



Newsletter

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Spring 2010

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President's Message

Dr. Lisa Rowe Fraustino

In my Autumn message I happily told you about my move to an office with a window and a new pothos plant, which I hoped would remain strong this year along with the ChLA under my care. Well, something happened. While away at a writing retreat during winter break, I suddenly remembered that my perky little pothos hadn't been watered for weeks. I called the department secretary to check it. Miranda said it was wilted beyond hope, but she would try to nurse it back to life. I feared for the ChLA. I regretted even mentioning the stupid pothos in the *ChLA Newsletter*; possibly jinxing the whole organization for the sake of a metaphor. What had made me think I could do this job? I wallowed in self-deprecation for a couple of days before I heard back from Miranda.

The pothos lived! Not only that, when I returned to school, I found it had grown bigger and perkier than ever. And guess what? The ChLA is doing fabulously, too, because so many talented people take active involvement in our mission—first off Kathy Kiessling, our gifted administrator, who works behind the scenes to keep the organization running smoothly. She's the one who makes sure none of the plants wilt.

Second, our various officers and committees work hard throughout the year to achieve their tasks, and I wish to thank all of them on behalf of the organization. In this issue, you'll see the results of our latest election to such positions. Vice President Mike Cadden led the Nominations and Elections Committee in designing an impressive slate of candidates. Last year we voted electronically for the first time, and this second time around we continue to seek your feedback

on the process. Please let Kathy, Mike, or me know your suggestions. Also in this issue you will find a session call for the 2011 MLA conference in Los Angeles. If you are interested in submitting a proposal, please review the guidelines carefully because we have made some changes in our process to reflect changes the MLA has made in its rules for affiliated group sessions. Thanks go to Phil Nel, our MLA Liaison, for his ever-admirable liaising.

In another new development, we have formed an *Ad hoc* Committee on Publications to review the ChLA publishing program, under the leadership of Past President Adrienne Kertzer. The committee is conducting a survey to ascertain the views of the membership. Its chief purpose is to learn how ChLA's participation in a publication program can best serve members' needs, so please do take a few moments to complete it. You may win a door prize!

The volunteer work group that formed to research and write an organizational response to the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008 finished its work and submitted our letter to the Consumer Product Safety Commission Chair Inez Tenenbaum in December. You may view our public statement on the ChLA web site.

I could tell you more of the interesting tidbits going on in the ChLA right now, but alas, we haven't the space. You'll just have to come to the Business Meeting at the annual conference June 10-12 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. By the time you read this, you should have received the registration information—and if you haven't, you can find it online. Organizers Annette Wannamaker and Ian Wojcik-Andrews have planned an exciting several days for us on the theme of Children's Literature and Media. I look forward to seeing you there!

June 10-12, 2010— Eastern Michigan University— Ypsilanti/Ann Arbor, MI



ChLA 2010: Children's Literature and Media

ChLA 2010: Children's Literature and Media

June 10-12, 2010

**Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti/Ann Arbor, MI**

Many texts from various media now constitute children's culture: novels, picture books, and poetry as well as video games, text messages, Facebook, television shows, and films. It is important that we expand our understanding of these child-oriented cultural forms and media platforms. Doing so expands the way we define and analyze children's culture and, hopefully, provides new critical tools by which to understand children's books.

This conference, the 37th Annual Children's Literature Association Conference, therefore seeks to illuminate the broader electronic children's culture within which children's literature exists and thus highlight the multivalent, dialectical relationship between literature and other media written for younger readers, viewers, and consumers.

Saturday

Keynote address:

Linda Simensky,
Vice President of
Children's Programming
for PBS

From Pages to Pixels:
Children's
Programming at PBS



Thursday evening

Poetry Slam

featuring the Ann Arbor
Volume Youth Poetry
Project



Jeff Kass, Ann Arbor Schools Poet in Residence, will introduce performances by poets working with the nationally recognized Volume Youth Poetry Project, which was featured in the 2009 HBO Documentary "Brave New Voices," a series about young poets and their mentors preparing for the Youth Speaks' 2008 Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Slam Finals.

