

ALSCConnect

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Officially Speaking

Singular Story Hours

A call went out in July from ALA's Public Information Office (PIO) for examples of unique story hours for a proposed Associated Press article on story hour trends. The list of programs submitted to PIO was amazing. For those of you who might not see that AP article, or in case some submissions are omitted from the article, I wanted to share these with you.

- At New York Public Library's Rikers Island prison branch, they run a Baby Lapsit program with babies and mothers in prison.
- At the Jefferson Market Branch in Manhattan's Greenwich Village (NY), librarians combine board books, instrument playing, and crafts for very young children, programming to more than 50 kids at a time.
- At the George Bruce Branch in Harlem (NY), the librarian uses volunteer moms and caregivers to read in Spanish the same book she's just read in English for their bilingual story times for toddlers.
- At Ohio's Rossford Public Library, Kristine Goldsmith incorporates American sign language into storytime, teaching signs to three- to six-year-olds using a song based on a book, repeating the signs the group had learned in previous weeks, and incorporating a new sign each week. At the end of the eight week series, all of the kids had learned all the signs in the song and even put on a performance, using the signs for their parents at the library. Many valuable skills were combined into one program, not the least of which were social skills. "When we had a new friend that maybe didn't know the signs, the kids made it their mission to make sure that the new child learned the signs and could 'sing' along," reports Kristine. "It was one of the most rewarding storytime sessions I have presented."
- At Kansas' Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, Judy Rohr holds a Spanish/English storytime once a month, reading the selected books once in Spanish and then in English. Then, the group plays a game related to the story, trying to emphasize one of the Spanish words from the story. When they read Eric Carle's "The Very Busy Spider" for example, Judy used a spider web prop and plastic spiders to practice the words for spider, web, up, and down.
- The Dupont Branch of the Allen County (Ind.) Public Library has a very successful program called "PAWS to Read." With the help of three therapy dogs whose owners bring them to the library once a week, children have the opportunity to read to, and spend valuable time with, four-legged, book-loving friends. The library gets an average of 25 children to read to the dogs. "The diversity of readers, the socialization skills for non-readers, and the community that has been formed is awesome," reports Laura Hontz, children's librarian.
- The Hennepin County (Minn.) Library has worked with several consultants to develop guidelines and best practice for storytimes in languages other than English. As a result, the children's staff no longer presents "bilingual story times," they present storytimes "of the heart," the child and parent's first language. The entire program, from start to finish, even including talking with parents and children before and after the programs, is done in the first language, with only a sprinkling of English, when a translation is needed. "It's made an amazing difference in the response of children, and parents are absolutely enthralled," reports Gretchen Wronka, HCL's youth services and outreach coordinator. Some languages are harder than others when it comes to finding appropriate books for storytime, but they search out every possibility.

As you can see, children's librarians all across the country are combining not only the six early literacy skills emphasized in the Every Child Ready to Read training--print motivation, vocabulary, letter knowledge, phonological awareness, print awareness, and narrative skills, but also imagination, love of books, socialization, outreach, music, languages, and much more.

This list makes me honored to be a librarian, especially a children's librarian, working every day to make reading fun and to forge the best possible library service for every child.-- *Jane B. Marino, ALSC President*

Council News

At the ALA Annual Conference in Washington D.C., ALA Council unanimously adopted a resolution of critical importance to youth-serving librarians. The resolution urges "the passage of the SKILLS Act with provisions to be included in any reauthorization of 'No Child Left Behind' (NCLB). The provisions are: (1) to include school library media specialists who meet the criteria established by the state educational agency as highly qualified in NCLB; (2) to require school districts, to the extent feasible, to ensure that every school within the district employs at least one highly qualified school library media specialist; and (3) to allow state and local professional development funds (Title II) to be used to assist in recruiting and training highly qualified school library media specialists."

Council unanimously passed a resolution calling "upon Congress to fund the \$19.1 million needed for the first year of the National Library Service's multi-year digitization project to convert to up-to-date digital technology, thereby preserving Talking Books services to people with visual or physical disability."

