FIRST FRIDAY MARCH:
2 MARCH 2012

Presented by Mass Center for the Book in Partnership with Mass Library System
I am in the overflow hotel ... settling into a four-day literary festival that spills over into the city ... and as a member of the program committee for next year’s AWP, I want to work to put libraries front and center during the day and night of the meeting.
First Friday March

Reports from the MassBook Judging Panels
- Children’s/Young Adult
- Poetry

Getting ready for National Poetry Month
- Common Threads
- Mass Poetry Festival programs of interest
- National Poetry Month Programming
MassBook Awards Committee

Katie Baxter, Convener, Children’s/Young Adult Literature (2014)
Laurie A. Cavanaugh, Coordinator, Reading & Discussion Guides (2014)
James R. Kelly, Convener, Nonfiction (2014)
Jan Resnick, Convener, Fiction (2014)
Peter Thornell, Convener, Poetry (2014)
Sunny Vandermark, MLA Liaison (ex officio)
Sharon Shaloo, MCB Director (ex officio)

We shall be recruiting members for other functions in the coming months and forming the Advisory Committee of former judges at that time as well.
Katie Baxter: Guest Presenter for the day:

Good morning Sharon and everyone. On behalf of the Children’s/YA panel of judges I’m delighted to be able to put the spotlight on several titles in the pile of 80 or so books we’ve been reading. What’s made the process fun is that we never know how the Massachusetts connection is going to hit us. Sometimes, it’s obvious the author, illustrator or publisher are Massachusetts-based. Other times, there’s an obvious, or not-so-obvious theme, setting or experience that touches our Massachusetts sensibilities.
No matter what the Massachusetts element is, this morning we are looking to each book not only for its quality as a fine book in the hands of individual readers, but also as a catalyst for interaction in libraries. In the next ten minutes, I won’t be giving away any of our final decisions, but I will be sharing with you perspectives and ideas that have bubbled up as we’ve handled the books. I’ll be considering specific titles as good candidates for your library storytimes, as inspirations for crafts and displays, for learning adventures & projects in classrooms and libraries, and for fun read alouds during April’s upcoming National Poetry Month.

Before digging into the pile, I should mention that our panel is considering a breadth of reading experiences. We’re reading fiction and non-fiction for children, tweens and young adults. I’ll try to make sure I cover the spectrum in this spotlight since the 2012 nominees hold possibilities for programs, projects and poetry for all ages of youth.
For Programs with “MASSAppeal” Consider……
for Storytimes, Special Events, Holidays, Crafts and More…

**Programs:** Let’s consider books that will help you plan those terrific library programs.  
**For infant and toddler storytimes:** Include Patricia MacLachlan’s *Lala Salama: a Tanzanian Lullaby*. While you may find that the text is a little too intricate for your smallest listeners, you can weave some magic by rhythmically looking at the soothing illustrations and repeating the refrain “lala salama, little one.” For some of you, this could become your “closer.”

Take a look, too, at Adam Gudeon’s *Me and Meow*. Your toddlers will help you read the story thanks to the kid-friendly, very concrete illustrations about a girl and her cat who share everything about their day.

**Chapter Books:** Most of us experience Mo Willems’ *Elephant and Piggie* series as tender fun. In this pile, we have stories about sharing, feeling different, and the chances of unlikey outcomes. Leo Landry’s *Grin and Bear It* surprises us with its clever twist at the end and message that sometimes there’s more than one path to our dreams.

**Earth Day is coming up:** Here are three titles for youngsters to promote and display in public and school libraries:

*Wilbur the Zucchini-Eating Dragon* by Justine St. John and published by Sweet Dreams in
East Bridgewater. This caught our eye for both the fun to be had at a farmer’s market AND Wilbur’s credible daring to try different things – for a dragon, he’s very believeable.

Looking for a green theme???? Diane deGroat’s book Ants in Your Pants, Worms in Your Plants! (Gilbert Goes Green) is an excellent choice for families, librarians and teachers who want kids to know that the best ideas start small and simple. Look at this book for nuances about owning your idea, listening to each other, persistence, letting kids pave their own path– there’s lots going on and deGroat seamlessly pulls it all together. This book has double-bang in the program arena, since it ends with a poem – so you can use it for both Earth Day and Poetry Month.

A Place for Fish by Melissa Stewart will be great for storytime and classroom discussion because while each page identifies a bad effect a human habit or decision has had on the habitat of specific fish, the opposite page presents a simple step a kid can take to make a difference for the better.
and re: problem-solving themes in novels for the older kids—Ben Winters’ *The Mystery of Everything*; David Yoo’s *The Detention Club*
**Fun and Thought-Provoking:** Hooray for Amanda & Her Alligator by Mo Willems – is a sweet friendship story that grapples with how we have to not only get used to each other but also make room for new friends. Hot, Hot Roti for Dada-ji by F. Zia includes bright, spicy aromatic colors and a story-within-a-story framed in purple backgrounds. For those who remember Popeye and his fondness for spinach, Dada-ji uses his roti as a source of strength and optimism.

