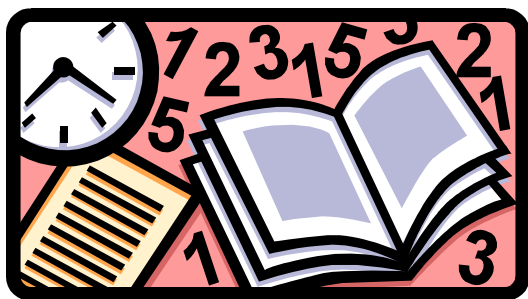


Briefings

Fall 2003

California Library Association
Children and Young Adult Services Section



Presidential Musings...

Thank you all for allowing me to serve as President of the Children's and Young Adult Services Section. It has been quite an experience! One, I hope, to which some of you in the future will aspire! (Since the Past President is the Nominating Committee Chair...)

The resurrected *Briefings* has now been through a year's cycle. I want to thank Penny Peck and Marie Carlsson for co-editing this year. Please consider contributing a favorite booklist or program or thoughts on an issue. As in anything, the product is only as good as its contributors. We have some great members and I wish you would let us hear from you.

During this year, I was able to get our section's website somewhat interactive. For those of you who want to contact an officer of the Section and don't know their e-mail, you can go to the California Library Association website,

www.cla-net.org

click on "About CLA" blue box on the top, click on "Sections/Round Tables" in the left side-bar,

click on "Section Officers" side-bar to get the President's e-mail OR

click on "Visit their website" after the Children's and Young Adult Services description in the middle column. This will take you to all the Section's officers, past minutes of meetings and copies of previous *Briefings* beginning WINTER

2003. If you have any suggestions to improve our website, please contact us.

Conference time is here again. We will have our annual meeting on Sunday, November 16th, at 4:30 pm. Check your schedule for the room. Please come and participate as this is the time we talk about ideas for the section to work on. To encourage attendance, there will be a goody basket raffled off again. WINNER MUST BE PRESENT!

Thanks for a great year!

Cynthia M. Olsen
President

24/7 Reference Service: What about Youth?

Lesley Farmer
Cal State University Long Beach
Oct. 9, 2003

Online reference service has actually been around since libraries posted email addresses. Patrons ask questions, and get an answer in 24 hours usually. The American Association of School Librarians provided a national 24/7 reference service called KidsConnect following the same principle. That service is now being reconfigured onto a regional model in the Midwest while other areas of the country are ramping up to real-time reference interactions online.

The two main services in California are 24/7 in Southern California, and QandA Café in the North. 24/7 has contracted with other agencies in the U.S., as well as working with QandA to develop a statewide AskNow 24/7 reference service.

What makes this version of 24/7 reference service interesting is the interface: real-time chat with a shared "whiteboard" space to project Web pages and help users navigate through electronic resources. As with the lower powered email service, this mechanism archives the transcript for the user – as well as provide documentation for librarians to assess the service itself.

With today's children and youth attraction to the Internet, 24/7 reference service seems like a natural fit. This environment addresses the issues of: timely access to library

resources – in the middle of the night; possible discomfort going up to the reference desk to ask for help; equity of access for users with physical disabilities. The main *dis*advantage of this service is that of remote Internet connectivity. Youth who do not have a computer, especially one that can access the Internet, tend to use a public system (i.e., school, library, community center) – and those institutions tend to maintain 9-5 or 9-9 opening hours. Interestingly, and maybe sadly, an increasing number of K-12 students are using 24/7 service while at school because no credentialed library media teacher exists.

In looking at those minors who *do* use 24/7 service, it appears that not all is well. Youngsters may be impatient or rude. Some have difficulty explaining their information needs. Sometimes they merely want to know when their local library is open. On the part of the online reference librarians, sometimes they don't know how to explain concepts so children can understand them. Sometimes they don't know the school curriculum so have a difficult time finding appropriate sources. Students have also reported that the librarian was impatient as well. Quite frankly, some librarians do not ask the students' grade level – or even realize that the person on the other end of the cable line is a minor.

The majority of these problems are not Internet-exclusive. It's just that the Internet makes them more obvious. Probably the two main issues that *are* unique to online communication consist of the issue of delayed answered (which can occur in face-to-face interviews, but are more common online) and communications protocol (netiquette, clarity and brevity online). On a more profound level, cyberspace is a very abstract environment; one cannot pick up on visual or nuanced verbal cues. A certain artificiality exists when telecommunicating. For youth, this abstract nature is compensated through informal chat, as witnessed in Instant Messaging. Most librarians are not at that same level of comfort; additionally, most online chat "manners" do not translate well into the reference interview scenario.

