

# OLA Quarterly



## Children's Literature: The Oregon Way

On Becoming a Children's Literature Librarian  
in an Academic Library

A Better Future for Children Through Libraries

MaryKay's Excellent Caldecott Adventure

Everlasting: Memories and Vignettes of the Newbery

A Therapeutic Collaboration: The Bibliotherapy Education  
Project at Oregon State University

Every Picture Tells a Story: Picture Books for Older Readers

Summer 2006

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# OLAQ

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# Introduction

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This issue of the *OLA Quarterly* is devoted to recognizing the contributions of Oregon librarians to development and use of children's literature in Oregon and beyond.

From the time I first became involved in the world of children's literature and librarianship, I have marveled at the number of prominent state and national positions held by children's librarians from Oregon. It was exciting for me to realize that people I knew had served, or would be serving on the Caldecott and Newbery Committees.

Other colleagues were active members of ALA and PLA committees devoted to early literacy and children's literature.

I was less sure of place of children's literature in the world of higher education. What I have discovered is that there is indeed a place for chil-

dren's literature in the academic world where it is appreciated and used to create a better world.

This issue contains articles from both academic and public librarians. There are articles from former members of the Newbery and Caldecott committees who share with the reader the sometimes mysterious process of selection and feelings of responsibility and awe as they work towards the ultimate goal.

In the academic world children's literature educates undergraduate and graduate students. A thorough knowledge of children's literature is essential in teacher education.

Yet education is not the only area where it has a starring role. In Oregon there is a remarkable program devoted to the development of a database of books suitable for use in counseling sessions.

Children's literature has changed and continues to change. In my opinion one of the most exciting trends is illustrated children's non-fiction, done in a picture book like format. These books have addressed some of the most serious issues in our history, communities, and country. With large colorful illustrations and short but fact filled text, these books offer a great opportunity to help older children who may have difficulty following the traditional format non-fiction. This is especially true with issues such as racism, adoption, alienation, and sexism. Historic events take on new importance when they are vividly illustrated.

I hope you will enjoy this issue and appreciate the contributions of so many librarians throughout the state who are deeply involved in the artistry and power of children's literature.

Dan R. White  
Children's Librarian  
Douglas County Library System  
*Guest Editor*



OLAQ

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# On Becoming a Children's Literature Librarian in an Academic Library

by Elaine Gass Hirsch  
Aubrey R. Watzek Library  
Lewis & Clark College

As with most of my fellow students on the academic librarian track in library school, I did not take any courses on children's literature. While I certainly grew up reading and enjoying the literature and have always held an appreciation of the genre, at the time classes in the field did not seem to be particularly useful for a future in academic libraries. For whatever reason there was a general assumption that the courses were designed for students working towards careers in public libraries, and were not encouraged or even mentioned by advising faculty.

The usefulness of such course work quickly became apparent when I began my position at Lewis & Clark College as the library's liaison to the Graduate School of Education. In this position I provide library services to the students, faculty and staff of the graduate education programs. Additionally, I am responsible for the library's collection development in the field of education, including the children's literature collection. Serving as the curator of the children's materials has become my favorite responsibility as a librarian, as I endeavor to support the College's teacher education programs by collecting relevant and interesting children's books that can be taken into public school classrooms by student teachers. The exciting reality is that the collection is also used by undergraduate faculty teaching child development in disciplines such as psychology, by children and other family members of the College's faculty and staff, and by undergraduates looking for alternatives to course-related reading.

When I arrived at the College in 1998, the library's children's collection had not seen much professional attention in a number of years. The collection had unintentionally become dated and somewhat historic in nature, with only the Newbery and Caldecott Award winners and a few selections recommended by education faculty regularly added. The children's materials were organized in a locally created classification schedule which did not help to familiarize patrons with standard classification

schemes and required original cataloging in technical services.

I spent my first two years becoming acquainted with the existing collection, the education programs it primarily supports, and, most significantly, the field of children's literature. Relatively straightforward aspects of children's librarianship, such as determining respected sources for book reviews, were areas where I was a novice. Reference books such as *Best Books for Children: Pre-school through Grade 6* and *A to Zoo: Subject Access to Children's Picture Books* were unfamiliar to me, as was *School Library Journal*, to which my library didn't subscribe. Slowly, through reading the library literature, talking to children's librarians, education librarians, and faculty, and developing the habit of regularly reading children's books, the pieces started to come together.

Beginning in 2001 I felt prepared to embark on an evaluation and weeding project of the collection, which took two years to complete. The entire collection was reviewed book by book in an effort to increase the currency and vitality of the children's materials. Factors under consideration included the age of the material, circulation statistics, significance of the author, whether the book was an award winner or otherwise important and recommended, and whether the material supported the current curriculum, including historical aspects that may be addressed in coursework or associated research. I found that examining the collection at this level of detail, although recognizably not always possible due to the amount of time it takes and the size of the collection under review, was the key to developing my confidence as a collection specialist. As of 2003 I had touched every book in the children's collection as part of my review and was much more familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of the collection as a whole. I was also actively selecting new titles to enhance the existing collection and fill the notable gaps, which were largely in nonfiction.

