

# ALSCConnect

December 2008, Vol. 6, no. 4

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## Officially Speaking

### ALSC Institute in Salt Lake

Education has always been a primary focus of ALSC, and it remains an essential goal identified in the association's strategic plan. Historically, professional development opportunities for ALSC members have been limited to annual conference programs. While members continue to look forward to summer conference, it is apparent that our members need more. For example, some of our members have told us that they look forward to the ALSC Institute because it is smaller and more manageable than ALA. Since the institute is held every two years, the planning committee has the opportunity to canvas members and find out the type of programming that best fits their needs.

The 2008 institute was held in Salt Lake City in September, and the evaluations from the 265 attendees indicate that ALSC has once again provided outstanding learning opportunities for children's librarians. (Check out the story on p. 56 of the November issue of *American Libraries*.) There were programs on blogging, library-friendly science experiments, graphic novels, and developing life-long readers.

One of the highlights of the conference was the "Breakfast for Bill" program, which will be a regular event at future institutes. Named in memory of William Morris, Vice-President and Director of Library Promotion at HarperCollins Children's Books, this breakfast was reminiscent of the ones that Bill hosted at ALA Annual and Midwinter for over forty years. Since the majority of those at the breakfast never knew Bill, K.T. Horning from the Cooperative Children's Book Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison began the morning by delivering a "perfect" character sketch of him. The author-editor teams of Sharon Creech with Joanna Cotler and William Joyce with Laura Geringer spoke about their work relationship. Later, in an informal conversation, one of the authors asked how many people at the institute knew Bill. K.T. responded, "I never knew Frederick Melcher either, but I know his contribution to the world of children's books."

In other events at the institute, Christopher Paul Curtis, winner of the Newbery Medal for *Bud, Not Buddy*, and Laura Vaccaro Seeger, a 2008 Caldecott Honor recipient for *First the Egg*, gave keynote addresses, and a number of local and regional writers and illustrators autographed their works at a reception held at the Salt Lake City Public Library. There were networking opportunities, social functions such as line dancing, and plenty of door prizes. ALSC raffled off one of our online courses. The crowd erupted in applause when a woman from Bermuda won it. She was also the person who traveled the farthest to attend the institute.

ALSC extends our warmest thanks to Gene Nelson, Director of the Provo City Library, for chairing the team that put this conference together. His idea to create a western theme, complete with bandanas, denim shirts for staff, and a chuck wagon style barbecue made this so much fun. And the crowd could be quieted in a split second with Gene's very loud "Yee-haw." I also want to thank Aimee Strittmatter, ALSC Deputy Executive Director, for her hard work in planning the conference from the ALSC end. Diane Foote, ALSC Executive Director, Laura Schulte-Cooper, and Jenny Najduch from the ALSC staff, were all on hand to make everything run smoothly.

The next institute will be in Atlanta in 2010. Plans have already begun. Salt Lake City and Atlanta have both hosted the Olympics; now they'll be dueling for bragging rights for the best ALSC Institute ever.— *Pat Scales, ALSC President*

### Gifts that Keep on Giving

One December a woman called the Perrot Memorial Library in the affluent town of Old Greenwich, Connecticut, and put in a request for a popular novel. This was not unusual, but then she added urgently that when the book became

available, the library should contact only her and speak to no one else at her residence. This also was not unusual for an institution that highly esteems privacy rights. However, the reason for the privacy was not at all ordinary. The woman said she intended to wrap the library book, place it under her Christmas tree, and return it to the library after her young, avid reader had finished it. Thinking frugally, she saw no reason to buy a popular book that would be read once and then put aside. The mother in Old Greenwich was definitely on to something, even though we all know that a beautifully wrapped library card would have been the most expansive gift of all.

It is a fact that our libraries are holiday gifts that keep on giving. In times of crisis, financial or otherwise, children's librarians never fail to rise to the occasion, and they give much more than creatively conceived "temporary" holiday gifts. Currently we face both penny-pinching holidays and financial uncertainty. From the New York Times, reporting on the Queens Library System to the Natchez Democrat reporting on the Natchez Adams Wilkinson Library Service, newspapers are chronicling the expected spike in library use in hard economic times, particularly in children's departments. This is not news to the nation's children's librarians. Many noticed a similar spike after 9/11 when parents and children, aching for normalcy and reassurance, packed library programs and clamored for booklists and services.

