



# The Review Crew

## What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Review Crew Volume 3 No 5

March 2007

## Fiction

### One Smart Cookie

By: John Nez  
Illus. by: John Nez  
Albert Whitman, 2006  
ISBN: 0807560995



*Curriculum: Dogs; Reading*

Festive and fun illustrations enhance a wonderful story about Cookie, a dog that can read and write. The family wonders where Cookie's amazing talent has come from. Mom is busy around the house, Dad only reads the newspaper, Duffy only likes to draw, and Nash likes playing "Space Army" all day. During Pets Day at school, Cookie averts a disaster by spelling "Smoke Smell" and becomes a hero. An awesome story for young children.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell  
Bryant Webster K-8 School

### The Scarves

Written & Illus. by: Daniela Bunge  
Mineditions, 2006  
ISBN: 0698400453  
*Curriculum: Grandparents; Relationships; Knitting*  
A little girl is dismayed to

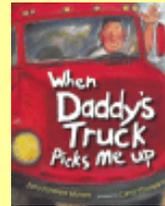


learn that her grandparents have decided to live apart. Their disagreements seem minor. For example, one likes red, the other blue, yet they stubbornly remain separated. So their granddaughter hatches a plan. Armed with the knowledge of how they met, ice skating on Little Lake, she knits them scarves, blending their favorite colors, and tricks them into meeting there.

Reviewed by: Steve Bowley  
South HS

### When Daddy's Truck Picks Me Up

By: Jana Novotny Hunter  
Illus. by: Carol Thompson  
Albert Whitman, 2006  
ISBN: 0807589144



*Curriculum: Trucks; Fathers and sons; Stories in rhyme*

Truck-loving kids of all ages will be fascinated by this family story. The cartoon-like, whimsical, pastel illustrations blend beautifully with the rollicking rhymes, e.g. "shifting down to first gear, taking that bridge real s-l-o-w...crawling like a giant snail, still a way to go". Children will feel the emotions of the little boy who dreams all day of

*(Continued on page 3)*

### Who are we?

- ☺ More than a dozen 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 303-405-8131 to order.)

The LION link to more reviews is finally working! See p. 4

# The Best for Upper Elementary Readers! Many of these books will work in middle school, too.!

## Nonfiction

### Breakfast

By: Ted Schaefer  
Raintree, 2006  
ISBN: 1410922146



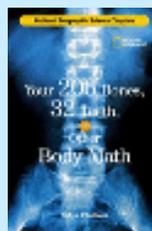
*Curriculum: Nutrition; Recipes; Breakfast*

*Breakfast* is one of four titles in the series *What's on Your Plate?* Readers will learn everything from how breakfast got its name to how to choose and prepare healthy breakfast foods. The emphasis on healthy eating does not take away from the appeal of the delicious looking food in the photographs.

Reviewed by: Steve Bowley  
South HS

### Your 206 Bones, 32 Teeth, and Other Body Math

By: Robyn O'Sullivan  
National Geographic, 2006



ISBN: 0792259556

*Curriculum: Math; Human body*

Did you know that the skin of an average adult weighs nine pounds? Various body systems and parts, from heartbeats to hair, are discussed in this slim but powerful volume. The text is liberally sprinkled with numbers that could provide a springboard for a variety of math lessons.

Reviewed by: Penny Cunningham  
Valdez Elem.

### Jake Burton Carpenter and the Snowboard

By: Michael O'Hearn  
Illus. by: Ron Frenz and Charles Barnett III  
Capstone, 2007  
ISBN: 0736864814



*Curriculum: Business; Inventions; Winter sports; Biography*

This biography in graphic format leads readers through Jake Burton Carpenter's contributions to snowboard design and to the acceptance of snowboarding as a mainstream sport. Besides being of interest to its target upper elementary audience, it could be very useful with struggling readers and ELA students studying business, as it clearly shows Jake's marketing strategies and business problem solving.

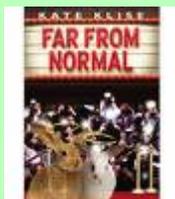
Reviewed by: Penny Cunningham  
Valdez Elem.



## Fiction

### Far from Normal

By: Kate Klise  
Scholastic, 2006  
ISBN: 0439794471



*Curriculum: Family life; Interpersonal relationships; Commercialism; Consumerism*

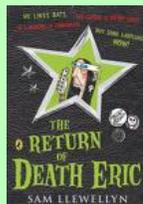
Charles Harrison wants to be a writer more than anything else. He is pleased and amazed when he

meets a man who loves the story of his family's adventures and decides to have it published. He is even more amazed when the mega-chain store, Bargain Bonanza sues him for defaming their name. What will it take to make things right with Bargain Bonanza? And will his family survive?

