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Lone Star Listens

Author interview by Michelle Newby Lancaster

Each week Lone Star Literary profiles a newsmaker in Texas books and letters, including authors, booksellers, publishers.



Michelle Newby Lancaster is a reviewer for Kirkus Reviews and Foreword Reviews,

writer, blogger at TexasBookLover.com, and a moderator for the Texas Book Festival. Her reviews appear in Pleiades Magazine, Rain Taxi, Concho River Review, Mosaic Literary Magazine, Atticus Review, The Rumpus, PANK Magazine, and The Collagist.

ABOUT THIS INTERVIEW

Meghan Goel is the TTBF Programming Director, Children's Book Buyer and Programming Director at BookPeople, and columnist for Publishers Weekly.

9.30.2018 Texas Teen Book Festival programming director Meghan Goel on what's new and perennial favorites at the 10th annual TTBF



Visit the 10th Annual Texas Teen Book Festival

Sat., Oct. 6, 2018 St. Edward's University Austin, TX

The tenth annual Texas Teen Book Festival (TTBF) takes over Austin's St. Edward's University on Saturday, October 6, 2018, for a full day of bookish fun. More than thirty-five authors will read from and sign their books and participate in panel discussions. There will be creative writing workshops conducted by Barrio Writers and Badgerdog, the Epic Reads costume contest, the 90-Second Newbery Film Festival Workshop, presentation of the winners of the annual fiction writing contest, and more.

TTBF is a one-day event that celebrates the teen reading experience by inviting fans to engage with some of the most popular and critically acclaimed young adult authors in the country. TTBF started as the Austin Teen Book Festival in 2009 with sixteen authors and five hundred attendees at Westlake High School. The event continued to grow, and in 2011 through 2013 was sponsored by the Austin Public Library Friends Foundation. In 2014 the event was renamed the Texas Teen Book Festival and is one of the largest gatherings of its kind anywhere.

Presented in collaboration with the Texas Book Festival, BookPeople, and a dedicated team of volunteers, librarians, and venue sponsor St. Edward's University, TTBF is made possible in part by a grant from Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

For more information and to plan your visit, visit www.texasteenbookfestival.org

Meghan Goel is the TTBF Programming Director, Children's Book Buyer and Programming Director at BookPeople, and columnist for Publishers Weekly. She spoke with Lone Star Literary Life via email.

LONE STAR LITERARY LIFE: Ms. Goel, how and when did the Texas Teen Book Festival (TTBF) begin?

MEGHAN GOEL: The Texas Teen Book Festival began in 2009 when librarian Heather Schubert partnered with BookPeople to see if we could start a festival together. A number of other librarians joined the cause. And the rest is history!

What is the festival's primary mission?

Our primary mission is to introduce readers to exciting literary voices and bring teens together around conversations that use young adult literature as a jumping-off point for anything that's on their minds.

How has the festival grown since its beginnings?

We launched the festival in a high school performing arts center, but it was clear at that first event that we already needed more space. The festival doubled in size the next year, then doubled again, and has continued to grow into an event that now attracts four thousand readers annually. Starting with sixteen authors in attendance, we now regularly host more than thirty-five authors and have added workshops, contests, and all kinds of interactive programming.

Take us behind the scenes; what is involved in putting on an event of this size and scope?

It's hard to know where to begin! A dedicated committee of booksellers, librarians, and Texas Book Festival staff begin planning in January and works right up until the final week to get everything ready for the big day. From working with publishers and authors to exhibitors and vendors to A/V and caterers, there are a lot of details to put into place, but it's a lot of fun to see what we can come up with to make each festival better than the last!

What can you tell us about this year's author lineup?

This year's lineup is jam-packed with incredible voices. Headliners **Nic Stone** and **Neal and Jarrod Shusterman** are leading an all-star line-up that mixes twelve returning TTBF alumni and big-name bestsellers with exciting debut voices.

What are some of the panels planned for this year?

For the first time, we're hosting a really interesting panel of activists-turned-authors that includes **Ebony Adams**, **Anita Sarkeesian**, **Julissa Arce**, and **Nadya Okamoto**. We are also featuring **Patrick Ness** and **David Levithan** in conversation about the art of adaptation and the experience of taking stories from page to screen and back again. And beyond that, we have a whole slate of awesome panels and conversations for readers to check out.

What's new this year?

We are once again expanding our interactive options for attendees. In addition to a full day of activities and events in the tent, which we launched last year, we have launched a brand new StudioCreate tent where exhibitors and community partners will offer creative, interactive activities and content throughout the day.

What is your favorite memory of past festivals?

This is the fourth year of our Delacorte-sponsored teen writing contest, and I think my favorite memory from the festival was watching the winners come to the stage while being cheered on by their favorite authors. I get emotional during the announcement every year.

What are the future plans for the festival?

With ten years under our belt, we're excited to see where the festival goes in the next ten. Who knows — hover-tents? It could happen!

What books are on your nightstand?

We Will Never Meet in Real Life by **Samantha Irby** and *Bridge of Clay* by **Marcus Zusak**.

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