In formidable times the ALSC "brand" becomes even more relevant and prized. The professional organization that you own with your ALSC division membership has a core purpose that elegantly promises to "Create a better future for children through libraries." ALSC works enthusiastically to expand the products and services that will move us toward this goal. Across America children's materials and services are enriched by the work you join ALSC in advancing: the exceptional media evaluation and award committees; heartening initiatives such as El día de los niños/El día de los libros (Children's Day/Book Day); the work of leading edge committees like Children and Technology and Great Web sites for Kids; the committees giving professional awards and scholarships that bring newcomers to conferences and authors to children; and the essential committees that offer ALSC organizational support.

Keep in mind that the greatest impact is most guaranteed at times of greatest need. If you are reading this, you are a member of ALSC, but consider encouraging co-workers and colleagues to join or renew membership. Consider volunteering for one of our committees to help us broaden our reach. Consider that, in hard times, ALSC will support and inspire you when the demands of your library families and children reach new peaks. And thank all of you who help ALSC to make a better future for all children in the best of times and the worst of times. — *Kate McClelland, ALSC Vice President/President Elect*

## Bright Ideas

### Needle and ThREAD

In 2007, Jen Funk Weber, a children's book author and needlework designer, initiated a program called Needle and ThREAD: Stitching for Literacy with a dual goal to promote needlework and literacy. As part of this program, Weber hosts an annual Bookmark Challenge. During the challenge, independent needlework shops across America collect hand-stitched bookmarks from stitchers, and donate them to local libraries or schools where they are presented as rewards for reading accomplishments during Children's Book Week. Stitch shops also are encouraged to hold special events in conjunction with the challenge, such as stitch-ins, book clubs, contests, and outreach programs. During the 2008 challenge, a needlework shop and embroidery guild in Anchorage, Alaska, hosted free workshops at local libraries, teaching cross stitch to kids and parents. Needlework guilds organize programs in communities where there are no needle shops. The 2009 Bookmark Challenge is scheduled for March 19 through May 7.

Weber's Needle and ThREAD program is supported by The National Needlework Association (TNNA). Further information about the program can be found on the Needle and ThREAD Web site at [www.JenFunkWeber.com](http://www.JenFunkWeber.com).

### Starting Out Right with Early Literacy

Reach Out and Read (ROR) is a national early literacy program that ties literacy to health: pediatricians and nurses advise parents that reading aloud is the most important thing they can do to help their children start school ready to

learn. At every well-child check-up, health practitioners offer tips that encourage parents to read to their children, and the children receive a new book to keep.

For thirteen years, Multnomah County Library (Portland, Ore.) has offered ROR in partnership with the health department's six county clinics; the library provides books and a coordinator to manage the program. Ellen Fader, Youth Services Director, learned about ROR at an ALA conference and ensures that the library's Early Childhood Services unit, managed by Renea Arnold, has the resources it needs to operate the program.

"In Oregon, 40.3% of children age five years and under are living in families with an income below 200% of the federal poverty level. Reading rates vary by family income, with 51.5% of children living below 200% of the federal poverty level read to daily compared with 70.7% of children with family incomes of 400% of the federal poverty level or above." [Reach Out and Read. Reading Across the Nation: A Chartbook (2007) - [www.healthychild.ucla.edu/ROR/ROR\\_Chartbook\\_2007.pdf](http://www.healthychild.ucla.edu/ROR/ROR_Chartbook_2007.pdf)] Therefore, the Multnomah program targets families living in poverty, since they can lack the money to buy new books and may have more limited access to libraries.

ROR works. National research proves that children who otherwise would have been at high-risk for language delays were showing near-normal speech development. Additionally, mothers associated with the program were four times more likely to read to their children than those of similar economic circumstances not in ROR. To read more about the research, visit: [www.reachoutandread.org/about\\_summary.html](http://www.reachoutandread.org/about_summary.html).

In the past year, doctors and nurses working in Multnomah County health clinics have given children almost ten thousand books. Thanks to Reach Out and Read, health providers are making a positive difference in children's developmental skills and preparing them for school success. If you are looking for a program to address income disparity and its effect on school readiness, Reach Out and Read offers a model you can use.— *Written by Ronit Fahl, ROR Coordinator, submitted by Ellen Fader, Multnomah County Library, Portland, Ore.*

## Meet the Author!

To celebrate 2008 National Library Week the children's room at a branch of Sonoma County Library set up a display of children's books about books and libraries. In addition, they created a writing station for budding, young authors, consisting of a table covered with colored paper, pencils, crayons, and colored pencils. A display sign reading "Be an Author" and a basket of little blank books, made out of white scrap paper stapled together and taped with book tape, beckoned children to express their own creativity.

