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MEDIA RELEASE

**2007 SYDNEY TAYLOR BOOK AWARDS
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(New York—January 11, 2007) **Stephen Krensky** and **Greg Harlin**, author and illustrator of *Hanukkah at Valley Forge*, and **Brenda Ferber**, author of *Julia's Kitchen*, are the 2007 winners of the prestigious Sydney Taylor Book Award. **Markus Zusak**, author of *The Book Thief* is the winner of the 2007 Association of Jewish Libraries Teen Book Award.

The winners were announced on January 8 at the Midwinter Meeting of the Association of Jewish Libraries in Manhattan. AJL's Sydney Taylor Book Award honors new books for children that exemplify the highest literary standards while authentically portraying the Jewish experience. The award memorializes Sydney Taylor, author of the classic *All-of-a-Kind Family* series. The new Teen Book Award honors books for young adults. The winners will receive their awards at the Association of Jewish Libraries convention in Scottsdale, Arizona this June.

Krensky and Harlin will receive the 2007 gold medal in the Sydney Taylor Book Award's Younger Readers Category for *Hanukkah at Valley Forge*, published by Dutton. During the grim winter at Valley Forge, a Polish-born soldier tells General Washington about Hanukkah, who draws a parallel between the Macabee's war against their foes with the American war against the British oppressors. "Beautiful watercolor illustrations of both the Revolutionary War period and the Macabean period, including the rededication of the Jewish Temple, add immeasurably to a delightful and inspirational account of this legendary encounter," comments Susan Berson, a member of the Award Committee. The book is recommended for grades 1-5.

Ferber will receive the 2007 gold medal in the Sydney Taylor Book Award's Older Readers Category for *Julia's Kitchen*, published by Farrar Straus and Giroux. When Cara Segal loses her mother and younger sister in a house fire, she questions her belief in God, struggles with her relationship with her father, and tries to find ways to hold onto the memories of her family in this deeply moving novel that will touch the hearts of all readers. First-time author Ferber, winner of the 2004 Sydney Taylor Manuscript Award, "authentically captures the voice of a contemporary 11-year-old girl and despite the tragic premise, manages to keep the book up-beat, refreshing, and inspiring" notes Rachel Kamin, Chair of the Award Committee. The book is recommended for grades 4-8.

Eight Sydney Taylor Honor Books were named for 2007: four in each the Younger Readers' and Older Readers' categories. For Younger Readers, Honor Books are: ***The White Ram* by Mordicai Gerstein** (Holiday House), ***I Am Marc Chagall* by Bimba Landmann** (Eerdmans Books for Young Readers), ***Shlemazel and the Remarkable Spoon of Pohost* by Ann Redisch Stampler with illustrations by Jacqueline M. Cohen** (Clarion), and ***Rebecca's Journey Home* by Brynn O. Sugarman with illustrations by Michelle Shapiro** (Kar Ben/Lerner). For Older Readers, the Honor Books are: ***Vive La Paris!* by Esme Raji Codell** (Hyperion/Disney), ***Solomon and the Ant: And Other Jewish Folktales* by Sheldon Oberman** (Boyds Mills Press), ***Yellow Star* by Jennifer Rozines Roy** (Marshall Cavendish Children's Books) and ***Night of the Burning: Devorah's Story* by Linda Press Wulf** (Farrar Straus and Giroux).

For the first time, the Association is recognizing the best books of Jewish content for teen readers. Markus Zusak will receive the 2007 Association of Jewish Libraries Teen Book Award for ***The Book Thief***, published by Alfred A. Knopf/Random House. Death narrates this story of Leisl Meminger, a Lutheran girl in Nazi Germany who sustains herself and those close to her with her love of books and reading. "Enveloping the engaging story is the beauty of Zusak's descriptive language and his unique literary style," remarks Nancy Austein, a member of the Award Committee. "It is a story that resonates with the full spectrum of human emotions and experiences - a unique and masterfully written book." The book is recommended for grades 9-12. Two honor books for teens were also recognized: ***Incantation* by Alice Hoffman** (Little, Brown and Company) and ***A Brief Chapter In My Impossible Life* by Dana Reinhardt** (Wendy Lamb/Random House).

In addition to the medal-winners, the Award Committee designated twenty-five Notable Books of Jewish Content for 2007: nine in the Older Reader' Category, thirteen in the Younger Readers' Category, and three for Teens. Notable titles, and more information about the Sydney Taylor Book Award, may be found online at www.SydneyTaylorBookAward.org.

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