

NEWSLETTER

Fourth Quarter 2012



**CENTER
FOR
THE BOOK**
IN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

www.Read.gov

The Center for the Book's networks of state centers and reading promotion partners extend the reach of the national center far beyond the programs it sponsors in the Washington area. The national center in the Library of Congress has established this newsletter to serve as a forum for all Center for the Book activities. We want to tell you what we are doing in Washington and around the country to support our mission of promoting books, reading, libraries and literacy.

And we want to hear about all the innovative ways you call attention to the importance of reading and literacy. Your updates can serve as year-round "idea exchanges" that augment our two in-person Idea Exchange meetings, held at the Library of Congress.

Please send your submissions to glam@loc.gov.

Applications Being Accepted for New Library of Congress Literacy Awards

April 15 Is Deadline for Awards Totaling \$250,000

Applications are now being accepted for the new Library of Congress Literacy Awards, which are made possible through the generosity of David M. Rubenstein. The literacy awards program is administered by the Library's Center for the Book.

The application rules and a downloadable application form may be accessed at www.read.gov/literacyawards. **Applications must be received no later than midnight on April 15, 2013.**

These awards will be formally conferred for the first time in October 2013 to recognize and support outstanding achievements in the field of literacy, both in the United States and abroad.

Three prizes will be awarded annually:

- **The David M. Rubenstein Prize (\$150,000)**, for a groundbreaking or sustained record of advancement of literacy by any individual or entity worldwide
- **The American Prize (\$50,000)**, for a project developed and implemented successfully during the past decade for combating illiteracy and/or aliteracy
- **The International Prize (\$50,000)**, for the work of an individual, nation, or nongovernmental organization working in a specific country or region

"The Library of Congress's mission to 'further the progress of knowledge and creativity for the benefit of the American people' is inextricably linked to the nation's literacy rates," said Librarian of Congress James H. Billington. "Thanks to the generosity of David Rubenstein, the Library is able to formally acknowledge those individuals and organizations that are making a difference in the United States and around the world in increasing literacy."



David M Rubenstein spoke at the International Summit of the Book and announced the Library of Congress Literacy Awards, which he is supporting.

David M. Rubenstein, co-founder of The Carlyle Group, is a major donor to the Library of Congress, including its annual National Book Festival.

"Literacy spurs innovation and creativity," said Mr. Rubenstein, a co-founder of The Carlyle Group who provided the funding for the literacy awards. "Literacy is one of the basic tools for making progress in life and can open doors to many joys and wonders. I am pleased to support the work of groups that help people become

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literate and successfully convince those who can read to read more.”

Final selection of prize winners will be made by the Librarian of Congress, who will solicit recommendations from literacy experts on an advisory board.

Since its creation by Congress in 1977 to “stimulate public interest in books and reading,” the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress (www.Read.gov/cfb/) has become a major national force for reading and literacy promotion. A public-private partnership, it sponsors educational programs that reach readers of all ages, nationally and internationally. The Center provides leadership for affiliated state centers for the book (including the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands) and nonprofit reading promotion partners and plays a key role in the Library’s annual National Book Festival. It also oversees the Library’s Read.gov website and



World Comes to the Library to Explore Past, Future of Book

By Mark Hartsell

The world, Ismail Serageldin said, is witnessing the final days of the book – at least, in the printed form readers have known and loved for centuries.

That, however, is no reason to fear the digital future, Serageldin, the director of Egypt’s Bibliotheca Alexandrina, said on Dec. 6 in an address at the International Summit of the Book.

After all, he asked, does anyone lament the loss of the scroll? Formats come and formats go, but the written word maintains its power whether it’s contained on a clay tablet or an e-reader.

“We shouldn’t cry over the demise of the codex [the bound, printed volume] any more than we should cry that great books read for centuries on scrolls began to be read in codex form,” Serageldin said. “That’s progress. That’s unstoppable.”

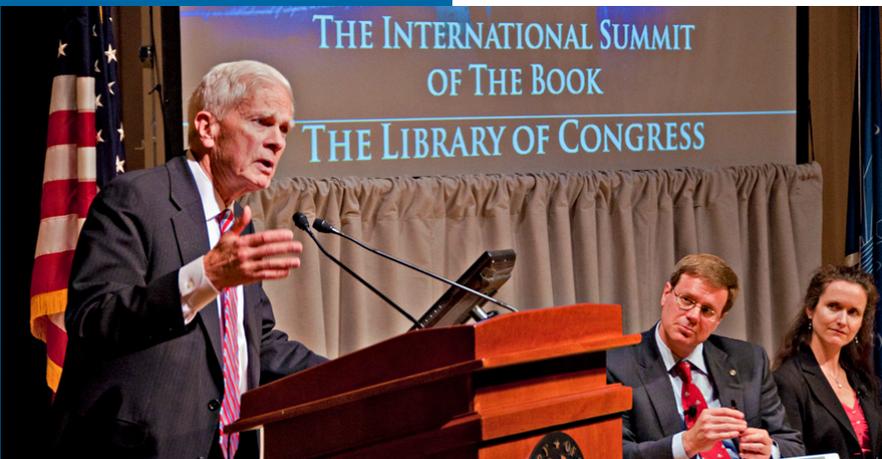
Speaking in the Coolidge Auditorium, Serageldin delivered the keynote at the inaugural International Summit of the Book, a gathering of librarians, publishers, academics and authors from across the globe designed to explore and promote the importance of the book and reading.

