

# ABC NEWSLETTER

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# 1998 ABC Calendar

- May 20 Annual meeting and pot luck dinner at home of Billie Levy, 5:00 P.M.
- May 30 Trinkett Clark, a curator of the traveling exhibition of children's book illustrations, "Myth, Magic and Mystery," will speak at Connecticut College, New London, CT, 3:00 P.M.
- Sept. 16 Discussion on researching pre-1821 books with materials available at the American Antiquarian Society by their cataloguer. American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA 10:00 A.M.
- Sept. 20 "Beyond Once Upon a Time," a children's book illustration show featuring Tomie dePaola and Steven Kellogg, among others, will open at the Creative Arts Workshop, 80 Audubon St., New Haven, CT, curated by Roger Crossgrove and Bina Williams, 1:00–5:00 P.M.
- Oct. 14 William Wondriska, graphic designer, will speak on his early picture books at his graphic design studio, Farmington, CT, 7:00 P.M.
- Nov. 14–15 The Connecticut Children's Book Fair, Bishop Center, University of CT, Storrs, CT 10:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M.
- Dec. Society of Illustrators show of children's book illustration, New York City. Date to be announced.

# 1998 Antiquarian Book Fairs

May 1 & 2	MARIAB Bk. Fr.	Boston, MA
May 31	N.E. Antiquarian Bk. Fr.	Concord, NH
July 11	Stockbridge Bk. Fr.	Stockbridge, MA
July 19	Cape Cod Bk. Fr.	Barnstable, MA
Aug. 2	Vermont Bk. Fr.	Woodstock, VT
Aug. 9	Westchester Bk. Fr.	Tarrytown, NY
Aug. 22	Sturbridge Bk. Fr.	Sturbridge, MA
Oct. 11	Sheffield Bk. Fr.	Sheffield, MA
Oct. 18	MARIAB Bk. Fr.	Andover, MA
Oct 24–25	Trinity Bk. Fr.	New York, NY
Nov. 20–22	Boston Int. Bk. Fr.	Boston, MA
Nov. 21–22	Book and Paper Fr.	Boston, MA
Dec. 12	Paper and Collectible	Marlborough, MA

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*Listings by Barbara and Rocco Verrilli*

# Edmund Dulac: His American Connections

*Ann Conolly Hughey*

Edmund Dulac was born and educated in France, yet is considered a British illustrator because so much of his work was done there. But he could almost be considered an American illustrator since a large body of his work was done for American publishers and patrons. Born in 1882 in Toulouse, France to a French family, he went to live in London in 1904 when he was 22. He became naturalized as a British subject 7 years later, and for the rest of his life maintained his studio in or near London. But most of his income from 1923 until his death in 1953 came from his American contracts, primarily with the Hearst empire for *American Weekly* front page covers and with George Macy for three Limited Editions Club books. A few of his *American Weekly* covers were republished in British periodicals, but the bulk of them never appeared in print outside the United States. The books Macy published were strictly for the American market and never had English editions. Besides these major commercial contracts, Dulac worked on numerous smaller commissions for American clients. There were books, there were exhibitions, there were periodicals, there were textile designs, bookplates and portraits—all just for Americans.

Dulac's first encounter with the United States came in 1903 when, at age 21, he entered into a brief marriage with an older American woman whom he had met while vacationing in Biarritz. The second much more consequential link to America was through American editions of the books he illustrated. His very first group of book illustrations—60 pictures in 1905 for a set of the Bronte sisters' novels, executed for Dent in London, was offered in the United States by Dutton. His alphabet book published by Warne had a New York edition. Even an obscure volume, *Toasts and Maxims*, was published here by New York's R.F. Fenno & Company. Then, beginning in 1907 with *Stories from the Arabian Nights*, until World War I, the elaborate "gift" books which Dulac illustrated for Hodder and Stoughton in Lon-

don became well known in the United States because they were also issued in American editions. In New York, Scribners published the first American edition of Dulac's *Stories from the Arabian Nights*. The Dulac "gift" book for 1908 was *The Tempest*. There was no separate American edition, but Scribners sold copies in the United States and much later, in 1928, published the Dulac illustrated *Fairy Garland*. Beginning with the 1909 *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, George Doran Company published all the Dulac American "gift" books. Doran, in fact, continued to publish Dulac's American editions long after the demise of the "gift" book. Today, American bookstores still carry new editions of *Omar Khayyám* with Dulac illustrations, editions which are direct descendants of Doran's 88-year-old first edition. In 1927 *Treasure Island*, a Benn production in England, bore Doran's trade mark on the title page of the New York printing. Dulac even designed stunning new end papers for the American edition which never appeared elsewhere.

Other American publishers who produced editions of Dulac illustrated books were Hearst's International Library for *King Albert's Book*, Macmillan for William Butler Yeats' books, Brentano's for *The Kingdom of the Pearl* and Carl Fischer for *Horoscope*.

Some of Dulac's illustrative work appeared solely in American published books. In 1910 there was *The Mahogany Tree*, a 200 copy edition of a delightful little Thackeray book. In 1916 Bergen Applegate wrote a monograph on Paul Verlaine and used 4 Dulac water colours for its illustration. This book, published in Chicago in both limited and trade editions, was never published outside the United States. And then there was George Macy of New York.

Mr. Macy may have produced more beautiful volumes than any other publisher of this century. His Limited Edition Club and Heritage edition books were painstakingly planned with every detail of artwork, binding, paper, typography and so on carefully worked over to compliment the text. Dulac illustrated 3 Macy books—*The Golden Cockerel* in 1950, *The Marriage of Cupid and Psyche* in 1951 and *Comus* in 1954. *Comus* was the last work of Dulac's life. He completed only 6 of the 10 pictures planned but was working on the 7th just 4 days before his death occurred on May 25, 1953 when he suffered a heart attack precipitated by an evening of strenuous flamenco dancing. Dulac's 3 Macy books are little known outside America.

It is also to be noted that Dulac illustrated the works of several American au-

thors—Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Bells and Other Poems* being a beautiful example of a painter’s adaptation to a text. Dulac also painted a frontispiece for Oliver Wendell Holmes’ *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*. Some of his most splendid pictures were done—I4 in all—as illustrations for Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *Tanglewood Tales*. Four of these water colours are now owned by the New York Public Library’s Spenser Collection. Dulac designed a Chinese seal for Ezra Pound which was used in *Lustra*. In 1939 as World War II broke out, the last book which was allowed materials for production in England was *Daughters of the Stars* by the young American author Mary Crary. Her book was acclaimed by the redoubtable William Lyon Phelps of Yale. Professor Phelps wrote “. . . it is meant to be very high praise when I add that the illustrations by Dulac are worthy of the book. . . .”

In addition to the early attention given his “gift” book illustrations, Dulac’s reputation in America was further enhanced by the American art critic Martin Birnbaum. Mr. Birnbaum was part owner of the Scott and Fowles Gallery in New York. He specialized in displaying at his gallery the work of younger European artists not yet widely known in America. He had organized shows for Aubrey Beardsley, Arthur Rackham, Kay Neilson, Shannon and Ricketts, etc. After being introduced to Dulac in London, Mr. Birnbaum arranged to present his original art work to the American public at a major one man exhibition. This, Dulac’s first American show, opened in November 1916 and was a brilliant success. For the show, Mr. Birnbaum produced a lovely little catalogue with a frontispiece by H.O. Hoppe of a decidedly debonair Dulac. The catalogue lists 69 exhibits, some on loan from Dulac’s American patrons, sculptor Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, poet Helen Hay Whitney, Mr. J.T. Spaulding, Mr. C.H. Pepper and dancer Miss Maud Allan. Mr. Birnbaum himself wrote the catalogue introduction, titled “Appreciation,” and later, in 1919, included this essay about Dulac in a book, *Introductions*, published in New York by Frederick Fairchild Sherman.

