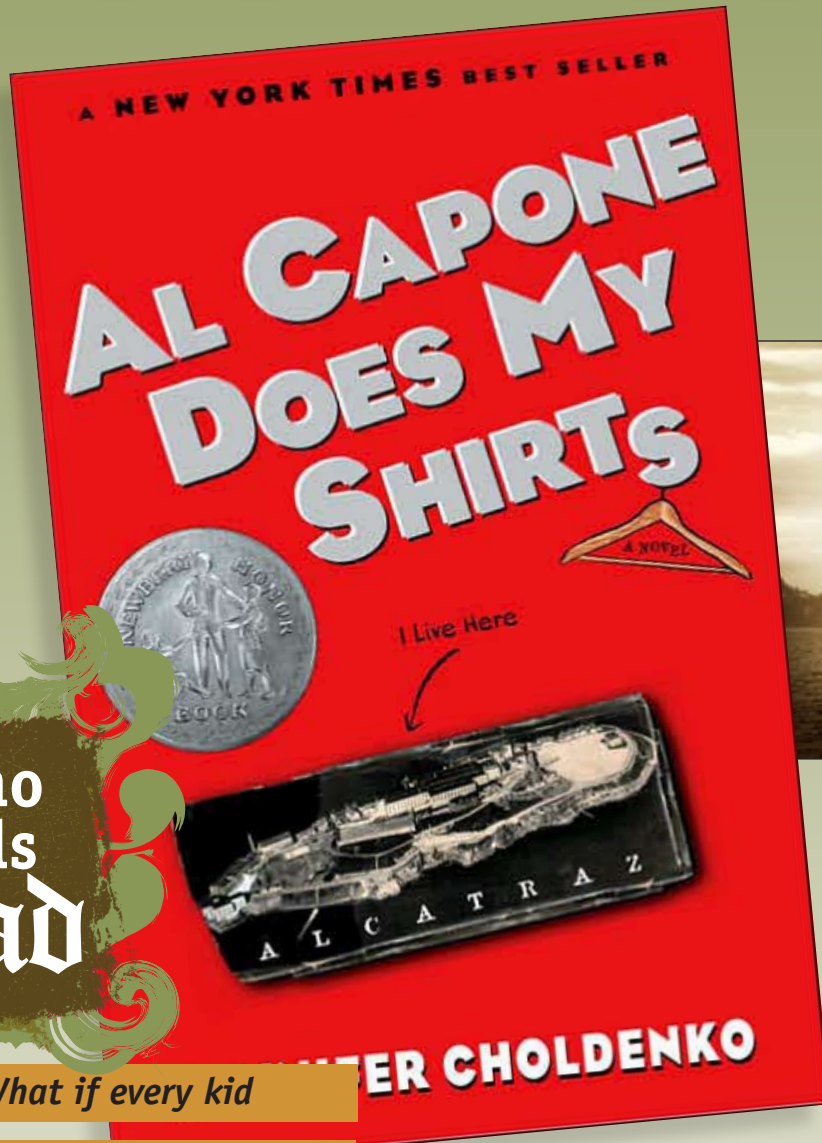


CheckItOut!

Fall 2007



Solano
Kids
Read

What if every kid

read the same book

at the same time?

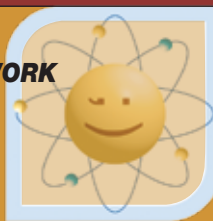
Newsletter of the Solano County Library, serving the cities of Fairfield, Rio Vista, Suisun, Vacaville, and Vallejo



Teenie
Boppers
named a
*Best of
the Rest*



**LIVE
HOMEWORK
HELP**



Growing
Up on
Alcatraz



Greatest
Generation:
Lee Suggs





What if every kid read the same book at the same time? Solano Kids Read is a free, county-wide reading project that encourages reading for entertainment, inspiration and delight.



Bay Area author Gennifer Choldenko will spend two days in five Solano County Library branches on November 16 and 17. Her two-day visit includes school field trips, a writer's workshop for kids and teens, speaking events, a reception and book signings. To encourage young people to read the book and visit with the author, activities are scheduled at various Solano County Library branches starting in early October. Adults are also getting into the act; several library book clubs have chosen *Al Capone Does My Shirts* for a fall discussion. For more information visit solanolibrary.com or call (866) 57-ASKUS.



