

MERIDIAN MONITOR

MERIDIAN LIBRARY SYSTEM

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2009

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Twelve Steps to Being a Winning Librarian

In an article entitled "Twelve Steps to a Winning First Year" in Library Media Connection, Karen Hodges talks about what a school media specialist needs to do to become successful. I want to take those points and talk about them in regard to libraries of all types.

1. Good customer service is your goal. If you have ever been in any of my classes, you have heard me say this over and over. Without customers, our libraries cease to exist. We must do our best to give them what they want. This may mean different open hours. It may mean rewriting rules and policies so they favor the public. It may mean no overdue fines. Take a tip from department stores: greet your customers and ask them if you can help them find anything.
2. Meet the people who can help you—and remember their names. In a school, this could be the secretary, administration, technology coordinator or school board member. In a public library, it is the library board, city clerk and other agencies with whom you may need to coordinate.
3. The school librarian should be a leader in the school. Change this to the librarian should be a leader in their community. This means you work to get a place at the table such as serving on committees and becoming active in professional organizations.
4. Learn your collection. Knowing what you have is a bonus when someone asks! This also includes databases such as those in Nebraska Access. Make sure you and your staff know how to search in each one.
5. Make enforceable rules and follow them. Review your current rules and make sure they are customer friendly. If you have a particular rule that seems to be causing problems with a number of people, perhaps it's time to review it and see if it needs to be changed.
6. Be visible. In particular, if you are the library director, be visible. When I worked the check-out desk, I had more input from the public than ever before because I was visible and available to them. Make sure you take walks around the library and talk to people. Jamie LaRue from Douglas County Libraries in Colorado often sits outside his libraries and chats with customers about what they like and dislike about library services.

7. Learn how to order books and supplies. Read reviews and make sure you have award winning books. Order at least twice a year, hopefully through a jobber that will give you a good discount. (If you are not currently using a jobber, check out the discounts the Nebraska Library Commission has negotiated statewide.) Only keep magazines that are being read.
8. Value your volunteers. Libraries seem to always be understaffed so volunteers can be invaluable. Be sure to train them well and let them know what they can and cannot do. In a school, student volunteers can do shelving, dust and straighten shelves for you.
9. Network, network, network. I know we hear this over and over but you cannot overestimate the power of knowing other people to contact when you need help or information. Know the other librarians in your area. Attend workshops and professional conferences. Join in on some listservs. In a school, get to know your teachers and ask for their help in ordering materials that will help them in the classroom.
10. Add excitement to your library. Bring in an author or other performer. Sponsor a book fair. Borrow an art exhibit. Modernize your library's look with paint, pillows, etc. Make sure you have eye-catching displays.
11. Practice using the audiovisual equipment. Make sure you know how all of your equipment works and that you have replacement bulbs and cords. Make sure you know how to at least hook up laptops and projectors.
12. Pace yourself. It's easy to become so involved in your work that you burn out. Don't focus on the work still unfinished. Focus instead on something positive that happened during the day.

Golden Sower Award 2010-2011 Nominees

Primary Nominees:

- Becker, Bonny. A VISITOR FOR BEAR.
 Crisp, Marty. TITANICAT.
 Deedy, Carmen Agra. MARTINA THE BEAUTIFUL COCKROACH: A CUBAN FOLKTALE.
 Henson, Heather. THAT BOOK WOMAN.
 Hest, Amy. THE DOG WHO BELONGED TO NO ONE.
 Hopkinson, Deborah. ABE LINCOLN CROSSES A CREEK: A TALL THIN TALE (INTRODUCING HIS FORGOTTEN FRONTIER FRIEND).
 Laminack, Lester L. SNOW DAY!
 Lies, Brian. BATS AT THE LIBRARY.
 Madison, Alan. VELMA GRATCH AND THE WAY COOL BUTTERFLY.
 Urbanovic, Jackie. DUCK SOUP.

Intermediate Nominees:

- Broach, Elise. MASTERPIECE.
 Jonell, Lynne. EMMY AND THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING RAT.
 Hart, Alison. GABRIEL'S HORSES.
 Hill, Kirkpatrick. DO NOT PASS GO.
 Kehret, Peg. STOLEN CHILDREN.
 Korman, Gordon. SWINDLE.
 Law, Ingrid. SAVVY.
 Lupica, Mike. LONG SHOT.
 Ryan, Pam Munoz. PAINT THE WIND.
 Sanderson, Brandon. ALCATRAZ VS. THE EVIL LIBRARIANS.