Sent to New York for this show were Dulac-fabricated masks, drawings for the masks and costumes for William Butler Yeats’ noh play *The Well of Immortality*, later called *At the Hawk’s Well*. A *New York Times* review of the Scott and Fowles show dwelt at length on Dulac’s spectacular noh masks. Also, the first item in the show catalogue was a magnificent oil portrait by Dulac of the Japanese dancer Michio Ito in eighteenth century Samurai costume. As an adjunct to the exhibition, Mr. Birn-

baum wanted to stage the actual Yeats play, which had previously been performed twice in London drawing rooms with Ito as the central figure. Ito was now in New York, Dulac enthusiastically supplied a script from the London production, Yeats gave permission and the play went on, overseen by John Murray Anderson, in the Greenwich Village Theater. Birnbaum himself was in the cast and Somerset Maugham was in the audience. The script Mr. Birnbaum used is now part of the New York Public Library collections.

Dulac's next exhibition appearance in America was as part of a 1918 showing of poster work by 28 well known artists. The posters had been sponsored by the British government to illustrate that country's efforts and ideals in World War I. A set of these posters was sent by Cambridge University to the Harvard Club of New York as a tribute to Harvard men who had fallen in battle. The American public at large became fully informed of the poster project by a March 12, 1918 *Boston Evening Transcript* article written by James Walter Smith. This Smith essay became the foreword to a catalogue issued by the British government for a New York exhibition of the poster set. Posters were sold as a fund raising effort both in New York and in a subsequent traveling exhibition including a two week showing as far afield as Bar Harbor, Maine. Dulac's poster sold for \$25.

The American art connoisseur-collector Albert Eugene Gallatin acquired the Dulac poster for his renowned war collection and also used it in his 1919 book *Art and the Great War*. Here is another book published in New York by E.P. Dutton and Company, this one issued only in American editions and with pictures engraved by the Beck Engraving Company of New York. Mr. Gallatin's war collection was exhibited in November 1919 at New York's Arden Gallery. The American magazine *Arts and Decoration* said the following about the Gallatin show: "One of the most remarkable things in the collection is Edmund Dulac's *Poland, a Nation*, which must be seen to be appreciated." It is evident that Americans liked Dulac's work!

A year after the Gallatin show, December 1920, Scott and Fowles Gallery offered Dulac work again as a sequel to its very successful 1916 first American Dulac presentation.

The following year Dulac became associated with a second World War I charitable event in the United States, the Fatherless Children of France Society's catalogue art sale. This was preceded by an exhibition of the pieces to be sold. The

originator of this project was Mrs. David J. Johnson of Boston. Earlier this lady had commissioned an embroidered bedspread from W.B. Yeats' sister Lilly. The bedspread featured a Dulac-designed centaur which Dulac reworked for the Fatherless Children committee. The painting shows an animated female centaur, in sepia with touches of gold. In addition to Dulac's painting, Mrs. Johnson had solicited 344 works from famous artists and writers and placed them all in a magnificent leather portfolio. The portfolio was the work of the celebrated bookbinder Mary Crease Sears of Boston. The sale of all the pieces took place at the American Art Galleries in New York on 28 February 1921. Mrs. Johnson's brother-in-law was the successful bidder and the entire portfolio, including Dulac's centaur painting, went to Boston.

Dulac originals continued to be exhibited in this country. In June 1922 the Chicago International Exhibition at the Art Institute showed his *Salomé*. This Chicago show was reviewed in the June issue of *Arts and Decoration* with praise for Dulac. The critic wrote, "Among the most attractive of the decorative painting was the one called 'Salome' by Edmund Dulac." In 1932 in New York at Knoedler Gallery at number of Dulac water colours and ink drawings were shown and again praised in reviews in newspapers and art periodicals.

Besides American books and American art exhibitions, American periodicals were another important stage for appearances of Dulac work. William Butler Yeats' play *At the Hawk's Well*, which had had a New York performance in conjunction with Dulac's first American exhibition, generated immediate publicity for Dulac when the American *Harper's Bazaar* became the first to publish the play's script. In the March 1917 issue of their magazine they printed the play with Yeat's preface, an excerpt from Martin Birnbaum's "Appreciation" in the Dulac exhibition catalogue and Dulac's drawings in black and white. Dulac's originals had been in color. This is the only place where drawings of Dulac's lanterns and drawings for, instead of photographs of, the two masks are printed. And few scholars realize that the first appearance in print of Yeats' *At the Hawk's Well* (with its accompanying Dulac art work) was in an American magazine.

The cover of the same March 1917 *Harper's Bazaar* was Dulac's frontispiece, *The Chinese Princess*, for *Princess Badoura*. The June 1917 issue had as its cover the frontispiece from *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. Nor was *Harper's Bazaar* the first Ameri-

can magazine to print drawings by Dulac. *The Century* magazine had used a Dulac picture, that appears no where else in print, for the color frontispiece in the October 1913 issue. It was titled "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith" (Proverbs XV. 17). In 1914 the cover of the *Town and Country* magazine was Dulac's "Cadet Rouseau." In December 1916, at the same time his first American exhibit was being acclaimed in New York, four more Dulac pictures, unique to America, were printed in that month's issue of *Good Housekeeping*. They were illustrations to Coningsby Dawson's story "The Seventh Christmas." Of these, two were printed in dark green ink, two in dark brown. In December 1922 the *Ladies Home Journal* published two Dulac pictures to illustrate Helen deVere Beauclerk's story "On the Feast of Stephen." These lovely little jewel-like pictures appear nowhere else and it is interesting that Dulac's first collaboration with the British Miss Beauclerk was in an American magazine. About this time Miss Beauclerk became Dulac's companion, a relationship that lasted thirty years.

In 1923, Dulac's other thirty-year relationship began with the William Randolph Hearst publishing empire. Over this span of years Dulac would paint for Hearst thirteen different series for *American Weekly* front page covers—or one hundred six American pictures. For printing, the pictures were blown up by a third and that fact, plus the poor color rendition of the era, caused Dulac to experiment and alter his artistic style in order to achieve the best results. He eliminated much of his usual detail and went in for more dramatic effects. He had first attempted these changes in his *Fairy Book* of 1916, prompting Mr. Wilenski, the director of London's Leicester Galleries, to write of the *Fairy Book*: "He used clear, bright, opaque colors without shadows; and the effect was . . . of those moments in the theater when the rising curtain shows gaily costumed static figures radiant in limelight and united in pattern with the scenic background—moments which vanish in the theater when the figures begin to move and speak . . ." However, these changes might have remained for Dulac a momentary toying with a new approach but for the need to adjust to the demands of his American work. Many who have admired his gift book style have overlooked his *American Weekly* covers. In fact, it would seem that these covers represent the evolution of his style to its ultimate state. These are no mere illustrations but true paintings, exquisite in their color, sophisticated in their composition, and theatrical in technique. Another look at Dulac's *American Weekly*

output is long overdue.

Dulac's relationship with his Hearst publishers was anything but serene. It was one of the major disappointments of his life that the initial *American Weekly* printed versions of his paintings were so poor. He would have liked to withdraw from this work, but he was so destitute financially that he forced himself to continue. In his agreement with Hearst he retained for himself the copyrights to his paintings. The sale of these originals generated additional income for him. Many customers were Americans. For instance, the collector Nicholas Carroll of Massachusetts paid \$250 each in 1931 for two paintings for covers illustrating *Love Stories the Ancients Believed In*. Mr. Austin Purves of Philadelphia was another purchaser of Dulac *American Weekly* drawings as was Colonel Colin Campbell of Los Angeles.

