A Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Greetings from Wyoming! After a long search, I accepted a full-time professional library position and moved to Sheridan, Wyoming, in December, 1998. The lovely rolling hills and greengrass of spring here are wonderful, and call me to long walks and drives in the nearby Bighorn Mountains. Snow comes one day, followed by balmy spring weather and then driving rain, so each day is a new surprise, much like life itself.

I am happy to be back at work on CLJ after a long break, and hope you find the current issue helpful in your materials selection for your library. This issue includes about twice the normal number of reviews, making this a “combined issue,” to be followed by our Summer issue in another two-three months.

The many renewals we have received in the past two months have been a strong vote for continuing the journal. We thank you for your patience, and hope this issue gives you many ideas for expanding your library collection.

In Christ’s love,

Nancy L. Hesch
Editor and Publisher

Corrections Fall, 1998

In the Picture Book section of the Fall 98 issue of CLJ, the title was omitted from the review for A Bad Case of Stripes, reviewed by Judy Driscoll. Our apologies to Blue Sky Press (Scholastic) and the reviewer. You will find the review, with its title, in the Picture Book section of this issue.

In the Children’s Fiction section, several reviews were repeated on the first two pages, thereby causing several reviews at the end to be dropped. We are carrying these reviews in the current issue. Our apologies to Soundprints for Mysterious Journey : Amelia Earhart’s Last Flight and Ice Continent : A Story of Antarctic; Emerald Books for The Secret of the Old Well; Pacific Press Publishing Assn. for Skeeter, the Wildly Wacky Raccoon; Journey Books (Bob Jones University Press) for Iceland Adventure; and to our reviewers Marcia Snyder, Jane Mouttet, Leslie Greaves Radloff, and Melinda Torgerson.

In the Children’s Nonfiction section, the review of Charlotte, by Janet Lunn, was printed only in part. We are carrying this review in the current issue. Our apologies to Tundra Books and our reviewer, Rhonda Marie Lackey.

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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 300 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*.

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Printed in the U.S.A.
MONKEYS,
MEN, AND
MYTHS

Few secular books have had more impact on Christianity than Charles Darwin’s 1859 The Origin of Species. Although the concept of evolution wasn’t new, Darwin gave it a form that virtually assured its acceptance by the scientific community, and triggered what in our century has been perceived as a ‘war’ between science and religion.

Today, an increasing number of scientists find no conflict between their Christian faith and scientific discoveries. But the conflict over evolution still rages - not only between Christian and un-believing scientist, but between Christians of differing viewpoints.

(The term ‘creationist’ ought to include everyone who believes that God created the universe, but is usually restricted to those who believe in a recent date for creation and a literal interpretation of Genesis. Other Christians hold to an old age of the earth and allegorize or reinterpret the Genesis account.)

As one consequence, books on the creation-evolution controversy have proliferated. Some are well-written and thoughtful, others are mere rehashes or second-rate offerings. It is not my purpose in this article to promote or defend any particular viewpoint, but rather to list some of the more recent books that may be worthy of review by those interested in a particular aspect of the controversy, or who wish to ‘read around’ the issues. Inclusion of a book should therefore not be taken to imply endorsement of the author’s viewpoint or arguments.

Creation/evolution literature can be roughly divided as follows:

1) Those who believe in an entirely naturalistic origin of the universe, where God is either absent or irrelevant. Stephen Hawking, Carl Sagan, and Steven J. Gould would be examples. Since this is not a Christian position, books promulgating this viewpoint are not included in this review.

2) Those who believe that the God of the Bible created the universe. This category can be divided into:

   a) Those who accept a recent date for creation (‘young-earthers’), who usually also deny evolutionary processes. Examples would include Henry Morris and Duane Gish.

   b) Those who believe the universe is ancient (‘old-earthers’), and who may accept that God actively directs evolutionary processes (Pattle Pun and others, ‘theistic evolution’); personally intervenes at specific points (Hugh Ross; ‘progressive creationism’); or created a universe capable from its inception of development (John Polkinghorne and others; ‘theistic creationism’).

The terms ‘evolution’ and ‘Darwinism’ are frequently (and misleadingly) used interchangeably. Evolution describes changes over time; Darwinism is a specific mechanism for change. Darwin originally proposed that ‘natural selection’ operated on existing variation in species; this idea fell out of favor towards the late 1800s and was replaced by the neo-Darwinian synthesis, which is the version commonly taught in schools. In this version, ‘natural selection’ works on random mutations in the genetic code to produce new species. So to challenge ‘evolution’ means to challenge the whole idea of development over time (whether caused by natural processes or God); to challenge Darwinism means to challenge one proposed mechanism of evolution. Hence some evolutionists will critique Darwinism while still holding to evolutionary theory. It would be wrong to label these critics as thereby believing in a divinely directed creation.

Books on creation and evolution will typically involve a variety of topics including radiometric dating, the laws of thermodynamics, the fossil record, presumed human ancestors, the Genesis flood, etc. It would be easy to spread the net wider and include books dealing with the origin of the universe (ie Creation vs the Big Bang), and the relationship of science and theology; but with a few exceptions, the following bibliography is restricted to books dealing with creation and evolution.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. General critiques of Darwinism by Christians:

Phillip Johnson is a lawyer who has written three books critiquing Darwinian theory and naturalism:

*Darwin on Trial*, IVP, 1991
*Reason in the Balance*, IVP, 1995
*Defeating Darwinism*, IVP, 1997


2. Critiques of Darwinism by non-creationists:

Michael Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box, the biochemical challenge to evolution.* Free Press, 1996. Behe is a Roman Catholic.


3. Books by young-earth creationists:

By far the most books have come from scientists affiliated with the Institute of Creation Research, founded by Henry Morris. Morris has written many books; the founding of modern creationism may be said to date from the publication of *The Genesis Flood* by Whitcomb and Morris in 1961.

Scientific Creationism has been regarded as the standard exposition of the young-earth position.


*The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, Baker, 1984

*The Long War Against God*, Baker, 1989. Explores the idea that evolution is merely one aspect of the devil’s war against God.

Duane Gish, *Creation Scientists Answer Their Critics*, ICR, 1993. A refutation of criticisms of creation science, such as those contained in Montague and Kitcher (below).


The most influential old-earth creationist is probably astronomer Hugh Ross and his organization Reasons to Believe, which aims to provide evidences for divine activity from scientific discoveries.


*Beyond the Cosmos*, NavPress, 1996. Explores the multidimensionality of God.


5. Critiques of creationism. Most critiques of creationism focus on the young-earth variety.

By Christians:

Alan Hayward, *Creation and Evolution*, SPCK, 1985. Hayward believes the six creation days to be days of divine fiat. Recently released in the US by Bethany House.


Critiques of creationism by non-Christians vary in the vehemence with which they assail religious beliefs in general. (Delos McKown’s *The Mythmakers Magic* is an extreme example of anti-religious rhetoric obscuring both scientific logic and good taste and is not recommended for this reason).


**6. Other books of related interest:**


Del Ratzsh, *The Battle of Beginnings*, IVP, 1996. Critiques both creation science and its opponents. Ratzsh freely admits his confusion over which side is ‘correct’.


**7. From a Jewish Perspective.**

Physicist Gerald Schroeder has written two books examining Genesis from a Jewish perspective:


*The Science of God*, Free Press, 1997. Schroeder proposes that the days of Genesis 1 need to be understood in the concept of ‘cosmic time’.

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School Librarian’s Corner

Welcome back to the School Library Corner of
Christian Library Journal.

by Debra Stombres

Technology Corner:

www.classroom.net

This issue we are going to take a look at a popular and important web site called Classroom Connect. This site is a great resource for you whether you are a novice as a cybernaute or whether you surf the web in all of your free time.

Taken from the welcome page at the Classroom Connect site during one visit is a statement indicative of a growing national and perhaps international attitude. “Information literacy will become an important benchmark in their (students) success as they become the leaders of an increasingly global society.”

As school librarians, developing information literacy is one of our prime directives. The Classroom Connect site is useful for our own development as well as a helpful place to start when teaching our students.

For the beginning Web searcher, there are many helps. Check out the link to the Classroom Connect Resource Station to find links to pages that teach citing internet resources, give answers to FAQs (frequently asked questions), fun links, internet acceptable use policies, lessons plans, global projects, college preparation, grant writing, guide to searching, teacher contact database, and even video conferencing. This is a great place to learn the basics of using the internet safely.

If you grow tired of weeding out the valuable results of a Yahoo or AltaVista search, try G.R.A.D.E.S. This is Classroom Connect’s own search engine which brings in only sites it has evaluated and approved. Remember, many search engines “crawl” around cyber-space adding whatever they find, true and valuable or not.

Besides the search engine for reference sites, Classroom Connect offers search engines for schools by school name, city, state, or country. Their interactive databases include a teacher contact database. Help your teachers make that first connection to another school desiring to do that internet project on the effects of El Nino in other parts of the country.

Classroom Connect publishes a number of internet products which it markets at its site. I have used the Internet Driver’s License and find it informative and thorough but maybe a bit juvenile for high school students. If you are considering allowing students to have internet access and you wish to train them and set some rules, it is a valuable tool.

Got other favorite sites?
Email me at dstombres@aol.com!
Questions & Answers

Send questions to dstombres@aol.com or write to CLJ.

Q. Do I need an expensive computer to go online?

A. Not necessarily, though you probably won’t be able to run the newest and fastest web browsing software. Last Spring (1998) I purchased a 486 75MHz PC with Windows 3.1 and a 33.6 modem for my parents. The modem did more for them than the speed of the processor. This did not include a sound card but sound can be distracting in a library anyway. I purchased the whole system including monitor for about $300.00. By Spring of 1999 you should be able to get a used Pentium 133 system for about this price. Most internet service providers will give you free software. Check out places that specialize in used PC equipment such as Computer Renaissance for a basic system, but make sure you get a warranty.

Web Sites of Interest to Christian Librarians!

REFERENCE SOURCES:

Britannica’s Web Guide
www.eblast.com
Here is another great help when using the Web for research purposes. Offering both a hierarchical index and a search engine of selected sites, this free site is very useful when helping students find sites for papers, debates, etc.

State and Local government on the Web:
www.piperinfo.com/state/states.html
Links to all 50 states and provinces, which in turn link to state and local government sites. Also links to government associations and Web sites.

CHRISTIAN SOURCES:

Religious Resources
http://etext.virginia.edu/relig/browse.html
The Revised Standard Version of the Bible and the King James are available full-text in side by side frames for comparison.

Gospel Communications Network
www.gospelcom.net
Choose links to 116 Christian Organizations from this home page, or search by keywords. Organized by Gospel Films, this is a great way to check out Christian sites with a “one-stop shopping” method!

Author Highlights:

Jean Craighead George, 2nd place winner of the Lamplighter Classic award for 1998.

Visit her web page for a brief autobiography and correspond with her through email.

[www.jeancraigheadgeorge.com/]

“I write for children. Children are still in love with the wonders of nature, and I am too. So I tell them stories about a boy and a falcon, a girl and an elegant wolf pack, about owls, weasels, foxes, prairie dogs, the alpine tundra, the tropical rain forest. And when the telling is done, I hope they will want to protect all the beautiful creatures and places.”
**Is History Really Dead**

**or Do Books Just Make It Seem That Way?**

If you think history is dull with a capital “D”, you are not alone. Many students have concluded just that. It’s no small wonder when so many social studies and history textbooks retell historical incidents in a dry, matter of fact manner, leaving the story out in the cold. With a little help and encouragement from the school librarian however, classroom teachers can use trade books to counteract dry texts and make learning history interesting and fun. School librarians can suggest picture book titles to be used to introduce young readers to history and plan displays of picture books which will serve to whet their appetites and lead them to more in-depth study.

Learning history takes on new interest once it is realized that history is someone’s story. That person may be a pivotal player on the historical scene, a minor figure, or “a footnote” in history. All have a voice, a story to tell which supplies a portion of the entire picture. High caliber trade books make these stories come alive.

Books chosen with the following items in mind will also add to the reader’s body of knowledge. Through reading students should:

1) gain a knowledge of the world around them,
2) discover ideas for themselves,
3) use the historical process,
4) explore materials for themselves,
5) develop critical thinking skills,
6) expand their minds and horizons,
7) be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and
8) use a wide variety of reading levels and materials tailored to meet the educational and instructional goals set by the teachers and students themselves.

Trade books provide an entre for topics discussed in the text. They may be used to enhance learning during the study of a theme or unit, or as a culminating activity. Picture books of a short and visually appealing nature lend themselves to this kind of use. Their length is less threatening to less-abled readers while allowing scope to better readers. The art work invites and engages the reader and adds depth and breadth to learning. Good description invites readers to make mental images of a scene to compare and contrast to prior knowledge and reinforce new learning.

Today’s picture books are written for a variety of grade and reading levels. *Hiroshima no Pika* and *Rose Blanche* both have an intended audience of older readers because of their subject matter. They work well with students in upper middle and upper grades studying war and its effects. Librarians can encourage teachers of upper grades to include them in their lesson plans and classrooms, and provide a collection of picture books to be used primarily with students in those grades.

In middle grades a study of the Civil War can be introduced by looking at the horrors of slavery and an explanation of the Constitutional Convention’s compromise to count slaves as 3/5 of a person by reading Turner’s *Nettie’s Trip South*. Later Bunting’s *The Blue and the Gray* or Polacco’s *Pink and Say* could be read to illustrate how war affects people. Many picture books focusing on historical events or people provide bibliographies for further reading which allow students to explore a topic more fully.

Picture books are published and available for most historical eras though many books focus on American history and the Holocaust. There are many selection aids for incorporating picture books in the area of social studies and history. Some are designed specifically for teachers, but librarians can also make use of the suggestions as well as the list of selected resources found in the teacher’s manuals.

Librarians will find the following criteria for selecting history and social studies trade books helpful.

1) Know the author’s qualifications. Check the track record and the reviews; study the lists from the

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**National Council of Social Studies Teachers, the International Reading Association, and others.**

2) Facts should be accurate. Check a standard text or ask an expert.

3) Is the book current? Check for offensive language - racist, sexist, or stereotyped.

4) Illustrations should clarify text and explain diagrams or maps.

5) Can fact and theory be clearly delineated? This may be hard to do especially in historical fiction where real life people and made up blend.

6) Author’s purpose...to defend, convince, enlighten?

7) Who is the intended audience and is the book suitable?

8) Is the subject covered adequately?

9) Does the book foster inquiry?

10) For non-fiction check organization. Is it logical? What is the sequence? Simplest to most complex? Familiar to unfamiliar? Early to late?

11) Is the language vivid and interesting? The text should be lively, not plodding and dull; suitable for non-fiction, but not too casual.

12) Are there reference tools/aids such as: glossary, table of contents, suggested reading list, index, maps, pronunciation guide, appendix, bibliography?

13) Are illustrations accurate?

14) Are a variety of primary source materials such as pictures, photos, documents, drawings etc. used with clearly written captions? Are these captions placed so that readers which illustration they explain? Does the medium suit the purpose or are black and white illustrations used when color would tell the story better or more fully? Check size of illustrations to see if an important part has been cropped.

15) How will the story foster understanding between people?

16) Is the sum total of the book attractive
and clear?

17) What is your initial reaction to it? If you don’t like it, it will gather dust on your library’s shelves.

18) Check for historical anachronisms and anomalies. Nothing destroys a book’s credibility, or the librarian’s for that matter, faster than a reader finding something out of place or downright wrong.

While many of these guidelines are general and used for all book selection, they are of utmost importance when applied to the selection of non-fiction trade books to enhance and extend the teaching of social studies and history. The books in the following bibliography are a small sampling of those available and fit the criteria established. You will find them useful with many grade levels and generally “Good Reads” all around. A look through the shelves at your library, and the public library and bookstore will yield a long list of titles that you will find indispensable.

AUTHORS ON WHOM YOU CAN COUNT

The following authors have established a reputation for thorough research and accurate writing. Picture books by these authors can be used to introduce topics, extend lessons, research on assigned topics, and provide free reading.

- David Adler. *A Picture Book of...* Holiday, Series of picture book biographies which introduce young readers to famous Americans.
- David Macaulay. *Pyramid, Mill, Cathedral*.

MATERIALS TO AID SELECTION


LITERATURE CONNECTIONS TO AMERICAN HISTORY: RESOURCES TO ENHANCE AND ENTICE 7-12. Linda G. Adamson (Libraries Unlimited, 1997)

SOCIAL STUDIES THROUGH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH. Anthony D. Fredericks (Teacher Idea Press, 1991)


LITERATURE BASED SOCIAL STUDIES: CHILDREN’S BOOKS & ACTIVITIES TO ENRICH THE K-5 CURRICULUM. Mildred Knight Laughlin and Patricia Payne Kardaleff (Oryx, 1991)

ADVENTURES WITH SOCIAL STUDIES THROUGH LITERATURE. Sharron L. McElmeel (Teacher Ideas Press, 1991)

UNDERSTANDING AMERICAN HISTORY THROUGH CHILDREN’S LITERATURE: INSTRUCTIONAL UNITS AND ACTIVITIES FOR GRADES K-8. Maria A. Perez-Stable and Mary Hurlbut
1998 Gold Medallion Award Winners

**Bibles:**

**Reference Works/Commentaries:**

**Fiction:**
*Only the River Runs Free*, Bodie & Brock Thoene, Thomas Nelson, Inc.

**Autobiography:**

**Theology/Doctrine:**

**Devotional:**

**Inspirational:**
*What’s So Amazing About Grace?*, Philip Yancey, Zondervan Publishing House.

**Christian Living:**
*Prayer - The Great Adventure*, Dr. David Jeremiah, Multnomah Publishers, Inc.

**Christianity and Society:**

**Missions/Evangelism:**

**Christian Ministry:**

**Christian Education:**
*Gospel Light’s Little Blessings, A Complete Nursery Kit for Loving God’s Little Ones*, Sheryl Haystead, Editor, Gospel Light.

**Preschool Children:**
*The Parable Series* (Set of 4) - Liz Curtis Higgs, Tommy Nelson.

**Elementary Children:**
*The Jubilee Family Illustrated Bible*, Dr. Claude-Bernard Costecalde, Consulting Editor, Jubilee Publishing Group.

**Youth:**
*It’s Time to Be Bold*, Michael W. Smith, Word Publishing.

**Marriage:**
*Men And Sex*, Dr. Clifford Penner & Joyce Penner, Thomas Nelson, Inc.

**Family and Parenting:**

**Bible Study:**
*God’s Story*, Anne Graham Lotz, Word Publishing.

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**CONFERENCE TIME**

will soon be upon us.

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We are happy to send up to 50 copies (as supplies last).

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Because I am working full-time, please try to reach us by fax or email.
Hospitality — an almost forgotten ministry - is needed more than ever in today’s hectic, impersonal world. The following books offer inspiration, biblical teaching, and practical suggestions to help Christians obey the biblical command to “practice hospitality.”


Experienced in outreach through Campus Crusade for Christ, these authors share the exciting concept of evangelistic entertaining. They provide step-by-step mentoring to host gatherings, prepare testimonies, and lead follow-up home Bible studies. Their fun ideas are suitable for church, neighborhood, or workplace. The book is full of creative events for different ages and occasions, and contains an extensive resource section which includes help for party planning and sharing faith. This comprehensive book combines evangelism and hospitality and is a must for church libraries.

Also available, compiled by the same authors and with the same publisher, is The Joy of Hospitality Cookbook (1996, PB, 480 pages, $16.99). Both titles stand alone but can be used together.


First published in 1976, this revised classic provides a theological basis for hospitality. Topics include hospitality versus entertaining, hospitality as a gift of the Spirit, servanthood, and more. Mains believes hospitality begins at home and should extend to the church, neighborhood, and society. She includes practical tips on time and home management along with new, thought-provoking “Opening the Door” activities that close each chapter. The principles taught are pertinent for singles, marrieds, men, women, churches, and organizational boards.


Cairns uses the biblical meaning of hospitality, “love of strangers,” to emphasize extending hospitality to neighbors, church visitors, missionaries, co-workers, or out-of-town guests. Her easy-to-read handbook combines personal experiences, biblical accounts, and practical teaching. Seasoned in hospitality, she offers guidance for handling restricted diets, lack of confidence, time, and money. Additional tips include being a good host and guest, ministering to the bereaved, and preparing for unexpected company. Appendices offer tasty menus and recipes. An excellent, economical resource.


A home economist, Van Pelt offers practical advice for planning, organizing, and extending gracious entertaining. She provides useful tips for table settings, food presentation, buffets, picnics, and potlucks. Challenging readers to minister through hospitality, she cites biblical role models and emphasizes that hospitality is a powerful witnessing tool. She encourages keeping hospitality simple, developing a personal style, and being hospitable to others besides friends. Attractively illustrated and easy to read, this excellent resource includes a seven-week study guide and bibliography.


Brestin believes the world would change if Christians practiced hospitality. This eight-week women’s Bible study teaches differences between hospitality and entertaining, ingredients of hospitality, hospitality to family and others, holiday hospitality, being a gracious guest, and more. Lessons include Scriptures, questions, “Action Assignments,” prayers, and leader’s helps at the conclusion of the guide. This study is highly recommended for libraries.
with curriculum resource sections.


Previously published as *A House of Many Blessings,* this motivational guide teaches the importance and blessings of hospitality. It’s divided into five parts: blessings of home, family, special friends, sharing, and God’s peace. Topics cover decorating on a tight budget, putting family first, mentoring, making guests feel welcome, using homes for ministry, and much more. It stresses letting God use your home to bless others. Personal stories, practical ideas, and generous biblical teaching make this a valuable resource. Notes and recommended books are included.


This handy resource provides creative ideas to throw successful parties for church, neighbors, families, or friends. It includes theme parties (e.g. sea cruises, western, and Hawaiian), special events (showers, birthdays, farewells, and congratulations), and year-round holiday celebrations. Complete with plans for invitations, decorations, activities, menus and recipes, these innovative suggestions help teens and adults host fun-filled parties. Useful recipe and activity indexes are included.


Barnes’ heart for hospitality is seen throughout this attractive gift book. Filled with “housewarming” ideas for each room, it shows how to create a welcoming home for family and friends. Color photographs provide a tour of her cozy home where she hosts gatherings and regards family and guests as royalty. A friendly book full of love, beauty, and inspiration, *Welcome Home* assures women it’s worth their time to create warm, inviting homes.


What little (or big!) girl wouldn’t enjoy a garden or musical tea party? This colorfully illustrated book presents six imaginative tea parties with ideas for invitations, decorations, menus, and fun activities. Using these suggestions, mothers (or grandmothers) and daughters can create lasting tea party memories. Although best-suited for girls through grade school, party themes could be adapted for older girls. A charming addition for children.

For adult tea party ideas consider the following titles by the same author and publisher:

*If Teacups Could Talk,* (HB, 72 pages, $15.99) or shorter version, *An Invitation to Tea,* (PB, 48 pages, $7.99). Both include paintings by Sandy Lynam Clough.

*We Didn’t Know They Were Angels: Discovering the Gift of Christian Hospitality,* by Doris W. Greig (Regal Books, 1987, PB, 404 pages, $9.95).

This volume is an interesting blend of personal accounts, recipes, and gentle exhortation to practice hospitality. In part one, Greig shares family stories of sacrifice and blessings from thirty-five years of welcoming guests and teaches biblical lessons on hospitality. Chapters end with thought-provoking study questions. Part two, over half the book, contains almost 300 family-tested recipes for modest budgets. Each recipe category (e.g. salads, desserts) has a separate index.

*Once-a-Month-Cooking,* by Mimi Wilson & Mary Beth Lagerborg (Focus, 1992, PB, 160 pages, $10.99).

Cooking only once-a-month is the method taught in this unique cookbook. It provides detailed grocery lists, recipes, and instructions for preparing two week’s or one month’s entrees at a time. Recipes are varied, flavorful, and include low-fat selections and side dishes. Especially helpful for singles and busy individuals, this plan supplies nutritious meals, reduces time, cost, and waste, and invites spontaneous hospitality. It’s an excellent, practical resource with special helps and index.


These authors believe the purpose of genuine hospitality is to encourage others. Adding your “personal touch” and focusing on people, not preparations, makes it effective. An inspirational, quick read with practical insights, this book also includes party ideas, menus, activities, special family and holiday celebrations.

Lydia E. Harris, M.A. in Home Economics, educator, is a freelance writer who “practices hospitality” with her husband in Seattle, Washington. Her special-tea is serving tea. This article appeared initially in Church Libraries.

- Bears--Fiction; Animals--Fiction; Behavior--Fiction. 32 p. PS - Gr. 2.
- Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Mother has always said, “Please stay right outside the front door,” but today Little Bear wishes for a new experience so he will feel big and brave. Then two of his friends invite him to go fishing in Big River and Little Bear’s Big Adventure begins. That is also when his big troubles begin, for Little Bear falls into the river.

On the next adventure Little Bear gets sick from eating too many blueberries. But when the friends want him to carry a beehive home so they can enjoy the honey, Little Bear stops and says, “No.” He discovers the real way to feel brave. Little Bear is sorry he has disobeyed his mother. He knows she is right when she says little adventures are best for him and he tells her so too.

Kathleen Allan-Meyer, a preschool teacher, has written books based on experiences with the children she has taught. The Little Bear Books were written to help children learn big lessons.

Elaine Garvin’s playful paintings show her delight in picturing small animals, and make the story come to life with action and feeling. Marie Knaupp


- Running--Fiction; Pumpkins--Fiction; Australia--Fiction; Individuality--Fiction. 30 p. Gr. 2 - 3.
- Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Joshua Summerhayes, at age sixty, inspects the sheep on his ten-thousand-acre ranch by running. He decides to enter the Koala-K 900 hundred kilometer race. Instead of the usual running attire, Joshua wears overalls and orange gumboots. By the afternoon of the first day, Joshua is keeping pace with the other runners, and on the third day he is leading the race. On the fourth day Joshua makes world news, and photographers from all over the world travel to Wombat Flat. However, one contestant is determined to win the $10,000 prize and gets a ride in a hot-air balloon for part of the distance. As the balloon descends, it collides with a jeep, and Joshua wins the race, setting a new record. He splits the winnings with the other runners and only keeps enough of his share to buy a new pair of overalls and gumboots.

Marsha Diane Arnold has written a story based on a sixty-one-year-old farmer from Victoria, Australia, who won an 875 kilometer race in 1983. The farmer set a new record and won $10,000 that he split with the other runners.

The Pumpkin Runner is an enjoyable story about a sheep rancher who loves running. Joshua competes in a race not for the prize money but just for pleasure and doesn’t care that everyone ignores the runner with gray hair and funny clothes until he leads the race. The color illustrations by Brad Sneed add to the enjoyment of the story. Dianne Woodman


- Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

I think it was three days ago
I first became aware—
That in my comb were caught a couple
Pieces of my hair.

In this rollicking new book by Tedd Arnold, a five-year-old boy discovers some unnerving things about himself—more specifically, about his body. Written humorously in first person, Arnold explores a child’s discovery of what I’d call “body oddities”—hair that sheds, skin that flakes, and baby teeth that loosen. My own five-year-old, impressed by the bold illustrations, sat riveted through the reading. We laughed together when the boy in the story found belly-button lint in his navel and concluded that his stuffing was coming out; and again when the boy suggested that “soon I’ll be in pieces in a pile without a shape…thank goodness Dad keeps lots and lots and LOTS of masking tape.”

Be aware that since the boy in the story thinks he’s coming apart, he imagines his arm falling off when he throws a ball, or worries about his head coming loose...
with a cough. Although the illustrations are innocent and non-threatening, this idea may unsettle very young or sensitive children.

Arnold successfully portrays a child’s fears and curiosity related to his or her own body, while inviting us to laugh along with him while he does so. Kim Swenson Gollnick


E. Friendship—Fiction; Easy reading materials. 48 p. K - Gr. 3.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

In Digby and Kate and the Beautiful Day, Barbara Baker shows five different settings where best friends may work and play together even when they usually disagree. The differences experienced by this odd couple do not seem strange because Kate is a cat and Digby is a dog. While Kate watches a mouse hole for something warm and tasty to eat, Digby makes a pizza which Kate declares to be, “Warm and tasty and just right.” Then when Digby is winning at checkers Kate makes her own rules. After a fly disrupts the game, Digby goes home so they can play by his rules.

Kate uses markers to make a picture of Digby and Digby uses his camera to make a picture of Kate. Now Digby has time for a walk which was what he wanted to do in the first place. It seems a walk in the rain was enjoyable to both friends, but especially the cocoa and cinnamon toast Kate made for the two wet friends to enjoy when they come inside to dry off.

Marsha Winborn uses the eyes and facial expressions to communicate feelings all through the illustrations as well as the message that having a best friend is definitely a good idea. Marie Knaupp


E. Accidents—Fiction; Friendship—Fiction. 32 p. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

There is a medical emergency in the house! Elliot the Moose has snagged his leg on a nail and his stuffing is falling out. His playroom friends come rushing to help. First Socks, the monkey fastens the seam with a safety pin, but the hole keeps opening. Lionel the lion applies tape, but it comes loose and pulls out more of the stuffing. Other friends bring glue, gauze, and a large metal clip. Although Elliot is thankful for his friends concern, the remedies only seem to complicate his troubles. Finally Socks finds a skillful tailor who neatly stitches up Elliot’s seam and saves his stuffing.

Elliot’s Emergency is Andrea Beck’s picture book debut. Her bright, full-color illustrations soften this plush-toy tragedy. The story handles the shock of unexpected accidents without being over dramatic or graphic. Because it compassionately relates to feelings of loss and grief, and is ultimately reassuring, it would be especially appropriate in a medical clinic or pediatrics ward. Melinda Torgerson


F. Moving; Household—Fiction; Schools—Fiction; Missionaries—Fiction. 46 p. K - Gr. 3.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

What do you do when you’re the new girl in class and everyone seems to want to make fun of you? Danae follows her mother’s advice and looks for roses. It isn’t easy to make the transition from one country to another, and when her well-meaning teacher, Mrs. Blimm, has her stand in front of the class to tell about her life in France, Danae finds it even harder to admit that her nickname “mon petit chou” means “my little cabbage,” a phrase sure to cause a stir in even the best behaved classes.

Eileen Berry expertly captures the feelings of a new student and the namelessness felt when trying to sort out a roomful of new faces and traits. The reader quickly identifies Plaid Skirt, Blonde Braid, and Pencil Boy. It is on the second day of school as Danae is looking for the roses in her classmates, that she is befriended by Chocolate Eyes, who becomes Katie, a new friend for Danae. Illustrator John Roberts adroitly portrays with watercolor the emotions of all the characters in this charming story. Judy Driscoll


E. Noah’s ark—Fiction; Giraffes—Fiction; Animals—Fiction. 32 p. PS - Gr. 3.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

It is not often that an author can transport his audience onto Noah’s ark with a new angle, but that is exactly what author LeRoy Blankenship does in calling readers to the ark through the eyes of Ob Long the giraffe and his mate Skippa. Illustrator Kelly Magladry continues this refreshing slant with animal expressions that draw one to think about what the animals might have felt when responding to the call of the Lord. The usual roll call of animals is relieved of a chuckle when the reader learns the names given to the starring Long giraffe family, even unto the grandchildren, Tagga and Hoppa. Judy Driscoll


E. Dogs—Fiction; Animals—Fiction; Self-acceptance—Fiction. 30 p. PS - Gr. 3.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Spike is an amusing little dog who thinks everyone else’s life is more exciting than his. When he finds the opportunity to steal away from his owner, Shannon, he decides to experiment a bit. First he tries his hand at being a chicken, then a bird, a fish, and even a horse. After several hilarious mishaps, Spike discovers that perhaps the life of a dog isn’t so bad. After all, as he finds out when he returns home, he is the only one that can make Shannon smile.

Spike, written and illustrated by Paulette Bogan, is a wonderful little story. In less than 250 words, Bogan is able to impart humor, suspense, and a valuable lesson of self-acceptance. The illustrations are bold and comical and help to complement the sparingly written story. The dry depictions of Spike wonderfully highlight his personality and spark the reader to immediately connect with, and care for, him. Spike is a gem and is sure to be one of those stories that finds fans among readers of all ages. Kerri Cunningham


E. Rabbits—Fiction; Freedom—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 32 p. K - Gr. 3.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Norm Bomer writes about Willow, a white bunny rabbit, the pet of Benjamin and Rebecca. Willow has tasty crunch nuggets from Beau’s dog food sack to eat. She has a comfortable, soft hutch in a fenced back yard to live in. Sometimes Willow even is allowed to run free in the back yard. But Willow is not happy. She wants to be really free.

One night the door to the hatch is not latched and Willow is free. She digs under the white fence and runs through the big clover field, but it is dead and dry. Then two big strange dogs try to catch her. She only escapes by reaching the woods and a brier thicket. Now Willow learns freedom means fear of dogs and scratches in the thicket. She is hungry and thirsty for the good food and safety of her back yard home. In the morning she finds her way back and the children find Willow under her own hatch. She is no longer unhappy and never tries to run away again.

Stan Myer’s watercolor illustrations add to the details of the story which is written as Christian fiction designed to show that God provides just the right ingredients for happiness when acceptance is learned. This is a lesson children need when they feel the rules at home spoil their freedom. Marie Knaupp


E. Animals—Fiction; Thunderstorms—Fiction; Fear—Fiction. 32 p. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5


E. Lost and found possessions—Fiction. 32 p. PS - Gr. 2.
Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5


E. Clubs—Fiction; Friendship—Fiction. 32 p. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

“Franklin could count by twos and tie his shoes.” Each of these three storybooks introduce Franklin the Turtle in this friendly manner. In Franklin and the Thunderstorm, he is stranded at Fox’s house when a storm hits, scaring Franklin right into his shell. Franklin finds a camera in the park. Is it Finders Keepers for Franklin, or does he do the right thing and find the owner? Franklin loves to belong. During the story Franklin’s Secret Club, Franklin finds out how it feels to be left out.

The author of the Franklin series, Paulette Bourgeois, has done a wonderful job of introducing a fun loving turtle and his animal friends. In each book, Franklin faces a problem, admits his mistakes or overcomes his fear, and learns a valuable lesson in life. The illustrations by Brenda Clark are bright and lively, capturing the emotions and humor within the pages of the books. Joanne M. Haffly


E. Mother and child—Fiction. 30 p. PS - Gr. 1.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Little Kangaroo asks Mama Kangaroo, “Will I always be little, Mama?” She explains that he is growing bigger every day. “But when I’m big, will you still take care of me?” Author Margaret Park Bridges takes the question of love and gives sometimes silly examples of a mother’s undying love for her child as Little Kangaroo changes from a tree, to a flower, to a bicycle, and more.

Young children take comfort in hearing stories of unconditional love from a parent. Will You Take Care of Me? joins the ranks of books such as The Runaway Bunny, How Long? and Mama, Do You Love Me? as a cuddle up and read book for toddlers and preschoolers. Illustrator Melissa Sweet uses bright watercolors in a simple child-like form. Both the author and illustrator have each published other children’s books. Joanne M. Haffly


E. Fathers and sons—Fiction; Honesty—Fiction. 30 p. K. - Gr. 3.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Every spring as a father and his daughter plant their garden of tomatoes, peppers, onions, marigolds and zinnias, he tells her once again the story of Mr. Bellavista and the summer when he was ten. He and his friends had been playing baseball near the vacant lot where Mr. Bellavista’s garden grew. Through their childish irresponsibility the garden is destroyed and so is Mr. Bellavista’s desire to continue gardening. The young boy cannot find the words to express his sorrow but the following spring he and Mr. Bellavista begin a special relationship that lasts until Mr. Bellavista’s death.

A book where a young boy realizes the impact of his actions upon the life of another and seeks to rectify the results of those actions, is a book to be treasured and shared. Watching the development of a relationship between these two characters is full of rich emotion and delight in the result. Pat Brisson has written a story that captures the heart of both the characters and the reader. Watercolor illustrations by Andrea Shine are outstanding. The subtle use of color variance and light convey a wealth of emotion bringing an added richness to an already powerful story. Sally Kuhns


E. Beauty—Fiction. 32 p. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Princess Bella has many beautiful hats in her closet, but chooses to wear only one. It is an oversized red velvet hat that the young rabbit pulls down to cover her entire head and most of her face. Bella’s father, the king, cannot understand why his daughter must wear this hat all the time. While on their daily walk, the king finally learns why her daughter needs her hat. Bella remembers that her mother was beautiful, but thinks that she is ugly. At least if she wears the hat, Bella reasons, their subjects will have something attractive to look at. The king tells Bella that true beauty comes from the inside and how difficult it is to attain such beauty. Bella decides she would like to have that kind of beauty and also decides she can be seen without her hat.

Princess Bella and the Red Velvet Hat by T. Davis Bunn quietly teaches the true source of beauty. The story is based on the Bible verse, I Peter 3:4, “Your beauty should come from within—you—the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit.” Cute bunny illustrations by Doreen Gay-Kassel will delight children and add to the subtle humor of the text. Elizabeth A. Coleman


E. Cats—Fiction. 24 p. PS - Gr. 3.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 3

Cat finds Anna one evening and he begins to whisper to her of the nine lives he has lived. He tells Anna about the palaces of the Egyptian pharaohs where cats were worshipped as gods, and Cat’s journey down the silk road to China. In Tibet, Cat tells Anna, there were mountain temples and cats who worshipped there. And Cat adds, “Wherever a cat goes, people still say he brings good luck with him.” Cats played in the great cathedrals and traveled around the world on mighty sailing ships to every land leaving their Pawprints in Time.

Philippa Butler chronologically touches on nine different periods and places in history. The events she has selected, while historically true, combine with the writing style to present the cat as a very mysterious animal. The adult reading the book may have to add some explanation of the historical periods presented and how they connect to each other in order for the child to understand the story.

The dark rich colors of George Smith’s paintings add to the magic of the cat with nine lives. The mysterious view people have had of cats through the ages seems to be reflected in the big yellow eyes of the large black and white cat with the long white whiskers. Adults, more than young children, may find the lush pictures fascinating. Barbara A. Bryden


E. Plays—Fiction; Schools—Fiction; Family life—Fiction. 28 p. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Young children will enjoy the bright colors and primeval art style of Judith Caseley’s newest picture book, Mickey’s Class Play. Easy-listening text will meet with four-to-seven-year-olds’ approval. Mickey, along with his entire kindergarten class, jump for joy when Ms. Humphrey announces they will all star in the class play. They will dress and talk like different animals to celebrate diversity. But when Mickey learns he is a duck, he squawks. Later, after costumes are made in Art Class, Mickey changes his mind. In fact, he likes being a duck, he decides. Ducks are beautiful.

Weeks pass as students practice their parts at school and home. Finally the big day arrives, Mickey is so excited about the performance that night he rehearses for his sister out on the picnic table. Alas, the costume gets left outside and destroyed by rain along with his hopes. The family chips in to make a new one. Again Mickey balks. This costume is too different. But sister Jenna has an idea. Looking at her book of ducks, they find a duck that matches Mickey’s costume. Wallah! Instant happiness.

This heartwarming story relates well to young children, and shows familial support and help in times of trouble. It’s a positive example of families working together, strengthening bonds.

Like many mothers who write, Caseley procures plots for her stories from the real-life adventures of her own family. The back jacket shows her son Michael dressed in his duck costume for his class play. Ginger McGrath
The sun is hot and the beach is calling. Mother is already packing, but Penny can only find one flip-flop. She hopes with one flop to the car. At the beach, the sand is warm and the waves wash over her feet. She wishes she had a shoe, so she uses her flip-flop to build a castle. That afternoon, Penny's flip-flop wins two sailboat races, catches half a bucket of crabs, becomes a Frisbee, and rescues a family of starfish from the hot sun. Best of all, her flip-flop introduces her to many new friends. A special telephone number scrawled on its well worn sole makes it a keepsake from an afternoon Penny will never forget.

Flip-Flops is a warm, soft-spoken story. Nancy Cote's pastel illustrations portray a multi-cultural community at peace. Her characters radiate unpretentious, unspoken acceptance. The conflict of the story draws attention to the value of imagination and improvising with an informal, easy-going style. Even the text has a personal, hand-printed appearance. The purpose of the story is not immediately recognized, but the conclusion is logical and satisfying. Melinda Torgerson


Janine, a second-grader in Mrs. Robin's room, is very excited because her name has been drawn to take Coco, a stuffed rabbit, and his diary home for the weekend. Inside the diary are Coco's thoughts, written by each student who has taken him home. On Sunday afternoon tragedy occurs. Coco is lost! After looking everywhere to no avail, Janine must face her class on Monday morning without Coco. Another student suggests that the class make posters and put them up around the mall. While in the process of doing this, the students see a sign advertising a toy drive for the local hospital. The girls put two and two together and head to the children's ward. They arrive just in time to see a big green frog handing Coco to a little girl with a broken leg. Janine quickly concludes that Coco is where he needs to be. In a last diary entry Coco writes that he is now with someone who really needs him and asks the class to write him.

Maryann Cocca-Leffler's story, Missing: One Stuffed Rabbit, is a pleasant, but bland account of a unique elementary school assignment. Cocca-Leffler's illustrations are cute and modern: Janine's mother introduces her to many new friends. A special telephone number scrawled on its well worn sole makes it a keepsake from an afternoon Penny will never forget.


William (named only on the book cover flap) is frustrated because his family has just moved to a new town. He has to share a room with his brother and go to a new school. He misses his old school and old friends. He feels awkward and uncomfortable in his new class. After school, the children try to go ice skating on the pond, but the ice is not safe. William strikes on the great idea of skating on the ice- over tennis court, which solves their skating problems and makes him feel a part of the group.

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A good practice book for beginning math, the activities of the guinea pigs on each page can be counted. The illustrations of the guinea pigs on each page are very entertaining. Many details can be seen and counted. Finally, all the tired guinea pigs are hugged by moms or dads and the book ends.

The pastel water colors blend with brighter shades as the lonely guinea pig becomes smiling pigs, silly pigs, giggling, singing, dancing, jumping, flying pigs. Then proud, sorry, smart, helpful, picnicking, sneaky, fighting, and finally ten good guinea pigs are seen, definitely a book to be enjoyed over and over again.

Mary Knaupp

It's Big Mama's birthday and Mama is making oxtail stew. Big Mama is "famous" for her oxtail stew, so Mama wants it to be just right. Mama and her sisters each think they know the secret ingredient. The aunts who chippity chips down the road to bring the story to its happy ending...for everyone but the bear of course!

Both reader and listener will enjoy the rhythm and repetition in this new story with an old theme. Judy Dicksoll

On the way, each of them meets a gigantic bear, who grows even more gigantic as he eats each of the family as they hungrily lump, skippity skip, crickets crack and limply limp down the road and over the bridge. This repeating tale is saved from being too scary by the whimsical illustrations of Alan and Lea Daniels whose belly bursting bear gets his due in the end, and the family is saved by their pet squirrel who chippity chips down the road to bring the story to its happy ending...for everyone but the bear of course!

Because one guinea pig is a lonely guinea pig, *One Guinea Pig Is Not Enough*. Kate Duke keeps adding one to each number until the excitement reaches ten guinea pigs. Then ten mom or dad guinea pigs are added and twenty guinea pigs is plenty.


In the style of the traditional tall tale, story-teller Aubrey Davis puts his talents on paper to delight his audience with the tale of an old woman who sends one after another of her family off to town to seek Boy who went to buy baking soda for her home-made biscuits. On the way, each of them meets a gigantic bear, who grows even more gigantic as he eats each of the family as they hungrily lump, skippity skip, crickets crack and limply limp down the road and over the bridge. This repeating tale is saved from being too scary by the whimsical illustrations of Alan and Lea Daniels whose belly bursting bear gets his due in the end, and the family is saved by their pet squirrel who chippity chips down the road to bring the story to its happy ending...for everyone but the bear of course!
the kitchen and lets Victoria add the secret ingredient. At dinner, the stew is declared “just right.”

Karen English has written a delightful read-aloud story about family life. The story is simple and easy to follow, even for pre-schoolers. The color illustrations of Anna Rich go well with the text. Youngsters will enjoy this African-American story.

Mary McKinney


E. Polar bear--Fiction; Bears--Fiction; Animals--Infancy--Fiction. 32 p. K - Gr. 4.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Fat, furry, and sleeping cozily in her den, Polar Star snugles her cubs. Three months later, as early spring arrives, Polar Star and two new cubs emerge into the white wilderness of the Arctic. It is time to go in search of food, and the two cubs, Snowball and Snowflake, gambled beside her, amazed at the large, exciting world they have entered.

A sudden attack by a male polar bear sends the cubs squealing to Mama, and after a terrifying battle, Polar Star hurries her family away from the danger and survives intact, but then drops her petals to protect a small dove egg, which has fallen to the ground from the nest in the tree above her. The dove hatches...The illustrations carry the story and add a great deal of action. The style is reminiscent of early New England paintings. The colors are muted, but rich. The lines are crisp and depth comes from a layering effect. The illustrations are not cluttered and children will have no trouble following the action of the story and finding humor in it.

This book can serve as an early reader due to the short and simple text comprised of two or three word sentences. Pre-school age children will delight in the pictures and having this book read to them.

Mary McKinney


E. Rose of Sharon--Fiction; Love--Fiction; Generosity--Fiction; Jesus Christ--Love. 24 p. K - Gr. 3.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

In Little Rose of Sharon, Nan Gurley tells a fanciful parable of how Jesus came to be called the Rose of Sharon. The little rose is proud of her beauty and thrilled when the Creator comes through the garden and notices her. She faces a storm bravely and survives intact, but then drops her petals to protect a small dove egg, which has fallen to the ground from the nest in the tree above her. The dove hatches safely, and the Creator returns. The little rose is ashamed because she is no longer beautiful, but the Creator tells her she is just like the Son he will send. The little rose gave everything to show the world the love of God. Mom gives each of her three young children a handful of assorted seeds to plant in a garden. The children break up the soil with a trowel and rake and plant the seeds using sticks they painted to differentiate them. They water the seeds, and soon green shoots are peeking out of the ground. The garden flourishes with the warmth of the sun and the abundance of water and before long is full of peas, beans, squash, spinach, lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, and radishes. The biggest plant is a watermelon and the tallest a sunflower with flavorful seeds to eat. The food in the garden ripens, and all summer the children delight in eating the fruits and vegetables.

Zoe Hall has written a story in which gardening fascinates three young children. After the children plant a garden with unknown seeds, they eagerly await for the plants to grow, astonished whenever they discover a fruit or vegetable for the first time. The Surprise Garden is a charming story with information about the plants grown in the children’s garden and which parts to eat. Shari Halpern’s full page colorful illustrations surrounding the text add to the charm of the story.

Jane Mouttet


E. Love. 32 p. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Helen and David Haidele team up to write and illustrate a wonderful children’s bedtime story about God’s love. Based on Ephesians 3:17-19, God’s love is depicted as longer, wider, deeper, and higher than anything in the world. Each two-page spread includes lyrical rhymes and colorful illustrations.

How Big Is God’s Love? explores everyday scenes from countries around the world to show that his love fills the whole earth and beyond. It stretches higher than mountains, goes deeper than oceans, and is wider than seas.

The book reassures children that God’s love protects them from harm and wraps around them like Daddy’s arms. Concluding with John 3:16, it conveys that Jesus is God’s greatest gift of love.

This delightful 8-by-8-inch picture book teaches a profound attribute of God in simple verse that children can understand and enjoy. Detailed watercolor paintings are vibrant and realistic, portraying families and scenery from Africa, Asia, South America, and elsewhere. An excellent book for introducing children to God’s great love for them, it will undoubtedly be read again and again.

Lydia E. Harris


E. Gardens--Fiction; Seeds--Fiction; Vegetables--Fiction. 30 p. PS - Gr. 1.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

When the springtime sunshine pours through the warm sky, Grandpa and his granddaughter dress in their long-sleeved white coveralls, boots, and jeans and tend Grandpa’s bees. While they are working, the sky darkens, and the humming of bee’s wings grows louder and louder. Granddaughter takes the long pole and brings a swarm of bees down into a hive Grandpa has made ready for them.

Both are smiling as they leave the bee yard for:

A swarm in May is worth a load of hay.

A swarm in June is worth a silver spoon.

A swarm in July isn’t worth a fly.

Grandpa tells his granddaughter that she is a fine keeper of bees.

Linda Oatman’s warm caring story of tending to chores together in the early morning will be enjoyed
by all ages. This is a valuable source for information about the care of bees. The warm sunny oil paintings of Doug Chayka enrich the experience shared together. Marie Knaupp


It’s a dark autumn night of moaning winds and rising seas when the young hero of Adventure on Klickitat Island struggles under his Blankie with Beary, his stuffed animal. Snug under the covers, the little boy’s thoughts go out to the poor animals on Klickitat Island who must weather the storm without such comforts. Suddenly, Beary jumps up:

...he reached for his jacket--

“Someone’s calling,” he said.

“We can’t be much help if we stay here in bed!”

and off go the two on a mission to help the inhabitants of Klickitat Island. Once they arrive, the two organize the animals and build a shelter of logs under which they all crowd in a happy, cozy tangle. Later, when the storm has passed, the boy and Beary quietly leave the snoozing den and head back to their own welcoming bed at home. But both know where they will be on the next stormy night.

Hilary Hippely tells a sweet bed-time story in verse in Adventure On Klickitat Island. Tapping on the young child’s natural sympathy for animals and impulse to try and “help,” she has written a soothing, imaginative story perfect for calming night-time fears. Older children who can read on their own will enjoy the rhyming aspect of the story as well as the wonderfully dreamy, furry illustrations of Barbara Upton. Hippely has two previous books to her credit. ISBN 0811819590, HBB, $14.95.

Swimming Lessons was written for a twelfth-grade English class assignment. Betsy Jay had been writing since she was a little girl. Her teacher encouraged her to have this story published. Lori Osiecki, who illustrated the book, lives in Mesa, Arizona, where there are 365 swimming days a year. This is her first children’s book.

Endorsed by the National Safety Council, this book can be used to encourage children to learn how to swim. It may help overcome fear of the water, and it is a delightfully humorous story with equally humorous and expressive action-packed drawings on each page. Also available with this book are bookmarks with water safety tips, posters, and a copyright-free Tools for Teacher’s Guide. Marie Knaupp


A young boy joins his father on a journey that leads not only to new territory, but also to a new level of maturity and understanding in Barbara M. Joose’s tender story, Lewis & Papa. Lewis is proud that his father asks him to help take a wagon load of goods from the East to the new settlers in Santa Fe. Besides buffalo stampedes and dangerous river crossings, Lewis and his father experience the pain of loss when their favorite ox, Big Red, falls ill. Lewis learns that there is more to be man than sheen brawn, and his father discovers the quiet joy of tenderness. Their journey ends successfully and while they make “a pretty penny,” both father and son realize the real wealth they gain is their new understanding of what it means to be a man.

While the emotional content takes precedence over the historical element of this story, readers are able to learn historical facts about the Santa Fe Trail and the people who traveled it through the historical note and glossary that are included. The endpapers show a map of the Santa Fe Trail and occasional spot maps pinpoint the location and the progress of Lewis and his father. Jon Van Zyle’s use of interesting angles and close-ups add to the emotional impact of the strong father-son bond this story relates. Lillian A. Heytvelt


A young, drowsy girl climbs the stairs to bed. She attempts to count some rambunctious sheep. As she imagines the fence for them to jump, the mouthy ram lets her know that they’ll need a clover-filled meadow, sky, sun, and clouds. Then he notices that the ground where they are is rather boring. The bleary-eyed girl imagines more grass, and decides to throw in a ferris wheel. Unfortunately, the much-annused sheep have too much fun to jump over the fence. After much pleading, the girl is empowered that she dreamt them up, so she could dream them away. She warns them of this, and after more grumbling, she does just that!

