This Issue Features:

- About 500 titles reviewed
- Classics Revisited
- School Librarians’ Corner: Awards and more
- Book Nook: Biographies for Young Artists and Musicians
- ECLA Conference

PRAIRIE BORN

Poem by Dave Bouchard
Paintings by Peter Shostak
A Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Almost four years ago we began the research and planning that eventually put the Christian Library Journal into your hands. It was a family project, hopefully to become a source of income for my daughters and myself after my husband’s death. At first we used family funds along with subscription income for planning and promotion, office help, editing, writing, reviewing, graphics, and printing. But as time went on, it became clear that the journal’s income did not meet its outgo, so one by one we cut most of these paid services, learned to do more ourselves, and enlisted volunteers to help with the work. As income was always insufficient to meet costs, we subsidized the journal with family monies. After almost three years of publication, it has become clear that CLJ is a ministry, not a business. We no longer expect the journal to contribute to our family’s income, and we also no longer have the financial resources to continue to subsidize CLJ. I am now looking for a professional library position, and will continue to publish the journal at home.

How does this story affect you? First, it means that the journal will only go to press and to the mailing service when we have funds in hand to pay cash for these services. This means that our publication schedule is very irregular. Our goal from the beginning has been to publish five issues a year. Each year so far we have published only four issues, but extended everyone’s subscription one issue into the next year, so our subscribers have always received five issues as they were promised. This year you have in your hands a combined March/May issue, with over 500 reviews to meet our commitment to you. Beginning in the fall, we will become a quarterly, with about 300 reviews per issue. We will publish one issue each season of the year.

Our most recent cut in costs means we will no longer pay for columns or articles. We hope and pray that librarians will be willing to share their ideas, expertise, and thoughts with others as part of their professional commitment to the library community, as is done in many professional journals. Our reviewers have been writing reviews as volunteers since the second year of publication, and their work has consistently improved and been of value to our readers.

So we call on you to renew and pay for your subscription promptly, and share your CLJ with others so that our subscription base might grow. At current costs, we could add about 1,000 new subscribers without additional cost, as we have must print a minimum of 2,000 copies. We have been sending the extras to interested libraries and those on our prospects list.

We continue to trust God’s provision for CLJ as long as the journal meets the needs of librarians. Pray for us as we continue to publish CLJ as a ministry to you and yours.

In Christ’s love,

Nancy L. Hesch

Nancy L. Hesch
Editor and Publisher
### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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The purpose of the Christian Library Journal is to provide readers with reviews of both Christian and secular library materials from a Christian point of view. About 250 books, cassette tapes, and videos from both Christian and secular publishers are reviewed each issue. Materials reviewed may reflect a broad range of Christian doctrinal positions and do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff of the Christian Library Journal.

Nancy Hesch Publisher & Editor
Children’s Books
Andrew Seddon Editor: Articles
Raymond Legg Editor: Adult Nonfiction
Mary McKinney Editor: Adult Fiction & Young Adult Nonfiction
Sylvia Stopforth Editor: YA Fiction
Kitty Lindstrom Design and Layout


Printed in the U.S.A.
What is the spark that makes great writers and artists? Is it a gift or talent for expression that shines out above the crowd? Surely we all have the ability to create and make beauty around us in one way or another if we are made in the image of God the great Creator. Why is it that some seem to be directed to develop a talent for expression that others neglect or pass by? We read great literature or view beautiful art and wish we too might have such gifts.

Talent for expression is indeed a gift from God, but studying the lives of great artists, musicians, and writers, one soon comes to the conclusion that encouragement with opportunity for expression and diligent work are essential to the flowering of that talent. As adults working with children, we have such an opportunity to offer encouragement and training, to urge discipline and work.

New biographies for young children on the lives of talented artists and writers may be the tools to help encourage and inspire goals for youngsters. *Author : A True Story* by Helen Lester is a delightful tale for the younger set, first through fourth grade. Children will identify with her first efforts at writing lists and stories when she was three years old that only she could read and understand. Becoming a teacher, she loved to teach writing to her second graders and one day wrote and illustrated a book for children. That first book wasn’t accepted for publication, but she leads her young readers through the adventures, hurdles, and work of finally writing children’s books that are accepted and published. Young children usually love to write stories and this is a delightful way to introduce them to the idea of writing as a career. The book stands on its own as enjoyable reading, but can be carried further to demonstrate why authors write books. Children will be tickled and challenged to entertain the idea that perhaps one day they might like to write books.

Children love the cadence and rhythm of poetry. Seldom do they know the story behind the poetry that conveys the feelings and struggles of the poet. *Revolutionary Poet* brings to light the life and struggles of a young black poet and the affirmation of friends that made such a difference in the use of her gift. *Revolutionary Poet : A Story About Phillis Wheatley* by Maryann Weidt is the account of a slave girl brought to Boston prior to the Revolutionary War and taken into the
John Wheatley family. The Wheatley daughter educated Phillis and her gift for poetry blossomed. When she was thirteen years old one of her poems was published in a local newspaper and people all over the colonies read it. Recognizing her gift for poetry, Mrs. Wheatley encouraged and promoted Phillis’ talent. At nineteen, Phillis traveled to Britain to promote publishing a book of her poetry. Following her trip and publication of her book, Phillis was set free. Marriage and years of struggle during the Revolutionary War ended with her death in December 1784. She is remembered as the first black poet in this country.

Writing can be hard work and demands persistence as well as talent. *Writer of the Plains: A Story about Willa Cather* by Tom Streissguth minces no words in telling of the hard work and stress involved in becoming a writer. An essay Cather wrote while enrolled at the University of Nebraska was published in the local newspaper and was the pivotal turning point for her in deciding to become a writer. Excited by the thought that many readers would be challenged by her writing, she pursued her dream of becoming a writer. A Boston magazine published a story she had written when only eighteen years old. In 1893 the *Nebraska State Journal* invited her to write regular columns. She was still an unknown college student, so her name wasn’t printed and she was paid only one dollar for each column. Following college, she struggled to find work that could support her. Newspaper work kept her busy, but didn’t allow much energy for real writing and offered little income. Teaching and then working on a magazine also allowed little time for the pursuit of her own talent. Sarah Orne Jewett, a well-known author, advised her to step away from her job at the magazine and earnestly pursue her own writing. Taking time off from work, she wrote her first book and then continued to write stories and books. She learned to write what she knew best, the Nebraska farmland and people of the plains. Despite struggle and discouragement she had persevered and seen her dreams realized. Recent years have seen renewed interest in her books.

In the book *Charlotte Brontë and Jane Eyre*, Stewart Ross traces the remarkable life of Charlotte Bronte from a Yorkshire parsonage to the creation of her greatest work, Jane Eyre. She wrote in a time when women were not encouraged and accepted as writers, yet she persisted and wrote one of the great literary classics under the pseudonym of Currer Bell. Artist Robert Van Nutt has captured the life and times of Charlotte Bronte with colorful paintings and pencil drawings that bring understanding to this period of history and life. This book will intrigue and challenge young writers in fifth through eighth grade. It has illustrations and story line that carry the reader to the last page.

*Vincent van Gogh* by Eileen Lucas and *Perugino’s Path* by Nancy L. Clouse take a look at the lives of the two artists. Defeats and discouragement are dealt with in realistic ways, while portraying the drive and talent of these two men. Children with a passion for painting will be captivated by the lives depicted here. All will have their understanding and appreciation expanded.

These are but a handful of current books available to young readers interested in writing or painting. It is hoped that such forays into the arts can encourage and stimulate young minds. The library can sponsor activities for young readers such as creating original student books and inviting authors to read and meet with children. So often writing and art are lonely, difficult careers, but encouragement early on can be the impetus that stirs the creativity which will benefit many. We may never know the importance of our influence on someone else, but it could be just what a young person needs to pursue the path to which God is calling him or her.
Classics Revisited

by Sylvia Stopforth

Although publishers are generally preoccupied with the perilous business of introducing new works, they sometimes indulge in a reissue of the tried and true.

Some of these take the form of a simple reprinting, so that an author’s work may be made available to a new generation. On occasion, though, a publisher will expend considerable resources in refurbishing a classic, providing illustrations, newly written introductions, or marginal notes that provide a sense of historical context.

In order to make our readers aware of the availability of these reissued classics, the Christian Library Journal is adding a new column to its pages. This column will consist of annotated bibliographies of award-winning titles and books that have come to be considered classics.

As the publication and availability of these works is sporadic, this column may not appear in each issue.


F. Boarding schools--Fiction; Schools--Fiction; Family life--Fiction; New England--Fiction. 332 p.


F. Boarding schools--Fiction; Schools--Fiction; Family life--Fiction; New England--Fiction. 316 p.


F. Runaways--Fiction; Dogs--Fiction; Friendship--Fiction. 262 p.


F. Friendship--Fiction; Boston (Mass.)--Fiction. 325 p.


F. Orphans--Fiction; Cousins--Fiction; Family life--Fiction. 236 p.


F. Orphans--Fiction; Cousins--Fiction; Family life--Fiction. 302 p.

Alcott’s classic tale of the warmhearted March family has been treasured by generations of readers. The charm of Little Women can be attributed to the perfect balance of joys and sorrows, with just the right amount of humor and romance thrown in. Through the guidance of their loving mother, the four March sisters learn to navigate life’s challenges with grace and wisdom.

The story continues with Little Men, which focuses on the boys’ home Jo and her husband establish at Plumfield, which was bequeathed to Jo by the cantankerous Aunt March. In Jo’s Boys, the youngsters are all grown up and making their way in the world.

Under the Lilacs is a stand-alone book about Ben Brown and his performing poodle, Sancho. Together, the pair runs away from the circus in search of Ben’s father. They are taken in by Mrs. Moss and their daughters, who give Ben a home. In the end, Ben regains his father, and it appears that Mrs. Moss may gain a husband.

In An Old Fashioned Girl, Polly Milton visits with the wealthy Shaw family, where she comes to understand the true relationship between wealth and happiness.

Eight Cousins and Rose in Bloom introduce the newly orphaned Rose, who loses her parents, only to gain eight boisterous cousins and a chorus of aunts with very set notions regarding the raising of young girls. Initially the quiet Rose is overwhelmed, but time - and her loving Uncle Alec - ensure that this flower will bloom beautifully.

Alcott’s stories are always sweet, but never cloying. Her excellent grasp of human nature is evident in her well-rounded characters and natural dialogue. While her tales are traditional and old-fashioned when viewed from the 20th century, she always manages to inject them with some revolutionary ideas, particularly in terms of education and women’s roles.

Each cover sports a painting by Jane Dyer, and proudly proclaims that these books are “from the original publisher.” There is often a dedication from Alcott in the opening pages, and sometimes a very brief preface apologizing for any “defects” in her “little stories.” Apology completely unnecessary, Miss Alcott.


F. Sisters--Fiction. 287 p.


F. Jungle--Fiction; Animals--Fiction. 210 p.

Viking’s Whole Story Edition of Little Women boasts the complete, unabridged text of Alcott’s story as originally published in 1868. It seems that the author famous for her creation of the independent, uncompromising Jo March gave in to pressures to make some minor revisions to her own novel. For example, Jo’s colorful language was toned down slightly, and...
Mrs. March, who was originally "stout," became stately and "tall.

This handsome edition is generously decorated with color and black and white illustrations, as well as sidebars which serve to remind the reader that Alcott lived and wrote within a particular context. Note that this volume contains only the first part of Little Women; the sequel, sometimes called Little Women Part II or Good Wives, was written later in response to public demand. The Little, Brown and Co. edition, above, contains both parts in one volume.

Kipling’s The Jungle Book receives the same treatment from Penguin. The captivating tale of Mowgli, raised by wolves in the jungle, is enhanced by new color illustrations as well as maps, black and white reproductions depicting objects and events of the time, and even a number of photographs of animals native to India.

Both books are printed on heavy, glossy paper; the wide margins and clear print make for a reader-friendly format. The sturdy bindings will stand up to many readings.


When it was first published in 1961, The Bronze Bow won a Newbery Medal. It’s no wonder, as this riveting tale will capture the reader's imagination of anyone who opens its covers. Speare's meticulous attention to historical accuracy is second only to her ability to draw the reader in.

Daniel is a rebel, living in the hills of Galilee and nursing his hatred of the Romans who killed his parents. He lives only for vengeance. When a friend takes him to hear a new preacher, named Jesus, Daniel’s hopes catch fire, and he waits for his life to unfold against a fascinating historical backdrop.

Lloyd Alexander provides an informative introduction to this novel, stating that, "Hawes compromised with neither life nor literature. He refused to pretend that the scriptures is not keeping the Sabbath holy. Her father is infuriated by the teaching of the Bible, as well as to her father’s sometimes unrealistic expectations, she finally gains the love she so desperately craves.

The Elsie Books, originally published over a century ago, relate the story of Elsie Dinsmore, whose mother died giving birth to her, and whose father has never acknowledged her. Elsie knows that her heavenly Father loves her, but she hopes and prays for the affection of her earthly father as well.

At long last, Horace Dinsmore returns, but he is biased by the spitful reports of his family regarding his daughter, and treats the gentle Elsie with undue harshness. Through untiring efforts to live up to the teachings of the Bible, as well as to her father’s sometimes unrealistic expectations, she finally gains the love she so desperately craves.

In Elsie’s Holidays at Roselands, a crisis arises when Elsie’s desire to obey her father conflicts with her determination to follow the teachings of God’s word. She refuses to read a story to her father, who is ill, because it is Sunday, and Elsie believes that reading anything other than the scriptures is not keeping the Sabbath holy. Her father is infuriated by the challenge to his authority, and deprives her of her friends, her freedom, and finally, her beloved mammy. Elsie is at death’s door before her father finally relents.


Born on Christmas morning, the lovely new addition to the Bird family can only be named Carol. But it seems her frail body and angelic nature are poorly suited to this world. Kate Wiggin eloquently describes the grief her parents experience when they find they must accept the fact that their child will never be well again.

Her tenth Christmas is to be Carol’s last, and her dearest wish is to give the penniless Ruggles children a Christmas they will never forget. Mrs. Ruggles’ valiant efforts to make her brood of nine presentable reveal glimpses of the humor that will burst out in the author’s Rebecca novels. Carol has her wish, and leaves the world a better place for her fleeting presence in it.

Good quality paper and a rich red jacket add to the charm of this slim hardbound volume.


Originally published in 1923, The Dark Frigate won the Newbery Medal for the same year. Tempest-tossed seas, bloodthirsty pirates, and a worthy young protagonist make for a rousing adventure story. But Hawes gives his readers even more, for his characters are true-to-life and his language is rich and robust. He sets his tale in the time of King Charles and Cromwell, so the story unfolds against a fascinating historical backdrop.

Lloyd Alexander provides an informative introduction to this novel, stating that, "Hawes compromised with neither life nor literature. He refused to pretend that either was easy."

The sketchy black line drawings at the head of each chapter capture the atmosphere of the book nicely.


Set of all four titles: $23.96.

Fathers and daughters--Fiction; Marriage--Fiction. 287 p.
the end, through her example, he learns to love Jesus as well as she does.

Mr. Dinsmore takes a new wife in *Elsie's Childhood*; this kind, Christian woman loves both her husband and her new daughter, and tempers some of the former’s stern manner. Elsie has her first taste of romance, and falls prey to the charms of one Tom Jackson, a deceitful fortune-hunter. Her father discovers the truth, and Elsie’s obedient heart is sorely tested as he forbids her to see Tom again. By the closing chapter, however, she finds that true love is sometimes found in a most unexpected place.

In *Elsie's Womanhood*, Elsie marries her father’s dearest friend, John Travilla, but their honeymoon nearly ends tragically when Tom Jackson reappears to make an attempt on their lives. Their lives are spared, but soon the Civil War breaks out, and Elsie must experience the loss of dear friends even as she thrills to the first joys of motherhood.

This series is as charming as its heroine, but it does take what some might consider a legalistic approach to the Bible, and it is very much a product of its time. Modern readers may find it difficult to reconcile the emphasis on keeping the Sabbath holy with the unquestioning acceptance of slavery and the sometimes condescending treatment of African Americans. The class system is firmly entrenched, and all characters, including Elsie, take pleasure in the many luxuries their wealth affords them.


Plain Girl is a gentle and eloquent story about tradition and change, about being in the world, but not of it. Esther Lapp is almost ten, and is required by Pennsylvania law to attend school. Her Amish parents have taught her at home until now, for they lost an older son to the world after he started going to the same school Esther is to attend.

With her quick eyes and darting thoughts, Esther is a delightfully engaging character. As she anticipates this exciting change in her life, she realizes that “Only in a crowd of dark dresses exactly alike, and white bonnets and black shoes and white aprons, was she hidden. At the Fair, where hundreds of people wore different styles and colors, she had been absolutely clear and alone among them, like one black bird against the sky. At school she would show every day, every hour.”

In spite of her trepidation, Esther finds a special friend at school. She also finds a way for her brother, who has gained a new appreciation for the old ways, to return home.

Sorensen, a Newbery medal winner, writes with a clarity and simplicity that perfectly complement the Amish way of life. The fluid, informal line drawings of Charles Geer add just the right touch.


Little is known of the origins of this charming tale. A cross between an old-fashioned morality tale and a traditional fairy tale, The Basket of Flowers tells of a gardener and his beloved young daughter. Every day, James teaches Mary lessons from God’s word, as illustrated in his well-tended garden.

Wrongly accused of theft, Mary is banished from her homeland. She and her father are sentenced to a life of poverty and woe. Often, they reach the end of their own endurance, but without fail they turn to God in their distress, to find that solace and deliverance are at hand.

ECLA Conference

The Evangelical Church Library Association annual fall conference will be held on Saturday, October 24, in Wheaton, Illinois. This school librarians are invited to attend as well as church librarians. (CLJ editor’s note: Christian librarians in public libraries and public schools may be welcome as well; contact ECLA for further information.)

For information, call 800-223-0001, or write to Evangelical Church Library Association, P.O. Box 353, Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60138.
Welcome to the School Librarian’s Corner of CLJ! This is our place to discuss issues particular to school librarians. That doesn’t mean other librarians won’t enjoy our “corner” of the magazine, but it does mean we can look at problems, projects, etc. that may be unique to school librarians. So get your cup of coffee and let’s chat!

Awards to Note: For a look at the many awards going to books/authors/illustrators around the country, see http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/subst/lists/awards/awards.html/6280-8660711-507902

Also check out the Children’s Literature Web guide at, http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/index.html

The winners are in for the 1997/98 Lamplighter and Crown Awards!! Remember, these are awards given to students in participating Christian Schools across the country. For information, contact Sandra Morrow, 11908 N. Lamar, Austin, TX 78753.

1998 CROWN WINNERS
1st Earthquake Terror, by Peggy Kehret
2nd Poppys by Avi
3rd Greyfriar’s Bobby, by Ruth Brown

1998 LAMPLIGHTER WINNERS
1st The Bookstore Mouse, by Peggy Christian
2nd Valpse the Red Fox, by Jean Craighead George

NOMINEES FOR THE 1998/99 CROWN AWARD
Child of the Wolves, by Elizabeth Hall
The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey, by Susan Wojciechowski
A Different Kind of Courage, by Ellen Howard
A Drop of Water, by Walter Wick
Esther’s Story, by Diane Wolkstein
Family Tree, by Katherine Ayers
Fradle, by Andrew Clements
Harry the Poisonous Centipede, by Lynne Reid Banks
Iditarod Dream, by Ted Wood
The Indian School, Gloria Whelan
The Inside-Outside Book of Libraries, by Roxie Munro

Inventors, by Martin W. Sandler
The Most Beautiful Roof in the World, by Kathryn Lasky
On Board the Titanic, by Shelley Tanaka
Riot, by Mary Casanova
Spring Break, by Johanna Hurwitz
The Silver Balloon, by Susan Bonners
Sweet Memories Still, by Natalie Kinsey-Warnock
The Tarantula in My Purse, by Jean Craighead George
Tracks in the Snow, by Juicy Jane Bledsoe

NOMINEES FOR THE 1998/99 LAMPLIGHTER AWARD
Black Horses For the King, by Anne McCaffrey
Bring Back Yesterday, by Harriet Sirof
Even Stephen, by Johanna Hurwitz
Gideon’s People, by Carolyn Meyer
Growing Up in Coal Country, by Susan Campbell Bartoletti
The Myth Maker, by Anne E. Niemark
Sarah With an H, by Hadley Irwin
Search for the Shadowman, by Joan Lowry Nixon
Two Mighty Rivers, by Mari Hanes
Washington City is Burning, by Harriette Gillem Robinet

The Caldecott Medal, 1938-1998, is “awarded annually to the illustrator of the most distinguished American picture book for children.” -- Amazon.com

The official Caldecott web page can be found at, http://www.ala.org/alsc/caldecott.html

“The Caldecott Medal was named in honor of nineteenth-century English illustrator Randolph Caldecott. It is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children.” -- web site.

The winner of the Caldecott Award for 1998: Rapunzel, by Paul O. Zelinsky

Reading level, ages 4 - 8
Hardcover, 48 pages.
ISBN: 0525456074

Three Caldecott Honor books awarded to:
Christopher Myers for Harlem, written by Walter Dan Myers.
David Small for The Gardener, written by Sarah Stewart.
Simms Taback for There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly

The Newbery Medal, 1922-1998, “honors the year’s most distinguished contribution to American literature for children. The medal was established in 1922 and is presented annually by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA). The recipient must be a citizen or resident of the United States.” -- Amazon.com

The official Newbery Medal page is, http://www.ala.org/alsc/newbery.html

“The Newbery Medal was named for eighteenth-century British bookseller John Newbery. It is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library Association, to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children.” -- web site.

The winner of the Newbery Award for 1998: Out of the Dust, by Karen Hesse.
List price, $15.95.
Reading level, ages 9 - 12.
Hardcover, 160 pages.
ISBN: 0590360809

Three Newbery Honor Books:
Lily’s Crossing, by Patricia Reilly Giff.
Ella Enchanted, by Gail Carson Levine.
Wringer, by Jerry Spinelli.

TECHNOLOGY IN SCHOOLS:
The competition in the area of school library, catalog/circulation software is tough! There are a number of companies out there, all doing the same thing. We benefit as quality rises and prices become more competitive. One company that is worth your
attention is Book Systems and their products, the Master Library System line of software.

Master Library System, MLS, has its roots in church library software, which is still available. MLS has a four tiered program of compatible software packages for meeting church library needs; from the church that has no on site computer and needs a basic card printing program, to MLS level 4, a networked catalog and circulation system.

Book Systems has greatly increased its product listing and now markets software for school and public libraries. They have continued to improve the quality of their products as they have expanded their market. If you are looking for DOS or Windows based library software at very competitive prices, incorporating current, related technologies, you should consider MLS.

By now, we should all be familiar with the basic essentials of circulation/catalog programs. Any good software package should include integrated circulation and cataloging, easy-to-use menus and icons, MARC record catalog format, support for Boolean logic, networkable capabilities, statistics and report options, label printing, etc.

MLS makes these standards easy for the novice. To quote their web page, “Master Library System (MLS) is a family of sophisticated library management software products. MLS gives you a fully integrated system: OPAC (On-line Public Access Catalog), Cataloging, and Circulation. And you get software that lets you print catalog cards, labels and reports for about the cost of a single module of many competitive systems.

Feature for feature, MLS makes library automation affordable. Additionally, innovative features within MLS provide flexible options for you. AutoMARC produces USMARC bibliographic records automatically as information is entered in the fields on the cataloger screens, thus eliminating the tedium of memorizing MARC tags, indicators, and subcodes.”

On top of the basics, MLS has provided for retroversive conversion, by integrating Precision One CDROMs.

For those of you with Windows95 or Windows NT networks, look at the depth of their newest circ/catalog package entitled, Concourse.

Book Systems also produces a couple of other library applications that are compatible with MLS and with other vendors circulation/catalog products. They claim to be the only microcomputer library vendor that produces and distributes $39.50 compatible software. EZcat allows you to grab MARC records right off of libraries on the internet. EZhost makes it possible to place your own catalog on the internet for patrons and others to access from their own homes. Webrary is software for adding web sites to your library catalog.

For more information, call: 1-800-219-MLSI (1-800-219-6574) or, check out their very informative web site for product information and useful automation help tips.

http://www.booksys.com

Next issue, look for info on the popular reading software, Accelerated Reader!

INTERVIEW CORNER:

Barbara Robinson is our featured personality this month. A noted author, Barbara was last year’s Lamplighter 1997 Award winner. This Christian Award is given by Christian Schools choosing to participate in order to promote quality, moral literature. The nomination criteria for this award include, “To encourage children to read more books of enduring value, to become more discriminating readers and to develop the ability to recognize good and evil. To acquaint teachers and parents with high quality books which promote wholesome values, edifying themes, positive goals, and a minimum of derogatory language. To encourage the publication of high quality books which promote wholesome values.”

The Best School Year Ever

List: $14.89
Reading Level: Ages 9-12
Library Binding, 117 pages.
ISBN: 0060230436
Paperback, List: $4.95


Barbara was born October 24, 1927. She is best known for her book The Best Christmas Pageant Ever, which has been made into a movie and a play. Barbara is a married, mother of two grown daughters and lives in Berwyn, Pennsylvania, where, when she’s not writing, she stays busy traveling to schools, promoting reading and libraries. She’s a woman after every librarian’s own heart.

QUESTION & ANSWER

Q: I want to stretch my book money; are the school book vendors really the best prices?

A: We all want the best bargain when it comes to book buying. Books can be quite expensive! My best advice is comparative shopping!

School library vendors are convenient, especially if you have a modem and their individual ordering software. Follett Library Resources provides software that will total prices and configure processing for you and then with the click of a mouse, it will send the order in via your modem. They also offer inexpensive processing, cheap MARC records, and sometimes, free shipping. Permanabond binds paperbacks into a book that will take a beating and still be cheaper than hard cover. If you want fast and cheap paperbacks and don’t care about processing, I recommend http://www.amazon.com on the world wide web. Amazon discounts everything to everyone and they can find just about any title you need, even out-of-print titles. CBD, Christian Book Distributors is also a favorite of mine when I want discounted Christian paperbacks, and I have the time to process the titles on my own. They have a web site for online ordering, http://www.christianbooks.com.

Always peruse the overstock titles at bookstores like Borders’. I recently bought a hard cover almanac for $4.98 and a hard cover copy of a popular young adult title for $1.98. Both were a fraction of the original cost!

(Editors note: Most publishers give libraries a good discount. For small orders, check with publishers listed in the back of this issue.)

E. Butterflies—Fiction; Grandfathers—Fiction. Unp. PS - Gr. 2

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Finding an injured swallowtail butterfly, Elizabeth shows it to her Grandpa. Seeing her Grandpa’s delight over the butterfly, Elizabeth tries to nurse it back to health. Due to a recent stroke, Grandpa is bound to a wheelchair unable to speak. Elizabeth hopes that if he sees the swallowtail fly, somehow he’ll be able to talk or walk again.

Pat Skiles has captured the quiet mood of the book perfectly with the illustrations. The text and drawings together make for a soothing, quiet-time story. For families facing a similar situation with older relatives, Elizabeth’s Grandpa may help to facilitate discussion. Readers will enjoy the packet of butterfly garden flower seeds tacked to the inside front cover.

A gentle tale that children will enjoy hearing. Its intended audience, however, will miss most of the subtle deeper message of faith and hope. Labeled a children’s story, Elizabeth’s Beauty by Nancy Markham Alberts, may be appreciated more by adults than children. EC


E. Afro-Americans—Fiction; Mothers and daughters—Fiction; Beauty shops—Fiction. Unp. PS - Gr. 2

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Shauna’s mother owns the beauty salon called The New You. Every Saturday, Shauna helps her mother care for customers. Shauna longs to have the grownup responsibility of caring for the customers’ hair but knows that she needs to be her mother’s helper by doing small tasks. Shauna satisfies herself with braiding her doll’s hair which catches the attention of a fussy little girl. Shauna’s mother is able to please her little customer with a beautiful new hairstyle complete with braids. At the end of the long day, Shauna is allowed to brush her mother’s hair while her mother praises her for her helpfulness.

The bustling and cheerful atmosphere of this African-American beauty salon is portrayed through Anna Rich’s vibrant oil paintings. Readers will feel as if they too are customers in the salon as they read the rich descriptions of the activity and patrons of The New You. Saturday at The New You reflects the warmth and beauty of the African-American culture while encouraging children to see the importance of helping their parents. SR


E. Grandmothers—Fiction; Dancing—Fiction; Polish Americans—Fiction. Unp. Gr. 1 - 5.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Trish Hill’s unique illustrations using color wash and scraped board bring drama to Jane Baskwill’s simple poem, Somewhere. The premise, that no matter where you are something special is happening, gives this book a feeling of expectancy. Jane Baskwill recognizes nature’s special gifts—a leaf falling, a leaping whale, a raindrop and rainbow, a star shining. Special things are happening everywhere—in darkness, in a forest, in the ocean, in a lonely treetop, or a distant meadow. This book shows a deep regard for the small relationship with her Polish grandmother Babci. Gabriella enjoys dancing for Babci and listening to the special stories she tells over and over again about Poland. Gabriella hears about the washtub in front of the kitchen stove, painting chickens feet blue, and coming from Poland on a ship with five hundred refugees. Babci also reminisces about Dziadziu, the grandfather that died before Gabrielle was born. Now, Babci asks that Easter be moved up, because she will be dancing with Dziadziu before Easter really comes. Gabriella has to deal with the fact that her grandmother has changed. She is no longer round and energetic, but tired and thin and bedridden.

This book, a poignant mixture of funny stories and sad circumstances, will raise questions about older relatives’ decline and death. Annika Nelson’s illustrations, prints of hand colored linoleum cuts, are unique and impressive. PSM


Quality—4 Acceptability—5

★ Outstanding Book of its Genre

RATING SYSTEM

Quality (Literary) * Acceptability (Ethical/Moral Concerns)

5 Excellent - among the very best of this type 5 No questionable elements
4 Good - well written; strong recommendation 4 Slight concerns
3 Average - readers will enjoy 3 Moderate concerns
2 Fair - can recommend, but not as well written 2 Barely acceptable
1 Poor - cannot recommend 1 Too questionable to recommend

* Acceptability does not refer to doctrinal position, unless the doctrine is anti- or non-Christian.
aspects of nature. The illustrations are different and impressive. PSM


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Back to the Cabin tells of two young boys and their fun times at their family's summer cabin in Canada. The boys greet their mother's announcement that they are returning to the cabin where, "There's nothing to do!"

The pleasure in reading Back to the Cabin is in watching the boys leap into the cabin fun and seeing them come to the opposite opinion as their time there comes to an end. Ann Blades illustrates the book with full page color drawings depicting each of the activities the boys become involved in, it looks like fun! SK


Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Franklin's New Friend by Paulette Bourgeois brings us the story of Franklin and Moose. Moose is a new student in Franklin the turtle's classroom and Franklin is intimidated by Moose's size. He is reluctant to befriend him and Moose's shyness is interpreted as unfriendliness by Franklin and his friends. Mr. Owl, the teacher, explains to Franklin that regardless of size, everybody gets scared and that Moose is new and has no friends and is probably worried about fitting in. Franklin befriends him and encourages his friends to do the same. The collaboration for Franklin's New Friend is masterfully done. The reader stands under the glowing orange Frisbee ready to reach out and catch it.

The Many Hats of Mr. Minches provides an answer. A foggy day brings Fred and Martha Minches and their mutt Jeff to Dotty's town. Unorthodox in manner and appearance, the Minches draw Dotty into their fantastic life where their hundreds of hats seem to have the power to change the wearer into a different character. Would this transformation affect such a sensible person as Dotty?

The pictures by Kathryn Naylor have many soft blurred edges as if to let the reader know that it's OK to indulge in the fantasy of the story. Naylor uses a wide palette of colors, brave and wild and bold. The pages of text share space with nautical decorations. Bourgeois employs colorful language in her text; "a fog, thick and salty as her mother's pea soup," is an example. The vocabulary may present a slight challenge to the youngest reader, but contextual clues abound. SAH


E. Rabbits—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction; Christmas—Fiction; Gifts—Fiction. 45 p.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Jonathan James is a rabbit who ascertains the real meaning of Christmas. Jonathan wants to buy his mother a toy for a Christmas gift, but his father persuades him to choose something befitting her predicition. Jonathan attends a Christmas party at school and is given a pen that he frowns on until his mother demonstrates it is special. On Christmas Eve, Jonathan's family sets out caroling with Jonathan complimenting until he sees a manger scene. Desireing to emulate the wise men, Jonathan sings a song dedicated to Jesus.

In the second book, Jonathan James ascertains the real meaning of sharing on his birthday. Jonathan doesn't share his cake or play with any of his friends after opening his presents. Feeling miserable, Jonathan's grandmother persuades him to share his celebration. When his friends lose and muddy his gifts, he no longer wants to share. His mother tells him sharing is virtuous, but not to share cherished gifts. Jonathan's friend, Jason, stays overnight. When Jonathan utters his bedtime prayers, Jason asks how to pray, and Jonathan divulges conversing with Jesus is the same as conversing with a close friend. Jason says a short prayer, and they go to sleep.

Crystal Bowman has created two delightful stories about commemorations with meritorious values blended into them, and Karen Maizel's fanciful illustrations on each page augment the text. A novice reader will need some help, but the reiteration of words make these books valuable tools for strengthening reading skills. DBW


E. Aunts—Fiction; Sound—Fiction. Upp. Ps. - Gr. 2.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

As the older sister tells the story of a walk with her two brothers and their little sister, you wonder why the little one cries so much. She carries her blanket and sobs, "Baba! Baba!" when she can't climb the fence, when she can't cross the stream, when she is afraid of the crows, and when she gets stuck in the sticker bush. Just when you are wondering along with the narrator if this child will ever stop wailing, you are stopped short, along with the older children, when you discover the little girl's blanket has been unraveling all along the walk. And no one, not even you, noticed.

Ruth Brown is the author and illustrator of this beautiful book. Her paintings of the children, wandering the English countryside with their dog, are superb. The pictures of the little girl are so perfect that you can hear her crying. This is one of those wonderful read-aloud books that brings as much enjoyment to the adult reader as to the child. CSJ


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

The theme of moving is explored in The Lost and Found House by Michael Cadnum. However, the language of the book and its truthfulness raise this picture book above others. The child character relays the story including his hopes, reservations, and fears. "Dad's steps echo, and Mom and I check the empty rooms to see the things which are not there..." says the boy. The adults' reaction to the move are not overlooked either. The two converse and it is clear that worry has stopped the one from hearing the other.

Cadnum includes beautiful details of sight, sound, and touch. "In the morning I have a scrambled egg mixed with cheese, and toast with warm, soggy butter, and I even eat the parsley," and, "Outside, the garden is all weeds, and a red rubber ball so old it is gray hides under a bush with red berries." These points engage the reader into the main character's situation completely.

Accompanying the poignant text are illustrations by the husband/wife team, Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher. Warm and cool shadows capture the subtle emotions of the story. Page layouts, with paintings tilted one way or another, add to the instability of the characters in change, and reflect excitement for the new house. Each depiction is a study of light and shadow to depict the characters.

The collaboration for The Lost and Found House is a great success. This book may offer comfort to those facing a move. LAG
E. Bedtime—Fiction; Sleep—Fiction; Imagination—Fiction. Unp. Ps - Gr. 2.
Quality—5 Acceptability—5

“Bedtime!” says the mother. “No!” says the boy, “I’m going to stay up all night.” “Oh, no you’re not!” says the mother. But the boy drives off as fast as he can in his little red car away. So begins Helen Cooper’s delightful book The Boy Who Wouldn’t Go to Bed. Determined to stay awake, the boy finds nothing but tiresome discouragement. “Nighttime is for snoring, not roaring,” says an oversized tiger. “Nighttime is for dreaming not parading,” soldiers tell him. “Nighttime is for resting not racing,” the train insists. The musicians will only sing him a lullaby, the birds are silent in the forest, and even his own car falls asleep. The boy climbs a ladder and finds the moon itself is snoozing.

But someone is awake. As the mother bundles the boy off to bed, the reader discovers the characters of the boy’s adventures—the tiger, the train, the soldiers—are all but toys in the boy’s room.

Every mother will love this book. Cooper’s watercolor illustrations have a soft, whimsical, dreamlike quality. And kids will relate to the boys determination to stay up and, finally, his sweet surrender to sleep. A truly wonderful snuggle up bedtime story. TP

E. Orderliness—Fiction; Color—Fiction; Toy and movable books. Unp. Toddler – PS.
Quality—5 Acceptability—5

While her mother is busy unloading groceries, toddler Anna is busy making multi-colored messes. In a book every mother will relate to, Oh No, Anna celebrates the discovery spirit of toddlerhood.

From spilling her cat’s blue bowl of milk, to unraveling a green ball of yarn, to unloading her mother’s brown tote bag, Anna revels in every colorful discovery. When finally her mother discovers her, the clean-up begins. The story ends with warm understanding: “Oh, yes, Anna. Time to clean up.”

Vivian French uses an economy of words precise enough to make the story perfect for preschoolers’ attention span. International illustrator Alex Ayliffe enlarges this little book with big bright images in vibrant primary colors that seem to leap off the page. Add to that, the added dimension of fold out flaps that reveal Anna’s mischief and you have a real winner.

Of all our books, this is the one I recommend to all the moms, or just like unfolding the flaps, Oh No, Anna! is a book we’ll enjoy again and again. TP

E. Toys—Fiction. Ps - K.
Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Matt and Watt the dog go everywhere together. The two are best friends and do everything together, including going to school. As Matt grows up he begins to lose interest in Watt and does not always remember to take good care of him. The young reader will experience sadness when one day Matt leaves Watt at the riverbank and does not return to search for him. After a long night rain begins to fall and the rainfall sweeps Watt down the river. Watt becomes so soggy that only his head is above the water and it appears that he might not survive the current of the river. Then all of a sudden a young girl named Hattie rescues Watt from the water and proudly names him Waterdog. Hattie adores Waterdog and takes him home with her and treats him very well. As she snuggles into bed that night Hattie makes sure that Waterdog is right beside her, warm, safe, and snuggled with lots of love.

You’re Safe Now, Waterdog told by Richard Edwards, is the sweet portrayal of that timeless childhood experience of growing up and outgrowing once precious belongings that are discarded or cared for by others. The soft and colorful painting by SophyWilliams add to the tenderness of this story. SKB

Placed in the setting of an artist’s studio a young boy shares how he helps his grandfather, an etcher, prepare...
prints for a yearly studio sale. The young boy takes us step by step through the involved process and art of creating a good etching. The young boy’s favorite job is adding color to the prints and imagining that he is in each print. In one afternoon he sails around Cape Horn, explores a jungle, rides in a hot air balloon over his neighborhood, and so much more. Then he remembers to concentrate on getting the colors right and his dream ends. The best part is when Grandfather congratulates him on a job well done.

Arthur Geiserts capture the process and art of etching using uncomplicated text and striking illustrations that place the reader in grandfather’s studio. The use of vivid colors and great detail add to the reader’s understanding of the text. The closing of the book includes a detailed illustrations of an etcher’s studio, reviews the process of how an etching is made, and provides the older reader with a brief overview of the art of etching since before the fifteenth century. The Etcher’s Studio is an excellent introduction for the young reader to gain an understanding of this art form.


In The Buffalo in the Mall, Molly Griffis compares a pet buffalo to many more normal types of pets—dogs, kittens, rabbits, gerbils, and others. On the last page you find out why a buffalo is the best king of pet—he is stuffed.

Preschoolers and early elementary students will enjoy the rhyming story line. Kim Doner’s black and white pictures are well done. While most children will enjoy the book, some adult readers may object to some of the storyline and corresponding pictures. One such page reads “Puppies wet on the carpet. Kittens throw up in the hall.” One illustration is a back view of an ostrich with its head in the sand. Guinea pigs are depicted as motorcycle gang members in another. Yet another possibly objectionable page states “Rabbits refuse to stay single. They soon fill a huge condo hutch.” While some of these objections do represent things that happen in real life, I question their appropriateness in a book for young children.


Mary Rice Hopkins and Chuck Ingolia have written an ABC book with a Christian twist. Each letter not only has a corresponding animal, but a short Bible verse as well. For example, “A is for ant eater...all things were created by him and for him. Colossians 1:16.” An inventive format forgivably stretched a bit at times, created by him and for him. Colossians 1:16.” An inventive format forgivably stretched a bit at times, created by him and for him. Colossians 1:16.” An inventive format forgivably stretched a bit at times, created by him and for him. Colossians 1:16.” An inventive format forgivably stretched a bit at times, created by him and for him. Colossians 1:16.” An inventive format forgivably stretched a bit at times, created by him and for him. Colossians 1:16.”

The land of Narnia, created by C.S. Lewis, is introduced in this lavish picture book for young children. In book one, Lucy Steps Through the Wardrobe, four children are sent to the countryside to escape the bombing in London during World War II. One of the children, Lucy, discovers another world through the doorway of an antique wardrobe. She steps from a London summer into a Narnia winter and encounters a “faun” in the forest. The faun (half man, half goat), invites Lucy to have tea with him and they become friends. But the faun is hiding a secret. He is a spy for the White Witch and is required to report to her if he should happen to come across a human being at any time.

In Edmund and the White Witch, Lucy returns to Narnia and undergoes the same trials she faced with the White Witch and the Faun. Edmund is following. Edmund loses sight of Lucy and the first person he meets in the forest is the White Witch, self-proclaimed ruler of Narnia. The White Witch recognizes Edmund as a “son of Adam” and questions him about his brother and sisters while offering him...
enjoyed food and drink. Edmund promises her that he will bring the other children back to Narnia but keep his visit with the White Witch a secret. Reunited with Lucy, Edmund feels uneasy about his secret but keeps quiet. The White Witch has promised him more of the Turkish Delight but only if he returns with the other three children.

Adapted from the series by C.S. Lewis, these books portray the classic battle between good and evil. They also include elements from mythology such as the faun and the White Witch. Each book has a moral element to it. In book one, the faun begins by deceiving Lucy but in the end, makes a choice to save his friend and help her get home safely.

The illustrations by Deborah Maze are beautiful and plentiful, filling the pages. The snow scenes in the woods of Narnia are especially lovely. DEB


E. Self-esteem—Fiction; Toys—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 32 p. PS - Gr. 3.
Quality—5  Acceptability—5

Living in a little village are the Wemmicks, wooden people all made by the same carver. Each day the Wemmicks hand out either gold star or gray dot stickers. The gold stars go to the most talented, beautiful Wemmicks and the gray dots go to the scratched, clumsy Wemmicks. Punchinello, who is covered with gray dots, meets Lucia who has no stickers, gold or gray; they don’t stick to her. Lucia sends Punchinello to the carver. There he learns how special he is and that his worth is not determined by stars or dots, but simply because the carver made him.

Thoughtfully written, You Are Special by Max Lucado, may even bring a tear to the adult reader’s eye. Color drawings by Sergio Martínez capture the silliness of the Wemmicks, the sadness of Punchinello and the warmth of the carver perfectly. Neither outshines the other; instead the text and illustrations are equally high quality.

While written for children, the story contains a beautifully told lesson for people of all ages. Punchinello discovers that the more time he spends with his maker, the more he’ll feel loved and the stickers will fall off. The other Wemmicks won’t be able to make the gray dots stick. Learning to please God and not be concerned about what others think is an essential lesson in life. EC


E. Babies—Fiction; Animals—Fiction. 42 p. PS - Gr. 1.
Quality—4  Acceptability—5

Don’t take this book too seriously. Would you believe that a woman is so engrossed in playing the drums that she doesn’t notice a cow munching lettuce in her kitchen? But we are entertained, along with the baby, as the hungry animals edge their way into the house to have an unexpected lunch. Boom, Baby, Boom, Boom! by Margaret Mahy tells the story.

The turn of phrase delights. “In trotted the black-faced sheep on her high-heeled hooves.” The alternate selection of verbs introduces the small listener to the beauty of the English language: lolloped, scuttled, cantered. The illustrations by Patricia MacCarthy are pleasant, just slight askew, melded with the touch of zaniness in the storyline.

Your pre-schooler will chime in on the refrain mid-way through the first reading: “Boom-biddy-boom-biddy BAA-BAA BAA!” SAH


E. Hippopotamuses—Fiction; Friendship—Fiction; Short stories. 340 p. PS - Gr. 2.
Quality—5  Acceptability—5

Readers of all ages who have long been entertained with the humorous friendship of two portly hippopotamuses will now be delighted to discover all thirty-five episodes created by James Marshall in George and Martha.

The 340 page hardbound volume is a keepsake edition that will be treasured by old fans and appreciated by new readers who come to value the profound message hidden behind the simple style.

In one short episode after another Marshall shows that good friends cannot stay angry for very long and that any activity is more enjoyable when there is a friend to share it with. MK


E. Show-and-tell presentations—Fiction; Brothers and sisters—Fiction; Schools—Fiction; Blacks—England—Fiction. 34 p. PS - Gr. 1.
Quality—4  Acceptability—5

Charlie is determined to find something really different to share with his class on “special” day, but his mother is too busy with baby Sally to help. Just when Charlie is at his most cross his Mom asks him to help with Sally and he discovers that having a sister is something special!!!

This story presents themes children will easily relate to. Because Charlie’s age is not revealed the book could be used in preschool or elementary classes. Nicola Moon tries to have broad appeal by representing several cultures. The storyline also indicates that Charlie’s family is a single-parent household. The illustrations by Alex Ayliffe are cheerful cut-paper illustrations which are attractive to children and highlight the multicultural elements.