Young Adult Nominees:

- Anderson, Laurie Halse. CHAINS.
 Applegate, Katherine. HOME OF THE BRAVE.
 Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. THE BOY WHO DARED.
 Bauer, Joan. PEELED.
 Burg, Shana. A THOUSAND NEVER EVERS.
 Collins, Suzanne. THE HUNGER GAMES.
 Hobbs, Will. GO BIG OR GO HOME.
 Supplee, Suzanne. ARTICHOKE'S HEART.
 Varrato, Tony. FAKIE.
 Pearson, Ridley. STEEL TRAPP: THE CHALLENGE.

Most Popular Quotations

To mark the launch of a major new edition of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, Oxford University Press posted a list of one hundred of the most resonant quotations in the book on its website, www.askoxford.com. Visitors to the site whittled the list down to a 'Top Ten' and then the public was invited to vote for their favorite quotation by email and by postcard. Over 900 votes were registered, one from as far away as Sri Lanka, testifying to the wide appeal of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations.

Elizabeth Knowles, editor of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations, said 'We often think of today as a soundbite culture, but a survey like this reminds us that personal expressions of key ideas can reach across centuries, to give us just the words we want today.'

The Top Ten favorite quotations:

20% It is necessary only for the good man to do nothing for evil to triumph
-- Edmund Burke (attributed, not found in his writings)

15% Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.
-- William Butler Yeats, 1899

12% Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.
-- John Donne, 1624

11% Two roads diverged in a wood, and I--I took the one less travelled by.
-- Robert Frost, 1916

9% I have a dream.
-- Martin Luther King, 1963

8% Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.
-- Lord Acton, 1887

8% To lose one parent...may be regarded as a

misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness.
-- Oscar Wilde, 1895

6% If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you.
-- Rudyard Kipling, 1910

5% It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.
-- Jane Austen, 1813

5% Genius is one per cent inspiration, ninety nine per cent perspiration.
-Thomas Alva Edison, c.1903



Blackwell, a provider of books to libraries since 1879, has been offering discounts to Nebraska libraries through the Nebraska Library Commission since 2001. Blackwell recently provided the Nebraska Library Commission with updated terms for these discounts. The new terms are as follows:

US
FO/NTAS
14% off list price
List price for List Price Publishers
No/Low pricing
List price plus \$10.00 proforma charge
1.5% shipping
\$0.10 per item fuel surcharges

For complete information on this offer, see the Blackwell section of our Discount Purchasing Program ~ Books & Supplies page. And while you're there, be sure to check out other offers available to your library!

The cutting machines are currently available. To sign up to receive them for a month, please contact the System Office.

Our Shared Vision for Library and Information Services: Nebraska Libraries Future Search Conference

Vision statement: Library as Front Porch: My library provides an inviting and welcoming front porch where the community comes to learn, play and investigate. People come first in this nurturing and enriching gathering place for all.

The public perceives the library as a neutral place and it is a natural meeting place for divergent cultures, ideas and groups to meet. Libraries should be sensitive to the changing nature of our communities due to immigration and cultural values shifts.

In an article on gaming in libraries from the August/September 2009 American Libraries, Jenny Levine suggests some possible goals:

- Offer recreation around content (book discussion groups; craft classes)
- Offer social communal space (adult programming; rooms for knitters)
- Offer literacy programs (storytime)
- Offer interactions between different demographics (family events, multigenerational programming)

Suggested activities for the library as Front Porch:

- o Grandparents reading to kids
- o Singing
- o Serve seasonal beverages
- o Read around the posies
- o Rock-a-thon
- o Kool-Aid stand
- o Spooning
- o Birdhouses
- o Ice cream socials
- o Bluegrass
- o Shoebox social
- o Gaming bees - "Wii-Bee"
- o Film festival - outdoors; make community films
- o Chautauqua
- o Greeters
- o Local art displays
- o Historical reenactment
- o Make your own video
- o Open microphone events
- o "Fine front porch" - less formal entry
- o Have experts make visits to make suggestions on making physical space more hospitable
- o Outreach to determine what is done (especially diverse populations)
- o Curbside service on roller skates
- o Drinks and books
- o Facebook, Myspace; and whatever is next
- o Posters where our neighbors are
- o Wii tournaments

