



DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER

CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARD

ORGANIZING CALENDAR

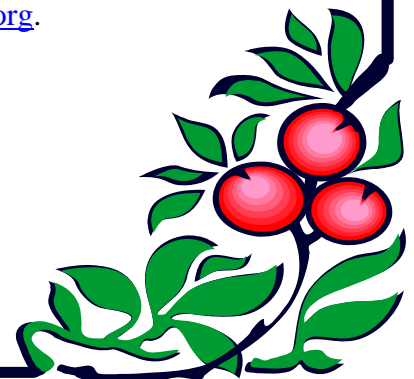
- When does the new Master List come out?
- How are the books selected?
- What can I do to promote the DCF Award program?
- May I bring a busload of children to the award ceremony?

These are just some of the questions that are asked each year about the DCF Award, Vermont's child-selected book award for grades 4-8.

This planning calendar has been developed to help answer these questions. Organizing a well-run and worthwhile DCF program is a cooperative effort. The award's co-sponsoring agencies, the Vermont Department of Libraries and the Vermont PTA, along with the eight-member volunteer committee, supply the necessary organizational structure. The local organizers may then use this framework to develop a program best suited to the needs of the children in the community. This calendar outlines month by month what local schools and libraries should do to participate in the award. It also explains what the committee does and gives some program suggestions to promote the award.

March may seem to be a strange month to begin a calendar, but since that is the month the Master List is chosen, it is a natural starting point for the DCF program.

If you have any questions about running a DCF program, please contact the committee chair (listed on the Master List) or Grace Greene, the Children's Services Consultant at the Department of Libraries (802) 828-6954 or email: grace.greene@dol.state.vt.us. For current information on the program, see the website at: www.dcfaward.org.



HOW TO PARTICIPATE

What do you need to do to participate in the program? Here's a month-by-month listing of procedures:

MARCH

Through a combination of mail and website information, all public libraries and schools in Vermont receive the following information:

- the present year's voting form
- the new Master List of 30 titles with annotations
- a listing of the DCF Committee members
- the new Master List of Red Clover books (Vermont's picture book award; see the Red Clover organizing calendar for more information)

Now is a good time to start ordering as many of the books as possible on the new Master List. If you order now they will be ready for the public libraries in the summer and the schools in the fall. Many jobbers offer special discounts on the DCF Books. Buy wisely! Although all of the books are recommended, **you do not have to purchase all of the books on the Master List in order to participate in the program.**

The books chosen vary greatly in maturity level since the grade range is so wide. What is appropriate for an eighth grader is often not appropriate for a fourth grader. Each book on the list is appropriate for some students in the program's age range, but many are not appropriate for all. Please use both the committee's grade guidelines on the list (which refer to maturity level, not reading ability) and your library's selection policy when making your choices. The new Master List titles are always available at the Vermont Department of Libraries/Department of Education spring Materials Review Sessions for you to evaluate personally, and at the DOL Children's Book Exhibit Center.



APRIL

It's time to vote! The voting form for this year's books that was made available to you in March will have the deadline date on it, usually mid-April. If you have lost it, you may request another one from the Department of Libraries, or download it from the DCF website www.dcfaward.org.

Organize your voting. Each child participating should vote for his/her own favorite book. Only students in grades 4 - 8 may vote, and each child may vote only once and for only one book. It is not necessary to have read all the books in order to vote, but the committee recommends that children read at least five so that they are able to select a true "favorite" from the list.

Several days before the voting, the children should be reminded of the forthcoming voting in order to think over the books on the Master List that they have read and be prepared to make a selection. Public libraries can have homeschoolers vote, or involve all of the children if the local school does not participate. **Be sure that no child votes more than once.** Votes should be counted, tabulated by grade level and sent to the current chair of the committee by the deadline.

***PLEASE NOTE: The time is tight, and the deadline MUST be adhered to if you want your votes to count.**

MAY/JUNE

Award Ceremony

If we are lucky, the winning author comes to Vermont for an award ceremony. Usually the award ceremony is held in late May or early June, but sometimes we have had to wait until the following fall, depending upon the author's availability. Watch for your invitation to this ceremony; invitations are sent **only to those schools and public libraries that voted.** Included with the invitation is a list of the top ten books in order of the number of votes received. Now you should:

- Send in the number of people attending. There is a limit of approximately five people per school. This can vary from year to year depending on where the ceremony is held (for several years it has been held at Vermont Technical College in Randolph), but chances of the number being greater than five are very slim.
- Arrange your transportation to the ceremony. The ceremony usually lasts one to one and a half hours. However, returning home may be delayed because many people want to buy books or talk to the author. Because of the popularity of the program **there is no autographing at the ceremony.** Instead, we have the author sign bookplates ahead of time, and anyone buying a book at the ceremony will receive an autographed bookplate.