Although the extra money helped, it did not assuage Dulac's feeling of being artistically trapped by the Hearst contract. The scheduling was another difficulty. The Hearst editors wanted all the pictures of a series supplied together, well in advance of publication. Dulac was prone to send the pictures piecemeal and always felt that he was working under the gun. Then there was the question of subject matter. His agreement allowed him to choose the themes, but the editors held veto power. Numerous times, to his dismay and aggravation, his proposed ideas were rejected. Early in 1940, after all the years of working for Hearst, he expresses his continued frustration with the editors in a letter to his old friend Frederick McCurdy Atkinson. ". . . I am *driven* . . . will you be surprised I had another cable from U.S.A. a week after the first: (saying) will let you know whether more Arthur pictures or Canterbury tales as soon as chief decides which he prefers. A.W!!!!!!! (9 exclamation points) (signed) Yours in a frantic hurry."

In spite of the difficulties Dulac endured while working for Hearst, it is a mark of their esteem that they in turn continued to put up with him. Even with these problems, the partnership produced for years a continued display of remarkable art disseminated by all Hearst newspapers. The wide range of Hearst newspapers is evidenced by a 1932 advertisement in the *New York American* which states that the *American Weekly* is distributed not only in their paper but in sixteen others. The list includes: *Boston Advertiser*, *Chicago Herald & Examiner*, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Detroit Times*, *Houston Post*, *Los Angeles Examiner*, *Milwaukee Sentinel*, *Minneapolis Journal*, *Philadelphia Bulletin*, *Portland Oregonian*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, and *Washington Herald* (D.C.)

But nowadays the public has little access to these papers of yesterday. Many became pulp in World War II paper drives. Libraries, the Library of Congress included, destroyed their holdings when storage problems dictated replacement of originals with microfilm. This was done before color microfilm; so a record of *American Weekly* pictures by Dulac, the great colourist, often only exists in black and white. Twenty years ago the then art editor of the New York Hearst offices made a search for the original printing plates and stated that the Hearst organization had disposed of them. The limited number of *American Weekly* covers that do survive in collections and libraries are crumbling away. Sets do remain at the New York Public Library Newspaper Annex on the East Coast and, on the West Coast, at San Francisco's Comic Art Museum.

Dulac patrons who bought the original water colours Dulac painted for Hearst's *American Weekly* were joined by a long list of others who over the years bought or commissioned Dulac work. In 1915 an American customer, Paul Lederlin, had Dulac design a tapestry which was woven by Leo Belmonte at the Paris Gobelins atelier. The marvelous piece was titled "Danae." A few years ago it surfaced on the market at the Paris Marché aux Puces and later was displayed in a New York jewelry store.

In 1921 Dulac received another unusual American commission from the Berwind-White Coal Mining Co. The company wanted him to design an elegant wall calendar for 1922 to be gift-boxed and sent to favored customers. Dulac produced four magnificent paintings of the four seasons, a cover picture, a box design and, of course, the calendar pages. The designs, based on Greek myths, were rendered in vibrant colors overlaid with gilt by the Beck Engraving Company's Philadelphia branch. Until several years ago the four seasons original paintings were still owned by the coal company. The calendar is one of the rarest of Dulac collectibles.

Popular with American collectors were Dulac bookplate designs. The poet Helen Hay Whitney had her Dulac bookplate engraved by Arthur Macdonald. Harriet Blair Borland of Chicago had her design stamped in gilt on leather bookplates and engraved in various colours on her stationary.

And now—a final category of work that links Dulac to America were his portraits of American personages. In 1912 Dulac drew a portrait of Edgar Allan Poe as a title page vignette for the *Bells and Other Poems*. In 1919 when working for the London weekly *Outlook*, he drew a caricature portrait of Woodrow Wilson as Unit-

ed States President. On November 28, 1921 one of Dulac's serious portraits, that of Madame Wellington Koo, appeared in *The Christian Science Monitor*. The portrait hung in the Chinese Embassy in Washington and in more recent years was owned and displayed by Madame Koo's son at Mt. Vernon, New York. In the late 1920s Dulac painted a delicious rendering of Marion Davies costumed as she appeared in the movie "When Knighthood Was In Flower." In 1937, printed as the frontispiece to *The Wayfarer* was a very lovely portrait of the author of the book's poems, Barbara Hutton, the American Woolworth heiress.

Rounding out the list, however incomplete, is a drawing of Revolutionary War heroine Molly Pitcher shown in a battle scene near Princeton. *Molly Pitcher* was published July 17, 1938 as an *American Weekly* cover, one of the series titled "Fighting Women."

At the beginning of this material I made the statement that Edmund Dulac could almost be considered an American illustrator. Now, after exploring many of his American connections, the amassed body of facts would seem to go a long way to support such a contention. To sum up: almost all of the books he illustrated had American editions published by American firms; of these, there were works by American authors; there were also some books published solely in America; Dulac's original art was exhibited over the years in various American venues, New York galleries, Chicago, and even Bar Harbor, Maine; he worked for numerous American patrons who bought his pictures, commissioned textiles, book plates, a calendar and portraits; his work for numerous American periodicals formed the basis of his income, particularly his 30 years of work for *American Weekly*. My argument has been made. With the foregoing evidence spread out before you, I leave it up to you to decide how much of an "American" artist you find Dulac to be. Thus, I rest my case.

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*This talk was presented before the American Book Collectors of Children's Literature (ABCs) at the Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT, June 19, 1997.*

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# A Room of Their Own: Libraries for Children

*Susan B. Aller*

“No dogs or children allowed!”

And with this notice—posted on the door of more than one public library in the 19th century—children were relegated to the lower social orders, thought to be inappropriate clients of that great American tradition: the free library system.

As with children, so it was also with children’s books, which were not considered to be of any literary importance or worthy of taking up space in a library’s collection. There were, to be sure, wonderful and imaginative stories written for children before and during the 19th century, but until the last years of the 1800s, children’s books were not recognized as important factors in the social and cultural betterment of children—except, of course, for the school and religious books written solely for that purpose.

But all of this changed dramatically at the turn of the century when, due in large part to the vision of a handful of pioneering librarians, children’s books moved into the 20th century with new credentials. Suddenly, children’s books earned the right to be considered legitimate literature, worthy of literary criticism; they were given an official division in the American Library Association; and authors of children’s books began to be actively cultivated by major book publishers who established new divisions just for juveniles.

The most influential person in the children’s book world at that critical turn-of-the-century period was Miss Caroline Hewins, chief of the Hartford Public Library. When Miss Hewins arrived in Hartford in 1875 to become librarian of the Young Men’s Institute, she found a subscription library—for adults only—with a motley assortment of children’s books mixed in. There was virtually no opportunity for children to gain access to good books outside their schools or homes. Her generous love for children and their books transformed libraries and book publish-

ing, and by the time of her death in 1926—51 years later—she was honored throughout the country for her pioneering work.

The question Miss Hewins asked a group of librarians in 1882 set the tone for the next century: “What are you doing to encourage a love of good reading in boys and girls?”

Her friend and colleague at the Boston Public Library, Alice Jordan, later added: “If young people do not see prospects of present satisfaction, there is little hope that they will read far in a book. In this pure pleasure, a child may find the spring for some quickening of the emotions, some strengthening of imagination or enlargement of ideas.”

