

Wyoming Library Roundup

Summer 2004

Lynne Cheney
brings history to America's children

**Discover New
Trails...READ!**
Statewide Summer
Reading program

Sylvia Long
Children's Author and Illustrator

Wyoming's children are CHAMPS

When Senator Mike Enzi's wife Diana was asked by the Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI) to help raise money for dogs who detect land mines, she knew who to go to first – the children of Wyoming.

"Children just love dogs," said Mrs. Enzi. "And I knew they would give to save other kids' lives." That they did. In a two week campaign, many of Wyoming's 80,000 schoolchildren chipped in their quarters and dollars to raise nearly \$15,000 through the Children Against Land Mines Program (CHAMPS).

Wyoming's children led the nation as the first to take part in CHAMPS. The Humane Society of the United States was so touched by the campaign that they not only pledged the remainder of the \$20,000 cost for one dog, but also agreed to match future Wyoming donations to CHAMPS.

The dog, named Wyoming, will be sent to Sri Lanka where 700,000 land mines left from a 20-year civil war dot this diminutive island country. During her "sniffing career" she'll clear about a million sectors of land, freeing up valuable agricultural and living space.

Land mines are found in 70 countries. Many are cased in bamboo or cardboard, which is why dogs are so important – dogs don't need metal to find the explosive. During visits to schools, Mrs. Enzi talks to children, showing a world map where land mines are located and educating them about the human cost.

With Wyoming's successful campaign over, Mrs. Enzi is heading next to Vermont with the eventual goal of

having each state's children sponsor one dog. Plans are in the works to make the effort international.

There's one story Mrs. Enzi doesn't tell children. She's heard of a village where, during the monsoon, land mines sometimes dislodge upstream and wash down the river, landing in the rice fields. After the rains, children are sent into the fields first. The elders were asked why they did not send the water buffalo instead. They replied

that yes, they loved their children, but if they lost their water buffalo, they lost their lives.

Through CHAMPS, American children help the children in the village. "Children love the project," said Mrs. Enzi. "They love the idea that by giving just a quarter -- which was doable for nearly every child -- they could make a difference. And this is important because if you make a child a global citizen and a philanthropist in the first or the third or the eighth grade, he or she will be those things for life."

Mrs. Enzi has tapped into the enthusiasm of children and taught them how to engage in their world. Librarians do the same. Just as you can make a child a global citizen for

life, you can make that child a reader and learner and information seeker for life. This first issue of the new *Roundup* is dedicated to Wyoming's children and the role that books and libraries play in tapping their unlimited potential.



Rosa, a trained Belgian Malinois, demonstrates her land-mine sniffing ability to the students at Paradise Valley Elementary School in Casper. Land mine detection is done by only two breeds – the Malinois and the German Shepherd – because of the physical requirements of the job.

Photo courtesy of Natrona County School District 1.

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State Librarian

Welcome to the *Roundup*! It's been many years since the Wyoming library community has seen this magazine, and I'm thrilled to see its reissue.

Some of you may remember the *Roundup* from the old editions, published by the Wyoming Library Association from 1942 to 1990. When I first arrived in Wyoming, the *Roundup* was how I got to know the people working in our state's libraries and the programs our libraries offered. I learned about Wyoming's authors and became familiar with the literature. It was invaluable to me as a county librarian, new to the state.

We hope the new *Roundup* will be a resource for Wyoming's librarians. But we also want to showcase our libraries' accomplishments to those outside the profession.

For many years, Wyoming has been quietly, without fanfare, on the cutting edge of librarianship. We put our resources together early in the game – ideas, expertise, technology, funding. When we talked resource sharing, we looked beyond the big players to all types and sizes of libraries.

The things that have grown out of that sense of cooperation – the WYLD network, its statewide automated catalog and databases – are an invaluable resource for the people we serve. They also reflect the level of leadership shown by librarians in this state. As libraries in other parts of the country join together in cooperative networks, they can look at Wyoming as an example of best practices.

The ultimate goal, however, is not a network, but the learning it makes possible. Libraries lead to learning, and Wyoming's libraries do a tremendous job of supporting their communities in this way.

We have focused this first issue on children and libraries, because early literacy is the basis for lifelong learning. When a child becomes a fluent reader, a whole new world opens. From our children's collections, to story times, to summer reading, libraries make the printed page exciting and fun for our children.

I hope you are as excited about the *Roundup*'s return as I am. Watch for future quarterly issues when we'll discuss business, technology, family history and other issues relevant to our libraries. And let us know how we're doing – we want this magazine to serve your needs.

Thank you for being part of our Wyoming library community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Boughton". The script is fluid and cursive.

Lesley Boughton,
Wyoming State Librarian

WLA President

Welcome to the return of The Roundup! One definition of roundup is “to gather in or to bring together.” The first gathering together of note is that the Wyoming Library Association and the Wyoming State Library are teaming up to bring about the return of this valued publication. We represent all of those who work or volunteer in our state to ensure information access occurs easily and freely to all citizens and strangers, young and old. Sounds like the hospitality code of the west, and this issue and future issues will flesh out just how completely that code is integral to the library and information services available in this, our Wonderful Wyoming.



This issue focuses on Wyoming's richest resource, our children. Invest in them and we invest in our future. Wyoming has often been called “the biggest little city” in the west; well, this village takes seriously its responsibility of raising its children. Librarians in public libraries and school settings understand how to bring the world to our children, nurture their creativity and light the spark of lifelong learning that can help them fulfill their dreams. All summer long you will see a “bringing together” as public libraries, supported and encouraged by their local school librarians, create exciting events to promote reading over the summer. Students who read over the summer months maintain the reading levels they attained through their hard work during the school year. (Education Digest 4/2003; Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk 4/2004)

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you your Wyoming Library Association. Currently we have 350 members working in school, academic, public and special libraries all over the state. They range from our esteemed State Librarian who has directed three county public library systems in Wyoming to a part-time employee from the Dubois Branch Library who is experiencing library work for the first time. Once a year librarians in like environments get together to learn, share and network regarding the issues unique to their service populations. For example, in late April the Children's/Young Adult librarians and School Library Media librarians met together in Dubois. They discussed this first year of having the same theme for all public summer reading events (Discover New Trails @ your library) and the concerns of school librarians and certification. Then, annually, we all meet in conference to attend a roundup of workshops, seminars and events intended to help us bring to our users the best service possible. The next conference will be October 13 – 16, 2004 in Rock Springs.

The last and greatest roundup I would like to mention is you joining with librarians as we identify issues, celebrate successes and come together in partnership. We have so much to offer each other. I hope you thoroughly enjoy this Roundup and look forward to our next “gathering together.”

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carey D. Hartmann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized 'C' at the beginning.

