

**EMPIRE READING SCENE**

JANUARY, 2011

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Join us at the  
Saratoga Hilton

April 3–5.

This is a conference event that you won't want to miss! See information inside this issue and check out our website for further details & registration :

[www.nysreading.org](http://www.nysreading.org)

Hope to see you there!

**Where can you find**

- Nationally acclaimed literacy experts
- Best selling authors
- Local practitioners
- Exhibitors with the newest teaching tools
- A network of professionals from around our state
- An opportunity to “refresh” your teaching practices and professional development credit



**THE NEW YORK STATE READING  
ASSOCIATION 2011 CONFERENCE:  
CONNECTING MULTIPLE LITERACIES  
SARATOGA SPRINGS, NEW YORK  
APRIL 3-5**

On behalf of the New York State Reading Association, we would like to invite you to the 2011 Annual Conference, “*Connecting Multiple Literacies*”. The conference committee has sought to bring you expert presentations to enhance your knowledge, teaching skills, and enthusiasm for lifelong learning.

We have planned institutes, presentations and workshop sessions that will share concepts and ideas that can be immediately “connected” back to the classroom and/or workplace. We are very proud of the conference program that we have put together with the help of our sponsors and feel this is a premier professional development opportunity for educators interested in literacy.

Come and participate in multiple connections!!

Debbie Dermady, NYSRA President

Cindy Wells, Conference Coordinator

## NOTES FROM THE NYSRA PRESIDENT, DEBBIE DERMADY



A trip to the bookstore always means a special time for me to spend browsing through one of my favorite spots~the children's section of the store. It doesn't matter where in the children's section I find myself, be it the picture books, middle school readers section, or young adults section, fiction or non-fiction, I like best listening to a child explain why he or she wants a particular book to a parent or an adult. One thing I find most rewarding is overhearing the **conversations** being held. It's almost as if the party having the **conversation** wants me to hear their enthusiasm towards a particular book or author. Many times I have overheard, "Oh, we read a book by that author in school," or "Our librarian did a book talk about that book and I would like to read more books

written by that author," and at times, "My teacher suggested I read that book," or "That author just visited our school!" I think one of my very favorites is, "My friend read that book and said I would really like it." Most recently I heard, "Oh, they are making a movie based on this book, can I read it first, please?" At times I find myself wanting to join in on the **conversations**, and if you know me at all, you know I sometimes do. There I am offering a hook or two to try and grab their attention to the multitudes of quality literature in the world, thanks to the many writers who felt it necessary to share with others the power of written word. **Conversation** is the true power behind reading. A book does just that. It opens up and lets us in to escape our daily lives and listen to the characters come to life. It then allows an opportunity to share what we have read with others. Don't ever underestimate the good you do daily by **communicating** your thoughts about books. I know that child I hear in the bookstore

is talking about **you** and how **your influence** promotes reading!

**My New Year's Resolution** ~ I am going to create a running list of book titles and authors (for all ages) shared daily. ~What's yours?

While thinking about your resolutions, check out some of the terrific authors listed throughout this publication who will be presenting at our **Connecting Multiple Literacies Conference** in April! Conference Chair Cindy Wells and her team have put together a diverse conference for you; jam packed with professional development opportunities of all kinds! I hope to see you in **Saratoga April 3rd!**

~Debbie Dermady, NYSRA President



"Conversation is the true power behind reading."

~~ NYSRA  
President,  
Debbie Dermady

## NEWS FROM OUR ADVOCACY CHAIR, SUE BOGDAN-RITTY

Congress continues to look at the reauthorization of ESEA in this session. Reauthorization did not occur in 2010 because even though both chambers were held by the Democrats, they could not agree on key points. A common point of agreement is low performing schools, so it is expected that resources may be concentrated on these schools.

Negotiations will start again now that the Republicans are in control, but will reflect the new people appointed to the Education Committee. The incoming Education Committee Chair, Congressman Kline, has suggested that he will move the legislation forward in sections,

not as one bill.

Significant to all issues will be funding. The administration looks to concentrate funding on buildings that are in greatest need of improvement. This means that any new resources must come from existing programs. While the Blueprint does concentrate resources by combining some smaller programs, it does not achieve the savings that will be needed to replace funds lost to Race to the Top and School Improvement Grants.