Over two days, speakers and panels considered the past and future of the book – the impact of new technologies, the state of national libraries, key copyright issues and the role of cultural institutions in fostering the book.

“We will be celebrating the enduring values of book culture for all people,” Librarian of Congress James H. Billington said in opening the summit. “Books are guardians of memory, tutors in language, pathways to reason and our golden gate to the royal road of imagination.”

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All photos by Cecelia Rogers/Library of Congress



Librarian of Congress James H. Billington opened the International Summit of the Book on Dec. 6-7, 2012: “We will be celebrating the enduring values of book culture for all people.” Panelists Michael Suarez, director of the Rare Book School at the University of Virginia, and Fenella France, chief of the Library’s Preservation Research and Testing Division, also joined the discussion.

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The summit was conceived by Rep. John B. Larson (D-Conn.), who, along with Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.), spoke at the event.

“We believe that libraries around the globe – from the smallest community libraries to what we consider to be the ninth wonder of the world: the Library of Congress – are humanity’s fortress of knowledge, and we must preserve and celebrate their existence,” Larson said.

Philanthropist David M. Rubenstein helped get the summit under way Thursday afternoon by announcing the creation of three Library of Congress Literacy Awards designed to promote literacy in the United States and around the world.

Rubenstein donated \$1.5 million to fund the awards, which will be administered by the Center for the Book.

In announcing the awards, he cited a litany of statistics that illustrate the importance of literacy to a prosperous life – illiterates, for example, make far less money and are far more likely to go to jail than those who can read.

“Pursuit of happiness – perhaps the most elusive thing in life – is very difficult to achieve if you’re not educated,” Rubenstein said, “and you can’t be educated if you can’t read.”

Few at the summit expressed alarm

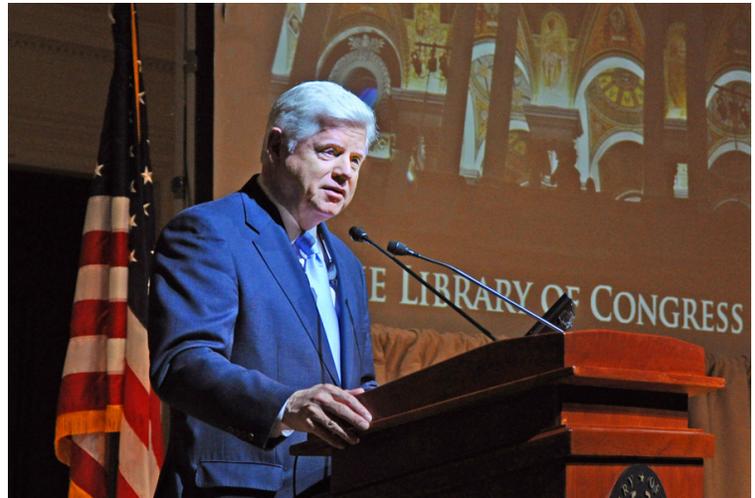
about the rapidly moving transition from printed to digital pages – after all, information formats have been changing for centuries. “There’s nothing deader than a floppy disk,” early printing historian Elizabeth L. Eisenstein quipped.

The new forms of the book that emerge present opportunities for authors, readers and publishers of the future.

“The youth of today will also produce their own great works that will become the classics of the future for the generations that will come after them,” Serageldin said in his keynote. “And the book lives on and on and on.”

A panel of publishers that convened on Dec. 7 agreed.

The book publishing industry has undergone dramatic, technology-driven change in recent years, said moderator Marie Arana, a former editor of The Washington Post Book World and a consultant to the Library of Congress. In 2003, Arana said, about 330,000 books were published in the United States. That number last year increased to about 3 million – a majority of them self-published.



Rep. John B. Larson (D-Conn.), who conceived the summit, said, “We believe that libraries around the globe ... are humanity’s fortress of knowledge.”

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(International Summit of the Book, from previous page)

Publishing, she said, already was an unpredictable, complex business with a thin margin of profit. Add to that dramatic changes in technology and the public's demands for new ways to read, and you have an industry in need of refining.

“You are either going to scramble to survive or you are going to take advantage of the unprecedented opportunities,” Arana said.