Laramie County Library System , Assistant County Librarian

The power
of story, the
importance
of history, an
interview with



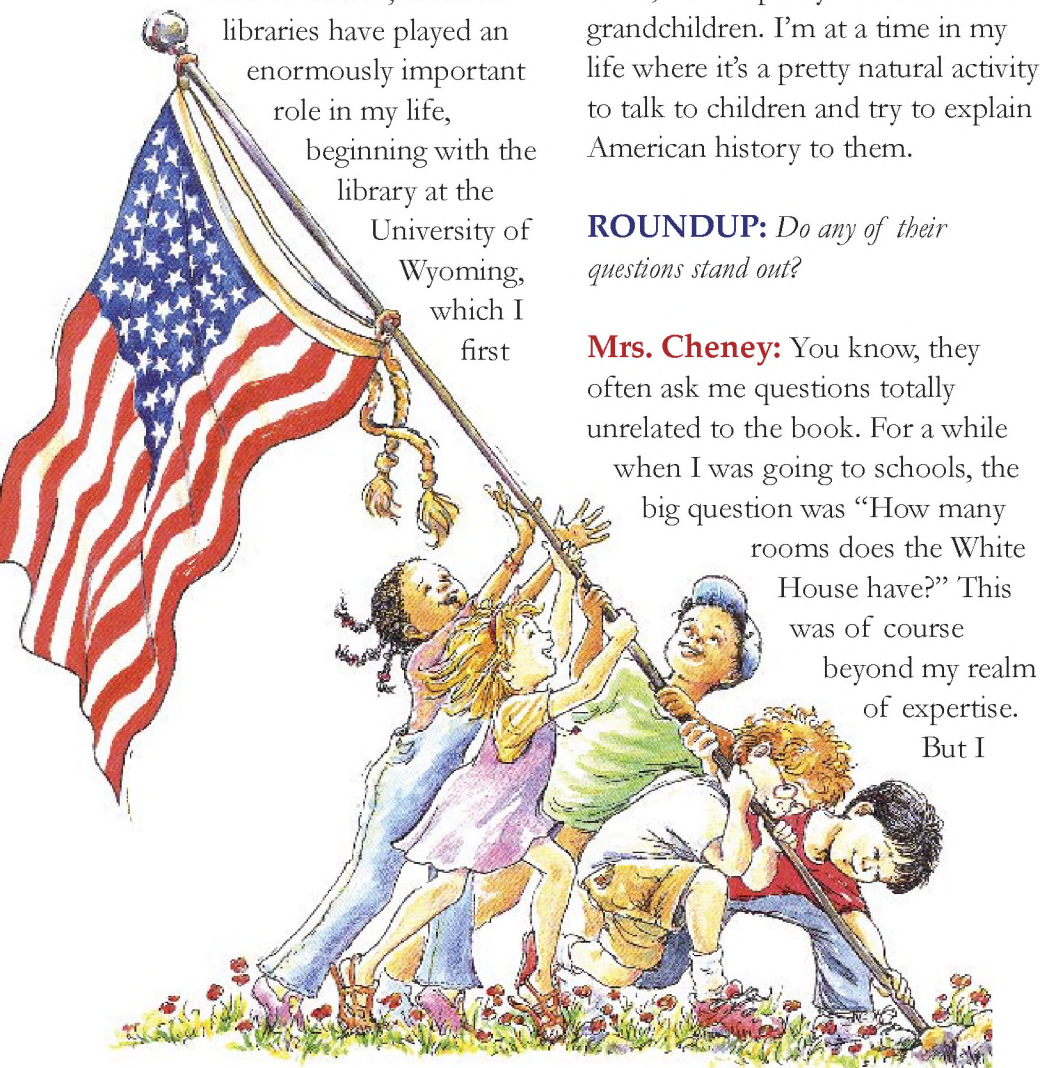
Lynne Cheney

Lynne Cheney, wife of Vice President Dick Cheney, is a Wyoming native and the author or co-author of seven books. A lifelong advocate of history, she believes we should know the stories of our past and transmit those stories to future generations. Her two most recent books are on American history for children: "America: A Patriotic Primer" and "A is for Abigail: An Almanac of Amazing American Women." Both were illustrated by Robin Preiss Glasser. Roundup writer, Susan Vittitow visited Mrs. Cheney at the Vice President's Residence in Washington D.C. to talk about her books.

ROUNDUP: *Before we talk about what you've written, I'd love to know a little bit about your experience with libraries. What role have libraries played in your life?*

Mrs. Cheney: I spent a lot of time at the library when I was growing up in Casper. At the time, the library in Casper was one that had been built using funds from Andrew Carnegie, a philanthropist who donated funds for libraries all across the country. The one in Casper was a very distinguished structure. I recall it was a striking brick building with a great, partial dome on top. I spent many hours there, and Dick did, too. It was a place you could browse and find what interested you.

And of course, research libraries have played an enormously important role in my life, beginning with the library at the University of Wyoming, which I first



encountered when I was teaching there. Next was the University of Wisconsin library, which I used when I was working on my Ph.D., and also the Library of Congress, which is a resource for me still. So, libraries still play a central part in my life.

ROUNDUP: *Tell us a little bit about your two children's books, "America" and "A is for Abigail."*

Mrs. Cheney: They were both enormously fun to write. I've had wonderful experiences as I've talked to kids all across the country and even around the world about the two books. They're a great device for talking about American history, and I've found them very gratifying to do, I think partly because I have grandchildren. I'm at a time in my life where it's a pretty natural activity to talk to children and try to explain American history to them.

ROUNDUP: *Do any of their questions stand out?*

Mrs. Cheney: You know, they often ask me questions totally unrelated to the book. For a while when I was going to schools, the big question was "How many rooms does the White House have?" This was of course beyond my realm of expertise. But I

learned that it has 137 rooms, so I can tell them that now.

ROUNDUP: *What inspired you to write these two books? I know you've mentioned your granddaughters as one source — you have three granddaughters, correct?*

Mrs. Cheney: That's correct, I have three granddaughters, and I'll have a grandson in July. The idea for *America* started on the campaign trail in 2000, when I suddenly had a unique opportunity to see every part of America. And it's a stunning experience to see what an amazing country this is, how diverse it is — not just in terms of its people, but in its landscapes as well. One day you'd be in a big city and go from there to the open spaces of Wyoming. I thought it was such an amazing country that I wanted to let my grandchildren know more about it. And so on the campaign trail I started jotting down on the edges of notes and newspapers what "A" could be for, and "B," and so on.

ROUNDUP: *How do your Wyoming roots come through in your writing?*

Mrs. Cheney: Well, I think my books pay a little extra attention to Western subjects. In *A is for Abigail* for example, the "C" page is for "Evelyn Cameron and women who went West." Evelyn Cameron was a Montanan who moved there from England in the late 19th century. She left an amazing photographic record of late 19th- and early 20th-century Montana, which is very reminiscent of what we know about life at that time in Wyoming. Elinore Pruitt Stewart, who wrote a book called *Letters of a Woman Homesteader*,

is also in *Abigail*. She lived near Green River in the early years of the twentieth century. And then there's Annie Oakley. I never saw the real Annie Oakley, but the Central

she walked barefoot, because she was saving her shoes for Sunday. But when Sunday came, her feet were so swollen she couldn't get her shoes on. I know this story because



Mrs. Cheney at the National Historical Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming. She made a donation from net proceeds of her children's books to this museum as well as many other non-profit organizations throughout Wyoming. White House photo by David Bohrer

Wyoming Fair and Rodeo used to have a pretty good fake Annie Oakley. Another woman of the West in *Abigail* is Angie Debo, who grew up in Oklahoma and became an early historian of American Indian life. So I suppose one way it comes through is in a little extra attention paid to western subjects such as these.

ROUNDUP: *There are several characters in these books that are also related to you. Can you tell us a little more about some of those?*

Mrs. Cheney: In *Abigail*, the "I" page is for "Laura Ingalls and other girls of America's past." On that page is Fannie Peck, who walked the Mormon Trail as a little girl. She was seven years old and mostly

Fannie Peck was my great-great-grandmother, and she recorded her experience in an oral history. On the "Z" page in *Abigail* is Marjorie Dickey, who was a softball star of the 1930s, when softball was played with a great deal of passion. Her team, the Syracuse Bluebirds, won the Nebraska state softball championship, which was quite remarkable since little towns tended not to win softball championships. Twice her team won the state championships, went to nationals, and nearly won nationals. So she was quite a celebrity in her hometown of Syracuse. She later married and had three children – and the oldest child is now the Vice President. Marjorie Dickey was his mother. So those are my characters in the book.

ROUNDUP: *I understand that not only have you been writing children's books about history, you've been encouraging other writers to do the same through the James Madison Book Award Fund. Tell us about this project.*

Mrs. Cheney: We've had one round of awards so far, and we'll host our second annual awards in July. The James Madison Book Award is presented to a book in American history for children and young people up to about age 14. Last year, the winner was a book called *First to Fly*, about Wilbur and Orville Wright. It was really a great book, and it was also a book that was very timely because last year was the 100th anniversary of their historic first flight. We had a terrific award ceremony at the Smithsonian, right under the Wright brothers' plane. That was fun.

One of the books we honored last year told the story about a man in the early 20th century who had a railroad spike go through his head. He lived, but the accident destroyed part of his brain, and much was learned about the mapping of the human brain as a result. The changes in his personality were very significant to scientists. There's some good writing about the sciences going on for young people, and that's a good thing, since the history of science is an important part of history.

We're just now beginning the selection process for this year's award, and I'm thoroughly enjoying sifting through the many nominated titles.



Mrs. Cheney with Susan Vittitow at the Vice President's residence in Washington, D.C. during this interview.

