

Inside this issue:

# Oyan Review

oregon young adult network

OYEA Awarded to Sonja Sommerville	1 & 2
Aha! Moments	1 & 4
90 Seconds of Fame	3
Better Than a Bio: Meet Greta	4
Jason Reynolds Talks like an Author	5
Contacts, Announcements, & Events	6

## OYEA Awarded to Sonja Sommerville of Salem Public Library

*This text has been adapted from the announcement of this year's OYEA winner at the OYAN reception last night at the Oregon Library Association's Annual Conference.*

OYAN's You're Excellent Award (OYEA) is given every year to an individual, library, organization, program, or initiative that has made a positive and significant contribution to teens in libraries in the

state of Oregon. The award consists of an engraved glass wedge and a monetary donation of up to \$100 to the teen services program of the award recipient's choice.

This year's winner is a long-time teen librarian and an OYAN queen in her own right: Sonja Sommerville of the Salem Public Library! Read on to hear



Sonja (right) displays her award with Salem Youth Services Manger Karen Fischer (left)

her colleagues and teens say about her.

Salem Youth Services Manager Karen Fischer says, "Sonja models the best in teen services. She has made our Teen Scene a destination for Salem area teens from over 13 middle schools and

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Aha! Moments By, Julie Jenmard; Cottage Grove Public Library

I recently had a series of "Aha Moments" in regard to my life as a youth services librarian. It all started during the week of the OLA conference. I knew TLAB had a huge program the following week on Friday: a teen art show. Last year it was highly successful, but I was not yet at the Cottage Grove Public Li-

brary for the program. As of the start of the OLA conference, I had two art submissions; last year the two gallery walls were filled. Thus starts my panic. I heard rumors that the teens tend to wait until the last minute to turn in art, which was true as of the deadline; however, one week before the show this fact

did not assuage my fear that the art show that teens had worked so hard and long putting together would be a flop. I personally wanted it bigger and better and not to fail under my guidance. So, I made a back up plan that turned out better than expected. I contacted the high school art teacher to see if I could go to her

class to procure art. She responded quickly and invited me to all five of her art class periods. Tuesday did bring in about 10 art pieces. Even still, those few pieces would not have had the gallery brimming with art.

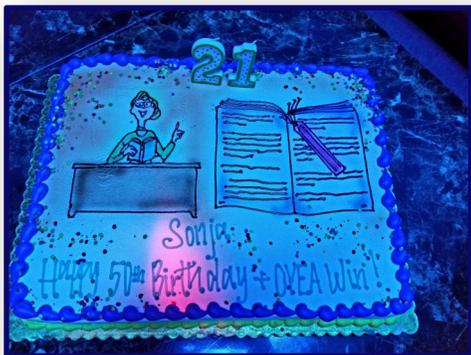
The day of the visit rolls around, I have a bell schedule in my hand and I venture

*(Continued on page 4)*

## OYEA Awarded to Sonja Sommerville of Salem Public Library cont.

(Continued from page 1)

eight high schools by curating a vibrant (and heavily used!) collection; encouraging teen literacy; providing leadership opportunities; partnering with a variety of local businesses and organizations to showcase teen talents; and welcoming and celebrating all teens as an important part of our community.”



The award presentation just happened to fall on Sonja’s birthday.

Salem Youth Services

Library Associate Leslie says, “Her patrons love her and are eager to participate in the creative programs she provides for them.”

14-year-old Brinsley says, “Sonja Somerville is an excellent teen librarian because she caters to teens’ interests. From *Stranger Things* parties to book clubs to movie days, she works tirelessly to ensure that everyone can find something they’d enjoy. Also, she gives teens leadership opportunities and fun experiences through the Teen Advisory Board.”

16-year-old Samantha says, “Sonja is generous and kind, and goes out of her way to

help and be there for others. She is the reason I felt comfortable to come to the library to try new things and meet new people. I began volunteering on the library’s teen advisory board because of her, and I cannot imagine myself without it, or the friends I have made and the skills and experiences I have gained because of it.”

Teenage Sam says, “She has added so much to our library,

as she is in charge of the Teen Scene and as such is behind every single thing that is done there. [...] The group would never work without her.”

18-year-old Rebecka says, “I, and everyone involved in Sonja’s library social circle will agree she is past overdue for this OYEA award. She is an incredibly crucial member of the Salem Public Library’s staff. This award will finally give Sonja the recognition she has long since deserved.”

Congratulations, Sonja!