Probably the best answer is education: what are the expected behaviors in 24/7 reference interactions? School librarians are best poised to teach students at the same time that they teach netiquette and research strategies. However, it might be a good idea to provide onliners with a simulated 24/7 reference

interview up front (say, as a help or example hyperlink) so they can understand what should happen. 24/7 reference service is a new ball game for everyone, so it will take some time to get used to procedures.

It would also be useful to have more school library media teachers (LMT) participate in 24/7 reference service. Such involvement happens more in the north than in the south; this fall the reference class at Cal State University Long Beach will get 24/7 reference training, and practice working with students online. Veteran online reference LMTs can help their professional counterparts by writing appropriate reference "scripts" to aid in the interview process. They can also create Webliographies for typical school assignments, posting them for other online reference librarians to consult and suggest. They can also help both students and other librarians to use 24/7 as an opportunity to teach information literacy skills.

24/7 reference service can benefit students as well as bring new users into the library. We need to communicate with each other about ways to make it more effective – and to demonstrate the value-added service that professionals can provide.

National Book Awards – Young People's Literature

Nominees for the National Book Awards were announced in October. The winners will be announced on Nov. 19, 2004. In the Young People's Literature category, the nominees are: Fleischman, Paul. [Breakout](#). Horvath, Polly. [The Canning Season](#). Murphy, Jim. [An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793](#). Peck, Richard. [The River Between Us](#). Woodson, Jacqueline. [Locomotion](#).

Reading the World Conference Scheduled for March 13-14, 2004 at Univ. of San Francisco

Reading the World Conference: The sixth annual "Reading the World" conference will be held at the University of San Francisco on March 13 & 14, 2004. To find out more about this celebration of multicultural literature, see their website at www.soe.usfca.edu/institutes/childlit

Meet the Author

Gennifer Choldenko's first book, Notes From A Liar and Her Dog, Putnam, 2001, was named a School Library Journal Best Book of the Year, and received several starred reviews. Her newest book, Al Capone Does My Shirts, is set on Alcatraz in the 1930's, and is due out in Spring 2004. Choldenko is happy to visit libraries and schools to discuss her books; email her at choldenko@earthlink.net.

I interviewed Choldenko by phone and email for "Briefings;" both of these novels are set in California, and she lives in Tiburon, so I was curious on how California fits into her writing.

NOTES FROM A LIAR, which was your first children's novel, received lots of starred reviews and awards. Did that surprise you?

My life is very quiet. A really big event for me might be the purchase of a new stapler. As a kid the biggest award I ever received was the Good Sportsmanship Award. And you know the kind of kids they give that award to -- the ones who never win anything else. I haven't ever experienced anything as exciting as what happened when NOTES FROM A LIAR AND HER DOG came out. And I was totally and completely blind-sided by it.

Ant MacPherson, NOTES main character, is a middle child like me. Totally true to life - but you are not a middle, you are the youngest! Why did you choose that for Ant and how did you get so into the head of a middle kid?

I didn't choose Ant, she chose me. She woke me up from a dead sleep -- no mean feat as my husband will tell you. I started writing her story at three in the morning.

People who don't know me are sure NOTES FROM A LIAR AND HER DOG is autobiographical, but it isn't. I was, as you pointed out, the youngest child in a very different kind of family. The truth is I love to make things up. I follow the advice of the wonderful children's editor, Richard Jackson. He said: "Make stuff up until it's real."

As far as the middle child issues go, I didn't set out to write about a middle child and I was surprised so many people picked up on this aspect of the book. Though I'm a big believer in

research, I didn't research middle children. Somehow Ant and her family seemed so real to me that I didn't want to mess with them. I trusted my instincts.

The zoo setting and the zoo's youth program also seemed very authentic, reminding me of a similar program at the Oakland Zoo. Was the zoo in NOTES based on any particular zoo, or did you visit some zoos?

I spent a year working as a volunteer at the Oakland Zoo to research NOTES FROM A LIAR AND HER DOG. I worked with a keeper who had been with the zoo for 17 years. I followed her around pestering her with questions. She was very kind, extremely generous with her time and full of fascinating information. I didn't identify the Oakland Zoo directly in the book because I wanted to have the prerogative to change the zoo around if I needed to for plot purposes.

