

# ***Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award 2008 Nominees***

## **Adam Canfield of the Slash by Michael Winerip**

Late for math club, late for jazz band, late for soccer — Adam Canfield has to be the most overprogrammed middle-school student in America. So when super-organized Jennifer coaxes him to be coeditor of the Slash — Harris Elementary/Middle School's student newspaper — he wonders if he's made a big mistake. Not only do editors get stuck with assigning stories (like an investigative report on the edibility of cafeteria food), but they also have to deal with annoying third graders like Phoebe, always pushing for a front-page slot. But when Phoebe's article on Eddie the janitor leads to a much bigger scoop — an eccentric woman's mysterious gift to the school — Adam and Jennifer rise to the challenge, risking their principal's wrath to uncover some shocking secrets.

## **Chicken Boy by Frances O'Roark Dowell**

Tobin Mccauley's got a near-certifiable grandmother, a pack of juvenile-delinquent siblings, and a dad who's not going to win father of the year any time soon. To top it off, Tobin's only friend truly believes that the study of chickens will reveal...the meaning of life? Getting through seventh grade isn't easy for anyone, son, but when the first day of school starts out with your granny's arrest, you know you've got real problems. Throw on five-day suspension (for defending your English teacher's honor), a chicken that lays green eggs, and a family feud that's tearing everyone to pieces, and you're in for one heck of a ride.

## **Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War Two by Joseph Bruchac**

Throughout World War II, in the conflict fought against Japan, Navajo code talkers were a crucial part of the U.S. effort, sending messages back and forth in an unbreakable code that used their native language. They braved some of the heaviest fighting of the war, and with their code, they saved countless American lives. Yet their story remained classified for more than twenty years. But now Joseph Bruchac brings their stories to life for young adults through the riveting fictional tale of Ned Begay, a sixteen-year-old Navajo boy who becomes a code talker. His grueling journey is eye-opening and inspiring. This deeply affecting novel honors all of those young men, like Ned, who dared to serve, and it honors the culture and language of the Navajo Indians.

## **Crooked River by Shelley Pearsall**

The year is 1812. A white trapper is murdered. And a young Chippewa Indian stands accused. Captured and shackled in leg irons and chains, Indian John awaits his trial in a settler's loft. In a world of crude frontier justice where evidence is often overlooked in favor of vengeance, he struggles to make sense of the white man's court. His young lawyer faces the wrath of a settlement hungry to see the Indian hang. And 13-year-old Rebecca Carver, terrified by the captive Indian right in her home, must decide for

herself what—and who—is right. At stake is a life. Inspired by a true story, *Crooked River* takes a probing look at prejudice and early American justice.

### **Defiance by Valerie Hobbs**

Eleven-year-old Toby Steiner wants to do normal things on his vacation: he wants to hike and race his bike down the hill and learn to fish out on the lake. The last thing he wants is to return to the children's hospital where his painful cancer treatment finally ended. When Toby starts spending time with Pearl, a spunky old woman who lives on a nearby farm, and Blossom, her broken-down cow, he sees all the more reason to keep the new lump on his side a secret from his parents. From Pearl he discovers the beauty of poetry, and from Blossom he just might uncover the meaning of life.

### **Drums, Girls, & Dangerous Pie by Jordan Sonnenblick**

Thirteen-year-old Steven has a totally normal life: he plays drums in the All-Star Jazz band, has a crush on the hottest girl in the school, and is constantly annoyed by his five-year-old brother, Jeffrey. But when Jeffrey is diagnosed with leukemia, Steven's world is turned upside down. He is forced to deal with his brother's illness and his parents' attempts to keep the family in one piece.

### **East by Edith Pattou**

Rose has always felt out of place in her family, a wanderer in a bunch of homebodies. So when an enormous white bear mysteriously shows up and asks her to come away with him--in exchange for health and prosperity for her ailing family--she readily agrees. The bear takes Rose to a distant castle, where each night she is confronted with a mystery. In solving that mystery, she loses her heart, discovers her purpose, and realizes her travels have only just begun.

### **Listening for Lions by Gloria Whelan**

Thirteen-year-old Rachel Sheridan is left an orphan after influenza takes the lives of her missionary parents in British East Africa in 1919. When cruel neighbors take her in, Rachel suspects their intentions may not be honest. Soon, Rachel becomes entangled in a shocking and nefarious plot that takes her away from her beloved East Africa on a lonely and treacherous journey across the ocean. Surrounded by greed and lies, Rachel must rely on her irrepressible spirit and extraordinary wit to weather her incredible adventure. And somewhere along the way, between deception and hope, the truth sets Rachel free and Africa calls her home.

