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Dear Readers,

I want to thank each of you who have renewed your subscription and shared your copies of CLJ with another library. We are breaking even financially at last, and continue to grow. This is our first issue as a quarterly, with over 300 reviews for your use. We hope you find it useful in the operation of your library and in your materials selection.

Another note of thanks to Mary McKinney, who has agreed to take over the editing of all children’s reviews, formerly done by Mary Jarvis, who has returned to work and is not able to continue as an editor. And we thank Mary Jarvis and all of our editors, writers, and reviewers, who share their skills and knowledge with us on a voluntary basis.

Our readers continue to send suggestions, recently that we review more Christian books for the public library, and that we review no Christian books, since Christians already know about them. Meeting the needs of several types of libraries and numerous individuals is challenging, but we encourage you to appreciate the many types of readers at CLJ and their needs. Without each group—school libraries, church libraries, university libraries, public libraries, and individuals—CLJ could not continue to exist.

Have something you’d like to see an article on? Or ideas to help CLJ improve? Let us hear from you. Your ideas can make a difference for libraries across the U.S. and around the world.

In Christ’s love,

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The purpose of the Christian Library Journal is to provide readers with reviews of both Christian and secular library materials from a Christian point of view. About 300 books, cassette tapes, and videos from both Christian and secular publishers are reviewed each issue. 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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Cover illustration from Jacob’s Gift by Max Lucado, illustrated by Robert Hunt. © 1998. Reprinted by permission of Tommy Nelson™, a division of Thomas Nelson, Inc.

Printed in the U.S.A.
I eat my peas with honey.  
I've done it all my life.  
It makes the peas taste funny.  
But it keeps them on my knife.

I listened with delight recently as four-year old Amy recited these words for me. Blue eyes dancing and brown curls bobbing, she enjoyed the magic of rhyme as much as I did.

There is something about the succinct pictures and rhythm of words that lend fascination to poetry. So often the English language is most expressive and colorful when set to poetry. Vivid word pictures sing to us through poetry, whether it be metered rhyme or free verse.

Because of the sound and cadence, the young child loves rhyming words. Listen to a three-year-old making up pairs of rhyming words. They will do it for days on end. The music and rhythm fascinates them. The toddler loves poetry, whether it be Mother Goose or other simple poems. As the child learns to talk and use language, there is a wonderful fascination with words and the pictures and feelings they invoke. Poetry is the perfect vehicle for listening to and experimenting with language.

Teachers or parents can give children words that will fill their minds with pictures, dreams, and ideals. We can give them words that will shape their minds so they can make those marvelous leaps of imagination that no computer will ever be able to rival. Poetry goes to the essence of things from the inside out. A poem can capture an image of sight, sound, or feeling that illuminates truth or a moment in time. Children need to listen to poetry. They need to learn poetry and they need to write their own poetry.

Children should be inundated with poetry. In my own teaching I found it helpful to keep a card file of poems. I categorized my file according to topics such as animals, color, weather, or feelings. My box of cards was handy when we were discussing a particular topic. Short poems that were especially fun or meaningful were posted on the bulletin board for students to learn. A short rhyme might go up on the classroom door at the children's eye level. I frequently heard them chanting the rhyme as they played or sometimes the whole class would...
chant a poem quietly as we moved down the hall. Other times penmanship lessons were enhanced with poetry written on the board.

First and second graders love to make up short poems. Have children dictate to you so that you can capture these gems on paper. By the time youngsters reach third and fourth grade they will write poetry freely. The beauty of poetry is that it goes to the essence of things from the inside out. In teaching children to create their own poetry this inner expression is the goal. So much of modern poetry does not rhyme, but weaves its magic with a quick, vivid word picture. Known as free verse, we recognize it as poetry when it reveals the unconscious or takes us somewhere new. Poems don’t have to be logical. But good poetry gives us an ‘Aha!’ experience of insight and beauty. Lightning may strike on any line. We become more aware of ourselves and our world when we hear the word pictures of poetry.

Listen to Carl Sandburg describe early morning:

Daybreak comes first  
in thin splinters shimmering.

What images do these lines bring to mind? Can we explore them with children and help them to write and express their own experiences with dawn?

Many of us are timid about trying to write poetry but children love it and reveal surprising insight and creativity. In her book Poemcrazy, Susan Goldsmith Wooldridge shares some of the exercises she has done with numerous children. She believes we can set up circumstances in which poems are likely to happen. “Playing with words we can get to the place where poems come from,” she says.

She suggests beginning with children making collective word pools. I did this in my own teaching, letting children suggest nouns, verbs, adjectives around a certain topic. Put them on the board or a sheet of butcher paper. Once ideas begin, it’s difficult to get all the words down. This stimulates thinking. Suggest a focus. Set boundaries of four or six lines. Give examples and then turn students loose. A few with language difficulties may need to dictate to you. You will be amazed at results.

Fifth grade Monica writes for Wooldridge,

I used to be a nightmare  
but now I am a cloud.  
When I sit and look at the sky  
I find I’m something more  
than just a person.

One technique Wooldridge uses when enabling children to write poetry is:

✔ Name it. Give an object a real or made up name.
✔ Describe it. What does it look like?
✔ Bring me. Ask for a quality the object has that I personally need.

Seventh grader Lupe writes:

Dead rose  
crinkly as paper  
bring me love.

And Serena,

Leaf  
like a red spoon with a thin handle  
or a heart balloon on a string  
bring me magic.

Another similar approach I have used is to have students choose one word and write associations and feelings it triggers. Pick a color, an object, a person. This will give focus and allow for feelings and rhythm to be expressed.

Poetry is a bridge; a bridge between this and that, the past and the present, light and dark, what we can see and what we can’t, a bridge between you and me. Let’s read it, listen to it, and share it with our children. Let’s cross this bridge and meet in the middle, clasp hands, and delight in life.

New books of poetry reviewed in this issue of CLJ:

The Llama Who Had No Pajama by Betty Fraser, Harcourt Brace, K - Primary.

Antarctic Antics by Judy Sierra, Harcourt Brace & Co., K - Primary.

Grassroots: Poems by Carl Sandburg, illustrated by Wendell Minor, Harcourt Brace, Third - Sixth Grade.

Insectlopedia by Douglas Florian, Harcourt Brace, Primary - Sixth Grade.

Cactus Poems by Frank Asch & Ted Levin, Harcourt Brace & Co., Primary - Sixth Grade.

Work Cited

Question a pilgrim in the Middle Ages on his reasons for embarking on a hazardous journey, and—if you could understand his English—you might receive a variety of answers. One pilgrim might be visiting a holy site to venerate the remains of a saint and obtain an indulgence for sins. Another might hope for a blessing or a cure. Yet another to express devotion or piety. And some might be simply curious. At best, pilgrimage involved the hope of deepening spirituality; at worst, it bordered on modern tourism.

In an earlier time, for the Celtic saints of the Dark Ages, pilgrimage was a total revocation of a prior way of life, a voluntary exile to a new location in the service of God.

One of my dreams is to take a pilgrimage, and walk one of the ancient pathways traversed by the devout in England, Wales, or Scotland. I haven’t yet realized this dream. But it isn’t necessary to leave home to accomplish a pilgrimage. I have taken several pilgrimages of the armchair variety.

My latest was to Canterbury, whose shrine of Thomas Becket was a favored location in the middle ages (even though Becket wasn’t everybody’s ideal of a saint). For my guide, I took The Road to Canterbury by Shirley du Boulay, an account of her pilgrimage walking the Pilgrim Way from Winchester to Canterbury. And I read Howard Loxton’s Pilgrimage to Canterbury for a nonfiction account of the life of Becket and the whole institution of pilgrimage. For music, I listened to Sir George Dyson’s Canterbury Pilgrims, a choral depiction of the travelers from Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales.

In the near future my next pilgrimage will be to Ireland, to visit the monastery founded by St. Kevin. The books: Glendalough, a Celtic Pilgrimage by Michael Rodgers and Marcus Losack, and Ireland Through the Ages by Michael Jenner.

The Celtic saints are my favorites, and Britain my favored destination. Keith Sugden’s Walking the Pilgrim Ways is a well-illustrated guide to the ancient sites scattered throughout Britain. But medieval pilgrims traveled great distances, to Rome and the Holy Land. H. V. Morton’s now classic books In the Steps of the Master and In the Steps of St. Paul are old but worthwhile treks to these destinations. More modern examples are Jesus and Paul, Places They Knew by F.F. Bruce, and F. LaGard Smith’s Meeting God in Holy Places. St. Francis of Assisi is arguably one of the most popular saints, and could be a guide to Italy. Every country has its saints and holy places.

So, to set up a pilgrimage, choose a time—an hour, a day, a weekend free from interruption; and place—a getaway, a quiet park or lake, at home or church or, if necessary, in a classroom for a group pilgrimage. Choose a place to visit—one of the cradles of Christianity, or a place with a long Christian tradition. Select a saint, or alternatively a topic, to explore. Choose an aspect of spirituality that would be valuable to your life, something that interests you, something with which you’re not familiar.

And then... walk away for a brief time from daily life into an adventure. It is easy to be a vicarious traveler; why not make a spiritual journey out of it?

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Canterbury:

Listening: The Canterbury Pilgrims, Sir George Dyson, Chandos 9531(2)
A must for lovers of the 20th century English choral tradition.

The Pilgrim Ways, Britain and Ireland:

Glendalough, a Celtic Pilgrimage, Michael Rodgers and Marcus Losack, Morehouse Pub., 1996.

Celtic Saints:

Fire of the North, The Illustrated Life of St. Cuthbert, David Adam, SPCK, 1993.
St. Patrick, George Otto Simms, O’Brien Press, 199
Wisdom of the Celtic Saints, Edward Sellner, Ave Maria Press, 1993

(Continued on page .)
Welcome to the School Librarian’s Corner of CLJ! This is our place to discuss issues particular to school librarians. This month we will look at the popular reading software, Accelerated Reader, discuss the success of Phil Vischer of VeggieTales, and look for some help in basic library skills for the school librarian! So, get your cup of coffee and let’s chat!

AWARDS TO NOTE:
NOMINEES FOR THE 1998/99 CROWN AWARD:
Child of the Wolves, by Elizabeth Hall.
The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey, by Susan Wojciechowski.
A Different Kind of Courage, by Ellen Howard.
A Drop of Water, by Walter Wick.
Esther’s Story, by Diane Wolkstein.
Family Tree, by Katherine Ayers.
Fridle, by Andrew Clements.
Harry the Poisonous Centipede, by Lynne Reid Banks.
Iditarod Dream, by Ted Wood.
The Indian School, Gloria Whelan.
Inventors, by Martin W. Sandler.
The Most Beautiful Roof in the World, by Kathryn Lasky.
On Board the Titanic, by Shelley Tanaka.
Riot, by Mary Casanova.
Spring Break, by Johanna Hurwitz.
The Silver Balloon, by Susan Bonners.
Sweet Memories Still, by Natalie Kinsey-Warnock.
The Tarantula in My Purse, by Jean Craighead George.
Tracks in the Snow, by Jucy Jane Bledsoe.

NOMINEES FOR THE 1998/99 LAMPLIGHTER AWARD:
Black Horses For the King, by Anne McCaffrey.
Bring Back Yesterday, by Harriet Sirof.
Even Stephen, by Johanna Hurwitz.
Gideon’s People, by Carolyn Meyer.
The Myth Maker, by Anne E. Niemark.
Sarah With an H, by Hadley Irwin.
Search for the Shadowman, by Joan Lowry Nixon.
Two Mighty Rivers, by Mari Hanes.
Washington City Is Burning, by Harriette Gillem Robinet.

(For information on participating in the Crown/Lamplighter Awards, contact Sandra Morrow, National Christian Schools Assn., 11908 North Lamar, Austin, TX 78753. (312) 835-3983; fax (312) 8352184.)

TECHNOLOGY IN SCHOOLS:
Could you use a tool that can make reading more fun for your students, increase your library’s circulation, and even determine if your students have really read their books before they get credit for a book report? Let’s take a look at a very popular computer reading program called Accelerated Reader!

Accelerated Reader is a software solution that is sweeping schools across the country. While some of us wonder how technology is going to solve educational problems in the magnitude in which it is being promoted, here we find a technology that really is making a difference in education.

Just what is Accelerated Reader? It is a system of tests, each between 10 and 20 multiple choice questions, that will both prove the student has actually read the book, and offer rewards based on the number of questions answered correctly, calculated with the reading level. This takes a lot of the burden off your teachers. Rather than requiring x amount of book reports, a teacher can assign students to earn x amount of points, or to pass a test at a certain
reading level.

**Why mention this to librarians?** In my experience teachers are requiring fewer book reports than in the past. Much of our fiction collection was not circulating as well as it should and students were not growing in their love of reading. When we added AR, our circulation shot up. We offered a store of prizes in the library once a month where students could spend the points they had earned from passing tests. Our top 20 elementary student point earners enjoyed a pizza party in the library at the end of the promotion.

**How does one choose and acquire tests?** First you must purchase a license and then you may put tests on as many computers within the school as you wish, networked or otherwise. Tests are purchased in chunks, from 25 to 50 tests per set. Many school book vendors now sell books in sets to match the test sets. Until recently one could only buy tests in sets already constructed. This meant you would probably buy tests for titles you do not own along with the tests you do want. AR recently designed a program for choosing your own set of tests. The drawback is that tests are much more expensive this way.

There are a couple of test sets for popular Christian titles.

There is also a method for creating and typing in your own tests. We have taken advantage of this when adding nominated titles for the Crown/Lamplighter award books.

*For more information contact Advantage Learning Systems at 1-800-338-4204 or call your favorite book vendor.*

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**CELEBRITY OF THE MONTH:**

Phil Vischer, best known for the wonderful video series, VeggieTales, is the subject of our discussion in this issue. Both church and elementary school librarians who have circulating video collections appreciate his contribution to the art form. These videos are even beginning to appear in children’s departments of public libraries. One local public library cannot keep their copy on the shelf.

Phil Vischer met his partner in Big Idea Productions, Mike Nawrocki, when they were involved in a puppet ministry as students of St. Paul Bible College in Minnesota. Phil worked for eight years as a computer animator for a Chicago production company before beginning his own company in 1989. When the two were ready to launch the first VeggieTale, they chose vegetables, not as the result of a long-time dream cartoon, but because the technology and budget available to them did not allow for arms and legs.

Big Idea Productions has grown to over thirty employees, but is still rather a family business for Phil Vischer. His mother, Scottie May of West Chicago, who has a doctorate in early childhood development, acts as content advisor. His wife Lisa provides one of the voices and sings the closing Bible verse song.

“We don’t consider ourselves a Christian company,” Lisa Vischer has been quoted as saying. “Instead, we are a media company with a Christian worldview, and that will impact every decision.” Their characters are humorous, lovable and consistent. Their plots are Bible-based, moral, hilariously funny, and creative. Kids love them, and adults do not tire of them. Will they enter mainstream popular media? They will if Phil Vischer’s dreams for the series come true.

(Information taken from the Chicago Tribune, Feb. 15, 1998, Section 17.)

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**QUESTION & ANSWER**

**Q** Where can I get some basic library skills training and connect with other librarians from similar backgrounds?

**A** There are many ways to pick up and polish library skills without returning to college. Library systems and state libraries offer seminars on specific areas of librarianship and/or technology. Journals such as this one offer timely articles. Check out Linworth Publishing’s Web page for information on their collection of library journals and their Professional Growth Series of publications. http://www.linworth.com

For concentrated library skills training and encouragement in an encouraging, Christian environment, let me recommend two conferences. The annual Christian School Librarians Conference, early in July, is held on Harding University Campus In Searcy Arkansas. For information contact Suzanne Spurrier or Teri Buss at 501-279-4354. The second conference is a one day conference in Wheaton, Illinois, put on by ECLA, Evangelical Church Library Association. Church libraries and Christian school libraries have much in common; therefore the ECLA is extending its ministry to encompass Christian schools. For information about the organization and the Fall conference call ECLA/Churchmart at 1-800-223-0001 or check out their web page at http://members.aol.com/ECLAssoc/index.html
When she was only ten years old, Biggar stories about them. She dreamed of traveling to new places, and thought someday she’d write books. She dreamed of travel made her restless. She said, “because a lot of things that my kids [in my classes] did...inspired characters and events in my books....” She keeps in touch with today’s kids by substitute teaching and working in a special program for home-schooled children at a local Christian school.

But in the beginning, after teaching for four years in the local school district, Biggar’s dreams of travel made her restless. She scheduled job interviews across the West Coast and handed a letter of resignation to her principal with a request that he give it to the district office if he didn’t hear from her. Then she left the state.

Her principal forgot to turn in the letter, so the school district renewed her contract and Biggar returned to Washington. One month later, she met her husband, Bob Biggar. She quotes one of her favorite Bible verses: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him..." (Romans 8:28).

When they moved to Alaska, Biggar continued to teach; she later used the setting in one of her books, Danger at Half Moon Lake.

And teaching spawned Biggar’s adult writing career. To satisfy state requirements to remain current as a teacher, Biggar enrolled in classes that matched her dreams of travel: languages, photography, art, and journalism. She also signed up for classes under Charles Keim, Dean of the English Department at the University of Alaska at Fairbanks.

"He was the best writing teacher anyone could ever have," Biggar recalls. She wrote several magazine articles, personality profiles, devotionals, and a few children’s stories, all of which were published. "I would say that he (Keim) was the one that got me started," she says.

During a teaching break, Biggar sat in a restaurant three mornings a week while her children were in school and began writing her first juvenile book, Treasure at Morning Gulch. Keim critiqued it. “That’s really how I learned to write, was re-writing that book,” she said.

The Biggars returned to Washington State in 1981 when Bob suffered a heart attack. He never fully recovered. Joan’s dreams slipped into the background. “There were a lot of hard years then,” she comments. “That’s when I did a lot of writing.” She also continued praying for God’s will.

Then one day, while carrying a stack of papers out to the garbage, Joan caught sight of a rumpled brochure for a writer’s conference. She recalls, "It was like the Lord said, 'This is for you, Joan.'"

The brochure was for the Warm Beach Christian Writers’ Conference; she registered. Today, she credits that experience for propelling her dream forward. She met established writers, and later joined a critique group. She decided to start her second book, Danger at Half Moon Lake, using the area in Alaska she’d grown to love as the backdrop for the story.

She did extra research for her books when she accompanied her husband Bob in his consulting business, visiting interesting places in Yakima, Washington; southern Oregon; and Arizona. She wrote Shipwreck on the Lights after visiting one of the last working lighthouses in the world, in British Columbia. High Desert Secrets followed, based on her experiences in Oregon.

Concordia Publishing House offered a publishing contract for these books in 1991 and 1992 as the "Adventure Quest" series (now out of print). To encourage other writers, Joan tells them it took over twenty years before she saw her books published. It wasn’t until then that Joan realized what had happened—she’d written about places far away from the little valley where she’d grown up. Her childhood dream had come true.

Her newest series released by Concordia Publishing House is the "Megan Parnell Mysteries” series, geared for ages 10-14 (reviews appear in this issue of CLJ). Her husband helped with research, exploring places with her on Whidbey Island, Fort Ebey, and Fort Casey, which later became the setting for her fifth book (and the first of the
Megan Parnell mysteries), Missing on Castaway Island. Sadly, he didn't see the second series published. After a long struggle with poor health, Bob died in 1994.

Biggar continues her hallmark tradition of weaving facts into her stories—items of history, geography, and personal experiences collected during her travels—and she includes sympathetic characters of various racial backgrounds. Additional titles in her new series include Mystery at Camp Galena, Trouble in Yakima Valley, and Trapped at Haunted Canyon.

Biggar has also written an adult historical novel and a young adult fantasy novel, which was a finalist in the 1998 Pacific Northwest Writer's Conference annual writing competition.

Biggar also received First Place in the prestigious literary competition sponsored by the Klondike Gold Rush Centennial Committee of Washington State in 1997, for her nonfiction entry: "The Abercrombie Trail, All-American Route to the Gold Field."

Biggar regularly hosts a critique group in her home; she served on the board of the Northwest Christian Writers' Association for two terms; and she occasionally gives school and library presentations. Wherever she goes, you can be certain that Joan Rawlins Biggar gently encourages her audience to free their imaginations, but most of all, never to forget their dreams.

**NEW SERIES - MEGAN PARNELL MYSTERIES** (ages 10-14), published by Concordia Publishing House:


*Mystery at Camp Galena* (1997, ISBN 0-570-05016-2). Megan and Peter take jobs as camp counselors, and Megan finds herself competing with another girl for the affections of Sean, a handsome fellow counselor. She and Peter also uncover who is damaging the forest ecology around the camp.


*Trapped in Haunted Canyon* (1998, released in June). Megan and Peter didn't know that spending Christmas on a cattle ranch in Arizona could turn dangerous. Caught in a sudden storm with Megan's childhood friend Aaron, the three are trapped in an ancient Indian cave. Pothunters illegally digging up artifacts come along and the kids try to escape without being seen, but only Megan gets away. How can she help Aaron and Peter? And how can they stop the illegal activities?

**ADVENTURE QUEST SERIES** (ages 8-12), published by Concordia (out of print):


Kimn Gollnick is an award-winning writer and lecturer with many articles to her credit. She lives in Washington where she home schools her two children.
### Christmas Releases by Lydia E. Harris

**Books play an important role in our lives at Christmas. They help us prepare our hearts, celebrate the season, and share the message of Jesus. Young and old alike enjoy a good book. Perhaps you’ll want to add some of these new releases to your library or give them as gifts to family and friends.**

**Adult Christmas Books**

**1.** Barnes, Emilie. *Christmas Is Coming.* Harvest House, 1998. ISBN 1565079124. HBB, $16.99, 144 pages. Full of practical help and ideas, this spiral holiday organizer for families has space to record Christmas planning for three years. It suggests what to do each week during November and December to get ready. The numerous tips, lists, and charts, along with colorful illustrations by Michal Sparks, make it an attractive, useful organizer.

**2.** Bunn, T. Davis. *One Shenandoah Winter.* Thomas Nelson, 1998. ISBN 0785272178. HBB, $12.99, 265 pages. This story is set in the isolated town of Hillsboro, Virginia, during the late autumn of 1961. An angry doctor arrives in the rural community to begin his medical practice. He clashes with the assistant mayor and others. The healing that takes place that goes beyond medicine. By Christmas, unexpected events bring joy and sorrow, providing a touching story of redemption.

**3.** The Heart of Christmas. Thomas Nelson, 1998. ISBN 0785282130. HBB, $14.99, 160 pages. This collection of messages by six well-known communicators—Max Lucado, Jack Hayford, David Jeremiah, John Maxwell, Bill Hybels, and Rick Warren—is designed for gift giving or personal use. Their inspirational thoughts bring a fresh perspective to the familiar Christmas story, helping readers see spiritual truths they may have overlooked.


**6.** McCusker, Paul. *Ephphany.* Zondervan, 1998. ISBN 0310225450. HBB, $12.99, 137 pages. This novella is a modern-day fantasy by former writer and producer of Focus on the Family’s Adventures in Odyssey radio series. The story is told from the perspective of Richard, the deceased father, an unseen observer of family happenings. His unexpected death, just before Christmas, forces his three grown children to face personal and family issues. How they resolve their struggles results in a heartwarming Christmas story with lessons for all.


**8.** A Nostalgic Noel. Barbour, 1998. ISBN 1577483499. PAP, $9.95, 346 pages. This collection of four Christmas romance novellas set in days gone by includes Cane Creek by Kay Cornelius, Bittersweet by Rebecca Germany, A Christmas Gift of Love by Darlene Mindrup, and The Honor of the Big Snows by Colleen Reece. You’ll meet a Kentucky school girl, a small-town couple, a woman alone on the Dakota prairie, and an Irish lass in the Canadian wilderness.


**13.** Shelly, Rubel. *Christmas Treasures.* Broadman & Holman, 1998. ISBN 0805401946. HBB, $15.00, 160 pages. This collection of Christmas reflections comes from over seventy writers such as Martin Luther, C.S. Lewis, Henri Nouwen, Charles Wesley, and Max Lucado. It includes quotations from political figures, contemporary Christian authors, significant figures in church history, and others. This inviting gift book, with
leading a child to Christ are included at the end. José Miracles painted the detailed, realistic illustrations.

4 Damashek, Sandra. WHAT CAN YOU DO ON CHRISTMAS DAY? illustrated by Paul Harvey. Broadman & Holman, 1998. ISBN 0805416668. HBB, $6.99, 12 pages. Preschool children will enjoy this small touch and look board book with different materials to touch. In rhyming verse, it mentions several outdoor winter activities such as sledding and skating and concludes with, "Hooray! It's Jesus' birthday!"


7 Finley-Day, Linda. DONALD THE DORMOUSE—WHERE'S OUR BABY JESUS? illustrated by Liz McIntosh. Broadman & Holman, 1998. ISBN 0805412476. HBB, 22 pages, $14.99. Baby Jesus is missing and Donald the dormouse helps find him in time for the school Christmas play; but he also causes commotion. Children can place the cutout of Donald in the pockets on several pages. The complete Christmas story is told on the back page.


10 Haidle, David & Helen. THE LIVING NATIVITY. Honor Books, 1998. ISBN 1562925377. HBB, $12.99, 32 pages. David and Helen Haidle team up to write and illustrate a heartwarming story of hope. It's the story of St. Francis of Assisi, who created the first known creche with real-life enactment of Christ's birth. The setting is an Italian village. The characters are a crippled peasant boy and a monk. Together they impact an entire village by starting the tradition of celebrating Christmas with a living nativity.

11 Hayward, Lucie. MY MUSICAL CHRISTMAS STABLE. Broadman & Holman, 1998. ISBN 0805417923. $14.99. This stand-up musical cardboard stable with pockets holds four mini paperback books, 12 pages each. The books are entitled MARY AND JOSEPH’S JOY, THE SHEPHERDS’ SURPRISE, THE ANGELS’ NEWS, and THE WISE MAN’S STAR. Children can push a button and listen to "Silent Night" and watch the shining star as the stories are read. MY MUSICAL CHRISTMAS STABLE is appropriate for children four and older.

creche figures. The story of Jesus' birth is told in rhyming verse, four lines per page, and illustrated with brightly colored cookie characters. The idea is to begin a family tradition of baking cookie characters and reading the enclosed Christmas story. Recipes and decorating instructions are included.

Maier, Paul L. THE VERY FIRST CHRISTMAS. Concordia. ISBN 0570050642 HBB, $14.99, 32 pages. Eight-year-old Christopher thinks he's too old for fairy tales, so his mother reads him the Christmas story from the Bible. This stimulates challenging questions and a wonderful mother-son discussion. Suitable for ages five to ten and written at the third grade reading level, this picture book includes rich color illustrations by Francisco Ordaz.

O’Neal, Debbie Trafton. FAMILY COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS, illustrated by Viki Woodworth. Augsburg, 1998. ISBN 0806637331. PAP, $10.99, 46 pages. Celebrate the Christmas season from December one through January six with daily suggested activities, recipes, and crafts from this book. Also count the days by placing colorful stickers on the one-page calendar included. Create rich family memories during Advent, Christmas, and the twelve days that follow, using these ideas.


Tangvald, Christine Harder. HEY, MR. ANGEL! Concordia, 1998. ISBN 0570050588. HBB, $6.99, 32 pages. The illustrations by Jeff Carnehl set the stage for the nativity story told by an angel to two little shepherd boys. The bouncy, lyrical verse is suitable for children ages four to seven.


Wangerin Jr, Walter. MARY’S FIRST CHRISTMAS. Zondervan, 1998. ISBN 0310222168. HBB, $19.99, 48 pages. The biblical Christmas narratives form the basis for this fiction account of Mary telling five-year-old Jesus the story of his birth. Written as a four-part bedtime story, each portion emphasizes deep love: Mary’s love for Jesus, Joseph’s love for Jesus, God’s love for Jesus, and Jesus’ love for all the world. This warm retelling of the familiar Christmas story offers a fresh view through the eyes of Mary.*

Ward, Brenda C. THE CHRISTMAS STORY. Broadman & Holman, 1998. ISBN 080541777X. HBB, $7.95, 14 pages. The Christmas story is told simply for infants through five-year-olds in this board book. The illustrations are photographs of babies dressed as characters in the story. Infants are costumed as shepherds, angels, Mary, Joseph, animals, wise men, and a star.

Wildsmith, Brian. A CHRISTMAS STORY. Eerdmans, 1998. ISBN 0802851738. HBB, $17.00, 24 pages. Brian Wildsmith is both author and illustrator of this young readers’ picture book with bright colors and brilliant gold paintings. Rebecca, a young girl from Nazareth, accompanies a little donkey to Bethlehem in search of his mother. They find the donkey’s mother and infant Jesus in Bethlehem’s stable. They all return to Nazareth and Jesus grows up with Rebecca as his friend. This version was originally published in 1989 by Oxford University Press.

Children four and under will enjoy the following sturdy board books, five by five inches in size, with colorful illustrations by Nancy Munger. Each one has 12 pages, costs $3.99, and was published by Zondervan in 1998.

Davidson, Alice Joyce. THE "J" IS FOR JESUS. ISBN 0310975530. A short rhyming story that tells the meaning of the candy cane.

DeBoer, Jesslyn. FOLLOW THE STAR. ISBN 0310975549. The wise men follow the star and find Jesus. They give him their presents and worship him.

DeBoer, Jesslyn. GETTING READY FOR CHRISTMAS. ISBN 0310975611. The animals do their part to prepare a manger to welcome Jesus.

VanderKlipp, Michael A. JOY TO THE WORLD. ISBN 031097660X. Young children will enjoy the counting and rhyming in this book. It begins with ten joyful angels and ends with one baby Jesus.

*Longer review elsewhere in this issue of CLJ.

Lydia E. Harris, educator and freelance writer in Seattle, Washington, has presented Christmas workshops in churches, a community school, and on the radio. She is a syndicated columnist and has published book reviews, devotions, skits, and articles.
Observations On
Frank Peretti’s Work & Impact

by Richard Terrell

The publication and astonishing success of Frank Peretti's novel *This Present Darkness* in 1987 aroused Christian publishing houses to the expressive potential of fiction. By the early 1990s, fiction sections in Christian bookstores overflowed with novels containing themes of evangelical import, and by the later 90's some Christian publishing houses were beginning to warn writers that the market for Christian fiction was “glutted.” Although successful Christian fiction authors existed before Peretti's remarkable success (Stephen Lawhead, for example), it is nevertheless fair to say that Peretti broke open the door to a potentially enthusiastic market for imaginative storytelling. He is, as Publishers Weekly religion editor Phyllis Tickle expresses it, "the daddy, the king, of contemporary Christian fiction.”

Following in his steps are many others, including people associated with distinctive ministries outside the arts such as Larry Burkett, Bob Larson, Dave Hunt, Charles Colson, Pat Robertson, Tim LaHaye, Hal Lindsey and others. Aspiring Christian writers have evidently taken encouragement from this development, because it says that the Christian community is interested and responsive. While acknowledging Peretti's impact, however, his novels are not highly regarded by Christian academics, nor is there universal enthusiasm for them in the lay-Christian reading public. Nobody, however, can deny Peretti's popularity and his importance as a catalyst for the new, explosive market for religious fiction.

*This Present Darkness* reveals the reasons for the ambivalence many people feel toward Peretti's novels. It is a riveting story, even though the book contains descriptive language that is ordinary at best, and dialogue threaded with cliches. This novel, and the others that followed it (Piercing The Darkness and Prophet), can "hook" readers with vigorously conceived plots that unfold stories which take place on the borders of the natural and supernatural worlds.

Whatever their weaknesses, Peretti's books show an appeal not only for his primary audience of evangelicals, but for many people beyond the Christian culture as well. Alissa Rubin, a reviewer for The New Republic, asserts that Peretti's novels may seem "simplistic" or even "paranoid" while at the same time possessing "something ... that can keep even a secular reader (myself included) oddly enthralled." She attributes this power to the ancient theological underpinnings of the books as rooted in Augustinian writings on the devil and themes of spiritual warfare.

Peretti’s earlier novels were published by Crossway, and continue to show up on Christian bestseller lists for fiction, years later. Despite what many see as literary shortcomings, Peretti can be a compelling story-teller. His books are easy to read, and one can enjoy his stylistic "quirkiness" (such as the use of comic-book style symbolism - *@!! - to convey characters' cursing). Certainly a good part of the attraction of his books is their focus on contemporary social issues of Christian concern like New Age occultism, abortion, and education. Other mainstream publications to notice and review Peretti's work include *Library Journal, National Review*, and *Voice Literary Supplement*. Even a basically friendly review in *National Review*, however, takes note of Peretti's "lack of character development" and simplistic presentation of episodes leading to mere melodrama rather than profound spiritual conflict.

While one may not expect high literary qualities from Peretti, his books are fun to read and, in their own way, they contribute to the edification of Christians as well as to the understandings of secular readers. Writing for *National Review*, Jarod Lobdell noted that "one can imagine Christians turning to prayer - serious hardworking prayer - after, or indeed while reading these books.” Indeed, many evangelicals will testify that the books had precisely that effect upon them. C. Robert Nixon, writing in *Library Journal*, calls *Piercing The Darkness "a good story," offering "insight into the kind of religion that sees demons behind every stump and angels in the hen house.”*

*This Present Darkness* and its follow-up novel *Piercing The Darkness* have a quality about them that is sometimes disparaged as “gospel propaganda.” There is no ambiguity, and the Christian message is delivered with a hammering force. The novels are not characterized by subtlety. *Prophet*, however, is a novel of considerable more nuance than the first two, and one with some splashes of humor as well. In this reviewer's opinion, it is the strongest of Frank Peretti's "big four" novels of the late 80's and early 90's. What makes the story especially interesting is that the main character is a man whose faith is qualified by some patterns of doubt. There are elements of faith which he has lost, yet he retains a peculiar giftedness from God that puts him at odds with his own secularized worldview.

Not only does Mr. Peretti study and read the works of successful mainstream novelists, he would appear to be interested in refining his craft through contact with the broader community of editors of literature and popular fiction. He and his new publisher (Word) submitted the manuscript of his most recent novel, *The Oath*, to the searching scrutiny of a non-Christian editor with strong credentials in the New York publishing world in an effort to improve his style and structure. In doing this, Frank Peretti shows that he is not content with mere marketplace success, but seeks growth as a writer. Unfortunately, the editing strategy did not work in this case. *The Oath* is a weak story in almost every aspect, featuring characters that are ciphers - mere conduits for speech who are almost psychologically and spiritually invisible. The plot and action constitute an unwieldy mixture of realism and symbolism that is, at best, incoherent. Indeed, this book is a major disappointment. It leaves one with yet another ambivalent feeling, that years for the "old" Peretti with his own unique quirks and oddities. Whatever their failings may be, the earlier books engaged my interest. *The Oath*, on the other hand, kept me asking "When will I get done with this?"

Many of us are looking and hoping for a strong Peretti comeback.

NOTES

Richard Terrell is Professor of Fine Arts and Humanities at Doane College, Crete, Nebraska, and author of previous critiques of Christian fiction. He is the author of *Resurrecting the Third Reich* (Huntington House, 1994).

- E. Alphabet; Farm life—Fiction. 31 p. PS - Gr. 1.
- Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Apple Tree Farm provides the setting for the *Alphabet Book*. Mrs. Boot, the farmer, her children Poppy and Sam, with Rusty their dog and all the animals appear on page after page as each letter of the alphabet is displayed.

On each page the featured letter appears many times, always in red. At the top of the page, the bottom, and in a sentence, the letter will appear, followed by a question to answer. As an added interest, a little yellow duck is hiding on each page.

Because of the repeated use of a letter in each sentence, Heather Amery has made enjoyable tongue twisters that need to be read aloud. The attractive water color illustrations of Stephen Cartwright picture all the words used to describe the letter of the alphabet emphasized on each page, and more. At the end of the alphabet one page contains a picture for each letter with the challenge to find them somewhere in the book.

