April 2009



Center for the Book Newsletter

The Center for the Book's networks of state centers and reading promotion partners extend the reach of the national center far beyond the programs it sponsors in the Washington area. The national center in the Library of Congress has established this monthly newsletter to serve as a forum for all Center for the Book activities. We want to tell you what we are doing in Washington and around the country to support our mission of promoting books, reading and literacy.

And we want to hear about all the innovative ways you call attention to the importance of reading. Your updates can serve as year-round "idea exchanges" that augment our annual in-person Idea Exchange meeting, which this year will be May 11-12 at the Library of Congress.

Please send your submissions to glam@loc.gov.

Annual Partners Meeting Attracts Participants from Across the Country

By Guy Lamolinara

Every year, the more than 80 organizations that make up the reading promotion partnership network of the Center for the Book gather in Washington at the Library to relate what they have been doing during the past year, to exchange ideas and to find new avenues for collaboration among their partners in reading and literacy promotion.

And they get only about 10 minutes to do so.

Such is the popularity and usefulness of these one-day meetings that nearly 40 organizations sent representatives to the Library for this "idea exchange" on March 9. Participants came from as close as Washington, D.C., and as far away as California.

John Y. Cole, the Center's director, opened the meeting and told participants about the new Young Readers Center that the Center for the Book will oversee. The YRC marks the first time in the Library of Congress's 209-year history that it will have a special room for young readers. The YRC will officially open sometime this fall and the partners were given a tour of the new facility in the Thomas Jefferson Building following the meeting.

The first participant to speak about her organization was Brenda Randolph of Africa Access, which is "working to expand perspectives on Africa in various ways." Randolph noted that Africa Access has reviews of more than 1,000 children's books on its Web site, as well as an Africa-oriented book club. The organization also works with the Outreach Council of the African Studies Association in announcing the winners of the Children's Africana Book Awards.

Jane Meyers of the Lubuto Library Project said that her organization is helping to build libraries for children in Africa "who are mostly left out of the formal education system because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic."

"The Meridian Center is known an international relations agency but we also have an arts program," said Curtis Sandberg. "We have an exhibition opening March 25 about globalization and urbanization in China. ... We have also mounted exhibitions relating to children's illustration on themes such as children's health or geographical literacy" – the Library's Language of the Land traveling exhibition of 1993-1994, which featured literary maps from around the country.

The Read It Loud Foundation's Tom Ruppanner, one of the newest Center for the Book partners, told how the foundation would be working with the CFB to encourage 5 million parents or caregivers to read to a child each day for 10 minutes. Studies show that reading to children has an enormous positive impact on children's desire to read.

The Children's Book Council "is trying to stay ahead of the times," said Robin Adelson, who proved her point by demonstrating the council's new Web site. The CBC is a co-sponsor of the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature program (www.childrensbookambassador.com/) with the Center for the Book. She called it a "brilliant partnership between the CBC and the Center

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for the Book. I am sad to say that in December 2009, Jon Scieszka's term will be up, but I am thrilled to say that in January 2010 we will have a new ambassador."

Another new partnership, with RedRoom.com, was represented by Ivory Madison and Abraham Mertens. According to Mertens, "Red Room is a community and a social network that supports the entire ecosystem of readers, authors, historians, librarians and educators who work with and love books. ... The site is the online home of more than 1,500 authors and 20,000 members." "It feels like entertainment but you are really getting an education," added Madison, noting that the content on Red Room "is written by professional authors." In addition to featuring well-known authors and their works, "we want to show people great books that they may not know about but would love."

David Kipen of the National Endowment for the Arts spoke about The Big Read project, "which helps cities and towns put on One City-One Book programs." "We have created materials for 30 books so far, so that any city can sponsor these programs."

According to Mary Chute of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, "Most of you probably know us through our grant-making programs to the states. ... We also have leadership grants and 21st century librarianship grants, which encourage robust development of librarians, especially in the field of children's librarianship."

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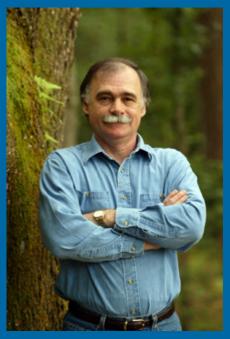
News from the Louisiana Center for the Book

Lt. Gov. Mitch Landrieu has named award-winning author Tim Gautreaux as the recipient of the prestigious Louisiana Writer Award. The Louisiana Center for the Book, part of the State Library of Louisiana, selected Gautreaux for his extraordinary contributions to the state's literary heritage.

