

# ALSCconnect

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## Officially Speaking

### Get Connected

You may have noticed that there are a few, well actually quite a few, more ways for us to communicate with one another than there were just a few years ago. Webcasts, podcasts, text messages, wikis, blogs, and social networking utilities like Facebook are just a few of the many new technologies that we as librarians must negotiate as we communicate, not just with each other, but with the world at large. ALSC has noticed too. Not only that, ALSC is jumping into the cold and sometimes murky waters of these new technologies in quite a few ways.

The ALSC newsletter you are currently reading is now published and distributed electronically. There are numerous ALSC electronic discussion lists (EDLs), a couple of which have been around since 1996, that serve a wide range of member categories and interests. There's ALSC-L, ALSC's main EDL, ALSCBoard, ALSCPGCCHR, for priority group consultants and committee chairs, and several other special interest discussion lists begun by individual committees and discussion groups. For a complete list, check the ALSC Web site.

ALSC has a wiki (<http://wikis.ala.org/alsc>), launched in 2006, that is a resource for information and news about ALSC and your library's activities and projects. All are invited to share news about committee work, share ideas and best practices, and network.

The ALSC Library Service to Special Population Children and Their Caregivers Committee, has posted information on the wiki about the "Light the Way" grant. This one-time grant of \$5,000 will be presented in honor of Newbery Medalist and Geisel Honoree Kate DiCamillo to a library conducting exemplary outreach to underserved populations. The committee will select the winner, and may name up to three Honorable Mentions. It has also posted information from the 2007 preconference, "The Underserved 20%: Children, Teens, and Adults with Disabilities."

ALSC also has a blog at <http://www.alsc.ala.org/blog/>. How popular are library blogs these days? When I googled the words "library blog," I got 149 million hits. Blogs are being run by individual librarians: the Shifted Librarian, the Annoyed Librarian, the Cool Librarian, the Free Range Librarian, Library Juice, Library Monk, the Rambling Librarian, the Vampire Librarian, and the Wandering Librarian, to name a few. Some blogs focus more on books than librarianship, such as: Fuse #8, Read Roger, Sharon's Mock Newbery, Educating Alice, Kids Lit, Oz and Ends, Shelf Talker. Many libraries, from Ann Arbor to the Library of Congress, all the way to Washington state, have their own blogs, it seems. And these are only a very, very few!

So it was only a matter of time before ALSC jumped into the fun and sometimes treacherous world of blogging. Launched in September and managed by Teresa Walls, the ALSC blog is already a busy place. ALSC member bloggers, Ann Crewdson, Jeanette Larson, Jennifer Schultz, Marge Loch-Wouters, and Steven Engelfried, have supplied posts on such subjects as ALSC partnerships, the Newbery awards, Second Life, and story time. All of the entries from ALSC bloggers invite commentary from ALSC members. It's easy to do. Just register, receive a password, and you're all set.

The ALSC blog is an amazing source of information and inspiration. Today when I logged on, there was a call from Steven Herb, Distinguished Service Award Committee chair, for nominees for his committee to consider. There's a post from Debbie Reese, a professor and Native parent who started the blog, "American Indians in Children's Literature" to reach parents, teachers, and librarians in order to provide information about American Indians, including reviews of children's books and new resources for teachers and parents.

p>There also was information about an exhibit at the Jewish Museum in New York City, entitled “Celebrating William Steig,” as well as information about PLA’s Leadership Institute, a preconference for PLA’s National Conference next March.

Want to know more? Just go to the ALSC website ([www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc)) and click on the link for any of these amazing electronic sources of information: ALSC EDLs, ALSC wiki, or ALSC blog. The water might seem a bit cold and murky before you jump in, but once you make the plunge, you’ll be glad you did.—*Jane B. Marino, ALSC President*

## **ALSC: The Best Library Course Offering**

It now has been more years than I would like to admit since I entered library school. The first class I attended was called “Basic Reference,” taught by a woman who was quite famous in the library profession. Her name was Frances Neal Cheney, and she wrote a reference column for *The Wilson Library Bulletin*. On that first day of class, she asked, “Why did you choose to become a librarian?” A number of students raised their hands to answer, but she quickly said, “And I don’t want to hear that it’s because you like books, or because you like to read.” Hands immediately went down. To this day, I’m not sure what Mrs. Cheney wanted us to say. Obviously, it was something more philosophical than liking books. But, reflecting upon my career, I can say with no hesitation, “Yes, Mrs. Cheney. I became a librarian because I love books, and because I like to read.”

