

2000 AJL SYDNEY TAYLOR BOOK AWARDS
Synagogue, School, and Center Division of the Association of Jewish Libraries

Linda R. Silver

Welcome! Here we are again: I'm Linda Silver, the chair of AJL's Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee and these are the members of the committee: Kathleen Clotfelter, Etta Gold, Fred Isaac, Naomi Morse, and Libby White! To them, I offer my thanks and congratulations for another year of constant reading, insightful writing, and thoughtful awarding!

To the Taylor Family, especially the Taylors' daughter, Jo Marshall, we extend our gratitude for establishing and sustaining this award, which has been given since 1968 in honor of Sydney Taylor, she who wrote the *All-of-a-Kind Family* series of 5 books about a Jewish immigrant family living on New York's Lower East Side at the turn of the 20th century. Many of us read these books as children, many of our children and grandchildren still read them! They are classics in the true sense of being timeless and universal. In fact, the cultural historian, Hasia Diner, in her recent book *Lower East Side Memories* (Princeton University Press, 2000), identifies the *All-of-a-Kind Family* books as being crucial in creating in the Jewish-American collective memory, that shared sense of New York's Lower East Side as being THE place of Jewish-American authenticity, whether or not one has ever set foot there!

Hasia Diner's personal experience with the books is what Jewish children reading them may still feel. She writes : "*All-of-a-Kind Family was the first book I ever read with Jewish characters, Americans, with whom I could identify. The minute I pulled the book off the shelf and looked at the cover, I knew instinctively that the family in the book was Jewish and that its pages contained stories that would affect me deeply...Finding this book [gave] me a sense of validation and a rush of belonging that I never experienced again as a reader.*" (p. 10)

Over 50 years have passed since the first book in the series was published and Jewish children now have a wealth of books to choose from. Identifying and honoring those books each year, those that strengthen and extend their readers' Jewish identity and sense of Yiddishkeit, is the glorious task of the Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee - glorious because in this age of widespread assimilation and cultural homogenization, the awards and the process of choosing each year's winners from many is a way of saying to readers – to Jewish children, their parents, and their teachers especially – “Take note! Don't forget! Be proud! Be Jewish!” To use a good postmodern word, we valorize Jewish children's books with this award and the attention we draw to it and I hope that all of you, whether or not you read children's books, or have children, or were ever a child yourself, will valorize them with us throughout the years! They are important!

The winners for the year 2000 are:

For older readers, *The Key Is Lost*, written by Ida Vos and translated from the Dutch by Terese Edelstein. It was edited by Rosemary Brosnan and published by HarperCollins. Ms. Vos, who lives in Holland and is not with us tonight, also won the Sydney Taylor Book Award for older readers in 1995 for *Dancing on the Bridge of Avignon*. As you will hear when Terese Edelstein reads her speech, Ida Vos is a Holocaust survivor and one of the two sisters in the story who lost,

or more precisely, had stolen from them, the key to everything they knew and loved, including childhood itself, during the Shoah.

The winner for younger readers is *Gershon's Monster*, written by Eric A. Kimmel and illustrated by Jon J Muth. It was edited by Dianne Hess and published by Scholastic Press. *Gershon's Monster, a Story for the Jewish New Year* is about *tashlikh* – casting one's sins into the sea (or running water) and about the act of *teshuvah* – repenting and turning back to our true moral natures. A man named Gershon finds out through his children that *tashlikh* without *teshuvah* is meaningless. The moody watercolor illustrations are eloquent in expressing Gershon's character, the monster created by his lack of *teshuvah*, and the satisfying resolution to some frightening events.

**2000 AJL SYDNEY TAYLOR BOOK AWARD FOR OLDER CHILDREN
Synagogue, School, and Center Division of Association of Jewish Libraries**

***THE KEY IS LOST*
Author: Ida Vos
Translator: Terese Edelstein**

Vos, Ida. *The Key Is Lost*. Written by Ida Vos; translated from the Dutch by Terese Edelstein. New York: HarperCollins, 2000. ISBN 0688162835

PRESENTATION OF AWARD TO IDA VOS AND TERESE EDELSTEIN

Linda R. Silver

I'd like to ask Terese Edelstein to join me now. It is through her graceful translation of *The Key Is Lost* that North American readers can experience the pathos as well as the imaginative leaps of Ms. Vos's story and meet characters like Mr. Ami, the puppeteer, Skinny Rinus and Big Mie, and Henny, the brave girl who rushes the sisters from one hiding place to another. Terese Edelstein is a professional musician and teacher of the violin, a member of the Grosse Pointe, Michigan symphony as well as Ida Vos's translator. She and her husband, Mark, a hematologist, have lived twice in The Netherlands and Terese has translated four of Ms. Vos's books, including *Dancing On the Bridge of Avignon*.

