

March 11 2011

Mock Newbery 2011!

Have you ever heard of the John Newbery Medal? It is an award given every year by the American Library Association to the author of the most distinguished American children's book. You have probably already read books that have won the medal or received a Newbery Honor without even knowing it!

The award-winning book is chosen each year by a committee of ALA members using the following criteria:

- interpretation of the theme or concept;
- presentation of information including accuracy, clarity, and organization;
- development of a plot;
- delineation of characters;
- delineation of a setting;
- appropriateness of style.

Before the award is given each year, many libraries and bookstores hold a "Mock Newbery," choosing a selection of children's books from that year that they think are contenders for the medal. There is no *official* list of books considered for the award, unlike the Academy Awards, and so part of the fun of a Mock Newbery is choosing just a few of the many excellent books of the year. After choosing a list of books to discuss, participants in a Mock Newbery act as if they were on the real Newbery deciding committee and choose a Newbery winner.

This year, a few of us here in the Youth Services department worked hard to create a list of five books we felt both met the Newbery criteria and were worthy of discussing. They are, in no particular order:

The Search for Wondla by Tony DiTerlizzi, One Crazy Summer by Rita Williams-Garcia, Keeper by Kathi Appelt, Simeon's Story: An Eyewitness Account of the Kidnapping of Emmett Till by Simeon Wright, The Dreamer by Pam Muñoz Ryan.

We also have a few books to talk about that won't be on our ballot, but that we thought were worthy of mentioning. They are:

On the Blue Comet by Rosemary Wells

As Easy as Falling off the Face of the Earth by Lynne Rae Perkins

Out of My Mind by Sharon Draper

Sir Charlie: Chaplin, the Funniest Man in the World by Sid Fleischman
A Conspiracy of Kings by Megan Whelan Turner
and Forge by Laurie Halse Anderson.

This morning, we held our Mock Newbery discussion. We discussed each of the books in turn, and then held two votes.

And now? drumroll please?

Highland Park Public Library's Youth Services Department choice for the John Newbery Medal recipient for 2011 is?.

One Crazy Summer by Rita Williams-Garcia

Oakland, 1968.

Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern arrive at the airport to spend the summer with their mother, Cecile. Cecile abandoned her three daughters shortly after Fern's birth and hasn't seen or spoken to them since. Delphine is not looking forward to the summer. When she finds out her mother is involved in the Black Panthers, Delphine wonders how she can protect her sisters from the rioting and arrests that are happening, because it's obvious Cecile isn't going to.

Our selections for Honor books were:

Keeper by Kathi Appelt and The Search for Wondla by Tony DiTerlizzi!

YS Reviewers:

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