A Conversation with the 2014 Florida Book Award Winning Authors
2015 Florida Library Association Conference
May 14, 2015
4:00 – 5:00pm

Moderator:  Gloria Colvin, Chairperson
Florida Book Awards Advisory Board
Head, Scholars Commons, Florida State University

Panelists:    Bill Belleville
*The Peace of Blue: Water Journeys*
Florida Nonfiction - Silver Medal

Madeleine Kuderick
*Kiss of Broken Glass*
Young Adult Literature - Gold Medal

Greg Neri
*Hello, I'm Johnny Cash*
Children's Literature - Silver Medal

Ira Sukrungruang
*Southside Buddhist Essays*
General Nonfiction - Bronze Medal

Panelists' Information:

**Bill Belleville**
*The Peace of Blue: Water Journeys*
Florida Nonfiction - Silver Medal

**BIO:** Bill Belleville is an award-winning author specializing in nature and “sense of place” who has written seven books of creative non-fiction---including “River of Lakes” and “Losing It All to Sprawl”. He’s also contributed to nine national anthologies, and authored over 1,000 articles and essays for publications such as Oxford American, Audubon, Sierra and others. Of Bill’s work, bestselling author Carl Hiaasen has said: “Bill Belleville writes gorgeously and straight from the heart.” Bill’s also traveled widely overseas as a writer on expeditions for the Discovery Channel and scripted radio documentaries for NPR and video docs for PBS. A member of the Florida Humanities Council’s prestigious Speakers Bureau, Bill’s currently co-producing and scripting a PBS film on Florida’s springs. A native of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Billlives in Sanford, Fla. (More information: www.BillBelleville.com )

**BOOK DESCRIPTION:** A series of essays, this book examines the importance of water to the sense of identity of Floridians. With evocative prose, Belleville examines how water shapes modern Florida and how the broader questions of water policy affect Floridians and their world.
From one of the FBA judges: “Belleville reminds us how important water is to our sense of being Floridians. This is an important book, combining the best of Henry David Thoreau and Rachel Carson.”

Greg Neri
_Hello, I'm Johnny Cash_
Children's Literature - Silver Medal

**BIO:** Greg Neri is the Coretta Scott King honor-winning author of _Yummy: the Last Days of a Southside Shorty_ and the recipient of the Lee Bennett Hopkins Promising Poet Award for his free verse novella, _Chess Rumble_. His novels include _Knockout Games, Surf Mules_ and the Horace Mann Upstander Award-winning _Ghetto Cowboy_. His latest is the free-verse picture book bio, _Hello, I'm Johnny Cash_. Neri's work has been honored by the Museum of Tolerance and the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Antioch University, the International Reading Association, the American Library Association, the Junior Library Guild and the National Council for Teachers of English. He has been a filmmaker, animator and digital media producer. Neri currently writes full-time and lives in Tampa, Florida with his wife and daughter.

**BOOK SUMMARY:** On even a first reading of _Hello, I'm Johnny Cash_, one is drawn in by G. Neri's poet's voice and sensibility in this retelling of the early years of this music industry icon. This extended prose poem is plain spoken, like Cash himself, and shows the young reader Cash's struggle with poverty and adversity without being sentimental or maudlin. Readers will be further dazzled by the deftly rendered illustrations subtly evoking time and place. Finally, this picture book for older readers has enough complexity and depth to appeal universally, especially to fans of "the man in black."

Madeleine Kuderick
_Kiss of Broken Glass_ (HarperTeen)
Young Adult Literature
Gold Medal

**BIO:** Madeleine Kuderick grew up in Oak Park, Illinois, a community with rich literary tradition, where she was editor-in-chief of the same high school newspaper that Ernest Hemingway wrote for as a teen. She studied journalism at Indiana University before moving to Florida and completing her bachelor’s degree at the University of South Florida and MBA at Saint Leo University. Today, she lives in Palm Harbor on Florida’s beautiful gulf coast. Madeleine is published in anthologies and magazines and speaks at reading conferences, literature festivals, and schools across the country. She enjoys writing about underdogs and giving a voice to those who are struggling to be heard. _Kiss of Broken Glass_ is her debut novel and a YALSA 2015 Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers.

**BOOK DESCRIPTION:** Lyrical with rich depth, Madeline Kuderick’s novel _Kiss of Broken Glass_ transports the reader into the world of peer pressure and its effect on an emotionally sensitive girl. Kenna Keagan has been admitted into a psychiatric facility for a minimum of 72
hours after getting caught cutting herself in the school bathroom. While there, Kenna begins to understand the roots of her obsession with self-mutilation. Realistically told in free verse, the story seamlessly ebbs and flows with Kenna’s emotional highs and lows. Kenna’s pain becomes the reader’s pain and is beautifully written to raise awareness about a topic where one in 200 girls cut themselves. Just like Kenna’s scars, this novel will not fade quickly from one’s memories.

Ira Sukrungruang
Southside Buddhist Essays
General Nonfiction - Bronze Medal

BIO: Ira Sukrungruang is the author of the memoirs Southside Buddhist and Talk Thai: The Adventures of Buddhist Boy, and the poetry collection In Thailand It Is Night. He is the coeditor of two anthologies on the topic of obesity: What Are You Looking At? The First Fat Fiction Anthology and Scoot Over, Skinny: The Fat Nonfiction Anthology. He is the recipient of the New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in Nonfiction Literature, an Arts and Letters Fellowship, and the Emerging Writer Fellowship. His work has appeared in many literary journals, including Post Road, The Sun, and Creative Nonfiction. He is one of the founding editors of Sweet: A Literary Confection (sweetlit.com), and teaches in the MFA program at University of South Florida and the low-residency MFA program at City University in Hong Kong. For more information about him, please visit: www.buddhistboy.com.

BOOK DESCRIPTION: In lyrical essays, Ira Sukrungruang tells a new story as old as America itself: how children adapt to a strange land and their immigrant parents. When asked by a teacher to tell the class who he was, the 16-year-old Thai-American replied, “I’m a Chicagoan . . . a Southsider.” Southside Buddhist takes readers on a journey from the steel factories of Chicago to dreams of white elephants, from Yogi Bear’s Jellyside Campground to the El-Mar Bowling Alley, where his mother warned him about blonde American women.