

## Board of Directors

Kristie Atwood  
*UTK School of Information Sciences*

Colleen Gilrane  
*UTK College of Education*

Sue Diehl  
*Robertsville Middle School Oak Ridge*

Ted Hipple  
*UTK College of Education*

Lexa Hooten  
*Knox County Schools*

Tena Litherland  
*The Webb School of Knoxville*

Judith Neff  
*Saint Joseph School*

Linda Phillips  
*UTK Libraries*

Sandra Twardosz  
*UTK College of Human Ecology*

Jinx Watson  
*UTK School of Information Sciences*

Fredda Williams  
*Knox County Public Library*

Kenneth Wise, Director  
*UTK Libraries*

**Newsletter Editor**  
Chris Durman  
*UTK Libraries*



The Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature celebrated its official opening on March 1, 1999, with ceremonies in the John C. Hodges Library and an evening talk by Suzanne Fisher Staples, writer of young adult fiction.

Publishers of children's and young adult books have agreed to place their newest published books on review in the Center, where books will be available for study by teachers, public and school librarians, college students, and parents of school-age children. Review copies will be displayed in the Center for a period of eighteen months. In addition to the current children's publications, a collection of professional reference works, secondary sources, and critical commentaries will be available to reviewers, as well as current issues of journals and review articles germane to books for children and young adults.

Outreach efforts sponsored by the Center will include workshops for teachers and librarians and talks by authors and illustrators of children's and young adult books.

The Center was created through the efforts of the University of Tennessee Libraries, School of Information Sciences, College of Education, and College of Human Ecology, the Knox County Schools, and the Knox County Public Library.

For further information about the Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature, contact the Director, Kenneth Wise, at 423-974-2359.



Board members Kenneth Wise, Jinx Watson, Lexa Hooten, Judith Neff, Ted Hipple, Sandra Twardosz, Fredda Williams, Kristie Atwood, and Linda Phillips

**Children's author  
Jack Gantos to speak  
September 30**

...see p. 4

Visitors to the opening of the Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature examine award-winning books. The Center celebrated its official opening on March 1.



## Recent Workshops

**PICTURE BOOKS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM.** What do you get when you combine three summer weekends, fifty students, three instructors, art, music, poetry, drama and lots of picture books? A wonderful experience called "Picture Books Across the Curriculum" offered by the School of Information Sciences and sponsored by the University of Tennessee Evening School. Graduate students from the College of Education, College of Human Ecology, School of Information Sciences (SIS) plus regional teachers and librarians comprised the class. Dr. Jinx Watson, Assistant Professor and Head of the Youth Services program for SIS, led the team of instructors along with SIS adjunct instructors Susan Epling and Kristie Atwood.

Focusing on the importance of stimulating and diverse literature for children, the course included guidance for selecting and using literature and other media for K-6 teachers and librarians. Students were asked to read, assess, analyze and write about fifty picture books that were new to them. The Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature proved a valuable resource for these explorations.

Plans are in the works for offering a course next summer with an emphasis on young adult literature for teachers and librarians working with students in grades 7-12.

**CHILDREN'S BOOKS IN DAY CARE.** "Children's Books in Day Care: Availability, Quality, and Teachers' Choices" was presented by Sandra Twardosz (UT Department of Child and Family Studies, College of Human Ecology) on February 9, 1999 as part of the Center's short program series. The research, conducted with Sandra Stone, a CFS doctoral student, documented the wide variation in opportunities for exposure to quality literature across day care classrooms for four-year-old children.

**MODERN REALISM AND YOUR STUDENTS.** Modern realism for young adults has often been described as grim and bleak, but many young people feel this accurately describes their lives. Brock Cole has written three books in this genre, *The Goats*, *Celine* and *The Facts Speak for Themselves*, which portray the lives of females in pressing circumstances. Each novel offers readers insight into contemporary themes and universal issues of coming of age.

