



## From the Editors

Some deadlines are just too early.

It is too late in December for me (Steve) to be writing an introduction to the Winter 2012 issue of *The ALAN Review*. I should have written it for the Nov. 1st deadline. The articles were all selected and the authors notified. I would have beaten the rush of email exchanges that came right after the ALAN Workshop between our wonderful copyeditor, Carol, and me about manuscripts. The resulting flurry of emails seeking feedback from the authors about the impending changes would have been less guilt ridden if I'd actually finished my own contribution. I should have, but I didn't. Instead, I read graduate papers about the role of the adolescent in literature. Instead, I provided feedback on the unit plans that my English education students created; after all, they were to begin student teaching in the middle of January, and their success as teachers is more important than any deadline. I am so pleased with their progress and their potential that it is worth flirting with the wrath of my coeditors.

The first of November was too early to write this introduction, anyway. Maybe it always is. It was too early because my first deadline preceded the NCTE Annual Convention and the Fall 2011 ALAN Workshop in Chicago. If I had written it then, I would have missed being able to reimagine Icarus in this editorial. Gary Salvner asked us, in his acceptance speech for the Hipple Award, to ponder the notion that perhaps Icarus was a hero; one who dared to test the limits of conformity. What if all of us, as Gary suggested, gave one gift membership to ALAN during 2012? I can just hear Joan Kaywell, ALAN's membership secretary, shouting with joy, only to recoil with trepidation as she imagines the membership doubling. Doubling the

membership would probably give *The ALAN Review* a wider subscription base than *Research in the Teaching of English*. Imagine the range and influence of talking about kids reading books instead of lamenting the time wasted on meaningless test preparation.

Yes, the first of November was just too early. I would have missed John Green's challenge to think smaller and change the world through little actions. I needed his reminder that despite the seeming omnipresence of social media in the lives of adolescents, they need quiet time to think. We all realize that when adolescents truly connect with a book, they aren't rushing to digest micro impulses from twitter, Facebook, emails, or text messages, but are truly engaged in thought. Can we each give one more ALAN membership to a teacher who needs that final nudge to be a stronger advocate for books that matter in the lives of kids?

The first of November *was* too early. Who knew that Laurie Halse Anderson would care enough about addressing an audience at the ALAN Workshop that she would finish a speech prone on the stage, invisible behind the podium while battling what turned out to be a fairly serious bout with food poisoning? Stories matter. Anderson's real story matters and her imagined stories matter; especially when teens who read them find a familiar voice. During the Workshop, I was exposed to so many new titles, new authors, and exciting ideas that I wanted to talk about them. And when I thought about whom I wanted to talk to, I knew exactly who needed a gift membership to ALAN.

No doubt about it. Finishing the editorial before the first of November would have been too early. I would have missed reporting on how the President of

ALAN, Wendy Glenn, orchestrated a beautiful conference that engaged and inspired participants. From all of us in ALAN, thank you, Wendy, for a fine conference and your dedication to teaching, scholarship, and young adult literature. I would have missed watching cj Bott, our incoming president, bustle along the sidelines of the conference as she took notes, helped in every imaginable way, and planned for the next workshop in Las Vegas. She is already hard at work and will share with anyone and everyone the ALAN Mission Statement (<http://www.alan-ya.org/>). I also would have missed observing Teri Lesesne during her first conference as the ALAN Executive Secretary. If she was nervous, I couldn't tell; she sat calmly on the back row, twittering, emailing, blogging, and generally informing anyone not in attendance about the current events during the workshop.

I will try to approach their energy and dedication by giving a gift membership. It's easy. If you are reading this, close the journal, look on the back for the membership form. Copy it and fill it out right now, write the check, and send it off. Today.

Now, let me introduce the articles before it's too late. It might already be too late; you may have already skipped over this to read one of the articles that follow. Many of these articles address the issue's theme of Reading YAL's Past, Writing YAL's Future, which echoes the theme of the recently concluded ALAN Workshop, "Flash Back. Forge Ahead." Baldwin's article reminds us that when books trace how adolescent teenage girls navigate their emerging sexuality, they may, in fact, serve as a therapeutic first step for those who have questions, but don't have an adequate support system in place. This is an issue that has been a constant in the history of YA literature, and Baldwin helps us look to the future of this topic. Jones suggests that from its early beginnings with *The Outsiders* (1967), young adult literature has discussed how the individual is often in conflict with society. His article discusses the issue of mind control in YA fiction. In a post 9/11 world, what will society allow as we strive for safety, higher test scores, and technological advancement? In his article, Smith reminds us that Science Fiction continues to capture adolescent readers, and perhaps we need to consider how this genre might fit more naturally in the classroom.

