



From the Editors

By the time you read this issue of *The ALAN Review*, the 2012 ALAN Workshop will be a memory. You will be engaged in a new year. Some of you will be hanging on to the memories of old friends visited and new friends met. Some of you will be relishing the speeches and comments of authors who are familiar favorites and a few whom you have only just discovered. Others will be engaged in new research projects stimulated by conversations with colleagues. Some among you will still be reading the new books you received at the workshop, while others will have read them all and be looking for more. We hope many of you will have passed them on to students, colleagues, friends. As my daughter, a junior in PK-3 education, said—Ooh books! Can I read them?

Sharing books with others—family, friends, students, teachers, librarians—is one of the perks of working with young adult literature. There is always a young adult book worth discovering and worth sharing. Jackie Bach is the best book-sharer I know. She gives books to students, to preservice teachers, and teachers. I don't think she knows how to visit a school without bringing a book to give away. After all, we have learned that sharing books makes a difference. Melanie is also one of the most generous souls I know. When we were both graduate students at the University of Georgia, we shared an office. I can't tell you how many times her spontaneous moments of sharing gave me better insight into teaching and researching. She helped me see YAL as a worthy avenue of serious research. I can still see her look of gentle chastisement when she realized I was ignorant of an

important writer in the community. I have gleaned a great deal from both colleagues, and I am still a work in progress. I am learning to emulate their thoughtful generosity, and my level of participation with ALAN is their doing.

As editors, we receive a few extra copies of each issue of this journal to send to others and for promotional purposes. Following Jackie's and Melanie's example, I made gifts of these copies to mentor teachers during recent visits with student teachers. In addition, I passed out copies of *The ALAN Review* and *Signal* (a wonderful gift from Jennifer Dial and her editorial team) during a presentation at the annual conference of the Louisiana Council of Teachers of English. I hope some of these seeds cast about will bear fruit.

Speaking of seeds . . . early in November of 2012, I met Sarah Mesle through an online research request. Sarah teaches young adult literature classes in the English department at UCLA and primarily attends the Modern Language Association (MLA) convention. She defines her research focus as American Literature, particularly to 1900. The Novel. Gender and Popular Culture. Transatlantic Cultures of Slavery. Nevertheless, she was scheduled to appear on a panel discussing YA literature at MLA during January 2013. Clearly, she shares an interest with the ALAN community. I sent her the last two issues. I hope she joins our YA family of readers, writers, students, teachers, librarians, and researchers.

Our theme for this issue is Flash Back—Forge Ahead: Dynamism and Transformation in Young Adult Literature. As an organization, our past has

always been one of sharing our enthusiasm for this great body of literature. In fact, the ALAN Workshop is currently so large it is hard to imagine a convention space that could accommodate more people and still capture the excitement and intimacy. At the same time, I never attend a session without thinking about someone who would really enjoy the experience.

So, how do we share more actively? As I look to the future, I believe we are at a critical moment of potential growth. As individuals, perhaps we should actively use Facebook, Pinterest, goodreads, and other social media outlets to share what we discover at the workshop. For instance, as I write this, I know that Teri Lesesne will be working her fingers to the bone tweeting away during the workshop. She will have done her part by the time you read this. And many of us will return to classrooms where we will offer book talks. As an organization, we will of course continue to explore methods of sharing. Perhaps we need to post speeches on YouTube or on the ALAN website, too. I think, however, that we miss an opportunity if we don't promote *The ALAN Review*.

The summer 2013 issue will be a double issue that celebrates the growth and history of *The ALAN Review* and the ALAN organization on its 40th anniversary. We will be reading memories from past editors, past presidents, writers, publishers, and ALAN contributors. This issue will mark the past and lead to the future. Now is the time to consider who needs to see this issue. Does your school or university library need to subscribe? Do you have a colleague that needs that final nudge to join? For quite a few years now I have considered the three annual issues of *The ALAN Review* as a continuation of the conversations sparked by the ALAN workshop. I hope you will carefully consider sharing the conversation by inviting people to join.

