



2011
Jefferson Cup

AWARD

U.S. HISTORY
HISTORICAL FICTION
BIOGRAPHY

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

2011 JEFFERSON CUP AWARD

Sparky: The Life and Art of Charles Schulz

By Beverly Gherman. Chronicle Books, 2010. Grades 5 and up.

Writing in a style that is accessible yet fresh, Beverly Gherman paints a fun portrait of cartoonist Charles Schulz's life. Beginning with his birth on November 26, 1922, Gherman focuses on how Charles "Sparky" Schulz's love of drawing shaped his life, as well as how he used his own life experiences in order to shape his work throughout his lifetime. Like the shy Charlie Brown, he was not always successful in what he did, which could be compared to the fact that Charlie Brown never could kick that football. Schulz's love for a little red-haired girl went unrequited and his first marriage experienced troubles, showing that things did not always work out for the cartoonist. What Gherman's biography drives home is the point that, in spite of his flaws and setbacks, Schulz was tenacious, self-deprecating, and hard working, and these traits played a large part in his success.

Schulz's tenacity did payoff, as he became an extremely well-loved and successful cartoonist. His work is easily recognizable, and Gherman's biography touches on why the Peanuts became popular and the fact that Schulz kept the strip going up until the very end, the final strip being printed in newspapers just hours after his death in February of 2000. His characters have stayed relevant, years after Schulz's death, as we still wait in anticipation for the Great Pumpkin or to follow Snoopy on his many crazy adventures.

Beverly Gherman uses wonderful anecdotes from Schulz's life in order to make this biography fun and accessible. She does not shy away from less positive aspects of his life, but paints a very true portrait that will interest readers and inspire them to look at his cartoons in a different light. What Gherman manages to beautifully capture is the notion that, while Charles Schulz- like Charlie Brown- never got to kick that football or win the little red-haired girl's heart, he truly got to do so much more.

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.

HONOR

The Notorious Benedict Arnold: A True Story of Adventure, Heroism & Treachery

By Steve Sheinkin. Roaring Brook Press, 2010. Grades 7-12.

Ask someone who Benedict Arnold was and they will tell you he was a traitor. He was probably America's first and most notorious traitor. However, before he became a traitor he was one of our country's greatest war heroes.

Steve Sheinkin brings Benedict Arnold to life in a way that keeps readers wondering what will happen next. General George Washington said of Arnold, "The merit of this gentleman is certainly great. I heartily wish that fortune may distinguish him as one of her favorites." Arnold believed that the American Revolution was the way for him to earn wealth, honor and respect. His strong military record is described with graphic immediacy by Sheinkin. In fact, if Arnold had been killed in the Battle of Saratoga, he would have died as one of America's greatest heroes. So what turned a great hero into a traitor?

The sixth Benedict Arnold was born on January 14, 1741. He was actually the second child born to his parents that was given the name. His brother only lived for ten months. His parents feared for the life of this new baby. But he surprised everyone by living. As a child Benedict was a daredevil. Locals described him as lean and strong and always dressed in fine clothes. When he was eleven, Benedict's parents sent him to a boarding school, which was the beginning of his troubles. Yellow fever took the lives of his sisters. An economic slowdown threatened his father's business. When his father passed away, Benedict Arnold, smart, a quick learner and with a hard worker's determination to succeed, was left with nothing but debts and a fouled family name. And it would seem that he was unlucky in love as well. A longing for action, a bold recklessness and a craving for attention gave Benedict enough fuel to power a dazzling rise to power and a spectacular crash.

Ruth and the Green Book

By Calvin Alexander Ramsey. Carolrhoda Books, 2010. Ages 4–8.

Ruth and her family set out from Chicago in their new 1952 Buick to visit Ruth's grandmother in Alabama. Travel for an African American family in Jim Crow era America is not easy. Restrooms at service stations are for "whites only" and the family isn't welcome when they stop at a hotel for the night forcing them to spend the night in their car. As they continue to encounter discrimination on their trip Ruth begins to be homesick for her Chicago neighborhood. When they spend the night with an old family friend in Tennessee they're advised to look out for Esso stations, which will serve them, but to be careful as things might get worse on the road as they go further south.

The next day as they near the Georgia border, Ruth spots an Esso station. It is here that they learn about *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, a guidebook to help African Americans who are traveling. Ruth is fascinated by the book and proud that she is put in charge of it. The *Green Book* helps them find a place to sleep for the night and when their car breaks down, Ruth and her mother use it to find a nearby garage. The breakdown adds another day to their trip but they are able to find a place to stay, again with the help of the *Green Book*. Ruth, now a seasoned traveler, helps out a scared little boy who is also staying at the inn by giving him her teddy bear. Before falling asleep that night Ruth reflects on the difficulties but also the good things they've encountered on their trip.

The author takes something as simple and familiar to us as a family road trip and uses it to as a vivid illustration of how hard life could be for African Americans during the Jim Crow era. Although the journey is difficult, the family also encounters friendly faces and Ruth finds that she can help out other travelers. The illustrations evoke old photographs and help move the story along. A wonderfully written vignette of African American life during a difficult time; this story will draw young readers in and through Ruth they will get a real sense for this period in our nation's history.

SERIES WORTHY OF NOTE

Sterling Biographies

Published by Sterling ~ Young Adult

This attractive and approachable biographical series by Sterling examines the lives of historical figures in the context of their times. Combining fast action with anecdotes and analysis, the authors have created books which make for fascinating leisure reading as well as being useful for report writing. The research is thorough and documented and the writing is concise, clear and engaging. Thoughtful illustrations such as black and white photographs from the period enhance the text to provide a more complete picture of the individuals. Each book includes color and black and white photographs, drawings, paintings, a glossary, source notes, a bibliography and an index.

The entries for 2010 were **Chief Joseph** by Lorraine Jean Hopping and **Sacagawea** by Emma Carlson Berne.

Six Questions of American History

Published by Lerner Publishing ~ Ages 9–12

This colorful series not only presents nonfiction material in a visually appealing manner, but also contains features that will help readers improve their nonfiction reading skills. The colorful layout that contains maps, photographs, drawings and reprints of important documents will attract readers, but it is the six questions that are asked throughout the book that will keep their interest. The series features six questions that are answered throughout each book. To keep the reader turning pages, there is a question presented at the end of a chapter that is answered in the following chapter. In addition, challenging vocabulary is defined and additional information is presented in side notes. This series also contains timelines, source notes, bibliographies, excellent suggestions for further reading, and excellent links to resources.

The entries for 2011 were **How Did Slaves Find a route to Freedom?: And Other Questions about the Underground Railroad** by Laura Hamilton Waxman and **Why did English Settlers Come to Virginia?: And Other Questions about the Jamestown Settlement** by Candice Ransom

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

Elizabeth Swistock, 2012 Chair

2442 Abington Drive
Charlottesville, VA 22911
434-293-3464
Swistock.elizabeth@gmail.com

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.

2011 Jefferson Cup Award Committee

Helen H. Hinkle, Chair

Sue Trask, Outgoing Chair

Terri Slusser, VLA Region I

Joann Verostko, VLA Region II

Martha J. C. Cole, VLA Region III

Andrea Clarke, VLA Region IV

Connie J. Moore, VLA Region V

Elizabeth Swistock, VLA Region VI

Sasha R. Matthews, YSF Chair