Children & Libraries

the journal of the Association for Library Service to Children

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Association for Library Service to Children

KAMISHIBAI in Storytimes

Science and Poetry: Strange Bedfellows?

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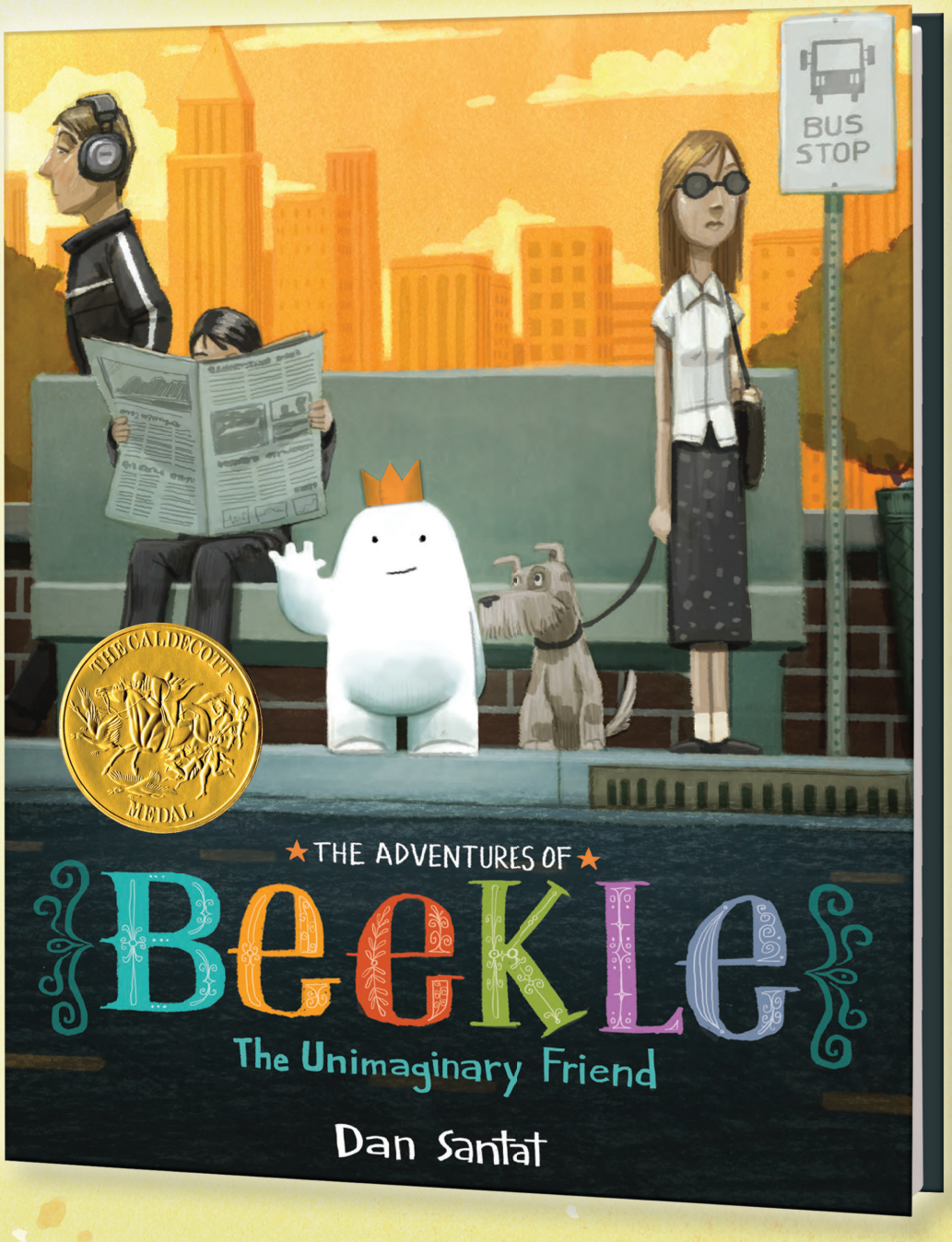

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"[A] sweet, mind-bending gumdrop of a tale."

—The New York Times Book Review

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Editor's Note

Renewing Friendships

By Sharon Verbeten

Great relationships. That's a big part of what attending ALA Midwinter means to me. This Midwinter in Chicago was no different—except it had one special personal twist. I was able to attend with two of my close friends from Green Bay, Miranda Paul and Melissa Gorzelanczyk.

I've known both for years, but this year, both were attending as first-time published authors—and the excitement was palpable. As Miranda celebrated on the weekend of her first book's release, Melissa was overwhelmed and thrilled to visit the exhibit floor and meet her editor in person for the first time. I was so proud of both of them for their hard work and diligence, which ultimately has led to their success in children's literature. I hope someday to see them honored at the Youth Media Awards.

I also use my time at ALA to renew friendships from the last conference—librarians who want to write about their experiences for *Children and Libraries*, publishers I'm meeting for the first time, or—my favorite—meeting authors I've admired. (This time it was Mac Barnett!)

These meetings are all part of the fabric of ALA for me and, I'm sure, for you as well. Make the most of these relationships—as long-term or as fleeting as they may be. We're all on this very exciting journey celebrating children and books, with a singular goal in mind; it's nice to know we're all in this together!

I look forward to renewing friendships and making some new ones this summer in San Francisco! &

Sharon Verbeten meets first-time author Dan Gemeinhart with his new book *The Honest Truth*. Photo by Melissa Gorzelanczyk.

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In a Nutshell

Bechtel Scholar Studies Chapbooks, Sendak

SUZI WACKERBARTH

"Boys Bullying a Boy," from *Lessons for Good Children*, 1837. Photo used with permission from the Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida.

"And they lived happily ever after."

These are the words we sigh after, picturing the princess in the castle, the prince vanquishing the dragon, the child, quiet, sound asleep. Quiet seems to be a theme in books of manners for children, I've found. Chew your food with your mouth closed (quietly). Sit next to your sister (quietly) without biting her. Do not speak (be quiet) until spoken to, and when you do speak, speak quietly.

As I shared with people at my local diner (and writing spot) that the project I'm furiously working on, as I eat my wedding soup and garlic bread, downing glass upon glass of iced tea, is about really old books about children and manners, the waitresses say, "Well, maybe they got it right, way back when. Kids these days have no respect."

I wonder. When I studied chapbooks with titles such as *The School of Good Manners*, *A Book of Good Manners for Girls and Boys*, and *Lessons for Good Children in Easy Rhyme*, it seems to me that children have probably always been too loud, too boisterous, and intent on biting their siblings. What does a baby do, after all, when she enters the world? She cries, bloody murder, so we know her lungs work, and that moment may be the last time we are glad to hear her cry.

When I started studying contemporary books on manners in preparation for my fellowship at the University of Florida's Baldwin Historical Library, I pored over Sesyle Joslin's twin books *What Do You Say, Dear?* and *What Do You Do, Dear?*, illustrated by Maurice Sendak. I read *Horn Book*'s "What Makes a Good Manners Book?"[1] I fully intended to compare and contrast these titles with the books listed in the Baldwin's online catalog.

But that is not the article you are about to read. No, this is the story of how one librarian thought she was going to explore all sorts of questions and answers about manners from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first century and ended up learning about chapbooks and focusing on a few books by Maurice Sendak.

Start at the beginning? I'll try. On my third day at the University of Florida's Smathers Special Collections Library, I came across a tiny chapbook in a clear cellophane envelope, *The Book of Manners for Girls and Boys*. I was quickly charmed. Unlike earlier books and chapbooks on manners, books I had set aside saying, "no, not this," "no, not that," this tiny book told stories. It was not a book of proverbs or endless lists of instructions. The Baldwin collection owns two editions, 1843 and 1845, printed by Geo. P. Daniels in Providence, Rhode Island. Both books are illustrated with woodblocks common to any chapbook, not necessarily corresponding to the text. But the 1845 edition is hand colored. I did not know

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what I wanted to learn, just that I was delighted and a little bit in love.

What is a chapbook? The best definition I found comes from *A Book about Chapbooks: The People's Literature of Bygone Times* by Harry B. Weiss:

> The term chapbook may include…anything printed—that was carried for sale by a chapman into villages, hamlets, towns. Although they varied in size, the small ones, as a rule, being intended for children…were about 5-½-by-3-½ inches and contained from four to twenty-four pages, but there was really nothing fixed about their size or about the number of their pages.[2]

Chapbooks were mostly published in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and were the books of the lower classes. This was a time when printed books were expensive and hard to come by. Libraries were still a new idea, and of course, no one had a Kindle. Chapmen (traveling peddlers) sold various things, including chapbooks. A lot of American chapbooks were directly plagiarized from British books or chapbooks. It was a different time in publishing, when having a printing press meant you could be a publisher. Copyright laws were lax and not a priority in the colonial times, and the ensuing early years of independence. Chapbooks were more often than not distinguished by their publishers than their authors, and the creators of the woodcut illustrations were not credited in any of the chapbooks I examined.

I wanted to know more about chapbooks, but information on this topic was not easily found. I wasn't interested in manners anymore. It wasn't necessarily the content that interested me—upon closer examination, charming in size as the chapbooks were, the best things about most of these books were the woodblock illustrations and borders. How to talk in company, how to help your parents, how to comport with your siblings—these books had as much subtlety as *The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Birthday*. This was not the sort of research I was interested in embarking any longer.

I had hit a wall in my research. And when that happens, I do three things: I take a walk, I continue to research, and I talk to teachers and librarians. I got to know the part of the University of Florida between my bus stop and the library, full of trees I was never able to name. I looked at books about illustration in children's books. I talked with the librarians who worked in the Special Collections building.

On my first Friday in Florida, I went to lunch at a nearby restaurant with Suzan Alteri, curator of the Baldwin Collection. We dined with my faculty advisor, Dr. John Cech. We talked about my research, and I mentioned that I wasn't sure where to take my new discovery of chapbooks, or where to go with my topic of manners. Cech is a Maurice Sendak scholar, and somewhere along the way, the conversation moved to the topic of Sendak and then to a television special from the seventies, "Really Rosie," in which some of Sendak's books, including the four titles that make up his *Nutshell Library,* were animated and put to music. I shared that while I had never seen the show, my grandmother had given me the soundtrack album as a present, and to this day, the songs are easily accessed by my memory.

I came away from lunch with more questions than answers, but I requested everything the Baldwin Library owned by Sendak. I worked my way through his first solo book, *Kenny's Window*, read again through the twin Joslin (*What Do You Say/Do?*) books, and revisited *Where the Wild Things Are*. Then I came across the *Nutshell Library*, a collection of four books in a mini slip case, just the right size for tiny hands—3 ¾ by 3 inches. As I held these four books, took them out of their snug slipcase, a light bulb went off in my head. But I hesitated. Was I crazy to see similarities between the American chapbooks and the *Nutshell Library*?

I did some more research, asked Cech, asked others who had studied or known Sendak, and herein lay the problem. No one could verify that Sendak had owned chapbooks (though we knew he owned many early American books). No one knew if he had chapbooks in mind when he wrote the *Nutshell Library*, and without that information, my research was PhD level work, not "Fellow for one month and back to being a librarian" level work.

Some of my initial observations about chapbooks: they were crowded with words, illustrations were well drawn, but seemed to be an afterthought and rarely had action. *Lessons for Good Children in Easy Rhyme* has many illustrations that do not match the text at all, of a child next to another child who seems to be falling out of a window, an image of a group of children wielding stones running after another child, and a small illustration of children carrying sticks, chasing a dog. What I noticed about the *Nutshell Library*: Pictures were either on their own page (*Chicken Soup with Rice*/*Pierre*) or illustrations dominated the page and text was minimal (*Alligators all Around*/*One was Johnny*). Chapbooks, even the ones that were called "toy books," were full of morality.

On the other hand, Sendak's words and illustrations have always emphasized children as they were, and fun is tantamount. Sendak's words on illustration: "You must never illustrate exactly what is written. You must find a place in the text so the pictures can do the work."[3]

Before I knew it, it was October; I was back in Pittsburgh, and it was time to write my report to the University of Florida about my fellowship. Hoping for some answers, I pulled out my personal copy of *Dear Genius: The Letters of Ursula Nordstrom,* collected and edited by Leonard Marcus, turned to the index in the back, and there, under the Sendak citations was a citation for *Nutshell Library*. I turned the pages, and there it was, proof! At the bottom of page 154, the second footnote reads,

> MS collected eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century children's chapbooks, the characteristically small format of

> which appealed to him as being well suited to young children's hands. The didactic content of the books was another matter. MS saw *Nutshell Library* as a chance to stand the moralistic children's literature of the past on its head.[4]

This was the missing link I had been looking for, textual proof that Sendak was familiar with chapbooks! I could research the style and form of American chapbooks and Sendak's *Nutshell Library*. I could eschew the study of manners!

While the footnote is the only textual proof that I have that Sendak owned chapbooks, there are many hints in his words and illustrations that point to his knowledge of the format. I did not e-mail Leonard Marcus to find out how he knew that Sendak owned chapbooks, or how he knew about Sendak's intent to "stand the moralistic literature of the past on its head."[5]

So I do not know which chapbooks Sendak owned, or which ones he referred to as he put together the *Nutshell Library*. Knowing that Sendak found chapbooks appealing, I'd like to think that he looked at them, crude and moralistic as they were, with the same eyes that he looked at the cheap books he grew up with. In *Artist to Artist*, he writes about "…the books I loved—those cheap, pulp-papered, gorgeously if vulgarly colored comic books and story books."[6] Armed with this footnote, this tiny piece of information, I offer my observations from three books of Sendak's and discuss similarities and differences with chapbooks that I examined while at the Baldwin Library.

The first Sendak book I want to discuss is not in the *Nutshell Library*, but it is the earliest example I noticed of the chapbook's influence in his books. Published in 1957, it is the first book in the *Little Bear* "I Can Read" series by Else Holmelund Minarik, *Little Bear*. In almost every chapbook I examined, printers used a stylized woodcut frame or border around full page illustrations and the front and back covers. Sometimes the border is made up of geometric shapes, sometimes it mimics frames seen in illuminated books of the Middle Ages. Flowers, vines, egg and dart patterns, rectangles, the variety used in even one single chapbook lacks rhyme or reason.

In *Little Bear*, Sendak uses this woodblock style border around the text and illustrations on each page. Three times in the book, Sendak plays with the border: on the title page, where Little Bear hangs off it like a vine; on page 23, where fruits and vegetables grow off it; and on page 39, where Little Bear hangs on it, wearing his new space helmet. This woodblock style border only appears in the first *Little Bear* book.

Here I'll compare four books: two chapbooks and two books from the *Nutshell Library*. First, let me introduce you to a chapbook called *The School of Good Manners*, which I will compare to *Alligators All Around*. *The School of Good Manners* exists in many formats, both in British and American chapbooks, with varying contents and lengths. *The School of Good Manners* was not intended for children, but "composed for the help of parents in teaching their children how to carry it in their places during their minority."[7]

The English is archaic and unclear, but I take the meaning as this: it is a handbook for parents in teaching manners to their children. In the 1754 version, published by T&J Green, there is a chapter called "An alphabet of useful copies." It is not an alphabet in the sense of "A is for apple" but more an acrostic—the first letter of each sentence starts with a letter of the alphabet, in order, a style found in ancient Hebrew poetry found in the Old Testament Psalms and Proverbs. Here is a sample from the "Alphabet of useful copies:"

> Keep thyself humble, Pride has ruined many,
> The proud man's seldom well-belov'd of any.
> Love covers multitude of faults, but hate
> Old faults discovers & does new ones make.[8]

American Chapbooks Studied at the Baldwin Library

Book of Good Manners (Providence: George Daniels, 1843, 1845). Stories about boys and girls that illustrate good manners. This was the book that started my research. A woodcut of a sofa illustrates the section about parlor manners. A picture of a cow is featured on the inside cover of the 1843 edition. In the same space in the 1845 edition, a picture of a bird is featured.

