

The Review Crew



What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?

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

Volume 8 Number 3

November 2011

Fiction

Bone Dog

Written and illus. by: Eric Rohmann

Roaring Brook Press, 2011

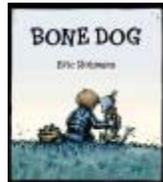
ISBN: 9781596431508

Curriculum: Dogs; Death; Skeleton; Halloween

Before Gus's long time dog pal, Ella, dies, she promises, "No matter what happens, I'll always be with you." When Gus is threatened by real skeletons on Halloween, Ella, now a bone dog, comes to his aid. The friends rally the flesh-and-fur neighborhood dogs sending the skeletons running. A heart-warming story from Caldecott winner Eric Rohmann.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose

Trevista ECE-8



where he has seen it. This simple and clever story has illustrations with a big impact.

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni

Back to School Tortoise

By: Lucy M. George

Illus. by: Merel Eyckerman

Albert Whitman & Company, 2011

ISBN: 9780807505106

Curriculum: Back to school; Teachers

Summer is over and it is time for Tortoise to go back to school. He is worried that he might trip, not like lunch, or not have any friends. But what if things do go well?

Reviewed by: Leah Rounds

Alumni



I Want My Hat Back

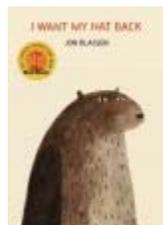
Written and illus. by: Jon Klassen

Candlewick Press, 2011

ISBN: 9780763655983

Curriculum: Bears; Forest Animals; Foreshadowing

A bear has lost his hat. He goes to each forest animal politely if they have seen his hat and all tell him no, but Bear soon remembers



Tía Isa Wants a Car

By: Meg Medina

Illus. by: Claudio Muñoz

Candlewick Press, 2011

ISBN: 9780763641566

Curriculum: Automobiles; Aunts; Family life; Hispanic Americans

Throughout this touching story, Tía Isa and her niece work to gather money to buy the shiny green car she has set her heart on. As they work, there are many



Who are we?

- ☺ We are DPS teacher librarians from elementary, middle and 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 ETLIS, where DPS teachers can order baskets of books for their classrooms. (Call 720-423-8131 to order.)

reminders and memories of all they've left behind. The car represents both what they've lost, but also what they've gained by moving to a new place. Tía Isa's determination to keep moving forward comes across nicely in this gently illustrated story that will ring true with many readers. It's about getting a car, but also about much more than that.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocernich
CMS Community School

Perfect Snow

By: Barbara Reid
Albert Whitman; 2009



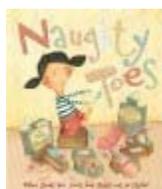
ISBN: 9780807564299

Curriculum: Snow; Snowmen; Schools
A snow day at school brings out the possibility of a great group effort recess. The children team up to gather snow from all corners of the playground to build "The World's Greatest Totally Massive Snowman Fort!" Kids will be wishing for snow at school to put this story into action.

Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Edison Elementary

Naughty Toes

By: Ann Bonwill
Illus. by: Teresa Murfin
Tiger Tails, 2011
ISBN: 9781589251038

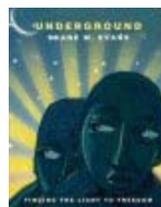


Curriculum: Dance
Chloe's sister, Belinda, is the ideal ballerina; dancing perfectly to the beat, every hair in place. Chloe on the other hand has "Naughty Toes" and hair "like dandelion fuzz." The piano accompanist realizes just what Chloe needs to let the little dancer shine, tap shoes!
Reviewed by: Gretchen Allgeier
Edison Elementary

Nonfiction

Underground: Finding the Light to Freedom

Written and illus. by:
Shane Evans



Roaring Brook Press,
2011

ISBN: 9781596435384

Curriculum: Underground Railroad; Fugitive slaves; Antislavery movements; Abolitionists

"The escape...We are quiet...The fear...We run." Fugitive slaves move through darkness. With determination and help along the way the weary travelers eventually rejoice, "We are free." Conveying essential elements of the Underground Railroad with a few well-chosen words and powerful imagery this is a fine choice for introducing young readers to the difficult subject of slavery.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Trevista ECE-8

Let's Count to 100!