Kristi Frost’s bright illustrations done in pastels are the perfect compliment to the humor-filled story. Quite unusual in its story line, readers will experience the same frustration that the girl feels as the obstinate sheep refuse to cooperate. The pictures of the carnival scene make Khan’s text come alive as the reader feels that the girl is screaming to be heard over the din of frolicking sheep. Carol M. Jones


As a new neighbor arrives wanting to play monster, the young girl says she already has a monster in the house! As she describes the various “troubles” this monster causes, the new boy’s imagination creates a most interesting scenario that fills the pages with its messes and mischief. But finally the image becomes...
refined as the girl at last mentions the fun and endearing things about this “monster.”

As the young man’s imagination calms down, he sees a tiny, bald monster and then he is introduced to the girl’s baby brother. The story ends with the two taking the “baby monster” for a stroll and enjoying their new-found friendship.

Although the monster being described is obviously a baby, the pictures and text may surprise the youngest readers, and delight them as the truth is revealed as to whom the monster really is.

Elisa Kleven, both writer and illustrator, presents a clever story incorporating both text and pictures in a creative and appealing collage of color. Mary McKinney


E. Prayer--Fiction; Mothers and daughters--Fiction; Stories in rhyme. 32 p. K-G 3.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

In rhyme form, this colorful and touching book of prayers by Bonnie Knopf gives a sense of security that a mother’s heartfelt prayers are heard. Every other page has the prayer being encompassed by the angels as the baby grows up and has children of her own. At the end you find the grown child taking care of her own babies and her now elderly mother.

This simple presentation of life shows how heavenly love keeps each family as they grow up and grow old. Each new generation is shown to share in the heritage of care and love that had been given from those who’d lived before.

Although God is not mentioned, just angels, you sense a surety in an overall protection from he who made the angels. The text is very simple, not giving much detail in the growing up process, but the simple prayers and progression lends itself to discussion.

The illustrations by Nan Brooks are delightful and keep a child’s interest, whereas the text subject may appeal to an adult more than a child. Mary McKinney

Pepita discovers that color does not matter, but people do.

Pepita Thinks Pink is a story about dislike, prejudice and, ultimately, friendship. The story is told in both English and Spanish, and author Ofelia Dumas Lachtman does a wonderful job of positively depicting a Mexican-American character and her family. A more gently integrated theme would help the story to read like a story rather than a rule book for tolerance. Alex Pardo DeLange’s ink and watercolor illustrations add interesting visual details like salsa, pinatas, and peppers, but the cartoon quality of the characters and their homes distracts from the serious theme. Kerri Cunningham


E. Great-grandmothers--Fiction; Old age--Fiction. 32 p. K. Gr. 2.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Confined to a wheelchair in a nursing home, Miss Olivia Wiggins does not speak, move, or respond to others. While looking at the sunset out the window, Miss Olivia remembers a childhood sunset. Other happy memories are sparked when her daughter, Angel, and great-grandson, Troy, stop by for a visit. As her guests leave, they comment on how Miss Olivia looks to be almost smiling and how their visit did her “a world of good.”

The Sunsets of Miss Olivia Wiggins by Lester L. Laminack will be appreciated much more by adults, who will not finish the book dry eyed, than children who may not “get” much of the story. However, there are still plenty of lessons that children can learn from this story. Many relatives have given up visiting Miss Olivia because they think she doesn’t know they are there. Angel and Troy, however, know better and they continue to visit Miss Olivia regularly. Whether they get a response from her or not. The illustrations by Constance R. Bergum match the text perfectly, adding depth and texture to an already fine story.

Those coping with a family member with Alzheimer’s will find this story to be an excellent resource for children. This deals with the disease on a purely emotional, non-medical level, that everyone can understand. Elizabeth A. Coleman


E. Teeth--Fiction; Schools--Fiction. 32 p. K. Gr. 2.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Trevor goes to school on Monday with his first loose tooth. C.J. and Tillman urge Trevor not to let anyone extract his tooth with a string. So Trevor conceals all the string in his house. On Tuesday, Tillman urges Trevor not to let anyone extract his tooth with pliers. Trevor gets frightened remembering the pliers at home. On Wednesday, Carmen encourages Trevor to wiggly his tooth with his tongue. On Thursday, Trevor’s father volunteers to extract the tooth. On Friday, Grandma Sally goes to school with Trevor, and the class concocts taffy. When Trevor bites the taffy, his tooth gets stuck in it. Then Grandma Sally bites the taffy, and all her top front teeth come out in it.

Lester L. Laminack has written a story about a young boy losing his first tooth. Because of Trevor’s family and friends, he is both excited and scared. But Grandma Sally’s antics at the end of the story ensures Trevor will never forget the loss of his first tooth.

Trevor’s Wiggly-Wobbly Tooth is a humorous story about a memorable event in a young child’s life. Children will relate to the uncertainty Trevor experiences in losing his first tooth. The whimsical illustrations by Kathi Garry McCord will draw children into the story. Dianne Woodman


E. Mountain life--Fiction; Family life--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 32 p. PS. Gr. 2.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Every year, the summer heat drives the family to Grandma’s cabin in the mountain. The first few years they travel by train, then by car. As the years go by the activities change slightly, but one thing remains the same. Each night before bed the entire family joins together in a “hymn-sing.” The last song they sing is the doxology and sounds to the narrator, like angels. Several generations go by, but still the family tradition goes on, and she still thinks they sound like angels.

Beautifully written by Alice Boggs Lentz, Mountain Magic captures perfectly the enchantment of long summer vacations. Children will enjoy this book, but adults will truly appreciate this story of a family’s spiritual tradition and how rapidly the years go by. A good quiet time book, with little “action.” There are no character names, only “Grandmother” or “brothers.” This technique is successful due in part to the lovely illustrations by David Griffin. The drawings put a face to the narrator and enhance the gentle text bringing the beauty of the mountain to life. Elizabeth A. Coleman


E. Commitment--Fiction. 32 p. PS. Gr. 2.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Frustrated with his five little sisters’ constant fighting and bickering, the barefoot boy consults his wise grandfather about a solution. His grandfather tells him to bring cows into the house. After the barefoot boy obeys, the chaos in the house grows worse. The barefoot boy goes to see his grandfather again. This time the grandfather tells the boy to invite some spoiled cousins to stay at the house. Naturally the din

E. Great-grandmothers--Fiction; Old age--Fiction. 32 p. PS. Gr. 2.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

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increases. Once again the barefoot boy goes to see his grandfather. Grandfather tells the boy to invite a band of musicians to the house. Finally, Grandfather tells the boy to send everyone back to their own homes. Now the barefoot boy sleeps peacefully through his sisters’ quarreling and the house seems spacious.

Cows in the House is an enjoyable folktale based on Philippians 4:11, “For I have learned to be content with whatever I have.” The dialogue by Beverly Lewis and illustrations by Chi Chung combine to give the story a Chinese Proverb feel. While adults will appreciate the subtle wit of this book, small children will enjoy the story, but may miss the overall humor. Grown-ups and children can both benefit from this pleasant lesson in accepting one’s situation. Elizabeth Coleman


E. Valentine’s Day--Fiction; Frogs--Fiction; Schools--Fiction. 28 p. PS - Gr. 1. Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Froggy dreams of Valentine’s Day. He thinks of candy, love, and making valentines. But his days at school are complicated by his crush on Frogilina. This book will be read with giggles of delight as Froggy struggles through the school week, falling off the monkey bars on his head, sharing lunch box treats with Frogilina, finally finishing his special valentine, and receiving his first kiss. Then the book ends with a surprise when Valentine’s Day arrives and Froggy serves his mother breakfast in bed and gives her his special valentine.

Jonathan London, who has written other Froggy books, lives in California. Frank Remkiewicz, who lives in Florida, has illustrated posters, greeting cards, animal cracker boxes, and many books for children. Froggy’s First Kiss is a good resource for encouraging sharing and remembering others on Valentine’s Day. Marie Knaupp


E. Race relations--Fiction; Schools--Fiction; Afro-Americans--Fiction. 32 p. Gr. 1 - 4. Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Sister Anne’s Hands describes a seven-year-old girl’s first encounter with racism during the 1960s. Author Marybeth Lorbiecki creates a story with a powerful and important message. She uses the first person for Anna Zabrocky to recall her first black teacher, Sister Anne. Anna sees beneath the “black dress and veil like other nuns” and skin “darker than any person’s I’d ever known” to the “sparkles” in Sister Anne’s voice. Learning in Sister Anne’s second grade class is filled with stories, counting teeth, buttons on clothing, and pencils in desks, singing and stomping out arithmetic problems. Though Sister Anne has
reached inside her students to inspire true learning, she is faced with prejudice as parents remove students from her class. Then one day after lunch a paper airplane sails toward Sister Anne’s desk with a racist note scribbled on the wings.

Sister Anne teaches the students left in her class about the black experience, about the color of hatred, and about understanding other cultures around the globe. She continues to teach reading, math and writing, as well as a little painting and gardening. Most importantly, she teaches students like Anna to spread their wings and fly.

K. Wendy Popp’s illustrations are filled with 1960s period detailing. They are luminous and dreamy, beautifully expressing Lorbiecki’s poetic prose. *Sister Anne’s Hands* is a story difficult to forget for its message of human love—and how a special teacher can influence a child for life. *Lisa Wroble*

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E. Folklore—Thailand; Bilingual books—English-Thai. 32 p. PS - Gr. 3.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

**The Girl Who Wore Too Much** is adapted from a traditional Thai folktale and given a contemporary setting. It is the story of a vain girl who has too much—too many fine silk clothes, too many rings, bracelets, and necklaces. One day she is invited to a party altogether and falls exhausted to the ground. Wanting to be the prettiest girl at the party, she decides to wear all her dresses and jewelry. This is a big mistake since her friends think she looks foolish, not pretty. Weighted down by all her adornments she falls behind. She will not heed the advice of her friends to shed some of her dresses, and so she misses the party altogether and falls exhausted to the ground. Finally, she is chastened, gives away her clothes, and is happy with one simple dress.

This story is a showcase for the excellent and vibrant illustrations. Several Thai storytellers collaborated with the author and illustrator to ensure accuracy of detail in the color palette, watercolor, and colored pencil illustrations. The illustrator conveys the excellence of Thai textile design in the scenes depicted as well as in the lively geometric borders that frame every scene. The endpapers are decorated with depicting as well as in the lively geometric borders that frame every scene. The endpapers are decorated with

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Mary McKinney

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E. Rats—Fiction; Brothers and sisters—Fiction; Characters in literature—Fiction. 32 p. K - Gr. 4.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 3

Here’s a fresh angle on the Cinderella story—this time from the rat’s point of view.

“I was born a rat,” the rat says in the opening. “I expected to be a rat all my days. But life is full of surprises.”

Changed into a coachman, or “coachboy” as the rat calls himself, he drives a girl (Cinderella, of course) to the castle for the ball, and that’s where the story veers off from the familiar. The rat-turned-coachboy, drawn to the castle’s kitchen by the heavenly smell of food, meets a human boy and shares a snack with him in the pantry. Suddenly, the boy shouts, “A RAT! KILL IT!” The rat-turned-coachboy thinks he’s been found out, but sees instead a familiar rat scampering in the pantry. The wiggly track, the wiggly track,

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E. Desert—Fiction; Children’s poetry; Stories in rhyme. 26 p. PS - Gr. 1.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Way out in the desert having fun in the sun

lived a mother horned toad and her little toady one.

If this book seem strangely familiar, it is because it is an adaptation of Olive A. Wadsworth’s counting song, *Over in the Meadow*. T. J. Marsh and Jennifer Ward transplant the old tune into the Southwest, and do an adaptation of Olive A. Wadsworth’s counting song, *Over in the Meadow*. T. J. Marsh and Jennifer Ward transplant the old tune into the Southwest, and do

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**Way Out in the Desert** blends reading, mathematics, music, botany, and art. Numbers hidden in each picture invite young listeners to interact with the story. A musical score encourages musicians to translate the text into song. Curious science students will be satisfied with the friendly tone and insightfulness of the glossary. Rarely can a picture book this educational be so much fun. *Melinda M. Torgerson*

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Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Author and illustrator Matthew McElligott presents a funny, far-fetched tale about Uncle Frank. For being a relative who would never come to visit, Uncle Frank finally shows up and then won’t leave. Uncle Frank is rather eccentric so when he begins to dig a hole in the back yard, no one questions it. But after he takes furniture, the TV, and even a hot tub into his hole, the family determines to put a stop to it. They discover a well-furnished, comfortable home below the ground, but discover something odd sticking out of the ground in the corner.

Dad begins to dig and finds a huge, beautiful museum piece that fills the hole and entire back yard. Now that the hole and yard are all dug up, Uncle Frank decide it’s time to move on. He senses special vibrations coming from Aunt Edith’s place, and off he goes.

This zany tale touches on the truth of having that peculiar relative who may overstays his/her welcome and bring a rather eccentric personality along. Humorous and inquisitive, the storyline and great illustrations will hold the interest of young and older readers alike. *Mary McKinney*

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**A Summery Saturday Morning**


E. Desert—Fiction; Children’s poetry; Stories in rhyme. 26 p. PS - Gr. 1.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Way out in the desert having fun in the sun

stunned by this turn of events but wishing to keep his secret, follows the human boy to a wizard’s cottage.

The wizard, after making a few mistakes, turns his sister into a girl. The three return to the castle, the clock strikes midnight, and the coachboy changes back into a rat. The story ends with a twist, and everyone lives happily ever after. The rat repeats his opening theme by stating, “Life is full of surprises, so you may as well get used to it.”

The story is engaging, and a fresh change from the familiar. Be aware that the author includes the wizard’s incantations (“Eye of bat and tooth of newt…”). This may lead children to mimic “spells,” and detracts from an otherwise interesting story.  
*Kinn Swenson Gollnick*


- E. Bedtime—Fiction; Night—Fiction; Animals—Fiction; Stories in rhyme. 32 p. PS - Gr. 1.
- Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Why is it important for children to go to bed? It is because the stars are waiting. They are waiting for animals to prepare for the end of their day and find their safe place to sleep. Waiting for humans to gather their loved children around them for a story. Waiting for the children to be tenderly hugged. Waiting for children to be snug in bed. Then the stars can come out.

Every family needs a good bedtime story book that will calm little bodies, preparing them for a restful sleep. With tender, sometimes rhyming verse, Marjorie Murray presents such a book in *The Stars Are Waiting*. Jacqueline Rogers provides two page soft watercolor paintings that add to the peacefulness of the book. This is a delightful book for both parent and child. *Lynette Sorenson*


- E. Dogs—Fiction; Camping—Fiction; 32 p. PS - Gr. 2.
- Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Spunky the dog and his master Mark are excited about their first camping trip together. While setting up camp, they meet their neighbors, the Johnson family and their dog Snapper. Mark is having a difficult time getting along with Buzz Johnson, who steals an arrowhead and plays some unfunny jokes on Mark. Spunky is having similar trouble with Snapper. When the canoe that Mark, Buzz, and the dogs are paddling overturns, Spunky saves the day and Buzz learns about true friendship.

Spunky’s Camping Adventure, based on character and story by Janette Oke, is an adventurous fun book. The illustrations by Elizabeth Gatt, Sue Wilkinson, and Holly Lennox have a Saturday morning cartoon look that will appeal to children. For added appeal, Spunky has hidden his multi-colored ball on each page, giving youngsters something to search for as the story progresses. Each page is nicely framed, with Spunky and his paw print featured prominently throughout. While the cute drawings and design almost outshine the text, solid biblical principles are presented and children will truly enjoy this book.

*Elizabeth A. Coleman*


- E. Animals—Fiction; Friendship—Fiction; Moods—Fiction. 24 p. PS - Gr. 2.
- Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Badger is in a terrible mood. He feels that he is no good for anyone or anything. His animal friends try to cheer him up to no avail. Then Badger’s best friend, Mole, comes up with a clever idea. He plans an awards ceremony for everyone in the forest. Mole thoughtfully creates an award for each of his friends from best slow dancer for snail to most gallant courier for frog. Badger is convinced to go and ends up winning the most prizes. Feeling much better about himself, Badger is able to truly celebrate with his friends.

Hiawyn Oram has written a lovely story about the importance of self-esteem. Through her descriptions of each animal, the reader can picture each animal as an individual with his or her own special abilities. Susan Varley’s warm, colorful paintings complement the loving tone of Hiawyn Oram’s story. *Badger’s Bad Mood* could be integrated into a lesson about building self-esteem with students planning their own awards ceremony as the culminating activity. *Badger’s Bad Mood* will be a helpful addition to school libraries seeking titles with bibliotherapeutic value. *Susan Robinson*


- Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

“While we slept the fog crept in. We zip our jackets and slip outside feeling thick with magic.” Thus Susan Pearson begins a journey with her readers through a magical misty world transformed by fog and shadowy shapes. This haunting tale captures a spirit of wonder and discovery as a child and mother make their way through field and forest. A rustle in the distance betrays the presence of deer. Only the flick of white tails reveals their presence. The sense of hearing becomes essential in this shadowy world that eludes vision. David Christiana’s muted watercolors enhance the mystery and beauty of this special morning.

*Barbara G. Tuentzier*


- E. Quilts—Fiction; Jews—Fiction; Emigration and immigration—Fiction. 40 p. PS - Gr. 3.
- Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

The 10th anniversary edition of Patricia Polacco’s *The Keeping Quilt* is as lovely as the original, which came out in 1988 and won the Sydney Taylor Book Award from the Association of Jewish Libraries. It tells the story of a quilt that was made for Polacco’s great-grandmother Anna from bits and pieces of family clothing, becoming an important part of her family’s history. “We will make a quilt to help us always remember home,” Anna’s mother said “It will be like having the family in backhome Russia dance around us at night.” It was passed from one generation to another, being used in many ways, including as a tablecloth, a wedding canopy, a tent, a picnic cloth, and as a welcoming wrap for each new baby that came.


- E. Reading—Fiction; Teachers—Fiction. 45 p. PS to Gr. 5.
- Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Trisha is excited to start school so she can learn to read. Her kindly grandparents explain how knowledge is sweet, like honey from the bee. Trisha loves school and especially likes drawing pictures. But words and letters are confusing and though some of her classmates learn to read, Trisha does not.

First grade is worse. As the others progress to harder books, Trisha is still struggling with the first book. Second grade is no better. The students begin to laugh at her stumbling, faltering reading and one boy bullies her to tears by his name-calling. In third grade, a new teacher, Mr. Falker, arrives and will not let the other children laugh at her.

Mr. Falker also lavishly praises her drawings. When he gives her a simple test after school, he gently tells her she just does not see letters and numbers as others do. She begins to have special lessons from Mr. Falker and a reading teacher. She works and works and finally, one day, she can read a whole paragraph! Author and illustrator Patricia Polacco tells that she was once a Trisha and that she had a Mr. Falker come into her life who “unlocked the door and pulled her into the light.” She asks children who read this book to thank all the teachers they have loved.

Inspiring and sentimental, this story gives encouragement to students with reading problems and extols the value of a teacher who cares. *Barbara G. Tuentzier*
In the 1988 edition, Polacco ends the book with new daughter Traci wrapped in the quilt. In 1998, Polacco continues her family’s story, showing how Traci and brother Steven used the quilt as a superhero cape, as a birthday tablecloth, and to cover their dying grandmother as the family prays for her departing soul. She ends the new edition with the hope that she may someday be able to share the quilt with her grandchildren.

“Polacco’s charcoal and marker illustrations are charming and wonderfully detailed—even the drawings of herself are true to life! The quilt (and its original elements) are the only colored items in each page and that catches the eye and emphasizes the way the quilt’s use changes from time to time.”

This is a wonderful book that can be used in many ways, such as encouraging family history and heirlooms, showing details of Jewish daily life, and adding interest to a pioneer unit, where quilting is talked about. Even if a library has the 1988 edition, they may want to add this one! Betty Winslow


E. Gerbils—Fiction. 30 p. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Cinnamon’s Day Out is a gerbil’s view of the exciting world outside its cage. Chewing its way out of the top of the cage, Cinnamon thinks the carpet is a green meadow. A dog and cat seem to be a wolf and tiger. When the gerbil is missed it is finally found eating in a cupboard and flies through the air as a hand safely deposits it back home.

Few words are used, but Susan Roth has filled full pages with graphic multi-textured materials fully depicting the adventure. Wood chips, wall paper, cut and torn scraps of various shapes, sizes and colors express more than many words could say. Many exciting things to look at and discuss are seen on each page of this book. Marie Knapp


E. Babies–Fiction; Brothers and sisters–Fiction. 29 p. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

The addition and acceptance of a new sibling can be a traumatic situation for many children, which is the subject for Hannah’s Baby Sister by Marisabina Russo. Jealousy is the usual emotion felt by siblings, yet in this story Hannah has no problem with another baby arriving. Her problem is that she is determined it will be a sister—after all she has a younger brother already, who needs two? But when the baby is a Benjamin and not a Patsy, Hannah has to readjust her thinking.

Even though there are numerous books that deal with the arrival of new siblings, Russo’s warm, uncomplicated text and illustrations lend the right amount of clarity and optimism to this major event in a child’s life. This story is also one that could be used for the unwaveringly determined child who has a difficult time accepting outcomes other than what he or she anticipated. Although the ending is as expected it is realistic of how a family would try to mend a disappointed sibling’s feelings. For a more rollicking approach try Kevin Henkes’ Julius, The Best Baby of the World. Pam Webb


E. Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 1803-1882—Fiction; Food—Fiction; Cookery—Fiction; Imagination—Fiction. 28 p. Gr. 1 - 3.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Newly arrived to America, Annie Burns becomes cook to the family of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Concerned because her husband has given up food, Mrs. Emerson gives Annie quite a challenge—to make him eat again! Annie is impressed by Mr. Emerson’s spending time doing farm work and teaching his children.

Admiring Emerson’s poetry and his unique perspective on life, Annie becomes devoted to the Emerson family. However, as a cook, she fears she has failed. She tries to no avail to entice Mr. Emerson to eat. It takes a gift from her mother—a book written by Annie when she was a child—to set her free into a new way of thinking. Letting her imagination go, she tries once more to cook a suitable dish for Mr. Emerson. Her recipe for Sunrise Pie wins back Mr. Emerson’s appetite.

Written by Annie Burns’ great-granddaughter, Judith Byron Schachner, this book is a fun combination of fact and fiction. The warm, whimsical writing, along with watercolor and ink illustrations, allow the reader to get to know Annie and Mr. Emerson. Mr. Emerson’s Cook is not so much a story about Ralph Waldo Emerson as it is about the power of imagination.

Presented as an eccentric thinker, Emerson’s transcendental philosophy is not specifically portrayed in this book. The afterward gives a biographical sketch of Emerson’s life and explains the connection to Annie Burns. Limited in information, it is a good first resource for a student researching Ralph Waldo Emerson. Karen Brehmer


E. Fear—Fiction; Trust—Fiction. 32 p. PS - Gr. 3.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Lying in her bed at night, Annie Aschraft hears a noise. It’s coming from the outside and sounds a lot like something trying to get inside, maybe something with a claw. Nothing helps the noise go away, not closing her eyes very tight or pulling her quilt up over her head. Finally, Annie whiskers for her Daddy. Somehow he hears her and comes to her room. After reassuring her, Annie’s Daddy investigates the noise and discovers its source. Tucking her back into bed, Daddy returns to his room and Annie finally goes to sleep.

Annie Aschraft Looks Into the Dark by Ruth Senter is based on the scripture, “I can lie down and go to sleep. And I will wake up again because the Lord protects me.” (Psalm 3:5) Children will be able to identify with Annie’s fear of noises, darkness, and shadows. While the story is not overly scary, tension does build as Annie listens in the dark, contemplating what might be outside. The dark colors in the illustrations by Lee Christiansen add to the night time feeling. This book could be a positive influence in helping a child overcome their fears. Elizabeth A. Coleman


E. Peer pressure—Fiction. 30 p. PS - Gr. 3.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Camilla Cream loves lima beans, but in her effort to fit in with the crowd, she gives them up. In fact, Camilla is so worried about what others think about her that she literally becomes her worries. Should she wear red or green on her first day of school? Filled with all these doubts Camilla looks in the mirror dismayed to find that she has become striped. After assurances from the doctor that she is not running a fever, and therefore not ill, Camilla goes to school, where she quickly becomes the center of attention, changing chameleons like to fit the whims of all her classmates. Asked to remain at home until the “stripes” disappear, there follows a series of medical and psychological experts all with helpful suggestions for getting over the stripes, each one of which only makes poor Camilla worse. The climax comes when an Environmental Therapist comes to visit and tells Camilla to breathe deeply and become one with her room. Poor Camilla, breathes deeply and literally becomes her room with lips as the bed mattresses, and eyes as pictures on the wall. It takes a little old lady “as plump and sweet as a strawberry” to solve Camilla’s bad case of stripes with a healthy dose of lima beans. Camilla vows to never again become what everyone else wants, but to be the best “self” she can be... and to eat lima beans whenever she likes.

David Shannon with his wonderfully fantastic illustrative art has created a far out and entertaining story. In fact, the events of the story are so unreal that the audience can giggle without worry at Camilla’s plight and yet identify with the stress of trying to be what you are not, driving home the point of Mr. Shannon’s message: Be yourself. Judy Driscoll


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

After assurances from the doctor that she is not running a fever, and therefore not ill, Camilla goes to school, where she quickly becomes the center of attention, changing chameleons like to fit the whims of all her classmates. Asked to remain at home until the “stripes” disappear, there follows a series of medical and psychological experts all with helpful suggestions for getting over the stripes, each one of which only makes poor Camilla worse. The climax comes when an Environmental Therapist comes to visit and tells Camilla to breathe deeply and become one with her room. Poor Camilla, breathes deeply and literally becomes her room with lips as the bed mattresses, and eyes as pictures on the wall. It takes a little old lady “as plump and sweet as a strawberry” to solve Camilla’s bad case of stripes with a healthy dose of lima beans. Camilla vows to never again become what everyone else wants, but to be the best “self” she can be... and to eat lima beans whenever she likes.
Miss Bindergarten is a lively border-collie teacher who asks her students to bring in “100 of some wonderful, one-hundred-full thing” to celebrate the 100th day of class. Her students get busy: Sara the squirrel counts the ants in her ant farm, Jessie the squirrel counts the ants in her ant farm, the frog Franny “draws a picture of her hundred-year-old face.” The story follows the quest of each student (reported in alphabetical order by name and species) and also the preparations of Miss Bindergarten as she works hard to decorate her room and herself for the big day. Creativity, hard work, and enthusiasm are catching and the students strive hard to bring in imaginative projects. Everyone’s efforts are recapitulated in a notebook that Miss Bindergarten puts together on the last pages.

Ashley Wolff’s illustrations are bright, cheerful, and include a lot of detail to keep readers and listeners intrigued. The rhyming text with the repeated phrase, “Miss Bindergarten gets ready for the 100th day of kindergarten,” is fun to read and reinforces the concept of 100. This spirited story teaches counting and early math concepts in a captivating way and yields itself to classroom tie-in activities. It is likely to inspire kindergarten teachers everywhere to join in the festivities. Lillian A. Heytvelt


Emily used to be too little to go down the twisty slide, to pour her own milk, or to do a cartwheel. Now, she can do a lot of things she couldn’t do before, but she still can’t spend the whole night at Grandma’s. She wants to—she loves to be at her grandmother’s house—but she can’t. She tries again and again, bringing her own blanket from home once and then her teddy bears to stand watch in the dark, but nothing helps. Each time, she ends up crying and begging her grandmother to take her home. Each time, her understanding grandmother lovingly assures her, “Someday it will be time. You will be able to stay overnight and not think anything of it.” Emily keeps visiting and keeps growing. Soon, she can put her face in the water. She can color inside the lines in her coloring books. She can even put her fingertips on the tree limb that she couldn’t reach before without leaping. Then, one night, she tries again and climbs into the bed at her grandmother’s house. She falls asleep right away, not thinking anything about it. Grandma was right!

Coalson’s misty watercolors add just the right feel to Slepian’s story of intergenerational love. The care and patience of the grandmother as, time after time, she must get up and dress and take her frightened grandchild home makes this book a perfect read-aloud choice as well as a wonderful addition to any library’s collection. Betty Winslow


Flowing water color illustrations enhance the soft sounds of seven water experiences young children enjoy. Poetic riddles describe Water Voices as Toby Speed spins a web of imagination with words. In a cacophony of nature sounds morningmist disappears, and sprinklerspray calls for play. Then watch out for hungry ocean wave, startling thunderstorm, and splashing mudpaddles. After a full day, nothing is more enjoyable than the bedtime bath splash. But beware, sleephead, or the morning dew will be gone before it can be seen.

A wonderful book to be enjoyed over and over again, the memory of flowing words and feelings will enhance each future experience with water. Marie Knapp


“Do you love me?” the little ones ask their mothers. The response is always the same, “forever and ever and always.” This is true whether the little duck or the little brown bear asks. Each reassurance is supported by an example from nature such as, “I love you as the wild rye loves you, gently swaying toward you, giving you food and cover from harm.”

Author/illustrator Nancy Tafuri has created a quiet bedtime book, I Love You, Little One. The large format and full spreads will be sure to draw the youngest audience. Her flat detailed watercolor and ink paintings are in keeping with her previous works. The lyrical text personifies nature. The oak loves the owl, and the stars love the child. There is the constant repetition of the fact that creation loves the creature.

Lorie Ann Grover


With broom in hand and chores to do, Melissa ties her dancing shoes. She curtsies to her slender partner, and the dust begins to fly. With a gay gavotte and a highland fling, she reels into her work. Dishes clatter and kittens scatter before the flurry of her broom. Optimism lightens her humble duty, and brightens the corners just as surely, as Melissa cleans the room.

When Young Melissa Sweeps reads with breathless exuberance. First published in 1927, Nancy Byrd Turner’s timeless poem comes to life in Debrah Santini’s rollicksome watercolor illustrations. The book begs to be read again and again, and as the pages swiftly turn, Melissa appears almost animated. The contagious energy of this book invites the reader to attack life with lighthearted determination. Melinda M. Torgerson
Grandpop and his cousins trying to beat the heat. Grandpop tickles the heat-sleepy worms to attract the lazy fish for which they are angling; he feeds Gertie, his favorite cow, some ice for heat relief and then tickles her for some surprising results; and sleeping on the cool, dark porch isn’t as peaceful as it sounds when Grandpop starts—you guessed it—licking Big George’s big feet. In between each story, Grandpop intersperses plenty of yummy, ear, and toe tickles. You would think Maggie, Morgan, and Max would be ready for more, but by the book’s cozy end, all three are “snuggled down, hugging their pillows,” and ready for bed.

Wonderfully bright watercolor washes energize The Tickle Stories. Although the book is long for a picture book, the stories are so much fun that the reader moves from restless ruckus to relaxed rest along with the three children, enjoying this warm, delightful, loving, ticklish tale. *Ann Ponath*


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

York, a slave to Captain Clark, ponders his freedom while traveling with the Lewis and Clark party on a mission to locate a Pacific Ocean waterway in 1803. It is an arduous trip requiring the men to manually haul their boats through grasslands and thickets and travel down perilous rapids. At mission’s end, Captain Clark carves the names of all the men on a tree.

Elizabeth Van Steenwyk has written a story about a slave who accompanies Lewis and Clark on their westward mission. After the mission, Captain Clark allows York to live as a free man, though he never judicially confers York’s freedom.

**My Name Is York** is an engaging story about a slave who never stops yearning for his freedom, even though it is not ever given. The illustrations by Bill Farnsworth add to the enjoyment of the story. Background information preceding the mission and York’s life is delineated in the Foreword and Farnsworth add to the enjoyment of the story.

Norma Burgin’s naturalistic illustrations are an absolute delight! Both the author and illustrator are from England and this is reflected in Burgin’s use of lush vegetation and the clinging ivy that creeps into nearly every page. The shadowy hues complement the gently ominous feel of the story. It is fun to follow the strange, glowing eyes found on several pages throughout the book and guess to whom they belong. This is a lovely book to look at with a small child. It encourages the awareness that someone more powerful than us watches our every move, and leaves its readers with the reassuring picture of the small mouse safely sleeping in his new bed. *Lillian Heytvelt*


E. Easter eggs--Fiction; Easter--Fiction; Jesus Christ--Resurrection--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 30 p. K - Gr. 3.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

In *The Legend of the Easter Egg,* Lori Walburg explains Easter and the gospel at a child’s level. Set in a small prairie town, this is a sequel to *The Legend of the Candy Cane* by the same author and illustrator.

The story takes place shortly before Easter. Thomas must temporarily live with the Sonnemans because his sister Lucy contracts scarlet fever. He helps in their candy store and nibbles sweets all day. But confessions can’t erase his concern for Lucy. Will she die? The Sonnemans treat him kindly and pray daily for Lucy’s recovery.

Good Friday, Thomas attends church with the Sonnemans and hears the story of Jesus’ death. Later, when Mrs. Sonneman gives him an Easter egg, he asks, “What are Easter eggs?” She tells him the true meaning of Easter and explains that just as chicks break out of eggs, so Jesus broke free of the tomb of death. She encourages him to believe in Jesus and pray for his sister. The next day he colors eggs and prays by himself for the first time.

By Easter morning, Lucy is well and Thomas returns home. He brings her a basket of colored eggs and shares his new faith in Jesus and hope for eternal life.

Realistic, vivid illustrations done in acrylic and colored pencil help tell the story. The artwork and descriptive words are strengths of the book. Since the time period is not mentioned, it’s difficult to place the story at first. Also, a few words are unfamiliar to the targeted age—children four to eight. Helpful background information about traditions and symbols of Lent and Easter are included at the end. An appealing book, it should stimulate further adult-child discussion about the meaning of Easter. *Lydia Harris*


E. Birthdays--Fiction; Dogs--Fiction. 28 p. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Lee Wardlaw provides a warm story of give-and-take and acceptance in *Bow-Wow Birthday.* When Grandpa leaves his dog Rambler behind when he goes on vacation, Maris is not sure about this animal who favors her closet and her bunny slippers. But when she finds out how old Rambler is she throws him a birthday party. Rambler would rather nap, which doesn’t deter Maris and her friends from celebrating. But when the guest of honor can’t be found, Maris recognizes her feelings for the old pook and accepts him for what he is, an old friend who needs some extra loving. The large pastel illustrations by Arden Johnson-Petrov provide the right touch of liveliness for a dog-gone fun, yet sensitive tale.

Even though the story is long on text, it is a wonderful book to help young children realize that when people become older and slow down, they shouldn’t be ignored, or even disdained. This book shows in a thoughtful way how we can still show our appreciation for the older persons in our lives. A little compassion and tenderness can go a long way. *Pam Webb*


E. Cats--Fiction; Clocks and watches--Fiction; Time--Fiction; Nantucket Island (Mass.)--Fiction; Stories in rhyme. 32 p. PS - Gr. 1.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

*Nantucket Cats* are busy animals. They have a different activity for each hour of the day and night. At noon the cats eat their peas, at eight they hang up their suckers and at one they sing a song. From all the clocks that appear on each page and their strict regimen it would seem the cats can tell time. As it turns out, they have to hear the chime to know the hour.

Simple rhyming poems tell the story of the feline’s daily schedule. While *Nantucket Cats,* by Dawn Wells, has a regional flavor, one does not have to be a Cape Cod resident to appreciate the cat’s choice of activities. For example, they cheer a sloop at four and...
**BOOK REVIEWS**

**CHILDREN’S FICTION**

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F. Robbers and outlaws--Fiction; Hotels, motels, etc.--Fiction; Mystery fiction. 58 p. Gr. 1-4.

Quality - 5
Acceptability - 5

Cam Jansen, her friend Eric, and her parents are visiting Aunt Molly at a big city hotel. While talking with a desk clerk about something exciting to do, Mrs. Wright, a hotel guest, rushes up claiming her luggage and her Little Tiger (a pet cat) are lost. It turns out they’ve been stolen and Cam’s photographic memory helps find the robber.

David Adler has written another fast moving book for emerging readers. Susanna Natti’s black line drawings illustrate the text well. An interesting addition to the book is the reader’s chance to test their photographic memory. At the end of the book, readers are asked to study a certain illustration and then answer questions about what they saw.

**Cam Jansen and the Catnapping Mystery** is just the type of book enjoyed by those ready to graduate from easy readers. The book is also a good read-aloud for those who can’t yet read alone. *Jane Mouttet*

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F. Mice--Fiction; Porcupines--Fiction; Animals--Fiction; Fathers and sons--Fiction. 182 p. Gr. 3-7.

Quality - 5
Acceptability - 5

Poppy, the woodland creature adventure, continues in **Poppy and Rye.** Poppy deer mouse is left heartbroken over her beloved Ragweed’s tragic death. Ereth, her porcupine companion, grudgingly agrees to escort her in a journey to find The Brook and the family Ragweed had spoken of so fondly. However, the beavers have dammed the stream and the woodlands are flooding. Ragweed’s brother, Rye, is being held captive, and he in turn captures Poppy’s heart.

Avi’s mice tales have won notable honors, including the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award. **Poppy and Rye** is sure to glow in this same favor. It is a story of love and friendship, of bravery, of sibling jealousy giving way to individuality, and co-operation winning over brute strength. The dialogue vividly portrays the characters. Rye’s romantic nature is expressed in poetic reflections. The “good old boy” leader of the beavers rambles on in clique phrases, while Ereth’s animal language swearing and insults leave no doubt of his general attitude. Brian Floca’s black and white illustrations emphasize dramatic points and lend mouse-sized perspective to the adventure. He also includes an overview of the territory, mapping out the scene of the events. *Melinda Torgerson*

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F. Magic--Fiction; Space and time--Fiction; Family life--Fiction; Indians of North America--Fiction. 228 p. Gr. 4-8.

Quality - 4
Acceptability - 4

In the last book, **The Mystery of the Cupboard,** Omri’s father discovers the secret of the cupboard and the magical key. Now Little Bear’s home is in danger. Omri and his father travel back to help their friend save his home and his heritage. Author Lynne Reid Banks weaves history into the pages of this exciting sequel to the Indian in the Cupboard series. Banks approaches the history from the Indian perspective, thus the European explorers and settlers are portrayed as aggressive and unscrupulous.

One quote used from the book **North American Indians** by George Catlin describes a Sioux chief’s observation of the white men. “And the chief just kept quietly asking about other white people’s customs, such as robbing graves and abusing their own women, and Catlin kept making notes and keeping his head down and feeling more and more uncomfortable, and at last the chief asked if it was true that the Great Spirit of the white people was the child of a white woman and that white people had killed him—referring to Jesus, of course. When Catlin had to say yes to that, the chief simply couldn’t believe it, and said, ‘The Indians’ Great Spirit got no mother—the Indians no kill him, he never die.”

Quotes such as this provide opportunities to discuss other cultures and other religious beliefs. Omri’s father professes no religious beliefs and feels drawn to the Indian tribe and their ceremonies.

The black and white drawings by illustrator James Watling add drama to the text, although the ‘dust jacket’ color picture inaccurately depicts Omri and his father as smaller than the six inches they are supposed to be. *Joanne M. Haffly*

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F. Frontier and pioneer life--Fiction; German Americans--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction; Family life--Fiction. 104 p. Gr. 4-6.

Quality - 5
Acceptability - 5

What happened 150 years ago if a mother gave birth to three babies at once? Usually the weakest one was left to die—not allowed to nurse. Thirteen year old Virginia wouldn’t allow that to happen. She leaves school in order to care for Tiny, the smallest of her mother’s triplets. Virginia and her brother Danny help Tiny fight for his life. No one in their area knows what to feed a baby like Tiny. Virginia keeps trying different things until Tiny starts getting stronger.

Esther Bender has written an enjoyable book for pre-teens who like historical fiction. I appreciated her prologue letting readers know what happened in the first book of the series. Her notes at the end help explain why Virginia was surprised her mom had a baby as well as other historical aspects of the story. Joy Keenan’s black and white drawings add a nice touch to the story.

Virginia and her family exhibit a faith in Christ. While not overly obvious, they do celebrate “Jesus’ birth” and “bring honor to the Christ child.” Virginia reminds herself several times to “keep the faith,” an expression she never understood before.

**Virginia and the Tiny One** gives readers a peek into family life 150 years ago. It would be a great addition to the historical fiction shelf in your library. *Jane Mouttet*

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F. Unidentified flying objects--Fiction; Inventors--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction; Family life--Fiction. 121 p. Gr. 3-6.

Quality - 5
Acceptability - 5

Twelve-year-old Willie Plummet comes from a long line of aviation buffs which explains his grand interest in flying. So Willie’s invention is, of course, a flying machine! He is super proud of his creation and actually succeeds in getting it to lift off with the help of two friends, Samantha and Felix, and several helium balloons. His intentions to perfect the machine fall by the wayside, however, when he and his friends realize that the town has been cited on national television as having UFO’s overhead. Their
flying machine is the greatest prank ever, bringing a booming business and many adventure seekers to the area. But, like anything based on a false premise, things get out of hand. What will happen when the whole town discovers that their famous UFO is only a kid's invention?

Invasion from Planet X is a fast-paced, humorous story that will keep the reader turning pages. Many humorous side issues are also presented such as his friend, Felix, hiring a bodyguard to keep from getting beat up by a bully, and his dad creating a terrible tasting chili that he wants to enter in the fair. Each dilemma is faced with humor yet realistic "middle-school" solutions that are most entertaining. Buchanan and Randall do an excellent job keeping the interest high and the moral lessons non-preachy yet poignant. Mary McKinney

- F. Entomology—Fiction. 1 videocassette, color, 28 min. Gr. 2 - 5.

- F. Cytology—Fiction. 1 videocassette, color, 28 min. Gr. 2 - 5.

- F. Genetics—Fiction. 1 videocassette, color, 28 min. Gr. 2 - 5.


In The Bug Safari, Wendell is trying to promote his First Annual Bug Olympics, but silverfish, moths, aphids, and termites are destroying people's cherished possessions. Wendell convinces Tim and Max to go on a bug safari at a condemned warehouse, and they find termites on rotten pieces of wood leading to a discussion about why God created termites. After the safari, the boys visit Grandpa Newton's workshop, and Grandpa Newton makes use of a piece of an old safari, the boys visit Grandpa Newton's workshop, Back in Grandpa Newton's workshop, Trisha and Grandpa Newton shows Trisha and Tim microscopic protozoa living in the water and uses a model of an amoeba and paramecium as examples of the different kinds of protozoa. He teaches Trisha and Tim about the intricate workings of a cell with a hands-on exhibit called Cell City and uses a diagram to illustrate how mitosis makes two identical cells from one cell. Grandpa Newton's contraption for transporting mail from the mail slot in the front door to the kitchen reinforces what Trisha and Tim learned about the interdependence of each part of a cell.

In The DNA Decoders, Trisha has just gotten a pair of glasses which results in learning about genetics at the Newtons with her friend Megan. In Grandpa Newton's workshop, Grandpa Newton uses a wireless and Morse code to explain how Trisha's bad eyesight is in a code and an inherited trait. The girls learn how DNA, chromosomes, and genes tie together, and Grandpa Newton uses his bug exhibit to explain Natural Selection. At home, Trisha's dad discusses with Trisha and Megan how all living things were created to glorify God and refers to Galatians 3:28. Back in Grandpa Newton's workshop, Trisha and Megan learn about skin tone and how every possible combination of skin color can be made with a genetic square. Grandpa Newton uses a chart to explain the difference between evolutionism and creationism.

In The Pollution Solution, the Thomas family is wasting water, so Trisha and Tim are encouraged to conserve water and electricity. While helping their grandparents with a painting project, Trisha refers to their house as a habitat. This is the catalyst for a short discussion about the meaning of ecology and the responsibility of Christians to be good caretakers of their homes, leading Trisha to quote Psalms 24:1. After Tim nearly flips paint water into the gutter, a field trip helps him understand how toxic chemicals can affect the food chain in the ocean. Grandma Newton proposes a landfill contest between Trisha and Tim in which the person with the lightest bundle wins, and they learn about recycling as a result. Through a hands-on exhibit called Spaceship Earth in Grandpa Newton's workshop, Trisha and Tim learn about solar radiation, photosynthesis, the water cycle, waste management systems, famines, and global warming. Trisha and Tim tie the landfill contest, and the family goes out to celebrate.

These videos focus on learning basic scientific information about entomology, cytology, genetics, and ecology mainly through educational discussions and hands-on exhibits. The reading and quoting of Bible verses is an essential part of each video as it is crediting God with the creation of all life forms. An illustrated Study Guide comes with each video crediting God with the creation of all life forms. An illustrated Study Guide comes with each video crediting God with the creation of all life forms. An illustrated Study Guide comes with each video crediting God with the creation of all life forms. An illustrated Study Guide comes with each video crediting God with the creation of all life forms. An illustrated Study Guide comes with each video.
alternate. No longer separated by suspicion, and the troubled boy restored to the team, they go on to win their first league game.

Matt Christopher’s fifty-first sports book still delivers the kind of story that boys like. There are sports action and angst, team spirit, driving desire, and a true-to-life problem that puts a monkey-wrench in everything. Jeff’s problem with his grades is one typically faced by those dedicated to sports. In his true-to-life problem that puts a monkey-wrench in their first league game.

No longer separated by suspicion, and the troubled boy restored to the team, they go on to win their first league game. Except for the sports pages.


F. Pirates–Fiction; Mice–Fiction; Dogs–Fiction; Cats–Fiction; Castaways–Fiction; Islands–Fiction. 118 p. Gr. 2-4.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


F. Pirates–Fiction; Mice–Fiction; Dogs–Fiction; Cats–Fiction; Castaways–Fiction; Islands–Fiction. 114 p. Gr. 2-4.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

All’s well that ends well even for Cody Michaels when the secret admirer—a fifth grader no less!—requests the valentine back. She had sent it to the wrong address.

Ginger McGrath


F. Easter–Fiction; Ancient Rome–Fiction; Early Christian church–Fiction. 1 videotape, color, 70 min. Gr. 1-7.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

In the first century, the Christians in Rome faced brutal enemies. This fully animated video tells the tale of how Ben the Baker, his wife, and adopted children bravely face persecution and fearlessly spread the stories of Jesus. Narrowly escaping death as their bakery shop burns, they take refuge in the catacombs. As their own adventures unfold, so do the events of the Easter story. Similarities tie the two together. They are betrayed by friends, arrested, and imprisoned. But neither the darkness of the caves nor the isolation of the prison can silence the stories. In fact, through the stories, they acquire some surprising new friends who make possible their escape.

The Easter Story Keepers runs high on action, narrow escapes, and dramatics. As the stories of Jesus are told, they too come to life in animation. However, they are told with a more subdued tone, which helps separate the two. Although the video portrays some traumatic events, such as the death of a protecting soldier, Christ’s flogging and crucifixion, these scenes are done carefully, keeping the age of the audience in mind. Over all, the animation is smooth and expressive. While the story does rely heavily on dramatic action, its emphasis is on living and sharing the truth.

Melinda M. Torgerson


F. Honesty–Fiction; Schools–Fiction; Friendship–Fiction; Family life–Fiction. 144 p. Gr. 3-7.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Liar, liar... We all remember that childhood refrain aimed at someone not telling the truth. Lies can be a cause for mocking, but lies can be the ruin of lives and lies can cover other deeper problems, as well. Such is the case in this well-written book by Barthe DeClements about Gretchen Griswold whose pleasant life is disrupted by the presence of a new girl, Marybelle Jackson. It all begins with Marybelle shading off a part of Susan November’s beautiful red hair during a classroom demonstration. An accident, Marybelle assured everyone, but it is only the beginning of unusual and confusing incidents making Gretchen out to be the prevaricator! Gretchen’s brother assures her that lies are eventually caught in their own web of deception so with his help, she weaves a plan that will divulge the truth once and for all. In a surprising twist, the liar is exposed but so are her classmates to examine the real meaning of friendship.

Young people will enjoy this piece of realistic fiction, written for fifth through eighth graders, and giving them a slice of life that relates to problems in today’s world. Though serious, Liar, Liar is not depressing and has its light moments, too.

Melinda M. Torgerson

The Easter Storykeepers

What could be worse than a secret admirer at age nine? Absolutely nothing, as far as Cody Michaels cares. The anonymous valentine he receives in his mailbox catapults his otherwise carefree life into a week of worry. His first fiasco starts while sleuthing to discover the admirer’s identity. Unfortunately, being a novice, he gets caught and the whole class thinks he put a secret admirer valentine into P.J.’s desk. How embarrassing!

In the midst of his investigation a new problem emerges. He learns, or so he thinks, his parents have arranged his immediate marriage to a girl named Sita from India. Suddenly, he decides, it’s time to grow up. Carrying his father’s old briefcase and newspaper to school to demonstrate his new maturity and calling his teacher by her first name ends up in the hall for a brief teacher-student conference. More embarrassment ensues.

This laugh-out-loud book will tickle both children and adult readers, although it’s written as a chapter book for seven to eleven year olds. The sentences are short; the word are simple. Every chapter ends with one of Cody’s Top Ten Lists; i.e. the Top Ten List of Things That Cause Trouble which include earth-shaking events like war and third-grade-shaking events like pop quizzes and valenzines.

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Patrick McWaid, thirteen, along with the rest of his family make a bone jarring wagon trip to Boomerang Bend. A letter from Grandpa McWaid pleading for help is the catalyst for this journey. The family’s combined assistance is needed to raise the sunken Lady Elisabeth. Grandpa’s crew has abandoned him, thinking the paddle wheeler is jinxed after several unusual accidents happen. He has only thirty days to raise the boat, repair the damage, and chug it down the river to the town of Goolwa or lose his half of ownership to the new investor. In spite of their many frustrating setbacks will they make it to Goolwa in time?

Robert Elmer, author of The Young Underground series, has created Race to Wallaby Bay, the fifth book in the Adventures Down Under series. The previous volumes will enable the reader to become better acquainted with the history of the characters, but they are written so as to be able to read each book by itself.

The setting is 1860 Australia and Mr. Elmer has incorporated interesting factual incidents that are gleaned from diaries and news articles of that era of Australian history.

Though it is fast-paced that all of the adventures would happen to one family in such a short amount of time, it does add to the excitement of the story and will appeal to the age group that is targeted. Debbie Lindsay


F. Mystery fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 112 p. Gr. 3 - 7.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

“Why do we have to move?” Elizabeth’s mom is re-marrying. With the new husband comes a new house. Elizabeth and Mike, her younger brother, both like the house Mom and Don, her fiance’, have picked out. Teresa, Elizabeth’s boss, is also interested in the house. It has many old books in it and she’s a book dealer.

Jerry Kendall brings an old book into Teresa’s used book store. He says it belongs to his grandma and she wants to sell it. Jerry turns up again at Elizabeth’s youth group meeting. Elizabeth eventually finds out that Jerry, whose name is really Jim, is the step-son of the man who is selling them the house. Jim’s step-father is cruel to Jim. In the end Elizabeth gets a new house, a new dad, and a new brother.

Secret in the Old Book is sixth in the Elizabeth Bryan Mysteries series, yet you do not have to read the previous books to enjoy this volume. The characters created by Vicki Erwin are believable, much like young junior high students in your school or church. Elizabeth and other characters show Christian love for someone in need. Jerry/Jim wants to live on his own rather than with his cruel step-father (his parents are both dead). Older elementary students who enjoy mysteries will enjoy Secret in the Old Book, written at a sixth grade level. Jane Mouttet


F. Best friends--Fiction; Friendship--Fiction; Treehouses--Fiction. 80 p. Gr. 2 - 3.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

“Albertina sure knows how to make friends.” (p. 26) That theme echoes and re-echoes through the chapter book by Susi Gregg Fowler, Albertina the Practically Perfect. Molly, the story teller, moves to a new neighborhood with her mom, dad, and baby brother Walter. She leaves behind her beloved grandparents. Albertina is the second person Molly meets, Violet and her mean cronies being the first. Albertina, ever the peace-maker, tries to give both sides a fresh start. Another project is the tree house that Albertina and Molly build. It is the envy of the community. This is a place where Molly feels autonomous, where she must make choices about sharing that space. And she needs to make a decision about a betrayed confidence.

