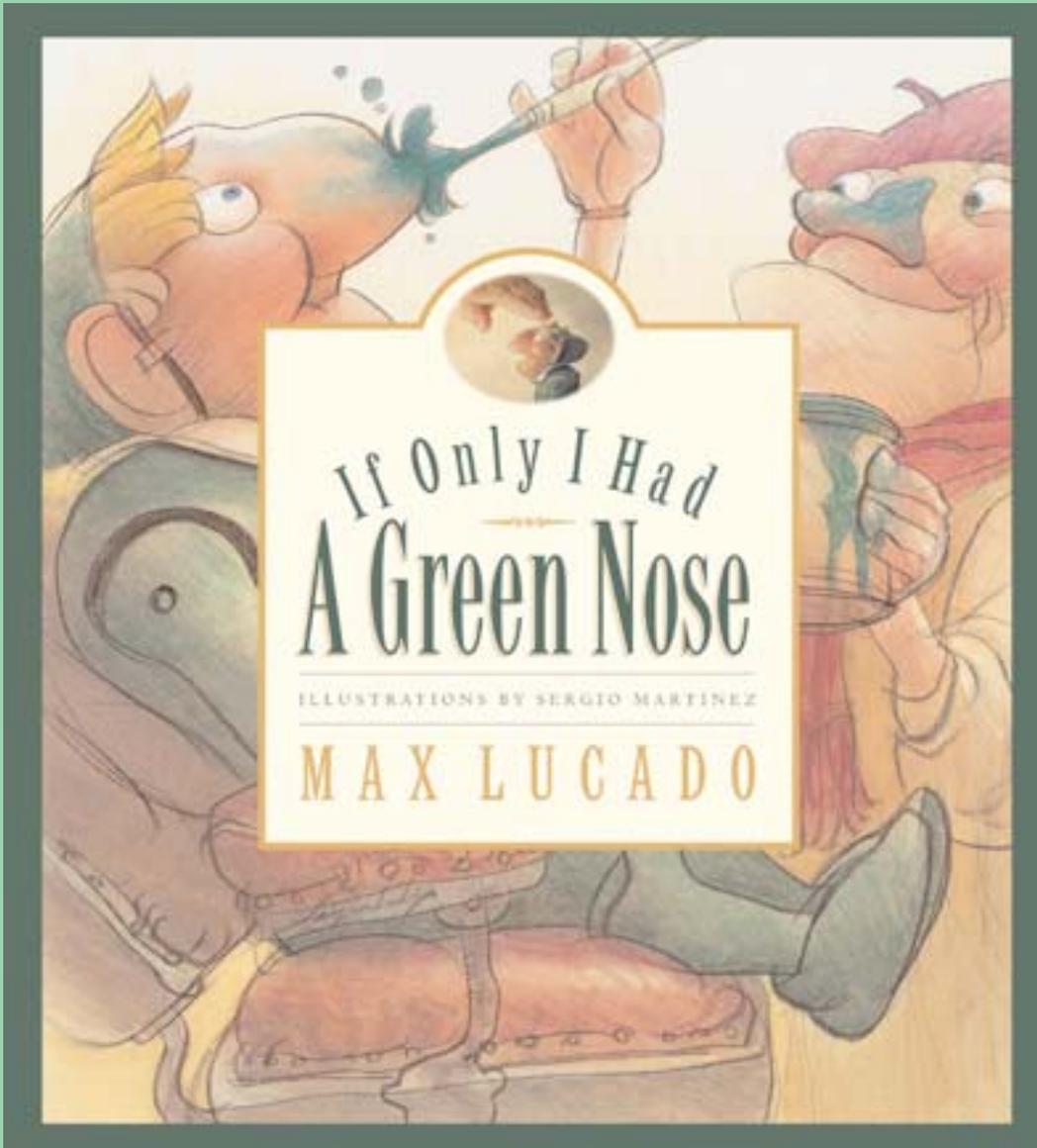
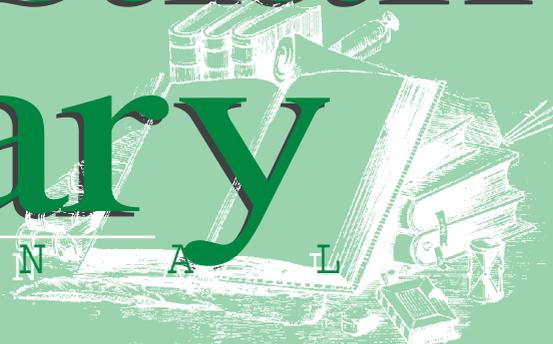


Volume VIII, No. 2  
April 2003

# Christian Library

J O U R N A L



## This Issue Features:

- [What You See...Fantasy, part 2](#)
- [Using Poetry in All Subjects](#)
- [On Summer Reading](#)
- [Listservs for Librarians](#)
- [Computerized Reading Programs](#)



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# Christian Library



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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 200 titles 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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# What You See...Fantasy

Part 2,

by Donna W. Bowling

"Of making many books there is no end" has been true for millennia. [Eccl. 12:12] Before the preceding article had an opportunity to go to press, several additional related titles came to my attention. These focus primarily on values which may be found in fantasy. Reading is an interactive process. Different readers bring different personal backgrounds to their reading experiences and take different impressions from their reading. Some works of fantasy provide an especially rich store of positive values--for those who have eyes to see them. No two readers will respond to any book in the same way.

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***Fantasy and your family : exploring The Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter and modern magick / Richard Abanes. Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 2002. PAP, 0875099750, \$11.99. Adult. Rating: 4.***

261.5'8. Children's literature--Religious aspects--Christianity; Fantasy literature--Social aspects; Magic in literature; Children--Books and reading; Potter, Harry (Fictitious character); Tolkien, J. R. R. (John Ronald Reuel) 1892-1973, Lord of the rings.

In *Fantasy and Your Family*, Richard Abanes begins by sharing his own life-long appreciation for fantasy and science fiction, especially the Star Trek series. "Part One: Worlds of Imagination" discusses fairy tales, myths, and legends as the historical background for modern fantasy. Fantasy can provide delight, excite emotions, offer "clear values, true heroes, ultimate justice, endless mercy and fierce courage," and especially hope (p.34). However, some popular contemporary fantasy involves horror and occult elements. These do not reflect Christian understanding of truth, goodness, and beauty. Because children vary in their response to literary works, parents need to be informed and alert to the potential effects of certain works on their own children.

Part Two presents some biographical background on J. R. R. Tolkien, author of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Much to the dismay of certain

critics, several polls have named Tolkien the "Author of the Century." Abanes demonstrates how Tolkien's Christian worldview comes through in the many Christian values and virtues and other religious topics found in these and other writings. Abanes counters accusations that Tolkien's use of "magic" and "wizards" is occult. On the contrary, Tolkien himself regretted that possible misinterpretation of his wise characters who serve much like angels.

In Part Three, Abanes devotes one chapter to contemporary occult practice and media positive portrayal of witches. In "Harry Potter: Magick and Morality" he points to parallels between elements in the series by J. K. Rowling and occult history and practice. Then he follows with itemized incidents which raise moral issues.

"Part Four: Debates, Disputes and Decisions" devotes one chapter to illustrative excerpts from mostly Christian writers who have presented more positive evaluations of the Harry Potter books. These include reviews published in magazines and/or online and Neal's *What's a Christian to Do with Harry Potter?* In the following chapter Abanes addresses specific issues from each of these excerpts in turn. The final chapter, "Questions Most Frequently Asked," discusses Harry Potter, *The Lord of the Rings*, censorship and schools, occultism, and Christianity and Scripture. Two appendices deal with "What's So Bad about Occultism" and "Today's 'Christian' Witches." Endnotes provide extensive bibliographical documentation.

Richard Abanes, author of *Harry Potter and the Bible: the Menace Behind the Magick*, is well-informed on occult issues. In this follow-up book he "looks at both sides" of the Harry Potter controversy. While it is inevitable that excerpting from works omits other content, his failure to note some key points in "Just the Facts" results in some misimpressions. Several reviewers he cited

gave qualifications in other sections of their evaluations. For example, "Connie's Campaign" is against ungracious dissension between Christians, not an endorsement of the Harry Potter books without serious discussion about the dangers of the occult. In defending Dickens's presentation of ghosts in *Christmas Carol*, Abanes ignores the issue of the ghost of Jacob Marley (p. 215). Abanes's suggestion that the malicious, gossipy, lying, unregistered "Animagus" Rita Skeeter cares "about discipline and following rules" (p. 171) gives support to the view that people tend to see what they are looking for. Many readers would not agree with Abanes's description of Harry Potter as "self-serving" (p. 171).

Abanes makes a valid distinction between moral law and ceremonial law in biblical events (p. 212). However, he makes a moral issue of violation of Hogwarts school administrative regulations by school officials (who have the authority to do so), as well as by students (p. 171). Any educator knows that educational policies may be subject to exceptions. Hogwarts students know the difference between school rules and "the law."

Much of the disagreement in the controversy about Harry Potter arises from differences about the meanings of terms. In his illustrative Table 9.1, Abanes contrasts Tolkien's Magic with Rowling's Magick (p. 231). He perceives that Rowling's magick "Takes place in our reality; not in another realm separate from our own world." A quick check of chapters on fantasy in children's literature textbooks reveals that many fantasy works, such as Mary Poppins, use place names from our real world, but describe events that could only occur in an imaginary world. (C. S. Lewis defends his use of the same technique in *That Hideous Strength* by pointing out that traditional fairy tales begin that way.) A more accurate statement would be that Rowling's magic "Takes place in an imaginary world that

borrows freely from place names and some technical terms found in our reality." This "pretense" may create its own problems, but the distinction is significant. Abanes is careful to point out that "Rowling's novels do not teach Witchcraft per se" (p. 139). However, he follows with "Rowling's series does present practices used by Wiccans," but this presentation gives little or no operational detail. Abanes frequently quotes from occult sources for definitions of terms used in the series--with all the implied overtones--rather than defining such terms based only on their use in the books themselves (e.g., p. 116).

Abanes clearly is convinced that the Harry Potter books are potentially harmful to some children. Because of that possibility he believes that parents should make informed decisions for their own children. He does not advocate censorship. He recognizes that "There is obviously a great degree of subjectivity when it comes to literature. No one, therefore, should be too quick to condemn others for believing that certain works of literature are harmful to children. It is all a matter of perspective" (p. 58). He regrets the unpleasant fact that "Persons on all sides of the debate have been guilty of fruitless bickering, which has produced far more heat than light" (p. 179).

This heavily-documented book is very useful for its rationale for fantasy and its comments about J. R. R. Tolkien. The information about the occult and warning about the popularization of witches and horror in the contemporary media is valuable. Even readers who disagree with Abanes's interpretations of the Harry Potter series will find his perspective instructive. Recommended for church libraries and readers who are interested in the Harry Potter controversy.

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*The Gospel according to Harry Potter : spirituality in the stories of the world's most famous seeker* / C. W. Neal. LCCN 2002069181. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002. PAP, 0664226019, \$12.95. Adult.

Rating: 4.

823'.914. Rowling, J.K.--Religion; Fantasy fiction, English--History and criticism; Children's stories, English--History and criticism; Rowling, J.K.--Characters--Harry Potter; Potter, Harry (Fictitious character); Spirituality in literature; Religion in literature.

For many years Connie Neal has enjoyed watching the clouds with her children to find shapes that look like interesting creatures or elements in a story. In their family reading, "Not only can we enjoy the story itself, we can go on to share what it means to us, what it reminds us of, and what that makes us think about in other stories and in real life" (p. viii). In *The Gospel According to Harry Potter*, Neal deliberately examines the first four books in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, looking for "glimpses of the Gospel." Her purpose is two-fold. First, as an evangelistic method, she chooses "something familiar to the culture to relate unfamiliar spiritual truth" (p. xi). Neal reports her surprise at finding that "Harry Potter has more useful parallels to the gospel than almost any other piece of popular literature I have seen in decades" (p. xi). Also Neal seeks to provide a balancing point of view and to encourage fellow Christians to see "new aspects of the story that may spark fresh thoughts and (hopefully) respectful discussions" (p. xiii).

Following Neal's introduction she considers each of the four current Potter books in turn. From each book she presents several short reflections, pairing episodes or situations from the books with scriptural parallels she has found. She offers a total of more than fifty such "glimpses." For example, it is through the sacrificial death of one person that another receives life (Book One) (p. 7). Confidence is based on the knowledge of being chosen (Book Two) (p. 84). All are sinners, but God loves us in spite of our sin (Book Three) (p. 105). Whoever wishes may come, no matter what the past (Book Four) (p. 160).

Neal recognizes that this technique of examining literary works to pull out such examples--whether to look for scriptural or occult meanings--is not proper literary analysis. She also acknowledges that it is possible to find some occult ideas if that is the focus, but that is not her focus..

Her hope is that some readers might accept

the truths of the Gospel through her applications and come to a personal knowledge of Christ. Her structure is similar to that of Bruner and Ware in *Finding God in The Lord of the Rings*, which she cites (although Tolkien's name is misspelled). (See below.) This book is definitely recommended for its balancing perspective on Rowling's series, and for its valuable suggestions for relating literature to our personal lives.

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*Finding God in The Lord of the Rings / Kurt D. Bruner ; Jim Ware. LCCN 2001004107. Tyndale, 2001. HBB, ISBN 0842355715, \$12.99 Adult. Rating. 4*

823'.912. Tolkien, J.R.R. (John Ronald Reuel, 1892-1973--Lord of the rings; Tolkien, J.R.R. (John Ronald Reuel, 1892-1973--Religion; Christianity and literature--England--History--20th century; Christian fiction, English--History and criticism; Fantasy fiction, English--History and criticism; Middle Earth (Imaginary place); Theology in literature; God in literature. 120 p.

Kurt Bruner is an executive with Focus on the Family; Jim Ware is a seminary graduate and the author of several books. They have co-authored *Finding God in the Lord of the Rings* as a labor of love. In the introduction Bruner briefly discusses Tolkien's Christian motivation in creating an ageless story. The authors assume that their readers are already familiar with Tolkien's trilogy. Their purpose is to share some Christian themes they have found and to inspire further reflection.

Each of the twenty-one meditations begins with a short quotation, followed by a situation from the trilogy which illustrates the theme. The discussion of a scriptural parallel or application concludes with a summary one-sentence "Reflection." Chapter titles include "A Deep Yearning, Small Tale, The Call, Evil Intentions, Wise Counsel, Deceptive Appearances, Shutting Out the Night, Hidden Courage, The Last Homely House, Loyal Companion, Oft Overlooked, No Safety, Mysterious Light, Unwholesome Power, A Crown of Flowers, A Good End, Singing in the Dark, Unwitting Instrument, King of Hearts, Seductive Voice, Redemption."

In the Epilogue, Ware responds to Christians who question that fantasy such as Tolkien's can have true spiritual value. To do so, he

elaborates on Tolkien's concept of man as a sub-creator made in the image of God. Tolkien sees the "eucatastrophe"--the miraculous happy ending--as an essential element in fantasy. He takes delight in the knowledge that such Good News is actually true in the story of Jesus Christ.

This thought-provoking book provides a model for the application of themes in a story to individual lives. The story in Tolkien's trilogy is timeless, but the themes remain relevant for the twenty-first century. Bruner and Ware have produced a book with a smooth, seamless style that reaches the heart. Recommended for school and church libraries, and the personal libraries of Tolkien fans.

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***Tolkien's ordinary virtues : exploring the spiritual themes of The lord of the rings / Mark Eddy Smith. LCCN 2001051569. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2002. PAP, 0830823123, \$10.99. Adult. Rating: 3.***

823'.912. Tolkien, J.R.R. (John Ronald Reuel, 1892-1973--Lord of the rings; Tolkien, J.R.R. (John Ronald Reuel, 1892-1973--Religion; Christianity and literature--England--History--20th century; Christian fiction, English--History and criticism; Fantasy fiction, English--History and criticism; Middle Earth (Imaginary place). 141 p.

Mark Eddy Smith is a writer and an artist. His *Tolkien's Ordinary Virtues* comes from his deep appreciation of *The Lord of the Rings*, which he has read and re-read many times since childhood. The thirty-one character qualities, or virtues, are qualities found in the trilogy that have personally challenged Smith in his own life. The book is divided into six parts, one for each "book" in the trilogy (which is published as two "books" per volume). Chapter titles include "Simplicity, Generosity, Friendship, Hospitality, Faith, Perspective, Community, Sacrifice, Wonder, Temptation, Failure, Atonement, Suffering, Resurrection, Humility, Providence, Trust, Trustworthiness, Wisdom, Hope, Imagination, Submission, Stewardship, Courage, Mirth, Foolishness, Perseverance, Celebration, Justice, Love," followed by a short conclusion and bibliography.

This book complements the book by Bruner and Ware. Smith writes with an easy, pleasing style. Themes in Smith's book are concepts represented by single nouns.

Several of the short chapters refer to multiple incidents in Tolkien's trilogy that illustrate the chosen qualities. The spiritual implications of those incidents are discussed in a paragraph or two, often with an accompanying scriptural reference. Themes in Bruner and Ware are sentences, propositional statements. Following their illustrative events, Bruner and Ware often give multiple biblical examples of parallels, along with various Scripture quotations. While Bruner and Ware elaborate more on the spiritual applications they find, both books offer valuable insights, without much overlap. Smith's book is recommended as an added title for school and church libraries, and the personal libraries of Tolkien fans.

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***Wartime wisdom : Ten uncommon insights about evil in The Lord of the Rings. / by Peter Kreeft. Paper presented at the C. S. Lewis Conference "Rediscovering Evil: A Christian Response." Austin, TX, May 11, 2002. [Cassette recording] \$8.95, plus \$2.00 S/H. Adult. Rating: 3.***

**Distributed by John E. Isom, 11801 Oak Haven Road, Austin, Texas 78753, 512-837-1801, <isomj@mindspring.com>**

823'.912. Tolkien, J.R.R. (John Ronald Reuel, 1892-1973--Lord of the rings; Tolkien, J.R.R. (John Ronald Reuel, 1892-1973--Religion; Christianity and literature--England--History--20th century; Christian fiction, English--History and criticism; Fantasy fiction, English--History and criticism; Middle Earth (Imaginary place);

Peter Kreeft is a Professor of Philosophy at Boston College and is well-recognized for his creative and effective books dealing with apologetic issues. In view of the close personal and literary ties between Lewis and Tolkien, he was invited to the C. S. Lewis Conference in Austin, Texas, to speak on J. R. R. Tolkien. The recent events on September 11, 2001, make his topic, *Wartime Wisdom: Ten Uncommon Insights about Evil in The Lord of the Rings*, quite pertinent to the current situation. Kreeft presents ten surprising facts about evil. (1) We are at war, not at peace--our enemy, Evil, is real. (2) Evil is very big, in fact immortal. (3) Knowing the difference between good and evil is very easy and very clear. (4) Knowledge is not always a good. (5) What defeats evil is evil itself. (6) Evil works for good. (7-10) Four of the most powerful weapons against evil are: sacrifice, humility, friendship, and words (names).

Kreeft elaborates on these ideas in a style that is incisive and often humorous, but never dull. His frequent "one-liners" bring appreciative laughter from the audience. Throughout his talk he mentions relevant biblical people and events--e. g. Eve, Joseph, Moses, Simon of Cyrene, and especially Jesus Christ, including His parables and crucifixion. "Calvary is the rule, not the exception" (# 6). Occasional glimpses of Kreeft's Catholic theology come out, but his emphasis is on Christ as "the golden key" in the fight against evil.

The cassette tape runs one hour and twenty-five minutes in length, including a five minute introduction, a one hour talk, followed by a twenty-minute question-and-answer period. John Isom recorded the session, and is the authorized distributor. Listening to this tape can be repeated with profit and enjoyment. Highly recommended for Tolkien fans, it is also appropriate for church and school libraries.

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Each of these titles makes its own unique contribution, but together their efforts only scratch the surface of the possible gleanings of positive spiritual applications to our individual lives. Beyond the delight in the stories, fantasy has much to offer to "those with eyes to see."

#### Additional References

Foster, Robert. *The complete guide to Middle-earth: from The hobbit to The silmarillion*. New York: Ballantine, 1978.

Lewis, C. S. *That hideous strength : a modern fairy-tale for grown-ups*. New York: Scribner, 1996.

Shippey, T. A. *J. R. R. Tolkien: author of the century*. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The hobbit : or there and back again*. New York: Ballantine books, 1966.

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The lord of the rings*. New York: Ballantine books, 1965. v. 1. The fellowship of the ring; v. 2. The two towers; v.3. The return of the king.

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The Tolkien reader*. New York: Ballantine books, 1966.

Tolkien, J. R. R. *The silmarillion*, edited by Christopher Tolkien. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.

Donna W. Bowling, *Library /Educational Consultant, Dallas, Texas*

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# SCHOOL LIBRARIAN'S CORNER

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by Leslie Greaves Radloff



With thoughts of April's Poetry Month still fresh in my mind, I'd like to share some ideas and resources with you that could easily be adapted and used throughout the school year to bring more poetry into the school library media center, and thus into classrooms. Many of you are aware that Children's Book Council began celebrating April as "Poetry Month." April, is of course, the month in which we celebrate William Shakespeare's birthday. So, what better month to capitalize on the wealth of new poetry anthologies, volumes, and new poets with appeal for students of all ages?

These ideas need not be limited to only one month of the year, however, rather poems can and should be included daily and included with other materials that teachers are given for the study of any topic, from Bible lessons to science to social studies and history, and it is a natural pairing for the study of the fine arts. When I work with teachers to pull materials from the collection for topics of study, I typically include one or two poetry books that I know will 'work' with the topic at hand. If teachers choose to use them, so much the better, if not, I try to include them when meeting with that teacher's students.

Why do I feel poetry is so important? There are many reasons: First, and foremost

because poetry with its economy of words, hits the nail on the head nine times out of ten; secondly, because children who are not reading at grade level are not intimidated by the amount of print; poetry has lots of white space; thirdly, because poems often, but not always, have rhyme and that makes information easier to remember; another reason is that poems run the gamut from fun to read, begging to be read aloud and shared, to those that invite contemplation; to introduce students whose first language may not be English to the sounds and rhythm of the language and provide common ground through the introduction of nursery rhymes and Mother Goose; and because teachers are writing poetry with their classes and want examples of various kinds of poems to illustrate lessons and show topics which might be used to write poems. A final reason is that I love poetry and the language of poets.

Materials teachers can use to help them become better teachers of poetry and to better teach the writing of poetry are as necessary in the library collection as the anthologies of various poets' works, collections of poems on similar themes, and student guides for how to write poems. Some of the best teacher resources to include in the library's professional collection include information about poetic forms, and ideas for writing and appreciating poetry. All the titles included in the list at the end of this article have valuable ideas and suggestions for teachers and include suggested reading lists of both poems and poets whose works should not be missed.

There are, of course, many more teacher resources available in print and on the Web which give more ideas than most teachers want or will ever use when teaching poetry. To see a smattering of the resources, go to Google and type in poetry or children's

poetry. The results are overwhelming. School librarians will want to become aware of some of the finest sites to point them out to teachers for various purposes. We will also want to share some of the poems and ideas with various grades as classes come into the library, and have a few ideas to include teachers in the fun of sharing poetry.

One idea to get started is to announce at the beginning of the study of poetry that there will be a free gift for each teacher who brings a poem into the library. Free gifts might include a notepad; free Internet time; pencils; cologne or after shave; small bags of candy; or other things in that vein. (I scour thrift stores, have culled items from closets and drawers, used the free gifts included with items purchased, and free gifts from jobbers for these bags). Wrapped in a bag with a ribbon and placed in a box for grabbing, the teachers and kids have fun hearing the poem and opening the bag. Poems are then posted on a bulletin board. I assure teachers and staff that the poems can run the gamut from a verse of an epic to doggerel.

Since I have a window wall looking out over an atrium area, I copy poems and post some on appropriate note paper and hang them on the window so passerby can read them. No windows? Use a bulletin board. I'm thinking of using this idea with each month and its holidays or 'Days' all year.

Volunteer to go into the classrooms to read poems of your choice and don't limit it to poets who write for children. I read some Goethe and Schiller to a sixth grade class, in translation, but next time I'll read it in German too, so that the listeners can catch the flow of the language and the rhyme in the original language. Practice before reading aloud, so you know where the logical breaks are.

Read collections of bilingual poems with a person fluent in the second language; read poems for two or more voices such as "Joyful Noise" or "Big Talk," both by Paul Fleischman, with a student or teacher; invite participation with nonsense poems.

Highlight special days with the reading of poems for that day. In November, I typically read "In Flanders Fields" by Canadian John McCrae around the 11th to commemorate all those who have fought for our country. Likewise around the 18th of April, I always read the first verse of Longfellow's "Paul Revere's Ride," often accompanying it with "Paul Revere Speaks" by Myra Cohn Livingston. Lee Bennett Hopkins' anthology of poems for states regions, *My America: A Poetry Atlas of the United States* (Simon & Schuster, 2000) and *Hand in Hand: An American History Through Poetry* (Simon & Schuster, 1994) makes doing this a lot easier. There are of course, anthologies that pair poetry with art and music, as well as collections whose focus is math, science, and space. Your libraries probably have many already.

In weekly emails let your teachers know which poets have websites that provide useful and child friendly activities. Although I have used the Web for many teaching activities, I was amazed at the number of poetry sites and among them one of the best is that of Kristine O'Connell George who believes as I do, that the more connections that can be made while learning, the more learning that takes place. The best way to find these are to use a search engine and type in the poet's name.

The super size magnetic poetry kits are fun to have though expensive. There are smaller less expensive kits available from gift stores and many are themed packages. These are usually about \$20.00. You might find magnetic kits through one of the multitudes of children's book clubs. An old cookie sheet or jelly roll pan makes a fine surface for using it in the library. While not as much fun as an actual Magnetic Poetry Kit, one site does allow users to manipulate words and drag them around the screen with the mouse. Unfortunately, you cannot print your composition.

One thing you will notice if you include poetry when pulling together materials for others teachers is that your own appreciation of poetry and the various kinds of poems

will increase along with your enjoyment of the form. Below is a very short list of poets to include in the library collection. You will see that this list does not include Shel Silverstein, Alvin Schwartz, or Jack Prelutsky not because we should avoid them, but because students and teachers will pick them up anyway.

#### POETS IN THE CLASSROOM

N.M. Bodecker  
 Gwendolyn Brooks  
 Eve Bunting  
 Emily Dickinson  
 Rebecca Kai Dotlich  
 Barbara Juster Esbensen  
 Ralph Fletcher  
 Douglas Florian  
 Robert Frost  
 Kristine O'Connell George  
 Eloise Greenfield  
 Lee Bennet Hopkins  
 Langston Hughes  
 Paul B. Janeczko  
 X.J. Kennedy  
 Karla Kuskin  
 J. Patrick Lewis  
 Dee Lilligard  
 Myra Cohn Livingston  
 David McCord  
 Eve Merriam  
 A.A. Milne  
 Lisa Westberg Peters  
 Charlotte Pomerantz  
 Cynthia Rylant  
 Gertrude Stein  
 Robert Louis Stevenson  
 Susan Marie Swanson  
 Valerie Worth  
 Jane Yolen

#### Books for the Professional Collections

Cullinan, Bernice E., Marilyn C. Scala and Virginia C. Schroder. *Three Voices: An Invitation to Poetry Across the Curriculum*. York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 1995.

Esbensen, Barbara Juster. *A Celebration of Bees: Helping Children to Write Poetry*. New York: Holt, 1985.

Fletcher, Ralph. *Poetry Matters: Writing a Poem from the Inside Out*. New York: Harper Trophy, 2002.\*

Graves, Donald H. *Explore Poetry*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1992.

Heard, Georgia. *For the Good of the Earth and Sun: Teaching Poetry*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1989.

Hopkins, Lee Bennett. *Pass the Poetry, Please!* New York: Harper Collins, 1998.\*

Janeczko, Paul B. *How to Write Poetry*. New York: Scholastic, 1999.\*

Kennedy, X.J. and Dorothy M. Kennedy. *Knock at a Star: A Child's Introduction to Poetry*, rev'd. ed. New York: Little Brown, 1999.

Livingston, Myra Cohn. *Poemmaking: Ways to Begin Writing Poetry*. New York: HarperCollins, 1991.\*

McElmeel, Sharron L. *The Poet Tree*. Englewood, Colorado: Teacher Ideas Press, 1993.

Sears, Peter. *Gonna Bake me a Rainbow Poem: A Student Guide to Writing Poetry*. New York: Scholastic, 1990.\*

Sweeney, Jacqueline. *Teaching Poetry: Yes You Can!* New York: Scholastic, 1993.

*\*Denotes books that students will also find useful.*

For an excellent overview of poetry read:

*The Discovery of Poetry* by Frances Mayes. Harcourt, 1987. Available in public libraries, it is a highly readable text for the study of poetry and used in many universities and colleges. The writer was on the faculty of San Francisco State University at the time it was written.

# On Summer Reading

by Karen Brehmer

At the end of the school year, teachers are often asked, “What can we do over the summer, to help our child with reading?” Here I am with a couple, asking this question of me. I review the benefits of oral reading. I offer strategies to increase reading accuracy and comprehension. We discuss the importance of parent modeling and reading aloud to children. And then I stop, wondering why my head hurts and my heart aches.

I know the answer. My student, this struggling reader, is tired. Tired of feeling different, tired of fighting with himself to be better. He wants to be a good reader, but he doesn’t know why he has trouble. He thinks he might be improving but he knows he is still behind. These parents and I have persevered with him, and we’ve shared in the victories and defeats. We all want to find relief and joy for this child.

Joy of reading. That’s it. My summer wish for struggling students is that they will find excitement through stories; that they will develop a love of words, of books, of reading.

The better question for summer reading is “How can I get my child to love books?” The first step is to expose him/her to a variety of books.

This requires homework for the parents (or anyone recommending books to children). Using resources like the library catalog, this journal, publisher or booksellers’ summaries, readers can find a variety of interesting titles to match interests. Visits to the bookstore or library will clue parents in to what subjects their child enjoys.

Often older struggling readers reject books because stories matching their ability level seem too babyish. Thank goodness many publishers have non-fiction transitional reading series, presenting factual information

in an easy to read format, leveled from preschool to about fourth grade.

Should parents allow children to read anything? Regarding offensive content, parents should trust their instincts and stand by their convictions when helping children pick books. Parents should read books before commenting on them. Restrictions must be made informatively; children need to know the reasons a parent dislikes a book. This process helps teach children how use their own discretion when choosing books.

What if a child picks a book that is lacking in plot, or seems to have no literary quality? Or, what if it is obviously too easy for the reader? Should we allow these for summer reading? Yes, I say. Allow it, affirm it, but silently make it a goal to move that child on as quickly as possible! Find quality literature that has some of the same attraction as the lesser book, and introduce it to the child. If he has no interest in reading it on his own, read it aloud to him. He might be surprised, and he might just listen to your next book selection.

Teachers, parents, and librarians must see the struggle of matching books with children as a rewarding challenge. It is a hit or miss process, but when we make a connection, the child is never the same.

Enjoy your summer. May you find a new joy in the books that are waiting for you.

# Listservs for Librarians

by Sylvia Stopforth

I know what you're thinking.

"More email? Please!"

"My inbox is so full it's spilling over into my outbox!"

I understand. Really, I do.

And yet ... there's just no getting around the fact that electronic discussion lists (aka listservs) can be a marvellous resource. For those who work in isolation, a listserv can provide a sense of community, of shared experience; for those who work on a team, but have primary responsibility for certain areas, a listserv offers hands-on solutions, and opportunities to learn from peers. Sometimes we simply need a quick answer to a quick question, or the welcome realization that we are not alone with our software quandaries or our outdated policies.

And there are listservs for everything under the sun. Most reference librarians have heard of Stumpers (the list created for the sharing of "difficult reference questions"), and of course many of us are aware of the scores of listservs organized by the American Library Association (ALA) or the Library of Congress. But did you know that there are listservs for dance librarians, geoscience librarians, and veterinary medicine librarians!? There's even a new listserv for church librarians!

But more about that later ...

I had originally intended to highlight a select few listservs, for your consideration. But there were so many great candidates that I soon realized I had set myself an impossible task. And one of the things librarians do well is compiling resource lists. So, why reinvent the wheel? I offer here, for your browsing pleasure, a List of Lists.

The Rolling Prairie Library System, based in Illinois, has provided an useful starting point. They begin by offering links to information re listserv software, and to Listserv Etiquette (referred to as

"Netiquette"), then plunge into a list of listservs provided by such organisations as the ALA, ACRL (Association of College and Research Libraries), and ERIC (Educational Resource Information Center). They finish with a smattering of Listserv Gateways, which provide "information about a large number of sites."

The RPLS webmaster most recently updated this site in February of 2002; look for it at: <http://www.rpls.ws/Links/listserv.htm>

One of the more comprehensive—if unorthodox—lists can be found at the Wild Librarian website, at:

<http://home.earthlink.net/~jsmog/library4.html#listservs>

Our untamed colleague offers a straightforward list of listserv titles (and live links) in alphabetical order, last updated in November of 2002.

A Google search for "listservs for school librarians" generates eight hits. The top two belong to the Hong Kong Teacher-Librarians' Association. At this website, one can find a very useful collection of a dozen or so listservs, primarily American, Canadian, and Australian. The HKTLA has provided urls as well as a brief description of each list, its source or sponsor, and its scope. Also available are links to online discussion groups and E-journals geared specifically to those in the area of Education. This site, which can be found at: <http://home.hkstar.com/~library/library/listserv.htm> was apparently last updated in July 1997, but a quick random sampling did not turn up any dead links.

The most extensive- and somewhat overwhelming - site is titled the "List of Library Oriented Lists and Electronic Journals," and can be found at: <http://liblists.wrlc.org/home.htm>. This document was originally the work of folks at the University of Houston Libraries, who began to compile the list in 1990. In 1996,

maintenance of the list was assumed by Wei Wu, initially at the University of Houston Libraries and now at the Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC). This site, updated in January of 2003, features some nifty keyword search options (of list title or address, for example) and includes title and subject indices.

I did not have great success tracking down numerous listservs geared specifically to Christian, or even religious, librarians. But then, the majority of our concerns are very similar to those of our professional colleagues serving in secular organizations and institutions.

But here's something that will most certainly be of interest to the church librarians amongst our readers. In December of 2002 Shawn Brouwer, Circulation Coordinator at Alloway Library, Trinity Western University, sent out the following announcement regarding a new discussion list: "LINC-List (The Libraries in Churches List) is an electronic discussion list for anyone who serves in a church library ... LINC-List is an open, email-based forum created to inspire, inform and encourage those who work in church or other congregational libraries. LINC-List participants are encouraged to share ideas on all aspects of developing and maintaining a church library. Topics of discussion may include: circulation policies, collection development, library promotions and programs, book and media recommendations, resources, supplies, technology, readers, staffing and more."

To become a list member, send an email to "join-LINC-L@patience.twu.ca," wait for a confirmation and then join in on the discussion. You can also join via the web at <http://patience.twu.ca/cgi-bin/lyris.pl?enter=linc-l>. For more information about LINC-List, contact Shawn at [scbrouwer@lynx.net](mailto:scbrouwer@lynx.net)

Happy subscribing!

[Please note that all websites mentioned in this column were accessed by the writer in January of 2003.]