Save The Date!



**New York State Reading Association**

**2011 Leadership Symposium**



**June 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

**Strengthen your council by participating in sessions designed to improve leadership skills, promote connections, enhance programming, encourage & strengthen membership, and support & improve council operations.**





## NYSRA VISITS SENATOR GILLIBRAND'S OFFICE

A group from NYSRA met with staff from Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's office in the federal building at One Clinton Square in Albany. The purpose of the visit was to share information with the Senator's staff on formative assessment and to encourage the Senator to support the **LEARN/Literacy Education for All, Results for the Nation** bill. The LEARN Act proposes to provide funding for literacy professional development (from age 0-grade 12).

Advocacy Chair Sue Bogdan-Ritty and one of her former students, Anastasia Brazell, demonstrated how a running record is done. Anastasia read while

Sue modeled how to do a short running record. Discussion followed in which NYSRA members were able to share the importance and timeliness of informal assessments such as the running record and how crucial it is for professional development to inform teachers of that and other formative assessments. A short discussion on summative vs. formative assessment followed the demonstration and it is our hope that Senator Gillibrand's staff members were able to see the importance of professional development and how it would influence formative assessment and move student progress.



Zach Goldstein and Amy Pollard from Senator Gillibrand's office along with Sue Bogdan-Ritty, NYSRA Advocacy Chair and Anastasia Brazille, a student from Sue's school.



**“Hear ye! Hear ye!**

### **The New Year heralds NYSRA's Return to Autumn.”**

Let it be known that following the 44<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the New York State Reading Association in Saratoga Springs, April 3-5, 2011, NYSRA's 45<sup>th</sup> annual conference will be reconnecting the annual professional development offering with the crisp, cool, stimulating fall season. **“Literacy Connections”** will take place at the Hilton Rye Town in Rye Brook, New York, October 23 – 25, 2011. This will be NYSRA's conference for the 2011-2012 school year. Mark it on your calendars and begin to make your plans to connect with speakers, presenters, and educational vendors, along with other educators from across New York State.

You are also invited to join us not just as a participant, but as a presenter. A call goes out to practitioners who are willing to share their successful educational practices that support student success. The *Program Proposal Form* for the conference will be available on NYSRA's website ([www.nysreading.org](http://www.nysreading.org)) starting on February 1, 2011 with a submission deadline of April 30, 2011. You may also contact the Conference Coordinators Mary Kline or Wally Freeland at [Fall2011Conf@nysreading.org](mailto:Fall2011Conf@nysreading.org).

**“The Crier rests...**

**All Ye Good People, We will see you in the Autumn of 2011 in Rye Brook, NY”**

**At the  
Saratoga Springs Public Library**

49 Henry Street, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

**Book signings & readings**

**Books available for purchase on site**

**Meet local authors:**

**Jennifer Armstrong**

Author of *Shipwreck at the Bottom of the World*, *Mangus at the Fire*, and *Once Upon a Banana*

**Karen Beil**

Author of *Jack's House*, *Mooove Over! A Book About Counting by Twos*, and *Fire in Their Eyes: Wildfires and the People Who Fight Them*

**James Bruchac**

Author of *Be Good, A True Cautionary Tale*, *The Girl Who Helped Thunder*, *Rabbits Snow Dance*, and *A Tracker's Trail*

**Kristen Darbyshire**

Author of *Put It On the List*

**Bruce Hiscock**

Author of *The Big Rock*, *The Big Tree*, *The Big Storm*, *The Big Caribou Herd*, and *Ookpik, the Travels of a Snowy Owl*

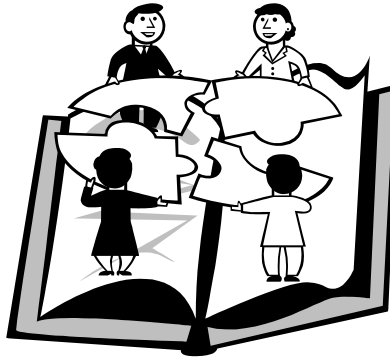
**Hudson Talbott**

Author of *River of Dreams*, *The Story of the Hudson River*, *United Tweets of America*, and *O'Sullivan Stew – A Tale Cooked Up in Ireland*