The books that were retained were reclassified in Dewey Decimal Classification



(DDC), as it is the system education students will be using as teachers in their school and public libraries. Although the library literature indicates that many academic libraries classify their children's materials using some form of Library of Congress Classification (Frierson-Adams, 2001), it is my hope that familiarizing students with DDC will be beneficial to their teaching careers. This conversion needed support from library administrators and the cataloger, and was readily agreed upon.

After the assessment and improvement project was complete, my interest in children's literature had really been whetted. I began to research the historical development of children's literature in different thematic areas and have taken college courses in children's literature as continuing education. My pleasure reading now includes history and criticism of the literature as well as books for children and young adults.

Promoting the collection is an area where I am again learning as I go along. The library has a display area in the entry that has highlighted the children's materials on various occasions. I provide some form of readers' advisory for the collection, often to education students developing curriculum units or to undergraduates who stop by the reference desk before leaving for vacation periods. I meet with the graduate students in small groups as they begin the teacher education program and discuss the children's collection, while highlighting national and regional book awards, as well as handbooks and directories to the literature.

While I don't believe the disregard of children's literature courses for those not on the public librarian track was unique to the library school I attended (Bay, 2001), I think it may be indicative of a larger issue that is often overlooked in library education. Students move quickly through their professional programs focusing on academic or public librarianship or information technology, for example, without the time or encouragement to explore the breadth of the profession and the literature and informatics it supports. Perhaps library education

should place more value on the variety of ideas a more diversified approach offers future librarians and their patrons. In any case, it is the responsibility of professionals in any field to educate themselves in areas of assignment, and certainly the lessons learned "on the job" carry a lot of meaning. I hope others are as fortunate to discover a niche that appeals to them as much as an academic approach to children's literature does to me.

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# A Better Future for Children Through Libraries

by **Ellen Fader**

Youth Services Coordinator  
Multnomah County Library  
System

and

President

Association for Library Service to  
Children (ALSC)  
(a division of the American  
Library Association)

I've been a librarian since 1972. Although I entered graduate school thinking I wanted to be an academic librarian (wouldn't I always stay youthful if I worked with college students?), I soon realized that children's librarianship was where I wanted to concentrate. I knew in my heart that libraries help children have a better future. Is there a better specialty to which one could dedicate herself?

During my career, I have held a variety of leadership positions in libraries and in professional organizations. Each has taught me something I needed to know to go on to the next phase in my career. I learned that the Kansas State Library could hire someone as a Children's Consultant who had never worked in a library except as a sixth grade volunteer. At the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County (OH), I learned that a children's librarian in the first hour of her first day on the job knows more about libraries and books than a teacher with her third grade class in tow. Eight and a half years at Arlington County Library (VA) taught me to respect all readers advisory questions, even the weekly request from the little girl dressed in pink who only wanted "pretty books." At the Westport (CT) Public Library, I learned what great partnerships result when both school and public libraries are well-staffed and stocked, and how to juggle the schedules of four staff that provided over 14 programs for preschoolers each week out of one library building. At the Oregon State Library, I learned how much Oregon communities love their libraries and about the dedication of library staff in far-flung places. Now at Multnomah County Library, I continue to learn about how to create library services that address 21st century needs.

As I write this article at the end of April, I am two months from the completion of my term as the President of the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association. The organization's over 4,000 members work in a variety

of settings: some are public or school librarians, while others are booksellers, editors or publishers, or work in academia teaching children's literature or children's library services. All find a home in ALSC, which strives to create a better future for children through libraries. Through working on ALSC committees such as Planning and Budget, and serving on the Board of Directors, I learned practical skills I use every day. Three times on the Newbery Committee taught me more about facilitation and guiding a group through a decision-making process than any well-intentioned training. I honed my collaboration skills serving on the ALSC/Public Library Association Task Force on Preschool Literacy Initiatives, which culminated in Every Child Ready to Read @ your library. As President, I am learning not to be intimidated speaking to congressional staffers at National Library Legislative Day; to groups of 1,200 at the Youth Media Awards Press conference (or 47,000 simultaneously on ALA's first live Web cast in January 2006); to over 1,500 people attending the Newbery Caldecott Banquet; or to the media from both small community newspapers and large magazines, such as *Parents*; to being interviewed about the Newbery and Caldecott awards on the *Today* show.

At the same time, I've tried to make a contribution on the state level. In Kansas, I planned a week-long conference on using a new technology—video—to help libraries capture local information. In Virginia, I demonstrated how to ignore children playing with Velcro on their sneakers during preschool storytime. In Connecticut, I helped establish the Nutmeg Award, a children's choice award that has now expanded to include books at more grade levels. In Oregon, I've worked to bring stability to summer reading programs; contributed to the development of the Youth Services Guidelines (now being revised); and am the 2007 Evelyn Sibley Lampman Award Chair.



I'm thrilled to see the interest in Oregon and many other states in helping parents and caregivers maximize children's chances to succeed in school by investing in the preschool years. Every Children Ready to Read @ your library is inspiring library staff to learn new skills and take needed risks to reach audiences who really need to hear the library and literacy message. I know that the longer we do this work in Oregon, the more we will continue to see reading scores increase and the more we will see the percentage of kindergartners entering school ready to learn increase. I'm gratified that ALSC and YALSA have more Oregon members than they did when I arrived in the state in 1983. I know that children and teens in every community know more about the Newbery, Caldecott, Sibert, and Printz awards because of Mock Caldecott workshops I helped plan and because more Oregonians serve on these committees now.