Smaller libraries may want to start with titles such as Fred Rogers’ New Baby or Dorothy Corey’s Will There Be A Lap For Me? Larger collections wanting to include more multicultural materials would welcome the addition of this colorful tale. AED


E. Spiders—Fiction; Characters in literature—Fiction; Stories in rhyme. Easy reading materials. 32 p.


E. Easy reading materials; Children’s songs—Text; Songs. 32 p.


E. Easy reading materials; Rebus; Fables. 32 p. PS - Gr. 1.

Quality—4  Acceptability—5

In Eency Weency Spider, Joanna Oppenheim retells the finger play rhyme “In a Byst Spider.” After the spider shines up a water spout and twirls a web in the branches of a rose bush, it frightens Miss Muffet at play, and she runs away. Humpty Dumpty sees the spider, cringes, and falls off the wall. Little Jackie Horner pulls the spider out of his cherry pie, screams, drops the pie and runs away. Jack beholds the spider and leaps in fright over the candlestick. S.D. Schindler’s animated illustrations realistically portray the fright expressed by the Mother Goose characters.

In She’ll Be Coming Around the Mountain, Emily Coplon, Doris Orgel, and Ellen Schecter retell the lyrics of this well-known childhood song. A family is dreaming about their favorite kissing cousin and all the revelry when she comes to visit. Rowan Barnes-Murphy’s comical illustrations add to the fun of the lyrics.

In The Boy Who Cried “Wolf!!,” Ellen Schecter retells the Aesop fable “The Shepherd Boy And The Wolf” utilizing rebus. A young boy is bored while caring for his master’s sheep and decides to play a trick on the people in the village. He convinces the people a wolf is attacking the sheep, and when the people discover it is a lark, they are furious. The boy tricks the people a second time, and the people loose faith in his honesty. A wolf attacks the sheep, and no one heeds the boy’s warning, so many sheep are killed, and the boy disappears. This adaptation adheres to the same maxim as the Aesop fable that lying causes one anguish. Gary Chalke’s expressive illustrations realistically portray the fable.

These Bank Street Ready-to-Read series are appealing renditions of familiar material to young children. The use of familiar material and reiteration plus rebus in The Boy Who Cried “Wolf!!” will augment the beginning reader’s pleasure in the books. DBW


Quality—3  Acceptability—4
At the Hotel Larry is a whimsical picture book about a Polar Bear, Larry, and the family with whom he lives. The unnamed narrator is a girl who explains that Larry saved her father’s life. In gratitude her father told Larry he would give him any reward and, since Larry has always wanted to live in a hotel with a swimming pool, that is what he gets. The father buys a hotel into which they all move. Larry and the girl like to travel about the city incognito. On these outings Larry, wearing trench coat and dark glasses, will assume the persona of the girl’s uncle from Milwaukee. One day they visit the zoo and discover Larry’s brother with two other polar bears. After asking her parents, the girl is allowed to honor Larry’s request to have his brother and the other polar bears visit the Hotel Larry for a swim.

The plot of this story is not especially innovative; there have been numerous picture books that employ the device of a normally bothersome or even dangerous animal such as an alligator or octopus living with a child. Perhaps the appeal of these books is their incongruity to reality or their ability to share a secret with the reader. Still the author, Daniel Pinkwater, has done a creditable job and made Larry an endearing if perhaps slightly menacing character. When asked by the girl Larry admits that some polar bears have been known to eat people, but assuredly only with good reason; he himself would never do such a thing, of course.

The illustrations by Jill Pinkwater, are colorful and vivid with extreme color contrast reminiscent of impressionist painting. Be sure to look for bear claws on almost every page.

And if you stay at the Hotel Larry do not neglect to read the notice by the swimming pool: “Make sure the little bear likes you before using the pool.” DWR

E. Ballet-dancing—Fiction; Grandmothers—Fiction. Usp. Ps - Gr. 3.
Quality—5 Acceptability—5
Alicia, a budding ballerina, wants nothing more than a pink, pouffy, sparkly tutu. Her mom reminds her that what they really need is another bed, now that her little brother has become such a climber. Alicia is convinced the gift her grandmother is sending is a tutu, and she struggles with her feelings of rejection, suspicion, and anger. When she gives milk to a hungry stray cat and asks if she can keep him, Allison realizes her love for the cat is similar to the love her parents have for her.

Allison’s story is a gentle tale for young children. While pleasant enough, it is a bit bland. Carl Sommer’s If Only I Were a Cat does not help liven the story up much. Kenneth James does not help liven the story up much. Thankfully, the almost too cute illustrations by Kenneth James do not help liven the story up much. The book’s not so subtle message “be happy with yourself, everyone has problems” is certainly a good one for children to learn. Preschoolers and younger would enjoy this book the most. They will get a kick out of seeing what animal Missy wishes to become next.

E. Mice—Fiction; Animals—Fiction; Self-acceptance—Fiction. Usp. Ps - Gr. 1.
Quality—3 Acceptability—5
Missy, a small mouse who lives at the zoo, isn’t happy being a mouse. Missy wishes she were bigger and stronger. One night as she dreams, her wish seems to come true. Missy changes from a mouse to a cat then to a tiger and so on. In the end, Missy learns that everyone has problems and that being a mouse is fine.

Carolin Sommer’s If Only I Were is a gentle tale for young children. While pleasant enough, it is a bit bland. Unfortunately, the almost too cute illustrations by Kenneth James do not help liven the story up much.

Illustrator Paul Meisel delights the eye, gives the reader many chuckles over the story author, Carol Diggory Shields weaves. What a charming, precious story! BGT

E. Monkeys—Fiction; Crocodiles—Fiction; Counting; Stories in rhyme. Usp. K - Gr. 3.
Quality—5 Acceptability—5
Counting Crocodiles is a lively story retold from an old Pan-Asian folktale about an animal trickster, in this case a monkey, who persuades crocodiles to form a bridge across water under the pretext of counting them.

Author Judy Sierra’s rollicking rhythm and two-line rhyme is pure fun to read once you get the pattern down. Read it loud to yourself and you’ll pick it up. It’s perfect for reading to children on laps or in a classroom, but teachers should make the book available for children to examine afterwards so they won’t miss out on the wonderful details in the pictures. Will Hillenbrand’s illustrations are eye-catching and humorous, done with a combination of oil, oil pastel, watercolor, and gouache on vellum. And how many crocodiles are there? “Just enough to make a bridge across the Sliababoble Sea, but not enough to catch a clever monkey like me!” Pure fun. KSG

E. Cajuns—Folklore; Folklore—Louisiana. Usp. Gr. 1 - 3.
Quality—4 Acceptability—4
To promote the tradition of oral folk telling, Celia Soper, stories, and Patrick Soper, drawings, have put together a lively little book, Cajun Folktales. The main characters are Lapin, a quick-thinking rabbit, and Bouki, his slow-witted compete. In six brief stories,
the reader becomes acquainted with the neighbors in Atchafalaya Swamp, each with its boldly designed character, each with a lesson to teach or learn. An unexpected turn of events may win the race; greed may do you out of a fine prize.

Once the reader is familiar with the glossary, both silent reading and read-aloud aspects of Cajun Folktales sparkle with enhanced understanding. The illustrations by Patrick Soper are as teasing as the text, animals in overalls are as reasonable as their conversations. Steal or wits, cruelty or consequences? The adult previewer makes the judgment call. SAH


E. Dogs—Fiction; Cats—Fiction; Animals—Fiction; Friendship—Fiction. 31 p. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Friends! Cat and Dog make ordinary tasks a way of sharing and learning together. Enjoy short easy to read stories as Dog teaches Cat to like swimming, Dog and Cat plan a yard sale and put on a pretend magic show, and Cat surprises Dog with the perfect present!

Kate Spohn, in Dog and Cat Make a Splash, has written exactly the right book to read with a four or five-year-old or let a six or seven-year-old read alone. It is a high interest book with colorful clear illustrations. PSM


E. Skunks—Fiction; Farm life—New Mexico—Fiction; New Mexico—Fiction; Spanish language material—Bilingual. Unp. PS - Gr. 3.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Carlos and Gloria are friends living in the Española Valley of northern New Mexico. The two have grown up together and are now young adolescents. Carlos longs to prove to Gloria how intelligent and daring he is. Carlos has heard that if a person picks up a skunk by its tail, it will not spray you. Carlos decides to show Gloria that he is able to accomplish this amazing feat. Instead of conquering the skunk, the skunk overpowers Carlos with his spray. Caros spends the next few days trying to rid himself of the strong odor without losing his pride.

Jan Romero Stevens has written an endearing story about the need of a young man to prove his worth and the love a family who strives to ease his suffering. The love a family who strives to ease his suffering do you out of a fine prize.


E. Grandmothers—Fiction. Unp. PS - K.

Quality—3 Acceptability—5

Jill Paton Walsh’s book, When I Was Little Like You, relays the conversation of Rosie and her grandmother during their day at the beach. Through repetitive dialogue Rosie points out things around her, while Gran responds points out how those things were different when she was Rosie’s age. When Rosie points out a train Gran responds, “When I was little like you,” said Gran, “a steam engine pulled the cars. It made little homemade clouds as it puffed around the point.’ The book comes to a satisfying conclusion as Gran reassures Rosie that world is definitely better now because she is in it!


E. Counting; Animals. Unp. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

One by one, everything follows the sun. First beetle, then frog, then lizard, bird, and snake. A new animal joins the journey on every page until ten follow the setting sun to the coming of night.

Author/Illustrator Jenny Stowe uses repetition and a scarcity of verbiage to create a counting book that directs your attention to the visual. In this hot, sunny book, ten African creatures, from a tiny beetle to an enormous elephant, sojourn through lily pads, sand dunes, treetops, high grass, prairie and watering holes.

What makes this book engaging for kids is searching the page for creatures as new ones are added. With illustrations that have a tangy African flavor, Following the Sun is a short, easy read that little ones will request again and again. TP


E. Mice—Fiction. Unp. PS - Gr. 3.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Kate Summers, in Milly and Tilly, has updated an old story in a delightful way. Milly, the city mouse, finds the night too quiet, the morning birds too noisy, and bees and sheep too frightening. Tilly, the sensitive country mouse, is overwhelmed by Milly’s beautiful doll (mouse) house, unlimited food (including cheese!), but draws the line at cat and mouse games. Maggie Kneen’s colorful, detailed illustrations are a must see. The moral is well done—that friends can be different and still be friends. This is an entertaining book that young children will quickly relate to.


E. Humorous stories. Unp. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality—4 Acceptability—4

There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly, an American folk-tale illustrated by Simons Taback, has passed the true test of acceptability; young children beg, “Read it again!” The familiarity of the story doesn’t diminish participation and Taback’s pictures are humorous, begging to be translated into a theatrical production.

Taback uses a die-cut hole to let the reader view the impossibility that the story tells, culminating in the old woman swallowing a horse. Each ingestion is amplified by a newspaper article or side-bar comments of the by-standers. “The artwork was done using mixed media and collage on Kraft paper.” The back of the dust jacket features a “Who’s Who” of houseflies. A very funny up-date of an old favorite. SAH


E. Cowboys—Fiction; Stories in rhyme. Unp. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality—4 Acceptability—4

Do Cowboys Ride Bikes? answers fourteen questions young children might ask about cowboys. The questions are not answered in the way you would expect. The answers are in the form of silly rhymes. Nadine Westcott uses colored illustrations to further show the answers to the question. The questions include: what do cowboys eat? do cowboys ever take their boots off? and twelve others.

The answer to what do cowboys do in town? may cause some concern. “They take a hot bath, slick down their hair, and put on their very best duds. They dance with the gals, play horse shoes and chess, and slug down some root beer with suds.” The illustrations on this page include a cowboy bathing in a barrel and a cowboy in boxer shorts in front of a mirror. JM


E. Animals—Fiction; Sleepovers—Fiction. 40 p. PS - Gr. 3.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Bearsie Bear is just falling asleep. Suddenly, there’s a knock at his door. “Who is it?” asks Bearsie Bear.

“It’s me, Moosie Moose,” says Moosie Moose.

“Moosie Moose?” asks Bearsie Bear.

“Yes, Moosie Moose,” says Moosie Moose. Bearsie Bear opens the door.

“It’s cold outside,” says Moosie Moose. “May I sleep over?”

And so begins a successive string of animal friends knocking at Bearsie Bear’s door seeking an invitation out of the cold.

Author Bernard Waber, who also penned the popular Ira Sleeps Over, continues his success on the subject of sleepovers in this delightful new picture book. Using repetition and predictably silly names, Waber enchants children and adults alike with this cumulative story. Tension builds as readers wonder how this story could possibly end, when Porky Porcupine arrives, delivering some comic relief along with a subtle message about friendship. The story concludes on a touching, humorous, and satisfying note. Waber’s sensitive ink-and-watercolor illustrations are light and colorful, adding depth and humor to the text.

Mattie and the Magic Show, written and illustrated by Kate Summers, in Dog and Cat Make a Splash, has been a success on the subject of sleepovers in this delightful new picture book. Using repetition and predictably silly names, Waber enchants children and adults alike with this cumulative story. Tension builds as readers wonder how this story could possibly end, when Porky Porcupine arrives, delivering some comic relief along with a subtle message about friendship. The story concludes on a touching, humorous, and satisfying note. Waber’s sensitive ink-and-watercolor illustrations are light and colorful, adding depth and humor to the text.

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The beautiful full color illustrations by Stephen Lambert are soft and rich looking, however Rosie looks like a young boy, not a girl, something children would surely point out. When I Was Little Like You would be useful as an early reader because of the repetitive pattern of the text and also as an exploration of generational differences. SK


E. Bees--Fiction; Work--Fiction; Reliability--Fiction; Friendship--Fiction. Unp. PS--Gr. 2.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Rigal, a very small buzzle bee, is upset that her little wings only whir, they don’t buzz very loudly. Some of the other buzzle bees have made fun of Rigal, causing her to feel even worse. Even so, Rigal continues to work hard at collecting pollen. Noting her sadness, Queen Ambrosia shows Rigal the star in the sky she is named after. The Queen strengthens to Rigal how important the stars are because they keep their place and do their work, no matter what. When a hard winter comes early, the bees are caught without enough honey to make it though the cold season. In spring, Rigal is rewarded for her hard work, while those who made fun of her and didn’t work as hard are banished from the hive.

**Very Like a Star** by Dawn L. Watkins is at first read a bit confusing. Character names like Marmalade, Keeper of the Pollen, Ambrosia, the Queen of All the Hive, and Fizzzumb combined with places like Bee-balm Hollow and Buzzle Hive perplex even adults. By the end of the book, however, the strength of the story has eliminated much of the confusion. Illustrations by Dana Thompson fit this cute tale, and add to the likability of Rigal.

While God is not mentioned by name in this book, it is clearly written from a Christian perspective. Hard work, persistence, and honesty are just a few of the lessons that can be gleaned from this story. Children will be entertained while they are learning sound virtues. EC


E. Shopping--Fiction; Money--Fiction; Brothers and sisters--Fiction; Rabbits--Fiction; Grandmothers--Fiction. Unp. K - Gr. 3.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

This is the fourteenth picture book in the “Max & Ruby” series by Rosemary Wells, but it’s just as fresh as her first. In **Bunny Money**, Max and Ruby Bunny go to the store to buy Grandma a birthday present: a pretty music box with dancing ballerina bunnies on top. During their outing, we watch Max and Ruby’s choices as they spend their money, dollar by dollar. Suspense mounts as we wonder if they will have enough to buy the music box. In the end, Ruby chooses something almost as nice that they can afford. However, while Ruby looks for wrapping paper, Max spends their last dollar on a set of glow-in-the-dark vampire teeth, because after all, they were half-price.

Using humor and delightful ink-and-watercolor illustrations, this story introduces children to the concepts of money, saving, and spending, as well as the deeper issue of making wise choices. Wells thoughtfully illustrated a small wallet on the bottom of the page showing how many “dollars” are left after each purchase, so children can visually see the money being spent. An added bonus is the colorful “bunny money” fly-leaf that parents can photocopy and cut into dollar bills ahead of time so children can pretend to shop with Max and Ruby as this story is read to them. The book comes with a colorful dust jacket. KSG


E. Librarians--Fiction; Books and reading--Fiction; Reading--Fiction; Tall tales. Unp. PS--Gr. 3.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Library Lil is not your stereotypical librarian—more interested in maintaining quiet than in encouraging reading. Although of normal stature, she is definitely larger-than-life. Lil loved to read as a kid. When she ran out of children’s books in the local library, she checked out a whole set of encyclopedias. While she walked down the street reading one volume, she balanced the rest of the set on the palm of one hand. Lil grew up to become a librarian in a nearby town where people were more interested in watching TV, “the Devil’s invention,” than in reading books. In this rollicking story, Lil takes advantage of the power outrage from a storm to encourage her local townspeople to become readers. Shortly afterward, big Bust-em-up Bill and his motorcycle gang ride into town, and are annoyed to find no “danged TV” in the local tavern because of Lil’s influence. When the gang block her bookmobile, she responds to their challenge by tossing their bikes into a pile. Soon even Bill and his gang discover the joys of reading. Bookworm Bill becomes Lil’s new assistant and learns to be “a whale of a storyteller.”

Librarian Suzanne Williams (Mommy Doesn’t Know My Name) has written several satisfying stories dealing with the concerns of young children. Here she moves with gusto into the realm of the tall tale. Steven Kellogg’s typically exuberant illustrations fit and move with gusto into the realm of the tall tale. Steven Kellogg’s typically exuberant illustrations fit and


E. Easy reading materials; Fairy tales; Folklore. Unp. K - Gr. 3.

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

**The Gingerbread Boy** retold by Harriet Ziefert and containing simple, colorful illustrations by Emily Bolam uses a familiar story in an easy to read format. When an old couple want a little boy, the wife bakes a gingerbread boy. The gingerbread boy immediately runs away. After being chased by various hungry individuals, he is finally caught by a tricky fox. “Munch” and “Crunch” are a pretty graphic ending. The author has kept the story line fun while reducing the amount of words and using a small vocabulary and brief sentences to aid new readers. PSM

F: Recycling (Waste)—Fiction; Mystery fiction. 175 p. Gr. 4 - 6.

Quality—4 Acceptability—3

Garbage Busters’ $1000 is stolen! The police have no leads, but that doesn’t keep Stephanie off the case. Since her mother is head of the Garbage Busters, she could be laid off because of the robbery. And that would mean no allowance for Stephanie. Collecting clues, dressing like a detective, and changing her name to Stevie, Stephanie solves the mystery.

Linda Bailey’s middle grade novel, How Come the Best Clues Are Always in the Garbage? will entertain readers and keep them guessing “who done it?” With a quick pace, Stephanie leaps from one danger to the next in pursuit of the thief. Bailey offers a strong female character who doesn’t need to be saved by a boy. But Stephanie and a boy do happen to make a great team. Being an official detective, there are times Stephanie disobeys her mother. She’s out in the middle of the night. She secretly searches a van and apartment. When confronted by her mother, Stephanie gives no explanation to her whereabouts. Disobedience is forgotten without correction. LAG


F: Baseball—Fiction; Conduct of life—Fiction; Lost and found possessions—Fiction; Fathers and sons—Fiction. 110 p. Gr. 2 - 4.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Written for younger readers, The Golden Glove by Fred Bowen is in the series, AllStar SportStories, and deals with Jamie Bennett, a twelve year old whose baseball skills seem to depend on his perfect glove. But when that glove disappears so does Jamie’s confidence and baseball prowess. Of course, the question is whether the glove has any real power or is it in the boy himself. How Jamie deals with the loss of his glove and begins to rely on his own talents, is the real story of The Golden Glove.

This simple but well written story will appeal to second through fourth graders and particularly to boys, often reluctant readers. Included is a six page essay written on Gloves, the Real Story, an interesting page of data about the author and a short preview of the next book in the series. These books would be a good addition to the children’s collection of any library. CC


F: Baseball—Fiction; Coaching (Athletics)—Fiction. 102 p. Gr. 2 - 4.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Written in a way that appeals to the young male reader particularly, it will be a hit in any library. CC


F: Baseball—Fiction; Chicago Cubs (Baseball team)—Fiction; Winning and losing—Fiction. 95 p. Gr. 3 - 5.

Quality—3 Acceptability—5

In typical “I dream of being a hero” style, Playoff Dreams portrays a young boy who loves playing baseball and is better at it than his teammates. With some good counsel from a special uncle, a visit to Wrigley field to see the Cubs play and a catch in the stands, and some wisdom from Ernie Banks, Brendan Fanning internalizes how important it is to just play his best and support his fellow players.

The book details the many games played during the season and into the playoffs, with scores, plays, and names. This book is really for baseball devotees. Incidentally, Brendan’s mother and father do not generally go to watch him play. Several black and white sketches illustrate some of the action in the story.


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Captured! number eight in the Story Keeper’s Series, tells the story of Cyrus who is captured by Flavian the merchant. The year is 64 AD, the place Rome, as the Christians are driven to hide. The orphans have become part of the family of Ben the Baker and his wife Helena, who teach them the stories of Jesus. The orphans risk their lives to help Cyrus escape from a brutal merchant only to learn that Cyrus does not want to leave! His academic skills have made him a special pet. However, circumstances lead him to humble himself and again seek refuge with the other orphans.

This video contains excellent Christian morals with Bible stories intermixed into the adventure. The characters are well-drawn colorful cartoons that keep viewers intent on the message. PSM
Danny Bigtree was having a hard time at school in Brooklyn. He wished he was still on the Mohawk reservation but he’d been in fourth grade for over two months now. He had no friends and some of the kids teased him, calling him “chief.”

Even after his father came to school and told the legend of the great Iroquois hero, Aionwahita and his peace song, it was no better. An unexpected accident disrupts life and Danny learns it takes more courage to make friends than enemies, and that peace is worth working for.

This is a story about being proud of who you are and what your ancestors believed. It’s also about doing the right thing even when it is hard.

Full-page black and white drawings illustrate the story. This is a good resource for learning about the culture of the Mohawk Indians and learning about prejudice against people who are different from your own. MK

Talmadge McLinn’s family has lost their farm at the height of the Great Depression and must move to Arkansas to find work on another man’s plantation. Emily Crofford has created a very real person in Talmadge, a sixth-grader, who desires to be allowed to continue his education.

Talmadge’s little sister contracts polio, a disease virtually unknown to today’s young readers. As young Missy suffers through the early stages of the disease, the reader will not only empathize with the family, but will gain an education about infantile paralysis. Talmadge and his brother do not get along well and rebellious Dwight runs away from home one night, but Talmadge and his brother do not get along well and Danny learns it takes more courage to make friends than enemies, and that peace is worth working for.

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Will’s family life is unstable. His father has lost his job and the family has had to move from their house in Baltimore to Grandfather’s farm in Pennsylvania. His mother is frightened and speaks impatiently to those she loves. Will is confused and longs to fly free like the Canada Geese he sees overhead that autumn. Priscilla Cummings has interspersed within this story the tale of a young Canada Goose on his first autumn migration. Just before his death, Grandfather likens Will’s father to that goose. They both have set off alone and separated themselves from the flock. Although seemingly lost at present, Grandfather is certain that they will both eventually return to their rightful places.

As ten-year old Will seeks to find his place at home and at school, Grandfather sets out to help him. While hunting geese with Will, Grandfather suffers a heart attack. Will shoots, but does not kill, a goose. Grandfather had explained to Will that he had planted a field just for the geese in repayment for the geese he had taken over the years. At the end of the story Will sets his now-healed goose back into the wild to free his own spirit.

This story is full of facts about Canada geese. The story gets its title, Autumn Journey, from a painting Will receives from a classmate of a flock of geese flying in formation. The author has developed her characters well as she has delved into their innermost thoughts during some rough times in life. The parallelisms are a little complex for the young reader. The characters in the story use minced oaths as well as the Lord’s name in their conversations with each other. Pipe smoking is seen as something special in Will’s Grandfather.

Gary is way out there and just can’t seem to find his way back to the fifth grade. When he is upset or confused, he blanks out and pretends not to hear what is going on around him. Now he is known as the Spaceman, but his actions are really only an attempt to escape from a world that doesn’t seem to understand or appreciate him. Dumb, slow, stupid, lazy; these are the words teachers use to describe him, and now he just doesn’t care.

That is, until Mrs. Block comes along. Mrs. Block is a special teacher who understands different learning styles. After a round of merciless teasing of Gary by his “normal” boys in his class, he becomes momentarily violent, and soon finds himself in Mrs. Block’s care. This is a class for children with severe learning difficulties and behavior problems, so Gary is angry about having to join a class for “dummies,” but he soon adjusts and begins to learn again, only this time, it’s at his pace.

In Spaceman, Jane Cutler has created more a piece of propaganda about the importance of utilizing individual learning styles in education, than she has an interesting children’s story. Although the incidents she depicts will be familiar to all children, the story unfolds in a dry manner. Her characterization of Gary’s parents is ultra modern: they are divorced and detached from Gary. Gary is not a likable or sympathetic character, and there is little of that kind of excitement to his story that makes children want to read a book. Cutler’s work seems to indicate that a child’s book on a serious subject like learning disabilities, doesn’t need to be entertaining.

The book’s one bright spot is the jacket illustration by Darryl Zudeck. The book’s printing is extra large, which may be to accommodate a theory outlined in the book that some children need large print to learn to read. VGS

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Yonie Wondernose was originally published in 1944. This “new” edition only reinforces the fact that a true classic will always look and read as if it were new. Yonie and his little sister Nancy are left at home with Granny while Pop and the rest of the family spend the night in Germantown. Pop reminds Yonie not to be a “wondernose” while he is gone. Pop also reminds Yonie that if anything happens, Yonie should be sure to take care of the big farm animals first.

Yonie is so curious about everything around him that he is easily distracted and is always ready to put his nose where it should not be. But this time, Yonie is not going to be a wondernose because Pop has made a special promise to Yonie. Unfortunately for this curious young man, nothing goes quite right. While driving the cows home, Yonie stops to explore a squirrel hole and the cows scatter.

Yonie accidentally locks Granny in the chicken coop and dinner burns. Then a thunderstorm brings lightning that strikes the barn, and Yonie and Granny must get all the animals out! Although the barn is lost, Yonie acts bravely and puts his curiosity aside when he really needs to be on task. Pop keeps his very special promise to Yonie upon his return, but first Pop hugs Yonie so closely.

Marguerite de Angeli’s color and black and white drawings enhance the telling of this tale of a curious young boy and his adventures. As the family is Amish, the clothing appears somewhat old-fashioned, but this offers a unique opportunity to investigate this different culture. The story moves along with Yonie’s curious explorations. The excitement of the fire is quite vivid. Yonie’s clear thinking and responsible behavior are proof that he can fulfill the responsibilities of a young man on the farm.

This is a story of family values that holds true across the years. Yonie Wondernose is sure to continue to please and amuse readers old and young alike. It is clear that Marguerite de Angeli had a love of the Amish people as well as a great understanding of their family life. BAW

The author, Kathleen Duey, spends most of the book dealing with Sarah’s thoughts and feelings after committing her “crime.” Realizing that it will shame her father, Sarah confesses and is punished by being put in stocks with the two other disobedient teens as an example to the town. Her father experiences a change of heart, shedding his careful piety for a brave goodness. He comes back through the snow and cold to release the three young people from a harsh punishment far worse than their crime. This diary of a young teen in Massachusetts in 1651 deals with the decision each must make regarding following rules that will shape lives and hearts forever. PJP


Quality — 5 Acceptability — 4

Children of a museum curator, twins Jack and Marie study an old book of prayer that their great, great, great, something grandfather, the scribe, has lettered. They compare it with the family book and notice a poem in French. They begin to recite the poem together and find themselves transported back to medieval France. Back to their grandfather’s scribe shop, where a mystery is about to unfold.

Someone has stolen the prayer book, in its final days of completion. And their grandfather is kidnapped. Using 20th Century knowledge about science, the twins help uncover a magician who is stealing from the townspeople.

The DNAgers ends by revealing that the grandfather is a magician who uses his powers to call for his grandchildren in his time of need. The authors, Steve and Terry Englehart, use magic as a mechanism for transporting the twins through time. Setting the book back in medieval France provides good opportunity to share the cultural of that time period. This is done effectively, and the adventure holds the reader’s attention. JMH
Family is very important throughout the book. Scott and Robbie are all the family their mom has. Their dad died before their move to Phoenix. In spite of their fighting at the beginning of the book, Scott and Robbie put their differences aside and learn to work together to survive.

Older elementary students should enjoy Danger in the Desert. The book contains high adventure. Subtle lessons are also taught about desert survival. JM

Quality—3 Acceptability—2

Alan Gibbons has created a story of a family living in Vietnam after the war. The story is told from the young son, Trà’s viewpoint. Trà is subjected to much taunting in the village because of his father’s Chinese background. He is confused about the role his father played in the National Liberation Front during the war. Everyone is disappointed with the post-war government and many are fleeing the country. Trà and his family escape in a boat to Hong Kong. The experiences along the way are not pleasant and their arrival in Hong Kong is not what they expected. The freedom they dreamed of was not to be instantly attained. Trà ends up fighting for his life with an enemy of his father. He realizes that his father fought for what he believed was right during the war, and he must not give up now in this fight for his own freedom.

The author, Alan Gibbons, is an Englishman who was not involved personally in the Vietnam War. He has filled his story with many anti-American feelings being expressed by the Vietnamese characters. Unless the reader has an understanding of the role of the Americans in the Vietnam War, this book could produce confusion and disrespect for those who served our country during this war. PJP

F. Ballet—Fiction; Counts—Fiction. 73 p.
Quality—4 Acceptability—5

We have a new heroine. Her name is Rosaleen O’Meara, but we can call her “Rosie.” Early on in the series we understand “You don’t have to be perfect every two minutes.” In Not-So-Perfect Rosie, Miss Deirdre, beloved ballet teacher, is leaving for a month, including that very special day, his birthday. Will Rosie figure out a way to be a part of this great event? She eventually is able to come through for Miss Deirdre on all counts with the help of her best friend Tommy Murphy and the neighborhood “bad kids” the Witti. While the conflicts are resolved Rosie is also able to accept herself in a greater way through Miss Deirdre’s affirmation.

Many technical ballet terms are included in the text and in the glossary headed “From Rosie’s Notebook.” Julie Durrell’s line drawings appear about every fourth page and perfectly characterize Rosie’s dreamy personality and the humorous situations of the plot.

Starring Rosie would stand alone by its own merit, but fortunately for young readers it continues a series that most certainly will endure. ASN

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Formula series are a staple in literary circles. The ballet series liberally sprinkles dance terminology to satisfy the young child who dreams of being the next Tchaikovsky. The pictures drawn by Julie Durrell possess likable, the personality slowly developing throughout the series. The pictures drawn by Julie Durrell possess likable, the personality slowly developing throughout the series. The pictures drawn by Julie Durrell possess likable, the personality slowly developing throughout the series. Formula series are a staple in literary circles. The pictures drawn by Julie Durrell possess likable, the personality slowly developing throughout the series. Formula series are a staple in literary circles. Thus, the pictures drawn by Julie Durrell possess likable, the personality slowly developing throughout the series.
This audio tape features four original seasonal stories told by Liz Curtis Higgs. The autumn story is about a pumpkin and is designed to show children how God can take a seed, make it grow, and then fill it with light. Forgiveness is the theme of the spring parable and centers around an Easter lily. In the summer story Logan desires to grow the biggest thing in the garden and plants sunflower seeds. He learns that God can take the seeds we plant and scatter them farther than ever imagined. There is one pine tree on a Christmas tree farm, in the winter parable, that is not for sale - until a poor family comes along and the farmer’s wife decides to lovingly give the tree away.

The stories are read very slowly with long pauses between sentences. Children are likely to lose interest in the stories very quickly. The musical background does not always fit the story and is sometimes rather distracting. There are four original songs by Ken Medema, each one sung after a story is completed. The lyrics have been written to explain the meaning of the stories, but the contemporary sound, movement, and style of the music is not compatible with the message. The vocal technique is poor, with sliding pitches and a breathy quality, which lessens their appeal to the young listener.

PJP


F. Folklore—Korea. 48 p.


F. Princesses—Fiction. 32 p.


F. Folklore—Korea. 48 p.


F. Contests—Fiction; Libraries—Fiction; Mystery fiction. 157 p. Gr. 3-7.

Quality—3 Acceptability—5

Felicity Snell, Junior Librarian at the Ebenezer Twitchpurse Memorial Library in West Millbury, has created a wonderful opportunity for young people to use the library’s facilities to solve a mystery. She has faked a murder and used a dummy as the body, and clues are hidden throughout the various departments. She has enlisted the help of the Watchdogs, members of a Junior Mystery Club. Library attendance is up and her supervisor is pleased with the interest shown by children. Though her supervisor has misgivings about the children creating havoc, hiding the clues so no one else can find them, and disruption of regular library services, Felicity has worked out most of these possible glitches.

However, even Felicity has not foreseen every probable problem, because the library has been robbed of various items, and no one knows how the items are being stolen from the building without someone noticing. Since Felicity is an ex-private investigator, she enlists the help of the Watchdogs so that they, too, may look for clues to the real crimes.

Author, E. W. Hildick, has written other Felicity Dell mysteries, and his heroine is lighthearted, likable, and kind to the children. Their enthusiasm and adoration of Ms. Snell is very understandable. The story is peopled with many, many characters, and it is sometimes confusing keeping track of who is who. Even though there is a villain, he is not violent and the story would be a good read-aloud for a classroom or home.

BGT


F. Solomon, King of Israel—Legends; Jews—Folklore; Bible—Folklore. 32 p.


F. Princesses—Fiction. 32 p.


F. Folklore—Korea. 48 p.

The Bank Street Ready-to-Read series is a graduated reading program. Selections reviewed here are from levels two and three. Level two books are intended for children beginning to read on their own. Colorful illustrations cover the entire page, leaving space for text. In level three, chapters divide the story line. The vocabulary is more challenging, and the text takes a dominant role.

In *The Flower of Sheba* The Queen of Sheba prepares a riddle to test King Solomon’s great wisdom. She is amazed when he enlists the help of a small bee. She discovers the secret of wisdom is to learn, no matter how humble the instructor.

In *The Monster from the Sea* a black monster frightens the people of an isolated island. The princess investigates, and discovers the monster is a lonely scuba diver needing help to repair his sailboat. The scuba diver wins the respect of the king, and the princess as his bride.

Similar to Beauty and the Beast, *Sim Chung and the River Dragon*, a Korean folk-tale sends a beautiful, devoted daughter to appease the wrath of a fierce sea dragon. Patience and kindness save her country and restores her father’s sight. Her virtue brings her respect and love.

In *The Warrior Maiden* a Hopi legend recounts the bravery of a young girl whose cunning plan and swift feet save her peaceful village from Apache raiders.


Big Brother Tom, Middle Sister Emily, and Little Brother Natty belong together, yet can be very much apart. Each of these Treehouse Tales highlights one of the trio. Tom faces the Civil War as General Ulysses S. Grant while coping with his sister being a ‘girl’ and his little brother’s fear of the dragon in the tree house. Emily wants, oh so much, to be grown up enough to ride a horse, but nobody trusts her, and her dreaming in the tree house keep getting in the way. Little Natty decides that the best way to win some respect is to emulate George Washington and chop down a tree. But his tree smashes the new tree house roof.

Mother and award winning Author Anne Isaacs has first-hand experience with brothers and sisters as well as with tree houses. Families will identify with her first-hand experience with brothers and sisters as well.


The Case of the Dognapped Cat by Milly Howard is a fun, fast-paced mystery written for young readers. While cleaning the loft of Mark’s family’s garage, Mark and his friends, Corey and Maria Delores come across some remnants from the detective agency. Crime Busters, Mark’s dad had when he was a kid and decide to form their own agency. Their first case involves tracking down a missing cat that it turns out, had been accidentally nabbed by dognappers stealing purebred dogs and selling them out of town.

Illustrator Bruce Day contributes a cartoon illustration every two to three chapters, doing a particularly fine job with the cat, Samson, and the dogs. The drawings should appeal to young readers. Milly Howard’s develops her characters well, adding details that give added insight into their personalities. This is an adventure with a clever cat, bungling burglars and daring but decent detectives.


The Violin Man is a delightful story about a long-lost violin that finds its way home to a family of musicians. The story is told from the perspective of the violin itself, and the reactions of those who come into contact with it. It is a heartwarming tale of reunion and joy.

Life seems ordinary to ten-year-old Antonio, who lives in a quiet Italian village back in the 1800’s. He keeps his eyes open for the traveling men who pass through his village periodically, wishing he could live such an exciting life. One day a traveling man arrives and changes Antonio’s life, and the village forever. The mysterious man comes seeking treasure he believes is hidden in Antonio’s village.

Inspired by the real life Luigi Tarisio, who sought out lost Stradivarius violins, the author provides drama, subtle humor and mystery in her debut novel for middle readers, The Violin Man. The author points out how music can make life rich, a treasure in itself.

The handful of black and white illustrations by Gary Undercuffler lend appeal to this unpretentious story of a boy who discovers searching for treasure is almost more exciting than finding it. PW

In introducing these tales Madhur Jaffrey, actress and author of several cookbooks, recalls her father telling stories to the family which introduced contemporary elements while combining them with traditional stories from India. Julius Lester did much the same with his recent volumes of Uncle Remus stories.

Traveling home, Robi Dobi, a likable elephant, hears calls for help. Rescuing Kabbi Wahabbi, a mouse turned orange by Slimy Kimey, from drowning in a river, the two set off to find a magical person who can make Kabbi Wahabbi brown again. Along the way they meet Maya the butterfly, who is invited to come into Robi Dobi’s ear and tell her stories, and the beautiful parrot princess, Tara who must be rescued from the Wicked Purple Panthers and their leader who wants to marry her.

These delightful tales give the reader a look into traditional Indian folktales and storytelling yet are very modern. Each section flows into the next as another character is introduced and invited into the safety of Robi Dobi’s ear to tell his or her own story. While at times predictable, they are also refreshing, particularly when accompanied by Amanda Hall’s black and white and color illustrations which give a feeling of the Indian countryside.


The Violin Man—Fiction; Animals—Fiction; India—Fiction. 76 p. Gr. 2 - 5.

The Violin Man—Fiction; Animals—Fiction; India—Fiction. 76 p. Gr. 2 - 5.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Robi Dobi: The Marvelous Adventures of an Indian Elephant, by Madhur Jaffrey; illustrated by Amanda Hall.

Life is more exciting when you live in Santa Monica, California. Walter seems bent on causing trouble wherever he goes, and Jessie and Leo have all they can manage to keep an eye on him. Walter finally gets enough of a scare to slow him down, at least for a while. Jessie decides maybe she should just try being nice to him.

In *The Case of the Dognapped Cat* the Wicked Purple Panthers and their leader who wants to marry her.

These delightful tales give the reader a look into traditional Indian folktales and storytelling yet are very modern. Each section flows into the next as another character is introduced and invited into the safety of Robi Dobi’s ear to tell his or her own story. While at times predictable, they are also refreshing, particularly when accompanied by Amanda Hall’s black and white and color illustrations which give a feeling of the Indian countryside.


F.   Elephants—Fiction; Animals—Fiction; Circus—Fiction. 132 p. Gr. 4 - 7.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Jessie’s nine year old cousin, Walter, comes to visit, and she is expected to keep him out of trouble. The year is 1935, and the circus has come to Santa Monica, California. Walter seems bent on causing trouble wherever he goes, and Jessie and Leo have all they can do to keep up with him and try to prevent one disaster after another. Before Walter is done, there is a tiger on the loose and the town is terrified. Walter finally gets enough of a scare to slow him down, at least for a while. Jessie decides maybe she should just try being nice to him.

Calamity at the Circus has plenty of action. Children reading the book may find it amazing that in 1935 a child might be able to wander through the lot where circus workers are putting up the big top and preparing for the show. But in spite of incredible events, the action is believable. Jerry Jerman’s writing is tight and fast paced. He puts just enough twang into the
language to show the Oklahoma background of the characters. He also creates believable circus folks, giving us a glimpse into their lives and the problems they face. CSJ


Wouldn’t it be fun to be invisible? What child hasn’t thought about that at one time or another. Wouldn’t it be nice to see and hear everything that was going on around you without being seen? Think of the places you could go and the things you could do!

While she didn’t wish for this, fifth grader Billie Stone becomes invisible after applying the make-up from a bag she’s found while on an outing with her mother and younger sister in New York’s Central Park. Then the fun and adventures begin.

Billie’s mom is a single parent, the school librarian at the school Billie and her sister, Jane, attend and is very protective of her children. At eleven Billie has begun to want a little more space and the lost backpack offers it. Intrigued by the backpack, Billie first experiments with the make-up inside. Results are becoming invisible. This presents problems because she is expected to be at school. She can see but not be seen; hear and be heard. To regain her visibility Billie enlists the help of Hubert, a friend, whom she meets in the boy’s bathroom to plan strategy. Somehow they manage to retrieve the backpack and eventually finds the owner who helps her become visible again, showing Billie her other inventions along the way: lipstick that tastes like strawberry pie; another lipstick that allows the wearer to speak in rhymes. By the time Billie has become partially visible they are on their way home and discover that the police have been called in. Mrs. Stone learns to let go a bit and Billie learns to appreciate her mother’s caring.

A contemporary setting and problem ...independence. Fifth graders everywhere struggle with that in-between age. The story moves along quickly, is implausible except where the relationships are concerned and is fun to read. Younger readers will have even more fun. Outside of the word “pee” and wondering about the strange fixtures in the boy’s room this is a pretty lighthearted look at growing up. We’re never told why Billie’s father is no longer in the home, but it really isn’t his story and doesn’t figure into this one. LGR


F. Mystery fiction. 176 p. Gr. 3 - 7.

In Book 28 of the popular “Mandie” series, Mandie and her friend Celia, visit turn-of-the-century New York City, and stay in a mansion as guests of Mandie’s friend, Jonathan, and his father.

While exploring the mansion the friends encounter several mysterious events. First, a dog appears in the garden and a girl from the tenements tries to claim him as her own. Next, Mandie overhears the butler carrying out a transaction with a strange man and warning the man to keep it a secret. Finally, Mandie and Jonathan are involved in a chase across the city as they try to discover the truth behind these events.

Lois Leppard writes fascinating mysteries for eight to twelve-year-old girls. The heroine of the series, Mandie, is a strong and adventurous girl, whose faith in God is demonstrated in her actions. The author does an excellent job of describing the historical settings of her stories without overwhelming the reader with too many details. She includes information on people and events from Mandie’s past in each story, enabling new readers to understand what has taken place in earlier books. DEB

A family vacation at a beautiful lake resort should be fun for Alex. But the other girls Alex’s age focus on stylish hair and clothing, and Alex just doesn’t fit in. They exclude her and laugh at her. Alex and her younger brother, Rudy, manage to do enough dumb things to give them plenty to laugh at, too. When Alex puts rotten fish heads in two of the girls’ beds, she knows it is wrong. Some wise parents who see what has been going on put all the girls to work cleaning up the mess, and they become friends.

Peach Pit Popularity is a story real kids will understand, because the problem behaviors are typical of children. Alex learns to deal with people who don’t like her. The other girls, who have been feeling guilty about their behavior, have an opportunity to be kind to Alex. Nancy Simpson Levene weaves spiritual truths into the story convincingly. The ink drawings by Graph Com Corporation add interest to the book. CSJ


Don’t let the slim size of the text and the simple picture book illustrations of Patricia MacCarthy fool you into thinking this is a young child’s story. The Five Sisters quickly draws the reader into its fantasy world of dream and adventure and invites the adult to ponder the stages of life and how we respond to them. Margaret Mahy has done an imaginative job of bringing to life a blank sheet of paper. She is sure to inspire many a young artist and adult grandma to revive the art of paper doll cutting and decoration. A good read aloud story in sixteen short chapters for classroom or family sharing, one that begs to be re-read. JD


Dagny Comfort and Megan Canary visit Aunt Allie, a childhood friend of Dagny’s mother, at Waxwing Orchards in Cherryland. Aunt Allie faces selling the orchards if she can’t pay the taxes and hopes the girls can help her retain possession of the fruit farm. As Dagny dreams up ideas for raising money, the girls spring into action. But they earn a negligible amount of money.

However, a turnabout in Aunt Allie’s financial condition arises, when she hears the girls wish for their own tree for a day and grants their wish. This prompts the girls to suggest Aunt Allie rent trees to people for a day, so she places an ad in the newspaper receiving an overwhelming response. When the cherries are ripe, families arrive at the orchards to pick the cherries from the trees they rented, and enough money is raised to save Waxwing Orchards.

The Cherry Pit Princess by Lynn Manuel is a story about the blossoming friendship of two girls with conflicting desires. Megan wants Dagny as her best friend, and Dagny is torn between enjoying Megan’s company and missing her best friend who relocated. Megan never wavers in her desire for Dagny as a best friend even though Dagny does not express a reciprocal desire. However, by the end of the story Dagny realizes she can have more than one best friend.

Debbie Edlin’s pencil illustrations within the text and a detailed painting of Dagny and Megan on the front cover and, Poor Thing, Aunt Allie’s cat on the back cover add to the overall appeal of the book. DBW


In Mission Impossible? Emily is dumbfounded when Annie Rose becomes defiant and rebellious and seems to reject Emily and her values. Annie Rose dyes her hair blonde, smokes in the girl’s bathroom, and plans to give the computer a virus. Still, Emily prevails when...
she remembers that a "Friend loves at all times." Annie Rose's parents are divorcing and Annie Rose needs a real friend. Disobedience does bring consequences and loyalty and perseverance rewards.

Graffiti! "A.J. Loves P.B." is written on the elementary bathroom walls. Who did it? In Caught in the Act! A.J. attempts to find the answer only to find himself unjustly accused. In looking for the answer God reminds A.J. that God took the blame for A.J.'s sin and A.J. can trust God to help him out of any situation.

