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VOLUME 6 | NUMBER 1

FALL 2007

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About This Cover

The cover image features YALSA publications during the past fifty years, including "The Fair Garden and the Swarm of Beasts" by Margaret A. Edwards.

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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

Valerie A. Ott

The Heart of YALSA

Relatively speaking, I haven't been a YALSA member for that long—just six or seven years. In that short time, however, I have been afforded some great growth opportunities—serving as the editor for this journal, for example. I've served on a couple of committees and made some new friends as well. In reading the reminiscences of fellow YALSA members, though, I realized that YALSA can continue to enrich the professional lives of its members for as long as one chooses because there are myriad ways to be involved. Most, if not all, of these reminiscences point to the fact, too, that YALSA is like a big family, an association of friends who work passionately and tirelessly toward the same goal: to provide the best possible library service to teens. YALSA members are truly the lifeblood of the association; however, it occurs to me that the blood wouldn't be pumping if it weren't for the *heart* of our association: teens. Several of the reflections and memories shared in the coming pages certainly speak to the fact that teens drive what we do, just as a heart pumps blood through a body.

Teens are the inspiration for authors, too, as evidenced in the Printz speeches contained in this issue as well as in the reflections of past Printz winners. While the Printz Award is arguably one of YALSA's greatest achievements in the past fifty years, there are certainly many more successes about which we can boast. YALSA's numerous booklists, such as Best Books for Young Adults, guide teachers, parents, librarians, and teens to exemplary materials for young adults. YALSA's member awards, such as the Sagebrush Award, highlight the accomplishments of librarians who connect teens with reading through innovative programming. These examples serve to bring me back to my point: that teens have always inspired and motivated YALSA members to work as hard as they most assuredly do, and that teens will continue to drive us for the next fifty years as well. Happy birthday, YALSA! **YALS**

from the President

Paula Brehm-Heeger



This year's ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., featured several events celebrating YALSA's fiftieth anniversary. These celebrations provided a unique opportunity for me to reflect on YALSA's rich tradition of excellence and to hear about the remarkable accomplishments, activities, and ideas of many current YALSA members. We may be turning fifty, but we haven't lost our passion for and dedication to YALSA's mission of advocating, promoting, and strengthening library service to young adults. With our proud past on full display, and an exciting future unfolding in front of us, it is the perfect time to concentrate on the theme of my presidential year, "YALSA: Leading the Way."

Never afraid to try something new, YALSA members and staff have been quick to utilize new technologies for the benefit of our division. We've created an award-winning blog, developed MySpace and Flickr pages, and recently added the YALSA wiki. More than two hundred individuals have taken part in thirteen online courses offered in the last year.

Our list of partners and sponsors continues to grow, helping us raise the profile and increase the impact of our national initiatives, including Teen Read Week™, featuring the WrestleMania Reading Challenge; Teen Tech Week™; and Support YA Literature Day. Last year, the Friends of YALSA generously sponsored two YALSA members to represent us among ALA's first class of Emerging Leaders. In addition, this spring YALSA received \$10,000 through the ALA-World Book Goal Award, which allowed us to provide additional training and resources in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi to improve teen services in these states. As if all that were not enough, we also are in the process of planning the first-ever YALSA-

sponsored YA Literature Symposium to be held in Nashville in 2008!

With so many accomplishments to our credit, and so many plans in the making, how do I see our division continuing to lead the way into the future? How can I, as your president, encourage members to be the driving force leading others to rise to the challenges of providing outstanding service to teenagers in our nation's libraries?

I will work to ensure maximum commitment and engagement from our division's leaders. One important piece of this equation came in the form of the overwhelming approval for two proposals on the spring ballot, one for adding a director-at-large to YALSA's board of directors, and a second for adding a secretary position to YALSA's board of directors. The decision to ask the membership for approval of these additional board positions was not undertaken lightly, however, to keep leading the way with dynamic programs and high-profile, nationwide initiatives, we must be certain our members have the necessary board support to ensure the highest quality in all that we do. I deeply appreciate this vote of confidence in the YALSA board, and am certain that the additional positions will translate into real-world results.

I also plan to encourage and support members in trying new and exciting activities. While our recent utilization of cutting-edge technologies is an example that comes immediately to mind when discussing this focus, let's not forget that the willingness of YALSA members to try out new, sometimes risky ideas is a long-standing tradition! For example, teen participation in the Best Books for Young Adults sessions at Annual Conferences has not always been a standard part of the

sessions. It was the result of YALSA members and leaders having a vision for teen inclusion and a commitment to giving teens a voice whenever possible. I will work to keep this tradition of innovative thinking and action alive.

In addition, I will work to increase partnership and sponsorship opportunities. The recent addition of Stephanie (Stevie) Kuenn, YALSA's new communications specialist, will certainly help us spread YALSA's message, but individual YALSA members and leaders also must be informed about the division's many activities. Whenever possible, we should all be ready and willing to speak confidently about the many reasons partners and sponsors should support our initiatives. As president, I will work to keep YALSA members and leaders well-informed and to raise awareness about the Friends of YALSA, whose generous gifts are vital to YALSA leading the way. If you would like to know more about how you can become a Friend of YALSA, visit www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/givetoyalsa/give.htm.

Accomplishing these goals depends on the support of each and every YALSA member. If you have additional ideas, please do not hesitate to contact me at paulabrehmheeger@fuse.net. It is with great excitement, anticipation, and honor that I look forward to serving as your president and to working with our more than 5,600 members to help YALSA lead the way into the future. **YALS**

Oh, Those Golden Oldies . . .

By Michael Cart

Reflecting on YALSA's fiftieth anniversary, I had an epiphany. If YALSA, I mused, turns fifty this year (it does), and if I'm sixty-six (I am), then the year YALSA was born, I turned sixteen. Omigod! I was a young adult myself then! That means YALSA and I are cosmic cousins! Dudes, no wonder I'm so devoted to the association and to all that wonderful young adult literature I was reading back then! Oh, but wait! The year was 1957, wasn't it? That means another decade would have to pass before S. E. Hinton and Robert Lipsyte "invented" young adult literature, in that magical year of 1967, with their instant classic novels *The Outsiders* and *The Contender*. So I guess that means I didn't actually begin reading young adult literature until I turned twenty-six and was no longer part of its target audience.

Hmmmm . . . so if there was no young adult literature yet, what *were* teenagers like me reading way back then in that heart of darkness known as the 1950s? Well, duh! J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, of course. Though published in 1951 as an adult title, this was really the first book that smelled like teen spirit and—thanks to Holden Caulfield's own jittery, angsty, nervous, disaffected, sarcastic, and sometimes self-pitying first-person telling—gave a voice to a whole new literary form that, a decade later, would be dubbed "young adult literature." Because of its radical appeal

to adolescents, it would become the first crossover title. *Plus ça change!* Today, fifty-five years later, writers for young adults are still employing that same first-person voice and tone, and crossover novels are now the hottest thing happening in the field. *The Catcher in the Rye* really was a harbinger of things to come. But, it also was an anomaly as food for hungry teen minds because, truth to tell, what teenagers such as myself were more often reading in the '50s was still almost exclusively old-fashioned, traditional genre fiction such as romances, career-romance hybrids (Sue Barton and Cherry Ames, anyone?), car stories, adventures, mysteries, and science fiction. *These* were the titles that crowded the shelves of what was then being called the "junior high section" in my local public library (and yours, perhaps?). *These* were the books that I was reading so avidly (well, not the romances, but more about that in a minute) way back in '52 and '53, when I was still a preteen in the fifth and sixth grades, trembling on the brink of adolescence, counting the days until my voice would change and my first whiskers would sprout.

Frankly, I had no sense of literature as literature back then. I only knew I loved books, and I loved reading, and I found my

reading material on the shelves of the public library, that all-you-can-eat cafeteria for hungry minds. It would be another thirty or forty years before publishers started releasing original paperback novels targeted at teens who, by then, were shopping in the new chain bookstores in America's malls. In the '50s, though, the library was still the only place in town where a book-hungry kid like me could satisfy his appetite. I found my book fodder through grazing . . . okay, through indiscriminate browsing. And because the shelves of my public library had never been systematically weeded, that browsing amounted to a self-education in the history of "books for young readers," a kind of generic term I use to describe what would not be called "teen" literature until the mid-1940s, when teenagers first emerged as a separate and distinct category of human being in America. Before that, in the '30s, there was something patronizingly called the "junior novel" (Rose Wilder Lane's *Let the Hurricane Roar* of 1933 is an example), and before that there was just an amorphous bunch of books called "children's literature."

In due and deliberate course, all of these terms would meld and merge into the contemporary descriptor of "young adult literature." But that wouldn't happen until the late '60s.

Frankly, though, who cared what it was called? It was published for category-defying kids who read it when they were ready for it, when it caught their attention, and when it interested them. What a field day we had, those of us who entered our teenage years in the early '50s. But then we turned sixteen and got our first driver's licenses, and most never looked back at the library as it rapidly receded in the rearview mirror.

It was liberating, that license, but even more liberating for me was the fact that

Booklist columnist and reviewer **MICHAEL CART** is a former president of YALSA (1997–98) and the author or editor of fifteen books. He also is the recipient of the 2000 Grolier Award.

turning sixteen meant I could, for the first time, enter the sanctum sanctorum, the holiest of holies: the adult stacks of the Logansport (Ind.) Public Library! Before turning sixteen I had to sneak into this hushed, dimly lit area when the librarians' backs were turned; now I could swagger in there under the steeliest of adult gazes. And what did I read? Well, not *The Catcher in the Rye*; I didn't read that until I was a freshman in college in 1959. No, I read . . . more genre fiction. As a teenage boy I doted on science fiction, discovering to my delight that Robert A. Heinlein, whom I had previously known only as the author of such kids' books as *Farmer in the Sky* (1950), *Rocket Ship Galileo* (1947), and *The Rolling Stones* (1952), also wrote for adults! Who knew? And then there was Paul French, author of the Lucky Starr series, who was actually Isaac Asimov, author of an astonishing array of titles published for newly minted adults such as myself.

Mysteries were another ample field to be explored. As a young teen in the early '50s, I loved the likes of Augusta Huiell Seaman, Stephen W. Meader, and—best of all—Howard Pease, who blended mystery and action-adventure. (A small confession: I also read Nancy Drew; but, for some reason, I never cracked the covers of a Hardy Boys mystery!) Now, however, I could omnivorously read the adult likes of Agatha Christie, Ellery Queen, and Rex Stout! And, me being a boy and it being the '50s, I must confess to having been a secret reader of Mickey Spillane (or "Mucky Spleen" as Walt Kelly called him).

I never read romances—perhaps the only genre I didn't touch—but if I had, the '40s and '50s would have been the wonder years! Starting with Maureen Daly's *Seventeenth Summer* in 1942, love was everywhere in the pages of books for teens back then. Ah, *L'amour*! You were so *toujours*! And unlike the '80s, another great period of romance fiction when original paperback series were queen of the prom, the brand names of those earlier decades

belonged not to series, but to authors, such as Janet Lambert, Rosamund DuJardin, Betty Cavanna, Anne Emery, and, if your taste was a wee bit more literary, Mary Stolz and Beverly Cleary. For those young adults who read adult titles, there were

I had no sense of literature as literature back then. I only knew I loved books, and I loved reading, and I found my reading material on the shelves of the public library, that all-you-can-eat cafeteria for hungry minds.

the borderline romance and family stories such as Betty Smith's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1947), Harriette Arnow's *The Dollmaker* (1954), Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca* (1938), Benedict and Nancy Freedman's *Mrs. Mike* (1947), Herman Wouk's *Marjorie Morningstar* (1955), Sally Benson's *Junior Miss* (1941), and so many miscellaneous others.

Girls didn't have *all* the reading fun in the '50s. Boys had a lot of action-adventure, sports, car, and animal stories from which to select. My personal favorite in the adventure category, aside from Howard Pease, was probably Robb White, whose much later novel, *Deathwatch* (1972), became one of the most celebrated young adult novels ever. Although I was never a sports enthusiast, I did read the occasional novel by John R. Tunis, but more for his in-depth characterization than for any play-by-play action. As for car stories, lo, the name of Henry Gregor Felsen, like that of Abu Ben Adam, led all the rest. (Interestingly, Felsen's 1952 novel *Two and the Town* is a quite good story, not of cars, but of what happened in one's back seat, which resulted in an unwed pregnancy. This was at least a decade-and-a-half ahead of all the rest of the titles about adolescent sexuality that would become commonplace in the '60s.

Not surprisingly, it excited considerable controversy but found a strong champion in the sainted Margaret A. Edwards). Of all these boy-friendly categories, that of animals probably boasted the strongest assortment of offerings, including Walter Farley's

Black Stallion books (enraptured, I read all of them); Fred Gipson's *Old Yeller* (1956); the many offerings of Jim Kjelgaard; Eric Knight's Lassie books; Mary O'Hara's horse stories; Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' *The Yearling* (1938); Sterling North's *So Dear to My Heart* (1947); and a whole pride of others.

Arguably even stronger stories fell into the category of historical fiction, such as work by the gifted likes of Rosemary Sutcliffe, Harold Keith (*Rifles for Watie*, 1957), Elizabeth George Speare (*The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, 1958), and, of course, Esther Forbes, whose *Johnny Tremain* (1943) remains the *sine qua non* of historical fiction for young readers.

So *was* there a literature for young adults before there was young adult literature? Well, as I hope I've demonstrated, the answer is an enthusiastic "You bet-cha!" That said, it speaks volumes, doesn't it, that YALSA's annual Best Books for Young Adults list didn't start including young adult books until 1973! What did it include before? For an answer, look no further than the original name of the list, which was "Adult Books for Young People," remaining thus until 1966.

Margaret A. Edwards championed the reading of adult books by young readers, a

reason that YALSA's annual list of the ten best adult books for young adults is called the ALEX Awards in her honor. (Mrs. Edwards was called "Alex" by her friends, though probably not by the terrified young librarians whom she trained so strictly at the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, where she "invented" young adult library services and later wrote about the topic in *The Fair Garden and the Swarm of Beasts* in 1969). To my sorrow, I never knew

Margaret A. Edwards, but I confess that, in a way, I'm sort of glad, because that means I never had to tell her that my own (secret) favorite adult book of the '50s was—wait for it—*Peyton Place* by Grace Metalious (1956). Some things are better kept secret.

The 1950s—when YALSA and I were still young—were years of opportunity for young readers: opportunity to read for pleasure, inspiration, occasional

edification, sometime enlightenment, and, yes, even secret titillation. Ah, good times. And good books, that, like YALSA—and maybe even me—have in the years since become Golden Oldies!

Happy Birthday, YALSA. YALS

Editor's note: See Michael Cart's featured article in the October issue of American Libraries.

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- 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.
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- 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.
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- 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.





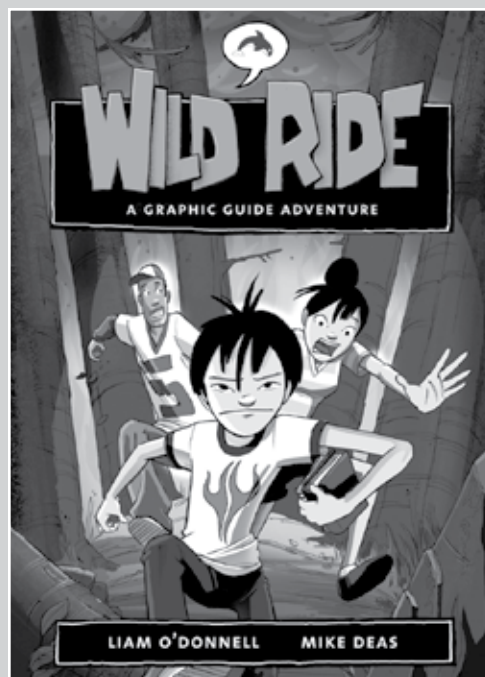

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Fifty Ways to Promote Teen Reading in Your School Library

By *CD McLean*

When I want to know how to promote reading to teens, I go to the fount of school library knowledge: independent school librarians! In recognition of YALSA's fiftieth anniversary, these fifty tips, hints, ideas, and techniques from independent school librarians across the United States and Canada will give many young adult librarians a successful start in promoting reading to their teen patrons for the next fifty years.

First Step: Be Adventurous!

1. Step out of your comfort zone and promote something other than fiction. Many teens (boys especially) are not fiction readers; they may be more interested in your magazine collection. Let your teens know which magazines are available in their library.
2. Remember those reluctant readers. Promote Quick Picks for Reluctant YA Readers as Fast Reads, which is less pejorative. Have a spinner filled with fast reads and label it as such.

3. Get graphic. Graphic novels are appropriate for boys and girls and for tweens and teens. Many times they appeal to students who wouldn't ordinarily pick up a book. If you have concerns about age appropriateness and have a collection that serves both middle and high school students, you can always break out the collection by division or grade level.
4. Think outside the book club box. An anime club can lead to a manga or graphic novel club; strategic games or MMORPGs (massively multiplayer online role playing games) can lead to a fantasy book club; and a writing or author club can lead to reading about writing or reading a particular writer's work.
5. Create some library leaders. Make the library in your school a place for

young leaders to develop their skills. They can run your circulation desk, shelve books, and more.

6. Sponsor a poetry slam contest or partner with your school's literary magazine to host an event.
7. Have a "Book Love" session once a month. Serve cookies and ask teachers and students to talk about a book they have recently read and liked.
8. Consider reviewing for a young adult magazine and have your students review as well. Sometimes the lure of seeing their name in print may push them to read more books.
9. If you have all boys or have very competitive students, have a word reading club and stand back and watch the numbers grow! Some librarians have reported that they have several students who read more than a million words in one school year.

Second Step: Be Bold!

