

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE YOUNG ADULT LIBRARY SERVICES ASSOCIATION

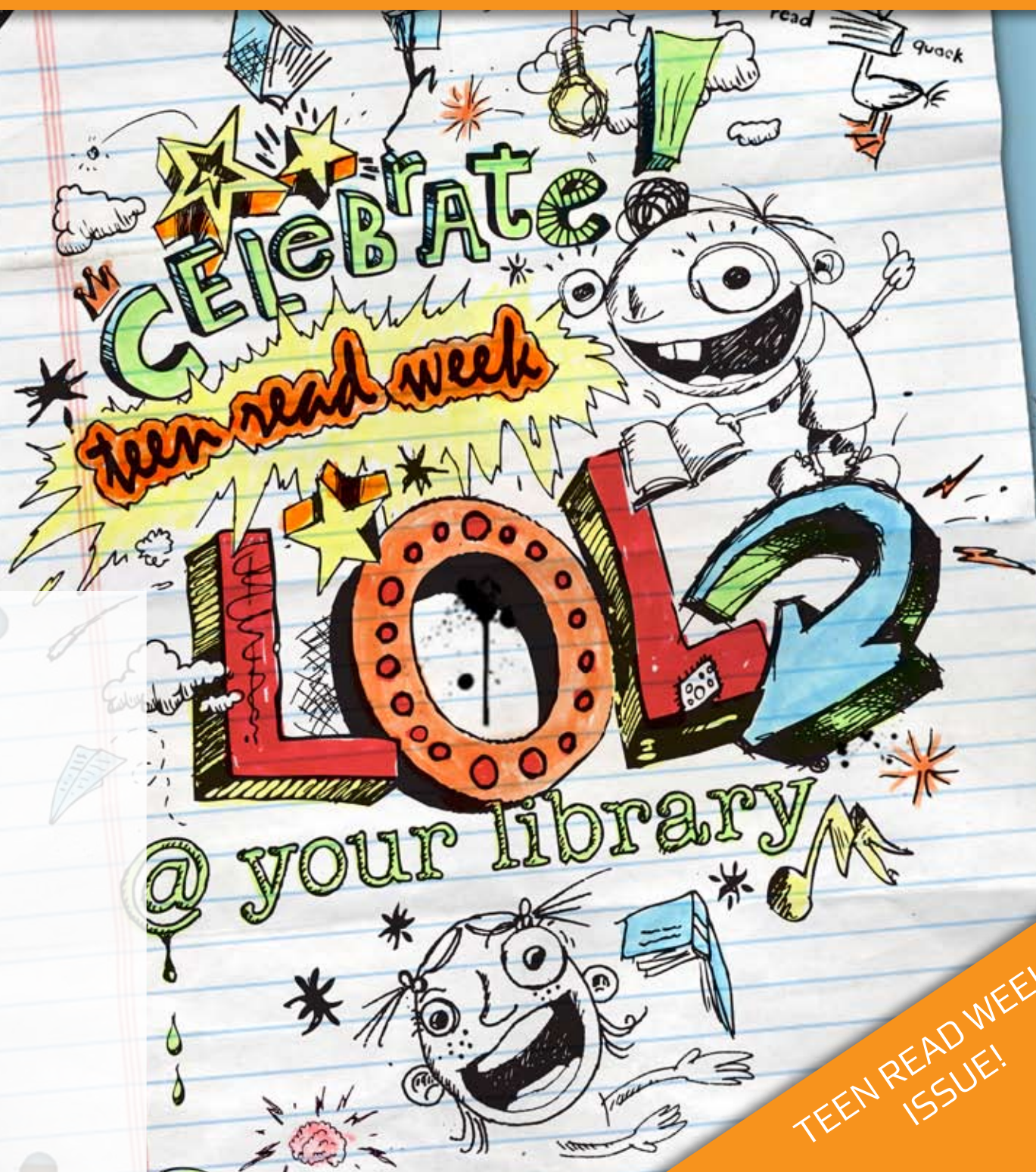
# young adult library services

VOLUME 5 | NUMBER 4

SUMMER 2007

ISSN 1541-4302

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# *young adult* library services

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## **About This Cover**

LOL @ your library® is the official theme for this year's Teen Read Week™, pushing teens to read something light, entertaining, and humorous. Teen Read Week is a national literacy initiative of YALSA to encourage young adults to read just for the fun of it. This year Teen Read Week is October 14–20. Poster design by Distillery Design Studio.

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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. YALS primarily serves as a vehicle for continuing education for librarians serving young adults, ages twelve through eighteen. It will include articles of current interest to the profession, act as a showcase for best practices, provide news from related fields, publish recent research related to YA librarianship, and will spotlight significant events of the organization and offer in-depth reviews of professional literature. YALS will also serve as the official record of the organization.

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# from the Editor

*Sarah Flowers,  
Guest Editor*

## Reading and Laughing

Hello, I'm Sarah Flowers, and I'm filling in for Valerie Ott for this issue, because she is busy with her newborn daughter. This has been a delightful experience for me, and I am especially pleased to have been able to work on this Teen Read Week™ (TRW) issue of YALS, since I love this year's theme: LOL @ your library®. I know laughing isn't always the first thing that teens associate with libraries, but some of the articles in this issue might help librarians get teens to change their minds about that.

For example, Dawn Rutherford provides a list of graphic novels to make teens laugh, and Francisca Goldsmith suggests some humorous audiobooks. Robyn Lupa, Megan Fink, and Nichole Pereira all have suggestions for LOL programs and activities for TRW at your library. Then there are some ideas in this issue about other ways of "reading" during TRW. Linda Braun talks about reading blogs and wikis (which can be pretty funny at times), Katherine Makens shares some insights about gaming with teens, and Diane Monnier and Diane Tuccillo talk about teens reading for YALSA's YA Galley Project.

Seth Cassel, a Maryland sixteen-year-old, shares his experiences in setting up a Web site for teen book reviewers and tells us a little about what his reviewers like to read. Meanwhile, Stacy Creel and some of her students at St. John's University went out and surveyed teens in malls and other places to find out what they were reading. Since YALSA believes so strongly and actively in youth participation, these articles are a great way for us all to see how real teens are reading in other parts of the country and how that compares to the teens in our own libraries.

And, okay, the books of Brian James aren't exactly hilarious, but teens certainly are reading them, and Dominique McCafferty's interview with James makes for some fascinating reading.

With all the suggestions here, you'll have many ways to show the teens in your community that libraries—and librarians—can be fun. So LOL all the way through TRW! For more booklists and TRW ideas, be sure to check out the TRW Web page at [www.ala.org/teenread](http://www.ala.org/teenread). YALS

# from the President

Judy Nelson



All year I've been saying that YALSA is "still reading after all these years." Promoting reading is one of the things we do best. As you gear up for Teen Read Week™ (TRW), congratulate yourselves for being in the forefront of connecting teens with reading, but it hasn't always been LOL, has it?

Librarians have been defending books and other materials from censors for fifty years. You are about to deal with the arrival of both the fifth Harry Potter movie and the seventh and final Harry Potter novel. I suspect that in some of your communities you had families and perhaps organizations that expressed concerns about these books for a variety of reasons. Some may have even called for their removal from your shelves, but you stood strong and kept these and other materials on your shelves because you believe in the power of reading and the right of everyone—especially teens—to have access to these age-appropriate materials.

Censorship is something we have to be ever-vigilant about, because it can happen so easily. Look at what happened with the latest Newbery Award winner. *The Higher Power of Lucky*, written by librarian Susan Patron, created a firestorm because of the use of the word scrotum, an anatomically correct word for a male body part, in this case that of a male dog. As teen librarians, most of us have faced some

level of material controversy. But when you work with teens you come to expect challenges inside and outside of the profession.

As an organization we have defended contemporary literature for teens starting back with such titles as Maureen Daly's *Seventeen*, S. E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*, and Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War*. Two of these titles continue to be challenged as inappropriate for teens today. As the decades passed, we have been accused of promoting "grim" or "gritty" novels such as Robin McKinley's *Deerskin*, and promoting alternative or unacceptable lifestyles because we welcomed Nancy Garden's positive portrayal of a gay teen in *Annie on My Mind* into our collections. And then there was Francesca Lia Block's *Weetzie Bat*, a breakthrough novel for teens about a counterculture lifestyle. These are just a few that I thought of off the top of my head; you can think of so many others. And yes, there is also plenty of light reading material. But where would the quality titles be if YALSA had not included them on selection and awards lists and defended their place in our collections? The last fifty years have produced many excellent novels and other materials for teens. YALSA and its members have advocated for the inclusion of quality modern teen literature in classroom curricula as well as on public library shelves. We have also encouraged teachers and parents to consider audiobooks as an

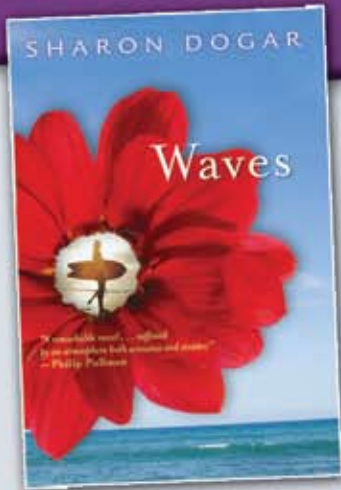
acceptable form of "reading." We look for ways to support our advocacy role

with new awards such as the upcoming Odyssey Award and evolving selection lists such as the Great Graphic Novels list.

As I write my last presidential column, YALSA is preparing to celebrate its tenth TRW event. For ten years, YALSA has created a special event about teens and reading. This year, YALSA's bringing a lot of laughter to this event, and there are many wonderful humor writers in your collections to introduce to your teens. In this issue of *YALS* you will find ideas and discussions to help make your first (or your tenth) TRW event successful.

With YALSA's fiftieth anniversary starting to wind down, the determination to support teens and reading in all the forms and formats continues. So let me say thank you for giving me the chance to represent you this past year. Whether you LOL or chuckle quietly to yourself over the *YALS* offerings, remember you are the gateway for our teens and their reading. Continue to stay strong, defend their right to read, and plan a rib-tickling celebration for Teen Read Week. **YALS**

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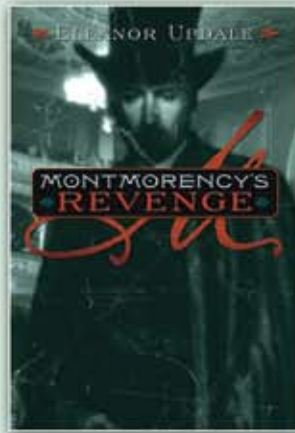
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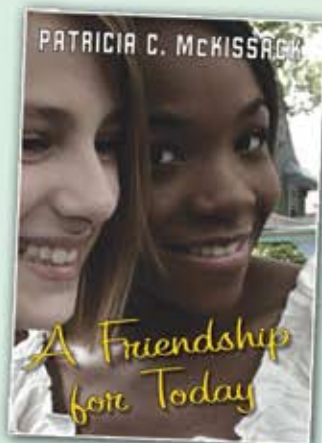
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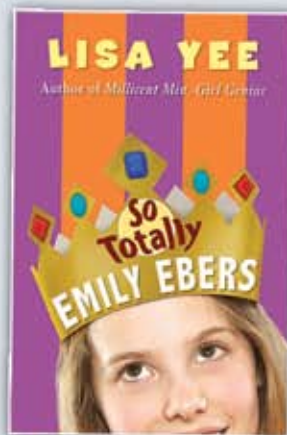
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# Fifty Years of YALSA—and Reading for the Fun of It!

*By Mary Arnold*

**Y**ALSA is celebrating the big 5-0 in 2007! Yes, we're fifty years "young adult" and revved up to serve twenty-first-century teen readers! It's serendipitous that one of YALSA's great reading initiatives is also celebrating a tenth anniversary in 2007: Teen Read Week™ (TRW) invites us to take time to read and LOL October 14–20.

The YALSA fiftieth anniversary group is working with so many of our wonderful committees to make every second of this year special and helpful for members and the teens we serve. That includes a lot of reading fun, and what a wealth of great reading we enjoy in 2007. I'm betting even Margaret Edwards herself would be surprised and delighted to see that YA literature is now one of the biggest and most exciting areas of book publishing, a very verdant garden indeed. In fact, YALSA inaugurated the first Support Teen Literature Day on April 19 to celebrate the variety of great reading out there for teens, to make everyone aware that YA lit is the place to be caught reading.

If you were in New York City for Book Expo America, I hope you caught the Day of Dialog session on YA literature

hosted by YALSA Past President David Mowery.

YALSA members and friends at the 2007 Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., partied hearty in honor of fifty years of award-winning writers and books that teen readers continue to embrace. Yes, for fifty years now, YA literature has pushed the edge of the page, exploring issues and themes crucial to adolescent developmental needs, and authors, publishers, librarians, and readers have often been challenged over the books we love. YALSA explored that ongoing history at The Sins of YA Literature preconference that kicked off the conference, and the fiftieth anniversary group will extend that focus during September's Banned Books Week with a list on YALSA's Web site of the fifty most challenged YA titles.

Fans of YA lit met and mingled with Printz and Edwards Award–winning authors at Sunday morning's breakfast, collecting autographs and enjoying "bookish" conversation. Visitors to the exhibits hall were treated to an afternoon of readings from new voices in the field, including Tiffany Trent, Cecil Castellucci, and Patrick Jones, as YALSA teamed with ALA's Public Programs Office for Monday's LIVE @ your library® Reading Stage. Judy Nelson's President's Program, "A Day in the Life of a Teenager: Five Decades with YALSA," showcased fifty years of books and writers teens love. Didn't get to D.C.? Then visit YALSA's Web site ([www.ala.org/yalsa](http://www.ala.org/yalsa)) and check out the conference information.

We're enlisting the expertise of our own resident summer reading maven, Kat Kan, to post fifty—count 'em, fifty!—great summer reads at the YALSA Web site (twenty-five in July and twenty-five in August). YALSA members know how crucial it is to make reading part of teens' summer fun, so make these lists, and all of YALSA's great selection lists, work for you and your teens.

Each and every one of us is YALSA! So make your contribution to the fiftieth anniversary celebration and join the festivities at the anniversary wiki (<http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa50>). Check out the fabulous fiftieth anniversary quilt, with squares honoring members' choices for favorite YA book (mine is John Ritter's *Under the Baseball Moon*). Take time to say "thanks" to all those whose influence and impact helped shape our organization since 1957

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**MARY ARNOLD** is a Teen Services Manager at Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Public Library. Being involved in YALSA as a Board Member, President, Committee Chair (Margaret A. Edwards 2006; Outstanding Books for the College Bound 2004), and current Chair of the Financial Advancement and Fiftieth Anniversary Task Forces has greatly enriched her professional life. Party on, YALSA!



at the Heroes of YALSA Honor Roll—then add your own personal mentors to the YALSA genealogy. Your memories *are* YALSA, so let's include them in our YALSA memory book. Remember where we've been and how we've grown in fifty years, and predict YALSA's future—wiki on!

To support YALSA's vital role for teens and teen library services for another fifty years and beyond, consider becoming a Friend of YALSA with a "fifty dollars for fifty years" contribution, or any amount at all! Check out the "Give to YALSA" link on the Web site—together we make all the difference. YALSA, fifty years young (adult) and going strong! **YALS**

## Resources

Kan, Kat. *Sizzling Summer Reading Programs for Young Adults*. ALA, 2006; ISBN-10: 083893563X; \$30.

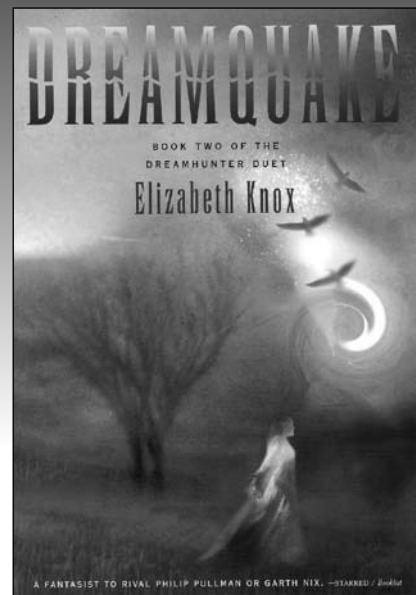
Ritter, John H. *Under the Baseball Moon*. Philomel Bks, 2006; ISBN-10: 0399236236; \$16.99.

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# Surveys

## What Members Want

By Sarah Flowers

**Y**ALSA ran several surveys in August and September 2006 and is using the results to plan for future activities. Two surveys (one for attendees of the 2006 Annual Conference and one for non-attendees) were about Annual Conference programs and activities. The third survey was about professional development. Committees and others who are considering conference proposals might find it helpful to examine the results and even rethink the types of programs YALSA normally offers to ensure that the division is meeting the needs of its members. To view complete survey results, please visit these Web sites:

- Attendees' survey: [www.surveymonkey.com/Report.asp?U=240393267527](http://www.surveymonkey.com/Report.asp?U=240393267527)
- Non-attendees' survey: [www.surveymonkey.com/Report.asp?U=241264684820](http://www.surveymonkey.com/Report.asp?U=241264684820)
- Professional development survey: [www.surveymonkey.com/Report.asp?U=235788135154](http://www.surveymonkey.com/Report.asp?U=235788135154)

A survey of 2006 Annual Conference attendees received 137 responses, and a survey of non-attendees received 146 responses. Some common themes occurred in the responses.

When asked about suggestions for speakers, respondents wanted authors,

authors, authors! They were also interested in speakers from outside the library or publishing world, especially those who work with or for teens. On a similar note, respondents were interested in having speakers who are fresh and new, as opposed to speakers who have presented at library conferences many times before. Speakers on technology and information literacy are still of great interest to our members.

When asked what YALSA should *not* change for future conferences, the respondents indicated that they especially liked the new YALSA 101 program (see Erin Helmrich's article in the Spring 2007 issue of YALS). Many people mentioned YALSA's premier events, the Edwards Award luncheon and the Printz Award reception. Many also cited the Best Books for Young Adults (BBYA) sessions, with special mention of the Sunday session at each conference when local teens give input on the nominated titles. A number of people mentioned that they liked having BBYA sessions in the convention center, where it is easy for conference-

goers to drop in and out. Other positives mentioned were the free breakfast at the Saturday All Committee meeting and the usefulness of that meeting as an interactive working session. The flyer listing all YALSA programs and events got high marks, but many would have preferred to receive it earlier, before they made final travel arrangements.

When asked what YALSA *should* change for future conferences, respondents indicated that they would like to see YALSA do more with other relevant divisions of the American Library Association (ALA), such as Public Library Association (PLA), American Association of School Librarians (AASL), and Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC). Other suggestions included making the YALSA booth more visible and keeping it staffed at all times during the conference, and making presentations, handouts, and the like available more quickly after the conference. Along the same lines, several respondents suggested that YALSA take advantage of podcasts, wikis, DVDs, and other technological methods to make conference programming available to all.

When asked about programs or activities they would like to see at future conferences, several topics came up repeatedly. These included more programs for school librarians, more workshops on technology (for example, using technology to reach teens, tech program ideas, demos of the latest "tech toys," and so forth), and more programs on reaching different teen audiences (for example, urban, multicultural, special needs, ESL, and so on). Other desired program topics were reference service to teens, graphic novels, manga and anime, gaming,

---

**SARAH FLOWERS** is the Deputy County Librarian at the Santa Clara County (Calif.) Library. She is a member of YALSA's Board of Directors, a past member of many YALSA committees, including the 2004 Michael L. Printz Committee (*The First Part Last*), and is the Guest Editor of this issue of YALS.

and teen volunteers. General suggestions included making more sessions interactive (not lecture format), offering programs targeted to people at a specific level of expertise (beginning, intermediate, advanced), and providing more informal networking opportunities in the evenings.

