

The Maryland Blue Crab Young Reader Award is given out annually by the Children's Services Division of the Maryland Library Association.

The purpose of the award is:

To identify and promote the best fiction and nonfiction books published at the K-2nd grade reading level and at the 2nd-4th grade reading level, both for children reading at grade level and for reluctant older readers.

To provide teachers, librarians, and caregivers with a resource list of excellent books for beginning readers.

To encourage publishers, authors, and illustrators to create high quality books for beginning readers

The members of the 2005 Maryland Blue Crab Young Reader award were:

Kathy Kirchoefer, Chair, Prince George's County Memorial Library System

Nancy Balz, Montgomery County Public Library

Kit Bloom, Maryland State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

Jennifer J. Fesche, Harford County Public Library

Melissa Harrah, Harford County Public Library

Marcie Hart, Carroll Community College

Sue Gibbs, St. Mary's County Memorial Library

Patricia Keogh, Goucher College

Carrie Willson-Plymire, William M. Brish Library



Maryland Blue Crab Young Reader Award 2005 Winners



Beginning to Read Fiction

Blue Crab Young Reader Award Winner for 2005

*Weeks, Sarah. **Baa-Choo!** HarperCollins, 2004.*

This “I Can Read” book tells the tale of Sam, a lamb who can’t finish his sneeze. In rhyming and pleasantly repetitive text, the story of Sam and his helpful friends progresses until Sam is able to finish his sneeze in grand fashion. Engaging and vibrantly colored illustrations also help draw young readers into a story that they can easily relate to.

Other noteworthy beginning reader fiction titles:

Aboff, Marcie. **The Giant Jelly Bean Jar.** Dutton Children’s Books, 2004.

Every weekend the owner of the local candy store has a contest. Whoever can guess the answer to his riddle wins a jar full of jelly beans. Shy Ben always knows the answer but never raises his hand to guess. At the store’s one-year anniversary celebration, the jelly bean jar is extra large. Will Ben be able to raise his hand and give the answer loud and clear? Kids of all ages will enjoy the suspense.

Cazet, Denys. **Minnie and Moo: The Attack of the Easter Bunnies.** HarperCollins Publishers, 2004.

Farmer Brown believes he is getting too old to be the Easter Bunny so it is up to cow friends Minnie and Moo to find a replacement for him. Imagine an Easter Rooster, an Easter Pig, or even an Easter Turkey! Lively illustrations add to the humor of this enjoyable read.

Klier, Kimberly Wagner. **Firefly Friend.** Children’s Press, 2004.

From dusk to bedtime, a child follows a firefly around the yard. What can its blinking mean? Told in verse with charming illustrations, the book conveys the quiet wonder of a summer evening.

George, Olivia. **Copy Cat.** Children’s Press, 2004.

Copy Cat can’t keep up with the bigger cats in the household but finds a way to make them want to emulate *him*.

Hill, Susan. **Ruby Bakes a Cake.** HarperCollins Publishers, 2004.

Ruby Raccoon doesn’t know how to bake a cake, so she asks her friends for advice. All of her friends suggest special ingredients to add, such as wiggly worms and snails. Ruby takes all of the advice and the result is an inedible cake, which all her friends staunchly praise. The pastel illustrations are as sweet as the story.

Krensky, Stephen. **Bubble Trouble.** Aladdin Paperbacks, 2004.

A little boy in the bathtub is enjoying the bubbles but, before you know it, the bubbles are everywhere and we have bubble trouble! Wacky illustrations and few words make this an engaging first read.

Other noteworthy transitional nonfiction titles include:

Abraham, Philip. **Cars.** Children’s Press, 2004.

Cars takes a thorough look at the history of automobiles in the United States, complete with historical photographs. Reluctant readers with an automotive fascination will enjoy this informative, attractive book.

Arnold, Eric. **Race Into Space.** Random House Books for Young Readers, 2004.

Space is said to be the last frontier, and the idea of exploring space fires the imagination of young people. Author Eric Arnold invites kids to imagine future possibilities, like going to an orbiting sports complex or participating in zero gravity games. The short chapters deal with the history of space travel and include the people and animals that have traveled there. Information about the solar system is also included.

Buckley, James Jr. **Space Heroes: Amazing Astronauts.** Dorling Kindersley Publishing, 2004.

This DK Reader shares the story of space exploration from the first rockets of the 1950’s to the Columbia disaster in 2003. With a focus on the people who have been involved in the space program, the author describes the diverse men and women who have journeyed outside the earth’s atmosphere. Large, clear type, and a balanced, pleasing layout of text and photos add to the reading appeal.

Davis, Gibbs. **First Kids.** Random House Books for Young Readers, 2004.

Being a child of the President of the United States and living in the White House makes you a “First Kid”. This book tells the reader about some of the amusing antics of young people who have graced the halls of one of our most famous homes.

Hall, Kirsten. **Kids in Sports: A Chapter Book.** Children’s Press, 2004.

