

TEEN LIBRARIAN

Monthly

Vol. 1 No. 6

Editor: Matthew Imrie

October 2006

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the sixth edition of Teen Librarian Monthly. This month marks the return of the website of the month, a focus on new technology to help protect youths online, an article on a librarian's experience working in partnership with a secondary school in the running of a reading group as well as training news and information on countrywide initiatives and an interview with new author Tabitha Suzuma.

As always feedback is appreciated and I am contactable online at:
editor@teenlibrarian.co.uk

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

The Library Service website of the Month goes to Devon County Council's The Zone:
http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/culturetourism/libraries/library_services/children/thezone.htm

TECHNOLOGY: Net ID Me

To help combat the threat of Internet stalkers grooming children and youths online, a virtual ID card designed to keep children safe while they're surfing the net has been launched in the UK, US, Canada and Australia.

The [Net-ID-me](#) is a secure electronic identity card that displays the user's first name, age, gender, and general location. It can be swapped by children online when using chat rooms, instant messaging and social networks.

The scheme, which claims to be the first internet age and identity verification system that validates the identities of individuals of all ages, aims to make it harder for adults to pose as children when online.

Parents and children can apply for the card online, which costs £10 a year. Members are verified in a process that is similar to a passport application.

Users are encouraged to check the identity of people they communicate with by being awarded points for each ID they check or issue. The points can be exchanged for prizes such as music downloads.

The card is the brainchild of UK businessman Alex Hewitt. Hewitt had the idea after finding that his daughter could only verify the age and identity of a third of her 150 online friends.

<https://www.netidme.com/>

When spiders go onto the internet, what do they visit first?

Charlotte's Web site.

WORKING WITH A SECONDARY SCHOOL – making contact and then maintaining the relationship: a Librarian's account

I've always been interested in the children and young person side of librarianship. My past employment history is evidence enough (nursery nurse, children and young person librarian, secondary school librarian and SureStart librarian). In my present post at Neston Library in Cheshire I wanted to help set up a book group centring upon young people, but the question was *how to do it?* Through discussions with my manager we agreed that it was something that we could do and once it was set up and running we could evaluate it. It was exciting to think that we, at Neston library, were the only librarians actively pursuing such a goal at that time in Cheshire and that we were the frontrunners for this particular activity.

So how did we get the kids in?

It was decided that the local secondary school would be our best point of call at that time. I knew, through my work as a secondary school librarian, that more and more schools were eager to work with outside organisations and agencies. It does look good on their OFSTED reports,

but also it shows that the school itself is not a singular entity and therefore it plays an important part in the community. I knew that the Literacy Co-ordinator was the best person to contact. Initial contact was made via a phone call and luckily this particular Literacy Co-ordinator was very interested. We then invited him to the library for a chat. He didn't make our first meeting, due to carrying out a last minute detention at school, but was able to attend the next one. So, if you want to go down the secondary school route, be aware that other forces out of your control may work against you! Finally, at this first meeting, we were able to thrash ideas about and work out the logistics of ferrying the kids to and from school and the format of the meetings. We agreed that we would run the meetings at the public library. We were invited to visit the school library and speak to the school librarian as well. This had never happened before! Our first meeting began at Easter time 2005. I would like to say a lot more about how our meetings went, but maybe I could save it for another article!

The end of the reading group as we know it

After running the meetings for a year (two visits per month) it was felt that we wanted a more informal group of youngsters meeting at the library, so we invited the Literacy Co-ordinator and another member of teaching staff back to the library for another chat about the group's future. At this meeting we found out that the young people (who were from a lower ability group) still enjoyed coming to the library and that the teachers still wanted to come to back with the group in the new academic year. It was agreed that we would still carry on with this activity, but would also, at the same time, encourage a more informal gathering of teenagers as well into the library. This was such a 'mini success' for us a way. *We thought 'well that's it, it was nice while it lasted'* but we have managed to maintain a good relationship with the school (teachers and kids). Even if you think that something is not working it's always good to be honest with the school and have discussions where possible. If you have willing teachers then you're half-way there! All the experiences we encountered with the school and the group will put us in good stead for our informal teenage gatherings in the future.

