

TEEN LIBRARIAN

Monthly

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Editorial

Welcome to the July edition of TLM, a slightly shorter edition but hopefully no less interesting than any of the others.

This month we take a look behind the closed doors of the Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Awards Judging process (something I have always wondered about). There is also information on a competition run by the Embassy of Japan and some upcoming events around the UK that may be suitable for Teen Groups to visit. A small-press publisher that is looking for talented cartoonists (again for any manga or graphic novel groups that may have up and coming artists). Talk like a Pirate Day is just around the corner as well so a link to the UK group running it is included, and finally this month's Eight Questions with... interview is with talented Australian author Margot Lanagan.

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On Judging the CILIP CKG Awards

What does it feel like to be a judge? First it was excitement – the achievement of a long held ambition; then it was fear – would I be able to read all the books? Would I be able to “distinguish” a winner? What if I was not up to the task? Everyone else seemed so assured – and arrived with files of notes. However, though it was a scary experience, it was also extremely exhilarating – and surprising.

The whole process is managed with great care and efficiency. We, the judges, are not there just to discuss our likes and dislikes. Each title has to be assessed against the criteria set out for each award. This is quite rigorous and to ensure that everyone feels confident with the process we meet together for a whole day's training – surely unique among literary awards? The long list is published – and the reading begins. This year there were 45 titles on the Carnegie long list, slightly fewer on the Greenaway. Then it is time for our first serious meeting – to decide the short lists for each award. This takes place over two days. Twelve judges, our chair

and vice chair, our CKG secretary, the CILIP coordinator and an independent observer (who takes no part in the discussion) gather at CILIP headquarters and talk, argue, advocate..... it is intensive. As each book is considered, new perspectives emerge; sometimes the title – perhaps a favourite – moves down the list, than another, less obvious maybe, suddenly ticks all the boxes. The atmosphere is charged – and the results can be surprising; but in the end each award will have a short list of which collectively, and individually, we can be proud.

Then comes the second stage – the rereading – and possibly rereading again; more notes – and back to CILIP for one more day of conversation, discussion, argument. The atmosphere becomes charged but under the watchful eye of our Chair we remain focussed. Once again the group dynamic can throw up surprises – emotional favourites are found wanting; excellence does not necessarily mean comfortable. But then it is over – the votes have been cast; the decision made – the relief is palpable and congratulations are in order. Whatever the outcome, the book chosen will be outstanding and deserving of the award. It has been a fantastic experience – and an honour. Now to start reading for next year....

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Manga Jiman 150 Competition

The Embassy of Japan is once again launching another major manga-writing competition, **MANGA JIMAN 150**, with fantastic prizes. This year the competition is open to anyone fourteen (14)* years of age or over.

The amazing First Prize is two (2) return air tickets to Japan, courtesy of All Nippon Airways!**

The Second Prize is a fabulous TOSHIBA laptop computer.

Third Prize is a superb RICOH digital camera.

Runners-up will receive a selection of

manga publications available in the UK from various UK manga publishers and Japan Centre gift vouchers, amongst other prizes.

The winners' works will also be displayed in a special MANGA JIMAN 150 EXHIBITION at the Embassy of Japan. This competition is open to all UK residents. All creations should be original and between six (6) to eight (8) A4-sized pages in length and although entrants are free to choose their own theme, restrictions do apply, and importantly the manga should in some way make reference to '150'.

The closing date for the competition is Friday, 26 September 2008.

How to enter:

The full MANGA JIMAN 150 COMPETITION RULES & REGULATIONS can be found here:

www.uk.emb-japan.go.uk/manga/manga150rules.pdf

All entries must be accompanied by an official entry form which can be downloaded here:

www.uk.emb-japan.go.uk/manga/manga150form.doc

Upcoming Events of Interest

Caption

Caption is a festival of comics and minicomics held annually in Oxford. Join us for a weekend of panels, workshops, and idle chatter in the bar!

Caption Timewarp will take place once again at the East Oxford Community Centre over the weekend of 9th and 10th August 2008.

Alcon 2008

Alcon, short for AnimeLeague Convention, is an extremely friendly and innovative anime convention that takes place in the UK. It's first convention was between 7th-9th of September 2007 at De Montfort University in Leicester, and saw over 200 very happy anime fans, and UK firsts such as the Iron Artist, and Cosplay Blind-Date. Our 2008 event, scheduled for 5th-7th September promises many more new events and ideas!

ITCH

ITCH may be of interest to any Librarians that run manga or graphic novel groups that have talented artists amongst their number.

ITCH was started in January 2008 by Willie Hewes, an amateur comic artist

living in Bristol, UK.

ITCH wants to promote comics and comic creators, by giving them a platform to show off their work in print. She also wants to promote comics as a fun and easygoing form of entertainment for everyone, because comics rock, dammit, and not enough people know!

ITCH believes in high production values, high quality design, and high quality art and writing. Itch also believes in creator's rights, prompt payment for artists and writers and a professional attitude.

To ITCH, "small press" does not mean "half hearted". To ITCH, it means creative freedom for artists, personal and unique products, and person to person promotion and marketing. To ITCH, "for fun" is a serious business.