A survey on professional development received 243 responses, of which 65.3 percent were YALSA members. Of those, 72 percent worked in public libraries, and 24 percent in school libraries. When asked about their preferred format for participating in continuing education opportunities, the overwhelming preference was for regional or local face-to-face one-day institutes, followed by online courses and

national conferences with multiple programs. Topics of greatest interest were YA literature, youth participation, programming, and collection development.

When asked about the top three issues facing them in their work today, respondents most often cited keeping up with technology, reaching the teens in their communities, and getting adequate funding for their departments. Asked about the top three issues facing the profession, they most often cited funding, technology, and staffing levels.

Finally, when asked how they saw YALSA's role in advocating for the profession and for libraries, respondents indicated that they strongly believe that

YALSA should provide professional development, advocate at the national level for funding and support, and conduct and disseminate research.

YALSA's Board of Directors will be considering these survey results in making decisions about future conference programs and continuing education offerings. YALSA members are encouraged to submit proposals for conference programs and journal articles on these and other topics. See the YALSA Web page at [www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/yalsapubs/publications.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/yalsapubs/publications.htm) for more information on publications, and [www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/aboutyalsa/yalsaforn.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/aboutyalsa/yalsaforn.htm) for program proposals. **YALS**

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# Teens and Reading

## My Flamingnet Perspective

*By Seth H. Cassel*

**Y**ears ago when I was in fifth grade, my mom and my dad, like most parents, tried to get me to read more. At the time, my dad was learning how to design Web sites and told me that he would post my



Seth H. Cassel

comments about the books I read on my own Web page. Together my dad and I created Flamingnet ([www.flamingnet.com](http://www.flamingnet.com)), a Web site dedicated to reviewing teen books. Now more than five years later, my initial book comments on the Internet have grown to include reviews on hundreds of new and advance books sent to me by authors and publishers including Penguin, HarperCollins, Scholastic, and Time Warner. Not surprisingly, as I received more books to review, I needed help. Thus, my Web site now includes reviews of books from students all over the United States. Reviewers rate books on a 1 to 10 scale, and any book receiving a 9 or 10 is designated a "Flamingnet Top Choice."

### Which Teens Are Reading?

I am always looking for teens interested in helping me review books for my Web site. My grandfather in Florida regularly sends out letters to school librarians telling them about Flamingnet and this opportunity for student reviewers. A link on my Web site also encourages students to contact me if they are interested in reviewing for Flamingnet. Through the applications submitted by students wanting to become Flamingnet reviewers, I have a chance to see which teens are reading, as well as what they are reading. These applications have highlighted some interesting patterns regarding the age and gender of teen readers. Although generally the students

applying to become Flamingnet student reviewers are all "good readers," in a recent sampling of our applicants, more than 90 percent of those who applied have been between the ages of twelve and fourteen. Perhaps this reflects my own experience that high school students are too busy academically these days for pleasure reading. Even more surprising to me, 85 percent of the applicants were female. To confirm that teen girls are reading (or at least reviewing) more than their male counterparts, I took a separate look at the gender of all of our Flamingnet student reviewers. Sure enough, more than 70 percent of all Flamingnet student reviewers are female.

On the application we ask that prospective Flamingnet student reviewers list a sponsor, an adult who will be responsible for overseeing the books the student chooses to review. The sponsor also sees that the student completes and submits his or her reviews in a timely fashion. Although a sponsor can be any adult, librarians, teachers, and parents are most often listed. Interestingly, in my recent sample of student reviewer applicants, students listed a parent as their sponsor more than 60 percent of the time. Thirty percent of sponsors were teachers and 10 percent were librarians. This finding seems to point toward a strong parental involvement among "good" teen readers and confirms my own middle-school reading experience, since at that time it was my mom who suggested books for me to read.

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**SETH H. CASSEL** is a sixteen-year-old high school student in Baltimore, Maryland, and a member of ALA and YALSA. Along with his father, Seth is co-webmaster of Flamingnet Book Reviews, a nonprofit Web site dedicated to promoting reading and featuring student reviews. When not working on Flamingnet or studying to keep up with a challenging academic schedule, Seth can be found pursuing tennis, robotics, and photography, participating in local charity work, or just curled up in his favorite chair with a good book.

## What Are Teens Reading?

The student reviewers seem to love fantasy books. This was mentioned twice as often as any of their next four favorite genres: mystery, historical fiction, science fiction, and humor. Not surprisingly, many of these applicants listed among their favorite books J. K. Rowling's highly publicized Harry Potter series, along with *Eragon* and *Eldest* by Christopher Paolini. The popularity of teen fantasy books is reflected in the large number of these types of books Flamingnet has been asked to review over the past several years. Among these fantasy books are several Flamingnet Top Choice Award titles such as *Firestorm* by David Klass, *The Floating Island* by Elizabeth Haydon, *Bloodline: Reckoning* by Kate Cary, and *In the Company of Ogres* by A. Lee Martinez. Authors of adult titles, such as Isabel Allende, Gena Showalter, Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez, and Mari Mancusi, also seem to be reaching out to young adult readers through the fantasy genre.

## What Are Teens Looking for in a Book?

Flamingnet student reviewers are often very natural and passionate when it comes to books that they really enjoy. In surveying my Web site for books that our Flamingnet student reviewers have rated very highly, I found that they have especially liked books with well-developed, believable characters—books in which they could relate to the characters' age, gender, situation, or emotions. For example, a fifteen-year-old student reviewer from Asheville, North Carolina, commented on *Incantation* by Alice Hoffman, saying that she found the book "very well written" and that "the characters are all very believable." She particularly felt that the main charac-



Flamingnet's home page (image used with permission).

ter, Estrella, "seems very real." Not surprisingly she rated *Incantation* a 10 on our 1 to 10 scale. And what author and publisher would not appreciate the reaction of our student reviewer from Fountain Valley, California, who reviewed Stephenie Meyer's *New Moon*? "This is one of my favorite books. . . I am absolutely obsessed with it . . . it's beautifully written . . . when Bella's in pain, you are in pain." Connecting on this level with our student reviewer makes it clear why this also was rated a 10 and designated a Flamingnet Top Choice Award book.

Besides appreciating the character development in the books they read, Flamingnet student reviewers also like books that leave them with a better understanding of life. Reviewers have especially enjoyed books with insight about those less fortunate than themselves such

as *Runaway* by Wendelin Van Draanen, books with messages about nature and our environment such as *The Great Tree of Avalon* by T. A. Barron, or self-improvement books such as *Beyond Basketball* by the famous Duke University basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski. These books appear to make a lasting impression on our reviewers.

## The Flamingnet Content Rating

As a middle-school student I read a lot of books, and I did not enjoy plots that included graphic descriptions of sex and violence. It seemed to me that there should be some way readers could be alerted to a book's content, especially to content that might be inappropriate or offensive

to them for various reasons. I realized that there could be a book rating, similar to the rating given to a movie, helping to guide the choice of readers and parents. Therefore, my dad and I developed the Flamingnet Content Rating for the books reviewed on our Web site. This is a series of “happy faces” that groups books into one of four content categories: books our reviewers feel are suitable for their recommended age group, books we recommend be selected with parental guidance, books our reviewers feel are only for a mature reader, and books that are faith-based. Although our Flamingnet Content Rating is a subjective rating system, this has been my attempt to help people determine the appropriateness of a particular book for a reader. This content rating, along with our student book reviews, have helped us encourage teens to find enjoyment in reading.

Flamingnet is a not-for-profit limited liability company. For all books or other items purchased through the Web site, we receive credit from Amazon.com. We use this credit to buy books for libraries in need. We have donated books to the Wilmer Hall Children’s Home in Mobile, Alabama; Helping Hands in Baltimore, Maryland; Books for Boys in

Hastings-on-Hudson, New York; libraries in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, and the Virgin Islands; and the Texas Library Association for Hurricane Katrina Relief. We have also contributed to the Freedom to Read Foundation. **YALS**

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**T**he Spectrum Scholarship Program turns ten years old this year. Established in 1997, the Spectrum Scholarship Program is the American Library Association's (ALA) national diversity and recruitment effort, designed to address the specific issue of underrepresentation of critically needed ethnic librarians within the profession while serving as a model for ways to bring attention to larger diversity issues in the future. Since its inception, Spectrum has supported 415 students with scholarships worth more than \$2.5 million. Additionally, many library schools and professional associations have built on Spectrum's efforts by providing matching funds and development opportunities for scholars.

Spectrum celebrated its tenth anniversary at ALA's Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., in June. Highlights included a fund-raising luncheon, Spectrum's annual Diversions tour, daily celebrations in the ALA Pavilion on the exhibits floor, a where-are-they-now program highlighting past scholars, a session on networking, and a 'zine showcasing scholars' creative talent.

The sixty-nine Spectrum Scholarships awarded for 2006–2007 mark the largest cohort of Spectrum Scholars to date. The substantial increase in available scholarships is due both to the generosity of individuals and organizations and to a substantial grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Through the three-year "New Voices, New Visions" grant, IMLS funded thirty-five scholarships per year in 2005, 2006, and 2007. The IMLS is an independent federal grant-making agency dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners by helping libraries and museums serve their communities.

A few past and present Spectrum Scholars spoke with YALS, and we were extremely impressed with their enthusiasm and encouraged for the future of our profession.

# Spectrum Scholars Celebrate Ten Years

## Candice Mack

Candice Mack, a student at UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, was a 2005–2006 Spectrum Scholar.

**YALS:** Tell us about your experience as a Spectrum Scholar.

**MACK:** I am absolutely thrilled that I was chosen as a Spectrum Scholar! The program has provided an endless number of fantastic opportunities. First, the scholarship portion of the program allowed me to attend graduate school. Second, the program provides leadership training and a myriad of networking opportunities. While at the 2006 ALA Annual Conference, I was able to attend YALSA's Great Graphic Novels for Teens panel, where I won a graphic novel giveaway, got to ogle my favorite author, Neil Gaiman, who was in the audience, and had a chance to meet Kat Kan and personally thank her for her assistance with an assignment in my Young Adult Services class. In addition, I was able to organize a group of fellow UCLA library-school students to volunteer for the ALA Office of Diversity's Nora Navra branch clean-up project

in New Orleans, and became involved with the Chinese American Librarians' Association, which recently nominated me to be the 2007–2008 Local Arrangements Committee Chair.

Also, through the Spectrum Scholar program, I gained the skills and confidence to run for and become ALA Student Chapter co-president, organize a talk by ALA President Leslie Burger at UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, get an internship in YA services and help organize a department-wide résumé workshop featuring seventeen panelists, including Virginia Loe, senior librarian in Los Angeles Public Library's Teen'Scape department. The résumé workshop that I helped organize is modeled on one held at the Spectrum Scholars preconference.

**YALS:** Have you considered becoming involved in ALA or a division?

**MACK:** Yes! I would love to be member of a YALSA committee, especially the Great Graphic Novels for Teens committee. I was ecstatic that Gene Luen Yang won the Printz Award this year and was a finalist for the National Book Award last year! I have been a great fan of graphic

novels since I was in high school, when a good friend of mine slipped me a copy of Neil Gaiman's *Sandman: Preludes & Nocturnes*, and am a firm believer that visual literacy greatly encourages and enhances standard literacy.

**YALS:** Do you want to work as a teen librarian?

**MACK:** Most definitely!

## Michelle Wong

Michelle Wong is a current (2006–2007) Spectrum Scholar, studying at the University of Washington's Information School.

**YALS:** Tell us about your experience with the Spectrum Scholar program.

**WONG:** I'm a 2006 Spectrum Scholar, so still new on the Spectrum scene. I've met some of the alumni through an informal dinner in Seattle during the Midwinter Meeting, and have joined several divisions that interest me, including YALSA. I am super excited about participating in the Leadership Institute before the ALA Annual Conference in D.C. I love thinking about big picture stuff, professional development (for me and others), and just libraries in general.

**YALS:** Are you interested in becoming involved in ALA committees?

**WONG:** I've considered applying for an ALSC committee (Best Web Sites for Kids). I'd love to apply for a book or video selection committee for children's or young adults' materials one day, though at this point I'd like to continue to read widely and write reviews.

**YALS:** You mentioned in your original e-mail to me that you are impressed with teen librarians. Tell us more.

**WONG:** I subscribe to many ALA-related blogs, including YALSA's. I'm most impressed by how YALSA is sort of a pioneer within ALA for a lot of Library 2.0 applications. I think teen librarians are some of the most dynamic and forward-thinking professionals in the library field. I say this because I recently participated on the Blogging Committee for the King County (Wash.) Library System, through which I met several teen librarians, including Sarah Hunt, Rick Orsillo, and Dawn Rutherford, who have used MySpace and gaming programs to connect with their teen patrons. These librarians are willing to go where young people are, to adapt to their needs, and to experiment with new ways of reaching out to them. Teen librarians are probably the most likely of all library staff to shatter stereotypes about crusty ol' librarians that persist in the minds of patrons.

My manager, Angie Benedetti, used to be a teen librarian and still devours young adult literature as a member of the Printz Committee. Thanks to her, I have realized that YA lit is *much* richer than the Sweet Valley High or Christopher Pike books that I used to associate it with. I have recently adored the Attolia series by Megan Whalen Turner (an Angie recommendation), and *King Dork* by Frank Portman.

**YALS:** What would you like YALSA members to know about the Spectrum Scholar program?

**WONG:** I think it's important to support this program to encourage members of American ethnic minorities to get more involved in the library profession. Frankly, some people just feel more comfortable

approaching someone who shares their cultural background—it's like a magnetic connection, and something that goes deeper than words. It can also be as superficial as feeling safer approaching someone who looks like you. For example, when I worked at a preschool, I noticed that the Chinese American kids gravitated toward me, probably because I looked most like their mommas.

And it's important to not just have isolated token minorities. A community should not congratulate itself for including one person of another ethnicity; unless he or she is extraordinarily bold, he may just be forced to assimilate with the majority, or his or her voice may simply be ignored. That can be a very discouraging experience, and nobody benefits from that. I believe all kinds of diversity are needed, though in particular, ethnic and cultural diversity is crucial to welcoming all kinds of patrons to the library.

## Alberto Martinez

Alberto Martinez is a current Spectrum Scholar at the School of Information, University of Texas, Austin. He worked as a young adult assistant at Tomball College and Community Library, part of the Harris County (Tex.) Public Library System.

**YALS:** What do you like best about working with teens?

**MARTINEZ:** Teens are technologically driven and are not the stereotypical library user. In working with teens you are required to be on top of not only popular culture, but the technological breakthroughs that are currently taking place. You are required to think outside the box, as well as find innovative ways to provide guerrilla reference on the fly using what-

ever resources are available to you at that moment.

**YALS:** Do you plan to continue to work with teens?

**MARTINEZ:** Regardless of what I do within the information field, I will keep in mind all underserved communities, especially young adults who come from economically disadvantaged communities and communities of color. Many of these populations have oftentimes been overlooked. We cannot create blanket programs with the assumption that whatever might work for suburban teens can be applicable in urban communities. There is a great need to create services and systems across the information field that cater to young adults. These services range from creating information retrieval interfaces that take the information-seeking behaviors of young adults into consideration, to creating spaces that are best suited for their needs.

**YALS:** Is there anything you would like YALSA members to know about the Spectrum Scholar program or about Spectrum Scholars?

**MARTINEZ:** I was the typical reluctant reader during my youth. I had not stepped into a public library of my own will until I was eighteen years old, and that was to look for work. I grew up in the San Antonio barrios and Houston ghettos.

During my youth, I was not enthusiastic about reading graphic novels—or any other book, for that matter. I was lucky enough to climb my way out of the miserable existence that many communities of color face. Working in libraries provided me the opportunity to extend my learning far beyond the community college level. It gave me enough knowledge to believe that I could actually attend a university. The library continued to provide enough supplemental reading to attain a high school-level education, and eventually to challenge my own professors during their lectures.

While working in these libraries I was immediately aware of the underrepresentation of people of color within the profession. I was also aware of the inability of some librarians to relate to youth of these communities. Communication was also a barrier due to the lack of Spanish-speaking librarians. Librarians should look to their support staff and encourage them to pursue their degrees, and help them throughout the process. I bet there are many support staff who only need the encouragement of their superiors to take that next step.

## Angela Barnes

Angela Barnes was a 2000 Spectrum Scholar.

**YALS:** Has the program achieved its goal of giving you opportunities to be involved in the profession?

**BARNES:** Receiving the Spectrum Scholarship has transcended my expectations. Not only did I receive money that enabled me to pursue my dreams of becoming a librarian, the program taught me (among other things) leadership and self-confidence. Most importantly, it has given me the opportunity to become actively involved in a great profession. In my dual roles as young adult librarian and assistant manager with the Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library, I serve as an example that librarians come in all shades. I love the looks of surprise on the kids' faces when I walk into a classroom to promote library programs or do book talks. I also get a kick out of hearing their whispers of "She doesn't look like a librarian."

I think one of the most important things I've learned from the Spectrum Scholarship Program is the importance of giving back to "Let the Circle Be Unbroken." As a Spectrum Scholar, I stood on the shoulders of those who came before me—my librarian heroes and "sheroes." Now, it seems that I've come full circle. Recently, I was given the opportunity to host a Queens College Library and Information Studies student at my branch; I received a lot of positive feedback from the students about the experience. **YALS**



# The Power of Words

## An Interview with Brian James

By Dominique McCafferty

**B**rian James is the author of several novels, including *Dirty Liar*, *Perfect World*, *Pure Sunshine*, and *Tomorrow, Maybe*. He currently lives in upstate New York. "I believe that what's inside us is more interesting than what is in the world around us," writes James on his MySpace profile ([www.myspace.com/brianjamestheauthor](http://www.myspace.com/brianjamestheauthor)). "I believe music and words have the power to save us."

**MCCAFFERTY:** Where did you grow up?

**JAMES:** I grew up mostly in New Jersey, about fifteen minutes outside of Philadelphia.

**MCCAFFERTY:** But you loved New York City.

**JAMES:** Yeah, I knew I wanted to live in New York when I was very young. I can remember being ten years old and getting some of the New York television stations where I lived, and I would always watch them. I watched their news and their

sports. I became a Yankees fan when I was a kid. I just always knew that's where I wanted to be. And then I finally moved to New York when I was eighteen to attend New York University.

**MCCAFFERTY:** Did you know you wanted to be a writer when you were a child as well?

**JAMES:** Not really, or at least not in the sense of actual writing. As a child, I preferred to play alone with toys rather than with other kids. Action figures, dolls, and stuffed animals were my toys of choice, and I used to make up stories and act them out for hours. I really see that as my first step in becoming a writer. I gave my toys voices and personalities the same way I do with the characters in my novels.

**MCCAFFERTY:** Did you read on your own as you were growing up?

**JAMES:** When I was really little, up until the age of five or so, my mom read to me and my older brother every night. I still have the Grimm's fairytale book that she read to us from. My mother was a reader. Books were always something she valued. Even though we didn't have much money then, we always had a great library.

I didn't read on my own very much at all as a child. I read what I was supposed to read for school and that was about it, with a few exceptions. The funny thing is that I still knew I wanted to be a writer, even though I didn't like to read. I actually first attempted to write a novel when I was eleven, because I just loved the idea of telling stories.

**MCCAFFERTY:** You say you read what you were supposed to read for school, with a few exceptions. What was one of those exceptions?

**JAMES:** I would have to say *Watership Down* [by Richard Adams]. I read it in seventh grade, and it's the book that I credit for changing my perception about reading. It's the first "real" novel that I read from beginning to end. . . . and I loved it. It was also the first book I read where I felt I could actually "see" the story. I still reread it every few years.

It wasn't until I was about sixteen or so that I started to read on my own on a regular basis, and then I took to it pretty passionately.

**MCCAFFERTY:** What sort of books were you reading at that point?

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**DOMINIQUE MCCAFFERTY** is Special Services Librarian at the Riverside (Calif.) Public Library and also a part-time Reference Librarian at California State University in San Bernardino.

**JAMES:** I read a lot of avant-garde literature from the '40s to the '60s, which is why I think my writing style is very different from what is expected of YA novelists—because the writers who've influenced me are by and large writers most people have never read.

