



The Review Crew

What's New and Great for Our Youngest Readers?



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

Volume 1, Issue 1

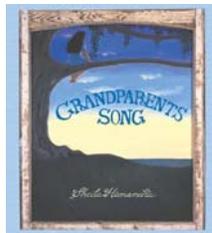
October/November 2004

Who are we?

- ☉ More than a dozen library media specialists 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.)



Fiction



Grandparent's Song

Author/Ill.: Sheila Hamanaka

HarperCollins, 2003

ISBN: 0688178537

Curriculum: Grandparents, Ethnicity, Multiculturalism, Stories in Rhyme

This beautiful story is one that honors our shared history and the interwoven ethnicities and cultures of Americans. Luminous and lyrical the story is also offers richly textured illustrations. The artist used paintings that have

distressed wooden frames and wood embellishments that make it seem old and highlight the cultures of her family ancestors. This is a wonderful book to discuss family heritage, American culture, and the multiracial/multiethnic experience.

Reviewed by: Janet Damon
Oakland

Mr. Putter & Tabby Write the Book

Author: Rylant, Cynthia

Illustrator: Howard, Arthur

Harcourt, 2004

ISBN: 0152002413

Continued on p. 3

Want to read more reviews? Your Library Media Center makes it easy!

None of us have money to waste. In this newsletter we have given you a taste of the best books we have recently reviewed. For a longer review of each book and thousands other reviews written by DPS librarians with our students in mind, follow these directions:

- ◆ Go to LION, our online library catalog, at <http://lion.dpsk12.org>

- ◆ Click on "ERS Home" on the menu at the left side of the screen.
- ◆ Click on "Review Committee" on the menu at the left side of the screen.
- ◆ Under "Link to Review Database," click on "Review Database."
- ◆ Ignore the member log-in boxes. Click on "Advanced Search"
- ◆ You can search for words in the title, author, curriculum connec-

- tions, and more. (To see your choices, click on the blue down arrow at the end of the box that says "Title." Use as few as one search criterion or as many as four, one in each box.
- ◆ Once you have a list of titles, click on a title to see a full review.

Continued on p. 4

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



Fiction

Pinduli

Author/Ill.: Cannon, Janell
Harcourt, Inc., 2004
ISBN: 0152046682

Curriculum: Hyenas, Africa Savanna
Award winning author and illustrator Janell Cannon presents Pinduli, a young striped hyena who meets and talks with Dog, Lion, and Zebra about their appearance in relation to her looks. This is a good book to use to introduce students to hyenas, being kind to each other, and animals of the African Savanna

Reviewed by: Pat White
Ashley



Nonfiction

Slavery and the Underground Railroad: Bound for Freedom

Author: Ford, Carin T.
Enslow Publishers, 2004
ISBN: 076602251X

Curriculum: Fugitive slaves, Antislavery movements
The history of the Underground Railroad involves not only slaves helping other slaves to escape, some of the white conductors helped as many as three thousand slaves to escape.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill

Fur, Fangs, and Footprints: A Collection of Poems about Animals

Cobwebs, Chatters, and Chills: A Collection of Scary Poems

Series: The Poet's Toolbox

Compiled and annotated by: Stockland, Patricia

Illustrator: Perez, Sara Rojo

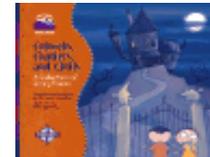
Compass Point Books, 2004

ISBN 0756505623; 0756505658

Curriculum: Poetry

A perfect fit for our poetry units. A variety of poetry with a strategy or technique clearly and briefly explained at the bottom of each page and great reinforcing activities at the end of the book.

Reviewed by: Penny Cunningham
Valdez



Middle School Reader Gold Mine

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

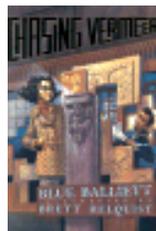


Fiction

Chasing Vermeer

Author: Balliett, Blue
Illustrator: Helquist, Brett
Scholastic Press, 2004
ISBN: 0-439-37294-1

Curriculum: Puzzles, Art, Painters, Vermeer



Summary: A famous painting by Vermeer is stolen. The thief sends out clues and young Petra and Calder become friends and try to figure out the puzzle. This story is full of twists and turns and wonderful illustrations.

Reviewed by: Karen Burns
Hill Middle School



Nonfiction

Tales from Shakespeare

Author: Tina Packer

Illustrators: Gail De Marcken, Leo and Diane Dillion, Mary Grandpre, P.J. Lynch, Barbara McClintock Chesley McLaren, Barry Moser, Jon J. Muth, Kadir Nelson, David Shannon, Mark Teague

Scholastic Press, 2004

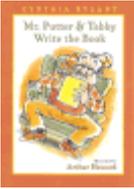
ISBN: 0439321077

Curriculum: Drama, Shakespeare

The life, times and importance of William Shakespeare are covered in an informative introduction. Five of Shakespeare's tragedies, and five comedies are retold in a simplified,

Continued on p. 4

Curriculum: Writers workshop, Young Authors



Mr. Putter decides to write a book during a snowstorm. He makes very little progress until he overcomes a bad case of both procrastination and writer's block.