# Computerized Reading Programs That Point Back to Books

by Jim McKinney, with Mary McKinney

There has been a push over the last several years to promote e-books and the such, thinking that this could become the newest rage. Could reading from an electronic device actually eliminate the need for the in-hand paper “page-turner”, alias, the book? Will the cyber-book ever totally replace the paperback for reading? I can’t speak prophetically on that issue, but I can give you some pointers on a couple of programs promoting ways to keep kids and others between the covers of your library treasures. The two I’m most familiar with are Accelerated Reader (AR) by Renaissance Learning Inc. and eyeQ by the Infinite Mind Company. Both of these companies want to improve readers’ abilities to enjoy books and learn more in other areas, too.

After teaching twenty-three years (eighteen in America and three overseas) I came back to the U.S. in 1991 and saw an article on the AR reading program in a magazine. We only had a few Apple II computers in our junior high and I had \$300 I could use for my own classroom materials. I purchased a few test discs along with the main program and got my seventh graders started into the AR testing program. They would read the books, be tested for each one, and the computer would then score their tests and award them points according to the results. At first it sounded too cut and dried to be worth much, but my students jumped in enthusiastically, and since then, I have used it with all three levels at my Junior High. Each year I’m more and more pleased with the depth and breadth of reading my students do. No other Language Arts teacher in my school has as many books read per class, and I now enjoy a favored spot with the library staff. They have worked with us to spread the wonder of this program to all 1,000 teens in the building.

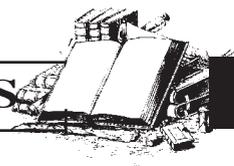
The eyeQ program is quite new compared to Accelerated Reader and I was intrigued by the infomercial. It claimed to enhance reading speed and comprehension to remarkable heights. I went for the \$150 family program in the summer of ‘02 to see what it would do for me before I took it into the classroom. Sure enough, within a couple of lessons I was seeing an increase in reading speed, and the eye exercises did keep me on track. If you know of someone who is a slow reader, or lacks concentration skills, I believe this program will help. It also has benefits for those who suffer from “lazy eye” or other physical tracking problems with the eyes. It does require a fairly updated computer to run the program, but depending on your need, the rewards are good.

If there are other programs you’ve found to be successful in encouraging reading, let our readers know. One last note: the Renaissance Learning Company also has Accelerated Math and Perfect Text writing programs that are worth checking into. The following websites will help you find information on both programs.

[www.renlearn.com/Default.htm](http://www.renlearn.com/Default.htm)

[www.infmind.com](http://www.infmind.com)

Let the computer become a tool to help you and your family sharpen their skills and interest in a time-proven pursuit— reading!



**The alley cat's meow / Kathi Appelt; illustrated by Jon Goodell. LCCN 2001005966. San Diego: Harcourt, 2002. HBB, 0152019804, \$16.00. Small children. Rating: 5**

E. Cats--Fiction; Dance--Fiction; Stories in rhyme. unp.

*The Alley Cat's Meow* by Kathi Appelt is a tribute to Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, starring Red and Ginger, two tabby cats who meet at the Alley Cat's Meow juke joint and dance the light fantastic. They go on to dance on Broadway, the silver screen, and around the world.

The illustrations by Jon Goodell are wonderful full page oil/acrylic paintings—colorful, graceful, elegant—conveying the silver screen

world of the Forties and the golden age of jazz. The costumes are magnificent, expressions are delightful and the dance is graceful.

The text is in rhyming couplet and there is little story here. The true heart of this book is in the illustrations. This book could be used to introduce children to the art of dance and music of the Forties. As a pleasurable read aloud and visual delight, highly recommended.

*Karla Castle, Public Services Librarian, Warner Pacific College, Portland, Oregon*

**Becky the brave : a story about epilepsy / by Laurie Lears; illustrated by Gail Piazza. LCCN 2001004094. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2002. HBB, 080750601X, \$14.95. Small children. Rating: 4**

E. Epilepsy--Fiction; Courage--Fiction; Sisters--Fiction; Schools--Fiction. unp.

Sarah feels very blessed to have her big sister Becky to help her do scary things. Becky helps Sarah through her first day at their new school, she faces down a big barking dog, and she lives with epilepsy! Sarah thinks Becky is so brave she is astonished to find out that Becky does actually have one big fear. Becky is afraid she'll have a seizure at school and then no one will like her anymore. Sarah squeezes her hand each day and silently wishes her big sister a good day.

**R A T I N G   S Y S T E M**

- 5 The best you can find on this subject/area- buy even if you have a very small library/small budget
- 4 Very good, strong appeal—buy if you possibly can
- 3 Good, will be useful—buy if you have a bit more money
- 2 Pretty good, nice to add to complement other titles in an area—buy if you have a larger budget
- 1 Poor—Not necessary to purchase

\* Outstanding Book of Its Genre

**Commonly Used Abbreviations in CLJ Reviews**

LCCN Library of Congress cataloging number	HBB Hardbound book	CDR CD-ROM
C Canadian Library cataloging number	PAP Paperbound book	VID Videocassette
ISBN International Standard Book Number	LIB Library edition	LLB Loose-leaf binding
	LGP Large print book	
	CAS Audiocassette	

Inevitably Becky does have a seizure at school. In the aftermath, Sarah quite innocently, and at first hesitantly, summons the courage to explain epilepsy to Becky's classmates. She is able to let them see that epilepsy is a small part of Becky that is certainly not the most important part!

Author Laurie Lears gently makes the point that children with different maladies simply want to be accepted for who they are; they do not want to be seen as an extension of their illness. Specifically dealing with epilepsy, the book gives a good explanation, at a child's level of understanding, of what happens when people have seizures. By having Sarah teach Becky's class about the disease, the author offers an appropriate way to help students see that all children, despite their differences, just want to be seen as (normal) kids. The soft pastel illustrations by Gail Piazza echo the approach of the book in their gentle depiction of the love between the girls. In the front of the book is a letter from the Epilepsy Foundation with further information about epilepsy (perhaps it would have been better placed at the conclusion of the story). *Becky the Brave* is an excellent addition to any school library, with the K-3 age group as its primary audience.

Kelley Westenhoff, Parent-Librarian, Dominion Christian School, Oakton, Virginia

**Birthday zoo / by Deborah Lee Rose; illustrated by Lynn Munsinger. LCCN 2002001726. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2002. HBB, 0807507768, \$15.95. Small children. Rating: 5**

E. Birthdays--Fiction; Parties--Fiction; Zoo animals--Fiction; Stories in rhyme. unip.

Look! There's a seal, a ray, a boar, and some pheasants! They are teeming up with the emu, okapi, the raccoons, and a shy Tamarin to plan a birthday party for the kid with presents.

The animals plan the party with the raccoons blowing up the balloons, the giraffe dressing like a clown and the donkey becoming a part of a game. The snake with the cake watches as they blow out the candles. "Happy Birthday" is chimed by the whole zoo.

This book is delightful in its rhyme and presentation. The rhyme is entertaining and the illustrations are colorful with impressive detailing of the celebration of a birthday party. *Birthday Zoo* by Deborah Lee Rose is a book to be read frequently to young children.

Pam Burns, Librarian, Promiseland Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida.

**Bravery soup / written and illustrated by Maryann Cocca-Leffler. LCCN 2001004167. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2002. HBB, 0807508705, \$15.95. Small children. Rating: 3**

E. Fear--Fiction; Bears--Fiction. unip.

Carlin is afraid. His friend takes him to see Big Bear, who is brewing some Bravery Soup. Assessing Carlin's situation, Big Bear sends him on a quest to collect an important ingredient for the soup. To do this, Carlin must go alone, through the forest, to the cave. His friends regale him with all the pitfalls he will face along the way, then load him down with items they think will be helpful, including a suit of armor.

Carlin sets out alone. His four faithful friends follow at a distance. Carlin soon realizes he is carrying too much. Reminiscent of David as he faces Goliath, Carlin discards the armor and other things, facing his biggest obstacle alone and unprotected.

Children will delight in the whimsical, acrylic paintings that aptly convey Carlin's fears with their wide brush strokes and bright colors. This lively adventure, both written and illustrated by Maryann Cocca-Leffler, will be read again and again as it gently encourages an "I-can-do-it" attitude.

Laurie Woolery, Freelance Writer, Cottonwood, California.

**Eaglet's world / by Evelyn Minshull; illustrated by Andrea Gabriel. LCCN 2001004093. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2002. HBB, 0807589292, \$15.95. Small children. Rating: 3**

E. Bald eagle--Fiction; Eagles--Fiction; Growth--Fiction; Flight--Fiction; Animals--Habits and behavior--Fiction. unip.

Before it has hatched, an eagle chick thinks about his confined, safe environment in *Eaglet's World*. Then the chick hatches and discovers his parents and their nest. As the baby grows into a young bird, the reader becomes involved in what the bird hears, tastes, and sees. The bird's world continues to widen until the day of its first flight, which the eaglet finds terrifying. But the parent eagles soar underneath to give support, turning the scary flight into an exciting adventure. The eaglet then explores its surroundings of water, mountains, evergreens, and wind without realizing it has become independent through its sometimes scary discoveries.

*Eaglet's World* is an interesting view into the beginnings of an eagle's life. Andrea Gabriel's life-like paintings add excellent visual perspective to this fictionalized account of how a yet-unborn-chick hatches, gains feathers, and takes flight. Children will be captivated by the drama of the eaglet's experiences, and will empathize with the emotions ascribed to the bird. The dustcover's flap copy explains author Evelyn Minshull's aim to encourage children in their own experiences of stepping into new situations. However, even though this is fiction, the frequent anthropomorphic narrative seems excessive. The art is skillful and detailed, making it a book worth looking at, if not reading word for word.

Karen Schmidt, Freelance Writer, Marysville, Washington

**Elliot gets stuck / written and illustrated by Andrea Beck. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2002. HBB, 1553370147, \$12.95. Small children. Rating: 5**

E. Toys--Fiction. unip.

Spring can't come fast enough for Elliot Moose. His eagerness to play outside on the first day of spring brings consequences for his impatience.

Stuck in the mail slot, Elliot sees the beautiful day he is missing because he can't wait for Socks to open the door. Socks and Elliot's other friends work hard to get him out of the fix he finds himself in, but to no avail.

Elliot finally works himself free and he and his friends enjoy the rest of their spring day. A great picture of natural consequences our impatience can bring.

Andrea Beck has done a wonderful job of giving little lessons through Elliot Moose's life, in *Elliot Gets Stuck*. The sixth in the Elliot Moose series, Andrea has once again created a charming story with exceptional illustrations. A must have for every library.

Robin Rusk, Freelance Writer, Susanville, California



**From dawn till dusk / Natalie Kinsey-Warnock; illustrated by Mary Azarian. LCCN 2002000411. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. HBB, 0618186557, \$16.00. Small children. Rating: \*5**

E. Farm life--Vermont--Fiction; Family life--Vermont--Fiction; Seasons--Fiction; Vermont--Fiction. unip.

Growing up on a farm in Vermont means long winters, muddy springs, and summers and falls full of hard work, in preparation for winter. The young female protagonist tells how her brothers plan to leave Vermont, as soon as they are old enough. She begins to point out events they might miss, like sugaring the maple syrup that their Aunt makes into delicious treats for them. She reminds them that the messy, muddy season draws neighbors together to help each other, and of how much fun it is to ride bikes through the puddles and get all dirty. Garden care is non-stop, but nothing beats fresh vegetables for dinner. Piles of wood to chop signify the onset of the long winter, once again, but memories of skiing, snowball fights, and Christmas pageants brighten faces and hearts. Her brothers, not surprisingly, decide to live near the family farm when they grow up.

*From Dawn Till Dusk* is written by Natalie Kinsey-Warnock, author of several well-composed children's books, and illustrated by Mary Azarian, Caldecott Medalist for *Snowflake Bentley* (Houghton Mifflin, 1998). Brightly colored woodcut illustrations capture both character and theme of story perfectly. Kinsey-

Warnock's prose appeals to all the senses and draws the reader into the nostalgia of the times. Black and white family photos are arranged in album-like setting with distinct explanations.

Kim Harris, Librarian, Churchville, New York

**Green cat / Dayal Kaur Khalsa. LCCN 2001095374. Plattsburgh, N.Y.: Tundra Books, 2002. HBB, 0887765866, \$14.95. Small children. Rating: 1**

E. Brothers and sisters--Fiction; Folk tales. unip.

Tom and Lynn, brother and sister of medium age, share a bedroom. Every night they fight over the space and try to oust each other into the hall. Then Green Cat turns up. He shows them in a surprising way that their bedroom is roomy enough for more than just two children by bringing in all kinds of new things, from animals to kitchen chairs. Tom and Lynn have fun until the room actually does become too crowded.

After Green Cat removes all the items and hugs them goodbye, Tom and Lynn now feel their room is just right. Still, they drag a couple of chairs back into the bedroom before they can go to sleep.

*Green Cat*, written and illustrated by Dayal Kaur Khalsa, is a clever picture book for little ones. The pictures are bright folk-art, although somewhat small and faraway looking. The rhyming story will attract little ears and convey a message. It will teach young ones to appreciate what they have and to not be selfish.

Some readers will recognize Green Cat as a fresh take on the folk tale, "The Crowded Room," and will find it similar to Cynthia Rylant's *Cat Heaven* (Blue Sky, 1997).

Ginger McGrath, Freelance Writer, Leavenworth, Washington

**Jasper's day / written by Marjorie Blain Parker; illustrated by Janet Wilson. C20019036868. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2002. HBB, 1550749579, \$15.95. Small children. Rating: 2**

E. Dogs--Fiction; Death--Fiction. 32 p.

Jasper is a beloved old golden retriever whose cancer is advanced to the point that the family must say good bye to him. Riley has never known a time in his life without Jasper and is heartbroken at the necessity of parting. He comes up with Jasper's Day to celebrate the old dog before his final trip to the veterinarian. Riley stays home from school and his parents stay home from work so they can do everything Jasper loves best. They feed him his favorite people food before going to Jasper's favorite stream. At the stream they laze and enjoy the spring day. On the way to their next stop, Grandma's house, they pause for Jasper's favorite treat—butterscotch ripple ice cream! Grandma massages Jasper and says goodbye. Although Riley isn't ready for the next stop,

Jasper's whimper of pain reminds him that it is right. Riley and Mom wait at home while Dad takes Jasper to the veterinarian. When he returns with the old dog's body they bury him and share memories of him. Riley goes to bed that night sad but resolved to make a memory book of his cherished friend.

Anyone who has ever said goodbye to a beloved pet will be smiling and crying at the end of this book. Marjorie Blain Parker has written a sweet story to help children cope with the loss of a pet. The chalk pastel illustrations by Janet Wilson are rendered lovingly and faithfully to the story. The boy's love for the dog as well as the weariness Jasper is experiencing come through clearly. A bit intense for the under six crowd, there is one picture of the dog's body, wrapped in a blanket, being put into the grave. *Jasper's Day* is best for older children.

Kelley Westenhoff, Parent-Librarian, Dominion Christian School, Oakton, Virginia

**Just right / Miriam Monnier; translated by J. Alison James. LCCN 2001026594. New York: North-South Books, 2001. HBB, 0735815216, \$15.95; LIB, 0735815224, \$15.88. Small children. Rating: 2**

E. Growth--Fiction; Self-esteem--Fiction; Mothers and daughters--Fiction. unip.

In *Just Right!* Miriam Monnier captures the frustration of being a child too little for some things but too big for others. As a big girl she has to climb the stairs herself, but she's too little for chewing gum. The boy downstairs thinks she is too little to play with, but when she asks her mother to play she hears that she is big enough to play by herself. Confused and frustrated the little girl stomps off to her room. When her mother comes to find out what is wrong the girl cries, the mother comforts, and all is just right again.

This first book by Miriam Monnier showcases her artistic talent in lovely pastels. The illustrations are perfectly keyed to the story line. For each page that the child feels small, the artwork shows her disproportionately smaller than her surroundings. When she feels big, the illustration shows her larger than life. When her mother hugs her, the pictures fit perfectly, as they really are. Any child who has experienced this in-between feeling of frustration will identify with this story. This is a good book to read aloud to preschoolers.

Kelley Westenhoff, Parent-Librarian, Dominion Christian School, Oakton, Virginia

**Learning to share / with Mary Lou Retton. (MaryLou's FlipFlop Shop; 1.) Nashville: Tommy Nelson, 2002. VID, 084997514X, \$12.99. Small children (Elementary). Rating: 4**

E. Sharing--Fiction. 1 video, col., 30 min.

The anticipation and excitement of getting ready for a baseball game dissipates when things start to fall apart because of team members who don't want to share. Through song and dance, children see the results of two boys not sharing, or friends not willing to give up some comfort to help out another person. The active dialogue and activities enable children to see what it means to share (and the consequences of not sharing). The group includes boys and girls, children of different races, and active motion. The story is realistic and sets the stage for hearing the message that God uses kindness to remind us of what's important. Learning to Share supports children as they see that sharing does not happen automatically or even easily.

Recommended for children's collections needing a video on teamwork, sharing, and/or consequences. Best suited for ages six through twelve.

Dr. Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Ft Myers Beach, Florida

**The little land / Robert Louis Stevenson; illustrated by Kim Fernandes. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2002. HBB, 1553373855, \$14.95. Small children. Rating: 4**

E. Children's poetry. 24 p.

Feel the enchantment of these poetic verses taken from Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses*, as this treasured classic becomes a perfect read-aloud story, letting children both play and dream. By closing their eyes, the verse goes, children can go sailing through the skies to the Land of Play. They visit fairyland, sail on little ships, see the spider and fly, and climb in the clover tree, just to mention a few adventures.

Parents and teachers familiar with Stevenson's work will appreciate how the full-page illustrations complement these verses, drawing in the reader. Fernandes' award-winning three-dimensional Fimo illustrations have graced many picture books; here the multi-colored unique illustrations make the verses come alive. Children will want to page through the verses and pictures on their own to relive parts of the story or discover something new in the pictures.

Recommended for children's collections in all public and school libraries. The creative mix of art and story are sure to enhance family story times.

Dr. Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Ft Myers Beach, FL

**Little Pig is capable / Denis Roche. LCCN 2001016583. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. HBB, 0395913683, \$15.00. Small children. Rating: 4**

E. Pigs--Fiction; Wolves--Fiction; Scouts and scouting--Fiction. unip.

Colorful full-page art illustrations convey a playful cartoon approach in this preschool title. The serious subject, parental care of children, deals with consequences, e.g. don't ever stand up in the bathtub for if you do, you could fall and break your tail. The gleeful story of Little Pig's adventures point out his resourcefulness at home and on a Scout troop outing, and is sure to stimulate the imagination of children while providing both intrigue and surprise, e.g. what is eggplant-banana juice or why does Little Pig feel suspicious when the Scout leader ate twenty beet and onion sandwiches?.

Recommended as a title for all children's collections, *Little Pig Is Capable* offers positive, can-do stories for children to emulate. The colorful gouache cartoons convey a feeling of playfulness amid the imparting of a serious message, keeping both children's interest and the amusement of adults reading the work with a child. Those familiar with Roche's *Brave Georgie Goat* (Crown Publishers, 1997) or *Ollie All Over* (Houghton Mifflin, 1997) will find here the same light-hearted approach with serious overtones.

*Dr. Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District*

**The Little Red Train / by Carl Sommer; illustrated by Kennon James. (Another Sommer-time story.) LCCN 99035277. Houston: Advance, 2000. LIB, 1575370611, \$14.95; HBB, 157537014X, \$9.95. Small children. Rating: 3**

E. Railroads--Trains--Fiction; Perseverance (Ethics)--Fiction. unip.

Three boastful big trains insist the Little Red Train is incapable of doing anything important, but when a blizzard prevents the people of a mountain town from getting food, the big trains refuse to help, and it's up to the Little Red Train to save the day.

On the surface this sounds like a story that's been written many times before, but *The Little Red Train*, a picture book by Carl Sommer, has a twist: try as he might, the Little Red Train can't make it up the mountain alone. Only with the help of a kind family from the valley, who helps the Train clear the tracks of snow, can the Train complete his rescue trip.

The Another Sommer-Time Stories are a series of eighteen picture books written to teach positive values and attitudes to children. Each book is complete in itself, with different plots and characters. *The Little Red Train* is a pleasant story. It is written in simple language that's rhythmic enough to be appealing if read aloud, and easy enough for older readers to read by themselves. The story stresses perseverance and teamwork, with a nice lesson about the good things in life taking a little effort. Kennon James' colorful, cartoon-like illustrations will delight children. As a bonus, the book includes the words and music for the "Try, Try, Try," a

song that the Train and townspeople sing. Despite all this and the plot twist, the story really is a familiar one, and this book may not be a necessary purchase for libraries with tight budgets.

*Rosemarie DiCristo, Children's Writer, The Bronx, New York*

**Little Whistle's medicine / Cynthia Rylant; illustrated by Tim Bowers. LCCN 99012382. San Diego: Harcourt, 2002. HBB, 0152010866, \$15.00. Small children. Rating: 5**

E. Guinea pigs--Fiction; Toys--Fiction. unip.

Little Whistle is a guinea pig who lives in a wonderful store called Toytown. The customers and children come to look at Little Whistle all day, thinking that he lives a boring life in his little cage.

Little do they know that when the store is closed Little Whistle dons his blue pea coat and travels about the store on the Toytown train. Another character, Soldier, reads stories to Little Whistle and all the other toys at night. One night Little Whistle finds Soldier with a sore head. He has been dumped off a shelf and will be unable to read stories. Little Whistle takes on the responsibility to find something that will help Soldier recover.

As Little Whistle travels throughout the store, each toy offers the one thing that makes it unique, but none of these remedies work. When Little Whistle comes to the mother doll, she knows what to do—mothers always know what to do. Luckily, she has the answer that will save story time.

Tim Bowers' illustrations are large and rich in color—perfect for Rylant's story. He manages to bring Little Whistle to life, cleverly making the guinea pig look real while all the other dolls and toys look like dolls and toys. Young children will love this story.

*Helen Hunter, Freelance Writer/Editor, Cedar Rapids, Iowa*

**Lucky Boy / written & illustrated by Susan Boase. LCCN 2001039254. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. HBB, 0618131752, \$15.00. Small children. Rating: 4**

E. Dogs--Fiction; Grief--Fiction. unip.

Lucky Boy is a dog neglected by his own too-busy family. He finds a new friend in the next-door neighbor, Mr. Miller, who is recently widowed. Miller notices and appreciates the dog, unlike Lucky Boy's owners, who express no concern when their dog disappears from the yard.

A moving and energizing story, this book provides an excellent opportunity for parents and caregivers to share a touching tale. The author's father-in-law and mother died a year

apart and the surviving spouse's loneliness became the springboard for this story, where a dog and man become the best of friends.

Recommended for children's collections. Storytellers seeking a story with both inspiration and meaning will find a useful resource here.

The black-and-white illustrations on glossy ivory paper attract children to follow Lucky Boy in his backyard neighborhood. Susan Boase's inviting prose and softly shaded drawings will have readers eagerly awaiting another title from her.

*Dr. Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District*

**The lucky sovereign / written and illustrated by Stuart Lees. LCCN 2001004434. Watertown, Mass.: Talewinds, 2002. HBB, 1570914885, \$15.95. Small children (Elementary). Rating: 4**

E. Voyages and travels--Fiction; Fathers and sons--Fiction; Jamestown (Va.)--History--Fiction. unip.

As Sam and his Father head for the new settlement at Jamestown in Virginia, they have no idea what intrigue awaits on their voyage. The neighbor who sees them off gives Sam a lucky sovereign which saved his life at the Battle of Cadiz. On board the *Treasure*, Sam is overlooked by most because he is a child. But it is Sam who discovers and catches a sailor stealing food. This leads to the sailor's punishment by flogging and Sam knows he has made an enemy. The sailor, Flint, gets even by stealing all of Sam's father's money, which means he and Sam will be forced into slavery. Sam's lucky sovereign is with the cache though, so there is a fitting ending to the story.

Realistic in its portrayal of an early seventeenth century voyage, *The Lucky Sovereign* is exciting and interesting. Hazards of the voyage include rats, flogging, and death of some sailors in a storm: it is not another sanitized version of life long ago. Although Sam does not set out to be a hero, his quick thinking saves his father from a dismal fate in the new colony. Stewart Lees' masterful colored pencil illustrations give this story a realism of its own—it's not just a dramatized history lesson. Enjoyable for children five through eight. This is a very good value if your collection needs more adventure books for this time period.

*Kelley Westenhoff, Parent-Librarian, Dominion Christian School, Oakton, Virginia*

**Max and Jax in second grade / Jerdine Nolen; illustrated by Karen Lee Schmidt. (Max and Jax; 1.) LCCN 98005544. San Diego: Silver Whistle, 2002. HBB, 0152016686, \$14.00. Small children (Elementary). Rating: 3**

E. Twins--Fiction; Brothers and sisters--Fiction. 38 p.

Max and Jax are boy and girl twins. They resemble alligators, although there is not a word to confirm that in the story. Max loves to fish. As he finishes second grade, fishing and his summer vacation are so heavy on his mind that he has a hard time spelling and doing his math problems.

Max's sister Jax also loves to fish and she catches more fish than her brother. Jax has lots of plans for summer, too, starting with a slumber party for her friends. Late at night when Max goes to the kitchen he finds his sister making her special fish bait—just for him. But Max also has a new fishing lure. What will he do?

When Max and his father go fishing, his dad reels in several fish while Max doesn't get a single bite on his new lure. Finally he rolls a bit of Jax's Secret Lucky Fishing Bait and in moments he feels a huge tug on his line.

Karen Lee Schmidt's bright watercolor sketches of Max, Jax, and their friends and family are as fun to look at as the story is to read. Sharing is a theme, as Jax shares her special fish bait with her brother and Max brings his catch home to her. Jerdine Nolen has written this early chapter book for ages six to nine.

*Helen Hunter, Freelance Writer/Editor, Cedar Rapids, Iowa*

**Missing Rabbit / by Roni Schotter; illustrated by Cyd Moore. LCCN 2001032569. New York: Clarion Books, 2002. HBB, 0618034323, \$15.00. Small children. Rating: 3**

E. Parent and child--Fiction; Rabbits--Fiction; Toys--Fiction. 32 p.

Kara likes to eat spaghetti with Papa. She and her best friend Rabbit like to snuggle against Papa's wool sweater at night. When Mama comes to get her, she feels happy and sad. Rabbit is confused. "Where do I live? he wonders. Kara doesn't know. Rabbit wants to stay wrapped up in Papa's sweater, so off go Mama and Kara, leaving Rabbit behind. At night in Mama's house, Kara misses Rabbit. Papa brings him over. Next time Kara goes to Papa's house, Rabbit stays with Mama. When Kara misses him, Mama brings him over. Rabbit asks Kara where she lives. She doesn't have the answer. Kara asks Mama and Papa. They tell her that she lives part of the time with Mama and part of the time with Papa. But they both love her.

Simply told, Roni Schotter explores the difficulty of shared custody using language appropriate for young children. Sweetly illustrated by Cyd Moore, *Missing Rabbit* paints an ideal picture that can bring comfort to children in a similar situation. The book gently lets the reader know that mixed emotions about bad situations are normal.

*Laurie Woolery, Freelance Writer, Cottonwood, California.*

**Molly rides the school bus / written and illustrated by Julie Brillhart. LCCN 2001004164. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2002. HBB, 0807552100, \$14.95. Small children. Rating: 3**

E. School buses--Fiction; First day of school--Fiction; Kindergarten--Fiction; Schools--Fiction. unpaginated.

Getting ready for the first day of kindergarten, Molly dreads the idea of riding the bus. Mom reassures her that big kids are nice and that her bear, Willy, will keep her company. Although a big kid greets her at the bus stop, Molly doesn't want to talk to her. After she takes a seat Molly realizes she has lost her bear. Suddenly she sees Willy flying through the air, tossed by older children who don't know who he belongs to and how special he is. Fortunately, Ruby rescues Willy and sits down with Molly, who discovers a new friend.

Written and illustrated by Julie Brillhart, this book would be a good aid to defuse first day on the bus jitters. The watercolors are delightful, showing Molly's pregnant mom with humor, older child Ruby with true "cool," and the bus driver with a mix of humor and reality. Ruby's ten tips for bus riding at the end are a nice touch. This is actually more of a 'getting ready for school' book rather than one to have in the elementary library—by the time the children get there, they've already mastered the bus. It is most appropriate for preschoolers who will be entering kindergarten soon.

*Kelley Westenhoff, Parent-Librarian, Dominion Christian School, Oakton, Virginia*

**Peanut's emergency / Cristina Salat; illustrated by Tammie Lyon. LCCN 2001004377. Watertown, Mass.: Charlesbridge, 2001. HBB, 1570914400, \$16.95; PAP, 1570914419, \$6.95. Small children (Elementary). Rating: 3**

E. Safety--Fiction; Lost children--Fiction; Problem solving--Fiction. unpaginated.

Peanut's mom isn't there to pick her up from school. While Peanut is waiting she climbs a tree and even her teacher forgets she is there. After the teacher leaves, Peanut starts getting concerned about how to get home and starts to wander off. She realizes she has spent her emergency money and she can't remember her telephone number. When a stranger approaches her to help find his lost puppy (a red flag for kids these days), she does remember her safety rule, shouts "I do not talk to strangers," and flees into a nearby shop that her mother frequents. The lady there helps her by looking up her parents' number in the phone book and calling until she reaches Peanut's family. When reunited with her parents, they are so happy to see her that Peanut gets angry telling them all the things she did wrong. They lovingly correct her mistakes and point out the things that she did right.

*Peanut's Emergency* by Cristina Salat stretches reality in the circumstances of Peanut being lost.

What teacher would let a young grade school child climb so high in a tree that she forgets the child is there? On the other hand, it does help children realize they have the skills to problem solve if they don't panic. The watercolor illustrations by Tammie Lyon depict Peanut's dancing with a vitality that makes the reader want to "shugga shugga" as well. I would use this book in a first or second grade writing program, encouraging children to re-write Peanut's story with her making better choices.

*Kelley Westenhoff, Parent-Librarian, Dominion Christian School, Oakton, Virginia*

**The perfect piñata = La piñata perfecta / by Kelli Kyle Dominguez; illustrated by Diane Paterson; translated by Teresa Mlawer. LCCN 2001005106. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2002. HBB, 0807564958, \$14.95. Small children. Rating: 4**

E. Pinatas--Fiction; Birthdays--Fiction; Parties--Fiction; Hispanic Americans--Fiction; Spanish language materials--Bilingual. unpaginated.

Marissa is going to have a birthday! She is so excited because she will get many presents and a piñata. She goes shopping with her mother to select the perfect piñata. She sees one in the shape of a butterfly and chooses it. On her birthday she is torn—should she break the piñata or keep it forever? She decides to keep the butterfly piñata and her family takes a sack and makes a different piñata.

The reader is led on the exciting story of Marissa's birthday. Hispanics will enjoy the cultural sensitivity and good story telling and all children will relate to it. The choice to celebrate how a family works together is a positive reinforcement of Judeo-Christian belief. The words of the story are set off by colored stars indicating which language is to be read so people won't read the wrong line. The illustrations are colorful, yet not overwhelming or distracting. They facilitate the telling of the story rather than compete with it. The child will have active images to help relate to the story long after the book is closed.

This bilingual picture book is a literary and illustrative work of art. Kelli Kyle Dominguez creates a believable dilemma and then provides a wonderful solution. The illustrations by Diane Paterson are ethnically correct and add to, never take away from the story. The English story is faithfully retold in Spanish by Teresa Mlawer. A fun book to read quietly but an even better book to read aloud in either language.

*Bianca Elliott, Educator, Linwood, Kansas*

**Shine! / by Karen and Jonathan Langley. LCCN 2002000887. New York: Cavendish Children's Books, 2002. HBB, 0761451277, \$15.95. Small children. Rating: 4**

E. Fathers--Fiction; Stars--Fiction; Theater--Fiction;  
Schools--Fiction; Christmas--Fiction. unip.

Jimmy's dad is an electrician and stays very busy making things "shine." Jimmy has a very important part in the Christmas show at school though and wants his dad to be there to see him. Day by day, Jimmy practices his part diligently. On the night of the performance Jimmy's dad goes to work promising that he'll do his very best to get to the play. As the play proceeds Jimmy gets more and more anxious, willing his dad to be there to see him shine. The Star in the show, Jimmy comes on last, giving him time to see that his dad is there. In turn, Jimmy shows his dad that he has learned a thing or two about lighting things up as well!

The older children get, the more important it is to them that their parents attend their performances. In this premier book by Karen Langley, the child's need to have his dad see his show is realistic to those of us with young children. Illustrator Jonathan Langley, the author's husband, has created engaging characters in Jimmy, Dad, and Nana. They all look very British. The two pages showing Jimmy getting ready for his part at the same time his dad is rushing through his task wonderfully capture the growing anxiety of both. The scenes of the play are absolutely adorable with the donkey bumping, the sheep shoving and the kings sneezing. Although *Shine!* is set at Christmas, this is not strictly a Christmas story, but rather a story of love between kids and dads. It is an excellent addition to any collection.

Kelley Westenhoff, Parent-Librarian, Dominion Christian School, Oakton, Virginia

**Sixteen miles to spring / by Andrew Thomas Pelletier; illustrated by Katya Krenina. LCCN 2001004317. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2002. HBB, 0807573884, \$15.95. Small children. Rating: 4**

E. Spring--Fiction. unip.

*Sixteen Miles to Spring* provides a fun alternate explanation of how spring arrives. Maddy knows something different is in the air but can't quite figure it out. As she and Dad set out on an errand she notices things have changed around her. They come across an old jalopy with "sixteen miles to spring" painted on it. Intrigued and fearing the jalopy has broken down, Dad and Maddy stop to help. The jalopy's occupants, Wilbur and Wiley, tell her they are just waiting for something. As they stand talking, sure enough spring rolls right up. There are butterflies and robins, a spring rain shower, and magic seeds of spring! Wilbur and Wiley drive off and Maddy joyfully understands that feeling she has had all day.

Responsibly starting with a note about how the seasons really change, Andrew Pelletier immediately sets that aside and launches into this tale about how we feel spring arriving

internally. As everything starts bursting into color and song something primal in each of us rejoices. The illustrations by Katya Krenina depict this perfectly in Maddy's freckles and dances of joy. Wilbur and Wiley are a comical duo straight out of Mrs. Piggle Wiggle. The enthusiasm they and Maddy feel is exceeded only by the brilliance of color that explodes on the page after the rain. This is a great book for children K-3 who are tired of snow days and bundling up and can't wait for kite-flying weather.

Kelley Westenhoff, Parent-Librarian, Dominion Christian School, Oakton, Virginia

**Song of the circus / Lois Duncan; illustrated by Meg Michele Cundiff. LCCN 00023139. New York: Philomel, Penguin Putnam, 2002. HBB, 0399233970, \$15.99. Small children. Rating: 3**

E. Circus--Fiction; Tigers--Fiction; Stories in rhyme. unip.

"This is the man who wears purple tights, who gets shot from cannons and goes on flights." It's hard to stop reading once your tongue gets involved in this delightful rhyming book, *Song of the Circus* by Lois Duncan.

Gisselda and Bop are children who travel with the circus. Gisselda takes naps on spangled laps and the bicycle clowns, Mom and Pop, are the parents of the boy named Bop. "The jungle cat is so mean and wild that he dreams of eating a circus child! (For he hates the food of the circus.)" When the clown's bicycle tire explodes, the mean jungle cat gets loose, but Gisselda and Bop, heroes of the circus, turn the event into a crowd pleaser.

