Caldicott and Newbery Awards Announced

Some 10,000 librarians from around the world gathered for the American Library Association’s (ALA) Midwinter Meeting on January 9-14 in San Diego. Highlights include the announcement of the most prestigious children’s book awards, a best-selling authors forum, and timely discussions of topics ranging from Internet access in libraries to copyright to the USA PATRIOT Act. Winners of the Newbery and Caldecott Medals for the best writing and illustration of children’s books were announced at a press conference on January 12.

Other award winners were also announced, including the Printz Award for literary excellence in books for young adults, the Coretta Scott King Awards for the best books representing the African-American experience for children, and the Pura Belpre Award to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for youth.

The 2004 winners of the John Newbery and Randolph Caldecott medals are Kate DiCamillo, author of *The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some Soup, and a Spool of Thread*, and Mordicai Gerstein, illustrator and author of *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*.

*The Tale of Despereaux*, illustrated by Timothy Basil Ering and published by Candlewick Press, draws the reader into an enchanting account of a smaller-than-usual mouse in love with music, stories, and a princess named Pea. This tiny hero faints at loud noises but gathers the courage to fulfill his dreams. With character and plot far more complex than the traditional fairy tale, separate stories introduce Despereaux, condemned for talking to the princess; the evil rat, Roscuro, who loves light and soup; and Miggery Sow, a farm girl with royal aspirations. The lyrical language of this distinctive tale is as savory as the palace soup.

The 2004 Caldecott Medal for illustration is awarded to Mordicai Gerstein for *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*, published by Roaring Brook Press, a division of the Millbrook Press. This true story recounts the daring feat of a spirited young Frenchman who walked a tightrope between the World Trade Center twin towers in 1974. His joy in dancing on a thin wire high above Manhattan and the awe of the spectators in the streets far below is captured in exquisite ink and oil paintings that perfectly complement the spare, lyrical text.

“Gerstein’s skillful compositions and dramatic use of perspective make this a book that literally takes your breath away,” said Caldecott Award Chair Kathy East.

Two Newbery Honor Books were named: *Olive’s Ocean*, by Kevin Henkes, published by Greenwillow Books; and *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793*, by Jim Murphy and published by Clarion Books.

Three Caldecott Honor Books were named: *Ella Sarah Gets Dressed*, illustrated and written by Margaret Chodos-Irvine and published by Harcourt, Inc.; *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?* illustrated and written by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page and published by Houghton Mifflin Company; and *Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*, illustrated and written by Mo Willems and published by Hyperion.

The awards are administered by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the ALA.
Coretta Scott King Awards. Angela Johnson, author of The First Part Last, and Ashley Bryan, illustrator and author of Beautiful Blackbird, are the winners of the 2004 Coretta Scott King Awards honoring African American authors and illustrators of outstanding books for children and young adults. Hope Anita Smith, author of The Way a Door Closes, is the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Author Award winner; and Elbrite Brown, illustrator of My Family Plays Music, is the Steptoe New Talent Illustrator Award winner.

The First Part Last, published by Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, takes place in urban New York City and tells the story of Bobby, a 16-year-old artist and single parent raising his daughter alone. In short alternating chapters between “now” and “then,” Bobby struggles to balance the rigors of fatherhood in the absence of Nia, Feather’s mother. In Beautiful Blackbird, published by Atheneum Books for Young Readers, Bryan has adapted a folktale from the Ila-speaking people of Zambia. His rhythmic and often-repeated “black is beautiful, uh-huh” message of self-acceptance and tolerance emphasizes that beauty comes from within.

Occasionally awarded, the Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe New Talent Award affirms new talent and offers visibility to excellence in writing and/or illustration at the beginning of a career as a published children’s book creator. The Way A Door Closes, by Hope Anita Smith and illustrated by Shane W. Evans, is a collection of 34 gentle poems that slowly unfolds the details of 13-year-old, C.J.’s life. The book is published by Henry Holt and Company. My Family Plays Music, illustrated by Elbrite Brown and written by Judy Cox is a lively, colorful introduction to ten varieties of music by a young African American girl and her contemporary family. The book is published by Holiday House.

Three King Author Honor Books were selected: Days of Jubilee: The End of Slavery in the United States by Patricia C. and Fredrick L. McKissack, published by Scholastic Press; Locomotion by Jacqueline Woodson, published by G.P. Putnam’s Sons/Penguin Young Readers Group; and The Battle of Jericho by Sharon M. Draper, published by Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

Two King Illustrator Honor Books were selected: Almost to Freedom illustrated by Colin Bootman, written by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson and published by Carolrhoda Books, a division of Lerner Publishing Group; and Thunder Rose, illustrated by Kadir Nelson, written by Jerdine Nolen and published by Silver Whistle, an imprint of Harcourt, Inc.

The Coretta Scott King Award is presented annually by the Coretta Scott King Task Force of the ALA’s Social Responsibilities Round Table.

Recognized worldwide for the high quality they represent, ALA awards guide parents, educators, librarians and others in selecting the best materials for youth. Selected by judging committees of librarians and other children’s experts, the awards encourage original and creative work. For more information on the ALA youth media awards and notables, visit the ALA Web site at http://www.ala.org/recommendedreading.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SLA conference. The 2004 SLA (Special Libraries Association) Leadership Summit, formerly known as Winter Meeting, will be held this year in Albuquerque on January 21-24. This is when SLA’s leadership will gather for four action-packed days of leadership learning, association business meetings, and networking opportunities. Chapter and Division Cabinet officers have designed a two-day Leadership Development Institute. This year, the Institute will feature a recognized keynote speaker, Ann Rhoades, (generously sponsored by Lexis-Nexis) to kick off the Institute on Thursday. All Cabinet members are expected to attend. Incoming and current unit leaders are encouraged to attend – presidents, chairs, treasurers, secretaries, webmasters, committee chairs, etc. Register now for the 2004 Leadership Summit. For full details, see http://www.sla.org/chapter/crito/Winter2004/Winter2004main.htm.

