

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a January 6, 2010, Washington Post article about this year's National Ambassador for Young People's Literature.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 6, 2010]

KATHERINE PATERSON NAMED NATIONAL AMBASSADOR FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S LITERATURE
(By David Montgomery)

The Stinky Cheese Man has been replaced by the Queen of Terabithia.

They have nothing in common, these two, and yet everything in common. Tuesday morning in the Library of Congress, with elementary school children as witnesses, the ceremony of succession was accomplished and a proud nation with so-so reading habits got a new National Ambassador for Young People's Literature.

She is Katherine Paterson, the award-winning author of more than 30 books, probably best-known for "Bridge to Terabithia," which was published and Newbery-Medaled in the late 1970s but had its longest run on the bestseller lists after release of the 2007 movie.

The outgoing ambassador wisecracked about all the imaginary diplomatic perks he would be giving up. He is Jon Scieszka, the award-winning author of more than three dozen illustrated books and chapter books and the Web-savvy creator of an online kid empire—but perhaps best known for his 1992 opus, "The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Fairy Tales."

It's hard to imagine two more different writers being asked to perform the same mission. Scieszka was the first kid-lit ambassador, serving the two-year term.

"We couldn't be more different," said Scieszka, 55. "Sometimes you want to read 'Bridge to Terabithia' and deal with that, sometimes you're feeling like a 'Knucklehead' and 'Stinky Cheese Man.' Kids are willing to try all of it."

"If you're trying to catch young readers, you have to fish with the right bait," said Paterson, 77. "Kids that are going to be caught by Jon's books are not going to be caught by my books."

Corey Shaw, 10, a fifth-grader at Brent Elementary School—one of three Capitol Hill schools that sent about a dozen students each to the ceremony—has read both "Terabithia" and Scieszka's "Tut, Tut." He gave thumbs up to both.

"It's actually a very important and surprising book," Corey said of "Tut, Tut," about a trip back in time to ancient Egypt.

Of "Terabithia," about a boy and a girl who invent a magical land together, Corey said: "The ending was very sad. Then I thought about it, and it's not that bad. You have to remember that you have to get over things."

Indeed, many of the other students also turned out to be what you might call Stinky Cheese Terabithians, fans of both the incoming and outgoing ambassadors, which helped Librarian of Congress James Billington and the others behind the ambassadorships make their larger point. The ambassador's role is to raise national awareness about the importance of young people's literature in getting young readers off to a good start. By picking two such different writers as the first two ambassadors, the program reminds parents that there are many different ways to be a reader, Billington said.

"Read for your life," Paterson told the young people in the audience. "Read for your life as a member of a family, as a part of a community, as a citizen of this country and a citizen of the world."

Meanwhile, reading rates among young people are in decline, while there has been an uptick in reading among adults, according to the latest figures released by the National Endowment for the Arts. Just over half of 9-year-olds, fewer than a third of 13-year-olds and about one-in-five 17-year-olds read almost every day for fun, the NEA reported in 2007.

The ambassador's responsibilities amount to making appearances at major book events around the country to evangelize for young reading—which Paterson has been doing for 30 years. "It will sound a little fancier now that I have this medal," she said.

A selection committee of children's book experts and the outgoing ambassador recommended Paterson to Billington. Sponsors of the ambassador program include the library's Center for the Book and the Children's Book Council, a nonprofit trade association. Several publishers also underwrite expenses.

Paterson's works include "Jacob Have I Loved," "The Great Gilly Hopkins," "Bread and Roses, Too," and, most recently, "The Day of the Pelican," about a refugee family's escape from the war in Kosovo to the United States.

Paterson lives in Barre, Vt., but inspiration for "Terabithia" came when she lived in Takoma Park. Her son David had a best friend, Lisa Hill, and the pair played imaginative games in Sligo Creek Park. While away on vacation, Lisa was struck and killed by lightning. Paterson wrote "Terabithia" to make sense of the tragedy, with protagonists named Leslie and Jess.

Before the ceremony in the library, David Paterson walked up to the rows of students. Katherine Paterson's four children, seven grandchildren and husband had come to watch her be honored.

"How many kids have read 'Bridge to Terabithia'?" he asked. Nearly 30 hands shot up. "You can tell your friends you met the original Jess."

Charlotte Harrington gasped. She's 9, a fourth-grader at St. Peter's Interparish School. "Terabithia" is one of her favorite books. "It starts out miserable, and then goes joyous, then goes downhill, then uphill," she said after David Paterson walked away.

When it was Charlotte's turn to get "Bread and Roses, Too," signed by Paterson, the girl told the author, "I loved 'Bridge to Terabithia.' It's one of the best books ever."

The Charlottes of the nation don't need an ambassador. But she and her friends had plenty of ideas for the new ambassador on hooking reluctant young readers.

"Give them a book that shows them what they feel like," said Fiona Campbell, 9, a fourth-grader at St. Peter's.

Isn't that what Paterson and Scieszka both have been doing, after their own fashion? Afterwards, they laughed about being such an odd couple.

"I think the No. 3 [ambassador] should be different from both of us!" Paterson said. "The variety of books is a wonder to behold, but we also have a variety of readers."

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BUFFALO BILL DAM

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, during the 57th Congress, our predecessors

passed the Newland Reclamation Act that changed the landscape of arid Western States. Part of the 1902 act, which created the Reclamation Service, included funding for a dam in a narrow, 70-foot gorge in the Shoshone Canyon, 6 miles from Cody, WY.

The construction of the Shoshone Dam began in 1905. Workers used 78,576 cubic feet of rubble concrete to build the massive structure. When work was completed on January 15, 1910, the Shoshone Dam was the world's highest concrete arch dam at 325 feet. The total bill for the dam was \$1,345,000.

Water from the Shoshone River filled a reservoir that covered an area 10 miles long and 4 miles wide—over 300,000 acres of land. Promotional brochures published during the early years boasted that the dam and reservoir created a "healthful, invigorating and enjoyable climate with an abundance of sunshine and irrigation water." Further, in an effort to draw enterprising farmers to the basin, they stated the area is "immune from storms and that tornadoes and cyclones are unknown in the region."

The 79th Congress once again passed legislation affecting the dam—this time to rename it for one of the West's favorite sons: William F. Cody. In 1946, the Shoshone Dam formally became the Buffalo Bill Dam. While Buffalo Bill may be most famous for his Wild West Show in the early 1900s, he had the vision to harness the Shoshone River to open the area for development. Cody and his colleagues had big dreams to build more than 50 miles of canals and irrigate more than 150,000 acres. He was only able to bring water to 6,000 acres before his finances and stamina ran out. However, it was because he saw the region's potential that the dam was initially built.

Those of us who are fortunate to call Wyoming home have a great appreciation for the opportunity to live with, utilize and benefit from the Buffalo Bill Dam. It is a positive presence in the world of the West.

Last week marked the tremendous structure's 100th birthday. We remember the ingenuity, courage and foresight of the men and women who made the dam possible. It changed the near desert landscape into one that supports a wide range of agricultural and recreational activities. We often say Wyoming is what America was. The Buffalo Bill Dam is a great reminder of this.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO CHUCK MACK

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, as Chuck Mack is honored by the Teamsters Joint Council 7, I take this opportunity to commend him for his tireless and dedicated service to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.