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ONCE UPON A CONTEST

Selections from Cape Ann Reads

Featuring

Leslie Galacar, Martha Shaw Geraghty, Marion Hall, Steven Kennedy, Charles King, George King, Michael LaPenna, James McKenna, Barbara McLaughlin, Alexia Parker, Victoria Petway, John Plunkett, Diane Polley, Mary Rhineland, James Seavey, Gail Seavey, Kim Smith, Christina Ean Spangler, Bonnie L. Sylvester, Juni VanDyke, Maura Wadlinger, Betty Allenbrook Wiberg, Kirsten Allenbrook Wiberg, Jean Woodbury, Claire Wyzenbeek

Essex, Mass. (April 2019) – - *Once Upon a Contest* is on the move and coming to Essex!

Inspired by Cape Ann Reads, the country's first children's picture book contest hosted by four public libraries, this travel exhibition brings special attention to award-winning local artists & writers and the art of children's picture books.

"The Cape Ann Reads travelling Art Exhibition is an opportunity for all to see the incredible original works by the authors and illustrators who were recognized through Cape Ann Reads. This literary contest was a feast to the eyes and the winner A Tree in Dock Square, should wear the honor proudly," enthused Deborah French, Director of TOHP Burnham Library.

The special group show was organized and circulated by curator, Catherine Ryan, with support from the **Bruce J Anderson Foundation | The Boston Fund**. Visitors will find picture books created by traditional author-illustrators (individuals who create both text and illustrations), friends and family pairings, repeat partnerships, volunteer matches, self-taught and master artists, storytellers, published authors, and educators. The works on view range from preliminary mock ups and unfinished pages to final published illustrations for original books. They cover diverse themes and points of view and provide glimpses into stories and methodologies. The exhibition includes a reading nook for visitors of all ages.

Repeat viewing is encouraged. The lovely and historic architecture is unique and requires a fresh perspective and installation for *Once Upon a Contest: Selections from Cape Ann Reads* at each stop. Additionally, accompanying events, opening receptions, family programs, and book readings change in each community. Lastly, at each travel stop one artist has been invited to create a NEW site-specific, temporary public art work for the community inspired by *Once Upon a Contest: Selections from Cape Ann Reads*. Bonnie L. Sylvester created the first one for the debut at Cape Ann Museum, an immersive wrap around mural, her first and a first for the museum. Leslie Galacar created a four part series for the entrance and exhibition gallery of the lovely Manchester Historical Museum.

Temporary Public Art in Essex

Alexia Parker's monumental paper collage site specific series "Essex Floats" for TOHP Burnham Library, Essex's stunning landmark building, will open May 4th. Parker illustrated two books recognized by Cape Ann Reads: *Pumpkin Carving* and *Bike's Big Adventure*. Parker resides and works on the North Shore. She is a native of Essex and former Essex teacher.

Special Programming in Essex

The public will have several opportunities to meet the authors and artists in Essex in addition to the reception May 18th. "Friday afternoons are busy days at TOHP Burnham," says Library Director, Deborah French, "perfect for planning extra special family programs like this "Fun Fridays" series with the authors and illustrators featured in the *Once Upon a Contest* exhibit." Our guests include James McKenna and Juni VanDyke who created the *If I were* series (May 10th); Alexia Parker who illustrated books for two authors, *Bike's Big Adventure* and *Pumpkin Carving* (May 17); Barbara McLaughlin author and illustrator *The Long Way Home* (May 31); and Diane Polley and Marion Hall who created *Let's Go Animal Tracks in the Snow*. James McKenna and Diane Polley reside in Essex. Alexia Parker is a native of Essex and a former Essex teacher.

Town of Essex Bicentennial display also on view

The Town of Essex Bicentennial Celebration is underway! In addition to a schedule of monthly events, displays of historical biographies and stories of Essex are featured on the 3rd Floor of this gorgeous Town Hall (where the *Once Upon a Contest* group show will be on display).

ABOUT TOHP BURNHAM LIBRARY

Thomas Oliver Hazard Perry Burnham was born in Essex in 1814, and bequeathed money to the Town of Essex for the purpose of constructing a building which would contain a library, offices and a place of assembly for the townspeople.

The building itself, is a design by Frank Weston. The lower part is built of field stones brought from all over Essex, the hall occupies the second floor, and below are offices and the library. On the tower is a four faced clock, and a ship, Santa Maria, weathervane (suitable for the ship building town) was the gift of Lamont G. Burnham of Essex

The building underwent a renovation in 2015- 2017. An elevator, sprinklers, heating/cooling were done. A third floor was added as a large auditorium space seating over 100. The beautiful unique structure now stands grand above the marsh once again.