### Past Winners

- 2017: Megan Hoak  
The Dalles-Wasco County Library
- 2016: Amy Wilde  
Cascade Middle School Bend, OR
- 2015: Aimee Muechel  
Tualatin Public Library
- 2014: Heydi Smith  
Stayton Public Library
- 2013: Traci Glass  
Eugene Public Library
- 2012: April Witteveen  
Deschutes Public Library
- 2011: Anne Tran  
Midland Branch, Multnomah County Library
- 2009: Brian Tompkins  
Newberg Public Library
- 2008: Maria Baldo  
Hermiston Public Library
- 2007: Andrew Cherbas  
Corvallis-Benton County Library

For more information or to nominate a deserving individual, library, organization, program, or initiative check out the [OYEA page on the OYAN site.](#)

## 90 Seconds of Fame

By, Sonja Somerville, Salem Public Library

A momentary hush fell over the room as the screen sprang to life. It was a big moment for seven members of the Salem Public Library Teen Advisory Board - a moment months in the making. They were about to see all 90 seconds of their creative retelling of "Ella Enchanted" by Gail Carson Levine on the big screen, during the official screening of the annual 90-Second Newbery Film Festival.

They were ready, and perhaps a bit sheepish, as the audience met their Ella (played by an eggplant with glued-on googly eyes) and Prince Charmant (a poblano pepper with with glued-on googly

eyes). But as it turns out, this madcap creative effort was a good fit for the 90-Second Newbery Film Festival, an annual project organized by James Kennedy, author of "The Order of Odd-Fish."

Our TAB video - filmed entirely on one December afternoon - was called "a fun romp" and "bonkers" by the judges, which seems about right. Even the most enthusiastic participant in its creation wouldn't exactly call it "good," but it was fun to watch and a heck of a lot of fun to make.

The idea telling the story using google-eyed vegetables started, as is often the case with these things, as a joke by a brilliant TAB member, Samantha. But, I thought it would work in their favor because ... uh ... who else would be doing it? A mere \$30 worth of produce later, the team was ready to roll.

We submitted the final video



Youth from the Salem Public Library TAB enjoy their 90 seconds of fame

not expecting much, so it was a bit of a thrill to be invited to the screening at Open Signal in Portland.

A group of 10 TAB members and adults made their way up from Salem. The screening was really fun. James and his Portland co-host, Dale Bayse (author of the Heck: Where the Bad Kids Go) were funny, entertaining emcees that approached each short film with great respect and enthusiasm. Also, some were genuinely and astoundingly good. I highly recommend the adaptation of "The Crossover" by Kwame Alexander submitted by a group from Lincolnwood, IL and "Volcano: The Eruption and Healing of Mount St. Helens" by Patricia Lauber told

in Lego stop-action by a student in Paris, France.

We also gathered some tips for ourselves or others who might be interested in entering videos in future years:

- Remember that the challenge is to tell the entire story of a Newbery Award winner or honor book inside 90 seconds. It's a good exercise in finding the essence of a narrative.
- You'll stand out more if you choose an obscure book, but you really can do any book you want to from the Newbery list.
- Put your own spin on it. Creative license is freely given in this contest.
- Be wacky if the mood strikes.
- It doesn't need to be slick, but it should come from the heart.

If you'd like to see our film, visit:

<http://90secondnewbery.com/search/Salem+public+library>

And if you'd like to be a part of the fun in 2019, all the information you need is here:

<http://90secondnewbery.com/>

OYAN is currently seeking candidates for incoming chair and secretary. These positions can be held by one person or held by two people as a co-chair or co-secretary. **Please refer to the [OYAN website for full position descriptions.](#)**

Send nominations for yourself or someone else by emailing [oyan@olaweb.org](mailto:oyan@olaweb.org)

## Aha! Moments, cont.

(Continued from page 1)

to the local high school for my first ever class visit as a youth services librarian. Aha moment number one: I am not nervous around a large group of teens. I have never had the opportunity to be around so many teenagers at once. Instead of feeling any ounce of trepidation, I felt my introverted self more energetic around their presence.

Aha moment two: No two teens are the same; knowing this in theory and seeing it is not the same. In an unstructured classroom (it was an art room), teens had the ability to strike up conversations easily with each other. Observing the differences was akin to a college psychology observation room. Coming from a mind keen on research, this was momentary utopia. Having the opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations about the library was awesome. Our conversations were short yet I could tell they were receptive to my information.

Aha moment three: The teens knew about the art show. The notion was a vague concept to them though; out of sight, out of mind. After being able to talk to them directly, I saw multiple light bulbs turn on.

Which leads me to aha number four: If the teens are not coming to the library, I need to

go to them. Ironically, I had told this to another librarian the week before. Today is Thursday. I will find out tomorrow if this belief is true. Either way I now have hope that I have a concrete tool to engage teens in the library. I also have about thirty more art pieces.

Aha moment 5: I attended the Understanding Autism preconference. One teen came up to me with his artwork. He told me that I probably could not read it but he read what it said. I responded that he could entitle the artwork to reflect the meaning of the words if he wanted. He then stood in the corner by himself listening to music. I took my newfound knowledge of what I learned at the preconference and decided to talk to him. I simply asked, "What are you listening to?" I waited for him to notice me. When he did, he took his earbuds out and asked me to repeat myself. I did and he told me it was trap music. The short conversation went on for me to find out he likes writing songs in music class and that he may or may not be interested in becoming a DJ someday. When I got back to the library, I read the title of his art, "Have a Very Merry Metal Christmas!"

