiled flippant attitude on the surface. Yet it delves deeper, tugging at readers' attentions, drawing them in for a heart-to-heart conversation.

Gantos' muse is not just hanging out, ready to strike once he's grabbed his morning coffee. He keeps a stringent writing schedule, adheres to his basic structure, and religiously feeds his journals. They are his constant companions to store and later conjure the elusive muse.

"Set them up so that they feed you instead of you constantly feeding them," he said. Gantos has a distinct literary

style. It's not an accident that tangential events appear happenstance or that raw, tender, and outrageous behaviors are tripping over one another. That is how life works, and Gantos succeeds in nailing it.

His Jack Henry alter ego, and the star of his many Jack books, is compulsive and self-absorbed, even when he is intent on changing his behavior. He brings the reader into his confidence as he observes his own reactions to bizarre situations. Jack is always assessing and wondering how he will measure up—traits to which readers will relate.

When Gantos was ten, he read his sister's diary. He made a discovery he was not looking for.

"My sister approached writing as she did table manners. Everything had to be tidy and in its place. There were no highs and lows. Nothing was untoward. I lived in the same house as she did, and I knew we had at least three knockdown drag-out fights a day. I knew that I was in love with my teacher. For her everything was even and flat. I thought, 'I can do better than that.'"

But this discovery led to a very important realization for him. "When I was a kid everyone would keep asking me what I was going to do when I grew up. I would counter, 'I don't know. I'm not grown up.' But then I started asking myself that question and I thought, 'I'm going to do what I really like to do because I knew I would be good at what I liked to do and I wasn't going to be very good at what I didn't,'" he remembered. "I decided I would get a job that I would *like*, not one that I would have to *endure*."

Gantos said, "The world was always shifting for me. I moved about forty times growing up. The one thing that wasn't changing was the journals. I have about two hundred journals from when I was a kid. I learned that when you wrote it down, it stayed put. My whole childhood is like a film for me, and I know it's

because I used to sit quietly and write about it. I etched it in. The things I don't write about just blow away."

Gantos told students, "You can do it now. You have the ideas now, you have the tools. You think that this whole writing life happens to someone else, but it's whether you want to do it or not. It's whether you want to spend the time doing it, to search for it and really write about your feelings and thoughts."

He advised "doing it now" because memory and imagination can be fleeting. "A first-grade imagination is very powerful. I

"First you need to have journal supplies. You go to the dollar store. They have great little notebooks and journals there. Then you confiscate rubber bands from the mailman. I meet my mailman at the door and say, 'Hand 'em over.' I don't know where they get them, but they're the best. And finally, you get your pens from the hotels. Holiday Inn is my middle name."

didn't want to get older and older and have less and less imagination. Write a little bit everyday, fifteen minutes. Write furiously and sloppily because it's the first draft," he said. "The whole idea is consistency; writing is built just like sports. If you practice, practice, you get better and better. So the writing thing is the same system."

Plus, some things are just more complicated when you get older.



Student Daniel Blanchard at a library visit with Jack Gantos.

"When you're a kid, drama's good. The situation that you're in, that's what you write about; what you know about. You should be at the center of your writing life, not at the edge," he said. "You want to start paying attention and saturate into the corners of your life. See some of those moments and then from the moment, you can build out from these corners."

He continued, "I know a lot of people feel that you get into the arts by being anointed. But it's not quite that way. It's mostly about getting up and having good habits. Sitting down, writing, doing the drafts, and really pursuing it. It's work. It's not just inspiration; there's an awful lot of industry to it as well. I get up really early, work like a dog, and it looks like a mess! But when it's complete, it's fantastic."

Hard work, he said, is what it takes to be fantastic. No one starts out as a superstar. "One of the myths that keeps people from writing is that they think it has to be perfect early on and it never really is," he says. "The part of *perfection* is that you have to be looking at how great is the *idea*. Do I really *enjoy* doing this? There's a lot of perfection in the pleasure of the work itself. It's not just *wicked* work, it's a lot of *eureka* work." 🐛

What Olivia Knows

How a Pig Can Teach Librarians Advocacy

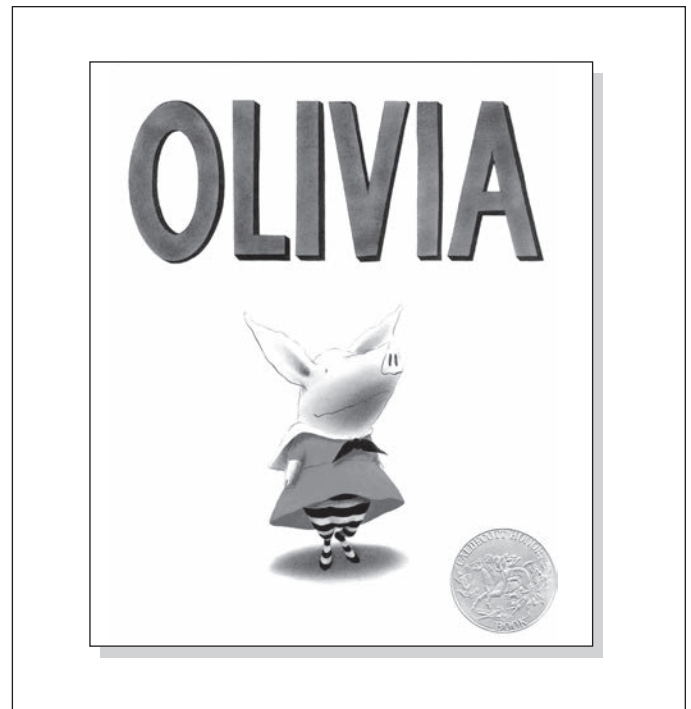
ALSC Managing Children's Services Committee

Advocacy is a crucial skill for public librarians today. Using Ian Falconer's character Olivia, ALSC's Managing Children's Services Committee demonstrates that advocacy is crucial in the current environment of budget cuts, library closings, and the need to justify resources spent on children's services. This article leads the reader through the skills needed for an advocate. It details specific steps for an effective advocate for children's services within your organization and for public libraries in the community. It also shows that the children's librarian must be an advocate for children to the community at large.

Olivia Knows: Pardon Me for Being a Manager, Part V

ALSC's Managing Children's Services Committee has long been a strong advocate and a continuing education provider on ALSC's competencies for librarians serving children in public libraries. Beginning with the ALA Annual Conference in 1999, the committee kicked-off a multi-part, multiyear series titled "Pardon Me for Being a Manager." Each yearly session is dedicated to one of ALSC's six competencies:

- knowledgeable of client group;
- effective communicative skills;
- administrative and management skills;
- collection development skills;
- advocacy, public relations, and networking skills; and
- programming skills.



The committee could think of no better way to impart such important tools on developing successful management skills to leadership-minded children's librarians than to employ well known children's book characters whose thoughtful and hard-learned lessons demonstrate how to be not just good—but great!

The traditional tale of *The Little Red Hen* shows librarians how to develop stronger management skills and that sometimes in order to lead, one must be willing to do so or risk going it

The ALSC Managing Children's Services Committee 2004-05 members are Beth Wheeler Dean (chair); Jill Bourne, Paula Brehm-Heeger, Mary Fellows, Kathy Fredette, C. Gaye Hinchliff, Betty Jean Neal, Veronica Stevenson-Moudamane, Evelyn Walker, and Teresa Marie Walls. Adjunct committee members contributing to this article are Ellen Riordan and Penny Markey.

alone. Rosemary Wells' beloved *Max & Ruby* characters taught children's librarians that strong interpersonal skills are key elements to being effective communicators. *The Bremen Town Musicians* by the Brothers Grimm humbly demonstrates that successful collaboration among community partners builds strong and lasting alliances. To ensure well-trained professionals, Ruth Krauss' *Carrot Seed* shows librarians how to grow their own by mentoring staff from within; and at the 2003 ALA Annual Conference in Toronto, Ontario, Falconer's incomparable *Olivia* highlighted the importance of unyielding advocacy and effective public relations.

To illustrate the role of advocacy needed in children's librarians, the committee used letters from a colleague, Rosemary Wells' Ruby, from "Pardon Me for Being a Manager, Part II," and a letter from Olivia's new boss at the SuperDuper Public Library with her charge for advocacy.

Olivia as Advocate

Olivia's enthusiastic advocacy skills garnered the highest accolades from one of the most respected leadership mentors in the field and ultimately, a new job as library advocacy specialist at the SuperDuper Public Library. From her sprightly professionalism to her unabashed and magnetic personality to her fundraising and networking wonders—Olivia knows what it takes to lead!