Things to think about and discuss:

1. What are the emerging groups in your community? Don't just think of ethnicity but of other groups such as latchkey children, the unemployed and young mothers.
2. What programming are you offering throughout the year to these various communities?
3. Do you offer materials and services for the informational, recreational and social needs of your community?
4. What ideas from those listed above could you use to create a front porch atmosphere at your library?
5. When you think of front porch, don't forget how your library looks. Do a "walkabout" and assess how friendly and welcoming your facility is. What can you do to make it more welcoming?
6. Discuss the following from the South Carolina State Library blog: The fact is, people all around us are connecting in so many new ways. Mostly younger people, at least for now. The USA Today survey that told us that college students would rather give up beer than Facebook. It gave us the news: These kids are not out on the porch, and they are not in the public library...not even in the college library. They are chatting it up, making friends, and passing information around online. Of course, they could be online in the public library. The public library as front porch for the community...something to think about.
7. Rethink having staff behind desks. Wander around the library offering assistance and guidance. If no one is in need of help, it's a great time to make some impromptu displays.

Don't forget to tell your new Board Members about the Trustee Trouble Video Segments:

Last year the Wyoming State Library produced a set of ten video segments for Wyoming Library Trustees. Trustee Trouble: The misadventures of a new library board member tells the story of Dan, a well meaning, but often misguided new library board member. Your new library board members may find the six to twelve minute segments an easy way to learn more about their responsibilities and the responsibilities of the board and the library director. Many library boards take time to view and discuss the segments at their regular meetings. The segments are available online: <http://www.wyominglibraries.org/trusteetrouble.html>



More than two-thirds turn to Internet over the economy:

A recent Pew Internet & American Life Project study, "The Internet and the Recession," shows that 69% of Americans - and 88% of all those who go online - have turned to the Internet to cope with the economy. Of those that have, 67% have used the Internet to find the lowest prices, and 41% have looked at new jobs. Other popular uses included looking for second jobs, finding advice about protecting personal finances, improving job skills and accessing information about unemployment and other government benefits. More than half of those surveyed had been hit hard by the economy, either losing pay or benefits, losing more than half the value of their homes or investments or losing their jobs entirely.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

This month, I am going to recommend a set of childhood favorite books and an adult non-fiction audiobook.

I am sure we all have favorite books from our childhood. The Betsy-Tacy series of books by Maud Hart Lovelace is one of mine. Set in Deep Valley, Minnesota in the early 1900's the books follow Betsy from early childhood through her marriage. The first four books are written at an early reading level and the high school books are written at that reading level. Recently, author Meg Cabot wrote a blog about these books. It can be found at:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704471504574447514006375536.html#articleTabs%3Darticle>

What I personally like about these books is that Betsy (and her older sister Julia) both wanted to have careers at a time when women did not usually work outside of the home and their parents actively encouraged them in their endeavors. Julia became an opera singer and Betsy a writer. Lovelace also tackles the usual issues facing young girls growing up: in the early books, it's about friendship and going to school; in the later books, it's about being accepted and learning how to accept failure.

These books have been in print almost continually since their initial printing. If you don't have a set in your library, I would highly recommend them as a purchase.

On the adult side, last month I talked about the travel book *Tropic of Capricorn*. This month, I want to recommend another travel book, in audio format: Michael Palin's *Himalaya*. Around five years ago, Palin embarked on an almost year long journey that took him along and through these mountains. It was a tv series but this book, read by the author, gives you so much more insight into the various countries and cultures. Because so many of these countries have different religions, Palin goes into some detail about each

one. He does not shy away from the political realities but also does not try to interfere or judge anyone. He had a very interesting meeting with the Dalai Lama. Also of great interest is their trek into a mountain base camp.

What I like most about this book is that Palin writes as if he is in casual conversation with you. As a person who enjoys travel, this one was a real winner for me!

Connecting with non-fiction

I recently attended this excellent webinar from School Library Journal. Below is the bibliography of non-fiction titles recommended for elementary and middle school ages.