Loving books, liking children, and finding ways to connect the two have led to a very satisfying career. But, the single most important factor in guiding my professional development after library school has been becoming active with the American Library Association (ALA) and the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC). No textbook is as powerful or personal as the opportunity to network with professionals who care about books and children in the same way you do. Serving on committees, attending programs, perusing the exhibits, and participating in electronic discussions with other librarians garner programming ideas that never surface in a library school class.

Thanks to technology and the media, people throughout the world know the work that ALSC is doing, which is extremely important when lobbying local politicians for budgets to support library services to children. The Newbery and Caldecott Medal recipients are now special guests on the *Today* show, giving ALSC a presence in the national media. Each year, the president of ALSC and other library leaders descend upon our nation’s capital on Library Legislative Day to tell “our story” to members of Congress. Other programs initiated by ALSC like Every Child Ready to Read let our communities know the role of libraries in the educational development of children. Children’s Book Week (November), National Library Week (April), summer reading activities, and Banned Books Week (September) are other ways through which library service to children is celebrated. ALSC helps promote each of these events.

ALA and ALSC dues are probably the best annual investment I make. My membership card assures me of professional opportunities that I never felt possible when I attended that first library school class. Mrs. Cheney and all of my professors may have planted the seed for professionalism, but they didn’t make it grow. I nourished it by making a personal commitment to ALA and ALSC. These organizations and their services are available to every librarian, but it takes membership and leadership to assure that every library and library professional receives the full benefits that the associations offer.

It doesn’t really matter why we chose to become a librarian. It only matters that we did. And it matters tremendously that we convince other librarians to become actively involved in ALSC so that they have professional support to successfully change the lives of the young patrons they serve. Changing children’s lives through books and library services is the best reason I know for becoming a librarian. And, ALSC is the best course offering.—*Pat Scales, ALSC Vice-President/President-Elect*

## **Getting Together**

### **USBBY in Philadelphia**

The annual USBBY program at the ALA Midwinter Meeting will be held on Friday, January 11, from 8-10 p.m. in Philadelphia.

Author Ying Chang Compestine is the featured speaker. Her new book *Revolution Is Not a Dinner Party* (Henry Holt) is based upon her childhood experiences in Wuhan, China, during the 1960s and 1970s and provides a perspective rarely seen about this particular historical time. Compestine is the author of several picture book texts, including *The Runaway Rice Cake*, *The Story of Noodles*, *The Story of Paper*, and *D is for Dragon Dance*.

USBBY will also announce its 2008 list of Outstanding International Books.

The program is open to ALA Midwinter registered attendees and USSBY members (who do not need to be registered for Midwinter). It is not open to the general public.

## **Summer Reading Survivor: Overcoming the Challenges**

Does it seem your library's summer reading program never ends? Want to be inspired and re-energized, and learn something new, too?

Plan to attend the ALSC Preconference, "Summer Reading Survivor: Overcoming the Challenges," on Thursday evening and Friday, June 26 and 27, 2008, in Anaheim. Meet poet, author and folklorist, Judy Sierra who is *Wild About Reading* and illustrator Harry Bliss who will help you "Catch the Reading Bug!" Literacy educator Stephen Krashen will remind you why summer reading matters to kids. Breakouts and a panel discussion will focus on collaboration, partnerships, promotion, and online programs. Finally, award-winning author Pam Muñoz Ryan will have you shouting "Hooray! Ole! We love reading!"

## **Brazelton to Speak at President's Program**

Mark your calendar for Monday, June 30, 2008, in Anaheim.