10. Put your cool stuff up front. I have my graphic novel collection near the front entrance of the library. Other librarians use that high-traffic area to promote their magazine collection.
11. Books don't have to stay on the shelves. One librarian puts high-interest books next to her computers, and those books circulate.
12. Use the lure of the forbidden. Tell them a book is banned or controversial, or just give them some of the crazy details (for example, boyfriend is on crack and parents are abusive) and a questioning "Are you up to the challenge?" look.

CD MCLEAN is the Director of the Jean Ann Cone Library at Berkeley Preparatory School in Tampa, Fla. She also is a YALSA member and serves on its Publications Committee.

13. Tie the book to a movie. If a movie is based on a book, you have an automatic tie-in; but, don't be afraid to go beyond the specific book and, for example, tie in the Dragonriders of Pern series with *Eragon*.
14. Make mine a contest. Have a book-related contest such as a Harry Potter contest, or a contest related to the last book (*The End*) of Lemony Snicket's Series of Unfortunate Events.
15. Pimp your contest prizes. Book gift certificates are great, but go with whatever is going to draw your kids into the library, such as coffee cards, iTunes certificates, or local eatery certificates.
16. Make your prize match your audience. One librarian at a school for girls has a special bracelet for her seventh-grade *Gone with the Wind* (GWTW) readers. If they read all one thousand pages, they get a GWTW bracelet, which has been very well-received!
17. Mix it up. Instead of holding separate book clubs for students and faculty, mix it up and have them both at one meeting. You'll be rewarded with amazing discussions.

Marketing your materials:

18. Berkeley Preparatory School has a convocation during which high school students meet every morning for twenty minutes of announcements. There is always at least one slide on a new book in the slideshow of announcements.
19. Make your book talks a blast. Several librarians dress in character when giving book talks. So indulge your inner actor!
20. Use props for your book talks.
21. Use your teen actors to do your book talks. Teens are more likely to listen to their peers.
22. Podcast or vodcast your book talks. Don't just present to a class; make a vodcast and keep it on your library's Web site. Better yet, ask your teens to create podcasts of themselves talking up their favorite books.
23. Move 'em out. Prepare a book truck with brightly colored graphics indicating the genre and filled with popular books; take it out to the cafeteria, study halls, or anywhere the kids gather.
24. Create short films to promote the library using faculty and student actors.
25. Celebrate Teen Read Week in whatever manner works for you. For example, because Teen Read Week falls in October, have teens read Halloween stories to primary school students.

Third Step: Be Organized!

26. Make it a point to promote your new books. Make sure a significant percentage of books get a book blurb and are on display to generate interest.
27. Print out (in color if you can) posters of newly acquired books and post them throughout the campus (including the restroom stalls!).
28. Change your bulletin boards frequently and make them interesting. It's easy for that place to become stagnant.
29. Have your students and faculty contribute reviews and make those reviews into bookmarks. The bookmarks could have their photo, the book's cover, and a snippet of their opinion on the book.
30. Update your signature file on your e-mail account with a "What I'm Reading Now" tag and encourage your faculty and teens to do it as well.
31. If you go to ALA Midwinter Meetings or Annual Conferences, bring back

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the advanced reader copies and give them out to your students. They love free books, and you can get advanced reviews of books.

32. If your budget permits, be willing to buy books for your book club members. Free books are a great draw.
33. Let your book club kids get first crack at the new books. Knowing they are getting special treatment is a big plus for teens.

Fourth Step: Be Welcoming!

34. Make the library a welcoming place by hosting parties designed to attract readers. One library had an Eclipse Read-In on August 7, 2007, when Stephenie Meyer's new book was released. They had games, prizes, readings, vampire movies, and even a vampire potluck lunch. (For more information on this program, visit <http://hhlibrarytwilight.blogspot.com>.)
35. Remember that teens gravitate to online social activities, so by hosting a *Dance Dance Revolution* (DDR) night, gaming night, or *Guitar Hero* night, you may attract kids who might not normally come to the library.
36. What's that they say about writers being readers? Host an Eat n' Speak or poetry slam. Teens are always writing; what better way to get them in the library than to have them read their own works?
37. Bring in authors. An author visit may spark interest in reading more of that author's work, or inspire a teen to read or write.
38. Celebrate Banned Books Week.
39. Celebrate National Poetry Month or bring in a poet to speak. Many English teachers are more open to using a particular poet's work than they are to using an entire book in their curriculum.
40. Food! If you provide food, they will come. You don't have to have a full lunch; try providing just dessert or pizza. For example, if you are reading a book that has a wedding, consider getting a faux (meaning less expensive) wedding cake for dessert.
41. Kick start your summer. Host a summer book fair before school ends to encourage reading over the summer.
42. If you charge late fines, be willing to take money off if they come in the library and read. (For example, give fifty cents off the fine for every half hour of reading in the library.)

Fifth Step: Be Willing to Ask for Help!

43. Have your students lead the book club discussion or have them pick the book.
44. Have your students run your book discussion blog.
45. Have a faculty or student Pick of the Week or Month. Display it all over campus, not just in the library.
46. Ask your students or tech department for help creating a Facebook or MySpace page (or do it yourself if you know how), and list what you are reading or what books you recommend.
47. Ask your students what titles they think are missing from the library, then buy them if appropriate.
48. Take your students to the bookstore with you. Several librarians take students with them to help pick or review materials for the library.
49. Ask your faculty to sponsor a book for summer reading. Many students will want to read what their favorite teacher is reading.
50. Get your students to do the displays and bulletin boards. They know what's hot and may have a more interesting way of presenting it. **YALS**



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I've had a pretty amazing year. And really, that's an understatement. Two years ago, I photocopied and stapled individual chapters of *American Born Chinese* to sell by the dozen at comic book conventions, usually to personal friends or my mom. Today, I'm standing here in front of you.

Along the way from there to here, I've had the privilege of talking to many, many librarians and teachers about why graphic novels belong in our libraries and classrooms. Without exception, my message has been met with unbridled enthusiasm. There's no doubt about it. Librarians love graphic novels.

This past March, however, while I was still enjoying the afterglow of the Printz committee phone call, I began having serious self-doubts. I thought back to an incident from a few years ago, when one of my students, an aspiring rap musician, gave me a copy of his album. I brought it home and played it. Though I found most of it incomprehensible, I thought it had a good beat. The next day in class I told him I liked it, and immediately his friend remarked, "Dude, Mr. Yang is a *teacher*. If he likes it, it must kinda suck."

This past March, after reflecting on this and many other similar experiences, I came to the slow realization that we adults who work with teenagers—we teachers and librarians—simply are not that cool. And really, the cooler we try to be, the more uncool we become. If you doubt me, try wearing a backwards baseball cap and sagging, extra-large jeans to work some time and take a good, hard look at the faces of the teenagers you serve. You will not find admiration, I assure you.

I began to wonder: By going from library to library and school to school evangelizing librarians and teachers on the virtues of graphic novels, was I robbing comics of their cool? Would a teenager stop reading graphic novels as soon as her classroom teacher or local librarian sug-

gested that she start reading them for her own educational benefit?

Then a month later, something happened that completely shifted my perspective. MySpace honored *American Born Chinese* with the dubious distinction of being their April 2007 featured book. What followed was a furious online discussion about my graphic novel among MySpace users. Although there were occasional nuggets of wisdom, the vast majority of the posts made me regret ever putting my inking brush to paper. Let me share some examples with you.

Post #1: Funnay. this book looks totally awesome. I know ppl who pee in Cokes and eat dead cats. Ba-haha

Post #2: RACIST BOOK. repost if u got any AzN pride. its practically racist against AzNz, even the dude's name is CHINK-kee and all dat s____. go to dis site and Place Bad comments, Destroy this son of a b____ book! Destroy it! Destroy it! Racist son of a b____ book!

Post #3: Shut up. its funny. leave it alone. ur mad cuz u aren't funny. ur just asian and not funny. Funny asians are better

Post #4: i think its funny hes making fun of chinks

Post #5: Heh. people still read books?

Before I went and burned my drawing table, I decided to compare these posts to posts from other online discussions on *American Born Chinese*. These other discussions took place on the Web sites of libraries and schools, and were guided by librarians and teachers. A few examples:

Post #1: I had heard about stereotypes, but never really fully understood them. This book has taught me to at least get a little grasp on the pain and hurt that stereotypes can really cause.

Post #2: It is important to know everything about yourself. . . . It's important because knowing yourself allows you to see more clearly what you want, who you consider as friends, where you want to go, how you want to live, and what you really care about. That stuff matters.

Post #3: Sometimes we choose to give up certain values or things

that we believe in to get to a certain position. Part of who you are may get lost. . . . But you can always choose to get your soul back.

Post #4: [I] didn't want to be a person who had ADHD. I wanted to be normal and I kept trying to find a way to do it, I searched for a few years, but couldn't find a way to do it. Finally, I guess I just had to accept just who and what I was. Unfortunately, this urge still comes to me once in a great while.

Afterwards, I had an epiphany. In a data-rich society like twenty-first-century America, we need information experts to prevent complex ideas from condensing into polarized, essentially meaningless sound bites. We need these experts to teach us to sort good information from bad. We need them to save us from being

drowned by the torrents of media we create. We need them to model for us how to think about what we read and watch and listen to. In short, my epiphany can be summed up like this: You librarians are all that stand in the way of the entire world turning into one big, no-holds-barred MySpace discussion board.

I suddenly appreciated how lucky I am to be able to count librarians among the most ardent supporters of *American Born Chinese*. My Cousin Chin-Kee character, especially, has the potential to be reduced to nothing more than a YouTube video clip in the mind of the reader. Now, it's okay for you to find him funny, but I want you to laugh at him with a knot in your stomach. Without at least a passing knowledge of Chin-Kee's historical roots, a young reader might not develop that knot.

To empower you to make knots in the stomachs of teenagers across the nation, I'd like to take some time now to deconstruct

the Cousin Chin-Kee character with you. Chin-Kee stars in one of the three storylines in *American Born Chinese*.

With Chin-Kee, I attempt to tie today's popular images of Asians and Asian-Americans with the more overtly racist imagery prevalent in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Here is a political cartoon from the 1880s, around the time the Chinese Exclusion Act was enacted.

Cartoons like this sanctioned discrimination and violence against early Asian-American communities. It is from here that Chin-Kee got his outfit and hair style.

My next example shares something in common with one of my favorite span-dexed crimefighters. Batman began in a comic book series called Detective Comics, DC Comics' flagship title. Few people know, however, that Detective Comics did not begin with Batman. In fact, twenty-six issues of the series were published before



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Batman reared his brooding, pointy-eared head. The inaugural issue of Detective Comics featured a character much more familiar and marketable to comic book readers in the 1930s.

This is Ching Lung, a cheap Fu Manchu knock-off. From him Chin-Kee inherited his leering eyes and menacing slouch.

Those are the origins of Chin-Kee's appearance. His words and actions are much more modern. One of Chin-Kee's most over-the-top lines is a word-for-word quotation from a political cartoon by an award-winning, nationally syndicated cartoonist. In a lunchroom scene in the sixth chapter of *American Born Chinese*, Chin-Kee offers Danny a bite of his "crispy fried cat gizzards with noodles." On April 9, 2001, in response to the Chinese spy plane crisis, American political cartoonist Pat Oliphant drew a six-panel strip depicting Uncle Sam's visit to a Chinese restaurant, where he is served "crispy fried cat gizzards with noodles" by a slant-eyed, bucktoothed waiter.

Chin-Kee's lust for buxom American girls mirrors that of Long Duc Dong, Oriental comic relief in John Hughes' 1984 film *Sixteen Candles*. Most Asian American men of my generation can vividly recall the sting of this character. In a strip drawn for *Giant Robot* magazine, Adrian Tomine, a fellow thirtysomething Asian American cartoonist, recounts his phone interview with Gedde Watanabe, the actor who portrayed Long Duc Dong. Tomine doesn't just speak for himself when he ends the strip with an emphatic, "I hate that f***ing guy!"

Since the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, America has generally acknowl-

edged that Fu Manchu and other historical caricatures of Asians and Asian Americans are racist. But what do we make of modern-day stereotypes? Often these are treated as little more than impolite jokes. After all, Asians and Asian Americans are largely seen as successful in American society.

Images, however, have power. And images have history. Today's depictions of Asians and Asian Americans rest on a tradition. They draw on visual cues and shorthands already established in the mind of the audience. When we encounter John Hughes' Long Duc Dong or Pat Oliphant's Chinese waiter, we must remember who their grandfathers are. And we must ensure that the next generation does the same.

Getting the next generation to read and watch and listen with all their minds and all their hearts is no small task. Generation Next is constantly tempted to communicate through ten-letter text messages, make snap judgments based on two-minute video clips, and understand the world through a rotating set of Yahoo! homepage headlines, all the while having more information at their fingertips than was available to all previous generations combined. Whether you realized it or not, when you got your librarian's degree and chose to work with teenagers, you enlisted yourself in the frontlines of this struggle.

So am I robbing graphic novels of all their cool by this very act of presenting to a group of librarians? That really isn't the right question. Instead, I should ask, "Can graphic novels—and all young adult literature, really—nurture thought, passion, and understanding within our young people?" I believe the answer is yes, as long as librar-

ians are at their side, encouraging them to not just laugh at the funny scenes and cry at the sad ones, but examine what's behind their laughter and their tears.

I'd like to end by extending my gratitude to the people who made this possible. One does not go from photocopying and stapling comics by hand to making speeches in front of audiences like this one all by himself. First, I thank God for His many blessings upon me and my family. I thank my wife for her infinite patience and love, and my two children for just being cute. I thank my parents for instilling in me a love of stories, and my brother for sharing in the habit of comic book collecting.

To my fellow cartoonists, especially those in the Bay Area alternative comics scene, and most especially Derek Kirk Kim and Lark Pien, thank you for inspiring me to be a better storyteller, for opening doors, and for partnering with me in so many ways. To Mark Siegel, Simon Boughton, Lauren Wohl, Gina Gagliano, Danica Novgorodoff, Kat Kopit, and the rest of the First Second team, thank you for your vision, your passion for excellence, and your elbow grease. I cannot tell you how lucky I am to be published by such an amazing outfit. To my agent Judy Hansen, thank you for reading and explaining to me all that fine print I find so tedious.

And finally, I thank all of you here at the Young Adult Library Services Association. Thank you for the honor of this award. Thank you for your enthusiastic support of my graphic novel. And thank you for developing the intelligent, passionate, insightful readership for whom it is such a pleasure to write and draw. **YALS**

Printz Award Honor Speech

By John Green

What you say is “Good morning, Hank. It’s Wednesday.” On three. One. Two. Three.

I’d like to begin by thanking Tobin [M. T. Anderson] for his speech, and I would also like to thank him for my speech, since many of the ideas in it are stolen from him. So anyway, if I’m not good, it is Tobin’s fault.

I am very grateful to be here tonight, and when people get extremely grateful, they can sometimes become gratuitously thank-you-ey. I figure the best way to do this is to dispense with them right away and to cover everything in less than one minute: I would like to thank the Printz committee for honoring *Katherines* and for all their hard work this past year. I’d also like to thank my wife, Sarah, who inspires everything I write; my fairy godmother, Ilene Cooper; writing partners Maureen Johnson and Emily Jenkins and Scott Westerfeld; and everyone at *Booklist*. Stephanie Lurie, Lara Phan, Allison Smith, and everyone at Dutton and Penguin believed from the beginning that this book had an audience despite its abundance of nonlinear equations. And speaking of those, I must also thank my friend Daniel Biss, who wrote the formulas in the book and also wrote the appendix, which I think is by far the best twelve pages in the entire novel and is prob-

ably the reason I am standing here today. Nothing I write would be possible without Julie Strauss-Gabel, who is the best editor and the best friend an author could ever ask for. Julie’s commitment to good literature for teenagers should be an inspiration to us all.

An Abundance of Katherines began with my friend Hassan al-Rawas. Hassan now lives in Dubai, but he grew up in Kuwait near the Iraqi border, and for several years lived with me and two other friends in a small house on the north side of Chicago. During the invasion of Iraq in 2003, Hassan and I watched TV pretty much constantly. Actually, we watched TV pretty much constantly regardless, but in those weeks, we watched a lot of war. I liked to watch CNN, because it features—you know—news, but Hassan always insisted on watching Fox, because his primary source of entertainment in those dark days was screaming at the television, and Fox makes for far better television-screaming material. I have never known anyone who screamed at the television with such charming vitriol, and it was a pleasure just to sit next to him and listen as, day in and day out, he eviscerated Shepherd Smith, whom Hassan referred to only as “Shithead McGee.”

So two days after Baghdad fell, Shithead McGee was on the air talk-

ing about the anger on the Arab Street. Hassan was screaming that the Arab Street, whatever the hell that was, did not speak with a unified voice. And then new footage came in from Baghdad, and they played it while Mr. McGee, who was also watching it for the first time, spoke about it from New York. The camera panned across an Iraqi home that had plywood nailed to a damaged wall. On the plywood, there was menacing-looking graffiti in black Arabic script. Mr. McGee talked about the inborn rage of the Iraqi people, the hatred in their heart, and so on. And then Hassan started laughing.

“What’s so funny?” I asked.

“The graffiti,” he said.

“What about it?” I asked.

“It says ‘Happy Birthday, Sir, despite the circumstances.’”

And that is where *An Abundance of Katherines* started for me, with Shithead McGee’s radical misapprehension of some Arabic graffiti. It was then that I started thinking about writing a Muslim character who, like my friend and the other American Muslims I know, is religious without being defined by his religiosity. It is possible in this nation to be Jewish and punk, or Christian and fond of modernist architecture, but it sometimes seems impossible to be Muslim and *anything*, because we think we know all what being a Muslim involves. And so *Katherines* started not with its main character, a washed-up child prodigy named Colin, but with Hassan. I decided then that I wanted to write a book wherein a guy’s Muslimness was not his defining character trait. I realize this is a lot of weight to put on a character who refers to his penis as Thunderstick, but such I suppose is the fate of the comic novelist.

