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South Dakota State Historical Society Releases New Bilingual Lakota Tale

PIERRE, S.D.—Award-winning illustrator Donald F. Montileaux has put another ancient Lakota tale to paper. “Tasunka: A Lakota Horse Legend” features a Lakota translation by Agnes Gay and is the newest children’s book from the South Dakota State Historical Society.

“Tasunka” is a story of adventure, discovery, loss and renewal, set to beautiful ledger-style illustrations that illuminate the story of the horse and its importance to the plains people.

“Tasunka” uses traditional storytelling methods to impart wisdom to new generations. Readers journey with a young warrior as he tracks a strange new creature across the plains. Far from home, he discovers beasts that run as swift as the wind and shimmer with many colors. The young Lakota warrior captures and tames them, and his people grow rich and powerful. Then the Great Spirit, who gave the gift of the horse, takes it away.

“Tasunka” is appropriate for first- to fourth-grade readers or as a book to be read aloud to younger children.

“This book is an important addition to our collection of stories for children,” said Nancy Tystad Koupal, director of the South Dakota State Historical Society Press. “Don has created a visually stunning work of art and, together with Agnes Gay, has preserved a piece of Lakota culture.”

Montileaux is an enrolled member of the Oglala Lakota Nation. “Tasunka” is the first time he has worked with the State Historical Society as both an author and an illustrator. Montileaux contributed artwork to the multi-award winning State Historical Society Press book, “Tatanka and the Lakota People: A Creation Story,” and illustrated “The Enchanted Buffalo,” part of the Press’s Prairie Tale series.

An award-winning artist, illustrator, presenter and consultant on Lakota culture, Montileaux uses his art to tell traditional Lakota stories. Montileaux lives in Rapid City, with his family. He dedicates “Tasunka” to Alex White Plume, who provided the catalyst for the book.

“Tasunka: A Lakota Horse Legend” is available for \$19.95 plus shipping and tax and can be purchased from most bookstores or ordered directly from the South Dakota Historical Society Press. Visit www.sdshspress.com, email orders@sdshspress.com or call (605) 773-6009.

The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society, an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society's world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.