Boys/Girls Picture Book (Concord, N.H.: Rufus Merrill, 1843). Boy's book has more pictures (front/back inside cover) and more action. "See this book being carried by a boy. Large load for a small boy." Girl's book is more moralistic, less action. "Good children will not hurt birds. It is very wicked to destroy birds' nests."

Lessons for Good Children (New Haven: S. Babcock, 1837). Plagiarized from the 1835 British book, *Pretty Lessons in Verse, for Good Children; with some lessons in Latin, in easy rhyme* by Sara Coleridge.

School of Good Manners, 1754, which contains "An Alphabet of useful copies."

School of Good Manners, 1802. The Baldwin's copy is falling apart not just from age, but from use. At least one child used the book as writing practice.

Wisdom in Miniature: 1807, 1818. Fascinating to look at the two editions side by side: the woodcuts are printed opposite in each edition.

Digitized chapbooks in the Baldwin Library can be found at the following address: http://ufdc.ufl.edu/baldwin/results/?t=chapbooks

The writer is emphasizing humility and love. The rest of the alphabet talks about sin, revenge, lying, all things that should be avoided. Truth, patience, thinking, these are all to be lauded and encouraged. Placed side by side with the antics described in words and images in *Alligators All Around*, Sendak literally turns manners and comportment on their heads with "U: Usually upside-down."

Sendak never wrote or illustrated a book about a sedate child who did what adults thought he should. The alligators are also Very Vain, Quite Quarrelsome, and Entertaining Elephants. Sendak does not comment on these states, does not admonish nor give advice. While the cover and verso page illustrations are both of the alligator family holding up letters of the alphabet in the appearance of learning something, "B bursting balloons" bursts our bubble of the well-mannered child. Hilarity and non-conformity by both parents and children continue through the rest of the alphabet. In his writings about *Alligators All Around*, Sendak says, "The least important aspect of *Alligators* is that it is an alphabet. . .my alligators aren't teachers. . .they stick their tongues out, stand upside down, and are very vain. They do the kind of things all my children do."[9]

While *The School of Good Manners* was written for parents, many chapbooks were billed (on their back covers, with more titles you could obtain) as "toy books." One of these was *Lessons for Good Children, In Easy Rhyme*, which explores three topics: the days of the week, the months of the year, and the seasons. This was the book that made me think of similarities between the *Nutshell Library* and the American chapbooks. Here is some verse from a poem about the months:

> January brings the snow, makes our feet and fingers glow.
> February brings the rain, thaws the frozen lakes again.[10]

These couplets are written as if they are meant for children to actually enjoy them, not just written for instructive purposes. However, the days of the week, listed earlier in the chapbook, are full of the morality and dread often found in early attempts at books for children:

> On Sunday begin
> The week without sin;
> On Monday resume
> Your tasks without gloom;
> And pray dont be vex'd
> That Tuesday comes next;[11]

The reader learns the days of the week, but also reminded that life is gloomy and full of sin. In contrast, *Chicken Soup with Rice*, Sendak's book of months, is full of fun and fantasy.

Let's look at it from the start, though. At onset, from the book's cover, *Chicken Soup with Rice* looks tame enough—a boy holding a bowl of chicken soup and a spoon. The t.p. verso indicates that perhaps the book will have some fantasy elements, as the person eating soup with the boy looks like a goblin. But open to January, and we have a sweet boy, eating chicken rice while ice skating on a lake. Turn the page, though, and fantasy has taken over. The boy is sharing a meal with a snowman, and though seated indoors, the snowman is not melting. The months continue, with the boy sharing his soup with the wind in March, an elephant in April. In May, the boy has turned into a robin, and the soup is being stirred in a nest.

My favorite is August, where "…it will be so hot/I will become/a cooking pot/cooking soup of course./Cooking once/cooking twice/cooking chicken soup/with rice."[12] The reader certainly learns the months, but fantasy and fun are mixed in.

What I have done here is merely introduce chapbooks and how they compare to a few Sendak books. I've listed below some of the chapbooks I looked at in detail while at the Baldwin Library. I hope in years to come to spend some more time studying these fascinating booklets, and I hope I have piqued your interest as well.

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Early Literacy in Wisconsin

Sharing a Statewide Harvest

TESSA MICHAELSON SCHMIDT

Growing Wisconsin Readers
GrowingWisconsinReaders.org

When the Growing Wisconsin Readers early literacy initiative (growingwisconsinreaders.org) began in 2013, the focus was straightforward: help parents and caregivers read effectively with babies, toddlers, and young children. As this multiyear initiative passes the halfway mark, it is clear that this simple idea has sprouted, branched, and bloomed in bountiful ways. Not only has the early literacy message reached the original audience, but the project has established and enriched state, regional, and local partnerships.

Growing Wisconsin Readers is coordinated by the Public Library Development Team at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the state library agency. The initiative builds upon ongoing statewide early learning efforts championed by Wisconsin's more than 380 public libraries. Using Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Grants to States Program, the three-year initiative involves competitive and noncompetitive components.

Noncompetitive components include distribution of print promotional materials, development of a mobile-friendly trilingual website, and planning of workshops and a statewide early literacy symposium.

In the competitive realm, public libraries and regional public library systems have the opportunity to apply for early literacy project grants ranging from $2,000 to $25,000 as part of the initiative. Grant projects focus on local and regional early literacy needs and include collaboration with agencies and networks. Sample projects include development of early literacy kits to circulate among patrons and child care providers, early literacy programming and services to Spanish speakers, outreach to low-income families and agencies that serve them, and youth services staff early literacy training.

Competitive mini-grants in the amount of $250 were awarded to forty small libraries to initiate one of two shelf-ready projects—a 1000 Books Before Kindergarten reading program or an early literacy activity area. Funding for these projects allowed libraries to either jump-start or further develop existing efforts.

1,000 Books

The 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten programs, popular in Wisconsin, encourage families with young children to make reading and library visits a regular habit. These programs are typically organized in a way that allows families to track the number of books read anywhere (home, day care, or preschool, and during library storytime) and any number of times (from once to multiple times per night) toward the 1,000-title mark.

The origins of the 1000 Books idea stem from Bremen (IN) Public Library where librarian Sandy Krost was inspired by

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author Mem Fox's *Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud to Our Children Will Change Their Lives Forever*.

In Wisconsin, passive programs like 1,000 Books count as "drop-in activities" on the state public library annual report. Increasingly, Wisconsin's public libraries are finding value in offering independent activities that promote reading and library usage in a flexible way for families. 1,000 Books programs are adaptable for libraries too—there is no "right" way to run the program. Libraries can customize the theme, structure, and goals.

However it is organized, 1,000 Books programs empower and celebrate families with young children reading together. The recognition of young readers at the one hundred, five hundred, or thousand mark of titles read is an accomplishment that kids, families, libraries, and communities can stand behind.

Early Literacy Activity Areas

The second shelf-ready project supported by the Growing Wisconsin Readers mini-grants was early literacy activity areas. Early literacy activity areas are spaces in public libraries designed to encourage early literacy skill-building through reading, writing, singing, talking, signing, and playing. These areas usually incorporate books, constructive and imaginative play materials, and informational and instructional signage.

Communication strategies are critical to the success of the activity areas. Without messaging tactics, a box of puppets and a play theater might appear to be the library version of a fast food restaurant ball pit—simply a fun diversion for kids to experience independently. Rather, early literacy activity areas encourage play and learning for children *with* their parents or caregivers.

Communication strategies are critical to the success of the activity areas. Without messaging tactics, a box of puppets and a play theater might appear to be the library version of a fast food restaurant ball pit—simply a fun diversion for kids to experience independently. Rather, early literacy activity areas encourage play and learning for children with their parents or caregivers.

For example, magnets and alphabet spinners inspire young children to play letter pattern and sound games with their adult guardians. Similarly, a bin of dress-up clothes and props encourage imaginative play and inventive dialogue between children and adults. Helpful signage, visual posters, take-home tips, thoughtful book displays, and positive interactions with library staff solidify the why and how of these early literacy experiences to parents and caregivers.

Competitive grant projects, whether on a large or small scale, have helped achieve the goal of the Growing Wisconsin Readers initiative by empowering adults with important information and skills regarding the reading development of babies, toddlers, and young children. These projects, while noble, effective, and sustainable, are not necessarily innovative.

The initial success of the Growing Wisconsin Readers initiative has not been the growth in the number of library early literacy endeavors. Rather, the greatest yield of this initiative has come from relationships cultivated on local, regional, and state levels. Like plants that benefit from growing near certain species, mutual symbiotic relationships have developed in the field of early childhood in Wisconsin.

On the local level, Growing Wisconsin Readers materials (brochures and posters printed in English, Spanish, and Hmong and customized with local library information) have been distributed by libraries to a variety of community locations such as child care locations, Head Start facilities, schools, places of worship or congregation, community centers, medical clinics, and other locales frequented by families with young children.

In one community, the brochures were distributed by the chamber of commerce in a new resident welcome kit. While the message (early literacy is important) and the messenger (public library) are not new, the Growing Wisconsin Readers materials have increased the visibility and value of what public libraries offer to young children and their families. In some communities, distributing the materials reinforced existing connections with local partners. In others, this act led to both new and re-established partnerships with child care providers, family resource coordinators, school districts, and more.

On a regional level, the seed has spread even further. A large, geographically and economically diverse state, Wisconsin is divided into seventeen regional public library systems. These systems, working independently and collaboratively, have connected with a range of early childhood partners, associations, and organizations in various parts of the state. In some regions, the public library was a new and welcome member to the table.

In other areas, early childhood educators were invited to participate in early literacy professional development alongside librarians. "I'm working with agencies and groups that never thought to connect to libraries before or didn't know how," said Leah Langby, youth services consultant at the Indianhead Federated Library System in Northwestern Wisconsin. Regional

Learning to read begins with A, B, C at the Allen-Dietzman Public Library in Livingston, Wisconsin.

A Growing Wisconsin Readers poster displayed at a local laundromat creates visibility for early literacy and the Altoona Public Library.

collaborations reinforce the shared commitment of various organizations to improving the reading lives of young children. In addition, regional connections have improved communications between library systems and area groups as well as increased knowledge of each other's organizational structure and constituents.

Likewise, on a state level, relationships have both blossomed and deepened as a result of Growing Wisconsin Readers' efforts. At the Department of Public Instruction, headquarters of the initiative, awareness of the role of the Public Library Development Team in the agency itself has increased. In addition, monthly networking and resource sharing among consultants with a vested interest in literacy continues to yield positive and systemic results.

For example, the public library youth services consultant, early childhood consultant, and literacy consultant, each from separate teams within the agency, serve as liaisons to a network of regional early learning specialists. Together, this group is currently developing a series of presentations and tools to be used for statewide early literacy professional development.

Reach Out and Read

The Growing Wisconsin Readers initiative has formed strong statewide connections with the children's health-care profession through Reach Out and Read, a national evidence-based clinical program in which physicians prescribe books and encourage families to read together. Dr. Dipesh Navsaria is the medical director of the Wisconsin chapter of Reach Out and Read. A well-respected advocate for early literacy in both medical and library communities, Dr. Navsaria supported Growing Wisconsin Readers from the onset by reviewing content and presenting research on how "books build better brains."

As a result, many Wisconsin public libraries forged stronger connections with local pediatric and family practice clinics by creating literacy-rich waiting rooms, sharing information with families about early literacy programs and services, and providing book purchasing support to clinics participating in Reach Out and Read. More broadly, Wisconsin youth services librarians are more aware of the benefits of partnering with health-care professionals, and subsequently this relationship extends further, from librarians to their directors and from physicians to their young patients. Early literacy is understood and valued in every role.

Growing Wisconsin Readers reflects a growing understanding of the role and benefit of early literacy. Recently, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued an early literacy policy statement formally recommending that its membership make literacy promotion a regular part of pediatric care. An early literacy partnership was announced between the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Clinton Global Initiative, Too Small To Fail, Scholastic, and Reach Out and Read nationally to promote early literacy from birth. Because of the local, regional, and state relationships cultivated through the Growing Wisconsin Readers initiative, this announcement had collective resonance across the state. Growing Wisconsin Readers will continue to develop through the final year but thus far, an abundant community harvest is coming in.

Give Peas a Chance!

Spreading Food Literacy One Book at a Time

MOLLY SENECHAL

Sylvia Spivens hates spinach. Her parents try coaxing her to sample some. They extol the green leafy vegetable's nutritional benefits. But she just won't eat it.

Then Sylvia is assigned to sow spinach seeds for her school's garden. Grow the vegetable she detests? No way! She tries trading seeds with her classmates. No luck: Sylvia is stuck. After planting, watering, and waiting (and waiting, and WAITING), Sylvia finally sees the spinach poking out of the soil. She waits some more, nibbles a leaf and—guess what?—she LIKES it!

Score one for growing your own food!

Now, you've probably guessed that Sylvia Spivens isn't an actual person. And you're right. She is the titular character of the children's picture book *Sylvia's Spinach* by Katherine Pryor and published by the Bellevue, Washington, publishing house Readers to Eaters. And she can inspire folks who want to grow their own food, give vegetables a second chance, or increase their food literacy in general.

Just what is food literacy? That depends on whom you ask. The Food Literacy Center (www.foodliteracycenter.org) describes it as "understanding the impact of your food choices on your health, the environment, and our community."[1] Food literacy (www.food-literacy.org) defines it as "the ability to organise one's everyday nutrition in a self-determined, responsible, and enjoyable way."[2]

Philip Lee, cofounder and coowner of Readers to Eaters, has a simpler definition.

"Food literacy is knowing what and how we eat," he said.

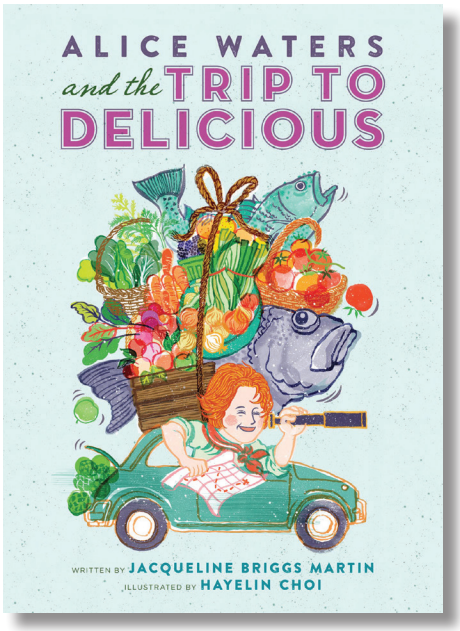
The "what" is pretty straightforward (food labels come immediately to mind), but the "how" is more complex. Is cooking dinner a family affair? Do you eat in front of a TV or at a dining table? And how do you know when your stomach is really full? These are the questions Lee and Readers to Eaters aim to address in a nonjudgmental way.