The problem on Fox News, and the problem in *Katherines*, and the problem in so many places, is one of narrative. Our brains like stories that make sense; they are easier to remember, easier to access, easier

to believe. We live in a world in which every TV ad tells a different story; each news station tells a different story; each MySpace page tells a different story. We are supersaturated with narratives—none of them terribly reliable—and many of those narratives are competing against each other. In the end, the narratives that triumph are not necessarily the most factual or the most interesting. The stories that win are the ones that make sense, the ones that strike us as touching or revealing. It is the good stories that win. Islam-is-a-scary-monolith is a better story than Islam is a multivalent and loosely associated set of ideas and actions. Or, to put ourselves in Colin's brain: Dumps are victims is a better story than dumps are only victims sometimes. Another example: Librarians are sensibly shoed shhhs is a better story than librarians are the greatest contemporary defenders of America's national values, people who will stand up for intellectual freedom and the rights of young people when no one else will, and also people who, in my experience, often wear very cute shoes.

Colin Singleton, the washed-up child prodigy at the book's center, has a lot of information at his disposal. But his brain is still human; it still prefers lies that make sense to true stories that don't. There is a moment toward the end of *An Abundance of Katherines* where Colin Singleton says, "You don't remember what happens. What you remember becomes what happened." The stories we tell do not shape history. They are history.

Colin is at a social disadvantage partly because, while he can mold language in all kinds of useless, nonnarrative ways, he cannot turn language into a good story. It is a hard thing to do, of course, for someone whose brain does not think in a linear fashion, and so in the end it is nonlinear

equations—and a girl who knows how to tell a story—that begin to help Colin understand the power of good storytelling.

I don't mean morally good; I just mean a compelling yarn. Look at *The Book Thief*. It is a good story—Hitler's historical narrative—that keeps Death so busy. But it is also good stories—the ones told by Max and Hans and in Liesel's stolen books—that transform Liesel into the kind of person so radiantly good that even Death must love her.

It is a hard thing to make a good story. Like, even after librarian action figures and *Book Lust* and challenging the PATRIOT Act, people still think of librarians as shy, retiring flowers. Whenever I hear someone stereotype a librarian, I counter their inherited story with a true one of my own: I say that last year, at a librarian conference in New Orleans, I learned how hard librarians party. I was in the Harrah's casino downtown walking to the roulette table with Sarah Dessen when we happened across a librarian, passed out drunk, sprawled across the loud carpet of the casino, a spilt drink in one hand, a galley of a promising first novel in the other. Parts of that story may have been fictionalized by my brain, but it doesn't matter: The story becomes true, and maybe just maybe some of the stories will shift from "librarians are retiring violets" to "librarians are drunks." But probably not—because once a story is in your head, it's hard to get it out. Such is the significance of a good story.

We have a way of saying that a book is good if we liked the characters, or if it kept us turning the pages, or if we enjoyed, albeit guiltily, the exploits of the snotty popular girls. But I think that such good stories are not necessarily good books. All good stories have power—as Colin says in the book, they become what

happened. And I do believe, although maybe it is unfashionable to say so, that such power must be utilized thoughtfully. I believe that authors—particularly those of us writing for teenagers—have a responsibility to tell stories that are both good and—for lack of a better word—moral. I heard Tobin Anderson say a few months ago that he is no longer opposed to fiction that teaches lessons, and neither am I. In fact, I believe that fiction must teach lessons—after all, any story that we believe in comes with a lesson, be they YA novels or Geico commercials. A book that is just its lesson cannot be a good story, of course. But we can't ignore the moral power of good stories, either.

The teenagers we work with and work for are in the process of forming their values. As participants in that process, we owe them good stories—but we also owe them more than that. We owe them what we know—or hope we know—of the truth.

There will be no easy hope for today's teenagers as they come of age. No simple platitudes will nourish them in this story-drenched world. It is a hard thing sometimes to tell stories that make sense without giving in to deceit or despair. I am so proud to be here today because these four other books that we are celebrating tonight each manage to do this—they are each powerful books because they each tell good stories, and they each use that power wisely. These books, and the many others like them, give me hope that better historical and contemporary narratives can triumph among teenagers and adults alike. These are stories that tell the truth about the worst hard times, the truth about the circumstances. And they also remind us that despite those circumstances, there is still such a thing as a happy birthday. **YALS**

Printz Award Honor Speech

By Markus Zusak

As far as speech transcripts go, it's ominous to start with an apology, but I feel I have to. I didn't have a written speech for the Printz ceremony, unlike the other four very gifted, very prudent, award winners; I had in my pocket what I have for any speech I give—a flimsy piece of faded, folded paper with small points on them. The expansion was in my head. The intonation was practiced, countless times. I had never been better prepared, for disaster.

Things to Be Sorry For

1. Forgetting on stage to congratulate the very gracious, talented, and forgiving Gene Yang for *winning* the award. . . . I must thank him now for his response to my panicked apology. His exact words went something like this: "Dude. I know how crazy it is up there. Don't worry for a second." Thank you, Gene, and congratulations on the unforgettable *American Born Chinese*.
2. Calling M. T. Anderson and John Green the Kennedys of young adult literature. My intention was to assert them as young, charismatic, and inspiring writers. The intention was *not* to imply certain other

publicly known characteristics of the Kennedys. . . . The best I can say is that I look forward to many more works from both writers over many, many years to come.

3. The incompetence of my praise for Sonya Hartnett, my fellow Australian. I'd like to make amends now by saying what I *intended* to say—that one of my goals is to become one of Australia's best writers, and that Sonya is already there.
4. Forgetting to thank Tracy Bloom and Adrienne Waintraub—two people who made *The Book Thief* a success, and continue to do so today.

Perhaps five years ago, there was a moment when I tried to recite a fully written speech. It ended badly. If I write a speech completely, I will stumble at every full stop [period], searching for my place. I will drown in the second paragraph. My only alternative is to gamble on a memorized speech with a few dot [bullet] points to bob around in front of me—usually ignored when I'm on the stage, saying words I didn't mean to say, and forgetting the words that were often most important.

Still, at the end of the day, I'm reminded that this is just a speech, and I feel that I did get a few things right, between the failures outlined above.

Things I'm Glad I Said

1. I thanked Catherine Drayton, Judith Haut, and Shanta Small—three people who made *The Book Thief* a success with a kind of iron will that I had never experienced before as a writer.
2. I dedicated the award to Erin Clarke, my excellent editor and friend, who took a gamble on me at a time when I thought I wouldn't be published in America any more.

The problem now is that I'm glad for two things and sorry for four, but I console myself in the knowledge that there is a third and final category.

Things That Had to Be Said

1. The story of where *The Book Thief* came from.
2. The story of how I found out about the Printz Honor.

I've published five books now, and I love them all, hate them all, and am both proud and embarrassed of each of them. Only one of them, however, means everything to me. Only one of them is the book, however flawed, that I worry I can't better in my next attempt—and that's *The Book Thief*.

There are many reasons why this book means everything to me, but the main one is my parents. Growing up in Sydney, I had a slightly different childhood from most kids in my neighborhood, especially when it came to stories that were told at home. My mother is from Munich and my father from Vienna—and although they're Australian now, they brought a whole different world of stories with them. It was those stories that kept us glued to our kitchen chairs as we grew

up. It was those stories that inspired *The Book Thief*.

My brother, my two sisters, and I were always entranced as we saw cities of fire, people crouching in bomb shelters, and several close brushes with death. We heard about German teenagers giving bread to Jewish people being marched to concentration camps. We heard how the Jewish people were whipped for taking the bread. And we heard how the teenagers were whipped for giving them the bread. . . . I remember being stunned by the ugly world I was told about, but more so by the moments of beauty that existed there as well. I wanted to write about those moments, and it's

here that I need to acknowledge that I'm extremely fortunate to have parents who not only have great stories, but also have the ability to tell them in a beautiful, meaningful, and compelling way. They are the beginning of *The Book Thief*. Writing the book resulted in me telling my parents that I loved them, and for that, I'm more grateful than anything else.

It's an exciting thing to receive a Printz Honor, and I want to thank YALSA and the Printz committee for their love of books, their love of young people, and, of course, their love of books for young people. It would be remiss of me, however, not to end with the story of how

I found out about receiving the Honor Award . . .

It's fitting that my mother told me the news. Last January, when the awards were announced, I was away from home. My mother, who was at my house minding the pets, received the call from the committee. She then went on to call me immediately. Given that she doesn't know much about literature awards, she was delighted to tell me that I'd won a Quince Honor.

With that in mind, I want to say how proud I am to have received this Printz Honor, even if it will always be a Quince Honor to me.

Thank you. **YALS**



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your
chance
to get
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Printz Award Honor Speech

By Sonya Hartnett

A few weeks ago, not long after *Surrender* was honored in this year's Michael L. Printz Awards, I drove home to visit my mother in the dark-green heart of Box Hill, the suburb of Melbourne in which I spent my childhood and teenage years. Rounding the corner into Mum's street, I passed a billboard advertising a local theater group's production of a play called *The Outsiders*. I stopped the car, reversed back. It was as I'd hoped: these *Outsiders* were, indeed, S. E. Hinton's *Outsiders*. For twenty-five years, they and she have lurked in the corners of my mind. Now they are back in the bright light, having skipped a generation in the '90s, the first generation of Australian teenagers who read mostly Australian books. I couldn't help grinning like an idiot, as if I had met, unexpectedly, a friend I'd thought gone forever.

When I was a teenager in the 1980s, Box Hill was a suburb still a little rough around the edges; it was not somewhere anyone aspired to. There was a lot of open, unusable ground where creeks ran and horses browsed, and the earth was swampy in winter, and in summer tall gum trees dropped their branches onto the roads. The weekends spent roaming this wild neighborhood fanned my imagination, and maybe made a writer out of me, for its silent streets and sullen houses have featured in my work since the beginning,

as have its eucalypts and birds and green grass and blue skies. On the other hand, it's this neighborhood that, years later, makes me hesitate shiftily when someone asks what I do for a living. An ordinary kid from an ordinary Australian suburb could never be a respectable writer of books: It's something I believed when I first started writing, as a thirteen-year-old, and something I still can't help believing, for the cultural cringe runs as deep in Australians as does guilt in a Catholic. S. E. Hinton could do it, but she was S. E. Hinton, who had several unfair advantages. She had a cool name, she had a flair for plot, she invented charismatic characters and christened them with ace nicknames, and, most unfairly of all, she was American.

At thirteen, I had no clear image of America as a country at all, but I did know that its teenagers were worldly and good-looking, ran in gangs and hung out in pool halls, had parents who were in prison, got into knife fights and were handsomely scarred, or even, occasionally, died romantically as poets in each other's arms. An Australian teenager couldn't compete with any of this. No one I knew had banged-up parents who'd left them in the care of their sexy and curt but good-hearted elder brother. No one I knew had been in a fistfight, let alone been stabbed. When I was a teenager, there were very few Australian books being written for teenagers, but even

if there had been, I'm sure I wouldn't have read them. Australia, and the Australian life lived by myself and my siblings and friends, was unworthy of fiction. Australia was a bland and unremarkable thing. America, though, was a strange place, an adventurous and dangerous place; one where, if the novels were correct, a fearful or outcast teenager was not a loser but, rather, a kind of beautiful young god or goddess. That promising world was the one in which I wanted to live. It was certainly the one I wanted to read about.

Looking back on my teenage years, I feel kind of breathless at the thought of what my life would have been like if I had not had the triumvirate of Suzy Hinton, Paul Zindel, and Robert Cormier to bolster me against the ill winds that blow through those tightly wound, easily wounded, blindingly bright years. Hinton gave me characters to aspire to create and become. She showed me that words can bleed. Most importantly, she showed me that the world was much, much wilder than I knew. Life in that wild world could be fraught, but even fraughtness has beauty and style when it's lived by guys with names like Ponyboy and M&M and Tex. Paul Zindel was the joker who taught me to cock an eyebrow at life's quirks; the loneliness and awkwardness and sadness of his characters was something they could laugh at, in the end. Like Hinton's characters, Zindel's were brave, but brave within an ordinary world—not brave during a gang brawl, but brave throughout a horrible day at school. Hinton broke a teenage girl's heart, but it was Zindel's characters who you wanted to be your friends.

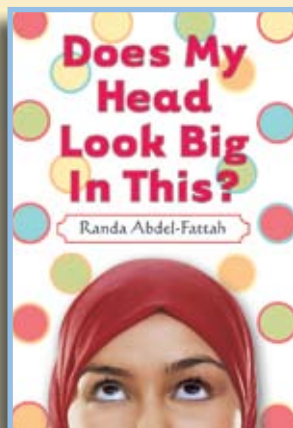
And lastly, there was Robert Cormier, whose work you picked up carefully, like a precious gem covered in spikes. Cormier looked at the world through dark eyes, and saw as a teenager sees—that there is hypocrisy and cruelty and unfairness in the world, that things can go skiddingly wrong, that everything hangs by a very thin

thread. Of the three, Cormier's world was the real world as I suspected it to be. It is Cormier who showed me the way in to being a writer, and Cormier to whom I owe my biggest literary debts; but the influence of wry Zindel and shadowy Hinton runs through what I write every day.

Yet putting aside everything these three taught me as writers, what I'm most grateful for is the huge delight their work brought me. I loved every word that they wrote. I saved for months to buy their books; I read them again and again. Each one filled me with that warmth in the chest that a beloved author gives a besotted reader. In the twenty-five years that I've been writing, I have striven to create work that might give my own readers just a taste of the joy that Hinton, Zindel, and Cormier gave me.

And so it is a tremendous honor to have *Surrender* recognized in this year's Michael L. Printz Awards for Excellence in Young Adult literature, and a great pleasure to be here in Washington tonight. I congratulate Gene Luen Yang, M. T. Anderson, John Green, and my good mate Markus on your fine and deserving work. I would like to thank my publisher, Candlewick, for taking on a book as difficult and strange as *Surrender*, and my editor Deborah Wayshak, for being such a sweet friend to me over the years. In publishing my work in your country, you give me the opportunity to give back a little of what your writers gave to me. Finally, I'd like to thank the 2007 Printz committee for honoring the book in this way, and YALSA and *Booklist* for sponsoring the prize. You do a great service not only to teenage readers, but to those who write for them as well. **YALS**

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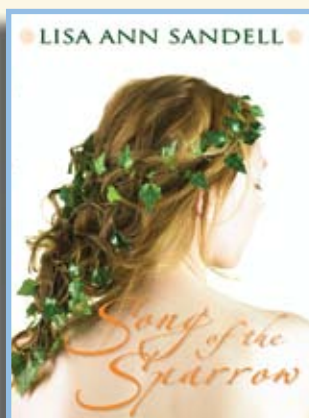
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Printz Award Honor Speech

By M. T. Anderson

First of all, I'd like to thank the Printz committee for this incredible honor.

Second, I'd like to thank Candlewick Press—not only Liz Bicknell, my wonderful editor, but also the design department and the sales and marketing departments, who believed in a very unlikely project.

I wrote the first few lines of this novel, as it happens, the night that America declared war on Iraq. I was down in Colonial Williamsburg, and had spent the evening in a bar surrounded by off-duty, eighteenth-century reenactors arguing about international politics. Most of them had taken off their costumes and had let their hair down. At first, I just thought they all had mullets.

So after Bush's speech, these early American colonists start to argue about our chances in the Middle East. It's crazy. On the one side, this guy is quoting from the Federalist Papers; on the other side, this guy is standing up and roaring the immortal words of Patrick Henry; and this guy is describing Washington's tactics; and in the middle, this one guy in street clothes is saying, "Jesus. Coming to this bar's like getting a goddamn Ph.D."

It strikes me that this image—men of the past arguing over the politics of the present—is an excellent emblem of what the historical novel can do.

The danger in reading historical novels is that they make us feel safe and

righteous. We look at a book about slavery, like this one, or about the Holocaust, like Markus's beautiful novel, and the evils of the past seem so clear to us. We seem superior to the dead. For one thing, after all, they're dead, we're alive—clearly we know something they don't.

The dangers of the past often seem more quaint than our own dangers. From our modern vantage point looking back, we have supernatural sight: We can see into torture chambers, across borders; we can peer into bedrooms and predict which infants are born to greatness; we can hear the whispered orders in forest camps and words of command spoken in the colonnades and cupolas of power. For this reason, people in the past seem blinded and stumbling.

And yet, the dead have their lessons to teach us, if only we'll listen.

It is worthwhile, when we read of the past, to say not just, "How did they possibly believe this was right?," but rather, "What do we do that our grandchildren and their grandchildren will look at aghast? What are we blind to?"

For example, the theme of race and education, which I get all sniffly about in this book:

My girlfriend teaches in the Boston public schools. The students at the elementary school where she works—overwhelmingly African American and Latino—just took the MCAS [Massachusetts

Comprehensive Assessment System] tests, Massachusetts's standardized tests, part of the No Child Left Behind program. The day the tests began, an older kid was shot near the school. The second day, a policeman posted outside the school to guard them was shot and killed right in front of the school just before school began, and they had to walk through police tape to get to their classrooms. The school was in lockdown. The teachers received instructions, not simply on invigilating the test, but also on what to do if a student found a discarded round. Later the same day, two kids were shot about a block away.

At the elementary school about five blocks away, the days preceding the MCAS this spring included an eighteen-year-old girl being gunned down at the school's bus stop, and a fifth grader bringing a gun into class.