A valuable source for learning letters and for counting, the scenes pictured on each page will also be perfect to use as suggestions for original stories. *Marie Knaupp*

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- E. Whales—Fiction; Mothers and daughters—Fiction. 1 32-page hardcover book; 1 audiocassette, 10 min. K - Gr. 3.
- Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Little Whale, a one month old humpback, embarks on an odyssey from Navidad Bank, north of the Dominican Republic, to Maine, USA. Little Whale is astonished by the unfamiliar melodiousness of a male humpback whale and her mother’s acrobatics to shake off barnacles. She is oblivious to the danger of a coast-guard cutter and cruise ship. When the whales reach the coast of Maine, Little Whale frolics and her mother feasts on the abundant krill.

Darice Bailer has written a delightful story interspersed with facts about humpback whales. The realistic sounds on the audiocassette accompanying Peter Thomas’ narration will give children a chance to feel they are crossing the ocean with Little Whale.

*Humpback Goes North* is an excellent book for introducing children to humpback whales, especially with Stephen Marchesi’s breathtaking full page color illustrations surrounding the text and on the selfsame dust jacket and hard cover.

The inclusion of supplementary data, a glossary, and points of interest add to the overall educational value of the book. *Dianne Woodman*

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- E. Bicycles—Fiction; Determination—Fiction. Unp. PS - Gr. 2.
- Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Franklin the turtle can do many things well but is having a difficult time learning to ride a bike. All of Franklin’s friends have mastered it, have taken off their training wheels, and are off on new adventures. Franklin is discouraged and has given up until his mother points out that many of the things he can do easily were difficult for his friends to learn how to do; it took perseverance.

*Franklin Rides a Bike* has colorful, double-page illustrations by Brenda Clark full of detail that children will enjoy. The storyline of dealing with the frustration that comes when things don’t come easily is of tremendous value for all ages. *Sally Kahn*

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**RATING SYSTEM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality (Literary)</th>
<th>Acceptability (Ethical/Moral Concerns)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Excellent - among the very best of this type</td>
<td>5 No questionable elements</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Good - well written; strong recommendation</td>
<td>4 Slight concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Average - readers will enjoy</td>
<td>3 Moderate concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Fair - can recommend, but not as well written</td>
<td>2 Barely acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Poor - cannot recommend</td>
<td>1 Too questionable to recommend</td>
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★ Outstanding Book of its Genre

* Acceptability does not refer to doctrinal position, unless the doctrine is anti-Christian.
Mucky Pup earns his name and his exit from the house when the farmer’s wife views the mess he has made of her house. Looking for a playmate, Mucky Pup approaches the rooster, duckling, barn cat, and horse. He is still lonely until he finds the mucky pig and his mucky mud. After a splendid time, a splash into the pond releases him from bath time and prepares him for a nap in his basket by the fire. Here he dreams about the fun of being a mucky pup.

Colorful full page, action packed illustrations tell the story completely for the child who cannot read. The text can easily be read by the beginning reader. Children who enjoy unhampered outdoor play will identify with the Mucky Pup and his adventures.

Though there are many counting books, this is a darling little book, with superb illustrations. One can picture a little one sitting on a beloved lap and eagerly looking at the pictures. In each picture is a little gray mouse, and it would be great fun to see if the preschooler can find where the mouse is hiding.

A charming book for a little person. Would be a great gift for a birthday party or other occasions. The numbers go from one to ten. Katherine Burton weaves a familiar counting game, and illustrations by Kim Fernandes are inspired.

Marie Knaupp

I Did It, I’m Sorry, by Caralyn Buehner; pictures by Mark Buehner. LCCN 9710216.

E. Conduct of life—Fiction; Animals—Fiction; Literary recreations. 30 p. K - Gr. 3.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

This clever book by Caralyn and Mark Buehner provides an excellent way to introduce morals and acceptable behavior to young children. The first of fourteen spreads begins with “Do your words and actions help, or hurt?” Each brief tale introduces animal characters in compromising situations, such as Bucky Beaver caught at the scene of a gnawed table leg and Ima Scalebody tempted to cheat on a test, and conclude with a multiple choice quiz for the reader to pick the proper response. Bad language, lying, following the crowd, consideration, and following the rules are a few of the principles covered by the tales in I Did It, I’m Sorry. The final spread includes a page recapping the lessons covered in the book, followed by an answer key.

Caralyn Buehner’s writing is light and witty, using lots of alliteration to delight young children. A variety of animal characters with interesting names, such as “Flora Flamingo and her friend Favio,” make the tales, and the lessons they teach, memorable. Mark Buehner’s colorful illustrations are whimsical, adding a light touch to serious lessons. Details, such as the glasses and lipstick on the teacher fish, photos on the walls of Bucky Beaver’s home, and outside lights at the Possum Pajama Party, are entertaining and further impress each story on the listener.

Lisa Wroble

Mama and Papa Have a Store, story and pictures by Amelia Lau Carlson. LCCN 9710217.

E. Stores, Retail—Fiction; Chinese—Fiction; Guatemala—Fiction. 29 p. K - Gr. 2.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

A young Chinese girl and her family live in Guatemala City where her parents had fled years earlier when war came to their hometown in China. They run a store specializing in Chinese goods and are successful in attracting customers from the other cultures in their community with their colorful variety of dry goods. The young girl tells us the events of a typical day in the store and in their family life in Mama and Papa Have a Store.

Amelia Lau Carlson adds texture to the text by including Spanish words and words that imitate sounds. Her watercolor illustrations provide additional insight into the cultures of Guatemala City and China. The story provides an example of a successful blending of cultures.

Sally Kuhns

It’s Going to Be Perfect, by Nancy Carlson. LCCN 9727689.

E. Growth—Fiction; Mothers and daughters—Fiction. 30 p. PS - Gr. 2.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

It’s Going to be Perfect, the thoughts of a mother before her child is born and up through the first years in school, is a book for sharing. Each new phase of the child’s life is anticipated, expecting perfection. However nothing happens as imagined. Later in sharing with her child, each event the mother declares to be different from her expectation, but perfect anyway.

Children will be delighted with this homey picture of everyday life. When the book is finished there could be time for sharing of personal stories, too.

The bold vibrant illustrations add to the pleasure of the book. Nancy Carlson has given many additional details in the drawings as well as the presence of a gray cat all through the book.

Marie Knaupp

A Big Trip for the Morrisons, by Penny Carter. LCCN 96052796.

E. Voyages and travels—Fiction; Geography—Fiction. Unp. PS - Gr. 2.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

The Morrisons take a trip around the world. At every stop and even on the airplane Mr. and Mrs. Morrison find something to complain about, yet on and on they go. When they arrive at home, both parents report having a good time and begin making plans for the next trip. In a humorous way Penny Carter communicates an enjoyable experience in spite of the emphasis on negative aspects of each place as she relates the events of A Big Trip for the Morrisons.

Many geographical details can be learned about each country visited by studying the carefully detailed illustrations. This book would be a valuable tool to use to prepare young children to take their first trip, and a good resource for the beginning reader.

Marie Knaupp


E. Texas State Capitol (Austin, Tex.)—Fiction. Unp. K - Gr. 3.
Quality - 3 Acceptability - 4

Bluebonnet, a friendly armadillo, is in Austin, Texas, to visit the state capitol. While there she meets Mac, a mockingbird, who is the state bird of Texas. Mac lives in a pecan tree, the state tree of Texas. Mac likes to mimic and mock Bluebonnet, but he does finally agree to show Bluebonnet around the capitol building. They have to sneak around and avoid the tour groups, but Bluebonnet and Mac learn a lot about Texas history. They learn about Stephen F. Austin, Sam Houston, the Alamo, and even get to see the governor. They also see a group of children with one dressed like an armadillo and one like a longhorn. This is quite strange, so Mac and Bluebonnet get a closer look. They discover the Senate will be voting on a State Mammal. Which one will it be?

Mary Brook Casad has created a charming little story to interest children while at the same time teaching them Texas history. There is a lot of information and a few statistics included in the story. Sometimes it bogs down a bit, however. The characters in the story are portrayed in cartoon format. Benjamin Vincent has created a backdrop of the true life scenery of the State capitol of Texas while including our cartoon characters in the foreground. This creates an interesting mix for children.
If you have interest in the state of Texas or study this area with younger children, this would be a great book to include in your unit. Older children would have trouble getting past the childishness of the book to find the facts. Marcia Snyder


E. Moneymaking projects—Fiction; Generosity—Fiction; Afro-Americans—Fiction; Easy reading materials. 32 p. K - Gr. 2.


E. Toys—Fiction; Family life—Fiction; Afro-Americans—Fiction; Easy reading materials. 29 p. K - Gr. 2.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Money Troubles
Little Bill wants to be famous, and he loves to look at the stars and planets in the night sky. Determined to buy a telescope, he decides to earn the money doing chores and recycling aluminum cans. But when he sees a poor child who needs the can money more than he does, he leaves his cans near the garbage can so the child can have them. After trying to save money by having his friend cut his hair for him, with disastrous results, Bill decides to take his telescope money and buy food for the food drive at school. He does become famous in the end. He donates more food to the food drive than anyone else.

Bill Cosby has told a touching story in simple child-like manner. The short chapter book style of pages will help the beginning reader feel like he’s conquered reading chapter books. Colorful and simple illustrations of Varnette Honeywood add just the right amount of humor to the story to keep the reader turning the pages.

Shipwreck Saturday
Little Bill is excited to sail the model sail boat he made on the pond at the park. His friend Kiku warns him not to let it go too far, but Little Bill lets it go to the end of the string and a row boat crosses his line and smashes his boat. Little Bill runs home to cry, leaving his boat behind. The boat is rescued by Kiku and her grandmother who turn it into a kite. When Little Bill’s father coaxes him to return to the park for his boat, he is surprised and finally pleased with the beautiful kite.

Bill Cosby has again told his story in the simple manner of a young child. The short chapters help the beginning reader tackle chapter books. Colorful illustrations of Varnette Honeywood with a primitive feel to them add to the enjoyment of the story.

The books in this series contain a short letter to parents by Alvin F. Poussaint, child psychiatrist, covering the topic of the book and hints at sharing that topic with their child and understanding the child’s development at that point. Judy Driscoll


E. Christmas; Birthdays; Jesus Christ—Nativity. 16 p.  Toddler - PS.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

When Holly Davis couldn’t find a book explaining the Christmas story in terms her preschooler understood, she wrote her own. My Birthday, Jesus’ Birthday centers around two elements young children can relate to—babies and birthdays. Each spread of pages compares the early stages of life for a young child today with the early stages of life for Baby Jesus, telling similarities and differences between them. For example, children today are born in hospitals; Jesus was born in a stable. A child’s birth today is announced by phone calls and birth announcements, while Jesus’ birth was announced by angels and a star. Children wonder what they’ll be when they grow up. Jesus knew he was born to be a Savior. Parents wait nine months for the birth of their baby; people waited thousands of years for Jesus’ birth.

Linking two events children love most—their birthdays and Christmas—this sturdy board book could easily become a year-round favorite. A delightful book with colorful illustrations by Nancy Munger, the book can help parents and preschool teachers explain Christmas in a way young children can understand. Lydia Harris


E. Crocodile—Fiction; Birds—Fiction; Endangered species—Fiction. 44 p. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Finally, another Bill and Pete adventure can be found on the shelves! Fans will quickly reach for Bill and Pete to the Rescue. This time Bill’s cousin, Jane Allison Crocodile, is missing. The old crocodile has seen her being loaded on a ship with a hippo, an ibis, and a camel. The Bad Guy’s Big Bad Brother is taking Jane to the United States. Here is the perfect chance for Bill and Pete to travel to Louisiana as stowaways. Pete is captured, caged, but escapes while Bill meets Antoine Pierre Alligator and his family in the Decatur Bayou. Bill and Pete eventually lead a group of gators and reporters to an illegal exotic farm. Endangered species are freed, and Bill finds his Cousin Jane, and his own father.

Tomie de Paola’s latest adventure of Bill and Pete is sure to capture newcomers and older followers. The painted images are consistent with his previous works. The bright flat colors command attention. The layout speeds along the action. The forty-eight page picture book is long, but the mystery has to unfold, and the characters have to travel a far way. All will agree the best part is Bill’s reunion with his father. They are “one big family” again, “because Bill and Pete came to the rescue.” Lorie Ann Grover


E. Lost and found possessions; Family life—Fiction. 37 p. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

Her bear is gone, and she can’t find it anywhere. It’s lost forever and no one will help! Told to “think like a detective,” the young unnamned character begins the search for her favorite stuffed animal. As she hunts through the house, she eventually gets to her sister’s room. There she is told that her sister would never play with her “stupid” bear. A subsequent trip to sister’s room has the sister telling her, “I’ll kill you!” if she loses a borrowed stuffed animal. Finally, after getting sidetracked by discovering lots of other toys that were lost, the detective is told it’s bedtime. While shrieking about not finding her bear, the missing item is discovered under her bed covers.

Several life lessons can be gleaned from this book. At one point, the very dramatic protagonist is crying. When no one comes to stop her, she stops herself, learning self-control. Forced to locate her bear herself and search independently, she realizes she can do it!

Both written and illustrated by Jules Feiffer, the book has a Sunday comics look. The handwritten text is part of the artwork on most pages, with characters frequently speaking in balloons. The watercolor and ink drawings are fun and colorful. The exaggerated dialogue would make this a great read aloud choice for an expressive reader. Elizabeth Coleman


E. Deer mice—Fiction. 1 32-page hardcover book; 1 audiocassette, 10 min. PS - Gr. 3.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Deer Mouse builds a nest for her unborn babies and falls asleep exhausted. Awakening to darkness, she goes in search of food. While eating, she hears a whispering in the bushes and tries to scare the hidden creature away with a
squeaky hiss and a slap of her feet. A cat materializes and chases Deer Mouse into a gap in a stone wall. Unable to reach Deer Mouse, the cat loses interest. Deer Mouse safely returns to her nest and gives birth to seven tiny mice in the early morning hours.

Laura Gates Galvin has written a charming story interspersed with information about a deer mouse. The realistic sounds on the audiocassette accompanying Alexi Komisar’s narration will give children the chance to feel they are participating in the adventure with Deer Mouse.

*Deer Mouse at Old Farm Road* is an excellent book for introducing children to deer mice, especially with Katy Bratun’s enchanting full page color illustrations surrounding the text and on the selfsame dust jacket and hard cover. The inclusion of supplementary data, a glossary, and points of interest add to the overall educational value of the book. *Dianne Woodman*


E. Jews—Fiction; Brothers—Fiction; Sharing—Fiction. 20 p. K - Gr. 5.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 4

Two young boys grow up together in happiness with their loving and wise father as their guide. They are raised the same, but they are very different. One day, when they are almost men, their father draws them to his side. He is sick and dying. “Divide the land evenly,” he makes them promise, and “always take care of each other, no matter what.” Years later, a famine comes to the land, and the two brothers find out how each of them has kept their promise.

Frances Harber’s story of two brothers, which is an adaptation from a tale in the Jewish Talmud, is filled with the meaning intended. The sage advice of his young niece Cornelia: “Anything is possible if you want it bad enough.” The joyous mood of the book is partially created by Wolf Harranth’s delight’s young audience with *The Flute Concert*, illustrated by Romulus Candea. For anyone who has lost anything important, August Winkelreid becomes a hero. August is the star of the show. At home, he frantically searches for the lost music, but, at the theatre, he boards an invisible magic carpet. He floats, weightless, through a wonderland of extraordinary sound. What made the difference? The sage advice of his young niece Cornelia: “Anything is possible if you want it bad enough.”

Candea’s pictures border on cartoon, attention taken away from the precision of each drawing. The focus, rather, is on the meaning intended. *Su Hagerty*


E. Babies—Fiction; Brothers—Fiction. Unp. PS - Gr. 1.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 4

A new baby has invaded Zachary’s house. Suddenly Mom has no time for him, and everyone is fawning over his little brother, Cameron. Zachary wishes he would go away, even hopes his Mom will forget Cameron and leave him at the store sometime. As Cameron gets older, things aren’t getting any better. Now Cameron can crawl around and get into his stuff. Zachary keeps hoping he’ll get left at the park. When a new sister arrives, Zachary decides this is the last straw: he’ll run away from home! When he realizes how upset Cameron would be without him, Zachary decides to stay. This time he wishes that his sister would get left at the store so it would just be him and Cameron again.

Written from Zachary’s perspective, author Dorothy Joan Harris, has captured the egocentric nature of a small child perfectly. While Zachary’s wish to have his siblings “left behind” may make adults cringe, these are the honest thoughts and emotions of a toddler struggling with a new sibling. Because there is no mention of how each baby arrives at Zachary’s house, this book might work well for adoptive parents. Marilyn Mets watercolor artwork helps to add a bit more depth to this story. She has drawn their expressions exactly right, making Zachary and Cameron come to life for the reader. *Elizabeth Coleman*


E. Dogs—Fiction; Behavior—Fiction. Unp. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Miss Pettibone’s plans for Tootsie’s special day fail to prepare him for the unfriendly reception on his first day with Danny’s Dogwalking Group.

All the dogs offer to take care of Tootsie. Bruiser knocks him into the gutter, Rex tail-thumps him, Bagels side-bumps him, Fleet runs in circles tangling his leash, Pepe and Pal nip off his ear bows, and all this behind Danny’s back.

When Tootsie refuses to budge after Bruiser bumps him into the fountain’s pool, Danny threatens to take him home. However, all this changes suddenly as Tootsie nab an escaping robber while Danny’s string of dogs cowers behind a parked truck.

The New Dog the next morning is Tiny Timmy. Danny’s group again offers to take care of him, but with Tootsie there to step up with the welcome words, “You’ll do just fine!” Each incident in the story is graphically illustrated by the facial expressions of the dogs. Every child who has been the new kid on the block will empathize with each mishap on the walk and rejoice at the ending. The story is a wonderful illustration of practicing the golden rule. *Marie Knaupp*


E. Friendship—Fiction; Imagination—Fiction. Unp. PS.

Quality - 3  Acceptability - 5

“Olivia Wendell didn’t have anyone to play with.” And so she daydreams about what it would be like to have a family move in next door in the empty house. She invents the members who would be in the family, what animals they would have, and what they would do together. While she dreams, she plays with miniature figures and moves them around to suit her.

Humorous illustrations by Laura McGee Kvasnosky add whimsy to the story, and would be fun for the young reader. Text by Libby Hough, is simple, not too original, as evidenced by the goat chasing the dog, the dog chasing the cat, the cat chasing the chickens. A pleasant little story. *Barbara Goy Taezler*
Watching the rides go up at the midway, Etta dreams of overcoming her fear of heights this year and finally riding the Ferris wheel. Not yet eight, she can’t ride the zipper with her siblings, Fiona and Harper. To practice for the Ferris wheel, Etta climbs to the roof of the chicken coop. Too scared to even speak, Fiona must help Etta down. After a failed attempt at the ride, Fiona tries to cheer Etta up by showing her how the stars make constellations. Studying the pictures in the sky, Etta decides that if the world should turn upside down while she’s on the Ferris wheel, the stars would catch her like a net. On the last night of the midway, Etta’s father goes to play bingo, instructing the children to stay together. Waiting until dark, Etta leaves her siblings to ride the Ferris wheel by herself.

The author, Jennifer Richard Jacobson, perfectly captures the feeling of a childhood (and for some, adult) fear and triumph over it. Although her sister Fiona is supportive, Etta must work through her anxiety alone. Beautiful illustrations by Greg Shed compliment the quiet and thoughtful tone of this picture book. Set on a farm in a small community, this is an innocent story where the biggest concern for the characters is what ride they’ll choose when the carnival starts. A well written story of a child overcoming her biggest fear. Elizabeth Coleman


E. Hair—Fiction; Humorous stories. 29 p. K - Gr. 3.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

The epitome of bad hair days is represented in the saga of Hurricane Henrietta who is famous not for what she has done, but for something she has never done: she’s never cut her hair. This furnishes continual entertainment for her friends who delight in her ability to reach into her flowing brown tresses and retrieve all sorts of surprises for show and tell. And when it comes to recess, Henrietta’s hair furnishes more entertainment than the jungle gym. Henrietta adores walking down the street and feeling her flowing mane fluttering in the breeze behind her.

As Henrietta’s hair continues to grow she becomes the center of the town’s attention, appearing in the newspaper, giving rise to all kinds of dreams of Henrietta dolls, and Henrietta TV shows. But, as in all good stories there comes a time when Henrietta’s hair begins to be a problem, not just for her, but for the whole neighborhood, as her hair becomes a safety hazard for others. Thus she earns her nickname Hurricane! When all of her best efforts to control her hair go for naught, Henrietta finally submits to the shears of Francine from the Bald Eagle Hair Salon, and recycles her hair to Harry the wig salesman, thus doing her part for the environment, and beginning a new business for Harry. Is Henrietta the same person she always was? Of course, nothing can stop this impish young lady, not even a bad hair day! The pencil and watercolor paintings of Wally Nibart add just the right sparkle to this delightful tressful tale. Judy Driscoll


E. Fathers and sons—Fiction. 30 p. Gr. 3 - 5.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

What more could a boy want than his very own baseball glove? I Remember Papa is the recollection of just such a boy. Replete with love but knowing money is tight, our boy helps Papa with the farm work, saving every hard earned quarter. Then one memorable day Papa and he ride the train to town to buy Papa work boots and go to a baseball game. The quarters go into an envelope and into the boy’s pocket. But... but, those quarters are lost out of his pocket. Papa knows what to do, buy the baseball glove instead of the work boots. Father and son glue the old boots back together, and son, of his own volition, works until every quarter he owes is paid back to his beloved Papa.

I Remember Papa comes from the reminiscences of seasoned author Helen Ketteman about her wonderful father and critically acclaimed illustrator Greg Shed about his brother. The goughe painting, hazy with age, bask in the golden hues of memory. The words themselves illustrate the story, being italicized during memory passages, straight during the actual story. Both the pictures and the words display the story from the boy’s perspective. Ketteman presents loving parents, an obedient, growing, happy child. Together they develop wise love as they learn about willing sacrifice, the true worth of desires, the value of earning your own possessions, family cohesiveness, how intertwined are the hearts of a papa and his son. This story is about a time past, yet includes many modern elements children recognize and value today: root beer and hot-dogs; baseball; baseball cards; family ties. Donna Eggett


Quality - 3 Acceptability - 4

Brenda and Edward is a happily-ever-after tale written by Maryann Kovalski. Brenda and Edward are two dogs, one a housewife, the other, a night watchman at a garage. One evening, Edward forgets his lunch, and Brenda tries to deliver it to him. She doesn’t succeed because she is hit by a car and is taken home by the driver. Edward spends the rest of his days looking for Brenda. On the day of his retirement, he catches the scent of Brenda on the tires of a car in the auto shop. He obstinately sits in the car and is taken for a reunion with Brenda.

Kovalski’s story of fidelity is strong. Sometimes young children associate with animal characters, and the fables make their character-building message. However, the recounting of the accident and the loneliness of Edward needs a judgment call by the adult.

The drawings are full of detail, colorful with everyday things for the young child to name. Su Hagerty


E. Mary, Blessed Virgin, Saint—Fiction; Jesus Christ—Nativity—Fiction; Christmas—Fiction. 32 p. K - Gr. 3.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Sarah always loved visiting her grandmother, Mamme Mary, but most of all when she could cuddle up next to her and hear the story of Mamme Mary’s trip to Bethlehem. Mamme would bring out the small wooden box filled with remembrances of the birth of her first child, and
share with Sarah the special memories she attached to each of the objects. As Sarah listened again to the stories Mammie told, she began to learn not only the history of each object but the meaning attached to it. The small piece of straw reminded her of the humility which Mary and Joseph accepted as the new-born was placed in a manger. And the wool? The gift of kindness from the first visitors to the stall, the shepherds.

As Carolyn Kramlich unfolds the story of the first Christmas from the viewpoint of a granddaughter of Mary, the mother of Jesus, the reader, too, will discover new meanings attached to the small objects which were a part of the first Christmas. Walter Porter’s watercolor paintings follow the events of the Christmas story, transporting the reader into another time and place. As Mamy stores these small treasures away in her small box, new meaning is given to Luke’s memorable verse, “But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.” — Judy Driscoll


E. Mustang—Fiction; Horses—Fiction; Cowboys—Fiction; African Americans—Fiction. 36 p. Gr. 2 - 5.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Bob Lemmons, a former slave, is a Texas cowboy famous for his ability to track animals. When he sets out to round up a herd of wild mustangs, he must track the horses day and night, endure volatile weather, challenge the stallion leader, and, finally, be accepted as one of them before he can lead the mustangs back to the ranch corral.

Award-winning author Julius Lester has written a true, slice-of-life story based on the life of black cowboy, Bob Lemmons. Through the use of beautiful, poetic language, and abundant imagery, Lester successfully evokes the spirit of the Old West and its cowboys. Meanwhile, Jerry Pinkney’s breathtaking watercolor illustrations capture both the ferocity and the beauty of wildlife and nature.

Black Cowboy Wild Horses is a beautifully written and stunningly illustrated book that tells an often forgotten story of the Old West—the story of the cowboy of color. Given its beauty, as well as the histories of its author and illustrator, it seems a likely and worthy candidate for many future awards. — Kerri Cunningham


E. Bears—Fiction; Teddy bears—Fiction; Play—Fiction. Unp. PS - Gr. 1.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Full page bright, colored paintings accompany the explanation for each new event in the saga of one day in the life of Teddy Bear. Each page of the text features a bold two inch title with a two sentence explanation. This is ideal for use with beginning readers.

Small children will easily relate to each activity in the day and will want to hear the book read over and over again. The rich texture of each painting enhances the feeling of Good Times With Teddy Bear as


Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

Mickey and Gary want to surprise their mother. They secretly write to Great Aunt Rosa and ask her to send the Christmas decorations that their mother so fondly remembers from her childhood: an angel, birds, glass-blown balls, and jumping jacks named Boo and Lou. When the ornaments arrive (with the exception of Boo and Lou), Mickey and Gary try to hide their disappointment at how old and worn out the decorations are. Sensing that something is wrong, their mother postpones decorating the tree until Christmas morning. When the family wakes up Christmas Day they find a package has been delivered with Boo and Lou inside. Mickey and Gary are thrilled, as are the other ornaments. The tinsel-tailed birds take flight and the angel grows new silver wings.

Carolyn Mamchur has written a Christmas story told from two viewpoints, that of a brother and a sister, and forgotten ornaments stored in a basement. Although The Popcorn Tree is a tale about family, traditions, and memories told in beautiful and poetic language, it makes for a confusing story. The different points of view do not blend together well and the reader is left confused concerning the children’s unexplained excitement over “ragged” Boo and Lou when they disliked the other ornaments because they were “old” and “tarnished.”

Laurie McGaw’s illustrations are beautiful and greatly enhance the story’s theme of family traditions and memories. The Popcorn Tree would be a useful book for beginning a discussion on Christmas traditions and memories. — Kerri Cunningham
Jacqueline McQuade encourages the reader to think of his own memories of good times and the promise of more to come. Such ordinary events as breakfast, playing outside, sipping soup, painting a picture, watching a sunset and reading a book are made special. **Marie Knapp**


E. Guinea pigs—Fiction. 32 p. PS - K.
Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Holly Meade has captured a guinea pig tale in **John Willy and Freddy McGee**. With a bowl full of seeds, a pile of straw, and a two-carrot cage, the living is easy for the two culprits. Life is perfect—perfectly boring. One day, the door is left open, and they make a break. Around the hassock, across the marble game, and into the dark tunnels of the pool table they scoot. However, life gets more exciting than fun when the cat wants to play, too. Home again, as fast as they can, they scurry. Safe at last—but the door is still open, inviting another adventure.

**John Willy and Freddy McGee** reads in a breathless hurry. The text scurries across Meade’s fanciful cut-paper illustrations, drawing the reader into the chase. Her choice of colors reflects the mood of the characters. The boring cage huddles in earth tones. The daring escape brings out funky shades of red, yellow, and green. The text carries a wonderful feel for the sound of action with its alliteration and onomatopoeia. The object of the story, in the author’s own words, is “Fun!” Meade also illustrated the Caldecott Honor book **Hush! A Thai Lullaby**, and the American Bookseller Pick of the List **Small Green Snake**. **Melinda Torgerson**


E. Grandfathers—Fiction; Jukeboxes—Fiction. 29 p.  K - Gr. 2.
Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Young Donna gets to go with her grandfather as he makes his rounds servicing jukeboxes. She watches as he changes records and collects money from the machines. She is thrilled when she gets to listen to her favorite record, Elvis Presley’s “Blue Suede Shoes.”

Donna is embarrassed, but responds respectfully to the waitress who calls her “honey” and says she is “cute as a June bug.” As a special treat, Poppaw gives Donna a recording of “Blue Suede Shoes” to take home with her. She carries it on the end of the big stick Poppaw uses for his jukebox keys.

In Poppaw’s workshop Donna’s record slips off the key ring as she twirls it around, and it gets smashed. She is dismayed, but even though her prized record is gone, Poppaw plays her song for her one more time on another machine, and together they dance around the workshop.

Jacqueline K. Ogburn portrays a time gone by with a vivacious warmth in **The Jukebox Man**. James Ransome’s full page, colorful artwork depicts a very happy girl and her congenial grandfather. **Jeanette Hardage**


Quality - 3  Acceptability - 5

Biddie, Bill, Bea, Bugs, Boo Boo, Maggie, Micky, Mel, Molly, Jenny, Josh, and Jimmy are neighbors. They are constantly over at each other’s homes, getting involved in different adventures, and helping each other with each new challenge. Neither race, age, nor marital status is a barrier to the friendship between the adults and their numerous children. The three individual families have become one big family who share life’s blessings and trials together.

Jan Ormerod has written a sweet story about the close friendship between three families in which the question “Who’s whose?” really has no relevance as they share everything. The author’s colorful drawings with charming details such as the cat licking up cheese dropped by a child and children helping one of the mothers get ready for a date, spilling clothing and jewelry everywhere, help make **Who’s Whose?** an endearing book which celebrates families everywhere. **Susan Robinson**


E. Mothers and daughters—Fiction; Dogs—Fiction; Kindness—Fiction. 29 p. K - Gr. 3.
Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

“Only I could drink once more the sweet, sweet water of my childhood, my life would be saved,” says Celia’s mother, Mara, as she lies desperately ill.

After the death of her young husband in a war, Mara takes her infant, Celia, and runs away, settling in a secluded cottage, alone except for their dog, Brumble. Although Mara misses her husband, she and Celia are happy until, ten years later, Mara becomes very ill. When Mara whispers her desire to drink of the healing waters, Celia packs up food, a cloak, and her mother’s flute and, accompanied by Brumble, goes off to find the water of her mother’s childhood. On the way, she meets a wild wood boy, a cold, lonely woman, and an angry mountain man. Her kindness to them persuades them to help her accomplish her task. However, as she returns to the cottage, she drops the bottle and spills the water. Afraid that her mother will now die, she weeps over her. Her tears drop onto her mother’s face, reviving her. “... you cannot truly share another’s happiness unless you share her tears,” they decide.

Newbery Medal and National Book Award winner, Katherine Paterson joins with Russian artist, Vladimir Vagin, to create the beautifully written and illustrated **Celia and the Sweet, Sweet Water**. Vagin’s large watercolor drawings contain striking details done in vivid colors. Each holds elements that compel the reader to look closely. Paterson introduces a lovable dog, the sad-faced, big, woolly Brumble, that always mutters original sayings.

Readers have learned to count on Paterson’s books as worthwhile for a wide-range of ages. **Celia and the Sweet, Sweet Water** upholds that opinion, making it a book worthy of enjoyment for generations to come. **Betty M. Hockett and Betty Winslow**


E. Friendship—Fiction. 30 p. K - Gr. 3.
Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

What do you do when you live in a house for two families? You become best friends with your neighbor, which is what Ben and Molly become. They share everything, both at home as they play and do homework, and at school at lunch and play. They even wear matching T-shirts which children will enjoy watching throughout the book as the slogans change.

Ben and Molly have a plan to save their allowances to buy a tent so they can camp out in the back yard. All is going swimmingly until the week before their shared birthday party. What do you do when you share a birthday with your best friend and all of a sudden your best friend is your worst enemy? Ben and Molly put up a good front for the party, only to please their parents, but in the end they discover that friendship and forgiveness are much more important than tents. David Soman lends his humor and sensitivity to his watercolor illustrations for this charming picture book. **Judy Driscoll**

The elderly Mr. Putter and his cat Tabby are neighbors of Mrs. Teaberry and her dog Zeke. Mr. Putter and Mrs. Teaberry both enjoy music, but Mrs. Teaberry likes country music while Mr. Putter prefers opera. One day Mrs. Teaberry decide they should join a band. “I can’t play an instrument,” Mr. Putter protests. “Of course you can, old people can do anything they want,” Mrs. Teaberry replies. They check out various bands, but can’t find the right one for them. Mr. Putter even tries to toot a horn. He can’t get it right! Mrs. Teaberry finally discovers the perfect solution and they are all happy. *Mr. Putter and Tabby Toot the Horn* is just one more engaging saga in this ongoing series of a grandfatherly gent and his feline friend.

Whimsical color illustrations by Arthur Howard highlight the text. Children will chuckle and enjoy the antics of these two older folks while learning the process of decision making and compromise. The storyline is fast paced and fun. Children will love the humorous outcome. *Mary Jarvis*


Camilla Cream loves lima beans, but in her effort to fit in with the crowd, she gives them up. In fact, Camilla is so worried about what others think about her that she literally becomes her worries. “Should she wear red or green on her first day of school?” Filled with all these doubts Camilla looks in the mirror dismayed to find that she has become striped. After assurances from the doctor that she is not running a fever, and therefore not ill, Camilla goes to school, where she quickly becomes the center of attention, changing chameleon like to fit the whims of all her classmates. Asked to remain at home until the “stripes” disappear, there follows a series of medical and psychological experts all with helpful suggestions for getting over the stripes, each one of which only makes poor Camilla worse. The climax comes when an Environmental Therapist comes to visit and tells Camilla to breathe deeply and become one with her room. Poor Camilla, breathes deeply and literally becomes her room with lips as the bed mattresses, and eyes as pictures on the wall. It takes a little old lady “as plump and sweet as a strawberry” to solve Camilla’s bad case of stripes with a healthy dose of lima beans. Camilla vows to never again become what everyone else wants, but to be the best “self” she can be... and to eat lima beans whenever she likes.

David Shannon with his wonderfully fantastical illustrations has created a far out and entertaining story. In fact, the events of the story are so unreal...
that the audience can giggle without worry at Camilla’s plight and yet identify with the stress of trying to be what you are not, driving home the point of Mr. Shannon’s message: Be yourself.

Judy Driscoll


E. Stars—Fiction; Epiphany—Fiction; Grandmothers—Fiction; Hispanic Americans—Fiction; New Mexico—Fiction. 32 p. K - Gr. 3.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

When the winter wind and rain turn icy cold in New Mexico, Pepe and Sila cuddle under the covers with their grandmother and ask, “How can the Three Kings ride in such a hard rain?... how will they find the hay box for their horses... with no stars to guide them?” To calm their fears on this stormy Epiphany Eve, the grandmother snuggles closer and lulls them into enchanting sleep with her story of the secret stars which they find in the icy patterns of spiders’ webs, the shining ice and water animals of the meadow pond, and even in the chicken coop! The children are still finding stars around them as they wake in the morning to the delight of the gifts left by the Three Kings.

In the telling of this tale Joseph Slate introduces American children to the Mexican traditions of the Epiphany which follows our Christmas season. His careful incorporation of the Mexican vocabulary into the telling of the tale, along with the colorful and enchanting illustrations of Felipe Davalos which highlight Mexican art and design, bring this story to life. A perfect addition to the holiday season for those studying traditions from other lands. Judy Driscoll


E. Prairies—Canada—Fiction. 24 p. PS - Gr. 2.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 4

“When Emily first saw the prairie she thought of a green-gold ocean.” What she misses instantly are trees. Rocking in the wagon at night she dreams of trees. When the first crop is harvested, a bit of money is left over, and her father lets her purchase a weeping willow by mail. At the first sign of spring, the tree is planted and quickly takes root. It stands through her lifetime, as her brother goes off to war and dies, as her parents age, as she has children and grandchildren. Emily is finally buried beneath the willow.

