

# ALSCConnect

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## Officially Speaking

### .ALSC Above Suspicion

Publishers and producers of other library materials for children have long recognized the expertise of ALSC members by asking them to serve on advisory boards or as paid consultants. Why should this concern the officers and directors of ALSC? That is a reasonable question with a simple answer: ALSC's elected leaders are responsible for ensuring and maintaining the integrity of the association's many influential awards. In the opinion of the ALSC board, as well as many members, this form of recognition has led to some real and perceived conflicts for members of ALSC's book and media evaluation committees.

To avoid such conflicts and to deflect the trust-destroying suspicion of such conflicts, ALSC's officers and directors took action during the 2005 Midwinter Meeting. The board unanimously approved the following revised policy:

An ALSC member may not accept nomination or appointment to a committee if: employed by *or advisor* to any trade publishing house or any company that produces children's films, filmstrips, recordings, software, and/or other types of nonprint media to be evaluated by a committee.

The revised evaluation committee manuals will be very clear on this policy. Candidates for elected positions on the Newbery, Caldecott, and Sibert committees will be informed before they agree to be nominated and all invitations from the president for appointments to the evaluation and award committees will include a statement about the policy.

Commenting on this decision, Leslie Molnar, consultant for Priority Group II, Evaluation of Media, emphasizes,

By this action the board underscores the strong commitment of ALSC to the evaluation committees and the vital importance of these lists that recognize the most notable children's books and media. This policy ensures that the integrity of the process is not jeopardized in any way.

Dudley Carlson, consultant for Priority Group VI, the Award Committees, advises,

Because conflicts of interest affect the integrity of ALSC's awards as well as the reputation of the association, members are urged to consider possible conflicts before accepting appointments or agreeing to run for committee positions. In some cases, your choice may be to remain on an advisory board rather than accept an appointment; this is your prerogative, and your choice will depend on your own priorities at any given time.

Board member Judy O'Malley responds with an editor's perspective,

As an editor who is not a librarian, but is a long-term and active member of ALSC, I appreciate and treasure the many friends and colleagues working with children in public, school, academic, and special libraries who have so graciously shared their views, experience, and ideas with me. I feel it is important that those on both sides of this mutually beneficial relationship be scrupulous about the potentially slippery turf on which the exchange of information and expertise can create the misperception of conflict of interests.

When a librarian is currently on an evaluation committee, an editor, marketing or publicity representative for a publisher must respect the librarian's commitment and the trust and confidentiality involved in that committee work. The publisher certainly may want to enjoy that person's professional company and introduce her to exciting authors and illustrators at a dinner or party during a conference or include her in invitations to presentations of new lists.

Those gestures can be helpful in keeping us all informed, opening us to new books, new talents in the field. The slippery slope comes in when the relationships formed through those meetings and events lead to assumptions that key library leaders can be counted on for favorable reviews of the publishers' books or a predisposition to see or discuss the materials with less objectivity. As professionals, librarians have criteria they employ in evaluating books, but we need and use our subjective opinions, too. Those opinions need to remain free from even the suspicion of bias. Librarians and publishers are partners in the work of getting good books to kids and that partnership must be grounded in ethical scruples and mutual respect.

Caesar's wife, Calpurnia, got a bum rap in their divorce for not being above suspicion. If only the poor girl had employed a better policy!— *Gretchen Wronka, ALSC President*

## Here for You

Once upon a time I thought I wanted a career as a teacher, social worker, horseback riding instructor, film critic, or journalist. Now I know that most of those choices, especially journalist, would have been disastrous. Can you imagine a journalist who crumbles under the pressure of imposed deadlines? It's not that I don't enjoy writing. I spend weeks mulling over ideas, coming to the conclusion that actually I have nothing to write about. As the due date for this column approached, I decided that because members get news and updates instantly through a variety of electronic means, they don't look to this column for news.

