



2010
Jefferson Cup

AWARD

U.S. HISTORY
HISTORICAL FICTION
BIOGRAPHY

*Presented by
Youth Services Forum
of the Virginia Library Association*

2010 JEFFERSON CUP AWARD

All the Broken Pieces

By Ann E. Burg · Scholastic Press · Grades 6-10

Writing in simple yet elegant free verse, Ann E. Burg brings readers into the world of Matt Pin. Airlifted out of Saigon during the Vietnam war at age 10, Matt has spent the last two years learning the ways of his adoptive American family. Now 12, Matt has gained enough confidence to try out for his school's baseball team and has bonded with his adoptive family, which includes his mother, father, and toddler brother. However, Matt cannot escape the residual guilt he feels over leaving his younger brother by birth behind in Vietnam, nor can he reconcile the claims that his birth mother loved him with the fact that she sent him away. Matt is convinced that he was sent away from his Vietnamese family as a punishment for a horrifying accident which maimed his little brother.

As he undertakes the daily activities of American boys, such as baseball games and homework, Matt remembers his life in Vietnam. His experiences of bombs, war, and loss compel Matt to gather together the broken pieces of baseballs and other detritus of his American life in case he loses everything again. On a deeper level, he gathers together the broken pieces of his Vietnamese life and uses them to become whole again and to help the Vietnam veterans he meets who have a hard time coping with their experiences in the war.

Ann E. Burg's first novel for young adults is a compelling work of historical fiction that examines the experiences of Vietnamese children brought to a new life in America, as well as the difficulties faced by Vietnam veterans after the war. Beautifully and powerfully told, Burg's novel brings to life the experiences of children who are often overlooked in remembrances of the Vietnam war. Burg has created an outstanding work that will stay with readers long after the last page has been read.

HONOR BOOKS

The Duel: The Parallel Lives of Alexander Hamilton & Aaron Burr

By Judith St. George · Viking · Grades 6-9

It is the true mark of a good writer when an author can take an event, such as the duel between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr, and unfold the story in a manner that makes the reader refuse to turn out the light and sleep until the last page is turned. Those who have taken

an American history course know that a duel happened between these two famous politicians, yet few know the interesting back story that makes *The Duel: The Parallel Lives of Alexander Hamilton & Aaron Burr* engrossing.

Hamilton and Burr leap off of the history pages and come to life in this book as characters worthy of modern fiction. When St. George reveals the parallel aspects of their lives with an added glimpse into their egos, the coincidences are sometimes so dramatic that one understands how real life can inspire fiction. Interestingly, knowing the outcome of the duel before reading the first page does not diminish the impact of the last few chapters as the duel is carried out and the significance of the results is felt throughout the country.

Much is revealed about these two men without the reader feeling weighted down by a textbook-like presentation of facts and dates. While the facts of the duel and the parallels in the lives of Hamilton and Burr are interesting, it is the ability of the author to bring these men of history alive that make it a fascinating read.

Hellie Jondoe

By Randall Pratt · Texas Tech University Press · Grades 7-12

Scrappy thirteen-year-old Helena Smith was orphaned at four and by six was a very good beggar. Now it is 1918, and she is a tomboy known as Hellie Jondoe, who is quickly learning how to be a successful pickpocket in bustling New York City. Life takes a dramatic turn when her beloved brother Harry is shot and Hellie, no longer under his protection, must leave the city. She soon finds herself traveling west on the Orphan Train with a large group of rag-tag children, all of whom are looking for a better life. It is not until the train's last stop in Oregon that Hellie, nearly blind Lizzie, and disabled baby Joey discover their fate. They have been indentured to the wealthy Scholastica Gorence who has decided that she could use some extra help on her large ranch. It will take all of Hellie's fortitude and problem solving skills to overcome this unfair situation and find a place she can call home.

Well-researched and full of authentic characters, this tale engages as well as educates the reader. From the exploitation of homeless children to the gut wrenching (and sometimes hilarious) adoption practices of these youngsters from the infamous Orphan Train, the author successfully weaves in interesting information about the Spanish influenza epidemic, World War I, and photojournalism. Full of unexpected twists and turns this page-turner will appeal to a wide range of readers.

