



For more information, contact:
Heidi Estrin, Chair
Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee
Association of Jewish Libraries
(561) 241-8118 ext. 206
heidi@cbiboca.org
www.jewishlibraries.org

MEDIA RELEASE

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2004 SYDNEY TAYLOR BOOK AWARDS ANNOUNCED BY ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LIBRARIES

(New York—January 12, 2005) Pnina Moed Kass, author of *Real Time*, is the 2004 winner of the prestigious Sydney Taylor Book Award. Eric A. Kimmel is the winner of the 2004 Sydney Taylor Body-of-Work Award for his overall contribution to the genre of Jewish children's literature.

Kass and Kimmel were among the winners announced on January 10 at the Midwinter Meeting of the Association of Jewish Libraries in Manhattan. AJL's Sydney Taylor Book Awards honor new books for children and teens 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 winners will receive their awards at the Association of Jewish Libraries convention in Oakland, CA this June.

Kass, who lives in Israel, won the 2004 Sydney Taylor Book Award for *Real Time*, published by Clarion. Hour by hour, the novel chronicles the events surrounding a bus bombing outside of Jerusalem. The story is told by a diverse cast of characters, including kibbutzniks, tourists, soldiers, and the Palestinian teenager who bombs the bus. Remarkably insightful and even-handed, this thoughtful book is a riveting read that, as the publisher says, "could be the backstory behind yesterday's—or tomorrow's—news." The book is recommended for grades 8-12.

"*Real Time* is a stunning portrait of modern Israeli life," said Heidi Estrin, chair of the Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee. "It is both frightening and hopeful, drawing readers into the complexity of life in the Middle East without offering easy answers. As one character says, everyone is part of the story, and 'like a tangled string when you pull it, it gets tighter.' The book will fascinate teen readers, and help them connect to the human side of what they see on the news."

Kimmel, of Portland, Oregon, won the 2004 Sydney Taylor Body-of-Work Award, which is presented every few years to an author who has made a substantial contribution to the genre of Jewish children's literature. Past winners include Barbara Diamond Goldin, Miriam Chaikin, and Isaac Bashevis Singer. Kimmel, the author of over fifty children's books, has written more than twenty books of Jewish interest during his illustrious career, including the recent book *Wonders and Miracles: A Passover Companion*, winner of the National Jewish Book Award and a 2004 Sydney Taylor Honor Book. He won the Sydney Taylor Book Award in 2000 for *Gershon's Monster* and in 1990 for *The Chanukah Guest*.

"Eric Kimmel's books are loved by children, not just by teachers or librarians," explained Estrin. "He brings a sense of joy to his storytelling. His humor, sense of adventure, inclusion of scary monsters, and pride in his Jewish heritage are all features that help him forge a strong bond with readers."

Six Sydney Taylor Honor Books were named for 2004: five in the Older Readers' Category and one in the Younger Readers' Category. For Older Readers, the Honor Books are: *Daniel Half-Human and the Good Nazi* by David Chotjewitz, published by Simon & Schuster; *Bobbie Rosenfeld: The Olympian Who Could Do Everything* by Anne Dublin, published by Second Story Press; *The Cats in Krasinski Square* by Karen Hesse and illustrated by Wendy Watson, published by Scholastic; *Wonders and Miracles: A Passover Companion* by Eric A. Kimmel, published by Scholastic; and *My Guardian Angel* by Sylvie Weil, published by Arthur A. Levine/Scholastic. For Younger Readers, the Honor Book is *Daniel in the Lions' Den* by Jean Marzollo and illustrated by the author, published by Little Brown.

In addition to the medal-winners, the Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee designated thirty-one Notable Children's Books of Jewish Content for 2004: twenty in the Older Reader" Category and eleven in the Younger Readers' Category. Notable titles, and more information about the Sydney Taylor Book Award, may be found online at www.jewishlibraries.org.

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