Your upcoming novel AL CAPONE DOES MY SHIRTS is set on Alcatraz, when it was a prison. When does it come out?

March 22, 2004.

Did you get to interview people who grew up on the island as kids of the guards?

I worked as a docent on Alcatraz for about a year. During that time I had access to a lot of information not normally available to the general public. I talked to convicts who were incarcerated on Alcatraz, guards who worked and lived on Alcatraz and kids who grew up on the island. There are many terrific books by people who lived and worked on the island. One of the best is called EYEWITNESS ON ALCATRAZ by Jolene Babyak. Jolene Babyak grew up on the island. Her father was the assistant warden. In fact, Jolene was kind enough to read AL CAPONE DOES MY SHIRTS for me to help me make certain I didn't make any historical errors. Another great book is ALCATRAZ ISLAND PRISON AND THE MEN WHO LIVE THERE by James Johnston, the first warden of Alcatraz. But perhaps the most important part of the research for me, was just going to Alcatraz every week. This way I experienced first hand what it felt like to be there.

Without giving away too much, can you explain the title?

AL CAPONE DOES MY SHIRTS takes place in 1935, when Al Capone was incarcerated on the island. Capone's first job on Alcatraz was working the mangle in the laundry facility. The facility handled the laundry for everyone who lived on the island and for some of the local army bases like the one on Angel Island. In other words, the kids who lived on the island in 1935 did have their laundry washed by the convicts, one of whom was Al Capone.

Did you base it on any particular person?

The protagonist in AL CAPONE DOES MY SHIRTS is a big, sweet, clumsy boy named Moose, whose father is a guard on the island. And though there is a huge amount of fiction in this book, it is clearly more autobiographical than NOTES FROM A LIAR AND HER DOG. Moose's sister, Natalie, is autistic – though she is never described this way in the book because autism wasn't identified until 1943. My sister, Gina, who died when I was a teenager, was autistic. And though Natalie is not Gina and I am not Moose – there's no doubt that the experience of having an autistic sibling helped me imagine the struggles Moose had with Natalie.

Public and school libraries are always interested in contacting authors like yourself for visits. How can they contact you?

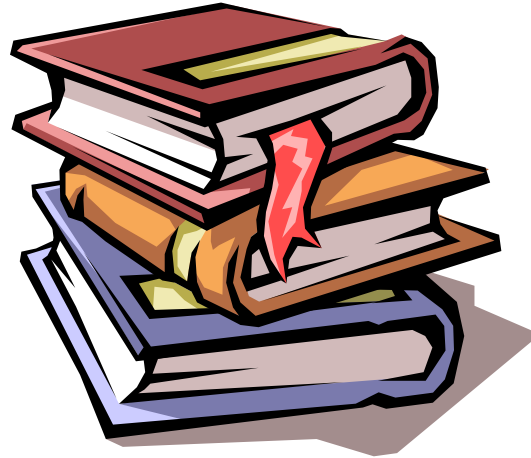
Email or phone. Email: Choldenko@earthlink.net. Phone: (415) 789-5130

Thanks to Gennifer Choldenko for her time and enthusiasm for this interview. Both of her novels will appeal to readers ages 9 through 13, and combine humor and drama in a believable way that stays with readers long after they have finished her books.

Penny Peck,
San Leandro Public Library

Briefings Contributors Needed!

All members are welcome to contribute to "Briefings." Just email co-editor Penny Peck at Pikly@aol.com two weeks **before** the first of February, May, August, and November. Thanks!



Creating a Successful Children's Book Club

Michele Robinson, Children's Librarian III,
Palms-Rancho Park Branch
And Annette Keenberg, Teacher and Book Club
Facilitator

As a Children's Librarian, I have wanted to create a successful Children's Book Club. It was always in the back of my mind, but it wasn't until Annette approached me with the idea that our club really took formation. Her background as a teacher and home-schooling mom has proved invaluable to our club. Together we come up with topics, books and crafts that tie into a theme for each month.

Since our club has started, it has gone through both growing pains and growth spurts. Since neither one of us have lead a book discussion group before, the process has been a learning experience. Over the months, we have witnessed first hand what works and what needs modification.

What We Do

- 1) We meet twice a month and pick a monthly theme. Our themes can be seasonal or genre driven.
- 2) The first meeting of the month is for the younger kids (picture books that we read to them) and the second meeting is for the older kids (chapter books that they read independently prior to our meeting.)