Right now, author Jef Czekaj keeps us chuckling and mesmerized with his clever books: Cat Secrets and A Call for a New Alphabet. All of your readers will catch the wit, subtle problem-solving and humor over the “human” condition that emerge as the stories move to their conclusions.
For older readers: Chasing the Nightbird by Krista Russell; Galaxy Games: the Challengers by Greg R. Fishbone
Dealing with a Day: In our work with children, we share stories to help them prepare for surprises, for special events, for new experiences as well as to spark empathy. Be sure to take a peek at these titles to see if you’ve got a reader for them: David Biedrzycki’s Me and My Dragon; Corinne Demas’ Halloween Surprise; Kate Feiffer’s My Side of the Car; Leslea Newman’s Donovan’s Big Day and Norton Juster’s Neville.

For older readers: Caitlin Kittredge’s The Iron Thorn; Kimberly Marcus’ Exposed (which is told in free verse);
For Projects

A couple of us cannot say enough about Richard Sobol’s work of non-fiction called The Mysteries of Angkor Wat: Exploring Cambodia’s Ancient Temple. In this travelogue, children become Sobol’s best guides and take him on a secret journey that leads to lots of great questions that any young researcher can continue to explore.

For those of you who feel there are never enough spider books, look, if you dare, at the very up close and personal photos in Silk and Venom: Searching for a Dangerous Spider by Kathryn Lasky. Lasky covers the real-life story of a science teacher whose curiosity about spiders takes her around the globe. Knowing about spiders means knowing about geology, biomes, the scientific method and lots of scientific terms. Lasky tells a huge story about a litter critter.

History and Massachusetts: Steer your 5th to 8th grade readers towards Music Was It: Young Leonard Bernstein for a look into the local roots of this important musician with international impact. The author Susan Goldman Rubin is so good about mentioning details of Mattapan, Roxbury, Sharon and other communities so important to Bernstein upraising. A classroom project could be making their own map of local palces mentioned in the book. Even if you have lots of books about the Pilgrims, look at Why Did the Pilgrims Come to the New World: and Other Questions about the Plymouth Colony by Laura
Hamilton Waxman. This is an interesting telling of a well-known story because of the details that happened when the Pilgrims were in Scrooby? Scrooby? right, how many of us know about that? Also, the book has great helpful notes about the original language of these early settlers in America.

**Novel for older readers**: A Million Miles from Boston by Karen Day; Phantoms in the Snow by Kathleen Benner Duble (for those students who research and/or are related to the Tenth Mountain Division.)
Speaking of language, let’s move on to Poetry
Libraries come alive with verse in April thanks to all of the creative ways we think about language as expression, art and story. At first glance, Christine McDonnell’s *Goyangi Means Cat* is a story of a little girl who in a new land with a new family whose sole solace is a Siamese cat. Look closely, however, and you note that the illustrations are visual poems of fabric patterns and Korean characters. Try reading the text as a poem of word lists and new experiences. I think you’ll pull it off as poetry for your listeners. Books with traditional poetry and rhymes are:
Mordicai Gerstein’s *Dear Hot Dog: Poems about Evreyday Stuff*, a book with plenty of vocabulary that will stretch a child’s appreciation for word-building as well as examples of how poems help us figure out answers to Big Questions.
Jane Yolen’s *Birds of a Feather* is an eye-catching book for anyone who wonders about birds. The up-close photos, fact boxes and verse make this a title to display and share on Earth Day and during Poetry Month.
Jane Yolen has been busy this year with verse, because her *Creepy Monsters, Sleepy Monsters: a Lullaby* is a fun read aloud of very few, but extremely lyrical words that will help put a child’s fears of monsters to bed.
For Middle School Book Clubs consider reading aloud a chapter from Lisa Papademetriou’s novel *Siren’s Storms*, a seashore suspense tale with romance, a disappearance and bits of poetry. There’s a bit of love poetry in Coleen Murtagh Paratore’s *Willa with Love*, a story of love on Cape Cod with a boy named JFK.