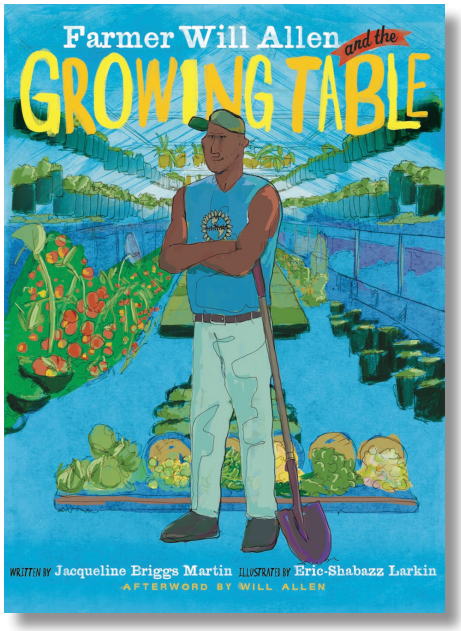
> *"Our goal is not just to build a healthy food community, but to build a healthy community through food."*

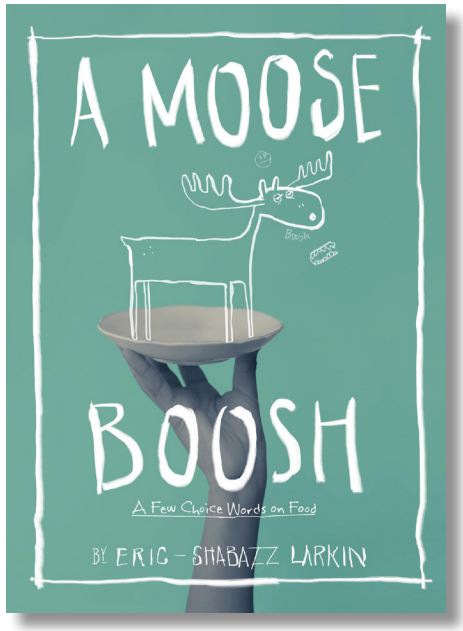
"Our goal is not just to build a healthy food community, but to build a healthy community through food," Lee said.

Lee and his wife, June Jo Lee, founded Readers to Eaters in 2009 with the mission to "promote food literacy from the ground up."[3] The company publishes books with a fun, fresh take

Molly Senechal *is a children's librarian at the Brown County Library East Branch in Green Bay, Wisconsin.*







on—as Lee said—what and how we eat. Good stories, beautiful writing, and an appreciation for food cultures are key.

Readers to Eaters' offerings are as diverse as the school and community gardens depicted in the books. The Lees publish everything from biographies (*Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table, Alice Waters and the Trip to Delicious*) to picture books (*Sylvia's Spinach, Our School Garden!*) to poetry (*A Moose Boosh: A Few Choice Words about Food*). The books tackle silly and serious topics alike.

Silly, you ask? Check out this poem from *A Moose Boosh* by Eric-Shabazz Larkin:

> If I Had My Own Cooking Show
> If I had my own cooking show,
> oh, the things I'd make …
> spider noodles with ant balls
> and baked mud cakes.
> If I had my own cooking show,
> I'd wave to all the girls I know.
> I'd make them caramel-covered frogs
> and wrap them up with pretty bows.
> If I had my own cooking show,
> I'd call it "The Dilly-Dallyin' Cooking Show"
> and I'd teach the most Dilly-Dallyin' recipes I know.
> 'Cause it's my own cooking show.[4]

Mmm . . . caramel-covered frogs . . .

To better understand Lee's passion for good books about good food, it helps to know a bit about his background. Lee was the cofounder and publisher of Lee & Low Books, an award-winning publishing company focused on multicultural children's literature. He also worked at Condé Nast, and later, as a host and producer for KBCS radio in Bellevue, where he reported on educational issues. It soon became clear to Lee that youth obesity, hunger, and lack of access to good foods are enormous obstacles to learning. This knowledge led to Lee's reporting on farm-to-school, food security, and the local food movement.[5]

"When I started in publishing. . . I was focusing on making good books," Lee said. The knowledge that students were going without food, and good food at that, "was a wake-up call. There is a strong connection between food and learning," he added.

Making sure students have enough to eat is only part of the food literacy picture. School and library gardens offer an abundance of activities that have ties to traditional academic subjects. The most obvious of them is science (How much water does lettuce need to grow? What amount of sunlight is best for pumpkins?), but there is also math (How many tomato plants can I fit in a ten-foot-square area? Are three carrots enough for a pot of vegetable soup?), language arts (How about a poem titled "Ode to Onions"?), and even history.

Yes, history! Lee told of a group of seventh-grade students learning about the Middle East as the region was centuries ago. During the unit, they made hummus with ingredients they had grown in their school garden. Amazing, right?

Equally amazing is the role public libraries are playing in the food literacy movement. Seed exchanges, library gardens and related programs, and collections of books on urban and small space gardening are increasing people's awareness of "eating local" in a fun and informative way.

Consider the Nature Explorium, a 5,000-square-foot outdoor library garden and learning space in Centereach, New York, where young patrons and their families can taste and smell flowers and herbs, build boats and float them down a creek, and play musical instruments from different cultures.[6] Or the Dane County Seed Library in Wisconsin, from which county residents check out vegetable seeds for their own gardens and return

Philip Lee and June Jo Lee

seeds from those plants in the fall.[7] Novice and expert gardeners love getting down in the dirt.

"It is so exciting to see the interest from kids," said Sarah Tomasiewicz, children's garden intern for the Brown County Central Library in Green Bay, Wisconsin. "Children in bigger cities don't always have space for gardens. This is their chance."

Tomasiewicz, who is majoring in human biology at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, worked alongside Brown County Library staff to plan and plant the garden that officially opened with a vine-cutting ceremony in the summer of 2014. They came up with event content first, plants, second. Children and their families had a hand in everything from planting seeds to weeding to watering and, in autumn, making scarecrows and planting bulbs for spring.

Who reaps the benefits of library gardens? Anyone who's interested. At the Brown County Library, produce like fragrant basil, tender lettuce, roma tomatoes, and green peppers, is piled in a basket for everyone to enjoy.

And who doesn't enjoy the taste of a garden-fresh tomato? Or, for that matter, spinach?

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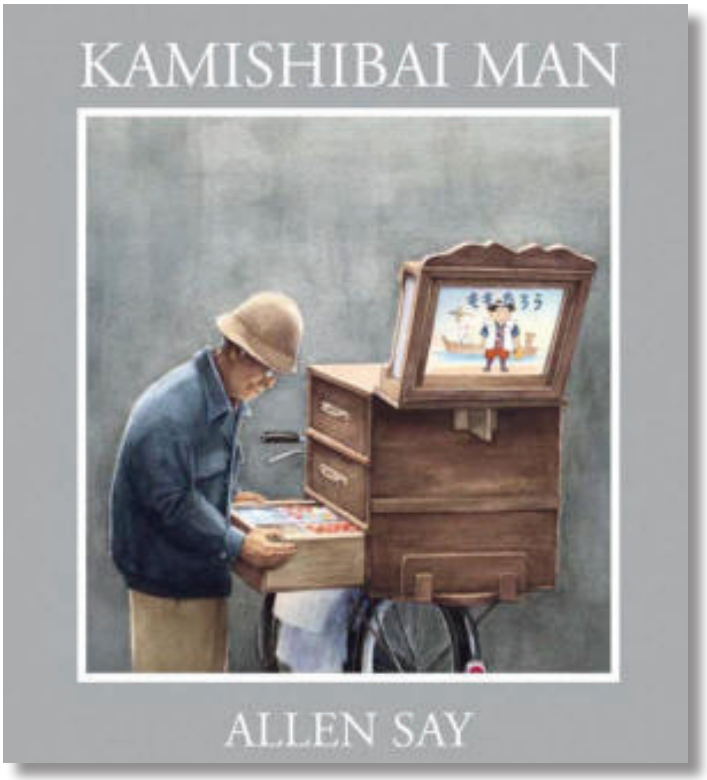
Kamishibai Isn't a City in Japan

Using Japanese Paper Theater in Storytimes

KATE ECKERT



Japanese paper theater, or *kamishibai*, is one of the earliest popular forms of Japanese sequential storytelling art, with its Golden Age peaking in the early half of the twentieth century.

Eric P. Nash, in *Manga Kamishibai,* claims that scholars are unsure of its exact origin, but that kamishibai appeared "suddenly" on the streets of Tokyo during the 1930s.[1] Event admission was the price of a small sweet, providing relatively cheap entertainment for Depression Era Tokyo denizens. Eventually, after the influx of American comics after World War II, modern manga outpaced kamishibai as the most popular sequential storytelling medium in Japan.

I'm lucky to have access to kamishibai stories and a stage, which resembles a small puppet theater stage, through a colleague who purchased it to share throughout our public library system. The illustrations are ordered sequentially on the front of the card with the story's text on the back. As the story progresses, the storyteller moves the cards from the front to the back, sometimes using the transition as a dramatic element in the narrative. I enjoy incorporating kamishibai into school-age and preschool programs when I can, not just for Japanese-themed events, but for everyday storytelling that engages the children with its wry folktales and unique presentation.

Earlier this year, I thought it would be interesting to use kamishibai to introduce the children to sequential art creation. After being inspired by various blog posts and books, I decided to use our newly donated iPads to create an easy, fun, do-it-yourself (DIY) kamishibai and technology program.

To ensure a decent turnout, our kamishibai group met on a Monday evening after school, one of our prime-time hours. I didn't specify an age range in the promotional materials; children from ages six to twelve showed up for the event, which was fine. I planned to have older kids use the iPads and the younger kids use paper and markers.

Kate Eckert *is a children's librarian, artist, gaming enthusiast, world explorer, former pastry chef, and occasional voice actress. She sold her first painting at age seventeen. As an undergraduate, she studied Japanese Buddhist Art in Tokyo, Japan. She is now a member of the Free Library of Philadelphia's Pre-Kindergarten Committee and Association for Library Service to Children's School-Age Programs and Services Committee. Kate lives in Philadelphia with three cats.*

I first introduced kamishibai—what it is, a little bit about its history, and its influence on modern Japanese manga and anime. I also read from Allen Say's *Kamishibai Man* to further increase their awareness of the medium, followed by a short discussion on the subject, and then we got started with creating our own kamishibai.

I selected the free StoryKit app for our program based on its user-friendly design. I preferred it to others because it didn't require a login. The older children easily created digital storybooks using StoryKit; its use came to them intuitively. While drawing the illustrations to their stories, several children noticed there was no eraser tool, so we simply used the white paint tool to erase our mistakes.

"Tiger Versus Radishes," one of the stories we created that is meant to be read sequentially on the iPad or iPhone can be seen at http://iphone.childrenslibrary.org/cgi-bin/view.py?b=vnc7oa7xpjvmge2bnaor.

The younger kids, with help from two teen assistants, created their own sequential art stories using construction paper and markers. The downside to having the younger kids use paper is that their work progressed much more slowly than the older children, some of whom were on their second or third digital kamishibai by the time the paper group finished their stories. This issue could be mitigated by having the DIY sequential art program split into two separate times for different age groups, but I prefer age-inclusive programs, especially since many of the young children are attended by their older siblings.

The older kids were glued to their iPads, and a couple of them made more than just one story. I was initially concerned that the iPad's connectivity to the Internet might prove too enticing to resist, and that everyone would end up on social media sites, but I am glad to report that was not the case.

Another child, so intent in the actual writing out of his story became bogged down with text and added pictures later as an afterthought. The whole group showed an interest in returning to the program so I'll have to make sure to reserve the iPads for a future session.

Kamishibai theaters and story cards are available for purchase at several retailers, including Storycard Theater (www.storycardtheater.com; an entire set with two stories and a frame sells for $105), and Kamishibai for Kids (www.kamishibai.com), which has slightly higher-end products.

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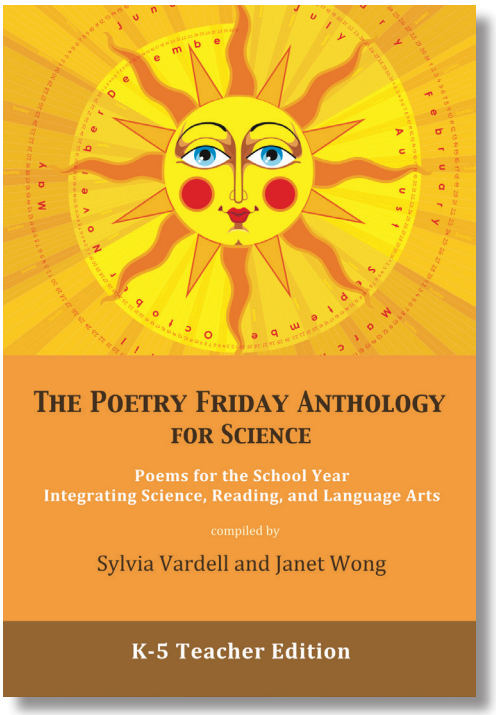
The Symbiosis of Science and Poetry

SYLVIA VARDELL AND JANET WONG



Sometimes unlikely partners can benefit each other in surprising ways. For example, dogs offer protection and companionship to humans, who in turn provide food and shelter for dogs. This "give-and-take" relationship is called symbiosis, referring to relationships that have mutual benefit.

That's true for the disciplines of science and poetry, too. Science is rich in content and poetry offers powerful language; together they can both inform and inspire.

For some of us, however, science is a little intimidating because of the unfamiliar vocabulary, abstract concepts, and the text-heavy format of many science books. But people who feel uncomfortable with science often feel very comfortable with language arts, so a poem might be the perfect way to introduce a science topic.

Experts Agree

The librarian who wants to plug science during recreational reading time or promote poetry in a science class has the ammunition needed to make a case for either approach. In her 2002 article, Valarie Akerson reminds us that the "processes of science and literacy learning are similar and may help the development of each discipline."[1]

She goes on to observe that the "use of language arts to promote literacy and support learning in other content areas is (also) recommended and encouraged by the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)."[2]

Literacy expert Timothy Rasinski confirms that poetry can provide practice for oral language development as well as serve as

Sylvia Vardell *is professor in the School of Library and Information Studies at Texas Woman's University. She has published extensively, including five books on literature for children and more than one hundred journal articles. Her current work focuses on poetry for children, including a regular blog, PoetryforChildren. She is also the Everyday Poetry columnist for ALA's* Book Links *magazine and the 2014 recipient of the ALA Scholastic Library Publishing Award.* ***Janet Wong*** *is a graduate of Yale Law School and former lawyer who switched careers and became a children's poet. Her dramatic career change has been featured on* The Oprah Winfrey Show, *CNN's* Paula Zahn Show, *and* Radical Sabbatical. *She is the author of thirty books for children and teens. Together, Vardell and Wong are the creative forces behind* The Poetry Friday Anthology *series, launched in 2012 and adopted by hundreds of school districts nationwide.*

a bridge to understanding content.[3] Fluent reading enables students to spend less time on decoding and have greater comprehension of the text, according to John Pikulski and David Chard.[4]

Science experts also support a multidisciplinary approach. Jill Castek recommends "breaking down those instructional silos" (of science and literacy) to maximize overlap, ensuring that vocabulary exposure is occurring in many contexts for maximum scaffolding.[5] Royce, Morgan, and Ansberry confirm "studies have shown gains in literacy as well as science achievement in programs that blend science and literacy instruction."[6] And in a 2013 *Popular Science* article, Erin Biba reminds us that the critical thinking and active investigation involved in science can "benefit even students who pursue nonscientific careers . . . [since] Everyone is a science consumer."[7]

Finding Science Poetry

There are many wonderful science-themed works of poetry to choose about animals, weather, seasons, and space. In addition to short, visually appealing poetry collections such as *Water Sings Blue: Ocean Poems* by Kate Coombs, *Ubiquitous: Celebrating Nature's Survivors* by Joyce Sidman, and *A Strange Place to Call Home: The World's Most Dangerous Habitats and the Animals That Call Them Home* by Marilyn Singer, you can also find comprehensive anthologies such as *The Tree That Time Built: A Celebration of Nature, Science, and Imagination* compiled by Mary Ann Hoberman and Linda Wilson; *The National Geographic Book of Animal Poetry* compiled by J. Patrick Lewis; and our own *The Poetry Friday Anthology for Science*, a recent "NSTA Recommends" title endorsed by the National Science Teachers Association. It features 218 poems about solar power and hybrid cars, gears and robots, hurricanes and the human body, video games and glaciers, famous scientists and everyday inventions, and more (along with learning activities for every poem). Using these science poetry resources and many others, it's possible to find a short "poem match" for almost any elementary science topic to provide a moment of learning that is also a fun break in the routine.