Al Capone Does My Shirts

By Terry Jacobsen
Supervising Librarian, Fairfield Cordelia Library

Al Capone was a Chicago gangster, wasn't he? Indeed he was, but in the 1930s, he lived in San Francisco, working in Alcatraz's prison laundry. If you were a kid back then, this was pretty amazing. Better yet, if you lived on Alcatraz, Al Capone was your neighbor.

Welcome to the world Gennifer Choldenko has created with her award-winning novel, *Al Capone Does My Shirts*. A Newbery Honor winner and a nationwide favorite in numerous children's and teen polls, this story captures the essence of San Francisco during the Great Depression. Solano County Library has chosen this great read for its 2007 One Community, One Book title. With its snazzy red cover and unusual title, the book grabs your attention. When you learn the story, you're totally hooked. . .

Moose Flanagan's dad takes on a job as a prison guard because the family needs extra money. Money is a huge concern for the Flanagans because Moose's teenage sister Natalie needs a special school. Doctors couldn't diagnose what we recognize today as autism, but all Moose knows is that his sister is different and he has to watch out for her.

Riding a ferry boat to San Francisco every day for school might have its allure, but if you want to play baseball—like our hero does—you've got to play in the city, not on Alcatraz. Trouble is, Moose has to go back to the island to watch Natalie. The book brings these characters alive with humor and compassion, as the kids of Alcatraz make a unique kind of fun in their most unusual neighborhood. With Piper as the trouble-maker and Moose constantly trying to be good, an exciting story develops, and yes, Al Capone plays a part.

Gennifer Choldenko captivates us—children and adults alike—with her remarkable tale of a loving family living and growing together on an island unlike any other in the United States. She balances the laugh-out-loud fun of kids being kids with the importance of striving to do right by those who love and need us. With its attention to historic detail and strong story lines, *Al Capone Does My Shirts* is just the book to spur discussion and trigger memories. Mark your calendars now: you don't want to miss Solano County Library's version of a "Fall Classic" this November.

Al Capone Does My Shirts is available at all Solano County Library branches or your local bookstores. Please plan on attending one of the many free events being held around the county.



Growing Up on Alcatraz

by Kristen Murray, Children's Librarian, Fairfield Cordelia Library

Moose, Natalie and Piper are just a few of the kids growing up on Alcatraz Island in Gennifer Choldenko's award winning novel *Al Capone Does My Shirts*. For these kids growing up on Alcatraz in the 1930's was an adventure, but what was living on Alcatraz really like? Solano County resident John Brunner shares his story of what it was like as a ten year old coming to live on Alcatraz Island.

The summer of 1950, John was growing up in Long Beach, California with his father and grandmother. As an electrician working on Terminal Island, his father was given the opportunity to work on a new theme park being developed in Anaheim or to move to Alcatraz Island. Since a theme park did not sound like an ideal job at the time, John and his family headed north to their new home.

Located in the middle of San Francisco Bay, Alcatraz was home to over 300 inmates at any given time. Upon arriving at the



island, John joined more than 80 kids whose parents worked on the island as electricians, guards and other assorted jobs to support this self-contained community.

Since Alcatraz was home to some of the country's most notorious criminals, safety

was a major concern. John recalls, "Upon first arriving to the island I had to give up all my toy guns, slingshots or any item that could possibly be fashioned in to a weapon by the inmates." Many inmates held jobs while imprisoned, including doing the laundry, building furniture, and manufacturing household items like rubber gloves and brooms. As a result, the inmates had to be free to move around the island; the solution was to keep the families safe behind a fence and locked gate. The security was so thorough that the families never even locked their doors!

There was a small cantina that sold non-perishable goods. John had to be at the docks every morning at 7:25 to catch a boat to school. Entertainment was mainly provided at the social hall which housed a pool table, bowling alley, soda fountain and hosted occasional dances. Trips were made to San Francisco to go to the drive-in or visit friends, but if you missed the last boat at 12:45 a.m. you were out of luck until the next morning.