- 3) For the chapter books, we give them an overview of the book, including a brief summary. Then the children discuss the book. Sometimes we ask questions to facilitate the discussion or play a game based on the book. After the discussion, we usually have a craft prepared that ties into the theme of the book. For example, we read a book about Madame C. J. Walker and then asked the kids to create their own business complete with business cards, followed by a group discussion, sharing our creations.
- 4) For the picture books, we read the book(s) and the kids usually make a (food) craft to go with it.
- 5) Kids are also encouraged to do “book reports”. The reports are displayed in the library and the children receive incentives for doing the work. Kids are also encouraged to read their reports out loud and share them with the group.
- 4) Be creative! Find some creative way to get their attention. Sometimes I use the Internet to find word searches, games or puzzles that are related to the book or theme. A good website for this is: www.kidsread.com.

What Does Not Work

- 1) Asking the children what books they would like to read next. Unlike adult book clubs, where the participants choose the books they want to discuss, we choose the children’s books ahead of time and post the list in advance. Asking the children for their opinions is difficult at best. Many times we do not get “regular” attendees, so even if they requested a book, they most likely will not be there to discuss it.
- 2) Long discussions. Often children’s attention spans are limited, so keep the discussion short – about 15-20 minutes.
- 3) Classroom-style discussions. Especially with the older children, they are already lovers of literature and need no checking by us to verify they read the book. We are there to facilitate and expand their learning, not test them on memorizing the book itself.

What Works

- 1) Food works! Anytime we offer a food craft with the book club, we have a great turnout. For example, we had “Pizza Month.” For the picture book meeting, Annette read two books about pizza and I did the craft. For the craft, children made their own pizzas (using English muffins, sauce, cheese, pepperoni, etc). We had about 75 people attending this program! By far, it was the most successful book club meeting ever. Another successful program was when we did “Chocolate Month” and children made smores.
- 2) Appealing to the younger children with picture books or Independent Readers attracts a larger crowd than the chapter books; but make sure the children sit at tables and chairs instead of on the rug to distinguish this program from story time.
- 3) Find topics that are “kid friendly” like dinosaurs, chocolate, pizza and pirates, etc.

Don’t Worry, Be Happy!! Have fun with it! If you enjoy the program, your library kids will too!

Everything is NOT all right: a list for teens about mental problems

By Lisa Gutierrez

YA Fic

I Can Hear the Mourning Dove

James Bennett

Gifted but severely mentally disturbed, sixteen-year-old Grace moves back and forth between school and hospital, where she receives unexpected support from an antisocial delinquent named Luke.

YA Fic

Vanishing

Bruce Brooks

Hospitalized with bronchitis and not willing to go home to her alcoholic mother and racist stepfather, Alice refuses to eat, nearly to the point of starvation.

YA Fic

Night Train

Judith Clarke

His family, peers, and teachers despair of 18-year-old Luke, who seems to have turned himself into a loser, failing at school, paralyzed with fear and indecision, losing touch with reality.

YA Fic

Staying Fat for Sarah Burnes

Chris Crutcher

High school senior Eric “Moby” Calhoun searches for answers when his best friend Sarah Burnes stops speaking and is hospitalized.

YA Fic

Ash: A Novel

Lisa Rowe Fraustino

Eighteen-year-old Ash's change of behavior and its disruptive effects on his family are recounted by younger brother, Wes.

Fic

The Re-Appearance of Sam Webber

Jonathon Fuqua

After his father abandons him and his mother, eleven-year-old Sam Webber has to deal with the legacy of depression that marked his father, and threatens to envelop him.

YA Fic

I Never Promised You a Rose Garden

Hannah Green

A teenage girl struggles for sanity with the help of an understanding doctor during a three years stay in a mental hospital.

Fic

Ordinary People

Judith Guest

High school student Conrad and his family struggle for balance after his suicide attempt and subsequent hospitalization.

YA Fic

Kissing Doorknobs

Terry Spencer Hesser

Fourteen-year-old Tara describes how her increasingly strange compulsions begin to take over her life and affect her relationships with family and friends.

YA Fic

Damage

A.M. Jenkins

Seventeen-year-old football hero Austin, trying to understand the inexplicable depression that has drained his interest in life, thinks that he has found relief in a girl who seems very special.

YA Fic

Silent to the Bone

E.L. Konigsburg

When he is accused of gravely injuring his baby half-sister, thirteen-year-old Branwell loses his power of speech and only his friend Connor is able to reach him and uncover the truth about what really happened.

YA Fic

Cut.

