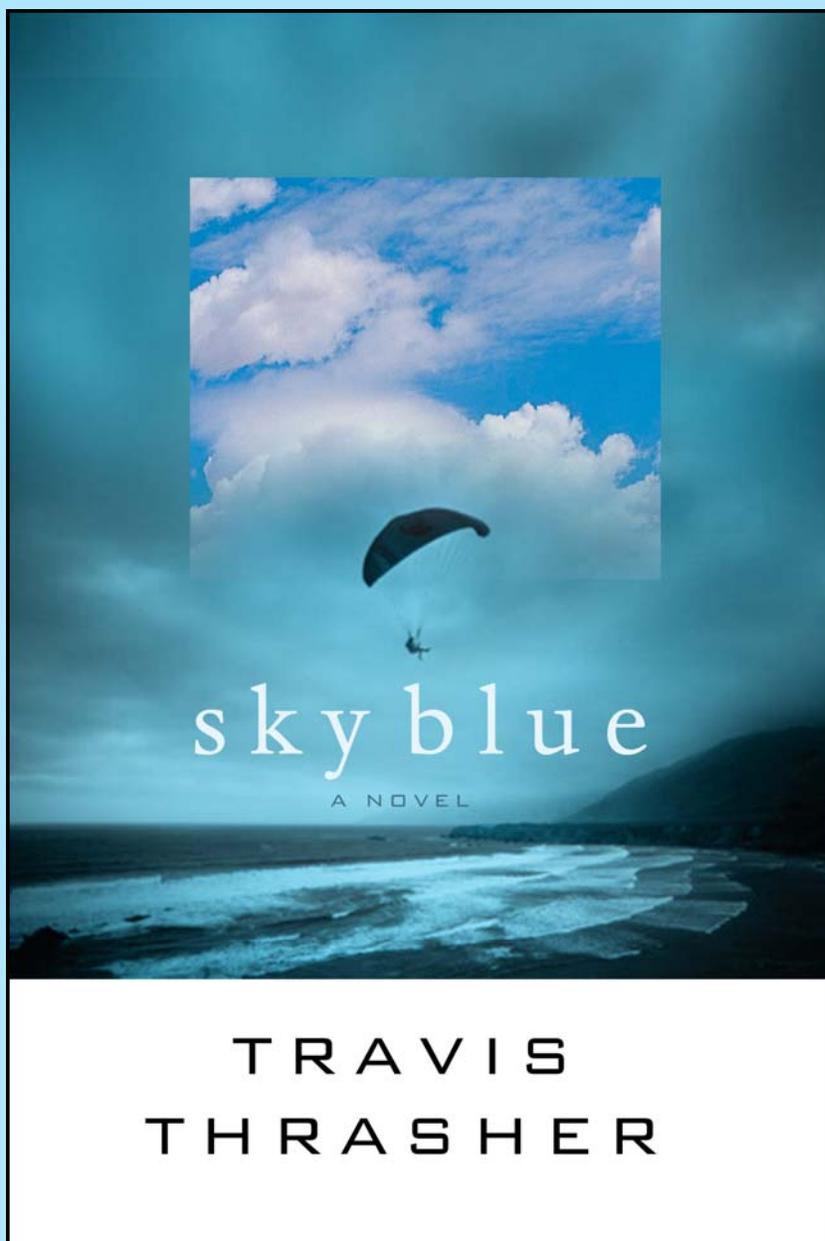
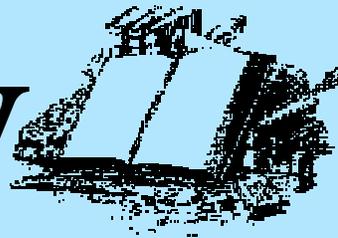


Christian Library

J O U R N A L

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Final Issue

This is the final issue of *CLJ*. After almost 12 years of publication, it is with regret that we cease publication.

Be looking for the core collection for the Christian reader on the *CLJ* site within the next year.

Thank you for your interest and support over the years!

Nancy Hesch & crew

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www.christianlibraryj.org

The purpose of the *Christian Library Journal* is to provide readers with reviews from a Christian point of view of both Christian and secular library materials for the Christian reader. 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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J. R. R. Tolkien, and His Tales of Middle-Earth

by
Donna W. Bowling

Several polls at the end of the Twentieth Century named John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892-1973) as “author of the century” for his monumental *The Lord of the Rings*, first published in three volumes in 1954 and 1955. When the poll results were announced, many critics were appalled that a work of fantasy and its author should be so highly regarded. Others have seen tremendous creativity and worthy moral vision in

this powerful literary work by Tolkien. Previous issues of *Christian Library Journal* have included reviews of works about Tolkien [*CLJ*, 6, 2:44 (Spr. 2001); *CLJ*, 6, 4:44 (Fall 2001); *CLJ*, 8, 2:2-4 (Apr. 2003); *CLJ*, 9, 1:44 (Apr. 2004); *CLJ*, 11, 2:2-6 (June 2006)]. The recently acclaimed movie adaptations of *The Lord of the Rings*, directed by Peter Jackson, have prompted fresh interest in Tolkien’s books themselves. Tolkien’s son Christopher has organized and published posthumously a number of volumes of his father’s unpublished writings about this secondary world of which Tolkien was the “sub-creator.”

Warning! The following reviews contain a number of spoilers for those unfamiliar with the stories.

The hobbit, or, There and back again / by J. R. R. Tolkien ; illustrated by the author. LCCN 67029221. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997.

HBB 0395071224, 9780395071229, \$16.00.

255 p. : ill., maps ; 21 cm.

MS (INT, HS, Adult). Rating: *5

When the wandering wizard Gandalf approaches Bilbo Baggins to recruit him for an adventure, Bilbo has no use for adventures—they make one late for dinner. Bilbo is a middle-aged bachelor hobbit who enjoys his creature comforts. (Hobbits are small persons, about half the height of humans, with hair on their feet as well as on their heads.) But after Thorin and his dozen dwarves explain their need for help in retrieving their treasure that had been stolen by the dragon Smaug, Bilbo reluctantly agrees to join them. His adventure takes him far from his comfortable home in the Shire, over rivers, through valleys and forests, under a mountain (where he finds a ring that can make him invisible), and finally to the Lonely Mountain where Smaug is guarding his treasure. On his journey, he encounters, among others, trolls, elves, goblins, wolves, eagles, spiders, various men, and Smaug himself. After the death of Smaug, and a fierce Battle of Five Armies over Smaug’s treasure, Bilbo returns home a changed hobbit. He has grown in humility, courage, loyalty, wisdom, and self-sacrifice. As Bilbo grows in his character, the humor in his adventure

fades somewhat as the adventure tends toward that of noble quest.

Professor J. R. R. Tolkien of Oxford University was a well-respected scholar in philology (study of languages). It was his love for languages that prompted him to develop new languages and to invent stories that fit those languages. He also enjoyed writing stories for his children. He originally wrote the chapters of *The Hobbit* to read to his children during the 1930s. Reflecting his love for poetry, he included several poems with various moods, meters, and rhyme schemes, which he composed to enhance his story at certain points. When other adults had seen drafts of the story, they recommended it to Allen & Unwin, British publishers. Ten-year-old Rayner Unwin was enthusiastic, and the book was published in 1937. The American edition came out in 1938, and received great praise from various New York reviewers for its fresh originality and creativity. After several reprintings, the publisher requested that Tolkien begin to work on a sequel. The new Hobbit became *The Lord of the Rings*, which is addressed to an older audience. As the sequel began to take shape, Tolkien produced a revised edition of *The Hobbit*, which was published in 1951. Tolkien’s illustrations include black-and-white full-page or half-page line drawings and two different maps on the end pages. Some editions also included some color plates of his paintings. Various more recent editions have used illustrations by other artists. Over the years since it was published, *The Hobbit* has been acknowledged by a number of specialists in children’s literature as one of the best children’s books of the Twentieth Century.

Several dramatic versions, including some musicals, of the story of *The Hobbit* have been produced for use in schools and theaters. In 1978 Rankin and Bass directed an animated adaptation of *The Hobbit* for television that is available in videocassette and DVD formats. Since the spectacularly successful Peter Jackson movie adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings*, there still seems to be some hope that Jackson might also work with an adaptation of *The Hobbit*.

The lord of the rings / J. R. R. Tolkien ; Alan Lee, illustrator. LCCN 2002726623. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.

HBB, 0618260587 (set), 9780618260584 (set), \$80.00

3 v. (xx, 1170 p.) : col. ill., maps ; 25 cm.

Adult (HS, MS). Rating: *5

The new Hobbit grew so long that the publisher decided to publish it in three parts with individual titles. Parts 1 and 2 were originally published in 1954, with Part 3 following in 1955. Each part is also divided into two “books.” Part 3 includes several appendices following the end of the main narrative in Book 6.

Part 1. *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Bilbo Baggins had adopted as his nephew and heir young Frodo Baggins, his orphaned distant double cousin—so they could celebrate their joint birthdays together more conveniently. The guests from all over the community thoroughly enjoy this year’s especially lavish

joint birthday party until Bilbo unexpectedly disappears, leaving Frodo in charge. With some encouragement from Gandalf, Bilbo leaves everything, including his magic ring, to Frodo, and heads off to visit the elves again in Rivendell. Several years later, Gandalf confirms his suspicions that Frodo's ring is actually an evil ring of power that is not safe in the Shire. Together with his faithful gardener Sam, and cousins Merry and Pippin, Frodo and friends encounter several terrifying adventures as they journey toward Rivendell. (The unique Tom Bombadil rescues them from a couple of scary situations.) At the Council of Elrond in Rivendell, Frodo learns that the

"One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,

"One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them"

must be destroyed where it was created, in the Cracks of Doom in Sauron's land of Mordor. Reluctantly, Frodo agrees to accept the task. Frodo begins this journey with his three hobbit friends, two warriors who are men of nobility named Aragorn and Boromir, the elf Legolas, a dwarf Gimli, and the wizard Gandalf. These nine constitute the Fellowship of the Ring. Their travels bring further perils, the most devastating as Gandalf falls into a chasm in deadly combat with a balrog. In Lothlórien, the elven queen Galadriel provides much needed refreshment and special gifts to aid the Company on their way. As Part 1 ends, Sam joins Frodo as they leave the rest of the Company and cross the river to go toward Mount Doom.

Part 2. *The Two Towers*. While Frodo and Sam head east, Boromir is killed defending Merry and Pippin as they are taken captive by evil orcs. Aragorn, Legolas, and Gimli follow the trail of the captives to rescue them. Gandalf, returned from the dead, leads the three hunters to assist in the defense of King Théoden of Rohan. Meanwhile, Merry and Pippin have escaped and accompany the Ents as they confront the traitorous wizard Saruman at his tower of Orthanc. There the hobbits reunite with their friends. As soon as possible, Théoden and his riders prepare to aid Gondor against the onslaught of the hosts of Sauron. While these events unfold west of the River Anduin, Frodo and Sam seek a way into Mordor to destroy the Ring. Sneaky Gollum, who had possessed the Ring before Bilbo found it, offers to help them to get into Mordor. Although warned against Gollum's plan by Boromir's wiser brother Faramir, Frodo and Sam proceed and walk into the trap of the giant spider Shelob. Believing Frodo dead from Shelob's sting, Sam takes the ring and prepares to complete the quest. But some orcs find Frodo before he comes to and take him prisoner. Learning that Frodo is alive, Sam prepares to rescue him.

Part 3. *The Return of the King*. Taking Pippin with him, Gandalf rides at full-tilt toward Minas Tirith to assist the ruling steward Denethor in the defense of Gondor. Disguised as a warrior, Éowyn takes Merry with her as they ride south among the forces of the Rohirrim. Accompanied by Legolas and Gimli, Aragorn takes the Paths of the Dead to gather more warriors to fight Sauron's armies. In the battle at Minas Tirith, after the death of Éowyn's uncle Théoden, Merry strikes the captain of the Black Riders with his specially made sword, and thus

enables Éowyn to kill that "Ringwraith." To distract Sauron's attention and give Frodo space to complete his mission, Gandalf advises Aragorn and the other captains to deploy their forces and confront Sauron's army at the gate of Mordor. Meanwhile, Sam rescues Frodo, and disguised in orc uniforms they head for Mount Doom. Although Frodo is unable to relinquish the ring at the Cracks of Doom, Gollum intervenes, bites the ring off Frodo's hand, and falls with the ring into the chasm. As the ring is destroyed, all Sauron's power crumbles. Gandalf sends some eagles to rescue Frodo and Sam. After Aragorn is crowned as the rightful king of Gondor, he marries the elven maiden Arwen. The four hobbits return home to the Shire and repair the damage done in the meantime by Saruman and his cronies. After Frodo finishes his portion of "*The Red Book*," the ring bearers depart across the sea.

The appendices include: "Annals of the Kings and Rulers," "The Tale of Years (Chronology of the Westlands)," "Family Trees," "Shire Calendar," "Writing and Spelling," and "The Languages and Peoples of the Third Age." Within these appear the explanation that Gandalf was an angel in the form of a man sent to combat Sauron, plus part of the long-delayed love story between Aragorn and Arwen. The script used for elven languages and a quite different script used by dwarves are given in some detail. Some of the "historical" detail in the appendices and throughout the work is expanded in *The Silmarillion*, and further writings published posthumously by Tolkien's son. The index at the end of Part 3 includes references in all three volumes. Hardbound editions of the three separate parts have large foldout maps at the end of each volume. Paperback editions and one-volume editions include smaller maps.

This skeleton of the plot gives little indication of Tolkien's structural parallels, such as his spiral presentation of periods of increasing terror and sense of impending doom followed by periods of greater refreshment. The major persons in the narrative each demonstrate the flavor of their well-developed characters as they respond to significant dilemmas. The crucial factor of choice and the seductive and corrosive nature of power come through loud and clear. Courageous faithfulness to duty and providence combine to accomplish "the impossible." A number of other important moral qualities are suggested in the various commentaries on Tolkien's work. Although Tolkien's Christian worldview permeates *The Lord of the Rings*, there is little religious reference. Tolkien disliked allegory, but at least three of his major characters possess different elements of a Christ figure.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Tolkien included a variety of poems, from long narrative epics to shorter poems in an elvish language that he invented. From among these, the composer Donald Swann chose seven, plus one from *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil*, to set to music for his *The Road Goes Ever On: a Song Cycle*. (Tolkien had suggested a musical style for one song in Elvish.) The published version includes text in Tolkien's elvish script with transliteration and commentary by Tolkien. This song cycle was performed by William Elvin for the Tolkiens' fiftieth wedding anniversary. This music was

recorded, along with some poems read by Tolkien himself, and is still available in cassette format. After the death of Tolkien, his secretary showed to Swann Tolkien's gift to her, another poem, "Bilbo's Last Song." Swann set that poem to music as well and incorporated it in a second edition of *The Road Goes Ever On*. Since then, Pauline Baynes has produced an exquisite full color picture book edition of *Bilbo's Last Song*, placing large paintings of scenes from *The Lord of the Rings* on the right side pages and smaller scenes from *The Hobbit* across the bottoms of the pages.

In the 1978 and 1979, two animated adaptations from parts of *The Lord of the Rings* were produced. The first, directed by Ralph Bakshi as a motion picture, was not as successful as the later one directed by Rankin and Bass for television. However, in 2001-2004 Peter Jackson directed three movies adapted from Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, winning eleven Academy Awards for the final film. These three films are available as a set of extended editions in DVD format. Although Jackson and his staff made several major or minor departures from Tolkien's plot and characterizations, they were generally faithful to his major themes and worldview. As separate works, these movies are excellent. They should lead viewers to the books, but they are no substitute for Tolkien's own writings.

The Lord of the Rings is a powerful fantasy that serves as an example *par excellence* of the concept of the "eucatastrophe" Tolkien suggests in his essay "On Fairy Stories" discussed below.

The Tolkien reader / by J. R. R. Tolkien. LCCN 66008065. New York: Ballantine Books, c1966.

PAP, 0345345061, 9780345345066, \$6.99

1 vol. [xvii, 251 p.] : ill. ; 18 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating: *5

In response to the popularity in the United States of their paperback edition of *The Lord of the Rings*, Ballantine Books offered to bring together several other shorter works by Tolkien and published them in a single volume under the title of *The Tolkien Reader*. For those readers not familiar with *The Lord of the Rings*, Peter Beagle provided a short introduction in his "Tolkien's Magic Ring."

"The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth, Beorhthelm's Son" first appeared in 1953 in a British scholarly publication. This short play in the form of an alliterative poem is an imaginative literary expansion on a fragment of an epic based on an actual battle fought in the tenth century. In it Tolkien demonstrates his professional expertise in the language of that Old English text, combined with his sense of story.

Tree and Leaf (1964) brings together Tolkien's essay "On Fairy Stories" with his short story "Leaf by Niggle" which provides an example of a major point in that essay.

Tolkien first presented his essay "On Fairy Stories" as an Andrew Lang Lecture at the University of St. Andrews in 1939. It was expanded and published in 1947 in *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*, edited by C. S. Lewis. Tolkien refutes the idea held by many of his professional colleagues that fairy-stories are only for children and writing them is unworthy the

attention of genuine scholars. On the contrary, the world of Faërie, or fantasy that includes the element of magic, is as relevant for adults as for children. Since Man is created in the image of God, exercising his imagination to invent a meaningful and consistent secondary world in the realm of Faërie demonstrates his God-given nature as a sub-creator. Fantasy can offer in unique ways elements of recovery, escape, and consolation to its readers. Tolkien terms the consolation of the happy ending, in spite of seemingly impossible odds, as a "eucatastrophe." In his Epilogue he details the "joy" produced when elements of fantasy from secondary worlds are found in the Primary world of real history. The supernatural elements of the Incarnation of Christ, His Resurrection, and the resulting Redemption of man are part of the Great Eucatastrophe of God's intervention that actually occurred in the real world.

The short story "Leaf by Niggle" first appeared in 1945 in *The Dublin Review*, and was subsequently reprinted and translated various times. The artist Niggle has taken a large canvas to paint a landscape that features a particular tree. As Niggle works, he especially concentrates on a certain leaf. His neighbors are unsympathetic with his work. His gardening neighbor Parish would especially like to use Niggle's painting canvas to repair his house. When Niggle departs for his "long journey," his travels take him to a scene that looks familiar. He wishes for Parish whose skills as a gardener could help him to improve the landscape. When Parish arrives, both of them are surprised when the guide explains that the scene with the beautiful tree was created in the mind of Niggle as he painted. Meanwhile, back at his old home, his canvas has been appropriated for more practical use. But when a friend discovers the beautifully painted leaf that had been inadvertently torn from the canvas, he frames the small scrap and later gives it to a museum with the title "Leaf by Niggle." Something of the joy Niggle experiences in his long journey reflects the desire that Tolkien had expressed in "On Fairy Stories" that his own "sub-created" secondary world would in some sense partake of reality. Some observers have seen certain elements of autobiographical allegory in "Leaf by Niggle." (If Niggle reflects Tolkien's creative imagination, does Parish reflect the concerns and objections of his professional colleagues, or maybe Tolkien's own sense of professional responsibility?)

Farmer Giles of Ham was originally written in the 1930s and delivered as a paper on the subject of fairy-stories in 1938, to the delight of the audience. Longer than the usual short story, it was finally published in 1949 with illustrations by Pauline Baynes. It has since been reprinted separately or together with various other titles. *Farmer Giles of Ham*, with lengthy subtitles in Latin and "the vulgar tongue" (i.e. English), has been variously described as a comic fantasy or a satire. Certainly it has many elements of humor, including bilingual puns, and biting references to ineffective bureaucracy. Giles (to use the shortened "vulgar" form of his name) is sleeping peacefully when his dog awakens him with his warning of the impending arrival of a destructive giant. Finally the sensible Giles loads his blunderbuss with powder and anything else handy and fires at the giant's face, driving him away. The unlikely farmer is acclaimed as a hero, and the king presents him with an old sword as a reward. So when a dragon named Chrysophylax

begins to cause trouble, Giles learns that his sword is actually renowned as "Tailbiter," famous for its effectiveness against dragons. Called to duty, Giles persuades the reluctant blacksmith to prepare some armor for him, accepts the advice of the parson to take some stout rope, and proceeds to confront the dragon with his special sword. This dragon learns that knights are not mythical after all! To preserve his own life, the dragon agrees to Giles's terms, and brings much of his treasure back to Ham. His presence there protects Giles and his little community, and Giles later is named king of that region. The practical commoner succeeds when members of the nobility are unable or unwilling to accept responsibility to act.

The Adventures of Tom Bombadil ; and Other Verses from The Red Book, published in 1962, is a compilation of sixteen poems written over the years by Tolkien. Tolkien revised several of these poems, and in his preface he presents them as having been written by various hobbits. He specifically names Bilbo and Sam and suggests that some poems come from the Buckland home of Merry. The poem "Errantry," set to music by Donald Swann in *The Road Goes Ever On*, "is an example of another kind which seems to have amused Hobbits: a rhyme or story which returns to its own beginning, and so may be recited until the hearers revolt." The original version of the title piece was first published in 1934. Although several of these poems are humorous, some have more depth than appears on the surface. The primary appeal of this collection is to those who are already fans of Tolkien and appreciate further glimpses into the life of the Shire, but several of the poems have a broader appeal as well. This book has since been reprinted separately and together with various other titles.

Smith of Wootton Major / by J. R. R. Tolkien ; with illustrations by Pauline Baynes. LCCN 67030683. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967.

HBB, OP.

61 p. : ill. ; 17 cm.

Adult (HS, MS). Rating: *5

Smith of Wootton Major was published in 1967, the last of Tolkien's fairy stories to be published in his lifetime. It has since been reprinted separately and together with various other titles. Although it was published too late to be included in *The Tolkien Reader*, British publishers have included it in collections that include "Leaf by Niggle" or *Tree and Leaf*.

As he prepares for the forthcoming Twenty-four Feast, Nokes, the Master Cook discovers a spice box that contains a small star. His apprentice, known as Alf Prentice, tells him that the star is a "fay" star, from the land of Faery. Nokes, decides to include it, along with twenty-four other small trinkets in the Great Cake for the twenty-four favored children at the Feast. Although no one at the time knows of it, young Smithson swallows the star. As he is singing few months later, the star falls out of his mouth into his hand, so Smithson claps it to his forehead. As he grows older, Smith becomes an especially gifted iron smith in his own right. Over the years he also makes a number of journeys that take him into the marvelous Land of Faery. He finds many delights in the trees and flowers, mountains and valleys, and especially in the singing and dancing with the elven lady who

turns out to be the Queen of Faery. On other visits in that perilous land, he encounters danger from the Wild Wind and is frightened by tall, stern elven warriors. After many years, Smith, now a grandfather, is surprised to meet Alf as he is leaving the land of Faery. Now the Master Cook, Alf explains to Smith that the fay star is needed for another child at the forthcoming Twenty-four Feast. When Smith relinquishes the star freely, and Alf allows him to choose his successor, Smith finally recognizes Alf's real identity.

Smith of Wootton Major illustrates the points that Tolkien made about the nature of Faërie (or Faery, as he sometimes spelled it) and the value of fairy stories for recovery, escape, and consolation. Some readers have seen autobiographical allegory elements in it. Various editions are easily available on the used book market. At this time a paperback edition of this title that includes the excellent original black and white drawings by Pauline Baynes, combined with *Farmer Giles of Ham*, is still in print in the United States. Editions that include the Baynes illustrations are recommended for the casual reader. In 2005, HarperCollins in London published an extended edition, edited by Verlyn Flieger. Following a slightly enlarged reprinting from the original edition with the Baynes illustrations, Flieger provides an essay on the book and other previously unpublished information written by Tolkien himself, plus her own additional notes on the book. This extended edition should appeal especially to Tolkien fans.

After the death of his father, Christopher Tolkien has managed to edit and publish much of Tolkien's creative work that remained in manuscript form. For years his father had hoped to see in print *The Silmarillion* that outlined much of his imagined history of the world in which the hobbit stories are placed. The twelve volumes of *The History of Middle Earth* document various stages in which that history was developed. Recently the son has brought together a narrative of *The Children of Húrin*, from materials included in early volumes of *The History of Middle Earth* and Tolkien's *Unfinished Tales of Numenor and Middle-Earth*. The collection entitled *The Monsters and the Critics, and Other Essays* contains a few major scholarly essays, including "A Secret Vice," which discusses Tolkien's love for creating new languages, and the seminal "On Fairy Stories" discussed above. Christopher Tolkien also published a later edition of *Tree and Leaf* that includes the father's poem 'Mythopoeia.' His father had written that poem for C. S. Lewis to help Lewis understand the truth value in myth. In addition, a few of Tolkien's fantasy stories that were written and illustrated for his children have also been published posthumously, along with their illustrations: *Letters from Father Christmas*, *Mr. Bliss*, and *Roverandom*. Works that are out of print are generally available on the used book market.

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

FYI:

The history of Middle-earth / J. R. R. Tolkien ; ed. by Christopher Tolkien. 12 vol. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983-1996.

v. 1. The book of lost tales, part one. c1983 --

v. 2. The book of lost tales, part two. c1984 --

v. 3. The lays of Beleriand. c1985 --

v. 4. The shaping of Middle-earth. c1986 --

v. 5. The lost road and other writings. c1987 --

v. 6. The return of the shadow. c1988 -- (The history of The Lord of the Rings, part 1)

v. 7. The treason of Isengard. c1989 -- (The history of The Lord of the Rings, part 2)

v. 8. The war of the ring. c1990 -- (The history of The Lord of the Rings, part 3)

v. 9. Sauron defeated. c1992 -- (The history of The Lord of the Rings, part 4)

v. 10. Morgoth's ring. c1994 --

v. 11. The war of the jewels. c1994 --

v. 12. The peoples of Middle-earth. c1996.

Review Rating System

- *5 Outstanding** —a book which impacts someone’s life or thinking
- 5 Excellent**—well written, among the very best
- 4 Good**—definitely worth reading
- 3 Fair**—to be read for relaxation or to meet needs for information
- 2 Poor**—poor writing or editing; read only if very interested
- 1** —What can we say? Not much going for this title.

Recommended with caution (may be used with any of the above ratings)—Note reservations within the review.

Not recommended (may be used with any of the above ratings)—Note problems within the review.

With fiction, the rating includes the quality of plot development/pacing, characterization, sense of time and place, mood and atmosphere, dialogue, depth of perception, sensitivity of writing, use of humor. Be aware that some books are character driven, so character development is extremely important. Others are plot driven, so character development isn’t as critical; plot is.

With nonfiction, the rating includes quality of the information, up to date, stimulates further inquiry, adds to the understanding of the topic, illustrations which are informative and appropriate.

Many of the CLJ ratings are fairly high, most ranging from 3 to 5. The reason for this is that all books are prescreened before being offered to reviewers. With a limited number of reviews, we concentrate on titles which show promise for the Christian library. *Editor’s note.*

Commonly used abbreviations in *CLJ* reviews

LCCN Library of Congress
Cataloging Number

C Canadian Library Cataloging
Number

ISBN International Standard Book
Number

HBB Hardbound book

LGP Large print book

LIB Library edition

LLB Loose-leaf binding

PAP Paperbound book

PBB Paper board book

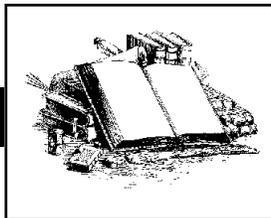
SPR Spiral bound book

CAS Audiocassette

CDR CD-ROM

DVD Videodisc

VID Videocassette



47 beavers on the big, blue sea / written by Phil Vischer ; illustrated by Jared Chapman ; character designs by Dana Thompson. LCCN 2006011450. Nashville : Tommy Nelson, 2007.

HBB, 1400308364, 9781400308361, list price: \$15.99.

E. Stories in rhyme; Cooperativeness--Fiction; Beavers--Fiction; Pacific Northwest--History--19th century--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 24 x 29 cm. + 1 CD-ROM (4 3/4 in.).

PS (PS). Rating : 5.

47 Beavers on the Big, Blue Sea is a beautifully illustrated book with a story providing young readers an entertaining glimpse at a Christian value, "two are better than one." The creator of the Veggie Tales, Phil Vischer takes readers on a beaver trek that shows that working together usually produces better results than working alone. Optimism prevails throughout the book as the beavers encounter a series of problems, starting with escaping a fur trapper, an encounter with a shark, and being lost at sea. If this isn't enough, illustrator Jared Chapman will keep the kids interested through his wonderful cartoon style drawings. Included with the book is a sing-along CD which brings further life to this story. *47 Beavers on the Big, Blue Sea* is a humorous tale with rhythm and beat that is highly recommended.

S. Katherine Lopez

Angelina's birthday / by Katharine Holabird ; illustrations by Helen Craig. LCCN 2005022968. New York : Viking Children's Books, 2006.

HBB, 0670060577, list price: \$12.99.

E. Mice--Fiction; Birthdays--Fiction; Bicycles and bicycling--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 22 x 27 cm.

PS (PRI). Rating : 4.

Angelina and Alice / by Katharine Holabird ; illustrations by Helen

Craig. LCCN 2005022817. New York : Viking Children's Books, 2006.

HBB, 0670061255, list price: \$12.99.

E. Mice--Fiction; Gymnastics--Fiction; Friendship--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 22 x 27 cm.

PS (PRI). Rating : 4.

In *Angelina's Birthday* Angelina prepares to celebrate her birthday with her best friend, Alice. As they ride their bicycles to town and race home, Angelina crashes and ruins her bicycle. Although upset, Angelina remains optimistic and sets out to earn money for a new bicycle. Helping various neighbors, Angelina is happy and proud of her hard work and the money she has earned, but still does not have nearly enough for a new bike. Nevertheless, Angelina cheerfully celebrates her birthday with a party and is surprised by the gift of a new bicycle from her friends and neighbors.

Angelina and Alice is a delightful story of the ups and downs of friendships. When they first meet, Angelina and Alice find they have almost everything in common, especially their love of gymnastics. To her embarrassment, Angelina falls on the playground amidst the laughter of other children. Alice giggles along with the group and leaves Angelina alone. When the teasing continues, she cannot concentrate on her schoolwork, loses her appetite, and feels sick. When the gym teacher asks the children to pair up for the gymnastics show, Angelina is certain she will be alone again. Fortunately, Alice has a change of heart and asks Angelina to be her partner. As Alice helps Angelina, she improves and together the entire group performs beautifully.

These positive storylines teach our children valuable life and friendship lessons. Angelina is a positive role model with whom girls can closely

relate. Moreover, Helen Craig's charming full-color illustrations bring these characters and setting to life. The layout of each page is unique with carefully drawn pictures without borders. The artwork flows gracefully suggesting movement and individuality among the mice. Although best appreciated on an individual basis because of the detail, the books still work well with groups and are excellent discussion starters about the values of hard work and friendship.

Kristine Wildner

Carl's nose / Karen Lee Schmidt. LCCN 2004014670. Orlando : Harcourt, 2006.

HBB, 0152050493, 9780152050498, list price: \$16.00.

E. Mountain life--Fiction; Weather forecasting--Fiction; Weather--Fiction; Animals--Fiction; Dogs--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 29 cm.

PRI (INT). Rating : 4.

Everyone has a calling in life or a gift and Carl feels sure his is using his nose to predict the weather for the citizens of Grimsville. His predictions make him the town celebrity.

Carl's Nose tells the story of a dog with a nose for weather, mostly bad weather. Life in Grimsville for Carl is good until the weather changes to sunny and breezy-everyday. Who needs someone to predict the weather when it is the same everyday-sunny and breezy? Carl sinks into a depression until one day the village alarm awakes him from his nap. Tiny Norman is missing. Can Carl's nose be used for something besides sniffing the clouds?

The text in the delightful book is accompanied by warm, double page illustrations. Each of the characters is friendly and appealing. There are no scary characters in *Carl's Nose*. Carl's nose for the smell of various clouds uses

the correct scientific name for the various clouds found in different types of weather. The only negative aspect of the book is that there are numerous big words used which an adult will need to explain to a child reading the book alone. The message of the book is that we all have talents some are just awaiting the perfect time to manifest themselves—a great message for children of all ages.

Mary McCoy

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Christmas night, fair and bright / by Julie Stiegemeier ; illustrated by Melissa Iwai. St. Louis, Mo. : Concordia, 2007.

HBB, 0758612710, 9780758612717, list price: \$14.99.

E or 232.92. Jesus Christ--Nativity; Stories in rhyme. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 27 cm..

PS (PRI). Rating : *5.

Many children's books omit Mary and Joseph's trip to Egypt. Julie Stiegemeier, however, includes the Egyptian sojourn. *Christmas Night Fair and Bright* shows Mary, Joseph, and Jesus starting toward Egypt, "...to a land they do not know, safely will the child grow...." They plod on "through shimmering desert heat," live in Egypt for awhile, and then obey the angel and return to Israel. Calvary is summarized in one page:

Born our Savior, born to cry,
Born to suffer, born to die,
All our Sin on Him will lie,
On Jesus, born for us.

Christmas Night Fair and Bright has many strengths. The author truthfully and carefully mentions scary events. Adult readers can add other age-appropriate facts. Positive family role models show young Jesus snuggling in bed between Mary and Joseph. Toddler Jesus plays, while Mary and Joseph

work nearby. The title is slightly misleading. True, the birth of Jesus fills the first few pages. Yet, the book contains as much about Egypt, as the "fair and bright" Christmas night.

Melissa Iwai's bright pictures, with appealing images, add a great dimension to tremendous storylines. The last page presents racially diverse adults and children singing Christmas songs by candlelight. The group celebrates, "... His birth tonight, Our Jesus, born for us." The emphasis on "...Jesus, born for us..." gives Jesus a personal dimension. Our Savior is approachable, and came to earth for us!

Roberta Lou Jones

Coming home / Max Lucado ; illustrations by Justin Gerard. LCCN 2006018953. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2007.

HBB, 1581347561, 9781581347562, list price: \$15.99.

E. Islands--Fiction; Brothers--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 31 p. : col. ill. ; 26 cm.

PRI (PS). Rating : 3.

Coming Home, a new picture book by Max Lucado, is a parable on faith—especially the faith necessary for believers awaiting Christ's return. It tells the story of Arion and Argo, twin brothers who've spent most of their lives shipwrecked, with the ship's kindly captain, on the dismal gray island of Terrene. When the captain leaves the boys alone to journey to Bluestone (a lush and beautiful island where he's preparing a place for them), Arion and Argo find it hard to believe he'll ever return. Then Argo decides to venture into the forbidden forest and listen to the words of the animals who live there... words that contradict everything the captain has taught the boys.

Lucado writes simply but lushly (especially when describing the "dirty, dismal gray" Terrene) and *Coming Home* clearly states its main message about trusting when it seems trust is

impossible: "You've got to see with your heart—not your eyes." Its secondary message (that the Captain—or God—gives second chances) is just as clear. Justin Gerard's illustrations, done in grays, blacks, and mustards, nicely complement the action.

Although the boys are supposed to be sixteen years old, they don't look or act that age (they seem, at most, eight or ten). Also, the book's cover indicates it's geared towards readers aged four to ten, but its look may be too babyish for the older end of that group. While the story is nicely told, it's never made clear why the captain needs to leave the boys behind, or why it took fourteen years for him to attempt a return to Bluestone. It's a nice but unspectacular book. (Note: *Coming Home* was originally published in 1992 as "Before It's Too Late" in the book *Tell Me The Story*).

Rosemarie DiCristo

Count my blessings 1 through 10 / Salina Yoon. LCCN 2006003603. New York : Putnam, 2006.

HBB, 0399246606, list price: \$9.99.

E. Counting; Stories in rhyme; Bedtime--Fiction; Prayer--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 21 cm.

PRI. Rating : 4.

A pretty picture book which will appeal to little ones and their narrators, *Count My Blessings* presents a teddy bear family enjoying the goodness in their lives. These blessings include home and possessions, family, friends, animals, and food. A prayer encompassing all these blessings satisfyingly closes this book.

Count My Blessings is generically spiritual and will suit several belief systems while not interfering with those beliefs. Christians will enjoy using it. The colorful, story-telling illustrations feature a human type teddy bear family, mother, father, youngster, and grandmother. Each blessing covers two

pages: a big number, a cameo illustration, and the blessing simply stated in large letters on one page, and facing it a full page illustration. Little ones will soon memorize the words and be able to 'read' for themselves. Sized for little hands, this book will also stretch happily across two laps. If you are in need of a counting book *Count Your Blessings* is worth considering.