Olivia's Letter of Reference (from Ruby) (aka Mary Fellows, manager, youth and family services, Upper Hudson Library System, Albany, New York)

*Penny Markey, Coordinator of Youth Services
SuperDuper Public Library*

Dear Penny Markey:

I am writing to tell you to hire Olivia to be your library advocacy specialist at SuperDuper Public Library. She is the best library advocacy specialist you are ever going to get. I should know. She came to the school where my little brother, Max, goes, and convinced the teachers to bring all the students to the public library. Olivia even managed to get Max to sit still and listen to stories, and he can be a real pill. Now he wants to go back to the SuperDuper Public Library every day.

You should hire Olivia because she is smart and strong and a pig of action—just like me, except that I am a rabbit, not a pig. In fact, Olivia shares lots of my best qualities: she has a clear vision of what she wants to accomplish, she communicates her wishes with directness, and she gets things done.

This pig also knows what's what and who's who. She knows which organizations would make good partners in the projects she dreams up. She knows who is in charge in those organizations. This plucky pig does not wait to be approached by them. There is no hoof-dragging for Olivia. She knows what she wants, and she asks for it. She's also generous in helping others with

their projects. People and animals of all kinds like to work with Olivia and seek her out for help and advice.

Olivia is comfortable speaking about public libraries and children on television and in front of large audiences. This poised pig is a natural in front of a crowd. You will not need to provide her a clothing allowance for these appearances, as she already has quite an extensive wardrobe suitable for public appearances.

Do not think Olivia is all red ballgowns and sailor suits. There is a sharp intellect between those bejeweled ears. Olivia is a master at finding, developing, and using statistics. She can persuade policy-makers and colleagues alike of the impact of children's services in public libraries. This perspicacious pig is also a whiz at finessing funders, using their money wisely, and getting more. She is adept at arguing for a fair share of the budget for children's services.

Did I mention that Olivia is good with children? Whether she's helping them research how to join the circus or joining in a search for a missing toy, Olivia is a perky pig who knows how to engage with children.

In addition to all her talent, Olivia has a reputation for being a pleasure to work with. Her good sense of humor, her even temper, her listening skills, and her ability to organize work have made this professional pig a respected supervisor.

In short, Penny Markey, Olivia is your perfect library advocacy specialist. There is no reason for you not to hire her . . . so you should.

*Sincerely,
Ruby*

Olivia's Charge of Advocacy

Dear Olivia,

We are pleased to offer you the new position of library advocacy specialist at the SuperDuper Public Library. I know that the children's services staff will be very glad to have you on board to assist them with this important work.

As you know "advocacy" is the function of speaking or writing in support of an idea or an issue. At the SuperDuper Public Library, you will have a multifaceted task. I know that your enthusiasm and energy will stand you in good stead as you come to your new job. You will be glad to know that you will have many hats to wear, as you look so attractive in them.

You will be responsible for being:

1. Olivia, advocate for library service to children and families in your organization

It is your job to define the role of children's services in your organization and work diligently to gain administrative approval for your initiatives. Stand firm in your efforts to ensure that children's services is allocated a fair share of resources and the budget.

To do this, you will need to understand how children's services fits within the organization as a whole and develop goals and objectives that fit the mission and stated goals of the library, thus providing children's services with credibility and viability. Learn about your library director and your library board, so you know what their biases are likely to be and how to approach them effectively for their support.

Do your homework; gather data based on your desired outcomes. You not only need to show how many books circulated and how many children attended library programs, but you need to know how these quantitative numbers answer the question "How did children's services make a difference in the lives of children and families in the community?"

Keep policymakers apprised of your successes and the ongoing accomplishments of the children's services department. Communication, communication, and communication are the words to keep in mind. Communicate to the policymakers in your library and in your community. And be sure that all members of the children's services staff and other community members can present the library story effectively as well.

2. Olivia, public library advocate

You will become the lead cheerleader of the SuperDuper Public Library booster club. Be prepared to speak about the benefits of the public library at groups throughout the community. Remind policymakers of the importance and value of their public libraries as well as the impact that various programs make in the quality of life in their community. Get out your missionary zeal and persuade various groups within the community that their library and children's services make a difference. It is important to keep the library vital and visible and relevant. You and your staff will also need to create and train other advocates to take your message into the community. You need to create a battalion of people (young and old) who spread the word to neighbors, colleagues, teachers, and parents. Have your data handy and remember to incorporate anecdotes and stories about actual success stories in your presentations.

The library circulates lots of children's books. Have you ever figured out how much it would cost the community if citizens had to buy all of those books themselves? Whew, that can be pretty big

bucks! Yes, and think about how you support the students after school in doing their homework. That is a real help for the students and parents in your community. Not to mention the service you provide to local teachers by helping kids understand homework assignments and providing resources for them to complete their work successfully. How do your programs open up new vistas? How do you promote multicultural understanding? I am sure that there are many other ideas that you will come up with to relate library services directly to the success of the children and families in the community.

3. Olivia, child advocate

The SuperDuper Public Library does not live in isolation. There are many community groups and organizations that work with children and families to improve their quality of life. Connect with those other organizations and team up to accomplish the same goals. Sometimes, there are existing networks among youth serving agencies that you should identify and join on behalf of the library.

Find out what is going on in your community. In Los Angeles County in California, there is a Children's Planning Council to bring resources together. Government departments and community-based agencies collaborate to create plans and improve the lives of children and families.

Sometimes the library can participate actively, like working with the parks and recreation department to get a joint grant to provide library-sponsored programs as part of after school latchkey programs at the park. Sometimes the library might consider policy changes, such as providing the mechanism for foster caregivers to get fine-free library cards for foster children.

The library can also be an information distributor, publicizing initiatives such as the California Safe Haven project, where mothers can leave unwanted infants at hospitals and fire stations with no ramifications.

Kids Day is August 13; let's let our partners know and see if they can support our efforts to get out the word. Can we work with our partners to identify childcare providers to come to a focus group that we plan as we develop specialized services for childcare providers?

Call for Referees

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

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

Now, Olivia, even as you get started on your new job, you need to stop and think about priorities. I know that you are a renaissance woman. You have displayed your versatility in the past as you have whirled through life going from one project to the next.

Stop . . . think . . . you need to set your priorities and know your own capacity and that of your staff.

It is better to do fewer projects and complete them. It is better to have a few successful accomplishments than to lose the library's credibility by not fulfilling commitments.

We look forward to having you on board. You can be sure that the SuperDuper Public Library will provide you with the necessary tools. Your halo and magic wand will be issued to you when you report on your first day of work.

Sincerely,
Penny Markey
Coordinator of Youth Services
County of Los Angeles Public Library
AKA SuperDuper Public Library

For more information, visit www.ala.org/pio/advocacy.

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National Storytelling Network honors Anne Pellowski

Anne Pellowski of Winona, Minnesota, is the recipient of the 2005 Lifetime Achievement ORACLE Award from the National Storytelling Network. The award is presented to individuals in the



storytelling community who have dedicated their lives to storytelling and demonstrated meritorious service to the National Storytelling Network. Pellowski worked at the New York Public Library from 1957–1966, where she was the children's librarian for the Office of Children's Services. In

1966, she established the Information Center on Children's Cultures for UNICEF. She continued in this position until 1983. In 1996, Pellowski began offering storytelling workshops abroad through The International Board of Books for Young People. Her publications include *The World of Storytelling* (H. W. Wilson, 1990), *The World of Children's Literature* (R. R. Bowker, 1967) and *Story Vine* (Macmillan, 1984).

A Travel Package for Book Lovers

Luxury Library Vacations

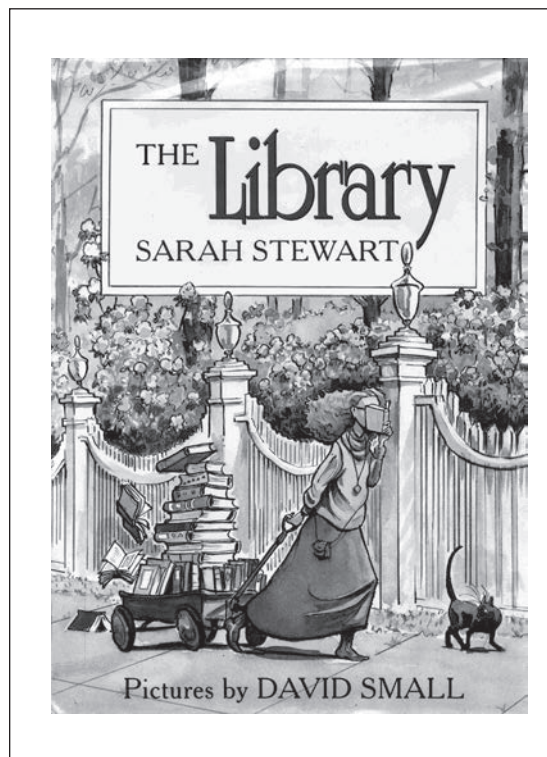
Megan Lynn Isaac

I'd like to vacation sometime in a library.