Allen, Thomas B. and Roger MacBride Allen. *Mr. Lincoln's High-Tech War: How the North Used the Telegraph, Railroads, Surveillance Balloons, Ironclads, High-Powered Weapons, and more to Win the Civil War*. National Geographic. 2009. 9781426303791.

Bang, Molly and Penny Chisholm. *Living Sunlight: How Plants Bring the Earth to Life*. Ill. by Molly Bang. Scholastic. 2009. 9780545044226.

Berne, Jennifer. *Manfish: A Story of Jacques Cousteau*. Ill. by Eric Puybaret. Chronicle. 2009. 9780811860635.

Bernier-Grand, Carmen T. *Diego: Bigger Than Life*. Ill. by David Diaz. Marshall Cavendish. 2009. 9780761453833.

Bishop, Nic. *Butterflies and Moths*. Ill. by author. Scholastic. 2009. 9780439877572.

Bryan, Ashley. *Ashley Bryan: Words to My Life's Song*. Simon and Schuster. 2009. 9781416905417.

Bryant, Jen. *River of Words: The Story of William Carlos Williams*. Illus. by Melissa Sweet. Eerd-

mans. 2008. 9780802853028.

Chaikin, Andrew. *Mission Control, This is Apollo: The Story of the First Voyages to the Moon*. Illus. by Alan Bean. Penguin Group. 2009. 9780670011568.

Cherry, Lynn and Gary Braasch. *How We Know What We Know About Our Changing Climate: Scientists and Kids Explore Global Warming*. Dawn Publications 2008. 9781584691037.

D'Aluisio, Faith. *What the World Eats*. Ill. by Peter Menzel. Tricycle Press. 2008. 9781582462462.

Fleischman, Sid. *The Trouble Begins at 8: A Life of Mark Twain in the Wild Wild West*. HarperCollins. 2008. 9780061344312.

Flannery, Tim. *We are the Weather Makers: The History of Climate Change*. Candlewick. 2009. 9780763636562.

Fleming, Candace. *The Great and Only Barnum*. Random House. 2009. 9780375841972.

Fleming, Candace. *The Lincolns: A Scrapbook Look at Abraham and Mary*. Random House. 2008. 9780375836183.

Floca, Brian. *Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. /Richard Jackson. 2009. 9781416950462.

Florian, Douglas. *Dinothosaurus: Prehistoric Poems and Paintings*. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. 2009. 9781416979784.

Freedman, Russell. *Lincoln: a Photobiography*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

1987. 9780899193809. CD, Random House. 2008. 9780739372555.

George, Jean Craighead. *The Wolves are Back*. Ill. Wendell Minor. Dutton 2008. 9780525479475.

Heiligman, Deborah. *Charles and Emma: The Darwin's Leap of Faith*. Henry Holt, 2009. 9780805087215.

Hoose, Phillip. *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice*. Farrar Straus Giroux 2009. 9780374313227. CD (12/09) 9781441802361.

Hopkinson, Deborah. *Abe Lincoln Crosses a Creek: A Tall, Thin Tale Introducing His Forgotten Frontier Friend*. Illus. by John Hendrix. 2008. Schwartz & Wade. 9780375837685.

Hughes, Langston. *My People*. Photographs by Charles R. Smith, Jr. Atheneum Books for Young Readers. /Ginee Seo Books. 2009. 9781416935407.

Jenkins, Steve. *Down, Down, Down: A Journey to the Bottom of the Sea*. Ill. by author. Houghton Mifflin. 2009. 9780618966363.

Kurlansky, Mark and S.D. Schindler. *The Cod's Tale*. Ill. by S.D. Schindler. Putnam. 2001. 9780399234767.

Marin, Gaudalupe Rivera. *My Papa Diego and Me/Mi papa Diego y yo: Memories of My Father and His Art/Recuerdos de mi padre y su arte*. Ill. by Diego Rivera. Children's Book Press. 2009. 9780892392285.

Nelson, Kadir. *We are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball*. Hyperion. 2008. 9780786808328. CD Brilliance Audio. 2009. 9781423375364.