Terese, before you read Ms. Vos's speech, which you've also translated, I'd like to present you with a certificate of recognition from the Association of Jewish Libraries for making these wonderful books accessible to Anglophone readers. It reads:

“The Association of Jewish Libraries recognizes the achievement of Terese Edelstein, translator of *The Key Is Lost* by Ida Vos, winner of the 2000 Sydney Taylor Book Award for older readers, presented at the 36th annual convention of AJL in San Diego, California, June 26, 2001.”

Please accept it and a cash award with our gratitude.

Ida Vos was born in the Netherlands in 1931. She has written of her experiences under the Nazis: wearing a yellow star, not being allowed to swim in public pools, or go to the movies, or to travel by train, or even to go to school with Christian children. In 1943, after many of her family's acquaintances and relatives, including her grandparents, were sent to concentration camps, Ida's parents decided to go into hiding. They split up: her parents at one of many addresses, Ida and her younger sister at others. After three years of hiding, Europe was liberated and Ida was able to go back to school and then to college. In 1956, she married and subsequently had three children. She writes, "We were a happy family until 1973 when I broke down mentally. All the grief of the war came back to me...Finally, I had to be nursed in a psychiatric clinic...for war victims and people from the resistance movement...I was never fully cured but I could endure life again...However, an unbelievable thing happened during my stay at the clinic. I started to write about the war...The author Ida Vos was born..."

Terese, I will present the author Ida Vos with her certificate and cash award through you. It reads:

"The Association of Jewish Libraries proudly presents its 2000 Sydney Taylor Book Award to Ida Vos, author of the book *The Key Is Lost*, selected as the year's outstanding book of Jewish content for older readers. Awarded at the 36th annual convention of AJL, San Diego, California, June 26, 2001."

Terese will read Ms. Vos's acceptance speech.

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH OF IDA VOS

Translated and Read by Terese Edelstein

I couldn't believe it. I listened to my voicemail, not suspecting a thing. Among the various messages such as "Mrs. Vos, your shoes are ready," and "Would you give an introduction at the presentation of a book about child abuse?" was suddenly that one message, spoken by the familiar voice of Terese Edelstein, my American translator. And what a translator! We have her to thank for enabling English-language readers to relive the experiences of children from that small country on the North Sea called Holland. "You've won the 2000 Sydney Taylor Award for *The Key Is Lost*. Nice, isn't it?" Terese cheered.

Nice...That's hardly the word. It's unbelievable. In a moment I'll explain why this message was much more important to me than you can imagine. But before I do, I want to express my deep gratitude. I'm extraordinarily happy, in the first place because it is professionals who have chosen *The Key Is Lost*, and in the second place because it is important for everyone to feel that his or her work is appreciated, whatever that work happens to be. It is also an indication that my American audience is aware of what those two little Zilverstijn girls endured. That awareness feels like a "salve for the soul," a soul that has not yet healed after all these years; it is a condition that we, the children of the Shoah, must live with.

I promise to tell you why the message on my voicemail was more important than you can imagine. At last, after a year of my dear husband's serious illness, a year in which all sorts of horrible messages were left on that same voicemail, at last came a voice that had something wonderful to tell me. Luckily, my husband is doing well for now, thank G-d. You do understand that because of his health problems, I couldn't come to accept the Sydney Taylor Award myself, even though I wanted to very much.

I would like to thank Linda Silver and her Committee for selecting *The Key Is Lost*. Who knows, perhaps someday my husband and I will travel together to the land where Rachel Hartog, Anna Markus, and Rosa DeJong, the characters from my earlier books, have appeared and who are now joined by Eva and Lisa Zilverstijn, the two brave girls in *The Key Is Lost*. I say two "brave" girls because I see them now with my adult eyes. I don't have to explain that Eva and Lisa represent Ida and Esther Gudema, who didn't know how brave they were during those terrible years of the Holocaust or how blessed they were with an inexhaustible imagination that sometimes lifted them out of difficulties and danger. I see that same kind of imagination in seriously ill children who can escape from their sick rooms because of that blessed ability to fantasize. I think *The Key Is Lost* sends the image to today's children that it is possible to hold your head above water during adversity by dreaming about better days. *The Key Is Lost* is a book in which the author reveals her own dreams during those years of hiding, in an almost imperceptible manner.