ALA Council unanimously adopted a resolution on the Use and Abuse of National Security Letters reading:

"That the American Library Association condemns the use of National Security Letters to obtain library records; that the American Library Association urges Congress to pursue legislative reforms in order to provide adequate protection for each library user's constitutional right to be free from unwarranted and unjustified government surveillance, including judicial oversight of National Security Letters (NSLs) requiring a showing of individualized suspicion and demonstrating a factual connection between the individual whose records are sought by the FBI and an actual investigation; elimination of the automatic and permanent imposition of a nondisclosure or "gag" order whenever an NSL is served on an individual or institution; allowing recipients of NSLs to receive meaningful judicial review of a challenge to their NSL without deferring to the government's claims; increased oversight by Congress and the Office of the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Justice over NSLs and FBI activities that implicate the First Amendment; and providing for the management, handling, dissemination and destruction of personally identifiable information obtained through NSLs; that the ALA communicates this resolution to the Office of the President and Vice-President, Congress, ALA members, and state chapters; and that ALA urges its members, state chapters, and all library advocates to ask Congress to restore civil liberties and correct the abuse and misuse of National Security Letters."

Following the lead of ALA Council, several state library associations have subsequently passed this resolution.

The Council also examined financial reports and set an upper budgetary level, addressed several organizational housekeeping issues, paid tribute to a number of outstanding members and generally worked effectively and within time constraints, thanks to the fine chairing of President Leslie Burger and incoming President Lorienne Roy. Complete information on Council actions can be found at:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/governance/council/councilactions...> -- *Linda Perkins, ALSC Division Councilor*

Friends of ALSC

Thank-you to all our latest contributors to the Friends of ALSC. To learn how you can contribute, visit www.ala.org/alsc and click on "Support ALSC" at the top right of the page.

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Lois J. Williams (in honor of Andrew Medlar's birthday)
Helen Worsham

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Light the Way Grant

ALSC and Candlewick Press are pleased to announce "Light the Way: Outreach to the Underserved," a one-time grant of \$5,000 for a library conducting exemplary outreach to underserved populations. The grant will be presented in honor of Newbery Medalist and Geisel Honoree Kate DiCamillo. Grant criteria and the application are at www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/profawards/candlewicklighttheway... The winner and Honorable Mentions will be chosen at ALA's Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia, January 2008.

Suggestions Welcome for Odyssey

The new ALSC/Booklist/YALSA Odyssey Award for Excellence in Audiobook Production will be given for the first time in January 2008 to the producer of the best audiobook for children and/or young adults, available in English in the United States. Suggestions from the field are encouraged and should be submitted using the 2008 official Odyssey Award suggestion form. For more information, visit www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawds/odysseyaward/Odysse...

Nominate Now

ALSC is seeking nominations and applications for its professional grants and awards:

- Bechtel Fellowship
- ALSC/BWI Summer Reading Grant
- Distinguished Service Award
- Maureen Hayes Author/Illustrator Visit Award
- Penguin Young Readers Group Award
- ALSC/Tandem Library Books Literature Program Grant

For more information about each award and to download award applications, visit www.ala.org/alsc/, click on Awards & Scholarships - Professional Awards. To request a form by mail, send a postcard to ALSC, 50 E. Huron St., Chicago, IL 60611; or e-mail: alsc@ala.org. Deadline for all professional award applications is **December 3, 2007**.

Scholarship Winners

ALSC is pleased to announce its 2007 scholarship recipients.

Frederic G. Melcher Scholarship: Rebecca Heckathorn, Inman, S.C., attending University of South Carolina; and Cynthia Jablonka Simpson, Highland, Mich., attending Wayne State University.

Bound to Stay Bound Books Scholarship: Jessica Kerlin, Lakewood, Ohio, attending Drexel University; Laura Knouff, Pittsburgh, Pa., attending University of Pittsburgh; Esther Mortensen, Ashland, Ore., attending University of North Texas; and Jeanna Rex, Jamaica Plain, Mass., attending Simmons College.

Congratulations to all!

2008 Arbuthnot Site

The 2008 Arbuthnot Committee chose South Central Library System (SCLS), Madison, Wis., as the host site for the 2008 Arbuthnot lecture, featuring David Macaulay, Caldecott Medalist and renowned author/illustrator. Macaulay won the Caldecott Medal in 1991 for *Black and White* (Houghton), and received Caldecott Honors in 1978 for *Castle* (Houghton) and 1974 for *Cathedral: The Story of Its Construction* (Houghton).