Despite the hundreds of hours I've logged in various libraries shelving books as an employee, scouring reference volumes for some scholarly assignment, or, most frequently, plundering the shelves to fulfill my own voracious appetite for stories, I've never really had enough time in the library. I always envied the children in books who managed to get locked into a library for a night like Garnet and Citronella in *Thimble Summer* by Elizabeth Enright, but these sorts of hapless adventurers never seem to have a flashlight, let alone a well-packed lunch bag to tide them over until opening time.

Other protagonists have tried to extend the wonder of the library in a more methodical fashion. Jane in *The Middle Moffat* by Eleanor Estes starts at the top of the first shelf determined to work her way through the entire collection, one volume at a time. But her first book turns out to be *The Story of Lumber* and the next *The Story of Cotton*, followed by *The Story of Sugar*, so she decides to hop around to the good ones, like *Heidi*, hoping that by the time she has finished she'll be able to read through the tedious ones too quickly to care how dull they might be. So, clearly, there are flaws in this approach too.

No doubt about it, a luxury library vacation would be the way to



The Library by Sarah Stewart,
illustrated by David Small

go for me. Just think how light my baggage would be since, for once, I wouldn't have to worry about packing enough books to see me through any rainy days or sleepless nights!

Choosing an itinerary would be the tricky part. I might want to go back to some old favorites, but the Villa Italia branch of the Lakewood, Colorado, library closed and shuttered its doors years ago. It was there I first discovered that L. Frank Baum's imaginative landscape stretched beyond Oz to include Mo and several other fantastic principalities, and that Carol Ryrie Brink had extended Caddie Woodlawn's adventures into a book called *Magical Melons*.

Or what about the lost but legendary library of ancient Alexandria? What an experience that would be! There are plenty of other still-extant possibilities, of course. The famously spiraling stacks of Seattle's newest library beckon appealingly, and I've never seen the glorious stone lions that grace New York City's most famous branch. Certainly they would both be worthy ports of call!

Megan Lynn Isaac is a former college professor. She lives with her family in Auburn, Alabama.

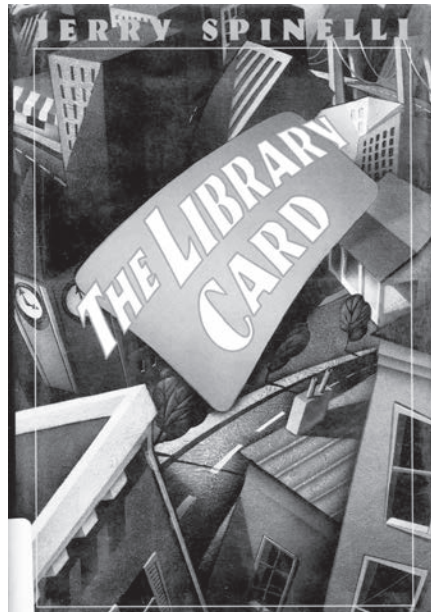
Yet, the libraries I most want to visit aren't on the map at all. They aren't filled with books, so much as inside the books themselves. They are the fictional libraries I've often read about in children's stories. It can't be an accident, I'm sure, that books so often celebrate the places where books are most deeply cherished.

These fictional libraries are filled with magic of various varieties. I'm not sure exactly how to find it, but somewhere in the library of Edgar Eager's *Seven Day Magic*, near the bottom of the fairy tale section there is an unassuming book. It is small, red, and rather shabby-looking, but the volumes shelved above it have been dripping spells and enchantments onto it for years, and it will grant wishes, at least it did for the five children in the story, and I can't help but hope it would do the same for me. Some libraries have even more spectacular collections of magic books. The ones that line the shelves at Hogwarts Academy in J. K. Rowling's tales simply crackle with the stuff! When Harry braves the library at night in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* to search for information about the mysterious Nicolas Flamel he passes books with peeling and faded gold letters, suspiciously stained volumes, ones that whisper, and worse—ones that scream. Here's a famous library where settling for the guided tour during daylight hours might be my best bet.

Jon Scieszka's library in *The Time Warp Trio: Summer Reading Is Killing Me* is thick with a very different sort of magic. The Hoboken summer reading list for the first through eighth grades has come to life and all the characters have headed to the library. Things are a real mess in the stacks. The villains clearly have the upper hand. Sam, Joe, and Fred are appalled to discover Mrs. Twit tying up Mary Poppins and Encyclopedia Brown. The rest of the good characters are being herded into cages built out of shelves. Only after some very quick thinking, augmented by a good chase scene and lots of flying volumes, do the plot lines begin to fall back in place. This library might not be the tidiest or best organized stop on the tour, but who could resist the opportunity to join forces with the likes of Pippi Longstocking and Frodo—even

if the Horned King and the White Witch are lurking near the checkout desk.

Other libraries are more noteworthy for their atmosphere than their collections. Maud Hart Lovelace never gives much space over to describing the library of Deep Valley, Minnesota, but the quiet warmth of its rooms provides a haven for her heroine in one volume after another as Betsy grows up. When she reaches high school in *Betsy in Spite of Herself* and *Betsy and Joe*, the library plays its greatest role. Under the gently smiling eyes of the librarian, Miss Sparrow, Betsy



The Library Card by Jerry Spinelli

and Joe Willard find common ground in their shared love of books and writing. Here, social background and popularity don't matter, and slowly their romance unfolds.

Much as I love books and really can't imagine a library with too large a collection, I must admit that some of the most appealing ones to visit are the smaller and more personal libraries. Some of these come on wheels like the wonderful bookmobile in Judy Sierra's *Wild About Books* that zips through the zoo enticing a boa constrictor with a volume called *Crictor*, baby bunnies with *Goodnight Moon*, and the elephants with *Dumbo*. Or the extra-tough bookmobile that bounces over bridges and careens down the curviest mountain roads to

bring short stories and tall tales to the singing, dancing, and book-loving critters of Philemon Sturges' witty rendition of *She'll Be Comin' 'Round the Mountain*.

Other small libraries are labors of love like the heaping collection assembled by Elizabeth Brown and donated to the town in Sarah Stewart's rhyming picture book *The Library*. My favorite little library, however, is Miss Franny's in Kate DiCamillo's novel *Because of Winn-Dixie*. Miss Franny is the only person I've ever heard of to receive an entire library as a birthday present, though of course she is also the only little girl I've ever heard of who had the imagination to ask for one! Just consider the possibilities in having your own library. The fantasy section of mine would be particularly well developed; there would be a special shelf of smudged books that were intended to be read while eating chocolates or buttered popcorn; and it would always be open at bedtime, just when I'm most likely to discover that I don't have anything appealing and handy to read! I'm not sure that Miss FranNew York runs hers along quite such idiosyncratic principles, but I know she has a special policy for bears who borrow books. An afternoon touring her domain would be time well-spent.

As every traveler knows, though, it isn't just exciting locations that make a trip memorable, it is also the people you meet along the way. Fortunately, the libraries in children's books are filled with wonderful librarians who rarely exhibit any personal flaws worse than overzealousness. Miss Lotta Scales who stars in Carmen Agra Deedy's *The Library Dragon* takes her job guarding the books very seriously, though she can be charmed by a good dragon tale and an enthusiastic roomful of children. Even more memorable is Mrs. Spud Murphy from Eoin Colfer's *The Legend of Spud Murphy*, who restricts children to the junior section with a sneaky rigidity that almost forces recalcitrant readers to lose themselves in a book just to spite her. Not to mention that she's got some clever tricks with rubber book stamps that alone are enough to make me stop in for a visit and a lesson.

