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A Silver Award for Author Lisa Connors

Oliver's Otter Phase honored in the 31st annual Benjamin Franklin Awards

Mount Pleasant, SC (April 23, 2019) -- Writing a first book is a great accomplishment but winning an award for that book is even sweeter, and Lisa Connors felt that success this month with the announcement of the Independent Book Publishers Association Benjamin Franklin awards. Her picture book *Oliver's Otter Phase* won a silver medal in the Best New Voice: Children's/Young Adult category.

Each year IBPA honors books from independent publishers that show excellence in editorial and design in 54 individual categories. Over 160 librarian, booksellers, and editorial experts spent seven months combing over more than 1,500 books critiquing each one and selecting gold and silver winners in each category.

Oliver's Otter Phase was inspired by a trip to the aquarium both in real life and in the book. When young Oliver visits the aquarium, he falls for the otters and takes in all the information he can about these playful creatures. The next day he declares to be an otter and tries to eat food from his belly, ties a line of "kelp" to prevent getting lost, and even takes a cookie to the bath. While this works great in the sea for an otter, it is not so easy for a boy! Young readers learn all about sea otters through Oliver's funny scenarios and then learn even more in the book's "For Creative Minds" educational section.

Connors' love of nature led her to a degree in environmental studies and teaching; now she spends her days writing about the natural world in hopes of inspiring young readers. She recently won the Virginia Outdoor Writer's Association Excellence in Craft Award for her book *Milkweed Matters: A Close Look at the Life Cycles within a Food Chain*. Connors' dedicates her time to writing and revising with more than 25 manuscripts in the works and a new life cycle book on the way.

Jones was a perfect fit as the illustrator for *Oliver's Otter Phase* for her love of research at local aquariums, zoos, and museums. The whimsical illustrations animate young Oliver's follies as he becomes an otter. Jones has illustrated several books for Arbordale including the math series *My Even Day, One Odd Day, My Half Day*, and most recently *Midnight Madness at the Zoo*.

Oliver's Otter Phase is available in hardcover (9781607184515, \$17.95), paperback (9781607184621, \$9.95), and dual-language, read-aloud ebook (9781607185154, \$12.99). A Spanish language edition, *Nico: Nutria por un día*, is available in paperback (9781607184676, \$9.95), and dual-language, read-aloud ebook (9781607185208, \$12.99). All formats are available from local booksellers and online retailers.