Talented Cundriff allows Duncan's words to rise and diminish in size, like waves of the sea. Curvy sentences swing above, below, and around circus performers with overly large heads, mouths, fangs, and trunks. Bright background pages are circus pinks, oranges, blues, and purples. At times, the gouache figures contain more detail than the eye can absorb at one reading.

The strong rhymes in this book are delightful.

There is one word in the book that grownups may find objectionable; children will laugh. (The word is poop. And, considering the context of performing around elephants, it fits in quite naturally.) The rhymes in this book are so strong the word doesn't carry as much weight as a person might think.

Duncan is best known for her young adult mysteries, especially the real life story, *Who Killed My Daughter?* (Delacorte, 1992). Acquainted with the circus from early childhood, she first published *The Circus Comes Home* (Doubleday, 1993), a compilation of her late father's black and white photographs of the Ringling Bros. Circus in its heyday. Different

from other circus rhyming books on the shelves, *Song of the Circus*, with Duncan's innate sense of rhyme and Cundriff's pictures, will encourage children to read this book over and over again.

Maxine Cambra, Freelance Writer, Anderson, California

**The teddy bear / David McPhail. (Lone star journals; 2.) LCCN 2002000236. New York: Henry Holt, 2002. HBB, 0805064141, \$15.95. Small children. Rating: 3**

E. Teddy bears--Fiction; Lost and found possessions--Fiction; Homeless persons--Fiction; Love--Fiction. unip.

Stories about children and favorite toys are perennial, with titles like *The Velveteen Rabbit* (Doran, 1922), *Winnie the Pooh* (Dutton, 1926), and *Corduroy* (Viking, 1968) coming immediately to mind. *The Teddy Bear*, by David McPhail, is a nicely done example of that genre. The little boy in the book has a beloved teddy bear that goes everywhere with him, until he accidentally leaves him behind one day and the bear ends up in a trashcan. A homeless man, picking through the trash, finds him and adopts him and takes him everywhere, as the little boy did.

Although the boy seems to adjust to the bear's absence, he is still sad, and when he sees the bear one day on a park bench, he is thrilled and takes him back. Then the man discovers that the bear is missing and begins to shout and cry, for he, too, loves and needs the bear. The boy hears the man's cries and runs back to the bench to return the bear to the man, for he knows how bad it feels to lose him. Then, as his parents take his hands and lead him away, he takes one last look at the bear sitting happily on the man's lap.

McPhail's watercolor and ink illustrations are soft and cozy, making the homeless man, his clothes, and even the trashcans he picks in look far more attractive than reality, but accuracy would certainly make the book too grim for this age group. The existing illustrations make the book an excellent way to introduce little ones to a homeless person and how to respond to such a person with compassion. It can also be used to illustrate the Golden Rule and may even give an older child a desire to do something for the homeless or needy in his own neighborhood.

Betty Winslow, Bowling Green Christian Academy, Bowling Green, Ohio

**Thanksgiving : what makes it special? / Harold Myra; illustrated by Jane Kurisu. LCCN 2002023889. Nashville: Tommy Nelson, 2002. HBB, 1400300061, \$7.99. Small children. Rating: 3**

E. Thanksgiving Day--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. unip.

*Thanksgiving, What Makes It Special?* Is it Turkey Day or Pig Out Day? NO! It's

Thanksgiving Day, and with very good reason. Journey along with Dad and Mom, school aged Michelle and Todd, and preschooler Greg as they prepare the feast for and discuss the whys and wherefores of Thanksgiving. They take a historical look at the first American Thanksgiving Day; discover Moses' full week of Thanksgiving; consider gratitude towards Jesus; learn about the health giving aspects of thankfulness. Then they welcome a large group of rejoicing relatives and guests.

Harold Myra's story is fun, attractive, and full of thoughtful facts. *Thanksgiving, What Makes It Special?* makes a good read-aloud book. It opens flat, is small and light enough to be held in one hand, yet has large illustrations for all to see. Students grades one through three will enjoy reading this book for themselves. On every page Jane Kurisu's simple, bright illustrations add family activity to the narrative: Dad chops mushrooms; little Greg rides Mom pig-a-back; pilgrims include lobsters in their feast. Written for Thanksgiving, this book will be useful all year, lending itself to many subjects, including reading, art, history, and social studies. Libraries and families will find this book helpful.

Donna Eggett, Freelance Writer, Radford Virginia

**Tina and the Penguin / written by Heather Dyer, illustrated by Mireille Levert. Toronto: Kids Can Press, 2002. HBB, 1550749471, \$16.95. Small children (Elementary). Rating: 4**

E. Penguins--Fiction. unip.

On her class trip to the zoo Tina acquires an unusual pet. A penguin is making a break for freedom and Tina decides to help. Disguising the penguin in her coat and pink beret, Tina smuggles him home. As she quickly discovers, however, the right habitat for a little girl is not the right habitat for a penguin. Resigning herself to living the way the penguin is most comfortable, Tina goes to bed in her thick socks and woolly hat. Her mother, abnormally unobservant, merely checks Tina's forehead and asks where Tina got the stuffed penguin. "The zoo," Tina answers. As the week goes on it becomes apparent that the penguin and Tina are not destined to be roommates. One morning when Tina awakes, the penguin is gone without a trace and Tina's life gets back to normal. Then one day, her dad is watching a show about penguins in the Antarctic and Tina notices a familiar pink beret.

A new twist on "it followed me home, can I keep it?" *Tina and the Penguin* is Heather Dyer's first picture book. It is a cute read-aloud, exploring friendship and habitats. The strength in Tina's character is her innocence. She doesn't try to change the penguin to adapt to her habitat, but tries to adapt her habitat to suit the penguin. The illustrations by Mireille Levert are wonderfully

engaging. Children will especially like the one showing twin boys on the bus doing what boys do—dangling critters in order to scare girls. For children in kindergarten through third grade, this book has great appeal.

Kelley Westenhoff, Parent-Librarian, Dominion Christian School, Oakton, Virginia

**You move you lose / by Carl Sommer; illustrated by Kennon James. (Another Sommer-time story.) LCCN 99035283. Houston: Advance, 2000. LIB, 1575370565, \$14.95; HBB, 1575370050, \$9.95. Small children (Elementary). Rating: 3**

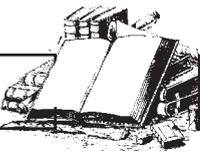
E. Obstinacy--Fiction; Bears--Fiction; Brothers and sisters--Fiction. unip.

Stubby and Prissy, two bear cubs who are brother and sister, fight constantly. When they decide to settle one of their fights with a game of You Move, You Lose, things nearly turn tragic. A pair of raccoon burglars take advantage of each cub's stubborn refusal to move by robbing their house. Then a wolf attacks a kitten. Will one cub move first—and lose the argument—to save the kitten?

*You Move You Lose*, by Carl Sommer provides a nice, age-appropriate lesson on the perils of having too fierce a sibling rivalry. Not only do Stubby and Prissy allow the burglars to steal from them and almost allow the kitten to be killed, all their friends become disgusted with their constant fighting and threaten to leave them.

The book is part of the Another Sommer-Time Story series, eighteen books meant to teach positive values to children. (Each title, with different characters and plots, can stand alone). Kennon James' bright and bold illustrations nicely capture the action and spirit of the story while subtly adding humor for adults reading the books aloud (the robber raccoons, for instance, have fuzzy dice on the rearview mirror of their pickup truck). The text is simple enough for its age group (children aged four to eight), while still entertaining. The story is sweet and the lesson it teaches is clear enough to be understood by its youngest readers.

Rosemarie DiCristo, Children's Writer, The Bronx, New York



**The candy factory mystery / created by Gertrude Chandler Warner; illustrated by Hodges Soileau. (The boxcar children mysteries; special # 18) LCCN 2001056759. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2001. LIB, 0807555002, \$13.95; PAP, 0807555010, \$3.95. Elementary. Rating: 3**

F. Brothers and sisters--Fiction; Otters--Fiction; Candy--Fiction; Mystery and detective stories. 114 p.

Someone is sabotaging the tiny candy factory owned and run by Mrs. Winkles, a family friend of the Boxcar Children. Orders are lost, shipments are damaged, and threats are being printed on the candy conversation hearts. Since the Boxcar Children had planned to visit Mrs. Winkles anyway, they agree to help her figure out what's going on.

*The Candy Factory Mystery*, Boxcar Children Mysteries Special #18, is a story filled with family values. It opens with the children sitting in front of a crackling fire, playing checkers as their grandfather eats the last of the coconut cake their housekeeper has made.

The mystery is tame, and suitable for its seven to twelve-year-old age group, although readers at the older end of this group may become impatient. Each suspect behaves suspiciously enough to keep the Boxcar Children—and the child reader—guessing, but the resolution is rather simple. There's not a lot of action in the story, just a number of innocent acts of vandalism (the messages on the hearts, someone's forgetting to fix a missing part for a candy machine, etc.) that the children must investigate. The Boxcar Children are likeable children, though, and little Benny's antics will keep the youngest readers laughing. In addition, there's a painless lesson on the way candy factories work, especially regarding how to make hollow chocolate Easter eggs; that said, having only one worker and one supervisor run an entire factory seems a little unrealistic.

The only potential problem: once the children exclaim "darn" and on another occasion they exclaim "doggone." In all other respects the book is a wonderful entry in a classic series created by Gertrude Chandler Warner, and entirely reminiscent of the other classic children's mysteries of the mid-20th century.

Rosemarie DiCristo, Freelance Writer, The Bronx, New York

**Dear Ichiro / by Jean Davies Okimoto; illustrated by Doug Keith. LCCN 2002069350. Seattle: Kumagai Press, 2002. HBB, 1570613737, \$16.95. Elementary. Rating: 4**

F. Seattle Mariners (Baseball team)--Fiction; Friendship--Fiction; Interpersonal relations--Fiction; Baseball--Fiction. 32 p.

This is a warm, simple story of anger and forgiveness. Henry and his best friend Oliver have a fight when Oliver drops Henry's favorite stuffed toy (the one he still sleeps with) in the toilet. Henry vows to hate Oliver for life, until his grandfather takes Henry to a Seattle Mariners game in which Ichiro Suzuki and Kazuhiro Sasaki play. His grandfather's quiet reminiscences of how he considered Japanese people enemies during World War II, but is now proud to have Japanese players on his hometown team, start Henry thinking about forgiving Oliver.

*Dear Ichiro* is a story that could easily turn schmaltzy, but Jean Davies Okimoto's straightforward prose and Doug Keith's deft, colorful illustrations keep it fresh. Its message on forgiveness—time must pass, there must be goodwill, and the person must want to forgive—is a fine one and it's delivered carefully enough for even the book's youngest readers to understand (*Dear Ichiro* is geared to children five and up).

Potential problems: while the fight is played for laughs, Henry gets really angry at Oliver, and fantasizes about flushing Oliver's baseball cards in the toilet, dumping a Happy Meal on his head, and putting dirt in his chocolate milk. He calls Oliver slug slime and snail brain (not aloud) as well as bobberty-woop and blibbity-doop (code words so his mother won't realize he's used bad words).

Baseball fans will especially like *Dear Ichiro*, but it's a nice read for all children, and should appeal to girls as well as boys.

Rosemarie DiCristo, Children's Writer, The Bronx, New York

**The disappearing staircase mystery / created by Gertrude Chandler Warner; illustrated by Hodges Soileau. (The boxcar children mysteries; 85.) LCCN 2001045671. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2001. PAP, 0807554901, \$13.95; PAP, 080755491X, \$3.95. Elementary. Rating: 3**

F. Brothers and sisters--Fiction; Orphans--Fiction; Buildings--Repair and reconstruction--Fiction; Charity--Fiction; Auctions--Fiction; Mystery and detective stories. 115 p.

The Bugbee house, which everyone calls the Bugaboo House, is the local haunted house. When it's donated to House and Hands, a group dedicated to restoring old homes for senior citizens and other groups, the Boxcar Children help out with the restoration. But odd things are happening. Some of the valuable Bugbee antiques vanish. Strange footsteps are heard upstairs when no one is up there. Most of the workers on the restoration seem to be hiding something. But what?

Haunted house stories are always appealing to children, and *The Disappearing Staircase Mystery*, #85 in the Boxcar Children series created by Gertrude Chandler Warner, is a fine one. Bugaboo House is filled with secret panels, dead-end passages, and doors that lead nowhere. The Boxcar Children even get to prowl about the house, alone, at night, without adult supervision. (They aren't really alone, though; the adult volunteers are asleep on the ground floor).

The mystery is challenging enough for its seven to twelve-year-old age group. As always, there are several potential villains who act in suitably suspicious ways, but they are never menacing and the children are never in danger.

*The Disappearing Staircase Mystery* is a pleasant book. The text is easy to read, and is interspersed with ten full-page illustrations by Hodges Soileau. The illustrations make the Boxcar Children look older (early teens) than the age group the book is marketed to, which is always a plus. Parents can rest assured that the Boxcar Children are always good-natured, polite, and thoughtful. The book is full of family activities such as cookie baking and doing things together. There's one instance where the kids exclaim "Darn!" but in all other respects the book is innocent.

Rosemarie DiCristo, Freelance Writer, The Bronx, New York

**Falling into place / Stephanie Greene. LCCN 2002002744. New York: Clarion Books, 2002. HBB, 0618177442, \$15.00. Elementary. Rating: 2**

F. Grandmothers--Fiction; Stepfamilies--Fiction; Family life--Fiction; Moving, Household--Fiction. 124 p.

Margaret Mack's life is disrupted with a stepmother, Wendy, and three stepsisters, Emily, Sara, and Claire. She misses her grandfather,

Tad, who died, and her Gran, who moved to a retirement village. Margaret sees herself pushed further into the background, especially when she must share her room with Claire. She is excited at her father's suggestion that she visit Gran. However, Margaret finds her normally energetic grandmother sad and lonely. Gran is upset with village rules and has no interest in meeting her neighbors.

Margaret enlists the help of her cousin, Roy, to find Gran a friend. Meeting Gran's neighbors and the director of the village, Margaret sees they will be perfect for her grandmother. Gran meets her neighbors and finds that they have a lot in common; she realizes it is time to let the past go.

Matt Mack arrives with Claire to give Margaret news of her new baby brother. Talking with Gran, Margaret realizes she loves Wendy and her stepisters. Given the honor of naming her brother, she names him David, but plans to call him Tad, knowing this will please Gran.

This book is humorous and entertaining. Being family-oriented, it is a story that blended families with young children will enjoy.

*Pam Burns, Librarian, Promiseland Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida*

**Get well, Good Knight / by Shelley Moore Thomas; pictures by Jennifer Plecas. New York: Dutton Children's Books, 2002. HBB, 0525469141, \$13.99. Elementary. Rating: 5**

F. Dragons--Fiction; Knights--Fiction; Magic--Fiction. 48 p.

Shelley Moore Thomas has written a delightful, "bring a smile to your face" book in *Get Well, Good Knight*. The story deals with a knight—all dressed up in armor—who finds himself taking care of three sick young dragons. When he realizes that his dragon friends have a "sniffle, a cough, and an achoo," he looks for some special medicine to cure them.

First he goes to a wizard who mixes up a horrid potion in his big black pot. However the dragons turn up their little green noses. Even the Good Knight has to agree when he tastes it! When he returns to ask for a different potion, he is given a similarly awful mixture. Finally, he rides to his mother's house, because mothers always know best, and her soup is the kind of medicine that smells and tastes good.

Shelley Moore Thomas puts together words that beg to be read aloud. Her horse "clippety-clops." The wizard's mixture is "slimy-grimy." (And even though there is a wizard in the story, he is most ineffective). This is an easy-to-read adventure that will delight new young readers. Jennifer Plecas' expressive, colorful cartoon characters add to the fun!

This is the second installment about the Good Knight and is as charming as the first.

*Paula Stewart Marks, School Principal, Bend, Oregon*

**Goin'someplace special / Patricia C. McKissack; illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. LCCN 99088258. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2001. HBB, 0689818858, \$16.00. Elementary. Rating: 4**

F. Segregation--Fiction; African Americans--Fiction; Nashville (Tenn.)--Fiction. unpag.

In *Goin' Someplace Special*, 'Tricia Ann experiences a rite of passage unique to the time and place she lives in. Her grandmother, Mama Frances, agrees she is finally old enough to go Someplace Special by herself. Setting out in her prettiest dress with her prettiest smile and visible excitement, 'Tricia Ann enters the world of Jim Crow all by herself for the first time. Her goal is the one public place where there are no Jim Crow laws, and black people are treated equally.

Step by step the indignities of segregation start getting her down even though there are kind friends of her grandmother's along the way to guide her. There's even one scary moment where she gets swept along with a crowd and ends up in a place forbidden to "colored people." Fleeing, she ends up crying in a garden where a nice white lady, who many people reject as addled, helps 'Tricia Ann find those values Mama Frances has instilled in her, fortifying her to resume her journey. 'Tricia Ann finally arrives at the steps of Someplace Special and rushes in.

Beautifully illustrated watercolors by Jerry Pinkney capture both the happiness and sadness of 'Tricia Ann as she goes on her journey. The vivid colors of 'Tricia Ann's dress fairly spring from one page to the next. The background fades as the reader concentrates on what 'Tricia Ann is doing. Patricia McKissack tells an autobiographical story that is a triumph of hope for a young girl in 1950's Nashville, Tennessee. The note at the end of the story explains what Jim Crow laws were, and how most African-American parents shielded their children as long as possible. This is a good book for first through third graders and will prompt many questions about fairness.

*Kelley Westenhoff, Parent-Librarian, Dominion Christian School, Oakton, Virginia*

**Gooney Bird Greene / Lois Lowry; illustrated by Middy Thomas. LCCN 2002001478. Boston: Walter Lorraine Books, 2002. HBB, 0618238484, \$15.00. Elementary. Rating: 3**

F. Storytelling--Fiction; Schools--Fiction; Humorous stories. 88 p.

Second grader Gooney Bird Greene transfers to Watertower Elementary School and

revolutionizes her new class, including her teacher, Mrs. Pidgeon. Gooney Bird's astounding and clever true tales about where she came from, how she got her name, and what made her late for class capture everyone's attention. Not only is this red-haired child a skilled storyteller, she dresses in bizarre outfits and brings the most atypical lunches to school.

By the end of the book, Gooney Bird has given each of her classmates confidence in his or her own abilities as storytellers, and sparked everyone's enthusiasm for school, and life in general.

Lois Lowry's feat of imagination in creating *Gooney Bird Greene* makes for a giggling good read. The back-and-forth jumps from the Gooney Bird's tales to the storyline of the book are a bit bothersome, though children will be keen to hear the next story Gooney Bird tells, and probably won't be bothered much at all. Middy Thomas' black and white line drawings give Gooney Bird added character, and depict her strange daily get-ups.

Young readers who plod through school might be motivated to improve their own writing and story creating after reading this book, and teachers will be reminded that each child's individuality has its strengths, and contributes to the colorfulness of the classroom.

*Karen Schmidt, Freelance Writer, Marysville, Washington*

**Grayboy / Kay Choro. LCCN 2001000698. New York: Henry Holt, 2002. HBB, 0805064117, \$16.95. Elementary. Rating: 3**

F. Gulls--Fiction; Beaches--Fiction; Ecology--Fiction. unpag.

Grayboy is a seagull, with all the seagull behaviors that make these birds a mixed blessing. Although he is unable to fly because of a damaged wing, he still gets about easily. The children in the story grow protective of him, bringing him scraps to eat, and hunting special tidbits. Their relationship with Grayboy is the connecting tissue of their summer adventures. They bring him minnows and crabs to eat. They build sand castles for him to lord over. They watch him on the water as they also swim. He comes to expect them and squawks when they leave.

One day a big storm blows up while Robert is out fishing with his father. The girl's anxiety about Robert is heart-wrenching, and the big sigh of relief at his safe delivery is personal to the reader as well. The storm has claimed one victim, though, and the next day the children bury their friend, Grayboy. Still, they appreciate the fun summer they had with him, and understand that he probably would not have survived the winter, and so they choose to cherish the memories.

Author-illustrator Kay Choroa has a talent for making her reader care about the characters and the storyline. Her illustrations of this area of Long Island are inviting in their warmth. I forgot the winter snows outside and immersed myself in sand and sun. Choroa's celebration of Peconic Bay's fragile ecosystem sings out from the beautiful watercolor illustrations. A note at the end of the story laments the degradation of this habitat and urges its protection and respect. Because of the death of the bird, this book is best for children six and up.

Kelley Westenhoff, Parent-Librarian, Dominion Christian School, Oakton, Virginia



**If only I had a green nose / Max Lucado; illustrated by Sergio Martinez. LCCN 2001007745. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2002. HBB, 1581343973, \$15.99. Elementary. Rating: 5**

F. Self-acceptance--Fiction; Fads--Fiction; Conduct of life--Fiction. 31 p.

Eli, the Wemmick-maker, made all the Wemmicks different on purpose; so PUNCHINELLO cannot understand why the other wooden Wemmicks are lined up to have their noses painted green by Willy Withit. Some Wemmicks begin believing that they are more loved or better persons because of their green noses. The mayor of Wemmicksville gives a medal to Willy Withit for his brilliant idea. Finally PUNCHINELLO gives in and has his own nose painted green. But soon red noses come into fashion, then blue, pink, yellow, orange, and purple. PUNCHINELLO realizes that trying to fit in doesn't work because the rules are always changing. He goes back to Eli, who is glad to help him to be who he made him to be. "It hurt to be sanded, but it was worth it to be normal again."

*If Only I Had a Green Nose* is another sequel to Max Lucado's best-selling *You Are Special* [CLJ 3, (4/5):13, 1998], which was followed by *You Are Mine* [CLJ 7, (2/3):29, 2002]. Sergio Martinez's full-color illustrations retain the high quality and spirit of the earlier books. The three books share the theme of self-acceptance. However, they each point out different fallacies in the search for significance. *You Are Special* shows that the opinion of others pales in light of the Creator's love. *You Are Mine* demonstrates the costs, as well as the futility, of relying on possessions for self-worth. Now, *If Only I had a Green Nose* illustrates the emptiness and bondage that comes from trying to keep up with passing fashion. These books each make valuable contributions in a delightful and convincing manner. If Lucado's engaging stories inoculate children against falling for these fallacies, they may be spared much heartache as they grow. Highly recommended for home, church, and school libraries.

Donna W. Bowling, Library/Educational Consultant, Dallas, Texas

**Keeper of the doves / by Betsy Byars. LCCN 2002009283. New York: Viking, 2002. HBB, 0670035769, \$14.99. Elementary. Rating: 3**

F. Sisters--Fiction; Family life--Kentucky--Fiction; Recluses--Fiction; Kentucky--History--1865--Fiction. 121 p.

During the late 1800s, the world is abuzz with change. Even The Willows—the wealthy McBees' family home—though reclusive, is filled with mystery and movement. Amen McBee, youngest of five daughters, is serious, naive, and attentive to the world around her. When Grandmama comes to stay for a time, the girls find out that they are going to have a baby brother or sister soon. Amen sees Mama's medicines and is afraid that she is ill, but when baby brother arrives, only tears of joy fill the house.

Amen fears Mr. Tominski, the man who tenderly cares for the family doves, and who lives in an old, abandoned chapel in the woods. Her sisters tell scary stories about him, and Amen more than half believes them. But Papa says Mr. Tominski once saved his life.

When the family dog is found kicked to death, Amen's sisters blame Mr. Tominski. He overhears them calling him a murderer, runs away, and is killed trying to hop a train. After the funeral, Papa tells Amen that Mr. Tominski was a fugitive from accusations of murder. Amen is puzzled by the many facets of Mr. Tominski and begins to see that people are rarely one-sided.

*Keeper of the Doves*, by Betsy Byars, is the story of a young girl who walks through life with both eyes open. Although the character sketches of the family are not fully developed, and Mr. Tominski's character seems sort of thrown together at the end of the story, the main character, Amen, does connect with the reader through her intensely poignant observations and sensitivity to humanity. Betsy Byars, Newbery Medalist for her book, *Summer of the Swans*, delivers a thought-provoking story about family and belonging.

Kim Harris, Librarian, Churchville, New York.

**Light your candle / by Carl Sommer; illustrated by Kennon James. (Another Sommer-time story.) LCCN 99036452. Houston: Advance, 2000. HBB, 1575370190, \$14.95; LIB, 1575370689, \$14.95. Elementary. Rating: 3**

E. Inner cities--Fiction; City and town life--Fiction. unip.

*Light Your Candle* is part of Advance Publishing's Another Sommer-Time Story series, eighteen books that attempt to painlessly teach values to children. Each book is complete in itself, with different characters and plots.

In *Light Your Candle*, Stephanie, Lori, and Cindy live in a city neighborhood overrun by

crime and filled with apathetic adults. They decide to do as much good as possible for one week, reasoning that helping even one person is a positive thing (in another words, lighting even one candle helps a bit). The idea of individuals helping individuals is a marvelous one, and it's a fine lesson to teach children, but when the girls begin instantly solving all their community's problems, the story turns sticky... and possibly dangerous, if real children try what the girls try.

When they confront a drug dealer, he just gets mad and yells at them. When their parents confront him, he runs off in fear. A disruptive school atmosphere is changed solely through one PTA meeting where every parent vows that his or her children will be better behaved from now on. The slum buildings the characters live in are cleaned and fixed simply because the tenants ask the landlords to fix them. While author Carl Sommer has taught in New York City and "has witnessed some of the tragic events" described in the book, his solutions seem based on wishful thinking.

The characters are suitably multi-ethnic and Kennon Jones' illustrations are realistic while still appearing upbeat. The story is well told, the girls' motivations are noble, and the lessons taught are wonderful. However, this book might be best for rural and suburban audiences where the solutions presented would have a better chance of taking effect.

Rosemarie DiCristo, Children's Writer, The Bronx, New York

**Little raccoon / by Lilian Moore; illustrated by Doug Cushman. LCCN 00040981. New York: Henry Holt, 2001. HBB, 0805065431, \$15.95. Elementary. Rating: 5**

F. Raccoons--Fiction; Animals--Fiction. 64 p.

What a delight to see Little Raccoon again! Three of Lilian Moore's original stories are back in one volume. The first, "The Thing in the Pool," is about Little Raccoon being sent on an errand by his mother, and falling victim to Fat Rabbit's suggestion and his own imagination. Although Little Raccoon is scared of the thing in the pool, the story is not scary to the child reader. In fact, the reader is in on the joke and will enjoy knowing something the central character has not yet figured out.

The second story, "The Outside World," shows the perils of disobedience in a non-threatening way. Little Raccoon's adventure into the outside world is prompted by his mother not taking the time to answer his questions and explain the difference between that world and theirs. The joke at the end is one that the reader will grasp, and many will understand perfectly why Little Raccoon just had to see for himself!

In the third story, "No Trouble At All," Little Raccoon is older, babysitting two ostensibly harmless chipmunks. Underestimating the

energy and mischief level of infants is the joke on Little Raccoon in this story. Resourceful as ever, Little Raccoon finds a safe, funny way to humble the chipmunks.

In the format of a chapter book, this is an easy read for the six to eight-year-old crowd. Doug Cushman's black and white illustrations punctuate the text with action and help break up pages of text that might be daunting to beginning readers. The animals, while anthropomorphic (speaking, wearing bandannas, living in houses) are still animal-like enough to be believable. Humor is used in an engaging way to make the reader part of the story.

Kelley Westenhoff, Parent-Librarian, Dominion Christian School, Oakton, Virginia

**The mystery of the mummy's curse / created by Gertrude Chandler Warner; illustrated by Hodges Soileau. (The Boxcar children mysteries; 88.) Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2002. HBB, 0807555037, \$13.95; PAP, 0807555045, \$3.95. Elementary. Rating: 3**

F. Mummies--Fiction; Brothers and sisters--Fiction; Orphans--Fiction; Mystery and detective stories. 137 p.

**The mystery of the spider's clue / created by Gertrude Chandler Warner ; illustrated by Hodges Soileau. (The Boxcar children mysteries.) LCCN 2001056754. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2001. HBB, 0807554960, \$13.95; PAP, 0807554979, \$3.95. Elementary. Rating: 3**

F. Brothers and sisters--Fiction; Orphans--Fiction; Mystery and detective stories.

**The mystery of alligator swamp / created by Gertrude Chandler Warner; illustrated by Hodges Soileau. (The Boxcar children mysteries; special #19.) Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2002. HBB, 0807555169, \$13.95; PAP, 0807555177, \$3.95. Elementary. Rating: 3**

F. Alligators--Fiction; Brothers and sisters--Fiction; Orphans--Fiction; Mystery and detective stories. 131 p.

A visit to a local museum containing dinosaur bones and mummies forms the plot of *The Mystery of the Mummy's Curse*. The four siblings volunteer to help the museum curator get the Egyptian exhibit ready. While they work, they uncover the dishonest plan of a visiting scientist who intends to sell artifacts for quick cash. The Boxcar Children rescue the stolen pieces and catch the thief, while helping the museum get its new displays ready for public viewing.

In *The Mystery of the Spider's Clue*, the Alden kids pitch in to help an injured window washer by washing windows. They simultaneously pursue a puzzle that could provide their friend with a large cash prize. Their cooperative efforts

help solve the mystery, while helping their friend reconcile a broken relationship. The puzzle is a fun subplot underlying the weightier interpersonal issues laced through the story.

French words, Louisiana bayou culture, and gators all figure into *The Mystery of Alligator Swamp*, when the Alden kids and their grandfather spend time at a bayou fish camp. The children help Grandfather's friend figure out whether it's a ghost or an unusual alligator that's plaguing the fish camp. This edition is a Special—after finishing the story, readers can use their new knowledge of the Louisiana bayou to do a variety of paper-and-pencil puzzles, then check their answers with the answer key.

Each of these three Boxcar Children stories, part of a series created by Gertrude Chandler, is well-plotted, and carries on the tradition of helpfulness, team work, and compassion that are Boxcar Children hallmarks. Readers will be captivated by the stories and positively impacted by the noble and upright character traits exhibited by the Alden children.

Karen Schmidt, Freelance Writer, Marysville, Washington

**The mystery of the star ruby / created by Gertrude Chandler Warner ; illustrated by Hodges Soileau. (The Boxcar children mysteries.) LCCN 2002000778. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2002. HBB, 0807555096, \$13.95; PAP, 080755510X, \$3.95. Elementary. Rating: 3**

F. Precious stones--Collection and preservation--Fiction; Brothers and sisters--Fiction; Orphans--Fiction; Mystery and detective stories.

In *The Mystery of the Star Ruby*, another title in the Boxcar Children Mysteries series created by Gertrude Chandler, the Alden kids, along with Grandfather Alden, visit the Ruby Hollow Gem Mine and Resort. After checking in and putting their belongings in their cabins, Grandfather pays the entry fee for each of them to participate in the gem contest. Whoever finds the largest ruby wins a prize of \$1000. Each day the children collect their buckets of dirt and take their place by the flume, where they wash the dirt and stones in mesh-screened trays. All of the children find gems, but it is Jessie who finds a star ruby.

The problem is, the ruby disappears just before the end of the contest—which Jessie surely will win. The Aldens put their heads together to solve the mystery, which they do, just in the nick of time. Soileau's sketches help the reader understand what a flume is and how it is used for washing the stones. Educational information is included on different kinds of gems, their names, size, and importance.

Helen Hunter, Freelance Writer & Church Librarian

**Mystery on Blizzard Mountain / created by Gertrude Chandler Warner; illustrated by Hodges Soileau. (The Boxcar children mysteries.) LCCN 2001045672. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2001. HBB, 0807554936, \$13.95; PAP, 0807554944, \$3.95. Elementary. Rating: 3**

F. Ghosts--Fiction; Buried treasure--Fiction; Mountains--Fiction; Brothers and sisters--Fiction; Orphans--Fiction; Mystery and detective stories. 95 p.

With nearly ninety books in this children's series, created by Gertrude Chandler, you may already be familiar with the story set-up. The four Alden children (the boys, Henry and Benny, ages 14 and 6; and the girls, Jessie and Violet, ages 12 and 10) have been orphaned, and lived in an abandoned boxcar in the woods until their grandfather Alden found them and they went to live with him.

In *Mystery on Blizzard Mountain*, Grandfather takes the children to visit the daughter of an old friend at Seven Mountains Wilderness Park. Though Mr. Alden doesn't go up the mountain with the children, other adults play a large role in the story. In addition, at the beginning of the book, one of the adult characters makes a semi-strong environmentalist appeal about people not hiking on the mountain.

A ghost is reported to be on Blizzard Mountain. There is also a missing strongbox of gold from a long-ago stagecoach robbery. During the time the children hike and camp on the mountain they learn many pointers for hiking safety. But they are also certain the ghost has visited them several times: a truck won't start, tires go flat, food disappears, shoes are taken, and they hear steps around the cabin. The tension of the mystery will keep children turning the pages. The children work together to solve the mystery. Hodges Soileau's black and white sketches help to identify the characters, with the exception of the "tall, thin waitress with silver hair" whose black ponytail makes her look like a teenager.

Helen Hunter, Freelance Writer & Church Librarian

**Robert and the great Pepperoni / by Barbara Sueling; illustrated by Paul Brewer. LCCN 2001028854. Chicago: Cricket Books, 2001. HBB, 081262825X, \$14.95. Elementary. Rating: 5**

F. Pets--Fiction; Pet sitting--Fiction; Dogs--Fiction; Schools--Fiction. 118 p.

What do you do when you're desperate for a pet and your parents always say "NO!" If you're Robert, you set up a pet-sitting business to show a sense of responsibility, and, along the way, to vicariously enjoy pet ownership. Life doesn't always follow your script though, so starting with a tarantula named Fuzzy, Robert's life gets very interesting. Through some love birds he learns compassion for his elderly neighbor. Through a TV star rabbit he has a brush with fame.

Finally, his dream comes true, and he acquires a dog. Acting as a foster owner until a home for the dog can be found, Robert gets to experience all the joys and pitfalls of dog ownership. Robert trains Pepperoni, scoops the yard, cleans up the shredded toilet paper, and replants his mother's petunias. The trade-off is waking up with a dog on his bed and being greeted with sloppy love when he returns from school. Having Pepperoni around even helps Robert conquer a huge fear. Alas, a family wants Pepperoni and Robert's heart is going to break. The resolution is a win for everyone concerned.

This funny book by Barbara Seuling had my third grader laughing out loud. Robert is a normal third or fourth grader with a familiar sense of life spinning out of control. The black and white pencil drawings by Paul Brewer occur often enough to give the reader a visual break from the text. A true chapter book, Robert and the Great Pepperoni is punctuated with humor, including the input of an obnoxious older brother. It is wholesome and believable. For the librarian in search of a book that will appeal to girls, boys, dog lovers, and children who love humor, this book is a must buy.

Kelley Westenhoff, Parent-Librarian, Dominion Christian School, Oakton, Virginia

**Runt / by Marion Dane Bauer. LCCN 2002003965. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. HBB, 0618212612, \$14.00. Elementary. Rating: 3**

F. Wolves--Fiction. 138 p.

Runt is the smallest and weakest wolf pup born to King, the leader of the wolf pack, and his mate, Silver. In Runt's determination to prove himself to the pack, he gets lost trying to follow the older wolves on the hunt, gets a muzzle full of quills in a tussle with a porcupine, and nearly gets struck by lightning. Everything he does seems to make him more disgusting to King.