"Louisiana is known throughout the world for its rich cultural and literary heritage," said Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu, whose office oversees the State Library. "Tim Gautreaux is part of the tradition of exceptional writers who call Louisiana home. We are proud to honor him with the Louisiana Writer Award."

The Louisiana Writer Award is given periodically to recognize outstanding contributions to the literary and intellectual life of Louisiana. Gautreaux's previous honors include a National Magazine Award, the John Dos Passos Prize, the Heasley Prize, the Southeastern Booksellers Award for Best Novel, the Mid-South Booksellers Award and an NEA Creative Writing Fellowship. He was also the John Grisham Visiting Writer in Residence at the University of Mississippi. His novel *Welding with Children* was named by the *New York Times* as a notable book of the year. *The Clearing*, published by Alfred A. Knopf, was highly acclaimed, and *USA Today* chose it as one of the 10 best books of 2003. Pulitzer Prize-winning author Annie Proulx called *The Clearing* "the finest American novel in a long, long time." Gautreaux's most recent novel, *The Missing*, appeared in 2009 to positive reviews.

The State Library of Louisiana will honor Gautreaux at a ceremony during the seventh annual Louisiana Book Festival, which will be held on Oct. 17, 2009.



Tim Gautreaux was the recipient of the prestigious Louisiana Writer Award.

Credit: Randy Bergeron



Anya Montiel (right) of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian speaks about the museum's Native Writers Series as another participant listens. Credit: John Y. Cole

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Both the NEA and IMLS are partners of the Library of Congress National Book Festival.

Jim Rettig, president of the American Library Association, said that many of the association's 11 divisions are dedicated to reading promotion for young people. "We sponsor Teens Reading Week every October and of course the Caldecott and Newbery prizes for children's literature and illustration. ... The Association for Library Services to Children will develop reading lists on demand. So if you need a book list, contact ALSC."

"We are continuing on with the Literary Landmark program," said Jillian Kalonick, who told participants that the Association of Library Trustees and Advocates had merged with Friends of Libraries USA to form the Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations, or ALTAFF for short. John Cole interjected that the Jefferson Building has been named a Literary Landmark. "Another project is the Books for Babies program," Kalonick continued, "a national literacy program that acquaints parents of newborns with the important role they play in reading aloud to their children. Kits are available that include books as well as 'Baby's First Library Cards,' which can be exchanged for real ones at a local library."

Bruce Curliss of WGBH represented the Boston affiliate of National Public Television. He said that "Masterpiece," formerly known as "Masterpiece Theater," became a reading promotion partner in 2006. "Teachers guides for 'Masterpiece' are available at pbs.org," he said. An exciting new WGBH project, "We Shall Remain," which premiers April 13, "focuses on five pivotal moments in Native American history. … The series also offers an online teachers guide" to the five parts of the series: "After the Mayflower," "Tecumseh's Vision," "Trail of Tears," "Geronimo" and "Wounded Knee."

The National Museum of the American Indian, the Smithsonian Institution's newest museum, is a recent Center for the Book partner. Anya Montiel said she was "very happy" to follow the presentation for "We Shall Remain." "We have a Native Writers Series in which indigenous authors come to the museum to talk about their work," including, Paul Chaat Smith, author of "Everything You Know About Indians Is Wrong," who was a consultant for the "Wounded Knee" segment.

WETA, the Washington Public Television affiliate, was next on the agenda. Tina Chovanec told about the four educational Web sites that WETA manages, including Reading Rockets, "which is for parents and teachers, especially for children who are struggling with reading. ... Our newest site is Adolescent Literacy, a much needed resource for parents and teachers of children in grades 4 through 12."

Tony Fowler of the U.S. Department of Education mentioned that "under the Obama administration's 0-5 plan, Head Start programs will be expanded."

The National Association for the Education of Young People's Susan Friedman said her organization "promotes excellence in early childhood education." In the spirit of the meeting's purpose, she invited participants to partner with her organization.