Fowler weaves in themes that concern the primary age child, like the dependence on a nightlight. She presents the family as warm and caring, compassionate in adopting the Chinese baby. There is, however, the occasional glitch in the storyline; why did the family move cross-town?

The drawings of Jim Fowler are cartoon-like, striking the right tone for this serious story presented with a generous dollop of humor. Su Hagerty


E. Fathers and sons--Fiction; Vietnamese Americans--Fiction; Fishers--Fiction. 30 p. Gr. 2 - 4.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

A father and young son work all day together on their shrimp boat. Sharing memories from the past, the father reminisces about his own father, telling how he learned the fishing trade so long ago in Vietnam. The son’s many questions bring them both to desire a day when all three can fish alongside of each other.

Author Sherry Garland prefaces the book quoting a Vietnamese proverb, “When you are young, you need your father; when you are old you need your son.” Together, Garland’s rich use of language and Ted Rand’s sensitive illustrations prove this proverb true, warming the heart of the reader.

My Father’s Boat celebrates unique cultural traditions while presenting a universal bond between all fathers and sons. This book would be a quality addition to a collection for ethnic awareness or family values. A beautiful text for read-aloud. Karen Brehmer


F. Ballet--Fiction; Competition (Psychology)--Fiction. 75 p. Gr. 2 - 6.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Rosie’s grandmother had been a ballet dancer. Now Rosie is taking ballet lessons. In fact, she was trying out for a part in a “big city ballet.” She has so many things to do: help her best friend Murph build his treehouse, help mom clean house, and practice. In the process Rosie learns the importance of helping a friend before doing what she wants. She doesn’t get the part she wanted, but she does get a part in a big city ballet.

With just ten chapters and seventy-five pages in Rosie’s Big City Ballet, children just starting chapter books will like the length. Patricia Reilly Giff has written yet another book that will be enjoyed by second and third graders. Julie Durrell’s black line drawings complement the text. The storyline flows smoothly and while not high-action, does move quickly enough to hold an early-readers interest. Jane Mouttet


F. Emotional problems--Fiction; Interpersonal relationships--Fiction; Farm life--Missouri--Fiction; Schools--Fiction; Missouri--Fiction. 199 p. Gr. 5 - 6.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 4

No way does Carly want to interview Dustin for her school assignment. Dustin is dirty, creepy, and lives in a strange compound with his relatives. But Carly sticks with her assignment. She does her best to learn about her nemesis. What she ultimately discovers is that her cruel and thoughtless past action altered a person’s life dramatically. Now kind acts and confession may set things straight.

Middle grade novel Reaching Dustin, by Vicki Grove, includes a family clan armed with semi-automatic weapons. The group is also running a methamphetamine lab. Main character Carly reaches out to the youngest family member, but she often disobeys her parents to do so. Her brother is shot in the heel.

Vicki Grove holds her characters accountable for their actions. Answers aren’t easy and the truth is hard to admit to yourself. Lorie Ann Grover


F. Fathers and daughters--Fiction; Family life--Fiction; Literacy--Fiction. 138 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Finding school challenging, Juice stays home most of the time. Her family loves her and at home she is important. She longs to encourage her depressed, unemployed father. From him she learns that an important letter has arrived. Neither of them able to read, they go on to discover that their house has been sold because of unpaid taxes. Hoping to reverse the
action, they devise a plan, keeping it from Ma, who is expecting a baby.

Pa starts a business. Things look better until the truant officer delivers a court summons, imposing a fine for Juice’s school absences. Secrets are unveiled and it is Ma who plans what happens next.

The reader is left to wonder about the outcome of the family’s troubles. Instead, the focus is on Juice, discovering that she is okay just as she is, knowing that because of their love, her family can face whatever lies ahead.

Written in first-person singular, thoughtful reflections draw the reader into the family’s situation. Author Karen Hesse accurately portrays difficulties of a child with a learning disability, most likely dyslexia. In chapter sixteen a birth takes place. Tasteful, necessary details are given; none are graphic. For a child wondering how a baby is born, questions are bound to surface.

The family’s passive reaction to Juice’s truancy is somewhat unbelievable. The optimistically simple resolution might leave some readers dissatisfied. Cloudy, grey illustrations add little to enhance the story.

A likable story, Just Juice is especially appealing to children who can identify with Juice’s learning difficulties. Karen Brehmer


E. Great-grandmothers—Fiction. 30 p. Gr. 2 - 5.
Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

Great-Grandmother’s Treasure is a story about a woman who lives life to the fullest. Whether she is a young girl setting a rabbit free, a mother telling ghost stories, or a grandmother stomping through mud puddles, Great-Grandmother finds excitement in just about everything. She even makes an apron and decides to fill it with secret treasures. As the years pass, even the great-grandchildren hear of this treasure. However, no one has ever seen it. When Great-Grandmother dies an old woman, everyone finds out that her apron isn’t filled with treasures you can see but with the riches that come from a life lived for others.

Ruth Hickcox has written a story with an important theme—we are made rich not through what we get from life but from what we give away. Although this is a worthy message, Great-Grandmother’s Treasure is not a very interesting story. The events that are depicted throughout the story are simply random snapshots from Grandma’s life without any discernible plot. While the theme does attempt to tie these “snapshots” together in the end, there is no storyline or action to hold the reader’s interest. The result is a series of loosely-related scenes that fail to come alive.

David Soman’s realistic watercolor and pastel illustrations do a wonderful job of showing Great-Grandmother throughout her long life. However, without any problem, action, or plot, Great-Grandmother’s Treasure is a book which adults could appreciate, but perhaps not children. Kerri Cunningham


F. Shakers—Fiction; Ohio—Fiction. 140 p. Gr. 4 - 6.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Samantha’s sorrow and loneliness after the death of her mother is compounded when her stern, uncommunicative father decides to join a community of Shakers. At Turtle Creek Samantha is sent to live in a house for young girls watched over by grumpy, elderly Sister Olive Gatwood. Her father goes to live with the other men. She struggles with the Shakers belief that families should not live together. Samantha questions whether God really wants families to be separated and longs for the day when she is old enough to leave the Believers. Susannah takes care of little Mary at Sister Olive’s. Mary’s father embraces the Shakers beliefs, but her mother,
unwilling to be separated from Mary, does not. Both parents want custody of Mary. As Susannah becomes entangled in Mary’s problems she is faced with a hard decision about her own future.

Janet Hickman tells the story of a young girl torn between what the adults tell her is right and what her heart tells her is right for her. Samantha, Mary, and all of the other main characters are fictional. However, Union Village, Eldess Ruth Farrington, and Judge Dunlay are factual as are some of the events. A helpful two page author’s note gives additional information about the Shakers. James McMullan’s colorful picture on the cover adds to the mystery surrounding Mary’s mother. Barbara A. Bryden


F. Survival—Fiction; Brothers and sisters—Fiction; Runaways—Fiction; Oregon—Fiction. 192 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Jessie, Allie, and Toady Cloud have a real home for the first time with Mom and Pop. Dark-skinned Allie is less fearful and withdrawn with Mom, whose skin is dark too. When the social workers start visiting more and more often, Jessie retreats to a haven—a chinquapin tree she discovered on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Then the three siblings learn their mother—they call her Sherrill—wants them back. Allie, who had been severely abused by Sherrill, panics. Desperate to keep the three of them together, Jessie decides they should hide from the social workers until Mom and Pop can find a way to adopt them.

While the tide is low, she guides her two younger siblings on a precarious journey to her chinquapin tree. They lose a sleeping bag in the strong tide, and raccoons steal their food, they run out of matches, and the tree. The Cloud children Jerry Kimble Holcomb has written an adventurous following. Importantly, they discover inner strength and even despite the odds against them they learn to catch fish, Mrs. Aronson with her children, but Ruthi heard about the Fresh Air Fund. Now Dossi, a young Jewish girl, is on her way to Vermont. For two weeks Dossi will live with a Christian family, the Meades, on their farm. The Meades are not rich, but their farmhouse seems huge to Dossi and Mrs. Mead’s kitchen with its wonderful homemade jams and jellies is almost overwhelming. Dossi discovers fireflies, picks blackberries, and learns how to milk a cow. She forms a friendship with Emma Meade and learns that the people and families in this Faraway Summer place aren’t so different from people at home.

Johanna Hurwitz realistically captures the hardships two young Russian immigrant girls face in 1910 after losing their parents. Written as Dossi’s journal entries, the story moves slowly through Dossi’s two week stay in the country. The Rabinowitz sisters and the Meade family are fictional. The Fresh Air Fund, Wilson Alywn Bentley, who discovered that no two snowflakes are the same, and other historical details are factual. Hurwitz’s attention to detail both in the language and life styles of the characters brings life to the story.

The cover illustration by Mary Azarian captures the feeling of great empty spaces that awed Dossi when she arrived in Vermont. Each chapter has an appropriate woodcut on the first page. Barbara A. Bryden


F. Farm life—Vermont—Fiction; Family life—Vermont—Fiction; Jews—New York (N.Y.)—Fiction; City and town life—Fiction; Vermont—Fiction. 155 p. Gr. 4 - 6.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Ruthi and her younger sister Dossi rent one room of the Aronson family’s apartment in a New York tenement. Dossi expected to spend the summer helping Mrs. Aronson with her children, but Ruthi heard about the Fresh Air Fund. Now Dossi, a young Jewish girl, is on her way to Vermont. For two weeks Dossi will live with a Christian family, the Meades, on their farm. The Meades are not rich, but their farmhouse seems huge to Dossi and Mrs. Mead’s kitchen with its wonderful homemade jams and jellies is almost overwhelming. Dossi discovers fireflies, picks blackberries, and learns how to milk a cow. She forms a friendship with Emma Meade and learns that the people and families in this Faraway Summer place aren’t so different from people at home.

Johanna Hurwitz has given characters Marcus and Marius a novel of their own in *Starting School*. They previously were minor characters in the Class Clown books. These children are known to be a handful, but the mischief they create is very mild. The teachers bemoan to each other how difficult “their” twin is to handle. The reader may not feel that degree of difficulty.


F. Twins—Fiction; Brothers—Fiction; Kindergarten—Fiction; Schools—Fiction; Teachers—Fiction. 102 p. Gr. 2 - 5.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Twins Marcus and Marius are ready for their first day of kindergarten. But are their teachers ready? How will the boys do being separated for the first time? And who will have the better kindergarten class? These questions are all answered with a bit of fun and a bit of a mix up. Not only do the boys trade classes, the usual twin story, but their teachers do also. This provides the funniest scenes in the book.

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Karen Dugan’s pencil illustrations accompany the text. Occasionally the characters’ proportions are slightly inaccurate. Her contribution does add to Marcus and Marius’ antics.

**Starting School** will be a fun read for the younger reader. It is the unusual case where the reader is older than the main character. Lorie Ann Grover

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E. Grandmothers—Fiction; Love—Fiction; Afro-Americans—Fiction. 32 p. Gr. 2 - 4.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

With Dad gone and Mom having to get her life back together again, Billy, a little African-American boy, finds himself being placed in his Grandma’s hands. Everything is so different from his inner-city life. Billy now lives on a farm, does chores, and has to cope with an old lady who speaks humorously but doesn’t smile and has rough, aged hands. Mom does not come back for a long time. Grandma and Billy learn to smile at each other; understand each other’s needs; live happily together. When a boy desperately needs love, even rough hands, if they are gentle, can dispense it. Together Billy and Grandma prove home is where the heart is. Life does not follow storybook lines nor does Grandma’s Hands. Billy finds peace,
love, and acceptance with Grandma, but at the end he
must give it all up, moving on with his mother.
However, what this sojourn with Grandma has
garnered will never leave him.

Dolores Johnson’s water colors portray emotions
through faces and interaction on an impressionistic
background. Her words combine with the
illustrations to present the whole story to both heart
and mind. All the events, sad and happy, occurring in
Grandma’s Hands are apropos to today’s child and
parent, no matter what race. With a poetic swing,
Johnson presents a story readable by children.
The sentence structure, mainly simple, will at times cause
the reader to reach slightly beyond his reading level.
This book opens flat to display the complete two page
picture and accompanying words. Donna J. H. Eggett

The Fiddler’s Secret, by Lois Walfrid Johnson.
(The Riverboat Adventures; 6.) Minneapolis:
F. Steamboats—Fiction; Mystery fiction. 160 p. Gr. 3 - 8.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

In her sixth book of the Riverboat Adventures, Lois
Walfrid Johnson has created another exciting fictional
adventure. A map and riverboat drawing at the
beginning of the story, along with the author’s
acknowledgments at the conclusion, help readers understand
the historical accuracy of this story. Detailed illustrations by Paul Casale add to the
overall appeal of the book.

Libby, Peter, Caleb, and Jordan are heading north on the
Mississippi River on Libby’s father’s riverboat in the fall of 1857. One passenger exhibits
extraordinary talent as a violinist and reluctantly
gives a concert for the first-class passengers. Libby
and the boys suspect there is more to this man than
appears on the surface. When they arrive in St. Paul, his violin is stolen and the young people help search
for it.

Libby is constantly reminded of Romans 8:28 and
needs to learn to trust God. She wants her widowed
father to marry Annika. When Annika decides to stay
in St. Paul and they are detained in Galena, Libby’s
faith begins to falter. Upon returning to find Annika, they resume their search for the violin and realize that
danger is lurking. Libby disobediently goes off on her own and is trapped by the thieves. Her dog finds
her and digs a hole through which she escapes. Libby
learns to trust and rejoices when her father marries
Annika and adopts Peter. Patricia J. Perry

Horrible Harry Moves Up to Third Grade, by Suzy
Kline; pictures by Frank Remkiewicz. LCCN
F. Schools—Fiction; School field trips—Fiction. 58 p. Gr. 1 - 4.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

Harry and Doug go back to school in the fall expecting things to be the same as last year. They
have the same teacher as in second grade, but have
moved to a new classroom on the second floor.
Several familiar faces at the school have been replaced with new people. Each student is the class
to tell about something they did that summer.
Doug tells the class about his trip to a copper mine.
What he didn’t tell was that he had been too scared to
go down in it. Miss Mackle, the teacher, decides
the mine would be a great place for a field trip. Doug is
able to conquer his fear with Harry’s help.

Suzy Kline wrote Horrible Harry Moves up to Third
Grade with elementary students in mind. The
characters are very believable. The black and white
drawings by Frank Remkiewicz do a good job of
illustrating the text.

Horrible Harry Moves Up to Third Grade does
contain some language that may be mildly unacceptable, such as “Gee” and referring to the
bathroom as “the can.” These instances are very few and probably wouldn’t prohibit its addition to your library.

How I Saved Hanukkah, by Amy Goldman Koss; pictures by Diane deGroat. LCCN 9652715. New
F. Hanukkah—Fiction; Jews—United States—Fiction; Family
life—California—Fiction; California—Fiction. 88 p. Gr. 3 - 6.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 4

At the approach of the Christmas holidays, Marla
Feinstein is the only student in her fourth-grade class
to be given blue-and-white construction paper instead of
red-and-green for an art project. Embarrassed at
being singled out for her Jewishness, she is cheered
when her best friend, Lucy, requests the same colors.
Still, this event is the sort of thing she dislikes about
the holidays. Her family never puts up a Christmas
tree to decorate; their Hanukkah gifts are practical
and not wrapped in shiny paper; the Feinstein house is
the only one on the block without glitttering lights or
plastic Santas on the lawn. For the first time she
begins to question, “Why?”

To Marla’s dismay, her parents’ answers are vague.
Celebrating Hanukkah has become a low priority in
the family, its history half-forgotten. Marla begins a
search that will lead her to other Jewish friends and
the library. Her enthusiasm ignites her parents’ sense
of pride, and the book ends with a touching ceremony
at the Feinstein house where friends and neighbors
hear the story of Judah Maccabee, learn the
significance of Hanukkah symbols, and even dance
the hora. When given the choice to have a tree next
Christmas, Marla elects to keep Hanukkah.

Amy Goldman Koss is careful to avoid the spiritual
implications of both Christian and Jewish holidays.
Despite a brief “seance” in which Marla and Lucy
frighten themselves, this story is an enjoyable way
to learn about the tradition of Hanukkah. With lively,
humorous characters, the author also explores such
themes as the selflessness of real friendship, the
uniqueness and value found in every family, and the
importance of keeping cultural traditions alive. Diane
deGroat’s illustrations add to the book by effectively
conveying real people who embody tenderness and
warmth. Mary Stewart Fronieke

Louise Takes Charge, by Stephen Krensky;
pictures by Susanna Nattii. LCCN 9737441. New
F. Bullies—Fiction; Schools—Fiction. 80 p. Gr. 2 - 3.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Louise has been looking forward to her new year at
school until she sees Jasper. Jasper has become the
school bully. Louise comes up with a plan to trick
Jasper out of being so mean. Beginning with herself
and then gradually adding others, Louise becomes
Jasper’s apprentice. Soon everyone in the class is
helping Jasper be a bully. Jasper soon finds out that
having so many helpers is not much fun. He cannot
steal from and take advantage of his own apprentices.
Meanwhile Louise and her classmates have learned to
work as a team and are able to stand up to Jasper.
Finding himself outsmaerted, Jasper can only resign as
class bully.

Stephen Krensky has written a humorous story which
will interest kids seeking fairness among classmates.
Louise Takes Charge is part of The Lionel and Louise
Series. This series appeals to second and third
graders with its large print, age-appropriate vocabulary,
short chapters, and attractive pen and ink
drawings. Stephen Krensky’s Louise Takes Charge
will be a welcome addition to libraries seeking more
books for middle readers. Susan Robinson

Emma and the Silk Train, written by Julie Lawson;
illustrated by Paul Monbrouquette. Buffalo, N.Y.:
E. Silk—Fiction; Railroads—Fiction; Canada—British
Columbia—History—Fiction. 32 p. Gr. 2 - 4.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

The Silkers stop for nothing. These trains with their
precious cargo of silk from China have priority even
over royalty. They must get to the market in New
York City. When a train derails and dumps bales into
the river, the whole town gets “silk fever.”
The reward for the cargo is an incentive. The adventure is
told in Emma and the Silk Train by Julie Lawson,
based on a real event. Emma is motivated by the
beauty of the fabric and she longs for a silk blouse of
her very own. She persists in her search, even going
beyond the bend of the river, a boundary set for her by
her parents. The remainder of the story is dedicated
to her creative use of the silk to effect her rescue.
Paul Monbrouquette hasactualized the essence of
photographic detail while using a paint brush and
bold colors. His picture book quality enhances this
lively drama. Su Hagerty
How does a child go to sleep when worried about a geography test? Count sheep. But where do those sheep go once they’ve leaped over the fence? Thomas imagines his four sheep travel around the world visiting the countries he’s been studying. From A to Z, with alliteration, Thomas’s Sheep and the Great Geography Test introduces the reader to other places.

Author Steven Layne presents sheep picnicking in Peru, quilting in Japan, and kayaking in Kenya. The text, apart from naming countries, gives no other pertinent information. The sheep actions are unrelated to the places.

Perry Board has painted illustrations for the text. Occasionally a landmark is shown, but not often. The layout holds much unimportant negative space. Board has created appealing sheep characters which are dressed according to their travels.

If familiarity with country names is all that is sought, Thomas’s Sheep and the Great Geography Test will give a fun introduction to just that. Lorie Ann Grover


“Mandie Shaw, do ye be havin’ leprechauns in this place?”, inquires Mandie’s 10-year-old guest from Ireland. Mollie, an orphan from Belfast, is staying with Mandie’s friend Celicia and her mother until Mollie’s aunt can be found. Mollie seems certain that if she can find a leprechaun’s pot of gold for herself and her missing aunt, her problems will be solved.

Thirteen-year-old Mandie, and her friend Celicia, have a different kind of problem. They are trying to convince the lively, little girl that leprechauns are only make-believe. Molly stops her search for leprechauns after she hears the truth from God’s Word, but is now convinced that an angel, all in white, has appeared and is beckoning to her. Lois Leppard has created an interactive story for Mandie fans. Mandie and Mollie and the Angel’s Visit contains two separate sections. The first half of the book is a mystery story with penciled illustrations. The second half is the same story, written as a three-act drama. A complete script and set instructions make it easy for children to read and perform. Donna Brown

F. T arantulas—Fiction; Friendship—Fiction. 78 p. Gr. 2 – 5.

Mike and Mandie kids’ visit to Scotland on a historic trip is interrupted by the visit of a tarantula. Celia thinks it is too big to be a tarantula. Mike tells a story about the tarantula he had in Australia. Celia realizes that it is a great big spider. But he is not dangerous. Many children have a fear of spiders. This book may make some children more comfortable with spiders. Beverly Lewis, who has made children feel comfortable with their fears, has written a warm story that will appeal to readers. Donna Brown

F. Behavior—Fiction; Brothers and sisters—Fiction; School—Fiction. 77 p. Gr. 2 – 5.

Beverly Lewis, in this book, provides a story that captures the interest of children. The text is well written and the illustrations are appealing. The story is well developed with a lot of action. The book is a mystery story as well. The author has written this book in a way that will appeal to children who enjoy the Cul-de-Sac Kids series. Beverly Lewis

F. Clubs—Fiction; Garage sales—Fiction; Mystery and detective stories. 79 p. Gr. 2 – 5.

Beverly Lewis has written a lively mystery story for children. The story is well written and the illustrations are appealing. The story is well developed with a lot of action. The book is a mystery story as well. The author has written this book in a way that will appeal to children who enjoy the Cul-de-Sac Kids series. Beverly Lewis

Jason Birchall plans to impress his friends and neighbors, a group who call themselves the “Cul-de-Sac Kids,” by starting a zoo in his bedroom. His star attraction is going to be a super-spider, a pink toed tarantula from South America. Jason tells his friends, Eric and Dunkum, that he will have the spider on display the very next day. But the shipment is delayed and Jason can’t get his spider that quickly. Rather than tell the truth about the delay Jason decides to tell his friends a “whopping big lie.” He’s going to say that “Pink toes,” the tarantula, is on the loose and will be crawling all the way home to Blossom Hill Lane! Jason’s lie backfires when he actually gets his spider and no one will come see it because they think he’s making it all up. How is Jason going to prove to his friends that he really does have a big scary spider in his room? Jason Birchall, who has written this book, has written a lively mystery story for children. The story is well written and the illustrations are appealing. The story is well developed with a lot of action. The book is a mystery story as well. The author has written this book in a way that will appeal to children who enjoy the Cul-de-Sac Kids series. Beverly Lewis

Carly Hunter is named “Student of the Week” in her class. So she gets to attend a special field trip to the natural history museum. Carly is excited about the trip and she wants to see the animals on display the very next day. But the shipment is delayed. The museum will not have the spiders ready until after the museum is closed. Carly is disappointed and thinks that the museum will not have any spiders. But Carly is wrong. The museum does have the spiders and Carly is very happy. Carly Hunter, who has written this book, has written a lively mystery story for children. The story is well written and the illustrations are appealing. The story is well developed with a lot of action. The book is a mystery story as well. The author has written this book in a way that will appeal to children who enjoy the Cul-de-Sac Kids series. Beverly Lewis

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Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Luke Espinosa watches the game with yearning. He yearns for the father who coaches Paul Pickerell’s soccer team. He yearns to play the game as Paul is privileged to play. But Luke has responsibilities beyond his years. He cares for Mr. Perea, his elderly neighbor. He cooks and cleans so his tired single mother will not have too much added stress. She works long hours so they can pay their bills, and has unfulfilled dreams of her own. She dreams of becoming a hairdresser. Luke is challenged to go after his dream by Amelia who just moved to town. Luke and Amelia round up a team to take on the boys who play for the league.

Luke’s search for and discovery of his father is compelling. However, the story of Luke going after exactly what he wants with determination and stamina is more affecting. The reader will cheer for Luke and Amelia’s team as they work hard to make their dreams reality. Kimberley Griffiths Little has constructed an appealing story that all readers will enjoy. The story of overcoming trials by hard work and dedication will empower readers who face their own seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Carol M. Jones


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Hurricane is written by Jonathan London and illustrated by Henri Sorensen. The slight story recounts how two boys living in Puerto Rico experience the coming and aftermath of a hurricane. The writing is fairly evocative. For example, in describing the height of the storm the author says, “lightning scribbled on the dark clouds,” and, “The Palms, whipping crazily, slung coconuts at us.” Still, somehow, the author fails to convey the same sense of the aura of the storm that Robert McCloskey does in Time of Wonder, for instance.

The virtue of this book is in the luminous oil illustrations by Sorensen. In fact, the book would convey the story and the atmosphere just as well without the text. David Rash

F. Christian life—Fiction; Allegories. 32 p. K – Gr. 3.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

In this parable describing the depth of God’s love, Shaddai, the wise craftsman, loves the children so
much that he builds them a village, filling it with love and laughter. A dark forest surrounds the village. Shaddai builds a tall stone wall around the village to protect the children from the dangers lurking in the forest. Soon Paladin, the most curious of the children, reports to Shaddai that he has found a large hole in the wall. Shaddai cautions Paladin about the dangers in the forest, and tells him he will not be able to find his way back to the village if he leaves. When Paladin expects Shaddai to repair the wall to keep the children from leaving, Shaddai tells him that he made the hole in the wall so that the children could leave if they wish to.

He informs Paladin, “I want the children to stay because they want to, not because they have to.” Although Paladin loves Shaddai and wants to obey him, he is drawn outside the fence by his curiosity. Once outside, he finds that everything seems normal, and he begins to doubt Shaddai’s words. Suddenly he finds that he cannot find the hole to return to the village. Too late he finds that everything is just as Shaddai said. He cries out for Shaddai, but even before he calls, Shaddai is on his way to rescue him.

Rich, vibrant illustrations by Mitchell Heinze are excellent complements for Max Lucado’s beautiful story of God’s great love for us. Together they show us that God wants us love and obey him because we want to, not because we have to. Virginia Brown


F. Mystery fiction; Christian fiction. 80 p. Gr. 1 - 5.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

It was terrible. People in their town were usually friendly. Why was almost everyone in town in a bad mood? Christopher, Korina, and Alex, The Puzzle Club detectives, discover that someone is sending poison-pen letters. Korina treats Alex like he’s too young to do anything right. She and Christopher set off to find clues, leaving Alex at Puzzleworks with Tobias (the shop’s owner), his friend Mrs. Randolph, and Mr. Randolph’s granddaughter Micki. Alex decides he’ll solve the mystery before Christopher and Korina. He and Micki search for clues on their own. It is a surprise to everyone when they discover who sent the letters. The Puzzle Club and their new friends learn to overcome evil with good when they decide to send encouraging letters to all who received a poison-pen letter.

Dandi Mackall has presented Christian values throughout Poison-Pen Mystery. The three Puzzle Club members show caring and concern for those around them. Even the negative attitude of Korina and Alex toward each other is resolved by the end of the book. Middle grade students will enjoy this mystery even if they haven’t read others in the series.

Jane Mouttet


F. Christian life--Fiction; New Zealand--Fiction. 80 p. Gr. 2 - 4.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Escape from Shangri-La by Michael Morpurgo is a wonderful story about family, relationships, and the courage it sometimes takes to keep people together. Full of action, suspense, and mystery as Cassie and Popsicle plan the “great escape,” the story also quietly explores the dynamics of inter-generational relationships. Cassie, her father, and her grandfather have much to learn about each other and, consequently, much to forgive. Some readers will be concerned about the use of alcohol that is mentioned frequently throughout the book and the fairly lenient attitude toward divorce that is displayed. However, all readers will love the surprise ending that takes them on a nighttime trip across the English Channel and into the heart of Popsicle’s mystery.

Kerri Cunningham


F. Weddings--Fiction; Cousins--Fiction; Mystery fiction. 60 p. Gr. 2 - 4.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


F. Cousins--Fiction; Seashores--Fiction; Mystery fiction. 63 p. Gr. 2 - 4.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5


F. Mystery fiction; Cousins--Fiction; Detectives--Fiction; Parrots--Fiction. 60 p. Gr. 2 - 4.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


F. Mystery fiction; Cousins--Fiction; Detectives--Fiction. 62 p. Gr. 2 - 4.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

The Three Cousins Detective Club is a series by Elspeth Campbell Murphy about three cousins, Sarah-Jane, Titus, and Timothy who work together to solve small mysteries that come up in the lives of their family and friends. They get along well, having set up guidelines for themselves such as, “The cousins had a rule that said it was OK for one cousin to sort of be the boss of something. AS LONG AS THAT COUSIN DIDN’T GET BOSSY.”

The storyline of each book moves along quickly and the clues are presented in a way that beginning
chapter book readers will probably be able to solve the mystery. The mysteries are all believable and within the limits of ten year old detectives to solve. Each book begins with a Bible verse that presents the lesson to be learned from the story. There is some humor in the books and a subtle rotation of leadership among the cousins from book to book, giving each character a chance to shine. Joe Nordstrom’s pencil drawings give the book a very current, up-to-date look and are very well done. Sally Kuhns


F. United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865—Fiction; Orphans—Fiction; Diaries—Fiction. 173 p. Gr. 4 - 6.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 4

Using a company journal to tell the story of James Edmond Pease, Jim Murphy, known to many readers as a Newbery Honor recipient, brings a wide background of knowledge and research into Pease’s story. Written as fiction, this journal of a teenage Union soldier gives readers a soldier’s insights into camp life and battle along with his personal thoughts about the war. James Edmond Pease becomes the keeper of the journal for his company after the other two writers are killed, and the journal does in fact save his life at one point by catching a minie ball. Since Pease tells the story, readers see what is happening through his eyes. He witnesses the horrors of battles, the kindness of soldiers and slaves whom he helps escape in return when he is separated from his company and must make his way back to the Union lines. Along the way he begins a correspondence with the sister of a fellow soldier which develops first into friendship, then becoming more serious as time passes until finally, after the war they marry. Their letters are innocent, full of hope and concern for one another, providing a way for Pease to discuss some of what he has witnessed.

Readers will find themselves drawn into the daily routine of soldiers. Descriptions of battles are realistic enough for the audience of the book, as are those of camp life. Tender moments between the warring sides provide a good contrast to war. Readers can compare this to Gary Paulsen’s Skeletons in the Closet (1998) though the intended audience for that book is somewhat older; or for a younger audience, Ann Turner’s Drummer Boy (Harper, 1998) and Murphy’s own Boy’s War (Scholastic, 1990). Good addition to historical fiction and the materials on the War Between the States. Includes a few four letter expletives, but nothing readers won’t have heard elsewhere. Leslie Greaves Radloff

Sara and Jenny agree they are worst friends. All their time together is spent battling with words, until Sara ends up hospitalized with a brain tumor. Jenny decides, no matter what, she will be nice to Sara. But that isn’t what Sara truly wants. The discord continues until both girls are able to communicate their true feelings.

My Worst Friend, by P. J. Petersen, is a well-written tale, but is filled with cutting remarks. Sara schemes and plots to frustrate Jenny from beginning to end. Only when Jenny returns a quip is Sara satisfied. The movie Nightmare on Elm Street is mentioned, and “that boxer that bit off the guy’s ear.”

Simple, but expressive black and white drawings by P. J. Petersen accompany the text. The illustrations are straight forward in portraying Sara’s poor physical condition and bald head.

Good, deep lessons can be learned from this novel, but they are couched in some negative examples. Lorie Ann Grover


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

After Thomas’ father leaves to fight against the British, Tory soldiers force his family from their home. Along with his mother, sister Emma, and brother Ben, he journeys to a nearby fort for protection. Thomas is fascinated watching the soldiers and listening to the other colonists’ stories. Eager for adventure, he and a friend sneak out of the camp to spy on the enemy. The family’s final hope to escape capture is to flee from the fort and travel across the Pocono Mountains, with sparse knowledge of the area and little food.

Set around the actual massacre in Pennsylvania’s Wyoming Valley during the American Revolution, Thomas portrays realistic situations, showing many trials that colonists had to endure. Author Bonnie Pryor draws the reader in, presenting interesting and likable characters.

This book would be an excellent literature tie in to any Revolutionary War unit. The story flows simply, and offers suspense and adventure, appealing to the reluctant reader. Three final pages give interesting facts about this era. Thomas is the first book in a series about boys living in important periods of United States history. Karen Brehmer


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

Carolyn Reeder has written an excellent historical novel concentrating on W.W.II from an eleven-year-old’s viewpoint. December, 1941, and Foster Simmons is grappling with the emotional upheaval of having his beloved older brother shipped overseas, and his best friend of Japanese descent branded an enemy and exiled to an internment camp. Besides this, Foster’s family works together trying to keep their stern, demanding father from exploding with angry venom at them. In many ways, Foster’s father is his identified enemy. Foster and his friends join the war effort by selling bonds, collecting scrap, and preparing for air raids. When Foster’s older brother becomes a war statistic, Mr. Simmons’s hard exterior is cracked and the family begins the healing process. Foster then gains a new perspective on his father, his past, and his relationship with his family.

This well researched book makes both wars—the war at home, and the war overseas—real and understandable. Carolyn Reeder captures the imagination and arouses sympathy and applause for Foster as he emotionally works through the turmoil of both wars. Paula Stewart Marks


F. Missionaries—Fiction; Sled dogs—Fiction; Dogs—Fiction; Alaska—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 133 p. Gr. 3 - 7.

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

Steve and Liz Bailey arrive in Alaska in 1950 for their first term of missionary service and, due to unforeseen circumstances, find themselves alone on the field. Gloria Repp has woven together the stories of several missionaries to create a three-part fictional series: Adventures of an Arctic Missionary. In this first book in the series the daily work of new missionaries is realistically portrayed. The Baileys attempt to befriend the Eskimos, learn their language, survey the area, and communicate with supporting churches while remaining under the direction of their mission board back in the States. Steve must purchase several sled dogs to provide needed transportation. The Lord provides an assent of huskies which Steve begins to train. They name one Mik-Shrok, which means “small, but good enough,” and he soon takes his place as lead dog. As the Eskimos carefully watch, Steve and Liz live their faith and trust in God.

Jim Brook’s line drawings depict life in Alaska and give personality to Mik-Shrok. Patricia J. Perry


F. Family life—Southern states—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction; Southern States—Fiction; Slavery—Fiction. 204 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

F. Family life--South Carolina--Fiction; Hypocrisy--Fiction; Slavery--Fiction; South Carolina--Fiction. 198 p. Gr. 3 - 6.
Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Aunt Hutchinson, with his mother and little brother, is living with his Uncle Drayton at the Ravenal Plantation while his father travels in the north speaking on abolitionist themes. In The Trap, by Nancy Rue, Austin gets an American Flag pin from his father. His uncle's life is threatened for his views about secession. When Izard and Fergus discover Austin's viewpoint, they threaten him. He struggles and learns to value the same things that Jesus values.

In The Trap, Austin learns about hypocrisy. He states the word “hypocrite” almost interminably at times. He can see in it his uncle when he tries to force his eldest daughter to marry a Confederate officer. Austin has trouble seeing the log in his own eye. As he prays, and through the insight and support of Daddy Elias, the older black slave, Austin understands some of his own frailty.

The action and philosophical wrestling is presented through the eleven and twelve year old eyes of Austin; his cousin, Charlotte; and their friend and slave, Henry James. Because of Austin’s inner turmoil, the reader is definitely pulled into the motivations and feelings of the characters more than in some other historical fiction series. Certainly the issues of slavery and the secession of the southern states are dominant themes in these books. Aunt Austin’s viewpoint, they threaten him. He struggles and learns to value the same things that Jesus values.


F. Family life--South Carolina--Fiction; History--1775-1865--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction; Conduct of life--Fiction. 126 p. Gr. 3 - 6.
Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

The action and philosophical wrestling is presented through the eleven and twelve year old eyes of Austin; his cousin, Charlotte; and their friend and slave, Henry James. Because of Austin’s inner turmoil, the reader is definitely pulled into the motivations and feelings of the characters more than in some other historical fiction series. Certainly the issues of slavery and the secession of the southern states are dominant themes in these books. Aunt Austin’s viewpoint, they threaten him. He struggles and learns to value the same things that Jesus values.


F. Escapes--Fiction; Slavey--Fiction; Charleston (S.C.)--History--1775-1865--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 181 p. Gr. 3 - 7.
Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

In The Hostage, Austin’s oldest cousin Kady becomes involved with helping escaping slaves. Then Austin is kidnapped to lure his father back to Charleston. Can Kady help him get away from the kidnappers?

In The Escape, safety becomes a major concern. Austin and his family need to get to the north soon, because war has started. Henry James, the thirteen-year-old friend and slave, is to be sold and even Polly’s slave Tot has been mistreated. Can they all be sent north though the escape system Austin’s cousin Kady is involved in?

The Charleston Years focuses on eleven-year-old Austin Hutchinson whose family has been left in Charleston while his father, an abolitionist, tries to help the northern cause. As the North and South move towards war, Austin’s family are confronted by anti-north demonstrations as well as confronting problems that involve the house where they are staying. Nancy Rue paints a good picture of the early 1860’s as well as giving readers a positive picture of how young people can rely on values and faith to sustain them during troubled times. Although the series builds on earlier details, each book can be read separately. Paula Stewart Marks


F. African-Americans--Fiction. 40 p. Gr. 2 - 4
Quality - 5  Acceptability - 3

Old Sam owns a sawmill. His lazy son, Young Sam, makes no effort to learn the business or do good work. A drifter offers to work for Old Sam for one year in exchange for learning the trade. The New Hand works well for Old Sam, but Young Sam resents New Hand. Young Sam sneakily witnesses New Hand making an old man young again through magic. This old man made young brings his old wife to receive the same treatment, but New Hand is not available, so Young Sam pretends to perform the magic himself. In his own lazy way, Young Sam cuts corners and this results in the woman’s death. Young Sam is taken to court for murder and declares his regret for being lazy and mean to New Hand. New Hand comes to Young Sam’s rescue by producing the woman alive, well, and made young again.

The illustrations provide the best feature of this book. Jerry Pinkney has illustrated many children’s books and is a three-time Caldecott winner. These illustrations are rich and expressive, providing a rural setting and portraying the story well.

A retelling of a African American folktale first published in 1899, this story is well written. Some might consider Young Sam’s realization of the error of his ways, confession and plea for New Hand’s forgiveness followed by New Hand’s merciful act to be symbolic of Christian salvation. This ending, however, does not balance out the use of magic. Karla Kessel


F. Books and reading--Fiction; Characters in literature--Fiction; Magic--Fiction. 73 p. Gr. 2 - 6.
Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

The Time Warp Trio has just met its seventh adventure. It is a 250-pound chicken from D. Manus Pinkwater’s book, The Hoboken Chicken Emergency. Their thin blue book with strange silver designs has just digested the summer reading list for the entire school, and all the characters are running loose in Hoboken. The only means of calming the chaos is to find the thin blue book. Unfortunately, it is under siege in the library. Every antagonist on the list has taken sides with a burly, button-eyed Teddy bear with a murderous, power-hungry heart. All literature will soon be under his control. Summer Reading Is Killing Me! is the Trio’s pathetic cry for help.

Time Warp Trio fans will be familiar with the dangers of the thin blue book. First time acquaintances will figure it out soon. Jon Scieszka has taken pains to introduce the reader to a multitude of interesting characters. They sift through the story out of their own context and in surprising combinations. The plot is to hook the reader covertly into a lifetime reading habit. Lane Smith has lent her own influence by punctuating the highpoints of the action with dramatic sketches. The plan is quite effective. The results are permanent. Melinda M. Torgerson


F. Christian life--Fiction; Conduct of life--Fiction. 126 p. Gr. 3 - 6.
Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

The Fairfield Friends are finding out what it really means to be a Christian as their everyday adventures become a way to learn more about God and what scripture really teaches. Whether it’s learning not to join in when others pull a nasty prank, or remembering to be respectful to your elders, this group of friends knows how to hold each other accountable.

Nancy Speck has created a great devotional for kids which uses everyday situations to teach biblical truth. While the way scripture is introduced seems a little unbelievable for a group of kids, the method is effective in revealing the truths in a way children can relate to.

Her book is a series of ten short stories which are actually scripture applications. At the end of each story is a written lesson and hands on activities to reinforce what has been learned, although many of these activities seem stale or unrealistic for today’s busy schedules.

Overall, Cave Hill Treasure is a successful Bible learning tool which parents and even Sunday school teachers will find refreshing, however the study portion concentrates more on actual behaviors rather than on the learning of scripture. Virginia Schnabel


F. God--Fiction; Astronomy--Fiction; Guardian angel--Fiction; Angels--Fiction. 96 p. Gr. 4 - 6.
Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

The Christian Library Journal 35 Winter/Spring, 1999
Herman works as a janitor at Jacob's school. He is an older, kind man with a twinkle in his eye. When Jacob first meets him he is amazed at all the knowledge Herman has about the stars and the universe. From that day on, Jacob makes a point to search out Herman and talk about the wonders of God's creation. Herman seems to know the answers to everything, and he always makes sure that Jacob gives God the honor for the marvels he unveils.

Herman says he is on assignment when Jacob questions him about his work. This puzzling answer doesn't make sense until Herman actually pulls Jacob from the frozen lake he's broken through. Now Herman is nowhere to be found, but Jacob remembers all he has learned and how Herman had said that angels were sometimes referred to as stars. Jacob watches, amazed, at the new star that appears in his telescope, and then just as mysteriously disappears. He knows deep in his heart that it is Herman who had been sent on special assignment just to share with Jacob and ultimately rescue him from drowning.

Elmer Towns writes an informative, interesting book all about the amazing facts of the universe. He presents the information from the view of Herman, the angel, as the reader follows the storyline. My Angel Named Herman presents a clever story packed with facts that should delight any young reader with an inquisitive mind. Mary McKinney


S. Frontier and pioneer life--Ohio--Fiction; Ohio--Fiction. 32 p. Gr. 2 - 5.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Set in the great forests of 19th century Ohio, Nothing Here But Trees tells the story of an unnamed pioneer boy and his family. Due to hard times, the family has had to leave their home in New York State and travel to the new state of Ohio. At first, the boy does not like Ohio. It is too different from New York and it seems as if there are nothing but bare, dark forests. However, after trees are felled, a house built, crops planted, and friends made, the young boy feels as if he might like his new home after all.

Author Jean Van Leeuwen has written a beautiful and moving account of pioneer life. By using colloquial words and images, she evokes the difficulties, hard work, and courage that were a part of everyday life for America's pioneers. Contributing to the feel of 19th century Ohio are Phil Boatwright's oil and acrylic illustrations. He recreates the lush beauty of ancient forests while at the same time making sure to accurately represent pioneer life. Examples of this are his depictions of everything from butter churns and kettles to cornhusk dolls and patched clothing.

Because of Van Leeuwen's careful storytelling and Boatwright's attention to detail, Nothing Here But Trees would be a very useful story when studying American pioneers. However, the story also stands alone as a wonderful account of fear, loneliness and, ultimately, hope. Kerri Cunningham


F. Mystery fiction. 121 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

A visit to the local firehouse launches the Alden children on another quest for answers in their mysterious circumstances in The Firehouse Mystery, one of the latest in the Boxcar Children mystery series created by Gertrude Chandler Warner. Benny, Violet, Jessie, and Henry learn that the community firehouse is set for demolition, and they begin a campaign to save the historic landmark. Their efforts are met with unusual "accidents", and it becomes evident that someone desperately wants the firehouse destroyed. Ms. Lerner, an angry town council member; Rebecca Wright, an architect; and Mr. Frederick, a writer, become the primary suspects. The children discover Mr. Frederick's deception as well as his theft of antique trophies from the firehouse. In so doing they are able to save the firehouse.

The element of mystery found in the earlier Boxcar Children books written by Miss Warner herself is found in this book as well as the emphasis on educating the reader in the subject area covered in the story, e.g., firefighting procedures, types of equipment, firehouse routine, etc. Found also in the book is careful gender neutral character selection. Christine is the firefighter who actually fights a fire in the book; the architect is female, as well as the antagonist town council member. Mike is a handicapped paraplegic firefighter who befriends the Aldens. There were no ethnic distinctions found.

Although the book seems to lack the substance of older Boxcar titles, it is engaging and quite informative. Pencil drawings rendered by Charles Tang illustrate key moments in the story, a story which communicates right is right and wrong is wrong. And for the Boxcar Children, that is no mystery! Arlene S. Neal


F. Titanic (Steamship)--Fiction; Diaries--Fiction; Shipwrecks--Fiction. 197 p. Gr. 4 - 6.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Sister Catherine has found a way for Margaret to join her brother William in America. Mrs. Carstairs is looking for a companion to accompany her on her Voyage on the Great Titanic. Left at the orphanage by her brother after the death of their parents, Margaret longs to join him in America. Now she has free passage. In return, Margaret will walk Mrs. Carstairs' dog, help her dress, and run errands. Mrs. Carstairs orders beautiful clothes for Margaret to wear. Margaret and Robert, their cabin steward, quickly become good friends. When the Titanic collides with an iceberg Robert puts Margaret on the last life raft.

Ellen Emerson White creates a detailed world full of the rich colors, exotic food, and extravagant clothes of the wealthy in 1912. Margaret and her diary are fictional. However, many of the people mentioned, the near collision of the Titanic and the New York, the sinking of the Titanic, and some other events are factual. The characters outlook on life, other people, and the language used are true to that period of time.

The last twenty-eight pages of the book contain excellent historical notes, pictures, maps, and a time line. Elizabeth B. Parisi's lovely oval picture of Margaret adds to the story. Barbara A. Bryden


F. Earhart, Amelia, 1897-1937--Fiction; Air pilots--Fiction; Time travel--Fiction; National Air and Space Museum--Fiction. 1 32 p. hardcover book; 1 13 min. audiocassette Gr. 2 - 5.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Lucy and her friends Emma, Kevin, and Tomas are visiting the Amelia Earhart exhibit at the National Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institution. While there Lucy, an aspiring pilot, finds herself swept back in time. She has become Amelia Earhart on that fateful night when she was lost. Lucy experiences all the trauma and decision that Amelia and her crew had to make. Would she make the same mistakes and perish?

Kevin, Emma, Lucy and Tomas are visiting the Pony Express exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution. The are naturally drawn to a video featuring “Boston” Upson. Suddenly, Kevin realizes that he is outside of Friday's station waiting for another rider to arrive. The first shots have been fired at Fort Sumter and the Civil War has begun. Can Kevin get the news and the mail through to the next rider? A blizzard is heading this way and the river is flooded. What can he do?

These writers have created a series that draws you into a period in history. Each book is accompanied by a cassette tape of the story being read with the full dramatization of background music. You can hear the engine of the plane and the beating of the horses hoofs. You feel as if you are right there with them. You can feel the suspense and the drama. Yet in the end you realize that Emma and Kevin have been swept away by their imagination and they are back safe and unharmed. Kevin and Emma are never quite the same, however, for they have really sensed what it was like to be a part of history.

The illustrations are bright and vivid, characterizing the young people well. They draw you further into the story and the adventure. The package of the book and the tape serve well to make history come alive for young people who have lost interest. Marcia Snyder

Continued on p. 96.
This computer program is a simulation of being on the internet. Kids are “logged on” when they begin and are “connected” to other “sites” as they progress through the program. On the welcome page they are offered several options: learn about Bibleland, search, game page, BibleLand video, BibleLand dictionary, and E-mail. Within these different connections, there are many ways for the student to get information. With the “search” connection, the user can choose a topic such as people, miracles, places, books of the Bible, promises, or punishments. They are then “connected” to a list of instances that occur in the Bible. They may go to Delilah’s web page to learn about her role in Samson’s life, or watch a video of the Holy Land and the Israelites journey through the wilderness. The BibleLand dictionary offers a wealth of information for those doing research. The dictionary includes over 2000 entries. The E-mail section is fun for kids who want e-mail and never receive any on their parent’s computer. When the student chooses “e-mail”, the letter is from a Bible character and it usually raises a question or gives direction to motivate kids to explore the Bible further.

Kids of all ages will enjoy this program. For those that are younger, the games will be appealing; however, for the web pages and other information, younger students may need help with the reading. The graphics are well done, and the video and dramatization segment is very impressive. The translation used throughout is The New Living Translation. This program will also help teach the use of the internet without the concern if they work on it alone. Patricia A. Youmans


Three Bible related games are contained on this CD-ROM. The Trivia Game is patterned after Trivial Pursuits, allowing up to four players to compete in answering trivia questions and collecting score bars in each of six categories. The Quiz Game involves answering trivia questions until a preset goal of correct answers is reached. Multiple players can participate in the Quiz Game, but each player continues until he/she reaches his/her goal, before the next player takes a turn. The Memory Match-up Game is modeled after the game of Concentration. Matching pictures of Bible characters are hidden. The goal is to expose the pairs that match.

All three games provide a choice of levels of difficulty. The Trivia Game and Quiz Game have the option for the questions to be read aloud at the first level. The questions and multiple choice answers are read by both male and female voices alternating randomly. The voices are clear and easily understandable. The graphics of these programs are basic and animation is minimal.

The games contain some interesting bugs and glitches. The voice may read a different question and answer than what is displayed on the screen. Also, occasionally score bars disappear during the Trivia Game. Players could easily be distressed to find that their hard earned score is disappearing for no clear reason.

The majority of the content of the trivia questions is taken straight out of scripture word for word. A few questions involve interpretation or doctrinal beliefs not contained in the exact wording of verses. The program does provide the scripture reference from which the question/answer was derived. Some questions seem to be extreme or nonsensical, such as “What were the Thessalonian Christians to the believers in Macedonia & Achaia?...as students, with suspicion, as examples, with love.” (This was taken from I Thessalonians 1:7.)

These games will be enjoyed by true trivia game lovers; however, the graphics, animation and program bugs may cause most players to lose interest in the games within a short period of time. Karla Kessell

200's - Religion

For IBM-Compatible PCs: 486SX, 33 MHz or higher CPU, 8MB or more RAM, Windows 3.1 or Windows 95. 640 x 480 pixel resolution color monitor, Graphics adapter card w/ 256 or more colors, 2X speed or better CD-ROM drive, Windows compatible sound card and speakers. For Apple Macintosh (w/ sound and speakers built-in), 68030, 33 MHz or higher CPU, 8 MB or more of RAM, System 7.0 or higher operating system, 640 x 480 pixel resolution color monitor w/256 or more colors, 2X speed or better CD-ROM drive.

220. Bible games; Computer education. 1 CD-ROM Gr. 4 - 12. Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

The graphics are well done, and the video and dramatization segment is very impressive. The translation used throughout is The New Living translation. The BibleLand dictionary offers a wealth of information for those doing research. The dictionary includes over 2000 entries. The E-mail section is fun for kids who want e-mail and never receive any on their parent’s computer. When the student chooses “e-mail”, the letter is from a Bible character and it usually raises a question or gives direction to motivate kids to explore the Bible further.

Limited readership because of the mother-daughter audience targeted by the title. Would make a lovely new baby girl gift. Barbara G. Tuenzler


What makes this Bible unique? Zondervan’s NirV Kids’ Quest Bible is designed for children. It is based on the NIV, but easier understood words are substituted to make this a book that children will enjoy reading. It is called a “quest” Bible because it asks and answers five hundred questions that children might wonder about. Does your body stay in the grave when you go to heaven? Is it all right to say bad things if there is no one there to hear you? Is it all right to throw rocks at someone who throws rocks at you? Answers are biblically based and stand strong on morals and truth. Each question is accompanied by a delightful, blackline, cartoon character. Each book of the Bible begins with a short Who? What? When? and For Whom? introduction. The Bible ends with a dictionary and index to questions. This is an impressive, easy to understand Bible that keeps to the integrity of scripture and will hold the interest of children or new believers who need a good foundation. Paula Stewart Marks
Adults as well as children will enjoy the delightful read aloud stories that show two young children, Missy and Bill, learning to use God’s important verses in their everyday life. Join them as they find out how using a soft answer can overcome a friend’s anger. Find out how being a peacock is very important when both children want the same toy.