2010 Francelia Butler Lecture: Margaret Mackey



A professor in the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta in Canada, Mackey has published widely on the subject of young people and their literature and media; much of her research invites the participation of young people themselves. Her most recent book is *Mapping Recreational Literacies*, published by Peter Lang in 2007.

For conference updates go to <http://chla2010.emuenglish.org>
Contact organizers Ian Wojcik-Andrews and Annette Wannamaker at chla2010@emuenglish.org

Revolt, Rebellion, Protest:
Change and Insurrection in Children's Literature
June 23-25, 2011
Hollins University — Roanoke, Virginia

Revolution, upheaval, protest, and cultural change have swept over the world in repeating cycles since civilization began and literature for children has encouraged those changes or deplored them, but always recorded them in its pages. So in 2011, at the 38th Annual Children's Literature Association Conference, we will look at the way and speed at which our world is changing, through the lens of children's literature. We will consider how children's literature and characters in children's literature, in all media from books to video games, institute change, transgress the norm, protest the status quo or seek to protect it.

For more information and conference updates go to:
www.hollins.edu/chla2011



Some suggested topics follow, but other ideas are welcome and encouraged:

Send 300-500 word paper proposals to J. D. Stahl, reading committee chair, at chla2011@vt.edu
Deadline: January 15th, 2011

- Patriotism and children's literature
- The idealization of the past in children's literature
- The "red diaper babies," children of leftist or radical parents
- Historical fiction vs. works written during the revolution itself
- The trickster figure in children's literature
- The American Revolution, the French Revolution, or the English Civil War
- Children's Literature as a mirror of changing social values and norms
- Explorations of racial and gender discrimination in children's literature
- The use of fantastic worlds and settings to explore traditionally taboo topics
- Historical context and changing social values — how a text may be enlightened for its time and embarrassing in our own
- Competing historical visions (*Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Disney's *Song of the South* for instance)
- Visions of society in series such as "Dear America" and the "American Girl" books
- Depictions of the civil rights, anti-war, and women's movements of the last century
- Censorship and children's literature
- The "problem book" and championing a cause
- Literature of the immigrant child



2011 Francelia Butler Lecture: Julia Mickenberg and Philip Nel

Co-editors of *Tales for Little Rebels: A Collection of Radical Children's Literature*:

Julia Mickenberg is Associate Professor of American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. She is the author of *Learning from the Left: Children's Literature, the Cold War, and Radical Politics in the United States*, which won the 2008 ChLA Book Award. *The Oxford Handbook of Children's Literature*, which she co-edited with Lynne Vallone, will be published later this year.

Philip Nel is Professor of English and Director of the Program in Children's Literature at Kansas State University. His most recent books also include *The Annotated Cat: Under the Hats of Seuss and His Cats* and *Dr. Seuss: American Icon*. Forthcoming are a biography of Crockett Johnson and Ruth Krauss (2012), and *Keywords for Children's Literature* (co-edited with Lissa Paul, 2011).

Ellen Kushner, Hollins 2011 summer writer-in-residence, and Delia Sherman, co-authors of *The Fall of the Kings*, will also give a joint keynote speech on fantasy, traditionally a genre of change and protest.

MLA 2009 Review: Summary of Panels and Papers Presented

Romance and Young-Adult Literature Chair: Catherine Tosenberger

Panelists explored many aspects of the ways in which the romance tradition intersects with attitudes and expectations about literature for young adults.

Erica Hateley (Queensland Univ. of Technology), "Romancing the Dane: Reviving (and Revising) Ophelia in Contemporary Young-Adult Fiction": Dr. Hateley analyzed the reimagining of Shakespeare's Ophelia in two recent young adult novels, Lisa Fiedler's *Dating Hamlet* (2002) and Lisa Klein's *Ophelia* (2006). While Ophelia is often, in contemporary discourse, an emblem of the perils adolescent girls face (as in, for example, Mary Pipher's *Reviving Ophelia* (1994)), in these romances, Ophelia refuses the role of suicidal victim of the patriarchy, and asserts her own romantic and sexual agency.