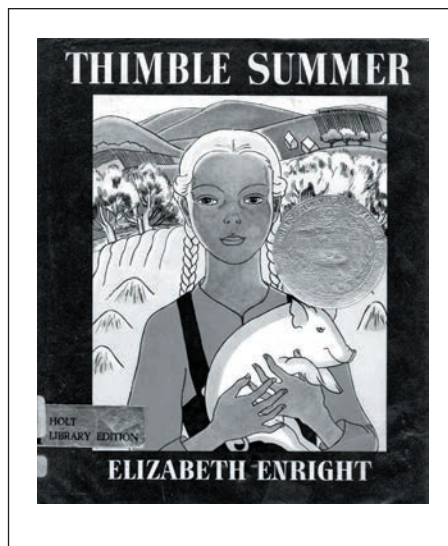
Fictional librarians, however, just like the traditional stereotype, tend toward

a sort of quiet cleverness. I particularly admire the nameless librarian in Eric Houghton's *Walter's Magic Wand*. Although she'd rather he didn't shuffle her index cards or use her biggest dictionaries to build castles, she doesn't lose her cool for a second when Walter uses his wand to conjure a band of rowdy pirates—she simply barricades herself and the other children in the room behind the desk and shoots pencils at them with a rubber band. Tigers and oceans are no match for her either. She probably went to the same library school as the head librarian from Hazel Hutchins' *Nicholas at the Library*. Nicholas' librarian has a manual half a meter thick and one-meter wide that helps her handle the special problems that seem only to crop up in the children's room. When Nicholas discovers a small chimpanzee who has fallen out of his tale, she accompanies him through jungles, down ski slopes, inside fairy tale cottages, and from cover to cover of every book they can think of that might be missing a small chimpanzee. Despite her ladylike demeanor, this librarian is one intrepid adventurer.

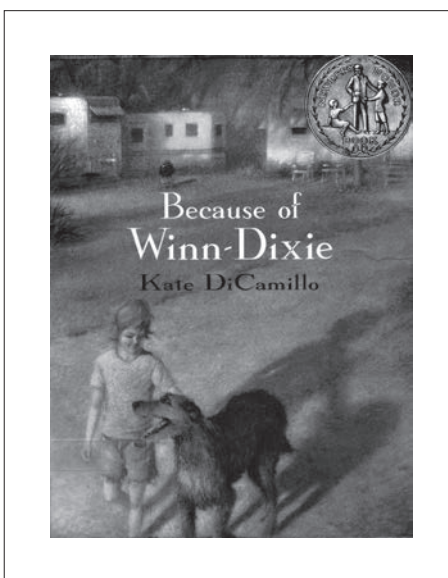
Other fictional librarians show the real truth about the demands of the profession and the courage of the people who weave in and out of the stacks. I'd like to spend an afternoon with the reluctant pioneer Lucy Whipple in the room over the general store in Lucky Diggins, California, where she makes her final appearance in Karen Cushman's *The Ballad of Lucy Whipple*. Her library isn't much to look at—just a copy of *Ivanhoe*, a handful of books on manners and household decoration, and a few other scattered volumes—but she treasures every one and is responsible for starting a mighty fine subscription library for the gold miners and everyone else who follows them West.

My very favorite fictional librarian is another fine iconoclast created by Garth Nix in *Lirael*. Lirael's job in the library of the Clayr shows off the true mettle resplendent, if sometimes hidden, in every good librarian. In her world, the job is recognized in all its dignity and danger. She arms and dresses herself for work with the pageantry of an epic hero because books are dangerous as well as

precious things; even the most experienced librarian can't know ahead of time when a simple search might transform itself into an arduous quest.



Thimble Summer by Elizabeth Enright



Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate DiCamillo

I don't know where I can book a tour of libraries and the splendid people that keep them, but I do know where to start looking. Inside Jerry Spinelli's collection of short stories, *The Library Card*, there is a small blue rectangle, an unassuming magic library card that one by one takes Mongoose, Brenda, Sonseray, and April to the very library that is perfect for him or her. I think this fantastic library card

would be just the passport I need to get started on my trip—surely it could take me to all the libraries I want to visit. The first thing I'll have to do, though, is make a trip to my own local library to ask a librarian where I can find it. ☺

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A Storied Career

At 70, Uri Shulevitz Isn't Slowing Down

Sharon Korbeck Verbeten

Whether he's writing about an urban snow scene (as in the 1998 Caldecott Honor Book *Snow*) or following the footsteps of a twelfth-century traveler (*The Travels of Benjamin of Tudela*, released last spring), Uri Shulevitz makes sure young readers feel right at home.

That's because avid research and a love of "poetic" writing drive this New York author, who has received the Caldecott Award once (for *The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship* retold by Arthur Ransome, 1968) and the Honor Book designation twice (for *Snow* and *The Treasure*, 1979) in his storied career.

Shulevitz, whose first book was published in 1963, celebrated his seventieth birthday earlier this year—eagerly awaiting the release of *Benjamin* and already finishing up a "goodnight story" picture book for Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

"My love of stories has to do, to a great extent, with my mother," said Shulevitz, who, with his family, fled Warsaw, Poland, during the 1939 blitz. Young Uri was only four, and the family spent the following eight years wandering, eventually landing in Paris in 1947.



Uri Shulevitz

Shulevitz said his mother had a thirst for learning. "That is something that really played an important role in my love of stories. I developed a great love and respect for stories." In addition to words, Shulevitz loved drawing, even at a young age. He recalled his parents telling him that as an infant, he would reach out of his crib and draw abstract art on the wall with a pencil.

The Shulevitz family moved to Israel when Uri was in his teens, and he later studied at the Art Institute of Tel Aviv. At fifteen, he was the youngest to exhibit in a group drawing show at the Tel Aviv Museum.

Even though his childhood began amid bombs and unrest, Shulevitz doesn't think his books have followed a particular theme. "If something seeps in, it was something I was unaware of," he said.

Shulevitz simply says he writes about the topics he is interested in, not focusing on writing for a particular audience. "Sometimes I wonder whether anyone is interested. You have to go by what you feel. "If one tries to second guess somebody else, one is sort of in no-man's land. You may end up talking to nobody," he said.

Fortunately for Shulevitz, then, he's happy with writing for himself—even though many of his books have received critical acclaim. "I do love what I'm doing, and that keeps me going," he said.

The acclaim came early in his career. He has vivid memories of receiving the

early-morning call telling him that *The Fool of the World* had won the 1969 Caldecott Medal.

“I had gotten up relatively early,” Shulevitz recalled. He said that was an unusual occurrence, since he usually worked until the wee hours and slept late. So when his editor called and said,

“Congratulations!” Shulevitz thought he was being lauded for getting up early!

It was humbling to receive the honor, but Shulevitz said, “I was always striving for artistic excellence.” After winning such an award, he said, “you have a certain responsibility to live up to a certain level.”

Shulevitz now lives in New York, writing and painting, honing his craft as much for himself as for his readers.

“Much comes out through the process of work. You don’t know what’s going to happen.” ☞

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Q&A with Uri Shulevitz

Uri Shulevitz discusses his new book, *The Travels of Benjamin of Tudela: Through Three Continents in the Twelfth Century* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005)

Who was Benjamin of Tudela?

Benjamin, a native of Tudela in northern Spain, was the greatest Jewish traveler of the Middle Ages. He left Tudela around 1159, traveling for fourteen years through much of the then-known world, returning to Spain around 1173.

Why is he important?

He was active in the second half of the twelfth century, a period of upheaval, the Crusades and the awakening and emerging of Europe from the Dark Ages. He is the first European to tell about a mysterious, faraway land called China . . . Benjamin was also the first European to speak of the sect of assassins, who, under the influence of hashish, were blindly following the orders of their prophet-leader and going on suicide missions, showing that today’s suicide jihadists had historical ancestors.

Why did you create a book about Benjamin?

I’ve traveled extensively—as a child, out of necessity; as an adult, out of desire. So there is a strong personal connection for me in terms of sharing a feeling for travel with Benjamin. I also found the subject matter fascinating. As an author and illustrator, I had a deeply felt response to the material and was intrigued by the possibility of telling Benjamin’s story through words and illustration.

How did receiving a Guggenheim fellowship help you research your book?

It enabled me to follow in Benjamin’s footsteps part of the way. I visited Tudela, his hometown, and saw the Ebro River, where his journey began. I traveled to Spain, the south of France, part of Italy. I went to Istanbul, Jerusalem, and Cairo. I found that very little of the twelfth century is left.

I did find, however, the remnants of the ancient walls that surrounded Constantinople, and the walls of Jerusalem. And although the twelfth-century houses no longer exist, I did visit narrow streets in the old medieval quarters of Barcelona and Genoa, among other cities, which gave me a feeling what things might have been like. That guided me in making the pictures and in writing the story.