I personally found that working with the school was sometimes a little frustrating, a little confining and a lot of hard work, but it

was well worth it! I have named contacts at the school, which can be very useful for promotional activities in the future. I see more and more of the young attendees in the library and in the community and they always recognise you and they usually come over to you for a chat. That's something that might not have happened before and it's great!

Janet Atkinson

*

TRAINING

Jerry Hurst now offers a new on-site training option:

Consulting and involving young people.

Consulting and involving young people of all ages is an important part of current government policy for both public and school libraries. This training course, successfully delivered with a teenage library services focus, inspires and equips participants to deliver appropriate and innovative services in partnership with young people. Sessions include:

- Why consult? Why involve? Policy drivers and local benefits
- Consulting... involving... what's the difference?
- Practical ways to engage with young people
- Consultation and involvement: national initiatives and useful case studies
- One-off and short-term consultation
- Sustaining longer-term partnerships
- Issues of social inclusion
- Action planning

Jerry works as a freelance trainer and consultant across the UK and Ireland with libraries, museums, galleries, archives, schools, youth services and other agencies. He has a proven track record of planning, co-ordinating, delivering and evaluating library services for teenagers, but equally, contributes to work with children, their parents and carers, adults, and to programmes covering the full range of service provision.

Go to www.jerryhurst.co.uk for more about training and consultancy, his background and experience and to find out what clients have said about his work. If you need further information, or would like to discuss your training or consultancy requirements, please e-mail jerry@jerryhurst.co.uk or telephone +44 (0) 020 8364 6166.

ARTS & KIDS WEEK

Arts & Kids Week is an initiative by the Prince of Wales Arts & Kids Foundation. According to the website exciting events will be happening all over the country offering children the chance to unleash their creativity in partnership with a local theatre, museum, orchestra or gallery.

The week runs from 21-29 October 2006. More information can be found on the website: <http://www.artsandkids.org.uk/let-your-kids-loose-on-the-arts-in-classic-fm-arts-kids-week-2006>

ADULT BOOKS FOR TEENS

***Laura's Diary* by Laura Sayers (Orana, Nov 2006)**

Not yet published, but already popular on Amazon, this book presents the diary of Laura, as heard on Scott Mills' Radio 1 show. Embarrassing but funny, and brief, this should be easy to promote to teens who listen to Radio 1 and to those who can relate to the quirky ups and downs of young love.

***The World of Karl Pilkington* by Karl Pilkington and Ricky Gervais (Fourth Estate, 2006)**

A regular feature on Ricky Gervais' podcasts (which are the world's most downloaded), Karl is basically an average guy who just happens to have extraordinary opinions, which he expresses freely much to the amusement of Ricky and his listeners. This collection of chat transcripts from the podcasts will be hilarious to pop-culture savvy older teens.

***The Modifying Manual* – MaxPower (Haynes, 2002)**

Under the branding of MaxPower magazine, this is a sexy version of the more familiar Haynes workshop manuals, but specifically geared towards boy racer types who want to soup up and pimp out their cars. Bound to appeal to teenage boys 16+!

***The Perks of Being a Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky (Simon and Schuster, 2002)**

Recently hailed as a future classic of adolescent literature by Aintitcool.com, this novel of teenage life has been around for a while and may even be sitting in your collections already. Check out the reviews

on Amazon then grab a copy to display for your more sensitive teenage customers!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Artemis Fowl: Fairies, Fiends and Flatulence

Eoin Colfer – Live in the West End October 21st – 29th (not 25th).

Join the hysterically funny and utterly brilliant No.1 author on an adrenaline-fuelled expose of teenage criminal-mastermind, Artemis Fowl. At Trafalgar Studios, located on the south side of Trafalgar Square on Whitehall.

WEBSITE NEWS: Forum & Reviews

As most of you may no doubt already be aware I have launched a Teen Librarian Forum on the website. <http://www.teenlibrarian.co.uk/forum>

I am hoping that it will become a point where Librarians that work with Teens/Young Adults can come together and discuss current events and give each others ideas on teen programming.