ROUNDUP: *You've made having and sharing knowledge of history a big part of your life. Why is this so important to you?*

Mrs. Cheney: I became convinced of its importance when I was at the National Endowment for the Humanities and it became clear to me how appalling our lack of historical knowledge was, and I think still is. I found many students weren't able to tell whether a sentence was from Karl Marx or the United States Constitution, or when the American Civil War occurred. It seemed to me that you couldn't understand our great good fortune in living in a free country and a democratic republic without understanding how we got here. It would seem to me, if I had no knowledge of history, that this was an inevitable way of life, something that we didn't need to worry about, to guard, preserve or even appreciate. But once you understand how perilous our journey has been, how challenging our beginnings

were, and what obstacles we've had to overcome to become a society based on equality, what perils there have been to us from outside our shores, then you begin to understand how amazingly fortunate we are -- and to see the importance of guarding what we have.

ROUNDUP: *How do you believe libraries can help bring history to life? What advice would you give to librarians, particularly those in rural areas?*

Mrs. Cheney: I know it's always a challenge to pick and choose what books are put on library shelves, and my advice would be to give good consideration to books on history, especially for children. One thing libraries do that bookstores don't do quite so well is indicate what history *is*. Many times, if you go to a bookstore to look for a book on history, it will be mixed in with all of the other nonfiction books. One thing libraries do very well, and I think it something that

certainly should be applauded and encouraged, is to give children an idea of what history is by grouping together books that are about the American story, or Wyoming and Western themes, or displaying books about the Civil War, or books that are about amazing women. Libraries do a very good job of making an educated presentation of the books they have, and that's something I'd encourage more of.

ROUNDUP: *Libraries are entering an era of digitization, where original documents, like diaries, etc. can be posted on the Web. How will this change our perception of our history?*

Mrs. Cheney: It's great. It makes research so much easier, and I think it encourages research because it's easier. One of the skills required by the Internet, though, is emphasizing to children that just because they see it printed somewhere doesn't mean it's true.

ROUNDUP: *Librarians are very concerned about that same issue.*

Mrs. Cheney: They're doing a real service in helping children understand the difference between good sources and ones that aren't so good. One of things I'm going to do in the back of the children's book I'm currently writing about George Washington is to ask the question, how is it we know what we know about the past? And I'll talk about the different sources that I used for the different pages in the book, pointing out, that one source was a letter written by someone right after the event, and that another is part of the lore that surrounds this event but is widely accepted by even

discerning historians. What's the difference between those two kinds of things? That's a great discussion for kids to have so they can learn to make judgments about the worth of what they see when they push buttons on their computer.

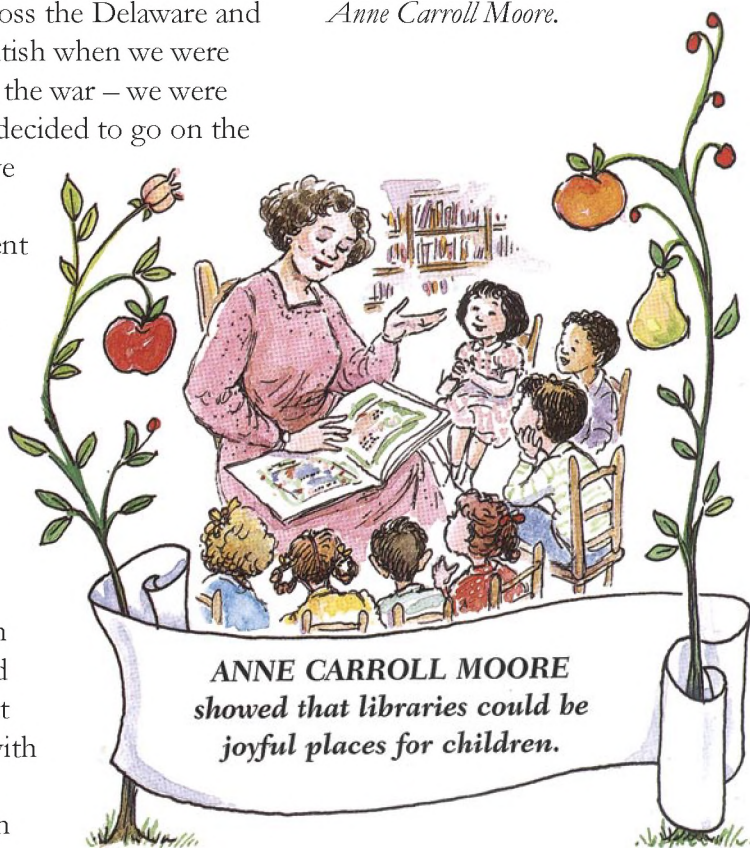
ROUNDUP: *In other interviews, you've mentioned your grandchildren as motivation for writing children's books. When you sit down and write, what is your hope for their future and what do you hope they will get out of it?*

Mrs. Cheney: First of all, I want to tell them a great story. Secondly, I do want them to know something about the greatness of this country, about heroes and heroines and about all those forks in the road where things might have gone otherwise. I've especially thought this as I've been writing this new book on George Washington. If Washington hadn't been bold in his thinking and decided to cross the Delaware and attack the British when we were clearly losing the war – we were *losing* and he decided to go on the offensive – we might not be an independent people. We might still be a colony of Britain. It's amazing to think about that, and I want my grandchildren to understand the effect that one person with courage and determination can have.

ROUNDUP: *You've already talked about your book on George Washington. When does it come out, and do you have any other new projects or children's books in the works?*

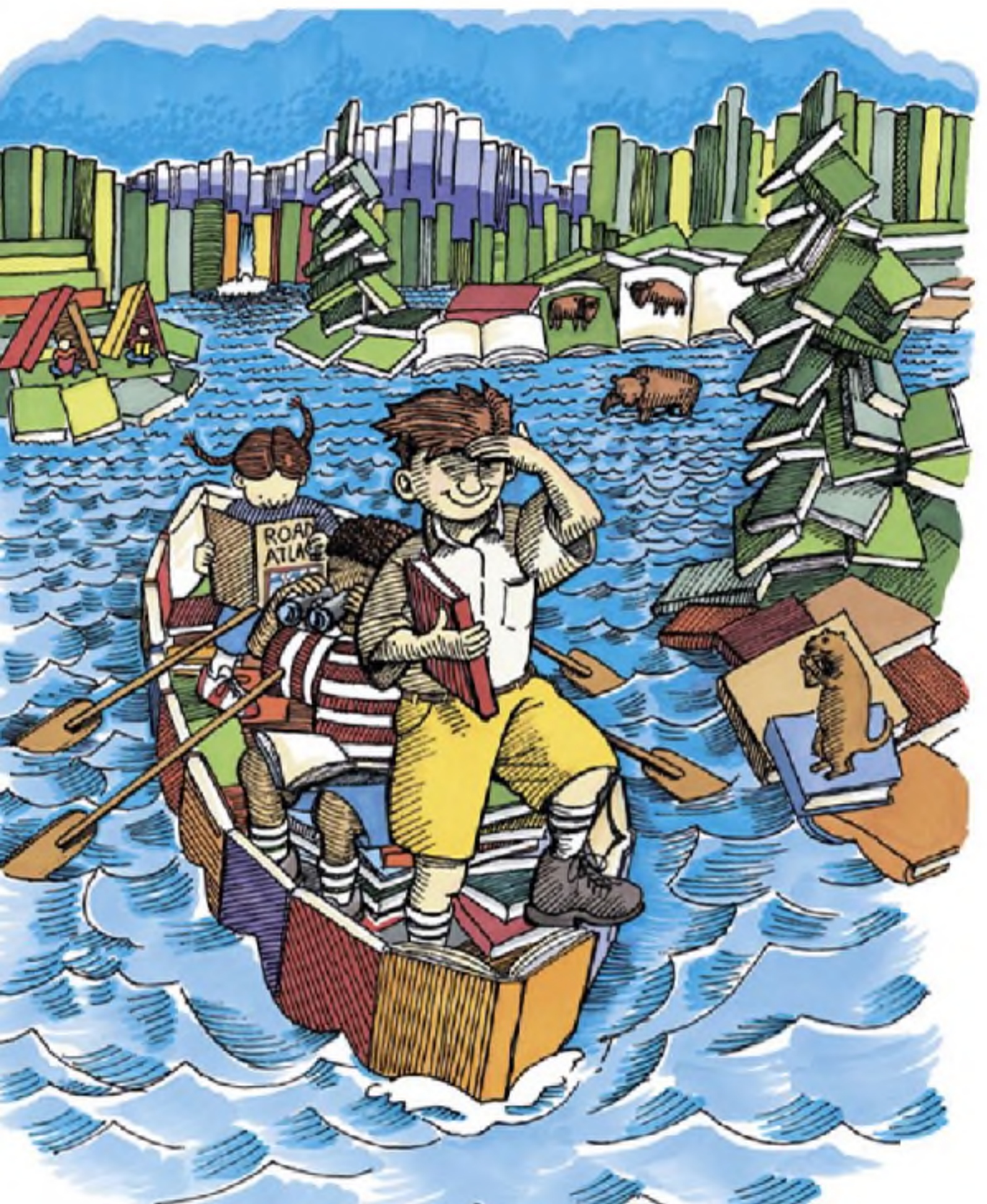
Mrs. Cheney: The book on George Washington will come out in time for Christmas. The book about Washington is a little different; it has a different illustrator. But I have another book with Robin Preiss Glasser, the illustrator of *America* and *Abigail*, that will be out in about a year, tentatively called *Fifty States*. It's a kind of atlas. *Abigail* was an almanac, *America* was a primer, and *Fifty States* will be kind of an atlas of every state: a historic atlas of what you should know about Wyoming and how it got to be what it is, and New York and Texas and California.