Ida and Esther never meet Mr. Ami, the puppeteer who stirs the girls' imagination, and, good psychologist that he is, gives them the opportunity to take revenge on the enemy. He makes a puppet for Eva and Lisa, dresses it in the hated SS uniform, and allows the children to stick sharp pins into it. I created Mr. Ami to express my deep longing for someone who truly understood me during those difficult years -- someone who could develop the creativity that was bubbling inside of me. That development came years later -- 30 years after the war to be precise.

I never had a bold little doll like Freekie, a doll that dared to blurt out all the things that Eva and Lisa were afraid to say. After all, our orders were to be good and to be quiet so that we wouldn't cause trouble for the people sheltering us. But, however misunderstood we were, I want to emphasize the fact that I admire everyone who had the courage to hide us. They risked their own lives by doing so.

We never met a couple like Skinny Rinus and Big Mie either. I am so glad that they play a part in *The Key Is Lost* because the girls most definitely needed the warmth of these dear people. The adult writer, Ida Vos, needs this warmth too and I feel blessed to be a writer who can breathe life into the kind of loving caregivers I needed so badly during my childhood. Blessed fantasy.

I would like to call your attention to the character Henny, the girl who fought against injustice. She is based upon a real mensch, named Truus Menger, who lives today in a village in North Holland. I created Henny because of my admiration for Truus. She was just 16 years old, even younger than Henny, when she joined the Resistance.

I would also like to say that children sometimes have control over their situations -- although I say "sometimes" with great emphasis. In the chapter, Heil Hitler, I describe how Eva and Lisa

saved the life of Mr. Ami, their own saviour. I want so very much to empower children a little, to allow them to take action because I know for sure that activity reduces fear.

My key is lost -- the key to the happy home of my childhood was lost in the Holocaust. There is no one who can find it for me -- or is there? *The Key Is Lost* is dedicated to Itamar Vos and Sophie Dajez, two of our five grandchildren. They belong to a new generation of free, happy people, which unfortunately I can't say is true of their own parents. Alas, my children still feel the burden of our own past -- a turbulent and painful time that was kept silent for too many years. But, my grandchildren have handed me the key to the future. My fervent wish is that they and all the children of the world will live in peace.

Thank you.

**2000 SYDNEY TAYLOR BOOK AWARD FOR YOUNGER READERS
Synagogue, School, and Center Division of the Association of Jewish Libraries**

***GERSHON'S MONSTER: A STORY FOR THE JEWISH NEW YEAR*
ERIC R. KIMMEL and JON J MUTH**

Kimmel, Eric A. *Gershon's Monster : A Story for the Jewish New Year* ;
illustrated by Jon J Muth . New York : Scholastic Press , 2000.
ISBN 043910839X

PRESENTATION OF AWARD TO JON J MUTH, ILLUSTRATOR

Linda R. Silver

We turn to the awards for *Gershon's Monster*. The book is based on a Hasidic legend and the wonder rabbi in the story is based on Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, the Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Hasidic movement. Never has the *Besht* had a more felicitous artist to bring his stories to life than Jon J Muth, whom I would like to invite to join me to receive his award.

Jon J Muth is a highly talented artist and graphic novelist who was born and grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio. When he was in his early twenties, he moved to New York to study with painter/illustrator, Jeffrey Jones and later to Vienna to study the artists of the Viennese Secession. He has traveled extensively to explore the ways people live and to see their art: sculpture and gardens and tea in Japan; paintings, prints and drawings in Austria and England, dancing in Argentina. Jon has written and drawn award-winning comic books, which have been published both in the United States and Canada. One, called *Imaginary Magnitude*, is based on his relationship with his son, Nikolai. Jon's guest tonight is Allen Spiegel, to whom Jon dedicated *Gershon's Monster*. Allen was the model for Gershon and if you've ever used the expression, "The character was so real it was as if he had stepped off the page" you will see the living embodiment of it in Allen/Gershon. Jon's previous book, *Come On Rain!*, written by

Karen Hesse (also a Sydney Taylor Award winner), won a Gold Medal from the Society of Illustrators in 1999. As I was writing this introduction, based on the bio Jon had sent me plus some Internet material, several books by Jon J Muth that I'd ordered were delivered. They are amazing in their versatility – from an easy reader about Batman to a graphic novel entitled *Dracula: A Symphony in Moonlight and Nightmares*, written and illustrated by Jon after Bram Stoker's famous work. Jon's bio is too modest and my introduction has barely done justice to his artistry!