SCLS has proposed programming that will celebrate not only children's literature, but also Macaulay's particular position as laureate of architecture and building. An accessible venue and plans for Web-casting will allow for a maximum number of participants.

More information will be posted, as it becomes available, at www.ala.org/alsc, click on Awards & Scholarships -- Literary & Related Awards.

Member News

Congratulations to **Barbara Immroth**, School of Information, University of Texas, Austin, who was selected as the 2007 winner of the ALA/Beta Phi Mu Award, in recognition of her extensive and lasting impact on education for youth services librarians.

Margaret Bush, Simmons College, Boston, **Barbara A. Genco**, Brooklyn (NY) Public Library, and **Carolyn Phelan**, Northbrook (Ill.) Public Library, are serving on the judging panel for the 2008 American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)/Subaru Science Books & Films (SB&F) Prize. Winning titles for 2008 will be announced in January. For more information, visit <http://www.sbsonline.com/prizes.htm>.

Congratulations to **Teri Lesesne**, Department of Library Science, Sam Houston State University (Texas), recipient of the 2007 ALAN Award, given by the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents (ALAN) of the National Council of Teachers of English. The annual award honors an individual who has made significant contributions to the field of young adult literature.

Congratulations to **Eliza Dresang**, College of Information, Florida State University, Tallahassee, who received the 2007 Scholastic Library Publishing Award for her extraordinary contributions to promoting access to books and encouraging the love of reading for lifelong learning.

Bookapalooza Takes Off in 2007

ALSC's new Bookapalooza program offers three select libraries a collection of materials, including books, videos, audiobooks, and recordings. The materials are primarily for children age birth through fourteen and have been submitted to ALSC award and media evaluation selection committees for award and notables consideration. After each ALA Midwinter Meeting when the awards/notables are announced, these materials, published in the previous year, must be removed from ALSC office shelves to make room for a new year of publications. Your library could become the new home for one of these collections!

The inaugural Bookapalooza collections were awarded in spring 2007 to College Gate Elementary School Library (Anchorage, Alaska), Custer County School District Library (Westcliffe, Colo.), and Creswell (Ore.) Library.

"Our first six boxes of books arrived last week. I alternated between crying and goosebumps ALL day—they are beautiful!" said Gretchen Villers, Custer County School District Library. "Teachers wandered into the library all day long just to look. We thank you so much for ALSC's generous gift to our library. Your gift was a wonderful way to end our year and brought great energy to our school."

Applications for 2008 Bookapalooza, featuring books published in 2007, are being accepted through Friday, November 30, 2007. Find out more at www.ala.org/alsc, click on Awards & Scholarships.

New Resources from ALSC

ALSC is pleased to offer the following new publications and resources:

- ***Kids, Know Your Rights! A Young Person's Guide to Intellectual Freedom*** . Free, downloadable, full-color PDF.

Have you ever tried to explain the concept of "Intellectual Freedom" to a young person? Not an easy task, but an important one, considering that over 70 percent of the challenges to books in this country each year take place in schools and school libraries.

Kids, Know Your Rights! , written by members of ALSC's Intellectual Freedom Committee, speaks directly to kids in grades five and up, using simplified, kid-friendly language to tackle difficult, abstract ideas.

After an introduction explaining intellectual freedom, the brochure forges ahead to discuss: challenges to the First Amendment; censorship, how it affects children, and how they can defend their right to read; privacy and confidentiality; and respecting the opinions of others. A bibliography of suggested nonfiction and fiction titles also is included.

The brochure is free to download, print, and distribute.

Visit: www.ala.org/ala/alsc/alscpubs/KidsKnowYourRights.pdf. It is an ideal giveaway for libraries that celebrate Banned Books Week and The September Project.

- ***Home Library Bibliographies*** . Free, downloadable, full-color brochures.

The Home Library Bibliographies are a project of the ALA-Children's Book Council (CBC) Joint Committee, with cooperation from ALSC's Quicklists Consulting Committee. They are updates of four previously released brochures for children ages birth to three years; four to seven years; eight to eleven years; and 12 to 14 years and are intended for parents, grandparents, and others interested in building a high-quality library for their children at home.

The selected titles appearing in the brochures are a balance of classics and new books, and were selected by Quicklists from among nearly 600 submissions from CBC member publishers. Audiobooks are highlighted for the first time on this revised set of brochures.

