



NEW YORK LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
Voice of the Library Community

Volume 4: Winter

2017-2018 YSS Board

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A Message from the President

As we head into the holiday season and a New Year, I am beginning another new position on the YSS board. I have been on the YSS Board since 2010 in different capacities and I've enjoyed each new challenge. As YSS moves forward in finalizing our Strategic Plan in 2018, we look to reaching out to our members in new ways and hope to gain new members who want to make our profession even better. We all serve so many youth and families, impacting lives every day in our own ways. What better way to give back especially at the holidays, than to share our knowledge and experiences with others doing the same work. Our Marketing Committee, formerly our Publications Committee, has been working hard to engage our members and attract new members with social media posts. We would like for you to contact our Marketing Committee about your STEAM programming, so we can share your programs on Pinterest. We all use Pinterest for program ideas and wouldn't it be fabulous to have our own sharing board to extend our reach across libraries enriching not only the communities we serve, but giving us inspiring ideas to work off of?

If you missed some of our inspiring programs at NYLA this year in Saratoga Springs, here are some highlights. James Howe, winner of the Empire State Award, gave us an engaging speech about his life as a writer and ended with a musical performance. Our annual membership meeting hosted author Todd Strasser, who gave comedic musical intervals of classic rock songs turned into songs about literature. It was an informative and entertaining workshop. Our Ann Gibson Scholarship event held at Jacob & Anthony's was an intimate gathering of enthusiastic professionals sharing some delectable desserts and sharing their experiences as librarians. Our NYS Battle of the Books program shared how libraries across the state are doing battle programs differently, even at different times of the year. YSS is in the beginning stages of discussing whether youth librarians want to work together to consider a state-wide Battle of the Books. This would mean everyone who chooses to participate could have set guidelines, books, and battle questions across the state. We will have an update in the New Year as to how these talks progress.

Our mascot, Yancy the Yak, was unveiled for sale at the YSS Booth in Saratoga. Our stuffed yaks with YSS bandana are very near sold out! They were a hit for conference attendees as well as some holiday gifts for friends and family. If you didn't stop by the YSS Booth to get your membership gift, hopefully you will be joining us on [Friday] April 13, 2018, in Syracuse for the upcoming YSS Spring Conference where you can still receive a member gift. This year's theme for the YSS Spring Conference is "Libraries are for Everyone" – continuing the move for diversity in our communities.

As we move into 2018, I look forward to bringing more opportunities to our members to get involved, help you think about what you can do for yourself on a personal and professional level, and how what you do every day with one kindness can impact an individual for a lifetime.

Enjoy your holiday season,
Laura Panter, YSS President

A look back at the 2017 NYLA Annual Conference

If you were unable to make it to this year's conference, hopefully these highlights will make you feel, at least a little bit, like you were able to experience the #BestConferenceEver!

Ann Gibson Scholarship Reception:

We've replaced Telling Tales with an informal meet and greet style reception. This year, the reception was held at Jacob & Anthony's American Grille. Guests of the reception dined on delectable desserts and made bids on several raffles, which further benefited the Ann Gibson Scholarship Fund.



YSS Workshops/Speakers:

After a fantastic CE on enhancing services for GLBTQ youth, YSS had a whirlwind of workshops on topics as varied as the patrons we serve.

(Side note – anyone who was unable to attend this CE has a second chance to attend Lyndon Cudlitz' presentation at the 2018 YSS Spring Conference!)

YSS 2017 Membership Meeting



a Todd Strasser musical interlude



Our membership meeting, featuring Todd Strasser, revealed that Todd is not only a talented author but also the "Weird AI of YA Literature." According to Todd Strasser, the YSS Membership Meeting was actually the very first presentation during which he performed his literature-inspired musical parodies!

