Janis Ian’s Address to School Media Specialists in Nashville

(Don’t know who Janis Ian is? Check out her website at www.janisian.com)

I like to tell audiences that I wrote my first song at twelve. I was published at thirteen, made a record at fourteen, had a hit at fifteen, and was a has-been at sixteen…

It’s all uphill from there.

I am from the North, and though I’ve lived in Nashville these past 23 years, that’s barely long enough to remove the phrase “Damnyankee” from my name. I am therefore doubly honored to be asked to address you; first, as a transplant, and second, as an artist.

Of all the descriptions I might apply to myself – Northern, white, Jewish, gay, female, vertically challenged – artist is the only one I earned myself. So today, I speak to you from the viewpoint of an artist, first and foremost.

When prehistoric man made his first symbols, and connected those symbols with true language, he began a chain of events that would enlighten and ennoble the world. The written word informs us. It challenges us. It drags us to the depths and lifts us to the heavens in one graceful arc that can only be appreciated by those who can read.

Continued on next page

Jane Yolen’s Advice to Young Writers:

1. Be a reader
2. Write everyday
3. Don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t do it.
Libraries are a hallmark of a civilized culture, and librarians represent that culture to all facets of society. We artists have a great affinity with you librarians, for many reasons, not the least of which is that we exist in large part to educate, and to protect. To make order out of chaos, and to teach others to do the same. To keep the dreams of a nation, of a people, safe for future generations. To make those dreams available to everyone – not just the wealthy or beautiful, not just the people of one race or one color or one religion – but available to everyone who dares to dream of something bigger than themselves.

As you well know, the history of libraries is deep and dense, informed with beauty and tragedy. Who among us has not wondered at the barbarism of those who burned the library at Alexandria? Which of us does not mourn the ignorance displayed every time a book is burned? Who among us here can fail to rejoice that we live in a nation where freedom of speech rules, and literacy is considered a right, not a privilege?

It is difficult to subdue a fully literate people. They are exposed to too many different trains of thought. They are taught to question, to challenge, to argue. In our respect for literacy, as in so many other things, we artists have a great deal in common with you.

Librarians and artists have an affinity for one another, perhaps because we’re both outlaws. We seek understanding rather than agreement. We are open to greater worlds than the day to day world we occupy. We are often left to stand alone from the first, to make our way toward conscience and morality at ages far younger than the average person. We seek solitude, in order to hear the thoughts in our heads – and to make room for the hope in our hearts.

I grew up on a farm, a mile or two from the nearest neighbor. There were books everywhere; some of my earliest memories are of my parents reading to me. From Babar to Winnie-the-Pooh, books were my companions and my solace.

My immigrant grandparents, whose English carried the lilt of their birth languages, would read the newspaper after dinner, and the fierce arguments over politics that ensued each night convinced me that the printed word carried a weight all out of proportion to its size.

I lived, not only on the farm, but in France with Madeleine at her convent. In Africa with Mowgli, in China with Ping the duck, on Mars with the Tik Tok Man, and in my favorite place, Oz, with Dorothy and Toto. My family gave me books, and books, in turn, gave me the world.

My grandparents wrote to us every week, always including a paragraph for me, and the instant I realized how it worked, I demanded my mother teach me so I could read them for myself. I was sure they’d sent secret messages meant only for me with each letter, and I wanted to find them for myself! Even then, I understood that words can reveal, and words can hide.

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I didn’t realize I was a freak until I started kindergarten. The teacher began showing us how to print letters. I raised my hand and asked to be excused, saying I already knew how to read and write and would much rather be reading. The teacher called me a liar, and made me stand in the corner for the rest of the afternoon. I was outraged, and complained bitterly to my mother when I got home.

Fortunately, my mother was also outraged, though at the thought of anyone calling her child a liar. She came with me the next morning, talked to the principal, and thereafter – provided I made good grades – I spent most of the writing hour with my nose buried in a book.

My father had what I now know was a rare and enlightened attitude toward my reading. A teacher himself, he believed that if I read something beyond my scope, I wouldn’t understand it, and it wouldn’t hurt me. If it was within my scope, I would understand it – and it wouldn’t hurt me.

As first generation Americans, my parents understood all too well the power of literacy. In Russia, my grandparents were not permitted to attend school. Fortunately for them, they were Jewish, a religion that insists on education – in fact, the first thing we’re taught to build when we begin a new community is not a place of worship, but a school. Because of this, they were literate in Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian, Ukrainian, French, and finally, English. Looking at my own mono-lingual skills, I feel like a pauper compared to them!

