2015 Charlotte Huck Award for Outstanding Fiction for Children

Barbara Kiefer, Denise Dávila, Detra Price-Dennis, Nancy Roser, Franki Sibberson, Fran Wilson, and Angie Zapata

Charlotte S. Huck was a former elementary school teacher who joined the faculty of Education at The Ohio State University in 1955. She established the first course in children’s literature at the university and went on to establish masters and doctoral programs in children’s literature with a wide range of special topics. Many of her students become leaders in the field. In 1961, she published the first edition of *Children’s Literature in Education* with her colleague Doris Kuhn. The book is now in its 10th edition.

Over the course of her career, Huck received numerous awards and honors, including membership in the Reading Hall of Fame. She served as President of NCTE and developed an annual conference in children’s literature at Ohio State. Charlotte believed that good literature should be at the heart and center of elementary school curriculum. She was convinced that if children found joy in books, they would want to learn to read and then read avidly. One of her goals was that children become lifelong readers. The Charlotte Huck Award for Outstanding Fiction for Children was established to honor her contribution to children and teachers and to further the belief that literature has the potential to transform children’s lives.

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**Charlotte Huck Award for Outstanding Fiction for Children Committee**

**The Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children’s Literature Committee**

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**2015 Charlotte Huck Award for Outstanding Fiction for Children**

**Winner**

Rain Reign
Written by Ann M. Martin

Eleven-year-old Rose Howard likes three things:

1. Words (especially homonyms)
2. Rules
3. Numbers (especially prime numbers)

Rose’s obsession with patterns and rules is symptomatic of her diagnosis of high-functioning autism spectrum and causes no end of frustration for her classmates, her teachers, and especially her father, a part-time mechanic and longtime barfly. Her mother has run away, and the only adult who seems to accept Rose as herself is her Uncle Weldon, her father’s younger brother. When her father brings home a wet and collarless dog he found behind the local bar, Rose falls in love. She names the dog Rain (homonyms: reign and rein). Rain provides the unquestioning love and comfort that Rose has been missing.

Much of the story centers on Rose’s relationship with her father, a well-meaning but damaged adult who spent much of his childhood in foster homes. When her father lets Rain out in a
bad storm that floods the town, the dog runs away and Rose is devastated. Uncle Weldon helps her place missing dog ads and visit shelters. Rose’s distress brings her relationship with her father to a breaking point. After he loses his job, he comes close to hitting Rose and sees his own abusive father in his reactions. Both he and Rose have to face up to difficult truths. Her father’s decision is to leave Rose in Uncle Weldon’s care. Rose’s decision to let Rain go is far more difficult, but she shows a mature and empathetic understanding of human nature as the book comes to a sad but uplifting close. (BK)

Honor Books

**Absolutely Almost**
*Written by Lisa Graff*  

Albie has always been an almost. He’s never been the best at sports, art, or music. He has difficulty calculating tips for the delivery of the Chinese food. He struggles with reading and writing. In fact, he is kicked out of his school for his poor grades and is separated from his best friend. Besides adjusting to a new school, where he is teased, Albie’s mom hires a new nanny, Calista, to care for him. Albie’s parents and grandfather struggle to accept Albie as a less than average student. When it is suggested that Albie be assessed for dyslexia, Albie and his mom both hope that’s the diagnosis. Each day his mom tells him he is caring, thoughtful, and good, but Calista is the one who understands Albie and encourages him to pursue something he loves and to keep practicing. The text is written in a series of short chapters from Albie’s point of view. Young readers, as well as parents and teachers, will appreciate the insight Albie provides about a child who struggles to be someone, not just an “almost.” This book is rich in themes that will prompt lots of discussion. (FW)

**The Crossover**
*Written by Kwame Alexander*  

“Basketball Rule #1: In this game of life/your family is the court/and the ball is your heart” (p. 20). Basketball stars and twins Josh and JB reconcile Rule #1 in Kwame Alexander’s tremendous debut novel in verse. After a tumultuous year, the Bell twins come into their own, both on the court and in their family. A former professional basketball player father, an assistant principal mother, and a strong family message of athleticism and education guide the boys’ lives. Family and basketball are the beating pulse of Alexander’s verses that reflect the quick cadence of the game (“My shot is F L O W I N G, Flying, fLuTtErInG/. . . ringaling and SWINGALING/Swish. Game/over” [p. 222]) and the heavier rhythms of sibling rivalry (“I’m banished to the back/seat with JB,/who only stops/playing with my locks/when I slap him/ across his bald head/with my jockstrap” [p. 13]). An accomplished author and poet, Alexander remixes diverse text forms, including free verse, concrete poetry, and other prose, to depict a story of compassion without skirting relevant issues of race, and he does so in a way that keeps family and basketball in clear focus. (AZ)

