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Yakking with **T.A. BARRON** Author is a wizard with words

Like the characters he writes about, author T.A. Barron's life has been an interesting and magical journey.

T.A., a popular fantasy writer for older grade school and middle school readers, was born in Boston. He spent his early years (through elementary school) in Harvard, Massachusetts, a small New England town with rolling hills and lots of apple trees. It was a place rich in history and beauty. In fact, author Louisa May Alcott (she wrote "Little Women") used to hang out there a century ago just down the hill from his home.

He grew up in a family of seven children and he loved playing outside and exploring nature — both on foot and through writing. T.A. says he was like any other outdoor kid, except he always had a notebook in his backpack.

When T.A. was 7 years old he wrote his first biography, not about a person, but about a big, old chestnut tree. T.A. says he wanted to explore the idea of what a tree's life was like. Years later, the seeds of that story grew into one of his novels, "The Ancient One."

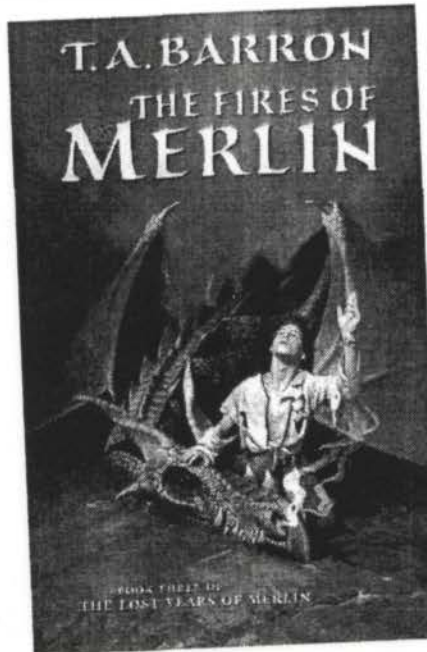
When T.A. was about 12, his parents, who loved the mountains, bought a ranch in the foothills of the Colorado Rockies and moved the family west.

T.A. kept writing and exploring the wondrous world around him. He even wrote and illustrated his own magazine for family and friends.

T.A. continued to write as a college student at Princeton and as a Rhodes Scholar in Oxford, England. As a young man he explored the world: Asia, Africa and even the Arctic.

After college, T.A. entered the business world. T.A. had many interesting jobs, including running a company, but still managed to write early in the morning before he started his work day.

T.A. has always loved Colorado. Growing up under the



enormous blue sky made him feel like anything was possible. That's why he left the business world and moved back home in 1990 to make writing his full-time job. Right now, he's busy spinning tales about Merlin. But soon, it will be summer, and T.A. will be hitting the trails with his kids — exploring and gathering experiences to share with us in future books. Happy trails.

By Janis Campbell,
Yak's Corner staffer

T.A. Barron Tidbits

🕒 **Personal stuff:** The T. stands for Tom. He lives in Colorado with his wife, Currie, and three sons and two daughters — ages 2, 4, 7, 10 and 11. They live in a big farmhouse with a dog, lots of barn cats and goats.

📍 **Where and when he writes:** T.A. says he always has several ideas cooking in his "creative stew pot." When he's on deadline,

really working on a book, he's a lot like a bear retiring to his cave, he says. His "writing cave" is the attic of his house, which is decorated with his children's artwork and other things that inspire him. At the beginning of the year, usually for about six or seven months, he writes all day and sometimes into the night, getting a book or sometimes two into shape. In August, he comes out of his cave. He always takes the month of August off to enjoy the summer.

☕ **Favorite food:** Coffee ice cream.

📖 **Want to read some of his books?**

Look for his first three books on the early life of the great wizard Merlin. He's planning a five-book series. The first three are "The Lost Years of Merlin," "The Seven Songs of Merlin" and "The Fires of Merlin." This fall, T.A.'s first picture book, "Where Is Grandpa," will be published. It was inspired by his children after his father died a few years ago. His fourth book in the Merlin series also will be published this fall.

🌐 **For more T.A. tidbits:** Visit his Web site at www.tabarron.com