**MCCAFFERTY:** Have you ever taken any writing classes?

**JAMES:** Nope . . . never, not a one. I never believed in writing classes when I was younger. I didn't feel that imagination and style—which I consider to be the two most important things you need to become a writer in the first place—could be taught. I did take some painting classes, and I had tons of friends at New York University who were film majors and writing majors, and so I heard about the workshops, but I never wanted to subject my work to that. I often find that in any artistic field there is so much competition to be the best, and often there is this need to put down other students' work in order to make yours seem better. There's no real desire to help students become better.

However, I have changed my opinion slightly in that I think a writing course could be helpful to young writers if it focused on editing and revision.

**MCCAFFERTY:** What about a writing group?

**JAMES:** I don't belong to a writing group either. Writing has always been a very private thing for me. I had a few people that I would let read some things, but that was it. My writing was very personal and the thought of sharing it made me uncomfortable. The funny thing is it still does, but as a published writer, it's easy to forget that anyone reads my writing because I rarely come in contact with them. But I still get a little weird when my friends or family



Brian James

read my books. I hope they'll skip this or that book.

**MCCAFFERTY:** Do you consider yourself a young adult writer?

**JAMES:** Not necessarily. My books are about coming of age, and I suppose that is the type of story I've always loved to read, but it's not the only kind of story I love, and it won't be the only kind of story that I write. I think I'll continue to write YA as long as I feel that I have something to say about it. I do have another book that should be coming out in the spring of 2008 that follows the character Elizabeth from *Tomorrow, Maybe*, but ever since I finished that manuscript, I've been working on decidedly different projects.

I've been concentrating on two new chapter-book series that are coming out in 2007—written for first through third grade. I love that sort of writing as well. I'm also working on a middle-grade novel,

a novel for adults, and a new YA novel that is not a coming-of-age story.

So to get back to your question as to whether I'm a young adult writer, I guess I don't know. I write what interests me at the moment, I suppose. I like inhabiting all kinds of characters and the teenage years are always interesting from a writing perspective. Unlike adult characters, teen characters can be confident and sure of the world one minute, and vulnerable and afraid of it the next—but it doesn't necessarily make them feel ashamed.

**MCCAFFERTY:** You capture the vulnerability of being a teenager so well, and that goes for all of your books. I was thinking the other day of how nice it would have been to have had all these wonderful books for teens in the mid-1980s, when I was going through that stage. The only books I can recall—those books that appealed to me—often involved characters whose lives were rather different from mine; teens who

were also orphans or endowed with magical powers. And those set in suburbia were often of the Sweet Valley High variety.

I related to Lacie in *Perfect World*. Had she been around when I was thirteen, I would have taken her with me into my teenage life.

**JAMES:** Hey, thanks for saying that about *Perfect World*. I'm really proud of that book. I think there's something about Lacie that everyone can relate to. We all have this side to us, a part of us that doesn't share what we're feeling. *Perfect World* and *Dirty Liar* are meant to complement each other in that way. Both books explore the ways we hide from ourselves and others, and what we choose to reveal. I was also interested in exploring the idea that everyone else seems more "normal" than we are.

**MCCAFFERTY:** "Everyone else on the planet is normal except for me." Sounds familiar, but it was never true. We all have insecurities. The only difference lies in how we manifest them. Some do it by joining a fraternity, and others choose to be alone.

**JAMES:** Exactly.

**MCCAFFERTY:** On a similar note, one of my writer friends, when I expressed my concern over a piece of very personal writing, told me that writing was all about vulnerability. What do you think about that?

**JAMES:** Yes, I think that's true. Even when I write children's books that are humorous in nature, there is a certain vulnerability in them. As a writer, you can't help but open yourself up to your readers, weaving your thoughts and personality into the story. Every character, plot point, and even the setting have the potential of leading readers to an interpretation of the author's state of mind. In order to make something great, you need to come face-to-face with your own psyche, I think—to bear witness to those parts of your life that cause you pain (or pleasure).

**MCCAFFERTY:** You certainly achieved that in your book *Pure Sunshine*. Will you talk about that book?

**JAMES:** I wrote *Pure Sunshine* in order to give a realistic point of view on drugs. I didn't want it to be preachy or moralistic. I didn't want for the characters to be on drugs because they had horrible lives and that was their only escape. I wanted to accurately depict the drug experience for most teens.

It was one of those things that I knew even at the age ten or so—I knew that one day I would do drugs. I grew up in the '80s with all the Just Say No propaganda but it never really put the fear in me. I was always attracted to that image. I was

always interested in out-of-body experiences, space travel, the afterlife, and other mind-altering journeys, so drugs were a natural fit during my teenage years.

**MCCAFFERTY:** Well, the book struck me as quite personal.

**JAMES:** *Pure Sunshine* is based on my life and the characters in it are all modeled after my best friends from high school. I still talk to all of them and it's strange how half of us have turned out okay and the other half have really f\*\*\*\*d things up. That's the nature of the lifestyle, though. It's a gamble, and everyone thinks they're going to win. **YALS**

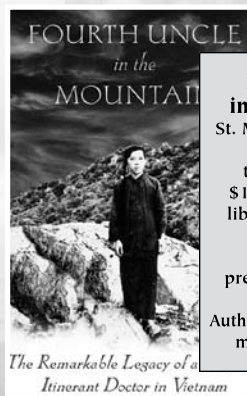
## Coming of Age in Vietnam Fourth Uncle in the Mountain

**S**et in the Mekong Delta during the War, this is the true story of an orphan, Quang Van Nguyen, adopted by a sixty-four-year-old Buddhist monk, Thau, who carries great responsibility for his people as a barefoot doctor. Thau manages against all odds to raise his son to follow in his footsteps and in doing so saves him, as well as a part of Vietnam's esoteric knowledge, from the Vietnamese holocaust.

Quang doesn't believe he can ever measure up to his father's expectations. His curiosity gets him into so much trouble but that doesn't stop him. He sneaks into the jungle at night to study martial arts and sorcery against his father's wishes, casts spells on his classmates at school, and traps bothersome spirits in bottles. Thau eventually deposits his son (against the boy's will) deep inside a cave-labyrinth to study with a hermit called Fourth Uncle who allows Quang to spend time in the jungle where the rebellious teen learns to run with wild pigs, play fruit war with monkeys, and he discovers that a giant tiger has been following him everywhere. Upon returning home, Quang is given responsibility for caring for an entire village just when the war has escalated. His newly acquired powers are not helpful at first, and again he gets into trouble, but he manages to prove to himself and to his people that he can fill his legendary father's footsteps.

*"This is a magical, mesmerizing story..."*

— Ken Burns, Director of Jazz and The Civil War



**Fourth Uncle in the Mountain**  
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*"An adventure book strung through with selflessness and mindfulness..."*

— Publishers Weekly



**M**ichael Stephens is a prolific library technology blogger, writer, and speaker. Currently, he is an instructor in the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois. Stephens also worked as the special projects librarian at the St. Joseph County Public Library (SJCPL) in South Bend, Indiana. When he's not on the road, Stephens splits his time between Evanston, Illinois, Mishawaka, Indiana, and Traverse City, Michigan.

In June, Michael presented "Using Technology to Market to Young Adults" with Kimberly Bolan at ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., for YALSA's Technology for Young Adults Committee.

The following interview is from a video and text chat between Stephens (in Indiana) and the author (in Minnesota).

**CANADA:** In your previous role in public service at SJCPL, did you serve teens?

**STEPHENS:** I only worked with teens who attended Internet classes, and they were few and far between. I remember a couple of digital camera classes at a branch that attracted all ages.

**CANADA:** How can librarians use technology to spread the word about library services?

**STEPHENS:** Technology is only a tool, right? If I knew then what I know now, I would have pushed for teen areas with more technology. Nothing set in stone, but I would have a place where they could discover stuff and grow into the technology. Teens could mold and plan the next things we buy.

# A New Mantra

## An Interview with Michael Stephens

*By Meg Canada*

You also need buy-in from teens in libraries. Information technology departments and librarians have to understand that tween technology might be different. Let them try stuff using software like Deep Freeze.

**CANADA:** Right, Deep Freeze is an example of a program that lets tweens or teens download whatever they want and return computers to their original state. Can you think of examples of libraries who are letting teens play?

**STEPHENS:** I love watching Kankakee (Ill.) Public Library. They have a green screen. Honestly, four years ago I would have laughed out loud at putting a green screen in the library. Now it makes total sense. Why? Content creation is the new black. The Pew Report confirmed this, 57 percent of teens create content. We need to reach them—and the 43 percent that don't.

Look at The Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County (N.C.) and their Studio-i at ImaginOn. Successful

gaming programs in libraries not only shatter the stereotypes of shushing librarians trying to control young people, but offer a noisy, exciting, and fun place to be after school. Librarians can crush gaming if they try to impose their paradigms on the events.

Here's a plea for libraries to hire TEEN LIBRARIANS! Not just some librarian who takes on teen duties, but someone who gets them. LIS education also needs to offer classes and education for teen librarians. We need "how to make a podcast" classes and "how to set up a studio" projects.

My new mantra for all librarians is:

1. Learn to learn
2. Adapt to change
3. Scan the horizon

**CANADA:** How can librarians "scan" or keep their technology awareness current?

**STEPHENS:** Use the tools we have such as blog aggregators like Bloglines.com or Netvibes.com to read about libraries and read outside our literature.

**CANADA:** What is the transparent library?

**MEG CANADA** is a Senior Librarian in the Center for Innovation and Design at Hennepin County (Minn.) Library in Minnetonka and the Chair of YALSA's Technology for Young Adults Committee.

**STEPHENS:** Are we listening to our users? Our staff? Do we hear them when they ask for change, for new services? Do we hear them when they tell us that what we're doing isn't working? The transparent library both listens and talks. The transparent library is connected, and connections between people breed expectations for open conversations. How transparent is the library for teens?

**CANADA:** That is a good question. It probably is transparent to members of teen advisory groups or volunteers.

**STEPHENS:** But not to the ones the librarians call "disruptive" or those they want to quiet down or move on? "They bother the other patrons. They need to be quiet," a woman at a recent presentation I

made went on and on. By the end of my talk she was thinking of opening the meeting room as a teen computer lounge.

**CANADA:** How far removed are they from the way we select and distribute books?

**STEPHENS:** Yes, teens should be guiding the collections and hours. Why would you want to close gaming on Saturdays, if you are getting crowds? That's where you assign your staff. Keep it coming, and hopefully teens will remember the library forever.

Give teens a place to have conversations online or in person. We need to remember the whole education piece, teaching them to be good digital citizens. **YALS**



Michael Stephens (photo by Adam Tarwacki, [www.lowlifephot.com](http://www.lowlifephot.com))

*where do*  
**YOU**  
*read your*  
**YALS?**

a conference  
the beach  
over breakfast



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the off  
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*The following is a report on the YALSA Midwinter Meeting preconference.*

**T**he crowd was energized and up for anything, as the karaoke session proved (who knew that YA librarians knew all the words to the theme song for *Fame*?). In fact, while the overall theme was online social communities, the informal theme was: Listen. Listen. Listen. In the morning session, director Audra Caplan advised the audience how to market online social activities for teens to their directors and Linda Braun explained the social technologies available. In the afternoon, attendees listened to some real-life YA librarians who are using Web 2.0 technologies to build social communities online for their teen patrons and to a panel discussion on online social communities and what it all means for YA services.

# Building Teen Communities Online

## Listen, Listen, and Listen

*By CD McLean*

### From the Director

"I'm your token director," said Audra Caplan, past president of YALSA and director of Harford County (Md.) Public Library. Her informative presentation on the barriers (both hidden and visible) that YA librarians may face when pitching a program to their directors included information on how to make talks with a director or administrator more fruitful, the best ways to create a proposal in order to have it approved, and how to work with many different administrative personality types.

When approaching your director to start a YA program, it is important to be aware of financial, staff, and maintenance concerns, Caplan told the audience. A good

plan of attack would be to anticipate the questions and come to the meeting with answers. A director may be concerned that a small library does not have the financial reserves to run a new program. The system may be suffering from cutbacks or the director may know that future cutbacks are coming. Your director may ask what you are willing to give up to start this new program or may ask how you will get your other duties done and still run this new program. If colleagues are not comfortable with teens, they may not be willing to support your program. Administrators and board members may see teens as more trouble than they are worth or generalize all teens as gang members and trouble-

makers. Staff and public may not see technology and online community building as part of the library's mission. You need to make sure that you highlight the relevancy of your program.

"It seems like the higher you go in administration, the more administrators you find who would have liked technology and services to have stopped in 1967," Caplan said. The director may not know much about technology or may not be comfortable with it. Then there is your network: Can it handle technology programs? Do you have the equipment? If not, then you may have a financial problem as well as a technology problem. Be prepared to answer technology-needs questions from your administrator.

Your community may include very protective parents who want strong filters and no access to Web sites such as MySpace. These patrons may create a delicate tightrope on which your administrator must balance. Additionally, parents may be

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**CD MCLEAN is the Director of the Jean Ann Cone Library and Library Department Chair for Berkeley Preparatory School (a pre-K-12 independent school) in Tampa. She is a member of the YALSA Publications Committee.**



asking how the library is going to be protecting their child from predators if Web sites such as MySpace are permitted. Plan to have answers to address community concerns.

Directors come in all shapes and sizes and it is important to be cognizant of the details of the director's administrative style and background in order to couch your request in a way that will predispose your director to approve the YA program. Was the director a former reference desk librarian or cataloger? Or was he or she a YA librarian? Caplan explained that there are several types of difficult directors.

The **benign** director doesn't understand and rules by benign neglect. Any proposal will need to be couched in layman's language. The **cautious** director doesn't want to move quickly and will dig in his or her heels if a quick decision is required. Planting a seed and watering is the method that will work with this kind of director. The **results-oriented** director will only approve programs with a high likelihood of success. Make sure that you have statistics or data to prove potential success in your proposal. The **standoffish** director often can't be found. Diligence is required with this director, as you will need to repeat requests for meetings. Giving the director info in advance and sending out frequent reminders of upcoming meetings raise the likelihood of success.

It is important to be aware of your library's technology infrastructure. New technology can eat up bandwidth, leaving old programs without the resources to continue. New technology requires that all the staff be aware of what is going on. There may be complaints from patrons and they may see online gaming or some of the other online social communities as rowdy and inappropriate behavior. There could actually be some behavior problems resulting from the new programs. It is important to try to turn lemons into lemonade by taking rowdy teens who already are in the

library and turning them into teens who are committed and loyal to your YA programming.

"Many directors are really, really busy," Caplan continued. "Your program may be your top priority, but we see everyone else's top priorities. Be patient. The best thing to do is to gently nudge them. Don't badger them."

YA librarians need to realize there is never an endless stream of money. Additionally, there may be restrictions in moving money from one account to another. A director may have to seek board approval to use money for a means different from what it was originally approved for.

So how do you overcome these barriers?

"First and foremost: you must come with a well-thought-out proposal," Caplan advised. Ask yourself some questions and then answer them in the proposal. Questions to consider include: What do you want to do? Who is going to run the program? How much money will it take to run the program? How much time will it take from staff? What will you give up to take on this project? What are the intended and unintended consequences (think technology problems here)? What are the arguments against doing your program and how can you counter them? What are the problems that your program might create, such as a bandwidth shortage? What statistics do you have to back up your proposal?

Consider proposing a trial run or prototype to try out a new program. Also consider writing a grant proposal, but always keep your director in the loop. It would be very bad form to write a grant proposal that your director doesn't know about, have it funded, and have the funding organization or your local paper call your library director to get comments on winning the proposal. Never blindside your director!

If you have a director who is ignorant on technology-related topics, keep your proposal simple. Write it in layman's terms or consult one of the Dummies guides to see how they talk about the technology. You can always plant a seed, nurture it, and then harvest it later on down the road. It may take some planning to get your technology-phobic director on board. Don't be discouraged with a "no."

When you are writing your proposal, use YALSA resources. YALSA's Teen Tech Week institutionalizes and, in a way, legitimizes, teens and technology in the library. Use that to your advantage. There are plenty of places you can go besides YALSA to give strength to your proposal. One such source is the Pew Internet and American Life Project ([www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org)). Another is the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago ([www.chapinhall.org](http://www.chapinhall.org)). Additionally, YALSA has been working with the Public Library Association (PLA) to develop young adult statistics. Last year PLA did a test survey and this year, YA-related information will be included in the survey.

Another sure-fire way to ensure that your proposal is approved is to have in mind how approval of this proposal will make your director, head librarian, or administrator look good.

"It's the 'what's in it for me?' approach," Caplan said. Additionally, collaborative efforts are always good and will make your proposal stronger.

As a final note to the YA librarians in the audience, Caplan told them that the best way to provide great YA services is to become an administrator or director. As administrators and directors, YA librarians will be more likely to approve YA projects.

"You are the future. Take the future in your hands. It is really important work," she said.

## Social Technologies

The workshop then turned from the director's vantage point to the inner workings of technology with speaker Linda Braun. Within a minute of stepping to the podium, Braun was able to show how easy it is to create a social community. She showed the audience [www.singshot.com](http://www.singshot.com), an online karaoke Web site, and got volunteers to sing the *Fame* theme song. Braun pointed out that the singers became their own community and that the YA librarians in the audience were also a community brought together by the performance. So how do you define a community? There are plenty of examples: libraries, Second Life, people who have pets, electronic discussion lists. But a community is a group of people who are bonded over the love of something or who share similar experiences.

Braun then discussed the social bookmarks editor [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) (<http://del.icio.us>), as one method of social networking. When you have a [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) account you can post a URL, its description or title, any notes that should go along with it, and tags. All of the links that Braun spoke about are at the following [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) site: [http://del.icio.us/teen\\_community?page=3](http://del.icio.us/teen_community?page=3).

Braun asked, what if your teen advisory board added links to the library's [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) page? What if you turned the library's teen [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) page over to the teens to maintain? You're using a simple tool to build community and loyalty. You're giving them a sense of ownership. [Del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) is not about collecting resources; it is about connecting people.

For those who are visual learners, a great spot to see what tagging is all about is at [www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/electronicresourcesb/electronicresources.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/electronicresourcesb/electronicresources.htm). At the bottom of the page is a visual representation of the tags for the YALSA [del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us) site. The larger the font a tag has (look for DOPA), the more info there is on a tag, or the more popular it is.

Braun then discussed podcasting. One of the most entertaining podcasts she talked about was found at [www.sdlax.net/longfellow/sc/ck/index.htm](http://www.sdlax.net/longfellow/sc/ck/index.htm), the site for the Longfellow Middle School (La Crosse, Wisc.) Coulee Kids' Podcast. The teacher who created this project started small and then grew it.

Many YA librarians feel their teen advisory board (TAB) isn't working or is too small, and therefore they can't do things such as podcasting. Braun said it's not about the size of the group, it's about having teen groups based on the technology they like. You can have a podcasting TAB or a gaming TAB that is completely different from your regular TAB. You could try to connect those teen communities or leave them separate, depending on the personality of the groups.

Braun introduced attendees to the Briarcliff Manor (N.Y.) Public Library MySpace page ([www.myspace/briarclifflibrary](http://www.myspace/briarclifflibrary)). Briarcliff defines who can be a friend, why they have friends, and how they verify the friends. The policies and guidelines are the framework that is used to show the library community that the library's MySpace page is a safe place for teens. Using MySpace is a way to start a conversation with teens who might not come into the physical library, but would be interested in visiting the virtual library.

YA librarians need to know about the devices that their teen patrons are using and be aware of what other institutions are doing to keep up with teens. For instance, Montclair (N.J.) State University and Georgia Gwinnett College are using wireless phones to build community (for details, see [www.ravewireless.com/spotlight\\_overview.htm](http://www.ravewireless.com/spotlight_overview.htm) and [www.ggc.usg.edu/newsdetail.php?newsID=30](http://www.ggc.usg.edu/newsdetail.php?newsID=30)).