The challenge, the panel said, is to figure out the economics of a new dissemination model that puts more books in more hands in more formats than ever before – a dynamic that ultimately benefits both writers and readers.

“The democratization of dissemination – the way in which technology now enables anybody for a few hundred bucks to print out their book of short stories, their poems, their family histories, their memoirs – that’s a really good thing,” said Niko Pfund, president of Oxford University Press.



Sen. Jack Reed (D-R.I.) was also a supporter of the event.

“There has never been a better time for books,” he said.

Other presentations included national library perspectives on the book; the law through the book; the legacy of Jefferson’s collection by Rare Book and Special Collections chief Mark Dimunation; a copyright-issues panel moderated by Register of Copyrights Maria A. Pallante; a conversation with Walter Dean Myers, national ambassador for young people’s literature; and lessons of the past, featuring Karen Keninger, director of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and Fenella G. France, chief of the Preservation Research and Testing Division.

The summit, sponsored by the Newman’s Own Foundation, is part of a larger “Celebration of the Book” at the Library that encompasses many events and programs, including the National Book Festival and the “Books That Shaped America” exhibition staged earlier this year.

The second International Summit of the Book will be staged in August at the National Library of Singapore. On Friday night, Larson conducted a figurative passing of the torch – the object actually handed over was a book-shaped piece of crystal – to Tommy Koh, the ambassador-at-large of Singapore.

“Events like this summit,” Reed said on Thursday, “contribute to the ideas that we all share, that cross every border – the idea of the human experience, how it is enhanced, how it is understood, how we all can benefit from not simply more facts but wisdom.”

--Mark Hartsell is editor of The Gazette, the Library of Congress staff newspaper.



Related interview follows on next page

National Ambassador for Young People's Literature Participates in Book Summit

During the first International Summit of the Book, held at the Library of Congress on Dec. 6-7, Center for the Book Director John Y. Cole interviewed National Ambassador for Young People's Literature Walter Dean Myers. The Center for the Book, the Children's Book Council and its foundation, Every Child a Reader, are the sponsors of the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature program (www.read.gov/cfb/ambassador).

Cole: How did you choose your theme, Reading Is Not Optional?

Myers: As I began speaking to young people and how to approach them. . . . I would hear teachers say, "Books are wonderful, they can take you to other places." And I began to ask young people, "What does this mean?" and they said, "If you want to, you can have a lot of fun with books. If you want to, you can learn about other things."

I thought this was bad because reading is something you have to have to exist in this world.

My dad, who was a janitor, could not read or write, yet he always prided himself on the fact that he could support his family. Today he couldn't. Not without reading.

How reading affects national security is not talked about much. . . . The most American thing we have in this country is the ability for the lowest classes to lift themselves. . . . Without reading they can't do this.

Center for the Book Director John Y. Cole interviewed National Ambassador for Young People's Literature Walter Dean Myers regarding his work in promoting literacy.

I was raised in a foster family. My mom read at a third-grade level. She read romance magazines to me. . . . I wasn't attracted to the stories but I was attracted to being with my foster mom. . . . Eventually I learned to read. . . . I never knew she was giving me something. . . . But now I know.

When I was 14, my family began to disintegrate. My uncle was murdered; my father went into a depression; my mother became an alcoholic. So I was thrown away. My grades plummeted but I had books. I had the New York Public Library [while growing up in Harlem].

So when I had the difficulties with my mom, I found my voice in books, in "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man." . . . I had "The Red Badge of Courage." Books gave me the voice that expressed my individual humanity.

Cole: How did you get into writing?

I had speech difficulties. I couldn't speak very well or read very well aloud. . . . My teacher told me to write something. I began writing little poems, and I really enjoyed that; that was

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(Walter Dean Myers interview, continued from previous page)
the only thing I was praised for. I enjoyed writing.

Cole: You are one of the most prolific writers of books for young people. Walter has written more than 100 books. He is known throughout the country and the world for his concern about youth. This is reflected in his young adult fiction, with its focus on his experience growing up in Harlem, which is reflected in his tours throughout the country. I would like to ask you about your first year of touring.



“The most American thing we have in this country,” said Myers, “is the ability for the lowest classes to lift themselves. Without reading they can’t do this.”

The National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature is chosen not just for his or her work but for their ability to relate to kids. Can you point to some of the wonderful experiences you have had not only at places like festivals but also at detention centers?

Myers: I am particularly interested in prisoners. I wanted to know their reading levels; what did they read. ... And for me, I have seen prisoners that I first saw in grade school and then seen them 10-15 years later in maximum security prisons, and to me that is absolutely shocking. But it’s the truth. I find that some people come to reading for the first time in prisons because they don’t have the community putting them down; they don’t have family anxieties, and they discover books. ... Many of the prisoners tell me that if they had read early on, they could have changed their lives. They could have known that they were not unique; that their problems were not unique and that they could have found ways to solve their problems.