The Golden Rule Duo series by Janet Holm McHenry is about twins who are learning to "Do to others as you would have them do to you." The series consists of short books, that are easy to read, with high-interest stories that contain morals and consequences for disobedience. Each book is separate. Donna Kae Nelson's black-line drawings creatively capture expressions and ideas. PSM


F. Friendship—Fiction; Acceptance—Fiction; Moving household—Fiction. 134 p.


F. Faith—Fiction; Mystery fiction. 143 p. Gr. 3 - 6.
Quality—3 Acceptability—5

Janet Holm McHenry's Mystery at the Fairgrounds centers on Annie Shepherd, an eighth grader, and her investigations. Mysterious camp fires occur at the county fairground. Strange cat sounds are heard late at night. Annie, a new arrival to tiny Mountain Center, joins with two new friends to form After School Sleuths. Together, they investigate suspicious classmates, a strange New Age book store, and a ghoulish cat seller. Along the way, Annie also begins learning about becoming a Christian and how to trust her Savior. Although the mystery is solved, the reader is left with a feeling of loose ends that need to be resolved.

What was really in the mysterious locked trunk? Why are so many people trying to get their hands on it? Just when the After School Sleuths get a clue, the trunk is stolen! Janet Holm McHenry uses her book, Secret of the Locked Trunk, not only to explore an interesting mystery, but also to explore the inner feelings of a young girl. Even though Kathy Brogan also believes that some people have the ability to travel between time zones as Harriet had.

Hilary McKay has written a ghost story in which the ghost is not fearful but a likable eleven-year-old. Through Robin and his mother's discussion of Harriet, Robin comes to terms with his father's accidental death. Death is viewed as a part of life with dying not being much different from living. Kathy Brogan also believes that people have the ability to travel between time zones as Harriet had.

The Amber Cat is a warm story about friendship. The language has a British flavor which will intrigue readers. Children will be curious about who Harriet really is as her true identity is not discovered until the end of the book. SR


F. Animals—Fiction; Adventure and adventurers—Fiction. 165 p. Gr. 3 - 5.
Quality—2 Acceptability—3

Lillian has received a fish for her sixth birthday. Each child in the family has received a pet on their sixth birthday. The newest addition joins a collection of pets, that are easy to read, with high-interest stories that contain morals and consequences for disobedience. Each book is separate. Donna Kae Nelson's black-line drawings creatively capture expressions and ideas. PSM


F. Mystery fiction; Brothers and sisters—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 128 p.


F. Mystery fiction; Brothers and sisters—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 124 p. Gr. 2 - 6.
Quality—3 Acceptability—4

When electronic equipment disappears from their father's radio station, Sean and Melissa Hunter open their first detective case, The Ghost of KRZY. They set up an overnight stakeout at the station, and then they pursue a dark stranger in a wild chase. At the end, they discover that this mysterious person is a young, deaf


F. Christian life—Fiction; Humorous stories; Amusement parks—Fiction; Stunt performers—Fiction; Uncles—Fiction. 113 p. Gr. 3 - 5.
Quality—4 Acceptability—4

The incredible world of Wally McDoogle features California Fantasmo World in book twelve of the series. Wally successfully blunders his way through a business-vacation with his family as they visit the fantastic and wealthy Uncle Max. Each day of the visit, life becomes more and more marvelous for his Uncle and more and more ordinary and drab for his Dad as Wally begins to compare the two brothers. Then comes the big chance to have a part in one of Uncle Max's shows. Excited, yet fearful, Wally practices his part marching with the band. However, in the unprepared rescue from a herd of Bigfeet, Uncle Max fails to appear and Dad becomes the hero of the show. Wally then finally gets his priorities straight and he finds out what it takes to make a real hero.

Two stories run through the book. My Life as a Bigfoot Breath Mint is interrupted as Sally pulls out a laptop computer to write more about a super-hero with Harry the Hairball and Floss Man.

The audience for this book is limited by the style of writing, outrageous humor, and hardly believable characters. However, a strong message for solid family values emerges at the end redeeming any previous weaknesses. MK
woman scientist called Doc, and they become acquainted with her computer-generated sidekick, Jeremiah. The four of them form Bloodhounds, Incorporated.

In The Mystery of the Invisible Knight, the supposed ghost of Sir Richard Falcrest commits several robberies in revenge against certain citizens of Middleton. Sean and Melissa crack the case and reveal that the museum curator, Edgar Jennings, is the culprit. At the same time, they learn to have faith to face the lion of fear.

In the same style of his Wally McDoogles, Bill Myers fills these books with action, slapstick comedy, and a touch of fun, preadolescent sarcasm and exaggeration. Readers will enjoy Jeremiah’s mixed-up phrases such as “barking up the wrong flagpole.” The preteen sleuths’ characters are stereotypical but entertaining. In both books, the author continues to expose the seemingly paranormal, teaching kids that ghosts don’t exist and that ghostlike activities can be explained.

In The Ghost of KRZY, Sean accuses Doc and Jeremiah of stealing equipment from the radio station. Jeremiah explains that they didn’t steal but paid for the equipment by leaving silver dollars in the station’s teapot. Then he asks the kids to help Doc and him develop better social graces. The issue of stealing is not addressed any further.

Two books can stand alone, as the second book repeats important information presented in the first. LHFN


Quality—3 Acceptability—4

Number three in the Action Reader series by Karen O’Connor, French Toast and Dutch Chocolate, continues the adventures of The Taylor family, Mom, Dad, Luke and Laura. The chapter-long stories take on a multicultural theme, like taking a trip to an orphanage in Mexico and hosting a Foreign Exchange student. Each chapter concludes with a project to further explore the diverse culture in our world.

The series need not be read in order to follow the story line. There is use of some mild slang in the story. SAH


F. Nutrition—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 64 p. Gr. 1 - 3.

Quality—3 Acceptability—4

Attention, All Junior Chef enthusiasts! The “Junk-Food Finders” are coming! Karen O’Connor explores the theme of being healthy, body and soul. The heroes, first-grader Laura and her brother Luke, three years her senior, discover ways to depend on God. Each chapter is a separate anecdote, introducing the Taylors and how they problem-solve and respect each individual’s contribution to the family dynamic.

While the plot at times seems contrived and preachy, the young cook with a Christian background would take the references in stride and thoroughly enjoy the simple recipes at the end of each chapter. SAH


F. Space and time—Fiction; Ghosts—Fiction; West (U.S.)—Fiction. 151 p. Gr. 4 - 7.

Quality—4 Acceptability—4

Caught between the past and the present, the ghost town of Bodine, Arizona, shares a story of greed and intrigue. Below the craggy, canyon cliffs the old graveyard is the logical place to investigate the scary legend of what had happened more than one hundred years ago.

Dr. Jacob Cooper and his children, Jay and Lila, assist Professor MacPherson in finding what really happened on June 8, 1885. The Legend of Annie Murphy reveals a murder and the illegal sale of the Murphy mine. Jay and Lila visit Bodine in 1885 and find all of Annie’s clues to the truth simultaneously as Dr. Cooper and Professor Mac see the clues from the present time.

The story is fast moving and believable for the reader who is willing to re-arrange time and space. Justice prevails as all the pieces fall into place in the nick of time. All who are acquainted with the Cooper Kids Adventure Series will enjoy this seventh book in the series. However, the story does not depend on previous events to be enjoyed. MK


F. Time travel—Fiction; Death—Fiction. 139 p. Gr. 4 - 6.

Quality—3 Acceptability—5

Time travel, a woman dying from an unknown disease, a young Jewish daughter and a Chinese family of many years ago...these are the elements of an unusual and compelling story written by Randy Perrin and his daughters, Hannah and Tova. Time like a river brings two families, Jewish-American and Chinese-American, together across space and time. A fantasy, yet a believable tale, woven through incidents in Margie’s life as she attempts-and succeeds-in finding a cure for her mother’s debilitating yet obscure illness.

This book is the accomplishment of Perrin as well as his seven and nine-year-old daughters. Their input lends reality to the language and reactions of the children in the story yet at times the writing seems disjointed and does not flow easily. This does not take away from the overall story line, the thrill of time travel nor the satisfying ending when the loose ends are tied up together. Adding Time Like a River to the young people’s collection of a public or school library would be giving enjoyment to many. CC


F. Schools—Fiction; Secrets—Fiction. 106 p. Gr. 2 - 6.

Quality—3 Acceptability—4

This is a book about secrets. From the first page to the last page there are little secrets that children like to keep from others. Mike can not keep secrets and everyone knows it. He just bullies with enthusiasm and excitement and usually lets the secret out. He is one of those children a teacher only needs to look at to know if something is amiss in the classroom. Amy has a very special secret and wants to share it with someone. Her best friend has moved and she is lonely. She looks for someone to share her secret with and decides that Mike will keep it.

Each chapter in this story by P.J. Petersen alternates back and forth between the perspectives of Mike and Amy, each one trying to keep their secrets. At the end of the story the secrets are told, and Mike learns that he can keep a secret. This is a fun book of stories that could happen in any elementary classroom that children can relate to. The line drawing illustrations in each chapter by Meredith Johnson help visualize the exciting things that are happening. PJP


F. Alaska—Fiction; Accidents—Fiction; Babies—Fiction. Unp. K - Gr. 3.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

When Marie Boyer with her two young daughters, three-year-old Betty and baby Ann, start out on a long, cold, sleigh ride from Fairbanks, Alaska to meet a ship for Seattle, they thought their biggest problems would be to stay warm and to entertain themselves on the lonely ten day ride. Little did they know they would become part of a winter disaster and miracle when their sleigh overturns and the young girls are lost on an icy river.

This true story, set in 1917, is filled with fun and suspense and best of all a happy ending. Gloria Rand has combined her storytelling talents with her husband, Ted Rand’s artistry to produce a beautiful story that children will want to read again and again. Depicted in the illustrations are sights and creatures of the far north, as well as a taste of what living in the extreme temperatures of an Alaskan winter demanded of those who were willing to brave the frontier in its early days. JD

26 C H R I S T I A N  L I B R A R Y  J O U R N A L  M A R C H / M A Y , 1 9 9 8

F. Hindenberg (Airship)—Fiction; Family life—Fiction. 72 p. Gr. 3 - 6.
Quality—4  Acceptability—5

The year is 1937 and Stenny wants to be like radio hero, Jack Armstrong. What he doesn’t want to be is himself, the chubby loser. Because of Stenny’s intense fascination with dirigibles, he manages to be present for the Hindenburg’s landing. What he witnesses is the dirigible catching fire and exploding. This gives Stenny the opportunity to put others first, and he goes into the smoke to help save survivors and the injured. Stenny is an ordinary hero, and he gains the respect he desired from his classmates.

Candice F. Ransom, author of Fire in the Sky, has caught the Hindenburg’s destruction from a child’s point of view. She reflects life in the thirties, prior to World War II. What about Hitler? Why was he placing those strange impositions on the Jews? These questions, brought forward in the novel, may incite the reader to further study of the time period, the war, and dirigibles.

Shelly O. Haas’ illustrations join the text to visually emphasize the catastrophe. The layering of images offers various perspectives and creates distance from the horror. The style, and color are good representations of the period featured.

The book features a tragedy, but the graphic details are included tastefully. Plot strays once when a family dinner is prepared and no one eats it. Also, Stenny’s father forbids Stenny from going to the air field. The dinner is prepared and no one eats it. Also, Stenny’s father forbids Stenny from going to the air field. The reader lives with Stenny through his struggles and growth. A tragedy of history is felt through Fire in the Sky. LAG


Quality—3  Acceptability—4

One in a Million is the story of a mixed breed dog named Joey. Abandoned as a puppy at the Humane Society, Joey is adopted out to a young boy and his family. Left to his own devices in the back yard, the dog soon loses favoritism with the family for his puppy antics. Unable to handle the responsibility of the half-grown dog and unwilling to train him, the family returns Joey to the Humane Society.

This story chronicles Joey’s life from the viewpoint of the dog. Along the way, a volunteer at the shelter, Marjorie befriends him and attempts to train the young dog. Throughout the story, caring for animals by training and neutering, is stressed heavily by Marjorie and Mr. Nulty, the shelter official. There is general disdain for individuals who do not neuter their pets and expect the shelter to care for the resulting animals.

One in a Million is quite simply a propaganda message from the Humane Society and other animal groups who are discouraged and disgusted by irresponsible pet owners. The author, Nicholas Read, does this through the eyes of an unwanted dog named Joey who doesn’t understand the human world and just wants people to like him. There is a volunteer teenager who smokes and the subject of euthanizing animals is discussed among the dogs and shelter workers. JMH


F. Twins—Fiction; Slaves—Fiction; Afro-Americans—Fiction; Pirates—Fiction; New Orleans (La.). Battle of 1815—Fiction. 139 p. Gr. 4 - 6.
Quality—5  Acceptability—5

Pierre and Andrew are twelve-year-old twin former slaves. Their father had helped them escape. They are now living in a swamp while their father helps their mother and little sister escape from the auction block. Andrew, the more adventurous twin, decides they need to explore the swamp. Pierre goes along, not because he thinks it is a good idea, but to take care of his brother. They come upon a pirate hide-out and get into mischief like almost any twelve-year-old would.

The brothers had been separated by their master, so they don’t know each other that well. As the story progresses, the boys grow closer together, especially after it becomes evident that their father has died. The boys become directly involved in the War of 1812—the Battle of New Orleans.

The Twins, the Pirates, and the Battle of New Orleans contains the adventure enjoyed by late elementary students. Students will be exposed to the Battle of New Orleans because the twins help the Yankee side during the battle. The book contains pirate superstitions which seem to bring out the mischievous side of the main characters. The book seems to be well researched, right down to a visit to a swamp to see just how alligators jump. Students who enjoy historical fiction or high adventure books should enjoy The Twins, the Pirates, and the Battle of New Orleans.

The Proud Tree, written by Luane Roche; illustrated by Chris Sharp. LCCN 9502437685, HBB, $14.95.

Quality—5  Acceptability—4

Rex is the proudest tree in the forest. One day, soldiers cut Rex down and make him into a cross. In the shape of a cross, Rex meets Jesus, and witnesses this gentle man who is treated with such cruelty. As Rex watches Jesus, he realizes his own sinfulness and confesses. While Rex is dying, he remembers an old story, “If a dying tree tells God he is sorry for the bad things he has done, if he wishes he had been better, God will give him new life from one of the tree’s own seeds.”

As Rex dies, he hears beautiful music. Some time later, a sapling grows, symbolizing new life.

Both Luane Roche’s writing and Chris Sharp’s illustrations convey great feeling. The personification
of the tree who becomes a cross adds whimsy to the very serious story of the crucifixion, and yet remains respectful. In the last few pages of the book, when Rex is dying, I found the theology a bit shaky. Rex dies hearing beautiful music, symbolizing God’s acceptance of his penitence. Rex seems to believe his salvation is based on the degree of his penitence. The new life he receives is the sapling that springs from the earth, which could represent a form of reincarnation. In spite of this, it is still a very well written account of Jesus’ crucifixion. CSJ


In The Rose Horse, Deborah Lee Rose has interwoven fact and fiction to introduce her readers to the historic place of Coney Island, the historic time of the early 1900’s, and the historic people who carved the carousel horses for America, as well as some of the famous people who entertained at Coney Island. When young Jewish Lily is taken to Coney Island to live for a time with her Aunt Golda and Uncle Samuel while her mother attends her premature baby sister Rose in the “incubator clinic” at Coney Island, she not only learns about the ancient art of carving from her uncle and father, but also about the exciting life on the boardwalk in Coney Island, and the religious practices of her own family as they count the days in preparation of Shavuos.

Who would have thought that the early “preemie units” of our country were actually a part of the side shows of Coney Island? This and other interesting information on the early days of this century is skillfully incorporated in a charming story which will capture the attention of many a young horse- and carousel-lover. Pencil illustrations by Greg Shed enhance the chapters. A glossary of terms, both Jewish and American, is included. JD


First Apple by Ching Yeung Russell is the story of a young girl named Ying who is growing up in China. Her Grandmother has raised her in a kind and gentle home. The class bully thwarts Ying’s love for her Grandmother, and the mischievousness of her own family as they count the days in preparation of the tender age of her audience. Ellen Beier, artist, follows away from the appropriate difficult word despite the tender age of her audience. Ellen Beier, artist, follows the crisis that knits the story together. Unfortunately, the impending separation of the two close friends is the crisis that knits the story together. Unfortunately, this problem interrupts the action with distracting regularity, while the frustration with Alicia’s recklessness becomes repetitious. Despite this handicap, the plot provides a rush of adrenaline. Panic in the Wild Waters encourages responsible decision making, courtesy in difficult relationships, and unselfish bravery. Lee Roddy paces the action with descriptive snap-shots of Hawaii’s exotic landscape, and laces the dialogue with local terms and slang. A glossary helps with pronunciation and definitions. For readers who have been following the Ladd Family Adventures, this twelfth book links the Hawaiian setting to its new frontier in Alaska. MT


Each season of the year holds a wonder for the Meadow family: Sullivan, Eva, Willie and Ray. A pregnant stray dog helps them write a primer on dog etiquette, beginning with “the Meadows gave the dog some cool water and warm meat loaf and they petted away her fears.” The Blue Hill Meadows by Cynthia Rylant, illustrated by Ellen Beier, tells an ordinary story in an extraordinary way. October, the perfect time for a catch-and-release fishing trip, quality time for father and son, a rare blizzard, and a missed school bus afford Willie the opportunity to learn a secret of success: contentment.

Cynthia Rylant uses a diffusion of love and gentleness in the text of The Blue Hill Meadows. This is a family who truly cares for each other. The author doesn’t shy away from the appropriate difficult word despite the tender age of her audience. Ellen Beier, artist, follows Rylant’s lead and illustrates the book with visual vignettes, full of detail and harmonizing color.

Rylant has over sixty books to her credit, including The Van Gogh Cafe and Missing May. SAH


The Trio, Fred, Sam and Joe, have just finished their class projects on ancient Egypt when Joe’s little sister, Anna, questions the accuracy of some details. To prove her point, Anna opens The Book and the green fog once again swallows the boys as well as Anna and her cat, Cleo. Each time The Book is opened the Trio once again enters a different time and cannot return until they locate The Book. This trip, the boys and their unexpected fellow travelers, Anna and Cleo, land in a pharaoh’s tomb in ancient Egypt. After meeting the evil high priest Hatsat and the boy king Thutmose III, the boy grows up the Nile, play basketball with Thutmose, tangle with an alligator, surf the Nile and end up at a banquet for Thutmose’s mother Hatshepsut. Anna has become one of the Hatshepsut’s dancing girls and after a little Trio magic, Anna leaves to retrieve Cleo the Cat and she doesn’t return! When the
group searches for Anna and Cleo in the Beautiful House, secret rooms under the palace, they are captured by Hatsnat. Wrapped up like mummies, and left to die in a sealed room, they are saved by Cleo. The boys and Anna are returned to the present day.

Time travel always catches the imagination. *Tut, Tut* is time travel with a history lesson thrown in for good measure that should please student readers and teachers alike.

Interesting facts are mixed with the antics of the travelers. Students will enjoy the word plays and quick action as the mystery unfolds and is then solved. The last page in the book includes a short matching quiz of important terms relating to ancient Egypt. Jon Scieszka’s writing style is mock serious, with definite comic overtones. Lane Smith captures this same atmosphere with pictures that exaggerate as well as illustrate our Trio of time travelers.

This is the sixth Time Warp Trio book for these two collaborators. Readers will certainly clamor for more.


F. Asparagus—Fiction; Cabbages—Fiction; Gardens—Fiction.

Unp. PS - Gr. 1.

Quality—4 Acceptability—4

An Asparagus named Albert and a cabbage named Herman forge a friendship in the picture book, *Cabbages and Kings.* After name-calling and arguing, the two begin to look out for each other. Albert teaches Herman about garden dangers, like rabbits. He tells him about the fair, and the two hope Herman will be chosen as an entry. When winter comes at the book’s close, Albert is looking forward to meeting more cabbages like Herman in the spring.

*Cabbages and Kings* offers a nice example of friendship. Good models of how to stop a fight, and how to say good-bye are provided. The reader sees how friends look out for one another.

Fine artist Jamie Wyeth is the book’s illustrator. Sharp complimentary colors add intensity to the paintings. Yellow accents and large yellow areas are brilliant. Color shapes and sensitive lines make dynamic compositions. The first spread does not completely illustrate the story. Children may search for Albert through the long text and be disappointed in not finding him. They might enjoy seeing the vegetable faces on other pages since they are not included on the cover.

*Cabbages and Kings* makes a contribution to books featuring duos. Albert and Herman will not be forgotten.

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F. Mothers and sons—Fiction. Short stories. 126 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

**Rescue on the Rapids and Other Stories** contains eight exciting adventures from rural America of the past century. The stories are short and complete, thus appropriate for reading when the time is limited.

1. Rescue on the Rapids features a near-fatal float trip on the Buffalo River.
2. Hunting in a Louisiana bayou for an alligator, to be delivered for making a movie in New Orleans, proved that fourteen-year-old Gus was Old Enough.
3. How much trouble can one Nubian goat cause? Clay found it was so much that there was no answer, until in the back of an unexplored cave, Napoleon’s Discovery surprisingly solved everyone’s problems.
4. For almost-blind Mark, Christmas Trappings came with rescue from a trapping accident, loving family and friends, and the Christmas snow he had wished for.
5. Ole Big Mouth provided one exciting day of fishing with a surprise ending Jerry and David had not anticipated.
6. After great disappointment, the excitement of The Hunt during Patches’ second year, completely redeemed Oscar’s pet hunting dog for a lifetime of “free room and board.”
7. A camping adventure on the Night of the Fox resulted in Toby and his dad bagging bigger game than they had anticipated, as an escaped prisoner tangles with a rabid fox.
8. How can Jeff keep his bird dog after the cotton crop fails and Mr. King the banker offers a good price for him? Three-in-one confirms that God has three answers for a problem when Jeff trusts in Him.


F. Prairie Provinces (Canada)—History—Fiction. 162 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Quality—3 Acceptability—3

The magic of time travel takes Emily from 1996 to 1899. Sentinel Rock is Emily’s favorite place on her Grandmother’s farm in Saskatchewan, Canada. Now that Grandmother has died, Emily’s mother Kate and her aunts are putting the place up for sale. Emily’s heart is broken.

Despite the many jobs Kate gives Emily to do in sorting through Grandmother’s possessions, Emily finds time to slip away to the rock. Climbing to its top, Emily is startled to discover someone else is there before her. A kindred spirit from the past, Emma Elliott, helps Emily come to terms with losing her Grandmother and the farm. Emily uses the knowledge she gained from Grandmother, about the healing properties of herbs and plants, to save Emma’s family from a flu epidemic.

Sentinel Rock serves as the time portal and a magic stone allows Emily to slip back and forth between the two worlds. Slipping into Emma’s world is so interesting to Emily she repeatedly sneaks out of the house to go to the rock. Those times she does receive permission from Kate to go she stays so long she misses her mother’s deadline for returning.

The constant tension between Emily and her mother is not satisfactorily explained. The cause seems to exist before the adventure begins. Emily’s deceptions and disobedience, of course, add to the problem.

The book gives an interesting look at Pioneer life in the late 1800’s on the Saskatchewan prairie.


F. Orphans—Fiction; Orphan trains—Fiction. 126 p.


F. Orphans—Fiction; Nebraska—Fiction. 128 p.


F. Orphans—Fiction. 122 p. Gr. 4 - 7.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Perhaps best known for her earlier Prairie Family Adventure series, author Hilda Stahl continues spinning stories about early America. Fourteen-year-old Kayla and her younger brother Timothy are newly orphaned; their parents died during a voyage across the Atlantic, having left their home in Ireland for new employment in America at Brierwood Farms in Maryland. Instead, the two arrive in America without their parents, all hopes and dreams crushed.

In *Kayla O’Brien and the Dangerous Journey,* Kayla and Timothy first stay in New York with their father’s friend and his large family. They soon realize that his pregnant wife resents them, overburdened with already caring for several children of their own. Mr. Murphy promises the two he will find a way for them to reach Maryland, where they hope to train horses like their father had planned to do. Conflicts with Mrs. Murphy escalate and the two strike out on their own. The story seems to unravel at this point and meanders for several chapters until late in the book, when Kayla and Timothy (and the reader) finally realize that they will never make it to Brierwood Farms—and that this is not the “dangerous journey” alluded to by the book’s title. The story regains its focus in the final thirty pages, however, and the reader is left with a satisfying ending.

**Trouble at Bitter Creek Ranch** picks up where the first book leaves off, showing us Kayla and Timothy with their new adoptive family in Nebraska. Stahl sprinkles this sequel with humor and interesting characters, depicting prairie life while showing us a family transformed by prayer and courage. Adding a slight romantic interest to the story is Boon Russell, a handsome young man Kayla meets in chapter five.

In the third book, *Kayla O’Brien and the Runaway Orphans,* Kayla and Timothy teach their new family how to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas.

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Timothy also helps some orphans escape from an abusive merchant in town and Kayla hopes their adoptive parents will understand. Boon Russell is back on the scene, causing grief for Kayla.

Over all, Stahl is perhaps best at detailing life in early America from a fresh angle. I especially liked learning about the Children’s Aid Society in the first book (CAS helped homeless New York street children find homes in the Midwest between the years 1854 and 1904), but the story could have, and should have, included more information than just the basics. However, Stahl is skilled at creating interesting, multi-dimensional characters, and readers will like the occasional hint of Irish brogue: “Don’t be shoutin’ now, Timothy. It’s not a thing to do, you know.” These books provide light adventure while introducing interesting topics for further study and discussion. KSG


F. Conduct of life—Fiction; Fathers and daughters—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 124 p. Gr. 2 - 5.
Quality—4 Acceptability—4

Sendi Lee Mason has a lot going on her in her young life. She is having troubles with her friends and with multiplication. Her single Mom, Janice, receives a letter from the man who fathered Sendi and wants to visit them. She uses her mother’s calculator to solve the math problems she should have been doing in longhand. She sees a class bully beating up on a younger boy who threatens her if she tells. She is having trouble with her classmates. She thinks he is mean and rude until her mother explains that he has a broken heart.

Ten-year-old Raydeen comes up with a solution: she will pretend she wants to take her Grandmother’s place. Raydeen continues in her free-spirited, chipper way to try to draw her Grandfather out of his grief. Success comes during a thunderstorm when Grandfather comes to rescue his young granddaughter who reminds him of his wife of forty-nine years. Secure on his lap in the darkened house, Raydeen listens to her Grandfather open up and share his grief.

In her story, Ingrid Tomye has attempted to view an older person’s grief as seen by a young child. The explanations given to young Raydeen can help the young reader understand part of this grieving process. The book includes line drawings by Robert A. McKay, including those of a grandfather which was not the one described in the text. Raydeen is an interesting character with wild outfits, loose behavior, and language that includes minced oaths. PJP


Quality—4 Acceptability—4

Anna Pavlova no longer dances publicly. She feels her future is gone, and she only dances alone. That is until the Czar requests her to dance for his ill son. Anna cannot refuse, but on the way she meets a group of gypsies. One woman dances with the youth and intensity Anna used to possess. The gypsy years to perform as Pavlova. Giving the gift of dance, Anna allows the woman to take her place in the sleigh and dance for the royalty. All through the night Anna dances with the gypsies and feels youthful herself.

Author Maxine Trottier has written a fictional account of historical characters. With beautiful writing she speculates as to how the Czar’s lives possibly intersected with Anna Pavlova. Also she presents a glimpse of the gypsy life. She does include an older gypsy woman who foretells the future. Victoria Berdichevsky’s full spread paintings fill the large picture book. It is simple for the reader to slip into a Russia of the past. However, Berdichevsky’s characters never seem to engage each other. They always stare into space with mournful eyes. Young listeners/readers will enjoy the step back in time, the secret switching of places between the gypsy and Anna, and the snowy winter setting. The time period and historical characters will come alive. LAG


F. Grandfathers—Fiction. 61 p. Gr. 2 - 6.
Quality—3 Acceptability—3

Raydeen’s Grandfather has just come to live with her. Her Grandmother, known only to her as a box of candy arriving in the mail every year, has just died and Grandfather has withdrawn in grief. Raydeen is disappointed when he will not come to Grandfather’s Day at school, a day Raydeen created just to introduce her Grandfather to her classmates. She thinks he is mean and rude until her mother explains that he has a broken heart.

Every child can relate to his or her first day of school. For some it is a day that is frightening and scary. For others it is an exciting day they have waited for all their lives. This is how it was for Amanda pig. Amanda was awake before the sun on the first day of school. She was dressed and ready while everyone else was still sleeping. The bus ride was even better than she had hoped for. Her brother, Oliver already knew so many people. Amanda said hi to a girl sitting by her licking a lollipop. But she did not answer. Amanda knew she was scared and took her to class and played with her and made her feel at ease. By the end of the day, Amanda and Emily, were ready to ride the bus home together after a great first day of school.

This is a charming little story that children will relate to. Whether they are shy like Emily, or very outgoing, like Amanda this is a story for everyone. Jean Van Leeuwen has created characters that are true to life. Amanda is uninhibited, yet kind and thoughtful. Emily really wants to be a part but just needs a little encouragement. Ann Schweninger pictures illustrate the perfect little classroom complete with books, tables, a reading corner and happy, smiling faces. The girls even have little bows on their ears. This hardcover, easy-to-read book is divided into four small chapters for a total of forty-eight pages. It is the type of beginning reader that children can’t put down like Frog and Toad and Little Bear. MS


F. Orphans—Fiction; Kidnapping—Fiction; Friendship—Fiction. 152 p. Gr. 3 - 7.
Quality—5 Acceptability—5

In the dead of night, cruel hands rip Colley Trevelyan from his bed and his cramped Victorian life. Now the piercing eyes of Obadiah and Quintilla Crawler oversee his care and education at the Broggin Home for Boys. Along with the other twenty-four boys, his lessons consist of grueling labor in the blasting fumes of the glass factory. Colley’s only hope of escape is to survive until his ransom can be paid. But if a ransom is required, why are they trying to kill him? An amazing chain of coincidences reveals surprising loyalty in those whom he fears, and deadly ambitions in those most trusted.

**Sparrows in the Scullery** is a fictional glimpse into the dark corners of nineteenth century history where children were exploited to fuel the industrial revolution. The reader who enjoys classics such as Oliver Twist will feel quite at home with this story by Barbara Brooks Wallace. Her language is light, and descriptions concise, avoiding the tediousness sometimes found in Victorian style stories. MT


**Getting acquainted with the new people at school.** There are many reasons why some children are nervous, for example the fact that every child can relate to his or her first day of school. For some it is a day that is frightening and scary. For others it is an exciting day they have waited for all their lives. This is how it was for Amanda. Amanda was awake before the sun on the first day of school. She was dressed and ready while everyone else was still sleeping. The bus ride was even better than she had hoped for. Her brother, Oliver already knew so many people. Amanda said hi to a girl sitting by her licking a lollipop. But she did not answer. Amanda knew she was scared and took her to class and played with her and made her feel at ease. By the end of the day, Amanda and Emily, were ready to ride the bus home together after a great first day of school.

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If you’re like me, you grew up reading the Boxcar Children’s mysteries. Now a whole new generation of readers are enjoying the series. While Miss Warner died almost 20 years ago, new books continue to be written using the characters she created. These books are popular with upper elementary students.

In The Mystery at the Alamo, Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Bennie (now ages fourteen to six) visit the Alamo with Grandfather. They get to serve as extras in an educational movie being filmed about the Alamo. As you would expect, a mystery develops on the movie set and the four children are able to solve it. There are really no surprises to the adult reader, but the older elementary reader will be comfortable with the predictability of the plot.

The Boxcar Children continue their mystery solving pursuits in The Mystery of the Secret Message. As their hometown, Greenfield, prepares for The Winter Festival, the four children, Henry, Jessie, Violet and Benny are involved in helping Grandfather ready the town square for the event. The Minuteman statue in the square, a mysterious photograph and vandalism of the statue and Festival decorations add up to a mystery with several suspects being scrutinized by the children.

Charles Tang has given the Boxcar Children a pleasantly updated look in the pencil drawings he has provided for The Niagara Falls Mystery. The mixture of ages and personalities attract both boys and girls, beginning and accomplished readers. The books appeal to those who love a mystery, and even though the clues seem obvious, the conclusion often surprises the reader. The occasional black and white illustrations adds interest to the story, and create an “intermission” for the eyes of beginning readers.

Warner’s original intent was to create a story that was both easy and fun to read, something she continues to achieve nearly ten years after her death. PW

The illustrations by Lynn Elam-Jones are pleasant and idyllic. While the book itself deals with character-building, the story tries too hard; instead of letting the reader discover the delights of everyday life, the author takes on the role of tour-guide. SAH


In The Outer Space Mystery, a Boxcar Children Mystery, Violet, Henry, Jessie, and Benny Alden visit Mountvale College with their grandfather while he chairs a symposium for young scientists. The children delight in accompanying their grandfather on peregrinations and clearing up any mysteries that arise.

On the night of a cookout, there is an intruder in the boys’ room. A short time later, Rachel, one of the students, disappears along with the jottings of a finding by Mark, an astronomy student. Mark needs his jottings to prepare his presentation for the symposium attendees. Mark has a second set of jottings hidden in the observatory that are stolen at a meteor shower. The children surmise that Eugene, Mark’s competitor, was the intruder in the boy’s room and after noticing Eugene hide food in his clothes they follow him to a cabin where he meets Rachel. After Eugene leaves, the children surprise Rachel, and she admits complicity with Eugene in pirating Mark’s jottings. The children convince Rachel to admit her wrongdoing to the symposium attendees, and Mark presents his finding of a new asteroid, the Alden Asteroid. The children’s grandfather promises to exert his influence and provide Rachel with the opportunity for a fresh start at another college.

This is an entertaining mystery that includes side adventures while the children attempt to unravel interrelated mini mysteries. Charles Tang’s pencil illustrations sprinkled throughout the book and a full color hard cover add to the divertissement of the mystery for young readers.


The Treasure Keeper by Anita Williams earns a place of honor as a bed-time story for young children. We are gradually introduced to Marcos and his older sister Marcia and their family. Marcos is on a mission, discovering the secret of growing big. Everyone he meets gives him ideas, Grandmomma, the Rock Man, the Flower Lady. The young hero gains knowledge, that using your mind to solve problems turns you into a giant, that the value may not be in immediacy but increase with longevity. Marcia falls ill, and Marcos learns the true secret of growing big.

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**BOOK REVIEWS**

**CHILDREN’S NONFICTION**


The Inside-Outside Book of Libraries presents facts about eleven libraries. The libraries are of different types and sizes. Each spread of pages depicts first the outside of the building, followed by a spread depicting the inside of the library. Each library has a unique design and purpose. Some are used by many people while some are only used by the person who developed the collection.

Cummins points out that we can each have our own library in our own room in any arrangement (or not) that we wish.

Munro’s paintings are excellent. The continuity her work brings will be comforting to readers. She presents the Library of Congress in this title as well as in The Inside-Outside Book of Washington, D.C. Readers will recognize the building and the interior. The text presentation in this title departs from the Outside Book series. This layout presents the text alongside the paintings. The smaller print may be daunting. CMJ


229.9. Bible stories; Creation; Noah’s Ark; Christmas. Usp. PS - Adult. Quality—5 Acceptability—5


229.9. Bible stories; Creation; Noah’s Ark; Christmas. Usp. PS - Adult. Quality—5 Acceptability—5

This one volume is a combined story Bible in easy language. Bible atlas, handbook, and dictionary with all the information right on the page where it is needed. Added to the information on each page are the complete table of contents and illustrated introduction to the Bible at the front of the book. Who’s Who in the Bible Stories and the index at the back also have useful information.

Small children will enjoy the illustrations and hearing the story read while older children will enjoy reading it themselves. It is a valuable resource for students, teachers, or anyone needing quick information about stories in the Bible. Consider this edition for a special gift for children or for an inspiration to the whole family. MK


222. Moses (Biblical leader); Exodus, The; Plagues of Egypt; Bible stories—O.T. Usp. book; 1 CD-ROM Gr. 1 - 5. Quality—5 Acceptability—5

This retelling of Moses’ life comes with a CD-ROM for listening. While a nice addition, this volume scarcely needs it. The text reads well and illustrations, from endpapers through the story itself, are beautifully rendered with a grainy, sandy texture that makes them highly suitable for a story set in the desert areas of Egypt and its surrounding area. Illustrations alone supply much detail about life in Ancient Egypt from architecture and clothing to the flora and fauna. Particularly striking is the illustration of Moses receiving the call to lead Israel out of Egypt at the time of the burning bush.
burning bush. The illustrations will help bring this story to life for younger readers as they listen to the CD, while older students will read the text themselves. A worthwhile purchase. LGR


222. Joseph/Son of Jacob; Bible stories—O. T. 40 p. Gr. 2 - 6. Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Brian Wildsmith has retold the Biblical story of Joseph with detailed illustrations using lavish detail, framed in gold in a manner similar to the banding used for The Easter Story (Knopf, 1993). Winner of the Kate Greenaway Medal, Great Britain’s highest honor for picture books, Wildsmith captures the desert locale perfectly through the use of warm colors, even to the endpapers with their muted sunset tones and the hieroglyphics for Joseph’s name, while showing the beauty of Ancient Egypt as it must have been not with the artwork worn away from the centuries.

The opulence and greenery of Egypt is dramatically contrasted with the tent dwellings of Jacob, the desert, and the clothing of Joseph’s family and is very apparent in the scene where Jacob’s sons return to Canaan after buying grain: within the walls the city is colorful with green plants while outside the walls—the desert. This illustration also shows an Egyptian chariot carrying Joseph’s servant chasing after the brother’s caravan. A thought that until now had not entered my mind.

The narrative is the Biblical story of Joseph and will provide a good visual to the telling of the Bible lesson. A gem. LGR


224. Jonah (Biblical prophet); Bible stories—O.T. Unp. PS - Gr. 2. Quality—4 Acceptability—3

If this title gives you a moment’s pause, it should, since here Jonah gets swallowed by not one but two big fish, as in the Biblical account, but by two big fish. Until that point and after the author returns to the Biblical account.

Readers follow Jonah from his call to preach repentance in Nineveh, to his refusal and flight from the Lord, the storm at sea, being swallowed by the great fish where the text departs from the book of Jonah. This “great fish” is too cushy for Jonah to ponder his sin of defiance, so to allow Jonah time for reflection, a second larger fish swallows Jonah. Though that is inaccurate, the illustration is delightful: Jonah floats from one fish’s mouth into the waiting jaws of a larger, more fearsome fish. Inside the second fish Jonah has time to think, repent, and conclude that he will follow God’s command. Jonah’s effective preaching causes many inhabitants to repent which results in his disappointment and anger when the Lord forgives Nineveh and shows mercy by not destroying them. The story concludes with the lesson of the fig tree.

This is a beautifully illustrated, well-told account of the reluctant prophet, and except for the two fish could be recommended wholeheartedly. Illustrations capture the architecture of the Middle East while color tones vary with each illustration. The book design uses a variety of page layouts from double page spread to one illustration per page with some smaller illustrations set off by frames and arranged two-by-two at the upper portion of the page. These illustrations provide much detail and understanding of the Middle East. The illustration of Jonah fleeing the hand of God shows him against a night sky where the clouds form God’s hand and a crescent moon and star his eye. God’s arm and hand is mirrored by Jonah’s posture when running with his own arm and hand outstretched.

There is much to like in this volume. The catch is, of course, the two fish. The illustrations are worth the purchase price and you could discuss differences between the story and the Biblical account. Peter Spier’s The Book of Jonah is more Scripturally accurate, though for a slightly younger audience. LGR
acrylic panels which allow the reader to see inside a Roman Merchant Ship, a Chinese Junk, Bushnell’s Turtle (a one-man submarine) and Civil War “Davids” (submarines), and France’s Normandie luxury liner. Instruments used by mariners as well as crew members and customs are covered in the text.

Tim Wood explores *Houses & Homes* from Eskimo igloos and Romany caravans to skyscrapers and biospheres. Illustrations and text not only depict houses and homes around the world, but also examine how people in different societies have learned to live together in community. Cutaway illustrations allow the reader to view inside homes of early Egyptians to see how they were heated, did their cooking, and stored their foods. Four see through pages show Sargon’s Palace in Assyria, a peasant home of the Mayan civilization, the Chambord castle of the Loire Valley, and early weaver’s cottages of the Western world. Each book contains a table of contents, time line of key dates, short glossary and index. JD


High in the clouds on an Andes mountainside lives little boy Miguel with his mother and father. The others have moved to the distant cities. Now Miguel must make his Necklace of Stars and decide for himself where his heart abides.

Author and artist (as well as singer and songwriter), Veronika Charles went to the Andes to research *Necklace of Stars*. Combining her love of the Andes and their people, mythology, and history, Charles presents this intimate, dreamy tale about the deep realities of heart and home. The reproduction of her illustrations encourages us to touch and experience their deep textures, truthful colors, story telling qualities. Her verbal reproduction of the myth, the history that inspired it, and the growth of Miguel’s qualities. Her illustrations show characters that are Jewish, not European, which is a strength. The story is well-written and the illustrations attractive. LGR


Like the Native American people, the Africans have a grand tradition in storytelling. Like Jesus parables these stories are used to help those who hear learn lessons that they can remember for years to come. This is the folk tale of a very mean hyena. One day Fisi, the hyena, decided to play off of one of his mean tricks on Kamba the tortoise. To make the best of a bad situation, Kamba tells the animals to come and get “Coats, beautiful new coats.” Kamba gives the zebra his stripes and the leopard his spots. Soon Fisi is so jealous of the other animals’ new coats he goes back to Kamba. After the hyena puts the tortoise back on the ground, the tortoise proceeds to give the hyena a new coat with spots of sticky tree gum. But it began to itch and as Fisi rolled on the ground his coat became dirty and matted. Then he began to chew on it. To this day the hyena laughs at his coat and you will too. The moral of the story is “don’t play a trick on someone unless you want an even bigger trick played on you.”

Judy Sierra set the scene for the book with a group of children sitting in a circle listening to a story. Then as the story proceeds you see that Kamba the tortoise, although a victim, carries on the best he can without complaining or grumbling. Michael Bryant with a sketch style has splashed watercolor over the entire page. His illustrations draw you into the story and help to set the scene for the story. They make a very nice complimentary team. Fisi, the hyena truly looks scheming and wicked when he laughs.

This is a beautiful hardcover book. Folk tales are a wonderful teaching tool. This story doesn’t have the most inspiring moral at the end of the story, but it does still have value for the children to understand that being mean and playing tricks will have its consequences.


There was a man who had such a noisy house who couldn’t sleep. The bed creaked, the chair squeaked, and the roof leaked. So one day he went to a wise man for advice. The wise man told him to get a cow. The man thought it was silly but he did what the man said. Pretty soon he also had a donkey, a sheep, a dog, and a cat. Then the wise man said to throw all the animals out. The man did this and now he could sleep he had such a quiet house. The fun predicttable, repetitive story for kids.

The story of the ugly duckling is a familiar story to most readers. Eight ducklings hatch and seven are beautiful and yellow. One, however, looks strange and rather ugly. The poor duckling is teased and feels ugly and out of place—until one day he meets some swans. He finds out that he is not an ugly duckling at all—but a beautiful swan.

These books are part of the Viking Easy-to-Read Program Level 1. Harriet Ziefert has taken these familiar stories and recreated them into short, simple sentences with word repetition to help children who are just beginning to read. Children will enjoy being able to read this familiar story for themselves. Emily Bolam has used simple, yet bold, illustrations. The illustrations also help the reader to be able to follow the story. They have created a good combination of words and pictures that will help each child be a success as they learn to read. These books are a nice, convenient size in hardback form that will stand up to the heavy use they will receive.

**Necklace of Stars** - 0670872903, HBB, $19.99.

**The Mean Hyena** - 0525675108, HBB, $15.99.

**The Cow in the House** - 0670867799, HBB, $11.99.


Dive in and take a swim into the wonderful world of Science with David Rubble’s science encyclopedia. From astronomy to physics and chemistry, this elementary encyclopedia covers most topics that might be of interest to the young scientist.

Carefully chosen variations on bright colors are used throughout the book in drawings, charts and graphs, and are intermixed with color and black and white photos. This illustration technique makes every
subject seem exciting and new, and will make kids want to study science.

Topics are covered briefly, in a clear, concise form, and alphabetized like a dictionary for easy reference. This makes the book easy to use as a tool for finding a topic for further research, but if you are looking for detail, you won’t find it here.

The encyclopedia has an entire section devoted to presenting the theory of evolution as fact; many of the other sections are also based on this theory.

The encyclopedia contains a section on human reproduction, which is illustrated with a drawing of a woman’s reproductive organs.

The quality of the book’s binding is disappointing. After only a few times of flipping through the tit, its pages were bubbling and coming loose. VGS


In a 32 page, library bound book Jim Bailey tells how spiders make their webs. Colorful photographs accompany the text on each page as a spider completes its web and catches its prey. This Benchmark Book is from the Nature’s Mysteries series. Other titles in the series include How Bats “See” in the Dark, How Bees Make Honey, How Birds Fly, How Fish Swim, and How Plants Grow.

With a table of contents, index, glossary, and bibliography for further reading, the information about spiders is very usable for reports, sharing, or just for satisfying the desire to want to know.

The durable binding makes this a good choice for the non-fiction section of any library. The beginning reader and advanced reader both will benefit from this well-organized book. MK


Award winning author Jennifer Owings Dewey interlaces scientific facts of arthropods with her own childhood encounters with these unique animals. Stories of bedbug bites, a science teacher ingesting an earthworm, scintillating fireflies, yearning for a unit study on arthropods. DBW


Captured in photographs, One Day at a Time takes us into the world of Hanna and Frederick and their families, their health care, their lives. These young children are leukemia patients and Thomas Bergman conveys their positive attitude toward life and their fighting spirits to regain good health. Though often touching, the photos are not melancholy and give children and adults a realistic view into the life of a young leukemia patient.

