



## From the Editors

Sitting at last fall's conference, we marveled at the sight—rows and rows of individuals who cared enough about young adult literature and its thriving community to attend a two-day workshop as the hectic holiday season was approaching. But it wasn't one of those stuffy conferences—just one row in front of us sat author T.A. Barron; Joan Bauer walked down the aisle and offered a friendly pat on the shoulder; a friend and first-time ALAN attendee sat a few chairs down, carefully picking through her stack of books and already making connections of the books with specific students waiting at home in her classroom.

No, this wasn't the typical conference—this was one filled with passion—for young adult books—and the many people who care enough to keep the field thriving.

After a successful and rejuvenating fall ALAN workshop in Pittsburgh, those who attended will find this issue of *The ALAN Review* filled with reminiscences of the lively conference. And those who were unable to attend will get a taste of the insightful conversations regarding “The Caring Community of Young Adult Literature.” Authors, educators, publishers, librarians, and others once again gathered for their annual celebration of the genre and the role it plays in the lives of young adults, and we attempt to share just some of their discussions.

Ingrid Seitz leads this issue with an extensive interview with author T.A. Barron, who shares insight into his retellings of Arthurian lore. The interview provides a look at his continued success in this generation's examination of those timeless stories. Grace Enriquez offers another voice in the field; she

provides a not-so-common opportunity for adolescents to voice their own opinions about controversial young adult literature—a subject usually only approached by adults. Enriquez allows young adults to share their insight—their perspective—regarding such works.

Donald R. Gallo, considered one of the leading figures in young adult literature, shares his keynote address from the November workshop. Despite issues that may make us lean toward the negative (banned books, overemphasis on testing and inadequate budgets, to name a few), Gallo reminds us that we are a member of young adult literature's caring community—and how that caring attitude involves the storytellers, the books, and the teenagers who read them. One of the field's most well-known storytellers, Joan Bauer, has gifted us with the talk she gave at the ALAN workshop. Through her humor and insightful stories of everything from liposuction ads to her daughter's baptism, Bauer encourages us all to continue our efforts as bearers of light in the field of young adult literature.

Convention goers who heard Frank McCourt's NCTE opening talk were treated to the thoughts and feelings of a passionate English teacher (who also happened to win the Pulitzer Prize for Literature with *Angela's Ashes*) and probably not too surprised when he acknowledged his former Stuyvesant High School creative writing student, Jordan Sonnenblick, sitting in the very front row. Hear “the rest of the story” about Jordan's experiences learning from “Mr. McCourt” and publishing the smash hit, *Drums, Girls and Dangerous Pie*, in “Venturing into the Deep Waters: The Work of Jordan Sonnenblick.”

Diane P. Tuccillo speaks out for the significant

messages offered in what she calls “quiet voices” in historical fiction of young adult literature. She emphasizes several books that provide thought-provoking tales of discrimination that young adults could benefit from hearing. Accompanying the article is an interview Tuccillo conducted with Laura Malone Elliott, author of *Flying South*. Tuccillo sees Elliott’s protagonist Alice as one of those quiet voices that speaks out regarding segregation in her community.

Jeff Kaplan shares the results of his study, which provides a look at dissertations over the past five years that have attempted to shed some light on adolescent literature. Chris Crutcher’s coaches are the topic of Caren J. Town’s article, while Carmen L. Medina examines Latino/a literature as critical fiction. Cindy Lou Daniels focuses on literary theory and young adult literature, which she deems “The Open Frontier in Critical Studies.” *Whirligig* by Paul Fleischman and

*Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli are the focus of Steve Redford’s “Transcending the Group, Discovering Both Self and Public Spirit,” in which he discusses how he uses young adult literature in a Japanese university to compare and contrast cultures.

Not to be overlooked are *The ALAN Review’s* regular features, including M. Jerry Weiss’s Publishers’ Connection, The Research Connection with William Broz, and more than 30 reviews of the latest in young adult literature with Clip and File.

The Fall Workshop may have come and gone for another year, but much conversation still lingers regarding young adult literature and the community that continues to care enough to see that engaging books reach the eyes that need them most—the young adolescent. Enjoy a little eavesdropping into those conversations with this issue.