Below: One of the illustrations in "A is for Abigail." This one features librarian Anne Carroll Moore.



Proceeds from sales of "America" and "A is for Abigail" are donated to projects fostering appreciation of American history. Donations have been given to projects all across the country, including many projects in Wyoming:

- National Museum of Wildlife Art, Jackson Hole
- Plains Indian Museum at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody
- National Historical Trails Interpretive Center, Casper
- Salt Creek Museum, Midwest
- Casper College
- The Foundation for Laramie, Wyoming, "History House" celebrating women "firsts" in Wyoming.
- In addition, Mrs. Cheney makes her James Madison Book Awards through the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole.



Discover New Trails... READ!

Wyoming's Statewide Summer Reading Program

Summer reading is an annual rite. Somewhere among the dandelion and cottonwood fluff seasons, the school year ends and each public library puts out the welcome mat for hordes of young readers.

This year, kids all across the state are reading to the same Lewis and Clark-inspired theme, thanks to Wyoming's first participation in a statewide summer reading program. Families and children will "Discover New Trails... Read!" and teens will "Get Lost!"

"Discover New Trails" is produced by the Collaborative Summer Reading Program (CSLP), a 27-state consortium of librarians sharing ideas, expertise, and costs to produce a high-quality program for children. CSLP employs professional writers, artists and designers to create its summer reading program. Kyan Rios, Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library, and Deb Bruse, Campbell

County Library, were Wyoming's representatives to the most recent CSLP consortium planning meeting.

"You end up with a better program with less burden on staff," said Rios. "Planning for summer reading takes so much time. When it's right in front of you, it's so much easier."

Each of the 23 county libraries received manuals for children and young adult programming, a CD with professionally designed graphics and the opportunity to

purchase reasonably priced, theme-inspired brochures, certificates and prizes. Libraries were welcome to use as much – or as little – of the materials as desired.

"It's kind of nice, because you can take from the manuals what you want to do and go off in your

Opposite: Graphic from this year's summer reading program. Below and next page: Laramie County Library System Summer Reading participants enjoying a special event at the park.





representatives to CSLP, Rios and Bruse will take part in Summer Reading sharing at the upcoming Wyoming Library Association conference.

“Wyoming has built such a name for itself in the fact that it shares so much,” said Rios. “We really believe in using everyone’s information. Statewide summer reading ties into that. We can do so much more as a collaborative.”

Travel expenses for Wyoming’s representatives to participate in CSLP planning were funded by a Library Services and Technology (LSTA) grant. Program participation costs, including purchase of program manuals, were provided by the Wyoming State Library. For more information on the Collaborative Summer Reading Program, visit the Web site at <http://www.summerlibraryprogram.org>



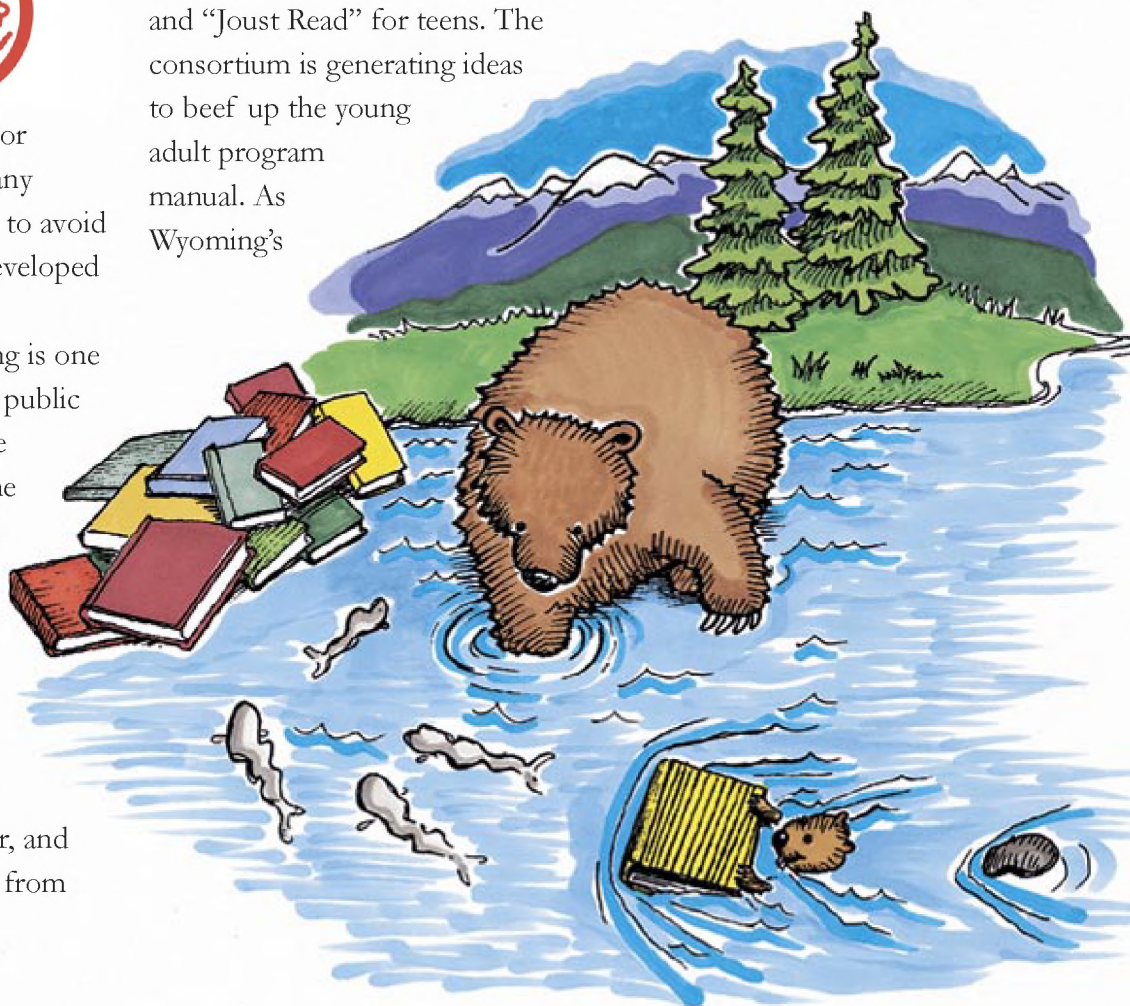
statewide publicity.”

Looking to the future, CSLP has already chosen the 2005 themes: “Dragons, Dreams and Daring Deeds” for the children’s program and “Joust Read” for teens. The consortium is generating ideas to beef up the young adult program manual. As Wyoming’s

own direction,” said Rios. For example, Sheridan and Albany counties adapted the theme to avoid repetition. Teton County developed its own program.

Rios said the general feeling is one of excitement. Most of the public library systems are using the program materials, and some have commented that it has been a great resource.

