

ALA Annual Conference  
New Orleans, LA  
June 23-28, 2011  
Scholarship Report  
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Being able to attend the ALA Annual Conference in New Orleans was a treat -- for the brain, for the taste buds, and for the eyes.

The exhibit hall at the Annual Conference is enormous and I probably didn't see all of the exhibits in the four days the hall was open. But I did manage to get a lot of information about e-book packages that we have been discussing in our library. In addition to information for my colleagues, I brought home many uncorrected proofs to share with my middle school teacher friends. Many children and YA books were available.

The most exciting sessions I attended were the Young Adult Coffee Klatch and AASL's **Top 25 Websites for Teaching and Learning**. The authors who talked at our table were Bobbie Pyron, author of *The Ring*, an "anti-Twilight book" in her words; a great book for reluctant readers. Ilsa Bick, author of *Ashes* spoke to us. Her book was one of the many ARCs given away -- I can't wait to read it. Valerie Hobbs, author of many YA novels, talked about her newest book, *The Last Best Days of Summer*, featuring a girl spending summers with a grandmother who is newly-diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Joe Luniewicz, author of *Open Wounds*, talked about his book and the fact that he Skypes for free! (at least at this point in his career) -- a Spotlight possibility? Another Spotlight possible is Michael Thompson, one of the storytellers who contributed to *Trickster: Native American Tales: A Graphic Collection*. Michael is an English teacher who belongs to the Muskogee Indian tribe and talked about the various ranges of style and tone in the stories and how the diverse artists were selected to illustrate.

The Top 25 Websites for Teaching and Learning by AASL have been chosen for the past three years (<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/guidelinesandstandards/bestlist/bestwebsites25.cfm>) Outstanding media sharing, digital storytelling, managing and organizing, social networking, content collaboration, curriculum sharing, and content resources were chosen by a committee of AASL members. Many of the websites will be useful for us in the academic world and I will most definitely share these with the faculty who are working to incorporate technology into their teaching. Tagzede is just one of the sites that look to have immediate use for us in our library launches with freshmen.

Jeff Kinney was a featured speaker, introduced by Tom Angleberger. Tom said that he was following in Jeff's trail of "massively illustrated" books. I had just read Angleberger's *The Strange Case of Origami Yoda* while traveling to New Orleans, so this was an extra bonus for me. Kinney spoke about his cartooning experience. His discovery of Flash in 2000 was a revelation and allowed him to begin the *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* web site. Readers from all over the world wrote to Jeff after seeing his website and it wasn't until 2007 that his 1<sup>st</sup> book was published. Kinney referred to "reluctant readers" as education-speak for boys -- who he draws for.

Sampling New Orleans cuisine and visiting the French Quarter in between sessions at the conference were exciting new experiences for me. Thank you for the contribution to my expenses for this very valuable conference.