**El Deafo**
*Written and illustrated by Cece Bell*  

Cece, the extraordinary protagonist of this graphic memoir, demonstrates that being different can be like having a super power.
Equipped with the Phonic Ear, a bulky, box-like hearing aid that she must strap over her heart beneath her clothing, Cece re-enters the world of public school after the case of meningitis that caused her to become deaf at age four. She discovers that when her teacher forgets to turn off the remote microphone that amplifies sound to the Phonic Ear, she can hear everything the teacher says and does outside of the classroom, even in the bathroom! By finding her inner superhero, Cece (a.k.a. “El Deafo”) learns to mediate the unique challenges and experiences of loneliness that she faces as the only hearing-impaired child in her entire elementary school. Readers are sure to empathize with Cece, who is depicted as an approachable and likable bunny, as her superpower not only leads to humorous adventures, but also illuminates her incredible perseverance in finding true friends. Bell includes a thoughtful and comprehensive author’s note about deafness and her own childhood journey with hearing loss. With illustrations that capitalize on the graphic-novel format, this is a must-have book for any classroom! (DD)

**The Farmer and the Clown**

Written and illustrated by Marla Frazee


This book is a prime example of the power of visual art to convey meaning and engage the reader emotionally. As the story begins, a farmer is seen at the lower right of the first page, bent in an arthritic stance, attacking a pile of hay with a pitchfork. The sepia-colored, empty landscape suggests the emptiness of the farmer’s life. When a circus train passes by on the horizon and a tiny toddler flies off the caboose, the farmer is nonplused but curious. As the two get to know one another, Frazee uses small vignettes to depict action and reveal the growing softening of the farmer’s heart. The train returns and the little clown is joyfully reunited with his clown family. A surprise ending reveals that the farmer and the clown have left each other’s lives the richer for their meeting. Frazee uses space and color to convey mood and personality, and her sparing use of line and her pacing of images are masterful. (BK)

**Revolution**

Written by Deborah Wiles


This riveting story set in Mississippi during Freedom Summer (1964) provides a window into the collision of ideologies about equality. Before “the invaders” arrived in her hometown to set up Freedom Schools and voter registration drives, the most important decision Sunny had to make each day was which Beatles song to listen to with her friends or how to avoid getting caught sneaking out of Bible school. Now that college students and civil rights activists have arrived, the town is flooded with reporters and police officers who are causing unease among the residents. In addition to navigating the politics of her town, Sunny is having a difficult time forming a relationship with her father’s new wife and her children. As her community tries to negotiate new boundaries between its African American and White citizens, Sunny is doing the same at home. Deborah Wiles captures the tension, fear, and violence that encapsulate this tiny community as people respond to the call for racial equality and social justice by choosing sides and taking a stand. The book is interlaced with poems, quotes, archived images, excerpts from pamphlets, maps, and posters that provide important information about the sociopolitical context, adding depth to the narrative. (DPD)
Recommended Books

**Draw!**
Written and illustrated by Raúl Colón

This wordless picturebook depicts the inward journey of an artist’s creativity and imagination. Once the young boy at the center of the story begins to draw, his fantasy world of elegant elephants, silly gorillas, and charging rhinoceroses comes to life. With art supplies, an easel, and a book of Africa at hand, the young artist finds himself face-to-face with the imagined thrills and dangers of his wildlife landscape. Colón’s signature scratched-watercolor technique and juxtaposition of line drawings with the fully rendered illustrations give depth to the boy’s artistic expressions and journey. Drawing from childhood memories, Colón artfully balances fantasy and reality in ways that readers of all ages can feel in their hearts, try on their own, and share with others. (AZ)

**The Meaning of Maggie**
Written by Megan Jean Sovern

On Maggie’s eleventh birthday, she receives three shares of Coca-Cola stock, a tour of the local newspaper, and shocking news that her fun-loving dad quit his job because an illness has made his legs permanently asleep. Maggie’s family members follow their motto and pull up their bootstraps to adapt to the changes. As the former fifth-grade science fair champ, Maggie does her part to learn all she can about multiple sclerosis and the search for a cure. The text, written as Maggie’s memoir, reveals her journey to discover herself and the meaning of her life. The text carefully blends heartfelt family events with plenty of humor. The author draws upon her own family experiences coping with MS to accurately capture Maggie’s point of view. (FW)

