

Youth Services Advisory Council

Meeting Notes

January 12, 2007

At

Upper Hudson Library System

8:30-9:00 Book Review, 9:00 am-12:00 noon meeting, 12:00-1:00 Teen Services Discussion Group

Attendance: Julie Zelman (Brunswick Community Library) Deb Canzano (Cohoes Public Library) Darlene Miller (Castleton Public Library) Pat Sahr (Nassau Free Library) Sharon Hodges (Petersburg Public Library) Gail Brown (Voorheesville Public Library) David Cole (William K. Sanford Town Library) Kathy Stempel (Berne Public Library) Carol Roberts (Troy Public Library) Carol Gaillard (Cheney Library) Ginger Hewitt (Watervliet Public Library) Jennifer McIntosh (East Greenbush Community Library) Sue Rokos (MVLS) Barbara Goetschius (RCS Community Library) Debbie Sternklar (Bethlehem Public Library) Mary Fellows (UHLS)

Mary Fellows did a presentation on looking at picture books and on being on the Caldecott Committee. The group then divided, and held its own Mock Caldecott. Discussion leaders were Mary and Sue Rokos, from Mohawk Valley Library System.

Winner of the Mock Caldecott was Flotsam by David Wiesner. Dear Fish by Chris Gall was a close second, and Sky Boys, by Deborah Hopkinson and illustrated by James Ransome was third.

Next meetings: February 23, March 1 (Summer Reading Program workshop at Colonie), April 13, April 27 (Storytelling workshop) May 18.

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Attendance: Maureen DeLaughter (William K. Sanford Town Library) Jennifer McIntosh (East Greenbush Community Library) Meta Reid (Albany Public Library) Joshua Carlson (Albany Public Library) Mary Fellows (UHLS)

Programs:

Maureen has been having great success with anime programs, DDR, and more. One large part of success is being able to have programs on Friday and Saturday nights after the library has closed,

which appeals to teens. Others are struggling to attract teens again, as sometimes interest goes in waves.

Books:

King Dork by Frank Portman

From School Library Journal

Grade 10 Up-Original, heartfelt, and sparkling with wit and intelligence, this debut novel tells the story of a 14-year-old outsider, Tom Henderson. For him, life is a series of humiliations, from the associate principal who mocks him to the popular girls who put him on their Dud list. The teen takes refuge in music, writing songs, and inventing band names with his only friend, Sam. He looks for a copy of *The Catcher in the Rye* in a box of books left by his father, a detective who died under strange circumstances. Tom sets out to read each volume, decode the secret messages that he finds, and figure out who his father really was. The daily torments of life at Hillmont High School play out brilliantly in ways that are both hilarious and heartbreaking. Sexual references and encounters abound, and the language is frank-oral sex is a frequent topic, as is drug use by teens and adults-but none of it is gratuitous. The plot unfolds at a leisurely pace, with digressions on music, popular culture, high school customs, literary criticism, and general philosophical observations, but Tom is so engaging that most readers won't mind. He's intellectually far above most of his peers but still recognizably a teen in his obsessions. The plot's mysteries come together for a conclusion that is satisfying but doesn't tie up all the loose ends. This dazzling novel will linger long in readers' memories.-*Miranda Doyle, San Francisco Public Library*

Looking for Alaska by John Green

From School Library Journal

Grade 9 Up - Sixteen-year-old Miles Halter's adolescence has been one long nonevent - no challenge, no girls, no mischief, and no real friends. Seeking what Rabelais called the "Great Perhaps," he leaves Florida for a boarding school in Birmingham, AL. His roommate, Chip, is a dirt-poor genius scholarship student with a Napoleon complex who lives to one-up the school's rich preppies. Chip's best friend is Alaska Young, with whom Miles and every other male in her orbit falls instantly in love. She is literate, articulate, and beautiful, and she exhibits a reckless combination of adventurous and self-destructive behavior. She and Chip teach Miles to drink, smoke, and plot elaborate pranks. Alaska's story unfolds in all-night bull sessions, and the depth of her unhappiness becomes obvious. Green's dialogue is crisp, especially between Miles and Chip. His descriptions and Miles's inner monologues can be philosophically dense, but are well within the comprehension of sensitive teen readers. The chapters of the novel are headed by a number of days "before" and "after" what readers surmise is Alaska's suicide. These placeholders sustain the mood of possibility and foreboding, and the story moves methodically to its ambiguous climax. The language and sexual situations are aptly and realistically drawn, but sophisticated in nature. Miles's narration is alive with sweet, self-deprecating humor, and his obvious struggle to tell the story truthfully adds to his believability. Like Phineas in John Knowles's *A Separate Peace* (S & S, 1960), Green draws Alaska so lovingly, in self-loathing darkness as well as energetic light, that readers mourn her loss along with her friends. - *Johanna Lewis, New York Public Library*