Maxine Trottier has conveyed the sweeping expanse of the prairie in Prairie Willow. The simile of the land being like an ocean is maintained throughout the picture book. The grass flows like waves, and their sod house is a small island. With poetic language and conciseness, the reader is taken back to first settle and harvest a fruitful land. One also sees “the way of things on the prairie. Held firmly to the land by its roots and a dream.”

Artists Laura Fernandez and Rick Jacobson collaborated on the illustrations for Prairie Willow. Most of the paintings offer a warmth and broad view of the setting. A few pieces bear static character poses. Overall the work does bring the prairie to touch the reader.

At the conclusion, Emily has a dream in which she is a young girl again. She calls to her little brother running toward her across the prairie. Emily has joined her brother in death. Lorie Ann Grover


Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Above the lake hovers a cloud of mist. The boy awakens and knows it is time. Dressing quickly, he goes to meet his grandfather, who waits for him in his handmade birchbark canoe. Into the silent water slides the great boat, and the pair set off together for an adventure of discovery, where the old man will teach the young man how to see, how to listen, and how to be brave.

In Morning on the Lake, Jan Bourdeau Waboose has created a masterpiece of awe inspiring wonder. The language is so beautiful and quiet that it lingers in the mind even after turning the page. Here is a book that teaches beauty, strength, honor, and love, ideals that are sorely lacking in most children’s books today, and it does so in a way that will inspire and encourage children to explore the world around them.

Karen Reczuch’s illustrations match the text perfectly. They are laid out much like photographs would be, which makes the reader feel as though they were taking the trip with the boy and his grandfather, while their simplicity and realistic hues add depth and warmth to the magical story.

Waboose uses two Native Americans as her subject matter, focusing on the close relationship between a boy and his grandfather, which makes Morning on the Lake an all around winner. Virginia Schnabel


E. Bedtime—Fiction; Rabbits—Fiction; Alphabet; Counting; Stories in rhyme. 28 p. PS - Gr. 1.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Old Mother Rabbit is trying to find a place for each of her baby bunnies to sleep for the night. First she feeds them and kisses them, then begins tucking them in one-by-one. With twenty-six children, Old Mother Rabbit has to get pretty creative to find a bed for everyone. She places Abel on the table, Blair in a chair, and Carol in a barrel. Each of the bunny’s name begins with a different letter of the alphabet, and their “bed” rhymes with their name. With several names, author Rick Walton had to really stretch his imagination. For example, Ute by the fruit and Yale by the scale.

Counting skills and letter recognition are combined in a delightful way in this gentle bedtime book based on the classic children’s rhyme, “There was an old woman who lived in a shoe...”. Old Mother Rabbit, however, is loving and efficient in this peaceful re-telling. Beautifully illustrated by Paige Miglio, the watercolor drawings of the Rabbit Family really make the book. Even very small children will enjoy just studying the pictures of the bunnies and their unusual sleeping habits. A wonderful picture book for bedtime or any quiet moment. Elizabeth Coleman
Jennifer Jansen has a photographic memory that has earned her the nickname Camera, or Cam for short. She and her friend Eric have gone ice skating and run into a problem when Eric loses his locker key after insisting to his father that he was old enough and wouldn’t lose it. Cam uses her amazing memory to recreate the images of Eric with the key to solve the mystery.

The storyline of *Young Cam Jansen and the Ice Skate Mystery* is very simple, making this a good choice for beginning readers. The illustrations by Susanna Natti focus on the interaction of the characters with not a lot of background detail which would serve to keep the young reader reading rather than examining the pictures. David Adler has written a book for younger readers that is enjoyed by all.

Sally Kuhns

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F. Egypt—History—Fiction; Pyramids—Fiction; Pharaohs—Fiction. 32 p. Gr. 3 - 6.


F. Vikings—Fiction; Great Britain—History—Fiction. 32 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

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In *Pharaohs and Pyramids*, Nakht, a wealthy landowner who is in charge of the local temple’s land, is introduced. Author Tony Allan follows Nakht through daily activities such as traveling the river Nile and going to school, to extraordinary events such as visiting the Pharaoh’s court and fighting in battle. The battle scene shows piles of hands cut off of dead warriors.

A team of authors, Heather Amery and Patricia Vanags, introduce Petronius, a rich government official, in the book *Rome and Romans*. Cutaways show the interior of homes, temples, and the baths. There is nudity in the bath scene. It is from the back or vague and undetailed.

Chieftain Knut leads a band of fierce warriors in *Viking Raiders* by Anne Civardi and James Graham-Campbell. When Knut is not running his farm in Norway, he is raiding and pillaging countries across the sea. The raid scene is graphic cartoon illustration, showing bloody swords thrust through victims.

Imagine donning a magic helmet and sending yourself into the past. Usborne Books combines imagination with cartoon illustrations to introduce children to three historical civilizations: Pharaohs and Pyramids, Rome and Romans, and Viking Raiders. Using cartoons similar to Waldo books, The Time Traveler Series introduces a family and follows them to market, work, school, festival, and battle. Burial preparations and the gods of each culture are also explained. A map of the region is at the front of each book and further information is found at the back. Although geared toward elementary age, this series engages the everyone from toddlers to adults with the bright illustrations by Toni Goffe and Stephen Cartwright. Joanna M. Haffly

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F. Old age—Fiction; Great-grandfathers—Fiction; Storytelling—Fiction. 29 p. K - Gr. 3.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Nathaniel Hopkins goes to visit his 100-year-old great grandfather after school every day to hear stories. Greatpaw makes lemonade and chicken salad sandwiches, too.

Then one day, hundreds of stories later, Greatpaw decides he wants to hear some new stories. Greatpaw advertises a meeting for all century-old storytellers. When the time arrives there are no stories and no storytellers. Nathaniel is glad he likes chicken salad sandwiches and lemonade.

When taking his dog, Johnson, to hear stories doesn’t help, Nathaniel takes Greatpaw to school. Still there are no new stories as the children just sit and look.

Then Nathaniel advertises in the paper and Sadie Johannsen, who is almost one hundred, answers the ad. She has lots of stories to share. Now Greatpaw is not lonely and Nathaniel gathers all his friends the first of each month for stories. Sadie cranks the ice cream maker, Greatpaw makes chicken salad sandwiches, and Nathaniel pours lemonade. Now The Chicken Salad Club is enjoyed by all.

Marsha Arnold writes this lively story of a boy sharing tales from the past with a great grandparent, showing how the need for companionship is met for both generations. Julie Downing’s detailed vibrant watercolor pictures greatly enrich the details of the story.

All who share this book will appreciate the value of good stories and good friends. Marie Knaupp

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F. Mystery fiction. 185 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Stevie Diamond and her partner, Jesse Kulniki are always on the lookout for another mystery to solve. The prankster has hit their city with embarrassing pranks pulled on high level officials. This time, he steals the president of the United States’ beloved dog. Stevie and Jesse unknowingly have already found the dog, filthy and covered with burrs. Their cleanup job includes a haircut to remove the burrs and henna to make the dog’s coat shine. The henna is the wrong kind, however, and turns the dog green. They decide they are now suspects, and must find the real prankster before they are accused. Systematically evaluating the suspects leads them to the prankster, just in time, of course.
What’s a Daring Detective Like Me Doing in the Doghouse? is a funny, entertaining mystery. Linda Bailey manages to make this preposterous story seem absolutely believable. The plot unfolds with a good pace; fast enough to keep the reader’s attention without being confusing. Stevie and Jesse are likeable twelve-year-olds with a penchant for solving mysteries. Unlike many fictitious detectives, they also have normal responsibilities appropriate for their age. The tone is upbeat.  

*Catherine Suvold Johnson*


394.2663. Christmas decorations; Christmas cookery; Christmas. 32 p. Gr. 1 - 6.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Emilie and friends invite young readers to join their Christmas Club and prepare for the best Christmas ever. The club meets between Thanksgiving and Christmas with different activities each week. Together the members make Advent calendars, cards, ornaments, and gifts. They share favorite family traditions, host a Peppermint Tea, and go caroling. After Christmas the twelve days of Christmas are celebrated, ending with an Epiphany party.

Younger girls will enjoy the creative recipes, crafts, and activities presented. Directions for projects are thoroughly explained and enhanced by Michal Sparks’ charming illustrations. Besides inspiring a season of fun, *The Very Best Christmas Ever!* encourages working together, giving to others, and celebrating in special ways. Families with girls through pre-teen will enjoy this book by Emilie Barnes.  

*Lydia Harris*


F. Mystery fiction; Christian life—Fiction; Washington (State)—Fiction. 160 p. Gr. 5 - 8.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Sixteen-year-old Megan Parnell and her step-brother Peter Lewis uncover mysteries in this new series by author and teacher, Joan Biggar. Using the natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest and northern Arizona as her settings, Biggar weaves fact into her fiction with items of history, geography, and nature in a way that entertains readers, even as they watch characters solve problems in a way that glorifies God.

In *Missing on Castaway Island*, Megan struggles to adjust to life with a new step-brother, Peter. Accompanying their newlywed parents on a family camping trip to Whidby Island, they explore the abandoned war bunkers at Fort Ebey. Almost by accident, they meet Thuy, a frightened Vietnamese girl whose brother is missing and in danger. Megan and Peter learn to work together to help their new friend. Encountering people with New Age beliefs during their search, Megan and Peter recognize how those beliefs conflict with their own. They eventually decides to ask Jesus into her heart; Megan finds her own faith strengthened; and a mystery is solved.

In *Mystery at Camp Galena*, Megan and Peter volunteer to be summer camp counselors. Handsome Sean Bertram signs up, too, but so does Willow Elizabeth Hanes—the prettiest girl in honors English. Worse, Willow is assigned as Megan’s cabin partner. During the week, Megan tries to overlook Willow’s insensitivity and pettiness, but trouble erupts between them. In addition, Megan is worried about two of her young campers—one struggles with a secret, the other faces a deadly illness. Mysterious clues outside the camp trouble Megan and Peter. Who is damaging the forest ecology, and why? Although diverse, this is a tightly-woven, camp experience book that delivers intrigue, teenage competition, folklore, and nature, while carefully dealing with tough issues such as sexual misconduct and environmental damage.

*Mystery at Camp Galena* takes us to Megan and Peter’s great-uncle’s ranch in eastern Washington. There they work in the apple orchards and meet a migrant-worker family, Mr. and Mrs. Salinas and their children, Luis and Rosalia. When accidents start happening in the orchards, Megan suspects someone is using sabotage to convince her great-uncle to sell his ranch. But who? And why does someone want to cause trouble for the Salinas family as well? Is it because they are Hispanic? Megan searches for answers to these questions, and the truth is eventually revealed.

In the fourth book, *Trapped in Haunted Canyon*, Megan and Peter spend Christmas vacation camping in Arizona with family friends Chuck and Penny Dale. Megan is pleased to see her childhood friend Aaron again, especially since he’s now a handsome eighteen-year-old. Traveling in the Dales’ fifth-wheeler trailer, the party visit historic sites in northern Arizona. While exploring one of the areas, the threesome discover signs of digging. They suspect illegal pot-hunting. A storm, a kidnapping, and a daring rescue keeps readers riveted to the end. Also, Aaron realizes just how much God loves him as a result of the self-sacrificial acts of others involving a lost Irish setter.  

*Kimm Swenson Gollnick*


F. Great Britain—History—Fiction; Middle Ages—Fiction. 124 p. Gr. 5 - 8.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Sigmund Brouwer subtly weaves in details of 14th century life, keeping the tale flowing while providing necessary background information. Bran’s character is well-developed and likeable. While Bran finds a sense of belonging, he learns that it is the spirit inside that makes the person, not the circumstances in which they were raised. Plot twists throughout the novel make the resolution anything but predictable.  

*Lisa Wroble*
being laughed at by his friends. His friends trick him into giving Mia the card but he realizes that, “It’s good to show people that you like them.”

Super-Fine Valentine will strike a chord with anyone who has experienced a crush and the related teasing, or who has worked with young children experiencing crushes. The subject matter is dealt with very positively and Little Bill grows as a result, which provides a good message to young readers, that “suffering” can produce something good. Varnette P. Honeywood illustrates Super-Fine Valentine with colorful images of Little Bill and his friends. Sally Kuhns


F. Mississauga Indians—Fiction. 30 p. K - Gr. 3.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 4

Rides the Wind is a young Mississauga boy who is somewhat ostracized because of a limp that prevents him from joining in the games and activities of the other children. His mother gave him his name as a reflection of the speed he could achieve when his dog pulled him on his sled. The winter season is especially long and harsh and the tribe runs short on food. One day while the men are out hunting for deer, Rides the Wind ventures into the woods and is shown by Ninautik, the name of all maple trees, and a red squirrel, how to get “sweet water” from the trunk of the maple. The discovery is initially met with disbelief but then Rides the Wind is given the opportunity to demonstrate his finding to the chief elders. The chief regards this as an answer to their prayers to the Great Creator and renames Rides the Wind, Wise Little Raven.

Connie Brummel Crook has developed a legend for the season called Maple Moon, when the sap begins to run. The discovery of this resource by young Rides the Wind adds a sweet poignancy to the tale, giving the character an opportunity to give something of value to his tribe. The changing of his name to Wise Little Raven, reflects the new appreciation given to the child. Scott Cameron’s illustrations are beautiful, done in a similar fashion to N.C. Wyeth, giving a tremendous warmth to Maple Moon. Sally Kuhns


F. Schools—Fiction; Humorous fiction. 92 p. Gr. 3 - 5.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Regina is envious of Margaret and Kate’s friendship. Regina feels she is losing her best friend, and tries to regain Margaret’s friendship by playing jokes on people. The attempts backfire with Margaret disappointed in Regina’s behavior, and Regina pretending to like an unpopular boy. But Regina will not give up, especially with her birthday only days away. As Regina is about to hand over a twinkie filled with dog food to Kate, she finds out Margaret is still her best friend. So she pops the twinkie into her own mouth, ratches, and misses the surprise birthday party her friends had planned.

Lynn Cullen has written a real-life story in which jealousy nearly costs a young girl her best friend. Regina resents all the extra time Margaret is devoting to Kate. But the fear of losing Margaret’s friendship keeps Regina from playing a trick on Kate, and ultimately she grasps that two friends are better than none.

Regina Calhoun Eats Dog Food illustrates the powerful bond of genuine friendship. Dianne Woodman


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Sent to live with his great aunt for the summer while his parents pursue their dream of climbing Mount Kilamanjaro, scrappy Walter Higgins feels left behind. Referring to his aunt as “the Warden,” Walter’s fears of boredom come true, until his imagination and curiosity bring him into the life of his aunt’s neighbor, Old Zeb. An old salt with the sea is still in his heart, Zeb builds ships in bottles. But he lets Walter in on the true building project hidden in the cellar—the GSP or Great Secret Project.

Walter spends the remainder of his summer helping Old Zeb make his dream come true, only to learn that Walter cannot share Zeb’s dream but must find and follow one of his own. Author and storyteller Carmen Agra Deedy weaves a playful tale ripe with the descriptive language and drama of oral storytelling. The endpapers of the book introduce and conclude the tale as a grown Walter tells his visiting niece about his summer with Old Zeb. A short glossary of high seas terms completes the book.

Walter’s experiences introduce and conclude the tale as a grown Walter tells his visiting niece about his summer with Old Zeb. A short glossary of high seas terms completes the book.

The bright, colorful illustrations by Michael P. White bring the tale to life. The mystery behind the GSP is cast using pirate treasure-map borders around the full-page illustrations. These progress from land to clouds as Walter grasps the concept of choosing his own dream to follow. A caption plate describes each picture like old photo frames and black and white drawings of scenes inside bottles echoes the “long ago” time period. Each spread is treated as a separate “chapter” in the book.

This story will work well when read aloud to elementary readers or as private reading for older readers. Whether young or old, Old Zeb encourages us to act upon our dreams. Lisa Wrobleski


F. Brothers and sisters—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction; Denmark—Fiction; Mystery fiction. 176 p. Gr. 4 - 6.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 4

Thirteen-year-old Peter, his twin sister Elise, and their Jewish friend, Henrik, play junior detectives. Matthias, an adult male Jew and family friend, seems to be acting suspiciously. They spy a shady character following Matthias, and before long this man begins to terrorize the children. Is Matthias truly a friend or does he have ulterior motives?

Touch the Sky is the eighth in The Young Underground series written by Robert Elmer, but the introduction and conclusion are such that the book is able to stand alone. The setting is post World War II Denmark, when Jewish refugees are trying to return to Palestine before permission is officially granted.

This mystery, full of action, will especially appeal to young readers. There are incidents of mild violence when the “bad guy” tries to harm some of the characters, but he is brought to justice in the end, with little damage done. Some of the action involving the young characters is far-fetched, but it does add to the excitement of this tale.
The story shares the chagrin that a Christian encounters when passing up opportunities to share his faith, and it also reveals how God can take even these failures and turn them into something useful. The ABC’s of salvation are also presented when a Jewish boy accepts Jesus as the Messiah.

The epilogue at the back of the book gives a small slice of information on the historical impact that this era had on the Jews. Debbie Lindsay


F. Africa—Fiction. Unp. Gr. 3 - 5.

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

Excitement, adventure, and an early breakfast begin the day when Zamani goes to market. Many times he has watched Father and his older brothers go, but today Zamani will go with them on the two mile walk to the weekly African market. Since Zamani does his part by leading the brown calf, he earns two coins. Now comes the fun of choosing what he will buy with his coins. Instead of buying a white kanzas for himself to wear, he chooses a beautiful necklace for his mother. Because of the pride and satisfaction he receives in giving his gift, he at once begins making plans to have something to sell on the next market day so he can buy a gift for his father.

The paper cover, quality of paper, and illustrations do not adequately present the beautiful story of simple unhurried village life and the events of a native African market day. Caring family life is shared as well as the simple joy of giving as Tom Feeling tells how Zamani goes to market. Marie Knaapp


F. Weight control—Fiction; Friendship—Fiction; Magic—Fiction. 110 p. Gr. 3 - 7.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

Pie Magic, by Toby Forward, is a whimsical fable of Bertie, an unhappy overweight boy. Bertie is so unhappy all he wants to do is eat chocolate bars and hit people. Which of course makes him fatter and more unhappy.

Fortunately, unbeknownst to him, Bertie has some friends who secretly decide to help him lose weight and become nice. It’s the pie magic. Bertie eats a pie and loses weight. But not the fat. He’s now lighter than air and floats like a big balloon. That’s the problem and to remedy it he ends up eating lots of healthful food like oatmeal to weigh him down and bicycling all around town looking for the elusive friends who had given him the magic pie. In so doing, Bertie begins to like the four basic food groups, slims down, and learns kindness.

Toby Forward, author of one other fantasy for children, is an imaginative writer. There are references to magic and potions; further there is a helpful old lady whom Bertie decides must be a witch, and when confronted, she doesn’t deny it. Although written for young children, some of the British terms in Pie Magic are used. For example, most Americans think of pie as dessert, not dinner.

Large print and several full-page sketches will attract young readers. Children who like fairy tales will like Pie Magic. And, who knows, maybe overweight readers will be inspired to a more healthful lifestyle as was Bertie. Ginger McGrath


F. Schools—Fiction; Humorous stories. 216 p. Gr. 4 - 6.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 4

Jasper can’t wait for school to start. He loves school, getting new books, and having homework every night. But the thought of having “the Cootches” in his sixth grade class makes him break out in a sweat. All summer Jasper watched Butch and Spike. From the library, where Butch and Spike snickered over the “dirty” pictures in the adult books, to the grocery store, where they left in a van with a “My Kid Just Beat Up Your Honor Student” bumper sticker on it, Jasper has observed the Couture cousins. Jasper wants to sit as far from Butch and Spike as possible, but Mrs. McNutty assigns him a seat between them.

All year Jasper shares a group with Butch and Spike, which complicates his efforts to earn A’s. But, when “the McNutt” decides to keep Spike in sixth grade, Jasper gives up his chance for first place in the science fair to help Spike move up to seventh grade. Butch and Spike find reasons to have good grades and Jasper discovers fun doesn’t have to be goal oriented.

Gail Gauthier portrays life in a sixth grade class with hilarious perception. Well written, the characters are nicely rounded with both the desirable and perhaps not so desirable traits of each child presented. Gauthier touches on the budding sexual interests of the young boys in a carefully worded, realistic way. The jacket art by Richard Hull faithfully follows Gauthier’s description of the boys. Barbara Bryden


F. Horses—Fiction; Grandfathers—Fiction; Ranch life—Fiction. 79 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Jessie Haas’ latest in her series of Beware books, is sure to capture the hearts of young horse lovers. In this adventure, a lightning storm frightens the cattle and prize horses of Lily’s grandfather and they escape into the countryside. The next morning young Lily decides to go out on Beware, her trusted horse, and look for them. The biggest concern is that Stogie, her grandfather’s newest addition to his farm, is a horse with a wild streak and no one has been able to ride him since he came to the farm. Lily sets out to find Stogie, unsure of how she will get him home when she does find him. When Lily finds Stogie trapped by his halter in a tree, she and Beware manage to gain his confidence and bring him home. This small chapter book is lively enough to hold the interest of middle readers even if they aren’t horse lovers! Judy Driscoll
the end you find yourself wondering if Sarah will finally get her wish of a horse of her own, and will it perhaps be Barney. Gayle Haberman


F. African Americans—History—1863-1877—Fiction; Reconstruction—Fiction; United States—History—1865-1898—Fiction; Diaries—Fiction. 197 p. Gr. 3 - 8.

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

Patsy is a black slave girl on a plantation in Mars Bluff, South Carolina. She has no last name, no known parents, and a definite limp and stutter. Due to her skin color and physical disabilities, Patsy is assumed to be stupid—destined to a life spent emptying chamber pots. But Patsy is mentally sharp. She learns how to read and write by watching and listening when the children of the house are being taught. Through a chain of events, this shy, disabled girl rises to help other blacks on the plantation learn to read and write when the school they are promised never materializes.

Joyce Hansen utilizes the creative approach of a hidden diary to shed light on a slave girl’s life in the 1860's. The reader will see first-hand the changes that occurred on a large cotton plantation as the civil war ended and slaves were freed. The life of newly-freed black people is seen as not much different—yet in some ways entirely different—than life when they were enslaved. This book gives insight into the Freedmen’s Bureau, Black Codes, and the desperation of former slave owners as their livelihood is subjected to changes beyond their control.

I Thought My Soul Would Rise and Fly is grounded in historical facts. Eleven black-and-white pictures with notes are included in the back of the book, along with the music for the song “Free at Last,” upon which the book’s title is based. Children will enjoy learning about this period in history, while teachers and parents will appreciate the historical accuracy. Barbara Beyer


F. Boys and girls—Fiction; Fathers—Fiction; Grandfathers—Fiction; Deer hunting—Fiction. 100 p. Gr. 4 - 8.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Helen Hunter has accomplished a masterful feat in combining the hunting stories of her sportsman husband with a field guide to bird hunting. The result is an easy to read and understand lesson in hunting, chock full of hunting information, without sacrificing the story line of a young boy’s adventure in going bird hunting for the first time with his grandfather. For the child who would rather be out doing the hunting than staying at home reading about it, this book is a must. Mrs. Hunter imparts the wisdom of gun care along with the ten Commandments of gun safety right alongside good wildlife preservation practices, without sounding preachy or dull. Each chapter ends with a hunting vocabulary list so that the reader is not left to guess at what strange terms mean. By the end of the story the reader is well prepared to plan a hunting trip of his own. The experience of reading this book will whet the appetite of the young outdoorsman to search for others in this Young American! Hunting and Fishing Series. Judy Driscoll


F. Fantasy; Writers—Fiction. 144 p. Gr. 4 - 6.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

WBE 1/2 page ad
Fred’s mother died when he was five and he has all but forgotten the magic-filled land she created especially for him. Until twelve minutes before midnight on his eleventh birthday, when the spoiled Prince of Tarn appears in Fred’s bedroom demanding to be returned to his royal kingdom.

How will Fred manage to send a fictional character back to an imaginary land? Worse, how will he hide the Prince from his busy-body neighbor, Mrs. Tobias? With the help of his friend Rebecca, Fred looks for clues in his mother’s notes. When a magic spell whisks all three of them to Tarn, what they find is not the kingdom the Prince left, nor the one Fred’s mother created. Tarn is being overgrown with trees and brambles—and the Prince is turning to wood!

To save Tarn and find a way home they must figure out how Tarn and reality are connected. Both Fred and the spoiled Prince learn a lot about the magic of friendship and something about themselves as they work together to rewrite the future of Tarn. With Rebecca’s help, Fred recaptures his imagination and fills the void left by his mother’s death. Award-winning Canadian author Hazel Hutchins creates a fast-paced tale of growth powered by hope. Ruth Ohi’s black and white ink illustrations chronicle the change in the Prince’s character. Lisa Wroble


Beneath the unused platform of the old Kings Cross train station in London is a portal to a magical island. Called a gump, this portal opens during one opening. The human girls, triplets, have been missing the world... and fish fry. Just as the gump is about to close again, the prince is stolen by Mrs. Trottle, the rich wife of a banker. The human girls, triplets, and the Prince are transported to the spellbound gump in the Island.

Adam Christian is a young Tananan Indian who is graduating from the Sitka Industrial and Training School, the best school in Alaska. The year is 1897, and as the top student, he is chosen to accompany Dr. Sheldon Jackson to Washington, D.C. This historical fiction account of Sheldon Jackson is told through the eyes of the bright, ambitious, boy who is eager to leave behind his Indian homeland. Together, Jackson and Adam travel up the Yukon river and then across the United States. Because the gold rush has depleted food supplies in Alaska, Jackson convinces the United States government to purchase reindeer from the Laplanders in Norway to send to Alaska. Adam accompanies Jackson to Alaska, where they brave a storm waiting for the reindeer herders. Another storm accosts them at sea while they are returning to the U.S. with the reindeer and their Lapp herdsmen. Through his travels with Sheldon Jackson, Adam sorts through his desires for success and comes to realize his destiny may be in helping his own people.

Dave and Neta Jackson use a fictitious main character to tell the true story of a Christian missionary, and it works well. Traveling through Alaska, Adam Christian meets an alcoholic sea captain who shows him a town where the natives all perished because of alcohol. The authors use these experiences to teach the reader about the effects of alcohol without seeming to preach. They use the moral dilemmas Adam faces in his travels to emphasize the need for honesty. While Adam’s eyes, Dr. Sheldon Jackson is portrayed as somewhat stern but kind; a man of insight and action. The pencil illustrations by Julian Jackson add interest and clarification to the text. The distances traveled in the story will be more impressive if the reader refers to a good map. Cathleen Sovold Johnson


Harry is afraid of heights. Now he and the gang have been invited to a party at the local amusement park. Sidney tells everyone about a new ride, the Drop of Doom, which is a giant elevator that takes people high into the sky, then drops them again quickly. Harry must face and overcome his fear, while Sidney must finally admit that he too was afraid.


Christopher's library journal 27 fall, 1998
Throughout the story, Deidre Langeland introduces her readers to many different Australian animals, trees, and plants. Kangaroo Island is beautifully illustrated with detailed watercolor drawings by Frank Ordaz. Each animal is pictured within the text and in the glossary.

Several pages of information follow the story. The author includes a map to locate Kangaroo Island, more information about the island and the benefit of forest fires, and a pictorial glossary of the animals and plants mentioned in the story. The last two pages open up to show a four-page illustration of the habitat of Kangaroo Island.

A readalong audio tape with page turning signals and sounds effects from the forest accompanies the book. Patricia Perry


Addie’s Forever Friend is an adventure story set in the 1800’s on an Iowa farm. Writer Laurie Lawlor did extensive research to find time-appropriate accounts of what life might be really like for a family on the prairie.

Main characters Addie and Eleanor share a near drowsy experience as well as a few mischievous escapades that lead to some good moral lessons. Addie’s mom is pregnant, and her dad is looking for a new homestead in “Dakota” while the family stays with the wise Aunt Ida and her husband Manfred. Aunt Ida frequents her “praying chair” and always has a kind act of love or word of wisdom for the children.

Addie has two brothers and hopes dearly for a new baby sister. Addie is the more shy, responsible girl, while Eleanor is bold, daring, and adventurous. The two truly are best of friends.

The author beautifully intertwines the struggles of life on the prairie homestead with the deep faith of a farmer’s wife to send the message to a young reader that the Bible is dependable in time of need, and those who believe can be strong, loving, and trustworthy.

At the beginning of each chapter, beautiful, detailed pencil drawings by Helen Cogancherry add to the sense of time and place of the book and offer further enjoyment for the reader. Mary Jo Kryzanski

It is Christmas, 1901, and Mandie—Amanda Shaw—is going home for the holidays. She must tell her grandmother that she has invited Jonathan Guyer and his father to spend the holidays with them. Seeking the perfect time to tell Grandmother, Mandie misses several opportunities to talk to her. The Guys arrive and Mandie allows her grandmother to come to a wrong conclusion. Mandy glosses over her deception until the last chapter, when she confesses, and subsequently receives a light punishment from her mother.

On her first day home Mandie finds a mysterious package on the porch containing dirt, holly berries, and ribbons. Mandie’s friends join her as she seeks to find out the meaning of this gift. She does not discover until Christmas Day that it is a treasure map of the house leading to presents Jonathan Guyer has brought for the holidays. The Guyer and his father to spend the holidays with them. Seeking the perfect time to tell Grandmother, Mandie misses several opportunities to talk to her. The Guys arrive and Mandie allows her grandmother to come to a wrong conclusion. Mandy glosses over her deception until the last chapter, when she confesses, and subsequently receives a light punishment from her mother.


F. Mystery fiction; Buried treasure—Fiction. 173 p. Gr. 3 - 8.

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

It is Christmas, 1901, and Mandie—Amanda Shaw—is going home for the holidays. She must tell her grandmother that she has invited Jonathan Guyer and his father to spend the holidays with them. Seeking the perfect time to tell Grandmother, Mandie misses several opportunities to talk to her. The Guys arrive and Mandie allows her grandmother to come to a wrong conclusion. Mandy glosses over her deception until the last chapter, when she confesses, and subsequently receives a light punishment from her mother.

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Mandie and the Unwanted Gift moves along rather slowly and covers only six days in Mandie’s life. Joe Woodard continues to play an important part. She plans to marry him someday and that governs many of her actions. This twenty-ninth Mandie book written by Lois Leppard could stand alone; however, a new Mandie reader might find the number of
characters from previous stories mentioned throughout this novel somewhat confusing. Patricia Perry

F. Family life—Fiction; Emigration and immigration—Fiction; Scotland—Fiction; Canada—Fiction. 124 p. Gr. 3 - 5.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Elspet Mary barely remembers when her mother died. She was only four years old. A skinny, frightened child, she was taken to live with relatives she had never seen before. But soon her new life in the small Scottish village settled into a comfortable pattern—until the men began talking about northern Canada. Elspet Mary finds herself in a turmoil again. What awaits in the rough wilderness? What will occupy a young girl's time in that untamed land? Will there be close neighbors as there are in the small village of Glen Buchan?

This sweet story is about the love of extended family—and a kitten—and how they impact the life of a little girl in ways she couldn't realize until years later. No illustrations are needed in this book where Jean Little brings characters alive, and takes the reader inside their humble home and seated beside the fireplace among them. Sometimes the Scottish brogue becomes a little difficult to follow, but it is well worth the effort. In a world where children often face major family changes, this story reassures us all of belonging. Barbara Beyer

F. Jews—Fiction; Italian Americans—Fiction; Friendship—Fiction; Triangle Shirtwaist Company—Fire, 1911—Fiction. 48 p. Gr. 5 - 8.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

An exciting fictional account of a true story, Fire at the Triangle Factory is an intriguing historical perspective of a young woman who worked in unsafe, crowded conditions during the industrial age. As a seamstress, she endured hard work and long hours, only to experience fire in which she was barely rescued. This story is entertaining for youth, but because of the brevity and historical perspective, may be better suited for the classroom. The educational spin-offs could include: 1) unsafe working conditions; 2) what do in a fire; 3) Children working during the late 19th century. Mary Jo Kryzynski

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Dandi Daley Mackall has gathered together the Cinnamon Lake gang, Molly, Quentin, Haley, Dirt, and Sunny, to solve the mystery of the appearing and disappearing money, silverware, and food at Granny Mae’s church soup kitchen. When scruffy Mr. Budd hangs around the church hall for every meal, the children are certain he is the culprit who causes things to disappear. But who makes the money appear? How surprised they are when they discover that slick and rich-acting Mr. Roosevelt is the pickpocket causing the kitchen supplies to disappear, and Mr. Budd is the eccentric millionaire benefactor of the soup kitchen. The children learn a great lesson on not judging a book by its cover.

Dandi Mackall has crafted a fast-paced entertaining adventure sure to keep the young reader guessing. Scripture references and truths are presented without sounding preachy, and the children are just rascally enough to be believable. Short chapters with lively titles draw the reader on to the next chapter. Kay Salem has lent her touch with pencil drawings and maps to enhance the details of the story. Judy Driscoll

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 4

It’s quirky, it’s chaotic, and at times, it’s downright confusing. Dean Marney’s Pet-rified! is an adventurous romp that will keep readers turning pages. It all starts when new neighbors move into the haunted house next door. Becky thinks it’s a little odd to be moving in at midnight, but then, she's not a wizard.

The next thing she knows, her beloved beagle, Irving, disappears, and an amazingly-life-like plastic replica of him appears out of nowhere. Her brother becomes permanently attached to his gorilla suit, and her parents start acting very strangely. To top it off, all the children in the neighborhood vanish, and the plants in the area start growing uncontrollably.

Only Becky and her friend, Jeff, seem unaffected by these bizarre events, and they are determined to find out what is going on. Their quest leads them to the wizards’ cellar, where a giant lizard is about to turn the missing children into a nice, light snack.

Eleven-year-old Becky is the main character and first-person narrator. Her tone and language are direct and informal, and she seems likeable enough; unfortunately, the characters fly through the story at such a break-neck pace, it’s difficult to become truly engaged.

The conclusion is rather abrupt. Just as the evil wizard is about to end Becky’s life, she thinks about all the people she loves, and begins to cry. Sure enough, her tears dissolve his magic, proving once more that love conquers all. The message is fine, but seems tacked on. Sylvia Stoforph

F. Basketall—Fiction; Christian fiction. Gr. 2 - 5.
Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

A. J. finds himself in a dilemma. He wants to play his beloved basketball, but has a commitment as student council representative for his fourth grade class. He lobbied hard to win as the class representative, but he cannot bear the thought of not playing his favorite sport.

Also, his twin sister, Emily, wants him to invite some of his friends and help her get a Bible study group organized to meet every Friday after school. He brushes off her request and assures her his friends would never be interested in anything like that.

Though he discusses his feelings of conflict with God, he doesn’t receive the answers that he wants. Trying to fit both activities into his schedule leaves him feeling rushed and frustrated. Author Janet Holm McHenry gives the reader some idea of what it is like to be a fourth-grader.

Simple illustrations by Donna Kae Nelson enliven the story. Most students undergo the same conflict as A. J. in choosing the right activities in school. Learning to separate what one wants to do and what one should do is often difficult. This would be a good class-read book. The solution seems a little too pat, but gives the reader some things to think about. Barbara Goy Taezner

F. Christian life—Fiction. 78 p. Gr. 2 - 5.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Hope Brown and her little sister, Annie are two home-schooled girls. Their dad’s job is taking him to Japan and the family gets to go along. While there, the girls visit a Japanese high school with their new friends Midori and Yoko. Although Hope is quite apprehensive, she enjoys her time. Later the girls spend the night with their new friends. Midori and Yoko’s father is always angry and seems to be so mean to Midori. He also worships these strange idols. Hope is
later horrified when Midori is kicked out of her home for becoming a Christian. Hope had never seen this type of persecution before.

Stacy Towle Morgan has written a story of faith and friendship, about two sisters who travel the world with their parents finding adventure, experiencing new cultures, and learning more about their faith. Hope learns to overcome her fears with God’s help. She also learns a new appreciation for her own family and for the country she lives in that allows religious freedom.