The Rio Grande Chapter will host a Dinner Buddies program on Wednesday, January 21. The Rio Grande Chapter has also planned a “Fiesta on the Rio Grande” welcome event at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center.

Ann Rhoades, the keynote speaker, is a business and organizational leader who will share how to create people-centric organizations. As the executive vice president of people at JetBlue Airways, Ann was one of the five core leaders to launch the airline in February of
2000. She believes in people and their ability to accomplish the extraordinary when they are given the authority and responsibility to succeed. With this overriding principle her sense of humor and her zest for life made JetBlue, one of the few commercial airlines to make a profit in its first full year of operation. (And did it all in the midst of the 9-11 crisis.) She has also been a driving force in many high profile companies such as Southwest Airlines, Doubletree Hotels, and First Interstate Bank. Over the past several years, Ann has been on the board of more than a dozen companies and community-based organizations. She continues to serve on the Board of Directors of JetBlue Airways in New York, Western Warehouse in Albuquerque, and is the Chairwoman of the Board of Directors of the Robert O. Anderson School of Business in Albuquerque.

If you would like more information, the Rio Grande Chapter president is Sarah Morley at (505) 272-3773 or e-mail smorley@salud.unm.edu.

PEOPLE NOTES

Suzy Sultemeier, who describes herself as “a fourth generation New Mexican, Bred on Red, Raised on Green” (as in chile, for those who may be confused by New Mexican terminology), recently retired from the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Library System. She received her Master’s degree from the University of Denver, and began working at Albuquerque’s Main Library in 1977. While there, she said that she worked at everything possible in public services: Reference, Serials, Circulation, Children’s Services, ILL, annotating newspapers and magazines, etc. When the Juan Tabo branch opened, she served as its first adult services librarian; next she managed the Ernie Pyle branch for a couple of years until, as she explains, she realized she really hated managing. She returned to the Juan Tabo Branch to work with a favorite boss, Julie Denning, until she left, then went back to Ernie Pyle for a couple of years, until she the opportunity to work for Julie arose again at the Los Griegos Branch. After three great years there, she was asked to work at the Wyoming Regional branch to beef up the adult collection. When the renovated Erna Fergusson branch opened, the entire Wyoming staff moved there. But after Erna Fergusson opened, she decided that after 26 years, she was ready for a change. She retired in 2003, and since then she has been working on a website based on material she began to collect in 1983 for the patrons of Juan Tabo. It contains compiled lists of New Mexico Authors, New Mexico Fiction by type, New Mexico Poets, New Mexico Children’s Fiction, New Mexico Children’s Authors, and New Mexico Children’s Nonfiction. Visit her website at http://www.geocities.com/suzys_lists.

New Mexico’s own Vaunda Micheaux Nelson’s most recent book, Almost to Freedom, was named as one of Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Books. Colin Bootman was the illustrator, and, as Vaunda pointed out, it was his illustrations that won the award. In addition to being the author of five other books for children, Vaunda is a children’s librarian at the Rio Rancho Public Library. She has also served on the Newbery Selection Committee.

JOBS

School librarian. There is currently an Elementary Public School Librarian position available with the West Las Vegas School District in Las Vegas, New Mexico. If you are interested and qualify for this position, please contact Mr. Joe Baca, Assistant Superintendent, at (505) 426-2311.

Library tech. The Espanola Public Library has an opening for a library technician who would be responsible for children’s programming (including Summer Reading Program), assisting with budget, giving tours of library, assisting the public with circulation of materials and information requests. Requires some nights and weekends. This is a full-time, 40 hours/week position and includes benefits. Call Marilyn Reeves at (505) 747-6086 for more information.
Head librarian. The Town of Estancia is currently accepting applications for a Head Librarian. This is an exciting opportunity to use your expertise! The Town of Estancia is finalizing plans to build a $1 million dollar library. Minimum qualifications are Grade I certification, two semesters (30 hours) of education beyond high school from an accredited college or university plus a minimum of nine hours of library science courses, OR Library Associates degree, OR successfully pass the examination given by the State Librarian; and three years experience. Salary is commensurate with experience and qualifications. This position is open until filled. Applications may be obtained at the Town of Estancia, 517 Williams Avenue, Estancia, NM 87016 or you may call Linda Caudle, Town Clerk at 384-2708, Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Town of Estancia reserves the right to accept and/or reject any and/or all applications. The Town of Estancia is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Two positions. The Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Library system is accepting applications for two positions: an M16, Library Branch manager and an M15, Librarian. For an application for either position, go to the online Albuquerque City Jobline at http://www.cabq.gov/jobs.

Library Branch manager salary range is $38,646 - $40,580 annually plus benefits. Salary advances five percent upon completion of six-month probationary period. The position will direct, manage, supervise, and participate in the work of staff responsible for providing a wide range of public services to customers within one or more branch library facilities. Education and experience requires a Master’s degree from an ALA-accredited institution with major coursework in library science or information science; five years of library experience, including two years of direct supervisory experience in a management and/or administrative capacity.

Librarian. The salary range is $35,131 - $36,878 annually plus benefits. Salary increases five percent upon completion of a six-month probationary period. The position will perform a wide variety of professional library work within an assigned branch including reference and programming to adults and/or youth; selecting and processing materials for the library collection. Education and experience require a Master’s degree with major course work in library/information science from an ALA-accredited institution, plus two years of library experience.