Susan Hunt has selected twenty-six verses, one for each letter of the alphabet, that young children can easily memorize and find useful every day. Each verse is accompanied by a short explanation, a real-life story, discussion, and short prayer ideas. Verses are from the King James and New King James versions and emphasize the integrity of God’s Word and the need to make that Word a standard of behavior. Yvette Banek has added colorful, expressive, cartoon children that aptly fit each story, Paula Stewart Marks.


The easy text and organized format make this book a handy tool for daily sharing. Heavy on Old Testament passages, there are sixty-three entries from I and II Kings. Hard to understand pictures of God’s judgment, and stories of death and destruction, make these choices questionable for bedtime reading. Some entries are incomplete and unclear. Solomon gets wisdom from God but there is no mention that God asked him to choose whatever he wished, and Solomon’s reward came from an answer that was pleasing to God. One entry tells of Daniel’s objection to the Bible, families will find opportunities for discussion, helpful in gaining biblical awareness and knowledge. Karen Brehmer
The book begins with a map of Palestine, then proceeds to teach in an enjoyable and memorable way. The last page emphasizes high value, even though life may be different today, people are still alike in one way. The last page emphasizes how, even though life has changed, people are still alike in one way. The last page emphasizes how, even though life has changed, people are still alike in one way.

The illustrations are semi-impressionistic and invite the listener to cuddle up and hear the story of creation. The story begins at a time when there was no sky, only a void and progresses through the creation of the water and dry land, animals of the sea, land and air, to the climax of the creation of the human child. The narrator’s purpose in telling the child this tale is to comfort the child and to stress God’s love for the child.

Liberties are taken with the biblical account of the creation story. The animals talk to God begging him to create the child who will lead them. God is anthropomorphized, described as having feet, crying tears, and laughing. Adam (not so named in the book) is created as a child and the narrator encourages the child to whom the book is being read to remember being that Adam child. The overall tone of the story is somewhat New Age.

The illustrations are semi-impressionistic and appropriate to the subject matter. There is some inconsistency in the quality of the individual pictures.

**In the Beginning There Was No Sky**, written by Walter Wangerin, Jr., is written in the voice of a narrator who invites the listening child to cuddle up and hear the story of creation. The story begins at a time when there was no sky, only a void and progresses through the creation of the water and dry land, animals of the sea, land and air, to the climax of the creation of the human child. The narrator’s purpose in telling the child this tale is to comfort the child and to stress God’s love for the child.

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**Ten Commandments** explains their origin, content, and value. The seventh book in the “I Want to Know” series, this 8-1/2-by-11-inch book is for eight to twelve year-olds.

The authors teach that the first three commandments form the foundation of a relationship with God and show how to love and honor him with our actions, words, and in our hearts. If he’s first in our hearts, we’ll put no other gods before him. First in our actions means we worship no other gods or idols, including present-day idols such as computers, TVs, or people. Honoring God with words means not misusing his name by swearing or speaking falsely about him. The fourth commandment, “Remember to keep the Sabbath Day holy,” shows our need of God for physical refreshment and spiritual help to keep his commandments.

The last six commandments, the authors explain, cover relationships with people. Honoring parents includes showing them love, obedience, and respect. The remaining five deal with relating to others: don’t murder, commit adultery, steal, lie, or covet. These commandments are discussed with sensitivity and teach youth to respect others in their hearts and with words and actions.

The book’s content is serious and meaty without being too academic or preachy. Activities, puzzles, and ways to apply the teaching are interspersed throughout. Upbeat writing style, youthful expressions, color photographs, and cartoons make it youth-friendly. A few practical questions and answers conclude the book. Parents who want to introduce their children to the ten commandments will appreciate this book for preteens.


Girls four to twelve will enjoy the beauty and femininity of this visually appealing gift book. *God’s Promises for Girls* discusses seven topics, each followed by numerous biblical promises from the NIV version that reinforce the thoughts shared. Concepts presented include God’s love, caring, and protection, and that everyone is special. The book concludes by saying God not only wants to be our friend and help us make wise choices; he wants people to know and experience the best promise of all—forgiveness and eternal life. There’s a place on the last page to inscribe name and date if a decision is made to accept Christ.

The ideas are clearly presented through stories, illustrations, and short simple sentences. The delicate pastel artwork gives a feeling of femininity and spring. A gold cross necklace is included as a reminder of God’s promises and love. The book’s reassuring message combined with Old and New Testament Scriptures makes it valuable to reread.

*Lydia E. Harris*

### 300’s - Social Sciences


Sammies small size and remarkable adventures make him a very special dog. Both his parents were police dogs and now Sammy Dog Detective is ranked as “Number One” police dog in the Western States Police Canine Association. Sammy and Andy became a team when Sammy went to K-9 school. Now Sammy lives with Andy and his family when he is not working. At school Sammy learned how to respond to hand signals, climb ladders, jump through open windows, and many other things. Every week Sammy spends some time training with Andy, so he won’t forget. At home Sammy plays with Andy’s children and acts like any other pet. When Halloween comes Sammy goes trick-or-treating with the children. He has been a pirate and a dinosaur. Sammy receives presents at Christmas just like the rest of the family.

Colleen Stanley Bare combines an interesting story with excellent color photographs in a book about a real K-9 dog. Any words or concepts that the young reader might not understand are explained in words and shown in pictures. For example, Bare not only tells the reader what Sammy does in agility training, photographs of Sammy walking on narrow planks and climbing over barrels accompany the text. An index is included. *Barbara A. Bryden*

### 394.203. Juneteenth. Afro-Americans—Social life and customs; Slavery—Texas; Texas—Social life and customs. 54 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

At the end of the Civil War, news of slavery’s end was slow to travel through all the southern states. Slaves in Texas learned of their freedom on June 19, 1865. The emancipated slaves celebrated their long-awaited freedom with jubilation. In Texas this freedom day was celebrated annually, and eventually came to be known as Juneteenth. Muriel Miller Branch describes the history of this important expression of Black hope and pride in *Juneteenth: Freedom Day*. The lively and informative prose begins with her journey to Texas, accompanied by her husband whose photos supplement the text, to research the book and experience Juneteenth Texan-style. Though celebrated in a sprinkling of states across the country, it is most popular in Texas, especially Galveston, where news of freedom first arrived to Texas. Branch explains how the celebrations developed in the years following 1865, how they grew from individual family celebrations to city-wide festivals, the importance of reading the Emancipation Proclamation or General Order #3 during Juneteenth events, and the decline, and resurgence, in popularity in recent years. A final chapter provides suggestions for starting “your own Juneteenth.”

Ample historical photos supplement those taken by Willis Branch during the couple’s research visit to the Rosenberg Library and Juneteenth festival in Galveston as well as other Texas celebrations sites. An impressive bibliography offers titles for additional reading. Two addresses for additional information are included by Willis Branch during the couple’s research visit to the Rosenberg Library and Juneteenth festival in Galveston as well as other Texas celebrations sites. An impressive bibliography offers titles for additional reading. Two addresses for additional information are included.

*Lydia E. Harris*

### Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

*According to author/illustrator Allen Say, *Under the Cherry Blossom Tree* is one of the most popular of the traditional “joke tales” used by Japanese performers to entertain countless generations of audiences. The tale revolves around a bitter, miserly landlord reminiscent of Dickens’ English character, Scrooge.

One spring day, poor villagers take a holiday and prepare a picnic under the cherry blossom trees. The miserly landlord, watching them and pouting cherries into his mouth, complains, “Why are they so happy? Bah!”

Quite by accident, he swallows a cherry pit. The next day, a cherry tree sprouts from the top of his head, reminiscent of “Seuss’” Daisy-Head Maizy. The tree grows and grows, until a year later it blooms. The villagers once again take a holiday, this time gathering around the landlord to marvel at the tree growing out of his head. Their comments infuriate the old man. He uproots the tree, leaving a large hole in the top of his head.

Over time, rain water collects in the hole. “Bah!” the old man exclaims. “Now I’ll have to sleep sitting up.” Soon, fish are seen jumping from the top of his head. A few village boys try to steal the fish, but their attempts awaken the old man. Enraged, he chases the boys. Tipping on a rock, he flies head over heels. His feet sink into the hole on his head, and his whole body disappears—leaving only a “lovely pond in the valley” with carp swimming lazily in the clear water. It becomes known as “the happiest spot in the valley.”

This story uses dark humor and may not be appropriate for young children due to the frightening imagery. Older children may benefit from understanding the tradition of “joke houses” in Japan, and students might be asked to make comparisons of familiar story elements to other known works (such as Dickens and Seuss). The black-and-white ink illustrations appear on every other page, detailed and well-done, using a fine cross-hatch style. *Kimm Swenson Gollnick*
Rosemary Wells subtitled her work as “a brand-new version” and the claim is not without merit. The basic outline of the story is the same as its traditional forerunners, but the change of the characters from old, worn humans to cats gives the story an unexpectedly fresh appeal. The fisherman’s wife is no longer merely a shrewish, greedy old woman. Instead she is a young, inexperienced cat/wife who foolishly longs for things that will only ruin her happiness and teach her nothing of life’s responsibilities. Her covetousness is indulged by husband and fish, until she asks to be Queen. This the fish refuses to grant because, “A good queen must think of other people all the time. Ulla would think only of herself.” So, it is back to the cottage and, a year later, when they have learned to be happy again, a needy kitten appears at their door.

Without mentioning them, The Fisherman and His Wife illustrates wonderfully the twin verses from Scripture: “Thou shalt not covet” and “It is more pleasant to give than to receive.” Children familiar with these verses will immediately see their application in the story of Ulla and Ragnar. The illustrations of Eleanor Hubbard are brilliant and enchanting as they capture the flavor of Norwegian folk culture with delightful detail. This rendition of the old tale will serve equally well as a read-aloud for folk culture with delightful detail. This rendition of the old tale will serve equally well as a read-aloud for pre-readers, but the text seems to expand the appeal through third or fourth grade readers.

**500’s - Natural Sciences and Mathematics**


553.6. Mud. 72 p. Gr. 3 - 6. Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Author Jennifer Owings Dewey has written a tribute to mud whose title says it all: Mud Matters. A more apt title could not have been chosen for this slim, little book all about wet, soft earth and the author’s fascination with it. From her childhood days of walking barefoot through mud to discovering fossils in river beds, Dewey repeatedly celebrates the joy she finds in mud. Through memories, storytelling, drawings, and photographs, she discusses mud in all its many forms and explains why, to her, mud matters.

While Dewey is a talented writer and storyteller, she has unfortunately chosen a subject will appeal to very few. A book about mud could be interesting if approached scientifically. However, an entire book devoted to stories of “mud wars” between neighboring children, descriptions of building miniature “mud villages,” and detailed explanations of Dewey’s youthful mud oven creations is a different story. The book’s lack of organization and Dewey’s REMINISCENT wanderings keep any pertinent information that the book does contain from being easily found or used. The index and glossary are the most useful aspects of the book.

While Dewey and many others may be fascinated with mud, not I. Other than the impressive photographs by Stephen Trimble, it is difficult to think of possible need or use for this book.


598. Birds. 159 p. Gr. 4 - Adult. Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

This exciting series of identification books is written expressly for students, but has much appeal to anyone interested in nature. At the beginning of each book is a brief section that explains the parts of the book and what sort of information can be found in each. Overview material is found in “The world of...”. Scientific names are explained, rules for the naturalist (“an explorer of nature”) and equipment needed is listed. The section entitled “How to look at...” explains to the young scientist what it is that is distinctive about the particular animal, plant, or mineral that will lead to identification. Following this is the actual field guide. One common item is focused on each page, with a large photo and detail information. Others that are related are pictured smaller on the facing page. This section has icons for differentiating shapes and categories. The last section of the book is the reference section, which is very complete. It contains a glossary, bibliography, index, and credits. The bibliography includes a list for further reading, organizations that are apropos, and web sites. In a slip pocket in the back cover is a pocket-sized spotting’s guide.

The guide on birds explains anatomy; distinctions; and explanations of feathers (“evolved from scales”), migration, nests, and chicks. Field marks are spelled out with information about colors, shape, bills, wings, singing, and ranges. Endangered birds are shown. The actual field guide only pictures the male bird, unless there is a significant difference between the sexes. Fifty common birds are included with descriptions of 125 more. The reference section has the state birds listed.

The guide on wildflowers covers the scent, color and its purposes, size and shape, and uses of wildflowers. The anatomy and parts are explained. The flowers are organized by color in the field guide section, and differentiated by leaf shape and arrangement, height, blooming time, habitat, and ranges. State flowers are included in the reference section.


577.7. Coral reef ecology; Ecology; Coral reefs and islands. 40 p. PS - Gr. 3.


574.5. Tide pools; Tide pool ecology; Ecology. 40 p. PS - Gr. 3.


583. Saguaro; Cactus; Desert ecology; Ecology. 40 p. PS - Gr. 3.


583. Forest ecology; Ecology; Oak; Trees. 40 p. PS - Gr. 3. Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

The Webs of Life series by Paul Fleisher draws the young reader into every aspect of life which surrounds a series of small ecosystems and shows them the interdependence of creatures in the nearby food chain. Summary pages review each book’s highlights in good learning format. Coral Reef is the most colorful of the books. Pictures of the many types of coral, fish, and plant life constantly grab the eyes. The text is simple enough for most primary children to understand because of the photos which are the real strength of the series. Oak Tree tells of the yearly life cycle of the deciduous oak tree and the animals which depend or are influenced by it. The animal shots are excellent, especially the black rat snake that seems almost alive. The shots of surrounding flora do not pack the same punch, but the shots of the flowers on the cacti are most colorful of the books. Pictures of the many birds are complete. It contains a glossary, bibliography, index, and credits. The bibliography includes a list for further reading, organizations that are apropos, and web sites. In a slip pocket in the back cover is a pocket-sized spotting’s guide.
The guide on insects has an incredible enlargement picture on the frontispiece for the budding entomologist. The differences between arthropods, spiders, and insects are clarified. The various families of insects are explained, from flies to butterflies to mantids. Some of the photographs actually appear a bit gross because of their extreme enlargement. This would probably have great appeal to some students. The reference section also points to tapes and discs for further information.

The guide to rocks and minerals is pointed at the aspiring geologist. Basic types of minerals and rocks are explained along with a geologic time scale of millions of years. Color, streak, luster, and hardness are given as helps for recognition. Crystals and gemstones and fossils are expounded upon.

These books have meaningful and helpful organization with interesting information for just plain reading. They would be fun to use as a test for studying the units with kids. Wonderful photography is on almost every page. These could easily encourage kids to be naturalists. Judy Belcher


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5  This series of books about occupations is colorful and up to date. Highlighting some of the favorite aspirations of this age group, these books give detailed information about the jobs in a politically correct manner, showing women astronauts as well as male ballet dancers. Large print and phonetic pronunciation in parenthesis augments the text. There are pictorial glossaries at the end of each book showing special equipment used in the occupation along with the jargon of the trade.

This series would be a great addition to any school or home library. Anita Goldman Horning


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700’s — The Arts and Recreation

The Colossal Book of Crafts for Kids & Their Families; originally published as: Sticks & Stones & Ice Cream Cones and Snips & Snails & Walnut Whales, by Phyllis Fratozzi with Noel Fratozzi. LCCN 9724530. New York: Black Dog and Leventhal, 1997. ISBN 1884822576, HBB, $14.98. 745.5. Handicraft; Nature craft. 517 p. PS - Gr. 8. Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5  The Colossal Book of Crafts for Kids & Their Families is full of great ideas. Twenty-nine chapters describe a multitude of projects from paper airplanes to vegetable string paintings, from educational crafts to fun with eggs, pine cones, twigs, and stones. There are chapters on tasty treats, puppets, parties, gifts, wearable arts, shell flowers, and pear people. The book ends with a play to perform and an award ribbon craft to congratulate the reader on finishing the book!
In this book encouraging tidy rooms. Although written for girls, moms will also appreciate shares her homemaking expertise with preteens. Home management and decorating to women, now Emilie Barnes, known for writing and speaking on something for every crafter! Choose, The Colossal Book is sure to contain and tear of a craft book’s life. A few of the projects sturdily constructed too, a plus for the inevitable wear the crafter picture the completed project. The book is help of an adult. Black and white illustrations help a double asterisk indicates a step which requires the easily obtained. Many are found in the backyard or book kid-friendly. Most of the materials needed are Phyllis and Noel Fiarotta strove to make their craft for younger; illustrated by Stacey Schuett. New York: Carolrhoda Books, 1998. ISBN 1575050846, HBB, $14.99.


Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Emilie Barnes, known for writing and speaking on home management and decorating to women, now shares her homemaking expertise with preteens. Although written for girls, moms will also appreciate this book encouraging tidy rooms.

In Making My Room Special, nine-year-old Emilie Marie and her friends invite young readers to join their room makeover service. Each Saturday the girls meet at a different home and help each other clean and decorate their bedrooms. One friend’s room needs a thorough cleaning, another needs reorganizing, a third needs redecorating. One friend wants ideas for sharing her room with a younger sibling. Working together, the girls find solutions for their room problems. Their bedrooms go from cluttered and messy to organized and cute.

The book offers efficient ideas for room cleanup and organization. Learn six speedy cleanup steps and how to make cleaning fast and fun. Get organized by sorting things in three categories: give away, throw away, and put away. Follow hints to work in fifteen-minute intervals, to file rather than pile, and to put belongings away rather than putting them down.

Simple redecorating tips are given to personalize and dress up rooms. They include no-sew pillows, fabric covered storage boxes, and wall decorations. Charming watercolor paintings by Michal Sparks illustrate the instructions and ideas. Girls will enjoy this visually inspiring gift book with practical and creative suggestions to make their rooms special. Parents who value neatness, organization, and beauty will welcome this book reinforcing their values. Lydia E. Harris


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Barbara Younger presents a charming and captivating account of Katharine Lee Bates and how “America the Beautiful” came to be in her debut book, Purple Mountain Majesties. Illustrator Stacey Schuett captures with colorful vitality the very inspiration Miss Bates must have had when witnessing the wondrous beauty of America’s landscape during the late 1800’s.

The book centers around the train trip Miss Bates took in the summer of 1893. A poet at heart, and a scholar in trade, Miss Bates was powerfully moved by the splendor she observed as she traveled westward from Boston to Colorado and wrote her impressions in a traveling diary. But she was disappointed with her poetry and set it aside. Two years later she came upon what she called her Pike’s Peak poem and sent it to a magazine, where it was published in the Fourth of July issue. From that point on her poem became etched in the hearts of America’s people, and was considered the first choice for a national anthem then, and perhaps now, by many.

Children will relish the warm expansive illustrations, and older readers will appreciate the history behind the beloved song. “Purple Mountain Majesties” is a worthwhile addition, especially for its patriotic flavor. Pam Webb


Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Play by play action is detailed in Game Day. Robert Young describes the many aspects that take place on the day of a baseball game. Readers observe through Jerry Wachter’s photographs exactly what happens before, during, and after the game. The photo journal takes readers into the underground storage of the Oriole Park field where popcorn is popped and supplies are delivered. Above ground, bases are washed, grass mowed, lines painted. The players stretch in a pre game work-out. The excitement mounts during the game as fans fill the seats, buy souvenirs, consume food, and enjoy the game. Players on the field are joined by their coaches, ballboys and ballgirls, batboys, umpires, and of course, the mascot!

The photographs in Game Day are clear shots that add to the text. Details are illustrated perfectly in Jerry Wachter’s pictures. Young’s text is written on a third grade reading level. Accompanying text inset on pages throughout add to the complexity of the information without overwhelming early readers. Detail oriented readers will thoroughly enjoy this photo journal down to the details of managing the scoreboard and television stats during the game. Carol M. Jones


976.54. Campfire programs; Outdoor recreation; Amusements. 128 p. Gr. 2 - 10.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Want to enjoy the traditions of campfires? Authors Jane Drake and Ann Love demonstrate a variety of time-tested and new campfire favorites from games and songs to fire building techniques and cooking recipes.

Tucked within the pages of The Kids Campfire Book is information on wildlife, stargazing, and plant identification. Also included are two ghost stories which may frighten young children but are enjoyed by adolescents. This book would be good to take along for ideas at a group or family campfire, even if the campfire was in the backyard.

In The Kids Summer Games Book, Drake and Love share many of the favorite games of their childhood. From card games such as rummey and hearts to dominos and checkers, old favorites are reintroduced to children of all ages. Outdoor games such as Spud, Bootin’, Scavenger Hunt, and three types of tag give simple yet complete instructions.

There are games to make, water games, beach games, and games for just one or two. Hand this book to a couple of ten year olds, and watch the games begin. Or better yet join in!

Heather Collins illustrated both of these books in delightful black and white sketches. She captures the playfulness of the activities and gives accurate drawings of game instructions. Joanne M. Haffly

800’s —Literature


911. Insects—Poetry; Spiders—Poetry; American poetry. 28 p. Gr. 3 - 5

Quality - 3  Acceptability - 4

God made the lowly termite
As a warning and a sign
That kids should eat their vegetables
Instead of knotty pine—

So goes the first verse of “School Lessons” in The Little Buggers by J. Patrick Lewis. A collection of silly rhymes about icky insects, this third collaboration of Lewis and Victoria Chess firmly ties author and illustrator together as a team. From the
lovely doodlebug, to the common cricket and on to the exotic butterfly, twenty-three bugs get poems all their own to amaze, disgust or provoke to laughter the middle elementary crowd. For those who groan at the announcement of poetry time, *The Little Buggers* may inspire a new interest in or at the least, give them something to really groan about.

As a silly, fun book that happens to be written in verse, *The Little Buggers* works well enough. But as poetry, it is almost totally lacking in imagery or original use of words. Only the first verse of “The Pond Glider” in which the damselfly’s wings are described as “...wings of veins, minutely sharded windowpanes,” does the language rise above the commonplace. The illustrations are like-minded, depicting the insects cartoonishly. The language and illustrations work together to give the reader an entertaining book, but not a memorable one. *Pamela A. Todd*


813. Hurwitz, Johanna; Women authors; Illustrator; Women--Biography; Author, American. 32 p. Gr. 1 - 5.


813. Van Leeuwen, Jean; Women authors; Authors, American; Women--Biography. 32 p. Gr. 1 - 5.

In a continuation of the Meet the Author Series, Richard C. Owens presents three more authors to learn about and from. The authors in their own styles tell the stories of how they began writing, and how they continue writing for children today. The reader is treated to photographs both of the author as a child and of the author today engaged in the varied activities that make up a writer’s life. The stories are written simply enough for young readers to both read and identify with, but at the same time, upper elementary students who love writing will enjoy finding out what makes a good writer and what some of their thoughts and activities are. Children will also discover that authors are real people with real families and homes and pets.

Whether it’s Jonathan London jumping on a trampoline with his children, or Johanna Hurwitz looking in the phone book for a good name, there’s something to be learned about writing, the writing process, and being a good story teller in each book. *Judy Driscoll*


Quality - 3 Acceptability - 4

The song “Auld Lang Syne” is sung around the world as a tribute to the passing of a year or the parting of friends but it began as a simple folk song, one of hundreds collected and refined by Scotland’s national poet, Robert Burns. Joanne Findon’s book offers a glimpse into the short life of a master of word and line who’s work still delights the world. Born the son of a poor tenant farmer, Robbie Burns knew back-breaking labor from a young age. But he also knew the warmth of a loving family and a father who valued education. The farm work took a toll on his health; the education helped produce a world-famous poet. *Auld Lang Syne* briefly chronicles Burns’ life through both Findon’s text and Ted Nasmith’s paintings which attempt to mirror the landscape style of the late eighteenth century.

*Auld Lang Syne* is a well-mean’t attempt to expose eight to ten year olds to the life of a poet whose work is rarely included in collections for children of this age. Wildly popular in his time and admired for centuries thereafter, Robert Burns is simply not a poet well enough known to children today to interest them in his biography. Conversely, if Burns is studied to even a small degree in literature class, *Auld Lang Syne* would be quite useful for showing that there are real people behind the poems they study. It is unfortunate that the author chose to write in the first person, as Burns himself, for the text’s style is wooden, lacking the incipient sparkle and delight with words that one would expect to see in such a narrative. Wooden also describes Ted Nasmith’s illustrations, although the subjects of his paintings are very appropriate to the time and place of the story’s events. Christian parents and teachers may also be wary of Burns’ attribution of his poetry to an ancient Scottish goddess. Whether this was done in seriousness or merely as a metaphor, the text does not make clear. *Pamela A. Todd*

900’s - Geography, History, and Biography


917.3. United States--Biography; Geography. 32 p. Gr. 2 - 4.


917.3. United States--Geography; History. 32 p. Gr. 2 - 4.


912. Distances; Measurements. 32 p. Gr. 2 - 4.


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

A map can capture the world and fold it into a pocket, but it takes a knowledgeable reader to unlock the meanings and solve the mysteries. David L. Stienecker and Fran Sammis introduce early grade school students to the intrigue of maps in this series.

*Maps* explains how a round world can be reproduced on flat paper. *States* gives examples of regional divisions, as well as historical, weather, and highway maps. *The World* begins with a map of the continents as they might have been 180 million years ago. It traces continental drift, temperature, climate, land use, and energy sources. *Countries* focuses on national capitals, borders, population, and terrain. *Measurements* explains map scale, elevation, contour lines, and calculating distances. *Cities and Towns* gives examples of maps that might be used for parks, streets, bus routes, and malls.

The Discovering Geography series is not a comprehensive collection of maps. It gives examples to develop skills and familiarize the reader with many possibilities. Along with elementary information, Discovering Geography poses questions, and offers puzzles, games, and activities that interact with the illustrated maps. The questions are straightforward and the directions are clear. The maps are simple and uncluttered, focusing on one or two aspects. The answers to all questions are listed in the back, along with a short glossary and index. *Melinda M. Torgerson*
Louisville, Kentucky, flood in 1937 and Germany’s attacks on Moscow in 1941. These are only two of her numerous achievements. Her photographs of Buchenwald are key in the discovery of the truth about German prisoner-of-war camps. After World War II, Margaret continues traveling and photographing people in cruel surroundings.

Catherine A. Welch has written a story about an innovative woman in a male dominated profession whose achievements outshine many of her male peers. Through Margaret’s photographs, the world is exposed to the inhumane suffering of people in plights not under their control.

Margaret Bourke-White is a compelling story about a woman who thrives on danger but is horrified by the atrocities people commit. The paintings by Jennifer Hagerman will enable children to see the story unfold before their eyes. Supplementary information about Margaret Bourke-White in the Author’s Note and Afterword plus a listing of important dates adds to the excellence of the book. Dianne Woodman

Charles Dickens: The Man Who Had Great Expectations takes the reader through the life of Charles Dickens, from his childhood sufferings to his early death. Authors Diane Stanley and Peter Vennema show that Dickens was an outgoing man who loved people. Dickens’ writings, reflecting the despair in the lives of England’s poor, prompted reform. Laws were changed; housing and schools for the poor were improved. Even as Dickens’ success increased, he always worked to help ease the burdens of the poor.

Well-written, this picture book has complete pages of text, each devoted to one aspect of Dickens’ life. Though dry at times, the detailed information offers a useful resource for student research. In presenting Dickens as an author, specific books and characters are mentioned, but not discussed in-depth. Including mellow illustrations depicting life in Victorian England, this biography offers a thorough view of Dickens’ life, to anyone wanting to know more about him. Karen Brehmer


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Wynton Marsalis, the first artist ever to receive Grammy awards for both classical and jazz music in the same year, was not always dedicated to music. When he was twelve, he liked playing the trumpet, but his real passion was basketball. His whole family was musical and they encouraged him to play his horn, but it wasn’t until Wynton heard a recording by artist Clifford Brown, that his dedication to music took the serious turn that would make him into a world-famous musician. Jazz Is the Word chronicles the hard work, the resulting success and the generous nature of a phenomenal artist whose music continues to break new ground and garner critical praise.

This easy to read biography does a very good job of telling children what they want to know about life as a famous musician and what they should know about the discipline it takes to become one. Mr. Marsalis’s interest in and encouragement of young people where ever he goes is also a fine example of obeying God’s command that we should share our gifts with others. Its language is simple without talking down to the reader and is interspersed with photographs that match the chronology of the narrative. A glossary of musical terms and references appears at the end, along with an index and a list of suggested resources for learning more about Wynton Marsalis and his music. Pamela A. Todd


Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

The Kids Book of Canada written by Barbara Greenwood and illustrated by Jock MacRae serves as a pictorial introduction to Canada and its provinces and territories. The first four pages of this book consider Canada as a whole; then each province is presented from west to east, finishing with the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Each province or territory gets the same treatment. First, is a two-page description including basic facts such as the provincial population, area, capital, flag, bird, tree, and gemstone with a large map and a small inset map showing the province’s location within Canada. Next, is a two-page layout with interesting places, people, events, inventions, etc., at the top and an historical timeline at the bottom.

This book is profusely illustrated with appealing color drawings. The layout, however, seems a little busy and hard to follow. The many illustrations strewn across the pages make it easy miss some of the text. The top and bottom layout across a two-page spread did not make for easy reading.

The many facts and figures presented seemed up-to-date. The impending (April 1, 1999) creation of Nunavut and Denebath was discussed under section devoted to the soon to disappear Northwest Territories. This book could have been improved through better editing. British Columbia’s “stands of giant Douglas spruce” are mentioned, but Douglas fir not spruce is correct. The impression that France lost all its colonies in Canada, in 1713, is conveyed on page six. Actually, it was not until Quebec was captured by Wolfe in the Seven Years’ War in 1759 that France was finally driven out of Canada.

The author seems intent on being politically correct in the people and places sections: she mentions thirteen women by name and sixteen men. Some of the choices seem to be motivated less by achievement than by inclusion of ethnic minorities. There is no discussion of the rifts and tensions in contemporary Canadian politics. A glossary is included; an index would have been useful. The book measures 12 inches by 9 inches. The binding is glued in. David Rash.
**BOOK REVIEWS**

**YOUNG ADULT FICTION**


F. Fantasy. 225 p. Gr. 5 - 8.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

One of Avi’s latest, *Perloo the Bold* is a wonderful fantasy about Perloo, a peaceful scholar who finds himself chosen to be the new leader of his people, the Montmers. In his reluctance to take on this authority, there is a hint of Bilbo Baggin in *The Hobbit* which will only make Perloo all the more enchanting to readers. The Montmers are a furry people who live in underground burrows and the adventure Perloo finds himself in has all the qualities of excitement that youngsters enjoy—an evil foe who wishes to take on the cloak of leadership for himself, a trusted friend who prods and pushes our hero into his new role, and even an impending battle that is forestalled by, of all things, snowballs!

Young readers will enjoy this fine adventure that reads smoothly and quickly and keeps your interest from page one. While instilling values, such as honesty and being true to yourself, Perloo is never preachy. Whether your library already has a collection of Avi books or this is the first, *Perloo the Bold* will be a well-read addition to the youth section.  

*Ceil Carey*

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F. Basketball—Fiction. 112 p. Gr. 5 - 8.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Chris has been a bench-warmer for his basketball team long enough. Now he’s determined to practice, and practice some more until he can make those shots and be allowed to play with the first string. But it seems that no matter how long or hard he works he still is low man on making points.

When Chris decides to practice with Greta, the star player on the girl’s basketball team, he begins to see a little improvement, but it’s still not enough. Finally, Chris talks with Greta’s mom and discovers that she was a guard on her team many years before. With little persuasion, Greta’s mom happily coaches Chris on how to work as an effective guard. At long last, Chris finds that he can be useful on the team and keep the other teams from scoring so much. Grateful to Greta and her mom, he becomes a valuable player and determines to continue working on those difficult-to-make shots as well.

*Fred Bowen* writes a believable story about the challenge kids have when they belong to the B string on the basketball team. Bowen gives good pointers about the importance of practicing and keeping a good attitude even when not allowed to play in a game. There is an informational section at the end that describes how girl’s basketball used to be played, and why the players used half court for guards and half court for forwards. The black and white illustrations give an adequate “feel” for those who are left on the bench.  

*Mary McKinney*

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Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Chris lives on the Penacook Indian Reservation. His father died in a car accident. His father is in rehab for his alcoholism. Chris and his younger sister Celeste live with Doda, their grandfather, and Auntie, Doda’s sister. Chris and his friends attend school off the reservation because the reservation school only goes through third grade. Chris, Pizza, Gartensnake, and Belly Button face problems both as sixth graders in a junior high and as Native Americans in an Anglo or white school. Pizza gains acceptance through his sports abilities. Chris gains acceptance through his leadership capabilities. Chris is voted leader of his group in language arts class. Their assignment is to pick a controversial topic and report on it. Chris leads his group to the topic “Using Indian Names for Sports Teams.” His group is able to convince the school to change their name from Chiefs. Chris isn’t a leader just at school. Doda was once a Penacook Chief. Chris acts like a chief and is able to convince the tribe to change the proposed location of a casino.

Being a Native American himself and having worked with Native American youth, Joseph Bruchac bases *The Heart of a Chief* on the reality of Native American life today. Chris faces issues many faced by Native Americans across our country: violent death of a family member, alcoholism, acceptance in the Anglo world, the issue of casinos, and traditional ways that are being forgotten.

*The Heart of a Chief* is an excellent book about the life of Native Americans. While the Penacook Reservation doesn’t exist, it is like many Indians reservations. Readers will come away from the book understanding Native Americans a little better.  

*Jane Mouttet*

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F. Unicorns—Fiction; Short stories. 198 p. Gr. 4 - 10.

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 4

What could be more exciting than a book of stories centered on that glorious make-believe animal, the unicorn? That’s apparently what much-published children’s author Bruce Coville had in mind when he collected the stories contained in *A Glory of Unicorns*. Unfortunately, not all of the stories contain the glory promised in the collection’s title. Many of the stories are set in other countries, times, and worlds, while others attempt to spread the
A Word from the Editor: Sylvia Stopforth

Young Adult Series

In my last column, I wrote in general terms about series and why young readers may be attracted to them. This column will take a closer look at specific series that readers of CLJ have been asking about.

FANTASY / SCI FI


Sample titles: The Alien; The Android, The Forgotten

This is pretty entertaining stuff. The evil Yeekrs have arrived on earth with the intention of taking over. These parasitic alien slugs enter a human body and take over the mind, turning humans into “Controllers.” The tricky bit is that no one knows of their existence.

No one, that is, but five middle-school children and an Andalite named Aximili-Esgarrouth-Isthill. Ax is the last surviving member of his species left on earth; his dying brother, not wanting to leave the earthlings defenseless against the Yeerk invasion, gave these five children the power to morph, to take the form of any animal they touch. Together, Cassie, Jake, Rachel, Marco, Tobias, and Ax give the Yeerk's a run for their money, harrassing them like a tiny guerilla army.

Applegate’s series appeals on many levels. First, the whole concept of alien invasions and conspiracies seems to be very popular right now. Then we have the powerful and often-used theme of the faithful remnant battling seemingly insurmountable odds. During the morphing scenes, the author manages to work in some interesting information about various animal species. On top of all that, her books are a quick read, and her characters are likeable.

There is some violence, due to the fact that we are dealing with intergalactic war, but there are no gratuitous details, and often characters use their heads, rather than their fists/paws/claws.

Each book deals with larger issues as well, such as trust and friendship on an inter-

species level, or the dangers of technology. In one case, Cassie is confronted with the ugly side of nature, and must wrestle with the difference between acting on animal instincts and acting on a human understanding of right and wrong.

Add to this a slick marketing strategy, postcards and bookmarks included in the books, catchy cover art, and a Web page, and the result is a series that can’t miss.

Diadem Series, by John Peel. Scholastic

Sample titles: Book of Names, Book of Signs, Book of Magic

The Diadem Series will appeal to the armchair sleuth as well as to the hardcore fantasy fan. Streetwise Score, warrior-princess Renald, and techno-wiz Pixel are swept up into this adventure from different worlds and different times. Like the reader, they are initially left in the dark; this establishes link between reader and characters. John Peel has mastered the art of feeding the reader just enough information to keep him interested and curious, without being frustrated.

Each of the three children has a specific magic gift, or power. As the series progresses, they develop these gifts, make a joint decision to use them for good, and, unwillingly at times, learn to work together against evil wizards, quarrelsome goblins, and slothful trolls.

Character development is minimal, with some reliance on stereo-typing, but pace is good, and Peel’s casual writing style makes for an easy read. He uses some familiar fantasy conventions (names =3D power), but combines them in original ways. Strange symbols and cryptic clues are scattered throughout the book, and both reader and characters race against time to decipher their meaning. Some of the dialogue - and characters’ reactions - doesn’t quite ring true, but generally, the series is an entertaining romp.

Through his characters, Peel makes some wise observations regarding friendship, trust, and the price of power. Curiously, while there does seem to be an absolute source of evil, there is no corresponding source of good; as a result, in the first three books at any rate, the central struggle pits humanity — in the form of these three characters — against evil.

This series should be read in sequence, as the puzzle pages are not reprinted in each book.

RELATIONSHIPS / REALITY NOVELS

Friendship Ring Series, by Rachel Vail. Scholastic

Sample titles: Please, Please, Please; If You Only Knew

Rachel Vail’s forte is her ability to capture all the angst of adolescence on paper. For example, she vividly portrays the complications inherent in schoolyard friendships, and the sharp anxieties and guilt that arise when one friend is ready to move on before another.

In Please, Please, Please, she describes CJ’s dilemma: should she continue to give her all to ballet, or should she live a “normal life” with her friends. Should she make her mother happy, or herself?

In If You Only Knew, she introduces her readers to Zoe, who is struggling to differentiate between boy friends and boyfriend, as she slowly comes to terms with her changing body. But all this wonderfully honest emotion never quite goes anywhere. CJ decides to level with her mother, and when we leave her, she is happily kicking a soccer ball down the playing field, but is it as simple as all that? Where are the moments of doubt, the small regrets? All the emotional realism and candor demand more, somehow.

Recognizing the fact that this is an on-going series, one is nonetheless left with the sense that the characters have not quite finished telling their story. Each title is a vignette, a sound bite on paper.

Don’t look for role models here; rather, look for sympathetic characters going through the trials of adolescent life.

California Diaries, by Ann M. Martin. Scholastic

Sample titles: Dawn; Sunny; Maggie; Dawn: Diary Two

Dawn and her friends are in the eighth grade at Vista middle school in California. As part of an on-going school assignment, they are all expected to keep a journal.

Written by Ann M. Martin, of Babysitters’ Club fame, each title in this series introduces us to one of a group of friends, each struggling with his or her own personal demons. These include such issues as step-parents, eating disorders, depression, and a terminally ill parent. Each title picks up roughly where the last left off.

The first diary in the series is written by
Dawn; the central conflict arises when certain members of her class are invited to a high school party. Three of the girls decide to go, without their parents’ knowledge, and one becomes drunk. In the end, they find they have been victims of an upper-classmen’s prank.

Diaries present the innermost thoughts and fears of their writers. As such, they should provide a sense of intimacy. But these characters never draw close. In striving for objectivity, the author never establishes the reader’s sympathy for the characters.

Martin is obviously committed to a realistic depiction of the lives of teens. There are no easy answers, but neither are there positive role models, or even brief moments of brightness to provide contrast. As a result, the series is rather bleak.

Most of the diaries use scripts and lined pages which effectively convey the feel of a hand-written journal. And yet, a unique voice never emerges. All tend to blend into one dark, self-absorbed narrative.

Ultimately, this series is all about alienation — from the reader, from one another, from the characters’ own sense of self. Realistic? Yes, but only in terms of the darker side of growing up.

On the other hand, according to reader reviews provided by the Amazon.com webpage, a lot of kids feel they can relate.

**HORROR**


Sample titles: *Dragneir: The Haunting of Drang Island*

Lock the doors and turn on the lights before you read Arthur Slade’s Northern Frights. Otherwise, this dark, modern series steeped in Norse mythology may just be too much.

In *Dragneir*, Sarah, Michael, and Angie spend summer vacation with Grandpa in small-town Manitoba. Grandpa is a great one for telling scary stories, and some of his favorites are about the draugr — one who returns from the dead.

The stories are scary enough, but one night, after something tries to get at the kids through the bedroom window, their grandfather disappears. A late night trip to the cemetery reveals that an ancient curse has claimed him, and now threatens to claim them all, one by one. In the end, Sarah must draw upon the strength of her ancestors to defeat the draugr, and to erase the curse.

The conclusion is not entirely convincing, but the author has provided some foreshadowing, and the reader will simply be happy to be able to breathe again.

*The Haunting of Drang Island*, the second in the series, reunites the reader with fifteen-year-old Michael. This time, it’s up to him to find a way to defeat the evil spirit that lures Jormungand, a mighty sea serpent, from the depths of the ocean with the promise of blood sacrifices.

Characters are sketchy, as they are secondary to the plot, but Slade provides enough detail to enlist the reader’s sympathies. The pace is a bit unrelenting, what with blood feuds and supernatural horrors, but fans of the “fright” genre will devour every word, and they may learn a thing or two about mythology along the way.

**A note for fans of the Dear America series:** Scholastic is introducing a complementary series for boys, under the title, “My Name Is America.”

- F. Murietta, Joaquin, d. 1853--Fiction; Robbers and outlaws--Fiction; California--Gold discoveries--Fiction. 136 p. Gr. 5 - 9.
- Quality - 4  Acceptability - 4

Because of a string of bad luck, Annyrose Smith finds herself trying to flee from the heartless and mean O. O. Mary. In *Bandit’s Moon*, by Sid Fleischman, Annyrose and her brother are orphans during the California gold rush. Her brother, Lank, has left Annyrose with O. O. Mary and gone on ahead to try to strike it rich while she heals from a broken ankle. He doesn’t know what a mean person O. O. Mary can be. When O. O. Mary’s home is raided by Mexican bandits, Annyrose escapes with them. Thinking she is a boy, their leader Joaquin demands that she teach him to read English. She feels it’s the least she could do to repay him for saving her from O. O. Mary. As she travels with these bandits, she is repulsed by the talk of killing the “Yankees”. She struggles with the thought that she is traveling with a bunch of killers. She is determined to escape from them and find her brother. As she travels with Joaquin, she gets to know the pain and bitterness he feels against those who took his land and his wife. Does she turn him in as the killer he claims to be? Or, is he really a killer at all? *Bandit’s Moon* is a fast paced, action packed book that will certainly keep young reader’s attention. There is superficial characterization, but doesn’t keep the story from being entertaining as well as somewhat informational. Mr. Fleischman has done a good job of showing the tension between the Mexicans and the Americans, however, a little more detail about the cause of the tension would have been helpful. Describing the underhanded methods the Americans used to acquire the Mexican’s land would have been useful earlier in the story. Some of the difficult vocabulary could use some explanation. This is a fast, entertaining story that could be used for further study of Mexican and American relations. Mr. Fleischman includes a brief summary about the real legend of Joaquin. Patricia A. Youmans


- F. Brothers--Fiction; Orphans--Fiction; Gold mines and mining--Fiction; Bodie (Calif.)--History--Fiction; California--History--Fiction. 151 p. Gr. 7 - 10.
- Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

After their parents die in an epidemic, Danny and his six-year-old brother, Judd, are sent to live in an orphanage in San Francisco. After enduring much misery, they finally decide to run away and find their uncle. When they find him in Bodie Camp, a gold-rush boomtown in the California hills, Danny is dismayed to find his uncle in love with a Chinese woman.

Although they are welcomed warmly into Uncle Hank’s home, Danny refuses to live there. Instead, he and Judd stay at a rough boarding house and run wild throughout the town. However, when Danny is faced with Judd’s life-threatening illness he must turn to Uncle Hank and Lu-Chen for help. Only after Lu-Chen’s help and kindness does he decide to give up hate and racism and learn that prejudice is wrong.

Kristiana Gregory has written an exciting historical adventure which also includes some valuable lessons. By basing her story on the lives of two young boys, Gregory is able to accurately depict the excitement of a gold-rush boomtown, while at the same time expressing the thoughts and opinions that were commonly held in 1878.

Although the story does lack careful characterization, there is enough action and adventure to easily compensate. An Author’s Note at the end of the story informs the reader that while the story is fiction, it is based on many real characters and events. Orphan Runaways is an fine example of solid, entertaining, and informative historical fiction. Kerri Cunningham


- F. Friendship--Fiction; Interracial dating--Fiction; African Americans--Fiction; Georgia--Fiction; Schools--Fiction. 214 p. Gr. 9 - 12.
- Quality - 4  Acceptability - 3

Shawn Riley, a well-to-do private school student, is uprooted from her Denver home when her parents divorce. She goes with her father to live with her grandmother in Georgia. As an African-American, Shawna finds Southern traditions, especially the all-white “Old South Ball” racially exclusive. Kari Lang, an “Old South” born and bred local, pits herself against Shawna, but as they come to know each other, they realize Kari’s mother and Shawna’s father were close friends in high school. When the girls find out that Allison Craighead (the mom) and Joe Riley (the dad) were sent away their senior year to live with relatives in other cities, they assume that Allison must have become pregnant by Joe. On a trip to find the missing sibling, Kari and Shawna bond with each other, but are disappointed to find that there was no pregnancy and no sibling. In the process of sorting through their parents’ past, the girls find the independence of “lives of their own.”


- F. Race relations--Fiction; Interracial dating--Fiction; African Americans--Fiction. 149 p. Gr. 7 - 12.
- Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Lori Hewett portrays the complexities of not only interracial relationships, but also teenage peer pressure and dating pressures in the changing South. The characters are clearly drawn, the dialogue realistic. One character takes the Lord’s name in vain, but the narrator points out that the character knew better. Ms. Hewett allows both Shawna and Kari to undergo transformations in their thinking about race. Three generations’ attitudes toward authority, male-female relationships, and social mores are contrasted.

John Clapp’s cover illustration is exquisitely done with black-on-white and white-on-black images of the two beautiful girls opposite each other. It is clear at the book’s end that they have “lives of their own.” What isn’t clear is what they intend to do with them. Arlene S. Neal


- F. Voyages and travels--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 120 p. Gr. 7 - 12.
- Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5


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Historical and heartwarming, *The Mayflower Secret* by Dave and Neta Jackson is a wonderful addition to any young person’s library. Thirteen-year-old Elizabeth and her family begin the long journey from England to the New World on the Mayflower in 1621. After a hazardous trip, Elizabeth loses both parents to scurvy and joins the Brewster family as nanny. Life is not easy in the harsh land, but the people work together, trying not to worry or bicker. It’s a matter of life or death.

One sunny day in July 1923 another ship docks at Plymouth. Onboard are the Brewsters’ two grown daughters and an invitation for Elizabeth’s return to England. Does she really want to leave the New World? She had thought so but now she’s not sure. Her answer comes easily when John Howland proposes to her. So, at barely sixteen, Elizabeth again has a family of her own.

*The Mayflower Secret* is preceded by interesting authors’ notes differentiating fact from fiction. A brief biography of the featured “Christian hero,” William Bradford, follows the story. Details from early American history set in an entertaining plot will engross fiction lovers while tantalizing nonfiction enthusiasts. It will particularly appeal to those interested in the first Thanksgiving.

Antiquated dialogue may slow down some readers but lends authenticity. And illustrations interspersed throughout the book, albeit somewhat amateurish, help young readers visualize scenes.

*The Mayflower Secret* is one of many books in the Trailblazers series published by Bethany House. 

**Ginger McGrath**

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F. Animals—Fiction; Fantasy. 358 p. Gr. 7 - Adult. 

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

The latest in the Redwall Abbey series, *The Long Patrol* focuses on the heart’s desire of young Tammo the hare. All his life, Tammo has longed to serve as a soldier in the Long Patrol, a fighting unit of hares, but his hide-bound father judges him too young to join. And it looks as though Tammo’s heart’s desire will be delayed—until the Long Patrol is called on to draw the Rascalion Army away from its target, Redwall Abbey. Tammo’s luck changes as he gets his chance to play the lead role in a swashbuckling battle against the Rascalion Army.

Full of action, emotion, and good, old-fashioned adrenaline, *The Long Patrol* lives up to the reputation Jacques has established with his other books. The world he portrays is moral and complex, one in which bad things sometimes happen to good people (and animals). But it’s also a world in which the just ultimately triumph. With wonderful, engaging prose and an exciting plot, *The Long Patrol* is a great read for young and old alike. Definitely a keeper. 

**Georgia Beaverson**

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F. (Ill.)—History—Fiction; Crime—Fiction; Reporters and reporting—Fiction. 153 p. Gr. 6 - 10.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

During a tedious parlor meeting moderated by her Aunt Agnes, Christine makes her decision to accept the teaching position at New Eden. The strange Christian Science ideas that are discussed in the parlor fuel her resolve to strike out on her own.

New Eden seems the perfect place for Christine, now a young adult of twenty-one. The place is organized, clean, and aesthetically beautiful; the fellow workers are helpful and friendly. No position is considered better than another and each one works for the common goals of the community. But her friend, Adam Vestry, informs her there are possible, but as yet unsubstantiated, connections to underground crime. Certainly New Eden is virtual utopia on earth. …or is it?

John Jenkins and Mark Weaver have combined their literary skills once again in this second book in The Century War Chronicles series. *City of Lies* is the sequel to *The Invisible Empire* and picks up the storyline four years later for another adventure with Christine Thompson and Adam Vestry. They come face to face with the consequences of greed for power and unjust gain.

Jenkins and Weaver have intertwined this story with historical incidents during the time involving the emergence of Christian Science, the burgeoning idea of utopia, and the rebuilding of Chicago to its status of Queen of the West after the great fire. The purpose of this series is to encourage thinking skills in an age of deception so the reader can observe motivations, thoughts, and reactions through the characters. 

**Debbie Lindsay**

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Ellen Adair is an eighth grader whose affluent life is shaken by her parents’ move to an older crime-infested neighborhood in Riverford. Her privileged former life in Blue Hills had been filled with friends, social events, and popularity, but her father’s unemployment forces the move that results in a change of schools and change in lifestyle for Ellen. She has a difficult time learning to deal with her old friends from a new perspective. When she ends up on a quiz bowl team representing Taylor against Blue Hills, Ellen realizes just who her true friends are.

This contemporary story by Lou Kassen portrays middle school student relationships for the most part as brash, in-your-face, and combative. Ellen does, however, undergo a change of heart toward her new peers and vice versa. The book’s language is sharp, to the point of crude at times, and the characters are somewhat stereotypical. 

Attractive cover art by W. Alfant makes *Sneeze On Monday* visually appealing. A side issue in the plot is Ellen’s open rudeness to her authorities, and at the book’s end there is no indication whether her attitude changes. 

**Arlene S. Neal**

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Katherine Lunden lives with her loving family on a farm in Wisconsin. Her family wants her to marry and settle close by, but Katherine has a burning desire to see the world. Given the opportunity to go stay with a relative in Michigan, she instead takes the train to Chicago. With only ten cents in her pocket, she learns to make her way. She assumes the identity of Edith Shay, whose suitcase she finds. Later, she goes to Virginia to search for the real Edith Shay.

This book has interesting plot and character development, in spite of minor inconsistencies. Alexandra LaFaye does a good job of showing the development of thought in this sixteen-year-old girl who is torn between love for her family and a desire to find herself. To show this, the author uses many flashbacks, as she is reminded of home. The author also uses the local color of the phrases that play in Katherine’s mind as she sorts out her life. Both the flashbacks and the cliches are a bit distracting in places. 

**Cathleen Sovold Johnson**

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F. Sheep dogs—Fiction; Dogs—Fiction; Animal rights activism—Fiction; Animals—Treatment—Fiction. 152 p. Gr. 4 - 7.