I suppose I’ve always taken lending libraries and children’s bookstores for granted. As a little girl (can it have been more than a half century ago!), I spent many happy hours in the big children’s room of the downtown library in Omaha, Nebraska, under the bright, bird-like eyes of Miss Adelaide Proulx, the children’s librarian. Sometimes my mother would also deposit me for a precious hour or so at the Matthews’ sisters bookstore (while she went shopping for girdles or something else quite boring), and I was permitted by these august ladies to sit at the low round white table in the children’s nook at the back of the store and oh-so-carefully look at the newest children’s books.

I’m sure it was because of these times of free access to children’s books that I developed my love for owning them, both old and new; for reading children’s books, often in preference to adult books; and for working with authors and illustrators who share my conviction that children’s books are among the most joyful creations in the world!

But if I had been born a half century earlier, as my parents were, I would have found access to books very different indeed.

Difficult as it is to imagine today in our child-oriented society, it was not until the 1890s that libraries came to realize that children under 16 form an important part of every community and that they deserve a room in public libraries where books and specially trained attendants are available for them. Before that time there was only a handful of children’s libraries in the country. These were mostly in New England, and the earliest of these was the Bingham Library for Youth given to the town of Salisbury, Connecticut, in 1803 by the bookseller Caleb Bingham, who re-

membered his own longing for books when he was a boy. Most libraries posted signs that read “No children or dogs allowed”!

Mid-nineteenth century children had access to books from three main sources: the Apprentices’ Libraries, the schools, and the American Sunday School Union. And if they were very fortunate, their parents might buy them occasional books for “their very own.”

The Apprentices’ Libraries were established in industrial areas for the benefit of young apprentices who might never have had books otherwise. The school books were just that: readers, spellers, arithmetic, natural history, and so on. And at least in the case of my parents and grandparents, they were much treasured and passed on to the next generations. (Can you imagine that at the age of 80 or 90 the last thing you retain from your childhood might be your second reader? Can you imagine your grandchildren even having something called a second reader?) It is a shelf full of these old schoolbooks, as a matter of fact, that forms the core of my own antiquarian book collection. Their eclectic variety never ceases to inspire me.

The American Tract Society also influenced more than one generation of American children, starting in 1825 when it began to publish small books for children in order “to counteract the prevailing thirst in the rising generation for the mere entertainment of high-wrought fiction.” Eventually, however, fiction, thinly disguised as fables, began to creep into these didactic little books, and children were deluged by unskillful and unimaginative stories devoted exclusively to the teaching of pious morality. These inexpensive, widely-distributed books “fell like a blight,” according to one historian, “upon a whole class of writing at a very critical moment in the development of juvenile books.”

(Notwithstanding this harsh judgment, the tracts of the late 19th century have become charming “collectibles,” all the more so because of their earnest messages. You just know that the little invalid is going to die and go to her heavenly reward, and that the ship was wrecked because the captain was drinking demon rum!)

To be sure, there were other books often read by children in the mid-nineteenth century, including, of course, Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, which usually occupied a place of honor next to the family Bible in the home; and, in more adventurous families, the stories of Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper and Sir Walter Scott. *Robinson Crusoe* had been around since 1719 and *Gulliver’s Travels* was written in

1726—and both these books had crossed the Atlantic, where they enjoyed great popularity with both adults and children.

Other early arrivals to American shores were the fairy tales of Charles Perrault, written in the 17th century France of Louis XIV. When they were translated into English, they became the first fairy stories British children had ever had printed just for them. Who can imagine a time when there were no *Puss in Boots*, *Red Riding Hood*, *Cinderella*, *Bluebeard*, or *Hop-o-My Thumb*? Charles Perrault was also the first to use the name and figure of Mother Goose—Ma Mère l’Oie—on the title page of his book *Contes du Temps Passé*. She is reading stories to the children, much as a nursemaid might have done to her small charges.

From France we also have the first collection of ancient Persian tales known as *The Arabian Nights*, compiled by a M. Galland between 1704 and 1717, and introducing Ali Baba, Aladdin and Sinbad among others.

The folk tales of Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm were first translated into English in 1823, and were published in England with wonderful illustrations by George Cruikshank. From the Grimms we have *Snow White*, *Rumpelstiltskin*, *The Elves and the Shoemaker* and others. Meanwhile, Hans Christian Andersen, the Danish cobbler’s son, wrote his memorable stories *The Snow Queen*, *The Red Shoes*, *The Tinder Box*, *The Princess and the Pea*, and *The Ugly Duckling*. Andersen died in 1875.

But what of stories written by Americans for their children in the early 1800s? One of our most prolific authors for the young was Samuel Griswold Goodrich, born in Ridgefield, CT in 1793, who wrote under the pseudonym “Peter Parley.” Apparently, the child, Samuel Goodrich, was either frightened, appalled—or simply bored—by the rhymes and stories of Mother Goose, the brothers Grimm, and the French storytellers, so when he grew up, he determined to write simple books about history, travel, geography, nature and other “true” subjects for young people. The kindly, old, avuncular Peter Parley told his stories with prosaic charm and published more than 100 volumes of them over a period of 30 years.

Following Peter Parley into the nurseries of America were the books of Jacob Abbott, writing the Rollo stories with their good common-sense approach to children’s relationships with each other and to their elders. In them are wonderful descriptions of mid-nineteenth century life in New England: sleighing and coasting, popping corn, roasting apples, and so forth; and in the travel books, Rollo and his

companions opened up the whole world to American children.

It was into the world of Rollo and Peter Parley and the adopted French, English and German fairy tales, that Caroline Hewins was born in 1846.

In her autobiography, called *A Mid-Century Child and Her Books*, written in her 80th year, Caroline Hewins tells about her charmed childhood growing up as the eldest of nine children in a well-to-do family in Roxbury, Massachusetts.

“Not every little girl lives in the house with a great-grandmother, a lively little old lady who played a very good game of whist,” she begins, and then continues, “(she) tried to teach me to knit when I was four years old, but the only result was a distaste for knitting which I have never been able to overcome.”

What she did learn to do at the age of four was to read. Her love for books began then and continued unabated throughout her long life. Even though there were eight younger brothers and sisters in the Hewins’ household, Caroline managed to hang onto some of her own children’s books; and in her mature years, as a professional in the field, she sought to re-assemble the library of her childhood. Four thousand of these and her other books—the Hewins Collection—have now found a permanent home at the Connecticut Historical Society.

After finishing the Girls’ High and Normal School of Boston in 1862, Caroline Hewins went to work for the librarian at the Boston Atheneum. It was then that she decided to devote her life to the library profession. In 1875, she applied for the post of librarian at the Young Men’s Institute in Hartford.

This was a subscription library with several hundred adult members; but it wasn’t long before Miss Hewins began to edit the collection of books, weeding out the trash and adding books of worth for both adults and children. She invited children to come into the library to read and discuss books. Soon she was extending the reach of the private library into settlement houses and schools; public funding followed, and then Miss Hewins directed the transformation of her subscription library into the Hartford Public Library. At the same time she traveled widely throughout the state of Connecticut by horse and buggy, campaigning for libraries in small villages and urging libraries and schools to work together and to “pay better attention to children’s reading.”

She was a leader in the earliest years of the American Library Association, and at the turn of the century—in 1900—she was instrumental in getting the ALA to

recognize children's library work as a legitimate division.

Meanwhile, back in Hartford, she convinced the library trustees that she needed a separate children's room. Her trump card was a newspaper picture showing the reading room of the Hartford Library on a Sunday afternoon with one man, one woman, and fifty-one children in attendance! She soon had her room, with a fireplace, deep windows occupied by stuffed animals, child-sized furniture, and dolls (her own collection of international dolls is still in the Hartford Public Library's Hewins Room).