So tell me. How accurately do we really think this test demonstrates these students' efforts? How scientific is its description of their intelligence and willingness to learn? How can anyone say that it makes statistical sense to compare these test results—taken in those conditions—with the test results of schools in Boston's wealthy suburbs? I mean, take a class from one of those suburban schools, fire off a few rounds over their heads, and then tell them to take the test. Then there will be some legitimate basis for comparison.

Everyone deserves safety. Every child deserves to feel like their school, their town, and their government wants them to succeed.

And yet, there are always reasons that inequities make sense to us. If this problem seems intractable to us, imagine how intractable a problem slavery must have seemed. It's easy to diagnose and fix the problems of the dead.

By the same token, it is easy to weep for slavery in the past; it is more difficult to confront the fact that there are an estimated twelve million people enslaved

today—not “wage slaves,” but people who were kidnapped or purchased and who are restrained with shackles, threats of violence, or even hamstringing.

We can tell ourselves that, if we were whites living in the Antebellum South, we would be the people aiding in escapes, we would be hiding people in our cellars and agitating for change. But we are clearly not those people. Because the problem persists.

And in a broader sense: We can look in horror at a system which forced many to suffer so that a few could enjoy leisure and nugatory pleasures—they could eat with utensils made of precious metals and drive fine equipages through their parks. We can say we would never allow such inequities to exist. But of course, that’s a comfortable lie, because our way of life is dependent on a global system of labor founded on inequities. Our clothes, our toys, our gadgetry are more often than not assembled by people laboring in conditions we would find

completely unacceptable ourselves: twelve to fourteen hour days, seven days a week, in factories in Bangladesh, in Lebanon, in India.

When we read about the inequities and atrocities of the past, we repeat, with horror, “Never again. Never again.” But we cannot stop there, because genocide, cruelty, inequality, and graft are not just relics of history, but a part of our world in the present.

On April 19, in the year 1975, my parents woke me up at four in the morning. They took me down to the river and put me in the canoe. I have only the faintest memory of this. My father and mother paddled us down the Concord River to the Old North Bridge, where, in the rushes, we saw some redwing blackbirds and the President of the United States. President Gerald Ford was standing on Old North Bridge, delivering a bicentennial address.

On the one bank was a hill where, exactly two hundred years before I arrived

there—down almost to the minute—the men of my town, ordinary citizens, men like my father, had come over the rise, and had marched down toward the river where I sat to engage in battle with the most powerful army in the world.

That time, those people, were not mythic; they had once been real, though now historical—just as the year 1975, the year I bobbed on the waters ten feet below the pants of the President of the United States, is now not real, but historical.

History is not a pageant arrayed for our delectation.

We are all always gathered there. We have come to the riverside to fight or to flee. We are gathered at the river, upon those shores, and the water is always moving, and the President of the United States always gesticulates silently above us, his image on the water. Nothing will cease. Nothing will stop. We ourselves are history.

The moment is always now. **YALS**

Margaret A. Edwards Award Acceptance Speech

A Passionate Yearning

By Lois Lowry

I started writing this speech on a recent Wednesday, and as I sat there staring mindlessly at the computer, trying to think about what to say (what *new* to say!), I decided to look on Amazon for the current ranking of *The Giver*.

Writers do this. It's like touching your child's forehead to feel its temperature, sniffing the bottle of milk to determine whether it is fresh, glancing up at the clouds before deciding to take an umbrella. Just a quick assessment of status.

The Giver, on Amazon, on this particular Wednesday, was ranked number 573.

You may not be aware of how astounding that is. Number 573 on Amazon is practically a bestseller. And yet this book was published *fourteen* years ago.

To put things into perspective, I checked the ranking of *The Higher Power of Lucky*, this year's Newbery winner. It was number 1,078. (Of course, it has that controversial scrotum in it).

I checked an all-time favorite, *Holes*, another Newbery book, a well-regarded film. It was number 20,373.

I checked *Bridge to Terabithia*. Newbery. Currently a very popular movie. Number 23,366.

And finally, knowing for certain that I could find something that would put *The Giver* into perspective, bring it down a peg, humble it, I looked up *To Kill a Mockingbird*. It was number 2,220.

Astounding.

I began to try to think about *why* *The Giver* has remained so popular, so meaningful to so many people, for so many years . . . why this organization has chosen to honor it, and me. And I do have some thoughts about that.

But first I want to talk about what a pleasure it is to be here in the company of librarians.

One of my happiest childhood memories is of going frequently to the public

library in the small college town where I lived. It seemed the grandest building in the town, though there were other impressive ones nearby: the buildings of the college itself and the law school. The bank where my grandfather's office was. But it was the library, the J. Herman Bosler Memorial Library, that had captured my heart and in which I spent so many solitary and supremely happy hours.

At home, while my sister played "school" with her dolls, frowning at them and scolding them as she taught them to read and add and multiply and sit still, I played a game that I thought of simply as "library." I arranged my books (and I was lucky to grow up in a home that valued books, and bought books, and gave me books) carefully. I stacked them up, sorted them, checked them out to my dolls and stuffed animals with great solemnity and with those magical thumps that seemed important in that pre-computer era. Thump. Thump. And the book became the property of that doll, or bear, or elephant, and I would send it off to a corner of the room with the book propped against its stuffed lap or knees.

I outgrew the dolls, of course, but never outgrew the books, or the library, though I said goodbye to that town, and that library, when I was eleven years old, in 1948, and moved on to others and to others and to others. But I remembered the J. Herman Bosler Memorial Library as being a magnificent building, something on the order of a cathedral, with pillars, and at least a hundred granite steps.

But a few years ago they invited me back to speak at the one hundredth birthday party for that library. It surprised me that the library was actually small. The steps were cement, and there were no more than ten of them.

Just now I Googled it, and found this description: "As a lasting memorial to Mr. Bosler, his widow and five children erected

a handsome public library building . . . known as "The J. Herman Bosler Memorial Library." Entirely completed and equipped with furniture and books, it was formally transferred to trustees on Jan. 30, 1900, together with an endowment fund of \$20,000. . . . The building has a frontage on West High Street of 57 feet and a depth of 88 feet, standing on a lot 63 by 110 feet. About 4,400 books are now upon its shelves under the care of the efficient and popular librarian, W. Homer Ames."

It is the trick that memory plays, isn't it? The enormity that we remember comes more from our emotional attachment to things than to actual size. Grandpa's lap—the place I curled so often, as he read Kipling to me—is remembered as soft and comfortable. Could it be that he might have had, actually, bony knees and scratchy tweed trousers?

Could my beloved library, the cathedral of my earliest literate life, have actually had a frontage of just fifty-seven feet?

I also, incidentally, found this as part of the library's history: "The price of a library subscription in 1900 cost \$1.00 per year. The rules stated that 'all persons above the age of twelve years, of cleanly habits and good reputation may use the books in the building.'"

That age rule must have changed, because I was well under twelve (of cleanly habits, usually, though, and I think my reputation was good) when I prowled the stacks of that library so contentedly in the 1940s.

It's probably not surprising that when I sat down to write the book that would be called *The Giver*, and to create a world that had lost so much of importance . . . it was a world that had no books.

My own first book was published when I was forty. My thirty-fourth book has just been published, and I'm seventy now. I've turned them out in somewhat the same way I turned out babies, in 1958, 1959, 1961, and 1962: close together, one

after another, and proud of each one of them . . . but the best part is to watch them go out into the world, and to see what they become to others.

Last weekend I sat in a large audience and watched a daughter receive a master's degree. I felt proud of her, how hard she had worked, how well she had done. But I never once felt, *I made her what she is today*.

And I don't feel that way, either, about books I've written. I turn them loose. They're on their own. They take on a life separate from me.

And it's the life of one book that I'm here to talk about.

Not long ago I got an e-mail from a teacher in South Carolina who told me that she teaches in a rural part of the state, a dirt-poor area. During the winter she was reading *The Giver* aloud to the class, one chapter a day. One day it snowed. A rare occurrence in South Carolina, and schools closed. During the day, when she was at home, her phone rang. She said it was the most troubled, most troublesome, most disruptive boy in her eighth-grade class. We've all known those boys: sullen, disaffected, unresponsive. Yet here he was, on the phone. And he begged her to read the next chapter of *The Giver* to him.

The teacher told me that she almost wept as she read to him that snowy afternoon, sitting alone in her house and hearing the boy's breath through the phone as he listened. It was the first time the boy had ever become engaged, interested, enthusiastic about *anything*.

And so I am back to the earlier question. What is it, about this particular book?

What was it to the young Trappist monk who wrote to me once, and told me that in the silence and solitude of his order, he had read *The Giver* and considered it a sacred text?

Or the privileged high school senior who risked punishment because he

insisted on reading the entire book aloud, non-stop, standing on the auditorium stage of his Minneapolis private school, refusing to obey the teachers who ordered him to stop and to return to class?

How about the young woman who—not sure of how copyright law applied—asked my permission to have a page of *The Giver* tattooed on her left shoulder?

And what made it appeal to a troubled adolescent in the rural South?

Well, just last week I got an e-mail from a college student, a girl who was writing a term paper using *The Giver* as what she called "contemporary myth." She asked me if I agreed with that assessment. I confessed to her that I didn't know, that I hadn't a clue what she meant by "contemporary myth," but that I was sure her paper would be intriguing and I wished her well.

Then, thinking about it after I had replied to her, I tilted back my chair so that I could reach my bookcase and I pulled out Joseph Campbell, began to skim, and realized it indeed answered the question of *what is it about this particular book?*

I certainly didn't think in grandiose terms—no thoughts at all about religion or politics or philosophy—when I sat down simply intending to write a story, the story that became *The Giver*. I had been thinking a great deal about memory because I had been watching my father's diminish and fade at the same time that I watched my mother cling tenaciously—fiercely—to the tiniest memories that went back seventy and eighty years and meant so much to her.

So I thought about what memory means, what it does, how we use it—and of course, what would happen if we let go of it. If we *chose* to do that.

I sat down to write a story that grappled with those questions. I chose to make the story about a boy.

And without planning or intending it, I recreated the classic hero of all recur-

rent myth: the figure (and yes, though it is sexist, the mythic hero seems always to be male) who perceives something wrong in the world and who therefore is compelled to undertake a quest.

Picture the boy in South Carolina. I know nothing about him beyond what his teacher told me. He's an eighth grader. He's disruptive, disaffected, disadvantaged. He'll be a drop-out soon.

But I am a very visual person. My mind creates images. I picture him African American. I don't know his ethnicity, but I know where he lives—a place with a largely African American population—and that's how he appears in my mind. I see a

Well, the boy in the classroom, the one slouched in his desk, is scared, too. His own world sucks. His own parents—assuming he has them in his life—do their best, but are not a source of wisdom or comfort. He hasn't a clue what his own future holds. He suspects it holds nothing.

He begins to listen to the story about the scared, uncertain boy.

Then the boy in the book meets a man.

This is part of the structure of myth, of course. The hero encounters a mentor—often it is someone with magical powers. Jonas, in the book, has this experience. He meets a man who has amazing powers and who is able to give him something

caught in a world that offers him little, that is in many ways a sick society; and through a mentor—a teacher—a Giver—he begins to undertake his own journey, as Jonas does.

There are other stock situations in myth. There is a threshold that the hero must cross in order to enter the unknown.

Jonas gets on a bike and crosses a bridge on his way to Elsewhere; the young boy in South Carolina picks up a telephone on a snowy day.

Myth requires a journey. They both set out.

Myth requires that they encounter obstacles, entertain doubts, that they despair and feel all is lost. We know, those of us who know *The Giver*, that Jonas experiences all of those things.

We don't know the boy in South Carolina. But we know the rural South. We know our culture. We know what the world offers a semi-educated, disaffected boy like him. And so we know that he, too, is going to experience crushing defeats and terrible despair.

But for now, during two weeks in February, he makes that mythic journey with a fictional character.

There is a moment when Jonas feels like giving up, like giving in:

He got off [the bicycle] and let it drop sideways into the snow. For a moment he thought how easy it would be to drop beside it himself, to let himself and Gabriel slide into the softness of snow, the darkness of night, the warm comfort of sleep.

But the trials that a mythic hero undergoes test him and reveal his true nature. So it is, with Jonas:

He pressed his hands into Gabriel's back and tried to remember sunshine. For a moment it seemed that nothing came to him, that his power was completely gone. Then

I thought about what memory means, what it does, how we use it—and of course, what would happen if we let go of it. If we *chose* to do that. I sat down to write a story that grappled with those questions.

lanky black boy with large sneakers, restless legs, bored eyes, forced to sit in a classroom with inadequate resources—this is a poor rural area—a classroom with nothing that seems relevant to him, nothing that holds his interest.

I see him sprawled at his desk, legs in the aisle. I see him yawn and fiddle with a pencil and gaze out the window, or glance at the clock, when the teacher begins to read a story and it is about a boy.

But because he has a mind, and an imagination—because all kids do, all humans do—he begins to see himself in the fictional boy. Something feels familiar. The boy in the story is scared. He's worried about what is going to happen to him. His parents don't seem to care. But the boy, the fictional boy, Jonas, senses that something is wrong in his world.

intangible, something mysterious, not yet explainable.

The boy in the classroom, listening, maybe less restless, attentive by now, knows in his heart that he is not going to have an opportunity to meet a bearded man who will be his mentor. Maybe there have been people in his past—a Cub Scout leader once, a Little League coach, maybe, who tried—but there had been no connection for him; they tried to make him conform, to follow their rules, and it didn't work for him, and he dropped out and drifted away.

But something is happening that he is unaware of. He has met a teacher who is magically transferring excitement to him, and a sense of wonder.

So we have a boy who is himself a Jonas. He is a mythic hero, a young boy

it flickered suddenly, and he felt tiny tongues of heat begin to creep across and into his frozen feet and legs. He felt his face begin to glow and the tense, cold skin of his arms and hands relax. For a fleeting second he felt that he wanted to keep it for himself, to let himself bathe in sunlight, unburdened by anything or anyone else.

But the moment passed and was followed by an urge, a need, a passionate yearning to share the warmth with the one person left for him to love.

And of course his true nature is courageous and unselfish. He becomes, after passing through the trials, like all mythic heroes, transcendent. Maybe, briefly, to the boy in South Carolina, reaching a destination seems possible.

I think the reason the book remains, after all these years, a bestseller (I began writing this on a Wednesday. Now it is Friday. I just checked Amazon again. Today it is number 474 . . . up a hundred notches in two days) is because everywhere—in China and Hungary and Germany and Serbo-Croatia and every one of the twenty-two countries in which this book is published now—readers live in a world that is wounded and needs sav-

ing. They want to make that mythic journey with a boy named Jonas. They want to share his passionate yearning and to emerge into a place where there is music.

They want to know it is possible.

I'd like to quote some lines from a poem called "The Makers" by Howard Nemerov, a former poet laureate of the United States. "The Makers" of the title refers to the very first writers, those of ancient times, and in the poem he says this:

They were the ones that in whatever
tongue
Worded the world, that were the
first to say
Star, water, stone, that said the
visible
And made it bring invisibles to view

When a young reader—whatever age—ten or twelve or fourteen—is captured by a book, is enthralled with a plot and in love with a character, he (or she), curled in a chair, or listening to the voice of a teacher, puts himself into that fictional situation, and weighs the choices the fictional character makes, that reader becomes that character for a period of time.

Books for young people have tremendous power over their audience. We're fortunate, in this country, that we have

so many wonderful writers for children, so many wonderful librarians, so many wonderful teachers, who understand that power and who use it with wisdom and intelligence.

And all we writers do, really, is, as Nemerov said, "say the visible"—the concrete, the details, the things that make a book come to life, that tell the story, that capture the attention, that invite the reader to make a journey. And then, when it works, it does what the poet said: it brings invisibles to view. The invisibles are those abstract, mythic things we care about: integrity, honesty, a sense of history, a hope of future. We try to make them accessible to the young. Interesting to the young. Important to the young.

I look with awe at the list of previous recipients of this award. I'm very honored to be among them.

But you know what makes me feel truly honored, truly successful? Knowing that on a snowy afternoon in an impoverished home in South Carolina, one troubled, angry boy crossed a threshold when he picked up a telephone, called his eighth-grade teacher, and said, with passionate yearning in his voice, "You gotta read to me."

Thank you. **YALS**

Teens Plus Books Honoring the Best in Literature and Reading Programs through the Sagebrush Award

By Cara von Wrangel Kinsey

As YALSA looks back over its first fifty years, the Sagebrush Award Jury has begun to reflect on the history of the award. When any anniversary comes around, people tend to experience a series of reactions. We reminisce about what has come before. We assess where we are now. We look toward the future. It is wonderful that YALSA booklists have brought recognition to what was once an underappreciated genre. It is heartening that YALSA advocates have helped to greatly increase the number of young adult librarians in the country. It is inspiring that Margaret A. Edwards and Michael L. Printz have achieved national recognition through the awards given in their names.

The year 2007 has been one for honoring the great leaps of YALSA-kind, but the Sagebrush Award has spent almost twenty years awarding the small steps, the people who work in libraries, and the people who love young adults. Every day, young adult librarians do amazing things

that positively affect the teens with whom they interact. They reach teens in groups, and they connect with them individually. They bring books to teens and, in turn, teens to books. The books that they introduce might change a worldview, help a mourning process, or help teens realize that they are not alone.

The Sagebrush Award recognizes librarians who find innovative ways to connect teens with books, and proceeds to connect those librarians with ALA and YALSA. Formed in 1988, the committee began its mission to reward a member of YALSA who "developed an outstanding

reading or literature program for young adults." As stated in the application document (www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/awardsandgrants/sagebrush.pdf), the submitted program must "bring young adults and books together" and "encourage the development of life-long reading habits." The Sagebrush Corporation provides \$1,000 to support the recipient's attendance at ALA's Annual Conference. Just as YALSA was once named the Young Adult Services Division (YASD), the Sagebrush Award has not always been so named. In 2000, the name of the award was changed from the Econo-Clad Award to the Sagebrush Award for Young Adult Reading or Literature Program when Econo-Clad was purchased by the Sagebrush Corporation.