Bider, a hunter wolf, challenges King's position by offering meat from the humans' livestock to the hungry pack. When King refuses to accept the meat, Bider calls him a coward, and the battle for leadership ensues. Bider loses and is kicked out of the pack. Runt follows in hungry fascination, as Bider returns to his kill. Bider gorges himself with the meat and meets with a horrible death, from which Runt narrowly escapes. Humans have poisoned the half-eaten carcass in order to kill the wolf that attacked their livestock and discourage other wild animals from slaughtering, as well. Runt learns that King was right to stay away from people.

*Runt*, by Marion Dane Bauer, is a book about the runt of a litter of wolves growing up in the Minnesota woods. What starts out to be a tale of how Runt overcomes adversity and finds self-worth, ends by propagandizing humans' cruelty to wild animals. The Afterword points out that wild animals are often portrayed as monsters in

children's fairytales. Wolf-lovers will enjoy the bibliography of both fiction and nonfiction books about wolves in the wild. Bauer, author of Newbery Honor book *On My Honor* [Yearling Books; Reissue edition (October 1, 1987)] is gifted at involving the reader in the tale she tells.

Kim Harris, Librarian, Churchville, New York.

**The stuffed bear mystery / created by Gertrude Chandler Warner; illustrated by Hodges Soileau. (The boxcar children mysteries; 90.) Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2002. HBB, 0807555126, \$13.95; PAP, 0807555134, \$3.95. Elementary. Rating: 3**

F. Teddy bears--Fiction; Bears--Fiction; Mystery and detective stories. 118 p.

In Gertrude Chandler Warner's *The Stuffed Bear Mystery*, illustrated by Hodges Soileau, Henry, Jessie, Violet and Benny Alden travel to Woolly Farm. Doc and Peggy Firman invite them to help with sheep shearing, and to make bears for the Teddy Bear Jamboree. When Herr Bear, an antique teddy bear, is stolen from Doc's locked cabinet, the children set out to uncover the thief. The mystery deepens when freshly sheared wool for stuffing, a pattern book for Peggy's bears, and Bear-collector magazines also disappear.

Who could have taken Herr Bear? The list of suspects grows to include three very unkind and impatient adults who could learn a few things about honesty and respect. As the Alden children gather clues they notice a look-alike bear in the possession of one of the suspects. The children solve the mystery, but the thief claims she only wished to borrow Herr Bear. The owner of Herr Bear feels sorry for the thief, and gives her the bear because "she loves him most."

*The Stuffed Bear Mystery* lacks the excitement and charm of the original Boxcar Children stories. Miss Warner's first 19 titles are packed full of challenging seeds of learning, and draw the reader into her stories. I read two, *Surprise Island* and *The Bus Station Mystery*, and was captivated by them. In *The Stuffed Bear Mystery*, the consequences of the theft are left unanswered. The message regarding right and wrong is vague, and could be confusing to children.

Jeanne Doyon, Freelance Writer, Pomfret Center, Connecticut

**Under the quilt of night / by Deborah Hopkinson; illustrated by James Ransome. LCCN 2001049685. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2000. HBB, 0689822278, \$16.00. Elementary. Rating: 3**

F. Underground railroad--Fiction; Fugitive slaves--Fiction; Slavery--Fiction; African Americans--Fiction. unsp.

A young slave girl and her loved ones are using the cover of night to escape to Canada. Running, waiting, watching, hiding, traveling, and finally rejoicing, the little girl in the story carries us along with her every moment. This escape from slavery reads like a poem, gathering speed as the danger draws near. There is no going back. Each stop of safety provides a bit of relief, but with an edge of danger. When the girl sees a quilt hanging in a yard she rushes forward, certain that this quilt has the 'safe' signal, but is she correct?

Although children today study the Underground Railroad, this is not a dry historical recitation of the facts. There is a connection between a young girl fleeing slavery, and the readers, who can understand running away from something they fear. James E. Ransome's masterful oil paintings capture the fear and urgency of every member of the escape party, as well as the determination in their eyes. *Under the Quilt of Night*, by Deborah Hopkinson, is good for units on poetry, history, and art. The quilt, central to this poem's resolution, provides a teacher or librarian a great foundation for discussing codes and messages hidden in plain sight and would be a nice springboard for an art project using tromp l'oeil. Ages seven and up will enjoy this book.

Kelley Westenhoff, Parent-Librarian, Dominion Christian School, Oakton, Virginia

**Wanda's monster / written by Eileen Spinelli; illustrated by Nancy Hayashi. LCCN 2002001955. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2002. HBB, 0807586560, \$15.95. Elementary (Small children). Rating: 3**

F. Monsters--Fiction; Fear of the dark--Fiction; Grandmothers--Fiction. unsp.

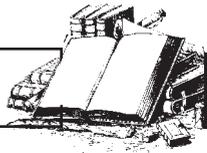
Wanda is certain that a monster lives in her closet. Her parents search, and find nothing. Her brother just laughs. Then her grandmother confirms it: Yes, there is a monster in Wanda's closet, but Wanda shouldn't be afraid. After all, monsters hide in closets because they're shy, and anyway, Granny asks Wanda, "How would you like to live in a dark, cold closet?"

Her grandmother's words start Wanda thinking, and soon she's leaving a pillow, and then toys, and then food in the closet for her monster. She even begins reading it stories. Just when she's gotten used to the monster, she's told it has to leave: the rules state monsters can only stay in one place for seventeen days.

*Wanda's Monster* is an appealing story that should delight little girls. Eileen Spinelli's prose is simple and friendly enough for young children (Wanda's Monster is a picture book geared to kids aged four to eight) yet it's never simplistic. In fact, Spinelli, wife of author Jerry Spinelli, seamlessly introduces words like "trudge," "thoroughly," and "zigzag" into her text.

Nancy Hayashi's watercolor and colored pencil illustrations perkily capture Wanda, her family, and the monster. True, the horned, sharp-toothed monster may seem a bit scary to the book's youngest readers, some of whom may be frightened by the confirmation that monsters do live in closets. Other children may feel sad when Wanda has to send her monster on its way. But for children charmed by the idea of a shy, harmless monster temporarily residing in their closets, *Wanda's Monster* would be a delight.

*Rosemarie DiCristo, Children's Writer, The Bronx, New York*



### 100's—Philosophy & Psychology

**Courage / Bernard Waber.** LCCN 2002004065. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002. HBB, 0618238557, \$12.00. Elementary. Rating: \*5

179'.6. Courage. [32 p.].

Bernard Waber, author of the *Ira* series, provides readers with some exceptional ideas as he defines the many facets of "Courage." In this impressive children's book, courage comes in many packages that include having courage for the spectacular (trapeze artists, firemen) or everyday (going to bed without a nightlight, eating vegetables without making a face).

This is definitely a "feel good" read aloud book that challenges every member of the family (including the pet that has to guard the house in the midst of strange night noises) to develop courage in big and little areas of their lives. Waber has touched on areas of courage that affect lives of children and grown-ups. (Note: I watched two different grownups get tears in their eyes when this book was read aloud to them). The cartoon-form illustrations, with a combination of black ink, watercolors, and even some crayon looks, convey the various types of courage in a distinct and compelling manner. This is definitely a book that will be read again and again to everyone!

Paula Stewart Marks, School Principal, Bend, Oregon

### 200's—Religion

**Ten commandments : the not so golden calf.** Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale. VID, 0842375953, \$14.99; DVD, 0842376054, \$17.99. Elementary. Rating: 3

222. Ten commandments. 30 min.

**Ten commandments : The rest is yet to come.** Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale. VID, 0842375961, \$14.99; DVD, 084237606, \$17.99. Elementary. Rating: 3

222. Ten commandments. 27 min.

Ten Commandments is a series of animated mini-movies combining excellent animation, well-known Hollywood voices (Peter Strauss is Moses), positive songs, and movie-like stories to help children gain a better understanding of the ten commandments. Each episode (with five scheduled) illustrates two commandments. A good advisory board encompassing historical experts and different religious backgrounds—Jewish, Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox—give credibility to the stories and background presented. All episodes are set in biblical times and told through the character of

eleven-year-old Seth. Seth's mother and his special animal friends, who also talk, help clarify the issues.

The first episode, *The Not So Golden Calf*, deals with the first two commandments. This is the story of Moses and God's giving of the commandments. When Moses delays coming down from the mountain and everyone complains, Aaron makes a golden calf to give them a visible god. Seth gets involved when his calf becomes the model. The calf, Jacob, feels superior to the other animals and makes their life miserable. Both learn to stay focused on the one true God. Overall, this is an excellent portrayal of the problem and although a fictionalized account, the movie gives a deeper understanding of what actually occurred in biblical times. One caution: smaller children may misunderstand, and focus on the negative—worshiping the calf, rather than the resolved problem.

Episode two, *The Rest Is Yet to Come*, is more for everyone and easily understood. While Moses is back on Mt. Sinai replacing the tablets, Seth's mother is needed to help someone having a baby. Seth ends up being babysat by a greedy man who forces him to work on the Sabbath Day. Part of the story revolves around gathering the manna, part about digging for a well. Children should immediately see the forced labor and greed as negative. This film deals with not misusing God's name and remembering to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Paula Stewart Marks, School Principal, Bend, Oregon

**Look what you made, God! / Elspeth Campbell Murphy; illustrated by Jim Lewis.** LCCN 2001005702. Bloomington, Minn.: Bethany Backyard, 2002. HBB, 0764223879, \$7.99. Elementary. Rating: 3

242'.62. Creation; Prayer books and devotions. unsp.

Rolling down a hill; dripping ice cream for ants; a dog saying thank you for snow; petting a policeman's horse; all these adventures and more become poems for little ones and their parents in *Look What You Made, God*. Each poem has its own NIV Bible verse and full page illustration. The first page of this book is a presentation plate for gift giving or awards day.

Printed on sturdy paper, with a cleanable, hard cover, *Look What You Made, God* lends itself to intimate parent/preschooler reading. It is easily held in one hand for group reading. Elspeth Campbell Murphy's poems combine events children will easily recognize with the praise to God that naturally flows from those events.

Each NIV Bible verse fits neatly with its poem. Jim Lewis' bright, active illustrations display happy children from many backgrounds. Preschools in both church and school, and parents and other relatives of preschoolers will find this book useful.

Donna Eggett, Free Lance Writer, Radford, Virginia

### 300's—Social Sciences

**Back to school / Maya Ajmera, John D. Ivanko; with a foreword by Marilyn Jachetti Whirry. (It's a kid's world.)** LCCN 00064328. Watertown, Mass.: Charlesbridge, 2001. LIB, 1570913838, \$15.95; PAP, 1570913846, \$6.95. Elementary. Rating: 4

372. Schools; Education. unsp.

There are certain threads that are common to children around the world, and which make them curious about each other. In *Back to School*, Maya Ajmera and John Ivanko use photographs to illustrate shared concepts in education, even if the execution of those concepts is different. For example, in "when you are at school you learn to read and write," the two page spread shows children in Bangladesh, Niger, Saudi Arabia, and Rwanda. Each child is writing in a different format with a different language, yet they're all doing the same thing. The children look different in their skin color, their type of clothing, and their immediate physical environment, yet they're all enjoying the excitement of learning. Some of the most striking photographs are from South Africa, showing children in a completely integrated environment. There is even a photograph of boys in Iraq exercising in P.E. Although one of the pictures purporting to be from Thailand is probably from Malaysia and the photo of American children in a library is probably in a bookstore, the ideas expressed in the book are coherent and nicely presented.

It is a good thing this book is available in library binding, because children will pore over the photos searching for clues about who these other children are and what their lives are like. *Back to School* is a project of SHAKTI for Children, a program of the Global Fund for Children which supports the Christ School in Uganda. A portion of the proceeds from sales of the book is donated to the Global Fund for Children to support community-based educational programs around the world.

Kelley Westenhoff, Parent-Librarian, Dominion Christian School, Oakton, Virginia

**500's—Natural Sciences & Mathematics**

**Hey, Daddy! : animal fathers and their babies / written by Mary Batten; illustrated by Higgins Bond. LCCN 2002000182. Atlanta: Peachtree, 2002. HBB, 1561452726, \$15.95. Elementary. Rating: 5**

591.56'3. Parental behavior in animals. unsp.

*Hey, Daddy!* introduces us to several interesting animal daddies. Where would blue jay babies be if dad didn't help build the nest and poke worms down those gaping mouths? How about that penguin dad incubating the egg at the Antarctic? Consider the giant waterbug dad with hundreds of eggs glued to his back; that marvelous carpenter, the beaver dad; or the tiny marmoset dad carrying those twins all about the place. Mary Batten closes her unusual, much needed book with a look at a rainbow of human dads shepherding their families around a zoo. Indeed, it takes someone special to be a good daddy.

If your library can afford it, consider this book. Zoology text, picture book, family relations celebration, *Hey Daddy!* fills an important niche on any book shelf. Award winning, Emmy nominee Mary Batten provides simple, direct, well researched narration. Noted artist and illustrator Higgins Bonds fuses her eye-catching, realistic, acrylic full page illustrations to the story. This marriage of picture and words will enchant children aged six through ten as well as their younger siblings and their parents. Everybody who has anything to do with families and/or children should have this book.

Donna Eggett, Freelance Writer, Radford, Virginia

**600's—Technology (Applied Sciences)**

**Apples here! / written and illustrated by Will Hubbell. LCCN 2002000776. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2002. HBB, 0807503975, \$15.95. Elementary. Rating: 3**

634'.11. Apples. unsp.

Starting in winter where a child and grandparent walk through a snow-covered orchard, *Apples Here!* conducts young children through the development of a favorite fruit. Artist and writer Will Hubbell begins with the dormant season where only small buds on limb tips give evidence to the fruit to come. Spring is a curtain of white blossoms and bees, with the hint of sweet fragrance, and then children play amid the leafy green trees during summer, noticing the swelling fruit. About half the pages are devoted to fall, as children help pick the fruit, shop at a farmers market, and create savory dishes with the harvested apples. The book returns to the winter season as a toddler pulls a red apple from a Christmas stocking and deer munch fallen fruit in the orchard.

*Apples Here!* is a colorful and simple way for young children to discover and appreciate God's

gift of apples. The text is uncomplicated and clear; only one line of text appears on most double-page spreads. The sojourn through the seasons gives an enjoyable understanding of how the apple growth cycle is a year-round process. Hubbell uses multi-cultural children, changing the faces and skin color on every page. This is a bit disconcerting in terms of continuity, but adds a wider inclusivity to the book. Hubbell also shows that "as American as apple pie" means different things to different cultures, as an Asian woman peruses the McIntosh and Gala apples at the farmers market and then an elementary age boy slathers applesauce on his Hanukkah latke. *Apples Here!* is instructive and pleasant reading.

Karen Schmidt, Freelance Writer, Marysville, Washington

**Ice cream / Elisah Cooper. LCCN 2001040495. New York: Greenwillow, 2002. HBB, 0060014237, \$15.95; LIB, 0060014245, \$15.89. Elementary. Rating: 4**

637'.4. Ice cream, ices, etc.; Ice cream industry. unsp.

It starts with a lot of cows. *Ice Cream!* from the grass and the sun to the finished product, here's the story of how that icy treat is produced. Winner of the Charlotte Zolotow Award, Elisha Cooper's book combines simple, impressionistic watercolor and pencil illustrations with descriptive, factual, narrative that sometimes curvets about the page. In case the grades one through three readers need an explanation of a word or two, a glossary closes this book.

The book *Ice Cream!* is as much a treat for the eyes as the dessert ice cream is for the tongue. The illustrations encourage imagination, enhance the story, and keep the reader busy. Be sure to look for the little words inconspicuously incorporated into the pictures. The tantalizing narration winsomely educates. A fine birthday present would be a pint of someone's favorite ice cream and this book. Recommended for all libraries, schools, families, and home schooling.

Donna Eggett, Freelance Writer, Radford, Virginia

**700's—The Arts and Recreation**

**Dave Dravecky / Gregg & Deborah Shaw Lewis. (Today's heroes.) Grand Rapids: Zonderkidz, 2002. PAP, 031070314X, \$4.99. Elementary (Middle school). Rating: 5**

796.357'092. Dravecky, Dave; Baseball players. 112 p.

Greg and Deborah Shaw Lewis have written a thoughtful, easy to read biography that helps the young reader understand Dave Dravecky's faith and determination as Dave and his family approach adversity. Left-handed pitcher Dave Dravecky's dream of playing professional ball began when he was seven years old playing

catch with his father, his hero. Playing any type of ball game was a consuming passion as a youngster; even his first baby word was "Ball!" The oldest of four boys that were often getting into trouble, but who were loyal and protective of each other, Dravecky had a strong Catholic background strengthened by both church and school. He was drafted by the Pittsburgh Pirates as a senior in college, but played poorly and ended up traded to Amarillo, Texas. There he experienced the input of a born-again roommate. When he finally seemed to be playing better and had become an all-star major league pitcher for the San Francisco Giants, he faced one of his biggest challenges—cancer! The doctors ended up removing half of his deltoid muscle and told him he would never be able to lift his arm above his head. But Dave's persistence and faith proved them wrong. Again, he became a pitcher to be reckoned with.

This is the story of the comeback he made as he gave glory to God. But the story is not finished; he had to face an even greater challenge, a struggle that tested his faith and determination. Readers will be impressed with Dave Dravecky's choices and decisions as he becomes what God wants him to be.

Paula Stewart Marks, School Principal, Bend, Oregon

**800's—Literature & Rhetoric**

**Broken feather / Verla Kay; illustrated by Stephen Alcorn. LCCN 00041504. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2002. HBB, 0399235507, \$15.99. Elementary. Rating: 5**

811'.54. Indians of North America—Juvenile poetry; American poetry. unsp.

Verla Kay's *Broken Feather* uses short poetic phrases rather than sentences to convey images and bring ideas and emotions to life. This is a wonderful, read-aloud story that is music to the ears. *Broken Feather* is a Nez Perce youngster. The Nez Perce are shown to be a gentle people living in teepees, using the abundant natural resources and natural beauty of their land to provide for their needs. Then the white people begin moving in to the area. At first it looks like they will pass through, but more and more come and stay. Eventually, the Nez Perce resort to warfare to protect their homeland.

The story line follows until the Indians are forced into a reservation (in 1877 in Idaho, according to the author's added notes). The ending, as *Broken Feather* asks his Father "Why?" conveys that what happens next is up to *Broken Feather*. The story is well researched historical fiction and will help students grasp the real difficulties the Indians faced when the White Men moved in. Illustrator Stephen Alcorn's dramatic color (water color and oil) relief-block prints give vivid portrayal and strength to the Indian story.

Paula Stewart Marks, School Principal, Bend, Oregon

Paula Stewart Marks, School Principal, Bend, Oregon

**900's—Geography, History, & Biography**

**Gertrude Chandler Warner and the boxcar children / Mary Ellen Ellsworth; illustrated by Marie DeJohn. LCCN 96032814. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 1997. HBB, 0807528374, \$14.95; PAP, 0807528382, \$6.95. Elementary (Middle school). Rating: 4**

921 (813'.52). Warner, Gertrude Chandler, 1890-; Authors, American; Women--Biography. 61 p.

*Gertrude Chandler Warner and the Boxcar Children*, written by Mary Ellen Ellsworth and illustrated by Marie DeJohn, is a biography of the Boxcar Children author, who was born in the early 1900s in Putnam, Connecticut. The book is simply written and short (only sixty-one pages) but it includes many details about Warner's life: her childhood (especially her play time with her brother and sister), her fascination with trains, which led to her writing the Boxcar Children books, how she became a teacher, and how that helped her in her writing career. There's even a bit about the "storm of protest" when the first Boxcar Children book was released: apparently some librarians thought the children were shown having too much fun with no parental supervision.

Although the book will surely be enjoyed by Boxcar Children fans (and it seems a perfect book to use when writing a school assignment on 'your favorite author'), it may seem a bit dull to its youngest readers. Not a lot of exciting things happened to Warner. The book merely recounts the events of her life. But most children will enjoy reading about the childhood games Warner played and the treats and favors she bestowed on her students when she was teaching.

Ellsworth's text is interspersed with DeJohn's pencil illustrations as well as a center section with fourteen black and white photos. Also included: a list of all the Boxcar Children books Warner wrote, separate lists of the other children's books and the adult books she wrote, and a two page list of sources.

Rosemarie DiCristo, Freelance Writer, The Bronx, New York

**Benjamin Franklin, you know what to say / by Loyd Uglow; illustrated by Greg Budwine. (Another great achiever). LCCN 99035278. Houston: Advance, 2000. HBB, 1575371081, \$9.95; LIB, 1575371065, \$14.95. Elementary (Middle school). Rating: 3**

921 (973.3'092). Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790; Statesmen; Printers; Scientists. 48 p.

*Benjamin Franklin, You Know What to Say* is part of Advance Publishing's Another Great Achiever series, junior biographies about historical figures. The book nicely covers all aspects of Franklin's career: his childhood and his apprenticeship to his brother, his inventions and experiments, and his involvement in the

American Revolution and with the Constitutional Convention.

Loyd Uglow writes with simple, straightforward language, and places much emphasis on Franklin's honesty and his quest to live an ethical life. The book contains a list of some of Franklin's most famous sayings, and the Constitutional Convention scene mentions a quote of Franklin's where he stresses the country's need for God's help if it is to succeed. Uglow focuses on the positive in Franklin's life. For instance, while Franklin's rocky relationship with his brother is mentioned, it's not emphasized unnecessarily.

The book is geared to eight to twelve year olds. There's lots of text per page, but there's also an illustration by Greg Budwine on each page, and the vocabulary and style used is suitable for the youngest end of the age group. It's possible, though, that the picture book look would be a turn off for the oldest end of the age group.

*Benjamin Franklin, You Know What to Say* is a nice introductory volume on the life of Benjamin Franklin. It's well-rounded enough to please teachers and older children, yet easy enough for early elementary schoolers to read and enjoy.

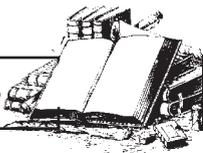
Rosemarie DiCristo, Children's Writer, The Bronx, New York

**Fireboat : the heroic adventures of the John J. Harvey / by Maira Kalman. LCCN 2002002523. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2002. HBB, 0399239537, \$16.99. Elementary. Rating: 4**

974.7'1044. John J. Harvey (Fireboat); World Trade Center (New York, N.Y.); September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001; Boats and boating; Fire extinction. unsp.

Maira Kalman is the author and illustrator of the true story of a heroic little fireboat. The story begins with a quick, fun glimpse of 1931 when the John J. Harvey is launched. Babe Ruth hits his 611th home run. Snickers becomes a candy bar. The Empire State Building is built. The John J. Harvey was the largest and fastest of New York's twelve fireboats. It fought fires on piers and ships for many years before it was considered obsolete. In 1995, finally due to be scrapped, it was instead bought by a group who wished to preserve the wonderful boat. They fixed and repaired the boat and kept it on the water. Then one day, September 11th happened, and the John J. Harvey was needed. Pipes had burst. Water was needed to fight the raging fires. For four days and nights the Harvey helped the firefighters pump water. The Harvey was a hero.

Maira Kalman weaves lots of interesting details into the story. Out of tragedy, the author shows the positive response of many people coming to help. Her painted cheerful, colorful illustrations dwell on the good. Who helped? Who showed bravery? Who worked together? This book focuses on pride and achievement and the worthwhile.



**Battle before time / by Jim Denney.** (Timebenders; 1.) LCCN 2002016639. Nashville: Tommy Nelson, 2002. PAF, 1400300398, \$5.99. Middle school. Rating: 4

F. Time travel--Fiction; Inventors--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 163 p.

**Doorway to doom / by Jim Denney.** (Timebenders; 2.) LCCN 2002023890. Nashville: Tommy Nelson, 2002. PAF, 1400300401, \$5.99. Middle school. Rating: 4

F. Time travel--Fiction; Middle Ages--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 163 p.

Max McCrane, a middle school geek, has managed to invent a time machine out of an old 1960's VW Beetle. Actually, Max isn't really a geek, just a very bright young man with an equally brilliant inventor father. A classmate, Toby, competitive and jealous, determines to ruin Max's experiment so he won't win the science fair.

After Toby sabotages the TimeBender, as the VW is called, he hides in its trunk. Now he and two other classmates, Allie and Grady, accompany Max on his first test run through time. However, something goes wrong and their designated time frame takes them to the prehistoric age instead. Now Toby wishes he hadn't ruined their only means of escape! From T-Rex to before the world's creation, their time "bending" trial experiences glitches and downright evil which threatens to keep them from returning to the present.

The adventure, *Battle Before Time*, Timebenders 1, starts at a fast pace with an intriguing story line. It slows down a bit as they are confronted with the Great Tempter himself in dragon form, but on the whole, Jim Denney creates a good read for kids.

Timebenders 2, *Doorway to Gloom*, takes the now familiar group to a world of knights, wizards, and battles. The twist is that everyone enters into the historical past via an antique doorway. When that avenue is closed to the present, is there a way of rescue for the four time travelers? This second adventure is a bit predictable, but kids should enjoy the setting of squires, and castles, as Max applies his wisdom to thwart an evil king's takeover.

The adventurer at heart will enjoy the possibilities these books open, and look forward to the next new escapade.

Mary McKinney, Editor, Writer, Conference Speaker, Teacher, Port Orchard, Washington

**Believing the dream / Lauraine Snelling.** (Return to Red River; 2.) LCCN 2002002574. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002. PAF, 0764223186, \$11.99; LgPrint, 0764226843, \$15.99. High school (Adult). Rating: 4

F. College students--Fiction; Journalists--Fiction; Young men--Fiction. 320 p.

From a farm in Blessing, North Dakota, Thorliff Bjorklund leaves his Norwegian family to pursue his dream of college and journalism. He arrives in Northfield, Minnesota. While attending St. Olaf College he works for Mr. Phillip Rogers, owner of the Northfield News. Here he meets Elizabeth Rogers, who works for her father while attending St. Olaf College. She is a talented pianist, but her dream is to be a doctor. Elizabeth and Thorliff support each other through the trials and obstacles they face while striving toward their individual goals.

This is a warm-hearted story of families, their traditions and cultures. Their faith in God to solve their problems is evident throughout the book. This book reassures the reader of the values and influences parents give their children. I especially recommend it to young adults who are leaving home for the first time.

Pam Burns, Librarian, Promiseland Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida

**Bloody Jack : being an account of the curious adventures of Mary "Jacky" Faber, Ship's Boy / L.S. Meyer.** LCCN 2002000759. San Diego: Harcourt, 2002. HBB, 0152167315, \$17.00. High school. Rating: 4

F. Orphans--Fiction; Seafaring life--Fiction; Sea stories; Pirates--Fiction; Sex role--Fiction. 278 p.

*Bloody Jack* is a first novel by L.A. Meyer, modeled after the confessional novels of the 18th century, such as Moll Flanders. Mary Faber loses her family to disease when she is only eight and ends up an orphan on the streets of London. She survives by being taken into an orphan gang. When the leader of her gang is killed, Mary decides to strike out for herself, dressing as a boy and getting a job as ship's boy on a British warship. The hardships of ship life are a blessing to Mary in comparison to her life on the streets. She has many adventures fighting pirates and learning seafaring skills, while in constant danger of discovery. Mary proves herself to be an outstanding ship's boy through her loyalty, reliability, and courage. Her disguise is eventually discovered and she is sent to a Boston girls' school.

The only illustration is a labeled diagram of the HMS Dolphin, which helps clarify descriptions of events on board the ship.

The publisher's website promotes this book to children as young as eight, the dust jacket indicates that it is for age twelve and up, but the violent and sexual content makes it inappropriate for children under sixteen. Mary's life on the street includes many harsh realities, such as the dead being gathered up and sold to anatomical scientists who dissect the bodies and preserve the parts in jars. Mary sees this as her future—to be just another specimen in a jar. Girls on the street often "escape" to brothels. Once on ship, Mary encounters other harsh realities, such as the sailor who has sexual interest in the ship boys. He eventually attempts to rape Mary.

The book is well written, and the message conveyed by the harshness of Mary's life is valuable. Despite the blows life has given her, she perseveres, makes strong, positive, loving relationships, and succeeds at life. It is important to remember that there was a time before social welfare and child protection, a time when women and children were nearly powerless and unprotected. This is an important story that should be told, but not to young children. Recommended for older teens and above only.

Karla Castle, Public Services Librarian, Warner Pacific College, Portland, Oregon

**Doing time online / Jan Siebold.** LCCN 2001004092. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 2002. LIB, 0807559598, \$13.95. Middle school. Rating: 4

F. Old age--Fiction; Nursing homes--Fiction; Punishment--Fiction. 88 p.

After participating in a practical joke that backfires, twelve-year-old Mitchell Riley is sentenced to spend two afternoons a week at police headquarters, chatting online with a resident of a nearby nursing home. Mitchell is initially disgusted with the idea of making conversation with some old person who'd probably "lecture about the good old days when kids had to walk eight miles to school in all kinds of weather." But Wootie, the "shriveled old lady" he gets as his partner, is not what Mitchell expected. Testy, sharp minded and sharp tongued, Wootie teaches him to be a real friend, to her and a lonely old lady in his neighborhood.

Mitchell blames his obnoxious neighbor, Trotter, for convincing him to play the practical joke; his relationship with Wootie allows him to

realize his own responsibility in the incident, as well as his need to personally ask the victim's forgiveness. *Doing Time Online*, a novel by Jan Siebold, is a slim, readable story about friendship and honesty with a neat lesson on being responsible for one's actions. Conversation, of the chat room variety, forms the action in this swiftly moving book written in simple, direct prose.

The relationship between Mitchell and his father is beautifully laid out as a close, caring relationship. Mitchell is a latchkey kid whose mother is dead and his father works late at a radiator plant.

*Doing Time Online* is a nicely done book. Its spare, quick style will appeal to reluctant readers or children with short attention spans, and the computer angle keeps the story fresh. Recommended.

Rosemarie DiCristo, Freelance Writer, The Bronx, New York

**Home run feud / Clair Bee; updated by Randall and Cynthia Bee Farley. (Chip Hilton sports series; 22.) LCCN 2001043007. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002. PAP, 0805421246, \$5.99. Middle school (High School). Rating: 4**

F. Baseball--Fiction; Sportsmanship--Fiction; Universities and colleges--Fiction. 177 p.

Ben Green's a terrific home run hitter and tries to hit slam one in every at bat, even if it hurts State's chances of winning. But Ben is not State's only problem. Biggie Cohen, starting first baseman, is benched after a hit-and-run accident report matches the description of his vehicle. Chip accidentally beans a player and is so afraid of doing it again he can't pitch. State begins losing, the players are fighting, and two of the stars are benched for missing classes.

*Home Run Feud* (Chip Hilton #22) is Clair Bee at his best. These books deal with troubled teens. Here Ben is obnoxious, selfish, and hot-headed, but like most of Bee's characters, vulnerable enough for the reader to care about. Chip would love to show Ben up—or shut him up—but he doesn't, which nicely contrasts his attitude to Ben's.

One surprise: Chip becomes an ordinary player because of his fear of hitting another player. He wallows in self pity, then through sheer will power, he pulls out of it and apologizes to the team. His actions turn Ben around. Is that more hopeful than realistic? Maybe not. It shows Chip has decided to treat Ben with respect, even before Ben "deserves" it. A good Christian concept. Through Chip and his friends, these books give kids good examples to follow.

Rosemarie DiCristo, Freelance Writer, The Bronx, New York

**Hungry hurler : the homecoming / Clair Bee; foreword by Rogers McAvo; updated by Randall and Cynthia Bee Farley. (Chip Hilton sports series; 23.) LCCN 2001049930. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002. PAP, 0805421254, \$5.99. High school (Middle school). Rating: 4**

F. Baseball--Fiction; Juvenile delinquency--Fiction. 175 p.

There's trouble in Valley Falls. A scarcity of jobs and a lack of things to do has turned the teens and young men toward juvenile delinquency. Chip is expected to find a way to help but he has his own problems. His inability to pitch after he beans a player in the college championship costs State the NCAA title. Now Chip vows never to pitch again.

*Hungry Hurler* is the last entry in the original Chip Hilton series (*Fiery Fullback*, written by Clair Bee in the late 1960s, was never published until 2002). In many ways it reads like a final volume. There's a seriousness to it that the earlier stories don't have, and it focuses much more heavily on the troubled teen theme than on Chip's pitching problems. Despite his forming a special sports program for children and joining the town baseball team, Chip isn't shown playing ball until the last fifty pages of the book. This may put off readers expecting exciting sports action, but then again it may not because, as usual, Bee's finely crafted, vulnerable characters draw the reader in. It's very easy to care about the "roughnecks" and Chip's efforts to reach them. It's slightly less easy to believe he reaches them with so little effort: by gently talking to one boy, by letting another join the baseball team, and by stopping one boy's brother's drunken rampage. (The rampage, by the way, is graphically depicted). Would troubled teens and men reform so easily in real life? Probably not, but that's an issue to concern an adult, not a child. *Hungry Hurler* is engaging enough to hold its readers' interest, and the sports action, when it does come, is as down to the wire exciting as it usually is in a Chip Hilton sports book.

Rosemarie DiCristo, Freelance Writer, The Bronx, New York

**The invisible enemy / Marthe Jocelyn; illustrated by Abby Carter. LCCN 2001028692. New York, Dutton Children's Books, 2002. 0525468315, HBB, \$15.99. Middle school (Elementary). Rating: 3**

F. Science--Experiments--Fiction; Schools--Fiction; Canadian Americans--Fiction; Humorous stories; New York (N.Y.)--Fiction. 167 p.

Billie's class field trip is nearly ruined when her archenemy, Alyssa, steals Billie's backpack, and gets into her invisibility powder. The antics begin when Billie comes up with a plan to get Alyssa aboard the bus, past the bus driver and an irate teacher, without raising any questions. Billie explains that Alyssa has had an accident in her pants, securing the girls a seat to themselves

at the back of the bus. When they get back to school, Alyssa invites herself over to spend the night at Billie's. Upon arrival, the girls must get past Billie's mom, the school librarian who doesn't miss much, her dog, and little sister Jane. Billie calls her friend, Jody, who developed the formula, and the girls agree to meet the next day to try out a new antidote Jody has developed.

Now, the only problem is to convince Hubert, Billie's best friend, that they need his help, but Hubert isn't speaking to Billie since their argument over the new boy, Jean-Pierre. He is becoming a close friend with Hubert. Billie is hurt and jealous of the new relationship between the boys and isn't very nice to Hubert because of it. Billie and Hubert make up, Alyssa is brought back to visibility and seems just a little bit nicer, and Jean-Pierre begins to fit into the group.

*The Invisible Enemy* written by Marthe Jocelyn, is a fun-filled adventure chapter book, with reader-friendly wording and print. Mild profanity only slightly detracts from the story line. Abby Carter's illustrations are black and white, full page drawings that, though few in number, are well spaced throughout the story for maximum enjoyment. Younger middle school children, as well as the elementary school crowd, will enjoy this humorous sequel to *The Invisible Day* and *The Invisible Harry*.

Kim Harris, Librarian, Churchville, New York

**The last dance / Tim LaHaye and Bob DeMoss. (The soul survivor series; 3.) LCCN 2002069143. Nashville: W Publishing, 2002. PAP, 0849943213, \$12.99. High school. Rating: 4**

F. Stalking--Fiction; Internet--Fiction. 159 p.

FBI Agent Nick Steele is tracking a cyberstalker, alias Elvis, who kidnaps, tortures, and possibly even kills his victims. He and his agents have Elvis right where they want him and are about to close in, when Elvis' RV blows up, injures agents, and takes valuable proof with it. Time ticks on, as Steele proceeds to follow Elvis' moves, in hopes of preventing further bloodshed.