The book writing center is reminiscent of Daniel Kirk's book Library Mouse. In the story, Sam the mouse lives behind the children's reference desk and writes his own little books that he leaves for the children to read. The librarian wants to meet him on Meet the Author day, but Sam is shy. He makes a sign reading "Meet the Author" over a mirror in a box. Children look into the mirror, see themselves, and realize that they too can be authors.

Sonoma's book writing station was quite a success. Staff created a shelf out of a cardboard box to store the finished books, in case the children return some day and ask, "Where is the book that I made?"

Some of the creative book titles included: "Life is like a stair case," by Maritza; "Days gone by;" "My favorite fruit ??? What's your favorite fruit?" by Nina; "Once upon a frog;" and "My amazing life" by Lacy.

The project was very easy to do. It cost nothing since the library used scrap paper and already had the colored pencils, crayons, etc. A teen volunteer made books, decorated the signs and helped children with their books.— *Bright Idea submitted by Kim Endoso, Sonoma County (California) Library, Santa Rosa*

# ALSC Voices

## ALSC Profile

Annisha Jeffries  
School Age Coordinator  
Cleveland Public Library  
ALSC membership: 5 years

Where did you attend library school?  
University of Pittsburgh

What attracted you to library service to children?

When I was seven years old, my mother brought me to the library to get a library card and I was so happy. The librarian was so enthusiastic and kind, and she shared her love of reading and books with us. That experience changed my life and I knew from then on that I wanted to be a librarian.

Why did you join ALSC?

Because of the wonderful history of ALSC. I wanted to be a member because of true advocates for children. ALSC members are so committed, hard-working, and dedicated; that dedication attracted me.

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

When I get an opportunity to discuss with children what kind of books they like to read and introducing them to new and classic books.

What is your favorite job responsibility?

I like outreach. We have classes that visit our library for library tours or research tours, and I enjoy talking to them, getting to know what they like to read, and showing the children that a whole new world awaits them in a library and in books.

Do you have any advice or a helpful tip for library school students or new librarians just starting out?

Don't get discouraged if your story time or program doesn't work out the way you plan. Stay flexible in whatever you do. Don't be too rigid; always have fun and smile. One thing you don't want to have is a frown on your face when a child walks into your library.

What is your favorite children's book out this year so far?

We Are the Ship by Kadir Nelson.

What are your hobbies?

Crafting, reading (of course), watching movies from the 1970's

What three words best describe you?

Curious, Humorous, Kind

## Hear Ye! Hear Ye

### Member News/Field Notes

The Children's Services Department of the Allen County (Indiana) Public Library (ACPL) hosts a Mock Geisel Award blog at <http://www.acplmockgeisel.blogspot.com>. It lists new books for beginning readers including an abstract, a cover image of each book, and publisher information. Comments are welcome! ACPL also hosts Newbery, Caldecott, and Sibert Mock Award Election blogs at <http://acplmocknewbery.blogspot.com/>; <http://acplmockcaldecott.blogspot.com/>; and <http://acplmocksibert.blogspot.com/>. Join in the discussions.

Libraries Unlimited recently published *Summer Reading Renaissance: An Interactive Exhibits Approach* written by ALSC member and library youth services consultant Rita Soltan. The book encourages children and families to read together for recreation, pleasure, and their own curiosity by focusing on a new model of programming based on a typical children's museum's interactive display theory.

## Save the Date

ALA's youth media awards press conference, which includes announcements of ALSC's 2009 book and media award winners, will be held on Monday, January 26, 2009, 7:45 to 9 a.m. during the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Denver. Winners will be posted at [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org) by noon (Mountain time) that day.

## Online Courses for February

Jump start your career with one of ALSC's online education courses. The next round of classes, beginning in February, includes: "Reading Instruction and Children's Books"; "The Newbery Medal: Past, Present and Future"; "The Technology Enhanced Library Professional"; and "Sharing Poetry with Children."

Registration opens December 29. Course information is available at [www.ala.org/alsced](http://www.ala.org/alsced). Questions? Contact ALSC Deputy Executive Director Aimee Strittmatter at [astrittmatter@ala.org](mailto:astrittmatter@ala.org).

## ALSC Emerging Leader

Congratulations to ALSC's 2009 Emerging Leader, Madeline Walton-Hadlock. She will receive \$1,000 to attend ALA's 2009 Midwinter Meeting and Annual Conference, and will work with peers on an Emerging Leader project relevant to ALSC and/or youth services in libraries.

