

Third Annual Ohioana Book Festival

3rd annual celebration of Ohio authors is greatest success to date

by David E. Weaver

When Ohioana created the Ohioana Book Festival, our goal was to celebrate the works of Ohio writers and to bring authors, readers and the community together for stimulating, fun, educational, and entertaining programs and activities.

With the tremendous success of our third event this May, we can truly say we are achieving that goal. The 2009 Ohioana Book Festival was the biggest and best to date.

This year's event represented a major expansion over previous festivals. Highlights included:

- o participating authors increased to more than 70 (from 45 in 2008)
- o outreach programming activities doubled from 2008 and the number of days of outreach programming was increased from one to three
- o the event was used to launch the State Library of Ohio's "Choose to Read Ohio," a new program to encourage the reading of works by Ohio writers
- o Ohio Government TV taped panel discussions, the OSU Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing recorded interviews of authors for future podcasting, and VoiceCorps interviewed R.L. Stine and other authors for a broadcast to visually-impaired audiences

From May 6 thru May 8, our ten featured authors – Jaime Adoff, Phil Brady, Margaret Peterson Haddix, Ann Hagedorn, Peter Mansoor, Erin McCarthy, John Scalzi, Jeff Smith, R.L. Stine and Thrity Umrigar - participated in a series of outreach activities that included visits to area schools and libraries, Na-



First Lady Frances Strickland opens the 2009 Ohioana Book Festival - Photo by Mindy Ciotola



Featured Author Jaime Adoff answers a question - Photo by Jonathan Achor

tionwide Children's Hospital, Columbus State Community College, and the Scioto Juvenile Correctional Facility; a program at the Lennox Square Barnes & Noble, interviews on WCBE's "Writers Talk" and a live panel discussion on WOSU's "Open Line" with Fred Andrlle.

Saturday, May 9 was the main event at Ohioana and the State Library of Ohio. The festival was free and open to the public. Frances Strickland presided

over the opening ceremony. Activities included panel discussions, readings, a book fair, expanded space and programming for children, food, and entertainment. For the second consecutive year, the Ohioana Robert Fox Awards for Young Writers and the Ohio Center for the Book's Letters about Literature Awards were presented, and students had the opportunity to read their winning entries. The festival closed Saturday evening with a special reception at the Ohio Governor's Residence hosted by Frances Strickland.

Saturday's attendance was nearly 3,000 – double what it was in 2008. Adding in outreach programming by our ten featured authors and broadcasts on WOSU and WCBE brought the total audience to nearly 15,000.

Thanks to the major funders and more than twenty organizations that partnered with Ohioana to present the festival. Thanks also to the Ohioana Board, Ohioana staff, and the many volunteers who worked on the event.

Mark your calendars now for the 4th annual Ohioana Book Festival, which will be presented on Saturday, May 8, 2010!



Clifford the Big Red Dog and Lilly Mouse dance with a young reader - Photo by Jonathan Achor