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Ask Aimee: Adults Reading Books for Teens?!

by Aimee Meuchel, Tualatin Public Library

Hi Aimee,

A recent *Christian Science Monitor* article highlights the huge popularity of teen books with adults:

<http://tinyurl.com/9f6vtqy>

What's your take on this trend? Please pick one of the following...

- A. The more readers the merrier. Oh, and thanks for justifying my budget.
- B. Stay in the adult section, you guys!
- C. Some other response...

Hello intrepid reader of books not meant for adults! What do I think of adults encroaching on territory meant for teens? I think A. The more the merrier. And budget distributor people--be prepared to give me more money to purchase the books that people really want to read. Forget the National Book Award nominees. Bring on more

Hunger Games!

The bigger question is why is this happening? Why do adults want to read books intended for teens? I'm sure we all have our own opinion, but I have the column, so here's mine: Adult Fiction seems to either be Literature (capital L intended) or fluff. There doesn't seem to be a lot of in the middle (sure this is an exaggeration). What is between James Patterson and Junot Diaz? I love my fluff (confession-I'm a romance reader). I don't love my Literature (got a degree in German Literature-enough depressing, moving, deep books to last me the rest of my life). I want something to engage my brain without requiring a dictionary. Great teen books do this! I found every sentence in *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green to be deliciously edible. I loved the premise of *The Future of Us* by Jay Asher and Carolyn Mackler. *Beauty Queens* by Libba Bray was one of the funniest books I've ever read.

Yes, there are great adult authors that do this as



Confession: I brown-bagged *Twilight*

well—Christopher Moore, Jasper Fforde, C. Alan Bradley, and more. Perhaps I'm not finding as many authors who write for adults that I like, but apparently this is also true for other 30-44 year-olds, according to the above article. Maybe we are all still reliving our glorious teen years (insert sarcasm) or we don't want to grow up. I feel, however, that many of the great books being written today are being written for teens and adults have discovered this and are enjoying them too. They seem to be fresh and new—not just sex and short chapters. One last confession though—I'm over trilogies! Could we please have more Young Adult titles that are stand alone?

PLEASE?

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Steampunk Rolls Through the Jackson County by Janice Mohr-Tipton, Jackson County Library Services**So what is “steampunk?”**

K. W. Jeter coined the term in 1987, but it has taken 31 years to come into a full bloom of combining the retro- futuristic movement, Victoriana fascination, and the fiction of Jules Verne. It started with fictional stories and spread to fashion & costumes, jewelry, 3D artforms, visual media, performing arts, rock bands, and whatever you can imagine.

In his book *Steampunk Bible* (2011), Jeff Vandermeer describes this fiction, “STEAMPUNK= Mad Scientist Inventor [invention (steam + airship or metalman /baroque stylings) x (pseudo)Victorian setting]+ progressive or reactionary politics x adventure plot.”

How did JCLS get into “steampunking” this summer?

As Program Specialist for Outreach to Youth, I decided after collaborating with staff to combine teens’ interest in steampunk stories and love of crafting. An art program featuring wearable art with mini-booktalks for all the branches in JCLS was born. Teens could make a necklace, bracelet, or a pin. They heard about great suggestions for reading in historical, realistic, mystery, and steampunk fiction, graphic novels and nonfiction. Fourteen of the fifteen branches participated with generous donations from staff and the public of all kinds of jewelry pieces, old watches, hardware, odds and ends, trinkets, and some purchases. For three of our small outlying branches, I created a “drop-in” steampunk jewelry project where teens

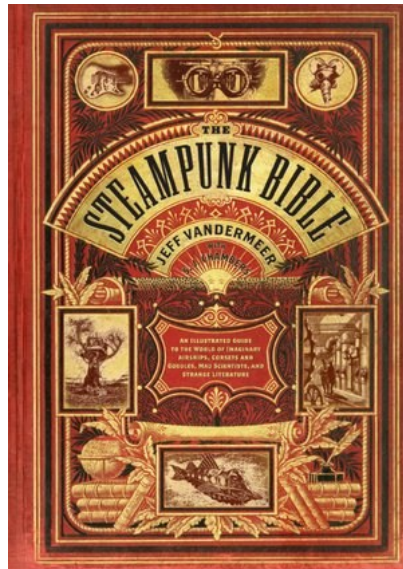
chose a packet of materials with instructions and used a tool and special glue provided for making their project on the spot when they visited that branch.

Was ‘steampunk’ successful over the summer?