Heather has met the perfect guy on the Internet, code named JesusFreak2. Jodi and Kat, her best friends, suspect he is a cyberstalker. They are shocked to find that he is only Stan, the guy she turned down for the prom in order to go with her Internet friend. While Heather and Kat go to freshen up, Jodi stays to talk with Stan, and is locked in the limousine by Elvis, the driver. Before long Jodi and Stan find themselves kidnapped and imprisoned in a tomb with a rattlesnake, while Elvis watches the ensuing drama through previously installed cameras.

Between two attempts by Jodi to contact her family, a call from the graveyard groundskeeper, and a mole inside the prison, the FBI pinpoints Elvis' exact location, catches him in the act, and

sets Jodi and Stan free. Bodily injuries from near death experiences heal quickly, and Stan becomes a true Jesus Freak in the end.

Tim LaHaye, veteran author of dozens of spiritual self-help and scripture study books and co-author of the highly acclaimed Left Behind series teams up with Bob DeMoss, also a veteran author and leading authority of today's popular culture scene, to create a suspense filled quick read. *The Last Dance*, the third installation in The Soul Survivor Series, is a typical teen series read, with the bonus of Christian values added.

Kim Harris, Librarian, Churchville, New York

**The man who laid the egg / Louise A. Vernon; illustrated by Allan Eitzen. LCCN 77024939. Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 2002. PAP, 0836118278, \$7.99. Middle school. Rating: 3**

F. Erasmus, Desiderius, d. 1536--Fiction; Humanists--Fiction. 119 p.

Gerhard Koestler is a fictional German orphan in the 1500s. Raised by two uncles, one a Catholic monk, Gerhard desires to study under Erasmus; a contemporary of Martin Luther who promotes what becomes known as "the new learning." The uncles deny his request and expect him to enter the monastery, but Gerhard is determined to seek out Erasmus and learn more about his teachings on the Bible.

Gerhard teams up with his uncles' servant boy, Andreas, and sneaks away to Basel, Switzerland, to find Erasmus. They find their way to the man's home and eventually live under his roof. Andreas enters a traditional school while Gerhard studies under Erasmus. Both are caught up in the whirlwind of discussion, debate, and dissension surrounding the different directions of religious thought being promoted by Luther and Erasmus. Through this turbulent era, Gerhard discovers the truth of Scripture.

Louise Vernon's title, *The Man Who Laid The Egg*, is from a statement passed on by Europeans of the time, "Erasmus laid the egg that Luther hatched." The book depicts an era of religious history and the Reformation of today's Christian church. This book contains valuable societal, theological, and denominational facets that Vernon shows through the character of Gerhard. The subject matter is appropriate for middle schoolers and up but the style makes it tough reading, partly because of numerous tongue-twisting names which, if not familiar to the reader, tend to muddle the story rather than advance it.

Karen Schmidt, Freelance Writer/Editor, Marysville, Washington

**The mind siege project / Tim LaHaye and Bob DeMoss. (The soul survivor series; 1.) LCCN 2001035891. Nashville, W Publishing, 2001. 0849942993, PAP, \$12.99. High school. Rating: \*5**

F. Christian fiction. 284 p.

Rosie Meyer is a social studies teacher and one-time Olympic Silver Medallist swimmer. She and her husband Phil, an ex-Navy Seal, have enlisted eight students to participate in a tolerance experiment. Jodi and Heather sign up to meet cute guys. Stan, the popular football player, signs up intent on committing suicide. Justin, a runaway, joins to keep an eye on Stan. The others just need the extra credit. Soon after the group boards the dilapidated looking houseboat, home for the next week, they confide in each other about fears and experiences that have affected them. The stories run the gambit from abusive parents to missionaries shot for their beliefs, and tolerance emulates compassion. Unfortunately, Jodi begins to realize that her Christian views aren't tolerated here.

A mixture of chores and fun take on a daily rhythm, until tragedy, in the form of a diving accident, strikes. Kat is medivaced to a hospital, where she is diagnosed with kidney failure. She has lost a great deal of blood, and will die within a few days, if a donor with her rare blood type is not found. After much prayer, Jodi, who shares Kat's rare blood type, decides that the Lord has called her to be a live donor for Kat. Neither storm, nor fear, nor facing death can stop Jodi now, but it sure helps to have Jesus, the Coast Guard, and a quick thinking and acting ex-Navy Seal on her side.

*The Mind Siege Project* by Tim LaHaye and Bob DeMoss is the first thrilling installment to The Soul Survivor Series for high school readers. With their illustrious writing backgrounds and Christian chemistry, LaHaye and DeMoss have formed a winning team that this writer trusts will continue to add more exciting, yet hopeful, episodes to the series.

Kim Harris, Librarian, Churchville, New York.

**The shrouding woman / Loretta Ellsworth. LCCN 2001039930. New York: Holt, 2002. HBB, 0805066519, \$16.95. Middle school. Rating: 5**

F. Aunts--Fiction; Death--Fiction; Frontier and pioneer life--Minnesota--Fiction; Minnesota--Fiction. 151 p.

Up until the 20th century, shrouding, the practice of preparing a body for burial, was done by women. Generation after generation, women trained by their mothers or other women in the family, handed down the skill until the middle eighteen hundreds. After the American Civil War, the practice of embalming bodies for burial began to be used more and more, which moved this task out of the home and into male run funeral parlors, thereby not only taking the

practice out of the home but also out of the hands of women.

Using information about the custom of shrouding and its practices, Loretta Ellsworth crafts a novel that removes the mystery and superstition. In southern Minnesota, Evie and her family grieve for their mother who died of consumption. The father brings his widowed sister to live with them. She arrives with a box that she promptly tucks under the bed.

Evie is determined not to allow this woman to take her mother's place even though her younger sister and father welcome her. Then Evie learns of Aunt Flo's own heartbreak, the loss of her children and husband. Evie is asked to accompany Aunt Flo when she prepares a body for burial. Seeing the comfort her ministrations give the family helps Evie begin to heal and accept her aunt.

*The Shrouding Woman* explores a daughter's loss of a mother much as Patricia MacLachlan's *Sarah, Plain and Tall* (Harper & Row, 1985). Ellsworth treats the subject of death and healing in a way that will touch the heart of readers while providing a look at a custom and vocation lost to mortuaries and funeral parlors.

Leslie Greaves Radloff, Teacher/School Librarian, S. St. Paul, Minneapolis

**The sword bearer / John White; illustrations by Jack Stockman. (Archives of Anthropos; 1.) LCCN 86002860. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1986. PAP, 0877845905, \$13.00. Middle school. Rating: 4**

F. Fantasy. 294 p.

**Gaal the conqueror / John White; cover illustration by Vic Mitchell; interior illustrations by Jack Stockman. (Archives of Anthropos; 2.) LCCN 89019821. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1989. PAP, 0877845913, \$13.00. Middle school. Rating: 4**

F. Fantasy. 312 p.

**The Tower of Geburah / John White. (Archives of Anthropos; 3.) LCCN 78006363. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1978. PAP, 0877845603, \$13.00. Middle school. Rating: 4**

F. Fantasy. 402 p.

**The iron sceptre / John White. (Archives of Anthropos; 4.) LCCN 80036727. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1981. PAP, 0877845891, \$13.00. Middle school. Rating: 4**

F. Fantasy. 408 p.

**Quest for the king / John White; cover illustration by Vic Mitchell; interior illustrations by Jack Stockman. (Archives of Anthropos; 5.) LCCN 95010887. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1995. PAP, 0877845921, \$13.00. Middle school. Rating: 4**

F. Fantasy. 319 p.

**The dark lord's demise / John White with Dale & Sandy Larsen; cover illustration by Vic Mitchell; interior illustrations by Jack Stockman. (Archives of Anthropos; 6.) LCCN 2001026466. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2001. PAP, 0877845212, \$13.00. Middle school. Rating: 4**

F. Fantasy; Christian fiction. 296 p.

**Book 1, *The Sword Bearer*.** Thirteen-year-old John is suddenly transported from England into the land of Anthropos where the Unchanging Changer commissions him as Sword Bearer and gives him the task of slaying the evil Goblin Prince. Lord Lunacy temporarily distracts John with his false brainwashing. After much hesitation, John accepts the "wine of free pardon" from his mentor, the old prophet Mab. This enables him, with the help of others along the way, to complete his task.

**Book 2, *Gaal the Conqueror*.** John and his father are trying to rescue runaway Eleanor when she suddenly disappears on a frozen lake in Canada. Suspecting that she might have been whisked to Anthropos, John follows her. Gaal, the Shepherd, gives them the task of imprisoning the wicked sorcerer, Shagah. Gaal gives his life to defeat the evil enchantment, but rises again to deliver the victims, leaving a defeated and weakened Lord Lunacy.

**Book 3, *The Tower of Geburah*.** Lisa, Wesley, and Kurt Friesen are living with their middle-aged bachelor Uncle John. In the attic of his house they discover five unusual TV sets, through which they are drawn into Anthropos. They join in the efforts of Gaal's forces to defeat the evil Shagah and his henchman Hocoino, and to return King Kardia to his rightful throne.

**Book 4, *The Iron Sceptre*.** Mary McNab and her cousins Lisa, Wesley, and Kurt are pulled into Anthropos to assist the forces of Gaal in the rescue of Kardia's wife, Queen Suneidesis, and Prince Tiqvah from the clutches of the witch Mirmah.

**Book 5, *Quest for the King*.** Immediately after Uncle John's wedding to Aunt Eleanor, the newlyweds disappear. Jealous Mary assumes they are in Anthropos, and tries to use magic to follow them there. She and her cousins find themselves in an earlier time, assigned to help ensure safe haven for the toddler Gaal, Son of the High Emperor, before wicked King Tobah Khukah and the sorcerer Shagah can find and kill Him.

**Book 6, *The Dark Lord's Demise*.** As new neighbor Betty Riggs comes to visit the Friesen children, the four children are called into Anthropos and become involved again in the conflict between Gaal and the forces of Lord Lunacy. Gaal heals King Tiqvah from the slow poison given to him by charming, but sinister, Queen Hisschi. Gaal and his followers decisively defeat Lord Lunacy and the forces of evil, and Gaal begins his endless reign of peace and joy.

John White is the author of a number of well-respected, non-fiction religious books. After he read the Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis to his children, they asked him to write a book for them, "But it has to be just like Narnia!" His land of Anthropos is peopled with noble kings and queens, stout Matmon (dwarfs), talking beasts, flying horses, and dragons, as well as evil spirits, goblins, jinn, and other awful creatures that serve the Dark Lord.

White's allegorical intent is apparent in the several names based on Hebrew or Greek terms (e.g., the ageless lady "Chocma," from the Hebrew for "wisdom"). Many incidents have biblical allusions: Three philosophers from a distant land seek the toddler king. A white pigeon guides or empowers the children in their tasks.

Action and dialogue express the individual personalities of the characters. The Canadian children grow through their experiences in Anthropos. Left alone after the death of his grandmother, John longs for a father figure. Parental abuse has crushed Eleanor's self-esteem. Coming from a dysfunctional family, Mary seeks beauty, and a stable family relationship. Betty's New Age ideas call for correction. The Friesen boys deal with sibling rivalry and rebellious attitude. Lisa learns the importance of immediate obedience. Similar growth appears in several characters from Anthropos.

More supernatural events occur in Anthropos than in Narnia. White repeatedly makes a distinction between "miracle," done through the power and at the instruction of the Unchanging Changer or his son Gaal, and "sorcery," done through magic spells for personal power and self-interest. "Bigger on the inside than on the outside," Gaal trees appear at opportune times along the way to provide refuge and needed sustenance. Reading from the *Book of Wisdom* generates a protective canopy and its light can destroy evil attackers. A recurrent theme is the assurance of full pardon, in spite of repeated failures. The presence of Gaal brings the warmth of love, joy, and peace. At the end of their adventures in Anthropos, Gaal promises the members of "the household of the Sword Bearer shall ever enjoy the gladness of my presence," even in Canada, where "they did learn to know him by a different name."

Like Lewis, White started his series at one point in the chronology of his imaginary world and later went back to fill in some of the earlier history. (This results in a minor inconsistency about the manner of Gaal's death and resurrection.) Since Gaal is Lord of Time and Space, in Book 5 he even returns the children to Anthropos at a time much before their previous visits. Dale and Sandy Larsen collaborated with White in Book 6, as they have in some of his non-fiction works.

White recognizes that the Archives of Anthropos do not reach the stature of Narnia. Although both series have both humorous and serious moments, Narnia seems to have more humor, while Anthropos seems generally more serious. The occasional black-and-white illustrations by Kinuka Kraft and Jack Stockman are adequate, but not distinctive. Nonetheless, this captivating series will appeal to young and old alike. It merits reading aloud with thoughtful discussion. Highly recommended for home libraries as well as church and Christian school libraries.

Donna W. Bowling, Library/Educational Consultant, Dallas, Texas



**Wild lies and secret truth / Matt Tullos. (Summit High series; 3.) LCCN 98040555. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999. PAP, 0805417656, \$4.99. High school. Rating: 3**

F. High schools--Fiction; Schools--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 137 p.

Clipper can't believe that Jenny agreed to go out with him. Jenny is a popular girl and until recently had a boyfriend away at college. What Clipper can't understand is why his friends seem so distant. When the town gossip discovers Jenny is pregnant, everyone assumes Clipper is the father. Clipper, having made a public vow of purity in an earlier book in the series, is devastated by what happens to his reputation. Worse, it looks like Jenny is going to abort the baby.

In this third book in the Summit High series, Matt Tullos takes on a few different issues that young Christians who are in the world have to deal with. By dating a girl who isn't a Christian, Clipper leaves his friends wondering whether his values are changing. Because of gossip, Clipper's friends struggle with their belief in him. Finally, because Jenny is considering abortion, although he is not the father of the baby, Clipper feels compelled to try to help Jenny step outside what her 'popular' friends are telling her is the only choice. Many books on the market for young Christian teens focus too heavily on the story line or the "Christian" line. This compelling book balances both well. It is a good read and raises some real-life questions that might help Christian teens think about what they might do in a similar situation. Only available in paperback, it will not hold up long

in your collection, but it is inexpensive enough to have duplicates.

*Kelley Westenhoff, Parent-Librarian, Dominion Christian School, Oakton, Virginia*

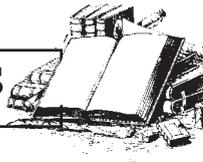
**Wooden ox / by LeAnne Hardy. LCCN 2002005392. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002. PAP, 0825427940, \$6.99. Middle school (High school, Adult). Rating: 4**

F, Missionaries—Fiction; Guerrillas—Fiction; War—Fiction; Mozambique--History--Independence and Civil War, 1975-1994—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 192 p.

Living in Mozambique with her parents, who are relief workers, and her younger brother, 13-year-old Keri encounters war, hunger, teenage mercenaries, daily uncertainty, and a lengthy trial of her faith in Christ. On a car trip upcountry to deliver clothing to refugees, the family and Pastor Makusa, a local leader who lost most of his family in the war, are taken captive. The majority of the *The Wooden Ox* describes in vivid detail how Keri and less prominently, her family and Pastor Makusa, cope with the privation, menace, and fear each day presents to them. Keri's brother Kurt disengages from the nightmare by playing with a tiny wooden ox carved for him by Pastor Makusa. When the ox is broken during the arduous cross-country trek, Kurt is in anguish and Keri's faith is further stretched. During their captivity, the family reaches out in tentative concern to Mfana, a young member of the rebel band. Mfana's role becomes prominent as the story comes to a close, leaving each member of Keri's family with a clarified appreciation for freedom and for God's mercy.

LeAnn Hardy has dramatically and realistically rendered a tale about the day-to-day effects of civil war. *The Wooden Ox* is rich in detail, dialogue, and the thoughts and questions a middle school age girl might ponder. Though the story is not biographical, it does contain much truth; Hardy lived with her family in Mozambique during its civil war and incorporated many authentic elements from various sources. The story is powerful and captivating, both for adults as well as for middle schoolers and teens. However, some war-related descriptions are graphic enough to be unsuitable for younger children and even sensitive pre-teens.

*Karen Schmidt, Freelance Writer/Editor, Marysville, Washington*



## 200's—Religion

**African-American faith in America / Larry Murphy. (Faith in America) LCCN 2002028593. New York, Facts on File, 2003. HBB, 0816049904 \$30.00. High school (Adult, middle school). Rating: 4**

200'.89'96073. African Americans—Religion. 128 p.

**Catholic faith in America / Chester Gillis. (Faith in America) LCCN 2002028590. New York, Facts on File, 2003. HBB, 081604984X, \$30.00. High school (Adult, middle school). Rating: 4**

282'.73. Catholic Church—United States—History; United States—Church history.

**Jewish faith in America / Shelley M. Buxbaum and Sara E. Karesh. (Faith in America) LCCN 2002029392. New York, Facts on File, 2003. HBB, 0816049866, \$30.00. High school (Adult, middle school). Rating: 4**

296'.0973. Judaism—United States—History; Jews—United States—History; United States—Ethnic relations. 128 p.

**Islamic faith in America / James A. Beverley. (Faith in America) LCCN 2002028592. New York, Facts on File, 2003. HBB, 0816049831, \$30.00. High school (Adult, middle school). Rating: 4**

297'.0973. Islam—United States—History; Muslims—United States—History. 112 p.

**Hindu and Sikh faiths in America / Gail M. Harley. (Faith in America) LCCN 2002034740. New York, Facts on File, 2003. HBB, 0816049874, \$30.00. High school (Adult, middle school). Rating: 4**

294.5'0973. Hinduism—United States—History; Sikhism—United States—History. 112 p.

Each volume in the Faith in America Series narrates the story of one faith and its history in America, focusing on how, in turn, American culture has shaped each religion. Readers are also introduced to historical and contemporary leaders of each faith. Between 112 to 128 pages each.

The reading level enables high school students to use the essays and commentary with ease, yet is written in such a way that the lay adult leaders will enjoy the presentations too. Recommended for high school libraries offering the American experience of faith, and in public library collections seeking to offer works that present American religion in a comprehensive, nonsectarian manner.

African-American faith in America

Murphy is a veteran lecturer, author, and consultant to film and television productions on religion and faith in African-American communities. He is also editor of the Journal for the Society for the Study of Black Religion. One sees the diversity of African-American faith in this volume, as well as the influence of gospel and Black church music on mainstream music.

Catholic faith in America

Gillis is professor of theology, holding double doctorates. He contributes to many popular and scholarly journals and has won a silver award in the ForeWord Magazine Book of the Year, Religion category. Of particular value are the insights provided that contemporary Catholics differ from previous generations. The chapters on Catholic impact on American culture and social issues provide timely insight into Catholicism especially for non-Catholics.

Jewish faith in America

Buxbaum holds a doctorate in Judaic studies and is program director at a Connecticut temple. Karesh, with a doctorate in religious studies, is director of education and youth at a temple. These chapters are devoted to how Judaism has influenced American culture, Jewish impact on American social issues, and the national and political impact of Jews and Judaism.

Islamic faith in America

Beverley is a professor of theology and ethics, and a noted writer and expert on religious studies. He recently had a personal interview in India with the Dalai Lama. This commentary gives insight to the challenge of American Muslims to live as Americans and as Muslims. Of current interest will be American Muslims connections to other Muslims around the world, and the influence of Islamic nations on Muslim life.

Hindu and Sikh faiths in America

Harley specializes in American and world religions and is editor of the Encyclopedia of Women in American Religious Life. Of particular note is the chapter on Hindus and Sikhs in American culture. Especially informative are the events and aspects of our public scene that trace from these traditions.

*Dr. Leroy Hommerding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers Beach, Florida*

**Living loud : defending your faith / Norman Geisler & Joseph Holden. (TruthQuest.) Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002. PAP, 0805424822, \$9.99. High school. Rating: 4**

239. Apologetics; Christian life. 172 p.

In thirteen short, easy-to-read chapters Geisler and Holden help teens consider their theological beliefs. Additionally, the teen is given a brief course in apologetics. Teens will enjoy the scenarios which begin each chapter and build on previous topics. Using situations that are believable to teens, the authors address issues of faith. Some of the topics are the existence of God, evolution, the problem of evil, miracles, and the trustworthiness of Scripture. The letter of introduction to the parents and teenagers captures the world they live in currently, addresses the needs of the book, as well as the goals of the book.

Each chapter begins with a scenario, questions regarding the scenario, purpose, goal, and objectives of the chapter. In this respect it is reminiscent of a textbook. The material is then presented in easy to understand paragraphs. The end of the chapter review helps internalize the material presented. The teen is not left with a textbook but is led to the next level in "studying to show himself approved" with the "Where do we go from here?" and recommended reading sections. Additionally, there is a notes section and a page of additional resources available.

*Bianca Elliott, Teacher, Linwood, Kansas*

**Every bit of who I am : devotions for teens / James C. Schaap. LCCN 2001040406. Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2001. PAP, 0800757904, \$12.99. High school. Rating: 3**

242'.63. Christian teenagers—Prayer-books and devotions—English; Reformed Church—Prayer-books and devotions—English; Heidelberg Catechism. 252 p.

Readers of the Heidelberg Catechism and those familiar with Reformed Church theology will welcome this devotional book. Schaap writes from a depth of understanding and relevance that well read young people will readily latch on to. Each page is addressed to one of 129 questions in the catechism. With a short Scripture reference, Schaap proceeds to give examples, anecdotes, and relevant issues to drive home the lessons from the catechism. Then he ends the devotion with a short, meaningful prayer.

Parents will enjoy providing their children with a book that explains the faith of their fathers in contemporary terms. The children will like how sincere and open Schaap is with his work. He achieves special honesty in the introduction when he admits to being tempted and finds his faith giving him the strength to do the right thing.

Comparing this with other teen devotionals is difficult. Many teen devotionals are without much meat and high in entertainment. A comparable teen devotional would be Josh McDowell's *One Year Youth Devotional* with Bob Hostetler. Both devotionals are instructive without being overwhelming for the youthful reader. The only caution may be that some of the things which makes this a current devotional will make it obsolete. A good addition for the family or youth group.

Bianca Elliott, Teacher, Linwood, Kansas

**TruthQuest survival guide : the quest begins / Steve Keels with Dan Vorm. LCCN 2001043812. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002. PAP, 0805424857, \$7.99. High school. Rating: 4**

248.8'3. Christian life; Conduct of life. 168 p.

In a no-fuss, direct, and warm style, *TruthQuest Survival Guide* encourages teens to take some time each day to reflect on the day and really spend time with God. The inviting 70 walks, each covered in two pages, offer a short passage from scripture, a reflection on these words and their applicability for today, and then some challenging questions inviting a journal response.

Most enticing is the easy, flowing writing style, enabling teens to feel involved in the devotionals without being preachy or being talking down to. This makes a wonderful, economical gift for teens, for use in youth groups (ages 12 to 18), and in Christian schools encouraging journaling and some quiet time reflection. School and public libraries offering devotional titles can add Wallace's work to fill in resources for teens.

The spiral bound book packs the experiences between metal covers, giving another unique approach and one making the journal a lasting affair.

Dr. Leroy Hommerding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers Beach, Florida

### 300's—Social Sciences

**The famous adventures of Jack / Berlie Doherty; decorations by Sonja Lamut. LCCN 00067698. San Diego: HarperCollins, 2001. HBB, 0066236185, \$15.95; LIB, 0066236193, \$15.89. Middle school. Rating: 3**

398.2. Fairy tales--England; Fairy tales; Folklore--England. 148 p.

*The Famous Adventures of Jack* is a story within a story. While walking in the woods one day Jill encounters Mother Greenwood who tells her "Jack stories"—Jack the Giant Killer, Lazy Jack, Jack and the Beanstalk. Jill soon becomes involved in the stories herself.

Berlie Doherty presents traditional folktales in a creative way which still preserves the original tales, but may be somewhat confusing to those not previously familiar with the folktales. Sonja Lamut's illustrations are minimal and limited to symbols of each of the stories. The stories within the story are set off by a title and different font size.

Karla Castle, Public Services Librarian, Warner Pacific College, Portland, Oregon

### 500's—Natural Sciences & Mathematics

**The American Heritage student science dictionary. LCCN 2002022726. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 2002. HBB, 061818919X, \$18.00. Middle school (High school). Rating: 4**

503. Science--Dictionaries. 376 p.

Containing 4,500 entry words amid an assortment of other factual features, *The American Heritage Student Science Dictionary* is a reference tool for students age 12 and up. All types of science are covered in the definitions, charts, and notes, including computer science and math. Many color photos and graphic images are incorporated—diagrams showing how water molecules are produced, illustrations of how a hurricane forms, and the elements of a nuclear reactor. Profiles of individuals such as Archimedes, James Hutton, Nikola Tesla, and Gregor Mendel add depth. Most pages have side bar boxes with word usage explanations and word histories. Use of color, bold and italic type help users peruse quickly. Tables and charts include a basic timeline of computing, measurement table, periodic table of the elements, the solar system, geologic time and others.

*The American Heritage Student Science Dictionary* is the sort of reference book that's not hard to enjoy. Even students who dislike using a dictionary might be enticed to soak up new facts because of the various forms of presentation and assortment of data offered. Visual learners will be helped by the plentiful graphics. As a science reference work for middle school and possibly high school, this dictionary is valuable and easy to use. Be aware that the Geologic Time chart presents a history of the earth that is not consistent with some creationist time scales. Definitions of evolution are presented factually, as is a profile of Charles Darwin.

Karen Schmidt, Freelance Writer, Marysville, Washington

### 700's—The Arts and Recreation

**Break a leg! : the kids' books of acting and stagecraft / Lise Friedman; photographs by Mary Dowdle. LCCN 2001026986. New York: Workman, 2002. HBB, 0761125906, \$24.95; PAP, 761122087, \$14.95. Middle school (High school). Rating: 5**

792'.028. Acting; Theater--Production and direction. 222 p.

*Break a Leg!* grabs its readers from the cover and hangs onto them to the end of the book. An endorsement from child actress Julia Stiles sets the stage for a fast-paced, informative introduction to the world of acting and stagecraft. A no-nonsense directness in the chapters is balanced with clever titles such as "meltdown" (describing difficult concepts for the student). All major concepts are listed, from warm ups for the actors to tearing down the set. Not only are these chapters concise, they include many color and black and white photos. Friedman includes movies from Chaplin to today to provide professional examples. She also uses professional child actors as examples to help the student learn. The appendixes have further material to read, web sites to visit, credits, and monologues, dialogues, and ensemble scenes to memorize to help the student learn more about the world of acting and stagecraft.

"Simple, easy to understand, and many great pictures" were just some of the comments a high school teacher made looking at this new book. She went on to say this book would help the aspiring student understand the craft. Written for middle/junior high students, *Break a Leg!* would be great for the high school library, too. This book is a welcome addition to other books on the market as it targets younger students well.

Bianca Elliott, Teacher, Lansing High School, Linwood, Kansas. Credits: Contributor to the Latino Heritage Bible, Curriculum Writer.

### 900's—Geography, History, & Biography

**Emily Dickinson / edited and with an introduction by Harold Bloom. (Bloom's biocritiques.) LCCN 2002009169. Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2003. HBB, 0791061795, \$24.95; PAP, 079107112X, \$11.95. High school (Middle school). Rating: 5**

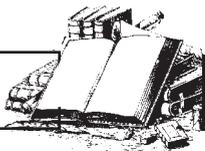
811'.4. Dickinson, Emily, 1830-1886--Criticism and interpretation. 142 p.

Each of Bloom's BioCritiques has an identical format. The book begins with a general introduction to the series, written by Harold Bloom. Then a specific introduction to the work of the author of subject, in this case, of course, *Emily Dickinson*, also written by Bloom. A short biography follows, and then specifics, such as The poetry of Emily Dickinson, The power of Emily Dickinson, and New England culture and Emily Dickinson, written by various authors. Included at the end of the book is a chronology

of the author's life, works of the author, and works about the author.

All this being said, BioCritiques are a combination of biography and criticism, written for the secondary student. Emily Dickinson's life and works are covered in depth and the information provides the reader with a wealth of knowledge about Dickinson. The book is well-written, challenging reading yet not inaccessible to one who reads thoroughly. Bloom's Emily Dickinson would be a worthwhile addition to any school or public library collection

*Ceil Carey, Young Adult Librarian, Public Library, Plano, Illinois*



**Angel of mercy / Tracie Peterson, James Scott Bell. (Shannon saga; 3.) LCCN 2002002463. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002. PAP, 0764224204, \$11.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

F. Women lawyers--Fiction. 379 p.

*Angel of Mercy* is the third in the Shannon Saga series by Tracie Peterson and James Scott Bell. While it is an exciting stand-alone book, one feels that much has been missed if the first two have not been read first. However, returning characters from the previous books that play a major role in the story are fleshed-out well enough for the reader to understand the thread of continuity.

Kit Shannon is a female lawyer living in Los Angeles in 1904. She is also a strong Christian beseeched by an old adversary as to whether to defend him against murder or not. Kit's quandary is one of deciding whether or not God is calling her to defend a man who appears, with mounting evidence, to be guilty. Her decision to do so may put her own life in danger. She also struggles with her relationship with Aunt Freddy, who is growing more distant after another clash with Kit over her Aunt's dalliance with a persuasive mystic. Kit is determined to protect her at any cost.

Other subplots which make interesting reading include the return of Ted Fox, Kit's love interest who is struggling with his disability after losing a leg, and the instigation of a lawsuit against her. Intriguing courtroom scenes with plenty of spirited dialogue keep the pace moving. The knowledge of former attorney and co-author, James Scott Bell, gives the scenes within the halls of justice an authority that rings true. The entrance of historical figures, President Teddy Roosevelt, William Randolph Hearst, and Clarence Darrow, anchor the setting in reality. The combination is winning, and a recommended read.

Cathy M. Elliott, Freelance Writer, Anderson, California

**Autumn's shadow / Lyn Cote. (HeartQuest (Northern intrigue).) LCCN 2002011989. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 2002. PAP, 0842335749, \$9.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

F. Women school principals--Fiction; School vandalism--Fiction; Sheriffs--Fiction; Wisconsin--Fiction; Christian fiction. 265 p.

*Autumn's Shadow* by Lyn Cote, second in the Northern Intrigue series, is set in the small town of Steadfast, Wisconsin. In this book, school principal Keely Turner teams up with new Deputy Burke Sloan as they battle a series of

pranks that turn sinister. Both also deal with problem younger brothers and unresolved family issues.

Lyn Cote combines romance, suspense, believable characters, and Christian faith into positive entertainment. She interweaves multiple stories, small town intrigue, and gossip to bring out the relationships and interaction of the people within the town. Can Keely and Burke overcome their personal conflicts as well as the town conflicts? Can either of their brothers' lives be turned around for good? Is there room in their lives for the growing attraction they feel? Their constant inner conversations with God enable them to find the final answers. God has a definite plan for the town and for them.

Paula Stewart Marks, School Principal, Bend, Oregon

**Chance encounters of the heart / Elizabeth White, Kathleen Fuller, Susan Warren. (HeartQuest.) LCCN 2002009702. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 2002. PAP, 0842335749, \$9.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

F. Christian fiction; Love stories. 339 p.

Does God use circumstance, chance encounters, divine opportunity to promote his will? Definitely! These three stories from Heart Quest provide ample evidence. "A Will and a Way," by Elizabeth White, bring Zoe and Will together in an airport terminal. This chance encounter changes Zoe's career plans, overcomes family bitterness, and puts Zoe back on track with the Lord and romance. In "Encore, Encore," Annika sees her dream sabotaged by a vengeful former acquaintance. However, God has better opportunities planned when Josef Gemmel, renowned Austrian violinist, takes over her promised position on tour. In "Measure of a Man," Peter Samuelson finds himself trapped in a Russian elevator. Circumstances force him to reconsider God's call on his life and rekindle the sparks of an abandoned romance.

These three stories have believable characters and charming circumstances, which ultimately usher the characters into making positive life decisions. The authors draw on their own lives to bring out portrayals of frustrating inner struggles and vivid settings. The main idea in all three stories focuses on God's constant care and intervention in lives as he brings opportunities and choices. These unexpected encounters result in delightful love stories.

Paula Stewart Marks, School Principal, Bend, Oregon

**Child of promise / Kathleen Morgan. (Brides of Culdee Creek; 4.) LCCN 2001048927. Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2002. PAP, 0800757610, \$11.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

F. Women physicians--Fiction; Widowers--Fiction; Clergy--Fiction; Colorado--Fiction. 302 p.

The importance of trusting God is the theme of this book, *Child of Promise*. Beth McKay, disappointed when Noah Starr marries another, pursues her dream of becoming a doctor. Returning home five years later, she goes into practice with Doc Childress. Pastor Noah Starr, living with his Aunt Milly, is raising his crippled daughter Emily, after the death of his wife Alice. Beth rents a room at the rectory. She and Noah cautiously renew their friendship. Noah and Beth marry and have some difficulties in supporting each other's professions. The death of his aunt and Harlow Peterson, a church member he was counseling, have Noah questioning his calling and faith. Beth tries to help Noah renew his faith in God. With support from his congregation, Noah realizes the Lord kept His promise and never deserted him in his moments of doubt. Noah knows God has always been in the heart of Beth who faithfully loves her husband.

This book is fourth in the Brides of Culdee Creek. I have not read the first three books. The author, Kathleen Morgan, presents a book worth reading with strong Christian content. The story line is excellent.

Pam Burns, Librarian, Promiseland Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida

**The covenant / Beverly Lewis. (Abram's daughters; 1.) LCCN 2002008665. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002. HBB, 0764227173, \$16.99; PAP, 0764223305, \$12.99; LGP, 0764227181, \$16.99; CAS, 076422719X, \$16.99. Adult. Rating: 3**

F. Sisters--Fiction; Amish--Fiction; Lancaster County (Pa.)--Fiction. 318 p.

*The Covenant* by Beverly Lewis is a nice read. Set in an Amish family, two sisters blossom into womanhood in entirely different ways. The historical, religious, and social intertwine in this novel. The story moves slowly with considerable description of the rich surroundings of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Leah and her sister Sadie are teenage Amish girls in their courting years. They are also in what is called the rumschpringe, or the time before Amish children take the kneeling vow to the Amish church. It is a time when they explore many issues inside and outside of

themselves before they make a lifetime commitment to the church. Sadie, Leah's older sister, is secretly dating an English boy. After a short period she discovers she is pregnant and is unsure what to do. No one in the family knows for a while. The English father doesn't want a child, and the child is stillborn, or so it is thought. The doctor, who is really the grandfather, finds the baby is still alive and makes sure the baby lives where he will embarrass neither family. Sadie goes to live with relatives, not coming to grips with her past. Abram, Leah's father, wants Leah to marry an Amish boy with ability to provide for her, while Leah's heart belongs to Jonas, another Amish boy. The book ends with Jonas and Leah looking forward to their wedding day.

While this story is well written, it is slow and prodigious. The plot is timeless and yet current. The solutions are predictable as are the behaviors of the characters. The book has so many characters and story lines it can become confusing. Unlike other historical fiction, this book tries to blend too many issues in at one time. Sex before marriage, cross faith and cross-cultural relationships, and the historical elements are each worthy of their own story line. Lewis does know her subject and setting which provides some moorings for the reader.