Recently, Scot Smith, Central High School librarian, offered participants a glimpse of the philosophical issues undergirding Brock Cole's work. Smith challenged the audience to consider the quality of life for many teen-aged girls as they work their way through today's culture. The audience of teachers and librarians exchanged real tales of real students with whom they work and compared these students and other literary characters to Cole's protagonists.

**READER RESPONSE PROGRAM.** University Child Development Center Pre-Kindergarten teacher Lisa Talley, Powell Middle School Language Arts teacher Jenny Wallace, Vine Middle School Science teacher Cheryl Cleeton, and Inskip Elementary 3rd grade teacher Heather Porter were presenters at a Center program entitled "Examining Children's Responses to Picture Books," January 20, 1999.

The teachers presented their analyses of the processes their children went through as they engaged with a variety of picture books from the Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature. The teachers showcased their students' responses, which varied from talk to dance to photography to three-dimensional artistic creations.

The Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature greatly appreciates the alumnae of **Pi Beta Phi** for their generous support through the **Phi Beta Phi Endowment for Children's Literature**.

## Staples Gives Center's First Lecture

How does an author of fiction for young adults develop characters and settings that will engage her young readers' imaginations? Sources of inspiration are no problem for Suzanne Fisher Staples, who served as a UPI foreign correspondent in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Nepal, among other exotic locales.

As the first speaker brought to campus by the Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature, March 1, Staples showed slides of the real people and real places that gave rise to her stories.

Imagine a tiger charging *up the trunk of your elephant* to warn you away from her cubs.

Imagine driving for days across the Pakistan desert, taking care to avoid bandits and rebel factions while breaking down frequently (because "only camels can cope with this terrain").

This latter adventure was part of Staples' work for the United States Agency for International Development, where she was beginning her efforts to improve women's literacy among the nomads of the Cholistan Desert.

Staples' party arrived twelve hours later than expected; however, the entire group—men, women, and children—were assembled to greet her. They had built a mud hut for her comfort and used their scarce fuel of gathered twigs and dung to keep a bath warm for her arrival.

As Staples told us, "There were many things to be unlearned as well as learned in the desert."

Why does she write? "It is not a compulsion fueled by love of writing," Staples said. "It can be very scary and painful." But, she is driven by *story*: "Because stories are the most important thing in the world. They teach us how to live, how to love, and, most important, how to find magic wherever we are."

Staples' first two novels for young adults, *Shabanu: Daughter of the Wind* and *Haveli*, draw on her experiences in Pakistan—and especially on her meeting with an orphaned girl, who, because she and her grandmother formed a non-traditional family group without men, was feared as a witch by the Cholistan nomads.

A third novel, *Dangerous Skies*, is set in a remote part of the Chesapeake Bay area, where Staples settled after her tenure with USAID.

Suzanne Fisher Staples now lives in Chattanooga, where she is working on *Shiva's Fire*, a novel set in India.



Suzanne Fisher Staples chats with Board member Lexa Hooten. Staples gave the Center's inaugural lecture, March 1.

THE *Center for Children's & Young Adult Literature*  
652 John C. Hodges Library  
The University of Tennessee  
Knoxville, TN 37996-1000

---

You are invited to hear

## **Jack Gantos**

author of *Rotten Ralph*,  
the *Jack Henry* books, and  
*Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key*

**7 p.m., Thursday, September 30**  
UT University Center Ballroom  
1502 Cumberland Avenue

Jack Gantos must have been a very naughty boy! He certainly has an affinity for the misfit and the mischievous.

From *Rotten Ralph*, the red-tailed cat who complicates life for his young owner Sarah, to *Jack Henry*, who describes himself as “a born, biological stone-cold *loser*,” to *Joey Pigza*, the kid

with Attention Deficit Disorder who is always in trouble—you’ll find his maverick characters surprisingly endearing.

*Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key*, which relates Joey’s daily emotional roller-coaster ride from his own “wired” and off-the-wall point of view, was a National Book Award finalist.

---

**Get on our mailing list!** To receive announcements of future events, send your name and address to:  
The Center for Children’s & Young Adult Literature, c/o Kenneth Wise, 652 Hodges Library, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996-1000