



The Review Crew

What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

Brought to you by the Denver Public Schools Book Review Committee.

Volume 3 Number 3
Dec. 06/Jan. 07

Fiction

The Runaway Dinner

By: Allan Ahlberg
Illus. by: Bruce Ingman
Candlewick, 2006
ISBN: 0763631426

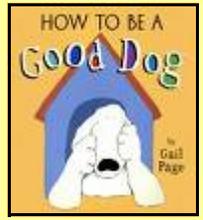


Curriculum: Dinners; Sausages
When little Banjo Cannon's entire dinner - led by a sausage named Melvin - runs away from him one evening, a hilarious race ensues. Jaunty illustrations and playful narration make this sendup of the classic gingerbread man story a riot. Fabulous for read-alouds, or pair with other fugitive food tales for a great comparison/contrast lesson.

Reviewed by: Jennifer Fakolt
Mitchell Elem.

How to Be a Good Dog

Written & illus. by: Gail Page
Bloomsbury, 2006
ISBN: 1582346836



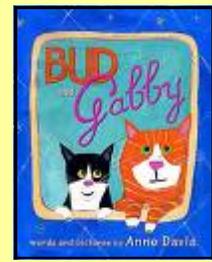
Curriculum: Functional Reading and Writing
Bobo tries very hard to be a good dog, but sometimes it is difficult. When he does

too many bad things, Mrs. Birdhead banishes him to the doghouse. Much to her surprise, Cat misses Bobo. This resourceful creature finds a book on dog training and sets to work. This hilarious story will delight young readers and listeners.

Reviewed by: Penny Cunningham
Valdez Elem.

Bud and Gabby

Written & illus. by: Anne Davis
Harper Collins, 2006
ISBN: 0060753501



Curriculum: Cats
Bud and Gabby, two cats living in the same household, share an amiable relationship. Bud, who narrates the story, admits to being the bossy one, but his affection for Gabby is obvious, and when she falls ill and is taken away in "the box," Bud reminisces about her importance in his life. When she finally comes home, "smelling a little like a medicine chest" but looking great, Bud is willing to share the comfy chair that was once his domain.

Reviewed by: Steve Bowley
South HS

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- ☺ We are DPS teacher librarians and literacy experts from elementary schools through high school.
- ☺ We know DPS students and the DPS curriculum.
- ☺ Every month each member writes reviews of at least fifteen recently published books.
- ☺ Our hard work earns thousands of dollars of free books for our school libraries and for the classroom library at ERS, where DPS teachers can order baskets of books for their classrooms. (Call 720-423-8131 to order.)

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Want to read more reviews? See the instructions on page 6.

The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

Fiction

On Christmas Eve

By: Ann M. Martin
Illus. by: Jon J. Muth
Scholastic, 2006
ISBN: 0439745888



Curriculum: Christmas; Magic; Santa Claus; Friendship; Cancer

This Christmas, eight-year old Tess feels magic start to build around her: she knows she will actually meet Santa Claus, and, she hopes, get him to grant her wish and cure her best friend's father of cancer. Martin beautifully captures the wonder and magic of the holiday in this sentimental and rewarding tale.

Reviewed by: Jennifer Fakolt
Mitchell Elem.

Many of these books will work in middle school, too!

Just for You to Know

By: Cheryl Harness
HarperCollins, 2006
ISBN: 0060783133



Curriculum: Family relationships; Death

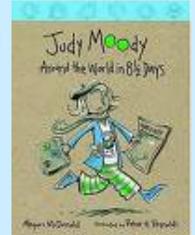
The Cathcarts are moving - again. Carmen wonders if life can get any worse than being stuck with five noisy younger brothers, a dreamy mom, a dad that can't hold a good job, and a terrible house with worn-out furniture. Yes, life can indeed

be much worse, it can become absolutely impossible.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill K-8

Judy Moody: Around the World in 8½ Days

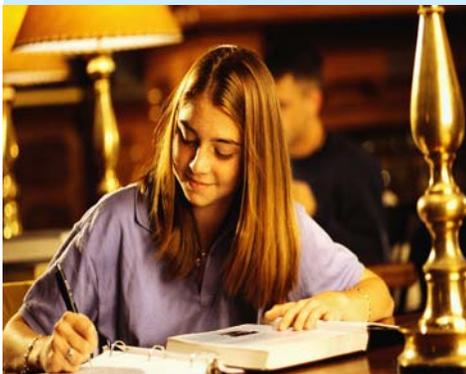
By: Megan McDonald
Illus. by: Peter H. Reynolds
Candlewick, 2006
ISBN: 0763628328



