

BACK TO THE SUMMIT
A Workshop for NC Librarians
November 1-2, 2012
by Claire Ramsey

School is starting, temperatures falling (we hope!), fall and winter holidays are in sight, and happily so is the biannual Youth Services Section Retreat and Workshop. This year's offering brings us Back to the Summit... in more than one way.

First, the retreat and workshop return us to the refurbished Summit retreat center at Haw River State Park in Greensboro. Second, and more exciting, this workshop will inform and inspire all attending youth services librarians (YOU!) to summits of experience and shared learning in a serene wooded setting.

New workshop activities will range from Technologies and Science Programs to programming and collection development for young LGBT patrons, while bringing back regular favorites such as State Library news, Wine and Cheese (with All Questions Answered!), and, of course, welcome activities, crafts, raffle baskets, and walks in the woods.

Registration is available August 20 through October 15: overnight attendance is \$130 per person (double occupancy only), and the commuter fee is \$90 per person. Please send registrations to Jacky Miller at Rockingham County Public Library, 527 Boone Road, Eden NC 27288.

Each successive meeting makes the Youth Services Section board members more and more excited about this upcoming retreat; we cannot wait to welcome you to this festival of workshops, networking, and relaxation. You are warmly invited to join us this November and venture with us Back to the Summit!

Get Ready for the Return of Fabulous Fridays!

by Joan Sherif

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The very popular Fabulous Friday one-day conferences, sponsored by the Public Library Section of NCLA, will return in October 2012.

The Fabulous Friday mini-conferences will feature our fabulous State Librarian Cal Shepard as the keynote speaker. Breakout sessions will be led by staff from NC libraries and support agencies, including hot topics that are of interest to all public library staff: Providing Great Service with Reduced Resources; Ebooks; Circulation; Genealogy and Local History; Volunteers; Security; PR/Marketing; New Approaches to Reference; and Youth Programming.

Beyond Storytimes: Youth Programming that Works

Description: Programming for youth is rewarding but can be challenging, especially for staff with multiple roles (children, teens, families) in programming. Get your programming groove back with new and proven approaches to youth programming, from leaders in serving children and teens!

Fabulous Fridays are scheduled for three locations across the state:

- Friday, October 12th: Asheville
- Friday, October 19th: Winston Salem
- Friday, October 26th: Rocky Mount

The cost is very affordable—just \$10 for NCLA PLS members; \$15 for NCLA members who are not members of PLS; and \$30 for non-members of NCLA. Registration is available online at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/H8JLNC6>.

Plan to join us for a Fabulous Friday this October!

North Carolina Children's Book Award

By Jane Deacle

Wake County Public Library



The North Carolina Children's Book Award (NCCBA) is sponsored by the North Carolina School Library Media Association and the North Carolina Association of School Librarians and the Children's Services Sections of the North Carolina Library Association.

The purpose of the award is to encourage students in grades K-6:

To become better acquainted with the best writers and illustrators of contemporary books with outstanding literary appeal.

To broaden students' awareness of literature as a means of personal satisfaction and lifelong pursuits. (Picture Books)

To promote reading aloud with students in the early grades as a means of introducing reading as a pleasure. (Picture Books)

To promote reading aloud with students as a means of extending the concept of reading for pleasure; (Junior Books)

To give recognition and honor to their favorite books, authors, and illustrators.

The first Picture Book Award was given in 1992 to *In a Dark, Dark Room and other Scary Stories* by Alvin Schwartz and the first Junior Book Award was given in 1995 to *The Boys Start the War* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor.

