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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Terrapin Turtle Book Named ASPCA Award Finalist

Mt. Pleasant, S.C. (March 10, 2007) – Can you imagine finding diamondback terrapin turtle eggs in your sandbox? In Maryland author Jennifer Keats Curtis' picture book, "*Turtles In My Sandbox*," a young girl named Maggie finds herself in exactly that situation!

After carefully caring for the hatchlings, Maggie and the turtle team celebrate the turtles' release. And now, Curtis, California illustrator Emanuel Schongut and Sylvan Dell Publishing are celebrating because "*Turtles In My Sandbox*" has recently been announced as a finalist for the 2006 Henry Bergh Children's Book Awards.

The Henry Bergh Book Awards are given annually by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) to honor books that promote the humane ethic of compassion and respect for all living things. They are named for the ASPCA's founder, Henry Bergh. The 2006 awards and honors will be presented at a reception sponsored by the ASPCA at the American Library Association's (ALA) annual conference in June, although the ALA is not a sponsor of the Henry Bergh Book Awards.

Released in September 2006, "*Turtles*" is based on a popular terrapin head start program that gives Maryland students the opportunity to participate as experts gather, hatch and release terrapin eggs each summer. The picture book has been vetted for scientific accuracy by educators and scientists at the Terrapin Institute, Ohio University, the University of North Florida, the Diamondback Terrapin Working Group and NOAA. It is also part of the Accelerated Reader program used in over 57,000 schools and, like all Sylvan Dell books, it contains a five-page "For Creative Minds" educational section with terrapin fun facts and a "Make Your Own Turtle" craft.

"I hope that '*Turtles In My Sandbox*' and its websites will teach children how amazing diamondback terrapins are and how important it is to protect them," explains Curtis, who is donating a portion of the book's proceeds to the Terrapin Institute. "It is such an honor to be considered for this award, because it truly represents my own reasons for writing," she continues.

An Annapolis area resident, Curtis strives to bring children close to the animals in their own backyard. Her first children's book, "*Oshus and Shelly Save the Bay*," won the Frederick Douglass Award given by the Maryland Council of Teachers of English Language Arts.



The book's websites, www.sylvandellpublishing.com/Sandbox.htm and www.terrapinbook.com, include fun facts and activities for children and teachers. In addition, www.terrapinbook.com offers a unique, interactive lab and houses the first comprehensive database on head started terrapins. The site is funded by Maryland's Department of Natural Resources and by a cooperative of private and public organizations including the Maryland State Department of Education and the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute.

Schongut adds, "Although the heroine is a young girl, I think that Jennifer wrote the story in a way that makes every child who reads the book feel included regardless of race or sex, and that's part of what makes our book unique."

A San Francisco resident, Schongut spent several years in New York City where he taught reportorial art and figure drawing at the Pratt Institute. During this time, the renowned Push Pin Studio represented his art and he had the opportunity to work with famous artists Milton Glaser and Seymour Chwast. He continues to teach in the San Francisco area and his multi-faceted style lends itself to any medium: book covers, textbooks, editorial art, posters, advertising art and children's books in particular.

"*Turtles*" is Schongut's second Sylvan Dell title. His first, "*Christmas Eve Blizzard*," was released in November 2005 and was a finalist for the 2005 Henry Bergh Children's Book Awards.

Sylvan Dell Publishing is on a mission to create picture books that excite children's imaginations, are artistically spectacular and have educational value. Readers can ask for "*Turtles In My Sandbox*," "*Christmas Eve Blizzard*" or any other Sylvan Dell title at their favorite local or online bookstore. For more information, please visit www.SylvanDellPublishing.com or call Katherine Miller at (877) 958-2600.

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