Perhaps what people want to know is that the vice president is alive and well and looking out for the health and well-being of the association. The vice president is not a superwoman (although it would help tremendously!). The ALSC executive committee (president Gretchen Wronka, past-president Cynthia Richey, ALSC councilor Kathy Toon, executive director Malore Brown, and me) works together to set direction, monitor emerging situations, respond to challenges, and keep ALSC moving forward. We are joined by the rest of our highly capable board members. You can find their names at [www.ala.org/ala/alsc/boardcomm/boardroster/boardroster.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/boardcomm/boardroster/boardroster.htm).

The board meets during both the Annual Conference and Midwinter Meeting. Some of you have been on the board, made a report to the board and asked us to take action on your topic of interest, or observed the board conduct business. We invite you to visit us again. The board meets in Chicago during the ALA Annual Conference on Saturday, June 25, 2–5:30 p.m., and on Tuesday, June 28, 2–5:30 p.m.

After our Midwinter meetings, we were complimented on how much work we got done! The executive committee also meets each fall in Chicago, along with all the other ALA divisions, and holds a money-saving conference call instead of meeting each spring. Some of our discussion between conferences takes place online; many of you subscribe to the ALSC board electronic discussion list, which is an easy way to monitor what's happening in the association. Join us by sending an e-mail message to [listproc@ala.org](mailto:listproc@ala.org). Leave the subject line blank, or, if your system requires a subject line, enter "subscribe" (without quotation marks) as the subject. As the only line of text in the body of the message, enter the following: subscribe ALSCBOARD YourFirstName YourLastName.

So what have we been working on? A summary of major actions taken at board meetings and on the ALSCBOARD list is posted at [www.ala.org/ala/alsc/boardcomm/boardactions/Default2289.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/boardcomm/boardactions/Default2289.htm). For those of you who don't want to rush to your computers, I'll list a few highlights from recent decisions and conversations: we have a new book award for beginning readers (Geisel Award), we are planning for an @ *your library* campaign that will focus on school-age customers, and we will be engaging in strategic planning, and by using the same consultants that have guided ALA in its most recent planning efforts, we will be better aligned with that process and product. The board also added a fiscal officer position to the board and executive committee, decided to investigate establishing a system to mentor new members, and continue to deal with pesky issues of conflict of interest on awards committees. We have approved some fabulous programs for Annual Conference. A few of us also served on the interview panel to hire our wonderful new deputy executive director, Aimee Strittmatter. That's just a sampling. Be sure to tell any of us what's on your mind and what you'd like your association to be doing. We're here for you!— *Ellen G. Fader, ALSC Vice President/President-Elect*

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# Bright Ideas

## Library Spies

On Monday, January 17, the Fargo (N.D.) Public Library hosted the second installment of its popular Secrets and Spies program for gradeschoolers. First-grader Jaycob "Super Spy" Good, called the program "lots of fun" and was excited to have his "cover" photo posted on the library's Web site, declaring, "I'll be famous!" More than 160 amateur sleuths attended the covert event, advertised as a sequel to the library's initial Secrets and Spies program held in September 2004, which drew more than 180 participants. Three ninety-minute sessions of the program were held throughout the day. Gradeschoolers registered for one of the three sessions, and each session was limited to sixty attendees.

During the program, the Fargo Police Department conducted a presentation on how police dogs are used in crime solving. Officers Mark Lykken and Rick Nechiporenko brought their canine companions, Nitro and Onyx, to illustrate how the dogs' powerful sense of smell helps officers find drugs and track criminals. The officers' presentation was followed by a code making and breaking workshop.

Participants each made a code wheel and were taught how to use the covert device to encode and decode top-secret messages. Next, after discussing the importance of disguises, each secret agent created his or her own super spy trading card that included the agent's alias and vital information about his or her cover, such as age, height, and hair color. One super sleuth decided her cover should be a ten-foot-tall, ninety-two-year-old man with green hair; others chose less visible covers.

Each session wrapped up with lively games of Detective and Criminal, also known as Killer Froggy. Participants were divided into groups of fifteen and asked to sit in a circle. A detective was selected from each circle and then sent into the hallway, while a criminal was secretly chosen from the remaining group members. After the detective was invited back into the circle, the criminal's job was to stick his or her tongue out at individual team members, who each enacted dying a "horrible death," without being detected by the ever-vigilant sleuth. Activities held during the initial Secrets and Spies program included a fingerprinting presentation conducted by the Fargo Police Department, a mystery scavenger hunt, and the creation and use of invisible paint.