One helpful selection resource is the annual list of Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students K–12, cosponsored by the Children's Book Council and the National Science Teachers Association. This annotated bibliography typically includes a few new books of science-themed poetry every year, sometimes in the form of rhyming picture books and verse novels.

In addition, many children's science-themed magazines and serials, such as *Ranger Rick, Owl, Chirp, Chickadee, National Geographic Kids*, and *Kids Discover*, regularly feature poems. In fact, magazines are often the first medium in which many new poets get their work published.

A poem alone is not intended to be the entire science lesson, but poetry's brevity, conceptual focus, and carefully chosen vocabulary make it a natural teaching tool for connecting with science, whether to jump-start or introduce a topic, present examples of terminology or concepts, provide closure that is concept-rich, or extend a science topic further.

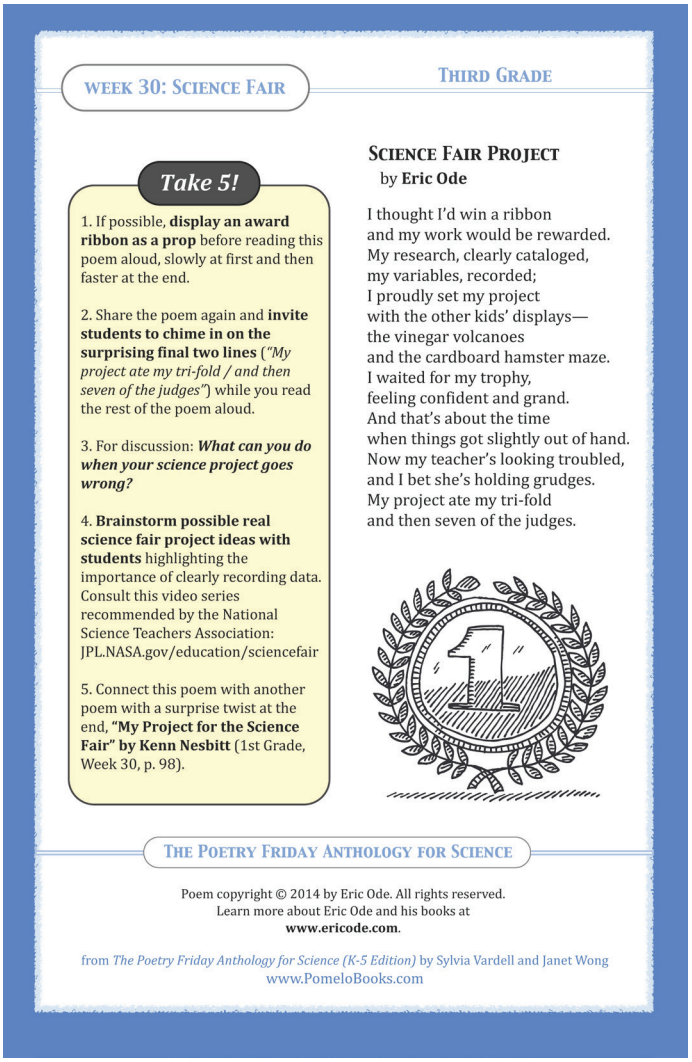
Poetry Helps Address Standards

With the growing national emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), a multistate consortium developed the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for schools across the country, offering a detailed description of the key scientific ideas and practices that all students should learn by the time they graduate from high school. There are three key dimensions of the framework—practices, concepts, and core ideas:

- **Scientific and Engineering Practices** (for example, asking questions, defining problems, using models, planning investigations, analyzing data, communicating information)
- **Crosscutting Concepts** (for example, patterns, cause and effect, scale, proportion and quantity, systems, energy and matter, structure and function, and stability and change)
- **Disciplinary Core Ideas** (across the physical sciences, life sciences, earth and space sciences, engineering, technology, and applications of science)

Like the Common Core State Standards, the NGSS guide us in moving from the familiar to the scientific, overlapping in their emphasis on rich discussion and critical thinking.

The NGSS emphasize knowledge retention—an area where poetry can be especially helpful by providing memorable texts filled with imagery and aural clues. Of course, a poem alone is not intended to be the entire science lesson, but poetry's brevity, conceptual focus, and carefully chosen vocabulary make it a natural teaching tool for connecting with science, whether to jump-start or introduce a topic, present examples of



WEEK 30: SCIENCE FAIR

THIRD GRADE

Take 5!

1. If possible, **display an award ribbon as a prop** before reading this poem aloud, slowly at first and then faster at the end.

2. Share the poem again and **invite students to chime in on the surprising final two lines** (*"My project ate my tri-fold / and then seven of the judges"*) while you read the rest of the poem aloud.

3. For discussion: ***What can you do when your science project goes wrong?***

4. **Brainstorm possible real science fair project ideas with students** highlighting the importance of clearly recording data. Consult this video series recommended by the National Science Teachers Association: JPL.NASA.gov/education/sciencefair

5. Connect this poem with another poem with a surprise twist at the end, **"My Project for the Science Fair" by Kenn Nesbitt** (1st Grade, Week 30, p. 98).

SCIENCE FAIR PROJECT
by **Eric Ode**

I thought I'd win a ribbon
and my work would be rewarded.
My research, clearly cataloged,
my variables, recorded;
I proudly set my project
with the other kids' displays—
the vinegar volcanoes
and the cardboard hamster maze.
I waited for my trophy,
feeling confident and grand.
And that's about the time
when things got slightly out of hand.
Now my teacher's looking troubled,
and I bet she's holding grudges.
My project ate my tri-fold
and then seven of the judges.

THE POETRY FRIDAY ANTHOLOGY FOR SCIENCE

from *The Poetry Friday Anthology for Science (K-5 Edition)* by Sylvia Vardell and Janet Wong
www.PomeloBooks.com

A poem from *The Poetry Friday Anthology*

terminology or concepts, provide closure that is concept-rich, or extend a science topic further.

Look for Curriculum Connections

While many science poems contain embedded facts, some poetry books also provide explicit curriculum connections in additional material.

- In *The Poetry Friday Anthology for Science*, a "Take 5!" sidebar of teaching activities or mini-lessons accompanies each of the poems to provide guidance in teaching poetry and science as well as to document which NGSS framework components are covered by each poem.

- A "Galactic Glossary" in *Comets, Stars, the Moon, and Mars: Space Poems and Paintings* by Douglas Florian defines everything from "the minor planets" to "the great beyond," with a sprinkling of especially kid-friendly facts.

- *Face Bug* by J. Patrick Lewis not only provides exceptional close-up photos of insect faces, but also ends with a section in which each of the insects featured in a poem has a first-person statement about "Where I Live," "How I Grow," "What I Eat," and "What Eats Me." (The Pearl Crescent Butterfly says, "I count robber flies . . . and, of course . . . BIRDS on my Most Scary List" while the venomous Saddleback Caterpillar says, "Go away, if you know what's good for you!")[8]

- Nature Notes in the back of Avis Harley's poetry collection *African Acrostics* feature informative paragraphs alongside thumbnail photos of each of the animals highlighted in the book; Susan Blackaby provides similar information about each of the animal habitats she showcases in the poems of *Nest, Nook & Cranny*. In addition, both Harley and Blackaby provide a section about the poetic forms they employ in the poems, too.

And several poets include factual prose paragraphs alongside vivid poetry to expand the learning and engagement opportunities. Look for the Newbery honor book *Dark Emperor and Other Poems of the Night* and others by Joyce Sidman or *Bug Off! Creepy Crawly Poems* among others by Jane Yolen, for example. Whether the poet incorporates information alongside the poems or in helpful back matter at the end, these extras show readers a variety of access points for learning the science content, as well as many different examples of the various forms of writing they might consider trying themselves.

Develop Research Skills

You can also use science poems to lay the groundwork for the research process or as a model for gathering and sharing key facts and vocabulary. Read widely from science, nature, or animal poems and encourage students to browse through the books and brainstorm possible topics to study. Then lead them to related nonfiction books and encourage students to identify key facts on their topic from these sources. Children can work together to create a collaborative "found" poem from a nonfiction book or a news article or encyclopedia entry as source, first underlining or highlighting what they think are the most important words in the informational passage, and then arranging those key words to create a poem.

Sharing Science Poetry

Vardell's 2013 *Book Links* article provides ideas for incorporating science-themed poetry into an established routine, blending science poems with activities that are already a part of the schedule.[9] For example, add a poem from *The Green Mother Goose: Saving the World One Rhyme at a Time* edited by Jan Peck and David Davis to the usual Mother Goose program.

Pair a science-themed nonfiction or informational book such as *Seymour Simon's Extreme Oceans* with a picture book such as Claire Nivola's *Life in the Ocean: The Story of Oceanographer*

In less than one minute, a poetry moment can promote incidental science learning, be part of science instruction, offer content-rich poetry lessons in reading and language arts—or simply provide fun Poetry Friday sharing.

Sylvia Earle, starting the whole program with a six-line poem, "Ocean Explorer Sylvia Earle" by Leslie Bulion (from *The Poetry Friday Anthology for Science*), or "Dive In!" (from her book *At the Sea Floor Café*) to show children how writers approach the same topic in very different and distinctive ways.

In less than one minute, a poetry moment can promote incidental science learning, be part of science instruction, offer content-rich poetry lessons in reading and language arts—or simply provide fun Poetry Friday sharing.

Last summer, "Fizz, Boom, Read!"—science—was the Summer Reading Program theme in many public libraries across the country. Children participated in science-themed summer book clubs, read science-themed mysteries, and checked out science activity books. Libraries were full of science displays and activities.

Let's keep that momentum going by encouraging children's natural curiosity about how the world works and what role they might play in discovering more answers. &

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The Best for Beginning Readers

Geisel Award Celebrates Tenth Anniversary

CAROLE D. FIORE AND CARLA MORRIS

Art by Mo Willems

In 2016, the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award will celebrate its ten-year anniversary. The tenth award winner, *You Are (Not) Small*, written by Anna Kang and illustrated by Christopher Weyant, published by Two Lions, New York, was announced at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in February 2015.

This occasion provides librarians with an opportunity to look at the "best of the best" books for beginning readers for the past ten years. What trends, if any, have emerged? What is the impact of the award so far?

Author/illustrator Mo Willems, the most decorated Geisel winner (with two medals and four honors), perhaps says it best.

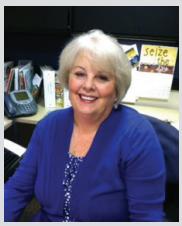
"For a decade, the Theodor Seuss Geisel Medal has shown a light on the most pragmatic and magical genre of literature in the world, the literature of becoming a reader. Becoming a reader is extra-ordinarily-empowering-fantastically-wonderfully cool. . . Early Readers have exact technical requirements; the vocabulary must be controlled, the syllables limited, the sentences must have forward thrust (and repeatability). One must master these technical things, [and] then make it *fun*."[1]

Willems's answer to "What is a beginning reader?" along with the awards criteria provides the parameters for this significant group of books for children.

And the Winners Are . . .

The first-ever Geisel Award was presented in 2006 to author Cynthia Rylant and illustrator Suçie Stevenson for *Henry and Mudge and the Great Grandpas*, published by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers in 2005.

"The simple sentence structure, along with a design that advances this well-told story, provides a satisfying celebration of family and friendship. . . This fresh and child-centered story . . . will immediately engage beginning readers," wrote Committee Chair Caroline Ward.[2] The committee also selected four honor books, three of which fit the easy reader format: *Hi! Fly Guy*, by Tedd Arnold; *Cowgirl Kate and Cocoa*, by Erica Silverman, illustrated by Betsy Lewin; and *Amanda Pig and the Really Hot Day* by Jean Van Leeuwen, illustrated by



Carole D. Fiore *is a past president of ALSC and has served on the Newbery, Caldecott Committees and twice on the Geisel Award Committee, once as chair. She is the author of Summer Library Program Handbook (Neal-Schuman) and many journal articles. Following her tenure at the State Library of Florida, she opened her own independent library consulting business and specializes in public library service to children and their teachers, parents, and caregivers as well as long range planning.* ***Carla Morris*** *is the children's services manager, Provo City (Utah) Library. She served as chair of the 2013 Geisel Award Committee. In addition to being a member of the 2004 Caldecott Committee and serving on the Planning Committee for the ALSC Institute that was held in Salt Lake City, Morris is the author of* The Boy Who Was Raised by Librarians *(Peachtree).*

2013 Geisel Award winner Ethan Long with Geisel Chair Carla Morris.

2014 Geisel Award winner Greg Pizzoli with Geisel Chair Penny Peck.

Ann Schweninger. The fourth honor book, *A Splendid Friend, Indeed,* by Suzanne Bloom is a picture book.

These selections helped cement the fact that books for emergent and beginning readers do not have to fit the mold of a traditional easy reader. These, and all the books selected as winners and honor books in the years following, were "carefully selected for formal recognition because they are real stories that children will be drawn to and call their own. No leveling. No labeling. No tests. These are books that children will want to read independently," said Ginny Moore Kruse, chair of the 2007 Geisel Award Committee. "That's actually what the Geisel Award is about. The excitement of reading an outstanding book—by themselves!"[3]

In the 2007 announcement of Laura McGee Kvasnosky's winning for *Zelda and Ivy: The Runaways,* Kruse noted that the characters' "escapades spark the imagination and make the reader want more. . . Karen Beaumont's patterned text in honor book *Move Over, Rover!* is expanded by Jane Dyer's watercolors containing context clues. . ."[4] Two additional books were named honor books that year.

Willems received his first Geisel Award in 2008 for *There Is a Bird on Your Head!* His success continued in 2009 with another medal for *Are You Ready to Play Outside?,* an honor in 2011 with *We Are in a Book!,* more honors in 2012, 2013, and 2014 for *I Broke My Trunk, Let's Go for a Drive!* and *A Big Guy Took My Ball!* respectively.

In 2008, Committee Chair Cindy Woodruff wrote, "In a book that is both contemporary and universal, Willems captures the hearts of readers while inspiring young children to embrace the joy of independent reading."[5] In describing Willems's 2009 winner, Committee Chair Joan Atkinson said, "Willems's easily approachable text, captured in dialogue balloons and bold, expressive drawings of friends Piggie and Gerald experiencing the ups and downs of a rainy day, deliver laughter and love of story to beginning readers."[6]

With more than forty books to his credit, Geoffrey Hayes won the 2010 Geisel Award for *Benny and Penny in the Big No-No!* According to Committee Chair Susan Veltfort, this book is "a perfect example of a graphic novel designed just for young readers. . . . The characters' emotions are revealed in the rich artwork within each panel. Children will connect with the realistic dialogue and page-turning appeal of the story."[7]

Multi-award winner Kate DiCamillo along with co-author Alison McGhee and illustrator Tony Fucile were the recipients of the 2011 medal for *Bink and Gollie*. Fucile's humorous illustrations "propel the reader through a story sprinkled with challenging vocabulary." In an "effervescent blend of picture book, reader, and graphic novel, text and illustration unite the real and imaginary . . . 'Covering a range of emotional territory to engage and challenge developing readers, fresh and creative text and powerful visuals generate a special chemistry between two friends,' said Geisel Award Committee Chair Julie F. Roach."[8]

In addition to Willems' *We Are in a Book!*, Grace Lin's *Ling & Ting: Not Exactly the Same!* was also named a 2011 Geisel Honor Book. Both books show life from the viewpoint of a young child with humor and understanding.