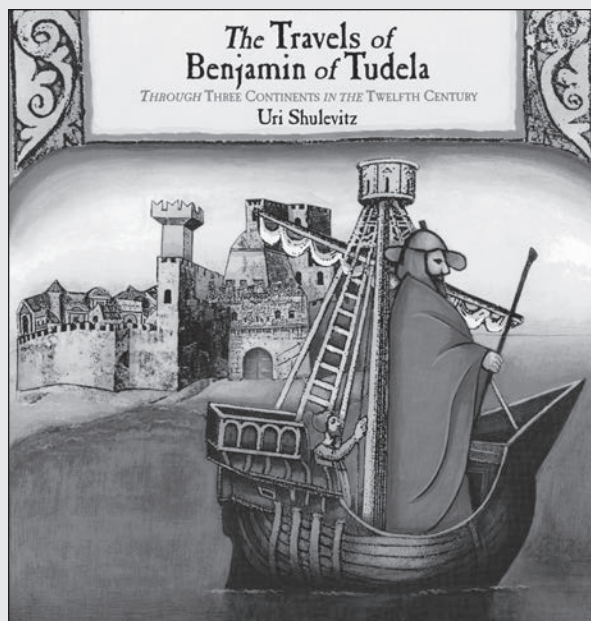
Your illustrations have a medieval feel to them. How did you achieve that?

Through research, I found how few pictorial materials of the twelfth century there were. Consequently, I had to supplement what I found of the twelfth century with pictures of earlier periods where appropriate, and as a last resort, I had to use later periods as well. One never finds all one needs.

I’ve therefore filled the gaps by relying on imagination and the feeling for the period. We’ll never know with absolute certainty what things looked like then; the closest we could come would be, at best, an approximation.

Why did you create a book about a real historical figure when fantasy books for young readers are so popular?

I love fantasy, but fantasy can get repetitious. Reality is so multifaceted, so unexpected, and so much richer than anything we can imagine.



Book Reviews

Butler, Rebecca P. *Copyright for Teachers and Librarians*.
Feather, John, and Paul Sturges, eds. *International Encyclopedia of Information and Library Science*, 2nd ed.
Fiore, Carole D. *Fiore's Summer Library Reading Program Handbook*.
Hughes-Hassell, Sandra and Jacqueline C. Mancall. *Collection Management for Youth: Responding to the Needs of Learners*.
Moore, Mary Y. *The Successful Library Trustee Handbook*.
Woodward, Jeannette. *Creating the Customer-Driven Library: Building on the Bookstore Model*.

Tools for Librarians: Books that Help Us Do Our Jobs

Kathryn Miller and Junko Yokota

The professional books reviewed in this issue feature publications that help librarians do their jobs. They provide information on copyright laws and collection management; they include an encyclopedia of information and library science, a handbook for trustees and one on summer reading programs, as well as a book on considering the bookstore model to serve "customers." Although most books we review focus on "helping us do our jobs," these titles help us in an administrative role more than in a programming role (with the exception of the summer reading program book).

Butler, Rebecca P. *Copyright for Teachers and Librarians*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2004. 248p. \$59.95. ISBN 1-555-70500-6.

Copyright law and its exceptions work to aid authors, owners, users, and libraries to use information in an equitable fashion. Copyright, however, is complicated and often not fully understood by teachers or library professionals. Butler makes copyright easy to understand in this book. Chapters begin with a clear introduction to the specific copyright topic, questions that are often asked about it (and answers to those questions), and guidelines on how the user can avoid copyright problems. Teachers will appreciate the easy-to-follow guidelines on public domain, the Internet and copyright law, and whether such

materials such as videos, DVDs, or CDs can legally be used in the classroom. Librarians will pay particular attention to the chapters on obtaining permissions, fair use, and multimedia and copyright law. Included in this book are newer components to the copyright laws, including distance learning and copying of music and audio files. Together, librarians and teachers can use this book to learn how integral understanding copyright law is to the entire educational experience. Flow charts illustrate how individual parts of copyright law work, making it easy to see why some uses of information are legal while others are not. This is a must-have addition to all library collections, helping any type of educator better understand the value and importance of copyright, as well as the consequences that may happen when the rules of information ownership and permission-based access are not known or simply ignored.

Feather, John, and Paul Sturges, eds. *International Encyclopedia of Information and Library Science*, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2003. 792p. \$300. ISBN 0-4152-5901-0.

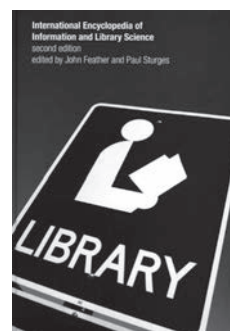
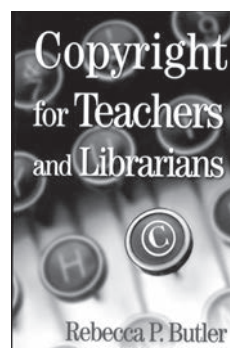
Librarianship is a field that has responded to and changed with the use of technology. This book presents readers with traditional library terms, as well as new terms that are part of our trans-

forming profession. The alphabetical encyclopedia includes basic definitions for such library concepts as "categorization" and "subject heading." Definitions often include cross references to relevant articles within the encyclopedia. Short articles authored by librarians from many American academic libraries and international libraries effectively describe library terms and offer current applications of them.

Although the encyclopedia effectively guides readers through best-practice uses of such traditional library terms as "library security systems" and "scholarly communication," the innovative library terms added to the encyclopedia's second edition justify the addition of this reference resource to all library collections. The encyclopedia's entries contain clear definitions and practical applica-

tions of the given term, helping readers grasp each library concept. The frequent inclusion of useful Web sites and further reading suggestions aid the reader in fully understanding the material. A comprehensive index provides easy access to the encyclopedia's contents. Also, the abbreviation list of library terms is a valuable resource. Keep in mind, however, that with quickly changing technology, this (or any printed encyclopedia) will not include the most up-to-date technological terms.

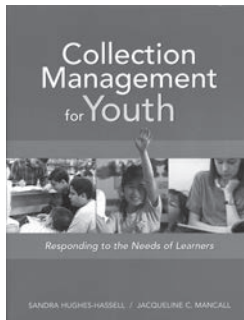
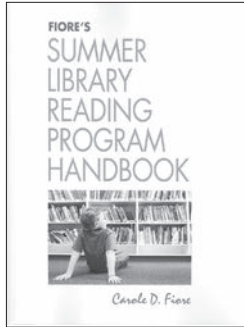
The encyclopedia gives a wide view of



librarianship, making it a useful resource for understanding the depth of the library profession. Local library concepts and terms are not included in this international publication.

Fiore, Carole D. *Fiore's Summer Library Reading Program Handbook*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2005. 312p. \$65. ISBN 1-55570-513-8.

Supporting students as readers is an enormous challenge, and librarians are given the lead opportunity of providing rich reading experiences, especially during the summer months. Fiore's book is both a resource book and a handbook that offers straightforward guidelines on running a successful summer library reading program. Rich as a source of ideas and practical as a manual, this book provides the widest range of information needed, from planning to implementation. It includes reproducible forms for sign-ups, book recording, and certificates of achievement. There are templates for planning and concrete suggestions for running the program.

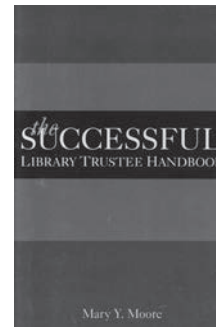


Hughes-Hassell, Sandra and Jacqueline C. Mancall. *Collection Management for Youth: Responding to the Needs of Learners*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2005. 103p. \$35. ISBN 0-8389-0894-2.

A guidebook on learner-centered collection management techniques, *Collection Management for Youth* focuses on how a youth collection must adapt to the specific, changing needs of its local learning community. Connecting the library media center based on *Information Power* guidelines to collection management, this book examines the theoretical foundation of collection development, including how paradigm shifts in educational theory impact collection development strategies. Also the strategies and tools used to develop a "Collaborative Access Environment," which involves the learner, the teacher, and the broad learning community, are included. Budget, selection, and policy management are real-life experiences and professional strategies shared by Hughes-Hassell and Mancall. The authors' expertise is shared further through the book's inclusion of reproducible collection development worksheets. These pages can

be used to open collection development discussions with likely partners, making necessary conversations about the library's needs, goals, and abilities easy to begin and follow-through on.

This book is an eye-opening guide to how education is changing and how library media specialists must recognize this and adapt their approach to accommodate new learning and teaching styles. The book stresses the value and importance that a learning community has on collection management. Library media specialists, public librarians, and teachers can use this guidebook to address how their library's books interact, complement, and fully support the learning



experiences of their students, faculty, and parents.

Moore, Mary Y. *The Successful Library Trustee Handbook*. Chicago: ALA, 2004. 112p. \$32. ISBN 0-8389-0891-8.