Pamela Querin has added a few black and white sketches that give you a feel for the culture and the emotions of the characters. This series of books is written in a way to intrigue young minds and capture their interests in a new part of the world. Each book leaves you with a longing to know where Hope and Annie will find themselves next time. *Marcia Snyder*


F. Brothers and sisters—Fiction; Grief—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction: Mystery fiction. 128 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Quality - 3  Acceptability - 3

Melissa and Sean, sister and brother, get involved in a mystery in an abandoned church. Melissa allows Sean’s sense of adventure to overshadow her good sense, and it gets them both in trouble. A chance statement about treasure in the abandoned church starts the ball rolling. Sean doesn’t know if there is a treasure, he just says there is. Spalding, the rich kid whose father wants to purchase the building, asks Sean how he knows about the treasure. That leads Melissa, Sean, Spalding, and two of his friends to search for the treasure. What the five end up with is a lesson in the consequences of being greedy.

Bill Myers has written a Christian version of the Goosebumps series. Like Stine’s books, almost every chapter ends with a horror of some sort. It does make the book a page turner, and a lot of kids will enjoy this series.

At times the Christian aspects of the book seem forced and unlikely. However, they do place *Phantom of the Haunted Church* a step above the popular Goosebumps series. *Jane Mouttet*


F. Divorce—Fiction; Musicians—Fiction. 130 p. Gr. 4 - 8.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 3

At ten years of age Eileen’s life changes dramatically when her father moves out, taking the piano with him. Angry, frustrated, and ashamed, Eileen will not tell her best friend why she must practice her piano lesson in the school auditorium instead of walking home with her after school. She also refuses to allow Stephanie to come home with her.

*Changing Tunes* produces very difficult days for Eileen but new friends begin to fill empty spaces. Mr. Poole, who sweeps the auditorium after school, encourages her by listening to her practice. Mrs. Tilly, the neighbor, has snacks ready when she gets home and Eileen is able to help her baby-sit Jared, Mrs. Tilley’s grandson.

Then at her first visit to her father’s apartment, she begins to see how important the piano and music is in her father’s life. Since leaving, her father has composed a wonderful new song and she begins to accept his absence even though she doesn’t understand.

Finally, Eileen gains courage to go on as she tells Stephanie, gets a baby sitting job to begin saving money to buy a piano, and composes her first short song.

Donna Jo Napoli was inspired to write this book because of the effect of music she observed in the life of her own children. A musical instrument can provide comfort when feelings cannot be put into words.

Good development of characters and their feelings will inspire readers to face their own problems and go on.

The word damn is used several times in the story. This family effort is jam-packed with likeable and believable characters. Loving, stable relationships abound. Tension arises from circumstances and external obstacles, rather than from teenage angst or rebellion.

Cultural differences are not brushed under the proverbial rug, or exploited, but rather are seen as opportunities to explore and to reach new understandings.

Author Randy Perrin had a lot of help from his young daughters, and it shows. Dialogue is natural, and Margie’s fears about losing her mother are realistically portrayed.

*Time Like a River* is a work of substance, with never a wasted word or superfluous scene. *Sylvia Stopforth*


F. Family life—South Carolina—Fiction; South Carolina—Fiction. 186 p. Gr. 5 - 8.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 4

The time is the 1960’s in South Carolina, and ten-year-old Sissy (who has a real name but the Gypsies stole it) copes with, among other things; a spoiled baby brother; a wonderful grandfather who uses words other adults don’t approve of; friends who decide to create their own miracles while burning the church down; and learning to appreciate *The Girl Who Ate Chicken Feet*. Following Sissy into her teen years provides many side-splitting moments as sex and emotional maturity rear their bewildering heads. Woven through are the racial tensions of the sixties as they impinge on white Sissy, especially because they affect the black people she loves.

*Sandy Richardson’s first book. She clearly remembers the adventure of adolescence in the sixties’ era, and draws from her own children’s more recent experiences. Adult wisdom does not temper Sissy’s narrative. If coach snakes roll after you mouth holding tail, then that’s how it’s written. This book abounds with the absolute truth as seen by Sissy. Maturity and moral growth come to Sissy in humorously believable ways. Characterization is delightful and only as full as the story requires. Told in the words of an adolescent girl, this coming-of-age story transcends era. Today’s pre-teens and teens will relate to Sissy’s problems and her brief flashes of hard won real wisdom. *Donna Eggert*
Seven-year-old Rebecca Galloway waits a long time to paddle a canoe around the second bend in the river. Set at the turn of the 19th century, Ann Rinaldi’s book draws readers into a rustic world of homesteads and Indians.

Rebecca, oldest daughter of nine children, works hard living with her family in this new harsh land. She longs for a girlfriend and a kitten—both difficult to come by. Instead, surprisingly, an Indian chief becomes one of her best friends as he repeatedly visits over the years.

By age sixteen, a time when her peers announce engagements, Rebecca realizes she has fallen in love with Tecumseh. Could Tecumseh, the now-famous Indian peacemaker between white and red skins, return her love? The real question is: if he does, then what?

There is one scene where Rebecca sees her brother fondling his girlfriend. There are also a few references to the Indians’ gods.


Emily Lodge comes to live with her aunt and uncle and cousins at Briarstone Plantation in Virginia at the outset of the Civil War. Her family in Illinois has died and these are her only relatives. She disagrees strongly with this part of her family about slavery and is at times very out-spoken about it. Gideon Tugwell, twelve years old, is the middle son in a poor family at an adjacent farm. Nat Travis is a slave purchased by Emily’s family, who has illegally been taught to read and write. In *Cry of Courage*, Lee Roddy brings to life the stories of these three as they face some hard times.

In the first book of the series, Nat Travis is purchased by Silas Lodge. When Silas goes off to war, Briarstone Plantation is run by his arrogant son, William. Gideon and his father travel to market with their grain, and get very close to action at Bull Run, but can’t seem to find Isham, Gideon’s older brother. This book definitely leaves the reader in the lurch.

In *Where Bugles Call*, the second book in the series, too many of the explanations from the first book are included. Gideon finds his brother, who has been wounded, and the buried gold that he and his father had been paid for the wheat earlier. Then his father dies. Nat and his friend, Sarah, escape and head North in a wagon which also carries Emily.

These are written as if they are recollections of Gideon Tugwell, later in his life. While there is some character development, there is stereotyping of the blacks and whites, rich and poor. The Southern position in the Civil War is not convincingly portrayed, except as evil and dictated by domineering men. Some pretty awful things are described, but in realistic ways that the people of the time would have actually seen. *Judy Belcher*

The lichee tree ten-year-old Ying planted five years ago has burst into bloom, and promises her a wealth of lichee fruits. Living in a small town in China with her grandmother, aunt and uncle, and two cousins, Ying longs to have money to go to Canton and buy beads.

Trouble strikes her family when Ghost Walk wants Ying’s cousin, Ah So, to become his second concubine, and the family refuses. Ghost Walk wields great power, and his wrath brings one trial after another to anyone who crosses him. Ah So and her boyfriend escape to Canton. Ying’s uncle gives up his business in order to escape being burned out, gives all the family valuables to Ghost Walk, and still has to disappear from his home. Reduced to poverty, Ying’s aunt and grandmother are driven from their home, and Ghost Walk moves in, where he sits in the backyard eating Ying’s precious lichees.

This is not a pretty story. Yet it is a story of tremendous hope, of people who face great loss, but value the love they have for each other more than their losses. Ching Yeung Russell grew up in China, and her depiction of a child’s life in China is fascinating. Written in first person, the narrative shows the confusion of a child trying to make sense of her world when life doesn’t make sense. Although some of the things that happen seem terrible, the dominant tone of the *Lichee Tree* is one of hope. *Cathleen Johnson*


Charlotte was orphaned at a young age by a tragic, horse-drawn wagon accident. She spends the next years in an orphanage befriending and developing an affinity with the horses. Her positive relationships with people are limited to the stable master, Vern, and a young boy named Hayward. When Hayward is adopted and she is forbidden to work with the horses, twelve-year-old Charlotte plans her escape. Disguising herself as a boy, Charlotte buys a one-way ticket on the stage. She finds a job as a stable hand, calling herself Charley, and eventually works her way to the position of expert stage driver, never revealing her true identity. As an adult, Charlotte moves to California, purchasing property and horses and developing a way station for the stage line. She also made a point of voting in elections, during the era before women were granted the right to vote, posing as a man until her death.

Pam Munoz Ryan’s fascinating book is based on the facts known about a real life individual named Charlotte Parkhurst, alias Charles Darkey Parkhurst, embellished by fiction. Charley’s story is well-paced and riveting due to the author’s talent and the unique subject matter. Brian Selznick provides pencil illustrations that reveal the vulnerability and inner musings of Charley, complementing the text to provide a fuller image of the character. It may be puzzling why Charlotte Parkhurst chose to continue the masquerade until her death, but the reality is that she did, achieving things no woman in her time could achieve. *Sally Kuhns*


F. Brothers and sisters—Fiction; Family life—Fiction; Grandmothers—Fiction. 166 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Ernest is a little scamp, forever “always a darling” yet sometimes frustrated with his parents. Then his father dies. Of course, all is forgiven between grandma, there was a rift, and Ernest begins to shape up his way to the position of expert stage driver, never revealing her true identity. As an adult, Charlotte moves to California, purchasing property and horses and developing a way station for the stage line. She also made a point of voting in elections, during the era before women were granted the right to vote, posing as a man until her death.

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This story is for younger readers. It is a fast and easy read, somewhat unbelievable in parts but very entertaining nonetheless. It contains a good message about the importance of family. There is mention of the drinking of champagne. This book would be fine for most schools and, of course, for the public library collection. Ceil Carey


F. Christian life--Fiction; Clubs--Fiction; Stepfamilies--Fiction. 128 p. Gr. 3 - 6.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Becky is miserable. Her mom has just gotten married, she has had to move to a new house in a new neighborhood, and her youngest step-brother, sixteen-year-old Quinn, doesn’t want her family around. Worst of all, she has to tell the other TCC members that she can no longer be their president or attend all the meetings.

TCC, the Twelve Candles Club, had started as a way to help the girls earn money. Becky has been president since the club started. For several days after her announcement to the club, Becky feels left out of things and unappreciated. She and her friends face some tough issues with a Christian perspective. Cara, one of the TCCers, is getting involved in hypnotism. Becky risks their friendship in order to warn her of the circumstances they face. The book’s pace is fast enough to keep the attention of reluctant readers. Becky, Cara, and the other TCCers are like girls you’d find in any older elementary classroom. Christian faith is evident throughout Becky’s Secret Surprise. Jane Mouttet


F. Dragons--Fiction; Schools--Fiction; Humorous stories. 120 p. Gr. 4 - 6.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

What a delightful book! The Care and Feeding of Dragons is the very appealing story of Alastair McKnight’s life in fourth grade. With the formidable Ms. Cassowary as his teacher, the tale of his life with Spike, the little blue dragon, continues. Uncle George, a research scientist at the Photon Institute expects—and gets—regular scientific reports from Alastair concerning Spike. Add attempted dragonnappers and a paranoid neighbor and you have a wonderful book that will cause you to laugh out loud.

Young readers will love this amusing sequel to The Dragon That Ate Summer. Whether at the school or public library, it won’t stay on the shelf long! Ceil Carey


F. Fathers and daughters--Fiction; Wadowers--Fiction; Soccer--Fiction. 95 p. Gr. 3 - 6.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Julia Mac Neill’s mother died in a car crash when she was three years old. At the beginning of Susan Shreve’s story, The Goalie, Julia is now eight years old, her sister Tally nearly three years younger. Julia wants to take her mother’s place and drive away Bianca the housekeeper with her uncompromising behavior. Spending much time at home being indispensable to her father costs her Lil’s friendship.

When her father brings Eliza True and her son Benji home for dinner, Julia’s loneliness and possessiveness erupt. To complicate her life, Benji competes with her for the position of goalkeeper on the soccer team, thwarting her long held desire. Gradually Julia’s anger and her mother’s memory fade, and she longs for a regular life without so much domestic responsibility. Benji wins first position on the team and Julia second, but when Benji is injured in the championship game, Julia leads them on to victory. Having achieved this, she has new respect for herself and others.

Young readers will love Julia’s humorous antics throughout the book as they understand the emotions causing her behavior. No need for illustrations; they will immerse themselves in Julia’s serious feelings and snicker as she plasters her mother’s pictures on the walls and jerks the tablecloth off at dinner. The author guides the reader gently through the subtle psychological changes which bring Julia from anger into acceptance of her changed role in new relationships. A delightful chapter book dealing with real life problems. Rhonda Marie Lackey


F. Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder--Fiction; Learning disabilities--Fiction. 54 p. Gr. 2 - 4.
Quality - 2 Acceptability - 4

“Joshua, sit down in your chair and finish your dinner this minute!” Josh has a problem—he can’t sit still or pay attention. It seems he’s always getting in trouble. He doesn’t like the way he is but he can’t do better. He wishes someone would tell him why he’s so weird. Mom and Dad have a meeting with Mrs. Conrad, his teacher. Then they take him to see Dr. Hartnett. Dr. Hartnett explains to him that he has a problem called ADD. Dr. Hartnett, Mrs. Conrad, and his parents work with Josh to help him overcome his problem. In the end, a small dose of medicine is needed to help Josh concentrate.

Mark Smith has written an excellent book on a topic I’ve not seen in books for elementary students. Pay Attention, Slish! will help ADD or ADHD students realize that others have the same problem they do. The book may also help non-ADD students understand a little better what classmates may be struggling with. Adult readers will also gain insight into ADD. Gail Piazza’s pencil drawings complement the text well. Jane Mouttet


F. Horses--Fiction; Stepfamilies--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction. 159 p. Gr. 5 - 9.
Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

In Close Quarters, life is overwhelming DJ Randall! Her growing responsibilities include riding horses and teaching at the Academy, art projects and an encouraging art teacher, piles of schoolwork, and a recent illness; add to these a new family, including five-year-old twin brothers, and it all equals exhaustion and frustration.

DJ is happy for her mother’s joy in her new love but still, truth be told, slightly jealous of her step-brothers, who take up so much of her mother’s time and interest. When a horseshow date coincides with a one-in-a-million art opportunity, it seems DJ and her mother are on a collision course that can’t be stopped. Only the Lord can intervene to restore right relationships in this distraught family.

Snelling’s book is fast-paced and a quick read. It will be particularly popular with young readers who love horses. Christian middle school libraries will find Close Quarters a circulation favorite that won’t stay on the shelf long, and librarians will be able to recommend it wholeheartedly for its spiritual content. Ceil Carey


F. Survival--Fiction; Fathers and sons--Fiction; Ranch life--Arizona--Fiction; Arizona--Fiction. 140 p. Gr. 4 - 6.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

In winter he boards in town and attends school, but in the summer he lives in the bunkhouse with the hands on his father’s Arizona ranch. His job
is to keep the thirty-one windmills on the twenty-one hundred square mile ranch lubricated and running smoothly. Heading out one morning towards Crittenden, he decides on a whim to go the opposite direction to Crazy Men Mesa. There, he climbs the thirty foot windmill to the platform and lubricates the gears. Suddenly, a dust devil hits the tower. He grabs the mill vane and is whirled around. He is left hanging, thirty feet above the ground, with two broken legs. Surviving the next two days, isolated and injured, tests every bit of his person. The battles he fights show the reader his strength, and it is clear he is a winner, and the boy called Whichaway now knows where he is going.

Whichaway is written in a spare, colorful voice reflective of the expansive land of the Southwest. Glendon and Kathryn Swarthout capture the beauty and loneliness of life where most of the fifteen-year-old’s conversations are with himself and his horse. A wry humor sets this survival story apart from the usual. When the main character faces isolation, pain, and hopelessness, he searches deep within and finds the determination an will to live. Whichaway is inspirational but, in the true voice of the hard Southwest, never maudlin. Cathleen Sovold Johnson


F. Apollo-Soyuz Test Project--Fiction; Time travel--Fiction; School field trips--Fiction. 1 32-page hardcover book; 1 audiocassette, 16 min. Gr. 2 - 6.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Four friends visit Space Hall in the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. Lucy is caught up in reading about the Apollo-Soyuz mission and suddenly finds herself part of the mission—as Soviet cosmonaut Alexei A. Leonov. Kevin, wishing he could get a closer look at the exhibit, finds himself aboard Apollo and in the suit of American astronaut Thomas P. Stafford. Lucy and Kevin experience the thrill that the space explorers felt in July of 1975 as American and Russian spacecrafts, Apollo and Soyuz, dock. Shari Tan brings her fictional characters back to earth with a greater appreciation of this historic space mission.

Beautifully illustrated in full-color by Higgins Bond, the authentic illustrations on each page help the reader visualize the rendezvous. The author includes further information about the mission and a glossary at the end of the book.

A dramatized audio cassette tape with authentic sound effects by Soundprints accompanies the book. The narrator provides further information on the mission following the story. Patricia Perry


Quality - 3 Acceptability - 4

The Viking Treasury of Classics brings the reader a collection of stories and poems that have withstood the passage of time to become favorites of children down through the years. It offers stories and poems children return to repeatedly.

Jingles, sonnets, fairy tales, mystery, adventure, and legend comprise this Treasury. Some tales have been abridged judiciously to accommodate the format. Full-color illustrations by contemporary artists keep interest high. There is a wide range of reading and interest levels presented here. This wide span may create difficulties on either end of the age spectrum both in appropriateness and vocabulary. If this volume is approached with the attitude that it is a book children grow into, those hurdles should be cleared easily. Mary Jarvis


F. Orphans--Fiction; Kidnapping--Fiction; Friendship--Fiction. 152 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

In the dead of night, cruel hands rip Colley Trevelyan from his bed and his pampered Victorian life. Now the piercing eyes of Obadiah and Quintilla Crawler oversee his care and education at the Broggin Home for Boys. Along with the other twenty-four boys, his lessons consist of grueling labor in the blazing furnaces of the glass factory. Colley’s only hope of escape is to survive until his ransom can be paid. But if a ransom is required, why are they trying to kill him? An amazing chain of coincidences reveals surprising loyalty in those whom he fears, and deadly ambitions in those most trusted.

Sparrows in the Scullery is a fictional glimpse into the dark corners of nineteenth century history where children were exploited to fuel the industrial revolution. The reader who enjoys classics such as Oliver Twist will feel quite at home with this story by Barbara Brooks Wallace. Her language is light, and descriptions concise, avoiding the tediousness sometimes found in Victorian style stories. The 152 pages are broken into twenty-two short chapters making the book manageable for young independent readers. Melinda Torgerson


F. Fathers and daughters--Fiction; Farm life--Fiction; Dance--Fiction; Chicago (Ill.)--Fiction; Afro-Americans--Fiction. 155 p. Gr. 4 - 6.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

When Kayla’s grandmother dies, circumstances force her to live with relatives in Chicago and move from her beloved community in South Carolina. Her dream of being a ballerina and her desire to see her daddy go right along with her. Instead of the wicked family so often portrayed in this type of story, Kayla is blessed with a wonderful aunt and uncle and cousins that treat her as if she were their sibling. Yet it is a realistic story, one with troubles and disappointments as well as the accomplishment of some of her dreams.

Dance, Kayla! is a story that will gladden your heart as Kayla adjusts to her life in a big city and a new family. She is a very appealing heroine, one who will be remembered by readers with hopes that other stories of Kayla will be forthcoming. Young readers in grades four through six will particularly enjoy this book but the readership could also extend into the upper middle grades. Dance, Kayla! will make a welcome addition to any school or public library. Ceil Carey


F. Mystery fiction. 111 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

Benny loves Silver Frosted Stars cereal. This time, he buys three boxes at once trying to get the last two silver stars needed to send for the coveted detective badge. Benny opens up the first box of cereal on the sidewalk and finds a silver star. Before anything else can happen, Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny hear a shout from the antique jewelry store. The jeweler has just been robbed! A ruby ring, bracelet, and necklace set have been stolen. Is the quiet Mr. Darden in cahoots with the suspect? Why is someone interested in Benny’s boxes of cereal? These questions and more plague the children until they successfully solve The Cereal Box Mystery.

Author Gertrude Chandler Warner wrote the first nineteen books of the Boxcar Children Series. The unknown author that penned the mystery, The Cereal Box Mystery, followed true Boxcar Children form. The four children solve the puzzle following the clues before them without too much danger to themselves.

The black and white illustrations by Charles Tang add charm to the book. The latest edition of the series will be welcomed by young fans eager to hear the latest adventure of The Boxcar Children. Joanne Haffly

F. Mystery fiction; San Francisco--Fiction. 119 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

In *The Mystery in San Francisco*, Gertrude Chandler Warner's Boxcar Children entangle themselves unwittingly in an intriguing waterfront predicament. Henry, Jesse, Violet, and Benny, ages fourteen to six, have come with Grandfather to the city to visit his sister Jane and her husband, Andy Bean. Excited about seeing the sights, the family rides on fisherman Charlie's boat and learns that Charlie is in serious trouble.

Who is stealing his fish? Who cut his nets and emptied his fuel tank? Will the Vito Vittles Restaurant refuse to buy his "spoiled" fish? A tall man in dark suit and sunglasses and a girl in a yellow slicker appear and disappear in the strangest places, keeping the children absorbed in detective work.

Upper elementary students will not be disappointed by this new adventure. Characters have just enough credibility for reader identity. One pencil drawing enlivens a full page in each of the short chapters, whose large print and ample white space invite the reader to relax. The author defines words such as "carousel," "pier," and "vittles" contextually. This fishing story, replete with geographical "vittles" contextually.


detective work.

The illustrations are bright and vivid, leading to discussion with a professor of

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drilled by a well, but it is dry. Walt and Papa discover a tunnel leading downward at the base of the "well." Hannah does some historical research, and Walt uses his newly acquired skills in geometry to solve the mystery of why the "well" is there and where the tunnel leads. Hannah makes a discovery that leads to discussion with a professor of archaeology regarding the cause of the Ice Age; he says Noah's flood caused it.

Eric Wiggin has written a high adventure mystery novel for older elementary students. He displays knowledge of creation, evolution, and carbon-14 dating. The Christian faith of the Parmenter family is evident throughout the book.


F. Mystery fiction. 158 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Hannah and Walt Parmenter live on an island in the Maine with their parents and another family. The Parmenters run a tourist lodge. While Mama and Hannah are picking blueberries, Hannah’s dog, Hunter, goes crashing through some boards. That crash leads to an adventure for Hannah and Walt.

Hunter appears to have fallen into a well, but it is dry. Walt and Papa discover a tunnel leading downward at the base of the "well." Hannah does some historical research, and Walt uses his newly acquired skills in geometry to solve the mystery of why the "well" is there and where the tunnel leads. Hannah makes a discovery that leads to discussion with a professor of archaeology regarding the cause of the Ice Age; he says Noah’s flood caused it.

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**The Secret of the Old Well** shows the value of research and math skills, as well as the ability to think straight in difficult situations. While the end of the story may be somewhat predictable, the biblical and technical explanations are a pleasant surprise. Most authors may have thought information about carbon-14 dating above elementary students, but not Mr. Wiggin.


F. Pets--Fiction; Christian life--Fiction; Raccoons--Fiction. 96 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

The Montgomeries down the street catch a raccoon in a cage. She has babies so Mr. Montgomery lets her go. When the mother leaves, she leaves a baby behind. Chris is upset because Mr. Montgomery is going to put the baby to sleep. Gram agrees to help Chris take care of the baby, which he eventually names Skeeter. Skeeter survives and grows into a mischievous pet. James, Chris’ younger brother, becomes jealous because Chris is not very good at sharing his pet. When he sees a family of raccoons at a nearby creek, James starts feeding them.

The family’s faith in God is evident throughout the book. References to family worship, church attendance, and Chris’s silent prayers for guidance are scattered throughout the book. Vera Lee Wiggins has written an enjoyable book for older elementary students. Drawings by Linda Hawkins start off each chapter. Illustrations for the odd numbered chapters depict a scene in that chapter. The same drawing of Skeeter starts the even numbered chapters. Editor Jerry Thomas opens the book with a message about the dangers of wild animals even if they seem tame.


F. Brothers and sisters--Fiction; Uncles--Fiction; Mountaineering--Fiction; Iceland--Fiction. 115 p. Gr. 5 - 9.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

Adventure in the classic sense is missing here, and that may leave readers feeling cheated once they get into the story. There also isn’t much mystery, at least not in the sense that young readers are used to using that word. What this book really seems to be is a travelog with a story thrown in to keep the reader’s attention.

**Iceland Adventure** grew out of a trip Elizabeth Yates made to Iceland when she was young. Readers meet siblings, Michael and Merry Lamb, and their uncle, Anthony Lamb, who have come from England to search for Jon Magnusson’s son. The adventure during their stay consists of climbing up a mountain—Hecla, known for its varying weather—searching for a lost mare and foal, finding geysers, and sailing across the sea.

Continued on p.59.

The Amazing Expedition Bible reads like a contemporary history book. Mary Hollingsworth presents the stories of the Bible in chronological order. Every page has colorful sidebars with a variety of information pertinent to the time the Bible story took place, including history, literature, art, philosophy, religion, science, daily life, and more. Timelines head each of the fifty-eight chapters, showing the biblical events above the line and other world events below the line.

The accompanying CD-ROM contains everything the book has, plus short film clips. The main menu allows you to choose from story screen, picture, timeline, search, expedition, or help. Expedition presents a picture and a clock that times you while you search for the matching picture in a story. The user can read a story from the book or on the computer monitor, and also choose to hear it read aloud.

The extraordinary feature of this book and CD-ROM is the colorful multi-faceted presentation of supplementary information. Fascinating sidebars show, for example, what was happening in China or Greece at the time of a given biblical event. The book alone is outstanding in its layout, using artwork, photographs, and a variety of print styles and sizes. The illustrations are simple and colorful, contributing to the upbeat tone of the work. The CD-ROM adds the dimension of multi-media, with its interactive way of drawing the user into an active learning process. It takes a bit of skill to navigate the CD-ROM, but most kids will probably figure it out faster than I did. Cathleen Johnson


Bible Activities on CD-ROM provides players with a variety of seven different games to play: “Books of the Bible,” “Puzzles,” “Memory,” “Paint,” “What’s Different?,” “Matching,” “Bible Word Jumble.” For each of the games either correct or incorrect responses receive immediate auditory feedback. In “Books of the Bible,” players take randomly arranged titles of the books of the Old/New Testament and rearrange them in proper order. In “Puzzles,” players select from colored pictures of twelve Old Testament stories in jigsaw puzzle format to complete the picture. The “Memory” game features nine pairs of cartoon-type pictures which are masked and randomly arranged in a 3 x 3 grid. The “Paint” activity presents ten Old Testament and five New Testament story picture outlines for players to color. The “What’s Different?” game presents a series of 3 x 3 grids in which the player chooses one of eight cartoon-type drawings that differs from the others.

The “Matching” activity presents a series of randomly arranged color photos of animals in their native habitat. The player is to match the sound to the appropriate animal. In “Bible Word Jumble,” players see a picture, a short identifying description, and three to six jumbled letters they are to rearrange in order.

Children in the target audience can enjoy these activities, and may not be disturbed by occasional minor difficulties. In the “Books of the Bible” game, a few of the Bible names are somewhat difficult to read because they are written in black on a dark blue which provides little contrast. The response to the preceding move must be completed before the program will accept the next move. Although educational in concept, the “Memory,” “What’s Different?,” and even “Matching” games have little direct biblical content. A few of the words in “Bible Word Jumble” may not be found in a Bible concordance. Donna Bowling


The theme from “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” and a baseball diamond design set the stage for this Bible Baseball game which is played in much the same way as the non-computer version. Two players or teams choose to play as home team or visiting team and select up to nine innings to play. For each time at bat, players choose from three difficulty levels: “single” (hard), double (harder), triple (hardest). Multiple choice questions on Bible content appear on the screen and players click to select one of three options offered. (A random home run may give a welcome surprise.)

Two colored graphics of a baseball diamond provide the background for play. The first is a close-up of the area including home plate and the pitcher’s mound. Announcements and questions appear on a black “scoreboard” which is lowered over the upper half of the computer screen, covering the pitcher on the mound. When players make a response, the graphic shifts from a view of the baseball approaching home plate to a view of the entire diamond. Other baseball sounds accompanying the play are music typical of the ball game and applause. Although the design of the text for the questions provides no great contrast, the text is legible and provides little difficulty for children. A few of the hundreds of questions are ambiguous, but “the decision of the umpire is final!” This game can provide many hours of enjoyable Bible review for pairs or groups with access to either Macintosh or IBM platforms. Donna Bowling


My 100 All-Time Favorite Bible Stories provides ten stories to read and/or hear read aloud in each of ten Bible categories: Beginnings, Bad Things, Power and Love, OT People, God’s Help, Jesus, Favorite Stories, Jesus’ Friends, Miracles, and NT People. When a player selects one of the
categories, ten story titles in that category appear. As the cursor passes over each of the titles, the “Sunday-School” type colored picture for that story appears for preview. Clicking on the title for the story brings up a story with from three to eight pages of text to accompany the picture displayed. Players click on arrow buttons to turn pages forward or back.

Players may read each page silently or click on a speaker button to hear the story read aloud. If the player moves the mouse over the picture for each story, the cursor arrow may turn into a speaker icon. Then the player may click the cursor speaker to hear an accompanying sound. Each story picture has from one to three sounds mapped into that picture.

Children in the target audience can easily manipulate this program. The read-aloud option is particularly appropriate for children learning to read. They are unlikely to be seriously concerned about occasional minor difficulties. For example, the instruction “Preview a story below, then click its picture on the right to play the story” should actually say, “click on its title.” In general the stories are appropriate and easy to read. The story about Samuel seems misleading when it reads “At night he slept in the small holy inner room of the tabernacle.”

Donna Bowling


220. Bible stories. 1 CD-ROM PS - Gr. 3. Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

My Bible Coloring Book on CD-ROM features twenty-two Old Testament stories and twenty-two New Testament stories, each with from four to ten pages of picture outlines. Players select pages to color using the color palette and any of ten “brushes.” The color palette offers shades and tints of a spectrum of colors, plus many gradations from white, through various shades of gray, to black. The available brush tools include filled circles and squares in small, medium, and larger sizes. Larger empty circles and squares, and two oblique line brushes, are also provided. Although the picture outlines may appear covered during the time a brush is in use, releasing the mouse button restores the outlines. If players wish to erase a small colored area, the white brush tool may be used. The Erase button colors the entire picture with the color selected. At any time players may click on the Bible verses which accompany each story picture to hear the verses read aloud.

Many children in the target audience will easily manipulate the brushes to produce a picture which satisfies them. Any who are quite particular about staying within lines are likely to find the challenge to their small muscle coordination frustrating. Selecting the desired color from the color palette often requires trial and error adjustments. Children familiar with other coloring programs may miss a fill tool or a print option. For a few of the Bible passages, the connection with the accompanying pictures seems strained. Donna Bowling


220. Bible stories; Creative activities. 1 CD-ROM K - Gr. 3. Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

At the core of this highly interactive program are sixty Bible stories. Each story is retold in about 150 words. Participants may read the stories themselves or push a “Read to Me” icon. There is also a “Big Idea” button, which presents a life application.

Every story has an activity connected with it. These consist of coloring a story-related picture, a concentration game, choosing non-matching pictures, or two types of puzzles. The concentration and matching activities do not have much connection with the stories. The slider puzzle and the non-fill-in painting are difficult.

The pictures contain a half dozen areas where a click causes animation. Some animation correlates to the story; some does not. I noted only one picture that might frighten the youngest users—an animated tree in the picture dealing with the story of Jesus’ temptation.

Contracting and expanding screen images and unpredictable sound effects—pops, thunks, boings, whooshes, etc.—maintain interest in New Kids Point and Play Bible on CD-ROM. Packaging is colorful and attractive. Art work consists of comic book-type drawings.

Jeanette Hardage


220.3. Alphabet; Bible. 32 p. PS - Gr. 2. Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

With a delightful blend of modern caricature and ancient trappings, illustrator Jim Harris romps through the alphabet. He combines his skills with the light verse of author Eric Metaxas, who proves he can find a Bible rhyme for any letter you name. Children will giggle at the Band-Aid on Goliath’s nose and Zaccheus swinging merrily by his knees from the sycamore tree....and Y is for Yahweh, would you believe that can be found on the same page as the land rover on the moon? Each reading of this book brings to light more details to be found and lessons to be learned. Judy Driscoll


What would the high priest wear? How was harvesting done? What is a “timbrel”? What do Cherubim look like? The Children’s Illustrated Bible by Selina Hastings provides impressive facts and wonderful, colorful illustrations that accompany easy to understand, condensed stories of the Bible. Intended for children, yet giving a practical overview of life during biblical times, an impressive list of consultants have enhanced this book and made it an excellent guide for anyone who wants to learn what the Bible is about. Many maps, charts, and photographs are included.

This outstanding book clarifies details and richly illustrates the people and places of the Bible.

Paula Stewart Marks

★


This series uses a unique multifaceted approach in presenting Bible characters and events. Each area is designed to involve the learner. First a short interesting factual story is given, next is a humorous Let’s Pretend section, next comes Neat Stuff about the person and times, then a Life Lesson related to the young reader’s life, finally Let’s Make a Video puts the reader into the story in a short drama. Interspersed with these are colorful heroes, cartoon characters, songs, and memory verses. This series deserves attention as a special blend of fact and fancy. Pretend areas are well designated and fun, while factual areas are simple and attention grabbing.


Geraldine McCaughrean has previously written books explaining myths and legends. Although the 32 stories that are retold are richly crafted and well illustrated, many lack scriptural integrity. The creation story blends the biblical story with evolution: “Let the ocean team with life cried God... there floated life forms too small to see at first one cell then two, then worms and jelly fish...”

The addition of details detracts from the original story, rather than merely explaining. When the angels strike the men blind at Job’s house, the author suggests that the angels threw salt into their eyes so they couldn’t see. The tower of Babel has God pulling a brick from the base of the tower and it coming down with the builders being hurled to the four quarters of the Plain of Shinar. Although Geraldine McCaughrean is obviously a gifted story teller, the fictionalized accounts may be misleading.


Esther’s Story is related by Esther from age eleven into her seventies. Juan Wijngaard’s detailed color illustrations are encapsulated with a mottled brown and gold frame, and the front cover is illustrated with Esther’s portrait. Children will benefit from the pronunciation guide at the beginning of the book and the supplementary data about Purim at the end.


Newbery Medal and National Book Award winner, Katherine Paterson, teams with her husband to produce this book worthy of coffee table status. Each of the three main sections contains from seven to ten images that relate to God. The Patersons chose some images—potter, shepherd, king—familiar to contemporaries of the Bible writers, though less well-known today. Other selections connect more readily with the Bible writers, though less well-known today. The Monet-like pastel illustrations are bright and absolutely delightful. Jesus is pictured in colorful robes with children and animals amongst the beauty of nature. The illustrations are superior in quality and enjoyable both for children and adults. A great bedtime story! Mary Jo Krzymanski
Alexander Koshkin, an artist from Russia, "explores (these images) in art." Intrinsic detail and vivid colors produce striking illustrations of an Old World style. Each one reflects the mood of the story. A shiny dust jacket and the outside of the book itself bear Koshkin's drawing.

*Images of God* holds ample ideas for discussions and questions when parents and children enjoy this book during together-time. Each chapter calls for pondering over the written text and closer examination of the art. Betty Hockett

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232. Jesus Christ. 32 p. Gr. 2 - 5.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Mary's First Christmas encompasses his birth, baptism, teaching methodology, an abridgment of miracles and parables, the Last Supper, perfidy of Judas, death and resurrection, and the importance of believing in Jesus and his lifework. Maps and facts relating to the Roman Empire and the Jewish people are incorporated into the text.