Donna Eggett

Dear God, it's me / by Lynn Hodges and Sue Buchanan ; illustrated by John Bendall Brunello. LCCN 2004005899. Grand Rapids : Zonderkidz, 2005.

HBB, 0310706459, list price: \$14.99.

E. Children's songs; God--Songs and music; Songs. 1 v. (unpaged) ; 1 CD-ROM : col. ill. ; 24 x 28 cm.

PS (PRI). Rating : 4.

Psalm 145:18a affirms God is near to all who call on him. Borrowing that scripture, Lynn Hodges and Sue Buchanan wrote *Dear God, It's Me!* In summary, baby elephant and his parents ask God for daily guidance. The book begins:

Before you throw back the covers
and your feet touch the floor,
ask God to show you
what he has in store.

The elephant family enjoys surprises, and playful times. Yet, little elephant sometimes feels, "frightened, sad, or alone." He asks God to "please stay close beside me. Make my heart your own." Mother and Father elephant are good role models, as they love and play with their child.

Make-believe talking and praying elephants think and act almost as humans. For instance, little elephant sleeps in a bed made from tree trunks, and large, exotic leaves. He ends each day on his knees, praying, "Dear God, I

am calling...please listen...it's me...you know all about my day from a to z."

John Bendall-Brunello's four-color artwork shows an interesting life in the jungle. Pages focus on large illustrations, with each set of two pages being one large scene. This format works well with either a group of small children or a cozy one adult per child reading session. A musical CD offers the song, "Dear God, It's Me."

Roberta Jones

The drop of doom / written by Adrienne Mason ; illustrated by Pat Cupples. (Lu & Clancy.) Toronto : Kids Can Press, 2007.

HBB, 1554530350, 9781554530359, list price: \$14.95.

E. Carnivals--Fiction; Crime and criminals--Fiction. 32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

PRI. Rating : 5.

A Kids Can Read storybook, *The Drop of Doom* relates the hilarious carnival adventure of those two intrepid doggy detectives, big Clancy and little Lu, accompanied by that pain, bumbling Jake. Usually Clancy and Lu find lost puppies or shoes, but this time they are riding the wild roller coaster, Drop of Doom in order to stop two nefarious canines who are planning daring robbery..

Written for readers who need a bit of help, hilarious and interest-catching, *The Drop of Doom* leads students happily into learning new words and grammar. All the characters are canine, acting with the buffoonery common to both dogs and humans. The colorful illustrations draw the eye and capably enhance the story. This combination of words and pictures make the events of this story easy to recall. Recommended for all schools, and homeschoolers, *The Drop of Doom* will also be useful for the English-as-a-Second Language class.

Donna Eggett

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A farmer's alphabet / Mary Azarian. LCCN 80084938. Boston : David R. Godine, 2007; 1981.

HBB, 087923394X, list price: \$19.95.

E. Farm life--New England--Pictorial works; Alphabet; English language--Alphabet--Juvenile literature. 61 p. : ill. ; 34 cm.

PS. Rating : *5.

In a modern world overrun with technology, *A Farmer's Alphabet* offers a glimpse into the year 1865. Mary Azarian selected an object for each letter of the alphabet. Then, Azarian made woodcuts to represent life from Apple to Zinnia. In between A and Z, C is for cow, G is for garden, and S is for stove. P, for pumpkin, shows a pumpkin on a porch with two children trick-or-treating. One child is dressed as a skeleton. The text often mentions farm chores. A man feeds his work horses, a woman gathers eggs, and an outdoor scene shows syrup buckets hanging on maple trees.

The black and white illustrations do not need color! Skillful choices show details quite well in the woodcuts. The owl sits in a dark background, quite appropriate for a nocturnal animal. W, for winter, has much white to represent snow and cold. Beige background paper suggests an old-time style. Blank pages alternate with pages showing a letter... one letter per page. This extra blank space allows the woodcuts to be prominent. Type is set in the attractive Cheltenham Old Style.

An "Artist's Note" explains the process of making woodcuts. She describes her joy of having "...a profession of doing woodcuts in a still beautiful rural area."

Roberta Jones

First grade, here I come! / Nancy Carlson. LCCN 2005023313. New York : Viking Children's

Books, 2006.

HBB, 0670061271, 9780670061273, list price: \$15.99.

E. Mice--Fiction; Schools--Fiction; First day of school--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 27 cm.

PRI. Rating : 4.

It was Henry's first day of first grade. At first thought, Henry didn't like first grade, it was nothing like kindergarten. Throughout *First Grade, Here I Come!* Henry compares his first day in first grade to kindergarten. Some of the differences include: having a male teacher, having a science corner, only knowing two other students, learning new things, learning to read, and having a teacher who plays kick ball. As Henry finishes telling his mother about his day, the reader gets the idea that being a first grader is better than being a kindergartener.

Carlson successfully uses the voice of a first grader to tell the story. The book is the fourth in a series of books about Henry's school adventures. Carlson's full-color illustrations are cartoon-like and use cute, dressed animals to represent the characters in the story. *First Grade, Here I Come!* could help children realize that starting a new grade can be exciting and will be different from the previous year. First grade teacher or parents may want to use this book as a read-aloud at the start of a school year.

Jane Mouttet

Fletcher and the falling leaves / by Julia Rawlinson ; pictures by Tiphonie Beeke. LCCN 2005034348. New York : Greenwillow Books, 2006.

HBB, 0061134015, 9780061134012, list price: \$16.99.

E. Leaves--Fiction; Trees--Fiction; Foxes--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 27 cm.

PRI. Rating : 4.

Fletcher the fox is worried; something is wrong with his tree. In *Fletcher and the*

Falling Leaves, it is autumn and Fletcher doesn't understand that trees lose their leaves before winter. As the leaves continue to fall, Fletcher tries many different ways to save his tree. When the last leaf falls, he promises to save it so he takes it home. The next morning he discovers a beautiful sight—his tree is covered with a thousand icicles.

Rawlinsong shares the wonder of experiencing fall for the first time. Her text successfully portrays Fletcher's feelings as he watches his tree lose its leaves. Beeke's pastel illustrations show what is portrayed in the text. The final illustrations, of the tree covered in icicles, is textured. Teacher may want to use *Fletcher and the Falling Leaves* as part of a unit on the seasons or as a read-aloud in the fall.

Jane Mouttet



For God so loved the world! : my John 3:16 book / by Dandi Daley Mackall ; illustrated by Elena Selivanova. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 2007.

HBB, 1591455243, 9781591455240, list price: \$12.99.

E. Bible. N.T. John III, 16--Juvenile literature; Salvation--Christianity--Juvenile literature. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 26 cm.

PRI (PS). Rating : *5.

A delightful picture book, *For God So Loved The World!* happily presents a wide range of the world's children, and their love for and from God. Each two page spread shows the children of culture merrily thanking God in a poem of praise. The words "For God so loved the world" in that particular culture's language and alphabet appears on the right edge of each spread. Languages used are: Spanish, Tahitian, Nigerian, Chinese, Russian, Japanese, Portuguese, English, and French. A fold out spread of all these children praising God together, a repeat of all the translations,

and the full NIV text of John 3:16 agreeably close this pleasing book.

First copyrighted in 1973, *For God So Loved The World!* is a classic children's picture book. Readers will welcome this new edition. Award winning, prolific children's author and speaker Dandi Mackall imbues this picture book with joyful, rhythmical worship. Internationally acclaimed illustrator, art editor, and artist Elena Selivanova's bright, child-inspired, carefree, motion filled pictures catch the essence of each culture and enchant readers of all ages. A multi-use volume, *For God So Loved The World!* will be popular with early readers and little ones who like to listen, as well as their narrators. It will fascinate artists of all ages, help the Bible memory class, become a family favorite for both fun and devotions; make a most appreciated gift, and find a welcome place in all libraries, schools, and classes.

Donna Eggett

Grace for an island meal / Rachel Field ; pictures by Cynthia Jabar. LCCN 2004056433. New York : Farrar Straus Giroux, 2006.

HBB, 0374327599, list price: \$16.00.

E or 811/.54. African-Americans--Fiction; Dinners and dining--Poetry; Blessing and cursing--Poetry. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 27 cm.

PS (PRI). Rating : 5.

Rachel Field, who died in 1942, wrote *Grace for an Island Meal*. Field's poetical lines and Cynthia Jabar's artwork mesh for an enduring, timeless quality. Children and adults show gratitude and thankfulness...qualities that are always in style! Eventually, the family and a few friends enjoy a bountiful meal on a picnic table with beautiful background scenery. Throughout the pages, people bestow various prayer-like blessings on Maine objects. For instance:

Bless the Island-pastured cow
 For her milk which now we pour.
 Bless these berries from the shore.
 Bless every fresh-laid egg and then
 Blessings on each Island hen.

Jabar's illustrations display an ethnic mix of people. Vivid, full-color scenes emphasize details. An almost royal blue ocean is surrounded by flowers of many hues, colorful houses, bright boats, and trees in many shades of green. Small details, such as drying clothes flapping on a line, add interest. Spriggin, a cute dog, looks at chickens, follows the children, and sneaks a sandwich.

Grace for an Island Meal is a great way to remind a child about being thankful for everyday events and things. The large size makes this selection suitable for group story time, too. Sturdy binding will wear well in libraries, or in any book-sharing group.

Roberta Lou Jones

Grandpa's clock / story by Rachna Gilmore ; illustrations by Amy Meissner. LCCN 2005935950. Custer, Wash. : Orca Book Publishers, 2006.

HBB, 1551433338, list price: \$17.95.

E. Grandfathers--Fiction; Clocks--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 28 cm.

PRI. Rating : 5.

Rachna Gilmore, a highly-acclaimed author of fourteen children's books, will not disappoint readers of *Grandpa's Clock*, a touching look at a child's bonding with her aging grandfather. As Cayley watches and works alongside her Grandpa during the building of nineteen clocks, she learns about the mechanics of creating a lasting timepiece. But more importantly, Cayley learns about patience, compassion, and love. When Grandpa has a heart attack and lies in the hospital for days, as her way of helping him heal, Cayley brings him the old

curve-top clock that has been giving her comforting reassurance after nightmares since she was small. She whispers to Grandpa,

Cay ley's here, tock,
 all is well, tock.

Cay ley's here, tock.

All is well, tock.

Finally Grandpa returns home and finishes the "Lord Nelson" he's making for Cayley.

Based on the author's true-life experience with her grandfather, Gilmore's story stirs the readers' empathy. The book also provides exact details of the creation of a grandfather clock beginning with the woodworking to the intricate functioning of the "works." Because of the blend of ethos and technical information, *Grandpa's Clock* will appeal to both boys and girls.

Illustrator Amy Meissner has done an outstanding job of capturing the essence of this story through her lovely, realistic watercolor paintings. With accurate details of the clock making and also the characters that display genuine emotions, Meissner's artwork truly complements this story on aging and relationships. Creating art for children's books is what this talented illustrator loves best.

Floss Craig

Honey, honey—lion! : a story of Africa / Jan Brett. LCCN 2005000449. New York : G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2005.

HBB, 0399244638, list price: \$16.99.

E. Symbiosis--Fiction; Honeyguides--Fiction; Badger--Fiction; Africa--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 24 x 29 cm.

PRI (INT). Rating : 4.

Fact, folklore, and fantasy are blended skillfully in Jan Brett's *Honey, Honey—Lion! : A Story of Africa*. Based on a Botswana legend and the traits of

African wildlife, Brett tells of the honeyguide bird that follows a bee to its nest and then leads the honey badger to the hive so both creatures can enjoy the luscious reward. When the honey badger selfishly refuses to share the honeycomb one day, Honeyguide decides to teach the badger a lesson. The bird involves various African beasts in the scheme, taking the badger on a long scamper through the Botswana bush, only to find a lion instead of a hive.

Brett's famed artistic ability again produces a charming book where the creatures show personality and expression. The badger is lumbering and self indulgent, while the pert Honeyguide is agile. The panoply of other wildlife—guinea hens, termites in a mound, hyenas—are portrayed in their natural habitats with native flora: baobab trees, papyrus and an acacia tree. Brett develops drama and suspense while producing an engaging read-aloud story with lively sound effects. The African theme is embodied throughout the art. The book makes an enjoyable reading experience or an extension for natural history or African studies.

Karen Schmidt

Lucille lost : a true adventure / by Margaret George and Christopher J. Murphy ; illustrated by Debra Bandelin and Bob Dacey. LCCN 2005019632. New York : Viking Children's Books, 2006.

HBB, 0670060933, list price: \$16.99.

E. Lost and found possessions--Fiction; Turtles--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 28 cm.

PRI (INT). Rating : 5.

A double delight, *Lucille Lost* presents in both pictures and words an interesting story based on true events which occurred in Wisconsin. As well, each page has its own sidebar with tortoise/

turtle facts. The Murphys go on vacation, leaving their pet tortoises, including adventurous Lucille the Burmese Tortoise, with friends. Audacious Lucille soon finds a way out of her enclosure, gets lost, and causes several days of great consternation among the humans as they desperately search for her.

Written by tortoise loving author George and Veterinary Murphy, *Lucille Lost* is factual, loving, interesting, and fun. Illustrated by the award winning team of Bandelin and Dacey, the full page, intensely colorful, full-of-movement pictures enliven this story. At one point in Lucille's sojourn she is standing on top of an Indian tortoise shaped mound and meets an old, wise, spirit tortoise who gives her useful advice. Because this book is about a lost pet tortoise, it is unique. The story encourages the reader to learn the facts about tortoises. Family cooperation, love for pets, friendship, and neighborhood teamwork are good side themes. I recommend *Lucille Lost* for all libraries, science classes, and families. It will lend itself easily to a book report, and is pretty enough to make a welcome gift.

Donna Eggett

Mr. Putter & Tabby spin the yarn / Cynthia Rylant ; illustrated by Arthur Howard. LCCN 2005024761. Orlando : Harcourt, 2006.

HBB, 0152050671, 9780152050672, list price: \$14.00.

E. Dogs--Fiction; Cats--Fiction; Neighborliness--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 23 cm.

PRI (PS). Rating : 4.

What a fun story! Mr. Putter's neighbor, Mrs. Teaberry, is a very good neighbor indeed, and Mr. Putter wants to find a suitable way to say thanks. At Mrs. Teaberry's knitting club, Mr. Putter is determined to return the favors, but when Tabby gets her claws in all that

yarn, the results, of course, are disastrous. But the neighbors do find a way to save the day—and the friendship.

This is one of many adventures involving Mr. Putter and his cat, Tabby. Easily read by children in early elementary grades, younger children would certainly enjoy hearing the story read to them. Four short chapters and great illustrations add to the charm of a winning story of friendship and simple problem solving by Cynthia Rylant.

Ceil Carey

Nothing to do / by Douglas Wood ; illustrations by Wendy Anderson Halperin. LCCN 2005026246. New York : Dutton Children's Books, 2006.

HBB, 0525476563, list price: \$16.99.

E. Recreation--Fiction; Play--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 30 cm.

INT (PRI). Rating : 5.

Nothing to Do by Douglas Wood is not the despairing, discouraged lament of the bored child, "There's nothing to do!" This is the rub-your-hands-together, gleeful proclamation of someone with a clear, unplanned day—an uninterrupted space of time where anything is possible. "What do you do when there's nothing to do?" asks Douglas Wood of his reader. The suggested answers are a mischievous mix of observation, exploration, play, or just being in the world. Wendy Halperin's soft pencil drawings of tan and yellow and green colors fit the relaxing haziness of a do-nothing day. She uses eight different natural shapes in repetition to divide the pages into sections. My favorite has a spiral looping across the page opening, gradually increasing in size and dividing the background into eight distinct drawings...except that inside each loop is another little picture. The pages are full of movement and interesting things to puzzle over.

The book is unashamedly about self-

indulgence and enjoying a well-earned day of rest. Most of the pages show solitary pursuits, a few show children playing or day-dreaming together. The text is not narrative, and time doesn't pass. Each page opening shows many different possibilities for spending a free day. The book ends with a bid for spending time with Dad. It's a delightful book that can be read many times with pleasure, stimulating conversation and ideas for spending time with family and friends. Though unstated, there is a reverence for the beauty of the natural world and a child's imagination that flows through text and illustration.

Diane Sekeres

Nuts / Paula Gerritsen. LCCN 2005021491. Asheville, N.C. : Front Street, 2006.

HBB, 1932425667, list price: \$15.95.

E. Mice--Fiction; Animals--Fiction; Storms--Fiction; Nuts--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 29 cm.

PRI. Rating : 3.

It is Autumn and Mouse sets out on a blustery day to gather nuts from a tree quite far from her home. She bundles up against the wind, traveling through fields, meadows, and farms. So intent is she on her task that she is oblivious both to the dangers around her and the warnings of her friends. After much travail she reaches the tree only to find the nuts are long gone. Great is Mouse's disappointment until she reaches home to discover the wind has brought the nuts to her.

In her picture book *Nuts*, Paula Gerritsen finds a balance between her sparse text and expansive pencil-and-pastel illustrations. It is the simplicity of capturing Mouse's mission primarily through the soft, colorful drawings that makes this picture book work so well. This is a lap book, one meant to have shared with a young listener being held

and read to. The humorous touches of Mouse trudging along in her bright red coat and yellow scarf amidst near disasters will make for an engaging read. The initial disappointment of not finding nuts at the tree is tempered by the joy of finding them seemingly delivered to her home once she returns. The front jacket leads out with, "Sometimes things just come your way," goes right in hand with many scripture verses. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him..." comes to mind, and can let little readers know that God watches over us, even when things seem to be not going our way.

Pam Webb

Pajama light / by Gale Sypher Jacob ; illustrated by Mark Graham. LCCN 2005025079. New York : Dutton Children's Books, 2006.

HBB, 0525473858, list price: \$16.99.

E. Fathers and daughters--Fiction; Bedtime--Fiction; Stories in rhyme. 1 v. (unpaged) ; col. ill. ; 26 cm.

PS. Rating : 5.

Pajama Light written by Gale Sypher Jacob and illustrated by Mark Graham is a preschool picture book about a special ritual a little girl and her daddy celebrate together each evening. In anticipation of the evening stroll on the beach together, a little girl dons pink pajamas and matching sneakers, hugs her teddy bear under one arm, and tucks her hand safely within her father's grasp. She sniffs the salty air, skips, and explores along the seaside path, climbs on boulders, and plays with a neighbor's dog. When they reach the shore, she listens to seagull songs and sits peacefully next to her daddy, watching boats sail by, the flashing of a lighthouse light, and the gradual setting of the sun. Daddy shoulders his sleepy daughter, slowly winds his way back through their early evening playground to a warmly lit

home and lovingly tucks his daughter into bed.

Pajama Light skillfully combines story and illustrations to form a charming picture book to be shared and enjoyed. Set along a traditional Maine-like coastline, quality, painted illustrations are softly lit in twilight hues of coral, pink, purple, green, and blue. Mood is reminiscent of innocent days gone by and sweet, misty dreams of total trust in a parent's tender care. Although some rhyming couplets are slightly more rhythmically pleasing (Example: "Through the woods, pine-needle ground / I pillow-walk without a sound.") than others (Example: "Through the woods, long pine boughs stir, / night wind whispers, whisper, whir-r."), writing style is delightfully relaxed with the soothing rhythm of a lullaby. This is former elementary school librarian Gale Sypher Jacob's first picture book. Award-winning painter Mark Graham has illustrated twenty books, including *My Father's Hands* by Joanne Ryder (HarperCollins, 1994). Highly recommended as a gentle, bedtime story.

Kim Harris

Princess Madison and the Whispering Woods / Karen Scalf Linamen ; illustrated by Phyllis Hornung. (Princess Madison ; 2.) LCCN 2006011751. Grand Rapids : Fleming H. Revell, 2006.

HBB, 0800718429, list price: \$12.99.

E. Princesses--Fiction; Lost children--Fiction; Love--Fiction; Fathers and daughters--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) ; col. ill. ; 21 cm.

PRI. Rating : 5.

Princess Madison breaks the house rules and is lost in the woods. She feels as if she has lost her father's love, but as the king comes to rescue her and takes her home, she learns that, no matter what, his love for her remains the same.

The story, a parable of God's love for

his children, is well-crafted. In this fairy tale, there is a whimsical mix of ancient and modern, where the king's men practice archery just in case they land a guest spot on the David Letterman Show. The father expresses his love for his daughter in three similes that are repeated in the story. As Princess Madison begins to feel guilt and doubt her father's love, she adapts these similes; for example, comparing the size of her father's love to an ant hill instead of to a mountain. There is a lot of clever use of language and a voice to which children can relate. For instance, Madison wonders what shadows like for dessert and hopes it isn't princess a la mode. The illustrations are charming too and seem to meld modern and traditional.

Susan Joy Clark

The problem with chickens/ by Bruce McMillan ; illustrated with paintings by Gunnella. LCCN 2005001225. New York : Houghton Mifflin, 2005.

HBB, 0618585818, \$16.00

32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 x 26 cm.

E. Rating : 5.

The Problem with Chickens by Bruce McMillan is a light-hearted tale of ingenuity set within Icelandic culture and traditions. The ladies of the town have trouble harvesting eggs from the wild birds' nests in the cliffs that protect the farmland from the seas below. The ladies solve their problem by importing chickens. Unfortunately, the chickens become more interested in doing the things the ladies do instead of laying eggs. The ladies fool them into remembering they are chickens, and their plan leads to a humorous ending. McMillan's lighthearted text is laid out in a white border on the pages, with a sentence, or at most two, on a page.

The layout showcases Gunella's distinctive folk art that is the strength of

the picture book. The oil paintings have depth and a richness of color that feels lifelike. Her whimsical paintings retell the story with a minimalist expressiveness. The ladies are frozen in the midst of each of their many activities: gardening, dancing, singing to the sheep, or blueberry-picking. Their broad faces and ample girths are warm and welcoming and funny.

The story, though not a familiar tale to children in the U.S., is instantly readable and sensible through this well-designed, well-written, and beautifully illustrated book.

Ceil Carey

Pup and Hound catch a thief / written by Susan Hood ; illustrated by Linda Hendry. (Kids Can read.) Toronto : Kids Can Press, 2007.

HBB, 1553379721, 9781553379720, list price: \$14.95.

E. Dogs--Fiction. 32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

Pup and Hound hatch an egg / written by Susan Hood ; illustrated by Linda Hendry. (Kids Can read.) Toronto : Kids Can Press, 2007.

HBB, 1553379748, 9781553379744, list price: \$14.95.

E. Dogs--Fiction. 32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

PS. Rating : 4.

Pup and Hound continue adventures started in earlier books. This loveable, well-intentioned pair learn lessons in each situation. Susan Hood offers two new titles: *Pup and Hound Catch a Thief*, and *Pup and Hound Hatch an Egg*. Both selections are for beginning readers in the Kids Can Read series, level one.

Pup and Hound actually *do* catch a thief who has stolen coins from a piggy bank. At first, the pair accuse the cat of thievery. Eventually, they prove a magpie (who likes shiny things) is the

culprit. Pup and Hound learn from their mistake of falsely blaming their friend, the cat. Naturally, this case of wrong suspicions presents a great opportunity for discussion with a preschooler.

In the second book, Pup and Hound find an egg. After many unbelievable adventures, they sit on the egg. A baby turtle hatches from the egg! They are shocked, but find baby turtle a little pool for water. For, Pup and Hound realize their new little friend has different interests from their own.

Linda Hendry's illustrations are pencil crayon on a sienna colored pastel paper. Colors are interesting, details are cute.

Roberta Jones

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Sing glory, glory! Jesus is born! / written by Gail Pawlitz ; art by Sehee Jung. St. Louis, Mo. : Concordia, 2007.

PBB, 0758613105, 9780758613103, list price: \$6.99.

E. Jesus Christ--Nativity; Stories in rhyme. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 22 cm..

PS. Rating : *5.

Gail Pawlitz wrote *Sing, Glory, Glory! Jesus is Born!* The poetry in this preschool board book fits the music to "Jesus Loves Me." Practice the first stanza: "

n a manger on the hay,
Jesus lay on Christmas Day.
Born as our Immanuel,
He is God with us to dwell."

See? Wasn't that wonderful? Try the last stanza:

Jesus is God's own dear Son,
Sent from heav'n for everyone.
Lived and died for you and me,
so from sin we could be free.

Sehee Jung's child-friendly illustrations

highlight Baby Jesus, with one page showing grownup Jesus with children.

We've all seen snow globes, that we shake and make-believe snow falls over little figures in a clear round ball. Jung drew snow globes, with snow coming down on the manger, shepherds, angels, and other representative scenes. If you can find a manger-scene snow globe, use it with *Sing Glory, Glory! Jesus is Born!*

New words to "Jesus Loves Me" give preschool church workers, parents, and grandparents a tremendous tool to teach little ones. I think of a rocking chair, a cuddly child, and you softly singing (After all, you practiced already!) about the birth our Savior. If you don't sing, don't worry. The rhyming words also read well!

Roberta Lou Jones

Tell me about heaven / Randy Alcorn ; [illustrations by] Ron DiCianni. LCCN 2007005145. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2007.

HBB, 1581348533, 9781581348538, list price: \$19.99.

236/.24. Heaven--Christianity--Juvenile literature; Heaven. 57 p. : col. ill. ; 24 x 27 cm..

PRI (All ages). Rating : 4.

Tell Me about Heaven is a gorgeous book with a glorious, high-quality cover done in deep metallic blues and golds. Ron DiCianni's detailed interior paintings, portraying Jesus and Heaven, are as lovely. Randy Alcorn's quiet, introspective text has a picture book look but contains twice as much text per page as a middle grade novel. There are nine chapters plus notes from the author and illustrator, a page on "God's offer of salvation," and a Certificate of Commitment on which a reader can record when he entrusted his life to God.

Geared to children with fears, anxieties, or just questions about what Heaven is like, this fictional story follows a series

of conversations between young Jake and his grandfather, who are mourning Grammy's death. Almost every question a child (or adult) might have is covered. After alerting the reader that the only place to learn about Heaven is the Bible, Alcorn proceeds to mine its clues about Heaven for his book. Accordingly, Bible verses back up answers to such questions as whether people who die are "asleep" or "wide awake;" whether they remember their loved ones and pray about them; if Heaven will be like Eden; whether it will be boring; what kind of clothes we'll wear; and what we'll eat and drink. Alcorn even discusses if there'll be computers in Heaven. (He says yes).

Although the individual chapters allow each concept to be read and digested before going on to the next, there's a chance the book will seem too long (and therefore old) to young readers, while its picture book look might make it seem too young to older readers. But *Tell Me About Heaven* gives a lovely, simply-stated explanation of how life in Heaven might be, and will be a valuable comfort for readers of all ages.

Rosemarie DiCristo

The totally wonderful Miss Plumberry / Michael Rosen ; illustrated by Chinlun Lee. LCCN 2005045392. Cambridge, Mass. : Candlewick Press, 2006.

HBB, 0763627445, list price: \$15.99.

E. Schools--Fiction; Crystals--Fiction; Teachers--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 24 x 25 cm.

PRI. Rating : 3.

Everything is totally wonderful for Molly on the day she takes her special crystal to school. Her grandmother gave Molly the crystal, which was in Grandma's backyard. Everything is totally wonderful at school until the children who are examining the crystal are drawn to Russell's stegosaurus. Molly is devastated. And then it's

totally wonderful Miss Plumberry, the teacher, who saves the day from being a totally horrible day back to a totally wonderful day. Taiwanese artist Chinlun Lee uses watercolor and pencil to create primitive style illustrations.

Michael Rosen knows children and teachers. He very sensitively and caringly handles a sad, lonely, and frustrating classroom experience many small children share with Molly. Miss Plumberry is a heartwarming understanding teacher who exemplifies smart pedagogy. The crystal which Molly takes to school to share smacks of New Age philosophy. Several sentences and phrases confirm that belief. For instance, Molly states the following, "... and I keep it by the side of my bed so I can look deep into it as I'm going to sleep." A page or two later, Miss Plumberry exclaims, "When I look into it, it feels like I'm falling and falling and falling deep into a warm pool. And I look and I look and I look some more, and then it feels like it's looking back at me." Will children grasp the implications of crystal use and gazing? Probably not.

Marion Mueller

Violet comes to stay : a Mitford storybook / story by Melanie Cecka ; pictures by Emily Arnold McCully. LCCN 2005035449. New York : Viking Children's Books, 2006.

HBB, 0670060739, list price: \$15.99.

E. Dwellings--Fiction; Cats--Fiction; Animals--Infancy--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 29 cm.

PRI. Rating : 5.

Jan Karon Presents Cynthia Coppersmith's Violet Comes to Stay, written by Melanie Cecka and Jan Karon and illustrated by Emily Arnold McCully, is a children's picture book about a small white kitten that can't quite fit the "mouser" mold she was

born into. She is first adopted by the owner of a plant nursery and, then, by a baker. In both cases, Violet's failed attempts to catch and kill an offending mouse end in disaster and her return to mother cat. Next, Alice, a book store proprietress, takes her in. They seem to bond immediately, but Violet is still worried about her track record as a mouser. When Violet finally manages to catch the mouse, she is unable to kill such a seemingly helpless creature. She releases the mouse, knowing this may be the end of her stay with Alice. To Violet's surprise, she is lovingly reassured of her continued welcome.

Violet Comes to Stay is written to represent a book written by the fictitious Cynthia Coppersmith, a main character in Jan Karon's Mitford Years series, who writes and illustrates stories about her cat, Violet. Aside from the slightly confusing introduction to this children's picture book, it is an endearing story of innocence, encouragement, faith, and trust. Writing style is clear, with a straight forward plot and a message reminding readers that, despite apparent failures, "God has a plan for each of us." Watercolor and ink illustrations beautifully enhance the text. Emily Arnold McCully has illustrated over one hundred children's books, including the Caldecott Medal winner, *Mirette on the High Wire* (Putnam, 1992). This book is the first title in a planned series for children. Highly recommended for group story times.

Kim Harris

The visit of the wise men / by Martha Jander ; illustrated by Lin Wang. St. Louis, Mo. : Concordia, 2007.

HBB, 0758613458, 9780758613455, list price: \$14.99.

E or 232.9/23. Jesus Christ--Nativity; Magi. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 27 cm..

PRI (PS). Rating : 5.

Some pictures show the Wise Men with newborn Baby Jesus in the manger. Martha Jander offers *The Visit of the Wise Men*, with these men from the east worshipping the young child Jesus. Jander's timeline fits better with Matthew 2, as most scholars believe the Wise Men's trip took considerable time.

One night, these learned men saw the large, special star. They knew a King was born. The Wise Men from the east started a camel caravan, bringing gifts for the King. The star led them across desert sands, to wicked King Herod, and then to Jesus in Bethlehem.

The last stanza summarizes why the Wise Men adored Jesus:

You see, this Babe was born to be

Our perfect, sinless Lord,

Who would give His life for all,

And who is by all adored.

Lin Wang's rich artwork mixes subdued browns, brick red, and yellow, blending together to show many fine details. For instance, Herod's palace has inlaid floors. His servants wave feather fans, while peacocks stroll near the throne. Typical of Wang's well-researched illustrations, Herod's face portrays fear that "another king will take my crown."

The Visit of the Wise Men will add depth to any school, church, or home library. At Christmas, we often use the phrase, "Wise Men still worship Him." Let's teach children about the first worshipping Wise Men!

Roberta Jones

What could be better than this? / Linda Ashman ; paintings by Linda S. Wingerter. LCCN 2003049075. New York : Dutton Children's Books, 2006.

HBB, 0525469540, list price: \$16.99.

E. Kings, queens, rulers, etc.--Fiction; Parent and child--Fiction; Stories in rhyme. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 28 cm.

PS (PRI). Rating : 3.

What Could be Better Than This? captures the awe of parents valuing their children. Linda Ashman describes a king who chases dragons and "ruled the whole world...." He meets an adventuresome lady who works on a royal ship. "...the two were completely entranced. So, right on the spot, near the opal lagoon, they married that same afternoon, then left on a grand honeymoon." The king and queen visit the end of the rainbow, the unicorn's home, and the land of the giants. Eventually, they abandon the castle, and choose a quieter life. The couple love the birth, and the growth of their precious child. Each day ends with a warm, tender kiss... "knowing nothing is better than this."

Linda S. Wingerter's paintings show the parents' joy with their child. The family plays together in the woods, looks at the stars, and rows a boat. Many illustrations contain one main color, with various hues. For instance, the king and queen "danced through the bright, starry nights" in purple shades. Elegant gold touches add an expensive quality.

Heavy paper, and strong binding indicate this book will withstand hard library or family use. The theme is timeless, and so appropriate for making children feel loved by their parents. I think of a mother or a father reading to a child in a rocking chair. The parent can cuddle and assure the child, "Nothing is better than this...you being my child!"

Roberta Lou Jones

What happened to Merry Christmas? / by Robert C. Baker ; art by Dave Hill. St. Louis, Mo. : Concordia, 2007.

HBB, 0758613466, 9780758613462, list price: \$14.99.

E or 394.268. Christmas. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 27 cm..

PRI (PS, INT). Rating : 5.

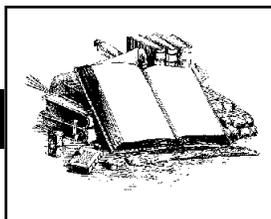
Robert C. Baker's *What Happened to*

Merry Christmas? clearly tackles recent trends toward the secularization of Christmas. Young Sam fears Christmas is lost because he is invited to a school *holiday* party. Mother wisely says they would "just have to look a little harder" to find Christmas. And they do!

Mother, with constant Scripture references, talks to Sam. Six-sided snowflakes remind her that God made the world in six days, and humans on day six (Genesis 1:26). An angel Christmas tree ornament represents angels in the first two chapters of Luke. Presents? The Wise Men brought gifts to Baby Jesus (Matthew 2:11). Sam was especially comforted to learn that *holiday* means holy day, the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Dave Hill's fine illustrations show a typical home in a snow-covered town. A church steeple points skyward, and one neighborhood lawn displays a crèche. Hill aptly captures various emotions of a little boy with many questions.

Roberta Jones



Factory girl / written by Barbara Greenwood. Toronto : Kids Can Press, 2007.

HBB, 155337648X, 9781553376484, list price: \$18.95.

Fic. Factory system--History--20th century--Fiction; Child labor--History--20th century--Fiction. 136 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

INT (MS). Rating : 4.

Factory Girl, by Barbara Greenwood, is a unique combination of fiction and nonfiction.

It's fictional chapters relate an account of fourteen-year-old Emily Watson, who becomes a clipper of threads at Acme Garment Factory, a shirtwaist shop located in the northeastern U.S., in 1912. Her family had been evicted from their home when they couldn't pay the rent.

Ms. Greenwood also includes nonfiction documentation of life for the working poor in large urban areas at the turn of the century. The fiction and nonfiction segments alternate through six chapters featuring the search for employment, conditions in factories, paydays, working children, and workplace hazards and catastrophes.

Period photographs by Lewis Hine, Jacob Riis, and others enhance the text. Concise captions label each picture. A timeline of child labor laws, a glossary and an index are appended.

While unique, the alternation of fiction and nonfiction yields a choppy read. The fiction portion of the text seems contrived to fit the nonfiction message, or perhaps the nonfiction seems extra stilted to fit the fiction chapter to which it is attached.

There are far more engaging fiction titles about the same topic. *Lyddie*, by Katherine Paterson (Lodestar Books, 1991), *Bread and Roses, Too*, also by Katherine Paterson (Clarion Books, 2006), *The Bobbin Girl*, by Emily Arnold McCully (Dial Books for Young

Readers, 1996), and *Counting on Grace*, by Elizabeth Winthrop (Wendy Lamb Books, 2006), are just a few. Russell Freedman's nonfiction book *Kids at Work : Lewis Hine and the Crusade against Child Labor* (Clarion Books, 1994) has even more heartrending photographs of children working in many occupations. *Up Before Daybreak: Cotton and People in America*, by Deborah Hopkinson (Scholastic Nonfiction, 2006), traces the history of cotton in America to the turn of the twentieth century. That said, *Factory Girl's* readability level is far easier than any of the above titles, with the exception of *Bobbin Girl*.

Marion Mueller

The green glass sea / Ellen Klages. LCCN 2007272019. New York : Viking Children's Books, 2006.

HBB, 0670061344, list price: \$16.99.

Fic. Friendship--Fiction; Scientists--Fiction; Fathers and daughters--Fiction. 321 p. ; 22 cm.

INT. Rating : 3.