Bianca Elliott, Educator, Linwood, Kansas

**The curate of Glaston : three dramatic novels from Scotland's beloved storyteller / George MacDonald; edited by Michael Phillips. (Contents: The curate's awakening -- The lady's confession -- The baron's apprenticeship.)** LCCN 2001006801. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002. PAPER, 076422591X, \$12.99. Adult (High school). Rating: 5

F. Windfold, Thomas (Fictitious character)--Fiction; Clergy--Fiction; England--Fiction. 187, 209, 218 p.

Snobbish attitudes, rich poor people, poor rich people, misguided love, heartbreak, pain and sickness, suicide: *The Curate of Glaston*, a trilogy, presents a close look at humanity's struggles. These modern themes were penned in the late 1800s by Scotland's beloved storyteller and pastor George MacDonald. Shunned by the sleeping church, MacDonald, Spirit led, used fiction to present basic Bible truths to his fellow Christians. In these three books, published in one volume, MacDonald introduces Thomas Wingfold, a young preacher who grows from Pharisaism to trusting the Lord even when other church attendees can no longer understand his leading. *The Curate's Awakening* deals with the resuscitation of Thomas' spirit, and how his life touches spiritually unaware Helen, her atheist cousin George, who wants to disciple and then marry her, and the great love of her life, Leopold her drug addicted, love besotted brother.

In the second story, *The Lady's Confession*, Thomas, now God's man, interacts with the self

absorbed Dr. Paul Faber, and the mysterious, sickly, beautiful Juliet. The third story, *The Baron's Apprenticeship*, presents two intellectually honest, unbelieving young people, Barbara and Richard, as they move, guided by Thomas' friendship, from darkness into the light of the Gospel. It also deals with problems between generations, social classes, and peers. In all three stories you meet a wide variety of Christians, from those who viciously dissect other believers, to those who cannot do so.

George McDonald's *The Curate of Glaston* softly guides the reader into deep contemplation of obedience to Christ the Creator, Savior, and Lord. Full depiction of each important character grows through closely reasoned conversations, glimpses of inner thoughts, and comparisons as different persons see and understand each event. Winsome descriptions of surroundings add to the depth and interest of the plot. The plot itself blooms slowly, engagingly, reaching fruition near the end of each story. Action and mystery play an important part in the stories; however, the reasoning ability and will of the characters take precedence over plot. Being very true to life, not all characters move in the direction that Christians would hope. One of today's most prolific Christian authors, Michael Phillips has edited, but not changed or cheapened, this trilogy. Phillips introduces each story, also telling a bit about McDonald himself. Both young adult and adult readers will easily identify with the characters, their problems, and joys. *The Curate of Glaston* will be useful in the English Literature class, for all libraries, for communal reading, and insight sharing in home schooling and other families.

Donna J. Eggett, Freelance Writer, Radford, Virginia

**Elena's song / Peggy Stoks. (HeartQuest) (Abounding love series; 3.)** LCCN 2001006403. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2002. PAPER, 0842319441, \$9.99. Adult. Rating: 4

F. Adult child abuse victims--Fiction; Separated people--Fiction; Women singers--Fiction; Michigan--Fiction; Actors--Fiction. 267 p.

This romantic fiction chronicles the story of Elena, a girl who ran away from home after her mother's death. She hopes to escape the wicked clutches of her father and brothers only to find herself in another relationship of abuse—both mental and physical—and used because of her beautiful singing voice. As the story opens, Elena lies in an 1885 hospital in Detroit waiting to die of self-imposed starvation. There, a sensitive nun prods her to eat a couple of spoonfuls of soup and learns that Elena has a husband in the area.

The story turns when Jesse Golden finds her and brings her home to recover, meets Robert, her four-year-old son, and they begin their marriage anew. But the past hangs on for dear life, causing Elena to fear Jesse's rejection of her if

he knew all the truth of her past. And in the present, Jesse's mother, in whose home she is recuperating, hates her and wishes her dead and gone.

A strong dependence on prayer, and God's working in each life to bring truth to the surface redeems the story. Though the setting is 1885, numerous things made me feel the story was contemporary: "parking" the horse and buggy and "making calls" on the telephone to name a couple.

Helen Hunter, Freelance Writer, Church Librarian, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

**The healer / by Dee Henderson. (The O'Malley series; 5.)** LCCN 2002001097. Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 2002. PAPER, 1576739252, \$11.99; CAS, 1590521021, \$19.99; CDR, 159052103X, \$24.99. Adult. Rating: 4

F. Post-traumatic stress disorder in children--Fiction; Student counselors--Fiction; School shootings--Fiction. 293 p.

Author Dee Henderson has written seven in the O'Malley series. The O'Malleys are a group of orphans who banded together in a foster home to make a family. Each book tells the story of a different O'Malley. In this book, 35-year-old Rachel O'Malley, is a caring counselor specializing in critical care after disasters. She must shoulder the burdens of those displaced by a flood, traumatized by a murder, and overwhelmed by a school shooting. While all of this is happening, her youngest sister battles cancer. Rachel's new faith helps to sustain her.

In the first chapter we learn about the complex trauma's facing the characters. Many O'Malleys wade into the problems. Kate is an investigator; Marcus, a U.S. marshal, helps in the investigations; Lisa, a doctor, helps with trauma response. Even doctor Jennifer, on a rare outing from the cancer treatments that debilitate her so, jumps into the fray after the school shooting and helps save lives. We also meet her friend Cole, the fire Chief whose dedication to his job is part of his attraction. Jack, a brother O'Malley, works alongside Cole. Stephen, another brother, is drawn to single mom and flood victim, Ann, and kids Nathan and Adam, who are taken under the protective wing of Rachel and Cole. Using a unique follow-up system, Rachel can track those she counsels for years. An old card found at the murder scene, leads to the identity of the victims. A troubled boy precipitates more grief when two students rage through a school shooting and hit more than each other. After the dead are identified the motives remain a mystery that seems linked to the original murder. Various siblings plan weddings and help end the book on a more jubilant, hopeful note.

Fast moving, turbulent with trauma, this book does not shirk from descriptions of terrible events. Character development centers around

response to the needs of others, family loyalty and love. As this book focused more on Rachel, her character is more richly made. Although the reader may be stretched to believe so many traumas could happen to one sane group of people in such a short time, helpful perspective is given on the steps to healthy adjustment, and going on with life.

Carol Taylor, Freelance Writer, Independent Clinical Social Worker, Poughkeepsie, Washington

**The heavenly fugitive / Gilbert Morris. (The House of Winslow; 27.) LCCN 2001005678. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002. PAP, 0764225995, \$10.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

F. Winslow family (Fictitious characters)--Fiction; Brothers and sisters--Fiction; Organized crime--Fiction; New York (N.Y.)--Fiction. 319 p.

**The fiery ring / Gilbert Morris. (The House of Winslow; 28.) LCCN 2002001341. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002. PAP, 0764226223, \$11.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

F. Winslow family (Fictitious characters)--Fiction; Women circus performers--Fiction; Brothers and sisters--Fiction; Missing persons--Fiction; Revenge--Fiction. 314 p.

*The Heavenly Fugitive* continues Gilbert Morris' successful series, *The House of Winslow*, with a new branch of the infamous Winslow family, Phillip and Amelia Winslow, grown children of Andrew Winslow. Amelia lands her first job as a nightclub singer with the help of Big Tony Marino, a local gangster. Phil finds love with Big Tony's daughter, and lands a job with the District Attorney's office. Also making a return appearance is Wes Winslow on a photography assignment for someone who is writing about New York. Amelia and Philip become more and more entangled in a precarious underworld. Unless they can find a way out, they may be destroyed by their own most cherished dreams. This is an action-packed story that you'll find difficult to put down!

In *The Fiery Ring*, Joy Winslow has led a picture-perfect life until now. When a family tragedy leaves her and Travis Winslow at the mercy of greedy relatives, they flee a life of certain servitude. A series of events suddenly finds her alone, riding in a boxcar where she is harassed by two vagrants. Chase Hardin, a handsome young circus performer, steps in to rescue her. As a result, he is injured, and Joy temporarily forgoes her journey to search for her brother, to find help.

Chase takes her under his wing and helps her find work in a traveling circus. Though Chase discourages it, Joy thrills to the danger of performing with the big cats. But her growing feelings for Chase only add to her uncertainty over the future. She must find her brother and recover what is rightfully theirs. Unless she can arrive at some path to inner peace, the struggle

between her love for Chase and her anger against those who wronged her may tear her world apart.

Late 1920's America is the backdrop for book 28 in this series and, as usual, Mr. Morris knows his history. An inactive hero and the fact that we are told of the heroine's desire for revenge, but never really feel it, weaken this story. And yet, numerous events and the behind-the-scenes details on circus life keep it interesting.

Rick Estep, Media Director, HeavenBound Media Center, Middleburg, Florida

**Let there be light / Al & JoAnna Lacy. (Mail order bride series; 10.) LCCN 2002009316. Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 2002. PAP, 1590520424, \$10.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

F. Prisoners of war--Family relationships--Fiction; Mail order brides--Fiction; Women pioneers--Fiction; Revenge--Fiction; Arizona--Fiction; Christian fiction; Western stories; Love stories. 305 p.

Popular authors Al and JoAnna Lacy, having written more than ninety historical and western novels, offer fans and new readers compelling reading in this latest of the Mail Order Bride series. Opening with a woman setting out for Arizona in response to mail order bride correspondence, and a relationship centered in the Lord and working, the story moves to Georgia where a Captain is murdered under mysterious circumstances. The Captain's daughter, Jenny, vows to avenge him, and one sees both the evil lurking in plans, and the interesting twists God brings across human paths. There is enough intrigue to keep the reader interested in *Let There Be Light*, even though the dialogue gets a bit contrived at times.

Recommended for public library collections where Lacy fans reside, and for adding to collections where readers can enjoy an easy read without vulgarity. New readers interested in women pioneers can be encouraged to try this title.

Dr. Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Ft Myers Beach, Florida



**Not a sparrow falls / Linda Nichols. LCCN 2002006085. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002. PAP, 0764217270, \$12.99; HBB, 0764227556, \$16.99; LgP, 0764227564, \$16.99. Adult. Rating: \*5**

F. Single fathers--Fiction; Problem families--Fiction; Young women--Fiction; Alexandria (Va.)--Fiction. 351 p.

Mary, age twenty-five, partner of Jonah, a crazed drug dealer, realizes she is headed nowhere. She escapes, changes her name to Bridie, anonymously informs the police of Jonah's business and whereabouts, and leaves for parts unknown.

One year later, Bridie, accepts a position as Nanny to a burned out minister, Alisdair, and his three children, thirteen-year-old Samantha, with a chip on her shoulder, and two-year-old twins Bonnie and Cameron, who don't speak and are still in diapers. Bridie learns that Alisdair, after two years of mourning, still feels responsible for his wife's suicide. Bridie lovingly nurses the family back to health, remodels the parsonage from mausoleum to livable abode, and potty trains the twins.

Jonah gets out of jail, and, bent on revenge, kidnaps Bridie. Jonah soon finds he is outnumbered, when Bridie's loved ones join forces with the police to rescue her and send him back to jail. Bridie turns herself in for her involvement in the drug business, is given probation, and set free for good behavior. Alisdair resigns his position, proposes marriage to and is accepted by Bridie, and the whole family moves back to Bridie's country home.

*Not a Sparrow Falls* by Linda Nichols is an exquisite story of God's love and surprising plans for each life. Nichols reminds the reader that God's grace truly is sufficient, if often mysterious. Although there are a plethora of characters introduced, causing some confusion at first, the main characters are well developed and easy to identify with. The story is reminiscent of a glorious puzzle that frustrates at first, as the pieces all look alike, but develops into a most satisfying and endearing mixture of prose and gently imparted wisdom. Highly recommended for all library collections.

Kim Harris, Librarian, Churchville, New York.

**Peace like a river / Leif Enger. LCCN 200108873. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2001. HBB, 087113795X, \$24.00; PAP, 0802139256, \$13.00. Adult. Rating: 5**

F. Boys--Fiction; Fathers and sons--Fiction; Motherless families--Fiction; Brothers--Fiction; Outlaws--Fiction; Minnesota--Fiction. 313 p.

Merits for *Peace Like a River*, an exceptional first novel, include *Time* magazine's Top Five Books of the Year and Best Book of the Year from the *Christian Science Monitor*, *Denver Post*, and *Los Angeles Times*.

Enger's characters are so real, the reader listens attentively as Ruben Land, eleven, narrates in his folksy, Wisconsin prose. A storyteller extraordinaire, Enger writes in images, symbols, and picturesque prose. *Peace Like A River* comes together with a magical twist of unconditional love.

Ruben believes his father creates miracles that he alone witnesses. But teenaged Davy, an older brother and Ruben's hero, who owns "a driver's license and a knockout four-inch scar down his right forearm," thinks his father is weird, perhaps even the town joke. The middle child, Swede, writes stories of outlaws and reads them along with the classics and Zane Grey, to Ruben.

Swede and Ruben rarely quarrel, "I never held opinions in those days, and her's (Swede's) were never wrong."

Ruben and Swede overhear an argument between Dad and Davy. Jeremiah Land, a janitor at the high school Davy attends, catches two teenage troublemakers assaulting the girl Davy likes. When he stops them they threaten him and his family. Davy becomes quiet and rebellious. One night, these same boys break into the Land's home and Davy, his hunting rifle with him under the covers, kills both boys. The sheriff arrests him and puts him in jail. While Ruben and Swede plot ways to break him out, Davy escapes.

Mail from distant friends west of Wisconsin indicate, in mysteriously worded letters, they have seen and helped Davy. Because of Jeremiah's health, the Lands decide to take a trip west in their Airstream trailer. What they find is heartbreak, a new mother, and an undisputable possibility that Mr. Land does in fact create miracles.

Maxine Cambra, Freelance Writer, Anderson, California

**A penny for your thoughts / Mindy Starns Clark. (Million dollar mysteries; 1.) LCCN 2002005633. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 2002. PAP, 0736909923, \$10.99. Adult. Rating: 3**

F. Women lawyers--Fiction; Nonprofit organizations--Fiction; Chesapeake Bay Region (Md. And Va.)--Fiction. 337 p.

Callie Webber, attorney for the J.O.S.H.U.A. foundation, investigates the legitimacy of non-profit organizations that submit proposals to the foundation for grants. Tom, Callie's employer, asks Callie to make a delivery to his long time friend Wendell Smythe. Wendell owns a large for-profit clothing manufacturing business as well as a non-profit organization that specializes in feeding needy children around the world. While delivering the check to Wendell, Callie discovers Wendell's dead body on the floor of his office. The death turns out to be murder. Tom asks Callie to investigate the murder of his friend. Callie is faced with reliving the death of her own husband and the test of solving Wendell's murder through many twists and turns along the way.

Callie is challenged by her mentor and friend Eli, to give things over to God. He gives her a Bible verse that he has found to lead her on this path. *A Penny for Your Thoughts* by Mindy Starns Clark, needs to expand in this area. This is something that many Christians in the world face today. After the passage from Eli in the book, we see Callie pray a few times but we never see the full description of how she is turning this challenging case over to the Lord.

Mindy Starns Clark does great work in characterization. One feels the tears; sees the joy, sorrow, pain and anguish held by these

characters. Many twists and turns lead readers on an interesting journey; you feel like you may know who did it but in the end, it is very surprising to find out who really killed Wendell Smythe and why.

Jennifer Siliznoff, Computer Analyst, Avid Reader, Renton, Washington

**Postmarked heaven / Jack Cavanaugh. LCCN 2002002500. Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2002. PAP, 0800758307, \$11.99. Adult (High school). Rating: 3**

F. Future life--Fiction; Heaven--Fiction. 224 p.

*Postmarked Heaven* is listed under the genre fiction, but don't look for a plot. Or maybe you need to find forty-three plots. Author Jack Cavanaugh presents forty-three letters sent from heaven by four people who have gone on to glory. These four have been given an opportunity to write to the folks back home.

The purpose of the letters is to point out biblical truths the writers didn't learn until they looked at them from a heavenly viewpoint. They contain such pithy sayings as, "Having experienced life on both sides of the veil, it is generally agreed among us that the greatest challenge of living on earth is one of perception. On earth, the physical reality of the world appears to be true, while the things of the Kingdom, in comparison, lack substance and appear dreamlike."

Then the writers give advice to those still on this earth. Basically the book is sermons in letter form. "When your choices, time, sacrifice, and emotions don't verify what you say you believe, they become as visible to others as the teraphim were to the neighbors of the Israelites."

The four writers are from four eras of history: Shankala, the son of an Ethiopian witch doctor; Dr. Everett Parker, a scientist and physician who lived in Illinois and died in 1868; Jared, a 31-year-old who died in 2000; and, Theodora, raised in Antioch during the height of the Roman Empire.

Each chapter is three to five pages long and self-contained. This format makes it easy to read in short snatches of time.

Myrtlemay Crane, Freelance Writer & Editor, Alderwood Manor, Washington

**Rivers of gold / Tracie Peterson. (Yukon quest; 3.) LCCN 2001005674. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002. PAP, 0764223801, \$11.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

F. Survival after airplane accidents, shipwrecks, etc.--Fiction; Women pioneers--Fiction; Botanists--Fiction; Alaska--Fiction. 383 p.

Miranda Colton, unconscious after being washed overboard, recuperates in the small cabin of Thomas Edward Davenport. Quiet,

reserved Davenport, a botanist, frowns on the interruption into his world of plants and herbs of Yukon Province. When winter threatens, Davenport, a Christian and an English gentleman, will not leave his houseguest, who is too weak to travel. The storm subsides and Davenport's guides arrive to drive them into town. Miranda does not know where to start looking for her shipmates, and without money to rent a room she has nowhere to turn. Davenport invites her to stay with him at the hotel, but Miranda, uncertain of what his suggestion implies, hesitates. Davenport confesses to owning the hotel and having a suite of rooms kept for his use year round. Miranda accepts the offer of his room and he stays in another room with his plants. Romance hovers but Miranda's mind stays on finding her friends.

Each book in the Yukon Quest series contains a different female protagonist. A reader may lose bits and pieces of the story by reading only book three. *Rivers of Gold*, written from a multi-character point of view, catches the reader in a web of unknown people and their trials. Even though Peterson foreshadows each new character, there are still some lost issues. Peterson wraps this third and last book of the Yukon Series up in a pretty blue bow. The plot brings Miranda and all her friends to a happy ending. Peterson's great dialogue moves the reader at a fast pace but her exposition drags. A prolific writer, Peterson has five series in print and six novels. Fans of the Yukon Quest series must have this book.

Maxine Cambra, Member SCBWI, Anderson, California

**Roses will bloom again / Lori Copeland. (HeartQuest.) LCCN 2001008344. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2002. PAP, 0842319360, \$9.99. Adult (High school). Rating: 4**

F. Women pioneers--Fiction; Sheriffs--Fiction; Colorado--Fiction; Christian fiction; Western stories; Love stories. 279 p.

Emma has made a good life for herself in Seattle, complete with close friends and a successful business. Nothing interrupts her well-ordered days, until she receives a phone call that her only sister, Lully, has died. Now she must return to Serenity, to the battered, old Victorian house, once a funeral home, that still represents the painful growing up years after Mom's death and Dad's desertion.

Emma arrives and is faced with sorting through Lully's pack rat like collection of worldly goods. She is greeted by unfriendly townsfolk, a motley assortment of reptilian pranks, and fishy land deals. As if that were not enough, Lully has left the house to both Emma and Sam, a man with whom, in her naive youth, she had attempted to elope. A past that has long lain silent among the cobwebs at the back of her heart, safely encased in a trunk of bitterness, now rises up to haunt Emma.

Emma's relationship with God is challenged, as she reflects on feelings of abandonment at an early age. Forgiveness is the key that unwraps the wonderful package God has waited fifteen years to give Emma. When she decides to fulfill her dream of botanical gardens and tearoom in the old Victorian manse, a light romance begins to develop between Emma and Sam. Their spiky banter is a delightful mixture of tenderness and verbal swordplay.

*Roses Will Bloom Again*, by Lori Copeland, is a charming tale of godly romance with a splash of mystery. More than fifty published books, including her best-selling *Brides of the West* series, hail Copeland as a seasoned writer of quality romances. Godly morals and a down-to-earth style create a fun, quick read, appropriate for high school, as well as adult readers.

Kim Harris, Librarian, Churchville, New York

**Second opinion / Hannah Alexander. (The healing touch; 1.) LCCN 2001005681. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002. PAP, 0764225286, \$11.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

F. Emergency physicians--Fiction; Medical personnel--Fiction. 345 p.

Continuing on from an earlier Christian medical series (*Sacred Trust*, *Solemn Oath*, and *Silent Pledge*), Hannah Alexander focuses on nurse Lauren McCaffrey in this new series, *The Healing Touch*. As introduced in the previous series, Lauren is a likable, dedicated nurse who takes her faith to work. She decides to escape the pressures of well-meaning friends and family to marry her off, and goes to work in a small community hospital in Dogwood Springs, Missouri. Lauren has difficulties fitting into this outwardly picturesque little town, yet she desires to make a go of her new locale. When Grant, an older attractive widower who has teen twins arrives, things begin to change for the worse, and for the better for Lauren. Lauren finds herself battling her feelings for Grant, as she contends with a suspected drug ring, and tries to solve a medical mystery.

Hannah Alexander is the pen name of the husband and wife writing team of Melvin and Cheryl Hodde. Their combined talent, and knowledge of writing and medicine make for a realistic and enthralling novel. The characters are believable, as are the situations. There is a fine balance of drama and humor as the plot moves swiftly along. Those seeking suspense, as well as human drama will be interested in *Second Opinion*. And those who became fans of the previous Alexander series will definitely be putting this one on the to-read list.

Pam Webb, Freelance Writer, Sandpoint, Idaho

**Shaiton's fire / Jake Thoene. LCCN 2002004772. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2002. PAP, 0842353615, \$12.99. Adult (High School). Rating: 2**

F. Terrorism--Prevention--Fiction; Undercover operations--Fiction; Nuclear power plants--Fiction; Middle East--Fiction; California--Fiction; Christian fiction. 368 p.

When a terrorist bomb blows up the Californian BART subway, Chapter 16, an elite, counter-terrorism team is called upon to track down the perpetrators before they launch an even bigger attack. *Shaiton's Fire*, by Jake Thoene, is so titled for the name of the small terrorist group of radical Hezbollah members determined to cause "Satan's Fire" with the meltdown of Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant—a catastrophe that Chapter 16 is narrowly able to avert.

Jake Thoene has written an eye-opening and timely novel which raises interesting questions about the security of our nation's nuclear power plants. However, the book does not reach the quality level found in other recently released novels of similar topics. The plot line is not unified, and character development is inconsistent. An inordinate amount of time is spent pursuing a false lead on a white supremacist group, which is left unsatisfactorily resolved when the second half of the book pursues the Hezbollah track. The book also gives the sense of a military team operating purely on hunches and suspicions, rather than any hard fact; there seems to be a "Rambo" mentality, rather than the sense of an organized team with all parts working together under an umbrella of an authority who really knows what is going on. In some ways, the Chapter 16 team seems almost as much of a rogue team as the Hezbollah group does.

The reader expects the Chapter 16 team to be the focal point of the story, but it soon becomes essentially a one-man-show, with minor appearances by a couple of other stereotypically described team members. Additionally, the book describes one rather crude, albeit slightly humorous scene, and has somewhat gruesome scenes of violence, which are mercifully brief. What is disturbing about this book is that it is not entirely believable. The events seem plausible, but because of the inconsistencies of its parts, the whole story has an air of unreality about it, and thus the violence is more disturbing than if it were realistic. The book reads like an action movie, where the reader is already assured of the outcome, and thus is never really scared or worried about the actual events. Despite these weaknesses, *Shaiton's Fire* is an interesting book, and reminds us that although evil does exist in this world because God gave man free choice, God is, however, still on the throne, in control of all things.

Sherril Beeler, Teacher, Cascade Christian High School, Medford, Oregon

**A test of love / Kathleen Scott. LCCN 2001050856. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002. PAP, 0825436648, \$9.99. Adult. Rating: 3**

F. Married people--Fiction; Christian fiction. 236 p.

Kathleen Scott has written the consummate marriage story—perfect Christian couple marries and has a perfect life, perfect home, perfect children. But, as in many marriages, life goes stale—husband has business problems but doesn't want to worry wife so he doesn't share. Wife has emotional needs but has been disappointed when husband hasn't responded, so refuses to set herself up for continued rebuff. Communication is at a standstill. Both persons are prime targets for relationships outside the marriage and Juliet nearly succumbs. Ironically it is the death of a family pet that is the catalyst for change. Juliet gets so angry that she asks Michael to move out.

Michael is so afraid of losing his family that he seeks counsel and is surprised to learn that he has been a real jerk. Juliet questions a friend and realizes that instead of trusting God to meet all her needs, she has been looking to Michael. Individually they come to their senses, seek forgiveness, and live happily ever after. The story is a simple straightforward plot with a satisfying, though predictable, ending. Each woman who reads it will wish the shortcomings in her marriage could be solved as quickly and easily. In addition, she will wish for her husband to read it and see his part in their marriage problems.

Helen Hunter, Author, Freelance Writer, and Church Librarian, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

**Touch the face of God : a World War II novel / Robert Vaughan. LCCN 2001054373. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002. PAP, 0785266275, \$14.99. Adult. Rating: 3**

F. World War, 1939-1945--Fiction; Bomber pilots--Fiction. 306 p.

Robert Vaughan proves himself both a war veteran and a writing veteran with *Touch the Face of God*. The year is 1943 and Mark White is a B-17 bomber pilot of the 605th Heavy Bombardment Group. Just before his mission he falls for Emily Hagan. He and many of the others of his group have girls they hope to marry when the fighting is done. As the missions add up so does the anticipation of going home. As Mark battles the enemy he also fights his need for God. And it is after a particularly grueling battle that Mark finally realizes who the Pilot of his plane is.

Vaughan deftly intertwines Mark's story with that of other pilots through letter and diary entries. In between the fast-action battle scenes we learn about the contribution of the Negro pilots during the war, as well as the difficult mission of the army chaplain, who has to fight the spiritual war while the men wage the physical. *Touch the Face of God* provides a

credible slice of WWII life for how it must have been for pilots and their loved ones.

The novel's strongest point is the descriptive missions, making it a worthy consideration for WWII collections.

*Pam Webb, Freelance Writer, Sandpoint, Idaho*

**Twilight / Kristen Heitzmann. LCCN 2002002466. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002. PAP, 0764226053, \$12.99. Adult. Rating: 5**

F. Single mothers--Fiction; Christian fiction. 350 p.

*Twilight*, by Kristen Heitzmann, is a gritty story of redemption. Suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, Firefighter Cal Morrison finds himself recovering from a stint in a mental health center, where he struggled through group therapy after his failed attempt to rescue a little girl caught in an unpredictable fire. Taken off the regular duty rotation at the firehouse, Cal employs his natural sense of humor by visiting schools and nursing homes, playing Spanner the fire safety clown. His painted-on smile, however, hides the intense mental and emotional struggle he encounters almost daily. Fire in any form gives him flashbacks; even barbecuing steaks proves difficult.

Laurie, Cal's old sweetheart, returns to town with her two young children, escaping a marriage gone horribly awry. When Laurie is kidnapped in a drug deal, Cal is forced to face his demons in the ultimate fiery test when he must save them both from a blazing inferno. While this may sound like a predicable plot-line, the story is anything but cliché. Heitzmann has written a pithy story about the flaws and frailties of real people, their struggles with God, difficult life situations, and relationships—and ultimately their redemption. Cal finally quits trying to handle things on his own, surrenders his life to God, and then learns the difficult lesson of waiting for God's timing for the one thing he desires most. Laurie learns just how precious she is in God's eyes when God's love for her is mirrored in Cal's willingness to lay down his life for her safety. Thrown in the mix is a large dose of mystery and suspense. Readers will find this a substantive book, well worth reading.

*Sherri Beeler, Teacher, Cascade Christian High, Medford, Oregon*

**Watermelon days and & firefly nights : heartwarming scenes from small town life / Annette Smith. LCCN 2002004891. Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2002. PAP, 0800757988, \$10.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

F. City and town life--Fiction; Humorous stories, American; Southern States--Social life and customs--Fiction. 185 p.

It is no surprise books describing small towns with larger-than-life folks are arriving en force. Authors like Garrison Keillor and Jan Karon

regale tales of Minnesota and Mitford, while Angela Hunt and Lori Copeland weave stories of those inhabiting the island of Heavenly Daze. And now we have a slice of small town life Texas-style with Annette Smith and her *Watermelon Days and Firefly Nights*. This makes her fifth collection of original short stories and this one truly does contain heartwarming scenes from small town life as the subtitle promises.

When times have become complicated a person longs to slow down, something the 3,400 some odd collection of inhabitants do so well in the fictional town of Ella Louise, Texas. Life indeed goes on there but at a slower, sweeter pace. For instance, that gaping hole in the Newman's roof that's been there for the past seven years, isn't fixed for lack of negligence—it's simply a reminder of how good their marriage really is. And life could be complicated for spinster twins and housemates Molly and Polly who got mixed up as babies and weren't told by their mother until some eighty years later. If it made no difference who was who all that time, why worry now? Then again life can be a bit stressful for a newly divorced mother of active twins who tries to run the town's only medical clinic; however, sometimes old hurts can be slowly healed with the help of a runaway dog. Through these vignettes readers will see love, friendship, forgiveness, and faith, not to mention humor and heartwarming moments as they read all about the quirky townfolk of Ella Louise.

For the most part *Watermelon Days & Firefly Nights* carries off the ability to combine modern times with old-fashioned goodness. The stories and characters could be even more developed, allowing readers a good hard look, instead of quick glimpses of the featured population. Readers who enjoy tales of small towns will want to look in on Ella Louise's crew.

*Pam Webb, Freelance Author, Sandpoint, Idaho*

**Wildflowers / Robin Jones Gunn. (Glenbrooke series; 8.) LCCN 2001003457. Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 2001. PAP, 1576736318, \$10.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

F. Separated people--Fiction; Restaurateurs--Fiction; Restaurants--Fiction. 284 p.

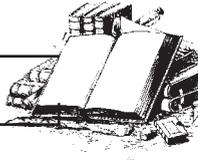
Genevieve Ahren finally has a chance to make her dreams come true when the Wildflowers Cafe in Glenbrooke goes up for sale. But with an airline pilot husband who is gone most of the time, Genevieve must make all the important decisions alone. She begins to feel disconnected from her husband and even from her two teenage daughters—then, tragedy strikes when her new cafe burns to the ground.

Genevieve calls on God to give her the strength she needs during this time, and she discovers friends she didn't know she had when the women of the Glenbrooke rally around her.

Before long, Gena really knows what psalmist David meant when he cried for God to create in him a clean heart. Not only has her relationship with God been restored, but with her husband too, when she realizes that she has fallen head over heels in love with him!

*Wildflowers*, the eighth book in Robin Jones Gunn's Glenbrooke series is a book that speaks to every woman's heart. Once again, Gunn has made us feel at home in Glenbrooke by bringing back all of the characters we're already familiar with from her other novels—only this time they are the givers, not receivers, of the much needed advice. Her emphasis remains on the necessity of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and she presents the awkwardness of being "unequally yoked" before she resolves the conflict. Following in her own traditions, *Wildflowers* is a compelling novel one is not anxious to put down.

*Amanda Ottaway, English Major, Meredith College, Raleigh, North Carolina.*



## 000's—Generalities

**A time to read : good books for growing readers / Mary Ruth K. Wilkinson & Heidi Wilkinson Teel.** [National Library of Canada: 00910500X]. Vancouver: Regent College Pub., 2001. PAP, 1573831468, \$19.95. Rating: 4

011.62. Children's literature--Bibliography; Children--Books and reading; Best books; Christian literature for children--Bibliography. 215 p.

"For those who love books, children, and God" is the invitation extended on the cover of *A Time to Read*, by Mary Ruth K. Wilkinson and Heidi Wilkinson Teel. This Canadian mother-daughter team offers a wealth of expertise with a unique perspective in their annotated bibliography listing more than 750 titles. Their insightful comments introduce each chapter and are also interspersed among the annotated book titles. A few less frequent topics appear in the chapter titles: Restoring, Introducing Young Children to Books, Picture Books, Music, Poetry, Bible Stories, Fairy Tales and Mythology, Fantasy and Science Fiction, Animal Stories, Historical Fiction, Good Stories, Prolific Authors for Avid Readers, Alternatives to "Young Adult" Fiction, Helps Along the Way to Good Books, and References. A box with one or more salient quotations graces the page before each chapter. Annotations vary from single sentences to paragraphs in length. Many entries refer to other titles by the same author, either specifically by name or generically.

Mary Ruth Wilkinson has taught "a literary and Christian approach to children's books," and has shared them together with her daughter, for more than thirty years. Chapter one demonstrates the value of The Story, and other significant stories, in providing context for life decisions. Chapter two gives several practical suggestions for employing literary experiences with the very young child. The last chapter on helps includes hints for Family Reading, The Family Library, Parental Guidance Suggested (with a section on The Potter Problem), Helpful Books and Articles, Magazines, and Sources of Good Books. The References include many comments about the sources cited. Separate indexes list authors, illustrators, and titles.

More than half of the titles included do not appear in the other booklists by Hunt, Lindskoog, McCallum & Scott, or Wilson [cf. CLJ, 7 (2/3):10-12]. Titles focused on Canada receive special attention. The wisdom displayed in the essay sections more than outweighs the very few typographical errors in this valuable tool. Highly recommended for all libraries as a supplement to the other standard tools.

Donna W. Bowling, Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics Library, Dallas, Texas

**Six ready-to-go storytimes / Gail Benton, Trisha Waichulaitis.** LCCN 2002005806. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2003. KIT, 1555704492, \$59.95. Adult (for Elementary, Preschool). Rating: 4

027.62'51. Storytelling--United States; Children's libraries--Activity programs--United States. 239 p.; 1 audio CD-ROM.

Easy to use and full of ideas describes *Six Ready-To-Go Storytimes* with interactive 30-minute storytime programs. Each of the six thematic chapters begins with an outline, followed by a read-a-loud book suggestion, fingerplays, prop or puppet script, patterns, songs, and activity sheets. An accompanying CD, featuring fourteen songs, provides music to use with each storytime including a "welcome song" to begin each time.

From novice to seasoned veterans, this resource provides school and public librarians, preschool and elementary teachers, daycare providers and home-school parents ideas and all-inclusive directions to ensure an active, welcoming storytime. Public libraries will likely see active circulation from home schooling families as well as daycare and teachers.

Leroy Hommerding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida

## 200's—Religion

**What is the evidence for/against the existence of God? / sponsored by the Faith and Science Lecture Forum; director Jody Danneman; produced by Bryan Gartman.** Worcester, Penn.: Gateway Films, 2002. VID, 1563646196, \$19.99. Adult. Rating: 4

211. God--Proof. 1 video, col. 155 min.

The debate presented in this video enables the viewer to clarify his/her thoughts regarding God's influence in the world. By presenting evidence for and against the existence of God, Craig and Atkins present a wealth of material for consideration. William Lane Craig, with doctorates in philosophy and theology, has written widely on reasonable faith, the Big Bang cosmology, and theism. Peter W. Atkins, with a doctorate in chemistry, has written university-level chemistry textbooks and on the interface of science with religion. The debate, moderated by William F. Buckley Jr., is lively and entered enough on specific points that the viewer comes away with having been challenged.

Recommended for academic library collections on science and religion, and in public libraries

for contemporary discussion of science and religion. Adult discussion groups are sure to have much for deliberation and can divide the discussion presentation into three segments: for, against, and follow-up points.

Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida

**When godly people do ungodly things : arming yourself in the age of seduction / Beth Moore.** Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002. HBB, 0805424652, \$19.99. Adult. Rating: 5

220.5. Spiritual warfare. 302 p.

Unique in its subject, treatment, and conclusions, Beth Moore's book is relevant, practical, and deeply challenging for all in the body of Christ. It has often been said that Christians are the only animal species that crucifies its wounded, and it is this topic that she so ably and compassionately treats. She has a wonderfully intimate way of talking straight to the reader as in a dialogue, making readers feel as if they were her most trusted friend and she is completely safe with them. In so doing the hard things she shares, many from her own personal experience, lose their rough edges that otherwise would bring denials and defensiveness.

The disciplined writing came as a consequence of reader reaction to her previous books: *Breaking Free* and *Praying God's Word*. She discovered through letter research and personal interview several areas of commonality in those who had been seduced by Satan even while being godly people. This considerable treatment has three sections: a warning of danger, a prescription for avoiding seduction, and a treatment process for those who have fallen. Significant, also, is the way she gently yet firmly carries the reader along, even the somewhat resistant (as I was) who prefer not to read about evil. Her case studies are well encapsulated into 16 clearly defined characteristics of the process of seduction. She warns about the fragile balance which must be maintained between spiritual passion and biblical knowledge: in spending time in the Word to prepare a sermon or lesson compared to spending time in the Word to hear and love the Giver of the Word.

As Moore found it difficult to write the book briefly so it is hard to review it briefly. I kept asking where the book could be divided into two or even three books: I am sure her editors did the same. The sheer size of the book could put many readers off; and it is not one of the bedside variety. Working through it is a spiritual

discipline in itself but invaluable in its results. If one cannot manage the whole thing, at least the last part might be helpful for any church leadership group which deals in church discipline. I think it highly probable they will be hooked and read it from cover to cover; so packed with piercing gems and gracious wisdom as it is. There is gentle humor, in your face confrontation, and mature godly counsel all shot through with humility and grace. There are many quotable statements but my favorite has to be from page 127; "God says yes to us as often as His purposes allow Him to; but when He does say no, He comforts us with His promises."

This book is not one to be given to the newborn Christian, but to those who have walked the way enough to be humbly grateful for the keeping power of God. It is specifically written to those who may feel impervious to Satan's assaults, or judgmental of the fallen, and especially to those who know their vulnerability and seek to shore up the defenses.

Rosalee Stent, Retired Missionary, Lamplighter Reviewer, Church Librarian, Avid Reader, Dallas, Oregon



**Understanding the Bible / John Stott. Rev. ed., LCCN 2001046120. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001. HBB, 0801012295, \$16.99. Adult (High school), Rating: \*5**

221.6'1. Bible--Introductions. 168 p.

With time and talent a jigsaw aficionado produces an attractive picture. Noted Anglican theologian John Stott capably uses a similar talent in this new edition of *Understanding the Bible*. Stott's succeeds capably at his aim to use the prism of the Bible to show us an enlarged vision of Jesus Christ. Purpose, geography and history, the story of the Old and New Testaments, message, authority, interpretation, and use form the seven main parts of this book. Along with attractive photos, maps, and fittingly placed, relevant scripture passages from the NIV, the seven main parts fit together into an engrossing whole. A concluding index provides a satisfying finale.

John Stott's analytical writing requires active, independent thinking from his audience. He has not attempted an exhaustive study of the Bible but rather an overview which draws the reader into the picture. This author does not mind if you disagree with him on certain points; rather, he seeks through closely reasoned argument to persuade you to love the Lord and His Word. *Understanding the Bible* will interest high school through adult readers. A multi-use book, areas of interest include: public, school, and church libraries; individual and group study; home schooling.

Donna Eggett, Freelance Author, Radford, Virginia

**Peter and Paul / directed by Robert Day ; produced by Stan Hough ; story by Christopher Knopf and Stan Hough. [Universal City] : MCA Universal Home Video , 2003. VID, 1563646285, \$39.99. Adult (High school and middle school). Rating: 5**

225.9'22. Bible. N.T. Acts; Peter, the Apostle, Saint; Paul, the Apostle, Saint; Bible films; Church history. 2 videocassettes (VHS) (194 min.) ; sd., col. ; 1/2 in.; includes study guide.

This dramatic presentation brings to life the precarious existence of early Christianity. The epic network television mini series from the late 80s follows two key leaders—Peter and Paul—together and separately, through three epochal decades. The viewer witnesses the stoning of Stephen, the road to Damascus, their encounter in Jerusalem, their conflicts over how the word of Christ should be spread. Paul's travels to Asia Minor and Greece, Peter and Paul's clashes over Jewish law, and Peter's decision to follow in Paul's courageous footsteps enable the viewer to see both the challenge and influence of Jesus in one's life.

Recommended for public library collections offering historical drama and a movie title worthy of inclusion because of Emmy Awards. Features include closed captioning in English, and a Spanish language track with or without English subtitles. The chapter titles, and titles when geographic location changes, enable even junior high youth to readily understand and follow the story and events.

Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Ft Myers Beach, Florida

**God : a good father / Michael Phillips. Shippensburg, Pa.: Destiny Image, 2001. HBB, 0768421233, \$16.99. Adult (High school). Rating: 4**

231. God. 152 p.

This title introduces the idea that God as our Father remains unknown to many Christians—that fatherhood is obscure. Interesting thought. Phillips suggests that because Jesus came in the flesh as man, the chasm that separates man from God doesn't exist between Jesus and man. He further asserts that "we stop short of the very thing Jesus said was His deepest heart's desire—that we know His Father as He did." Then he sets out to prove that is true.

In 39 short chapters of three to four pages the reader is taken through every conceivable (so it seems) thought about the fatherhood of God—Abba-Father, the world's most loving Daddy, discovering whether or not God is really good, etc. Some chapters end with a prayer and most leave you encouraged to pursue a relationship with Him. He addresses the lies of Genesis, i.e., independence (which says we don't really need God) and fear (God is going to punish you. Hide from Him) which keep us from a deep relationship.

This book, meant to be read contemplatively and without too many stops and starts, is devotional in nature. Recommended for adults and older teens and would work well in church libraries.

Helen Hunter, Freelance Writer/Editor, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

**Elijah among us : understanding and responding to God's prophets today / John Loren Sandford. LCCN 2002000367. Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 2002. PAP, 080079393X, \$14.99. Adult. Rating: 3**

231.7'45. Prophecy--Christianity. 248 p.

"This is perhaps the most exciting age in all of history as God moves His players into position on the chessboard of history," writes John Loren Sandford, author of *Elijah Among Us*. This book is a sequel to his earlier work, *The Elijah Task* (Logos Int'l., 1977).

In *Elijah Among Us*, Sandford explores the prophetic office and explains why he believes we live with end-time prophets. His work reveals an underlying concern that the church and lay people frequently pursue "a personal word" from prophets that borders on using prophets as diviners or fortune tellers.

He explores word definitions, using Hebrew text, and identifies what he feels are prophetic requirements, such as self-discipline, prayer, and Bible study for those working in the gifts of prophecy.

The book is divided into three sections. The first examines the history of the prophetic office and how God talked to humankind through the prophets. The second describes the functions of the prophetic office and includes warnings, personal words, words of knowledge, and dreams and visions. Part three highlights the purposes and tasks of prophets today. The index is reader friendly, while the bibliography shows the depth of his research.

The book is informative and well written.

Gail Welborn, Freelance Writer/Reporter, Everett, Washington

**Jesus on trial / James Montgomery Boice, Philip Graham Ryken; with a foreword by David A. Skeel, Jr. (Focal point series.) LCCN 2001007330. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2002. HBB, 1581344015, \$12.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

232.96'2. Jesus Christ--Trial. 125 p.

Those who judged Jesus were actually judging themselves. What a powerful premise. Using Black's Law Dictionary and other secular sources, Boice and Ryken explore the judicial process Jesus was exposed to while on Earth the first time. This topic has been explored before and well researched, however this book also provides the reader with a theological lesson regarding Jesus and His divinity and humanity.

It also shows how the Father God was involved in the trial. Within every chapter the authors turn to the reader and force the reader to come to terms regarding their own spiritual condition. The readers are asked to consider if they are ready for their trial.

Short, riveting chapters compel the reader on to the next chapter. Facts and research are never provided out of context or without explanation. The reader never gets lost in the factoids but in fact is drawn in to the whole mistrial of Jesus. Without being overly dramatic the authors present the suffering of Jesus at the hands of the people in power then. This book would be great to read during the Easter season. It will help one appreciate what Christ did for us.

*Bianca Elliott, Teacher, Linwood, Kansas*

**Scribbling in the sand : Christ and creativity / Michael Card. LCCN 2002023277. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2002. HBB, 0830823174, \$16.00; CDR, 0830823034, \$20.00. Adult. Rating: 5**

233'.5. Creative ability--Religious aspects--Christianity; Christian life. 166 p.

Michael Card's written work (he also wrote a song under the same title) on creativity, art, and the Christian journey is as lyrical, emotive, and profound as many of his songs. He's accurate in calling *Scribbling in the Sand* a discussion, because he constantly invites the reader's interaction as he describes biblical personalities—Noah, John, the prophets, Jesus—and various contemporary examples that add more facets to the discussion. His personal vignettes and slices of his song lyrics weave in and out of the text. Card gives significant space to the role of community in the expression of artistic creativity. The chapter, "Letters to Christian Artists," brings in the insights and contemplations of five men from diverse backgrounds. The final two chapters contain a prompting for readers to discover how to give of their creativity, and eleven succinct suggestions, which Card calls advice, for getting practical about using the creative being God has molded within us, His creations.

From the explanation of how he came to title his book *Scribbling in the Sand* to his "practical advice" on how to exercise God-given creativity, Michael Card magnetizes a reader's attention. He is genuine, humble, and candid in sharing his own questions while seeking to understand the subject. Card's own experiences add authenticity to the book, but don't take center stage or skew his focus on the place creativity does and should take in a Christian's journey of worship and obedience. Anyone with a leaning toward writing, music, or the arts will be stimulated by and absorbed in his sharing of ideas, his examples, and his single-minded concentration toward worshipping the Creator using all of one's creativity. Card's writing is

descriptive, gentle yet intense, and wholly pleasurable to read. Those who enjoy his songs will appreciate his stylistic and excellent writing, as will anyone interested in the topic of creativity, the arts and how these interplay with a lifestyle of following Christ. However, expect to be challenged to move forward in the expression of creative skill—Card's words won't leave you sedate and sleepy.

*Karen Schmidt, Freelance Writer, Marysville, Washington*

**The seven churches of Revelation rediscovered / . Worchester, Penn.: Gateway Films, 2002. VID, 1563646447, \$19.99. Adult (High school). Rating: 5**

236'.9. Bible--Prophecies--End of the world; Bible--Prophecies; End of the world--Biblical teaching. 1 video, 40 min., color.

The Seven Churches is a video for public library collection for anyone interested in seeking to study biblical end-times and the significance of the book of Revelation. Host David Dunn takes the viewer to Turkey for a firsthand visit to the seven cities addressed in the book of Revelation 2-3. The historic comparisons between ancient and modern times, and the meaning of Scripture's words enable both an appreciation for the natural beauty of Asia Minor and the relevance of Revelation for today.

Private and religious high school and college instructors in religion or the humanities will find this docudrama useful for discussion and reflection. The map illustrations and real life scenes will spark an interest among youth to enable consideration of Revelation's message.

*Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Ft Myers Beach, Florida*

**Light in the shadow of jihad / Ravi Zacharias. LCCN 2001008181. Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah, 2002. HBB, 1576739899, \$12.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

239. Terrorism--Religious aspects--Islam; War--Religious aspects--Islam; Jihad; Islamic fundamentalism; Islam and politics; Religion and politics. 121 p.

Many times powerful information is shared in few words. Such is the case with *Light in the Shadow of Jihad* by Ravi Zacharias, renowned theologian and apologist. He takes the reader back to September 11, 2001 and shares answers to pressing questions such as, Where was God—and on whose side? Is this true Islam or a pollution of it? and so forth. In a conversational manner, Zacharias helps the reader to begin to understand God's view regarding this tragedy. Using easy-to-read passages to clarify his position, he delves into the Biblical response to September 11th. While written primarily to comfort and clarify, there is also a teaching component which readers searching for answers may not benefit from in the book. The reader is looking for answers and they are provided but not in an easy to determine fashion all the time.

Zacharias, at times, wanders from the main theme and goes into apologetics mode, leaving the reader with confusion regarding what the theme of the chapter really is. Short, powerful chapters attempt to convey the essence of Christianity's answer to bad occurrences. Adults interested in apologetics or comfort may find this book helpful.

*Bianca Elliott, Educator, Linwood, Kansas*

**130 questions children ask about war and terrorists / Stephen Arterburn, David Stoop. LCCN 2002283287. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2002. PAP, 0842370644, \$6.99. Rating: 4**

241. Children and war; War--Miscellanea; War--Religious aspects--Christianity; Terrorism--Miscellanea; Children's questions and answers. 151 p.

*130 Questions Children Ask* is a timely resource and valuable resource for teachers and parents as they respond to children's reactions to war and terrorism. While the questions are those children ask, the answers are ones fifth graders can read, and answers parents/teachers can use to help deal with younger children's fears and concerns. Questions range from "Do we need gas masks in our home?" to "Is it wrong to hate Osama Bin Laden?"

Of particular help is a section of twenty family activities, and one offering family devotions for times of war. The Bible is used in some of the answers and a section offers comforting Bible memory verses.

Recommended for public library children's collections offering contemporary issues. Christian librarians can add to bring both life and faith to this timely discussion.

*Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Ft Myers Beach, Florida*

**Walking wisely : real guidance for life's journey / Charles F. Stanley. LCCN 2001054681. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002. HBB, 0785272984, \$24.99. Adult. Rating: 5**

241'.4. Christian life--Baptist authors; Wisdom--Religious aspects--Christianity. 243 p.

In the prologue to Charles F. Stanley's most recent book he establishes that wisdom will help one walk wisely. Without wisdom man can only walk unwisely. He enumerates the expectations one can have if he chooses to walk wisely: contentment, courage, confidence, peace, progress and prosperity. Walking unwisely is also a choice and the harvest from the choice will be conflict, consternation, disappointment, disillusionment, and discontentment.

Using that succinct bit of information as a springboard for the remainder of the book, Stanley clearly establishes the difference between the wisdom of the world and God's wisdom. The former is grounded in man's fallen

nature, the latter in the “new nature” given at the time of spiritual rebirth.

The reader could pick and choose chapters depending on his need for wisdom in a particular area—Wisdom for: confronting temptation; choosing friends and business associates; building deep, lasting, godly friendships; healing a damaged relationship; in times of conflict and criticism; and for establishing the ultimate relationship.

The book is appealing because it is so readable, but one of the things I particularly like, especially from “big” name authors is that Stanley is transparent about his own search for wisdom. He freely uses anecdotes from his life and his church to illustrate his points. The book is full of practical suggestions for finding wisdom and making the right choices.

I highly recommend it for church libraries and public libraries.

*Helen Hunter, Freelance e Writer/Editor, Cedar Rapids, Iowa*

**His redeeming love / Jonathan Edwards; compiled by Judith Couchman and Lisa Marzano. (Life messages of great Christians.) LCCN 2001045459. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Vine Books, 2001. PAP, 156955112X, \$9.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

242'.2. God--Love--Meditations; Devotional calendars. 153 p.

During the 18th century, Jonathan Edwards, drawing on his deep dependence upon God, fueled the Great Awakening. Many modern Christians also have been awakened by Edwards and his message about our sin-hating, mercifully redeeming God. A thirty day devotional, *His Redeeming Love*, gives the reader a chance to share in this awakening. Each day's devotion contains a brief thought, an echoing scripture, an excerpt from Edwards' writings about God's love and mercy, questions to consider, and a prayerful response. The book closes with a listing of Jonathan Edwards Resolutions: “Knowing I am unable to do anything without God's help, I humbly entreat...”

Devotionals are an ever popular genre, with a multitude of volumes. His *Redeeming Love* stands out among devotionals. A gem for friends of Edwards, this book is an enjoyable, comprehensible introduction to readers who have only heard of him, as well as those who aren't yet aware of him. Without losing Edwards' closely reasoned thoughts or his style, the compilers, Judith Couchman and Lisa Marzano have edited his writing for today's reader. Divided into two sections, *The Way to Redemption*, and *The Way to Love*, His *Redeeming Love* aids all thinking people. A versatile book, it will find a place in religious and secular libraries, the pastor's study, church library, and the Christian home.

*Donna Eggett, Freelance Writer, Radford, Virginia*

**A simple gift of comfort / Jane Kirkpatrick; photography by Lisa H. Sorensen. LCCN 2002002887. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 2002. HBB, 0736909257, \$12.99. Adult. Rating: 5**

242'.4. Consolation; Encouragement--Religious aspects--Christianity. 64 p.

*A Simple Gift of Comfort* is an update of Jane Kirkpatrick's *A Burden Shared*. It is an appealing, encouraging-to-read gift book which will remind readers of a sixty-four page “thinking of you” hardcover greeting card.

“Healing Words for Difficult Times,” proclaims the sub-title. Throughout the book Kirkpatrick speaks as if she and the reader sit across the table from each other, sipping cups of tea. She begins by saying, “I want to give you words of wisdom... comfort... joy... endurance... words to nourish your soul...” She goes on to mention sorrow, loss, dreams unfulfilled, and change. Scripture verses add credibility and reinforcement to her gently-spoken advice.

Photos by Lisa Hollister Sorensen, an award-winning photographer, add to the allure of the book throughout its five sections. She includes small, simple, homey pictures with muted colors and a pleasing non-glare finish easy to look at.

*A Simple Gift of Comfort* is an ideal gift for a good friend who needs comfort and hope. It is also well-suited for the church or home library. Librarians can suggest it to a patron passing through a life-storm. For home use, a book of this caliber merits a place on the coffee table where one can pick it up and reread snatches again and again, or to offer to a guest who needs encouragement.

*Betty M. Hockett, Writer/Speaker/Teacher, Newberg, Oregon*

**Heights of delight / Dick Eastman. Ventura, Calif.: Regal Books, 2002. HBB, 0830729461, \$12.99. Adult. Rating: 5**

248.3. Worship. 178 p.

Dr. Dick Eastman, president of *Every Home for Christ*, writes a small book with a powerful, profound, yet simple message. God created people to worship. Worshiping God brings God into our midst. The Japanese translation of Psalm 22:3 reads “When God's people praise Him, He brings a big chair and sits there.” Whatever the problem or need, whether global or local, worshiping God is an important key of intercession. Dr. Eastman traces seven important steps of worship saturated intercession that help people focus on God with new passion.

This is the type of book that excites the reader with new purpose and devotion by encouraging readers to find out how worship brings joy and transforms every situation. God answers the worship of his people with miracles that cannot be understood or explained apart from His

power. Read how a 200-year-old omnu tree mysteriously explodes, not once but twice; or how a monastery disappears in fire. Find out how worship is an important key of revival. As Eastman quotes A.W. Tozer, “Revival is a sudden bestowment of a spirit of worship upon God's people.” This compelling book is for everyone who wants to be part of a new surge of revival. Learn how to pray big prayers.

*Paula Stewart Marks, School Principal, Bend, Oregon*

**Answers to prayer / by Charles G. Finney; compiled & edited by Louis Gifford Parkhurst, Jr. LCCN 2002002714. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002. PAP, 0764225944, \$7.99. Adult. Rating: 2**

248.3'2. Prayer--Christianity. 127 p.

Louis Parkhurst Jr. has done a commendable job of taking extracts from Charles Finney's autobiography and compiling a one month series of devotional studies illustrating the ways in which prayer was answered in Finney's life. Each chapter begins with a quote from Parkhurst's edited book on Finney's *Principles of Prayer* (Bethany House) and ends with a question to provoke personal reflection or group discussion.

Although the primary intention of the book is not to stimulate interest in the *Autobiography of Charles G. Finney* (Helen Wessel, ed.; Bethany House), it will certainly do so for many readers. The anecdotes quoted reveal a man honestly and openly sharing his life experiences, including his struggles. When he quotes his successes he does so without seeming proud of them. There is a summary of Finney's life in Appendix C.

Many of the experiences related are most instructive. In chapter twenty-one, on *Prayer and Difficult Decisions*, he relates how he went to Rochester to serve a church there after advice not to go, because he realized as he continued to pray that he was saying no for the wrong reasons.

The danger of any anecdotal work is evident here. Not every experience could be imitated, and some should not be sought or thought to be normative. This is true, for example, in chapter three where he speaks of his experience of the baptism of the Spirit or in chapter fourteen on *Prayer and the Pulpit*. In the latter, Finney's testifying to not doing any written preparation at all before preaching is not good advice, even though his emphasis on coming to the pulpit in a spirit of prayer and dependence on the Spirit is. The lack of scriptural reference in many chapters is not helpful in this regard.

*Rodney Stent, Former Missionary to Pakistan, Adult Sunday School Class Teacher, Dallas, Oregon*

**God at work : your Christian vocation in all of life / Gene Edward Veith, Jr. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2002. PAP, 1581344031, \$14.99. Adult. Rating: 5**

248.4. Vocation. 176 p.

Here's a title for career and family growth collections in public libraries. In *God at Work*, Veith unpacks the biblical teaching about the doctrine of vocation, emphasizing now what we should specially do with time or career, but what God does in and through our callings. The spiritual framework for thinking about these issues can help to balance collections dependent on self-help therapies and self-chosen platitudes.

Clearly meant to challenge the reader as a worker, as a citizen, in the family, and in vocation, this book will probably do well by word-of-mouth referral. Veith is co-author of several books on Christianity and culture and a frequent conference speaker.

Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Ft Myers Beach, Florida

**A heart after God / Elizabeth M. Hoekstra. LCCN 2001005672. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002. PAP, 0764225480, \$10.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

248.4. Christian life. 188 p.

Want practical Scripture applied to everyday events? Seeking a guide to guide reflection? How people expressed love for the Lord is the outline for the forty meditations in the ten chapters of *A Heart After God*. Hoekstra offers a reflective journey wherein the reader can welcome the Lord at the center of one's life.

Each chapter in Hoekstra's book is divided into four readings—heart, soul, mind, and strength—demonstrating how the biblical characters placed the Lord at the center of their lives. Concluding each day's reading is a prayer for drawing closer to the Lord.

Prayer groups can utilize the opening Scripture, or parts of the reflective readings. Adults seeking a guide with meditative readings may find this draws them to the Lord. Church reading areas offering resource titles for its members can add this easily read title with confidence. Public libraries can include this in reflective spiritual reading.

Hoekstra is founder of Direct Path Ministries as well as a former RN with a concentration in psychology.

Leroy Hommerding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida

**A heart for God : learning from David through the tough choices of life / Rebecca Manley Pippert. LCCN 2001061946. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2002. PAP, 0830823417, \$13.00. Adult. Rating: 5**

248.4. Christian life; David, King of Israel. 236 p.

Rebecca Manley Pippert, who once worked as a field worker for Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, is now an internationally known speaker and writer. She has given keynote speeches at many conferences, including Billy Graham's, and her books have been translated into more than twenty-five languages. Pippert is best known for *Out of the Saltshaker & into the World*, her book on lifestyle evangelism, but I predict *A Heart For God* will soon catch up. In it, as the subtitle says, she shows us what we can learn from David's life, but instead of focusing on the same old angles of adultery, murder, and rebellious children, which Christians sometimes feel they know only too well, she focuses on his years in the wilderness running from a vengeful and murderous Saul, what he learned from it, and what we, in turn, can learn from him.

Pippert's insights on David are fresh and thought-provoking and each of her chapters end with questions that encourage the reader to personally apply what she's taught so far. Throughout, she shows readers how David brought all of his life - his sin, his anger, his grief, his joy - to God in honest openness, and how by doing so, he developed "... 'a heart like his' - a heart that draws its life moment by moment from the living God, our Creator and Redeemer". Her conclusion is that the same thing is possible for us, if we approach life the same way. We, too, can have a heart for God.

Betty Winslow, Bowling Green Christian Academy, Bowling Green, Ohio

**God's eye view : worshiping your way to a higher perspective / Tommy Tenney. LCCN 2002283123. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002. HBB, 0785265600, \$22.99. Adult. Rating: 3**

248.8. Christian life; Spiritual life--Christianity. 211 p.

From a reluctant waitress to a back stage pass, Tommy Tenney brings us to a full orb view of worship; one way to seeing things from God's perspective. Written with uncomplicated vocabulary and style, each of the chapters contain much practical information to guide into attitude and life-changing magnification of God.

Among the more interesting chapters is, "How to Make a Fool Out of the Devil," picturing him as the world's greatest tattletale. Everyone can remember the neighborhood busybody who could not wait to give evidence to the higher ups about some misdemeanor. Tenney likens this one to Satan and his race to the front door bell, while the offender instead takes the short cut to the back door and into the kitchen, where, seated

on Mom's lap, he confesses and asks forgiveness.

In his discussion of Job in Chapter seven, the author points out that, according to Old Testament culture, Satan thought he had destroyed Job's ability to worship when he had been deprived of all his sacrificial animals. Readers are then led to see God's gracious provision when he tells Job's 'friends' to bring animals to Job so that they may be sacrificed on their behalf. Such insights into familiar biblical narratives give the book its freshness and clarity.

This is a book well worth reading and applying not only in corporate formal worship but in our responses to everyday activities, routine or exceptional.

Rosalee Stent, Retired Missionary, Church Librarian, Avid Reader, Dallas, Oregon

**Mary's prayers and Martha's recipes / Tommy Tenney. LCCN 2002280713. Shippensburg, Pa.: Fresh Bread, 2002. HBB, 0768420598, \$17.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

248.8. Spiritual life--Christianity; Christian life. 187 p.

In *Mary's Prayers and Martha's Recipes*, Tommy Tenney takes two of his biggest concerns, forging together the passion for God with compassion for man, and creates a work that is a practical primer in accomplishing his goal. Tenney builds on his previous title, *Chasing God, Serving Man* (Destiny Image, 2001), where he set the premise that we need both Marys and Marthas in the Church.

In his new work, Tenney has constructed a resource book, a how-to that answers many of the questions Christians have about pursuing God and providing service to the body. He begins by building an inspirational foundation, using compelling classics from the past. Many heroes of the faith such as Amy Carmichael, George MacDonald, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Hannah Smith, are highlighted. At the conclusion of each moving story, Tenney adds a Reflections and Recipes section that offers practical suggestions to overcoming the subject of that person's contemplations.

The book is divided into three sections: Mary's Prayers, Martha's Recipes and a Resources portion. In the first segment, Tenney explores classic thoughts on prayer and pursuit. He then supports it with contemporary thought on the same subject. The second segment speaks to the challenge of equipping the saints for the work they are now impassioned to pursue. The third part bursts with a storehouse of resources: a list of devotional books, a compilation of ministries nationwide containing addresses, telephone numbers, and their web sites, and Internet resources.

Tenney's book will itself be an excellent resource when it comes to applying the principals of living out one's faith through service to others. It is full of insightful advice for the layperson and clergy alike. Highly recommended.

Cathy M. Elliott, Freelance Writer, Anderson, California

**Character matters! : raising kids with values that last / John and Susan Yates. originally published as: What really matters at home, Word, 1992., LCCN 2002021549. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002. PAP, 0801064104, \$12.99. Adult. Rating: 5**

248.8'45. Family--Religious life; Character--Study and teaching; Christian education--Home training. 196 p.

John and Susan Yates take on a timely topic that has great relevance—character. It isn't difficult to see how our country is showing bankruptcy when it comes to character—all one has to do is turn on the news or glance at the headlines. The authors early in their book recognize how our country has shifted in values since WWII, with the shift going to a more self-oriented society. And though society is a contributor towards shaping and influencing our children, there are other factors that form character, the parent is still one of the most influencing factors. However, with all these considerations in mind the authors point out that it is God who truly fine-tunes a life.

It is quite clear children learn more through example, so much of the book is directed to adults, particularly parents, describing ways in which readers can show, instead of tell, their children what character is all about. Each chapter concentrates on one particular character component and concludes with study questions, making this a resource adaptable to group studies, such as a Sunday school class. And yet, this book is not just for parents—it is beneficial to anyone who is concerned about developing Godly character.

Each author takes turns at a chapter, lending a personal point of view to the material covered. Writing with confidence and experience, being pastors and parents of five children, the Yateses provide a thoughtful guide for developing our children's character, using personal accounts combined with advice and research. There is sound counsel for everyone interested in developing personal integrity. Character does matter, and it does influence how our society functions as a whole.

There is also a leader's guide with chapter questions to use in a group study, along with a Scripture and subject index. A definite consideration for the parental-helps section, although there is much value for those looking to redefine their own personal values, for we are

all role models, influencing whomever we are in contact with.

Pam Webb, Freelance Author, Sandpoint, Idaho

**Faith tango : a liberating approach to spiritual growth in marriage / Carolyn and Craig Williford. LCCN 2002006906. Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2002. PAP, 1578565626, \$10.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

248.8'45. Spouses--Religious life. 177 p.

How do couples stay connected? Do emotions lead us to God? The Willifords open their lives and their married relationship to readers to see how couples can address these questions and others. While not being perfect examples (a plus for readers), they enable readers to assess how everyday activities, including frustration and crisis, become part of the process of growing together spiritually.

The practical steps offered are sure to give hope that growth is possible. Because the steps are offered amidst their real life challenges, spirituality becomes not so much a model but a process a couple does together.

Highly recommended for self-help, marriage and family, and adult growth collections.

Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Ft Myers Beach, Florida

**Is there meaning in evil and suffering? / the Faith & Science Lecture Forum. Worcester, Penn.: Gateway Films, 2002. VID, 1563646188, \$19.99. Adult. Rating: 5**

248.86. Suffering--Religious aspects; Apologetics. 1 video, col., 163 min.

This lively debate by four panelists, Ravi Zacharias and William Lane Craig (Christian perspective), Bernard Leikind (naturalist perspective), and Jitendra Mohanty (Hindu perspective) focuses on diverse and well-prepared worldview perspectives. The friendly, yet challenging exchange between the panelists gives the viewer much to think about regarding the place and meaning of evil and suffering in human life.

With a live audience of 1800 and others linked via satellite and the Internet, the viewer is able to hear and follow varied questions to the panel. The subject is handled with directness and respect as the panelists challenge each other and deal with audience concerns, as well as bring in humor.

The video lends itself to being viewed in one setting or in segments. Adult discussion groups would have a lot to probe. Retreat planners could use as a provocative and challenging session. Public libraries could add to comparative religions or contemporary religious discussion collections.

Leroy Hommerding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida

**Grieving a suicide : a loved one's search for comfort, answers & hope / Albert Y. Hsu. LCCN 2002017264. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2002. PAP, 0830823182, \$12.00. Adult. Rating: 5**

248.8'66. Bereavement--Religious aspects--Christianity; Suicide--Religious aspects--Christianity; Consolation. 180 p.

Suicide is a subject that most of us would rather not consider because it raises such heartrending questions, particularly when the suicide victim is a Christian. Author Albert Hsu is no stranger to the pain and anguish felt by someone who has lost a loved one to suicide. After his father's suicide, Hsu wrestled with the emotional and theological questions that surround suicide, and out of his pain and searching arose *Grieving a Suicide*.

This book—divided into three parts: When suicide strikes, The lingering questions, and Life after suicide—is well organized and covers many of the issues facing loss by suicide. It includes an appendix of resources for suicide survivors and suicide preventions and many footnoted references. Yet the author never loses sight of the compassion and comfort needed for healing as he draws on the resources of faith to point survivors to God and the hope he gives for the future.

A fitting summary of the author's views on *Grieving a Suicide* is as follows, "God doesn't only absorb the pain of grief and loss; he makes a way through it. Because suffering is within the realm of God's comprehension and knowledge, it becomes a point of contact between us and God. If God knows suffering and we know suffering, then we can know God even in the midst of the suffering. God can be known through suffering because he has made himself available to us through it, through opening himself up to the pain and grief of this world" (150).

*Grieving a Suicide* is a book about a very difficult subject yet one that needs to be faced by those who have lost a loved one, their pastors and counselors, and all those who love and grieve with them. An excellent resource for all library shelves.

Ceil Carey, Young Adult Librarian, Public Library, Plano, Illinois

**Counseling in African-American communities : biblical perspectives on tough issues / Lee N. June & Sabrina D. Black, editors; Willie Richardson, consulting editor. LCCN 2002004147. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002. PAP, 0310240255, \$14.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

259'.089'96073. African Americans--Pastoral counseling of. 263 p.

*Counseling in African-American Communities* is not your typical reference book. Unlike other counseling books, June and Black have collected essays from experts addressing specific needs in any community. Four powerful chapters encase the experiences and teaching of respected professionals with years of experience dealing with the topic written to in each section. The four chapters are confronting addictions, confronting family issues, confronting issues of mental health, and confronting other critical issues. Subsumed in these chapters are wonderful, informative, and well written essays with a balanced view of the issue under discussion. In the first chapter regarding addictions, gambling, sex, internet, and other addictions, the issues are discussed with passion and love for the person suffering and the family. One strong point of the book is how a full appreciation of the problem is demonstrated with no toleration for the sinfulness of it. For example, in the mental issues chapter depression is discussed openly and the possible causes for it. Along with a frank discussion of the medicines is a helpful biblical insight. This insight is not just added for show but demonstrates people are a mixture of body, soul, and mind.

There are many issues candidly handled in this book, including straight forward discussions and suggestions. There is a chapter regarding demon possession. The practical, biblical advice and counsel provided is excellent and worthy of reading by counselors, patients, and family members. While written for the African-American community, this book is helpful for all ethnicities.

Bianca Elliott, Teacher, Linwood, Kansas

**Designer universe : intelligent design and the existence of God / Jimmy H. Davis and Harry L. Poe. LCCN 2002510714. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002. PAP, 0805424474, \$12.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

261.5'5. Religion and science. 252 p.

Jimmy H. Davis and Harry L. Poe follow up their previous, title, *Science and Faith: An Evangelical Dialogue*, (Broadman & Holman, 2000) with this study of intelligent design as an evidence for the existence of God. Davis is Professor of Chemistry and Poe Professor of Faith and Culture, both at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee.

Davis and Poe begin with a historical overview of how religion and philosophy have viewed the subject of design up to its eclipse by skepticism and Darwinism in the nineteenth century. In separate chapters on cosmology, mathematics and physics, and chemistry and biology; they describe the recent developments renewing interest in design as an evidence of the Creator.

Despite the skepticism of both liberal and conservative Christian groups about intelligent

design, the authors guardedly defend the utility of the argument: "Satisfactory empirical evidence may be present to conclude that a Designer made the universe but . . . we receive this knowledge by faith." They hope that the current discussion of design in nature may restore a recognition of other ways of knowing reality besides empirical science and even point the way to a reintegration of our knowledge of physical and spiritual reality "rooted in the ancient Hebrew understanding of the soul made in the image of God."

This book provides an excellent survey of the history of the idea of design and of the scientific developments that have brought design back to the fore in our postmodern era. The tables, graphs, and line drawings are adequate to help understand the chapters on science and the index includes the names of persons and major topics. The opening chapters on the theological and philosophical background of design may be difficult for many adults, but the fascinating sections on the sciences are accessible to students who have mastered their high school science courses.