My people understood the power of literacy because they saw, over and over again, that education was the key to a future. The Portuguese say, “Knowledge does not occupy space.” As a hunted people, expelled from one country after another through the ages, the Jews had learned that lesson well. My grandmother often told me that gold could be confiscated, money could be lost – but knowledge was forever.

So my grandparents, and my parents, encouraged me to read – everything and anything, from Batman comics to My Side of the Mountain. My nickname as a child was “Why?” People would ask my mother how she could stand it, the constant questioning – my father even got a part time job selling encyclopedias so he could buy one for me and give my poor mom some time off!

But even when my omnivorous curiosity presented difficulties for them, they continued to support my quest for knowledge. Who knew where it would lead? We were in America! Maybe I would become a great scientist, like Einstein. Maybe I would become a professor, or a doctor – all the professions denied to my forebears in Russia. Whatever I became, they were sure books were key.
You can understand what a disappointment it was to everyone when I became a musician…

And being a musician, being a writer, set me apart from the first. I became an outlaw the day I set my fingers on the piano keys. I became an outlaw the day I decided Madeleine L’Engle was more interesting than American Bandstand.

When I looked around at my schoolmates, I didn’t see anyone remotely like me. No one else dreamed of the day when she’d be able to afford a hard-backed book instead of a paperback. No one else saved every scrap of lunch money so they could buy pens, and pads, and books. I longed for friends, people I could talk to about things that were important to me, but I met none.

I was alone, and lonely. I only met myself in novels.

And novels were few and far between. There was a lending library on wheels, limited to books adults thought children would enjoy. Hah. Anyone who’s ever watched an untutored adult choose books for a child knows how little I found of interest there!

Then, one brisk October morning, everything changed. My entire class was taken to the library. We wrote our names down, gave our addresses to a stern-faced woman behind a tall desk, and were given library cards in return. They were limited to the children’s and young adult sections, we could only take out three books at a time, but they were library cards.

The library saved my life. If anyone in my family wondered where I was, they had only to drop by the reading room to find me. The librarian, Mrs. Anna Baker, was my first true friend – someone who listened carefully, responded truthfully, and gave me every scrap of knowledge she could muster through the books she controlled.

I met her because she’d noticed the way I decided which books to check out. To have access to an entire room full of books was more than I’d hoped for, and I was determined to read each and every one. I’d begun with the top left shelf of the room, and was gradually working my way to the bottom-most right. Of course, the problem with my indiscriminate reading was quality, and interest – quite often, I’d take home my three cherished books, only to find that two of them failed me completely, and the third wasn’t so great either.

Anna began recommending books – A Wrinkle In Time, Half-Magic, Boy Gravely, Young Man With a Horn - all the Newberry and Caldecott winners and more besides. My life began to fill with more worlds than I’d ever dreamed. Books led me to more books, as authors led me to more authors.

Continued on next page
A newspaper article led me to Scottsboro Boys, but when I tried to sneak out of the adult section and check it out, the head librarian caught me and confiscated it. I complained to Mrs. Baker, who called my parents and obtained their permission to check adult books out for me on her own card.

Books saved me. I lived at the library. I lived there because it was quiet. I lived there because it was safe. I lived there because no one judged me. I lived there because there, and only there, did I feel free to explore myself.

The library was my safe haven, my sanctuary, the only place that understood my inner world. The library taught me that somewhere out there were others like me. The library promised that one day, when I was old enough, I would meet them at last.

The library saved me. It was a source of strength, and that source fed me, as surely as a river feeds the sea. It was the library that taught me how to be an artist, and led my way to my own life’s work.

An artist is a citizen of the world, bound by no convention, tied by no borders. We are homeless from the start; we do not have the refuge of conformity, of predictability. Artists need a place of refuge, just as children need a place of refuge… and the world needs its artists, just as it needs its children.

It is the artists who pull sense from the chaos of daily life. It is the artists who carry our true history in their work. Artists are the last alchemists, turning base metal to gold, base desire to beauty, daily life to magnificent stories that stay with us long after we set the work aside. We take your heart’s desire and make it visible – and if that isn’t alchemy, I don’t know what is.

Artists deal in dreams. That is what we sell. We sell dreams, and as you well know, without a dream, a book is just an empty cover waiting to be filled. Without a dream, a CD is merely a piece of plastic. Without a dream, a child is just a shell, left to wander in ignorance, no better than a brute animal.