You can find guidelines, activities and more information about the NCCBA on the Bookhive webpage at:

<http://www.cmlibrary.org/bookhive/NCCBA/>

Or contact:

Lisa Tucker, Middle Fork Elementary School
Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools
Frank Morgan Elementary School
3210 Village Point Drive
Clemmons, NC 27102
e-mail: lengland@wsfcs.k12.nc.us

Jane Deacle
Cameron Village Regional Library
1930 Clark Avenue
Raleigh, NC 27605
email: jdeacle@co.wake.nc.us

The NCCBA Nominations for 2012-2013 are:

Picture Book Category

Baker, Keith: ***LMNO Peas***

Bradford, Wade: ***Why Do I Have to Make My Bed? Or a History of Messy Rooms***

Cleminson, Katie: ***Otto the Book Bear***

Emmett, Jonathan: ***The Princess and the Pig***

Florian, Douglas: ***UnBEElievables: Honeybee Poems and Paintings***

Hall, Michael: ***Perfect Square***

Litwin, Eric: ***Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes***

Lyons, Kelly Starling: ***Ellen's Broom***

Offill, Jenny: ***Eleven Experiments that Failed***

Rocco, John: ***Blackout***

Stein, David Ezra: ***Interrupting Chicken***

Wardlaw, Lee: ***Won Ton: a Cat Tale Told in Haiku***

Wilson, Karma: ***The Cow Loves Cookies***

Junior Book Category

Clayton, Emma: ***The Roar***

Draper, Sharon: ***Out of My Mind***

Erskine, Kathryn: ***Absolute Value of Mike***

Gibbs, Stuart: ***Belly Up***

Hines, Anna Grossnickle: ***Peaceful Pieces: Peaceful Poems and Quilts about Peace***

Ibbotson, Eva. ***One Dog and His Boy***

Mass, Wendy: ***Candymakers***

Park, Linda Sue: ***A Long Walk to Water: Based on a True Story***

Sweet, Melissa: ***Balloons Over Broadway***

Voigt, Cynthia: ***Young Fredle***

Weeks, Sarah: ***Pie***

Williams, Garcia: ***One Crazy Summer***

Wolitzer, Meg: ***Fingertips of Duncan Dorfman***

Our First “Prize Free” Summer

by Lara Luck

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Several years back our systems’ librarians realized that we were making our reading programs, on all levels – children, teens and adults, too complicated. We had first time reading logs, second time reading logs, reading logs for beyond those levels, a prize chart, different prizes for every level, and even a sheet of instructions and rules to hand out to customers and staff so they could keep up. (We should have offered a prize just for reading the rules sheet alone.) During those years the surveys we conducted at the end of the Summer Reading Programs would always have the biggest complaint being that the program was way too complicated. What to do?

Our library system began trying to streamline our Summer Reading Program to make it less complicated and stressful for both customers and staff. Slowly, over the last several years, we have been trying different ideas to keep customers happy and staff less stressed. At some point we realized that the prizes we were handing out might be one of the biggest problems we had. We have been trying different approaches with the prizes, and this year we did away with most of them all together (a terrifying thought for most of the youth services librarians). The question was would anyone participate if we didn’t hand out coupons and toys for reading. Well, this year we had slightly lower numbers of children and slightly higher numbers of teens participating, but the library staff seemed to agree we had our best year yet, especially in making customers and staff happy.

In past years, we have given out candy, plastic treasure chest toys, stuffed animals, pencils, stickers, bookmarks, books, gift cards, a bike, coupons (lots and lots of coupons), and lots of other trinkets to our summer readers. Usually, when a reader completed her first 8 hours (our set time for finishing), she would get a bag with

several little prizes - a pencil, stickers, bookmark coupons, etc. Then, if she completed another 8 hours, we would reward her with something else – sometimes a book, or an entry for a big prize, or picking from our treasure chest, really it varied from branch to branch. This caused a lot of problems with customers going from branch to branch to try to win different prizes.

Our first goal was to get prizes under control and offer the same incentives at all of the branches. So, a few years back library staff started offering the prize bag mentioned above for completing 8 hours of reading (teens got a similar bag for reading three books, but with YA oriented prizes) and an entry toward a gift card drawing for each time they read 8 more hours (or three more books for teens). This seemed to get things under control and worked to simplify the program for us and our customers. For a while we had fewer complaints from staff and patrons, but then the problems started.

