

## YA Authors: The Heart of *The ALAN Review*

TAR Coeditor (with Lori Goodson) 2003–2009

**TAR:** Why did you decide to apply to become an editor of *The ALAN Review*? What was the experience like for you?

Applying for the coeditorship was an act of faith and courage. I think most of the courage came from Lori Goodson. *The ALAN Review* is the biggest journal in YAL, and I was afraid I would be so very intimidated in an interview with the people on the search committee, including the chair, Chris Crowe, and other people I greatly admired, such as Sissi Carroll, Gary Salvner, and Virginia Monseau (just to name a few). As it turned out, they were all very welcoming and assuring, and we came out of the interview believing that we could successfully carry on the journal's tradition of excellence if they would give us a chance. Two days later, we were named the new coeditors. I will never forget Gary Salvner shaking my hand in the hotel lobby and saying "We would like you and Lori to be the next editors of *The ALAN Review*." It changed my life forever.

**TAR:** Looking back across your tenure as editors of *The ALAN Review*, what were the seminal young adult texts that came out during that time? Were there texts, genres, or themes that went viral? (For example, the Harry Potter series and Twilight trilogy certainly captured the country.)

Strangely enough, although the Twilight series experienced readership like no other YA book, and we were heavily involved with Stephenie Meyer, the Eclipse Prom, and Scarecrow's *Stephenie Meyer: Into the Twilight* locally in Arizona, this was not

a book series that the YAL community of teachers and scholars deeply engaged with, nor did the series seem to have an impact of social significance like some others that will always be memorable to us. Books that opened up new conversations about the diverse paths of the adolescent experience were much more notable.

Michael Cart was an amazing force for good over the years, advocating for LGBTQ youth and their equitable representation in literature. KaaVonia Hinton, Cicely Denean Cobb, and Kay Smith helped to cover issues and authors in African American and women's YA. Betsy Nies, Susan Carlisle, Alex Sanchez, Carmen Medina, and Francisco Jiménez helped with the Latino/a experience. Marinda White-Kaulaity, Kenan Metzgar, and Wendy Kelleher kept us abreast of Native American YA, and Virginia Loh showed there was much to learn about the problems created by the dearth of Asian American YA. James B. Carter taught us about Sequential Art Narration (graphic novels).

Some of the emerging voices we were fortunate enough to cover included Kevin Brooks, Christopher Paul Curtis, Clive Barker (new to YA), Laurie Halse Anderson, Jacqueline Woodson, Joseph Bruchac, Shannon Hale, Ellen Wittlinger, Jack Gantos, Chris Lynch, Jordan Sonnenblick, Cornelia Funke, T. A. Barron, Suzanne Collins, Patrick Jones, David Clement-Davies, Angela Johnson, John Ritter, Chris Crowe, Coe Booth, David Levithan, Sarah Dessen, Rachel Cohn, Alan Sitomer, and of course Sherman Alexie as he ventured into YA to win the National Book Award. Naturally,

we highlighted all the established stars, too: Gary Paulsen, Will Hobbs, Chris Crutcher, Joan Bauer, Jerry Spinelli, Walter Dean Myers, Harry Mazer, Marc Aronson, Jim Murphy, Julie Ann Peters, Jane Yolen, and Louis Sachar.

**TAR: As an advocate for young adult literature, what key “battle” you were engaged in?**

There were two major battles that we entered: The battle against censorship and the battle for equity for each and every cultural, ethnic, and gender identity—all the myriad ways to be an adolescent human being. We often gathered articles around themed issues, like “Borders and Bridges,” as a way to engage with these concerns in more depth.

**TAR: Who do you feel contributed to the journal or the ALAN organization during your tenure (authors, scholars, presidents, teachers, educators)?**

We want to thank Kay Smith, Jerry Weiss, Jeff Kaplan, Bill Broz, and Diane Tucillo for serving as editors of the various columns. Their influence on

the field is noteworthy, and all YAL community members are grateful to them. In an emergency, when we needed something important and fast, we could always turn to Teri Lesesne to produce a good piece of writing about an issue that was thrust upon us days before our deadline. Margaret Sacco was always available to help with the battle against censorship. Other stalwarts included Pam Cole, Jean Boreen, Wendy Glenn, Joan Kaywell, c. j. Bott, Gerrit and Barbara Bleeker, and Katie Mason.

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