The brochures are available to download for free on the ALSC and CBC Web sites; we encourage librarians to print them in black and white or color to use with their parent, grandparent, and caregiver patrons. Find the brochures at: www.ala.org/homelibrary.

- **Special Collections in Children's Literature Wikiography**. Available online at <http://wikis.ala.org/alsc>, scroll down the page and click on the Special Collections link.

The ALSC Committee on National Planning of Special Collections in Children's Literature created the wikiography as an easily-accessible clearinghouse to provide helpful information about special collections around the country. These collections are typically used by scholarly researchers studying children and/or their literature.

Currently, the wikiography lists 20 such collections. Among those included are: the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, which holds the original manuscripts and illustrations of more than 1,200 authors and illustrators, as well as 100,000+ published books dating from 1530 to the present; and the Cotsen Children's Library, Princeton (N.J.) University, a major historical collection featuring rare illustrated children's books, manuscripts, original artwork, prints, and educational toys from the fifteenth century to the present in over thirty languages.

"This wikiography will be a helpful resource for those engaged in scholarly research in children's literature, as well as for those librarians assisting them," said Kathleen T. Horning, ALSC Immediate Past President. "It's wonderful to see the collective efforts of curators using twenty-first century technology to provide access to historical archives and collections."

The committee encourages others to contribute bibliographic citations on their collections to the list. To add a collection or to discover what treasures the list and its collections hold, visit <http://wikis.ala.org/alsc> and click on the Special Collections link near the bottom of the page. For those who may be new to wiki technology, the committee has provided helpful, basic instructions on how to add a collection to the wikiography, making it very easy to add to the list.

Preconference Support

Many thanks to the sponsors of the 2007 ALSC/ASCLA Preconference "The Underserved 20 Percent: Children, Teens, and Adults with Disabilities."

Abledata
American Academy of Pediatrics
APA/Magination Press
ARC
Autism Society of America
Brookes Publishing
Candlewick Press
Christopher Reeve Foundation
Cleveland Public Library
Closing the Gap
Demco
Exceptional Parent Magazine
Future Horizons
Gallaudet University
Harris Communications
Henry Holt
Infogrip
JayJo Books, School Specialty Media
Jessica Kingsley Publishers, Inc.
KLAS (Keystone Library Automation System)
Lighthouse
Maryland Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
Mayer Johnson
National Association of the Deaf
National Association for Down Syndrome
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Lekotek Center
National Library Service for the Blind & Physically Handicapped
NICHCY/National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities
New Harbinger Publications
Orca Book Publishers
Program Development Associates
Signing Time/Two Little Hands
Stuttering Foundation of America
Symbol Speak
United Cerebral Palsy
Virtual Vision Technologies
WGBH
Woodbine House
Wrightslaw

Bright Ideas

I Spy Success

With very little fan fare and hardly any promotion, Youth Services staff at the Mount Prospect (Ill.) Public Library unveiled a display case of small, rather odd objects (think bumble bees, skeletons and, yes, an ear) randomly arranged in the style of the popular "I Spy" series of books. The goal behind the display, created by Darice Castino, was to actively engage children while they were visiting the library.

To participate, children were given a list of items, divided by level of difficulty, to "spy" in the display case. Children were then challenged to find points of interest in the youth area, like magazines, the "new books" shelf, and a Clifford the Big Red Dog stuffed animal. Children who turned in their list (however complete or incomplete) received a fun ruler as a prize for participation. And participate they did! In less than one month, over 200 children gazed at the display case and searched the library for these special objects. The greatest testament to the success of this "contest" is that one of the local schools has copied the idea.

The library will never again wonder if the displays the staff painstakingly put together are truly noticed by patrons.--
Carolynn Muci, Mount Prospect (Ill.) Public Library

Día Event Grows

April 28, 2007, marked the third annual celebration of El día de los niños/El día de los libros (Día) at Tuscarawas County Public Library in New Philadelphia, Ohio. This rural county in East Central Ohio has experienced an influx of Latino residents—primarily from the Guatemalan region—in the past five years. The library has felt a strong commitment to welcoming and actively embracing these new members of the community.

Our efforts toward this were initially focused on expanding our collection to include Spanish-language and bilingual books and videos, with the support of a grant from a local foundation. The challenge remained of helping the Latino residents feel comfortable enough to come into the library to benefit from the materials available there.

