



Meet our staff! This month, we are profiling Baker & Taylor's Alison Curtin, Children's and Teen Services Special Collections Project Manager in Baker & Taylor's Public Library Sales group. She's worked at Baker & Taylor for 12 years this autumn, and cannot quite believe how quickly the years have flown by. She's a native, 100% authentic Jersey Girl, who loves books, is a huge Star Wars nerd, an art museum fanatic, supporter of our National Parks and is currently trying to visit as many Major League Baseball Ballparks across the country as possible. She's also training to run her first ever marathon-hopefully this November-in New York City!



**Q: Hi Alison. First off, tell us a little bit about what your role entails at Baker & Taylor.**

AC: I work along with multiple departments and wear many different hats. One day I may be reviewing newly added titles to our lifetime guaranteed prebind line, FollettBound, another day I may be reviewing product for our makerspace microsite, and then on another day I am working with our colleagues in different publishing houses in developing both in person and virtual CATS TitleTalk presentations for you, our library customers. If your Baker & Taylor field rep has a question about any of the menu items we offer for Children and Teen librarians, I am one of the office contacts they reach out to for information. Over time I have been lucky to meet quite a few of the librarians at our accounts this way, and it has been immensely rewarding.

So much of the job is variable, all based on what our library customers need at the time. Much like a Children's and Teen Librarian's day, we never know what we can expect, and we have to be ready to answer many different questions, troubleshoot solutions, and learn something new along the way. One thing we often say in our office is that we are constantly learning, as each week, each day brings along something new. I consider myself lucky to be in such a position.



**Q: Having been involved with the prebind program at Baker & Taylor since its inception 12 years ago, is there a favorite moment you'd like to share from building that program?**

AC: I can remember an early product return from back in 2012 or so, when the prebind program was still called Paw Prints. We back our prebinds with a lifetime guarantee. The librarian in question had returned a very shop worn and tattered copy of Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Into the Woods* and had written me a lovely letter, saying that the book had been through HUNDREDS of circulations over a few years, and that the book

was ready to be retired, something we happily did and replaced right away! I still have the copy at my desk. It is a shop worn and much loved looking book, and I'm not certain that I will ever part with it. To think about how many people had read that book over the years it was out there in circulation, it's a special thing.

**Q: Any favorite reads you'd like to tell us about? And what are you reading now?**

AC: I have always been an avid reader with overflowing bookcases and a never ending TBR list. As a child, one of my favorite books was *Corduroy* by Don Freeman. The idea of the teddy bear all alone, adventuring around a giant department store like Macy's or Marshall Fields was so fascinating to me, and I secretly wondered if I would ever get the chance myself! I love history, and often read biographies. I recently read Erik Larson's *The Splendid and the Vile* about the beginning of The Blitz and how it affected all parts of British society and the collective nature of "getting through it together" that we are all currently faced with today. I'm a huge fan of science fiction and fantasy novels, and I am currently re-reading Frank Herbert's *Dune* ahead of the new film adaptation being released. I am also a huge fan of Ursula K. Le Guin and encourage everyone to read her Earthsea Chronicles and her breathtaking novel that won the Nebula & the Hugo in 1970, *The Left Hand of Darkness*. My 10 year old son is a big fan of graphic novels, and we just read *Dragon Hoops* by Gene Luen Yang together, and it was fantastic! He & I are getting ready next to start *Sal and Gabi Break the Universe* by Carlos Hernandez and winner of this year's Pura Belpre Author Award.

**Q: Rumor has it, you are an avid baseball fan. What one or two things do you think all librarians should know about baseball?**

AC: WE LOVE BASEBALL IN MY FAMILY! I have been a fan of the New York Yankees since I was a kid, and have passed the love of baseball along to my son. After visiting libraries in the Chicagoland area 5 years ago, my husband and son met me in the city for a family weekend trip. We ended up getting tickets to a game at the newly renovated friendly confines of Wrigley Field, and a family travel challenge was born! 5 years later – we have visited 15 different Major League Baseball stadiums and ballparks. It has been a great way to see the country!

My biggest piece of baseball advice that I had when I was one of the parent coaches in t-ball and then coach pitch was reminding the kids rounding the bases to "touch them all", as in, make sure you tag each base as you are running around the diamond! In a way, this is so much like how the dedicated librarians I have met handle their day to day, by touching them all. Each kid. Each story time. Each time they help out a child on their first research project. Librarians always touch the all bases!



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Stay tuned for future Meet the Staff introductions, and if there's anyone you'd like to see gracing the pages of the *CATS Meow*, let us know at [CATS@baker-taylor.com](mailto:CATS@baker-taylor.com).