Look behind a successful library and you will find effective library leaders, both trained library professionals and members of the board working together in synergistic fashion. New library board members, however, may be overwhelmed by the business of the library and the jargon often used by librarians—"Welcome to Your Public Library Board, tonight's agenda will concentrate on ILL procedures within the System, paying particular attention to how we can effectively use the OPAC to catalog EDs and original OCLC records." *The Successful Library Trustee Handbook* works as a guide for new trustees to effectively step into that leadership role for their public library.

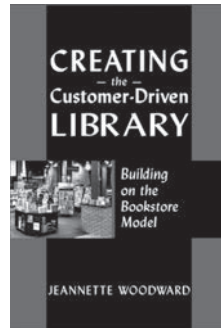
The book includes basic library policies and standards including The Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statement, and useful Web sites for library trustees—all resources that help the trustee understand the principles of the library profession. Current legislative measures that impact the rights of library users, such as the USA Patriot Act, are also included. This material, all contained in this easy-to-carry book, is important for the trustee to understand the background and challenges of the complex library organization they are now leading. The book speaks to all board members and provides ideas on how

to contribute successfully to the library's leadership team. Basic issues, including the trustees' role in the library, the library's expectations of the trustees, meeting do's and don'ts, and effective library policies are all included. Seasoned trustees will find themselves returning to this book to review library strategic planning; program, service and staff evaluation; director hiring (and firing); and budget development, including fund-raising ideas. This is an approachable, ninety-five-page handbook, packed with great information. It acts as a road map for library trustees to begin a successful leadership

experience with their public library. A recommended addition to the reference shelf of public libraries throughout the United States, this book is also a good resource for the library director to give to new trustees.

Woodward, Jeannette. *Creating the Customer-Driven Library: Building on the Bookstore Model.* Chicago: ALA, 2004. 256p. \$38. ISBN 0-8389-0888-8.

Why are people flocking to bookstores and spending hours there? How do bookstores establish an ambience that is conducive to leisurely perusing? How do they market their books? These and many other questions are explored in this well-written book that offers insights on how highly successful



bookstores operate and how some of those ideas might appropriately cross over to libraries. Retailers have allocated a lot of time and resources on market research so they can attract and retain customers. How can libraries likewise lure patrons and entice them to linger? Many of the suggestions are low-cost or no-cost; the ideas center on showcasing services more than on making costly facilities changes. In fact, it is "customer service" that drives this book.

The book covers strategies such as focusing on the bottom-line, using technology to enhance services, establishing ambience, creating signage, using effective promotion and publicity, and locating resources. Examples are drawn from real bookstores and

libraries; photographs help clarify what is being described. Libraries are encouraged to identify local needs, utilize staff talent, and create a customer-responsive library. Centering on the customer can help place the library squarely at the center of the community's life. This book, filled with practical tips, will help libraries achieve this goal. ☺

Kathryn Miller is an academic librarian at National-Louis University in Evanston, Illinois. She completed her work as a certified public school librarian at Dominican University.

Junko Yokota is a professor of education at National-Louis University. She completed her school library certification at The University of North Texas and was a librarian in Arlington, Texas. She has been a library patron, a librarian, a library consultant, and a library trustee.

OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, continued from page 3

to the committees for implementation. Fox stressed that providing open access to common information helps create a successful relationship based on trust and transparency between the ALSC board and staff and its members. This orientation set the bar high for ALSC leadership.

The board is responding to Fox's challenge as we focus on several major initiatives to energize the division. The revision of ALSC strategic directions is on the table. The board and task force charged with the revision are working with consultants from Tecker Consultants to align our long-range plan with *ALA Ahead to 2010*. Complete information about *ALA Ahead to 2010* is available at www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/governingdocs/aheadto2010/aheadto2010.htm. You will have the opportunity to review the ALSC plan as it develops.

The ALSC @ your library task force will unveil the division's exciting new national advocacy campaign soon. The focus is on how libraries support students' school successes. The task force charged to develop the *dream* graduate library school curriculum for prospective children's librarians will also be releasing

its recommendations. This task force resulted directly from member concerns emphatically expressed at the leadership meeting at Annual Conference 2004. I can't wait for the reaction from the ALA Committee on Accreditation. This curriculum will not include instruction on how to make story time nametags in the shape of teddy bears or apples; it will reflect the professional competencies expected of contemporary children's librarians.

As I started to think about this final column of my presidency, I planned to reflect on the past year, but there's no time. ALSC is moving rapidly ahead with an invigorating agenda. Every committee is thoroughly engaged in the business of the association. Annual Conference attendees had a plethora of well-planned and presented ALSC programs vying for their attention. An energetic president, Ellen Fader, has just taken office while new board and committee members bring their perspectives to the division's business. I shall have become a past president! But I expect to continue working with you as this amazing association of like-minded people boldly moves forward, building on our tradition and anticipating exciting challenges. We are the best! ☺

Preparing a Best Practices Piece for Children and Libraries

Whenever children's librarians get together, the conversation usually turns to discussions of favorite books, new or old, or some new service. When it's suggested that someone turn that information into an article for *Children and Libraries*, often the response is "Who me?" "I can't write," or "I don't have the time."

The CAL Advisory Board is here to tell you, "Yes you can!" We're looking for articles of two hundred to five hundred words sharing your successes, your improvements on old ideas, or even good ideas that needed some adjusting.

Here are a couple of tips to getting published in *CAL*:

- If you had to write up a summary report for your supervisors or a grant, you've already written the meat of the article.
- Compose the article with a coworker or friend—you'll both see your names in print.

Board major actions

Electronic actions

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

Voted, to co-sponsor in name only a program on Best Practices for Library Accessibility and Universal Design to be presented by the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies at the 2005 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago (May 2005).

To become a “read only” subscriber to ALSCBoard and stay on top of the news, visit www.ala.org/alsc and click on the “Stay Connected” graphic near the bottom of the page.

Annual Conference 2005 actions

Voted, to support the development of the ALSC @ your library Advocacy Campaign with a budget of \$10,000 spread over the current fiscal year and the 2006 fiscal year.

Voted, to approve a Children’s Science Programming Award.

Voted, to approve the establishment of a student rate for the 2006 ALSC National Institute in Pittsburgh and also the establishment of a higher registration rate for late registrants.

Voted, to approve: the use of interest

income from the Bill Morris Endowment to fund \$2,500 for 2006 preconference speakers and \$3,000 for leadership training by Tecker Consultants at Midwinter 2006; and the use of \$2,500 from the Friends of ALSC to fund 2006 preconference speakers. Funding sources will be recognized in the publicity and marketing pieces for designated events.

Voted, to charge the Membership Committee with the development of membership promotional materials with a budget of \$800. The ALSC Membership Committee chair will discuss YALSA’s membership development strategies with the YALSA Membership Committee chair and work with John Chrastka, ALA’s Membership Marketing Manager.

Voted, to add the following to the Friends of ALSC donation solicitation card: a Belpré Endowment designation (pending REFORMA’s approval), and a membership designation to ascertain whether a donor is a member of ALSC, REFORMA, or “other.”

ALSC seeks award applicants

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

- **ALSC/BWI Reading Program Grant.** The \$3,000 ALSC/BWI Reading Program Grant is designed to encourage outstanding summer reading program development by providing funding to implement such a program. The applicant must plan and present an outline for a theme-based

summer reading program in a public library. The committee encourages proposals with innovative ways to encourage involvement of children with physical or mental disabilities.

- **ALSC/Sagebrush Education Resources Literature Program Grant.** This award, made possible through an annual grant from Sagebrush Education Resources, provides a grant of \$1,000 to support an ALSC member’s attendance at the 2006 Annual Conference in New Orleans. The award is given to a children’s librarian who has developed and implemented a unique reading or literature program for children (infants through age 14) that brings children and books together to develop life-long reading habits.
- **Bechtel Fellowship.** Midcareer librarians with a minimum of eight years experience working with children are encouraged to apply for a Louise Seaman Bechtel Fellowship to finance a month of study at the Baldwin Library of Historical Children’s Literature at the University of Florida in Gainesville. The \$4,000 fellowship is for travel and living expenses during the period of study. A mentor will be assigned upon request.
- **Distinguished Service Award.** ALSC members are invited to nominate one of their fellow members to be the recipient of the ALSC Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes a member who has made significant contributions to and had an impact on library services to children. Nominees

may be practicing librarians in a public or school library, a library or information science educator, a member of the library press, or an editor or other employee of a publishing house. The individual may be active or retired. The recipient receives \$1,000 and an engraved pin at the ALSC membership meeting during the ALA Annual Conference.