"Teens send out text messages about what books to read," Braun said. They are using cell phones in ways that build community in spite of the cost of sending text

messages. It's all about connecting with people through their devices.

## Lunchtime Panel

For lunch, the preconference audience joined the Advocacy Institute audience to listen to a panel of speakers: Richard Sweeney, Dr. Ismail Abdullahi, and Patrick Jones.

Richard Sweeney spoke first, discussing the characteristics of Millennials (born between 1979 and 1994) and how they differ from GenXers. For example, Millennials are more outgoing, more adaptive and mature, more rule-conscious and dutiful, and more socially bold. They are more sensitive, more self-doubting, more open to change, more organized and self-disciplined, less self-reliant, and less solitary and individualistic. Sweeney said that Millennials are the first generation not to have a particular type of music ascribed to them, showing that they are open to it all. They see no reason to conform to others, saying, "Don't label us." They want more selections, more customization, and more personalization.

Sweeney had some suggestions for how to get Millennials involved in the library. First, he said, recognize that Millennials are digital natives, not immigrants, are media- and format-agnostic, and are good collaborators, all of which bode well for interaction with YA librarians and for YA programming.

"Get them in the library however you can. Have 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. interactive sessions. Keep them involved, because they want to be involved. Create an e-buzz: get them talking amongst themselves about what the library is doing." Sweeney concluded by saying, "It's all about relationships."

Patrick Jones was the next speaker. "You need to invest in teens," Jones said.

“They won’t be advocates until they believe and they won’t believe until they are invested.”

YA librarians need to shift their goals from outputs for the library to outcomes for users.

Jones stated that there are two major trends in teen services. One is youth involvement—moving teens from being passive customers to active contributors. YA librarians need to tap into teen creativity, such as teen poetry. A TAB is a formal group, but YA librarians may need to seek more informal groups and create more interactive programs such as gaming.

A second trend is looking at services for libraries in the context of our larger society.

The Search Institute has published the forty developmental assets critical to raising a successful young person ([www.search-institute.org/assets](http://www.search-institute.org/assets)). The key finding from this research is that relationships are the most important thing, he said, echoing Sweeney.

“This work is about relationships with teens, listening to them, listening to them talk about books.” For an example of a user-centered model, he suggested, create an “all-time best books” list of the books that are stolen from your library. “Replace any books that have been stolen, as they are often the most popular books on the shelves,” he advised.

The third and final speaker was Professor Ismail Abdullahi, who asked why schools of information science haven’t made classes on YA librarianship an important part of the curriculum. “Library schools teach very little about YA issues or not at all. Library schools are in denial, are neglectful, or plain have no interest in YA services,” he said.

Librarians need to understand the tasks, behaviors, and needs of users from nine to eighteen years old. Librarians need to understand the language young adults use, the technology and devices they use,

and provide the services they need and want. Finally, he said, it is important for librarians to create advocates for the library by mentoring young adults into library advocacy.

### My Own Café

After lunch, the audience moved back to the YALSA agenda with a presentation by the YA librarians (Vickie Beene-Beavers, assistant administrator for youth services, and Kathy Lussier, technology consultant, Southeastern Massachusetts Library System) who created My Own Café, an interactive site for the teens in their community.

Lussier spoke first and said that to create the site, they realized they needed to hire a professional Web design firm. They also hired a project manager.

“It was the best thing we did,” Lussier said. “Talking to others is the number one thing that teens do on the Internet. So we knew we needed interaction on our site,” she said. They had teen focus-group meetings with the design firm. Out of those focus groups came a list of recommendations for My Own Café. The teens were then involved in administering parts of the site, including message boards.

Beene-Beavers said, “Our slogan is ‘It’s the library, only better.’ The kids chose it. They feel comfortable on the site.” In addition to the site, My Own Café has a creativity center. “We’ve had some really interesting discussions between teen administrators on appropriate language. They are very smart and reasonable kids,” she said.

Lussier’s and Beene-Beavers’s experiences with My Own Café proved to them that teens are very willing to help, both with the administration of a site and with other users. For example, Beene-Beavers said that there was a suicide poem posted

to the list and one of the teen administrators wrote a very sweet response to the poster.

“They didn’t notify us, but after we talked with them and told them that we needed to be in the loop on those kinds of occurrences, they know to let us know,” she said.

She stressed that while online communication is great, face-to-face interaction with your teens is still important. Teens will take responsibility for their own community if you let them. Beene-Beavers added that her final tip was that you can never budget too much money for publicity.

### Panel Discussion on Creating Community through Gaming

The final session was a panel discussion on creating community through gaming. The panel consisted of Kelly Czarnecki (YA librarian, *ImaginOn*, Charlotte, N.C.), Andy Fletcher (Upper Deck Entertainment), Beth Gallaway (trainer/consultant for Metrowest [Mass.] Regional Library System), Jean Gardner (YA librarian and team leader for Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library in Kansas) and Jami Schwarzwald (recent MLIS graduate and instructor and volunteer on *Second Life*). The panel answered the following questions:

**What sort of advice can you give for building a gaming community smartly and safely?**

**GALLAWAY:** Get the teens involved. Most adults don’t realize how social it is. Explore what exists and then partner with them.

**FLETCHER:** Safety isn’t an issue here; libraries are safe. In terms of “smartly”: Pay



attention to journals such as *Shonen Jump*. Think of Dungeons and Dragons and the stigma that used to exist and that no longer exists. These games are so mainstream. Realistically, there is a great progression. Younger kids start with younger games, but what hooks them is the community that is out there. They'll be able to grow. Pay attention to any aspect of gaming and it will help you.

**SCHWARZWALDER:** It's important for librarians not to be watchers, but to participate. Ask them to teach you how to play. Teens need strong role models.

**Are there certain types of gaming that are better at creating social communities?**

**GALLAWAY:** DDR (Dance Dance Revolution) in the library. It is fun to play in a big group.

**FLETCHER:** What we see is a first-person or person-to-person element, one individual interacting with one game at a time. You can get around that sort of a first-person performance by using DDR and Guitar Hero. What sort of dialogue does gaming create? You have the online community, fan sites, forum sites, and the like. There is a community component to all games now. I don't think there is a game platform that won't lend itself to building a community.

**GARDNER:** We find that especially with RuneScape. They come to the library for the participation aspect.

**SCHWARZWALDER:** MMORPGs (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games). Part of playing the game is when your guy is up, you enter a command and interact with other people's avatars

and participate together. One example is World of Warcraft (WoW), which has a series of podcasts that gives hints or talks about how to get out of jams. If you're from China and don't speak English, you are going to need to learn English to play WoW and the Chinese teens do learn it.

**How can we in libraries facilitate the community-building aspects of gaming?**

**GALLAWAY:** Just be open to having gaming in your library.

**FLETCHER:** Check out what Ann Arbor (Mich.) District Library is doing. They have a gaming blog ([www.aadl.org/node/2445](http://www.aadl.org/node/2445)). They have practice runs and finish with a large tournament. There is trash talking, predictions of winners and losers. Blogs and wikis: Let the teens moderate them. MMORPGs have no boundar-



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ies. Six to seven million regular users pay a monthly fee to get online. Eighty to 85 percent of the things they do online are quests. It can be done individually, but there are requirements to work in groups. It's part of the product strategy. How can libraries help? Pay attention. Ask questions.

**GARDNER:** Listen, listen, listen. And observe. I can't say that enough. Monday and Thursday nights are our Xbox programs. We have blogs on Xboxes. We have Yu-Gi-Oh! and Texas Hold 'Em. We have purchased an island on the teen grid on Second Life.

**SCHWARZWALDER:** Try to work with them and see where it would be appropriate to do gaming. We don't want to turn them away. We want to help them get what they want from the library. They are technology agnostic. Put out gaming magazines for them. If you are doing a display on the holocaust, bring out *Maus*, DVDs, and books. Try to mix it up.

**GALLAWAY:** When you listen, you need to follow through. The best way is to get them to write the proposal. If you use the Search Institute's forty developmental assets, you can justify almost any teen program!

**FLETCHER:** Yu-Gi-Oh! This game skews so young. The young gamers really don't know what to do, and librarians can offer them guidance. They are looking for someone to show them what to do, either a peer or a YA librarian who is young enough or hip enough to show them. Be aware of the other resources, such as gaming stores and producers. Know what your role as librarian is.

**SCHWARZWALDER:** Most games have conferences. Get associated with them. In some ways you can incorporate the conference programs in your library as well.

**GALLAWAY:** Use [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com) to find affinity groups. There is a whole community of people looking for people to play games with. Look by geography and see what exists and see how your library can build on it.

**What are the trends librarians should be aware of?**

**GALLAWAY:** Be aware that there are communities out there and venture out. Teens pay \$5 an hour [plus a monthly fee] to play WoW. We can offer it to teens for free in the library.

**FLETCHER:** Gaming is mainstream. It is not a subculture.

## Resources and Conclusions

Going to the YALSA Web site is a good place to start if you want to find out information relating to online teen community building ([www.ala.org/teentechweek](http://www.ala.org/teentechweek)). Since everyone suggested that listening was one of the most important things to do, YA librarians should start there. Begin a dialogue with teen patrons and find out what teens want. Don't forget to listen to your director as well. By listening and working together, teens and YA librarians can start small and build on successes to develop strong online communities that create lifelong library advocates.

And if you really want to see and listen to YA librarians singing the theme song to *Fame*, all you need to do is go to [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hn0LDm6LlcA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hn0LDm6LlcA). Don't say I didn't warn you. **YALS**

**M**any libraries now offer gaming programs for their teens that involve console games and sometimes MMOGs (massively multiplayer online games). These programs give teens a very positive and educational experience in the library and usually generate a good turnout. However, these programs are often similar to gaming events teens could find elsewhere. The library is not the only place where gaming can become a social event.

The question is: How can we apply Library 2.0 concepts to make gaming events that are truly unique to a library setting? There have been several takes on this idea. In some libraries, the teens run the gaming programs, decide what games to have, compete in library teams, or post their comments about games in general or library tournaments on their library's blog. Another possibility would be to provide a program that shows teens how to make the games that they are playing and allow teens to really control the content that they consume. This article will be an examination of one library's experiments with finding a viable option for such a program.

Last year, the North Regional/BCC Library of Broward County (Fla.) Libraries tried testing several programs for a video game design for teens. Since the library had a license for Flash, we tried a small experiment showing Actionscript to a small group of teen volunteers. This was quickly abandoned as a summer program since it was too labor-intensive for staff and not workable for a large group.

The next experiment was with a piece of shareware called Game Maker ([www.gamemaker.nl](http://www.gamemaker.nl)). Game Maker has a basic

version available for free or a full version at \$20 per user. This software does allow for surprisingly sophisticated game design for the money. However, it is not intuitive to use and requires at least one person on staff to learn the software very, very well for an ongoing summer program. It also takes a very long time for teens to learn enough to create a really satisfyingly complex game from start to finish. This proved to be difficult with a large group of teens. The solution for which we opted was to give teens a ready-made game and then show the teens how to alter or "mod" the game in interesting ways. This was a less stressful option that let teens get something quickly that they had made their own, but didn't require the time and skills to create an entire game independently from start to finish.

Because the summer program from last year had shown that there was community interest in video game design, we wrote and were awarded a grant for Multimedia Fusion 2 and a subscription for online classes from the Youth Digital Arts CyberSchool ([www.ydacs.com](http://www.ydacs.com)) for

summer 2007. The goal of the grant is to provide an enjoyable video game design program for teens that will teach them useful skills, expose them to a career that otherwise they would not have access to, and to test these products for possible system-wide use in Broward County Libraries. The program will take place at three branches over the summer. By the end, these teens should be able to create a game with Multimedia Fusion 2.

This summer we will be having a contest for the best game at each of the three locations, chosen by the teens themselves. However, this could be extended to having teens create games to teach other teens different library skills. A contest could be held to see who can create the best game that promotes the library. Staff who learn how to design games can create games to teach other staff new skills or to test current skills in a fun way that does not require an individual instructor for each session. Although it takes a while to design a game, the library can save money in the long run since once the game is created, there is no longer a need for an individual instructor for each class session. There are myriad possibilities for what could be accomplished with a successful game design program that truly incorporates Library 2.0 concepts and lets our teens generate their own content—and lets the librarians generate their own games as well. **YALS**

# Gaming in Libraries 2.0

*By Katherine Makens*

**KATHY MAKENS** has been the Young Adult Librarian at the North Regional/BCC Library for the last year, and has also worked as an Adult Reference Librarian and Law Librarian after joining the Broward County (Fla.) Library system in 2003. She is a current YALSA member and can play DDR on the "heavy" setting.



# NEW FANTASY FOR TEENS THE BONEMENDER'S CHOICE



BY HOLLY BENNETT

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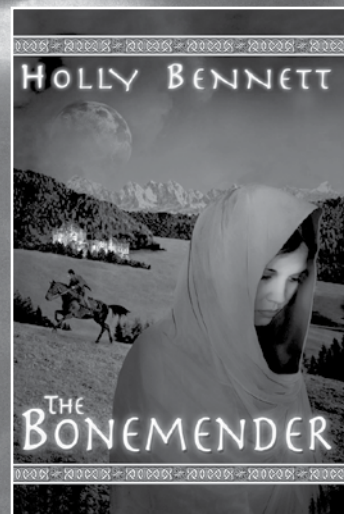
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**L**aughter can boost your endorphins, lower your blood pressure and heart rate, and improve your immune system, not to mention lighten your mood.<sup>1</sup> Thus, with this year's theme of LOL @ your library® for Teen Read Week™ (TRW), teens can enter their school and public libraries for a visit that will produce a smile and improve their health, if not have them laughing out loud! Communication, collaboration, and implementation are the three most important components of a successful TRW celebration at a school or public library.

## Communication and Collaboration

The most important aspect of TRW is to talk to your students and your teen patrons about what they like. It sounds simple, but successful teen programming consists of activities that teens enjoy—and who is a better expert than your target audience? If you don't have a teen advisory board or teen book club, ask your frequent patrons and students what they would like for a TRW party. Explain the ideas behind TRW, offer them some examples, and let them suggest activities. One of my eighth-grade students suggested this teen-friendly activity: host a movie trivia contest where you use quotations from famous comedic movies (such as *Napoleon Dynamite*) and teens have to guess which movie they're from, à la *Jeopardy!* game rules. Buy prizes with the money from the copy machine.

For events, try backwards planning: in other words, know where you want to

end up on TRW with teen events and then start planning in August. If you're a public librarian, ask the principal or the school media specialist at your local middle or high school if you can visit during a work day and discuss TRW events coming up in October. Then, meet with the school media specialist and coordinate events. School librarians should contact their local public libraries and ask for the YA librarian or teen services director. According to Michele Gorman, teen services/library supervisor at *ImaginOn* in Charlotte, North Carolina, a "communicative partnership" is the first step for successful collaboration and involves sharing information about TRW for the benefit of both school and public libraries. Likewise, school librarians can promote literacy with TRW and highlight new genres with their students. TRW can even serve to enhance the school library's mission of supporting school curriculum. The goal of Standard 5 from *Information Power* states, "The student who is an independent learner is information literate and appreci-

ates literature and other creative expressions of information."<sup>2</sup> The tenets of TRW from YALSA highlight the same goal of promoting teen literacy, which intersects with many middle and high school English classes and their collaborations with the school library. From the simple to the superb, these activities are suggestions to celebrate TRW in a school or public library.

## Implementation and Activities

- **Soundtracks:** Ask students to select their favorite humorous books. Their assignment is to make up soundtracks for the books. They can compile any type of music or songs. Have them bring in CDs and iPods with their books' soundtracks. Then, ask the group to compare them. While this activity can be used on a variety of books or on the same book, students should be able to explain why certain songs belong with certain chapters, plots, and characters of the book.<sup>3</sup>
- **Films:** Host a comedy movie festival with snacks. Include old cartoons as well as new favorites, such as *Anchorman—The Legend of Ron Burgundy*. (Editor's note: also see Robyn Lupa's article in this issue.)

**MEGAN P. FINK** is a Middle School Librarian at Charlotte Country Day School in North Carolina. She began her career in children's book publishing, but fell in love with the library while working for the New York Public Library. She is an active member of YALSA's Teen Read Week Committee.

# Teen Read Week™ Collaboration

*By Megan Fink*



- **Cartooning:** Invite local artists and amateur cartoonists to submit their creations and hang them in the library. Host an open house and display their cartoons. Teach teens how to use animation software like Flash to create a short, animated cartoon. Then have a cartoon marathon, projecting them on a big screen.
- **Improv night:** Invite a local improv group to teach kids how to act or ask the drama teacher from the local school to help instruct.
- **Can you judge a book by its cover?** Copy twenty book covers and the blurbs on the back and inside flap. Then create false blurbs for those same twenty books. Let the students decide which is the true blurb and which is false and why.<sup>4</sup>
- **Game night:** Use board games such as Catchphrase, Balderdash, or Guesstures.
- **Wacky Olympics:** Make up a series of "wacky Olympic" challenges. Go through an obstacle course with "x-ray glasses" on and try to beat the other teams. Use other gag games where you have to perform with your opposite

arm or leg, such as the Flingshot Flying Chicken.<sup>5</sup>

- **Contest:** Invite teens to make a funny, short video like *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* (A group acts out a scene, incorporating audience-suggested lines on pieces of paper given to them.) Then, the winner will be shown during TRW celebrations.
- **Carnival:** Have a dunk tank, pie-throwing contest, sumo wrestling, gladiator joust, bungee run, or other carnival-type event. Most of these activities require a rental, but parent-teacher associations are a possible funding source, or propose that the public library partner with the school.

Libraries are known as sources of information, but the laughter during TRW may improve teenagers' health. According to *Psychology Today*, "laughter may also improve our mood through social means. Telling a joke, particularly one that illuminates a shared experience or problem, increases our sense of 'belonging and social cohesion,'" thus improving the mood of your everyday, stressed-out teen.<sup>6</sup> **YALS**

## References and Notes

1. Peter Daskoch, "Happily Ever Laughter," *Psychology Today* (July/Aug. 1996), <http://psychologytoday.com/articles/pto-19960701-000032.html> (accessed Feb. 27, 2007).
2. American Association of School Librarians, *Information Power*, Standard 5, [www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslproftools/informationpower/InformationLiteracyStandards\\_final.pdf](http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslproftools/informationpower/InformationLiteracyStandards_final.pdf) (accessed Feb. 27, 2007).
3. The British Council, "Teenage Reading Group Ideas," [www.encompassculture.com/readinggroups/readinggroupideas/teenagerideas](http://www.encompassculture.com/readinggroups/readinggroupideas/teenagerideas) (accessed Feb. 25, 2007).
4. Ibid.
5. Flingshot Flying Chicken available for \$4.95 from Gag Works, [www.gagworks.com/index.asp?PageAction=VIEWPROD&ProdID=3359](http://www.gagworks.com/index.asp?PageAction=VIEWPROD&ProdID=3359) (accessed Feb. 27, 2007).
6. Daskoch, "Happily Ever Laughter."



## Best Books for Young Adults

Now available for preorder at the ALA Online Store!

*Best Books for Young Adults* is back! Teen services librarians, along with parents and English teachers, will welcome this fully updated third edition, the most comprehensive and effective reference for great reading for young adults. Edited by Holly Koelling. Preorder yours at the ALA Store, [www.alastore.ala.org](http://www.alastore.ala.org). Publication expected in Fall 2008.

*Best Books for Young Adults*. (ALA Editions, 2007) 0-8389-3569-9. ISBN-13: 978-0-8389-3569-9. 7 x 10. 376p. \$42.00 (ALA Members: \$37.80).

Caitlyn is a reader. The fifteen-year-old Arizona honor student devoured at least two books a day during her mid-March spring break. She delighted in a suitcase full of book galleys, willing to read and give her take on those that struck her fancy.

When told about teens who actually read books and share their opinions with publishers, her bright eyes sparkled. “How could I get to do that?” she asked, and the door was open to explain all about YALSA’s YA Galley project and the Teens’ Top Ten (TTT) list ([www.ala.org/teenstopten](http://www.ala.org/teenstopten)). Caitlyn was all ears.