This issue has many rich offerings. In the President's connection, Jeff Kaplan surveys the past accomplishments of the ALAN community. His message provides multiple reasons to share the past and look forward to a rich future. Next, Justin Scholes and Jon Ostenson explore the wide appeal of the dystopian novel. They look closely at books in this genre written since 2000, discussing the common characteristics these books share and considering their potential for classroom use. E. Sybil Durand forges even further forward by discussing three post-colonial young adult

novels. She helps us see the establishment and growth of young adult literature that reaches well beyond the boundaries of the United States and Canada.

Adrienne Cleland and Shanetia P. Clark describe an action research study in which seventh-grade students selected texts and shared how and why they should be valued. The study specifically focuses on the self-selected reading choices of young middle school boys. Understanding the reading selections of boys, a group often considered reluctant readers, is a knotty problem that many of us have tried to untie. Amy Bright adds insight about how to scaffold young readers into more difficult and perhaps more mature young adult selections. Then Ricki Ginsberg further explores adolescent voices by describing her young adult elective for high school students. She incorporates technology as a tool for student expression. I was excited and jealous of her opportunity all at the same time. I was probably never bold enough when I had the chance, but with her modeling, many of us can explore new opportunities for our students.

Michele D. Castleman and Erin F. Reilly-Sanders explore the complex and controversial topic of killing in YA literature—not just violence and death, but the act of killing. They address a difficult topic thoughtfully, providing readers with important insights that can help us consider how to talk about these books with students, parents, and colleagues. Angie Beumer Johnson, Laurel Haynes, and Jessie Nastasi explore the staying power of *The Giver*, another text with killing as a central theme. They wonder what it might mean to read a book with such complex themes at different stages of our lives, what might be the different experience of reading the book as a pre-teen, a teen, or an adult?

Bill Broz explores a topic he has considered previously in an ALAN workshop; he offers a description of how he teaches young adult literature with his audience of primarily Mexican American preservice teachers in southern Texas. He pushes the discussion of how those of us who teach YA literature at the college level prepare these courses with an eye to the needs of both our college students and their future students. The next piece continues to probe the issue of how and why we select books for specific audiences. In AP Gatekeeping, sj Miller dispels the myths about using (or not using) YA literature in the AP classroom. This is a topic that continues to be debated often, but with

the benefit of sj's experience and expertise. I think you will find compelling reasons to include YA novels in settings that have often been neglected.

One of the most compelling features of *The ALAN Review* over the years has been the contributions of adolescent novelists. The final two columns are no exception. Beverley Brenna's column offers an author's perspective on breaking stereotypes through her presentation of characters. Amanda Havard, another author of novels for adolescents, points to the challenges

and excitement of connecting texts to new technologies. How might a character's journey be enhanced if we could follow his travel on Google. The possibilities are quite intriguing. Once again, we finish with Stories from the Field. Danny Wade, Bridget Mahoney, and Georgia Parker all remind us of little moments and tiny victories that make the efforts we all go through worthwhile. I hope you enjoy the issue, and when you are finished, pass it on.

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 2014 Theme: Reaching Them All, ALAN Has Books for Everyone

The theme for the 2012 ALAN workshop is "Reaching Them All, ALAN Has Books for Everyone." Current ALAN president cj Bott notes that there are young adult books for boys, for girls, for challenged readers, brilliant readers, LGBTQ teens, teens in other countries, teens from other countries who now live here, Christian kids, Jewish kids, Muslim kids, non-believing kids, kids with problems at home—alcoholism, illnesses, incest, divorce—as well as kids from happy, fun-loving homes, homes with two moms or two dads or one mom or one dad or one of each or grandparents, teens who live in cyberspace, teens who can't afford a computer, and so on. We welcome submissions related to this theme—how young adult literature reaches young adults. 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, 2013.**

Summer 2014 Theme: How to Teach Young Adult Literature in an Age of Censorship and Common Core?

In a time of extreme criticism and scrutiny of texts that are being used in the classroom, what are proponents of young adult literature to do? This issue seeks to address that question with submissions that offer very practical ways of incorporating (or continuing to incorporate) young adult literature in the classroom. What ways are you teaching young adult literature? How are you using young adult literature to meet or exceed what is being required in the common core? What experiences have you had with censorship, and how have you dealt with them? How can beginning teachers approach the inclusion of YAL in their classrooms to take advantage of the power of young adult literature to improve reading skills and foster a lifelong love of reading? **Submission deadline: November 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.