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ACL Minutes
Friday, January 12, 2024
Zoom meeting, 9:30am–12:00pm

Zoom Link:
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87129630729?pwd=MHFKcDJJcUJvVzFBczlydVgweGkxdz09

9:30–9:40: **Introductions:** Welcome to anyone new!

We shared highlights from our year so far and things we're looking forward to.

9:40–9:50: **Committee highlight/overview:** Learn more about ACL Committees and positions you might want to join now or in the future! This month: Spotlight on Performers' Showcase and Mini-Grants.

Mini-Grants: Penny posted the application for mini-grants on the blog. You can get up to $500 to put on a program at your library. Email Penny (pikly@aol.com) if you have any questions! Question: How many grants do we typically give out? We have $1500 to give out this year, so we could give out three $500 grants, but often folks ask for less than $500. We give out between two and five grants each year.

Performers' Showcase: We have thirty two performers signed up and plenty on the waitlist. It is happening in Fremont on Saturday, February 3, 2024. The committee is looking for volunteers (Sheila, Renee, Armin, and Diana are on the committee). If you come and help out all day, you get in free. It is from 9am to 4:30pm. Share it out with your libraries! Tickets are $15 ahead of time and $20 at the door. If you are interested in volunteering (or have questions), email pshow.acl@gmail.com.

9:50-10:20: **Book reviewing:** Outstanding & Unsatisfactory or controversial (a.k.a stinky-cheese) titles only. If time remains, other titles can be discussed.

Folks shared out their Outstanding reviews. See *BayViews* for full review text.

10:20-10:25: **Early Reader Discussion**

Do we find the term "early reader"/"easy reader" to be ambiguous? Are there other terms that might better define this area?

Some libraries and schools use the term "young reader" but that can also reference beginning chapter books (as compared to books for kids who are learning to read).

There are also lots of graphic novels coming out that fit into that beginning reader

category.

How can we better define this category of books in our reviews? Sarah will probably need to support the change in language to move away from “easy reader” and towards “beginning,” “emerging,” or “new” readers.

We can add some preferred terms in our reviewing guidelines to help with this transition. This is intended as a gentle nudge to be a little more intentional in the terms we use for kids learning to read and the materials geared towards that age.

10:25-10:30: **BREAK**

10:30–11:30: **Professional development: Novelist Training:** Hone your readers' advisory skillset with a deep dive into Novelist, the “secret weapon” for finding books to recommend. We'll take a look at features that will help you find the next best read for your patrons (and yourself!). No matter how well you already know Novelist, you are sure to learn some new tips and tricks!

This training will be recorded and sent out via the ACL listserv, along with the handouts that Caroline showed during the training.

What is Novelist? It is a database for finding books to recommend using different elements that books are tagged with. It provides lots of different resources for supporting readers advisory. It has a controlled vocabulary for the different elements of a book (genre, writing style, theme, and more).

Novelist will be doing a website redesign this year (2024), but functionality should remain the same, just with a more modern look.

Most libraries provide Novelist Plus; there is also Novelist K–8, but Caroline generally prefers to use regular Novelist. Regular Novelist does allow for you to filter by age range (0–8, 9–12, etc.).

Caroline covered doing a basic search, finding readalikes, looking at recommendations based on series, and looking at recommendations based on author.

On a related note, Caroline recommends FantasticFiction.com for getting lists of series in order.

Novelist Search Strategy handout is a good visual guide for how to do what Caroline covers in this first portion of the training.

Recommended Reads Lists are books from the last three to five years based on different categories (ex. “For Fans Of…” has lists for different fandoms). These are intended to be books that you would have on the shelf, not necessarily what is most popular right now.

Browse Genres only shows new and popular titles by age ranges.

Explore Pages has tips for how to search in certain topic areas (ex. diverse characters). It has some title recommendations but is more about how to use terms in Novelist to do specific searches. It does include some curated lists.

Story elements are the terms that Novelist uses for things like genre, themes, pacing, etc. Novelist used to provide a PDF guide to these and Caroline will send out the 2021 version. You can find the most recent story element terms by going to Quick Links (at the top of the page) -> Story Elements Index. This list (and the PDF) does not include nonfiction terms. Check out nonfiction records to find interesting and useful nonfiction genre tags (like “nonfiction that reads like fiction” or “nature writing”).

If you do a search for “fantasy themes” and select the “lists and articles” tab, you can usually find an article titled “fantasy themes” that is a list of the themes that apply for the fantasy genre.

You can focus in on an age range by using the advanced search and choosing a grade level, especially if a child is at either the higher or lower end of an age range.

Media Mentions page for helping patrons find a book they heard about on the radio (or wherever).

11:30–12:00: **Business meeting**

- **Consent calendar**

    - Approval of December minutes
    - Treasurer's report
        - Checking: $24,242.16
        - Helfeld: $4,310.54
    - Consent calendar is approved by membership vote.

- **New business / Committee updates**

    Mychal Threets will be joining us for our meeting in February. Now is also a great time to show Mychal some support on social media, since he has been getting more negativity as he gains popularity. His social media is @mychal3ts.

    Reminder to renew membership!

    Soft deadline for reviewing 2023 books in March and hard deadline is April.

We're looking for some new mentors for book reviewers.

There is a Board meeting later this month.

- **Vote: Updates to Bylaws**

  Voted to approve the updated Bylaws. They will be added to the website soon.

- **Announcements**

  - Job openings: Please e-mail these to the Secretary (lillianwhithaus@gmail.com) if you would like them to appear in the minutes.
  - Humbug witch queries

    Moomin-like characters in a rich forest colorful fantasy world. Not Barbara Papa, not Bone, not a similar Australian title. Person in her late 30s, early 40s who read it in her childhood. From Alex Petrakis, send her any ideas!
  - Book/Resource recommendations: If you have a topic that you need resources for, request them here.

- **Feedback and appreciations:** Feel free to email Caroline (carolinedavis@aclibrary.org) and Shani (shani13reads@gmail.com) additional comments! This will also be a space to acknowledge and appreciate fellow ACL members. If you have an upcoming birthday, have a professional or personal success or accomplishment (promotions, job changes, graduations, etc.) you'd like to share, please let us know. We want to celebrate you!

  Lillian will be starting at OPL in February!

  Happy January birthdays!

12:00: **Adjourn**

Submitted by
Lillian W.