Josh Schneider's book *Tales for Very Picky Eaters* received the Geisel Medal in 2012. "The dialogue presents some preposterous situations but even the most challenging words are presented in context so beginning readers can easily discern their meaning. The touches of humor make this book an engaging page turner," wrote Committee Chair Carole Fiore. Willems makes another appearance on the honor list, this time with *I Broke My Trunk*. Willems uses "meticulously chosen words and sparingly

drawn illustrations to convey the humorous situation. The pacing is masterful and will keep young readers turning the pages until they reach the surprising yet satisfying conclusion. . . . The big, bold font, easy-to-read color coded speech balloons and repetition make this a perfect book for beginning readers."[9]

The humorous drawings and interactive story of Ethan Long's *Up! Tall! and High!* earned him the 2013 Geisel Medal. This lift-the-flap book provides beginning readers the opportunity to raise flaps and read "their first words with confidence and delight. . . The large font, word repetition, occasional rhyming, and simple but clever illustration support the very beginning reader's efforts to read independently."[10]

The 2014 award was presented to Greg Pizzoli for his picture book *The Watermelon Seed*. Wondering if the watermelon seed he swallowed will grow inside of him, the crocodile protagonist faces a childhood fear. Committee Chair Penny Peck said the style "is innovative but with a retro quality that will embrace the emergent reader in this satisfying treat."[11]

All Shapes and Sizes

Geisel winners are as varied as their creators. As can be expected, most of the books honored fit the format of a traditional easy reader. Eighteen of the thirty-nine Geisel winners can be classified as easy readers. The vocabulary is limited, the sentences short, and there is much white space on the page, with lots of context and visual clues that assist beginning readers decode the words.

Another format that was expected is that of early chapter book. These books are slightly longer, sometimes pushing the upper page limit for this award. As per the award criteria in the Geisel Award manual, the maximum number of pages for a book to be considered is ninety-six; the minimum twenty-four. While the longer length and additional chapters are more demanding, they still contain the same short sentences and have child appeal as do their easier counterparts.

But the unexpected entry into the books for beginning reader category is the picture book. Twelve of the thirty-nine winners are picture books—two include die-cuts and one has flaps.

While picture books are meant to be read aloud to young children, these titles meet the criteria of a beginning reader; they provide "a stimulating and successful reading experience" and have "the kind of plot, sensibility, and rhythm that can carry a child along from start to finish."[12] Two nonfiction books and three graphic novels round out the final analysis of the Geisel winners.

What Interests the Beginning Reader?

To provide a stimulating and successful reading experience, the authors and illustrators of the books have portrayed and expanded on childhood experiences. Most of the books (fifteen) either have animal characters or are about animals and pets. Friendship (nine) is the second most frequently written about topic while books relating to family experiences come in third with six books on this theme.

Humor plays an important part in children's lives and several of these books rely on humor to move the plot along. Children are interested in exploring their world; therefore, nature, weather, and gardening are subjects also included in these books for beginning readers. While there are many picture books in rhyme and books for beginning readers do have "rhythm," there was only one book that had a Library of Congress subject of "Stories in rhyme." Books also include concepts such as opposites and counting. Children's feelings and emotions are validated or questioned in books that deal with empathy and morality.

Impact on Authors and Illustrators

Without question, award books, with their metallic seals, are brought into the spotlight and may even ensure longevity on booklists and on store and library shelves. Even with strained budgets, public and school libraries usually purchase the major award winners. The Geisel award winners now demand attention, both intellectually and fiscally. And similar to the other ALA awards, Geisel authors and illustrators have experienced jumpstarts in their careers as well.

"It meant a lot to receive the Geisel Award," said Long, winner of the 2013 Geisel for *Up! Tall! and High!* "It validated the kind of work I was creating and what I was trying to accomplish as far as brevity and simplicity in writing and art. Even if I felt deep down that I was doing good, the Geisel was just a little wink sent my way."[13]

Tedd Arnold noted, "The Geisel Honor I have twice received for books in the Fly Guy series represents sweet validation. Sometimes you think you'll try something and just hope for the best. But Geisel recognition has given me the ample assurance of knowing I'm on the right track, not just for my work, but for the many wonderful beginning-reader books that for so long had performed their good service without such formal endorsement, I say thank you!"[14]

Willems compares his emotions to those of the children he writes for. "Kids love the feeling when their school work is rewarded by a sticker. It's a validation of their efforts that's fun to look at. It's so shiny! Perhaps it's shallow, but that sticker is an incentive to work even harder on your next assignment. Oh, sorry, did I say kids? I meant 'authors and illustrators' . . .

"The Geisel medal is a mark of respect, not just to the books chosen for recognition, but for all early readers. It is the fuel that has allowed me to spend the last seven years creating the small jet-packs that I call Elephant and Piggie books. The Geisel has directly aided me in my life's work and for that I am extraordinarily grateful."

Willems continues, "That being said, there is a greater award than a Geisel medal or honor. When I hear that the very first book a young person has read by themselves is an *Elephant and Piggie* book, something inside of me shines brightly, happily, joyfully. It is magic."[15]

Committee Members Gain New Perspectives

Each committee member, committee chair, author, and illustrator gained various insights and knowledge about beginning readers with their involvement with the award. As the award matures, we are becoming more discriminating about what makes a good book for a beginning reader, and what works with that special audience.

Cynthia Woodruff, chair of the 2008 Geisel Award Committee, worked with beginning readers for many years in an independent school setting. "In my year [on the committee]," Woodruff said, "I would say that my view of the definition [of books for beginning readers] expanded as we looked at books that were *not* of the I Can Read flavor. Children who are learning to read are as diverse as adults who are selecting what [they want] to read."[16]

Julie Roach, 2011 Geisel chair, modified and changed what she looked for when evaluating books for beginning readers as a result of serving on the committee.

"When looking for books for beginning readers now, I am more interested in pictures that work as clear clues to the text, the size of the font, the white space around the text, the length of the sentences and the paragraphs than whether the book comes labeled as a beginning reader," said Roach. "I look for books that are engaging and well-designed to encourage, excite, and challenge developing readers. If a book done in a traditional picture book format (or any other format) provides support in those ways, than I like to have a copy of it in a place where beginning readers can find it."[17]

When 2014 Geisel Chair Penny Peck was asked, "How did your definition of a beginning reader change as a result of serving on the Geisel Committee?" she replied, "Probably the most significant change happened when I looked more seriously at books with a text that contained (and repeated) just a few words. These books are vital to the child who is just beginning to read text. It opened me up to look at books with very minimal texts, and how those are often very useful for emergent readers, and are often quite artistic. To acquire literacy, 'reading' the pictures is as important as reading the text."[18]

Serving on any award committee provides professionals the opportunity to refine their evaluation and interpersonal skills. Working within the committee structure can sometimes prove difficult, but all Geisel Committee chairs had nothing but positive comments to report.

As anyone who has served on any committee knows, it's essential to be able to work with others, to listen to other people's opinions, and to have the ability to change their opinion. As Woodruff said, "The art of compromise is paramount in any book award committee. The manual was very helpful as was the diverse makeup of the committee."

She added that every member of the committee ". . . came away from our experience with more knowledge and a deep love for beginning readers and the kids who enjoy them."[19]

Roach not only "loved every minute of my term chairing the 2011 Geisel Committee," but also commented on the members of the committee. "I worked with an outstanding team of people. We looked at and discussed so many incredible books. I feel very passionate about this award and its charge and am so honored to have been part of its first decade."[20]

Heather Hart, who served on the 2013 Geisel Committee, said, "Before serving on the Geisel, I tolerated beginning readers. I didn't think there was much to them, except that my library customers were always looking for very early beginning readers and there were a few go-to series and authors that I always recommended. As a result of serving on the committee, I now look at beginning reader books with a whole new set of eyes. I look for quality writing, controlled vocabulary, white space, text size, and illustrations that provide clues to the text."[21]

Committee member, Jackie Partch, School Corps Lead Worker, Multnomah County (Ore.) Library, says that her work on the 2012 Geisel Committee changed her professional life. "Everybody in my library system now views me as an expert on Early Readers. I have been very involved in a new reading initiative at our library, focused on kindergarten through third grade reading, and I helped to plan a Mock Geisel presentation for our state library association.

"There is such a need for this award, as the books kids use in school reading programs are often less than inspirational. It's great to be able to offer kids quality readers at their level that they are excited to pick up."[22]

Peck, who chaired the most recent committee, commented, "I know all the different committees say this, but serving on the Geisel might be the best committee. The amount of books one has to read is manageable, plus the emergent reader is such a wonderful age group to interact with. They are so open to books, reading, and they enjoy stories without being too jaded. So it can be a joyful experience!"[23]

Geisel in the Future

The Theodor Seuss Geisel Award was established to recognize "the author(s) and illustrator(s) of a book for beginning readers who, through their literary and artistic achievements,

demonstrate creativity and imagination to engage children in reading."[24] Ideally, it can inspire writers and illustrators and encourage publishers to produce quality books for beginning readers. These are the books that will spur the beginning reader on with page-turning dynamics and set young readers' course for continued reading for the remainder of their lives.

In the ten years since its establishment, the award has become another jewel in the ALSC crown of book awards, taking its place on the literary stage along with the Newbery and Caldecott Medals, now being introduced immediately preceding these most prestigious awards during the ALA Youth Media Awards presentation. More people have become aware of the importance of these books and how they challenge, entertain, and delight.

And the award itself continues to mature. Authors and illustrators are creating truly inspiring and engaging books for children beginning the journey of learning how to read. More publishers are publishing outstanding and distinguished books for beginning readers. And, because of the award, more people are aware of what constitutes a beginning reader and the criteria that is used in determining appropriateness and distinction.

Parents who grew up with Dr. Seuss are discovering new books that sustain his spirit. By recognizing these books and getting them into the hands of children, we are keeping the spirit of Dr. Seuss alive and creating a new generation of readers.

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Tough Topic, Necessary Reading

Finding Books for Children with Incarcerated Parents

REBECCA J. SHLAFER AND ALYSSA SCRIGNOLI

The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world,[1] and it is estimated that about 53 percent of men and 61 percent of women in the US prison population are parents of minor children.[2]

As the number of people incarcerated in US prisons and jails grows, so too does the number of children affected by their parents' absence. Recent estimates suggest that more than 2.7 million US children now have a parent in prison or jail.[3]

Children with incarcerated parents are at increased risk for adverse outcomes across multiple domains of development, including behavioral and emotional problems (for example, depression, anxiety, acting out), cognitive delays, and difficulties in school.[4] Although honest, age-appropriate communication about the parent's incarceration has been shown to help promote resilience among children with incarcerated parents, children's caregivers and other professionals who work with this population (teachers, social workers) may struggle with initiating such conversations or knowing how to respond to children's difficult questions.[5] Further, few developmentally appropriate resources exist to help support children with incarcerated parents.

Children's literature may be one potential resource for supporting children and youth with incarcerated parents. Although children's books have addressed many other sensitive issues, including adoption, disabilities, divorce, and the death of a parent, relatively few books have been written addressing parental incarceration. Like books on other sensitive topics, though, children's books that address the issue of incarceration could serve many purposes and could benefit children with a parent in prison or jail.

First, books on parental incarceration could provide one avenue for caregivers and professionals to initiate conversations with children about where the parent is or why they cannot be with the child. The book's plot or the characters' experiences could encourage children to ask questions, including questions about their own experiences and feelings (being scared when the police came and took dad, feeling sad that mom is missing a birthday). The books might also give readers language with which to talk about sensitive issues (arrest, foster care, social worker). Further, children may relate to the books' characters and feel less ashamed and stigmatized, knowing that they are not alone.

Although there are potential benefits to children's books that address the topic of parental incarceration, there are also potential challenges. Although the reading level may be appropriate for the child's age, the book may introduce topics that are not developmentally appropriate (such as gangs or substance use). Further, a book may evoke memories of traumatic experiences that—without support from caregivers or other professionals—could heighten children's arousal and have adverse effects.

***Rebecca J. Shlafer**, PhD is an assistant professor at the University of Minnesota, Department of Pediatrics. Her research examines children's developmental outcomes when their parents are incarcerated. **Alyssa Scrignoli** completed her undergraduate studies in psychology and sociology at the University of Minnesota.*

To avoid such unintended consequences, it's important for caregivers and professionals to have information about each book when making recommendations for children and youth with incarcerated parents. Information about the age group of readers the book is appropriate for, key issues addressed in the book that may be sensitive topics, and a summary of the book would help inform book selections for children with incarcerated parents. With this goal in mind, we sought out to review children's books on this topic.

Book Selection

We identified existing book lists that had been created by other organizations and agencies that focused specifically on children with incarcerated parents (such as the National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated, https://nrccfi.camden.rutgers.edu/resources/books-films/#ChildrenBooks). From these lists, we identified books that were still in print and available for purchase. We used Amazon to locate each book.

Many of the books on the existing lists were no longer available for purchase or were unaffordable (exceptionally high prices on out-of-print titles). Via Amazon, we were directed to numerous titles that were related to our topic of interest through various recommendation engines. This allowed us to identify additional books that did not appear on previous lists. The final book list included twenty books.

Book Reviews

Fourteen undergraduate and graduate students representing multiple disciplines (such as child psychology, family social sciences, sociology, public health, and women's studies) reviewed the books. All of the students had expertise in parental incarceration and were working as interns on research projects related to this topic, under my supervision. With the exception of a few chapter books, each book was independently read and reviewed by two students.

Students were asked to identify a target age group, relevant keywords (foster care, abuse, drug use, prison) that might guide caregivers and practitioners, and prepare a brief summary of the book. They also provided a rating (out of five stars). The two reviews for each book were then compiled into one review; the recommended ages and ratings were averaged across reviewers.

Results

The title, author(s), recommended ages, keywords, a brief summary and rating for each of the twenty books are presented in table 1. Most of the books targeted school-age and pre-teen readers. Some of the books were most appropriate for pre-readers and young children (*My Daddy Is in Jail* by Janet M. Bender); others were most appropriate for adolescents or young-adult readers (*My Father's Son* by Terri Fields).

The books addressed a wide range of issues related to parental incarceration, including witnessing a parent's arrest, visits between children and their incarcerated parents, foster care, and stigma. The books were well received by the reviewers and most were reviewed quite positively; fourteen of the twenty books received a rating of four or five stars.

Although our list is intended to help guide book recommendations for children with incarcerated parents, it should not be considered a substitute for caregivers' and professionals' judgment about what would be most appropriate for the children in their care. We recommend that whenever possible, caregivers and professionals pre-read the books so they have time to organize their own thoughts about the story and its characters and have time to reflect on how the child may interpret the book. Further, these books are not intended to replace professional counseling, but instead provide one source of support that may help children cope during a difficult time.