<p>Nelson, Scott Reynolds and Marc Aronson. <i>Ain't Nothing But a Man: My Quest to Find the Real John Henry</i>. National Geographic. 2008. 9781426300004.</p>	<p>9780786839001.</p>
<p>Partridge, Elizabeth. <i>Marching for Freedom</i>. 2009. Penguin. 9780670011896.</p>	<p>Sturm, James and others. <i>Adventures in Cartooning: How to Turn Your Doodles Into Comics</i>. Ill. by authors. Roaring Brook/First Second. 2009. 9781596433694.</p>
<p>Patent, Dorothy Hinshaw <i>When the Wolves Returned: Restoring Nature's Balance in Yellowstone</i>. Ill. by Dan Hartman. Walker. 2008. 9780802796868.</p>	<p>Swanson, James L. <i>Chasing Lincoln's Killer</i>. Scholastic. 2009. 9780439903547.</p>
<p>Pollan, Michael. <i>The Omnivore's Dilemma for Kids: The Secrets Behind What You Eat</i>. Dial. 2009. 9780803735002.</p>	<p>Thimmesh, Catherine. <i>Lucy Long Ago: Uncovering the Mystery of Where We Came From</i>. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 2009. 9780547051994.</p>
<p>Rosen, Michael J. <i>The Cuckoo's Haiku: and Other Birding Poems</i>. Illus. by Stan Fellows. Candlewick Press. 2009. 9780763630492.</p>	<p>Thimmesh, Catherine. <i>Team moon: how 400,000 people landed Apollo 11 on the moon</i>. Houghton Mifflin. 2006. 9780618507573.</p>
<p>Sandler, Martin W. <i>Lincoln through the Lens: How Photography Revealed and Shaped an Extraordinary Life</i>. Walker. 2008. 9780802796660.</p>	<p>Turner, Pam. <i>The Frog Scientist</i>. Ill. by Andy Comins. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. 2009. 9780618717163.</p>
<p>Sandler, Martin W. <i>Secret Subway: The Fascinating Tale of an Amazing Feat of Engineering</i>. National Geographic. 2009. 9781426304620.</p>	<p>Walker, Sally. <i>Written in Bone: Buried Lives of Jamestown and Colonial Maryland</i>. Carolrhoda Books. 2009. 9780822571353.</p>
<p>Shulevitz, Uri. <i>How I Learned Geography</i>. Farrar Straus Giroux. 2008. 9780374334994.</p>	<p>Wadsworth, Ginger and Patricia J. Wynne. <i>Up, Up and Away</i>. Ill. by Patricia J. Wynne. Charlesbridge. 2009. 9781580892216.</p>
<p>Smith, Anita Hope. <i>Mother Poems</i>. Henry Holt and Co. 2009. 9780805082319.</p>	<p>Winter, Jonah. <i>You Never Heard of Sandy Koufax</i>. Random House. Illus. by André Carrilho. 2009. 9780375837388.</p>
<p>Stone, Tanya Lee. <i>Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream</i>. Candlewick Press. 2009. 9780763636111.</p>	<p>Yaccarino, Dan. <i>The Fantastic Undersea Life of Jacques Cousteau</i>. Ill. by author. Knopf. 2009. 9780375855733.</p>
<p>Sturm, James and Rich Tommasio. <i>Satchel Paige: Strikes Out Jim Crow</i>. Ill. by authors. Hyperion. December 2007.</p>	

WEB SITES OF THE MONTH

Shmoop: This website provides study materials for selected literature, poetry, and U.S. history topics. Titles and subjects include sections for summaries, study questions, website links, and related material. The website launched in late 2008. Website "content is written primarily by Ph.D. and Masters students from top universities."

URL: <http://www.shmoop.com/>

10 Tricks for Shipping Holiday Gifts

With Ease: These tips "will help you ship holiday packages safely and in the least expensive way, depending on your needs." Covers timing, packing, choosing a shipping service, and understanding when to pay more. Includes links to major consumer shippers. From MSNBC.

URL: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/16059156/>

Yule Log (Buche de Noel) Recipe:

Background and recipe for "the most famous dessert made with a roulade (sponge cake) [which] is the Buche de Noel ... or Yule Log. ... The story goes that an innovative French pastry chef (in the late 1800s) came up with the idea of replacing the real 'yule' log with a cake that was log shaped." Also includes a link to a recipe for meringue mushrooms. From a cooking enthusiast.