Rick Osborne and K. Christie Bowler have written an excellent book for children unfamiliar with Jesus and will reinforce teachings for those already familiar with his life. Most of the colorful illustrations within the text are the style characteristic of The Beginner's Bible videos marketed by Time-Life. Dianne Woodman


Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

Hush! the Lord Is Talking contains twenty-five entertaining stories that show how the Lord is at work in everyday life. Each tale is from the life of the author, who is also a pastor and senior elder at Mount Zion Fellowship of the Brethren. Most of the stories are from Dr. Williams' childhood, like falling into the septic tank while visiting his cousin, helping to work the cotton and sweet potato fields, or going fishing. A few took place when Dr. Williams was older, like the run-in with the quicksand and snakes when he was in college. Each tale provides a lead-in of background information before getting to the point of the story and a related Bible quote for each lesson learned. All the lessons come from daily, ordinary life, like seeing beyond quicksand and snakes to the beauty in each person, not allowing things to get in the way of our relationship with Christ, or plain and simple, listening and obeying our elders.

The stories contain many personal details, such as reminiscing about grandmother's cooking, but the writing is lively enough to keep the reader’s interest until the take-away arrives. Nancy Robinson’s color illustrations portray the gist of the story with a folk art flavor. Additional line illustrations represent motif from the story, such as a snake, fruit, or a toad. Lisa Wroble


299. Prayer; Celts--Christianity. 25 p. Gr. 2 - 5.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Using a lost boat, rings and roses, a brigand chief, world wide true-life stories of today and yesterday, Patricia St. John presents believable, understandable parables about God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and how each child (and adult) can interact with him. There are forty-eight of these Stories To Share, all of them worth sharing repeatedly.

Patricia St. John (1919-1993), wartime nurse, missionary, children’s relief worker and author, was beloved by our parents and grandparents. Stories To Share introduces her to a new audience, modern children and their families. Straightforward with comprehensible punch lines, the stories are engaging, fun, and thought provoking. Based on real characters, people of all ages and human experience appear in the narratives. Divided into twelve sections, the stories cover the Christian experience from learning of God and accepting his salvation to bearing the Holy Spirit’s fruit, Christian growth and eternal life. Each story’s format lends itself to interaction: the tale; discussion, and thoughtful questions about the lesson; apropos scripture to clinch the heart of the lesson; a suitable prayer. Two one page Highlights aid understanding: Becoming a Child of God; Growing in Faith. The stories are timeless and pertinent, covering such subjects as embarrassment at admitting your Christianity; murder; our love of possessions; the horror and danger of war; why God lets us face trouble and disappointment. Written for adults to read to children, this book will be useful in many venues where older people share with younger ones. Donna Eggert
To teach a child the simplicity of unceasing prayer, Joyce Denham has written and compiled *A Child’s Book of Celtic Prayers* (Helen Cunn, illustrator). Hem each day with prayer, nothing is too trivial. The book is partitioned into sections: prayers for creation, the home, life’s journey, for journeys, of blessing. The newly created poems take their vocabulary and rhythm from the ancients, St. Patrick, Camina Gadálica, and others.

The artwork extends the charm of this short offering, muted, Celtic borders decorating each page, visual vignettes scattered throughout, portrait punctuation for the lyrical poetry.

A Celtic Childhood opens with a brief narrative to explain the background followed by a couple of paragraphs to amplify the poems themselves, a flow throughout like a tranquil, timeless river.

Repetition seems a key component, God the Father, Son, and Spirit permeate the text, the repetition seems a key component, God the Father, Son, and Spirit permeate the text, the flowing throughout like a tranquil, timeless river.

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Are you or do you have a student who is achieving at subsistence level in school? This School Survival series presents easily followed step by step plans for happily attaining classroom success. James and Barkin are seasoned writers for young readers, presenting their material at the student’s level of understanding. These authors know the importance of individual style, organization, and thorough preparation. They attack each subject at the very beginning, explain every step clearly and concisely, and don’t end until the desired product is cogently, lucidly reached.

Super Study Skills looks at organization, considering the individual student within his own family space, and how to make a weekly schedule that fits that student’s actual time spaces. Some subjects covered are study areas, learning styles, actually doing homework, preparation for tests and test taking strategies, what annoys teachers and other school problems.

Super School Reports explains what a report is, how to do it, how to write it, how to present it. It gives a list of reference works for the student’s level of understanding. A working outline is included. It gives a list of reference works for the student’s level of understanding. Examples of actual reports in various styles and a working outline are included.

Terrific Book Reports majors on the collaboration of student with book. Step by step the student achieves the report: using the library, how to read the book, organization, several drafts, written and oral reports. Extra ideas add panache: ideas for extra credit; write for free stuff; intriguing ideas for a “different” book report.

Each book in this series concludes with a useful index. There is a fourth book in the School Survival series: How to Do Your Best on Tests. Donna Eggett


398.2 Fairy tales; Short stories. 138 p. Gr. 4 - 6.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Thembulina, The Little Mermaid, and the Ugly Duckling are some of Hans Christian Andersen’s famous fairy tales retold in the new Tales of Faith and Wonder. Less familiar stories such as Five Out of One Pod and The Wild Swans are included. There are fifteen stories in all.

The editor, Angela Elwell Hunt, has revised the Old English words to simple words for younger readers, and believes Hans Christian Andersen would be pleased with this revision. Also, within the Editor’s Foreword, is a brief biography of the famed storyteller which will intrigue some readers. What pleasure to learn that the origin of Andersen’s stories’ morals was his faith.

Each full-page picture is captioned with an excerpt, explanation, and/or scripture regarding that story. The paintings are enchanting in vivid colors and will captivate a child’s eye. However, there may not be enough pictures to hold a very little one’s attention.

Tales of Faith and Wonder would probably work best read aloud by an adult while the child studies the pictures. It would make a nice birthday gift to a little friend or relative, and would be acceptable to both Christian and non-Christian families. Ginger McGrath


398.2 Afro-Americans--Folklore; Trickster; Folklore--Africa; Folklore--West Indies; Folklore--Southern States. 111 p. Gr. 3 - 5.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Storytellers will love these tales! Virginia Hamilton tells readers that the tales “grew out of a common type of African folklore in which a very human-acting animal uses his wit and cunning to take advantage of bigger, stronger animals.” These trickster tales from America, the West Indies and Africa show resourcefulness, trickery, cunning and guile to outwit stronger forces. The trickster may, or may not help others, and generally takes care of himself. The tales can be traced to African Americans in the southern states, to the West Indies, and Africa.

Each part begins with an introduction by the author giving background to the stories. In the American tales of Bruh Rabbit will be recognized as Brer Rabbit, who uses his wits to escape dangers. In the West Indian tales, Anansi, the name of the spider or animal trickster uses his wits in a similar way. This character comes from Ananse (spider) stories of the Ashanti, who called these and other stories Anansem, a word meaning stories. Gullah speech, such as was spoken during the plantation era and a combination of English, French, Spanish, and African is used at times, but is not hard to understand and reads aloud well. The African tales, porquoi, or how and why tales, explain how and why something is or came to be. In them spider and hare meet their match, often each other.

Barry Moser’s artwork is realistic, humorous, and fanciful. First glance finds some of the pictures very true to life, but with further inspection little details appear adding humor. Thoroughly enjoyable stories and a fine addition to the folklore section in libraries. Compare the first group to the Julius Lester “Uncle Remus” stories. Leslie Radloff


398.2 Pegasus (Greek mythology). 37 p. Gr. 3 - 6.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Pegasus is the classic Greek legend of the winged horse and the young hero, Bellerophon. A jealous king fears that Bellerophon has fallen in love with his wife, so he sends the lad to another kingdom with a sealed message “PUT TO DEATH THE BEARER OF THIS MESSAGE.” Unwilling to kill the youth directly, the second king sends Bellerophon to slay the monster, Chimera. The hero asks the advice of a soothsayer before heading to battle. He is advised to seek out Pegasus, the winged horse.

The author Mariani Meyer retells the familiar story of Pegasus and Bellerophon, adding notes regarding the history of these Greek heroes.

This is a Greek myth full of gods, soothsayers, muses, and magical fountains of water. It provides a simple way of introducing Greek mythology to students of all ages. Award-winning illustrator Kinuko Y. Craft painted the beautiful full color illustrations in oil watercolors. The book adds dimension to the study of Ancient Greece and Greek mythology. The paintings alone make the book worth owning. Joanne Haffly


398.2 Fairy tales; Folklore--Germany. Unp. K - Gr. 3.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

CHILDREN’S NONFICTION
This is the retelling of the classic German folk tale Rapunzel. Through the years there have been several versions of this story. Paul Zelinsky has combined several to create what he sees as the best. In this story the wife urges her husband to steal rapunzel (or parsley) from the neighboring garden. The husband is caught in the act and agrees to give the child to the sorceress when she is born, in order to save his wife. The child grows and becomes very beautiful. The sorceress locks her in a tower in the forest to hide and protect her from the world. There are no doors in this tower; the only way in is for Rapunzel to let down her hair. One day a prince discovers Rapunzel and they are married in the tower, without the sorceress’ knowledge. They are however found out and Rapunzel is cast out into the wilderness, and the prince, blinded, wanders in the forest. They do find each other eventually. Rapunzel gives birth to twins, and they live happily ever after.

Zelinsky has created a sense of Renaissance art with his oil paintings, accompanied by Italian landscapes. There is a formal type of beauty found in his art, making a magnificent book. The illustrations are very large and colorful often covering an entire page. Zelinsky is known not only for his illustrations but also his clever retelling of other familiar stories such as Hansel and Gretel and Rumpelstiltskin. If you are looking for folk tales, this book is a rare find. You would not be disappointed. Marcia Snyder


A book of folktales, nursery rhymes, and poems is always a delight. This book is a collection that is centered around the extraordinarily large or small, such as giants, elves, and fairies. These ordinary characters can, by wit and courage, control their own fates. There is no confusion here between right and wrong; right always wins. Anything is possible as things are exaggerated to the extreme. One example is ‘How big-mouth wrestled the giant.’ In this story a young boy brags about everything, but one day confronts a giant and saves himself, while learning a lesson. Other examples of stories are: the shoemaker and the elves, the little men, and three strong women.

Diane Goode is known for putting together wonderful literary collections. Several of her other collections include Diane Goode’s book of Silly Stories and Songs, Diane Goode’s Book of American Folk Tales and Songs, and Diane Goode’s Book of Scary Stories and Songs. Along with the stories, she has included a section called Notes on the Stories. In this section she gives the background and what each story is trying to teach. This would be very helpful while working on a unit of different folktales. Each story is illustrated with bright, vibrant colors and life-like characters. Each characters face shows such specific expressions that you can read the characters feelings.

This book is slightly larger than standard. It has very thick, glossy pages and a sturdy binding. Just an incredible book. If you are looking to build your collection of folktales, this would be a great choice. Readers of all ages will enjoy these stories. Children who see themselves as small in a big world can relate to these who although very small, make a big difference in their world. Marcia Snyder

400’s - Language


Alphabetical Order deals not only with alphabets from Sumerian cuneiform to Roman, but also discusses the alphabets of Braille, Morse code, calligraphy, typography, sign language, use of flags for signaling, and how artists use decorative alphabets. The French title of this book, Le Monde des Alphabets is more descriptive of the book’s contents.

What make this book special are the wonderful illustrations of alphabets. Unfortunately, the illustrator’s name appears only in fine print on the copyright page. Pastel alphabetic symbols on the background of each page are a distraction, though, which sometimes make it more difficult to read the text.

There are tables of pictograms and hieroglyphs, the alphabets mentioned above, as well as Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Indian devangari, and Japanese katakana. Reading comprehension level is probably higher than indicated on the book jacket, such as when the author discusses intonation and spelling conventions. In the description and illustration of sounds of the English language, checked and free vowels, and plosives and fricatives are labeled on the illustration, but there is not an adequate explanation. Similarly, there is no explanation of the use of the terms “short e,” “long e,” etc.

Tiphaine Samoyault, a professor of literature at the University of Vincennes, presents Alphabetical Order as her latest contribution to the field of childhood education. It is a welcome addition to any library, especially for the very well done, colorful illustrations. Jeanette Hardage


These two dictionaries share many features: easy-to-read type, lots of white space, lots of colored photos and drawings, clear, easily understood definitions (including of phrases such as “ghost town” and “relay race”), and sentences using the defined words in context. Both include pronunciation guides, sample pages with different features diagrammed and explained, and interesting sidebars such as “Vocabulary Builder,” “Synonyms,” “Word History,” and “Word Detective.” On closer examination, some important differences appear. American Heritage uses standard pronunciation symbols in their key, while Scholastic uses a system of letters and letter combinations heightened to indicate differing sounds and accents. An example is “determine,” written as “di-tur-min” in both books, with “tur” highlighted to indicate a stressed accent. However, AH also marks the syllables with symbols, while Scholastic expects the child to figure out how it sounds just from the spelling.

Although both use illustrations to show examples of defined nouns (“cheetah”, “pansy”, “continents”), AH also uses them to show hard-to-picture words such as “demonish” and “relay race.” Where Scholastic does so, it is poorly done; the child on the cover looks as though she is jumping up in the air instead of skipping. Although Scholastic shines in their use of diagrams, if that is a real need in your library, Facts on File’s Visual Dictionary is a better buy.

AH defines the same words that Scholastic does, but they add such words as “practicable” and “preacher” and define abbreviations such as pp. (pages) and IA (the postal code for Iowa) as well. AH’s defined words are printed in blue, making them easier to find on the page, and they also tend to be defined more completely and correctly, as in this example:

Prayer (Scholastic)

1. The act of praying.
2. An expression of appeal or thanks to God.
3. A set of words used in praying
4. Something requested or prayed for.

Prayer (American Heritage)
1. An expression of human thoughts, hopes, or needs when asking or giving thanks to God for divine help, favor, or forgiveness.

2. The act of praying.

3. A serious request.

Both books contain interesting appendices. American Heritage has a short thesaurus, a section on phonics and spelling, and one on geography that includes a map of the U.S., and an up-to-date world map that labels even the smallest islands and tells which country they belong to. Scholastic has the Braille and American Sign Language alphabets, a map of the U.S., and an up-to-date (but not as detailed) map of the world, and sections on country flags and facts, presidential information, and facts about the fifty states. Scholastic also includes a key index to all their photos and drawings. Either dictionary will help a child define and spell an unfamiliar word, but AH does it in such an eye-catching, interesting way that a child might find herself reading the dictionary just for fun! If you can only add one dictionary to your library, make it the American Heritage Children's Dictionary. Betty Winslow

500's - Natural Sciences and Mathematics


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Parents, teachers and caregivers are usually looking for ways to encourage children to observe and question the world around them. Don't Try This At Home by Vicki Cobb and Kathy Darling not only serves to encourage curiosity but successfully shows how to relate science to our everyday world.

Subtitled Science Fun for Kids on the Go, this book is a collection of sixty simple science experiments based on observation and common objects to use as tools of discovery. The experiments are grouped together by place and/or experience. For example, one chapter is Park Amusements and Amusement Parks. Another is for use in the classroom, while a third has projects designed for each of the four seasons of the calendar year.

The illustrations by True Kelley show the experiments in progress. Some of the pictures also diagram the techniques described in the text to conduct the experiment accurately and safely. The written procedures are easy to understand giving background as well as historical information. Carol Shearer


531. Speed. 29 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

Kids can run fifteen miles an hour, and an ostrich can run forty-five miles an hour, but a cheetah can run more than seventy miles an hour. This is where we may normally stop, but this book keeps going. You will follow a swooping peregrine falcon, an airplane, the speed of sound, and even a rocket ship. You won't find the thing with the most speed, however, until you find "light." Something that is small enough to fit in your hand, a flashlight, and that light is the fastest traveling thing in the whole universe.

Robert E. Wells has written a very intriguing book. He includes fascinating facts in such a way that you hardly know you are learning at the time. He also includes some additional thoughts on very fast things at the end of the book and a table that shows the comparison of the speeds of all the things described in the book.

The illustrations are intertwined with the text across the pages. They are very colorful and humorous. This book helps the reader to understand the awesomeness of speed and the objects that move at such enormous speeds; yet brings us back to a very simple and everyday object. This could help students to understand the awesomeness of God and his creation.

Marcia Snyder


551.2. Volcanoes; Earthquakes. 26 p. PS - Gr. 5.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

"The earth is the Lord's" could easily be Michael Carroll's motto as he introduces his readers to the awesome powers that shape the ever-changing geology of the Earth. Floating on a core of molten rock, the Earth's crust slowly shifts and buckles, creating volcanoes and causing earthquakes. While mountains push up, sheets of glacial ice tear down, and flaming meteors threaten cataclysmic destruction. While all of this might seem like a slow-motion accident, Carroll's emphasis is on God's design and control over nature. Bible verses caption the chapter headings and pictures. Geological events mentioned in the Bible are highlighted, along with photographs of their location.

Volcanoes and Earthquakes is a balanced blend of scientific fact and biblical knowledge. While touching on many theories associated with geology, it invites the reader to independent investigation. Creation is emphasized as the origin of all things. The changing world is held as an example of God's eternal power. Michael Carroll has been a science journalist and astronomical artist for more than fifteen years. He has done commissioned work for NASA, and been chief artist at the Reuben H. Fleet Space Theater and Science Center in San Diego. His experience shows in the high quality paintings and photographs chosen as illustrations. His faith shows in the enthusiasm of the text.

Melinda Torgerson


574.5. Ecology; Grasslands; Grassland ecology. 32 p. Gr. 4 - 6.


551.46. Ecology; Ocean; Ocean ecology. 32 p. Gr. 4 - 6.


574.5. Ecology; Rain forests; Rain forest ecology. 32 p. Gr. 4 - 6.


574.5. Tundras; Tundra ecology; Ecology. 32 p. Gr. 4 - 6.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Philip Steele has created an attractive and informative book presenting the grasslands of the world including North America, South America, Eurasia, Mongolia, Southern Africa, Central Africa, and Australia. He begins by explaining what grasslands are, their characteristics, wildlife, and the effects of weather and fire. Each page is colorfully illustrated with color photographs and drawings to amplify the text. Mr. Steele has made liberal use of side-bars and information boxes to introduce small excerpts of information. In addition each topic (a double page spread) contains a Geography Detective box which presents a problem or project idea for further thought and research. The last topic in the book is The Future of Grasslands, which explores ideas that can be utilized to protect our world's grasslands. Each of the following volumes include a map and exercises to give the reader experience in working with maps. A glossary and index are also included.

In the same style as others in this Geography Detective Series, Oceans explores the water bodies of the world. Differences between Seas,
Oceans and Coastlines are clearly presented, and the shape of the ocean floor is illustrated. Other topics covered include ocean currents and weather, why the oceans are never still, plants and animals of the sea, deep-sea creatures, how oceans shape the land, coastal hazards, defending the coastline, how we use oceans and seas, and environmental issues of water pollution.

What is a rain forest and why do we need it? Philip Sauvain presents an overview of the rain forests of the world exploring these questions and rain forest climates, plants, animals, people, settlers, ranches and plantations, logging and mining, and managing rain forests. He also looks at the future of rain forests.

Using the same format as others in this series with colorful illustrations and photographs, Philip Steele dons fur and leather to explore the tundras of North America. In addition to what and where the tundras are, Mr. Steele presents their seasons and climates, wetlands, plants, wildlife, reproduction, and migration, people and life on the tundra, and tundra industries. He also explores the environmental problems facing the tundra including acid snow, nuclear waste, and global warming. Research questions and project ideas dot each page with the volume concluding with a series of map work questions. Judy Driscoll


Cactus Café, a beautifully illustrated book and accompanying tape, tells the story of a desert micro-ecosystem. The reader witnesses a short period of time between the pollination and fruiting of the great and venerable Sonoran Saguaro Cactus. It becomes apparent how all the animals, insects, plants and ultimately humans are dependent and interdependent on the fruiting Saguaro.

The illustrations by artist Mirocha who lives in the Sonoran desert, depict the colonies of birds and mammals that live in or on the cactus. However, the cactus itself appears from many perspectives and lighting situations. One such shows the talons of a hunting owl hurtling down from the top of the page; another shows us perched at the top of the cactus peering down at javelinas; a third is a close-up of the cactus blooming.

The narration is a word-for-word recitation of the text that is presented in boxes within the illustrations. The narration is crisp and precise, if somewhat less than dramatic. At the end of the book is a world map locating the Sonoran Desert, a one page summary of facts about the Sonoran Desert and the cacti, a fold out illustration, and individual pictures of the plants and animals described in the text. David Rash

★


591.52. Forest animals. Unp. K - Gr. 3.


In a tangle of purple thistles, a tiny pair of shiny black eyes blink inquisitively. Then with a sharp chatter and a flash of cinnamon stripes they disappear. In Faces in the Forest and Faces in the Mountains, Ron Hirschi introduces young wildlife enthusiasts to many of the creatures that live in the wilds of North America. From the chocolate-colored moose wading knee deep in the beaver pond, to the chickadee’s distinctive song, Hirschi’s knowledge of wildlife is carefully condensed to a few succinct facts that entice readers to become active observers.

In twenty-eight pages, each book briefly describes characteristics, habitats, and environmental concerns, but the focus remains on identification. Beautiful color photographs taken by Thomas Mangelsen capture the creatures in their natural environment. At the back of each book is a section that gives pointers on successful wildlife watching and additional facts. They list animals that typically share the same habitat, and suggest locations where these groups may be observed.

Hirschi and Mangelsen are both dedicated to preserving the wildlife of North America. They have collaborated on several other books dealing with animals and nature. Mengelsen’s photographs have been published in magazines such as Audubon and National Geographic. Melinda Torgerson

★


Elephant Calf and his mother, the herd matriarch, live on a protected preserve in Tsavo National Park in Kenya, East Africa. As the herd roams over the grassy plains looking for water, Elephant Calf inspects a gigantic termite mound and frolics with the dangling bands of bark his mother decorcicates off a tree trunk. The herd travels by a pack of hyenas, a group of giraffes, and reaches the pools at the inlet of the Mzima river in the late afternoon. Elephant Calf has fun in the mud and at nightfall snuggles into the grassy plain with the herd encompassing her and falls asleep.

Schuyler Bull has written a fascinating story encapsulating an East African Savanna. The realistic sounds on the audiocassette narrated by Randye Kaye will give children the feeling they are journeying across the plains of East Africa with Elephant Calf.

Through Tsavo is an excellent book for introducing children to an East African savanna, especially with Paul Kratter’s exceptional full page color illustrations surrounding the text and on the selfsame dust jacket and hard cover. The inclusion of supplementary data, a picture glossary identifying animal names, and a fold-out of the savanna add to the overall educational value of the book. Dianne Woodman

599.8. Tamarins; Monkeys; Rainforest animals. 1 36 p. hardcover book; 1 11 min. audiocassette Gr. 2 - 5.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

The rain forest is a hot topic. Newspapers are filled with articles about its importance and destruction and the indigenous people who populate the area. School curriculum includes teaching about the rain forest so this will be a welcome addition to library shelves, especially since it comes with a cassette for reading along. The Nature Conservancy has published a book to fill the need that will instruct young readers about the delicate balance of life in this precious resource.

And instruct it does; fact after fact fills the story about a young tamarin monkey, one of only 300 left in the rain forest, and his quest for a mate. As he searches, readers are introduced to the other inhabitants of the rainforest, the fig wasp, anole lizard, harpy eagle, hermit hummingbird, palm tanager, red-tailed parrots, tree frog, Azteca ants, azure jays, three-toed sloths, katydid, agouti, pacas, and white-lipped peccaries. Readers learn that the bromeliad is the chief food of the tamarin monkey, and that it too is endangered. Each of the animals and the trees and plants mentioned is illustrated in the glossary but no more information is given about them. Readers learn much through this pleasant story designed to teach us as much as possible about the Atlantic rainforest.

Art work by Wisconsin artist, Thomas Buchs, is full-page, dark, as is the under canopy of the rain forest where light does not penetrate. Bursts of color from the animals, birds and foliage relieve the darkness while the text is set off in lighter green.

While not the best of the titles available on the rainforest, for those libraries looking for more materials on the Atlantic rain forest this will be a useful addition. Leslie Radloff

600's — Technology


613.6. Safety; Strangers; Child abuse. 160 p. Gr. 2 - 6.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Donna Chaiet and Francine Russell have developed a book designed to acquaint younger children with issues of safety. Safety is both physical and emotional, and many types of situations are addressed in this guide. Using real children from a California school for the pictures and real incidents (name changes, of course), each different situation and the rules to handle the issues are dealt with in a matter of fact manner. The result is that children will feel empowered to take steps that do not involve physical contact to protect themselves. The authors have businesses that conduct workshops in schools teaching children the simple rules and procedures discussed in this book, and have done so for twenty years. This adds credibility to the practical no nonsense approach.

Children will learn how to set boundaries, deal with bullies and strangers, when to ask for help, and many other relevant safety issues. Parents and teachers should read or work with students regarding the issues in The Safe Zone. Adults may also learn good coping strategies for some situations, though adults are most definitely not the target audience for this book. A section on getting help with a list of agencies as well as a list of other resources for more information make this an especially valuable resource. Sharing this book with your child is an apt way to open discussion of these serious safety issues. Barbara Wall

700's — The Arts and Recreation


704.03. Inuit art; Inuit--Social life and customs. 56 p. Gr. 5 - 8.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Art of the Far North is a story about the Inuit people, also known as Eskimos. The first chapter of the book is a conceptus of a society that evolved from a wandering culture to a neoteric life. Chapter Two comprises sculpture which is predominantly of Arctic animals, drawing, and the process involved in printmaking. Chapter Three consists of folklore, beliefs, and the customary and neoteric life.

Carol Finley has written a fascinating account about the Inuit people with a map depicting their location, and key illustrations throughout the text. Well-authenticated, the book includes sources for further reading, a selected bibliography, sources for quotations and poems, photos of contributing artists, and an index. Dianne Woodman


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. has 800 keys to unlock doors in two buildings almost a third of a mile long which house approximately 94,000 (!) works of art so that up to 17,000 visitors a day can view those works. Those statistics alone made the book fascinating reading. But this is the story of the people behind the scenes who make it possible for the public to view the collection of great and not-so great works of art. This book gives readers an idea of what the curators, conservators, designers, installers, art handlers, security people, custodians, carpenters, masons, housekeepers, librarian, gardeners, and “lampers” (they change the light bulbs), engineers, electricians, painters, and last but not least, the museum directors do, and how they work together to make art exhibits “user friendly” and display the art that has been collected.

The audience for this book will be narrow, those interested in art and museums, but art and classroom teachers will find this useful for preparing students for visits to those places. Photos show the installation of new exhibits and some of the people doing their jobs. Sidewalls give additional information and along the way readers learn about conservation and restoration practices for paintings and sculpture, along with gallery decoration, and flower arrangement in the galleries and courtyards. Each part of the National Gallery’s vast collection is discussed with humorous tidbits thrown in: Directions for cleaning might include removing your shoes and crawling on the platform, or following brushstrokes on a painting with a paintbrush to remove dust.

There is a wealth of information here, and a visit to an art museum will never be quite the same after reading it. It won’t matter if the only museum nearby is a city or county historical museum, there will be people in each filling the roles discussed in this book. Leslie Radloff


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Diane Stanley, author and artist for Leonardo Da Vinci, has created a masterful work in her exploration of the life of the famous artist and scientist. Combining the facts of his life with the social, political and religious influences of the Renaissance, the author has brought Leonardo within the reach of very young children as well as furnishing fascinating reading and insight for older children and adults. Her clear, colorful illustrations in Renaissance style depict the
scenes of the day as well as incorporating DaVinci’s own artwork into the illustrations. See DaVinci at work on the “Last Supper,” and find out the shocking truth of “Our Lady and her Son with the Angels.” Sit in the audience with costumed partygoers at the palace of Ludovico for the unveiling of the “Feast of Paradise,” and examine drawings of submarines and scuba divers. Grow old with the artist and shed a tear at his passing. This extraordinary book deserves a place in every artist’s library. Judy Driscoll


745.592. Paper airplanes. 64 p. Gr. 4 - 7.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Paper Airplanes takes paper crafts to a new height. Emery J. Kelly presents a dozen models, starting with the Improved Dart, and advancing to the Stealth Wing. Using ordinary materials such as paper, staples, and tape, the detailed instructions guide the reader into the science of flight. Several experiments are included to illustrate the basic principles of aerodynamics. These will aid in adjusting the models to achieve maximum flight or coax them to perform turns and loops.

Paper Airplanes has rainy day appeal. It glides just as easily into an art class as a science class. Although the directions are simple and the diagrams clear, the best models require attention to detail to be successful. Its basic premise challenges logic and problem solving skills. The models range from the usual swept wing design to a double winged canard and tandem biplane. Each one poses its own variables and advantages. The author even claims to have flown one of these models over a three-story school building on a windy day! Melinda Torgerson


759.13. Brown, Rod--Themes, motives; Slavery in art; Afro-Americans in art. 40 p. Gr. 3 - 7.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Drawing from deep within his soul and heart, Rod Brown tears into ours with paintings so real they blast away mere photography. From slave ship horror, resignation, degradation, Brown traces the depths, passions, heartbreaks, and hopes as the slaves travel the freedom road. His ancestors lived it and through them he actively relives it, painting their voices and colors. Faces full of living personality present their story: feet, fingertips, arms tell of death, torn love, slave owners’ self-chosen ignorance, religious ecstasy, stunning freedom. Julius Lester’s meditations accompany throughout, calling the reader to enter into the lives of the people who live this perilous, perplexing adventure.

The pictures in From Slave Ship to Freedom Road come from Brown’s critically acclaimed, magnificent exhibition From Slavery to Freedom. Enhanced by historical research with manipulations of energy, shadow, color, detail, gradations of light, and perspective, the pictures well over with abundant life. Gripped by this vivid representation of his ancestors’ story Julius Lester lets his heart speak for each painting. With simplicity of narrative, daring not to detract from the painting, using a cogent simplicity of narrative Lester leads the reader to draw the story from his own thoughts. Award winning author Lester has written several historical novels about slavery. Both artist and writer successfully present raw, unadorned truth understandable and acceptable to all ages. Donna Eggett


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

When I First Came to This Land is a cumulative folk poem first brought to the United States over a century ago and now retold by Harriet Ziefert. It tells the story of an immigrant beginning with these lines, “When I first came to this land, I was not a wealthy man.,” and the poem grows as he accumulates a farm, plow, horse, and so on. With each item he adds, he gives it an appropriate, but sometimes silly name; he calls his horse “I’m-the-boss!” The poem wraps up endearingly with his finding a wife, “Spice-of-my-life!” and having a son, “So-much-fun!”

Simms Taback’s illustrations are alive with simple detail that make each page fun to explore. The text makes for a pleaseable read-aloud that will have children chanting along. Sally Kuhns


782.42. Folk songs--United States. 22 p. PS - Gr. 3.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Featuring a rainbow of children with their supporting cast of like adults, Cumbayah presents in picture, word, and music this universally beloved song. Seeing picture books as a vehicle for presenting important ideas to the whole family, award winning illustrator Floyd Cooper uses Cumbayah as a bridge between cultures. His colorful pictures and sympathetic portrayal of emotions in children and adults of many races illustrate each verse. An international circle of pre-school children hold hands and sing. “Cumbayah, my Lord.” An Asian family clinging together in front of shadowy barbed wire exemplifies, “Someone’s crying, Lord.” Rainbow framed words and music fill the end pages. The history of this Gullah song makes an interesting forward to this book. The pictures invite touch and the paper is strong enough to cope with gentle little hands. Cumbayah excellently introduces children to the delights of the hymn story genre. Donna Eggett

800’s —Literature

★


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Frank Asch states that his goal for writing Cactus Poems was to “Enter the desert as a child, touch the soul of the place and let it speak through me.” His goal is accomplished as he captures the starkness, the strength, and the beauty of the desert in his poetry. Ted Levin’s sensitive color photography will open this world of sand and wildlife in a new and beautiful way for children. Animals, plants, birds, and insects pause on these pages to teach their lessons of survival in a harsh environment. Asch’s words go from whimsy and humor to breath-taking beauty and sensitivity. Through the art of poetry and photography one is invited into this harsh world to delight and explore.

Cactus Poems is a marvelous book to share with children, either introducing them to North American deserts or to enhance their present knowledge. A section of notes on desert life at the end of the book gives further information for adult or child on the desert environment and it’s inhabitants. Mary Jarvis


811. Insects—Poetry; American poetry. 47 p. Gr. 3 - 6.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Douglas Florian brings a light and whimsical touch to Insectlopedia, a book of poetry about insects that children will chuckle over while learning. His watercolor illustrations capture the essence of young discovery and enthusiasm. Kids will wander around reciting these catchy short poems that intrigue with their rhyme. Who could resist, “Mosquitoes are thin/ Mosquitoes are rude/ They feast on your skin/ For take-out food.” His playful attitude with words will
encourage children to read poetry and make up their own rhymes. Whether learning about the insect world or just enjoying poetry, this is a book kids will love. Mary Jarvis


Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

More than forty years of Mary Ann Hoberman’s verse for children has been collected in The Llama Who Had No Pajama by a winner of the American Book Award. Hoberman knows the feelings and delights of childhood. Weather, whimsy, wildlife, and the world of the child are all reflected in her poetry. She speaks directly to the child in her rhymes and children will want to hear or read these tongue ticklers again and again. Award winning artist, Betty Fraser has captured the spirit of the poet and the young in her colorful illustrations. A helpful index of poems is at the end of the book. This promises to be an off-read book for home or classroom. Mary Jarvis


811. Middle West--Poetry; American poetry. 35 p. Gr. 1 - 6.
Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Artist Wendell Minor has captured the essence of Carl Sandburg’s poetry of mid-America in Grassroots. Sandburg’s love for the land, its rigors, and its inhabitants shines through his words. Children learning history and their roots will be drawn to a deeper understanding of what our nation is about through the poetry and illustrations. At the conclusion of the book, Minor shares his own heritage of growing up on the Illinois plains. He says of Carl Sandburg, “Though we are of different seasons, we share a love of the land and are bound together by our grassroots.” That heritage and love permeates both poems and watercolor paintings. Mary Jarvis


811. Penguins--Poetry; Antarctic regions--Poetry; American poetry. 29 p. K - Gr. 3.
Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Penguins pop off the pages of this lively book in rhyme and whimsical illustrations. Judy Sierra takes a playful, poetic approach to describing the life and antics of this Antarctic bird. Children will learn and be amused as they watch a hatching emerge in the cold world of ice and snow, or be wary as the wily killer whale stalks these feathered friends. Bright, humorous illustrations by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey give an idea of the life and habitat of these birds in Antarctic Antics : A Book of Penguin Poems. This will be an enjoyable introduction to an unusual bird. Mary Jarvis


811.54. City and town life--Poetry. 64 p. Gr. 2 - 5.
Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

When a City Leans Against the Sky is a collection of short poems. Each short poem allows the reader to look at some simple aspect of the city and see something new. The shadows of the fire escape are piano keys and the cat on the window sill is the fire escape princess who “dreams royal dreams.” Allan A. De Fina writes about ordinary things with insight and humor. His poems engage the senses and tease the imagination. Sometimes playful and other times contemplative, he is always imaginative. Piece by piece, he picks up the parts of his city and examines them, turning them over and seeing more than one usually notices. His ability to see beauty in the ordinary, everyday things we seldom notice awakens the imagination. The pencil drawings by Ken Condon in city gray tones have a quality of timelessness about them. Cathleen Sovold Johnson


818. Monsters--Wisdom; Riddles; Jokes; Easy reading materials. 42 p. Gr. 1 - 3.
Quality - 4  Acceptability - 4

Monster Riddles, a level three book from the Viking Easy-To-Read series, is just right for children beginning to read on their own. The jokes and riddles in Monster Riddles are silly, just as this age group likes, and easy enough to show off their developing reading skills. Each page separates the illustration from a text box to offer 48 playful riddles. The joke or riddle is printed in large, easy-to-read type, such as “Where does a 3,000-pound monster sleep?” The answer or punch-line, “anywhere it wants to,” is in smaller type at the bottom of the text box.