**Kyra Teis**

Author of *The Magic Flute*, *Look!, Read to Me*, and *Words Are Like Faces*

## Connecting Kids:



A

## Literacy Festival

**Sunday**

**April 3, 2011**

**2:00 – 4:00 pm**

**Presented by**

**New York State Reading Association**

**With support from:**

**Saratoga Springs**

**Public Library**

**Saratoga Springs**

**Barnes & Noble Booksellers**

**Scholastic Books**

**At the  
Saratoga Hilton Lower Lobby  
& Gallery**

534 Broadway

Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

**Participate in games and activities with a literacy theme for kids of all ages**

**Stretch your mind.**

**Test your skills.**

**Have fun.**

**Look for story characters like  
Cookie Mouse!**

**PLEASE**

**COME TO BOTH LOCATIONS**

**Saratoga Springs**

**Public Library**

**Saratoga Springs**

**Hilton Hotel Lobby**

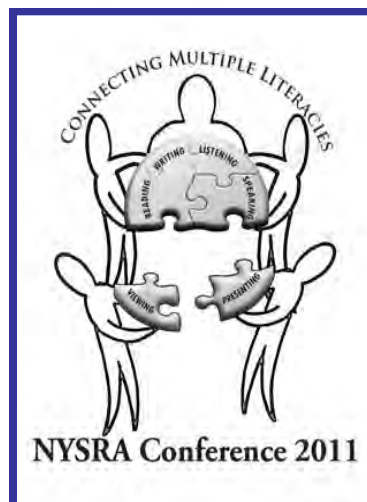
**FREE**

**FAMILY FUN!**



### ReAd: NYSRA's Link to the Net

NYSRA publishes an electronic web based newsletter every two months to keep our membership linked to educational and practical websites. The website links help us stay up-to-date with new information and helpful websites. Many thanks to our co-editors: Liz Yanoff, Sandi Kurbiel & Dawn Montague.



Conference 2011 is on Facebook!

## CONFERENCE 2011 HIGHLIGHTS

### “CONNECTING MULTIPLE LITERACIES”

 <p>Sunday April 3</p>	<p>Ralph Fletcher: <i>Widening the Circle in the Writing Classroom</i></p> <p>Donna Scanlon: <i>Responsive Teaching &amp; Intervention: Considering the I in RTI</i></p> <p>Kay Gormley, Debbie Dermady, Peter McDermott: <i>Beginner &amp; Advanced 2.0 Webtools</i></p> <p>Sarah Parker: <i>The Village of Hope</i></p> <p>Steven Layne: <i>Stories I Never Tell</i></p> <p>Sessions by expert practitioners</p>
 <p>Monday April 4</p>	<p>Steven Layne: <i>Igniting A Passion for Reading</i></p> <p>Donald Leu: <i>Connecting Multiple Literacies to the Classroom</i></p> <p>Anne Mazer &amp; Ellen Potter: <i>Author Tea featuring Spilling Ink</i></p> <p>Beauty and the Beast Storytellers: <i>The Art of Storytelling</i></p> <p>Tim Rasinski: <i>Fluency Connections</i></p> <p>Coleen Paratore: <i>Writing Craft</i></p> <p>Helen Wilbur: <i>Author Journeys</i></p> <p>Diane Buchanan &amp; Michael Buchanan: <i>Engaging the Reluctant Teen Reader</i></p> <p>Sessions by expert practitioners</p> <p>AUTHOR DINNER—featuring authors of professional books and literature</p>
 <p>Tuesday April 5</p>	<p>Tim Rasinski: <i>Best Practices for Promoting Higher Literacy Skills</i></p> <p>The 2 sisters: <i>Using The Daily 5 and Café in Your Classroom</i></p> <p>Kelly Gallagher: <i>Read Like Writers and Write Like Readers</i></p> <p>Sessions by expert practitioners</p>

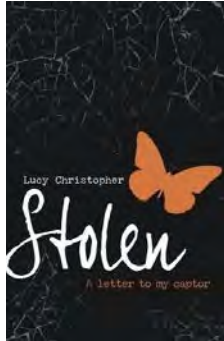
**COME JOIN US FOR A PREMIER LITERACY EVENT**  
**APRIL 3–5**  
**SARATOGA SPRINGS, NEW YORK**

# Book Banter

WINTER, 2011

**Stolen** (Chicken House, '10) is a first novel from Lucy Christopher, and an impressive debut. She crafts a complex and effective Young Adult story involving sixteen-year-old Gemma who is en route from England to Vietnam with her parents when she is drugged and abducted from the airport in Bangkok. This was not a chance occurrence. Gemma's kidnapper, a twenty-five-year-old Australian named Ty, has been watching her since she was a child and becomes obsessed with her. He has carefully planned this abduction.