URL: <http://www.joyofbaking.com/YuleLog.html>

100-Mile Thanksgiving: Share and view stories about Thanksgiving meals based on locally grown and produced foods. The story archive could benefit from an index, but browsing will bring up many ideas for Thanksgiving dishes, local traditions (from the U.S. and Canada), recipes, and more. From the website of the authors of a book

on eating locally.

URL: <http://100milediet.org/thanksgiving>

History of Pumpkin Pie: Background about the traditional Thanksgiving dish pumpkin pie. "Early American settlers of Plimoth Plantation (1620-1692) ... might have made pumpkin pies (of sorts) by making stewed pumpkins or by filling a hollowed out shell with milk, honey and spices, and then baking it in hot ashes. An actual present-day pumpkin pie with crust is a myth, as ovens to bake pies were not available in the colony at that stage." Includes recipes. From a cookbook author. <http://whatscookingamerica.net/History/PieHistory/PumpkinPie.htm>

10 Recipes for a Howling Good Gluten Free Halloween Party:

This collection of gluten-free recipes features caramel apples, deviled "ghoul" eggs, "boneyard BBQ drummies," and "ghost-topped" mini-brownie cupcakes. Also includes recipes that could be used for Halloween or other holiday parties, such as gluten-free caramel corn and snack mix. From About.com. URL: <http://glutenfreecooking.about.com/od/glutenfreekids/tp/glutenfreehalloweenrecipes.htm>

Paper Snowflakes: Illustrated, set-by-step instructions for making six-pointed paper snowflakes. Also includes links to instruction for making five-pointed and six-pointed paper stars and Moravian Pennsylvania German woven stars. From a company that sells paper craft supplies. URL: <http://highhopes.com/snowflakes.html>

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The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress in partnership with Target presents

LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE

Letters About Literature is a national reading and writing promotion program.

Sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book, the Nebraska Library Commission, Houchen Bindery Ltd., and Lee Booksellers

Participation Guidelines for Readers

Books have wings. You can't see them, but they are there just the same. On books' wings, readers can soar to new places where they meet intriguing characters and experience exciting adventures. But a book's wings can also help a reader rise above difficult situations so that they see the world — or themselves — with new understanding. Has a book touched your life in a personal way? If so, we invite you to enter this year's LAL competition. Have you ever felt the power and lift of literature?

How to Enter

First, determine your competition level. Letters About Literature welcomes entries from all readers — reluctant as well as enthusiastic — on three Levels of Competition. Entrants must be at least 9 years old and fall into one of the following categories:

Level 1 — Grades 4 – 6

Level 2 — Grades 7 – 8

Level 3 — Grades 9-12

Second, reflect and connect! Select a fiction or nonfiction book, a short story, poem, essay or speech (sorry, no song lyrics) you have read and about which you have strong feelings. Explore those feelings and why you reacted the way you did during or after reading the author's work. Consider one or more of these questions when writing your letter:

Did the characters, conflict or setting mirror your life in some way? If so, how? If not, why not?

What strengths or flaws do you share with a character or characters in the book?

What did the book show you about your world that you never noticed before?

What surprised you about yourself while you were reading this book? Why was this work meaningful to you? Your letter need not answer all of these questions, of course. These are just starting points to spark ideas.

Third, write a personal, reflective letter (not a fan letter or a book report!) Express yourself! A letter is less formal than an essay or research paper. Write honestly and in your own voice, as if you were having a conversation with the author. Those are the best letters to read and the most fun to write! Keep in mind these two tips:

Correspond, don't compliment! Your letter should inform rather than flatter the author.

Do not summarize the book's plot! The author wrote the book and knows what happened. What the author doesn't know is how the book affected *you*.

Our judges do not count words but we do have recommended lengths: Entries for Level 1 should be no less than 100 words and no more than 400 words. Entries for Level 2 should be no less than 300 words and no more than 600 words. Entries for Level 3 should be no less than 500 words and no more than 800 words. Please refer to the Contest Entry Guidelines in Rules #4 of the Official rules found at www.lettersaboutliterature.org for complete information on how to prepare your letter.

Fourth, submit your letter by December 12, 2009, using the required entry coupon. (See next page!)

STATE AND NATIONAL AWARDS

LAL awards prizes on both the state and national levels. Each state center has its own panel of judges who select the top essayists in the state. State Winners will receive a \$50 Target GiftCard and additional prizes, and then advance to the National Level Judging.