Also included in this informative book, part of the Don’t Turn Away series for young people, is a glossary, an index, lists of books and organizations that deal with leukemia specifically and cancer in general, and a question-answer section with suggested projects. This book shows the young reader that illness should not cause fear, separation and embarrassment but rather it can bring out the best in each of us and cause us to share our lives. This book would be a positive children’s selection in any school or public library. CC


As the United States prepares to commemorate thirty years since the landing of the astronauts on the moon, Anastasia Suen describes in simplified text the mission for the very young reader. The simplification loses nothing in the telling of the terms Mission Control, Houston, Eagle, Apollo, and Saturn are all there, as are the famous words upon landing on the moon and those uttered by Armstrong as he stepped upon this satellite of earth.

For the very young child interested in rockets and space the colorful illustrations by Benrei Huang will be a great introduction to the world of space travel. The author’s note at the end of the story tells what she was doing the day the astronauts landed on the moon and an interesting fact about their now famous quotation. She has also included an illustration of the plaque left on the moon. JD


Harvest takes place all through the year in the United States. Every month food is produced in all our fifty states. Harvest is a year-round season in America. There are carrots and pineapples in January, strawberries and salmon in April, watermelon and peas in July and shrimp and pecans in December. Each month produces a new food in a new part of the country.

Chris Peterson has created very clear and concise text. Each month has a map to accompany the text that show the area of the United States each new food comes from. Children will learn about the foods they eat and also learn the geography of our country. Each month also has brilliant, colorful photos by Alvis Upitis. Many of the photos contain children sampling the delicious foods. Also included in the photos are fields and orchards of each crop and many times the equipment used to harvest.

This is a beautiful hardcover picture book that has great value in teaching about foods. Children can learn where their food comes from before it gets to the grocery store. They can also learn about harvest, technology and seasons. Children and adults alike, will love this book! MS


The I Want To Be series published by Harcourt Brace & Company consists of the three titles above, plus I Want To Be a Dancer.

All three of the reviewed titles follow a common format. They all are profusely illustrated, mostly in color, with some historical illustrations in black and white. The illustrations are well chosen, up-to-date, and are nicely integrated with the forty-six pages of text.

Each title shows actual professionals at work; each title shows students of various ages engaging in activities which might lead to careers in the profession; each title details the history of the profession and highlights the career of some of that professions foremost practitioners. Dr. James Herriot is listed among the famous veterinarians along with Dr. Daniel E. Salmon, the discoverer of Salmonella.

These titles make a point of showing a diverse group of professionals including representatives of various

736. Origami; Object lessons—Christianity. 48 p. PS - Gr. 3.
Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Biblical principles are combined with the Japanese art of paper folding in Object Lessons with Origami by Geneva Cobb Lijima. Each of the twenty simple stories illustrate a Bible verse and fall into either the category of Christian character, sermon on the mount or the Christian life. The accompanying origami instructions literally bring each story to life. For example, one scripture verse is Ephesians 6:17, “Accept God’s salvation to be your helmet”. Making a wearable paper helmet is then the origami project for the story. Origami instructions are clear and illustrations invaluable. Helpful information about paper type and a glossary of terms will insure that even those with all thumbs can succeed. Each story has a materials list with suggestions for even paper color. Short entertaining stories will capture the attention of even preschool children, although they will need help with the paper folding. Older elementary age children will delight in seeing their creation emerge from the square of paper. EC


743. Drawing—Technique; Automobiles in art. 63 p.
Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Drawing is a skill anyone can use, and it is one that can be learned. Sometimes, however, teaching methods are not geared toward personal interests. That’s what makes a drawing series by Peel Productions, which includes Draw Sports Figures, by Damon Reinagle, and Draw Cars by Doug DuBosque, such a perfect tool to motivate young people to try their hand at art.

Draw Sports Figures presents a large cross section of sports in an easy to follow figure drawing manual. The uncomplicated sketches and clear instructions make the process of drawing athletes seem simple, and there are fun sports facts and trivia questions included to make the book even more interactive.

This same format is used in Draw Cars, which includes a gallery of “weird” cars that have been manufactured. Also included is an informative section on tools and tricks that can be used to achieve more professional results.

These books are not only fun to look at and read, they make learning to draw seem like an accessible achievement even for the most inexperienced artist.

One drawback to this type of drawing manual is that individual creativity is limited; however, basic drawing skills are taught which can be applied to any drawing situation.

Listed on the last page are more books in the series, as well as an address to write for a catalogue, and an Internet address where more titles can be found. VGS


885. Short stories; American poetry; Children’s poetry; Handicrafts; Cookery. 76 p. Gr. 2 - 6.
Quality—5 Acceptability—4

Artist Sarah Pooley gathered stories and poems from around the world and compiled them in an attractive
There was an old woman who lived in a shoe and her children were six winsome puppies. How about the wonderful yellow ducklings who sail off as rub-a-dub-dub three men in a tub? Jack be nimble, Jack be quick and Joey Kangaroo jumps over a candlestick.

From Mother Hubbard’s Old English Sheep Puppy to Little Bo Peep’s Lamb (including his tail), *Twinkle, Twinkle* presents sixteen Mother Goose verses illustrated with happy animal babies. Photographer, painter, animal lover and Mother Goose devotee, Australian magazine illustrator Bobbi Fabian combines her talents and loves to present this delightful version of a family classic.

Fabian painted each background, added the live animal and waited for a propitious moment to photograph the winsome result. The words dance the individual pattern of the rhyme: rock-a-bye baby rocks across the page; goosey, goosey, gander wanders around. This is a book that begs for group reading. The pages are strong - the binding holds together through various handlings. It is big enough to hold up in front of a group or spread across two laps. Children will enjoy drawing their own versions of the well defined animal subjects.


★

**In the Swim**, a collection of twenty-one humorous poems, introduces the reader, through sight and sound, to an aquarium of delightful adventures. The variety is unlimited as Douglas Florian, with watercolor and picturesque words, portrays an unmannerly piranhas; flatish, mattish flounder; ugly blenny; cramped crab; rainbow trout and many other sea creatures.

Experience this under-sea trip by swimming with the expressive words and flowing colors from page to page. This ideal read-aloud book, with its light hearted humor, must be savored over and over again.

As an added benefit to the enjoyment will be the information about the habits and characteristics of the many under-water creatures.


**Rebus Riot** contains a collection of verses that uses pictures in place of some of the words. Perfect for parents to read with small children or older readers to enjoy on their own, the rhyme puzzles are sure to please. Excellent illustrations add to the fun as well as the small picture keys with words to be matched with the picture in each rhyme.

This is definitely a book to be read aloud to enjoy the sounds as well as the sights. The word solutions are given at the back of the book. Perfect pals, Crazy Daisy, Fishy Business, Heebie-Jeebies, The Tail End, and others; fifteen rebus with picture clues to be solved by you.


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**Prairie Born** is a light-hearted sampling of other cultures. Like most legends and fairy tales, these


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★


★


Quality—4 Acceptability—5

In Once Upon Ice, frozen water creates illusions across a wintry landscape, and those illusions invite the viewer to move beyond the known world into the world of imagination. Ordinary ice becomes an icoseaur, a trapped leaf becomes a button for a cold cape, and jagged ice becomes a river’s necklace, but that’s only the beginning!

Photographs by Jason Stemple were the inspiration for twenty-two new poems by Jane Yolen and other selected authors. Writers were invited to view Stemple’s photos and create a poem about what they saw, and the result is delightful! The poems are as varied in style as they are in meaning, and yet are short and sweet; just the way children like them.

While the photographs themselves are simple and uncluttered, the words they inspire are penetrating. These poems are a tribute to the intricacy and complexity of the human mind, which never fails to reveal it’s creative powers when faced with a challenge.

Once Upon Ice is exciting to read, but the editing choices for the photographs makes them seem flat and washed out in comparison. It is difficult to tell what the original photographs may have looked like, so some of the book’s potential charm is lost. Still, Once Upon Ice should inspire many creative endeavors among budding poets of all ages. VGS

Chickie Riddles by Katy Hall and Lisa Eisenberg contains forty pages of puns and riddles about chickens. If you have always wanted to know which side of a chicken has the most feathers, where chickens go to dance, or why chickens lay eggs, this is the book for you! Chickie Riddles is full of funny misinformation—the kind that delights young readers and motivates them to read to any available listener. Each riddle is accompanied by a silly, colorful picture drawn by Thor Wickstrom. PSM


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

William Shakespeare’s MacBeth as retold by Bruce Coville is the time-honored tale of intrigue: MacBeth and Lady MacBeth and their ambitions for the throne of Scotland, the elimination of those who stood in their way, the terrible price exacted for such folly. This version takes a little different slant on the classic drama. The author employs prose rather than poetry, while keeping the famous quotations intact and in familiar surroundings.

The narrative leaps from mountain peak to mountain peak, hardly pausing for a breath. The characters wear either black or white hats; one has no problem sorting out the villain, the victim, the victor.

Gary Kelles’ illustrations are filled with portent, awash with somber tones as if mourning the predicted and actual disaster. Coville’s offering is an ideal introduction to the Bard, high interest with a syllable comfort for the older “limited” reader. SAH


811.54  Growth—Poetry; Afro-Americans—Poetry; Children—Poetry. Usp. Gr. 1 - 4.
Quality—4 Acceptability—5

In a delightful book of poems, It’s Raining Laughter, Nikki Grimes presents us with infectious joy. She takes emotional characteristics that could be a “minus” and, with broad strokes, reverses them into a definite plus.

First person voice is used, encouraging instant identification with the reading audience. The photos by Myles C. Pinkney show ordinary children doing ordinary things, running, giggling with a friend, looking through a fence—ordinary, yet quite extraordinary in composition and clarity.

The book is a good read for children of all races, although Mr. Pinkney shows us just people of color. SAH


Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Geography Wizardry for Kids by Margaret Kendra and Phyllis S. Williams is a compendium of projects, games, crafts and experiments calculated to entertain and teach geography at the same time. Within its 332 pages kids will find out how to make a flat map of a round world, concoct a “fountain of youth drink”, and see how Eratosthenes measured the earth in 283 B.C. They will also learn why Gerardus Mercator was originally named Gerhard Kremer, and they can have lunch with Captain Cook (or take a whippin). Most activities are described in about one to three pages. Each one give some narrative background information, a list of supplies, and a numbered sequence of instructions. Activities are grouped in chapters such as “Find the Crossroads and Addresses of the World” or “Design Your Own Creative Maps”. Some of the activities are relatively simple; some are quite ambitious. Any time adult supervision is required it is noted in the text with a different colored typeface. Some planning ahead will be necessary as supplies such as disposable aluminum baking pans, plastic overlays, and plaster of Paris may not be readily on hand.

The book is a softcover with a “perfect” binding and large blue typeface Headers and illustrations are found on every page and are printed in dark red. All the illustrations are drawings. Strangely, for a book about geography there are no real maps.

There is an index and glossary at the end of the book. It might have been helpful to categorize the index so that crafts, experiments, recipes, games, etc. were separately accessible. Upon reading the front cover blur, which alluded to projects, games, crafts, and experiments, to my six year old, he immediately wanted to do a craft. It was not easy to pick out one out using the index.

The material appears to be quite up to date; there is a section which mentions recent geographic name changes due to politics and newer forms of transmigration. For example, Eskimos are referred to as Inuit and Kiev is now Kyiv. Included in a list of suggestions to parents at the beginning of the book is the injunction to use the Internet and a web address for the Hong Kong Standard newspaper is provided. DWR


917.8  Lewis, Meriwether, 1774-1809—Fiction; Clark, William, 1770-1838—Fiction; Explorers—Fiction; Endurance (Character quality)—Fiction. 1 vol., 45 p., activity book , character book, map, misc.


My American Journey is a package deal that home schoolers will find especially helpful. From East to West with Lewis and Clark is the first in this new series. Five kits are complete and author, Deborah Hedstrom and the publishers plan to have fifteen kits in all. The kit contains a hardback book with a full color two-page-spread picture on the end papers. More full-page art, depicting Lewis and Clark’s journey, is used throughout the book. The book is true to life with the addition of an fictional character from whose point of view the story is told.

An Activity Book includes such topics as Tracking, by identifying animal foot prints, Map Making, Checking Plants, Using Weapons, and Avoiding Danger. Another workbook emphasizes character building. The theme for this kit is Endurance. Each chapter is reviewed and then Scripture verses are quoted reinforcing what the Bible has to say about endurance.

Four other additions complete the kit: A map of Lewis and Clark’s journey, a journal with actual entries from 1806 and 1807, and four collectors cards. The cards for this kit are Thomas Jefferson, a Grizzly Bear, Sacajawea, and Lewis and Clark.
From Colonies to Country with George Washington is told from the viewpoint of fictional Ben Johnston, a lad of sixteen, hired as an assistant to Washington. This book also has full-page art.

There is an activity book and the character building book deals with leadership. The four complements to the kit are: a Manual Exercise of the foot guards (a reproduction of an 18th century book of drilling exercises), a parchment copy of the Declaration of Independence, a Masked letter (coded message sent from British Commander, General Henry Clinton to General Burgoyne) and the collectors cards.

Each set comes in a sturdy box, labeled, My American Journey an exciting new interactive adventure in history. MPC


From the early Native American tribes of the northern reaches of the Mississippi to the floods of 1993 on the river plain, everything you’ve ever wanted to know about the Mississippi River is at least touched upon in this eye catching volume. Informative illustrations and striking photographs help tell the story of the Mississippi, its people, industry, history, animal life, problems, and future. Formatted in wide, two-column style with short easily noted and read text, and richly illustrated, the volume invites browsing and research. It includes a one page glossary of terms followed by an index.

Each title in this series is of similar style and scope. Volumes are bound in sturdy cloth library bindings. An excellent choice for the elementary library. JD


Keeping Them In Stitches: The Life-Story of Keeping Them All In


Happiness Under the Indian Trees is the life story of Catherine DeVol, daughter of Dr. Isabella and Dr. George DeVol, missionaries to China. Catherine was born in China and at age six went to the Kuling Boarding School.

By the time Catherine is thirteen her father has died and her mother becomes very ill. Because of the illness, Catherine, her two brothers, and mother return to the States. Catherine’s plans to return to China someday as a doctor end when she begins having eye trouble in college. With her dreams of returning to China shattered, Catherine marries and settles in the U.S. But God has other plans for her, and her husband, Everett. Reliance on God, is the theme and deciding “What does God want me to do?” propels the story.

Keeping Them In Stitches: The Life-Story of Keeping Them All In

Geraldine Custer, thirty-five year missionary to Burundi, Africa, begins her life very simply in Colorado Springs, Colorado. When she is thirteen, a missionary visits her small church and Gerry decides that is what she will be. Nothing deters Gerry from her goal, and after years of school and training she is finally in Africa. Loving and serving the people of Kibimba, Gerry’s life is filled with adventure and laughter.

Eighth in a series of real life missionary biographies by Betty M. Hockett, simply written, this relatively short book makes for an easy read. Chapters are short enough that an adult could read Keeping Them All In Stitches to a child over the course of several days. A gentle, pleasant story that will hold most children’s Examples include, ‘he felt sad,’ ‘he felt happy,’ ‘he felt afraid,’ ‘they felt blessed.’ Yet, the message is important and the Life Story Series provides information otherwise unavailable to children.

Maps, illustrations, and photographs are scattered throughout the books. These visual aids are bright spots in the books. Betty M. Hockett writes Christian education curriculum and children’s stories. JMH
In 1955, Vern and Lois Ellis were called by the Friends Mission board to work with the Navajos at Rough Rock, Arizona. Mud on Their Wheels tells how Vern, Lois, and their five children moved from Nebraska and began a thirty year mission with the Navajo. This is a story of love and dedication shown through service. A lesson in obedience for Christians of all ages. Anna Nixon tried to do what she felt the Lord was calling her to do. As a result, Anna was protected in dangerous situations and a blessing to many.


921. (266). Missions—Biography; Ellis, Vern, Ellis, Lois. 76 p. Gr. 3 - Adult.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5


Quality—5 Acceptability—5


921 (803). Asch, Frank; Authors, American; Illustrators. 32 p.


921 (803). Authors, American; McKissack, Pat, 1944-; Afro-Americans—Biography; Women—Biography. 32 p.


921 (803). Authors, American; Pringle, Laurence P.; Natural history—Authorship; Authors, American—20th century—Biography; Children's literature—Authorship. 32 p. Gr. 1 - 5.

Quality—3 Acceptability—5

For the student, future author, or teacher who wants to know more about their favorite authors, the Meet the Author Series is a great way to begin. Each book is written by the author presented and tells events of their lives which led them into authoring and illustrating books, how they go about finding and developing their ideas, and what they like to do in their “real” lives. Illustrations and color photographs of the author's work as well as of the author in action, keep the reader's attention focused on the personality of the author. The easy to read text and short paragraph format will appeal to the young or immature reader without detracting from the “meat” of the text. Each book contains a bibliography of other books by the author and also a color photograph and biographic paragraph about the illustrator for the book. This series will be invaluable for teachers of writing who want to inspire their students to go beyond writing a story for a class assignment to pursuing a career in writing.

Young Adult Fiction Reviews, cont. from p.52.

F. Teacher—Fiction; Identity—Fiction; Animals—Fiction; Supernatural—Fiction. 134 p. Gr. 6 - 9.

Quality—4      Acceptability—4

This fantasy is a coming-of-age story told with a twist. It would seem that the entire town has gone through the gate when graduating from grade school. “Going through the gate” is a rite of passage, and no adult seems to want to discuss it in depth, making only guarded statements about it when asked. The parents of this year’s graduates have the utmost trust in the teacher, Miss Clough, who has been there forever.

The children are introduced chapter by chapter on the morning of the day when they, too, will be “going through the gate.” Some are fearful, some very desirous of going, while others are skeptical; but all choose which bird or animal they want to become and all meet at school where their aged teacher gives them final instructions about the experience and reminds them they should leave something of themselves behind so that they can return. She will wait for them, and if they have difficulty returning, she will help them. This will be her last group, and the reader senses more than the children that because of the teacher’s age there may be problems. And there are.

The children’s thoughts on this milestone event, the teacher’s story of coming to the town, and the changes that happen to people who have successfully gone through the gate unfold with this well-written story, but questions linger after one finishes it. Why were the parents so ready to let their children experience a dangerous “morphing” when they all knew what had happened years ago? Though the children change and grow through this experience, why did they have to take on the shape of other creatures? How were other people changed by this, as only hints are given? Not a very satisfying read even though well-written by author Janet Anderson. LGR


F. Mystery fiction; Camps—Fiction; Wilderness areas—Fiction; Babysitting—Fiction. 157 p. Gr. 4 - 7.

Quality—5      Acceptability—5

Stevie Diamond and her pal Jesse Kuhiki are twelve-year-old detectives. A week at a tree-planting camp where Stevie’s dad is in charge sounds like great fun until they realize five-year-old Alexander expects to tag along with them. Upon learning a smuggler is in the camp, they throw themselves into solving the case. Thinking they have nabbed their man by locking him in an outhouse, they discover they have made a dangerous mistake. The real criminal reveals himself, informing them that the man locked in the outhouse is an undercover cop.

**How Can I Be a Detective If I Have to Babysit?** is a great whodunit-type mystery. The young detectives make a list of the suspects and search for clues that will tell them which tree planter is really Rubberface Ragnall in disguise. The book has action, but no violence. Linda Bailey creates believable situations and characters, putting it all together for an enjoyable mystery. CSJ


F. Christian fiction; Mystery Fiction; Caves—Fiction; Indians of North America—Fiction; Camping—Fiction. 128 p. Gr. 3 - 8.

Quality—4      Acceptability—5


F. Christian fiction; Mystery Fiction; Stealing—Fiction; Inner cities—Fiction. 128 p. Gr. 3 - 8.

Quality—4      Acceptability—4

Camp Friendly Waters will never be the same after Rebecca, Julie, and Emily discover the hidden Indian cave. While racing back to camp to beat their rival tent; the girls spot a hole and begin to investigate. By digging around the hole, they reveal a large cavern underneath; letting their curiosity get the better of them, all three girls fall into the cave as the ground breaks loose. Finding themselves underground with no way to escape brings panic to all three; suddenly a voice is heard above, and a rope is lowered to pull them to freedom. Mary Little dove, whose family owns the camp, explains more about the cave, only to disappear suddenly along with all the evidence the Home School Detectives had of their adventure in the cave.

No one believes the girls’ story about the cave because when they return to show it to their camp leaders, the hole is gone. The question is: who would do this and why? Before the girls have the opportunity to solve the Mystery of the Vanishing Cave, bad things start happening to the campers. Rebecca becomes the target of racial slurs and is branded a liar. The girls realize the answers they seek lie with the elusive Mary Little dove.

**The Mystery at the Broken Bridge** begins with an act of good will. Josh and his friends are helping to clean up a run-down neighborhood tenement. While they are cleaning, Josh’s new basketball is stolen, along with a tenant’s purse. Josh is accused of the theft when the woman’s purse is found in his van. Embarrassed by the event, he decides to find out who stole the purse and to unravel the other puzzling occurrences at the apartment building. Learning painful lessons of not jumping to conclusions, Josh feels all the more inclined to locate the thief and clear his own name. The Home School Detectives take off to a wooded area to meet with an unknown person, rescue a friend from a burning building, and discover the real plot behind the strange events.

The Home School Detectives series mixes fun and learning with adventure. Kids will enjoy learning about friendship and experiencing the growing pains the characters in each story go through. Author John Bibee tells each story with a realistic edge and the narrative rings true as the boys and girls hash out their feelings and thoughts with one another and God. MH


F. Frontier and pioneer life—West (U.S.)—Fiction; West (U.S.)—Fiction; Chinese Americans—Fiction; Fathers and sons—Fiction. 143 p. Gr. 4 - 8.

Quality—4      Acceptability—4

Renny is the son of an Irish miner who lives in Miner’s Chance in the Rocky Mountains. Instead of being outgoing and tough like his father, who is always ready for a fight, Renny would rather have peace. He feels deeply his dad’s disappointment in not having a son more like himself, yet his nature is such that he would rather help than hurt someone.

To complicate matters, a Chinese family moves into their camp and Renny finds himself befriending Wong Gum Zi. The rest of the miners are determined to run the Chinese family out of their camp by any means possible, and Renny finds himself in a race to protect Wong’s family. Renny is torn in two directions—he knows how his father feels, and does not want to stir up more wrath upon his own head, and yet he is not able to sit still and see no one stand up for the Chinese family. He finds an unexpected friend in the priest who is even willing to go to jail to protect Wong’s family. Things come to a climax when the class bully sets fire to the Chinese family’s stable, endangering the entire camp. Renny’s father realizes that prejudice is
Teen Advisory Councils

Young people are often in the news these days, and the stories are seldom positive. It seems that one of the hallmarks of youth is a profound intensity, coupled with boundless energy; if not properly channeled, this combination can become destructive.

At the same time, we have librarians bemoaning the fact that the resources and services provided for this user group are often unappreciated and under-utilized. Enter the teen advisory council.

According to Gisela Konopka, author of The Adolescent Girl in Conflict, a number of conditions are necessary for the "healthy development of young people . . . they require the opportunity:

- to participate . . . as responsible members of society
- to gain experience in decision-making
- to interact with peers and acquire a sense of belonging
- to discuss conflicting values and formulate their own value system . . ."

A well-organized teen council is an ideal setting for the presentation and realization of these opportunities.

Although the teen council is generally regarded as a public library concept, it can easily be adapted for the school or church library. The basic objective is to involve youth in planning (and perhaps implementing) services, programs, and collection development geared to the needs and interests of their age group. The council should be granted as much autonomy as possible, but should also be furnished with the guidance and assistance of a youth services librarian or other interested adults.

Teen councils run the gamut; some groups meet only a few times each year to publish a modest newsletter, set up displays, or provide input regarding the library’s YA collection. Others are more active.

Barbara Williams, manager of the Youth Services Division at the Central Library of the Queens Borough Public Library, found that "young adults often do not use the library for its intended purpose." Determined to provide opportunities for growth for this group, Williams devised the "Tapping Teen Talent" program, designed to teach young people to plan, implement, and evaluate programs for their peers and younger children. She hoped that this program would encourage teens to "explore the library as a life resource in building self-esteem, and the development of talents." The program was a great success. Williams found that participants had a genuine desire and ability - to make a valuable contribution.

The fact that libraries and youth are a winning combination is also evident on the Internet. Several teen councils post their newsletters and book reviews on their own Web sites.

The Young Adult Advisory Board of the Boulder Public Library can be found at http://128.138.129.27/library/bpl/yaab/ . A healthy sense of humor is flourishing here, as is a generous application of youthful energy to the library's programs and services. One member puts it this way: "Our purposes are to promote usage and understanding of the library, to prove to adults and teens alike that teens are capable of changing the world, and to have fun while doing it."

An informative newsletter, published by the teen advisory council of the Sparta Free Library is posted at http://host/lp.centuryinter.net/spartalib/newsstr.htm

This council sponsors a book group, previews new YA titles, and in December, got together to make Christmas gifts for a local nursing home.

A newsletter featuring book reviews and recipes from the teen advisory council of the St. Petersburg Public Library is available at http://snoopy.tlbc.lib.fl.us/sppl/tac1195.htm

At the Chicago Public Library, a new Teen Study Center opened recently. Information about this, and about the resident teen advisory council, can be found at


The homepage of Richmond Public Library's teen council provides links to "teen resources" and information about this library's award-winning writing contest for young people.
http://www.rpl.richmond.bc.ca/teen/voice/council/

A teen council serves as a forum for an important user group, allows librarians to have a positive impact on tomorrow's leaders, and brings library resources to the attention of some who might not always see the great potential residing on our shelves. At the same time, it provides young people with opportunities to develop talents and skills that will serve them well into the future. And, as one teen council member noted, "It looks great on a resume!"

Works Cited


This novel, *I'm Off to Montana for the Throw the Hoolihan*, is the sixth in The Code of the West Series. Tapadera (Tap) Andrews and his pregnant wife, Pepper, travel to their new ranch in Montana. Accompanying them is their young charge, Angelita, whose mother is dead. Both Tap and Pepper have lived unsavory lives in the past but are deeply in love and looking forward to a new future and a family.

Adventure seems to follow Tap wherever he goes, and settling on his new ranch is not as easy as it seems. To add to Tap’s difficult adjustment, he is trying to apply his newfound Christianity to his dealings with coworkers and enemies. For example, he tries to remember to ask God’s guidance in dealing with unscrupulous and murderous neighbors who try to run him off his ranch.

Stephen Bly’s western is populated with a variety of interesting characters, such as his loyal ranch hands, a neighboring Mormon family, bank robbers, and friendly Indians. It is a sweet story about a family very fond of each other, having to make moral decisions in a sometimes immoral and rough wild West. Laced with humor and affectionate interaction between family members, this is a gentle, fast-paced tale, which should be appealing to most readers. BGT


F. World War, 1939-1945—Fiction; Dogs—War use—Fiction.

Quality—4 Acceptability—4

Jet is a black Labrador Retriever who is first owned by Fred Parry. Jet is well-trained in the art of poaching animals, and he can communicate with them just fine. However, a handful of scarlet feathers changes his perspective. Smugglers are using his lake as a base to improve his verbal skills. Without speech therapy, he has to go to speech therapy. Come back to this world. Put your hearing aid back on.”

Nick’s mission is to spend the summer analyzing the lake and studying the wildlife. His mother’s mission is to improve his verbal skills. Without speech therapy, he will have to attend a school for the deaf in the fall. Nick doesn’t care. He much prefers the company of animals, and he can communicate with them just fine. However, a handful of scarlet feathers changes his perspective. Smugglers are using his lake as a base to breed scarlet macaws. His only chance of escaping depends on communicating with a Mexican emigrant who speaks Spanish. The lives of the rare birds depend on his getting help quickly. His love for animals teaches him to appreciate his connection with people.

Claire Blatchford draws on personal experience to portray her protagonist’s frustrations. She also is deaf. This unique perspective strengthens the realism of her characters’ motives and actions. Nonverbal communication and intuition play an important role in a mystery that pits a single mother and deaf child against dangerous international criminals. *Nick’s Mission* encourages inter-dependent relationships and environmental responsibility. Some crude slang is occasionally used by the characters. MT


F. Western fiction. 188 p. Gr. 9 - Adult.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

War Dog is written in the third person and is a fast-paced story full of action. Within the story, many facts are provided relating to World War II from the English point of view. This book will appeal especially to boys and dog lovers. *War Dog* is a heart-warming story that will remain with the reader and prove to be a great resource for a study of World War II. It may also be used in an adult education class for those learning to read, as the words used are fairly simple in context. DAW


F. Hockey—Fiction; Steroids—Fiction.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

A girl playing professional hockey—who ever heard of such a thing? Lauren Cross tries out for the Spokane Chiefs; her position is goal tender. Joseph Larkin has been the Chief’s goal tender for several seasons. Because his preacher father put church before family and was in jail for embezzling, Joseph has built a wall of anger around himself. Can Joseph tear down that wall, at least enough to help Lauren, who was framed in a steroid use scandal and kicked off the team? Lauren helps Joseph by sharing with him what her mother, a psychologist, has discovered—that Jesus can help those in pain. While neither Lauren or Joseph makes a commitment to Christ, the book ends with Joseph contemplating reconciliation with his father.

The book opens with a helpful diagram of the playing field and a list of hockey terms. The reader does not have to be a hockey fan in order to enjoy Chief Honor. Sigmund Brouwer’s book is a well-written mystery that will interest sports fans of all ages, but especially those in the middle school age group. JM


F. Adolescence—Fiction; Runaway teenagers—Fiction.

Quality—4 Acceptability—4

Thirteen-year-old Willie Bishop has it better than he knows. Life is pretty great living with his sister Nellie and her husband Jeff, but the couple’s obvious love for each other leaves Willie feeling left out and angry. Still, he can’t fault either of them. Both Jeff and Nellie do their best to give him a loving, safe haven. But Willie wants more. He sets out on his own to become part of a traveling side show and meets up with a lying, cunning man named Doc Granger.

Willie quickly sees that the traveling life is more work and less excitement than he once imagined. Willie befriends Blanche, the owner’s daughter, and another young man from the show. Together they learn about growing up and being loyal to their friends. Willie continues to search for something he excels at to prove he is a man. When his chance comes to impress a bar full of men with his courage, he can’t resist. Thus, Willie catches the eye of Abe, the show’s rattlesnake handler, and they eventually work together. Willie’s travels take him far from home only to lead him back again, hopefully wiser and more mature.

Author Clara Clark makes *Willie and the Rattlesnake King* come to life with her vivid representations of the little things in life. She paints the picture of the seedy life of traveling shows by describing the barroom brawls, the unwelcome sexual attention from coarse onlookers, and the overt lying and thievery amongst the showmen themselves. Hopefully, young readers can read this book without glamorizing Willie’s obvious mistakes and can learn from his poor choices. It is a good historical novel complete with the good,
Mattie loves horses. In fact her whole world is wrapped up in competing in horse shows. Her dream is to one day own a horse of her own. Then tragedy strikes in a freak automobile accident that leaves Mattie with a fractured leg. After six weeks of being in traction, Mattie thinks that the worst is over only to discover that her one foot won’t move due to some paralysis. She masters getting around on crutches so she can be released to go home. Then her doctor breaks the news. Mattie will need continued therapy three times a week because the nerves are affected. She is scared. Will her nerves ever heal up where she can walk without help?

Mattie goes home but soon realizes that things are different from before. The kids at school don’t seem to understand what Mattie faces. She even fights with her best friend. All her exercising still doesn’t bring the desired results. The final word from the doctor is no riding for at least a year. Mattie feels like her world has caved in on her. She takes down everything in her room that reminds her of horses and refuses to go back to the riding stable. When school is out for the summer, Mattie mopes around feeling lost. At last she gives in and goes to a horse show. She is back in the world of horses again and jumps at a chance to become a stable hand. Then Mattie finds out about a racing horse that is about to be sold to an auction because it has a crippling disease. When Mattie sees Whisper she falls in love with the mare and becomes determined to save her. Her parents agree to buy Whisper if Mattie has a crippling disease. When Mattie sees Whisper she is overwhelmed by what she sees. Mattie is determined to be the one to ride and exercise Whisper and saddles her up for a trial run. All her exercising pays off. Mattie is back in her world of horse riding.

Mattie’s Whisper is a heart-warming story told in the third person about a girl who doesn’t let adversity get her down. Mattie’s feelings are realistically portrayed as she struggles to become again the girl she was before the accident. Mattie emerges a stronger person for all that she goes through. This book had special meaning for my son who went through knee surgery recently that didn’t turn out as expected. It is something all youngsters can identify with as they face their own life with or without physical difficulties. A good resource for a younger facing hard times. DAW


F. Vikings—Fiction; Time travel—Fiction; Brothers—Fiction. 134 p. Gr. 5 - 8.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

When Ben and David, two brothers exploring the woods near their Michigan home, come across an ancient Viking dagger, they suddenly find themselves mysteriously transported back in time to tenth century Norway. From there, they find themselves caught up in a Viking quest to avenge an enemy attack and rescue kidnapped family members. The adventure carries them across the North Sea to Scotland, and then southward through Gibraltar to the Mediterranean Sea and Africa.

Scarlett Foster, a fifth grade teacher, uses her interest in medieval history to weave a fast-paced adventure story meant to capture the interest of young scholars and introduce them to historical accounts. In this book, one learns much about the Viking culture, as well as about castles and keeps of old Britain, and the busy multi-cultural world of ancient Cairo where Europeans, Moors, and Arabs come together.

**The Secret of the Viking Dagger, by Scarlett Ryan Foster.** The book’s main strength is its adventure and its wonderful wealth of historical knowledge, written simply for elementary and middle school readers. It contains a glossary for the terms and times set in the story, a bibliography for further study, and a list of suggested activities that a teacher or a parent could use to enhance a study of the Vikings. GCH


F. Laotian Americans—Fiction; Prejudices—Fiction; Schools—Fiction; Cousins—Fiction. 156 p. Gr. 5 - 9.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Vatsana, who was born of Laotian parents in the United States, feels American. Her parents want their children to acknowledge and retain their former country’s language and customs. When Vatsana’s cousin and aunt come to Portland to live with their family, she sees how much she is needed by her cousin to interpret, to share her bedroom, and to introduce her to her friends. Though she is courteous and kind to her cousin, she is also resentful at times.

To add to Vatsana’s troubles, there is a brutal, prejudiced boy in one of her classes who calls her names and harasses her. Vatsana is an excellent student and the boy scoffingly calls her “Teacher’s Pet” and “Chink.”

**Vatsana’s Lucky New Year, by Sara Gogol.** Author Sara Gogol is well-qualified to write on the subject, as she lives in Portland and has taught English as a Second Language to students from many different countries.

**Vatsana’s Lucky New Year teaches how harmful, hurtful, and unreasonable prejudice is.** Another lesson gleaned from the tale of Vatsana is that ignoring a problem can only be effective for so long. Sometimes anger can act as a catalyst to force one to confront one’s tormentor with the insensitivity of their actions and words. This loving, supportive family is the basis for sensible, well-adjusted children. The importance of allowing children to make their own decisions is another good feature in this story. BGT


F. Alaska—Fiction; Indians of North America—Fiction. 84 p. Gr. 6 - 10.

Quality—5 Acceptability—4

**The Way of Our People, by Arnold A. Griese.** In The Way of Our People, by Arnold A. Griese, Kano, a young Athabaskan Indian boy, has a secret. He is afraid of all the things a great hunter must face. Somehow he must conquer his fear of being lost in the forest, of bears, and of the Nakani, or spirits who live in the forest and take the forms of men and women, and become a great hunter so he won’t disgrace his family. With help from sister Maya, his grandmother, and the Old One, Kano comes home to his village confident that his fears are gone—until he joins a hunt and becomes lost. As a result, his father decides to take him to the white man’s village of St. Michael.

Living with his father’s disappointment and feeling that he can no longer bear it, Kano leaves the village to travel to the home of “Auntie” their grandmother’s sister. While staying at there Kano encounters his first white man, Ivan, a Russian trader. The news Ivan has brought is troubling: the Eskimo of a village to the south are becoming sick with smallpox, the “white man’s” disease. The Athabaskins will also become sick and die unless they take the medicine he has brought along. Kano sees a chance to help his people and redeem himself. He is vaccinated and tries to convince the village elders that they too, must be vaccinated. They refuse. When Auntie dies of smallpox, Kano heads for the village where Ivan is staying, determined to bring the vaccine back so his sisters and grandmother will not die. Traveling alone through the forest, Kano faces the fears that overwhelmed him earlier and conquers them. Upon his return, the villagers are finally vaccinated, but not without a few interesting twists.

A conflict between Kano and Napak, a village boy, is hinted at early in the story but never really takes shape, leaving readers wondering until the final pages. A satisfying read for middle to upper grades. LGR


**Rainy Season, by Adele Griffin.** Rainy Season
Twelve-year-old Lane lives on an army base in the Panama Canal Zone. She is a worrier, while her younger brother, Charlie, seems almost self-destructive. When she is upset, Lane writes in the journal that Emily gave her back when they lived on Rhode Island. The entire book takes place on one day of Lane’s life, starting with breakfast. Lane and Charlie are building a fort with their friends, and planning a “war” against another fort. After a sudden rain damages their fort, Charlie, who thinks the other kids caused the damage, plans to retaliate. His late-night fall from a tree results in a harrowing ride to an emergency room. The hospital reminds Lane and Charlie of their stay in a Rhode Island hospital after their entire family was in a car crash.

The conversations in Rainy Season are laced with insults. The parents seem detached and too busy with their own lives to see that things are not quite right with their children. It is not until the end of the book that one discovers that the girl named Emily, who Lane remembers from Rhode Island, was her older sister, and that she was killed in a tragic car crash.

Each family member has been suffering alone, expressing his or her grief in different ways. The end of the novel provides hope that they will begin to find solace, and healing for their memories, in one another.


Dorry has moved with her parents to Indiana from Ohio. Not only has she had to change schools in her junior year of high school, but she also has to adjust to living in a large city. For three weeks she has been trying to make friends with someone at her new school. Nothing is working out the way Dorry has hoped which makes her feel even more insecure. Then out of the blue one of the in-group of girls invites her to eat lunch with her and her friends. Because they are friendly and act concerned about her, Dorry starts attending their social gatherings and church services. This seems to be what she has always looked for and under pressure she joins the group called the Fishers.

Because the Fishers are a religious group, Dorry thinks that she has made the right choice. It isn’t long until Dorry begins to have questions. She is expected to open up to Angela, her spiritual mentor, but becomes uneasy at the way Angela pries into her life. Not only is Angela pointing out all her flaws, which she backs up with scripture, but she jumps on any weakness that Dorry has. Dorry is now expected to pray for so many hours a day, plus witness and recruit others to join the Fishers. Soon Dorry is frantically scrambling to keep up in her school work and is never able to stay at home as there is always some meeting she is required to attend.

No matter how hard she tries, Dorry is never able to make Angela happy or get rid of a sense of guilt. Suddenly she finds herself going in circles with no way out. When she thinks of trying to get out, the sense of doom of being forever lost haunts her. She signs over all the money in her savings account to the Fishers. She jumps from one to another, her spiritual mentor, and learns to slay them with scripture, but she jumps on any weakness that Dorry has. Dorry is now expected to pray for so many hours a day, plus witness and recruit others to join the Fishers. Then to add to Dorry’s distress she begins to notice inconsistencies within the Fishers themselves that she is told don’t matter, and more pressure is put on her. Dorry’s grades drop and her own family doesn’t know how to take her religion. They become concerned about her health as she is pressured to do penance by using the Word of God.


Arby Jenkins has a special ability to create a character that is both believable and fun. Arby Jenkins, a twelve-year-old boy just entering seventh grade, is a character with which all junior high readers can identify. Arby faces the same fears and challenges that face young teens everywhere. His reactions will cause readers to examine how they respond to similar situations.

Arby wants to make a good first day impression in his Christian junior high school. However, just before school opens, he falls and breaks his front teeth. This is the first of an interesting set of challenges he must face. His homeroom teacher, Mr. Hogan, tells the class about the “dragons” they will fight throughout the weeks and months ahead. This theme is well-developed throughout the book as the dragons of Selfishness, Fear, and Pride prey upon Arby. He learns to identify these sins in his life, and learns to slay them by using the Word of God.

Arby is being watched in his attempt at dragon slaying by Stuart. Arby witnesses to Stuart and, although he is not ready to make a commitment, Arby is able to plant seeds in Stuart’s life. A new character, who will challenge readers to be leaders with character, is introduced at the end of the story. Rex comes to Arby after a humiliating situation and offers his support and friendship. His kind and caring attitude is helpful in molding Arby to be the person God wants him to be. PJP
**Y O U N G  A D U L T  F I C T I O N**

F. Refugees—Fiction; Germany—Fiction; Courage—Fiction .
120 p.

F. Polygamy—Fiction; Death—Fiction; Faith—Fiction .
119 p. Gr. 5 - 9.
Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Adjustment! Change! A Better Tomorrow, by Dorothy Lilja Harrison, contains glimpses of Depression hardship. Janet, a fifth grader of Swedish descent, finds that the Depression of 1934 forces her family to adjust to new circumstances. Because her father is out of work, her family can no longer afford their own house. Instead, they share a house with an elderly lady who gives them lopsided rules designed to keep children quiet at all times. Janet has to watch her younger siblings, make new friends in a Polish neighborhood, attend a new school, and cope with the growing realization that her family is “poor.”

*Operation Morningstar* is based on a true story. The year is 1945. The place is war-torn Germany. Five children, aged nine to fourteen, embark on a journey of over 400 kilometers in order to find their father and younger sisters. The journey is dangerous, and often seems impossible. If they don’t reach Waldeck in time, their family will be gone; but God’s intervention lends itself more easily to people speaking of God and turning to Him during their times of trouble. As readers peruse the pages of this book, they will find themselves carried away to a small mountain village filled with people who are often maligned and misunderstood. The gentle heart of Littlejim and his struggles will engender a deeper concern for those whom we view as “different.” MH

F. Fantasy. 258 p. Gr. 8 - Adult.
Quality—5 Acceptability—4

The Erl Queen is dying, and Nora is summoned from her bed in the dead of night to serve as nurse to the infant prince. In order to ensure that Nora remains in the magical realm of Erland, the wicked Erl King robs her of her memory, and her voice. By the time the memories of her former life with her husband and newborn babe return, Nora has come to love her frail charge. Tom between two lives, and two loves, she makes the difficult decision to stay until Prince Elver learns to walk of his own accord.

Dahlov Ipcar uses the voices of several characters to spin his tale, including Nora, the prince, Nora’s husband, Eben, and their son, Owen. This shifting perspective allows each character to emerge clearly, and pulls the reader into the story.

In Nora’s absence, the grief-stricken Eben is an easy target for Bab Magga, a malicious witch who takes over the household and finally drives Owen to run away. As Prince Elver begins to come into his magical powers, he finds a way into his beloved Nana’s world. He comes to understand what Nora has left behind, and then finds that there are grave dangers facing her in this world. This knowledge gives him the strength to let her go, and to find his own true calling.

A Dark Horn Blowing is a gripping and original blend of English, Scottish, and Norse mythology, all brought together with the author’s own vision. The atmosphere is muted and dream-like, almost nightmarish at times, as the forces of evil threaten to overwhelm the protagonists. The novel is dark, but very effective, and in the end, redemption is found. There is one attempted rape, and Bab Magga is not above casting the occasional evil spell.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Littlejim (as opposed to Bigjim, his father) is a young teen growing up with dreams of his own in the early 1920’s. Littlejim is the eldest son, and his parents depend upon his efforts on their farm in the Appalachian mountains. When his mother becomes ill and is taken to her bed, Littlejim’s dream of going away to school seems to die. His family takes in Myron, a boy from the city, for the summer, and despite a rocky beginning the two become fast friends as they discover a common love of reading. Times are changing quickly in this small village, and Littlejim is challenged to grow and change as well.

His winning essay is published in a national publication, but then his father must take his mother to a hospital for an operation, and unscrupulous miners come looking for people to cheat and timber to steal. Throughout this long summer, Littlejim works out his feelings, turns over his loyalties in his mind and decides to do what is best for his family. Eventually Myron returns to the city, leaving an empty void for Littlejim. Still, he presses on and continues to work and dream of a future as a writer.

Events take a turn, and the wrongs get righted, and Littlejim discovers a father who truly loves him, a community that stands behind him, and just possibly a future with fulfilled dreams.

*Littlejim’s Dreams* is a terrific book filled with the wonders of a young boy’s heart. Gloria Houston’s Appalachian dialogue makes the reading intriguing. While not an overtly Christian text, the time period lends itself more easily to people speaking of God and turning to Him during their times of trouble. As readers peruse the pages of this book, they will find themselves carried away to a small mountain town filled with people who are often maligned and misunderstood. The gentle heart of Littlejim and his struggles will engender a deeper concern for those whom we view as “different.” MH

F. Elliot, Jim—Fiction; Missionaries—Ecuador—Fiction; Saint, Nate—Fiction .
xxx p. Gr. 4 - 8.
Quality—4 Acceptability—5

The story of a small boy named Jim Elliot, growing up with dreams of his own in the early days of the Ecuadorian jungle mission. Jim Elliot’s dreams are dashed when he is caught on his first mission trip, and he and a group of other men are killed by natives. The novel is based on the true story of Jim Elliot, who was an inspirational leader in the early days of the Ecuadorian mission field. The novel is a gripping and original blend of English, Scottish, and Norse mythology, all brought together with the author’s own vision. The atmosphere is muted and dream-like, almost nightmarish at times, as the forces of evil threaten to overwhelm the protagonists. The novel is dark, but very effective, and in the end, redemption is found. There is one attempted rape, and Bab Magga is not above casting the occasional evil spell.