Curriculum: World Travel; Cooperation; Creativity

Judy's found a new friend, Amy Namey, a girl who is as quirky as Judy with many of the same interests: signature sayings, rhyming names, gum chewing. Unfortunately, Judy's other friends Rocky and

(Continued on page 3)



Fiction

Danger in the Dark: A Houdini & Nate Mystery

By: Tom Lalicki
Illus. by: Carlyn Cerniglia



Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006
ISBN: 0374316805

Curriculum: Harry Houdini; Magicians; Spiritualists; Friendship

Young Nate is in trouble - his Great Aunt Alice has fallen under the influence of an unscrupulous spiritualist who wants her money. Can Nate's new friend, the legendary Harry Houdini, help him expose the faker? Excitement and illusion abound in this suspenseful historical thriller.

Reviewed by: Jennifer Fakolt
Mitchell Elem.

The Braid

By: Helen Frost
Frances Foster, 2006
ISBN: 0374309620



Curriculum: History; Canada; Immigration; Scotland

This lovely poem-story told from two sister's perspectives as one immigrates with her family to Canada, the other remaining behind is woven together as seamlessly as the braid the two sisters exchange as they part ways. Notes by the author on

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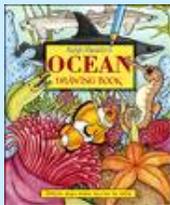
Frank feel neglected, especially when Judy shirks her duties on a school project all of them are working on. Kids will definitely be able to relate to her plight-- who hasn't had a fight with their friends and needed to make good?

Reviewed by: Laurie Bell
Brown Elem.

Nonfiction

Ralph Masiello's Ocean Drawing Book

Written & illus. by:
Ralph Masiello
Charlesbridge, 2006
ISBN: 1570915296
Curriculum: Drawing; Ocean life



This simple drawing book rises to the top of a crowded genre. The drawings are realistic rather than cartoon-like and include variations for more accomplished artists. Each finished drawing in the book is colored with a different medium, from colored pencil to fine-tip marker. This is the first in a series by this artist.

Reviewed by: Penny Cunningham
Valdez Elem.

Where's Mom's Hair?

By: Debbie Watters, with Haydn and Emmett Watters

Photographs by:
Sophie Hogan
Second Story,
2005

ISBN: 1896764940

Curriculum: Cancer; Chemotherapy

Two young boys narrate the story of their mother's surgery and conse-



quent chemotherapy for cancer. Included in the story, and documented in black-and-white photographs, are a hair-cutting party, a chemotherapy appointment, a visit to the oncologist, the use of wigs, hats and scarves, and finally a hair-growing-back party. This is a frank, yet gently told story of family support in a time of serious illness.

Reviewed by: Steve Bowley
South HS

Galaxies, Galaxies!

By: Gail Gibbons
Illus. by: Gail
Gibbons
Holiday House,
2007

ISBN: 0823420027

Curriculum: Milky Way; Astronomy;

(Continued on page 5)



Young Adults Deserve the Best!

Fiction

Startled by his Furry Shorts: Confessions of Georgia Nicolson

By: Louise Rennison
HarperTempest, 2006
ISBN: 0060853840

Curriculum: Diaries; Humorous stories; School; Dating
Dave is in love with Georgia, Georgia is in love with Masimo. Masimo has to think about whether he wants to "be with" Georgia. Now having to think about it is probably not a good thing. So Georgia is stressing, as only Georgia can, about the future of her love life. Meanwhile she and the girls are getting in plenty of trouble at school and at the clubs. And just when Georgia thinks things couldn't get any more confusing, well, they do.

Reviewed by Chris Coble
Kepner MS



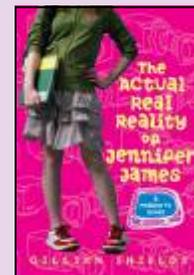
The Actual Real Reality of Jennifer James: A Reality TV Novel

By: Gillian Shields
Katherine Tegen Books, 2006
ISBN: 0060822406

Curriculum: Diary; School; Interpersonal relationships; Self-confidence; Reality TV; Integrity

Down the Bog is the new "it" television reality show, and now it is coming to Jennifer's high school, London Road Comprehensive. The prize for winning the contest is a scholarship to St. Willibald's College. Jennifer James is a perfect fit for St. Willibald's, she is shy and bookish and smart. She really doesn't fit in at London Road Comprehensive, a last-chance high school in a last-chance neighborhood. All she has to do is win each weeks contest against some of the most popular and "pretty" people at school.