Introducing the Día celebration into our community has proven to be a wonderful way to meet that challenge. Our library staff is committed to promoting this as a community event, rather than one that is exclusively for our Latino residents. This enables us to fulfill our dual goal of welcoming the Latino residents and promoting general community awareness of, and appreciation for, the wonderful culture that is weaving itself into our daily lives.

Our three-hour celebration is held during regular library hours the final Saturday of April. The event is widely promoted during the preceding four weeks. Colorful flyers are distributed by the local grocery stores, and the same flyers are mailed in bulk to all of the schools and daycares in the area. Posters are placed in strategic places throughout the community, including churches and places of business such as laundromats, Latin grocery stores, and other businesses. Individual invitations are sent to local and state government representatives, many of whom have joined us for the event.

The event itself is marked by a festive carnival atmosphere in the library, with Latin music playing and refreshments donated and served by our Friends of the Library. Highlights include family games, craft activities assisted by bilingual volunteers, balloon-tying, face-painting, and circulating, costumed characters from favorite children's stories such as Winnie the Pooh, Curious George, and Strawberry Shortcake, providing wonderful photo opportunities for the children. A bilingual story time presented by a gifted and engaging professional storyteller moves the day's activities to the exciting climax of the piñata activity ("el romper de piñata").

The movement toward community-wide recognition of this festive event seems to be happening just as we had hoped. Attendance at our first event in 2005 was approximately 300. In 2006, the attendance increased to over 400 people. In 2007, attendance was close to 500 and the library gave away 360 new, free books in English and Spanish to children. A local bank subsidized the entire cost of the 2007 celebration in exchange for our acknowledgment of their support through the inclusion of their logo on invitations, promotional materials, and game prizes. Such support is a positive step toward realizing our goal of fully and appreciatively embracing this most recent ethnic addition to our community.— *Rosemary E. Russell, Tuscarawas County Public Library, New Philadelphia, Ohio*

Record Year for Día!

With 39 states participating and libraries around the country offering exciting events and activities from author and illustrator visits to storytelling under the stars, from kite making to papel picado paper crafting, the 2007 El día de los niños/El día de los libros (Día) celebration was a great success. Día, held annually on April 30, celebrates books, language, and culture, and allows libraries the opportunity to demonstrate their value within the community as vibrant, cultural, and family-friendly institutions.

ALSC, national home of Día, and Target, official national sponsor of Día 2007, gave away 46,000 complimentary Día brochures, featuring recommended children's books and tips for parents on reading to/with their children, and bookmarks to 360 libraries that registered their Día event information online by April 16th.

In addition, ALSC and Target provided mini-grants of \$5,000 plus a suite of Día-themed promotional materials to eight model public library systems, including El Paso (Texas) Public Library, Hennepin County (Minn.) Library, Public Library of Charlotte-Mecklenburg (N.C.), Queens (N.Y.) Public Library, Riverside County (Calif.) Library System, Broward County (Fla.) Library System, Providence (R.I.) Public Library, and Phoenix (Az.) Public Library. These "Super Sites" put grant funds towards purchasing culturally-relevant books for permanent collections or giveaways and/or to fund Día programs. Each Super Site also received a large display banner, bookplates, and bilingual Día brochures and bookmarks.

Throughout June, ALSC received feedback from the Super Sites and other libraries participating in Día events in April and was pleased with the diversity and depth of the celebrations held nationwide.

Riverside County Library System (RCLS) estimated attendance of over 500 children and adults for events at three libraries; in addition, over 2,700 students attended programs at five local schools. One highlight of their celebrations was a visit at the three library sites by award-winning author Jorge Argueta, who read from his work and spoke with children and parents about his life in El Salvador and his experiences migrating to the United States. He encouraged children to follow their dreams and feel proud of their language and culture. He talked to parents about the importance of sharing family stories with their children and encouraged them to make reading a daily family activity.

"Our [Día] celebration was a great success!" said Sharon Ballard, manager of Thousand Palms Library, part of RCLS. "It was wonderful to witness the community participation and support. Programs like this help build a sense of community among our library customers, families, volunteers, and staff. It took many hours of planning and preparation, but it was well worth our efforts to see everyone enjoying a day filled with reading and library activities!"