Although she was in charge of the entire library, she found time for the children's stories, clubs, theatricals and other activities that were her special joy.

For example, at a time when some libraries were still displaying a sign about "no dogs or children," Miss Hewins welcomed both. There is a story about the Library Dog (her own, perhaps? I couldn't find out) and the ceremony she conducted to name him. With children gathered around, she filled several bowls with dog food, and on each bowl there was written a phrase. The first bowl the dog chose was to determine his name. The dog picked one on which was written the Biblical phrase "Moreover the dog." He was thereafter known as "Moro." (Isaiah 66:3—Moreover the dog being an unclean animal...)

An annual event much enjoyed by everyone was the New Year's Day doll's reception, when Miss Hewins' collection of dolls from all over the world were brought out of their glass cases to meet the new Christmas dolls brought to the library by little girls of Hartford. First Miss Hewins would read a doll story to the assembled children, who sat hugging their dolls, then one by one, the dolls would be formally introduced and presented to each other by name.

Miss Hewins made many trips abroad, always thinking about her children back in Hartford, and sending frequent letters to them that were published in the Hartford Courant. Later these were collected in a volume called *A Traveller's Letters to Boys and Girls*.

Looking at her many innovative ideas for children's library work, I find it hard to think that anything new—except computers—has been thought of in the 75 years since her death! She wrote the first lists of recommended books for children and encouraged children to report their own preferences; she led her small patrons on nature walks; she wrote and produced plays, pageants, and an annual Maypole fes-

tival; she edited a quarterly library bulletin and established summer reading clubs; she invited classrooms of children who were visiting the Connecticut Historical Society (which at that time was housed in the Wadsworth Atheneum along with the library) to come afterward to her office for lemonade and gingerbread.

Her legacy for library work in America cannot be underestimated. In her 51 years at the Hartford Public, she formed or participated in most of the library and education related organizations in Connecticut, as well as a number of civic and cultural clubs. She wrote numerous articles on her profession, traveled widely to give speeches, and was much honored in her time. In 1911, Trinity College awarded her an honorary master's degree—the first woman to be so honored by the men's college—and at the conclusion of the ceremony, President Luther proclaimed, "Hail, first daughter of Trinity," to prolonged applause.

But perhaps her greatest contribution was her collegiality. Pictures show her to be erect and rather plain; she was also endowed with an abundance of energy, a cheerful and gregarious disposition, superior intelligence, and a warm understanding of children. It was in her great capacity for friendship and encouragement of others that her influence was most widely felt. Her mentoring of other librarians, book creators and publishers created a synergism among New England "book women" that is still in motion nearly 75 years after her death.

The writer Carolyn Heilbrun has noted that "the sign of female friendship is . . . whether they share the wonderful energy of work in the public sphere." She emphasizes the powerful bonding among women who share a passion for their work and for a body of political ideas. This was never more evident than among the group of women for whom Caroline Hewins was both mentor and model.

Foremost among these was Anne Carroll Moore, a native of Maine and 25 years younger than Miss Hewins, who met Miss Hewins in the mid-1890s and thereafter consulted with her, worked with her in ALA circles, and—when she was appointed children's librarian at the New York Public Library—patterned her children's room after Miss Hewins' example in Hartford. Their friendship lasted until Miss Hewins' death in 1926. In fact, the last public program Miss Hewins gave was at a Hallowe'en party at the New York Public Library, an annual event to which she was always invited by Anne Carroll Moore. Miss Moore was at the library nearly 40 years, until she reached the mandatory retirement age in 1940; but for the next 21

years she continued to exert her influence over the emerging fields of literary criticism and book publishing for children. She was 89 when she died in 1961.

A third New England librarian, Alice Jordan, became head of children's work at the Boston Public Library in 1902. She was a close friend of Miss Hewins and Miss Moore and further spread their influence into academe when she became a lecturer in children's literature at Simmons College.

One of Alice Jordan's students was a young woman named Bertha Mahony, who joined the circle of friends, and with their guidance and inspiration founded first the Bookshop for Boys and Girls in Boston and later the "Horn Book Magazine."

As the influence of children's libraries spread, and the recommended booklists and literary criticisms of the librarians multiplied, it became evident to book publishers that libraries were becoming a very big market. In 1919 the Macmillan Co. established the first children's book division, followed in 1922 by Doubleday Page & Co. Many of the first editors began their careers as librarians, and it was natural for them to consult with their library colleagues in an effort to meet the criteria of good children's literature.

As we approach the end of this century of pioneering work in children's books, it is interesting to reflect on the changes occurring now.

I wonder if Caroline Hewins would recognize the industry she set in motion? What would she think about the fact that there are now 500 publishers of books for children in America? In 1919 there was only one. In the entire 19th century, there were probably 20 magazines for children; now there are 568!

Today a children's publishing house may receive as many as 5,000 manuscripts a year submitted by hopeful authors. More than 5,000 new children's books were published last year in the U.S.

But will this boom last? Is this the *fin de siècle* for the richly diverse illustrated literature of childhood as we know it?

Will technology in the 21st Century so change the nature of our reading habits that the book—printed on paper and held in the hand—will become an endangered species?

Those of us who savor the feel and look of a beautiful book wonder if TV and computer versions of stories can have the same profound socializing and educating effect that a book can: a book read aloud while held between two people snuggling

close in a chair, or a book read alone with the reader's imagination fully engaged in visualizing the many facets of the story.

Will today's children—so precocious and so eager to grow up—make the leap from books read to them on the lap to books they “read” on the laptops—without the experience of reading “real” books themselves?

Changes in the publishing industry send new signals to those of us who write and illustrate children's books. All our contracts now have clauses asking us to grant electronic and commercial rights to our work. If we don't grant the rights, we risk losing a lucrative market in audio or video, or in merchandise tied to our books. Yet if we do grant the rights, we may be forced to accept something with our names on it that scarcely qualifies as the book we intended to produce.

It would be easy to criticize today's books as market-driven, of mediocre manufacture, and of dubious literary quality. Yet the truth is, children's books in America for the past 300 years have always been vulnerable to these charges! The best will survive, as they should.

Most of us remember with nostalgia the experience of sitting on a parent's lap and being read to, or of receiving a special gift book at Christmas, or of discovering the magic kingdom inside a children's room at the library. Today's children surely find joy in their books, too, whether they are audiovisual or still the old-fashioned paper kind.

If you haven't visited a children's library room recently, I encourage you to do so. You will find that there are still books—lots of them—but there are also rows of computers with tiny tots beeping away at them, and a play area with wonderful toys, and bags of books and games for grandparents to check out when little visitors are coming. And on the walls are notices of story hours and films and American Girl tea parties. (Memories of Miss Hewins' dolls' receptions!) And there are lots of children, as well as adults—and a surprising number of men!—and the helpful librarians are there, too. And in West Hartford's library, a life-sized Big Bird watches over all the activity. Miss Hewins would have loved it!

# Northeast Children's Literature Collections

## Dinner, November 1997

*A speech by Barry Moser, read in his absence by Norman Stevens*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very sorry that I am not able to be with you tonight. Those of you who have visited me at my home need no further explanation than the words “snow and ice” to understand my predicament. Those of you who haven't visited my home will have to trust me when I say that the weather and what it does to the road up to my house, does truly make it impossible for me to be with you.

I regret not being there for a number of reasons but mostly I regret not being there to see my friend Billie Levy and to join you in applauding her and her work.

I have known two women in my life named Billie.