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Books fill the empty pages of our hearts. They leave their language on our souls. Whether a story leaps at us from the printed page, or whispers to us from a CD, or blinds us with its beauty when we see it on film, words capture and hold our dreams. They remind us of ourselves at our best, and teach us what we can be. They carry our longing for the stars, and point us toward them when we are too earthbound to do it ourselves.

I hope that every library is a place of refuge for people like me, and for all the children in the world. I hope that every librarian is as kind as Mrs. Baker, who corresponded with me regularly until her death, and whose last letter to me recommended several books she’d recently enjoyed. I hope that when you are tired, when you are exhausted, when you are frustrated and angry and railing against an impossible system with ridiculous rules – I hope that in those moments you will remember me, who found her heart in books, and learned from you that there are worlds for the taking, if only we can find them.

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**No spring nor summer beauty hath such grace**  
As I have seen in one autumnal face.  ~ John Donne

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**Did you know that....**

- We have 1,676,412 students enrolled in Georgia public schools
- 962,041 of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch
- 217,036 require additional instructional services
- 167,798 receive special education services
- 159,680 qualify for the gifted program

From the Georgia School Board Association  September 2011
Child of the Library

Chorus:

I’m a Child of the Lib’ry, it made me who I am,
It taught me about freedom and the fellowship of Man
A sea of story waits for you behind the lib’ry door,
Don’t say we can’t afford them any more.

The Lib’ry’s where I made some friends I’ve known my whole life through
The Walkers and the Blacketts and the Pevensies so true.
Simp the canine cannonball, Galadriel the fair.
The daughter of a pirate king and Paddington the Bear

I’ve travelled South with Shackleton and all his gallant crew
And to the African interior that Mary Kingsley knew
I’ve rode the trackless prairie where the bison used to roam
An travelled round the Universe, not half an hour from home.

And as I grew the libr’y fed my curiosity,
All there for the asking. All of it for free.
It’s there I found the stories that I couldn’t find at home.
It’s where I learned I was myself and not my father’s clone.

So make friends with your library, don’t let it fade away.
Teach your kids the lib’ry’s where you go on Saturday.
Don’t let the bastards tell you they will cost to much to save
While they’re shoveling our taxes down the hole the bankers made

So make a stand for the lib’ry. Stand up while you can.
Stand up for your freedom. Stand for your fellow man.
Ignorance is never bliss, don’t close the lib’ry door.
For a lib’ry lost is lost forever more.

Lyrics © 2011 Piers and Gill Cawley

http://www.youtube.com/watch?
feature=player_embedded&v=MDi5JtSiH-g#!

www.todayingeorgiahistory.org
Catch Up with GALILEO
Karen Minton

The fall conferences for schools and libraries begin with COMO in October, and GALILEO will be a big presence with sessions, exhibit booths, posters, and other materials. Check out the list below for sessions to help you and your teachers. Help spread the word to teachers and technology staff that they will find sessions of interest at GaETC and the Social Studies Annual Conference. If you aren’t planning to attend a conference this year, look through the webinars on the GALILEO training page for sessions you can log in to right from a computer in your office.

COMO XXIII, Athens, October 5-7

What’s New in GALILEO Catch up on new features, functionalities, and projects, with Q & A included.

Grab GALILEO for Great Multimedia Projects This fun and inspirational session covers using GALILEO resources to create multimedia projects.

Professional Development Planning for Public Library Staff, GALILEO Included Learn strategies for implementing or improving a professional development program at your library, including a look at the “Great Things to Know in GALILEO” self-guided training modules.

Exploring Newspapers in GALILEO A look at content and functionality in DLG historical newspapers and subscription newspaper databases in GALILEO, including tips for better searching.

Showing Value with GALILEO Statistics A look at the inner workings of how GALILEO collects, manages, and reports usage statistics. Session will also demonstrate different ways to present usage data for accountability purposes.

GaETC, Atlanta, November 2-4

Creating Your Story: Tips for Using GALILEO in Student Multimedia Projects This session introduces the “Create Your Own Story” activity, a guided-exploration activity in which elementary, middle, or high school students investigate GALILEO resources, illustrate a chosen theme, and create an autobiographical digital story.

The NEW New Georgia Encyclopedia: Creating the Resources You Need to Teach the GPS After a description of planned technology upgrades, participate in a discussion on developing a version of the NGE for elementary readers and a Teacher’s Resources area that will align NGE content with GPS.