Broward County Library System held three Día celebrations with a total of over 7,300 participants. A free Conference on Children's Literature, aimed at librarians, teachers, media specialists, daycare owners, etc., featured authors Eric Kimmel and Antonio Sacre, illustrator David Diaz, and Native American storyteller Dovie Thomason. The following day, Children's BookFest, a daylong children's festival, was held simultaneously at three library locations around the county. A culminating evening event for all ages, Moonlight Tales: Storytelling Under the Stars, took place at the main library.

Children's BookFest included hourly live stage performances, featuring four international storytellers and Emmy award-winning children's music legend Ella Jenkins, free arts and crafts, and a book signing and mini drawing workshops by award-winning illustrator David Diaz. Following the event, storyteller Sacre commented, "I felt so honored to be part of the wonderful festival you all worked so hard to make happen. My visits to Northwest Regional and Weston Libraries were incredibly fun. The children and parents were so excited and such great audiences."

Based on these all-star line-ups and lively events, it's easy to see that libraries put a great deal of planning and heart into their Día celebrations. Phoenix Public Library even held focus groups to determine a message to be placed on giveaway bags to be distributed to children attending its Día celebration. Bilingual librarian Kristl Chavez met with Spanish-speaking parents at two inner city elementary schools, and these focus group participants agreed on the message that parents were responsible for getting children the materials they need at the library. Twenty-seven parents took part in the focus groups.

Pima County (Ariz.) Public Library, which is strongly committed to Día, held events from April 18 all the way through April 30. Library branches hosted special events and activities from juggling acts and bilingual puppet shows, to a Teddy Bear Picnic/Storytime and Bolivian dance lessons.

It's not too late for your library and community to join in the fun! El día de los niños/El día de los libros rolls around again on Wednesday, April 30, 2008. For more information on Día, including event ideas, educational presentations about Día, free downloadable resources, such as logos and full-text brochures, and more, visit www.ala.org/dia. Start planning your 2008 celebration now.-- *Laura Schulte-Cooper, ALSC Office*

ALSC Voices

Truly Distinguished

Congratulations to Caroline Ward, 2007 Distinguished Service Award winner. Caroline delivered the following award acceptance remarks at the Membership Meeting in Washington, D.C.

Thank-you, Jean Gaffney and members of the ALSC Distinguished Service Award Committee for this honor.

I still remember my first ALA conference in New York in 1974—of course it was a different world then. The Newbery/Caldecott was a joint committee of 23 people, and when President Priscilla Moulton spoke of evaluating nonprint materials, she was referring to 16 mm films, filmstrips and recordings—as in records! But that conference was full of authors reading from just published works. I sat in the darkened Donnell Auditorium listening to M.E. Kerr, Rosemary Wells, Natalie Babbitt, David Macaulay, Judy Blume, Jack Prelutsky, Ashley Bryan, and Richard Peck. It seems remarkable that these people are still writing, and a number of them are even speaking at this conference.

I remember taking copious notes at the program “Start Early for an Early Start.” The focus was on research in human development, cognitive theory, and psychology that revealed learning begins at birth. The Preschool Services Committee was promoting the groundbreaking concept that libraries should be active partners in this early learning. Sound familiar? Our current early literacy initiatives all draw from these roots, and the seeds for my lifelong commitment to a child's education through a love of books were planted that day.

I didn't know anybody at that first conference, maybe some of you attending this ALSC business meeting feel the same way. But that first experience was so exhilarating that I went back to Vermont, where I was the state children's consultant to 220 small public libraries, renewed, knowing that I had found a sort of spiritual professional home. I trust this will happen too for all of you who are new to our division.

I came back to ALA again and again, and began to form a national network of ALSC friendships, mostly through committee work, that last to this day. Over the years I have had many interesting ALSC assignments, I tried to say yes to all of them, but the road was not always clear. I remember once on the Education Committee we seemed to be floundering—what exactly was our charge? If we could only define what traits or qualities made a great children's librarian—wouldn't that be helpful? Maybe this thought made its way into the minutes, for a number of years later a savvier Education Committee was able to translate those traits and qualities into what came to be known as the ALSC Competencies, a fine and helpful document for all who train and supervise children's librarians. This is just one of the many examples I've witnessed that demonstrates how we are always building on the work and experience of those who have gone before.