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 2

Jody lives with his Mom and her sister. The sisters’ passion is rescuing abused animals. Sometimes they use Jody as a distraction so they can illegally get the animals in question. Jody is torn up inside, and he often eats a lot to compensate for his inner agony. On one “rescue,” a border collie is seriously injured. As Jody gains respect for the instincts of the creature, and bonds and loves this incredible animal, he loves himself more, too. His mother comes to see what is really important a little more clearly, also.
While details about the Border collie are fascinating, Jody’s mother’s ignorance, deceits, and conniving are troubling. She operates from the philosophy that the end justifies the means. The author is not quite convincing presenting her ardor for delivering the animals. A neglected guard dog might be a feasible target, but a kids’ frog jumping contest? Mom stays over with a boyfriend one night, and wonders if this bothers Jody. “As far as Jody could see, adults have their own set of rules or made them up as they went along.” Judy Belcher


F. Interpersonal relations—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 144 p. Gr. 5 - 8.
Quality - 4
Acceptability - 5

Merry Hanson has more than enough to juggle in her young life without the added trauma of nearly dying in a skating accident. But the accident and the temporary amnesia that results could turn out to be a blessing in disguise. The fifteen-year-old finds she must slow down in her attempts to solve the mysteries that pop up in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, so that she can solve her own personal mysteries of what happened the day of the accident and which of two very different young men deserve her awakening affection.

Echoes in the Wind brings back the intriguing Levi Zook, an Amish neighbor turned Mennonite, whose gentle determination that Merry recover her memory springs from personal as well as spiritual motives, and continues the story of Merry’s friend Chelsea, whose mother is slowly recovering from involvement in a cult. As Merry sorts through unfamiliar and conflicting feelings she comes to understand that the echoes from her forgotten past are a God-given opportunity to learn her own heart.

Beverly Lewis’s picture of the interaction and tension of the Amish, Mennonite, and “English” in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, are accurately and respectfully depicted in her series, SummerHill Secrets. Those unfamiliar with these branches of Christianity will gain some insight into the beliefs and practices of these groups who engender so much curiosity and exploitation by those outside of their communities. Merry and her friends are very believable, with strongly drawn personalities and convincing problems. Even though amnesia is an overworked device, it works well in this story as an illustration of how the worldly accretions on our hearts must be stripped away before we, through God’s grace, can see the truth about ourselves and those around us.

Pamela A. Todd


F. Amish—Fiction; Friendship—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 142 p. Gr. 4 - 8.
Quality - 4
Acceptability - 4

An Amish girl having her picture taken in designer jeans with her hair down? Fifteen-year-old Rachel Zook, having found a photograph of an ancestor, desires to experience being English. She convinces Merry Hanson, her neighbor, to not only take her picture but take her to her high school for a day. Rachel’s exposure to another way of life leaves her confused. Merry, because of her promise not to tell, ends up sneaking around behind her parents’ backs. With the help of her parents and Rachel’s older brother, Merry is able to help Rachel see her error and come back to herself.

Hide Behind the Moon, Beverly Lewis’ eighth book in the SummerHill Secrets series, can be read alone but may leave the reader wondering who is who and what happened previously. Her insight into Old Order Amish and Mennonite cultures bring light to young readers’ curiosity of what it would be like to be Amish. Patricia J. Perry


F. Oregon—History—Fiction; Fathers and daughters—Fiction. 156 p. Gr. 4 - 8.
Quality - 4
Acceptability - 5

Oh, Suzannah is an interesting account of a young pioneer girl and her father who embark on a difficult move to Oregon to work with the Indians. Suzannah is tender-hearted and willing to put Christ and others before herself. However, when her father chooses to remarry after the death of Suzannah’s mother, she is faced with a most difficult challenge.

Through precarious travels by ship and unsettled living conditions, Suzannah continues to be critical and aloof from her new step-mother; despite the fact that Charity is able to nurse her sick father back to health during the journey. Once they settle in the Oregon territory, Suzannah is excited about working with the Indians. She is gracious and unselfish towards them yet continues to view her step-mother as an intruder. Suzannah knows that she isn’t pleasing to Christ in this, but how can she allow Charity to replace her beloved mother?

This historical fiction presents Suzannah as a young girl in her early teens. Katherine Matchette presents little-known facts within the storyline, as the characters face fierce storms, Indian attacks, and challenging living conditions. The heart for doing God’s work is admirably presented and this book should be a good tool for stirring young readers towards appreciation of those who worked as missionaries. Mary McKinney


F. Orphans—Fiction; Death—Fiction; Resourcefulness—Fiction. 216 p. Gr. 5 - 7.
Quality - 4
Acceptability - 4
Unable to believe that her parents died when the bridge broke, eleven-year-old Tanya refuses to accept the help of the villagers. Instead, she insists on living on the farm by herself with only her cow, Milenka, for company. Remembering the wonderful muffins her mother made, Tanya decides to make muffins. The men in the village buy muffins from the Muffin Child every day. But the women are jealous of her muffins, greedily Parvel tries to take over her farm, and Gypsies move onto her land. Her problems escalate. The Gypsy children threaten Tanya with a pitch fork, the villagers accidentally burn down her barn and house in their search for a lost child, and Anton, the sharpener, tries to kill her when she discovers he has taken the child. The Gypsies rescue Tanya, care for her, and raise her as part of their family.

Stephen Menick’s story is set in the Balkans in the early 1900’s. Tanya’s mother tells Tanya the rather depressing story of the great-grandmother she was named for. In the telling, she makes no attempt to hide Tanya’s mistakes or the weaknesses of the other characters in the story.

The young girl with dark hair, blue eyes, and gold earrings in the cover picture by Ian Schoenherr emphasizes the folk tale quality of the story. Barbara A. Bryden


F. Masada Site (Israel) -- Siege, 72-73--Fiction; Jews--History--Rebellion, 66-73--Fiction. 188 p. Gr. 4 - 8.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 4

It is the year 72 C.E. in the land of Judea. Upon a high rock fortress called Masada, lives a small remnant of Israelites who have resisted capture by the Romans. Together, they have vowed to never give in, and to never give up. In this self-contained fortress, which once belonged to King Herod, they have managed to maintain their freedom for many years. Now the Romans have vowed to capture this rebel band at any cost, and so a year long siege on Masada begins, only to end in terrible tragedy. Gloria D. Miklowitz has created a wonderful human interest story about the people who lived and died at Masada. Her characters seem real, although only the main character, Simon, is dealt with in any depth. From her perspective, you find out what life on Masada might have been like and the emotions that many of those involved in the siege must have dealt with.

The one confusing element of this novel is that it switches from Simon’s viewpoint to that of a Roman soldier. While it is interesting to learn about the Roman’s viewpoint, this back and forth treatment makes the chapters where this happens more difficult to follow. There is also a descriptive portion of the novel which deals with romantic feelings and details a kissing scene which leans toward the erotic side, however, for the older reader, Miklowitz’ treatment of this incredible event in Jewish history is inspiring and challenging. Virginia G. Schnabel


F. Mystery fiction; Science fiction. 140 p. Gr. 4 - 9.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Bloodhounds, Inc., a brother and sister detective agency, receive a call from a neighbor who claims to have seen lights from a UFO, flickering in the night sky and heading for the nearby hills. He is convinced that an alien invasion has begun and asks the two young detectives to come over and investigate.

Sean and Melissa Hunter, along with their one hundred and two pound bloodhound, “Slobz,” find themselves drawn into a mystery that involves car thieves, New Age fanatics and a flying saucer. While investigating the mystery of the UFO they stumble onto a gang of car thieves, find themselves handcuffed to a “flying saucer” and are shot at by amateur “soldiers” who are trying to drive off alien invaders.

Bill Myers has written several excellent serials for pre-teen and teen readers. The Incredible Worlds of Wally McDoogle are especially popular with pre-teen boys. Bloodhounds, Inc. follows a similar pattern of wild humor, crazy antics, and mystery.

In Invasion of the UFOs one scene details Sean and Melissa’s adventures in making dinner. They start off all right but Sean isn’t quite certain about things like quantity and temperature. They end up with mashed potatoes being flung against the walls; as the electric mixer gets bumped into high gear, a bubbling marshallows mess in the oven, and four bags of spaghetti that come boiling up out of the pot to travel across the kitchen floor and wrap itself around ankles.

On the serious side, Invasion of the UFOs carries a message of Christian compassion and friendship for a lonely old man as Sean and Melissa try to put Jesus words into practice: “Whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me.” Donna Brown


F. Christian life--Fiction; Family life--Fiction. 256 p. Gr. 9 - Adult.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Virginia Simpson has her life all planned out. As events around her begin to alter plans for college and marriage, Virginia must deal with the loss of what she thought was her dream. As several years go by, Virginia tries to make the best of her situation and begins preparing for life as a spinster. Getting a job in town, Virginia begins saving to buy a small house. When the house next to the Simpson’s becomes for sale, Virginia is disappointed when it is sold to an older woman, Mrs. Withers. When Virginia and Mrs. Withers become close friends, the older woman introduces Virginia to her grandson, Jonathan. As romance begins to blossom, God’s true plan for Virginia unfolds.

A Searching Heart focuses on relationships with friends, family, and God. Many of the characters are committed Christians. They witness to and pray for those characters that do not know Christ. Just like real life, some come to accept Christ and others do not. With few historical details, it’s difficult to pinpoint exactly what decade the story takes place in. When Virginia and her first love, Jamison break their engagement, many teens will be able to relate to her feelings. Hopefully, they will also take away the larger lesson of the book; that God is in charge and he has a plan. Elizabeth A. Coleman


F. Friendship--Fiction; North Carolina--History--Fiction; Audiotapes: 2 sound cassettes (ca. 3 hrs.) Gr. 10 - Adult.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

A sentimental story of two girls during the First World War, this book demonstrates the power of faith to overcome painful circumstances. Notwithstanding their different environments, Bethan and Jodie are best friends. They pray and hold each other accountable through difficult times. Then, in spite of the few female science students at the time, Jodie goes to college, strengthening the friendship.

Schifferdecker reads the narrative fairly well except when portraying anger or excitement. The dialogue where Bethan pleads for Jodie’s continued friendship sounds whiny and annoying. She reads the script at a steady pace. Her light and childlike voice is well-suited for this tale of two innocent girls. Anita Goldman Horning (Adapted with permission from AudioFile Magazine)


F. Social isolation--Fiction; Interpersonal relations--Fiction; Great-aunts--Fiction. 155 p. Gr. 7 - 9.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

While waiting for her mother to return, Molly temporarily moves in with her Aunt Fay. Will, a neighbor, has moved in with his grandparents and befriends a reluctant Molly. At the public library Molly meets Tracy, a home schooler. The two girls hit it off right away, but Tracy’s mother dislikes Molly and ends their friendship.

At Christmas, Molly finds out that her mother has no intention of returning for her; she also learns that Will’s dad, ill with pneumonia, is living a sequestered life with Will. A couple of months later, Will’s dad dies of AIDS. After her mother is arrested for selling dope, Molly discovers that Aunt Fay is not a blood relation. In spite of this, the social worker who comes to scrutinize Molly’s abode determines it to be acceptable.

Richard Peck has written a true-to-life story about a twelve-year-old wary of friendship because her drug-addicted mother has never let them put down roots. As a result of Will’s friendship and Aunt Fay’s support, Molly comes to terms with her imbroglio.

**Y O U N G A D U L T F I C T I O N**
Strays Like Us is a compelling story about preteen children grappling with the consequences of drug-addicted parents. Dianne Woodman

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

In a world where a magical few protect others, four young people find themselves at Winding Circle. At this temple community noble children are educated, and magics live and learn. When all four children fail to fit in with their peers, they are sent to live at a house called Discipline. The four have nothing in common—except the magic they deny they possess.

In Circle of Magic, Sandry's Book, Tamora Pierce weaves an intriguing coming-of-age adventure. The first in a series of four books, Sandry's Book explains how the four mages-in-training come together. Left under the care of two dedicats and a mage, the group becomes an odd family, learning to accept themselves and each other.

Sandry, a daughter of nobles with ties to royalty in two countries, has always been fascinated by weaving, something nobles do not do. Briar, a thief, has always felt an affinity for plants and walls in the comfort earth provides for him. Daja, the daughter of successful merchants is cast out by her people when she is the only survivor of a shipwreck, but has always been more interested in metal working than buying and trading. Tris, a merchant’s daughter, has been plagued by a bad temper that usually coincides with severe weather. Each must master their power and also learn to work together. Their combined elements of magic are the only thing that can save them—and all of Winding Circle—from a natural disaster thrown out of control by magic. Lisa Wroble

F. Grandfathers--Fiction. 149 p. Gr. 9 - 12.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Nicky Radford has traveled to the Atlantic coast with his mother and brother. They’ve come to help Aunt Margo, who owns a large old inn. On the third floor of the inn, behind closed doors, lives Nick’s grandfather. Nick would like to get to know this grandson. He helps Nick to understand his grandfather. And in the end, a violent storm forces Nick and Grandfather to work together to rescue Nick’s mother.

The themes of forgiveness and returning good for evil run through the story. The Trouble at Silver Pines Inn is set against the backdrop of the Atlantic Ocean, with birds inhabiting the shoreline. Gloria Repp uses the birds to teach a lesson on identifying God’s creative handiwork in the special construction of bird feathers. The story is enhanced by several full-page pencil illustrations by Gabriela Dellosso. Myriamay Pittman Crane

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 4

Ann Rinaldi’s novel, the title of which is taken from a line in a Civil War song, tells the story of John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry in 1859, from the perspective of his daughter, Annie. The story begins after Brown’s execution for the raid, when Annie Brown has gone to live with Louisa May Alcott to be educated and to “get her head together.” Louisa May encourages her to write down what happened that fateful summer and autumn when John Brown and his followers tried to take over the arsenal, and Annie does just that. Writing and reflection allow Annie to try to understand the complex man who was her father.

Using primary and secondary source documents, Rinaldi breathes life into figures from history books. Brown is a person obsessed by the idea of freeing the slaves, a man with many connections but also a failure in many ways. Readers meet his followers and learn why they follow Brown, even though they know there is little hope of achieving their goal without loss of life. As Annie sits and keeps watch for strangers on the porch of the rented house we learn her thoughts about the group, and her gradual realization that the plan is doomed; the fatalistic attitude of the men is touching.

Rinaldi deftly introduces key historical figures such as Frederick Douglass, Robert E. Lee, who commands the soldiers who captured Brown, and George Washington’s great-grandson, whose slavess awake to find that Brown has freed them. Mine Eyes Have Seen is another good read from a master writer. Some cursing and vulgar language. Leslie Greaves Radloff

F. Paul (Apostle)--Fiction. Time travel--Fiction. 1 Videocassette, color, 60 min. Gr. 5 - 8.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

How would the early Christians treat those without friends and those who had been in trouble? Josh, Emily, and Caleb decide to use Josh’s laptop, which has technology beyond current capabilities. They decide to bring Paul the Apostle up from the year 40 A.D. But the Paul they meet has not yet been converted. They are able to get him back to his own time, but not before he incites three teenagers to vandalize and burn a church. The church exhibits much anger and hatred toward Lisa, the girl who comes forward to admit her part in the crime. Lisa approaches Emily with her unbelievable story about Saul of Tarsus. The kids bring him back to current time, this time after his conversion. Saul is able to help the church forgive Lisa for her part in the crime.

The Fiery Stranger features gospel music performed by the Friendship Baptist Church mass choir. The acting is not as professional as it could be. Parts of the plot are a bit unbelievable, such as when Lisa runs into the headlines right after she vandalizes the church and makes no attempt to get right away. Older elementary and junior high students will enjoy this high action video that helps bring the Bible to life.

The copy I previewed did not contain the usual FBI warning about copyright infringement. Nor did I find any notice of “home-use only.” From this I would assume the video may be shown in a church or school setting. Jane Moutet

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

The British are coming, or aren’t they? Sixteen year old Amity Spencer doesn’t know what to believe. She does realize she’s come to adulthood, but no one seems to notice. Everyone continues to call her child and treat her as one. That is until Amity has to carry secret battle plans into town to General Benedict Arnold. As a young woman she sets off to work through her fears and do her Continental duty.

Saratoga Secret is a strong, positive, young adult historical novel. Sterman does a fair job in representing the thoughts of both Tories and Continentals in the Revolutionary War. German soldiers are also portrayed sympathetically. Good successful effort was made to round the reader’s perspective of all participants. On the individual level, a character questions her identity, is tested physically and emotionally, and emerges with clearer self-understanding. Amity is a positive role model in her thoughts, aspirations, and actions. Even her desire for marriage is handled in a modest way.

Young adults will feel the suspense as they live through the Battles of Saratoga. Readers will gain familiarity with historical characters, their faults and strengths, by reading Saratoga Secret. Lorie Ann Grover


The Moonstones is another good read from a master writer. Strengths, by reading familiarity with historical characters, their faults and strengths, by reading Saratoga Secret. Lorie Ann Grover

F. Christian life--Fiction; Interpersonal relations--Fiction; High schools--Fiction; Schools--Fiction. 138 p. Gr. 7 - 10.

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5


F. Christian life--Fiction; Courage--Fiction; High schools--Fiction; Schools--Fiction. 137 p. Gr. 7 - 10.

Quality - 2 Acceptability - 5

Matt Tullos, a counselor for teens in his church, has created a series that deals with contemporary issues. He has included modern day references to fashion trends, music groups, and current events that will soon date the series. It appears that he is attempting to deal with all the issues teens might face within the public school system in his first two books.
000's - General Knowledge

★


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

For any child wanting to explore what he or she could do to make a living, or for any parent/teacher/librarian trying to guide a child with these decisions, the Career Ideas for Kids series is an excellent resource. These books are fun, easy to read, and informative. The standard format for each book begins with a short section that explains how to use the book. This is followed by a questionnaire that allows readers to pinpoint their interests. Next is a great section called: “Take a Trip” which profiles fifteen different individuals working in jobs that belong to the career path. The book ends with a set of exercises that help the reader to focus on which jobs and skills were most interesting. Many include addresses of related individuals working in jobs that belong to the career path. Each book ends with a set of exercises that help the reader to focus on which jobs and skills were most interesting. Every page contains an eye-catching graphic and all the profiles include photos. Besides making readers aware of the amazing numbers and kinds of jobs available in these fields, these books are excellent resources for finding further information. There are three more titles (not seen by this reviewer) in the series: Career Ideas for Kids Who Like Art, Career Ideas for Kids Who Like Science, and Career Ideas for Kids Who Like Talking. Lillian Heytvelt

200's - Religion


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

This book provides an account of well-known Bible stories combined with unfamiliar details that are available by reading the Midrash. “Midrashim are stories combined with unfamiliar details that are available by reading the Midrash. Eric Kimmel has used the Bible and the Midrash to retell the love story between God and his children in this book Be Not Far From Me. The Old Testament stories of twenty heroes and heroines from Abraham to Daniel are listed under five categories: Abraham and his children, Out of Egypt, Judges and Kings, Prophets and Exile, and Redemption. The stories vary in length; the story of Deborah is only four pages, while the story of David is twenty pages.

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200's - Religion


“Shalom!” The Rabbi, Tamar, and friendly Eyal greet as Jesus: The Man, The Message, The Messiah begins. This CD is designed to give its users a realistic look at life in Jesus’ day while studying the Gospel (an NIV harmony of the four gospels by Orville E. Daniel). Users may take photographic and video tours of the Holy Land, accompanied with authentic sounds and music. Click on boldfaced words in the Gospel text and learn about the marriage customs at the time or Nazareth’s history. Study questions help focus the user’s search. A concordance lists many Biblical references; further study gives books, periodicals, and other sources of information. It contains 188 lessons and countless sidebars that advance the user’s understanding of Christ’s earthly life. When finished for the day, an electronic bookmark keeps the user’s place until the next study time. The program can be set for home or school use.

Ray Vander Laan’s extensive research makes Jesus: The Man, The Message, The Messiah an intriguing project. On first use, the sheer volume of information was overwhelming, but the format is relatively easy to follow and the graphics, sound, and endless variety of research topics is extremely interesting. Some of the Faith Talks and reference material may reflect the specific beliefs of the author. Overall, Vander Laan’s work provides a new dimension in the study of Christ’s life and times. Ann Ponath


Charles Spurgeon was one of the most dynamic and influential preachers of the 19th century. His writings are as timely and applicable today as they were 100 years ago. The truth of God’s word and its impact on our lives is eternal. However, our language has changed over time, sometimes making Mr. Spurgeon’s writing style difficult to understand. Randy Petersen has taken Spurgeon’s classic devotional, The Cheque Book of the Bank of Faith, and paraphrased it into English as we speak and write it today.
The book contains 120 daily devotions. Each is headed with a scripture verse followed by a half to full page essay to expand or illustrate the verse of the day. Most conclude with a short prayer.

*Charge It to the Masters Card* presents a blend of the Father’s love for us just as we are while also challenging us to be changed by the Spirit. The reader will be encouraged to look for ways to live out their faith tempered with a message of hope.

The book is subtitled A Contemporary Devotion for Teens, but adults will be stretched by it as well. The writing style is very conversational in tone. Even non-readers will find the writings easy to digest, and will, hopefully, carry the words with them throughout the day. *Carroll Shearer*

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*In Your Place In This World*, popular Christian singer and songwriter Michael W. Smith lays out for teenagers the concept that God has a plan for each person’s life.

The book is divided into four parts: Place, Purpose, Passion, and God’s Plan. Starting with simple ideas and working up to the profound ones, Smith encourages teens to avoid doing things they know are incompatible with God’s will, and instead cultivate those talents and interests that the Creator put into their hearts. He illustrates his points with stories about his friends, other celebrities, his own life, and biblical examples.

Smith makes some important points that might be new ground for some kids. For example, you don’t have to wait until adulthood for God to use you. He tells the story of a blind eight-year-old fan whose bold prayers inspired him while on tour. He reminds about David, the shepherd boy, whom God anointed king, and who defeated the fierce warrior Goliath who’d intimidated the rest of the army. Smith also puts kids on the alert for those little accidents and small successes that God uses powerfully for his own purposes. He points to the cross-over popularity of his song “Place in This World.” He believes it was successful not to make him a star, but to put him into contact with people who were open to hearing about the gospel at that moment in time.

Although always entertaining, the book starts out slow and lightweight. The second half, however, picks up momentum with profound truth. This book would be particularly effective read and discussed by parents and high school juniors planning for college and career. *Andrea R. Huesenberg*

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It seems that Jaci Velasquez is trying to reach out to young people with the message that even famous people, like herself, have normal problems, concerns, emotions, feelings, and difficulties. Eight small chapters cover topics appropriate for young readers, such as: relationships with God, family, friends, dating, sex, dreams and goals, and controlling feelings. Each chapter includes small paragraphs or a few sentences that convey a feeling or an idea. She uses her own life experiences to illustrate her convictions.

Young readers will relate to the different events in Jaci’s life and hopefully see that, with God, they can cope. From divorce, to her first kiss, Jaci is very open and honest about her feelings and convictions. Being written in the style of a diary, and being true to young people’s language, *A Heavenly Place* will appeal to young readers even if they aren’t familiar with her music. *Patricia A. Youman*

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*300’s - Social Sciences*


347.73. Due process of law; United States. Constitution. 5th Amendment—History; Constitutional amendments. 128 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

The Constitution series by Enslow Publishers is an informative, easy-to-understand presentation of several of the constitutional amendments. At the conclusion of each volume is the entire text of the Constitution of the United States and a list of all the amendments. Chapter notes, a glossary, a list for further reading, and an index conclude the books. The introduction gives a brief overview of each of the chapters to follow. These well-written, highly documented books are invaluable to a better understanding of our constitution.

The Thirteenth Amendment, Ending Slavery begins with a chapter on Nat Turner’s rebellion on August 21, 1831. It goes back to the writing of the Constitution and discussions on the slavery issue. This is followed by a historical overview of slavery in North America beginning in Jamestown in 1619. The following chapter covers the Civil War including Harriet Tubman’s story. The book concludes with the reconstruction and desegregation in the 1950’s. Author Elizabeth Schleichert shows the impact of the Thirteenth Amendment on African Americans in the past and today. Esther Knaupp


363.1. School violence; Violence. 112 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


614.4. Communicable diseases; Diseases. 128 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


614.4. Communicable diseases; Diseases. 128 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


320.53. Neo-Nazis; White supremacy movements; Racism; Prejudices. 112 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 3


291.9. Cults. 128 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


322.4. Militia movements; Government, Resistance to. 112 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


362.82. Child abuse; Family violence. 128 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 3


364.86. Juvenile delinquents; Juvenile delinquency—Prosecution; Juvenile homicide; Juvenile justice, Administration of. 112 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


365. Prison; Prisoners. 128 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


344.73. Prayer in the public schools. 104 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


363.4. Gun control; Firearms; Juvenile delinquency; School violence. 112 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


616.97. AIDS (Disease); Diseases. 112 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 2

The Issues in Focus series by Enslow Publishers does an excellent job of presenting contemporary teen and society problems. These attractive library-bound editions include chapter notes of scenes referred to, a glossary of terms, a bibliography of suggested titles for further reading, and an index. Wide margins, pictures, and charts relating to the text enhance the effectiveness of the material. Each of these books must be read to check for acceptability since some of the subjects involved may contain explicit material that would not be appropriate for young readers.

The book Schools Under Siege is filled with examples, statistics, and quotes about today’s problems with school violence. It examines the reasons for the problems and discusses solutions on what can be done to change this trend.

Starting with a discussion of disease in ancient times and a detailed discussion of the Black Death, the book Plague and Pestilence gives an excellent overview of the history of diseases. It covers the epidemics of the Renaissance and moves to the new world. It concludes with modern epidemics and the issues surrounding AIDS.

Neo-Nazis gives the background to Neo-Nazism as it discusses its growth today and links to the movement in Europe. It shows how propaganda and hate is spread and discusses how hate crimes can be stopped. A comment on “hate talk” erupting from broadcasts “like Rush Limbaugh who also spews racist vitriol” makes the philosophy of the author suspect although the book is informative.

The book Cults is concise and informative in covering the subject mostly in a contemporary setting. It goes back to colonial times, but the bulk of the material is on recent groups such as the Branch Davidians, the Freeman, The Family, and The People’s Temple.

Militias gives the history of the “right to bear arms” movement going back to colonial times. Current groups such as Ruby Ridge, the Branch Davidians, and incidents such as the Oklahoma City bombings are covered. Quotes are given and philosophies are discussed.

Family Abuse covers subjects such as child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, and other forms of family abuse. The examples are so graphic and the language so explicit, it may be inappropriate for reading by teens, but could be a resource for adults working with abused children.

The book Teen Crime Wave gives the history of juvenile justice in American and discusses its uses. It gives a detailed description on how the juvenile justice system works and describes innovative programs that have been used. It contains one swear word in a quote.

Prisons takes a hard look at the increasing problems our society is facing with the increase in the prison population and possible solutions. It explains laws regarding juvenile sentencing and describes life in prisons and discusses the effectiveness of prisons and harsh sentencing.

School Prayer gives a background of the Supreme Court debates going back to the 60’s. The separation of church and state issues from colonial times is discussed. It ends with controversies in the 90’s.

Guns, Violence, and Teens presents the issues of youth and gun violence including violence at school. State and federal gun control laws are explained. The book explains the debate on gun control from a balanced perspective. The issue, according to the book, is not whether we have gun control, but what kind of control will work.
368.2. Drug abuse. 104 p. Gr. 7 - 12.
Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

306.875. Brothers and sisters;Sibling rivalry. 112 p. Gr. 7 - 12.
Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

616.85. Eating disorders; Weight control; Self-perception. 128 p. Gr. 7 - 12.
Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Quality - 3  Acceptability - 3

The Teen Issues series by Enslow Publishers is informative, relevant and current. Each book in the series concludes with a chapter on where to find help, chapter notes, suggestions for further reading, and an index. They are attractively laid out and easy to read. Quizzes relating to the material are scattered throughout the text, and numerous personal examples from teens are used to enhance the material. These attractive library-bound books are ideal for research and for teens who are facing specific problems.

In Addiction, the "High" That Brings You Down, stories of real teens are used to illustrate how addictions shape the role or every member of the family. Common addictions of drinking, using drugs, gambling, spending money, sexual relationships, and eating are explored. Signs to identify problems are explained as well as suggestions for solutions to the problem.

Sibling rivalry as a normal part of family life is explored in Brothers and Sisters, Born to Bicker?

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AIDS, Choices for Life begins with the true story of a young man who died of AIDS and then gives the history of the development of AIDS, how AIDS is transmitted, related diseases, how to protect yourself, and testing and research of AIDS. It is a "politically correct" presentation that condones immoral lifestyles. Esther Knaupp

Hazy Skies elucidates the interconnection of atmospheric pollutants and weather. The book is a valuable educational tool for learning about the reasons for air pollution, problems stemming from pollutants, and the need for everyone to take responsibility for curbing pollution. Dianne Woodman

363.739. Water--Pollution; Pollution. 122 p. Gr. 10 - 12.
Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

As we near the end of the twentieth century and survey the myriad of issues facing humankind, the pollution of the world's water resources must be high on the list of concerns. This is the challenge which Edward Dolan sets out to describe in the present volume. Dolan provides a worldwide perspective on this important subject covering both fresh and salt water situations. The author begins by stating the causes of the present dilemma and provides examples of a variety of forms of water pollution. In the final chapter, Can You Be of Help? Dolan lays out practical ways for us do become involved. This is a balanced, fact-oriented book, geared towards students requiring information for their term paper research. A thorough bibliography and index round off the work. Ted Goshulak

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Education, by Linda Leuzzi, is part of the Life In American 100 Years Ago series, and shares the story of the beginning of education in America starting with the Puritans. It covers the progress of elementary, secondary, undergraduate, and graduate education. A chapter is devoted to people who influenced education because of their wealth or because of their vision; both victories and struggles are shared. Extensive coverage is given to the education of women and other minorities including blacks, migrants, and Native Americans.

This easy-reading, informative book is strengthened by the multitude of pictures that take the reader back in time. Pictures include a black and white engraving of Harvard College (p 17), a black and white photo of Native American students at Carlisle Indian School (p 34 ), and a colored print of lunchtime games. (p 27).

Credits for pictures is provided at the back of the book. A few of the photos are out of place: a picture of a primary classroom was in the middle of a chapter on universities (p 76). A helpful index is included as well as a short list of further readings that include older as well as currently published material. This book provides a great starting place for someone

YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION

Our Poisoned Waters
interested in background information of education in America). Lynette Sorensen


Laryn Linaman’s Guide for the College Bound, Everything You Need to Know is an up-to-date, informative guide that would be beneficial for high school students, their parents, and individuals of any age who are planning to go to college. This excellent source includes tips on how to choose a college, questions to ask college reps, answers on finances, and helpful tips on making use of the internet to get college information.

This book tells students what to expect in a first term of college and includes tips for successfully transferring to another college without losing valuable credits. It also includes information about distance learning and educational choices for grown-ups. The appendices include a list of financial aid resources, a listing of names and addresses of Christian colleges and universities, and web pages by denomination. This practical guide book is well worth reading for all prospective college students and their parents. Esther Knaupp


A boy raised by his mother in the wilderness and known to himself only as Young Master or Dear Boy, knows nothing of life beyond his home. He does not know of God, the Creator of the bird whose death he causes. He sorrows so deeply after this accident his mother orders her peasants to capture all the larks nearby and wring their necks so her son will return to happiness. Her plan fails, to allay his sorrow; she tells him about God and also about the devil from whom he must flee. The boy soon meets three knights. Determined to become a knight, he sets out, riding a dilapidated old nag and armed only with his mother’s advice and a javelin.

The quest takes him into unfamiliar territory where he discovers his true parentage and even his name, Parzival. To his amazement, he finds other family members. In spite of his youth and inexperience, Parzival wins many combats, earning the love of a beautiful woman. While luxuriating one night in a king’s palace, Parzival fails to ask an all-important question. His omission leads to years of misery while he searches for the Grail.

Paterson ends the ancient tale, retold in her experienced style. In the same triumphant manner as the original thirteenth-century epic poem Parzival, the Quest of the Grail Knight, includes high drama, suspense, surprises, pathos, and well-described characters who exhibit good and evil. Paterson clearly presents the story of God’s love and his plan for clearly seeing those who believe him.

Parzival, just 4 1/2” x 7”, makes a handy family read-aloud book for long winter evenings or summer afternoons in the shade. Betty M. Hockett

500’s - Natural Sciences and Mathematics


The History Makers Series by Lucent Books would be a definite addition to any school library. These well researched volumes are filled with documented, interesting facts about prominent people who have made a difference in the world. Each book contains chapter biographies of both well-known and some not so prominent figures. Quotes from both primary and secondary sources are used throughout each book. After a concise introduction, a chapter follows on each person. Each volume ends with a list of notes, a chronology of events, a list of books for further reading, a list of major works consulted, additional works consulted, and an index. Numerous pictures and diagrams sprinkled liberally through the books make them inviting to a wide audience of readers.

Scientists of Ancient Greece by Don Nardo includes chapters on Democritus, Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus, Archimedes, Ptolemy, and Galen. These great thinkers were prominent in the areas of philosophy, botany, scientific classification, astronomy, and medicine. The book shows where their theories were found to be correct and where they were not.

Don Nardo’s Rulers of Ancient Rome begins with a brief history of ancient Rome from around 2000 B.C. to the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The rulers included are Fabius, Marius, Caesar, Cicero, Augustus, Nero, Constantine, and Justinian. The chapter biographies include personal facts about each leader as well as the circumstances and important events in Rome under their leadership. It gives an excellent overview of the entire Roman empire. Esther Knaupp


In line with the increasing interest in the natural world around us, a growing number of more advanced guides are coming out in spring. The two books covered in this review fulfill that role in a superior manner. Field guides provide basic identification tools whereby we can match the seen with the known. Beyond this initial identification we look to books which provide the relational characteristics of our interconnected world.

Gilbert Waldbauer, professor emeritus of entomology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, has written a book which provides a context for understanding the ecological interdependence of two of nature’s creatures: birds and insects. The lives of insects and birds are intricately interwoven and incredibly fascinating. This book looks at birds that eat bugs, bugs that eat birds, insect and bird defenses, bugs that eat people, and how people have responded. With color photographs and black-and-white line drawings, this is a well-conceived work. Two chapters which stand out are the chapter on the bugs that birds eat, where Waldbauer discusses various “eating habits” used by different birds, and a final chapter on “disappearing diversity” worldwide.

Baiich and Harrison’s book falls closer to the category of field guide. However, their presentation supplements the standard field guide and provides additional information on the breeding biology of North American birds. Using identification keys, species descriptions, color plates, and black-and-white drawings, the authors provide succinct yet pertinent information on the nests, eggs, and nestlings of North American birds. This second edition comes twenty years after the first edition and is greatly improved. The only comparable works, Hal Harrison’s Field Guide to Eastern Birds’ Nests (1975) and Field Guide to Western Birds’ Nests (1979) (both in the Peterson Field Guide series), lack the depth and detail of the present volume. For further information of North American birds’ eggs see: http://www.pma.edmonton.ab.ca/exhibits/eggs/vxhome/egghome.html which provides a comprehensive “virtual exhibit” of images from the Provincial Museum of Alberta, Canada.

The Birder’s Bug Book and A Guide to the Nests, Eggs and Nestlings of North American Birds are both valuable additions to any library collection. They are both well-written and useful for enhancing our knowledge and understanding of the world around us. Ted Goshulak

598.3. Herons; Birds. 183 p. Adult.
Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

The great blue heron is the quintessential heron throughout the majority of North America. However, despite its widespread territory, this impressive bird’s biology is still largely unknown. Butler, a research scientist with the Canadian Wildlife Service, and an adjunct professor at Simon Fraser University, has spent over ten years researching the great blue heron. This study focuses on a particular West Coast colony and is the first effort to follow the natural history of this species for a full year of its life cycle. Coastal British Columbia is home to a particular subspecies of the great blue heron, distinctive for its nonmigratory nature. It is at risk due to ever encroaching human activities. While focusing on a specific geographical location the results of this study shed light on the interplay between man, nature, and the preservation of quality habitats, which transcend place.

Butler presents the reader with a thorough, engaging look at the great blue heron’s foraging habits, food selection, social and territorial behavior, breeding, colony location selection, and population dynamics. While based on his 1991 Ph.D. thesis (University of British Columbia), Butler makes his technical data come alive. It is obvious that he enjoys his work and his enthusiasm is contagious. The final chapter of the book looks at the challenge of the conservation of this species in its native ecosystem. This is where Butler’s synthesis comes into its own; for we see the threat which human disturbance places on the future of these magnificent creatures. With a foreword by Robert Bateman, a comprehensive bibliography and index, and many charts and photographs, this is a well-crafted piece of work. Ted Goshulak


Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

This guide to the diurnal birds of prey of North America complements the authors’ earlier work. In 1987, Clark and Wheeler authored A Field Guide to the Hawks of North America (Peterson Field Guide series). This book was well-received in birding circles, with one caveat. The 242 black-and-white photographs were of only limited use in field identification. A Photographic Guide to North American Raptors is an answer to those shortcomings, and more. With over 370 color photographs, mostly taken by the authors, and descriptive species accounts for each of the forty-two raptor species, this new “edition” is a major work on its own. The photographs cover the numerous variations, phases, and stages of the various hawks, eagles, vultures, falcons, and kites found throughout North America. Regular vagrants are also given space. In addition, a “raptor identification problems” section rounds out the book. Here, fourteen ongoing identification problems are described and illustrated, with photographs, in great detail.

Brian Wheeler, illustrator of the 1987 volume, and co-author of this latest book, is a talented photographer and bird artist. More information on his work can be found at: http://www.virtualbirder.com/bkwheeler/ . He is at present working on a second edition of the 1987 hawks book as well as smaller versions (eastern species and western species) of the 1995 raptor work. All three of these latest products should be available in the year 2000. Ted Goshulak

600's - Technology


649. Family—United States; Divorce—United States; Family policy—United States; Adoptions—Government policy—United States. 224 p. Gr. 7 - 12.
Quality - 4  Acceptability - 4

The Family is part of the Opposing Viewpoints Series by Greenhaven Press. The series covers such controversial topics as Abortion, An Aging Population, American Values, Homosexuality, and Violence. The book editors have compiled many varying viewpoints on the subject of family; family decline, new family forms, single parenthood, gay-parented families, etc.

The book compilers present all sides of the issue. They includes the views of those who wish to replace America’s conventional moral standards with an immoral set of values. Michael Lerner is quoted as saying, “The agenda of the conservatives and the religious right does not respect America’s diversity and would require adherence to a repressive belief system.”

Also in the book are articles from those who do claim to adhere to Judeo-Christian morals. D. Bruce Lockerbie writes, “Advocates of the new forms of family structure are really advocates of spiritual rebellion against any higher moral authority than themselves.”

The introduction to the book uses this quote from John Stuart Mill to support its validity. “The only way in which a human being can make some approach to knowing the whole of a subject is by hearing what can be said about it by persons of every variety of opinion and studying all modes in which it can be looked at by every character of mind. No wise man ever acquired his wisdom in any mode but this.” Myrtlemay Pitman Crane

700's — The Arts and Recreation


704. Saints. 96 p. Gr. 5 - Adult.
Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

A drink of cold water for the thirsty, a shelter for the weary—the inspiration drawn from Sister Wendy’s Book of Saints by Sister Wendy Beckett is this, and more. She defines a saint as one who has embraced God’s love with an unreserved “yes.” The saints are legend and real, each demonstrating character that embodies the love of God. The book begins with the familiar disciples and apostles, goes on to Mary Magdalenie, Paul, John the Baptist, Stephen. There is a section on virgin martyrs, some who were horribly mutilated before dying, then on to the saints through the Medieval times. The book ends with the family portrait of St. Anne, the mother of Mary, the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child. “You are not a saint because you keep the rules and are blameless; you are a saint if you live in the real world, going out and loving the real people whom God has put in your life. For most of us, this is our own family.” (p. 91)

Each page is framed with opposing conterpieces, the date of death, feast day, place or characteristic identified with the person, and attributes. A dropped initial begins each article, and there are illuminated letters throughout. Sister Wendy’s comments on the paintings make the lives of the saints breathe with their humanity, their devotion. Su Hagerty


743.6. Dinosaurs in art; Drawing—Technique. 64 p. Gr. 6 - Adult.


743.6. Insects in art; Drawing—Technique. 64 p. Gr. 6 - Adult.
Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Doug DuBosque has published two books that deal with drawing subjects that appeal to children and adults alike; insects and dinosaurs. In Draw Dinosaurs, twenty-four dinosaurs are presented with detailed step-by-step instructions. Each dinosaur page includes the dinosaur’s vital statistics and a tidbit of interesting information. Special pages dealing with basic forms, finishing touches, and various appropriate backrounds are also included. In Draw Insects, forty-nine different insects, from A to Z, are shown. Each page includes information as well as a life-size drawing of the insect. The reader is encouraged to study the author’s drawing before beginning their own illustration. DuBosque directs the student to look for the characteristics of insects, such as: six legs, two antennae, three body parts, and whether or not there are wings. A special section called Insect Relatives is also included which covers 10 favorite creepy-crawlies that are not insects, such as the wolf spider, the tick, and the scorpion.

DuBosque makes the topic of dinosaurs and insects fun and interesting. The step-by-step directions will
make even the most art challenged person feel successful. The reading level would make these books appropriate for young adults, but would also be a helpful tool for younger students that have adult help. The illustrations are done in black and white and could easily be used to trace if a particular insect or dinosaur is needed immediately. The science facts are an extra bonus that could be used in a science curriculum or with a student that has an above average interest in either topic. Patricia A. Youmans

900's - Geography, History, and Biography


914. Great Britain—Description and travel; France—Description and travel. 197 p. Gr. 7 - Adult.

Quality - 2 Acceptability - 4

Chasing the Horizon, written by Patrick Kinkade and illustrated by his brother Thomas, details a trip the brothers and their father took to Britain and France. The Kinkades wanted to retrace the elder Kinkade's travels in the military in World War Two.

To be successful, a book of travel experiences requires several factors—an entertaining writing style, keen observation, human interest (both of the author and those encountered), knowledge of history, and a sense of humor. Patrick Kinkade provides interesting details of places visited, and he possesses good observational skills. Unfortunately, Chasing the Horizon fails to satisfy in other areas.

Why should the reader care about the author's trip? This is the most important question and one that Chasing the Horizon never answers. There's little Christian content, and a promised “bond of love” between sons and father never seems to materialize. While Kinkade writes in a familiar style, his humor tends to fall flat. His tone at times is affected and self-conscious as he tells about the “clan Kinkade.”

I'm left wondering why the Kinkades felt this book was worth writing. Far from being a “wondrous journey” as the cover proclaims, Chasing the Horizon fails to excite or inspire. Thomas Kinkade's paintings, used as illustrations, are competent but fail to redeem the book. Andrew M. Seddon


920 (781.65). Musicians: Jazz. 128 p. Gr. 5 - Adult.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 4

Check the demographics: ten biographies, nine of black persons, one white; nine males, and one female. The reason? “Jazz really is the music of black Americans.” (p. 7) In American Jazz Musicians, Stanley J. Mour introduces the reader to these musical giants. Mour follows the chronology of jazz, from the forerunner, ragtime, with Scott Joplin (1868-1917) to Benjamin “Benny” David Goodman (1909-1986), noted for the integration of races in his band, to the contemporary trumpet genius, Wynton Marsalis (b. 1961.)

Mour surrounds his informative biographies with a preface, chapter notes, a list of books for further reading, selected discography and an index. Each chapter also has two black and white photographs of the subject.

American Jazz Musicians has a high interest level with a limited vocabulary. Su Hagerty


920 (973.7). Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865—Military leadership; United States—History—Civil War, 1861-1865; Presidents. 246 p. Gr. 6 - 12.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 4

Marrin doesn’t show a perfect hero, but he shows a realistic hero. Each chapter highlights different incidents as the book progresses through Lincoln’s life, but the majority focus on his tenure as president of the United States. There is no attempt to write a definitive biography of Lincoln from cradle to grave, but each background facet and related information relate to how Lincoln conducted himself during the civil war. Through ridicule, questionable military leaders, and an inherited set of divisive political circumstances, he remained true to his faith in God and convictions of moral righteousness. Throughout his public life Lincoln displays a duty to serve, even when it costs him dearly.

Marrin mixes snippets from primary sources with his easy to follow story line that connects the episodes from Lincoln’s life. The cited material is easy to follow, although a few passages do have fairly coarse language.

The book is an excellent example of history shared through a top-notch story-teller. It is directed towards young adults, but easily fits adult and upper elementary audiences as well. It is valuable as both an entertaining story about Lincoln’s life and as material for specific research information. Marrin makes Lincoln come alive while allowing the reader to appreciate him even more. Larry Smith


920.72 Afro-Americans—Biography; Women—Biography 32 p. Gr. 4 - Adult.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

In Women of Hope, former teacher and award-winning author Joyce Hansen writes compelling one-page biographies of twelve outstanding African-American heroines who conquered racial and gender prejudice to accomplish their dreams. The volume includes notable educators, Nobel- and Pulitzer-prize winners, the first African-American female neurosurgeon in the U.S., and the first black woman astronaut. Among the featured women are Ella Josephine Baker, the Delaney sisters, Ruby Dee, Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Mae C. Jemison.

With each story, recurring themes surface: the responsibility one has toward others; the necessity of following one’s path whatever the obstacles. The concise biographies whet the appetite for more, and an annotated bibliography provides further reading opportunities. The book itself is a work of art with its picture-book size, textured endpapers, and haunting photographs, which resonate with character and draw the reader to study each noble face again and again. This volume will inspire young people of any color and would be a welcome addition to the classroom. Marcy Stewart Froemke


921 (576.5). McClintock, Barbara, 1902-1992; Women geneticists; Genetics; Nobel Prizes—Biography; Women—Biography. 128 p. Gr. 5 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


921 (940.53). Wiesenthal, Simon; Holocaust survivors; War criminals—Germany; Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945). 104 p. Gr. 5 - 12.

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5


921 (629.45). Ride, Sally; Astronauts; Women—Biography. 104 p. Gr. 5 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5


921 (813). Asimov, Isaac, 1920-1992; Authors, American; Science fiction—Authors. 112 p. Gr. 5 - 12.

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

All books in the series follow the same format, an introduction to the figure, description and information about their formative years, their work, and what they are doing now. Many events are touched upon, but the authors seem to be trying to present information is
a well-rounded manner, not just the positive aspects of the person’s life but also the difficulties. Figures in the series are interesting, some known to readers because of mention in social studies history, or science texts, and also from current events and popular contemporary figures. Pick and choose the titles that will best serve your users’ needs.

To many young readers the name Barbara McClintock will have little meaning. Yet she, along with Marie Curie, who was awarded the prize with her husband, and Dorothy C. Hodgkin, are some of the only women to win Noble Prize in science. This biography gives readers an idea of the struggles and sacrifices this woman made throughout her long career.

After a short look at McClintock’s childhood and youth, the author focuses on her work with corn, and the “jumping genes” (called that because of their behavior), which led to the winning of the prize. Readers see the perseverance, focus on, and dedication to an idea that is needed by scientists as they form an hypothesis, and continue experimenting in spite of meeting dead ends. It is amazing that a life’s work could be focused on so common a plant. While the writing here is clear, it is academic. The biography will be useful for those classes discussing scientists in general and women scientists in particular.

Primary source documents are noted, with frequent use of “ibid,” although one wonders if that is needed at this particular grade level. A bibliography is provided, and photos are used throughout. There is even a web site with links to other sites for more information about McClintock’s work. Useful for upper grade students involved in beginning research or writing reports. Consider your library’s needs first.

Tracking down Nazi criminals became the life work of Simon Wiesenthal. Background is provided for Wiesenthal’s early life and World War II. Much attention is paid to the years he spent in Germany and growing up years, but we also become aware of the changes that were happening in the Christian church during the 1600’s. Susanna became interested in Christianity at an early age, and also received more education than most other girls her age. Susanna’s faith helped her to deal with hardships in marriage, poverty, the birth of nineteen children and the death of many of them at a young age. In the midst of her struggles she became a leader in spiritual matters, not only in her household, but also in the Christian community.

This book is easy to read, but sometimes goes into details that don’t seem relevant to a story about Susanna. Chapter 2 gives too much detail about what was going on in the Church during her growing up years. There are many lengthy quotes from other biographies such as John Kirk’s The Mother of the Wesleys. Actual quotes from the writings of Susanna or her family members give added insight into their thoughts and actions; however, a few of them are lengthy (eg. p 87-97). A number of times throughout the book, the author refutes what others have said in biographies about Susanna Wesley (eg. p 26) and evidence is provided to prove the point. Current views on Susanna’s child rearing and teaching methods are also discussed (p 82). A short bibliography, including older as well as current titles, and two appendices, one of selected meditations and prayers, and the other with Susanna’s exposition on the Apostles Creed make this book a useful source of information about the Wesleys). Lynette Sorenson


Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

While Hank Aguirre may be best known to sports fans as a major-league baseball pitcher with a blazing fastball, others will remember him as the founder of Mexican Industries, a corporation founded to train and employ minorities. Aguirre’s major-league career ran from 1955 to 1970, and he pitched for the Cleveland Indians, the Detroit Tigers, the Los Angeles Dodgers, and the Chicago Cubs. It was in 1962, while with the Detroit Tigers, that Aguirre became an All-Star pitcher and had the lowest ERA in the American League. Always proud of his Hispanic heritage, Aguirre wanted to help other Mexican Americans “climb up the ladder of life” after his retirement from baseball. In 1979, in a neglected area of urban Detroit, he founded Mexican Industries, an auto-accessories company. Today that firm is a multi-million dollar business that employs more than a thousand people. Aguirre lost a battle with prostate cancer in 1994.

The main focus of this book is on Aguirre the businessman and humanitarian rather than Aguirre the major-league pitcher. Little information is given on his personal life as an adult expect for a quick accounting of his divorce and re-marriage at the age of sixty-one and a vague mentioning of his children’s problems with addiction. Throughout the book, Copley uses many quotes from different sources to supplement the text. The sixteen pages of photos show Hank Aguirre’s growth from a smiling little boy with a baseball to a successful businessman. The book also contains a chronology, Aguirre’s stats and career pitching highlights and a helpful glossary and index. Lillian A. Heytvelt


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

This well-written and exceptionally researched biography covers the life of Lorraine Hansberry, a gifted Black playwright who died much too early at the age of thirty-four. Author Catherine Schecker’s research includes interviews with Hansberry’s sister, cousin, and former husband in addition to a variety of biographical books. Following the format of Enslow’s African-American Biographies series, Lorraine Hansberry: Playwright and Voice of Justice opens with a chapter describing opening night of Hansberry’s first play, Raisin in the Sun, on Broadway. The play, by a then unknown, Black playwright, was the first to focus on the Black experience, and met with doubt that it would succeed on Broadway. A multitude of backers toured the play through key cities, such as Chicago and Philadelphia, to convince a Broadway theater of the play’s merit.
The success of *Raisin in the Sun* launched Hansberry's career as a playwright at the age of twenty-nine. A prolific writer, much of Hansberry's work was published and produced posthumously by her former husband and "literary executor."

Remaining chapters follow Hansberry's life chronologically from her birth into an affluent Black family to her illness with pancreatic cancer and death in 1965. Literary projects as well as background information for the reader to fully understand the political influences on Hansberry's career are also described. Notes for each chapter are included at the end of the book, as is a chronology of Hansberry's life. A list of suggested reading and a thorough index are helpful for student research. *Lisa Wroble*

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921 (318). Hughes, Langston, 1902-1967; Poets, American; Afro-Americans—Biography. 128 p. Gr. 5 - 12.


921 (796.35). Robinson, Jackie, 1919-1972; Baseball players; Afro-Americans—Biography. 128 p. Gr. 5 - 12.


921 (322). Wells-Barnett, Ida B., 1861-1931; Afro-American women civil rights workers; Afro-American women journalists; Civil rights workers; Journalists; Women—Biography. 128 p. Gr. 5 - 12.


921 (973). Woodson, Carter Godwin, 1875-1950; Educators; Afro-Americans—Biography; Historians. 128 p. Gr. 5 - 12.


921 (128.73). Jordan, Barbara, 1936-1996; Legislators; Afro-Americans—Biography; Women—Biography. 112 p. Gr. 5 - 12.


921 (325). King, Coretta Scott, 1927-; Civil rights workers; Afro-Americans—Biography; Women—Biography; King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968. 128 p. Gr. 5 - 12.