Perhaps I avoided classroom visits because I thought I would be awkward and nerv-

ous around teens. Future classroom visits will now enthusiastically be in my library future. With a new love of my role as a teen services librarian, I am looking forward to the Art Show and furthering my role to increase attendance at all teen programs. Did I mention I love my job?

### Better Than a Bio: Meet Greta

**Recently I spoke with Greta Berquist, Youth Services Consultant at the State Library. Here's what she had to say for herself.**

**What's your deal?** I love kids and libraries. And chocolate and dogs.

**Tell me about a book you didn't finish:** Cinder by Marissa Meyer. I tried to like the Lunar Chronicles because my teens did, but I just couldn't get into them. A few of my YA favs are Angie Thomas, Nicola Yoon, Jason Reynolds, John Corey Whaley, Deborah Heiligman, Sharon Draper and Sharon Flake. I just started *Saints and Misfits* by S.K. Ali.

**What would I find in your fridge?** Butter, lemons, eggs, spinach. And a door full of condiments.

**Are you more a hunter or gatherer?** I'd rather be a gatherer but I think I'm more of a hunter.

**In the movie about your life, who would play you and what genre would it be?** A comedy starring Amy Poehler.

## Jason Reynolds Talks Like an Author

By, Kristy Kemper Hodge; Corvallis-Benton County Public Library

It was Saturday night of the OASL Fall Conference and Jason Reynolds towered on stage. He regaled us with the story of how he went from an obstinate non-reader to the author powerhouse he is today. The story begins with a much younger Jason, who grew up in a neighborhood that was dangerous and full of perils like gangs, shootings, drugs, and death. Where young men walked on one side of the law or the other, dealing and gang-banging or keeping their heads down, going to school, and staying out of trouble. Jason was able to keep out of trouble, and focus on school, but he was no reader. Why read? Why bother when there were no books about people like him? Who looked like him, talked like him, walked like him, lived like him? Or about people like his friends, family, and the people in his neighborhood? What could books possibly offer?

Then came Queen Latifah. Thus began Jason's lifelong love of rap music and a love of language, of words, and of writing. When Jason discovered a rapper whose music spoke his life and his world, he couldn't get enough. He listened, he learned the lyrics. He decided then and there to become what he revered. He was going to be the next Queen Latifah. And he told his friends and family so.

Now, we know Jason Reynolds as a prolific and successful author who writes much needed books about characters of color, often about tough topics, like gun violence, domestic violence, police violence, racial violence, broken family relationships, and trying to figure out how to live in hard neighborhoods. What I didn't know until hearing him speak is that he was nearly a college dropout. That, after moving to New York, he very nearly gave up on writing after just one rejection. That he felt like teachers, librarians, and other adults failed him and so many others when those same grown-ups could have made a difference by handing them books that reflected his world at a much younger age. By promoting rap music as the much-needed answer to a magnificently huge gap in literature that expressed the life of young people living like Jason, rather than declaring rap as a decline in culture and a danger to youth. By helping direct them to books and music that mirrored the experiences of Jason and his community. Thankfully, there was Queen Latifah.

Thankfully, there was Dean Myers' son, who challenged and encouraged Jason to keep writing.

Thankfully, there was Jason's mom, who allowed him to move back home.

Thankfully, there is Jason Reynolds, writing about the youth he would have wanted to read about as a kid and teen.



Jason Reynolds takes the stage

And thankfully, there are teachers, and librarians everywhere, helping young people find Jason's books and stories, whether they mirror the lives of those youth, or whether they open windows into lives unlike their own, so that they learn, empathize, and explore the experiences of their peers elsewhere.

**Check out Jason's books for teens and middle grade readers:**

- All American Boys
- As Brave As You
- Boy in the Black Suit
- Ghost
- Long Way Down
- Miles Morales: Spider-Man
- Patina
- Sunny
- When I was the Greatest

OYAN: Finding great reads for Oregon teens!



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Presentations and Handouts from the 2018 OLA conference
have been posted on Northwest Central. Check out the OYAN
blog for a list of sessions that may be of particular interest to
OYAN members.

Oregon libraries and Teen Services would really benefit by hav-
ing more teen-serving library staff from Oregon becoming in-
volved in CSLP. Contact Luke Kralik, Organizational Coordina-
tor via email or by phone: 503-842-0582 for more information.

OYAN sold 545 tickets and made approximately \$2,200 during
the annual raffle.

The 2018 OYAN Book Rave list has been announced. Find cur-
rent and past lists through our webpage.

We welcome all your comments, articles, photos, book
reviews, ideas, and suggestions for future
OYAN Review newsletters!
Please submit to
oyanpublications@gmail.com.

Upcoming Meetings

Table with 3 columns: Meeting Period, Date, and Location. Rows include Summer 2018 (July 27, 2018, Deschutes Public Library), Fall 2018 (October 19, 2018, Wilsonville Public Library), and Winter 2018 (TBD, TBD).

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.

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