Karen Mittelman of the National Endowment for the Humanities said that "we don't directly promote books and reading but a lot of what we do does." She



Librarian of Congress James H.
Billington (center) spoke with
NNA President John Stevenson
and NNA Foundation President
Peter Wagner about the state of
newspapers today.



The luncheon gave American PressWork staff members the opportunity to meet with Rep. James Clyburn.



Rep. Clyburn enjoys a conversation with NNA Director JoAnn Reed.

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offered as an example "our Family and Youth Programs in American History and Culture program, which is aimed at getting young people and intergenerational audiences to think together about key books, ideas, themes or moments in American history and literature. We support lifelong learning."

"For those of you who don't know about us," Margie Bell, of the International Reading Association, said, "We focus on state-of-the-art teaching of literacy in all its forms. We have a lot of good friends at this table. Barbara Cambridge of the National Council of Teachers of English works closely with us on a lot of our efforts to make sure teachers are at the absolute top of their game when it comes to teaching literacy. Every year we celebrate International Literacy Day. ... The purpose is to bring as many people as possible who are in the literacy business to network with each other. This year we are co-hosting it with the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress on Sept. 9." She invited everyone at the meeting to participate.

The Wish You Well Foundation is a recent Center for the Book partner. Natasha Collin said her organization is the family foundation of author David Baldacci and his wife, Michelle. "It began in 2003, and our ultimate goal is to eradicate illiteracy in the U.S. We operate mainly by funding other organizations, as many of you here do. One program we have is Feeding Body and Mind, a partnership we have with Feeding America. David Baldacci said he realized that those suffering from illiteracy also frequent our nation's food banks. Although Feeding America is doing a great job, we know that we cannot end the cycle of poverty if people remain unable to read." The program donates books to food banks for distribution to their clients. Many best-selling authors have already joined the effort.

The American Printing House for the Blind's Rebecca Snider told of a book, published by the APH this year, that is a "great resource for teachers, counselors, parents, children and libraries. It explains common eye diseases and their causes in a child-friendly language. ... It helps us promote the independence of individuals who are blind and visually impaired. You might say that removing roadblocks is our business."

"I am so excited to hear what everyone is doing," said Brigid Hubberman of the Family Reading Partnership. The organization is "based in communities and looking to make change with community coalitions, always thinking about innovative ways to connect families with the joy of reading and books." Among

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National Newspaper Association Holds Annual Meeting at Library of Congress

As it has most years, the Center for the Book sponsored the Washington meeting of the National Newspaper Association. The luncheon provides an opportunity for association members to meet with their members of Congress to discuss issues related to the newspaper business. NNA members publish community newspapers. The meeting on March 19 attracted House members such as Rep. James E. Clyburn, D-S.C., the House majority whip.

David Mazor (left) said Reader to Reader is "a grass roots organization that takes books donated by one reader and gets them to another reader." The Meridian Center's Curtis Sandberg had earlier spoken about a future center exhibition on China.

Credit: John Y. Cole

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FRP's projects are Books at Birth, which gives a book to families when their baby is born; and the Read to Me! banners, which offer communities billboard-size banners with colorful images of reading together to encourage and inspire families to read to their children. Read to Me! artwork is also made into a calendar each year reminding families to read together every month.

Barbara Cambridge of the National Council of Teachers of English said that her organization's "weekly e-blast, called In-Box," reaches 100,000 people with information about literacy events around the nation. She invited the Center for the Book partners to send her news of upcoming events for inclusion in In-Box. Another project is Read, Write, Think, a Web site with "lessons on reading, writing and thinking. Teachers, families and parents are using that site in order to learn how to help their children and students with literacy."

Reading Is Fundamental's Rebecca Chrystal-Armstrong said one of the most exciting RIF programs is called Book a Brighter Future, "a multicultural initiative funded by Macy's for the past two years that lets people buy a coupon for \$3 that is good for \$10 off in merchandise." According to Chrystal-Armstrong, the program raised more than \$3 million in 2008. RIF targets underserved populations, in particular Native American, African American and Hispanic communities.

Share Literacy's programs last year, said Bruce Appelgren, helped more than 16,000 children and their teachers in the San Francisco Bay area alone. Hoopoe Books, an imprint of the Institute for the Study of Human Knowledge (an educational nonprofit), publishes traditional children's stories from Afghanistan, collected by Afghan author Idries Shah. The books promote multicultural understanding.

