



JOCELYN KNIGHT / FOR THE ARK

A member of the Teen Book Club, Ark contributor Katie O'Neill, explores a display of popular young adult fiction books at the Belvedere-Tiburon Library.

## From dystopian to magical, YA books read across ages

By GRAHAM GREMORE

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Young adult fiction is one of the hottest genres in literature today, read by both teenagers and adults alike.

"There's a lot of energy around YA lit," says Rebecca Jung, teen services librarian at the Belvedere-Tiburon Library. "It's a genre that's crossed boundaries, and a lot of adults are fanatic about YA literature."

According to the Association of American Publishers, in 2012, the young adult fiction genre showed powerful growth in nearly every international market, with an estimated 13 percent increase in sales from the previous year.

"I read a statistic recently that said approximately 50 percent of all YA literature is read by people over the age of 18," says Jung.

Jung started her job as the teen librarian two years ago and has become quite the expert on the young adult fiction genre and has a number of book recommendations for readers of all ages.

"The trends that we've seen over the last few years are continuing," says Jung. "There's a lot of energy around the whole dystopian, post-apocalyptic survival genre. It's really, really popular, and we're going to see some more big titles coming out in that area."

Some current popular dystopian genre series include the "Lorien Legacies" by Pittacus Lore, Marie Lu's "Legend" and "Divergent" by Veronica Roth.

"The supernatural genre, books about vampires and zombies, are also popular," says Jung. "There have been some big series lately."

Supernatural authors and series worth checking out include: Amanda Hocking's "Watersong" books, a supernatural romance series, and Maggie Stiefvater's "The Raven Boys" series, as well as Richelle Mead's



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Teen Services Librarian Rebecca Jung in the young adult book section of the Belvedere-Tiburon Library.

emy, and Darren Shan's "Cirque du Freak: A Living Nightmare," part of "The Saga of Darren Shan" series.

Jung warns that many of the series can be addictive.

"With a big series, I try to read the first novel so I'm familiar with them and can recommend them or not," she says half-jokingly, "and I have to admit that I get hooked on them and sometimes read through the whole series."

"There are always kids who want to read realistic fiction," Jung says. "Books about friendships and relationships and family and struggles."

"John Green wrote 'The Fault in Our Stars,' in 2012, which continues to be one of the most popular YA books, even though now it's over a year old." The protagonist

is made to attend a support group where she falls in love. "People are still reading 'The Fault in Our Stars' — adults and teens. You can't talk about YA lit without talking about John Green."

Other recently released stand-alone young adult novels readers might be interested in are Nick Lake's "In Darkness," winner of

the 2013 Michael L. Printz Award, Susan Crandall's "Whistling Past the Graveyard," a poignant story about friendship set in 1963 Mississippi, Kari Luna's "The Theory of Everything," a quirky tale about a teen girl and her shaman panda on a quest to learn the truth about her father, and David Massey's "Torn," a gritty military story set in a war-torn Afghanistan.

"There's a lot of content out there," Jung

Many of the latest young adult fiction releases can be found at the Belvedere-Tiburon Library within a few weeks of their release, and can be ordered ahead of time so they are ready for pick-up when a patron comes in.

In addition to a wide selection of young adult fiction, the library offers an extensive teen program.

"Teens love to come to the library," Jung says. "And when we supply not only the materials they want — the books and other items — but a place for them to hang out and see their friends and do something creative, they just flock to it. It's a great resource to the community."

The Teen Book Club meets once a month to discuss a different book. Titles are announced ahead of time on the library's website, bel-tib-lib.org. There is also the Teen Lounge, which is offered on Tuesday afternoons during the school year. The lounge allows teens an opportunity to socialize, hang out, finish homework and relax.

Jung says that she's noticed most teens don't need much encouragement to read, but for those who do, it's helpful when parents get involved.

"It's great when parents bring (their kids) in and we work together with finding books that they'll be interested in," Jung says.

"There are so many great authors and titles, and YA lit continues to be really hot. Every time I mention a popular series or author, I think about 10 others I should be talking about. If you get online or come to the library and look for YA literature, there's a lot out there. There's certainly something for everyone."

*Born and raised in St. Paul, Minn., Graham Gremore came to Tiburon by way of San Francisco. He earned a master's in creative writing from San Francisco State University and his work has been nomi-*

### on the web

For suggestions on young adult fiction titles, visit [teenreads.com](http://teenreads.com) and [dogobooks.com](http://dogobooks.com).

For more information on teen activities at the Belvedere-Tiburon Library, visit [bel-tib-lib.org](http://bel-tib-lib.org).