I have had some feedback and offers of reviews from users of the website but am always eager for more. Any interested parties can contact me on the usual e-mails.

NEWSLETTER QUERY

This is just a general query to all readers of the newsletter: Is everyone happy with the mix of articles and information or is there any other info. you like to see more of?

Answers to editor@teenlibrarian.co.uk please.

COMPETITION WINNERS

The winners of the Tanoshimi sponsored Manga competition last month were:

Carl Cross from Derbyshire and Kirsten Stewart from Glasgow.

SUBMISSIONS

If anyone would like to submit an article or idea for inclusion in the newsletter, please mail it to teenlibraryservice@gmail.com.

Eight Questions with... Tabitha Suzuma

Q1. What made you decide to write for Teenagers?

I love teen fiction. I loved it when I was a child, as well as when I was a teen, and I still love reading it as an adult. I love the rawness, the grittiness, the pace. I like writing about things that really matter: real-life issues affecting teenagers nowadays.

Q2. How do you get into the heads of your characters?

When I create my characters, I become them. Their lives become more real than my own. I can picture them perfectly in my mind and they become real people – people I can see, hear and touch. There is always a little bit of myself in my main character, but it is also exciting to create a character out of thin air and to watch that person evolve and develop during the course of the book. It often feels like the characters have a mind of their own – sometimes they do or say things which are totally unexpected and as a writer I just have to go with it and let them lead the way.

Q3 Do you know instinctively what will appeal to Teens or is it more a hit or miss process?

I know what will appeal to me. I know what would have appealed to me as a teen and it is not very different from what appeals to me now. I write primarily for myself – about the things that interest me, the things I feel passionate about. I like to write hard-hitting, gritty novels which have a dramatic impact and leave you feeling moved, shaken, and a slightly different person from the one you were before you started reading. I don't write to entertain, I write to give my readers an experience they will never forget. That is my aim, anyway. And from the feedback I've had, it would seem that so far I've succeeded.

Q4 What is the most satisfying part of the writing process for you?

The response from my readers, without a doubt. When I received my first 'fan mail' I cried. It is elating to know that there are strangers out there that have read my book, have shared the same experiences with me, have cared for my character as much as I have. It feels like I know them and they know me. Like I have given them a piece of myself. It suddenly makes all those late nights alone in front of my computer worthwhile.

Q5 Do you ever read the works of other Teen/YA authors? If yes what can you recommend?

I love and will always love teen fiction. My favourites are THE OUTSIDERS, RUMBLE FISH, THAT WAS THEN THIS IS NOW, by S.E. Hinton; SAY GOODNIGHT GRACIE, by Julie Reece Deaver; LOOKING FOR JJ, by Anne Cassidy; and all of K.M. Peyton's books for teens.

Q6 Are any of your novels based on personal experiences?

A NOTE OF MADNESS is my debut novel and has just been published. It is about a teenage musical genius who suffers from manic-depression and is heavily based on my own experiences of severe clinical depression. The main protagonist, Flynn, is an outstanding pianist at the Royal College of Music, and the musical aspect of his character was inspired by my 17 year old brother Tiggy, who is a talented pianist at Chetham's School of Music.

Q7 What are you working on at the moment?

I have written another three books for teens: FROM WHERE I STAND, which is a psychological thriller about a disturbed teenager looking for his mother's killer; WITHOUT LOOKING BACK, which is about a family on the run; and A SONG FOR JENNAH which is a sequel to A NOTE OF MADNESS but written in alternating chapters from Flynn and Jennah's points of view. I am currently embarking on my first novel for adults, MAYELLA, which is about a custody battle - but the main protagonists are in their twenties so I think the book will also appeal to young adults.

Q8 Do you ever do Library visits to Teen Reading Groups? If yes, what is the best way to get into contact with you or your agent about it?

I am a new author, so I have not had the chance to do a library visit yet, however I would be honoured to be invited to do one. The best way to get in contact with me is via my website: www.tabithasuzuma.com where you can also find photos, biographical details and the first chapters of each of my books.