



From the Editors

In preparing for this issue, our last one as editors of *The ALAN Review*, I looked back through my saved emails from the spring of 2009 when we were preparing to take over *TAR* duties. There were the emails of introductions, of budgets, of permissions, and of questions—lots and lots of questions from Steve, Melanie, and me. In my first few interactions with our new editorial team—Wendy Glenn, Ricki Ginsberg and Danielle King—I’ve noticed how many of those I could answer simply by cutting and pasting from previous editors Jim Blasingame and Lori Goodson’s responses. In looking back at their final issue’s introduction, as well as that of former editor Pamela Sissi Carroll (Blasingame and Goodson’s on being intimidated, Carroll’s on remembering), I can’t express as eloquently as they did the joy and honor we feel after spending the last five years contributing to this important field.

Before I describe the exciting contents of this issue, I would like to give thanks. There’s not enough space for me to thank everyone, so I must limit myself to thanking the several graduate students who have been of tremendous help over the past five years. Many have left our university and have their own classrooms now; they are Karin deGravelles, Cord McKeithen, Heather Durham, Shannon Pope, Sybil Durand, and Leylja Emiraliyeva-Pitre. I would also like to thank Michelle Zoss who has designed our past five covers that have captured the growing nature of reading—from the book to the digital book to the audio recording to the tablet. Thank you. And, of course, a huge thank you to Carol Schanche, our editor, who

has been so wonderful.

I (Jackie) have a ten-year-old son who loves watching Spongebob cartoons. In many episodes, Spongebob hurls himself into each new endeavor proclaiming, “I’m Ready, I’m Ready.” In the spirit of Spongebob, the three of us are going to share with you what we’re ready for now that our tenure as editors is coming to an end.

I’m ready to read what my son will be reading.

He’s just now getting into young adult literature. He’s read J. K. Rowling, Rick Riordan, Ridley Pearson, R. J. Palacio’s *Wonder*, Cynthia Lord’s *Rules*, and Chris Grabenstein’s *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello’s Library*. Someday it will be *Hunger Games*, *Speak*, *Monster*, *Boy 21*, and whatever work captures the public’s attention for whatever mysterious reason that draws us to vampires, basketball games, and boarding schools. Those involved with *ALAN* know to listen to what our students tell us about what they are reading, and we know how to listen to be able to recommend titles back to them. Many of the contributions to *TAR* during the past five years speak to the magic of sharing and discussing a good book.

I (Melanie) am ready to challenge my students to see what those of us who love YAL see in it.

I teach several young adult literature classes. In each incarnation of the class—whether it is a focus on race, class, gender, and sexual identity in YAL, or the appropriation of mythology or Shakespeare in YAL—I watch the students fall in love with the texts they read. They become passionate advocates of these texts; now I want them to be able to critique them,

to push the field forward, to both celebrate the books and challenge them. The field of YAL has become increasingly diverse, artistic, experimentative, and thoughtful. I want to challenge my students to keep that momentum going and growing.

I'm ready to advocate for digital and multimodal young adult literature.

Working with middle school readers in several after-school and weekend reading programs, I have watched them read both print texts and multimodal texts. Right now, we're reading one of Patrick Carman's novels, and the students are fascinated both with the story and with the novelty of the two media formats. As many young adult authors take up the digital and multimodal writing challenge, I look forward to reading and sharing a new form of storytelling with kids.

I'm ready to see what is next.

I'm not ready to say goodbye to the amazing people with whom I have worked at ALAN. The past five years as editor has been an amazing journey for the three of us. While our tenure as editor of *The ALAN Review* is ending, our commitment to the field is not. I am ready to see what the next stage in the work is for me and for Jackie and Steve.

I (Steve) am ready to visit more schools and reconnect with past English education students who are teaching in the field.

It has been wonderful communicating with all of the various contributors to *The ALAN Review* over the last five years. However, it does take time—time that has too often kept me away from visiting the classes of students who have graduated over the last five years. They occasionally send emails telling me about how their students respond to Crutcher, Voight, Green, Lipsyte, Myers, Myracle, Anderson (MT and LH), Sachar, Levithan, and numerous others. I want to watch the magic in the classroom. I want to see what my former students, now colleagues, are doing with young adult literature. How are they using YA literature to explore the ins and outs of the Common Core State Standards and to engage reluctant readers? I am also interested in what pedagogical strategies, including YA literature, they are using to accomplish their goals. After all, these preservice teachers and master's students are the ones who responded enthusiastically to the books in YA courses, methods classes, or as part of one-to-one discussions. Many *TAR* articles in

the last five years have explored what teachers do in their classrooms. It is time I took a closer look.