The ALSC Charlemae Rollins President's Program will feature T. Berry Brazelton, MD, renowned pediatrician and child development specialist. Details will follow -- but get the date on your calendar now. You won't want to miss this unique opportunity to hear Dr. Brazelton's ideas on the healthy and whole child and family.

## **Go West, Children's Librarians!**

Trailblaze your path to library success, by attending the ALSC National Institute, to be held in historic and scenic Salt Lake City, Utah. The institute, scheduled September 18-20, 2008, will feature three exciting tracks on the topics of technology and children's services, programming in the new millennium, and inspiring lifelong reading with the best of the best in children's books and a special focus on 'tweens and reading. Tracks will repeat on Thursday and Friday so that attendees may take advantage of two of the three tracks. On Saturday, attendees will choose to participate in one of three available morning workshops.

Thursday dinner, Friday breakfast, lunch, and evening reception are included in your registration fee and will feature keynotes from well-known authors and illustrators. Ample time will be scheduled for networking with colleagues and meeting new contacts. A mentoring program will help connect seasoned professionals with those new to the profession.

The institute will be held at the Hilton Salt Lake City Center, nestled in the heart of downtown Salt Lake City and footsteps from historic Temple Square and the world renowned Family History Library. A room block, with special rates, has been secured at the Hilton. Information about registration and program information will be posted on the ALSC Web site and ALSC-L early in 2008 as plans develop. So prepare to head west, partners, and have a rip roaring time!

## **Latino Children's Lit Conference**

The University of South Carolina's School of Library & Information Science and College of Education are pleased to announce their first annual Celebration of Latino Children's Literature conference on April 26th, 2008. To launch the conference theme, "Connecting Cultures and Celebrating Cuentos," they will host a free El día de los niños/El día de los libros (Children's Day/Book Day) family and community event on the evening of April 25th at the Lexington

County Public Library. The festivities include storytelling and feature award-winning Latina artist and children's author Yuyi Morales.

The conference proper begins the following day with guest speaker and multicultural literature scholar Dr. Kathy Short. Breakout sessions will include topics related to Latino children's literature that are of interest to both researchers and practitioners. Notable Latina children's author Lucía González will read from her forthcoming bilingual picture book *The Storyteller's Candle* and provide an historical perspective on the development of Latino children's literature in the United States.

For additional information, please contact the conference co-chairs: Julia López-Robertson ([lopezrob@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:lopezrob@gwm.sc.edu)) and Jamie Campbell Naidoo ([jnaidoo@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:jnaidoo@gwm.sc.edu)), or call 803-777-0090.

## Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

### ALSC Welcomes New Staffer

Jennifer (Jenny) Najduch joined the ALSC staff on Monday, November 12 as ALSC's first Marketing Specialist. In her position, Najduch will work to creatively address member attraction and retention, promote ALSC programs and services, and increase two-way communication with the membership at large.

Najduch has her Bachelor's degree in Public Relations and English from Drake University (Des Moines, Iowa). She has worked with two non-profit organizations, the Des Moines Symphony and Ukiah Valley Medical Center. She also has worked in marketing for an insurance brokerage firm. Najduch plans to start the LEEP program at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) next fall in pursuit of her MLS. Welcome, Jenny!

### Support for Committee Work

A penny for a spool of thread,  
A penny for a needle.  
That's the way the money goes,  
Pop! Goes the weasel.  
—Traditional

Do you need more than a penny to support the work that you are doing to make a difference in library service to children?

The ALSC Budget Committee wants you to know that there is \$1,500 (that's 150,000 pennies!) in our division's Children's Library Services Endowment that is available to support the work of your committee.

Projects that would make good candidates are those that tie in with ALSC priorities as outlined in the Strategic Plan (available online at <http://www.ala.org/alsc>; click on "Board and Committee Work," then "Strategic Plan" in the list of links on the left) and that are largely sustainable by your committee without requiring extensive ALSC staff time.

If your committee is interested in taking advantage of this money, please complete a Special Funds Application (Form M, which is available in the Division Leadership Manual) and submit it to the Budget Committee, c/o chair Andrew Medlar, Chicago Public Library ([amedlar@chipublib.org](mailto:amedlar@chipublib.org)), by March 1, 2008.