**The Most Magnificent Thing**
Written and illustrated by Ashley Spires

This is the story of a regular girl with a very big idea. She is going to make the most magnificent thing. She has a plan and gets to work with the help of her dog (and best friend). It is difficult work, but she is determined. She works long and hard, but cannot get her invention to match her vision. Frustration sets in and she decides to quit, throwing a bit of a tantrum. But with a break and encouragement from friends, she gets back to work. And she does create a most magnificent thing! This is a story about creativity, friendship, and working through problems. Spires’s quirky, linear illustrations reflect the theme of imagination. (FS)
Otis and the Scarecrow  
Written and illustrated by Loren Long  

Otis the tractor is back with Loren Long’s distinctive illustrations. The farmer brings a scarecrow to the farm to protect the ripening corn, but when Otis and the farm animals try to befriend the scarecrow, they are surprised to see that he refuses to even smile at them. The animals finally decide to leave the scarecrow alone. When a big rain comes to the farm, Otis and the farm animals huddle together, but the scarecrow is left alone in the rain. Otis and friends worry about the scarecrow and decide to go sit with him in the rain so that he isn’t so lonely. Once again, Otis teaches us about kindness, compassion, and acceptance of others. The cheerful farm residents are illustrated in the colors of harvest, and Long’s lively visual pacing makes this book highly pleasing to younger readers. (FS)

The Secret Hum of a Daisy  
Written by Tracy Holcer  

In this coming-of-age story, 12-year-old Grace is to learning to cope with the tragic death of her mother. She misses the origami cranes her mother used to make and the poems she used to recite to her. She misses their capricious flair for life and steadfast commitment to each other. After the funeral, Grace is forced to live with her estranged grandmother and has to learn how to forgive past wrongs while contemplating her future. Readers will applaud her efforts at making new friends, reluctantly smile as she tries to sabotage her new living arrangement, and shed tears with her as she grieves for her mother while slowing uncovering the complexities of family life and past secrets. This poignantly told story offers an honest portrayal of what it looks like to find happiness and hope in unexpected people and places. (DPD)

The Madman of Piney Woods  
Written by Christopher Paul Curtis  

Narrated in alternating chapters by 13-year-old Benji, a descendent of enslaved people of the US, and “Red” of Irish heritage, Curtis returns readers to the Ontario environs of Buxton. Set 40 years later, this companion novel to Elijah of Buxton (2007) brings the two boys together as friends, reprises some central characters, and allows for exploring themes of family, loyalties, collisions, bravery, commonalities across divides, and the crevasses of racial prejudice. Benji loves words, chicanery, and is intent on a newspaper career. Red is science-minded and wary of his tyrannical grandmother, who is scarred by Irish immigrant experiences. Both boys have significant encounters with the near-mythical “madman” who dwells in the Piney Woods. The voices of characters ring true and the storyline evokes compassion as well as laughter. (NR)
A Snicker of Magic
Written by Natalie Lloyd

Mama’s hometown Midnight Gulch, Tennessee, which used to be filled with magic, is the newest home for Felicity Pickle and her sister Frannie. Felicity, who wants the chance to stay in one place long enough to develop a lasting friendship, is a word catcher and collector. She not only sees the words that fill the open-air spaces around people and places, but also organizes those words into found poems that capture the heartfelt emotions of the moment. Lyrically written with a folksy quality, Felicity’s quest to fit in with others and to have a place to call home leads to finding the “snicker” of magic that still remains in the cursed town. Readers who love language and magical realism won’t want to miss this debut novel. (DD)

The Turtle of Oman
Written by Naomi Shihab Nye
Illustrated by Betsy Peterschmidt

Although traditional immigrant stories portray the United States as a goal for freedom seekers, Aref Al-Amri is loathe to leave his perfect Oman just so his parents can pursue graduate degrees in Michigan. In the days before the move, the third grader spends time with Sidi, his beloved grandfather, visiting and recounting the places and features that seem impossible to leave for three years—the sands, the stars, the beach—and Sidi himself. Along with Aref, readers feel the draw of a beautiful, familiar place and share Aref’s trepidations about leaving his homeland, kitty, and bedroom. Nye’s title analogy with turtles undergirds Aref’s way of coping with the stretch of ties: Sidi’s reassurance that aspects of home can be carried along, as a turtle does, while the less mobile features await one’s return. (NR)