Louis Phillips has written outrageous text, much of which is pun-based, that will keep young readers chuckling and wanting to practice their reading skills. The theme of monsters sometimes stretches to include ghosts, giants, and a giant ape. Types of monsters are grouped together. For instance, all the ghost riddles are together. One riddle, “Why does Count Dracula drink blood?” appears twice—on facing pages—but has two different twists. Lisa Wroble

900's - Geography, History, and Biography


Quality - 5  Acceptability - 4

In Ten Queens author Milton Meltzer introduces the reader to female rulers: Esther, of secrets and revelations; Cleopatra, the scion of public relations; Boudicca, the red-headed Briton who sought revenge; Zenobia, a guardian of a fabled desert oasis; Eleanor of Aquitaine, “who leaped over the barriers of proper behavior set for her sex” (p. 43); Isabel, dedicated to the unification of Spain as a country and under one religion; Elizabeth I, “Good Queen Bess... a rare genius” (p. 83); Christina of Sweden, champion of the arts; Maria Theresa, devoted mother to her family and her far-flung country; Catherine the Great, liberal reformer to bitter reactionary.

Meltzer chooses his subjects well, showing, by contrast, that the women are flesh-and-blood, yet each with courage to live her values and cleverness to achieve goals. He writes in a straight-forward manner, making no apologies for their faults, not giving undue praise to their accomplishments. He leaves that judgment to the reader.

Andersen’s drawings add a touch of stylization to the book. She often adds flags flying, hair being swept back by the wind. The pictures are not portrait-perfect, but are an interpretation of the text.

Ten Queens includes a table of contents, preface, a note on sources, bibliography and index. The lay-out invites the reader to use the book as a research source. Su Hagerty


910.9. Exploration--Handbooks, manuals, etc. 29 p. Gr. 3 - 5.
Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5
Marilyn Tolhurst challenges children to discover what it would have been like to be an explorer of early lands. She begins by mentioning the courage and dedication needed by explorers to be able to face the unknown, and ends the handbook with a quiz for students to test for themselves whether or not they have that same courage and dedication. Throughout The Explorer's Handbook, Marilyn Tolhurst gives examples from Egyptian civilization up to the twentieth century, of the gamble explorers took to discover new lands. Explorers such as Ferdinand Magellan and Roald Amundsen risked death to make new discoveries. Many like Christopher Columbus and Marco Polo were never given the recognition they deserved until long after their deaths.

Simple projects such as making a compass and a sea chest will encourage children to feel as if they are participating in some of the experiences of exploration. Interesting illustrations add unique details such as the list of Captain Cook's supplies on board his ship and the description of explorers' headgear.

The Explorer's Handbook is more than a description of the history of exploration. Students will become involved in the projects and motivated by the fascinating pieces of information about different explorers to want to do further research on individual discoverers. The Explorer's Handbook is a wonderful introduction to the history of exploration and a helpful aid for school projects. After reading this book, children will be motivated to discover new worlds of their own. Susan Robinson


Just like the hot jazz music Louis loved to play, Leonard Jenkins’ illustrations are dark and sultry. Blacks, browns, and bright colors, interwoven with a variety of texture and media, give these illustrations a surrealistic effect. While maybe not appealing to younger children, their abstract quality makes them interesting to study, as it is easy to find something new in them each time they are viewed. Virginia Schnabel


Lou Gehrig, the man who never missed a game in fourteen years. Born in 1903, Mr. Gehrig played his first game in 1925 for the New York Yankees. In 1938 he started having trouble playing. First, he couldn’t hit. Then he couldn’t field. In 1939, he pulled himself out of the game. Later he was diagnosed with what is now known as Lou Gehrig’s disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. He died in 1941 at the age of thirty-seven.

David Adler has written a biography of Lou Gehrig that is appropriate for young elementary students. The colored paintings by Terry Widener illustrate the text well. Jane Mouttet


A Life with Animals: Jane Goodall

Mount Everest and Beyond: Sir Edmund Hillary

To Edmund Hillary, mountain climber and adventurer, the greatest challenge he can think of is to climb Mt. Everest, the tallest mountain in the world. After years of preparation and training, Hillary faces his challenge and fulfills his original dream, but what he finds in the process is a new dream that will last a lifetime. A Life with Animals: Jane Goodall
irrepressible personality eventually lands him in the White House, where he will become one of the most well respected and well loved American presidents of all time.

**Partner in Revolution: Abigail Adams**

The British are unfairly taxing the colonies and people who live in the new country are fed up. Many are demanding a revolution and Abigail Adams’s husband, John, has joined the fight. Now Abigail must do her part to help win the battle for freedom, as her home becomes a place of refuge for weary revolutionaries. When the war finally ends, Abigail continues to support her husband as he helps to build the new country, and when he eventually becomes President of the United States.

**The Last Hawaiian Queen: Lili‘uokalani**

In Lili‘uokalani’s country called Hawaii, the sky is blue, the sun warm, and the flowers sweetly scented. It is a land where she and her people feel happy and safe; that is until white men begin to move in and take over this island nation. Although the Polynesian people fight to protect their home land, the American people prove too powerful for them. When Lili‘uokalani becomes queen, she finds she is queen in name only and can do nothing to help her people. Over time, she must face many more trials before she learns to accept and appreciate the fact that her once independent nation is now a part of the United States of America.

This Benchmark Biography series introduces young readers to some of the most memorable characters in American history. The quality is somewhat affected by a number of typographical errors and the short, choppy, and unchallenging sentences throughout most of the books. Still, the information is thorough and gives a good overview of each subject’s life in a small amount of space.

There are some obvious biases against Caucasian people in several of the books, one against people who hunt, and one against missionaries. Also to be noted: in Crazy Horse, Indian spiritualism is described and mentioned several times.

Overall, this series provides a fascinating glimpse into the lives of people who chose to make a difference. The challenges these Americans faced, and the dreams they lived out are an inspiration.

One thing that makes this series effective is that some of the books are based on and use quotes from the subject’s personal writings. These are not dry textbooks, but exciting, emotional accounts of the highs and lows of each subject’s life.

The book’s illustrations are photos of actual paintings, portraits, cartoons and historical documents, and every book contains a glossary of terms, as well as an index of other resources for further study. *Virginia Schnabel*
realism to the explorers’ travails as well as interest to the descriptions of clothing and the tools of the trade. Written in easy to read, short chapters, this book is certain to please those faced with a history report or those who just enjoy an exploration of their own. A short Afterword, Bibliography and Index round out this excellent offering. Judy Driscoll


921 (919.804). Steger, Will; Arctic regions—Discovery and exploration; North Pole—Discovery and exploration; Explorers; Diaries. 63 p. Gr. 3 - 8.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Over the Top of the World is the exciting account of five people, three sleds, and twenty-two dogs that crossed the frozen Arctic Ocean in 1995. In his prologue Will Steger shares what led up to this expedition that he intended to use to draw attention to the Arctic’s ecosystem. The body of the book is Steger’s account of the team’s anticipation, frustration, and excitement throughout the trip as transcribed in his diary. He involved children in his trek each day as the team communicated on the Internet with schools around the world. The epilogue shares the benefits gained by the expedition. Full-color photographs illustrate the text on every page. These enable the reader to experience the expedition with the explorers. Sidebars by Barbara Horbeck include further information about people, places, and things mentioned in the text. Steger’s graphic account of this incredible journey from Russian to Canada by way of the North Pole will enthrall anyone who has a sense of adventure. Patricia Perry


921 (973.7). Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865; Presidents. 29 p. K - Gr. 2.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Honest Abe is as simple and straightforward as Abraham Lincoln himself. Born in a Kentucky log cabin, Abe grew up in the wilds of the western frontier. This rough life taught him to be brave and hardworking. He loved to learn. When it was impossible to attend school, he taught himself. By the time he was grown, people loved and trusted him because he was always fair and honest. Once, while working as a storekeeper, he walked three miles to find a woman who had overpaid him six cents. Abe became a lawyer, and was eventually elected president. However, being magnanimous is not always popular. Just after the end of the Civil War, an angry man shot him while he was at a theater with his wife.

In approximately 1000 words, Edith Kunhard introduces readers to a great man of American history. Her narrative is factual, but reads as a smooth story. The book has excellent visual appeal. Malach Zeldis’s primitive style paintings fill each page with dramatic whimsy. Her imaginative depiction of early American life balances the unadorned nature of the text. The facts, which have been carefully selected for their appeal to young readers, emphasis Abraham Lincoln’s high moral character. Honest Abe concludes with the full text of the Gettysburg Address and a timeline of Lincoln’s life. Melinda Torgerson


944. France—Civilization—1000-1228; Women—France—Social life and customs; Blanche, de Navarre, comtesse de Champagne, d. 1229; Nobility—France—Champagne. 48 p. Gr. 4 - 9.


731.4. Stone carving—Europe; Stone cutters—Europe; Stone carvers—Europe; Church buildings—Europe. 48 p. Gr. 4 - 9.


664. Millers; Middle Ages. 48 p. Gr. 4 - 9.


841. Troubadours; Peire Vidal, fl. 1200—Fiction. 48 p. Gr. 4 - 9.

The new series from Runestone Press, a division of Lerner Publishing, will no doubt fill a need for students wanting to know more about life in the Middle Ages. The French author and Italian illustrator have worked together on the four books which seem to have been published first in Europe and then translated for an American audience. That may explain some of the stilted sentence construction, and why typically American words like “Daddy” creep in where a French child would say “Papa.”

Readers of history and historical fiction set in this period will find a wealth of details about daily life. All the titles in this series help readers understand more completely Karen Cushman’s Catherine Called Birdy, de Angeli’s A Door in the Wall, Grey’s Adam of the Road, and others set during this long period called the Middle Ages. Using these titles along with Macauley’s Castle or Cathedral give readers more insight into the importance of the stonecutter (particularly in the two titles just mentioned), and the interdependence of these people on one another and their dependence on the nobles whom they served. These also serve the adult reader as a good overview to the period. The format, large picture book style, may put off some older students however.

While not the only materials out there on the topic, these are well-researched books designed so that the supplementary materials, glossary, pronunciation guide, index, and suggested reading lists, are easy to understand and follow. However, the bindings do not appear to be very strong. They are shiny covers with no dust jacket, the kind that do not wear well with heavy use. On the plus side, these are attractively illustrated volumes with drawings, photographs of the areas, and art work. Many pages begin with the first letter of the first paragraph illuminated as would be the first word of an illuminated manuscript. The drawings for the stories of these individuals, though, are not very appealing, especially the faces, whereas the horses and other objects are well-drawn. The lack of evenness in the drawing may be due to the fact that several artists were responsible for additional art. While good, consider the needs of your library carefully and compare these to other materials.

A Day With a Noblewoman

Based on the life of Blanche of Champagne, a young widow who struggled to govern and safeguard her young son’s inheritance after his father died on the way to the Crusades, readers are taken through a day in her life. This provides readers with details of how she spent her time and what she did for entertainment, for work and recreation. It also dispels the idea that no one in the Middle Ages ever bathed—Blanche took full baths.

A Day With a Stonecutter

Here a readers follow a fictional stonecutter as he works on a church in the northern part of France, practicing his trade and art. Readers are taken from the stone quarry with its deafening noise to the relative quiet of carving at the cathedrals and churches. Here Yves the stonecutter decides he must work cutting the stone into statues which will adorn the buildings.

A Day With a Miller

Readers are introduced to milling in the first part of the book, and good thing they are since many readers do not connect grains with the final product of bread, cake, or cookies. The miller Landry is fictionalized, although details are taken from historical accounts. Daily family life and
business is explained through the story, but it is an explanation of a lifestyle, not the story of the person, that interests the reader.

**A Day With a Troubadour**

Again a fictionalized story based on a real-life figure, this time Peire Vidal who lived during the 12th century, as did the figures of the other books. Readers travel with Peire from castle to castle, through exile for attempting to kiss the beautiful Lady Vierna, whom he sung about in his songs, to a castle preparing for a siege. Troubadours took the latest news, gossip, songs, and information on styles from castle to castle as they provided entertainment and divertimentos for the nobles. French troubadours developed the art form in southern France and were responseable for the songs of love and valor, such as *The Song of Roland.*  Leslie Radloff

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956.94. Jews--History--Israel--History; Zionism--History. 102 p. Gr. 4 - 6.

Quality - 3  Acceptability - 5

Israel chronicles persecution and broken promises through the ages, and gives a very thorough history of the Jewish people up to and including the establishment of a nation in the late 1940s. This book takes the reader on a historical adventure, as seen through the eyes of a most unique people—the Jews. Though they were scattered around the world, Jews longed for their homeland. Thanks to a variety of men through the ages—brought to life here via pencil sketches—the Jews were able to finally settle in their beloved Palestine and make it into a nation. An in-depth bibliography, index, and timeline round out this great reference/history book.  Barbara Beyer

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970.01. America--Discovery and exploration; America--History--To 1810. 48 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 4

Exploration and Conquest, by Betsy and Giulio Maestro is a remarkable history book. A companion to their *The Discovery of The Americas*, this volume continues to develop the history of North and South America. The text clearly and concisely covers an enormous amount of complicated history in such a way young readers will readily be able to absorb the information. The water color/pen and ink illustrations rendered with precision, complement and clarify further what is being covered in the text. Even though the information is in picture book format, it should by no means stop with young readers. This is a notable introduction to the history of the Americas and of the New World, which students of all ages might consider when researching the subject.

Without editorializing, the Maestros cover how the Europeans exploited and dominated both the Indians and Africans as they developed their interests throughout the world. One possible concern is the how younger readers might need some discussion on the issue of how dominant powers should treat people and resources. Perhaps sensing this as a window for discussion the Maestros sum up the momentous change brought on by European advancement with this one statement, “The great gain of one people was the great loss of another.”

The Maestros once again have showcased their abilities and talents by providing a history lesson that is understandable and attractive.  Pam Webb

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970.02. United States--History--Colonial period. ca. 1600-1775; Canada--History--To 1763 (New France). 48 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

The New Americans is the most recent book in The American Story Series by Betsy and Giulio Maestro. Written in a picture book format, it introduces readers to life in the American colonies and the important events of the colonial period.

Beginning with the arrival of the Pilgrims in 1620, the Maestors cover the first Thanksgiving, religious freedom, exploration of North America, and the colonies’ struggle with England. Competition among the French, English, Spanish, and Dutch for the resources of North America is also explored. Importantly, Native Americans are not forgotten. Their way of life and the injustices served them are covered in great detail. All of this is accomplished using clear, concise text and the appeal of the picture book. Giulio Maestro’s illustrations are beautiful and a great asset to the book. Not only are they eye-catching and intriguing, but the maps, charts, and pictures provide valuable, accurate information. An index is also included.

The American Story Series, which includes the books *The Discovery of The Americas*, *Exploration and Conquest*, and *A More Perfect Union: The Story of Our Constitution*, has already won many awards, including two ALA Notable Book Awards. Its newest book, *The New Americans*, would be a worthy investment for any library.  Kerri Cunningham

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973.7. United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865. 48 p. Gr. 3 - 6.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

A solemn young man in an army uniform stares back from the photo. Johnny Clem joined the Union Army at eleven years of age. It was said that he was small enough to fit in a drum. When a cannon shell destroyed his drum, Johnny grabbed a musket and began shooting. He is one of many faces and stories among the pages of the *Children of the Civil War.*

Children of the Civil War is small book filled with black and white photographs and illustrations of children and their families during the mid to late nineteenth century. Woven through the photo essay is the simplified story of the Civil War. Relying strongly on the visual images, the author Candice F. Ransom touches on the impact the war had on families.

The back of the book lists further resources including a bibliography and internet websites. There is a question and answer session directed at parents and teachers, and a game for creating a secret code. Overall, the book provides a basic introduction to the Civil War. This book is one of four books in the series, *Picture the American Past* by Carolrhoda.  Joanne Haffly

F. Stores, Retail—Fiction; Old age—Fiction; Automobile driving—Fiction; Alcoholism—Fiction; Texas—Fiction. 201 p. Gr. 7 - 10.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

*Rules of the Road* is a delightful, fast-paced novel with the starring role played by Jenna Boller, “a tall girl with tall ideas.” Jenna has only recently acquired her driving license, but by a strange quirk of fate becomes the cross-country driver for Madeline Gladstone, elderly president of the Gladstone Shoe Stores where Jenna is employed. She’s a crackerjack shoe salesman but when it comes to driving, our heroine has a lot to learn. Along the way she does learn—about life and death, but mostly about herself.

The story has many laugh-aloud scenes yet conveys a poignancy that touches the reader's heart. Jenna’s father is an alcoholic and the problems related to that have plagued her and her sister all their lives. This trek from Illinois to Texas helps her to understand alcoholism to some degree, and also to understand her own ambivalent feelings toward her dad; she begins to come to grips with this issue in her life. It is a much matured and changed Jenna that returns to her mother and sister at the end of her adventurous summer.

This would be a well-read addition to any library. Joan Bauer is a well-known author, whose name appears on the pages of *Country Living*, *The Horn Book*, *School Library Journal*, and *The Horn Book Magazine*.

**A Word from the Editor: Sylvia Stopforth**

Series Fiction

Series fiction, particularly that written for younger readers, is often scorned by parents, librarians, and other concerned adults. Yet, despite our best efforts to guide young readers to "superior literature," requests for the latest in the Sweet Valley High, Bailey School Kids, and Goosebumps series abound. So we shake our heads, reluctantly lead the way to the paperback racks, and ask ourselves just what the attraction is.

Sometimes, choices made in the library are based on peer pressure. Everyone else in the class, or group, seems to be reading these books, and the need to belong, to fit in, can be a powerful force. Clever advertising and flashy cover art draw some readers in. Like toys, movies and clothing, books have become big business. The popularity of some series can be almost entirely attributed to costly - and effective - marketing strategies.

But surely there is more to it than that. Perhaps, in the interest of our young readers, we need to rethink our attitudes towards series fiction. What do series offer readers that stand-alone titles do not?

One of the most significant factors contributing to the on-going popularity of series fiction is the concept of familiarity. The plots are often predictable; we know from the first page that, no matter how convoluted the trail of clues, Nancy Drew will crack the case.

Children living in an ever-changing world find comfort in recurring patterns. The familiar can be comforting; it can also be freeing. Some young people may not be ready to deal with particular themes or emotions depicted in certain books. As a result, they distance themselves from the narrative, or stop reading altogether. With a series, the reader has a pretty good idea as to how it will all turn out in the end, so he can allow himself to become immersed in and involved with the story to a greater extent. A certain level of trust is established between author and reader. This translates into fewer disappointments.

For those who find reading a bit of a challenge, series fiction is often more accessible. Certain elements are repetitive, and the author’s writing style becomes familiar, so there are fewer demands made on the reader. Reading seems like less of a chore, and more of a pleasure. Sometimes, over the course of a series, characters can become old friends. They are consistent and reliable, but never boring.

Readers return again and again to become reacquainted. As characters grow and develop, and overcome obstacles, these readers may derive some sense of confidence in their own ability to weather life’s storms.

It seems, then, that there may be some legitimate reasons to read series fiction. So how can we emphasize the positive aspects, minimize the negative, and foster a life-long love of reading? We do what loving, committed parents and librarians have always done.

We know our young people. We look beyond the hype, and do not simply reject their opinions out of hand. We make a sincere effort to understand our young readers and their choices so that we can support and encourage their efforts to make wise choices. We read what they are reading, and keep the channels of communication open. Finally, we are prepared for that moment when they decide they’ve had enough of that Star Trek series, and we have booklists of quality titles - both stand-alone and series - ready.

For ideas, check the pages of *CLJ*.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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In the next issue of *CLJ*, Sylvia will take a closer look at several series currently available.
will ensure high circulation of her newest book.

Ceil Carey


Widge is a poor orphan in England apprenticed to a doctor who trains him in shorthand. A deceptive, thieving man hears of Widge’s abilities, and “buys” him so Widge can illegally copy Shakespeare’s plays for him. Widge enters the Globe Theatre and attempts to copy Hamlet, only to have his tablet stolen. He makes friends with the “players” and decides not to steal the playbook, or copy it, after all. The theatre players care for him as he has never been cared for before. He learns what true friends are, and even gets parts himself. However, the evil “Falconer” is constantly lurking about, trying to get Widge back.

Many exciting, dangerous adventures ensue, and the characters are colorful and animated. The author, Blackwood, obviously has considerable knowledge of the accents, clothing, customs, and culture of England in the 1600’s. Some of the dialect is difficult to understand, but makes for a more effective and believable novel. Several swear words are used which, although fairly discreet, are really unnecessary.

The Shakespeare Stealer is an intriguing book that weaves together mystery, culture, and adventure. The greatest value lies in the lessons learned by Widge in morality, trust, friendship, and loyalty. The reader may also profit from the historical value of the content, gaining knowledge of the England of Shakespeare’s day.

Mary Jo Krzymanski


The globe spun its blur of blues, greens and tans and Emma determinedly jabbed her finger onto the smooth surface. With eyes closed she could only hope that her destination wasn’t in the middle of the ocean. As she slowly lifted her finger, the name Papua New Guinea emerged from the land mass on which she’d pointed. Relieved but trembling she knew that she was actually going to go through with leaving home and setting out in search of a new life—a new Emma Doris. This was to be a journey that would hopefully transform the mousy, shy, thirteen-year-old into a personable and confident young lady.

The cruise itself is an awakening call to the fragile and gullible Emma, and she finally sends a silent prayer upward that starts her on a different path than she had ever expected—a journey back to the love and guidance of a caring Savior.

As she accepts a position as governess to three motherless children, she finds a depth to her love that she has never known. Through hardship and misunderstandings, can Emma truly reach out to Josh Daniels and convince him of her care for his children? Despite danger and threats from neighboring tribes, Emma discovers a true love emerging. Can it be reciprocated by Josh or do past hurts on both sides stand in the way of a true relationship?

Tracy Carlson writes a touching novel of inner healing and new beginnings in Awakening Heart. The story moves smoothly from one challenge to another that endears the reader to the interesting characters presented. Growth and changes are key themes within this romance mystery.

Mary Kathleen McKinney


The passage between the world of Central Park, New York City, and Fayre Farre is entirely plausible in the engrossing sci-fi The Kingdom of Kevin Malone, created by Suzy McKee Charnas. Amy, joined by her girlfriend Rachel Breakstone and a schoolmate, Claudia, attempt to free Kevin Malone, A.K.A. Kavian prince, the Promised Champion, from his tortuous imaginary world. He has peopled Fayre Farre with trolls, moorims, giants, all in need of rescuing from the White One.

Gradually the reader realizes that the plot is an attempt to work through a continuing cycle of child abuse. The story itself is strong, but inevitably demands a crisis the magnitude of the final battle to justify the conclusion. Charnas writes in a vivid style that stimulates the imagination and lends depth to even the secondary characters.

There is some violence in action and language, in keeping with the subject matter. Su Hagerby


The story is strong, but it is necessary to occasionally suspend belief at the luck that Alice experiences in her search for the killer and in her attempts to locate places to stay at night. Alice exhibits both logic and panic within close periods of time. This seems normal and believable for a sixteen-year-old.

Wanted! is a mystery whose main character, Alice Robie, seems to vacillate between great detective work and the feelings of a child lost in a grownup world. Carolyn Cooney does well in bringing out this conflict that is perhaps fairly typical of most teenagers were a murder not involved. Barbara Wall


Nellie is a twenty-two year old teacher in Eastern Canada. Her strong sense of justice, and belief in equality for women, lead her to become involved in the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. She believes women are powerless because they are not allowed to vote, and that they are sometimes the innocent victims of men who become drunk and abusive, squandering money needed for the care of their families.

Nellie also finds herself growing in love for Wes McClung, who is studying to be a pharmacist. When Wes goes to Toronto to finish his education, he and Nellie correspond, gradually expressing more hints of their affection for each other. When Wes finally returns, he proposes, promising to support Nellie in her work for women.


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 3

The Jetty Chronicles is a fictionalized account of life on the shores of Lower New York Bay during the years 1934-1939 as observed by the author as he matures from a twelve-year-old to early manhood. The unifying factor is the jetty, a man-made promontory built of rock blasted from the Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit.

Following an explanatory introduction by the author, each chapter in the book represents a different year and centers upon a unique, adult character. Underlying the sometimes humorous and very human characters is a sense of impending doom: Hitler’s atrocities and power are growing. At the book’s conclusion, America is on the verge of joining the war.

Young readers who have difficulty empathizing with older characters may find this aspect of the book problematic, as will those who expect a unifying plot or suspense. However, the episodic format is excellent for short spurts of reading, and the author’s forays into geology, shipping, history, and environmental concerns enrich the work.

At least one of the characters is disturbing: Plaut, the Prince of Peace, who considers himself the miracle-working son of God. Plaut misuses scripture. The character is plainly delusional, and the author deals compassionately with him. Light profanity is used in a couple of conversations.

The author’s writing style is lyrically beautiful, and the exotic setting recalls a time that will never come again. Reflecting this tone, his jacket painting of a boy sitting at the end of the jetty evokes the hazy quality of memory. This unique book, written by an award-winning author-illustrator, might be more appreciated by adults.

Marcy Stewart Froemke


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

Freedom often comes at a price, which is what the Henry family and other freed slaves discover in My Home Is Over Jordan, by Sandra Forrester.

Readers were first introduced to Maddie and her family in Sound The Jubilee (a Notable Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies). In this continuation of the story, members of the Henry family strive to carry out their dream of...
becoming landowners. They had thought that, with the Civil War behind them, and the sweet promise of being a freed people ahead of them, life would be easier. But the Promised Land still has giants to conquer, the biggest one being prejudice.

The main story revolves around Maddie, a strong lead character, as she tries to reckon with dreams for her own future. Forrester’s approach to the reality of what newly freed slaves encountered is honest without being overly sympathetic. She delivers the impact of racial prejudice without emphasizing the violence. The modified dialect gives the story authenticity, but doesn’t slow down the pace.

Enough reference is made to the previous book that a reader can follow along with the plot, although reading the books in order will give a better understanding of why the Henry’s search for their home over Jordan is still a river crossing away. Forrester’s book makes the reader wonder if much has changed since Maddie’s time. There is one instance of profanity, which is presented in a way that makes possible their ultimate survival. There is a touch of earthiness in one or two spots, along with some graphic descriptions of human suffering which can be a little disturbing. Out of the Dust was the Newbery Award winner for 1997. Colleen Drippé


This plucky heroine has a song in her heart even though she faces situations with clenched fists at times. She portrays the hopeful message that a person can be an overcomer in even the most bleak of circumstances. Pam Webb


F. Dust storms—Fiction; Farm life— Oklahoma—Fiction; Depression—1929—Fiction; Oklahoma— Fiction; Poetry—Fiction. 227 p. Gr. 9 - 12.

Karen Hesse begins her tale in January, 1934, set right in the Oklahoma dustbowl. Mama is expecting a baby and fourteen-year-old Billie Jo can hardly wait. Finally she will have a little brother or sister! Tragedy strikes when Daddy leaves a pall of kerosene by the stove and Mama mistakes it for water. She is critically burned and dies giving birth to a baby who also dies. Billie Jo is left with crippled hands and a big load of guilt for her share in the accident. The next couple of years go by beneath a pall of despair— and dust. Only when Billie Jo decides to leave home for good does she learn that “what I am, I am because of the dust. And what I am is good enough.” She is reconciled to her father, who prepares to marry again and rebuild his life.

Written in an unadorned prose style which strongly resembles blank verse, this is an intense, even a beautiful book. The very starkness of the imagery, studded with small evocative vignettes and examples of understated pathos, leaves a powerful impression on the reader.

Karen Hesse’s book is about endurance, about hope and perseverance. And yet it is also about humility, that necessary yielding of the strong personality—both Billie Jo’s and her father’s—that makes possible their ultimate survival. There is a touch of earthiness in one or two spots, along with some graphic descriptions of human suffering which can be a little disturbing. Out of the Dust was the Newbery Award winner for 1997. Colleen Drippé


F. Amish—Fiction; Hospice—Fiction; Christian life— Fiction; Romance fiction. 281 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.

Who is she? Where does she belong? Is she Katie Lapp, adopted Amish girl? Or is she Katherine Mayfield, Mistress of Mayfield Manor? Katherine finds herself living out her dream—the life of “the English.” After her birth mother dies, Katherine inherits a sizable estate. Since her Amish family and community has “shunned” her, she begins to build a new life—one that includes the wealthy Justin Wirth. But, she soon discovers that she can not walk away from the family and community she has always known. When her childhood sweetheart, Daniel, reappears after his supposed death, Katherine finds her heart divided and broken once again.

The author, Beverly Lewis, tells an interesting story about the bonds of family, friendship and love. The fact that it is told in an Amish setting makes it unique. The characters come alive and one finds that they care about the minor characters as well as the major ones. The
Reckoning, being third in the series, had some unclear parts from previous books that were difficult to “piece together.” Also, throughout the novel Amish or German words were used without translation. Tammy Williams


Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

Tessa Ramsey’s father is a renowned surgeon, her mother, a nurse. Tessa has always craved the attention and love of her father, but Dr. Ramsey gives most of his attention to his patients and the hospital. Dr. Ramsey served in Vietnam, only to return a changed and haunted man. He confuses Tessa and her mother. Deciding that he can no longer work as a doctor in Milwaukee, Dr. Ramsey sets out for a research position in Georgia, taking Tessa for company. Tessa and her father stop to visit her Aunt and decide to stay. Tessa’s father takes a job as the convent gardener while Tessa forms friendships with Selina and with handsome, older Caleb. As Tessa’s father tries to heal his psyche, Tessa falls in love with Caleb. But Caleb’s character is flawed; eventually, he persuades Tessa to lie to her father, as Caleb has lied to her.

Jan Marino has written a book with many levels. At the center is the returning veteran who is in shock and needs time and love to heal. Tessa’s father takes a job as the convent gardener while Tessa forms friendships with Selina and with handsome, older Caleb. As Tessa’s father tries to heal his psyche, Tessa falls in love with Caleb. But Caleb’s character is flawed; eventually, he persuades Tessa to lie to her father, as Caleb has lied to her.


Quality - 4 Acceptability - 3

Mother dies and Em’s life becomes almost unbearable. Father soon remarries a woman who has no desire to tolerate Em’s older sister, Pamela, who is out of control in the high school, on the bus, and at home. Pamela says whatever comes into her head and eats everything, rapidly adding to her girth and anger at the same time. She is emotionally disturbed and abusive, but she is all that Em has.

Together they leave Father’s trailer and end up in Syracuse, New York, living on Pamela’s disability checks and Em’s occasional jobs. Pamela can’t form any other human relationships and Em doesn’t know how, though she yearns for the closeness and the comfort of a mother figure. When Pamela dies and the disability checks stop, Em is virtually without food and resources and not yet eighteen.

Norma Fox Mazer finely draws the characters of Pamela and Em. Pamela is abusive and her language is difficult, with frequent swear words. She is not a likeable or admirable character. Em is a victim who eventually claws her way out of the emotional walls she has let Pamela build around her. The language may be inappropriate for some students, especially if they do not realize that Pamela’s behavior is the result of a mental illness.


F. Industrial Revolution—Fiction; Canals—Fiction; Family life—Fiction. 150 p. Gr. 10 - 12.

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

With mother dying two years after father, the ten Carpenter children are faced with the struggle to survive and to keep the family intact—a monumental task for twenty-year-old Betsey, the eldest. Although there are many difficulties that must be managed, Betsey’s biggest decision regards her relationship with Cyrus, a Roman Catholic. Will she seek God’s direction regarding the family’s and her own future?

Never the Same Again is based on actual court and town records of the Samuel Carpenter family of South Sutton, Massachusetts, during the early 1800s. Though the story lacks energy, Phyllis Hosken Masso strives for accuracy regarding the family members, to the degree that the records allow. Everyday life during this era, along with historical incidents that took place, are blended into the fabric of the story, which includes the construction of the Blackstone Canal Locks, a source of labor for the Irish emigrants and other men of that area. Words common to that time are sprinkled into the dialogue; a glossary of definitions and an illustration of how the locks function are provided at the back of the book.

The author portrays the religious prejudices that abounded between Protestants and Catholics. There is a comment regarding the Latter-day Saints’ prophet, Joseph Smith, and his mysterious tablet discovery, as well as Roman Catholic doctrines that the people are warned against.

Debbie Lindsay


F. African Americans—Alabama—Fiction; Apache Indians—Fiction; Race relations—Fiction; Friendship—Fiction; Alabama—Fiction; Indians of North America—Fiction. 160 p. Gr. 5 - 10.

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

Eleven-year-old Sarah Crossman, an only child, is consumed with jealousy when her parents take in a runaway Apache boy. She is cold to fifteen-year-old Sky, who in return ignores her completely. But they must set aside their differences when the Crossmans face real trouble. The year is 1888, and many blacks in Quincy, Alabama, have been forced into sharecropping. Mr. Crossman refuses to sell his cotton farm, claiming that sharecropping is just another name for slavery. But when boll weevils destroy his entire crop, he is in debt and in danger of losing his farm. Sky has the chance to run away again, but he chooses to stay and help the Crossmans fight for their land. Sarah makes peace with him, learns to love her adopted brother, and they stand together to defend their freedom.

In Run Away Home, author Patricia C. McKissack uses incidents from her own family history to craft a simply-written but satisfying read. The characters are unusually well-developed; by the end of the book, you know each character intimately. The plot is slow in some places, due to far too much emphasis on Sarah’s jealousy. It seems as though McKissack’s original intention was to make Sarah’s bitterness the focus of the story, even though many more important things are going on, such as the attack of a group of nightriders, much like the Ku Klux Klan.

Also, the book sends a mixed message about religion; Mr. Crossman is a Christian, and frequently quotes Scripture, but Mrs. Crossman, part Indian, shares Sky’s beliefs and sometimes uses incantations instead of prayer. Tara Sigler


F. Death—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 224 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


F. Death—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 224 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5
Kyle believes that nothing could be more perfect than life itself. She has reunited with her real parents and brother, her husband, Kenneth, is loving, caring, and going places in his career, and she is pregnant with their first child. Nothing but joy emanates from her glowing face. But all this is soon to be pushed aside as she is told that her new baby has a life-threatening heart condition. Through this irreconcilable loss, Kyle begins to realize that blame has little to do with what has happened. Now she must make the all-important decision that can turn her back to truth or keep her entombed in self-pity and fear.

Janette Oke and T. Davis Bunn are masters at pulling the heart strings. They take a rather simple plot, albeit heart-rending, and delve into the thoughts and intents of the heart. Although Kyle’s character is somewhat frustrating with her misguided choices, the reader can rejoice with the assurance that God is big enough to reach the hearts of even the most desperate soul. Forgiveness and healing are the main themes brought forth in *Tomorrow’s Dream*. Mary McKinney

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F. Romance fiction; Mystery fiction; England—Fiction. 238 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.

Quality - 5    Acceptability - 5

Touring Great Britain to write travel articles has a certain appeal to Gabrielle Fleming, but the contingencies are troublesome. Gabby’s sister, Janice, had insisted that she accompany her and Gabby is suspicious that her sister has gotten into some kind of trouble. She also has been assigned a photographer, handsome Jarod Walls, but Gabby has always worked alone and feels put upon by the unusual arrangement.

Soon the tour becomes anything but routine as Gabby overhears Janice bargaining for five million dollars! From this point, suspicion and danger increases as Janice disappears and Gabby becomes involved with gun-runners. Her amateur detective work only sinks her deeper into trouble. By now she is not sure who can be trusted as Jarod appears to be part of the espionage. Trying to guard her heart from Jarod’s obvious interest in her, yet feeling the tug of her own heartstrings, Gabby forcibly puts her feelings on hold to try to track down her sister.

Can she take control of this dangerous situation, and her own life?

Tracy Peterson, in her novel *Framed*, skillfully weaves an exciting tale of intrigue and romance that takes place in the heart of London and the British Isles. Her accurate information of famous landmarks gives a clear picture of the historical sites. The descriptions are a bit tedious in some places, as non-essential information to the storyline, but all in all, this is a very exciting read for the mystery lover. *Mary McKinney*

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F. Romance fiction. 281 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.

Quality - 4    Acceptability - 5

Claire Anderson works as a teacher at Hanover Falls Elementary School. She meets Michael Meredith, a local nursing home administrator, and they begin to fall in love. As they share about their similar childhoods and the difficulties they both had experienced, the bond between them deepens. However, Claire discovers the truth about Michael’s identity and his connection with a dark secret from her own past, and she breaks off their relationship. It seems unlikely that things will work out between them.