One large project or a number of smaller ones may be selected for this budget cycle and the committee(s) with project(s) selected for funding will be notified by May 1, 2008. The money will then need to be spent by August 31, 2009.

If your committee has any questions, don't hesitate to contact Medlar.

Key Dates:

- March 1, 2008: Form M due to Budget Committee

- May 1, 2008: Committee(s) with funded project(s) informed
- August 31, 2009: Money must be spent

## City of Learners/IMLS Grant

The Children's Museum of Houston (CMH), with ALSC as a partner, has been awarded a grant to develop and implement a city-wide system for increasing family learning through the circulation of literacy kits that parents use at home with their children, birth through age eight. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grant will begin in August 2008, and run for three years.

Along with ALSC, other partners with CMH in this grant are: the Houston Public Library; the Children's Learning Institute at the University of Texas Health Science Center; Brooklyn Children's Museum; Brooklyn Public Library; Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose; San Jose Public Library; and the Association of Children's Museums.

## ALSC +Web + Log = ALSC Blog, We Need You in the Equation

The ALSC Blog, <http://www.alsc.ala.org/blog/>, is our organization's newest communication tool, a place for interactive discussion of time-sensitive news in children's librarianship, current issues in the field, programs, conferences, initiatives, resources, and activities of interest to ALSC members and those interested in children's librarianship. Lively opinion and commentary are welcome.

The ALSC Blog is seeking contributors (a.k.a. bloggers). The ALSC 2008 pre-Midwinter Institute, the Bill Morris Seminar: Book Evaluation Training, and the ALA 2008 Midwinter Meeting, all in Philadelphia, are only days away. Please consider reporting about the events, programs, and meetings that you attend for those who cannot be there in person. No previous blogging experience is necessary -- just ALSC membership and the willingness to post reports within one week after Midwinter.

If you are interested in joining the ranks of the ALSC member bloggers and/or you have a topic suggestion, please contact me at [alscblog@gmail.com](mailto:alscblog@gmail.com). -- *Teresa Walls, ALSC Blog Manager*

## Día 2008

Plans are underway now for the 2008 Día celebration in libraries across the country! El día de los niños/El día de los libros (Día), also known as Children's Day/Book Day, is celebrated annually on April 30 and honors children, families, and reading, emphasizing the importance of advocating literacy for children of all linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

ALA Graphics is now offering for sale a limited edition Día poster and bookmark featuring the delightful character Dora the Explorer. The material is not dated, so it is perfect for year-round use. Check your Graphics Holiday catalog for more information.

The Día Web site now features ideas on how to get started on celebrating Día in your library. Over 400 libraries of various sizes in diverse communities shared their Día celebration ideas with us. Their stories may be found at <http://www.ala.org/dia>.

## 2008 ALSC Scholarships

Applications are now being accepted for the 2008 Frederic G. Melcher and Bound to Stay Bound Books Scholarships.

Four Bound to Stay Bound Books scholarships at \$6,500 each will be awarded. Two Frederic G. Melcher scholarships at \$6,000 each will also be awarded.

The scholarships are given annually to students who plan to enter an ALA-accredited program, obtain a master's degree in library science and specialize in library service to children. Applicants must be United States or Canadian citizens. Recipients are expected to become members of ALA and ALSC and are required to accept a position in the field of library service to children for at least one year following graduation.

Applications are available on the ALA Web site at <http://www.ala.org> by clicking on "Awards and Scholarships." The deadline for receipt of applications is March 1, 2008.

A committee of five ALSC members will review applications. Winners will be notified by June 1, 2008.

## Member News

**Mona Kerby**, McDaniel College, Westminster, Md., has authored a new picture book entitled, *Owney, the Mail Pouch Pooch* (Farrar, 2008), illustrated by Lynne Barasch. Photos of and notes about Owney are at: [http://www.carr.org/authco/k\\_owney.html](http://www.carr.org/authco/k_owney.html). Kerby also has posted to Google Video and You Tube a video she created in 2000 called "The Newbery Award Video," which highlights numerous Newbery winners and honorees such as: Lloyd Alexander, Sharon Creech, Sid Fleischman, and Karen Hesse. To view the 17-minute video, visit You Tube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) or Google Video (<http://video.google.com>), and search by the video title or the creator's name (Mona Kerby).

