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# YOUNG ADULT

## LIBRARY SERVICES

The official  
journal of the  
**Young Adult  
Library  
Services  
Association**

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Famed tennis player Arthur Ashe once said, "From what we get, we can make a living; what we give, however, makes a life." His causes were many, and he shared his knowledge and passions with the world. People who work with and advocate for young adults can use this quote as a daily affirmation of what we do. How many of us provide some sort of outreach, whether in the form of visits to schools, hospitals, jails, recreational centers, or even just reaching out to that one teen who is struggling with a dilemma? Most of us, I expect. I would also like to think that as libraries continue to recognize the value of providing resources and programs to teenagers, one of the reasons has to be outreach.



Thousands of librarians and associates partner with organizations, engage audiences with good reads, plan and implement not only tried and true teen programs, but also new and innovative activities to bring that elusive Generation Y group through the library doors and into a more literate future. In the Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, one of the definitions of "outreach" is the extending of services or assistance beyond current or usual limits. While we ultimately try for this definition, we can be hampered by many obstacles. Administrative staff may not see the overall value of outreach, especially in small rural and tribal communities where there are few staff to perform even the most basic services. Larger systems also may not see the big picture when it comes to frontline staff spending time outside the workplace, especially when there may be a department for Outreach Services. These barriers can be overcome. Staff training can make some difference, perhaps conducted by YALSA's Serving the Underserved (SUS) trainers.

The theme for this issue is outreach, and each article presents a different piece of outreach throughout the library community. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the beginning of SUS, and we bring you in-depth information as well as personal stories of trainers. SUS has become a successful way of promoting outreach on a national level. In addition, you will have the opportunity to read speeches from Ursula K. Le Guin, the 2004 Margaret A. Edwards Award winner; Angela Johnson, the 2004 Michael L. Printz winner; as well as Printz honorees Jennifer Donnelly, Carolyn Mackler, Helen Frost, and K. L. Going. As you read these wonderful speeches, think about how the authors are "reaching out" to us and the intended teen audience and what an impact these books have made.

There is very slender line that connects each article in this issue to what each of us does every day, and that is to empower the teens of today to reach out to their future. ●

## About the Cover

The art is adapted from ALA Graphics's "It's Alive" Mini Poster, available at [www.alastore.ala.org](http://www.alastore.ala.org), and reflects the theme for Teen Read Week 2004. For more information about Teen Read Week, visit [www.ala.org/teenread](http://www.ala.org/teenread).

# YOUNG ADULT LIBRARY SERVICES

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## Statement of Purpose

*Young Adult Library Services* is the official journal of the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division of the American Library Association. The *Journal* primarily serves as a vehicle for continuing education for librarians serving young adults, ages 12 through 18. It will include articles of current interest to the profession, act as a showcase for best practices, provide news from related fields, and will spotlight significant events of the organization and offer in-depth reviews of professional literature. The *Journal* will also serve as the official record of the organization.

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## Manuscripts

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# What YALSA Means to Me

David C. Mowery



## Y=Youth Participation

Whatever they are named—teen advisory group, teen advisory board, teen library club, and so on—these groups enable young adults to actively participate in and guide their public and school libraries' programs and services. Volunteer or paid opportunities for teens cover a broad range within the library spectrum: serving as book buddies to read to (and with) younger children; helping with arts and crafts programs for children; serving as computer coaches to library customers of all ages; helping children with homework; performing outreach services in their community; greeting and informing users about library programs and activities; planning and leading young adult programs; providing peer tutoring and being teen mentors; and actively participating in Friends of the Library groups.

## A=Access, Equity Of

Young adults, an ever-increasing percentage of the population in the United States, are entitled to equal access to library services and programs. *All* teens should be included—ESL, GLBT, teens with special needs, teens of diverse economic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, and so on. Teens must feel welcome and comfortable in their local library in order to take advantage of the various things their library can offer them. YALSA's Serving the Underserved (SUS) trainers have blazed a trail across the country training library generalists, staff members, and board members, enabling them to provide better service and outreach efforts to young adults in school library media centers and public libraries. To date, ninety SUS trainers have provided sessions for almost 30,000 attendees!

## L=Literacy

Teen literacy encompasses helping young adults to develop the skills they need to seek and effectively utilize information resources. YALSA assists and promotes libraries in this critical endeavor through the work of several of its committees, discussion groups, and task forces. Encouraging and motivating teens to read is, of course, the foundation for building the bond between teens and literacy. We, as members of YALSA, the "voice" for library services to young adults, must continue to convey the absolute importance of a lifelong love of reading and learning. Teen Read Week, steadily increasing in popularity and participation, is a shining example of a successful literacy-based initiative.

## S=Sustainability of the Association

Association sustainability, as a result of revenue growth, is a crucial goal area in YALSA's strategic planning. To achieve this goal, YALSA must concentrate on three objectives: increasing revenue from existing programs and services, including adding publications that will generate income over expenses; generating revenue from new products and services; and increasing membership by developing a targeted campaign to solicit new members, while retaining existing members. YALSA membership, at this time, remains strong at more than 4,200!

## A=Advocacy

Advocacy is a primary, continuing, ever-important goal area in the strategic planning of the division. Through the advocacy efforts of all YALSA members, the value of teen services within public and school libraries will increase. In order to accomplish this, YALSA needs to focus

on creating advocacy tools for members; increasing staff, financial, and volunteer resources allocated to advocacy; increasing advocacy within the local community, primarily through partnerships with strategic organizations serving youth; and increasing advocacy within the library institution.

During my year as YALSA president, my action areas and concerns are:

1. Adolescent Literacy. My presidential program in Chicago 2005 is titled "Teen Literacy Is a Four-Letter Word: Reading Equity of Access Advocacy Diversity." If you have thoughts, suggestions, or ideas you wish to share, please contact me.
2. Development of YALSA member training workshops and institutes on teenagers and literacy.
3. Building stronger bridges and collaboration between public and school librarians who serve young adults.
4. More extensive dissemination and marketing of the YALSA book awards and media awards lists.

This is a very exciting time for YALSA. We are in the process of developing and rolling out a new strategic plan. Keep attuned for news about this in upcoming issues of *YAttitudes* and *YALS*. Much to our loss, Executive Director Julie Walker and Deputy Executive Director Cindy Welch will be leaving the division to pursue other endeavors. But YALSA has strengthened as an organization (thanks to Julie and Cindy), and we will be hiring our very own full-time executive director in the coming months.

Just as adolescents struggle through the "growing pains" of becoming adults, YALSA is in the process of a grand transition. I am counting on your support and participation to make this transition a reality. You can reach me at [d.mowery@brooklynpubliclibrary.org](mailto:d.mowery@brooklynpubliclibrary.org) or by phone at (718) 230-2753. ●

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# Ten Years and Counting

## YALSA's Serving the Underserved Project, 1994–2004

Monique le Conge

Ten years may not seem like that long, especially when you've been in one library for that time, as I have. But if you are a teen, it may as well be a lifetime. Teaching generalists to better understand that "lifetime" was only one goal for the Serving the Underserved (SUS) Project begun by YALSA ten years ago. What was the world like for a teen, or for you and me, in 1994? South Africa held its first interracial national election, electing Nelson Mandela as president. O. J. Simpson was arrested in the killings of his wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ronald Goldman. Four were convicted in the World Trade Center bombing. Kurt Cobain committed suicide. Thousands were killed in Rwanda. The FDA approved the Flavr Savr tomato, the first genetically engineered food product. Major league baseball players went on strike. *ER*, *Friends*, and *My So-Called Life* debuted on TV. *Reviving Ophelia* was a *New York Times* bestseller. *Schindler's List* won the Academy Award for Best Picture. *The Shipping News* won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. *Pulp Fiction* and *The Shawshank Redemption* premiered. Whitney Houston's version of "I Will Always Love You" won the Grammy for Record of the Year. Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and John Candy passed away.<sup>1</sup>

In 1994, the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), a division

of the American Library Association (ALA), began training YALSA members as part of the Serving the Underserved: Customer Services for Young Adults Project. Library staff around the country needed education and information about teenagers in the library, how best to interact with them, and how to encourage their participation in planning collections, space, and programs. Furthermore, marketing, collaboration among community resources, physical and psychological development, and working with boards and administration—all related to young adults—were skills that needed the professional development and continuing education opportunities that these trainers could provide.

As Linda Waddle, a former YALSA Deputy Executive Director, remembers: "The SUS project was a group effort. Executive Director Ann Weeks wanted YALSA to apply for the ALA/World Book Goal Award. This was at a time when we were all working on Library Power, and there was a lot of discussion about professional development. Elizabeth O'Donnell was YALSA president at the time. She was on the school board in her city and was familiar with professional development in education and knew someone whom we later hired to work with the SUS trainers. . . . We were looking at the training-the-trainer model and adult learning. Barbara Herrin provided the expertise. With Barbara's guidance, I did a crash course in these subjects and wrote the grant proposal, Barbara and Ann vetting it all along the way. There were other elements that came into play as well. We were working with DOE on the research project that resulted in "Services and Resources for Children and Young Adults in Public Libraries"—that's where the idea of YA's being underserved came from. We were also working on

*Output Measures and More* with Virginia Walter at the time. When we received the award, we got down to brass tacks by putting together an application process."

Initially, two seminars were held in 1994 and 1996 (Miami and San Antonio, respectively), with a third seminar in 2001 (Washington, D.C.). ALA World Book Goal Awards funded all three. As Waddle further recalls, "We did the training in Miami at the Annual Conference under less than ideal conditions. That and . . . the training led to a marvelous experience and bonded the trainers in a way you could never plan for." In all, ninety SUS trainers from all geographic areas of the United States were accepted to participate in the three training sessions, based on applications. They developed techniques and content to teach adult learners and began training in libraries all over the country. Their presentations continue to cover such topics as "adolescent development, reading interests, behavioral problems, youth participation, facilities, and computer services for teens."<sup>2</sup> The workshop presentations have been made to professional and paraprofessional staff in rural public libraries with as few as seven staff members (the whole staff!) to state, regional, and national conferences, and specialized seminars. They have made over 350 presentations to more than 20,000 participants.<sup>3</sup> Trainers continue their own development, discussing issues and learning about young adult library service and other useful information via a discussion list and a dedicated Web site.

Because ten years have passed since the first group of trainers met in Miami, YALSA wanted to know how the trainers have affected library service to teens. In 2003, two surveys were conducted to learn how the training has helped both the trainers and the learners. One survey

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asked trainers about their observations and involvement in the program, and the second asked participants about the long-term effects that the training had on their libraries. SUS trainers have reached quite an impressive number of people, but has the training changed or improved libraries or librarians at all? Are library services to young adults better than they were ten years ago?

## Methods

A focus group of YALSA members, YALSA board members, SUS trainers, and YALSA office staff was convened at ALA Midwinter in Philadelphia in early 2003 to discuss the kinds of questions they felt should be asked in a survey, and to critique and offer suggestions for a draft survey. Approximately twelve participants provided input during a thirty-minute focus group.

The first survey was conducted from March to May 2003. Of the ninety SUS trainers, contact information was found to invite eighty-one to participate in the survey. Even those trainers who are not currently active were included in the survey to find out what had changed to keep them from conducting any more training. (Initially, trainers were expected to conduct one training within two years of their participation in the SUS project, but many continued long beyond that requirement.) This survey was first conducted electronically using Zoomerang ([www.zoomerang.com](http://www.zoomerang.com)) on the Internet. Because responses were limited to a short time frame, copies of the survey were snail-mailed to those who did not respond or indicated they could not respond. In two rounds of surveys, forty trainers (49.3 percent) answered the survey (appendix A).

The second survey was conducted in October and November 2003. A sample of forty-four participants was taken from trainers' suggestions. These participants were libraries that had hired the SUS trainer to conduct the workshop(s) and often were learners in the workshop(s) themselves. The participants received a paper survey by mail only. Of the forty-

four, eighteen (40.9 percent) responded to the survey (appendix B).

## Results

### Survey One—the Trainers

Because only about half of the trainers responded to the survey, and because there is no formal follow-up procedure to measure long-term effects of the training in place, many of the answers rely on anecdotes and observations. That said, the available statistical information does give insight into the strengths of the project. For most of the responses, the surveys had a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest rating, or least effective, and 5 being the highest rating, or most effective. A rating of 3 would be an average, where the question was somewhat important, or the goals/ideas were somewhat met. See appendix A for the trainers' survey.

The two primary goals of trainers entering the project were youth advocacy and professional development. An overwhelming 76 percent reported that their "individual advocacy for young adults" was the most significant factor encouraging their participation in the SUS training; 72 percent then reported that the training met this goal completely. Add in those who rated this goal as a 4, between "somewhat significant" and "most significant," and individual advocacy was a goal for 95 percent of the trainers and 94 percent felt this goal was met *more* than "somewhat."

A secondary goal of trainers was "professional development," with 98 percent reporting this as a 4 or a 5, both *above* "somewhat significant." This was met completely, or just under, for 86 percent of the trainers. While leadership development was not an original goal of the SUS project, it was obliquely mentioned as a motivation or personal goal for trainers ("professional development"), and it has been an outcome, as noted in the 2001 SUS Annual Report submitted by Linda Waddle to the YALSA Board in June 2001.<sup>4</sup> Many trainers have gone on to leadership positions within YALSA, not to mention within their own careers. For example, several participants

have gone from a young adult librarian to some type of supervisory position, including several who have become library directors.

Other goals that encouraged participation, as listed by some trainers, include:

- Networking with others who serve YAs
- A desire to participate more actively in YALSA and with other YALSA members
- Sharing the importance of working with teens in libraries
- Being intrigued by the process
- Receiving the cachet of being nationally certified by a professional group and being one of a select few with this certification
- Helping libraries improve or start YA services

Some additional goals that were met, as listed by some of the trainers, include:

- I started teaching graduate workshops at the local library school
- We now have a young adult focus group and have written grants
- I definitely expanded my network, and I also had some participation in YALSA and ALA
- More confidence about my own knowledge and abilities as a young adult specialist
- Participation in the SUS workshop was one of the most transformative experiences of my life—I met lots of influential people in the field and left with many new doors open to me
- I felt more a part of my profession
- Trainings I presented opened doors of opportunity for other libraries

Of those responding, 62 percent characterized themselves as "active" trainers. The most influential reason for no longer being active is a "change in job." Second to that is "no libraries/systems requesting training." It's impossible to tell if this is a recent trend based on economic factors, if the market has reached saturation, or even if libraries are unaware of the program. Motivation for the trainers to present more trainings comes from "retraining/updating skills" (83 percent cited this, rating it "somewhat



Training the trainers

interested" or higher) rather than "increased marketing by YALSA," so marketing is not necessarily viewed as a factor in why libraries are not asking for trainings.

One suggestion from the statistical information is the 72 percent who are "somewhat interested" or above in "partnering with other trainers." While the SUS seminars covered the basics of workshop presentations, some may feel unsure about partnering or may not have considered it an option until mentioned on the survey. They may not know where to begin. Trainers who have done this in the past might be able to show and tell others, providing some of the advanced training or refresher work. This can be an effective way to present—learners like different styles—and much more fun. However, this is where the cost factors, of course, can make skills-updating prohibitive. A half-day presentation in January 2003 did offer some new training for those who were attending the Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia.

An interesting note is that in spite of the requirement for trainers to present one workshop within two years of the initial training, 71 percent said that having "done enough" was "not influential" when becoming inactive. So even though they might have had an "out" to end their term of service, that factor was not a reason for leaving.

Most trainers said that they do have an awareness of long-term impacts of SUS training on individual libraries and staffs. While these are purely observational statistics, the anecdotes are particularly valuable in illustrating the benefits

## SUS STORY SWAP

Compiled by Monique le Conge and Jana Fine

Have you ever wondered about those training sessions and what trainers think about? Read the following stories from SUS trainers around the country and find out just how rewarding training workshops can be, not only from a presentational aspect, but also from a personal view.



The SUS trainer class of 1996

When I did a training session in Monterey, staff had set the scene for themselves as a "surprise" for me upon my arrival! They had each brought a photo of themselves as teens to a coworker, who made blowups of them. These large photos—mostly from the '60s and '70s, with a few from the really big-haired '50s—were tacked around the room's walls, interspersed with period album covers which another staff member had bought for something like twenty-five for one dollar at a local Salvation Army. It proved a wonderful ice breaker, as you can imagine. . . .

In Calexico, I was reminded that we really need some bilingual SUS trainers. The Imperial County library district provides some buildings with monolingual collections (Spanish), and everyone on staff is bilingual; but the default language, again, is Spanish. This meant that I could be understood; but when discussions became flowing and enthusiastic, I could only understand vaguely and couldn't participate (which was probably fine) because everyone returned to Spanish. They were not expecting me to be Spanish-speaking and were pleased with the training, but it would have been more appropriate, I think, had it been conducted in Spanish as are many of the library services.—*Francisca Goldsmith, Collection Management and Promotion, Berkeley Public Library, 2090 Kittredge St., Berkeley, CA 94704, (510) 981-6139, frg1@ci.berkeley.ca.us*

One time, I was team-training with Leslie Westbrook in a rural part of northern California and we were talking with the group about how important it is to have a line item for young adult services in the library budget, even if it's only \$500 annually. It makes the service "real" to the public and to the city, county, and library staff, and is therefore viewed as a vital service.

At the next break, a woman approached us and said, "I understand what you are saying about needing a budget line item, but our library doesn't have a budget for children's or young adult books at all. The only way we purchase new items is if someone dies, donates money, and specifically requested that it be spent on youth services." We sympathized (and realized that better preparation might have helped, in terms of knowing our audience; we could have talked with someone about how much support YA services had in that area of the state) with her, but pointed out that she could always speak to the director, letting them know how valuable this workshop had been, and include a budget line as a recommendation from the "experts" and consider it as a future goal.

Almost a year later, I saw this same woman at a conference. She approached me, beaming, and said that her director had welcomed the idea of a line item

**continued on page 7**

specifically for teen materials. They now had an annual budget of \$50! Obviously, not much money, but now a budget “presence” that deserved attention annually.—*Monique le Conge, Director, Benicia Public Library, 150 East L St., Benicia, CA 94510-3281, (707) 746-4343, mleconge@ci.benicia.ca.us*

Soon after I started as coordinator of young adult service at Queens Borough Public Library, I attended the third SUS training. Not only did the training materials help me greatly when making staff aware of YA issues in libraries, I also learned about how to focus my training toward adult learners. These techniques have served me well, and thereby help our staff and system as well. Thank you, SUS.—*Nick Buron, Coordinator of Young Adult Services, Queens Borough Public Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd., Jamaica, NY 11432, (718) 990-8545, Nick.H.Buron@QueensLibrary.org*

What SUS means to me:

- Excellent training and resource materials that I have used to great effect in state conference programs, particularly the ones on marketing. The reference materials are also helpful, in particular the Reference Interview Skit.
- Lots of professional support and collegial sharing. An opportunity to get together with other trainers.
- I love the train-the-trainer aspect.
- Being able to put together a program for a staff that is hostile to teens, and feeling good about their reactions to such techniques as going back to think about what you were like or doing or listening to, and so on when you were a teen.
- I like the fact that SUS gives you the resources to be able to “act as if.” You might not be an expert on a subject, but because of the resources YALSA provides for us, we’re able to convince our audience that we are experts—even if we don’t feel like it.

I am delighted with the SUS training I received; I’ve had really good experiences doing training (so far), from a single library staff to statewide programs to the national arena.—*Bonnie Kunzel, Youth Services Consultant, New Jersey State Library, 185 W. State St., PO Box 520, Trenton NJ 08625-0520, (609) 633-3963, BKUNZEL@aol.com*

I was YALSA president at the time, which was in the early 1990s, and there were all of these resources coming out, either as a revision or as new stuff—things like Patrick’s book, *Connecting Young Adults and Libraries* (Neal-Schuman, 1998), which I think was in revision; *Fair Garden* may also have had a new revision; *Bare Bones* was either new or revised—and I remember saying to Linda Waddle (then deputy executive director of YALSA) that it seemed a shame that YALSA has all these new resources and not very many folks know about them or how to use them. I suggested that we apply for the World Book Award, which she felt was a long shot . . . and the rest is history. Linda did the proposal, and office staff provided great support. I don’t know what went on until Linda called and told me that we had the grant—which goes to show, “nothing ventured, nothing gained.”—*Betty O’Donnell, Past President, YALSA, eodonnell@comcast.net*

of the SUS project. But first, highlights from the statistics:

- 100 percent report an “improvement in the attitude towards teens”
- 75 percent said that there was a “positive revision of policies for teens”

- 81 percent found a “development of special collections for teens”
- 93 percent report “program(s) created for teens”
- 57 percent said that there was “creation of young adult advisory group(s)”

- 82 percent noted “positive action(s) for teens by staff”

The only item that didn’t have a majority of “yes” answers was related to “positive action(s) for teens by the library or school board.” It is likely that this may be because the trainers have no personal knowledge of that level of change, which is not always as visible as teen programs or collections. Furthermore, board policies may already be broad and inclusive and may not require changes or action. In some cases, though, boards added young adult budget lines, added a teen representative to the board, and were made more aware of teens’ needs in the library.