To make the ceremony a meaningful experience for the students who will be attending and to highlight the program, try some of the following activities:

- Display the author's winning book along with the nine other top choices. Compare how the children in your school voted with the statewide results.
- If your school has a newspaper, publicize the winner there and announce plans to travel to the ceremony.
- Encourage the children who will be attending the ceremony to read other books by this author.
- Help the students develop interesting questions to ask the author at the award program.

Not everyone who voted can attend the program. It is up to each school or library to decide how to choose the children who attend. Some draw lots; some allow teachers to choose; some require that the students who attend voted for the winning book. It is tempting to choose attendees by rewarding those who read the most books, but remember, also, those less strong readers for whom an experience like this could make a big difference.

Recognize all the children who participated in the DCF Program by holding a party or other gathering. You could show a videotape of the ceremony (available from the Department of Libraries) or ask the children who did attend to do a presentation. Pass out certificates, supply food, and you'll be all set!

The DCF Conference

In 2003, we instituted an annual conference at the beginning of May for teachers and librarians about the DCF Program and related topics. The conference features a keynote author (Lois Lowry in 2003 and Virginia Euwer Wolff in 2004), a practitioner who speaks about methods of getting books and kids together, and many workshops. Watch your mail and the DCF website www.dcfaward.org for more information.

SUMMER

Since most school libraries are closed during the summer, it is now the public librarian who has the most opportunity to promote the DCF books. Many schools lend their entire collection of DCF books to the public library in the summer in order to maximize the books' exposure.

In towns where the schools do not participate in the program, public libraries may wish to sponsor it. Using the summer reading club as a springboard is a great way to begin.

Now is also the best time for teachers and librarians to borrow the books and read them. Don't put this off until September, or you may never catch up!

SEPTEMBER

The start of the school year means it is time to get into full swing to promote the DCF program. Since the purpose of the award is to encourage Vermont children to become enthusiastic and discriminating readers, emphasize the joys of reading rather than competition. Also, please remember that **most students who participate in the program will not be able to attend the award ceremony** because of the five person per school limit, so do not promise them all a chance to meet the winning author. Instead, start booktalking the books on the Master List, and start planning your own end-of-the-year ceremony. Some towns have the school and public librarians share the booktalking, which benefits all.

Besides booktalking, there are many other ways to promote the books. Check the following pages for some good ideas.



PROGRAM & PROMOTION IDEAS

General - to do anytime:

- Check out the official DCF web page, maintained by Roger Crowley of Montpelier. It features the Master List, committee members' names, DCF booktalks, and links to many other children's literature pages. The URL is: <http://www.dcfaward.org>.
- Order support materials from DOL (list at end of this calendar).
- Read aloud one or more of the books to your classes. Or, read the first chapter or so of several to pique interest.
- Start a literary luncheon club and have round table discussions of the DCF books.
- Look for titles on the Master List that lend themselves to dramatics and have the children act out scenes from the books for other kids.
- One Jr./Sr. High School Librarian says "Kids like to keep track of the books read. I keep a file box on my desk; when a kid has read a book, he/she gives it a grade (ranging A-F) and if they wish, a comment. Many of them choose a code name (one avid reader calls himself "Reading King") so their comments are private. It is also a great way for them to check up on the books when they are ready to vote the following spring."
- Build a visual display of books read. One year **Lindy Sargent at Newport City Elementary** built a DCF house out of 3" x 3/4" blocks. Each time a child read a book he wrote the title on one side of the block, then glued it on to the other blocks. Another year they used a dead tree branch that "bloomed with leaves as the spring went on."
- Have children do booktalks for one another. Older children can do them for younger ones, or classmates can do them for one another. Videotape

them and play them on your local community access channel.

- Give a copy of the trifold check-off list provided by the Department of Libraries to each student to keep track of the books he/she reads over the year.