And, now, we're ready to introduce this issue.

The theme for this issue is how to teach young adult literature in an age of censorship and Common Core, and as usual, our authors and reviewers decided what we should include in this issue. These articles touch upon teaching in an age of Common Core and censorship, but not in overt ways.

Two articles, one by Kristine E. Pytash and Richard E. Ferdig and the other by Gretchen Schwarz, examine the role that *The ALAN Review* has played in the field of young adult literature. Pytash and Ferdig note the trends of articles published in *TAR* since 2005 and Schwarz asks us as a field to evaluate young adult literature in order to identify works our students should be reading.

The article by E. Suzanne Ehst and Jill M. Hermann-Wilmarth as well as the one by Donna L. Miller call for continued conversations and contemplations on the ways we incorporate young adult literature with characters from non-Western cultures and assist students in connecting their out-of-school experiences with those found in the classroom. In the end, both pieces demonstrate spaces for these texts within the CCSS and show that stories can serve as bridges between students' own experiences and the effect of those experiences on who they are becoming as adolescents.

Graphic novels also deserve consideration in an age of Common Core and censorship. Both the article by Ashley K. Dallacqua and Dorothy J. Sutton and the one by Bucky Carter provide productive, useful approaches for teachers while tackling issues of critical literacy, adolescence, and the genre itself.

Choosing which texts to teach, recommend, or share is becoming an escalating problem in an age of Common Core and censorship. Ruth Caillouet and Amy Davis Sanford explore the joys and troubles associated with choosing texts to read in young adult literature courses while Jennifer Miller examines the magic that infuses the reading of a book when teenagers get to interact with the author.

We have always been fortunate to feature pieces by authors of young adult literature in *TAR*, and the two Author Connection columns by Nancy Garden and Lyn Miller-Lachmann speak to the craft and care

that go into writing stories about LGBT characters and characters with disabilities. In this issue's The Publisher's Connection, Jerry Weiss provides current commentary on the state of booksellers and a comprehensive list of current titles that are worth reading. In The Research Connection, Laura May, Melanie Hundley, and Teri Holbrook examine the Common Core's focus on informational texts and analyze several biographies on President Obama. In The Classroom Connection,

Matt Skillen and several of his students share their experiences at last year's ALAN Conference. I love that one student describes it as a reunion, because I feel that way each year. Our two Stories from the Field feature what Hipple characterizes as the "It's the THAT, teacher."

Finally, we're ready to see what comes next for ALAN, beginning with the new editorial team and next year's conference!

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 2015: (Re)membering and (Re)living: Probing the Collective and Individual Past

Stories are dynamic, told and heard, accepted and revered, rejected and rewritten by readers who draw from their experiences and understandings to garner meaning from the words on the page. In young adult texts, fiction and nonfiction, historical and contemporary and futuristic, this dynamism can encourage the critique of our collective past, helping us question assumptions about what came before and reconsider our responsibilities to the present and future. These texts can also help us consider the adolescent experience across time and place and explore the similarities and differences that shape reality as young people navigate and draft their own coming-of-age stories. This universality can foster a connection to others and reinforce our shared existence as members of a human community. And yet, these texts can give emotional reality to names, dates, and other factual information, letting us imagine the voices of those who lived in other places and times, voices that have sometimes been silenced in official accounts of history, ideally inspiring us to honor these voices and generate a better future. Through these stories, we might come to reject a single narrative and develop empathy for individuals we never knew—and those we did and do and will.

In this issue, we welcome articles that explore the relationship between young adult literature, history, stories, and readers. We acknowledge that "every living soul is a book of their own history, which sits on the ever-growing shelf in the library of human memories" (Jack Gantos, *Dead End in Norvelt*). And that, "If you stare at the center of the universe, there is coldness there. A blankness. Ultimately, the universe doesn't care about us. Time doesn't care about us. That's why we have to care about each other" (David Levithan, *Every Day*). Stories matter in this caring: "I leapt eagerly into books. The characters' lives were so much more interesting than the lonely heartbeat of my own" (Ruta Sepetys, *Out of the Easy*).

As always, we also welcome submissions focused on any aspect of young adult literature not directly connected to this theme. All submissions may be sent to alan-review@uconn.edu prior to **November 1, 2014**. Please see the ALAN website (<http://www.alan-ya.org/page/alan-review-author-guidelines>) for submission guidelines.