



From the Editors

Editors' Note: *Kenneth L. Donelson, a founding member of ALAN (Assembly on Literature for Adolescents, NCTE), having served as its president and as founding editor (with Alleen Pace Nilsen) of The ALAN Review, died on April 30, 2013. He was a well-known professor of English and Director of ASU's English Education program throughout the 1990s until his retirement in 2002. He is also coauthor of Literature for Today's Young Adults, the leading textbook in the field for English teachers, school librarians, and reading teachers. You will see his name mentioned throughout this issue as he leaves a lasting legacy for our organization, this journal, and to those of us lucky enough to have spent time with him.*

Welcome to the 40th Anniversary Issue of *The ALAN Review*. You'll notice the larger size; in spite of being twice as long as our usual size, we still were unable to include everything an issue this special should contain. We hope that the additional pieces we would like to have included will find their way onto a digital archive hosted on ALAN's website. Please accept our apologies if there's something you really wanted to see as part of this issue—hold that thought for our 60th anniversary issue!

The first half of this issue contains fascinating pieces written by those members associated with ALAN and its creation. The former editors who put together this outstanding journal share their stories about editing the journal and what authors and trends shaped the field during their editorship. It seems a bit

early for Steve, Melanie, and me (Jackie) to share our stories about editing the journal before we've finished—other than how grateful we are for our editor at NCTE, Carol Schanche—so we're going to share with you our experiences with the ALAN Conference.

Jackie's Story

Many of the authors in this anniversary issue, myself included, found our way to our first ALAN conference through a suggestion made by a mentor, a colleague, or a teacher. In 1994, I was a junior at Florida State University and taking Dr. Pamela "Sissi" Carroll's "teaching middle school" English course. In class one day, she recommended that we consider attending the upcoming NCTE and ALAN conferences that were to be held in Orlando that year. I don't recall Dr. Carroll requiring us to go to the conference as part of her course. In fact, I'm not even sure exactly what she said to make me want to register and pay for the conference, drive to Orlando, and then attend sessions—all by myself. Maybe I was just eager to learn more about my profession. But I went.

At the NCTE Conference, I clumsily wandered in and out of rooms, trying to digest the vast number of sessions. I had a hard time understanding how to navigate my experience in a useful way. It wasn't until I attended an ALAN session with author Theodore Taylor (*Timothy of the Cay*) that I felt at home. While I don't recall the details of his talk, I do recall the passion with which he spoke about his craft and writing for adolescent readers. I was hooked. Young adult literature became a staple in all of my classrooms.

Of course, it also helped that John Simmons (a long-time advocate who recently passed away), Laurence Baines, Kathryn Kelly, and Gloria Pipkin—scholars who are all involved with young adult literature in one way or another—were also at FSU at this time, and I was fortunate to take courses with many of them. As two of the columns in the second half of this issue note, our entrance into the field often begins with a simple recommendation, such as attending a conference, reading a book, or listening to an adolescent.

Now as a teacher educator, I currently have graduate students who are studying young adult literature in various settings, undergraduates in my adolescent course who are engaged in partnerships with schools and public libraries, and colleagues to whom I recommend books for themselves or their children. I hope that my students join the ALAN community and share some of my experiences—from having to figure out how to get all of those books from the conference back home to reading the journal and becoming inspired to try something new. Here's to an organization that honors readers and their writers, and those who understand the power of a simple recommendation.

Steve's Story

As a new teacher in 1978, I was just smart enough to realize that I wasn't going to have every good idea that I needed by myself. During our English methods class at Brigham Young University, Joyce Nelson told us to always subscribe to the *English Journal*. I did. It helped. I stayed involved; I found my way to a few NCTE conferences, I applied and was accepted to some seminars and institutes of the National Endowment for the Humanities. I just wish she would have included *The ALAN Review*. I am not blaming Joyce; she did a great job and I promise I still hear her voice as I make teaching decisions. But as we have worked to gather information for our celebration of 40 years of *The ALAN Review*, I realize how much I missed during the first 25 years.

Just as Joyce's advice was essential in my success as a teacher, I believe our personal conversations and stories can be important guiding points for others. We grow as we share. I discovered *The Life of Pi* (Martel, 2001) because a student was caring it around. I was also introduced to Phillip K. Dick by a student.

I first read *The Giver* (Lowry, 1993) and *The Devil's Arithmetic* (Yolen, 2004) because my daughters were reading them. I also ventured back to Tolstoy because a student in a make-up English night school class was reading *War and Peace* (Tolstoy, Maude, Maude, & Gifford, 2008) for his silent sustained reading selection. Sharon Murphy first lent me a copy of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (Chbosky, 1999) as a first-year graduate student in 2002. I was teaching the YA literature class, and she couldn't imagine that I could teach the course without mentioning this book. She was right.

As I attended the ALAN workshops, my professional life took on a new dimension. Two of my favorite publishing projects began before the authors finished speaking. First, I was already reading *Inexcusable* (Lynch, 2005) when Chris Lynch began his talk. Before he was finished, I knew what the project would be and which students I should ask to read the book and discuss it with me (Bickmore, 2008). I revisited Lynch's books, reading everything that I had missed along the way. I have discussed his books in courses with preservice teachers and shared his books with teachers and colleagues. Should every class read *Inexcusable*? No. Are there students who will benefit from reading *Inexcusable* or many of his other books? Absolutely.