Reviewed by: Penny Cunningham
Valdez

Why Epossumondas Has No Hair on His Tail

Author: Salley, Coleen

Illustrator: Stevens, Janet

Harcourt, 2004

ISBN: 0152049355

Why Epossumondas Has No Hair on His Tail



is a cheery and classic tale of function over form. Early readers will enjoy a tall tail and vibrant story, illustrated by award-winning artist, Janet Stevens.

Reviewed by Pat White
Ashley

Mrs. Watson Wants Your Teeth

Author: McGhee, Alison

Illustrator: Bliss, Harry

Harcourt, 2004

ISBN: 0152049312



Mrs. Watson Wants Your Teeth will have first graders casting a wary eye out for the teacher with the necklace and matching earrings that look suspiciously like so many baby teeth.

Reviewed by Pat White
Ashley



Nonfiction

Wiggling Worms at Work

Author: Pfeffer, Wendy

Illustrator: Jenkins, Steve

HarperCollins 2004

ISBN: 0060284498

Curriculum: Earthworms, Colorado animals

Earthworms, under your feet, are hard at work making the soil more fertile.

Reviewed by: Marilyn Martin
Park Hill



The Quilting Bee

Author/Ill.: Gail Gibbons

HarperCollins, 2004

ISBN: 0688163971

Curriculum: American History, Art

This book tells the history of quilting, describes over 30 quilt patterns, and explains tools and techniques of both

traditional and modern quilting. Gibbon's bright illustrations capture the warm community experience of a quilting bee.

Reviewed by: Penny Cunningham
Valdez

Pig

Author: Older, Jules

Illustrator: Severance, Lynn

Charlesbridge, 2004

ISBN: 0881061093

Curriculum: Swine, Science Standard 3.1

Did you know that Denmark has more pigs than people? Or that pigs sleep 13 hours a day? Students will pig-out on these tidbits and more in this colorful humorous offering-full of swine facts from snout to tail.



Reviewed by: Cat DeRose
Smedley

Young Adults Deserve the Best!

Escaping Tornado Season

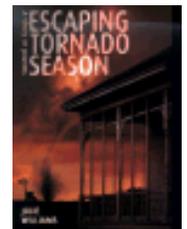
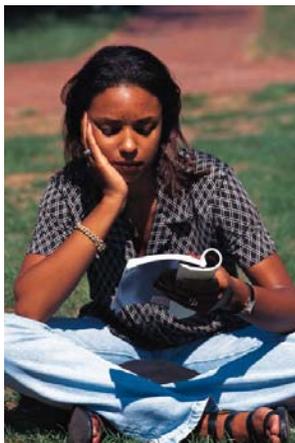
Author: Williams, Julie

HarperTempest, 2004

ISBN: 0060086394

Curriculum: Poetry; Families; Grief

This is a story of loss and the ways different people in Allie's family cope with what they can't control. It is written in a series of first person poems. Allie's journey through her stormy life leads her to inner strength and a sense of her place in a sometimes unfair world. A beautifully crafted moving story.



Reviewed by: Penny Cunningham

Middle School continued from p. 2



easily understood format, each accompanied by two illustrations done by a popular children's book illustrator.

Reviewed by: Steve Bowley
Beach Court

Backstage Pass

Author: Gaby Triana
HarperCollins, 2004
ISBN: 0-06-0560185



The story takes place in Miami and is written by a Hispanic woman, though the characters are not Hispanic. A good, girly coming of age novel.

Reviewed by: Chris Coble
Kepner

Bones Rock: Everything you Need to Know to be a Paleontologist

Authors: Peter Larson & Kristin Donnan
Invisible Cities Press, 2004
ISBN: 193122935X
Curriculum: *Paleontology; Science*

This book is a colorfully written book on the study of dinosaurs. The authors take the reader to their own amazing discov-



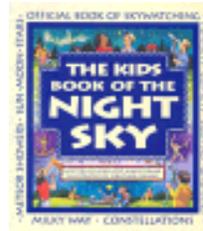
eries such as the famous Tyrannosaurus Rex Sue find and explains the scientific method they use to learn so much about the life of a dinosaur that has been dead for thousands of years. It is both informative and fun and makes the reader consider the field of paleontology as a career, even an adult librarian!

Reviewed by: Danette Roland
Grant

The Kids Book of the Night Sky

Authors: Love, Ann and Jane Drake
Kids Can Press, 2004
ISBN: 155337357X

This book is a superior balance between text, storytelling, and hands-on activities to relay scientific information. The illustrations allow for the reader to be taught, not condescended to.



Read More Reviews! continued from p. 1

Want more? Reviews from other sources such as School Library Journal and Horn Book are now available through LION, our online library catalog. Have you seen the new look? It's worth checking out!

- ◆ Go to LION, our online library catalog, at <http://lion.dpsk12.org>
- ◆ Search for a book by title, subject, or however you want.
- ◆ When you get to the book records, if there is a dark blue button called "More About This Book", click on it.
- ◆ You will see a list of available features, which may include books reviews, excerpts, and summaries. Click on any or all.
- ◆ To learn more about the other cool new features that have been added to LION this year, ask your librarian!

Good children's literature appeals not only to the child in the adult, but to the adult in the child.

Anonymous