The successful Secrets and Spies programs have attracted gradeschoolers, especially boys, to the library. In fact, a number of the participants had never been to the library before attending one of the programs. The programs also promote the library's collection, many of the activity ideas were taken from books in the collection and participants also receive a spy-related booklist. The programs are low cost and community-friendly. Good luck hosting a top-secret event of your own! —*Erin Smith, Fargo (North Dakota) Public Library*

## Vote for Books

Seven library systems in a multicounty, bi-state area worked together last fall to provide children with the opportunity to Vote for Books. During the first week in November, colorful voting booths went up in more than fifty-five public library locations in the Kansas City metropolitan area, inviting children to cast a vote for their favorite book character. Picture ballots were provided and children voted by making an X in the box beside their favorite candidate's picture and name. There were no hanging chads, and voting could be done absentee at library outreach programs.

The field of candidates was diverse with Amazing Grace, Amber Brown, Yoko, and Esperanza competing for the women's vote, the Baudelaire's and the Berenstain's in there for families, and the Cat in the Hat and Clifford standing up for animals everywhere. Harry Potter, the prince from across the pond, won with 1,359 votes. The Cat in the Hat pulled in 1,089 votes for a second-place finish. Altogether more than 6,200 children voted.

Vote for Books is the second cooperative project for Metro Youth Services, a loose-knit group of children's and young adult librarians from Johnson County (Kan.) Public Library, Olathe (Kan.) Public Library, Mid-Continent (Mo.) Public Library, North Kansas City (Mo.) Public Library, Kansas City (Mo.) Public Library, Cass County (Mo.) Public Library, and Kansas City (Kan.) Public Library. In August 2004, with support from our professional soccer team, the Wizards, Krispy Kreme Donuts, and Costco, we had an area-wide end-of-summer reading celebration at a Wizards game with game tickets, fresh donuts, and bottled water for successful readers. With cooperation from our local public television station, KCPT, and professional storyteller Jim Two Crows Wallen, we also produced a PSA/interstitial promoting

summer reading that was shown on all but one of the area's TV stations over the summer. —*Anitra Steele, Mid-Continent (Mo.) Public Library, Independence*

## Rehab through Reading

Reading Powers the Mind is a project of the Center for the Book, which uses the resources and prestige of the Library of Congress to promote books, reading, literacy, and libraries. It is a library-based family literacy project that supports and helps develop pilot projects organized by libraries and their community partners in more than ten states.

This particular award honors the East Baton Rouge Parish Library in Louisiana as a Showcase Library. Library representatives and their partners will participate in an all-expenses paid workshop to be held at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., in August, where staff will report on the library's pilot or demonstration project. The library will also receive a \$3,000 award to be used to help fund family literacy programming from June 2005 through June 2006.

In 2004, the East Baton Rouge Parish Library established a new outreach center for the local juvenile detention facility that houses fifty-two young people ranging in age from ten to seventeen. These young detainees are, by and large, low-literate, disenfranchised teenagers who have had minimal success in the traditional educational system.

The library's outreach center provides a special deposit collection of print and nonprint resources to help educate, improve, and enrich the lives of these at-risk youth. Working within the material guidelines for the juvenile detention facility, the library furnished hundreds of new books, audios, videos, DVDs, and magazines, and also provided the outreach center with posters and new furniture.

Resources in the outreach center are crafted to focus on existing issues for at-risk youth. Fiction titles present stories of realistic pressures of modern-day life that encourage the growth of critical thinking and decision-making when dealing with these obstacles. Nonfiction resources contain facts about careers, goal-setting, events in history, and other related topics. All materials in the outreach center were carefully selected by the library staff to meet hi-lo (high interest–low literacy) standards to present challenging issues in a relevant and accessible manner.