The first problem we had was that fewer and fewer businesses were willing to give out the amount of coupons we required (around 3000). This started about four years ago, and last year we had such a terrible time getting coupons that we decided not to try again this year. (This is not to say we did not appreciate the businesses that did donate coupons, especially in these financially hard times. Thanks so much to all who give back to the community, especially through us!) We also had some customer complaints about the coupons.

The other big problem library staff had was we still had two reading logs for each age group, children, teens, and adults. Each time a participant came in, library staff had to ask them if they had already gotten a reading log and if so, had they turned it in. It was both confusing and time-consuming for staff members and customers. So, in order to try to lower the amount of staff time being put into taking in the reading logs and handling all of the prize giveaways, it was decided that we would have two prize weeks for customers to turn in logs and receive prizes. This helped some with the amount of staff time being put in, but unfortunately it also ended up causing some confusion and

inconvenience for many patrons. Again, we needed to make some changes and rethink our approach.

This year we finally made some big changes that have been very helpful in streamlining our Summer Reading program while getting back to the basics of making reading the priority. The first thing to go was the prize bags. We had already decided to not ask for coupons anymore, so getting rid of the other little prizes did not seem to be that much of a stretch (although I have to admit that I had my doubts). As one of our youth services librarians put it “they [kids] just didn’t seem to be that interested in them [the bags] anymore, and I know the moms won’t miss them.” Next we decided to have one reading log for each age group, each a different color (easy to know which age group it was) and each the size of a large bookmark with a perforated ticket at the bottom for the gift card prize drawings. (Yes, we did not go completely prize free. Each participant had a chance to win a bookstore gift card at the end of the summer and that was still an incentive prize, but it was definitely an easy one to do.)



One of our teen gift card winners stands in front of our “Summer Reading Stars” board.

After the two biggest stress inducing problems were resolved, we turned to programming itself. The programming we offer during the summer is what was needed to draw in customers. Have some fun, exciting performers, really cool craft programs, and some silly storytimes and “they will come,” and that’s when you hook them for the reading program.



Captain Jim shows his magic to an enthralled audience.

Youth services librarians know this, but in the past our staff tried to use prizes as a draw to participate in the reading program too, and this is when we created the hectic mess that our Summer Reading Program used to be. So, we decided that incentive giveaways shouldn’t be used for reading prizes, but we could give prizes as incentives to visit the library and attend a program. Most of our branches had finale parties where they gave away cups, book bags and other things away as door prizes. I also gave out door prizes at my big programs to draw in kids and that

worked out well. We also had the gift card drawings at the end of the summer. Each branch was able to give out an adult, teen and child gift card, and there was a system-wide drawing for a grand prize gift card for each age level too.

Another way we rewarded our Summer Reading participants was to acknowledge their participation by posting their names (first name, last initial for safety) on bulletin boards or windows in the libraries. This has been a big hit. Many of our young readers have been showing off their stars to family and friends when they come in to my library. We have also asked the school system to recognize them by running a list of Summer Reading Club members on their TV announcements or posting them in their media centers. We may try next year to get the county cable channel and/or newspaper involved. Anyway, simple acknowledgement and praise of their reading time has also proved to be an effective incentive for participation.

Summer Reading can be a busy, stressful time for library staff. It's all about getting kids and teens into the library and get them reading. And every year, we ask ourselves how do we get even more youth through our doors. Obviously, we still have much we can improve upon, and new ideas to improve the program keep coming. Summer Reading can be great, we can make it great, but we've all got to keep the focus on what the program's about ... keeping kids reading while they're not in school and maintain their reading and comprehension skills. We need to find ways to make them proud of their accomplishments and find joy in reading for its sake and not for the trinkets that we offer. A program designed to reward them through acknowledgement seems to work just as well as one that gives out coupons and little plastic toys. We will continue to try to find ways to make our Summer Reading Program better for ourselves and our patrons.