

Michigan Library Association's Thumbs Up! Committee

The Whys  
The Hows  
The Whens

The Whys

- Recognize excellence in the genre of teen literature in the American library scene.
- *Thumbs Up! Award* is given to an author for an outstanding contribution to teen literature having both literary quality and teen appeal.
- Heighten awareness of the teen patron as a unique and important library user.

The Books

- Award given annually to the author of an original work commercially published in the U.S. during the previous year, from January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Books originally published outside US are eligible provided first US printing occurred during the eligibility period.
- Fiction or nonfiction.
- Teen: between 12-18 years of age.

Things to Consider--Fiction

- Permanent contribution to the genre.
- Thought provoking.
- Communicates timeless truths.
- Universality of theme.
- Multi-dimensional characters.
- Accuracy in setting and in historical perspective.
- Natural development of the plot.
- Appropriateness of style
- Teen appeal.
- Quality and appropriateness of illustrations, if any.
- Stands on its own as a story if a sequel or part of series.

Things to Consider--Nonfiction

All of the above, with great teen appeal.

- Accuracy
- Thought provoking.
- Great illustrations.
- Index (!)

The Hows: People

- Selection committee is comprised of interested Michigan librarians/library staff.
- Current MLA member.
- Volunteers solicited at Spring Institute and via MLA's Call for Volunteers
- Committee can contain up to 20 members.
- Every effort made for state-wide representation.
- Committee member may not serve for more than two consecutive years.

#### The Hows: Books

- Starred reviews in standard review sources, compiled by the Committee Chair.
- Features books with starred reviews from *Booklist*, *School Library Journal*, *VOYA* (4Q, 4P), *PW*, *Kliatt*, *Kirkus*, *Horn Book*, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*
- Also includes titles from YALSA's Best Books for Young Adult (BBYA) and Great Graphic Novels for Teens (GGNT)

#### The Hows: Books (con't)

- Nominations for titles are sought via electronic lists in January of year following publication. (In January 2009 for 2008 Thumbs Up! Books)
- 2008 Thumbs Up! list had 358 titles!
- Committee is divided into groups of 4 or 5 and assigned a group of titles to read and comment on.

#### The Whens: How many meetings do I have to attend?

- Much of the committee work takes place online at the Thumbs Up! Blog
- <http://thumbsup2010.blogspot.com/>
- Limited to committee members only.
- Titles are listed, summarized, and commented on.
- Votes (Yes, No, Maybe) are tabulated on a google document for up-to-date totals.

#### The Whens: (con't)

- Call for volunteers for the Committee goes out in the spring on MLA's Call for Volunteers.
- Committee is convened by July 1, when the first list of titles is distributed via email.
- First committee meeting is held by August 31. Titles under consideration are discussed and possibly removed/added.
- Top 20 books are determined by February 15<sup>th</sup>. This meeting is mandatory.

#### The When's: Con't

- Voting takes place at the February meeting.
- Optional Spring Institute meeting where committee members discuss the top 20 titles informally.

- Final committee meeting held the first week of June. Teen vote is due by Memorial Day.
- Voting takes place to determine winner and possible honor books.
- Total of 4 face to face meetings.

#### Thumbs Up! Benefits

- You will be the world's best Reader's Advisor for the year(s) you are on the committee. You will have read and/or discussed practically every title in your collection. (this is a great sell for your employer)
- Beware: you will run out of room in your collection!
- Chance to develop your leadership abilities.

#### Thumbs Up: What it Takes

- A commitment to reading and recording your observations about many teen books. (could be more than 100 titles)
- A commitment to attend 4 meetings in Lansing.
- If you serve as head of the committee, record keeping, reading reviews, compiling the list and votes.