

Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction in Children's Literature

Charge: To select the recipient of the annual [Orbis Pictus Award](#) for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children and up to five honor books; to propose a session on nonfiction books for children and plan a session featuring the award winning author at NCTE's [Annual Convention](#); and to promote the use of nonfiction children's books in the classroom.

[Read more](#) about the Orbis Pictus Award selection process and view the current list of award-winning books.

As committee chairs, we are grateful for the support provided by the NCTE staff members, Debbie Zagorski and Linda Walters, who continue to supply encouragement, information, and patience.

What major actions or projects have been completed by your group pursuant to your charge since July 1, 2010?

Since July 2010 the committee has announced the winner, honor, and recommended books of the 2010 collection of books in the article of reviews for *Language Arts* and at the national conference in 2010, during which the committee acknowledged a number of authors and illustrators at the children's literature luncheon. Hester Bass, E.B. Lewis, Alice B. McGinty, Pamela S. Turner, and Pegi Deitz Shea were honored. Later the authors participated in a round table author discussion about writing and illustrating books for young readers. The committee's selection of the 2010 collection was intensive and challenging because of the number of excellent and varied books published for young readers. Features and content are diverse and sometimes controversial; new forms such as the memoir and first-person biography, as well as superb photographs and design continue to renew, expand and invigorate the genre. The concerns about sources and documentation in books for the youngest readers continues to be part of committee discussions

The books presented at the 2010 conference, whose authors were honored, are as follows:

Winner of the 2010 Orbis Pictus Award

**The Secret World of Walter Anderson* by Hester Bass, illustrated by E.B. Lewis (Candlewick Press)

Honor Books for 2010

**Almost Astronauts: 13 Women Who Dared to Dream* by Tanya Lee Stone (Candlewick Press)

**Darwin: With Glimpses into His Private Journal and Letters* by Alice B. McGinty (Houghton Mifflin Books for Children)

**The Frog Scientist* by Pamela S. Turner (Houghton Mifflin Books for Children)

**How Many Baby Pandas?* by Sandra Markle (Walker Books for Young Readers)

**Noah Webster: Weaver of Words* by Pegi Deitz Shea (Calkins Creek Books)

Recommended Books for 2010

**The Boy Who Invented TV: The Story of Philo Farnsworth* by Kathleen Krull (Knopf Books for Young Readers)

**Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice* by Phillip Hoose (Farrar Straus and Giroux);

**Eleanor, Quiet No More* by Doreen Rappaport (Hyperion Books for Children)

**The Grand Mosque of Paris: A Story of How Muslims Rescued Jews during the Holocaust* by Karen Gray Ruelle and Deborah Durland DeSaix (Holiday House)

**Life in the Boreal Forest* by Brenda Z. Guiberson (Henry Holt and Company)

**One Giant Leap* by Robert Burleigh (Philomel Books)

**Truce* by Jim Murphy (Scholastic)

**Written in Bone: Buried Lives of Jamestown and Colonial Maryland* by Sally M. Walker (Carolrhoda Books)

At the November, 2010, conference, during the committee meeting, members discussed the nonfiction book titles that had been reviewed to this point.

The 2011 committee selected the winning, honor, and recommended books and submitted a review article to *Language Arts*. The completion of voting for the 2011 award occurred at the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011. The 2011 collection will be presented at the November conference in Chicago. The following books have been selected for the 2011 collection:

Winner of the 2011 Orbis Pictus Award

**Ballet for Martha: Making Appalachian Spring* by Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan, illustrated by Brian Floca (Roaring Brook Press)

Honor Books for 2011

- *Birmingham Sunday* by Larry Dane Brimner (Calkins Creek)
- *Candy Bomber: The Story of Berlin Airlift's Chocolate Pilot* by Michael O. Tunnell (Charlesbridge)
- *If Stones Could Speak: Unlocking the Secrets of Stonehenge* by Mark Aronson (National Geographic)
- *Journey into the Deep: Discovering New Ocean Creatures* by Rebecca L. Johnson (Millbrook Press)
- *Mammoths and Mastodons: Titans of the Ice Age* by Cheryl Bardoe (Abrams Books for Young Readers)

Recommended Books for 2011

- *Black Elk's Vision: A Lakota Story* by S. D. Nelson (Abrams Books for Young Readers)
- *Dave the Potter: Artist, Poet, Slave* by Laban Carrick Hill, illustrated by Bryan Collier (Little, Brown & Company)
- *The Extraordinary Mark Twain (According to Suzy)* by Barbara Kerley, illustrated by Edwin Fotheringham (Scholastic Press)
- *For Good Measure* by Ken Robbins (Roaring Brook Press)
- *Henry Aaron's Dream* by Matt Tavares (Candlewick Press)
- *Kakapo Rescue: Saving the World's Strangest Parrot* by Sy Montgomery, photographs by Nic Bishop (Houghton Mifflin)
- *Polar Bears* by Mark Newman (Henry Holt and Company)
- *They Called Themselves the KKK: The Birth of an American Terrorist Group* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti (Houghton Mifflin)

What projects, initiatives, or studies are "in progress" at this time?

The period since June 2011 saw the annual change in the committee. Two members, Diana Porter and Jeffrey Kaplan rotated off of the committee; they are no longer involved in book selection, but they will be part of the presentation of the 2011 books at the annual convention. Two new members joined the committee, Dr. Sue Parsons and Dr. Cyndi Giorgis. Continuing members of the committee are Barbara Chatton, Jan Kristo, Lisa Morris-Wilkey, and Deborah Thompson along with Fran Wilson, committee chair. The members are reviewing books published in 2011 in consideration for the 2012 award selection. The members of the committee reflect a range of professional experience, regional representation, diversity, and expertise with children's nonfiction literature. The committee will host several authors and an illustrator during the author presentation at the fall convention in Chicago. Following the NCTE convention, Kim Ford will officially complete her term as chair of the Orbis Pictus committee. The existing Orbis Pictus committee will select the 2012 winning, honor, and recommended books in January, submit a review article to *Language Arts*, and present the 2012 collection at the NCTE convention in Las Vegas. In January, the committee will also begin to read and evaluate submissions for the 2013 award.

As part of our charge to promote the use of nonfiction children's books in the classroom, committee members have taken it upon themselves to publicize the Orbis Pictus Award through presentations at local, state, and national conferences throughout the year. Presentations have been made at regional IRA conferences, meetings of NCTE state affiliates, librarians' conferences, and local district meetings. These presentations have been well received, and plans are underway to continue this effort during 2011-2012.

While presenting at conferences, members of the committee have discovered that teachers and librarians are eager for professional development that recommends quality nonfiction titles as well as instructional ideas for

their use in the classroom. The integration of nonfiction into literacy programs at any grade level continues to be a challenge and an issue, especially with the adoption of the Common Core language arts standards by the majority of the states. The Orbis Pictus Award Committee can support teachers by providing guidelines for the selection of quality nonfiction books as well as by suggesting ideas for the use of these books in the classroom.

Kim Ford, Outgoing Chair

Fran Wilson, Chair