Some of the “positive action(s) for teens by staff” that trainers cited include:

- More new YA staff seeks employment at our library because of our “Teens Welcome Here” policy
- Libraries have put efforts toward creating or updating a teen area
- Better understanding of teen behavior and motivations
- Staff using YALSA booklists for selection

As observed earlier, the personal anecdotes give the most information in terms of the long-term effects, how to present trainings, and even about the experience of being a trainer. Comments from the trainers include:

- “I ran into a participant from a previous training, and she was still very motivated and told me about her current teen programs.”
- “I’m currently the chair of my library’s staff training and development committee. I use what I learned as a YALSA trainer to provide better training sessions in my own library.”
- “I didn’t think I knew much about YA services but realized I am doing much more than other libraries, and they have really looked to me for advice.”
- “The main thing is what a brilliant idea this training network has been and how receptive most people are to learning how to interact with teens. . . . The one thing that would help me would be to overhaul the training



The SUS trainer class of 2001.

manual, and especially to update the research examples in the manual.”

- “I’ve had a couple of young YA librarians contact me after the program for advice on how to move ahead in the field. I’m always grateful for the opportunity to mentor YA librarians in this way since so many people helped me to get to the place that I am today.”
- “Since receiving SUS training . . . there is a significant increase in the number of libraries with either YA librarians or library generalists specifically charged with YA services.”

In short, the trainers responded that the trainings provided them with skills to become youth advocates, gave them professional development opportunities, and have, overall, had a positive effect on those libraries they did reach. They desired more training to keep skills and knowledge current. With high interest in young adult services in libraries nationwide, increased marketing and perhaps expanded availability of trainers would seem to be next steps.

## Survey Two—the Participants

As part of their survey, SUS trainers were asked to provide contact information for libraries or library systems where they presented training. These participants were responsible for organizing and often attending the workshops. Again, this is a small reporting group, but it offers some valuable information and anecdotes.

Interestingly, 79 percent of the participants were aware that the trainer(s)

had received specialized training. The trainer had made them aware, they were familiar with the program, or somehow they learned about it after the fact. This is an important factor in establishing SUS and YALSA as a “brand” for young adult library service.

Not surprisingly, the most important reason for having training was a “desire for professional development”; 76 percent of the respondents named this as “most significant.” Combined with the 4 rating, this accounted for 94 percent of the participants. Second to professional development, at a rating of 5, “most significant,” was “wished to improve young adult services.” Interestingly, combined with the 4 rating, this also equaled 94 percent of respondents.

Advocacy for young adults, in this case as a library instead of as an individual, was not seen as a primary goal for participants as it was for the trainers. And while “wished to establish young adult services” was last as a “most significant” (5) rating, it did receive 76 percent of the responses for “somewhat significant or higher.”

Other goals that encouraged the participants to have an SUS presentation included:

- To increase tolerance of teens in the library
- We knew we would have a quality training program for our librarians
- We opened a new library and wanted specialized training for our nonprofessional staff
- Ideas for programs and services for teens
- This was part of our CE program

What provides insight into the success of the SUS presentations are the ratings of how goals were met by the training(s). When asked to rate how goals were met, 92 percent said that the goal of

establishing YA service was “met somewhat” or better. This can indicate that SUS trainers are reaching libraries that have no separate YA library service or didn’t know they could have separate services. In fact, the training met the goal of professional development at least “somewhat” or better for 100 percent of the participants. The same was true of the advocacy goal. Participants may have specific goals in mind, but it seems they got much more from the training than they expected.

Other goals that were met include:

- General staff members were beginning to recognize the training and expertise of YA librarians and staff
- Staffs of two regions interacted to share ideas
- Awareness for YA services and materials by library system directors
- Empowered paraprofessional staff by providing foundation of philosophy for YA services

Eighty-five percent of the participants reported that they were aware of long-term impact of the training(s). Ninety-three percent reported that there were both an “improvement in the attitude toward teens” and “positive action(s) for teens by staff.” “Development of special collection(s) for teens” was noted by 85 percent. That same number reported “creation of special space or section for teens,” which was not asked of the trainers.

An interesting comparison note is that 91 percent of those responding said that they were aware of “positive action(s) for teens by the library or school board.” This illustrates the point that these were likely to be people aware of these often “invisible” changes, as opposed to trainers who may not be aware.

Some of the “positive action(s) for teens by the library or school board” that trainers cited included:

- We have worked with school officials on a high school summer reading list and book discussions of those books
- Library is encouraging all branches to dedicate to YA programming
- New programs, space dedicated for them, changes in attitude

- Library now site for teen activities

To be sure, the responding participants seemed to be quite satisfied with the SUS trainers. Ninety-four percent said that they would have a training session in their library again, that they felt the specialized training had an effect on the quality of the presentation, and that the specialized training had an effect on the level of service, programs, and collection development for teens in their library. This demonstrated the effectiveness of the SUS program and a desire for libraries to hire “experts.”

## Conclusion

Based on these two surveys, the SUS program has been successful in changing and improving services to young adults in public libraries, at both frontline and administrative levels. The program is seen positively and is helpful in creating new services and standards of customer service, as well as providing an area of continuing education that reaches more than youth librarians. With the continued efforts of the SUS program, it is possible that by 2014, not only will we look at current events, movies, and music trivia with nostalgia, but also the idea of not having all staff trained to work with young adults will be equally amusing. ●

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## Appendix A. SUS Program Trainer Evaluation Survey

1. What was your job title/position when you trained to be a trainer for Serving the Underserved?

2. What is your current job title position?

3. Why did you originally take the SUS training? 1 = not significant, 2–3 = somewhat significant, 4–5 = most significant

Responsibilities related to your library position, 1 = 0 (0%), 2 = 2 (5%), 3 = 7 (18%), 4 = 12 (31%), 5 = 18 (46%)

Your individual contribution to the school/library community, 1 = 0 (0%), 2 = 1 (3%), 3 = 6 (15%), 4 = 15 (38%), 5 = 17 (44%)

Your individual advocacy for young adults, 1 = 0 (0%), 2 = 0 (0%), 3 = 2 (5%), 4 = 9 (23%), 5 = 28 (72%)

Your opportunity for professional development, 1 = 0 (0%), 2 = 0 (0%), 3 = 1 (3%), 4 = 16 (41%), 5 = 22 (56%)

4. Were there other goals that encouraged your participation?

Yes = 19 (53%)

No = 17 (47%)

5. Please rate the level at which your personal goals were met from your participation in the training for the SUS Program. 1 = did not meet, 2–3 = met somewhat, 4–5 = met completely

Responsibilities related to your library position, 1 = 9 (0%), 2 = 2 (5%), 3 = 7 (18%), 4 = 13 (33%), 5 = 17 (44%)

Your individual contribution to the school/library community, 1 = 0 (0%), 2 = 3 (8%), 3 = 1 (3%), 4 = 15 (38%), 5 = 20 (51%)

Your individual advocacy for young adults, 1 = 0 (0%), 2 = 1 (3%), 3 = 2 (5%), 4 = 9 (24%), 5 = 26 (68%)

Your opportunity for professional development, 1 = 0 (0%), 2 = 1 (3%), 3 = 5 (13%), 4 = 9 (23%), 5 = 24 (61%)

6. Were there other personal goals that were met by your participation?

Yes = 9 (31%)

No = 20 (69%)

7. About how many trainings do you do each year? 0 = 6 (15%), 1–3 = 21 (53%), 4–6 = 7 (18%), 7–10 = 3 (8%), 11 or more = 1 (3%)

8. What would motivate you to present more trainings? 1 = low interest, 2–3 = somewhat interested, 4–5 = high interest

Partnering with other trainers, 1 = 6 (16%), 2 = 4 (11%), 3 = 14 (36%), 4 = 10 (26%), 5 = 4 (11%)

Increased potential for income, 1 = 13 (33%), 2 = 1 (3%), 3 = 9 (24%), 4 = 9 (24%), 5 = 6 (16%)

Increased marketing by YALSA, 1 = 7 (20%), 2 = 6 (16%), 3 = 9 (24%), 4 = 9 (24%), 5 = 6 (16%)

Retraining/updating skills/knowledge needed, 1 = 3 (8%), 2 = 3 (8%), 3 = 13 (34%), 4 = 10 (26%), 5 = 9 (24%)

9. Are there other motivations that would lead you to present more trainings?

Yes = 16 (48%)

No = 17 (52%)

10. Do you consider yourself to be an active trainer?

Yes = 24 (62%)

No = 15 (38%)

11. If you are no longer participating in the SUS program, or do not consider yourself to be an active trainer, why? 1 = Not influential, 2–3 = Somewhat influential, 4–5 = Most influential

Change in job, 1 = 4 (25%), 2 = 0 (0%), 3 = 2 (13%), 4 = 1 (6%), 5 = 9 (56%)

Have done enough, 1 = 11 (73%), 2 = 2 (13%), 3 = 1 (7%), 4 = 1 (7%), 5 = 0 (0%)

No libraries or systems are requesting training from you, 1 = 3 (18%), 2 = 1 (6%), 3 = 5 (29%), 4 = 1 (6%), 5 = 7 (41%)

Burned out, 1 = 7 (43%), 2 = 3 (19%), 3 = 3 (19%), 4 = 2 (13%), 5 = 1 (6%)

12. Are there other reasons you are no longer participating?

Yes = 1 (6%)

No = 8 (44%)

N/A = 9 (50%)

13. Do you have an awareness of the long-term impact of your SUS presentation(s) on individual library(ies) and library staff(s)?

Yes = 28 (72%)

No = 11 (28%)

14. If the answer to question 13 is yes, please consider the following set of questions to indicate changes in library service that you believe have occurred since the training.

Improvement in the attitude towards teens, yes = 29 (100%), no = 0 (0%)

Positive revision of policies for teens, yes = 22 (76%), no = 7 (24%)

Development of special collection(s) for teens, yes = 23 (82%), no = 5 (18%)

Creation of young adult advisory group(s), yes = 17 (59%), no = 12 (41%)

Program(s) created for teens, yes = 27 (93%), no = 2 (7%)

Collaboration among agencies serving teens, yes = 17 (59%), no = 12 (41%)

Positive action(s) for teens by staff, yes = 24 (83%), no = 5 (17%)

Positive action(s) for teens by the library or school board, yes = 7 (25%), no = 21 (75%)

## Appendix B. SUS Program Participant Evaluation Survey

1. Were you aware that this trainer had received specialized training?

Yes = 14 (79%)

No = 3 (21%)

2. Why did you originally present the SUS young adult services training? (1 = not significant, 2–3 = somewhat significant, 4–5 = most significant)

Wished to establish young adult services, 1 = 3 (18%), 2 = 1 (6%), 3 = 7 (40%), 4 = 2 (12%), 5 = 4 (24%)

Wished to improve young adult services, 1 = 0 (0%), 2 = 0 (0%), 3 = 1 (6%), 4 = 6 (38%), 5 = 9 (56%)

Your library's advocacy for young adults, 1 = 1 (6%), 2 = 1 (6%), 3 = 2 (12%), 4 = 6 (35%), 5 = 7 (41%)

Desire for staff professional development, 1 = 0 (0%), 2 = 0 (0%), 3 = 1 (6%), 4 = 3 (18%), 5 = 13 (76%)

3. Were there other goals that encourage you to have an SUS young adults services presentation?

Yes = 8 (50%)

No = 8 (50%)

4. Please rate the level at which your goals were met from receiving training from the SUS Program (1 = did not meet, 2–3 = met somewhat, 4–5 = met completely)

Wished to establish young adult services, 1 = 0 (0%), 2 = 1 (8%), 3 = 4 (34%), 4 = 4 (33%), 5 = 3 (25%)

Wished to improve young adult services, 1 = 0 (0%), 2 = 0 (0%), 3 = 2 (13%), 4 = 6 (38%), 5 = 8 (49%)

Your library's advocacy for young adults, 1 = 0 (0%), 2 = 0 (0%), 3 = 3 (19%), 4 = 5 (31%), 5 = 8 (50%)

Desire for staff professional development, 1 = 0 (0%), 2 = 0 (0%), 3 = 1 (6%), 4 = 5 (29%), 5 = 11 (65%)

5. Were there other goals that were met by your SUS presentation?

Yes = 7 (50%)

No = 7 (50%)

6. Do you have an awareness of the long-term impact of your SUS young adult services presentation(s) on your library(ies) and library staff(s)?

Yes = 13 (85%)

No = 2 (15%)

If your answer to the above is yes, consider the following set of questions to indicate changes in library service you believe to have occurred since the training.

Improvement in the attitude towards teens, yes = 13 (93%), no = 1 (7%)

Positive revision of policies for teens, yes = 5 (42%), no = 7 (58%)

Development of special collection(s) for teens, yes = 11 (85%), no = 2 (15%)

Creation of special space or section for teens, yes = 11 (85%), no = 2 (15%)

Creation of young adult advisory group(s), yes = 7 (47%), no = 8 (53%)

Program(s) created for teens, yes = 11 (79%), no = 3 (21%)

Collaboration among agencies serving teens, yes = 6 (55%), no = 5 (45%)

Positive action(s) for teens by staff, yes = 13 (93%), no = 1 (7%)

Positive action(s) for teens by the library or school board, yes = 10 (91%), no = 1 (9%)

7. If you answered "Yes, to "positive action(s) for teens by staff," please give examples:

8. If you answered "Yes," to "positive action(s) for teens by the library or school board," please give examples:

9. Please share an anecdote of a significant experience, change, or realization that came about as a result of the SUS training. If you need to continue beyond the space below, please use an additional sheet of paper.

10. Would you have an SUS young adult services training in your library again?

Yes = 16 (94%)

No = 1 (6%)

11. Do you believe that this specialized training had an effect on the quality of the presentation?

Yes = 16 (94%)

No = 0 (0%)

Unknown = 1 (6%)

12. Do you believe that this specialized training had an effect on the level of service, programs, and collection development for teens in your library?

Yes = 16 (94%)

No = 1 (6%)

13. Although this survey is confidential, would you like to have someone contact you regarding possible young adult services training(s)?

Yes = 7 (41%)

No = 10 (59%)

For complete results including anonymous comments, please contact the author at [mleconge@ci.benicia.ca.us](mailto:mleconge@ci.benicia.ca.us).

# What Does Professionalism Mean for Young Adult Librarians?

Dawn Rutherford

*The following speech, "The Leader in the Mirror: New Visions of Leadership for Young Adult Services," was presented on June 28, 2004, during the YALSA President's Program and Membership Meeting at the 2004 ALA Annual Conference.*

Good afternoon, everyone. I'm delighted to see you all here. One of the things I love about going to ALA conferences is that I find it extremely energizing and inspiring to be in the company of so many people who care deeply about the same things I do, specifically teens and the library services we can provide for them. Some of you may consider yourselves leaders in our chosen field. It is my hope, as co-chair of the organizing committee for this program, that when you leave this room today, each and every one of you will recognize your own leadership potential. That when you get back to your hotel tonight and you step in front of the mirror, you won't just see someone exhausted by miles of exhibit halls, too many receptions, and the stifling humidity, but you will see in yourself the leader that you can be and already are becoming.

I myself have only recently discovered that I am a leader. Admittedly this was something I long have aspired to achieve, but I had no idea I had arrived at that point until Audra and Sara asked me to co-chair this committee. And it took a minute for it to sink in. "You want me to lead a program about leadership? You think I'm a leader!" And this recognition was a gift they gave me, a new perspective on myself, and a fresh lens through which to view our profession. At this point I would like to extend a sincere thank you to both of them, although Sara could not

be here today, for this opportunity and recognition.

As we planned for this conference and worked together to find a mix of speakers who could share innovative and inspiring views about leadership, I discovered that I myself had something worth expressing on the topic. Not once, but twice during the early months of planning, I was complimented by respected peers on my professionalism. Again, this is not a word I might have used to describe myself, though it certainly was something I was conscious of and aspired to achieve. But the compliment, though flattering, raised questions for me. What is professionalism for a young adult librarian? At the time I had blue hair and no doubt a reputation for an eclectic wardrobe based strongly in thrift shop dresses and motorcycle boots. This did not match the stereotypical mental image one has of professionals: all suits, briefcases, and subdued hair styles. But as I thought more on the subject, I found that while I am not a conformist by any means, I do have a very solid sense of what it means to be a professional. And I am guided by a set of values and standards based in a vision of what Young Adult Librarianship can be.

To understand where this vision comes from, let me tell you a little about my own experiences as a youth growing up in Spokane, Washington. I was truly blessed with great public libraries, staffed by caring professionals. Though it was many years until I recognized it, it was at the age of seven that I first was introduced to the concept of excellence in service to youth. Of going beyond what is merely expected, to serve patrons as best as you possibly can. In second grade, each day as I walked to and from school I passed the little North Hill Branch of



Dawn Rutherford

Spokane Public Library. And at least once a week I would stop in to get some books. I have no negative memories of that library, though admittedly at this point, twenty-five years later, few memories of it are left at all. It was a cozy little place, with brick walls and a service desk that at that time still used paper cards for check-out. But the one memory that has forever stood out for me of that place and the people who worked there was the day I brought so many books to the checkout desk I couldn't get my bag to close. Did

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the librarian chastise me for being greedy? Did she make me put back some of my treasured books? No. The reaction I remember was that the entire staff searched through drawers and closets to find a piece of rope and helped to tie the flap down on my bag so that I could carry those books the last half-mile home.

Now most everyone expects libraries to provide great service to children. It is when we get to their teenage years that the public expectations drop dramatically. But not during my teen years, not in Spokane in the late eighties. What I experienced was something else altogether. As I grew to the age where I was asked to baby-sit for the children's librarian, she introduced me to another staff member she felt could help me better with my reading tastes, which were outgrowing the children's section of the library. I was introduced to the young adult librarian and her small, but visible collection. Every day after school, I could go to the branch nearest my home (or any branch in Spokane) and find a qualified librarian sitting in the Young Adult Area ready to provide services just for me. At the time it seemed natural, as visiting the children's desk had for years. Now it sounds radical. Spokane also had a wonderful teen group called YAAC which I was soon exposed to. The Young Adult Advisory Committee of the Spokane Public Library was a terrific group of teens and branch libraries that met every two weeks for three hours on a Saturday morning, led by Spokane's Young Adult Coordinator, Christy Tyson. We discussed books, reviewed new titles for publishers, and put out an annual book award (the Golden Pen) as well as created our own promotional booktalking videos, called 16 Minutes.

As a teen I viewed this group as lots of fun, a place where I could get leads on new books, meet other geeky teens, and find out about cool programs. But now as an adult I see what Spokane had as so much more. I see it as an institution committed to serving teens, which provided equitable staffing and leadership, adequate hours and flexibility for creative innovation, and a genuinely welcoming environment for teens. Rather than being

feared by the adults and shunned to invisible corners, we teenagers of Spokane were asked to be involved in decision-making processes, to represent the library at public presentations and hearings, and to freely become intellectually engaged in conversation with our librarians. How many libraries can say that today? How many systems have Young Adult Coordinators, particularly ones who are free to invite teens into their offices to visit at will?

I see what once existed in Spokane (but alas, has since passed) as an example of what Young Adult Services can be, for I have experienced it. At the time I did not realize what magic was at hand. But it is not lost, for I carry it with me.