In recognition of exemplary program achievement in early literacy, the **Norfolk (Va.) Public Library (NPL)** was selected as the 2007 winner of the RADM Ben Hacker Literary Leadership Award from the Literacy Partnership, a regional organization created with a mission to increase awareness of literacy programming; promote the economic benefits of supporting literacy rate improvement; and enhance the capacity and performance of literacy resources. NPL was chosen based on the multi-pronged approach it has taken in starting a family-driven literacy effort.

**Sylvia Vardell**, Texas Woman's University, Denton, has published a new book, *Poetry People: A Practical Guide to Children's Poets* (Libraries Unlimited, 2007). This resource guide provides one entry for each of 60-plus children's poets, with biographical information as well as ideas for using each poet's work with kids. Vardell's Poetry for Children blog is at: <http://poetryforchildren.blogspot.com/>.

## "Step Up to the Plate @ your library" teams up baseball and libraries

Developed by ALA and the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, "Step Up to the Plate @ your library" encourages young people to visit their local library, check out a book on baseball, and write about how their favorite character inspired them.

In a random drawing at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum on Saturday, Oct. 6, Hall of Famer and "Step Up to the Plate" spokesperson Ozzie Smith chose Hannah Cavanaugh, age 12, as the grand-prize winner of the 2007 "Step Up to the Plate" program. Cavanaugh, along with a parent, won a trip to Cooperstown, N.Y., to attend the Hall of Fame's World Series Gala on October 27. Cavanaugh, a volunteer at the Kirkwood (Mo.) Public Library, read the book *Lou Gehrig: The Luckiest Man* by David A. Alder, and wrote that Gehrig, who suffered from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), inspired her because "he never gave up even in the hardest times."

Libraries were also awarded for their participation. Lena Juniper Elementary School library in Sparks, Nev., received a \$100 bookstore gift certificate and a copy of Lawrence Hogan's *Shades of Glory: The Negro Leagues and the Story of African-American Baseball* for sending in the most essays. A self-professed "huge baseball fan," librarian Margie Picone introduced "Step Up to the Plate" to her library classes and worked with sixth-grade teachers to promote the program. She even transformed her desk into a makeshift dugout for the event.

Three other libraries won prizes for bringing in the most entries: Lion Park LRC, Mt. Prospect, Ill., Lee-Scott Academy library, Auburn, Ala., and Durkin Park School Library, Chicago, Ill. All received a copy of *Shades of Glory*, along with a \$50 gift certificate to ALA Graphics.

"Step Up to the Plate @ your library" is part of The Campaign for America's Libraries, ALA's national public awareness and advocacy campaign to remind the public about the value of libraries and librarians. For more information, visit [www.ala.org/baseball](http://www.ala.org/baseball).

## KidsClick! Redesign

The San Jose State University (SJSU) School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) acquired KidsClick! in February 2007, and graduate students are currently redesigning the KidsClick! site with completion anticipated in early summer 2008. KidsClick!, originally a project of the Ramapo Catskill Library System in New York state and maintained by SJSU SLIS students, is a collection of 5,400 links on subjects supporting school curriculum at the K-12 level. Sources are selected and reviewed by librarians. Visitors can browse categories or search keywords. The site logs approximately 3,000 searches a day at this time.

KidsClick! is used as a teaching tool for future librarians interested in youth services and new searching and learning technologies. Project Manager and SJSU SLIS faculty member Enid Irwin explains that "KidsClick! offers graduate students practical work experience and the opportunity to research search behavior while providing a vital research tool for K-12 students."

After researching the target audience's Internet usage, SLIS students designed a new logo and Web site prototype and reviewed the nearly 5,400 links. Students will create new content, develop maintenance procedures, and incorporate social tags for improved search results. Students are also creating new instructional lessons on information literacy using multimedia and youth friendly-instruction with potential for interactive participation through blogs, wikis, and communication software.