The great value has been that the “steampunk” theme had attracted both teens who use the library and a lot of teens who normally don’t use the library or participate in the reading program. This program created new library users much to the delight of staff who work with teens. The mini-booktalks sparked new reading interests and a look at what the teen shelves have available for those new users—PLUS some awesome art you see pictured to the right of this article!



Punks? Leather and spikes.
Steampunks? Baubles. Lots of baubles.



Your guide to all things Steamy and punky.



Steampunk also requires a lot of feathers!

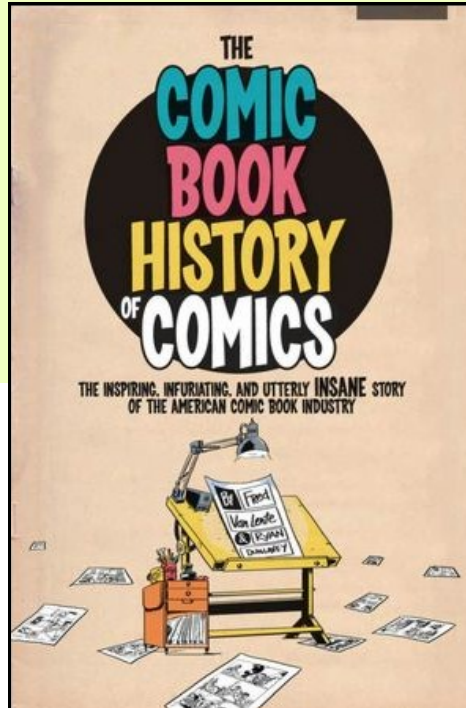
A Review of *The Comic Book History of Comics*

by Mark Richardson, Cedar Mills Community Library

When I finished reading Fred Van Lente and Ryan Dunlavey's *Comic Book History of Comics*, it occurred to me that this was the comic equivalent of getting the Ken Burns documentary treatment. Just about every significant event in the development of American comics over the last hundred years is covered in this book. Better still, these events are entertaining and explained in an engaging way. Of course, comics are a great medium for this type of documentary experience as we can see by flood of nonfiction comics being produced these days (does the Carter Family really warrant its own graphic biography? Yet I've heard it's quite good).

The book starts with the development of newspaper strips like *the Yellow Kid* and takes the reader on a narrative that leads directly to the threat to comics today—digital piracy. The rise of superhero comics, the rise and fall of horror comics, the indie comics movement of the 70s and the influence of manga and European comics are all covered as well. One common theme throughout the book is the continual mistreatment of artists and writers by the publishers over the years that never seems to go away. This problem is clearly still with us today and its why the current move by many writers and artists to independent and creator-owned publishers has been a long time coming.

The one individual that looms large throughout most of the book is Jack Kirby, creator of *Captain America*, *the Fantastic Four*, *the Hulk* and many



Jack Kirby—man, myth, legend.
1917–1994

other characters. Kirby is depicted as a workhorse and a fount of creativity who is repeatedly taken advantage of by the people he works for. I never realized how long he actually worked in the industry and just how influential he really was until reading this history of his work. Yet, it is interesting to note, several savvy creators like Bob Kane (*Batman*) and Stan Lee (*Spiderman*) managed to secure comfortable livings for themselves by negotiating favorable contracts with the publishers. Unfortunately, their successes were not the norm by any stretch. Most creators had the same troubles that Kirby did, working long hours with little security, while their creations could become multi-million dollar iconic characters that are immensely valuable to the corporations that own them.

At first glance, this work may not be an easy sell for teens, but the storytelling and the narrative are so good, it will hold the attention of any teen interested in comics, and maybe even a few who aren't. The universal struggle of the artist and writer are depicted so well here, that anyone interested in these fields as a career or even a hobby would do well to read this book. I would recommend this to older teens with these interests. While there is no outright nudity or language in the book, there are some adult themes, particularly in the chapters dealing with the indie comics movement in the 70s and the strange man, Charles Moulton, who created *Wonder Woman*. Yet, all in all, it's a great read and very informative.

“I have never come across any adult nor adolescent who had outgrown comic-book reading who would ever dream of keeping any of these “books” for sentimental or other reason.”