Visitors were welcome on the island anytime as long the boat knew to expect them. This made John popular at school. People were curious about the island nicknamed "The Rock" and hoped to be invited to visit.

Brunner is an active member of the Alcatraz Alumni Association and gathers annually with families and even inmates who were a part of Alcatraz history. The Association strives to restore some of the buildings and is currently landscaping the island with native plants. For more information on the Alumni Association visit www.alcatrazalumni.org

John Brunner will be speaking at the Fairfield Cordelia Library on Wednesday, October 17 at 4 p.m., at the Rio Vista Library on Thursday, October 25 at 3 p.m. and at the Fairfield Civic Center Library on Wednesday, November 7 at 3:30 p.m.

Related Reading

Notes from a Liar and Her Dog, If a Tree Falls at Lunch Period

More Great Books by Gennifer Choldenko

Al Capone and the Roaring Twenties

by David C. King

The life and times of one of America's most notorious gangsters.

Children of Alcatraz: Growing Up on the Rock

by Claire Rudolph Murphy

Real life stories of children whose parents were prison guards, soldiers, and lighthouse keepers.

The Speed of Light

by Ron Carlson

During his last summer before junior high, twelve-year-old Larry plays different forms of baseball with his best friends and observes the secrets of the universe.

Perfect, Once Removed: When Baseball was All the World to Me

by Phillip Hoose

A reflective memoir about the role of baseball in the author's life, particularly after he learns that a relative is a pitcher for the New York Yankees.

Autism

by Sudipta Bardhan-Quallen

Possible causes, treatments for autism in young people and adults.



Last September,
to celebrate reading and literacy, we asked you to tell us about a book that changed your life.

We received over 100 responses, here are just a few.

Old Yeller
by Fred Gipson

I read this book when I was in elementary school. It was one of the first times I was touched emotionally by the written word. Reading about this young man's relationship with his dog and his family was touching, and I found myself crying when I read the final chapters of the book. It taught me the power of the written word.

— Mark

Outlander
by Diana Gabaldon

This is the first of a series of historical novels in which a 20th century English nurse is put into 18th century Scotland. The book did a marvelous job of demonstrating how much of one's attitude is dependent on life experience and historical context. I think of this lesson when facing another person's bias and then try to figure out what has prompted the person's attitude.

— Linda

The Coldest Winter Ever
by Sister Souljah

That taking the easy road in life doesn't always pay off. Do right by others no matter what position you are in.

— Anonymous

To Kill a Mockingbird
by Harper Lee

There is no better tale portraying justice and the importance of standing up for what is right and true. Harper Lee's incredible novel shaped my life in a very specific manner - it showed me not only the value of each life, but the responsibility we have as human beings to protect every life. Then there is the movie - Gregory Peck... that's all I can say!

— Sabine

The Rape of Nanking
by Iris Chang

A remarkable, thought-provoking analysis of one of the most brutal incidents in world history.

— John

Anne of Green Gables
by Lucy Maud Montgomery

Showed me the value of having a vibrant imagination, how to ask questions, and how acting impulsive isn't such a bad thing at all.

— Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous (The "Big Book")
by Bill W.

Obviously it helped me to stop drinking 14 years ago, but it also gave me a deeper appreciation for organized religion which I had mocked for years. "Alcoholics Anonymous" is certainly not the best-written book I've ever read--it is full of anachronisms--however, its power cannot be denied. Sixty-seven years after its first printing, it continues to give hope and new life to people who are dying by the drop. I can honestly say with tearful gratitude that this book saved my life!

— Tony

"A Tear and A Smile"
by Kahlil Gibran

I found this book hidden away in a dresser when I was a lonely 13-year-old. I was awestruck by the power of the poetry. The beauty and longing seemed to leap from the page. Finding the power of words, I was inspired to write my own poetry.

— Sarah



The Republic
by Plato

Plato's *Republic* taught me no longer to take life at face value and to question everything (politely and with respect, of course) before everything questions me. Also, I learned from the dialogues of Socrates (through Plato) that the greatest questions do not particularly lead to answers but might lead to greater questions down the line. We may not be able to know things but questioning should help us achieve a greater amount of understanding.