Walton-Hadlock graduated from San José (Calif.) State University in 2006 with her master's degree in library and information science. She is now a youth services librarian at San José Public Library, where she coordinates youth services for the English and Spanish speakers in the community. She has been active in ALSC as a member of the Children and Technology Committee, a participant in the William Morris Seminar, and a recipient of the 2008 Penguin Young Readers Group Award. She is also a member of the California Library Association (CLA).

## It's a New Day

ALSC is revising its El día de los niños/El día de los libros (Children's Day/Book Day) bilingual brochure. The updated material will feature new recommended book titles and resource Web sites, as well as an eye-catching new design. Print copies of the brochure will be available right after the ALA Midwinter Meeting in January by signing up on the Día Web site; click on "Día Celebrations." A PDF version of the brochure will be available to download free of charge at [www.ala.org/dia](http://www.ala.org/dia).

## ALSC Budget Update

It's not news that many ALSC members are experiencing budget difficulties in our own libraries and homes, but you may be wondering how the current economic conditions are affecting our association. While acknowledging the fact that ALSC ended fiscal year 2008 (9/1/2007 through 8/31/2008) slightly under budget, Executive Director Diane Foote recently reported to the ALSC Executive Committee that "In general, ALSC's FY2008 financial difficulties seem to mirror what is happening across the association and the general economy, but ALSC remains generally fiscally healthy due to our large net asset balance, array of endowments supporting many of our activities, and diverse revenue sources." Likewise, ALA Treasurer Rodney M. Hersberger stated in the November issue of *American Libraries* that "defensive" investments are keeping ALA and our fellow divisions "healthy financially." We would like to echo those statements and assure our fellow members that despite the craziness and uncertainty of today's financial environment, ALSC is financially positioned to continue to provide members with the tools, resources, and benefits we need, expect, and deserve.

At such times as these, members' concern is certainly understandable, especially considering that many of our important initiatives and activities are supported by endowments that rely on interest made from principal to foot the

bill. Rest assured that we anticipate weathering this financial storm as we have budgeted conservatively and maintained a relatively significant net asset balance of more than \$1 million. ALSC has plans to transfer a portion of this balance into our endowments over the next few years in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of our programs and services. Additionally, we have the benefit of diverse revenue sources such as dues, publication and product sales, grants, and continuing education registration, and with fiscal year 2009 well underway are already experiencing successes such as the higher than expected registration at this fall's phenomenal institute.

The fiscal year (9/1/08 through 8/31/09) budget picture is undoubtedly tight, and certainly some financial plans that we've been forecasting may have to be readjusted in the light of the current state of affairs. Your Budget Committee will be looking carefully at this before, during, and after our Midwinter meetings in Denver so that we can revise future projections if necessary and advise the ALSC Board responsibly.

Like Saruni in *My Rows and Piles of Coins* (Clarion, 1999), we continue to carefully watch our money so we can use it to benefit all of our kids, who need libraries now perhaps more than ever.— *Sue Zeigler, ALSC Fiscal Officer, and Andrew Medlar, Chair, ALSC Budget Committee*

## Special Thanks!

The 2008 ALSC National Institute in Salt Lake City was a great success. We extend our sincere thanks to the Planning Task Force for making everyone's time in Salt Lake enjoyable and beneficial. Task force members were Chair Gene Nelson, Director, Provo City Library; Carla Morris, Children's Services Manager, Provo City Library; Nancy L. Peterson, Associate Professor, Utah Valley University; Deanna Romriell, Assistant Manager, Children's Department, Salt Lake City Public Library; and Susan Spicer, Youth Services Librarian, Kearns Branch, Salt Lake County Library System.

ALSC also offers grateful thanks to the following organizations and institutions for their support of the 2008 National Institute:

Arbonne International  
Capstone Publishing and Stone Arch Books  
Children's Plus, Inc.  
Dowdle Folkart Puzzles  
EBSCO  
First Second  
Emotes Publishing  
Friends of ALSC  
Guildcraft Arts & Crafts  
Hobble Creek Candles  
Lehi Roller Mills  
Lerner Books/Graphic Universe  
Miller Honey  
Mister Anderson's Company  
Night Flight Comics  
Oni Press, Inc.  
Provo City Library  
RealSalt  
Roberts Arts and Crafts  
Rosen Graphica  
Salt City Candles  
Salt Lake City Public Library  
Salt Lake County Library System  
Scholastic Graphix  
Sweet's Quality Candies  
Taffy Town  
Toon Books  
Tutor.com

## Week of the Young Child

April 19-25, 2009, is designated as the Week of the Young Child (WOYC), but it's time to get ready now! The Liaisons with National Organizations Serving Children and Youth Committee (LNOSCY) encourages you to contact child care centers in your area to invite them to display children's art work in your library throughout April. Bulletin boards, blank walls, even shelf ends can be recruited to create an attractive display space.