There are a few other lessons I've learned: in my lifetime, I'll never read all the books for children and teens that intrigue me and I'll never catch up with my e-mail. But is that what is important? No. What matters is maintaining a sense of optimism. After 34 years of providing

(or encouraging others to provide) great library service for children, I remain convinced that libraries make a difference for children and teens today and every day. In each position we hold in our libraries, in our communities and in our professional organizations, we learn more about the power of libraries to change lives. The baby who cries when he is forced to leave the library, the preschooler who learns every song in storytime, the elementary school student who trusts the librarian to find just the right book for her book report, the middle school boy who admits that what you showed him on the computer helped him earn his first ever "A," and the teen who stops by every day to see if you have any new graphic novels... these are the reasons we stay optimistic. All our work improving libraries is for them. Yes, libraries do help create a better future for children. And that's something we need to shout from the rooftops.

*Since 1995, Ellen Fader has been the Youth Services Coordinator at Multnomah County Library in Portland, Oregon. In July 2006, she becomes the Immediate Past President of the Association for Library Service to Children.*



Ellen Fader (right) with 2006 Caldecott Award Winner Chris Raschka (center) and 2006 Newbery Award Winner Lynn Rae Perkins (Left) just before they appeared on the *Today Show*.



# MaryKay's Excellent Caldecott Adventure

by **MaryKay Dahlgreen**  
*Library Development Program  
Manager, Oregon State Library*

## August 2001

The call comes asking if I am interested in running for a position on the 2004 Caldecott Committee: I am very confused if that means I read the books in 2003, 2004, or maybe even 2005. As it turns out, I read books published in 2003 and we determine the winner in January of 2004.

## May 2002

The even better call comes in that I have been elected to the 2004 Caldecott Committee. I am delighted and pretty darn sure I will do an extraordinarily good job!

## January 2003

I attend my first meeting of the 2004 Caldecott Committee. My incredible overconfidence is shaken for the first, but not the last, time as I meet the other members of the Committee and realize just what heavy hitters they are in the children's literature arena. I also attend a publisher's dinner and have a chance to chat with the Chair of the 2004 Caldecott Committee. I can't wait to get started.

## March 2003

I begin to receive boxes of books. Hundreds of books, thousands of books, millions and billions and trillions of books. And these are not just any books; these are "thin, oddly shaped books" as the love of my life so enjoys calling them. And the bad news is that we don't just pick from the "distinguished" books that have been published, we get almost all the picture books that are being published in the United States this year. And as we all know, thanks to Madonna, anyone can write a children's book.

## July 2003

In the months leading up to July 2003 there is much Sturm und Drang about whether to hold the ALA Annual Conference in Toronto, Ontario, Canada since they are experiencing a SARS epidemic. Even though attendance is required for

Committee members at both the Annual Conference and Mid-Winter Conference I am fairly certain I could get an excused absence if I can't attend. I try to assure my co-workers that I won't come back with SARS and if I do I promise to submit to quarantine. The decision is made to hold ALA in Toronto and the decision is made that MaryKay can continue her excellent adventure. At our meetings we don't hold formal discussions of the books, but we do bring books to have practice discussions about and my outlandish overconfidence is once more taken down a notch (or two). I return home without SARS but with a bad cold that could be SARS and I get a seven day weekend when my doctor tells me to stay home.

## January 2004

I have been reading, reading, reading; thinking, thinking, thinking; talking, talking, talking for the past nine months. I re-read my favorites and the titles that have been nominated by the committee members and the titles that other librarians have suggested. I torment my grandchildren, niece, brother, sister-in-law and anyone else I can think of by sharing the books and more importantly, my thoughts about them. I worry about our choices. I read some more. I AM READY TO GO!!! The bad news is that the Willamette Valley has been hit with one of the worst ice storms in history, state offices are closed down, Oregon State University is closed down and worst of all, the Portland Airport is closed down (if I could get there on the sheet of ice that is I-5). I frantically call the chair of my committee, trying to hold back my tears, and tell her I may be a day late. Then I frantically call the airline to see if I can get a plane out of Eugene, which I do get. It is a late evening flight so I don't get to San Diego until after 2:00 a.m. Running on adrenaline, I get up to attend an 8:00 a.m. meeting the same morning. I would love to be able to provide details of my time with



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the 2004 Caldecott Committee when we determined our choice for the most distinguished picture book published in 2003. However, I can't provide details and quite frankly, I can't remember too many details. I will share some of my impressions of that experience and the experience of the months leading up to it:

Choosing the Caldecott Medalist and Honor Books is a HUGE RESPONSIBILITY which is not made any easier by the amazing Medalists from years past. The experience consumed my life for a year.

I will NEVER second guess a Caldecott, Newbery, Siebert, or any other ALSC award committee again.

The 2004 Caldecott Committee was the most amazing group of smart, funny,

insightful, respectful people I have ever had the pleasure of working with. We laughed, we cried...

Serving on the 2004 Caldecott Committee was one of the highlights of my professional life.