Mission Control, This is Apollo: The Story of the First Voyages to the Moon

By Andrew Chaikin • Viking Children's Books, 2009 • Grades 4-6

With intricate illustrations and imaginative text, illustrator Alan Bean, member of the Apollo 12 crew, and author Andrew Chaikin introduce young readers to the historic, thrilling, tragic, and near-tragic Apollo missions 1-17. Based on exhaustive research, including many interviews with surviving members of the Apollo missions, Chaikin pays tribute to the courage and intellect of the Apollo astronauts and gives moving tributes to the lost astronauts of Apollo 1. From the tragedy of Apollo 1 to the last hurrah of Apollo 17, readers gain insight into the mission and, where applicable, the successes of each individual mission.

Readers are not only transported back to each unique Apollo mission, but they are also treated to sidebar information detailing facts that everyone, regardless of age, really wants to know about space flight: How do they eat? How do they handle bodily functions? Although this creates a massive amount of information on each page, the skillful graphic design displays a clean balance of text and graphics.

This coffee table-sized book is brimming with beautiful NASA photography and Bean's evocative illustrations, enriched with Bean's personal explanations of each illustration. The attention-grabbing text will lure space aficionados as well as casual readers. The back matter, which includes an extensive account of the author's research, source notes, index, and recommendations for further reading, is solid and satisfying. Out of the many young readers' books published to mark the anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing, this stands out for its brilliant partnership of language and art, while being a fascinating read for all ages.

Tricking the Tallyman

by Jacqueline Davies and S.D. Schindler • Knopf • Grades 1-4

It is October 1790 when Phineas Bump rides into Tunbridge, Vermont. Phineas is homesick and sore after three months of counting people. The townsfolk of Tunbridge are confused as to what the census means; they fear more people counted will mean more taxes, so all but one person hides, so the town will be undercounted. Then young Boston Pepper hears that the census count is for representation in the new government. This time the townspeople gather everyone, including cats, dogs, pigs and sheep (in children's clothing) and ask to be counted again. Finally, at the end the count is right.

Appropriate to the times, this lighthearted look at what the census means comes at the perfect time. Full of delightful, detailed illustrations, this book is an excellent resource for teaching younger children about the census as well as about concepts of representation and government.

SERIES WORTHY OF NOTE

Up Close

Published by Viking Juvenile · Young Adult

This series offers readers an "Up Close" look at individuals from the twentieth century. Each biography is written by an author with a passion for his or her subject. The personal introduction sets the stage for the life story within the covers. Written in an engaging style, these biographies are extremely well-researched and well-written. In addition to being informative, the biographies are also interesting and entertaining. Each book includes photographs, source notes, bibliography and index.

The entries for 2009 were Harper Lee by Kerry Madden, Theodore Roosevelt by Michael L. Cooper, and Babe Ruth by Wilborn Hampton.

THE JEFFERSON CUP AWARD honors a distinguished American biography, historical fiction or history book for young people. The Youth Services Forum of the Virginia Library Association has presented this award annually since the 1982 publishing year. Through the award, the Youth Services Forum seeks to promote reading about America's past, to encourage the quality writing of United States history, biography and historical fiction for young people, and to recognize authors in these disciplines.

For information about the award or to submit a nomination, please contact:

Helen Hinkle, 2011 Chair

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Eligibility

- The book must be an original work published in the year prior to the selection.
- The book must be about U.S. history, an American person, or fiction that highlights the United States' past, 1942 to the present.
- The author must reside in the United States.
- The book must be published for young people.
- The book must be accurate, informative, well researched, unbiased, literate, and give a clear and interesting picture of America's past.

Selection

The Jefferson Cup Committee selects the winning book. The committee has nine members: a chairperson selected by the previous year's committee, six individuals representing the six regions in the state, the outgoing chairperson of the Youth Services Forum (YSF), and the outgoing Jefferson Cup Award Committee chairperson.

2009 Jefferson Cup Award Committee

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