The time is World War II from 1943-1945; the place is Los Alamos, New Mexico during the Manhattan Project. Dewey, a ten-year-old girl, travels from St. Louis by train to the station closest to Los Alamos. She is a loner and is shunned by most of the girls living in the government housing; she is handicapped with a deformed foot, is very intelligent, and likes to invent widgets. She is also motherless, and—by the end of the story—is fatherless as well.

When her mathematician father travels to Washington, D.C. on official business, another scientist family takes Dewey in. The family has one daughter, Suze, who is also shunned by the popular girls and nicknamed "Truck." Dewey and Suze gradually become friendly, finding a relaxed camaraderie in complementary interests such as inventions and junk art.

The book's major strength is Ellen Klages' deft, detailed, description of time and place. The reader can easily picture the desert and mountain scenery, flimsy housing and the dump at Los Alamos. The reader feels the dust, dirt, heat, and isolation of the "secret" location where the atomic bomb was developed. *The Green Glass Sea* is one of the few books for children which features this setting.

Klages received the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction for her representation of the period. Dewey, however, is too perfect. Despite all of her handicaps and her pathetic childhood, Dewey is a model child who accepts her status stoically. Her deformed foot has little relevance in the book except to pile on Dewey's problems. Comments about her runaway, wayward mother are merely an attempt to garner even more sympathy for Dewey but have little impact on the story. When Dewey's father is killed in an accident with a drunk driver, the reader is weighted even more with her plight.

Frequent references to the smoking of an assortment of cigarette brands by Suze's mother, and occasional mention of social drinking, reflect habits of the period, but are not essential for the story development. God's name is used in vain at least half a dozen times.

Marion Mueller

Larger-than-life Lara / Dandi Daley Mackall. LCCN 2005032757. New York : Dutton Children's Books, 2006.

HBB, 0525477268, 9780525477266, list price: \$16.99.

Fic. Schools--Fiction; Family problems--Fiction; Obesity--Fiction; Prejudices--Fiction; Bullies--Fiction; Authorship--Fiction. 151 p. ; 22 cm.

INT. Rating : 4.

A story that can be appreciated on many levels, *Larger-Than-Life Lara* is told in the strong voice of Laney, a fourth grade girl. The focus of Laney's story is Lara, the new girl. Lara is enormous at 300 pounds, but her personality is extraordinary. Although immediately and consistently ridiculed by her classmates, Lara always responds to her tormentors with forgiveness, and positive words and actions.

Laney tells Lara's story using chapter headings and discussions titled with literary terms such as Character, Setting, Opposition, etc. As Laney explains the story components, she also lets the reader peek into the hidden story of her own difficult life.

With a strong, positive ending, which is both happy and sad, Dandi Mackall's *Larger-Than-Life Lara* inspires the reader to treat others with respect and to be positive despite all obstacles. Lara's example of optimism, forgiveness, and constructive action is something we all need to cultivate, especially when life gets us down. Laney's story is equally motivating. Within her cruel home environment, Laney reaches out to her "littlest big brother" and experiences a renewed relationship through patience and communication.

The book's discussion of literary components adds to its charm. The reader feels the emotions of both Lara and Laney while at the same time recognizing the important story elements. Teachers can use this book in so many ways -- as illustrations of the parts of a successful composition, as a model of forgiveness and kind treatment of others, and finally as an example of two separate stories woven together into one marvelous tale.

Kristine Wildner

**Leepike Ridge / N.D. Wilson.
LCCN 2006013352. New York :
Random House, 2007.**

HBB, 0375838732, 9780375838736, list price: \$15.99.

Fic. Buried treasure--Fiction; Mothers and sons--Fiction; Adventure and adventurers--Fiction; Caves--Fiction; Missing persons--Fiction. 224 p. ; 22 cm.

INT/MS. Rating : 4.

Leepike Ridge is the first literary offering for children by Nathan D. Wilson, the son of Douglas Wilson (a prominent promoter of Christian classical education and no mean writer in his own right).

Underneath *Leepike Ridge* lies an ancient secret that eleven-year-old classic American boy Tom Hammond is going to find out—when he accidentally floats there. Tom encounters some pretty serious abrasions along the way, and finds out about even worse violence—murder—also in his family's past. Before his story is done, Tom will also witness a self-defense killing.

But Tom's adventure is otherwise harmless fun for any boy or girl around his age (and adults who enjoy reading to them!). And those boys and girls might even learn a lesson if they listen to the appended preaching section (p. 137—a hint that this is a Christian book).

Leepike Ridge is perhaps more plot- than character-driven, so some of the characters are not fully developed. But this is the kind of story which finds a redoubtable defender in no less than G.K. Chesterton, who long ago wrote, "The simple need for some kind of ideal world in which fictitious persons play an unhampered part is infinitely deeper and older than the rules of good art, and much more important."

Mark L. Ward, Jr.

**The mouse and the motorcycle /
Beverly Cleary ; illustrated by
Tracy Dockray. (Mouse books.)
New York : HarperCollins, 2006.**

PAP, 0380709244, 9780380709243, list price: \$5.99.

Fic. Hotels, motels, etc.--Fiction; Mice--Fiction; Motorcycling--Fiction. 186 p. : ill. ; 19

cm..

**Runaway Ralph / Beverly
Cleary ; illustrated by Tracy
Dockray. (Mouse books.) LCCN
2006926610. New York :
HarperCollins, 2006.**

HBB, 068821701X, 9780688217013, list price: \$15.99.

Fic. Mice--Fiction. 183 p. : ill. ; 19 cm..

**Ralph S. Mouse / Beverly Cleary ;
illustrated by Tracy Dockray.
(Mouse books.) LCCN
2006926611. New York :
HarperCollins, 2006.**

HBB, 0688014526, 9780688014520, list price: \$15.99.

Fic. Mice--Fiction. 160 p. : ill. ; 19 cm..

PRI (INT). Rating : 5.

Beverly Cleary created a classic in *The Mouse and the Motorcycle*. The book and its two sequels cleverly combine strong realistic fiction with a brilliant touch of fantasy. Readers will delight in the adventures of the little mouse named Ralph and the lonely boys he befriends. The unique plots reach directly into the imaginings of boys who love fast vehicles, turning their daydreams into reality.

The Mouse and the Motorcycle begins when Ralph was just an ordinary mouse living in an old, run down hotel Ralph meets a young boy on vacation and falls in love with his toy motorcycle. Together they discover that Ralph can ride the motorcycle if he makes the appropriate noise (pbbbb...). After a harrowing near-disaster in the laundry room, Ralph finds himself the only one who can help the boy.. In *Runaway Ralph*, Ralph finds himself discontented at the hotel with all his relatives constantly wanting to ride his motorcycle, so he runs away to a nearby summer camp. Here, he is pursued by a bully and eventually imprisoned in a cage by a troubled boy. As Ralph realizes he misses his family, he

convinces the boy to help him return to the Mountain View Inn. In the final book, *Ralph S. Mouse*, Ralph once more finds himself having more in common with a human, the housekeeper's son, than the other mice. This time he goes to school and must prove his intelligence by running a maze.

Effortlessly, the reader enters into the world of a mouse talking, believing right away that a mouse can befriend a boy. The settings are common places with which children will be familiar, perhaps imagining their own friendly mouse. The characters are rich with both the boys and the mouse growing as they make decisions. Tracy Dockray's fantastic, new and fun illustrations extend and reinforce the story with the expressions and emotions of the characters.

Almost every library already owns these classics. Unfortunately, as the books age, children's interest often wanes. *The Mouse and the Motorcycle* series is one that should not be forgotten on the shelves. The characters are too rich, and the examples of how the three boys mature in their relationship with Ralph and others are too important to be missed. An investment in the new editions will attract a whole new generation into the world of a special mouse and his motorcycle.

Kristine Wildner

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Night boat to freedom / Margot Theis Raven ; pictures by E.B. Lewis. New York : Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2006.

HBB, 0374312664, 9780374312664, list price: \$16.00.

Fic. Fugitive slaves--Fiction; Slavery--Fiction; Underground Railroad--Fiction; African Americans--Fiction; Kentucky--History--1792-1865--Fiction; Ohio--History--1787-1865--Fiction. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 28 cm.

PRI (All ages). Rating: *5.

Night Boat to Freedom engages both the

eye and the imagination. Based solidly on fact, it tells how, shortly before the American Civil War, Christmas John, a young American slave, at the behest of his beloved fellow slave, Granny Judith, risks personal disaster by rowing runaway slaves across the Ohio River, from Kentucky to the free state of Ohio. The freedom quilt Granny Judith patches throughout this story symbolizes others' freedom; then danger and capture draw near and the quilt comes to embody Christmas John's and Granny Judith's bid for freedom.

Based on slave memories contained in *The Slave Narrative Collection* (1930s Federal Writers' Project), *Night Boat to Freedom* resonates with truth, emotion, fear, triumph, and resolve. Multiple award winning author, Margot Raven, brings Christmas John, Granny Judith and the slaves' great hunger for freedom to pulsating life. The reader travels with these desperate people.

Professor of illustration, and Caldecott Honor winner, E. B. Lewis swirls his watercolors into glowing, active day and dark-of-night illustrations. As the rowboat heads across the river on a moonless night the reader is drawn into dark, anxious, wonderfully storytelling pictures.

In both the main text and the author's note, mention is made of the hope Christianity gave to the slaves. *Night Boat to Freedom* is for all people of all ages. It wondrously recreates history in a way no historical fact book ever could. A valuable, attractive book, *Night Boat to Freedom* is highly recommended for all families, schools, art classes, and libraries.

Donna Eggett

The story of the selfish giant / [presented by] Morning Light Media ; screenplay by David Mead. Worcester, Pa. : Vision Video, 2005.

DVD, list price: \$14.99.

Fic. Children's films; Animated films; Giants--Fiction; Fairy tales--Juvenile films; Wilde, Oscar, 1854-1900. 1 videodisc (25 min.) : sd., col. ; 4 3/4 in.

PRI. Rating : 4.

In a real-life setting, a grandfather counsels his granddaughter when she is anxious and impatient about opening her Christmas gifts. This leads to the animated retelling of the Oscar Wilde story of a giant who built a wall around his yard to keep others out. The wall not only keeps others out, but the absence of children keeps his garden in a perpetual winter state. The highpoint in the story comes when the giant notices the Christ Child with wounded hands; this experience motivates the giant to tear down the wall, and with its destruction children arrive, and flowers and blooming trees and shrubs return to the garden. At this point the story returns to the live action scenes where grandfather and granddaughter discuss some possibilities regarding selfishness.

The watercolor animation and musical interludes make the retelling of Wilde's story move quickly and with interest. At first I found the grandfather counsel segments artificial, but as the animated story progresses these scenes make more sense. While there is no direct mention that the Child in the garden is the Christ Child, the wounds in the hands and feet are clearly recognizable. The story fits both in the context of gift-giving at Christmas, and resurrection and new life at Easter.

Public libraries can add this title for families to enjoy, and parents can consider it for children to watch and re-watch as a holiday favorite, as they see what the giant does and how he reacts in this Christian message.

Dr. Leroy Hommerding

Trapped / Peg Kehret and Pete the Cat. LCCN 2005032962. New York : Dutton Children's Books,

2006.

HBB, 0525477284, list price: \$16.99.

Fic. Human-animal relationships--Fiction; Cats--Fiction; Trapping--Fiction. 177 p. ; 22 cm.

INT. Rating : 5.

Pete the Cat, feline author, is at it again in *Trapped*, a mystery filled with references to animal rescues and their humane and caring treatment. It all begins when Pete's owner, Alex, finds an illegal trap in the woods. Next, when a pig falls from a truck and the driver doesn't even stop, Alex and his friends are again on the scene and rescue the pig. "Hogman", as the kids christen the driver in their heads, is a cruel, belligerent man, responsible for many injuries and deaths to local animals, and also for the deadly traps.

Pete, of course, is always vainly trying to communicate with his humans, but somehow they just don't get it. Thus our feline hero feels forced to take matters into his own hands, and puts himself into some perilous situations.

Peg Kehret's Pete the Cat mysteries are fun, quick reading for middle elementary students who are still very willing to suspend belief and enjoy stories about a cat that thinks just like a human.

Ceil Carey

Young Cam Jansen and the spotted cat mystery / by David A. Adler ; illustrated by Susanna Natti. (Young Cam Jansen ; 12.) LCCN 2005034006. New York : Viking Children's Books, 2006.

HBB, 0670060941, list price: \$15.99.

Fic. Mystery and detective stories; Schools--Fiction; Cats--Fiction. 31 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

PRI (PS). Rating : 4.

Young Cam Jansen and the Spotted Cat Mystery is for younger readers at the beginning-to-read level. This series and others by Viking are color-coded to give parents a good idea of other books at the same level for their child. And the

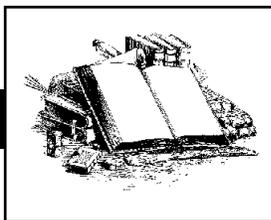
stories do not fail to interest children in the early grades.

Cam's real name is Jennifer but she been nicknamed Cam because of her photographic memory and habit of saying "click" when she wants to remember something. And those clicks have helped Cam solve many a mystery. In this title, by David Adler, Cam, her classmates, and her teacher are puzzled when a cat with a spot on its tail is discovered napping by the coat rack. A dry cat on a rainy day! How did it get into their classroom and where did the spotted cat come from?

The reader will find plenty of visual clues in the colorful illustrations, and a memory game (maybe you, too, can be a "Cam") at the conclusion of the book.

One of the best parts about this series is that when they're ready to move up, children can graduate to the older Cam Jansen mysteries. Either series would be a very good addition to a school library.

Ceil Carey



Free at last! : stories and songs of Emancipation / Doreen Rappaport ; illustrated by Shane W. Evans. LCCN 2003043853. Cambridge, Mass. : Candlewick Press, 2004.

HBB, 0763614408, list price: \$19.99.

306.3/62/0973. Slaves--Emancipation--United States; Slavery--United States--History. 63 p. : col. ill. ; 30 cm.

INT. Rating : 4.

In *Free at Last! : Stories and Songs of Emancipation*, Doreen Rappaport chronologically narrates the history of African Americans from the Emancipation in 1863 through the 1954 Supreme Court decision to end school segregation. Interspersed throughout the text are songs, poems, and stories about events and people of the time frame represented. There is poetry by Lucille Clifton, Countee Cullen, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Langston Hughes. African Americans, commoners and the famous, represented in the stories are Jane Kemper, Booker T. Washington, John Solomon Lewis, Ida B. Wells, Jackie Robinson, and Thurgood Marshall. Shane W. Evans renders the vivid, strong illustrations in oil. A timeline, artist's note, acknowledgments, selected sources, reading list (including websites), and an index are resources available in the back matter.

The time frame represented in this middle title of Rappaport's and Evans' trilogy was another period of struggle for African Americans. Former slaves sought spouses and children who had been separated. They were challenged by searching for homes and a means of making a living independently, and were met with one obstacle after another. The picture is not a pretty one, but one all Americans need to know in order to make America its place of promise for all citizens. Rappaport is critical of Booker T. Washington as being too subservient and too accommodating to

whites. She blends songs and poetry into the fabric of the narration smoothly. Other titles in the series include: *No More!* (Candlewick, 2002) and *Nobody Gonna Turn Me 'Round* (Candlewick, 2006). Together the three books make an accessible history of the African American struggle.

Marion Mueller

Up before daybreak : cotton and people in America / Deborah Hopkinson. LCCN 2005008128. New York : Scholastic Nonfiction, 2006.

HBB, 0439639018, list price: \$18.99.

331.7/63351/0973. Slavery; Slaves--Biography; Cotton trade; Cotton growing; Cotton picking. 120 p. : ill. ; 23 cm.

MS (INT). Rating : 5.

Up Before Daybreak: Cotton and People in America is an engaging treatment of a potentially boring subject. It begins traditionally with the settlement at Jamestown. Proceeding briskly, the author outlines the process of converting cotton to cloth, and mentions the inventors who made it possible to speed the process, leading to cotton becoming profitable. But then author Deborah Hopkinson works a miracle using the voices of those whose journey in life paralleled the journey of cotton from a mere sideline crop to "King Cotton." Beginning in the second chapter and continuing through the end of the book, she uses records of oral histories made by the Federal Writers' Project in the 1930's as well as many other oral history resources to allow the people who literally lived and breathed cotton tell their stories. This includes former slaves, cotton brokers, mill girls, sharecroppers and tenant farmers, and migrant workers. Following the history of cotton this way brings it right up to the present times by mentioning that many countries currently use child labor

to harvest cotton.

This book is a useful resource for any student studying the time periods covered. It separates suggestions for further reading for young people from the excellent bibliography. The end of the book contains notes from each chapter directing the reader to the exact resource. Numerous photos illustrate the chapters and subjects. An adequate index at the end provides a quick way to jump to particular interests. The true test of this book is that my seventh grader used it as one of her resources to write an exam essay on "cotton as an icon leading to the Civil War." She reported the book was easy to access, interesting to read, and helped her get her best grade ever in history.

Kelley Westenhoff

Emily Post's Emily's everyday manners / by Peggy Post and Cindy Post Senning ; illustrated by Steve Björkman. LCCN 2005020601. New York : HarperCollins, 2006.

HBB, 0060761741, list price: \$16.99.

395.1/22. Etiquette for children. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 29 cm.

PRI (PS). Rating : 4.

In the storyline we watch as the main characters, young Emily and her best friend Ethan, ride the school bus, romp on the playground, visit friends, and eat at restaurants. The spirit of etiquette is a model for transformation from self-focused conduct to a comportment full of actions that are kinder and friendlier. Teaching young toddlers to school age children about the basic consequences of both good and bad manners is an enjoyable task with this informative teaching narrative. The message presented by the co-authors in this children's book is clear and simple: be considerate. Both authors Peggy Post and Cindy Post Senning have written

and presented seminars on this topic for years.

Cheerful watercolor, pen-and-ink illustrations by Steve Björkman make the "Emily's Don'ts" in the corner of the page a fun way to redirect the natural tendencies of youthful behavior. The book is humorously instilled with the wisdom that etiquette is "rooted in three fundamental principles: respect, consideration, and honesty." This is a more meticulous storybook approach to teaching manners than *ELMO's Good Manner Game* but less comprehensive than a parent guidebook like *Elbows Off the Table, Napkin in the Lap, No Video Games During Dinner: The Modern Guide to Teaching Children Good Manners* (St. Martins, 1996).

As a reader born in the south, the one thing that is missing from *Emily's Everyday Manners* is the tradition of using the "yes sir" and "no ma'am" when addressing people of authority. In an afterword section for adults, the author provides tips and reminders for grownups to consider in order to "navigate the complexities of the social interaction." On the publisher's website there is a page about the book with activities for kids and downloadable items such as manners "tips" cards, placemats to color, and even "Emily's Thank you notes." Recommended for pre-school, early school age school, and family collections. <http://emilyseveryday.emilypost.com/>

Rebecca Cress-Ingebo

Gizmos & gadgets : creating science contraptions that work (& knowing why) / by Jill Frankel Hauser ; illustrations by Michael Kline. LCCN 98030302. Charlotte, Vt. : Williamson Pub., 1999.

PAP, 1885593260, list price: \$12.95.

500. Inventions; Physics--Experiments; Experiments; Scientific recreations. 144 p. : ill.

; 22 x 28 cm.

INT. Rating : 5.

Here is a book that will appeal to any young reader who takes delight in the mechanical world around them. *Gizmos & Gadgets* delivers on its promise to explain why science contraptions work and to show how to make some of your own.

The content is cleverly organized into sections based on the action performed—gripping, falling down, balancing, spinning, energizing. Each section contains five explanations and corresponding projects. "Let's Build It!" sections provide students with easy-to-build projects constructed from everyday household supplies. For example, in the "Energize" section, students receive instruction for building and using a simple pinwheel. Jill Frankel Hauser then explains how the energy in air transfers to the pinwheel. Simple ideas work to teach simple concepts. The projects are fun to complete and they teach fundamental science concepts too.

Historical anecdotes about famous scientists like Isaac Newton and Galileo Galilei are sprinkled throughout. Important terms are put in bold print, and the exciting page layouts only add to the clear content of the words.

Accompanied by excellent illustrations from Michael Kline, Frankel does an exceptional job explaining how things work. Students will enjoy the hands-on approach to scientific learning, and parents will appreciate the ease in which the projects are made and cleaned up after.

Scott Lamb

How to think like a scientist : answering questions by the scientific method / Stephen P. Kramer ; illustrated by Felicia Bond. LCCN 85043604. New York : HarperCollins, 1987.

LIB, 0690045654, list price: \$16.89.

502.8. Science--Methodology. 44 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

INT. Rating : 4.

What is the scientific method? Answering this question in concise and concrete terms is not an easy task, especially when the audience is upper elementary readers.

However, Stephen Kramer writes a short explanation of the scientific method in *How to Think Like a Scientist*. He begins with "How do you ask questions?" putting the whole scientific enterprise into focus by showing that science is about asking and answering questions about the world around us.

Kramer then lays out the five steps of the scientific method and illustrates with an amusing "what if" story about chickens and egg laying. Key terms such as hypothesis, control-group, and solution are defined and explained using this chicken story as the backdrop. Thus, the abstract science terms come through clearly in an understandable manner.

I wish I had had this book back in elementary school when the annual science project assignment came around. It really helps get a handle on how the scientific method functions.

Scott Lamb

Science experiments you can eat / Vicki Cobb ; illustrated by David Cain. Rev. & updated ed. LCCN 93013679. New York : HarperCollins, 1994.

PAP, 0064460029, list price: \$7.99.

507.8. Cookery; Experiments; Science--Experiments. 214 p. : ill. ; 21 cm.

INT. Rating : 5.

Science Experiments You Can Eat? That is a great title for a book kids will surely love to read and put to use.

Every parent gets called on to answer science questions that come out of everyday living. Why did my can of

soda explode in the freezer? Why does cake rise when it gets baked? How do kernels turn into popcorn?

Coming up with the answer to these questions can be tough for the scientifically challenged parent. Here is a resource that can not only answer many of these questions for the student, but it can also point them to many other exciting scientific events going on right under their noses in the kitchen.

The book is organized according to similar topics—colloids, carbohydrates, proteins, plants, microbes, and enzymes. One example of science springing from the kitchen is David Cain's explanation of colloids and suspended particles in the section on "Consommé: Clarification by Flocculation". Grandma may have called it, "making chicken broth," but young kitchen-scientists will show off their colloidal smarts and serve some good soup at the same time.

Scott Lamb

You gotta try this! : absolutely irresistible science / by Vicki Cobb and Kathy Darling ; illustrated by True Kelley. LCCN 98029556. New York : Morrow Junior Books, 1999.

HBB, 0688157408, list price: \$15.99.

507.8. Scientific recreations; Experiments; Science--Experiments. 144 p. : ill. ; 22 cm.

INT. Rating : 5.

You Gotta Try This! Absolutely Irresistible Science, written by Vicki Cobb and Kathy Darling and illustrated by True Kelley, is a hands-on look at fifty science experiments geared to middle graders. Most of the experiments require the use of common household items and are designed to be simply and safely performed with maximum fun and minimum hassle. Chapters are divided into subject areas with catchy titles (i.e. Physical Attractions, Curious Chemistry, etc.), then further divided into several two to

three page sections. Each section contains a brief explanation of an experimental goal, a list of necessary supplies, directions on how to perform the experiment, and a clear cause and effect explanation. Examples of experiments include: how to make an alarm out of a paper cup, dental floss and a toothpick; how to artificially respire a fly; how to make liquid-filled bubbles; and how to identify counterfeit money, using iodine and cotton swabs.

You Gotta Try This! Absolutely Irresistible Science is designed to spark a beginner's interest in the wonders of science. The writing style is upbeat and informative. Instructions are organized and understandable. Black and white cartoon-sketches contribute to this playful approach to serious science. Humor will appeal to "adult assistants," as well as the children they are assisting. Includes detailed index. Vicki Cobb is known for her enthusiasm for engaging, as well as educating, her readers. Kathy Darling is the author of numerous popular animal life cycle books. Their books, *Bet You Can! Science Possibilities to Fool You* (Avon, 1983) and *Bet You Can't: Science Impossibilities to Fool You* (Lothrop, 1980), continue to be elementary school book talk favorites. Recommended both for individual and small group enjoyment.

Kim Harris

Nature in a nutshell for kids : over 100 activities you can do in ten minutes or less / Jean Potter. LCCN 94028953. New York : Wiley, 1995.

PAP, 047104444X, list price: \$12.95.

508/.078. Nature study; Nature study--Activity programs--Juvenile literature. viii, 136 p. : ill. ; 21 cm.

INT (PRI). Rating : 3.

Over 100 quick activities are contained in *Nature in a Nutshell for Kids*. The

activities are designed to help children discover the "beauty and wonder of the natural world" season by season. Each season is introduced with a summary about common natural events. Then experiments, complete on one page, are presented. Each activity has a title, scientific question, a list of materials, step-by-step procedures, and an explanation. Author Jean Potter suggests tips for completing the activities, keeping a nature notebook, and studying nature. She urges readers to be accurate, creative, careful, and neat while exploring nature's beauty. There is a list of nature and environmental organizations, glossary, bibliography for further reading, and an activity index. Black and white pen and ink illustrations decorate each page.

The collection of activities is written in cookbook, recipe style and does not promote scientific inquiry or thinking like a scientist. Students/readers are not posed questions, other than the introductory question, to encourage further discovery or observation or collection of data. The creative teacher or nature loving student, however, could find many hands-on projects which help explain natural phenomena. The readily available materials for conducting the activities are another plus. For the teacher this title could be a handy resource for planning science lessons around the seasons.

Marion Mueller

Junior nature experiments on file / Pamela Walker, Elaine Wood. New York : Facts on File, 2006.

LLB, 0816066078, list price: \$185.00.

508/.078. Nature--Experiments; Natural science--Experiments; Nature study; Experiments; Science--Experiments. 1 v. (various pagings) : ill. ; 30 cm.

Adult (INT, MS). Rating : 4.

Teachers Pamela Walker and Elaine Wood (Georgia's 2007 State Teacher of

the Year) have compiled a file of their nature activities for students in grades 4-9. There are nine segments in the file: earth science, weather, animals, plants, ecology, and environmental science. Each experiment begins with an introduction, then continues with time needed, materials, safety precautions, procedures, and summarizing thought questions for student reaction. Topics include erosion control techniques, mealworm characteristics, plant pigments, soil sterility, biodegradability, and aquatic light limitations. The activities are leveled by difficulty. Extensive appendices include supervision level, settings, teacher findings or answers, a glossary, Internet resources, and an index.

Junior Nature Experiments on File is a loose-leaf binder resource filled with "70 new science experiments" teaching ideas. The experiments are new, and reflect contemporary teaching techniques and pedagogy. Teachers purchasing the file also have purchased a "reproduction certificate," thus receiving photocopying authorization. While written in cookbook recipe style (for ease of use and standard format), many experiments, such as "Dissolved Oxygen in Local Waters," require data collection and analysis of the data in the "Observations" section of each activity. Students are encouraged to maintain a science lab book with all of their notes and data. Thus, the experiments are not only hands-on, but also encourage the students to think scientifically. Many activities are designed to extend over several days.

Marion Mueller

The Magic School Bus and the science fair expedition / by Joanna Cole ; illustrated by Bruce Degen. LCCN 2006283534. New York : Scholastic Press, 2006.

HBB, 0590108247, 9780590108249, list price: \$15.99.

509. Frizzle, Ms. (Fictitious character); Scientists; Science--History. 45 p. : col. ill. ; 22 x 27 cm.

PRI (INT). Rating : 4.

Ms. Frizzle's students are off on another adventure with their wild and wacky teacher, this time on a science fair expedition. Looking for science fair project ideas, Ms. Frizzle has a zany plan to take her students on a tour of science through the ages. The boys and girls are delighted with the ideas they receive from some of the science greats of all time—Edison, Galileo, Newton, Einstein, and more. But interestingly, each one does remind them a little bit of their determined teacher.

Sidebars give additional information on each scientist and as usual in the *Magic School Bus*, Bruce Degen's illustrations are colorful and detailed, adding fun and information to every book in the series.

Of course, Ms. Frizzle's students arrive back at school with some wonderful plans for their own projects and asking their usual question, "Will we ever go on a normal school trip?" This *Magic School Bus* adventure is informative, accurate, and fun—a great combination for young readers who love non-fiction.

Ceil Carey

The jumbo book of space / written by Cynthia Pratt Nicolson and Paulette Bourgeois ; illustrated by Bill Slavin. Toronto : Kids Can Press, 2007.

PAP, 1554530202, 9781554530205, list price: \$17.95.

520. Astronomy; Solar system; Outer space. 208 p. : ill. (chiefly col.), ports. ; 24 cm.

INT (MS). Rating : 4.

The Jumbo Book of Space is an attractive paperback targeted for students in middle and upper elementary grades. It is well organized, starting with our own planet Earth and proceeding through the sun, the eight planets, and beyond. Bill Slavin's illustrations are neat, humorous, and

well coordinated with the text. Full-color photographs are also interspersed throughout. Cynthia Pratt Nicolson and Paulette Bourgeois include legends from native peoples and historical events in astronomy such as the controversy raised by Galileo's telescope, the appearance of a comet following the death of Julius Caesar, and the discovery of the Andromeda Galaxy by pioneering female astronomer Caroline Herschel. Facts about the stars and planets are arranged in concise tables and examples of relative sizes, speeds, distances, and temperatures (i.e. it would take 15 years for a jet aircraft to fly from the Earth to the sun) are very instructive. Many of the experiments included in the book are easy-to-do versions of physics and earth science activities with which teachers are probably already familiar. A glossary and index are appended.

As a science tradebook, *The Jumbo Book of Space* has a mixed performance. The book explains and diagrams processes such as the Solar Wind well. However, the book never uses the proper scientific term Solar Wind. Missing from a discussion on how the sun makes energy is the word fusion. Absent from two experiments on separating light with prisms is the term ROY G BIV. It is surprising to see, in a book with so many facts and figures (distances, sizes and compositions of the planets), the use of non-standard science vocabulary. The data on planets, stars, and histories are generally accurate. The author mentions that the universe began to expand about 10 to 15 million years ago, and "about 4600 million years ago, the cloud separated into lumps," which became the eight major planets. *The Jumbo Book of Space* translates as an illustrated almanac that might work as a starting point for fourth through sixth grade research projects or for general browsing. No sources are cited.

Marion Mueller and John W. Mueller (Independent Science Consultant)

Fizz, bubble & flash! : element explorations and atom adventures for hands-on science fun! / Anita Brandolini ; illustration by Michael Kline. LCCN 2003043096. Charlotte, Vt. : Williamson Pub., 2003.

PAP, 188559383X, list price: \$12.95.

546/.078. Experiments; Science--Experiments; Chemical elements. 128 p. : ill. ; 22 x 28 cm.

INT. Rating : 5.

Zoology displays awesome animals and botany highlights luscious plants, but chemistry seems to lack a viable candidate for a poster child. How do you put personality into chemistry to make the learning more fun for upper elementary students?

Fizz, Bubble, and Flash answers the question by having students "Meet the elements" one elemental group at a time. Author Anita Brandolini teams up with illustrator Michael Kline to put a face on the elements. So instead of an abstract discussion of fluorine and iodine, students get the chance to "Meet the Halogens" with humorous and entertaining comic pictures.

All told, nine groups of elements greet the reader with useful information including proper pronunciation, symbol, atomic number, and the history of their discovery. There are also "Make it Happen!" sections providing students an opportunity to use chemicals in safe home-laboratory experiments.

Brandolini says, "What do elements have to do with your everyday life? They make your world move and groove, fizz, bubble, and flash!" Her writing gets right down to the level of the young reader and brings chemistry to life. The creative illustrations will help store much of the information into the memory without even trying. Students will certainly have fun reading and learning about chemistry from this delightful book.

Scott Lamb

How animals move / written by Pamela Hickman ; illustrated by Pat Stephens. (Kids Can read.) Toronto : Kids Can Press, 2007.

HBB, 1554530296, 9781554530311, list price: \$14.95.

573.7/9. Animal locomotion--Juvenile literature. 32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

PRI. Rating : 4.

How animals eat / written by Pamela Hickman ; illustrated by Pat Stephens. (Kids Can read.) Toronto : Kids Can Press, 2007.

HBB, 1554530318, 9781554530311, list price: \$14.95.

591.5/3. Animals--Food--Juvenile literature. 32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

PRI. Rating : 4.

The interesting, informative series Kids Can Read now presents two more books, *How Animals Move* and *How Animals Eat*. Both of these books, by Pamela Hickman, introduce important aspects of animal life, encouraging curiosity towards the study of wild animals.

Each chapter of *How Animals Move* looks at a particular type of animal: swimmers and floaters; runners and walkers; slippers and sliders; and three others. The animals will be recognizable to readers and include such favorites as: basilisk lizard, penguin, cheetah, water strider insect, and otter.

How Animals Eat considers various foods, types of mouths, and eating habits. Animals studied include: chameleon, hamster, turkey vulture, and koala bear—to name just a few.

The Kids Can Read series provides books on three levels of reading. *How Animals Move* and *How Animals Eat* are on the highest level, Level Three—Kids Can Read Alone. Written in simple sentences, with recognizable words, and explanations for new words, young readers will be encouraged to happily learn. Each page is amply illustrated with colorful, true-to-life illustrations by Pat Stephens. There is no mention of

evolution, or of creation. All data is well researched. All schools and homeschoolers in need of this type of science book are encouraged to consider these titles.

Donna Eggett

Dorling Kindersley animal encyclopedia / [authors, Jonathan Elphick .. [et al.]. LCCN 23782. New York : DK Publishing, 2006.

PAP, 0756619726, list price: \$19.99.

590/.3. Animals--Encyclopedias. 376 p. : ill. (chiefly col.) ; 28 cm.

MS (INT). Rating : 4.

Dorling Kindersley Animal Encyclopedia by Dorling Kindersley, Inc. is an illustrated catalog of animals divided into two main sections. The first section is an overview of common attributes among animals, like the fact that all animals have some kind of body structure, eating habits, and the need for communication and defenses. The second section alphabetically lists specific classifications for an assortment of animals like anteaters, camels, eagles, fish, pandas, reindeer, spiders, and tigers. Information includes fun facts about how hummingbird's nests are made from stems, plant down, and feathers that are held together by spiders' webs; the method used by amphibians living in water to determine the presence of predators; and the probability that "toy" or smaller dogs were first bred by the Romans to be used by the wealthy as status symbols.

Dorling Kindersley Animal Encyclopedia displays color photographs ranging in sizes from approximately one-half inch to full-page, black and white sketched scales of average animal sizes, and color artwork of select wildlife movements. Well-placed information, using a variety of font sizes, provides short, fact-packed clips that aid the reader in identifying pictured activities. Visuals are clear and

attractive. Several of the photographs are annotated for closer exploration. Fact boxes highlight specific traits of species, like family life, habitat, where they can be found, and foods they eat. "Find out more" boxes, disbursed throughout the book, link topics together for a better understanding of animal life and surroundings. A glossary of new words and an extensive index are included. Binding is sewn and lightly glued. This is a revised edition of the *Animal Encyclopedia: [The Ultimate Visual Reference Guide To The Animal Kingdom]* (Dorling Kindersley, 2000). Recommended as a secondary purchase.

Kim Harris

The journey : stories of migration / Cynthia Rylant ; illustrated by Lambert Davis. LCCN 2004020762. New York : Scholastic, 2006.

HBB, 0590307177, list price: \$16.99.

591.56/8. Animal migration. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 29 cm.

INT (MS). Rating : 3.

The Journey: Stories of Migration introduces six migratory animals and the instinctive habits they embrace throughout their lifetime. Outstanding details of these extraordinary journeys undertaken by desert locusts, gray whales, American silver eels, monarch butterflies, caribou, and arctic terns are revealed in easy to understand language written for second to fifth graders.

Did you know: The gray whale travels 6,000 miles mostly on an empty stomach? Locusts are young grasshoppers, born among millions of their kind, who initiate a constant migration throughout their entire lifetime? The arctic tern covers more migrating miles than any creature on earth; it can fly 12,000 miles nonstop, as it swoops its food from the sea while in flight? The migratory path of each animal is followed in its entirety.

The Journey: Stories of Migration is not a science book although scientific facts are discussed. Instead, author Cynthia Rylant gives us a depiction of how animals use their instincts to survive. The facts of migration, a not-too-detailed narrative story, may tire younger readers but the clear and enlarged type should encourage them to persist.

Lambert's paintings in *The Journey: Stories of Migration* will fascinate children with their animated features. Children who appreciate stories about real animals will enjoy learning about their habitats from lifelike paintings.