Glenn et al. suggest that educators can use young adult literature to nurture readers who are ready to become aware of social issues, but could also become

young adults who are capable of action. They discuss several novels depicting issues of social import and provide sample discussion questions to aid teachers in the classroom. Helping students to live critically literate lives seems like a far more productive way to usher students into the future than endless test preparation. Hallman and Schieble claim that perhaps young adult advocates have spent too much time worrying about the age appropriateness of individual texts and instead should focus on whether or not these books address the issues of "New Times." They discuss the implications of New Times as a combination of literacy as a socially situated practice and the issues surrounding an increasingly digital world.

Brenner is also concerned with sponsoring adolescents who think and write critically. Her article examines how Printz-Award-winning literature exemplifies the four resources model developed by Luke and Freebody (1997, 1999) through the literacy practices of its characters. She suggests that among all the literacy practices displayed, they rarely demonstrate examples of acting as text critic. Given this situation, Brenner joins with many other authors in this issue who encourage teachers to help students read widely and think deeply. She suggests that not only should readers examine the reading practices of literary characters, they themselves should think deeply about the ideological suggestions of the texts themselves; they can and should begin to participate in the critical discussion as adolescents. Indeed, this practice and the others suggested throughout the issue would truly help develop lifelong readers.

S. D. Collins provides an interview with Jack Gantos that provides us with a more in-depth look at one of the most entertaining writers in the Young Adult literary community. Then, cj Bott's President's Connection revisits the past with "ALAN and YA Lit: Growing Up Together," in which she interviews past presidents of ALAN and discusses the ways that the presidents have shaped and been shaped by the organization they have built. This nostalgic approach highlights ALAN strengths as a community of scholars and readers. Susan Groenke and Robert Pricket offer a definition of multimodal texts and an exploration of multimodal reading practices in "Continued Absences: Multimodal Texts and 21st Century Literacy Instruction." They discuss the challenges of literacy instruction in a testing climate and the disconnect between teens' digital literacy practices and teachers' digital

literacy practices. In “Mexican American YA Lit: It’s Literature with a Capital ‘L’!,” René Saldaña, Jr. considers the role and importance of Mexican American young adult literature in both classrooms and teacher education classes. He introduces several new books and explores the role that literature can play in a classroom. In “Aliens among Us,” James Lecesne, young adult author, examines the ways in which adolescents often feel alien. He introduces The Trevor

Project and discusses the ways in which LGBT adolescents have responded to it.

We hope you enjoy this issue’s offerings. We think they are fine examples of the intelligent ways so many of you out there are thinking about YA literature. Oh, and by the way, I hope both Claudette and Jenette enjoy their gift memberships enough to join on their own in a year.

## Call for Manuscripts

### Submitting a Manuscript:

Manuscript submission guidelines are available on p. 2 of this issue and on our website at <http://www.alan-ya.org/the-alan-review/>.

### Winter 2013 Theme: Flash Back–Forge Ahead: Dynamism and Transformation in Young Adult Literature

In her Fall 2011 president’s column, Wendy Glenn reflects that our field manages to “successfully shift and sway with time and changing elements, while maintaining a core commitment to young people and the books written for them.” For this call, we wonder, like Glenn, what topics, voices, and forms have shaped our field and what we anticipate those future ones will be. What titles endure and why? Which ones are poised to become readers’ favorites? As we pursue the next trend in young adult literature, what should we be careful not to lose? What will our future roles as young adult literature advocates be and with whom should we be forging relationships? This theme is meant to be open to interpretation, and we welcome manuscripts addressing pedagogy as well as theoretical concerns. General submissions are also welcome. **Submission deadline: July 1, 2012.**

### Summer 2013 Theme: 40th Anniversary Issue

While we will be soliciting articles from past ALAN presidents and editors as well as influential young adult authors, we welcome submissions that reflect on the past 40 years of ALAN. **Submission deadline: November 1, 2012.**

### Fall 2013 Theme: Reading and Using Nonfiction Young Adult Literature

So often our schools tend to privilege the reading of fiction over the reading of nonfiction. But what about those kids who want to read something other than the novels we assign? What about the students who crave nonfiction? The theme of this issue asks us to consider the role of nonfiction in the classroom and in the personal choice reading of adolescents. What is it about nonfiction that grabs students? What role can/should nonfiction play in classrooms? What nonfiction have you used that empowered adolescents? What is it that we must consider or celebrate when we teach/use/recommend nonfiction? This theme is meant to be open to interpretation, and we welcome manuscripts addressing pedagogy as well as theoretical concerns. General submissions are also welcome. **Submission deadline: March 1, 2013.**

### Stories from the Field

**Editors’ Note: Stories from the Field** invites readers to share a story about young adult literature. This section features brief vignettes (approximately 300 words) from practicing teachers and librarians who would like to share their interactions with students, parents, colleagues, and administrators around young adult literature. Please send your stories to: [jbach@lsu.edu](mailto:jbach@lsu.edu).