Now little did I understand as a teen that this environment was born of a vision shared by librarians across the nation. Only recently did I find out that while I was a senior applying for colleges, Spokane's Young Adult Coordinator and my grown-up friend, Christy Tyson, was serving as president of YALSA. No wonder when I look at YALSA's recently revised Competencies for Librarians Serving Youth everything seems so familiar. For I was taught my professionalism by librarians modeling exemplary behaviors, leaders living to make their vision real.

Though I was surrounded by great librarian role models, having a career as a librarian didn't cross my mind until my sophomore year of college. I went to college planning to be a calculus teacher, then flirted with psychology, and finally declared myself a music major. And all during this time I worked as a library page at the Bellingham Public Library. It was at the library in fact that I found the clue that led me to my true calling. It was there I checked out a science fiction novel called *The Child Garden* by Geoff Ryman. In this wonderful book, I found a quote that I couldn't get out of my mind. "Love is a torch, you pass it on." For weeks I thought about this. What was it that I loved enough to want to pass on to others? And the answer finally came to me: books, reading, libraries.

So there it was . . . I was meant to be a librarian. I switched my major to

English, took my GREs, and started applying. But when I did well on the GREs, suddenly I came across opposition to my chosen career. I had professors telling me that I should go to law school. Go into computer science, where the money was. That I was resigning myself to library science because it was a woman's field, but that I could do better. Frankly, I was shocked at the opposition. Here I had finally found something I felt was worth doing, and people were telling me I could do better. Luckily my parents had told me as I was growing up that I could be whatever I wanted to be, they just wanted me to be happy. I had long thought this meant I could have any high prestige career I desired, but now I understood . . . they really wanted me to be happy more than anything else. And I knew in my heart of hearts that I would much rather be an excellent librarian than a mediocre lawyer any day. It was with that realization that I made a conscious choice not only to be a librarian, but to strive to be a great one.

Since the day I made the choice to pursue excellence in librarianship, I have never been left wanting for like-minded people. At the University of Illinois Library School I discovered an entire community of incredible people, committed to stellar libraries and excellent customer service. I also found a wonderful mentor in Christine Jenkins, who to this day continues to encourage and support me, always pushing me to go a little bit farther with my career. And in my first job at Chicago Public Library, I had the honor of working under YALSA's own Cindy Welch, who taught me many things about how to function as a YA librarian within a big system, and to this day is always willing to help when I have a dilemma. When I moved out to King County Library System, I was lucky to be one of the last YA librarians to be trained under former YALSA president Susan Madden before she retired. Not to mention all of the fabulous people I've gotten to work with being involved with YALSA committees. So if I am a leader today, is it any wonder where I learned it?

So what does professionalism mean to young adult librarians? It is not only



understanding our field the best you can, but committing yourself to improving it. It is about knowing that when you are in your libraries, at conferences, or in any other situation where you are likely to be recognized for your career, you need to put your best face forward, for you represent not just yourself but the entire field. And it is about recognizing that if you dare to follow your own vision of young adult librarianship, you will find mentors and then be a mentor to the next generation.

For let there be no doubt in your minds. Teens in your libraries are watching. They are learning from your example. You are leading them, even if you didn't realize it. And the teen who works

on a booktalking video like 16 Minutes today may someday be out in the schools telling the next generation about the hottest new books. There is a clear line between my working on the Golden Pen Award in high school and being on the Margaret A. Edwards committee today. It is because of the professionalism shown to me by adult mentor librarians when I was a teen, by idealistic library school professors, and by you, my peers. Want to see more teen services? Do you want the public to have a better image of librarians? Wishing there was a teen librarian in every branch? I believe these things are all achievable...if we take personal responsibility for making them happen. As Gandhi said, we must be the changes we

want to see in the world. More than anything else, this is the idea that compels me. Why I strive to always be respectful of my patrons and peers. Why I am never discouraged by small setbacks and frustrations. Why professionalism is so important to me.

I mentioned before what a gift it was for Audra and Sara to reveal to me my own established leadership. Well now, I want to pass that gift on to you. I'm telling you now, you are a leader. You are doing great things, impacting the lives of many teens, and have in your hands the future of our organization. And I'm proud to be associated with all of you.

Thank you. ●

## GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

*Young Adult Library Services* is the official publication of the Young Adult Library Services Association, a division of the American Library Association. *Young Adult Library Services* is a vehicle for continuing education of librarians working with young adults (ages 12–18) that showcases current research and practice relating to teen services and spotlights significant activities and programs of the division.

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# Reaching Out to Young Adults in Jail

Patrick Jones

The term “outreach” is used to describe library services that take place outside of the library setting. Outreach normally refers to either a community relations function (promoting services) or actual service delivery. The decision to deliver a service outside of the library depends upon a variety of circumstances for both the library and the customer. For the library, the call is usually based on the belief that the delivery of service directly to the patron in their home, school, or other location is a more cost-effective way of reaching customers. For the customer, outreach is an answer when there are obstacles to physically visiting a library. For all teens, there are plenty of obstacles, such as transportation, blocking their path to a library. For a small group of teens, often ones in desperate need of reading materials and information, the obstacles are the bars on their jail cell.

Despite the ever-increasing number of teens serving time behind bars, few public libraries provide services to teens in juvenile correctional facilities (JCFs). A literature search revealed that forty-four public libraries were identified as providing some level of service to jailed teens. In the fall of 2003, these libraries were surveyed, and sixteen libraries (36 percent) responded to questions about the history of their services, the range of services offered, and restrictions on materials (see figure 1). The goal of the survey was to identify the “state of the art” for this type of service, with a particular

focus on collection development issues. Intellectual freedom is always an issue in dealing with materials for teens; and in the correctional setting, it is perhaps the single largest concern facing any library serving JCFs.

While our professional values embrace intellectual freedom, there is the

“When libraries partner with correctional facilities, we must understand the need to support the goals of that institution, even if they may conflict with our values.”

reality of working with the correctional system. Any person in a correctional facility is deprived of certain liberties. So a teen in corrections finds the facility acting “in loco parentis” and determining which materials are appropriate to be read. When libraries partner with correctional facilities, we must understand the need to support the goals of that institution, even if they may conflict with our values. Our values don’t trump their values. When a correctional facility allows a library to provide a service, we are like any service provider, bound by the regulations of the facility.

The survey revealed a wide range of services and history of providing service, with some libraries just getting into the business while others (such as Hennepin County Library) have more than a decade of experience. The facilities also differ greatly, ranging from twenty-five to eight hundred prisoners, with an average of two hundred. The one constant was that the large majority of these prisoners were male. The ratio of ethnicities and races varied widely, from 75 percent white at one program to primarily Latino at another. The range of African-American populations ranged from 10 percent to 50 percent. While the demographics and economics vary, an incarcerated teen is an at-risk teen lacking in developmental assets.

The vast majority of services to JCFs operate without a written service agreement, collection policy, or materials reconsideration procedure. Even though the majority of libraries embrace the Library Bill of Rights, all but two programs leave the final decision on removing materials with the JCF. Almost all of

the services consist of more than dropping off materials and allow for interaction with residents. Most of the services have funding (an average of \$6,000) for materials, but most also make use of donations and weeded materials. The one common element was every library surveyed faced limitations on materials.

Format restrictions prevent almost half of libraries from providing magazines. Staples in magazines, as well as spiral-bound books, could be used as weapons against correctional officers and other residents, or used as instruments of self-injury. Only a few libraries reported not being able to supply hardback books (again, safety concerns), but every single library surveyed reported restrictions on materials due to content. The materials most commonly prohibited were:

- *Anarchist Cookbook* or similar
- *High Times* magazine or similar
- Donald Goines and Iceberg Slim street life novels
- *Vibe*, *Source*, or similar magazines
- Sex instruction books
- *Body Art Book*, *Tattoo* magazine, or similar
- *Low Rider* or similar magazines
- *The Godfather* and other mafia books
- *Helter Skelter* and other true crime
- Martial arts instruction or similar
- *Monster*, *Do or Die*, *My Bloody Life*,

**Patrick Jones** is Manager, Outreach Department, Hennepin County Library, Minnesota. He also runs [www.connectingya.com](http://www.connectingya.com); a consulting firm dedicated to providing powerful youth services. In addition to several professional books, Jones published his first teen novel in 2004 (*Things Change* from Walker & Company).

and other gang stories

While the survey did not pose the question, anecdotally we learned that most libraries also don't provide erotica or sexually explicit materials.

Even those libraries that "on paper" face few restrictions find the reality quite different. One librarian noted that "there is a guard from the facility who accompanies the patrons, and the guard (usually) examines each item and denies those that they don't feel are appropriate." Another commented that "we have had several instances in which a resident will request a book, we bring it, and it is taken from the resident by a staff member who personally disagrees with the material."

Almost all of the survey respondents expressed similar frustration in working with correctional officers whose "world view" is so different. Librarians are paid to provide free access to information; correctional officers are paid to work in an environment where freedom is limited.

So, is it worth it? The experience of the Hennepin County Library certainly proves that the payoffs far outweigh the frustration and professional compromises. The library has a long history of outreach to correctional facilities, all of which were combined into an Outreach Department in 1974. In the late 1980s, however, budget issues forced the libraries to eliminate a full-time juvenile correctional librarian. Despite that, services to teens in corrections remained strong, utilizing other outreach staff to include biweekly visits by staff to the library created at the eighty-seven-bed Juvenile Detention Center. The library also provides library materials ("cottage collections") to teens incarcerated at the County Home School (CHS). CHS is a correctional treatment facility for boys and girls from the ages of twelve to eighteen. Both facilities are units of the County's Community Corrections Department.

In early 2002, the library obtained grant funds to further the award-winning Great Transitions program already in place at CHS. Great Transitions is a collaborative project of Hennepin County Library in cooperation with Hennepin

**Figure 1. Survey participants**

Tucson-Puma Public Library	Ariz.
Fresno County Library	Calif.
San Francisco Public Library	Calif.
Allen County Library	Ind.
Anderson Public Library	Ind.
Monroe County Public Library	Ind.
Johnson County Library	Kans.
Hennepin County Library	Minn.
Rochester Public Library	Minn.
Mid-York Public Library	N.Y.
Akron-Summit Public Library	Ohio
Multnomah County Library	Ore.
Dallas Public Library	Tex.
Fort Worth Public Library	Tex.
Austin Public Library	Tex.
Laramie County Public Library	Wyo.

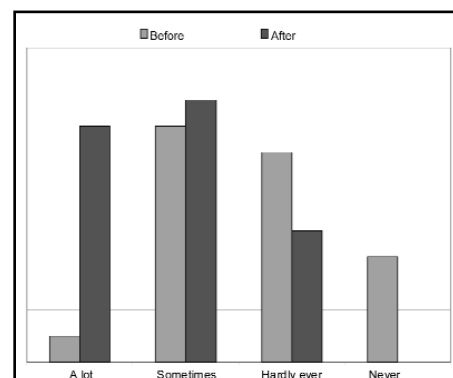
County Home School, Epsilon School, and Minneapolis Public Library. Using these grant funds, the library was able to offer students at CHS:

- A Born to Read program for teen mothers and fathers
- A creative writing workshop
- An author visit (YA writer Will Weaver)
- Book discussion groups
- Monthly booktalks held in classrooms
- Creation of a 5,000-item library and twice-monthly visits by library staff
- Information literacy instruction
- Library card sign-up and fine waiver
- Publication of a literary magazine (*Diverse City*)

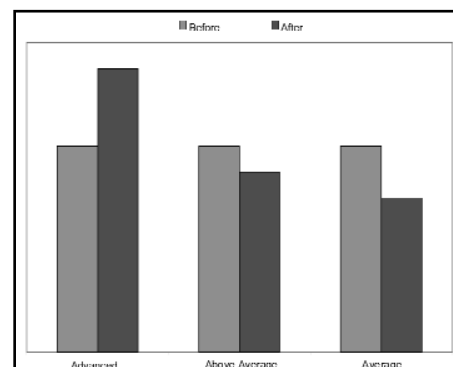
Many of these programs had been offered in the past at CHS, but these grant funds allowed them to be planned, implemented, and evaluated as a total package.

After the completion of all programs, the library conducted a survey of CHS residents to measure the impact of the various Great Transitions programs upon their reading attitudes and behaviors. The major findings were:

- A majority of CHS residents believe they will be more likely to use public and school libraries upon release than they did before entering CHS



**Figure 2. How often residents used a school or public library before and after coming to county home school**



**Figure 3. How residents rated their own reading levels before and after coming to county home school**

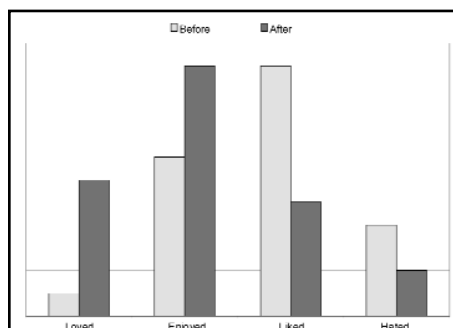
(see figure 2)

- Several CHS residents believe their reading level has increased while at CHS (see figure 3)
- A majority of CHS residents believe they have a more positive attitude about reading than before entering CHS (see figure 4)
- The majority of CHS residents are reading more while at CHS than before they entered (see figure 5)
- Visiting the new CHS library was the favorite activity of CHS residents, followed by reading books supplied by the library and located in their cottage (see figure 6)

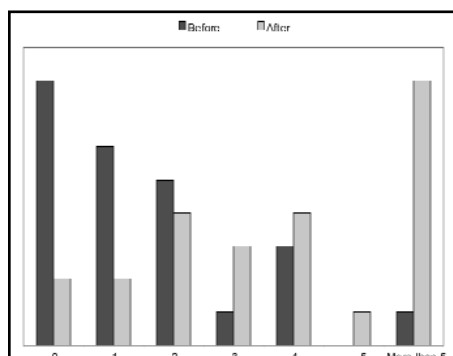
Residents also readily supplied information about the best books (see sidebar, page 16) they have obtained from the

library and read during their stay at CHS. While teens at CHS indicated they would continue reading upon release, we don't have any way to measure the lasting effect of our work with these challenged young people.

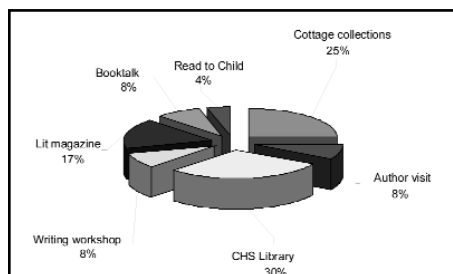
If we look at outreach from the view-



**Figure 4. How residents describe their view of reading before and after coming to county home school**



**Figure 5. Number of books residents read per month before and after coming to county home school**



**Figure 6. How residents describe their view of reading before and after coming to county home school**

point of "old school" library statistical measures, services to kids in corrections don't make a great deal of sense. The loss rate for materials is high, the time spent setting up services is great, and the return on the circulation bottom line is low. But, if we think about outcomes rather than outputs, then programs like these are an obvious choice for any library actively engaging in building community. These programs also represent a new direction in teen services where the focus is not

only on what services libraries provide young adults but, just as importantly, on the outcomes of those services. Our focus needs to be on assets—not library resources, but on a positive youth development approach.

Focusing on positive youth development represents a vision of looking outside of the walls of the library, not only for the usual suspects of collaboration or outreach, but looking at what value our services have in the lives of teenagers. The

## "Best Books" Read by Students at County Home School

Dickinson, Peter. *The Rope Maker*. When the magic that protects their Valley starts to fail, Tilja and her companions journey into the evil Empire to find the ancient magician Faheel, who originally cast those spells.

Draper, Sharon. *Romiette and Julio*. An African-American girl and a Latino boy fall in love after meeting on the Internet, but they are harassed by a gang that objects to their interracial dating.

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Classic Greek epic poem recounts the tale of a hero's journey home.

LaHaye, Tim. *Left Behind*. This fictional account of life after the Rapture delivers an urgent call to today's readers to prepare their own hearts and minister to others.

Moore, Yani. *Triple Take*. Jonathan "JC" Cole is about to get out of the joint, and he has one thing on his mind—revenge against the three men who betrayed him to save their own skins.

Mosley, Walter. *Bad Boy Brawly Brown*. Easy Rawlins is out of the investigation business, but when an old friend gets in enough trouble to ask for Easy's help, he finds he can't refuse.

Myers, Walter Dean. *Slam*. Seventeen-year-old "Slam" Harris is counting on his basketball talents to get him out of the inner city and give him a chance to succeed in life, but his coach sees things differently.

Pelzer, David. *A Child Called It*. Dave Pelzer shares his unforgettable story of the many abuses he suffered at the hands of his alcoholic mother and the averted eyes of his neglectful father.

Roberts, Katherine. *Spellfall*. Natalie and her friends are caught up in a sorcerer's attempt to cross an invisible boundary in order to invade another world.

Rock, Chris. *Rock This*. Chris Rock confronts all the hot-button issues, such as finding a black leader, addiction to bubble wrap, why white folks can't say the N-word, the dirty socks rule, marriage, Bill Clinton, sexual harassment, and more.

Sachar, Louis. *Holes*. Stanley Yelnats is sent to a hellish correctional camp in the Texas desert where he finds his first real friend, a treasure, and a new sense of himself.

Sapphire. *Push*. This is a self-portrait of an unloved black teenage girl with a father who rapes her and a jealous mother who screams abuse.

Shakur, Tupac. *Rose That Grew From Concrete*. This collection of more than 100 poems honestly and artfully confronts topics ranging from poverty and motherhood to Van Gogh and Mandela.

Souljah, Sister. *The Coldest Winter Ever*. After a black drug dealer goes to jail in Brooklyn, his ruthless seventeen-year-old daughter takes over his empire.

question no longer asks what a young adult does in a library or as part of an outreach, but also asks what happens to that young adult as a result of checking out a book, attending a book discussion program, having their creativity tapped, or learning how to locate information on the Internet. Librarians want incarcerated teens, such as this young man from the County Home School, to discover that:

"I never knew reading could be so fun. When I was out, I never did read a book. But now that you showed me how fun it can be, I'm going to read every book I can, not just 'cause of you. But because I really like reading and like to learn new things. Things I never knew." ●

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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*Author's note:* Thanks to Keven Larson (Hennepin County Library) for his assistance in conducting, compiling, and reporting the results of the JCF survey.

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# Making a Difference

## Incarcerated Teens Speak

Diana Tixier Herald

I became involved in working with incarcerated youth quite by accident. I was invited to a recently opened facility to talk about library services and to booktalk as a one-time event. I was taken aback by the high level of security (it has become even more secure in recent years) and the number of locked doors between the kids and the “outs.” I was amazed by how thrilled these teen miscreants were to have someone bring them books and present booktalks to them. The beginning of my ongoing relationship with incarcerated youth was discussed in “Booktalking to a Captive Audience” in the May 1995 issue of *School Library Journal*. I have maintained an ongoing relationship with the teachers at the facility and continue to provide monthly booktalks. Because it is essential that the books talked are available to the teens, I always booktalk titles I have as review copies from publishers so that they can be left at the facility for the teens to read. While the favorite authors have changed over time, the enthusiasm of locked-up teens to escape through reading has remained constant. Their comments on books eligible for Best Books for Young Adults (BBYA) appear

**Diana Tixier Herald** is the author of *Teen Genreflecting*, now in its 2nd edition, *Genreflecting*, in its 5th edition, and *Fluent in Fantasy*, and the co-author of *Strictly Science Fiction*. Formerly a popular-materials librarian she now writes, consults, and speaks at conferences. She runs the non-profit Center for Adolescent Reading, providing book discussion programs and deposit collections for teens that allow her to discuss books with teens every week.

interspersed with comments from other teens at [www.genreflecting.com/best.htm](http://www.genreflecting.com/best.htm); and while some are terse and poorly spelled, others are eloquent and leave the reader with a glimpse into the lives of these teens.