SJSU SLIS is actively seeking sponsors and volunteers for KidsClick! where future librarians participate in a 21st Century library environment while offering quality resources for K-12 students. For more information, visit KidsClick! at <http://www.kidsclick.org> or contact KidsClick at [kclick@slis.sjsu.edu](mailto:kclick@slis.sjsu.edu).

## Bright Ideas

### Back to School Night

Since the advent of the A+ Partners in Education program (<http://www.hclibrary.org/partners/>) in 2002, Howard County (Md.) Library has participated in the Howard County Public School System Back to School Nights. Staff members from Howard County Library were present at 28 out of 40 elementary school back to school nights this year. Both information and circulation staff teamed up to provide coverage at schools close to their branches. We have an information table set up at which conversation about and materials on library resources are available to students, parents, and teachers. Library staff also issue library cards and check out books to attendees. At four of our 40 elementary schools, library staff addressed parents and teachers as a group.

We track the number of students, parents, and teachers with whom staff speak or to whom we hand out library resources. The results of our efforts have been great. Parents and teachers alike spread the word about our materials and services. For example, one mom came to the library table saying "someone told me this [brochure] was very good and that I should stop by and get one." She was referring to one of the many homework help brochures we hand out throughout the evening. A teacher also stopped by to say another teacher told him about a tour for new faculty. He said that he and his wife, both teachers, were interested in having a tour. After Back to School Nights many families and faculty come in and seek out the library's resources and the staff who were so informative. The staff receive many immediate and positive comments from our customers, parents, and faculty alike, as we all launch into another school year together.—*Susan L. Stonesifer, manager, Miller Branch, Howard County (Md.) Library*

### The Kindergarten Overnighters' Club

Abbots Hill Elementary School, Duluth, Ga., won the 2007 ALSC/Tandem Library Books Literature Program Grant.

We all know reading aloud is one of the best ways to foster a love of reading. Kindergarten parents at Abbots Hill Elementary School, Duluth, Ga., help their children develop a love of reading and an ongoing use of the library media center by participating in a reading program to encourage nightly parent-child reading. The library-media center at Abbots Hill Elementary School offers the Kindergarten Overnighters' Club reading program for students who wish to participate. The teachers are willing to send students to the media center on a daily basis and collect books daily to

be returned to the center. One of the goals of our school was to increase the utilization of the school's media center and encourage reading. Starting in kindergarten, students develop a habit of coming to the media center that can continue throughout their entire school experience. Parent-child reading is an important way to instill a love of reading in young learners, and rewarding children for reading daily helps to establish a reading routine.

Each time a student checks out a book from the media center and reads it at home or has a parent/guardian read it, the child returns the Overnights' Club form (located in the pocket in the back of the book) filled out and signed by an adult. As these forms are accumulated, students earn rewards to recognize their achievement. The forms are counted and compiled by the media specialist or media assistant. The rewards are issued every nine weeks at a story-time class in the media center. A "Hugh Success" certificate is given to those students who have completed 20 different books or more; an "Eager Reader" certificate for 15 different books; a "Way To Go" certificate for 10 different books; and a Participation Award for nine books and under. Award time falls around report card time.

Before the program begins, a newsletter is sent home to the Kindergarten parents. Media crates are assigned to each kindergarten room for the students to return their books each day or the teacher lets the students return their books individually. The signed slips are removed when the books are checked in. When coming to the circulation desk, a form is put into the pocket in the back of the book they are checking out.

The Kindergarten Overnights' Club has encouraged the students to check out more books from the media center. Most of the kindergarten students participate and come often if not daily to the media center to check out books. As the children began understanding the program, through encouragement during scheduled story times and with the kindergarten teachers allowing the students to come daily to the media center, more books were checked out. After the students experience the first of four awards presentations in their class story time, they better understand the program and check out remains high.

