

Excerpts from Janet Stevens's and Susan Stevens Crummel's acceptance speech at the  
NLA/NEMA Conference  
October 17, 2008  
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(Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel showed slides and videos during their presentation.  
I'm sorry that you can't see them as well as read their words!)

**Janet:** We are very happy to be here and thank you for such a wonderful presentation. It was just great and I love the costumes. I'm Janet and this is my big sister Susan.

**Susan:** I live in Fort Worth.

**Janet:** And I live in Boulder, Colorado.

**Susan:** We are so glad to be here. I want to tell you a little bit about growing up together. We came from a typical American family. (slide of the family from "Father Knows Best")

**Janet:** These kids have no idea who that is.

**Susan:** That's not really our family. That's a TV family where everything was perfect.

**Janet:** Actually, this is my family. That's my husband, Ted. He's a scientist so we're not really sure what he does. That's my daughter, Lindsay. She's about to graduate from vet school, and that's very helpful for all the animals that I have. And that's my little son, Blake. He's in clown school.

**Susan:** This is my daughter, Courtney, she's in advertising; my son, Jason, who's an engineer; my oldest daughter is a high school teacher; and my husband was a high school principal. But these people don't matter anymore because I have grandkids! That's Sophie and she's four, and when she was little she thought my name was "Book." She'd come over to my house and I'd read to her so much that she'd see me she'd go "Book!" And so my son would say, "We're going over to Book's house today." And that's Matthew, and Janet says he's so fat he looks like a potato. She calls him "Spud." Sophie calls him "the destroyer."

**Janet:** Here's where we grew up. My dad was in the navy so we lived all over the place, so we were always the new kid in school.

**Susan:** I graduated from high school in Rhode Island.

**Janet:** And I graduated from high school in Hawaii.

**Susan:** Not fair!

**Janet:** I go to my reunions in Hawaii. Susie goes to Rhode Island. I won on that one! Here we are as kids.

**Susan:** See that cute one right there? That's me!

**Janet:** My big sister was perfect. She never got in trouble, she got straight "A"s every time, she always knew the answers to the questions, her room was neat at home. It made me kind of mad, because I was the opposite. I was a mess, my room was a mess, I never got straight "A"s, and I was always in trouble.

**Susan:** So I called her "Miss Messy."

**Janet:** And I called her "Miss Prissy pants" because she was SO perfect!

**Susan:** We got these dresses for Easter. My eyes are blue so I got a blue dress.

**Janet:** And my eyes are brown so I got a brown Easter dress.

**Susan:** It was ugly!

**Janet:** No it wasn't! I wanted a blue one like Prissy pants. All I had to do was wait, because Prissy pants grew and she got bigger and bigger and wider and wider and she grew right out of that dress. And guess who grew into it—me! So I got my blue dress, but it was a hand-me-down from Prissy pants. But that's a book idea.

**Susan:** We don't have a plot yet, but we have a title—"The Hand-Me-Down Blues."

**Janet:** That's as far as we've gotten.

(video clip about the sisters portrayed as squirrels, one neat and one messy)

**Janet:** All that messy energy went into being an artist. You can get really messy when you're an artist, so next time your mom or your teacher says, "Clean up your desk" or "Clean up your room," you just tell them that you're artistic and that you're being creative and to leave you alone. I really wasn't that good at art in kindergarten, but I liked to paint and color and draw. I wasn't particularly great at it, but I liked it. And the more you do something, the better you get. Look at my report card in 5<sup>th</sup> grade—my art grades were "B"s. You would think that an artist would get an A in art, but I didn't. But you know what? I can still be an artist and not be the best. And I can get better if I work at it, right? And I did! And now I draw every day in my studio—it's a mess.

(They went on to show a video of Janet and her studio, and read and acted out portions of their books, including *The Great Fuzz Frenzy*.)