True, her local library may not be among the current crop of Galley Groups (the closest participating group to Caitlyn’s Glendale, Arizona, address is the Teen Reading Club of the George L. Campbell Library in Phoenix), but Caitlyn and every other reading teen can be part of the exciting adventure that makes the TTT list a reality each year.

TTT, YALSA’s only book list nominated and voted on by teens, needs Caitlyn and countless other reading teens everywhere to participate in the online vote each October during Teen Read Week™ (TRW) to help make this list an annual reality. Any teen from any community can join in, and more and more are doing so as librarians and teens learn about the project and spread the word. That’s where

# Get Out the Vote for Teens’ Top Ten

*By Diane P. Monnier  
and Diane P. Tuccillo*

we come in—the librarians, media specialists, and other YA fans who are in perfect positions to promote the project, letting individual teens, classes, groups, and entire school populations know about TTT by following some simple basic guidelines:

1. Go online to [www.ala.org/teenstopten](http://www.ala.org/teenstopten).
2. Copy the list of 2007 nominations. There are twenty-five titles nominated this year.
3. Order copies of the nominated titles for your school or public library.
4. Include these titles on summer reading lists.

5. Encourage students to read the nominated books during summer vacation so they are ready to cast their votes for favorites during TRW.
6. Hold discussions of the nominated books.
7. Enthusiastically support a “get out the vote” campaign in your school or library in the fall so students will be motivated to vote online the third week in October.

The entire YA Galley/TTT idea, rooted in teen reactions to newly published titles, started as a YALSA pilot project in 1999, became official in 2003, and is being honed to improve its procedures and teen involvement each year. The project relies on the work of a variety of appointed school and public library reading groups from all over the country. It also encourages teens to read the titles nominated by the YALSA-appointed groups and to vote online for their ultimate “top ten” favorites each year as a major highlight of TRW ([www.ala.org/teenread](http://www.ala.org/teenread)) in October.

The YA Galley project involves fifteen teen book discussion groups selected by YALSA’s YA Galley Committee. Groups come from all ages of YA and from all

**DIANE P. MONNIER** is the Senior Librarian for Children’s and Adult Services at the Rockville (Md.) Library. She is a member of the YA Galley Committee, having served as the committee’s first chair in 2003. She was also the first Coordinator of Youth Participation for YALSA. She is a current member of Quick Picks and was YALSA Local Arrangements Chair for this summer’s Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. **DIANE P. TUCCILLO** was the Young Adult Coordinator at the City of Mesa (Ariz.) Library for almost twenty-five years. She presents workshops for libraries on youth participation, based upon her book, *Library Teen Advisory Groups: A VOYA Guide* (Scarecrow, 2005). She is currently on YALSA’s YA Galley Committee.



parts of the country. There is an effort to ensure that the appointed groups come from a variety of locales and library types. Five of these groups read, discuss, and nominate what they think are the best books published during the previous year through April of the current year. For any book to make the list, three teens (representing at least two of the five groups) must nominate the title. The nominations are teen centered. The other ten groups are reading, evaluating, and voting groups. These teens read books supplied through the galley project by more than two dozen publishers. They provide feedback to publishers through online evaluation forms, which are sent by Galley Group advisors to the publishers themselves.

Without publishers' generous participation, the project could not exist. Beth Eller, from Bloomsbury/Walker Marketing, says,

Any project that helps get books into the hands of teenagers and provides a conduit for us to learn their thoughts and feelings about

a particular book—from the topic, to the writing, to the cover art—is an invaluable service for publishers. The untempered comments from the kids always delight and often surprise us. We use the information to help us develop a sense of what we think kids are reading and what we think they will respond to. It is great to add the kids' opinions to the mix of information that continually informs our publishing decisions.

Eller adds, "If Teens' Top Ten grew and became a more visible part of Teen Read Week, it would help other teens connect with books, knowing that the books have been selected by their peers, rather than by adults."

As YALSA works to get the word out, teens are encouraged to promote the project in their libraries by holding TRW voting parties and book discussions, making bulletin boards, and distributing reading lists. The number of teen participants has been growing each year with 1,700 online

votes the first year it was an official project and more than 5,000 votes just three years later.

YALSA members interested in having groups participate as one of the fifteen official Galley Groups are encouraged to begin now to form teen book discussion groups, to continue working with students on the development of thoughtful evaluation skills, and to get teens in the habit of reading the nominated TTT books to vote for favorites in October. This will help groups be experienced and ready to fill out an application in 2008 for the November 2008 to October 2010 term.

Teens will sometimes read what adults recommend. They will sometimes read what they find on a reading list. They will read what they have to for school. But when it comes to their own, independent reading, which is something they need to learn about if they are going to become dedicated and astute readers into adulthood, what better way than to let them evaluate and experiment for themselves? YA Galley/TTT encourages them to do just that. **YALS**

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## FULL-DAY PRECONFERENCES

### AASL Advocacy Institute

Wednesday, October 24, 2007  
9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Don't miss this special institute on advocacy. Participants will receive information, resources and strategies that will help define advocacy and guide them in the creation of long-term advocacy action plans for their school library media programs.

### Assessing for Learning: Connecting the Library and the Classroom

Wednesday,  
October 24, 2007  
9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Presenter **VIOLET HARADA** of the University of Hawaii's Library and Information Science Program and Joan Yoshina, a retired school library media specialist currently residing in Olympia, Washington will discuss how library media specialists can be key players in closing the learning gap. Attendees should plan to engage in a lively, hands-on, minds-on session.

### Library Media Specialist 2.0: Social, Collaborative, and Interactive Technologies

Wednesday, October 24, 2007  
9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

From blogs and podcasts to wikis and virtual worlds, everyone's talking about the dynamic technology tools, resources, and learning spaces available to educators and students through Web 2.0. Presenters

**ANNETTE LAMB** and **LARRY JOHNSON** of Indiana University at Indianapolis will help attendees separate the hype from what's realistic.



## HALF-DAY PRECONFERENCES

**Books Kids Will  
Still Sit For:**  
A Look at New  
and Notable  
Children's  
Books across the  
Curriculum and  
How to Use Them  
(Grades Pre-K to 6)

Wednesday, October 24, 2007  
1:30-4:30 p.m.

Join presenter **JUDY FREEMAN** in an overview of current trends in children's literature, she will share some of her latest favorites, an eclectic and indispensable assortment of compelling titles no librarian can live without.

### Collaboration: The Key to the Future Begins @ your library®

Thursday, October 26, 2007  
9 a.m.-noon

This fast-paced workshop by longtime collaborators **GREG BYERLY, PHD** and **CAROLYN BRODIE, PHD** from Kent State's Institute for Library and Information Literacy Education ([www.ilile.org](http://www.ilile.org)) will share practical examples of successful teacher-librarian collaborations and provide creative solutions that lead to student achievement. Findings from a study on the characteristics of successful teacher-librarian collaborations and provide creative solutions that lead to student achievement.



### Copyright and Plagiarism: Teaching Ethics to Tomorrow's Citizens

Thursday, October 26, 2007  
9 a.m.-noon

Are the legal and ethical aspects of teacher librarianship driving you crazy? **DR. CAROL SIMPSON** of the University of North Texas School of Library and Information Science will discuss appropriate attribution, how much is too much, and where to draw the line for young students, older students, and faculty.

### Designing School Library Media Spaces for Now and the Future: A Special Place for Reading, Thinking, and Learning

Thursday, October 26, 2007  
9 a.m.-noon

**DR. THOMAS L. HART**, library media facilities planner and professor emeritus at the College of Information, will provide participants with an opportunity to develop skills and gain knowledge to plan a quality library media space to serve their current and future users.

### Urban Fantasy, Chick Lit, Graphic Novels, Audiobooks, and More: Young Adult Literature for the YouTube and MySpace Generation

Thursday,  
October 26, 2007  
9 a.m.-noon

Don't miss **DR. RUTH COX**. Clark is an Associate Professor in the Department of Library Science and Instructional Technology within the College of Education at East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina as she shares techniques for enticing teens to explore the new genres and formats available in recently published YA Literature.



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PRECONFERENCES

## Audiobooks that Tickle the Funny Bone

By Francisca Goldsmith

**A**udiobooks offer teens an alternative method of access to traditional literary works, an intimate experience with performance, and the opportunity to sample genres and subjects while occupied with other activities such as traveling or exercising. Audiobooks currently come in several formats, including cassette, compact disc, MP3 disc, Web-based MP3 file, and housed MP3 file (such as Playaway). Teens can listen to classics, prize-winning YA authors, poetry, plays, and documentary recordings. They can also listen to some downright funny stuff. It's this last category that I'm promoting here—audiobooks that provoke chuckles, smiles, and even some belly laughs.

Identifying what's funny can be a matter of personal taste. There's the silly, the witty, the ironic, and even the gross when it comes to answering the question "Why am I laughing?" Some of the audiobooks listed here offer subtler—and some more raucous—humor than others. Happily, many humorous audiobooks are actually parts of series, so if you find that one episode strikes your funny bone, there are others holding a similar promise based on a similar premise.

Beddor, Frank. *The Looking Glass*

*Wars*. Performed by Gerard Doyle. Scholastic, 2006; 7 discs, ISBN-13: 978-0439898485, \$74.95; 8 hours and 41 minutes. This retelling of *Alice in Wonderland* is grisly and streaked with high-flying puns, just the right antidote to tales that take themselves too seriously, or take their audiences for granted.

Cabot, Meg. *Shadowland*. Performed by

Johanna Parker. Recorded Books, 2005; 5 cassettes, ISBN-13: 978-1419341427, \$51.75; or 6 discs, ISBN-13: 978-1419355981, \$66.75; 6 hours. Teenaged Suze not only can see ghosts, but she helps them work through their unfinished business with the living. Both written and performed with perfect irony, "The Mediator" series continues with *Ninth Key*, *Reunion*, and other episodes

featuring Suze, the stepbrothers she's nicknamed for Disney's Seven Dwarfs, and her ghostly sidekick.

Griffiths, Andy. *Just Tricking!* Performed

by Stig Wemyss. Bolinda Audio, 1999; 2 cassettes, ISBN-13: 978-1876584979, \$24; or 2 discs, ISBN-13: 978-1740308878, \$24; 2 hours and 20 minutes. Part of an informal series that also includes *Just Annoying* and *Just Stupid*, these short stories are exemplars of both the author's and the narrator's work. Basically middle-school tall tales—including how the author was threatened with burial by his exasperated parents—the scenes and characters are universally recognizable. The narrator's pacing suits both the content and the listener's interest in having the funny parts exaggerated.

Keillor, Garrison. *A Prairie Home*

*Companion Pretty Good Joke Tape*. Performed by Garrison Keillor, Paula Poundstone, Ray Blount, and others. HighBridge, 2000; 2 cassettes, ISBN-13: 978-1565113695, \$18.95; or 2 discs, ISBN-13: 978-1565113886, \$24.95; 2 hours and 30 minutes. High school students who prefer sly wit to ribald jokes will appreciate this, its sequel, *A Few More Pretty Good Jokes*, and a series of short stories featuring a Prairie Home Companion character in *The Adventures of Guy Noir*.

Korman, Gordon. *Son of the Mob*.

Performed by Max Casella. Listening Library, 2002; 3 cassettes, ISBN-13: 978-080729714, \$30; or 4 discs,

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FRANCISCA GOLDSMITH is a Library Services Manager at Berkeley (Calif.) Public Library, working with materials and online collections, as well as with teen services. She has been an active YALSA member for fifteen years and is currently serving on ALA's newly created Odyssey Award Committee.

ISBN-13: 978-0739348987, \$38; 4 hours and 36 minutes. Boy meets girl, boy and girl are happy together in spite of parental incompatibility, boy loses girl, boy and girl are reunited with surprise ending about one of their parents. In this case, the boy is the straight-laced son of a local mobster, while the girl is princess-daughter to the FBI man assigned to watch the boy's family.

Limb, Sue. *Girl, 15, Charming but Insane*. Performed by Katherine Kellgren. Listening Library, 2004; 5 discs, ISBN-10: 1400094828, \$26; or 4 cassettes, ISBN-10: 1400091098, \$26; 6 hours. Jess has issues: friends more beautiful and glamorous than she and a slightly daft father who leaves her "horrorscopes." She deals by using her sense of humor—and it's infectious. Her madcap narrative continues in *Girl* (Nearly 16), *Absolute Torture*.

Pratchett, Terry. *The Wee Free Men*.

Performed by Stephen Briggs. Harper Children's Audio, 2003; 7 cassettes, ISBN-13: 978-0060566258, \$29.95; or 7 discs, ISBN-13: 978-0060785987, \$29.95; 9 hours. This episode in the author's Discworld series features miniature blue pixies that drink and cause trouble for a young witch in training. The humor here ranges from broad physical antics to bad (good) puns.

Riordan, Rick. *The Lightning Thief*.

Performed by Jesse Bernstein. Listening Library, 2005; 6 cassettes, ISBN-13: 978-03072452998, \$45; or 8 discs, ISBN-13: 978-0307245311, \$60; 9 hours. Percy Jackson is the offspring of a modern American woman and a Greek god. Fortunately, there's a summer camp for kids like him, replete with a Diet Coke-can-munching satyr. One summer does

not a demigod make, so the adventures continue in *Sea of Monsters*.

Winton, Tim. *Lockie Leonard: Human Torpedo*. Performed by Stig Wemyss. Bolinda Audio, 2000, c.

1998. 3 cassettes, ISBN-13: 978-18644231743, \$28; or 3 discs, ISBN-13: 978-1740305976, \$28; 3 hours. The title character is featured in a series of novels describing his life in an Australian coastal town, where he is plagued by his own relatives: a poetry-spouting policeman father, a metal-sculpting mother, and a little brother who is embarrassingly incontinent. Outside the home, Lockie has to deal with girls, guys, and his own sensitivities. Check out *Lockie Leonard: Scumbuster* as well. **YALS**



here's  
your  
chance  
to get  
involved

## Volunteer for a YALSA Committee!

This fall, YALSA chooses its selection committees for its 2009 booklists and media awards (evaluating 2008 titles). We need your help!

- ♦ Make sure your YALSA membership is up-to-date! We can only offer committee appointments to current members.
- ♦ Fill out the Committee Volunteer Form at [www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/joinus/joinus.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/joinus/joinus.htm).
- ♦ Contact the chair of the committees you're interested in, and let them know! Names and contact information are available at the "Governance" link on the left-hand side at [www.ala.org/yalsa](http://www.ala.org/yalsa).
- ♦ Committee members are expected to attend Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference, so plan your schedule accordingly. Media consumption begins in February 2008.

**Find more ways to make the most of your YALSA membership at [www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/joinus/howparticipate.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/joinus/howparticipate.htm)!**



## Looking for the Comic in Graphic Novels?

### Try These Humorous Reads for Teens!

*By Dawn Rutherford*

It seems like everywhere you look nowadays, you are starting to see graphic novels pop up. I could tell they were becoming truly widespread when I even started seeing them at garage sales this year! There are mysteries, dramas, science fiction, romances, and all kinds of serious literature winning prizes and places in school curriculums. But over the summer, many teens want nothing more than a light read, something silly that can get them into a healthy giggle fit. Here are a few of my favorite humorous graphic novels, good for chuckles, snorts, and laughing out loud. Why are they funny? To try and tell you that would be like trying explaining why a joke is funny without telling it: you'll just have to read them yourself to find out!

Azuma, Kiyohiko. *Yotsuba&! Volume 1*. ADV Manga, 2005; ISBN-13: 978-1413903171; \$9.99. A super-naïve five-year-old moves in next door to a house full of teenage girls who marvel

at her strangeness. How unusual can a child be? Even her dad thinks she's super weird. Why does she have green hair? Nobody knows! Discover the wonder of the world again through the eyes of one odd little kid.

Baker, Kyle. *Rubber Bandits: Plastic Man*. DC Comics, 2006; ISBN-13: 978-1401207298; \$14.99. By playing with contemporary issues, Eisner Award-winning cartoonist Kyle Baker delivers a delightful reinvention of the classic hero Plastic Man.

Ellis, Warren. *Nextwave: Agents of H.A.T.E.—Volume 1: This is What They Want*. Marvel, 2007; ISBN-13: 978-0785119098; \$14.99. Edgy, wild, and surprisingly clean enough for even a school library, I laughed out loud many times reading this fresh look at the super-hero team-up genre. Plus, the book directs you to their Web site, so you can even listen to the team's terrible (yet hilarious) theme song!

Kobayashi, Makoto. *What's Michael? Book 1*. Dark Horse Comics, 2006; ISBN-13: 978-1593075255; \$9.95. An entire manga series focused on cats! Picture Garfield if it was written for adults. A great peek at Japanese culture and the universal oddities of cat lovers.

Nibot, Root. *Banana Sunday*. Oni Pr., 2006; ISBN-13: 978-1932664379; \$11.95. A girl has to try and fit in at her new high school while also dealing with her three talking monkeys. What could possibly be funnier than talking monkeys?

Nonaka, Eiji. *Cromartie High School—Volume 1*. ADV Manga, 2005; ISBN-13: 978-1413902570; \$10.95. In this Japanese award-winning manga, Takashi is the odd duck out at Cromartie High School, home to thugs, bullies, fighters, and delinquents. Everyone assumes he must be the toughest guy in school, since a wimp like him should be afraid to even be there! Mind-bendingly weird at times, this is not for every

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DAWN RUTHERFORD is a Teen Services Librarian for King County (Wash.) Library System. She served on the planning committee for the 2002 YALSA preconference on graphic novels, writes graphic novel reviews for *School Library Journal*, and chaired YALSA's first Great Graphic Novels for Teens committee. She is also a Serving the Underserved Trainer for YALSA. While her humor tends to be dry, she loves a good knock-knock joke.

reader, but only the most sophisticated of humor lovers.

Rubio, Kevin. *Star Wars: Tag and Bink Were Here*. Dark Horse Comics, 2006; ISBN-13: 978-1593076412; \$14.95. Like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern turned loose in your favorite science fiction trilogy, these


bumblers turn up to witness key moments and cause chaos at every turn. A must read for anyone who loves Star Wars.