Barbara Kiefer (Chair) is the Charlotte S. Huck Professor of Children’s Literature at The Ohio State University. Denise Dávila is an assistant professor at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Detra Price-Dennis is an assistant professor at Teachers College, Columbia University. Nancy Roser is a professor of Language and Literacy Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Franki Sibberson is a third-grade teacher at Riverside Elementary School in Dublin, Ohio. Fran Wilson is a second-grade teacher at Madeira Elementary School in Cincinnati, Ohio. Angie Zapata is an assistant professor at the University of Missouri at Columbia.
2015 Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction

Cyndi Giorgis, Jeanne Gilliam Fain, Joyce Herbeck, Marie LeJeune, Ruth McKoy Lowery, Marianne Richardson, and Ed Sullivan

The Orbis Pictus Award Committee recognizes high-quality nonfiction published within the previous calendar year. The award, created by the National Council of Teachers of English in 1989, was named after what is believed to be the first nonfiction book written especially for children. This book, written in 1657 by Johannes Amos Comenius, was entitled *Orbis Sensualium Pictus: Hoc Est Omniun Principaliuin in Mundo Rerum et in Vita Actionius. Picturaet Nomenclatura (The Visible World: Or a Nomenclature and Pictures of All the Chief Things That Are in the World, and of Men’s Employments Therein)*.

The seven members appointed to the Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction Committee apply stringent criteria as they carefully read and review nonfiction books published for children in grades K–8. Each book is evaluated for accuracy of information, organization of content, appealing design and layout, and engaging writing style. In addition, committee members consider each book’s ability to interest readers as well as its potential to enrich content area curriculum. Approximately 350 nonfiction titles were received for consideration for the award and discussed in meetings at NCTE headquarters and in email conversations. Award recipients were chosen during a lengthy conference call.

The committee selected one winner, five honor books, and eight recommended titles. The 2015 recipients cover a range of topics and themes that include scientific inquiry, inventions, biographies, social justice, artistic process, sports, and history. The 2015 list also addresses a range of reading abilities and will be of interest to both younger and older readers. Teachers searching for high-quality nonfiction that will motivate students to read for information and pleasure, as well as address the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010), will appreciate this year’s Orbis Pictus Award-winning books.

2015 Orbis Pictus Award Winner

*The Family Romanov: Murder, Rebellion, and the Fall of Imperial Russia*

Written by Candace Fleming


Murder, intrigue, and suspense await readers of this year’s captivating Orbis Pictus Award-winning book. Fleming is known for her well-written, meticulously researched nonfiction titles, several of which have been recognized in the past as Orbis Pictus Honor books, including *Amelia Lost: The Life and Disappearance of Amelia Earhart* (Schwartz & Wade, 2011) and *The Lincolns: A Scrapbook Look at Abraham and Mary* (Schwartz & Wade, 2008). *The Family Romanov* illustrates once again Fleming’s ability to craft an engaging and insightful look into history as she focuses on the last czar of Russia and his family.

Czar Nicolas II was ill-prepared and outwardly incapable to deal with the deprivation and oppression of imperial Russia. His beloved wife, Alexandra, was socially insecure and extremely protective of her four daughters and one son Alexei, who was born with hemophilia—a fact that the family desperately tried to hide. In her untiring attempt to heal Alexei, she turned to self-proclaimed holy man, Rasputin. As Alexandra focused on the children and attempted to shelter them from the outside world, Nicholas chose to ignore the conditions of the Russian people, which led to tumultuous events and revolutionary fervor. The final chapters astutely describe how the family was moved to less spacious surroundings.
while still not grasping the severity of their circumstances. Even as they were led to their execution, the family members clung together and appeared oblivious to their inevitable demise.