Reader to Reader is "a grass roots organization that takes books donated by one reader and gets them to another reader," said David Mazor. "We are in over 400 schools all across the United States. This year we have been very active trying to get books into homeless shelters." The organization is also actively involved in mentoring programs that link college students with grade school and high school students in low-income neighborhoods.

Pamela Michael then provided an update on a "project with which the Center for the Book is closely involved," said Cole. "It's called River of Words."

"River of Words was founded almost in this room, when Robert Hass was appointed Poet Laureate in 1995," Michael said. "He and I got together to develop a program for K-12 students that would address not only literacy issues but also the shocking disconnect that children in the modern world have with their own home ground." The program is based on local watersheds "because we believe water usage is one of the critical issues of our time." This program encourages students to write a poem or create a piece of art based on their local watersheds. The program is involved in teacher training and is active in 22 countries. Poems are accepted in English as well as Spanish and American Sign Language.

One of the major programs of Big Brother Big Sisters of Texas is a mentoring project that focuses on the children of men and women in prison. "Seventy percent of children whose parents are in prison go to prison themselves," said Olivia Eudaly. She said she was at the meeting to solicit volunteers to join Big Brothers Big Sisters organizations nationwide to "reach these at-risk kids."

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Dead!'," "Traveling the Freedom

Road: From Slavery and the Civil War Through Reconstruction"

and "The Loveliest Woman in

America."

New Center for the Book Webcasts Available

The Center for the Book has sponsored the Books and Beyond author series since 1996, bringing writers from all genres and from across the country and around the globe to the Library to talk about their work. These writers have used the incomparable collections of the Library in their research, and they are more than eager to exalt the treasures they can access here as well as the staff members who bring them to life.

For those who are unable to attend these programs in person, the Center for the Book makes Webcasts of the programs available from its Web site. Please pass along this information during your own programs and feel free to link to the Center for the Book Webcasts page at www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/cyber-cfb.html, where more that 100 diverse and interesting programs are available.

The newest Center Webcasts (available approximately May 1):

- "They Have Killed Papa Dead!": The Road to Ford's Theatre, Abraham Lincoln's Murder, and the Rage for Vengeance," featuring author Anthony Pitch. The assassination of the 16th president is one of the singular events in American history, and historian Anthony Pitch uses primary source material to document and reveal previously unknown facts about Lincoln's death; the murder of his secretary of state, William Seward; and the events that led to the torturous incarceration of John Wilkes Booth's coconspirators. According to Pitch, Lincoln was under threat of assassination from the time of his first inauguration, in 1861. Gen. Winfield Scott, in charge of military defenses in Washington, feared secessionists would kill Lincoln even before his inauguration. And six weeks before shooting Lincoln at Ford's Theatre, Booth was forcibly restrained from approaching the president as he walked through the rotunda of the Capitol to be sworn in for his second term. Pitch details the murder plots that were unsuccessful as well as the successful one by referencing hundred of sources. Most of his research was conducted at the Library of Congress.
- "Traveling the Freedom Road: From Slavery and the Civil War Through Reconstruction," featuring author Linda Osborne. The book draws on interviews with former slaves in the Library of Congress collections to convey the aspirations, sorrows, courage and hopes of ordinary people living through this period. More than 80 archival images complement the text. Major events covered include the rise of the domestic slave trade, the Emancipation Proclamation and the Republican Congress's Reconstruction policies.
- "The Loveliest Woman in America: A Tragic Actress, Her Lost Diaries and Her Granddaughter's Search for Home," featuring author Bibi Gaston. The writer took a remarkable journey to discover the truth about her forgotten grandmother, an actress who was the toast of Broadway in the 1920s-1930s. Rosamond Pinchot was dubbed "the loveliest woman in America" at 23, yet 10 years later she was dead by her own hand. Pinchot was an acclaimed actress, socialite and sportswoman. Shortly after the death of Gaston's father in 2001, she received a cardboard box filled with more than 1,500 pages of her grandmother's diary. Thus began Gaston's quest to tell the story of Pinchot and the tumultuous story of her life.