In 1999, Donna McMillen won the Econo-Clad Award for her teen review group. The teens read and reviewed books nominated for Best Books for Young Adults (BBYA). At a time when official teen participation in BBYA was just entering a pilot stage, Donna was a librarian who had never attended a conference and never served on a committee. Still, she was more than willing to organize her teens to review and provide feedback for a local BBYA committee member. Donna still enjoys connecting books with patrons, and her library continues its review group. For Donna, the trip to ALA Annual Conference meant a new era for her own work and her strong leadership in YALSA. She has since served on the Printz committee and chaired BBYA. In return, appointment to committees helped Donna secure financial support from her

CARA V. W. KINSEY, of the St. George Library Center of the New York Public Library, served as chair of the Sagebrush Award Jury for 2007. Fellow jury members include Diane Tuccillo, Teen Librarian at Fort Collins (Colo.) Public Library, Victoria Vogel, Rocky River (Ottawa) Public Library, Nicole Redmond, Librarian for Rockwall Independent School District in Texas, and incoming chair Lisa Youngblood, Library Director of the Harker Heights (Tex.) Public Library.

local library to continue to go to conferences, and she has attended each Annual Conference since. Words of wisdom from Donna: "Attend YALSA events at the ALA conference; volunteer for committees; reach out and network—our fellow librarians are doing fascinating work! Learn and grow—there is so much that can be done."

Diane Tuccillo, formerly of the City of Mesa Library, won in 2004 for the Open Shelf newsletter (<http://mesalibrary.org/teens/books/openshelf.aspx>). Teens write reviews for the newsletter that are posted online and distributed in print to all the junior and senior high schools in the area, thus reaching both national and local audiences. Still going strong, Open Shelf is a good example of a cooperative project between a school and public library.

Diane reminds us that winning the award celebrates not only the librarian who wins, but also the students who participated in the program. Diane was inspired to apply for the award using a program that she had been conducting for years because she was about to leave her position and wanted the teens to be recognized for their hard work. When budget cuts threatened the program, she came back as a volunteer and, with the help of the Friends of the Library, the group continued. Diane continues her work with teens and YALSA, even serving on the 2007 Sagebrush Award Jury.

Amy Shelley, the youth and outreach services manager for the Laramie County Library System, won the award in 2005 for her work with the Wyoming Latina Youth Conference. For the past several years, she

has worked with teens to select appealing and pertinent books and bibliographies to present to each conference attendee, with a focus on Latino authors. Winning the award gave the conference and the at-risk teens it serves visibility and recognition. It also led to contacts with librarians around the country who were interested in replicating the program. "As a teen librarian, I feel that it is important to continue to work with populations outside of my library building (and community) to support literacy and pleasure reading," Amy recently said. This year, the conference will look at starting a magazine targeting Latino teens.

In 2007, Joanna Peled won for her program at the Tucson-Pima County Public Library in which she recruited teens to create movie-trailer-style advertisements (www.lib.ci.tucson.az.us/teenzone/trailers) for their favorite books, such as Patricia McCormick's *Cut* (2000) and Nancy Farmer's *The House of the Scorpion* (2002). This required training the teens to become screenwriters, storyboard creators, and actors. By partnering with Tucson's City Channel 12, these trailers aired throughout the city. At first glance, this project might appear to be daunting, but a strong alliance with the local television station made the difference. Replicating this program could involve film students, network stations, public access channels, or even parents with a camcorder as library partners.

Does Joanna's win for such a high-tech program herald a new era for literature programs? While Joanna's program might inspire, or be representative of,

technology-dependent literature programs across the country, other past winners continue to prove that successful literature programs come in all types and sizes, and that the work continues after the award is given. Patricia Suellentrop, the 2002 winner, continues to work with teens in correctional facilities (the activity that won her the award), but she's now branching out to work with teens and younger kids in foster care. One of the early winners of the award, Cathi Dunn MacRae, had a national voice as the editor of *VOYA* magazine. The Sagebrush Award Jury encourages everyone to replicate winning programs in their own libraries, or use them for inspiration to do something new.

The Sagebrush Award Jury received more than a dozen applications last year, and hopes for many more in the future. Young adult librarians shouldn't be shy about sharing what they're doing; you never know who will be inspired. Past applicants can even resubmit ongoing programs or submit new programs. The application for this award and YALSA's other grants can be found on the YALSA Web site at www.ala.org/yalsa in the Awards and Grants section; applications are due to the YALSA office by December 1, 2007. The jury searches for innovative programs; strong contenders often include community partnerships, teen participation, reproducible or inspiring elements, and quality results. Young adult services continue to change. Who knows what cool, rad, spiffy, groovy, wicked, gnarly, and frankly spectacular things young adult librarians will produce in the future? **YALS**

Making the List Behind the Scenes of the Best Books for Young Adults Committee: A Retrospective

By Holly Koelling

As with all great and complex machines, the Best Books for Young Adults (BBYA) committee needs regular care to run smoothly so that it can successfully complete the job it was designed to perform. Like any machine, it stutters and coughs when a screw comes loose or a wrench falls in the engine. Keen attention to its operations and the quality of its output is required, as is a strong commitment to updating and upgrading the machine to keep it in top working order.

The BBYA committee faces challenges as a committee, as a group of people with different life ways, outlooks, ideas, and practices who are brought together to meet a broad charge and achieve a demanding goal. Through a series of interviews with former BBYA members, publishers, and authors, this article will examine both the hardships that go into creating the BBYA lists as well as the list's achievement.

Common challenges for the BBYA committee include interpersonal challenges, such as poorly performing members or a demographic makeup that's somewhat homogenous, but the single greatest challenge BBYA members face is the volume of books and the time required to read them. "The number of books to consider just grows and grows," Mary Arnold said in an interview. Arnold, the regional teen manager at Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Public Library, noted that this is "a happy problem, but a challenge for the committee to truly read and consider everything available."

Donna McMillen, senior library manager in the King County (Wash.) Library System, said in an interview that she can't imagine how she handled the "tremendous" amount of books. "Looking back, I wonder at how I was able to do it. You end up taking time out from many of your interests for several years."

Indeed, former chair Erin Pierce, teen coordinator at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, admits during an interview to being overwhelmed. "I literally did nothing outside my full-time job but read for a year of my life, and I still felt like I didn't do justice to creating nominations."

There is no doubt the BBYA committee has hills to climb and obstacles to overcome. Is it worth it? Although many might like to see changes to the process and to the lists, no one seems willing to imagine a world without each year's BBYA list in it. The lists are highly appreciated and utilized, as are the library professionals who create them. In the words of Canadian publisher Colleen MacMillan: "A group of dedicated and knowledgeable librarians who have committed their time and energy to reading, evaluating, and creating annual lists of great books for teens and the teen-serving community? Is this real? Pinch me."

Among what is likely a lengthy list of benefits of the BBYA committee's work is a selection of commonly expressed themes. First and foremost, the work of the BBYA committee fosters an awareness of the variety and quality of teen literature published for teens and adults. In the opinions of some librarians, this awareness sets the stage for the Printz Award. Beyond this, the BBYA committee and its lists both set and raise professional standards, promote professional recognition, enhance professional

HOLLY KOELLING is Outreach Services Manager for the King County (Wash.) Library System. She currently chairs YALSA's Best Books for Young Adults committee and edited the third edition of *Best Books for Young Adults* (ALA Editions, 2007). She holds her master's in library science from the University of Texas at Austin.

development, provide local and national connections for teens, provide readers' advisory and collection development assistance so that outstanding reading connections with teens can be made, and encourage links with authors and publishers.

Professional Standards, Recognition, and Development

In addition to giving credibility to literature for teens, the BBYA committee sets an example for how professionals and readers at large might evaluate this teen literature to identify, promote, and even encourage works that not only attract and resonate with teen readers, but that are exceptionally well-crafted.

The committee's demonstrated commitment to teens, to literary tools for teens, and to feedback from teens regarding the world of teen literature also sets a standard. The BBYA committee is perhaps the earliest professional trailblazer in finding and showcasing literature for and of interest to teen readers. Now, with its fellow YALSA selection committees, BBYA demonstrates not only the exceptional importance of books and reading in teen lives, but how essential the "great conversation" is about those books and reading between teen-serving adults and teens themselves. In addition to encouraging literary connections at local levels, the BBYA "great conversation" goes all the way up to the national arena.

Mary Arnold notes that "YALSA pioneered teen involvement at conferences with their input to the BBYA work," and that it "has become a highlight for many conference goers, and reinforces YALSA's commitment to youth participation."

The work of the BBYA committee has brought recognition, respect, and even prestige to nationally active library professionals who serve teens and typically

do not receive the support they so richly deserve. The BBYA lists carry, at least in selected arenas, a well-earned stamp of quality, and they confer clout on those who dedicate the time and effort to their production. This recognition is a positive motivator for continued professional focus on teens and on the power of books in their lives far beyond the years of committee participation.

The BBYA committee provides participating members and observers opportunities to develop a greater understanding of teen literature and its trends and to develop increased evaluative and reviewing skills. It also offers them opportunities to share their knowledge and skills regarding teen literature both within their own professional communities and more broadly in local communities.

Betsy Fraser, branch librarian at Alexander Calhoun Library, a branch of the Calgary Public Library in Alberta, adds that she was "able to provide information on these books in my own community, doing presentations at teachers' conventions over my time on the committee in three areas in Alberta, as well as building information into training for the public library."

Teen Connections

Deliberate or not, the BBYA committee process is designed in such a way that it is simple to involve teens at the local level in the work of this national committee. Teens are easily connected to the committee and to each year's publications through reading groups and book clubs, teen advisory groups, special collection areas in libraries, and through existing reading incentive programs.

Community libraries with strong reading groups will read and review BBYA candidates to submit to librarians on the committee who do not currently have the

pleasure of their own teen book groups. It's a wonderful phenomenon that brings teens into the process not only under the tutelage of librarians on the committee, but within the larger network of teen services librarians and teen readers sharing the same goal in a library system.

Numerous librarians and libraries, large and small, use the BBYA process to make connections with teens, provide books for them, talk about books with them, and get their input on the best books of each publication year to fulfill the part of the committee's purpose that identifies books with "proven or potential" appeal.

Pam Spencer Holley, 2005–2006 YALSA president and past BBYA member and chair, believes that "from the book discussion groups, there's been a natural progression to teen advisory groups in the libraries that foster YA work." Levine shared Pam's observations, noting, "I've been able to share the review books with teens and get their input. We have monthly review meetings where we talk about the books together, and many of these teens have then become involved with other library programs, including the teen advisory council."

Going further, teens already in a teen advisory group can be given a new and meaningful focus. Rick Orsillo noted that BBYA "has galvanized my teen advisory board. It has given them goals and even more of a purpose. It is a tangible program that I can point them to and say, 'See. This is what we can do.'" He adds that it has created a positive awareness with his library's Friends Group of the value of teen participation not only at the local level, but at the national level. He said, "... this is something that I have been able to rally my Friends group around. In fact, I was able to take a number of teens on an almost-all-expenses-paid trip to the San Antonio Midwinter Meeting in 2006 on Friends'

funds. I think that this can be one of the most powerful aspects of BBYA—that it is something tangible that we can point our librarians, staff, and community toward as an example of what librarians and teens working together can create.”

For those teens who do not feel comfortable in groups, but who read avidly and have much to say about what they read, a less formalized BBYA reading and reviewing process has been used in libraries. Some librarians create from scratch a process for teens to access BBYA and submit reviews without ever needing to join a group or even speak with a librarian. A set of shelves or carts are dedicated to BBYA books, the books are identified in some way as part of a unique collection, and review forms and a drop box are provided for teen use. Other librarians piggyback BBYA reading on reading and review incentive programs already that already exist in their libraries.

In the end, whether opting for a group process or an individual one, the BBYA committee provides a range of straightforward opportunities for making connections with teens, not only to fulfill the charge and purpose of the committee, but simply to bring current books to teen readers and give them a strong evaluative voice. The benefits also exceed the goals of the committee; in a broader view they build a foundation for continuing literary connections and conversations between librarians, teens, and books.

Readers' Advisory and Collection Development

In addition to being a direct resource for teen readers, the BBYA lists are exceptional readers' advisory and collection development tools for professionals who work with and build collections for teens. The lists serve not only as guides to some

of the highest quality and most appealing literature for teen readers each year, they are used alongside reviewing and other collection development resources to build strong and attractive collections for teen readers.

Although the charge of the BBYA committee is to make an annual list for teens to be used directly by teens, making the broadest connections between teens and BBYA lists generally requires a far more creative and multifaceted approach, one masterminded by teen-serving professionals. In addition to being a resource teens can personally browse to find outstanding reading choices, the BBYA lists serve as great building blocks for other readers' advisory tools. Cindy Lombardo shares that BBYA lists provide a list of “quality literature that can be used to compile reading lists and to engage teens in reading,” and Eunice Anderson suggests that the lists can be used to create displays in libraries, another aspect of readers' advisory service.

In such an expansive teen publishing market, staying abreast of current trends in teen literature and the highest quality representative titles in those trends is a tall order for any teen-serving librarian, yet one that is critical to making strong connections with teen readers. McMillen believes the BBYA lists play a positive role here, providing teen-serving professionals with a regular tool that keeps current their readers' advisory knowledge without overwhelming them, asserting that, “the work of the committee brings books forward for others who do not have time for all the reading. It helps them winnow down what to pay attention to.”

Perhaps more than as readers' advisory tools, BBYA lists play an important role in collection development. In addition to reviewing resources, BBYA lists provide librarians with a highly defensible tool for building contemporary, responsive, quality collections from a menu much smaller than

the overwhelming numbers of materials released every publication year. In Betsy Fraser's words, the BBYA lists “provide a constant and ongoing resource for librarians across North America who don't themselves have access to these items firsthand . . . they then have a reliable buying tool.”

Once those books are selected and find their way to library shelves, BBYA lists and the clout they carry can also play a positive role in defending content challenges, which appear in all library types, but perhaps are most commonly seen in school libraries. As Kimberly Paone says, “The BBYA list is a wonderful collection development tool for librarians and I know many who rely very heavily upon it to help them make purchasing decisions. It also lends credibility to books that may have challenges—the librarian can say: ‘Well, the book was selected as a Best Book for Young Adults by YALSA.’”

The BBYA lists, when examined as a collective over their many years of creation, have additional benefits for those who observe, track, teach, and write about teen literature, and perhaps even as a foundation for professional evaluation, trouble-shooting, and decision-making at organizational levels. Michael Cart, as both library educator and author of library professional literature, as well as from the vantage point of a literary historian, shares that “reviewing past BBYA lists is an enormously helpful way of getting a handle on the evolution of the literature and of the cultural environment in which the books were published and selected.”

Industry and Author Connections

The BBYA committee has been an incredible connector between library professionals, teens, authors, editors, and publishers who are all invested in its work. In a way,

the BBYA committee meetings are like a biannual potluck that hosts folks from different parts of the book world, including teen readers themselves, so that they may look over, promote, discuss, select from, and relish the most delectable literary fare on the table—and all leave full and hopefully satisfied.

The guests at this party are all essential in making the BBYA committee and its lists possible in the first place. Authors need to conceive and write quality books that appeal to and engage young readers; editors need to help authors polish and present their stories in the best possible way; publishers need to get those stories packaged and out on the market; dedicated, teen-serving professionals need access to the books so that they might evaluate and recognize them; and teens need a resource that narrows down the publishing market in a way that provides them with a neat annual list of high-quality, high-appeal reading choices.

In addition to helping create and maintain a higher profile for outstanding teen literature and for the importance of that literature in the lives of teens, as well as endorsing the professional role of YALSA in general and the BBYA committee in specific in the lives of teens, following are some benefits past and current BBYA members find in the connection between the committee and the publishing industry.

“The publishers are active in watching what is being discussed and what the teens think of the books,” said McMillen. “It provides an important way for them to discover more about their audience. The cache of the list also propels some of their books forward that may otherwise have had a weaker debut.”

Diana Tixier Herald, consultant and author of *Genreflecting*, adds, “Publishers want their books to be named to the list because it really does seem to increase the marketability of the titles. This makes additional good YA books available.”

Kimberly Paone sums up BBYA’s influence perfectly: “It’s obvious that more books are being published for teens, books of better quality; I’m sure that BBYA has had some influence as far as that’s concerned.”

Colleen Macmillan addresses the benefits of this connection from the perspective of a publisher by saying:

With the diminishing numbers of independent children’s bookstores and the accompanying decline of hand selling, publishers who endeavour to select projects of a high editorial standard deeply appreciate the extraordinary time commitment and devotion to reading countless numbers of books that takes place in the various youth-related committees of the ALA. Through the committees’ work, publishers receive the encouragement that is essential to publish the best books for youth. There was a time when publishers could look to two strong constituencies of support—independently owned children’s bookstores and the institutional market. While we are grateful for the tremendous efforts of the remaining independent bookstores and others who promote new releases and backlist for young readers, we can’t fail to recognize the critical role of youth librarians.

It is not uncommon to find authors sitting quietly in the audience during BBYA discussions. They may have one or more books on the current nomination list, or they may just be regular participants in ALA conferences and enjoy the discussion of all books written or recognized for their potential power in the reading lives of teens. Whatever the case may be, they appreciate the committee process and see its value in their lives as authors.

“I think recognition by ALA is almost vital. Being a BBYA choice is even better,” said Gail Giles, a multiple-title author for teens whose book *Shattering Glass* appeared on the 2003 BBYA list and on the 2005 Best of the Best list. “Making the list is great for sales, for buzz, and—face it—for your own ego. It validates your book.”