“Goshen County Library will be using the statewide summer reading program this year,” said Isabel Hoy, director. “That makes things so much easier, and I hope we see some benefit from



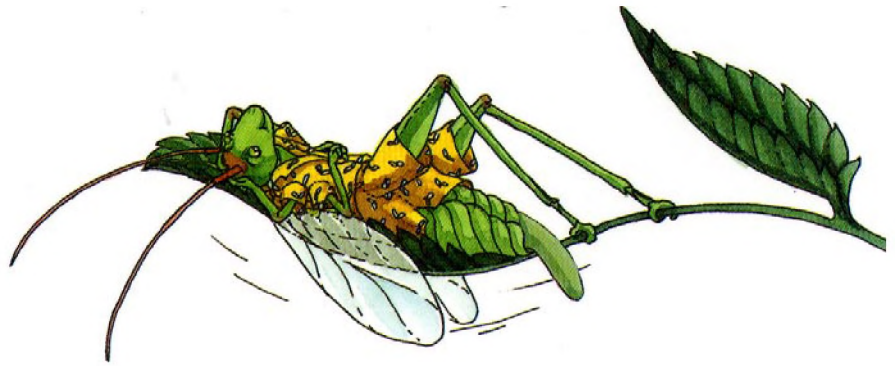
Snug as a bug with a book on a rug



Sylvia Long

Illustrator and author Sylvia Long published her first children's book in 1991 while living on the Wind River Indian Reservation. That book, "Ten Little Rabbits," was named Best Picture Book of the Year by the International Reading Association.

Since then, she has produced many delightful picture books including the latest published in 2004, "Snug as a Bug."



Award winning author and Illustrator, Sylvia Long, who has ties to Wyoming.

ROUNDUP: *Tell us how you began illustrating and writing children's picture books.*

Sylvia Long: I was working away at my "regular art," which I generally accomplished by creating a series on some particular theme or exploration. A friend, Virginia Grossman (the future author of "Ten Little Rabbits"), came to visit and thought the series I was working on would be an interesting vehicle for a children's book featuring a variety of Native

American cultures. I agreed to collaborate with her on the project, which ultimately was published by Chronicle Books in 1991.

When I was finished with the illustrations for that book, my editor called and asked "What would you like to do next?" Much as I enjoyed the experience, it honestly hadn't

occurred to me that I'd have another chance to illustrate a children's book!

That sent me flying to the local library in search of a story or poem in the public domain that I thought would make a neat children's book. "A Bunny Romance" by Oliver Herford listed in the index of a book of poetry caught my eye. It subsequently became my second book, re-titled "Most Timid in the Land." I gradually stopped doing my "regular art" in favor of my

new found passion for illustrating for children.

ROUNDUP: *You were living on the Wind River Indian Reservation when you published your acclaimed first book, "Ten Little Rabbits." How did your surroundings inform and influence your work?*

Sylvia Long: Having come from "back East," living on the reservation was an adventure. We immersed ourselves in the culture, attending the Sun Dance each year, a very private and sacred ceremony, and a lot of Pow Wows, which were just for fun. I was inspired by all the vivid colors in the landscape and in the ceremonial dance costumes of the Arapahoe and Shoshone people.

ROUNDUP: *Many children love and cherish the books you illustrate and write. What were the books you remember from your own childhood? Did you find any at the library?*

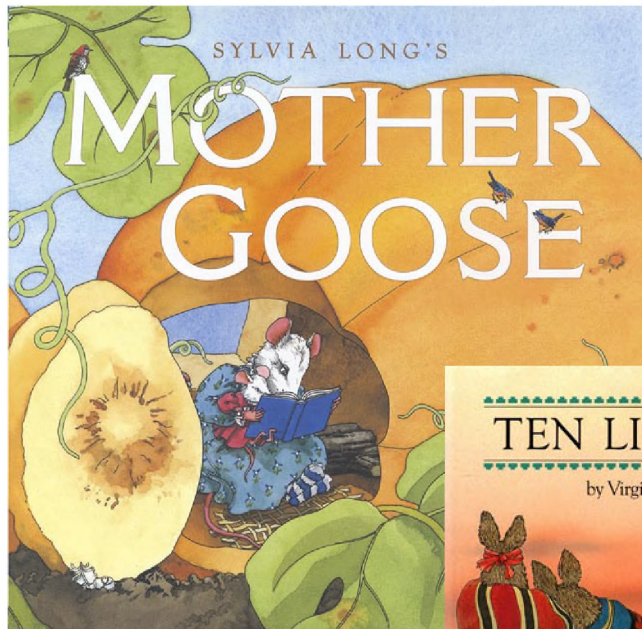
My mother read to us (FIVE of us!) regularly: "Winnie the Pooh," "House at Pooh Corner," "When We Were Very Young," "Wind in the Willows," "Pokey Little

Puppy” and “The Little Engine that Could” are all favorites that I remember fondly.

My dependence on the library didn’t really start until I was in junior high school. I use the libraries a lot now in doing research for my books.

ROUNDUP: *What things do you think about when trying to tell a story to a child through a picture book?*

Sylvia Long: Since I’ve only written one, “Hush Little Baby,” but illustrated 15, I usually am approaching the story visually. I try to enhance the written word with details that aren’t mentioned in the text, rather than just make a picture that duplicates the information provided. I like to include subtle little areas of interest that won’t be immediately seen with the first



reading, so the child will discover something new with subsequent readings.

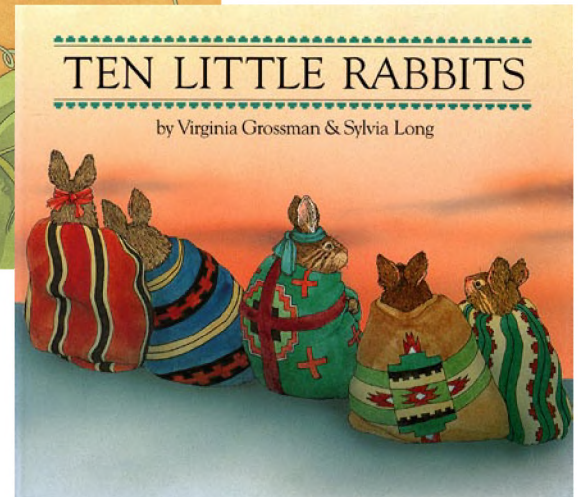
ROUNDUP: *How do you think libraries can influence young children?*

Sylvia Long: If children are exposed to libraries at an early age, they will become intrigued with the sheer volume of books available

to them on every imaginable topic. If they only read books that are purchased for them, they will be much more limited in the sorts of books they are exposed to and perhaps not develop that spark of curiosity

that will make learning by reading a lifelong experience.

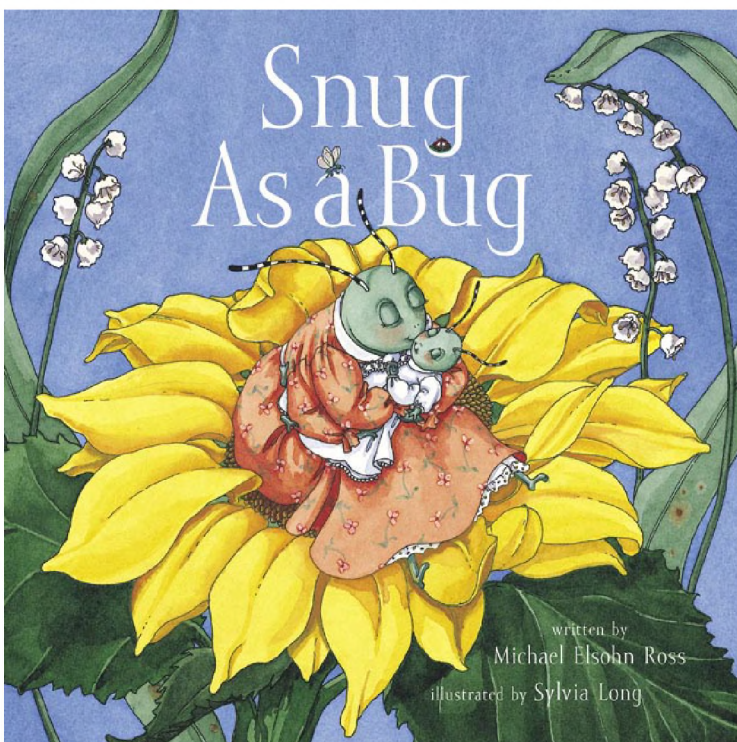
ROUNDUP: *What’s the most rewarding part of your career?*



Sylvia Long: The idea that on any given night a child somewhere might be choosing one of my books to bring to a parent and ask to be read to. The closeness of snuggling into mother’s or dad’s lap and helping to turn the pages, pointing out familiar things, asking questions about unfamiliar things. I remember it as a special bonding time, and feel extremely fortunate that I’m able to help create books that might be the catalyst for that experience.