This story of migration is a good read-aloud book and will be useful in an independent study of animals. These six animals were chosen for their unusual habits and it's a good starter book, however, the book leaves you wanting to know more about this archetypical habit of animals.

Maxine Cambra

Sea monsters / written by Stephen Cumbaa ; illustrated by Margot Thompson. Toronto : Kids Can Press, 2007.

HBB, 1553375599, 9781553375593, list price: \$14.95.

591.77. Sea monsters; Marine animals. 40 p. : col. ill. ; 29 cm.

INT (PRI). Rating : 4.

A science picture book, *Sea Monsters* presents creatures ancient and modern, real and legendary. Beginning with the problems sea monsters face, this book goes on to consider krakens and devilfish, pre-historic creatures, crocodilians, sharks, living fossils, whales, rays, legends (including some North American relatives of Nessie), and possible new monsters. An apropos index closes this volume.

Canadian paleontologist and author Dr. Stephen Cumbaa fills *Sea Monsters* with a wide range of interest-catching data.

Award-winning illustrator Margot Thompson's imaginative, colorful, true-to-life paintings double the interest quality, enrich the curious, and delight the blood-thirsty. A few eye-catching photos add verisimilitude. The pre-historic monsters are listed as millions of years old, but evolution is not mentioned. If your library, school, or family needs another book on this subject, you should consider *Sea Monsters*.

Donna Eggett

Owls : whoo are they? / Kila Jarvis and Denver W. Holt ; illustrated by Leslie Leroux and Courtney Couch ; "Owlphabet" letters by Ed Jenne in cooperation with the Owl Research Institute. Missoula, Mont. : Mountain Press, 1996.

PAP, 0878423362, list price: \$12.00.

598.9. Owls; Owls--Juvenile literature. iv, 59 p. : col. ill. ; 23 cm.

INT (MS). Rating : 4.

Well written and informative in a simple, direct way, *Owls: Whoo Are They?* covers all 19 species of owls found in the United States and Canada. It describes many facts about owls, including how they differ from other raptors such as hawks and eagles, how they locate their prey through sound, and how they can swivel their heads nearly 270 degrees. Also mentioned: why owls fly so quietly, and how owls' feathers keep them warm.

The educator recommendations for *Owls* (from organizations like *School Library Journal*, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Montana Science Teachers Association) state the book is "biologically correct," but authors Kila Jarvis and Denver W. Holt also make room for fun facts that will appeal to kid readers: that owls can have eyes "as big as yours," that they have three sets of eyelids, that they stay up late, that they

prefer mice to pizza, that they spit up the animal parts they can't digest. Other ways the book is kid friendly: illustrators Leslie Leroux and Courtney Couch include 36 full color drawings and 10 anatomical illustrations in a 60 page book; potentially unfamiliar words are bold-faced in the text; scientific names have their pronunciations added.

There's mention of owls having been around for 55 million years as well as how various cultures have religious or superstitious beliefs concerning owls, but these mentions are very brief. *Owls: Who Are They?* is a terrific introduction to the subject for all age groups. (It includes a two page glossary and two page index).

Rosemarie DiCristo

Inside your brain / Eric H. Chudler. (Brain works.) LCCN 2006020927. New York : Chelsea House, 2007.

HBB, 0791089444, list price: \$32.95.

612.8/2. Neurophysiology--Juvenile literature; Brain--Juvenile literature. 124 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

MS (INT). Rating : 4.

Inside Your Brain by Eric H. Chudler discusses how the human brain works, using a captivating format with clear colored diagrams and comparative charts comparing people and animals, and insets of fascinating facts. Complete with a glossary, bibliography, books and websites for further research, and an index, the book offers an alternative way of explaining the brain to students. Unique are the sections within each chapter titled "Activities to Exercise Your Brain." These extensive supplements offer hands-on activities to help children understand the brain, and can be used in a classroom setting or individually. Subjects include functions of neurons, memory experiments, exercises showing left and right brain dominance, games to test the senses, and

activities showing the importance of protecting the brain.

A full-color book with an attractive cover, *Inside the Brain* is a clear, concise text designed to stimulate student learning. An excellent stepping-stone into questioning and research, this book is unique with its manipulative activities that stimulate all types of learners. As students complete the activities, more questions develop in their minds and critical thinking skills can improve. Other books in the series include: *The Brain and Love, A Day in the Life of the Brain, How the Brain Grows, Inside Your Brain, and Seeing, Hearing, and Smelling the World.*

Kristine Wildner

A subway for New York / David Weitzman. LCCN 2004056286. New York : Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.

HBB, 0374372845, list price: \$17.00.

625.4/2/097471. Subways--New York (State)--New York--Juvenile literature; Subways--New York (State)--New York. 1 v. (unpaged) : ill. ; 29 x 22 cm.

INT (MS). Rating : 5.

This meticulous picture book for older children offers a comprehensive look into the intricate and wondrous system of subways. David Weitzman's extensive research highlights every stage of the digging and excavation to the final laying of tracks, building of stations, and providing the electrical information riders see. The pen-and-ink illustrations and numbered diagrams coordinated with text, often occupying the open spread of two pages each in 8 1/2 x 11 inch format, lend an appreciation for artistic representation while also making this an interesting way of relating information.

What *New York Subways* (John Hopkins University Press, 2004) is for adults, *A Subway for New York* is for youth in grades 4 to 8. Youth will likely

gravitate to the flow of the story, especially the dangers the workers experienced and the complex electrical work needed to make the subway a reality.

Weitzman's talent for depicting mechanical wonders is well known in earlier works such as *Model T: How Henry Ford Built a Legend* (Crown Books, 2002), *Superpower: the Making Of A Steam Locomotive* (David Godine, 1995), and *Old Ironsides: Americans Build A Fighting Ship* (Houghton Mifflin, 2003). That same attention to detail and careful historical research is continued in *A Subway for New York*. Those familiar with David Macauley's works will find the same clear and comprehensive drawings here.

School and public libraries can add this for the technological finesse presented to a general audience. This is also an adventure book, particularly for those attracted to trains, tunnels, and tracks that should make subways more appreciated for all who encounter them.

Dr. Leroy Hommerding

George Washington Carver : an innovative life / written by Elizabeth MacLeod. Toronto : Kids Can Press, 2007.

HBB, 1553379063, 9781553379065, list price: \$14.95.

630.92. Carver, George Washington, 1864?-1943; Agriculturists--United States--Juvenile literature; African American agriculturists--Biography--Juvenile literature. 32 p. : col. ill., maps ; 29 cm.

INT (MS). Rating : 4.

An ideal role model, George Washington Carver's thirst for education and faith led him to become one of the foremost inventors of all time. Organized chronologically, the story of his life is told on the left, while clear historic photographs and drawings adorn the right page with interesting facts punctuating the layout. Telling not only of his life, but also his relationships with

other influential African Americans at the time and more importantly the common poor black farmer, the book relates Carver's desire to help people as his inspiration for his many inventions. Recognized as the father of biochemical engineering for his work with crop rotation and plants—particularly the peanut, cotton, and sweet potato—Carver impacted the economy of the entire country with his agricultural innovations and discoveries. A timeline, list of historical museums/monuments, and index complete the book.

Friendly in tone, *George Washington Carver: An Innovative Life* is a valuable resource. Author Elizabeth MacLeod portrays his story in a format that stimulates more intense browsing by having the most interesting facts punctuated by photographs and drawings. Student research skills in questioning will be sparked not only by the informative text, but also by the historical sidelights. Relatively inexpensive and available also in paperback as part of the *Snapshots* series, the book is a refreshing addition to any biography collection. Students at many levels can enjoy the book. Likewise, it guides its readers to further inquiry. Other books in the series include: *Alexander Graham Bell*, *Marie Curie*, *Albert Einstein*, *Harry Houdini*, *Helen Keller*, *Lucy Maud Montgomery*, *Eleanor Roosevelt*, and the *Wright Brothers*.

Kristine Wildner

*

**Wind chimes and whirligigs /
Renee Schwarz. Toronto : Kids
Can Press, 2007.**

HBB, 1553378687, 9781553378686, list price: \$12.95.

745.592. Handicraft--Juvenile literature; Whirligigs--Juvenile literature; Windchimes--Juvenile literature. 40 p. : col. ill. ; 26 cm.

PRI (All ages). Rating : *5.

A Kids Can Do it handcraft book, *Wind Chimes and Whirligigs* gives illustrated instructions for young students to make exactly what the title delineates. Three units on how to make this type of craft, including safety tips, and the materials needed (helpfully illustrated) are followed by twelve fun, and eye-catching projects, such as: crazy kitten spinner; caterpillar wind chime; whirlibug; and, wind dragon.

Requiring the use of tools (pliers, screwdrivers, etc.), and materials ranging from forks and spoon, CDs and tennis balls, to nuts and bolts, *Wind Chimes and Whirligigs* helps students learn dexterity, discover mechanical ability, enhance imagination, and see the possibilities which surround them everyday. Young students will need a mentor; older ones will be able to follow the ample directions for themselves. Adults will also enjoy making these dizzy, delightful crafts. Simple, full instructions are enhanced at every step by colorful, accurate illustrations. An unusual, interest-whetting craft book, *Wind Chimes...* is recommended for all schools, homeschoolers, craft classes, Vacation Bible Schools and camps, also visits from grandchildren, and making items to sell at a bazaar.

Donna Eggett

**The glorious American
songbook : a classic illustrated
edition / compiled by Cooper
Edens. San Francisco : Chronicle
Books, 2005.**

HBB, 0811845524, list price: \$19.95.

782.42. Songs, English--United States. 77 p. : col. ill. ; 24 x 29 cm.

INT (All ages). Rating : 4.

In *The Glorious American Songbook*, the reader is treated to a musical and visual feast as each page is turned. Encompassing traditional patriotic songs such as "America the Beautiful," "God Bless America," and "You're a Grand,

Old Flag," to classic American folk songs like "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain," "O Susannah," and "Camptown Races," the heritage and beauty of our country is laid out page by page as a musical reminder of the expansion and growth we have experienced as a nation. While you might be unfamiliar with a few of these songs, you will more than likely be reminded of long-forgotten tunes and lyrics which evoke pleasant memories of elementary school music programs from days gone by.

The organization of this book by Cooper Edens begins concisely by listing the Table of Contents. Each song featured thereafter allows the reader to know the title, composer, and composition year of the song. Also listed is a brief history of the song or the songwriter, the lyrics to which the music was set, and a portion of the song's melody set in the treble clef, which includes tempo markings, key, and time signatures. Along with the text and musical information, each page contains a corresponding illustration vividly depicting the song by artists including American painters Winslow Homer, Edward Hopper, and Norman Rockwell. The acknowledgements page at the conclusion of the book gives a numeric account of each of the visually artistic works used throughout this collection.

The heritage and tradition of passing along these great American songs and folk tunes is an integral part of our culture and thanks to *The Glorious American Songbook*, these musical treasures are ones that Americans of all ages can sing together and enjoy for generations to come.

Sarah Burkhead

**So you want to be an explorer? /
Judith St. George ; illustrated by
David Small. LCCN 2004027239.
New York : Philomel Books, 2005.**

HBB, 0399238689, list price: \$16.99.

910/.9. Adventure and adventurers--Juvenile literature; Discoveries in geography--Juvenile literature; Explorers--Juvenile literature. 53 p. : col. ill. ; 30 cm.

INT. Rating : 3.

Judith St. George and David Small have again teamed up to create a topical collective biography picture book. St. George asks whether you are plucky, enjoy thrills, and like something new in *So You Want to be an Explorer?* If you do, then the explorer's life is probably for you. She continues by grouping male and female explorers into categories such as the curious, people who tackled a quest with gusto, the determined, the risk takers, and those respectful of natives. Additionally, she describes explorers who launched new sports, made mistakes, were the first, didn't get along with fellow explorers, and were failures in their efforts. Then she briefly mentions explorers who fit her groupings, and their accomplishments. David Small uses his signature caricature ink, watercolor, and pastel chalk artwork on full and half pages to illustrate each category. A complete listing of each explorer mentioned in the text, with dates and accomplishments, is appended. A bibliography is also included.

St. George and Small have also collaborated on *So You Want to be an Inventor?* (Philomel, 2002), and *So You Want to be President?* (Philomel, 2000). The presentation of text and artwork is similar in all three, a listing of characteristics plus the people who met them, and the caricature artwork. However, there are several misleading statements in the text. "In 1911 Norwegian Roald Amundsen raced Englishman Robert Scott to the South Pole. Roald learned from the native Inuits what food to eat..." This seems to indicate that Inuits lived at or near the South Pole; there were no humans living there. Currently historians are not positive that the letters reportedly

written by Amerigo Vespucci are his. Thus, some of his exploration is doubtful. The primary value for educators is the listing of cited explorers for further study.

Marion Mueller

S is for shamrock : an Ireland alphabet / written by Eve Bunting ; illustrated by Matt Faulkner. LCCN 2006026000. Chelsea, Mich. : Sleeping Bear Press, 2007.

HBB, 1585362905, 9781585362905, list price: \$17.95.

941.5. Northern Ireland--History--Juvenile literature; Ireland--History--Juvenile literature; Northern Ireland--Social life and customs--Juvenile literature; Ireland--Social life and custom--Juvenile literature. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 26 x 29 cm.

INT (PRI). Rating : 4.

Ancient Ireland, Blarney Stone, Claddagh ring, Dublin, Ellis Island, fairy rings, Giant's Causeway, hedge schools, Irish wolfhound, journey, Book of Kells, leprechauns, modern Ireland, nature, O', St. Patrick, Queen Maeve, Riverdance, shamrock, Titanic, Ulster, Vikings, writers, non-existent X, and zed are the twenty-six topics Irish-born Eve Bunting, author of over 250 children's books, has chosen to describe in both prose and poetry. In *S is for Shamrock*, Bunting presents snippets of Irish history, mythical and real; famous Irish individuals and groups; modern day Irish character and culture; Irish symbols; and the unique. For example, the letters x, j, k, q, v, w, or z do not exist in the Irish alphabet except in proper names, math, or science. The emigration from Ireland during and following the potato famine and today's technological revolution are both featured. Matt Faulkner used pen, ink, and watercolor to create the large pictures, which often are two-page spreads. A world map is juxtaposed next to a half-page enlargement of the island of Ireland.

Sleeping Bear Press has begun a series of international alphabet books for middle graders. Each book follows a similar format, but is written and illustrated by individual authors and illustrators. In this volume Bunting has selected twenty-six topics of child interest about Ireland. The book may be read quickly as an alphabet poem, and then specific topics may be explored in depth by reading the sidebar three-to-five paragraph narratives. It is in the narratives that the real Irish character and culture are evident. Faulkner's detailed illustrations extend the text as well as add humor and human interest. Though enjoyable on its own, the book will be in demand in March.

Marion Mueller

Martha Ann's quilt for Queen Victoria / written by Kyra E. Hicks ; illustrated by Lee Edward Fodi . LCCN 2006024651. Dallas, Tex. : Brown Books Publishing, 2006.

HBB, 9781933285597, list price: \$16.95.

B or 305.896/073006662092. Ricks, Martha Ann, b. ca. 1817--Juvenile literature; Victoria, Queen of Great Britain, 1819-1901--Juvenile literature; Quilts--England--History--19th century--Juvenile literature; Quilts--Liberia--History--19th century--Juvenile literature; Slaves--Tennessee, East--Biography--Juvenile literature; African Americans--Liberia--Biography--Juvenile literature. 1 v. (unpaged) : col. ill. ; 26 cm.

PRI. Rating : 4.

Martha Ann Hicks grew up as a slave in Tennessee. Her father saved his money to move the family to Liberia where they were free, Martha could be educated, and Queen Victoria's ships protected them from recapture into slavery. In gratitude to the queen, Martha followed her father's example and saved her pennies for a trip to thank the queen in person. Martha spent fifty years saving money and quilting a beautiful coffee tree design quilt to present to the queen. Martha met her goal. In 1893, the Coffee Tree Quilt was displayed in the

World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

The story, written by Kyra E. Hicks and illustrated by Lee Edward Fodi, is a true one from history and presents facts in an interesting way. As Martha matures from a young child, she learns sewing skills from her mother and saving habits from her father, two keys that become important later. There is a lot of repetition of the red tin box where the coins were saved, which is pleasing and helps the reader relate to the characters and to the setting. The moral and applicable lessons in *Martha Ann's Quilt for Queen Victoria* are truly wonderful. In the true-life character of Martha Ann Hicks, the reader has a model of gratitude, patience, diligence, and persistence. It is inspirational to read about someone who worked and saved to achieve a long-term goal, and one can easily apply that model to areas of one's own life.

Susan Joy Clark

A bookworm who hatched / by Verna Aardema ; photographs by Dede Smith. (Meet the author.) LCCN 93012002. Katonah, N.Y. : Richard C. Owen, 1992.

HBB, 1878450395, list price: \$14.95.

B or 811/.54. Aardema, Verna; Children's literature--Authorship--Juvenile literature; Authors, American--21st century--Biography--Juvenile literature; Authors. 32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

INT. Rating : 5.

Self portrait / text and photographs by George Ancona. (Meet the author.) Katonah, N.Y. : Richard C. Owen, 2006.

HBB, 1572748605, 9781572748606, list price: \$14.95.

B or 811/.54. Ancona, George; Children's literature--Authorship--Juvenile literature; Authors, American--21st century--Biography--Juvenile literature; Authors. 32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

INT. Rating : 5.

Whole days outdoors : an

autobiographical album / by Jim Arnosky. (Meet the author.) LCCN 2006045340. Katonah, N.Y. : Richard C. Owen, 2006.

HBB, 1572748591, 9781572748590, list price: \$14.95.

B or 508.092. Arnosky, Jim; Children's literature--Authorship--Juvenile literature; Authors, American--21st century--Biography--Juvenile literature; Authors. 32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

INT. Rating : 5.

Under my nose / by Lois Ehlert ; photographs by Carlo Ontal. (Meet the author.) LCCN 96015441. Katonah, N.Y. : Richard C. Owen, 1996.

HBB, 1572740272, list price: \$14.95.

B or 811/.54. Ehlert, Lois; Children's literature--Authorship--Juvenile literature; Authors, American--21st century--Biography--Juvenile literature; Authors; Illustrators. 32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

INT. Rating : 5.

If you give an author a pencil / by Laura Numeroff ; photographs by Sherry Shahan. (Meet the author.) LCCN 2002074266. Katonah, N.Y. : Richard C. Owen, 2002.

HBB, 1572745959, list price: \$14.95.

B or 811/.54. Numeroff, Laura Joffe; Children's literature--Authorship--Juvenile literature; Authors, American--21st century--Biography--Juvenile literature; Authors. 32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

INT. Rating : 5.

Before it wriggles away / by Janet S. Wong. (Meet the author.) LCCN 2006046411. Katonah, N.Y. : Richard C. Owen, 2006.

HBB, 1572748613, 9781572748613, list price: \$14.95.

B or 811/.54. Wong, Janet S.; Children's literature--Authorship--Juvenile literature; Authors, American--21st century--Biography--Juvenile literature; Authors. 32 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

INT. Rating : 5.

The *Meet the Author* series is a collection of 35 autobiographies of notable children's authors and illustrators written for seven to ten year old children

(second to fifth grade). Six of these books are reviewed here. These famous authors show children, through words and photographs, about their own childhood and about how they became writers. Each book reveals what the author's life is like now. The authors explain how they get ideas, and how they go about the task of writing and illustrating their books.

The photographs add much to this series. Some photographs are supplied by the authors and show childhood homes and memories. Others, done by professional photographers, show the authors/illustrators at work and at home. The durable hardback books with sewn binding will stand up to years of handling. These books will do a great job of informing curious fans and inspiring a new generation of writers.

A Bookworm Who Hatched tells the story of Verna Aardema, Caldecott Medal winning author of *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*. Aardema decided to be a writer when she was 11 because of her mother's encouragement. Aardema started her career as a journalist but eventually switched to writing children's books that re-tell folktales from Africa and Mexico.

In *Self Portrait*, George Ancona invites readers into his adobe home/studio in New Mexico. Ancona does his own photography for this autobiography. He talks about various books he has written and shows readers how he plans and produces his work.

Jim Arnosky shares his love of nature in *Whole Days Outdoors: An Autobiographical Album*. His wife, Deanna, does the photographs for this book which shows Arnosky working and playing outdoors.

Under My Nose by Lois Ehlert introduces readers to this author/illustrator of such books as *Growing Vegetable Soup* and *Eating the Alphabet*. Ehlert shows readers the thumbnail

sketches for one of her books and some outlines and brainstorming pages for the text of other books.

Laura Numeroff's first published children's book started as a homework assignment in college. She is famous for authoring *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*, which she wrote during a car trip with a friend. She tells about her life and work in *If You Give an Author a Pencil*.

In *Before it Wriggles Away*, Janet S. Wong tells readers about how she went to Yale law school. She became a lawyer, but she did not enjoy her work. When she discovered that she could write children's books and poetry, she was very happy. Wong shows readers how she now spends her time writing and traveling to schools and events to talk to children about poetry and writing.

In the *Meet the Author* series, both photos and text offer a great window into the lives of these authors/illustrators and show children that "famous" people have ordinary lives and work hard to do a good job.

David Rainey

W. A. Mozart : [a musical picture book] / by Ernst A. Ekker ; illustrated by Doris Eisenburger. LCCN 2005034379. New York : North-South Books, 2006.

HBB + CD, 0735820562, list price: \$20.00.

B or 780.92. Mozart, Wolfgang Amadues, 1756-1791--Juvenile literature; Composers--Austria--Biography--Juvenile literature. 1 v. (unpaged) ; 1 CD-ROM : col. ill. ; 31 cm.

INT. Rating : 3.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg in 1756. Both he and his sister, nicknamed Nannerl, learned music from a very young age. In fact, Mozart was a musical child prodigy, and his father became manager as Wolfgang and Nannerl toured Europe. In the Hague, brother and sister both came down with typhoid fever. During a trip to Italy, Wolfgang visited the ruins of Pompeii

and gained an even greater love for opera. In 1782 Wolfgang married Constanze Weber. In Vienna now, Wolfgang became somewhat successful as a freelance composer. Wolfgang was not always easy to get along with. He was demanding and temperamental. Just before a trip with Constanze to Prague, Mozart was startled by a messenger that reminded him of the grim reaper. The messenger had requested a requiem, foreshadowing the great musician's own death that was to follow shortly.

W. A. Mozart: A Musical Picture Book by Ernst A. Ekker gives the reader biographical snapshots of Mozart's lively personality and brief life. The complicated writing style and vocabulary limit it to older children. Doris Eisenburger's illustrations in watercolor are very good and fit perfectly with the story line. On the last page, a detailed chronology appears listing milestones in Mozart's life and certain political events in Europe. The book comes with a Compact Disc that has 50 minutes of music. The selections are well chosen and mostly consist of excerpts from piano sonatas and operas like *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Magic Flute*.

David Rainey

The young Hans Christian Andersen / by Karen Hesse ; illustrated by Erik Blegvad. LCCN 2004029100. New York : Scholastic Press, 2005.

HBB, 0439679907, list price: \$16.99.

B or 839.8/136. Andersen, H. C. (Hans Christian), 1805-1875--Juvenile literature.; Authors, Danish--19th century--Biography--Juvenile literature. 48 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

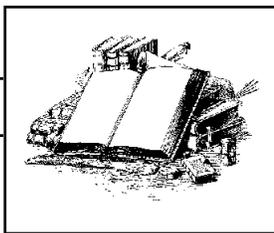
INT. Rating : 3.

This recent biography of classic children's writer Hans Christian Andersen provides elementary school readers a glimpse into the author's possible motivation and sources for his imaginative stories. In nineteen

vignettes, author Karen Hesse deftly links highs and lows from Andersen's childhood to stories that might have flowed from them. Each vignette bears the title of one of Andersen's stories and is illustrated in full-color detail by Erik Blegvad. For example, Andersen's frightening experience visiting a mental institution carries the title "The Bog King's Daughter." "A Drop of Water" may be based on Andersen's father leaving home to serve in Napoleon's army. *The Young Hans Christian Andersen* ends with "The Twelve Passengers"—a vignette that sees young Andersen leaving his family to go out into the world and make his fortune.

In this unusual treatment for a biography, readers in search of a typical facts-based recitation of a subject's life may be confused upon first reading. Yet, the combination of the titles and life stories works very well for Andersen, a man whose stories covered the pain of dark episodes in his young life. Here they are treated gently and respectfully without being frightening to a young reader. The biography includes references to ghosts and angels and a mysterious blooming of thistles that had been laid upon his dead father's body, references that flow directly from Andersen's fanciful imagination. A four-page afterward completes the biographical sketch of Andersen for the curious, and an extensive bibliography gives the same reader direction to more detailed information about the famous author. Finally, illustrator Blegvad has a short note on the last page regarding the influence of Andersen's stories on his own childhood in Denmark and gives a nice nod to the author's treatment of her subject.

Kelley Westenhoff



Aftershocks / William Lavender.
LCCN 2005019695. Orlando, Fla.
: Harcourt, 2006.

HBB, 0152058826, list price: \$17.00.

Fic. Earthquakes--California--San Francisco--Fiction; Chinese Americans--Fiction; Sisters--Fiction; Fathers and daughters--Fiction; Sex role--Fiction; San Francisco (Calif.)--History--20th century--Fiction. 343 p. ; 22 cm.

HS. Rating : 3.

The less-than-riveting beginning of William Lavender's *Aftershocks* is typical of historical fiction written for teen girls. Jessie is a spirited girl whose aspiration is to become a doctor, but her overbearing father has forbidden her to do any such thing. It is a misleading beginning for an unusual, emotionally charged tale. The focus of the book changes when Jessie discovers the terrible truth that her father is having an affair with their family's young Chinese maid. The conventional characters in this story directed against racist stereotypes detract from the book. Mr. Lavender's keen sense of style deeply involves the reader, even though flat characters dominate his story.

Aftershock deals with complex moral themes. It shows how an individual's actions can destroy themselves and everyone around them. Racism is portrayed in all of its ugliness. Truth, responsibility, forgiveness, and love play key roles. I find it unrealistic that, in the early 1900s, the only mention of God is in the occasional exclamation. The reader should be aware that the circumstance under which Jessie discovers her father's affair is described briefly in the book.

Ultimately, *Aftershocks* is a success. While it has multiple weaknesses, the engaging style and its complex subject matter make this book a good read.

Kathryn Stillman

Andrea Carter and the dangerous

decision / by Susan K. Marlow.
(Circle C adventures ; 2.) **Grand Rapids : Kregel Publications, 2007.**

PAP, 0825433576, 9780825433573, list price: \$7.99.

Fic. Horses--Fiction; Ranch life--California--Fiction; California--History--1850-1950--Fiction; ; Christian life--Fiction. 139 p. ; 22 cm.

MS. Rating : 4.

Andrea Carter and the long ride home / by Susan K. Marlow.
(Circle C adventures ; 1.) LCCN 2005006620. **Grand Rapids : Kregel Publications, 2005.**

PAP, 0825431883, list price: \$7.99.

Fic. Horses--Fiction; Ranch life--California--Fiction; California--History--1850-1950--Fiction; ; Christian life--Fiction. 128 p. ; 22 cm.

MS. Rating : 4.

In the first Circle C Adventure, *Andrea Carter and the Long Ride Home*, we meet twelve-year-old Andi. She is a feisty tomboy living on the Circle C Ranch in San Joaquin Valley, California, in 1880. While Andi doesn't go looking for trouble she often finds it. One troublesome day, she makes the fateful decision to saddle her beloved horse Taffy and run away from home. After a horse thief steals Taffy and several other dangerous situations occur, she realizes maybe home is not so bad after all. But will she make it back to the Circle C?

The second Andrea Carter adventure, *Andrea Carter and the Dangerous Decision*, puts Andi in trouble from the beginning. While racing her horse, Taffy, through the streets of Fresno she comes close to running down the new schoolteacher, Mr. Foster. He takes an instant dislike to Andi, sees her as a disrespectful troublemaker, and once school starts, matters worsen as his lying daughter, Virginia, also shows an aversion to Andi. When a convicted murderer barges into the schoolhouse and tries to take the schoolmaster's daughter hostage, Andi must make the

most dangerous decision of her life. Should she volunteer to take the place of the mean, tale-bearing Virginia? Can Andi find a way to help defuse this scary situation without being harmed herself?

Circle C Adventures are wholesome novels for tween-aged kids 8-12 who love adventure and mysteries. While being marketed mainly towards girls, boys will also enjoy reading the heart-pounding adventures of tomboy Andi Carter. Honesty, faith, and courage in adversity are topics touched upon in each story of the Circle C Adventures series by Susan K. Marlow. Through her many exciting and oftentimes dangerous escapades, Andi learns that God is always with her, watching over and protecting her. While there are currently two published novels in the series, another is planned for release in 2008 with the title of *Andrea Carter and the Family Secret*. These books held my attention throughout the entire story and I highly recommend these fast-paced, action-packed novels.

Sherri Myers

Beyond reach : a novel / Melody Carlson. (The secret life of Samantha McGregor ; 2.) LCCN 2006034482. **Colorado Springs : Multnomah Books, 2007.**

PAP, 1590526937, 9781590526934, list price: \$11.99.

Fic. Schools--Fiction; High schools--Fiction; Death--Fiction; Suicide--Fiction; Visions--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 250 p. ; 21 cm.

HS (MS). Rating : 3.

In this second book of *The Secret Life of Samantha MacGregor*, Samantha must reconcile her acceptance of the visions and prophetic dreams God has bestowed upon her. *Beyond Reach* starts exactly where *Bad Connection* leaves off, except Samantha asks for a break from visions. God seemingly does so, and Samantha panics. When Ebony, her contact with

the police, asks for help with an apparent suicide case, Samantha realizes her gift is not something she can easily turn on and off. Samantha is given the opportunity to learn more about her gifts as she learns more about the case. Was it really suicide? Who is the person in her reoccurring visions?

Melody Carlson continues her series that focuses on the gifts of vision and prophecy. Samantha MacGregor is an engaging character; much like Nancy Drew, she has a knack for clues, and even more like Pollyanna, she has a penchant for the positive. She is accepting of everyone, particularly of a classmate who is struggling with his sexual orientation. Written in first person, Samantha at times comes across as a typical teen girl, with worries about chemistry class, her boyfriend, and her mother.

Often she switches into a much older person, reminiscent of the protagonists in Carlson's adult novels. The plot flows well although the character portrayal fails at times. Carlson provides a more consistent teenage personality in her *Diary of a Teen Girl* series.

Pam Webb

Blood on the river : James Town 1607 / Elisa Carbone. LCCN 2005023646. New York : Viking Children's Books, 2006.

HBB, 0670060607, 9780670060603, list price: \$16.99.

Fic. Indians of North America--Virginia--Fiction; Powhatan Indians--Fiction; Virginia--History--Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775--Fiction; Jamestown (Va.)--History--Fiction. 237 p. : map ; 22 cm.

MS (INT). Rating : 5.

As our country celebrates the 400th anniversary of Jamestown, *Blood on the River* brings the story of our first settlers to life. Samuel, an orphan, is chosen as a page for Captain John Smith of the Virginia Company. Crossing the

Atlantic is a mix of lazy gentlemen, hardworking commoners, and their servants, all with varied motives. Some come to spread the good news of Christianity, while most simply seek to turn an immediate profit. power struggle among the gentlemen and Captain Smith coupled with crowded conditions and limited food supplies make the voyage almost unbearable.

Told from Samuel's point of view, we learn not only of the extreme hardships faced by our earliest settlers, but also of their crucial, yet fragile relationship with the Powhatan people. Although their survival depends on the natives, the profit and power-seeking settlers continually thwart Smith's peacemaking efforts. When illness and violence ensue, only a few survive.

Concluding with fascinating historical notes, *Blood on the River* is a stunning, authentic piece of historical fiction. Elisa Carbone's thought-provoking novel leaves the reader with a lasting impression of the strength and courage of our earliest settlers. Each chapter beginning is an original quote from a primary source, directly tying the fiction to history. The characters are genuine and setting descriptions realistic and detailed. Many moral principles are reinforced within the context of the story. Greed is the downfall of peace, and teamwork becomes the strength of the community. Children and teachers can easily integrate the true events of history with the story. This book will augment any historical fiction collection.

Kristine Wildner

The braid / Frost, Helen . LCCN 2005040148. New York : Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.

HBB, 0374309620, 9780374309626, list price: \$16.00.

Fic. Emigration and immigration--Fiction; Islands--Fiction; Sisters--Fiction; Canada--History--1841-1867--Fiction; Scotland--History--19th century--Fiction; Cape Breton

Island (N.S.)--History--19th century--Fiction; Mingulay (Scotland)--History--19th century--Fiction. 95 p. ; 24 cm.

HS (MS). Rating : 5.

Interweaving compelling historical fiction with unique form, Helen Frost has created a stunning young adult novel. *The Braid* is told in narrative poems, separated by poems of praise. Based on the events and circumstances surrounding Scottish immigration to Nova Scotia, Canada, in the 1850's, each chapter is narrated by a different sister -- Jeannie or Sarah. Separated when they set sail, they are bound symbolically by a braid made with hair from each girl. After an excruciating voyage, three family members perish. Only Jeannie, her mother, and brother survive. Life in Canada is brutal. Homeless for months, Jeannie and her mother eventually build a life together. Meanwhile, Sarah moves with her grandmother to the Scottish island of Mingulay. She falls in love and becomes pregnant out of wedlock. Although the girls never reunite, they do connect when Sarah's love contacts Jeannie in Canada and eventually returns to Scotland to wed Sarah.

The form of this short novel is distinctive with first person narrative poems written from each girl's point of view. When someone is quoted, the words are printed in italics. The praise poems are simple, yet beautifully relate to each chapter. Nevertheless, the book reads as a historically based story about the love and struggles of the sisters, more than a series of poems. Each of the main characters is fully developed; we know their hearts through their writing. Vivid descriptions allow us to feel their hardships and see the landscape. Covering two years, time flows effortlessly. Endnotes about the history and form complete the work. Although short, its content necessitates its audience be limited to grades 8+. While many will enjoy *The Braid* independently, it could be used in the

classroom as historical fiction, a companion to the study of immigration, or to teach narrative poetry.

Kristine Wildner

Gavin Goodfellow : the lure of Burnt Swamp / by Candy Abbott. LCCN 2006940792. Georgeown, De. : Fruitbearer, 2007.

HBB, 1886068038, 9781886068025, list price: \$24.95.

Fic. Fantasy; Christian fiction. 367 p. : ill., maps ; 24 cm..

MS (HS). Rating : 5.

Burnt Swamp is suffering the effects of a decade-old fire that still burns. But that's because the swamp is a gateway to the underworld... and only a 12-year-old boy can stop it from opening.

Gavin Goodfellow: The Lure of Burnt Swamp is an exciting, smoothly-written tale of spiritual warfare with wonderfully-drawn, engaging characters and beautifully-crafted descriptive passages. The villains, notably arrogant teen witch Bea Daark and Hee-Haw Downes, a local teen burning with anger, are ruthless, but have just enough vulnerability to keep from being caricatures, while the main characters, at least in Book One of this trilogy, are all too human, yet have been chosen by God to fight the monstrous presence lurking beneath Burnt Swamp. Gavin, the hero, is dyslexic, insecure, and in conflict with his father, who prefers Gavin's athletic cousin Eric. Molly, Eric's twin, is super-smart but reeling from her parents' divorce. Dexter, a friend, uses "goodness" to mask the pain of his parents' deaths. These three (plus Uncle Warney, a gentle, deeply religious man) become guardians of the Burnt Swamp diary, kept for centuries by Christ-followers, and the key to stopping the coming evil.

The richly-detailed story contains multiple examples of Christianity and the occult. Molly and Dexter quote the

Bible; Warney has visions and prophesizes; Gavin learns to let God's power shine through him; he speaks with the risen Christ. The villains, meanwhile, meditate, engage in astral projection, see auras, use crystals, and cast spells. While the evil is ferocious and real (there are even demonic characters) there's always the sense that "God wins."

Candy Abbott has crafted a wonderful story. The plot moves swiftly, alternating between suspense, humor, and stark terror. Because this is Book One, few issues are settled, but there are hints of resolutions -- and problems -- to come.

Rosemarie DiCristo

Hearts of stone / Kathleen Ernst. LCCN 2005032756. New York : Dutton Children's Books, 2006.

HBB, 0525476865, 9780525476863, list price: \$16.99.

Fic. Brothers and sisters--Fiction; Orphans--Fiction; Forgiveness--Fiction; Survival--Fiction; United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Fiction; Tennessee--History--Civil War, 1861-1865--Juvenile fiction. 248 p. ; 22 cm.