Giles continues, “Do I think the BBYA list is valuable? You bet. Some libraries with small funding might be able to order nothing more than the books on BBYA. And to those lunatic authors like me that value the craft just a tad more than the sales—yes, the list is important. It says something to me about my work.”

All in all, there are a lot of people from all aspects of the book industry and teen services profession who are involved in, important to, and invested in the BBYA committee. This committee plays an essential role in showcasing outstanding and appealing books for teen readers across the nation and beyond its borders, and also is a player in the larger world of books that, through its process, is dedicated to ensuring there will be more and more outstanding and appealing books for teen readers to recognize over and over again. **YALS**

Remembering YALSA

The View of “The Oldest Living YA Librarian”

By Mary K. Chelton

The part of YALSA's fifty years that I remember best was in the 1970s, when I was most active in what was then the Young Adult Services Division (YASD). Carol Starr can take full credit for getting me active, because until she started the *Young Adult Alternative Newsletter*, I never realized what a national community of practitioners would mean intellectually or politically. I had been nurturing one of my better snits for several years over never getting a response to something I asked of the YASD office, and it took a kick in the pants from Carol

to make me put it aside and attend ALA's Annual Conference in New York City to see what was going on. I don't think enough kind words can be devoted to Carol's importance in creating a vehicle for an entire generation of YA librarians to communicate with each other. She also made a concerted effort to learn how ALA worked and to mentor those of us whom she thought might need it.

The following are highly personal anecdotes of YALSA participation, but vivid memories nonetheless. It is not accidental that most, but not all, are culled

from various Midwinter Meetings, which are much more manageable venues than Annual Conferences, where I remember aching feet and learning that I was interested in the program in the hotel where I was standing because it took too much effort to get to another hotel.

Mike Printz

I had heard about Mike Printz from Bill Morris (the wonderful marketing director and subsequent vice-president of HarperCollins, then Harper and Row, for whom YALSA has named a new book award), and finally met Mike on a corner in downtown Los Angeles after the Still Alive in 75 Best Books preconference. We instantly bonded amid the winos and garbage over several titles we loved that other members of our groups had not. Years later, Mike asked for my advice on how to get on the Best Books committee. I knew that Joan Atkinson, the incoming president, was looking for regional and gender diversity for the committee, so I told him to write her a letter outlining his skills and experience while at the same time making it clear that he was male and from Kansas. He did what I told him verbatim and got appointed immediately. (It's still good advice, by the way.)

While Mike was on the committee, he got so annoyed with what he felt was a middle school bias that he brought several of his school's seniors to talk to the committee about what they liked to read. He and the boys stayed in the hotel together, and, over dinner, I asked how they were doing. He said, “Oh, Mary K., it's terrible! I have to stay dressed all the time, and they don't want to do anything cultural. They just want to watch the previews of the X-rated movies on the TV!” Mike was a teacher down to his toenails, but the New York Museum of Natural History was

MARY K. CHELTON, a co-founder of VOYA, is a Professor in the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies, Queens College, City University of New York. Her 1997 dissertation on YA services is *Adult-Adolescent Service Encounters: The Library Context*. She is the editor of the first three editions of *Excellence in Library Services for Young Adults* for YALSA. Among her many articles is “The Problem Patron that Public Libraries Created: The Normal Adolescent,” which appeared in *The Reference Librarian* in June 2002. She was YASD President in 1976.

of no interest to Kansas teens who didn't have X-rated movies at home.

Once, Mike told a funny story about himself. Thinking the extra space in the Palmer House Hotel room doors was an extra closet, he hung his suit inside and was in a total panic when the hotel took it to be cleaned, until it came back.

I adored Mike, as did most people who knew him. It's possible, though, that I would never have met him had I not been active in YALSA. Knowing Mike remains a life-changing event for me. YALSA has given me friends all over the country and in Canada whom I cherish.

Richard Peck

When the ALA Annual Conference was held in Detroit, there were lots of warnings about being on the streets at night. After a party at the Poncha Train hotel, however, I decided to walk back to the Renaissance Plaza where I was staying because I had to attend an obscenely early board meeting the next morning. There was no one on the street that I could see, and there were lights everywhere, so I started off, only to encounter a man walking toward me. It turns out it was Richard Peck, who immediately escorted me back to my hotel, desperate for human company. It seems he thought he had a room by himself, so he had not packed any pajamas. When he arrived, thanks to some people not leaving the Poncha Train as scheduled, he discovered his publisher had put him in a room with Robert McCloskey, who was sound asleep and snoring like a brass band. Richard was out wandering because he didn't want to go back to his room, especially without pajamas. Desperate to be conscious at 7 A.M., I left him leaning and looking wan over one of the Renaissance Hotel's many pods. I learned later that he

told this story all over the conference, so I feel little guilt repeating it here.

Exploratory Committee on Possible Services to Young Adults in Personal Crisis, Ad Hoc

Because phone-in crisis hotlines, heavily used by and aimed at kids, were all the rage during the early '70s, and many public libraries were starting analogous information and referral services, YASD wanted to examine the phenomenon. Yours truly became chair of this committee. The two members I remember are Sara Fine from the University of Pittsburgh who, besides being a professor there, was a counseling psychologist, and Susan Ellsworth, a recent graduate of library school in Maryland, whose entire experience had been with crisis hotlines. Unfortunately, I don't remember the other members, for which they may be grateful, nor do I remember what brilliant report we turned in to YASD. What I do remember is our own, home-grown committee crisis.

The committee was meeting in a Palmer House dining room, minus Ellsworth, who had gone off to meet the National Runaway Hotline staff based in Chicago. Twenty minutes into the meeting, we received a call from the front desk explaining that one of our committee members was there and very ill. Logically, I ended the meeting, and Sara and I went down to discover Susan in a miserable state. We helped her up to her room, got her into bed, went off and had a drink together, and returned to check on her. By this time, she was vomiting, had massive diarrhea and looked green, so we decided to call the house doctor, only to discover there wasn't one. After calling 911, two of Chicago's finest, both about 6'4", showed up and

apologized because all they had was a paddy wagon. (At this point, they could've had a magic carpet, and I would not have cared.) We put Susan in a wheelchair provided by the police officers, but just as we were getting on the elevator, the house detective slithers out of nowhere to demand all of the details. Apparently, he was to be informed if the police were called to the hotel, as if I was supposed to know that through my pores. I started to tell him the entire story, and he took out a tiny piece of paper to write it all down. It was bizarre.

When we got to the emergency room, Susan was whisked away for hours while Sara and I exchanged life histories, only to discover at about midnight that she had the flu. Upon getting Sara back to her hotel room, we discovered her frantic roommate who had returned to their room to find the phone book open to "hospitals" but no message because, in all the chaos, I forgot to leave one. I can't remember if the committee ever had the rest of its meeting, but we sure had a crisis!

Susan Tait

My favorite memory of coming home late from a meeting or event at the Palmer House was meeting Sue Tait of the Seattle Public Library. Sue was on YASD's Best Books committee and an ALA Councilor at the same time (I do not recommend doing this). She was trotting around the hotel in her bathrobe with three books under her arm and her council name badge on.

Susan Madden

Seated next to Dorothy Broderick, who had recently returned to ALA after a hiatus of some years, I watched as Susan

Madden of the King County (Wash.) Library System dropped to one knee after I introduced her to Dorothy, and kissed her hand as a longtime admirer of her work. It was a great moment.

My Variable Buttons

The Palmer House elevators were so crowded during a Midwinter Meeting that once when I got on and turned around, the friction of rubbing against somebody while turning opened every button on the front of my blouse! Standing in the front of the crowded elevator as it stopped on every floor, I unwittingly flashed every floor until we reached the lobby. It was only then that I happened to look down. Would that I had known about Victoria's Secret underwear; instead, only a plain cotton bra did the flashing!

The "Palmer House Crud"

I used to say that half of ALA's active members came to the Palmer House with the "crud" (a.k.a. the flu), and the other half left with it. I remember planning to spend some time with Evelyn Shaevel's family in Chicago after the conference (Evelyn is one of Beth Yoke's predescen-

sors). What should have been a very pleasant time, instead saw me prostrate with the "crud" on her mother's sofa. I was roused only to have dinner before being delivered back to a prone position. I did interact with Evelyn's family enough to realize that much of her political sense came from family discussions of temple politics, and I learned to love chopped liver. Luckily, the only other time I was sick during a conference was in Dallas, where I could only eat French bread and drink water in a five-star hotel.

What I Learned

Besides all the silly anecdotes, what I mainly learned from YALSA was that I was not alone either in implementing or caring about library services for adolescents, and that there are many different ways to do both. I also learned how to organize large-audience programs while coping with an unreasonably long planning time, a frequently maddening bureaucracy, and unresponsive committee members.

Thanks to very good advice from Lillian Gerhardt, former editor of *School Library Journal*, I learned how to make people feel good about serving on committees or boards I chaired, especially when they often paid their own way, used vacation time, and stayed three or four to

a room in order to participate in YALSA. I responded quickly to communications; thanked people in writing; welcomed them upon appointment; arranged for a communal meal if they were interested; made sure they knew when we were meeting in time for them to book cheaper plane reservations; gave everybody agendas; and kept to our schedule. I also learned to keep the YALSA office informed of everything I did, realizing early that, despite any personality problems or philosophical disagreements I may have had with them, the office staff never needed to be taken by surprise because of something I never told them. I sent all files to my successor in any endeavor. These things sound simple, or possibly simple-minded, but they were absolutely necessary to my political and organizational development. It is still amazing to me how often they are ignored in professional associations.

I also learned through watching the struggle over allocated page space in *Top of the News*, which the YASD and the Children's Services Division (CSD) both shared, that there was a great need for a dedicated and professional voice in young adult library services, which is basically how VOYA was conceived. I like to think that this has helped foster YALSA's current strength, which I now enjoy participating in online as much as I once did in person. **YALS**

Because this issue of *YALS* celebrates a big milestone for YALSA, we thought it only appropriate that we ask the worker bees of the association—YALSA members—to reflect about their fondest memories. After all, these folks, and others just like them, are the reason that, after fifty years, YALSA is stronger than it ever has been. So, we posted messages to the YALSA wiki and the YALSA-L discussion list, inviting members to share their memories of YALSA. Below are the members' responses.

My best YALSA memory was being in New Orleans [for ALA Annual Conference] last year (2006). I was crossing the street when a young man looked at me, saw my badge, and very quietly said, "Thank you for being here." It's those kind of moments that truly make you feel humble and happy to be part of such a great organization as YALSA.—*Amy Long, Young Adult Librarian, Bel Air Branch, Harford County (Md.) Public Library*

It was the first Get Graphic @ your library® preconference at ALA [Annual Conference]. I wasn't a librarian back then. I wasn't even in *library school*! My mom was attending [the conference] in Atlanta, and I decided to go because it was an excuse to see the South for the first time. I didn't know what I was going to do with myself while there. Thankfully, I read the conference catalog the night I arrived. I saw the YALSA preconference listing. I couldn't believe that Art Spiegelman was actually going to be there! I ran over there in the morning and paid up front so I could get in. I had *the best day*. I sat next to Neil Gaiman and got to ask him questions. I was completely taken by all the speakers, including Jeff Smith, Colleen Doran, and, of course, the genius behind *Maus*. That day was so cool; I am pretty sure it was the moment I decided that I should be a librarian.—*Amy Pelman, Young Adult Outreach Librarian, Burlingame (Calif.) Public Library*

YALSA Member Memories

Edited by Valerie A. Ott

A Series of Fortunate Events. . . . That's how it feels, like I was fortunate to be in a night class that was taught by the Cedar Falls high school librarian, Linda Waddle, at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) while working on my library degree. I had been a classroom reading teacher for twelve years or so, and thought Linda didn't require us to read enough books, so I read and wrote up twice the number she requested each week. Later, when Linda became deputy executive director of YALSA, I imagine she may have had some impact on my appointment to the Best Books for Young Adults (BBYA) committee.

I was fortunate that when I attended my first ALA [Annual Conference] in Chicago to observe the BBYA committee in action, I got to see Judy Nelson in action as chair. She became my role model. Her combination of expertise, decorum, and obvious love for her work simply shined through everything she did and said.

I was fortunate at that first and subsequent conferences to meet hundreds of dedicated, award-winning YA authors; dozens of editors, such as Dick Jackson, Marc Aronson, David Gale, and Laura Godwin; and a legion of talented and smart marketing people, like Bill Morris and Terry Borzumato. [There have been] so many important contacts who have helped me bring books and teens together so many times and in so many ways.

I was fortunate that Linda "turned me in" to Dorothy Broderick and Mary K. Chelton at VOYA, and to Trev Jones at *School Library Journal* as a potential reviewer. What a treat to have been able, in various contexts, to visit with and learn from these folks as well as with Lillian Gerhardt, Roger Sutton, Betsy Hearne, Hazel Rochman, Stephanie Zvirin . . .

I was fortunate to spend a summer afternoon in the UNI library reading VOYA's first year, gaining an appreciation for the need to put teens and their various needs first in all our professional deliberations—and being a bit irreverent, when warranted, in doing so.

I was fortunate to benefit from the leadership provided by people like YALSA (or YASD) past-presidents Christy Tyson and Ma'lis Wendt, whose work and thoughts inspired me.

I was fortunate to serve on BBYA with wonderful folks like Francis Bradburn, Debbie Taylor, Audra Caplan, Bonnie Kunzel, Dee Herald, Ann Sparanese, C. Allen Nichols, Sue Riley, Suzanne Manczuk, Judy Sasges . . . I could go on and list dozens of others whose vital real-world teen expertise, unending passion for their work, and sense of fun had such a positive impact on me and my work.

I was fortunate that Audra introduced me to Cathi Dunn MacRae, who at that time usually described herself as being one

half of the YA Wizards at the Boulder (Colo.) Public Library. [Editor's Note: Ms. MacRae is the former editor of VOYA.]

I was fortunate that no other committee members clamored for the job of chairing BBYA, so I enjoyed a third year of the work I'd loved since the start. Working with Mike Printz that year, and with the other members of "my" committee, remains a career highlight. If memory serves correctly, that was the first BBYA committee to use a "full-time" assistant, Susie Corbin-Muir, and the last *not* to have a Sunday afternoon teen participation component. We've come a long way since then! Sally Estes, *Booklist* representative, was always a delight.

I was fortunate to be elected to the YALSA board of directors, where I again got to work with stellar folks, some of whom I've already mentioned, along with Leslie Farmer, Michael Cart, Pam Spencer Holley, Patrick Jones, Susan Raboy, Jana Fine, and Mary Arnold. I was fortunate to work under YALSA presidents such as Elizabeth O'Donnel, Judy Druse, Jennifer Gallant, and Pat Muller—all watched over by, first, Ann Carlson Weeks, followed by the "new-hire" Julie Walker—more great role models. And I was always fortunate to *really* be watched over by Esther Murphy, who had that knack of knowing just what I needed to do, know, or have just before I knew it, and provided support for our work that was simply exemplary.

Highlights I recall best?

- YALSA's first forays into the Internet, especially including the creation of the YALSA-BK discussion list and first attempts to use virtual committee members.
- Increased opportunities for teen participation.
- The constant search for new revenue streams. We were never short of ideas we wanted to try out, but figuring out how to do them on a limited (often zero-based) budget was a challenge.

- The equally constant focus on providing additional services to our members while searching for ways to increase our membership. And that worked, didn't it?

Meanwhile, I was so fortunate that Mike Printz asked me to join his Econo-Clad Advisory committee, where again I was rewarded by working for several years with Marilyn Miller, Debbie, Pam, Michael, Randy Enos, etc. Great discussions about books, great road trips for dinner, and great memories of Mike, another wonderful role model for work and life.

I was fortunate to be elected president of YALSA to end the decade of the nineties. Certainly a highlight of that experience were the discussions having to do with immediate past-president Michael Cart's shepherding of what was to become the Michael L. Printz Award from first proposal, through naming [the award] to the first announcement of winners.

I was fortunate to continue to find ways to serve YALSA, as chair of the Printz committee, as a member of the First-Time Author Task Force, and various other opportunities.

I was fortunate that Charles Harmon of Neal-Schuman Publishers asked me to be series editor for *Teens@the Library*; to have been given the opportunity to publish interviews with YA authors in *VOYA*; and to have been asked to teach as an adjunct instructor at the School of Library and Information science at the University of Iowa.

I am fortunate to live and work in a community that cares about the reading and writing of books, about literacy, and about kids.

I have been fortunate to have the love and support of my wife, Becky, and my two sons, Jonathan and Michael, who for nearly twenty years have put up with family vacations that always corresponded with the

ALA Annual Conference location, and I am thankful that they gave me the time and space to read, and read. And read.

And I am most fortunate to have witnessed YALSA's tremendous growth, to have shared in passing the torch of leadership to a new generation of YA librarians who will continue to shape and drive the future of so many of the most important library people in the world—those teens who come to our libraries needing something good to read, something to do, something to learn. I feel so fortunate to benefit from the continued efforts of Beth Yoke, Nichole Gilbert, and other "new" YALSA folk, who continue to innovate, to explore new ways to get the word out, and to push the ALA envelope just a bit more each year.