ROUNDUP: *What’s next for you?*

Sylvia Long: I have several projects in the works that are at different stages of development. “Waddle, Waddle, Quack! Quack!,” by Barbara Skalak will be published next spring.





Story time

more than just a song and dance

Story times link children to the printed word at a young age with bright picture books, rhymes, songs, dance and puppetry. But don't let the fun fool you – there is serious learning going on here. That little girl singing “Head, shoulders, knees and toes!” is picking up skills that prepare her for reading.

What she is learning is emergent literacy or pre-literacy skills: the things children know about reading before they know how to read. Emergent literacy includes everything from telling stories to handling a book to knowing that letters mean something.

Public libraries are inextricably linked with story time, so it's not surprising the Public Library Association (PLA) has identified and targeted six emergent literacy skills that children learn before they start school:

1. **Narrative skills** – being able to describe things and events and tell stories
2. **Phonological awareness** – being able to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words
3. **Letter knowledge** – knowing letters are different, knowing their names and sounds and recognizing letters everywhere.
4. **Print motivation** – being interested in and enjoying books
5. **Vocabulary** – knowing the names of things
6. **Print awareness** – noticing print, knowing how to handle a book and knowing how to follow words on a page.

PLA offers checklists for libraries to use when planning story time activities, and a parent guide to encourage fun activities to support emergent literacy at home. The PLA's strategies to promote emergent literacy stem from brain research that shows the tremendous development that occurs from birth through age 5 or 6, and pinpoints what skills children are learning at that age.

Libraries typically offer story time programs for children from 18 months to 5 years old. These programs fill the gap from toddler to school when children are beginning to relate to the wider world.

In a typical story time, emergent literacy skills are taught through play,

“Children learn through play. The point is to create avid readers.”
-Amy Shelley

fun and excitement around books. Amy Shelley, Youth and Outreach Services Manager at Laramie County Library System explained that story time at her library usually includes:

- A familiar opening song or activity. Repetition and sense memory make

children comfortable and help them to anticipate what's going to happen.

- A theme that is familiar to children. Animals, colors, objects are basic building blocks for kindergarten-readiness.

- Movement, music, repetition and

Opposite: Weekly story time with a day care group. Debbie Schlenger, librarian at Teton County Library. Below: Frannie talks to girls during special story time at Laramie County Library System.



rhyme to help children learn. “Kids are so drawn to music that they tend to learn better,” Amy noted. “For example, how many of us learned to sing the alphabet instead of say it?”

Library staff may use finger plays (teaches fine motor skills), puppets, flannel boards and “realia” (three-dimensional props like a cookie sheet during “If You Give a Mouse a Cookie”) to tell stories and involve the children in the storytelling. The children are too busy playing to know they are learning.

“Children learn through play,” said Shelley. “The point is to create avid readers: to create language skills and understand writing structure.” She added, “Stories are what life is all about. Stories shape us and inform who we are. At the same time they’re learning and responding to the storytellers, these children are living their own stories.”

When library staff model behavior in story time that encourages

literacy, parents who attend learn to take these skills home. Parents are

**“Anything
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-Jerry Jones

introduced to the breadth of exciting library materials available. They learn songs, rhymes and finger plays they can use at home, which reinforces learning through repetition. And they learn that the library is a resource for them as another part of their children’s education.

“Anything libraries do reinforces what parents are doing as their children’s first teachers,” said Jerry Jones, Natrona County Public Library’s Youth Service Coordinator. Jones has researched emergent literacy recently as part of her work toward a graduate degree. “The main aspect is that parents and caregivers are the primary teachers. Libraries can support their roles.”

Library staff model for parents and caregivers, setting an example so that when they go home and read to their kids, they pick up on the kinds of books to read, such as concept books, books that rhyme, books that hit on those skills children need to know. Staff can reinforce what parents already do and make additional suggestions. Although not all can, some libraries are going beyond picture books and story times to create learning and activity centers, with toys, games and puzzles.

Jones’s observations of parents showed her the importance of library staff modeling literacy-supporting behaviors during story times. “When I did the observations here in the library, that was my biggest eye-opener,” she said. “I sat and really watched how parents interacted when they read to their children. For example, I didn’t see much ‘dialogic reading’ – talking back and forth about the story, which reinforces narrative skills. Maybe they do things differently at home, but it’s doubtful.”

She emphasized, “There’s nothing wrong with what the parents are doing. They’re doing good things, but they’re just not taking full advantage of how they read to their kids.” She



Children gather around Clifford the Big Red Dog during story time at Crook County Library in Sundance.

sees opportunities for parent training to encourage early literacy skills at home.

Best of all, encouraging literacy at home can be good, clean fun for parents and children alike. “The kids have no idea they’re being educated,” said Jones.

Play is a child’s job, how he

or she learns.

Simple things like repetition,

singing, rhyming and taking time to play support emergent literacy. Little changes, like talking back and forth about

a story instead of reading it “straight” or not worrying or correcting when a baby chews on a board

book build pre-reading skills.

“As librarians, we should be seen as experts in the community in emergent literacy,” said Jones. “Be able to answer parents when they wonder why you do what you do in story time.”



After reading “Kiss the Cow” at the Big Horn County Library, story time, these children had the opportunity to feed a calf. Librarian Sherry Willis is holding the bottle in the above photo.

Public library story times will be there to support parents as their children’s first teachers. Outreach and community partnerships can

peers. It creates a haven for parents at the library where their children will get engaged in stories and books.

Play is a child’s job, how he or she learns. Simple things like repetition, singing, rhyming and taking time to play support emergent literacy.

bring in at-risk children and enrich their early education. Story time is a great opportunity for libraries to reach parents of pre-schoolers, who can be very isolated, and get them out of the house and among their

Best of all, it’s fun. Story time creates an exciting environment that then builds literacy. And, Shelley said, “No matter what you go on in life to do, reading is essential to success.”

School Libraries...

the heartbeat of schools

Learning is increasingly measured and weighed in the K-12 world. Everything from WyCAS standardized testing to state educational standards puts the focus on improving student achievement.

One particular learning powerhouse can help schools meet those standards: the school library media center. A growing body of evidence shows that strong school library media programs improve student outcomes significantly.

"We're

finding 10% to 20% higher test scores where there are strong school libraries," said Keith Curry Lance, director of the Colorado-based Library Research Service. These studies were done across 15 states, grade level by grade level.

Lance has been studying school libraries and publishing his

classrooms and homes.

The most important piece of this puzzle is making the library media specialist an integral part of curriculum and instruction through collaboration. When teachers, administrators and library media specialists work together to build a learning environment, students benefit.

"Most everyone considers the library media center to be the 'heartbeat' of our school," said Jan Segerstrom, a library media specialist who is building a strong program at Jackson Hole High School.

"It wasn't that way two years ago when I began working in the JHHS library. The library was still in the Dark Ages!" Students now use the library extensively, coming in before, during and after school to access the book and periodical collection, 44 Internet-ready computers and a large list of licensed databases including the WYLD (Wyoming Libraries Database) resources.

Segerstrom's dream library hasn't happened overnight. It's taken her years to build the K-12 information literacy program in her district, which she started at the middle school. Along the way, she has had to take an active role in winning

research for the last decade.

Strong school libraries, he said, employ both professional and support staff.

They use technology to provide more sources of information that go beyond the school library walls and into



support, cooperation and funding from teachers, administrators and elected officials.

“Our school board and superintendent support the libraries in our district because they have witnessed first-hand the difference a quality library can make in student learning,” she said.

Improved subject mastery shows up on standardized tests. But strong school libraries can also offer instruction in “information literacy,” the skills needed to find, evaluate and use information efficiently, effectively and ethically.

For example, “bonsai kittens” is a parody web page, allegedly showing how to grow cats in various shapes by encasing them in glass jars. One Wyoming student at Pinedale High School thought it was real. It’s a humorous example – provided she doesn’t try the technique with her own cat – of how students need information literacy instruction.

With the proliferation of information sources, part of developing critical thinking skills is learning which sources can be trusted. The Internet is a fantastic resource, but all too often, students choose to “Google-it” and take whatever shows up on screen at face value. “Having a teacher-librarian available in the library to help with information access is invaluable these days,” said Segerstrom.

One trustworthy source available in every school library media center is the WYLD (Wyoming Libraries Database) system and its licensed databases. Through WYLD, students can search thousands of published, indexed articles in EBSCO, WilsonWeb, SIRS Knowledge Source and other reliable information repositories.