Reviewed by Chris Coble
Kepner MS



(Continued from page 1)

Yoon and the Christmas Mitten

By: Helen Recorvits

Illus. by: Gabi

Swiatkowska

Farrar, Straus and

Giroux, 2006

ISBN: 0374386889

Curriculum: Christmas; Korean Americans; Tolerance

In her new American school, Yoon's teacher reads to her class about Christmas and Santa Claus. Though her parents tell her that they are "not a Christmas family," Yoon is determined to find a way to honor both her Korean and American cultures. Thankfully, this sequel to *My Name Is Yoon* proves to be a worthy follow-up and a must-have title for any collection.

Reviewed by: Laurie Bell
Brown Elem.



The Jade Dragon

By: Carolyn Marsden
and Virginia Shin-Mui
Loh

Candlewick, 2006

ISBN: 0763630128

Curriculum: Chinese Americans; Identity; Friendship

Ginny has never had a best friend. Now there is a new girl in the second grade class; a new girl who is Chinese just like her. But Stephanie doesn't like Chinese food and she hates her straight black hair. Her parents aren't even Chinese! Are they really too different to become best friends?

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill K-8



Alpha Oops! The Day Z Went First

By: Alethea Kontis

Illus. by: Bob Kolar

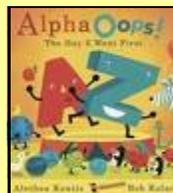
Candlewick Press, 2006

ISBN: 0763627283

Curriculum: Alphabet

A feast of vibrant illustrations awaits the reader as he/she delves into the lively story of confusion and comedy. A rebellion is about to take place among the letters of the alphabet. Z is tired of always being in last place when his alphabet family lines up. He incites members of his family to defy A and total chaos is the result. A becomes last and the letters agree to go back to normal because their line-up was not as easy as A-B-C.

Reviewed by: Irene W. Bell
Bryant Webster K-8



Nonfiction

Frankenstein

Makes a Sandwich

Written & illus. by:

Adam Rex

Harcourt, 2006

ISBN: 0152057668

Curriculum: Poetry; Monsters

How can Frankenstein borrow the ingredients for a sandwich if all his neighbors are afraid of him? What happens when Dracula's young son goes to the dentist? This is a delightful potpourri of poems packed with monsters from literature, folklore, and song. Young readers may miss many of the allusions, but that will not dampen their enjoyment. This is a very sophisticated yet accessible offering to entice those who are fascinated by the scary and monstrous.

Reviewed by: Penny Cunningham
Valdez Elem.



Simple Machines:

Springs

By: David Glover

Heinemann Library,

2006

ISBN: 1403485674

Curriculum: Science; Springs; Simple machines

A simple definition of a spring is followed by real-life examples: pen, pogo stick, door spring and lock, etc. Excellent photos and drawings accompany each example. Fun and interesting "Fact File" entries are included throughout the text. One activity is included that can easily be replicated.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Stedman Elem.



AV Resources

Becoming the Author of Your Life

DVD by: Ben Mikaelson, 2005

Curriculum: Bullying; Writing; Personal development

Ben Mikaelson knows what it is like to be teased for being different, to be bullied, to be the only kid who can't read in a school full of smart kids. Yet he has created for himself a life full of adventure and success. He has been a cliff diver, a polar explorer, and an author, and his life now revolves around Buffy, a very large black bear that he has raised from a cub. Ben tells his story with humor and conviction that draw kids in and leave them inspired. From bullying programs to writers' workshop, this DVD will find many uses in both elementary and middle schools.

Reviewed by: Penny Cunningham
Valdez Elem.



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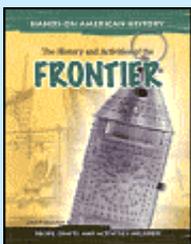
Curiosity

Gail Gibbons finds a nice balance of simple and informative with this text, which takes readers on an exploration of what we know about galaxies from the beliefs of the ancient Greeks to the invention of the refracting and reflecting telescope, up to the use of space probes like Voyager. A perfect introduction to astronomy for young readers.

Reviewed by: Laurie Bell
Brown Elem.