— Dr. Fredric Wertham's infamous *Seduction of the Innocent* (1954)

Riding the Dystopian Wave by Dawn Borgardt, Beaverton City Library

It's been a few years since we had a solid 'book club' for teens at the Beaverton City Library. It's something we talk about re-instating all the time, but man, it's hard to get teens into the library for a book club! So to ease back into the waters of teen book-club-dom, we decided to do a series of three Book Chats this summer. Each was centered on a different theme or genre, so that participants didn't have to read the same book. So the format was more of a book share than a book club. In the past, we've had 15+ turn out for Pizza and Pages programs in June, so we went with a blockbuster theme – Dystopias - during our busiest month – June, ordered some pizzas and crossed our fingers.

We were rewarded. About 17 teens came; ready to talk all about their favorite dystopias. Most everyone there had read *The Hunger Games* trilogy and several were 1 or 2 books into the *Divergent* trilogy. We started by discussing what makes a book dystopian, and then moved to sharing recommendations. The discussion was lively and I left the program with at least 20 recommendations that we posted on our Teen Facebook page throughout the summer. Next we

had an activity: I put together a series of quotes from different characters in *The Hunger Games*, teens teamed up and took turns reading the quotes and guessing which character they belonged to. I had another quote game, but the HG quotes took the remainder of the hour and everyone left gloating about their extensive *Hunger Games* knowledge.

We did serve pizza and soda to entice participants, but the enthusiastic conversation conversation told us we were on to something. Then in July we had the Humor Book Chat. Armed with activities, our favorite funny books, and pizza, we and waited...only 3 people came. What was wrong? We had one more chance to find out. All summer, the plan was to let teens pick the August theme – we polled teens in the teen room and asked participants in other programs – what should our August book chat theme be? The overwhelming response - Dooomsday! Wait, you might say, isn't this a thinly veiled way to talk about Dystopian books again? Maybe so, but we're democratic about these things, so Dooomsday it was! This chat took place in late August, a time when our programs are traditionally sloooow. But, 10


eager teens showed up to talk about Dooomsday books. Another lively program ensued with book recommendations and discussion of how one might respond to the end-of-days scenarios that I passed around. One teen came up to me afterwards to say, "I totally knew what to do in my alien invasion scenario – just find out what the aliens are allergic to and reproduce tons of it – drives them away real quick...Just like the cats in *True Meaning of Smekday*." Awww. The take-home message? Give them what they want! And with that, we'll keep riding the Dystopian wave until the teens tell us it's over.

I ♥ Dystopias book chat

Hunger Games fans,
join us for pizza &
a chat about the latest
and greatest in
Dystopian fiction.

Tuesday, June 19
3:00–4:00 pm

At the Beaverton City Library
Grades 6-12 only, please.



Flip over or reading suggestions

“I think it coincides with young people’s anxieties about the future, in that it’s about a heroic figure triumphing over the odds, but what drew me to write that kind of story was simply that it gave me a big canvas in which to explore love, betrayal, and mistakes.”

— Moira Young, author of *Blood Red Road*

More dystopian zombies, please.



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OYAN: Finding great reads for Oregon teens!

Fall Membership Meeting

Directions to Tualatin Public Library

Tualatin Public Library
18878 Southwest Martinazzi Avenue
Tualatin, OR 97062

Coming from the South:

Take exit 289 toward Tualatin/Sherwood
Turn left onto SW Nyberg St
Turn right onto SW Martinazzi Ave
Destination will be on the right

Coming from the North:

Take exit 289 toward Tualatin/Sherwood
Turn right onto SW Nyberg St
Turn right onto SW Martinazzi Ave
Destination will be on the right

Lunch Options:

- Birra Deli (Sandwiches)
- Ruben's New York Deli (pizza and subs)
- Thai Cuisine Restaurant (Thai)
- Sushi Train
- Dickie Jo's Burgers
- Panera
- Bambuza Vietnamese
- Chipotle (super busy at noon)
- Aloha Grill

Upcoming Meetings

Fall 2012	October 26 10 AM	Tualatin Public Library 18878 SW Martinazzi Avenue Tualatin, OR 97062 503-691-3071
Winter 2013	January 18 11-3 PM	Salem Public Library 585 Liberty St. SE Salem OR 97301 503-588-6052
Spring 2013	May 10 11-3 PM	The Dalles-Wasco County Library 722 Court Street The Dalles, OR 97058 541-296-2815

OYAN [Oregon Young Adult Network] exists to provide a network for communication and growth among people who provide library services to teens, to increase awareness of teen library services in the state of Oregon, and to promote cooperation between school and public libraries.

Visit us online at

<http://www.olaweb.org/oyan/>