

## ***“Librarian’s Shelf” by Brad Hruska***

And the winner is...PART II

In my last article, I featured this year’s 2011 Caldecott winner, “A Sick Day for Amos McGee.” I would like to transition a bit and highlight this year’s Newberry Medal winner. Like picture books, the juvenile novels have their own set of special honors, but of all the notable acknowledgments, it is the Newberry Medal that encompasses the essential literary elements recognized for a great read.

The Newbery Award, named after the eighteenth-century English bookseller, John Newbery, is presented annually by the American Library Association to the author of the most distinguished juvenile novel published during the previous year.

Previous winners include “The Voyages of Doctor Dolittle” by Hugh Lofting (1923), “Wrinkle in Time” by Madeleine L’Engle (1963), “The Bridge to Terabithia” by Katherine Paterson (1978), and “Holes” by Louis Sachar (1999).

This year’s winner is “Moon over Manifest” written by Clare Vanderpool. In this tale, readers meet Abilene, a young girl forced to spend the summer of 1936 in her father’s boyhood hometown of Manifest, Kansas, while he pursues work with the railroad.

While in the community known for its “Rich Past” and “Bright Future,” Abilene stays with Pastor Shady Howard. In the attic of the minister’s home, the 12-year-old uncovers an old cigar box. The contents (a few miscellaneous trinkets and a letter dating back to 1917 written to a Jinx from a Ned Gillen) are mysterious to Abilene and intriguing, especially since in the letter, Ned warns Jinx that “The Rattler” is watching.

The dusty tobacco box’s contents take Abilene and her newly made friends, Ruthanne and Lettie, on a scavenger hunt throughout the streets and back alleys of Manifest and lead her to Miss Sadie, an old Hungarian woman known for her stories about the town’s colorful, bootlegging past.

After listening to Miss Sadie’s accounts, Abilene is driven to find out the identity of Jinx, Ned Gillen, and the Rattler. She is also determined to find out what her father’s role was in the town’s past and why he chose to leave Manifest so long ago.

This tale of self-discovery and mystery is sure to engage readers of all ages. Readers will also get a sense of what it was like to live in a rural community during the post-World War I bootlegging years.

The next time you or your tween are looking for a book with wonderful characterization, a captivating plot, and great character dialog; be sure to check out the many Newbery Award winning books at the Columbus Public Library. They are the ones with the blue ribbon prominently displayed on the spine of the book. I guarantee that no matter what honor book your children pick, they are sure to find one that will captivate them! If you have any questions regarding the award winning books featured in this article or would like a listing of other great books, feel free to contact

me at 564-7116 opt. 4.