In four chapters, readers discover the stories of four young people who have proved that kids can do anything they set their minds to. The book uses clear, large type and primarily full-color photos to tell the stories of these young people who have successfully faced challenges and not given up.

Holub, Joan. **Why Do Snakes Hiss?** Puffin Books, 2004.

Vibrant, lifelike photographs and text in a question-answer format will make this an engaging book for young readers whether or not they are fans of snakes, lizards, or turtles. Difficult words are spelled phonetically, and the text is large and easy-to-read.

Markle, Sandra. **Spiders: Biggest! Littlest!** Boyds Mill Press, 2004.

With stunning photographs and engaging informative text, this book is an absorbing read even for arachnophobes. What are the advantages of being a big spider? A little spider? Read this book to find out. Includes a map of where the spiders in the book reside so you know what to look out for!

party was only a little nauseating, but Mr. Klutz bungee jumping from the school roof? How the students rope in their principal makes for hilarious reading.

Haas, Jessie. **Scamper and the Horse Show**. Greenwillow Books, 2004.

This delightful book intertwines facts about local horse shows with a story about a horse named Scamper attending his first show. Accurately portraying the personalities and activities of horses and children at an equestrian event makes this an appealing read.

Howe, James, adapted by Heather Henson. **The Vampire Bunny**. Atheneum, 2004 (Ready-to-Read adaptation of Bunnacula by James and Deborah Howe).

One dark and stormy night, the Monroe family finds a little black-and-white rabbit at a Dracula movie. They take him home and name him Bunnacula. The family dog, Harold, thinks the bunny is cute, but Chester the cat is convinced that Bunnacula is a vampire! Readers will zip through the seven lively chapters to discover Bunnacula's true nature.

Jinkins, Jim. **Pinky Dinky Doo: Where are My Shoes?** Random House, 2004.

Pinky Dinky Doo, an imaginative young girl, tells her little brother and her pet guinea pig a very silly story about a mixed-up school day when everyone wore food for shoes. The combination of photography with digital coloring and compositing creates a lively cartoonish effect for this over-the-top tale told with humor and interactive features suited to its young audience.

Steinberg, David. **Grasshopper Pie and Other Poems**. Grosset & Dunlap, 2004.

What exactly is grasshopper pie? What happens when an elephant sneezes? Even the most reluctant readers will enjoy this delightfully silly book with zany illustrations and story in rhyme.

Tripp, Valerie. **Good Sport Gwen**. Turtleback Books, 2004.

Gwen, a good sport on the soccer field, is a bad loser during the class spelling bee. Frustrated and angry over losing, Gwen learns from her teacher and her classmates how to be a good sport no matter the playing field. The book includes notes for parents on teaching good sportsmanship as well as activities to encourage good sportsmanship.

Transitional Nonfiction

Blue Crab Young Reader Award for 2005

*Goodman, Susan E. and Michael Doolittle. **Choppers!** Random House, 2004. Whether you call them choppers or helicopters, these amazing machines go places and do things that planes can't. In clearly written concise chapters accompanied by exciting color photos that extend the drama of the text, Goodman tells the history, design and capabilities of this versatile aircraft. Readers are sure to be captivated learning all that choppers can do from battling blazes to rescuing animals and people.*

Labatt, Mary. **Sam Gets Lost**. Kids Can Press, 2004.

White and fluffy Puppy Sam jumps out of Joan and Bob's car to explore. When Puppy Sam is finished exploring, she discovers that her owners are now missing! With word repetition and watercolor illustrations that provide helpful clues, beginning readers are sure to enjoy Sam's adventures.

McMullan, Kate. **Pearl and Wagner: Three Secrets**. Dial Books for Young Readers, 2004.

Secrets can be fun unless you're not in on it! Best friends Pearl and Wagner share and don't share secrets during trips to the ice cream factory and the amusement park, and learn that being brave is always easier when you're with a friend. Children will relate to this story of friendship and overcoming fears.

Milgrim, David. **Swing Otto Swing!** Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2004.

In this latest book about a busy little robot, Otto wants to learn to swing like his monkey friends Flip and Flop. Though Flip and Flop give Otto lots of swinging tips, Otto has one mishap after another. Readers will admire Otto's persistence and his ingenious solution to the problem of how to become airborne. Playful illustrations help tell the story in this perfect selection for very beginning readers.

Packard, Mary. **The New Baby**. Children's Press, 2004.

A boy is jealous of his new baby brother until Mommy gives him a hug and he finds a way to make the baby smile. This familiar story of the arrival of a new sibling, told in rhyming text accompanied by colorful, breezy watercolors, is an ideal choice for new readers.

Rylant, Cynthia. **Henry and Mudge and the Funny Lunch**. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2004.

In this episode of the popular series about a boy and his very large dog, Henry and his dad make a special treat for Mom on Mother's Day--a pineapple sofa! The warm illustrations help convey this story celebrating a special occasion in family life.

Rylant, Cynthia. **Mr. Putter and Tabby Write the Book**. Harcourt, 2004.