Jon, please accept this certificate and cash award with our warmest wishes. The certificate reads:

“The Association of Jewish Libraries proudly presents its 2000 Sydney Taylor Book Award to Jon J Muth, illustrator of the book *Gershon's Monster*, selected as the year's outstanding book of Jewish content for younger readers. Awarded at the 36th annual convention of AJL, San Diego, California, June 26, 2001.”

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Jon J Muth

I'm singularly ill-suited to any job but that of an artist. That is to say, we might be in the middle of Texas and hear hoofbeats coming this way and my mind will immediately picture zebras. This propensity has invention going for it but not many practical applications...except perhaps in telling stories. And that's OK, because we re-examine and re-discover our true selves in our stories.

I want to thank our excellent editor, Dianne Hess, for not letting her job stop at putting out a good book but for getting *Gershon's Monster* under the nose of everyone she could find; our art director, David Saylor, for making the presentation so elegant and fitting; my great friend, Allen Spiegel, for modeling both as my Gershon and all of the little sins and Eric Kimmel for telling such a wonderful tale with such grace.

I live in these moments of working; these brushstrokes, these pencil marks, this color. To be allowed to create a world for you and your children is my favorite thing. And to be honored then for it by this award is all the more tremendous. I thank you.

PRESENTATION OF AWARD TO ERIC A. KIMMEL, AUTHOR

Linda R. Silver

The name Eric A. Kimmel will be recognized by anyone, of virtually any age, who is even mildly familiar with contemporary children's literature. He is an acclaimed and prolific author, with at least 65 published books and several more in progress. The Association of Jewish Libraries honored Dr. Kimmel with a Sydney Taylor award in 1990 for *The Chanukah Guest*, a picturebook story illustrated by Giora Carmi and, I can attest from many happy experiences

reading this book to classes, one of children's absolute, all-time favorites! It is exceeded in popularity only by *Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins*, which was both a Sydney Taylor and a Caldecott Honor Book and is certainly one of the best-loved of modern children's books. Among the books of Jewish content that Eric has written for children in addition to those I've already mentioned are: *Nicanor's Gate*, *Hershel of Ostropol*, *The Chanukkah Tree*, *The Spotted Pony*, *Asher and the Capmakers*, *Days of Awe*, *Bar Mitzvah: A Jewish Boy's Coming of Age*, *The Magic Dreidels*, *Onions and Garlic*, *When Mindy Saved Hanukkah*, *Be Not Far from Me: Legends from the Bible*, *A Hanukkah Treasury*, *A Cloak for the Moon*, and *The Jar of Fools*. Through his books, the collective memory of Jewish readers is enriched by acquaintance with Hershel Ostropoyler, the Fools of Chelm, a Bialik poem, tales of Rav Nachman of Bratslav and the Baal Shem Tov.

Eric A. Kimmel was born in Brooklyn and now lives in Portland, Oregon with his wife, Doris. He is Professor Emeritus of Education at Portland State University with a fondness for horses, trains, and storytelling. He credits his career as a writer and storyteller to his grandmother, who came from the part of Poland where the Baal Shem began his work. Her version of *Gershon's Monster* was the first he heard and for that we can be very grateful.

Eric, please accept our thanks for the immeasurable gifts you have given to us and to our children and accept your award and cash gift. Your certificate reads:

"The Association of Jewish Libraries proudly presents its 2000 Sydney Taylor Book Award to Eric A. Kimmel, author of the book *Gershon's Monster*, selected as the year's outstanding book of Jewish content for younger readers. Awarded at the 36th annual convention of AJL, San Diego, California, June 26, 2001."

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Eric A. Kimmel

Thank you all very much -- this is very, very nice.

I call this little talk - Rising from the Sea.

It's an honor to be here—for the second time, no less—to receive an award named after one of the true pioneers of Jewish-American literature for children, an author whose books I grew up reading. Sydney Taylor was the first to cross-over. Her *All-of-a-Kind Family* books had as great a following in the non-Jewish community as they did in the Jewish community. She was our Laura Ingalls Wilder. Like Pa Ingalls, she blazed the trail for the rest of us to follow.