**M A R C H / M A Y  1 9 9 8  4 6  C H R I S T I A N  L I B R A R Y  J O U R N A L**
How would you describe a yellow airplane if you had never seen one before? As a giant wooden bee perhaps? Would it scare you? How would you respond to seeing a human-a white man-"in its belly"? What would you think of it delivering "gifts"? What would you do when you think it might have landed near your house?

Most of us with any interest in missions know of Nate Saint, Jim Elliot, and the others who were martyred in Ecuador in 1956. In The Fate of the Yellow Woodbee, Dave and Neta Jackson do a great job of getting behind and beyond the familiar story to understand the natives, as seen through the eyes of a young Auca boy named Niwa.

Niwa is fascinated by the giant yellow "woodbee" and the white men in it, yet he is confused by the reaction of his tribesmen. He is thoroughly indoctrinated in the beliefs of his people—that life is insignificant, and fighting and killing are common place. And he wonders what any of this might have to do with his older sister, Dayuma, who disappeared several years ago and is believed to be living among white people. Have they eaten her? Everyone knows that white people are cannibals!

The Fate of the Yellow Woodbee is interesting juvenile fiction based on documented, historical facts. Illustrations scattered throughout the book help the reader better understand the characters and their lifestyle.

The reader will see how God used the deaths of five men to further His kingdom in ways that perhaps their lives never could. The book vividly portrays how the wives and children of these martyrs impacted the Auca’s lives for future generations and eternity. BB

Young readers will be able to apply these lessons to their own situations. An example is the story of Pilgrim and Hopeful being locked in a dungeon; it seems there is no way out. Even in this plight, Hopeful says, "As long as there is life, there is hope."

Traitor in the Tower ends with a few pages entitled "More About John Bunyan." These pages contain historical data. Charming black and white drawings help show the clothing and setting of the period. MPC


F. Underground railroad—Fiction; Fugitive slaves—Fiction; Slavery—Fiction; Afro-Americans—Fiction; Steamboats—Fiction; Mississippi River—Fiction. 191 p. Gr. 5 - 8.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Libby and Caleb Norstad, along with their friend Jordan, return in The Swindler’s Treasure, the fourth book in Lois Johnson’s Riverboat Adventures. The series is set in the 1850’s. While they are traveling the upper Mississippi River on their father’s riverboat, a swindler robs them of the money they need to keep their boat and business afloat. Libby and Caleb want to try and recover the lost money, while Jordan wants to see his family reunited again.

His mother and siblings have just recently made it to freedom via the Underground Railroad, but his father is still a slave in the south. Before the family can complete its journey to safety in Canada, Jordan wants to rescue his father, also. His church entrusts him with a considerable amount of money to take back with him to help some friends in need. This money ends up lost, and in an effort to retrieve it, while clearing his name and freeing his father, Jordan becomes embroiled in an adventure of intrigue and suspense. The three friends find that both quests lead to the same swindler.

The Swindler’s Treasure is an exciting tale that weaves faith, friendship, and trust together solidly. Family loyalty and responsibility are the bedrock of the children’s direction and focus.

Also woven into the story is a measure of mid-nineteenth century United States history, particularly focusing on the slaves’ plight and their quest for freedom. It’s an exciting and good read for middle school age children, which will enhance their study of our country’s heritage. GCH


F. Coal Strike, Colo., 1913-1914—Fiction; Strikes and lockouts—Fiction; Runaways—Fiction; Interpersonal relations—Fiction. 167 p. Gr. 6 - 9.

Quality—4 Acceptability—4

Mr. Jones was inspired to write Frankie when he read a re-telling of the Ludlow Massacre. He uses a little known event in Colorado coal mining history as the setting for his story.

Frankie escaped a life of abuse in Denver and is taken in by Luke’s family. Beth, the youngest of the family thinks she is the only one not taken in by Frankie’s unbelievable stories about her past. Having someone to care for brings Luke’s mother to life for the first time since Luke’s brother was killed in the mines. Beth is sent to temporarily live with an aunt in Denver because she is making life so miserable for everyone due to her attitude toward Frankie. Luke and Frankie make friends at the striking miners’ camp. They become increasingly involved in the events leading up to the Ludlow Massacre.

Frankie is well written and offers the adventure which is enjoyed by upper elementary and junior high students. However, there are several expletives and some profanity. Those interested in Colorado or mining history will want to consider adding Frankie to their library. JM


F. Runaways—Fiction; Cats—Fiction; Fathers and sons—Fiction. 149 p. Gr. 6 - 8.

Quality—4 Acceptability—4

Twelve-year-old Spencer decides to run away from his mom when conditions force them to move from their rented apartment to go live with his Aunt May and her two children. The worst thing for Spencer is that he is told that he must get rid of his cat, Foxey. Foxey is Spencer’s best friend, and realizing that he must make a choice, he decides to run away and find his dad. The last that Spencer heard from his father was a post card mailed from San Francisco telling Spencer that he was at the baseball stadium at Candlestick Park, home of the Giants. Spencer soon finds out that life on the road, especially for a minor, is no picnic, and he has to resort to desperate measures to keep going. Just when things look like failure, an older man, Hank, takes Spencer under his wing and helps him make the right choices.

Spencer finally reaches the baseball park and finds his dad, only to realize that in real life things don’t always have a happy ending. Spencer is sent back home, but soon takes things into his own hands again. Ultimately, Spencer realizes that home is the best place, even under difficult circumstances.

Told in the first person, Peg Kehret’s novel is a heart-warming story of a boy who faces difficult choices. Even though Spencer doesn’t always do the right thing, he holds to the basic principles of right and wrong. Searching for Candlestick Park is realistic about the trauma kids face when living with separated parents. It also is factual about what happens when one decides to run away, and it concludes with a strong emphasis on the importance of uniting parent and child, even in less than ideal situations. DAW

F. Farm life—Vermont—Fiction; Family life—Fiction. 139 p. Gr. 5 - 9.

Quality—3 Acceptability—3

Natalie Kinsey-Warock has created an appealing story of a young girl’s love for the land her family lived on for hundreds of years. Thirty year old Iris lives on the family farm in northern Vermont in 1956. However, the year holds many trials for her family as the barn burns down and her father loses his leg in a logging accident. Iris finds out that her cousin is part of a group that was responsible for the fire and blames him for her father’s accident. Times are hard and her father feels that he cannot run the farm anymore and decides to sell the farm. Iris knows that “as long as there are mountains, and rivers, and stars in the sky” that she will miss the family farm. The story ends on a happy note as her uncle comes to the rescue and saves the farm. Iris learns many lessons during this trying year about herself, her family, and others around her.

Iris’ father uses profanity and several unnecessary references to bodily functions are made within the story. Iris questions God’s love for her and wonders if all the family problems are a punishment for her. She has questions for which no answers are given. PJP


F. Grandmothers—Fiction; Self-confidence—Fiction. 76 p. Gr. 5 - 8.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Sweet Memories Still, by Natalie Kinsey-Warock, is a small book that makes a big point. A person locked in selfishness can learn to see things from another perspective. Shelby is a preteen girl consumed by her selfishness can learn to see things from another perspective. Shelby hears her grandmother sing “Amazing Grace,” and is deeply affected.

Shelby to resent her mother and grandmother. The service Shelby hears her grandmother sing “Amazing Grace,” and is deeply affected. During the weekend stay at her grandmother’s home Shelby learns many surprising things about her family. Her grandmother’s sickness and an unexpected out-of-town trip ruin those plans and cause Shelby to resent her mother and grandmother. The seemingly inappropriate gift of an old camera from her grandmother makes the situation almost unbearable.

During the weekend stay at her grandmother’s home Shelby learns many surprising things about her family. She comes to appreciate the old camera when she understands the memories that her grandmother associates with it. During a Sunday morning church service Shelby hears her grandmother sing “Amazing Grace” and is deeply affected.

She is further pressed into a relationship with her grandmother when a fire destroys the old family home and her grandmother comes to live with Shelby and her parents.

Shelby recaptures the lost pictures destroyed in the fire through her careful drawings of scenes she remembered from the old photographs. She gains strength of character and the ability to go beyond her own fears from her grandmother’s courage in overcoming the house fire.

Laurie Harden’s life-like pencil drawings appear throughout the book. She has captured the characters and the emotions in each of her illustrations. ASN


E. Riddles—Fiction; Pirates—Fiction; Sailing—Fiction; Inventions—Fiction. Unp. Gr. 4 - 5.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Oonagh is a happy farmer maiden until the day her betrothed, the famous weaver Conal, falls into the hands of the Pirate Malcolm. Immediately she lays all aside and goes to rescue Conal from the Pirate’s island fastness. Malcolm, riding a wave of arrogant ambition, has captured many artisans. He even holds Aidan, his own son, prisoner until a maiden can win his hand by answering four riddles. To free her beloved Conal and his fellow slaves, and reunite Aidan and his love, Oonagh risks her own freedom and accepts the trial by riddle, including how to capture the wind and escape across the sea.

Using Celtic themes, award winning author Sheila MacGill-Callahan draws on her own Celtic background to expertly weave this poetic saga of love, ingenuity, partnership, and forgiveness. Her heroine capably handles her problems with a combination of grit, wisdom, cunning and selfless devotion. Even as in Tolkien’s Hobbit, To Capture the Wind uses the ancient and honorable riddle game as an intrinsic part, reminding the reader that life often needs its tricky riddles answered correctly. Employing an interesting and contemporary version of the classic Celtic style, To Capture the Wind evokes the aura of Irish heroic tales. Like this tales’ heroine, noted illustrator Gregory Manchess is self taught and very successful in his chosen field. Illumined with Irish light, Manchess’ heroical tales. Like this tales’ heroine, noted illustrator Gregory Manchess is self taught and very successful in his chosen field. Illumined with Irish light, Manchess’ artwork is both captivating and arresting. The reader is transported into another world.

Manchess’ paintings are simply breathtaking, bringing the reader into the tale. His art captures the essence of the story in a highly detailed and evocative manner. The illustrations are skillfully executed, bringing the story to life. Manchess’ style is unique and his artwork is truly remarkable. His paintings are carefully crafted and reflect a deep understanding of Irish culture and history. His work is both beautiful and thought-provoking, evoking a sense of wonder and admiration. The reader is left with a profound appreciation for the story and its message.

To Capture the Wind is a beautifully illustrated novel that will captivate readers of all ages. The story is engaging and the artwork is stunning, making this book a must-read for anyone interested in Celtic culture or adventure stories.


Quality—3 Acceptability—5

“History! I hate it,” he thought, “especially Texas history!” So says Benny at the start of the novel One of Fannin’s Men. But when Benny reluctantly goes on a field trip to La Bahia, he is transported back in time to live through the Texas massacre. He meets his distant grandfather, and the two secretly help save a wounded man escape from General Antonio Lopez of Santa Ana.

Author Isabel R. Marvin has handled the violent history in a careful way. She relays the story so the main character, Benny, does not witness the slayings of the 342 Texans, or the burning of their bodies. She does provide a setting to arouse reader interest and sympathy for these occurrences.

A conglomeration of photos and paintings illustrate the text. Some are better quality than others. A typo can be noticed and improper time sequence is included. Benny tells his mother he has gone to La Bahia today when the trip occurred the day prior. Readers may be disappointed when a fearful encounter with the Mexican soldiers is foreshadowed repeatedly, but the situation never occurs.

Despite the above, readers will gain an appreciation for Texas history. The time period will be real for them because of Marvin’s writing. LAG


Quality—5 Acceptability—3

Fifteen-year-old Ruth Mendenberg cannot locate any surviving family members in Poland at the cessation of World War II. Feeling completely isolated, she reluctantly agrees to assist the underground organization, Brichah, to smuggle twenty orphans, aged six to fifteen, to Palestine. At the Czechoslovakian border, the children are nearly thwarted in the early part of their mission. Before they cross the border into Italy, violence erupts between the French soldiers and the Jews. Suffering minor bruises, they are released and travel to a children’s camp in Northern Italy, where Ruth takes the first step in coping with her torment.

The children leave the camp and embark on a voyage to Palestine. It is a difficult journey with one thousand refugees crammed together. The Orthodox Jews on the ship pray three times a day. Everyone celebrates when Ruth espies her brother, Simon, on board. After the refugees reach Palestine, many are arrested and sent to a camp in Cyprus. Ruth and two of her friends escape.

Carol Matas writes about a fifteen-year-old girl who is emotionally dead until she is drawn out by her compatriots. By the end of the story, Ruth has coped with her pain and awakened emotionally.

The hand-drawn map at the beginning of the book is a valuable tool for delineating the orphans’ itinerary. After the War is based on episodes from the Holocaust, and parents should be aware that there are some graphic descriptions of Jews being killed. DBW


F. St. John’s (Newfoundland)—History—Fiction; World War, 1939-1945—Canada—Fiction. 213 p. Gr. 6 - 12.

Quality—5 Acceptability—4

Twelve-year-old Evelyn is angry. Her father has gone to fight in World War II, so Evelyn and her mother have moved in with his parents in St. Johns, Newfoundland. After feeling like a misfit in her new
school, Evelyn makes friends with fourteen-year-old Peter. She learns of the folklore many of the islanders believe. When her curiosity and the sound of sweet, high music draw her into an old spring house, she encounters a fairy. Later, she returns, hoping that she will find the fairy and he will grant her a favor. When the fairy fails to appear, she is partially relieved, as it might have meant choosing between a wish for her father, who is now missing in action, and for her mother, who is in the midst of a difficult childbirth. The complex plot of Catch Me Once, Catch Me Twice flows well. There are quite a few characters, each with their own set of problems, and the interaction between them is believable. The book is exciting without seeming contrived. Janet McNaughton writes well, showing attention to detail. In the context of a historically accurate story, the encounter with the fairy is treated as fact, not fantasy. The book has one instance of a mild profanity. CSJ


F. Christian life—Fiction. 270 p. Gr. 6 - Adult.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Virginia, born third in a family of five children, just doesn’t seem to know her place. At least, that’s how she feels. Her family consists of a father who is a lawyer, a mother who was a nurse, and four assorted siblings. As Virginia yearns for the acceptance of her peers, she accepts the unlikely friendship of Jenny, a true rebel at heart. Jenny becomes the instigator of many trials for Virginia. Eventually troubled by her disloyalty to her family and her new-found faith, Virginia accepts the challenge set her by her wise mother. She must try to love Jenny and accept her without becoming like her. Can she do it?

After a tragic accident, this task becomes simpler in some ways and more difficult in others. Jenny’s weakened condition gives Virginia the opportunity to invite her to the church youth group where Jenny sees her sights on Virginia’s friend, Jamison. Virginia’s reluctance to admit her own feelings for Jamison adds another thread to the already complicated pattern of their friendship. Over time, Virginia grows in her faith and in her love for Jenny. As she learns to listen to her heart and watch for God’s plan, Virginia begins to settle into becoming a woman with grace.

Author Janette Oke spins a powerful story in The Tender Years. Her subtle “drawing out” of common teenage fears and struggles is superb. The yo-yo pattern which many pre-teens and teens experience is told in a loving, generous spirit. Uncertain pain and self-discovery are balanced with the joys of new feelings and thrills. Reading this text was like re-experiencing some emotions from years past. This book is one to read together and share with the whole family. The many peer pressure issues will spur hearty discussion on the part of everyone. MH


F. Fathers and sons—Fiction; Family life—Fiction; Race relations—Fiction; North Carolina—Fiction. 262p. Gr. 6 - Adult.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

This historical novel opens with twelve-year-old Bubba Harkins and his six-year-old brother Scooter eagerly awaiting the return of their father, Jed. For six long years, Jed Harkins has been in prison, wrongly accused of making moonshine on his property. Throughout those years, Bubba has taken on the position of man of the house, helping his mother farm and make do.

With Wings as Eagles is set in the late 1930’s. Bubba has more adversity than being the son of an former prisoner; his best friend and neighbor, Israel, is a black man. Bubba doesn’t stand for negative remarks about either of the men in his life, and the boy pays dearly for defending himself and his brother. The local schoolmaster has it in for the Harkins family, and only through perseverance and a quiet, natural calling out to God will Bubba’s heart heal from the pain. As events unravel, the truth begins to reveal itself and the entire community learns a valuable lesson about judgment and forgiveness.

The author, Patsy O’Leary, is a former native of North Carolina and returned there to write this novel. She writes this fictional piece with the flavorful words spoken in that time period. Many of Bubba’s phrases and expressions, such as “wont,” were common in that time period. Many of Bubba’s phrases and expressions, such as “wont,” were common in that time period. Many of Bubba’s phrases and expressions, such as “wont,” were common in that time period. Many of Bubba’s phrases and expressions, such as “wont,” were common in that time period.

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Morgan Drummond, young, rich, handsome, and engaged. She pays him little mind, as she is consumed by what her future holds. Oriel has spent two years grooming Berenice McPhail for her debut into society. Berenice is on her way to London to marry an English aristocrat, and so Oriel will soon be unnecessary.

After the wedding, Oriel assumes Berenice’s mother will pay her passage back to America. She is shocked to find that this is not so, and is stranded in London, friendless and jobless. Seeking domestic work, she finds she is competing with too many native Englishwomen and is too attractive as well! She encounters Morgan Drummond by chance, who informs her that he has inherited a castle in Ireland from his grandfather, something which displease him as he has no desire to live in Ireland. After this meeting, she eventually finds work in a garment factory sewing buttonholes. After a week of draining work, the plant manager makes a pass at her when she tries to collect her pay. She manages to get away with her honor intact, but with no paycheck.

In this desperate situation, Oriel is surprised by a letter from Drummond, asking for a meeting at his lawyers’ offices. Once there, she learns that his fiancee has broken off the engagement because a requirement of his grandfather’s will was that he live in the castle in Ireland with his bride for a full year or receive nothing from the estate. He proposes a one-year marriage that will not be consummated. After the year, they will obtain an annulment, Oriel will receive a large payment, and they will go their ways. With few options, Oriel eventually agrees.

She falls in love with Ireland, its people, and the sea. She makes friends with a poet named Bryan and other Englishwomen. As the year progresses, she also finds herself struggling with a marriage of convenience that has become very inconvenient. To further complicate her life, several “accidents” convince Ariel that someone wants her gone from the castle. Pearl resolves all of these issues in a satisfying manner. Though this is a moral book, there is little of an explicitly Christian element.

Debut novelist Pfitsch provides an enthralling plot with strong, vibrant characters. The author provides readers with a tender and passionate story of a girl emerging into womanhood, who stands well in the company of Jo March of Little Women and Anne of Green Gables. Pfitsch promises to be a writer who provides memorable characters and themes to ponder upon.

There are a couple of instances of light profanity, in context, to which the character responds with remorse.


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Thomas Hutchinson, at nearly eleven years of age, is the youngest of the three boys in his family in Colonial Williamsburg. In The Rebel, he strives to understand the Revolutionary War on a personal level, confronting such issues as right and wrong, and what is expected of him. As he struggles with his clumsy, stubborn, volatile self, he matures. He seeks God’s help and saves the life of his boss in the pharmacy, as well as those of his Tory friends.

Thomas’ adventures continue in The Thief. He helps an indentured servant, his new friend, uncover a horse thief’s ring and its plot to chase the Loyalists out of town. Thomas discovers that God does have a plan for people who do what is right.

These two works of historical fiction delve deeper into inner thoughts, feelings, and motivations than many series books. They portray a couple with a deep faith in God and strong convictions about doing right, and their efforts to raise their sons in a godly way. The books paint a clear picture of what colonial life was like during the Revolutionary War. Nancy Rue does not moralize or settle for pat answers to the hard questions of the times. In some scenes the behavior of the main character is a bit stereotypical; for the most part, the reader is easily hooked into the stories. One’s understanding of some of the underlying attitudes might be clearer if these are read in order, but they can be enjoyed separately.


Quality—4 Acceptability—3

Sacred Shadows is the story of Lena, a young teenager caught in World War II. Germany is taken under Polish rule and Lena is a Jew. The Jews begin to feel discrimination on a larger scale until it will affect their very livelihood. Lena is not ashamed that she is a Jew, but also feels like she is a legal Polish citizen, as her father died in the army of Germany with honor. With the rise of Hitler in Berlin, several Jews begin to move to other nations for protection. Lena and her mom, who runs a shoe shop, feel that the rumors will die down. As their store gets discriminated against, Lena begins to realize that the threat of Hitler is real, but she feels that the Zionist movement that is strong among the youth is too far out and she would rather make peace within her own country instead of fleeing to Israel. Lena falls in love with Janusz who is a Zionist leader. A struggle begins as Lena tries to remain a faithful Polish citizen and yet follow her heart. Not until the last chapter is the reader given a hint of what Lena’s final decision will be.

Told in the first person the reader will easily identify with Lena and her struggles. This book is a historical.

F. American poetry. 93 p. Gr. 5 - 7.
Quality—5  Acceptability—5

This slim book of narrative poems will get lost in the poetry section. Put it on the regular fiction shelves. The poems describe three girlfriends, two eleven and one twelve years of age, spending the summer learning about life and the world as a city cousin, a boy, comes to stay in their small rural town. As the summer unfolds, a local war-hero gets his life back together, and worldly Vivian Malone (call me Viv) comes to town with her Flame Kiss lipstick, immediately causing all the girls to be intrigued and all the mothers to be skeptical. Delightful! Many pages beg to be read aloud and shared with other readers in peer and multi-generational groups.

The black and white illustrations are soft and muted—exactly right for these gentle poems.

Students who are serious readers will enjoy Under the Pear Tree, once pointed toward it by a guiding hand. A worthwhile addition to the school or church library.

LGR


F. Slavery—Fiction; Afro-Americans—Fiction; Louisiana—History—To 1803—Fiction; Sandies—Fiction. 147 p. Gr. 5 - 8.
Quality—4  Acceptability—3

Melitte is a young mulatto slave girl in Louisiana in the late 1700’s. She does not know who her parents are or why she is unloved and unappreciated by Madame and Monsieur Duroux. At the age of six she is introduced to the word “slave” and makes up a definition based on her life. Hopelessness and hatred fill her heart. However, with the coming of Baby Marie, Melitte learns to love and to receive love in return.

When the Spanish take over Louisiana, Melitte’s world expands and she is allowed to go to a plantation to worship on Sundays. No true worship takes place, however, as the slaves are only using this as a guise for talking of escape to freedom. Melitte is taught to sew and earns money with which to buy her freedom. But her money is stolen by the family, and she is bound at night to prevent her escape. Meanwhile, Marie is being trained in the “big house” to hate the blacks, but is unable to hate Melitte, whom she has found out is her half sister. The two girls attempt to run to freedom and are captured by Indians. Melitte is allowed to continue on but Marie must return back home.

Fatima Shaik has used this work to explore racial differences through the eyes of a child. The French people in the story are seen as unloving, hateful, lying, and ill-tempered although they claim to be “Christians.” Melitte’s life is very difficult as she seeks to gain an identity and the courage to escape.


F. Fathers—Fiction; Kidnapping—Fiction. 115 p. Gr. 6 - 8.
Quality—3  Acceptability—3

In How Do You Spell Abducted? by Cheryllyn Stacey, twelve-year-old Deb is not looking forward to the upcoming holiday with Dad. As the oldest of three children, she has a clearer picture of how things had been before the divorce, and a more mature perspective on how things are now. She doesn’t totally understand her mother’s fears when her dad visits them, but she senses them all the same. Now she and her nine-year-old sister, Paige, and five-year-old brother, Cory, are going to spend two weeks with him.

Paige and Cory can still laugh and giggle at their “Tarzan-Teddy Bear” father, but Deb is not so comfortable. What’s more, his animosity toward her is obvious. Deb’s fears are confirmed shortly after their trip begins when she learns that Dad has no intention of bringing them home again. He sneaks them across the border into the United States; somewhere in Wyoming the children make a desperate bid for freedom, and so begins the long and dangerous journey home.

How Do You Spell Abducted? is an exciting book; it is hard to put down, and provides some good reading in regard to contemporary issues. It speaks to the need for cooperation between siblings as they work to solve a serious problem. The children do mature throughout the story. They learn to work together, and each begins to see things from other perspectives.

But there are also some major concerns. The father, as an immature and selfish adult, is somewhat critical to the plot of the story, but his character, attitude, and actions are often disturbing. Mom, who could be more of a role model to balance Dad, is not a significant part of the story, and when she is present, she comes across as being tired, frustrated, and somewhat weak. The book is very realistic in terms of issues, but not entirely satisfying. Language is also an issue; profanity and disrespectful innuendoes are sprinkled throughout.

GCH


Quality—4  Acceptability—5

Wheelchair-bound Darcy DeAngelis is about to enter a whole new world. Just after graduation from her local elementary school, Darcy begins contemplating the unknowns of the junior high school where she’ll be attending next fall. She asks herself if the bathroom mirrors will be low enough for her to see into? Will the desk rows be wide enough for her wheelchair to fit through? Will she even see her friends from elementary school anymore? All these questions and doubts loom in Darcy’s mind as she writes to her “Box,” her version of a diary.

As the summer begins Darcy tries to forget how her disabled legs have made her different. Looking forward to camp is the one consolation she has—until she learns that even there she’ll be set apart. Darcy’s disappointment with her physical limitations cause her to ask God for answers and encouragement. God’s answer comes in a most unusual way, and he continues to remind her that he has a special plan for her life, a life filled with special people.

The poems describe three sisters, two eleven and one twelve years of age, spending the summer learning about life and the world as a city cousin, a boy, comes to stay in their small rural town. As the summer unfolds, a local war-hero gets his life back together, and worldly Vivian Malone (call me Viv) comes to town with her Flame Kiss lipstick, immediately causing all the girls to be intrigued and all the mothers to be skeptical. Delightful! Many pages beg to be read aloud and shared with other readers in peer and multi-generational groups.

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LGR


F. Three Against Time (B.C.):—Fiction; Canoo (B.C.: Regional district)—Gold discoveries—Fiction. 137 p. Gr. 4 - 8.
Quality—4  Acceptability—5

Three brothers on a camping trip in British Columbia with their parents discover a dilapidated old prospector’s cabin. When the boys venture inside, they are whisked back in time to 1868. Their adventures include encountering a grizzly bear and witnessing the Barkerville fire. They learn how to prospect and help catch a clan jumper. When they finally return to the present, they rescue the prospector’s great-great-granddaughter from the old mine.

Three Against Time has an adventure-filled plot. Through the eyes of the boys, author Margaret Taylor depicts the life of a gold miner and the changes that have taken place since the 1880’s. The reader will learn a bit of British Columbia history while enjoying a good story. Several ink drawings by Ljuba Levstek augment the text.

CSJ


F. Caves—Fiction; Mystery fiction; England—Fiction. 115 p. Gr. 5 - 7.
Quality—3  Acceptability—4

Wheelchair-bound Darcy DeAngelis is about to enter a whole new world. Just after graduation from her local elementary school, Darcy begins contemplating the unknowns of the junior high school where she’ll be attending next fall. She asks herself if the bathroom mirrors will be low enough for her to see into? Will the desk rows be wide enough for her wheelchair to fit through? Will she even see her friends from elementary school anymore? All these questions and doubts loom in Darcy’s mind as she writes to her “Box,” her version of a diary.

As the summer begins Darcy tries to forget how her disabled legs have made her different. Looking forward to camp is the one consolation she has—until she learns that even there she’ll be set apart. Darcy’s disappointment with her physical limitations cause her to ask God for answers and encouragement. God’s answer comes in a most unusual way, and he continues to remind her that he has a special plan for her life, a life filled with special people.

Author Joni Eareckson Tada writes from personal, heart-felt experience as she tells Darcy’s story. Given that Joni herself is wheelchair-bound, she provides practical insights into the struggles disabled boys and girls face every day. Darcy’s own emotional mindset helps readers empathize more fully with kids who are different. This book is filled with fun, excitement, and little doses of sobering reality. It is enough to cause readers to think twice before making assumptions about those who lives are physically challenged. At the end of the book, Joni lists simple, practical ideas for helping the disabled around us.

MH
in modern day England, the story introduces Sheila and her classmates, who decide they will study the underground caves that run through their city. As the small group of students, along with an interested reference librarian, painstakingly uncover clues, they reach the conclusion that one of the caves hides an ancient treasure. excavating the treasure proves to be a race against time since the building above it might soon be sold and leveled.

Seasoned author Trease may be unfamiliar to many American readers, but this novel might be a welcome change of pace as characterization and dialog reflect her British background. Even though there is one instance of an adult using profanity, the book is a worthwhile selection as it touches on the persecution of the Church and describes the fact that countless Church-related works of art had to placed in hiding. One of the characters relates the story of Joshua to the other students, many of whom come from other religious backgrounds; she also shows strength in her faith by singing hymns to calm herself when suddenly thrust into a frightening situation. PW


F. Fairy tales; Princes and princesses—Fiction. 176 p. Gr. 6 - 10.

Friendship, loyalty, and laughter...therein lie the best and truest kinds of magic. This is certainly the case with Vivian Vande Velde’s A Hidden Magic. In many ways, her story is a parody of the traditional fairy tale. Jennifer is a princess, but she is on the plain side, and rather shy, and her father’s kingdom is modest, to say the least. In fact, when the prince makes his entrance, it is laundry day, and Jennifer is down at the river pitching in with the servants.

Prince Alexander is everything a young princess’ heart could desire—that is, until he opens his mouth. Then it quickly becomes obvious that he is arrogant, selfish, and gullible giant, and a petulant, shape-changing sorcerer. It is enchanted sleep, it is entirely his own fault. But, being the kind-hearted sort, Jennifer sets off in search of help.

Her quest forces her to confront an irritating witch, a gullible giant, and a petulant, shape-changing sorcerer named Norman who wants to be left alone. But Jennifer is nothing if not persistent, and Norman never really stands a chance. With his help, Jennifer does get her happy ending, but only after several surprising twists.

The author’s effortless writing style makes this novel an easy read. Vande Velde obviously enjoys playing with stereotypes and turning traditions on their heads, but she never lets this get in the way of the story. Readers will quickly become attached to her likable characters, and will be delighted to find that the plot is never quite predictable. SS


F. Virtual reality—Fiction; Computers—Fiction; Science fiction. 217 p. Gr. 7 - 9.

Quality—4 Acceptability—3

Jack North acquires a pirated copy of Silicon Sphere, the ultimate virtual reality game for teenagers. After Jack plays the game, he is mystified upon discovering sand from the game in his bedroom. When Jack plays the game again, he sees the signature of Greg Sharp, a boy who inexplicably disappeared from the Internet, in the hotel guest book. Then Jack’s friend, Kyle, has a key ring that belongs inside the game.

Next, Kate, a school friend, asks Jack to play Silicon Sphere with her when an e-mail friend disappears, the latest in a group of students worldwide to disappear. While playing the game, Kate vanishes. Jack chances upon a group of teenagers, and they are captured and “reformatted” with a nanochip inside their brains. Jack returns home, plugs himself into the computer and transfers data onto a tape to the mystification of family and friends.

Virtual World by Chris Westwood is an engaging science fiction story that will appeal to young teenage readers that especially like playing computer games. A reclusive society totally controlled by the information superhighway and the game, Silicon Sphere, gradually changing the world from a real to a computer generated state is a thought-provoking plot. The only problematic element in the book is the profligacy. DBW


F. Christian life—Fiction; Archaeology—Fiction. 144 p. Gr. 4 - 7.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Hannah and her friend Mell discover a large clay pot, unearthed by Hanna’s dog, Hunter. Examining the pot, they find human bones and broken pottery. Their discovery brings a professor of archaeology, a group of his students, and Chief Littledeer to visit Hannah’s home on Beaver Island. While the students are studying the site, Hannah becomes friends with Lucy LaVerdiere. Like Hannah, Lucy is a Christian. Lucy also has great respect for the beliefs of her Native American ancestors. Hannah is overjoyed when Chief Littledeer decides to become a Christian.

The Lesson of the Ancient Bones has a unique blend of uncompromising Christian teaching and sensitivity to non-Christian cultures. This quality makes the book an outstanding contribution to Christian fiction. Eric Wiggin weaves plenty of information into the story, sometimes sounding a bit like a history lesson. Although the plot drags in places, this book will appeal to the sort of reader who will envy Hannah’s hideaway in the hayloft, where she keeps her stash of books and letters. Hannah, the central character of this series, is likable and believable. CSJ


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Set in the post-Civil War western frontier, Mustang Flats, by Clifton Wisler, is quality historical fiction. The results of the war, in political, social, and emotional terms, are experienced at a personal level through the first-person narration of fourteen-year-old Alby Draper.

Alby’s father fights in the war, leaving Alby at ten years of age to care for the family and farm. At the war’s end both Alby and his father are greatly changed and their relationship is strained; this is primarily due to Mr. Draper’s emotional turmoil, the result of battle trauma. The situation is made worse by the presence of Nebo Hill, a young man who returns from the war with Mr. Draper. They have shared horrible experiences and Alby naturally feels left out and rejected.

When the family suffers a severe financial crisis and fears the loss of the farm, Alby, Mr. Draper, Nebo, and several other men camp out on the Mustang Flats for several months, capturing wild mustangs to sell. The money to save the farm is earned, but that is secondary to the father-son relationship that is saved during the time they spend together on the Flats. Both characters come to a new understanding of each other as mistrust is replaced by forgiveness. ASN


F. Fantasy; Unicorns—Fiction. 110 p. Gr. 5 - Adult.

Quality—5 Acceptability—4

The Transfigured Hart is a beautiful story rife with symbolism. Richard Plante is a solemn, solitary orphan, who lives an austere life with his aunt and uncle. Heather Fielding, on the other hand, has an abundant family life which revolves around horses, hunting, and church. Each child independently happens upon a shimmering pool in the heart of Five Mile Wood. This pool is frequented by an unusual white beast, which Richard believes to be a unicorn.

With great reluctance, the children agree to share their secret, and a cautious friendship blooms between them. But Heather lets their secret slip on the evening before Opening Day, and together they must find a way to save their animal from the guns of the hunters.

This story resonates on many levels. On a human level, it speaks of the connections forged between very different people. On a mythical level, it taps into the rich vein of legend and symbolism associated with the Continued on p.40.

004.6. Internet (Computer network); Home schooling—United States. 120 p.


004.6. Internet (Computer network); Home schooling—United States. 175 p. Gr. 6 - Adult.

Quality — 4 Acceptability — 5

Many people interested in getting onto the information highway have only heard about e-mail [electronic mail] and the World Wide Web. The Homeschool Guide to the Online World is an introductory work written specifically for Christian parents and homeschooling families. It begins with a chapter on some basic questions and answers about the Internet: What it is; what equipment is needed to access it; and what about possible drawbacks in an uncensored environment? The authors recommend that beginners take advantage of the free introductory trial periods provided by one or more of the commercial online services to learn which service gives them the most useful guidance and special features. The second chapter briefly describes and compares the major online services, calling attention to special features relevant to homeschoolers. The chapter on “Exploring the World Wide Web” lists more than 150 websites, and takes up most of the book.

Topics covered include homeschooling, education, Christian resources, children, parents and family, reference, and a number of specific school subject areas. Appendices include information on selecting new computer systems and web browsers, online “netiquette,” special terms and expressions. Wide outside margins, allowing room for users to add “Notes & Tips,” occasionally feature significant information or hints in sidelines.

Cartoon-like black-and-white drawings introduce each major section; sample web pages, illustrating the variety and quality in web page design, appear on most pages in the chapter on resources.

The Homeschool Guide to the Internet is an intermediate level sequel designed to be used along with the first book, with very little duplicated information. The chapter that applies e-mail to mailing lists is followed by chapters explaining “Gopher,” “ftp,” and “Usenet” resources available on the Internet. All of these types of resources, plus more from the World Wide Web, are intermingled in the long chapter listing homeschool resources. More than 250 addresses are grouped again according to topics, including computer topics. For ease in identification, special icons in front of each listing in the resource directory indicate the type of resource listed. One of the appendices discusses screening software.

In a time when informed “netizens” may refer to the “radioactive half-life of websites,” Mark and Wendy Dinsmore have undertaken a daunting task in providing these two guides to the Internet. In the first book they emphasize that “Web pages are not set in stone! Pages sometimes move or change unexpectedly.” In fact, this reviewer found that more than 1/3 of the WWW URL’s [Uniform Resource Locators] in the first book were not current. A good number of the changed sites set up automatic forwarding links from the obsolete URL’s to the current sites. Several other “not found” sites were located by the reviewer and updated using a good search engine—but some other sites seem definitely to be closed out.

In the second book the authors note that “many older Gopher sites are being rapidly transformed into Web sites.” At this time most of the listed Gopher sites have been incorporated into WWW sites. Of the few Gopher sites still operating, much of the information has not been kept up-to-date. Others are not to be found. It’s a similar story for “FTP” sites. The Usenet Christian homeschool newsgroup listed as “moderated” seems to have been abandoned by the moderator and left open for postings incompatible with the Christian purpose.

The generous white space in the format provides room for users to pencil in updated information on sites of interest. The resources listed originate from a wide variety of sources, including those with Islamic and Unitarian as well as frankly secular perspectives. Many of the listings have annotations, but a good number have none. The topical arrangement does not give the information that indexes by URL or source would provide. Typos were few—one URL was case sensitive, prompting a “not found” message because two words should not have been capitalized! Some might want to look further to get answers to certain questions and would appreciate a short bibliography. But these books provide a unique and useful resource for homeschoolers, and for Christian school faculty and students as well. DWB


Quality — 3 Acceptability — 5

Goalposts: Devotions for Girls is directed toward teens who are ready and willing to develop a deeper spiritual life. Although written in easy to understand language, with short chapters, it is not a light and easy guide or so-called “spiritual fast food.” Author Bill Sanders shows teens how to develop Biblical standards and values in their lives. He encourages a relationship of love and trust in God that will help them get through difficult times.

The book covers about 40 different issues facing teens including: fears, depression, dating, the “New Age,” and abortion. He includes scripture from the Old and New Testaments and illustrates with events from his own experience, whether its teaching his young children how to water-ski or getting his fruit trees to produce healthy and appealing fruit.

In a section entitled “The New Age Cage” the author describes the New Age movement, listing it’s specific practices and dangers. He quotes 1 Thess 5:21-23: “Test everything that is said to be to be sure it is true...” and helps the reader learn how to discern the truth from a lie. Each chapter asks pertinent questions and directs the reader to God’s Word for the answers. DEB


Quality — 4 Acceptability — 5

Lorraine Peterson has produced a quick paced, fast reading book that will appeal to teens and their parents. Its subject is God’s wonderful provision of grace and the author illustrates this with the written word and dozens of cartoons that get right to the heart of the matter. One of Peterson’s foremost concepts is that since this wonderful grace is available to teens in all circumstances, being ignorant is a terrible price to pay. This is a lesson also needed in the lives of parents.

How to get a life...no strings attached will be enjoyed by teens in their own personal reading and could also be used for a group discussion or Sunday School Class. It would be an asset to any church library. CC

248.8. Divorce; Christian life; Prayer books and devotions. 122 p. Gr. 6 - 12.

Quality—5  Acceptability—5

Angela Elwell Hunt has written a practical, readable and biblical guidebook for teenagers experiencing the divorce of their parents. Each chapter begins with a journal entry by Kelsey Davis, a fictitious thirteen-year-old. Kelsey begins her freshman year believing her father is having an affair and that her mother is going to divorce him. As the book progresses Kelsey has to deal with the situations and feelings brought on by divorce.

Following each journal entry the author discusses the feelings teens have over a divorce in the family and how they can cope. She includes quotes and experiences from others who have been through their own parent’s divorce. At the end of each chapter applicable Bible verses are included.

Although the book discusses many painful issues for teens, it is a valuable tool for helping them to deal with things that they don’t completely understand. The author helps them face not only their own feelings but also recognize what may be happening with their parents, siblings or extended family.

The reactions of Kenyon, Kelsey’s brother, to his father’s betrayal and family troubles may encourage boys to read this book as well, even though the general format is a girl’s journal. The discussion portions apply to any young person going through this struggle.


Quality—4  Acceptability—5

This “guidebook” is designed to help teens navigate through the choices to come after graduating from high school. Author Joey O’Connor writes that “taking a piece of the planet” refers not only to carving out your place in this life but in “being all God has designed you to be here on earth while keeping your eyes on heaven.” The short chapters cover topics such as: loneliness on a college campus, credit card debt, being strangled by stuff and freedom over fear. Each chapter is divided into three parts. “The scene” tells a story from the authors experience of that of another graduating senior. “The slice” talks about possible ways of working through problems and hanging onto the Christian faith. “The stand” is a brief challenge for the reader to put his faith into action in a specific way.

The author talks to “generation x’ers” about the things that concern them while offering a mature viewpoint based on experience and God’s principles.


Quality—5  Acceptability—5

Does Tom Sirotnak, author of Warriors, know young men? Definitely! From page one Sirotnak hits the nail on the head when it comes to “the guys” Using realistic high school and college scenarios and stories of celebrities, mostly athletes he knows personally, Sirotnak relates well to youth. A member of the Power Team, he also spends time visiting high school and college campuses asking young men everywhere “what makes a real man?”

The first chapter in Warriors is Sirotnak’s testimony—a before-Christ lifestyle idolized by many teens—the emptiness he felt then and the fullness he now knows Sirotnak is no twinkle, his fifty-four inch chest and twenty inch biceps will impress most anyone and the pictures prove it. But his words are even more impressive: honest, bold, and practical.

By addressing Generation X, (those under thirty) a generation searching for itself, Warriors tackles the Xers head on about destiny. Sirotnak challenges young men to find God’s destiny for them and then live it wholeheartedly. “Youth is not a time to waste your life with foolish experiments, whether with drugs, alcohol, or sex. You don’t have time for that. Pursue God, He has a purpose for your life. Then, throw yourself into it with all your heart.” The point: their destiny will fulfill them.

With only 177 pages and containing “get check” questions at the end of each short chapter, Warriors is the new macho manual for spiritually-minded young men.


331.3. Children—Employment—History; Jones, Mother, 1847-.
1930. 88 p. Gr. 6 - 8.

Quality—3  Acceptability—5

We Have Marched Together: the Working Children’s Crusade by Stephen Currie seems to be a book which doesn’t know where it is going. By turns it appears to be a book about national child labor law reform, Mother Jones, who was a rather colorful early labor activist, the Philadelphia textile workers, their strike of 1903, and their subsequent march from Philadelphia to New York City. In addition to its lack of focus, the subject(s) of this slight (eighty-eight pages) volume appear to be rather specialized and narrow for its intended audience of younger readers. It would, perhaps, be of more interest to an undergraduate or graduate level audience. This volume is one in a series entitled Lerner’s People’s History.


Watching Warblers, by Michael Male and Judy Fieth. Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ: Blue Earth Films, 1996. VHS, 60 min., stereo. $34.95 (home use), $85.00 (public performance).

Warblers of the Americas is a comprehensive guide to all the 116 species of wood warblers found in North, Central and South America. Thirty-six color plates, black and white illustrations and color range maps supplement the written species accounts. Curson does a good job of summarizing the current knowledge on the distribution, habits, breeding biology, molt and voice of each species. Quinn and Beadle’s illustrations are well executed and clearly display the age, sex and subspecies variations for all species. Each species account covers the identification, description, geographical variation, voice, habits, breeding status, distribution, migration and moths of each wood warbler. In the introduction there is a useful explanation of the terminology used in describing the various plumages warblers go through in their lifespans. The authors also take special care to address the conservation needs of these birds, many of whom winter in South and Central America while breeding in North America. As part of the Helms series of identification guides to the world’s bird families, *Warblers of the Americas* provides a high level of research at an understandable level. The one drawback to this volume is its cost; a paperback printing would be highly recommended.

A Field Guide to the Warblers of North America has a somewhat more limited focus. Using thirty-two color paintings, 141 color photographs and 60 color maps, Dunn and Garrett have put together a comprehensive guide to the sixty North American species of warblers. As the latest addition to the Peterson series they continue to utilize the “Peterson Identification System” which uses arrows to emphasize key field marks in the identification of a particular species. Unlike previous Peterson guides, which only included paintings, this volume provides the user with many photographs, which emphasize sexual and geographic variations. Dunn and Garrett’s book goes a long way towards demystifying these birds. Of additional assistance are two introductory chapters, which precede the species accounts. The first, “The Natural History of Warblers” displays the vast amount of research behind the writing of this volume. The second, “How to Identify Warblers” provides concise background tips for facing the various problems encountered when watching these birds.

Watching Warblers explores the lives of the thirty-nine warbler species, which nest in eastern North America. This video, ten years in the making, supplements traditional print field guides. Male and Fieth have created a visual masterpiece, which portrays aspects of the warblers’ lives, that can only be captured on film. Watching Warblers does more than help identify members of this family of birds. With breathtaking photography and high-quality sound, the feeding, nesting and breeding behavior of wood warblers is also presented. This husband and wife team of award-winning filmmakers presents the thirty-nine species one by one, highlighting the unique aspects of each. Watching Warblers is an hour of celebrating the beauty of God’s creation, and, a challenge to go out and see these birds for yourself.

Wood Warblers of North America is the second product of Rampheats, a software company in New Hampshire. The principal members of the organization began quantifying the results of ornithological research in South America in the late 1980s, and over several years developed the search engine behind the present product. Wood Warblers is in essence an “electronic field guide,” with fifty-two species of warblers being described. It is one “chapter” in what will eventually become a computer-based guide to all the bird species of North America. The software, which I tested, was at the beta stage of development, and will be available for public distribution shortly. The program opens with a random slideshow of images and songs. One of the unique features of this product is the “rollover” bird schematic, which is part of the field marks index. This interactive schematic allows the user to move their mouse over various parts of the warbler’s anatomy. Choosing a number of specific aspects can lead to focusing a search on a particular bird. For those wanting to use this computer program effectively I would suggest a high-speed 486 PC with Windows 95, as the minimum operating system.