Books always made a difference in my life. They let me escape the abusive world that made up my life until I went out on my own at age seventeen. They provided a constant in my life when I moved repeatedly, changing schools thirteen times. Books let me see how life could be and how I wanted to design my own future. I first discovered that I was not the only one who was forever changed by books when an incarcerated young man asked for a copy of Cynthia D. Grant's *Shadow Man* so that he could re-read it, having read it first during a previous incarceration. The impact of Gabe's death on the other characters inspired him to turn his life around. That was the last time he was jailed (but not the first), and now he is a responsible husband and father, working to support his family. Most changes wrought by reading YA literature are not so immediate or obvious, but recently teens in lock-up have written:

Reading has changed my life because instead of talking or watching TV all day, I can read. When I first read a book all the way through was the first time I came to NYC (Division of Youth Corrections). After that I kept picking up books and reading them. The book I read that I thought triggered my interest in books was *A Heart Divided*. Then I read a book named *Lucas*. After I read those books I

just kept reading every teen book I found. Reading really has changed my life very much. I have really gotten into reading!—a fifteen-year-old girl

Reading has got me away from my problems. It helps me escape from where I am in my cell. It helps me not think about jail.—a sixteen-year-old boy

The first book that I read was in NYC. I always knew how to read, but I just wouldn't do it. I always thought that reading was so dull and boring. I had always done push-ups in my cell until I got a roommate who was reading *Where The Red Fern Grows*. I had heard it was a good book, so I tried it out for once. After I started to read the book, I got sucked in. I finished it, I read *The Street Boys*. It was about World War II and how it impacted lives of children. I thought it was a wonderful book so I kept on reading. I read in all of my spare time, even when I do push-ups. And that is how reading has impacted my life.—a seventeen-year-old boy

I had a fourteen-year-old boy who was coming to my book groups. He had been sentenced to a treatment facility for youthful sex offenders. I always try to give away my review copies of books at the end of the year to kids who really loved them. He wanted *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things*. Reading it was a turning point for him. It was what finally made him see that girls were people like him who had real feelings. ●

Hyperion  
bw page  
21

# Margaret A. Edwards Lifetime Achievement Award Speech

Ursula K. Le Guin

If anybody knows what young adult fiction is, it's you—this audience. I feel foolish trying to say anything about it to you. I tried writing vast generalities about young adult fiction and discovered that all I really know is what I do, insofar as I know what that is. The truth is, I just *did* young adult fiction without thinking about it. And it's very nice to be told by the Margaret Edwards Award that I did it satisfactorily. But I still don't know what it was I was doing.

How did I begin doing it? Unexpectedly. Herman Schein of Parnassus Press, who had published my mother's books for young children, wanted to publish books for older kids, and so he asked me to write one—a fantasy.

And I said, "Oh no, no, I can't do that, I haven't written anything for children, don't know how, quite impossible,



Ursula K. Le Guin

thank you very much," and ran away.

And I got home and rued my words. (Nobody can rue words more truly than a writer.) I'd never been asked to write a book. I'd submitted stories and novels for ten years to publishers who hadn't asked for them and didn't want them, and now, a *proposal*? Oh yes, yes! But no: I haven't written for kids, I have no idea what it involves, I don't like thinking about a specific audience, I refuse to put any restrictions on my imagination or vocabulary, and the stuff I want to write about isn't teenage stuff. And a fantasy, he said. Like Tolkien? Oh my heavens! Compete with Shakespeare, sure! Forget it.

But thinking about Tolkien took my mind away to thinking about wizards. . . and so to something that had bothered me about wizards . . . Prospero, Merlin, Gandalf, all old. Peaked hat, white beard. Why? What were they before they were old beardy men? Young men. Smooth cheeks. Kids. How did kids get to be old wizards? By being young wizards, evidently. Learning the craft, going to . . . wizard school?

Huh? Hey. *There's* an idea.

This is not a claim to have invented it. I plant no flags and do not pee on fences. In *The Sword in the Stone*, T. H. White has Merlin say something funny about going to wizard school, and I'm sure there are other predecessors. But, in 1968, nobody I knew of had worked the idea out.

And it took hold of me like a bulldog. No, more like a boa constrictor—it enwrapped and devoured me. I became it. This is what writing novels is like. Being an elephant living inside a boa constrictor. The Little Prince knew all about it.

The conception was not just of a school of magic, but of a child gifted with an essentially unlimited power who

needs—urgently needs—to learn how to know and control such power. That is a big idea. It reverberates. It contains worlds.

So, a few months later the elephant emerged from the boa constrictor as *A Wizard of Earthsea*. Herman Schein was happy with it, and his wife Ruth designed its marvelous cover. And I was happy, too—I had a book I knew was something closer to what I'd hoped to write than anything I'd yet written.

I think it was Herman who first said to me, don't worry about the vocabulary and the audience and all that: all a young adult novel has to have is a protagonist over twelve and under twenty.

Is there anything else in fact that makes a YA a YA? It sounds like a rhetorical question, but it isn't; I am really asking you.

There may be other requirements or rules for the YA novel, and I may even have followed them in my YA novels. Writers do a great many things of which they are not only unconscious but ignorant. Don't let the naïve fallacy of authorial omnipotence or the critical fallacy of authorial intent fool you for a minute. A book is planned, always, to some extent, and some books are very closely planned; but in writing, we fiction writers work in the dark, perhaps more than any other artists except poets, because we work with language inside the mind. We cannot be thinking about what we write as we write, because we are using the principle tool of thinking, language, to write with—and we have to use it for the writing not for thinking. We cannot be intellectually, articulately conscious of what we're doing as we write, any more than we can be intellectually, articulately conscious of the actual process and intent of typing on a keyboard while we type. To think about it consciously, in words,



would stop us right there, fingers frozen above the keys.

And therefore most fiction writers learn, taoistically, to cherish our ignorance and trust it to do our job.

So as long as we have been to wizard school, we do have to learn the craft. That's all we have under our control and can use intentionally: craft. We are crafty people. The rest is gift.

Whatever rules I was ignorantly following then, the *Wizard* came out and was approved as a YA, getting the *Boston Globe/Hornbook* Award, which I hardly knew how to value back then, and taking my publisher rather by surprise at how it went on selling.

Now, here is an example of intentionality in planning: I had wondered why wizards were always not only white-haired, but white men. I wasn't ready yet to question the gender, only the color. The only reason for the whiteness of wizards seemed to be that our fantasy tradition came largely from northern Europe, with its weird skin-color hang-ups. So I just reversed the convention. My hero and all his people are reddish-brown to black, while the more barbaric or villainous types are white. Some people notice this, many don't. I prefer my subversion to be sneaky, not preachy.

That was a deliberate, political decision, made "outside" the writing. Here's an example of the stuff you write while you're just following your story, "ignorantly," without knowing what it implies. A year or so after the *Wizard* came out, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that it was full of hints of more to come. Right on the first page I had written about "the man called Sparrowhawk, who in his day became both dragonlord and Archmage. His life is told of in the Deed of Ged and in many songs, but this is a tale of the time before his fame, before the songs were made."

Now I'd thought this was just a crafty trick, learned mostly from Dunsany and Tolkien: the indication of time before the story and time after it and a great geography all around it, which gives the story a chance to reverberate.

But there was more to it than that. I had announced before I even knew who

he was that Ged was a dragonlord and the Archmage. When I wrote that sentence I didn't know what an Archmage was, let alone a dragonlord.

So. How did he do that, how did he get there, what did those words mean?

I learned what archmages and dragonlords were by writing the first book; but Ged himself got there while I wasn't watching. I was in the second book, looking away, looking east to the Kargad Lands, writing about a girl who, like him, had been given a terrible power, but unlike him, wasn't taught rightly how to handle it.

People ask forever, where do you get your ideas, and I have written several long essays about it and still have no idea where I get my ideas from, except some of them. *The Tombs of Atuan* came directly from a three-day trip to eastern Oregon: the high desert, the high, dry, bony, stony, sagebrush and juniper country, just about as far as you can get from this soggy Florida. It wasn't the first time I'd seen desert, I am a Westerner after all, but it was the first time I had stayed in desert country, heard that silence, walked in twilight on that dangerous, infinitely fragile land. And driving home with the car full of kids and sweat and dust and twigs of sagebrush, I knew I was in love and had a book. The landscape gave it to me. It gave me Tenar and where she lived.

So the *Wizard* got a sequel, and soon I started the third book. Trilogies were not obligatory back then, let alone series. It was still possible to write one fantasy novel, or two, and stop. But as I started *The Farthest Shore* I was planning two more books: one following Ged into middle age, and one following Tenar. And then stop.

Because my publishers—Atheneum by then—and I thought of the books as YA, I knew I had to have a young protagonist; but Earthsea had to have a king, too; so there you are. Young prince meets older wizard and they go sailing off together into death. Nothing to it.

So having found out what happened to Ged, I started on the fourth book, the one where I was to find out what happened to Tenar. I wrote a chapter and stopped, because I didn't understand what

was happening to Tenar. She had given up magic; she was a farmwife with a couple of kids. What was she thinking of?

It took me seventeen years to find out. During those years, the second wave of feminism broke, and I learned how to write as myself, from the sensibility and intellect of a grown woman. That was not the commonest thing in any genre, even realism; and fantasy had been particularly male-centered. It was a radical change.

The key to my fourth book of Earthsea was not Tenar herself, but Therru, a young child who has been terribly used. When I saw that child, I had my book. But Therru is not yet an adolescent, and not even a protagonist, and everybody else in the story is middle-aged. Where is the obligatory teenager? I have to confess I didn't worry about it. I had grown up, my characters had grown up; if I thought about it, I guess I thought, well, I hope my readers have grown up too. I went ahead and wrote the book I had to write. At the end the king was on his throne, the lovers were in each other's arms, and my private title for it was *Better Late than Never*. Publicly I called *Tehanu* "the last book of Earthsea" because I thought it was. Oh idiot author.

It was met with some shrill accusations of man-hating feminism from people who think being a hero means you win. But I guess most of my readers had indeed grown up, because they liked it fine. And I was happy again because I had brought my tale to its happy ending, ha, ha.

Again, omens and indications in the text, hints of story to come. . . And this time, to jog my obliviousness, letters from readers: Who is going to be the next Archmage? Who or what is Tehanu? What are the dragons?

And a huge blooper, which I had already realized with horror and hoped nobody would notice but of course they did, though they were very kind and tactful about bringing it to my attention: the Master Summoner in the third book is dead, in the land of the dead; but in the fourth book he is alive and apparently well on Roke Island. Oh idiot idiot author!

Sometimes your mistake is your guide. I'd heard Rusty Schweikert, the

astronaut, tell the tale of how when he went outside the space craft to do some external repair, he forgot a tool he needed, and while they were getting it to him, he had the first free time he had ever had on the mission: no programmed activity for five whole minutes. Hanging there on his lifeline in space, idle, because of a mistake, because of something he forgot, he had time to look around. And he looked, and he saw the Earth. The Earth—his home, immense and fragile, shining there among the stars. A vision that changed his life forever.

That's a beautiful and useful learning story, and I used it. I looked at what I'd got wrong, and saw why it was wrong—because right wasn't quite what I'd thought it was.

By way of answering some of the questions I'd caused by absentmindedly reviving the dead, or had otherwise left unanswered, I wrote the various *Tales of Earthsea*, in which I finally established a coherent history. Certain features which, in 1968, I'd just bought wholesale from the heroic fantasy tradition—such as the supremacy and the celibacy of male wizards—I had to really think about now, and explain, and fit into my *Earthsea* as I now perceived it, seen not only from the top, from the seats of power, but from below, through the eyes of the powerless, women and children, ordinary people. Some people think this change of view has led to a loss of enchantment in the stories. I don't. The last tale led me straight into a nest of dragons. Soon after that, I wrote *The Other Wind*, which brings together all those questions, who Tehanu is; who the dragons are; and how, when clever people meddle with it through hubris or through fear, death itself might go wrong.

There are young people in these last two books—Irian/Dragonfly, young Ogion, my dear Kargish Princess—but the books don't obey the teenage protagonist rule, and I don't think they're definably YA. Yet kids as well as adults seem to buy and read them, and I've had no protests so far about the advanced senility of Ged and Tenar. Why are the books thus forgiven?

Is it because they're fantasy? Is this a well-known fact—which I have just discovered with cries of Eureka!—that fantasy doesn't have to follow the YA rule, because it bridges the gaps between age groups?

We read *Alice in Wonderland* or *The Wind in the Willows* first at eight, or earlier if they're read to us, and again at twelve, maybe, and again maybe every decade or so. And every time we read them we're a different person; yet each time, if we let them do it, they give us what is "appropriate to our age-group"—kiddies or mid-lifers or wrinklies. The *Jungle Books* contain stories that one may read happily at ten, and understand with a hard jolt at forty-five. *The Once and Future King* is as magical, exasperating, fascinating, and moving to me now as it was when it was published. *The Hobbit* doesn't carry across the kid-to-adult gap reliably for everyone, but (going the other direction in Middle Earth) nine-year-olds are now reading *The Lord of the Rings*. Yet *The Lord of the Rings* is a fully adult book about fully adult concerns, with no children in it at all. Short adults, yes. But no kids.

So, the Edmund Wilsons of the world croak, what else is new? Fantasy is *all* infantile. Childish escapism. Mind-mush. Talking animals, elves, bushwa! I was charmed to learn that somebody said of Edmund Wilson that he always thought he was the only grown-up in the room. It is a common delusion of critics. It shouldn't be encouraged, but it can be ignored.

What should not be ignored is the curious capacity fantasy has of satisfying both the child and the adult—and even, and even most particularly, that creature of tormented and insatiable and uncomprehended and infinite needs and longings, the adolescent. How does fantasy do it? Or what does it do that none of the other genres, including realism, does?

Fantasy is the oldest form of literature. Even if story telling began with Oog reciting to the family around the fire in the cave the true and factual story of How I Killed a Mammoth, you and I know that Oog's tale was not totally realistic. Elements of fantasy slipped in—the size of the mammoth, the length of the

tusks, the intrepidity of Oog. . . . It got better every time he told it. And after a couple of generations, maybe it was the tale of How Great Hero Father Oog slew the Lord of the Mammoths, which is why we are the People of the Long Tusk—a legend, a myth. A work of the imagination. A fantasy.

They all begin in the same place, the place in our mind that knows what story is. What reality may be, what really happened, we cannot tell; what we can tell is the story, the infinitely flexible, wonderfully rearrangeable, extremely useful story. With it we remake reality. We remake it according to our desires and according to our needs. The truth of story is not fact. Neither is it mere wishful thinking. Story tells human truth, serving human community and spiritual longing. And the stories that call most on the imagination work on a deep level of the mind, beneath reason (therefore incomprehensible to rationalists), using symbol as poetry does to express what can't be said directly, using imagery to express what can't be perceived directly—using indirection to indicate the truthward direction.

And here myth and imaginative fiction run a risk; all fiction does, but it's particularly destructive to fantasy: the risk of being rationalized—interpreted, reduced to allegory, read as a message.

Such reduction is a nefarious act. Teachers and critics indulge in it with the best of motives, but they leave ruin in their wake. Fortunately, the strongest fantasies simply shrug off interpretation like a horse twitching off a fly. Everybody wants to tell us what *Alice in Wonderland* means, and the more they talk about Charles Dodgson and Victorian mores and mathematics and the libido, the farther they get from Lewis Carroll and Alice, who go on about their business on the chess board among the dodos, quite intact.

Take the currently almost-unquestioned assumption that fantasy concerns a Battle Between Good and Evil. This assumption permits the author to declare one side good and the other bad without further inquiry as to what makes a person or an action good or evil. The heroes and the villains are equally arrogant, competi-

tive, thoughtless, and bloody-minded; and so the Battle goes on 'til the Problem of Evil is solved in a final orgy of violence and a win for the so-called Good Team.

Being akin to legend and folktale and myth, with no necessary allegiance to modernism or realism or any limiting school of fiction, fantasy draws its scenery and characters and images and symbols from the whole range of human storytelling back to quite primitive times; and it doesn't have to clothe its people with distracting realistic trappings and contemporary disguises, but can present them quite nakedly—the brave man, the kind woman, the mistreated child, the villain, the king, the traitor, the fool. Character is often less important in fantasy than role (which can also be said of Greek tragedy and much of Shakespeare, where role and character are often the same thing). To a careless reader, such stark stuff may appear to be morally simplistic, black-and-white. Carelessly written, that's what it is.

But careless reading of genuine fantasy will not only miss nuance, it will miss the whole nature and quality of the work. Fantasy is in fact particularly suited to examining the difference between good and evil, both in act and in intent. The imagination is the instrument of ethics. Imaginative literature offers the opportunity to test motive and behavior, to see how the unconscious may control the seemingly rational, to understand how the bravest deed may leave a track of ruin, to ask what the road to Hell is paved with, and why.

Americans think obsessively in terms of war and battle. It is a suspect metaphor. I don't write about wars between good and evil. What I write about—like most novelists—is people making mistakes, and people—other people or the same people—trying to prevent or correct those mistakes, while inevitably making more mistakes. The “problem of evil” in *Earthsea* is pretty much what it is here: that people don't or won't recognize the evil they do. In the first book, Ged doesn't know who he is, because he doesn't recognize his own shadow, the shadow we all cast.

Immature people crave and demand moral certainty: This is bad, this is good. Adolescents struggle to find a sure moral



Margaret Edwards committee members (l to r) Ranae Pierce, Nancy Reich, and Francisca Goldsmith pose with Le Guin (second from left)

foothold in this bewildering world; they long to feel they're on the winning side, or at least a member of the Good Team. To them, heroic fantasy may offer a vision of moral clarity. But a battle between unquestioned Good and unexamined Evil is a mere excuse for violence—as brainless, useless, and base as aggressive war in the real world. I hope that teenagers find the real heroic fantasies, like Tolkien's. I know such fantasies continue to be written. They don't have to be written for kids; they'll find them, whoever they're written for.

Which brings me to my final thought about young adult fiction. When I was in my teens, I certainly didn't feel that in order to interest me a book had to be about other adolescents. I got enough of them at school. I wanted to know about being grown up, and novels offered a chance to find out what that was like from inside. Kittens playing are playing cat.

So like all reading children who have the chance (which usually means the public library), I read way ahead of myself, blundering into Austen and Voltaire and Dostoyevsky and Dinesen and Dunsany and Steinbeck and Forster and you name it, understanding bits and not understanding lots; but that's how we learn to speak and read, isn't it? By doing it: not word-by-word-exactly-correct, but with mistakes and misunderstandings, in bits and gulps and clumps that finally

begin to stick together and make sense. Literature is a major tool for understanding the world and the life we have to live, and we learn to use it by using it.

The rule that the YA book is about young adults may apply best to the realistic novel of contemporary teenage life and problems, and to historical novels. In other genres, the adolescent reader doesn't seem to demand adolescent protagonists. That all the characters are adult doesn't stop a kid from reading *The Virginian* or any other good Western; the Sherlock Holmes books or any other good mystery; C. S. Forester, or Nordhoff and Hall, or Patrick O'Brien, or any other good sea story; or any science fiction story at all. Fantasy appeals to kids even earlier than the other genres, but much genre literature is like fantasy in this: once you're old enough to read it, it doesn't matter how old you or the characters are. Nine to ninety, as they say.

I suspect this whole talk has been an attempt to justify myself to myself for continuing the young adult trilogy of *Earthsea* with a trilogy of old adult *Earthsea*. But I have atoned! My next book, *Gifts*, is a YA with a definitely, absolutely, extremely adolescent hero and heroine. Now, of course, I am thinking of following those two kids to find out what happens to them when they're thirty . . . but that is another story. ●

# The Michael L. Printz Award Speech

Angela Johnson

**G**ood evening. It is an honor to be with you here tonight as only the fifth winner of the Michael L. Printz Award. By creating this separate category, you have recognized those of us who write about the world of the young adult. A time when our characters are wrestling between the world of childhood with its first awakening to life's possibilities—and the inevitability of becoming an adult, when choices often bring a lifetime of consequences.

The first Printz awards were given at the beginning of a new century with a fresh appreciation that while some things remain the same, we have also managed to create some complications.

Certainly no librarian in 1900 could have imagined the libraries we are now building. And aren't we happy that those who predicted the death of the books we actually hold in our hands are still wrong.

People describe this period of time in which we live as being most changed by

technology. As someone who bought their first computer less than a year ago, I understand a little of what they mean. As a woman who used to spend her nights wandering around the house quietly, I now find myself surfing the Net ordering too many books or CDs online. The young slip into this world as if they were born to it. And they were. But while technology may make it easier to more quickly access knowledge, machines still don't change the challenges of the teenage heart. First-time love, friendships, death, sex, drugs and alcohol, racism, exclusion from their peers, or a body that seems to have a life of its own, growing in directions so unfamiliar that the person who was in the mirror yesterday is a stranger today.