In addition to regular visits with the residents, library staff assists counselors and educators at the juvenile detention facility in the use of the outreach center. Once a month librarians conduct workshops for the youth, not just to inform, but to elevate the quality of life.

Many titles have been chosen by the library staff for use in bibliotherapy, therapy through reading, which is an effective approach in breaking through the self-imposed walls of resistance in our at-risk youth. Specially chosen titles facilitate bibliotherapy by allowing at-risk youth to view commonalities of human experience, consider the consequences of actions, and learn from the mistakes made by characters in the text. Bibliotherapy opens the door for self-examination by helping the reader realize that other people have experienced and survived similar troubles and adversities.

Bill Wilson, volunteer with the juvenile detention facility, conceived the idea of having a resource center that concentrated on positive development and rehabilitation for these at-risk youth. With the help of the East Baton Rouge Parish Library, Wilson's vision became a reality. On November 15, 2004, Lydia Acosta, director of the East Baton Rouge Parish Library system; members of the Library Board of Control; the Honorable Judge Pamela Johnson; and the Honorable Judge Kathleen Richey joined Wilson and other officials to cut the ribbon at the grand opening of the outreach center at the facility.

The outreach center is the newest addition to the library system, which provides a wide range of services and resources to patrons throughout the parish with a main library, twelve branch libraries, and a bookmobile. Further satellite collections are planned for Head Start and Early Head Start parish sites in 2005.— *Patricia (Pabby) Arnold, East Baton Rouge Parish (La.) Library*

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# ALSC Voices

## ALSC Profile

Jos Holman  
County Librarian  
Tippecanoe County (Ind.) Public Library

### How many years have you been an ALSC member?

I started participating in ALSC in the early '90s, I think 1992. I joined and participated more in LAMA for a number of years but recently returned to ALSC.

### Where did you attend library school?

University of Texas at Austin

### What attracted you to library service to children?

I have always loved working with children. As a part of my undergraduate education in New England, I participated in various children's theater classes and productions. When I decided to go to library school, ideally, I just wanted to find a library director who would let me do creative dramatics with youth in the library. After taking a few children's literature courses, I experienced a kind of epiphany and realized everything I wanted to do with kids was based on the written word, and sharing good literature with children was a productive, positive social contribution.

### Why did you join ALSC?

I wanted to directly contribute to the organization that had the largest impact and greatest influence on furthering library services to children. Also, it was important to network with other colleagues because children's librarians form a unique bond centered on their sincere interest in the positive development of children.

### Have you served on any ALSC committees?

Yes, I have served on a few committees including a committee that served as a Liaison to Mass Media, and I currently serve on the ALSC @ your library Advocacy Campaign Task Force.

### Which committee service did you enjoy the most?

When I served as the LAMA Liaison to the ALSC Managing Children's Services committee. Led by Penny Markey, this committee was really creative, results oriented, and it provided real practical skills to children's librarians who attended the presentations. It was a lively group and though LAMA appointed me, this work allowed me to stay connected to children's services and children's librarians.

### How many conferences (including Midwinter Meeting) have you attended?

Because I started attending ALA conferences while I was still a library school student, I have attended approximately twenty-six conferences. Attendance at so many conferences has provided limitless resources of expertise, ideas, and advice from presentations and colleagues I have met over the years.

### What is the biggest change you see in ALSC in 2005?

I believe the biggest change I have seen in ALSC is its visibility and recognition within ALA. ALSC has proven it is a division that works hard, showcases well, and brings attention to ALA. Look at how the Newbery and Caldecott awards make national morning television news shows each year. This garners more annual publicity for ALA than any other event and ALSC deserves accolades for this. Even within local libraries, youth services get more media attention than any other services and therefore library directors profile these services in political activities.

### What service or resource would you like to see ALSC offer which we currently do not?

I don't know if there is a particular service I would like to see ALSC offer. However, I encourage ALSC leadership to continue reaching out and involving younger librarians and minority librarians in important leadership positions in ALSC. I know efforts are presently being made and I hope they continue.