A cursory glance at my address book tells me I have left out a raft of people and events, but I trust they'll know no slight is intended. I am sincerely thankful for every one of the people I've worked with in YALSA for providing me with this most fortunate series of events.—Joel Shoemaker, *Library Media Specialist, South East Junior High School, Iowa City, Iowa*

I think my best YALSA memory was SUS [Serving the Underserved] training in Boston in January 2005. Being able to meet so many awesome YA librarians in one place was incredible, as was learning together about best practices. I will always fondly remember that time as a turning point that served to convince me that I was following the right path in libraries. I thought I was just meeting colleagues, but it turned out that I was making friends as well.—Erin Downey Howerton, *School Liaison, Johnson County (Kans.) Library*

As I recall, as administrative assistant for YALSA, I wasn't involved in the first two days of the first SUS seminar, so I missed the huge roach and the bad food in the Hotel Deauville (where the Beatles

had once stayed, but that was during the Deauville's better days) in Miami. My supervisor, Linda Waddle, had already faced those obstacles, and dealt with the hotel catering manager, who had explained to her that "he really wasn't good with details." In the same hotel, we had the Best of the Best going on, and instead of a conference room with tables and chairs, the various groups had to claim their respective areas in an auditorium and converse uphill and downhill with their group members. When the top 100 titles were chosen, we held a luncheon there, with Michael Cart and Walter Dean Myers, I believe, as speakers. But first, the Deauville housekeeping decided that the room reserved for the luncheon needed some touch-up painting—the very day of the luncheon! We waited and waited for housekeeping to clean up the paint chips, and finally we could wait no longer, so Pam Spencer Holley wielded the carpet sweeper and did it herself! Our hero! Thank heavens the Edwards Award Luncheon was in a very nice place.

Since so much of the YALSA activity was taking place at the Deauville, Conference Services did Linda and me the favor of putting us up there. So while I was dealing with the program oddities, I also had a bit of a room mystery. I kept finding white powder on my bedspread. At first I thought it was cigarette ash, and that the maid was very careless while smoking and cleaning my room. Then I began thinking that there was an awful lot of cigarette ash. I had to solve this mystery, and since I hadn't read Philip Pullman yet, *Dark Materials* didn't occur to me; I was sure there was an earthly explanation. I didn't consider cocaine either, as someone would had to have thrown about a million dollars of the stuff around the room while I was staying there. (Besides, I would certainly have been enjoying Conference a lot more.) I looked up and noticed that the ceiling was the same color as the white power. I climbed on the bed and poked the ceiling

and bits of the stuff flew off and landed on the bed. Mystery solved, and I immediately asked for a different room. My theory remains that the Deauville folks took a shortcut during cleanup after the last hurricane and didn't bother replacing the water-damaged ceiling on the top floor; they just painted over it. Hence, it was just flaking off on all the lucky people staying on the top floor.—*Esther Murphy, former administrative assistant for YALSA*

My first YALSA committee assignment was to the Youth Participation committee in 1996, with Carolyn Caywood as chair. It was a great experience, and was followed up with an even better experience the next year on Outstanding Books for the College Bound, where I met some of the people who became my mentors and friends in YALSA: Audra Caplan, Frances Bradburn, Adela Peskorz, Leslie Westbrook, Sara Ryan, and others. Probably my greatest YALSA moment was being elected to and serving on the 2004 Printz committee, which selected Angela Johnson's *The First Part Last* as the winner. I was honored to work with Pam Spencer Holley, Deb Taylor, Charli Osborne, Carrie Kienzle, Juanita Foster, Ruth Allen, Betty Lazarus, Sarah Dentan, and Stephanie Zvirin. There is nothing like an award committee for bonding people together! I was then honored to be elected to the YALSA board, which was a wonderful experience. I learned so much about what goes on in YALSA, and developed a new appreciation for all the work that the members do. YALSA is truly my home in ALA, and in the profession.—*Sarah Flowers, Deputy County Librarian, Santa Clara County (Calif.) Library*

While it is hard to choose just one, many of my favorite YALSA memories are surely from my two years on the PPYA [Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults] committee. I had the great fortune of working with

and learning from knowledgeable and dynamic chairs, Sally Leahey and Walter Mayes. The many fantastic committee members I got to know while "shaping" our lists (Walter—I still use that great phrase, thank you!)—Diane, Robin, Janet, Allan, Elizabeth, Michele, Alison, Melissa, Kevin, Caryn, Carlie, and Marin—made this a unique and truly amazing experience. I'm very proud of the lists we created, but have a special place in my heart for both Books That Won't Make You Blush (yeah, Allan!) and What Ails You? (yes guys, I still have lots of Purell).—*Paula Brehm-Heeger, Teen Coordinator, Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County*

Wow! So many memories! I remember being asked to serve on the Teen Read Week Work Group. I remember very clearly receiving the e-mail asking whether or not I would like to have my name placed on the ballot for the Printz committee. I had to read that notice twice because I could not believe that it was for me. "They asked me to allow my name on the Printz ballot!" I shouted. "I teach first grade. I am not a teen librarian." What an honor. Of course, this was immediately followed by months of believing that I would never be elected. And then the e-mail that told me I was elected! Speaking to the winning authors is nothing short of spectacular. Woohoo! Then BBYA! Serving on BBYA is probably harder work than any other committee I've ever been on in this life and all former lives. Averaging a book a day will challenge anyone! I have a very special spot in my heart for all of the lists I've helped create, including the two Best of the Best groups I've joined. I print them out and save them in a file for eventual scrapbooking. These lists go into my school district, and so do the books. Teens read these books, and these books change lives. I hear about this from real live teens that live in my neighborhood. Awesome!

As amazing and profound as these memories are, however, my very best memories involve the teens and the YALSA members. Because of YALSA, I have friends now that I will always have—friends who share a passion for helping students develop into thoughtful, passionate, lifelong learners. I love that brave teen who tells me, “*how i live now sucks*” (the Printz winner from my committee). I love those teens who do not *ever* want to leave book group meetings and beg to keep meeting during the summer. I’ve had parents call and thank us because their sons and daughters “are readers now.” Many, *many* other YALSA members have these same memories of teens morphing into adults and leaders who will make a difference. YALSA is all about making a difference. The culture of caring and respect and passion for teens is the memory that stays freshest. When I think of YALSA, I think of people: teens, librarians, media

specialists, authors, editors, publishers, agents, teachers, and groupies. I always feel like I am coming home when I attend [ALA] Annual or Midwinter. From day one, YALSA has treated me—a first-grade teacher by day and YA [literature] lover by night—as a family member. I will remember this honor. In fact, I am very close to [earning] my library media specialist degree, which would not have happened without YALSA.

My favorite funny story takes place on the night of the first Printz reception. Remember that one? We were in Chicago. The rectangular room had food tables in each of the four corners. The tables were placed at an angle, creating a triangle of space behind the tables. For that first Printz reception, we ate first and then listened to speeches. I remember standing in this small triangular space with Christopher Myers, and being totally charmed by this tall fashion designer, art-

ist, and nice human being. Chris told me how much he loved his dad [Walter Dean Myers] and admired his talent. During this conversation, a reporter came up to speak to Chris. I told Chris that all talented people must look alike because the reporter thought that I was Christopher Myers, in all my five feet, nine inch splendor! He shook hands with me saying, “Christopher, it is nice to meet you.” I looked down, turned my name badge so he could read my name, and watched as he walked out of the room without stopping to meet Christopher [Myers], who was standing right next to me.—*Ed Spicer, Allegan (Mich.) Public Schools*

The responses were all retrieved from http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa50/index.php/Talk:Share_Your_Memories_with_YALS and the YALSA-L discussion list. **YALS**

As we commemorate YALSA's fiftieth anniversary, it's hard to ignore one of the association's most significant achievements: the establishment of the Printz and Edwards awards. At the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C., in June, YALSA hosted a casual breakfast for past Printz and Edwards awards winners. At the breakfast, authors circulated from table to table, mingling with YALSA members and other young adult literature enthusiasts. This afforded a few YALSA members the opportunity to ask a variety of authors about their work and teen literature as well as the impact the Printz and Edwards awards has had on both. Not surprisingly, the authors graciously answered these questions, exuding enthusiasm for the Printz and Edwards awards and modesty about winning them.

YALSA: Do you think the Printz Award has had an impact on what teens read?

Terry Trueman: Yes, the Printz absolutely has a huge impact on what teens read . . . this award brings books to the attention of librarians. Great books rise to the surface. The Printz also considers all types of books, which makes this award much more meaningful.

Jack Gantos: With *Hole in My Life*, the Printz did have an impact because it brought my book, which was a "juicy book," to the attention of boys, who really gravitated towards it.

Kenneth Oppel: The Printz is a "must" to authors because it is such a prominent award. The award raises awareness among librarians and teachers as to worthwhile books for teens. That award sticker really draws attention to the books.

M. T. Anderson: I think that authors may be less aware of the Printz Award than librarians. Librarians probably see more of the impact of this award than the authors do.

A View from the Top

Past YALSA Winners Reflect on the Printz and Edwards Awards

Interviews by Sophie Brookover, Jan Chapman, Erin Downey Howerton, and Brooke Young

Chris Crutcher: The Printz Award helps to legitimize young adult literature and gives it form. YA literature has often been the "redheaded stepsister" of adult fiction. Prior to the establishment of the Printz, the Newbery recognized children's literature, but there was no award to acknowledge quality young adult literature written for teens. The Printz Award took up the slack.

YALSA: How did winning the Printz affect your career as a writer?

Virginia Euwer Woolf: [The Printz] didn't have an enormous effect on my life because where I live Printz is not spoken. No one where I live has

noticed, but I am grateful to win. I bought a new dress for it, and I was delighted.

Trueman: Completely. It gives you a leg up, especially if you publish your first book at the age of fifty-two.

Gantos: In a smarmy way it covered up a mug shot on the book cover. Teenage boys go to that book, and I don't think teenagers get a book because it is an award winner. Teens want a book to knock their socks off, and they will find a book like this whether it wins awards or not.

Oppel: Before I won [the Printz], I was bald, and the next day I had a full head of hair. My marriage was bad and my sex life awful, but the Printz really turned my life around.

Complete List of Printz Award and Printz Honor Winners

2000

Winner—Walter Dean Myers for *Monster*
 Honor—David Almond for *Skellig*
 Honor—Laurie Halse Anderson for *Speak*
 Honor—Ellen Wittlinger for *Hard Love*

2001

Winner—David Almond for *Kit's Wilderness*
 Honor—Louise Rennison for *Angus, Thongs, and Full-Frontal Snogging*
 Honor—Carolyn Coman for *Many Stones*
 Honor—Terry Trueman for *Stuck in Neutral*
 Honor—Carol Plum-Ucci for *The Body of Christopher Creed*

2002

Winner—An Na for *A Step from Heaven*
 Honor—Chris Lynch for *Freewill*
 Honor—Virginia Euwer Wolff for *True Believer*

Honor—Jan Greenberg Abrams for *Heart to Heart: New Poems Inspired by Twentieth-Century American Art*
 Honor—Peter Dickinson for *The Ropemaker*

2003

Winner—Aidan Chambers for *Postcards from No Man's Land*
 Honor—Nancy Farmer for *The House of the Scorpion*
 Honor—Garret Freymann-Weyr for *My Heartbeat*
 Honor—Jack Gantos for *Hole in My Life*

2004

Winner—Angela Johnson for *The First Part Last*
 Honor—Jennifer Donnelly for *A Northern Light*
 Honor—Helen Frost for *Keesha's House*
 Honor—K. L. Going for *Fat Kid Rules the World*
 Honor—Carolyn Mackler for *The Earth, My Butt, and Other Round Things*

2005

Winner—Meg Rosoff for *how i live now*
 Honor—Kenneth Oppel for *Airborn*

Honor—Allan Stratton for *Chanda's Secrets*
 Honor—Gary D. Schmidt for *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*

2006

Winner—John Green for *Looking for Alaska*
 Honor—Margo Lanagan for *Black Juice*
 Honor—Markus Zusak for *I Am the Messenger*
 Honor—Elizabeth Partridge for *John Lennon: All I Want Is the Truth, A Photographic Biography*
 Honor—Marilyn Nelson for *A Wreath for Emmett Till*

2007

Winner—Gene Luen Yang for *American Born Chinese*
 Honor—M. T. Anderson for *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation, Volume 1: The Pox Party*
 Honor—John Green for *An Abundance of Katherines*
 Honor—Sonya Hartnett for *Surrender*
 Honor—Markus Zusak for *The Book Thief*

YALSA: Do you think young adult literature has changed over the years? If so, how?

John Green: In the last ten years, it's become possible to write and publish books for teenagers, which wasn't really possible before the advent of the Printz Award. There were great books for teens published earlier, but there wasn't the systematic support for teen

literature that exists now at publishing houses, public and school libraries, and bookstores.

Laurie Halse Anderson: The biggest change is that there's more of it! I don't read lots of YA literature because I'm writing it, and I don't want other authors' voices in my head. I can see that the field has broadened dramatically, though—there are many popular subgenres, like horror, beachy

books, and literary fiction—which to me is a sign of a very healthy field of literature.

Lois Lowry: It's hard for me to answer, because I'm not really so much a YA author. Most of my books are for younger kids. The answer has to be yes, but I'd be more interested to hear what librarians think, because they're the ones reading YA literature, whereas I'm the one reading about it

(and writing it, of course). [At this point, the librarians at the table all volunteered that YA lit is growing more sophisticated and mature.] If YA literature is growing more sophisticated, it's because the kids themselves are more sophisticated.

Trueman: The Printz Award has dramatically expanded the scope of teen literature. Everything for smart readers is considered, and the Printz honors books with literary merit that kids actually want to read!

Robert Lipsyte: I do think YA literature has changed, enormously. It goes through cycles. When I started writing, there was no YA literature. Ursula Nordstrom [legendary HarperCollins editor] sort of invented it. With *The Contender*, I just thought I was writing a boxing novel—I had no idea who my audience was.

YALSA: Where do you think young adult literature is headed?

M. T. Anderson: I think it's interesting. . . . Typically, I think writers always feel that there's a previous age of literature, a golden age of literature that is now over . . . well, I mean obviously

any number of books will never be surpassed. I actually think right now is a golden age of YA literature. There are so many wonderful authors working right now. Usually you look to the past and you think, "Oh, well, Homer—no, Shakespeare was the greatest"; there's always a sense of literature in the past. It's wonderful for us all to be a part of that.

Garrett Freymann-Weyr: I hope that it will head away from its desire and impulse to be a lesson of any kind to kids, and I hate when kids are given a book and told, "Oh, you can relate to this." That's just lazy reading; you should have to find a way to relate to something through language and voice and epiphany and subtext and mood. I hope that we will emphasize writing more.

Allan Stratton: Oh my lord, all over the place! What's great is that there's something for everybody. There's stuff for readers who are just learning how to get into books and to enjoy books; [there are] books on their lives as they're living [them], and they can go to it if they're feeling alone and troubled; they can find friends in literature; there's fantasy, if that's what they're involved and engaged in.

I think it's a very exciting time. There don't seem to be any boundaries for these books.

Gary Schmidt: Oh man! A cosmic sort of question. . . . I think it's going to be pushing envelopes. Adolescent literature is today where children's literature was in the early '80s, where there was a movement out of expected genres and avenues, and children's lit in the '80s began to explode. . . . I think YA literature is on the cusp of that.

Marilyn Nelson: It seems to me that YA literature is becoming more interesting, risk-taking, edgier. I don't know how far it can go in that direction, so I wouldn't presume to make a prediction.

Walter Dean Myers: I think YA literature is among the best literature we have in the country right now. What I'm seeing is that we're attracting young people who would normally be aspiring to adult literature. . . . How YA literature differs [from adult lit] is that it can be literary and still be successful. I think it's going to be better, and better, and better! **YALS**

Thomson Gale. *Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center: Critical Thinking Database.* 2007. www.gale.com; contact Thomson Gale representative for pricing: 1-800-877-4253.

The new *Critical Thinking* module of Thomson Gale's *Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center* database offers added features that would be a great resource for teachers and school librarians. This database gives students access to reference and magazine resources for roughly 250 social issue topics ranging from the pros and cons of abortion, to capital punishment, to professional wrestling. The database is useful for students working on social studies assignments as well as for those preparing for debates. In addition, the new database package helps students develop and enhance their critical thinking skills while researching and learning about a variety of typically assigned research topics.

The critical thinking portion of the database is divided into six main sections, which are then subdivided into specific browseable topics. Each topic features at least one overview and viewpoint essay. Each essay article contains questions to think about, words to know, and a review quiz. There is even the option to listen to the article in an MP3 format. Students will be encouraged to really think about the topics when using the critical thinking component of the database. Teachers will benefit from *Critical Thinking* because the material is curriculum-based, which allows more time for teaching and less time preparing questions. Teachers and librarians also will like the Curriculum Standards section, which details the national and individual state's standards. This special critical thinking edition of *Opposing Viewpoints* will gain some new users while continuing to be helpful for those who have benefited from the original database.—*Heather Timko, Librarian, Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Public Library*

Doyle, Miranda. *101+ Great Ideas for Teen Library Web Sites.* Neal-Schuman, 2007; ISBN-13: 978-1-55570-593-0; 307p. \$65.

Part of Neal-Schuman's *Teens @ the Library* Series, this book is sure to be an invaluable and well-used resource for any library looking to either start, expand, or completely revamp their Web presence. Doyle organizes the information, tools, and suggestions in an easy to use and methodical way, taking readers step-by-step from general overview and evaluation of needs and Web desires through to each stage of potential components. Organized into major topics, including information, communication, and creativity, which are then addressed in smaller pieces, such as reader's

advisory, feedback forms, and teen advisory groups, users can select components on which to focus in manageable chunks. Interviews with a wide range of librarians, useful forms, and sample pages from different Web sites are peppered throughout the text. Each of these helps illustrate the topics discussed and adds concrete visuals assisting in creating a well-balanced picture for the librarian ready to tackle what could be an overwhelming task. From the opening contents page through the index, this resource is well laid out and quite thorough. A particularly helpful feature are the Tech Companion pages, complete with a thorough and basic-language glossary of key tech terms. With obvious attention to detail and a passion for the subject, Doyle delivers a resource that every librarian eager to serve teens in creative and current ways should add to their professional collection. Highly recommended for school and public libraries.—*Stephanie A. Squicciarini, Fairport (N.Y.) Public Library*

Shontz, Priscilla K., and Richard A. Murray, ed. *A Day in the Life: Career Options in Library and Information Science.* Westport, Connecticut: Libraries Unlimited, 2007; ISBN 1-59158-364-0; 443 p. \$45.