- Begin with a simple phone call to childcare facilities and follow-up with a letter.
- Ask for child-created work only (no color-sheets or crafts from patterns), maybe children's impressions after hearing a favorite story.
- Prepare a letter for childcare facilities to send home with children inviting parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles to the library through the month of April.
- If art work has no "frame," back each piece with colored construction paper.
- Identify the child care facility(ies) providing the display pieces.
- Take pictures of families visiting to view the display and submit a favorite photo to Linda Mays at [lmays@ala.org](mailto:lmays@ala.org). [When sending photo(s), please be sure to provide a signed photo release form from the parent(s)/guardian(s).]

In addition to highlighting the importance of early education, this activity provides a terrific opportunity to attract caregivers and families of young children into your library. It also provides terrific photo opportunities for families and the media.

Week of the Young Child is a project of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. (<http://www.naeyc.org/>).

## Bits and Bytes

**NASA Launches New Web site.** With space shuttle missions continuing construction on the International Space Station and planned maintenance to the Hubble Space Telescope, the importance of spacewalks and the reliance on spacesuits are taking center stage. To help educators share these topics with young people, NASA Education has unveiled a new Web site: [www.nasa.gov/education/spacesuits](http://www.nasa.gov/education/spacesuits). The NASA Education Spacesuits and Spacewalks Web site brings a wealth of educational resources together in one place.

Visitors to the Web site can: check out the Clickable Spacesuit and learn about the different parts of a spacesuit; take a look at videos about the spacesuits of the future; watch "Brain Bites" videos and learn about hard-to-do moves in a spacesuit; take a step back in time and visit the Spacesuit History Gallery; explore educational activities; read about spacesuit designers and engineers who create and test spacesuits; and discover other NASA Web sites with information about spacesuits and spacewalks.

**The Big Read.** The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), announces the fifth deadline for The Big Read. The purpose of The Big Read is to revitalize the role of literature in American popular culture. Grants ranging from \$5,000 – \$20,000 are available to encourage local communities to inspire reading by developing and carrying out programming revolving around a single work of literature. Programming must be conducted between September 2009 and June 2010. Big Read grants require the participation of a library as a lead applicant or a partner. The Request for Proposals is at [www.NEABigRead.org](http://www.NEABigRead.org). The proposal deadline is February 3, 2009. Questions should be directed to Arts Midwest at 612-238-8010 or [TheBigRead@artsmidwest.org](mailto:TheBigRead@artsmidwest.org).

## Getting Together

### 2009 Preconference

Plan to join ALSC for its 2009 Preconference, Meeting the Challenge: Practical Tips and Inspiring Tales on Intellectual Freedom, on Friday, July 10, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., at the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago.

Hear strategies for addressing complaints and stories to strengthen resolve as author Judy Blume, librarians Carolyn Caywood, Carrie Gardner, and James LaRue, attorney and Freedom to Read Foundation board member John Horany, and others offer pragmatic advice and passionate perspectives on intellectual freedom.

“There will always be people who attempt to ‘censor’ what children read and view,” says ALSC President Pat Scales. “The best ammunition to use in fighting the ‘censorship war’ is knowledge. It is our responsibility as librarians to inform ourselves and transmit this knowledge to the young patrons we serve.”

## **Civil Rights Heroine to Keynote President’s Program**

Only 52 years ago, fifteen-year old Melba Pattillo Beals faced down furious segregationists, the Arkansas National Guard, and the Governor of Arkansas to integrate Little Rock Central High School. A best-selling author, university professor, and Congressional Gold Medal of Honor recipient, Beals joins ALSC in July at the American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference to discuss her fight for civil rights in the United States.

The ALSC Charlemae Rollins President’s Program featuring Beals is part of the ALA Auditorium Speaker Series and will take place on Monday, July 13, 2009, from 8:00 – 9:30 a.m. A Chicago children’s choir will perform songs from the civil rights movement to start the program.

Visit [www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc) for more information as it becomes available.

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