David Haddon, Writer, BS, UC Berkeley, IVP, Christianity Today, Redding, California

**A better way : rediscovering the drama of God-centered worship / Michael Horton. LCCN 2001043968. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002. HBB, 0801012341, \$19.99. Adult. Rating: 3**

264. Public worship; Public worship--Biblical teaching. 249 p.

The music wars are but a symptom of a larger issue, namely "What is Worship?". Horton's book, *A Better Way*, seeks to answer this question. His thesis is that our current concepts of worship have been conditioned far too much by the world's philosophies and far too little by the Scriptures. What we do in worship has been determined more by what will appeal to people today than by what God requires. It has become subject to the passing fads of the age, so much so that already many in the newest generation reaching adulthood are ceasing to resonate with what contemporary worship offers.

Horton acknowledges that he approaches the subject from a reformed viewpoint. He sees the weekly worship service as a covenant renewal ceremony, bringing to our consciousness the glorious drama of God's works. He examines preaching, along with the sacraments of baptism and communion, all from the perspective that they highlight what God does for us. Along with this Horton critiques so much of what passes for worship today, but which majors on what we are doing for God. Other parts of worship, such as prayers, reading of Scripture, and singing hymns and songs should equally emphasize what God does, rather than what we want or feel. One of the most stimulating chapters, and most of them

are such, compares the worship variations in churches with their eschatology.

The main thesis of this needs to be seriously considered by not only pastors but all involved in developing the worship traditions and practices in their churches. From that point of view it is a book to put in appropriate people's hands or to use as a study project by the church board or music committee!

Rodney Stent, Former Missionary to Pakistan, Adult Sunday School Teacher, Dallas Oregon.

**William Sheppard : Congo's African-American Livingstone / William E. Phipps. LCCN 2001040945. Louisville, Ky.: Geneva Press, 2002. PAP, 0664502032, \$22.95. Adult. Rating: 5**

266'.51'092. Sheppard, William H. (William Henry), 1865-1927; Presbyterian Church in the U.S.--Missions--Congo (Democratic Republic)--History; African American missionaries--Congo (Democratic Republic)--Biography; Missionaries--Congo (Democratic Republic)--Biography; African American Presbyterians--Congo (Democratic Republic)--Biography; Presbyterians--Congo (Democratic Republic)--Biography; African American missionaries--Biography; Missionaries--United States--Biography; African American Presbyterians--Biography; Presbyterians--United States--Biography. 247 p.

**Black Livingstone : a true tale of adventure in the nineteenth-century Congo / Pagan Kennedy. LCCN 2001026096. New York: Viking, 2002. HBB, 0670030368, \$24.95. Adult. Rating: 3**

266'.51'092. Sheppard, William H. (William Henry), 1865-1927; Presbyterian Church in the U.S.--Missions--Congo (Democratic Republic)--History; African American missionaries--Congo (Democratic Republic)--Biography; Missionaries--Congo (Democratic Republic)--Biography; African American missionaries--Biography; Missionaries--United States--Biography. 237 p.

When Pagan Kennedy met William Henry Sheppard as a minor character in another book, she knew the story of this charismatic missionary-traveler-explorer needed to be told.

William Phipps, a professor at Davis and Elkins College, Elkins, West Virginia, was born in Sheppard's home town, Waynesboro, Virginia and previously wrote *The Sheppards and Lapsley* (The Presbyterian Church, 1991), which chronicles the part played by these first two American Presbyterian missionaries to Congo in that country's history.

Kennedy writes about the biographer of Sheppard's wife "engaging in a kind of speculative biography" because of a dearth of sources, then confesses, "I find myself resorting to similar tactics." The drawback of her fascinating telling of the life of an extraordinary man in *Black Livingstone* is this: it appears at times to be historical fiction.

Her inordinate use of such suppositions as "could have," "might have," "perhaps," and "probably" distract from what is otherwise a

wonderfully told tale. A novelist, Kennedy has a great flair for language and description, but she attributes attitudes and feelings to some in the story that cannot be corroborated. For example, she states that the Presbyterian church would not send William Sheppard to Africa without a white missionary to accompany him and be in charge. On the other hand, in William Sheppard, Phipps documents the fact that the church would not send any person alone to Africa.

When Samuel Lapsley volunteered in 1889, the church sent him and Sheppard as co-founders of the American Presbyterian Congo Mission. Each missionary received the same salary and was expected to have an equal voice in mission affairs. Both men wrote of their close friendship. Nevertheless, other writers (including Kennedy) report that a substrata of racism existed, as evidenced by Presbyterian church segregation in the American South.

William Sheppard came to be respected and loved in Congo; he became an expert hunter; he discovered a lake, was invited to join the Royal Geographical Society, and spoke in Exeter Hall in London; he met with two American presidents; he spoke to overflow crowds at churches, schools, and halls throughout eastern America, where he was dubbed Black Livingstone; he stood up against human rights violations and atrocities in Leopold's Congo. He also suffered hardships both in Africa and in his racially segregated homeland.

When Sheppard confessed to marital infidelities in Africa, he was "retired" to America in 1910, and the denomination kept his failing quiet. In 1912 he became pastor of a small church in Louisville, Kentucky, and renewed his traveling and speaking engagements. He and his wife, Lucy, ran a mission in a slum area for years, holding classes and offering the same kinds of services as they had in Africa.

*Black Livingstone: A Tale of True Adventure* is notable for bringing the story of Sheppard to light, but *William Sheppard: Congo's African American Livingstone* is recommended reading for an authoritative biography.

Jeanette Hardage, Freelance Writer, South Carolina

**Secure in the everlasting arms / Elisabeth Elliot. LCCN 2002000900. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Vine Books, 2002. PAP, 1569552940, \$11.99. Adult. Rating: 3**

277.3'02'092. Elliot, Elisabeth; Christian biography--United States. 245 p.

Over her lifespan writer, radio teacher, and popular speaker Elisabeth Elliot has traveled to all manner of places and interacted with diverse individuals. She relates snippets of these travels and people and how they meshed with her journey of faith in a semi-monthly publication, *The Elisabeth Elliot Newsletter*. *Secure in the Everlasting Arms* is a compilation of many of

these articles, most no more than three pages long. The range of experiences and faith lessons Elliot accumulated makes for fascinating reading, and then there's the take-away value—nuggets of eternal truth from Scripture, sometimes quoted by verse and sometimes filtered through other writers or persons. The 59 readings are grouped by general theme such as joy and sorrow, finding contentment, missionary travels, marriage, courtship and singleness, and daily faith.

*Secure in the Everlasting Arms* is enjoyable and productive reading. The short essays are quick to read and usually contain deep or thought-worthy ideas. Readers could use the book within their daily devotions or as an inspirational injection into their daily routines. Most lend themselves to reading aloud for a family or group, and the themes are all-encompassing enough to interest most North American Christians. Those who enjoy Elliot's style or writing will appreciate this book, and so might those who've not yet discovered her distinctive voice and insights. Compared to Elliot's *The Music of His Promises* (Vine Books, 2000; CLJ, 8:1), also a volume of short readings, these seem to be more uplifting and inspiring, and also interesting for the wide range of people and places introduced.

Karen Schmidt, Freelance Writer/Editor, Marysville, Washington

**The Scottish Covenanters / . Worcester, Penn.: Gateway Films, 2002. VID, 1563645904, \$19.99. Adult. Rating: 3**

285.241. Covenanters; Church and state--Scotland--History--17th century; Scotland--Church history--17th century. 1 video, col., 55 min.

*The Scottish Covenanters* introduces the viewer to a seventeenth-century group of Scottish people known as The Covenanters, hundreds of whom died to secure their freedom to worship. Following various prayer or commemorative services in Scotland, along with documentary footage or commentary, viewers become familiar with the major personalities, incidents, and complexities of this struggle to grasp why the Covenanters acted as they did.

Those interested a historical picture of the conflict between church and state, or reasons why the roots of Scottish pride derive from sometimes unfamiliar sources will find in this story video a remarkable movement.

Church groups seeking to understand the opposition of earlier religious will find this insightful. Recommended for large public libraries seeking to include a wide religion collection including minority movements.

Leroy Hommerding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida

**Imagination & spirit : a contemporary Quaker reader / edited and introduced by J. Brent Bill ; foreword by C. Michael Curtis. Bill, J. Brent, LCCN 2002029953. Richmond, Ind.: Friends United Press, 2002. PAP, 0944350615, \$19.00. Adult. Rating: 5**

289.6. American prose literature--Quakers authors; American prose literature--20th century; Quakers--United States; Quakers--Fiction. 257 p.

This anthology offers quality writing from a broad spectrum of Quakers, and there is no comparable title to suggest. All writers included have been published with a mainstream publisher (not a religious house) or have sold widely enough to be well known.

The short, easy-to-read fiction and non-fiction essays seek to get at the mystery at the core of all being. Even if the reader has not encounter a particular writer before, a short commentary on the writer appearing before the essay, offers a wealth of material serving as a comprehensive biographical sketch and an intimate glimpse in how faith was lived out in the writer's life.

Readers are treated to down-home spun tales bringing both tears and smiles as a couple's cat ends its ninth life, as well as direct hitting commentary about the intensity of the opposition to a committed Christianity.

Useful for prayer groups, for adult discussion groups, and for retreat reflection. *Imagination & Spirit* deserves a worthy place on congregation and pastor shelves. Public libraries offering contemporary storytelling yarns will delight a host of readers by including this in the collection.

Leroy Hommerding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida

**Clash of worlds / David Burnett. Grand Rapids: Monarch, 2002. PAP, 1854245708, \$13.99. Adult. Rating: 5**

291.2. Religions; Cults; Philosophy, Comparative; Christianity and other religions; Missions--Theory. 252 p.

David Burnett provides us with an excellent overview worldview studies from a Christian perspective. His most notable contribution is his treatment of a variety of decidedly non-Christian worldviews. In a time when non-Western religions and worldviews are growing in popularity and acceptance, Burnett provides a thoroughly Christian perspective which focuses on the history, themes, and practical functions of the competing worldviews.

Part One of the text begins with two introductory chapters that outline the nature of worldviews and the Christian's need to explore those worldviews. Part Two of the book treats six "traditional worlds" in brief chapters. Here are the historical overviews of secularism, theism, Hinduism, Buddhism, the traditional Chinese worldview, and Islam. The five

chapters that follow these explore the issues involving the changes that must and do occur as a dominant worldview is replaced with another. The New Age movement is treated here, for instance.

Part Four includes three chapters that outline the biblical worldview and explores how worldviews are transformed and communicated.

The intellectual study of worldviews issues has increased significantly in the evangelical Christian church. This book should be included in the basic library of anyone who is engaging in that study for the first time. Likewise, those who have a long-time interest in worldview studies will benefit from Burnett's reasoning and the endnotes he provides at the end of each chapter.

The book has a decidedly academic flair. There are limited graphics and a functional index included.

*Daniel S. Brown, Ph.D., Professor of Communication, Grove City College, Grove City, Pennsylvania*

**Islam at the crossroads : understanding its beliefs, history, and conflicts / Paul Marshall, Roberta Green, and Lela Gilbert. LCCN 2002006672. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002. PAP, 0801064163, \$11.99. Adult (High school). Rating: 5**

297. Islam: Islam--Doctrines; Islam--Essence, genius, nature. 121 p.

The first chapter of *Islam at the Crossroads* quotes the prayer used by Muslims five times a day wherever they are. The book explains the five Pillars (practices) of Islam and its six Principles (beliefs), as well as the three types of Islam. The question of jihad (holy war) is also explored, and the authors distinguish between the violent expressions of this belief and that of moderate Muslims who believe that jihad "has to do with an inner struggle for perfect conformity with the will of Allah."

Of the hundreds of new books on Islam, *Islam at the Crossroads* stands out as an excellent brief primer on a religion about which many Americans are woefully ignorant. It contains a brief history from Islam's beginning to the present time; it includes a chronology and a chart of differences between some Christian and Islamic beliefs, with reference to an internet source for further comparisons. The authors point out the historic second-class-citizen status of Christians and Jews under Islam, wherein they were required to wear identifying clothing (reminiscent of the Jews under the Nazis) and pay extra high taxes.

The three well-qualified authors point out several common misconceptions about terrorists: Most of them are not struggling to better their lot in life. They are well-educated and often wealthy individuals. Violent attacks are not about domination by the West (much as

extremists hate the West) but against all who stand in the way of extremist Islam. Neither are terrorist attacks about U.S. policies toward Israel and Palestine; they are about religion. Extremists "explicitly name and target Christianity, Judaism, and moderate Islam."

Peter Marshall and Lela Gilbert co-authored Gold-Medallion-winning *Their Blood Cries Out* (Word, 1997). Both have authored numerous works. Marshall is senior fellow at the Claremont Institute and the Center for Religious Freedom. Roberta Green is a journalist and historian of Islam. *Islam at the Crossroads* would make an excellent study book, even for high school students.

*Jeanette Hardage, Freelance Writer, Charleston, South Carolina*

**Who is the true Jesus? : comparative analysis of the Jesus of the Qu'an and Jesus of the Bible / . Worcester, Penn.: Gateway Films, 2002. VID, 156364620X, \$19.99. Adult. Rating: 5**

297.246. Jesus Christ--Person and offices; Jesus Christ--Islamic interpretation; Koran--Relation to the Bible. 1 video, col., 154 min.

The dynamic interactive exchange presented in this film is sure to draw in the viewer of *Who Is the True Jesus?* Ally, a Muslim and president of the Islamic Information and Da'wah Center in Canada, and Smith, a Christian with a wide background on Islam and the historicity of the Qur'an, both give meaning and challenge to their side of the issue under consideration. The two-hour debate includes presentations by each with rebuttals and lively exchange. Their dialog is challenging but seasoned with cordiality and humor. Answers to questions submitted by the audience add to this comparative analysis of the Jesus of the Qur'an and Jesus of the Bible.

At a time when interest in Islam is high, this video is sure to be informative for many. The delightful and active discussion will help to keep viewers attention. Public libraries can add to comparative religions or history collections. Congregations could make this available for adult resource shelves. Adult study groups could use this lively debate for discussion for it lends itself to probing specific passages in the Bible and the Qur'an, as well as comments and views about the person of Jesus.

*Leroy Hommerding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida*

### 300's—Social Sciences

**Educating your gifted child / Vicki Caruana. LCCN 2001008605. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2002. PAP, 1581343566, \$12.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

371.95. Gifted children--Education; Education--Parent participation; Home and school. 208 p.

Need practical ways in which parents can ensure their child receives a quality education?

*Educating Your Gifted Child* can help. It also asks parents to reflect on why they do what they do. It shows how to merge Judeo-Christian beliefs with what experts in the field are saying, and urges parents to take into account the spiritual needs of children as educational challenges of gifted children are reviewed.

Caruana has a master's degree in gifted education and taught both gifted and learning-disabled children in public schools before deciding to home school her two sons. The stories from her own experience, and extensive appendices on resources and support groups, are sure to offer encouragement and guidance as parents make educational choices.

Recommended in public library education and parenting collections, and in private schools offering parents resources for review.

*Leroy Hommerding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida*

**An educated choice : advice for parents of college-bound students / Frank A. Brock. LCCN 2002002255. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002. PAP, 0801063868, \$12.99. Adult. Rating: 5**

378.1'98. College choice--United States; Education, Higher--Parent participation--United States. 139 p.

Parents of college-bound students will appreciate Frank Brock's new edition, *An Educated Choice*. Although Brock, President of Covenant College, starts out a bit stodgy and academic, by book's end his philosophical wisdom will win readers. Better yet, it will inform and assist parents in their objective—matching their student to a college.

Brock's use of charts, graphs, along with his personal experiences with his own children and students at Covenant College, lend credibility to this volume. He begins by proclaiming the virtues of college (hint: bigger is not necessarily better) and many chapters later, ends by citing his worries of college criteria. In between these chapters parents will discover their role in this phase of their child's life, how to evaluate a college, and how to help their child get ready and involved in the process during their high school years. Further, he includes a good but rather disturbing chapter on teen lifestyles at college.

Brock has found a necessary niche in the literary marketplace. In researching Amazon.com only 6 of the 32 results under "choosing a college" were comparable to Brock's book; and in ChristianBooks.com only 4 of the 22 results were comparable. Considering that 80% of high school students enter college, this type of book is an important tool for both parents and students.

*An Educated Choice* is a must read for parents of college-bound kids.

Ginger McGrath, Freelance Writer, Leavenworth, Washington

### 600's—Technology (Applied Sciences)

**Date—or soul mate? How to know if someone is worth pursuing in two dates or less / Neil Clark Warren. LCCN 2002283566. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002. PAP, 0785265392, \$14.99. Adult. Rating: 3**

646.7'8. Mate selection; Dating (Social custom); Man-woman relationships. 201 p.

In the light of statistics on marriage, it doesn't look good for singles looking for longevity in relationships. Dr. Neil Clark Warren, clinical psychologist and relationship counselor, tries to sweeten the odds with his pre-marital guide *Date—Or Soul Mate?* Dr. Warren admonishes readers to know themselves first before they try to get to know potential marriage partners. So many people, he says, marry out of desperation, convenience, or even out of superficial attractions, then later regret their decision.

Most of this compact book contains chapters on compiling lists for qualities and even though it almost seems like creating a dating shopping list, there is value in deciding what a person desires, and cannot tolerate in a mate. Warren goes so far as to indicate that a person can decide whether or not to pursue a relationship after the second date.

Another aspect of the book is Dr. Warren's website [www.eharmony.com](http://www.eharmony.com), which gives participants the opportunity to take a personality test. The site is an extension of the book, and both used together should prove to be helpful in venturing into the search for a fulfilling relationship. This book is a consideration for counselors, pastors, and those seeking pre-marital advice.

Pam Webb, Freelance Writer, Sandpoint, Idaho

**Spanking, a loving discipline : helpful and practical answers for today's parents / Roy Lessin. LCCN 2002002715. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002. PAP, 0764225634, \$8.99. Adult. Rating: 5**

649'.64. Corporal punishment--Religious aspects--Christianity; Discipline of children--Religious aspects--Christianity. 108 p.

Is spanking a form of child abuse? Does spanking promote violence? Not necessarily, responds minister and author, Roy Lessin. With frequent references to various Scripture passages, Lessin addresses those questions in *Spanking, a Loving Discipline*. He faces the issue of child abuse squarely in his first chapter, "Why is there so much opposition to spanking?" The next three chapters deal with the Why, When, and How to give a spanking. Chapter five demonstrates "Obedience that produces happiness." He closes with "Common questions parents ask about spanking" and "Selected Scriptures."

Lessin believes that spanking is necessary because a good, loving God teaches spanking. He contrasts God's truth regarding spanking with two opposing types of child abuse: (1) Emotional response, resulting in physical harm and injury; and (2) Selfish love, resulting in permissiveness and neglect of correction. Lessin cautions against times when spanking is not called for. Two reasons for spanking are willful disobedience and wrong (rebellious) attitudes. Lessin insists that parents should never give a spanking in anger, but instead with grief. Among his seven points on How are: prompt, private, and followed by demonstration of repentance and reconciliation. A properly administered spanking brings closure and maintains the relationship between parent and child. It is much less emotionally damaging than cruel, demeaning comments or angry withdrawal of affection. Failure to give proper discipline often results in hurt to others as well as to the child. Because only parents have the continuous close relationship with the child, Lessin does not advocate that grandparents or baby-sitters spank a child.

In this 2002 edition, Lessin expanded and updated his 1979 *Spanking, Why, When, How?* (Bethany House). The new section on common questions is a welcome addition. He specifically addresses this thoughtful and positive book to Christian parents. In "A Personal Note" the author encourages readers who have not made a decision for Christ to do so. Highly recommended for church libraries and opponents as well as proponents of spanking.

Donna W. Bowling, Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics Library, Dallas, Texas

**Proposal planning and writing / Lynn E. Miner and Jeremy T. Miner. 3rd ed. LCCN 2002025791. Westport, Conn.: Oryx Press, 2003. HBB, 1573564982, \$39.95. Adult. Rating: 5**

658.15'224. Proposal writing for grants--United States. 205 p.

Lynn and Jeremy Miner, active in seeking grants, are partners in a consulting group specializing those involved in the process of grant writing. Public and private organizations both can find much of use in this step-by-step guide. Specifics include finding public grant funds at the national and state level, and private funds via foundations. Practical leads are offered by helping grant seekers become aware of directories, databases, web sites, and resources to explore to locate a government or private program for funding requests.

One chapter offers letter proposals for contacting private and corporate foundations, and several chapters concentrate on writing government proposals. The closing section deals with writing and editing techniques, and grant review decisions.

Of particular help for small and medium sized public libraries that can afford only a few grant seeking resources. All collections can benefit as the advice and directions offered enable novice grant seekers to see an overview with specifics to get moving.

Leroy Hommerding, Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida

**The paradox of power : a transforming view of leadership / Pat Williams with Jim Denney. LCCN 2002108166. [New York]: Warner Books, 2002. HBB, 0446529389, \$18.95. Adult. Rating: 5**

658.4'092. Leadership; Williams, Pat. 237 p.

Williams writes a power-packed leadership book with so many athletic, business, and leadership experts a reader will be exhausted after the first chapter. Williams' unabashed dedication to Jesus Christ is clear on almost every page. His straightforward, unblinking look at what real power is, using the life of Christ, is invigorating. While he quotes people who are not Christian he uses them to demonstrate his points regarding leadership. His quotes of Maxwell, another leadership teacher, are never too many and the mutual fan club is not distracting.

In the introduction Williams explains to the reader that they will be using the greatest leader of all, Jesus Christ. He informs the reader he is a Christian but that one doesn't have to be a Christian to follow the leadership examples of Christ. Williams has a premise that there are seven paradoxes to leadership exemplified by Christ. The paradoxes are seeing what isn't there, daring to be a fool, daring to be weak, dying to live, encouraging failure, embracing crisis, and being a servant. Then, weaving in powerful examples and quotations, he goes on to explain the apparent paradox. He isn't afraid to be vulnerable. He talks freely about his failures and shortcomings in professional and private life. He has accomplished much but he also recognizes it cost him. The choice to be a leader is not presented as an easy decision for the reader. Williams references Stephen Covey, a Mormon, as well as other non-Christian individuals.

Bianca Elliott, Educator, Linwood, Kansas

### 700's—The Arts and Recreation



**Quilts from the quiltmaker's gift : 20 traditional patterns for a new generation of generous quiltmakers / Joanne Larsen Line, Nancy Loving Tubesing; illustrations by Gail de Marcken, story text by Jeff Brunbeau. LCCN 00102128. New York: Scholastic, 2000. PAP, 1570252033, \$26.95. Adult. Rating: \*5**

745.5. Patchwork--Patterns; Quilting--Patterns. 144 p.

Jeff Brumbeau's book *The Quiltmaker's Gift* (Pfeifer-Hamilton, 2000), a wonderful picture book about a quiltmaker who teaches a king about what is really important in life, inspired this book, *Quilts From the Quiltmaker's Gift*, by Joanne Larsen Line and Nancy Loving Tubesing. It not only offers patterns and instructions for twenty of the quilt blocks from the original book, but it also provides visual glossaries which show the anatomy of both quilt blocks and quilts, "Wellness for Quilters" (ergonomic and safety tips for quilters), a chapter on quilting basics (including tools & techniques, color & fabric selection, cutting & piecing/pressing, settings & assembly, and borders & finishing), and a list of resources (suggested reading, Internet resources, including one that was inspired by the original book itself, and addresses for quilting organizations and professional quilters).

You expect wonderful color photos on slick, glossy paper in a quilting book, and this book has them, too, but what takes it from "just another quilting book" to "gotta have it" is the extras that are offered: details about the blocks (alternate names, earliest publication date, bits of history); watercolors from the original book, along with an "Artist's Secrets" sidebar for each block, written by the illustrator, Gail de Marcken; a "Quilter's Design Challenges" sidebar for each block, filled with ideas to make it your own original design; and photos of at least two different quilts made with each block, along with information about the quilters who produced them. This book is worth a look, even if you've never read *The Quiltmaker's Gift* or quilted a day in your life.

Betty Winslow, *Bowling Green Christian Academy, Bowling Green, Ohio*

### 900's—Geography, History, & Biography

**Kenn Kington : I'm confused / .**  
**Worcester, Penn.: Gateway Films, 2003.**  
**VID, 156364630, \$19.95. Adult. Rating: 4**

921. Kington, Kenn; Confusion. 1 video, 150 min., color.

Filmed live at the Ultimate Comedy Night in Houston, Texas, Kenn Kington shares a message about the various ways life seems confusing to him. Public library collections offering self-help and motivational videos can add this with confidence, as adults will relate to the everyday realities as they laugh along with Kington.

The program lends itself to being viewed in one setting or broken up into segments. Also included on the tape is a musical comedy by Los Angeles' Paul Aldrich, and a short prop comedy of Florida's Mike Williams.

Leroy Hommerding, *Director, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida*

**The blood of the moon : understanding the historic struggle between Islam and Western civilization / George Grant.**  
**LCCN 2001056238. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002. PAP, 0785265430, \$13.99. Adult. Rating: 4**

956. East and West; Islam and politics; Middle East--Politics and government. 207 p.

In 1991 this book was published by Wolgemuth and Hyatt, with the sub-title "The Roots of the Middle East Crisis." This was about the time of the first Gulf War. Much has happened since then and it was necessary to update the book in the light of these developments, culminating in the events of September 11, 2001. The main changes are additions to chapters one and two and a new chapter between the former chapters two and three. The additions in the first two chapters reflect the increasing number and intensity of questions arising out of actions and words proceeding from Muslim sources. The new third chapter gives a good summary of Islam, with especial reference to whether or not it is a religion of peace.

The new sub-title "Understanding the Historic Struggle Between Islam and Western Civilization" accurately conveys what the book is about. The main thrust of the first two chapters is that we in the West are failing to heed the lessons of history. This naturally leads on in the second part of the book to a consideration of those aspects of history that relate to the Muslim world and to the interactions between that world and other empires. Included is a whole chapter analyzing the religious wars (jihad) waged by Muslims in the past. Also there is a chapter showing how various rulers of predominantly Islamic lands are seeking to revive their glory, for which purpose they are not adverse to adopting pre-Islamic, pagan elements. Iraq's Saddam Hussain is a notable example.

In the third part of the book Grant is concerned to show that the West, in general, underestimates the Middle Eastern and Muslim mind-set. He exposes the fallacies in many of the peace initiatives, based as they are on a false optimism concerning the reasonableness of everybody deciding to live in peace. This leads to the last main chapter, the ninth, in which American policy towards the Middle East is summarized by reviewing the foreign policies of two related presidents, Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Although this seems somewhat dated, the main point is that the right approach must be based on a true fear of the Lord.

Anyone wishing to understand why Muslims and the Middle East are the way they are will greatly profit from Grant's presentation. The book has a useful glossary, mainly of Muslim terms, and a substantive bibliography.

Rodney Stent, *Former Missionary to Pakistan, Adult Sunday School Teacher, Dallas Oregon.*

**Inside Afghanistan / by John Weaver.**  
**Weaver, John, LCCN 2002028851.**  
**Nashville: W Publishing, 2002. PAP,**  
**0849943922, \$14.99. Adult. Rating: 5**

958.104'6. Church charities--Afghanistan; International relief--Afghanistan; Afghanistan--Politics and government--1989-2001; Afghanistan--Politics and government--2001-; Afghanistan--Description and travel. 201 p.

On September 10, 2001, the United Nations called an emergency meeting of foreign relief workers in northern Afghanistan to discuss evacuation plans. A suicide bomber killed General Masoud, leader of Northern Alliance forces against the Taliban, the day before, and many expected the Alliance to collapse.

News of the terrorist attacks on the United States reached Afghanistan the night of September 11. The next morning John Weaver, a leader of relief and development programs for Christian relief organization Shelter for Life, and a few of his co-workers were surprised by the sound of UN planes taking off. They had not been notified of the evacuation.

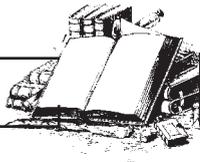
Ten days after accompanying co-workers to the Tajikistan border, Weaver returned to his post, determined not to desert a needy people. He recounts the sorrow, anger, and embarrassment at the attacks expressed by Muslims who told him, "We don't believe that evil suicide bombers, who kill innocent people in the name of Allah, go to paradise as a reward for their wickedness."

Shelter for Life workers, including native Muslims, found themselves distributing relief materials and funds for governmental and other organizations that had fled the country. Grain-for-work programs have improved living conditions for the many victims of war, drought, and earthquakes, through the building of roads and latrines, the reopening of schools, and other public works projects.

An Arabic speaker who said, "We Christians are often lousy examples of what we say we believe," inspired the author to be a different kind of helper in Afghanistan. John Weaver accepts the fact that, as a Christian, he cannot proselytize. He insists, however, that "what we can do speaks more loudly than what we can say."

Among the deluge of 9/11 books, *Inside Afghanistan* provides genuine insights on conditions, people, relief and development programs, and the character and faith of one young man who would rather be there than anywhere else. He tells poignant stories of courage and terror, with history, humor, and faith thrown in for good measure.

Jeanette Hardage, *Freelance Writer, Charleston, South Carolina*



300's—Social Sciences

**Festivals of the world : the illustrated guide to celebrations, customs, events, and holidays / Elizabeth Breuilly, Joanne O'Brien, Martin Palmer; consultant editor, Martin E. Marty. LCCN 2001059876. New York: Checkmark Books, 2002. HBB, 0816044813, \$29.95. Reference (Adult, High school). Rating: 5**

394.2. Festivals; Fasts and feasts.

*Festivals of the World* presents 150 full color photos, thirty original artworks, and twenty full color maps plus tables and information boxes. This illustrated guide is sure to be of help to high school students and adults seeking insights into the celebrations, customs, events and holidays of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Taoism, Jainism, Rastafarianism, the Baha'i Faith, Zoroastrianism, and Shinto. Layout of the text invites easy reading.

Of particular significance is the recognition given to the adaptations and variety the cycle of festivals witnesses, e.g. festivals in Buddhism have separate sections for the Southern Buddhist, Eastern Buddhist, and Northern Buddhist calendars, or for the differences and divisions of Christianity.

Each of the authors offers strengths, e.g., O'Brien in comparative religion and near Eastern religions, Palmer in Chinese and Japanese studies, Breuilly in language, and Marty on religion in North America.

This is a title sure to see wide usage in public libraries, and an important edition for high school public and private school libraries.

Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida

500's—Natural Sciences & Mathematics

**Math on file : algebra / James C. Alexander. (Facts on File science library.) LCCN 2002029710. New York: Facts on File, 2002. LLB, 0816046328, \$185.00. Reference (High school, Middle school). Rating: 4**

512. Algebra--Study and teaching--Activity programs. 1 v. (various pagings).

*Math on File* is a collection of units aimed for the collaborative high school group work. Those reviewing algebraic concepts may find the levels enable some junior-high students to handle them with comfort, and are of infinite value to remedial level college students. Over 250

illustrations help to visualize the basics, and 155 problem sets can be used in class or for individual out-of-class assignments.

Within each unit, explicit reference is made to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics standards. Also included is an index listing the Standards, and identifying the units addressing them.

James Alexander presents reproducible units which are divided into basic number manipulations, basic algebraic manipulations, functions, grouping, patterns, data, and matrices. The variety of level, style, and subject matter, prepared by a team of people, can be used as supplements to algebra courses or as calculus preparation. Recommended for teacher resource shelves in both public and private high schools, and in public library collections with heavy algebraic review demand by students and those reviewing basics for various tests.

Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida

**Asteroids, comets, and meteorites : cosmic invaders of the earth / Jon Erickson. Erickson, Jon, (The living earth.) LCCN 2002002434. New York: Facts on File, 2003. HBB, 0816048738, \$55.00. Reference. Rating: 4**

551.3'97. Asteroids; Comets; Meteorites. 256 p.

Erickson starts this fascinating treatise with a discussion of the origin of the solar system and its role in the formation of Earth. After an examination of impacting meteorites and comets in the first 500 million years of Earth's history, he explores the different impact craters on other planets.

Students and general readers will learn about different asteroid belts, along with the possibility and consequences of large meteorites and comets hitting Earth. Finally, he outlines some of the possible defenses we might mount against any future asteroid or comet collisions.

The photographs and drawings in *Asteroids, Comets and Meteorites* enable the reader to visualize the issues. A chapter-by-chapter bibliography steers a course for future research.

Recommended as a highly accessible reference book in geology and earth science for high school students and teachers, and for public library science collections serving high school researchers and general readers.

Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida

**Marine geology : exploring the new frontiers of the ocean / Jon Erickson. Erickson, Jon, (The living earth.) LCCN 2002001295. New York: Facts on File, 2003. HBB, 0816048746, \$55.00. Reference (Adult, High school). Rating: 4**

551.46'08. Submarine geology; Marine biology. 317 p.

Erickson explores theories about the origin of the earth, and gives insightful ideas about the role of oceans and water in the development of plate tectonics in his volume, *Marine Geology*. He looks at different ocean basins, covering both earlier history and changing life forms in these basins. By using knowledge gathered from ocean currents and dredging operations, he uses the idea of continental divide to explore mid-ocean ridges, deep-sea trenches, and submarine volcanoes.

The photographs and drawings make it easy for the reader to appreciate geological wonders. A glossary helps students and readers understand terms like albedo, diatom, and tephra. This reference work can be used by high school students, and offer community college and beginning earth science students a quick overview of current theories and past discoveries. Public libraries can add for both the earth science student and adult readers intrigued about how the earth developed.

Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Myers, Florida

900's—Geography, History, & Biography

**Historical atlas of the Viking world / Angus Konstam. LCCN 2002073518. New York: Checkmark Books, 2002. HBB, 0816050686, \$35.00. Reference (Adult, High school). Rating: 4**

948'.022. Vikings.

Who were the Vikings? Why did they venture outside Scandinavia? These questions and many others are covered in this coverage of the Viking Age spanning almost 300 years (starting around 790 AD) in an easy-to-read format accompanied with 160 full color illustrations and seventy maps. The Table of Contents and Index add to ease of locating specifics, and the Appendix listing Viking & Anglo-Saxon kings make digesting the material practical and understandable.

Drawing upon the latest archaeological discoveries and Norse sagas and mythology, the Vikings come alive. Coverage in the *Historical*

*Atlas of the Viking World*, includes the first Viking settlements and Norse society, Norse mythology, the Viking ships (and of course, Viking warrior), their colonization efforts, and Vikings in popular culture and legacy.

Konstam's command of the subject makes the presentation compelling. His earlier works include *Historical Atlas of the Crusades*, *Atlas of Medieval Europe*, and *Historical Atlas of Exploration*. As a museum professional with degrees in history and archaeology, he gives the topics, e.g. Viking stone sculpture, Viking skalds, and the Icelandic sages, relevance and meaning.

Recommended for high school libraries, and for public library history collections.

Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Meyers, Florida

**Encyclopedia of American history / Gary B. Nash, general editor. LCCN 2001051278. New York: Facts on File, 2003. HBB, 0816043612, \$995.00. Reference (Adult, High school). Rating: 4**

973'.03. United States--History--Encyclopedias. 11 v.

Designed as a reference to the most important individuals, events, and topics in U.S. history, ten volumes cover the 15th century to the present. The *Encyclopedia of American History* is written for secondary and college students, and for the general public. Volume 11 offers a comprehensive index to each volume. The ten volumes' easy-to-read text is enhanced by 750 photographs and 200 maps.

The chronology and major topics addressed follow the architecture of The National Standards for U.S. History. Of particular note for Christian schools and for public libraries seeking to include balanced treatment in the collection, is the place given by general editor, Gary Nash, to religion in the development and life of America.

Leroy Hommerding, Fort Myers Beach P.L. District, Fort Meyers, Florida

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