Come Back to Afghanistan: A California Teenager's Story by Said Hyder Akbar & Susan Burton

From School Library Journal

Starred Review. Grade 8 Up—After the fall of the Taliban government in 2001, Afghans living in exile began to return home in hopes of participating in rebuilding their war-torn country. Akbar's father sold his hip-hop clothing store in Oakland to join his friend Hamid Karzai, now the elected president, serving first as his spokesman and later as the governor of the remote province of Kunar. The author joined him right after he finished high school and spent three summers, first in Kabul and then in Asadabad, the provincial capital. The young man traveled through the countryside and across the mountainous border into Pakistan. Equipped with a microphone and recorder, he chronicled his experiences and his reactions for public radio's *This American Life*. These immediate observations form the basis of this engaging and informative account of Afghan life and politics interwoven with a teen's reactions to his first visit to his family's native land. Because of his background and connections, his interest and knowledge of Afghan history and politics, and his language skills, Akbar was involved in his father's work in ways that most teens can only dream of. Readers are rewarded with an inside look at Afghan reconstruction that is both informative and appealing. The teen admires his father and his father's friends immensely; he dreams of being personally involved in nation-building. Readers will come away from this memoir with a strong desire to see into the young man's future and that of the country that has so entranced him.—*Kathleen Isaacs, Towson University, MD*

An Abundance of Katherines by John Green

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Grade 9 Up—This novel is not as issue-oriented as Greens' *Looking for Alaska* (Dutton, 2005), though it does challenge readers with its nod to postmodern structure. Right after intellectual child-prodigy Colin Singleton graduates from high school, his girlfriend (who, like the 18 young women and girls whom he claimed as girlfriends over the years, is named Katherine) breaks up with him and sends him into a total funk. His best friend, Hassan, determines that he can only be cured with a road trip. After some rather aimless driving, the two find themselves in Gutshot, TN, where locals persuade them to stay. There, Colin spends his spare time working on a mathematical theorem of love, hypothesizing that romantic relationships can be graphed and predicted. The narrative is self-consciously dorky, peppered with anagrams, trivia, and foreign-language *bons mots* and interrupted by footnotes that explain, translate, and expound upon the text in the form of asides. It is this type of mannered nerdiness that has the potential to both win over and alienate readers. As usual, Greens' primary and secondary characters are given descriptive attention and are fully and humorously realized. While enjoyable, witty, and even charming, a book with an appendix that describes how the mathematical functions in the novel can be created and graphed is not for everybody. The readers who do embrace this book, however, will do so wholeheartedly.—*Amy S. Pattee, Simmons College, Boston*

Hellsing (vol. 7) by Kohta Hirano

PBK

Publisher: Diamond Comic Distributors

Demon Ororon by Mizuki Hakase

PBK. 232 pages

Publisher: Tokyo Pop (April 2004)

ISBN: 1591827256 ISBN: 9781591827252

This series follows the romance between Chiaki, the young orphan daughter of Archangel Michael and a human woman, and Ororon, King of Hell. Chiaki takes in the injured Ororon and cares for him, and as payment he offers to grant any wish she makes. Chiaki, who is lonely, says, "I want you to stay with me. I don't want anything else. Be my friend. Stay with me...forever." An innocent promise made in gratitude opens the door for a world of hurt, as sadistic angels, bounty hunters, demon princes, and every denizen of the underworld appear determined to destroy the King. But for love of his pacifist Chiaki, Ororon must also battle against his own bloodlust and murderous impulses. To save Ororon's life Chiaki releases unexpectedly devastating powers of her own and must come to grips with her own deadly nature. Not to be a downer, but the series is pretty much a tragedy. The tragic nature of being a Demon seems underscored by the characters, none of whom seem happy. They do their jobs, they suffer, they die; Ororon and Othello especially seemed to have lived/are living more or less meaningless lives.

Runaways (series) by Brian K Vaughan, Adrian Alphona (Illustrator), Takeshi Miyazawa (Illustrator)

Marvel Comics

ISBN-10: 0785118764

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Kids of supervillains run away to fight for good.

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