The second project began during another workshop. I listened carefully as Padma Venkatraman introduced her new novel, *Climbing the Stairs* (Venkatraman, 2008). The novel tells the story of a young girl, Vidya, in India during the turbulent days of World War II. I was intrigued with this well-crafted historical novel and found myself outlining a close reading based on craftsmanship, ideology, and its basic appeal to readers (Bickmore, 2011). *Climbing the Stairs* is rich in literary and historical allusions. Vidya's personal story outlines her quest for education and independence as she struggles with the loss of her father, who valued her individuality, and the new restraints placed on her by a less progressive uncle. Both the feminist and post-colonial themes of the novel offer a rich reading experience.

I know that many of you who are reading this have similar tales to tell. Well, I hope you tell them. I hope you share them. More important, I hope you use the influence you have on new teachers and colleagues to say: You should always subscribe to *The*

ALAN Review and attend workshops; it will enrich your life.

Melanie's Story

I've been attending the ALAN conferences for awhile now; each time I go, I am amazed and touched by the stories that surround us. From the books themselves to the stories the authors tell to the stories we tell each other at our table, I am overwhelmed by the ways in which books—good books—touch our lives and connect us to the world. Five years ago, I had my first opportunity to bring students with me to the conference. Three graduate students and three undergraduates walked into the large ballroom of the hotel, received their box of books, and made their way to seats at a table. They were wide-eyed, fascinated, and in awe of the books they received. Kayley asked, "These are ours? We don't have to give them back?" She and the other five students oohed and aahed over the books. If the conference had stopped there, they would have been content.

Then, the first author spoke, then the next, then the next. Panel after panel of authors stepped up and shared. The six young women sat mesmerized by the speakers and then ran to get in line for autographs. For the entire day, they listened to the authors they knew from their childhoods, to new authors, and to authors who were rising stars in the field. If the conference had stopped there, they would have been content.

As the day ended, Emily turned to me and said, "This is pretty much the best experience I've ever had." A librarian from a school in Minnesota turned and said, "It's like this every year." Another announced, "And we get to come back tomorrow." Others nodded. The teachers and librarians who sat near my six students also did something amazing—they talked and shared their experiences with authors and other ALAN attendees; they treated the six young women at the beginning of their teaching careers as colleagues. They bonded over books and a shared love of reading. They mentored the women into the world of ALAN in a way that made them feel as though they already belonged. Kayley described their interactions with the teachers and librarians as "the extra cherry on the perfect sundae of a day."

The six women are now teachers all over the country. Each year when it is time for ALAN, I hear

from them about whether or not they will see me at the conference. I introduce them to the students that have come with me this year and watch as they mentor them into our community.

In This Issue

In addition to these retrospective pieces, this issue features articles that showcase the then and now of the field of young adult literature. In our first two articles, Pamela C. Coke and James Brewbaker trace their entrance into the field of young adult literature and acknowledge those scholars who have had an influence on their careers.

Jennifer Buehler, Daria Plumb, and Jennifer Walsh, in their article "Young Adult Literature Book Awards: A Guide for Newcomers to the Field," help readers understand and navigate the works honored by various organizations. In "Young Adult Literary Adaptations of the Canon, Jennifer M. Miskec examines the different ways canonical texts are adapted into young adult novels. Angel Daniel Matos's "Writing through Growth, Growth through Writing: *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* and the Narrative of Development" closely analyzes this masterful book that continues to attract readers.

We are delighted to include six pieces by seasoned and newer young adult authors: Virginia Euwer Wolff, Robert Lipsyte, M. E. Kerr, Sonya Sones, Cindy Pon, and Mike Mullin. ALAN has long been fortunate to have generous authors whose speeches, panels, writing, and interviews continually inspire and motivate us to use young adult literature with our students. M. Jerry Weiss, another longtime contributor whose columns introduce high-quality novels that make excellent recommendations for students and colleagues, shares artifacts from previous ALAN documents. Katie Dredger explores lessons and benefits of incorporating young adult literature into the classroom in ways we hope readers of ALAN and fans of young adult literature support.

One of the new features we brought to our editorship are the "Stories from the Field." These uplifting stories always wrap up the issue with powerful recountings of young adult literature; in this issue, Eisenbach's story offers another testimony to what those of us in ALAN have long experienced.

We hope you enjoy this issue as much as we do.

References

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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/>.

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.**

Fall 2014: Open Call

The last 40 years have seen an explosion of young adult literature novels. From vampires to zombies, biographies to poetry, video games to movies, YAL is a considerable force in the world of publishing and media. This issue is an open call, so we ask you to consider young adult literature writ large. What is it that we know and can say about this field? Who are the authors and texts that are shaping the current and next generations of readers? What has changed or stayed the same about young adult literature? What are the trends, themes, or topics that capture the attention or imagination of adolescent readers? 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, 2014.**

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.