#### Still January 2004

The Committee walks into the ALSC Awards Press Conference, after having called our Medalist and Honor Book illustrators to let them know they had been selected, to the applause of our colleagues. Even better, the applause continues after the announcement of our selections. It doesn't get any better than this.

#### June 2004

Wait, it does get better than that. For the past six months I have been invited to a variety of places to talk about my Calde-



2004 Caldecott Award Winner Mordicai Gerstein (center) with the Caldecott Selection Committee.



cott adventure. I have had children ask for my autograph on the Caldecott bookmark I handed out to them after I told them about being on the Caldecott Committee. I have been able to give away nearly 700 picture books to libraries, bookmobiles, friends, family, and a variety of others. I have been called on the phone and thanked!!!! by Mordicai Gerstein. In Orlando at the Annual Conference I got to meet the Medalist and Honor Book illustrators. I got to meet the real Ella Sarah. I got to sit at the Newbery Caldecott Banquet with Mo Willems and his wife.

#### April 2006

I have been expecting to forget just how amazing this excellent adventure has been. However, this last week at a meeting of children's librarians in New Jersey, at lunch one day, several of us who had been on a Caldecott Committee talked

about our experiences. It all came back to me and I am wondering when I will be eligible to serve again. ALSC nominating committee, are you reading this?

**2004 Caldecott Medal Winner**  
*The Man Who Walked Between the Towers*  
by Mordicai Gerstein

**2004 Caldecott Honor Books**  
*Ella Sarah Gets Dressed*  
by Margaret Chodos-Irvine

*What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?*  
by Steve Jenkins & Robin Page

*Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus*  
by Mo Willems



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# Everlasting:

## Memories and Vignettes of the Newbery

by **Heather McNeil**  
Youth Services Coordinator,  
Deschutes Public Library

**B**eside my bed is a hope chest that was made by my great uncle as a gift for my great grandmother. Inside are linens that have been passed down through three generations of women, beaded sweaters my father brought back for my mother from his tour of duty in Vietnam, and an original of the South Dakota state flag my grandmother designed while working at the South Dakota Department of History. On top of the hope chest are THE BOOKS. Each book is signed by the author, with their personal gratitude reflected in the words.

*Thank you for giving me the biggest honor of my life.* —Gennifer Choldenko

*For Heather, as you too watch for the eye of the whale!* —Gary Schmidt

*For Heather, with thanks and appreciation.* —Russell Freedman

*For Heather and Jamie. Stars are kira-kira/Fireflies are kira-kira/And I'm sure Jamie is VERY kira-kira!* —Cynthia Kadohata

These are the books selected by the 2005 Newbery Committee. Three are Honor Books, chosen as outstanding examples of literature for children ages 0–14. One is “the most distinguished contribution,” the Newbery Medal recipient.

Everyone who knows anything about awarding the Newbery Medal knows that more reading is required in a year’s time than seems humanly possible. When I told my brother that I would be considering about 450 books he said, “But that’s impossible! That’s more than a book a day!” And, at times, it did seem impossible indeed. But when you accept a responsibility of such magnitude and prestige you are consumed by a level of undaunted

determination. Your personal life is over, and all you do is read and re-read books. Is it worth it? Of course! Are you glad when it’s over? Of course! Would you do it again? Of course!

Immediately after the announcement of the 2005 Newbery Medal winner I wrote an article for *Children and Libraries* about that year and how it affected my personal life. “Forty Hundred Books: A Single Mother’s Year With the Newbery” is in their Summer/Fall edition of 2005, and it offers a month-by-month journal of the challenges and rewards of being a member of the committee while still trying to have a life with my daughter, Jamie.

So when I was asked to write this article I wondered what was left to be said. I reflected back on the past 18 months and realized two things. First, serving on this committee was not only a professional goal for the 27 years I have been a librarian, but also a tremendous learning experience. Second, there are vignettes that replay in my mind’s eye, brief moments that are forever remembered. Here, then, are the top five learnings and memories that I believe could help someone appreciate the everlasting significance of being a member of a Newbery (or Caldecott) committee.

### **Learning #1: The Process Is More Than the Reading**

Reading the books is the easy part. What takes the time is taking notes, critically analyzing the books according to the criteria established by ALSC, researching historical data or factual discrepancies, and recording all this. Plus you often have to reread titles in order to compare and reconsider. Two fat notebooks went with me to ALA Mid-Winter in Boston, full of notes, reviews and my comments. As a result, the books I read that year are literally burned into my heart and I feel a personal attachment to each title I reviewed. All of this



work was similarly done by the other fourteen members, which means our discussions were careful and thorough analyses of the criteria.

### **Learning #2: Nonfiction Is Worth Reading!**

I am a voracious reader, but, before my experience with the Newbery, the only nonfiction I read was anything related to my passion for all things African. But during 2004 I read some outstanding nonfiction that significantly widened my narrow focus. I was deeply moved by the dramatic mystery of *The Race to Save the Lord God Bird* by Phillip Hoose, and surprisingly intrigued by the discoveries of Sy Montgomery in his book *The Tarantula Scientist*. I learned about pyramids, Cesar Chavez, and certainly more about the Revolutionary War than I would normally consume in a year. And, of course, I was enchanted by the grace and power of one woman in *The Voice That Challenged a Nation: Marian Anderson and the Struggle for Equal Rights* by Russell Freedman. Now I pursue reading quality nonfiction, and am continually impressed at how it has improved from the days of glorifying biographies and factual essays with no thought to creativity or artistic display.