### What are you currently working on at your library?

As a library director, I am working with my Board of Trustees on a number of specific projects. Tippecanoe County (Ind.) Public Library (TCPL) is finalizing a new strategic plan that takes us through 2008. A \$750,000 renovation of our downtown library facility started this spring and the library made an offer on the last piece of property on the block not already owned by TCPL. Finally, we are in the process of selecting an architect to design a new branch facility that starts construction in the summer of 2006. Of course, all of these activities are in addition to the normal day to day tasks and responsibilities along with keeping a positive working relationship with my board.

### What is your favorite children's book and why?

As with most children's folks, this is a difficult question. I usually pick a couple of Newbery winners, Jerry Spinelli's *Maniac Magee* and Lois Lowry's *The Giver*. As an African American, I was really intrigued by *Maniac Magee* as it covered various relationships between characters from different races and their interactions. I thought it would be great to foster discussion of race among our youth, but I don't think many folks made that connection.

### What three words best describe you?

Articulate, creative, and serious.

### What are your hobbies?

I am not so sure I have hobbies anymore, but more so what I do in my leisurely time. I juggle, tell stories, grill and smoke meats, ride bikes with my family, and enjoy theatrical performances. Also, I still cook breakfast for my family most Saturday mornings.

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## Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

### Batter Up!

ALSC is one of the newest sponsors of the **Join the Major Leagues @ your library** program, which celebrates and promotes two of America's oldest institutions—baseball and libraries—while heightening awareness of twenty-first-century literacy skills: the use of computers and other media to obtain information and improve communications. The 2005 program was launched this spring and will run through mid-September. The centerpiece of the program is the Join the Major Leagues @ your library contest, an online baseball trivia contest that challenges participants to utilize the resources available at the library to answer baseball trivia questions of increasing difficulty. To learn how your library can get involved, visit [www.ala.org/ala/pio/campaign/sponsorship/jtmlhome/joinmajorleagues.htm](http://www.ala.org/ala/pio/campaign/sponsorship/jtmlhome/joinmajorleagues.htm).

### Science Honors

Science Books & Films (*SB&F*), the review journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), marked its fortieth anniversary in 2005 with the creation of the *SB&F* Prizes, which celebrate outstanding science writing and illustration for children, young adults, and general audiences. ALSC members **Marilyn Courtot**, The Children's Literature Comprehensive Database Company, Bethesda, Maryland; **Barbara A. Genco**, Brooklyn (N.Y.) Public Library; and **Carolyn Phelan**, Northbrook (Ill.) Public Library, served on the nominating committee and as judges for the new *SB&F* Prize for Excellence in Science Books for Children. The 2005 *SB&F* Prizes honored five authors and one illustrator for their lasting contribution to science literature for

children and young adults. The 2005 winners, announced at the AAAS annual meeting's Family Science Day event, were:

- Children's Science Book authors: Patricia Lauber, Laurence Pringle, Seymour Simon
- Children's Hands-on Science Books author: Bernie Zubrowski
- Children's Science Book illustrator: Jim Arnosky
- Young Adult Science Book author: James Trefil

The 2006 SB&F Prizes will recognize recently published, individual science books. Courtot, Genco, and Phelan are also judging the 2006 prizes for children's books. For more information about the awards, visit [www.sbsonline.com/prizes](http://www.sbsonline.com/prizes).

## Top Reader

Congratulations to fourteen-year-old Caroline Byrd who has read *every* Newbery medal book with the exception of this year's winner *Kira-Kira!* Caroline's family appreciates their local public library, Spartanburg County (S.C.) Libraries, for its emphasis on children. Caroline poses here with one of her favorite Newbery winners, *The Giver*.

## New York News

The **Queens Borough Public Library (QBPL)** has instituted a new policy for reciprocal use of Brooklyn Public Library and New York Public Library cards. Customers with valid cards from either of the two library systems are now able to borrow materials from QBPL. This exciting step towards cooperation between the three New York City library systems is in keeping with QBPL's mission to provide quality service to its customers. The Brooklyn Public Library and New York Public Library are currently working on implementing similar policies for QBPL cards.— *Diane Janoff, Queens Borough Public Library*

## June in Chicago

Be sure to drop by the ALSC membership booth during Annual Conference. Helpful conference tips will be available along with exciting giveaways and other information. ALSC lapel pins will also be for sale. Consult your conference program book for the booth location at McCormick Place.