Fleming deftly weaves together an intimate look at the Romanov family, the story of the revolution beginning with the workers’ strikes of 1905, Lenin’s rise to power, and the heartbreaking personal stories of the Russian peasants who struggled to survive. The exciting narrative coupled with archival photographs are supported by over 25 pages of Fleming’s source notes. The Family Romanov illustrates that history is anything but dull, especially when presented by a skilled researcher and artful storyteller. (CG)

Honor Books

A Home for Mr. Emerson
Written by Barbara Kerley
Illustrated by Edwin Fotheringham

Ralph Waldo Emerson grew up in Boston, but desired to live closer to nature where he could surround himself with books and friends. He found the perfect home in Concord, Massachusetts, where he and his wife raised a family. When a fire destroyed Emerson’s cozy home, he mourned the loss like the death of a loved one. To demonstrate their affection for the beloved philosopher, the people of Concord came together to rebuild his house. Readers will enjoy Fotheringham’s cheery, cartoon-like illustrations depicting the intellectual giant Emerson like a superhero as he literally dives into oversized books and flies through the air on a giant tome. Kerley’s author’s note helps round out the portrait, describing Emerson’s friendships with Henry David Thoreau and Louisa May Alcott.

This book is a delightfully written, dynamically illustrated, inviting, and accessible window into the life of America’s greatest philosopher. (ES)

Mr. Ferris and His Wheel
Written by Kathryn Gibbs Davis
Illustrated by Gilbert Ford

The 1889 World’s Fair in Paris left visitors in awe of the magnificent Eiffel Tower, then the tallest man-made structure on earth and constructed specifically for the fair. What could Chicago possibly do for the 1893 World’s Fair that would surpass the Eiffel Tower? Many engineers submitted ideas, but none seemed good enough. George Ferris, however, was thinking outside the box. He designed a structure that would move, spinning on an axle, like a giant wheel. Almost as tall as a football field is long, the wheel would carry visitors up, up, up, in enclosed cars with huge windows and velvet seats. The fair’s chief engineer proclaimed it would never work and refused to fund the project. Using his own savings and the assistance of wealthy donors, George broke ground for the structure’s foundation, only to find 20 feet of quicksand.

The story of George’s perseverance in the face of setbacks, mockery, and lack of financial support will rivet readers. His determination resulted in the first Ferris wheel, the astonishing centerpiece of the Chicago World’s Fair. Ford’s digitally mixed-media illustrations capture the struggle for acceptance, the challenge of construction, and the dazzling beauty of success. As George blows the golden whistle to begin the first turn of the illuminated wheel, readers will be high-fiving and cheering. (JH)
The Right Word: Roget and His Thesaurus

Written by Jen Bryant
Illustrated by Melissa Sweet

Peter Mark Roget was a list maker, almost from the beginning of his life. After losing his father at the tender age of four, Peter discovered that books could and would be his constant where friends and family were not. By age eight, he wrote his first book—a book of lists. Lists brought order to his life and allowed him to keep track of the things in which he was interested. Those interests ran the gamut from plants, animals, and insects to just the right word for all occasions. Peter was a thinker, a scientist, and a doctor; and in 1852, he published his thesaurus. With thanks to Mr. Roget, we can have a thesaurus at our fingertips to find just “the right word.” Bryant’s engaging text coupled with Sweet’s intriguing illustrations will keep readers turning the pages.

Jen Bryant has called this book a happy accident. Her fascination with Roget began on a car trip when she mistakenly left her reading material at home. Left with only a thesaurus to pass the time, she became curious about someone who would try to put all of his knowledge into a book. Inspired by the original thesaurus, illustrator Melissa Sweet determined that Roget’s lists would be the art. Roget’s story and the rich, colorful pages filled with word lists will prompt readers to create their own lists. (MR)

Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family’s Fight for Desegregation

Written and illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh

When Sylvia Mendez’s family moved to Westminster, California, she experienced excitement as she noticed a school with a spacious playground, manicured lawn, and spotless hallways. When Sylvia and her brothers attempted to enroll in their neighborhood elementary school, multiple administrators required them to attend the “Mexican School.” Sylvia was an American and her English skills were exemplary, but she was mandated to attend Hoover Elementary or “The Mexican School” that consisted of inequitable school grounds and educational opportunities. Mr. Mendez advocated for his children by establishing a parental group and creating a petition to establish high-quality educational experiences for all children regardless of ethnicity.

Mr. Mendez hired a lawyer named David Marcus to assist him in filing a lawsuit against Orange County. During the trial, Mr. Kent, superintendent of Orange County, admitted that children were sent to the school as a result of their inferior language skills, social behavior, personal hygiene, and scholastic ability. Several students and family members were called to testify regarding these accusations and eloquently demonstrated that these decisions were made based upon discriminatory practices that led to segregation. The Mendez family won the first decision, but the school board appealed the case and requested a second trial. On April 15, 1947, the Court of Appeals ruled in support of the Mendez family.