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner M.S.

### The Return of Death Eric

By: Sam Llewellyn  
Walker and Co., 2006  
ISBN: 080278951X



*Curriculum: Family life; Rock music; Musicians; Humorous stories*

Eric Thrashmettle was once the lead singer in the world's hottest rock band, Death Eric. But one day, when he was playing a concert he became convinced that a raven cursed him, so he became a recluse. Now he hides out in his exclusive estate, Dunravin with his two children Lulubelle Flower Fairy and Living Buddha (Lou and Buddy, to the world at large) and select others from his rock and roll past. But one morning breakfast

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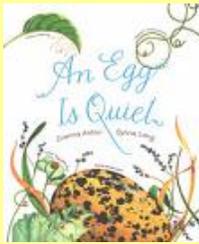
the moment when his dad will arrive at preschool to pick him up in his big truck. It's not until the final pages that readers will learn if "Daddeeee" does indeed arrive on time.

Reviewed by: Andrea Antico  
Asbury Elem.

## Nonfiction

### An Egg Is Quiet

By: Dianna Aston  
Illus. by: Sylvia Long  
Chronicle Books,  
2006



ISBN: 0811844285

*Curriculum: Eggs; Insects; Fish; Amphibians; Reptiles; Birds*

If they can take their eyes off the amazing ink and watercolor illustrations long enough, readers will learn lots of interesting facts about eggs

from the author. As each page is turned in this beautiful picture book, a characteristic of eggs introduces related facts. "An egg is clever," for example, is the lead-in to text about camouflaged eggs. Don't miss the new collaboration by this pair, A Seed is Sleepy.

Reviewed by: Steve Bowley  
South HS

### Let's Visit a Dairy Farm

By: Alyse Sweeney  
Children's Press, 2007  
ISBN: 053116433



*Curriculum: Dairy farming; Cattle*

Clear photographs show each step of the milk process. A "Word Hunt" introduces new vocabulary with small pictures and a pronouncer. These words appear again in the glossary. In addition to the table of contents and the index, there are two other information sections; a two-page spread of the types of cows that give milk and a

page entitled "What other animals give us milk?" This is an excellent introduction to non-fiction text features as well as an explanation of where the milk comes from that appears on the reader's table every day.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier  
Stedman Elem.

### What Sea Animals Eat

By: Joanne Mattern  
Weekly Reader Early Learning Library,  
2007



ISBN: 0836868757

*Curriculum: Food chains; Ocean animals*

All living things need food to live and grow. Ocean animals belong to a sea food chain which shows the order of who eats what. Colorful photography gives strong support to the simple text. There are six books in this series, which focuses entirely on food chains.

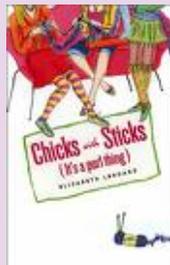
Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin  
Park Hill

# Young Adults Deserve the Best!

## Fiction

### Chicks with Sticks (Knit two Together)

By: Elizabeth Lenhard  
Dutton, 2006  
ISBN: 0525477640



*Curriculum: Friendship; Interpersonal relationships; Knitting*

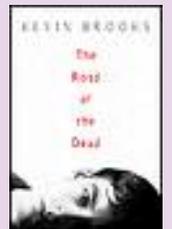
KNITTING! I can hear it now, "Who would want to read a book about knitting?" But knitting is the fiber that

holds the story together, the relationships between the four very different friends is what makes this book a good girl read. This book is a *Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* with knitting needles.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner M.S.

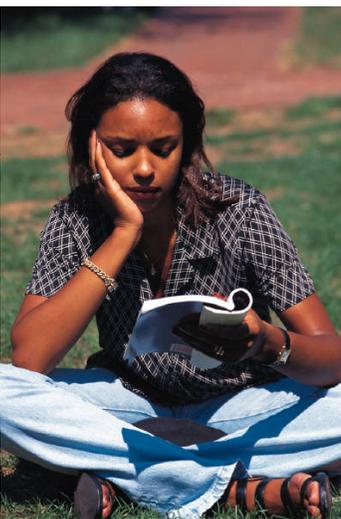
### Buried

By: Robin Merrow MacCready  
Dutton Books, 2006  
ISBN: 0525477241



*Curriculum: Alcoholism; Mothers and daughters; Mental*

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(Continued from page 2)

consists of dry bread and the children realize that the money is gone. The only thing the children can figure out is that Death Eric must return.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble  
Kepner M.S.