921 (796.42). Owens, Jesse, 1913-1980; Track and field athletes; Afro-Americans—Biography. 128 p. Gr. 5 - 12.

**Quality - 3**  **Acceptability - 5**

This series gives readers information about Black Americans who are only briefly mentioned in many social studies and history books, and whose stories need to be told. For that reason alone the series is worth looking at, though school librarians will want to evaluate each volume to see which best fits their school needs.

Each volume contains additional endnotes, primary source documents, a bibliography, and some photographs of the individual and his/her times. Writing of individual volumes is uneven and at times "textbookish," but they do enlighten readers and provide much needed information about these prominent Black Americans. They will be useful for schools needing information about Black Americans, and also those wishing to build their knowledge of the contributions and struggles of Black Americans.

Langston Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance are synonymous. This legendary Black American writer whose poetry earned him much praise in later years, waged a long battle to have his work accepted during his lifetime. Along with many other American writers and performers, both white and Black American, Hughes left America in the early years of the century to live and work in France where there was less racial bias. After honing his skills in Paris and traveling in Europe, he returned home to American where he became a prominent spokesperson for, and poet of the Black American community, receiving the Spingarn Medal from the National Association for Advancement of Colored People in 1960.

This volume makes reference to the Harlem Renaissance and Hughes' personal life, though it does not go into as much detail as the Milton Meltzer biography (Crowell, 1968 and recently reissued by Millbrook Press with illustrations) or Audrey Osofsky's *Free to Dream: The Making of a Poet: Langston Hughes* (Lothrop, 1996), nor is the writing as fine. This volume does include a bibliography for further reading, uses many photographs, and includes some of Hughes' poetry.

April 1947 seems like eons ago to today's young readers, yet fifty-one years ago Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in professional baseball by signing with the Brooklyn Dodgers. The grandchild of slaves, Robinson's parents separated while he was quite young. His mother took him to live in the north to escape the Ku Klux Klan and Jim Crow laws. Once his talent became apparent he played with the Montreal Royals. Use with the other biographies to unite and stand together demanding the rights and remembered for being a moving force behind Negro History Week (which would later become Black History Month). He saw his mission as that of educating others in the rich history of Black Americans. Like Hughes, he was a recipient of the Spingarn Medal from the National Association of Colored People in 1926.

Not only did Barbara Jordan struggle against racism, sexism, and poverty to become a lawyer in Texas during the 1960's, she also faced opposition from within the ranks of Black Americans who thought she was not taking a decisive enough stand on certain issues. During her career Barbara Jordan was appointed to the Judiciary Committee after her arrival in Washington in 1973 when her mentor, Lyndon B. Johnson recommended her. She also was a keynote speaker at the 1976 Democratic National Convention in New York City. After retiring from political life she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The widow of Martin Luther King, Coretta Scott King gave up a promising career as a singer to marry Martin Luther King, Jr. and work with him in his mission to bring the idea of civil rights for Black Americans to pass. Today many people would scoff at the idea of a person with so much talent giving up her dream to follow her husband. Yet throughout the biography readers sense the strength of Coretta Scott King and her determination to fulfill her mission after his assassination in 1968. This book provides an introduction to a woman who was, and is, very much a part of the Civil Rights movement.

Think Jesse Owens and visions of the 1936 Olympics come to mind. But there is more to the story of Jesse Owens than disproving Hitler's idea of the Master Race. Readers follow his youth and early years as a track star, when pay was not as good as now, and endorsements for products few, even fewer if you happened to be Black. One wishes that the central figure of this biography would be more alive. Use with the Adler biography of Owens written for younger audiences and you'll have a well-rounded look at this track and field star. *Leslie Greaves Radioff*


Charlotte Bronte and Jane Eyre, as the title implies, combines biographical information about Charlotte Bronte, a thorough summary of the novel Jane Eyre, and points out the similarities between the two. Three insets give additional historical information to provide a background to the rest of the text. A chronology of the life of Bronte is included.

The illustrations include full-page oil paintings and pencil drawings. The paintings are rich and colorful showing both the beauty of the English moors and the austerity of Victorian life.

Stewart Ross states in his author's note that his purpose in writing Charlotte Bronte and Jane Eyre is two-fold. He is providing biographical information for the reader who has already discovered Bronte's Jane Eyre and is summarizing the novel for the reluctant reader who has not. The text is packaged in a semi-picture book form and appears to be aimed at a middle school audience. The novel being promoted, however, is not at an appropriate reading level for the average middle school student. This book would have been more effective if presented in a form appropriate for high school and college students.

Karla Kessel


C. S. Lewis will forever be identified with his classic children's series, The Chronicles of Narnia, but he was also a renowned lecturer and scholar. For those interested in learning more about the creator of the magical wardrobe and Aslan, Beatrice Gormley's biography provides an insight into the life of a man of deep Christian faith and intelligence. C. S. Lewis was not always a Christian; in fact, he was at one time a self-professed atheist. Gormley thoroughly explores the different relationships that shaped and formed C. S. Lewis both as a Christian and as a writer, from the troubled one with his father, to his poignant, late-in-life marriage to Joy Davidman. Other important influences were the Inklings, a writing group to which he belonged, one member of whom—J.R.R. Tolkien—did not like the "Narnia" books at all.

Quotes from C. S. Lewis, his family, and friends enhance the text, and many black and white photographs add interest to a very readable biography. Students who love The Chronicles of Narnia will enjoy seeing a photo of the intricately carved wardrobe that inspired its namesake in its series. The list of suggestions for further reading at the end of the book includes not only a complete listing and brief description of all the books that C. S. Lewis wrote, but also an excellent list of others written about him. Lillian A. Heytvelt


940.53. Righteous Gentiles in the Holocaust; Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945); World War, 1939-1945--Jews--Rescue; Righteous Gentiles in the Holocaust . 112 p. Gr. 6 - 12


940.53. Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945); World War, 1939-1945--Jewish resistance; World War, 1939-1945--Jews--Rescue; Righteous Gentiles in the Holocaust . 112 p. Gr. 6 - 12


940.53. Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945); World War, 1939-1945--Concentration camps . 112 p. Gr. 6 - 12


940.53. Germany--History--1933-1945; National socialism; Hitler, Adolf, 1889-1945 . 112 p. Gr. 6 - 12


940.53. Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945); World War, 1939-1945--Concentration camps . 112 p. Gr. 6 - 12


940.53. Nuremberg Trial of Major German War Criminals, Nuremberg, Germany, 1945-1946; War crime trials . 112 p. Gr. 6 - 12


940.53. Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945); Holocaust survivors; Refugees; Jews--History--1945-- 96 p. Gr. 6 - 12

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 4

Readers will find information on all aspects of Hitler's plan to exterminate European Jewry and those he considered society's "misfits" in The Holocaust Library. Volumes begin with a summary of the times and the political scene before Hitler's rise to power continuing with the war years through the Nuremberg Trials and later where applicable. A time line of the events follows. Volumes are heavily illustrated with period photographs, some of which appear in more than one volume. The images along with quotations from primary source materials and survivors make a powerful impact on the reader. The material presented is by no means new, but having access to the information in separate volumes will make it easy for students and teachers to find material for research projects. There is some overlap of material from volume to volume.

This is a grim, serious look at a period of time when it seemed that human decency was lost. Information about the Righteous Gentiles, resistance groups, and groups within Nazi Germany and Axis Europe show that many people followed their consciences in opposing Hitler and the Nazis, and the price they paid. More unsettling is the stand of the United States and some church groups. An index, chapter notes, glossary, and suggestions for further reading are included in each volume.

A good summary for the age intended but very sobering to read. Photographs of the naked corpses of men, women, and children are upsetting and unsettling even though they have been used often. More unsettling to young readers may be the faces of the prisoners and the photographs of naked people lined up waiting to be executed. Writing seems uneven in the different volumes of the series. These volumes would be additionally powerful with information from the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. Consider carefully, keeping in mind other library holdings.

Righteous Gentiles, a name given by the Jewish people to those non-Jews who at risk to themselves, helped Jews during World War II. Many of the stories told are familiar: Anne Frank; the Danes helping Jews escape to Sweden, which provided the basis for Lois Lowry's Newbery winning book Number the Stars; Jacob's Rescue, and others. Raoul Wallenberg's story is told here though not in as much detail as the Milton Meltzer book. This is the volume that provides a ray of hope in a otherwise dark topic and would be a good beginning look at this aspect of World War II.

Lest we believe that the Jewish people and others totally accepted Hitler's Final solution, The Resistance tells the story of those who chose to oppose him, the consequences faced, and the punishments meted out to those who chose to follow their beliefs and consciences. Many of these stories have provided the basis for other fiction and non-fiction for young readers as well as many movies. Here they are summarized and organized by geographic area. Readers can go to other sources for a more detailed account of individual incidents.

When all other methods of persecution failed to kill enough Jews, the death camps were put into operation. The Final Solution allows readers to see that, while the escalation was gradual, once it gained momentum there was no turning back. Harder to answer is the question how so many people seemed to be unaware of what they heard, saw, or smelled. Will raise many discussion questions.

First person accounts from the survivors and people who liberated the camps makes The Death Camps a very depressing yet hopeful book. Depressing in that so many suffered so much. Hopeful in that many prisoners within the camps and a few of the people in charge did what they could to help others. Hopeful too, since after the camps were liberated, many of these people were determined never to allow such a thing to happen again and to get their lives back to

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normalcy, if normalcy can be used when all your family, friends, and people from your village have been killed and you are the sole survivor. The power of the human spirit stands out here.

Just who were the Nazis is answered, at least in part, in The Nazis. The names and faces we know from other materials on World War II, but here they are profiled briefly. Readers are shown different facets of their lives, not just their role in the army. Their development from the early years between the World Wars and Hitler’s rise to power is traced. This should shed more light on a topic that is briefly covered in textbooks. With all that has been written the authors conclude this volume with a question: Who was to blame? The conclusions reached are that guilt must be shared by many people and groups, including those who chose to do nothing. This could be used as a good basis for discussion with more mature students.

The Nuremberg Trials and their outcomes are presented in Nazi War Criminals with information about the Nazi War criminals who went into hiding and were subsequently found, tried, and convicted. With each passing year not only are there fewer survivors to bring evidence against those involved but fewer perpetrators as well. Same format as other volumes and brings out the idea that there is a price to be paid for wrong-doing and that even though fifty plus years have passed people are still being held accountable. Mention is made here as in other volumes that war crimes and persecution of certain groups has gone on for years and is still going on today.

The time line in The Survivors differs from the others since it begins in 1944 and ends in 1954 with Jewish immigrants being granted citizenship by the Knesset in Israel. The struggle for acceptance of the Jewish State of Israel is shown as is the struggle of displaced Jews from all over Europe, bereft of family, many ill, with no means to earn a living to get to Israel. The displaced persons’ camps are mentioned and the groups who tried to find family members. Leslie Greaves Radloff


967.94 Jerusalem—History. 64 p. Gr. 7 - 12. Quality - 5 Acceptability - 3

Bernard Wolf’s color photography of Jerusalem brings the city to life—the places and the people—from archaeological sites to today’s soldiers. This photojournalist presents Jerusalem’s story from ancient to modern times, incorporating the history of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Wolf relates the bare facts of Christ’s life, including his crucifixion at Golgotha. But he writes: “Historians disagree with theologians that Jesus and Pilate ever met. Pilate was known to be a cruel, impatient, and corrupt man, who would, most likely, not have wasted his time over the mere disposal of another troublemaking Jew.”

The author presents a rather detailed account of Muhammad’s life and includes the assertion that Muhammad’s “footprints can still be seen embedded on the rock’s surface” [from which he supposedly rose to heaven.] One of Wolf’s last statements is “If God exists, whose God is He?”

The photographs would benefit from captions. Sometimes the accompanying text clarifies the subject. Other photos cannot be easily recognized. The title of the book comes from Psalm 137. Jeannette Hardage


970.0497. Indians of North America—History; United States—History—Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775; Culture conflict—North America; Indians of North America—First contact with Europeans. 96 p. Gr. 8 - 5.


973.2. Virginia—History—Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775; United States—History—Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775; Slavery—Virginia. 94 p. Gr. 8 - 5.


973.2. Pilgrims (New Plymouth Colony); Puritans; Massachusetts—History—New Plymouth, 1620-1691. 96 p. Gr. 8 - 5.


973.2. United States—History—French and Indian War, 1755-1763; United States—History—Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775. 96 p. Gr. 8 - 5.


The French and Indian War is difficult to understand, perhaps because of the misleading name given to it. This book has only two maps, and more would have been helpful.

The American Revolution is excellent. Several maps help illustrate where the battles took place. The authors speak eloquently about George Washington, explaining that his greatness as a leader was due to his incorruptible character.

The series is attractive and well written. In the preface, the authors express their goal of telling the big picture of history, leaving out much of the details which tend to overwhelm many students. On a whole, they have done exactly what they set out to do. The books are attractively illustrated with famous paintings, engravings, political cartoons, and photographs from Williamsburg, Jamestown, and Plimouth Plantation. Each book has a bibliography and index. Cathleen Sovold Johnson


973.3. United States—History—Revolution, 1775-1783; Participation, Afro-American; Afro-American soldiers—History—18th century. 182 p. Gr. 6 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Clinton Cox retells the story of the Revolutionary War, taking the reader into chillingly inadequate quarters occupied by the Continental Army. Never challenging the hypocrisy of a nation set on fighting for freedom while enslaving some of its people, Cox simply presents racial attitudes of the period. He peppers his book with portraits of some of the thousands of Negro soldiers who by choice or by force fought alongside whites to free the land from the British. Crispus Attacks, believed to be the first person killed in the Revolutionary War, is mentioned. So is Prince Whipple, the black man who traveled with George Washington and was with him at the crossing of the Delaware. Some lesser known men are also portrayed, such as a man known only as Black Sampson, about whom a poem was written and Jude “Old Rock” Hall, who first heard sounds of battle at Bunker Hill.

Cox gathered old drawings, and copies of documents from the Library of Congress, New York Public Library, WPA National Archives, Negro History Association and other sources to bring reality to his work. Both a detailed index and comprehensive
bibliography add to the importance of *Come All You Brave Soldiers*.

Young adult readers will find it difficult to put down this book. They will be shocked, horrified, yet thrilled as they read of this difficult period in America’s history. The richness of the information, along with the starkness of the illustrations make this a welcome addition to any library. *Dell Smith Klein*


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4


973.7. Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865—Assassination. 128 p. Gr. 5 - 10.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4


978. Oregon Trail. 128 p. Gr. 5 - 10.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4


324.6. Women—Suffrage; Women’s rights—History. 128 p. Gr. 5 - 10.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

Enslow is able to take significant periods, events, and people that influenced our country’s history and present the information in a comprehensive manner for middle grade and older readers. Such is the case in their In American History series. Although these are well-represented subjects, Enslow understands the needs of beginning researchers and showcases the material with consideration and relevant pertinence. The books are also helpful for adult researchers in need of a quick, but thorough overview.

Each book begins with a action highlight then moves into a slow progression that recaps the life and history of the featured subject. The books often weave in small windows of information which allows for a more intimate, personable approach to the subject. Early life and career, and important dates are covered, and the books include applicable source documents, photographs, and illustrations. Other notable features are timeline, chapter notes, further reading suggestions, index, and where relevant, a list of internet addresses. Considering the books are under two hundred pages they adequately cover important historical aspects. Librarians looking for a practical historical series for upper elementary and junior high might consider these books. *Pam Webb*


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


973.91. Crusades—Influence; Europe—Social life and customs; Civilization, Medieval. 128 p. Gr. 6-Adult.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


940.2. Renaissance. 128 p. Gr. 6-Adult.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

This series introduces the reader to the variety of living through the centuries, providing stimulating information for today’s people. Each volume follows a similar outline. They all have a common forward explaining the aim of the series: understanding ourselves. Each book starts with an introduction to that book’s individual study. Avoiding stereotypes, explaining the aim of the series: understanding everyday people and their events receive sympathetic but truthful treatment; as does good and bad. The reader gets to know individuals in depth. Where possible, the various facets of a story are compared. Sturdily bound, the volumes will last through much use. *Donna J. Eggett*


977.6. Duluth (Minn.). 80 p. Gr. 6-8.


977.4. Los Angeles (Calif.). 80 p. Gr. 6-8.


971.4. Montréal (Québec). 80 p. Gr. 6-8.


976.3. New Orleans (La.). 80 p. Gr. 6-8.


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Without leaving home readers can tour several important cities in Lerner’s Port Cities of North America series. Although these books are targeted at the junior high level, the density of material covered is more appropriate for high school students and adults.

Continued on p. 98.

F. Mentally handicapped children—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 144 p. Gr. 6 - Adult.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Ever wish you could walk with Jesus along the beach, your hand in his, asking questions about life and death, sin and forgiveness, and hear the Savior’s answers?

In Jonathan’s Journey, Katherine Bell’s work of inspirational fiction, such a fantasy materializes in a tenderly told tale whose central character is a six-year-old boy born with severe mental and physical disabilities. One night while asleep in his mother’s arms, Jonathan is awakened by Jesus and invited to travel through time and space with him. As Jonathan and his Creator begin their travels, the profoundly disabled youngster is startled to find he can see, walk, and talk just like other children. But he discovers that on this particular night (unlike other children) he can also tread the rainbow and sail the moon.

As the journey unfolds, Jonathan witnesses important events in the lives of Noah, Moses, Abraham, and Jesus himself. The Lord’s answers to the little boy’s questions reflect God’s love and grace and man’s need for a Savior.

The author brings a lyrical quality to her gently paced book that at times gives you a sense of “you are there.” In spots, though, the story loses some of its drama and risks becoming a lesson. The appeal of Jonathan’s Journey is in part Steve Miller’s black and white illustrations and the incorporation of verses from well-known hymns of the church. Each chapter opens with a drawing and a hymn. Nancy B. Clarke

A Note from the Editor: by Mary McKinney

The Greatest Story . . .

Have you ever noticed those long lines in shopping malls or bookstores as people wait excitedly to get a personally signed copy of the best seller they tightly grip? The author quickly scribbles a name, and occasionally a small note for the delighted fan. Now, the book’s value has been increased significantly because it carries the personal touch of the author.

How much more value must the greatest book of all, the Bible, possess as every page, every word is personally written to impart life and light to the reader. The Bible reveals the very core purpose of our existence — the why’s and wherefores, the how come’s and because of every significant question humanity has ever asked. This word is living and active, assuring the reader of ever-increasing knowledge and an ever-growing relationship with its author — God Almighty himself!

The following story, related to me by a missionary, shows the life-changing power of the Bible. A small Russian child of six named Mishna sat wide-eyed with wonder as he heard the Christmas story being related to him for the first time. Later, the group of children were given precious colored paper (unavailable in their city), cardboard, and felt so they could make their own little manger scenes.

Mishna carefully cut out yellow strips to make the hay for the baby Jesus. Then he placed the little felt figure he made in his cardboard manger. But when the missionary came by he noticed that Mishna had placed two tiny figures in the cradle. “Mishna, why do you have two babies?” the missionary asked. “Did you understand the story we told you?” Mishna nodded and began to retell the Christmas story, detail by detail. But when he got to the manger he only told of the baby Jesus. “So who is the other little figure?” the missionary asked again.

Little Mishna’s eyes filled with tears as he explained, “I wanted to give the baby Jesus a gift, like everyone else had done, but I had nothing to give. Jesus looked at me and told me I could stay with him, and I wanted to so much, but I had to have a gift. Finally, I thought that if I could keep him warm that would be a good gift. So I asked Jesus, ‘If I keep you warm, will that be a good enough gift?’ And Jesus told me, ‘If you keep me warm, that will be the best gift anybody ever gave me!’ So I got into the manger and then Jesus looked at me and he told me I could stay with him for always.”

Shaking with sobs by this time, little Mishna knew he had finally found a safe place where he could be welcomed and loved no matter what. This simple story should give us incentive to keep this greatest book at hand as number one on our best-seller list!
Can people truly change? This is the question posed in the ongoing saga of Vicar Andrew Phelps and his lovely young daughter, Elizabeth. While Elizabeth is being courted by a steady, handsome young Anglican priest, the man she once loved comes back into her life wanting to prove he is not the same person he formerly was. Can she and her father trust this man who once broke her heart? He learns it will take more than words to redeem his love.

Set in a 19th century English village, this tale continues the unfolding drama of the young widow, Julia Hollis who runs the Larkspur Inn. Gresham may be a sleepy country village, but author Laura Blackwell keeps the pace up as she delves into the lives and loves of its inhabitants. This sequel to the Widow of Larkspur Inn portrays its characters in a depth and richness that holds the reader’s interest.

Life in all its complexities and challenges sharpen and shapes the choices made by these characters attempting to live out their faith in Christ. Defeat as well as victory is confronted. Though set in an earlier time, the reader will identify with the emotions and dilemmas of the characters. Mary Jarvis

Stephen Bly has a wonderful way of bringing his characters to life. Readers will find themselves locked into the story with these real characters. Red Dove of Monterey is an excellent example of “show, don’t tell,” making it a real page-turner. Spiritual elements are down-to-earth and applicable. Beth Loughner


Sweet” Carolina Cantrell is more independent, business-like, and stubborn than sweet, but these traits enable her to deal competently with the murder of her brother and the settling of his affairs in Montana Territory. Carolina is more than a match for her incorrigible, saloon-owning partner Starke, and her pride will not allow her to be defeated into returning home to her cultured life in the eastern states.

But Carolina has an inexplicable romantic streak as well, which complicates her need to be in total control. Her heart is irresistibly drawn to a God-fearing, drifting cowboy, Ranahan. With his help and that of July, a young boy she befriends, Carolina successfully establishes a store literally in the middle of nowhere and tackles the challenges presented when a nearby gold strike promises to turn her business into a growing town. She also encounters difficulty when she discovers that Jacob, her former beau, is in the area, and wants to renew their relationship. Carolina is shocked and angry when she meets the actress Isabel Leon whom Jacob dumped her for, but she becomes sympathetic and forgiving when she learns how terribly Jacob treated Isabel. The two women establish a tenuous but promising friendship and together prevent the illegal wiles of Jacob from ruining the budding town.

Sweet Carolina, first in the Heroines of the Golden West series, is a fast fun read. Author Stephen Bly has a wonderful way of bringing his characters to life. Readers will find themselves locked into the story with these real characters. Red Dove of Monterey is an excellent example of “show, don’t tell,” making it a real page-turner. Spiritual elements are down-to-earth and applicable. Beth Loughner

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Travis, Son of Cleatus battles poison, pirates, pagan gods, and a perilous sea voyage to Carthage, where his father wants him to seek financial help from his half-brother. Should this prove unsuccessful, Travis must seek a foothold for the family in the economically prosperous Constantinople, and uncover the political corruption affecting his family. In his travels, Travis is joined by Hannibal, a Christian trader, and his daughter, Lydia. Travis and Lydia fall in love, but cannot marry, since Travis is not a believer. Travis is perplexed by the divisions within the Christian community—the Gnostics, the Donatists, and the followers of Arius. But Hannibal gives Lydia wise advice: “He will see the flaws in our religion...and unless we refuse the convenient cloak and instead meet him with open honesty, he will use what he learns to condemn and criticize...we must not seek to shield ourselves but rather disarm him with the truth.”

Having little success with his corrupt, younger half-brother, Travis continues on to Constantinople, only to be kidnapped by his power-hungry older brother and enslaved in the mines. There, under the tutelage of an old priest, he accepts Christ’s gift of salvation. With his life spiritually transformed, Travis is finally freed from the mines to confront his brother’s corruption, establish business prospects with members of the Christian community, and ask Lydia’s hand in marriage.

To the Ends of the Earth, by T. Davis Bunn, is an intriguing story which starts off strongly, but becomes somewhat disjointed and less compelling towards the end. Set in a time of great political upheaval and spiritual unrest, the story is a vivid portrayal of the struggle to establish basic elements of the Christian faith which we now take for granted: Was Jesus truly
God and yet fully man? Was God the Father the same as Jesus the Son? Other questions revolving around salvation were fiercely debated: When believers were under severe persecution, should they stand and be martyred for their faith, or was it permissible to go into hiding? Could they go through the motions of worshipping the emperor, and still claim to follow the One True God in their hearts? Could they purchase false certificates of sacrifice from the priests and not deny their faith with such actions? Could penance alone for one’s sins? To the Ends of the Earth follows one man’s struggle to find the truth promised to those who earnestly seek Christ with all their heart. Sherri Beeler


F. Christian fiction. 338 p. Gr. 11 - Adult.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Meg, fleeing a broken engagement, arrives in Crandale with mixed emotions. Her late Grandfather’s cranberry farm bring many warm memories of summers spent helping him. But crowding these aside come the harsh memories of Sunny, her eccentric mother who never really was a mother, and of Grandmother, whose approval Meg was never able to gain, but who now is slowly dying. At thirty-five, Meg has long ago made her own way in the world and would never have foreseen returning to this family whose ties she had mostly severed. Maybe it was now time to forgive and forget even if it means taking the blame.

Homeward is a story of healing bruised emotions between estranged family members. Past assumptions and judgments made are discovered to be based on misunderstandings that only the maturity of adulthood can fathom. Skeletons tumble out of the closet that shed light on reactions to situations that shaped growing up years.

Melody Carlson includes much information on the delicate methods of cranberry farming as the main character strives to restore the bogs from years of neglect. This parallels the gradual restoration of family relationships and returning to the commitment made to God as a teen. Debbie Lindsey


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

A four day holiday from her work aboard a mission ship was just what Allison Westcott needed. What she did not expect was to be caught in the middle of a murder mystery that involved agents from warring countries. Set in Egypt and Turkey in 1916, Arabian Winds is the story of a young nurse named Allison. While on her “archaeological holiday,” a member of the team is discovered dead. When Allison discovers her cousin, Leah, in the hut of the dead man, she unwittingly becomes a messenger in a world she does not understand. In the process, Allison meets a British agent—Bret Holden—and during one of his rescues, finds herself very attracted to him. Will she and Bret survive this mission? And will she remember that she has a “fiancé” waiting back in Egypt for her?

In Lions in the Desert, we find Allison serving as a nurse on the war front along with her “unofficial” fiancé, Wade Findlay. She has not heard from Bret in twelve months, although he promised he would be in touch with her once he returned from England. When, on the front, both she and Wade are in need of being rescued, Bret once again appears and whisks her off to safety. It appears that Bret has no desire to become committed in any relationship. But then why does he keep showing up each time that she needs him? He would be a lot easier to forget if he would just stay away.

In Valiant Hearts, Allison is told that Bret has betrayed the Intelligence Agency and has lost his position. Allison disregards this information and is determined to trust in the man who had recently asked her to marry him, even if that was months ago, and she hasn’t heard from him since. When Allison does see Bret again, it is on a cruise on the Nile, and there is a rich and attractive woman on his arm. Has he betrayed his country and her? What should she believe?

Linda Chaikin has once again written a series that readers will not want to put down until they have finished book three. As usual, Chaikin has chosen an exotic and creative location/time period for the series and has woven historical events with the fiction. The novels contain mystery, romance, and a picture of a heroine who will sacrifice all for those she loves and her country. Both the heroine and hero have a strong relationship with God and they seek him to guide them in their adventures. One will read this series and know why I consider Linda Chaikin one of the best in the Christian field of fiction writing. Tammy Williams


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Hilda Beauchamp not only knew exactly what she wanted, but also what would best suit the other members of her family. But all of Hilda’s careful planning goes awry as those in her circle of family and friends are caught up in the evangelical awakening that breaks out on the university campuses of England in the 1880s. One by one the wealthy, promising young men of her acquaintance abandon their lives of indulgence, privilege, or position for the hardships of missionary life; a call that Hilda, though a Christian, does not share or completely understand. Bewildered by the changes in those around her and the direction of her own heart, Hilda turns repeatedly to Kynaston Studd, whose deep desire to serve on the mission field seems always thwarted. Both Hilda and Kynaston watch and pray for their dear friends and relatives as love of a higher sort calls them all to lives they had never dreamed.

Where Love Calls is a noble attempt to recreate the atmosphere and personalities of the great revival in late nineteenth century England. Crow’s subject is a worthy one, as so much of what Christians believe about foreign mission work and how it should be done was formed by the men known as the “Cambridge Seven” who answered God’s call in those days. Donna Fletcher Crow has done considerable research into the lives of the Seven and has written a book that, while fiction, attempts to portray these giants of the faith as flesh and blood men. Her decision to do this in conjunction with a romance, though, is unfortunate, for both the romantic aspects and the spiritual self-examination of each member of the Seven suffer as a result. In addition, the number of characters and their various friends and relatives becomes problematic as the reader tries to keep track of who is who. In the process, Hilda Beauchamp’s spiritual growth goes undeveloped throughout most of the story until near the end, leaving the impression of a petulant young woman rather than a maturing one. The glimpses into the life of C. T. Studd and the others of the “Cambridge Seven” are well worth the reading of this book. It is long past the time that these great men of God should be re-introduced to a new generation. If Ms. Crow’s book encourages its readers to delve further into the lives of these men, she will have done a great service. Pamela A. Todd


F. Great Smoky Mountains--Fiction; Mystery fiction. 245 p. Gr. 11 - Adult.
Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

Michael, a private investigator, and his wife Elizabeth are searching for a missing woman in a remote area of Tennessee that has been left in the dustheap of time. The missing woman, who has seemingly vanished into nothingness, is the fiancée of a young, very wealthy business man who has yet to receive a ransom note for her return. The people are a tight lipped, protective group and Michael must move slowly to gain their confidence and much needed information, especially since the local search and rescue and sheriff are unable to unearth any clues.

Spirits is by Peggy Darty, who has created through this plot a glimpse into the life of the people who have...
chosen seclusion in the midst of modern America. She touches on the history of the Cherokee nation and their contribution to the area. There is evidence in the story that previous books by Ms. Darty have introduced the main characters, but enough information of the past is included to become acquainted with their history.

Debbie Lindsay


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Father Reed Griffin is the Episcopal rector (senior pastor) of a large cathedral-like church located on the beautiful campus of Avennell University, “a southern Ivy League kind of school,” nestled in the foothills of the Cumberland Mountains in Tennessee. Dudley J. Delffs has provided a remarkable authenticity to Father Griffin, an Episcopal priest comfortable in his calling to serve God in the small college town and campus he’s known since boyhood. Gentry Truman, a wealthy famous American playwright, is murdered in an isolated college chapel, bringing in the national news media and show business personalities to upset Avennell’s tranquility.

The twists and turns of characters and plot kept me intrigued, guessing vainly at which character was the murderer. I particularly liked the portrayal of the kind, gentle characters who were Father Griffin’s family, friends, and acquaintances in this charming setting. What detective novel begins with a quote from Matthew 16:25-26! The thrust of our Lord’s words are actually carried through as the lesson of this story. Humor is mixed with pathos and intrigue in this delightful novel. After reading this book, I’m sure that any Episcopal parish seeking a new priest will be clamoring for “Father Griff” to be their rector. But I suspect that they will be unable to lure him away from his beloved Avennell. That’s all to the good, as I hope Delffs will take us back again many times more to Avennell for further adventures with Father Griff. This story gets a happy thumbs up! Mike Jarvis


F. Mystery fiction; Submarines—Fiction; Spiritual warfare.

329 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Present day San Diego and its clear, warm waters is the setting for the arrival of a World War II submarine, the USS Triggerfish, unannounced and unmanned. Retired Navy captain J.D. Stanton is at first excited beyond belief to be in charge of research for this mysterious sub, but soon unusual and life-threatening events begin to happen that turn his eagerness into caution and apprehension.

Alton Gansky takes the reader from active duty in the Atlantic during World War II, to the current lives of those assigned to discover how the Triggerfish can look brand new after having disappeared fifty years earlier. Unexplained happenings and an eerie, almost tangible evil have some believing the sub is haunted, and others determined to prove that the supernatural doesn’t exist.

A Ship Possessed is a page-turner that is guaranteed to give the reader chills and a deeper appreciation for their Christian faith. Gansky is quite expert at filling the pages with interesting details combined with excitement and a sense of mystery. This is an excellent read for anyone who enjoys exploring the possibilities of supernatural activity in the light of biblical text. Mary McKinney


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Dr. David O’Neal, the director of Barrington Relief, is arrested for skimming money from the organization and smuggling illegal aliens into the country. The proof of David’s guilt on one charge lies in a video that shows him turning over a briefcase full of money to the leader of a smuggling syndicate. Greg, a college student, demonstrates to David how the incriminating video is a fake by showing him a spot where a shadow is pointing in the wrong direction. When Greg finds other misdirected shadows and images of mosquitoes on some of the money in the video, he leaves a message on David’s answering machine unaware that his phone is bugged. This results in Greg’s death and an unsuccessful attempt on David’s life. David’s name is cleared, and Dr. Elaine Averbene, a highly respected scientist and the person responsible for the frame-up, escapes.

Alton L. Gansky has written a suspense story in which a man is framed for crimes he didn’t commit and has to prove his own innocence. Through David’s personal resolve, support of his lawyer and girlfriend, and trust in God, he is able to discredit the conspirators and reestablish his own credibility.

Tarnished Image is a story about a man whose anger and frustration over the recent disastrous events in his life cause him to rely on his own devices instead of his faith in God until his girlfriend intervenes. Then David puts his faith back in God to resolve his predicament. Dianne Woodman


F. Colorado—History—Fiction; Western fiction. 303 p. Adult.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

The Treatment Seekers, a novel set in an English farming community in 1844, tells the story of Annie Caraway, her mother Constance, and four siblings. Constance, recently widowed with five children, is unable to keep the family farm. When Annie suggests a move to New South Wales where free land is given to new settlers, Constance objects because it is a convict’s colony.

Uncle Abbot, a magistrate, with four children of his own, purchases their farm and says his family will relocate to New South Wales with them. Annie wonders why; this isn’t like her uncle.

New South Wales doesn’t become the land of opportunity for the Caraways. Disasters from weather, fire, failed crops, and Constance’s death, make them penniless orphans. The Abbots reluctantly take them in. Annie meets Ragan, an impoverished architect, charged with embezzlement, and imprisoned in a private jail on the Abbot’s estate. Annie delivers his evening meal while, Isabelle, her younger sister, whose duty it is, meets secretly with Charles Lafferty, their half-sister’s fiancé.

The introduction of characters in the first chapter is difficult to follow, but the story takes over. The struggles the main characters face are easy to identify with. Ragan doesn’t come back to God until the final chapters. Patricia Hickman weaves romance through the entanglements of the sisters. Kidnapping, running away, and a life and death chase through the wastelands add suspense. The character development shows spiritual growth through family separation and the death of both parents. Though part of a series, the novel can stand alone. Gail Welborn


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Reared in an upper-class home with all the trappings and servants of the wealthy, Rachelle Bailie discovers from her dying mother that she is part Indian—a race shunned and enslaved by the settlers at Charles Towne as much as the Negroes who work the rice plantations. Engaged to be married to the handsome, slave-owning Lanston Wragg, Rachelle insists on traveling to Boston to find Mojag Bailie, missionary to the Indians—the father she never knew. Rachelle has learned firsthand some horrifying things about Lanston and how he “manages” his slaves. If she confirms that she truly is part Indian, Rachelle fears that Lanston will break their engagement—or worse.

Rachelle’s Boston-bound ship is attacked by the notorious pirate Bettencourt, who offers freedom to all the Indian and Negro slaves aboard. Rachelle escapes Lanston by insisting that Bettencourt take her on board and help her find her father. As they search, Rachelle falls in love with the gentlemanly Bettencourt, who opens her eyes to the evils of slavery. Ultimately Rachelle is united with her father, though not without great cost of life and freedom for his Indian friends, and she and Bettencourt flee Lanston with Mojag, and get engaged.

Charles Towne, book five in the Keepers of the Ring series, is a well-researched book written by Angela Elwell Hunt, who provides a list of her historical sources at the end of the book. Charles Town is a good read, although the story-line appears less than credible in places, including the exaggeratedly villainous Lanston, the overly chivalrous Pirate Bettencourt, and Rachelle’s choice to sail with a pirate rather than remain behind in relative safety.

The book speaks powerfully of the spiritual bondage of sin as well as the physical bondage of slavery. Sherri Beeler


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Manasseh and Ephriam, sons of Joseph, vizier to the Egyptian pharaoh, are grown young men who are eager to find their places in life. Manasseh and Ephriam are called to their grandfather Jacob’s death to receive his blessing. Jacob crosses his hands so that his right hand falls on the younger son, Ephriam, instead of the older son. Jacob pronounces that the younger son will be greater than the older. Ephriam takes full advantage of this opportunity to lord himself over Manasseh. He then returns to Egypt to pursue what appears to be a promising relationship with the pharaoh’s daughter. Ephriam imagines that marrying into the royal family will be God’s way of making him a great man of power.

Manasseh meanwhile remains behind with his uncles, Joseph’s brothers, and hears the incredible tales of Jacob’s life and God’s faithful relationship with his chosen people. Manasseh commits himself to the Lord, and God speaks to him in a dream telling Manasseh that people of God should leave Egypt and return to conquer the land of Canaan. But Manasseh is in love with Judayi, a beautiful Egyptian harpist who is a slave in the pharaoh’s court and none of Joseph’s brothers are willing to believe that God truly spoke to him. Manasseh struggles with confusion and doubts. If he follows God’s call to prepare an army to conquer Canaan, he will go against his father’s counsel and earn the scorn of his brothers and uncles.

If Manasseh’s plans are discovered by the pharaoh, he will lose any chance of marriage to Judayi—and perhaps lose his own life. Manasseh ultimately decides to follow the vision of God rather than the counsel of men. And while the Lord does not answer Manasseh’s prayers in the way he expects, the outcome shows Manasseh that the Lord is faithful to those who follow him.

Journey, by Angela Elwell Hunt, is the third book in the Legacies of the Ancient River series. While not the strongest book of the trilogy and perhaps a bit more speculative than the other two books, Journey is a biblically-based story that explores the relationship of two brothers divided in their sincerity in following God. Through Manasseh’s example Ephriam is faced with the realization that he must make a choice. He cannot continue to remain on the fence claiming to follow God while paying lip service to Pharaoh and the Egyptian gods in order to establish a future for himself that will leave him powerful in the eyes of men. Manasseh demonstrates that following God must be done unreservedly and whole-heartedly.

Sherri Beeler


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

In the small town of New Bethany, Tennessee, there has been a tradition for many years of women coming together to plant trees and committing themselves to a year of prayer for their community. Time has taken its toll on this tradition, however; this year only four women step forward to take on the challenge. Naomi, divorced and middle-aged, leaves an unsatisfactory life in Maine for her home town only to discover that she must become her elderly mother’s caregiver. Rose, a fifty-six year old widow, is struggling to find where she fits in now that her children are grown. The biological clock of Mary Lucille, a daycare owner, is ticking, and everyone knows that her boyfriend has no intention of marrying her. “Superwoman” Gayle lives in fear that someone will discover the secret that haunts her past and keeps her from responding to the love of her husband.

The Prayer Tree follows the sweet joys and shattering sorrows that fill the lives of these women as they spend a year arguing, eating chocolate, and praying together. Annie Jones lost her mother just as she began writing this novel, and in a note at the end she shares that she determined that this experience would be reflected in the lives of her characters. She has indeed written “a love story about women becoming friends” and succeeded in telling a story that reflects the comradeship that often develops between women as they face together the pivotal moments that mark every life. Lillian Heytvelt


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 4

In the year 1162 a young knight is summoned to the court of Henry II, King of England, to set right a wrong that has darkened the world. Lord Sivron is forced to take a serious look at the life he has been leading--a life of thievery and manipulation to survive in the homes of Americans by publishing Brady’s travel notes and illustrations. Embittered by the death of his wife, and the prejudice against Irish-Americans, Jack is encouraged by Terese’s brother Cavan to seek the answers in a relationship with Christ. This is reinforced by the godly Samantha Harte, a young widow Jack has come to love. But even she has her own dark past of an abusive marriage to overcome. She believes she will never be able to love a man. When Cavan nearly dies protecting Jack from an attempt on his life, Jack and Samantha’s friendship is strengthened, and Jack is forced to take a serious look at his spiritual standing.

Cloth of Heaven is an appealing book because it describes real people with real hurts and needs, and doesn’t give simplistic answers to the problems author B.J. Hoff raises. Terese, bitterly estranged from Brady, makes her way to America, carrying his child under false pretenses—a child she almost aborted. Cavan is recovering from two grievous wounds; Jack is not yet convinced to entrust his life to Christ; Samantha still must face the pain of her past; and Brady wanders Ireland, restlessly seeking for something to fill him without tying him down. But B. J. Hoff has set the stage for the books that will follow in this series with wonderfully developed characters, and the hope of certain redemption for at least some of them. Sherri Beeler


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 4

In the year 1162 a young knight is summoned to the court of Henry II, King of England, to set right a wrong that has darkened the world. Lord Sivron is forced to take a serious look at the life he has been leading—>

F. Romance--Fiction; Sisters--Fiction. 245 p. Gr. 11 - Adult.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

At thirty-one, still single and beautiful, Cat is now the president of her late father's advertising agency. At threeo, still single and beautiful, Cat is now the president of her late father’s advertising agency. Cat learns to be more accepting of personality differences and that a little spontaneity will not be detrimental to that which counts most in life. She also realizes that jumping to conclusions without checking all the facts was what brought her much emotional pain and loss in her relationship with Jonas. Debbie Lindsey


F. Christian--Fiction; Mothers and daughters--Fiction; Romance fiction. 159 p. Gr. 9 - Adult.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Snow begins falling over King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, in December 1929. Mary Withers, a pretty young widow, dreads the cold winter. She has little money to pay for the coal to heat her house and her six-year old daughter Alexis has asthma, which always gets worse in the cold. While delivering coal for his injured father, Eric Mueller a professor at the university, becomes attracted to Mary. When Christmas Eve brings a snow storm, Eric delivers medicine for Alexis’ asthma attack. While helping Mary nurse her daughter through the night, Eric discovers that she loves Mary and also that his long lost brother has been living in the closed up part of her house.

The theme that we are all children of God is woven throughout the story. Mary watches over Alexis and God watches over them all. He not only answers prayers, but also gives good gifts, providing Christmas miracles and a few surprises. Well written, Snow by Calvin Miller will fill several winter (or summer) hours pleasantly. The book’s small size and lovely cover art would make it a great gift selection. Elizabeth A. Coleman


F. Airplane--Design and construction--Fiction; Terrorism--Fiction; Woman engineers--Fiction. 265 p. Adult.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

Two women, both highly educated engineers working together on the development of a nuclear powered aircraft, find themselves battling tremendous physical, emotional and spiritual issues. In Margaret Miller’s intrigue and suspense laced thriller, A Vessel of Honor, Tisha O’Brien and Audra Shields, while working toward the same professional goal, approach their paramount challenge from different moral foundations. Going from the bustling work field of home with its desperate race against the clock, to the pit of the enemy’s stronghold, these two women find their faith, values, and basic principles of life challenged to the very core; and the outcome is dramatic and even chilling to the reader. Truth and right prevail, but only after severe testing and sacrifice.

A Vessel of Honor is well written, fast paced, and thought provoking. It deals squarely with contemporary subject material, balancing the religious and spiritual mores of the centuries with the issues and philosophies so embraced by today’s generation. The book is written, though, with a more mature audience in mind. Necessary to the plot of the book, issues dealing with a violent and sexual nature are included, though they are handled with honesty, integrity, and discretion as much as the story allows. There are places, though, where the subject matter is somewhat intense.

Margaret Miller has written a powerful and provocative novel. It challenges and even strengthens the beliefs and values of the reader with its extremely interesting and intriguing plot and substance. Gayle Chessman Haberman


Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

Among the King’s Soldiers is a slow paced tale, told from multiple viewpoints. It is the third book in The Spirit of Appalachia series co-authored by Gilbert Morris and Aaron McCarver. The story is complete in itself, although readers who have completed the first two books in the series will find it easier to sort out the many characters. There is a family tree in the front of the book, but it can be inconvenient to have to flip to a chart to figure out who is who.

Seth Donavan is out to revenge the death of his younger brother, Isaac. The two Scottish boys joined the British cause in the American Revolution. Then Isaac is felled by an American Ranger bullet and Seth vows his brother’s death will not be forgotten. His vow carries him to the Appalachian frontier to spy out a shipment of arms.

He is soon torn between his loyalty to the king and the kindness of the Martin family who takes him in when he becomes ill. Can he betray Will Martin? Which is more important, avenging his brother’s death or seeking the love of the beautiful Sarah MacNeil? Myrtleann Pittman Crane


F. Marriages--Fiction; Newspapers--Fiction; West (U.S.)--Nevada--Fiction; Nevada--Fiction; Mining--Fiction. 360 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Jennifer DeSpain learns quickly after marrying her Union soldier husband that she can’t convert him from his rough ways to Christianity. After a shoot-out on a riverboat results in her husband being unjustly charged and sentenced to jail, Jennifer finds work with a local newspaper. While trying to escape from prison, her husband is shot and succumbs to infection.
Before dying, he reveals to his wife that he won ownership of a small newspaper in Virginia City, Nevada, while playing poker. Jennifer decides to move her family to Nevada and make a go of the newspaper business on her own. She soon discovers that the editor, Jason Stone, has a great deal of talent, but is beset with a drinking problem. Tragic circumstances lead him to accept the Lord as his Savior and Jennifer sees him in a new light. Her attempt to expose the corruption of the local mine owners results in the newspaper office being burned to the ground. The authors leave the two main characters still unwed, but making plans to move to Colorado.

*Riches Untold*, the first book in Gilbert Morris and J. Landon Ferguson’s new series, The Chronicles of the Golden Frontier, is a fairly predictable romance set in the turbulent period following the Civil War. The pace of the plot keeps one reading, however, and it is easy for a modern reader to identify with Jennifer’s struggles to raise her children while running a newspaper. *Lillian A. Heytvelt*

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### *Sound the Trumpet*, by Gilbert Morris; read by Wayne Shepherd.  
(The Liberty Bell; 1.)  

**F. Revolutionary War--Fiction. 2 cassette tapes, 180 minutes.  
Adult.**

### *Song in a Strange Land*, by Gilbert Morris; read by Wayne Shepherd.  
(The Liberty Bell; 2.)  

**F. Revolutionary War--Fiction. 2 cassette tapes, 180 minutes.  
Adult.**

**Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5**

The first two books in the Liberty Bell series recount the history of two virtuous orphans forced into the harsh streets of London. After their father’s death, Daniel and Linna Bradford’s mother struggles to hold the family together until she succumbs to illness. Her dying words to her children are to believe in Jesus as their salvation according to John 3:16 and seek God’s will. They are accidentally separated for more than twenty years, and then joyfully reunited and learn that each has kept the faith and lead Christian lives.

Wayne Shepherd reads this smooth abridgment with a bright, friendly voice. He handles frequent, lengthy physical descriptions of characters without appearing to take a breath. However, his upbeat voice does not adjust when the material is tragic, failing to convey appropriate empathy. Also, the packaging is too tight, adjusting when the material is tragic, failing to convey physical descriptions of characters without appearing a bright, friendly voice. He handles frequent, lengthy

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### *Wind from the Wilderness*, by Gilbert Morris.  
(The Liberty Bell; 5.)  

**F. United States--History--Revolution, 1776-1783--Fiction; Spies--Fiction. 284 p. Gr. 11 - Adult.**

**Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5**

“...I wonder if I’m doing the right thing,” Joel laments to Mr. Dante. Joel is recovering from being tarred and feathered due to acting the part of a patriot turned loyalist. He is in the process of becoming a spy for the American cause under Mr. Dante, General Washington’s chief intelligence officer. Without any explanation, Joel must leave behind family and friends to go to New York and glean any important information to send back from British General Howe’s ranks.

To accomplish his mission, Joel resorts to his natural acting and mimicking abilities by disguising himself in order to keep suspicion to a minimum.

Gilbert Morris, author of the House of Winslow series, has written *Wind From the Wilderness*, the fifth book in The Liberty Bell Series. He includes a touch of romance, a bit of history and a portion of spiritual insight. The plot is methodical and the characters interact with historical figures leading up to the Battle of Brandywine which took place in Pennsylvania, September, 1777.

This story illuminates the hardships and dangers of the life of a spy rather than on the actual battle itself. A common thread in this series is the effect of a war that has members of the same family on opposing sides. It begins at the point from which the previous volume ended, but enough history of the characters is included that it can be read without being familiar with the former titles. *Debbie Lindsay*

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### *In the Twilight, In the Evening*, by Lynn Morris and Gilbert Morris.  
*(Cheney Duvall, M.D.; 6)*  

**F. San Francisco (Calif.)--History--Fiction; Hospitals--Fiction. 315 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.**

**Quality - 3  Acceptability - 5**

Dr. Cheney Duvall finds a position at the St. Francis de Yerba Buena Hospital in San Francisco in the 1800s. Her interview and references are strengthened by her quick actions after a carriage collision when she treats the hospital administrator and his son without knowing who they are. She is a remarkable woman, far ahead of her time, and fighting for respect and acceptance by other doctors and nurses at the hospital. When she tries new, updated procedures, the doctors give her grudging deference.

Her good friend and assistant, Shiloh Irons, is in love with her but she does not know if she loves him or not. He has been loyally protective of her, but does not press his suit of her as he is an orphan and has no idea of his parentage, is not wealthy, and he feels he must seek more information about his background. Cheney is a promoter of offering medical care to minorities, a highly unpopular stand. She also trains her black maid in some medical procedures, learned in New York, are some of the best parts of the book. Cheney is a moral person, who tries to rely on herself until she gets into trouble, and then she remembers to place her trust and her patients’ care into the hands of the Lord. A good paperback set in the post gold rush days of San Francisco. *Barbara G. Taenzler*

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### *Island of the Innocent*, by Lynn Morris and Gilbert Morris.  
*(Cheney Duvall, M.D.; 7)*  

**F. Hawaii--Fiction. 318 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.**

**Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5**

In *Island of the Innocent*, we find Shiloh Irons in Hawaii, searching for answers to his parentage and history. He is soon joined by his friends, Cheney Duvall and Dr. Walter Baird. In Hawaii, Shiloh meets Bain Winslow’s mother, Denise, and his sister Brynn. After precious moments that hold the keys to his past disappear, Shiloh wonders if once again, his search will be in vain. Hope seems lost, but then the large mountain on the Island begins to rumble ....

The writing team of Lynn and Gilbert Morris once again write an episode of Cheney and Shiloh that is exciting and mysterious. The main characters are strong, noble and sacrificing. Cheney’s reliance on the Lord in each circumstances is clear and challenging to the reader. As Book Seven in this series, although it would still provide a good story line, too many important details are missing. As a reader who has followed this series since Book One, my only question is: When is the poor guy going to get the girl? *Tammy Williams*

### *The Invitation*, by Nancy Moser.  

**F. Christian fiction. 425 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.**

**Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5**

Julia is a middle-aged former state governor now ready to retire from the pressures of politics. Natalie is eighteen and pregnant, with an aspiring dream of becoming a famous published author of romance novels. Walter, in his mid forties, is an egotistical, cynical, television news producer. Kathy is a young mother of two with a salesman husband who is usually absent from the family. Del, former priest turned homeless bum, is atoning for a past mistake in a macabre way. Arthur is a young punk in the fast lane to delinquency and crime.

Though strangers to each other, all but two are sent to experience Haven, Nebraska. Del finds Walter’s discarded invitation while rummaging through the trash. Arthur just happens to make a stop in Haven to steal money to get him farther down the road. Surprises are in store for each person along the way and during their stay in the small town of Haven.