The illustrations were created in collage on the computer. Tonatiuh stated in several blogs and interviews that he was inspired by “Pre-Columbian Art,” which explained why his characters were created in geometric shapes and in profile. Sharp contrast between the colors was strategically utilized within the illustrations to demonstrate the differences of the characters from the past and present. The illustrations are unique and truly complement the storytelling. This book is impeccably researched and consists of a detailed glossary, bibliography, and dialogue integrated from actual court transcripts. (JGF)
Star Stuff: 
Cdl Sagan and the Mysteries of the COSMOS
Written and illustrated by 
Stephanie Roth Sisson

Carl was a curious boy full of imagination and wonder, fascinated by many things, but particularly by the stars in the night sky, “hanging down like lightbulbs on long black wires.” Smitten with the stars and the planets, Carl studied and wondered, read and wondered, and wrote and wondered, until curious young Carl became Dr. Carl Sagan. Sagan worked with other scientists to explore, examine, and record data about planets nearest the Earth. Although some of Carl’s curiosity was satisfied, he wanted to share the amazing knowledge he had gained with others, including the extraordinary news that Earth and all of its inhabitants, us included, are made of “star stuff.”

Sisson’s spare text and lighthearted illustrations combine in a warm tribute to scientist Carl Sagan, whose quest for knowledge and love for science opened up the study of the cosmos to millions of people around the world. Illustrative details such as panels, labels, balloon quotes, and gatefold spreads encourage readers to slowly examine and ponder each page, soaking up the details of Sagan’s life. Direct quotes from Sagan’s work and writings are sprinkled throughout the text. Extensive back matter, including an author’s note, source notes, and page notes, offer an additional layer of information to the already informative biography. Delightfully written and illustrated, Star Stuff reminds readers of the imagination and passion that fuels the advancement of scientific discovery. (ML)

Recommended Books

Chasing Cheetahs: 
The Race to Save Africa’s Fastest Cats
Written by Sy Montgomery
Photographs by Nic Bishop

Can you run 70 miles per hour? Can you clearly see an object two miles away? Cheetahs can! These amazing cats, however, are in danger. Their numbers have plummeted from 100,000 worldwide in 1900 to only 10,000 in the wild today. Sy Montgomery introduces us to Laurie Marker at the Cheetah Conservation Fund’s headquarters in Namibia. Laurie’s research indicates that livestock farmers, trying to protect their cattle or sheep or goats, are the number one killers of cheetahs. So, Laurie raises Kangal dogs, known for guarding sheep and other animals from predators, and sells the dogs at a discount to livestock farmers who live in cheetah territory. Laurie’s efforts are making a difference, but cheetahs are not yet out of danger. Nic Bishop’s stunning photographs of these majestic animals invite readers to get actively involved in the race to save Africa’s fastest cats. (JH)

Eye to Eye: 
How Animals See the World
Written and illustrated by Steve Jenkins

How do animals use their eyes to see the world? Steve Jenkins helps readers to understand the evolution of animals’ eyes by crafting creative, colorful, and eye-popping illustrations alongside riveting facts that effectively inform about four types of eyes that are typically found in animals.
These eye types include: the eyespot, which consists of a group of light-sensitive cells distinguishing light from darkness; pinhole eyes that create comprehensive images with limited light; compound eyes comprised of thousands of lenses forming individual images; and camera eyes that utilize a focused lens. Informative back matter provides a detailed graphic of the evolution of the eye, animal facts about the 24 animals highlighted in the book, a brief bibliography, and a glossary of key terms. (JGF)

The Girl from the Tar Paper School: Barbara Rose Johns and the Advent of the Civil Rights Movement
Written by Teri Kanefield

The Girl from the Tar Paper School pays homage to Barbara Rose Johns, who in 1951 led a student boycott demanding comparable facilities for Black students in segregated Virginia schools. Forced to attend school in substandard buildings, students frequently became ill. When their demands were ignored, Barbara and her classmates staged a peaceful protest. Amid threats of jail time and a cross burning at the school site, the students persevered, eventually garnering the help of the NAACP. This case later became one of the four cases that formed the landmark 1954 Brown v. Board of Education suit resulting in the Supreme Court decision that school segregation was unconstitutional. Readers will be enthralled by the tenacity of Barbara and her classmates who, even in the face of adversity, were determined to speak against civil and social injustices. The author’s note and extensive source notes provide additional historical and background information into this intriguing biography. (RML)

