

NLLN Continuing Education Scholarship Reports for 2008/2009

Carol Sibley “IBBY” World Congress 2008 September 7-11, 2008

The following report will enumerate all sessions, tours, and special events attended over the five days of the Congress. This Congress kept participants very busy with numerous sessions during the day, followed by late afternoon evening tours and events.

Sunday, September 7

The opening session was held at Tivoli and featured speeches by Vagn Plenge, President of the Congress, Patricia Aldana, President of IBBY, and Chieko Suemori, from the Nissan Motor Company.

This was followed by a presentation of the Hans Christian Andersen Awards by the Danish Queen Margrethe II. Then, there were acceptance speeches by the two Andersen winners, Jürg Schubiger and Roberto Innocenti.

Monday, September 8

The morning plenary sessions included speeches by Fernando Savater of Spain with a presentation entitled “Narrative Thinking: Stories Fiction and Philosophy.” This was followed by a speech by Torben Weinreich of Denmark entitled “How Children’s Literature Has Reflected Actual History—and How Historical Experiences Have Influenced Stories for Children.”

These formal speeches were followed by a PowerPoint presentation of the IBBY Honour List 2008, which featured the best books from around the world published in the last two years. Seminar sessions were the feature each afternoon. I attended a seminar on Hans Christian Andersen, which included the following speakers and topics:

- “Outsiders in Hans Christian Andersens’s Fairy Tales” by Associate Professor, Ph.D. Vivian Yenika-Agbaw, Pennsylvania , USA
- “The Collateral Damages of War: Radical Transformations of H.C. Andersen’s The Little Match Girl in Contemporary Children’s Literature” by Associate Professor Jina Kalogirou & MA, Phd and author Sofia Paraschou, Greece
- “12 Minutes with H.C. Andersen” by Illustrator Lilian Brøgger, Denmark
- “Hans Christian Andersen” (an overview) by Author Louis Jensen, Denmark.

The second seminar session I attended was “The Hans Christian Andersen Awards and the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.” This session was moderated by Katherine Paterson, who has won both awards. Members of both juries provided an overview and background on each award.

In the evening I attended an event at a public library, the Ballerup Municipality. The children’s room in this public library was extraordinary. I took many photographs!

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Tuesday, September 9

The morning plenary sessions were given by Michèle Petit of France with a presentation entitled "Children's Reading in Times of Crisis," Grete Haagenrud of Norway speaking about "Children at War: A Story from Norway," and Josefine Ottesen of Denmark with a presentation entitled "Recreating the Story of Your Life: How to Overcome Cruelty."

These were followed by a late morning presentation entitled "Cultural Heritage Reflected in Literature for Children" by Ana Maria Machado of Brazil. Then, the two IBBY-Asahi Prize-winning projects were highlighted. The Asahi Shimbun newspaper company sponsors the Award. It is given biennially to two groups or institutions whose activities are judged to be making a lasting contribution to reading promotion programs for children and young people. The 2008 winners were from Laos and Rwanda.

I attended seminar sessions in the afternoon. I presented at the seminar entitled "Literary Awards." This seminar featured:

- "Aesthetic Quality Between Text and Readers" by Beth Juncker, Denmark
- "Stories, Jane Addams and Social Justice" by Assistant Professor Susan C. Griffith, Ph.D., Michigan USA
- "New Book Awards: Best Picture Books for Reading Aloud" by Professor Carol Hanson Sibley, MN, USA
- "Celebrate a New Children's Literature Award Encouraging Environmental Stewardship: The Green Earth Book Award" by Assistant professor, Ph.D. Patricia Dean & Associate professor, Ph.D. Ernest Bond, MD, USA

The second seminar of the afternoon was about illustrations with the following presentations:

- "Empowering Images -- Visual Re-telling of Myths, Legends and Fairy Tales -- the Epic of Gilgamesh" by Filmmaker, author & illustrator Ludmila Zeman, Canada
- "The Immigrant Experience in Shaun Tan's *The Arrival*" by Senior lecturer, Dr. John Foster, Australia
- "Picturing Hard Times: A Critical Discussion of the Role of Illustration and Book Design in Telling War Stories" by Illustrator Kathryn E. Shoemaker, Canada
- "The Intersection of Children's and Teachers' Interest in Picture Storybooks Based Solely on Illustrations" by Dr. Linda M. Pavonetti and Mrs. Anne Hotz, MI, USA
- "Childhood Represented in Japanese Picture Book Magazines" by Professor Tomoko Masaki, Japan
- "More" by Illustrator Helle-Vibeke Jensen, Denmark.

In the evening the City Council of Copenhagen hosted a reception for Congress participants at the Copenhagen City Hall. I had the unexpected pleasure of conversing for about an hour with U.S. author Katherine Paterson and her husband John.

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Wednesday, September 10

Presenters & topics for the early morning plenary sessions included: "The Relevance of Myths and Legends in Contemporary Thai Children's Literature" by Jane Vejajiva, Thailand; "Stories Told by & for Children in Today's Society: The Palestinian Experience" by Sharif Kanaana, Palestine; and "Let's Share the Dream: Stories for Children in Angola" by Ondjaki (Ndlu de Almeida), Angola.

The late morning plenary sessions included: "Freedom of Speech vs. Cultural Sensitivity: Balancing the Right to Create Freely vs. the Need of People to be Respected" by Rukhsana, Canada; "Do You Remember Diogenes?" by Mats Wahl, Sweden; and "Orbis Pictus: Drawn into the World" by Peter Sis, USA.

In the afternoon, I toured the Danish Centre for Children's Literature with other conference participants and in the evening attended the closing ceremony and farewell dinner.

Thursday, September 11

In the morning I joined other conference participants to tour the Royal Danish Library, which is the national library of Denmark. This included an extensive tour of the "Black Diamond," which was added on to the main library in 1999. This has become a very popular Library for research. It is located on the waterfront and the shape suggests a "black diamond" with lots of glass and panoramic views of the waterfront.

As part of the Congress, I was paired up with a Danish children's literature specialist for a lunch in her home. I visited Lea Thume, who recently completed her master's thesis in the English languages program at Copenhagen University. Her thesis was entitled "Laura Ingalls Wilder's Little House Books in Danish Translation." This made a good discussion point!

General Comments:

Thank you so much for providing me with funds to help pay for this fabulous Congress. I learned so much about international children's literature and networked with people from around the world. I also was very pleased to have the opportunity to present a seminar session and share information with an international audience about the MSUM Library's Comstock Reading Aloud Initiative.

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