

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: March 1, 2008

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ALABAMA BOOK FESTIVAL FEATURES CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT WRITERS, ACTIVITIES

"There is no substitute for books in the life of a child," wrote Mary Ellen Chase more than half a century ago. Those words are just as true today, and every parent and teacher knows the value of encouraging children to read.

You can encourage reading--and have fun at the same time!--at the upcoming Alabama Book Festival on Saturday, April 19, in Montgomery. The festival will celebrate books and reading for all ages and offer special programming for young readers and families.

Authors, illustrators, theater performances and storytelling are among the special children's offerings, many of which will be located in the children's tent, an area designated specifically for young readers. Interactive crafts and book-related activities, as well as book characters in costume, are also among the offerings.

This year's line up includes Deborah Wiles, whose first novel, *Love Ruby Lavender*, won wide acclaim, including selection as an ALA Notable Children's Book. Her picture book *One Wide Sky* was a Children's Book of the Month Club selection, and novel *Each Little Bird That Sings* was a National Book Award finalist. At the festival, she'll read from and talk about her latest book, *The Aurora County All-Stars*.

Children's book illustrator Elizabeth Dulemba will be on hand to talk about her just released *Paco and the Giant Chile Plant*, a bilingual children's book. Her first picture book, *The Prince's Diary*, was named No.1 2006 Valentine's Day Pick by Book Sense.

Storytellers Wanda Johnson, recipient of the Storytelling World award, and Joseph Trimble, whose books include *Marty and the Million Man March*, will join Janet Chambers, author of *Ready, Set, Read*, and magician Russell Davis in the festival's children's area.

Amadeus the Traveling Dog, a four-year-old Great Pyrenees whose books for children include *Friendship Rules*, will be on hand, and a special performance by the award-winning Children's Educational Theater will take place in the children's area. Clifford the Big Red Dog will be available throughout the day to greet children and sign autographs.

Alabama Public Television will give its Reading Rainbow awards at the festival. A noon time program showcasing the winners reading their own work will be open to all.

The Alabama Book Festival is a free event for all ages. It will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the grounds of Montgomery's historic Old Alabama Town. Sponsored by the Alabama Center for the Book, Old Alabama Town, the Alabama State Council on the Arts, Alagasco, AT&T, Auburn University's College of Liberal Arts and many others, the festival is a signature literary event for the entire state.

For a full list of festival authors/presenters and more information, go to www.alabamabookcenter.org.

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