No technology can change that. No machine has made the journey less predictable. When our teens flop down on the floor of their room and find the paper they never found for fourth-period English or the clothes they have been wearing too long, they are always wrestling in a world of feuding emotions and time.

Most of us at one point entered into that tunnel of adolescence that creates the illusion that anyone over the age of twenty-five is a mystery. Our parents seemed either distant, too involved with us, or quite frankly—more stupid with each passing day.

But how painful to be young and searching through the mysteries and vagaries of the human heart.

For me, to write the characters in YA fiction, the childhood of picture books and middle readers become as distant as the moon.

What can I bring to writing for this world? For me it is simple. The comfort of truth. Not just the truth that I'd prefer, but the truth of life in all its variations of a teen experience.

I know what a comfort it is to find out who you are. I know the pain of wondering if anyone else will ever know it. And on days like this, I know the pleasure and

pride that someone else knows me too. As a young woman I wrote poetry and dreamed of that time five, ten, or twenty years down the road when I might have mastered my craft enough to call myself a writer.

I quickly learned that being a writer is not just the love of writing, but the business of being a writer. As I never intended to write *The First Part Last*, I had to come to understand that sometimes the muse is not always in control—but that others' visions are sometimes clearer than your own, i.e., my editor who asked if there was indeed a story about Bobby I had to tell.

But now I had to open my imagination up to explore how this young man came to be raising this baby by himself. I knew Bobby loved Feather, felt that the first time I wrote about him. But how did he get to Ohio? Where was the mother of this baby? His parents? How did his journey take him to teen fatherhood?

The gifted actress Ruby Dee once said that "the greatest gift is not being afraid to question." In writing *The First Part Last*, I had nothing but questions. But after I had put off the writing as long as I could, figuring out how many new places in my house I could discover to clean, or whether it wasn't a good day to weed that garden that was growing up onto my porch, I would eventually have to ask and answer those questions. They would be easy. They just wouldn't be *my* answers. They had to be Bobby's.

The idea of wanting to protect young people from life's realities is like trying to hold back time. You may fly in a plane to the west so that you can go backwards an hour, two, even twelve hours, but eventually today will become tomorrow. Trying to write novels in which pain, suffering, sex, accidents, mistakes, joy, love, death don't happen is just putting your head into the sand so deeply you might as well believe, as we did when we were children, that eventually you'd come out the other side of the earth. I find writing for teens demands



Angela Johnson

writing a truth. Not *the* truth, mind you . . . a truth.

If I had written *The First Part Last* on my truth and personal philosophy—Bobby would *not* be raising a baby at all. Teen sex, birth control, abortion, adoption are all options and truth for young people. Bobby's truth would not be mine, but as a writer I can't always be a mouthpiece for my own personal agendas (although I struggle against it constantly).

Charles Dickens said, "It was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way." That's what I had to write about.

The challenge for me as a writer, as an artist, was crawling inside the skin of Bobby, Nia, his mother, father, and everyone else who cares about him. To understand his fears, his passion, his moment of crossing over from a boy to a father and make it real. Not my world—his world. Not my view, but his reality.

When a character says, "I'm here," I must listen. I have to listen to Bobby say: "Think about what I'm doing here with this baby. I'm a young teenage father. The world sees me as just another black boy who's got a baby. I want to be a man, a father. I'm growing up before your eyes if you let me."

So when my ears start listening, my mouth starts watering, and my heart starts beating, if I'm very, very lucky it all becomes the eyes and ears and heart of an incredible character who will live on. His name could be Bobby and his baby Feather. A spirit so bright it almost makes the weight of being a father light enough to bear without buckling.

This was a real challenge, but I was handed a gift—I knew the end of the story; I just didn't know how he would meet that end. In this case, I had to create his world, the world of a teenage boy in the middle of New York City who thought he had the world in his hands until a different life started happening. But as usual, life does not follow rules. It makes demands. It kicks the bottom out of dreams. It says you better be ready to rewrite your life because

you just changed direction.

If as a writer I follow the path that is mindful, it will take me to that which is truthful, not necessarily convenient or uplifting. In that YA literature triumphs.

Life happens. It's messy and chaotic, sometimes boring and brutal. Can we celebrate and write about that which is wonderful and never do justice to the other? Shall we write about our riches and superiority and never discuss the problematic, devastating, and sad? Should we write about happy families instead of orphans and the disaffected in a world that chooses war and destruction over improved reading scores, decent housing, and social programs? Should we not write about passion, loneliness, and the exclusion of large segments of our own children from the dream? Should we wave the flag, call ourselves patriots, and exclude the amazing, ugly, and sometimes regrettable truth?

Lucille Clifton writes:

won't you celebrate with me  
what i have shaped into  
a kind of life? i had no model.  
born in babylon  
both nonwhite and woman  
what did i see to be except  
myself?  
i made it up  
here on this bridge between  
starshine and clay,  
my one hand; come celebrate  
with me that everyday  
something has tried to kill me  
and has failed.

The creative spirit can be beaten down. People may criticize our books, try to ban and exclude them from our schools and libraries, but they can't change the fact that they exist. They will be found and read, and if they are speaking to the lives of their audience, they won't be forgotten.

I'd like to thank the Printz Committee for their acceptance of mine and all the 2004 recipients' work.

I'd like to thank my editor Kevin Lewis for vision and my agent Barry Goldblatt for his patience and trust.

And last but not least, the American Library Association for always fighting the good fight.

Good night. ●

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# Michael L. Printz Honor Speech

K. L. Going

I'd like to begin by saying that giving a speech to very many people, even if it is a thank-you speech to very kind people, is not my favorite thing to do. In fact, I feel about standing up here much the way that Troy felt about his first gig. (Now, I'll be able to tell which people have read my book because they will be the ones moving far to the back of the room.)

In fact, I'm surprised that I'm here when any number of excuses could have been made. Impersonators could have been hired. Editors could have been coerced into accepting on my behalf. A pretaped video appearance could have been passed off as some sort of cutting-edge statement on postmodern technology in YA literature. Or something like that. Yet here I am, standing before you.

There are several reasons why I'm committed to being present tonight, and the first is to say in person how much this honor means to me. To say thank you to all of you on the Printz Committee who



K. L. Going

worked so hard to bring us to this point. I know enough about the selection process to know that it took countless hours of reading and debate, selfless service for which no sticker, silver or gold, will be applied to your person.

My second reason for wanting to be here follows closely after the first. I'd like to take a moment to say how much the Printz Honor means to Troy and Curt. Although it may seem strange to thank you on behalf of my fictional characters, I think it is appropriate because you have lengthened their lives and increased their ability to reach readers.

I've worked at both a literary agency and an independent bookstore, so I've seen publishing from both sides, and I am convinced that from every angle an award such as the Printz makes a difference. It's easy to think that awards are about vanity—they praise the author and the publisher, and bestow an ethereal approval on a work of art—and these things are true and important, but awards have a concrete impact as well. They affect sales and shelf life and a book's ability to reach its intended readers.

It follows then that awards have a concrete impact on an author's life as well; and my final reason for wanting to be here tonight is to share with you the personal impact that receiving the Printz Honor has had on my life.

When I finished writing *Fat Kid Rules the World*, I had no idea whether anyone would like this book besides me. Let's face it. On page three you have a bleeding hunk of raw leg, and well, how many people were going to read past that kind of in-your-face punk rock imagery? I honestly didn't know the answer to that question. I was toiling away under a Salinger-esque hope that indeed I was not the only one in the world who felt like the Fat Kid throughout most of my life and that when other people read my book, they would connect to the raw feelings of self-consciousness that Troy expresses.

Unfortunately, one of the very first readers of the book never made it past the first couple chapters, and she informed me that most people were, in fact, over that kind of low self-esteem thing by the time they reached high school, meaning that I was now quite a few years too late. She also expressed her hope that Troy would lose weight and become the prom king by the end of the book.

Well, I thought. So, it is just me.

But others read *Fat Kid* and connected to it. My parents said, "Yes, this is good; keep going." My agent said, "It's my f—king birthday present!" My editor called my agent, who was also my boss at the time, and speaking to me, but thinking she was speaking only to Ginger's assistant said, "Tell me more about this K. L. Going person." Since the book was published last June many people of all ages and body shapes have told me that they too feel like the Fat Kid. One of the questions I get asked by teens all the time is, "How did you know how to write this book? You're not fat. . . ." I love to answer that question, and *Fat Kid* receiving a Printz honor says to me and to these teens that we aren't the only ones who have connected to Troy's inner life. It affirms the truth, that many of us really are the Fat Kid at heart.

The Printz Honor has had a practical impact on my life as well. When *Fat Kid* was first published, I was working forty hours a week and commuting twenty hours a week to get to my job in the city. Then I was writing in my free time. Free time? What free time? I was exhausted and burnt-out and really wondered if I could keep writing, considering the physical and financial toll. Receiving the Printz Honor is what pushed me to make writing my number one priority, so a month ago I left my job to work closer to home. That decision might have been

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# Michael L. Printz Honor Speech

Helen Frost

**T**hank you. I am honored to be in this room with all of you this evening. I am especially honored that the Printz Committee includes people who knew Michael Printz. He must have been a remarkable person—I wish I had known him. I have been reading the Printz books for five years now, and my respect for your other choices, this year and in previous years, deepens my gratitude for your selection of *Keesha's House*. I am at the same time enlarged and humbled by my inclusion in this company.

Conversation about *Keesha's House* can lead in many directions—teen homelessness, novels-in-verse, the relationship between real people and invented characters, the use of traditional forms to hold contemporary voices. All of these topics interest me, but tonight I'd like to speak about two elements of the book that can seem elusive, but are important: race and poetry.

When I was writing *Keesha's House*, I knew that it was risky to write in voices



The 2004 Printz Committee award and honor book authors and the committee that selected them. Front row, from left: Deborah Taylor, award recipient Angela Johnson, Sarah Dentan, Pam Spencer Holley, honor recipient Helen Frost, honor recipient K. L. Going. Second row: Charlynn Osborne, Audra Caplan, honor recipient Jennifer Donnelly, honor recipient Carolyn Mackler, Sarah Flowers, Caroline Kienzle, and Juanita Foster.



Helen Frost

that differ from my own by virtue of age, gender, and cultural background. But if no one allowed themselves to do that, we would not be able to write about friendships that cross those boundaries. And in the settings of my book—the juvenile justice system, in particular—teens do form such friendships. I once heard two girls who met in a post-detention nonviolence group discover that they had been in adjoining cells a few months earlier. They had heard the guards call out one another's names, but had never seen each other before that day, and may not have realized that they were of different racial backgrounds.

Or, if it mattered to them, they may have guessed, using all the clues my readers use when they want to know the race of my characters—most often, as far as I

can tell, clues based on names and language. While working on the poems, I hired youth consultants to help me get the voices right. I told these teen readers that I had been listening carefully to young people for a long time, but it was still hard for me to get the different voices down on paper. They understood; one girl said, "That's how school is for me all the time." They were specific and helpful in their suggestions.

Their perceptions about the race of the characters generally matched my own. One reader said, "If you didn't have Keesha, Dontay, and Carmen, I would've thought 'all these kids are white' and shut the book." I asked him how he perceived Joe—I hadn't yet made up my own mind about Joe's racial background—and he

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# Michael L. Printz Honor Speech

Carolyn Mackler

**O**n the morning of January 12, 2004, I turned off the ringer on my phone. I always do this when I intend to write, so I won't get interrupted. But then, of course, I get wildly curious and check my messages every half-hour. And on this Monday morning, I was particularly curious. I knew that the American Library Association Midwinter Meeting was underway. I'd been hoping that *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things* would get chosen as a Best Book for Young Adults. If it did, I didn't know how I'd find out or when. But I was too curious to let my voice-mail go untouched, so I decided to check.

Well, there was a message on my machine. It was from a woman named Pam Spencer Holley, telling me she was the chair of the 2004 Printz Committee. My first thought was, "That's so nice of them to tell me who won the Printz awards this year." But as she proceeded to congratulate me because *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things* had been selected as a Printz Honor book, my next thought was . . . well . . . my brain

wasn't functioning enough to have a concrete thought. I sunk onto a stool and looked out at the Manhattan skyline in shaking, hyperventilating disbelief. I called my husband . . . the only words he could discern were "Printz Honor! Printz Honor!" I called my parents and my agent and my editor. I still hadn't started breathing again.

For me, it is especially significant that *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things* was received so generously by librarians. I grew up in a small town in Western New York. Like many teenagers, I had a split personality. There was the public Carolyn—gossiping, flirting, skiing, hanging out with friends. And then there was the private Carolyn—wondering if I fit in, wondering if anyone else had ever had these feelings, wondering why I seemed like a freak so much of the time. To feel less alone, I turned to young adult novels. Every week, I'd head over to Seymour Library. I'd spend forever flipping through books, narrowing it down until I'd selected seven or eight. During these quiet afternoons, it was often just the librarians and me. I loved this time. The librarians gave me the space I needed and wouldn't ever grimace or laugh if I selected a fluffy teen romance or a sexy love story. I had this safe feeling that they wouldn't judge me for what I was reading. They would stock enticing books and let me figure out where I wanted to go that week. It was exactly what I needed at that time in my life and I am forever grateful to them.

This is one of the reasons I'm compelled to write novels for teenagers. And this is definitely one of the reasons I wrote about Virginia in *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things*. I wanted to create a teenage girl who feels so alone, so freaky, and different. I wanted to write about a plus-size heroine who overcomes some of her insecurities and gets the guy in the end. I wanted Virginia fooling around with Froggy

because—despite so much of what we see on TV—girls of all shapes and sizes are raging with hormones. Virginia doesn't go public with Froggy in the beginning, but by the end, she gains enough confidence to kiss him in public. I wanted Virginia to find her voice and demand respect from her parents and tell her brother what she really thinks of him and start feeling strong and capable and comfortable in her own skin. Above all, I wanted to write a story that would have touched me when I was a teenager.

When I'm writing a novel, I get some serious leg muscles. As I'm trying to figure out what a book is about, I walk. I live near Central Park, so I can walk for miles and space out and think about my story. I wrote a good portion of *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things* in the summer of 2001. For several weeks that summer, I took my laptop and went up to central New York, where my family has a house on a cliff overlooking Cayuga Lake. During that time, I was trying to figure out how Virginia was going to stop being victimized—by her mom, her brother, her peers. Every afternoon, I'd walk and walk and think about this. Usually I would meander on a flat path along the shore, but one day I went straight uphill to the farmland perched a mile or two above the lake. I was determined to resolve this issue with Virginia, and I was going to walk until I figured it out. I must have walked myself delirious because when I reached the dairy farm at the top of the hill, it came to me in a wonderful tingling rush. Virginia would meet Annie Mills—the college student her brother had abused—and by these two characters coming together and realizing that you can let yourself be a victim or you can choose to be empowered by a negative experience—this would set Virginia free. As I imagined the scene where Virginia and Annie met, I stood there crying. Luckily, there was no one around but a few Holstein cows and they



Carolyn Mackler



didn't seem to mind that I was having a breakthrough on their pasture.

Aside from occasional bouts of crying, I really need to laugh when I'm writing. Partially because I'm alone in front of my computer every day. But also, as much as the teen years can be tragic and heartbreaking, it's also a time when you have a crazy sense of humor, when you have inside jokes about everything, and when you find yourself in a group of friends, laughing your head off and thinking, "Life can't get better than this."

So whenever I'm writing, I remember humor. I remember these two teenage girls I overheard at a poetry slam a few years ago. One was telling the other how

she's been having horrendous stomach problems and her parents have dragged her to tons of doctors and one finally discovered that she has a parasite in her stomach. And the other one said, That's so awful. A parasite?" And the girl said, "Yeah, I know. But I've named him Bob."

That's what I remember when I'm writing. That as much as things can be tough, teenagers have a wonderful way of finding the humor. That's why I love writing for and about them. I also love writing for teens because it's still a time when a powerful novel can change their lives. They definitely did for me.

In addition to thanking all the librarians who have helped me along the way,

I'd like to thank Deborah Wayshak, Mara Bergman, and everyone at Candlewick for loving Virginia as much as I do. I'd like to thank my agent, Jodi Reamer, for sticking by me through every stage of this book. I'd like to thank my husband, Jonas Rideout, for cheering me on when I most needed it and bribing me with ice-cream cones in exchange for not checking my e-mail while I'm writing. And I'd like to thank the Printz Committee for wowing and surprising me so completely, for giving *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Big Round Things* such an esteemed honor, and for allowing me to be here tonight. Thank you. ●

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said, "Oh, him? I just figure he's some foreign guy that doesn't know you're not supposed to let kids live in your house."

I could say a lot more about race, which, for all we think and talk about it, is not real. The more closely you try to look at it, the more it dissolves in definition. But I want to go on to speak about poetry, of which the opposite can be said: the more closely you look into poetry, the more vividly its reality comes into focus.

In 1968, in his office in the Hall of Languages at Syracuse University, Philip Booth put Elizabeth Bishop's book, *Questions of Travel*, into my hands and called my attention to the poem titled simply "Sestina." Later that day in a bookstore on Marshall Street, I bought the book—it was probably the first time I bought a book with those three triangular fish swimming in opposite directions on its spine, along with the title and the author's name and the initials of the publisher, FSG. And so our dreams are born.

Bishop's sestina went into my ear, into my heart, and her book traveled with me from one bookshelf to another in my

own travels—to Vermont, to Scotland, to Alaska, to Oregon and Indiana. I read that poem many times; by the time I began writing the sestinas that would become *Keesha's House*, I no longer needed to turn to it as an example of the form. By then I knew the form "by heart," as we say of things we love enough to commit to memory. So it was that any connection between Bishop's "Sestina" and *Keesha's House* remained subconscious as I created the poems and structured the book.

On the evening I learned about the Printz Honor, that deep connection between the poem and the book came to the surface. Pamela Spencer Holley called to give me the amazing news, and an hour or so later, Frances Foster called to share it with me. In the quiet glow of those two conversations, I lit a candle in my living room and held the book in my hands. I looked at the beautiful cover design, that soft rain falling over the blue door, and I heard a line of poetry: "September rain falls on the house." It was the first line of Elizabeth Bishop's "Sestina." The poem is about a child living in a house with her grandmother in

Great Village, Nova Scotia, when her parents cannot care for her.

How did that happen? How did that rain fall through Bishop's poem, through the editors and designers at FSG, and find its way, some thirty years later, into my poems in such a way that the illustrator Frances selected, R. Gregory Christie, created that image for the jacket? If I were writing a sestina about this, the end words might be: house, rain, room, language, light, and something else completely unrelated that would, in the last stanza, somehow allow us to see into the mystery of how all these things fit together.

But this is prose. Let me try to craft a sentence that will bring together the rain falling on the house in Great Village, the office full of books in the Hall of Languages, and my living room in that moment of quiet light. Let me try, at the same time, to say something of what this Printz Honor means to me: "We are all born into Great Village; with a little luck and the generosity of librarians, we pass through the Hall of Languages to a quiet place in our living room where a candle is burning and, somehow, we see it." ●

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# Michael L. Printz Honor Speech

Jennifer Donnelly

**H**ello and thank you. I would like to say a very heartfelt thank you to Pam Spencer Holley and the members of the Printz Committee for awarding *A Northern Light* a Michael Printz Honor, and most of all, I would like to thank them for their dedication and commitment to young readers. To the members of the ALA, and to all the librarians, educators, publishers, and booksellers who fight the good fight every day—thank you. To my agent, Steve Malk, thank you for your wisdom, guidance, and good humor. And to Michael Stearns, editor and soulman, and everyone at Harcourt, thank you so much for believing in Mattie Gokey and in me.

As an author who writes both adult and young adult novels, I'm often asked what makes a story a story for young adults. Is it the age of the character? The subject matter? The language? The issues?

For me, what makes a story a young adult story is simply this: intention.

*A Northern Light* was inspired by a true story—the murder of a pregnant teenager name Grace Brown in upstate

New York in the summer of 1906. Grace was drowned in a lake in the Adirondack Mountains by the father of her unborn child because he did not wish to marry her. *A Northern Light* shows the effect Grace's murder has on a fictional local girl named Mattie Gokey. When I wrote the book, I was angry—angry that a lovely young life had been so brutally ended and angry that nearly a hundred years later, during a summer that saw the headlines in America full of violence against girls and women, things hadn't seemed to change much.