In 1999-2000, I had the privilege of serving as ALSC president. Being president of ALSC is a little like being flung into a rapidly revolving door, you swirl around with so many required duties that you have to give yourself room to think about creating special initiatives that reflect your own passions. I knew I wanted to establish a school-age service committee so the division could focus on these important formative years in a child's life. That turned out to be easy to accomplish, but a real challenge came from an unexpected source. The Pura Belpré Award had been established six years before, the joint ALSC/REFORMA committee had given out three awards, but there was no medal and no funding—its very existence was precarious. Now I love a cause, and when I saw the commitment of the people who believed in this award, I worked together with a co-chair from REFORMA to rescue the award financially. Today the Pura Belpré Award is fully endowed. Of all the inspiring experiences ALSC has afforded me, this is the one of which I am proudest.

Like many of you, I have been very fortunate to work with more experienced librarians, who introduced me to the important ideas and people in our field. Carolyn Wicker Field at the Free Library of Philadelphia was one of them (the legends at that time ALL had three names). Patty Klinck, my supportive boss and mentor in Vermont was another. And although he was not a librarian, William C. Morris, or Bill as we call him, introduced many of us, especially when

we were first starting out, to some of the rising stars in our field. Bill was the first winner of the ALSC Distinguished Service Award and it is an honor to share this award with him, and the other winners.

As I, and so many experienced ALSC members know, the time and expertise that we have given has come back to us tenfold. I am so grateful for all the opportunities that ALSC and its many wonderful members have given me. So, in this spirit, to thank an organization that has meant so much to me over the past 35 years and has given me such a great honor today, I would like to regift the monetary award that comes with this distinguished service honor. KT (Kathleen Horning), here are two checks for you to invest. One for the Bill Morris Endowment whose generous legacy will support ALSC for many years to come, and, of course, one for the Pura Belpré Award. Thank you again.

Conference Notes

Each year four deserving children's librarians receive the chance to attend ALA Annual Conference for the first time through the Penguin Young Readers Group Award. Following are two of this year's winners' reflections on the Washington, D.C. conference.

Just like Ruby Lu, the best part of ALA is everything: sessions, people, social events, advance copies of books (and newly toned muscles from lugging around those books). After piling the books by my bed and filing my notes, I find myself remembering the people I met most. Fueled by a heady combination of adrenaline and caffeine, and thanks to the Penguin Young Readers Group Award, I enjoyed a whirlwind of breakfasts, receptions, and the Newbery/Caldecott/Wilder Banquet. At these events I met ALSC members, saw old friends, and chatted up a thrilling mix of authors (I met Judy Blume!). It also provided a superbly fun opportunity to dress up, rare for many of us youth librarians. As I resume my real life, my high heels wait patiently for me at the top of my closet until the next round of soirées. Hope to see you there!-- *Suzanne Myers Harold, Multnomah County (Ore.) Library*

I am grateful to Penguin Young Readers Group for enabling my ALA attendance. It was wonderful, enriching, and fun. I made many connections with amazing people.

I arrived Thursday with my co-worker and we represented our library at the Spectrum Professional Options Fair. I made some great connections at Friday's ASCLA/ALSC pre-conference and YALSA's 50th birthday party that night was a lot of fun! I visited the exhibits on Saturday and staffed the ALSC membership booth for an hour. On Sunday, I got involved at the ASCLA-LSSPS-LSPVPDF meeting and had a blast at the Newbery/Caldecott Wilder Banquet that night. Monday's ALSC meeting was very informative.

I can't wait to attend ALA next year!-- *Rachel Gould, Perkins Braille & Talking Book Library, Watertown, Mass.*

Lisa Taylor, an MLS Student at Texas Woman's University (TWU) SLIS and Librarian-in-Training, Ocean County (NJ) Library, worked with ALSC staff in Washington D.C. as part of the ALA Student-to-Staff Program. She also shared her conference experience and impressions with us:

Riding the train home from the 2007 ALA Conference in Washington, D.C., I am struck by the contrasts in my experiences with ALSC as an ALA Student-to-Staff Program participant. Yes, the conference was overwhelming in size and scale. On some days there were more than 600 programs and events offered in multiple venues! Yet it was also an intimate bonding of the nation's librarians, bringing librarians of all stripes together to share their knowledge and experience. I shared a room with a future school librarian and spent an enlightening evening with two academic librarians from the "Deep South." Librarians have more in common than not.