Each of the items listed above should be part of a growing library collection. With the emphasis placed on varying learning styles, more than printed sources, they enhance the learning process for students at all levels. The identification tools reviewed here encourage us to step out into the various natural habitats in which we find ourselves and look, listen and enjoy. TG


649. Baby-sitting—Handbooks, manuals, etc. 99 p. Gr. 6 - 12.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Mary Guleserian and Therese Furey, two sisters, team up to prepare baby-sitters for the challenge and responsibility of watching over children in The Ultimate Baby-Sitter’s Survival Guide. The book is divided into three categories encompassing advice, games, and trouble.

The first category comprises advice on subjects such as rates, arrival and nineteen questions to ask, ten “don’ts,” discipline, caring for infants, toddlers, and older children three and up, meals, bath time, bedtime, and collecting pay. The second category is an accumulation of indoor and outdoor games and activities, thinking games, and science experiments. The third category concentrates on unexpected occurrences describing first aid for a myriad of ailments such as burns, choking, cuts and scrapes, drowning, poisoning, fevers, stomach aches, CPR and obstructed airway instructions for infants and children through age eight, plus how to cope with household emergencies and natural disasters. The book ends with a list of fifty ways to encourage children.

The layout of the book is well-done with step-by-step instructions, listings of required materials for activities and experiments, and relevant pencil drawings by Shara Braithwaite, the primary illustrator, and BC Studios. The book is a valuable source of reading for a first-time baby-sitter and a handy reference for any sitter. DBW

Both of these books are must titles for any library. The content of each is separate and yet related. While one title focuses on job hunting and one focuses on letter writing, there is value in having the how-to’s of both skills at the fingertips. Both volumes are spiral-bound and designed for individualized instruction. Content is outlined and each part of the outline clearly numbered and itemized. Simple explanations are followed by suggested activities and worksheets. Samples support complicated data making it easy to work in each volume for long or short time periods. Materials in each volume supplement the other. Job hunting requires well written letters, and good letter writing skills enhance job application. The volumes are short enough that patrons in their teens and hunting for first jobs will easily slide through from start to finish. Adults with limited experience in letter writing or job application will find the information helpful rather than degrading. Although the data covered in each volume is basic to success in any job seeking/letter writing situation, emphasis is more on entry level. Someone seeking a long-term career or writing a complex formal letter may want a similar type book with the details required.

Because so much of this book is samples and worksheet, a review of chapter highlights really details the contents. *Job Sleuthing* is divided into five chapters and begins with a quick background look at first jobs, career paths, applications and labor laws. Chapter two covers resumes of refinement guaranteed to catch the eye of future employers. Chapter three discusses captivating cover letters to give the presentation edge that opens doors to interviews. Chapter four provides samples of brochures and the means for marketing skills locally. Chapter five ends by outlining the ABC’s of polished interviews that will help achieve getting the job.

Power Penning is divided into three basic sections: Business letters including consumer and request letters, Press Releases, and Letters to the Editor. Quizzes are given along the route as a review of data covered and a test for memory. Each section utilizes

796.357. Baseball. 80 p.


796.323. Basketball. 72 p.


796.44. Gymnastics. 80 p.


796.9. Snowboarding. 64 p.


796.357. Softball. 64 p. Gr. 5 - 9.

Quality—5  Acceptability—5

Fundamental Baseball begins with a brief history of the game, basics of the game in terms of equipment, organization of the field, rules and positions are lightly covered. Fielding, throwing, hitting, and base running are more fully described in separate short chapters.

Fundamental Basketball starts with a brief history of the game followed by a chapter of basics in terms of equipment and field. The play and practice chapter overviews strategies for a better game while the Razzle Dazzle chapter provides hints for polishing the game after mastery of the basic skills.

Fundamental Gymnastics contains a brief history followed by a long chapter review of basics focusing on each type of equipment and its related exercises. One chapter is devoted to preparing for the actual showtime and a Razzle Dazzle chapter identifies various ways to polish a program from performing an exercise to winning the event.

Fundamental Hockey (ice hockey is the main example) begins with a brief history of the sport followed by an extensive chapter of basics in terms of equipment, rules and terminology. Unique rules are further defined by examples in a separate chapter. The Razzle Dazzle chapter allows perfection of style, and a short chapter at the end describes other hockey games with similar rules and moves.

Fundamental Snowboarding, a relatively new sport, describes briefly how the sport began. The basics chapter begins with the ability to know the snow, equipment, clothing, and proper safety before beginning trial basic moves. Chapters progress to more advanced maneuvers, competitive areas and their judging, ways of practicing when not on the slopes, and fancy stunts.

Fundamental Softball covers many of the same elements as the baseball volume but transfers them into everyday use in amateur sandlot and playground games. In this volume the basics are truly rudimentary and the photographs could be neighbors or teammates. Basics regarding rules, equipment, and skills are covered.

As a series, the simple beginning concepts information is clear, and the photographs apply to the item being discussed. The photographs are clear, colorful and enticing. The diagrams and drawings included are simple and clear. The format of each volume is basically the same including a glossary, and index. Each sport is presented as if any reader could succeed. The professional aspects of the game take a back seat to the amateur participation although in some of the sports professionals are shown in action. While all sports have an element of injury, the volume on snowboarding, a popular new individual sport, seems to provide the how-to for more potential danger than the others. PBB


917.94. California. 144 p.


917.73. Illinois. 144 p.


917.47. New York. 144 p.


917.64. Texas. 144 p.


917.75. Virginia. 144 p. Gr. 5 - 8.

Quality—5  Acceptability—5

Benchmark Books, a division of Marshall Cavendish, has produced a set of states books suitable for upper elementary/middle school level readers. The format is somewhat larger with an easily readable typeface. Each volume contains a complete index, several maps (road, places to see, landforms, products), and multiple color and black and white pictures as well as illustrative charts. Each volume is set up in an identical manner, a reassuring aspect for children using information from more than one volume.

The introduction of each book consists of famous quotations about the state. Other sections include history, geography, government and economy, people, achievements, landmarks, state survey and an extensive bibliography of further resources. An interesting feature of the state survey section is the inclusion of a state song and mini-biographies of famous residents of the state.

Each of the five reviewed volumes is a high quality hard cover book with library bindings, and presents an excellent overview of the state in its title. (One exception is the reversal in California of the road and landform maps.) With copyright dates of 1997, the reader can be sure of reasonably accurate and up to date information for any state-related research project. There is a strong environmental strain throughout each book. The Celebrate the States series has tastefully included this current topic within the context of the changes that have occurred over time.

Using any of the Celebrate the States volumes will provide students with a good overview of each individual state. The approach is straightforward, almost conversational which makes a somewhat easier read than many other fact packed volumes. This style encourages the reader to investigate further both in this series and in other sources. The format, readability, and layout of text and pictures provide an excellent early research resource. BAW


Quality—4  Acceptability—5

Thomas Garrett and William Still, the subjects of Dear Friend, are rather unlikely compatriots, yet through the years of their correspondence and alliance, they helped hundreds of slaves travel the Underground Railroad to freedom. Garrett, a white Quaker from Delaware, and William Still, a free black of Philadelphia joined as "friends of humanity" in the common cause of aiding the oppressed. This book chronicles their friendship, their correspondence and their collaboration to free the oppressed. Also covered are many stories of the slaves themselves and their fight for freedom.

This biography for young people is well written, quickly read and includes many photos and sketches
that bring the story to life. Middle schoolers and those older will find in this book the subject of the Underground Railroad told from an unusual slant and in an appealing way. It will be a good addition to the non-fiction collection of a school or public library.


921 (305.897). Banks, Dennis; Ojibwa Indians—Biography; American Indian Movement. 112 p.

Quality—2   Acceptability—2

Kae Cheatham presents only the Native American side of stories and not all the facts in her book Dennis Banks. According to a quote of Banks in the book, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) has done more to hurt Native American communities than to help them. No reference is made to all that the BIA provides for many Native American communities—roads, utilities, police, hospitals, and schools. Mr. Banks statement is accurate if Native people want to do without these services and live the way life was 150 years ago.

The book reports that Mr. Banks was in trouble with the law often in the late sixties and early seventies and not always because of peaceful demonstrations. According to the book, Mr. Banks and the American Indian Movement took the law into their own hands on several occasions in order to force the U.S. government to abide by the old treaties and to listen to what Native Americans had to say. Many incidents ended in violence. Native Americans are often portrayed as innocent victims, yet by reading between the lines, you can see that possible verbal abuse on the part of Native Americans may have provoked some of the violence that is portrayed as undeserved. Dennis Banks represents an organization whose actions show that they have no problem with using violence to get what they think they deserve. JM


921 (578). Leeuwenhoek, Antoni van, 1632-1723; Biologists—Netherlands—Biography; Microscopes; Microscopy; Biologists. 128 p. Gr. 5 - 12.

Quality—5   Acceptability—5

One of the Great Minds of Science series, the book Antoni Van Leeuwenhoek, First to See Microscopic Life is attractive and inviting from cover to cover. The artistic, colorful, library-bound cover will draw the attention of students young and old. The large print and wide margins make the book very inviting and enjoyable to read. Black and white photographs, maps, drawings, and diagrams spread throughout the book greatly enhance the text.

Because of the well-done presentation, this book by Lisa Yount would be interesting and informative for both elementary and middle school students. It covers the personal information on the life of Van Leeuwenhoek and facts about his discoveries with the microscope.

A chronology on the life of Van Leeuwenhoek, chapter notes, a glossary, a list for further reading, and an index located at the end of the book are helpful to those interested in further information. EK


921 (888). Baldwin, James, 1924-1987; Authors; American, Civil rights workers; Afro-Americans—Biography. 95 p.


921 (795.1). Henson, Jim; Puppeteers; Television producers and directors; Muppet show (Television program). 112 p.


921 (947). Caesar, Julius; Heads of state; Generals; Rome—History; Republic, 265-30 B.C. 112 p.


921 (888). Baldwin, James, 1924-1987; Authors; American, Civil rights workers; Afro-Americans—Biography. 95 p.


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921 (888). Baldwin, James, 1924-1987; Authors; American, Civil rights workers; Afro-Americans—Biography. 95 p.
The story of Thurgood Marshall graphically pictures the discrimination faced by black Americans. It is written from the liberal perspective and several quotes by Marshall include profanity. Quality—4 Acceptability—4


921 (792.8). Indians of North America—Biography; Tallchief, Maria; Ballet dancers; Osage Indians—Biography; Women—Biography. 128 p.


Quality—3 Acceptability—3

In telling the life story of Maria Tallchief, the author includes quite a bit of history of the Osage people. Maria’s life story is covered quite well, from her birth and early training, her experiences with ballet, her three marriages, to her “retirement” spent training new dancers.

**Sitting Bull** tells the story of the struggles between the Sioux Indians and the white man from the perspective of the Sioux Indians. At times the story is told in such a way that the anger of some Native Americans toward the white man could be intensified. Sitting Bull was a religious man and his reliance on the gods of his tribe is very evident.

The first seven chapters of Sacagawea tell the story of the Lewis and Clark expedition and Sacagawea’s involvement. The book ends with a chapter which tells what happened to Lewis and Clark after the expedition. The last chapter also includes two different stories of what happened to Sacagawea after the expedition.

A portion of Jim Thorpe reads like a sports page—a lot of statistics. The author is very interested in facts: if she found a myth to be untrue, she will tell you so. Outside of sports, Thorpe’s life included two divorces, a variety of short term jobs, a bout with lip cancer, and three heart attacks, the final one being fatal.

The authors of this series seem to have done their research before writing the books. Several comments in their introduction on myths about the person which were found to be false in their research. The books are for the most part written from the Native American perspective, at times making the white man look bad, perhaps worse that it really was. These books would help non-Native Americans get a feel for what is like to be a Native American in a white man’s world. They may also give the student a different perspective on history. Each of the books in this series end with a chronology, chapter notes, glossary, bibliography, and index.


Quality—3 Acceptability—4

Jim Thorpe was an athlete who became famous for his great speed in the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm, Sweden. He was an American Indian who very much loved the outdoors and had trouble settling in school. His father valued education enough to persist in keeping Jim involved. Eventually he found athletic success because of his great speed at Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, coached by the great Pop Warner. After the Olympics, his medals were taken from him because he had innocently played baseball on a minor league team one summer. His records were reinstated and duplicate medals were presented to his family after his death.

The narrative of Jim Thorpe’s early life is a bit confusing and drops some details. As the book progresses through his life, the mention of his excessive drinking and divorces seem almost casual. However, the text went into quite a bit of detail about the town of “Jim Thorpe,” even though the place does not really have much to do with him personally, except that his body is buried there.

The book is illustrated by several black and white photos. Included also is a poem of several pages written by his daughter and a present day picture of her. At the end of the book is a bibliography of further suggested reading.


921 (823). Christie, Agatha, 1890-1976; Authors; English Women—Biography; Mystery fiction—Authorship. 111 p. Gr. 7 - Adult.

Quality—5 Acceptability—4

Carol Dommermuth-Costa’s biography relates the life story of Agatha Christie, one of the world’s most popular mystery writers. An influential figure in Agatha’s decision to become an author was Clara, her mother, who told bedtime stories of conundrum and peril, arousing Agatha’s inquisitiveness regarding the unfamiliar. At the age of seventeen, Clara recommended Agatha attempt to write a story, marking the beginning of Agatha’s lifework. During Agatha’s marriage to Archie Christie, she wrote books so Clara would not have to sell Ashfield, her childhood home, in England. Agatha’s first mystery novel launched Hercule Poirot. In The Murder of Roger Ackroyd, Agatha modified her story design, leading to unprecedented fame. When Archie asked for a divorce, Agatha disappeared for ten days, never divulging her reasons. The Christie’s divorced, and Agatha used her writing as a catalyst for recovery.

On a visit to an archaeological excavation in Ur, Agatha met her second husband, Max Mallowan, an archaeologist. She assisted Max on a handful of archeological excursions, utilizing some of the experiences as a springboard for her writings. Though Agatha authored an immense number of writings, she considered writing a hobby.

The book is excellently compiled, with a reinforced binding, superior quality paper, and black and white pencil drawings and photographs throughout the text. Well-authenticated, the book includes a list of sources, a bibliography, an index, and photo acknowledgments. The book’s hard cover and dust jacket is attractively illustrated with Agatha’s photo and a colorful rendition of the Orient Express, a train featured in one of her stories.


921 (793.5). Presidents; Jackson, Andrew, 1767-1845. 128 p.


921 (793.5). Presidents; Madison, James, 1751-1836. 128 p.


973.91. Presidents; Roosevelt, Theodore, 1858-1919. 128 p.


Quality—4 Acceptability—4

The United States Presidents series published by Enslow provide readers with a brief, yet solid study of these chosen leaders of our country. Each portrayal provides readers with varied and colorful highlights, giving dimension to each president.
The books are balanced in the biographical material; they have enough details to make the subject come alive, yet they do not provide so much that the reader will have to wade through irrelevant details. The uncomplicated vocabulary and sentence structure make the series one that younger elementary students will be able to comprehend, and older readers able to absorb readily.

By studying the presidents one realizes that no matter if a person is rich or poor, highly educated or self-made, a leader on the battle field or a leader on the court floors, the main qualifier for presidency is determination. The books highlight how each of the presidents had some sort of obstacle to overcome in order to become elected; and while some weren’t overwhelmingly popular while they served in office, history and time has proven them to be leaders.

Each book is slightly over a hundred pages long, and has an index, chapter notes, and further reading suggestions. There are also several internet addresses listed for each president.

Each president had to face social issues relevant to their times be it slavery, racial prejudice or using bombs. These issues are part of history and each author deals appropriately with each instance so even middle readers can comprehend and reflect on the decisions that had to be made. PW


Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Certain Indian chiefs remain “household words” forever identified with the wars of the Great Plains following the Civil War. This is the biography of one, a member of the Sioux Hunkpapa tribe, Slow, (thinking time not speed). Slow at the age of fourteen earned the warrior name Sitting Bull, following a raid upon the Crow. Each chapter chronicles the general life and career of this great man by defining a particular leadership trait, or a growth change in his life which influenced his role as Hunkpapa chief, until his betrayal following the Ghost Dance uprising. St. George describes a spiraling life of a warrior who tried to lead his people in the established traditions of nomadic plains Indian life. The changing frontier and its infringements on that life forced him as chief to participate in a war he did not wish but felt he could not avoid with the whites.

St. George describes a caring man, through his family relationships, his tribal image, his spiritual feelings, his humane actions and his warring activity. Songs and poems are incorporated throughout the book. Each chapter begins with one, and several are included because they were a natural part of his daily life. The picture calendar of the Hunkpapa is often interpreted in the action of the chapter as well. In this way St. George presents the Indian perception of a beloved chief forever part of this nation’s history. An extensive bibliography and detailed index make this a valuable research tool and validate the information presented here. St. George admits in the forward she spent time traveling in the footsteps of Sitting Bull, hoping to tie the vastness of his land with the spirit of the man. This caring on the part of the author is evident in her presentation of the person. PBB


939. Nuba; Sudan. 80 p.


939. Incas—History; Incas—Antiquities; Indians of South America. 80 p.


948. Vikings; Northmen. 80 p.


909. Civilization; Islamic; Islamic Empire—History. 80 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

From its historical antecedents to the present geography, daily life, history, culture, and religions, short readable chapters illustrated with photographs, drawings, and maps provide young readers with connections to the present day Africa, in The Ancient Kingdom of Kush. For example, on page twenty-three the photograph of a modern Sudanese village appear opposite a description of a paragraph describing Kushite homes as “rectangular brick.” The photograph could have been taken of an ancient village and allows the reader to visually compare the two. Later the author discusses how modern Africans helped the archeology team understand how homes were arranged because their own homes were still arranged in that manner. Connections are also made with the arts by pointing out that Verdi’s Aida was a Kushite princess.

This series provides an overview, history, and geography, modern day information and a “If you were a boy/girl” page to let the reader see what his life would be like if he lived there. Highly readable with balanced descriptions and information and photographs will make this volume useful for teaching Ancient History and Bible History as well as about Africa today. A time line, glossary, bibliography, and index are included; however paintings do not always carry a citation of artist or the painting’s name.

Other titles in the series follow the same format. Bibliography and For Further reading include titles on both the student’s and teacher’s levels. These should be made available in a well-stocked public library. The bindings should allow the books to see much use. The Golden Age of Islam explains what followers of Mohammed believe and will be helpful in explaining the religious practices of those people in areas where there is a large Muslim population.

In The Vikings and The Incas readers find descriptions of the cultural heritage left by those peoples in the areas where they lived, and in the case of the Vikings, where they sailed and pillaged. Readers of The Incas will find a good discussion of reasons for the decline of the Inca civilization and a description of life for their descendants in today’s Peru. LGR


940.1. Knights and knighthood. 48 p.


913. Ancient architecture; Ancient civilization. 48 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality—5 Acceptability—4

The somewhat oversized format of these books’ pages allows for print and many illustrations within. While not cartoonish, illustrations are not quite realistic either, but captions which are in rather small print give information about what readers see. Photographs of places and objects as well as maps pack much information into the volumes with overlays younger readers will enjoy. Similar in format to Dorling Kindersley publications with small bites of information and a lot of visuals.

Medieval Knights describes knighthood and life during Medieval times while providing an insight into the history and demise of the knights. The time is somewhere around the 15th century when gunpowder was invented and any man could become a professional soldier, or mercenary, wanting and expecting pay for services, not land, as had been the practice with knights. Readers will be able to identify parts of a knight’s clothing, go inside a manor house, Ain Habis, a cave fortress, and a ship. Short bites of text, quotations from people living during the time, drawings and pictures from the period are used to convey what life was like when knighthood was in flower. Includes a time line and index.

Ancient Wonders uses the same format and arrangement. It includes the pyramids of Egypt, temples of Petra, Carthage, a Minoan palace, Stonehenge, Chichen Itza, and others. This volume gives a brief look at these places and how they were constructed. For more information, other sources will need to be consulted. Many of the places shown are religious centers in other parts of the ancient and modern world. This volume should help modern readers understand what Buddhist temples and places of worship in Celtic Britain were like and provide enough information for a good overview and to tie into social studies and history classes. Readers will go back to these again and again. LGR

940.54. World War, 1939-1945—Personal narrative, Russian
188. xxixp. Gr. 6 - 9.
Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Tatjana Wassiljewa began her diary in April, 1941, writing “In this diary I have written everything I can remember about myself and my family since I was five, and I have decided to record every good thing that ever happens to me.” Ironically, within a few months she was recording major events whether or not they were happy. Tatjana was living in Wyrzita, Russia, in June, 1941, when Nazi Germany invaded. After nearly starving to death at home, at fourteen she was taken, as one of the 7,000,000 prisoners to labor in Germany first on a farm and then in the city factories. Simple survival became her goal until freedom was again bestowed at the end of the war. Then at eighteen, alone in a foreign country, passport-less, and basically penniless, Tatjana had to find her way back home to Russia seeking any family members who also might have survived. Former German labor prisoners were treated by postwar, suspicious Soviet officials as traitors and spies because of their “contacts” in the West. However Tatjana was able to overcome each obstacle as it arose ultimately achieving her lifetime dream of becoming a teacher.

The book is simply written in diary format and reminiscent of Anne Frank. Although it seems as if the reading level should be lower because of the simplicity of the translation from the Russian, the content centers on man’s inhumanity to man and requires a more mature mind to process the enormity of personal suffering encountered here. Little has been written for this age group about the Russian civilian prisoners removed from their country to work in German cities. Tatjana’s courage and faith in other people are reflected in the positive acceptance of each event and her determination to survive and return home. This book leaves the reader marveling at the resilience of the individual and reflecting on man’s treatment of other humans. PBB


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

These books in the World History Series give a thorough coverage of the subject with an enlightening view, and an eye toward showing the motivation of the participants. Each title begins with the same forward that explains why we should study history and how this series meets those needs. Each book follows a similar format. This includes references to primary and secondary sources, often inserted in boxes within the text, and footnoted at the end. Before the overview given in the introduction is a time line featuring major events. Each volume ends with a bibliography, a glossary, pictures credits, an index, and information about the author. Illustrations are black and white photographs. For the more ancient times, these are of art work and drawings, in the more current times these are mainly news pictures. Maps are interspersed where appropriate.

The Byzantine Empire by James A. Corrick covers a time period of 1400 years, an incredible effort in 99 pages of text. This was a people with a history of exerting power, participating in wars, and conquering territory. It was a culture with a deep love for learning, exerting power, participating in wars, and conquering territory. It was a culture with a deep love for learning, religion, the dignity of women and of marriage, and the value of the arts. The author states that Augustus was quiet humane in comparison with the leaders that followed him. Because a couple of accounts briefly mention sexual matters, this book may be too mature for those below sixth grade level.

In The Chinese Cultural Revolution, David Pietrusza bases his presentation on Chinese culture and history, so the reader can understand the effect of the promises and political correctness of Communism, and Mao’s vast impact on that society. Because Mao operated generally throughout his life from a lust for power and a personal revolutionary zeal, he manipulated the masses and destroyed his enemies. Numerous mention is made of the use of public humiliation and ridicule of those who were being brought down out of power. No mention is made of the persecution of Christians during this time, except in the broad sense that the Red Guard destroyed anything that came from the West.


959.7. Vietnam. 64 p.

946. Spain. 64 p.

932. Egypt. 64 p.


The heritage of some terminology is explained in the text. When talking of the universe, the authors claim that most astronomers consider the Big Bang Theory to be correct. Some information about DNA was given as proof for evolution.

Stephen R. Lilley, in The Conquest of Mexico, captures the adventurous spirit of Cortez in a story-telling style. He attempts to defend and promote both the Spanish and Aztec points of view. The Spanish were driven by the strange combination of a zeal for spreading the church and personal greed. They succeeded with significant help from peoples previously mistreated by the Aztecs. The Aztecs believed the Spanish were gods and were partially defeated by their own fears.

The period of the most outstanding achievements of the Ancient Romans is covered in The Age of Augustus by Don Nardo. Augustus Caesar believed that he had a divine destiny to rule. He was a capable, fair, and shrewd leader. He believed deeply in the practice of religion, the dignity of women and of marriage, and the value of the arts. The author states that Augustus was quiet humane in comparison with the leaders that followed him. Because a couple of accounts briefly mention sexual matters, this book may be too mature for those below sixth grade level.

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Olivia Skelton chooses to introduce Vietnam to her young readers with a Vietnamese folk tale, Spirits of Mountain and Sea, which sets the stage for an elementary understanding of the complex country of Vietnam. For the present day elementary student who has no recollection of the Vietnam War, the folk tale serves as an interesting starting point for learning about this country where struggle has been the norm. Using clear text and beautiful photographs of Vietnam today, she sketches an overview of five areas of Vietnam: Geography and History, People, Family Life, Festivals, and Food, School and Recreation, and The Arts. Easily read maps, headings in bold print, and the added bonus of short vignettes of customs, together with table of contents, glossary, bibliography, country facts, and index make this a wonderful tool for the social studies teacher, as well as the student needing to write that annual country report!

Each book in the series covers the same general chapters and shares similar structure including library binding. Included is a short biographical paragraph on the author.


Quality—4 Acceptability—5

This colorful, library bound book in the United States Presidents Series is an informative, interesting volume on the life of George Washington. Black and white pictures and copies of official documents are sprinkled liberally throughout the book. While information is given on Washington’s early life and also his retirement, the majority of the book covers his public life.

Interesting facts about precedents set by Washington that are still followed today make the information interesting to both young students and adults. Included at the conclusion of the book is a chronology of Washington’s life, a list of chapter notes with sources quoted, sources for further reading, internet addresses, and an index. EK


973.7. Underground railroad. 128 p.


979.4. California—Gold discoveries; California—History—1846-1850. 128 p.


Quality—4 Acceptability—5

These volumes, including The Underground Railroad in American History, are part of a series dealing with topics in American history. There are four other volumes in the series not reviewed here.

The story of the Underground Railroad is clearly told from its beginning to the time when it was no longer used. Here the reader will find the cast of characters, the “conductors” or guides on the perilous journey to freedom; the “stations” houses where the fleeing slaves could rest and gain strength to continue their flight north to freedom in relative safety. The author also includes a description of a slave in the South before the War Between the States. Much of this is amplified by the use of first person accounts which describe the individual’s life.

One interesting fact given was that in 1820 there were 1,519,017 people in bondage and that by 1860 that number had risen to almost 4 million while the white population was over 8 million, a fourth of which owned slaves. That rise in the numbers of people in slavery and the relatively small numbers of whites owning slaves reflects the economic impact of the large plantations where many slaves were employed.

Another, often overlooked fact, is that there was slavery in the North but because it was not profitable for Northerners it soon was abolished. Yet the prejudice and hostility against the Blacks remained. But it was in the North that the anti-slavery sentiment grew and flourished and it was to the North that the runaway slaves came.

Several incidents retold in the volume have been used as the basis for children’s and young adult stories, i.e. Harriet Jacobs and William and Ellen Craft, which Florence B. Freedman used as the basis of her story Two Tickets to Freedom. Many of the titles listed in “Further Reading” are available in libraries and school library media centers.

Each volume is well-organized with time line, chapter notes, suggestions for further reading and an index. The readable text is set off by black and white illustrations of some of the people mentioned in the text, period drawings and photographs. Also a reproduction of posters and some maps are included.

While more complete biographies of the people involved in the Underground Railroad and the Anti-slavery movement exist, this volume, and the others in the series, will be useful for class projects and research. LGR
A Note from the Editor: by Mary McKinney

“There are three things that last forever; faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of them all is love.”

1 Corinthians 13

Love is that great universal theme underlaying almost every type of written piece, movie or video. Wherever one turns you come face to face with the reality of love’s presence, or the lack of it. Unfortunately, in the 90’s there is much less an unselfish, giving love than the “do your own thing, whatever feels good,” type of self indulgence. And so comes the flood of books covering every aspect of “love” imaginable.

Critics of such popularized “romance” fiction are as abundant as the reading material itself. I have even heard fair warning to women to beware of being “hooked” on romance novels, as they are as much an addiction as anything else. But as always, a general statement can never truly represent the whole, and though it is good to consider our actions, I believe that with a little forethought and care we can find uplifting and encouraging tales. Such well-written, thoughtful stories can spur us on to desire a better relationship with our marriage partner and help us graciously to give preference to others.

“There is no fear in love; but love casts out fear.” (1 John 4:18.) With such wisdom and admonition from the greatest source, God’s Word, let us discover together some possibilities of fine reading, or at least good and wholesome entertainment that may leave the reader with fruitful inspiration!

Some notable authors in the “romance” field are Michael Phillips and Judith Pella. They have co-authored several series that are outstanding examples of fine entertainment mixed with a much appreciated godliness. The Stonewyck Series, and The Russians are excellent examples of all that is truly wholesome in well-written romance novels. As well as an interesting read, the reader can expect to find spiritual insight into God’s perspective on love and His divine leading and purpose in relationships as well.

Other fine authors in the “romance” arena include Linda Chaikin with her Heart of India Series, as well as, The Royal Pavilions and The Great Northwest Series. In my opinion, Boede Thoene (pronounced Tay’nee) has an outstanding series, The Shiloh Legacy, mixing romance, adventure, and of course, historical accuracy in her presentation. Lori Wick has many popular books out as well, a favorite of mine being The Kensington Chronicles. Several of her novels have dominated the best seller list.

New books are being added daily to this popular genre. There’s a lot to say about romance novels, but especially that they speak to that most moving emotion of all—love. A noted doctor listed several emotions which produced disease in human beings: fear, frustration, rage, resentment, hatred, envy, and jealousy. He then noted that the one and only antidote that can save people from being destroyed by these powerful forces is—you guessed it—love!
Linda Chaikin weaves a tale of exotic adventure, mystery and love in *Endangered*. Sable Dunsmonr has lived in East Africa her entire life. Her family has managed a wildlife reserve and game viewing lodge for two generations. Sable’s mother, recently deceased, was a medical missionary. Sable’s sister, Kate, is following in her footsteps. Since her teens, Sable’s heart has been consumed with the endangered species of Africa, and, one man...Kash Hallet. But two years before, Kash walked out of her life and Sable has spent that time in Toronto nursing her terminally ill mother. Now, Sable has returned to Africa “almost” engaged, ready to assist her father in working with the elephants, determined to share the Jesus film with the natives, and sure that she has left all feelings of Kash far behind. Then, she sees him once more.

*Endangered* contains inspiring themes of enduring love, family devotions, and the importance of reaching out to lost for Jesus. The heroine is passionate and determined to share the Jesus film with the elephants, determined to share the Jesus film with the natives, and sure that she has left all feelings of Kash far behind. Then, she sees him once more.

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F. Christian fiction; World War, 1914-1919—Egypt—Fiction; World War, 1914-1919—Iraq—Fiction; Nurses—Fiction. 458 p. HS. Adult.

Quality—5  Acceptability—5

A major in the British Intelligence, Bret Holden lives with loneliness, cynicism, and frustration. Secret fears, buried beneath his hard demeanor, do little to remedy the trials of warfare and espionage for Bret in 1914. He won’t allow himself to commit to anyone.

Nurse Allison Wescott, also British, serves wounded soldiers in a military compound close to Basra. She longs for news of Bret’s whereabouts, not hearing from him for a year. Unimaginable difficulties face Allison, her co-workers Marra, Emily and Wade as they minister to wounded men on the Arabian desert overrun by German troops. Bret unexpectedly appears and rescues Allison, making arrangements for her evacuation to safety in Egypt with family.

During her respite, she meets her mother’s cousin, Sir Edgar, the new Cairo chief of police, and is thrown into danger searching for an unnamed treasure at the home of a socialite friend, Sarah Blaine. Allison discovers Bret is involved in an investigation involving the new police chief and together they resolve the mystery of a priceless Egyptian treasure.

Linda Chaikin’s sequel to *Arabian Winds, Lions of the Desert* follows her pattern of riveting suspense. Allison, a committed Christian, permeates the story with her mature view of God, probably because of her background, having sat under the tutelage of Oswald Chambers. She learns not only patience as she waits for God’s will regarding her relationship with Bret, but courage as she comes against the fears of a world steeped in lies and selfishness. Bret and Allison learn to trust God in an uncertain world during the “war to end all wars.”


Quality—5  Acceptability—5

**Winds of Allegiance** is the second book in the Great Northwest Series by Linda Chaikin. Both stories stand alone. Ms. Chaikin uses the historical events of the mid 1800’s in what was then called Oregon Country to tell a story of love, intrigue, vengeance, and faith. Three countries—the United States, England, and Russia—all lay claim to this vast wilderness rich with resources. Sir Douglas from England desires to be the next governor of the British Northwest; Baron Sarakof seeks to clinch a deal for the Czar of Russia; Captain Trace Wilder, whose ship sails the Pacific Ocean, proudly claims the land for the United States. Savannah Rezanov Mackenzie, the beautiful niece of Sir Douglas, finds herself the pawn of all three men, each one seeking her allegiance to help him carry out his own separate mission.

Savanah wrestles with her loyalty to King George or to God; she desires to find her lost father and learn about her Russian roots, inherited from the mother she never knew, both of which the Baron offers to solve for her. Everything becomes complicated by the American, Trace Wilder, who believes the Baron is dangerous, and declares himself Savanah’s protector. Who will win the love of Savannah? Will her allegiance be to England, Russia, or America? Can she keep her faith amidst the temptations of power, greed, prestige, and political intrigue? Whom can she trust when everyone seems to be spying on someone else?

This story gives the reader a personal look at early American history on the Western frontier. The book contains a helpful map to assist the reader in following the geography of the story; and Chaikin concludes the book with a good list of historical notes to put the fictional story in its historical time period. DS


F. Frontier and pioneer life—California—Fiction; Young men—California—Fiction; Sherrif—California—Fiction 335 p. Gr 10 - Adult.

Quality—3  Acceptability—5

Sheriff Matt Page is actually the acting Sheriff while his predecessor recovers from a gunshot wound. The former Sheriff, John Taylor, and also Matt’s wife’s father, has indicated that he will probably not run for office again. But he resents Matt taking over his office and duties even though it is necessary. He shows up at the office every day, offers his advice on all matters, and demeans Matt’s methods in front of others.

Matt’s dear wife, Sarah, feels caught in the middle between her loyalty for her husband and her love for her father, and tries to keep the peace between them. The story takes place in California in the town of Bridgeport, and many are the challenges for keeping the peace: a group of Indians who claim one of their members has been killed and his body decapitated and dumped in the river; a traveling Evangelist who seems suspicious; a mine accident; a stagecoach holdup and robbery.

Matt tries to combine duty with his Christian beliefs, but is often torn about what is right and what is necessary to keep justice in his community. Trouble piles on trouble, Matt and Sarah quarrel over her father’s decision to run for office again, the evangelist turns out to be an infamous outlaw, and the Indians threaten the town if the murderer of their friend is not punished.

W. E. Davis, author, has an new adventure in every chapter, and the plot keeps moving. Some of the chase scenes are prolonged and tedious. Descriptions of the beautiful scenery in the Yosemite region are quite picturesque. Western lovers should like this adventure
of some of the early settlers in the West. There are some violence and murder scenes. BGT


F. Romance fiction; Middle Ages—Fiction. 272 p. Gr. 9 - Adult.

Quality—2 Acceptability—4

Thomas, King Phillip's brother, awaits the arrival of his wife, Elizabeth. They had been separated for two years, during a war in the kingdom of Lynaleigh. Though he loves her deeply, she dreads returning to him. She would prefer to live in the safety of a monastery. Her mind has been poisoned by her bitter attendant, Ellen. Elizabeth has been told over and over that all men are scoundrels and never faithful to their wives.

Tom is happy they are reunited but is puzzled at Elizabeth's cool and distant reception. He promises to wait until she loves him as he loves her. She relentlessly rejects him, suspects his motives in everything he does, and turns from him. He prays for patience and persists in his courtship.

Meanwhile, their kingdom is threatened by scoundrels and one in particular, Taliferros, who wishes to overthrow the king. When Elizabeth turns to him, believing him an ally, her naiveté is savagely destroyed. She feels her chances for forgiveness from her husband are impossible, though she now realizes he is the true love of her life.

Author DeAnna Julie Dodson, weaves a fanciful tale about castles and kings, knights and honor, royalty and slaves. Though predictable, the story paints a picture of times long gone, and romance and treachery. There is one violent rape scene alluded to, and many love scenes. There is also some violence, but no more than one can expect of a violent age. BGT


F. Romance fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 269 p. Adult.

Quality—4 Acceptability—4

Walker's Point is the location of Amanda Kelly's family seaside cottage. Amanda spent summers there as a child, and as she grew, assisted her grandparents in their antique shop. It was at Walker's Point, the summer of Amanda's eighteenth year, that she first fell in love. His name was Chris Davis—handsome, a musician, and...not a Christian. But that was long ago. Now, Amanda is in her thirties, married, has two children, and is in New York with her employer to shop for antiques. After spending a carefree day "seeing the sights," as she is entering her hotel, she runs into the entourage of Christopher Davis—famous rock star. Amanda and Chris become reacquainted, the years seem to fade, and Amanda is faced with a choice. Will she remain true to her marriage vows, or return to the arms of the man she fell in love with, so long ago?

Marilee Dunker has written a novel about misunderstandings, first loves, and the commitment of marriage. The characters are interesting and real. The subject of marital unfaithfulness in a Christian novel is risky—especially when little time is devoted to her marriage relationship. The entire story revolves solely around her past and present relationship with Chris. Therefore, one tends to sympathize with Amanda and Chris and with their "lost love." Readers should be cautioned that although there is no content containing adultery, there is content containing unfaithfulness.


F. Mystery fiction; Bicycle racing—Fiction. 352 p. Gr. 9 - Adult.

Quality—3 Acceptability—3

Ian Kendall is a cyclist who is competing in the Tour de France 2,300 mile race. He convinces Chase, his girl friend, to come along and watch the race. Other eyes are on this race as well, hoping to use Ian as the central figure to teach the world a lesson and bring fear for a large-scale uprising by the IRA. At each point of the race the tension increases in not only the bike race, but the race between good and evil. Drew Gregory from the CIA must figure out exactly who is behind all the sabotaging and bomb threats that follow the race before destruction hits. A tragic accident that was carefully plotted finishes the race for Ian. Carefully hiding the fact that Ian still lives, Drew tries to run down the main force that threatens mass destruction at the finish so that the race can end in glory.

The Race for Autumn's Glory is a fast-paced novel that will keep one on edge until the last page. For those who like mysteries, The Race for Autumn's Glory will be a challenge to the reader to see if they can solve the mystery and tie in all the clues before the book ends. On the other hand, the first hundred pages gives a background for all the characters that are involved and may become frustrating as each chapter deals with another scene and another set of characters. This book is not for the first time mystery reader or one who likes to have the main character easily identified and used exclusively during the story. The novel is 352 pages long and one may become bogged down unless one is a serious reader. DAW


F. Louisiana—Fiction; Mystery fiction. 205 p. Gr. 11 - Adult.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Set in the quiet, bayou back country of Louisiana, All the Days Were Summer, by Robert Funderburk, is the second of the Dylan St. John novels. Dylan, a policeman, and his wife, Susan, have left the dangerous streets of Baton Rouge for a quiet, deputy position in the little delta town of Evangeline. Only the quiet is quickly disturbed when the town's mayor, and then other small towns mayors, is murdered in a rather unique fashion. Motives and leads are scarce, and the search for answers leads Dylan back to the capitol in pursuit of a mysterious beauty who has an interest in medieval weaponry and Camelot.

All the Days Were Summer moves quickly and is action packed all through. The Gospel message is carefully woven in, but more important, the themes of integrity, honesty, and fidelity come through strong in Dylan’s approach to his job and his relationship with his wife. The Louisiana setting and lifestyle is wonderfully portrayed throughout, and will satisfy those whose love or interest turns to the deep South. I learned a lot about a culture that was as foreign to me as any land across the sea. I could almost taste the crawdads and Cajon food, and smell the sweet moss and magnolias at sundown.

This book will hold the interest of any adventurous and action hungry reader, while satisfying the concerns of those who want something that holds values and morals in respect. Because of the nature of the murders and intrigue, though, it might need a more mature audience. GCH


F. Christian fiction; United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Fiction; Richmond (Va.)—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Fiction. 444 p. Gr. 9 - Adult.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Carrie Cromwell looks out over the city of Richmond and waits with bated breath. "How long?" she wonders to herself. Will the war end soon? Will the Northern troops take her beloved city? Carrie slowly turns away and tries to dismiss her fears. She treads heavily back to the hospital to put in another long day tending to the wounded troops. After several weeks, Carrie has the opportunity to do some "real" doctoring under the tutelage of Dr. Wild. He finds her work admirable and even desires to learn from her the ways of herbal medicine. Eventually, Carrie is summoned to the only hospital for blacks in Richmond where she encounters danger and prejudice at every turn. With only her work as solace, Carrie awaits the return of her fiancee, Robert. Little does she know, that he is being ministered to by a black family. Her prayers for him and his thoughts of her keep them both alive through the spirit of hope.

The horrors of the Civil War are brought to life in this novel. Heaps upon heaps of mangled corpses, body parts, and disease are daily occurrences as described in this book. Virginian Gaffney takes special care to describe the various battles and the political aspects of each. Her knowledge of the South and their genteel ways is interesting without becoming disdainful. Readers can come away with a deeper understanding as to what motivated both sides in fighting this infamous war. MH

F. Mystery stories; Abortion—Fiction; Kidnapping—Fiction. 268 p. Gr. 9 - Adult.

Quality—4  Acceptability—5

April Operation is the third book in Linda Hall’s mystery series featuring Sergeant Roger Sheppard of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It is a stand-alone novel dealing with the murder of abortion doctor, Douglas Shanahan, and the abduction of Betsy, the young daughter of one of his employees. The pro-choice and pro-life factions seem to be pitted against one another in this race to save the kidnapping victim, yet the beauty of this book is that some of the Christian characters are able to see the “enemy” as human beings with emotions and pain just as, to be more aptly put, Jesus would view them.

April Operation is a quick read with a very believable plot in addition to its moral teaching. This book could be enjoyed by middle school students on up. It deals with the very current issue of abortion and leaves the reader eager for the other books in the series. It would be an excellent addition to most libraries. CC


Quality—5  Acceptability—5

Journey is a novel that chronicles the lives of two of the grandchildren of Jacob-Manasseh and Ephraim, the sons of Joseph. Manasseh, the eldest, after an extended visit with his father’s family at Hebron, declares that God has spoken to him and told him to lead the Hebrews back to Caanan. He is willing to risk everything in order to obey—the chance to win the love of the blind harpist, and his relationship with his father, Joseph. Joseph does not give his blessing to Manasseh, going as far as saying if God wanted them to return to Caanan, God would let him know, not his son.

Ephraim is a “son of Egypt.” He feels that his relatives are ignorant shepherders and wants little to do with them. Once Jacob gives his blessing to him instead of to the eldest, Manasseh, Ephraim does not miss an opportunity to lord this over his brother’s head. Ephraim believes that the prophecy that he will be “improvement, not change.”  Esther Bollick, Mitford’s upstart candidate, Mack Stroupe, is pushing for “awhile.” Mysterious occurrences begin to happen around the abandoned castle that Annie has always claimed as her “refuge.” When she discovers a connection that will forever tie her to Davy, Annie knows that she can only turn to God to withstand the storms ahead.

The Tempest at Stonehaven is set in 1882, Scotland. Although the main characters in the story are Annie and Davy, much of the story is devoted to other colorful characters of Stonehaven. There are touching scenes involving the children of the village as well as the lighthouse keeper. The plot incorporates love, mystery, and murder. There are quite a number of deaths in the novel, some seemingly unnecessary. God’s power to direct and change lives is manifested throughout and in the lives of many. TW


F. Episcopal clergy—Fiction. 296 p. Adult.

Quality—5  Acceptability—5

The sleepy little town of Mitford becomes embroiled in a hot-and-heavy mayoral race that comes down to the wire. Unbelievable charges and counter-charges, steaming debates, and the “war” of billboards and publicity stunts have the residents in an uproar. The upstart candidate, Mack Stroupe, is pushing for unbridled development while promising “improvement, not change.” Esther Bollick, Mitford’s mayor for fifteen years, vows Stroupe will do that over her dead body.

Lamb’s Chapel beloved rector, Father Tim Kavanagh, and his talented wife, Cynthia, are pondering retirement plans. Nevertheless, they find themselves increasingly being pulled in many directions: town politics, a seeming estrangement from Doodle (the young boy Father Tim informally adopted), and a miriad of other carrs that carry the reader through several nail-biting episodes.

Karen’s sensitive understanding of small town residents, their problems and quirky personalities, rivalries and loves, brings continuity from her three previous books in the series. (See Jannet Hoeffner’s review of these in previous issues of Christian Library Journal: At Home in Mitfod, A Light in the Window, and These High, Green Hills.) Satisfactionary resolutions come about in Out to Canaan, but Karan leaves wiggle room for future books in the series. RI


Quality—4  Acceptability—5

A Gathering of Finches tells of Cassie Hendrick Stearns’ pursuit to fill her soul with worldly things. Unsatisfied with her life, she leaves her marriage of convenience to Josiah Stearns to live with madcap Louis Simpson. They live together as Mr. and Mrs. Simpson for a few years before marrying. Both live fast, luxurious lives on the Simpson wealth. Cassie makes a selfish choice that affects many: “A man over my child, passion over pragmatics, guilt rather than responsibility.” For the rest of her life she pays the price for getting what she wanted. Cassie throws herself into life, but lives with a “vacancy of spirit.” She studies Christian Science, but also reads from the Bible the last days of her life. Before her death, Cassie understands herself as never before and finds some worth by giving to others.