It was my intention to talk to as many teenage girls as I could though my novel. I wanted to say to them: "Listen, the world is a tough place for young women. Always has been. Always will be. Be wise. Be wary. Think your own thoughts. Choose your own path." I hoped teenagers would relate to sixteen-year-old Mattie and her struggle to build a life of her own choosing, and it appears that they have. What has surprised me, though, is that *A Northern Light* is also resonating with older readers. A mother of two recently e-mailed to tell me Mattie's story reminded her that she still had a secret dream she wished to pursue. Another adult, a woman in her eighties, wrote to say how the book had reawakened the pain she felt as a teenager when she had to choose between her country home and an education.

I'm delighted that grown-ups like the book, of course, but in being embraced by adults, *A Northern Light* has become part of an emerging and sometimes controversial phenomenon in children's literature: the crossover novel. The controversy stems from the view that adults who take an interest in kids' books are only indulging their Peter Pan complexes, or worse yet, dumbing themselves down.

To me this criticism misses the point entirely. What's so intriguing and so important about the emergence of the

crossover book is not what it says about adults, but what it says to kids—that the stories that matter to them, matter to us as well.

If I think back to my high school reading assignments, novels like *The Scarlet Letter*, *Crime and Punishment*, and *The Grapes of Wrath* come to mind—all books that examine adult issues and situations. How can we tell teenagers that adult stories are worthy of their time and attention, but their stories are not worthy of ours?

The stories we like define us. They embody our experiences, hopes, fears, and dreams. Dismiss a person's stories, and you dismiss that person. If we encourage kids to enter adult territories through the vehicle of literature, and to value what they find there, shouldn't we repay the courtesy now and again with a visit back to the realms of childhood and adolescence?

Just because we choose to tote *The Golden Compass* along on the morning commute, it doesn't mean we're regressing. It simply means we like Lyra Silvertongue. She interests us. Her world and her struggle to understand it interest us. Should we deny ourselves the pleasure of her company simply because she's a kid and we're not?

The idea that books for and about young adults can only be of interest to young adults is absurd. It's like telling a reader not to bother with *Ulysses* unless she's Irish or *Trainspotting* unless he uses heroin. Books are not gated communities; they're open and shimmering cities where we can all come and go at will, freely sampling other lives and times, other cultures and realities.

What better way to convince a teenager of the importance of her views, the validity of her feelings and concerns, than to say to her: "I like your stories. They're interesting. They're good. And . . . can I borrow that book when you're done?" ●



Jennifer Donnelly

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# Publishing 101: A Guide for the Perplexed

## Publishers Offer Insight through Orlando Program and Interviews

Roxy Ekstrom and Amy Alessio

**P**ublishing a book would seem to be a fairly straightforward process—find a manuscript, edit, choose a cover, print copies, and sell them. But since the YALSA Publishers' Liaison Committee has several members who live in the publishing world, we knew it was a bit more involved. During our brainstorming sessions, we started throwing out the questions we personally wanted answered. How does an editor find a new author? What happens during the editing process? Why are the paperback and trade covers different? Does the author have any say? And . . . what about the money? How much advance does the author get?

The librarians on the committee knew bits and pieces, but committee members Terry Borzumato, Executive Director, School and Library Marketing, Random House Children's Books, and David Gale, Editorial Director, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, knew it all. And, even better, they knew who would be great for a panel presentation: Regina Griffin, vice president, editor-in-chief, Holiday House; Wendy Lamb, vice president and publishing director, Wendy Lamb Books/Random House Children's Books; Ginee Seo, vice president, associate publisher, Atheneum Books for Young Readers; and Isabel Warren-Lynch, executive director of art and design, Knopf Delacorte Dell Books for Young Readers/Random House Children's Books. These panelists created a mock publishing company, Perplexed Publishing, to give the audience a glimpse into the complex publishing world.

Early Monday morning, as the audience listened in, Wendy, Regina, and Ginee covered the merits of several manuscripts. After much discussion, new author A. K. Paley's *Bite Me*, the profanity-laced story of a teenage boy whose father is a porn king, was selected. Through the informal give and take, the audience learned about everything from selection to editing, production costs to subright income. One year later, the unknown author proved to be worth the risk. It had great kid appeal, star reviews, and an attractive number of zeros in the profit column. Isabel covered the cover, showing the artwork from conception to finished product. The audience even had a chance to do a bit of cover designing. Terry Borzumato finished the presentation with a comprehensive overview of the marketing techniques used by publishers. She touched on everything from Internet marketing to advanced reading copies for new titles, to the influences that major awards and author visits have on book sales. Questions and answers from the audience completed the program.

The expertise of publishing practitioners truly made this program. And the dual membership of the Publishers' Liaison Committee—librarians and members of the publishing field—is what makes this committee work.

### Publishers On YA Publishing

Committee work offers members a chance to network as well as improve the industry for others. Some YALSA initia-

tives have another benefit with editor input, offering librarians added insight into the publishing industry. Four editors who have been active in YALSA (and other organizations) were interviewed about their views on these projects and on teen literature. While they did not always agree about trends in the field, they all commented on the benefits of their committee work.

**David Gale**, editorial director of Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, has worked with several YALSA projects, including developing the Michael L. Printz Award. "So many of us had wanted this sort of award for so long; it was something I felt strongly was needed, and I felt good about what we were doing."

**Marc Aronson**, award-winning author and editor who has worked at companies including Candlewick, HarperCollins, and Carus, agreed with



**Roxy Ekstrom**, a member of the YALSA Publisher's Liaison Committee, is the Youth Services Collection Development Librarian at the Schaumburg Township District Library in Schaumburg, IL. She loves booktalking for Junior High students and also spent thirteen years as a high school English teacher. **Amy Alessio** is the Teen Coordinator at the Schaumburg Township District Library in Illinois. In addition to being active in YALSA, she has published and spoken widely on teen services, and has enjoyed the constant advice of her Teen Advisory Board for the last six years.

this: "I've gotten something out of all the committees I've worked on, but probably the various Printz committees (planning and evaluation) . . . have meant the most, because of my passion for the cause, and the satisfaction of creating the award." Marc has ideas for teachers and librarians at his site: [www.marcaronson.com](http://www.marcaronson.com).

*Booklist* Books for Youth Editor **Stephanie Zvirin** has been a consultant to several book selection committees, including Best Books for Young Adults, Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers, and Printz, helping her develop perspective on the process. "Each one has a different character. Some are lively, some contentious, and some just don't mesh at all. The Printz was great. They had a huge advantage over Best Books for Young Readers as the list of books they consider is so much shorter, which allows them more time to consider each book."



"I became an ALA member to support libraries and librarians, and especially in order to do committee work. I think it's really important," **Sharyn November** emphasized. November can list YALSA Youth Participation, Publishers Liaison, and Legislation among many committee credits. Sharyn also has ideas and topics of interest for librarians at her site: [www.sharyn.org](http://www.sharyn.org).



## Industry Trends

Many times librarians want to know why they don't see more of a particular genre teens are clamoring for, or have questions about why titles are not available in paperback. Just as teen input is essential to offering relevant services at the library, research about the publishing world can be crucial with materials selection. Professional reviews and journals offer valuable insight, as do the opinions of the

professionals on the front publishing lines.

Zvirin has the widest view of the industry as most of what is published comes through her department each year for review. "I've seen huge swings in publishing during the twenty-eight years I have been here. . . . Now we have a tsunami (of YA fiction) . . . and we are seeing fewer picture books and middle-grade fiction as a result."

"The industry has changed dramatically," agrees November. "Children's books are big business and less of a backwater than they had been. . . . Frontlist has become increasingly important, and books go out of print much more quickly." Libraries with shrinking budgets are all too aware of this as waiting for copies to go into paperback in order to buy multiples becomes impossible.

Aronson agrees with this as well: "All of publishing is more 'make it or break it' than it used to be. Books that do well can do extraordinarily well, books that don't can disappear . . . it means that there is a better chance than ever of creating something that many kids see and read. Another way of seeing the same trend is that the importance of the library market has significantly declined."

Another trend mentioned among the editors includes a hope for a rise in non-fiction, something librarians working with reluctant readers know is badly needed. Some of the editors also noted a positive trend in publishing for older young adults.

Just as school and public libraries can have different wish lists for books, and teens can have vastly different interests in reading, the editors have different preferences in their work. November is the creator and senior editor of fantasy and science fiction imprint Firebird. The line offers reprints of many favorites in the genre as well as new titles. Gale would like to look at something different. "I'm hoping the fantasy wave will subside soon, as I'm tired of being offered 'the next Harry Potter' and other derivative, endless fantasy sequences." Gale has

recently worked with authors Todd Strasser and Rachel Cohn.

## A Shared Passion

Librarians and editors for this age group share a special passion for the needs of teenagers. "I still respond to things the way I did as a teenager," says November. "The books are always about 'opening out,' new experiences, and going into the world for the first time."

While he also works on books for preschoolers and up, "my true love is books for teens," says Gale. "I know that teens can and should read up and down, that is, books for adults and books for children. But in giving them quality books that will also resonate with them on an emotional level, I think we're reaching them in ways that other books can't."

Aronson enjoys the freedom of the young adult genre. "I enjoy the fact that teenagers are smart, self-aware, and have some knowledge—so there is less constraint in what a book can be."

## Input from Teens

All agree that they enjoy the exchange of perspective with librarians from committee work, and they also work with input from teenagers themselves. The YALSA Teen Galley project has been successful in putting review copies into teens' hands and then sending the teen views back to the publishers, including Aronson and Gale.

November also pursues teen input actively through online reading partnerships. "Right now I have over 100 teen readers all over the world," she admits. "It has changed my work dramatically."

While her work at *Booklist* limits her teen exposure, Zvirin also agrees on the importance of keeping relevant to young people and the real world. "We talk to librarians and teachers who work with youth all the time, and we keep as up-to-date as possible when it comes to popular culture." ●

# YA Galley Project Gives Teens a New Voice

Diane Monnier and Francisca Goldsmith

Adults who care about reaching teen readers with books that will attract, engage, and inspire them work in a variety of interrelated fields—sometimes at cross-purposes. “Certainly young adult librarians are the largest majority of professionals that promote titles to teens, but there are also book-sellers, publishers, and book reviewers as well.” More than six years ago, *Publishers Weekly* columnists Jennifer M. Brown and Cindi Di Marzo reached the conclusion that there can be so much adult caring (and carefulness) going on, that the voices of teen readers themselves are in danger of being bypassed.<sup>1</sup> At the time this news hit the larger publishing and reviewing world, YALSA was already at work on a plan to give teen readers themselves a direct voice in the process of finding and championing new books intended to reach them and their peers.

YALSA’s commitment to youth participation ascribes to the organization’s members the responsibility for seeking youth participation that is meaningful. Teens’ Top Ten aids teens in making their opinions about new books be heard by such audiences as other teens, library staff serving teens, and by publishers. To this end, in 1999, a YALSA project, cosponsored by *Voice of Youth Advocates*, brought the galleys of participating publishers directly into the hands of library-sponsored teen book groups. In 2003, the project goal of enhancing YALSA’s annual Teen Read Week with a direct method of demonstrating teen views on new YA books was realized in the first live Teens’ Top Ten online vote.<sup>2</sup>

During Teen Read Week 2004, teens who log on to YALSA’s event-specific page will be able to cast votes for their favorite YA books of the year. Whether

finding the site on their own or being directed to it by informed librarians or teachers, they will be participating in Teens’ Top Ten; a project of YALSA’s YA Galley Committee. Growing in popularity each year, Teen Read Week stands as a youth participation success story. With Teens’ Top Ten, teenage participation comes from two fronts: those who participate in the YA Galley Committee’s work

to the teen market, what these readers deemed the best became the Teen Read Week slate, and YA Galley and Teens’ Top Ten became a dynamic effort that now is a blueprint for an annual teen-selected list of top new books.

Fifteen library-based teen book groups, including some in middle and high schools as well as public libraries, located around the nation from

By externalizing the critical efforts of the teen reading groups involved in reviewing galleys of new books targeted to the teen market, what these readers deemed the best became the Teen Read Week slate; and YA Galley and Teens’ Top Ten became a dynamic effort that now is a blueprint for an annual teen-selected list of top new books.

actually help to design the slate of books put to the vote, while any teen anywhere can cast a vote during Teen Read Week. That means that this is a genuinely teen-generated “best” list.

The concept for Teens’ Top Ten developed through more than a decade of preliminary brainstorming and organized task force work. YALSA member and current *Voice of Youth Advocates* Editor Cathi Dunn MacRae promoted the idea of a “teens only” list as a way to further enhance youth participation in library-related activities. YALSA’s 2004 President Audra Caplan also worked in the foundation planning of this project. In a closely related effort, but one focused on funneling teen reading opinion toward the very producers and marketers who make YA books a reality—book publishers—the YA Galley project developed from task force status to an official YALSA Committee in January 2003. By externalizing the critical efforts of the teen reading groups involved in reviewing galleys of new books targeted

Maryland to Michigan to Texas and Arizona, applied in 2002 to be the first official YA Galley groups. This designation allows the library-based teen book groups to acquire galleys of newly published young adult books from among the offerings of more than a score

**Diane P. Monnier**, Chair of YALSA’s YA Galley Committee, works as Senior Librarian for Children’s and Adult Services at Rockville Library in Montgomery County, Maryland. A past member of The Best Books for Young Adults (BBYA) Committee, Diane is Youth Participation Coordinator for YALSA, working with BBYA to involve teens in the discussion of nominated books at ALA conferences. Diane is a Serving the Underserved trainer and has conducted training sessions in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Colorado. **Francisca Goldsmith** is the Collection Management and Promotion Librarian at Berkeley (Calif.) Public Library. In her capacity as YALSA Director, she serves as liaison to the YA Galley Committee.

of publishers who participate in the galley project. These teen groups read and discuss the books and provide feedback to the publishers on a book evaluation form designed to give editors a clear idea of what works and why, and what doesn't, with the literature they hope to sell to teens, either directly or through the intercessions of librarians, bookstore sellers, and reviewers.

In anticipation of the first YALSA Teens' Top Ten vote held during Teen Read Week 2003, five of the fifteen groups were designated to work together to create a nomination list of their favorites. The teens who had read and discussed so many books during the year cast votes as did teens across the country who enjoyed reading books on the official nomination list as it appeared on YALSA's Teen Read Week site. No sooner were the public votes cast and the list announced in 2003 than the same YA Galley groups were hard at work on the 2004 nominations. This year's list is posted at [www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teenreading/teenstopten/teenstopten.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teenreading/teenstopten/teenstopten.htm) with directions for voting during Teen Read Week 2004.

The first Teens' Top Ten list generated lots of excitement among teens, librarians and publishers. Nearly 2,000 teens voted on the 2003 list during Teen Read Week. The YA Galley Committee discussed the project and urged even greater participation in 2004 during YALSA's Teen Read Week Preconference, *It's Alive! @ Your Library*, this past June in Orlando.

The work of the first fifteen groups will be history right after Teen Read Week 2004, having given us all two years of thoughtful and energetic insight on what makes a YA book a "best" with teen readers. Fifteen new groups have been chosen to continue the project into 2005 and 2006. They begin their work in November, reading galleys, sending comments to publishers and, for five of the groups, searching for just the right books to nominate as Teens' Top Ten in 2005.

Teen Read Week gives each teen an opportunity to be part of history by reading books on the nominated list and casting votes for up to three favorites. Online voting is easy, and hopefully librarians

will encourage students to celebrate Teen Read Week with a vote for their own "top" list. ●

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2. During YALSA's first Teen Read Week in 2000, YALSA members and the general public who paid attention to this little piece of news were surprised and somewhat incredulous to read that, in the first

online national vote of its kind, American teenagers apparently were willing to vote the *Book of Mormon* as their second favorite title. Four years later, we are much more savvy about how to focus attention on specific new YA books, how to incorporate electronic polling with our efforts to get the public to listen to teens speak up with their thoughts and opinions, and the need to include a nominating body with representatives from all parts of the United States.

## YA Galley Groups—Newly Selected at Annual 2004

### The Five YA Galley/TTT Nominating Groups

1. Young Adult Advisory Council from the City of Mesa Library (Mesa, Ariz.) under the direction of Diane Tuccillo
2. Middle Creek High School Printz Club from the Middle Creek High School (Apex, N.C.) under the direction of Teresa Brantley
3. Teen Literacy Initiative from the Memorial High School (Eau Claire, Wisc.) under the direction of Pam Gardow
4. CHS Book Club from the Central High School (Grand Junction, Colo.) under the direction of Leota Sweetman and Diana Herald
5. TAB (Teen Advisory Board) from the Downers Grove Public Library (Downers Grove, Ill.) under the direction of Heather Booth and Amanda Blau

### The Ten (Additional) YA Galley Groups

1. City Library Street Team from the Salt Lake City Public Library, Canteena (Salt Lake City, Utah) under the direction of Susie Woodward and Julie Bartel
2. Mary Jacobs Teen Group from the Mary Jacobs Memorial Library (Rocky Hill, N.J.) under the direction of Elizabeth Willoughby
3. Keene Public Library Teen Read from the Keene Public Library (Keene, N.H.) under the direction of Gail Zachariah
4. Danbury Library Teen Council from the Danbury Library (Danbury, Conn.) under the direction of Dymphana Harrigan
5. Young Adult Advisory Council from the Johnson County Library (Shawnee Mission, Kans.) under the direction of Tricia Suellentrop
6. Stratford Library Youth Review Board from the Stratford Library Association (Stratford, Conn.) under the direction of Barbara Blossveren and Diane Stackpole
7. Best Books for Young Adults Discussion Group from the Elizabeth Public Library (Elizabeth, N.J.) under the direction of Kimberly Paone
8. Watertown-Mayer Book Club from the Watertown Public Library (Watertown, Minn.) under the direction of Maggie Snow
9. Teen Talk Book Clubs from the Lincoln County High School Media Center (Standford, Ky.) under the direction of Kay Hensley
10. Teen Advisory Board from the Tippecanoe County Public Library (Lafayette, Ind.) under the direction of Kelley Lathgo



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# Young Adults As Public Library Users

## A Challenge and Priority

Ivanka Stricevic

**D**uring the last decade, in the same way as many public libraries in the world, the Medvescak Public Library (MPL) in Zagreb, Croatia, was faced with poor interest from young adults for library services in general. From the early sixties, MPL paid a lot of attention to elementary school children, toddlers, preschool children, and their parents as library users, but neglected young people between childhood and adulthood.

The Medvescak Public Library is one of the public libraries in Zagreb whose numerous innovations in the last few decades have had a huge impact on the theory and practice of public librarianship in Croatia. It is the first public library in Croatia that has computerized its operations and developed special programs for preschoolers; and it is also the first public library that has set up a special services department for teenagers.

The library covers a district of Zagreb with some 50,000 inhabitants, but it is open to all citizens of Zagreb (a million inhabitants) regardless of where they live. The library registers some 15,000 members annually. Almost one-third of them are children up to age thirteen, and about 2,000 are young adults from thirteen up to twenty-two or twenty-three. A

special department for young adults has been in operation since 2000. Since its opening four years ago, the number of teenagers becoming members of the IDI PA VIDI (IPV) Young Adults Department and using the newly run services has increased by 1,000. The most prominent figure is the number of teenagers visiting per month (more than 2,500 visits). This suggests a great interest from a population that had been neglected prior to the introduction of new library services.

The Young Adults Department, named by young users as IPV (*Go and See . . .*), offers standard library service to teenagers in a way they find acceptable and in a separate space that is designed specifically for this age group. Also, library materials are adjusted to the needs and interests of young adults, and new forms of work are developed, motivating young people to spend most of their free time in the library participating in various activities, programs, and projects.

The need for innovations in this area is a result of a number of facts and indicators, the most important being the following:

- Public libraries (in most parts of the world as well as in Croatia) do not provide continuous programs and services that would cater to the changing needs of young library users as they grow up; rather intensive programs for children are implemented only until they finish elementary school. After that, they become (or they do not become) users of adult services, which are not very often suited to their needs in terms of methods or contents.
- More developed library systems throughout the world have shown, and *IFLA Guidelines on Library Services for Young Adults* have defined, the need to pay special atten-



The workshop on non-violent communication led by trained volunteers

tion to this age group. In this period of life, when children make the transition from childhood to adulthood, they need to be offered services and activities that will be suited to their specific interests in the new media of today's communication.