Gemma awakens in the desolate Australian Outback, with only her kidnapper and assorted wildlife as company. Ty says he plans to keep her there forever, with the goal of making her eventually love him. He does not sexually abuse her nor treat her roughly; nevertheless, Gemma is every bit a captive. At first she hates both her kidnapper and the environment, but escape is impossible, and in time her defenses wear down. She finds herself attracted by the untamed power of the Outback and increasingly ambivalent toward her captor, warming as she comes to know him better. Ty's plan may be working: Gemma comes to realize she may be falling in love with him.

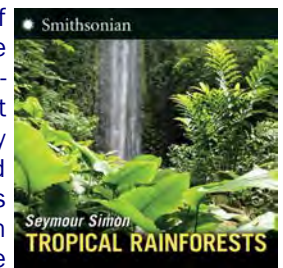


The structure of *Stolen* is unexpected and quite interesting. The story is related as a first-person narrative, in the form of a letter written by Gemma to Ty much later, following her release. This creates an unusual point of view, with Gemma being both participant and narrator, and the reader in the position of observing her gradually evolving attitudes and feelings as they unfold. Ty also evolves. He begins as a ruthless villain, but as Gemma learns more about his difficult youth and sees his caring behavior toward the wildlife in the Outback, he becomes more sympathetic. Certainly the circumstances leading finally to Gemma's release show consideration and compassion on his part. It is precisely this ambivalence that makes the novel such a powerful psychological study. The plot and narrative are both disturbing and absorbing—aspects which will stimulate thoughtful discussion. As noted earlier this is Christopher's first Young Adult novel. Reviewers will look forward to another, soon.

**Tropical Rainforests** (Harper Collins, '10) is the latest in a lengthy list of exceptional nonfiction books for children written by Seymour Simon. As often in the past, Seymour has

teamed with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute to bring to light marvelous photographs of the rainforests of Central America, South America, Central Africa, and Southeast Asia. This untamed world is home to brilliantly colored birds, multiple species of monkeys, poisonous butterflies, snakes, and thousands of animals and plants found nowhere else.

Seymour explains the four layers of growth stacked one on top of the other in the rainforest, from the 250-foot trees crowning the top-most emergent layer to the dense canopy just beneath, to the understory, and the dark forest floor which receives little sunlight. Each level has its own plant and animal life, and unique physical characteristics. The book contains spectacular photographs of representative species from each of the levels. The rainforest covers only about 2 percent of the world's surface but is extremely important to the global climate and human environment. The author details—but never in a tedious way—facts about the importance of the tropical forests in managing carbon emissions; he includes as well startling statistics about the rainforests' accelerating disappearance through logging and urban sprawl, and the devastating consequences if governments take no protective action.



There is a small but useful glossary and an index at the conclusion of the book and well-selected links to enable readers to learn more about our rainforests.

## Children's Literature Committee

Pat Shea-Bischoff, Faye Cohen, Debbie Dermady, Janet Peters, Kristen Gramlich Regan, Alice Sample (Chairperson)



**NYSRA Literature**

**Mini-Grant**

\$500.00

Please see **Awards** at [nysreading.com](http://nysreading.com)

Deadline **April 15<sup>th</sup> 2011**

# LETTERS ABOUT LITERATURE

The New York Library Association was designated the New York Center for the Book by the Library of Congress in January 2010, and one of the initiatives of the Center for the Book is Letters About Literature (LAL).

Letters About Literature is a national reading and writing promotion program that encourages students in grades 4-12 to write letters about how a particular book, short story, poem, play, or essay that they have read impacted their lives or elicited strong feelings. The letter should be written as though the student is writing to or having a conversation with the author of the literary work. The author can be living or deceased and this cannot be part of a class reading assignment.