— Mark

The Grapes of Wrath
by John Steinbeck

My mother grew up in a labor camp in Shafter, California during the time this book was written. They lived there until 1948 and moved to Roseville. I used to hear stories about the trip from McAllister, Oklahoma and camping on the back side of the billboards on the road. This book helped me understand and appreciate the sacrifices and endurance my family experienced. It gave me strength to continue on to make a better life for myself and I have instilled this in my children. They are both college educated and productive members of society. All those hardships were not in vain and I have always reminded them of this.

— Anonymous

Tuesdays with Morrie
by Mitch Albom

It made me realize even more that people take things for granted and they should enjoy every part of life.

Watership Down
by Richard Adams

I read the book for the first time as one of my 8th grade book reports (more than 27 years ago). 8th grade wasn't going so well for me at the time. My teacher spoke about the symbolism behind all life's struggles that lay within the stories pages. I didn't figure it out on my own, but the lesson was meaningful and gave me hope and courage. I have read the book many times over since then and I still cherish it.

— Dawn

If I Had Four Apples

I must have been about thirteen, so we're talking Depression times. This was the first book about budgeting I ever read and even though my income was in pennies I budgeted them. Probably the best habit I ever learned and it made all the difference in my life. I read almost everything that comes my way, but this is one book I've never forgotten for a minute.

— Gaylon

Death of a Salesman
by Arthur Miller

It taught me the difference between the American Dream and an American's delusions. Our lives are what we make of them.

— Ken

"The Bible"

This book has been life changing. I have gained understanding, wisdom, revelation and come to understand God's unconditional love for me.

— Anonymous

Living on Wilderness Time
by Melissa Walker

I admire this true story about how a female college professor in her 50's takes a year off to camp by herself at various national parks, national forests and wilderness areas. She takes time out of her marriage and her busy life to breathe the silence and feel a sense of timelessness while camping & backpacking on our nation's most pristine landscapes.

— Stephanie

books**change**lives

Read a book. Get a library card. Become a tutor.



Celebrate Reading: Share a Book that Changed Your Life

In September, at the Library's website, solanolibrary.com, you can write about the book that made a difference in your life and read about books that have changed the lives of others. We want to hear from you! Tell us about a book that has influenced you and you will be entered in a drawing for an MP3 player.

The Lord of the Rings
by JRR Tolkien

The first time I read the *Lord of the Rings*, I read it as a fantasy. I have read it again and again over these many years and every time I read it, I find deeper nuances and meanings within meanings. These three books provide a moral compass that leads straight to Faith, Truth and Love.

— Ruth

1984
by George Orwell

1984 is a virtual compendium of why we need to be vigilant citizens. It deals with issues of language, censorship, monitoring, and altering history - all of which are extremely important to pay attention to in our current situation.

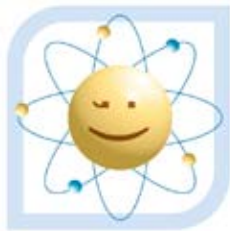
— Ivan

Red Badge of Courage
by Stephan Crane

I read it in high school. The idea that one can be brave or courageous is a fine notion. The reality that situations can change how you think you will react is sobering. I hope it has helped me be more realistic about what I can expect from my own behavior and that of others.

— Duane





Over 90% of Users Say Thanks!

Live Homework Help is a free online tutoring service that debuted last year on the Solano County Library website, solanolibrary.com. Ever since there has been a buzz growing from teachers and parents who appreciate the quality of the instruction and how easy it is to use. However, the most revealing comments come from the students themselves —

"LOVE the tutors on here... They are so kind & make me laugh!"

"The tutors are really nice and don't rush you!!!!!!!!!!!"

WHAT A GREAT SERVICE!!!"

"I wish I had tried this sooner. It's great."

"It was very helpful! I really appreciate that you guys have a program for kids like us that really need help with things from school thank you so much :)"

"This tutor was the greatest please thank her for me once again i really got my homework done that day this system rocks don't ever take it away."

Over 90% of the students who filled out a post-session survey reported that the service was helping build their confidence, helping them complete assignments and even improve their grades.

