

Texas Teens Read!

BY CHRISTINE MCNEW AND KENDRA PERKINS

If you placed an order for 2008 Texas Reading Club materials from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC), you may have noticed that the 2008 order form included artwork and a manual for a new program, *Texas Teens Read!* You may also have heard that the Young Adult Round Table (YART) formed a committee to advise TSLAC on the program. We would like to take a few moments to tell you about this exciting new program for Texas libraries.

The 2006 report, *Long Overdue: A Fresh Look at Public and Leadership Attitudes About Libraries in the 21st Century*,¹ concluded by identifying four vital needs that libraries could help communities meet while simultaneously positioning themselves as funding priorities for elected officials.

- Providing a safe and engaging space for teens
- Supporting adult literacy and other components of workforce development
- Expanding access to the Internet and other uses of technology
- Becoming a community hub by making government forms and services easily available

In response to the report, TSLAC staff began planning programs to help libraries address these needs. For many years, Texas youth librarians have requested a separate and unique reading club for teens. To fulfill this need and to provide a program to assist Texas libraries in meeting the first challenge identified in the report, Christine McNew, youth services consultant for TSLAC, proposed establishing a statewide summer reading program for teens. With the enthusiastic support of State Librarian Peggy Rudd and Deborah Littrell, director of the library development division, planning for *Texas Teens Read!* began. Staff in the TSLAC Library Development Division, including Julie Hughes, office services coordinator; Kelli Hansen, Web editor; and Suzanne Holman, graphic designer, began planning for production and distribution of the artwork and manual. They also designed a Web page and order forms. Organizers are especially happy that the first *Texas Teens Read!* coincides with the celebration of the *Texas Reading Club Jubilee: 1958-2008!*

To involve Texas young adult librarians in planning and implementing *Texas Teens Read!*, McNew envisioned an advisory committee similar to the Children's Round Table Texas Reading Club Advisory Committee, established in the late 1980's, and approached the Young Adult Round Table (YART) Executive Board with a proposal to establish



an advisory committee. At TLA's Annual Assembly 2006, the YART Executive Board voted to form an ad hoc committee to serve in an advisory capacity to TSLAC. This partnership between TSLAC and YART has been enormously successful and productive.

The 2006-2007 YART chair, Jeana Actkinson, recruited eight public librarians and two school librarians for the ad hoc committee. The public librarians are: Kendra Perkins (chair, 2006-2009), Kim Archer, Deban Becker, Jennifer Freeman, WyLaina Hildreth, Amanda Hipp, Valerie Jensen, and Sheilah Kosco. The two school librarians initially selected for the ad hoc committee were Denise Bortolussi and Patricia Costello. When Patricia Costello resigned in 2006, Kate DiPronio, who is also a school librarian, soon filled her position. Monique Franklin, from Harris County Public Library, serves as an advisor to the committee. McNew, manager of *Texas Teens Read!*, is the committee's liaison to TSLAC. Both Jeana Actkinson and the 2007-2008 YART chair, Susi Grissom, have attended TTRAC meetings and have been very supportive of the work of the committee. Joanna Nigrelli, the 2007-2008 YART chair-elect, attended the most recent meeting and has been reviewing applications for new committee members.

At the 2007 TLA Annual Conference, the YART membership voted to make the *Texas Teens Read!* Advisory Committee (TTRAC) a standing committee. The TTRAC Web page hosted by TLA at www.txla.org/groups/yart/texasteensread.html contains a list of current members. You may volunteer for this exciting committee by completing the form at www.txla.org/groups/forms/yart_vol.html.

The TTRAC held its first meeting in October 2006. Committee members selected a permanent name for the committee, the *Texas Teens Read!* Advisory Committee (TTRAC). They discussed themes, illustrators, and programs for 2008 and 2009 TLA Annual Conferences. The committee selected *Game On! TTR.08* for the first *Texas Teens Read!* theme. Four of the TTRAC members – Kendra Perkins, WyLaina Hildreth, Deban Becker, and Amanda Hipp – volunteered to co-author *Game On! TTR.08*, the first *Texas Teens Read!* programming manual. The manual features eight exciting programs about electronic games, role-playing games, board games, trivia games, extreme sports, and more.

The committee nominated five artists to create the artwork for *Game On! TTR.08*. TSLAC sent invitations to each of them, and Rod Espinosa, a graphic novelist with Antarctic Press in San Antonio, responded enthusiastically. Espinosa captured the spirit of *Game On! TTR.08* in a poster, certificate, bookmark, and clip art.

The manual authors will present a program on the *Game On! TTR.08* programming manual on April 18, 2008 at 8:00 a.m. at the TLA Annual Conference 2008 in Dallas. Immediately following this presentation, the TTRAC will host a program by the 2008 illustrator Rod Espinosa. Both programs are co-sponsored by the YART and TSLAC.

To view Espinosa's artwork, read his biography, or place an order for the 2008 *Texas Teens Read!* programming manual, posters, bookmarks, certificates, and reading logs, visit the TSLAC website at www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/projects/ttr/. The printable and downloadable programming manual will be available on this *Texas Teens Read!* Web page and will be mailed to participating libraries on CD-Rom by January 31, 2008. The TSLAC will mail Espinosa's artwork to participating libraries by March 31, 2008.

The *Texas Teens Read!* programming materials will be provided without charge to participating Texas public libraries. Orders from school libraries will be filled as long as supplies permit. Schools offering a program during the summer, especially in locations without access to a public library, will be given first priority. Orders from schools planning to use the *Texas Teens Read!* materials during the following school year will be filled on a first come, first served basis for as long as supplies last. They will be mailed in August 2008.

The Texas State Library and the *Texas Teens Read!* Advisory Committee are now looking ahead to 2009 when the *Texas Teens Read!* theme is *Time Twistin'* and focuses on time travel, fantasy, and science fiction literature and programs for teens. The artist is Emily Fiegenschuh, illustrator of *A Practical Guide to Dragons*, an American Library Association Quick Pick for reluctant YA Readers, and *A Practical Guide to Monsters*, both published by Wizards of the Coast.

For more information about *Texas Teens Read!*, please contact Christine McNew at cmcnew@tsl.state.tx.us or Kendra Perkins at kperkins@bryantx.gov. ★

Christine McNew is the youth services consultant for the Library Development Division of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission and the manager of Texas Teens Read! and the Texas Reading Club.

Kendra Perkins is the chair of the Texas Teens Read! Advisory Committee and a youth services librarian at the Larry J. Ringer Public Library in the Bryan + College Station Public Library System.



Sample artwork created by Rod Espinoza for *Game On! TTR.08* is used by permission of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.



NOTE

- 1 *Long Overdue: A Fresh Look at Public and Leadership Attitudes About Libraries in the 21st Century*. Prepared by Public Agenda with support from the Americans for Libraries Council and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. ©Public Agenda, 2006. The report is available on the Public Agenda website at www.publicagenda.org/research/research_reports_details.cfm?list=99.