The Go and See Department (IPV) is located between the Children's Department and the Adult Department. Librarians from both areas are involved in its operation, but daily activities and programs for teenagers are implemented by children's librarians. This has proven to be a better solution in the MPL, since children's librarians are better qualified in terms of transferring knowledge and playing methods, have a better understanding of young people and their needs, and are more willing to include game and fun elements in their work. For the last four years the children's librarians have become more competent and skillful in working with young adults, but without any specialized training.

The premise of the Young Adults Department differs to some extent from other parts of the library. Teenagers participate in designing the location (notice boards, wall newspapers, round tables like those in coffee bars, a shop window with people sitting in it, etc.). Teenagers were

**Ivanka Stricevic** is the Head of Children's and Young Adults' Services for the Medvescak Public Library in Zagreb, Croatia. She has published dozens of books and articles about children's and young adults' librarianship, co-operation with parents in public libraries, children's reading, and child rights, as well as a few picture books for children. She serves as the Chair of Libraries for Children and Young Adults IFLA Section and the Chair of Children's Section of the Croatian Library Association.

involved in all stages of department development; they suggested topics, literature, and programs they would like to participate in, took part in interior decoration, and chose the name for the department.

Results of a survey conducted before the opening of the department showed that more than 50 percent of teenagers surveyed were keen on using the new department. In fact, 57 percent said they would prefer to have access to CDs, audio, and video cassettes, while 55 percent displayed interest in the Internet and books for young adults. One-third of those surveyed were interested in participating in workshops and interest groups. The topics they wanted to read about or discuss in workshops are in order of importance:

1. Adolescence, sexuality, and addictions
2. Choice of school, college, and career
3. Human rights and children's rights

Sports, a traditional topic that teenagers are particularly interested in, ranked only eighth. As many as 66 percent of the teens said they were ready to take an active part in working in the department (do some decorating, assist the librarian, etc.), which they confirmed after the department was opened.

The activities that are offered continually include: getting together with friends; finding fun and riveting books, magazines, information leaflets; borrowing books listed on their school's reading list; listening to CDs; looking through CD-ROMs; playing computer games and using stimulating computer programs; surfing on the Internet; using the computer for homework (typing a report or paper); finding a variety of booklets about subjects ("Tips for . . ."); seeking and getting advice on many issues

from expert-guests; and participating in workshops on a variety of topics.

Computers and CD-ROMs are used in a variety of ways: for educational purposes or for independent use, for individual and group work, for information gathering, writing, participation in projects, development of materials for the IPV Department, workshops and fun activities of choice. Recently a group of young users has designed their own Web page, located on a separate domain but linked from the MPL home page [www.knjizmed.hr](http://www.knjizmed.hr). They maintain the Web page and are primarily responsible for the content and design. It contains News, a Forum, Chat, a list of recommended books and Web sites, best books, new books in the library, a fun box, actualities, columns, and interesting addresses, etc.

By introducing new services for young adults, MPL records numerous positive changes, especially in the increasing number of young people buzzing all around and making a special atmosphere in the library. A lot of indicators suggest its success. The changes can be perceived in the following areas:

- Quantitative and qualitative indicators—the extent to which teenagers use the library (its materials, programs, and services), their readiness to participate as library volunteers in all types of programs and services, provide input about interior design and other facilities required for working with young adults.
- Changed awareness of the role of the public library and its focus on the rights of all age groups and special groups associated with education,



Doing schoolwork or just reading

information, culture, social, and personal development.

In only four years of operating the Go and See Department, many public libraries in Croatia have started with some kind of service for young adults. Some of them provide a special book collection for youth as well as computers with Internet capability, while others arrange special rooms, run a youth club, or set up projects and programs in cooperation with local high schools and non-governmental organizations. ●

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#### GOING

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delayed a long time otherwise, or it might never have been made, but the Printz offers me the hope of a career that will allow me to support myself. And I hope it means there are people out there who care if I write another book.

Every day at the bookshop where I now work I see the way the award sticker

attracts the attention of people who might otherwise pass over my book without even picking it up. And this is so important. It's important to every one of us in this room, and it's important to the life of YA literature as a genre.

I'm very glad that there is a Michael L. Printz Award. I would be glad even if *Fat Kid* hadn't been named an honor book.

#### AWARD SPEECH

I've read each of the other books honored tonight, and I'd be thrilled to know they were chosen because they are great books. *Fat Kid* is in fabulous company, and that means a lot to me. Enough to bring the "fat kid" out on stage to give a speech.

So, thank you again. From me and Troy and Curt. ●

# An Unscientific Survey of Teen TV Programming

Leslie Marlo

Television programming, as with most forms of entertainment, spans the spectrum from high to low quality, with plenty of mediocrity in between. The quality seems to be dependent in large part on the network carrying the given show and the audience that is being sought. Children of the last several generations have grown up with a steady diet of accessible TV, so the youth of today are well versed in what to expect.

The programs surveyed for this article generally provide both educational and entertainment value, but none are purely educational. Sitcoms generally exist to provide escapism, and in moderation there is value in that. However, the perceived worth will vary tremendously depending on one's value system.

For example, this adult finds shows from *The Simpsons* and *King of the Hill* to *Friends* and *Frazier* to be highly entertaining, because of the intelligently presented humor; other adults may be offended by certain sexual or political content. On the other hand, *The Osbournes* was incomprehensible to this viewer, and not because of trouble understanding British accents; rather, there appeared to be only the flimsiest of plots with considerable swearing, fighting, and yielding of guns in between any actual dialogue. Similarly, while *South Park* subtly presents some serious issues, such as single parenting, through rather creative and humorous situations, the swearing certainly pushes the envelope of

acceptability for a not-yet-adult audience. However, teens flock to these shows; for them, the more outrageous and absurd, the better.

Dramas such as *Judging Amy* or *Joan of Arcadia* take a more serious view of their content. CBS presents a trendier, youth-oriented *Touched by an Angel* in *Joan of Arcadia*; the fact that a network is willing to present a series with a religious orientation in this society is in itself a bold move. CBS, in *Judging Amy*, also presents a show that is not afraid to tackle such current events as teen exploitation in the music industry, teen pregnancy, and child abuse. With these shows, CBS seems to be the network most willing to cater to an audience concerned with and willing to think about the challenges of today's world rather than gratuitous violence, sex, or fake reality. Despite, or perhaps with, the mature content, these shows would be of great value for a family to watch and discuss together. However, an informal survey of teens reveals that these shows are not particularly popular.

Popular TV shows appear to segment by gender with female youth being more consistent in their viewing habits. Weekly serials such as *Everwood*, *Gilmore Girls*, *One Tree Hill*, and *The O.C.*, essentially the equivalent of prime time soap operas, are considered "must see" by large segments of the female population. It is considered quite important to be able to discuss what happened on the latest episode during school the next day. These shows all provide certain doses of themes important to teens, such as dating, friendship, and good times, but in varying ways. Of these four shows, *Everwood* seems the most family-oriented and serious, tackling issues such as dating, teen depression, and college admissions, but always emphasizing family relationships. *The Gilmore Girls*

also emphasizes family relationships, but this viewer could not determine if the show was meant to be a comedy; if nothing else, it was certainly trying to be hip, with references to skateboarding and extreme sports and a "Game Theory" class being offered in college.

On the other end of the spectrum, *One Tree Hill* and *The O.C.* hit the "sex, drugs, and rock n' roll" themes quite hard. In both shows, high school students (who all look to be about thirty years of age) appear to be living almost independently of their families. In one episode of *One Tree Hill*, various athletic teams were chaperoned to an out-of-town weekend event, where oddly, it was no problem for the males to go drinking in a bar, and there were plenty of references to having sex. In a nod to *The Graduate*, a recent episode of *The O.C.* started with a scene whereby a high school student sleeps with his girlfriend's mother. Meanwhile, later in the show, a group of teens goes to a Hollywood party in a strip club, and cocaine is prominently displayed. Clearly, Fox and The WB networks are intentionally pushing the envelope by providing teens the opportunity to see mature adult situations. Disturbingly, a recent local news interview with *One Tree Hill* stars noted that they are proud to present teenage life so "realistically." Hopefully, these shows are also providing an opportunity for family discussion, or alternatively, that teen viewers are mature enough to understand that what they see is not necessarily reality or worthy of emulation.

Male teens appear less interested in TV viewing, but will gravitate primarily toward sports, comedy, or shows with shock value. Surprisingly, poker on ESPN is quite popular, as are more traditional sports viewing opportunities such as football. Comedy Central's *Chappelle's Show* is considered worthy of watching, because of

Active for many years as a volunteer with her local public library, **Leslie Marlo** received her MLS from the University of Pittsburgh in April 2004. She currently works as a consulting actuary while searching for a professional library position.

its irreverent, controversial, and sometimes bathroom humor—politically correct, it's not. Similarly, *Family Guy* still has a following despite no longer being in production; this show is full of pop culture references (e.g., Woolly Willie and Raiders of the Lost Ark) and ridiculous situations. This viewer found the show to be quite humorous and entertaining, but it does tackle subjects such as masturbation and drinking. Even *Jackass* (also no longer on the air), while exceedingly absurd and dangerous, was popular for just those reasons.

Music and video montages comprise a significant portion of all of these programs. The purpose seems to be trendiness mixed with a presumption of attention-deficit in the audience. Given the MTV and video game generation, this should be no surprise; both *The Lizzy McGuire Show* and *Malcolm in the Middle* included videos of what was essentially filler material, while *One Tree Hill* and *The O.C.* are offering CDs of music played during the shows. It was somewhat surprising to find the same video treatments in shows such as *Judging Amy* and *Joan of Arcadia*. *Monday Night Football* has turned its opening sequence into a video, and the half-time show is not about scores and highlights but rather a battle of the bands with NFL stars as participants. Apparently, the video age has been in existence long enough that all viewers also have the need for fast-paced video sequencing, or the writers and producers want us to think so. These sequences can be entertaining, but shows that are well written do not need such supplemental diversions, at least not week in and week out.

The commercials selected for various programming are telling in terms of the audience being reached. Obviously advertisers are paying very strict attention to audience demographics, though there does appear to be some confusion over whether certain prime time commercials should be geared toward youth or adults or both. Advertising on *The O.C.* appears to be the most conflicted in terms of desired demographics, surprising given the very mature themes addressed. However, advertising included movie

commercials for both *Scooby Doo 2* and *Jersey Girl*, while also running ads for a birth control pill and candy. Meanwhile, food, cars, make-up, and retail stores are common to all programming. Alcohol advertisements crop up occasionally—teenagers are very familiar with Skyy Vodka and Bacardi ads—but the token antidrug public service announcement is included as well. Each of the networks is understandably self-serving in promoting other shows, such as Fox's *The Swan*, where “unattractive” females are made over and then voted off the show from week to week—presumably a show well geared toward giving young girls another opportunity to feel inadequate about their bodies.

Keeping with the attention-deficit presumption, commercials presented as videos are prevalent in all of these venues. Additionally, technology sells; the chance to win both cell phones and PDAs are regularly used as enticements for buying the product at hand. In fact, cell phones are displayed prominently even on the shows, to the point where it becomes annoyingly obvious who the sponsor of the show is. Other products are also well represented in shows such as *The Osbournes* and *One Tree Hill*. The promotion of consumerism is clearly alive and well even during economic downturns. However, advertisers may be disturbed to know that this informal survey of teens revealed that TV commercials are not particularly effective, unless a big star such as Britney Spears is involved.

The predisposition of a young viewer toward particular programming, or any programming at all, may well be predicated on both their inherent interests and personality as well as external influences. The external influence of peer pressure becomes particularly important in the teen years, as evidenced by the following of serial programming by young females and the current interest in poker by young males. Perhaps libraries could take note of the interest teens display in certain types of media and offer forums for discussion. This would not need to be limited to TV or video programming; the

## Log of Shows Surveyed

### CBS

*Joan of Arcadia*  
*Judging Amy*

### NBC

*Frazier*  
*Friends*

### ABC

*Monday Night Football*  
*The Lizzy McGuire Show*

### Fox

*Family Guy*  
*King of the Hill*  
*Malcolm in the Middle*  
*The O.C.*  
*The Simpsons*

### The WB

*Everwood*  
*Gilmore Girls*  
*One Tree Hill*  
*Smallville*

### ESPN2

*Best of Poker*

### MTV

*Jackass*  
*The Osbournes*

### Comedy Central

*Chappelle's Show*  
*South Park*

existence of teen book discussion groups and advisory councils are a well-ingrained step in this direction. From all aspects, it is increasingly important that caregivers, and perhaps in some ways the community, monitor or at least take some interest in what their children are watching, from the earliest ages through the teen years. ●

# The Update

## Annual Report of the YALSA President: Audra Caplan (2003–04)

It's amazing how quickly a year passes; it seems like last week when I was pondering the implementation of my presidential theme, "Leading from Any Position." In hindsight, this was certainly a theme that was earmarked for success in YALSA because this organization has a great percentage of active members willing to take on leadership positions. It was also my goal to begin focusing on how Young Adult Librarians could take a leadership role in convincing administrators and funding bodies of the importance of having Young Adult Specialists and active YA programs in all libraries. I believe we are well on our way to accomplishing this goal and many more.

This has been a pivotal year for YALSA as an ALA Division. We are on the cusp of becoming a non-subsidized division and are stronger in membership and financial health than we have ever been. For the first time we have broken the 4,000 mark in membership; we now stand at 4,201 members and growing. This is quite remarkable in a difficult economic climate. We have developed a new Business Plan (FY05–08), which calls for the division to increase our revenue stream enough to support operations without the assistance of the ALA subsidy. In addition we received a bequest from our dear friend William Morris, and a task force was appointed to examine how the yearly interest from this money could fulfill Bill's wish that it go to honor Young Adult Literature. The report will be presented to the YALSA Board at this annual conference.

YALSA celebrated our fifth annual Teen Read Week in the fall of 2003 with the teen relevant theme "Slammin' @ your library." Slammin', a form of theatrical poetry, is being embraced by teens (and adults) all over the country, in both

rural and urban areas. Over one thousand librarians registered on the YALSA website as participants in this Teen Read Week. In addition, YALSA cosponsored a survey with SmartGirl.org that had 3,600 teen respondents. ALA Graphics successfully sold a line of products including bookmarks, posters, and magnetic poetry kits with the slammin' theme.

YALSA also cultivated a number of corporate sponsors for Teen Read Week including HarperCollins, Scholastic, and Harcourt, Inc. publishers and Morningstar Foods and Barnes and Noble. We developed a collaborative partnership with New Line Cinema, who in addition to a financial sponsorship agreed to send posters with educational projects related to Lord of the Rings (connecting the books and the movie) to all members of YALSA, AASL, ALSC, and PLA.

YALSA also developed a partnership with The N, a cable television network, to produce poetry PSAs and an activity sheet related to the slammin' theme. So many librarians have responded to Teen Read Week that the YALSA office is regularly being asked for programming and training tips on how to implement successful activities and highlight the week. In response to these requests the 2003 Teen Read Week Committee suggested a preconference, and I am pleased to say that we will be presenting this preconference at the 2004 Annual Conference in Orlando. The new theme for 2004, "It's Alive @ your library®," will be highlighted; and in addition to a great day of training and marketing ideas, we will have a number of authors who write in the horror or mystery genres speaking. These include Amelia Atwater-Rhodes and Jane Yolen.

For the first time this year during Teen Read Week, YALSA sponsored the Teens' Top Ten. This was the first time teens voted nationally for their favorite books published during the previous year; 1,700 votes were cast. The Young Adult Galley Committee implemented

this award. This newly appointed YALSA committee is also responsible for monitoring the very successful YA Galley project that enables publishers to send galley to teen reading groups across the country for discussion and evaluation.

In June 2003 YALSA members and staff selected the division's new dynamic logo. Since that time we have used it to brand all of YALSA's print materials. In addition, in April 2004 YALSA previewed our newly organized Web site using the logo as the focus for the design. We believe the logo graphically symbolizes the energy and cutting edge quality that reflect the division and the membership.

During the month of October, in conjunction with Teen Read Week, YALSA rolled out its new Teen Advisory Group (TAGS) section on the website. This addition was the result of more than seven hundred survey responses asking for information and assistance in forming and maintaining teen advisory groups. As a result of the survey YALSA has created a TAGS committee. This group's charge is to monitor and update this sub site of the YALSA Web site that focuses on the needs of teen advisory groups in libraries.

YALSA members have been busy presenting workshops all across the country. The Power Up With Print Institute was presented at three different sessions in Kentucky in September 2003. A Graphic Novel workshop was presented at the AASL National Conference in October 2003. This proved to be so popular that we are developing a Graphic Novel Institute to premier in the fall of 2004. In addition, our Serving the Underserved initiative marks its ten-year anniversary this summer, 2004. Since the inception of this program, SUS trainers have trained more than 20,000 library staff. The demand for trainers is so high that we are anticipating training a new group of trainers at ALA Midwinter Meeting 2005.

Last year a number of the current SUS trainers received additional training to reflect the tenets of *New Directions* for

*Library Services to Young Adults*. This year "Young Adults Deserve the Best: Competencies" was also updated to reflect the philosophy of *New Directions*. These are posted on the YALSA Web site. These competencies should prove to be indispensable to both librarians and managers who serve young adults.

YALSA and the other youth divisions (AASL and ALSC) worked closely this year in a tremendous spirit of collaboration. The leadership of all three divisions recognizes how important it is to come together to represent youth and youth librarians. There were two events that highlight this collaboration; the first was the jointly sponsored memorial service for William Morris at the Midwinter Meeting in San Diego. In addition, the three division presidents visited a number of elected representatives and federal department representatives during Library Legislative Day in May 2004. Having all three presidents participate in these meetings sent a strong statement about the essential services we provide in developing healthy and educationally successful youth and the dire need for more funding for these services. The youth divisions have also formed a joint Public Library/School Cooperation Committee in hopes of creating an initia-

tive that will encourage public libraries and schools to form partnerships.

YALSA also selected a recipient for the Great Books Giveaway; the winner this year was a joint use public/school library in Prairie Lea, Texas. We also held another "Excellence in Library Services to Young Adults" recognition project. The YALSA Executive Committee selected twenty-five "best practice" winners. These projects are being highlighted in the new revision of the YALSA publication *Excellence in Library Services to Young Adults* (June 2004).

All of YALSA's selection committees continue to take on the stewardship of choosing the best Young Adult materials for teens whether it is the selection of the new Printz winner Angela Johnson for *First Part Last*, or the list created by the Selected DVD's and Videos committee. This year the Outstanding Books for the College Bound Committee completed the revision of this list, and it has been produced in an attractive new pamphlet format.

One of the accomplishments of which I am personally most proud, YALSA embarked on a new strategic planning process this year. Over the course of the year a consultant (Tecker

Consultants) has interviewed many YALSA members and a full day was set aside at Midwinter with a group representative of YALSA leadership to hammer out the outline of the plan. The executive committee anticipates that the final plan will be approved and implementation started during the 2004-2005 year. The new plan will be a document that will lend itself to change and incorporate the ability to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. This will truly be a plan that is representative of all areas of membership, but will also fit nicely with the goals of ALA.

Finally, there will be two programs in Orlando that reflect the theme of leadership: the President's program, "The Leader in the Mirror: New Visions of Leadership for Young Adult Services," featuring noted author Esme Codell; and "It's Not Fantasyland: Directors Speak about Young Adult Services." I am proud to say that YALSA is attracting many new librarians into our ranks with new perspectives and new energy and enthusiasm. It has been a pleasure this year to work with all of the members and the staff. It is because of these hard working people that YALSA has made the exceptional progress we have in the last year, and it has been my honor to

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serve with each and every one of them.