Beyond Bilingual Storytimes



NYS Battle of the Books

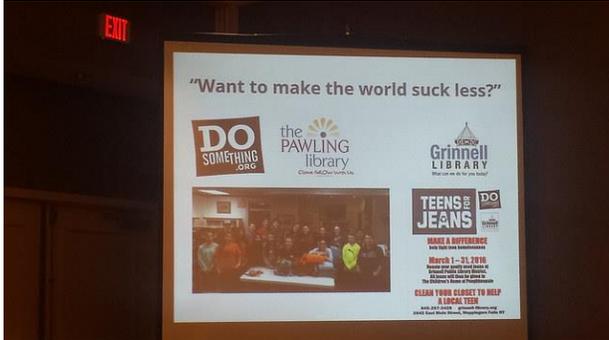


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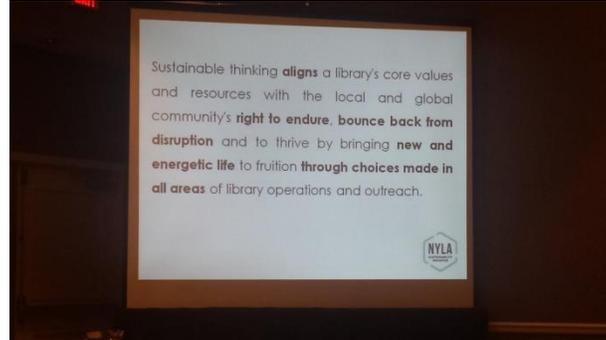
Beyond Bilingual Storytimes was a session in which attendees learned ways to support our ELL families and to incorporate foreign language even if we don't have the resources to have full-on bilingual storytimes.

The NYS Battle of the Books panel was actually presented like a book battle, with panelists buzzing in to give their answers to the judge's questions about how their book battles are prepared and held.

Youth Councils and Teen Leadership



Youth Services Sustainability



At the session about Youth Councils and Teen Leadership, attendees learned about the service-project based Youth Councils at the Brooklyn Public Library. Breakout discussions encourages attendees to share their own ideas and practices with the group.

In our session about Youth Services Sustainability, we discussed ways that libraries can encourage and practice sustainability within their own buildings and out in the community.

YSS Table Talks



And, as per tradition, we wrapped up the conference with our YSS Table Talks.

Topics included:

New Ways to Look at Summer Reading, SCRAWL Publish Your Teens, Plays at Your Library, A Read Aloud as a Partnership Building Tool, ASL Programs for Infants Through Teens, Building Educational Partnerships through Public Library Archives, and 2018 SRP Crafts

**And, in addition to all of the excellent workshops...
There was even a PETTING ZOO on the Trade Show floor!**



#BestConferenceEver

James Howe Accepts the NYLA/YSS 2017 Empire State Award

The Youth Services Section proudly presented the 2017 Empire State Award for Literature for Young People (ESA) to children's and young adult author James Howe at the ESA Luncheon on November 10, 2017 during the NYLA Annual Conference in Saratoga Springs, NY. This award is given annually to a living New York State author and/or illustrator to honor a significant body of work in the field of literature for young people. Mr. Howe met and exceeded the qualifications for this award. Aside from four years spent in college in Boston, MA, he has lived in New York State his entire life. He is the author of over 90 books for children and young adults and has won multiple awards for his books.



Over 100 people were in attendance at the Luncheon for the presentation of the award medallion and Mr. Howe's acceptance speech. Among the attendees were his husband, Mark Davis, and two very good friends, Helise Harrington and Sy Bucholz. In his remarks, Howe shared his very personal experience as a writer of children's and YA books for 40 years.

Howe recalled some of the significant books he had read during his early years. These books had important implications in his life, both personally and professionally.

The first was *Silver Pennies: A Collection of Poems for Girls and Boys* by Blanche Jennings Thompson, and later, *A Players' Handbook: The Theory and Practice of Acting* by Samuel Selden.

Ferdinand the bull, in *The Story of Ferdinand* by Munro Leaf, reminded James of himself as a young boy and how much he had enjoyed having tea with his dolls. He credited his family (he the youngest of four brothers,) for never teasing him about being a boy who liked playing with dolls or stuffed animals more than playing football.

His favorite book, *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White, spoke to him about being different and alone but finding the power in words. But it would be many years before he could put words to who and what he was and put words into characters. In the meantime, he spent his childhood hours and days roaming his neighborhood on foot or on bike, letting his imagination roam as well. He and his family spent hours talking and playing games because these were part of their everyday life.

As a child, Howe had an interest in acting. Later, as college graduates, he and his wife, Deborah, attempted to earn their living as actors. However, the economics of it ultimately led James to accepting a position as a literary agent.

In 1977, he and Deborah began writing their first book, *Bunnacula: A Rabbit Tale of Mystery*. They set out to write a story to entertain themselves, not to publish. Inspiration for this book came from Christopher Lee's movies of vampires and E. B. White's book, *Charlotte's Web*, with its secret world of animals who communicate with each other. The *Bunnacula* characters, Chester and Harold, were even inspired by characters in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* mysteries.