Patricia McCormick

Thirteen-year-old Callie, confined to a treatment facility for mutilating herself, gradually begins to understand some of the reasons behind her problems.

YA Fic

Lisa, Bright and Dark

John Neufeld

Sixteen-year-old Lisa, smart, attractive, and outwardly successful, suffers from a nervous breakdown that only her closest friends seem to notice and care enough about to try to find a way to help her.

Fic

The Bell Jar

Sylvia Plath

This extraordinary work chronicles the mental breakdown of Esther Greenwood: brilliant, beautiful, successful – but going under, maybe for the last time.

YA Fic

Matthew Unstrung

Kate Seago

A 17-year-old boy who has suffered a mental breakdown in the early 1900s is able to regain his sanity with the help of his brother.

YA Fic

Stop Pretending: What Happened When My Big Sister Went Crazy

Sonya Sones

A young sister has a difficult time adjusting to life after her older sister has a mental breakdown
J 616.852 K

Ups and Downs: How to Beat the Blues and Teen Depression

Susan Klebanoff and Ellen Luborsky

Examines the nature, causes, and effects of depression, where to turn for help, and ways to cope with it.

616.8684 S631

No One Saw My Pain: Why Teens Kill Themselves

Andrew E. Slaby
Andrew Slaby, a psychiatrist specializing in depression, presents the profiles of eight adolescents who either attempted or committed suicide.

813.54 K

Girl Interrupted

Susana Kaysen

The author offers a compelling memoir of her two years as a teenager in a psychiatric hospital, sharing vivid portraits of her fellow patients, their keepers and her experiences during treatment.

Websites of Interest

www.psych.org

American Psychiatric Association

www.apa.org

American Psychological Association

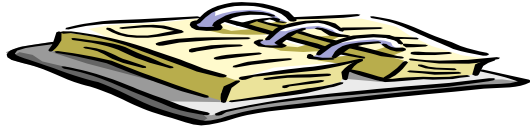
www.mentalhealth.org

Center for Mental Health Services - Knowledge Exchange Network

www.nimh.nih.gov

National Institute of Mental Health

Phone number: 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433)



Entry materials now available for Letters About Literature, 2004!

Statewide Reading and Writing Contest for children & teens

Presented by the California Center for the Book

The contest invites all California students in grades 4 through 12 to write letters to authors whose books have changed their way of looking at the world and themselves.

Winners at each level receive cash prizes, a gift certificate to Target Stores, and entry into the national competition!

Contest deadline is January 7, 2004

ENTRY FORMS ARE AVAILABLE FROM
THE CALIFORNIA CENTER FOR THE
BOOK

cfb@ucla.edu * 310-206-9361 *

www.calbook.org

William C. Morris, HarperCollins Vice President, Dies at 74.

October 1, 2003. William C. Morris, Vice President and Director of Library Promotion at HarperCollins Children's Books, died of cancer on September 29, 2003 at his home in Manhattan. He was 74 years old.

During the course of Bill's long and illustrious career in children's books, he was an enormous influence on the relationship between the publishing and library communities. For decades, Bill worked closely and tirelessly with authors, artists, librarians, and teachers to bring books and children together, often in ways that had never been attempted before. He is widely acknowledged and respected throughout the industry as the person who single-handedly revolutionized the way books are presented to librarians and teachers. His dedication and passion for bringing the publishing and educational community together was personal and pervasive, and over the years the library community recognized him with numerous tributes and awards, including the Association for Library Service to Children Distinguished Service Award. Bill received that honor in 1992, and it is a measure of his standing in that community that he, not a librarian, was the first recipient of this award.

Caldecott Medalist William Steig Dies at 95.

William Steig, whose insouciant cartoons of street-tough kids and squiggly drawings of satyrs, damsels, dogs and drunks delighted and challenged readers of *The New Yorker* for more than six decades, died in Boston in October 2004. He was 95. Mr. Steig was also the author of more than 25 children's books, about brave pigs, dogs, donkeys and other creatures. One of the most popular was "Shrek!" which was made into a movie in 2001 and won an Academy Award as the best animated feature film. In Mr. Steig's 1969 book, "Sylvester and the Magic Pebble," a donkey turns into a stone and his parents go to the police, who are represented as uniformed pigs. Eventually, the donkey parents manage to reconstitute their son. His last book, published in June, was "When Everybody Wore a Hat," about his childhood.

Special thanks to HarperCollins for these two obituaries.



BRIEFINGS

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