Sonya Fritz (Texas A&M University, College Station), "Old-Fashioned Girls: Libba Bray, Clare Dunkle, and Neo-Victorian Young-Adult Romance": Ms. Fritz argues that the YA romance novels of Libba Bray and Clare Dunkle, all of which are set in fantasized versions of nineteenth-century Britain, involve a complex negotiation between the traditions of Victorian romance narratives and twenty-first century attitudes about female sexuality and subjectivity. While both authors appeal to nostalgic ideas about "old-fashioned" love stories, Dunkle tends to reinforce the assumptions of female passivity inherent in the Victorian marriage plot, while Bray attempts to revise this plot through the heroine's romantic involvement with an Indian man.

Thomas Crisp (University of South Florida), "The Heteronormativity of Gay Adolescent Romance Fiction": Dr. Crisp addresses the recent spate of YA romances featuring gay teens. He argues that while such narratives may seem progressive, given YA literature's history of avoiding any depiction of gay sexuality, by utilizing the heteronormative romance plot, they serve to reinforce binary identity categories, and to mold representation of gay relationships into forms most comfortable for a heterosexual audience.

Teenaged Monsters

Chair: June Pulliam

This panel considered how adolescent development is represented as monstrous in horror fiction and film for young adults as well as why teens enjoy this type of fiction.

In "Michael Meyers Has Some Issues: Recontextualizing the Adolescent Monster in Halloween 1978/2007" John Fried (Duquesne University) examined the characterization of the monstrous adolescent in the slasher film *Halloween* (1978) and the 2007 remake. He argued differences in the treatment of the protagonist evokes a cultural discomfort with the inexplicable, placing an emphasis on the film as "biopic" as study that explains and moreover *contains* what is horrific about adolescents.

In "The Comfort of Fangs: The Perception of the Vampire Family and Its Connection with the Vampiric Essence of Adolescents" Vicki Gilpin (Millikin University, Richland Community College and Cerro Gordo High School) explored why teens connect with vampire fiction. For young adults, one of the tantalizing elements of vampiric fiction is the re-imagining of the family structure. Similar to gang affiliation, vampire and supernatural communities often create an environment that serves as the "eye of the storm." Teenagers may connect with vampiric figures not only because of their powerful traits, but also because of a link between vampiric weaknesses and teenage limitations.

And in "An Ye Harm None, Do as Ye Will": Magic, Gender and Agency in Young Adult Narratives of Witchcraft," June Pulliam (Louisiana State University) considered how Young Adult narratives about witchcraft employ the tropes of horror and fantasy to explore the relationship between a subordinate feminine subjectivity and girls' epistemological perspectives. In these narratives, the teen witch's real power is her ability to refuse the subordinate feminine subject position she is being groomed to occupy as an adult rather than her supernatural abilities. This ability to refuse a subordinate subjectivity is connected to her emerging constructivist epistemological perspective.

Session Call MLA — January 5-8, 2012, Seattle

Each year, the Children's Literature Association sponsors at least one session at the MLA Convention; though the ChLA is only guaranteed one session, it can submit proposals for two more. If you would like to propose a session topic, by June 8th please send the ChLA/MLA Liaison (Philip Nel: philnel@ksu.edu): (1) a short description of your proposal idea, and where relevant, (2) the name of an other MLA-affiliated entity (allied organization <www.mla.org/orginfo_directory>, division <www.mla.org/danddg>, or discussion group <www.mla.org/discussion_groups>) you plan to seek as a co-sponsor. The ChLA Board will examine the proposals and select the top three (one guaranteed, plus two additional) for submission to the 2012 MLA Convention.

The above call for proposals reflects a change in the MLA's rules. As the MLA representative Lorenz Tomassi wrote on December 21st, "Starting with the January 2011 convention, allied and affiliate organizations will have one guaranteed session and will be able to submit proposals for two additional sessions. The proposals for the two additional sessions will be reviewed by the Program Committee. If the organization chooses to submit two additional sessions, one of those sessions must be a collaborative session with another entity (division, discussion group, allied organization, etc.). Please see the Procedures for Organizing Meetings on the MLA Web site (http://mla.org/conv_procedures) for further details. To facilitate the new collaborative sessions, the MLA has created a new area on the Web site for entities to submit their ideas for collaborative sessions and send those ideas to the leadership of other entities. Allied and affiliate liaisons will be able to submit ideas. Once an idea has been approved by the chair of the entity, a message will be sent to the leadership of the other entities requested on the form. Please visit (http://www.mla.org/conv_collab) to take advantage of this feature."