While there are likely more books that address this topic, we restricted our review to books that were still in print and readily available via online retailers. We also recognize that there are many books addressing topics that are related to parental incarceration (mental illness, addiction, foster care) that may also be relevant to this population. Although we chose not to include those books here and instead focus specifically on the topic of parental incarceration, such books would likely be beneficial to children of incarcerated parents and the caregivers and professionals working with them.

Further, although there are considerably more resources that exist on this topic (booklets, brochures, reports, journal articles), nearly all of these resources are for adult audiences and thus we have chosen not to review those resources here.

Books offer a unique and valuable way to reach children struggling with difficult life experiences, including the incarceration of a parent. But beyond books, libraries can offer a safe and welcoming space—with connections to additional community-based resources—for children and families impacted by incarceration. For these reasons, we recommend that school and public libraries add books on parental incarceration to their collections.

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Table 1. Research to Practice Series: Children's Book Review—Parental Incarceration
Rebecca J. Shlafer, Ph.D. & Alyssa Scrignoli

These books were reviewed and rated (1-5 stars) for content related to parental incarceration, availability, and affordability by a group of fourteen students representing multiple disciplines (e.g., child psychology, family social sciences, sociology, public health women's studies) under the direction of Dr. Rebecca Shlafer, Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Minnesota (shlaf002@umn.edu). The review process was informed by an examination of book lists created by other organizations and agencies and the use of an online retailer. With the exception of a few chapter books, each book was independently read and reviewed by two reviewers combined into one review; recommended ages and ratings were averaged across reviewers.

Book title, Author	Ages	Keywords	Summary
After Tupac and D Foster, Jacqueline Woodson	10+	Foster care, prison, friendship, coming of age, Tupac	The unnamed narrator is an African American teenage girl who grows up with her two best friends. She struggles to make sense of the depictions of African American people in the media, as well as growing up in a world filled with violence, prison, music, friendship, family, and loss. As she tries to understand her friend's experience in the foster care system, she learns more about herself. ★★★★☆
Amber Was Brave, Essie Was Smart, Vera B. Williams	7+	Jail, cops, arrests, sisters, father	Using pictures and poems, the book tells a story of two sisters who stick together through tough times while their father is in jail. The father was sent to jail for forging a check after he was fired from his job. The sisters take care of each other while their mom works hard to support her children. ★★★★☆
An Inmate's Daughter, Jan Walker	11+	Stigma, family, prison	Jenna MacDonald's father was sent to prison. Jenna's mom tried to cover up this fact because she didn't want it to reflect poorly on the family. When Jenna finds that she can't talk about the experience of having an incarcerated father with her friends, she finds support through journaling and reflecting on her feelings about her father. ★★★★☆
Do Not Pass Go, Kirkpatrick Hill	9+	Jail, stigma, family	This story is told from the perspective of Deet, a young, but very mature and reflective, boy who is the oldest of his two siblings. His dad goes to jail for using drugs to stay awake on the job. Throughout the book, as Deet begins to visit his father each week, his perspective drastically changes. He goes from being ashamed and embarrassed about his dad, to seeing the people who go to jail in a new light. He realizes that other kids at school have the same experience as he and that the inmates are just people, just like his father. ★★★★★
Five-Finger Discount, Barthe DeClements	8-13	Theft, father, incarceration	Jerry Johnson is in fifth grade. His father is in jail and he doesn't want anyone to know. One of his fellow classmates figures it out and threatens to tell everyone, which creates conflict between the two of them. Jerry steals pieces of wood from a construction site to build a tree house and also steals shoes to give to his mother because he can't afford to buy them. When his father is released on parole, they go shopping and his dad attempts to steal shoes by using Jerry. This is when Jerry finally learns that this is not okay no matter what the circumstances. ★★☆☆☆
Harry Sue, Sue Stauffacher	8-12	Incarcerated mother, felons, Wizard of Oz	This story is told through the eyes of eleven-year-old Harriet Susan Clotkin, also known as Harry Sue. Both of Harry's parents are incarcerated, so she lives with her grandmother who is abusive. Harry wants to be incarcerated with her mother as soon as she is able, and begins using prison slang. Even though she seems to be tough, Harry Sue is still a caring eleven-year-old. She tries to protect the children that are being mistreated by her grandmother. Harry Sue's life is much like Dorothy's in *The Wizard of Oz*; she is trying to find her way home, but in the end she realizes she was there all along. ★★★★★

Book title, Author	Ages	Keywords	Summary
Jailbird Kid, Shirlee Smith Matheson	8-12	Prison, bank robbery	This story is told by Angela, a ninth grade girl whose dad has just returned home from prison to live with Angela and her mom. *Jailbird Kid* nicely illustrates the many struggles Angela deals with, particularly regarding the conflicted feelings she has about her father and her family. She deeply loves her father and tries to help him find work, but also knows he is making unhealthy decisions. She grapples with who to talk to and when, and her feelings of embarrassment about how her friends and others in the town see her and her family. While her father gets mildly caught up in old habits, the story ultimately ends on an upbeat note. ★★★★★
Jakeman, Deborah Ellis	8-12	Mother incarcerated, foster home, social workers	This story is about Jake who visits Wickham prison with his older sister, Shoshana. Jake has been writing to the governor for three years to have his mother pardoned, but he has never received a response. Together, Jake and his sister must sneak out of their foster home to meet the bus for the 10-hour ride. Jake visits regularly and describes the multiple rules about visiting to his friend who is a "first timer." One trip home from the prison is filled with adventure and chaos as Jake continues his quest to get his mother pardoned. ★★☆☆☆
Mexican Whiteboy, Matt de la Peña	13+	Racial identity, absent father, cultural barriers	Danny is half-Mexican and visiting his father's family this summer near the Mexico border. At his home in San Diego, he attends an all-white private school where his skin is too dark to fit in. Here in National City, where the population is predominantly Mexican, he stands out as "too white". He struggles to find his place as a "Mexican Whiteboy" and save up to find his absent father in Mexico. Another character, Uno, also stands out because of race; he is the only black kid in town. He dreams of getting out of National City, hoping to move to Oxnard to be with his father. Together, Danny and Uno use Danny's baseball talent to con local teams, as long as Danny can maintain control of his pitches. At the end of the story, Danny learns that his dad did not run off to Mexico, but instead has been in prison for the past several years. ★★★★☆
My Daddy is in Jail, Janet Bender	3-10	Jail, witnessing arrest	A young girl returns home from school to witness her father being arrested. The book discusses the girl's confusion and her other complex feelings about her father's arrest. Ultimately, the young girl finds help from the guidance counselor at school. ★★★★★
My Father's Son, Terri Fields	16+	Homicide, paternal incarceration, coming of age	Kevin is shocked to discover his father plastered in the media as a serial killer, responsible for the brutal deaths of over a dozen women. Kevin's parents had been separated for years and had split his time between both parents. Kevin questions his father's innocence, never thinking his father could be responsible for such atrocities. Kevin and his mother struggle to survive financially and socially. The events that unfold are heart-wrenching, and will keep readers at the edge of their seat. ★★☆☆☆
My Mom Went to Jail, Kathleen Hodgkins and Suzanne Bergen	3+	Foster care, jail, feelings coping	Sarah is a young girl who lives with foster parents because her mother is incarcerated. In this short book, readers learn a bit about some of the difficulties Sarah is facing, including some of her thoughts and feelings about her mom being in jail. ★★★☆☆
The Night Dad Went to Jail, Melissa Higgins	5-10	Witnessing arrest, jail, prison, social worker	Sketch witnesses his dad's arrest, and is confused and angry about why his dad was taken away. After his dad's arrest, Sketch has a hard time in school and acts out aggressively towards another kid at school. This book follows Sketch's story through his dad's incarceration, including how Sketch ultimately finds support at school and from a mentor, and Sketch's experiences with visiting his dad in prison. ★★★★★
The Not-Just Anybody Family, Betsy Cromer Byars	8-12	Arrest, jail, grandfather, siblings, dogs, broken legs, police, lawyer, courtroom, judge	Junior Blossom wakes up in the hospital after falling off the roof and breaking both of his legs. He remembers being on the roof with his siblings when they spotted a police car headed toward their family farm. When the police arrived, his siblings (Maggie and Vern) ran, leaving Junior behind. They later learned that their grandfather is in jail. With their mom gone performing in the rodeo, Maggie and Vern are left to rescue Junior and their grandfather, and solve their family's problems. ★★★★☆
Sunny Holiday, Coleen Paratore	3-9	Jail, father, spirituality	Sunny is a spunky nine-year-old with a wonderful support system that includes her mother, best friend, family friends, and neighbors. Sunny's father is in jail. Still, her father, mother, and friends instill remarkable hope in Sunny. The story follows Sunny and her adventures with her friend, living with her father in jail, and becoming involved in improving the community by infiltrating politics. ★★★★☆
Tyrell, Coe Booth	15+	Homelessness, incarceration, prison, coming of age	Tyrell is a 15-year-old boy. His father is currently doing his third stint in prison. While his dad is in prison, Tyrell has primary responsibility for keeping the rest of his family safe. They have recently lost their home and moved to emergency housing. At the shelter, Tyrell meets a girl named Jasmine who has lost both of her parents and is being raised by her sister. Tyrell has an ambivalent relationship with his father - he idolizes him, but he is also angry at his father for ending up in prison again. Meanwhile, Tyrell is dating a "good girl" whose mother is everything that his own parents are not. The central theme of this book is around Black masculinity and what it means to be a man in his community. ★★★☆☆

Book title, Author	Ages	Keywords	Summary
Visiting Day, Jacqueline Woodson and James Ransome	4-9	Paternal incarceration, contact visits, jail, father, grandmother	This well illustrated book tells the story of a little girl as she prepares to visit her father. Once a month, she takes a long bus ride with her grandmother to visit her father in prison. Although she is very excited to visit, she is sad that it is over so quickly. Her grandmother reminds her to count her blessings and start a new list of things to tell her dad at the next visit. ★★★★☆
What Will Happen to Me, Howard Zehr and Lorraine S. Amstutz	4+	Parental incarceration, caregivers, personal accounts, resource	The first section of this book includes personal stories of children with incarcerated parents. Each story illustrates different experiences children may encounter when a parent is incarcerated. Some children remember their parent being taken away. Some have good relationships with their incarcerated parent, while others acknowledge feelings of anger or grief. The second section of this book is for caregivers of children whose parents are incarcerated. There are a few personal stories, in addition to specific advice for caregivers. ★★★★★
Wish You Were Here, Autumn Spanne, Nora McCarthy and Laura Longhine	12+	Parental incarceration, prison, visitations	The book is divided into two sections: teens and parents. The book is filled with personal narratives that both teens and parents share about their experience related to incarceration. The different stories the teens share cover myriad topics, including anger, forgiveness, relationship building, and feelings about visiting their incarcerated parent. The parents share first-hand accounts of the pain, grief, guilt, shame, and regret that incarceration has produced. One particular parent speaks of his experience being sexually molested as a child, and becoming a sexual molester once he had children. ★★★☆☆
The Year the Swallows Came Early, Kathryn Fitzmaurice	8-15	Witnessing arrest, police, jail, gambling	Eleanor Robinson, known as "Groovy," is an 11-year-old girl who dreams of someday going to cooking school. Her dreams quickly fall apart when her mom has her dad arrested and Groovy learns that her father gambled away her inheritance money. She goes through a roller coaster of emotions from anger towards her mother, and then towards her father, to sadness while her dad is away. Throughout her journey, she witnesses her friend's family problems, as well. But, the swallows that return to the city every year teach her some life lessons and restore her hope. Ultimately, Eleanor learns to forgive her dad and to "expect the unexpected." ★★★★★

Dead Wood?

The Forgotten Art of Woodcut Illustrations

JULIE CUMMINS

Is the art of woodcut illustrations in children's books really dead? Have they been relegated to the trash bin by computer capabilities for creating images? Has digitization usurped the creativity and skill of this hands-on medium? The answer is simple—yes and no.

So what is woodcutting? Essentially, it's a type of relief painting in which an image is carved into the surface of a block of wood and printed on paper. To apply the technique, the design is drawn on a smooth block of wood and the parts that are to be white are cut away with knives or chisels, leaving the design standing up in relief. It is then inked and pressed against a sheet of paper.[1]

There are two forms of the process, woodcuts and wood engraving. Though they are similar, they are not interchangeable. The only difference between them is the direction of the wood grain. Woodcuts use blocks of wood with the grain running length-wise, while wood engraving is the opposite, using wood blocks sawn across the grain.

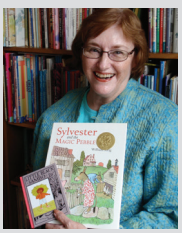
Woodcuts have a long history. As early as the sixth century, designs were cut into wood and printed on textiles in the Near East. They were the forerunners of the technique, but it was English printer William Caxton who established woodcuts as an art form in the 1400s when he illustrated his books with finely chiseled line drawings (though they were not intended for children).

It wasn't until the late 1700s that Thomas Bewick (pronounced Buick) chiseled woodcuts in books for children. He was a country farm boy who was apprenticed to an engraver and put to work making woodcuts, which were at that time considered to be unimportant and cheap, but nevertheless popular. His portraits of farm animals and birds were impeccably produced, making him a natural to illustrate *Aesop's Fables* in 1784.[2]

When Bewick died in 1828, George Cruikshank, at the young age of 24, became the master of line and the craft of the wood block. He was among the early illustrators of Charles Dickens' books, but his foremost work for children was the first English translation of Grimms' *German Popular Tales* (1823 and 1826). His flair for caricature and strong use of line infused his work with amusing detail that established the whole tone of the book.

Twenty years or so later, Edward Lear was another skilled artist whose sharp line drawings cleverly captured the absurdity in his children's *Nonsense Book* (1846).[3]

Probably the most famous engraved images are John Tenniel's from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1871). Tenniel himself didn't print his own art, he depended on the skilled engraver Dalziel to transfer his delicate and intricate creations to the printing surface.[4]



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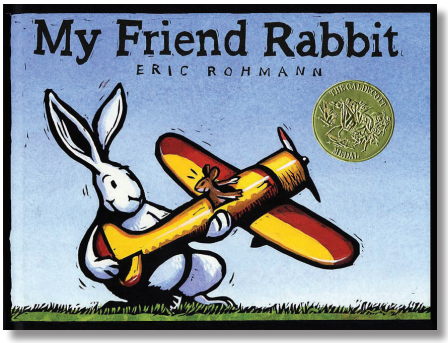
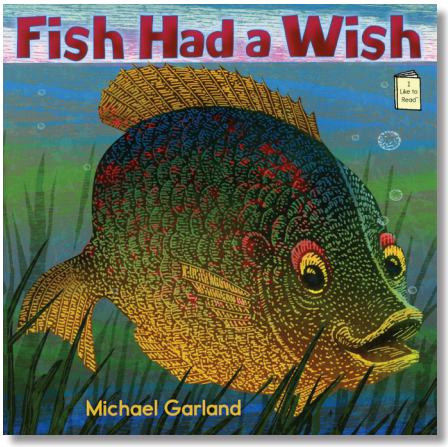
Then came photography. It revolutionized the technique of reproducing pictures and almost eradicated woodcutting and wood-crafted illustrations save for the gifted printer, Edmund Evans. He developed improved methods in color printing with which he could print up to eleven different colors. A trio of famous illustrators was captivated by this newly developed method and applied it to their signature styles. Randolph Caldecott, Walter Crane, and Kate Greenaway led the way of a confluence of artists whose expertise made them major players in setting the bar for this new challenging process.