### **Learning #3: Consensus Is Not About Majority Rule**

Think about it. Fifteen well-read, well-prepared adults, all of whom are passionate about children's literature. They each have their personal likes and dislikes, and they are to come to agreement about the ONE title that is the most distinguished above all others published that year. Yikes! I fully credit our chair, Susan Faust, with guiding all of us toward consensus by reminding us frequently about two important qualities we needed in order to achieve agreement. First, keep an open mind. Second, listen, truly listen, to what oth-



Newberry committee with 2005 Newbery Medal winner Cynthia Kadohata (front row, fifth from the left).

ers are saying. There was more than one title that changed its status in my mind as I absorbed what others shared. "I hadn't thought about that," was spoken by several of us, as well as, "Now that you mention it, I can see..." Yes, there were some titles that each of us was willing to, in Susan's words, "throw ourselves across the table" to defend. Of course, that's what made the final discussions as we approached balloting so energizing and important. But we always maintained a professional respect for each other's opinion, and we listened, truly listened, to what was said. It made all the difference, and led us toward making the selection we all supported.

### **Learning #4: The Newbery Medal Encourages Discussion**

When *Kira-Kira* was announced to the hundreds of librarians, publishers, and booksellers breathlessly waiting at the press announcement there was a brief moment of stunned silence before the loud applause. We knew that would happen. This book was not widely discussed or publicized. It was a quiet treasure, a gem worth discovering. One previous Newbery chair commented to us, "You really did your homework. Congratulations!" What





The Committee with 2005 Newbery Honor Book author Gennifer Choldenko (front row, center).

she meant was we went beyond the obvious, which is sometimes necessary. And it also meant that not everyone was going to agree with us. At first I was hesitant to read the listservs following the announcement, because I didn't want to read any adverse criticism. But I did read them, and what I found was a variety of comments, all of which I had felt myself before being part of the process. Some thought we should have chosen their favorite. Some thought the Newbery should focus more on books for younger readers. Some thought the story was too quiet. Some thought it was time for a particular author to have won. Some thought it just wasn't what they would have chosen. Amid all these comments would be recommendations of other titles, thoughts about the award, and observations about the changes in the world of publishing children's books. Can you think of anything better than people all over the world sharing their thoughts about children's literature?

**Learning #5: The Thrill Never Ends**

I have had the great honor of sharing my experience with a variety of audiences. Each time I speak, whether it is a pre-

sentation to students in a classroom, or to adults at an educational conference, I never cease to be thrilled and amazed that I was given this opportunity. I also love the chance to increase people's knowledge about the Newbery Medal, the meticulous process that is followed, and the challenges it brings to committee members. "I had no idea," is what most people say. They thought it is a democratic vote for what should be a popular title, but they learn that popularity or marketability has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with it. And I learn that I am ever so lucky.

And now for the vignettes, brief scenes that play and replay whenever I want to relive what made it all worthwhile.

Returning to my office after a two-week vacation in July, halfway through the year of the Newbery, and discovering that every inch of desk, table and floor is covered with boxes and bags of books. Panic!

Arriving for ALA Mid-Winter without any delays and with my luggage. In Boston. In January. A miracle!

Grabbing a hotel employee from the hall to have him take a photo of all of us and the four winning titles immediately after our balloting was completed. I'm sure he had no idea why we were all so giddy. That photo is one of my favorites because it's just us, after hours and hours and hours of discussion, and we're happy and relieved and PROUD!

Visiting the booth for Atheneum Books on Sunday morning after making our selection, thinking, "I know something you don't know." I reached up to touch their display copy of *Kira-Kira*, and my hand was shaking with so much secret excitement that I knocked it over, which made all the rest of the books carefully lined up on that shelf fall over, like dominoes. Boom boom boom boom boom boom. Kind of prophetic, don't you think?

All fifteen of us, jittery with coffee and no sleep, crammed into a tiny cubicle,





Newbery Honor Book authors Gary Schmidt (front row, third from left) and Russell Freedman (to Gary's left) celebrate with the Committee.

very early Monday morning to call the authors. Mr. Freedman was such a gentleman and so very kind. We thought Ms. Choldenko was going to hyperventilate with all her gasps of joy, and Ms. Kadohata's appreciation was well worth the three phone calls Susan made before finally getting through to her at the ridiculous pre-dawn hour in California. My fondest memory is the lucky fact that Mr. Schmidt was on his way into Boston to teach a class so he came to the press conference where we gathered around him like groupies. Shameless adoration!

The incredibly thoughtful gifts. There are too many to list here, so I will mention only two. Marsha, one of the committee members, gave each of us the word *kira-kira* handwritten in Japanese calligraphy on linen-like paper. And from author Cynthia, we received a teacup handmade in Japan.

During the Awards Banquet, sitting at the table with Caitlyn Dlouhy, editor of *Kira-Kira*, and George Miyamoto, Ms. Kadohata's partner. Watching the tearful pride and love on their faces as Cynthia gave her acceptance speech was just like it should always be, when someone we deeply care for receives just what she deserves.