HS (MS). Rating : 5.

Hannah Cameron was just fifteen years old when her father died fighting for the Union Army in the Civil War. As a resident of Tennessee, his decision to fight against the Rebels in the South caused his family to be hated by their neighbors. Shortly after their father's death, bushwackers attack the Cameron family home and the mother is killed. As the oldest, Hannah must care for the children, and decides to bring them to Nashville and look for their only remaining relative. After making the two-hundred-mile journey, the children are devastated to learn of Aunt Ellen's death only six weeks earlier. With nowhere else to go and too worn out to return home, they live on the streets, eventually finding their way to a refugee camp.

Hearts of Stone is a fantastic coming of age novel for young readers. Historically accurate and completely engaging, this dramatic book has won numerous awards. Kathleen Ernst used her knowledge and love of the Civil War era to write this remarkable novel, taking ten years to complete the task. Hannah is a determined young woman with the weight of her family's needs on her shoulders, which can quite readily be felt by the reader with Ernst's descriptive prose. Prejudice, hatred, forgiveness, and strong love for family combine to make *Hearts of Stone* a novel not soon forgotten. Incidences of stone throwing, stealing, death, and cigar smoking are present, but are needed to show the true circumstances of the time period.

Sherri Myers

The night of the burning : Devorah's story / Linda Press Wulf. LCCN 2005052113. New York : Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2006.

HBB, 0374364192, 9780374364199, list price: \$16.00.

Fic. Ochberg, Isaac, 1878-1937--Fiction; Sisters--Fiction; Immigrants--Fiction; Emigration and immigration--Fiction; Jews--Fiction; Orphans--Fiction; South Africa--History--1909-1961--Fiction; Poland--History--1918-1945--Fiction; Historical fiction. xii, 210 p. ; 22 cm.

MS (HS). Rating : 4.

The Night of the Burning: Devorah's Story is a moving historical novel set in Poland during the anti-Semitic pogroms of the early 1920s. Linda Wulf takes the family history of her mother-in-law and creates a story that is considered fiction but is based on one woman's memory of a childhood filled with war, disease, and loss. The writing of this book helped a woman fulfill a long ago promise to her parents to "never forget who we are." (p. 82.) Devorah is only eleven when the pogroms reach her village. Only she and her younger sister,

Nechama survive the night of Domachrovo village burning. The sisters are smuggled out of the village to an orphanage in Pinsk, where serious and cautious Devorah seeks to protect and shelter her younger sister. Should they join the two hundred orphans bound for South Africa? If they leave Poland, will they forget who they are? Will their parents and their early lives be lost forever?

The Night of the Burning takes a very personal look at history and how it affects the lives of everyone—including children. The Jewish pogroms of Poland are accurately portrayed but the descriptions of the burning of the village could be distressing for some, especially since the Christians Poles led by the Cossacks were responsible for the death and destruction. Devorah and Nechama are so different. Nechama seems all too ready to forget her past and Devorah is determined to never forget. One sister embraces a chance for a new life with a new family and the other feels responsible for keeping the past alive. It is hoped that young readers will be moved by the story and encouraged to see history not as dates and wars but as the stories of the ordinary everyday men, women and children like Devorah.

Mary McCoy

The silver donkey / Sonya Hartnett ; illustrated by Don Powers. LCCN 2006042582. Cambridge, Mass. : Candlewick Press, 2006.

HBB, 0763629375, 9780763629373, list price: \$15.99.

Fic. Conduct of life--Fiction; Soldiers--Fiction; Storytelling--Fiction; World War, 1914-1918--France--Fiction. 266 p. : ill. ; 19 cm.

INT (MS, HS). Rating : 3, recommended with caution.

The Silver Donkey is a cleverly written tale of a British soldier who is traumatized during World

War I and decides to flee the war, to go home without permission. The soldier becomes temporarily blind as he makes his way through France when he chances upon four children who help him on his journey. During his encounters with the children, he tells them four parables about a silver donkey charm he keeps with him for good luck.

The story does a fine job of balancing the development of the soldier's story with the four parables. Hartnett also portrays the reality of war in a way that does justice to a biblical perspective on death. In addition, the pencil sketches add just enough visualization to keep the flow of the story going. The binding on the hardcover edition is exceptional and the semi-glossy paper with large fonts help to ensure it is accessible to a wide age range. It includes a fine ribbon marker.

The book must be recommended with caution. One reason is that the birth narrative of Jesus is turned into a purely moralistic tale. It changed the donkey into a symbol of using our strength to help those who need it (p. 70, 229). And this birth narrative is portrayed as an event that may or may not be true depending on what you decide (p.73). A second reason for caution is an overt attempt to depict a soldier's participation in war as immoral. One of the main messages of the

story is that being a war deserter is done by those who are "trustworthy and brave" (p. 229).

David H. Wenkel

Standing against the wind / Traci L. Jones. LCCN 2005051226. New York : Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2006.

HBB, 0374371741, 9780374371746, list price: \$16.00.

Fic. Schools--Fiction; African Americans--Fiction; City and town life--Fiction; Family problems--Fiction; Conduct of life--Fiction; Self-confidence--Fiction. 184 p. ; 22 cm.

MS (HS). Rating : 4 (Not recommended).

Standing Against the Wind is a raw story about an eight-grader named Patrice who faces the struggles of poverty, a broken home, and a rough neighborhood. The author works hard to portray the reality of the difficulties that Patrice faces. The author succeeds in painting this picture without overdoing it. Gangs, drug dealing, and truancy are all a part of the background but are painted negatively. Central to the character is Patrice's hair. Her black, poofy hair is a metaphor for her unique life amidst her surroundings.

Positively, the story emphasizes the theme of hope. The reader will come away realizing that hard work and an attitude of responsibility that accepts self-sacrifice are needed to succeed in the world. Patricia attends church but not much detail is given. She is generally moral but the author does not indicate how her actions are related to her faith. On another good note, the story paints education as desirable for girls. Unfortunately, the story also clearly legitimizes being disrespectful to parents and not loving those who do not love you first.

At one point Patrice gets sexually harassed by a couple of boys in a traumatic scene. The book contains several slang words (some of which are

sexual) such as “nappy,” “knocked up,” and “trifling.” The book also contains references to “Jesus,” “Lord Jesus,” “God,” and “Lord” that are more exclamatory than reverent. The swear “hell” occurs once. This book presents a good story but a vile picture of morality. Because the moral of the story is that we should only love people that love back, it is not recommended.

David H. Wenkel

An unlikely friendship : a novel of Mary Todd Lincoln and Elizabeth Keckley / Ann Rinaldi. (Harcourt great episodes.) LCCN 2005030210. Orlando, Fla. : Harcourt, 2007.

HBB, 0152055975, 9780152055974, list price: \$17.00.

Fic. Lincoln, Mary Todd, 1818-1882--Juvenile fiction; Keckley, Elizabeth, ca. 1818-1907--Juvenile fiction; Lincoln, Mary Todd, 1818-1882--Fiction; Keckley, Elizabeth, ca. 1818-1907--Fiction; Slavery--Fiction; Friendship--Fiction; United States--History--19th century--Fiction. 241, [2] p. ; 22 cm.

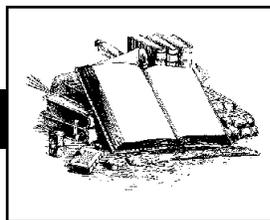
MS. Rating : 4, with caution.

Ann Rinaldi knows how to write first-rate historical fiction, but *An Unlikely Friendship* does not quite fit that description. The story opens immediately prior to the death of President Lincoln and narrates the traumatic event to the reader. This section also introduces the two lead characters, Mary Todd Lincoln and Elizabeth Keckley, as adults. The remaining pages are divided into two parts: their childhood lives and sections of explanatory content. In childhood, Mary struggles with an overbearing stepmother and the danger of supporting the Underground Railroad. Lizzie is born a mulatto slave who must face the harsh realities of her place in society as she works toward earning her freedom.

While the quality of writing remains solid, the sections that summarize events jolt the reader suddenly out of the story. Also, the friendship referred to in the

title remains disappointingly under explored, as the two women do not meet until after the events of their first person narratives. In addition, this title includes tough content that relates to the cruelties Lizzie faced in her life as a slave such as rape and suicide. There are several references to slaves using magic, most notably when Lizzie uses conjuring to give her assailant headaches. However, deep relationships are shown as a high priority throughout the lives of these women. Both characters are strong women who are willing to stand up for what they believe in and fight to make their lives better. It is recommended only for collections in which historical fiction is in high demand and the above cautions are noted.

Tinna Mills



The dangerous book for boys / Conn Iggulden, Hal Iggulden. LCCN 2006047000. New York : HarperCollins, 2007.

HBB, 0061243582, 9780061243585, list price: \$24.95.

031.02. Boys--Miscellanea; Recreation; Amusement; Handbooks, vade-mecums, etc.. 288 p. : ill. ; 23 cm.

INT (All ages). Rating : 4.

"Boys liking to make things and do stuff girls do not want. It is a *Dangerous Book for Boys*. Do not tell your mother!!! If you want to make a go cart or tree house. This book is good I like it."

-Mikey Wood, 8

The Dangerous Book for Boys has one major theme: There are so many better things to do than play video games! Boys should go outside, get dirty, build things, and send secret codes for no reason other than the sheer delight in it!

The cover is a purposeful 1910s throw-back. The type-setting and illustrations on the inside look as though they come from about forty years later. Amazon reviewers have pointed out that the Boy Scouts will do much more for a boy (and his dad), but this now bestselling book is a great start.

With this book, you can learn about latitude and longitude, the five knots every boy should know, the seven poems every boy should know, how ships sail into the wind (this reviewer always wondered!), the seven wonders of the ancient world, how to make a go-cart. Learn about modal adverbs, common Latin phrases, first aid, catapult and artillery design, constellations, navigating with a compass, how to make a bow and arrow. Read the stories of multiple famous battles, master some simple coin tricks, identify common bugs and trees.

Evolution pops up here and there, the

authors laud Whitman's "Song of Myself," and the section of advice on girls contains a flatulence euphemism (but only as part of sound advice meant to stay outbreaks of the aforesaid event around members of the opponent sex). But the science overall is reliable, the literary selections are standards, and the rest of the "Girls" section encourages selflessness and chivalry (with a dash of wry wit).

The authors, Conn and Hal Iggulden, definitely maintain the British origin of the book which is evidenced in spelling and content, but the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address each get a showing. Add a few brief stories of wholesome historical derring-do, and you have a hit for boys 8-14 or so.

Mark L. Ward, Jr.

The industrial revolution : a history in documents / Laura L. Frader. (Pages from history.) LCCN 2005015167. New York : Oxford University Press, 2006.

HBB, 0195128176, list price: \$36.95.

330.9/034. Industrialization--History; Industrial revolution--Sources. 157 p. : ill., maps ; 26 cm.

MS, HS. Rating : 5.

Teachers will be impressed with *The Industrial Revolution: A History in Documents* by Laura L. Frader in the "Pages from History" textbook series. One of the top challenges an historical survey book in this genre faces is gaining the readers attention and holding it. This textbook meets that challenge by creating a continual interaction between cultural texts and short explanations. The book is replete with photos and illustrations that

enhance readability. The size of the book is also manageable. The student will not feel overwhelmed by the size or weight of the book.

This volume not only offers a collection of documents about the industrial revolution, it is also a book about how to study historical resources. The author introduces the reader to the nature and importance of primary sources and attention is given to specific types, such as photographs and paintings. This enhances its value as a reference and will supplement and integrate topics brought up in the broader history curriculum. Students should be able to handle issues such as sexism, racism, labor abuse, and slavery.

History teachers will appreciate the balance of picture media and text in this book. It is engaging and will help students value this era in history. In addition to helpful sidebars with explanatory information, a timeline is provided at the back of the book. An index is provided as well as a list of websites for students to pursue more information.

David H. Wenkel

Science fair success / Ruth Bombaugh. Rev. and expanded. (Science fair success.) LCCN 98003297. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 1999.

LIB, 0766011631, list price: \$26.60.

507.8. Science projects--Handbooks, manuals,

etc.; Science projects. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.
MS (HS). Rating : 5.

Science fair success using household products / Salvatore Tocci. (Science fair success.) LCCN 2001000305. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2002.

LIB, 0766016269, list price: \$26.60.
507.8. Science projects; Experiments; Science-Experiments. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.
MS (HS). Rating : 5.

Science projects about solids, liquids, and gases / Robert Gardner. (Science fair success.) LCCN 99042737. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2000.

LIB, 0766011682, list price: \$26.60.
507.8. Science projects--Handbooks, manuals, etc.; Science projects; Matter--Experiments; Experiments. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.
MS (HS). Rating : 5.

Science projects about the science behind magic / by Robert Gardner. (Science fair success.) LCCN 99023826. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2000.

LIB, 076601164X, list price: \$26.60.
507.8. Magic tricks; Science projects. 128 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.
MS (HS). Rating : 5.

Science fair success using the Internet / Marc Alan Rosner. Rev. and updated [ed.]. (Science fair success series.) LCCN 2005006749. Berkeley Heights, N.J. : Enslow Publishers, 2006.

HBB, 0766024253, list price: \$26.60.
507.8. Internet; Science projects. 112 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.
MS (HS). Rating : 3.

These books are a part of the Science Fair Success Series. This first book, *Science Fair Success* has been revised and expanded from its first issue in 1999. This volume takes you step by step through the process of preparing a

project for a science fair. Step one is getting organized. This chapter gives you an overview of the complete process. The other chapters take each step individually, beginning with choosing your topic, designing your experiment, keeping track of your equipment, writing your research report, making an attractive display, and ending with talking to the judges. This book presents the process of developing and presenting a science project in a clear and straight forward manner.

The other books in the series deal with different types of experiments. The first chapters of *Science Fair Success Using Household Products*, *Science Projects: About Solids, Liquids, and Gases* and *Science Projects: About the Science: Behind the Magic* give a brief review of the scientific method. The additional chapters in each book present different types of experiments related to the book's main topic. Each experiment has a list of the things you will need as well as a section on exploring on your own. The black and white illustrations are used to highlight or enhance the text and the various appendices are very helpful for further research. The print is large and easy to read. The simple illustrations and text make these books very easy to use.

Science Fair Success: Using the Internet is structured a little differently from the other volumes in the series. It discusses how to use the Internet not only to search for a project but to also devise a project where information or data can be accessed via the Internet, such as using a weather site to collect data on the weather in certain locations. There are also sections on personal safety issues and how to use search engines to locate information. Other topics covered are how to use the Internet to communicate with other students, as well as how you may communicate with various scientists or scientific organizations. The other chapters address the various

types of science and how to locate information and projects in those disciplines. This book was published in 2005 and may be dated or unnecessary for the millennium student.

Mary McCoy

Optics : illuminating the power of light / Kyle Kirkland and Sean M. Grady. (Science & technology in focus.) LCCN 2005036736. New York : Facts on File, 2006.

LIB, 0816047049, list price: \$35.00.
535. Optical instruments; Light; Optics. xiv, 178 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.
HS (MS). Rating : 4.

Lasers : the technology and uses of crafted light / Charlene W. Billings and John Tabak. New ed. (Science & technology in focus.) LCCN 2005033798. New York : Facts on File, 2006.

LIB, 0816047847, list price: \$35.00.
621.36/6. Lasers. 162 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.
HS (MS). Rating : 4.

Light, its components and uses, is exceptionally complex. These two books in the new series, *Science & Technology In Focus*, *Optics* and *Lasers*, simplify these complicated subjects mixing history with scientific explanations. Each book discusses the practical uses of each technology and potential future applications. With black and white photographs, graphics or diagrams punctuating nearly every other page, the format is appealing. Both include a glossary, bibliography, related websites, and an index.

Optics: Illuminating the Power of Light begins with an explanation of the nature of light and vision. Explaining why people can see, the book defines the electromagnetic spectrum and the atomic mechanism of illumination. Moving on, it focuses on the history of the exploration of light from ancient civilizations to the present including

brief biographies of key scientists. The next sections explain mirrors, lenses, colors, and explain human vision. Finally, several intriguing chapters concentrate on the practical uses of optics including telescopes, microscopes, electronics, cameras, invisible electromagnetic radiation, lasers, fiber optics and communication, computing, manufacturing of optical instruments and the use of optics in scientific research and medicine, and art.

Lasers: The Technology and Uses of Crafted Light introduces its subject in much the same way as *Optics* beginning with an explanation of the nature of light, but this time focusing on light's wave and particle nature. The nature and creation of laser light is unique; understanding the concepts of monochromatic light, coherence, and laser power and efficiency is critical. As one of the most important inventions of the twentieth century, the history surrounding lasers is relatively recent and critical to the reader's understanding. The book concludes with the practical uses of lasers in industry, communication, reading and writing, measuring, holograms, and microscopic uses and spectroscopy.

With complex and changing technology, libraries must make certain their collections reflect the latest information. This series is clearly an important addition to any library striving to keep its materials current. Each volume is a valuable resource for student research and study. Other books in the *Science and Technology* series include: *Biohazards*, *Forensic Anthropology*, *Modern Medicines*, *Robotics*, *Supercomputers*, and *Virtual Reality*.

Kristine Wildner

Canyons / Erik Hanson ; foreword Geoffrey H. Nash. (The extreme Earth.) LCCN 2006015810. New York : Chelsea

House, 2007.

HBB, 0816064350, 9780816064359, list price: \$35.00.

551.44/2. Canyons; Plate tectonics. xvii, 206 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Caves / Jeanne K. Hanson ; foreword, Geoffrey H. Nash. (The extreme Earth.) LCCN 2006011718. New York : Chelsea House, 2007.

HBB, 0816059179, 9780816059171, list price: \$35.00.

551.44/7. Caves. xviii, 142 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Lakes / Jeanne K. Hanson ; foreword, Geoffrey H. Nash. (The extreme Earth.) LCCN 2005034327. New York : Chelsea House, 2007.

HBB, 0816059144, 9780816059140, list price: \$35.00.

551.44/2. Lakes. xiv, 146 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Waterfalls / Patricia Corrigan. (The extreme Earth.) LCCN 2006001829. New York : Chelsea House, 2007.

HBB, 0816064369, list price: \$35.00.

551.48/4. Waterfalls. xiv, 146 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

HS (MS). Rating : 4.

The Extreme Earth examines the most fascinating examples of earth's most interesting landforms—*Canyons*, *Lakes*, *Waterfalls*, and *Caves*. Other books (not reviewed) in the series include *Deserts*, *Mountains*, *Ocean Ridges and Trenches*, and *Rivers*. Moving far beyond the ordinary geology text, the series focuses on the most extreme landforms in each category--the biggest, deepest, most unusual, etc. The series assumes the theories of a billion-year-old earth and evolution are fact. These theories are significant in the explanation of the origins, climate, and geologic history related to each landform.

The books follow a similar format. Geologist, Geoffrey H. Nash introduces each with a customized forward, and an introductory section discusses the origins and common components of

each landform. Ten subsequent chapters address specific locations in detail. Black and white photographs, diagrams, and maps are included throughout with eight pages of color photographs inset into the middle of each book. Critical, detailed information illuminates each locale including vital and world record statistics, unique geologic characteristics, surrounding plants and animals, climate history, recent scientific discoveries, effects of human intervention, etc. Chapters are detailed and complete, well organized with human-interest insets including biographies of key scientists, legends, safety tips, stories of exploration, future prospects, etc. Moreover, the "In The Field" section of each chapter includes methods by which geologists are currently studying each location. Each book concludes with a thorough bibliography for further research listing magazines, books, and websites pertinent to each landform and a comprehensive glossary and index.

Each book creates its own sense of wonder. Canyons are extremely complex, and diverse in their origins. *Canyons* covers this landform throughout the world. Every canyon is unique with histories and circumstances that continue to fascinate and surprise researchers. Moving underground, *Caves* takes the reader on a tour beneath the earth. Difficult to measure, sometimes impossible to explore, caves take us back in time with dinosaur fossils, Stone Age art, gigantic chambers, the deepest lava cave, impressive Basalt columns, etc. Lakes, a landform we often take for granted, explains what was there before each lake, how it formed, how it has changed, and the multitude of forces impacting each lake. Visiting familiar and unfamiliar lakes around the world, we learn about a lake inside a volcano crater, a lake saltier than the ocean, the world's largest lake, and a mysterious

body of water that sometimes disappears, then reappears. Conversely, rare landforms such as waterfalls have always attracted both tourism and research. Yet the variety and development surrounding each waterfall is unique and changing, prompting continued research. *Waterfalls* visits extreme waterfalls (highest, widest, most unusual, etc.) throughout the world. *Extreme Earth* takes geology beyond the simple study of rocks to an intriguing world to visit and explore.

As our planet changes and natural resources become more scarce, *The Extreme Earth* series inspires the reader on to further study. So much detail of the world is yet to be explored. The more students learn about these natural wonders, the more they will understand how much more there is to discover.

Kristine Wildner

A field guide to mammals of North America / Fiona A. Reid. 4th ed. (The Peterson field guide series.) LCCN 2005037897. Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 2006.

PAP, 0395935962, list price: \$20.00.

599.097. Mammals--Canada--Identification; Mammals--Identification--United States. xx, 579 p. : col. ill. ; 19 cm.

HS, MS (All ages). Rating : 4.

Those who have seen a live mammal or dried skull they couldn't identify would find *Mammals of North America* useful. The book opens with an introduction which explains how to use the book. The next two sections, titled Plates, include color drawings and photographs of North American mammals and skulls. These sections contain brief descriptions of the animals and direct readers to the larger section of Species Accounts. The species account includes longer descriptions and location maps for the mammals found in North America. The book closes with a glossary and index which increase the book's usefulness.

The drawings, photographs, and maps seem to be accurate and will help readers identify the mammals they see. The Plates chapters have an easy-to-use layout of descriptive text opposite the color drawings or photos with cross-references to the longer descriptions in Species Accounts. While the book is written at the adult level, Reid has written the book in such a way that readers of all ages could find the book useful. As one of the Peterson Field Guides, the book's first use is in identifying mammals in the area. Another use of the book would be as a starting point for research on mammals.

Jane Mouttet

Da Vinci & his times / Andrew Langley. Rev. ed. (Eyewitness books.) LCCN 2006295748. New York : DK Publishing, 2006.

HBB, 0756617685, 9780756617684, list price: \$15.99.

709.2. Leonardo, da Vinci, 1452-1519--Juvenile literature; Artists--Italy--Biography--Juvenile literature; Italy--Civilization--1268-1559--Juvenile literature; Italy--History--15th century--Juvenile literature; Italy--Social life and customs--Juvenile literature. 71 p. : ill. ; 29 cm.

MS (All ages). Rating : 5.

Da Vinci & His Times reawakens us to the Renaissance, the mid-1400s, when people's thoughts swerved from their duty to the church to social obligations: a phase called humanism. The book's timeline sees the general public becoming immersed in society through education, art, and a revival of Greek and Roman classical works.

DK Eyewitness Books presents this historical period to the reader as an easy to understand collection of esoteric facts; it is more like an encyclopedia written in satisfying bites accompanied by pictures. As a structural prop, the author lets his readers discover the intimacy of this world through the life of Da Vinci, the genius the author claims to be the most famous citizen of the times.

Da Vinci & His Times is seventy two pages of travel through the Renaissance period. The book is written in two-page chapters. Each chapter contains a brief topic description, many pictures, and a remarkable amount of historical facts. The first chapter, The Early Renaissance, explains the drift from the mid-1400's, the Middle Ages, what drove the people away, and the interests they found as the Renaissance period began. The last chapter, The Renaissance Legacy, tells how this era benefited the world. This book was first published in 1999 under the title *Leonardo and His Times*.

Maxine Cambra

The Oxford dictionary of music / Michael Kennedy ; associate editor, Joyce Bourne. 2nd rev. ed. LCCN 2006050238. New York : Oxford University Press, 2006.

HBB, 0198614594, list price: \$60.00.

780.3. Music--Dictionaries; Music--Bibliography. xv, 985 p. ; 24 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

This second edition of *The Oxford Dictionary of Music* adds approximately 1,000 new entries and revises at least eighty percent of the existing 11,000 entries. As a reliable, comprehensive one-volume reference on music, it covers a great deal of material and lists the less well-known composers along with the musicians that are more established in reputation.

As a respected author and critic on English music of the twentieth century, Kennedy commands an achievement that offers much for a variety of users. In addition to covering 5,000 composers, attention is devoted to conductors and performers, directors, individual works, musical terms and styles, instruments, and thematic entries such as musicology. The updated lists of composers' works is of particular value to both amateur and professional music lovers.

Public libraries seeking a one-volume reference can add this dictionary with assurance that it is helpful for the music student, and an excellent addition for the music hobbyist. There are more entries and more up-to-date entries here than in the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Harvard University Press, 2003).

Dr. Leroy Hommerding

Critical companion to Chaucer : a literary reference to his life and work / Rosalyn Rossignol. (Facts on File library of world literature.) LCCN 2006000099. New York : Facts on File, 2006.

LIB, 0816061939, 9780816061938, list price: \$85.00.

821/.1. Chaucer, Geoffrey, d. 1400--Handbooks, manuals, etc.; Civilization, Medieval, in literature--Handbooks, manuals, etc.; Poets, English--Middle English, 1100-1500--Biography--Handbooks, manuals, etc.; Great Britain--History--14th century--Handbooks, manuals, etc.. viii, 648 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 5.

Chaucer: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work by Rossignol is an invaluable tool for any student of Chaucer. The book is divided into three distinct parts with relevant artwork throughout. The first part gives a detailed biography of Chaucer. Rossignol is careful to distinguish between facts that are known and accepted to be true with those that are debatable and still under discussion by Chaucerian scholars. Part II consists of plot summaries of all Chaucer's works with critical commentaries and detailed lists of suggested readings. Part III entitled "Related People, Places and Topics" is an alphabetized reference on just about anything of interest to a student of Chaucer. Also included in this volume are several appendices: Chaucer's Life with Significant Historical and Literary Events; List of Works by Chaucer; The Canterbury Highway; and Bibliography.

Rossignol's handling of Chaucer is detailed, thorough and well-organized. Anyone looking for information on a particular aspect of Chaucerian study could find exactly what they were looking for quickly and efficiently. Rossignol has a comfortable style of writing that allows even the novice to find enjoyment in reading about the Father of English Poetry. I would highly recommend this book for any serious student of English literature.

Heather MacInnis

Polar regions / Charles F. Gritzner. (Geography of extreme environments.) LCCN 2006019636. New York : Chelsea House, 2006.

LIB, 0791092356, list price: \$24.95.

910.911. Polar regions--Juvenile literature. 126 p. : col. ill. ; 25 cm.

The tropics / Charles F. Gritzner. (Geography of extreme environments.) LCCN 2006019747. New York : Chelsea House, 2006.

LIB, 079109233X, list price: \$24.95.

910.913. Tropics--Juvenile literature. 128 p. : col. ill. ; 25 cm.

Deserts / Charles F. Gritzner. (Geography of extreme environments.) LCCN 2006025584. New York : Chelsea House, 2006.

LIB, 0791092348, list price: \$24.95.

910.915/4. Deserts--Juvenile literature. 126 p. : col. ill. ; 25 cm.

HS (MS). Rating : 4.

South Dakota geography professor Charles Gritzner has taught geography at the college level for forty years. For the series "Geography of Extreme Environments," he has chosen to describe deserts, polar regions, and the humid tropics. Each title includes the following sub-topics in eight chapters:

an introduction and definition of the extreme environment; weather and climate; land and water; ecosystems; native peoples; contemporary conditions; and future prospects. A separate chapter about European influence is included in the polar and tropics books, whereas, in the desert title resident human geography is emphasized. Numerous colored photographs, charts, diagrams, graphs, and info sidebars are widely spread throughout the books. A timeline, bibliography of sources, further reading, credits, and an index are in each volume.

Professor Gritzner has written a geography series about high interest environments. The text has numerous research aids: subtitles, captions, headings, charts, graphs, and maps. The writing, while scholarly, detailed, and thorough, is lively and filled with human-interest topics. Especially well presented are the enumerated characteristics of each of the environments in the first chapters. Gritzner's emphasis on human geography and the impact of native humans plus exploitive humans, such as colonizing Europeans, help make what could be a dry topic a relevant topic. The native cultures, historically and contemporaneously, and their struggles with their hazardous environment help the reader empathize with peoples who have lived in these challenging regions. Gritzner also mentions global warming, and the economic and strategic position of the desert areas. Some of the titles listed in the bibliography are dated classics.

Marion Mueller

Atlas of the United States / H.J. de Blij, editor ; [cartography by Philip's]. LCCN 2006629550. New York : Oxford University Press, 2006.

HBB, 0195220447, list price: \$50.00.

912.73. United States--Social conditions--Maps; United States--Economic conditions--Maps; United States--Maps. 1 atlas (208 p.) : col. ill., col. maps ; 35 cm.

HS. Rating : 4.

This visually oriented *Atlas of the United States* offers a thematic look at physical geography and geology, tectonic provinces, energy and minerals, surface water, indigenous peoples, immigration, and social diversity and urbanization after opening with a satellite image of the United States.

Separate pages are devoted to each of the fifty states and present an inviting look at the places and features of the American landscape. Distilling an enormous amount of information in these pages, *Atlas of the United States* highlights the evolution of geographical knowledge at the same time as it presents a fascinating journey of the states. Those familiar with *Atlas of North America* (Oxford, 2005) will find a similar atlas here but without the addition of Canada and Mexico.

This is a priority purchase for those school and public libraries where students frequently consult an atlas on their own and where a concise overview suffices for most of what the students need. Its easy-to-use consultation makes it a welcome tool for offering a quick overview of respective states while also conveying an appreciation for the uniqueness of the various states. The layout is superb and the historical information is accurate and well researched, e.g. New Orleans maps clearly point out the land as it existed before hurricane Katrina. The thematic look adds interest and the index makes it easy to find places. Frequently available at lower prices so multiple copies can be considered, e.g. it is currently selling for \$10.00 on Amazon.

Dr. Leroy Hommerding

Mexican Americans / Michael J. Schroeder. (The new

immigrants.) LCCN 2006008380. New York : Chelsea House, 2007.

LIB, 0791087859, list price: \$27.95.

973/.046872. Immigrants--United States--Social conditions.; Immigrants--United States--History; Mexican Americans--Social conditions.; Mexican Americans--History; Mexico--Emigration and immigration--History; United States--Emigration and immigration--History. 150 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

Korean Americans / Anne Soon Choi. (The new immigrants.) LCCN 2006019745. New York : Chelsea House, 2007.

LIB, 0791087883, list price: \$27.95.

973/.04957. Immigrants--United States--Social conditions.; Immigrants--United States--History; Korean Americans--Social conditions.; Korean Americans--History; Korea--Emigration and immigration--History; United States--Emigration and immigration--History. 132 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

Filipino Americans / Jon Sterngass. (The new immigrants.) LCCN 2006015645. New York : Chelsea House, 2007.

LIB, 0791087913, list price: \$27.95.

973/.049921. Immigrants--United States--Social conditions.; Immigrants--United States--History; Filipino Americans--Social conditions.; Filipino Americans--History; Philippines--Emigration and immigration--History; United States--Emigration and immigration--History. 144 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

MS (HS). Rating : 5.

An excellent resource for learning about recent immigration to the United States, the New Immigrants series discusses the history and lives of our country's most contemporary citizens. Children whose parents or grandparents are recent immigrants will be particularly interested as they learn some of the many reasons why their relatives may have immigrated. In addition, adoptees can learn about their country of origin.

An extremely political issue, immigration can be a subject about which some people tend to make general statements without knowing the history and facts. For this reason, each book in the series begins with the same introduction delineating the purpose and importance of understanding

immigration. Subsequent chapters follow a logical sequence covering the history and experience of each group. For example, *Mexican Americans* begins with a riveting chapter detailing the lives of Rita and Cesaer Chavez. *Korean Americans*, on the other hand, begins with a discussion about the exclusion of Koreans from America. Finally, *Filipino Americans* begins discussing the dichotomy many Filipinos feel as part of two different cultures.

Although differing in content areas, each book includes many of the same organizational details. The covers depict color photographs of children in traditional attire. All chapters conclude with thoughtful study questions and include photographs, maps, charts, diagrams, and timelines illuminating the text. Moreover, all include the importance of religion in the lives of the immigrants. Readers should note that many of the reasons and circumstances related to immigration are mature in nature, including prostitution, picture brides, poverty, family violence, racism, affirmative action, racial slurs, etc. These issues are addressed appropriately within the text, but some children will have additional questions about these sensitive subjects.

The text is complex; designed not for casual reading, but for more serious students who are genuinely interested in the topic or conducting research. The New Immigrants series provides a unique look into the people behind the issues of today. As much as different groups vary, so do the issues discussed. Challenges, triumphs, important events - - such as the 1992 L.A. riots, and effect on Korean businesses are all discussed. Unique terms are defined within the text and again in the glossary. Personal stories inset within the chapters highlight notable personalities. The end of each book includes a complete glossary, chronology, detailed index, and resources for further reading

including books, videos, and websites.

Overall, the series is an outstanding resource. I encourage librarians to review their resources related to immigration to make sure their collection includes information on our most recent settlers. Immigrant families from Korea, The Philippines, and Mexico did review the books with me and agreed that they are an accurate and fair portrayal of these immigrant groups.

Kristine Wildner

Slavery in America / Dorothy Schneider and Carl J. Schneider. (American experience.) LCCN 2006024798. New York : Facts on File, 2007.

LIB, 0816062412, 9780816062416, list price: \$80.00.

973.7/1. Slavery--United States--History. iv, 554 p. : ill., maps ; 29 cm.

Adult (MS, HS). Rating : 5.

An information-filled one volume encyclopedia, *Slavery in America* provides engrossing, truthful, well researched data covering the years 1441-1877. Arranged chronologically, each chapter quotes from eye-witness testimony, contemporary journals and articles, and professional reports from people such as ship's doctors, pastors, politicians, abolitionists, and others. Longer articles are based on careful research.. Calendars and event chronicles, maps, drawings, photos, and other memorabilia plentifully illustrate this book, adding greatly to the reader's understanding. Several appendices containing pertinent information and pictorials, glossary, bibliography, and index add further value and assistance.

Once again Facts on File series presents a valuable learning aid for all students and interesting read for the historically minded. Both authors hold Ph.D.s in covering English Lit., political science, and history and have co-authored many popular history books. *Slavery in*

America covers numerous subjects, for example (and this is a very small sampling): slavery before Americans bought into it; workers, from breeders to hiring out; voluntary enslavement; insurrections; proslavery vs. antislavery arguments; black soldiers; freed people; physical and economic conditions. Christians and the church are portrayed truthfully, sometimes as actively pro-slavery, but equally as often as dynamically anti-slavery. This is a volume for all ages capable of reading it, from older elementary school age through adult. Useful, challenging, and attention-grabbing, both secular and church schools, libraries and homes will find *Slavery in America* a useful adjunct to studies.

Donna Eggett

The Underground Railroad / Michael Burgan. (Slavery in the Americas.) LCCN 2005015723. New York : Chelsea House, 2006.

LIB, 0816061378, list price: \$3500.

973.7/115. Slavery--United States--History--Juvenile literature; Abolitionists--United States--History--19th century--Juvenile literature; Antislavery movements--United States--History--19th century--Juvenile literature; Fugitive slaves--United States--History--19th century--Juvenile literature; Underground railroad--Juvenile literature. 112 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

MS (INT). Rating : 5.

The eight chapters of Michael Burgan's *The Underground Railroad* describe the network that helped southern slaves escape to freedom in the north. This system in pre-Civil War United States took the form of houses for hiding the escapees, writers, people who transported the slaves, and individuals who contributed money. The text mentions well-known figures such as Harriet Tubman and Dred Scott, in addition to lesser known activists. Henry Brown, for instance, shipped himself to Philadelphia in a large wooden box. He drilled a few air holes, and dined on water and crackers as he

traveled along to freedom!

The varied black and white illustrations range from an antique woodcut and an 1850 lithograph to a diary page and photographs. A reproduction of the 1850 poster from Massachusetts highlighted the Fugitive Slave Law. A timeline, short glossary, reading list, and index complete *The Underground Railroad*.

Sidebars, many illustrations, charts, and bold-face headings make this book easy to read. Generous white space and clear type further enhance the layout. Quality paper and sturdy binding indicate this title can withstand hard use in a public library, home schooling group, or a church library. Other books in this series cover different aspects of African American history, such as slave rebellions and slave trade.

