The Publisher’s Connection

The Long Journey

As a founding member of ALAN, I have witnessed the growth of the organization, as well as the output of many outstanding books for young adults. NCTE’s annual convention has changed also. When I first started attending the convention, usually one or two authors spoke. One of my favorite memories is that of listening to Richard Armour, who delighted many with his humor, even making fun of teachers. (Some at my table were “offended.”)

Now, through the generosity of publishers, many authors—children’s, young adult, adult—appear and share their ideas and writing techniques with convention-goers. The post-convention ALAN Workshop is increasingly successful. Many authors talk briefly about the sources for their writings, and outstanding educators who know and use young adult literature share ways for using such books in the classroom. It is exciting to be a part of all this.

But there is a new cloud in the skies. The troubled economy has hit publishing in a big way. Many good friends have lost their jobs, as a number of good people are being let go from publishing houses. Publishers are facing a decline in sales, and schools and libraries have less money to spend on new books. The New York Times (January 29, 2009) reported that “The Washington Post has decided to shutter the print version of Book World, its Sunday stand-alone book review section, and shift reviews to space inside two other sections of the paper” (C1). In addition, the Los Angeles Times lost its stand-alone book review section in 2007. Publishers Weekly fired a number of people, including its editor-in-chief, Sara Nelson, and Elizabeth Devereaux, children’s reviews editor. (The size of PW has shrunk tremendously.) New people have been assigned to take over these tasks. Some publishers are urging employees to take voluntary retirement. Voltaire states: “All is for the best in the best of all possible worlds.”

Since I was a youngster, how times have changed. I was an avid reader of comic books. I also was addicted to the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew. (I still read the Aladdin editions published today.) When I went to the library in the good old days, I was informed that professional organizations recommended against purchase by libraries of such “series books” and comic books. Too trivial. Now look at the lists of series books and graphic novels in libraries. Who would have thought that hundreds of thousands of young people would attend midnight parties for the latest in the Harry Potter and Twilight releases? Hooray!

Dear publishers, you have helped many of us to grow and appreciate your efforts. As a result, we have chosen to spread the word about the abundance of poignant, funny, heartbreaking, heartwarming, and mind-broadening books you have offered us. These good young adult books have touched not only our lives, but those of students, teachers, librarians, and parents. So, in hopes of attracting even more readers to even more books, here are some of my favorites from among more current titles.

Professional
**Biography/Memoir/Non-Fiction**


**Cultural Diversity**


**Family Relationships**


**Historical Fiction**


**Mystery and Suspense**


**Sports**


Jones, V. M. *Out of Control.* Candlefish, 2008.


**Teens: Good Times/Bad Times**

Beck, Nina. *This Isn’t Fat, It’s Fabulous*. Scholastic, 2008.

**A Touch of the Poet and Artist**

is pleased to announce that

Jay Asher

is the winner of the

Heartland Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature

For his book

*Thirteen Reasons Why*

Published by Razorbill
Trace Bonham, last seen in *Saturday Night Dirt*, returns with hopes to move beyond his local rural Minnesota race-car track. . . Weaver offers outstanding descriptions of the races, putting readers in the center of the action.” —*Booklist*

“The novel is likely to appeal to youngsters who normally shy away from fiction.” —*School Library Journal*

“Weaver draws from his auto-racing experience . . . to bring to life the small-town, dirt-track racing world. Racing action, sharp dialogue and solid characterization make this a good bet for young sports fans.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

$14.95 / 978-0-374-35061-1 / Ages 12 up

An ALA Quick Pick for Young Adults

Now available in paperback from Square Fish

$7.99 / 978-0-312-56131-4 / Ages 12 up

“A good bet.” —*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

“A fine, original novel.” —*Booklist*, starred review

“Curtis’s talent . . . is as strong as ever.” —*School Library Journal*, starred review

“Irresistible.” —*Horn Book*, starred review
Reading – it is the single most important skill children must learn to be productive members of society. As budget cutbacks increase, funding for books is often the first thing to go, virtually eliminating new acquisitions of this most essential educational tool. Kids Need to Read was established to fight this disaster by sending exciting new books to under-funded schools, libraries and health clinics across the United States.

The need for Kids Need to Read books has become greater than ever. We provide books to public schools and libraries, inner city charter schools, small private schools, clinics and shelters in low income communities - even schools for homeless children! Please stand with us in the battle for childhood literacy! Find out more or submit an application for a book donation at www.kidsneedtoread.org.

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Inspiring Imagination

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