The conference was a contrast in preparedness and improvisation. ALSC staff were extremely prepared and professional, however, when handed lemons in the form of undelivered supplies or missing AV equipment, they responded not with lemonade, but lemon sorbet! All programs went off without a hitch. My roommate and I were welcomed as part of the ALSC team, and we participated in many preparatory and follow-up activities. I was impressed by the groundwork required to host the myriad ALSC events and programs.

The conference was also professional and educational, as evidenced by the many superb programs offered by ALSC and other ALA divisions. (The Poetry Jam featuring Children's Poet Laureate Jack Prelutsky, and moderated by my own TWU Professor, Sylvia Vardell, was a particular favorite!) However, the conference also showcased the entertaining side of librarianship--The Hollywood Librarian premiere, New Members Round Table's rollicking party, and an impromptu bit of levity when Geisel Award winner Laura McGee Kvasnosky's cell phone began ringing in the

middle of her own acceptance speech! My favorite foxes, Zelda and Ivy, could not have handled the incident more humorously.

The opportunity to attend my first ALA national conference is one for which I am extremely grateful. I learned useful skills, connected with new friends and colleagues, and discovered the many opportunities available to new librarians. I head for home exhausted in body but invigorated in enthusiasm for my new profession!-- *Lisa Taylor, Ocean County, N.J.*

ALSC Profile

Amanda Moss
Instructional Media Center Director
Maywood Elementary School (pre-K through grade two)
Monona, Wisconsin

How many years have you been an ALSC member?

I have been a member for four years; currently, I chair ALSC's Organization and Bylaws Committee.

Where did you attend library school?

University of Wisconsin-Madison (Go Bucky!)

What attracted you to library service to children?

I was a classroom teacher before attending library school. Being a school librarian seemed like the perfect job—and it is! I get to work with the entire school (families, teachers, and every student), providing truly valuable resources in the form of information literacy instruction, library materials, and other services.

Why did you join ALSC?

I had the wonderful experience of working at the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) during library school. Katy Horning, Merri Lindgren, Megan Schliesman, and Hollis Rudiger (the CCBC librarians at that time) were excellent role models; their involvement in ALSC and YALSA led me to become involved, too.

What to you is the biggest reward of being a librarian?

As a school librarian, my job is unique because I get to see the same children every day, all school year long. We get to know each other very well. I love being so closely involved with young children as they grow into readers, book lovers, and library users. Working with library volunteers is also extremely rewarding; Maywood's volunteers have added immensely to our program, and have become some of my closest friends.

What is your favorite job responsibility?

I was fortunate to have outstanding practicum advisors and mentors in library school who instilled this idea in me: "My main job is helping kids learn to love the library." This mantra drives everything I do. I love coming up with new ways to affirm students' feeling of belonging in the library, and to continually strengthen their zeal for literature and libraries.

What is the greatest challenge your library faces?

I have to say that the Maywood library is very, very fortunate. We are a school of 180 students, and the administration and community have continually advocated to maintain a full-time Library Media Specialist position here, as well as in every building in our district. Many school districts across the country are cutting librarians, which is beyond disheartening—it's appalling.

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

Last year, another librarian in our school district and I wrote a regular column in the local newspaper. Our column, called Lit Bits, included seasonal or thematic book suggestions for elementary school-aged children, along with a corresponding photo of the two of us. For example, our column on books about grandparents featured a photo of each of us with our grandmothers. The column was a really fun and effective way to reach the community. I got to know lots of parents and community members because they would stop in to comment on the column. This project also helped us to reach kids in a different way.

What are you currently working on at your library?

I am excited to be developing Maywood's first-ever library blog! You can check it out at <http://maywoodlibrarynews.blogspot.com>.

What is your favorite children's book?

Nothing in this world could interfere with my love of Ann M. Martin's The Baby-Sitters Club series. Say what you will, but growing up with Kristy, Mary Anne, Claudia, Dawn, and Stacey helped me learn to believe in and accept myself and others.

What are your hobbies?

During the summer, you can find me windsurfing, and in the winter, I enjoy ice skating and cross-country skiing. Fall and spring are prime time for camping and canoeing. All year 'round, I love to knit, play the banjo, and (of course) read!

What three words best describe you?

This is a tough one! I called a co-worker, my brother, and my best friend to find out. Here's what they told me: resourceful, innovative, and happy-go-lucky.

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