*The Invitation* by Nancy Moser is a riveting allegory of the process of salvation and God’s desire to direct
lives and utilize the talents he has given each person to touch the lives of others. The story is a strong encouragement to place oneself into the capable hands of God. The fictional characters are a representation of people in various stages of life and from various backgrounds with idiosyncrasies that readers may relate to. The plot moves quickly and the literary style makes this book difficult to put down. Each chapter is prefaced by a scripture that pertains to the incidents that unfold. At the back of the book is a topical index with references of the verses that are used throughout the story. Debbie Lindsay


F. Mystery fiction. 218 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Looking forward to a new adventure and wanting to help the ailing Allegra Selkirk, Nell Winston assumes the position of companion. Allegra has been unable to speak or walk since the terrifying accident which killed her parents. Nell soon finds out that her help is not wanted at Hope’s End, Allegra’s home. For some mysterious reason, Allegra’s uncle and doctor prefer her to remain an invalid. Nell must work against these powerful men if she is to help Allegra and discover the reason for Allegra’s illness, even at the risk of her own life.

Jane Peart has written a thrilling mystery full of suspense and a few romantic surprises. Thread of Suspicion is the fourth title in the Edgecliff Manor Mystery Series which is set in late nineteenth century England. Readers will find Jane Peart’s mysteries compelling and refreshing to read as well as spiritually uplifting. Susan Robinson


F. Russia--History--Fiction. 298 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Anna Fedorenko and her family have given up. There seems no hope that Andrei could still be alive. Even so, Anna continues trusting God—in the midst of World War, the Russian Revolution, and...in spite of her missing son. Anna’s other son, Yuri, is filled with guilt and can not seem to find God in the chaos and heartache around him. Talia Sorokin has loved Andrei since childhood—in spite of his ties to Stephan Kaminsky and Lenin himself. It is a dark time for Russia and their exiled Tsar. Across town, in a small one room hovel, lay a wounded young man—unsure of his identity—willing to allow a woman named Sonja to call him “son.” He must belong to someone. Where and to whom does he really belong?

Judith Pella concludes the Russian series with this gripping novel. It is filled with historical events and an exciting fictional story line as well. The faith of Anna that began in Book One of this series continues and is passed on to her offspring in this final chapter. Passage Into Light is interesting reading alone, but there are too many “loose threads” for it to stand completely on its own. Tammy Williams

The Reel Story

The fascinating account of how God so worked in the heart of a man who’d reached the pinnacle of a lucrative career in the Hollywood movie industry, that he left it all for Christ.

In the Reel Story, author Larry Nangle relates the story of one of his successful contacts in the world of Hollywood movie industry. He reveals the inner workings of the business, the power and money, the scandals and sex. But underneath it all, behind the glamorous facade, is a man trying to find the reason for his life. His life is contrary to the Hollywood lifestyle, with its never-ending parties and sex.

He finally finds his answer in a beautiful garden. In the garden, Larry awakens to the love and power of God. He begins to see that he has been living for himself, for power and money, and finally understands that he needs to turn his life around. He begins to see the love of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

ISBN 9-9622-505-3
RETAIL: $16.99
400 pages


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Suffering a heart attack in his sleep, Mike author awakes in a beautiful garden. Each flower is more fragrant, more colorful, and larger than any on earth. While meeting with Jesus, he is told he cannot know his final destination until his eyes are fully opened. Only then will he be able to see his true Self. Various mentors like C.S. Lewis, George MacDonald, Mary mother of Christ lead Mike through different parts of the garden. Discussions with his hosts and the very scents of the flowers themselves cause Mike’s eyes to slowly open. As his Self is revealed, he falls asleep in the garden. Mike awakens in the hospital, much to the relief of his concerned family.

In Controlling Interests, Tracie Peterson weaves a tale of intriguing mystery and romantic tension. The story tends to get rather slow in places, and it becomes increasingly annoying that every single encounter between Denali and Michael turns into either a catfight, or an episode in which Denali lectures Michael about anything and everything. Still, it’s a riveting read; and the first romance that has interested this reviewer in months. Tara Sigler


Quality - 3 Acceptability - 4

Although she is a successful and moderately wealthy young woman, Denali Deveraux has always longed to know the secrets of her past. Neither her loving aunts nor her estranged grandfather—the owner of the company Denali works for—will speak of her parents: either who they were, or what happened to them. They simply ask Denali to resign herself to living with the mystery of her past.

But Denali is restless. When she is transferred to Dallas, where the main headquarters of her grandfather’s company is located, Denali sees an opportunity to finally confront her grandfather. But the stubborn, elderly Richard Deveraux has no intention of revealing anything. He pays Michael Copeland, a handsome but deeply bitter young man, to “distract” Denali from her self-appointed mission. Denali is determined to unlock the past, but she has no idea that she will uncover insanity, murder, and a year-old guilt that has eaten away at her grandfather’s mind.


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Suffering a heart attack in his sleep, Mike author awakes in a beautiful garden. Each flower is more fragrant, more colorful, and larger than any on earth. While meeting with Jesus, he is told he cannot know his final destination until his eyes are fully opened. Only then will he be able to see his true Self. Various mentors like C.S. Lewis, George MacDonald, Mary mother of Christ lead Mike through different parts of the garden. Discussions with his hosts and the very scents of the flowers themselves cause Mike’s eyes to slowly open. As his Self is revealed, he falls asleep in the garden. Mike awakens in the hospital, much to the relief of his concerned family.
The Garden at the Edge of Beyond by Michael Phillips is a well-written first person fantasy account of a near death experience. While there are not many pages, this is not light reading. Footnotes and references to other literary works add depth to the story. C.S. Lewis and George MacDonald figure prominently in this tale, not only as characters, but clearly as strong influences for the author. It is not required of readers, however, that they be Lewis and MacDonald experts to take much away from this thought provoking book. The beautiful cover art and petite size of the book would make it a great gift. Elizabeth A Coleman

F. Humorous stories; Romance--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 248 p. Gr. 11 - Adult.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5
At twenty-seven, Julia is happily single and a successful business woman who has found fulfillment through her work. Just recently transferred to another town in Vermont, she seeks temporary residence in Hattie Hopkin’s boarding house and soon finds herself among an hilarious hodgepodge of fellow boarders. One especially piques her interest, Sean Flannigan, business man, handsome, and single. Sean has just been “volunteered” at the last moment to babysit his nine-month-old niece for two weeks and Julia becomes his number one assistant. The intensity of the two weeks causes both of them to reconsider the priorities they have chosen. Is there room in their lives for a significant other?

Say Uncle... and Aunt is a delightfully humorous romance that has a “giggle guarantee” which states that if the book fails to cause a smile, giggle, or laugh, it may be exchanged for another book in the “A Time for Laughter... and Romance” line.

Suzy Pizzuti has skillfully developed this entertaining piece of comedy. The eccentric actions and resulting misunderstandings of the characters add to the story’s amusement. Sean and Julia learn that seeking balance between work and relationships with people is what helps to bring contentment in life. Debbie Lindsay

F. Humorous stories; Family life--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 203 p. Adult.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5
The job of wife and mother to a family of adolescents can cause a mother to feel unappreciated; more like the chauffeur, maid, and servant, in her desire to create a smooth functioning family. Especially at an age of turmoil from bodily changes, how does a mother encourage her children to participate and contribute to the family well-being without undue confrontation?

In Enough! Gayle Roper has presented an amusing solution to the problem that Molly, a phlegmatic mother, has prayerfully considered and implemented with the full endorsement of Dad. Molly announces during family council that from this point on for a two week period due to lack of respect and constant harassment, the maid has quit. She lets them know that with the exception of Dad, the rest of them are on their own to get their meals, do their laundry, clean up after themselves, and find their own transportation. Though chaos takes temporary control, the young people soon perceive the importance of their contribution to the smooth function of a household. Molly realizes how much she enabled her children to dishonor her and strengthens her own character by her resolve to follow through when tempted to cave in as she sees the children struggle.

Included at the end of the story is the family contract with the biblical principles, household rules, and duties listed for each member of the family modeled after the author’s own experience as wife and mother. Debbie Lindsay

F. Mystery fiction. 254 p. Gr. 9 - Adult.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5
When Helen Bradley receives a phone call asking her to come for a family get-together on Paradise Island, she has no idea about the extent of the mystery she’ll end up solving. Rushford weaves into the intriguing story a possible threat to the life of Helen’s uncle, missing money and jewels, the disappearance and probable death of Fabian, her cousin’s husband, and stolen roses that later appear in their original bouquet. What do these bizarre and frightening events, plus others, have to do with the resident ghost in Uncle Patrick’s island mansion, Werner Castle? Helen doesn’t for a minute believe in the ghost, but yet, does someone really want Uncle Patrick dead? Did Fabian steal Claire’s car and her money? Did he also rob Uncle Patrick? The answers unravel at last, but not until complications pile onto complications that make the reader hang on for the duration.

The story moves forward with enticing chapter endings, and as the situations develop, they flow naturally one into the other with nothing contrived. In her usual good writing style, Rushford’s characters become good friends of the reader. Her descriptions of the setting—the San Juan Islands—create good visual images that make the reader feel a part of the action.

A Haunting Refrain, third in the Helen Bradley series, reads quickly and leaves behind the hopes for a fourth book starring the sometimes-retired detective. Betty M. Hockett

F. Christian life--Fiction; Grandmothers--Fiction. 281 p. Gr. 9 - Adult.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5
The Reaper’s Song is a well-written novel set in the late 1800’s in the Dakota Territory. The story of the Bjorklund family continues as they build their lives “out west” in the town of Blessing. As the town grows, the settlers are faced with many hardships as well as decisions that will effect the entire population of Blessing. Ingeborg and Haakan Bjorklund are large property owners and they carry a great deal of influence with the residents. As their family grows, and others immigrate from Norway, Ingeborg feels the weight of responsibility for her family. Ingeborg makes choices while her husband is absent that will affect her family for a life time.

Lauraine Snelling tells an interesting story that is also unusual in the fact that all of the characters have immigrated from Norway and most of the characters in the novel are related in one way or the other. The characters are alive and definitely “take the reader in” once one sorts through the numerous characters and figures out who is who. This is somewhat difficult if one has not read the previous books in this series as the author offers little background information. Overall, it is a spiritually uplifting novel that reminds us how much we must depend on God and how he is always there and has our best interests at heart. This reader only wishes that she had read books one-three, as that would have made the reading much easier.

Tammy Williams

F. Romance fiction; Sisters--Fiction. 256 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5
An up to the minute computer thriller, Web of Intrigue draws the characters into the dark side of the WWW. What horrors wait at the click of a mouse? Who’s taking over the lives of the people in Dallas? And what can Morgan do about it?

Susan Taggart has hit on a hot topic. The invasive computer is taking over more and more of our lives. But can the many good benefits be out-weighed by the potential harm? She certainly gives us something to think about. For three and a half years Morgan Carruthers has carried on an affair with Kevin Whitney. Now he tells her he’s in love with another woman. Reeling from his news she flees to her mother’s home in Texas. But her trauma has only begun.

A well-written romance/suspense you’ll keep reading to see if Morgan gets her man and if she can find the computer-terrorist responsible for her sister’s death. Myrtilleay Pittman Crane

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

CHRISTIAN LIBRARY JOURNAL 75 WINTER/Spring, 1999
Mae Demaray, a widow and a grandmother, has a full life. She is active in her church, has a wonderful volunteer ministry at the Children’s Hospital, and a grandchild that is the “apple of her eye.” Then one tragic day, an accident occurs in her home that takes the life of her grandson. Suddenly, Mae’s life is destroyed as she refuses to forgive herself and find joy in life any longer. Mae’s daughter, Ellen, remains close and offers her mother forgiveness, but Mae finds it impossible. Since Mae was a child, her family had befriended a boy named Roy. Roy, a little older than Mae, is “slow,” but his heart is large, generous and loving toward his old friend Mae. Through Roy, and the unlocking of some family secrets, Mae once again finds the joy of the Lord—that sometimes comes after darkness and rain.

Ann Tatlock has written on a topic that is a bit unusual and therefore proves interesting. The style is honest and down-to-earth. The character of Roy is very touching and one can not help but sympathize for him and hope for the best. This novel would appeal to an older audience because of the “life reflections” of the main character and because of the relationships she is involved in. **Tammy Williams**

F. Ireland--History--Fiction. 320 p. Gr. 11 - Adult.  
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Set in 1843, Bodie and Brock Thoene’s **Of Men and Angels** describes a volatile time in history when England’s heavy fist rested upon Ireland, and the Irish strove to repeal English rule to gain the freedom to govern themselves. Joseph Conner, landlord of the village people whom he loves so well, when small-pox is deliberately introduced into Ballynockanor and the town is put under quarantine before a doctor can be sent for.

Although he is careful to keep his Repeal efforts within the law, Daniel O’Connell is ultimately framed and arrested for treason. Joseph is fortunate enough to escape a prison sentence, but when he returns home, his manor is burned to the ground. Despite the personal attacks on Joseph, the failure of the Repeal, and the loss of his money and home, Joseph does not give up hope. The numerous trials provide opportunities for his spiritual growth, for the reparation of his broken relationship with his sweetheart, and for hope of a new life in America.

The Thoene’s have written a well-researched novel filled with intriguing characters, including the lovable but wise Mad Molly, introduced in the first book of the series. Although the story ends rather abruptly, the authors provide a series of questions about issues the book raises, which can be used for personal reflection, or discussion in a book club or classroom. The reading of book one, **The River Runs Free**, is necessary for a full understanding of this sequel, **Of Men and Angels**. **Sherri Beeler**

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

Margaret Tuttle is the supervisor for the cafeteria at Emma Welty Elementary School. She runs the kitchen and program with meticulous precision, accounting for money and food with great order and regimentation. She lives her life with husband Thomas in a like manner. Life must be orderly and precise, no deviation from routine and little interaction with others. Excellence of workmanship and expression of life is an obsession for her.

Into her life and work enters Birdie Freeman, who challenges her parameters and the core of her very being. Birdie is an enigma to Margaret. Competent in her work, but transforming the environment of the cafeteria and school with her love. Birdie manages to break down the barriers of Margaret’s carefully protected heart. Margaret has never known anyone like Birdie and gradually she lets go of some of her own pain because of this plain little woman who loves so much. Margaret’s healing begins as she realizes that Birdie’s beautiful spirit flows from pain that she too has experienced. Margaret realizes that she is not alone in her suffering. There are others close to her that carry a burden of pain.

Jamie Langston Turner deals with the tragic consequences of sexual abuse in **Some Wildflower in My Heart** in a perceptive and sensitive manner. Written in the first person, the book reads like a diary. At times it becomes somewhat tedious because of the inhibited character portrayed here. This restriction and tedium though certainly brings reality to the character of Margaret Tuttle and results in the book reading more like autobiography than fiction. The metamorphis of Margaret unfolds gradually as it becomes more and more like autobiography than fiction. The Christian message of redemption is woven into the book subtly, but with truth and clarity. The struggles of the characters with their faith comes across in a realistic way. No easy answers or bolts of lightening flash across these pages. Real life stubbornness and temptation are dealt with, yet the victory of a loving life submitted to Christ shines through the character of Birdie. Birdie’s character is almost hard to believe at times, yet the transforming power of Christ in a life can be just as unbelievable. This is a thought provoking book that one will not easily forget. **Mary Jarvis**

F. Western fiction; Mexico--Fiction. 336 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.  
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Julian Cobb has lost his memory, and General Escobar is keeping him prisoner until he divulges a treasure’s hiding place. Joe and James Cobb, plus Chupta, a White Mountain Apache scout, travel with the General’s wife and party along a hazardous route dominated by Mescalero Apaches, ophidians, and parched watering places. Zac Cobb and Pablo, an orphan boy, surreptitiously dog them. After safe arrival at the General’s hacienda, Joe, James, and a friend aid in Julian’s escape, unknowingly pursued by the General and his men. When Chupta is killed, Zac joins his brother’s party. After uneartning the treasure, they are captured by the General and barely escape with their lives. Then Julian trades a map with the treasure’s location for a presidential pardon of all erstwhile malfeasants.

Jim Walker has written a story about a criminal brother held prisoner in a foreign country and the deep-rooted familial ties that motivate siblings to undertake a hazardous rescue mission. **The Warriors** is an adventure story with an underlying theme of familial ties and forgiveness. Familial ties lead to the saving of Julian’s life, and Julian’s turning his life over to God leads to Zac’s forgiveness for his past misdeeds. **Dianne Woodman**
Forgetten Pages

At some point during nearly every one of the classes I teach, I try to impart to the students what I call tricks of the trade. These are helpful study habits I have developed along the way which can, if put into practice, go a long way in helping individuals get the most from their college experience.

Many of these hints arise in the second semester of Freshman English where I teach research methods. Simply choosing a topic for a research paper can prove unnerving for freshmen so I try to provide help in hopes of making the process as painless as possible.

To their amazement, among the first bits of their assignment and the quickest way to discover which sources are most useful is to skim the Forgotten Pages.

The process I share with students is simple. As they uncover possible sources for their papers, before copying the article or checking the book out of the library, I tell them to read the Table of Contents and the Index. If these do not mention the subject or are not immediately relevant, put the source aside. If the subject is there, read the Forward and Preface to discover the author’s intent for the source. By that time it should be obvious even to the novice researcher whether of not the source will be helpful. If it is, keep it; if it is not, put it back on the shelf.

Recently, I was reminded of the usefulness of this hint. While doing reading for a study on Postmodernism, I was fascinated by one author’s comment that two of the most significant influences responsible for the inauguration of the modern era were the flight of the Wright brothers at Kitty Hawk, and the publication of Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man by James Joyce. According to that writer, these two events released man from all previous restraints and gave him a freedom then unknown. As I thought about these events, I was challenged to learn more about both. The first I know something of and the second I am reading about now. What an interesting account of coming of age Joyce’s Portrait has given us. Though I have known the novel for some time, this reading of it is special in some way. I have found myself impressed anew with how significantly books can impact lives of people if they are given a chance regardless of time or place. However, in a day when many could-be readers are waiting for the movie to come out rather than read the story for themselves, or are content to be planted in front of the TV where they do not have to think at all, I find myself struggling for ways to help them appreciate the joys of reading because I know how challenging and informative that can be.

Maybe, just maybe, the way to tease would-be readers to read more is with comments such as those I found in the Forward — among the Forgotten Pages — of the book I was reading. I can’t wait for the semester to begin so I can share what I discovered with the students in my classes.
unidentified additional titles in their series. Another chapter suggests related recommended videos. Short biographical sketches are provided for a few selected authors.

Librarian Barbara Walker has produced a useful, current work which fits into a unique niche. With many new Christian fiction titles constantly coming on the market, and often many fine books going out of print, nearly 90% of the titles listed have imprints in this decade (including reprints of a few older classics). Some readers may wish that certain older publishers were better represented. Others may look in vain in the core collection listing for a few authors or titles mentioned in the introductory chapters.

Donna W. Bowling

100's - Philosophy and Psychology


In this book's complete title is Healing the Bereaved Child: Grief Gardening, Growth Through Grief and Other Touchstones for Caregivers and the author, Alan Wolfelt, says that he sees himself "... not as a counselor, but as a counselor-gardener... Grief gardeners do not cure the grieving child; instead we create conditions that allow the bereaved child to mourn. Our work is more art than science, more heart than hand. The bereaved child is not our patient but instead our companion."

The book itself is part textbook and part workbook. In it, Wolfelt encourages the reader to ask herself "... not as a counselor, but as a counselor-gardener... Grief gardeners do not cure the grieving child; instead we create conditions that allow the bereaved child to mourn. Our work is more art than science, more heart than hand. The bereaved child is not our patient but instead our companion."

The book is divided into three parts: Interactions between science and religion; Genes, Environment, History; and What God created us to be. It is a book of explorations—not offering hard and fast answers, but exploring possibilities. Some authors adhere more closely to traditional theology than others. The authors do not agree with each other on all points. There is a general acceptance of evolution as the formative mechanism of humanity.

The essays are thought provoking, although uniform agreement is far from being reached on many of the issues. Because of the multiple authorship, In Whose Image seems to lack an overall coherence. This doesn't impair its readability, but means it should be approached as a collection, and not as a unified whole. The chapters are non-technical enough for the average reader, and each chapter contains study questions for further discussion. Andrew M. Seddon

200's - Religion


Celtic Christianity, which flourished in the British Isles in the Dark Ages (the fifth through eight centuries), has experienced a resurgence in recent years. With its emphasis on love of creation, holiness, the leading of the Holy Spirit, and pilgrimage, Celtic Christianity offers unique insights into the Christian faith. According to Joyce, the church of saints like Patrick, Aidan, Columba, and Hilda has much to offer today.

Though many books on Celtic Christianity have been written from the Anglican perspective, Joyce, a Benedictine monk, brings a Catholic voice to his examination of the Celtic tradition. That is not to say this book is only for Catholics; anyone with an interest in Celtic Christianity, no matter the examination of the Celtic tradition. That is not to say this book is only for Catholics; anyone with an interest in Celtic Christianity, no matter the denomination, will find much of value in Joyce's work.

Writing from an Irish perspective, Joyce studies the coming of Christianity to the Celts, the development of the Celtic church, its conflict with Rome and subsequent decline, and its contemporary resurgence.

Celtic Christianity is perhaps overly heavy on Irish history through the 16th to 20th century, to the exclusion of Celtic traditions in other countries such as Wales. This aside, however, Joyce's book provides an excellent, non-technical introduction to this fascinating heritage. Not all about the Celtic Church was sweetness and light, and Joyce doesn't hesitate to point this out. There is a useful bibliography, as well as a listing of organizations of Celtic Christians.

Andrew M. Seddon


The New Living Translation is a revision of the Living Bible. It is not, however, just a revised paraphrase, it is a "dynamic equivalence" translation which goes back to the original Hebrew and Greek, using the Living Bible as a guide.

In the past, numerous translations were attacked by those who felt that the translators were attempting to water down essential doctrines such as the blood, virgin birth, or deity of Christ. No such charges can stand against the NLT. In Isaiah 7:14 and Luke 1:27, we read that Jesus is born of a "virgin." The "blood" of Christ is preserved in Col 1:14, 20, Heb 10:19, 1 Pet 1:19, Rev 1:5, Mt 27:24, Acts 20:28, Rom 3:25; 5:9, and Eph 2:13. And the deity of Christ also comes through very clearly in Jn 1:1, 18, Acts 20:28; Rom 9:5; 2 Thess 1:12; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:9; and 2 Peter 1:1. While the accuracy of these translations may be challenged, the theological conservatism of the translators is beyond question.

Of course any Bible translation is open to criticism, and the NLT will be no different. Although technically a translation, the New Living Translation still contains a considerable amount of paraphrasing. For in-depth Bible study it may be better to stick with a Bible that is closer to the original wording than the NLT, for example NAS or NKJV. But for a Bible that is fun to read and easy to understand, the New Living Translation is one of the best on the market! Dennis Ingolfsland


The Bible, as well as being the most published book in the world, has also likely been the most attacked. While the Bible has always been considered the central writing of Christianity, our century shows an increasing reluctance among people—Christians included—to attach relevance to and confidence in the Bible. Is the Bible God’s word? Why should we trust these ancient writings in today’s culture?
Writing from a conservative viewpoint, Lutzer (senior pastor of Moody Church in Chicago) gives seven reasons why Christians should accept the Bible as the word of God. The book is organized around these reasons: logical, historical, prophetic, Christ-centered, scientific, providential, and personal.

Seven Reasons is written in a clear, straightforward manner and at a fairly basic level. This makes the book suitable for new Christians, young people, and those seeking to learn more of Christian beliefs. Lutzer does not go into scholarly detail or present controversies regarding the interpretation or position of scripture. Andrew M. Seddon


As the title suggests, this book is a commentary on the social and rhetorical aspects of the book of Acts. The title, however, is somewhat misleading since the book does not focus on socio-rhetorical aspects alone. It also does an excellent job of covering geographical, historical, political, and legal aspects. To be sure, the readers will learn about Luke’s rhetorical interests in structuring the book of Acts, but they will also learn about the political and historical background behind the events described, the geographical and historical background of significant cities, and the legal aspects of the various trials.

Particularly helpful are the numerous essays that are scattered throughout the book in appropriate places. In these essays, the author provides a more detailed discussion of various issues relating to the book of Acts. “Luke’s Christology,” “Lukan Eschatology,” the “Hellenists,” “Synagogues,” and “Luke, Josephus and Historical Reliability” are just a few examples. Witherington interacts with a large body of significant literature relating to Acts, both ancient and modern. He convincingly refutes various arguments against the reliability of Acts, showing that Acts is an accurate historical work. While Witherington does not neglect discussion of significant theological issues, theology is not particularly the focus of this book. Devontal material and practical application are also outside the scope of the book.

While this commentary shows evidence of deep scholarship, it is well written and should be relatively easy to understand even for those with limited background in Bible. The book contains some pictures, extensive footnotes, an excellent bibliography and thorough indices of the modern authors and ancient literature cited.

Ben Witherington is a professor of New Testament Interpretation at Asbury Seminary and is emerging as one of evangelicalism’s foremost experts in the field of New Testament studies. His commentary on Acts is surely destined to become a standard in the field. Dennis Ingolfsland


The subtitle of The Bones of Joseph : From the Ancient Texts to the Modern Church might lead a reader to expect a dry, theological tome. That would be a mistake. Gareth Lloyd Jones has selected twelve texts from the Old and New Testaments (and one from the Apocrypha) as bases for reflections. He discusses the meaning of the story and then relates it to contemporary life (hence “ancient texts” and “modern Church”). The title refers to Joseph’s wish to have his bones transported to the holy land when the children of Israel left Egypt. This, Lloyd Jones uses as the basis for an essay on tradition.

The Bones of Joseph is fluently written and eminently readable. Gareth Lloyd Jones is Canon Chancellor of Bangor Cathedral in Wales, and so the book has an Anglican flavor. Its appeal, however, should extend beyond an Anglican readership. His approach is broadly conservative; he does not hold to a fundamentalist, literalist view of scripture (the Bible is “God’s Word in man’s words) and he accepts some (but not all) of the products of modern biblical scholarship.

The texts Lloyd Jones has selected are not ones commonly found in devotional material, and neither are the insights he offers. The Bones of Joseph is intriguingly different. Andrew M. Seddon

Jesus and the Victory of God is the second volume in a series entitled Christian Origins and the Question of God by N.T. Wright. Wright begins his second volume by tracing the quest for the historical Jesus from Reimarus (1694-1768) to the present, arguing that the current “Third Quest” for the historical Jesus, which is the first “real attempt to do history seriously” and to “be guided by first-century sources.”

Wright’s historical methodology involves proposing a hypothesis to answer the major questions posed by “Third Quest” writers, and then testing that hypothesis by pre-selected criteria. The majority this attempts to show in great detail how the parables, teachings, and actions of Jesus recorded in the Gospels, as well as the structure of the Gospels themselves, support his hypothesis and meet the pre-established criteria.
Wright has proposed a refreshing new model for doing New Testament historical studies. His work is thorough, detailed, and thoughtful. It lacks the unwarranted skepticism of many historical Jesus books on the market today. The picture of Jesus that emerges from Wright’s analysis, though controversial in places, is one that finally attempts to do justice to all the New Testament data.

Wright is an Anglican canon who was a professor for twenty years at such prestigious institutions as Cambridge and Oxford Universities in England. He is now Dean of Lichfield and a Canon of Coventry Cathedral. His book is very well written and contains an extensive bibliography and indices. Dennis Ingolfslund


All You Need to Believe is a volume in a new series from Moody Press called Foundations of the Faith. The series is designed to explore the essentials of Christian faith; other volumes deal with the Beatitudes and the Lord’s Prayer. The series is designed to explore the essentials of Christian faith; other volumes deal with the Beatitudes and the Lord’s Prayer. All You Need To Believe was originally published in 1983 as I Believe.

In a few short lines, the Apostles’ Creed sums up the central beliefs of the Christian faith. Some churches recite the creed in worship, others don’t. But regardless of denominational differences, Christians can agree on these cardinal doctrines.

Cole explains the meaning of the Creed phrase by phrase and line by line, from what it means to believe in God, to believing in the life everlasting. But more than explaining what the framers of the Creed meant, he also applies the truths of the Creed to life today. He says that The Creed is not an outworn document, but a living statement of our living faith.

The chapters are short and well-written and the book should appeal both to established Christians wishing a refresher on the basics, and to new believers and seekers wondering what Christianity is all about. All You Need To Believe contains a study guide by James Bell Jr. appropriate for either individual or group study. Andrew M. Seddon


Religious pluralism in our time has reached new heights. People have a bewildering variety to choose from—traditional religions, newcomers to the scene, and “personal” do-it-yourself versions. Even the Christian Church has been affected by this, as well as by society’s secularizing influences, to the point where many people, Christians included, may not know what Christianity really teaches. The Church doors have been left open to outside influences and non-Christian elements and properties have entered in.

For both inquiring non-Christians and Christians unsure about their faith, Stanley Grenz has written What Christians Really Believe and Why. Grenz, who holds professorships at Carey Theological College and Regent College has written widely. This book follows in the footsteps of such classics of Christian explanation as John Stott’s Basic Christianity and Walter Martin’s Essential Christianity.

Grenz’s exposition is fresh and relevant to today’s religious situation. Grenz deals not only with the what of Christian belief, but the why. What makes Christianity different from and superior to other religious alternatives? What beliefs are historically Christian and which are more recent deviations? Grenz explores such topics as “Which God?,” “Who is Jesus and what did he do?,” “Is the World—am I—Going Anywhere?” and others from a conservative, fully orthodox position. As a concise introduction or refresher to the Christian faith it would be hard to beat this book. Andrew M. Seddon


I Was Just Wondering is a collection of essays initially published in Christianity Today, and revised for this edition. Yancey relates that he doesn’t write his column until the deadline arrives. This gives his essays a spontaneity, which is tempered in this published edition by further reflection and reader comments.

Yancey’s reflections are wide-ranging in the fields of the humanities, science, philosophy, theology, and practical Christian living. He groups them into six sections: The Human Animal, In the World, Among the Believers, Necessary Voices, Life With God, and Another World. Yancey is not content to seek pat answers to difficult questions. Rather, his reflections are designed to encourage deeper inquiry. Despite the penetrating nature of his queries, the essays are remarkably easy to read.

Yancey’s essays frequently take unusual twists, not ending up where they seem they might. And sometimes they leave the reader with a sense of uneasiness. Perhaps there is more to this business of being a Christian than we’ve realized. Yancey is not out to answer questions, but to pose them. And this he does well. Agree or disagree, I Was Just Wondering contains many points worth pondering. Andrew M. Seddon


Murray Harris took his Ph.D. from the University of Manchester and was professor emeritus of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. His book Jesus as God was possibly the most comprehensive, in-depth, and scholarly treatment of the New Testament passages attributing deity to Jesus in print.

There are a total of sixteen passages in the New Testament have been interpreted at one time or other to attribute deity to Jesus Christ. Harris examined each one in detail. Textual, linguistic, grammatical, contextual, historical, and theological issues were all taken into consideration. Various translations and conjectural emendations were discussed. Even the Hebrew text and Greek Septuagint were analyzed for those passages which alluded to or quoted from the Old Testament. Pro’s and con’s were listed for each view and Harris’ conclusions were given in degrees of probability.

Harris’ conclusions were that it is certain that John 1:1 and John 20:28 applied the title God to Jesus Christ. Harris believed that it was very probable that Romans 9:5, Titus 2:13, Hebrews 1:8 and 2 Peter 1:1 applied the title God to Jesus and that it was probable that that John 1:18 did as well. Harris believed that it was possible, but not likely that that Acts 20:28, Hebrews 1:9 and 1 John 5:20 called Jesus God. Harris concluded that it was not at all likely that Matthew 1:23, John 17:3, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 5:5, Colossians 2:2, 2 Thessalonians 1:12 and 1 Timothy 3:16 applied the title God to Jesus (Harris, 1992 171) Jesus as God is scholarly, well written, and very through in its analysis. The book is a must for anyone involved in ministries to cults which deny the deity of Christ, or who have friends or family in such groups. Dennis Ingolfslund


Meditations on the Cross is a collection of excerpts from Bonhoeffer’s books, sermons, and prison letters that revolve around the events of Easter and the Passion. They are, however, not abstract intellectualizing; Bonhoeffer is concerned with how the events affect contemporary life. He is concerned with what being a Christian means? What difference does being a Christian make? “Jesus calls us not to a new religion,” Bonhoeffer writes, “but to life.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was one of the 20th century’s most respected theologians. During WW II, he opposed Hitler and died in a concentration camp shortly before the war’s end. Perhaps because of the situation in Germany, themes of the Cross, suffering, and resurrection form an integral part of Bonhoeffer’s writing.

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The meditations are short (the longest is seven pages), but they are full. There is no fluff. Meditations on the Cross is not a book to be read—it is to be pondered, absorbed, digested, and lived. For those unfamiliar with Bonhoeffer, this would provide a good jumping off point for his more challenging and weightier works. Andrew M. Seddon


Love Set Free is a short book of six meditations on the Passion according to St. John by Martin Smith, an Episcopal monk. They carry the titles: embodiment, vulnerability, intimacy, desire, union, and silence. The book arose out of Good Friday messages. Most Easter devotions end with the Resurrection, but Love Set Free does not, and this is why. It is a Good Friday devotional. Smith’s intent in writing from St. John’s gospel is to draw out some of the nuances that set it apart from the other gospels. He attempts to call forth the images that John creates, not engage in biblical interpretation. That is, he wants the story to come alive, for the images and scenes to resonate within us.

Despite their brevity these well-written meditations require thought and reflection. They could be used through Lent or as a series on Good Friday. The apostle John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, tells us more about love than possibly any other New Testament writer. Love Set Free helps us to comprehend the immensity of God’s love. Andrew M. Seddon


Lee Strobel was an atheist. A graduate of Yale Law School. An award-winning legal affairs editor. When his wife accepted Christ as her Savior, Strobel began an intensive two-year spiritual journey investigating another case—Christianity. Was Jesus really who he claimed to be? The result is an absorbing and persuasive work: The Case For Christ: A Journalist’s Personal Investigation of the Evidence For Jesus.

Strobel pursues and interviews thirteen top scholars, most with doctorates and years of study, in areas of expertise such as Bible history, archaeology, psychology, and medicine. He doggedly presses for answers to tough questions: Were Jesus’ biographies reliably preserved? Evidence for Jesus outside the gospels? Does archaeology confirm or contradict Jesus’ biographies? Was Jesus convinced he was the Son of God or was he crazy? Did he fulfill the attributes of God? Really die? Was the resurrection a hoax? The author quotes from other skeptics as he cross-examines relentlessly.

The reader will delight in Strobel’s technique—beginning each chapter with an attention-gripping legal piece, which parallels the biblical topic he subsequently addresses. Using a fast-paced fictional style, he draws the reader into the scene and the conversation. The skeptic finds answers to his favorite theories: Strobel’s probing challenges the Christian to deliberate on beliefs more intensely.

Personal or group study questions and additional resources appear at each chapter’s end. In the back is a list of citations, notes for each chapter, and a helpful index. A must read for believers and nonbelievers alike. A most important and engaging treatise in popular apologetics.

The reader is a juror on The Case For Christ. And Strobel’s verdict? The evidence is overwhelming: he is currently a teaching pastor at Willow Creek Community Church outside Chicago. Rhonda Marie Lackey


The Power of the Cross is basically a book of conversion stories, designed to demonstrate the saving efficacy of Christ’s death in the face of the worst human sin and degradation. LaHaye presents stories of people rescued from skepticism, crime and violence, alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, homosexuality, and guilt. Each person reached the end of human resources and ability, but received new life by accepting Christ as savior. These stories are prefaced by a discussion of the Cross as being more than a mere symbol; the message of the Cross for salvation; and the story of the Apostle Paul’s conversion. LaHaye (who writes from a conservative evangelical position) concludes with a brief chapter on multiculturalism and the foolishness of godless wisdom.

The Power of the Cross suffers from frequent repetition of stock phrases. While the dramatic stories LaHaye presents form the point of the book, they create a one-dimensional focus. He doesn’t mention the hidden, quiet, but equally effective saving efficacy of Christ’s death in the face of the worst human sin and degradation. LaHaye presents stories of people rescued from skepticism, crime and violence, alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, homosexuality, and guilt. Each person reached the end of human resources and ability, but received new life by accepting Christ as savior. These stories are prefaced by a discussion of the Cross as being more than a mere symbol; the message of the Cross for salvation; and the story of the Apostle Paul’s conversion. LaHaye (who writes from a conservative evangelical position) concludes with a brief chapter on multiculturalism and the foolishness of godless wisdom.

The Power of the Cross suffers from frequent repetition of stock phrases. While the dramatic stories LaHaye presents form the point of the book, they create a one-dimensional focus. He doesn’t mention the hidden, quiet, but equally effective working of the Holy Spirit in less-troubled lives. Also, the untutored might mistake a “conversion experience” for the culmination, rather than the beginning of new life. There’s a risk that readers whose conversion experience was less startling might doubt the validity of their own experience.

The Power of the Cross is thus a starting point for an examination of the meaning of the Cross. It would best suit new Christians, seekers, or hesitant inquirers. This is not a book of theological reflection, but designed to inspire and to stress the need to present the Cross of Christ to unbelievers. Andrew M. Seddon


Contemplating the Cross is a forty day devotional on the last hours of Jesus’ life, from the Garden of Gethsemane to the resurrection. Rhodes’ intent is for us to look at the Crucifixion as if we were physically present, seeing it in all its brutality and horror. Each meditation is laid out with a quiet time of reflection, scripture readings, a narrative focusing on an event in Jesus’ life, a response, and a closing prayer.

Facing the Cross is not an easy proposition, and Rhodes’ narratives take us through the details of an inhuman death. The trip can be painful and unpleasant. But there are other moments, moments of tenderness, repentance, and finally victory. The Crucifixion should not become a sanitized, emotionless picture. Rhodes takes care to point out what was actually happening—behind the scenes of soldiers, priests, the machinery of Roman-Jewish politics—was deciding the redemption of humanity.

Contemplating the Cross is a book to dispel complacency and pretty pictures of the past. It brings us to face our sin and the immensity of God’s response. Rhodes encourages journaling as a way to deepen the effect and document our journey through the final hours of Jesus’ earthly life. Writing narrative about such a sacred event is fraught with hazards, but in general Rhodes does this fairly well, and doesn’t over-elaborate far beyond what the scriptures record. Andrew M. Seddon


In the Old Testament (Job 2) Satan stood before the throne of God as the accuser of men. Is he still there? When was he cast out of heaven? What difference does it make? What is his role today? If he does not accuse men before the throne of God, how does he accuse people today?

Not many people, including myself, have given much thought to any of these questions. It is obvious in The Cleansing of the Heavens that Mark C. Roser has given the topic a great deal of thought and study. Roser presents the argument that Satan was cast out of heaven when Christ died on the cross in part one of the book. Then he systematically “exposes his (Satan’s) background, explains his defeat, and clarifies the position that he has occupied ever since.” In part two Roser explains how we overcome Satan
by the blood of Christ and our testimony. Roser believes it is only when we understand where and how Satan operates now that we can cease to live in fear and guilt.

Each chapter is followed by extensive endnotes that must be read concurrently with the text to fully understand Roser’s position. Because the author is presenting new insights, the reader may find scriptures combined in a new way. Roser is very good at connecting scriptures and explaining sequences of events, such as what was accomplished at Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension, in a way that clarifies and simplifies the information. The author includes an excellent bibliography. Barbara A. Bryden


R.C. Sproul writes a scholarly account of eschatology, the study of end time events. Citing many sources, and presenting many differing views, he finds balance in the scriptures themselves. However, when such a subject is studied there are inevitably unknown factors to ponder. By presenting a variety of viewpoints, the reader is able to come to his own conclusions or at least possibilities of the last days scenario. The Last Days According to Jesus keeps one abreast of popular beliefs, and compares them to scriptural accounts rather than conjecture and “pet theories.” There is an extensive bibliography at the end of the book, a useful glossary, as well as index of scriptures, notes and names. An interesting appendix on the Olivet Discourse comparing each Gospel account is also included.

This study gives a wealth of information, historical as well as futurist, that can be a valuable tool for the serious Bible student.

Mary McKinney


Popular author, and ordained Presbyterian minister, R.C. Sproul brings out his third edition of Renewing Your Mind. Using The Apostle’s Creed as the foundation for his book, Sproul offers a contemporary explanation of the creed’s teaching, not to give a historical exposition of each point, but to apply its basic tenets to contemporary faith-issues. He returns to the fundamentals, dealing with such questions as, Who is God? What about the virgin birth? Is the resurrection for real? Will Christ return? The author says there are “three dimensions to renewing your mind through faith: (1) faith has an intellectual dimension; (2) faith touches the human will profoundly, (3) faith is intimately bound to our emotions.” Using each phrase of The Apostle’s Creed, starting with “I believe . . .” Sproul expounds on living the Christian life. “The Christian life is nothing if not challenging. It is not the fun life, nor the easy life. It is life. This book is about living that life to the fullest, about renewing your mind so that your thinking conforms to the mind of Christ.” A scholarly work, the writing is made reader-friendly by using many subheads, often making sections less than a page in length.

Mary McKinney

Myrtle May Pittman Crane


Christianity has often been accused of a variety of evils: forcing its morality on others, suppressing women, being unscientific, destroying the environment and native cultures, to name only a few of the attacks. The authors of Seven Myths about Christianity attempt to tackle these attacks or “myths” head on. They point out the inaccuracy, circular reasoning, and other logical fallacies used by non-Christians in their attacks. The authors however, do not take a head-in-the-sand approach to these “myths.” They acknowledge that these myths unfortunately, have a basis in fact. They point out, for example, that Christian men have indeed suppressed women, that professing Christians have sometimes used violence, deception, and intimidation to support their causes, that some Christians have contributed to the destruction of the environment, and that Christians often show more compassion to the unborn than to the poor or those with AIDS. The book, therefore, makes a distinction between what some professing Christians practice, and that which is the “essence” of Christianity itself, that is, “the authentic way of Jesus as he meant it to be.” (8)

The authors try hard to be objective in their arguments and the book is very easy to read and understand. It does not have an index, but is well documented and contains a list of books for further study.

Dennis Ingold


In an age when our society has seen an explosion of crime and dysfunction amongst young people, there is a growing need for clear instructions on how to teach morals to children. Bonniddell Clouse, Ph. D., is a professor of Education and School Psychology at Indiana State University, and she intends for her book to show “that parents, educators, and church leaders can impact the lives of children and adolescents so that moral development is more likely to occur.” In the first section of the book she discusses the traditional approaches to moral development: the use of stories, the Bible, and character education. In the second section she surveys four psychological approaches to moral development (psychoanalytic, learning, cognitive, and humanistic). Each examination is in turn followed by three sub-sections containing guidelines specific to teachers, parents, and pastors. In the final section Clouse looks to Scripture to evaluate the four psychological approaches and summarizes everything in a short conclusion titled, How Shall We Then Teach?

While academic in tone, this book is fascinating to read and provides one with a thorough understanding of the different approaches to teaching moral behavior. Although written from a Christian perspective, all caring citizens can profit from the

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

With the production of the cloned sheep Dolly, the issue of cloning has captured the imagination of scientists, journalists, and lay people alike. The question that leaps to the forefront in the thinking of most people is, assuming the technology becomes acceptable, should we clone human beings? What are the ethical, religious, and societal implications of cloning?

As usual with any scientific advancement, there are no easy answers. Opinions vary. In his introduction to Human Cloning, Cole-Turner says, “For society to make its way blithely into the practice of human cloning without having heard the concerns of Christians would be a great failure on the part of the church.... it is imperative that Christians respond in faith, even if they find themselves disagreeing with other Christians. There is something worse than theological disagreement, and that is theological silence.”

The twelve authors of this book bring a variety of perspectives and theological backgrounds to the discussion of human cloning, with opinions from Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, and United Church sources. The opinions range from “no” to “maybe” to cautious “yes.” While some authors feel that technical difficulties may preclude human cloning, others believe that it is only a matter of time. It is imperative that Christians educate themselves and contribute to the discussion. Agree with all the authors of this book or not, Human Cloning presents an excellent introduction to the complexities of the task ahead, and the multiplicity of positions available to thinking Christians. Andrew M. Seddon


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

The Psalms have struck a responsive chord among believers from the earliest days of Christianity. The cries of David and the other psalmists meet us at our most basic emotional levels. I'm Lonely Lord—How Long? Marva Dawn has drawn on those psalms that reflect one of the most painful emotions—loneliness.

This book, newly revised, was written when Dawn was suffering profound loneliness in the wake of desertion by her husband. As such, it is a personal book. Dawn, like David, is not afraid to reveal the dark paths her soul followed. And, like David, she realizes that God does care, that he is present with us. And only God can meet the soul’s deepest needs and longings.

There are thirty-one meditations in this book, making it suitable for monthly use. But it doesn’t have to be restricted to those in the throes of loneliness; Dawn’s searching meditations would be suitable for anyone wishing to penetrate deeper into the Psalms. Each chapter includes questions for reflection and there is a helpful list of resources at the end. Andrew M. Seddon


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Emphasizing prayer as the key to developing an intimate relationship with God, Ron Auch inspires every Christian to make prayer a priority. He Hears Your Prayers begins by showing the importance of prayer, with teaching founded on biblical principles. Auch goes on to address the believer’s call to prayer, obstacles to prayer, spiritual warfare, and intercessory prayer.

The last two chapters offer practical advice on how to establish one’s own prayer life. Never accusatory, Auch challenges Christians not to settle for just having prayer in their lives. Instead, he encourages believers to intentionally work toward establishing a regular prayer life that results in knowing God.

The author uses an easy to read, conversational style, as if he is visiting with the reader around the coffee table. Straightforward instruction, based on the Bible and Auch’s experiences as a seminar leader, support his arguments. However, paragraph breaks and subheadings are inconsistent and sometimes confusing when following specific points.

Especially helpful for a new believer, He Hears Your Prayers speaks to anyone exploring what it means to have a meaningful relationship with God. Christians will benefit by using this book for personal study or as a springboard for small group discussion. Karen Brehmer


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Jane Fryar emphasizes the reality of spiritual warfare and that Christian warriors, armed with God’s Word and prayer, are dangerous to the forces of the devil. Each of the ten chapters in Armed and Dangerous follows the same format: biblical example, teaching, preview of the next chapter, discussion questions, and practical prayer tips. Topics covered are praise, confession, intercession, the Holy Spirit’s role in prayer, praying when angry or discouraged, praying in God’s will, the importance of God’s Word in prayer, and more.

A quick read, the book is practical and easy to understand. It is not deeply theological but covers powerful, scripturally-based concepts. Over forty pages of appendices strengthen the book and include suggestions for teaching children to pray, planning a personal and group prayer retreat, examples of other believers’ prayers, tips for effective prayer, and a sample prayer journal. Information about the author is not included. Readers who want to strengthen their prayer life will appreciate this book. Lydia E. Harris

This book is part Bible study, therapy, and diary that may relate more to women rather than to men. The chapter devotionals are short anecdotes from situations in the author’s life and the scriptures she used to help her through the situations she recounts. Hunter seeks to encourage other singles to live a life devoted to God. She alludes often to her marriage and the trials she has been a single mother to three children. At the end of each chapter she provides insightful questions and action points for the reader to apply in his/her life. Following the questions is one scripture verse for the week. She is evangelical in her theology. She avoids placing blame or providing opportunities for self pity; rather, she offers single people an opportunity to see themselves as whole without having to have a spouse.

There are a few areas of concern. There appear to be no specific unit headings for her essays. Grouping them in units would have improved the readability of the book. When she tells one story, the next may be many years in the future or past. Her moves through time are hard to follow. She repeats her stories at times but with a different emphasis which might not have happened had she been more organized regarding her units or chapters. There may be topics that do not connect to every single but most should be applicable. She skirts the issue of remarriage. Bianca Elliott


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

A helpful list of resources at the end. The prayers are arranged in general subject categories, such as hungering for God,
seeking forgiveness, and speaking honestly. The prayers are written by a wide range of women, including Mary Queen of Scots, Mother Teresa, Amy Carmichael, Corrie ten Boom, Eugenia Price, and Kathy Troccoli. The book includes a biographical index of the writers which indicates not only the page where their prayer can be found, but also gives a brief description of each woman’s career or ministry.

This book of women’s prayers provides a wonderful look into the hearts of women and their relationships with God. This is truly an ecumenical collection. It can easily be used as a daily devotional or prayer aid. Women who read it will be encouraged to hear the words of other women expressing the same emotions and struggles that they face. Karla Kessell


J.J. Packer is a well-known evangelical theologian, prolific author, and speaker. Your Father Loves You is a year’s worth of daily devotional readings culled from Packer’s published writings and taped addresses by Jean Watson. The main theme is “the life of the Christian family” which is examined under sixteen related topics. Each devotional is preceded by a verse of scripture and followed by a question for further reflection.

The theme of the Christian family provides a very helpful unifying concept. Just as a human family has its foundations, lifestyles, standards, and wisdom, so does the Christian family. Human families have heads and members, as does the church. Human families undergo trials and attacks, as does the Christian family.

Packer’s writing is incisive, practical, and thought provoking, never obscure. The theme of “life in the family” appeals on various levels—to the intellect, the emotions, and the spirit. Packer writes from a conservative evangelical position. Your Father Loves You is written at a level accessible for high-school to adult age groups. Andrew M. Seddon

Each of the forty devotions (which end on the Saturday before Easter Sunday) consists of a reflection, then a prayer, and finally scriptures for further meditation. Martin is particularly concerned with love, and how we as Christians express the Gospel both with fellow believers and with those who are unbelievers. He is concerned that we set aside our differences and love our fellow believers of all Christian denominations, even if we might not agree with them on all points.

Readers might wish to know that he does not adopt a completely literal view of scripture, and accepts an evolutionary history of human origins. Andrew M. Seddon


For Patsy, tea speaks of a time to relax, reflect, and nurture our souls. “Tea is a sip of yesterday when times were less frantic and more family, when Polly put her kettle on, and we all had tea.” Teatime is a comforting interlude reminding Patsy “in quietness and trust is your strength” (Isaiah 30:15b).


Nancy Parker Brummett takes simplicity one step further by showing us how to achieve spiritual simplicity—by focusing on Jesus and eliminating anything that interferes with our communion with him. Fifteen short chapters with titles like “Simply Believe,” “Simply Pray,” and “Simply Say No” detail how to sort out spiritual clutter and enjoy intimacy with God.

Brummett uses anecdotes from her own life and others’ to illustrate her points. She bases her content on scripture and quotes from twenty-some other sources. Simply the Savior is beautifully produced with a padded cover and purple print. Although it is often displayed with the gift books, the text is meaty, articulate, and substantial. Andrea R. Huelsenbeck
As parents flounder in a culture lacking absolute truth, Dr. James Dobson steps forward to provide the solid answers today's families need. A respected psychologist, author, radio host, and founder/president of Focus on the Family, Dr. Dobson has been answering parents' questions for over twenty-five years. His reliable advice is based on firm biblical principles and time-tested information. In this comprehensive resource, he answers almost five hundred questions covering a wide range of family-life subjects including discipline, education, spiritual life, money matters, marriage, single parenting, and many more.

Written in a conversational question/answer format and organized by subject, it is easy to read and use as a reference. The last chapter is an unexpected bonus and offers 117 principles and concepts from Dobson's other books and statements. The extensive end notes and subject and scripture indexes are a valuable addition to this excellent resource that belongs in every home and library. Lydia E. Harris


Dennis Rainey, executive director of FamilyLife, has a passion for restoring families, one home at a time. He describes root causes of family problems and offers hope through four pillars of family reformation: personal repentance, embracing the marriage covenant, accepting God-ordained roles, and leaving a spiritual legacy for the next generation. When Christians apply these biblical truths, families and neighborhoods are strengthened.

In One Home at a Time, Rainey's goal is to help readers establish solid Christian marriages and families, develop moral courage, and recognize the need for the Christian community to unite. The community “bricks” needed to rebuild families include not only Christian couples and churches but parachurch organizations and Christian leaders in education, business, the media, and politics—all working together.