The Ambassador proudly brandishes his official medal.

I was in prison yesterday with 16-18-year-olds; some of them in prison for murder. You see a kid who is 16 facing 39 years in jail and it is shocking. Here is a person I wish I could have read to and maybe taught his parents reading skills. I could have made a difference.

Cole: I see you are wearing a rather handsome medal. This is the medal we have had made for our various National Ambassadors.

Myers: It’s awkward in the shower.

Cole: How did you feel when you heard you were selected?

Myers: I have been looking at literacy for many years and I have seen the gaps. While I am very grateful for the opportunity to spread the word and read so much about literacy, it is also a responsibility that I take very seriously. I want to finish this term being useful. On my tombstone I want it to say, “He was useful.” I don’t want to just say the words; I want to make a difference.



Ohio Center for the Book Publishes “Letters About Literature” Notable Entries

The Ohio Center for the Book at Cleveland Public Library recently published a booklet with the winning and semifinalist letters submitted by the state’s students in the 2012 Letters About Literature contest, sponsored by the Center for the Book. This is the last year that Target is co-sponsoring the contest. The Center for the Book is sponsoring the 2012-13 contest and is currently seeking a new sponsor.

The type of books that the 1,495 students who entered the contest wrote about range from the poems of Emily Dickinson and Sharon Draper’s “Hazelwood High” trilogy to “The Autobiography of Malcolm X” and Chuck Palahniuk’s “Fight Club.”

Erica Langan, who won first place in the Level 1 category (grades 4-6), wrote to Emily Dickinson regarding her poem “I’m Nobody! Who Are You?”

Wrote Erica: “The poem really spoke to me, because sometimes I do feel like nobody. Emily, you made me feel like being nobody is so much more fun than being somebody.”

Paris Hudson, who won second place in the Level 2 category (grades 7-8), wrote to Sharon Draper. Paris told Draper how reading her “Hazelwood High” books helped her aid a suicidal friend. “I have this letter hanging above my bed because not only do I love reading and writing but also I love helping others.”

Letters such as these demonstrate the profound impact that Letters About Literature has on students. Thus year’s contest winners will be announced sometime this spring.



Calendar of Events

Feb. 5 (Tuesday), noon, West Dining Room, Madison Building

Books & Beyond program. Paul Farber and Michael Eric Dyson will discuss “This Is the Day: The March on Washington” (Getty Publications, 2013), a photo-essay by photographer Leonard Freed, foreword by Julian Bond, introduction by Michael Eric Dyson and afterword by scholar Paul Farber. Co-sponsored with the Prints and Photograph Division.

Feb. 7 (Thursday), Noon, Dining Room A, Madison Building

Books & Beyond program. Daniel Stashower will discuss and sign his new book, “The Hour of Peril: The Secret Plot to Murder Lincoln Before the Civil War” (St. Martin’s Press, 2013).

Feb. 20 (Wednesday), noon, Montpelier Room, Madison Building

Books & Beyond program. Tom Piazza will discuss and sign his new book, “The Southern Journey of Alan Lomax: Words, Photographs and Music” (W.W. Norton, 2012). Introduction by William Ferris. Co-sponsored with the Publishing Office.

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(Calendar of Events, from previous page)

March 5 (Tuesday), 8:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Montpelier Room and Dining Room A, Madison Building

Reading Promotion Partners annual idea exchange meeting.

March 7 (Thursday), 7 p.m., Library of Congress location to be decided

Kislak lecture. Charles C. Mann will discuss and sign his new book. “1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created” (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2012). Co-sponsored with the Rare Book and Special Collections and Hispanic divisions.

March 12 (Tuesday), noon, Montpelier Room, Madison Building

Books & Beyond program. Margaret E. Wagner will discuss and sign her new book, “The Library of Congress Illustrated Timeline of the Civil War” (Little, Brown & Co., 2011). Co-sponsored with the Publishing Office and in cooperation with the Interpretive Programs Office.

March 20 (Wednesday), noon, Pickford Theater, Madison Building

Books & Beyond program. Stephen Hess will discuss his new book, “Whatever Happened to the Washington Reporters, 1978-2012” (Brookings Institution Press, 2012).

March 27 (Wednesday), noon, Mumford Room, Madison Building

Books & Beyond program. James Srodes will discuss and sign his new book, “On Dupont Circle: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt and the Progressives Who Shaped Our World” (Counterpoint, 2012). Co-sponsored with the Humanities and Social Sciences Division

April 4 (Thursday), noon, Pickford Theater, Madison Building

Books & Beyond program. Professor Gil Troy: “Moynihan’s Moment: America’s Fight Against Zionism as Racism” (Oxford University Press, 2012).



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