Jane Kirkpatrick uses the lives of Cassie and Louis Simpson, a powerful Oregon Coast couple at the turn of the century, to illustrate the emptiness of worldly pursuits. She chooses to recount the life of Cassie Hendrick Stearns in the manner of fiction, though the story remains true to details she discovered in meticulous research. It rings with the truths of Ecclesiastes: all is vanity and striving after wind. Through Cassie’s eyes, readers discover this multifaceted character, both her vivacious, daring public life and the inner torment of her soul from the bad choices she has made. Her guilt echoes that of Jane Kirkpatrick. LCCN 97027682. Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah Publishers, 1997. ISBN 1576730824, PAP, $12.99.


Quality—4  Acceptability—5
**A Sweetness to the Soul**, by Jane Kirkpatrick. 

Sherar, Jane Herbert—Fiction. 
Adult.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

At age twelve, Jane Herbert watches three siblings die. This tragedy, for which her mother blames her, greatly affects her life. Two years later, in 1863, she marries Joseph Sherar, who is sixteen years her senior. The book’s second half describes their first thirty years of marriage: Jane’s struggle to have a family; conflict with her mother; friendship with her childhood Indian friend Sumiet and her people; and Joseph’s dreams and accomplishments.

Weaving together actual accounts of the Sherars’ pioneering experiences in eastern Oregon and her knowledge of history and the land, Jane Kirkpatrick created *A Sweetness to the Soul*. The story, told by Jane Sherar, unfolds as memories occasionally interjected with reflection. The Sherars’ faith blends in unobtrusively, naturally, never preaching. The sometimes-flawed responses to life’s trials and triumphs of the well-developed main characters add realism to the book.

Over the years, Jane learns to trust God and cope like a coping saw, strong but flexible—with life on the frontier and with her husband’s numerous risky building and ranching projects. These caused them to become the center of their community. She gradually learns that “a hard heart has no room for the good things God gives.”

The epilogue, which describes the last respects the Indians pay to Jane Sherar and the comfort they offer to Joseph, will deeply move the reader. The author closes the book with notes about how much of the story was based on fact.

**Love to Water My Soul**, by Jane Kirkpatrick. 

F. Oregon—History—Fiction. Paiute Indians—Fiction. Sherar, 
Jane Herbert—Fiction. xxxx p. Adult.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Sequel to *A Sweetness to the Soul*. Left behind as a small child on the Oregon Trail, Asiam begins her pioneering experiences in eastern Oregon and her pioneering experiences in eastern Oregon and her knowledge of history and the land, Jane Kirkpatrick created *A Sweetness to the Soul*. The story, told by Jane Sherar, unfolds as memories occasionally interjected with reflection. The Sherars’ faith blends in unobtrusively, naturally, never preaching. The sometimes-flawed responses to life’s trials and triumphs of the well-developed main characters add realism to the book.

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Patterson have four young children. Kim is overwhelmed with her stay-at-home lifestyle. Claire is exercising her new-found psychic healing powers. Her daughter Jasmine is an obstacle to her concentration. Matt and Ann Coley are in training for a marathon when Ann begins to show symptoms of multiple sclerosis. Then the new vicar, Richard, moves into the neighborhood and touches each of their lives.

This is the first novel for Larcombe, a British author. Leaning on a Spider’s Web is peppered with British expressions and spellings. It is also plagued by run-on sentences, which will annoy grammarians. Larcombe does an excellent job of characterization, making each of her many characters distinctive and believable. However, the book suffers from under description of the most dramatic events. Much more could be made of the plane crash at the story’s climax. ARH


F. Amish—Fiction; Christian fiction. 286 p. Gr. 9 - Adult.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

The Confession is the sequel to Beverly Lewis’ The Shunning, the tale of Katie Lapp, a young Amish girl who has always rebelled against the ways of the Plain Folk. When Katie discovers she is adopted, she leaves behind the life she has always known to seek out her birth mother.

In The Confession, Katie finds herself in the home of Laura Mayfield-Bennett in the role of a maid, watching an impostor claim to be Katie herself. The truth of Katie’s identity is discovered before the death of Laura but many questions and uncertainties have arisen and Katie seems far from the peace and joy she is seeking. At the same time, her childhood sweetheart, Daniel, long thought drowned, is returning to Hickory Hollow to reestablish a relationship with his family and hopefully with Katie. What lies in store for the love they once had for one another?

Reading The Shunning before The Confession is a recommendation from this reviewer as some rich details of Katie’s family relationships need to be included for the full enjoyment of both books. The story line is interesting and holds the interest of the reader and the openedendedness of The Confession brings the hope that there will be more volumes in The Heritage of Lancaster County.

This book will be enjoyed by middle school and above, particularly female readers. CC


Quality—4 Acceptability—5

This novel, Vote of Intolerance, is well-written by a pair of authors, McDowell and Stewart, who each have a number of books to their credit. This is a political novel, a family story of our times, a story that deals with issues of today. Stevie Van Home, newly divorced, moves her two remaining children—she has lost her oldest to a drug overdose—to a new state, North California, with the promise of a better life. This better life would be without the godless culture rampant in southern California, a culture that she blames, at least in part, for the loss of both her marriage and her son.

Immersing herself in the campaign of Dan Bellardi, conservative governor for North California, Stevie finds herself devoting more and more time to this endeavor at the cost of time invested in her children. A key relationship in the book is her friendship with Wes Bellardi, son of the governor candidate. A terrorist attack, cult seduction and Wes’ disappearance are only a few of the incidents occurring that overall cause Stevie to rethink some of her priorities and endeavor to trust the Lord with her future.

This rather long book (over 400 pages) is nevertheless quite a fast read and is written in an interesting manner that will appeal to men as well as women. It is a good choice for the fiction section of any public or church library. CC


Quality—4 Acceptability—5

“I’m afraid ... afraid to ride ... Most of all, I’m afraid because I can’t control the fear and that makes me wonder if I’ve lost my faith in God.” These words come from the depths of Sabrina Mayhew’s heart. Three years before, Sabrina, a champion horse rider suffered an accident that left her injured, and her horse, Vesuvius, dead. Although she denies it, with all of her being, Sabrina wants to overcome her fear and trust in God again. Hunter Buchanan, owner of Montclair Equestrian Center, offers her that chance. Will Hunter be able to assist Sabrina in overcoming her fear? Will his reliance on God help her restore her faith in Him? Are Hunters expectations too high?

Sara Mitchell writes a heart-felt and compelling novel that explores the subject of fears and panic disorders. This was a refreshing angle in writing a romance as one could sense the struggle of Sabrina and relate to her on some level. It also demonstrates how tragedies in life can affect all aspects of our lives, including our relationship with God. The author shares at the end, her own past struggle with panic disorder. I found it courageous that she would base a novel on a topic that was so near her own experience, and one that must have been painful to relive. TW


F. Bahama—Fiction; Mystery fiction. 251 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.

Quality—3 Acceptability—5

The Balcony is a modern-day novel that takes place on an island in the Caribbean. Johnnie James has been sent by her Atlanta accounting firm to establish the accounting procedures for Taino Castle—an ancient castle that is being refurbished into a hotel by its owner, Esteban Ventura.

Esteban’s younger brother, Diego, the business administrator, can rarely be found during business hours. But, he is quite visible in the evening for dining and entertaining. Nuna is a family guest and a young flamenco dancer. She makes it clear to Johnnie that Esteban belongs to her, and Johnnie is not welcome near her territory. When three yachts disappear from the waters surrounding Taino Castle, and the police question Esteban and Diego, Johnnie finds herself doubting Esteban’s integrity while fighting her attractions to him.

Lynn Morris has written a romance that has Christian morals but there is no spiritual depth or message in the story. It appeals to readers who enjoy the “wealthy, attractive male” sweeping the “wealthy, attractive female” off her feet in a Christian context. It is light reading, written in the style of a Harlequin Romance. TW


F. Christian fiction; Second Advent—Fiction. 331 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Bill Myers, in Threshold, has written a powerful work of fiction relating to the end times, but with a unique and interesting twist. The story centers around young Brandon Martus, a troubled Generation X young man, struggling to overcome tremendous guilt and anger resulting from the death of his younger sister. Brandon is a typical small, Midwest town post-high schooler caught up in adolescent pranks and slightly rebellious mischief. Only there is something very different about Brandon. He has the mysterious ability to see into the future. It’s not a gift he can control or even understand. This ability is for this troubled, pre-Christian young adult, a gift from God setting him apart for a very special calling. He is to become one of Revelation’s two witnesses, only he doesn’t know it yet.

Threshold moves quickly and jumps around a lot. So much, in fact, it took me awhile to get the characters figured out and catch a vision for where Bill Myers was going with the story. He not only develops Brandon’s character, he weaves in another young man, a peer of Brandon’s, who is a sort of pre-antichrist. And then there is Dr. Reichner who thinks he’s on the verge of some tremendous discoveries in the area of science and the paranormal. He risks courting the interest and money of a mysterious guru in remote Nepal to further his studies, not having any idea the
danger he is moving into, bringing young Brandon and Sarah Weintraub, his ambitious neurobiologist associate, with him.

Bill Myers, in Threshold, comes a long way from his McGee and Me series of stories. Threshold is captivating, challenging, enlightening, even, at times, a bit frightening. It left me shuddering to think what things may very well be taking place right now somewhere in preparation for Christ's return. This work definitely has a bent toward focusing on some of the more insipid, even Satanic, forces that come to play before the end. Meyers creates a very real and plausible setting for the Antichrist to enter the stage. Interest in the paranormal (ESP, predicting the future) fits right in to the New Age movement and man's desire to fill the God-sized vacuum in his life with any number of counterfeit substitutes. Myers makes Revelation real in a very contemporary and explicable way.

Threshold most likely would require a mature reading audience. It can stimulate and challenge the thinking of a mature believer; but then can also be the stimulant to arouse curiosity and interest into supernatural phenomena of a counterfeit nature. It's a good book, but it needs to be handled with care. GCH


F. Bible—Antiquities—Fiction; Bible—Prophecies—Fiction; Bible and science—Fiction. 604 p. Gr. 11 - Adult.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

The prologue of Michael Phillips' latest novel, A Rift in Time, puts the reader in the wilderness of Arabia in 1898 as an unnamed explorer vainly attempts to save his life as he seeks to make a discovery that would prove the truth of the creation account in Genesis.

The book abruptly moves to Mt. Ararat and Livingston's on-site documentation of Noah's Ark. However, this is only the beginning of an adventure packed novel that keeps the reader guessing until the end.

Upon his return to his home in England, Livingston's life is threatened by a conspiracy that is incredibly far reaching. Neither bombings, sabotaged computers, nor break-ins can stop his next top secret expedition to discover the Garden of Eden. His discoveries in Africa's Rift Valley will change the world's view of origins and must be silenced by a secret and deadly order at any cost.

Scientific and geological information, and an overview of God's plan throughout the ages, will leave the reader with much to ponder long after the book is finished. This thought provoking, exciting, and gripping novel is guaranteed to challenge and inspire the reader. EK


F. Sisters—Fiction; Family life—Fiction; Suicide—Fiction. 219 p. Adult.

Robinson has created in Housekeeping a family album of beautifully crafted word pictures. Ruth opens the album and introduces us to the family. Pictures of Ruth, her sister Lucille, and their eccentric Aunt Sylvie, occupy most of the album. Other pictures, however, give the background for all that happens before the girls first come under the care of Grandmother, followed by inept, maiden great-aunts, and finally Sylvie.

We see the train in which grandfather Foster rode to his death as it plunged from the bridge into the lake near Fingerbone, the town where the family lives. That lake, which later claims the life of Helen, mother of Ruth and Lucille, shows up effectively in many of the pictures. Toward the end of the story, townspeople conclude the lake has also swallowed Ruth and Sylvie. Of course the reader knows the real story, and at that point Ruth closes the picture album of her girlhood and takes us through the final pages with more exquisite word pictures.

Carefully chosen words keep the reader fascinated with this painful story which became a favorite in its initial publication in hardback. The flimsy and dark cover of this reissue in paperback does not attract, but once inside, the reader cannot resist the strong characters. Robinson brilliantly shows, not tells, the story.

Few spiritual connections enter the story, but Ruth obviously has some understanding of Bible stories. No bad language or violence ruins the story. This book begs to be read at one sitting, though slowly so as not to miss any words. BMH


Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Lady Johanna Durwin, the young woman with flowing blondish white hair has determined that no man shall have her heart. That is, no man unless he be equal to the stature of the infamous Black Knight. But, Johanna’s dream man is now dead. Her tapestry of the knight is what keeps the fire alight in Johanna’s heart as she decides there is no one who can fill the late knight’s place. Enter in a secret underground swimming cave, a mysterious knight, and two hearts ready for love.

Johanna opens her poetic soul to a mysterious knight in the dark cover of the underground cave where they meet over a period of weeks. Innocent in their affection, the knight knows Johanna would not love him if he reveals his true identity. Still, his love for her forces him to take the risk when he suspects Johanna of contracting leprosy. Pledging his love for Johanna, he takes her to a home in the city for lepers. Once there, the life of ease and comfort are stripped away and Johanna is left to wonder after her knight’s love for God and his obvious faithful love for her.

In time, Johanna learns to know God and His ways through her service to others in the colony. Still apart, Johanna and her knight continue to write letters and visit. During the last visit, for Johanna becomes severely disfigured ( and she vows to release her knight) a wondrous thing occurs which solidifies her faith in God.

The Warrior’s Bride could have been just another medieval novel. However, author Lisa Sampson made it so much more with her creative plot and her singular idea of bringing leprosy into the main story. Readers will be drawn into the world of knights and ladies. Samson describes in detail the costumes, food, games, and beliefs of these fascinating people. Her knowledge of leprosy and its disfigurements (both physical and emotional) add more depth to this stirring tale of two lovers whose only hope lies in the power of God. MH


F. Christian fiction; Science fiction. 358 p. Gr. 11 - Adult.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

From father and son, to Laveda Pruitt and her first computer, to the Lonely Hearts Virtual Bar, to a scene with an elf, giant, and ranger that turns out differently than it appears—this quick change of sites leads the reader to Ethan Hamilton and his son Jordan, Terminal Logic main characters. The fast-paced story takes place in the year 2006, and GlobeNet, the 3D virtual reality-intensive descendent of the Internet, captures the minds of Ethan and Jordan as well as a host of others.

Bots, short for robots programmed with artificial intelligence, run amok throughout the story, raising the question, “can harmless computer games turn deadly in real life?” The bots create havoc with young men’s emotions, but did they cause Gerry Wright’s death? Can Ethan produce sufficient reason for the FBI to begin an investigation? What part do the unnamed father and son play in all that happens? Did Ethan really see the devil himself on GlobeNet? Suddenly, in the middle of all this uncertainty, the security of the United States becomes at stake. Ethan has less than an hour to prevent disaster. As he searches for the impossible, he cries out, “I’m totally at Your mercy, Lord.”

Terminal Logic contains more cliff-hangers than a rock-climbers’ outing as Scott moves from scene to scene with speed and dexterity. His excellent writing, featuring an equitable balance of narration and good, functional dialogue, creates this can’t-put-it-down story. Good word pictures draw the reader into situations of the future when computers could replace most manual tasks. All the characters, human and otherwise, somehow appear believable. Technically challenged readers may get lost in the tech-talk, but the core of the story will keep them reading. Scott shows Ethan’s faith and reliance upon God as genuine. BMH

Continued on p.85
150. Psychology. 368 pages.
Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Christians hear the message frequently from the pulpit. "God helps us solve all our problems. The Bible is more than adequate." What encouraging news—that "God helps us solve all our problems. The Bible is more than adequate." What encouraging news—that is, until squaring off face to face with trouble, many pastors lament, "I'm not qualified to walk you through this problem." Why is that?

Many Christians and pastors buy the lie that only "professionals" can handle "serious" problems. Pastors fear they don't have the "training" and the problems may be out of their league. Another lie.

Ed Bulkley, pastor and counselor, encourages readers to gain confidence in God's word and the power of the Holy Spirit to heal lives. Bulkley uncovers the myth that psychology is scientific, effective and motivated by compassion. He discusses the psychological labels, and exposes the myth that psychology heals the past. He includes Christian psychologists in this discussion, convinced that much of their "integrationist" training is in error.

Bulkley realizes that, assuming the pastor, or church layman has an adequate grasp of the Bible, he must take additional steps to acquire counseling skills. He should become acquainted with Christian counseling literature, both theoretical and practical. Bulkley suggests Jay Adams provides foundational biblical counseling material both in theory and in practice.

Why Christians Can't Trust Psychology is Bulkley's follow-up story. A pastor's wife is misled into searching her past for deep-seeded, repressed issues that render her depressed. Her husband confronts her Christian counselor, pointing out his non-biblical approach and reasoning in counseling his wife, to no avail. The counselor feels the pastor is simply not "qualified." The wife continues her sessions, leaves her family, and the pastor must resign his church. The entire family, immediate and extended, struggle with her bizarre behavior prompted by her Christian counselor.

Bulkley uses the same technique in both books—continues his narrative and intersperses each chapter with a follow-up story. A pastor's wife is misled into searching her past for deep-seeded, repressed issues that render her depressed. Her husband confronts her Christian counselor, pointing out his non-biblical approach and reasoning in counseling his wife, to no avail. The counselor feels the pastor is simply not "qualified." The wife continues her sessions, leaves her family, and the pastor must resign his church. The entire family, immediate and extended, struggle with her bizarre behavior prompted by her Christian counselor.

A Note from the Editor: by Ray Legg

Reading for Accuracy

Seldom has anything affected me as the Clint Eastwood film The Outlaw Josey Wales. I was so moved by the characters and much of its plot that upon going to bed the night after I had seen the film, I dreamed a sequel to it. When I awoke, I felt compelled to jot down my ideas in the nights of writing the story one day. I even went so far as to venture to a local bookstore to purchase Forrest Carter's Gone to Texas from which the movie was adapted. I enjoyed reading the book and have not yet lost my fascination with the characters in it or the film.

Another of Carter's books is presently in the news. This time, controversy surrounds the release of the film adaptation of his story, The Education of Little Tree, directed by Kevin Costner. Some Native Americans claim the story is an accurate portrayal of the life and times of their people, while others see it as yet another erroneous presentation of their past by nonnatives with little cultural sensitivity. Still others take offense at the story in general because of the questionable nature of Carter's past views on race and ethnicity.

After a hiatus of several years, Carter resurfaced in literary circles with a series of novels viewed as deliberate attempts to rectify some of the damage done by views expressed in his earlier work. Additional controversy surrounds the claim by certain critics that Carter plagiarized Where the Red Fern Grows. Readers and movie goers alike are thus being challenged on several levels as they consider Carter's work. Should they read the book, see the film, and make up their own minds about the accuracy of the story? Should they avoid both until the controversies are resolved? Or should they stay away from both to avoid being unfair to writer and producer alike?

It seems to me that resolution of the conflict may involve several aspects. First, we should read the story of Little Tree ourselves and seek to understand both the artistic merit of the story and the underlying source or sources of the conflict it has generated. Second, following our reading of the story, we should read representative criticism from pertinent sources to gain as broad a perspective on the issues raised by the book as possible. Third, we should arm ourselves with the realization that no adaptation of a book will be flawless, and then head to the theater to make up our own minds as to whether or not the negative criticism of the film and of Carter and his novel is warranted. (That is, of course, only if we are so inclined. It is completely possible to judge this story on its literary merits alone without seeing the film at all.) Finally, regarding the similarities which exist between The Education of Little Tree and Where the

Cont. on p. 84.
with documented information exposing today's anti-biblical thinking and counseling techniques. The stories, believable and riveting, reveal false teaching Christians capitulate and follow because the "experts" say it's so.

Each book contains extensive indexes, notes, resources and explanations. A must-read for pastors and laymen, alike. CLKH


Quality—3 Acceptability—5

“It’s easy for Christians to assume they can’t possibly be deceived by such frauds— but that is a dangerous assumption,” state Andrew Kole and Jerry MacGregor. Mind Games explains why people believe in psychic phenomena and aberrant “Christian” teachings. It exposes psychic abilities as mere illusions easily duplicated by competent magicians and addresses the spiritual issues in light of the Bible. The authors stress the importance of not attributing too much power to Satan and remind the reader that only God can do miracles.

Kole and MacGregor, both professional magicians, draw from their own extensive research on the topic and cite numerous sources to support their case. Thus, Mind Games contains a wealth of information, but at times is repetitive. In an easy-to-read style, the authors expose as fraudulent all psychic phenomena and as heresy the human-potential movement that has seeped into the church. Readers will be drawn into the illustrative stories that the authors present and will grasp a better understanding of New Age beliefs that have permeated our culture.

Unlike many books written by two or more authors, where the first person is typically used to tell one author’s experience, Kole and MacGregor used the first-person plural and then the third-person singular, which seemed awkward in places. The book contains several pages of notes; however, an index would have been useful. LKFN


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

This book is one I have wanted to read for a long time. It is an extremely valuable and useful tool for historical study and teaching. A large number of competent philosophers and historians have combined, under the very competent direction of the editors, to create one of the only sources of information I am familiar with on the pre-Socratic philosophers of Greece, as well as excellent articles on Plato, Aristotle, and many other less well known philosophers of ancient times in western philosophy. There is some biographical and historical information here on virtually everyone for whom anything is known in ancient western philosophy. The book is organized alphabetically for easy reference; there is a helpful index in the back, as well as a complete list of the contributors to the volume. For anyone who is interested in or teaches philosophy, this is the book to have on the ancients—everything you always wanted to know but didn’t know where to look. PAB


156.6. Men—Psychology; Masculinity—Psychology. 251 p. Adult.
Quality—4 Acceptability—5

God created men and women differently. How often we bemoan or deny those differences rather than celebrating them. Originally published by Oliver-Nelson Books in 1991, this book preludes the popular Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus by John Gray by one year.

At the outset, Uneasy Manhood seems to be a gripe-book, with the first chapter complaining how from boyhood, males are constantly being picked on and remolded by females. However, as the book continues and author Hicks explores issues of marriage, friendship, work, singleness, sexuality, fatherhood, and spirituality, he provides much food for thought. He looks at the way males are and how they could be, and calls for the integration of the full range of male characteristics (“masculine” and “feminine”).

Hitting at his extensive research and counseling experience, he uses many anecdotal illustrations and scriptural references to support his conclusions. However, his only practical applications are given in a two-page Epilogue. Also included are Hicks’ notes and an extensive bibliography. ARH


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Charlie Walton’s book, When There Are No Words, would be helpful to anyone who has lost a loved one or knows someone who has. The book is well written and even the chapter titles contain good advice! From “Let People Do Things” and “People Are Going to Say a Lot of Dumb Things” to “Every Hug Dilutes the Pain” and “Time Doesn’t Heal All Wounds”, Walton pulls no punches in advising readers how to cope.

Walton speaks with the voice of experience having lost two sons and a friend’s son to carbon monoxide poisoning. He writes, “Now...when I go to comfort a friend...having had the experience of being the bereaved one...I know there are no words. No words are necessary. Everything that needs to be said is communicated in the presence, the look, the touch, and the shared silence. If I am sorry, they are going to know it. If I am something greater than sorry... something for which our language has no terminology...the message will be clearly communicated.”

Walton also discusses several related issues from what media attention can do to grieving, dealing with guilt, handling a loved one’s effects, grief and marriage, going back to work, to the things grief can teach you, even against your will. “You can be sure that the grief process is about to show you your real friends are, what you truly believe, and where your real trust lies,” he also says, “You can talk confidently about your faith for years, but...when life suddenly drops a sand bag on you...and God doesn’t step in to keep it from hitting you...you are about to find out which one of the many forms of God you really believe in.”

When There Are No Words ends with lists of helpful organization names, addresses, and phone numbers and book titles for further reading. BW


Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Opening the Bible is the second volume in the New Church’s Teaching Series, a collection written as an introduction to Anglican thought.

Opening the Bible is designed primarily for those unfamiliar with Christianity’s central writings, although believers familiar with the Bible may benefit as well. Ferlo describes his book as “a practical guide to navigating the Bible page.” Opening the Bible is thus not an exposition, but quite literally a guide to opening and using a physical Bible.

To this end, Ferlo discusses the importance of reading and how books have developed over the centuries from scroll to codex to modern book; practical matters including the way the Bible is formatted (chapters, verses); types of translations, explanatory notes, and cross-references; and styles of interpretation. He concludes with the communal nature of scripture—that the Bible is not simply printed words on a page, but words that are to be responded to and lived. While Opening the Bible has no index, there are lists of resources for further study and questions for group discussion.

Opening the Bible is an interesting and easily readable book; it is a basic introduction, not a scholarly study. It should be particularly helpful for people unfamiliar with the Bible, or new to the Christian faith. AMS


225. Jesus Christ—Biography; Palestine—Pictorial works. 64 p. Gr. 9. Adult.
Quality—4 Acceptability—5

F. F. Bruce’s beautiful, oversized pictorial tour of the Bible lands would be a welcome addition to any

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church or school library. Each page contains several color photographs taken of significant towns and locations where Jesus walked. The places feature include Bethlehem, Nazareth, Galilee, Capernaum, Caesarea Philippi, Synhar, Jericho, Bethany, Jerusalem, and the Temple.

A full color map on each page shows the reader the location being described. Passages from the Bible as well as references to historical events help give a more well-rounded explanation. Photographs for the book were taken by Tim Dowley and Peter Wyart who visited the Holy Land a number of times to best capture pictures to go with the text of the book.


The Anglican Vision is the first volume in the New Church Teaching Series (a further eleven volumes are projected). The series is designed to update prior series published in the 1950's and 1970's, and to provide an overview of Anglicanism—"what Anglicans share with the larger Christian community and what makes them distinctive."

This first volume by series editor James Griffiths covers the development of the Church of England in the years after the Reformation, and then discusses the changes in post-Revolutionary War America that produced the Episcopal Church. Further chapters explore Anglican believing, worship, identity and diversity, and the church as sacrament. The identity of the Anglican Church is seen as being rooted in the Incarnation; Anglicanism has sought to chart a middle course between Roman Catholicism on one hand and the more radical reformers on the other.

The Anglican Vision is essentially an overview. Griffiths sticks to main themes and avoids minutiæ: he paints with a broad brush. Griffiths has done an excellent job of making the book readable and avoiding theological quagmires. The book contains questions for group study.

The Anglican Vision assumes a different readership from previous series—"adults who are not "cradle Anglicans", but who come from other religious traditions or from no tradition at all, and who want to know what Anglicanism has to offer." The Anglican Vision should appeal to both these groups—newcomers to the Episcopal Church who want to understand more of their church's history and outlook, and those outside the Anglican Communion who want a peek inside. EK


Theologian R.C. Sproul has fashioned a career from explaining Reformed theology. He has tackled such difficult topics as predestination (Chosen By God), justification by faith (Faith Alone), and the five points of Calvinism (Grace Unknown). In The Invisible Hand he turns his sights on the providence of God.

Providence is a word once in common parlance which seems to have dropped from Christian vocabulary. We no longer speak of "trusting ourselves to Providence." Providence refers to the workings-seen and unseen—of God. We are used to thinking of God being active in the lives of men and women, but how is he active? What form does his activity take? Is God active in the minute details of life or not?

Sproul does his usual workmanlike job of clarifying difficult topics and rendering them comprehensible to the lay reader. In this regard, The Invisible Hand is more accessible than Faith Alone. Perhaps too, the subject does not have as many difficult to grasp nuances. I confess to a slight feeling of disappointment when I reached the end of the book; but that is perhaps understandable. Who of us can fully understand the workings of God? The Invisible Hand throws welcome light on a neglected facet of God's action and human experience. AMS


Modern-era objections to God interposing himself in human history (miracles) can be said to have begun with David Hume and his 1748 essay, "On Miracles." One influential exponent of Hume's position in our day has been Antony Flew. In defense of the idea that God does work miracles, this book has been composed. The first section contains the original essay by Hume and an essay written by Flew which summarizes developments of Hume's position since 1748. To respond to the anti-miracle position, essays have been collected in three broad categories.

The first section defends the possibility of miracles. One essay seeks to define miracles, another surveys miracles as viewed by modern minds, while a third describes how to recognize a miracle. Most outstanding in this section is the article by Francis Beckwith which explores the interplay of history and miracles. He convincingly shows that miracles and history are not contradictory. The next section contains various perspectives of a theistic context for miracles. While all five chapters are very helpful in their specific topics, I would argue the most important chapter in this grouping is W. David Beck's examination of God's existence. For arguments about miracles to matter, there must be a foundation of the bald fact that God exists at all. Beck summarizes the cosmological, teleological, and moral arguments for God's existence in the light of miracles. The final section presents case studies in Christian miracles. Miracles in other religions receive attention, as well as fulfilled prophecy, the Incarnation, the empty tomb, and the resurrection appearances of Jesus. The most-contested battleground today seems to be over the empty tomb, and William Lane Craig presents a well-argued (and readable!) description of the arguments that Jesus did rise from the dead.


The Cross of Jesus Christ has been viewed in many different ways through the centuries. The interpretation as to what Christ accomplished there has also varied in different times and places. Our century is not alone in seeking the relevance of the Crucifixion. Using the analogy of a house with many windows that overlooks the Cross, Tom Smail (formerly vice-principal of St. John's College, Nottingham) discusses several different perspectives on the Crucifixion. Some of these perspectives—reconciliation, justice, freedom, and sacrifice—have existed since New Testament times. Others—sharing of suffering and victory over sin—have a more contemporary flavor. These perspectives are not mutually exclusive; rather they illuminate different facets of Christ's saving work.

Smail points out how all of the perspectives, old or new, have relevance for today, and can help us in our understanding of the Cross and draw us into closer fellowship with God. The final chapter deals with glory—how God's glory is revealed through Christ on the Cross.

The chapters, though fairly short and easily readable, deserve repeated readings. Each one contains questions for discussion or further study. Smail has not attempted an exhaustive survey of every possible perspective, but those which have enjoyed the greatest popularity and acceptance throughout history. My only complaint with Windows on the Cross is that I wished Smail had written more. AMS
Beginning with the names and titles of Jesus and ending with the cross and the empty tomb, the reader is invited to put himself/herself into the picture that the author paints, for a personal encounter with Jesus.

Illustrating this rich volume are the original paintings of Ron DiCianni. Each chapter is accompanied by a water color illustration focusing on a person and need met by Christ: blind Bartimeus, a leper, the disciples, etc. At the close of the book, each painting is reproduced in miniature and the artist shares his insights and choices in portraying these events. The color and style of print chosen for the pages give the appearance of aged and water stained parchment.

Overall, The Saviour is an attractive and artistic work that draws the reader in and gives him or her a feeling of encountering Jesus, the Savior of the world. DEB


Quality—4 Acceptability—4

Michael Ramsey, formerly Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote his devotional volume Be Still and Know in 1982, and it has recently (1993) been reissued by Cowley Publications. The short length indicates that it is, indeed, a devotional study and not an exhaustive treatise on prayer.

Still, Ramsey covers a fair amount of territory. He discusses the prayer of Jesus and how he taught the disciples; teachings of Paul and John on prayer; and prayer as discussed in Hebrews. He moves on to talk about Christian prayer today, contemplation, the way of the mystics, confession, and the communion of saints.

Ramsey’s style is direct and easily readable. Since he offers an overview of prayer, examining it from different angles, some aspects are bound to be less familiar than others. I doubt that everyone will agree with all of Ramsey’s viewpoints and opinions. Still, this is a minor quarrel, and Be Still and Know should appeal to many people interested in improving their prayer life. AMS


Quality—4 Acceptability—5

In The Call of a Lifetime, Michael Youssef compares the believer’s life to working in God’s “corporation.” Youssef says the mission statement of God’s corporation has two parts: “As I have loved you, so must you love one another” (John 13:34). The other—and more literal—part of the statement comes at the end of Matthew [28:18-20], where Jesus tells His disciples to “go and make disciples of all nations.” To Youssef, this is the call of a lifetime—to live that mission statement in whatever circumstances you find yourself. The message is similar to Henry Blackaby’s and Claude V. King’s Experiencing God (LifeWay Press, 1990), except for Youssef’s adherence to the business metaphor.

Each of the eleven chapters addresses a different aspect of a long term association with the corporation:
priorities, integrity, success, confrontation, responsibility, aggressiveness, self-knowledge, failure, progress, isolation, and prayer.

Youssef convincingly makes his case to us “executives” (believers). He shows the reader how to respond to God’s call, and the consequences of our success or failure at doing so. His inspiring examples from scripture, history, and modern culture illustrate his points well. ARH


Quality—4  Acceptability—5

A veteran Christian school teacher, principal, and counselor of over forty years, Ralph Beikmann took on the challenge of writing this book when encouraged by a friend as he was going through his second bout with cancer.

The two to three page devotionals on a variety of topics are drawn from personal experience. Each devotional ends with “God’s Words of Encouragement,” scriptures that relate to the topic. Chapters include subjects such as “Teacher Baggage” that comes from childhood, “Teacher Shock” which is faced by all new teachers, and “Exercising in the Wait Room” on how God works in the discontented teacher.

This inspirational work is the kind of book that could be read year after year to encourage and bless the classroom or Sunday school teacher. EK


Quality—5  Acceptability—4

It goes without saying that many people in the western world’s materialistic, scientific culture find the idea of God—especially the God of the Bible—a difficult concept. “Western culture,” writes Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, “has done us a serious disservice—it has so robbed us of the sense of the transcendent that we are unable to give due attention to the question of God.”

Carey himself at one time found it difficult to believe in God. And so he writes as one who has experienced doubts. But now, he says, “my own investigations over a period of many years have given me a quiet assurance that there is a God who has given us sufficient clues...to satisfy the genuine inquirer that he exists, and that he has expressed himself most meaningfully in Jesus Christ.”

Why I Believe in a Personal God ranges over such topics as the origin of the universe, the meaning of life, the problem of evil, and the nature of experience—topics that sound heavy but which are handled in a straightforward, uncomplicated manner. Carey concludes that only the God of the Bible is credible, and that a personal response to him is necessary. “To know God is to know him, not as an article in the creed, but as a real person.”

Why I believe in a Personal God should appeal to doubting believers needing reassurance, as well as being a useful tool for seekers after God. Some may object to Carey’s apparent acceptance of an old age for the earth and evolutionary processes, but this is a minor quibble. AMS


248.4. Spiritual life—Christianity; Spiritual exercises; Quietude; Peace—Religious aspects—Christianity; Stress (Psychology)—Religious aspects—Christianity; Time management—Religious aspects—Christianity. 189 p. Adult.
Quality—5  Acceptability—5

“Bombarding of our senses,” as Coyle calls it, affects all of us. Noise everywhere becomes so commonplace we may not know how to utilize silence. She reminds us that for many, “silence has become so uncomfortable it is avoided altogether.” In Answering God’s Call to Quiet, the sixth in her Devotional Daybook series, Coyle offers instruction and ideas about how to find time and place to take advantage of silence, finding strength for daily living.

Coyle divides the book into six sections, each with five short chapters that contain a Scripture and a phrase from that portion to reflect upon, words of wisdom (quotes from others), words of beauty (familiar hymns), and finally several personal questions. Space following the questions makes it easy for the reader to record thoughts accumulated during that reading. The questions she poses at the end of each chapter require thoughtful answers.

Coyle obviously understands where we live amidst today’s clamor. Illustrations from her own life and from other sources, as well, help us identify with all she says. She speaks gently, yet authoritatively as she guides us fearlessly into silence that will provide “strength and peace for a pressured life.” An experienced writer, Coyle writes well, making her words of wisdom a joy to read. The secrets and results are supported by many examples, personal experiences, and experiences of others. These secrets and results are supported by many personal experiences, and experiences of others.


Quality—3  Acceptability—4

In his book, The Power of Prayer and Fasting, Ronnie Floyd suggests that “personal sacrifice is when a person accepts the call of God, even when painful, to do what it takes to reconnect with our heavenly father.” (49) He very much believes that “it is fervent prayer and fasting that reaches into the heart of God, motivates us to adjust to what God is doing, moves heaven to action, and changes what we see and do on earth” (53). Mr. Floyd presents ten secrets to spiritual strength and seven results from prayer and fasting. These secrets and results are supported by many personal experiences, and experiences of others.

The format of the book is attractive with main ideas highlighted in bold print throughout the book. At the end of the book pages are printed with lines for a prayer and fasting journal, and two pages of Endnotes supports the quotes used in the book. DS

Michael Ramsey was the one hundredth Archbishop of Canterbury, serving from 1961 to 1974 (he died in 1988). He was, according to James Griffiss, editor of this book of readings, “...not an original or groundbreaking theologian. He was, however, a Christian who struggled to live out his relationship to God in the world of human affairs.”

To Believe Is to Pray is a series of selections from Michael Ramsey’s most important writings, arranged in related sections. The sections carry such titles as: What makes us Anglicans?, The Glory of God; The Resurrection; the Kingdom of God. There are nine sections altogether.

Griffiss has provided a brief, six page introduction to Michael Ramsey the man, his perspectives, and writings. This introduction is valuable in order to see Ramsey’s contributions to Anglican thought in the context of his life and times. The heart of Ramsey’s writings lies in the “theme of the incarnation of God in Christ and the call of human beings through the incarnation into the glory of God.”

This volume presents the core of Ramsey’s thought in an accessible manner. Ramsey is devotional, insightful, and the issues he addresses are valuable not only for members of the Anglican Communion but for the church in general. To Believe Is to Pray could serve both as an introduction to Anglican thought, or as a volume of meditations on the Christian life in its broader aspects. AMS


“The first and basic mark of pilgrimage,” says Episcopal priest Douglas Vost, “is the quest for something personally important enough to motivate a committed search.” In his book On Pilgrimage, Vost takes a look at the concept of pilgrimage.

He does this in the context of several pilgrimages he has undertaken himself—to Iona, to ruined Welsh abbeys, to St. Deiniol’s Library in north Wales, to his boyhood home. He examines the urge to pilgrimage, the effect of place, the type of pilgrimage (solitary or group), and the desired effect (increased spirituality, physical healing, a sense of meaning). He contrasts pilgrimage—which has a sacred purpose—with sightseeing or tourism.

Each chapter concludes with questions for individual or group reflection. On Pilgrimage ends with a checklist for planning a pilgrimage, focusing on the ‘W’ questions—who, what, why, where, when, and how.

On Pilgrimage is a nice, general introduction to the concept of pilgrimage, and would be valuable for anyone who is contemplating undertaking such a venture. Reading this book well in advance of pilgrimage should help the pilgrim to prepare, and to obtain the most benefit from a pilgrimage. “...I want to live a holy life,” Vost writes, “which begins with my yearning for a whole life, as undivided and integrated as I can help it to be.” Many people have found that pilgrimage to sacred places can contribute to the formation of a holy life. AMS


Every Christian is familiar with the Lord’s Prayer; it is recited privately and in worship services of many denominations. Yet how familiar are we with it, really? Do the words roll too easily off the tongue, made familiar by frequent repetition? Or does the prayer mean more than this? New Testament scholar and Dean of Lichfield Cathedral, N.T. Wright, takes a look at this familiar part of scripture in his book, The Lord and His Prayer. Wright’s focus is on the Kingdom of God, and he examines the Lord’s Prayer in this context. What did the Kingdom of God mean to Jesus; how did Jesus live the Kingdom; what does the Kingdom of God mean for us today?

Wright divides the Prayer into six clauses which he expounds beginning with how the Prayer would have sounded to First Century Jews in Roman-occupied Palestine. He then expands this to include contemporary Christianity. We pray, Wright says, because we want to know the living God and call him Father.

Wright’s writing is clear, and he uses a variety of illustrations; those illustrations are not the ones that might be expected, and the result is a fresh insight into the multiple meanings of the Lord’s Prayer.

Wright writes from an Anglican perspective, and his comments on liturgy and the Eucharist will be more familiar to those from liturgical traditions. The Lord & His Prayer is a scant eighty-nine pages, but those pages are worth reading slowly and pondering. AMS


Jonathan, You Left Too Soon, is a list of ways to support a grieving pastor that alone may be worth the cost of the book.

In “Putting the Pieces Back Together”, he discusses struggling with grief and loss and says, “Do not pretend. Do not lie. But look your struggle in the eye, whenever you can, with help if you need it. And slowly—slowly as necessary—come to terms with it. All the while remember that your life is in God’s hands, and that He understands your struggle and is far more patient, gracious, and forgiving than you can ever imagine.”

The author ends the book with a wonderfully encouraging chapter, “To Kiss the Joy-Celebrating What Is”, in which he says, “Instead of asking, ‘How can I know when it’s over?’ let’s ask, ‘where am I in the process that leads beyond the pain, even to joy?’”

But if you are honestly not ready to move ahead just yet, your Lord understands. Though He longs to heal your broken life, He is patient and kind and willing to
listen to your continuing lament until you can truthfully say, "Enough." BW


Quality—3 Acceptability—5

Be a man my son. But what kind of man! *Raising a Modern-Day Knight* presents an answer for our gender-neutral society’s lack of definition of manhood. Using the medieval knight’s training and standards of chivalry, Lewis presents his plan for a Dad to raise his son to be a strong Christian man. Illustrated from his own experiences both as a son and as a dad, with examples from other families, based on his interpretation of relevant scriptures, Lewis presents the father as the active leader of his family, the loving, strong director of his son’s personality. The need for a modern-day knight is stated first. Then follow Lewis’ vision of the knight with ideals for manhood and conduct and a cause to live for. The need for a community of Christian men helping each other through relevant ceremonies, rigorous training, advice and friendship is stated.

Written in a clear, interesting style, *A Modern-Day Knight* uses step-by-step directions for raising a knight for Christ. Each chapter ends with a summary of its contents. Author of several books on marriage and family, Pastor Dr. Robert Lewis aims this book at the upper-middle class Christian father: the large cost of ceremonies is mentioned as necessary: several examples speak of the use of expensive equipment; the father is often presented as a professional man. However, many illustrations and suggestions are broad enough for adaptation by imaginative readers. The ceremonies detailed will catch the interest of rational minded readers. A small notes section at the end gives a useful bibliography for further reading. DJE


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Using the Bible as “road map” (14), *When God Weeps* graphically starts with man’s cry, “I’m hurting bad!” (15) Knowing that God wants to communicate in words understandable to each sufferer, Tada and Estes use contemporary language to present a picture of God who empathizes with and answers you: who He is; what He’s doing; how He helps us to hang on and triumph.

They answer such questions as: am I being punished? has God decided to hate me? will my suffering ever end? are God and Satan taking alternate shifts. Acknowledging various Christian positions on this subject, they unashamedly present what they have learned from the Bible: God is in complete control—His plan for your life is being worked out perfectly. Realizing that the sufferer urgently needs to know God intimately, this book closes with three engaging, scripture-based appendices: God’s Hand in our Sufferings; God’s Purpose in our Sufferings; God’s Experience of Grief.

From the heart of two individuals deeply acquainted with abiding pain comes this love letter to all who agonize in affliction. Author and Founder of JAF Ministries for the disabled, Joni Eareckson Tada has been a quadriplegic since she was injured in a swimming accident which happened in her late teens. Pastor, author, and scholar Steve Estes was sixteen years old when God brought him into Joni’s life immediately after her accident. She whined, cried, demanded answers. In desperation he turned to the Bible. In this book, Tada and Erickson share what they have learned from God over three decades since their meeting. They also share insights of Christians through the centuries, from Calvin to John McArthur and suffering Christians everywhere. When God Weeps plunges into the maelstrom of human suffering and finds underneath are the everlasting, loving arms of our Creator God. DJE


253. Pastoral theology; Pastoral psychology. 320 p. Adult.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

The twenty-seven authors who contributed to this volume, which is part of Bethany House’s larger Library of Leadership Development series, have varied philosophies about the role of counseling therapy in the church. This dialogic tension makes for enjoyable and thoughtful reading. The authors are united in their understanding that psychology and counseling theory have had a major impact on the life of the American church.

Eugene Peterson reminds the reader that the role of “curing souls” is a historic role of the pastor. Pastoring is more than “running a church” to be sure, but Louis McBurney questions the high status that the American church has accorded psychology. Randy Alcorn confesses his personal struggles as a pastor who was weighted down by the care of his growing counseling ministry.

The late Richard Halverson discusses the application of small group principles to his pulpit ministry. Robert J. Morgan has two chapters, one of which contains the story of how his family invested in the life of a drug-abusing alcoholic who was also a good friend. Michael Phillips warns pastors to walk the line between intimacy and improper affection in their counseling relationship and James Dobson provides practical advice on how to grow a family-friendly church. Dobson’s emphasis on the pastor’s family as “the most important family” will challenge many pastors.

The final chapters of the book are particularly engaging. They include specific advice about ministering after death and contending with suicide. Contributors also discuss healing for the sexually addicted and for survivors of childhood abuse from a pastoral perspective.

The book is well written and well edited: a difficult task when working with so many authors from diverse backgrounds. It offers the reader thoughtful insight into a topic that is simultaneously practical and controversial. DSB


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Half a million foreign students attend American colleges and universities. They are the best and the brightest in their native countries, and when they return home, they will be the leaders-in-industry, in government, in education, in the arts. If they also take a commitment to Jesus Christ with them, they can impact the world for Him. Sadly, 70% of international students receive their degrees and go home without ever having stepped inside an American home or place of worship.

Not only does *The World at Your Door* convince that ministry to the international student is a prime evangelistic opportunity, it also gives detailed directions. Although the ultimate goal of the ministry is to lead the students to Christ, the authors say that’s not the first step. First, we need to extend God’s love to the student by meeting his immediate needs—picking him up at the airport and helping him through the bewildering transition from the known and comfortable to the actual American experience, which is likely to be quite different from the student’s expectations.