Toyoda, Minoru. *Love Roma—Volume 1*. Bantam Bks., 2005; ISBN-13: 978-0345482624; \$10.95. Frustrated by his hesitation at approaching his

crush, Hoshino vows to pursue her with complete and utter honesty. This of course leads to awkward situations, embarrassment in front of classmates, and a genuinely sweet romance. **YALS**

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- 2 HIT THE HALL** — Visit the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. Choose from over 100 top hits and burn your own CD. Music prevails in Music City! You will see permanent and changing exhibits devoted to musical legends featuring original costumes, instruments, interactive exhibits, etc.
- 3 RIDE THE ROW** — Visit historic RCA Studio B by taking a trolley tour of Music Row to the famous recording studio where Elvis recorded over 200 songs. Roy Orbison, Dolly Parton, Eddy Arnold and many more recorded classic hits here. Not surprisingly, the heartbeat of Music City is driven by music—from country to classical.
- 4 VISIT THE HOME OF THE GREEK GODS** — In Nashville's Centennial Park, you'll find the world's only full-scale reproduction of the Parthenon in Athens, Greece. The Parthenon houses an art gallery and museum as well as Athena Parthenos—at almost 42 feet in height, it's the tallest indoor sculpture in the Western world.
- 5 TAKE IN A SONGWRITERS-IN-THE-ROUND SHOW** — It's simple. It's classic. It's uniquely Nashville. In a city of working musicians and songwriters there's no better way to hear the music. Typically called a "writers night," several singer/songwriters sit on stage accompanied only by a microphone, a guitar and their immense talent. These shows can be found in small, intimate clubs like the famed Bluebird Café.
- 6 KICK UP YOUR BOOTS** — At the Wildhorse Saloon, they serve up country that kicks! Take a break from line dancing to enjoy the famous Bar-B-Q. Daily lessons are free for those adventurous enough to scoot onto the dance floor. Country's brightest stars often perform here, too.
- 7 VISIT THE RYMAN AUDITORIUM** — Sure, it's the "Mother Church of Country Music," but artists such as Jon Bon Jovi and Tony Bennett regularly perform on its legendary stage. The world's greatest stars have performed at the Ryman, from Caruso to Cash.
- 8 TAKE A TIMELESS JOURNEY** — The stars of the Grand Ole Opry perform every Friday and Saturday night. With over 80 years under its belt, the Opry shows no signs of slowing down. It's the world's longest-running broadcast.
- 9 SALUTE** — Three U.S. Presidents called Tennessee home—Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk and Andrew Johnson. You can revisit the past at The Hermitage, Home of President Andrew Jackson. Polk is buried on the grounds of the historic State Capitol building.
- 10 VISIT HONKY TONK HIGHWAY** — Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, Legends Corner, Second Fiddle, The Stage, Bluegrass Inn and Robert's Western World are all experts at serving up cool longnecks and hot country music. You never know who you'll see in these Lower Broadway clubs in the shadow of the Ryman. Willie Nelson, Kris Kristofferson and Terri Clark all began their careers at Tootsie's.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MUSIC CITY EVENTS & ATTRACTIONS, PLEASE LOG ON TO [WWW.VISITMUSICCITY.COM](http://WWW.VISITMUSICCITY.COM)

## Reading—It's Not Just about Books

*By Linda W. Braun*

In the YA literature class I teach for Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Science in Boston, I ask students to find out what thirteen- to eighteen-year-olds say about their reading interests and preferences. As a part of the process, the library school students ask each teen to fill out a reading log. The log is used to chart reading during a twenty-four-hour period, and is meant to include anything and everything that a teen reads. In the most recent set of logs, the following reading was listed:

- Text messages
- E-mail
- MySpace/Facebook
- Orchestra music
- *Seventeen* magazine
- iTunes
- IM
- Specific Web sites

While traditional forms of reading did appear in the logs, book-reading was almost always related to school assignments. The reading assignments listed included textbook reading as well as fiction reading assigned for a particular class.

Sometimes I ask teens with whom I'm working to fill out the same kind of reading log. Whenever I ask teens to fill out a log and then talk to them about what they recorded, it's quickly apparent to me how surprised many of the teens are about how

much and how often they read on a regular basis. Many of the teens say they don't like to read, but then they realize, "Oh, it's not that I don't like to read, I read a lot, it's that I don't like to read certain types of things."

More adults realize that teens read constantly. What is less often realized is the need for librarians and teachers to accept and promote nontraditional forms of reading—blogs, wikis, text messages, and the like—as readily as they accept and promote traditional forms of reading—books, magazines, and so on. If adults do accept and promote the nontraditional (or new), they will realize that reluctant readers and nonreaders are few and far between. They'll notice that every teen is indeed a reader.

The reading logs, mentioned previously, are a real demonstration of the frequent reading in which teens take part. They read via technology in order to find information, communicate with others, improve skills, and so on. Consider these

examples of what teens read using technology-based tools.

- **Blogs**—Teens read blogs to keep up on topics of interest, including technology, world news, and gossip. They read blogs written by friends and favorite authors. This reading is a way to collect information, find out about the world, and learn about how people think and live. Teens read fiction to be carried away by a good story and to live vicariously through others. That's some of what they get from blog reading. Similarly, teens read magazine articles to learn about something in which they are interested or to find out what's hot and what's not. They do the same with blogs.
- **Games**—To succeed in game play, teens often have to read about characters in the game, the history of the game, ways to improve play, and so on. In many ways this reading is very similar to the nonfiction reading teens are frequently required to complete as a part of a school assignment. For school they read history about places, directions on how to complete a task, and biographies of famous people. In the game-related reading of teens, there is an investment in the content that perhaps is different from the investment they might have for school assignment reading. Because of the high interest in learning how to succeed in a game, teens are more likely to remember, understand, and value what they read about game play.

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**LINDA W. BRAUN** is an Educational Technology Consultant with LEO: Librarians & Educators Online. She works with schools and libraries on finding the best ways to integrate emerging technologies into their programs and services. She is YALSA's blog manager and her latest book is *Teens, Technology, and Literacy: Or Why Bad Grammar Isn't Always Bad* (Libraries Unlimited, 2006).



That's quality reading, even if it's not school related.

- **Podcasts**—Most podcasts include a show notes site. This site provides information on topics discussed and includes links to resources mentioned in each episode. These show notes pages are not much different from annotated resource lists and bibliographies that teens read as a part of research they might need to do for a school assignment. After listening to a podcast teens like to go to the show notes site to find out more about topics discussed in the audio. They want to find out more. Again, they are invested in the reading. This is exactly the kind of investment we would like teens to have when they look through the resource lists and bibliographies associated with school assignments.
- **MySpace/Facebook**—Reading biographies is often a requirement for teen English or history classes. Aren't MySpace and Facebook forms of biography? Teens read about the interests of others via MySpace and Facebook pages. They learn about the lives of authors and the lives of entertainers. Is it possible to suggest that MySpace and Facebook are the early twenty-first-century version of a profile or interview in a magazine?
- **iTunes**—Finding and downloading music requires research skills similar to those librarians strive to teach. Using iTunes also gives teens the chance to read about the music and musicians in which they are interested: more biography and history reading.
- **Text messaging and IM**—Texting and IM is all about dialogue and dialogue is something that's a key part of many high school English classes. When teens communicate via text messaging or IM, they continue to process, learn about, and participate in dialogue. It's a different form of



dialogue. Imagine if teens compared the dialogue in a text-message conversation with their friends to the dialogue in a favorite book or class-assigned book? What would they discover? What would they learn?

Librarians regularly encourage teens to read fiction, history, biography, and so forth. As the above list demonstrates, this reading doesn't have to take place within the traditional book and magazine format. If you think about the technology-based reading in which teens are currently involved, in most cases you'll be able to see connections between that reading and the more traditional forms of reading librarians and teachers promote on a regular basis.

What can librarians do to recognize and promote nontraditional forms of reading in which teens take part? Consider these ideas:

- Initiate conversations with teens about what they spend time reading that isn't a book or magazine. Ask if they

consider text messaging, IMing, and reading blogs as reading. Find out why or why not. Ask what kinds of reading they would like to be able to do for school assignments. What forms and formats should school-related reading take? Find out what type of reading teens would like to see promoted in the library.

- Talk to teachers about the technology-based reading teens are involved in and help them to see how these newer forms and formats connect to the more traditional reading promoted on a regular basis. Consider working with teens or teachers on a chart, diagram, or other graphic organizer that shows the connections between the traditional and the new.
- Rethink your use and publication of materials and booklists. Move away from calling lists "booklists" and begin to use a more encompassing term. Maybe you can simply call all materials lists "favorites" (to connect with what teens save in their Internet browser.) Whatever you call the lists



you create to let teens know what's available to read, make sure to include blogs, wikis, Web sites, MySpace pages, Facebook pages, and game sites and resources on the lists.

Don't make negative judgments on the quality of what teens read simply because the reading is taking place through non-traditional means. As of today, whenever you find yourself questioning or judging what a teen likes to read using technology, ask yourself, "Why is this different or less valid than reading a book?" Is your answer one related to format? If so, then

remember that writing on the Web—for example a blog post—doesn't equal bad or poor writing. There are numerous blogs by teens, adults, and journalists that are excellent examples of high-quality writing. Of course not all blog posts are high-quality writing, but not every magazine article or book is either.

Most important, don't make judgments based on what you don't know. Start text messaging and IMing so you know first-hand what that dialogue is like and entails. Remember that to encode and decode messages in these real-time instantaneous formats takes great skill. Read

blogs, wikis, and social networking sites to find out what's available and to learn about the writing that's taking place online. Visit music and gossip sites to learn what teens are reading about their favorite entertainers and entertainments.

The more willing adults are to recognize the important role that technology-based reading has in teen lives, the more likely it is that teens will start to think of themselves as readers (and the adults will think of them as readers, too.) After all, that's what we want, isn't it? We want a world of readers, not just a world of those who read books. **YALS**

## 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 twelve through eighteen) that showcases current research and practice

relating to teen services and spotlights significant activities and programs of the division.

For submission and author guidelines, please visit [www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/yalsapubs/yals/authorguidelines/htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/yalsapubs/yals/authorguidelines/htm).

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Celebrate the 2007 Teen Read Week™ (TRW) theme of LOL @ your library® by hosting a comedic film festival and related activities that will offer teens humor-filled October afternoons and evenings. Arm yourself with a good overview of this film genre (check out [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comedy\\_film](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comedy_film) for some ideas) and get started!

# LOL on Screen

By Robyn Lupa

## Set Up

Get a license (from [www.movlic.com/library/faq/faq.html](http://www.movlic.com/library/faq/faq.html)) to show movies at your library. To address parental concerns, be sure to include film ratings on advertisements and stick to G, PG, or PG-13 flicks. If necessary, have parents sign permission slips that teens may turn in at the door, ensuring it is okay for them to view selected films. Book your meeting room, set up a DVD player and projector, put sodas on ice, order some pizza, throw popcorn in the microwave, and you are good to go!

## Ideas

Sponsor a Saturday afternoon game session by playing Scene It? Movie Edition, which combines a traditional board game with DVD clips ([www.sceneit.com](http://www.sceneit.com)). Trivial Pursuit's Pop Culture Editions will also test the kids' knowledge of the silver screen ([www.trivialpursuit.com/trivialpursuit/board\\_games.html](http://www.trivialpursuit.com/trivialpursuit/board_games.html)).

In advance, ask teens to vote on favorite comedians and plan to screen one or more of their films for a few consecutive days after school. Some possible choices with accompanying films may include: Jim Carrey's *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* and *Liar Liar*; Will Ferrell's *Kicking and Screaming* and *Elf*; Adam Sandler's *Happy Gilmore* and *The Waterboy*; Ben Stiller's *Meet the Parents* and *Starsky and Hutch*; Will Smith's *Shark Tale* and *Men in Black*; Jack Black's *Nacho Libre* and *Shallow Hal*; Eddie Murphy's *Dr. Dolittle* and *The Nutty Professor*; or Ice Cube's *Are We There Yet?* and *Barbershop*. In conjunction, go through books such as Lisa Bany-Winters's *Funny Bones: Comedy Games and Activities* (Chicago Review Pr., 2002) or Bob Bedore's *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults* (Hunter House, 2004) to prepare activities for the program. Offer various prizes (movie tickets, Blockbuster coupons, Netflix gift certificates, popcorn and candy bundles) to celebrate talent within the audience.

Repeat the same event featuring classic comedians. Compare and contrast actors from earlier generations to those who are popular today: How is Jim Carrey's physical comedy like Jerry Lewis's? What similarities may be drawn between the wacky antics of Mike Myers (as *Austin Powers*) and the Marx Brothers? Find a comprehensive list of comic entertainers on Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_comedians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_comedians)) as well as information on today's greats at Comedy Central ([www.comedycentral.com/comedians/index.jhtml](http://www.comedycentral.com/comedians/index.jhtml)).

Within certain broad topics, watch films and then talk about their funniest moments. Some ideas to get you started include: science fiction (*Back to the Future* and *Spaceballs*); romance (*John Tucker Must Die* and *10 Things I Hate About You*); popularity contest (*Legally Blonde* and *Clueless*); school (*Bring It On* and *Napoleon Dynamite*); sports (*Dodgeball* and *The Bad News Bears*); buddies (*Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* and *Dumb and Dumber*); slackers (*Employee of the Month* and *Big Daddy*); lost in the '80s (*Pretty in Pink* and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*); vehicles (*Talledega Nights* and *R/V*); music (*School of Rock* and *The Wedding Singer*); Monty Python (*Monty Python and the Holy Grail* and *The Meaning of Life*); and fantasy (*The Princess Bride* and *Shrek*). Check out the Internet Movie Database ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)), click on the "trivia" link for each film, and obtain some "look for this" or

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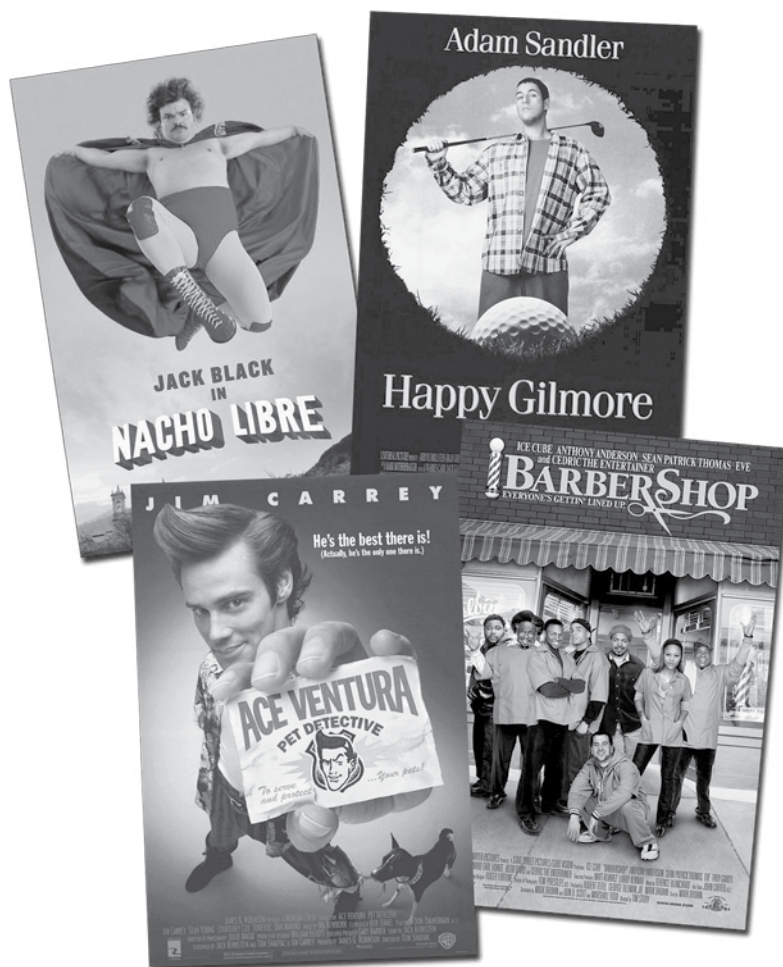
“did you notice” fun facts to share with the audience. Also print out quotes from IMDB so that budding comedians may do impromptu skits.

“Read the Book/Watch the Film” may be another fun series. Look for teen-friendly titles such as:

- *How to Eat Fried Worms*
- *How to Deal* (read *Someone Like You* by Sarah Dessen)
- *Mean Girls* (read *Queen Bees and Wannabes* by Rosalind Wiseman or *Queen of Cool* by Cecil Castellucci)
- *Freaky Friday*
- *Cheaper by the Dozen*
- *About a Boy*
- *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*
- *Clueless* (read *Emma* by Jane Austen)
- *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen*
- *Ella Enchanted*
- *Princess Diaries*

Find other ideas at <http://movies.yahoo.com/mv/upcoming/bygenre/basedonabook/> and [www.mcpl.lib.mo.us/readers/movies](http://www.mcpl.lib.mo.us/readers/movies).

Watch remakes followed by a discussion to compare, contrast, and analyze the sociocultural differences between each flick. Some teen-friendly options include: *Doctor Doolittle*, *Cheaper by the Dozen*, *The Nutty Professor*, *Fun with Dick and Jane*, *Freaky Friday*, *Flubber* (*The Absent-Minded Professor*), *Father of the Bride*, *The Pink Panther*, *The Parent Trap*, *The Shaggy Dog*, and *The Bad News Bears*.



## Have Fun

Be sure to pull biographies of actors, books about film, pop culture magazines, and DVDs to display during programs,

highlighting the lighter aspects of your collection. Enjoy this type of programming, relive humor from your own favorite comedies, and laugh out loud right along with your teens! **YALS**

**L**OL @ your library® is an excellent theme for creating programs during Teen Read Week™ (TRW). It creates a wide-open field for interpretation, giving the freedom to create innovative programs dealing with laughter and humor. The greatest thing about laughing is that everyone does it; there are no barriers to laughter. Humor is thought to be a means to promote teamwork, reduce stress, stimulate creativity, and improve communication, morale, and productivity.<sup>1</sup> Creating programs around humor and comedy will make a fun and inviting atmosphere for all teens, and really make them feel great about themselves.

# Got Laughs?

## Programs @ your library

*By Nichole Pereira*

### Program Ideas

#### Funny Movie Film Festival

Pick a day during TRW to show a series of funny movies. You can show random movies, or choose certain comedians to spotlight. Some examples include Adam Sandler, Chris Farley, Eddie Murphy, Ben Stiller, or even some classic funny television episodes with the Three Stooges or Lucille Ball. Many TV shows are available on DVD, making it possible to show a couple of episodes from funny sitcoms. Look to animated TV series, such as *The Simpsons*, for a large teenage draw.

#### Last Comic Standing Competition

Using the reality show *Last Comic Standing* as a model, create a similar program. Provide an outlet for teens to showcase their comedic talents. Don't limit it to only

standup comedians; include a group section for skits as well. This would be great for a series of programs, over a month or so, with the number of participants dwindling down until the last teen is crowned the last comic standing. The finals could be held during TRW at a ceremony that the community can attend.

#### "So You Want to be A Comedian" Career Presentation

Look to local comedy clubs or theatre groups for comedians who may want to speak to teens about what it's like to make people laugh for a living. Promote it as a career presentation that could include a comedy sketch, as well as ways to get started and what to expect in the industry. This serves as a great chance to reach out to teens who may not be interested in traditional jobs.

#### Comic Drawing Program

Comic books are a classic and innovative way to bring humor to the library. The Sunday comics have been a long-standing staple of humor. Contact a local comic artist and propose a program at the library where the artist can discuss what daily life is like in his or her profession. Teens would also love to create their own comic strip from start to finish. Have the comic book artist teach the teens how to create comics, including everything from creating an original and humorous story, to designing a comic strip and drawing it out, to coloring it in. So many teens already sketch and doodle, this program is a chance to showcase what they can do.

#### Improvisation Program

Many cities and towns have local improv comedy clubs or theatre companies. Approach some of these businesses with the idea of an improvisation program. Some high schools may also have a theatre or improv club that would be willing to share its talents. Once you have the improv or theatre group set up, use your program room to create a stage or staging area for the group. Promote it for teens, and create a

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comedy club-like atmosphere. Another key to a great improv program is audience participation. Teens really like to get involved. Discuss with the group doing the program that audience participation is a must.

## Reader's Theatre

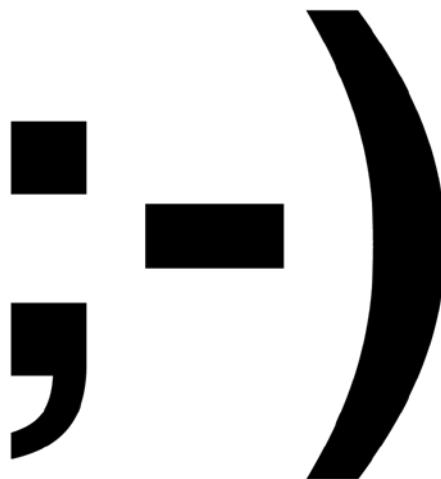
Rob Reid, author of *Something Funny Happened at the Library*, wrote: "Humorous stories come alive through readers' theatre presentations."<sup>2</sup> Imagine how much funnier a book would be if teens were acting it out. Have them become part of the process. Choose a funny picture book or short story and have them adapt it into a screenplay. This is also a great way to get the community involved by allowing the teens to present their adapted humorous screenplay at the library in front of the community.

## Comedy Club

During TRW, start a teen comedy club that encompasses a variety of programs, ending with a finale comedy show for friends and family. One great example of this program was the ArtsReach Comedy Club for Kids at the Louisville (Ky.) Free Public Library.<sup>3</sup> The Comedy Club met for six weeks, incorporating programs such as improvisation, acting exercises, and writing comedy routines. During the sixth meeting, there was a reception that included routine performances and was even covered by local media.