### **The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane by Kate DiCamillo**

Once, in a house on Egypt Street, there lived a china rabbit named Edward Tulane. The rabbit was very pleased with himself, and for good reason: he was owned by a girl named Abilene, who treated him with the utmost care and adored him completely. And then, one day, he was lost. Kate DiCamillo takes us on an extraordinary journey, from the depths of the ocean to the net of a fisherman, from the top of a garbage heap to the fireside of a hoboes' camp, from the bedside of an ailing child to the bustling streets of Memphis. And along the way, we are shown a true miracle — that even a heart of the most breakable kind can learn to love, to lose, and to love again.

### **The Misadventures of Maude March, or, Trouble Rides a Fast Horse by Audrey Coulombis**

Eleven-year-old Sallie March is a whip-smart tomboy and voracious reader of Western adventure novels. When she and her sister, Maude, are orphaned for the second time, they decide to escape their new self-serving guardians for the wilds of the frontier and an adventure the likes of which Sallie has only read about. This time, however, the wanted woman isn't a villain out of a dime novel – it's Sallie's very own sister. Narrated by the irrepressible Sallie, what follows is the rollicking story of what really happened out there on the range. Not the lies the papers printed, but the honest-to-goodness truth of how things went from bad to worse and how two very different sisters went from being orphans to being outlaws-and lived to tell the tale.

### **MVP\*: \*Magellan Voyage Project by Douglas Evans**

Every kid's dream is to be named Most Valuable Player. But how many ever dream that the game is a race around the world (no flying allowed) in just 40 days? That's the challenge Adam Story faces in the Great Global Game. As the player for the \*Magellan Voyage Project, he competes against 23 other players for a four-million-dollar prize! Of course the trackers in red sweat suits and hoodies with their blowguns and sleeping darts don't make things easy. Nor does the nefarious Baron von Sheepsbottom, who will stop at nothing to stop Adam. But it's time to go — the game's afoot!

### **The Old Willis Place: A Ghost Story by Mary Downing Hahn**

Diana and her little brother Georgie have been living in the woods behind the old Willis place, a decaying Victorian mansion, for what already seems like forever. They aren't allowed to leave the property or show themselves to anyone. But when a new caretaker comes to live there with his young daughter, Lissa, Diana is tempted to break the mysterious rules they live by and reveal herself so she can finally have a friend. Somehow, Diana must get Lissa's help if she and Georgie ever hope to release themselves from the secret that has bound them to the old Willis place for so long.

### **The Penderwicks: A Summer Tale of Four Sisters, Two Rabbits, and a Very Interesting Boy by Jeanne Birdsall**

This summer the Penderwick sisters have a wonderful surprise: a holiday on the grounds of a beautiful estate called Arundel. Soon they are busy discovering the summertime magic of Arundel's sprawling gardens, treasure-filled attic, tame rabbits, and the cook who makes the best gingerbread in Massachusetts. But the best discovery of all is Jeffrey Tifton, son of Arundel's owner, who quickly proves to be the perfect companion for their adventures. The icy-hearted Mrs. Tifton is not as pleased with the Penderwicks as Jeffrey is, though, and warns the new friends to stay out of trouble. Which, of course, they will--won't they? One thing's for sure: it will be a summer the Penderwicks will never forget.

### **Princess Academy by Shannon Hale**

Miri lives on a mountain where, for generations, her ancestors have quarried stone and lived a simple life. Then word comes that the king's priests have divined her small village the home of the future princess. In a year's time, the prince himself will come and

choose his bride from among the girls of the village. The king's ministers set up an academy on the mountain, and every teenage girl must attend and learn how to become a princess. Miri soon finds herself confronted with a harsh academy mistress, bitter competition among the girls, and her own conflicting desires to be chosen and win the heart of her childhood best friend. But when bandits seek out the academy to kidnap the future princess, Miri must rally the girls together and use a power unique to the mountain dwellers to save herself and her classmates.