Even though the time of the Newbery for me is long gone it continues to shine and glitter for me, just as the stars and butterflies did for Katie in *Kira-Kira*.

I shall always be grateful for the nomination and election that brought me such a professional honor and such an important personal journey.

#### **2005 Newbery Award Site**

<http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawds/newberymedal/newberyhonors/05NewberyMedalHonorBks.htm>

#### **2005 Newbery Medal Winner**

*Kira-Kira*

by Cynthia Kadohata  
(Atheneum Books for Young Readers/Simon & Schuster)

#### **2005 Newbery Honor Books**

*Al Capone Does My Shirts*

by Jennifer Choldenko

*The Voice that Challenged a Nation:  
Marian Anderson and the Struggle for  
Equal Rights*

by Russell Freedman

*Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*

by Gary D. Schmidt



# A Therapeutic Collaboration:

## The Bibliotherapy Education Project at Oregon State University

by **Paula McMillen, Ph.D.**  
*Oregon State University Libraries  
Assoc. Professor & Social Science  
Librarian*

In this article I hope to briefly introduce the concept and practice of bibliotherapy and then describe the development and current state of a bibliotherapy resource page, developed jointly by faculty at the Oregon State University (OSU) Libraries and School of Education. I'm currently a social science reference librarian at OSU with responsibilities for Education, Psychology and Sociology as well as the Children's book collection.

Bibliotherapy has been defined many ways and is known by many other names such as biblioguidance, literatherapy, reading therapy, bibliocounseling, bibliopsychology, book matching and literapeutics. Most simply, if one goes back to the Greek roots of the word, it means helping through books. It has been used with all ages, with almost every imaginable issue or problem, and at all levels of intervention by teachers, counselors, librarians, social workers, nurses, psychologists and physicians. Developmental bibliotherapy, for example, can be used in the classroom where the goal may be to facilitate normal developmental passages or to educate about attitudes, feelings and behaviors. Clinical bibliotherapy usually involves trained mental health or healthcare practitioners using books as a way to stimulate discussion of difficult feelings or facilitate resolution of more significant behavioral and emotional issues. It is seldom used alone, but more typically in combination with discussion or other follow-up activities that promote the psychological processes of identification, catharsis and insight.

Our project at OSU started as a routine request for a library session with graduate counseling students in the Winter term of 2000, but it has grown into an ongoing collaboration with much broader reach and appeal. With my background in clinical psychology, I was excited to help my colleague in the Counselor Education Department at OSU, Dr. Dale Pehrsson, and work with her students on using books in

therapeutic settings. We began exploring the professional literature around bibliotherapy, initially to gather information on what recommendations practitioners made about evaluating books for use, and what the research said about the benefits and efficacy of using books therapeutically. We created the first draft of an evaluation tool based on our findings, using a paper and pencil format, to guide graduate students through the process of evaluating primarily children's books to use in therapy.

When we took our project to the joint OLA/WLA conference in Portland in April 2002, we were somewhat surprised to find that what we had previously considered a good demonstration of interdepartmental collaboration in an academic setting actually drew more interest from the public librarians than academic ones. We were pleased that librarians were interested in our project, especially because libraries serve as such a great source of reading material for teachers, mental health workers and parents who are trying to help children and young adults with issues. Not surprisingly, librarians were the first partners with healthcare professionals in using books therapeutically in the early 1900s; it's only in the last few decades that the dominant discussion of bibliotherapy has shifted from the library and medical literature to that of mental health and education.

Dr. Pehrsson and I had discussed the possibility of creating a database of the graduate students' evaluations so that students in subsequent classes could take advantage of this collected wisdom. With our new awareness of potentially broader interest in this information, we felt the optimal way to improve accessibility would be to put it on the Web. We applied for and received two small teaching improvement grants (OSU L.L.Stewart) which helped us hire some student technical expertise to move this idea into reality. We discovered in the process that we would have to significantly revise the evaluation tool to



make it compatible with a Web-based form and searchable database. Our interdisciplinary team of library technology, library intern, computer science, graphic arts and counseling students helped us realize our initial goal of creating an online form with a searchable database of the resulting evaluations.

We have continued to expand and update the Web site, now called the Bibliotherapy Education Project © (<http://bibliotherapy.library.oregonstate.edu>). In addition to the Bibliotherapy Evaluation Tool ©, we now link to book finding resources, information about the project, and about our own research and teaching related to bibliotherapy. We also include brief descriptions of student research projects at OSU that have involved bibliotherapy. Although we began with a focus on children's books, our future plans include greater coverage of resources for young adults, adults and multicultural materials. The database of book evaluations has been expanded by each new class of graduate counselor education students at OSU and at other institutions with programs in counseling, notably Texas A & M at Texarkana. We've also had inquiries from students doing research on aspects of bibliotherapy in several countries including Canada, Taiwan and South America.

OSU Libraries management and the OSU School of Education have supported the project in many ways. The Library Technology department provides the server space and technical oversight for the Web site. My work schedule has been accommodated to allow me to do graduate work in children's and young adult literature at Portland State University. This has enriched our bibliotherapy research and my ability to build a better collection of children's and young adult books in the library; obviously an improved collection better provides for our curriculum and students, and even enables new classes. I'll be teaching a graduate course in multicultural children's literature for educators and counselors this

summer, which is the first time the course has been offered in many years.