My mother was called Billie—short for Wilhelmina—Wilhelmina Elizabeth Haggard. Her people came from Decherd, Tennessee and moved to Chattanooga around the turn of the century. Mother was born in 1910. When she was full grown she stood only an inch or two over five feet. She was the only person in my family who read, though I'm afraid that her taste in books leaned more toward the romance and mystery novels of her day. But at least she read. The only thing anybody else in my family read was the newspaper and the Bible.

The other Billie is, of course, Billie Levy. It goes without saying that Miss Billie's taste in reading is decidedly different from and more expansive than my mother's.

I met Miss Billie a number of years ago—and for the life of me I cannot remember just how long ago that was (probably longer ago than either of us would like to remember because it reminds us of how quickly time passes at this age.)

Nevertheless, the day I met Miss Billie began when a station wagon with Connecticut license plates on it pulled up in front of Jane Dyer's house. It was a warm, sunny day in the spring or summer. Jane and I had agreed to gift the archives of our

work in children's books to the Northeast Children's Literature Collections at the University of Connecticut Library—now the Dodd Center. Jane had been approached by several similar collections but nothing had ever come of their courtings because, in Jane's own words, she is so bad at organizing such things she could never get it all together to give it away. But these guys from Connecticut were different. They just drove up and picked it up—no lollygagging or pussyfooting—they wanted the stuff and, by God, they came to get it. They were not going to take a chance of letting it slip through their fingers or have it put off due to bad organizational habits. Later that day they would drive up to my house to collect my stuff which wasn't really any better organized than Jane's, just bulkier. The road up my hill was even worse back then because it hadn't been paved yet and a good hard rain would make it impassable in all but a four wheel. But since it was a dry day they made it with minimal problems and made off, I think, with a lot more stuff than they were expecting.

In between those two stops came lunch which is always a good thing, at least from my point of view, and Alan Gurganis, who reminds us in *The Oldest Confederate Widow Tells All* that “history is lunch.” The luncheon party included Norm Stevens, Verne Mahoney, and a couple of other lovely people from the library (all of whom were Yankees), and Miss Billie. I was immediately drawn to her. First, because she had the same name as my mother; and second, because as soon as she opened her mouth and all those lovely and familiar sounds from the deepest parts of Dixie came out I knew she was kin. Long lost kin from Mississippi, a place Pearl Bailey once described as “a lush place to live, provided one enjoys the languor of a subtropical climate, kindness, and a relaxed atmosphere.”

You know, it's a strange thing that happens between displaced, expatriated southerners—something I can't imagine happening between Yankees—probably because you all have such thick accents and think barbeque is a verb.

Miss Billie and I, on the other hand, don't have accents and we know that barbeque is a noun. I remember that we talked about barbeque as we ate our huevos rancheros our humus and sprouts sandwiches. We were the only ones in the restaurant that day that didn't have accents and who yearned for that “many-splendored comestible.” Barbeque, as my friend John Shelton Reed has pointed out, is the closest thing we have in America to Europe's wines and cheeses—you drive a hundred

miles and it changes. I think that these things had something to do with the quickness of the bond that Miss Billie and I formed that day.

Over the ensuing years that bond has grown, as has my respect, admiration, and affection for her. And, alas, we share an affliction. We are both biblioholics. Yes, it is true. We are both possessed by that demon to the point where we will buy books and let the light bill and telephone bill be hanged. We buy them and, as Erasmus said, if there's any money left over we buy food and clothes. For me, I am passionate about books that are beautifully designed and printed, regardless of the subject, time, or language. For Miss Billie the passion is for books for children—I dare not call them juvenile books for fear that Jane Yolen might be in earshot and soundly reprimand me, saying that I don't call the other ones senile books.

When it comes to the collecting passion, there are few people I know who have dedicated so much of their intellect, energy, resources, and perseverance to it has Billie Levy.

Now in case you don't already know, Miss Billie has amassed a collection of over 10,000 books for children, a passion (dare I say an obsession?) that swelled to life when she began buying books for her own children. She told me not too long ago that until her first baby was born she had no real interest in children's books—my, my, diapers are not the only things to change with the advent of a new baby, are they. And here at the Dodd Center we see the proof of that passion. Those 10,000 books—which, by the way, are mostly American books—are now on deposit here in the Dodd Center and are in the process of being donated permanently. This splendid and peerless collection forms the base for the Northeast Children's Literature Collections, a collection I am proud to be a part of. I, and all of you gathered here who are practitioners of the form Billie Levy so loves, are the beneficiaries of her generosity and passion. Collections like hers, in institutions like this, succor a long deserved approbation and prestige to the discipline we practice, and by extension it lends dignity and honor to children in a culture that embarrassingly and unceasingly undervalues them.

I wish that the weather had not turned off the way it has so that I could be there myself to say all this to Miss Billie in person, to sit with her and talk about books and children things southern and to lighten her ears of the burden of having to listen to all them northern accents.

# Reply to Barry Moser

*Billie Levy*

Your eloquent and very kind remarks are very much appreciated, Barry, and I, too am sorry you could not be with us tonight. You are a very difficult, if not impossible, act to follow.

I can't draw a stick, teach or make the beautiful books you can, Barry. All I can offer is my heartfelt thanks to you, my family, good friends and the wonderfully generous and talented book people who have made this occasion so special for me. The Northeast Children's Literature Collections are a dream come true.

Years ago, when I saw the exhibit of illustrated children's books that Roger Crossgrove and Tim Ann Parker had mounted in the Babbidge Library, I began thinking and dreaming of a wonderful collection of children's books in New England that would be a resource for scholars. Since my husband had built about all the shelves our house would hold and I really wanted to share my growing collection with others, I approached the then Director of the University Libraries, Norman Stevens, about my plan to send my book collection to the Babbidge Library. Fortunately, Norman is also a collector; so he understood my feelings and approved the plan.

I had catalogued the first 3,000 of my books, which made it easier for Richard Schimmelpfeng, then Head of Special Collections, and me to check and pack them up in the hundred boxes he had sent. As the UConn truck pulled away with my treasures, I'm sure the expression on my face mirrored that on Marc Simont's face recently as Norman, Nora and I drove away in our two cars loaded with Simont's life work.

Through the years I have been fortunate to be able to work with my collection both at home and at UConn, adding to it, upgrading and filling in some important gaps and all the while eagerly learning more about children's books and their creators. As I worked, I dreamed also of having some of the original art and manuscripts to accompany the books we had and I'm delighted to see the in-flowing of

unique material into NCLC. I also wished for space and perfect environmental conditions in which to properly store our materials. Now we have our new Dodd Research Center. I dreamed of cooperation with and interest in our collections by other schools in the University and yesterday we had our first teacher's conference co-sponsored by the UConn School of Education. The annual Connecticut Children's Book Fair is another dream come true, for through monies raised from it we can now acquire some of the material we need. Now I'm looking forward to sharing our resources with the rest of the world, electronically and otherwise. I can't believe this has all happened so quickly and pleasantly. To paraphrase Thomas Carlyle, 'to dream is to bear responsibility'. I hope I have acted responsibly toward my dreams.

The people most responsible for making those dreams come true are first and foremost, Norman Stevens and our new Director of University Libraries, Paul Kobulnicky, who supported our ideas from the beginning. You can imagine how I held my breath when Tom Wilsted was appointed head of the new Dodd Research Center, now home to the Northeast Children's Literature Collections, before I learned Tom was an enthusiastic and wonderful supporter as has been Terri Goldich, who is working closely with the collections. The person who has taught and knows everyone who creates children's books, Professor Emeritus of Art, Roger Crossgrove, has given much of his time and talent to helping with the development of NCLC and has been a joy to work with. And I'd like to especially thank two of my friends who have volunteered their expert help in coming out to Storrs to work with me, Verne Mahoney and Susan Aller. Ellen Embardo gave me the opportunity to work as a professional with the Collections while she was on leave with her husband in Turkey. That was a wonderful experience and I'm continuing to work at home now cataloguing additions to my collection and taking those books to the Dodd Center to join the rest of my Levy Collection.