## Create Your Own Emoticons

One way to interpret the LOL theme is by creating emoticons. Emoticons are often used in e-mails, messaging, and chat; three things that are most certainly important parts of teenagers' lives. Give the teens a list of emoticon characters, including colons, semicolons, dashes, and hyphens. A great list can be found at



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emoticon>. Some examples of emoticons that work with the LOL theme include: :) (smile), XD (laughing hard), and X8 (laughing hard while covering your mouth with your hands). With these characters, the teens will create their own emoticons, leading to a slew of creative and funny expressions. Take those emoticons, judge them, and choose a winner, then display them in the library, or even create a little emoticon book for the attendees.

## Funny Book Club or Book Discussion Group

During TRW, develop a book club or discussion group that will promote the funny books in the library. For the book club, create a display in the library and set aside a day for teens to come to the library and talk about any funny books they have read lately, including comics. Providing refreshments will also bring the teens in. Another option is a true book discussion group. Pick a funny title and provide enough copies for the teens to read, and then hold a discussion group. Either of these programs will bring to light the number of humorous books for teens the library has, and encourage some teens to enjoy reading in general.

In addition to programs, showcase the funny books in your library. The easiest way is with a display. Pull out all the funny YA books from your collection, both fiction and nonfiction, and use them to create an inviting display. Create a booklist with humorous books that teens can take with them, not only promoting the books that are on display, but showcasing others. Use the booklist as a bookmark so that teens can be inspired to read more humorous stories.

## Conclusion

The TRW theme, LOL @ your library, is a great opportunity to use humor in your programming. By incorporating one of these programs into the week, teens will flock to the library and hopefully become lifelong users. Depending on the success of these programs, you may even look to continue them when TRW is over. **YALS**

## Additional Resources

### Nonfiction

- Allen, Steve. *How to Be Funny: Discovering the Comic You*. Prometheus Bks., 1998; ISBN-10: 1573922064; \$17.95.
- Carter, Judy. *The Comedy Bible: From Stand-up to Sitcom—The Comedy Writer's Ultimate "How To" Guide*. Fireside, 2001; ISBN-10: 0743201256; \$15.
- Dean, Greg. *Step by Step to Stand-up Comedy*. Heinemann Drama, 2000; ISBN-10: 0325001790; \$18.95.
- Horn, Delton T. *Comedy Improvisation: Exercises and Techniques for Young Actors*. Meriwether Publishing, 1991; ISBN-10: 0916260690; \$14.95.
- Reid, Rob. *Something Funny Happened at the Library: How to Create Humorous*

*Programs for Children and Young Adults*. ALA, 2002; ISBN-10: 0838908365; \$32.

Sanderson, David W. *Smiley's*. O'Reilly Media, 1997; ISBN-10: 1565920414; \$7.95.

Schreiber, Brad. *What Are You Laughing At?—How to Write Funny Screenplays, Stories, and More*. Michael Wiese Productions, 2003; ISBN-10: 0941188833; \$19.95.

Smith, Ronald. *Who's Who in Comedy: Comedians, Comics, and Clowns from Vaudeville to Today's Stand-ups*. Facts on File, 1992; ISBN-10: 0816023387; \$40.

Todd, Anne M. *Chris Rock: Comedian and Actor (Black Americans of Achievement)*. Chelsea House Pubs., 2006; ISBN-10: 0791092259; \$30.

Vorhaus, John. *The Comic Toolbox: How to Be Funny Even If You're Not*. Silman-James Pr., 1994; ISBN-10: 1879505215; \$14.95.

Voytilla, Stuart. *Writing the Comedy Film: Make 'Em Laugh*. Michael Wiese Productions, 2003; ISBN-10: 0941188418; \$14.95.

## Fiction

Behrens, Andy. *All the Way*. Dutton Juvenile, 2006; ISBN-10: 0525477616; \$16.99.

Ehrenhaft, Daniel. *Drawing a Blank, or, How I Tried to Solve a Mystery, End a Feud, and Land the Girl of My*

*Dreams*. HarperCollins, 2006; ISBN-10: 0060752521; \$15.99.

———. *Tell it to Naomi*. Delacorte Books for Young Readers, 2004; ISBN-10: 0385731299; \$7.95.

Korman, Gordon. *Son of the Mob*. Hyperion, 2004; ISBN-10: 0786815930; \$5.99.

Limb, Sue. *Girl, 15, Charming but Insane*. Delacorte Bks. for Young Readers, 2005; ISBN-10: 0385732155; \$8.95.

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## Web Sites

### So You Wanna Be a Comedian?

[www.soyouwannabe.com/site/syws/standup/standupfull.html](http://www.soyouwannabe.com/site/syws/standup/standupfull.html)

### Humor Project

[www.humorproject.com](http://www.humorproject.com)

### Emoticon Resource

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emoticon>

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## Early Adolescents' Reading Habits

By Stacy L. Creel

*Editor's note: This article is based on a class project and paper by St. John's University Division of Library and Information Science, LIS 226: Young Adult Literature and Resources.*

There are numerous articles about teen reading habits and library services for teens, written by professionals who understand the value of reading, but these articles do not always agree on what—and why—teens are or aren't reading. In Marc Aronson's book of essays titled *Exploding the Myths: The Truth about Teenagers and Reading*, he presents a collection of popular misconceptions about the reading habits of teenagers, including three of the most common:

1. teens don't read at all;
2. teens only read adult books; and
3. teens don't have time to read.<sup>1</sup>

Yet in contrast to these myths, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) *Reading at Risk* report states that "literary reading is declining among **all age groups**."<sup>2</sup> If less than half of the adults surveyed in 2002 by NEA reported reading literary works (novels, short stories, poetry,

or plays) for pleasure, Gambrell ponders the question: "Are adults reading less or are they just reading differently?"<sup>3</sup> No matter how different the views brought forth by the professional literature are, everyone can agree with Patrick Jones's emphasis on giving young adults a voice and a chance to speak.<sup>4</sup>

The extent to which teens find time in their schedules for independent reading and what value they place on this activity are central concerns to teen librarians who perform library outreach and reader advisory services for this demographic group.<sup>5</sup> With these concerns in mind, librarians conduct surveys to analyze the interests of teens. YA librarians can provide materials that accommodate the reading habits of their customers if they know the interests of these teens. For example, each year during Teen Read Week™ (TRW), SmartGirl.org conducts a survey online to determine the reading habits of teenagers nationwide focusing on the following questions:

1. What are the reading habits of teenagers?
2. Why do teens read?
3. Why don't teens read? and

4. How do teens feel about the services they are offered at their local public and school libraries?<sup>6</sup>

While evaluating circulation records may tell what teens are borrowing, determining what young adults enjoy reading may be best determined by using a survey designed to answer the questions librarians have about teens and their reading habits. According to the text *Literature for Today's Young Adults* by Nilsen and Donelson, surveys and forms are often used in an attempt to match books and readers, but there is a problem with using surveys and forms. The problem with such forms is that they are usually filled out and then stored in a drawer. No one has the time or the expertise to interpret them.<sup>7</sup> As an exercise in how to gather information and how to use it once they are practitioners in the field, the students in LIS 226 surveyed 127 young adults between the ages of eleven and fourteen to determine the current trends in reading interests in their service areas.

There is a vast difference between a twelve-year-old and an eighteen-year-old. As Eliza Dresang, quoted by Smith, pointed out,

a young person in that cross-over zone—ages twelve to fourteen—may be a child one moment, hour, or day and a young adult the next moment, hour, and day in psychological needs, in perspective, and in interests. And finally we realized in terms of resources that

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STACY L. CREEL currently teaches at St. John's University (Queens, N.Y.) in the Division of Library and Information Science and is finishing her Ph.D. at the University of North Texas. She has served YALSA as a member of Quick Picks, Chair of Organization and Bylaws, a member of the Teen Web Site Advisory Committee, and a member of the Sins of YA Literature Preconference Committee.

reader response differs from reader to reader so that the very same book may be read differently by a “child” who is twelve from the reading by a “young adult” who is twelve.<sup>8</sup>

These tweens and early adolescents are often the library’s heaviest users, so the survey was narrowed to focus on the ages of eleven to fourteen.

## The Process

The LIS 226 students approached early adolescents at public venues and asked them if they were interested in giving their opinion on reading. They asked 127 random early adolescents, ages eleven to fourteen, to participate. Surveys were collected at public libraries (8), malls and shopping centers (4), middle schools (3), high schools (2), on the street (2), and at a church (1). The surveys were done without the presence of a parent or other adult to elicit honesty in the responses and to create an atmosphere of comfort. No one was excluded based on race, beliefs, gender, or socioeconomic status. The survey was brief; it took no more than three to five minutes. There was no penalty if they declined, and there was no penalty if they wished to stop and did not finish the survey and interview after starting. The survey was completely anonymous; no identifying information was taken. There were no personal benefits for the participants other than the pleasure that comes from being heard and giving their opinion.

## The Results

Of 127 survey participants from Nassau, Queens, Suffolk, and Westchester counties (New York City and surrounding areas), seventy-six (60 percent) were female and fifty-one (40 percent) were male. The par-

ticipants were fairly evenly distributed with twenty-three participants being eleven years of age; thirty being twelve years of age; thirty-two being thirteen years of age; and forty-two being fourteen years of age.

## On Books and Reading

As seen in figure 1, almost half (44 percent) reported reading *more than once a week* and 22 percent reported reading *once a week*. The following reasons were given by participants for not reading: no time/too busy (9); boring/not fun (4); not interested/don’t like it (3); prefer computers or games (2); prefer TV or movies (1); and unknown (1). These reasons echoed the information reported in the 2001 and 2002 Teen Read Week Survey.<sup>9</sup>

Participants were asked the name of the last book they read for a school assignment (this could be a self-selected book to fill a requirement or assigned class reading) and the name of the last book/magazine/graphic novel/thing they read just for fun. Many of the titles one would expect for school reading did in fact make the list.

Some examples are *Animal Farm*, *Anthem*, *The Chocolate War*, *The Giver*, *Hatchet*, *Night*, *The Odyssey*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *The Scarlet Letter*. However, new and popular titles, such as the Harry Potter series, *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*, the Secret of Droon series, and the Warriors series were also included. As seen in figure 2, of the titles read for a school assignment, almost 74 percent were from the 1990s or prior in contrast to approximately 19 percent of titles read for fun being from the 1990s or prior.

Of the titles reported by participants as read for fun, 57 percent were books (with 12 percent of the books being in a series), and 30 percent were magazines. Surprisingly, only 6 percent reported that the last title they read for fun was a comic, graphic novel, or manga. As seen in figure 3, the two main genres participants reported reading for fun are realistic fiction (32 percent) and fantasy (21 percent). Often the last item they read for fun was reported as their current favorite (27 percent); this pattern may be partly due to the fact that the last thing read is still fresh in

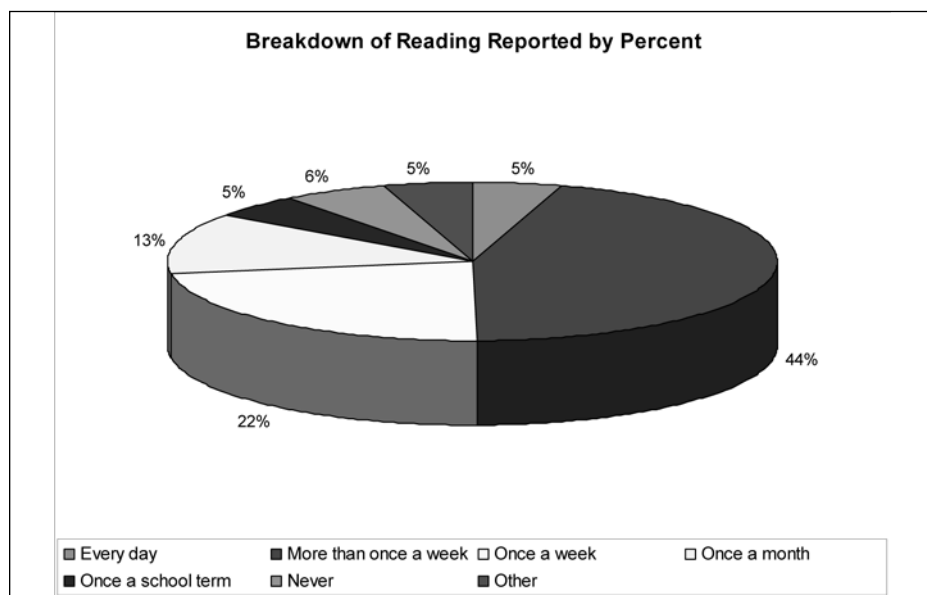
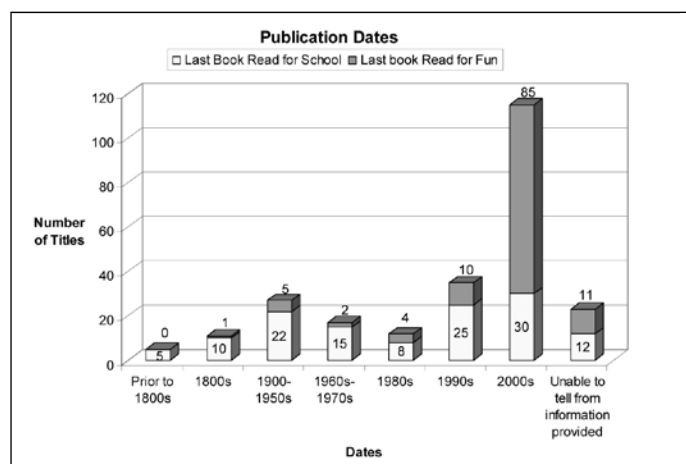
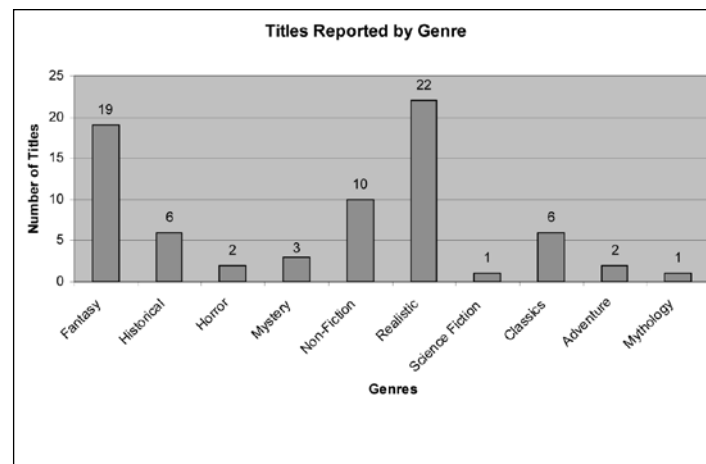


Figure 1. Time Spent Reading





**Figure 2. Books Read by Publication Date**



**Figure 3. Genres Read**

the memory and answers might be completely different if they took more time to think about it or if you asked them again in a month.

Twenty-four percent of participants were not enthusiastic readers and reported that they read once a month (13 percent), once a school term (5 percent) or never (6 percent). However, students are also not referring to their time spent browsing the Internet as reading, although case studies have proven that the Internet can be just as beneficial as printed text. Even participants who claim they do not read every week might not be thinking of the reading they do through technology through e-mails, MySpace, blogs, online articles, and so forth. Reading even comes into "play" when playing video games, which often require reading for the player to know what to do for the next mission. The myth of great digital divide is not as true as it once was. In *Education Week*, Andrew Trotter states that "children in the U.S. are going online in greater numbers, more often, and for longer periods, regardless of age, family income, and race or ethnicity, according to a study for children up to seventeen comparing Internet use in 2000 and 2002."<sup>10</sup> To really gauge what a teenager is reading, the Internet should be included in future surveys. Many kids will choose to go online rather than read a book. They

feel books are boring. But they will find something of interest and research about it, often finding a book on the subject to further their reading literacy.<sup>11</sup> When teens say they do not read for fun, do they operate under the assumption that reading only counts if it comes from a book?<sup>12</sup>

## On the Library

Patrick Jones states,

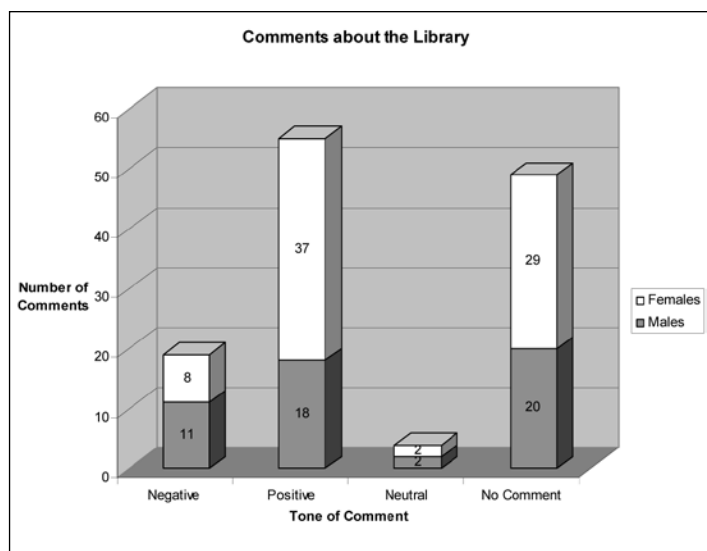
A library of the future that provides a space for teens along with quality programming and opportunities for young people to share their voices and their unique experiences on advisory committees and as volunteers will continue to remain a place where information and education collide; thereby contributing to the development of lifelong library users."<sup>13</sup>

In addition to questions on their reading habits, participants were asked if they had any comments they would like to make about the library. Some examples of positive comments included the following: helpful librarians; like the food; like the DVDs; like the collection and has what I'm looking for; well organized; positive comments about the atmosphere; like that

it is a separate section; like the programs; and like the computers. Some examples of negative comments were: not enough books; too many girl books; embarrassed to go; been banned for inappropriate behavior; too girly; need more current series; and broken computers. Figure 4 shows the comments broken down by gender.

## Conclusion

Libraries must continue to meet teens' reading needs by purchasing current materials, including a wide variety of magazines for pleasure reading and school "classics." The emphasis on free reading for school requirements should be continued and an emphasis on variety of genres may need to be implemented. Students are definitely reading, but they may not be experiencing the wonderful variety out there. Participants are reading a large variety of teen and adult magazines, including *People*, *Teen People*, *Ebony*, *Vibe*, *CosmoGirl!*, and others, which teenagers can read by themselves or which can be a catalyst for interaction with their peers with quizzes, gossip, articles, and discussion of their culture and pop culture. This project showed surveys are a good and reliable way to determine the interests and preferences



**Figure 4. How They Felt about the Library**

of YA readers. Librarians can collect and document their findings and plan for their collection development, teen services, and teen spaces in an informed manner based on input from library users, but they have to survey and then do something with the results. Surveys help librarians give their user populations what they want. If used effectively, surveys provide valuable information for collections development and for keeping patrons satisfied.

## DLIS Student Comments on the Process

"The teens were more than happy to participate. It seemed to give them a feeling of importance to be heard and to have what they were saying written down and recorded."

"This process turned out to be a great learning experience, and we enjoyed the interaction with the teens as much as they enjoyed being asked their opinion."

"This was a very interesting process and learning experience. Survey-taking was a slightly daunting idea that turned

out to be much less painless than anticipated."

"As students in a young adult literature class, we were pleased to have the opportunity to meet with a number of teenagers and hear their thoughts and opinions about what and why they read."

"The teenagers were eager to share their reading trends, feeling important and proud once they saw on paper how often they were really reading."

"Some of the answers were completely unexpected to me. This showed me the importance of speaking to actual young adults in order to help determine which materials will best suit their needs." **YALS**

## The Writers and Contributors

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LaSpina, Myung Lee, Danielle LoDolce, Gisela Ramos, Jacquelyn Rizzo, Michelle Samuel, Lissetty Thomas, and Myrna Velez.