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"Children can't read books if they can't read. Period," said Carl Hecht of the North Texas Future Fund. He noted that a 1992 study in north Texas showed that 16 percent of those over 16 had difficulty reading. "They had trouble filling out a job application. ... We lost ground from 1992 to 2003. In that year we found the figure had jumped to 21 percent. ... We need to stop talking about illiteracy as just an educational issue and view it in a broader context, as an economic issue, as a community development issue, a health issue, a global competitiveness issue, a financial issue and a criminal justice issue, as we just heard." The North Texas Future Fund acts as a coordinator of literacy activities for all ages in its local area, which has a population of more than 2.6 million.

"We share the concern of the Texas partners who are concerned about the low literacy skills of adult populations, said Jennifer Maloney of the National Coalition for Literacy. Her organization has 26 partners, including the Center for the Book. "We encourage advocacy and promote effective federal policy in Washington. This year we are focusing on the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act, which, according to the law, works to "consolidate, coordinate and improve employment, training, literacy and vocational rehabilitation programs in the United States."

SeniorLearn, offers "the oldest continuous book club on the Internet." Joan Pearson said, "We are primarily a book Web site. She mentioned SeniorLearn's project "where we provide books to prison libraries, working with PEN/Faulkner. SeniorLearn also offers five levels of Latin in a discussion or bulletin board-style format with other students and the instructor. "We attempt to make the classroom experience as close as possible to what you would encounter in a physical bricks-and-mortar classroom."

Becky James of Pi Beta Phi said the fraternity "has been committed to removing the barriers of illiteracy for over 100 years." Working with First Book since 2007, the fraternity has distributed more that 1 million books to children in need. The Champions Are Readers program targets third graders, asking them to read at home for 15 minutes daily with friends and family. A workbook lets students track their progress.

The Center for the Book has been a frequent host of the annual National Newspaper Association Foundation luncheon in Washington, which gives members a chance to meet their members of Congress. Carol Pierce asked attendees in the meeting to "contact your local newspaper – there are 16,000 of them – to tell your local story. They would love to tell it."

Erika Widmaier said that Turning the Page partners with Washington, D.C., schools to provide services such as Community Nights, which is a free dinner followed by a 90-minute workshop "focused on improving literacy and bringing literacy home through activities such as reading aloud to students and building relationships with your children's teachers." While the parents are in the workshops their children are in mentoring activities with students from local colleges. Every family receives three free books at the conclusion of the program.

School Biz Match "might be useful if you are interested in 'scaling up,'" said Robyn Hickey. "It's a Web-based tool that puts K-12 schools in contact with external community organizations such as businesses, PTAs and literacy organizations to help you meet your school's goals, such as improving literacy."



Rozlyn Beitler of The Reading Connection proudly shows off the "Imagination Booms When Children Read" quilt, which celebrates the organization's 20th anniversary. Credit: John Y. Cole

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Rozlyn Beitler of The Reading Connection brought a quilt for her discussion. The quilt celebrates the organization's 20th anniversary after its founding by an Arlington, Va., teacher to serve at-risk families in Northern Virginia and the District of Columbia. In one project, 150 volunteers read to more than 700 children. Following the reading, the children chose a new book to take home. "We also offer workshops for parents to model for them how to share books with their children. Many of them lack the confidence to read to their children." Last year, the TRC held 60 workshops, 27 in Spanish.

Mary Brigid Barrett of the National Children's Book and Literacy Alliance, which is an organization of authors and illustrators, said, "We had an eight-year project that finally came to fruition in September. ... 'Our White House: Looking In. Looking Out' is everything we wanted. A history book based on the White House that is multicultural and multidisciplinary in nature that was full of fiction, nonfiction, poetry and great original art. ... The National Endowment for the Humanities was so impressed with the book that they gave us a grant to develop an accompanying educational Web site." Barrett made special note of all the partners in the room that had helped with the book's success.

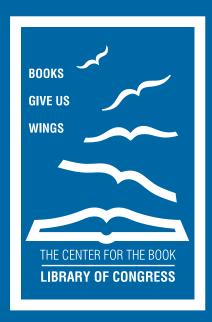
Linda Lancaster of First Book said, "I love this meeting because it has worked so well for First Book in building new partnerships. We are a national literacy organization whose only mission is to put new books in the hands of children from low-income families." In the 17 years of its existence, First Book has distributed more than 65 million books "with the help of most of you sitting at this table." Lancaster said that the First Book Marketplace, the Web site from which organizations can order books, "will soon have 1,500 new titles," many of them award-winning books. "We are in the process of registering groups that should have access to our books. We have 20,000 groups now. She asked meeting participants to help First Book register more worthy organizations and schools.

