

For more information, contact:
Kathe Pinchuck, Chair
Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee
Association of Jewish Libraries
(973) 777-4504
chair@sydneytaylorbookaward.org
www.SydneyTaylorBookAward.org



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MEDIA RELEASE

**2010 SYDNEY TAYLOR BOOK AWARDS
ANNOUNCED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LIBRARIES**

(New York—January 11, 2010) **April Halprin Wayland** and **Stephane Jorisch**, author and illustrator of ***New Year at the Pier: A Rosh Hashanah Story***, **Robin Friedman**, author of ***The Importance of Wings***, and **Margarita Engle**, author of ***Tropical Secrets: Holocaust Refugees in Cuba***, are the 2010 winners of the prestigious Sydney Taylor Book Award.

The Sydney Taylor Book Award honors new books for children and teens that exemplify the highest literary standards while authentically portraying the Jewish experience. The award memorializes Sydney Taylor, author of the classic *All-of-a-Kind Family* series. The winners will receive their awards at the Association of Jewish Libraries convention in Seattle this July.

Wayland and Jorisch will receive the 2010 gold medal in the Sydney Taylor Book Award's Younger Readers Category for ***New Year at the Pier: A Rosh Hashanah Story***, published by **Dial Books for Young Readers, a division of Penguin Young Readers Group**. The Jewish New Year is a special time of year, with a change in seasons, symbolic foods and other traditions. It is also the time for introspection and the ritual of *Tashlich*, when sins are symbolically cast into a body of flowing water. Izzy thinks about things for which he is sorry. He "compares *Tashlich* to cleaning out his toy closet, an example of the wonderful way this story conveys to children, at their own level, a contemporary version of the healthy Jewish way we start fresh at the beginning of each new year," commented Susan Berson, a member of the Award Committee. Incoming Committee Chair Barbara Bietz noted that the "whimsical watercolor illustrations are a perfect paring for the delightful prose."

Friedman will receive the 2010 gold medal in the Sydney Taylor Book Award's Older Readers Category for ***The Importance of Wings***, published by **Charlesbridge**. Ah, the drama of being in eighth grade! There's the boy you have a crush on who likes someone else. There's getting dressed in gym class and being picked last for teams. There's your parents, who are so unlike Mike and Carol Brady and not even like Ma and Pa Ingalls. And there's your hair, that won't go in the popular feathered back style that everyone else is wearing. When an Israeli girl moves next door, Liat "not only shows Roxanne how to give her hair 'wings,' but she helps her 'wing' her way toward maturity and self-esteem," asserted Debbie Colodny, a member of the Award Committee. Another Award

Committee member, Kathy Bloomfield, affirmed this praise: "With appealing and affecting writing, Ms. Friedman grabs the reader immediately and takes her on a journey of self-discovery, confidence building and empowerment that will leave her hoping for a sequel." Friedman's book about male bulimia, ***Nothing***, was named an AJL Notable Book for Teen Readers last year.

Engle will receive the 2009 gold medal in the Sydney Taylor Book Award's Teen Readers Category for ***Tropical Secrets: Holocaust Refugees in Cuba***, published by **Henry Holt, an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group**. After Kristallnacht, many Jews tried to leave Germany, but other countries refused the refugees. Cuba agreed to take in some of these people, but at a price. The tension of this era is seen through the eyes of several of the people affected: Daniel, a thirteen-year-old German boy whose parents put him on a boat to "the Americas," hoping to save his life; Paloma, the daughter of a Cuban official who prefers a dovecote to her home; David, who escaped the pogroms of Russia, sells ice creams, and helps the new refugees; and Gordo, Paloma's father, who is profiting by charging exorbitant fees for visas to stay in Cuba. "The verse and the different perspectives make the history of Cuba during the Nazi era accessible while illustrating the complicated situations and the twists and turns of political interactions," noted Kathe Pinchuck, Committee Chair. Ms. Engle is known to readers for her Newbery-Honor book ***The Surrender Tree: Poems of Cuba's Struggle for Freedom***, for which she also won the Pura Belpre Award.

Six Sydney Taylor Honor Books were named for 2009. For Younger Readers, Honor Books are: ***Nachshon Who Was Afraid to Swim*** by **Deborah Bodin Cohen** with illustrations by **Jago** (Kar-Ben), ***Benjamin and the Silver Goblet*** by **Jacqueline Jules** with illustrations by **Natascia Ugliano** (Kar-Ben), ***Yankee at the Seder*** by Elka Weber with illustrations by Adam Gustavson (Tricycle Press) and ***You Never Heard of Sandy Koufax?*** by Jonah Winter with illustrations and an amazing lenticular cover by Andre Carrilho (Schwartz & Wade Books, an imprint of Random House). Two works in translation were named Honor Books for Older Readers: ***Anne Frank: Her Life in Worlds and Pictures*** by Menno Metselaar and Ruud van der Rol (translated by Arnold J. Pomerans) (Roaring Brook Press/Flash Point, an imprint of Macmillan Children's Publishing Group) and ***A Faraway Island*** by Annika Thor (translated by Linda Schenck) (Delacorte Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Random House). ***Lost***, a historical novel by Jacqueline Davies (Marshall Cavendish) and ***Naomi's Song***, a biblical fiction by Selma Kritzer Silverberg (JPS) were named Honor Books in the Teen Reader Category.

The JPS Illustrated Children's Bible by Ellen Frankel with illustrations by Avi Katz (JPS) was named a Notable Book for All Ages. The Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee was very impressed Ms. Frankel's retelling of biblical stories. "She succeeds in creating an age-appropriate interpretation of the most intriguing and familiar stories that allow families to glean the essence of Jewish teachings, ethics, and history," commented Rita Soltan, Award Committee member. "Readability, faithfulness to 'idiomatic nuances of biblical Hebrew,' and softly rendered color illustrations are the main features of this compilation," noted Susan Berson, Award Committee member.

We will be promoting an author and illustrator blog tour as a way to spread the word and generate interest in these books. The tour will take place February 1st – February 5th, and the schedule will be posted at jewishlibraries.org/blog.

In addition to the medal-winners, the Award Committee designated twenty-two Notable Books of Jewish Content for 2010: eight in the Younger Readers Category, eight in the Older Readers Category, and six for Teens. Notable titles, and more information about the Sydney Taylor Book Award, may be found online at www.SydneyTaylorBookAward.org. A blog about the awards can be found at www.sydneytaylorbookaward.blogspot.com.