The Taguien Cycle is the most exciting and promising new project to have come before the committee in several years. It meets our two primary goals: Develop a book line that will appeal to young adult readers, especially boys; and develop a book line that has the potential for media spin-offs that will contribute to future profits and on-going financial success.

Interest in the fantasy genre has increased steadily over the past ten years, a trend that shows no sign of reversal. Anecdotal industry sales statistics show an increase of 2 to 3 percent per year for adult fantasy books and 5 to 6 percent for young adult fantasy books. Each year Lucerne has published several fairytale/magic books for younger readers, but we do not currently offer anything sophisticated enough to appeal to young adult readers. Although we have found it very difficult to sell other genres to this audience of reluctant readers, there is every indication that offering a fantasy series at this time would met with success.

The most successful fantasy series are aimed squarely at the young adult market but also appeal to high-level grade-school readers and adults. Several publishers have already achieved solid success in this arena with books by a variety of authors, such as:

1. Harry Potter series, by J. K. Rowling
2. Bartimaeus Trilogy, by Jonathan Stroud
3. Artemis Fowl series, by Eoin Colfer
4. Old Kingdom trilogy, by Garth Nix
5. Inheritance series, by Christopher Paolini

Of special note are the Harry Potter series and the Inheritance series. The Harry Potter series now includes six books that are known and loved world-wide, making it arguably the most successful of all the fantasy offerings since J.R.R. Tolkien’s classic trilogy, Lord of the Rings. The Inheritance series was penned by a 19-year-old, who after producing two very successful books in the series, grew tired of life as a writer and left his legions of fans thirsting for more.

A successful fantasy series generates a community of fans that is supported by an interactive Web site. The Web site not only provides information about the author but also offers background insights into characters and circumstances, and includes quizzes, games, downloadable graphics, newsletters, and more. Successful marketing and sales of a fantasy series must include development of such a site as an important adjunct to normal marketing efforts. Although a book might drive a fan to the Web site, the Web site in turn paves the way for the success of future volumes in the series and can be the primary force in spin-offs such as movie rights and merchandising contracts. We see the launching of this series as the impetus for revamping community building and auxiliary marketing strategies that will benefit all our programs across all genres.

The eagerly anticipated first installment of the young adult fantasy series by the same name, *The Taguien Cycle* has all the elements of a rousing good read, guaranteed to hold your interest from the first page to the last. All the riveting characters are in place, from the bully to the wizard to the innocent people caught in the midst of a strange dream that just might turn out to be reality. This first book starts the cycle with a group of misfits who find a mysterious crystal ball hidden in the hedgerow surrounding an unused field on the outskirts of their village. After they accidently unlock the power of the crystal, their lives will never be the same again, as they become lost in a world where the battle of good versus evil rages.