Midway through writing *Bunnacula*, they learned that Deborah had cancer. After several months of hospital visits and treatments, they returned to creating and writing and ultimately finished the story of *Bunnacula*. Together, they wrote another book entitled *The Teddy Bear's Scrapbook* before Deborah died in June 1978.

At that point, James was still working as a literary agent with plans of becoming a theater director and no intentions of being a writer of children's books. But, when the two books were published in 1979 and 1980 respectively, he found himself on his way to being a published children's book writer. He went on to write *The Hospital Book* (published 1981) in which he wrote for children about what it is like going to the hospital.

The success of *Bunnacula* has allowed him to do the work he loves and have it make a difference in the lives of others. Many books written by James Howe have followed. Characters in them have been inspired

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by people and situations as well as animals in his life. Of all the books he has written, the one closest to his heart is *The Misfits*. It is a book for young teens which deals with name calling and bullying. The idea for it came out of his daughter's experience with teasing. Publication of the book inspired the Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network's "No Name Calling Week," one of this country's largest bully prevention initiatives.

James Howe came out as gay at age 51. In 2016, he published the picture book, *Big Bob, Little Bob*, a work more like an autobiography than any of his other books published up to that time. In this book, he shared that it was ok to be who you are and let others be who they are. His message to young people is this:

Everyone deserves to have a good life, do the things they most enjoy, to be loved, and to feel proud of who they are.

Howe continues to write. Two more *Houndsley and Catina* books are due to be published in 2018 and 2019. He has also been working on a childhood memoir.

A big part of his life now is music. (He plays the cello!) Along with his husband, Mark Davis, he writes and performs music as Old Dogs New Tricks.

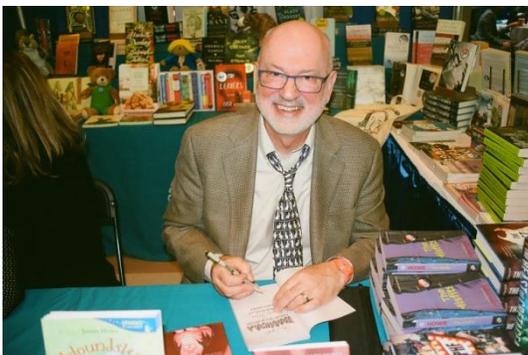
One of his most recent works of writing is a piece entitled, "How Miracles Begin," published in the young adult anthology of music, *Behind the Song*. The article is about one of their songs, "Planting Trees." Everyone was treated to a performance of the song by James and Mark at the Luncheon. The refrain in the song reflects Howe's approach to life:

Just embrace what you love. Do each day the thing that you love. That's how miracles begin.



James Howe does just this through both his writing and music. We were the lucky ones to be able to hear him speak and to honor him with the NYLA/YSS 2017 Empire State Award for Excellence in Literature for Young People.

The Youth Services Section thanks James Howe for his engaging and inspirational presentation and congratulates him on his selection as the 2017 NYLA/YSS Empire State Award for Excellence in Literature for Young People. We look forward to his future writings and music and know that they won't be long in coming!



Finally, thanks go to Simon & Schuster and Candlewick Press for donating multiple copies of James Howe's books. The books were signed by Mr. Howe and given away at the Luncheon. In addition, YSS thanks Simon & Schuster for covering his travel expenses.

By Terry Rabideau, Empire State Award Committee
In Consultation with James Howe, 2017 Empire State Award Recipient

For more information about the YSS Empire State Award, including a list of previous Empire State Award winners, check out the [ESA page](#) on the YSS website.

Keeping up with the YSS Marketing Committee

The YSS Marketing Committee has been busy finding great content to post on the YSS Facebook and Twitter accounts. Have you been following YSS? If you have, you've seen all the great articles and links that have been posted. If you haven't, it's never too late to check us out!



We are still working to create a YSS Pinterest page filled with STEAM programming ideas, and we need your help! Please send your ideas to Lindsay Jankovitz: jankovitzl@gmail.com

Follow YSS on
Pinterest

Increasing YSS membership is also a priority this year. If you have any ideas about what we could develop and offer as a 'members only' resource, or if you have any other suggestions or comments for the Marketing Committee, please contact Tara Morris, 2018 Marketing Committee chair: tmorris@rcls.org

Want to Get More Involved with YSS?

Commitments range from short-term help with specific events and projects [like being a room monitor or presenter] to long-term positions on a YSS Committee or the YSS Executive Board.

Check out the "[Get Involved in YSS](#)" page of our website for more specific information, then complete our online "[Active Member Form](#)" to tell us about your interest.

