

## **The 2009 Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction**

The winner of the 2009 Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction is *Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson, published by Simon & Schuster.

Freedom is the cry when the British invade New York City at the start of the Revolutionary War and the Rebels fight the Loyalists, but young house slave Isabel, owned by a Loyalist family, is chained between two nations. Her owners are cruel, but why should she support the Rebels when their laws allowed her little sister to be sold away? Isabel's first-person narrative of her daily life reveals the brutality of slavery, including the breakup of family life, even as her invisibility (she's just "a piece of furniture") gives her the power to spy. Through Isabel's rebellion, loyalty, and fight for independence, the brave girl's stirring narrative gets beyond simplistic political history to reveal the true meaning of freedom.

Established in 1982 by the great historical fiction writer Scott O'Dell, the annual \$5000 Award is given for a distinguished work of historical fiction for young people, published by a U. S. publisher; the setting must be South, Central, or North America, and the author must be a U. S. citizen. Since O'Dell's death, the Award has been administered by his wife, Elizabeth Hall.

Hazel Rochman, Contributing Editor of YA books for ALA's *Booklist*, is the Committee Chair. She succeeds the late Zena Sutherland, who served as chair from the inception of the Award. The other members of the committee are Ann Carlson, English and Fine Arts Librarian, Oak Park and River Forest High School; and Roger Sutton, Editor of *The Horn Book*.