### **The Ruins of Gorlan by John Flanagan**

He had always wanted to be a warrior. The Rangers, with their dark cloaks and shadowy ways, made him nervous. The villagers believe the Rangers practice magic that makes them invisible to ordinary people. And now fifteen year-old Will, always small for his age, has been chosen as a Ranger's apprentice. What he doesn't realize yet is that the Rangers are the protectors of the kingdom. Highly trained in the skills of battle and surveillance, they fight the battles before the battles reach the people. And as Will is about to learn, there is a large battle brewing. The exiled Morgarath, Lord of the Mountains of Rain and Night, is gathering his forces for an attack on the kingdom. This time, he will not be denied.

### **Shakespeare's Secret by Elise Broach**

When Hero starts sixth grade at a new school, she's less concerned about the literary origins of her Shakespearean name than about the teasing she's sure to suffer because of it. So she has the same name as a girl in a book by a dusty old author. Hero is simply not interested in the connections. But that's just the thing; suddenly connections are cropping up all over, and odd characters and uncertain pasts are exactly what do fascinate Hero. There's a mysterious diamond hidden in her new house, a curious woman next door who seems to know an awful lot about it, and then, well, then there's Shakespeare. Not to mention Danny Cordova, only the most popular boy in school. Is it all in keeping with her namesake's origin-just much ado about nothing? Hero, being Hero, is determined to figure it out.

### **The Schwa Was Here by Neal Shusterman**

Anthony, also known as "Antsy," is fascinated by "The Schwa Effect"--the fact that no one ever sees Calvin Schwa. Even when acting weird and dressed like a total freak, The Schwa is only barely noticed. The two boys form a partnership and get away with all kinds of mischief, from conducting experiments at school to confounding opponents on the basketball court. When The Schwa senses that even Antsy is beginning to lose sight of him, he vows to do something that will make him so visible, no one will ever forget him. Any kid who's ever felt unnoticed will identify with Schwa and Antsy and their quest for notoriety.

### **Thunder from the Sea by Joan Hiatt Harlow**

It's 1929 and thirteen-year-old Tom Campbell has always wanted a real family with a real house and a dog of his very own. Since he was three years old, the only home he has ever known has been the Mission orphanage. When he is sent to live and work with fisherman Enoch and his wife, Tom finally sees his dream within reach. And when

he rescues a Newfoundland dog in the middle of a terrifying squall, Tom feels as if both he and the dog, which he names Thunder, have found a place to call home at last. But when Enoch's wife becomes pregnant and it looks like Thunder's owner might be found, Tom's wonderful new world is turned upside down. Will the Murrays still want Tom? And will Tom be forced to give up his beloved Thunder?

### **Worth by A. LaFaye**

After Nathaniel's leg is crushed in an accident, his father brings home an orphan boy, John Worth, to help work the fields. Worth has come to Nebraska from New York City on the Orphan Train, which brings homeless children west to find new lives. Nathaniel feels increasingly jealous of the boy who has taken over not only his work but the attention of his father, who has barely spoken to him since his injury. In school for the first time he is far behind even his youngest classmates, and he feels as useless there as he does at home. Meanwhile, Worth is still grieving for his family and his old life. As the farm chores prevent him from going to school, he also resents losing his dream of an education and a good job. And for all the work he does, he knows he will never inherit the farm that he's helping to save. But a battle between ranchers and farmers — and a book of Greek mythology that Nathaniel reads aloud each evening — forges a connection between the two boys, who begin to discover that maybe there is enough room on the farm, and in the family, for both of them.

### **Yankee Girl by Mary Ann Rodman**

The year is 1964, and Alice Ann Moxley's FBI-agent father has been reassigned from Chicago to Jackson, Mississippi, to protect black people who are registering to vote. Alice finds herself thrust into the midst of the racial turmoil that dominates current events, especially when a Negro girl named Valerie Taylor joins her sixth-grade class -- the first of two black students at her new school because of a mandatory integration law. When Alice finds it difficult to penetrate the clique of girls at school she calls the Cheerleaders (they call her Yankee Girl), she figures Valerie, being the other outsider, will be easier to make friends with. But Valerie isn't looking for friends. Rather, Valerie silently endures harassment from the Cheerleaders, much worse than what Alice is put through. Soon Alice realizes the only way to befriend the girls is to seem like a co-conspirator in their plans to make Valerie miserable. It takes a horrible tragedy for her to realize the complete ramifications of following the crowd instead of her heart.