The History and Activities of the Frontier

By: Lisa Klobuchar
Heinemann Library,
2006
ISBN: 1403460566

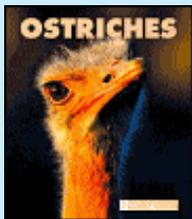


Curriculum: Social studies; American history; Frontier living; Pioneer living
Foods cooked over an open fire in one pot were the main part of a frontier meal. All clothing was made by the frontier dwellers and cloth first had to be woven. Most household items had to be made from available materials, toys also. Learn how to make Kentucky Burgoo, how to weave, how to make a lantern and a Jacob's ladder. Find out how all of these items were an integral part of frontier life.

Reviewed by Chris Coble
Kepner MS

Ostriches

By: Thane Maynard
Child's World, 2007
ISBN: 1592966454



Curriculum: Ostriches; Animals; Science

You have to fall in love with the face

on this cover! Full page photographs appear on each two-page spread. Text pages are divided into 4 panes: general text, short informational/interesting fact section, picture caption, and an innovative page number. This book covers a lot of information in a straightforward, interesting and well presented way.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Stedman Elem.

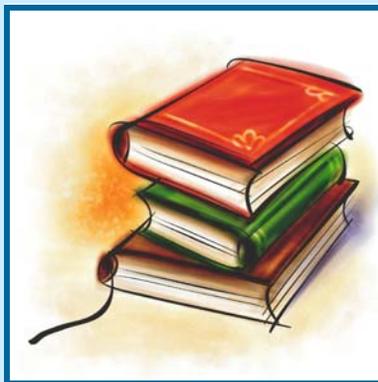
Pills, Powders and Potions: A History of Surgery

By: John Townsend
Raintree, 2006
ISBN: 1410925404



Curriculum: Social studies; Medicine; Pharmacy drugs
Aren't you glad that you don't live in a time when leaves boiled in camel urine were considered medicine? Although some herbs used in ancient times are still used today, herbs like St. John's Wart and garlic. This is part of the series *A painful history of medicine*. This book has plenty of pictures and will appeal to those readers who would rather not.

Reviewed by Chris Coble
Kepner MS



Review Crew Staff

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Valdez Elementary**

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Mitchell K-8**

**Marilyn Martin
Park Hill K-8**

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how the poetic form works will aid teachers in explaining poetic composition and will inspire students in writing their own poetry.

Reviewed by: Danette Baltzer
Grant M.S.

Life as We Knew It

By: Susan Beth Pfeffer

Harcourt, 2006

ISBN: 0152058265

Curriculum: Natural Disasters; Survival

As predicted, an asteroid strikes the moon, but in a cruel twist unforeseen by scientists, the moon is pushed closer to the Earth, setting off a series of natural disasters and causing Miranda and her family to enter a desperate struggle for survival. Readers of this gripping novel will not view the moon with the usual romantic notions for some time to come.

Reviewed by: Steve Bowley
South HS

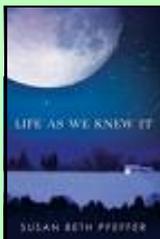
Firestorm

By: David Klass
Farrar Straus
Giroux, 2006

ISBN:
03743230070

Curriculum: Space and time fiction; Ecology

A spine tingling race against the ever ticking ecological clock. Jacj Danielson (Prince and Beacon of Hope) has been sent a thousand years back in time to reverse the decline of Earth before the Turning Point becomes a reality. If this happens, the forces of the Dark Army (ghouls, bats, Gorms, demon ninjas, cyborgs, genetic



mutants, and many others) will win and Earth will become a desolate wasteland not fit for animal habitation.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell
Bryant Webster K-8

Nonfiction

Hero of the High

Seas: John Paul Jones

By: Michael L. Cooper
National Geographic,
2006

ISBN: 079225547X

Curriculum: United States Navy history; Revolutionary War; Biography.

With sharp and succinct prose, Cooper tells the story of John Paul Jones, a flawed but likeable hero from our American past. Period artwork, maps and solid source notes enhance this biography providing an interesting look at the Revolution that will engage reluctant readers.

Reviewed by: Danette Baltzer
Grant M.S.

Hiding Edith: A True Story

By: Kathy Kacer
Second Story, 2006
ISBN: 1897187068

Curriculum: Holocaust; Jewish children; France; Jewish Scouts of France

This powerful Holocaust biography follows the childhood of Edith Schwalb. Separated from her family for her protection, she joins other fugitive Jewish children in a safe haven created by the Jewish Scouts of France. When the house must close down, Edith faces even greater hardships, and poignantly struggles to maintain her sense of self and family.

Reviewed by: Jennifer Fakolt
Mitchell Elem.



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