Roberta Lou Jones

John Wesley : the world, his parish / by Janet and Geoff Benge. (Heroes of history.) LCCN 2006100152. Seattle : YWAM, 2007.

PAP, 1576583821, 9781576583821, list price: \$8.99.

B or 287.092. Wesley, John, 1703-1791--Juvenile literature; Methodist Church--England--Clergy--Biography--Juvenile literature. 191 p. ; 21 cm.

INT (MS, HS, Adult). Rating : 3.

Thomas Edison : inspiration and hard work / by Janet and Geoff Benge. (Heroes of history.) LCCN 2007005939. Seattle : YWAM, 2007.

PAP, 193209637X, 9781932096378, list price: \$8.99.

B or 621.3092. Edison, Thomas A. (Thomas Alva), 1847-1931--Juvenile literature; Electric engineers--United States--Biography--Juvenile literature; Inventors--United States--Biography--Juvenile literature. 203 p. ; 21 cm.

INT (MS, HS, Adult). Rating : 4.

YWAM presents a series of biographies showcasing a variety of influential

historical figures. Each biography starts with a moment of significance, and then moves to the featured person's childhood, showcasing his or her life. Intended for elementary students, the biographies are appealing and useful for middle school through adult audiences as well. The husband and wife writing team of Janet and Geoff Benge blend their talents to creating succinct, yet thorough biographies on men and women who have impacted and contributed to history. Their biographies go beyond the elementary classroom, and are worthy reads for any age.

John Wesley, another formidable Christian hero, came from a strict religious upbringing. His parents helped form his calling, bringing his passionate view of doctrine to people on both sides of the Atlantic. *John Wesley: The World His Parish*, is a chronicle of a man who was driven to share his vision, even though it was not traditional nor popular with most he encountered. His perseverance eventually formed the Methodist movement, which has influenced generations far beyond Wesley's passing in 1791. While Wesley's life makes for interesting reading, younger children may not find it as captivating as other historical figures in the series.

When we think of Thomas Edison, we immediately link him with the invention of the light bulb. However, readers will discover this great man of innovation contributed so much more to the world than electric lights. *Thomas Edison: Inspiration and Hard Work* is a fascinating account of one of history's greatest inventors. With little formal education, Edison managed to follow his thirst for understanding and inventing. This account will give insights into how this man managed to achieve and contribute so much in his lifetime, giving a greater illumination to the complicated genius that he was.

Pam Webb

Jim Thorpe : original All-American / Joseph Bruchac. LCCN 2005032173. New York : Dial Books/Walden Media, 2006.

HBB, 0803731183, 9780803731189, list price: \$16.99.

B or 796.092. Thorpe, Jim, 1887-1953; Indian athletes--United States--Biography; Athletes--United States--Biography. 277 p. : ill. ; 22 cm.

MS. Rating : 4.

Children who are passionate about sports will thoroughly enjoy Joseph Bruchac's new biography of Jim Thorpe. Fictionalized in the sense that it is written in the first person from Thorpe's point of view, the author assures us in the afterward that none of the events, settings or time periods have been fabricated. Moreover, Bruchac has attempted to correct previous misconceptions and misinformation about Thorpe's life in earlier works. We learn first hand of the suffering, and determined spirit of the Indian people during this period of intense government intervention into their lives. As we see Indian children taken from their parents and forced into government schools suffering sometimes deplorable conditions, we discover the great tenacity of the Indian people. Moreover, we begin to understand their strong values including loyalty to family, aversion to profanity, and resolve in the face of overwhelming obstacles. The book covers Thorpe's early years and focuses on his experiences in government Indian schools through his athletic accomplishments at Carlisle Indian School and controversial Olympic participation.

Focusing on his early sports career, Thorpe's example is the embodiment of the values of perseverance, hard work, and team spirit. As an accomplished track star, baseball and football player, sports was the center of Thorpe's life. Play-by-play action in many of the football games will have many readers

on the edge of their seats. Likewise, sports fans will enjoy the history of the development of football and interesting accounts of his coach, the famous "Pop Warner." Although a good starting point for a student research paper, the lack of an index makes it difficult to pinpoint specific events. With historic photos, a fascinating author's note and strong bibliography, *Jim Thorpe: Original All-American* is an excellent addition to any school biography collection.

Kristine Wildner

Laura Ingalls Wilder : a storybook life / Janet and Geoff Benge. (Christian heroes : then & now.) Seattle, Wash. : YWAM Publishing, 2005.

PAP, 1932096329, list price: \$8.99.

B or 813/.52. Wilder, Laura Ingalls, 1867-1957 --Juvenile literature; Wilder, Laura Ingalls, 1867-1957; Authors, American--20th century--Biography--Juvenile literature; Women pioneers--United States--Biography--Juvenile literature; Frontier and pioneer life--United States--Juvenile literature; Children's stories--Authorship--Juvenile literature; Authors, American; Women--Biography. 196 p. : map ; 21 cm.

INT (MS). Rating : 3.

Rachel Saint : a star in the jungle / Janet and Geoff Benge. (Christian heroes : then & now.) LCCN 2005016786. Seattle, Wash. : YWAM Publishing, 2005.

PAP, 1576583376, list price: \$8.99.

B or 266/.0092. Saint, Rachel--Juvenile literature; Missionaries--Ecuador--Biography--Juvenile literature; Missionaries--United States--Biography--Juvenile literature. 207 p. : map ; 21 cm.

INT (MS). Rating : 4.

This basic biography of Laura Ingalls Wilder, known for her authorship of many autobiographically-inspired books including *Little House on the Prairie*, chronicles her life from birth to death. In *Laura Ingalls Wilder : A Storybook Life*, Janet and Geoff Benge detail many incidents of Wilder's family and her

growing up in Wisconsin and the Great Plains. The story also gives readers a panoramic picture of the development of the West. The book centers largely on her childhood and teen years, with brief descriptions of her adulthood and fame as a writer and speaker. Both major and minor incidents are described that add realism to the book.

Young readers familiar with Laura Ingalls Wilder will enjoy realizing how her books are mirrors of her own experiences as a young frontier woman. Much history will be gained as well as insight into Wilder; children may take away a better grasp of the struggles pioneers faced in gaining the west. Young readers will also discover how different pioneer life was from their own experiences with technology and modern conveniences. This book is a useful supplement to a study of American history of the west.

God's ability to use a single person to influence a culture for Christ is the message in *Rachel Saint, A Star in the Jungle* by Janet and Geoff Benge. Rachel's earliest experiences and family life set the stage for the calling she experienced as a young adult to proclaim Jesus to a murderous tribe of South American Indians. Wrapped around the account of the five missionaries speared to death by the Aucas is Rachel's journey as a single missionary woman committed to and ultimately succeeding in introducing the Aucas, now known as Waorani, to God.

The ups and downs, leaps of faith, and times of confusion bound up in the work of a career missionary are evident in Rachel Saint's biography. The story portrays the multiple aspects of Rachel's seeking God's will and following it, including losing her brother Nate to the Auca spears. She is described with a sense of authenticity, using excerpts of letters she wrote and impressions of those with whom she worked. *Rachel Saint: A Star in the Jungle* has potential

to prompt readers to offer themselves for missionary service, or at least increase readers' understanding of the realities and eternal value in missions.

Karen Schmidt

C.S. Lewis : master storyteller / by Janet and Geoff Benge. (Christian heroes : then & now.) LCCN 2007006022. Seattle : YWAM, 2007.

PAP, 1576583856, 9781576583852, list price: \$8.99.

B or 823/.912. Lewis, C.S. (Clive Staples), 1898-1963--Juvenile literature; Authors, English--20th century--Biography--Juvenile literature. 191 p. ; 21 cm.

INT (MS, HS, Adult). Rating : 4.

C.S. Lewis, or Jack, as he preferred, is best associated as the author of the Narnia tales. There was so much more to Lewis than his stories of Aslan and the Pevensie children. In all, he wrote over thirty books, most concerning themselves with theological arguments and truths. Ironically, Lewis did not intend on writing the Narnia books as a Christian allegory, yet his beliefs in the truths of Jesus Christ were so strong that his stories overflowed with his convictions. In *C.S. Lewis: Master Storyteller*, readers learn about this literary leader, who as a former atheist, became one of the most influential Christian writers of our time. An accomplished literature professor, a dedicated brother, husband, and friend, and a brave soldier, Lewis was a man rightly called a hero for then and now.

Pam Webb

A girl from Yamhill : a memoir / Beverly Cleary. LCCN 87031554. New York : Avon Books, 1999.

PAP, 0380727404, list price: \$10.99.

B or 813/.54. Cleary, Beverly; Authors, American. 344 p. : ill. ; 20 cm.

MS (HS, Adult). Rating : 4.

Henry Huggins and Ramona Quimby are

familiar names to many who grew up with Beverly Cleary's books. In her memoir, *A Girl From Yamhill*, readers are able to see fiction did imitate life as Cleary's childhood days in Oregon proves to be inspiration for many of her juvenile offerings. In fact, it isn't much of a stretch to say the similarity of Ramona and Beverly Cleary as a girl is remarkable. Cleary's memoir takes readers on the journey of her childhood through high school during the 1920s and 1930s of rural and urban Oregon. Raised on a farm as an only child, and surrounded by family, Cleary grows up confident and precocious. When her family leaves the strenuous life of farming and moves to Portland, Cleary has adjustments to make in her school life, family life, and discovers her goal: to become a writer.

Written with compelling frankness and fascinating detail, readers discover that Cleary had many bumps and bruises while growing up. Some were physical, such as prolonged illnesses which weakened her. Others were social, being snubbed by the more affluent girls in her neighborhood and school. The most poignant issue was emotional—the uncle who had misplaced affections for her, the controlling first boyfriend, and the obsessive mother. The memoir's tone is addressed towards middle schoolers, yet older readers will find the reading interesting as well. The memoir ends as Cleary embarks on her journey to faraway California to attend college, prompting her readers to find the second installment, *My Own Two Feet*, to see how she fared on through adulthood.

Pam Webb

Elie Wiesel : messenger for peace / Heather Lehr Wagner. (Modern peacemakers.) LCCN 2006020453. New York : Chelsea House, 2006.

LIB, 0791092208, list price: \$30.00.

B or 813/.54. Wiesel, Elie, 1928-; Holocaust survivors--Biography; Authors, French--20th century--Biography; Jewish authors--Biography. 112 p. : ill. (some col.) ; 25 cm.

MS (HS). Rating : 5.

The biography tells the true life story of Elie Wiesel's life. The reader learns about his childhood in Romania and his time spent in concentration camp at Auschwitz. The story follows the man to maturity as he becomes a refugee in France, an American citizen, a reporter and book writer, a college professor, a Nobel Prize winner, and a human rights activist.

In this biography, there is much to learn about the fascinating man of Elie Wiesel. The reader can relate to the hardships he faced in concentration camp which later inspired him to write on behalf of Holocaust victims so that they and the horrors they experienced would not be forgotten. Readers learn about the man's discipline and drive as well as his humility and the compassion he had for all oppressed people. The book includes many photographs of Wiesel and other important individuals and events from history. Pages are laid out with colorful squares containing mini biographies of other important and related characters from the period such as Adolf Eichmann and Golda Meier or information on historical places such as Buchenwald. An appendix includes the full text of Wiesel's speech on acceptance of the Nobel Prize for Peace and a chart shows a chronology of major events in Wiesel's life.

Susan Joy Clark

A dangerous engine : Benjamin Franklin, from scientist to diplomat / Joan Dash ; pictures by Dusan Petricic. LCCN 2004063204. New York : Frances Foster Books, 2006.

HBB, 0374306699, list price: \$17.00.

B or 973.3/092. Franklin, Benjamin, 1706-1790 --Juvenile literature; Statesmen--United States--Biography--Juvenile literature; Scientists--

United States--Biography--Juvenile literature; Inventors--United States--Biography--Juvenile literature; Printers--United States--Biography--Juvenile literature; United States--Foreign relations--1775-1783--Juvenile literature. 246 p. : ill. ; 21 cm.

MS (HS, Adult). Rating : 3.

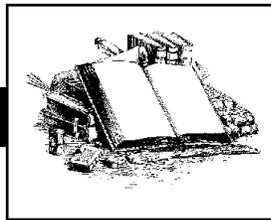
Joan Dash offers a biography of a famous eighteenth century American, A Dangerous Engine: Benjamin Franklin from Scientist to Diplomat. Black and white illustrations by Dusan Petricic highlight important events in the life of this diversified man.

Part One, At Home in the Laboratory, focuses on Franklin's early life, his print shop, and scientific experiments. Part Two, At Large in the World, includes travel in Europe and his work with the early congress of the United States. He signed the US Constitution, conducted the famous kite experiment in a thunderstorm, and helped the American Revolution.

Dash's extensive research shows Franklin as a man of many contrasts. He learned to "...stand up to authority, the authority of his father, of the church...." Yet, Ben Franklin later admonished his daughter to listen to sermons, "...even if the Preachers you dislike." He produced an illegitimate son before his marriage, and borrowed the civic-mindedness of the Quaker community. Franklin spent little time in formal schooling, yet St. Andrews in Scotland, Yale, and Harvard awarded honorary degrees to the statesman and inventor.

A bibliography and source notes verify facts. The text is easily readable, but hampered somewhat by a bland writing style. The author sometimes chooses the passive voice, rather than the more forceful active voice. Sentences and phrases beginning with "it is," and "there are" lack needed preciseness. Many pronouns could be exchanged for descriptive nouns.

Roberta Lou Jones



Admission / Travis Thrasher.
LCCN 2005023641. Chicago :
Moody Press, 2006.

PAP, 0802486711, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. College students--Alcohol use--fiction;
 Missing persons--Fiction; Roommates--Fiction;
 Psychological fiction; Christian fiction. 298 p. ;
 21 cm.

Adult. Rating : 3.

It is April 1994 and Jake River's last rabble-rousing, drug permeated, alcohol soaked spring break party. At least while he is a student at Providence Christian college. He regains consciousness in a wrecked car. He is covered with blood. On the floor of the car is a handgun wrapped in a muddy towel. In Jake's blood is enough alcohol to land him a DUI. Jake has no idea what happened.

Fast forward to January, 2005, and a paying proposition from a father who is worried about his daughter who disappeared with one of Jake's former college friends. Jake takes the job and begins a sometimes violent journey that puts him back in contact with each of his former college friends and, eventually, the answers to the riddle of what happened with the mysterious car wreck.

The reader takes a dual journey in two time zones: 1994, the college years, when Jake "spent three years existing around here but never really living," and 2005, the season of dealing with the tragic events of the college years. Both time frames are woven into a seamless chronology that intensifies the suspense.

Each of Thrasher's characters is well-developed, have their own distinctive dialogues and invoke the reader's interest. It is interesting to see how their lives are going twenty one years after college. We find Alyssa Roberts: the good Christian girl in college who disdained Jake's mischievous ways, but twenty years later is an angry-at-God divorcee who tries to lure still-single

Jake into her bed; Bruce Atkinson: the bombed-out drug addict who has become an even worse bombed-out drug addict; Jake himself, who has given up his old rebellious ways for the healthy life of an adventurer who climbs Mount Everest, among other really cool things, but still hasn't given up that social drink. Alcohol, in fact, permeates most chapters in this book, usually as a "stage prop" for conversation, but most prominently to drive home the lesson, at least in Jake's life, that excessive alcohol consumption can lead to a shameful nagging mystery: "What did I do last night?"

Thrasher writes in an easy style that drifts steadily through plot twists and turns while keeping the suspense tangible. The plot progresses slowly from one chapter to the next, leading the reader on step by step. Thrasher has penned an interesting story, but do not expect a heavy spiritual payload, rather a mild drift by the protagonist into a more redemptive state of living. His God remains undefined and Christ unmentioned.

William Patrick Davis

All things hidden : a novel / Kathy Herman. (A Seaport suspense ; 3.) LCCN 2005025581. Sisters, Ore. : Multnomah Publishers, 2006.

PAP, 1590524896, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Suspense fiction. 349 p. ; 21 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 3.

Ellen's relationship with her father has never been good but as he ages his anger and caustic tongue becomes almost more than she can endure. She knows he can no longer live alone but how can she even discuss the issue with him. In *All Things Hidden*, Kathy Herman explores how our past is so intricately interwoven with our present. Ellen's life is so

pleasant. She has a wonderful, Godly husband, a productive career as a writer, and a fine son and daughter-in-law along with a precious grandson. But gradually the past begins to impact the future. Can Ellen really trust God and His word? "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

All Things Hidden is the third book in Herman's A Seaport Suspense Series. Reading a new book in a series is a bit like a visit with an old friend. The location and many of the characters are familiar and we are comfortable with the author's style. *All Things Hidden* is a comfortable read. It deals with many of the issues we all face. The characters ask questions we may be too timid to ask God. It is so reassuring to see God's word and His ways played out in the lives of the characters. While the characters are not fully developed they are familiar ordinary people, just like you and me. Although the book is labeled as a murder mystery, the mystery is really a subplot.

Mary McCoy

Dead of night / Brandilyn Collins. (Hidden faces series ; 3.) LCCN 2005002767. Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 2005.

PAP, 0310251052, 9780310251057, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Women artists--Fiction; Police artists--Fiction; Detective and mystery stories; Mystery fiction. 367 p. ; 22 cm.

Web of lies / Brandilyn Collins. (Hidden faces series ; 4.) LCCN 2005021093. Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 2005.

PAP, 0310251060, 9780310251064, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Women artists--Fiction; Police artists--Fiction; Detective and mystery stories; Mystery fiction. 355 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 5.

Brandilyn Collins establishes herself as the queen of suspense in these two superb novels that close out the *Hidden Faces Series*. In *Dead of Night*, forensic artist Annie Kingston finds herself mixed up in deadly game with a serial killer. Bodies of several young women have been discovered in Redding, California, and Annie has been called in to draw the unknown victims for identification. The latest body has been found just behind Annie's property, and it seems as if the killer may have Annie in the crosshairs. She must now work fast to not only protect another innocent victim, but also to save herself.

In *Web of Lies*, Collins brings her *Hidden Faces* and *Chelsea Adams Series* to a close. Annie Kingston witnesses a horrible murder, and is called on to draw the picture of the at-large killer. Meanwhile, Chelsea Adams has a vision of a girl being held captive. She feels God has called her to team up with Annie Kingston to find the girl before it is too late. As the two women work together, they soon discover a mysterious connection in the two cases that will lead them toward ultimate danger. Somehow these women must find a way to use their God-given talents to stop a mad man's deadly plans.

Not only does Collins raise the bar for other suspense authors, somehow she manages to make each installment better. Annie Kingston's first-person narrative effectively drives this series. Annie's struggles are real and we are able to relate with her as a parent and a Christian. As a single mom, Annie must juggle the demands of family with the intense responsibilities that come from working in law enforcement. On top of all of that, as a new Christian she faces an inward battle as she learns to rely on God completely. As Annie continually finds herself in the throes of danger, it is inspiring and encouraging to watch her faith increase.

Collin's writing is edgy, engaging, and absolutely thrilling. She knows how to take readers on a journey that will have them gripping their chairs and looking over their shoulders. This series is highly recommended for fans of suspense and mysteries, as well as those who love stories that challenge and inspire. The first two books in this series are *Brink of Death* and *Stain of Guilt* (CLJ, Sept.2005).

Jake Chism

**Deception / Randy Alcorn.
LCCN 2006039133. Colorado
Springs : Multnomah Books,
2007.**

HBB, 1590526163, list price: \$19.99.

Fic. Murder investigations--Fiction; Oregon--Fiction; Christian fiction. 490 p. ; 24 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 3.

Ollie Chandler is a Portland, Oregon, homicide detective who is colorful, quirky, and cynical when it comes to Christianity. *Deception*, Randy Alcorn's latest novel, is well-titled, since nothing appears as expected. Chandler's latest case involves a popular philosophy professor murdered by bizarre means--injection of fountain pen ink. Or was it by the noose on his neck, or even the bullet holes in his chest? The case becomes more and more convoluted as Chandler reveals evidence that points to the detectives in his department--including himself. Interlaced within the plot are Chandler's struggles with attempts to reconcile with his daughter, and his views of Christians and Christianity. There are also the attempts on his life, and his slide into alcoholism. The question of whether Chandler will make peace with God before he dies trying to bring the killer to justice is one that keeps a reader turning the pages in this unusual murder mystery.

Randy Alcorn provides another installment in his murder mystery series, and it is very much a combination of a

hardboiled detective novel with a C.S Lewis theological argument mixed into the plot. *Deception* stands alone; however, references to other characters and situations in prior books creates an interest in reading Alcorn's previous two books. Chandler has little regard for Christians, even though some of his best friends are believers, and his wife became a believer shortly before her death. The reader is presented with arguments for and against Christianity as the murder mystery unfolds. Written in first person, with much tongue-in-cheek, Alcorn weaves into an engrossing murder mystery plot the many struggles people battle: alcoholism, lying, premarital sex, and hypocrisy.

Pam Webb

**Fearless / Robin Parrish.
(Dominion trilogy ; 2.) LCCN
2007011983. Minneapolis :
Bethany House, 2007.**

HBB, 0764201786, 9780764201783, list price: \$19.99.

Fic. Supernatural--Fiction; Heros--Fiction; London (England)--Fiction; Suspense fiction. 391 p. ; 24 cm.

HS (Adult). Rating : 4.

Fearless, by Robin Parrish, continues the story of Grant Barrows, a man endowed with an irremovable silver ring and super-human powers by a mysterious group called the Secretum. Grant has connected with several other ring-wearers, and together they serve around the world, using their special powers to save mankind from increasingly severe disasters. Grant becomes an internationally hunted man, however, it seems that wherever he appears, there is disaster. Is he the one causing it?

Grant's ring is also unique. It is the Seal of Dominion and has power over all the other rings. Grant is called "The Bringer"--but the bringer of what? Grant's quest to answer this question leads him to the heart of the Secretum,

where, with startling results, he walks into the destiny the Secretum has carefully planned for him.

Fearless is a bit tamer in the violence category than its predecessor, *Relentless*. However, it loses none of the action, mystery, and suspense of the first book, although twice it employs a vulgarity. The cliff-hanger ending will leave readers eager for book three in the trilogy.

Sherril Beeler

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Fury / Bill Bright & Jack Cavanaugh. (The great awakenings, 1825-1826.) LCCN 2006043614. New York : Howard Books, 2006.

PAP, 1582295735, 9781582295732, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Finney, Charles Grandison, 1792-1875--Fiction; Great Awakening--Fiction; Revivals--Fiction; Runaway teenagers--Fiction; Witnesses--Fiction; Murder--Fiction; Uncles--Fiction; Young men--Fiction; Rome (N.Y.)--Fiction; Cumberland (Md.)--Fiction; Christian fiction; Historical fiction. vii, 328 p. : ill. ; 21 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : *5.

At 16-years-old, Daniel Cooper has had enough of tragedy, enough of being called a liar, and enough of God. All he wants to do is play his recorder and lose himself in its haunting music. His parents have drowned at sea and left him with his cantankerous uncle. He witnesses a murder, for which his boss is responsible. And his uncle sides with the murderer...against Daniel. Now, Daniel is running for his life. Surviving hardship and bitter temperatures, Daniel works his way across upstate New York, along the Erie Canal, managing to stay one step ahead of the killer. When Daniel arrives in Rome, New York, he is befriended by a group of young people who take him to hear the Reverend Charles Finney speak. Daniel opens his heart to God's revival and discovers he

must find a way to rescue his uncle and catch the killer.

Fury by Bill Bright and Jack Cavanaugh, the fourth and last book of the Great Awakening series, is Christian suspense fiction at its best. Dialogue is realistic, entertaining, and skillfully blended. The plot is fast-paced and consistently interesting. Mood and atmosphere, during the revival outbreak initiated through the Reverend Charles Finney, are enhanced by expertly researched historical and geographical background. Characters are professionally crafted to generate a realism that reaches beyond the boundaries of the story. Bill Bright was world-renowned for founding Campus Crusade for Christ International, as well as for creating a plethora of Christian book and media resources. Jack Cavanaugh, author of more than twenty books, is the award winning author of *The Puritans* (Victor Books, 1994) and *His Watchful Eye* (Bethany House, 2002). Highly recommended as an excellent source of geographic and historical, as well as Christian fiction for both adults and young adults.

Kim Harris

Glastonbury Tor : a novel / by LeAnne Hardy. LCCN 2006021228. Grand Rapids : Kregel, 2006.

PAP, 0825427894, , list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Catholic Church--Fiction; Great Britain--History--Henry VIII, 1509-1547--Fiction; Glastonbury Tor (England)--Fiction; Christian fiction. 239 p. : ill. ; 22 cm..

Adult, HS. Rating : 5.

Seventeen-year-old Colin blames his father for his mother's death, and with good reason. Yet, when that anger spills out uncontrollably, the tragic consequences force him to leave his home. Colin arrives at England's Glastonbury monastery as a pilgrim, seeking both protection and cleansing for the sin against his father. Yet, it is

not the best time for a young man to center his aspirations on becoming a monk, for King Henry VIII is creating religious upheaval by forcibly closing down monasteries as he changes England's religion for his own means. Colin is befriended by a family who secretly reads the bible for themselves. For this this will become heretics, and Colin must choose his allegiance: the church of old or the new ways of faith.

Glastonbury Tor, is a compelling coming of age story that weaves in the yore of King Arthur, especially the aspect of the Holy Grail. Leanne Hardy admittedly takes some liberties with the historical basis for her story, but much is based on actual events and people of the time period. Colin, the main character becomes caught between love and loyalty. He loves his mother, yet loses her to premature death. He cannot remain loyal to the man whom he believes killed his mother, and turns to the church to absolve his guilt and shame. What he finds on his way to the Glastonbury monastery, the place where King Arthur is supposedly buried, shakes his belief. He finds illiterate peasants reading the bible for themselves, and living the words of God with more truth and devotion than he finds at the monastery. Hardy weaves a plausible tale that is both riveting in its pace and characters. More importantly she speaks to the topic of forgiveness and forgiving in a meaningful way. The book has a wide readership appeal, ranging from a King Arthur based historical novel, to YA literature to a extended sermon on the meaning of forgiveness.

Pam Webb

Glitter of diamonds / N.J. Lindquist. (Manziuk and Ryan mystery.) LCCN 0. Markham, Ont. : MurderWillOut Mysteries, 2007.

HBB, 0968549594, 9780968549599, list price:

\$24.95.

Fic. Mystery fiction. 383 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

Star pitcher Rico Velasquez, a Cuban refugee recently signed to a huge contract with the major league Toronto Matrix, is a temperamental young man, fond of verbally assaulting his teammates. Rico also has trouble staying faithful to his wife and has offended the Matrix management, the Toronto media, and most Matrix fans. So when an acidic radio talk show host suggests someone take a bat to Rico's head, someone does, killing him.

Glitter of Diamonds, book two in the Manziuk and Ryan Mysteries, is a cleverly written tale with a large cast of well-rendered characters, each of whom has strong motives for killing Rico. Who did it is truly a puzzle, and keeps shifting. The police procedural aspects (Detective-Inspector Paul Manziuk and Detective-Constable Jacqueline Ryan are the main characters) are fascinating. Author N.J. Lindquist clearly knows a lot about how police investigate crimes; readers hooked on television shows like *Law and Order* will surely be fans of this book. Baseball fans will also delight in the copious details on the inner workings of a team, and the descriptions of the player and media interaction.

Some characters drink liquor; others have extra-marital affairs. A light religious element involves Detective-Constable Ryan's grandmother, who's a strong Christian. Ryan, however, isn't sure what she believes. (Manziuk's family is Ukrainian Orthodox but he rarely attends church).

The story is a bit slow-moving until all the suspects get introduced (the murder doesn't occur until page 117; Manziuk and Ryan don't appear until page 121), and the detectives aren't quite as interesting as their colorfully-drawn suspects. Also, the emphasis is more on

how the crime gets solved than on suspenseful non-stop action. But this is a well-plotted book with several surprises, and should leave readers guessing until the end.

Rosemarie DiCristo

**The Hadassah covenant / Tommy Tenney & Mark Andrew Olsen.
L C C N 2 0 0 5 0 2 2 5 4 2 .
Minneapolis : Bethany House,
2005.**

HBB, 076422736X, list price:
\$19.990000000000002.

Fic. Women--Israel--Fiction; Women--Iran--
Fiction; Israel--Fiction; Iran--Fiction; Suspense
fiction; Religious fiction. 349 p. : map ; 24 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

For those following the current events in Iraq and Israel, *Hadassah Covenant* by Tommy Tenney and Mark Andrew Olsen will bring to life the significance embedded in centuries-old conflicts. The authors present an interesting perspective on the possible events of ancient Queen Esther's life after the death of King Xerxes. The unexpected appearance of someone thought long dead usurps Queen Esther's place of prominence in Persia and ultimately forces her to retreat to Jerusalem with her childhood friend Jesse and the prophet Ezra. Momentum builds to a fevered pitch as contemporary Hadassah, wife of the Israeli Prime Minister, seeks answers to unexplained assassinations of "hidden Jews" by delving into the past through letters between Esther and Leah, a Jewish concubine. The answer to the modern day crisis is directly related to Hadassah's discovery as she studies the letters between the two women of old. At times they are mundane and slow down the reader, but Tenney and Olsen masterfully merge the two stories, taking the reader from the twenty-first century A.D. back to the fifth century B.C.

Adding to the twenty-first century realism are technical details like the

description of a secret intelligence device, "...that emitted a rare form of infrared light through a classified ultraviolet filter, all finely calibrated..." The events are plausible and reflect the tensions of current events in the Middle East, making this book a good choice for those looking to make connections between the past and present.

Floss Craig

**The heir / Paul Robertson. LCCN
2006037952. Minneapolis :
Bethany House, 2007.**

HBB, 076420324X, 9780764203244, list price:
\$18.99.

Fic. Corporations--Corrupt practices--Fiction;
Inheritance and succession--Fiction; Suspense
fiction. 366 p. ; 24 cm.

Adult. Rating : 5.

After losing his loathsome father in a car crash, Jason Boyer inherits the billion dollar empire his father leaves behind. At first, Jason wants no part of the inheritance. He knows what kind of man his father was, and he wants nothing to do with the shady business deals and politics his father was involved in. However, as Jason gets a small taste of the power that he now has, he is quickly drawn into a life he never wanted. As Jason is drawn in by the fame and riches, he begins a moral battle that is seemingly insurmountable. Can he use the power and influence at his disposal to right the wrongs his father committed, or he is destined to be a slave to money, power, and greed?

Paul Robertson's powerful debut is a modern cautionary tale that is both gripping and challenging. The story is told from Jason Boyer's point of view, and this gives the reader a small taste of the temptations and struggles that Jason battles. Robertson's writing is dark and somber, and Jason Boyer's character exudes

cynicism. Indeed, this story is full of heartache, despair, and vengeance. However, these elements are used effectively to paint a clear picture of the darkness Jason finds himself in.

This may be the most spiritually challenging novel I've ever read, and there's no mention of Christianity in the novel. Rather, Robertson takes the powerful elements of riches and power and dangles them out there for us to bite. Then Robertson yanks the rug out from under us as he reminds us that all the money and power in the world can never satisfy, and in fact can destroy us. In the end, we are encouraged to look beyond ourselves and realize true contentment lies not in this world.

Jake Chism

In the company of secrets / Judith Miller. (Postcards from Pullman ; 1.) LCCN 2006038412. Minneapolis : Bethany House, 2007.

PAP, 0764202766, 9780764202766, list price: \$13.99.

Fic. British--United States--Fiction; Cooks--Fiction; Illinois--Fiction; Christian fiction; Historical fiction. 382 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 3.

In the historical fiction book entitled, *In the Company of Secrets*, Olivia Mott casts aside her dream of becoming a chef when the Count of Lanshire's chef starts trying to force his undesired affections upon her. Lady Charlotte, daughter of the Count and Countess of Lanshire, decides to accompany Olivia in her escape from the unethical chef. Only after she escapes does Olivia realize that she is shackled by Lady Charlotte's lies.

Judith Miller crafts a quickly moving plot throughout *In the Company of Secrets*. The decisions resulting from Lady Charlotte's lies force Olivia to mature and also bring Olivia to her own

crisis of faith. The Pullman town in which the story is set adds historical depth to the novel while creating a sense of intrigue that will continue throughout the series. The Victorian Era time frame of the story also presents Olivia with unique constraints in career choice, and Miller develops Olivia's character to be mostly consistent with Victorian era women. Miller sensitively deals with Olivia's dilemmas and the consequences of her choices. One potentially disastrous incident provides humor to the mostly serious plot. Finally, the theme still rings true, "Ephesians 4:25 'Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another.'"

Kristina Wolcott

The legend of the Firefish / George Bryan Polivka. (Trophy Chase trilogy ; 1.) LCCN 2006021727. Eugene, Ore. : Harvest House, 2007.

PAP, 0736919562, 9780736919562, list price: \$13.99.

Fic. Fantasy fiction; Christian fiction. 347 p. ; 23 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 4.

The Legend of the Firefish delivers a tale of swashbuckling sword fights, true love, and the soul's reckoning with God. Packer Throme, rejected from seminary, returns to his hometown of Hangman's Cliffs after being tutored in sword fighting from the great sword master Senslar Zendoda. Determined to help his struggling fishing village, Packer stows away on a pirate ship where he hopes to exchange information about the Firefish with the pirate Scat Wilkins. When Panna, Packer's fiancé, learns his destination, she decides to follow behind. The one person who can reunite the two wants to kill both Panna and Packer. Along the journey, all three reckon with the God of the universe.

The plot of George Bryan Polivka's tale

of the legendary Firefish and the sailors trying to catch them moves quickly, full of imaginative twists. The protagonists struggle with real-life issues dealing with guilt in the struggle to obey God but sometimes failing. Although the antagonist seems to embody evil, Polivka successfully brings a sympathetic element to her character as her story unfolds. The fictional lands of Nearing Vast provide the backdrop for this story and no definite time frame is given, but it feels like it could be set in the 1800's. Dialogue stays true to the characters. The educated characters speak well, and conversely, the poorly educated do not speak well. In keeping with character, the phrase "an iceberg's chance in hell" is used on page 55. The wonderful message of this book lies in Packer's discovery,

"Packer felt small, and infinitely unworthy, before a great and holy God who looked down on them all, who looked deep into Packer's heart and saw all the evil, all the sin of the whole world. And yet, Packer marveled, that same God, knowing all the ways of man, that same God sacrificed Himself. There was, after all, one Man who could do it. The thought gave Packer a shred of hope." (page 209)

Kristina Wolcott

Letter perfect / Cathy Marie Hake. LCCN 2006013798. Minneapolis : Bethany House, 2006.

PAP, 0764201654, list price: \$13.99.

Fic. Historical fiction; Humorous fiction. 379 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 4.

Cathy Marie Hake introduces Ruth Caldwell in her historical fiction, *Letter Perfect*. This page turner is an unforgettable story filled with humor, tears, and love.

Ruth arrives in California to join her estranged father only to discover that her

father passed away several years ago and part of his ranch is now hers.

Joshua McCain and his father own the other half of the ranch. But until they can settle who the rightful owner is Ruth has nowhere to go. Joshua and his family invite her to stay at the ranch and life settles into a bit of a routine, albeit unpredictable as it seems Ruth has a wont for finding trouble. But the outhouse door falling on her and falling off of the sidewalk weren't really her fault—they were accidents. Joshua struggles between trying to protect her from herself and finding her humorous charm irresistible.

When Ruth's accidents turn into foul play, she and Josh learn to trust in their heavenly Father in a whole new way.

Cathy Marie Hake develops her characters in an intriguing way, letting their personalities appear as if you are meeting them yourself for the first time. The plot is very well paced and makes for a fast page-turner without rushing through scenes too quickly. The language she uses is easy to understand and factual with the time period in which *Letter Perfect* takes place, and the dialogue is quirky, witty, and deep all at the same time. The emotions her characters express are the exact ones you find yourself feeling as you read each scene. This is a well written book without some of the red flags present in other Christian romance fiction. A clean, fun read and one I would recommend to friends both young and old.

Paula Miller

Life, Libby, and the pursuit of happiness / Hope Lyda. LCCN 2006035766. Eugene, Ore. : Harvest House, 2007.

PAP, 0736917896, 9780736917896, list price: \$12.99.

Fig. Life change events--Fiction; Public relations personnel--Fiction; Love stories;

Christian fiction. 334 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 3.