Fritz Eichenberg was a German-American artist who worked primarily in wood engraving. Politically outspoken and a critic of the Nazis, he moved his family from Berlin to the United States. In his prolific career he was drawn to novels of emotional conflict and social satire. In particular, he was inspired by the haunting, tragic stories of the Bronte sisters. His images in *Wuthering Heights* (1943) not only portrayed the events in the story but also captured the book's spirit.



Antonio Frasconi had a similar lifeline. Born in Argentina, he moved to the United States at the end of World War II. He quickly gained recognition for his intricate woodcuts and social commentary. It was legendary children's book editor (and his neighbor) Margaret McElderry who saw his woodcuts and asked him to do a children's book, and he did.

His first book for children, *See and Say: A Picture Book in Four Languages* (1955), was critically acclaimed. The multilingual picture book cited word translations in four different languages, making it unique in the medium used as well as content. It validated him as one of the foremost graphic artists of his generation.



Enter the Caldecott Award. In 1938, the then Children's Services Division (now the Association for Library Service to Children) of the American Library Association initiated the annual award, named for Randolph Caldecott, in recognition of illustrations in children's picture books as a distinguished art form.

The first book illustrated with scratchboard or wood engraving technique to receive Caldecott recognition, an Honor citation, was *Song of Robin Hood* by Virginia Lee Burton in 1948.

Eichenberg and Frasconi, masters of woodcutting, each received a Caldecott Honor award: Eichenberg for *Ape in a Cape* (1953) and Frasconi for *The House That Jack Built* (1959).

Another prominent artist who lent his dexterity to the craft of woodcutting was Lynd Ward. While studying in Germany, he discovered a woodcut novel without words by Belgian engraver Frans Masereel. He was so inspired by the book that he created six adult, wordless novels with woodcuts or wood engravings that gained him the title "Father of the Graphic Novel."[5]

Ward then turned his hand to children's books, three of them, all based on childhood experiences (eight to ninety pages in length). He won the Caldecott Medal for the first, *The Biggest Bear,* in 1953.[6] It's interesting to note that in that same year, two of the five Honor books were also illustrated with woodcuts: *Ape in a Cape* and *Puss in Boots.*

Just as Ward was inspired by Masereel, Michael McCurdy was inspired by Ward. When he was a teenager, he wrote him a fan letter that evolved into a lifelong friendship and collaboration. Their rapport was so strong that when Ward died in 1985, McCurdy reportedly inherited his wood engraving tools. McCurdy's multifaceted career as printer and publisher includes children's books, having illustrated more than one hundred eighty titles. As a master of engraving, woodcuts, and scratchboard techniques, his work has a special affinity for recreating folktales and historical scenes. His style ranges from the dramatic compositions in *Giants in the Land* (1993) to the hewn depictions in *American Fairy Tales* (1996).

A similar method to woodcutting is linoleum block printing, for which a linoleum block is used in place of wood. The end result is difficult to distinguish from wood prints. Famous painters Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse, known for their fine art, were early adapters of linocuts, which are easier to handle though the details are not as fine. A contemporary artist working in linocuts is Ashley Wolff. Examples of her work include *A Year of Birds* and *Bells of London*.

One Skilled Style

Say the word "scratchboard" and the name that comes to mind is Brian Pinkney, the king of this technique. Akin to woodcutting, a drawing board is covered with white clay, then black ink. A scratch knife is used to scratch into the top coating so the color underneath shows through. Pinkney often uses crosshatching to create texture. He has won two Caldecott Honors with this method: *The Faithful Friend* (1996) and *Duke Ellington: The Piano Prince and His Orchestra* (1999).

To date, twenty-four books illustrated with woodcuts or like techniques have been awarded either the Caldecott Medal or Honor. Notably, of those twenty-four titles, four were illustrated

Interview with Rick Allen

Woodcut self-portrait, © Rick Allen

Illustrator Rick Allen's latest book is *Winter Bees & Other Poems of the Cold* written by Joyce Sidman (Houghton Mifflin, 2014). In a conversation with *Children and Libraries,* he describes his approach and application.

"The images for this book were made through the unlikely marriage of some very old and almost new art mediums. The individual elements of each picture (the animals, trees, snowflakes, etc.) were cut, inked, and printed from linoleum blocks (nearly two hundred of them), and then hand-colored. Those prints were then digitally scanned, composed, and layered to create the illustrations for the poems. The somewhat surprising (and oddly pleasing) result was learning that the slow and backwards art of relief printmaking could bring modern technology down to its level, making everything even more complex and time-consuming."

The result, in his words, "makes for an attractive anomaly."

His step-by-step process begins with sketching the initial concepts for the images, transferring them to blocks, then cutting. Each image takes from three to seven blocks. Next is choosing the color palette and finally registering and printing.

"You're never quite sure how each image—produced from so many blocks and with so many hours of cutting—will turn out until they're finally pulled off the press, and that in itself introduces enough healthy uncertainty to keep your attention."

There's no doubt that his vigorous and extremely well crafted art will keep the attention of many who appreciate children's book illustration.

by Marcia Brown, recipient of nine total Caldecott awards and honors. Two of her three Caldecott Medals were created with woodcuts: *Once a Mouse* (1962) and *Shadow* (1983). Two of her six Honor books also used woodcut techniques: *Dick Whittington and His Cat* (1951) and *Puss in Boots* (1953).[7] The choice of *Shadow* was somewhat controversial because some critics felt that the dramatic mix of collage, woodcuts, and acrylics was too scary for children and the story itself too adult.

It is encouraging that in the last five years of Caldecott Awards and Honors, there have been four illustrators who have used some form of wood printing techniques: *The House in the Night* (2009), illustrated by Beth Krommes; *Red Sings from Treetops* (2010) and *Sleep Like a Tiger* (2013), both illustrated by Pamela Zagarenski; and *A Sick Day for Amos McGee* (2011), illustrated by Erin Stead.

If asked the question, are woodcuts as illustrations dead, some people would emphatically say yes, while other contemporary artists such as Betsy Bowen (*Ant, Bear, Canoe: A Northwoods Alphabet,* 1991), Brian Pinkney (*The Faithful Friend*), Mary Azarian (*A Farmer's Alphabet,* 2012), Holly Meade (*On the Farm,* 2012 and *In the Sea,* 2012), David Frampton (*The Song of Francis and the Animals,* 2005), Bonnie Christensen (*Daring Nelly Bly: America's Star Reporter*), Eric Rohmann (*My Friend Rabbit,* 2003), Barry Moser (*The Blessing of Beasts,* 2007), and Hadley Hooper (*The Iridescence of Birds: A Book about Henri Matisse*, 2014), would firmly say no. Each of them has kept alive the traditional technique of woodcutting with handsome results.

Can hands on a keyboard transmogrify an ancient technique that uses chisel in hand into equally striking art using chisel in hand? There is evidence that artistic hands can do so.

Michael Garland is a case in point. He has pioneered a new art form that incorporates the old with the new. He calls it "digi-woodcut," a form of digital art that mimics woodcuts by scanning in wood textures and then layering them in the painting. *Fish Had a Wish,* published by Holiday House in 2012, is illustrated in this way.

Another newcomer who is embracing technology and infusing it into his woodcut art is Rick Allen. He made a stunning debut with his illustrations for *Dark Emperor and Other Poems of the Night*, a 2011 Newbery Honor Book, written by Joyce Sidman.

To paraphrase a childhood tongue twister, how much wood could a woodcutter cut, if a woodcutter did cut wood? As much as the skilled artist chooses to create art, if only they would. Let's hope there will be many.

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It's How You Say It

Using Value-Based Language for Elevator Speech Awesomeness

JENNA NEMEC-LOISE

Everyday Advocacy empowers ALSC members to embrace their roles as library advocates by focusing on their daily efforts to serve youth and families. Each lighthearted column features easy-to-implement strategies and techniques for asserting the transformative power of libraries both within communities and beyond them. Contact Jenna Nemec-Loise at everyday-advocacy @hotmail.com with comments and ideas for future topics.

If we're going to be colleagues and friends, you should probably know these three things about me:

1. I think Everyday Advocacy is rad and won't rest until everyone else thinks so, too;

2. "Awesome" is pretty much my favorite word ever; and

3. It pains me to admit when my mom's right about something.

Now I love my mom. She's a neat lady. But when I hear myself parroting things she told me when I was a surly tween and teen? Oh, man. We must be on the verge of a new world order.

Well, Everyday Advocates, I'm here to tell you change is a-comin' because Kathy Nemec was definitely onto something with this 1980s Mom-ism: "It's not so much what you say. It's how you say it."

Of course, my mom was talking about my affinity for sarcasm. (The fierce words, "Watch your tone, young lady!" usually followed.)

But that doesn't mean we can't channel my mom when we think about crafting impactful library messages for policymakers and community stakeholders.

Maybe a little Kathy Nemec is *exactly* what we need.

With National Library Legislative Day right around the corner, it's time to write elevator speeches that articulate the value of what we bring to children, families, and communities through libraries.

How you say it matters, and my mom and I are here to help.

The Skinny on Elevator Speeches

Do you really need an elevator speech or two? Yes. Yes, you do.

Elevator speeches are brief opportunities—maybe one minute or less—to pique the interest of anyone whose ear you'd like to bend about library-related issues.

When you've got great elevator speeches in your tool kit, you're ready to snap up an Everyday Advocacy opportunity wherever it presents itself—the coffee shop, the park, the alderman's office, or quite naturally, the elevator.

The goal of your elevator speeches shouldn't be to tell listeners everything you want them to know about the library. Instead,

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your speeches should answer the questions, "What do you do, and why is it important?"

Ultimately, you want your listeners to say, "Tell me more!" or ask, "How do you do that?"

Using Value-Based Language

When someone asks what you do as a children's librarian, it might be tempting to respond with the usual litany of responsibilities: storytime, reference, collection development, summer reading, and so on.

But what does that list actually tell your listeners about the value of those critically important activities? Not much—and maybe even nothing at all. That's a scary prospect, right?

With National Library Legislative Day right around the corner, it's time to write elevator speeches that articulate the value of what we bring to children, families, and communities through libraries.

By using value-based language (VBL), you can create action-oriented elevator speeches that shift the emphasis away from the programs or services you provide and onto the kids and families you impact. What better way to express how what you do makes a difference and changes lives?

Here's a VBL template for writing awesome elevator speeches:

> "I help [insert target audience] [insert verb phrase] at the library so that [insert proven/expected positive outcome for target audience]."

Still clear as mud? Let's try it another way.

Compare the following three sets of examples, each containing a program-centered statement and its VBL counterpart:

> **Example 1**: "I do storytime at the library."
>
> **Example 1 with VBL**: "I help parents and caregivers promote kindergarten readiness at the library so their young children can start school ready to learn."
>
> **Example 2**: "I conduct a summer reading program at the library."
>
> **Example 2 with VBL**: "I help youth and families read, discover, and create at the library so they can become critical thinkers and lifelong learners."
>
> **Example 3**: "I manage a volunteer program at the library."
>
> **Example 3 with VBL**: "I help kids increase their civic engagement at the library so they can become global citizens who vote on the issues that matter to them."

See the difference? It's pretty hard to ignore.

The first examples in each set are serviceable—they answer the question, "What do you do?" But the second example in each set is powerful because it clearly articulates the *value* of what you do. That's Everyday Advocacy in action.

Remember, your elevator speeches are conversation starters. You can share all the details later, so don't be afraid to ask listeners for those follow-up phone calls or meetings once you've dazzled 'em with VBL!

Elevator Speeches in Action

Every day you're out there creating a better future for children through libraries. Why not let everyone know what you do and why it's important?

As part of the Everyday Advocacy initiative, ALSC is giving away buttons with a call to action at the 2015 ALA Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference. Attached to each button is a tip sheet created by the Advocacy and Legislation Committee and filled with talking points to help you articulate the value of youth library service.

This spring, we're challenging you to develop your elevator speeches, wear your button proudly, and remind people how you create a better future for children through libraries. What you do matters, and how you say it makes an Everyday Advocacy difference!

I know you've been waiting for just the right moment to get started.

How about now?

Taking Time for Tech

Offering Support for Students through Technology

TARA SMITH

While libraries have long been known as destinations for learning, research, and study, the methods we use to provide homework support must be continually updated, not only to demonstrate our relevance in a technological era, but also to ensure that the students we serve have access to the most up-to-date information and devices.

When I began as the youth services manager at Cherokee County Public Library (CCPL) in Gaffney, South Carolina—a small system serving a largely low-income, rural population of about 55,000—it was evident we needed to reconsider how our young patrons accessed technology to complete homework assignments, type papers, and work on projects. Students often came to the library without a library card to log on to our computers; many with cards in good standing still lacked the technological skills to find information or funds to print documents.

In 2013, we were fortunate to receive a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, administered by the South Carolina State Library, which provided us with $25,000 to create a Learning Resource Center (LRC) at our main location with dedicated technology for student use. This new homework area helps students develop the information and technology literacy skills they need for school readiness, widespread educational success, and a smooth transition into higher education.

For a community in which few students had come into contact with iPads or iMacs, having a chance to increase skills and comfort level with these devices was in itself an educational experience, but we wanted to enhance that experience by helping our patrons view technology as a viable option for learning and homework completion.

Getting Started

Achieving our goals required far more than just making the iPads and iMacs available; we had to consider how they could best be used to support students' information needs. In addition, many logistical considerations required extensive research into best practices for device configuration and security measures, the creation of detailed use policies, and endless hours evaluating apps and software.

Creating a homework support center within your library raises a unique set of issues and questions you must consider including:

- How will students access the devices? Will they need a library card to log in, or will their parents sign a release form giving them permission?

Formerly youth services manager at the Cherokee County Public Library in Gaffney, South Carolina, ***Tara Smith*** *is now a teen librarian at Charlotte Mecklenburg Library in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is a member of the ALSC Children and Technology Committee.*

- How can we ensure the security of the technology? What policies should we have in place in case devices are damaged or stolen?

- How do we guarantee that students' information stays private? What is the best way to regulate how students save their work for future sessions? Will we create a single shared login for apps that require an account, or encourage students to create their own?

- Are we able to offer free printing? If so, how will we limit and track the number of pages printed?

- What forms of support can we offer, and to what degree? Will we have the available staff to help students learn how to use the software? To help them with specific homework questions? To give them individualized research instruction?

- Do staff members have the necessary knowledge, skills, and comfort level with these devices? What plans should we develop for maintenance, updates, purchasing additional apps, and training?

Our Plan

One of our biggest priorities was eliminating the barriers to students' access to technology at the library. Rather than requiring library cards to access the LRC devices, we created a release form that would allow students to log on to the LRC at their parents' discretion; this release form also defined patron liabilities and explained policies and regulations.

Determining which apps, software, and materials to use at the LRC necessitated a massive amount of research, experimentation, and evaluation—a process that should be never-ending when you hope to consistently offer the best and newest resources.

I spent a great deal of time reading reviews of educational apps and trying them out on my own iPad to decide which apps covered the same ground (like the seemingly infinite number that claim to teach early reading skills), which provided the best bang for the buck (because, yes, sometimes it's necessary to pay for quality apps), and which would work best in an environment where devices are shared and available for public use.

We also chose to offer students up to ten pages of free printing per day by adding an AirPrint-enabled printer to the LRC's wireless network. This element alone has drawn in many students who may not have the ability to create professional-looking papers and presentations otherwise. We hear on a near-daily basis how valuable it is to our patrons, and several students who previously struggled with project completion now proudly report to us that they are receiving top marks for their homework.