On each competition level, a panel of national judges for the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress will select **six (6) National Winners** (2 per Level of Competition) and **twelve (12) National Honorable Mention Winners** (4 per Level of Competition). The National Winners will receive a \$500 Target GiftCard, plus each will win a **\$10,000 LAL Reading Promotion Grant** for his or her community or school library so that others can experience personal relationships with authors and the stories they tell. Additionally, the National Honorable Mention Winners will each receive a \$100 Target GiftCard and a **\$1,000 LAL Reading Promotion Grant** for the community or school library. The community or school library selected for the National Winners and National Honorable Mention Winners is at the Sponsor's sole direction. Refer to the National Level Judging in the Official Rules for more details.

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. A Purchase will not enhance your chances of winning. MANY WILL ENTER, FEW WILL WIN. Open to legal residents of the 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands enrolled as a student in grades 4-12 during the 2009-2010 school year, 9 years or older as of 9/1/09. Contest starts 8/1/09 and ends 12/12/09. Void where prohibited. Subject to Official Rules found at www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/letters.html.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR ENTRIES

RETURN ADDRESS. Print your name and complete return address (either home or school) in the upper right corner of the first page of your letter. Letters without a return address and adequate contact information will be disqualified.

ENTRY COUPON. Each letter must be accompanied by an entry coupon (below). Staple the coupon to the last page of your letter. Should you win a state or a national prize, your State Center for the Book will contact you using this information, so be sure your coupon is complete and legible!

MAILING ENVELOPE. Entries should be mailed in a flat 8x10" envelope or larger. Please indicate the competition level — either 1,2, or 3 — on your envelope. Your Entry must be postmarked by December 12, 2009, (and arrive at LAL Central no later than December 22, 2009). Mail to:

Letters About Literature Competition Level (Indicate level 1, 2, or 3) P.O. Box 609 Dallas, PA 18612

ASSESSMENT. All entries will be judged on the following criteria:

Content (the writer's achievement in addressing the contest theme).

Writer's Voice (the writer's style and originality of expression).

Exposition (the writer's use of language skills, organization and grammar).

Each criterion will be scored on a scale of zero (0) to five (5), where five (5) is excellent and zero (0) is not fulfilling the judging criteria.

OWNERSHIP. All letters become the property of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. Please make a copy of your entry as no letters will be returned.

NOTIFICATION & CONTACT. State Centers for the Book will notify state winners on or about 3/21/10. The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress will notify National Winners and National Honorable Mention Winners on or about 4/30/10. www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/letters.html. For program updates, please refer to the LAL website, www.lettersaboutliterature.org or e-mail us at lal@epix.net

Note for Teachers Submitting Class Sets:

When mailing class sets, please include a cover letter that lists the names of each child who has written a letter. Mail class sets in one flat envelope rather than individual envelopes. Use one envelope for each level.

Please do not assign the same book to an entire class, as this misses the spirit of the program — identifying a personal relationship with an author and/or book. Likewise, rather than assigning the same opening paragraph or topic sentences, encourage students to express themselves individually.

Visit www.lettersaboutliterature.org for free teaching materials, including lesson plans, assessment checklists, writing samples, plus teaching tips from our many LAL teachers who have participated in the past.

Letters About Literature 2009-2010 Entry Coupon (cut & staple to letter)

PLEASE PRINT. Often our failure to contact you is due to incomplete or illegible information on the entry coupon.

Name _____ Age _____ Home Phone (optional) (_____)

_____ Grade (circle one grade only): Level 1: 4 5 6 Level 2: 7 8 Level 3: 9 10 11 12 Book/Story

Title _____ Author _____

Home Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

_____ Parental Signature

(required if submitting as an individual entry):

IMPORTANT! If submitting through a school or library, please complete the additional information below:

School/Library: _____ Street _____

_____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Code _____ School/Library Telephone: (_____) _____ School/Library E-mail: _____