The book is remarkable in its completeness. One chapter cautions Americans to be culturally sensitive; another has suggestions for activities to do with an international student; another suggests topics for a discussion of the Middle East, China, Japan, and Africa, and strategies for reaching students from those backgrounds.

Appendices include information about International Students, Inc., discussion starters, and an evangelism tool called “Knowing God Personally.” Phillips and Norsworthy are president and vice-president of International Students, Inc., a ministry on 300 U.S. college campuses. Their many years of practical experience make *The World at Your Door* a valuable manual for congregations or individuals who want to be involved in world missions without leaving home. ARH

261. Christianity and culture; Church and social problems. 224 p. Adult. Quality—4 Acceptability—5

This book is a compilation of brief essays by the authors which originally appeared in World magazine. The essays cover a variety of topics, including such subjects as abortion, education, economics, race, foreign affairs, health and welfare, and the media and journalism. The two authors each address essays to the various issues. Both write from a distinctively Christian and politically conservative point of view.

These essays are an attempt to apply biblical thinking to current concerns in an interesting but clearly slanted way. The essays vary in quality; most are quite well done. A few are somewhat frivolous, but most are thoughtful and thought-provoking. The authors are quite well balanced and consistent in their presentations.

Not all conservative Christians will be comfortable with all of the material here. For example, Belz chides some Christian movie makers as too concerned with proper content and message and too little concerned with producing an exciting, attention-grabbing story. The section on economics is quite helpful, especially the article by Belz on the government’s power to tax as a legitimate function of government for the protection of its citizens. There is a very encouraging section on some individuals who have escaped poverty by being creative and hard-working in their application of free market principles.

This is not a deep book, but one that is pertinent and engaging and provides a good overview of conservative views on current affairs and issues. 

Joe Dallas offers a wake-up call to the conservative Christian church which ignores the problem of homosexuality in the pew. Now facing the “gay Christian” movement, which Dallas defines as “a tendency among Christians who are homosexually tempted to yield to that temptation and then try to justify it,” Dallas feels the church must respond by taking a positive stand. A Strong Delusion traces the beginnings of the gay rights movement from the first gay denomination to “coming out of the closet,” to the “gay mandate,” to the American Psychiatric Assoc. removing it from its list of disorders. Dallas also provides details of the seductive gay theology containing major portions of truth born in error which give the Christian counselor biblical answers for responding intelligently, with love and concern to the challenges raised by the issue of homosexuality in the church. Even with a biblical view of homosexuality, Dallas reminds readers only God can soften the homosexual heart and provide victory over the sin.

An ex-homosexual himself, his once hard-driving, promiscuous lifestyle gives Dallas the understanding to illuminate the background and help the reader understand current trends and thinking on this issue. He exposes the academic elite’s blessing on the “gay Christian” movement, cites bogus studies and conclusions snapped up in the media, as well as naming conservative Christians who either support the “gay Christian” movement or condone it with their silence. In response, he not only interprets Scripture, but applies it accurately, understanding that the authority of the Bible is under attack, from not only the homosexuals, but even well-meaning, liberal Christians.

Dallas includes a suggested reading list, and extensive notes documenting his research. This academic offering is easy to read, yet offers sound, helpful direction for those who want accurate understanding. A must for the serious biblical student who seeks to minister to fellow believers, pastors and laymen alike. CLH


The Bible describes King David as “a man after God’s own heart.” Is it possible to become a woman after God’s own heart? Elizabeth George, author, Bible teacher, and cofounder of Christian Development Ministries, combines her passion for God and his word with her wisdom and experience to stimulate married and single women in their spiritual walk. Women yearning after God will find rich biblical teaching and practical disciplines to apply.

Part one challenges women to develop a devoted heart that abides in God’s word, is committed to prayer, and obeys. George assures women that putting aside business to pursue a deepening relationship with God will result in blessings and fulfillment.

Part two covers discerning God’s priorities related to husband, children, home, self, and ministry. The author teaches how to cultivate a heart that serves, submits, and loves, including nine specific actions that communicate “I love you” to husbands. Guiding women to value mothering, she emphasizes, “Your children are not interruptions-they are your greatest work and the best investment of your time!” Additional chapters include home management pointers to help women create order and beauty in their homes. Also, emphasized throughout the book is the importance of the role of prayer.

Part three urges women to practice God’s priorities by seeking him first and following after his heart. George ranks seven priorities in this order: God, husband, children, home, spiritual growth, ministry activities, and other activities. Following these priorities day by day will result in “a lifetime of living as a woman after God’s own heart!”

This deep, meaty book is saturated with scripture and personal insights. Each chapter ends with a response section to help women open their hearts for God’s transformation. Those serious about spiritual growth will benefit from the study guide at the end. There are also ample footnotes for each chapter. LEH


A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality, states the subtitle for this serious look at an issue that creates an ongoing discussion in many Christian circles. Groothuis has not reached her conclusions in an off-hand manner. Instead, Good News for Women comes after careful research into the Scriptures and study of appropriate materials already in print. She presents her arguments in a scholarly manner, using end notes and Scripture references, along with many quotes.

Groothuis urges careful study of Biblical passages in their cultural context as a prelude to understanding the proper place for today’s women in homes and churches. She examines the traditionalist proof texts that leave “missing pieces and weak links.”

“Despite the fact that we live in a society that puts a strong emphasis on equality and liberty for everyone,” Groothuis tells how treatment of women today often belies that claim. She roots a strong case for gender equality rather than gender hierarchy securely in Scripture as well as in common sense logic.

Groothuis writes well and forcefully, although because of the subject matter and the scholarly presentation, Part 1 reads slowly. Part 2 becomes more interesting. She does not use real-life examples with names and places to make the point, nor does she need to do so. Men and women attempting to establish their own attitude toward this debate will do well to thoughtfully balance the result of Groothuis’ research against other writings on this subject. BMH


Newman, a long-established counselor and speaker, writes a book to complement her previous works on marriage. The subtitle, “Finding Fulfillment as the Woman God Intended You to Be” describes her intentions for the books content. She wants readers to understand their feminine identities and the obstacles to achieving a healthy feminine identity.
Working from the premise that “our attempts to control our pain keep us from receiving what we need most (p. 174), Newman follows a fictional group of six women who meet together regularly for spiritual growth. They each have a different stereotypical personality. Their backgrounds and ways of viewing their lives typify each of us. In thoughtful “Time for You” questions, we are asked to examine how we came to view ourselves as women.

Emphasizing making God-pleasing choices, she says, “I’m no longer angry when I choose to love” (268). Touching lightly on such things as body image, sexuality and understanding, Newman broadly treats a wide array of subjects close to all women’s hearts.


Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Senter, author of other books on friendship and love, has written this book on regaining what feminism has stolen from Christian women. She admits there have been many needed gains the past 100 years or so. There have been saddening losses along the way as well.

Written in a reader-friendly, informal conversational style, Senter encourages the use of “directed quiet” to learn God’s will and counteract the frantic business of our world. She draws heavily on the examples of her spiritual giant of a mother, a woman she admires greatly and aspires to emulate.

A list of questions at the end of each chapter entitled “For Thought, Journaling, or Discussion,” are thought provoking and suitable for group or individual study. Intended for women of any age, the book examines women in general and frequently uses “they” as a manner of address. This creates too much overgeneralization because there are always exceptions to any trend and it is difficult to think the same way about every woman you know. This easy-reading book will be helpful to women’s ministry leaders, especially those trying to reach women who are lured by today’s feminism.


291. Religions; Christianity and other religions. Adult.
Quality—5 Acceptability—5

This book is a Christian introduction to world religions. It is divided into eleven chapters, each of which discusses a separate living religion, e.g. Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Native American religion, etc. The opening chapter is a discussion of religion in general. Corduan defines religion as “...a system of beliefs and practices that provides values to give life meaning and coherence by directing a person toward transcendence.” He then discusses some theories on the origin of religion; he favors the view that all peoples and cultures began with an original monotheism which later deteriorated into animism and polytheism. Corduan gives a good refutation of the evolutionary theory of religion. He does not include a chapter in this book on Christianity because it was written for a primarily Christian audience and assumes a Christian viewpoint throughout.

Each chapter is devoted to a particular religion or type of religion in a particular culture, e.g. there is a chapter on traditional religion in Africa and a chapter on Chinese popular religion. Each chapter discusses basic beliefs of the religion, as well as important rituals and celebrations in the system. There is also a review of important events and rituals connected with rites of passage, e.g. rituals at birth or at puberty or at death.

There is a very helpful review of the history of each religion and of its founder, if known, including maps of essential places and pilgrimages. At the end of each chapter, there is some practical help for Christians who might be witnessing about Christ to a member of that particular religion. This advice is very timely and even-handed and stresses honesty in the context of love and concern. Following this section, there is a list of questions and subjects the reader should be able to answer or discuss after reading the chapter, and there are some very good suggestions for term paper topics on that particular religion. Then at the very end of each chapter there is a brief bibliography of helpful works on the religion. In addition to all of this, there are some very interesting photographs in each chapter of temples, statues, idols, etc. of particular relevance.

This is a very readable and interesting book. It is clearly written from an evangelical Christian point of view, but Corduan’s approach is very balanced and sensitive to other beliefs. He does hold to an exclusivistic view of Christianity, but he presents it in a very inoffensive and compassionate way. It is evident that he has spent a great deal of time in other cultures, and he writes with a great degree of sensitivity born out of experience talking to adherents of these religions. This book would be a great addition to any library interested in furthering understanding of world religions and their relationship to Christianity.


296.1. Dead Sea scrolls—Criticism, interpretation, etc. 535 p. Adult.
Quality—5 Acceptability—5

This is a very readable and interesting book. It is seen as a definitive work on the most important archaeological discovery of our time. Weston W. Fields, Exec Director of the Dead Seal Scrolls Foundation in Jerusalem, calls the Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls a primary source of education for the present generation of Christians doing research on the Scrolls.

Author Randall Price discusses a scope of topics before unavailable in one volume. He looks at the drama, story and scandal of the Scrolls in addition to the Scribes, and significance of the Scrolls as they relate to the Old and New Testaments. He examines in detail what the Scrolls teach, and calls for discernment as we study them. In addition, he looks ahead to the political influences which may determine future study of archaeological sites and further scroll discovery.

He includes personal interviews with Muhammed edh-Dhib, who discovered the Scrolls, other leading scholars in the field, and information about the latest archaeological excavations and discoveries related to the Scrolls.

Artistic renderings of the Temple City described in the Temple Scrolls are included; Qumran community and cave photos, along with Scroll photos give the reader good visuals. Detailed maps, illustrations and charts add to the books’ usefulness.

AGH
Bringing a wealth of educational expertise, Dr. Price is more than qualified to author numerous books on biblical topics. As president of World of the Bible Ministries, Inc., his ministry provides a clearer understanding of the Bible and biblical issues through information on the ancient and modern Middle East; Bible prophecy and historical, cultural, and archaeological studies. He has appeared on the CBS Television special “Ancient Secrets of the Bible.”


George Braswell, a former teacher of Islamic Theology at the University of Teheran and a current professor of missions and world religions at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, provides readers an excellent overview of the basic beliefs and cultural implications of Islam in this volume. The author provides readers who are unfamiliar with the basic tenets of Islam an easy to understand and well-organized primer on the fastest-growing religion in America.

The book largely follows a chronological format. After outlining the common stereotypes and several frequently asked questions in chapter one, Braswell presents chapters devoted to a succinct history of the Prophet Muhammad, the Expansion of Islam, and basic Islamic Theology. North American readers will be interested especially in the chapters regarding Islamic institutions (discussing Ayatollahs and Shirquotes, for instance) and the section on personal, family, social, business, and political aspects of Islam.

The writing style of the author is sometimes forced and the course of thought is sometimes disjointed. The book reflects more of an oral style than a written, expository style. Readers interested in learning more about their Muslim neighbors and our relations with Islamic nations will find that this text provides the foundation to enter into discussions with understanding. DSB


The basic theme of this book is “get involved” and although we may have many good excuses not to, Crippen and his colleagues say it is not an option. We are called to be dual citizens, Christians and Americans, to work to better our social structure. “As Christian people, we are called to be defenders of faith and family. And this will entail engagement, not isolation” (2).

The book is an excellent cross-section of Christian political theorists, such as Crippen, William J. Bennett, and John Eldredge. They take turns showing why political involvement is necessary and possible for Christians. Some essayists are more scholarly and technical than others but there is something here for every reader interested in carrying out the Great Commission in the political and social arena.

There are many helpful additions to the book such as a fifty-five-page annotated bibliography and appendices which will be helpful for future research and community action. The book also contains short reviews of books on topics such as Church-State Relations, Our Culture and an Essential Quick Study List. Political satirical cartoons are sprinkled throughout the text, and each chapter ends with discussion questions appropriate for individual or group study.

This book helps us answer the all-important question, “How do we live together with our deepest differences, especially when they’re religious in nature?” (37)


When the Honeymoon’s Over is a couples’ guide for a more fulfilled and successful marriage. Written by a husband/wife team, it addresses such issues as personality differences, serving your mate, disillusionment, and sex.

It is unique in that the authors, Kathy and Larry Miller, respond to the different topics separately, and together. This clearly depicts the unique differences of how men and women view things.

The authors’ style of writing is both honest and concise. They are “down to earth” and address the subjects head-on—using examples from their own marriage. When the Honeymoon’s Over is a quick read , but contains a great deal of useful information and answers to questions that couples face. TW


Teaching Children is one of three books of the Child-Light Series. Author, Diane Lopez along with Susan Schaeffer Macaulay wrote this book as a practical guide to the method described in Macaulay’s book, For the Children’s Sake. Based on the educational teachings of Charlotte Mason, a 19th century educator, Lopez and Macaulay have developed a workable method of using fine literature or “living books” to educate children.

“Charlotte Mason believed education to be an atmosphere where there is respect and understanding; a discipline of habits of mind and body; a life that includes intellectual, moral, and physical sustenance, and where the mind feeds on ideas; and a science of relationships where a child has natural relations with a vast number of things and thoughts, and is exposed to living books, nature, science, art, music, drama, physical exercise, and handicrafts.” All within a Biblical framework and a Christian worldview.

Teaching Children is not complete without the other books in the series; For the Children’s Sake by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay begins the series with an in-depth look at Charlotte Mason and the Child-Light philosophy of education. The other Child-Light book is Books Children Love by Elizabeth Wilson, a guide to choosing “living books”. This series is an excellent tool for all parents and schools alike, providing concrete information to help us enrich our children’s lives.
Diane Lopez is the principal of Bethany Christian School in Sierra Madre, California. A long time educator, Lopez has written numerous articles on education. JMH


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

In her blunt yet friendly way, author, Mary Pride tackles the issue of homeschooling. In twelve easy to read chapters, Pride shares her thoughts on everything from learning styles to curriculum planning, wrapping up with the issue of housekeeping. The author holds no punches as she delivers her message. Schoolproof is a carefully thought out argument in favor of homeschooling. Footnoted and indexed, this book provides good information for anyone considering homeschooling. Regarded as a homeschooling classic, Schoolproof has earned its place alongside such classics as Teach Your Own by John Holt, For the Children’s Sake by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay, and books by Dorothy and Raymond Moore.

Mary Pride is the author of The NEW Big Book of Home Learning, The Next Book of Home Learning, The Way Home, and other books. She and her husband both publish and edit the magazines, Practical Homeschooling, Big Happy Family, and Homeschool PC. JMH


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Suzanne Stevens’ book on LD and ADHD children is one that should be required reading for every classroom teacher. In a very non-threatening way, Stevens tells stories and gives examples to help the classroom teacher understand students with special learning disabilities.

Characteristics of the LD child and patterns of failure are explained as well as techniques for helping the student become successful. Hints on how to deal in conference situations with specialists, students, and parents are shared. Stevens gives helpful suggestions on how to adjust classroom work and homework assignments to meet the needs of individual students.

An index, select bibliography, and addresses including the Internet are found at the end of the book. The numerous practical examples and stories that are shared throughout the book make it a treasure chest of useful information that would make it a great addition to every elementary and high school library. EK


Quality—5 Acceptability—4

The vast majority of Christians today are not Jewish, are unfamiliar with the world of the ancient Hebrews, and have little—if any—familiarity with the Hebrew language. We have to rely on translations of the Old Testament, and unfortunately no translation can fully capture the nuances of the language it is attempting to portray. What makes The Science of God unique among recent books on science and the Bible is that the author, MIT-trained physicist Gerald Schroeder, is both Jewish and has been studying the Old testament scriptures in the original Hebrew for twenty-five years.

Schroeder is not a Christian—he is a theistic Jew—but firmly believes that the Genesis account of Creation is perfectly compatible with the findings of modern science. His perspective is refreshingly different from many books on science and religion which do violence to one side or the other. Schroeder brings out nuances and thoughts from the Hebrew that do not emerge from English translations. A major premise of his book is that the six days of creation should be measured by what he calls ‘cosmic time’—a clock based on the wavelength of radiation since the moment of creation.

Those committed to the young-earth interpretation of Genesis as expounded, for example, by the ‘Creation Science’ movement, will probably not agree with Schroeder’s conclusions. Those, on the other hand, who accept the findings of science but dismiss Genesis may have cause to rethink their position. But agree or disagree with Schroeder, The Science of God is well worth reading and considering for those interested in the relationship between the Bible and science. AMS


Quality—4 Acceptability—5

Emilie Barnes, popular author and speaker, expresses her heart for hospitality in Welcome Home. This inviting 8 by 9 1/2 inch gift book is full of ideas and inspiration to help you create a welcoming home for family and friends. Color photographs by Mark Lohman take you on a tour of her cozy California home, a converted barn, designed with hospitality in mind. Since first impressions count, Emilie begins with suggestions for creating a warm welcome at doorways and entrances. A bright banner, a welcome sign, or greeting your guests with a beverage at the doorway all tell them they are welcome. She continues with appealing ideas for living rooms, kitchens, and bathrooms, guest rooms, child-friendly spaces, work rooms, and the outdoors. Emilie emphasizes the need for comfort, beauty, personal touches, and cleanliness in these areas. She ends each chapter with “Housewarmings,” a section of practical, affordable ideas to try. Emilie’s love for people and gracious hospitality is evident throughout the book. She enjoys treating family and guests like royalty and encourages celebrations and parties (her favorites are tea parties). People are always more important to her than possessions. “To me, the real treasures of any home are the people of all sizes who are growing, creating, playing, sharing, and learning there. These are the treasures that truly make a house a home.”

Written with a nostalgic, descriptive style, some of her secrets remain hidden in the text and may take a second read to discover. Biblical family values underlie her writing. A friendly book filled of love, beauty, homey quotes, and inspiration, “Welcome Home” assures women it’s worth their time to create a warm and welcoming home. LEH


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

‘Playing God’ is a frequently encountered phrase. But what does it mean, and what kind of response should thinking Christians have? The phrase, as Ted Peters (Professor of Systematic Theology at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary) points out, almost invariably carries a connotation of warning; that fallible humans may have cause to rethink their position. But agree or disagree with Schroeder, The Science of God is well worth reading and considering for those interested in the relationship between the Bible and science. AMS
Before she became a Christian, Mary Pride was an ardent feminist who worked as a computer systems engineer. After her conversion, her Bible study, together with her extensive reading of both secular and Christian feminist writers, led her to the position that the results of the feminist movement had been destructive to women, their families, and society at large.

In her early book, The Way Home (1985), she takes Titus 2:3-5, with its key term "home-working," as a basis for her description of the role that God intended for women. Citing a number of different sources, she suggests that feminism is actually a religion in which "Woman is the measure of all things." Instead she offers her vision of the fulfillment a woman can experience in her "return" to the home. Beginning with a frank discussion of the marriage relationship, she lays down a theoretical basis for large families with the parents responsible for the character training and education of their children. She demonstrates that home-working is broader than just "housework" using a variety of examples of home-based business, artistic, and Christian ministry activities. In addition to the bibliography, she appends an additional page of recommended resources.

In All the Way Home (1989), Pride follows up her more theoretical discussion in the earlier book with an added, more practical, "how-to" approach to many of the same issues. Among topics that receives greater emphasis in this book is midwifery. Another is missionary outreach to international students in this country. The format with side columns is used for special emphasis on key topics or supplementary quotations related to the main text. The resources section at the end of this book includes books, periodicals, training courses, organizations to join, and suppliers of helpful materials. Black-and-white cartoon-type drawings introduce each chapter. Both books are indexed and have generous end notes included with the bibliographical references.

Mary Pride may be more widely known for her The Big Book of Home Learning, now in its fourth edition (1997). Many of the helpful suggested resources included in All the Way Home are not found in The Big Book, but some listed here are now dated (i.e., unavailable or hard to find). Pride writes in the first person, using an informal, vigorous, and often blunt, style. Many Christians will disagree with some of her biblical exegesis and/or logic, as well as her positions.

Her objections to birth control may not raise as many eyebrows as the questions she raises about foreign missionary activities. She seems to fall into the common statistical fallacy of equating correlation with causation as she relates foreign missions activity to the rise of communist or totalitarian influence in various nations of the world. More positive changes have taken place in a number of those countries since her book was published in 1989.) However, many of her concerns still merit serious consideration, such as the potential negative effects on children of those who give their ministry outside the home a higher priority than their responsibility to their own children. Some will agree with and conform to all of Pride’s positions on the various issues, while others will not. However, Christians in both groups can still respect the others as genuine servants of the Lord.

Turbulent Teens of Panicking Parents is a guide for parents that addresses common difficulties and concerns faced by both the teen and their parents. Jeenie Gordon writes about such topics as communicating with your teen, drug abuse, education, pre-marital sex and pregnancy, and date rape.

Gordon, herself, is a high school counselor and, therefore, the majority of her encounters are drawn from the personal experiences she has had with various teens in a High School setting.

Each chapter end contains exercises for parents to complete to evaluate what areas they may or may not need to address or improve. Gordon is very direct in style and open in sharing many heart-felt experiences. Turbulent Teens is also complete with various resources that are available for further exploration. Parents of teens will find that this book promotes introspection and self-evaluation and would prove helpful. TW

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Single parents face difficult challenges including loneliness, legal battles, and parenting alone. Dr. Lynda Hunter, editor of Focus on the Family’s Single-Parent Family magazine and a single mother, knows the road of single parenthood is not easy. She offers hope and encouragement in her comprehensive guide, Parenting On Your Own. Compassionately written in question answer format and organized by topics, it addresses real concerns single parents face. Chapters begin with background information called “What You Should Know” and include answers to “Questions You Ask.” Her sound answers are rooted in personal experience, single-parent responses, her seminars, other books on the subject, and scripture.

Whether divorced, abandoned, never married, or widowed, single men and women gain help to understand legal issues, emotions, parenting children from infancy through adulthood, safe relationships, and remarriage. Each topic is discussed in depth. For example, the section on emotions deals with handling fear, anger, sadness, joy, grief, guilt, and forgiveness. The parenting portion emphasizes the need to guide, protect, encourage, and teach independence. It provides concrete suggestions for disciplining,
building self-esteem, and preparing children for adulthood. About one third of the book offers practical help to develop the necessary life-skills of setting goals, finding balance, handling conflict, coping with stress and change, communicating, managing time and money, and more. Although aimed at singles, some of Dr. Hunter’s straightforward, sensible advice is applicable to anyone. The book is well-documented with notes and a resource chapter provides further reading on many subjects discussed.

Single parents will find many answers on a broad reading on many subjects discussed. Dr. Hunter’s straightforward, sensible advice is money, and more. Although aimed at singles, some of the past, and move on to what lies ahead. LEH encouraged to face the reality of what happened, let go and change, communicating, managing time and money, and more. Although aimed at singles, some of the past, and move on to what lies ahead. LEH


Dr. Patricia Morgan, mother of four, college professor, and author of *How to Raise Children of Destiny* offers a new twist to rearing godly children. She mandates personalizing scripture’s “seed” to our own children. Further, she says “godly parents need to discover God’s particular call for their children if they are to effectively help guide them through childhood to maturity.” For, according to Morgan, that is exactly what Mary and Joseph did with Jesus.

Written in methodical order, Morgan proceeds from the battle for the seed (offspring) to generational discipleship. Although wordy and sometimes complicated, the various Parent Checklists and quotes help break up the gray.

Due to a wordiness that can get complicated or tedious, a reader may bog down early in the book. If so, skip to Chapter 8, Molding the Minds of Leaders. This chapter is both practical and excellent. Even “Hitler knew the secret of the seed...The Church may be deaf, dumb, and blind but God is not. He has warned us of the beginning about the importance of our children. When we see only young and perhaps headstrong children, He sees mighty leaders doing great exploits in His name.”

Some subheadings in Chapter 8 are Parent/School Relationship, Important Lessons for Young Students and Leaders, and Help Your Child Commune with God. Other subheadings are How to Discover God’s Specific Intention for your Child and What is My Role as Parent?

How to Raise Children of Destiny is at times convicting, and always thought provoking. Digest it one chapter at a time. Pray over it; practice it. Your children are at stake. GM


Quality—4 Acceptability—5

In *A Father for All Seasons*, author Bob Welch describes the five seasons fathers and sons grow through. Spring represents the start of the relationships and all the firsts. Summer is the time of childhood discovery. Autumn covers the transitional time of the teen years. Winter is the season of letting go and separation. The second spring emerges as fathers and sons play new roles in their relationships.

Welch doesn’t offer didactic instruction or psychological analyses of father-and-son relationships; he tells stories. In an honest and often humorous conversational manner, he shares about four generations of men in his family, their successes, foibles, and failures, and gently weaves in insights God has given him from these events.

Welch, a newspaper feature writer, also added stories of friends and people he has met on his beat. Some are painful, such as the ones about a cocaine-dealing son and a man’s abusive childhood. These the author handles tenderly.

Though the book is written for men, women will also enjoy the touching stories and insights into how men feel and relate to one another. LKFN


Quality—5 Acceptability—4

In their introduction, the editors of *The Harbrace Anthology of Literature* state that they have “attempted to make their selections as varied and diverse as possible.” This claim is borne out by a quick skim through the table of contents. In the poetry section, the reader is presented with selections that range from the traditional Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth to First Nations voices, and finally to such contemporary, award-winning Canadian authors as Atwood and Ondaatje. In the drama section, the impeccable Oscar Wilde rubs shoulders with a rumpled Woody Allen, while the journey into short fiction section begins with an entry by Nathaniel Hawthorne and ends with an offering by Amy Tan.

The organization of this 1259-page volume is mercifully straightforward. Selections within the three genres—poetry, drama, and the short story—are arranged chronologically. This arrangement allows the reader to observe the patterns that have developed over time, as well as the ways in which later writers were influenced by those who came before. Each of the three sections is preceded by an introduction which defines basic terms and concepts, providing students with the tools required to effectively analyze these works. Examples are taken directly from the anthology itself. The editors have also included a useful chapter on essay writing, which covers everything from overcoming writer’s block to a list of the ten most common mistakes. The volume concludes with a glossary of terms and an index combining authors, titles, and first lines of poetry. As with any anthology that attempts to introduce its readers to the many voices that comprise our literary tradition, this volume does include works that do not reflect the Judeo-Christian viewpoint.

Now in its second edition, the *Harbrace Anthology of Literature* boasts all the strengths of the first, including a rich and diverse selection of poetry, drama, and short fiction, an excellent introduction to each genre, and a concise, informative entry regarding the background, style and major themes of each writer. To these elements, the editors have added more Canadian content and author interviews in each of the three sections. The resulting text will prove an invaluable resource in the field of literature. SS


823. English poetry; Thompson, Francis. 80 p. Adult.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

I suspect many people are like myself, having heard the phrase “the Hound of Heaven,” without knowing its origins. The opening words of the poem, too, may strike a chord:

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways of my own mind...

The Hound of Heaven was written in 1859 by Francis Thompson, a down and out opium addict. The poem describes Thompson’s flight from God, a flight that ends with his own defeat. At long last, Thompson ceases running; he is ‘caught’ by God, and receives new life. Thompson’s drug-ruined life is restored by a God who won’t let him go, who ‘tracks him down’ no matter where he tries to run. It is, in a sense, a modern rendition of Psalm 139 (“where can I flee from your presence?”).

This new edition offers Thompson’s original poem along with a paraphrase by Gordon MacDonald. Part I is a brief story of Thompson’s life; Part II is MacDonald’s paraphrase presented alongside Thompson’s poem; and Part III is Thompson’s poem complete.

The Hound of Heaven well deserves its honored place in the ranks of Christian poetry. It deserves reading and re-reading as an always fresh reminder of the “God who will never let us go.” AMS


Quality— Acceptability—5

Footfalls in Memory is the record of a journey made in the company of books, by Englishman Terry Waite while a captive of Lebanese terrorists for five years. After the first year his captors supplied him with a steady stream of reading material. Waite writes, “To be alone with a book was one of the most precious gifts
I received during those long solitary years.” To help survive the first year, Waite wrote his autobiography in his mind and endeavored to remember passages from favorite books and from the Bible.

Waite writes, “At times I was afraid not only of the situation in which I found myself but also of the inner journey. I felt that I could be lost and wander into madness as a way of escaping the pain of self-examination. At the same time, I was possessed by a burning desire to find and understand truth and discover my own center.” He says, “Death did not cause me to be afraid, but I was fearful of the way in which I might die. I did not want to die in captivity. I did not want my family and friends to have to live with the terrible uncertainty of not knowing how I lived my last days. When I literally “felt like death” I would repeat the Twenty-Third Psalm to myself. The way we view death will affect the way we live.”

This book brings together selections from some of the volumes he was given and excerpts from others he held in memory, and selections from books he wished he had had during that time. It is a record not only of his delight in books, but also an exploration into the self. He says, “As I trod that perilous path, some of the authors and characters mentioned in these pages walked with me, and I shall always be grateful for their wisdom, humor, and companionship. Solitary confinement taught me anew the delight and value of books.”

The human spirit ennobled by faith and courage is proclaimed on these pages. The reader is plunged into his own self-examination and can only be grateful that this man was freed so that he might share this very personal journey. MJ


921 (267). Schaeffer, Francis A. (Francis August); Schaeffer, Edith; L’Abri (Organization)—Biography; Christian biography—United States; Christian biography—Switzerland 155 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

L. G. Parkhurst’s biography of Francis and Edith Schaeffer is an inspirational and informative book about two great Christians of our era. One of the Women and Men of Faith series, this small, easy to read volume begins with the family backgrounds of both Francis and Edith and tells how they met and married. The focus of the story is on their ministry years and the beginning of L’Abri Fellowship.

Throughout the book, Parkhurst includes many faith-inspiring stories about the founding of L’Abri and God’s continual answers to prayer in the lives of the Schaeffers. This biography is not intimidating because of its small size and shortness in length; therefore, it is inviting even to reluctant readers. It is also very well written and interesting to keep the reader’s attention. At the end of the book is a list of notes listed by chapter and a separate bibliography of recommended reading of other titles of and by the Schaeffers. EK


921 (269). Graham, Ruth Bell; Baptists—Biography; Evangelists’ spouses—Biography; Spouses of clergy—Biography; Children of missionaries—Biography; Graham, Billy, 1918- 294 p. Gr. 9 - Adult.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

The pretty Wheaton College coed knelt beside her bed that snowy winter night and prayed, “God, if you let me serve you with that man, I’d consider it the greatest privilege in my life.”

Ruth Belt spoke her prayer minutes after a tall, lanky fellow student named Billy Graham (already smitten with Ruth) had walked her to her door following their first date.

No doubt this was a match made in heaven. Although Ruth had planned to become a single missionary, her intrigue and admiration for the future world evangelist soon turned to love and marriage—and an enduring partnership in ministry and life with him to which she would bring wit and caring, style and strength.

Those who read author Patricia Cornwell’s original biography of her friend Ruth Bell Graham, will remember the prayer scene in *A Time for Remembering* published in 1983. It was a book that plucked Ruth out of the background, where she prefers to live and introduced this fascinating woman to a generation of readers.

Now a new generation gets a chance to meet Ruth Graham in *Ruth, A Portrait*, Cornwell’s lovingly written update—or perhaps more accurately her enhancement—of her original book.

The new book opens in May 1996 in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C., where the Grahams are to become the first clergy couple to receive the Congressional Gold Medal. Before she returns us to the original story, Cornwell takes us to the Renaissance Hotel with the Grahams following the ceremony. Here Ruth relaxes with her grandchildren while enjoying a plate of Chinese food ordered from room service. She is seventy-six now and more frail, but as Cornwell puts it, little changed “in a way that counts.”

The original book follows, virtually intact, including the same chapter headings and many of the same family photographs. Drawing on numerous interviews with family and friends as well as journals, letters, and diaries, it traces Ruth’s story from her first seventeen years in China as the mischievous sensitive daughter of medical missionaries, to her marriage, the birth of her five children and grandchildren, her own quiet ministry, and with Billy on his crusades around the world.

The author brings us back to the present in a touching postscript that reflects the love and admiration she feels for her subject. Patsy, as the Grahams call her, was a lonely, young neighbor in Montreal, North Carolina, when Ruth befriended her. Ruth encouraged her young friend to write, and the original biography, published while Cornwell was a crime reporter on the *Charlotte Observer*, was her first book. Since, she’s won awards and fame as a crime novelist.

Patricia Cornwell again brings Ruth Graham to life, through insightful, often comical, anecdotes, extensive research, and the benefit of a close, personal relationship with this outstanding Christian woman. NBC


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

At long last Billy Graham has written his autobiography and it’s a doozy—733 pages of facts and faith covering over fifty years of Graham’s life and ministry. Whole chapters are given to crusades; national and international leaders, including three USA presidents; and the development of his myriad ministries. In fact, there are nearly 100 photographs included, along with a comprehensive index listing all the people and places he’s worked.

**Just as I Am is** chronological, of course, starting with his childhood and how he met Jesus as a teenager, his spiritual hunger from the get-go, and his calling to evangelism. His purpose was and is “to preach and propagate the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ by any and all means” because “it seemed the whole world was ripe for the gospel.”

Some readers may find the first and last two chapters the most interesting-definitely the most personal. Here Graham discloses his love life. When he first met Ruth: “I just could not believe that anyone could be so spiritual and so beautiful at one and the same time.” And later his family life. Theirs was a regular family with regular problems.

Graham is candid about his mistakes in his preaching and ministries, likewise, he is candid about his mistakes at home. He regrets having missed so much family time. Ruth raised their five children almost single-handedly. But she never complained to Billy, although journal excerpts reveal her cries to God for help. Graham shows nothing but love, admiration, and respect for his bride of half a century. In fact, judging from the many excerpts he uses, he must have a trunkful of Ruth’s letters.

The final chapter reflects his diagnosis of Parkinson’s Disease, coping with old age, and his ever-growing faith. Above all, the book ends with hope. “And most of all I look forward to seeing Christ and bowing before Him in praise and gratitude for all He has done for us, and for using me on this earth by His grace just as I am.” *Just as I Am* is a book worth reading. GM RI


Quality—4 Acceptability—5

The Men of Faith series shows the power of God to change individual lives, cities, and nations. Luis Palau
has preached to millions through his crusades. His life story with all its struggles is presented by W. Terry Whalin. Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1934, Luis Palau watched his father’s bold witness for Christ. But when he was ten his father died of bronchial pneumonia. He rushed home from his boarding school too late to say goodbye. Palau committed his life to Christ at a summer camp. When the initial spiritual fervor died he drifted away from the Lord. His understanding of living the Christian life was based on performance: read the Bible, pray, study, and go to church. But he had no idea how to enjoy the indwelling Christ.

Before Luis was eighteen he had a job at Bank of London in Buenos Aires. He soon felt compelled to join his family in Cordoba, who needed his financial support. Here Luis became involved in the church. The story continues looking into his first evangelistic efforts, his college training, and his move into city-wide evangelistic crusades.

An appendix presents the text of one of Luis’s best-known Gospel presentations. He has given the message in crusades and booklet form to many millions of people around the world. MPC

William Petersen offers a birds-eye view of the marriages of twenty-five Christian leaders-past and present. His stories cover missionaries, evangelists, pastors, authors and teachers and many readers will easily recognize names like Dwight Moody, Billy Sunday, Hudson Taylor, Martin Luther, Grace Livingston Hill, Jonathan Edwards, Adoniram Judson, Peter Marshall as well as seventeen more husband and wife teams.

Identifying with the joys and challenges every marriage faces makes this believable book an encouraging experience, not only for the pleasure of reading, but for the wisdom readers gain from the lives of God’s servants. According to Peterson, extended spiritual accomplishments of the men and women is not the focus of this work. Instead he emphasizes “family backgrounds, courtship, early adjustments, family relationships and the blending of strong personalities.”

Petersen looks at the marriage and the home life. What better place to learn to make life practical. His desire is for readers to receive insight from the lives of these marriages to strengthen their own. Readers cannot help but be inspired, however, by the lessons these famous Christians learned on the front lines of Christian service. Many struggled to maintain a balance with their responsibilities of God’s work, personal growth, and family relationships. Often children are alienated from parents because of intense work in the ministry, and separation is a cross they often bear.

Petersen tells the stories with a sensitivity to the strengths and weakness of his characters. Readers will admire his honesty in the numerous character sketches and his reverence for what God called His servants to do. CLH


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

If you have ever wondered why someone you love walks away from God, this book reveals the seduction of self-sufficiency and sin. In Surprised by God, Arterburn candidly reveals his deepest secrets—including coercing his college girl-friend to have an abortion, and his pursuit of pleasure, possessions, and power. The consequences almost destroyed him.

To the casual observer, Arterburn’s accomplishments are impressive: a nationally-known speaker and radio host, author of twenty-two books, and a licensed minister, he once worked as senior vice president of a major company hired away at age thirty-two to become chairman of a quarter-of-a-billion-dollar company. Now Arterburn is co-founder of New Life Clinics, the largest provider of Christian counseling in the country. But Arterburn does not discuss his outward successes. Rather, in Surprised by God he delves into the deeper question of the condition of one’s heart, and a prodigal’s drift away from God.

Arterburn writes, “There is one great truth and one great lie. The great truth is that God loves us, and through Him we find ultimate meaning and fulfillment. The great lie says we can control our own destinies and find contentment on our own.” He quotes Proverbs 14:12: “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.”

After Arterburn confesses how his motives affected his choices and how those choices hurt himself and others, he shares how he grew to understand what full obedience to God really means. With a style that is direct yet gentle, he challenges the reader to be brutally honest and pursue the truth found only in the Bible. The strength of Surprised by God is that Arterburn addresses tough issues like abortion and homosexuality, but also the subtle sin of living a shallow and insincere life in Christ. KSG


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Readers know Laura Ingalls Wilder from her delightful autobiographical stories, The Little House on the Prairie series. Now, with the results of Stephen Hines’s research deeper into her memoirs, we have the advantage of 163 short inspirational gems from Wilder’s writings. Each comes complete with Scripture verses, and Hines also offers hymns from the era in which Mrs. Wilder writes. The selections pinpoint common happenings in Mrs. Wilder’s everyday life. She speaks of neighbors, friends, her family, stewardship, responsibility, heaven, home, and many other topics as relevant today as to life in the early 1900s. Hines’s introduction gives readers good background information about Mrs. Wilder.

Readers expect good writing from Mrs. Wilder, and these selections do not disappoint. They include dialogue, anecdotes, and good descriptions. The kindly way she states her faith inspires and encourages the same in others. Anyone who has enjoyed the Little House books will feel a kinship with these inspiring bits and pieces.

The inside format of the book invites those who may not have time for long, involved readings. The straightforward writing enchant readers without intimidating them, though she presents profound precepts. A well-designed book, Saving Graces makes a lovely gift. It’s attractiveness places it in the coffee table category. BMH


Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Her friends thought her crazy when Jane Kirkpatrick and her husband Jerry decided to purchase one hundred and fifty acres of rural land along the John Day River in Eastern Oregon. “It was such a very long way from my manicurist,” she wrote, unaware of the personal triumphs and tragedies ahead, events that would transform her-mentally, physically, and spiritually.

Homestead reads like letters home. From rattlesnakes to coyotes, road washouts to plane crashes, Kirkpatrick describes the daily adventures that became part of the homesteading life she adopted. She shares her belief God wanted them on the side of the mountain called “Starvation Point,” and leaves the readers wondering about God’s plan in their own lives.

Divided into three parts, the book is further broken into thirty-two chapters plus a prologue and an epilogue. The approach is a friendly essay format. I was bothered that I did not find God’s spectacular plan that she saw in buying the homestead. I found myself wondering if God wasn’t saving her from her own selfish intentions.

A clinical social worker by trade, Jane Kirkpatrick has published several novels and essays in magazines and newspapers across the nation. JMH

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

“These days most parents don’t have the time or opportunity to craft storytelling into a family tradition,” writes author Joni Eareckson Tada. “Still, when Mom or Dad is able to pull up a chair by (a child’s) bedside and read a truth-telling tale, powerful things happen.” In this book Joni Eareckson Tada delivers seven timeless stories for parents to read to their children.

Each story illustrates a Biblical truth. Following the story is a verse from the Bible and statements designed to help a child understand and respond to what they’ve heard. Ron DiCianni’s illustrations help bring each story to life. His notes in the back of the book give further insight into the thoughts and events that inspired each painting. This book would be a valuable resource in any home or library in which there are young children. DEB


F. Iraq—Fiction; Antiquities—Iraq—Fiction; Biological warfare—Fiction; Babylon—Fiction. 363 p. Gr. 9 - Adult.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

Mars and Anne are archaeologists who somehow seem to get involved with international terrorists. Even out of the country and spending their honeymoon in London doesn’t keep Mars and Anne out of danger. After arriving back in Jerusalem they accept another assignment on an archaeological dig in Iraq where they stumble onto a chemical warfare laboratory set up right next to them at the dig. When they get word to leave immediately they realize they are in over their heads. Before they can evacuate the dig, the site is surrounded by guards. Their only source of communication is cut off and the time gets closer to the bombing of the laboratory. Anne begins to pray for deliverance while Mars tries to set up a escape route on his own power. The laboratory gets bombed twice and Mars and Anne are called in for questioning. They know that time is running out and so they try to escape and are caught and imprisoned in the basement of the guest house. There Mars accepts Jesus into his heart realizing that He is the only one they can depend on. Meanwhile the rescue crew is grounded and hides to avoid detection while trying to figure out a rescue plan. Unknown a second rescue team is sent and after a desert chase and gun fight the archaeological team is finally rescued.

Walls of Terror is a fast -paced suspense story told in the third person that is a sequel to Veiled Threats. It is a complete story in itself and keeps one turning the pages to see how it all will end. Frank Simon shifts the scene from the good and bad side using several characters to build up a spellbinding story with Mars and Anne as the central figures. Placed in a current time frame the reader is able to quickly identify with the story. Walls of Terror is over 360 pages long and is geared for the more serious reader. DAW


F. Prayer—Fiction; Angels—Fiction; Spiritual warfare—Fiction; Missions—Africa—Fiction. 313 p. Adult.

Quality—4 Acceptability—5

The title of Celeste Perrino Walker’s novel, Prayer Warriors, captivates readers at the outset. Written primarily for adults, the work could be enjoyed by teens as well. Prayer Warriors tells the physical and spiritual stories of four or five groups of people. Stories include a man in a coma, and how his condition affects his family, an airplane crash, an unwanted pregnancy, and a mission doctor who cannot forget the ravages of war. Characters each have an angel, and in many cases, a demon, seeking to influence the person either to turn to God or to turn away from Him. Through the prayers of certain characters, God’s working in the lives of people is portrayed.

At the outset of Prayer Warriors there are at least five story lines. These are successfully combined into two main plots by the conclusion. The reader spends the first third of the book becoming acquainted with a multitude of characters and their relationships to each other. A chart of characters and related spiritual beings is provided at the beginning of the work. This is helpful, although it is still difficult for the reader to keep track of all the people. Characterization is excellent, however, holding the reader’s interest to learn more about the characters’ stories. The passages from the angels’ perspective incorporate a strong theology that does not appear to contradict scripture. Prayer Warriors is inspirational reading, to be read more than once, and then shared with others. TM


F. Romance—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 425 p. Gr. 11 - Adult.

Quality—5 Acceptability—5

The sensitive disposition and loving Christian spirit of Sophie, created by Lori Wick, captures readers’ admiration almost instantly. Twenty-eight-year-old Sophie comes to America for a better life, leaving her homeland in Prague, Czechoslovakia and her beloved grandmother, Kasmira, who cared for her. Sophie fears she’ll never see her fragile grandmother again. She seeks out Christian fellowship in a ladies Bible study and meets Janet. Realizing she’s lonely and frustrated at her job, and seeing the need Sophie has to serve God, Janet arranges a meeting between Sophie and her brother Alec, a recent widower. Janet sees in Sophie someone who will bring joy to his brother’s home again, and at the same time serve as housekeeper.

Even though they wallow deeply in sorrow from their wife and mother’s death, Sophie is accepted by Alec’s family. Her quiet, unashamed faith, exposes their lack of communication with God and helps them conquer their grief and face each day with joy.

True restoration comes for Alec and Sophie when they fall in love and marry. Sophie grows, too. Highly educated, she learns to accept God’s hand in her life as a housekeeper as He begins His healing for Alec.

Lori Wick is a master of dialogue, weaving believable characters into a conclusion readers all want—the happy ending. Sophie’s broken English provides occasion for laughter, but Wick uses Sophie’s heart of faith to confront Alec and his kids with God’s love, enabling them to heal from their bitterness and sorrow. Readers rejoice when self is dethroned, Alec assumes leadership of his family and the children seek God’s heart.

Wick uses a surprise ending to culminate this delightful story. CLH
The following is a list of publishers who cooperate with CLJ by sending books for review. Use these addresses and phone numbers to order books reviewed by CLJ in this and all past issues. At the end of the publisher list, find a list of book distributors who may supply more of these titles, simplifying your ordering process. Any of them will be glad to send you catalogs and information about cataloging and discounts.

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