And, book discussion leaders can be creative and weave in a discussion about the language of obituaries and poetry collections like Edgar Lee Masters’ *Spoon River Anthology* if they choose to discuss Gantos’ Newbery award winning *Dead End* in Norvelt during Poetry Month.
Report from the Poetry Field

Sharon Shaloo, Mass Center for the Book
The Judges are still reading through the selection ... and there are a few titles they haven’t yet reached that I know will rise in their rankings ... but some early words ....
Rosanna Warren lives in JP, is a University Professor at BU, and a very accomplished poet and translator. Poems on friends dying and death; taken from visual art, history, biography. AND ... If you are interested in hearing her read ...
Rosanna Warren, Ghost in a Red Hat

PEN New England invites you to join a conversation with Christopher Lydon & Rosanna Warren

Thursday, April 5, 2012
Upstairs on the Square

5:00 - 5:45 Wine Hour
5:45 - 6:30 Reading

A great kick-off to National poetry month ... Upstairs – above Grendel's in Harvard Sq – Cambridge ... just a block or so from Red Line stop
baseball, childhood, politics, history of Latin America (Puerto Rico, Chile) and experiences of immigrants in New York and other areas. Also, memories and mourning the death of a dear friend. ... Martin is a prof at U Mass Amherst and a great reader.
National Poetry Month

Programming Ideas for April …
Common Threads

http://masspoetry.org/common-threads-2012/

2012 selections:

“The Author to Her Book” — Anne Bradstreet (2012 is the 400th anniversary of her birth)
“The Fire of Drift-Wood” — Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Poem 1129 — Emily Dickinson (tell it slant) (Jane Yolen, My Uncle Emily)
“For the Union Dead” — Robert Lowell
“The Hardness Scale” — Joyce Peseroff
“Horseface” — Sam Cornish
“If see no end in is” — Frank Bidart
“Out at Lanesville” — David Ferry
“Baseball” — Gail Mazur (from Zeppo’s Wife, a MassBook Award winner)
Massachusetts Poetry Festival

- Favorite Poem Reading
- Common Threads Poets – Bidart, Cornish, Mazur, Peseroff, and – perhaps – Ferry
- Youth Poetry Slam Competitions
- Poets with New Books – Sequential Reading
- Tool for Archiving Poetry Slams
- Youth Programming at PEM
- Featured Readers include Robert Pinsky, Maggie Dietz, Nikky Finney, Joy Harjo, Major Jackson, Frank Bidart, Martha Collins, and many more!
- “Poetry in the Stacks: Libraries as Poetry Promotion Partners” (proposed)

April 20 to 22 in Salem, Massachusetts

http://masspoetry.org
Mass Authors with New Books

A few more for your radar screen …
historical novel set in Boston in 1915, where a young woman stands on the cusp of a new
century, torn between loss and love, driven to seek answers in the depths of a crystal ball.
Still reeling from the deaths of her mother and sister on the Titanic, Sibyl Allston is living a
life of quiet desperation with her taciturn father and scandal-plagued brother in an elegant
town house in Boston’s Back Bay. Trapped in a world over which she has no control, Sibyl
flees for solace to the parlor of a table-turning medium.
But when her brother is suddenly kicked out of Harvard under mysterious circumstances
and falls under the sway of a strange young woman, Sibyl turns for help to psychology
professor Benton Derby, despite the unspoken tensions of their shared past. As Benton and
Sibyl work together to solve a harrowing mystery, their long-simmering spark flares to life,
and they realize that there may be something even more magical between them than a
medium’s scrying glass.
From the opium dens of Boston’s Chinatown to the opulent salons of high society, from the
back alleys of colonial Shanghai to the decks of the Titanic, The House of Velvet and Glass
weaves together meticulous period detail, intoxicating romance, and a final shocking twist
that will leave readers breathless.
Praise for The House of Velvet and Glass
“Richly atmospheric, The House of Velvet and Glass transported me to the turn of the
twentieth century and a world changing as rapidly and irrevocably as our own. A gifted
historian and storyteller, Katherine Howe has created a vividly imagined world that made
me want to suspend time, lingering just a bit longer with the characters who live there,
before the whole thing vanished in the clouded glass.”
—Brunonia Barry author of The Lace Reader and The Map of True Places
“The House of Velvet and Glass is an intricate and intimate family portrait, painted against a backdrop of beautifully rendered tales of colonialist Shanghai, the wreck of the Titanic, and upper-crust Boston dabblers in the spirit world in the uneasy days preceding the Great War. I’d ask Katherine Howe for more than this, but it seems churlish to request that she turn the pages for me.”
—Lyndsay Faye, author of The Gods of Gotham and Dust and Shadow

“Katherine Howe follows up her amazing debut with The House of Velvet and Glass, a thoughtful journey into the realms of the supernatural that inhabits its source material with effortless ease and charm. A totally absorbing read peopled with characters who will haunt readers’ minds.”
—David Liss, author of The Twelfth Enchantment and A Conspiracy of Paper
I think he’ll be making some waves this fall: About a month after his book is released, Díaz will be the keynote speaker at Facing Race, the largest national, multi-racial gathering of leaders, educators, journalists, and activists on racial justice. Facing Race is organized by the Applied Research Center, Colorlines.com’s publisher. The conference will take place in Baltimore, MD., November 15-17 2012.
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