It's nice to receive awards, although in all honesty, I have a lot less to do with the success of *Gershon's Monster* than some people who aren't even here. There's Rabbi Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, who first wrote the story down two hundred years ago. There's Meyer Levin who included it in his *Classic Hassidic Tales*, a classic of American Jewish writing and a very important book for me. I read it when I was ten, and to a large extent my fascination with Jewish folklore began with that book. There's my dear bubbe, Clara Kerker, who had her own version of

the story, including the ending I used, but with one difference. The way my grandma told the tale the monster eats Gershon and his children and let that be a lesson to me to say my *bruchas* properly when I wash my hands! The lessons sunk in. I had visions of monsters coming out of the sink.

There's also my editor Dianne Hess of Scholastic Books, who believed in this story even more than I did. And there's Jon J Muth whose superb watercolors turned a quirky tale into a memorable picture book—illustrations that I had no right to expect and which turned out to be more than I ever hoped for. Truly amazing, magnificent work.

Finally, and most important, there's my wife Doris, who puts up with the rages, the crazed cackling, the loony theories, and the general *meshugas* that comes percolating out of my basement office.

On the other hand, if someone's handing me an award, I'll gladly accept it, because as my Dad used to say about prizes, “You might as well take it because if you turn it down they'll only give it to someone else who will probably deserve it even less than you do.” Dad was a wise man.

An interviewer once asked I.B. Singer why he wrote about ghosts and demons. He answered, “Because I believe in them. When he interviewer then asked him why he wrote for children, he replied, “Because they believe in them, too.”

There is nothing fantastic or imaginary about *Gershon's Monster* as far as children are concerned. There wasn't anything about that story that I didn't believe in when I first heard it. The possibility of your sins coming back as a gigantic creature rising out the sea like Godzilla was absolutely real; the stuff of nightmares.

Just last week at an autographing at American Library Association Conference in San Francisco, a very kind grandma told me that her five year old was frightened by the book. My first impulse was to reply with a smart aleck line I could have lifted from Henny Youngman. “So don't read it to a five year old!”

However, the more I thought about it, the more her comment made me realize how much the world has changed. My Bubbe told me this story when I was five. When I cried and said that I was scared of the monster in this story and all the other stories she told me, she would say, “So what did you do that you shouldn't have done? If you don't commit sins, you won't have to worry. God will protect you.” But what if you weren't as good as you pretended to be. You knew what you had done, and God did, too. What if God turned his back and let the monsters have you? Gevalt!

Nowadays we call this psychological child abuse. To Bubbe, it was a basic parenting technique from the *alte heym*, handed down from parents to children for generations. Terror as behavior modification. Believe me it works, because whenever we vacation on the Oregon coast, I sometimes have flashes of that black monster rising out of the Pacific and pointing its claw at me.

Stories have immense power. In the case of children they change lives.

Several years ago, I did a program at the Jewish Community Center in Houston. A gentleman came up to me and said, “Mr. Kimmel, you don't remember me but I remember you very well. My name is Henry Blume.”

That name set off a spark in my memory. Henry Blume! Of course I remembered him, although I never would have recognized him as an adult. He was an amazingly bright fifth grader in a Sunday School class that I taught when I was a graduate student at the University of Illinois. Henry grew up. Now he was a lawyer and president of his synagogue. There wasn't much time to do more than give him a hug and exchange cards, promising to keep in touch.

We finally got together a few years later when I was back in Houston. I had dinner with Henry and met his family. He said to me, “I only knew you for a year but you changed my life. You were one of the greatest teachers I ever had.” I asked Henry what I did that was so wonderful it would cause him to remember me all these years. He answered, “You told us stories.”

I did. I had to. These were super bright Jewish kids—very, verbal and very active—and the curriculum was horrible. If I was going to keep their attention, I had to come up with something interesting.

So I turned to folktales—*Midrashim*—which never fail. It wasn't easy at first. These were professors' kids. They had all acquired a superficial skepticism. When I tried to talk about David and Goliath, they said Goliath wasn't a real giant, only a big man.

“Oh no, kids, you're wrong,” I said. I then went on to tell them about Goliath and how the American Bank Tower, the biggest building in town, only came up to his knees. I laid it on thick. By the time David rolled Goliath's head at the Philistines like a bowling ball, those kids were all mine. They remained mine for the rest of the year.