_____ Teacher/Librarian Contact: _____ E-

mail: _____

2009 Nebraska Book Festival Set for November 14 in Lincoln

Nebraska Writers: Cultivating Creativity, 2009 Nebraska Book Festival, November 14, 2009 will be held at the Nebraska State Historical Society's Museum of Nebraska History, 15th and P Streets, Lincoln, Nebraska. The festival will include a variety of literary activities. An awards luncheon will honor the winners of the Center for the Book's Mildred Bennett Award, Jane Geske Award, and Nebraska Book Awards. A selection of Nebraska writers will read from their 2009 works, along with readings from the winners of the Nebraska Book Awards. Writers Workshops will be offered free of charge. Teresa Lorensen of the Bess Streeter Aldrich Foundation will lead a book discussion of Aldrich's *A Lantern in Her Hand*, this year's enormously popular One Book One Nebraska selection (www.onebookonenebraska.org).

A Conversation with Three Poets will give Nebraska poets Ted Kooser, Bill Kloefkorn, and Don Welch the opportunity to share insights on reading and writing poetry. These long-time members of an intentional writing community will share insights on how they have supported each other's work through the years. Additional Nebraska author activities and plans for vendors are in the works. The Festival is sponsored by the Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Humanities Council, and the Nebraska Library Commission.

Noted Nebraska Writers to Appear at the 2009 Nebraska Book Festival, November 14, 2009:

William Kloefkorn
Ted Kooser
Don Welch
JV Brummels

Sean Doolittle
Michael Forsberg
Harley Jane Kozak
The Loren Eiseley Society Readers
Mary Pipher
Hilda Raz
Joe Starita
Stephanie Grace Whitson

For more information see <http://www.nebraskabookfestival.org> or contact Mary Jo Ryan, mjryan@nlc.state.ne.us, Nebraska Library Commission Communications Coordinator, 402-471-3434, 800-307-2665.



Upcoming Summer Reading Program Themes

The general topic for summer 2011 is world cultures and the slogans are:

Children's Program: One World, Many Stories

Teen Program: You are Here

Adult slogan: Novel Destinations



2012 General topic: Nighttime.

One of the topics discussed at our Let's Talk About It meeting was what libraries are doing about the threat of H1N1 virus. Most are making sure there is plenty of hand disinfectant in various locations around the library. Other than that, we are in a "wait and see" period of time.

Below is a draft policy from a Nebraska library in case an epidemic or pandemic actually occurs. I have removed identifying information. You may want to take this to your board in order to create your own policy. Remember that it is always better to be proactive in these types of situations!

Policy for Reacting to a "Declared" Swine or Avian Flu Epidemic/ Pandemic:

When determined by the _____ Health Department that an Avian Flu epidemic is imminent, the _____ Library Board will institute the following precautionary procedures to reduce staff and public exposure to the flu:

Staff:

- All staff who are able to continue working (not sick and no one in the family sick) shall be expected to work a 10 am to 7 pm shift with staggered one-hour lunches.
- Should a family member living in the household become ill with the flu, that library employee should not come to work, but instead take either sick leave or vacation time.
- Staff shall wear disposable latex protective gloves at all times and, when arriving and departing from the building, should wash their hands.
- Each member of the staff shall stay at least 8 feet away from other staff.
- Each member of the staff will be assigned a telephone and a computer to

use. No employee may use another employee's phone or computer.

- Surgical masks of N95 density will be provided by the Library and all staff will be expected to wear masks during work hours.
- Staff may be "loaned" to other city departments, depending upon the urgency of that department's mission.

Public Service:

- Entry into the Library will be closed, with the exception that the outer door will be open to allow patrons to pick up previously-reserved library items.
- Patrons may not use the library as a reading room or for browsing.
- No meetings will be held in any of the meeting rooms.
- All public restrooms will be closed to the public.
- The library staff will be available from 12 noon until 7:00 PM to assist the public by phone and Internet to reserve library materials for later pick up.
- Patrons will use the entry area of the building to pick up library materials reserved earlier. These items will be in plastic bags with the patron's name attached and will be placed on folding tables on either side of the entry.
- All library materials will be returned to the Library by way of the book drops.
- All returned materials will be quarantined in boxes (dishwasher-type) for one week, prior to re-shelving.



Booklist is sponsoring a free webinar called *Sweet Talk: Romance Fiction in the Library* on November 12th. Full information may be found at: http://www.ala.org/ala/newspresscenter/news/pressreleases2009/october2009/romancefiction_booklist.cfm

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