Continued on next page
Enhancing History Education with Digitized Maps  An exploration of digitized maps of Georgia’s cities and towns in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Civil War Sesquicentennial: Digital Resources in GALILEO  Explore online Georgia history resources in GALILEO to find primary sources, facts, images, magazine and journal articles, and more.

Supporting and Customizing GALILEO for Your School  Learn key information on supporting and customizing GALILEO for your school system, including best practices for accessing through the GALILEO interface or linking directly from school web pages.

Georgia Council for the Social Studies Annual Conference, Athens, October 20-21

Civil War Sesquicentennial: Resources in GALILEO and the Digital Library of Georgia  Explore GALILEO and Georgia history resources to find primary sources, facts, images, magazine and journal articles, and more to use in your classroom.

Enhancing History Education with Primary Source Materials in the Digital Library of Georgia  The presenter describes the large variety of primary resources in the Digital Library of Georgia, their usefulness in enlivening history teaching, and how they can help students appreciate the value of research in history.

The NEW New Georgia Encyclopedia: Creating the Resources You Need to Teach the GPS  After a description of planned technology upgrades, participate in a discussion on developing a version of the NGE for elementary readers and a Teacher’s Resources area that will align NGE content with GPS.

2012 Annual GALILEO Staff Awards for Best Use of GALILEO Resources in a Georgia Student Media Festival Project  Many sessions at conferences and webinars are great preparation for creating projects for the Georgia Student Media Festival. Two awards will be presented for the best use of GALILEO resources among the 2012 entries. Use this flyer to promote the awards at your school.

GALILEO Staff Awards Flyer  http://about.galileo.usg.edu/docs/materials_docs/GALILEO_StudentMedia_Award_2011-2012_1.pdf

GALILEO Online Training  http://help.galileo.usg.edu/librarians/training/

GALILEO News and System Status Announcements are now available via RSS feed.
- News: http://about.galileo.usg.edu/news/feed/
- System Status Announcements: http://status.galileo.usg.edu/site/feed/
REGISTER NOW FOR BEST RATES!
DISCOUNTED Early Registration Opens April 1, 2011

Ways to save on Registration▼
SUPER SAVER REGISTRATION April 1 – May 31 $135
EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION June 1 – July 31 $145
REGULAR REGISTRATION August 1 – October 7 $155
LATE REGISTRATION After October 8 $175

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CALL TO PRESENT!
Now accepting applications for Workshops & Concurrent Sessions (www.gaetc.org)

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Alan November
November Learning

Featured Speakers
Patrick Crispent
NetSquirrel.com
Leslie Fisher
lesliefisher.com
Bernajean Porter
DigiTales
Kathy Schrock
KathySchrock.net
Tony Vincent
Learning in Hand
Brent Williams
SpeakWisdom!
Tammy Worchester
Tammy’s Technology Tips for Teachers
Chris Walsh
New Tech High Network
### 2011 Exemplary and Exceptional Recipients!

#### Exemplary

**Elementary:**

- **Parsons:** Gwinnett  LMS Suzanne Skeen  Principal: Charlotte Sadler
- **Compton:** Cobb  LMS Peggy Milam-Creighton  Principal: Liz Murphy

**Middle**

- **Palmer:** Cobb  LMS Janell McClure  Principal: Cathy Wentworth
- **Midway:** Liberty  LMS Cristina Dover  Principal: Debra Frazier
- **Clarke:** Clarke  LMS Shawn Hinger  Principal: Tad MacMillan

**High**

- **Glynn Academy:** Glynn  LMS Melissa Purcell and Amy Bradley  Principal: Scott Spence
- **Sequoyah:** Cherokee  LMS Jan Reed and Elease Franchini  Principal: Elliott Berman

#### Exceptional

**Elementary**

- **Kingston:** Bartow  LMS Lori Pilgrim  Principal: Stefany Howard
- **Medlock Bridge:** Fulton  LMS Leigh Martin  Principal: Margaret Pupillo

**Middle**

- **Ridgeview Charter:** Fulton  LMS Taylor Wickline  Principal: Lisa Hastey
- **Little Mill:** Forsyth  LMS Anna Murdock  Principal: Connie McCrary
- **Heard Middle:** Heard  LMS Glovis South  Principal: Mike Roberts
Inspired by other schools nationwide that have held One Book Projects, Holcomb Bridge MS teacher Dana Ferrara brought the idea to the school’s leadership team. After months of planning the project began with the selected novel, *Seedfolks* by Paul Fleischman.