I asked Henry what he remembered best from our class and he replied, “You taught us about heaven.” And then, almost thirty years later, he described for me what I told the class on this Sunday morning about God's throne, the seven heavens, the different archangels and what they looked like. I had to laugh. “Oh, Henry, it was basic Kaballah, with some Assyrian wall carvings thrown in. To tell the truth, I made up a lot of it as I went along.”

Henry answered, “I realized that later after I grew up, but by then it didn't matter. When you told us these stories, I was ten years old. I'd never heard any of this before and I wasn't going to; not at a classic Reform synagogue. It just blew my brain apart. Then you handed out paper and asked us to pick our favorite part of heaven, and draw it. I drew God's throne. Can you imagine that? Asking a ten year old to think about what God's throne looks like, and then draw it. Incredible! It never happened to me before and it never happened to me again. I never forgot it.”

So that's where it all began for Henry Blume, who hated Hebrew School up to that point.

When you love listening to *Midrashim*, you want to find more *Midrashim*. So you go to the library. This naturally leads to Torah and *Tanach*, where the stories come from. Then you want to understand them better by reading them in the original language, which brings you to Hebrew.

Then you want to see the places where these stories took place, so naturally you go to Israel, where Henry told me several of the kids in that class are to this day. It all begins with a couple of stories told on a Sunday morning in a Midwestern town in 1971.

So never underestimate the power of stories, especially in the minds of children. They create worlds of wonder, they change lives, they unlock secret hidden doors. And that's why I write stories, especially creepy ones like the ones I got from my Bubbe. Because everything from the Bubbe, including the *potches*, was given with love and came with a gift. The gift that came with these absolutely terrifying tales of monsters, ghosts, demons, and dark creatures lurking in the Galician forest was the unimaginably rich lore of Jewish traditions, going back to the first *Midrashim*. It's a vein of pure gold that never runs out.

For the more we mine it, the richer it becomes because as we dig, we become part of it ourselves. A part of that we pass on to our children who come after us as it was passed on to us by the giants who went before: Sydney Taylor, Deborah Peissin, Sadie Rose Weilerstein, I.L. Peretz, Hayyim Nachman Bialik, Shalom Aleichem, the Shivhei HaBesht, the Ayn Ya'acov— all the way back to the source; the fire, the smoke, and the flashes of lightning at the top of Mt. Sinai.

Linda R. Silver:

I close by again offering congratulations to our winners, Ida Vos and her English “voice,” Terese Edelstein, to Jon J Muth and to Eric A. Kimmel. May you all go from strength to strength! And may all of us go forth to champion Jewish children's books!

Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee of AJL's SSC Division:

Committee Chair:

Linda Silver -- Librarian of the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland and Chair of the Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee. She is co-editor of the AJL Newsletter's new children's book review section. She is also editor of a new AJL publication, *Creating a Judaic Children's Collection: A Basic List of Books and Videos*.

Committee Members:

- **Kathleen Clotfelter** -- Part of the Media/Library department at Donna Klein Jewish Academy; previously librarian at Hillel Community Day School in North Miami Beach.
- **Etta D. Gold** -- Head Librarian at Temple Beth Am Library in Miami; previously, she was Manager of the Children's Department at the Coral Gables Branch of the Miami-Dade Public Library System. She has earned an MLS and an RJE; and worked in Jewish education.
- **Fred Isaac** -- Librarian at Temple Sinai in Oakland California and a Judaica Library consultant and writer in the San Francisco Bay Area. He has also presented papers and published in the field of detective fiction and is a long-time member of the Popular Culture Association.
- **Naomi Morse** -- Head Librarian at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in Rockville, Maryland. Her interests are art, poetry, children's literature and the literature and art of the Holocaust.

• **Libby White** -- Librarian of the Beth Israel Congregation Hebrew School in Owings Mills, MD; previously she has been a Reference Librarian at a large public library system in upstate New York. Libby reviews for the AJL Newsletter, School Library Journal, and the Baltimore Jewish Times. She has been consultant to *Funk and Wagnalls Encyclopedia* and to *Magazines for Libraries*. Libby is a PhD. Candidate in Jewish History at Baltimore Hebrew University.

President of the Synagogue, School, and Center Division of AJL:

Michlean Amir -- Librarian at the Upper School of Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School; previously Librarian of the Isaac Franck Public Library of the Board of Jewish Education of Greater Washington. She was a former Chair of the Sydney Taylor Book Awards committee.