Mock Newbery!

By *efardoux*
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This morning, our librarians and staff held a riveting Mock Newbery discussion, hoping to predict the American Library Association's Newbery Medal and Newbery Honor winners. (The real books honored will be announced at the Midwinter conference, this year held in Seattle.)

The real Newbery books are chosen by a hard-working and hard-reading committee of dedicated library professionals who spend months and months reading books published for children in the calendar year. Unlike with our staff's preparation, the real Newbery committee does not vote from a set list of books (at least, none that we *know* about - the committee is very private about their discussions).

The six books they discussed were:

On the Day I Died: Stories from the Grave by Candace Fleming: Driving at break-neck speed past a Cook County Forest Preserve after midnight, late for curfew again, Mike nearly hits a girl who is standing in the middle of the road. His decision to give the hapless hitchhiker a ride home turns into a night spent sitting in a graveyard listening to the ghosts of Chicago area teenagers as tell him the stories of their lives, and deaths. (HPPL Youth Staff Review)

Mister Death's Blue-Eyed Girls by Mary Downing Hahn: Combining murder mystery, historical fiction, and a coming-of-age story, this chilling book is base on real life events in the author's past. The time is 1956 and Nora anticipates spending a the summer before her senior year with her group of friends. But two of her friends are shot to death on their way to the last day of school. Everyone but Nora is sure that the murderer is a jealous ex-boyfriend. Told from a number of perspectives, the story examines the effect this horrible event had on so many lives. (HPPL Youth Staff Review)

The Lions of Little Rock by Kristin Levine: Two girls separated by race form an unbreakable bond during the tumultuous integration of Little Rock schools in 1958 Twelve-year-old Marlee doesn't have many friends until she meets Liz, the new girl at school. Liz is bold and brave, and always knows the right thing to say, especially to Sally, the resident mean girl. Liz even helps Marlee overcome her greatest fear - speaking, which Marlee never does outside her family. But then Liz is gone, replaced by the rumor that she was a Negro girl passing as white. But Marlee decides that doesn't matter. Liz is her best friend. And to stay friends, Marlee and Liz are willing to take on integration and the dangers their friendship could bring to both their families. (GoodReads Review)

Wonder by R.J. Palacio: *I won't describe what I look like. Whatever you're thinking, it's probably worse.* August (Auggie) Pullman was born with a facial deformity that prevented him from going to a mainstream school—until now. He's about to start 5th grade at Beecher Prep, and if you've ever been the new kid then you know how hard that can be. The

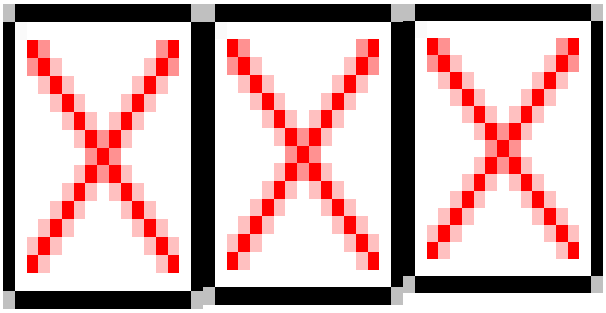
thing is Auggie's just an ordinary kid, with an extraordinary face. But can he convince his new classmates that he's just like them, despite appearances? R. J. Palacio has written a spare, warm, uplifting story that will have readers laughing one minute and wiping away tears the next. With wonderfully realistic family interactions (flawed, but loving), lively school scenes, and short chapters, Wonder is accessible to readers of all levels.(GoodReads Review)

What Came from the Stars by Gary D. Schmidt: The Valorim are about to fall to a dark lord when they send a necklace containing their planet across the cosmos, hurtling past a trillion starsall the way into the lunchbox of Tommy Pepper, sixth grader, of Plymouth, Mass. Mourning his late mother, Tommy doesn't notice much about the chain he found, but soon he is drawing the twin suns and humming the music of a hanorah. As Tommy absorbs the art and language of the Valorim, their enemies target him. When a creature begins ransacking Plymouth in search of the chain, Tommy learns he must protect his family from villains far worse than he's ever imagined. (GoodReads Review)

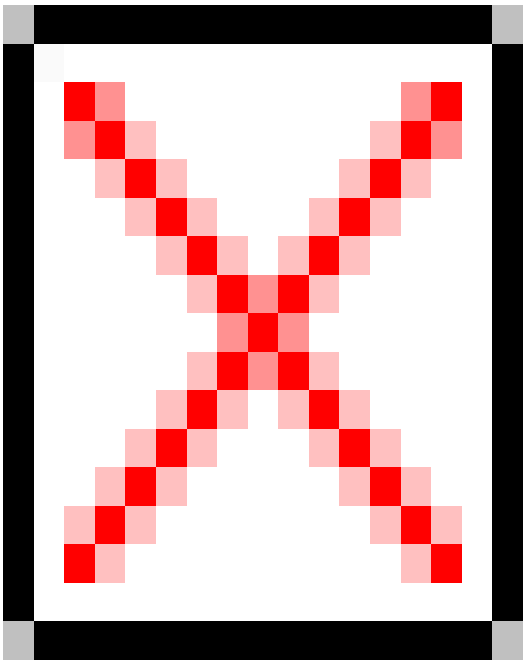
Bomb: the Race to Build - and Steal - the World's Most Dangerous Weapon by Steve Sheinkin: Bomb reads like an edge-of -your- seat spy novel, but it's all true. It tells of the Herculean effort behind building the bomb, the desperate arms race with Germany that will decide WWII, the heroic efforts of Norwegein resistance fighters, and the spies determined to steal the plans for the Soviet Union. The story of the scientific genius behind the bomb, the politics, the military heroics, and the espionage make this a thrilling read where truth is far more exciting than fiction. (HPPL Youth Staff Review)

After some great discussion & a couple surprising opinions, our librarians did their time-tested and popular M&M voting, with very little split on opinion.

We awarded three Newbery Honor Medals:



Our Newbery Medal winner was....drumroll please....



We're excited to find out the real winners! Our Mock Caldecott will be held later this month.

Tags: The Gerbils

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