



## From the Editors

Nearly six years ago, I sat in my Kansas study, called Jim Blasingame at Arizona State University, and said I had a crazy idea: We should apply to be coeditors of *The ALAN Review*. A few months later, we were at the head (or foot, more appropriately) of a table presenting our proposal and being interviewed for the position by some of the top people in the field of young adult literature.

It was a little intimidating.

A couple days later, we learned we had been selected, and all those “great” ideas we had proposed suddenly needed to become fact rather than fiction. Dreaming is the easy part; making dreams happen is a little more difficult. We knew the quality reputation of ALAN and its journal, so we knew we would be expected to maintain those high standards. We spent time designing the journal and developing themes to give it our own personality during our tenure as coeditors.

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As we settled into the role, we learned more and more about the exciting web of experts and enthusiasts in the field of young adult literature. Nearly daily, we became acquainted with newcomers to YA lit—classroom teachers, authors, etc. Amazingly, I found myself working with some incredible leaders in the field—authors my middle school and high school students adored (okay—I adored them, too) and educators and researchers my colleagues and I admired.

It was a little intimidating.

In the past five years, Jim and I have been fortunate to be a part of an organization—and its journal—that are thriving. We’ve tried to bring in the latest in research regarding young adult literature, while

also providing a practical side designed to encourage educators to use quality YA literature in the classroom. We know the secret to success for our students is engagement; young adult literature provides the greatest opportunity for engaging those learners. That philosophy has guided us as we’ve approached a half-decade’s worth of journals.

The numerous articles in this issue reflect that philosophy. The female fantasy heroine is the subject of an article by Kara K. Keeling and Marsha M. Sprague, while Lisa Kerr examines futuristic young adult fiction in her article, “Frankenstein’s Children.” Vivian Yenika-Agbaw provides a look at books focusing on Africa that have received the Newbery Medal. In her article on writing and teaching historical fiction, Linda J. Rice shares focuses on the works of L.M. Elliott.

In “Carolina Dreams,” Scot Smith discusses the works of Kerry Madden and shares an interview with the author. Melanie D. Koss details how today’s new literacies are affecting young adult literature. Hannah P. Gerger moves into the world of video games, discussing how they can be used to encourage teens to read young adult literature. Additionally, Emily S. Meixner shares ways to open up secondary classrooms to the LGBTQ young adult literature by using book passes.

Jerry Weis provides a look at the publishing concerns that have emerged with today’s economic issues in his Publisher’s Connection column, while Bill Broz and guest book reviewer Jim Davis discuss memoirs in the Professional Resource Connection. Also, don’t forget to read through our 31 reviews of the latest in young adult literature in the Clip and File center insert.

This issue of *The ALAN Review* is our last; we hope we've brought you the best and the brightest regarding developments in young adult literature. Now, we turn the reins over to a new set of coeditors—Steven Bickmore, Melanie Hundley, and Jacqueline Bach—who we feel confident will be outstandingly successful and propel the journal into new realms.

Most important, we hope we've shared the passion we have for young adult literature. As educators, we have seen these quality books in the hands of teens across the nation, and we believe . . . no, we *know* . . . that young people are able to find their own voices through the works of Walter Dean Myers, Chris

Crutcher, Laurie Halse Anderson, Christopher Paul Curtis, and so many others. There may be some voices that make a few adults somewhat uncomfortable, but those voices must continue to be heard. ALAN, with its growing number of members, offers an opportunity for just that.

In our five years as coeditors, we hope we've helped a few more of *your* voices to be heard, as well; we appreciate you and thank you for allowing us to drop into your homes and offices three times a year.

And, Jim, it may have been a little intimidating, but I'm really glad I made that phone call.

## ALAN Foundation Research Grants

Members of ALAN may apply to the ALAN Foundation for funding (up to \$1,500) for research in young adult literature. Proposals are reviewed by the five most recent presidents of ALAN. Awards are made annually in the fall and are announced at the ALAN breakfast during the NCTE convention in November. The application deadline each year is **September 15th**.