Written and illus. by:
Masayuki Sebe
Kids Can Press, 2011
ISBN: 9781554536610



Curriculum: Counting; 100th Day
Colorful two-page spreads of silly animals, kids, and vehicles make this a fun choice for learning to count to 100 by tens, as well as for celebrating 100th Day. There are fun little clues as to what will be on each upcoming page and some "I Spy" kinds of questions that allow students to interact with the book.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert
Waller K-8



The Best for Upper Elementary Readers!

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

Fiction

Desk Stories

Written and illus. by:
Kevin O'Malley

Albert Whitman, 2011
ISBN: 9780807515624



Curriculum: Desks; Cartoons and comics; Humor

Colorful comic panels guide readers through this paean to the common desk. A brief history is followed by tales of an evil desk, one harboring a furry mystery, a high-tech fantasy desk and the saga of *The Incredible Shrinking Supergirl* searching for lost treasure in an overstuffed workspace. The creative cartooning and sarcastic repartee will amuse school-weary students. Sure to be a hit with reluctant readers.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Trevista ECE-8

Village Garage

Written by: Thanhha Lai

Harper, 2011

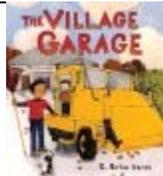
ISBN:
9780061962783

Curriculum: Vietnamese Americans; Immigration; Vietnam History

Written in verse, 10-year-old Ha tells about her mother's decision to leave Vietnam after waiting for her father who has been missing in action for seven years. The journey out of Vietnam includes being trapped at sea, waiting for a sponsor and the adjustment in a country with a culture very different than what she knows.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-Crowley

MSLA



Emmy and the Rats in the Belfry

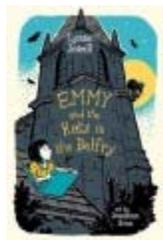
By: Lynne Jonell
Holt & Co.

ISBN:
9780805091830

Curriculum: Magical animals; Adventure; Mystery.

This latest addition to the series of books about Emmy and her magical rat friends is a delightful adventure for young readers. Emmy's friends, Ratso and Sissy are searching for their Ratmom, but the evil former nanny, Miss Barmy, has plans for the magical rats. Miss Barmy wants to be a human again, and she'll do whatever it takes.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College



Little Bo in Italy: The Continued Adventures of Bonnie Boadicea

By: Julie Andrews Edwards and Emma Walton Hamilton

Illus. By: Henry Cole

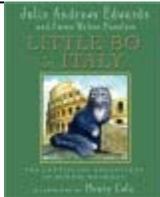
Harper Collins, 2010

ISBN: 9780060089085

Curriculum: Cats; Travel; Italy; Adventure

Bo, a beautiful gray cat, has become a crewmember on a luxury yacht with her owner Billy. Setting sail on a long awaited trip to recover from an attempted kidnapping of their employer, Lady Goodlad, Bo and Billy are able to see the sites of Italy. Adventure is around every corner but will Bo be able to stay out of the clutches of two men who seem to fit the profiles of the mysterious kidnappers?

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton



Nonfiction

South H.S.

Seabird in the Forest

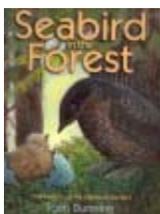
Written and illus.
by: Joan Dunning

Boyd's Mills Press, 2011

ISBN: 9781590787151

Curriculum: Birds California; Marbled murrelet; Sea birds; Birds nests

This fascinating offering reveals the incredible giant redwood nesting site of a small seabird-the Marbled Murrelet- and chronicles its life cycle in beautiful paintings and flowing prose. Inserts provide fur-



ther details about the bird and facts about plant and animal life in the Murrelet's habitats. This informative picture book will enthrall students and teachers alike.

Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Trevista ECE-8

Which Side Are You On?

By: George Ella Lyon

Illus. by: Christopher Cardinale

Cinco Puntos Press, 2011

ISBN: 9781933693965

Curriculum: Miners - Kentucky; Miners - labor unions

The question of "which side are you on?" was an important one to the mine workers striking in a fight against their employers back in the 1920s and 1930s.

Florence Reese wrote this powerful song while sheltering her family from the violence that frequently comes with standing up for your rights. Lyon's accounting of this time period with its struggle of unions and workers is powerfully told through the story, the well-chosen wood cut illustrations, and the informative notes provided as well.