Most of all though, I want to express my gratitude to those generous authors and illustrators who have left their precious work in our care so that future generations can study, appreciate and contribute to the history of our American children's books.

The woodcut by Allen Lewis, *Swinging the Gate*, that you found for me is perfectly beautiful. And I'm thrilled to have an autographed presentation copy of *The Busy*,

*Busy World of Richard Scarry*, by Walter Retan and Ole Risom. The little autograph book signed by all of you here tonight will be a treasured remembrance of a wonderful evening with people who mean so much to me.

My fondest dreams have come true, thanks to all of you.

# Serendipity Down Under

*Billie Levy*

I didn't go to Australia and New Zealand to find children's books but they kept popping up in the most interesting places. After flying to Auckland in January 1998 our Elderhostel group made our way during the first week of our five week journey through the north island of New Zealand. As we visited the Waitomo ("glowworm") Caves and the Waimangu Valley Geothermal Site I picked up brochures and some books on the Maori arts and culture, including some children's paperbacks in the Maori language, which is having a resurgence. I only wanted books printed in N.Z. or Australia, for the others are available through today's world-wide conglomerates. After watching people jump off towers attached to a bungee cord (sometimes two at a time), parasail from the mountains, sail behind boats and do everything possible that was really dangerous we got an idea of the character of the people—brave, independent and very friendly.

On the way to Christchurch, we stopped for a while in Arrowtown to visit a historical museum and walking to it we stumbled onto the Wind in the Willows Bookshop/Café, decorated with large paintings inside and out of scenes from the book. The stock consisted mainly of *Wind in the Willows* books, cards, ephemera, etc., with some typically English cards and books included. The store is included in some of the 900 photos I took on the trip. But for some reason I didn't take one picture of the Children's Bookshop in Christchurch.

The only used book shop we got into was in Christchurch and, as expected, most of its stock was from England, Australia or New Zealand, with few children's books. I did find two I wanted: a *Water Babies* and an *Alice*.

Christchurch is the most English of all the cities of New Zealand; so we shouldn't have been surprised when the whole group shouted to me that they saw a children's book shop near our hotel and on investigation, we found it to be the best children's book shop I've ever been in anywhere. The Children's Bookshop, owned by Kath Crabb and Sheila Sinclair (who has a diploma in children's literature), car-

ries a tremendous collection of fine books, audio tapes, CD ROMs and cards and no Walt Disney, coloring books or TV spin-offs. The emphasis is on books from publishers in England, Australia and New Zealand, but I saw many American authors and illustrators represented. Their books on sexuality, AIDS, and various subjects not seen in the U.S. were frank and excellent. Of course, they had to ship a box of books home for me that I had selected from their stock.

I wasn't aware of the large Antarctic connection between New Zealand and the U.S., but was fascinated with the Canterbury Museum, (which documented the exploration of Antarctica,) and with the International Antarctic Centre, (which was an excellent, hands-on museum with a fine selection of related books, including some charming children's books.)

Flying to Melbourne, Australia next gave me the opportunity to visit with old friends from Nathan's Yale days. Daryl (now Sir Daryl, a supreme court judge, newly retired) Dawson kindly drove me out to Dromkeen, an hour from Melbourne, to visit the place I had heard so much about and which Tomie dePaola had highly recommended. Tomie had given me the name of the director, but as she could not be there when we arrived, we were shown around by a delightful cataloguer, who showed us their storage facilities, the historic collection and how they were proceeding with their collections. They have a great deal of original art, and work primarily with school children, which Tomie found to be a very attractive feature of their work. And as I looked up in one of the rooms, there was Tomie's photo on the wall. Then they showed us the room he usually stayed in when he visited. The former home is large and attractive with a swimming pool and peacocks strolling around grounds decorated with sculptures from some of their famous books. Since they had an extensive bookshop with children's books and reference works I had not seen, another box needed to be shipped to the U.S.

After five days in Melbourne we flew to Alice Springs in the outback to visit The School of the Air, which teaches by radio the children too far in the outback to go to normal schools each day. The teacher visits each pupil twice a year, and the whole class is taught over the radio at the same time. The Royal Flying Doctor Service covers the same vast distances for these isolated families when they have medical emergencies. The telegraph station there linked Australia with the rest of the world and passed along the news to the rest of the country. A fascinating account

of a child's life on the station where her father was superintendent was available for me to buy and read on the plane. Many aboriginal peoples, divided by language groups, lived in the area and we saw a little group of children jump into Alice Springs with great delight on that very hot day. There was no need for them to change clothes as the hot sun dried them almost immediately.

The drive to Ayres Rock (Uluru is the name given by the aboriginals to their sacred place.) took five hours, with stops at outdoor museums along the way to see the animals and flora. Ayres Rock itself is truly awesome, both from a distance and close up when seen in the walks around it viewing the springs, caves, pictographs and vegetation. Then we sipped champagne as the sun set on Ayres Rock, recorded by my camera as well as in the beautiful books I found in the shops selling digerdooos, native art and souvenirs.

The flight to Cairns from Alice Springs was three hours, giving me time to look over the local newspapers and laugh at their irreverent view of Clinton and American politics. After tramping through three kinds of rain forests in humidity to match the 100 degree heat, there was little energy left to look over the nature books available about the Great Barrier Reef. After snorkeling instruction in the hotel pool from one of our boat-owning members, I was brave enough to try it after our huge sail boat landed on the tiny reef island. It was worth the practice to see the beautiful fish and coral a few feet below me. As you can imagine, books with these spectacular views abound, showing in brighter colors the views we saw later from the submersible.

The flight to Sydney took us to weather that was a little cooler and a harbor that is really spectacular, with the Opera House (where we saw *Tosca*) looking like a ship under sail. The museums offered the best source of books for children and adults, although we sought out normal book stores and found a few isolated items of interest, including Maori tales by Kiri Te Kanawa. The skyrail ride over the top of the rain forest was a unique view. As one would expect, the parks and gardens everywhere were gorgeous, with the begonias in the greenhouse the most beautiful I've ever seen. Fairies taken from one of their books were carved into one of the trees and the tiny outdoor village was certain to attract grownups as well as the children. The varied cultures and landscapes throughout the two countries had provided the background for the surprisingly interesting children's books I found.

# Visiting California's "Secret Garden" of Children's Literature

*Joan Mary Grammar*

The members of the ABCs Northern California Chapter treasure our good fortune to live in the San Francisco Bay area, where there is a little-known but rich legacy of children's literature. Over the last ten years, our small group of six die-hard enthusiasts has pursued the rich variety of exhibits, award dinners, special collections and opportunities to visit local authors and illustrators. Although we have not exhausted all the treats our hometown offers, here are a few choices to select from when you visit the Bay area.

The San Francisco Library has a wing dedicated to children's literature, with daily tours at 2:30 P.M. While you are there, take notice of the library building, which is considered an architectural gem. This past fall, the library presented the "Brave Little Girls" exhibit, which previously appeared in Washington, D.C. We were delighted by the original artwork done by Emily Arnold McCully, *Mirette on the High Wire*, as well as Susan Jeffers' illustrations in *The Wild Swans*. Located next to the San Francisco City Hall and Symphony Hall, the library is now planning a January 1999 show that will highlight the skills of Jerry Pinkney, a three-time winner of the Caldecott Honor Book Artist Award, as well as the only three-time winner of the Coretta Scott King Illustration Award.