**Religion and Spirituality in Children's and
Young Adult Literature**
Co-chairs: Keith Dorwick and Jameela Lares

The first paper presented for this panel was "Eliza Lee Cabot Follen and Milton's Little Abolitionists" by Reginald Wilburn, University of New Hampshire. Wilburn's paper considered Eliza Lee Cabot Follen's literary engagement with John Milton, England's epic poet of liberty in the children's story, "May Morning," which was included in an abolitionist primer for children.

Natalie Stowe, Simmons College, explored "Spirituality and Coming-of-Age: Terry Davis' *Vision Quest* and Pete Hautman's *Godless*." In her essay, Stowe examined the role of spirituality and how it shapes each protagonist's character arc. Paradoxically, Stowe shows how the theme of spirituality complements both the secular content of *Vision Quest* and the irreverent content of *Godless*.

Craig Svonkin, of Metropolitan State College of Denver, presented the paper, "Sunny Baudelaire Speaks Hebrew and Count Olaf Speaks Yiddish? Crypto-Jews and Hidden Jewish Tropes in American Children's Literature." Svonkin noted that while "crypto-Jew" is a term that has generally been applied only to Sephardic Jews forced to hide their Jewishness as a result of the Inquisition, the term may prove useful for thinking of the hidden Jewish characters and tropes found in many contemporary works of American children's literature.

Finally, Graeme Wend-Walker, Texas State University at San Marcos, discussed "The Inexplicable Moon and the Postsecular Moment: Turkish and American Experiences of the Lunar Landing in Two Picturebooks" The picturebook *No One Walks on My Father's Moon*, set in rural Turkey in 1969, considers the plight of a young boy who excitedly returns home from school to tell his father about the American astronauts who have walked on the moon. He contrasted this with *Team Moon: How 400,000 People Landed Apollo 11 on the Moon*, an informational picturebook which emphasizes technical expertise and scientific endeavor and yet is riddled with language that suggests a broader, underlying spiritualization of the moon.

Malevolent Metafiction: Good Books Gone Bad
Chair: Jordana Hall

"Malevolent Metafiction: Good Books Gone Bad" chaired by Jordana Hall of Texas A&M University-Commerce included discussions of ineffective or threatening authority figures in children's literature. Panelists included examples from recent fiction that challenge the privileging of the written word, its role within the novel.

In "Pick Your *Poison*: Malevolent Metafiction's Power to Spark Meta-awareness and Subvert Indoctrination" Michelle Pirkle of Texas A&M University-Commerce argued that Chris Wooding's young adult novel *Poison* warns his readers that books have power for good or evil. They can be used by those in authority to control adolescents if they do not recognize how books can be used to indoctrinate them. The author seemingly argues adolescents must ultimately learn to wield that power for themselves. A book which appears empowering, however, actually preserves the power of the status quo by privileging the status of the written word. Ultimately the malevolent metafiction in Wooding's book, by sparking its readers' meta-awareness, subverts its own indoctrinating power.

In "Voldemort versus Mr. Bunsy: Degrees of Metafictional Danger in J. K. Rowling and Terry Pratchett" Karin E. Westman of Kansas State University looked at the different levels of metafiction in two popular British authors to examine various methods of enculturation and subversion of literature in fiction. She argues that Pratchett directly challenges the status of books, the power to influence, in his novel *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*. In contrast, the Harry Potter novels challenge the power of the text on a more covert, speculative level including various forms of the written word, in books and newspapers for example.

The discussion that followed the presentations was encouraging as both presenters agreed the subject requires substantial research and remains open for future scholars to investigate the nature and purposes of metafiction in children's literature as it continues to change.