<http://www.itchpublishing.com/>

International Talk Like A Pirate Day

ITLAPD happens every year on the 19th of September. This event originally started in the 1990's in America is now a truly international event.

As information on the British website tells us (in piratical talk):

"It originally be a quick joke, but now Pirate Day in this sceptr'd isle now be raisin' thousands o'pounds fer charity, as well as bein' more entertainin' than a barrel full o'mice. We be proud t'carry on the tradition, an' t'be gettin' as many folks round Britain as we can t'be talkin' like pirates!"

Pirates are more popular today than they were in 1995 when the movie *Cut Throat Island* was released, the *Pirates of the Caribbean* trilogy will attest to this. Running a workshop or workshops in Libraries on how to talk like a pirate and discussing novels and even non-fiction about historical and modern pirates will be interesting and engaging.

For more information visit the official UK website: <http://www.yarr.org.uk/>

Submissions

If anyone would like to submit an article or idea for inclusion in the newsletter, please send it to teenlib@teenlibrarian.co.uk

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Special thanks to Margot Lanagan for giving up her time to answer the eight questions.

Eight Questions with... Margot Lanagan

Q1. What made you decide to write for Teenagers?

I don't know that I actually decided; it's just that the stories that came out of me mostly had child and teenage characters. Also, I'd just had children myself and was feeling a bit trapped. I remembered my teenage years as times of great choice and intensity - not always fun, but interesting because in those years you haven't really set yourself on one particular path - and I guess I found that attractive. Now my two babies are teenagers themselves, and youth and energy and optimism and vulnerability and being mixed-up and undecided all still fascinate me.

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

I usually start with some kind of atmospheric image, with the character in the middle of reacting to it. I'll carry that around for some time not writing anything, until I've thought enough to start hearing that character's voice, either their speaking voice or the voice they think with. Once I've caught on to the turn of phrase they would use, that gives me a sense of the changes they'll go through during the story, which will tell me roughly how it's likely to end (i.e. well or badly for that character).

While I'm doing the thinking, I'm noticing useful things around me - in the paper, on the street, on television, in other books. Because I've got the initial image in my head and have set myself to building on it, material for the story will just float in, piece by piece - looks, gestures, scraps of dialogue, weather. And often it's one of those pieces, a particularly colourful one or particularly odd, that will set me writing.

That said, I make plenty of false starts, and sometimes I've written whole stories and realised at the end that the wrong character is telling them. That's why short stories are great - you've only messed up a couple of days' work, not a couple of years'!

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

I can really only go on what will appeal to me. And I figure, if it appeals to me, there is someone else out there who'll also like it. If I start out thinking, 'This must appeal to readers aged 12 to 15', in fact if I start out thinking of any kind of audience at all, it gets in the way of the story developing. The less I worry about who will read it and why it might appeal or not, the more integrity the story has in the end.

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

Probably at the end of a day's writing when I've got 10 pages of lined paper turned over on the desk beside me, all crinkly with having been filled with longhand first draft. I don't mind whether it's a novel or a story I'm working on, but that pause when you return to the world knowing you've *got somewhere* in the writing - that's the moment I hug to myself for the rest of the day. If I can replicate it day after day for a while, I feel I could conquer the world - or at least encompass a large part of it in my writing!

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

I read all kinds of stuff. Probably the best YA reads I've had recently have been the first two books of Paul Park's Princess of Roumania quartet, although generally I'm not much of a series person. I've just started *Town*, by Aussie author James Roy - naturalistic, linked short stories from different teenaged points of view - and that's shaping up well. Also, anything by our gal Ursula Dubosarsky (her latest novel is *The Red Shoe*, but they're all good) gets a big tick from me.

Q6. Are any of your novels based on personal experiences?

All of them and none of them. It's hard to tell! Every bit of input I've had in my life is packed away in a memory cell somewhere, changing shape by composting, linking itself with the flood of new experiences coming in. By the time an experience becomes translated into a story, it's often so bent out of shape by being misremembered, or relived the way I wish it had

happened, or mixed up with something completely outrageously fictional (like added dragons, or a time machine), that it's not until later that I can see where that story came from, i.e. connect it with something that happened to me in real life.

Q7. What are you working on at the moment?

I'm in rather a nice place at the moment. I'm working full-time, so I don't have time to start anything big, although last year I finished my first novel for a while, *Tender Morsels*. I'm still recovering from that, in a sense. I've done a bunch of short stories recently that I'm still pecking away at, and I'm just, vaguely, dreamily, feeling my way towards the next novel, collecting pictures and quotes and ideas, scrapbooking my way towards it. I think it's going to be big and rich and more Australian than *Tender Morsels*, which was more or less eastern European. I'm looking forward to discovering it.

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

I don't know that I've ever done a library visit to a teen reading group, but I've done an awful lot of talking, reading aloud and workshopping in schools, so I'm open to offers, that's for sure. If you're talking about UK visits, probably the best way to contact me is directly by email at margo@inhouse.com.au. Of course, I'm a long way away, and all I can say is that it is *just* possible I'll be in the UK towards the end of this year when *Tender Morsels* comes out from David Fickling. Octoberish, Novemberish - who knows? Let me know if you're interested, and we'll go from there.