Across the bay, in Berkeley, we invite you to attend the wonderful Otter Award dinner held each year by the Northern California Children's Booksellers Association. Here, we rub elbows with more than three-hundred enthusiasts who come to see the yearly honoree of the Otter Award, as well as to support children's literature education and encourage the efforts of lesser-known authors. This year, the eleventh annual Otter award dinner applauded Charlotte Zolotow, author of my personal favorite, *Mr. Rabbit and the Lovely Present*, illustrated by Maurice Sendak, and the popular book *William's Doll*, illustrated by William Pene Du Bois. In addition to

honoring this author of more than 50 children's books and long-time editor, this February event featured two other speakers and a tasty dinner, with local authors seated at every table. Previous award winners have been Lloyd Alexander, Jim Trelease, and Margaret K. McElderry, while featured speakers have been Katherine Paterson, best known for her books *Jacob Have I Loved* and *Bridge to Terabithia*, and E.L. Konigsburg, best known for her works *The View from Saturday* and *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. The \$38 invitation fee helps support children's literature projects in the primary and secondary schools.

Traveling a short distance south along the peninsula, you can visit Stanford University, the proud home of the Mary Schofield Collection of Children's Literature. This one-of-a-kind collection has more than 10,000 first editions, which are available to interested scholars and visitors year-round. The life-long passion of Stanford librarian Mary Schofield and the special efforts of our member Carol Jacobs have resulted in the donation of this remarkable collection to the campus' Green Library. Our group has had the rare treat to sit in a private library room and carefully pass first editions on pillows among our members. It is a visual feast to compare the differences between current reprints and the original illustrations by Beatrix Potter or the vibrant artwork of Kate Greenaway.

In addition to the the above activities, we are blessed by a number of local authors and illustrators who are happy to meet with us to share our common interests. Shirley Climo, a friend and local author of 20 children's stories, spoke at our September meeting. Shirley has explored the Cinderella story across cultures, giving us the Korean, Irish, and Egyptian versions. She visits schools and generously shares her knowledge and enthusiasm for children's literature with the next generation. Shirley has also written stories celebrating the wonders of spiders. Don't miss her Christmas story, *The Cobweb Christmas*.

Our West Coast ABCs may not have a large membership; but what we lack in numbers, we make up for in passion and pride in the San Francisco Bay area, which is a rich source of children's literature if you know where to look. We hope you will pay us a visit and enjoy what we have to offer.

# The Companion: Books & People

*Reviewed by Norman D. Stevens*

*The Companion: Books & People, Vol. 1, March 1996. Quarterly.*  
\$20 a year. Inkwell Press, P.O. Box 794, Frostburg, MD 21532

This wonderful journal deserves our strongest possible encouragement and support. It informs classroom teachers and librarians—not to mention collectors—about various aspects of contemporary children’s literature through the words of young adults. It is remarkable for the scope of its coverage, the quality of its writing, its physical appearance, and the obvious enthusiasm that its contributors show for the field. Its motto, “A Celebration of the Joy of Reading,” is certainly accurate.

*The Companion* originates from Keyser High School in Frostburg, Maryland. It is written and produced by a group of junior and senior Advanced English students in that school. It is encouraging to note, however, that they are now actively seeking other high school students, as well as librarians and other educators currently working in elementary, middle, or secondary schools, to serve as reviewers.

The reviews are the heart of this journal. Fifty or more new children’s books at all levels, along with a smaller number of audio, computer software, and video titles, are reviewed in each issue. Each review provides full bibliographic information and is accompanied by a black and white image of the cover. Each begins with an excellent descriptive statement of the content and purpose of the book that is followed by a personal evaluation. The evaluations, which are refreshingly honest, cover everything from the quality of the images and the writing, the impact of the book on the reviewer, to the value of the book in a classroom or library setting. Each review is individually signed and is accompanied by a specific recommendation (highly recommended, recommended, optional purchase, or not recommended). While written by high school students, the reviews cover children’s books at all levels. Public and school librarians, not to mention collectors, will find this to be one of the best selection sources that there is.

There is much more of value to be found in *The Companion*. In addition to re-

views, each issue contains articles, columns, and departments. To date each article section contains information about both a featured author and a featured storyteller. That consists of a piece about the person that may be based on an interview or a visit, a speech that he or she may have given, and an annotated bibliography of the person's writings or related materials. The columns section features "Appalachian Voices" that consists of information about a person closely involved with children's literature from the area in which the journal is published. The bibliographies that accompany the information about all of the featured persons serve as excellent selection sources. Further strengthening the value of this journal are the miscellaneous features that are scattered throughout each issue. "Sketchers, Scribes, and Skalds" provides brief biographical information about children's authors, illustrators, and storytellers who travel to schools and conferences, information about how to contact them, and examples of their work with a concise one sentence annotation of each example. "Good Buys for Celebrations" offers an annotated listing of old and new titles "worth celebrating and worthy of any celebration." In some issues there is also a special column such as, for example, "December Holiday Books." "Book Tenders" features quotes from, and comments about, children's authors, illustrators, and storytellers about the importance of books and reading. A one-page editorial "Dear Friends" talks about the journal and its work as well as current issues. From time to time, "Winner's Circle" salutes, through reviews and comments, an author, illustrator, or storyteller who has recently won an award for his or her work.

It is impossible not to enjoy each issue of *The Companion* as one delights in the contagious enthusiasm that these students, and their advisors, bring to their work. As a broad-based source that contemporary American children's book collectors can use for keeping well informed about the work of new, and established, authors and illustrators it simply can't be beat. Let's all subscribe and add our support for this most worthy venture to the amazing support shown for it by local businesses, individuals, and stores in the local area. Vickie Saville and Cassie Whetstone, as editors, deserve special thanks for getting *The Companion* off to such a strong start.

# Connecticut Children's Book Fair

*November 14 and 15, 1998*

The Connecticut Children's Book Fair will be held on Saturday and Sunday, November 14 and 15, 1998 in the Bishop Center at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT. The participants this year will include Natalie Babbitt, Mora Fain, Trina Schart Hyman, James Howe, E.B. Lewis, Michael McCurdy, Candice Ransom, Peter Speir, John Steptoe, Cyndy Szekeres and Jane Yolen, among others. There will be costumed characters with photo opportunities with *The Wild Things*, *Curious George*, *Stinky Cheese Man*, *Bunnicula*, *Clifford* and *Corduroy*. In addition to talks by the authors and illustrators, there will be special activities for children and autographing sessions throughout the day. The book fair is sponsored by the Dodd Research Center and the UConn Co-Op. There is no admission charge and proceeds from sale of the books benefit the Northeast Children's Literature Collections in the Dodd Research Center at the University of Connecticut.

# Guidelines for ABC Newsletter Submission

Although we accept typewritten manuscripts, someone on the newsletter staff must input the material into a computer word-processing program in order for the material to be usable by us. Consequently, it is greatly appreciated when submissions are made on a computer disk. Disks will be returned promptly, but please keep a backup of your file. They may be formatted for the PC or for the Macintosh. Any common word processing program that has word-wrap capabilities may be used, but WordPerfect or Word is strongly preferred. A printout of all submitted files should be included, as well as a note explaining what application was used. To make our job a little easier, please use one space only between sentences, and paragraph indents rather than extra lines between paragraphs.

Send submissions to:

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