- **Catherine Freese in Sharon** has kids fill out a ticket each time they read a DCF book and drop it off in her office. It goes into a box that serves as a raffle box during their DCF end of the year party. The more books they read, the more chances at "wonderful and gaudy prizes." That way she gets to talk to each of the kids about the book they've just read. She has modified it a bit over the years and books from other DCF lists count (because she doesn't have enough copies from the current year.) To attend the party, fourth graders read 4, fifth graders read 5....you get the idea.

- In the entry way to the **Sharon School** there is the DCF Wall of Readers. Librarian **Catherine Freese** scans the cover of each DCF book that someone reads and hangs it up. She puts their name underneath and adds others as new readers read it.

Throughout the Year:

APRIL

Just before voting, try conducting a political rally. Have each of the students interested in promoting a book present a campaign speech to persuade the class to vote for his or her favorite candidate for the DCF award. At least one school borrows the voting booths from the town and sets them up for DCF voting

MAY/JUNE

Hold a party for all the participants. Usually you can get a copy of the videotape of the ceremony from the Department of Libraries. Check with the Children's Services Consultant to see if there is one available of the ceremony that just took place. That way, even those children who were not able to attend the program will be able to hear the winning author speak.

Before the teachers leave for their vacations, put DCF Master Lists in their mailboxes and encourage them to read the books over the summer. Ask them to think of ways to introduce books to their students when school convenes in September.

Dale Gasque, of Randolph Elementary School sends this suggestion: We end the year with a DCF Battle of the Books assembly for 3rd (next year's readers!) through 6th. The top 15 DCF

readers are invited to compete - 5 to a team. I prepare around 75 questions, using current DCF nominees as well as previous winners. I direct every 5th question to the audience so they can be more actively involved (I include some Red Clover questions in the audience ones so the 3/4's can be the experts). When I read the questions to the teams, the first to hit the button for the light (our custodian rigged light bulbs up for each team) may answer the question for a point. The competition is all for fun; all 15 kids are awarded \$5.00 gift certificates to our local bookstore. We end with donated B&J ice cream for the audience and competitors. This battle has become a yearly tradition. Even parents of the competitors attend.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

Public libraries can begin a monthly program for homeschoolers based on the DCF books. For instance, **Mary Graf of Brownell Library in Essex Junction** booktalks four books and discusses the ones the children have read every month. She has developed a form for students to record the titles they have read, which includes a brief analysis of each book (genre, plot summary, personal rating). The library keeps a folder for the child so they can write comments about each book as they read them and review these personal records when deciding which book is their favorite.

In February they do a poster project of student drawings based on favorite titles. When they vote in March, each child who has read five DCF titles receives a free paperback book.

Debbie Wheeler, from the Stowe Library suggests that when the list first comes out, put them on a PowerPoint presentation (picture of cover, title, author and a one-sentence summary on each slide). She shows this to some groups in the spring and some in the fall, depending on the desire of each teacher. As she goes through the slide show, students are asked to comment on the ones they have read and give recommendations to their classmates.

Ellen Drysdale of Waitsfield and Warren Schools introduces the books this way: "The last couple of years, we have gotten a group of a couple of teachers, the public librarian, me, and even the principal together to do 40 minutes of rapid reviews of the DCF's for the 4-6th graders in late September, early October. Fires 'em up pretty good. And of course the promise of the party with make your own sundaes (with E's special hot fudge sauce) is terribly exciting."

Pat Cook of Dothan Brook School has done a kick-off for the DCF program with 4th and 5th graders by introducing them to Dorothy Canfield Fisher herself. Pat did research at the UVM library and Arlington library and photocopied old pictures from 2 years on and blew them up for her presentation. She had gathered a lot of information about Fisher's early life since she felt that would be of interest to kids.

In Manchester, Georgeanne Bonifanti tried a new way to introduce the books. After separating the DCF titles into interest levels by grade, she booktalked about 20 for each grade and showed the other 10, giving a brief overview of each book. She booktalked groups by advisory or grade or class, whichever way she was able to get the teachers and kids in. During the first week of school she met with 12 groups, and by the end of the week the reserve lists for many of the

books were over the top.

FEBRUARY

Dorothy Canfield Fisher was born on February 17, 1879; use her birthday as an opportunity to honor one of Vermont's outstanding writers and at the same time publicize the program in your community.