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—James Blasingame, Associate Professor of English Education at Arizona State University, coeditor of *The ALAN Review* (NCTE), and editor of the "Books for Adolescents" section of the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* (IRA).

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**Jurkowski, Odin L.** *Technology and the School Library: A Comprehensive Guide for Media Specialists and other Educators*. Scarecrow Pr., 2006; ISBN-13: 978-0810852907; 236p. \$45.

This title provides a school librarian with a beginner's overview of the selection and application of technology commonly used in school libraries. The book is separated into broad topical areas that include descriptions of hardware, software, and networks, the development and maintenance of information resources, the integration of technology tools into classroom teaching, uses of technology and the Internet within the library setting, and suggestions for guiding teachers through technology professional development. The author outlines the historical development of various hardware devices and software applications, explaining how the different iterations of technology tools have been used in the field of education. Historical background on the development of the Internet provides a nice context for descriptions of today's Web and commonly used Web browsers. Early chapters include some incomplete or erroneous information, sometimes using incorrect terminology or narrow examples to describe broad topical areas; it is in the later chapters of the book that the author's expertise is most apparent. A casual writing style makes the text seem approachable, but occasional poor grammar and confusing descriptions can make this a difficult book to read. A number of useful Web sites have been included at the end of each chapter, but source citations are sometimes of questionable authority. While school librarians certainly have a need for books on this topic, this would serve best as an additional purchase rather than a first choice.—Cathy Rettberg, Head Librarian, Menlo School, Atherton, California

**Levine, Jenny.** *Gaming and Libraries: Intersection of Services*. ALA TechSource, *Library Technology Reports* 42, no. 5 (Sept./Oct. 2006); 80p. \$63.

In this issue of *Library Technology Reports*, Jenny Levine presents an overview of the place of gaming, particularly video games, within various library service models. Most of the material is aimed at librarians who may have little or no experience with using

video games themselves, but there are also extensive programming ideas that are useful to game-savvy librarians. All of the material is presented in a straightforward manner with talking-point summaries at the end of each chapter. Levine's emphasis is on the use of video gaming in programs rather than on collection development. The first sections of the report deal almost exclusively with the justification for the inclusion of gaming programs within the library. Levine draws on recent research and observation supporting both the social and educational benefits of video games as well as the evolving gaming culture growing around them. She documents successful programs that librarians at public, school, and academic libraries have created for each of their institutions. There is enough step-by-step information and resources outlined in this report to give a clear view of how to create a successful gaming program for most libraries. The author includes a brief description of the different types of video game hardware with emphasis on console games, although some of this information is out of date. However, the programming models are still relevant. This resource is most helpful for librarians just beginning video game programming.—Don Phillips, Teen Services Librarian, Milpitas Library, Santa Clara County (Calif.) Library

**Brown, Joyce and Marge Rizzo.** *Building Character through Community Service: Strategies to Implement the Missing Element in Education*. Rowman and Littlefield Education, 2006; ISBN-13: 978-1578863662; 208p. \$32.95.

Nearly all the philosophy in this book is in the title. Almost everything else between the covers of this user-friendly, ultimately practical manual is directed toward achieving that goal. The authors' aim is to provide educators with a step-by-step guide to organizing a half-day community service project for eighth-grade students. Initiating such a project means organizing enough details to drive a Broadway producer insane, but why risk that when it's all here from soup to nuts? Each chapter deals with a specific aspect of the project (for example, agencies, students, chaperones, and so on) and includes valuable tools such as timelines, agendas, checklists, evaluation forms, and lesson plans. Some of these are admittedly so simple and obvious that there's no need for them, but the important thing is that all the eventualities have been anticipated



and accounted for here. The plan outlined and the materials provided for its execution are entirely flexible, and this roadmap could easily be adapted to projects of longer duration and more frequent incidence or with older students. Anyone endeavoring to establish a community-service project would do well to start with this guide. The authors offer an opportunity not only to avoid their mistakes, but to capitalize on their successes.—*Peter Rivard, Bullitt Central High School Library, Shepherdsville, Kentucky*

**National Writing Project. *Writing for a Change: Boosting Literacy and Learning through Social Action*. Jossey-Bass, 2006; ISBN-13: 978-0787986575; 192p. \$22.95.**

*Writing for a Change* is a book from the National Writing Project. Written primarily for K–12 educators, the book is divided into three segments: the definition of Social Action, anecdotal stories of teachers who have used this model successfully, and activities that educators can use to facilitate communication, problem-solve, and identify commonalities. Social Action is about opposing injustice and oppression. Focusing on creating change for the better is the motivation for writing and for honing writing skills. The beginning segment describes and defines Social Action in detail, and defines the role of the teacher as facilitator for the information-gathering activities found later in the book.

How does it work? The book has numerous stories from teachers from different grade levels who used the Social Action model both to create change and to boost their students' literacy skills. In these different stories the educator will be able to see how they may incorporate this model into their own classrooms. The latter portion of the book has activities for facilitators to use to analyze issues, uncover opinions, to plan an event, and so on. The activities are simple, with most needing little more than flip charts, markers, and Post-It notes. This book has clear definitions and activities for teachers, and fulfills its promise of boosting literacy through promoting Social Action.—*Rochelle Carr, Fresno County (Calif.) Library*

**Haven, Kendall, and MaryGay Ducey. *A Crash Course in Storytelling*. Libraries Unlimited, 2007; ISBN-10: 1591583993; 121p. \$30.**

Frequently, library staff defer to professional storytellers when providing storytelling programming. Why? Haven and Ducey assert that we are all storytellers, and they guide us through the process of learning to tell stories with *A Crash Course in Storytelling*. Experienced storytellers themselves, the authors provide a thorough guide to the process of storytelling. Techniques, contingencies, and story suggestions are a few of the topics that Haven and Ducey adeptly address. The pros and cons of props and the guide through various problem situations are especially useful. Readers

will also be inspired by the programming ideas offered within the book.

This is a guide best suited to children's librarians, but the teen librarian can glean many tips for teen programming. Teen drama clubs can also benefit from many pointers in this guide. Additionally, *A Crash Course in Storytelling* will be useful in training teens in the art of storytelling for outreach with younger children. This guide will encourage teens as well as professionals in the use of creative expression in storytelling as well as in reading written stories aloud. While this is a professional guide, the teen librarian can use it as a reference when teaching teens.

*A Crash Course in Storytelling* is one of a series of Crash Course books published by Libraries Unlimited. As with the other volumes, this concise guide is easy to read, inspirational, and an excellent resource for public librarians.—*Vicky Lopez-Terrill, Teen Librarian, Loveland (Colo.) Public Library*

**Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center: Critical Thinking ([www.galeschools.com](http://www.galeschools.com)). Thomson Gale.**

Critical Thinking is a new, add-on module to Thomson Gale's Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center. Once patrons click on the Critical Thinking module, their next step is to choose from the picklist of 250 topics (more than twice the size of the picklist in the standard Opposing Viewpoints).

For each topic, a few questions to ponder are given and three essays are provided, sourced from the series included in Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center (for example, *At Issue, Teen Decisions*). Each essay is enhanced with these features: an audio recording of the entire essay; a ten-question quiz; highlighted advanced vocabulary—their definitions appear and disappear with a mouse hover, are gathered in a list, and each word comes with a sound file; and, finally, links are provided to subject searches for related topics in the standard Opposing Viewpoints.

The Critical Thinking module can facilitate vocabulary learning and provides material for auditory learners. Its longer picklist will make research easier for students. The thoughtful, ten-question quizzes for each essay would help self-learners or curriculum developers, either traditional or homeschooling. These features all work well, but are slim additions to the vast wonders of the standard Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center. Purchase if these features resonate with your library's mission.—*Sally Leete, Adult Program Librarian, Gilroy Library, Santa Clara County (Calif.) Library YALS*

*Editor's note: Please submit professional resources for review to YALS, c/o Valerie Ott, Wadsworth Public Library, 132 Broad Street, Wadsworth, Ohio 44281. For inquiries about the resources reviewed in this column, contact Valerie Ott at [vott724@yahoo.com](mailto:vott724@yahoo.com).*

## Debraski Elected YALSA Vice President

Sarah Cornish Debraski has been elected vice president/president-elect of YALSA. She will assume office following the 2007 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.

Debraski has worked for YALSA for several years, including chairing the Program Clearinghouse Committee and serving as a representative to ALA's Conference Planning Coordinating Team. In 2004, she was elected to the Board of Directors for a three-year term. She is involved in the New Jersey Library Association and has published extensively on romance novels and booktalking, two of her favorite topics.

She hopes to encourage participation in YALSA as the organization continues to grow quickly, finding innovative ways to allow YALSA members to participate and be active within the association.

"So many people have great skills, experience, and knowledge to share, but not everyone is able to travel twice a year to conference," said Debraski. "With growth comes change and challenges. We've already expanded opportunities with the creation of interest and discussion groups, and we need to continue thinking of opportunities such as that."

Debraski began her career as a children's librarian at the Tecumseh branch of the Allen County (Ind.) Library System, with her interest in teen services deepening after she accepted a position at the Vineyard Haven (Mass.) Public Library. Later, she returned to her hometown of Warren, New Jersey, to be a young adult

librarian at its branch of the Somerset County Library System, eventually becoming head of its youth services department. She left Warren Library in 2005, following the birth of her son, Clark. She now lives in Neshanic Station, New Jersey, with her husband and son. Debraski earned her MLS from the University of Pittsburgh.

## YALSA 2007 Election Results

### Elected Members

**Vice President/President-Elect:** Sarah Cornish Debraski

**Board of Directors:** Michelle Gorman and Dawn Rutherford

**Margaret A. Edwards 2009 Award Committee:** Sharon Rawlins, Stephanie Squicciarini, and Kristine Mahood

**Michael L. Printz 2009 Award Committee:** Karyn Silverman, Elizabeth Burns, Marin Younker, and Alison Hendon

(Terms officially begin at the close of the 2007 Annual Conference.)

### Proposals Passed

- The proposal to amend the bylaws to increase the member representation on the Board of Directors by increasing the number of Directors-at-Large from six to seven passed.
- The proposal to amend the bylaws to add to the Board of Directors a Secretary position who will also serve on the Executive Committee passed.

## New YAttitudes! Editor Named

YALSA named Erin Downey Howerton, school liaison for the Johnson County (Kans.) Library, as editor of its quarterly online newsletter, *YAttitudes!* She will begin a three-year term with the Fall 2007 issue. *YAttitudes!* is a members-only electronic newsletter that spotlights significant news and events of the organization and its member groups, including articles, interviews, and other information.

"I feel very privileged to contribute to the organization in a way that affects our members so directly," Howerton said. "YALSA does such good things, and this is a perfect way to make our information more accessible to them in a fun and functional way."

Howerton will earn her MLIS from Florida State University in December 2007. A YALSA member since 2004, Howerton has served on several committees, including the Margaret A. Edwards Award Committee and as chair of the Program Clearinghouse Committee. She is a certified YALSA Serving the Underserved trainer.

## Two New Books from YALSA This Summer

### Get Connected

*Get Connected: Tech Programs for Teens* by Rosemary Honnold, published by YALSA and Neal-Schuman in June, offers tried-and-true, practical tips for young adult library workers seeking to incorporate



technology into their programs and services. Topics include recreation- and education-based programs, working with special teen populations, drawing young readers in the social networking

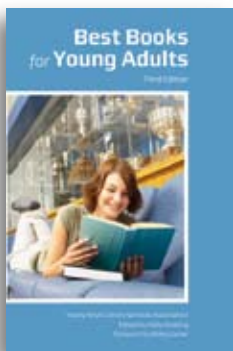
scene, tips for working with teen advisory groups and YALSA's innovative ideas for celebrating Teen Tech Week.

Honnold, a longtime YALSA member, brings her teen expertise to the table in her fourth book on teen services. "Teens' love for technology and the new Teen Tech Week initiative pointed us in the direction of technology related programs to recognize the changing trends in libraries due to technology," she said. "YALSA members are generous in sharing their expertise, experience, and ideas with their colleagues. I'm very happy to have been involved in this project." Honnold is the young adult services coordinator at the Coshocton (Ohio) Public Library.

*Get Connected* (ISBN-10: 1555706134; ISBN-13: 978-1555706135) costs \$45 and is available at [www.neal-schuman.com](http://www.neal-schuman.com) or by calling 1-866-NS-BOOKS. A discount is available for YALSA members (use discount code GCTT).

## Best Books for Young Adults, 3rd Edition

Preorders are now available for the third edition of YALSA's unparalleled *Best Books for Young Adults* (BBYA), due out from ALA Editions this fall. Expertly edited by Holly Koelling, outreach services manager for the King County (Wash.) Library System, BBYA continues to be the most comprehensive and



effective reference for great reading for young adults, including forty years of best YA books.

Teen service librarians in public and school libraries, along with parents, and middle and high school English teachers, will welcome this fully updated third edition, which includes:

- Background on the history, committee procedures, and current issues facing the BBYA Committee;
- A recap of the current trends in teen literature as reflected in the past decade of BBYA lists;
- Twenty-seven themed and annotated reproducible booklists, perfect for reader's advisory with teens, parents, teachers even for collection development; and
- Indexed, annotated lists extending back to 1966.

The third edition of *BBYA* (ISBN-10: 0838935699; ISBN-13: 978-0838935699) costs \$42 (\$37.80 for ALA members). For more information, or to preorder, visit [www.alastore.ala.org](http://www.alastore.ala.org) or call 1-866-SHOP-ALA.

## YALSA Wins World Book—ALA Goal Award

ALA named YALSA as its annual World Book—ALA Goal Award, with a grant totaling \$10,000 to improve teen library services in three key states: Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. The award was accepted at the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., in June.

YALSA will host two workshops in each state—A Beginner's Guide to Teens in Libraries and Power Up with Print—and give free Teen Read Week™ (TRW) resource kits to library workers in each state, including tips on collection development, programming, and marketing library services to teens.

YALSA Immediate Past President Judy Nelson identified three key problems facing the nation's teens: poor literacy skills, inadequate service in the nation's libraries and a low rate of participation in TRW in several states. The project seeks

to raise the level of library services to teens in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi by using TRW as a focal point. Each of these states reported having fewer than forty-nine librarians in their states implementing TRW in 2005 and 2006 and all three states have standardized reading scores below the national average.

The \$10,000 World Book—ALA Goal Grant is donated by World Book, Inc., and is awarded to ALA units for the advancement of public, academic or school library service and librarianship through the support of programs that advance the mission, goals and priorities of ALA.

## Teens' Top Ten Nominations Ready for Reading

### Encourage Teens to Read Now, Vote in October

The 2007 Teens' Top Ten (TTT) nominees include twenty-five books released between January 2006 and March 2007 in several genres, including mysteries, science fiction, fantasies, and realistic fiction.

Librarians seeking new titles for readers' advisory, collection development, or simply to give to their teens as part of summer reading programming can see the 2007 nominations at the TTT Web site at [www.ala.org/teenstopten](http://www.ala.org/teenstopten). Teens across the country are encouraged to read the nominated titles and participate in the national vote during Teen Read Week, October 14–20, 2007. The votes will determine the 2007 TTT booklist of the best new books for young adults. TTT is the only national literary list selected and voted on entirely by teens.

TTT is a part of YALSA's Young Adult (YA) Galley Project, which facilitates access to advance copies of young adult books to national teen book discussion groups. Fifteen public libraries and school library media centers from across the country evaluate books from publishers; five of those groups nominate submitted books for TTT. YALSA's YA Galley Committee chooses groups every two years; new groups will be chosen for the 2008 observance.





Left to right: Plymouth Whitmarsh High School Librarian Erika Miller with contest winners Dave Burgmayer, Michael Morse, and Michelle Gillman.

## Teen Tech Week Video Contest Winners

Michael Morse, Michelle Gillman, and Dave Burgmayer of Plymouth Whitmarsh High School in Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania, won YALSA's Teen Tech Week™ video contest with a short video

highlighting the many great technological resources the library has to offer students. Their film, which can be seen on YALSA's Web site ([www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teentechweek/contests/contests.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/teentechweek/contests/contests.htm)) asks the question, "What's so great about the library?" All three filmmakers are seniors taking an independent study class in tele-

vision production. Burgmayer works the camera and feels that one of his strengths is in finding that perfect shot. Gillman serves as editor/reviewer, and identifies what needs to be added or redone. Morse comes up with the ideas and produces the video.

When the YALSA contest was announced, Morse and Burgmayer approached their school librarian, Erika Miller, and asked her what she thought should absolutely be included in the video. From there, they took on the project themselves, working primarily with their teachers and just checking in with the library staff to let them know when they would be coming in to work on the video.

Plymouth Whitmarsh High School is one of Pennsylvania's Classrooms for the Future schools, and Miller feels very fortunate to have wonderful databases and e-books, a new Web-based catalog, a supportive administration, good staff, and cooperative faculty. Miller's goal is to work with the school community to integrate the technology, the curriculum, and information resources so that they work as a whole and are understood to be vital to the success of each student.

The teens each won \$50 Borders gift cards, and Miller received \$100 in books from YALSA. **YALS**

## Teen Read Week Wiki

Librarians prepping for Teen Read Week (TRW) have a unique resource to look to for help: the TRW Wiki. Launched last spring, the TRW Wiki is a great place to find creative program ideas; smart professional resources; and recommendations for funny books, media, movies, and Web sites to share with teens.

But the wiki is far from complete—and that's where YALSA members come in! YALSA invites its members and any other TRW stakeholders to visit and contribute to the TRW Wiki. Librarians, teachers, parents, or anyone else who wants to participate can add recommendations to the humor book and media lists, provide links to articles that may help others plan their TRW celebrations, or brainstorm creative program and activity ideas. There's even space for librarians to provide links and information about their own TRW plans!

The Teen Read Week Wiki is located at [http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Teen\\_Read\\_Week](http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Teen_Read_Week).

## YALSA Releases Guide to Social Networking Software for Teens

In honor of National Internet Safety Month, YALSA published "Social Networking: A Guide for Teens." YALSA created the brochure with teen audiences in mind to assist librarians in educating teens about safe use of online social networking software, including sites like Facebook, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube, and LiveJournal. The guide is available as a PDF on YALSA's Web site at [www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/profdev/socialnetworking.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/profdev/socialnetworking.htm). Librarians can download the color brochure to distribute to their teen users.

"We wanted to give librarians a resource they could use to jump-start discussions with teens about Web 2.0 in their lives," said Linda Braun, chair of YALSA's Website Advisory Committee and YALSA blog manager. "June is Internet Safety Month, so it's a great time for librarians to do just that."

Written expressly for teens, the guide offers definitions of online social networking software, gives teens practical safety advice, explains why social networking causes so much debate, and provides several online resources for safe, smart use of online social networking software.

"Teens need help understanding why adults are concerned about teen use of social networking," said Braun. "As librarians who serve teens, it's our responsibility to help show them how they could get involved in educating others about social networking and how it has an impact on teen lives." **YALS**



read for  
the fun of it

# teen read week™

[www.ala.org/teenread](http://www.ala.org/teenread)

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Get ready to LOL @ your library®! This year's theme encourages teens to read something light and entertaining, just for the fun of it. Teen Read Week™ is October 14–20, 2007.

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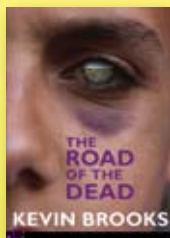
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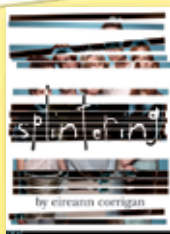
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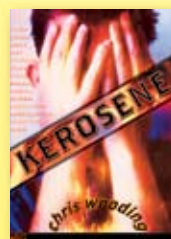
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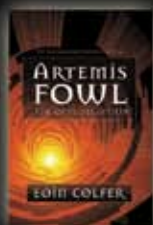
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