Acacia O'Connor of the Association of American Publishers said, "We are improving and expanding our reading and literacy programs such as our Get Caught Reading program. In honor of the 10th anniversary of that program we are partnering with the National Basketball Association and the Women's National Basketball Association. We are also partnering with National Geographic Kids in a program in which they send in a card that says they 'Got Caught Reading' for a chance to win a prize."

Anita Merina from the National Education Association spoke about its Read Across America program, which for the past 12 years "has celebrated the joy of reading. The accompanying Web site offers free downloads of four Dr. Suess books. "We just took the Cat in the Hat on tour, reading to 300 to 700 kids on each stop of the tour."

Her final comment was a fitting close for the meeting: "We love our partners. Thank you for making our programs such a success."

(For more information about any of these program partners of the Center for the Book, see their Web sites at www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/partners/.)



Calendar of Events

Throughout the year, the Center for the Book sponsors myriad programs on a wide range of topics. Please note the State Centers meeting on May 11-12. We hope to see you. Most of the Center for the Book's programs are filmed for later Webcasting. We invite you to share this information with libraries, so they may tell their users. Webcasts are available at www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/cyber-cfb.html.

Following is the current Center for the Book calendar for 2009:

APRIL 15 (Wednesday), noon, Mumford Room, Madison Building

Books & Beyond program. Author Paul Dickson will discuss and sign the third edition of his book *The Dickson Baseball Dictionary* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2009). Cosponsored with the Humanities and Social Sciences Division.

APRIL 28 (Tuesday), 3 p.m., Mumford Room, Madison Building

Books & Beyond program. David A. Taylor will discuss and sign his new book, *Soul of a People: The WPA Writers' Project Uncovers Depression America* (John Wiley & Sons, 2009). Co-sponsored with the American Folklife Center.

MAY 11 (Monday), 8:45 a.m.-5 p.m., Mumford Room, Madison Building State Center "idea exchange" meeting (not open to the public).

MAY 12 (Tuesday), 9a.m.-noon, Dining Room A, Madison Building State Center project meetings (not open to the public).

MAY 13 (Wednesday), 10 am-noon, Room 119, Jefferson Building

Awards ceremony for winners of the 2008-2009 River of Words poetry and art contest for young people. Hosted by Robert Hass, U.S. Poet Laureate 1995-1997.

MAY 14 (Thursday), 6 p.m., Mumford Room, Madison Building

Books & Beyond program. John Hessler, Christine Johnson and Wey Gomez, participants in the Library's international symposium "Exploring Waldseemuller's World," will discuss their books. Co-sponsored with the Geography and Map Division.

MAY 19 (Tuesday), noon, Mumford Room, Madison Building

Books & Beyond program. Ralph Eubanks will discuss and sign his new book, *The House at the End of the Road: A Story of Race, Identity and Memory* (HarperCollins, 2009).

JUNE 2 (Tuesday), noon, Dining Room A, Madison Building

Books & Beyond program. Baltimore Sun film critic Michael Sragow will discuss and sign his new book, *Victor Fleming: An American Movie Master* (Knopf Publishing Group, 2008). Co-sponsored with the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division.

SEPTEMBER 16 (Wednesday), **5:30-7:30** p.m., Montpelier Room, Madison Building Literacy Leadership Awards program. Co-sponsored with the National Coalition for Literacy. (Not open to public.)

SEPTEMBER 26 (Saturday), 10 a.m.-5 p.m., National Mall National Book Festival.

OCTOBER 7 (Wednesday), noon, Dining Room A, Madison Building

Books & Beyond program. Tony Lester will discuss and sign his new book, *The Fourth Part of the World: The Race to the Ends of the Earth and the Epic Story of the Map That Gave America Its Name* (Free Press, 2009). Co-sponsored with the Geography and Map Division.

OCTOBER 20 (Tuesday), noon, Mumford Room, Madison Building

Books & Beyond program. Leonard Marcus will discuss and sign his new book, *Don't Make Me Laugh: Conversations with Writers of Comedy* (Candlewick Press, 2009). National Ambassador for Young People's Literature Jon Scieszka will be a special guest.