## Major Motions from the Meetings of the YALSA Board of Directors at the Annual Conference 2004 in Orlando, Florida

- Adopted a measure to send the YALSA president, or a representative, to Legislative Day on an annual basis, and directed staff to make every effort to provide a minimum stipend for the YALSA participant.
- Accepted the report of the Electronic Discussion List Ad Hoc Committee and agreed to implement the Internal Policy for Electronic Mailing Lists and Mailing List Policy sections with revisions as discussed.
- Voted to move forward on four specific suggestions for the use of the William C. Morris Endowment and to establish a task force to pursue a name, focus and structure for a permanent committee to oversee use of the funds.
- Voted down the proposal to administer the Amelia Walden Award for ALA.
- Voted to hold an SUS Institute at Midwinter in Boston and to look at effective cost-saving methods and measures.
- Directed the YALSA councilor to vote her conscience as to whether to support the Intellectual Freedom policy revision.
- Voted to accept the Organization and Bylaws Committee report and establish a Regional Institute Task Force with the following charge: "To select a training topic and to develop content and curriculum for a YALSA Regional Institute. A report and proposed curriculum will be presented to the YALSA Board at Midwinter 2005."
- Accepted the final slate of programs for Annual 2005 as presented by the chair of the Program Clearinghouse Committee.
- Voted to adopt the FY06 budget.
- Voted to allow teens to select the

annual Teen Read Week theme through the process of voting on the Web site, as suggested by the Teen Read Week Committee. The TRW Committee will supply several themes for the vote.

- Accepted resolutions for Sheila Anderson, Amy Alessio, Caryn Sipos, William (Bill) C. Morris and Cathi Dunn MacRae.

## Resolution for Sheila Anderson

Whereas Sheila Anderson has served for three productive years on the Young Adult Library Services Association Board, and

Whereas during that time Sheila has never failed to volunteer for a project or task force, and

Whereas Sheila has shown unfailing passion and dedication to providing excellent service to teens wherever she has worked, from Allen County to Dover, Delaware and parts between, and

Whereas Sheila has written numerous articles and edited books on all aspects of young adult services, and

Whereas Sheila has served as a dedicated and fearless member of the Professional Development Committee, and

Whereas Sheila has never shied away from controversy or irreverence and has alluded to various fellow YALSA directors and comrades as "the Seven Dwarfs," and

Whereas Sheila Anderson is ALWAYS the life of the party,

Therefore be it resolved that the YALSA board commend Sheila for all of her hard work and dedication, and will sorely miss her outrageous sense of humor and unpredictable and imaginative social directress skills.

## Resolution for Amy Alessio

Whereas Amy Alessio has served on the YALSA board of directors for three years, and

Whereas as a Chicago-area resident, she has provided assistance and counsel to the YALSA office, and

Whereas Amy is a contributing writer for YALSA and ALA publications promoting young adult services to the profession at large, and

Whereas Amy has served the Association with dedication as a Serving the Underserved trainer and advocate, training hundreds of library employees, and

Whereas Amy's beliefs and values in regard to teen library services have led to YALSA's strong organizational conviction to "do the right thing," and,

Whereas she has approached her duties and responsibilities as a board member with a strong focus on teenagers and the librarians who serve them, and

Whereas Amy, the proud and selfless mother that she is, was willing to share her new son Josh with the world via an ALA bookmark, and

Whereas her criminal justice background in dealing with offenders gave her the experience she needed to work with the YALSA board and other such miscreants.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the board of directors of the Young Adult Library Services Association acknowledge the tremendous service and contributions Amy Alessio has provided to the Association, and

Be it further resolved that the board of directors of the Young Adult Library Services Association gratefully thank Amy for her contributions and look forward to her continued involvement as a YALSA member.

## Resolution for Caryn Sipos

Whereas Caryn Sipos has been an outstanding member of the Young Adult Library Services Association board for seven years, and

Whereas Caryn devotes enormous energy to advocating equity of access and diversity through YALSA programs and initiatives, and

Whereas Caryn persuaded the ALA President to mention the Michael L. Printz Award on national television along with other ALA awards, whose names escape us for the moment, and



Whereas Caryn has never shied away from controversy and demonstrated that by having two teens who were not allowed to present for another division escort her into the start of her presidential year, and

Whereas Caryn has served as an exemplary and tireless voice for young adults, and

Whereas Caryn showed her great personal strength by faithfully serving YALSA through a period of personal loss,

Therefore be it resolved that the YALSA board offer their heartfelt gratitude and admiration to Caryn Sipos for a difficult job very well done.

## Resolution for Cathi Dunn MacRae

Whereas Cathi Dunn MacRae, as a member of the Young Adult Library Services Association, has taken the concept of Youth Participation to a new dimension by promoting a partnership with more than twenty publishers to place galleys of young adult books in the hands of teens, and

Whereas Cathi Dunn MacRae has spent more than a decade developing the idea of an annual national teen-generated "Top Ten" booklist, and

Whereas Cathi Dunn MacRae served as the original Project Coordinator for the Teens' Top Ten Project, which led to the first "teens only" booklist during Teen Read Week 2003, and

Whereas, in that capacity, Cathi Dunn MacRae provided teen group advisors and teens themselves with guidelines for reviewing and evaluating books, and

Whereas Cathi Dunn MacRae created and managed a discussion list involving over twenty publishers and fifteen teen groups to seamlessly place the aforementioned galleys in the hands of teens, and

Whereas Cathi Dunn MacRae has diligently worked with YALSA's YA Galley Committee and the YALSA office to provide operational guidelines to enable the YA Galley/Teen's Top Ten project to move forward, and

Whereas Cathi Dunn MacRae has launched the YA Galley/TTT project to be

an ongoing component of Teen Read Week,

Therefore be it resolved that the YALSA board commend Cathi Dunn MacRae for her creativity, her dedication to Youth Participation and for the fostering of a YALSA project which allows teens themselves to proudly create their own "Top" books list on an annual basis.

## Resolution for William C. (Bill) Morris

Whereas, the Young Adult Library Services Association lost a devoted and deeply committed friend with the death, on September 29, 2003, of William C. (Bill) Morris, Vice President and Director of Library Promotion for publisher HarperCollins, and

Whereas Bill Morris was, for nearly half a century, a stalwart advocate of young adults, their literature, and the library services developed for them, and

Whereas, Bill Morris was the inventor of modern marketing of books for young readers, whose forty-eight-year association with Harper—known variously as Harper Brothers, Harper & Row and HarperCollins—was more than a career: it was a calling, distinguished by a passionate commitment to excellence in books, an encyclopedic knowledge of literature, and a brilliant capacity for bringing together books, authors, and librarians (and if they were Harper books and authors, so much the better!), and

Whereas Bill Morris's commitment to excellence extended beyond books to embrace music (mostly by Mozart), neckwear (largely by Liberty), vodka (always by Absolut) and the art of hosting ALA entertainments that were distinguished not only by their understated excellence but also by their manifestation of his genuine fondness for the librarians whom he invited and greeted, personally, at the door, and

Whereas, in his self-effacing but inefable sense of personal style, in his love of literature and all the humane arts, in his devotion to his adopted city, New York, and in his caring commitment to culture,

Bill Morris was called "the last civilized man," and

Whereas Bill's commitment to young adults, literature and libraries survives in the generous testamentary provision he made for YALSA and its future work,

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Young Adult Library Services Association—its members, officers, and staff—express and record boundless gratitude to William C. Morris, who was vastly more than the "mere middleman" he modestly dubbed himself; he was a Young Adult Library Services Association original, an arbiter of excellence in both style and substance, an influential advocate for youth, for literature, and for libraries, a publishing institution, and a man of such signal achievements that they—like the man himself—have become legendary. More than most, his life made a difference and that is his living—and enduring—legacy.

## YAttitudes Editor Named

Amy Alessio, teen coordinator at the Schaumburg Township District Library, has been named the 2004–2007 editor for *YAttitudes*, the Young Adult Library Services Association electronic newsletter. Alessio brings more than six years of direct experience working with teens and is a popular Serving the Underserved (SUS) trainer as well as being a YALSA Board Member. She has publishing credits through ALA Editions, VOYA and YALSA, and has also published many articles in professional journals. Alessio is a book reviewer for *Public Libraries*, VOYA, and Teenreads.com.

According to Alessio, "Spring Lea brought a lot of great energy and ideas to *YAttitudes*. I am excited to work on such a fun and useful publication. YALSA is bigger than it has ever been and I look forward to soliciting articles, bibliographies, teen input and program write-ups from school and public libraries all over the country. My Teen Advisory Board has given me several strong suggestions and advice about this already!"

*YAttitudes* is the quarterly online newsletter for YALSA members. It

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includes current information of interest to library staff who work with teens. Regular features include programming ideas, reviews, member profiles and upcoming events. Alessio's term will begin with the November edition of *YAttitudes*. Access *YAttitudes* through the YALSA Web site by clicking on the orange "For Members Only" button at

the top of the page, at [www.ala.org/YALSA](http://www.ala.org/YALSA).

## **YALSA Election Results**

**Vice President/President-Elect**  
Pam Spencer Holley, Assawoman, Va.  
**Board of Directors**  
Sarah Cornish, Warren (NJ) Township Library

Sarah Flowers, County of Santa Clara, San Jose, Calif.

## **Margaret A. Edwards 2006 Award Committee**

Barbara Blossveren, Stratford (CT) Library Association

Molly S. Kinney, Nova Southeastern University, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Judy T. Nelson, Pierce County Library System, Tacoma, Wash.

## **Michael L. Printz 2006 Award Committee**

Michael Cart, San Diego, Calif.

James Edward Cook, Dayton (Ohio) Metro Library

Jennifer Hubert, Little Red Schoolhouse/Elizabeth Irwin High School, New York, NY

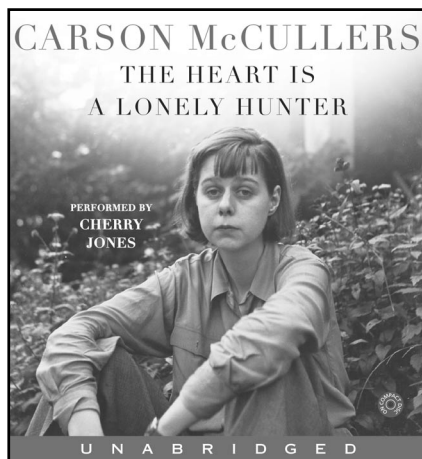
Betsy J. Levine, San Francisco (Calif.) Public Library

## **Membership Survey**

A membership satisfaction survey was administered electronically April 22 through May 31, 2004, to 3,277 YALSA members. There were 306 responses, a 9.3 percent rate of return. The survey consisted of sixteen values propositions, neutral statements about YALSA goods or services, that members were asked to rate separately on their perceptions of how important the item was to them as well as how well they thought YALSA was performing on that item.

The difference between the perceived importance and perceived performance of a proposition is an interval known as the 'gap.' The six highest gap scores for all YALSA responses have been provided in parentheses below with the corresponding tag. According to James G. Dalton, a management consultant to the nonprofit community, a gap greater than 1.0 on the 5.0 scale indicates the need for close strategic attention in that programmatic area. A gap of less than 1.0 but greater than zero indicates that the focus should remain on continuous improvement in that area; while a negative gap indicates that a program may require less attention and resources, or perhaps suggests that the program might be a candidate for "organized abandonment," both allowing for a reallocation of resources to more critical areas.

# Listen to a Classic

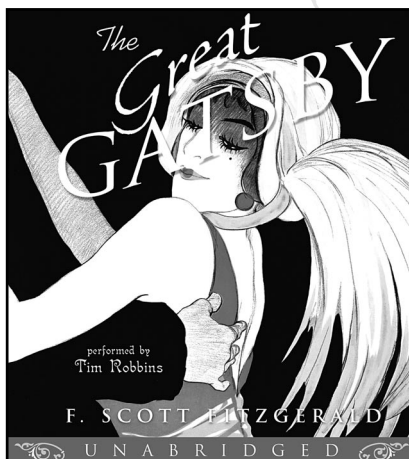


**THE HEART IS  
A LONELY HUNTER**

Carson McCullers

0-06-076486-4 • \$39.95

Performed by Cherry Jones

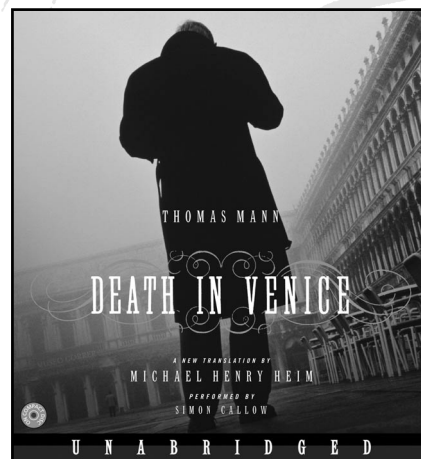


**THE GREAT GATSBY**

F. Scott Fitzgerald

0-06-009891-0 • \$29.95

Performed by Tim Robbins

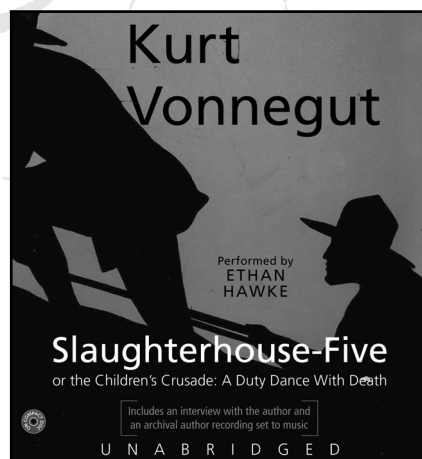


**DEATH IN VENICE**

Thomas Mann

0-06-072752-7 • \$22.00

Performed by Simon Callow

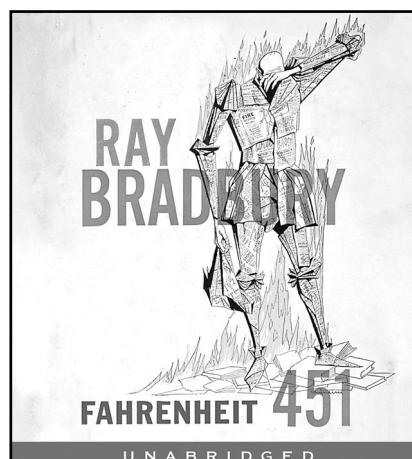


**SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE**

Kurt Vonnegut

0-06-057377-5 • \$29.95

Performed by Ethan Hawke



**FAHRENHEIT 451**

Ray Bradbury

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Following are the value propositions in the survey:

- Puts a national spotlight on the importance of teen reading. (Teen Read Week, Gap Score: 0.82)
- Provides face-to-face opportunities to create connections with others interested in young adult library services. (Networking, Gap Score: 0.78)
- Provides learning opportunities in a variety of formats that address the knowledge and training needs of library staff working with young adults. (Continuing Education, Gap Score: 0.77)
- Publishes a newsletter that informs members about resources, services and activities of interest to those serving young adults in libraries. (Newsletter, Gap Score: 0.67)
- Promotes and publishes research to improve and further advance the creation of a full range of library services for young adults in every library. (Research, Gap Score: 0.68)
- Publishes a periodical that addresses the knowledge needs of library staff serving young adults. (Journal, Gap Score: 0.58)

These scores echo the priorities that have emerged from discussion during the revision of YALSA's strategic plan. The fact that this similarity exists between the newly emerging strategic plan and member perceptions helps insure cohesive focus as YALSA moves forward in the planning process.

See the YALSA Web site for a complete report of the results.

## YALSA Receives Bequest

William C. (Bill) Morris, former vice president and director of library promo-

tions for HarperCollins, passed away September 29, 2003, leaving a significant financial gift to YALSA. At the 2004 American Library Association Annual Conference, YALSA's board of directors made the decision to pursue certain activities using funds from this endowment. Over the next several years, YALSA will be developing an award to recognize a first-time author writing for young adults and also creating a national institute with a heavy emphasis on young adult literature. In addition, some of the funds will be tapped for use in connection with Teen Read Week. A committee will be appointed to flesh out the details of the two projects and progress will be reported as it occurs. The board will reevaluate how the funds are assigned on an ongoing basis. (See page 45 for the YALSA Resolution honoring Bill Morris.)

## Graphic Novels Come to You

As a result of the demand at conferences and institutes in the past, YALSA is developing a traveling institute on graphic novels. The one-day institute includes information about the history and current publishing of comics and graphic novels, uses in the classroom as well as in library programs, intellectual freedom issues and information about bibliographic control. Robin Brenner, creator of "No Flying, No Tights" ([www.noflyingnotights.com](http://www.noflyingnotights.com)), and Philip Crawford, author of numerous articles on graphic novels, have combined their talents to help YALSA create the curriculum for this workshop. For information about the cost of the institute, or to make arrangements for

hosting it, contact the YALSA office at 1-800-545-2433, ext. 4387.

## YALSA Adopts Electronic Discussion List Policies

The YALSA board of directors voted at the 2004 ALA Annual Conference to institute a code of conduct for all YALSA discussion lists. The following is the policy for posting materials to any YALSA electronic discussion list. Please direct any questions to the YALSA staff.

### Posting Policy

- All messages should relate to the general topic of the particular list.
- Only subscribers to a list may post on the list.
- Solicitations and advertisements for non-YALSA publications and other commercial purposes are not permitted.
- Announcements of conferences, workshops, new publications, and position openings appropriate to the topic of the list are allowed.
- Virus warnings (not bug reports), are strongly discouraged, and ONLY official CERT or CIAC advisories are acceptable. In addition, before forwarding any virus information you may wish to check Internet Hoaxes and Virus Hoaxes for hoax information and how to spot hoaxes.
- Attachments may be included in an e-mail, however they should not be larger than 40KB.
- Personal attacks such as name-calling and personal insults will not be tolerated.
- Any messages posted about YALSA committee business must be sent by the appropriate committee chair. List

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members must not send postings that suggest the message is being sent with the approval or under the auspices of a particular YALSA Committee.

- All postings must be free of copyright restrictions that limit distribution. For example, posting a significant amount of a copyrighted work verbatim requires the permission of the copyright holder. To verify that such permission was obtained, all postings of this nature must include a statement that this is the case.
- The YALSA executive committee has the right to remove members of the list who fail to participate as required by the policies stated in this document.

## Guidelines for Participation

The following guidelines are offered as advice on how to best participate in the discussion list in a manner that will both contribute to the experience of all readers and also reflect well on you.

- Say something substantial. Simply saying "I agree" (in so many words) or "I disagree" (in so many words) does not meet this guideline. Specific technical questions are, however, quite appropriate, as are brief answers to such questions.
- Say something new. Mere redundancy will not convince an opponent of their error. Explaining the same argument differently in an attempt to make them see the light has not been proven to be an effective strategy.
- Be careful with the "Reply" command. If you mean to reply only to

the poster, address a new message to the individual's email address, do not reply to the message.

- Take "conversations" off the list. When list interaction becomes two-sided (two individuals trading comments or arguments) it is a sign that you should take the discussion off the list and correspond with that person directly. If the discussion was of interest to the general membership you will see others posting on the topic as well.
- Agree to disagree. The likelihood of convincing someone to change a strongly held opinion is nil. State your case, but give up on the idea of converting the heathen.
- Be civil. Treat others the way you wish to be treated.
- Respect the rights of others. An electronic discussion is a commons. Your right to post ends at the right of others to not be insulted, badgered, or to have their time needlessly wasted.

## YALS Expands to Quarterly Publication Schedule

*Young Adult Library Services*, YALSA's official association journal is now published quarterly! The new production schedule for the journal means that YALSA members and subscribers will receive four issues a year, in October, February, April and July. Editor Jana Fine is soliciting materials for the newly expanded journal and can be reached by e-mailing [jfine1@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:jfine1@tampabay.rr.com). The submission guidelines are available at

[www.ala.org/yalsa](http://www.ala.org/yalsa) by clicking on "Publications" from the menu on the left-hand side of the page and following the links to "Author Guidelines." Electronic submissions are preferable.

## Membership Bundling Studied

An ad hoc committee appointed by the joint executive committees of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), recently undertook an informal study of costs associated with offering a joint membership package. This research was done both as a result of member interest in joining multiple youth divisions for a reduced membership fee and as an exploration of using this type of bundling as a membership recruitment tool.

Upon completing their data collection, the group determined that the cost of providing basic services to a member exceeds current membership dues in each of the divisions. Based on that research, the committee determined that such a multiple membership package should not be offered at this time. They also recommended that the decision be revisited in three years. C. Allen Nichols, YALSA Fiscal Officer, served as chair of the ad hoc group. Carrie Gardner, AASL Treasurer, and Floyd Dickman, ALSC Budget and Finance Committee Chair, represented their respective divisions. ●

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