This resource is a compilation of a wide cross-section of library and information science careers. In each section, a different librarian discusses the day-to-day challenges and joys of their position. The portraits range from reference librarian in a public library to international school librarian in Bolivia. In every entry, the librarians discuss their daily responsibilities, the pros and cons of their career, how to succeed in their field, and additional resources. Each section is unique to the librarian that writes it, but all the entries are filled with an aura of excitement and are written in a light, conversational style, likely to revive interest in the field for any reader. Although written for new librarians and those searching for a change, the book is interesting to anyone wishing to learn more about the field. The book relies more heavily on library jobs than those in the field of information sciences, but, because there are ninety-five very different positions represented, anyone should be able to find something that reflects their interests and abilities.

This resource would be most valuable in library and information science programs, where it would give insight to students and professors. It not only offers unique alternatives, but gives valuable advice on the more mainstream paths. While reading this book, new librarians will get a sense of different choices as well as different approaches individuals take to librarianship.—*April Cipo, Teen Services Associate, Wadsworth (Ohio) Public Library* **YALS**

Save the Date! Young Adult Literature Symposium in November 2008

The first Young Adult Literature Symposium will be held by YALSA at the Millennium Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee, November 7–9, 2008. The biennial event's inaugural theme is "How We Read Now." The Young Adult Literature Symposium is funded in part by the William Morris Endowment.

The symposium's theme, "How We Read Now," will investigate who, what, how, and why the burgeoning teen population—the largest and most diverse in United States history—reads. The event also will explore the impact this generation is having on young adult literature and vice versa. The goal of the symposium is to provide a venue for educators, librarians, students, authors, publishers, and others interested in young adult literature to gather and explore this vibrant and growing genre.

"Librarians attending the symposium will come away with a fresh perspective on today's young adult literature that will help them as they work to connect a wide variety of teens with the books they want and need," said YALSA President Paula Brehm-Heeger. "This event will offer a unique chance for librarians to broaden the scope of their own YA literature knowledge and also symbolizes how far YA literature has come. Having a full event dedicated just to literature for teenagers will help generate the support and respect these important works of literature deserve."

Details about the symposium, including registration, programs, and more, will be available at www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/yalit-symposium/symposium.htm.

Early Bird Registration Open for Midwinter!

The 2008 ALA Midwinter Meeting will take place January 11–16, 2008, in Philadelphia. Register by November 30 to save as much as \$25 off onsite registration fees. To register and learn more about YALSA's plans for Midwinter 2008, visit www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/midwinter.htm.

YALSA will kick off Midwinter with "Taking Teen Services to the Next Level," a one-day preconference focusing on advocacy on January 11. The preconference comes at a special price: YALSA members, students, and retirees pay \$100, with fees for ALA members at \$125, and nonmembers at \$150. A separate program during Midwinter will feature YALSA's new three-year advocacy campaign.

Midwinter attendees also can look forward to YALSA's annual Gaming Night. At this year's event, experienced gamers, beginners, and everyone in between will find something new in the world of online, video, and tabletop games while enjoying refreshments, networking with other young adult librarians, and checking out the latest games popular with teens.

Finally, no Midwinter is complete without the Youth Media Awards. Get up early on January 14 to find out who this year's Printz, Edwards, and Alex winners will be!

Tune In @ your library® for Teen Tech Week

The second annual Teen Tech Week will be celebrated at thousands of public and school libraries across the country from March 2–8, 2008. The general theme of Teen Tech Week is *Get Connected @ your library*®. This year's focus theme is *Tune In @ your library*®. Download tech guides, read up on contests, and register to participate at www.ala.org/teentechweek. Want to share your plans and get development ideas? Visit the Teen Tech Week Wiki at http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Teen_Tech_Week.

Teen Tech Week is a national initiative aimed at teens, their parents, educators, and other concerned adults. The purpose of the initiative is to ensure that teens are competent and ethical users of technologies, especially those that are offered through libraries. Teen Tech Week encourages teens to use libraries' nonprint resources for education and recreation, and to recognize that librarians are qualified, trusted professionals in the field of information technology.

New First-Time Author Award Debuts in 2009

YALSA will honor a debut book by a first-time author writing for young adults with the William C. Morris YA Debut Award. The first Morris Award will be given in January 2009.

The Morris award will celebrate the achievement of a previously unpublished author or authors who have made a strong

literary debut in writing for young adult readers. The winning book may be fiction, nonfiction, poetry, a short-story collection or a graphic work—as long as the award winner has not previously published a book for any audience.

“Many first-time authors write compelling, high-quality books that have a significant and long-lasting impact on YA literature,” said YALSA President Paula Brehm-Heeger. “This award will provide a high-profile way to formally recognize, celebrate, and spread the word about these strong rising stars. I’m thrilled that YALSA, through the generous donation of an amazing individual such as Bill Morris, will be able to honor and recognize talented new writers.”

The award winner will be announced annually at the ALA Midwinter Meeting Youth Media Awards, with a shortlist of as many as five titles publicized on the second Monday of December. The award will be presented at ALA Annual Conference.

The Morris Award is named for William C. Morris, an advocate for marketing books to children and young adults. He was beloved in the publishing field and the library profession for his generosity and enthusiasm in promoting literature for children and teens. The award is made possible by the William C. Morris Endowment, established with money Morris left to YALSA in his will.

YALSA Offers New Discussion Lists for Teaching Young Adult Literature and Serving Incarcerated Teens

YALSA recently created two new electronic discussion lists:

- teachyal, which offers resources and discussion for those currently teaching children’s and young adult literature. Library school students, teachers, librarians, and others can discuss theory and practice as well as exchange ideas, syllabi, and information.
- yalsa-lockdown, which discusses issues unique to librarians serving incarcerated youth. The group will address such issues as working

within several systems with differing values (probation, library, school departments, social services), issues of censorship within a structure that may or may not acknowledge ALA or guidelines, issues of providing services to youth with mental health issues or serious criminal charges, and so on.

To subscribe to teachyal, yalsa-lockdown, or YALSA’s other electronic discussion lists, visit www.ala.org/yalsa and click on “Electronic Resources” followed by “Web Sites and Electronic Discussion Lists.”

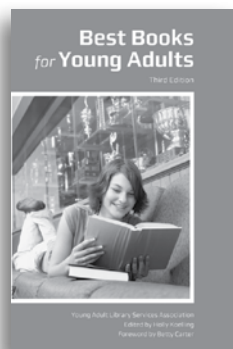
Best Books for Young Adults, 3rd Edition Now Available

ALA Editions released the third edition of YALSA’s unparalleled *Best Books for Young Adults* (BBYA) in August. BBYA will quickly prove itself to be an invaluable, comprehensive resource for those in public and school libraries who serve teens as well as an excellent tool for readers’ advisory and collection development.

BBYA includes annotated lists of the best young adult books extending back to 1966, indexed by author and title and twenty-seven themed and annotated lists in easily reproducible formats. In addition, readers will appreciate the book’s discussion of the history of the BBYA lists, analysis of the lists’ content from 2000 to 2006, and reflections on current trends in teen literature.

Editor Holly Koelling, current chair of YALSA’s Best Books for Young Adults selection committee, is the outreach services manager for the King County Library System in Washington State.

Best Books for Young Adults, third ed., edited by Holly Koelling for YALSA with foreword by Betty Carter (ISBN: 0-8389-3569-9; ISBN-13: 978-0-8389-3569-9) costs \$42 (\$37.80 for ALA members). It can be purchased



through the ALA Store at www.alastore.ala.org or by calling 1-866-SHOP-ALA.

YALSA Names Twenty-five Winners for Excellence Project

YALSA recognized twenty-five exemplary teen programs and services from across the United States in the fifth round of its Excellence in Library Service to Young Adults project.

The top five programs each will receive a \$1,000 cash prize, while the remaining twenty “best of the rest” each will receive \$250; all honorees will be included in the fifth edition of *Excellence in Library Service to Young Adults*, edited by Amy Alessio, to be published in summer 2008. Winners also will be featured in a program at the 2008 ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim, Calif.

“We looked for outstanding, interesting, and original programs that could be adapted to libraries in a variety of circumstances,” said Excellence jury chair RoseMary Honnold. “While all the submitted programs were successful, the programs chosen for Excellence are truly special in their creative and ingenious methods of reaching and serving teens.”

Applications were judged on the degree to which the program or service met the needs of its community, particularly the young adult audience it served; originality; the degree to which the program or service reflected the concepts identified in *New Directions for Library Service to Young Adults*; the degree to which it impacted and improved service to young adults; and quality.

The top five programs are:

- The Hennepin County (Minn.) Library for its International Teen Club
- Austin (Texas) Public Library for Second Chance Books
- Cleveland Public Library for Teen Empowerment: A Motivational Summit
- Alameda County (Calif.) Library for Teen/Senior Web Connection
- The New Scotland Branch of the Albany (N.Y.) Public Library for its Skateboarding Discussion Group.

The twenty “best of the rest” are:

- Monroe County (N.Y.) Library System, Fairport Library Council and Fairport Central School District for the Greater Rochester Teen Book Festival
- Loudoun County (Va.) Public Library for Hanging Out Rocks!
- Homer (Ill.) Public Library District for Energy: A Teen Leadership Academy
- Louisville (Ky.) Free Public Library for its Anime Con
- Cheshire (Conn.) Public Library for its Teen Podcast
- Randolph County (N.C.) Public Library for Teen Corner @ your library*
- Seward Park Branch, New York Public Library for its Teen Advisory Group Garden
- West Covina Library, County of Los Angeles Library System for its Cultural Heritage Series for Young Adults
- Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind, Blind Department, Staunton for its ABC Café Audio Book Club
- Fairfield Civic Center Branch of the Solano County (Calif.) Library for Teenie Boppers
- Berkeley (Calif.) Public Library for its Vera Casey Parenting Class
- Prince George’s County (Md.) Memorial Library System for its Outreach to the Crossroads Youth Opportunity Center
- Alachua County (Fla.) Library District for Teen Artist of the Month
- The New York Public Library for Classic Literature for Teenagers
- Donnell Library Center, New York Public Library for its Anti-Prom
- San José (Calif.) Public Library for San José Teen Idol
- Livermore (Calif.) Public Library for its Teen Film Festival: An Independent View
- East Jessamine (Ky.) Middle School for its Student Novel Nibbles Party
- Deltona Regional Library, Volusia County, Fla. a for The X-Room
- Monroe County (Mich.) Library System for 2007: Year of the Teen

The Excellence in Library Service to Young Adults Project was started by ALA past president Hardy Franklin in 1993. All five rounds of the project have been funded by the Margaret Alexander Edwards Trust. Edwards was a well-known and innovative young adult services librarian at Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, Maryland, for more than thirty years.

Youth and Library Use Studies Show Gains in Serving Young Adults

YALSA applauds two recent surveys that illustrated progress in staffing and use of library services to young adults.

The Public Library Association’s (PLA) 2007 Public Library Data Service (PLDS) Statistical Report tracked young adult service trends in public libraries. The report found that nearly 90 percent of the public libraries surveyed offer young adult programs, with more than half (51.9 percent) employing at least one full-time equivalent dedicated to fostering young adult programs and services, up dramatically from 11 percent in 1995.

“We are seeing one of the largest generations in United States history begin their teen years, so it is not surprising to see more and more teens visiting libraries,” said YALSA president Paula Brehm-Heeger. “Clearly libraries that have embraced teens have seen benefits to their teens and communities and to ensuring that their libraries remain a relevant part of future generations’ lives. For libraries considering expanding or enhancing teen services, these statistics can help them to be confident that in doing so, they will find a receptive, responsive audience.”

A poll conducted for ALA by Harris Interactive, which surveyed 1,262 youths between the ages eight and eighteen on library use, found that a significant amount of respondents used both their public library and their school library media center for personal use. Thirty-one percent visit the public library more than ten times a year, and nearly 70 percent use their school library more than once a month. Of those who regularly use their libraries, more than three-quarters (78 percent) indicated they borrowed books and other materials for

personal use from public libraries, while 60 percent sought out materials for personal use from the school library.

The Harris poll also found that nearly one-third of youth surveyed would use both public and school libraries more if they offered more interesting materials to borrow (32 percent public, 33 percent school). One-quarter of respondents said they would visit their school library more if its computers didn’t block information they needed (one-fifth cited this for public libraries). Other suggestions to draw more youth into libraries included offering more activities and events (32 percent public, 22 percent schools); staying open for longer hours (31 percent public, 21 percent schools); and creating a comfortable, welcoming atmosphere (22 percent public, 21 percent schools).

“When librarians committed to providing excellent service to teens host programs full of excited, enthusiastic young adults who check out books, manga and other materials, there really is no doubt that libraries can and should provide service specifically targeted to and designed for this age group,” said Brehm-Heeger. “And to help them, YALSA offers online courses, institutes, and conference sessions focused on helping staff—all staff—feel comfortable and confident in serving teens.”

PLA is taking orders for the PLDS Statistical Report at www.pla.org/ala/pla/plapubs/pldsstatreport/pldsstatistical.cfm, and a summary of data from the Harris Interactive poll is available for download as a PDF at www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/HarrisYouthPoll.pdf.

Resources for Teen Social Networking Available from YALSA

YALSA created *Social Networking: A Guide for Teens* with teen audiences in mind to assist librarians in educating teens about safe use of online social networking software, including such sites as 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. 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, editor of YALSA's blog and former Website Advisory committee chair.

Written expressly for teens, the guide offers definitions of online social network-

ing 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**



**salutes its cohosts
for the
YALSA 50th Anniversary Party
at ALA Annual Conference**

**thank
you!**

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| Henry Holt Books for Young Readers | Simon & Schuster |
| Hyperion Books for Children | School Library Journal |
| Kids Can Press | Scholastic |
| Lerner Publishing Group | Walden Media |

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.

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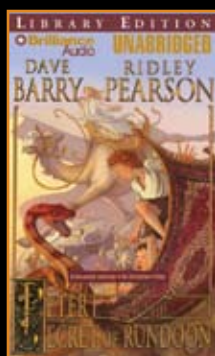
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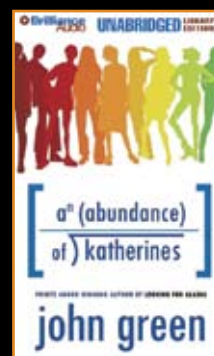
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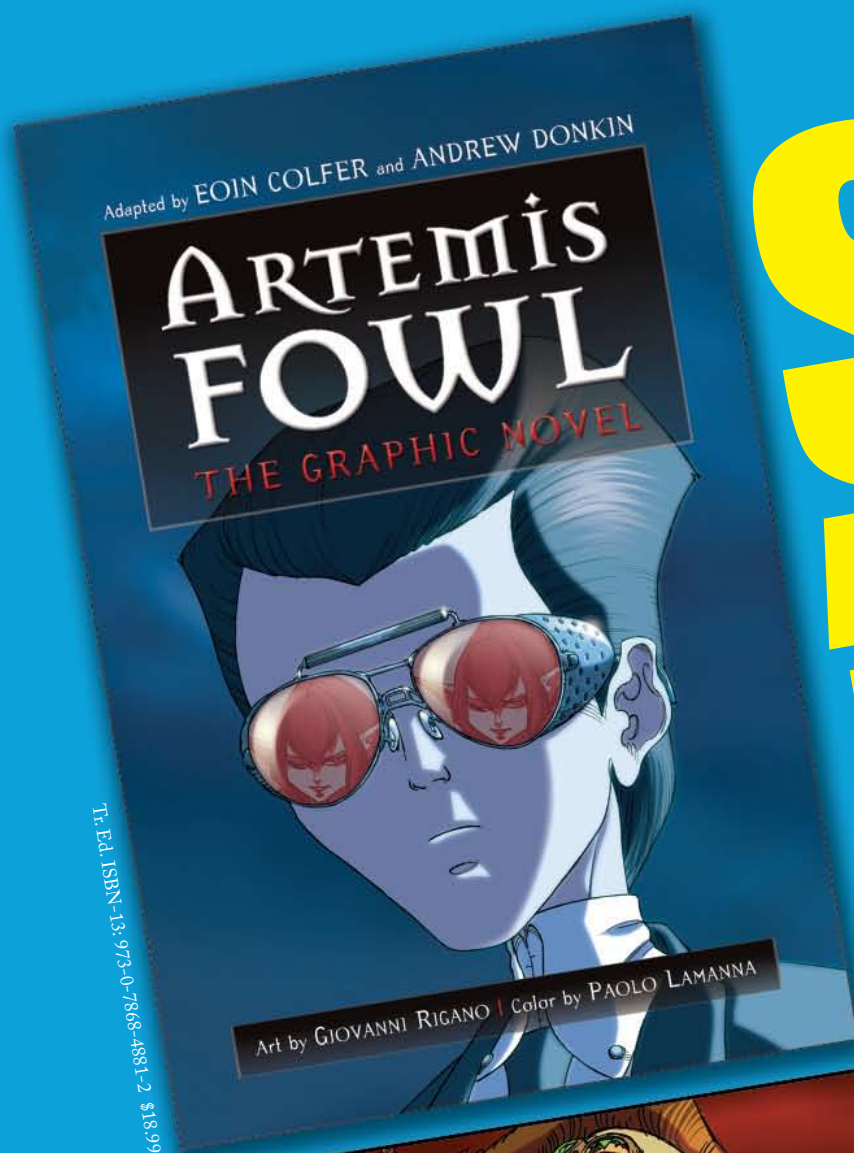
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