Mr. Putter has decided to while away the winter by being a writer. Eating snacks and napping interrupt his progress while Tabby, his faithful cat, is ever nearby for companionship and support. Simple vocabulary combined with warm pencil and watercolor illustrations make this a delightful first book.

Beginning to Read Nonfiction

Blue Crab Young Reader Award for 2005

*Clarke, Ginjer. **Platypus!** Random House Books for Young Readers, 2004. Clarke gives the reader a lot of information in just a few words in this entertaining true book about an animal that may be unfamiliar to young readers.*

Other noteworthy beginning reader nonfiction titles:

Bauer, Marion Dane. **Clouds**. Aladdin, 2004.

Watercolor illustrations accompany the text of this book, which tells how clouds form, what weather effects they produce, and how to identify different types. Bonus facts on cloud size, weight, and composition appear at the end of the book. This is simple, well-done book for early readers.

Bauer, Marion Dane. **Rain**. Aladdin, 2004.

Soft, uncluttered watercolors and simple, well-placed text combine in this early reader to explain the concept of the rain cycle. Youngsters will enjoy reading on their own how rain is formed and used by people, animals, and plants. The final page lists seven interesting facts about rain.

Gordon, Sharon. **Guess Who Swoops**. Benchmark Books, 2004.

Simple, clear text and crisp photos of clues about who swoops, on what, and when, provide readers and reading partners with material for conversation and an opportunity to play a guessing game. An indexed vocabulary list helpful to the beginning reader is included.

Kulling, Monica. **Eat My Dust! Henry Ford's First Race**. Random House Books for Young Readers, 2004.

Ford Motor Company started with a man and his dream to build a car that everyone could use, but Henry Ford needed to win the prize money in a 1901 car race to fulfill this dream. Here is an amusing true story of early automobiles and an inventor who took a chance.

Marshall, Pam. **From Idea to Book**. Lerner Publications Co., 2004.

A book by author Nancy Carlson is followed from its conception to publication. The book's photographs will appeal to the readers, as will the accessible writing.

Mitchell, Melanie. **Moon**. Lerner Publications Co., 2004.

Breathtaking photographs complement this book that introduces the beginning reader to our neighbor, the moon. Each page tells an interesting fact about the moon in one simple and easy to read sentence. This title with its simple font and good use of white space is an ideal choice for the youngest of readers.

Trumbauer, Lisa. **What is Gravity?** Scholastic, Inc., 2004.

With the use of color action photographs, children find out that "what goes up must come down." Although you can't see it, gravity is at work in the world around us, explains the text, and children are encouraged to experiment with everyday activities like throwing a ball to prove gravity's existence. Few words and clear photos inform early readers about a somewhat difficult-to-grasp-concept in superb style.

Transitional Fiction

Blue Crab Young Reader Award for 2005

*Nolan, Lucy. **Down Girl and Sit: Smarter than Squirrels**. Marshall Cavendish, 2004.*

Imagine seeing the world through the eyes and noses of two dogs that strive to make the world a safer place from ferocious squirrels, hungry birds, and the neighborhood cat! This book is for dog lovers of all ages who wonder why their pets do what they do. Every page, illustration, and chapter title will bring a smile to the reader's face.

Other noteworthy transitional fiction titles:

Bang-Campbell, Monika. **Little Rat Rides**. Harcourt, 2004.

Little Rat learns to conquer fears and build confidence by riding a big horse and standing up to the bully barnyard goat. Children will enjoy this endearing tale accompanied by humorous gouache and watercolor illustrations.

Byars, Betsy, Betsy Duffey, and Laurie Myers. **The SOS File**. Henry Holt and Company, 2004.

Teacher Mr. Magro is giving his students extra credit for writing stories about their biggest emergencies. He tells his students that all but one of the stories will receive extra credit. As readers ponder which story won't get the extra credit, they will be entertained, intrigued, or moved by each of the students' tales.

Colfer, Eoin. **The Legend of Spud Murphy**. Miramax Books: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004.

So you think libraries are happy, colorful places with friendly, helpful librarians? Think again! Just ask the two brothers who are given a summer ultimatum by their parents to frequent the public library. Parents think the librarian, Mrs. Murphy, is a sweet old lady, but the boys know about the spud-shooting gun she keeps in her desk to keep the kids in line. Witty dialogue and cartoon-like illustrations will keep readers laughing until the end.

Guest, Elissa Haden. **Iris and Walter and the Substitute Teacher**. Harcourt, 2004.

Iris confronts new challenges when her grandfather unexpectedly appears in a new role as her substitute teacher. Sharing Grandpa is not something Iris wants to do. But, great news, Miss Cherry is returning tomorrow! This book has clear text with a vocabulary appropriate for transitional readers.

Gutman, Dan. **Mr. Klutz is nuts!** HarperTrophy, 2004.

Part of the 'My Weird School' series, this book takes a close look at the school principal, Mr. Klutz. Principal Klutz is always challenging his student body to achieve new goals such as reading a million pages or doing a million math problems. The problem is that his rewards keep getting stranger and more dangerous. The chocolate