- **Penguin Young Readers Group Award.** This award consists of four \$600 awards presented to children's librarians to enable them to attend the ALA Annual Conference for the first time. The 2006 Annual Conference will be held in New Orleans. The recipients must be ALSC members, work directly with children, and have one to ten years of library experience.
- **Maureen Hayes Author/Illustrator Visit Award.** Established in 2005 with funding from Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing to honor Maureen Hayes, former director of library services for Atheneum, this award pays the honorarium and travel for an author or illustrator's visit to a library. Maximum amount of the award is \$4,000. The award will be given for three years, beginning in 2006.

For more information about each award or to download award applications, visit the ALSC Web site at www.ala.org/alsc and click on Awards & Scholarships—Professional Awards. To request a form by mail, send a postcard to ALSC, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; or e-mail alsc@ala.org. Deadline for all professional award applications is **December 1, 2005**.

Your suggestions welcome

ALSC members are welcome to suggest titles for the 2006 media awards and for the 2007 Wilder Award.

- The **Newbery Medal** is given to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children. Please send recommendations with full bibliographic information to **Barbara Barstow** at

bbarstow@cuyahoga.lib.oh.us.

- The **Caldecott Medal** is given to the illustrator of the most distinguished American picture book for children. Please send recommendations with full bibliographic information to **Gratia J. Banta** at gjb@gratiaarts.com.
- The **Sibert Medal**, sponsored by Bound to Stay Bound Books, and named in honor of the company's longtime president Robert F. Sibert, is given to the author of the most distinguished informational book for children. Please send recommendations with full bibliographic information to **Kathy Simonetta** at ksimonetta@itpld.lib.il.us.
- The **Pura Belpré Award**, cosponsored by ALSC and REFORMA, is presented to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth. Please send suggestions with full bibliographic information to **Barbara Scotto** at barbara_scotto@brookline.mec.edu.
- The **Andrew Carnegie Medal**, supported by an endowment from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, honors an outstanding video production for children. Please send suggestions with full bibliographic information to **Susan Pine** at spine@nypl.org.
- The **Mildred L. Batchelder Award** is a citation given to an American publisher for a children's book considered to be the most outstanding of those books originally published in a foreign language in a foreign country and subsequently translated into English and published in the United States. Please send recommendations with full bibliographic information to **Karen Breen** at Kbreen@optonline.net.
- The **Theodor Seuss Geisel Award** is given to the authors and illustrators of the most distinguished contribution to the body of American children's literature known as beginning reader books. Please send sug-

gestions with full bibliographic information to **Caroline Ward** at cward@fergusonlibrary.org.

- The **Laura Ingalls Wilder Award** is given in alternate years to an author or illustrator whose books, published in the United States, over a period of years, made a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children. Please send suggestions for the 2007 award to **Roger Sutton** at rsutton@hbook.com.

Pittsburgh hosts ALSC

The 2006 ALSC National Institute will be held at the Hilton Pittsburgh, September 14–16, 2006. Plan to join us for this biennial event that features stimulating continuing education workshops; engaging speakers, including top-name children's book authors and illustrators; and professional networking opportunities. According to attendee evaluations, the 2004 institute in Minneapolis was a resounding success! Don't miss your chance in 2006 to reenergize and enjoy the camaraderie of library colleagues. As institute plans progress, information will be shared on ALSC-L discussion list and the ALSC Web site.

Great Reads

ALA's Guide to Best Reading in 2005 (from ALSC, *Booklist*, RUSA, and YALSA) was released last spring. The guidebook includes such reading lists as "Notable Children's Books," "Notable Books," "Editor's Choice," and "Best Books for Young Adults." The materials are camera-ready and can be used to create brochures and bookmarks for unlimited distribution. The price is \$34.95 (non-members); \$31.45 (ALA members). To order, visit the ALA Store online at www.alastore.ala.org.

New home for El Día

ALSC is now the national center for *El día de los niños/El día de los libros* (Day of the Child/Day of the Book), also known as *Día*. Through a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, ALSC will

annually coordinate with other national organizations, including REFORMA—the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking, to promote the celebration.

ALSC plans to initiate communication and education efforts that promote *Día* to families across the United States. The new grant will fund education programs, Web site design and maintenance, a tenth anniversary *Día* celebration in 2006, and national mailings. Previous funding from the Kellogg Foundation was used to create and distribute brochures in English and Spanish and create a universal state-wide model and tools for librarians.

Día brings together children, books, languages, and cultures. It is both a daily commitment and an annual celebration every April 30 of the joys and wonders of childhood and the importance of literacy in the lives of families. *Día's* vision is to spread “bookjoy” every day by linking children from all languages and cultures with books and celebrating together across the country on April 30. Its goals are to honor children, their languages, and culture; to encourage reading and literacy; and to promote library collections and programs that reflect our plurality.

“April 30, and every day, is a day to celebrate childhood and books in all our lives,” said outgoing ALSC President Gretchen Wronka. “ALSC is proud to be the center for *Día* activities, and we look forward to partnering with REFORMA and other organizations on those activities. We thank the Kellogg Foundation for its support.”

El día de los niños/El día de los libros is an enhancement of Children’s Day, which began in 1925 as a result of the first World Conference for the Well Being of Children in Geneva, Switzerland, and was designated as a day to bring attention to the importance and well-being of children. It was designated by the United Nations as November 20, by Unicef as April 23, and by Mexico as April 30 (*Día del Niño*), to name a few. In 1996 Pat Mora, acclaimed author of books for children and adults, proposed linking the celebration of childhood and children with literacy.

“How exciting that ALSC is welcoming the family literacy initiative *El día de los niños/El día de los libros!* ALA and a nation of committed librarians—what a grand home!” Mora said.

For more *Día* information and resources, including a list of bilingual children’s books, visit the ALSC Web site at www.ala.org/alsc and the Texas Library Association at www.texasdia.org.

Egoff Remembered

Sheila Agnes Egoff died on May 22, 2005. Over her long career, she served as a children’s librarian, professor of children’s literature, and critic and advocate of children’s literature. Egoff graduated from the University of Toronto and worked at the Children’s Room of the Toronto Public Library. She was instrumental in bringing the British Osborne Collection of Early Children’s Books to the Toronto Public Library and was the collection’s first curator. Egoff was the first full-time tenured professor of children’s literature

at a Canadian university, the University of British Columbia. She also was the first children’s literature critic from Canada to be recognized internationally. Egoff delivered the 1979 May Hill Arbutnot Honor Lecture.

Brown Resigns

After four years of service, Malore I. Brown resigned in July from her position as ALSC executive director to pursue other opportunities. During her time at ALSC, Brown presided over two successful ALSC National Institutes in 2002 and 2004, and has been instrumental in the early planning stages of the 2006 institute. She oversaw ALSC’s transition to a new division journal, *Children and Libraries*, and an updated logo and identity. She wrote successful grant proposals, which led to the creation and production of *El día de los niños/El día de los libros* brochures in both English and Spanish, and to the selection of ALSC as the national home for the annual *Día* observation.

Brown cultivated preexisting relationships between ALSC and organizations such as PBS and First Book, and fostered new relationships with The Boys and Girls Clubs of America, National Kids Day, and Toon Disney. She served as ALA staff liaison for the Children’s Book Council/ALA Joint Committee and on the First Book Advisory Council. She fostered a collegial, communicative, and productive atmosphere in the ALSC office. We wish her great success in all her future endeavors. ☺

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INCOMING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, continued from page 4

For ALSC, it does appear to be the best of times. Our office is completely staffed for the first time in over a year and a half. Our staff is poised to help our member leaders develop and implement a new strategic plan that parallels ALA's *Ahead to 2010* plan, which is scheduled to be adopted at the 2005 Annual Conference. Deputy Director Aimee Strittmatter, who joined our staff in April, will be devising new ways to bring continuing education to those who want to improve their skills in working with children. I've joined your last two presidents in peppering our many committees and task forces with bright

new members who bring fresh energy to our work. Task forces are creating or revising manuals so that committees can work efficiently and exploring new concepts such as creating a mentoring network to help new ALSC members feel at home.

We have started planning for the next National Institute in the fall 2006 in Pittsburgh. Your newly elected officers, who join the ALSC Board at the end of the 2005 Annual Conference, offer commitment and the energy to make ALSC the best it can be. ALSC's greatness rests in its members, so get or remain involved;

learn new skills through our publications or conference programs; and make new friends as you serve on a committee—there are even ways to contribute as a “virtual” committee member if you cannot attend Annual Conference. Let your vision and voice be heard by telling your board or office staff how you want to see ALSC grow in the next year. Finally, we can all bring a sense of perspective and humor to these tasks. Remember, when it seems to be the worst of times, the best of times is right around the corner. ☺

GEISEL, continued from page 41

Applying the guidelines, books published as picture books and easy readers are eligible, if they function successfully as beginning readers.