Students respond well to encouragement and praise for their accomplishments. The students enjoyed hearing how many books they had read or had read to them and it encouraged many to strive to get more. Many of the kindergarten teachers expressed positive reactions from the students and the parents and felt the students were doing better in learning to read. Parents reported having a nightly ritual of reading and filling out the slips. Kindergarten is an important year for students to be encouraged and to frequent the library. The Kindergarten Overnights' Club Program helps to accomplish this goal.—*Diane Williamson, Abbotts Hill Elementary School, Duluth, Ga.*

## **ALSC Voices**

### **ALSC Profile**

**Chrystal Carr Jeter**  
**Youth Services Manager**  
**Cleveland Public Library – The People's University**  
**ALSC Membership: 22 years**

#### **Where did you attend library school?**

I attended the University of Southern California School of Library and Information Science in Los Angeles, California. I also enjoyed post graduate courses at UCLA in Children's Literature and Public Relations.

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

Although I had a mother who read to me all the time, I was greatly influenced to examine my own potential at a very young age by a junior high school librarian who took the time to introduce a young black girl to worlds she had never known. She literally turned me upside down and sideways. I voraciously read all she gave me, such as biographies, fairy tales, folk tales, poetry and geography books, bible stories, and much more. I decided then that I wanted to do the same for other young children – I wanted to rock their world...as she did mine.

#### **Why did you join ALSC?**

Three things come immediately to mind as I reflect back over the years about my interest in ALSC: (1) professional networking, (2) continuing educational development, and (3) the opportunity to share my skills and experiences with other colleagues. During this time, I have had the privilege to serve on several committees and in numerous



capacities: Membership, Batchelder Award Selection, Nominating, and Newbery (twice). I also represent ALSC as a rep to the ALA Recruitment Assembly and have recently served as a member of the Geisel (Dr. Seuss) Award Selection Committee. I enjoyed each assignment and look forward to many more years of continuing service to ALSC.

**What to you is the biggest reward of being a children's librarian?**

Someone once said, "Nothing you do for children is ever wasted." I think this is especially true for children's librarians because it is a primary task in this profession to impact and influence young minds through the literature. I've discovered that the greatest reward is the opportunity to shape young minds, sow seeds of wonder into their lives, and make deposits into a child's life bank that will gain interest over time, resulting in the development of a lifelong learning treasury and an insatiable love for reading.

**What is your favorite job responsibility?**

Cleveland Public Library administers the Norman A. Sugarman Children's Biography Award, which is given biennially to the most distinguished children's biography book published nationally for grades kindergarten through eighth grade. This prestigious award is endowed by Joan Sugarman, widow of the late Norman A. Sugarman, lawyer and philanthropist, and a dedicated lover of the literature. It is my responsibility to chair the selection committee that reviews and selects titles for this award, publish the Sugarman Distinguished Children's Biography List, and coordinate the awards ceremony and the other public awareness events funded by the endowment.

**What is the greatest challenge your library faces, particularly in the children's services dept.?**

In an urban setting, the library's role in continually waging war against illiteracy, facing the on-going challenges of the technological advances that are necessary to keep us engaged effectively in the information services arena, and managing to keep these halls of learning vibrant, relevant, and welcoming with limited budgets are all critical issues that face us daily at Cleveland Public Library.

More importantly, however, I have found in my capacity as youth services manager, my greatest challenge is the recruitment, nurturing, and retention of qualified and dedicated professional children's librarians. After serving over 23 years at Anchorage (Alaska) Municipal Libraries, many of these years as youth services coordinator and the last six years in Cleveland working with professional children's librarians and para-professionals committed to library service to children, I am challenged to find the right key to keeping them trained and retained. It seems to be a growing trend to engage new recruits, encourage them to a high pitch of excitement about the tasks and the challenges in serving youth today, and then watch them excel, develop, and move up and out of the children's arena to jobs of higher management and greater responsibility. While it is good to have managers with children's services skills and experiences -- and I'll admit that libraries do benefit greatly with directors in the board room who can remember how exciting it was to see the light in a child's eyes when he finally masters the finger play "eensy-weesy spider" or can recall the joy in a parent's voice when she reports on the excellent progress of a student that once was struggling to keep up but has now improved -- I am still searching for the tool or incentive that I can offer to harness these jewels longer for the critical nurturing and influence needed for our young minds today. Merit pay, perhaps? Should we encourage children's librarians as managers or deputy directors, maybe? I know there are libraries that are involved in role switches now because they realize that the most critical clients we have today are the potential voters of tomorrow. We'll see.