*Seedfolks* is a novel that focuses on the impromptu creation of a garden that brings together a diverse, inner city neighborhood. Like the garden, Holcomb Bridge is a diverse community of learners who come together for a common goal: excellence. The planning committee even created a web page so that families and community members could read along (http://onebookhbms.weebly.com).

Title 1 grant money provided enough funds so that every child had his/her own copy to read during the two week period. Every staff member had a small mentoring group to work with and even non-reading teachers enjoyed working with the students to promote literacy and create a common experience. Spanish copies were ordered and an evening Spanish speaking parent group formed to read the book together.

Fulton County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Robert Avossa attended the Kick Off assembly where he shared his own heritage and experience of coming to the U.S. as a small child. Holcomb Bridge teachers dressed the parts of the characters in the book and introduced themselves to the students at the school wide assembly. Permission was granted by the publisher to use the book cover art in community flyers and promotional materials. The entire project was a tremendous success and the school plans to loan their materials to other Fulton schools who may decide to try a One Book Project at their schools. Student and teachers are already asking what the next book will be.

A good book should leave you slightly exhausted at the end. You live several lives while reading it. ~ William Styron
Library Journal/School Library Journal present the second annual Virtual Summit on Ebooks: The New Normal a one-day virtual conference on ebooks and their role in the future of libraries on October 12th, 10:00 am - 6:00 pm EDT.

This event will bring together librarians, vendors and publishers, and industry experts and offers keynote presentations as well as three tracks designed for public, academic, and K-12 libraries to discuss how libraries are leveraging the ebook opportunity to improve service and reach more users than ever before.

This year’s keynote will be delivered by author M.T. Anderson

Library Journal is granting a special Gale discounted pricing of $19.95. This special pricing is good now until the live day. The normal price is $29.95, but participants using the Gale Promo code: Ebksmt11Gale will pay only $19.95. Click HERE to Register.

Or you can click on the registration URL that leads directly to the registration page, just be sure to include the Gale Promo code: Ebksmt11Gale to pay only $19.95: http://www.thedigitalshift.com/events/e-book-summit/register/?utm_source=gale&utm_medium=promo&utm_campaign=ebooksummit

Once registered, media specialists will have access to all the summit content and materials for 90 days. To learn more about the Virtual Summit visit: http://www.thedigitalshift.com/events/e-book-summit/?utm_source=gale&utm_medium=promo&utm_campaign=ebooksummit

Besides the autumn poets sing, a few prosaic days
A little this side of the snow and that side of the haze. ~

Emily Dickinson
Temple High School Media Center Launches High Tech Learning Environment

August 30, 2011

Since the media center is the learning hub for the entire school, Temple High is working to transform their media center into a 21st century learning environment. A remodeling project has opened the area for visitors to enjoy and provided space to accommodate technology upgrades. With the help of SPLOST money, the updated media center will feature ebooks, Nooks, iPads, iPods, and flat screen televisions. The media center has been redesigned to accommodate an interactive Promethean Board that will allow classes to utilize the resources the media center has to offer. There is also a plan to purchase ebooks with money from the School Improvement Grant (SIG). One goal of the transformation is to promote digital literacy among the students and faculty. The media specialist and media clerk/technology assistant are collaborating with teachers to help implement the NETS (National Educational Technology Standards http://www.iste.org/standards/nets-for-teachers.aspx). With help from the media center, these national standards are integrated in 21st century classrooms at Temple High School.

Submitted by Sabrina Thompson Media Specialist Temple High School
Sharon Coatney (paraphrased) said: It is difficult to be in a leadership position as a school librarian or a school library district director or coordinator. It is hard to watch school library positions cut or reduced to a para-professional status; it is wrenching to watch successful programs decimated. It is particularly difficult because research supports the correlation between excellent school library programs staffed with credentialed school librarians and student achievement. Yet the worst of times often brings an opportunity for visionary leadership. School librarians and school library administrators can use these hard times to identify themselves as school leaders and promote advocacy for the school library program. The “worst of times” can become the “best of times” for school libraries. Let’s do it!

Thanks Rosalind Dennis for sharing this.

October gave a party; the leaves by hundreds came-
The Chestnuts, Oaks, and Maples,
And leaves of every name.
The Sunshine spread a carpet, and everything was grand,
Mrs. Weather lead the dancing,
Professor Wind the band. ~ Georgia Cooper
## October 2011

**Georgia Department of Education**

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*Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower.~ Albert Camus*