To complicate matters, Michael is dealing with problems at the nursing home. Several suspicious deaths have occurred. Michael must figure out why, and who is responsible. His own career could be in danger.

The author has written a charming, captivating story in *Kindred Bond*. God is portrayed as the kindred bond that takes place in the heart of London and the British Isles. Her accurate information of famous landmarks gives a clear picture of the historical sites. The descriptions are a bit tedious in some places, as non-essential information to the storyline, but all in all, this is a very exciting read for the mystery lover. *Mary McKinney*

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F. Death—Fiction. 326 p. Gr. 5 - 10.

Quality - 5    Acceptability - 5

Miranda Browne knows there is something strange about Abby. Her skin is too pale, and her footsteps vanish suddenly in the snow. When Miranda’s parents find out that Abby is homeless, they decide to take the girl into their home. Soon they are quite attached to her, but Miranda feels left out in the cold. There is something wrong with Abby—something so wrong it’s frightening. On top of that, Miranda realizes that confusing new feelings are threatening her warm friendship with Dan.

Finally, a desperate Abby confides in Miranda. Her family died in a house fire when she was only thirteen... in the year 1693. Somehow, Abby has survived, but she never grows, changes, or ages. The only link between eras is a small stone statue of a phoenix, the mythical bird that rises from the ashes to live again.

Reiss’s narrative flows effortlessly in this well-written story. Her characters, with all their faults and foibles, come to life, and often surprise the reader. Understanding and trust do not come easily, but come they do, and the reader, along with the characters, comes to understand that the ability to change—and to grow—is a gift.

A couple of expletives are used, and Dan gives Miranda an intimate backrub, but these incidents are true to the characters. As they all grapple honestly with the concepts of death and eternal life, Miranda comes to realize that she cannot change the past, but must help Abby to face the future. *Sylvia Stopforth*

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F. Mystery fiction; Animal rights—Fiction. 160 p. Gr. 6 - 12.

Quality - 4    Acceptability - 5

Jennie McGrady, sixteen-year-old amateur detective, becomes involved in a murder mystery while visiting a fur farm belonging to family friends. Shortly after her arrival and introduction to mink farming, Jennie learns that someone has raided a neighboring farm during the night, and released all the caged animals. She and her hosts hurry to capture as many of the animals as possible before they come to any harm in the wild. Suspicion for this deed falls on Jennie’s friend, Scott, a former animal rights activist, who is working at the farm Jennie is visiting. When the owner of the raided farm disappears, and is later found murdered, Jennie launchest into a investigation of her own to discover the truth. In doing so, she nearly becomes a murder victim, herself.

*Desperate Measures* will hold a mystery reader’s attention right up to the end, as Jennie’s list of suspects and motives grows with each new twist and turn of the story. Author Patricia Rushford does an excellent job of keeping the suspense level high and the action moving. The plot does not slow down for an instant, as Jennie moves from one risky pursuit to another, in search of the truth that will clear Scott’s name. *Donna Brown*

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F. Mental illness—Fiction. 236 p. Gr. 9 - 12.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 4

Mental illness has not always been treated with an enlightened attitude. In 1910, when seventeen-year-old Matthew Hobson can no longer cope with expectations and dreams that are not his own, he is institutionalized by his stern father, the Reverend Hobson. Reverend Hobson expects Matthew to follow in his footsteps, particularly since Matthew’s brother Zack has left the family to buy and run a ranch in Colorado.

Matthew can no longer do the work at school, and is expelled when he stops functioning on any level. Reverend Hobson believes that Matthew has been made ill as a punishment by God and simply ignores Matthew and the horrific institution in which he is placed. Zack discovers the situation and gains custody of Matthew, eventually taking him to the ranch in Colorado. Slowly, with love and patience, Matthew begins to heal and recover.

Matthew Unstrung is based on the true story of Kate Seago’s grandfather. It is a vivid picture of the lack of understanding most people had in regard to mental illness. The religious beliefs of the father are so inflexible that Reverend Hobson cannot see his family members as individuals needing love, care, and understanding. This is not a condemnation of religion and religious practices of the early 1900’s, though some may choose to believe that. Rather, Matthew Unstrung is a story of love and redemption, and of belief in a kind and loving God. The historical aspects of the treatment of insanity are fascinating, and the brotherly love inspiring.

Barbara Wall


F. Mystery fiction. 302 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.
Quality - 3 Acceptability - 4

When did we lose Harriet? Harriet is an elusive fifteen-year-old character. No one seems very concerned she is missing until MacLaren Yarbrough comes on the scene and is determined to find Harriet or to find out what has happened to her. Mac doggedly pursues every clue she can uncover with very little consideration for her own personal safety, stubbornly refusing to give up her search for the young girl. MacLaren is only a visitor to Montgomery, Alabama, while her brother is undergoing bypass surgery, but she quickly makes friends (and enemies) and spends the majority of her days in her relentless pursuit of the truth.

Despite an interesting plot, When Did We Lose Harriet? is over characterized with so many important members that keeping track is often a losing battle. Randomly, another character, Josheba, takes over the telling of the story for a chapter or two and then back to MacLaren. This is a little disconcerting in the middle of the telling of a tale, especially when so unexpected. Several incidents of drinking and dancing are mentioned.

References are made to spiritual ideals and prayer.

I found myself eager to solve the secret of Harriet’s disappearance and quickly read through this book, even looking forward to another MacLaren Yarbrough mystery. It would be a popular addition to most library collections.

Ceil Carey


Quality - 3 Acceptability - 4

Meri is white, Tilly is black, which has never mattered to the two best friends, until Meredith overhears her father say he is going to sell Tilly. For both girls this is the beginning of the realization that the world treats each of them differently. Meri is willing to defy her father to help Tilly escape, and for night to come swiftly is the prayer of ten-year-old Tilly as she struggles with communication to a God she feels can’t be trusted. This God allowed her ancestors to be brought as slaves to this country and she inherited her mothers bitterness for the white man’s God. When she can think of nothing to pray to this God in the dark cellar along the freedom train route, she asks simply for night to come swiftly, so that they can move on. She is leaving behind the only life she has ever known, the only real friend she has ever had.

P. B. Wilson uses the remainder of the book to show the enduring friendship of these two individual girls as they each take a distinct path in life and how they develop a deeper relationship with this God who can be trusted even though life is not fair or perfect. Love and forgiveness are the key issues.

There are obviously issues of racism covered in this story, also physical and sexual abuse.

Jannet Hoeffner


921 (813). Finley, Martha; Women—Biography; Authors—Biography. 156 p. Gr. 5 - Adult.
Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

A work of biographical fiction, On the Banks of Big Elk Creek builds an account of the life of Martha Finley, who wrote the Elsie Dinsmore books. The Elsie Books, originally published over a century ago, have recently been re-released. At the time they were written, Miss Finley was surprised by the popularity of these books, but eventually twenty-eight books were written for the series.
Talented, independent, inquisitive, and sentimental, Martha Finley was a student of the Bible and of classic literature; a timeless writer, she produced some fifty novels and many short stories, all without even a typewriter.

Born in Chillicothe, Ohio, in 1828, she was the sixth child. Her mother died when she was young, and it was her stepmother who would prove to be her greatest source of encouragement. Miss Finley moved to Elkton, Maryland, in the 1870's and it was here that the Elsie stories were written. The author of this book, Barbara Zahn, is a native of Elkton, and as a collector of the original Elsie Books became interested in writing about Martha Finley’s life.

A deeply religious woman, Finley continued to live a quiet private life even after her writing was well known and she became wealthy. She ignored the objections of family members who felt that, as a woman, she was out of place as a published writer. She died at eighty-one, a writer whose Elsie series was admired, respected, recommended, and read by millions.

Children of all ages, or anyone who wants to know more about the Elsie Books, will enjoy reading this biography.

Please see CLJ, vol. 3, n. 4/5, p. 4 for an annotated bibliography of classics, including the Elsie series.  

Esther Knaupp

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**Children’s Fiction**

*Continued from p.34.*

All pretty tame by today’s standard, but exciting for the time when it was originally written, no doubt.

Through their search, Michael and Merry are introduced to Icelandic geography, topography, culture, and people, and are given a tour of the island nation, which in turn gives readers much information about a country they may not be familiar with.

The cover illustration is rather flat. All in all, disappointing fare consisting of likeable children who seem very unsophisticated, an interesting country, and good description, presented in a story that lacks tension and a captivating plot. Perhaps the original, unedited version made better reading.  


F. Penguins--Fiction; Spring--Fiction; Antarctica--Fiction. 136 p. hardcover book; 110 min. audiocassette Gr. 1-4.

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**Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4**

In *Ice Continent,* the ferocious beauty of the Earth’s harshest environment is introduced to young readers through the eyes of the emperor penguin. The emperor penguin is a bird that flies under water, feeding on silverfish, krill, and squid. After feeding, it waddles across miles of windswept ice to where its mate and young chick wait in a crowded rookery. Hungry leopard seals hunt in the shadowy water, and starvation lurks on the frozen land, but the emperor penguin waltzes through life, as it has for thousands of years.

Louise O. Young’s up-close perspective entices the readers to leave the comfort of the known world to explore life on another continent. His easy language weaves scientific facts into an engaging documentary. He includes a map to set the story in its global position. Additional facts about Antarctica are included, along with a fold-out identification chart of wildlife and fish. The pastel shades of Larry Elmore’s illustrations soften the reality of the harsh climate, and fill each page with vivid detail. A ten-minute cassette accompanies the book. The quality of the soundtrack is excellent. Ocean, wind, and wave sound effects enhance the drama of the narrative, making this the easiest Antarctic expedition ever.  

*Melinda Torgerson*

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**Children’s Nonfiction**

*Continued from p.51*

In a story of familial divisiveness and rejection, Lunn’s realistic characters and their emotions come alive. Children will enjoy reading or listening to her diction, which bathes the reader in the flavor of the times without sounding archaic.

Drawing stools and whispered confidences blend beautifully with colorful full page illustrations of cobblestone streets, ivy covered buildings, and people dressed in bonnets, flowing capes, and uniforms of the day. Though the rejection theme may upset very young children, the story will delight young and old.  

*Rhonda Marie Lackey*
100’s - Philosophy and Psychology


Prompted by the Holy Spirit, David Wilkerson began to preach and write about suicide. In his book, *Suicide*, he shares many of the letters he received from young people who have contemplated or attempted suicide. He does not mince words in condemning suicide as an unpardonable sin. Discussing many biblical references to despair and suicide, he focuses on Job. One chapter features a checklist of things to do first if you are considering suicide. Wilkerson finishes by preaching a sermon encouraging the reader to listen for God’s voice.

The insights in this book are primarily biblical, not psychological. There is no question that David Wilkerson feels great compassion for those who are hurting, and pours himself wholeheartedly into preaching the message of the healing power of the gospel. Wilkerson’s first book, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, was widely read because of the power of the author’s convictions which lead him to a ministry on the streets of New York City. In *Suicide*, Wilkerson again is moved to action by God showing him the desperate need of young people seduced by suicidal thoughts. Biblical quotations are presented in the King James version. The intended audience is teenagers, but the presentation may not hold their interest. The message is powerful, however, and a teen troubled by suicidal thoughts might be literally saved by reading this book. Carolynn Sovold Johnson

200’s - Religion


God informs us how the world will end, but not when that day will begin! *Look Who’s Toast Now!* addresses the concern that young people face about the issue of their future, in particular, the next millennium and the end times. He contrasts the Christian and world views, and gives input from the scientist to the politician. Of particular interest is his section on various groups through history that have predicted the end of the world, going back to AD 156!

Johnson extends hope as he looks at biblical prophecies fulfilled. The reliability of the Bible is validated by its accuracy, an important principle for young people fearful of the future. The Bible is completely trustworthy.

Giving readers rules for accurate reading of the Bible sets the stage for learning about the end times. Johnson spends much time in Revelation and carefully documents end time events, correlating them with Old Testament references and explanations (i.e. Daniel).

He fairly delineates the differences between the pre-trib and post-trib positions, nevertheless, he doesn’t cover up the fact Christians do suffer, but not beyond what they will be able to bear. His ending message stays upbeat, revealing readers, whoever is correct in their tribulation viewpoint, God wins and Satan loses! Whatever we do, we should live Holy lives! Carolyn Hearing


Author Greg Johnson brings his extensive experience working with teens to write *If I Could Ask God One Question*. This eighty chapter book is filled with actual questions asked by teens who are wanting to grow in their Christian lives. Greg Johnson’s purpose in writing this book is to assist new Christians in their “progress toward the goal of understanding the Bible and loving God.”

Each chapter states a question from a teen, followed by a scripture and a short, practical answer from the author. The chapters are only two to three pages in length. The answers contain illustrations that relate to teens and use scripture to support them.

The questions cover subjects such as dealing with non-Christian friends, reasons for reading the Bible, feelings of guilt and forgiveness, swearing, dealing with divorce, and knowing God. This book is an excellent resource for young Christians who are asking many questions as well as for older Christians who may be in a discipling relation with a new believer. Esther Knaupp


Written as a devotional tool for new believers, *21 Jump-Start Devotionals* is a great book to have on hand for recent converts. McPherson covers some of the beginning basics of Christianity in the first chapter, including: sin, salvation, repentance, grace, gratitude, growth, and prayer. He covers questions such as “Do I have to go to church?” and “What is worship?”

The rest of the book gives a simplified Bible study for the new believer, with the format Read, Reflect, and Respond. Each chapter has a theme, title, and introduction, then two to four pages of scripture from the book of John, concluding with questions to respond to. His writing is informal, often using a current slang to draw the reader in. Important to note is the fact that McPherson is a former NFL football player, and currently speaks to youth through crusades around the country.

Although the author has a clear, easy-to-read style for the new believer, the greatest portion of the book is scripture. The disadvantage of this is that the new convert may be overwhelmed with the length of the passages. The advantage is for the Christian who may not yet have his or her own Bible in which to refer. Mary Jo Krzymanski


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“There’s something that makes me different from most kids. I had leukemia. It’s a kind of cancer.” This kid knows life has its tough stuff. And so do all the other kids who helped write Facing Down the Tough Stuff. Karen Dockrey along with Kathryn Templeton, Emily Dockrey, Beth Matthews, and Andrew Adams, writes from a kid’s-eye-view.

Life can be hard to manage. Tough Stuff shows kids that they don’t have to go it alone, that God is there with them. The book talks about coping skills in a variety of situations. Four main subjects are covered by the young people who’ve been through it; learning disabilities, serious illness, blended families, and friendship squabbles.

No simplistic answers here. Just kids helping kids get through the difficulties of facing life’s realities. “There is always something you can do to help a friend through a hard time.”

The last two chapters are full of practical Do’s and Don’ts for kids and family members who care and want to help. Ideals are presented for and with some of the interviews being repetitive, but can easily be used in part as well, as an effective evangelizing tool. Mary McKinney


Quality - 4   Acceptability - 5
Have you ever wondered who wrote Jesus Loves Me, This I Know or what were the inspirations for well known hymns such as Just As I Am? Jane Stuart Smith, a dramatic soprano who has sung in major opera houses in Europe and America, and her friend, Betty Carlson, answer these questions in their book, Great Christian Hymn Writers. They bring to life the stories of fifty-three different hymn writers in a quick, easy to read format.

The book’s chapters are very short and each is devoted to a single hymn writer. The last chapter is an exception, covering seven writers who are each remembered for a single hymn. Along with general information about each writer’s life and inspiration, the authors have included a verse from the writer’s best known hymn. The book also contains a useful index to hymn titles, and a list of the composers in chronological order.

This is not an exhaustive study, and some of the chapters vary widely in the amount of information they provide. However, this book will provide answers to general questions and contains an excellent bibliography if more information is desired. Lillian Heyvelt


266. Missions--Afghanistan; Missions--The Netherlands; McClung, Floyd; McClung, Sally; Drug abuse; Hippies. Gr. 9 - 12.
Quality - 4   Acceptability - 5
It’s the early seventies. Hippies are flowing from America through Europe and into Asia looking for... something. On a trip through India, an American man is shocked to see young Americans who have followed their dreams only to find themselves far from home, penniless, sick, burned-out on drugs, and begging. This one American man—Floyd McClung—and his faithful wife, Sally, respond to God’s call to minister to the hippies along the Trail. But where do they start? They feel inadequate in their “square” appearance. And where along the Trail—the route that several hundred thousand young people follow each year—is the best place to minister?

Where else but the bottleneck of the Trail—Kabul, Afghanistan? In the seventies, with the help of others from Youth With a Mission, the McClung’s established a solid ministry reaching multitudes of homeless young adults through the simple offer of free tea, conversation, medical help. For those who expressed interest in the Lord, there was deeper discipling and a free place to stay. But after a few short years, a coup against the government of Afghanistan caused the river of homeless young adults to slow to a trickle.

But the Lord had already been preparing the McClungs for a move to the trailhead—
Amsterdam. While continuing to reach the transient young people, this ministry’s primary purpose was to train “straight” people who were called to minister to those in the drug culture. In Amsterdam the McClung’s faced the very real challenges of raising a family—first on a boat, and finally in the red light district! They felt God’s protection even though their new home was sandwiched between a satanic temple and a sex cinema.

Living on the Devil’s Doorstep is an inspiring look at how one young family and their caring ministry partners were confident of God’s call and responded to His guidance again and again. Floyd McClung does a great job of painting a realistic picture where the reader can “see” the junkies and prostitutes on the street, and a loving God reaching out to them through His willing people. Barbara Beyer


This can be a confusing world, with many different people and organizations claiming their allegiance as Christians. But are they all following biblical principles and solid truth? The answer is obviously no, but how can we know who’s who out there?

What’s with the Dudes at the Door? is an uncomplicated presentation of the key issues that every Christian should know about their faith. Three main doctrines are examined that are critical to the Christian believer: 1. Who God is; 2. What God has done in Jesus; 3. How we know the Bible. With these basic truths as the foundation, the authors, Johnson and White, launch out to explore different religions that are prevalent in our society. Although the information seems to overlap itself in several chapters, the reader can find a clearly documented list in chapter eight that names and explains nine different cults and the dangers in their doctrines.

This book can be a useful tool for a youth pastor, but it takes a little “wading through” to get to the points. Upbeat and current language is used that would appeal to teens, and this may hold their attention as they not only affirm the important issues in their own faith, but become better equipped to compare and discern error in other faiths. Mary McKinney

300’s - Social Sciences


306.82. Mate selection; Friendship; Friendship in adolescence. 239 p. Gr. 10 - College.

Are you ready for this? A book written with a plan to help prevent a broken marriage, Best Friends for Life boldly goes where few men go today. Don’t let the ultra-conservative perspective of this writing keep you from being open-minded to the truths taught. Let’s face it. Americans have one of the highest divorce rates in the world, and few seem to have any solutions to the problem.

The authors appeal to the reader to view marriage as a life-long commitment that should not be taken lightly. Feelings, lack of knowing the prospective partner, sexual desire, and lack of parental participation in the pre-marriage process are all factors contributing to the demise of the institution of marriage. Young people need a whole new strategy for finding a life-long mate.

The authors espouse parental involvement, with parents actively involved in knowing their child’s potential mate so they can exercise their God-given authority to make recommendations regarding the relationship. They also affirm that the friendship of the couple is of the utmost importance, and that is what will enable a couple to endure through the storms of life.

The authors draw upon their pioneering work from the home-school movement, as well as from experiences with ministering to youth. Four real-life examples of couples who had successful or non-successful relationships were narrated, naming positive and negative signs of potential for each situation. A quiz is included in the end to help would-be couples determine their strengths and weaknesses.

If a person is seriously pursuing a lasting relationship, this book gives a strong prescription for a strong Christian marriage. Mary Jo Kryzynski


112 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

346.78301. Cherokee Indians--Trials, litigation, etc.; Cherokee Indians--Legal status, laws, etc.; Indians of North America--Georgia--Legal status, laws, etc. 128 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

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Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


342.73. Flags--Desecration--United States; Freedom of speech--United States; Dissenters--Legal status, laws, etc.; United States--Flags--Law and legislation--United States--Criminal provisions. 112 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


343.73. Ali, Muhammad, 1942- -- Trials, litigations, etc.; Trials (Political crimes and offenses)--United States; Conscientious objectors--Legal status, laws, etc.; United States--African Americans--Biography. 112 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5


344.764. Ferrell, L. W.--Trials, litigations, etc.; Dallas Independent School District (Tex.); Student suspension. 128 p. Gr. 7 - 12.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 1

Reading the Landmark Supreme Court Cases series is an excellent way for young people to gain an understanding of some of the extremely significant Supreme Court cases that have had an impact on our country. These colorful, attractive, library-bound books contain numerous photographs and other information pertinent to the text. The text of the books is followed by “Questions for Discussion,” chapter notes, a bibliography of sources referred to, and an index.

Large print, bold headings, and wide margins make this series inviting and non-threatening. Although the nature of these court cases is involved and confusing, the authors do a commendable job of making the information as clear to the young reader as possible.

The bias of the author comes across in some of the books, but most of the information is simply presenting the two sides of the issue.

The Cherokee Nation v. Georgia, Native American Rights gives the history of the conflicts of the Indians beginning with the colonial times and continuing on through the 1900’s. Victoria Sherrow presents the views of numerous political leaders and judges which are quoted as it relates to the Indians’ situation. The author’s views come across as being biased for the Indians.

In Texas v. Johnson, The Flag-Burning Case, J. Anthony Miller focuses on the issue of freedom
of speech. Background information going back to the writing of the Constitution and the amendments and laws as far back as the early 1900’s lead up to the court case Texas v. Johnson that made it all the way to the Supreme Court. Both sides of the issue are presented in this very emotional case.

Suzanne Freedman addresses the issue of conscience objectors in the book \textit{Clay v. United States, Muhammad Ali Objects to War}, which centers around Cassius Clay’s (Muhammad Ali) court battle to escape the draft. Examples of conscientious objectors going back to colonial times give the roots of the movement including Quakers and the Mennonites. The information presented is informative and factual.

The court case \textit{Plessy v. Ferguson, Separate But Equal?} by Harvey Fireside, presents the facts surrounding the segregation issue in the United States. Excellent background information dating as far back as the 1890’s explains the events that led up to this case as well as the impact of this decision.

\textit{Ferrell v. Dallas I.S.D., Hairstyles in Schools} by Karen L. Trespacz, gives details about a case taken to court in 1966 by three high school boys who were not allowed in school because of the length of their hair. They argued that the musical contract of their rock band necessitated keeping their hair longer and claimed that their treatment from the school was unconstitutional because it violated their freedom of speech. When the suit was dismissed in the Federal District Court, it was taken to the Federal Appeals Court and from there to the Supreme Court. Even though the case was not heard in the Supreme Court, according to a statement on the back cover of the book, “this case provides a good example of how students can go about legally challenging school rules that they consider to be unjust.” The picture on the book cover shows a young man in gang attire with a mohawk hair cut. \textit{Esther Knaupp}


362.7. Teenage pregnancy. 91 p. Gr. 9 - College.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Martha Zimmerman guides a young lady through the maze of questions encountered when she faces a pregnancy. She suggests what should and could be done and to whom she should talk.

Zimmerman makes it clear early on that her personal bias is to favor life for the unborn, and she graciously builds her case around the fact that the pregnant mother is not the only one involved! She encourages her to consider parents, the father, the baby, her relationship to God, who loves her deeply, and possibly adoptive parents. National Crisis Pregnancy Services are listed as resources, as is a letter to parents, encouraging them, also, to chose life for the unborn.

Addressed to the reader as if she’s pregnant, \textit{Should I Keep My Baby?} reads like a quiet conversation with a concerned neighbor next door. Zimmerman compares holding a bouquet of roses, appreciating their beauty and the thorns, as she weaves the analogy throughout her advice. She presents all the facts, carefully examining all the options, medically, spiritually and emotionally. While Zimmerman’s style is careful not to be judgmental, she spares no detail in describing abortion procedures and consequences for later pregnancies. She carefully balances facts (abortion is legal) with the reality of our culture (authorities keep changing their minds on laws!). She separates what is legal from what is moral. \textit{Carolyn Hearing}


598.2. Birds. Gr. 6 - Adult.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Kenn Kaufman, one of North America’s premier birders, has created a one-volume encyclopedia on the life histories of North American birds, written for the general public. Beginning with two introductory chapters, the first focusing on how birds live, and the second presenting background information on how bird life histories are compiled; Kaufman presents over 600 species accounts culled from a broad range of current and historical data.

Where a field guide can assist with the identification of a particular species, this volume goes on to describe the characteristic aspects of behavior, habitat, courtship, migration patterns, as well as numerous other related information. What arises is a more fully formed understanding of each bird species as distinct and yet related to the larger whole.

The writing style is captivating and nonscientific in content and allows the reader access to a
wealth and a depth of largely inaccessible ontological research. Each species account includes a color photograph, and a range map. The variety and uniqueness of many North American birds is clearly seen as you read through the accounts which follow. An annotated list of references consulted can be found at the end of the book.

*Lives of North American Birds* should be on the shelves of every school and public library. Its breadth and currency, as well as its readability make it an indispensable research tool. *Ted Goshulak*

### 900's - Geography, History, and Biography


This film begins with the life of Robert S. Sheffey from 1835, when as a young man he attends a revival service with a group of rowdy disruptive friends. He gives himself to the Lord and immediately encounters opposition from his family who are religious in form, but not faith. Beginning as a teacher, Robert overcomes a fear of preaching to become a circuit rider, ministering the gospel to out of the way areas. Denied a "license" to preach, because he lacks formal training, he leads an independent life bringing hundreds of people to the Lord. A strong man of prayer, Sheffey is blessed by the Lord after his wife died is also discussed with helpful advice on writing. Interspersed throughout the book are photographs of the author, his family, and friends. Additionally, her love for Judge Otis Phillips Lord after his wife died is also discussed with sensitivity appropriate for this reading level.

The eye catching jacket/cover is just one of the marks of quality in the construction of this book. The book has strong binding and the paper is durable and type is easy to read. The pictures, letters, and poems are clear and help the biography immensely. There is a source page as well as a detailed bibliography for students to look for additional information. There is a detailed index and photo acknowledgments to further aid the student. *Bianca Elliott*


*Dan Marino, Star Quarterback*, is one of the Sports Reports series by Enslow Publishers. This colorful, library-bound book is especially attractive to reluctant readers. Huge margins and sidebars with features and various facts and many full-page photographs make this an enjoyable, easy-to-read book.

Author Nick Kennedy spends one chapter telling about Dan Marino's roots in Philadelphia. The remainder of the book focuses on Marino's sports career from college at the University of Pittsburgh to the pros where he has played for the Miami Dolphins since 1983. He covers season after season including quotes from Marino, his teammates and coaches, and players and coaches on other teams.

This inspiring sports success story shows the determination of a young man to persevere through the ups and downs of his career. Extensive chapter notes, statistics, and an index are printed at the end of the book. *Esther Knaupp*

*The Abracadabra Kid* offers a glimpse of the hard work and craft behind the apparent "magic" of both the magician on stage and the writer who mysteriously produces books. The book starts out seeming like a children's book of particular interest to a child fascinated by magic tricks. As Fleischman becomes an adult and a writer, the focus changes. What develops is a behind-the-scenes look at a successful writer that will be of great interest to aspiring writers of all ages. Fleischman is a professional who took his natural talent and interest, and worked very hard to develop it into a great career as a writer. He writes with lively humor and throws in some helpful advice on writing. Interspersed throughout the book are photographs of the author, his family, and friends. *Cathleen Sovold Johnson*
Jesse James: a colorful aspect of Wild West history? a Robin Hood of sorts? a political zealot? or maybe just a violent desperado? Who was Jesse James? It would be hard to discern if a person relied on popular media as a measurement. Author Roger Bruns takes an insightful look at the legend in Jesse James: Legendary Outlaw.

From his humble beginnings on a Missouri farm Jesse James became one of our country’s most infamous gunmen. The author shows the slow progression of how a “pretty good boy” became a bandit of notorious proportions. The author gives a well-defined look at the man behind the legend, ensuring that Jesse James is no hero to gaze upon but a criminal whose crimes eventually caused his death. Citing various actual eyewitness testimony and newspaper accounts, Jesse James unfolds as a brazen, perhaps reckless man who liked glory, almost more than the riches he risked his life for. The inclusion of how Jesse James married and raised a family while on the run further illustrates that eventually a person has to become accountable for any wrongdoing, and that the innocent can get pulled down in the fall.

The interspersed illustrative material, along with the chronology, chapter notes, and glossary make this a biography of depth considering its few pages. There is also a list for further reading and an index. Pam Webb


Covering a difficult and painful subject, this series provides detailed material on five different components of the Holocaust, the overview, camps, ghettos, heroes and survivors. The series is written in a text book style with large print and black and white photographs sprinkled throughout the short chapters. Difficult words, such as homogenous, are defined in parentheses.

The amount of material condensed in these short books is nothing short of amazing. Especially the number of Holocaust heroes covered is commendable. Although most people have heard of Anne Frank and Őskar Schindler, joyfully there are so many more revealed in the heroes book. The personal accounts of survivors give the book a positive human element.

Pam Webb
A Note from the Editor:  by Mary McKinney

... And If Not...

How important is it to continue presenting the Gospel in literature? I’m sure we would all agree that it is critical! As we see society today turning from God’s principles and precepts, we yearn to present the truth that can truly set people free. Be it fiction or fact, an historically accurate account or a heart-rending story of love and loss, when Christian life is presented within the pages of a book you can be sure that the Holy Spirit will cause a stirring of life and truth within the reader.

I recently heard Chuck Colson relate a fascinating true story from his program “Breakpoint” (8/24/98) that epitomizes the importance of a nation having God’s Word in their hearts. The setting was the beaches of Dunkirk; the time was June 1940; the event was World War II. The British and Allied forces were under a terrible siege and the hope of victory was dim indeed. An opportunity presented itself to send a message for help, but a blatant statement of weakness would be like signing the troops’ death warrants. With great wisdom and I’m sure a prayer of hope, the message went out, “And if not... ”

Today we may not readily understand what this message implied, but because the British people were so steeped in God’s Word they immediately understood that their men were in dire need of reinforcements or all would be lost.

How did they get that message from those few simple words? Had they previously arranged some secret coding? NO! Instead, these desperate men trusted that those at home would recognize these all important words from scripture and know what must be done. “And if not... ” was a biblical allusion to the book of Daniel where Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were about to be thrown into the fiery furnace for refusing to worship anything other than the one true God. The allied forces were stating that, “Even if we are not rescued from Hitler’s army, we will stand strong and unbowed.”

The British people recognized these words immediately and realized how critical their intervention was. They responded with thousands of boats crossing the Channel to the beaches of Dunkirk. This ultimately turned certain defeat into victory, saving the 350,000 British and allied troops from annihilation by the Nazis.

Could we trust that our “would-be rescuers” would understand a message within God’s Word today? Probably not, for often, the faith of the 90’s is shallow and meaningless. I believe it is critical that we pursue a more committed prayer life and reading of God’s Word on a daily basis. Add to this godly literature that will enhance and encourage a much richer understanding of God’s Word and a deeper walk of faith. Then we can also say with confidence in the face of adversity, “And if not... !”
someone is falsely accused, what is right must be upheld.

Endevoring to get to the bottom of Sandy Joseph’s murder, it seems Tracy has made an enemy. She begins to receive threats and strange things begin to happen. Tracy is no longer sure who the good guys are, or who can be trusted. How far is she willing to go in her stand when it could mean life or death?

James Scott Bell states his goal quite successfully, in a book that you don’t want to put down. Bell writes in such a way as to grab your attention at the very beginning, you MUST turn the page because he continues to add twists and turns to keep things suspenseful. Even when going back and forth to different scenes we are able to keep on track. There are somewhat gory details of killings, but not gratuitous. His characters are all real and unique, believable people, believable dialogue. A little light on the spiritual stuff, but it is there. A credible story line, a former trial lawyer, Bell knows his material well. You aren’t left feeling that the bad guys won. Retribution is meted out. Justice prevails.  

Jannet Hoeffner

The Widow of Larkspr Inn, by Lawanna Blackwell.  (The Gresham Chronicles; 1)


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Julia Hollis was a surgeon’s wife and lived a life of ease until her husband’s sudden death. Julia then finds herself in a desperate situation. All she can salvage from her husband’s gambling debts are the clothes on their backs, their own personal items, and an old abandoned inn. Julia has ten days to decide what to do and try to get adjusted from living a life of wealth to poverty. Even though Julia feels like she has been abandoned, God has not forsaken her. Fiona, Julia’s personal maid, insists on moving to the Larkspur Inn with the family to help out in any way she can. Even Jensen, the butler that Julia secretly fears, gives Julia the idea of opening up the inn as a business and gives her one hundred pounds to get started. Each of Julia’s three children face the challenge of moving and adjusting to their poor state differently. Fiona’s steady faith in God helps Julia in her search for a closer walk with God. They open up the inn and soon become involved in the lives of their guests. Julia finds out that the inn is a ministry. Life changes in the village when Vicar Phelps and his family moves in. Andrew is a widower and has two teenage daughters who keep him. The Vicar’s interest in Julia has the whole village involved. Julia realizes that God has a plan for both of their lives and families.

The Widow of Larkspr Inn is the first in the series of The Gresham Chronicles. Told in the third person, this Christian fiction story uses different crisis to keep the plot moving while retaining a small village atmosphere set in the 1800’s. The author vividly portrays the idiosyncrasies of several characters while weaving them skillfully into the story’s theme. It is important to note that the book runs 432 pages long and is broken up into forty-five chapters. The book is geared towards the serious reader who enjoys reading longer fiction stories.

Dorcas Walker

Behind the Veil, by Linda Chaikin.  (The Royal Pavilions; 3)

F. Crusades—First, 1096-1099—Fiction; Middle Ages—Fiction.  256 p.  Adult.

Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

This is a story of intrigue: kidnapping, deception, coercion, greed, murder, manipulation, and deep and lasting love. Set in the area of Constantinople during the Crusades, this is the love story of Tancred Redwan, Norman Knight, and Lady Helena. In this, Book 3, Tancred thinks Helena is safe and he once again sets out to find his Cousin Mosul—the murderer of Tancred’s brother, Derek. But, he receives news that Helena is in the hands of Bishop Constantine, who is willingly handing her over in marriage to a Moslem Prince. Tancred must rescue Helena and bring her to safety, but he must also continue his pursuit of Mosul, or his reputation will never be restored.

In Book Three of the Royal Pavilions, Linda Chaikin concludes the story of Helena and Tancred. Having read Book Two, Golden Palaces, I could follow the story, but without the others in this series, it is very difficult to follow. Because of the historical content, details of the Crusades and large number of characters, it was not an easy read. I did find the hero and heroine very interesting. Chaikin has an ability to develop strong, warm characters with large hearts that are devoted to God. Tammy Williams

To Grace Surrendered, by DeAnna Julie Dodson.


Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Rosalynde screams as she watches her abductors bludgeon Philip, her husband and king, into oblivion. As she is carted away by boat, her brother-in-law, Tom, and the other soldiers are helpless in their rescue attempt. No ransom is requested and the abductors promise to throw her overboard if they are followed.

Days later, Rosalynde finds herself at the castle of King Reghed, a tyrant and mad man, who believes her to be his long deceased mistress Rosamund. After much praying, Rosalynde plays along with the king’s delusions hoping to buy precious time for her rescue before the king decides to make her his queen. Will Philip survive his serious injuries and be able to locate his beloved wife and mother of his children?

To Grace Surrendered is a sequel to By Love Redeemed and In Honor Bound. Enough information is contained so that it can be read without being familiar with the other titles.

Its fairy tale quality focuses on good overcoming evil with a happily ever after ending. The cast of main characters are brought through severe trials; some exhibiting a robust faith from the start, while others are brought to a crossroads of decision whether to abdicate or fully trust in God’s supreme will.