Schulman recalled that Geisel always insisted that every noun and action be depicted in the art. “He wanted the art to function as clues to the text, to reinforce the content of the text,” Schulman said. So it is fitting that the award criteria

reflect the importance of illustration for beginning readers, and the award will be given to both the author and illustrator.

Klino said, “A beginning reader functions as a tool to help children learn to read, but Ted Geisel elevated it to an artistic tool.” While beginning readers, by definition, have the practical job of helping children learn to decode, a beginning reader can

be much more than a teaching tool. The committee will be looking for a book that, because of its creativity and artistic merit, can be considered an outstanding contribution to children's literature.

We think Dr. Seuss would be pleased. ☺

For more details on the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award, visit www.ala.org/ala/alsc under “Awards and Scholarships.”

NEWBERY ACCEPTANCE, continued from page 8

I cried. I ranted. I raged. I wanted that book. Finally my parents decided that my mother, who'd taken typing in high school and owned an old manual typewriter she practiced on, should type up the book before we returned it. I still remember the Xs all over her typing errors. A few years later I got a Christmas gift from my family. It was a notepad with the Lucy character from Peanuts. A frown furrowed Lucy's brow. The caption read, “No one understands us crabby people.” That gift proves that somebody did understand me. So I really need to thank my family for their understanding, and I hope that I've returned it.

I also have to thank my dog Shika, who lies by my side every moment that I write.

I've moved many times in my life. Whenever I move to a new place, I call the phone company and the gas company. I don't like to drive so I figure out the transportation system. And I figure out where the nearest library is.

I read voraciously until I finished eighth grade. Then I hardly read at all for three years. I look back on 1973, the year I dropped out of school, with the belief that libraries cannot just change your life but save it. Not the same way a Coast Guardsman or a police officer might save a life, not all at once. It happens more slowly, but just as surely.

I started out tonight by discussing what distinguished me from other Newbery

winners. I believe what we all have in common with one another and with everybody in this room is that we search out libraries like heat-seeking missiles. And another thing we have in common: our parents could not have afforded to buy us all the books we read as children. Our parents walked across the doorway of that first library holding our hands because they knew our futures resided in that building, as I believe the futures of my son and indeed of all Americans reside in those buildings.

Libraries fed our passion as children, and feed it still. ☺

Get Your Name in Print

Submit an Article to *Children and Libraries*

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

Manuscript Consideration

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

Manuscript Preparation

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

For citations, use endnotes as described in the 15th edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, sections 16–17.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Photos can also be included with manuscript. Color or black and white photos are acceptable.

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

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

returns between paragraphs. Number all pages.

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

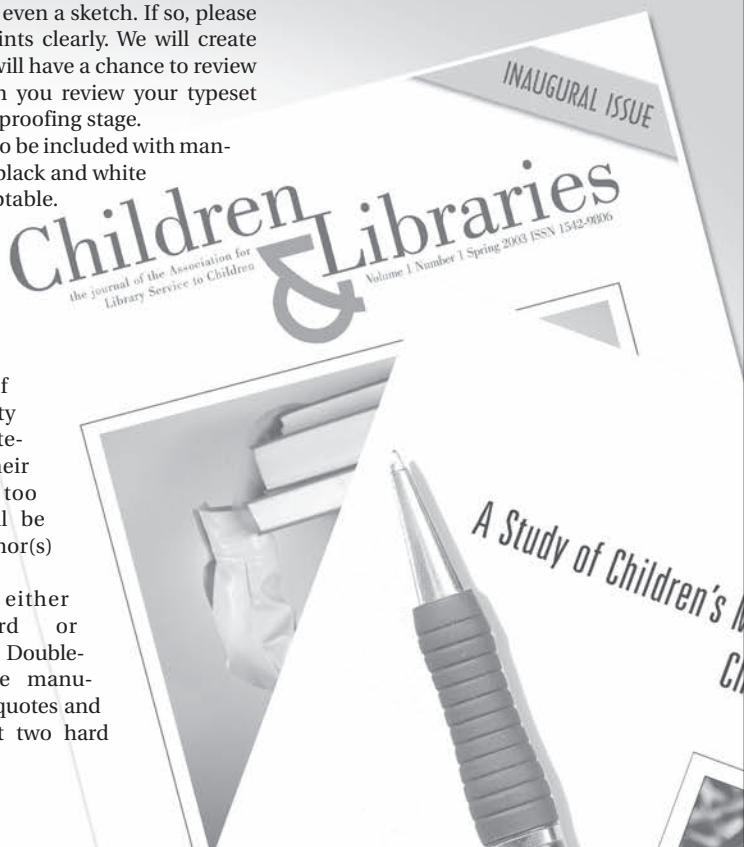
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Writing and Bibliographic Style

Children and Libraries follows the 15th edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Authors are responsible for accuracy in the manuscript, including all names and citations. Editor may revise accepted manuscripts for clarity, accuracy, and readability, consistent with publication style and journal audience.

Address

Send correspondence and manuscripts to Sharon Korbeck Verbeten, CAL editor, via e-mail to toylady@athenet.net.





Association for Library Service to Children

SAVE THE DATE

Friday, January 20, 2006

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m

The Fun and Facts of Early Literacy:

Communicating with Parents and Caregivers Through Storytime



Keep the joy of storytime as you share early literacy information with the parents and caregivers who attend them. Develop storytimes (newborn to age five) incorporating research, information, and activities promoting early literacy development based on the **Every Child Ready to Read @ your library®** project. Enhance your storytimes and learn to articulate to staff, administrators, partners, and funders how storytimes support early literacy. Speakers are Saroj Ghoting, early childhood literacy consultant, and Pamela Martin-Diaz, branch manager, Allen County (Ind.) Public Library, Shawnee Branch.

Join ALSC for this pre-Midwinter special event in San Antonio, Texas.

Advance registration fee: \$175, ALSC members; \$220, ALA members; \$255, non-members; and \$120, students/retirees. Limited onsite registration will be available for \$270.

ALA online registration begins **September 1, 2005**, at www.ala.org.

Advance registration closes December 12, 2005.

For more info on ALSC's Midwinter schedule, visit www.ala.org/alsc, click on "Events & Conferences."

THE LAST WORD

SILLY STORY TIME GAFFE LEADS TO LAUGHS

BY ANGELA REYNOLDS

Playing with language and rhymes is one of my favorite ways to engage children at story time. I love introducing children to new words, and I like to use little fingerplays at story time.

These are Grandma's spectacles.

This is Grandma's hat.

This is the way she folds her hands.

And puts them in her lap.

I do story times in childcare centers and in-home childcares, so I rarely see the same children. As a traveling outreach librarian, I reach many children.

To introduce this rhyme, I do it once with the kids. For the first line, you make circles over your eyes for the spectacles, put your hands on your head for the hat, and then place your hands in your lap. After I do the rhyme once, I ask, "Do you know what spectacles are? That's an old-fashioned word!" And often, a few kids will yell out, "Glasses!"

Often, they've figured out the definition of the word by the hand motions rather than actually knowing what it means. And so we say "spectacles" together and then do the rhyme again.

A few years ago, I tried the rhyme at a preschool for twenty-five three- and four-year-olds. They all did it along with me and were sitting very sweetly, hands in their laps, when I asked, "Do you know what spectacles are?"

A little boy in the back immediately and enthusiastically raised his hand and yelled out "I know! They are right under your 'Wally!'" It took me a moment to realize his malapropism, but when I did, I'm sure my face turned red as I stumbled around and said, "Actually, 'spectacles' is an old-fashioned word for glasses."



Spectacles or Wally?

Fortunately, I was nearly finished with story time because when I got to my car, I laughed heartily; it was at least ten minutes before I could drive back to the library.

And so I learned several things that day—I learned what a "Wally" is, and I learned the fine art of controlling hysterical laughter to save the tender ego of a child learning vocabulary. Several of the young teachers in the

classroom were unable to control their laughter, however, and the boy was embarrassed—not at his mistake, but because they were laughing at him.

To this day, I have not been able to use that rhyme because I'm afraid I'll goof up and give Grandma the manhood she never had! ☹

Angela J. Reynolds is head of children's and YA services at Annapolis Valley Regional Library in Nova Scotia, Canada.

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 Verbeten at toylady@athenet.net.