YSS Spring Conference Scholarships: Deadline = Feb 1, 2018

If you're hoping to attend the spring conference but aren't sure how you will be able to pay for it, you should apply for one of the YSS Spring Conference Scholarships. Not only do they earn you a FREE conference registration, but they also provide you with a stipend to cover your travel and lodging expenses!

New Member Spring Conference Scholarship:

The applicant must be a current, regular or student member of NYLA/YSS. The applicant may be a graduate library student (full- or part-time) who is matriculated at her/his institution, a practicing librarian or paraprofessional employed in New York State, or someone else who is involved in a related youth services field (e.g. storytelling, an illustrator, etc.) for less than 10 years.

Lisa C. Wemett Spring Conference Scholarship:

The applicant must be a current, regular member of NYLA/YSS. In addition, the applicant must have at least 10 years of post-graduate experience working in libraries and be currently working in the area of youth services in a public or school library in New York. She/he must be able to demonstrate that she/he has had a significant impact on youth and youth services in her/his community.

Get the full details – and the scholarship application – on the [Spring Conference Scholarship page](#) of the YSS website!

NYLA YSS SPRING CONFERENCE 2018

**FRIDAY,
APRIL 13, 2018**

**SHERATON
SYRACUSE
UNIVERSITY
HOTEL &
CONFERENCE
CENTER**

SYRACUSE, NY



KEYNOTE SPEAKER



REBECCA McCORKINDALE
HAFUBOTI

LUNCHEON SPEAKER



TAMORA PIERCE
YA FANTASY AUTHOR

Register at www.nyla.org/yss



NEW YORK LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
Voice of the Library Community



**YOUTH
SERVICES
SECTION**

2018 YSS Spring Conference Workshop Preview:

21st Century Tools for Little Coders

Presenter: Madalyn Lombardo, Tully Free Library

Learn all about hands-on technology and how to incorporate it into fun programming for elementary students. Learn how to use these technologies as well as get program and lesson plans on how to incorporate them into your daily activities.

Breaking Down Barriers by Rethinking Fines

Presenters: Patricia Uttaro, Monroe County Library System, Katie Hayduke, Onondaga County Public Library System, Rebecca Maguire, Onondaga County Public Library System

Learn how libraries in Syracuse and Rochester have worked to bring children and families back to the library by eliminating fines.

Bring Them All In: Programs That Work for Both Kids and Teens

Presenters: Stephanie Preston and Christina Stenson-Carey, Albany Public Library

Learn about programs that work for early elementary aged children through young teen. We will have lots of winning ideas from pop culture and beyond to enable you to make your library a fun destination for kids and teens. There will be hands-on projects and activities.

Enhancing Library Services for LGBT Youth

***NOTE: this is a 2-hour double session**

Presenter: Lyndon Cudlitz

With practical advice and tips for library services, learn how your library can be a welcoming and supportive place for LGBTQ young people and their families.

Family Literacy in a Food Pantry

Presenter: Betsy Kennedy, Cazenovia Public Library

Cazenovia Public Library's outreach program at the local food pantry includes early literacy, high school equivalency tutoring, summer reading programs, parenting workshops and Read Aloud Book Club. This is achieved on a small budget with many volunteers. It started small and continues to grow. Learn about this program and how you can replicate it in your community.

A Natural Fit: Environmental Programs at the Library

Presenter: Nathan Keefe, Syracuse University iSchool

Does your library offer nature programming? Libraries are uniquely positioned to link the world of books and media with the natural world, and foster this interest in children, families and teens. Join us to explore fun and exciting ideas to engage youth in your library with do-it-yourself nature programming. Participants will leave with a handout featuring takeaway program ideas for implementation.

An Overview of Autism

Presenters: Mardie Ninno and Charissa Taylor, Margaret L. Williams Developmental Evaluation Center, Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital

One in 68 children are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This workshop will provide an overview of the characteristics of autism and some strategies librarians can use that will be helpful in providing activities and services to individuals with autism.

A Safe Place to Game

Presenter: Daniel Fadden, TCGPlayer.com

Learn about the program Safe Place to Game, which partners with Onondaga County libraries to run a fun and educational program for those passionate about gaming. We donate materials, hold game nights, and teach, promoting a culture where children can have fun and feel safe, while interacting with their peers through tabletop games.

YSS Table Talks

Roundtable discussions/hands-on activities about programming and services for children and teens. Participants can attend three different Table Talks during this workshop.