Reviewed by: Karyn Pocerlich

CMS Community School



What can I
say?
Librarians
rule!
Regis Philbin



Middle School Reader Gold Mine

Many of these books will work in high school, too.!

Fiction

Then

By: **Morris Gleitzman**

Henry Holt, 2011

ISBN:

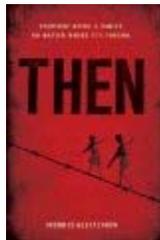
9780805090277

Curriculum: Holocaust; Orphans; Poland; Survival

Picking up where *Once* left off, Felix, 10, and Zelda, 6, escape from a train car headed to a Nazi death camp. Struggling to survive, they are taken in by Genia, a farmer waiting for her Nazi husband to return from war. A story of sadness, hope, acceptance, and despair, the tale will haunt readers even after the closing paragraph. Although the characters are young, this novel is for MS and HS students due to violence and graphic imagery.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas

JFK H.S.



OyMG

By: **Amy Fellner Dominy**

Bloomsbury, 2011.



ISBN: 978002721778

Curriculum: Tolerance; Anti-Semitism

A Jewish girl, at a parochial school - vying for a scholarship to participate on the Debate Team. A huge crush on the gorgeous, debate-champion grandson of the school's biggest benefactor. An immovable, yet wise Zeydeh who acts as the conscience-cum guilt trip guide. All these elements add up to a series of awkward events - typical of adolescents. Should Ellie Taylor follow her heart and lie about her religious affiliation, or remain true to her beliefs in the face of modern-day anti-Semitism?

Reviewed by: Cheryl Joseffy

Henry M.S.

Haywired

By: **Alex Keller**

Mogzilla, 2010

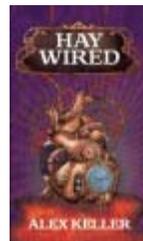
ISBN 9781906132330

Curriculum:

In the quiet village of Little Waineford, Ludwig von Guggenstein lives as a privileged, only child of a brilliant scientist, Mandrake von Guggenstein. Together, they are working to construct an (H)euristic (E)ngine with (L)earning and (O)bedience (T)ailoring to be utilized as a labor-saving device. When a horrible accident causes the death of a beloved family friend, the world as Ludwig knew it was turned upside-down. Family secrets, hidden agendas and double-triple crossing villains-turned heroes-turned outlaws, keep the reader in a page-turning frenzy to keep up with the twists and turns to the very last sentence!

Reviewed by: Cheryl Joseffy

Henry M.S.



Shimmer

Written by: Alison Noel

Square Fish, 2011

ISBN:

9780312648251

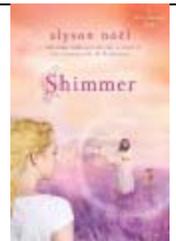
Curriculum: Ghosts; Slave insurrections; future life

12-year-old Riley is in the "Here and Now," otherwise known as heaven. Her duty in "Here and Now" is to convince souls stuck in the middle between life on Earth and "Here and Now" to cross the bridge to "Here and Now." While on vacation with her 14-year-old guide, Bodhi, Riley comes across a young girl, Rebecca, who died during a slave revolt on St. John's island in 1733. Rebecca is stuck in-between by her anger. It is Riley's job to help Rebecca release her anger and help her cross over.

Reviewed by: Dr. Lynne Lopez-

Crowley

MSLA



The Accidental Genius of Weasel High

Written and illus. by: Rick Detorie

Egmont USA, 2011

ISBN:

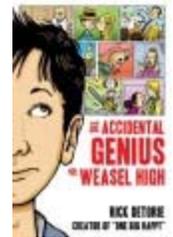
9781606841495

Curriculum: High Schools; Relationships; Families

Freshman Larkin Pace's personal blog reads like a high school "Wimpy Kid" sprinkled with cartoons revealing his inner thoughts. Larkin has plenty of angst in his relationships with his drama queen sister, almost girlfriend Brooke, and the school bully while trying to make enough money to buy a camcorder for his filmmaking aspirations. Teens will empathize with Larkin's dilemmas and solutions.