Hope Lyda's third contemporary female fiction book, *Life, Libby, and the Pursuit of Happiness*, is about a young single woman living an urban lifestyle while trying to keep her professional, relational, and spiritual life moving forward. Libby Hawthorne goes down the corporate ladder instead of up while blundering through old and new male and family relationships, all the while battling around what it means to live a life of faith. Unexpected side roads eventually deliver her to a satisfying level of purpose and peace inside and out.

A plethora of characters—fairly bland and one-dimensional—peoples Lyda's lackluster novel. The plot plods along predictably as Libby eats, visits her favorite bookstore, sorts out her love life, and wends her way through family complexities. She and the cast of characters confront authentic struggles which are handily resolved by the concluding pages. An absence of violence, coarse language, and intimate situations makes this safe reading for women who want a comfortable, non-taxing break from life, and for those who liked Lyda's first two books.

Karen Schmidt

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Quaker summer / Lisa Samson. LCCN 2006033474. Nashville : WestBow Press, 2007.

PAP, 1595542078, 9781595542076, list price: \$14.99.

Fig. Christian life--Fiction. 325 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : *5.

The Curridge family lives a luxurious lifestyle: a large home on the lake, the latest model cars for Heather and Jace, and an expensive school for Will. But Heather Curridge also lives in a world of desperation. How can her intelligent

and handsome cardiologist husband love the overweight person she has become? And why does she feel guilty when the school bullies harass her son, Will? Heather loves her possessions but often feels guilty about having so much. Then why do blueprints for a new tennis court reside in her desk drawer?

One night, Heather and Jace miss their turnoff and end up in a dark, deserted part of town. When Jace asks for directions, a young thug and a sinister-looking man in a black trench coat threaten him. Then out of the shadows steps Sister Jerusha. The young thug calls her Knoxie's godmother and the two bad guys disappear like candy canes at Christmas. While trying to understand herself, Heather comes under the guidance of three godly women and learns that God always has a reason for what he gives us—good or bad.

There are many aspects to embrace in this complex novel and Lisa Samson unravels them little by little in a fascinating story that you cannot put down. She leaves one intriguing plot unfinished as she opens and begins to unravel another. Quaker Summer also has a full cast of characters for the reader to monitor.

Each year the Women of Faith choose one novel that most exemplifies the joys, struggles, and realities in a woman's life. Quaker Summer takes the honor of being their 2007 Novel of the Year.

Maxine Cambra

The return / Austin Boyd. (Mars Hill classified ; 3.) LCCN 2007004622. Colorado Springs : NavPress, 2007.

PAP, 157683946X, 9781576839461, list price: \$14.99.

Fig. Outer space--Exploration--Fiction; Astronauts--Fiction; Mars (Planet)--Fiction; Christian fiction; Science fiction; Suspense fiction. 491 p. ; 21 cm..

Adult (HS). Rating : 5.

Austin Boyd's *Mars Hill Classified* series ends with great suspense and drama in book three, *The Return*. Astronaut John Wells' family is presumed dead; in reality they have been kidnaped by Malcom Raines, a powerful preacher mixing spirituality, cloning, and the extra-terrestrial. When the grieving Wells is asked to lead a NASA team to Mars he agrees, but what the team finds there is more unexpected than anyone could have imagined.

In the meantime, John's wife, Amy, struggles to maintain trust in God as she and her children are secluded from all contact with the world and other human interaction. In her greatest moment of need, she fully puts herself in the hands of God and He uses her to reach a young woman in the innermost circle of Raines' cult. Together they are able to stop Raines' plan to implement a most dramatic abuse of cloning. The Wells' rescue and reunification with John is a joyous ending to a richly complex, suspense-filled novel.

The Return satisfyingly ties together all the tantalizing threads developed in the first two books of the series. The last chapter is followed by an in-depth news article "written" by a female reporter, (a character in the book) which neatly provides closure to the story. The characters are fully developed, demonstrating how human weakness and tendencies toward sin can be overcome with complete focus on God, not circumstances. The story also carries a powerful message about forgiveness, and includes a series of very substantive study questions for research and discussion about the Biblical view of Gnosticism, and the ethics of cloning and biotechnology.

Sherri Beeler

Saint / Ted Dekker. LCCN 2006010191. Nashville : WestBow Press, 2006.

HBB, 1595540067, 9781595540065, list price: \$23.99.

Fic. Kidnapping--Fiction; Christian fiction; Suspense fiction. 353 p. ; 25 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 4.

In *Saint*, Ted Dekker's tenth suspense novel, Carl Strople, recruited for the highly secret Black Ops X group, undergoes brutal psychological and physical training that strips him of his memory and identity. Dubbed "The Saint," Carl accepts only the information programmed into him by Agotha, the group's high-tech behavioral scientist; he trusts and loves only one person, Kelly. Agotha knows that Carl must believe in Kelly's love in order to perform at his unequaled level. But, Carl discovers that he has been lied to. Now, he must choose when, where, and for whom to use his spectacular skill.

The Saint is being groomed for a special assignment, loosely tied to "project showdown" from a previous novel. Dekker adapts his writing style to match the voice, and cold, factual, distant point of view of the main character. Readers meet Carl, already deeply embedded in "training"—inhuman sensory deprivation—and discover his unique survival methods. For about one-third of the novel, readers have only the plot to hang onto. However, the strong plot makes up for Carl's emotional distance, and the reader will grow to care for him. Dekker's unpredictable ending is inconclusive: evil is abated, but only for the present.

Recommended with caution: Demonic involvement in human affairs is a central theme. The plot driven novel includes gun violence and attempted assassinations; however, main characters overcome internal and external difficulties.

Vicki McCollum

Scent : a dark secret hidden in petals of pink / C.L. Kelly. (Sensations ; 1.) LCCN 2006022080. Grand Rapids :

Zondervan, 2006.

PAP, 0310262992, 9780310262992, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Perfumes industry--Fiction; Perfumes--Fiction; Christian fiction; Suspense fiction. 334 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 3.

In C. L. Kelly's suspense novel *Scent*, Nick and Cassie Dixon's dreams of making it big in the high-stakes industry of perfume are dangerously close to collapse. Cassie's old enemy, Brenda Gelasse, is circling like a lovely corporate buzzard. In the New Guinea rain forest, Nick believes he has discovered their company's salvation in the form of a strange orchid with a captivating scent. Gambling with their company, their reputations, and their lives, Cassie announces that the company has created a new perfume, "Cassandra," based on the rare orchid's scent. Luckily, Nick returns with a sample of the orchid's fragrance. "Cassandra" is a wild success, and it looks like Nick and Cassie have foiled Brenda's schemes and made their own dreams reality. But "Cassandra" has a nightmarishly dark side.

Mr. Kelly's engaging style and solid characters are this book's best qualities. The dialogue flows naturally and the narration is immediate. The characters are different enough from every other character in every other book to be interesting but, for the most part, not so quirky that they feel forced. Many of them are developed with depth and sympathy. (A note: a past marital infidelity plays a role in the plot. The main character involved repented.)

Disappointingly, plot is its weakest quality. The general plot—if one can accept the basic premise of a scent being evil—is passably constructed, if not particularly well-paced or "suspenseful," which is unfortunate in a suspense novel. There are a number of unnecessary cute coincidences (all of which tie up unrealistically neatly at the

end) and extraneous scenes that don't further advance or develop the plot or the characters that detract from the story. Violent animal attacks (domestic as well as wild animals) are an important plot device and are described at length and rather bloodily. Spiritually, the book's central message is clearly defined: God comes before the things of this world. An Episcopalian priest helps Cassie restore proper order to her life.

As long as the reader is content to enjoy the characters and style, and to refrain from critiquing the plot, *Scent* is a good read, if not a shining example of the suspense novel.

Kathryn Stillman

**The secret of us / Roxanne Henke.
LCCN 2006022297. Eugene, Ore.
: Harvest House, 2007.**

PAP, 0736917012, 9780736917018, list price: \$13.99.

Fic. Self-realization--Fiction; Married people--Fiction; Married women--Fiction; Christian fiction. 359 p. ; 22 cm..

Adult (HS). Rating : 3.

In *The Secret of Us* Laura tries to remember why she fell in love and married Donnie Dunn 23 years ago. She can recall both their dreams. Laura desired the life of an artist, to perhaps open her own gallery. Donnie's goal was to build a successful advertising company.

And, dynamic Donnie thinks BIG. He reaches for large corporation accounts even though he has a small office staff. Staying abreast of the competition keeps him at the office during daylight hours and when he is home, work continues on his cell phone. His goal is to branch off into a bigger city grabbing only top commercial accounts and he thinks Laura should be proud of his accomplishments. Nevertheless, his drive to succeed has become the greatest obstacle in their marriage.

Laura wants to tell Donnie how she feels

about his lack of attention to her and to their marriage. She wants to tell her husband about her loneliness, her hopelessness. But whenever she tries, a ring of the phone wins his attention and he is back on the job. Devastating thoughts wind through Laura's mind. Though she cannot say the word out loud, divorce creeps its way into Laura's thinking. She believes that wedding vows, made in God's name, should never be dissolved. However, this may be the only way to save her sanity.

This is Roxanne Henke's first stand-alone novel after writing five books in the Brewster series. Her platform draws attention to pertinent issues for women from a Christian standpoint. Henke is a prolific writer with a dedicated following. In *The Secret of Us* she pinpoints difficulties in a marriage that all too often end in divorce, a heart-searing topic, but superfluous writing makes the book a slow read. Henke's 2008 book, *Learning to Fly*, will be released February 1, 2008.

Maxine Cambra

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**Sky blue : a novel / by Travis Thrasher. LCCN 2007010563.
Chicago : Moody Publishers, 2007.**

PAP, 0802486681, 9780802486684, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Literary agents--Fiction; Christian fiction; Psychological fiction. 384 p. ; 21 cm.

Adult. Rating : *5.

In *Sky Blue: a novel* by Travis Thrasher, Colin Scott is a literary agent who markets authors' books to publishers. The death of his father at a young age has embittered Colin toward God. Seven years of failed attempts at fathering a child with his beautiful wife, Jennifer, have turned Colin's bitterness into two successful careers that provide for a lavish lifestyle, yet progressively

draw the couple apart and reduce intimacy to cell phone conversations over schedules and updates. When Jennifer expresses concern over the coldness that has crept into their relationship, Colin suggests they take a sun-and-fun vacation. A tragic accident plunges Jennifer into the icy depths of the ocean. The loss of his wife combined with the uncaring attitudes of coworkers and clients thrust Colin into a state of depression that challenges not only his lifestyle, but his sanity.

Sky Blue: a novel is psychological fiction about a disillusioned businessman and his journey toward a personal relationship with a loving, caring God. First-person narrative style allows the reader to immediately step into the protagonist's persona and remain there throughout the story. The plot twists and turns as the main character's perception of reality dies and is reborn. The reader gains an inside view of the inner workings of the publishing world. Realistic dialogue is strategically interspersed to lighten the intense mental analysis. Writing style seasons prose with poetic undertones to produce a novel that resembles classic quality fiction. Mood and atmosphere appropriately emit somber notes with enough of a hint of hope to keep the reader hooked. Travis Thrasher has written seven novels. His suspense novel, *Admission* (Moody, 2006; reviewed in this issue of *CLJ*), about a young entrepreneur whose past choices return to haunt him, received a *Booklist* starred review. Highly recommended.

Kim Harris

**Violet dawn / Brandilyn Collins.
(Kanner Lake series ; 1.) LCCN
2006004764. Grand Rapids :
Zondervan, 2006.**

PAP, 0310252237, 9780310252238, list price: \$12.99.

Fic. Murder--Fiction; Young women--Fiction; Idaho--Fiction; Mystery fiction; Suspense

fiction; Christian fiction. 323 p. ; 22 cm.
 Adult (HS). Rating : 5.

**Coral moon / Brandilyn Collins.
 (Kanner Lake series ; 2.) LCCN
 2006037474. Grand Rapids :
 Zondervan, 2007.**

PAP, 0310252245, 9780310252245, list price:
 \$12.99.

Fic. Supernatural--Fiction; Resorts--Fiction;
 Murder--Fiction; Idaho--Fiction; Mystery
 fiction; Suspense fiction; Christian fiction. 326
 p. ; 22 cm..

Adult (HS). Rating : 5.

**Crimson eve / Brandilyn Collins.
 (Kanner Lake series ; 3.) LCCN
 2007012727. Grand Rapids :
 Zondervan, 2007.**

PAP, 0310252253, 9780310252252, list price:
 \$13.99.

Fic. Women real estate agents--Fiction;
 Resorts--Fiction; Idaho--Fiction; Christian
 fiction; Suspense fiction; Christian fiction;
 Mystery fiction. 352 p. ; 22 cm..

Adult (HS). Rating : 5.

Brandilyn Collins has proven once again that she is a writer of immense talent in this inventive and exhilarating new series. *Violet Dawn* introduces readers to the mystery and intrigue that surrounds the citizens of quiet and peaceful Kanner Lake, Idaho. Paige Williams has recently moved to Kanner Lake to escape a troubled past. When a body is mysteriously left for her to find she is faced with a dilemma she wants know part of. Going to the police is the obvious right choice, but doing so will no doubt resurrect her dark past. Kanner Lake will never be the same as the town is drawn into a frightening search for truth about a strange new resident and an unidentified killer.

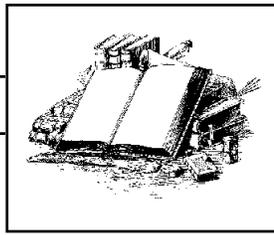
In, *Coral Moon* Collins brings us a fascinating tale laced with supernatural chills and gut wrenching suspense. Leslie Brymes, reporter for *The Kanner Lake Times*, has her world turned upside down when she discovers a dead body in her car. Suddenly, a typical workday turns into a nightmare for Leslie and the other citizens of Kanner Lake. Police

Chief Vince Edwards searches diligently for the culprit, only to be floored when his best suspect turns out to be the dead husband of the victim. As the truth is slowly uncovered, the citizens of Kanner Lake are faced with a dark truth and their faith will be challenged at every revealing turn.

Crimson Eve is Collin's most intense thrill ride to date. Kanner Lake realtor Carla Radling just may have landed her dream commission. Someone is interested in purchasing the sprawling estate of the late actress, Edna Sans. As Carla shows the property to the eccentric potential buyer, things suddenly take a horrible turn for the worse. Now Carla is on the run from a man who wants her dead because of the shadowy past of her childhood. He will stop at nothing to claim her life, and Carla must somehow find a way to protect herself and her reputation. If the citizens of Kanner Lake really knew Carla's story could they possibly still love and accept her? How far can one flee from the past before the past catches up?

Brandilyn Collin's *Kanner Lake Series* is hands down her best work. The fictional town of Kanner Lake is a delightful creation, full of cleverly crafted characters that are quirky, loveable, and memorable. From the twisting and turning plots to the shocking revelations, Collins proves she is a master of the suspense genre. Each story in the series is vastly different and yet all are equally entertaining and riveting. Embedded in the suspenseful storylines we find nuggets of hope and faith that are both insightful and encouraging. This series is highly recommended for fans of suspense thrillers and mystery.

Jake Chism



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MySpace for moms and dads : a guide to understanding the risks and the rewards / by Connie Neal. LCCN 2006039554. Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 2007.

PAP, 0310277434, 9780310277439, list price: \$14.99.

004.69. Myspace.com; Internet and teenagers; Online social networks. 213 p. : ill. ; 23 cm.

Adult. Rating : *5.

No matter how computer illiterate parents may be, they'll be enlightened and encouraged by Connie Neal's comprehensive tour of the social networking Internet entity, MySpace. Neal leads parents through the reasons why MySpace has become so popular, how it started and why teenagers love it. She presents the ways teens are using the website for both positive and negative purposes and how the experience meets many teen needs. Then she provides a wide range of information to help parents make informed decisions for their own teens about using My Space safely and productively.

Plenty of adults will benefit from Neal's assessment of MySpace and her clear information. She encourages parents to use the site themselves to become more acquainted with it and how it can be a constructive influence in a teen's social life. Her examples of how MySpace has positively impacted others helps balance the negative media reports; however, Neal is not reticent to provide warnings and suggest boundaries. She details a series of levels based on a teen's involvement and lists rewards and risks at each level. Interactive sections prompt critical thinking for parents and offer discussion potential with teens. A glossary of terms and list of cyber-safety resources are valuable, especially for those with limited Internet experience.

Parents will find this an effective tool in making discerning decisions as well as offering them avenues of interaction and conversation with teens about My Space.

Karen Schmidt

MySpace, MyKids / Jason Illian. LCCN 2006031307. Eugene, Ore. : Harvest House, 2007.

PAP, 0736920447, 9780736920445, list price: \$8.99.

004.69. Myspace.com; Online social networks; Internet and children; Internet and teenagers. 118 p. : ill. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 5.

Twenty-something author Jason Illian has written an informative and rational assessment of the MySpace phenomenon and how parents can understand teens' interest and involvement in the social networking experience. Illian explains how MySpace works, why it is so very attractive to teens, and presents both dangers and benefits. He succinctly describes his own MySpace experiences and how teens are using the site for other purposes besides the widely publicized negative ones.

Brevity is one helpful aspect of Illian's book, as well as his age proximity to teenagers who predominate on MySpace. He skillfully assists adults who grew up before technology became an essential tool to understand MySpace's magnetism. Illian offers many ways to manage a teen's involvement. The FAQs section is useful for quick reference. Overall, MySpace My Kids is a valuable resource for families navigating teen years who want to guide their children in making their own decisions within biblical boundaries. Parents, teachers and others who interact with teens will appreciate this book.

Karen Schmidt

The storytime sourcebook : a compendium of ideas and resources for storytellers / Carolyn N. Cullum. 2nd ed. LCCN 99046420. New York : Neal-Schuman Publishers, 1999.

PAP, 1557503607, list price: \$49.95.

027.62/51. Children's libraries--Activity programs--United States; Storytelling--United States. xix, 469 p. ; 28 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 5.

The storytime sourcebook II : [a compendium of 3500+ new ideas and resources for storytellers] / Carolyn N. Cullum. LCCN 2006035096. New York : Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2007.

PAP, 1555705898, 9781555705893, list price: \$75.00.

027.62/51. Children's libraries--Activity programs--United States; Storytelling--United States. xvi, 489 p. ; 28 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 5.

Despite their hefty price, these two huge books represent a wonderful resource for storytellers. Carolyn N. Cullum's first book, *A Storytime Sourcebook: A Compendium of Ideas and Resources for Storytellers* is to help anyone "...locate the appropriate idea (craft, fingerplay, story, song, etc.) for programs or lessons from the vast number of books usually available in libraries." This title lists nearly 150 headings. Cullum's second book, *The Storytime Sourcebook II: a Compendium of 3500+ New Ideas and Resources for Storytellers* continues the list of written, visual, and audio sources.

Each sourcebook has 146 topical entries, starting with Activities, Adoption, Alphabet, Anatomy, and Animals. The list continues — Bicycles, Birds, Kites, Kindergarten, Pirates, Toys, Witches, and Zoos. Some categories have subdivisions. Weather, for instance, includes rain, snow, and storms. The Holiday section has 10 categories, with Chanukah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and Thanksgiving as part of the list. Each

Topical Events Calendar ties storytime themes with special events. (Did you know January 14 is Penguin Awareness Day?)

Both books offer an extensive list of picture book authors, an index to picture books titles, and a bibliography. Book I includes a guide to Suggested Music Cassette and CD Distributors. Book II has an Index to Music/Movement. Many craft ideas are easily completed with Cullum's brief instructions; others require the original source. Several cute songs give words to common songs. "The Farmer in the Dell" becomes "The Colors in My Box."

These titles are for the serious storyteller, or for widespread group use. Public libraries should certainly seriously consider these two volumes.

Roberta Jones

The winners! handbook : a closer look at Judy Freeman's top-rated children's books of 2006 / Judy Freeman. LCCN 2006211823. Westport, Conn. : Libraries Unlimited, 2007.

PAP, 1591585104, 9781591585107, list price: \$35.00.

028.1. Children's literature--Bibliography--Periodicals; Best books--Periodicals. 217 p. : ill. ; 27 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

If you can't make it to one of the new book seminars around the country, you can get the same information at a fraction of the price in *The Winners!* Although produced as a companion to Judy Freeman's Winners workshop, the book does stand alone despite references to the event. Rich in practical information, the book begins with an annotated booklist of 104 of what the author considers best children's books published in 2006 for grades K - 6. Each entry includes a rating, bibliographic information, annotation,

related titles and subjects. Moreover, what makes it unique is the "Germ" included with each title. Each "Germ" is a practical curriculum expansion, which can take each book into an exciting lesson not only in the library, but also in the classroom.

The handbook continues with indices, and a comprehensive section about important factors to evaluate children's books, worksheets and templates celebrating children's books including comprehensive teacher's guides, songs, storytelling tips, and reader's theater. Finally, the handbook includes a comprehensive list of websites related to children's literature.

Staying current with the best in children's literature can be one of the most enjoyable tasks of a librarian. Reviews in *Christian Library Journal* and other periodicals help narrow down the selection. *The Winners!* goes even further and provides practical curriculum ties to help you make even better informed decisions. When you can plan a standards-based, fun lesson based on that literature, you know your day is a success. *The Winners!* is a practical guide to achieving a librarian's every day goals. For similar information covering books published in multiple years see Judy Freeman's Books Kids Will Sit Still For series.

Kristine Wildner

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The new manners & customs of Bible times / Ralph Gower. LCCN 2006275693. Chicago : Moody Press, 2005.

HBB, 080245965X, list price: \$29.99.

220.9/5. Bible--Antiquities; Jews--Civilization--To 70 A.D.; Palestine--Civilization. 352 p. : col. ill., col. maps ; 26 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : *5.

What does the saying "sweeter than honey" have to do with early writing

practices? Why did King David pour the water on the ground that his men had risked their lives to acquire for him from the well of Bethlehem? From wilderness sheepfolds to towns and villages to politics and war, *The New Manners & Customs of Bible Times* by Ralph Gower draws the reader closer to the people and places of Bible times through defining their culture and traditions. Ancient lifestyles of both the poor and wealthy are compared and contrasted with those of modern day Middle Easterners. Gower discusses the affects on social and political traditions of occupying civilizations, like the Assyrians, Greeks and Romans. Text is divided into two parts: part one focuses on the development of the basic survival structure (i.e. food, clothing, shelter, and family life), while part two focuses on community, social and political interactions, geography, war, and religion.

The New Manners & Customs of Bible Times is replete with useful scripture references that connect historical interpretations of events with biblical references. Colorful photographs and artwork are accompanied by informative sidebars. Well-placed sidebars and highlighted boxes contain fascinating fast facts that add variety to the text. Font is large, clear and easy to read. Includes maps, charts, diagrams, and topical and scripture indexes. Textbook style chapters are divided into short, information packed segments. This revised and updated edition incorporates materials from *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands* by Fred Wight (Moody, 1953). Scripture quotations are predominately from the *New International Version of the Holy Bible* (Zondervan, 1984). Ralph Gower is a minister whose career has centered on religious education. Writing style is entertaining and understandable with young adult through adult appeal. Highly recommended for basic through

refresher foundational studies of Bible culture and traditions.

Kim Harris

The Roman Empire and the New Testament : an essential guide / Warren Carter. LCCN 2006004350. Nashville : Abingdon, 2006.

PAP, 0687343941, list price: \$16.00.

225.9/5. Bible. N.T.--Criticism, interpretation, etc.; Bible. N.T.--History of contemporary events; Church history--Primitive and early church, ca. 30-600; Rome--Religion; Rome--Politics and government, 30 B.C.-284 A.D.; Rome--Social life and customs. xi, 248 p.; 23 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 5.

Many books have been written exploring the spiritual aspects of the New Testament. In *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide*, Warren Carter provides information on another important element that is rarely analyzed -- the impact of the Roman Empire on the daily lives of Jesus and the early church.

Carter starts with a basic description of the Roman Empire's political and social structure and how they intertwined with religious systems. For example, Pilate is often portrayed as a weak, cowardly ruler, but Carter explains how he was more likely an astute politician who manipulated Jesus' situation to solidify his power over both his allies and the angry crowd. Carter also gives background information that sheds light on Paul's writings and the accounts of the Gospels. He describes the Roman views on such topics as religious celebrations and temple activities, control of the economy, and the privileges of the elite citizens.

Carter uses a wide variety of classical and contemporary writers to document his ideas. He adds depth and context to even the most well-known Bible stories by describing the underlying political and social issues that New Testament

writers and the early church had to navigate every day. The book is an excellent resource for biblical research, personal study, and could even serve as an interesting group study for those people who truly want a different perspective of the New Testament.

Jeff Friend

Can we trust the Gospels? : investigating the reliability of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John / Mark D. Roberts. LCCN 2007005924. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2007.

PAP, 1581348665, 1581348665, list price: \$12.99.

226/.06. Bible. N.T.--Gospels--Criticism, interpretation, etc. 202 p. : col. ill., plates ; 22 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 4.

Can We Trust the Gospels? answers this question by asking two questions: Do the Gospels provide reliable historical information about Jesus? and Do they offer a trustworthy basis for faith? Mark D. Roberts' answers involve clear and compelling discussions of such topics as what the original manuscripts said, whether the Gospels contain contradictions, if they can be theology and history, and whether early church politics influenced their creation.

Roberts (senior pastor at Irvine Presbyterian Church with a PhD in New Testament from Harvard) based his book on a blog series he created to defend the Gospels from sources such as *Newsweek*, *The Jesus Seminar*, *Misquoting Jesus*, and *The DaVinci Code*. (Three chapters discuss *The DaVinci Code's* claims about the Dead Sea Scrolls and "political agendas" of early Christians). The book works best as a starter book on the topic. Roberts' arguments are non-complex ones geared to non-evangelicals and evangelicals, doubters and committed Christians, meaning he doesn't "investigate" Biblical reliability as much as discuss it.

Also, the chapter on apparent contradictions explains only one (which roof the paralytic's friends dug through) even though Roberts mentions (but doesn't explain) several, including the manger/house locations for Jesus' birth. In this chapter and others, interested readers are referred via footnotes to other sources (often websites). There's no bibliography but a three page general index and two page Scripture index.

Roberts admits his middle-of-the-road approach may offend some groups. Potentially unsatisfying to skeptics, for instance, is his use of Paul's letters as "proof" that Jesus existed, and his dismissal of many Gospel contradictions as stylistic differences; potentially unsatisfying to conservative believers is his statement that the Good Samaritan may be a mere story although its lessons on love hold true. However, when necessary he uncovers discrepancies in both evangelical and non-evangelical theories, often providing alternatives.

Rosemarie DiCristo

Be alive / Warren W. Wiersbe. LCCN 85062697. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1986.

PAP, 0896933598, list price: \$10.99.

226/.5. Bible. N.T. John I-XII--Commentaries. 156 p. ; 21 cm.

LCCN 84050147. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1984.

Be alert / Warren W. Wiersbe. LCCN 84050147. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1984

PAP, 0896933806, list price: \$10.99.

227.907. Bible. N.T. Peter, 2nd--Commentaries; Bible. N.T. Epistle of John, 2nd--Commentaries; Bible. N.T. Epistle of John, 3rd--Commentaries; Bible. N.T. Jude--Commentaries. 168 p. ; 21 cm.

Be transformed : an expository study of John 13-21 / Warren W. Wiersbe. LCCN 86060874. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1986.

PAP, 0896933520, list price: \$10.99.
226/.507. Bible. N.T. John XIII-XXI--
Commentaries. 151 p. ; 21 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

Be Alive, Be Alert, and Be Transformed are three commentaries included in the 23 books that make up the "Be" series of New Testament commentaries by noted author and scholar Warren W. Wiersbe. In each of these books, Wiersbe provides the reader with an engaging, informative, yet easy to understand commentary of the New Testament. In the books *Be Alive* and *Be Transformed*, Wiersbe provides a wonderful exposition of the Gospel of John. It is Wiersbe's desire through this commentary of John to provide the reader the opportunity to delve into the Gospel and to become better acquainted with the Jesus as the Living Savior. It is the desire of Wiersbe that these resources will help individuals have a renewed desire to become alive and transformed.

In the third book reviewed *Be Alert*, Wiersbe provides a detailed look into the books of 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John along with Jude. With today's society full of individuals and groups intent on deceiving individuals, Wiersbe's words provide encouragement and help to overcome the false teachers of the world. With the title *Be Alert*, it encourages all Christians to be on watch for things that can destroy one's relationship with Christ.

These three books are delightful resources that can be used for the scholar or the Sunday school teacher in a local church. Filled with keen insight into the text, Wiersbe also provides meaningful application for the reader along with thought provoking illustrations. One of the most helpful parts of these books are the study questions for each chapter found at the end of the book. These questions allow the reader to not just read the commentaries but to become engaged

with the text. Through his writings, Wiersbe encourages the reader to want to dig deeper into the text that he or she is studying.

While these books are helpful for all individuals, those involved in the teaching and preaching of these particular books of the Bible will receive the most help. For in each book, Wiersbe breaks down each chapter into nice neat "points" that can be used to share with a group. For anyone interested in receiving the basic message of these biblical books, then Wiersbe's "Be" series will make a nice addition to one's library.

Chris Carroll

**Growing in Christ / J.I. Packer.
LCCN 93050566. Wheaton, Ill. :
Crossway Books, 2007, c1994.**

PAP, 1581348525, 9781581348521, list price:
\$16.99.

230. Apostles' Creed; Lord's prayer; Ten
commandments; Baptism. 288 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 3.

J. I. Packer says in his introduction to *Growing in Christ* (a new printing of his 1994 book, *I Want to Be a Christian*) that it's meant as a resource for study groups, or a do-it-yourself course for adults with no access to study groups. Written with the view that Christianity isn't instinctive but must be taught, learned, and matured, the book is broken into four sections: Affirming the Essentials, Entering In, Learning to Pray, and Design for Life, which discuss the Apostles' Creed, baptism and conversion, The Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments respectively.

As the title implies, it's a helpful book for readers seeking to grow in Christ. New and old Christians should find much to think about. Each short chapter is broken into brief, nearly outline-like paragraphs. Essentials of the Christian faith are clearly explained. Phrase-by-phrase studies are made of the Creed, the

Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. Copious use of Bible verses back up Packer's points. Additional Bible verses are included for further study, as are questions and answers on the topic just taught.

Growing in Christ is simply written (although Packer doesn't hesitate to expound upon the meaning of the original Greek of a particular Bible verse, or use an advanced vocabulary, or dip into Christianese). The brevity of its format raises many questions for readers to reflect on. However, answers are sometimes given, but sometimes not; several concepts may be too dry or difficult for new believers; and Packer's often quaint writing style may turn off younger readers, meaning other books may be necessary for a full understanding of the topic. (Packer recommends his own *Knowing God* as a companion book). Nonetheless, *Growing in Christ* should be a valuable addition to all church libraries.

Rosemarie DiCristo

**The power of the spirit / William
Law ; edited for today's reader by
Dave Hunt. Fort Washington, Pa.
: CLC Publications, 2006.**

PAP, 0875088228, list price: \$9.99.

230/.3/08. Theology--Early works to 1800.
184 p. ; 21 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

Here is an old Christian classic from the 18th century with fresh editing by Dave Hunt. No less than Andrew Murray said about this book, "In all my reading I have never found anyone who has so helped me in understanding the Scripture truth of the work of the Holy Spirit."

Written long before modern Charismatic theology spoke a word about the Holy Spirit, Law's treatment accordingly engages the topic without having to engage in the polemical debates such a book would now be compelled to enter

into.

Law shows the power of the Holy Spirit in all aspects of gospel work – salvation, worship, church life, and sanctification, reformation and revival. The tone of the book is warm and the application is pastoral.

C.S. Lewis once lamented how modern people too often only read modern books. In so doing they ignore the wealth and treasure of ages past. In applying Lewis' sentiment, I recommend this book because of the duration of time it has been read with enjoyment and profit. There are newer books on "The Power of the Spirit" on the market, but why not travel back a few hundred years to hear the voice of one outside our own time and perspective?

Scott Lamb

God's passion for His glory : living the vision of Jonathan Edwards, with the complete text of The end for which God created the world / John Piper. LCCN 98019029. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2006.

PAP, 1581347456, list price: \$15.99.

231.7/65. Edwards, Jonathan, 1703-1758. Concerning the end for which God created the world; Glory of God--Christianity--Early works to 1800; Creation--Early works to 1800; Glory of God--Christianity--History of doctrines--18th century; Creation--History of doctrines--18th century. xvii, 266 p. ; 23 cm.

Adult. Rating : 3.

God's Passion For His Glory is a unique book in that this book is divided into two separate works, In the first part of this book, noted author John Piper invites the reader to become re-introduced to one of the greatest theologians of the 18th century, Jonathon Edwards. Piper's goal is to act as a mediator in "helping the less competent make more effective contacts with the best minds." By providing a well-researched history of Edward's life, one leaves this first part

of the book feeling as if they have come face to face with one of the greatest theologians in Christianity.

The second part consists of Edward's majestic essay entitled "*The End for Which God Created the World.*" With the help of Piper's explanatory footnotes, one is able to see the passion that Edwards had in helping all individuals to understand God's passion. Edward's main point in this essay is that God is glorified not just in making Himself known but is delighted when people respond to God's glory.

The first part of this book is very insightful and provides a wonderful description of the life and works of Jonathon Edwards. One leaves the first part of this book with a better understanding of the passion that Edwards had for placing God first in his life. Yet, the second part of the book is very difficult to read. Even Piper admits that the second part of this book (Edward's writing) is the "the most difficult and will discourage all but the most determined reader." Even though the footnotes by Piper were very helpful, one will still find difficulty in traversing the difficult 18th century language as used by Edwards.

While this book is helpful for all of those interested in learning more about Jonathon Edwards and his beliefs, those involved in research and teaching will receive the most help from this book. This is a challenging read but if one is willing to stay the course they will see God's glory revealed through this work.

Chris Carroll

Suffering and the sovereignty of God / John Piper, Justin Taylor, editors. LCCN 2006018431. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2006.

PAP, 1581348096, 9781581348095, list price: \$15.99.

231/.8. Theodicy; God (Christianity)--

Omnipotence; Providence and government of God--Christianity; Suffering--Religious aspects--Christianity. 254 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

Originating as talks given at the 2005 Desiring God National Conference, *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God* consists of essays edited by (and sometimes written by) John Piper and Justin Taylor. The book, divided into three sections -- The Sovereignty of God in Suffering; The Purposes of God in Suffering; and The Grace of God in Suffering -- tackles the logical questions people ask when bad things happen: where was God? Why didn't he stop evil from happening? Is God sovereign over Satan? How can we be free if God is sovereign over us?

It's a curious book. Stephen Saint and Joni Eareckson Tada's accounts of their suffering are deeply moving, but despite the editors' promise that *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God* speaks to the reader emotionally without relying on complicated theology, the essays often read like a college-level text rather than a book that meets readers in their pain. Mark R. Talbot's essay on "God's gracious hand" states outright that it won't easily be understood; it includes 66 footnotes. The essay on racism uses growth spurts of pink and red flowers to symbolize and explain "biological determinism," "unearned privilege," and "personally mediated racism." An essay on missionaries' suffering is reprinted with only slight changes from a previous compilation and may not interest general audiences.

The book raises interesting points: that suffering may increase the mission of the church; that God doesn't merely permit evil but actively ordains it; that the popular theory of God allowing evil so our wills can remain free makes no sense. Readers interested in a cool, distanced treatise on the relationships between evil, suffering, and God will find much of interest. But readers who

are suffering right now and are looking for a quick, comforting answer as to why should probably choose another book.

Rosemarie DiCristo

Redemptive suffering : lessons learned from the garden of Gethsemane / Leslie Montgomery. LCCN 2006011338. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2006.

PAP, 1581347944, 9781581347944, list price: \$11.99.

232.96. Jesus Christ--Prayer in Gethsemane; Jesus Christ--Passion; Gethsemane, Garden of. 141 p. : map ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 3.

Leslie Montgomery has written *Redemptive Suffering : Lessons Learned from the Garden of Gethsemane* to help readers face their own Gethsemane -- the place of their deepest pain -- by using Jesus' experiences there, including his sorrow, suffering, and submitting to God's will. In doing so, Montgomery reinforces some tough concepts: that simplistic clichés spouted by well-meaning friends, even if biblically correct, seldom help; that how we respond to crises depends on what our relationship with Christ had previously been; that God won't necessarily work things out the way we like but will never abandon us in our suffering; that suffering is inevitable and we must deal with it, both so we can grow, and so we can learn what God wants to teach us.