Another important component of the planning process is staff buy-in. Every library has staff who are more technologically inclined and those who are more hesitant, so it's vital that you share your excitement with every one of your coworkers, encourage them to play around with the devices and apps, make sure that they feel comfortable helping kids learn the basics, and offer documentation to assist with training and troubleshooting.

Promotion and Outreach

When you are working to help students succeed academically, it is key to collaborate with schools and heavily promote your services to teachers and administrators. After all, what's the point of providing homework support if nobody knows what you have to offer?

We created promotional posters, bookmarks, and other information to distribute in the schools, and sent reminders at the beginning of each school year so that teachers could encourage their students to take advantage of the library's resources. Additionally, we contacted media specialists to offer information literacy outreach sessions where I brought the LRC devices to the school to get students hooked on fun new ways to research, create, and learn. We also developed a web form where teachers can share information about upcoming assignments, so staff members are prepared to share the most relevant resources, databases, and software when students come in to complete the assignment.

Looking Forward

Every school and library approaches technology integration differently, but it is clear that students need our help navigating the abundance of gadgets, apps, websites, and other electronic resources that could enhance their educational experience. CCPL's LRC is only one example of how libraries can use technology to support students, but hopefully it will inspire you to examine your community's needs and identify how your resources can foster learning, collaboration, and creativity. &

Crunching Numbers

Make Your Case Using Statistics

COMPILED BY TESS PRENDERGAST AND BETSY DIAMANT-COHEN

Reports or presentations about the importance of early literacy or the value of libraries are most valuable when they give a context. For instance, making a point about service to a low-income population is most effective when accompanied by a statistic regarding the number of children in your state who live in poverty or whose parents lack secure employment.

The value of library early literacy programs becomes even more apparent when placed in the context of young children living in your state who are not attending preschool, fourth graders who are not proficient in reading, and high school students who are not graduating on time.

Knowing where to go to find the most recent statistics to both support and illustrate the value of the work we do as children's librarians is essential. This list provides links to some of our favorite go-to sites for getting the numbers we need to make our cases.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data Center

http://datacenter.kidscount.org

This annual report assesses child well-being nationally and by state. Free and easy access both digitally and in print is provided for statistics regarding economic well-being, education, health, and family and community. Trends in child well-being are examined comparing current years with past years. Data can be searched by location or topic, including demographics, economic well-being, education, family and community, safety and risky behavior, and health. Five minutes on this site gathering current statistics about your state can strengthen the value of library services for children.

National Center for Education Statistics

http://nces.ed.gov/datatools/index.asp?DataToolSectionID=4

For access to data on a wide-range of educational topics, the National Center for Education Statistics provides an array of data building tools including: Education Data Analysis Tool, Elementary/Secondary Information System, International Data Explorer, National Assessment of Educational Progress, Power Stats, and Quick Stats. Using these tools, you can quickly create statistical tables about almost any educational topic of interest and even draw comparisons to other nations to help you build a research-based description of your area of concern. One practical application that might help you familiarize yourself with your community's schools is the elementary/secondary information system. It allows you to input specific school names to see things like student populations, student-teacher ratio, as well as the ethnic diversity of the children who attend.

US Department of Education: Ed Data Inventory

http://datainventory.ed.gov/InventoryList

Still in the beta phase, this site describes data reported to the US Department of Education "as part of grant activities, along with administrative and statistical data assembled and maintained by the department." Created in response to President Obama's 2013 Executive Order "Making Open and Machine Readable the New Default for Government Information," access is given to date from studies about Early Childhood, Ed Facts, Family Literacy, Pre-Elementary Education, Public Libraries, State Library Agencies, and International Trends in Mathematics and Science.

US Census Bureau: State and County Quick Facts

http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/00000.html

This site offers quick background information such as population numbers, number of people who speak a language other than English at home, how many people have been living in the same home for one year or more, how many people have a bachelor's degree or higher, how many people are living below the poverty level, and median household income. By having these facts available by state and county, the information can be used to create a community portrait. The library tab includes a photo library of images including family, school, and community life scenes that are free to use in public information products with permission granted via e-mail.

UNICEF Statistics and Monitoring

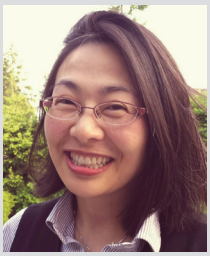
www.unicef.org/statistics

UNICEF's global focus represents a comprehensive source of information about the state of childhood around the world. While our work is community-focused, it is worthwhile understanding some of the issues that impact child development around the globe. The work of UNICEF offers such perspectives through a comprehensive array of statistical tools and reports, all available online and free. Many of us work in communities that are now home to people who have recently left refugee camps, war zones, or impoverishment in other parts of the world. Information about these areas of the world may help build understanding and help build bridges to effectively serve and support newcomers from such circumstances. This site is also recommended for use by school-age children and youth who are studying global issues such as poverty, famine, and war. &

Photo: Francis Dzikowski

Photo: Randee Dadonna

Uegaki, Haughton Win Ezra Jack Keats Top Honors



Chieri Uegaki and Chris Haughton are the winners of the 2015 Ezra Jack Keats Awards for new writer and illustrator, respectively.

"The Ezra Jack Keats Book Award celebrates and inspires exceptional new writers and illustrators, who are seldom recognized in the early stages of their careers," said Deborah Pope, Executive Director of the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation. "These new artists have created books of beauty in the spirit of Keats that portray the universal qualities of childhood, a strong and supportive family, and the multicultural nature of our world."

The Ezra Jack Keats Foundation partners with the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection at The University of Southern Mississippi for the awards.

Uegaki is the author of *Hana Hashimoto, Sixth Violin,* published by Kids Can Press. The author said, "Learning that I would be the recipient of this year's Ezra Jack Keats Book Award for new writer was one of the most surreal moments of my writing life to date. I wrote *Hana Hashimoto, Sixth Violin*, because I wanted to pay tribute to my two grandfathers. I also tried to write the kind of story that I would have wanted to read as a child, and to create the kind of main character I would have wanted to see in a picture book. To now have that effort recognized by the Ezra Jack Keats Book Award jury is an honor that is altogether wonderful, humbling, and incredibly encouraging."

Haughton is the author and illustrator of *Shh! We Have a Plan,* published by Candlewick Press.

Haughton said, "It is an honor to be presented with the Ezra Jack Keats Book Award. I'm a huge fan of Keats' work and am very inspired by his collages and deceptively simple graphic approach. More than that though, what I admire most is his forward-thinking spirit and the inclusivity and kindness that emanate from his work. In the central image in *Shh! We Have a Plan,* the individual colors of the birds surrounding the main character come together to form a hopeful rainbow. The message of the image, and of the book, is the power of kindness and the courage to do things differently and stand up against the status quo. These messages are ones I see throughout Keats' life and work and it is a huge honor to be associated with him through this award."

Honor books cited include:

New Writer Honor

Adam Auerbach for *Edda: A Little Valkyrie's First Day of School* (published by Christy Ottaviano Books, an imprint of Holt; illustrated by the author)

Alan Rabinowitz for *A Boy and a Jaguar* (published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; illustrated by CáTia Chien)

Misty Copeland for *Firebird* (published by G.P. Putnam's; illustrated by Christopher Myers)

New Illustrator Honor

Evan Turk for *Grandfather Gandhi* (published by Simon & Schuster/Atheneum; written by Arun Gandhi and Bethany Hegedus)

Mike Curato for *Little Elliot, Big City* (published by Holt; written by the illustrator)

To be eligible for the 2015 Ezra Jack Keats Book Award, the author and/or illustrator will have no more than three children's picturebooks published prior to the year under consideration.

The selection committee is comprised of early childhood education specialists, librarians, illustrators, and experts in children's literature, including Caroline Ward, Chair, Rita Auerbach, Carolyn Brodie, Jason Chin, Pat Cummings, K.T. Horning, Sean Qualls, Lisa Von Drasek, and Paul O. Zelinsky.

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THE LAST WORD

The Curious Case of Band-Aid Contagion

Shawn D. Walsh

I don't think anyone could have prepared me for the fact that germs are not the only things that are contagious. The need for a Band-Aid can spread faster than a cold germ!

For kids under about ten, every small cut, abrasion, or invisible hurt needs a Band-Aid. Logically, when you have a large group of young children, the chance of someone legitimately needing one is high.

Combine that with summer, when more skin is exposed and energy is high. Running, tripping, and just general kid antics increase the risk of needing a Band-Aid. And, of course, all this movement means the Band-Aids their parents put on them will also fall off during a program, and they will need an immediate replacement.

Now for me, nothing is more fun than a colorful Band-Aid or one adorned with characters, especially when I'm feeling sad. However, having any Band-Aids in the library that are not the generic beige plastic adhesive kind is a disaster waiting to happen. Since they have become a badge of honor, if the library has neon ones then everyone will need one!

Please note: there are ways to contain the contagion before it spreads. Be sure to check all shoes before any activity that involves movement. Make sure all laces are tied, double knotted, and loose ends tucked into shoes. Yelling, "shoe check!" is not unheard of in my library anymore. The kids stop where they are, and everyone's shoes are checked for potential problems.

Finally, and this helps with elementary-age children who can discern humor better, offering to cut off an injured appendage and replace it with a wooden one is always good. If the child is really hurting and not just succumbing to the Band-Aid contagion, he or she will proceed to show me the scrape or abrasion. The wide-eyed look of concern believing they may actually need a peg leg or arm frequently means that child is probably just fine and needs only a momentary break to settle down and refocus. Crisis averted!

I never would have thought Band-Aid contagion would be one of my challenges as a librarian, but a large break-out can derail an entire program, and I'm not having that happen again. So bring on the boring beige bandages!

Shawn D. Walsh *is the Emerging Services and Technologies Librarian at Madison (Ohio) Public Library. He is known in the community for his messy, energetic, and creative programs for elementary, middle, and high school patrons.*

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

ALSC Award Winners

Congratulations to ALSC's 2015 media award winners!

Newbery Medal

The Crossover by Kwame Alexander
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Newbery Honor Books

El Deafo by Cece Bell
Amulet/ABRAMS

Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson
Penguin/Nancy Paulsen

Caldecott Medal

The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend by Dan Santat
Little Brown

Caldecott Honor Books

Nana in the City by Lauren Castillo
Clarion

The Noisy Paint Box: The Colors and Sounds of Kandinsky's Abstract Art by Barb Rosenstock
Illus. by Mary GrandPré
Knopf/Random House

Sam and Dave Dig a Hole by Mac Barnett
Illus. by Jon Klassen
Candlewick

Viva Frida by Yuyi Morales
Roaring Brook/Neal Porter

The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus by Jen Bryant
Illus. by Melissa Sweet
Eerdmans

This One Summer by Mariko Tamaki
Illus. by Jillian Tamaki.
First Second

Batchelder Award

Mikis and the Donkey
Eerdmans

Batchelder Honor Books

Nine Open Arms
Enchanted Lion

Hidden: A Child's Story of the Holocaust
First Second

Belpré Author Award

I Lived on Butterfly Hill by Marjorie Agosín
Simon & Schuster/Atheneum

Belpré Author Honor Book

Portraits of Hispanic American Heroes by Juan Felipe Herrera
Illus. by Raúl Colón
Penguin/Dial

Belpré Illustrator Award

Viva Frida (See Caldecott)

Belpré Illustrator Honor Books

Little Roja Riding Hood by Susan Middleton Elya
Illus. by Susan Guevara
Penguin/G.P. Putnam's Sons

Green Is a Chile Pepper by Roseanne Greenfield Thong
Illus. by John Parra
Chronicle

Separate Is Never Equal by Duncan Tonatiuh
Abrams

Carnegie Medal

Me…Jane
Paul R. Gagne and Melissa Reilly Ellard
Weston Woods

Geisel Medal

You Are (Not) Small by Anna Kang
Illus. by Christopher Weyant
Two Lions

Geisel Honor Books

Mr. Putter & Tabby Turn the Page by Cynthia Rylant
Illus. by Arthur Howard
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Waiting Is Not Easy! by Mo Willems
Disney-Hyperion

Odyssey Award

H. O. R. S. E. A Game of Basketball and Imagination
Live Oak Media

Odyssey Honor Audiobooks

Five, Six, Seven, Nate!
AUDIOWORKS/Simon & Schuster

The Scandalous Sisterhood of Prickwillow Place
Listening Library

A Snicker of Magic
Scholastic Audiobooks

Sibert Medal

The Right Word (See Caldecott)

Sibert Honor Books

Brown Girl Dreaming (See Newbery)

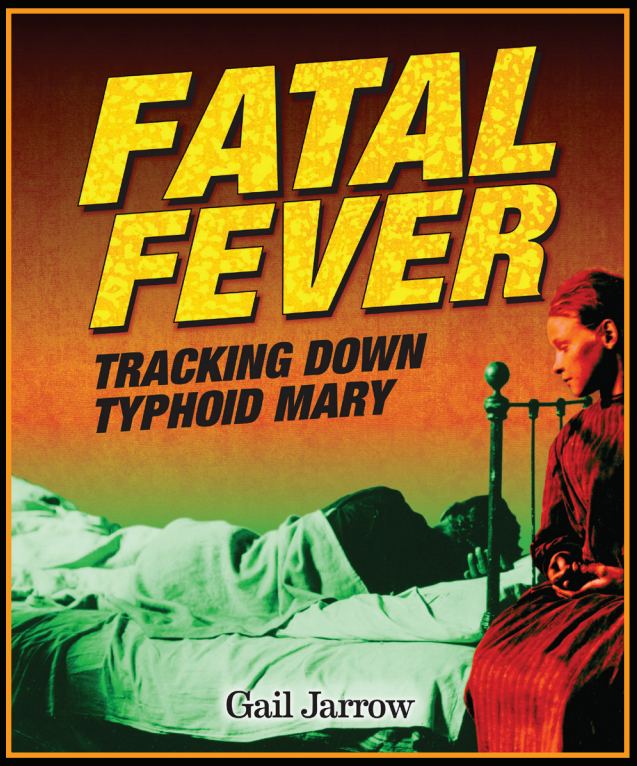
The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion & the Fall of Imperial Russia by Candace Fleming
Schwartz & Wade/Random House

Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker by Patricia Hruby Powell
Illus. by Christian Robinson
Chronicle

Neighborhood Sharks: Hunting with the Great Whites of California's Farallon Islands by Katherine Roy
Roaring Brook

Separate Is Never Equal (See Belpré)

Typhoid Mary, as she's never been seen before . . .



★ "A nonfiction page-turner relying upon extensive research and copious source notes, this is a fantastic addition to any library."
—*School Library Journal*, starred review

★ "[E]ngrossing . . . a top-notch addition to the popular topic of deadly diseases."
—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

★ "The writing is lucid, well organized, and informative. . . . [R]eaders who are curious about Typhoid Mary . . . will find this an absorbing account of what actually happened."
—*Booklist*, starred review

★ ". . . (c)aptivating . . ."
—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

In the early 1900s, typhoid fever was running rampant across America, killing tens of thousands of people. At the same time, Mary Mallon was employed as a cook by several well-to-do New York families. When members of these households developed the disease, suspicion fell on Mary. But why wouldn't Mary cooperate with the authorities?

Acclaimed author Gail Jarrow combines stellar research with her expertise in science and history to tell this true medical thriller. Readers will be on the edges of their seats wondering what happened to the innocent typhoid victims—and to Mary herself.

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E-book: 978-1-62979-060-2 • $9.99
With glossary, timeline, list of well-known typhoid sufferers and victims, further resource section, author's note, and source notes.