Jasper Warembourg is a language arts and drama teacher at Pinedale High School. He has been

conducting a study with fellow English instructor Myra Schouboe on the measurable impact of the WYLD licensed databases on student research. What he found was beyond his expectations.

“It’s staggering,” he said of results. “It’s night and day. The databases are an incredible gift of knowledge when you compare them with Internet searches.”

Warembourg conducted the study with fellow Pinedale English instructor Myra Schouboe and with assistance from Keith Curry Lance.

**“We’re finding
10% to 20%
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-Keith Curry Lance**

Students were split into groups doing research using print, Internet and database sources. Some received training and some did not.

Print users found some outdated sources and were limited in how many students could physically do research at once. Trained Internet searchers found 67 Web sites in 45 minutes that were verified as providing true and accurate information.

In contrast, students trained on the WYLD licensed databases had 6,787 valid, reliable sources of information in 45 minutes – with no

limit to the number of students who could use the resources. In addition, Warembourg said students stayed more focused on the task using the databases. Internet searchers became sidetracked.

“Information is power,” Warembourg said. “We’re just pretty amazed at the results.”

Technology, staffing, collaboration – no longer is the school library a quiet repository for books. It’s an active partner supporting subject mastery. It teaches information literacy – the ability to find, evaluate and use information efficiently and effectively whether it’s in a book or on a Web page.

There are a tremendous number of school libraries in the state. Wyoming’s online libraries directory lists 450 libraries of all types; 300 of those are located in schools. Each school library offers an opportunity to support student learning.

Lance said the biggest limiting factor as to how much school libraries can affect student learning is collaboration. Libraries succeed when seen as an integral part of learning, not as a supplemental program.

“If parents and community leaders understand the value of a good school library, they should communicate to school leaders that they expect a good library and they expect to see the school using it fully,” said Lance. “If schools don’t, they’re wasting a resource.”

Several full reports of the Library Research Service studies on the impact of school libraries by Keith Curry Lance are available at the Wyoming State Library or through WYLD at <http://wylld.state.wy.us/>

Book Reviews

Ed Kienzle, *Partners in the Wilderness: Travis's Choice*,
148 pages, JETBAK Publishing, March 2002

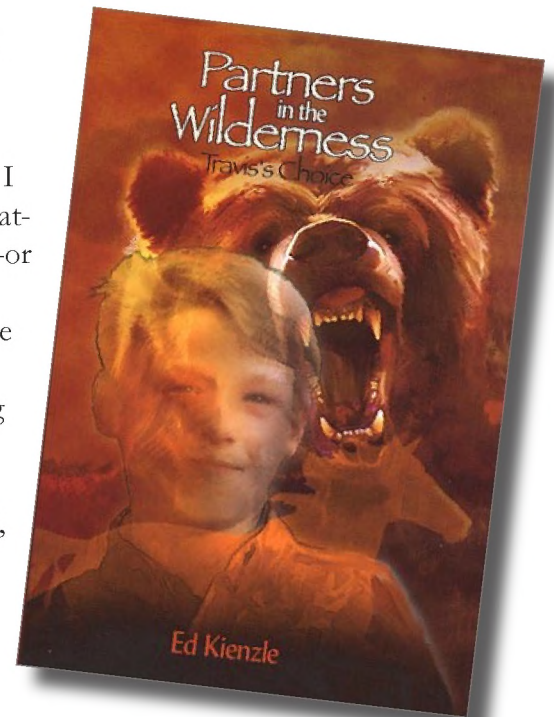
"For such a small boy, you have, in one day, turned into quite a young man. I know giving up those horns was hard to do, but you did right ... All that matters is that you know. You know what happened. You know what you had --or could've had. You have it in your heart now, Boy. You know why you were here and why your pa didn't shoot that bull the first day. You may not realize it now but in your heart, you know." This statement made to Travis by his legendary hero John Colter, summarizes the events of Travis Driscoll's long awaited first elk hunt.

Travis Driscoll has turned twelve and has dreamed of the day when his dad, Matt Driscoll, would ask him to go on his first elk hunt, a family tradition. Travis also daydreams about his hero John Colter, the mountain man who was the first to discover Yellowstone National Park.

Ed Kienzle uses the story to discuss how tense relationships between father and son can change in the out-of-doors. The story has a slow beginning because of the "journal" style writing used to describe Travis's preparation for his first elk hunt and the first few days of the hunt. As the father and son are setting up camp, Travis imagines an old fire pit was used by John Colter and discloses this to his father. His father enjoys teasing Travis about John Colter. This adds to the tension between the father and son.

The plot heightens as Matt Driscoll is mauled by a bear and Travis must overcome his fears to help his father survive and find a way out of the Wyoming mountains during a dreadful snow storm to save his father's life. As a non-hunter, I enjoyed the story including the moral lessons taught to Travis by his father about hunting and his views on experiencing and enjoying nature. Fourth, fifth, and sixth grade boys love this adventure story. They are impressed by the survival skills used by Travis as he becomes the story's hero.

Cheryl Confer,
White Mountain Elementary, Rock Springs



Barbara M. Lucas, *Snowed In*;
Illustrated by Catherine Stock
27 pages, Bradbury Press, 1993

Sparsely worded and evocatively painted in rich, dreamy watercolors, *Snowed In* by Barbara Lucas recalls a simpler time when winter meant staying put and spending your days with a good book. Grace and Luke are two young children who must say good-bye to friends and school in the late fall, when the onset of winter forces them to stay on the homestead. As they make their last trip through town, the refrain, "and plenty of them", is repeated for many things, including

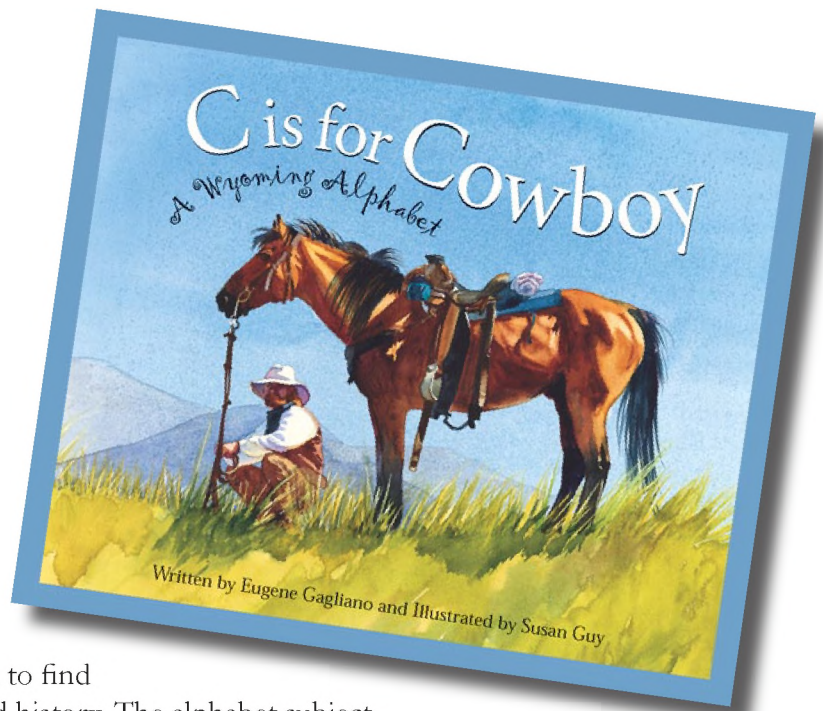
the supplies of pencils from the general store and books from the library, enough to last through the cold months ahead. Once the snow has arrived, we see the family at work in daily activities around the farm. Luke and Grace's parents are their teachers as well as their mentors in life. Each evening, the family reads together, sharing tales of far-away places and fantastic adventures. Stock's illustrations reflect many of these imagined scenes and readers are taken along into stories well loved by all. *Snowed In* is not only a picture book about the way things used to be, but also a sweet reminder of the joys of armchair travel and childhood fantasies based in books. Lucas offers a wonderful opportunity for sharing both the joys of reading and the simplicity of times past with a child.

Amy Shelley, Youth and Outreach Services Manager
Laramie County Library System

Eugene Gagliano, *C is for Cowboy*;
illustrated by Susan Guy,
40 pages, Sleeping Bear Press,
July 2003

Auggh! Not another alphabet book!
But wait, this one is worth a look,
By golly, this is a great Wyoming book!