While addressing a serious subject with zeal, Rainey offers practical steps to restore homes, beginning with each reader's family. Appendix, notes, and resources are a bonus in this excellent resource which is valuable for families, pastors, and libraries. Lydia E. Harris


501 Practical Ways to Teach Your Children Values is written for Christian parents who want to encourage their children to abide by a Christian lifestyle. The introduction includes ten steps to follow in teaching values, four steps children undertake in learning, and hurdles parents may encounter. Chapters One and Two list twenty-five activities to help parents select values and twenty-five for how to pass them along. Chapters Three and Four list seventy-one activities for defining values in behavioral terms and seventy for sparking children's interest. Chapters Five and Six list sixty activities for teaching children how to exemplify parents' values and sixty-four that tie into Bible stories. Chapters Seven and Eight list sixty-six activities for helping children apply values in their own lives and thirty-nine games for reinforcement. Chapters Nine and Ten list sixty activities for rewarding appropriate behavior and twenty-one for memorable circumstances. The epilogue encourages parents to never give up on passing their own values along to their children.

Bobbie Reed has written an excellent resource for teaching children Christian values. The real life illustrations and helpful hints at the beginning of the introduction and chapters are beneficial for using the book. The activities are appropriate for school age children, and ones that target either younger or older children can be reformatted. Some of the activities require little preparation, while others require a great deal. As there is not an index, it can be difficult to locate an activity if you don't mark it when reading the book. Dianne Woodman
counselors, and pastors. Although the authors don’t promise a fairy tale ending, applying their psychological, biblically-based instruction provides practical help and hope to keep the happily-ever-after in marriage. Married couples of all ages will benefit greatly from completing the exercises at the end of each chapter. A valuable resource to strengthen marriages, it encourages couples to remain committed and contend in their marriage. *Lydia E. Harris*


Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Bob and Yvonne Turnbull write with humor and honesty in TeamMates, a book designed for couples to read aloud together and for group discussion. The content is based on the Turnbells’ marriage and family seminars taught across the United States and Canada. Using dialogue, they show couples practical ways to work as a team in marriage instead of competing. The five marital building blocks discussed are unity, roles and expectations, communication, spiritual growth, and changes. Some chapters are specifically for husbands, others for wives. Although written for married couples, singles could also benefit from their excellent teaching on communication and handling conflict.

Filled with illustrations, personal stories, and scriptural principles, the book is helpful and interesting. Each chapter ends with team-building questions and action steps. Couples who desire a winning marriage will find plenty of practical tools and wisdom to apply. *Lydia E. Harris*


Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

At its simplest, prayer is communication with God. At its deepest level, it is a complex, multifaceted relationship. To discuss prayer in a single, manageable volume is thus a daunting task. Margaret Guenther, recently retired professor at the General Theological Seminary in New York, has chosen to write a book on prayer that is practical and readable. Theological Seminary in New York, has chosen to write a book on prayer that is practical and readable. The book’s content.

In Part One of *The Practice of Prayer* Guenther surveys different ways Christians have prayed through the centuries. She also relates practices that people have adopted as aids to prayer. Part Two is called Praying in the Midst of Life, and brings prayer off the shelf and into the ordinary routine of life. This is the heart of the book. Such chapters as “Your kitchen will teach you everything.” “How do I pray when the baby is keeping me up?” and “Tis the gift to be simple, ‘Tis the gift to be free” remind us that God is not a God far off, but a God close at hand. While the New Church’s Teaching Series is produced for an Anglican readership, prayer is for all. *The Practice of Prayer* calls us to a deeper life in communication with our God. *Andrew M. Seddon*


248.3. 210 p. Gr. 11 - Adult.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

On Our Knees and In His Arms is another volume in the Moody Press Foundations of the Faith series. These books examine the cardinal doctrines of the Bible and the Christian faith. In this volume, Peter Lewis tackles the Lord’s Prayer. His forty-four chapters work their way through the sections of the prayer, discussing not only surface implications, but deeper aspects of our Lord’s teaching.

The format of the text is application of the Lord’s Prayer to contemporary living. It ranges from the nature of God and our response to him; to the relationship of God, Christians, and the world; to practical issues such as temptation, anxiety, forgiveness, contentment, and discipleship. Lewis is an evangelical pastor, and this is reflected in the book’s content.

Lewis writes clearly and forthrightly, using many scriptural references. At times, I felt his sections were too long, and could have been said more concisely without loss of information. But this is a small price to pay for a detailed examination of this important section of scripture. The book has a study guide by James Bell Jr., which will be helpful for group study. *Andrew M. Seddon*


248.3. Bible--Reading; Bible--Devotional use; Spiritual life--Catholic Church. 164 p. Adult.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

In the world of contemporary Christian spirituality silence, contemplation, centering prayer, and lectio divina have taken root ground lost for want of the Church’s attention to the individual’s spiritual need for a personal sense of communion with God. M. Basil Pennington, a Roman Catholic monk and teacher, introduces us to the ancient church practice of lectio divina—divine reading, or praying the Scriptures. His orthodoxy is impeccable. “First and foremost is the disposition of faith, a firm belief that the Word of God is the Word of God...as we faithfully hear the Word, the Word strengthens and renews our faith...this actual experience of the Word brings us to the point where we can say with St. Paul: ‘I know in whom I believe’”

“To the extent we truly ‘hear’ that Word, receive that Word into our being and into our lives, we participate in the Divine Being, Life, Love, Joy. Made in the image of God, we have an unlimited, an infinite potential to be like unto him.” *Lectio Divina is letting our Divine Friend speak to us through his inspired and inspiring Word...it includes our response to that Word...in intimate prayer and in the way we take that Word with us and let it shape our lives. “Hearing this Good News is one of the most essential acts of our being.”

Chapter after chapter was a joy to read, to ponder, and to find encouragement in reading and believing and praying the Scriptures deeply and meditatively. This book is a profound model for our daily quiet times. Lectio is a wholesome method for entering into communion with God through the Bible. Pennington provides practical guidance for an individual, families, and groups to do that. No longer do we have to feel uneasy about Eastern methods of mysticism creeping into our Christian attempts at renewing our own spirituality. The Church’s own prayer life with Scriptures for almost 2,000 years is there to renew and be renewed in such practices as lectio divina.

I was unused to speaking of the Holy Spirit as “Holy Spirit” (without “the”). Pennington does not use Holy Spirit as a description of the third person of the Trinity. He uses it as a name, just as we use Jesus or Jesus Christ without a “the” for a prefix. One jarring note was in Appendix Four, a letter from Fr. Bernardo Olivera, a Trappist monk, who referred to the Holy Spirit as “she” in two sentences. Pennington does not use this new, politically correct pronoun in his book, himself, but still I was disquieted with its inclusion from another author in an otherwise noteworthy book. To all who would draw aside with their Bibles, listen to God, and commune with him in prayer, there is much to learn from this monk. *Mike Jarvis*


248.4. Spiritual life--Christianity; Presence of God; Carmichael, Nancie; Temple of God. 207 p. Adult.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

“Think of it—as you allow God to become more and more at home in your life, you become His house, His dwelling place in this world!” Nancy Carmichael, who many readers may recognize from her columns in the magazines *Virtue and Christian Parenting Today*, uses the metaphor of building a house to illustrate the principles necessary to live with God-given purpose. From the first chapter, The Foundation, to the last, House Beautiful, she lays a blueprint for constructing the home of one’s heart according to God’s plan. Filled with personal anecdotes of her own struggles as a pastor’s wife and the mother of four sons and one adopted daughter, Carmichael invites readers inside her own life to explore the importance of allowing God to be at the heart of all that one does.

For Christian women feeling overwhelmed by responsibilities and tired of living a life without joy,
Prophet. Dawn examines this chapter in thirty-one
with many applications and insights for daily life that
Marva Dawn originally wrote this devotional study of
joy awaits us. discovery comes a bottom line message: have hope—
for God—more faith. But throughout this journey of
possible in this world. Our instinct is to strive for
we've falsely assumed that total fulfillment is
psychology's counseling techniques with the
In examining these points the author gives practical
advantages/abuse we've experienced in the
home.
Dr. Crabb writes in an expanded outline format
making three major points. First, all people thirst for
home.
In examining these points the author gives practical
tools for lasting change. He successfully interfaces
psychology’s counseling techniques with the promises
given to us in God’s word. Dr. Crabb emphasizes that
in our desire to deal with life’s pain, we’ve falsely assumed that total fulfillment is
possible in this world. Our instinct is to strive for fulfillment through hard work, more “good works”
for God—more faith. But throughout this journey of
discovery comes a bottom line message: have hope—
joy awaits us. Carol Shearer

To Walk and Not Faint: A Month of Meditations on
248.4: Christian life—Spiritual life—Christianity. 245 p. Adult.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Marva Dawn originally wrote this devotional study of
Isaiah Chapter 40 eighteen years ago, but has
completely revised it for this new—and welcome—
edition. The fortieth chapter of Isaiah is scripture with many applications and insights for daily life that
are as important now as when first penned by the
prophet. Dawn examines this chapter in thirty-one
meditations, making To Walk and Not Faint suitable for a monthly study.

Right or Reconciled?: God’s Heart for
0768420040, PAP, $9.99.
Right or Reconciled? challenges the Church to be the leader in eliminating stereotypes
of racism, social discrimination, and gender bias.

Joseph Garlington urges believers to imitate Christ’s
model of reconciliation. “First you and I must be
reconciled to God, to be brought back to His original intent for our lives and our local churches. Then
we must be reconciled to one another in bonds of
atonement love, ‘loving our neighbor as ourselves.’” Right or Reconciled? challenges the Church to
be the leader in eliminating stereotypes of racism, social discrimination, and gender bias.

Using II Corinthians 5 as a foundation, this book emphasizes that the ministry of reconciliation is part
of our obedience to God. When a Christian becomes
a new creation in Christ, he is to “recognize no man
according to the flesh.” He is to tell the world that
God died for all men and women, and God is “not
counting their trespasses against them.” When facing
issues that threaten to divide, Garlington asks, do you
want to be right or reconciled?

Frank and to the point, the author shares his own
experiences and uses humor to awaken a new way of
thinking. Supportive Scripture texts are written out in
their entirety, and reprinted for subsequent points.
This, and logical arguments that build on one another,
makes for easy reading.

This is an important book for all believers, to reflect
on their own attitudes toward those who are different.
Although not written as a Bible Study, a church group
would benefit by using this book to examine beliefs
and practices in their own lives and within their
church. Karen Brehmer

Reasons for Believing: A Seeker’s Guide to
Christianity, by Frank Harber. LCCN 9866301.
0892214228, PAP, $10.99.

Reasons for Believing: A Seeker’s Guide to
Christianity, by Frank Harber. LCCN 9866301.
0892214228, PAP, $10.99.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

“Every intelligent design indicates a designer. The
greater the design, the greater the designer,” writes
Frank Harber in Reasons For Believing. He
discusses answers to questions about Christian faith, and
shares answers in tables and charts, based on
extensive research. Five of seven chapters form the
premise about who God is, why he exists and why the
Bible is true. Harber uses evidence from prophecy
stating the Bible is 100% accurate in foretold prophecy.
No other book can claim this.

He shows how archaeology supports biblical
creationism rather than evolution, with dates, times,
and where evidence was found. A compiled
user-friendly chart on cuneiform tablets details cultures
and times from the time of Abraham. All tablets,
though non-Christian, support the Bible.

“The resurrection is not a philosophy that evolved,
but a fact,” states the author. The evidence is the
empty tomb and the dedicated apostles willing to
sacrifice their lives for Jesus and their Christian faith.
He documents post-resurrection sightings found in
ancient, non-Christian writings telling of the empty
tomb. Harber says, “Christianity is different from
other religions because it is the story of God’s search
for man, rather than man’s search for God.”

Harber closes with a chapter titled Intellectual
Objections. Although he raises questions and
explores the problem, he doesn’t address the issues he
raises. Overall, a worthwhile read giving answers to
questions many Christians are unable to answer.
Included also is an extensive bibliography. Gail Welborn

This Was Your Life!: Preparing to Meet God Face
To Face, by Rick Howard and Jamie Lash; foreword by
0800792599, PAP, $9.99.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

This Was Your Life! is an introduction to the concept of
the Judgment of Believers and how it impinges on the
everyday life of the Christian. Using scripture (1
Corinthians 3:9-15, etc.), their own and others’
experiences, and quotes from devout Christians,
Howard and Lash guide the reader into an
understanding of the relationship between the
Christian’s hope of God’s special blessings and God’s
expectations of the individual Christian. Different
aspects covered include: building on the foundation
of salvation, bearing spiritual fruit, developing a
servant’s heart, and healthy fear of the Lord.

Because they personally experienced changed lives
from meditation on the Judgment Seat of Christ, Rick
Howard and Jamie Lash felt it necessary to write This
Was Your Life!. Believing this is a little studied
concept among Christians, they present this book as
an in-depth yet easily read, scriptural study. A feeling
of intimacy between reader and authors is fostered by
personal anecdotes and the use of “you” and “I.” This
technique holds the interest of the reader. Several
helps are included at the end of this book, like a guide
to being sure we will go to heaven when we die, a vision received by William Booth, study guides for each chapter to foster individual and group study, and chapter notes including expansion of some ideas and books referenced. Audio and video tapes of This Was Your Life are also available. Donna J. H. Eggert


248.4 Christian Life. 277 p. Gr. 10 - Adult. 
Quality - 4   Acceptability - 5
It has been said that many people, Christians among them, live lives of “quiet desperation”—lives devoid of joy, excitement, interest. Perhaps our secular, materialistic culture contributes to this problem for non-Christians. But shouldn’t it be different for Christians? Jeff Imbach would answer “yes,” and The River Within is his call to live life passionately.

Passion doesn’t mean a life focused on lusts and desires. Rather, a passionate life is focused so intently on God that all aspects of life are filled with the presence of God. By loving God, we do as God pleases, which brings true joy to life.

Imbach has functioned as a spiritual director for many years, and brings these experiences to bear, with vignettes of people caught up in unsatisfactory lives. Ten years, and brings these experiences to bear, with vignettes of people caught up in unsatisfactory lives.

I suspect that this could well be a disturbing book for readers who don’t want to think seriously about their lives. It could be a frightening experience. On the other hand, Imbach righteously warns against the dangers of excess. This is not a book of license, but a book urging openness to God and freedom in Christ. God, for Imbach, is mainly a God of love—not a tyrant looking for excuses to punish us, but a gracious parent seeking ways to bless us.

My only quibble is that the book occasionally seems to be a little repetitious, as Imbach reiterates points relating to passion more frequently than is perhaps necessary. Andrew M. Seddon


Quality - 4   Acceptability - 5
Why do so few parents leave a solid legacy for their children? The authors believe it is not incompetence, dysfunctional family background, or lack of desire— but lack of intentional planning. They offer practical suggestions to ensure leaving a legacy that meets the spiritual, emotional, and social needs of children.


Quality - 4   Acceptability - 5
Family Fragrance is part of the “Heritage Builders” series and is designed to enlarge on the concept of fragrance discussed in The Heritage. Husband and wife, J. Otis Ledbetter and Gail Ledbetter, use the acrostic AROMA to explain how to create the sweet-smelling fragrance of love in the home. AROMA stands for affection, respect, order, meriment, and affirmation. The authors share stories, helpful principles, and numerous ways to carry out the five qualities of fragrance. Affection is the foundation of AROMA and includes unconditional love, modeling a servant’s heart, and asking forgiveness. Parents can express affection simply by how they tuck their children in bed or awaken them.

Respect is shown by honoring each other in the ups and downs of life, valuing a child’s privacy, and giving second chances. Order involves balance between freedom and boundaries. Guidelines for order include establishing appropriate rules, communicating through family meetings, and following a schedule. Laughter and enthusiasm are part of meriment; the authors share numerous ideas for year-round family fun. Affirmation blends affection, respect, order, and meriment. It is shown through touch, positive reinforcement, and by eliminating hurtful name calling.

This easy-to-read resource concludes with pointers on leading a child to Christ, recommended books and magazines for parents, and songs to teach young children. Parents will value the practical suggestions and guidance offered to fill their homes with the appealing fragrance of love.

Lydia E. Harris

The Hiding Place


248.4 Christian Life. Adult. 
Quality - 3   Acceptability - 5
In this Christian Growth Study Plan book, Karla Worley combines interviews with Christian women, both well-known and not widely-known, and author questions intended to spark growth in, and inspiration for, women’s lives. In the well-known category, interviewees include Rosalynn Carter, Gloria Gaither, and Jeannette Clift George, the actress who portrayed Corrie Ten Boom in The Hiding Place.
The chapters are organized into such topics as compassion, grace, simplicity, and submission with three or four conversations given in each. The interviews are done in transcript style, with author questions italicized, and the text of the book is framed with illustrations, Bible verses, and author comments on the outside edges of each page with additional space for reader notes. The author also makes devotional applications within the body of the interviews. Footnotes are given at the end of each chapter.

While the effort to provide an informal forum for the sharing of Christ’s influence in women’s lives is laudable, unedited (one assumes) conversations can make for unyielding reading. Consequently, the narratives vary in impact due to the women’s individual talents in oral communication and not necessarily the depth of their spiritual insights.

In spite of this, these faith stories of women of God are uplifting and memorable. Certainly, some of the more vivid storytellers relate messages, like that of an unfortunate spider and the four-year-old girl who would become Gloria Gaither, will stick like putty to the reader’s memory. Marcy Stewart Froemke


John Beckett has been loving Mondays ever since he decided to run his oil burner business for the glory of God. He says, “I had seen clear evidence that the Lord had a vital interest in my work. I concluded it would be utterly foolish for me to somehow partition my life into one way of thinking and conduct on Sundays and another during the work week. There needed to be a much fuller integration of my two worlds.”

Three areas of focus make the R.W. Beckett Corporation notable. The first, he says, is extraordinary service. Management and employees alike strive to do their best. All are constantly looking for ways to improve their products so that they are always on the cutting edge of excellence. Examining their manufacturing process, they search for techniques that will enhance productivity and quality. They demonstrate their integrity in their contacts with customers and fulfillment of orders.

Second, Beckett says, is commitment to employees. Company policies such as twenty-six weeks of maternity leave at quarter pay enable employees to remain union-free. For employees to be successful or to be promoted to the best interests of labor, providing training needed to be a much fuller integration of my two worlds.

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The remainder of this little book (only 55 pages) expounds on this three-point plan. Bolles talks about cycles of learning and unlearning as we fine-tune our lives. Bolles suggests that we existed in heaven before our own births and knew then what God planned for us to do; now we just have to reclaim that memory.

The book is illustrated with pictures reminiscent of woodcuts. It also includes a bibliography for further reading. Andrea Huelsenbeck


Howard Bell, born with spinal muscular atrophy in 1972, was expected to live only five years, nevertheless recalls the story of his life of twenty-four years in More Than a Conqueror. Bell, whose father was a Pentecostal Holiness Preacher, believes in the prayers of healing and finds it hard to take his son to a physician and ask for help.

Defying the odds, Bell lives past his expectancy, undergoing numerous hospital stays and surgeries. He attends a Christian school, public school, and public college. He endures not only numerous physical problems, the pain of moving from a familiar neighborhood, but also the divorce of his parents. Though restricted to a wheelchair, Bell manages to develop worldly friends and succumbs to their influence until God becomes real in his life.

More Than A Conqueror, forward by Marilyn Hickey, is a story of a young man growing up in the Pentecostal tradition. The author spends much time on detail when describing ordinary situations and events and thus, spends more time telling his story than applying God’s principles of spiritual growth. The story lacks depth of writing, moving from event to event, yet is easily read in an evening. Carolyn L. Hearing


Richard N. Bolles is a well-known career counselor and the author of the annual What Color Is Your Parachute? How to Find Your Mission In Life started out as an appendix in Parachute.

Bolles writes that each of us has a three-fold mission: “to know God, and enjoy Him forever, and to see His hand in all His works... to do what you can, moment by moment, day by day, step by step, to make this world a better place, following the leading and guidance of God’s Spirit within you and around you... to exercise that Talent which you particularly came to Earth to use—your greatest gift, which you most delight to use, in the place(s) or setting(s) which God has caused to appeal to you the most, and for those purposes which God most needs to have done in the world.”

The story lacks depth of writing, moving from event to event, yet is easily read in an evening.

Reading through these devotions and thinking about the questions they pose, readers can’t help but wonder about the women pregnant for the first time who were surprised by a pregnancy, or who were pregnant after years of wanting a child, the older pregnant woman, and how these devotions would affect them. The meditations cover so many of the questions pregnant women have. And many meditations have points worth pondering even if you are not pregnant. They ask for a closer relationship to God, to those we love. They ask for forgiveness for weak moments of faith. Because the writing is clear and beautiful—never is it condescending to the reader—I wasn’t prepared for was the effect the devotions had on me, a non-parent.

The analogy of pregnancy to faith was one that is easily understood. A pregnant woman waits in expectation for the birth of her child to see that person face to face, the believer lives in expectation of the culmination of faith, seeing Christ face to face in heaven.

This would make an especially good gift for the first time mother, or a woman going through a difficult, at-risk pregnancy. Leslie Greaves Radloff

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Written by former “Miss America” and Wisconsin native now living in Virginia, the devotions in this book show a spiritual journey and growth of personal faith. The topics covered in the book are arranged in five parts beginning with the foundation of God’s promises, his word, followed by “Living the Christian Life,” “Relationships,” “In Difficult Times,” and “Closing.” Each subtopic is followed by a section entitled “My Journal Page” that could be used by readers to write their own reactions to what has been read, and keep a prayer diary.

The format of each section is the same: scripture text, a meditation written by the author, closing prayer, and salient Scripture texts taken most often from the New King James Version, or the Amplified Bible. Each meditation, though different in format, goes straight to the heart of matters of concern to readers, and, through the Scripture, tells them what God tells them about their daily living and dealings with people. Readers will be able to make applications to their lives.

The author’s strong faith and reliance on God’s word in her life are clear. While she alludes to a spiritual battle in her own life that caused her to consciously put on the armor of God, she does not tell the reader what it is. We learn that her first marriage ended in divorce, made more painful by the fact that she was a Christian in the public eye. What she learned is important for us too; the Armor of God needs to be worn to fight against the temptations of the world, and it is possible to be happy in difficult and unpleasant circumstances.

Other sample chapters deal with: When the World Is Falling Apart, Psalm 2; When All You Know Is Discouragement, Psalm 11; When Fear Calls and Won’t Go Away, Psalm 27; When Stresses Are Greater than Strengths, Psalm 46. The Psalms are always a good place to start reading for all of life’s problems and Stuart Briscoe helps us understand how clearly the Psalms speak to the issues of our day. Myrtlemay Pittman Crane


Postmodernism is the prevailing view of contemporary western society, a view which has to a large extent replaced the modernism which dominated western thought for centuries. Postmodernism is the non-rational, relativistic successor to the rationality of the Enlightenment. Postmodernism disposes with absolute truth, the existence of an external knowable universe, and the ability of language to describe our experiences.

In this book, Stanley Grenz, professor at Carey Theological College, attempts to explain (in concise terms) postmodernism in terms of its history, characteristics, and advocates. To a large extent he succeeds, but the going is still difficult; while postmodernism affects us all, it is hard to grasp without training in philosophy. The vast majority of the book is explanation without commentary, but in the all too short last chapter, Grenz discusses the relationship between postmodernism and the Gospel.

A Primer on Postmodernism is not bedside reading; but if Christians are to be aware of and sensitive to the changing cultural paradigm, this would be a useful starting point. Postmodern values are not confined to philosophy books, but show up in popular literature, television, and movies. If Christians are to stand against a movement that attempts to diminish the relevance of the Gospel, then an understanding of that movement is essential. Andrew M. Seddon


Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

The Media-Wise Family provides parents with “A Christian family guide to making morally and spiritually responsible decisions about movies, TV, and multimedia.” The need for discernment is the consistent focus in this vigorous presentation of media literacy from a Christian perspective.

Topics in the early chapters include: public concern for morality and family entertainment, principles of learning as they relate to the results of viewing sex

Scott Hoezee, minister of preaching and administration at Calvin Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, asks the question, “Why is it that many Christians find a theological-scientific debate about creation’s ancient origins far more engaging than a speech about how to live responsibly in the creation today?” The book is Hoezee’s answer to the question. Focusing on the breadth of the biblical text, Hoezee paints a picture of a God who delights in his creation, and calls each one of us to do the same. Based on a solid theological foundation, this book also presents practical ways in which we as individuals and as the church-at-large can take part in God’s “ecology of praise.” Hoezee challenges us to slow down, listen, smell, observe, and generally delight in creation. He asks us, as biblically and theologically informed Christians, to look at our relation to the environment within a consistent framework. The central three chapters are a good overview of his message, and the final chapter, a meditation, pulls all the author’s reflections into a thoughtful whole. While not written at a popular level, Hoezee’s style is reminiscent of a well-presented sermon series. A section of notes, as well as subject and scripture indexes round out this well-conceived package. Ted Goshulak


266. Missions—Iran; Missions—China; Missions—Latin America. 252 p. Gr. 7 - Adult.

Anyone who loves to hear a good missions story will enjoy this book! Brother Andrew tells stories after story about suffering Christians around the world and Open Doors’ efforts to take the Bible to them. His stories cover Eastern Europe, China, Africa, Russia, Latin America, the 10/40 Window—every corner of the world. Interspersed with the stories are ten “steps” that will make evangelism most effective, including: “Become persistent in prayer,” “Penetrate every devil-inspired boundary or barrier,” “Maximize your opportunities by being present,” “Become part of a permanent presence wherever you are,” “Use your platform to proclaim God’s message,” and “Allow God’s power to flow through you into a needy world.”

Discussion questions at the back of the book would make For the Love of My Brothers an ideal book for a study group with a heart for missions. The appendices include ten prayers to accompany the ten steps, Open Doors’ addresses and vision statement, and ideas for ways that an individual or church can get more involved in evangelism.

The name Brother Andrew will be familiar to many because of his former book titled God’s Smuggler. For the Love of My Brothers brings the reader up to date on Brother Andrew’s efforts around the world, allows the reader to hear Brother Andrew’s heartbeat for the suffering church—and especially those in the Muslim world—and fills the reader with Brother Andrew’s excitement for the future. Barbara Beyer


To complement her other books for women, Susan Hunt wrote about the importance of teaching God’s promises to the children in our churches. Hunt says the church is losing its covenant children, the offspring of believers, who are supposed to be the main source of new believers. The world calls to our children and they will capitulate if we do not have a detailed plan to claim them for our own.

Among the book’s strengths is the excellent scripture timeline of the covenant in the first section. Starting with Adam in Genesis through John’s words from Patmos at the end of Revelation, she lists verses that describe God’s promises. Each chapter begins with a compelling testimonial illustrating the importance of dedicated Christian educators. These add a touch of humanness to the scholarly body of the book. The chapters end with a take-away point, a few questions, and a Christian education idea. My favorite is the whole-church Bible verse memorization plan.

The book is heavy on background information and light on quick tips. It appeals more to directors or pastors than Sunday School teachers trying to glean ideas for their next lesson. Although teachers need this background to comprehend the solemnity of their role, unfortunately many of them are too busy to complete this lengthy study. Karla Kessell


Living With History is the fifth volume in the New Church’s Teaching Series, a series designed to help Anglicans in their understanding of the Christian faith. Though at times we might like to think that history is the boring relics of dead people and past events, the truth is that an understanding of where we have come from and the forces that have shaped us is important both for how we live today and for where the future might take us.

Living With History is not a book about history, but a book about it. Thompson says that she has “selected a number of themes that I find important in understanding the Christian faith today, including the connection between tradition and change, how we envision the ministries of all the baptised, ways of dealing with conflict and disagreement, and theological sources that can be “recycled” to inform the pressing concerns of our own day.” To be sure, Thompson uses examples of people and events from the past, but always to understand their connection with and relevance for today.

Each denomination has its own history and related perspectives, and Living With History is written from a particularly Anglican slant. It should prove to be a valuable resource for Anglicans interested in the forces that have shaped the denomination, as well as reminding us that history is relevant. Andrew M. Seldon


270. Christianity—Quotations, maxims, etc. 502 p. Adult.

The Doubleday Christian Quotation Collection contains a wealth of quotable quotes from interesting Christian thinkers and writers through history. It begins with some brief quotes from the first century AD and continues up to the present time. Obviously, there are many more quotations available from recent centuries than there are from earlier times, but the compilers make a valiant attempt to include what is available from ancient times. The twentieth century is divided into two periods, before 1950 and after 1950 because of the wealth of material available.

The compilers state that one of their purposes is to present material from all around the world, especially
from writers in the Third World. Another important purpose of theirs is to offer quotations from the writings of women from around the world. Some speakers and writers are quoted more than others, largely because some are more quotable and pithy, not necessarily because they are more important or influential Christian thinkers. The compilers do not judge the authors’ commitment to Christianity; all the authors they include would consider themselves Christian in a broad sense.

One of the values of this book is its completeness and its inclusion of writers and thinkers from many different perspectives with regard to Christianity. There seems to be a greater emphasis on writers from Europe and the international community than on American writers, particularly American evangelical writers in the twentieth century. There are very few quotations from evangelicals in the twentieth century. There is an emphasis on the Catholic and liturgical Protestant traditions throughout the book.

Overall, this is a unique book, and I find it very useful and interesting, and I have already found several quotations I plan to use in my own speaking. Paul Boling


Labeled as an “unauthorized biography” in the forward by J.I. Packer himself, Alister McGrath traces in order, the life of the English theologian. Of particular interest is Packer’s childhood, where, as a loner and probably due to wearing protective headgear stemming from a head injury, he may have developed his voracious reading habits.

Packer, an ordained minister of the Church of England, is best known today for his scholarship, a number of books that Packer claims the assembly began as a “working Mission in the Third Millennium.” McGrath stating that Packer claims the assembly began as a “working group exploring the ways” in which individual Christians might work together on common ground, insisting it is not a mandate for the convergence of churches. Packer, however, is known as a strong advocate of the role of parachurch organizations, yet insisting it is not a mandate for the convergence of churches. Packer, however, is known as a strong advocate of the role of parachurch organizations, yet

McGrath’s book is balanced, addressing even disputes in Packer’s career such as his signing of the “Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium.” McGrath stating that Packer claims the assembly began as a “working group exploring the ways” in which individual Christians might work together on common ground, insisting it is not a mandate for the convergence of churches. Packer, however, is known as a strong advocate of the role of parachurch organizations, yet still claims this does “not imply acceptance of Roman Catholic doctrinal distinctives.”

McGrath includes a detailed index centering on people and places mentioned in the book, a list of recordings of lectures by Packer, a bibliography of Packer’s works, including books, articles and pamphlets and extensive notes documenting his research of five years. A good addition to the library

of the serious student of modern evangelicalism. Carolyn L. Hearing


Christ’s invitation to rest in Mark 6:31 is quite simply the whole idea of Rubiетta’s book Quiet Places. Retreat from the busyness of life and refocus on Christ for the peace you so desperately seek.

The chapters are set up to be individual retreats or meditation but can also be use in small groups, during retreats, or Sunday School classes. There is much to reflect on, to contemplate, Scripture to meditate on, prayers of all kinds, questions, and hymns. The beginning sounds a bit too much like a “How to do” book, but once past that the reader will find a truthfulness that is unmistakable.

Among topics covered by the book are busyness, a facade worn to keep from meeting the woman behind the mask. Stress, a fact of life; in most instances we cannot change our many stressors, we can only change the ways we deal with stress. Transitions, a given on this road called living. Learning to see them not just as stressors, but as a means for God to transcend our every-days with his all-encompassing grace will move us on in our journey.

While many of the topics have been covered in self-help books, here the help comes from the Lord and his word. The end of the chapter quotations for contemplation are from well-known writers, actors, philosophers. Following those quotations are Scripture verses for further contemplation. Included also are well-known hymns which provide fitting conclusions for each section.

With all the emphasis on ‘retreats’ today, and difficulty of securing places at retreats in some areas, this small book gives the benefits without the hassle. Quiet time spent with this book and the Scriptures would provide a recharging of emotional and spiritual batteries sufficient to face the world. Leslie Greaves

Radioff

300’s - Social Sciences


616.85 Eating disorders. 200 p. Adult.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 4

Jantz, a doctorate in psychology, directs an eating disorder treatment center in Washington State. He espouses a holistic approach that addresses four aspects of a person, the physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual. He states that God will be with the reader throughout their journey towards healing and that their healing and recovery depend upon God.

Reminiscent of John Bradshaw, Jantz asks many piercing questions about the readers’ childhood. He feels that behind every eating disorder is abuse of some kind. Often the individual is not even aware that they have been abused. He acknowledges that the abuse needs to be worked through and healed before the eating disorder can be addressed. Since he believes that the body must regain a measure of strength to do the healing work, Jantz also produces and sells a line of nutritional items.

Each chapter contains a list of thought-provoking questions that are meant to be completed with a caring professional. Thoughts from patients with eating disorders are at the end of each chapter. In one of the later chapters, he includes a letter that the patient can give to family members to ask for their assistance with recovery.

Since there are eight million people afflicted with eating disorders, with seven million of them female, there is a good chance we will have one in our church or school. This book would be beneficial to give to teachers and parents of people they suspect of having an eating disorder. Anita Goldman Horning


615.5 Cookery. 256 p. Adult.

Quality - 3  Acceptability - 4

This eclectic collection of wit, wisdom, household hints, and recipes better fulfills the cover’s tiny-print slogan, “A Home Management System,” rather than the title, Dinner’s in the Freezer. Busy cooks may wish the author had focused more on the subject of her book’s name. Jill Bond’s “mega-cooking method” and freezing tips don’t begin until almost halfway through the book (recipes don’t show up until the last third), so Bond can share household management ideas, family stories, and her son’s illustrations in the first half. Going to the recipe section and browsing through the main entrees, I found three I could personally use, although there were many more dessert ideas. Not exactly what I expected, or needed, from a book called Dinner’s in the Freezer. However, every family’s tastes differ.

Developing and using her own program for over eight years, Jill Bond and her husband cook all their meals for the next six months during a three-day weekend. The last half of this book shows us how to do it ourselves. The author’s program seems complicated, but she includes all the forms needed to follow her system. Of course, Bond assures the reader that you can start small, like doubling up on an evening’s meal and freezing some of it, or maybe cooking once a week.

In her section on saving money while shopping for food, the author does not include information on what time of year a consumer can find the best buys on meat or produce. Although this may vary depending on region, general guidelines exist (for example, good deals on turkeys at Thanksgiving or buying fruit in season). However, nothing like this is mentioned—a surprising oversight.

A resource page in the back lists special offers for newsletters and catalogs related to both homemaking and homeschooling. Jill Bond’s style is warm, chatty, and personable, but it feels as if the author crammed every bit of wisdom into this one book. That may delight some readers, while others just want to get down to business—the specifics of Bond’s mega-cooking system so dinner can, indeed, make it to the freezer. Kimn Swenson Golnick


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Is raising teenage boys something to fear? Not according to Bill Beausay, author, counselor, and father of two sons. He believes parents can raise teenage sons successfully and enjoy it.

Beausay helps parents understand teenage boys, teaching six principles of provocative parenting that put parents in charge. He applies these principles to areas of parental concern: communication, sexuality, discipline, passage rites, leadership development, and spirituality. He assures parents they are competent to handle most of their teenager’s behavior, but includes a chapter on crisis management for deeper problems.

The focus throughout Teenage Boys! is on shaping boys into men who are ready for life. Beausay advocates genuine parental interest and involvement in every aspect of children’s lives. His sound, practical advice builds hope and self confidence in parents. Application exercises, called “A Closer Focus,” are found in each chapter. Although footnotes and parenting resources are lacking, it is definitely a valuable resource parents and others working with teenage boys. Lydia E. Harris


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5


A Field Guide to Home Schooling elucidates the issues necessitated in home schooling children. Chapters 1 - 4 consist of the author’s reason for home schooling, home school vs. public school, and the scholarly and societal intermingling of home schoolers. Chapters 5 - 8 entail methods for home schooling, educational genres and curriculum selection, essentials for beginners, and the rapport amid public and home schools. Chapters 9 - 12 deal with the desideratum of socialization, publicizing home schooling, support groups, and managing home schooling as parents. Christine M. Field has written an excellent resource for parents contemplating home schooling. Well-documented, Appendix A comprises businesses offering home school materials plus a synopsis of their expertise. Appendix B enumerates home school organizations for each state. Appendix C encapsulates the laws pertaining to home schooling in all fifty states plus the Office of Education address and phone number. The Notes section embodies the resources utilized in the writing of the book. 


Strategies for Struggling Learners is specifically addressed to homeschooling parents. The first chapter describes eight recognized forms of exceptionality, and is followed by a framework for teaching that emphasizes a biblical philosophy. Other chapters provide many practical suggestions in the areas of testing and evaluation, developing curriculum, program practices, modifying instruction, teaching methods, and managing behavior. End matter includes names and addresses of recommended resources and suppliers, references, and Scripture, author, and subject indexes.

A veteran educator, Dr. Joe P. Sutton is the president of Exceptional Diagnostics. He and his wife and co-author, Connie J. Sutton, are professors at Bob Jones University. Each of the practical chapters includes a number of useful tables or itemized lists of suggestions which can be used with profit by home educators—or classroom teachers—in their educational planning or evaluation. Although many of the techniques appear as one-size-fits-all, educators should choose from among those recommendations to meet individual needs. Students with learning disabilities compose the largest percentage of exceptional students, and most of the suggested techniques seem particularly appropriate to that population. The discussion of various reward systems in the final chapter does not mention the possible diminishing returns from their use.

The Suttons’ book makes no mention of the overwhelming empirical data from the field of neuropsychology that currently demonstrates the plasticity of the human brain and indicates that we should not accept the learner as a static individual, but should recognize that the brain is open to development at all stages of life. This book tends to focus on changing the environment for the static learner instead of changing the learner to adapt to his ever-changing environment and to be successful in different environments. Donna W. Bowling 


Looking for recipes for fun? Author Silvana Clark approaches life from a creative, playful perspective. She encourages families to play together to strengthen bonds and build confidence in children. In 150 Ways to Raise Creative, Confident Kids, Clark offers over 300 examples including how to combine fun and fitness, create treasure hunts, comfort the sick, and many others. Her goal is to help families nurture the “curiosity that provokes creativity.” Readers might feel overwhelmed by all of the choices she provides, but the book is offered as a resource which gives parents the freedom to choose activities best suited for their lifestyle, yet be willing to step out of the “safe” zone occasionally.

Clark draws the reader in by sharing personal stories of her family and other families who have enjoyed playing together. She is an international motivational speaker, a recreation coordinator, and the mother of two daughters, Joanne M. Haffly 

800’s — Literature


For anyone hoping to write Christian fiction, The Complete Guide to Writing and Selling the Christian Novel is the place to begin. In a well-organized format, Dr. Stokes takes the aspiring and experienced writer through basics such as characterization, plotting, point of view, etc., and relates them to the particulars of Christian fiction. Stating what might seem obvious at first glance, she says that a writer of Christian fiction should be a Christian. However, given the rapid growth of this market and the hunger of many to be published, this may not always be the case. Some of the distinctive features to look for in these novels include a decidedly Christian—and most likely evangelical—worldview; universal themes and subjects; and fully rounded characters who are not created to serve merely as didactic tools. Dr. Stokes warns authors eager to proselytize that most of the readers of Christian fiction are already converted. Instead of preaching, the writer’s duty is to create inspiring stories of believable people who experience growth in their faith despite adversity. Quoting John Gardner, she says fiction should be a “continuous, vivid dream.”

Covering the subject from query letter to how to field those sometimes annoying fan letters, Dr. Stokes is eminently qualified to know of what she writes. The author of Turner’s Crossroads and other novels, as well as non-fiction works, she has edited more than 150 books, many of which have won awards. This beautifully-written book is itself an example of smooth, readable style. An essential for the serious writer’s library, the handbook has an index and three appendices, including a sample proposal and a suggested bibliography for further research. Marcy Stewart Froemke

On October 11 and 12, 1996, the National Council of Teachers of English held a conference at the University of Maine entitled Reading Stephen King: Issues of Censorship, Student Choice, and the Place of Popular Literature in the Canon. This book is a collection of some of the material that was presented at the conference. The issues of censorship, student choice, and popular literature in the classroom are complex; educators’ opinions on these topics run from one extreme (students should read anything and everything) to the other (assignments should be chosen with great care from literature of proven merit). The first few chapters strongly favor the former point of view, as typified by this excerpt from Stephen King’s keynote address, giving advice to students: “...run, don’t walk, to the nearest non-school library or to the local bookstore and get whatever it was that they banned. Read whatever they’re trying to keep out of your eyes and your brain because that’s exactly what you need to know.”

It’s not until the fourth chapter that a voice of reason intervenes. Carol Avery, then president-elect of NCTE, asks, “...as teachers and parents, do we know things that students don’t know?...Are there times when we have to guide and challenge kids to do things they wouldn’t do on their own so that they can adopt insights and behaviors they wouldn’t achieve without our help?” The essays and materials chosen for this book attempt to cover all sides of these explosive questions. However, many educators and parents will likely take...
exception to some of the opinions expressed. For example, in chapter eight, James Albright and Roberta F. Hammett describe a particularly brutal scene in King’s *Rose Madder*, and pronounce, “These are undeniably the acts, ideas, and values of an evil person, and therefore presumably not admirable or tempting to the reader to imitate…” While I agree that’s probably true for 99% of readers, our prisons are full of violent criminals whose inspiration for their deeds came from explicit depictions in books, magazines, and movies. Might adolescents who are titillated by such material in danger of labeling themselves aberrant or homosexual just because they found the material titillating? Isn’t it irresponsible to subject students to literature of this nature at the time in their lives when they are forming their identities?

Some of the chapters advocate using horror genre and other examples of popular literature to teach critical thinking skills, and suggest various techniques to do so. The appendices contain reading lists and bibliographies, strategies for fighting censorship attempts, and sample questions and suggested activities relating to some of Stephen King’s short stories.

This book is an eye-opener for those who would like a glimpse of the beliefs of those who teach our subject students to literature of this nature at the time in their lives when they are forming their identities. The author begins by challenging the reader to attempt, and sample questions and suggested activities relating to some of Stephen King’s short stories.

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The second major focus of the book is a comparative study of law versus grace, religion versus compassion. Jesus personified and taught that the Sabbath is for man and not man for the Sabbath. The author illustrates this through biblical references. But he also explores many present day applications of this idea. He often references to his time spent as a parish priest, as well as a retrospective look at the church now that he is retired from formal ministry.

* A Portrait of Jesus effectively paints a picture of Jesus for us that is easy to imagine. The writing style is very reader friendly. While the book is not truly a pencil drawing to set the mood of the writing. Carol Shearer


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 3

The title of Sheila Upjohn’s book *Why Julian Now?* perfectly encapsulates its theme: what relevance does a 14th century English mystic have for people in the 20th century? Certainly there is interest in Julian of Norwich; her book *Revelations of Divine Love (or Showings)*, an account of visions she received and meditated on for many years, is still widely read. Upjohn doesn’t set out to explore Julian’s theology in detail (although she does this to some extent) but find areas where Julian’s spirituality addresses current needs. Julian is relevant, she believes, not because the 14th century (a time of war, plague, intolerance, and ignorance) was like our own century (although it was), but because it was dissimilar. And, paradoxically, this dissimilarity gives Julian’s writings meaning for today.

Writings by and about Christian mystics do not appeal to all branches of the church. Some see mysticism as a neglected aspect of Christian life, while others regard it as a danger. The appeal of this book, therefore, will be to those sympathetic towards a mystical approach, as well as those desiring an introduction to Julian.

Julian’s perspectives on several issues—the nature of God, creation, sin, salvation, and the relationship of God to humanity, for example—is unique. Upjohn has a tendency to seem to elevate Julian’s writing to a par with those of St. Paul. Equating Julian to the New Testament would seem to be extreme, and one might be forgiven for doubting whether Julian herself would want the *Revelations of Divine Love* to be so regarded.

**Why Julian Now?** is fluently written and offers a concise introduction to Julian’s thoughts. Julian herself gives thought-provoking insights, even if we might not agree with all she says. *Andrew M. Seddon*
David Bercot has taken Patrick’s own writings (the Confession and the Letter to Coroticus) and used them as a basis for telling the story of Patrick’s life in narrative form. Here is no mythical hero, but a real man engaging on a difficult but God-given task. Patrick wasn’t the first Christian in Ireland, but he did more than anyone else to evangelize it.

While Bercot’s aim is laudable, his writing technique is not quite adequate for the task. Let Me Die in Ireland is in many ways amateurishly written. The dialogue, rather than opening pathways into the personalities of the characters, serves only as a conduit for information, and hence comes across as stilted and unreal. While the writing flaws detract from the book’s value for adults, it should still appeal to younger readers. Patrick was a true servant of God, and his life story deserves to be better known.

Andrew M. Seddon


Quality - 5  Acceptability - 4

The distinction between Hellenism and Judaism was once used by some New Testament scholars to imagine that Peter (the Jew) and Paul (the Hellenist) were leading two essentially competing versions of Christianity. These scholars then imagined that the writer of Acts created a fictional picture of a unified Christianity that supposedly never existed. This view is still influencing some of the more radical writers today (e.g. Who Wrote the New Testament by Burton Mack).

Hengel’s study is a serious challenge to this view. Most of Hengel’s book is a presentation of the evidence that Judea and Galilee were strongly influenced by Hellenism in Jesus’ time and that such hard and fast distinctions between Hellenism and Judaism are unhelpful in today’s scholarly discussions. His evidence comes from inscriptions on ancient coins and tombs, intertestamental and Rabbinic literature, the presence of Greek style architecture, and first century history.

Martin Hengel is a world-renowned New Testament scholar at the University of Tubingen in Germany. The book is generally directed to specialists in New Testament studies, but since much of the technical discussions are contained in the end notes (nearly half the book), most upper level college students with an interest in the New Testament and/or early Christianity might profit from the discussion as well.

Dennis Ingolfson


E. Twelve (The number)--Fiction; Stories in rhyme; Easy reading materials. 30 p. P.S. Gr. 3-5.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

A Dozen Dozens, by Harriet Ziefert, uses several paths to help children identify the concept of “dozen.” The explanation that a dozen is the same at twelve is introduced early in the book. The concept of “half-dozen” is also taught. Ms. Ziefert does a wonderful job of showing that a dozen doesn’t have to be twelve of the same thing, such as six roses and six tulips. The book is done in rhyme for easy repetition and the vocabulary would all be familiar to young children (i.e. pies, dogs, babies, apples, shoes, socks, etc).

This book is very well done and would be a useful tool for teaching as well as reinforcing the concept of “dozen” and “half-dozen.” The illustrations are very colorful and simple. Every page provides an opportunity to count. Some of the illustrations lend themselves to addition or subtraction as well. This is a worthwhile supplemental math tool.

Patricia A. Youmans


E. Jesus Christ--Fiction; Donkeys--Fiction; Christmas--Fiction. 24 p. PS. Gr. 3.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

A Christmas Story, by Brian Wildsmith, tells the tale of Rebecca, a small girl who is charged by Joseph and Mary to take care of their baby donkey while they travel with the donkey’s mother to Bethlehem. Because the young donkey is sad without his mother, Rebecca sets out to find his mother, as well as Mary and Joseph. She travels past Herod’s palace, by some shepherds keeping watch over their flocks, and by a full inn. She sees the star shining over the stable and finds Joseph, Mary, the mother donkey, and the new baby Jesus. She leaves the young donkey with his mother as they go with Joseph and Mary to Egypt. Rebecca is taken home by one of the three wise men.

Even though it is obvious this story is not true, it seems like the author is grasping for some kind of story to go with his illustrations. Young children, however, would probably not notice how unrealistic it would be for a small girl to take off on her own to find a mother donkey. The story does provide an atmosphere of adventure that young ones would enjoy. The illustrations are the strong point in this book. They are paintings that are very ornate with an abundance of gold. Many of them have an almost stained glass effect that conveys a very majestic event, especially in the paintings depicting the angels and the star above the inn. This is certainly a very beautiful book.

Patricia A. Youmans


E. Math--Fiction; Division--Fiction. 32 p. K. Gr. 2.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Rabbit and Hare find a mushroom. They try to break it in half so each can eat a piece. Disagreement ensues. Raccoon comes along and offers to make the two pieces equal, only he eats all of it! “Let’s find something else to eat,” says Rabbit. They find an apple, big and round. Hare tries to divide the apple in half, but one piece is much bigger than the other. Raccoon wants to help. “Oh, no,” say Rabbit and Hare. “We will work together and divide it ourselves.”

Rabbit and Hare Diverse an Apple by Harriet Ziefert is an entertaining read for beginning readers. Simple and colorful illustrations by Emily Bolam emphasize that working together is the best solution. This story teaches cooperation in an enjoyable way with easy text that the beginning reader can master.

Mary Jarvis

Children’s Fiction  Continued from p. 35.


F. Mystery fiction. 158 p. Gr. 3-6.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Hannah and Walt Parmenter live on an island in Maine with their parents and another family. The Parmenters run a tourist lodge. While Mama and Hannah are picking blueberries, Hannah’s dog, Hunter, goes crashing through some boards. That crash leads to an adventure for Hannah and Walt.

Hunter appears to have fallen into a well, but it is dry. Walt and Papa discover a tunnel leading downward at the base of the “well.” Hannah does some historical research, and Walt uses his newly acquired skills in geometry to solve the mystery of why the “well” is there and where the tunnel leads. Hannah makes a discovery that leads to discussion with a professor of archaeology regarding the cause of the Ice Age; he says Noah’s flood caused it.

Eric Wiggan has written a high adventure mystery novel for older elementary students. He displays knowledge of creation, evolution, and carbon-14 dating. The Christian faith of the Parmenter family is evident throughout the book.

The Secret of the Old Well shows the value of research and math skills, as well as the ability to think straight in difficult situations. While the end of the story may be somewhat predictable, the biblical and technical explanations are a pleasant surprise. Most authors may have thought information about carbon-14 dating above elementary students, but not Mr. Wiggan. Jane Meautet


inviting to any audience. Each volume is filled with many pictures, illustrations, maps, and excerpts of quotes. Each book concludes with notes, a bibliography for further reading, works consulted, an index, picture credits, and a word about the author. The books are easy to read while at the same time they do a great job of covering the subject.

The *Watts Riot* gives a day by day description of the events as they unfolded, as well as discussion as to why the riot happened. The book is filled with quotes from people who were there as well as giving quotes from reactions from people around the nation.

The *Battle of the Little Bighorn* covers the background that led up to the battle and tells about the main people involved on both sides. Quotes, maps, and pictures help to give as detailed a view as possible about the events surrounding this fascinating event in history.

The *Roostervel and the New Deal* gives an excellent overview of the descent. It tells about all the programs that were carried out by the New Deal and is filled with quotes from a variety of people who lived through that time in history. Profanity is found in two quotes.

The *Roaring Twenties* is filled with personal stories of people who lived through that decade. Politics, economics, entertainent, and sports all give a rounded picture of the times. Several of the quotes used contain profanity.

*Russia of the Tsars* gives an abbreviated history of Russia beginning in 988 and continuing to the 1990’s. The rulers and their contributions are discussed and the views of the peasants are shown as the major uprisings are outlined.

Beginning with a discussion of slavery in the early Mediterranean civilizations, *The History of Slavery* continues on to the Middle Ages. The book goes on to talk about slavery in Africa, Indian slavery in the America’s, and slavery in the American colonies and the United States.

Starting with the definition and reasons of myths, *The Book of Myth and Romances* is a concise volume on the origins of stories that have woven into our vocabulary and culture. This is a great volume for giving a quick overview of mythology. Numerous nude pictures are included in the book picturing figures in mythology.

The book *The Renaissance* does an excellent job of giving a clear and easy-to-understand overview of people and events of that time in history. Educational advancements, church reformers, business and commerce, rulers, explorers, artists and writers, and science and medicine are all covered. *Esther Knaupp*
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