We encourage you to explore and use the Bibliotherapy Education Project© Web site. The searchable database of book evaluations and the resource links are all freely available. To view the Bibliotherapy Evaluation Tool© or use it to review a book, you do first need to complete a short form to become a reviewer. There's a link to contact us at the bottom of the home page and my co-founder and I would love to hear your reactions and ideas to make this a better resource.

For more information about the project, or scholarly explorations of bibliotherapy and reviews of the literature, follow the links from "About the project" or see the following resources:

McMillen, P. (2005). The Bibliotherapy Education Project: A collaborative teaching effort goes to the Web. *Behavioral and Social Sciences Librarian*, 23(2), 85-96.

McMillen, P. & Pehrsson, D.E. (2004). Speciality of the house: Bibliotherapy for hospital patients. *Journal of Hospital Librarianship*, 4(1), 73-82.

Pehrsson, D. and McMillen, P. (2005). A bibliotherapy evaluation tool: Grounding counselors in the therapeutic use of literature. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 32(1), 47-59.

*Paula McMillen has a doctoral degree in clinical psychology as well as her master's degree in library science. Her professional experience includes over 20 years in various mental health and health care settings. She is currently an Associate Professor in the Oregon State University Libraries and a social sciences reference librarian.*



# Every Picture Tells a Story:

## Picture Books for Older Readers

by Dan R. White  
Children's Librarian  
Douglas County Library System

In my experience as a children's librarian in a rural community, many traditional juvenile non-fiction and fact based fiction books are rejected as too intimidating or too difficult by many readers. Pages of relatively small type and the occasional photograph or illustration can turn away readers who need the information for a school report or other educational endeavors. However, alternatives to these traditional formats have begun to fill the shelves of libraries.

Children's literature has undergone an exciting transformation over the past few years. Large, colorful and dynamic illustrations, complementing fact filled but engaging text are allowing the most difficult topics to be in presented in a much more accessible format.

These picture book-like books cover a wide range of sensitive and serious topics. Racism, sexism, adoption, alienation, and other relatively mature themes appear in this format. Science, biography, and history are also presented.

These books present serious subjects in a fresh and more accessible form, allowing students and other readers whose interest or reading ability are discouraged by conventional reading material, another way to approach the subject.

Listed below are books that I believe are excellent examples the presentation of thought-provoking topics in a picture book format. While these titles are well known to most librarians working with children's literature, others may not know them at all.

### *Smoky Night*

*By Eve Bunting;*

*Illustrated by David Diaz*

*San Diego: Harcourt Brace, c1994*

When the Los Angeles riots break out in the streets of their neighborhood, a young

boy and his mother learn the values of getting along with others no matter what their background or nationality.

The boy and a Korean grocer come to understand each other as they search for their lost pets.

The artist uses collage and other techniques to convey the fear and chaos of the riots. A Caldecott Award winner.

### *So Far from the Sea*

*By Eve Bunting*

*Illustrated by Chris Soentpiet*

*New York: Clarion Books, c1998*

When seven-year-old Laura and her family visit Grandfather's grave at the Manzanar War Relocation Center, the Japanese American child leaves behind a special symbol. Both the text and illustrations provide a powerful depiction of the forced relocation of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Large, realistic illustrations move between the present of the child and past of her father. The past is depicted through sepia tones while the present is in color.

### *Major Taylor, Champion Cyclist*

*By Lesa Cline-Ransome*

*Illustrated by James E. Ransome*

*New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, c2004*

This story is an introduction to the life of the African-American bicycle racer who won the 1899 World Championship title. Major Taylor was a phenomenal athlete in a time when bicycle racing was an international sport. He was the Lance Armstrong of his day, but racism tainted his every accomplishment. Powerful illustrations propel this story.



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***My Brother Martin:  
A Sister Remembers Growing  
Up with the Rev. Dr. Martin  
Luther King Jr.***

*By Christine King Farris*

*Illustrated by Chris Soentpiet*

*New York: Simon & Schuster Books for  
Young Readers, c2003*

This is a story of the early life of Martin Luther King, Jr., as seen through the eyes of his older sister.

The story travels back to the youth the iconic civil rights leader where the reader sees him as boy growing up in a loving family in a middle class neighborhood, while living with the racial separation of the South. Like nearly every child young Martin plays, goes to school, and sometimes gets into trouble.

The illustrations are rich with color and suggest an almost bucolic life despite the ever-present menace of racism and racial separation.

***Dear Katie, the Volcano is a Girl***

*By Jean Craighead George*

*Illustrated by Daniel Powers*

*New York: Hyperion Books for  
Children, c1998*

A grandmother and her granddaughter argue over whether a volcano is a geophysical phenomenon or an angry Hawaiian goddess.

In this unique book, the author successfully reconciles the traditional beliefs of native Hawaiians and modern geologic science.

The art is supportive of the text, alternating illustrations of scientific depictions of volcanic eruptions with those of Pele, the goddess of the volcano and the lush Hawaiian.