C is for Cowboy: A Wyoming Alphabet, written by Eugene Gagliano and illustrated by Susan Guy is a great read through our state. Mr. Gagliano has paired poetry with informational sidebars that pique your curiosity. Once kids have enjoyed this book, they will start doing research on their own to find out more about Wyoming and its interesting sites and history. The alphabet subject choices are not run of the mill. "A" is for Altitude, "M" is for Medicine Wheel, and "V" is for the Vore Buffalo Jump. Way more interesting than "A" is for apple.



Not only does this book get you excited by the flow of text, the artwork is a visual feast. This is a great pairing of words and art that add interest to the topic. An added bonus is that the author lives in Buffalo, Wyoming. His love of this state comes through in his alphabet choices, poetry and prose. I wonder how long it took him to limit himself to 26 subjects. Maybe there is a sequel in the works?

As with other titles in Sleeping Bear Press alphabet series, this is a great addition to any library collection, public or school. What I like most about the series is that they do not limit themselves to one book per letter. These books give kids and adults a real taste for the wonders of our fifty states.

Michelle Havenga, Children's Librarian
Fulmer Library, Sheridan County Public Library System

Wyoming Library Association Featured Recipe

Yummy Poppycock

Marylou Bowles-Banks, District Librarian,
Dubois School Libraries

In a medium sized sauce pan,
over LOW heat, melt the following:

1 pound of butter (no substitute)
 $2\frac{2}{3}$ cup white sugar
1 cup light corn syrup

Slowly blend everything together until the
butter is melted and the sugar is thoroughly
dissolved.

Stir occasionally with a wooden spoon.

In the mean time, pop $1\frac{1}{3}$ cups of popcorn.
(I use four packages of extra-butter
microwave popcorn.) Put the popped corn
into a very large bowl. Try to pick out the
unpopped kernels – it can save a tooth!



Taryn Lackey enjoying some "Yummy Poppycock."

When the syrup mixture is melted, turn the heat up to medium and slowly bring it
to a boil. Boil only until it holds together when a little syrup is dropped into cold
water. (If you boil it too long, it will get hard.) Remove from heat and add one can
of salted mixed nuts. If you don't like peanuts, use the deluxe mixed nuts.

Put some of the popped corn into a different bowl. Pour some of the hot mixture
over the corn, and stir till all the popcorn is coated. Turn it out onto a counter top.
Continue until all the popcorn is coated with the gooey nut mixture. With a pan-
cake spatula, turn the poppycock over a few times while it cools, to keep the mix-
ture evenly distributed.

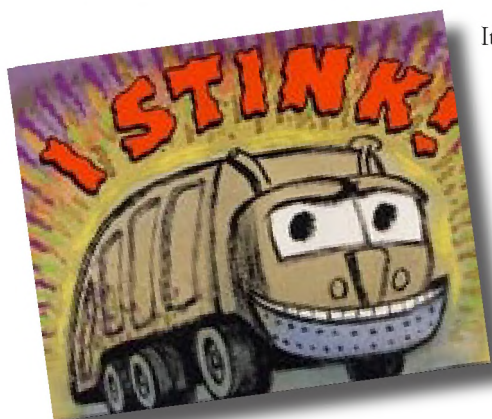
Cool and enjoy!

Store covered if there is any left!

WYOMING YOUTH BOOK AWARDS

Buckaroo Award Winners

Sponsored by the Wyoming Library Association and the Wyoming State Reading Council, the Buckaroo Book Award provides the opportunity for Wyoming children in grades Kindergarten through third to select favorite books they have read or have listened to and to honor the authors of these books.



Its purpose is to help Wyoming students in grades K-3:

Become acquainted with the best contemporary authors.

Become aware of the qualities that make a good book.

Accustom younger children to concepts of choice, critical reading, and voting procedures which will help them participate in choosing other book awards.

To honor an author whose books Wyoming students have enjoyed.

2004 Winner — *I Stink!* by Kate McMullan

1st Runner-Up: *Dear Mrs. LaRue: Letters from Obedience School* by Mark Teague

2nd Runner-Up: *Epossumondas* by Coleen Salley

Indian Paintbrush Award Winners

Sponsored by the Wyoming Library Association and the Wyoming State Reading Council, the Indian Paintbrush Book Award will provide the opportunity for Wyoming youth in grades 4-6 to select a favorite book and honor its author.

Its purpose is to help Wyoming students in grades 4-6:

Become acquainted with the best contemporary authors.

Become aware of the qualities that make a good book.

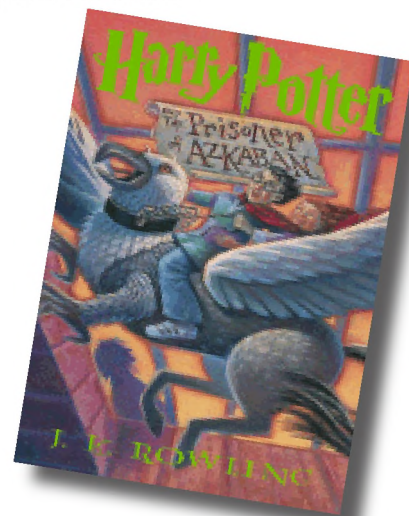
Set a goal to read at least three good books.

To honor an author whose books Wyoming students have enjoyed.

2004 Winner — *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* by J. K. Rowling

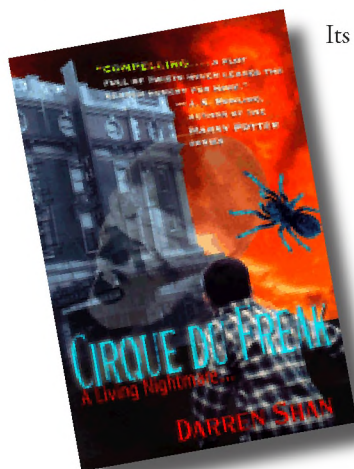
1st Runner Up: *Loser* by Jerry Spinelli

2nd Runner Up: *Thief Lord* by Cornelia Funke



Soaring Eagle Award Winners

Sponsored by the Wyoming Library Association and the Wyoming State Reading Council, the Soaring Eagle Book Award will provide the opportunity for Wyoming youth in grades 7-12 to select a favorite book and honor its author.



Its purpose is to help Wyoming students in grades 7-12:

Become acquainted with the best contemporary authors.

Become aware of the qualities that make a good book.

Choose the best rather than the mediocre.

Set a goal to read at least three good books.

To honor an author whose books Wyoming students have enjoyed.

2004 Winner — *Cirque Du Freak:*

A Living Nightmare by Darren Shan

1st Runner-Up: *Cut* by Patricia McCormick

2nd Runner-Up: *What My Mother Doesn't Know* by Sonya Sones

Letters About Literature guidelines to be available in August

Young readers are invited to enter the 2005 Letters About Literature contest by Dec. 4, 2004 to compete for state and national honors and cash prizes.

Letters About Literature invites each participating student in grades 4-12 to read a book, react to it and write back to the author who created it. The program has three competition levels: Level I, grades 4 - 6; Level II, grades 7 - 8; and Level III, grades 9 - 12. The contest promotes literacy by encouraging students to explore literature and relate it to their own lives.

Wyoming's winners for the 2004 contest were:

- Level I: 1st, Rebecca Thompson, Casper; 2nd, Megan Kolf, Douglas; 3rd, Sapphire Feltner, Cheyenne.
- Level II: 1st, Rebecca Thorsness, Laramie; 2nd, Sierra Bradley, Powell; 3rd, Kristin Althoff, Powell.
- Level III: 1st, Whitney Cheek, Diamondville; 2nd, Sarah Knutson, Cheyenne; 3rd, Zach Dixon, LaBarge.



Level I winner, Rebecca Thompson with *Little House on the Prairie*, the book she wrote about in the 2004 contest.

Research shows that children understand better when they respond to literature – and then, the writing reinforces their reading skills. This reading-writing link is at the heart of Letters About Literature. Teachers are encouraged to make the contest a class project; a teachers guide is available at <http://www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/letters-teacherguide.html>

The national contest is sponsored by the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress, with support from Target Stores. Wyoming's Center for the Book at the Wyoming State Library coordinates the contest at the state level. Guidelines should be available in August on the WSL web site at <http://will.state.wy.us>.

<http://will.state.wy.us/roundup>

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