Screening Childhood

Chair: Erica Hateley

At the 2009 MLA Convention in Philadelphia, I had the honor of chairing the session "Screening Childhood". Originally conceived as a forum for considering the intersections and relationships between children's literature and filmic adaptations thereof, the audience had the opportunity to hear three papers which were diverse in their approaches and foci.

"Childish Machines: Uncanny Motions in Adapting Ted Hughes' *The Iron Man*" delivered by Kevin L. Ferguson (Queens College, CUNY) offered a re-vision of Freud's "uncanny" alongside a re-reading of the *Iron Man* film.

Xu Xu of Penn State presented "Chairman Mao's Child: *Sparkling Red Star* and the Imaginations of Children in Communist States." Drawing on Benedict Anderson's influential model of "imagined communities" as well as the rhetoric of Chairman Mao Tse Tung, Xu offered a reading of the book-film pair *Sparkling Red Star*. The film was enormously popular during China's Cultural Revolution, and Xu's paper introduced a number of points which disrupt received Western wisdoms about childhood and children's literature.

The New School's Deepthi Welaratna, engaged Hayao Miyazaki's film adaptation of Diana Wynne Jones's *Howl's Moving Castle*, in a paper which circulated culturally-specific notions of apocalypse.

I am pleased to report that the fine quality of these papers, and their diversities, were appreciated by a lively audience (despite the lateness of the session!) who engaged the speakers and each other in a consideration of the workings of nation and theory in our understandings of film adaptation. I must extend my thanks to the speakers, the audience, and the Children's Literature Division of the MLA for making this panel possible!

Results of the 2010 ChLA Election of Officers, Board and Committee Members

Vice-President/President Elect

Michelle Martin

Secretary

Kathryn Graham

Executive Board

Michelle Ann Abate

Lissa Paul

Jean Webb

Anne Devereaux Jordan Award Committee

Karen Coats

Adrienne Kertzer

Jill May

Article Award Committee

Charlie Butler

Susan Stewart

Book Award Committee

Philip Nel*

Kimberley Reynolds*

*both will serve as a current committee member has resigned

Diversity Committee

Thomas Crisp

Sarah Park

International Committee

Ann Gonzalez

Marek Oziewicz

Grants Committee

Chris McGee

Julie Pfeiffer

Astrid Lindgren Award Nominees

Walter Dean Myers (USA)

Mitumasa Anno (Japan)

Anne Devereaux Jordan Award - Call for Nomi- nations

The Anne Devereaux Jordan Award is intended to honor the lifetime achievement of an individual whose scholarship and service have had a significant impact on the field of children's literature scholarship. The award is not restricted to ChLA members or to those whose work has benefited the Association specifically. The award may be given posthumously.

To nominate someone for the Anne Devereaux Jordan Award, send a letter that explains the person's accomplishments and contributions to children's literature scholarship to: Anne Devereaux Jordan Award Committee, Children's Literature Association, P.O. Box 138, Battle Creek, MI 49016 or by email to Kathy Kiessling (kkiessling@childlitassn.org).

Nominations must be received no later than October 15, 2010. Although nominees are considered annually, there may be years in which no award is given.

Hannah Beiter

Graduate Student Research Grants

Ph.D. Candidates:

Patrick Cox, Rutgers University

Kerry Mockler, University of Pittsburgh

Rebecca Onion, University of Texas at Austin

Breanne M. Robertson, University of Maryland

CAS Candidate:

Jenny Schwartzberg, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Faculty Research Grants

Michelle Martin, Associate Professor, Clemson University,

Book Project: *Dream Keepers for Children of the Sun: the Children's Literature of Arna Bontemps and Langston Hughes*

Christina Mazzoni, Professor, University of Vermont,

Book Project: *Dolls and Literary Fairy Tales by Italian Women Writers, 1890-2000*

Megan Norcia, Assistant Professor, SUNY Brockport,

Book Project: *Empire Games: The Imperial Agenda of Children's Board Games, 1759-1900*

