



“A True Calling That Grows More Lovely Each Year”:

Three Authors Pay Tribute to 2007 ALAN Award Winner, Teri Lesesne

Note from the editors: We asked this trio of top authors to say a few words about Dr. Lesesne, and they jumped at the opportunity. Many thanks to Jennifer Flannery for helping us connect with Gary Paulsen deep in the Alaskan bush!

I first met Teri Lesesne at an NCTE dinner years ago. “You’re speaking at our humor conference in two and a half years,” she said to me, grinning. “We can’t wait.” I decided not to mention that I might be dead in two and a half years. Worse than that—I might not be funny. But Teri is just so beyond all those what ifs, for all her half-filled glasses overflow. She puts herself out there to learn and teach and love and share with infinite enthusiasm. Enthusiasm, I learned recently, means “filled with God,” and how she lives that out as a friend and colleague. When she’s had losses, she makes them her gain. When she loves something—a book, a person, an idea—she lets the world know. She blogs with joy and confidence, and that’s how she teaches. Again and again her students have told me, “I don’t really have time to take this course, and I have to drive a really long way, and it’s on Saturday and all that, but, well, it doesn’t matter because . . .” a smile; a happy sigh . . . “Dr. Lesesne is teaching.”

Dr. Lesesne is teaching, and thank God for that—in her books, in her classrooms, on her panels, in her blog, with her friends—matching books with readers and people with ideas that will change their lives. And now in print I get to say what I’ve wanted to convey for so long. Thank you, Teri, for the gift of your joy, your resilience, your unswerving insistence on excellence, your reservoirs of strength and wisdom, your gutsy laugh, and your fresh vision. And thank you most of all for showing us the beauty of a true calling that grows more lovely each year.

—Joan Bauer

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You can’t have much of a discussion about adolescent literature without Teri Lesesne’s name coming up. It was one of the first names I heard back in the day when I was one of the young new guys and it’s one of the first now. She reads voraciously and you can ALWAYS expect an honest response to your work. She’s funny and smart and you always feel in capable hands when you’re presenting at one of her conferences, or with her at a national conference. She’s a great friend to authors and a great friend to the literature she loves. I can’t say too much. My one complaint is what her name does to Spellcheck.

—Chris Crutcher

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I write books for young people. That makes me a foot soldier. Teri Lesesne puts books in the hands of young people. That makes her a general on the front line of battle.

Teri seems to know everything about and everyone in the business of getting books and young people together. She forgot more last week about what kids like to read than most people will know in a lifetime—except I’m not sure that’s true because of her prodigious memory (“Ah yes, page 67 of the hardcover not the paperback edition, midway down on the left, you wrote . . .”).

She’s passionate and fierce and funny about books and kids and writers. She’s a voracious and curious reader which makes her a great friend to both authors and young readers, and her support and encouragement make the world a little better than the way she found it.

—Gary Paulsen