By discussing the historical and biblical significance of Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives, the Kidron Valley, Jerusalem, and the roads to Jericho and Bethany, Montgomery explains how they relate to a person's journey through suffering and to Christ. The significance of the Passover meal (and Christ's celebration of it) is similarly treated. But *Redemptive Suffering* is also intensely personal and emotionally compelling. Montgomery recounts her son's battles with schizophrenia, her own abusive childhood and failed marriage, and her

several suicide attempts to show how she learned to deal with her pain. (One chapter, geared specifically towards readers who've contemplated suicide, is written with love and urgency). Montgomery never pretends recovery will be easy, but her fresh, direct, honest voice gives her words substance and makes her suggested strategies sound possible.

Rosemarie DiCristo

The beauty of holiness : a guide to biblical worship. Greenville, S.C. : Ambassador-Emerald, 2006.

PAP, 1932307621, 9781932307627, list price: \$14.99.

234.8. Holiness; Sanctification. 285 p. ; 23 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 5.

Dr. Michael P. V. Barrett, President of Geneva Reformed Seminary, gives an insightful look into the issue of worship. The issue of worship in the church is one which has divided many congregations and families. Yet, worship is highly important when one considers whom one is worshipping! The point of view of Dr. Barrett is that of a reformed fundamentalist. The subtitle is accurate in that this is truly a *biblical guide* to worship. Dr. Barrett writes in a way that will please both the layman and the scholar; his style is easy to read and his endnotes are helpful for research. He covers the dangers of worship by focusing on the strong admonitions of the Old Testament prophets. He also explains the liturgy of worship, aids for worship, examples of worship, and paradigms of worship. One can not read this book without his thoughts of God being enlarged. Dr. Barrett also provides five appendices which provide excellent teaching on topics such as the following: dead religion, women in the church, head coverings, the meaning of music from a Christian worldview, and contemporary worship with a focus on young fundamentalists.

This book is thoroughly biblical. Dr. Barrett's use of scripture is exegetically sound; his use of sources outside of Scripture is not limited, yet he does favor the Westminster Confession of Faith. Dr. Barrett is dogmatic, because he views Scripture as being dogmatic on the issues of worship. He does not apply where there is no scriptural reason to apply; he does not press on issues of his own opinions. He has a pastoral heart in that he knows the joy and duty of worship and wants to convey the importance of worship to fellow believers for their good and ultimately for God's glory. One who reads this will learn much more about the Old Testament because Dr. Barrett has taught both Old Testament and Hebrew at the college and seminary levels. Yet, his writings are still clear and simple. As one views worship in Scripture, one's worship is transformed.

Scott Shafran

Only one way / Richard D. Phillips. LCCN 2006026380. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2006.

PAP, 9781581348019, list price: \$12.99.

239. Apologetics. 151 p. ; 21 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 3.

Only One Way: Reaffirming the Exclusive Truth Claims of Christianity, edited by Richard Phillips, is written to help readers address a world where Christ is just one of many gods.

The book's six essays tackle different aspects of this issue, including the rise of polytheism, the growing assault on "truth," what Paul's speech on Mars Hill has to say to 21st century audiences, and how postmodern culture rejects the biblical God. Also covered: the concept of one church and one people, why the modern world has progressed so far as to make Christianity "irrelevant," and why the world isn't the way it's "supposed to be."

Only One Way is clearly written for the most part. That it reinforces many of the Bible's main teachings while explaining how they differ from polytheism is helpful for new or young Christians. Also helpful is the detailed look at the Sermon on the Mount (which includes discussion of the differences between the four biblical gospels and the "gospels" of Phillip and Thomas). But some essays seem more alarmist than accurate, which may not make the book palatable to those critical of its message. (Peter R. Jones' "One God" strongly implies the Temple of Dendur exhibit in New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art is a working shrine dedicated to the worship of the goddess Isis and that world leaders gathering there for a seminar was something frightening). Also, the book's detailed discussion of various theories of philosophy and religion make *Only One Way* best for a college age or older audience.

The book includes a four page Scripture index and a very simple, five page general index.

Rosemarie DiCristo

Love your neighbor : thinking wisely about right and wrong / Norman L. Geisler and Ryan P. Snuffer. LCCN 2007010483. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2007.

PAP, 1581349459, 9781581349450, list price: \$14.99.

241. Young adults--Conduct of life--Textbooks; Christian ethics--Textbooks. 188 p. ; 22 cm..

Adult (HS). Rating : 4.

Love Your Neighbor: Thinking Wisely about Right and Wrong addresses how living life in accordance with "the greatest commandment" will help us know how to handle most of today's ethical issues, including lying, cheating, and stealing; civil disobedience; economic injustice; sexual sin; euthanasia; cloning and stem cell

research; capital punishment; and war.

Norman L. Geisler and Ryan P. Snuffer base their discussion on the concepts of truth and God's absoluteness, asserting that some positions are absolutely right or wrong (because they conflict with God's nature) while admitting that some moral absolutes can conflict. The first section, An Introduction to Christian Ethics, explores the attributes of a theistic God, then presents primers on morality, Old Testament law, and relativistic and absolute ethical systems. This part can be dry (young readers may be tempted to skip it) but the actual issues are discussed with warmth and compassion.

Chapters are short and to the point, with important concepts summarized at chapter end. Discussion questions are included. While the authors rarely answer ethical dilemmas outright (instead, presenting varying thoughts on the issues, as well as scientific facts and Bible verses where necessary), they carefully and compassionately cover all sides of each issue, especially sensitive issues (like whether it's okay to lie to save a loved one's life, or what is the difference between sanctity of life and quality of life). Regarding complicated issues, readers are given (via endnotes) more in-depth sources to consult. (Eight special resources for teachers are included in a section meant as a lesson plan for those using the book as a teaching tool). There's a three-page glossary, three-page general index, and four-page Scripture index. Although the vocabulary can be advanced and complicated issues are discussed, *Love Your Neighbor* is a thought-provoking and deeply valuable book, suitable for teens and adults.

Rosemarie DiCristo

Emotional purity : an affair of the heart / Heather Arnel Paulsen. LCCN 2006032418. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2007.

PAP, 158134855X, 9781581348552, list price: \$13.99.

241/.66. Marriage--Religious aspects--Christianity; Single people--Conduct of life; Dating (Social customs)--Religions aspects--Christianity; Chastity;. 158 p. ; 22 cm..

Adult (HS). Rating : 4.

As might be guessed from its title, *Emotional Purity* focuses not on the physical aspects of purity but on something author Heather Arnel Paulsen feels is as vital: the tendency of women to read signals wrong, romanticize relationships, mistakenly see them as more than friendship, and so find heartbreak when they share their deepest hopes, fears, and dreams with someone they'll never marry.

Paulsen, who counsels women in emotional purity issues and maintains a website on the topic, bases her book on Proverbs 4:23 (NIV): "Above all else, guard your heart." She carefully traces the traps Christian singles can fall into and how to avoid them, including how to keep from giving your heart too soon; the difference between being "liked" by a man and being loved by him; how to find peace in being single; how to remain emotionally whole for your future mate; and how to ground everything in a right relationship with God. Also discussed: the need to DTR (define the relationship); how to break off inappropriate relationships; how Christian singles groups often wrongly but innocently encourage a too-intense emotional intimacy.

Paulsen uses a light, conversational voice as she dispenses sensible guidance on a topic hardly anyone talks about, making many solid points (although not everyone will agree with how seriously she treats the issue). *Emotional Purity* is geared to female young adults college-aged and older, but high schoolers would benefit from its lessons and several "For Guys Only" cheat sheets sum up information on understanding women, including how to avoid leading them on. The book contains no

endnotes, index, or bibliography but includes questions for study and discussion. An earlier version was published in 2001 and some chapters, not revised for the 2007 edition, refer to events before Paulsen married as if she were still single.

Rosemarie DiCristo

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The power of your words / Robert Morris. LCCN 2006002897. Ventura, Calif. : Regal Books, 2006.

HBB, 0830738339, list price: \$17.99.

241.672. Communications--Religious aspects--Christianity; Oral communications--Religious aspects--Christianity. 186 p. ; 24 cm.

Adult. Rating : *5.

Early in life a child begins to utter strange sounds, trying to communicate with anybody or anything that will listen. From those early attempts at language, the use of words becomes increasingly more complex, and so does their impact on both the speaker and the listener. In *The Power of Your Words: How God Can Bless Your Life Through the Words You Speak*, Robert Morris explains how a Christian's words can affect relationships with others as well as God.

According to Morris, "Words – spoken or written – are clearly serious, powerful things to God."

Morris does not simply exhort his readers to understand the positive aspects of their words, such as the abilities to speak healing, peace, encouragement, and love. He is equally candid about the negative use of words, including his list of the Ten Deadly Sins of the Tongue. By addressing the good and the bad, he gives Christians balanced and thought-provoking views and helpful advice on taking control of their language.

Morris also tactfully discusses the topic

of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, specifically speaking in tongues and developing a spiritual prayer language. He walks the reader through some historical background points and then transitions into personal application. Aware that these areas are often controversial, Morris merely lays out the basic Pentecostal theology so the reader can decide the relevance for himself. A chapter-by-chapter study guide is provided for further group discussion or individual reflection.

Jeff Friend

Pathways to His presence : a daily devotional / Charles F. Stanley. LCCN 2006019093. Nashville : Nelson Books, 2006.

HBB, 0785221638, list price: \$19.99.

242/.2. Devotional calendars. 1 v. (unpaged) ; 23 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 5.

Popular author, speaker, and pastor Charles F. Stanley offers *Pathways to His Presence: a Daily Devotional*. Stanley addresses tough and sensitive topics, offers encouragement, and promotes God's Word as the source of comfort and guidance. For March 24, he writes, "Sometimes our spiritual lives seem to darken a bit...Don't fear these times. Instead, treasure them as moments when God wants you to tread carefully...." May 12 reminds, "Our faith is not a shield from suffering." October 14 asks, "Have you failed? Are your insides being gnawed by the insidious emotions of embarrassment and remorse?"

Each devotional consists of a Scripture background and key verse, comments, and a short concluding prayer. Twelve pathways address topics such as God's presence, Christian victory, freedom in Christ, and the future. The devotionals are arranged in an appropriate fashion for the year. Holiday devotions and special dates offer words for particular

seasons. Yet, Christians may scan the 12 sections, and select a particular month to help with a known personal spiritual battle. Representative daily titles for July are: (1.) Freedom from sin, (2.) What is truth? (3.) How to handle rejection, and (4.) How to handle anger.

The Christian publishing world abounds with devotionals. Yet, *Pathways to His Presence* ranks among the best. Use for personal study, as a gift book, or part of a church library. Group discussion would be good in a setting, with each individual reading these daily devotionals.

Roberta Jones

Strategic prayer : applying the power of targeted prayer / Eddie Smith, Michael L. Hennen. LCCN 2006038327. Minneapolis : Bethany House, 2007.

PAP, 0764203428, 9780764203428, list price: \$13.99.

248.3/2. Spiritual warfare; Intercessory prayer--Christianity. 191 p. ; 22 cm..

Adult. Rating : 3.

A Christian growth and specialized prayer study, *Strategic Prayer* coaches the reader in decisive, successful, targeted prayer. With a martial styled plan,, the four sections of this book consider warring in spiritual realms, spiritual strategy, the battleground of the mind, and proactive prayer. These units delineate the authors' twenty seven principles, including: prioritizing prayer; mutual prayer; learning God's truth as opposed to what the world calls truth; and, faith and obedience. Each principle concludes with an application section - summarization, thought provoking questions, and personal reflection.

Co-founder and president of the U.S. Prayer Center, Eddie Smith collaborates with pastor, missionary, and church planter Michael L. Hennen to produce *Strategic Prayer*. Writing within a

genre (beginning in New Testament days and continuing into ours) which already has a wide variety of materials, the authors present a modern voice and style which catches the interest. Augmenting the text with quotes, scripture, and experiences of themselves and others, *Strategic Prayer* provides workable information. Those looking for a new book on prayer, as well as for libraries, reference shelves, and Bible classes, *Strategic Prayer* will be worth considering.

Donna Eggett

Dream : have you caught God's vision? / Kenny Luck. LCCN 2007000462. Colorado Springs : WaterBrook Press, 2007.

PAP, 9781578569878, list price: \$13.99.

248.8/42. Christian men--Religious life. x, 213 p. : ill. ; 23 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

A men's Christian growth study, *Dream* seeks to help readers find God's dream for them, remain steadfast in it, and express it in God's way. Opening with a discussion on seeing, hearing, and discerning according to Christ's directives, Kenny Luck leads the seeker through many subjects, including: bearing God's image; giving up self for Christ; the Father/son relationship; helping others accept the real issues. This book closes with a challenge to the reader to take up these personal growth issues.

Founder and president of Every Man Ministries and men's pastor for his church, Kenny Luck draws from a wide base of experience to present *Dream*. He has also written a separate aid for the study of this book, *Dream Workbook*. Written with panache, empathy, and in conversational, contemporary language, *Luck* uses quotes, mini-bios of many people, including himself, and scripture to illustrate his ideas. Relational themes considered include: marriage;

fatherhood; friendship; ill-health; and, closeness with God. Primarily meant as a men's study, women will also find it interesting. *Dream* will be useful for church libraries, men's groups, and individual study.

Donna Eggett

LifeOvers : upside-down ways to become more like Jesus / Gracie Malone . LCCN 2006032187. Grand Rapids : Revell, 2007.

PAP, 0800731425, 9780800731427, list price: \$12.99.

248.8/43. Christian life--Biblical teaching; Christian women--Religious life. 219 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

A twelve week Bible study suitable for individuals or groups, *LifeOvers* uses some of the words of our Lord which seem a bit upside down to modern thought to consider Christian growth. Subjects presented include: God's view of success vs. the world's; the last and the least are the first; our flaws do not bar us from God's love and plan; how to become children for God; plus eight more subjects. All come directly from scripture and are discussed Biblically with a modern twist. Each chapter follows the same format: first, what seems an upside down thought but is really very right side up for Christian living; then, several questions, ideas, and thoughts to encourage the student to internalize the principle.

One of noted Bible teacher Kay Arthur's Precept leaders, as well as a women's conference speaker and Christian author, Gracie Malone uses an engagingly conversational style to present these important points. Anecdotes from her life and lives of her friends and students, interesting sidebars, and relevant quotes provide the illustrations for these studies. The closing notes give further scripture references, and a useful bibliography.. Aimed at women, *LifeOvers* offers a helpful series of

studies which will teach and entertain beginning through more capable Bible students. In a prolific genre, *LifeOvers* must take its place beside similar books. If you are in the market for a new Bible study this one is worth considering.

Donna Eggett

Respectful kids : the complete guide to bringing out the best in your child / Todd Cartmell. LCCN 2006012341. Colorado Springs : NavPress, 2006.

PAP, 1576839842, list price: \$13.99.

248.8/45. Parenting--Religious aspects--Christianity; Child rearing--Religious aspects--Christianity. 205 p. ; 21 cm.

Adult. Rating : 5.

Respectful Kids: Bringing Out the Best in Your Child by Dr. Todd Cartmell, explains easy steps to encourage good behavior in children. Three strategies mesh together for positive impact:

One: Teach Respectful Behavior

Two: Turn on Respectful Behavior

Three: Turn Off Disrespectful Behavior

Adults should not train like a demolition expert. Rather, Dr. Cartmell urges parents to be master gardeners, and "... pull out the weeds: your child's bad habits. But as you do so, you take great care to make sure you don't damage the roots of your relationship." Boys and girls must see the logical consequences of their bad actions, with parents using the "pour-it-on" technique for good behavior.

I liked the focus on asking questions in a respectful way, the stress on flexible thinking, and problem solving methods. The book promotes a positive, hopeful theme. For instance, showing respect adds to our enjoyment in life. Further, "...we need to help our kids see that being respectful to others is a natural extension of our relationship to God." Sometimes, offer the child two clear

options. Mention their ability and right to choose.

Each chapter includes pertinent sidebars, and Key Points to Remember. Taking the Next Step suggests Scripture readings and asks thought-provoking questions for parents. Consider Respectful Kids for a church library, a baby shower gift, a home library, or a parent discussion group.

Roberta Jones

When the darkness will not lift : doing what we can while we wait for God and joy / John Piper. LCCN 2006026383. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2006.

PAP, 1581348762, 9781581348767, list price: \$7.99.

248.8/6. Depression, Mental--Religious aspects--Christianity; Patience--Religious aspects--Christianity; Trust in God; Expectation (Psychology)--Religious aspects--Christianity; Spiritual life--Christianity; Depressed persons--Religious life. 79 p. ; 21 cm.

Adult. Rating : 3.

Written to give comfort to readers currently suffering through a period of spiritual darkness as well as to help readers minister to friends or loved ones trapped in darkness, *When the Darkness Will Not Lift* is a thin book (only seventy-nine pages) with a very large font. It's more of a pep talk on or an outline of ways to overcome periods of spiritual darkness than a complete treatment of the issue, but author John Piper includes a list of other books on the topic, and also recommends several of his own books, including *When I Don't Desire God*. (*When the Darkness Will Not Lift* was originally meant to be that book's final chapter).

Piper touches on but doesn't delve deeply into possible causes of spiritual darkness (clinical depression; Satan's assault; unconfessed sin), reflects on topics such as where God is during periods of darkness, and gives suggestions on how to muddle through

(including why we should muddle through). By including a simplified description of what Christ's death on the cross means for believers, he makes the book accessible for younger readers and new Christians. Yet in many ways the book reads too simply for that audience - or even for committed Christians. *When the Darkness Will Not Lift* is a good starter book for readers looking to deal with the spiritual darkness they are encountering, but readers truly in need of help dealing with "darkness" (or wanting to fully understand a Christian take on it) will want to use another book in addition to this one.

Rosemarie DiCristo

Work excellence : a biblical perspective of work / Charles M. Garriott. Washington, D.C. : Riott, 2005.

PAP, 0976200406, list price: \$12.00.

248.8/8. Work--Religious aspects--Christianity. 112 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 4.

Over the past decade a whole genre of Christian literature has developed centered on living with or for a purpose. Charles M. Garriott in *Work Excellence : A Biblical Perspective*, goes a step further in applying biblical purpose to working life. Garriott points to Daniel, for example, as an encouragement for influence in the workplace. Cain and Abel, on the other hand, offer contrasts in setting aside the fruits of work as worship to God.

At 115 pages, double spaced, with biblical texts reprinted in their entirety, *Work Excellence* could at first blush be seen as a quick read of sound Bible teaching, since the language and message in the text deal with themes that may be familiar to mature Christians. Dig deeper, though, and the reflection questions following each chapter offer opportunity for personal or group study for adult or older high school students.

Garriott poses the question, "Do you understand the 'glory of God' in your work?" With *Work Excellence*, we gain a better appreciation of work beyond a paycheck once or twice a month.

John Fannin

52 family time ideas : draw closer to your kids as you draw your kids closer to God / Timothy Smith. LCCN 2006019412. Minneapolis : Bethany House, 2006.

PAP, 0764202405, 9780764202407, list price: \$12.99.

249. Family--Religious life. 175 p. ; 21 cm.

Adult (All ages). Rating : 4.

In our fast-paced society, families should always be on the lookout for good ideas to pull everyone together for some fun. *52 Family Time Ideas* delivers on the promise of the title by supplying page after page of great ideas for family fun.

The contents fall under two headings. Part one contains forty chapters worth of ideas for normal weeks, and part two contains twelve chapters dealing with holiday weeks.

Each chapter starts with a main point and then lists the materials needed. The author, Timothy Smith, walks you through the "lesson" which includes a Bible reading. Then he explains the activity itself, followed by questions for family discussion. The chapter ends with "Today's Slogan" and a prayer. What is exceptional is the "Adapting for..." section of each chapter in which the activity is modified in keeping with the special needs of either younger children or teenagers.

This is an excellent resource because it pulls together the priorities of family worship and family fun. While none of the "main point" ideas are doctrinally deep or theologically profound, they do emphasize the basics of spirituality and

morality. I would like to see a follow-up book that takes the same approach but makes the “main point” more explicitly Christian. However, for what it is, this is a good tool for building families.

Keep in mind that not every idea is going to appeal equally to everyone. However, life is short, kids grow up quick, and if you get even five good ideas out of a book like this then I think it is a good investment. I found my five and so can you.

Scott Lamb

The leader's legacy : preparing for greater things / David L. McKenna. Newberg, Ore. : Barclay Press, 2006.

PAP, 1594980071, list price: \$15.00.

253. Leadership--Religious aspects--Christianity. 172 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

David McKenna served as president of two universities and one seminary over the course of thirty years. This becomes a significant fact when considering the value of his newest book, *The Leader's Legacy*. The lessons he teaches us rise from the mountain of life experiences that have shaped him.

The premise of the book is that great leaders will prepare and implement good succession strategies for the leader who will follow them. McKenna takes the reader through twelve steps for succession such as, “Understanding our life cycle”, “Timing our leave”, “Celebrating our successor”, and “Leaving our legacy”. McKenna believes succession begins before a leader even assumes a position of leadership because a great leader will always deal with the past, present, and future of an organization.

The literary structure of the book utilizes the story of John the Baptist preparing the way and stepping aside for Jesus. This thematic element glued the chapters

together nicely. McKenna does not run out of personal anecdotes, and these make for very interesting reading. He also shows knowledge of the literature on leadership by sprinkling pertinent quotes throughout.

Books on leadership are very popular and it seems like there is a never-ending supply coming off the presses. McKenna's contribution to the field displays strength because of the long-tenure of actual leadership experiences on which he draws for illustration.

Scott Lamb

Doing things right in matters of the heart / John Ensor. LCCN 2006037264. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2007.

PAP, 1581348428, 9781581348422, list price: \$11.99.

261.8/357. Sex role--Religious aspects--Christianity. 159 p. ; 20 cm..

Adult. Rating : 4.

Doing Things Right in Matters of the Heart uses the Bible's definitions of masculinity and femininity to guide readers into finding and fulfilling their proper roles in healthy long-term relationships. Divided into two sections and geared primarily to single Christians, it tackles such concepts as what the heart wants and lacks; how men and women have complimentary but different roles in a courtship or marital relationship; and how to counter the modern world's assault on gender identity and its acceptance of sexual promiscuity. A primary focus: the need to get a right relationship with God before it can be possible to have such relationships with others.

Author John Ensor is director of urban initiatives for Heartbeat International, an organization working to establish pregnancy help centers worldwide. With fifteen years work in pastoral counseling, Ensor uses his personal experiences as well as the experiences of

friends and others to illustrate his points. Ensor also quotes liberally from the Bible as well as lighter sources such as the works of Shakespeare, popular music, movies, and television.

Doing Things Right is a small, slim book, simply written in a gentle, conversational style (it's a “user-friendly, basic version” in Ensor's own words) but Ensor can be blunt when necessary, particularly about sexual matters. His explanations of what the proper roles of men and women are, why men must lead and women must guide, why waiting for sex gives women power, and what it means for women to submit are clear, direct, and convincing. This should be a valuable addition to church libraries. Note: while the quotations and facts are scrupulously documented in footnotes, there's no index or bibliography. Also, many footnotes are to websites (with only the url given, not the website name) which may vanish suddenly.

Rosemarie DiCristo

Rock-solid teacher / Gregory C. Carlson. LCCN 2006015492. Ventura, Calif. : Regal Books, 2006.

HBB, 0830739203, list price: \$17.99.

268/.6. Education--Aims and objectives; Teaching--Religious aspects--Christianity; Christian education. 170 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Adult. Rating : 3.

Readers who teach Sunday school or lead a Bible study or youth group but have had no formal training in Christian education will appreciate Gregory C. Carlson's book *Rock Solid Teacher*. In this slim volume Carlson sets forth the basic characteristics of Jesus' teaching methods and content, and then suggests practical ways to apply these traits, whether it be teaching children, teens, adults, or your own family members.

Carlson covers numerous topics, including considering physical setting of

the classroom, using age appropriate activities, knowing the scriptures, proclaiming the truth and applying the healing power of the scriptures, building healthy student-teacher relationships, becoming catalysts for change in students' lives, employing a variety of teaching methods, and so on. Each chapter makes numerous scripture references illustrating the various teaching principles, and ends with a self-check for teachers to evaluate how well they are mastering a given principle.

The book is written in a well-developed outline format, with plenty of bulleted concepts, lists, and topics highlighted in italics throughout each chapter; this makes for easy reading, but does not provide fully developed explanations of activities, leaving readers to creatively apply the basic principles to their own teaching scenarios. Endnotes and an extensive bibliography provide readers with additional resources to consult on the topic of teaching.

Sherri Beeler

AD 33 : the year that changed the world / Colin Duriez. LCCN 2006030490. Downers Grove, Ill. : InterVarsity Press, 2007.

HBB, 083083396X, 9780830833962, list price: \$22.00.

270.1. Jesus Christ--Crucifixion; Jesus Christ--Influence; Church history--Primitive and early church, ca. 30-600. 256 p. : ill., maps ; 24 cm.

Adult. Rating : 5.

Many books have analyzed and interpreted the events surrounding the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But in *AD 33: The Year That Changed the World*, Colin Duriez digs much deeper than focusing on just a few weeks. He explores the entire year from a variety of perspectives to provide a well-rounded overview of that pivotal time.

Duriez does a commendable job of exploring the political, religious, and

social climates and structures of the day. He gives valuable background information on many of the key leaders – Tiberius, Pilate, Antipas, Caiaphas – in a style that flows smoothly, even as he transitions back-and-forth between subjects throughout the book. Duriez naturally looks extensively at the most important character, Jesus, and his relationships with those close to him as well as his enemies. Duriez also describes life in Jerusalem and what life was like there.

He draws his information from a balanced and wide range of biblical and historical sources, so even non-Christians can benefit from the research without fearing a totally Christian perspective. Reading viewpoints other than the standard biblical accounts will also give Christians a more insightful understanding of the undercurrents and conditions faced by the early church.

AD 33 is not casual reading, but is written on a level that can be appealing and easily followed by most laypeople. Duriez includes many maps, pictures, and diagrams to help the reader visualize the places mentioned. There are timelines for easy reference, and the extensive bibliography is a great resource for further study.

Jeff Friend

Organizing for life : declutter your mind to declutter your world / Sandra Felton. LCCN 2006025454. Grand Rapids : Revell, 2007.

PAP, 0800731859, 9780800731854, list price: \$12.99.

648/.5. House cleaning. 233 p. ; 22 cm.

Adult. Rating : 4.

An how-to book aimed at a well-publicized contemporary problem, *Organizing for Life* starts with a clear explanation of the target audience, people who have lost control of their surroundings and live in a constantly

perplexing mess. The author, Sandra Felton describes several categories of these Messies: savers; time-wasters; fatigued and depressed, plus several more. She then provides focus to get Messies out of their fog and into an organized life by considering the mindset that tumbled them into their disorder. Practical ways to begin decluttering your life are included. Each chapter ends with suggestions to help the reader assess their own life. Three appendices provide further help: an appearance makeover; a listing of support groups; and, an explanation of Messies Anonymous.

Founder of Messies Anonymous, and author of several popular books on the same topic, Sandra Felton wrote this additional book to take careful aim at the root of the problem - the Messies mindset, where it grew from, and how to remold it. Written in an interest-catching, teaching style, *Organizing for Life* is easily understood. While aimed at women who are desperately drowning in clutter, there are valuable suggestions for everybody, men or women, from the organized but happily untidy, or the one who does not need lots of modernity to feel fulfilled, to the already carefully organized and organizing person. Although Fulton mentions the Bible several times, and portrays the Messie as valuable to God, this is not a religious book. All people, secular through Christian will find it readable and useful.

Donna Eggett

Singing between the lines : fifteen-minute music theory lessons for your church choir / Ginger G. Wyrick. Nashville : Abingdon, 2006.

PAP, 0687497485, list price: \$18.00.

782. Singing--Instruction and study. 88 p. : ill., music ; 28 cm.

Adult. Rating : 5.

Choral teachers and church choir

directors will find a tremendous resource in Ginger Wyrick's book, *Singing Between The Lines*. As most choir professionals will attest, it is incredibly difficult to incorporate music theory into the typical choir rehearsal. Wyrick's book is divided into 30 lessons with two pages per lesson. The first page details the concepts to be covered with suggested pedagogical techniques. The second page is a handout, reproducible for each choir member, to be sent home as an assignment or worked through in rehearsal.

Each lesson includes a well known hymn tune which can be taught to the choir along with its proper tune name (ex. ANTIOCH). The hymn tune is used to exemplify the concepts covered in each chapter. Throughout the lessons, no aspect of music notation is left unexplained. Wyrick covers such things as note and rest duration, note names, intervals, meter, dynamics, articulation, scales, and key signatures. The musically uninitiated who love to sing in choir, but find themselves consistently confused will rejoice for the opportunity to progress through this program. Wyrick suggests several teaching schedules, but the musical literacy of each choir will dictate the time spent on each lesson. It would probably be best to just progress as the entire choir understands each lesson. Some directors may even schedule a lesson time each week which is open to those interested. The end of the book contains ear training exercises, music examples for many of the concepts covered, and an answer key for all the worksheets.

Whatever system of presentation is found most useful, this book would make an excellent resource for any music teacher/choir conductor. Best use of the material would be if it were immediately applied to rehearsal music on hand.

John MacInnis

From Hinton to Hamlet : building bridges between young adult literature and the classics / Sarah K. Herz and Donald R. Gallo. LCCN 2005012728. Westport, Conn. : Greenwood Press, 2005.

HBB, 0313324522, list price: \$39.95.

809/.89283/0712. Youth--Books and reading; Literature--Study and teaching (Secondary); Young adult literature--Study and teaching (Secondary). xvii, 256 p. ; 25 cm.

Adult. Rating : 5.

The task of getting students to read is challenge enough, let alone inducing them to read required classics. Authors Sarah Herz and Donald Gallo approach this challenge much like an builder would trying to span one shore to another. Herz and Gallo build their bridge to the classics using contemporary literature, and provide capable blueprints in their book *From Hinton to Hamlet*. Teachers, librarians, even parents, looking for a inducement for today's teenager to read and connect to the Joad family, Atticus Finch, Ralph and Jack, or even Huckleberry Finn, will find it through this reference read. More than ideas and lesson plans, the book explores what young adult literature is all about, providing success stories from other schools and libraries, and has an impressive resources appendix.

Well-organized, practical, interesting, and useful are some of the adjectives that come to mind with this book. Getting reluctant readers to eager readers is one of the greater challenges facing teachers and librarians alike these days. Teens are more motivated towards visual information, which is part of their culture. Yet, put the right book in their hands, and they will read. Hinton, from experience, is an excellent place to start, and can be used a means to "bridge" to classics, like Romeo and Juliet. The authors have compiled a working list of most classics used in the classroom, ones students should be familiar with, and they have provided several

contemporary YA novels to go with each classic. This is one book that won't gather dust on the shelf, as it will be busy being used to form literature units throughout the year.

Pam Webb

John Newton : from disgrace to amazing grace / Jonathan Aitken ; foreword by Philip Yancey. LCCN 2007005061. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2007.

HBB, 1581348487, 9781581348484, list price: \$21.99.

B or 283.092. Newton, John, 1725-1807; Church of England--Clergy--Biography; Hymn writers--England--Biography. 400 p. : ill. ; 24 cm.

Adult (All ages). Rating : 4.

John Newton's story is truly a journey *From Disgrace to Amazing Grace*. This is just the time to chronicle that divinely worked transformation, because 2007 is the 200th anniversary of Newton's death.

Everyone who knows Newton as the author of "Amazing Grace" needs to read the story of Newton the slave—and, more importantly, Newton the slaver. Author Jonathan Aitken spends ample time and makes good use of sources (mainly Newton's own letters and autobiography) in describing how utterly vile that Newton could be. Aitken is also careful and spiritually sensitive in his description of the change God wrought in such a man. Aitken pays special attention to the very important question of how after his conversion Captain Newton could have studied his Bible for hours a day directly above stolen, chained *people*. Aitken steers a wise course between judging Newton too harshly and letting him off the hook.

Aitken's work also navigates well between being a spiritually dry recounting of the facts and an uncritical hagiography. He has done the church a good service, offering readers insight into the religious climate of 18th century

England, the time of Methodism and its leaders John Wesley and George Whitefield. These men deeply influenced Newton, and he in turn nearly idolized them (especially Whitefield) as a young believer. Readers will also enjoy reading the touching love story between Newton and his wife, Polly née Catlett.

Newton did come around on slavery. He even became instrumental in its demise in the British empire through his friendship with MP William Wilberforce and through his own testimony to Parliament. It is instructive and encouraging for Christians to read the course God's amazing grace ran in the life of this interesting and important saint. Newton's pastoring (not least of famous poet William Cowper), his letters, and his hymns have made a deep impact on British and American evangelicalism.

Mark L. Ward, Jr.

Statesman and saint : the principled politics of William Wilberforce / David J. Vaughan. LCCN 2001047704. Nashville : Highland Books, 2002.

HBB, 1581822243, list price: \$14.95.

B or 326/.8/092. Wilberforce, William, 1759-1833; Legislators--Great Britain--Biography; Abolitionists--Great Britain--Biography; Philanthropists--Great Britain--Biography; Antislavery movements--Great Britain--History; Great Britain--Politics and government--1760-1820; Great Britain--Politics and government--1820-1830. 340 p. ; 18 cm.

Adult (MS, HS). Rating : 3.5.

The life and work of William Wilberforce have recently received passionate attention by Christians of all stripes in the advent of the 2006 biographical film, *Amazing Grace*. For those so inclined to also reach for a biographical book, *Statesman and Saint* by David Vaughan would make an excellent choice. The work covers the life of Wilberforce from childhood to death, and is broadly divided into four

sections: Life, Character, Legacy and Lessons. Information is well documented, but almost to a fault. Lengthy quotations take up much of the narrative. Also, though not hagiography per se, a readership outside of Christianity would more than likely find the tone of this book unbalanced.

As stated above almost every line has documentation of some kind, allowing the reader to confirm the accuracy of what he/she is reading. Of particular note is Vaughan's consistent moralizing. Absolutely no opportunity to draw ethical lessons from Wilberforce's life is passed—a fact which would make this book appealing to parents seeking to inject a level of moral development into their children's reading. An advanced and impressive vocabulary is employed throughout which would prove daunting to most middle school students (and many in high school). Parents and teachers wishing to see marked development in student reading and comprehension could put this book to good use. Short chapters, specifically organized help keep the work focused and well paced. Those reading for research purposes are well aided by the inclusion of a six page chronology, selected bibliography, and index.

John C. MacInnis

The faith of Condoleezza Rice / Leslie Montgomery. LCCN 2006033151. Wheaton, Ill. : Crossway Books, 2007.

HBB, 1581347995, 9781581347999, list price: \$19.99.

B or 355/.033073092. Rice, Condoleezza, 1954- --Religion; Rice, Condoleezza, 1954-; National Security Council (U.S.)--Biography; African Americans--Biography; African American women--Biography; Cabinet officers--United States--Biography; Stateswomen--United States--Biography. 223 p. : ill. ; 23 cm.

Adult (HS). Rating : 2.

As might be expected from the title, *The Faith of Condoleezza Rice* is less a political biography of Rice than a look at

how her faith shaped her life.

Using the civil rights movement as a "guideline" (Rice was raised in Birmingham, Ala., during its most turbulent times), author Leslie Montgomery contrasts Rice and her family's experiences with what was happening to African-Americans in general in the 20th Century. While this constitutes the bulk of the book, Montgomery also fully covers Rice's childhood, educational experiences, and political triumphs.

The book is clearly written and includes photos, endnotes, and a timeline of key facts. (There is no index). At times, however, the language seems excessively emotional (for example, Montgomery's descriptions of "the iron clasp of oppression and slavery" or the "brutality of perpetrators who sought to eliminate the black race at all cost"). Also, unfortunate word choices can have unintended meanings, such as Montgomery's statement that the legacy of owners raping their slaves "bred" inferiority into the slaves. Most troubling is Montgomery's muddling of timelines, especially early in the book. *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Nat Turner rebellion, the Civil Rights Act of 1866, and the rise of black culture in the 20th century are haphazardly, confusingly interspersed, as are details of Rice's childhood, leading to repetition of facts and stories, often only one page apart. There are also several glaring factual errors, including Montgomery stating that Rosa Parks was 21 when she refused to give up her bus seat (Parks was 42) and her implying, when describing events occurring in 1971, that Boris Yeltsin was then Russia's leader.

The book's simplicity makes it readable for middle graders and up, but its sloppiness should raise many concerns, even for general readers merely interested in an overview of Rice's amazing faith.

Rosemarie DiCristo

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