**What is the most popular children's program/event at your library?**

At Cleveland Public Library, we seem to pull the stops out for Teen Read Week and Children's Book Week each year, always enjoying the response of the youth to our innovative programs. For the last three years, we have conducted Cleveland Real Star city-wide competitions for our teens (similar to the American Idol phenomenon) to encourage the performance presentations of their various creative talents. The staff has been blown away with the response and quality of the performances. Children's Book Week activities always feature a personal appearance by a popular author or illustrator whose books our young readers have been enjoying. Meeting and engaging a dialogue in person or online with a favorite author has always been a popular and exciting event.

But, I can say without reservation that the most popular programs that generate the highest number of participants are our summer reading and winter reading club campaigns. This year, our Summer and Winter Reading Clubs served over 21,436 children reading a combined total of 169,844 books. Our greatest allies are the program partners who work with us to deliver incentives and on-site programs that encourage our students to participate. Reading incentives, such as food coupons, sporting events admission tickets, tours of popular museum and entertainment facilities, movie cinema tickets, and a grand prize that offers a trip for a family of four anywhere Southwest Air flies,

provide a win-win situation. Kids read and achieve immediate and lifelong benefits. Themes vary each year but the objective is the same – Kids Who Read - Achieve!

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

Several crucial projects are always being juggled at the same time but three projects are deadline driven and have our full attention, at the moment. We are... (1) finalizing the entries for our annual Celebrate with Books publication, which features YS staff selections for the best children and young adult books of the year and is published just before Christmas as a holiday buying guide; (2) testing teen use and inputting data into the newly launched teen Web site – [www.voicesrisingcleveland.org](http://www.voicesrisingcleveland.org); and (3) drafting new procedures and policies for the successful YRead.org online book discussion service to include the circulation of classroom sets of books for teachers featured in our new cooperative service initiative – C.L.A.S.S.I.C. (Connecting Libraries and School Services in Cleveland).

### **Who/What is your favorite children's author/Book and why?**

Oh, I can't give you just one favorite – I enjoy so many for different reasons. However, I can say that the Coretta Scott King Award winners and honor books always seem to rise to the top of my favorites of the hour because they never cease to amaze and inspire me. Ashley Bryan, Kadir Nelson, Jerry Pinkney, Sharon Draper, Jacqueline Woodson, Sharon Flake, Christopher Paul Curtis, Nikki Grimes, and Patricia and Fred McKissack are all favorite award winners and must be read!

I must offer, as a single title of influence, that when I first began my career in children's services, I did have a favorite Dr. Seuss tale – everyone does, right? *Horton Hatches the Egg* provided a sort of stick-to-it mantra for me:

"I meant what I said,  
And I said what I meant...  
An elephant's faithful,  
100 per cent."

I remembered this tale from the bedtime stories that my mother used to read repeatedly. I believe it helped me set a foundation for a life of service, both in the library field and as a pastor's wife. When I commit to a project, I'm there – 100%!

### **What are your hobbies?**

I'm a storyteller and a gospel singer – but these are more than hobbies – I'd say avocations. I do these for my own personal enjoyment/inspiration and for anyone else in earshot. But, a hobby...I guess I'm a collector. I have a serious collection of elephants, Noah's Arks, and Mother and Child paintings that I keep safely stored. Most days, however, when I get a moment to relax for a few moments...you'll find me reading a favorite mystery or trying to achieve a new level on the latest educational computer game, Jewel Quest is my latest challenge.

### **What three words best describe you?**

This is the hardest question yet, I'd say charismatic, innovative, and faithful. I asked someone close to me to describe me in three words. This individual said, "enthusiastic, classy, and dedicated to the big picture." Well, I just don't know for sure. All I do know is that I just love life and the opportunity I have to share mine with young people.

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