If you are new to ALSC or attending your first ALA conference, plan to attend **ALSC Connections** on Saturday, June 25, 9–11 a.m. This informal coffee and tea break is your opportunity to meet other new members, speak with ALSC officers, and learn how to get involved in ALSC.

A complete schedule of ALSC events is available at [www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc), click on "Events & Conferences," and in the spring issue of *Children and Libraries*, which mailed in May.

## Special Thanks

Phyllis Van Orden and Patricia Pawelak-Kort would like to thank the ALSC members who suggested items for the recently published *Library Service to Children: A Guide to the History, Planning, Policy, and Research Literature* (Scarecrow, 2005). This revised bibliography includes print and electronic sources including master's theses and graduate papers.

## Bon Appétit

Many thanks to the Chicago Local Arrangements Committee for compiling a diverse list of recommended Chicago restaurants to pique your culinary interest while visiting Chicago in June. Check it out at [www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc), click on "Events & Conferences."

## Join the List

To stay informed about ALSC activities and issues, subscribe to the ALSC electronic discussion list. Send the following message to [listproc@ala.org](mailto:listproc@ala.org): subscribe ALSC-L [firstname] [lastname]. Leave the subject area blank.

Change of address? Be sure to subscribe under your new e-mail address and unsubscribe from your old address. To unsubscribe, send the following message to [listproc@ala.org](mailto:listproc@ala.org): unsubscribe ALSC-L. Leave the subject area blank.

ALSC's Storytelling Discussion Group has established **ALSCSTORY**, a new electronic discussion list for those who want a place to discuss issues and concerns in storytelling, as well as keep in touch with a storytelling support group. To subscribe, send the following message to [listproc@ala.org](mailto:listproc@ala.org): subscribe ALSCSTORY YourFirstName YourLastName.

## On the Web

The ALSC Library Service to Special Population Children and Their Caregivers Committee has compiled several bibliographies to assist librarians in serving special populations. They are: Home Schooling Resources for Librarians; Resources for Librarians Serving Teen Parents; New Immigrants Resources; and Children with Disabilities and Library Programs.

Last year, the AASL/ALSC/YALSA Joint Task Force on School/Public Library Partnerships solicited information on existing school/public library partnerships, cautionary tales (programs that did not succeed or that encountered road blocks others may want to know about), and references to articles and Web sites on this topic. The task force compiled the data collected and created a new Web site, which includes information on programs submitted to the task force, a bibliography on school/public library cooperation, and a list of exemplary Web sites.

To access all of the resources above, visit [www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc) and click on "Resources" and "For Librarians & Educators" on the left-hand navigation menu.

## Mark Your Calendar

"Fall into Books," the seventh Annual Children's and Young Adult Literature Conference, will be held Friday, November 4, 2005, at Mount St. Alphonsus in Esopus, New York. The guest speaker is Katherine Paterson. All are invited to attend. For more information, contact the Orange-Ulster Boards of Cooperative Educational Services School Library System at (845) 781-4360.

## It's a Blast

ALSC is presenting its second annual Poetry Blast, co-hosted by Barbara Genco and Marilyn Singer, on Monday, June 27, 5:30–7:30 p.m. Do not miss this opportunity to enjoy these world class poets reading their work: Kurt Cyrus, Rebecca Kai Dotlich, Douglas Florian, Nikki Giovanni, Juan Felipe Herrera, J. Patrick Lewis, Pat Mora, Marilyn Nelson, Jack Prelutsky, Joyce Sidman, Marilyn Singer, and Quincy Troupe. Publishers will also offer a display of books and promotional materials, featuring the participants. Hope to see you there!

## Thank You

ALSC thanks all those who have contributed to the **Friends of ALSC** and the **Pura Belpré Award Endowment**. For more information, visit [www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc) and click on the "Support ALSC" link at the top right of the page.

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