ABOUT CAPE ANN READS

Cape Ann Reads came about in 2015 when the four public libraries on Cape Ann --Gloucester Lyceum & Sawyer Free Public Library; Manchester by the Sea Public Library; TOHP Burnham Public Library, Essex; and Rockport Public Library-- began to work together to encourage and highlight community creativity, regional collaboration, and family literacy through a focus on children's picture books. "A passion for writing literature and the arts is one thing that ties all four communities together making Cape Ann Reads a meaningful collaboration between our four libraries and the Cape Ann Museum," explained **Cindy Grove, Director, Rockport Public Library.**

During the first year of implementation, the collaborating public libraries and Cape Ann Museum offered innovative monthly programming and free picture book themed workshops for families and adults as a vehicle for family literacy, a work of art and literature, and a form of engagement and recreation. The vibrant endeavor culminated in a public art call, Cape Ann Creates for Cape Ann Reads. "What an opportunity for a talented individual or individuals to produce a lasting piece of literature with such special meaning," exclaimed **Deborah French, Director, T.O.H.P. Burnham Library,** Essex.

Scores of Cape Ann creatives responded to this open call for a chance to win a first edition printing. In fact, so much interest occurred that a writer's group led by Gloucester Writers Center was established, and volunteer artists and writers stepped up to help people without a partner. Two jury panels selected Gulliver, Honor and Medal books in the spring of 2017:

GULLIVER BOOKS: ****"The Prince of Winter,"* written by Martha Shaw Geraghty and illustrated by John Plunkett; ****"Jimbo and His Mustache,"* written by Steven Kennedy and illustrated by Victoria Petway; ****"The Best Way Home,"* written and illustrated by Barbara McLaughlin; *"Beauty on the Wing,"* written and illustrated by Kim Smith; *"Bike's Big Adventure,"* written by Charles King and illustrated by Alexia Parker; *"Henrietta's Moon Egg,"* written and illustrated by Claire Wyzenbeek; *"If I were a Moose,"* and "If I were a Lion" written by James McKenna and illustrated by Juni Van Dyke; *"Above Water: Three Flood Stories, Four Faiths,"* written by Gail Seavey and illustrated by James Seavey; *"Where in the World is Catherine Abigail?,"* written by Michael LaPenna and illustrated by Leslie Galacar; *"Small Elephant or Small One,"* written by Kirsten Allenbrook Wiberg and illustrated by Betty Allenbrook Wiberg; *"Pumpkin Carving,"* written by George King and illustrated by Alexia Parker. **HONOR BOOKS:** *"Let's Go! Animal Tracks in the Snow,"* written by Diane Polley and illustrated by Marion Hall; *"Why does my dog sniff other dogs' butts? (and other important questions),"* written and illustrated by Mary Rhinelander; *"Faraway Grammie,"* written by Maura Wadlinger and illustrated by Christina Ean Spangler. **MEDAL BOOK:** *"The Tree in Dock Square,"* written by Jean Woodbury and illustrated by Bonnie L. Sylvester

****Received Cape Ann Reads 2017 Kids Compliment Certificate*

The jury panel of adults included librarians, acclaimed children's book author-illustrators and a rare books dealer: Carol Bender, Pat Lowery Collins, Ann Cowman, Kate Strong Stadt, Giles Laroche, Bob Ritchie, Justine Vitale, Anna Vojtech, and April Wanner. Five children served on the kids panel. *The Tree in Dock Square* by Jean Woodbury and Bonnie L. Sylvester was selected as the first Cape Ann Reads Medal book. A reception and book fair was held in Gloucester's City Hall in January 2018 thanks to Mayor Romeo-Theken. Original sculpture trophies of the bespectacled Cape Ann Reads mascot, "Gulliver", by fine artist Jason

Burroughs, were presented to the Honor and Medal book recipients. Cape Ann Reads continues to foster connections among the children's picture book network, and generate business. Six books have been self-published, reviewed, and sold in local stores. Reflecting on this boon, **Sara Collins, Director of the Manchester by the Sea Public Library** said "Cape Ann Reads has been an innovative incubator for authors and illustrators, with the offspring as marvelous and varied as you can imagine in this creative community."

Media inquiries and sponsor opportunities please contact Catherine Ryan, Cape Ann Reads Director (917)584-3019 capeannreads2016@gmail.com

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