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**Passion-driven author wins another award;**

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***Book and educational tools help children understand the need for conservation***



**Jane Veltkamp is seen relaxing in Cedar Key, where she arrived a few days ago. That is a replica beak she is holding in her right hand - this is just like the one created in 2008 by a 3-D printer as the first-ever prosthetic beak for an American Bald Eagle.**

**Story and Photo By Jeff M. Hardison © Jan. 12, 2018 at 11:27 a.m.**

**CEDAR KEY --** A 62-year-old Idaho woman who reenergizes with her husband the winter at Cedar Key was announced on Friday (Jan. 12) at 11 a.m. (Eastern Standard Time) to be a winner of a very prestigious award for her book *Beauty and the Beak*.

Birds of Prey Northwest director and raptor biologist Janie Veltkamp and award-winning children's author Deborah Lee Rose are sharing in the American Association in the Advancement of Science/Subaru (AAAS/Subaru) Award as co-authors.

The book venture from Veltkamp's perspective took place under the umbrella of Birds of Prey Northwest, a non-profit group that provides medical care to eagles, hawks, owls, ospreys and falcons from the wild who are in need of medical attention.

Veltkamp is the founding director of Birds of Prey Northwest since 1993. The woman said she will never stop in her effort to help young people learn the role of raptors in ecology. Bald eagles and osprey were once critically endangered from the previous use of the now-banned DDT.

Birds of Prey Northwest returns those animals to the wild when possible. Birds of Prey Northwest uses 20 teaching birds that are unable to return to the wild – including Beauty. These creatures include eagles, falcons, red-tailed hawks and other species of

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birds of prey. Those birds travel and are used to teach children about conservation.

The AAAS/Subaru Award is a peer award presented by scientists, scientific writers and others who are sharp critics of science and the advancement of this field of study.

The American Association for the Advancement of Science was created on Sept. 20, 1848 at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. It was a reformation of the Association of American Geologists and Naturalists.

Subaru is providing the \$3,000 award, which Rose and Veltkamp are sharing equally as co-authors. Rose had 15 other children's books published before *Beauty and the Beak*.

Rose and Veltkamp are being transported by jet to Austin, Tex., in February for the ceremony to accept the cash prize and to be recognized for their work.

The first award for *Beauty and the Beak* was from California Reads – A Recommended Title – from the California Teachers' Association.

The second award to recognize this book came from the Junior Library Guild.

This is Veltkamp's first venture into the world of being a children's book author, and she mentioned there is a potential for a second book. The book is in its second printing now, having sold at least 5,000 so far.

Now having been named as an AAAS/Subaru Award winner, as well as accepting the other two significant awards, and with the book going into its second printing, Veltkamp said this is all she could hope for -- with this being her first children's book.

Jane and Don Veltkamp of Idaho are among the condo owners on the island that is in western Levy County. They go there to relax, although she is active in the island's Audubon group as a charter member; she has spoken to children at Cedar Key School as a visiting author; and she is active in other community groups on Cedar Key.

The couple met some years ago back when she was in South Dakota, where she worked for three years to introduce baby osprey to that state – from whence they had become extinct due to DDT use.

“People down here (Cedar Key) think ‘There's another osprey,’” she said. “Well there are some states that are still completely devoid of osprey because they have not recovered still from 50 years ago when DDT was used.”

Every third through fifth grade student at Cedar Key School was given a copy of the \$18 book in the fall of 2017, soon after it was first published. Those children were the first in the United States to read the story.

The book that was first published in August of 2017 has earned a number of awards, with this most recent announcement being the current pinnacle.

It was published by Persnickety Press. Persnickety Press is the sister imprint of the Cornell Lab Publishing Group, which is connected with the ornithological studies at Cornell University, as well as other aspects of Cornell.

Persnickety publishes a broad range of books for children and young adults, both fiction and non-fiction from picture books through teen titles.

*Beauty and the Beak*, while focusing on an audience of children in the third through sixth grades, is a story that tells about how the American Bald Eagle who became named Beauty lost part of her beak from a gunshot wound.

This is not just a feel-good children's book. Beyond the story, this book includes several tools for elementary science teachers to engage their students in learning.

This rescue and procedure to add a three-dimensional beak on the raptor happened in 2008, when the 3-D printers of today were in their infancy. The stunning photos in the book were captured at the time of the surgery.

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The mechanical engineer and the team that Veltkamp created as a biologist were the first in the world to create a prosthetic beak.

The 25-page story ends with Beauty the bald eagle, drinking water with her new beak attached. Since the first prosthetic beak was created and attached to the rescued eagle, her natural beak has grown out a bit and she no longer wears the prosthetic beak, however she will remain as a captive bird that has been and will be used to help children and adults know more about America's national symbol.

After the first 25-page story, there is another 25-page section of background material to aid the students in learning about bald eagles. That story shows how the national symbol is an animal that can face dilemmas in the modern world.

Among the obstacles the eagle and other birds of prey face are those that originate from humans. Death by gunshot is one daunting factor.

Veltkamp said she was delighted to hear children at Cedar Key say that among the things they learned was to never shoot an eagle. This was profound for her.

She wrote the book “to tell one eagle’s story to conserve many.”

Lead poisoning from ingesting big game animals that have lead shot in them is another toxic danger taking the lives of eagles, she said.

“Am I going to stop the man or woman who shot Beauty in Alaska?” she asked. “No. But you give us an hour with his or her third through sixth grade student and they will grow up to be conservationists.”

Other causes of death for bald eagles include being hit by cars, trains and planes. Wind turbines that create electricity present a fatal obstacle. Eagles eating animals that have been euthanized and placed at landfills also leads to the death of these birds, she said, because they overdose on the remnant drug used to kill those cats and dogs.

The back part of the book shows students how eagles function with their feathers to fly, and their beaks to eat, drink, preen, communicate and the like.

Another reason the book has earned multiple awards is the additional instruction guide designed for teachers. That is free to download by clicking [HERE](#).

In the back of the book, too are STEM-related exercises and information. STEM is the acronym for Science Technology Engineering Mathematics. Some teachers have added Art to create the acronym STEAM.

“This book is winning awards,” Veltkamp said, “because teachers, particularly science teachers, are hungry for these kinds of lessons that are applicable to STEM standards.”

There is a page in the back that shows common core standards, by grade and by subject to enable teachers in their efforts to educate children about bald eagles.

Veltkamp said there are replicas of the actual working model of the beak that was first placed on the bird in 2008 after it was created by a 3-D printer.

She is available for being a visiting author in classrooms, even though she and her husband Don are in Cedar Key to reenergize before returning to Birds of Prey Northwest.

“Some people have a job,” she said. “Some people have a career. Some people have a passion. I am just passionate about raptor conservation; and particularly pointing out modern perils for these birds which need a large space of vertical environment to survive.”

Any teacher who would like to invite Veltkamp to speak to students is invited to contact her at [janie@bopnw.org](mailto:janie@bopnw.org).