There are three levels of competition: Level 1 – Grades 4-6, Level 2 – Grades 7-8, and Level 3 – Grades 9-12. The letters from each level of competition

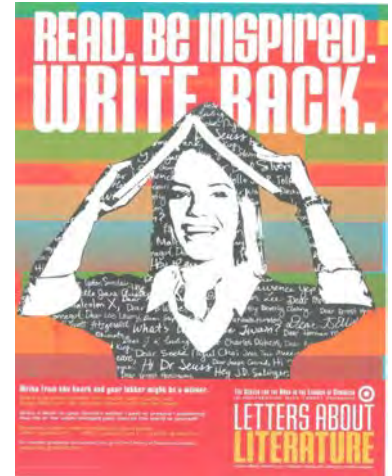
are sent to a national clearinghouse and screened there before being selected to be sent back to a panel of state judges. At last count in December, New York State was one of the top states for submissions with over 2400 letters. These letters are in the process of being screened so that New York's panel of eight judges will select one winner and three runners-up (or honorable mention) in each level or age group. The state winners will each receive a \$50 Target Gift Card (provided by the Library of Congress National Center for the Book) and, because of the generosity of NYSUT and NYRSA, a \$100 check plus a plaque. Again, due to the donations from NYSUT and NYSRA, the nine runners-up will each receive a \$50 check. The state winners and runners-up will be honored at the New York State Writers Hall of Fame Gala on Friday, April 1,

2011, in Albany.

State winners are then forwarded to a national panel of judges who select six national winners (two per level) and twelve national honorable mention winners. The national winners will receive a \$500 Target Gift Card, plus each will secure a \$10,000 Reading Promotion Grant in their name for his or her community or school library so that others can experience personal relationships with authors and the stories they tell. The national honorable mention winners will each receive a \$100 Target Gift Card, plus a \$1,000 Reading Promotion Grant in their name for his or her community or school library.

○○○○○

By Ellen Rubin, retired school library media specialist and



**LAL is a national reading promotion program of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, presented in partnership with Target and affiliate state centers for the book.**



## UPCOMING FEATURE: HOOCH SUBMITTED BY MARY MILLER

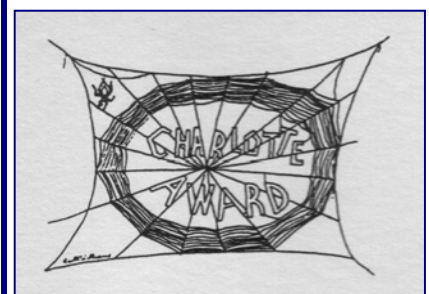
Author Mike Peterson and illustrator Christopher Baldwin have collaborated on a new serial story, *Hooch*. It tells the story of a young boy who has to make a choice between the allure of easy money and doing what is right. The setting is northern New York during the 1920s Prohibition. This 9 chapter story is completely free to newspapers

because of the support of the New York Newspapers Foundation and NYSUT. The teaching guide, student worksheets, audio podcasts, and a link to the author's blog are all included on my serial story webpage at: <http://www.nynpa.com/nie/nieserial.html>

Some newspapers are offering web access for

teachers who would like to follow the story but their local newspaper is not opting to run the story in-print or online should contact me via email:

[mmiller@nynpa.com](mailto:mmiller@nynpa.com)



Who will the next Charlotte Award nominees be? A special presentation at our upcoming conference in Saratoga, NY will be made by the Charlotte Committee where the new ballot will be announced.



**NEW YORK STATE  
READING  
ASSOCIATION**  
Chartered by the International Reading Association

**NEW YORK STATE  
READING ASSOCIATION**

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- Proofreaders: Debbie Howlett  
Jerry Peters  
Sue Smith



**NYSRA Conference 2011**

New York State Reading Association

2011 Conference

April 3—5

Saratoga Springs, NY

***Connecting Multiple Literacies***

Check our website, [www.nysreading.org](http://www.nysreading.org)  
to watch a sneak preview and sign up today!



This coupon is good for  
one **FREE**  
**Silent Auction Ticket**

NYSRA Conference

April, 2011

Silent Auction

located in the

Exhibit Hall.