How Does It Work?

Connect to online tutors for free from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. every day from solanolibrary.com

Once connected in online classroom, tutor and student can chat using instant messaging, draw problems on an interactive whiteboard, and share files to review essays and term papers.

Tutors are education professionals and have received third party background checks.

Spanish-speaking tutors are also available, from Sunday through Thursday 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Help is available in:

Math • elementary, algebra I, algebra II, geometry, trigonometry and calculus

Science • elementary, earth science, biology, chemistry, physics

Social studies • American History, World History, Political Science and more

English • spelling, grammar, book reports, essay writing and more

LIVE HOMEWORK HELP

Solano County Library's own Project Greenlight puts you in the director's chair. In October, make a video for the library's free tutoring service, **Live Homework Help** and your video may be chosen for MTV!



It's easy:

- ▶ Make your video. It needs to be 30 seconds or less, include the library's logo and the Live Homework Help Logo (available at solanolibrary.com in October)
- ▶ You can make your video in the library, at home, at school or any other place. If you make it in the library you need to get a signed photo release from anyone who appears in your video or from their guardian if they are under 18.
- ▶ Post your video on YouTube and send us the link. You will find a submission form at solanolibrary.com in October. We'll post your video on the library's website and MySpace site.
- ▶ Entries will be judged on creativity, humor and skill in presenting the benefits of free tutoring through Live Homework Help.
- ▶ The winning video will be broadcast on MTV during primetime in Solano County during the month of September.

Selections from Solano Teen Magazine

If I

*If I weren't born,
would life be the same?*

*If I were new to this world,
would Joshua still be my name?*

*If I were a rapper
would people respect what I say?*

*If I were locked up
could I ever make a change?*

*If I had all the money in the world,
would I spend it all up
or let it drain?*

*If I had a new life,
would it be the same?*

*If I was Invincible,
would I still have dreams?*

*If I didn't have dreams,
would I be a human being?*

— by Joshua
(inspired by Langston Hughes)

Pain

Tears may come and go,

But pain is ever lasting,

So cold and empty inside,

Almost like you're fasting,

Things may seem to change,

But inside there all the same,

Walking around a lot,

All sneakily,

*How can you think I can forgive
so easily?*

I can't forgive and forget,

Do you have any regrets?

For this pain

I am feeling.

— by Lonnie

Mother

*Walking in your footsteps even though they're smaller than mine.
Looking at you tear up, telling me everything is fine.*

*Everytime graduation comes up and we talk about it, I see you get
that look in your eye so I try to change the subject.*

*Knowing that I'm growing up, I get that feeling too.
I will still be your son and I will always love you.*

*You have dedicated your life to me and I will always know,
That you have always cared for me even when it didn't show.*

*Like when I burned the carpet or when I ran away from school,
When I went down to the creek or when you threw me in the pool.*

*You have always been there for me, always there to cheer me on.
My biggest fan for soccer and footraces on the lawn.*

*You were even there for football, every year without fail.
Even when we were losing you stuck around, you didn't bail.*

*I learned many lessons, most from you up to today.
Knowing you were always there to help me along the way.*

*Here I am reflecting as I walk the sands of time.
Looking at the footsteps that you and I have left behind.*

— by Robert



Be sure to check
out more reviews,
literature and art
from teens at our
teen 'zine at,
solanolibrary.com

Meet the Authors for Authors Luncheon 2007

With one of the most exciting groups of authors to date and a variety of genres represented, this year's Authors Luncheon promises to have a wide audience appeal as well as an entertaining program.



Authors Luncheon 2007

will be held on

Sunday, November 4

10:30 a.m. – 3:30 p. m.

at The Clubhouse

at Rancho Solano

in Fairfield.

Tickets will be available

in September.

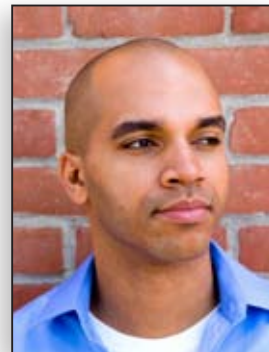
Table sponsorships are

available now.