Since February is Black History month, now is a good time to emphasize the books on the list that feature African-Americans, or that are written by African-American authors.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

The Dorothy Canfield Fisher Committee is responsible for the running of the program and for the selection of each year's Master List. Committee members are selected by a consensus of the committee and the approval of the Children's Services Consultant from the Department of Libraries. In the selection of committee members, consideration is given to the expertise of the candidates to maintain a well-rounded and balanced committee, i.e. school and public librarians, teachers, parents, etc. Candidates must live and/or work in the state of Vermont on a year-round basis. Geographic distribution is considered in the event that selection among equally qualified people becomes difficult. The Committee consists of six members plus the Children's Services Consultant and the School Library/Media Consultant of the Vermont Department of Education.

The committee's responsibilities include:

- Reading and evaluating books that meet the criteria for the award.
- Publicizing the DCF award in their own communities and regions.
- Keeping up with publicity, correspondence and other business matters.

Duties of committee members throughout the year:

MARCH ... Meet early in the month to select the 30 titles for the Master List

... The Chair contacts all publishers and authors represented on the new Master List, and also contacts all publishers asking them to submit books.

APRIL ... Chair tallies the votes to determine the winning book.

... Chair or Children's Services Consultant contacts the winning author's publishing house and then the author.

... Begin to plan for the annual award ceremony sponsored in even numbered years by the Department of Libraries and in odd numbered years by the DCF Committee.

MAY ... Help with the annual DCF Conference for teachers and librarians

... Provide a program of booktalks on the books on the new Master List at the Vermont Library Conference.

... Write up activity pages on one or more books on the Master List, to be compiled into a booklet.

MAY/JUNE ... Attend and help with the award ceremony.

... Chair sends the books on the previous year's Master List to Castleton State College. A depository of all past Master List books is maintained at the Castleton State College Library for the use of college students, librarians, and educators in their teaching and research. The books are available through the statewide interlibrary loan network.

AUG/SEPT ... Announce vacancies on the committee in the various professional newsletters and websites in the state, as well as at meetings and workshops throughout the state.

OCTOBER ... Submit first list of suggested titles for Master List to chair.

... Attend the annual business meeting during which new members are chosen and officers are elected.

DECEMBER ... Submit second list of titles to the chair for possible inclusion on the next year's Master List.

JANUARY ... Submit to the chair the third list of suggestions of titles for the consideration list.

FEBRUARY ... Submit to the chair a final list of book suggestions.

SUPPORT MATERIALS

To help you promote the DCF program, the following materials are available from the CBEC, Vermont Department of Libraries, 109 State Street, Pavilion Office Building, Montpelier, VT 05609.

- Stickers** Stickers to affix to the winning books (not the books on the Master List) are available in quantity from the CBEC.
- Posters** In 1983 the DCF Committee launched a slogan contest to increase exposure for the award. The official slogan, "The Kids' Voice, the Kids' Choice," was incorporated into a poster designed by Caldecott Medal winner Trina Schart Hyman. Copies of the poster are available free; they can be picked up in the CBEC. Watch for new ones in late 2004 with a totally new logo!
- Brochures** A one-page (both sides) brochure aimed at adults, gives a short history and explanation of the award as well as a list of the past winners.
- Bookmarks** Bookmarks listing all the winners are available in quantity for schools and libraries.
- Trifold checklists** A one-page folded sheet featuring all 30 books with boxes for kids to check as they read through the list.

Before ordering any of these materials, please check for availability by contacting the CBEC at (802) 828-6954; email grace.greene@dol.state.vt.us.

HOW ARE THE BOOKS CHOSEN?

The committee considers books of fiction, information, and poetry that are of commendable quality, that exhibit creativity, that reflect student's interests and that will increase their enjoyment of reading. To be eligible for the master list:

- 1) The book must have been published in the preceding calendar year. Reprints and compilations previously copyrighted are not eligible.
- 2) The book must have been written by a living author who is a citizen or resident of the United States. Co-authors may be included.
- 3) The book must be original or, if traditional in origin, the result of individual research.

The retelling and reinterpretation must be the writer's own.

- 4) All forms of writing are eligible for consideration - fiction, non-fiction, short stories, and poetry. Poetry, anthologies and short stories must be by a single author and not previously copyrighted.
- 5) Books written by a previous recipient of the DCF Award may be considered at the discretion of the committee.
- 6) Books should have children as their intended audience, display respect for children's understanding, ability, and appreciation, and be appropriate for students in grades four through eight.

Revised 4/04



This program is supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, a federal agency, through the Library Services and Technology Act.