Little Melba and Her Big Trombone
Written by Katheryn Russell-Brown
Illustrated by Frank Morrison

“Spread the word! Little Melba Doretta Liston was something special.” So begins the iconic journey into the life of famed trombone player Melba Liston. Born in Kansas City, Melba grew up loving all musical genres. At age seven, Melba chose to play the trombone because of its odd shape. This young prodigy’s talents were realized when at age eight she was asked to play for the local radio station. When the Depression forced her mother to relocate to Los Angeles, Melba’s academic and musical talents were recognized. She joined the after-school music club and quickly became the envy of her peers. By 17, Melba began traveling the country and the globe, performing with jazz legends including Billie Holiday, Dizzy Gillespie, and Duke Ellington. Morrison’s striking illustrations allow readers to visualize this beautifully crafted tribute. A detailed afterword, discography, and author’s sources provide additional resources about this unsung musical trailblazer. (RML)

Neighborhood Sharks: Hunting with the Great Whites of California’s Farallon Islands
Written and illustrated by Katherine Roy

The subject of both fear and fascination, great white sharks swim, stalk, and strike through their hunting grounds in the Farallon Islands, just 30 miles from the shores of San Francisco. Natural weapons make these large predators efficiently...
lethal: “torpedo shaped” bodies speed attack; their circulatory system and uniquely small dorsal aorta raise their body temperature and thus their reflexes in the frigid water; high-definition vision aids in spotting prey; 50 jagged teeth and fast-acting, projectile jaws devour 400-pound seals in less than 10 bites. Author/illustrator Katherine Roy combines rich scientific details with intense illustrations and clever diagrams, creating an informative narrative about the sharks’ anatomy, the scientists who study them, and their place in the local food chain. Picturesque end pages, full-page spread illustrations, and rich use of perspective and style captivate and educate the reader about sharks and the ocean they inhabit. (ML)

**The Streak! How Joe DiMaggio Became America’s Hero**
Written by Barb Rosenstock
Illustrated by Terry Widener

Readers are transported back in time to the summer of 1941, when the nation held its collective breath as one of our greatest sports heroes set a new MLB record with a 56-game hitting streak. That year, DiMaggio’s beloved bat, Betsy Ann, became as well-known as his baggy Yankee pinstripe uniform. As the streak grows, each page builds tension and emotion through engaging text and expressive illustrations. DiMaggio’s accomplishment is still widely regarded as the greatest unbroken sports record in history. His fame immortalized, he became the hero that Americans needed, particularly as the nation was on the verge of WWII. An author’s note, source notes, statistics from DiMaggio’s 1941 regular season, and a detailed bibliography conclude this riveting and rousing sports story. (CG)

**The Scraps Book: Notes from a Colorful Life**
Written and illustrated by Lois Ehlert
Beach Lane, 2014, unpaged, ISBN 978-1-44243571-1

Encouraged by parents who provided materials of every description as well as a workspace to call her own, Lois Ehlert began her fascination with color and design at an early age. Her lifelong love for books and her passion for art are on display in this autobiographical scrapbook of an artist at work. This volume traces her career, using illustrations from her books, photographs from her life, and ephemera that serve as her inspiration. Aficionados of Ehlert’s work will be treated to a walk down memory lane as each page contains notes from her many titles. She even offers a lesson on writing and illustrating a story through a two-page storyboard. The final pages and endpapers offer a montage of Ehlert’s work and sources of inspiration. The recipient of a Caldecott Honor for *Color Zoo*, Lois Ehlert has given young readers and illustrators an engaging blueprint for a colorful life. (MR)

**Strike! The Farm Workers’ Fight for Their Rights**
Written by Larry Dane Brimner

This outstanding history of the United Farm Workers (UFW) begins with the action of a group of Filipino farm workers who walked off the California fields in 1965 under the leadership of Larry Itliong. In a compelling, accessible narrative that makes excellent use of primary sources, photographs, and other archival images, Brimner chronicles the rise of union and civil rights.
leader Cesar Chavez, exploring the controversies surrounding him in a thoughtful, nuanced discussion. While a number of books celebrating the life and work of Cesar Chavez are available for younger children, no title provides this much in-depth coverage for older readers. This attractively designed, thoroughly researched exemplary work offers insight into an essential chapter of American labor history. (ES)

References


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