For information about tickets or sponsorships for the event, see

solanolibraryfoundation.org

or call 707.421.8075.



Celebrated book illustrator Kadir Nelson teams up with authors Tiki and Ronde Barber of the NFL in Kickoff!, a sports saga for young readers. Kadir's artwork jumps off the page and shows why he won the 2007 Caldecott Honor Award for **Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom.**



When *Gourmet Magazine* refers to restaurateur and author Cindy Pawlcyn as "pretty much the queen of Napa Valley casual dining," a reader of her **Big Small Plates** knows exactly what the coronation means. The book is full of enticing recipes that provide glimpses into Pawlcyn's extraordinary relationship with the food of the Valley.

David Michaelis's **N. C. Wyeth: A Biography** won the Ambassador Book Award for Biography in 1999. Now, after six years of research, his latest endeavor **Schulz and Peanuts: A Biography** is scheduled for an October 2007 release. With early rave reviews, this new biography promises to revise our understanding of the most beloved cartoonist of all time.



Ann Packer follows her award winning debut novel **The Dive from Clausen's Pier** with her much anticipated second novel, **Songs Without Words.** This powerful tale of a lifelong friendship forged by crisis is certain to burnish Packer's reputation as a masterful storyteller.

In Susan Patron's Newbery Award-winning novel, **The Higher Power of Lucky**, ten-year old Lucky Trimble searches for the meaning of family in a journey that takes her from eavesdropping on Twelve Step meetings to being lost in a desert windstorm with an injured five-year-old.



Familiar places. Familiar faces. Jeff Bell, a familiar voice to Bay Area radio listeners, guides us through familiar feelings that swing out of orbit to obsession in **Rewind, Replay, Repeat.** Bell allows us a view of the physical, spiritual, psychological, and pharmaceutical stop-and-start responses to the challenges of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder.

Those who are familiar with the Authors Luncheon (a sold-out audience of 400 attended last year) know that the authors are available to sign their books before and after the luncheon and will give short presentations about their work and career. The always popular Auction will feature Immortality Contracts and other items including events and services especially selected by the authors for the enthusiastic audience. Returning this year as the Emcee will be Edie Lambert from KCRA Channel 3 in Sacramento as well as the ever-entertaining Auctioneer Joe Gates. The annual Authors Luncheon is the Solano County Library Foundation's major fundraiser for Reach Out and Read and other Library literacy programs. The Solano County Library Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to support the programs of the Solano County Library and the literacy and lifelong learning needs of the community it serves. It provides funding for special projects that the Library cannot fund with public dollars, enabling the Library to reach those who need and utilize its services the most.



For more information and disaster brochures log onto

www.solanocounty.com/oes



During a real emergency tune to your hometown radio station 95.3 KUIK, for emergency information!



Lee Suggs

By Latifah and Ayala

To celebrate Older Americans Month, Solano County Library sponsored a project called **Greatest Generation: Please Share Your Memories.** High school students conducted interviews with members of the “greatest generation” and their stories were displayed in local libraries during the month of May and are now on our website, solanolibrary.com



I was born in Water Valley, Mississippi. Water Valley had rolling hills and fields of watermelon and cotton. There was a coal yard with huge piles of coal used as fuel for the trains passing through. I was a boy in June of 1948 when my family moved to Marin City, California. There was a large oak tree on the edge of our yard when we left Mississippi and I went back in 1979 and it had encompassed the edge of the barbed wire fence by 8”.

We worked hard; we had a huge garden for our vegetables. We would put up fruit and vegetables in mason jars to use throughout the year. My father raised and killed one pig a year for our meat. My uncle had a cow for our milk and butter. A balanced diet. We chopped our own wood. We had two stoves, one for cooking and one for heating. Neither of my parents could read.

Growing up was interesting. I learned to tell it like it is. It’s just easier to tell the truth; then you can remember what you said. My parents didn’t find the value of me studying after school. My parents thought that chores and work were more important than studying in the evenings, so I had to train myself to remember everything in class rather than doing homework after school. I didn’t appreciate it at the time, but later it came in useful in training my memory. During the Depression, I remember the food they gave us—red grapefruits, grits, and margarine that had no color so we had to mix in the color ourselves. Roosevelt built power lines so rural families would have electricity and I remem-



ber lightning playing on the electrical lines near our home during a thunderstorm. We got our drinking water from a spring a mile away. It rained a lot and we collected rain water for bathing and washing. There were crawdads in the spring. We had an outhouse, of course, and used white lye to keep the odor down.