Reviewed by: Peggy Obert

Waller K-8



The Dragon's Apprentice

Written by: Dugald A. Steer

Illustrated by: Nick Harris

Candlewick Press, 2011

ISBN: 9789780763634278

Curriculum: *Dragons; Family; Adventure; Survival*

Daniel and Beatrice Cook are young members of the Society of Dragons. They have a pact with the dragons to protect them and learn about them. Their dragon chick is Torcher, who they have helped raise. An evil society called the Dragonsbane Knights have arisen again and their goal is to kill all dragons and take their gold. The children help the adults along with the Dragon's Apprentice, to thwart their plan and save the dragons and themselves. This is book three in the *Dragonology* series.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy

Missing on Superstition Mountain

Written by: Elise Broach

Illustrated by Antonio Javier Caparo

Henry Holt & Co., 2011

ISBN: 9780805090475

Curriculum: *Mystery; Brothers; Mountains*

This is the first book of a new series. Brothers Simon, Henry and Jack just move to Arizona to live in their late uncle's house. This place is totally different from the city that they left. When their cat ran



off, the boys went to the forbidden Superstition Mountain to find her. This started a series of events from finding skulls to learning about the mystery or the Lost Dutchman's Mine. They have many adventures, some that get them in trouble with their parents. They make new friends and decide that maybe they could find the lost gold.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns

Place Bridge Academy

Return to Daemon Hall: Evil Roots

By: Andrew Nance
Holt & Co.

ISBN: 9780805087482

Curriculum: *Horror; Contests; Haunted houses*

In this horrific sequel to *Daemon Hall*, writer Ian Tremblin is once again inviting young, prospering teen writers to participate in a contest with help from Wade and Demarius, two of the survivors from the last battle with *Daemon Hall's* ghosts. Unfortunately, choosing a safer location makes no difference for the group; *Daemon Hall's* haunted roots have a long reach. The teens find themselves reliving the history of the murderous house, and they must fight to survive its attacks.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College



Nonfiction

Hera: The Goddess and Her Glory

Written and illus. by George O'Connor

First Second, 2011

ISBN 9781596437241

Curriculum: *Mythology*



Review Crew Staff

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Leah Rounds

Alumni

From ETLs:

Dave Sanger

Karen Shannon

Antonio Nicotera

There's only one person Zeus, King of the gods is afraid of...his wife, Hera. Part of graphic biographical series, The Olympians; Hera comes undone when she finds that Zeus has extramarital affairs resulting in offspring. This particular story focuses on Hera's wrath upon Hercules and his legendary Twelve Labors. Implied indiscretions make this questionable for younger-than-adolescent graphic novel readers.

Cheryl Joseffy
Henry M.S.

**Beethoven for Kids:
His Life and Music**

By: Helen Bauer
Illus. by: Monica Ba-



ziuk and Mark Baziuk
Chicago Review Press, 2011
ISBN: 9781569767115

Curriculum: Beethoven; Composers; Music; Austria

This well-written biography presents the story of Beethoven's life and music from birth to death couched in the context of early 19th century European history. Text-boxes add to the biography by providing historical information as well as introducing people and places that were influential in the life of Beethoven. 21 activities are included.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
Thomas Jefferson HS



Young Adults Deserve the Best!

Fiction

Flawless

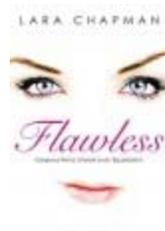
By Lara Chapman
Bloomsbury, 2011

ISBN: 9781599905969

Curriculum: Classics Retold; Teen Peer Pressure

An enjoyable, yet predictable teen romance - *Flawless* is a retelling of the classic, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, only with the genders reversed. Sarah is otherwise beautiful, save her overly large nose; she is a gifted writer and unfortunately too loyal to her best friend, Kristen when Rock - new kid in school catches both of their eyes.

Cheryl Joseffy
Henry M.S.



White Crow

By: Marcus Sedgwick
Roaring Brook Press,
2011

ISBN: 9781596435940

Curriculum: Good; Evil; English villages; Friendship

In a dying and decay English town being set upon by the sea, we meet resident Ferelith and visitor Rebecca. Rebecca befriends Ferelith but feels there is something off about her. Interspersed are 1798 diary entries from a rector obsessed with heaven and hell. The two stories creepily come together in a present day game of dares in which Fere-



lith goes too far. Recommend this JLG selection to HS fans of gothic mysteries and Lovecraft's tales.

Reviewed by: Nancy Lucas
JFK H.S.

