New Tech High School Great American Author Project

In the fall of 2011, Monroe County Public Library asked the students of Rachel Bahr's English and American Studies classes at New Tech High School [1] to consider the "Great American Author." We were interested in getting teens' opinions about what criteria an author has to meet to be included on this rather arbitrary list, whether some authors considered great Americans have aged ungracefully or are no longer relevant, and who should be considered "great" that is not already.

For example, some of the teens in these classes read *Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger. While Salinger and his most famous work are considered to be American classics, a number of the teens, while acknowledging the importance of the book, did not feel it was all that relevant to their lives. The issues of identity and alienation Holden Caulfield experiences, which seemed radical in print when the book was published, are apparently so commonplace today in teens' real lives and in young adult literature in general that the book seemed out of touch to some of the students. Being a teenager has become so much more complex in the 60 years since the

book's publication, that one student even wondered what Holden had to complain about!

After studying a wide variety of literary movements in American history, the New Tech students developed websites demonstrating their research, as well as book reviews of representative "Great American" titles. Their work will be used by the Library to fine tune our selection process for the Young Adult collection - Check them out!

Of Mice and Men [2] [3]
The Giver [4]
Fahrenheit 451 [5]
A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court [6]

For the Love of Reading [7] Information, Answers & Reviews [7] Classics [8] Local Interest [9] Teens [10]

Posted by Chris H. on Mar 29, 2012

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Links:
[1] http://www.mccsc.net/subsite/bnth
[2] http://www.wix.com/bwdonal/gaa_mice-and-men
[3] http://www.wix.com/gemietoveyu/great-authors-timeline#%21what-makes-her-great
[4] http://www.wix.com/jessicareiser/great-american-author
[5] http://www.academic-community.com/jcabear/author/template.html
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