During World War II, I was still in Mississippi. We worked a lot. We had to work. We had a radio, and my cousin across the road had a Victrola that played 78 records. I was really not that aware of World War II. But I read a lot about it later in books. Books by Winston Churchill like **Gathering Storm** and **Their Finest Hour**. I read all six volumes in his Second World War series. Volume 2, **Their Finest Hour** spoke of the time when Britain stood alone, before the United States came in to the war. I also am inspired by Volume 4, **The Hinge of Fate**. I used them to help me get through difficult times. Here is a man with enormous responsibility overcoming great odds.

When Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, to tell you the truth, I didn’t relate to the non-violence. Marching on issues and protesting is a start, but in the long run, you have to do more. You have to stand up for yourself. You have to look at practical issues like economics. Malcolm X, I could relate to and understand him. After his Haj to Mecca in 1964, he became a “true Muslim” and understood that ethnic background doesn’t matter. He focused more on practical concerns such as improving economic condition. I enjoyed reading his autobiography. Huey P. Newton, one of the founders of the Black Panthers, used to visit my roommate in our flat on 56th and Grove in Oakland. This was before the Black Panther Party, when he was starting Cal Berkeley as a student.

What they did was wonderful but marching on issues is only the beginning. Rosa Parks taking a stand was wonderful. But they should have focused more on the economic issues, bettering the financial condition, helping people to own more resources of the United States. What do you own? How many people can you hire? That’s “green” power.

During the 50s I remember music and learning how to dance. I was a teenager in Marin City, and my sister was 3 years older than me. Her boyfriend taught me the first dance I ever learned. I learned the Chicken, the Hully Gully and others by watching the good dancers. I learned the Monkey in Germany. There was



a guy in the Army we called “Peeler” and he was very tall, but that guy could really Monkey! I also learned how to dance the Pony and the Twist, the Fly in the 50s and 60s. I remember dancing the Charleston, the Mambo, and the Limbo while stationed at Ft. Lewis, Washington.

I got out of the service in 1968, started buying real estate, investing in my future. I had just bought a new car and I came to the realization that I would have nothing to show for this car in a few years time. I got in touch with my values and invested in a house on Beverly Drive in Vallejo. “If I work, I need something to show for it!” I was working at the county hospital in Martinez, with my medic training from the Army.

If you could pass on any advice about life to the newest generation of your family, based on your experiences, I would say, become responsible. If you say you’re gonna do something, do it! Your word is your bond. Either do what you say, or have a good explanation why you couldn’t do it. There is a quote, “What you do speaks so loud, I cannot hear what you say.”





Local Librarian gets National Attention for Teen Pregnancy Program

While studying for her masters degree in library science Sarah Krygier had an idea. After a flurry of emails and meetings

during her first months as a librarian at the Fairfield Civic Center Library, Krygier's idea took shape and had a name – Teenie Boppers.

Once a month during the school year, she visits Sem Yeto High School's Young Mothers Program to talk to the moms (both expectant mothers and young women with babies and toddlers) about reading to their babies, reading for their own good and about college, careers and more. "I feel strongly that Teenie Boppers provides a valuable service to teens who might otherwise be unfamiliar with the library," explains Krygier.

The American Library Association agrees. In early July, the Young Adult Library Services Association, a division of ALA, confirmed the value of Teenie Boppers by naming it as one of the twenty "Best of the Rest" winners in the Excellence in Library Service to Young Adults project. YA Librarians around the country submitted applications and were judged on factors including the degree to which the service met the needs of its community and improved service to young adults.

"I am excited about what the \$250 cash award will provide for Teenie Boppers, and I am so pleased to be a member of a library community that recognizes the need to go beyond the library walls to provide the best service possible" said Krygier.

“
Teenie Boppers
provides a valuable
service to teens
who might
otherwise be
unfamiliar with
the Library
”



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