Fighting in the Shade

By: Sterling Watson
Akashic Books, 2011
ISBN:
9781936070985

Curriculum: Football; Boys; Florida; Coming of Age



Football is everything to seventeen-year-old Billy Dyer and being new to Oleander, Florida means that he has much to prove if he wants to make the team. But in this town where football rules, Billy soon finds that making the team may extract a price higher than he is willing to pay.

Reviewed by: Michelle Jensen
Thomas Jefferson HS

Pink

By: Lili Wilkinson
Harper Collins, 2009
ISBN:
9780061926532

Curriculum: Identity; Interpersonal Relationships; Sexual Identity

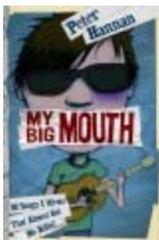


Ava has a very progressive girlfriend, Chloe, who her parents adore. But after coming out as an ultra-modern, almost gothic lesbian at her urban school, Ava explores the softer, more conventional side of herself as she moves to a private school to concentrate on her education. Now she must try to decide where she fits in as she begins to fall for a boy sporting a lifestyle she has never known.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton
South H.S.

My Big Mouth: 10 Songs That Almost Got Me Killed

Written and Illus. by:
Pete Hannan
Scholastic Press,
2011



ISBN: 9780545162104

Curriculum: Bullies; Bands; High school

Davis Delaware, who is not from Delaware, has moved to a new school in the middle of ninth grade. He would be happy to be invisible and spend his days doodling in his notebook. He has attracted the attention of beautiful Molly who is supposedly the girlfriend of Gerald "the butcher" Boggs. Gerald is on a mission to kill him and Davis is on a mission to avoid getting killed -- at all costs. And now he finds himself in a band with the beautiful Molly and super-nerd Edwin. So much for invisible! (Raunchy, boy humor but appropriate for upper middle school.)

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

The Sweetest Thing

By: Christina Mandel-
ski
Egmont, 2011
ISBN:
9781606841297



Curriculum: Single parent families; Cake decorating; Friendship

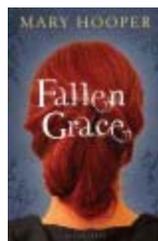
Sheridan Wells is perfectly contented with her life. Well, one small thing would make it perfect

and that is finding the mother who walked out when she was small. But until that happens she lives with her father, a famous chef looking for a television contract. She works in her grandmother's bakery where she is a cake decorator. Throw in a slightly crazy best friend and a couple of cute boys and this story has everything a girl could want. (Appropriate for mature middle school readers.)

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.

Fallen Grace

By: Mary Hooper
Bloomsbury
ISBN: 9781599905648



Curriculum: Historical fiction; Teen Pregnancy; Orphans;

Fifteen-year-old Grace and her sister live alone together in the slums of nineteenth-century London. After leaving the orphanage at age 14, the girls entered a work house, but fled when the owner of the home had his way with the girls, leaving young Grace pregnant, and Lily terrified. Now, the girls must find their own way in a harsh and dirty world, living among the dead and being taken advantage of by a family of cruel and greedy funeral directors. This is a gothic mystery that refuses to get bogged down in angst and romance, and is a great recommendation for fans of historical fiction.

Reviewed by: Sudi Stodola
CEC Middle College

Stork

By: Wendy Delsol
Candlewick, 2010
ISBN: 9780763656874



Curriculum: Folklore; Supernatural; High School Life

Small town Minnesota is a far from the fashionable L.A. life Katla LeBlanc left behind. Being the new fashion columnist for the school newspaper gives her a chance to turn this town around. Little does she know her ancestral destiny lies in a deeper purpose, selecting parents for unborn souls. Norse legends, funny old women and an intertwined fate shared with her snarky editor Jack, make this a fabulous read.

Reviewed by: Cheri Hilton
South H.S.

Nonfiction

How to Die of Embarrassment Every Day

By: Ann Hodgman
Henry Holt, 2011
ISBN:
9780805087055



Curriculum: Growing up in the 1950s

This is the biography of Ann Hodgman. Ann is an average kid growing up in the 1950s. She collects small glass animals and is the boss of her younger siblings. She remembers what she was doing when John F. Kennedy was shot, as does everyone from that era. This book is filled with the marvelous voice of Ann Hodgman. She is funny and refreshing. The book is illustrated with photographs and artifacts from her life. Anyone who grew up in the 1950's will recognize their lives here. The problem is that anyone from the 1950's is not the audience for this amazing book.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner M.S.