### The House Where Nobody Lived

By: Brad Strickland  
Dial Books, 2006  
ISBN: 0803731485



*Curriculum: Magic; Wizards*

Lewis Barnavelt and his best friend, Rose Rita, are enjoying a walk on the back roads of New Zebedee, Michigan when they stumble on an overgrown road that leads to an unusual house. The Honolulu House has been abandoned since the mysterious deaths of a princess, her husband, and all the servants. They were found dead in their beds without a mark on them and will not rest until they are avenged. A new family moves into the house and are haunted by spooky drumming that chills the bones and ghostly figures of long-dead warriors who surround the house.

Reviewed by: Irene Bell  
Bryant Webster K-8 School

### Wind Tamer

By: P.R. Morrison  
Bloomsbury, 2006  
ISBN: 1582347816



*Curriculum: Fantasy  
Fiction; Family;  
Curses; Courage*

It is Archie's tenth birthday, and strange things are happening. He hears the wind talking to him and his long lost uncle shows up on the family's doorstep. He discovers

many secrets including the fact that there is a curse on his family. It is up to him as the first born son to break the curse. His uncle and many unusual creatures come to help him fight the great evil as only his courage and the truth can break the curse.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Hill School of Arts and Sciences

### A Christmas Carol

By: Charles Dickens  
Illus. by: P.J. Lynch  
Candelwick Press  
ISBN: 0763631205



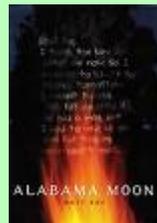
*Curriculum: Christmas; Ghosts*

The complete text of Dickens' famous Christmas drama has been greatly enhanced with the water-color-and-gouache illustrations of P.J. Lynch. Nearly every page is embellished with spot art or full page spread, each of which offers the ambiance of Victorian England and enrich the emotion-filled story at every point. The thick textured paper, tasteful cover and dust jacket add to the pleasant presentation and may tempt a librarian to keep this book as non-circulating material!

Reviewed by: Danette Baltzer  
Grant M.S.

### Alabama Moon

By: Watt Key  
Farrar Straus Giroux,  
2006  
ISBN: 0374301840



*Curriculum: Wilderness survival; Anti-government sentiments*

Ten-year-old Moon Blake has lived his entire life with his Pap, in a camouflaged shelter in the woods. When Pap dies, Moon comes face to face with the institutions of government--the bully sheriff, the boy's home--

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his father has taught him to hate. Wilderness survival is second nature to Moon, but being thrust into society tests skills he doesn't even know he has.

Reviewed by: Steve Bowley  
South HS

### The Green Glass Sea

By: Ellen Klages  
Viking Press, 2006  
ISBN: 0670061344



*Curriculum: Historical  
Fiction; War; Manhat-*

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*tan Project; Atom Bomb; Family Life*

This story is set during World War II when scientists were experimenting with the bomb. The families of these scientists lived in Los Alamos under great secrecy. Their project, known to their families as "the gadget" rules their life. Dewey is the daughter of one of these scientists, and we see life from her point of view. When her father must travel, she has to stay with the family of one of her least favorite people, Suze Gordman. Both of them learn to like and depend on each other through these turbulent times. This is a coming of age novel set in a turbulent time of our history.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns  
Hill School of Arts and Sciences

## Nonfiction

### The Hero Schliemann: The Dreamer who Dug for Troy

By: Laura May Schlitz  
National Geographic  
ISBN: 079225547X

Curriculum: *Archaeologists; Excavations; Ancient Civilization.*

"His last name was Schliemann, and in the center of that... is the English word *lie*... Heinrich did not grow up to be a truthful man." What biography begins with this type of introduction to its subject? An interesting one! Standard biographical fare would give us the wonderful characteristics of the adventurer leading us to believe that he was beyond criticism. Schlitz, on the other hand, intelligently gives the reader an engaging portrait of the



man who discovered Troy and other history-changing archeological finds.

Reviewed by: Danette Baltzer  
Grant M.S.

(Continued from page 3)

*illness; Schools*

Is this another of her alcoholic mother's binges? Seventeen-year-old Claudine awakes, finding the trailer in disarray, her mother gone. She pours her heart and soul into cleaning the trailer, compulsively making notes, scrubbing her hands raw and coming apart at the seams. Claudine's downward spiral is revealed through letters to her mother, dreams, and flashbacks. The story ends abruptly after a surprising and dramatic scene; leaving the reader a bit unbelieving. MacCready makes a valiant effort to build a psychological drama that is only partially effective. Overall, high school students will find this an enjoyable read.

Reviewed by Gretchen Allgeier  
Stedman Elem.

*To keep our faces  
toward change  
and behave like  
free spirits in the  
presence of fate is  
strength unde-  
featable.*

**Helen Keller**

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