***The Cats in Krasinski Square***

*By Karen Hesse*

*Illustrated by Wendy Watson*

*New York: Scholastic Press, 2004*

Two Jewish sisters, escapees of the infamous Warsaw ghetto, devise a plan to thwart an attempt by the Gestapo to intercept food bound for starving people behind the dark Wall. The younger girl is able to mingle with the people on the streets, passing as a Polish Catholic. By following city cats she discovers ways to smuggle food into the Ghetto.

The illustrations are somber, with a pale, nearly monochromatic color. The menace of the Nazi's omnipresence permeates every picture.

***Mama Went to Jail for the Vote***

*By Kathleen Karr*

*Illustrated by Malene Laugesen*

*New York: Hyperion Books for  
Children, c2005*

This is a fictional account of the women in the suffrage movement of the early 1900's, who demanded that women be given the right to vote in all U.S. elections. Through direct action and civil disobedience they picketed the White House.

Tormented by men who objected to their protest, they endured being pelted with rocks and rotten food thrown at them, men who physically attacked them, and finally jailing. A little girl tells the story of her mother's imprisonment and the ultimate success of the suffragettes cause.

The illustrations are colorful and almost cartoon-like yet they match the girl's recollections and accurately depict the settings and events.



***Snowflake Bentley***

*By Jacqueline Briggs Martin  
Illustrated by Mary Azarian  
Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998*

This is a biography of a self-taught scientist who photographed thousands of individual snowflakes in order to study their unique formations. It is a remarkable story of a man who asked a simple question and spent the rest of his life trying to find ways to answer it. The question: What is the nature of a snowflake? His photographs taken before the turn of the twentieth century remain the standard catalog for snowflakes and their crystal forms.

The illustrations are both simple and complex. The actual book design allows for factual information to appear in sidebars while the story of his life is told on the main page. The colors are lively and the style of the illustrations reminds the reader of old woodblock prints and emphasizes the nineteenth century setting.

Winner of the Caldecott Award for illustration.

***Just Add One Chinese Sister***

*By Patricia McMahon  
and Conor Clarke McCarthy  
Illustrated by Karen A. Jerome  
Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press, 2005*

Claire and her mother are working together on a scrapbook as they relive their first days and hours together following Claire's arrival from her birth home in China.

As more families include adopted children from China this story, based on an actual family's experience, depicts the events around the addition of a new family member.

The illustrations are lively and joyful, presented in the manner of a photo travelogue.

***The Girl Who Loved Caterpillars***

*Adapted by Jean Merrill  
Illustrated by Floyd Cooper  
New York: Philomel Books, c1992*

In this retelling of an anonymous twelfth-century Japanese story, Izumi resists social and family pressures as she befriends caterpillars and other creatures deemed unfit for young women.

Izumi is a very strong young woman who chooses to live a life free from the demands of marriage and expectations of her culture.

The illustrations employ soft, muted colors and are in the style of traditional Japanese painting.

***Civil War Artist***

*Written and illustrated by  
Taylor Morrison  
Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999*

This wonderfully researched and illustrated book traces an illustrator's sketch of a Civil War battle from the time it leaves his hands, through the engraving and printing processes, and to its final publication in a newspaper.

Morrison is an Oregon artist who does extensive research before he begins his latest book.

The illustrations are realistic and detailed and they depict the actual events described in the text.

***Pink and Say***

*Written and illustrated by  
Patricia Polacco  
New York: Philomel Books, 1994*

Say Curtis describes his meeting with Pinkus Aylee, a black soldier, during the Civil War, and their capture by Southern troops. Based on a true story where the wounded Say is rescued from the battle-



field and nursed back to health by Pink. In return Say teaches Pink to read.

The illustrations are drawn loosely with great expressive details. The people and settings are vibrant with color.

***Grandfather's Journey***

*Written and illustrated by Allen Say  
Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993*

A Japanese American man recounts his grandfather's journey to America, a journey he too makes years later, and the feelings of being torn by a love for two different countries. He belongs to two countries and two cultures but he does quite feel at home in either one.

Illustrations are formal and realistic with muted colors. Neither Japanese nor Western in style and composition, they combine both to create a sense of detachment alienation.

***Song of the Water Boatman:  
and Other Pond Poems***

*Written by Joyce Sidman  
Illustrated by Beckie Prange  
Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005*

This is a collection of poems that provide a look at some of the animals, insects, and plants that are found in ponds, with accompanying information about each. The powerful and descriptive language of the poetry is the perfect complement to the factual information accompanying each illustration.

Beautifully illustrated with line drawing depicting each subject and its place in the pond's ecology.

***Sixteen Years in Sixteen Seconds:  
the Sammy Lee story***

*By Paula Yoo  
Illustrated by Dom Lee  
New York: Lee & Low Books, c2005*

A biography of Korean American diving champion Sammy Lee. The story focuses on Lee's childhood determination to achieve his personal goals, and, fulfill his father's dreams. His force of will and the ability to overcome obstacles of every sort, led to a medical career and Olympic gold. As a platform diver he earned Olympic gold medals in 1948 and 1952. While he became the doctor his father always wanted him to be.

This is a rare story of urban west coast racism set in Los Angeles, when people of color were prohibited from using the municipal swimming pool. Sammy Lee overcomes this obstacle and many more to become a champion in and out of the water.

Sepia toned illustrations done in the style of newspaper photos reinforces the story of history being made.



