**All Star!: Honus Wagner and the Most Famous Baseball Card Ever**

**by Jane Yolen**

Louisiana Young Readers’ Choice Nominee 2013

Grades 3-5

*Submitted by Gail Goldberg – Branch Manager, J. W. McDonald Memorial Branch, Rapides Parish Library, Glenmora, LA &*

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Yolen, Jane. All Star! : Homus Wagner and the Most Famous Baseball Card Ever. Philomel Books. 2011. 23 pages.

**SUMMARY**

*All Star*! is a biography that tells the life of one of the greatest baseball player of all time. He played for the Pittsburgh Pirates. Honus won the National League batting championship in 1900, 1903, 1904, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909 and 1911. The setting is a ball field in three different states. Honus played different positions and was a versatile player. He didn’t care what position he played as long as he was playing because he loved the sport. Honus played in more games than any other player in the National League.

Honus played 21 seasons of major league ball without any drugs; training programs or incentives. His fans young and old collected everything about their hero. He had his own baseball card that was sold in cigarette packs. He did not approve of tobacco, so when he found out he had the card pulled off the market because he did not want his young fans to get the wrong idea about cigarettes. A small number of cards had already been produced and promoted and a few of the public had them. They were very rare because he had them pulled which made them extremely valuable. In July 2007 the Honus Wagner Baseball Card was sold at auction for almost three million dollars. A saying that Honus often said was “How about that!” In 1936 when the Baseball Hall of Fame was established, Honus was one of the first five men inducted.

**AWARDS**

Winner of the Oppenheimer Gold Award

**AUTHOR’S BIOGRAPHY**

Jane Yolen was born February 11, 1939 in New York City. In 1962, Jane married David W. Stemple. Together they have three children and six grandchildren. After forty-four years of marriage her husband died of cancer in March 2006. For four months of the year, she lives in her home in Scotland.

Jane Yolen graduated from Smith College in 1960 with a BA. In 1976, Jane received her Masters in Education from the University of Massachusetts.

She has written over 300 books that she has received many awards for including: Caldecott medal, two Nebula awards, World Fantasy Award, National Book Award, three Mythopoeic Fantasy Awards, the Golden Kite Award, the Skylark Award, Jewish Book Award, two Christopher Medals, the Association of Jewish Libraries Award, the Charlotte Award, the Garden State Award, the Golden Sower Award and numerous others. The Jane Yolen biography website is [www.janeyolen.com](http://www.janeyolen.com).

**ILLUSTRATOR’S BIOGRAPHY**

Jim Burke is the illustrator. He was born in Manchester, New Hampshire. Jim Burke is an illustrator of many children books. He illustrates many of Jane Yolen’s books. Jim is also a writer of children books. His artwork was shown in the Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition in London in the year 2008. He is a Gold Medal recipient from the Society of Illustrators. Five of his books have been honored at The Original Art Show in New York City. Other awards include: The New York Art Directors Club and Prints Regional Design. In addition to his publishing work, Jim has created many private and corporate commissions. He lives in Beacon, New York with his wife and young daughter.

**CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS:**

**Introduction:**

Read aloud All Star!: Honus Wagner by Jane Yolen.

**ART:**

The book tells of a steel and coal mine town in Pennsylvania and its simple life. Have the student’s research products that are made from steel or coal and draw these products. Let the classmates name the products and discuss what they are used for.

**MATH:**

There are many measuring and counting activities you could have students participate in to understand

the period of time the book All-Stars took place in.

**.** Measure the school ball field by walking off the feet from home plate to center field.

**.** Physically count the amount of money that Honus made per hour (when he started in the coal

mines) compared to what a person makes in an hour in this day and time.

**VOCABULARY:**

German Dawn

Dusk Line drive

Snag Streetlamps

Inning Shortstop

Outfield Baseball

**SCIENCE/SOCIAL STUDIES:**

**.** Make a timeline of baseball players inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame since the establishment

in 1936. <http://baseballhall.org/>

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1 – What was the saying that Honus Wagner always said and why do you think he used that wording?

2 – Why did Honus Wagner quit school in the 6th grade?

3 – Why was the baseball card so valuable in 2007?

4 – What languages did the Wagner children speak and why?

5 – The alteration that Honus made to his baseball glove was for what purpose and would it be legal in

today’s game?

6 – What positions did Honus Wagner play in the major league?

7 – What nickname did the newspapers call Honus and why?

8 – Who was the baseball executive that offered Honus a place on a Paterson, NJ, team and how much

was he paid per month? What was the average yearly pay for a worker at that time?

9 – Who did Honus call “my two boys” and why?

10 – What was the name of the team that Honus Wagner became the coach of?