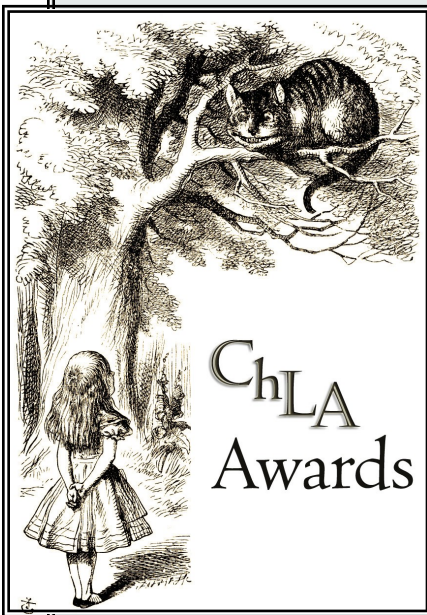
Marilynn Strasser Olson, Professor, Texas State University-San Marcos,

Book Project: *Children's Literature and Culture and the Avant-garde*

Lee Talley, Associate Professor, Rowan University,

Book Project: *'Operation Pied Piper': The WWII Evacuation of British Children and the Children's Literature it Inspired*

The following Association awards will be presented at the 2010 conference awards banquet:



Anne Devereaux Jordan Award

Betsy Hearne

Article Award

Winner: Jackie Stallcup for
 “‘The Feast of Misrule’: *Captain Underpants*,
 Satire, and the Literary Establishment”
Genre XLI (2008)

Honor Article: Joe Sutliff Sanders for
 “Spinning Sympathy: Orphan Girl Novels
 and the Sentimental Tradition”
ChLA Quarterly 33.2 (2008)

Book Award

Winner: Leonard Marcus for
Minders of Make-Believe: Idealists, Entrepreneurs, and the Shaping of American Children’s Literature
 Houghton-Mifflin, 2008

Carol Gay Award

Winner: Melissa Filbeck for
 “It’s a Love/Hate Relationship: Representations of Mothers in the *Harry Potter* Series”
 (sponsored by Ranita Chatterjee, University of California – Northridge)

Honor essay: Cara Walter for
 “These Things I Know for Certain: How List-Making Functions as a
 Turning Point in Young Adult Literature”
 (sponsored by Kara Keeling, Christopher Newport University)

Graduate Student Essay Awards

PhD Level Award: Lara Saguisag “‘Strangely Familiar’: Shaun Tan’s *The Arrival* and the Universalization of the Immigrant Experience” (sponsored by Lynne Vallone at Rutgers University, Camden)

Master’s Level Award: Kendra Magnusson “Lemony Snicket’s *A Series of Unfortunate Events*: Daniel Handler and Marketing the Author” (sponsored by Mavis Reimer, University of Winnipeg)

Master’s Level Honor Essay: Catherine McKenna “The Magical and the Mundane: Mother Goose and the ‘Elfin Music’ of *Tuck Everlasting*” (sponsored by Katharine Capshaw Smith, University of Connecticut)

Phoenix Award

Winner: *The Shining Company*
 (Farrar/Straus/Giroux and Bodley
 Head, 1990) by Rosemary Sutcliff



International Sponsorship Grant

Distinguished Scholar for
 special focus panel on
 Russian children’s literature:
 Marina Balina,
 Illinois Wesleyan University

*Religion and Children's Literature:
A Decennial Examination*

To pay tribute to the ongoing, shifting, and always provocative conversation, a special issue of *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* will be devoted to new considerations of religion as it appears in children's and young adult literature. Papers are invited on any aspect of the discussion, including (but not limited to):

- tracing and theorizing new trends
- new considerations of old patterns
- the influence of religious presses
- censorship issues
- wrestling with and/or rejecting religion
- religious themes and imagery in picture books
- cults, non-deist or other non-dominant traditions

Please send your papers (which should conform to the usual style of *ChLAQ*, and be between 5000-7000 words in length) to guest editor Jennifer Miskec (miskecjm@longwood.edu) by 1 Nov 2010. The selected articles will appear in *ChLAQ* 36.3, Fall 2011.

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Check out the latest on the ChLA Website!
www.childlitassn.org

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