This romance takes place during the medieval age of knights, kings, and castles, and appears to be DeAnna Julie Dodson’s conclusion to the story of the Chastelayne family. Debbie Lindsay


Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Betty Dunn is dead. Sam, her second husband, insists on cremation with “burial” at sea. Bobbi Acres, Betty’s daughter, is really not so sure about throwing the ashes into the sea. Now there is nothing to bury in a cemetery, nothing to visit, and no real ending. Giving in to her stepfather’s wishes is not easy for Betty so she is especially upset when, after arriving home, she can’t reach Sam on the phone. Never has New England seemed so far from Florida. Griffin and uncommunicative. Sam Dunn has no friends, so Betty calls the funeral parlor/crematorium only to learn that the ashes spread upon the sea are not her mother after all. Bonnie Dean, wife of J.W. Dean, an itinerant preacher, is inadvertantly switched with Betty Dunn and the chase is on. Sam wants his wife’s ashes to spread them in the sea with the dolphins. Bobbi wants her mother’s ashes to bury in New England so that she can visit her mother. And J.W. Dean just wants to get on television handling the same snakes that killed his wife.

John Fischer has created a mystery with humor and with God. Throughout Ashes on the Wind, Fischer reminds the reader of the many facets of Christian belief as he weaves together snake handling, a possible murder, the chase across Florida, and Bobbi’s amnesia that sends her compulsively to Florida. Characters are well developed and we can easily feel Bobbi’s pain at the death of her mother. Sam’s gruff attitude and single-mindedness might be any relative in any family. The pace of the story is fast and the Christian beliefs woven into the story line are
both subtle and informative. Snake handling evangelists are not your everyday happening, and the explanation for this unusual practice is clear and entertaining. *Barbara A. Wall*


Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

This video is set in the time of the Spanish Inquisition when Christians who differed even slightly from the Catholic church were tortured and burned at the stake for their faith. The church was immovable in its stance that no person outside of the formal church have access to the Bible. Thus, some corrupt priests and other high officials would alter scripture to their benefit and men and women would have no recourse but to obey or be killed as heretics to the faith.

In this story, Carlos is a wealthy young nobleman whose father was imprisoned as a Christian heretic at the time of Carlos birth. Raised by a servant woman, Carlos is groomed for service in the Catholic church. On a visit home, he meets a peddler who gives him a Bible. It doesn’t take long for Carlos to begin his own inner search for truth and he makes his own commitment to Christ against the church’s authority. Carlos struggles between being faithful to Christ and his own fear of punishment. He sells out his Christian friends and as they die the martyr’s death, Carlos gives himself to Christ no matter what the personal cost.

Viewers will find this video a good historical account of the Spanish Inquisition and the corruption which typified the church during that period. The background and costumes are elegantly made and “fit” those characters whose roles are acted out. The events in this story are laid out at an even pace and movement from one scene to the next is easily followed. *Michele Howe*


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Dylan St. John is about to become a father, something he finds exciting and overwhelming at the same time. But as he delights in the possibilities and responsibilities that lie before him, he finds himself thrust into a difficult assignment to find thieves and murderers in his area. A perplexing problem arises when it is discovered that the wanted men have a young child with them, too. When his baby daughter is born, complications arise that threaten her tiny life. The strain between his spending long evenings with his sweet wife, Susan, at the baby’s incubator, and long days filled with hunting for these desperate men causes Dylan to do some real soul-searching. Can he put his faith and trust in God and challenge his own heart to willingly surrender his all?

Now Dylan finds that he must leave Susan and his baby to hunt the men that have not only threatened the lives of many business owners, but have killed Dylan’s long-time friend and mentor. He must pursue the killers and seek justice for his departed friend despite the strong pull to remain with his own struggling family.

Robert Funderburk writes a compelling novel with unexpected turns that catch the reader by surprise. The setting of New Orleans and the colorful language, i.e. “a blade of a man..., a narrow, seamed face...” depicts each character uniquely and descriptively. Winer of Grace presents a well-told story with unique twists and well-portrayed characters. *Mary McKinney*

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Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

Sixteenth-Century Holland Anabaptists believed in peace, not war. Persecuted, jailed, burned at the stake, but holding to the belief that God’s word should not be a banned book, Ethel Herr shows God’s word to be the best sword possible. When a fragment of scripture comes into a jail cell, lives change. The thief has a change of heart. Even one of the soldiers changes sides.

The Maiden’s Sword continues the story of Pieter-Lucas van den Garde, an artist with God given talent, as he becomes a messenger in war time. His new wife Aletta is in training to be a healer. Together, they grow in faith as they seek God’s will. Reading only the second book of this series makes the story somewhat disjointed as the reader may have difficulty figuring out a multitude of characters and continuing situations. Background details and charts provide excellent historical background. *Paula Stewart Marks*


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Simeon the Destroyer—that’s what his brothers called him. A man full of bitterness and anger; a hard-hearted and hot-tempered herdsman. Now he is a prisoner under house arrest in the luxurious home of Pharaoh. Simeon is held hostage by Zaphenath-Panah, the acting ruler of Egypt, until his brothers return with their youngest brother, Benjamin. Simeon does not even recognize Zaphenath-Panah as his own brother, Joseph, whom Simeon and his brothers sold into slavery many years ago. But Joseph immediately recognizes his brothers when they come seeking grain for their families in this time of famine. He grieves over Simeon’s hardness of heart, and longs for reconciliation with all his brothers.

Learning submission is a difficult task for Simeon. In his confinement, Simeon’s rage grows to explosive proportions and he violently lashes out at anyone who comes near him. Only the unfailing gentleness of Mandisa, who serves him, touches his heart. When Simeon is released to return home with his brothers, he is a changed man.
man, but not completely. He still finds it difficult to control his temper, and he rages against his father, Jacob, who treated Simeon's mother, Leah, unfairly. Ultimately Simeon is brought to his knees in an intense encounter with God. He is able to make peace with his father, receive the generosity and love of his brother Joseph, and marry a godly woman who can respect his Spirit-tamed heart.

*Brothers* is a well-written book that gives insight into the traditions and gods of Egypt, and Joseph’s commitment to the One True God. The book is divided into five sections, each preceded by a scriptural prologue that relates to the portion of the story that follows. There is a brief prologue to the book that has no clear connection to the story whatsoever. *Brothers* powerfully displays the themes of forgiveness, reconciliation, and complete submission to God. *Sherri Beeler*

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Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Adrine Tevian, an Armenian Christian, snatches moments between slaving for the occupying Muslim Turkish army, to woolgather. These moments of past and future reflections offer a much needed respite from the ravages the war has brought. Would the legendary Fedayeen receive her cry for help and rescue her and her hundred other ‘sisters’ from this pit of hell?

Tatul Sarafian, known as The Fox, has risen in the ranks of the Fedayeen, the legendary Armenian freedom fighters. Once initiated, The Fox is given the dangerous task of rescuing one hundred women and children from an impending massacre.

Frank Davidson, U.S. consulate stationed in Turkey, tires of the neutral status of the American government and takes it upon himself to smuggle refugees to safety.

Is God listening to the pleas of the Armenian people for divine intervention? Despite the hatred that war arouses, the main characters grow to rely upon God’s promises to avenge their suffering.

*Deliver Us From Evil* is the first novel of the series In the Shadow of the Mountain. It captures the horrors of the death marches and slaughter of tens of thousands of Armenians during World War I, the pattern from which Adolph Hitler was motivated to emulate and exceed.

Clint Kelly has masterfully knit history with fictitious characters to create this emotionally evocative, graphic yet not gruesome depiction of the senseless cruelty that humankind perpetrates upon those who differ. The story is an effort to keep alive the memory of the faith and heritage of a people almost annihilated, and a reminder that wickedness left unchecked, corrupts and destroys. *Debbie Lindsay*

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F. Canada—Fiction; North-West Mounted Police—Fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 320 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Trouble is brewing again in the Canadian frontier. Hunter Stone, one of the best of the Northwest Mounted Police, trails a gang of ruthless killers to the peaceful Blackfoot village where Reena O’Donnel is a missionary. Reelaed that the villains hadn’t come through the area, Hunter now faces other unwanted challenges. He is more than infuriated with the beautiful Reena, but his lack of faith in the God she so loves and serves, keeps them apart. When Hunter discovers that a handsome young missionary, the Reverend Jack Sheffield, has taken up temporary residence with the Blackfoot tribe, he finds jealousy and suspicion rising within.

However, his duty to trail the renegades comes first, and in a strange turn of events, Hunter discovers that Reena’s brother, Liam, is part of the murderous gang. Through much suspicion, hurt and anger, the tangled web of danger and heart-matters puts Hunter in a very dark mood. Can he sort through the maze of events and emotions himself, or will he at last surrender to a higher authority allowing God to set things right?

Alan Morris pens another fine novel with the same endearing characters of his first two books in the Guardian of the North Series. This finely crafted book presents a straightforward Christian message amid high adventure and tender moments allowing for a well-rounded and satisfying story line. *Mary McKinney*

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Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Alan Morris continues his Guardians of the North series with his fourth installment, *Between Earth and Sky*. Although the series so far has focused on the initial beginnings of the Canadian Mounted Police, Morris veers the action towards the historic clash between Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and General Custer at Little Bighorn.

The main plot is that of Reena O’Donnell, missionary to the Blackfoot Indians, traveling down to the Dakota Territory in order to nurse her Uncle Faron, a scout for General Custer, back to health. She is accompanied by Mountie Hunter Stone, who still mourns the death of his wife, but finds himself drawn to the vibrant Reena. Irrepressible curmudgeon Mountie scout, Del Dekko, and idealistic preacher Jack Sheffield insist on accompanying the duo as they head for hostile Indian Territory. The foursome encounters a variety of difficult situations before finding Custer and Reena’s uncle, and barely avoid involvement in Custer’s final encounter with Indians.

It’s unclear why the book was centered around events leading up to Custer’s Last Stand when the previous books of the series focus on the Canadian frontier. Much has already been written about Little Bighorn and Morris does not contribute anything more except a sympathetic portrayal of Crazy Horse, an historically inaccurate one at that.

So far the first book in the series has proved the most noteworthy with its vivid character portrayals and detailed coverage of a subject so little written about, the days of the Canadian frontier and the Mounted Police. *Pam Webb*
The authors’ brief “Note to Our Readers” at the end of the story circumstantiates the historical facts that have been brought to life in this volume. Debbie Lindsay


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

The Shadow Portrait traces the adventures of two Winslow cousins, Phil and Peter, as they pursue their dreams in New York City. Phil, who was raised on a ranch in Montana, has completed his artistic studies in Europe and is looking for success in New York. Peter has a passion for racing, and with the help of his companions, Jolie Devorak and Easy Devlin, he is busy building a race car. The cousins become involved with the Lanier family as well as the wealthy widow, Avis Warwick. Avis pursues Peter, while Jolie looks on with her heart breaking. Phil finds himself drawn to the invalid painter, Cara Lanier, but she is isolated and protected by her controlling father.

Will Peter realize Avis is drawn to the excitement more than to himself? Will Phil achieve his dream as a painter and find love? Gilbert Morris, true to form, writes an interesting story of individuals trying to find their place and God’s will for their lives. Their discovery of true love from the Father while on their journey makes for a very satisfying storyline. The family dynamics of the Lanier family brought a powerful and unusual twist to the novel. Tammy Williams


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

A Time to Build by Gilbert Morris is book six in The American Odyssey series, which follows the members of one family through six decades of American history, each book focusing on one decade. This book chronicles the years between 1950 and 1960, following the lives of three young members of the Stuart family, as they move through the events of the 1950’s and, individually, find that only Christ can meet the needs of their lives.

Seventeen-year-old Richard Stuart is eager to fight for his country when he learns that South Korea has been invaded. His sister, Stephanie, is set on a career in journalism. She drops out of college to become a reporter on her grandfather’s newspaper. Their cousin, Mona, has still another direction to go. After trying, for years, to become a major star in Hollywood, Mona becomes disillusioned with the business. Then she discovers a beautifully written novel and is determined to see it become a motion picture. Before that can be done she must track down the elusive author, an author who does not want to be found.

A Time to Build is well-written, appealing to the Christian reader and history buff. Author Gilbert Morris includes background information on the entire Stuart clan, highlighting those characters whose stories have been told in previous volumes. But after five books and several generations, there are enough characters in the Stuart family to confuse a new reader. The author includes a “Stuart family tree” at the beginning of the book, to help alleviate this problem. Donna Brown


F. Romance fiction; Mystery fiction; Christian life—Fiction. 300 p. Adult.
Quality - 3 Acceptability - 4

Shelby Martin is an ordinary kindergarten teacher who begins an extraordinary adventure while on a vacation (taken on impulse) to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

There she meets the love of her life, Frank Stefano. He shows her a side of life she has never experienced, a satisfying simple life with her Beloved Stranger. They hastily marry and return to Redondo Beach, California. Now, there are secrets, late night meetings, boat trips, the mysterious death of Frank’s former wife. How does this all tie together?

Pella’s story follows the predictability of a formula romance with a thin veneer of Christianity. The religious passages seem inserted, sometimes interrupting the natural flow of the plot. The characters are well-defined and interact in an anticipated manner. There are the good citizens and the criminals, with little space for the confusion felt by Frank, the quandary of what is right concerning his younger brother, Ramon. Situations such as the cherished mantilla being passed on to Shelby add a cultural touch. Su Hagerty


F. Allegheny Mountains—Fiction; Railroads—Fiction. 368 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.
Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

The story of James and Carolina Baldwin continues in Ribbons of Steel. James is still employed by the BandO Railroad, while residing in the Baltimore Mansion. As James and Carolina welcome new additions to their family, Carolina finds herself frustrated and lonely. James is frequently absent from home with the railroad and her involvement in their shared dream is limited. Desperate, Carolina convinces James to allow the family to follow him to a rustic railroad town in the Allegheny Mountains. New challenges face them with the Irish immigrants, the lack of luxury, and the fact that Victoria, their adopted daughter is on the verge of womanhood. Did Carolina ask her family to sacrifice too much so that they could all be together?

Judith Pella and Tracie Peterson once again write a captivating story that will hold the interest of the reader. They deal with themes of forgiveness, family ties and love. An additional theme is that of a mother trying to balance the responsibilities of motherhood while pursuing her other dreams at the same time. A Promise for Tomorrow is relevant to readers today and would touch the hearts of mothers in particular. Tammy Williams


F. West (U.S.)—Fiction; Fathers and daughters—Fiction; Harvey Girls—Fiction. 299 p. Adult.
Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

In one swift motion, seventeen-year-old Simone crashed the water pitcher against her attacker’s head. After staring at the blood pooling about her head, Simone did not bother to determine his identity before frantically gathering what little she had. With a backward glance toward the only home she’d known, she mounted the man’s horse and disappeared into the snowy forest. Having just been “sold” to this total stranger by an abusive father, Simone faces her future with uncertainty and a dark cloud of possible murder hanging over her head. Unbeknownst to her, Simone’s wretched father, murderer of her mother, has a change of heart. Wishing he hadn’t “sold” her he goes in search of his daughter with a horribly devious plan in mind. As an unspoiled flower, big money is to made at her expense for his pleasure.

A Shelter of Hope is the first title in the Westward Chronicles series. It explores the myriad of emotions that abuse causes in one so tender of age; how to establish trust in others, and how a person is able to accept God as a father when the earthly pattern is so seriously flawed.

Tracie Peterson, co-author of the Ribbons of Steel series, sketches the history of the Harvey House Restaurants that were so popular along the Santa Fe rail lines and steers the story to show how one can rise above pain to become a person of strength and character in spite of the lack of a healthy upbringing. Debbie Lindsay

Quality - 3  Acceptability - 5

Charles and Jocelyn Rutherford live on a country estate outside the village of Milverscomb not far from London. They have three children: two girls and one boy. Charles is in the midst of the political movement in Parliament and holds searching for truth and being a free thinker as high goals. Amanda, their firstborn has a strong-willed personality which both parents encourage, thinking that it will foster an independent spirit. Everything goes well until Charles and Jocelyn come to know Christ on a personal level and their lives begin to change as they seek to live the way Christ would have them to. Not only does it affect their home life, but it ultimately affects Charles’ role in Parliament when he realizes that his highest ambition of being the prime minister holds no attraction compared to the life that God is leading him into. He refuses the position and thereby sets into motion events within his own household that become far reaching. Amanda is furious with her dad’s decision and becomes more antagonistic towards the life of Christianity. She ends up running away, convinced that her parents are trying to ruin her life and chance of happiness.

Wild Grows the Heather is number one in the series of The Secret of Heathersleigh Hall. This is a Christian historical, mystery fiction set in the late 1800’s. Told in the third person, the author weaves circumstances into the lives of the characters to keep the plot moving forward. The book is mostly made up of dialogue to get the main points across so that at times the story seems barely to move. There is an introduction, map, and a prologue of three chapters before the story actually begins. The book is divided into seven parts and closes with an epilogue and the characters whereabouts are described for the viewers’ interest. Michele Howe


F. Ireland—Fiction. 448 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.
Quality - 4  Acceptability - 5

Mad Molly Fahey says a miracle is coming to the Irish village of Ballynockanor! This is good news to the tenant farmers who struggle under an abusive and oppressive landlord. Joseph Conner is the “miracle,” the true Burke, the real landlord of the town. His wicked uncle poisoned Joseph’s father, forcing Joseph to flee for his life when he was a young boy. Joseph returns to Ballynockanor but must keep his identity a secret until he can find a way to prove who he really is. Joseph befriends the Donovan family—particularly the oldest daughter, Kate. Burned in a fire while attesting to save her family, Kate is horribly scarred and believes she will never marry again. But to Joseph, she is “a gold coin shining on the riverbed.” Tragedy strikes the family again, however, when Kate’s sister Brigit secretly marries William, the corrupt son of the village landlord. He uses her, then abandons her to prostitution in Dublin. Feeling responsible for her downfall because he failed to warn her against William’s wiles, Joseph goes to Dublin to rescue her. He finds Brigit pregnant and very ill. Filled with an unexplainable love for her, Joseph marries Brigit and gives the unborn child his name. At her death, he returns to her family with the baby, and with the help of Mad Molly Fahey is finally able to reveal his true identity. Joseph marries Kate, assumes his role as the true landlord, and begins to right the many wrongs practiced upon the Irish tenant farmers under the false landlord.


F. Mystery fiction; Christian fiction. 323 p. Adult.
Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

A gunshot rings out, and suddenly Paul and Anne Lorelli’s tenth anniversary becomes their last. Anne’s pearl necklace breaks in the scuffle with the muggers. Molly and Clark O’Kelley, long-time Lorelli friends, help Anne as she moves numbly through the next days that include Paul’s funeral. We wonder, along with Anne, about the woman standing apart from the other mourners. Her dark glasses, large black hat, and “sweeping black coat” reveal nothing. Later Vaughn allows us to see this woman and her importance in the story.

We sit alongside detectives as they interview Paul’s law office partner, Randolph Percy. His information helps make the final case against the muggers and the force behind them. Detective Tom Hogan carries on the investigation with thoroughness, finding himself with feelings he had not anticipated.

During this time, Anne questions her lack of feeling, the absence of heart-felt mourning. She begins to move out of herself, volunteering to tell stories to children at an inner-city learning center. Friendships with Jackie and her daughter Shari at the center and also with Father Josef Kowalski and his sister Danuta, Holocaust survivors, sustain Anne when Tom Hogan reveals unbelievable facts. Their faith in God restores her and gives hope once again.

This well-constructed story comes from the mind of an experienced writer. Vaughn has collaborated with Charles Colson for more than
sixteen years. She writes _The Strand_, her first novel, with assurance and accuracy as to the setting in Washington, D.C. The emotions upon which the story depends, pull the reader into the lives of Jackie, Jozef, and Danuta, as well as Anne. A well-defined background for all the primary characters makes the reader identify with them as real-life neighbors. Vaughn gives us enough information to have some idea how the story will come out, while at the same time adding unexpected events and complications to keep us guessing.

Readers who love a mystery, especially one that contains a hint of romance, and who appreciate the addition of a spiritual uplift will relish this good read. _Betty M. Hockett_


F. Western fiction; Sitka (Alaska)—Fiction; Mystery fiction. 287 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

The adventures of Jenny Hays and Zac Cobb continue when Jenny leaves word that she has traveled to Sitka to be reunited with her sister Naomi and Uncle Ian. Zac, uncomfortable with her traveling so far into unknown circumstances, decides to follow her. He soon discovers that things are not as they seem and Jenny is in real danger. Zac is frustrated in his attempts to find the truth and protect Jenny by the deceptions of Ian and the greed and power struggles that surround them.

Jim Walker’s novel is action packed and addresses the issues of greed and deception. The writing style is similar to the Corrie Hollister series. There are a number of murders among the rough and unpredictable environment of Alaska in the nineteenth century. _The Ice Princess_ is interesting, but there are few surprises. _Tammy Williams_


F. Mystery fiction; Titanic (Steamship)—Fiction. 487 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

_Murder on the Titanic_ is a mystery that intertwines historical events with fiction. Morgan Fairfield, while preparing for his departure aboard the Titanic, finds himself entrusted with vital government papers from a dying man. These papers must be delivered to Washington to avoid an impending war. Knowing that the murderer is also aboard, Morgan knows he must watch his back and at the same time ensure the security of the documents. Morgan is immediately befriended by Hunter Kennedy—a reckless actor who offers Morgan assistance. Also aboard, is Morgan’s life long love, Margaret Hastings. Margaret is accompanied by her fiancé, Peter Wilksbury. When dead bodies start showing up, Morgan is even more determined to accomplish his “mission” and to discover just who is committing murder, aboard the Titanic.

Jim Walker has written an exciting mystery that captivates the reader. There is just enough fact mixed with fiction to keep you interested and proves the story is based in solid research. The characters are alive and one cannot help but become involved and concerned with their outcome. With each major character, Mr. Walker speaks of what is really in his heart. It is a story that will appeal to a broad audience and I look forward to others in his series. _Tammy Williams_


F. Denny, Louisa Boren—Fiction; Frontier and pioneer life—Washington (State)—Fiction; Women pioneers—Washington (State)—Fiction; Denny, David Thomas—Fiction; Seattle (Wash.)—History—Fiction. 271 p. Adult.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

_Sweetbriar Autumn_ continues the story of David and Louisa Denny (early founders of Seattle). At the conclusion of _Sweetbriar Summer_, the settlers in White River flee to Seattle from hostile Indians invading the nearby territory. As the story resumes, families from the White River area receive word that it is safe to return home and that the danger was exaggerated. Unsuccessfully, David and other town leaders, try to convince them to wait. Word soon comes that the Indians attacked and burned the homes of their friends and loved ones. David feels responsible to go with the volunteers to bury the dead and rescue the survivors. Louisa, expecting their second child, is left alone. Will David return safely? Will the Indians invade Seattle?

Brenda Wilbee proves herself to be a thorough researcher and writes from historical accounts. Each chapter has excerpts from different literary sources which are referenced in the comprehensive bibliography. _Sweetbriar Autumn_ demonstrates how the Denny family relied on God for their safety and for their peace. It is an excellent source for one who wishes to gain detailed information on the history of Seattle. _Tammy Williams_


F. Rome, Ancient—Fiction. 1 videocassette, color, 120 min. Gr. 8 - Adult.

Quality - 2 Acceptability - 5

This story is drawn from a novel by Bob Jones and set in the time of Christ. Joel is a young Jewish man whose destiny will be found in the hands of rebels and outlaws. During the time of Roman rule and tyranny, young Joel sees the treachery of the Romans and vows to revenge his fellow countrymen’s sufferings.

As Joel travels from city to city in search of fulfillment and meaning in his life; he repeatedly encounters Christ, his healings, and his followers. Bits and pieces of Christ’s teaching are shared with Joel to no avail. He remains staunchly committed to leading a life in opposition to all Romans. When Joel becomes part of a band of robbers, he adopts the name Barabbas. Eventually, Barabbas (Joel) is captured by the Romans and is ordered to die for his crimes. Enter in the Biblical account of Barabbas and Jesus being condemned in the thief’s place. As Barabbas witnesses Jesus’ death and that of his fellow thieves, he begins an inward journey of introspection, one that lasts years. Surviving a shipwreck, sends Barabbas searching once again. At last he finds Christ and begins to boldly witness for God, even facing jail and death for his newfound Lord.

This two hour story is often stilted and slow moving. The acting is mediocre and forced at times. While the story line moves along, the viewer is left wondering how the characters proceed from one scene to the next without much explanation or internal growth/struggle. Each sequence assumes the viewer has more knowledge than he/she can possess. _Michele Howe_


F. Mystery fiction. Adult.


F. Mystery fiction; Scotland—Fiction. 350 p. Adult.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 5

Benjamin Reese is an archivist at a small university in Ohio. He bears the scars of wounds suffered in World War II as an Army Ranger in France. In his late thirties and driving an old 1947 Plymouth, Ben is still haunted by his wife’s death during her first childbirth. In the initial novel, _Publish and Perish_ by Sally Wright, the pressures for academic advancement lead to the death of Richard West, Ben’s old friend and a professor of English literature. Ben is skeptical of the claim that his friend’s death was from natural causes. This skepticism leads him into a labyrinth of academic ambitions, bitterness, and deceit within the college.
Surviving an attempt on his life, Ben unravels the mystery that brings the murderers to justice.

Sally Wright paints word pictures that draw the reader into the drama of each scene. Her characters are believable and I particularly liked her portrayals of their faith as something natural and acceptable without a trace of religious chauvinism. Her plot keeps one guessing and left me with a desire for more adventures in the annals of professor Benjamin Reese.

In Sally Wright's second novel in the Ben Reese Mystery Series, the setting is along the border of Scotland and the holy isle of Lindisfarne. In *Pride and Predator* the Rev. Jonathan MacLean, a Church of Scotland minister and owner of the MacLean family home at Kilgarth, dies of anaphylactic shock from bee stings while hiking on Lindisfarne.

Sally Wright spins a captivating story around Castle Balnagard owned by the writer Lord Alex Chisolm. Ben Reese has been retained by Sir Alex to evaluate for sale antiquarian items Lord Alex inherited with the estate. The rich tapestry of country estate life and gentle people is so engaging that the cleverly contrived murder of Jon MacLean is an unwanted intrusion to the reader. There is plenty of intrigue, multiple suspects, and a shocking attempt upon Ben Reese's life before he corners the murderer.

If you like mystery stories that are not cheap and tawdry, you'll enjoy the Ben Reese mysteries by Sally Wright. *Mike Jarvis*

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**The Reel Story**

The fascinating account of how God so worked in the heart of a man who'd reached the pinnacle of a lucrative career in the Hollywood movie industry, that he left it all for Christ.

In his first novel, author Larry Hughes relates the true story of the successful career of one of the world's most influential and wealthy leaders of the Hollywood entertainment industry. He reveals the inner workings of the film business and shows the reader what it's like to rub shoulders with Hollywood's biggest stars and most notorious characters.

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Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

Sue Holtkamp dropped out of school after ninth grade and married very young, giving birth to her third child at the age of twenty-three. Emotionally and physically dependent on her adored husband, Glenn, the bottom fell out of her world when Glenn and youngest daughter Katie died in an airplane crash. Grieving with Hope tells the story of how, with God’s help, she made it back to hope and a new life that included a doctorate and a ministry to other bereaved Christians.

Holtkamp’s story is told in simple language and is heartbreakingly honest. She says, in the chapter, “Never Alone”, “Knowing God loved me didn’t erase the pain of grief any more than his love eliminated my labor pains. For grief, like labor, is a process that must be experienced in order to bring about new life.” From “Not Me, Not Mine, Not Now” to “Just Surviving Is Not Enough”, she takes readers through that process and lets them emerge on the other side into joy, as she did. “The paradoxical reality that one could have great grief and great joy may remain inconceivable until we understand that joy is sweetest when found beyond suffering.”

Grieving with Hope packs a lot of relevant scripture and nuggets of personal wisdom into 108 pages. It would be a good addition to any library and its short chapters and easy language make it an excellent gift for a bereaved parent or widow, as well. Betty Winslow

200’s - Religion


212. God--Proof, Cosmological; Anthropic principle; Natural theology; Religion and science. 216 p. Adult.

Quality - 5  Acceptability - 5

To listen to atheists—particularly atheistic scientists—one might think that science has administered the coup de grace to God; that the...
universe no longer contains room for the divine or the spiritual. Perhaps this impression is because the atheists shout louder, for an increasing number of scientists are finding that the universe makes no sense without God—and are writing about their realizations.

Patrick Glynn was raised Catholic, but became an atheist while obtaining his Harvard Ph.D. To him, both science and philosophy proved that God was dead. But twenty years later, those same disciplines convinced him that God was very much Creator of the universe. Science indicates a universe with all the hallmarks of intelligent design; philosophy that atheism is a failure; and, to Glynn, near death experiences (NDEs) that there is more to humanity than bodies and brain activity.

Glynn doesn’t state his religious views, but he is broadly sympathetic to Christianity and quotes scripture frequently. Glynn has written a readable book, one that is honest both to his own journey from atheism to theism, and to developments in science and philosophy. Faith and reason are not opponents, Glynn writes, but reason leads to faith. If God—The Evidence has a flaw, it is Glynn’s reliance on NDEs (themselves a controversial issue) as evidence of humanity’s spiritual nature.

Christian readers might desire a more Christian-oriented book, but God—The Evidence should be valuable regardless, and particularly appropriate for those wrestling with concerns of faith, reason, and science. Andrew Seddon

While Wright believes the Bible to be historically reliable, his reconstruction of Jesus is not entirely traditional. He often takes both liberal and conservative scholars to task regarding their views of Jesus. Some of his views, therefore, are bound to be controversial but the book as a whole is outstanding and is surely destined to become a classic in the field of Jesus’ studies. Dennis J. Ingoldflsh


Quality - emailed for ratings Acceptability -
“Find where God is already at work. Come alongside Him, get in step, and you will experience Him as never before.” Based on this premise, Experiencing God is a thought-provoking, soul-stirring book, causing the reader to sense God’s presence in an experiential way. The authors give scriptural backdrops to important truths such as: 1) God is at work around us, 2) God pursues a love relationship with us, 3) God initiates, 4) God invites us to join him in his work, and 5) God reveals himself through circumstances, the Word, prayer, and other ways. The style of the book is very reader-friendly. Chapter summaries at the end of each chapter offer the truths revealed “in a nutshell” to aid understanding and deepen the message. The contents are easily understood and efficiently outlined.

Most importantly, this book is life-changing. The authors understand the personal relationship with God and give readers insight in how to know him intimately. They encourage readers to see that prayer, Scripture, and circumstances agree with the direction they sense God calling them to.

Focusing attention on God’s plans, rather than our own plans is essential. They then reveal practical ways to know his will.

Useful as a personal growth book or as a Bible study, Experiencing God may well be one of the most-read, beneficial, Christian growth books of this decade. Mary Jo Krzyminski


235. Spiritual warfare; Devil; Christian life. 159 p.
Quality - Adult
Acceptability - 5
Miller, a seminary professor, is confident that we all have the tools to disarm the Tempter. He says that Satan hits us hardest in three areas, money, sex, and power. The demonic gods and goddesses of these temptations are constantly working overtime to sway us into sin and away from our God. Their pull on our egos is sometimes too much to bear.

He says our strategy should include learning about our personal weaknesses and eliminating threats to our faithfulness. Confessing aloud and avoiding secrets dispels the darkness Satan needs to operate. Studying the Dark One and his ways gives us the strength to know how to fight him. Understanding that he tempts in subtle ways helps us to avoid the slight wrong turns in life that can lead to huge wrecks.

A book for everyone from late teenager on up, Disarming the Darkness, leaves the reader with a buoyant feeling of power. Satan’s touch but with God, the Bible, and Christian fellowship in our corner we can beat him hands down. Anita Horning


Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5
The Moral Quest is a serious and thoughtful study of the foundations for ethical thinking in philosophy and religion. A major concern of Grenz’s is the relationship of Christianity’s claims with regard to ethics and morality to philosophical ethics in general. What is the connection between biblical claims and general philosophical ideas? In other words, how does a Christian do ethics differently from a secular philosopher?

Grenz begins with an excellent historical study of ethics in the Greek tradition of Plato and Aristotle. He then surveys ethics in the Bible and various approaches Christian thinkers have taken to ethical thinking. First he focuses on important historical figures, i.e. Augustine and Aquinas, and then he discusses important contemporary figures in Christian ethics, e.g. Barth with his emphasis on transcendence, Ramsay with his love ethic, Bonhoeffer with his worldliness, and various liberation theologians with their ethics of liberation. Another major emphasis of Grenz in this historical study is the various views on character and virtue ethics in the history of ethics going back to Aristotle. There is much interest in virtue ethics in current Christian and secular ethical discussion, and Grenz finds much biblical support for such an emphasis.

Following the historical study, Grenz seeks to place Christian ethics in its contemporary context. Current ethical discussion emphasizes virtue and being, as well as the centrality of community in human life. Grenz thinks these issues fit quite well with a biblical view of ethics as both individual and communal in the church context. He particularly notes the biblical
emphasize on integrity as an example of the Christian ethical emphasis on being, not just doing. He then analyzes the two extremes of heteronomy in ethics (emphasis on the Word as written, the letter of the law) and autonomy (emphasis on the Spirit and individualism instead of the Word), and after rejecting both of these alternatives, Grenz opts for what he calls a “theonomic way,” which draws the Word and the internally active Spirit together.

The latter part of this book contains Grenz’s suggestion for a foundation of Christian ethics in what he calls comprehensive love, agape love lived out in community as a reflection of the Trinity and a reflection of who we are as children of God indwelt by the Spirit of God. This is a celebrative and very positive way of living, according to Grenz. This book is not light reading, but for those interested in deeper thinking about theology and ethics, this book will prove very helpful. Paul Boling


Patience, David Harned asserts, is one of the neglected Christian virtues. Little attention is paid to it either in life, or in contemporary thought. Yet it is important for the Christian life. Patience is not passivity, but an active response to the world. Harned takes a tour through the history of patience, beginning with Hebrew scriptures, to early Church writers (Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine), to the middle ages (Gregory, Aquinas, Kempis), and the Reformation and beyond (Calvin, Burroughs, Kierkegaard). He distinguishes patience from other views, and shows how the virtues relate, and how they differ. He shows what patience is and what it is not. Finally, he discusses how patience relates to the modern world. In our overstressed, hurried, tyranny-of-the-urgent society, we could all do with paying attention to patience.

David Harned is professor emeritus of philosophy and religious studies at Louisiana State University. In consequence perhaps, Patience is not so much a meditation or devotional study as a philosophical or theological analysis. This is not to say it is impractical or academic, merely that the style requires concentration and effort from the reader. To read Patience requires patience. Andrew Seddon


Quality 4 Acceptability 5

Weaving a Life of Prayer is a combination devotional/Bible study/how-to book on prayer. In the introduction, author Marsha Crockett describes her frustration with making time to pray. She says, “I wanted my prayer life to become a life of prayer, to breathe with the reality of God in the earthiness of my everyday living.”

Crockett explores the role of prayer in the lives of women in the Bible: Sarah, Rebekah, Miriam, Deborah, Ruth, Martha, Mary Magdalene, and others. She relates the scriptures to events in her own life, experiences that drew her closer to God as she learned to turn her disappointments and struggles toward him.

The book is arranged in thirty daily readings. The front and back covers have generous flaps to help the reader keep her place. A firm believer in the value of journaling, Crockett strongly encourages the reader to apply the book’s principles to her own life by recording her thoughts in a journal. The end of each daily reading contains suggestions for journal entries. Andrea R. Hueslenbeck


Quality 4 Acceptability 5

John Ortberg addresses an area of weakness every Christian wrestles with: the desire to grow spiritually and not knowing the best route to proceed. The Life You’ve Always Wanted encourages readers to recognize the need for spiritual transformation by looking at all of life as spiritual. Viewing it as a learning ground enables Christians to focus on the common every day occurrence as opportunity for growth. Standing in the line at the grocery store or attending a child’s soccer game affords occasion to learn something about spiritual growth. Ortberg suggests Christians practice the celebration of life, practice slowing it down, practice servanthood and confess, all the while maintaining Bible reading and quiet times. Written almost as a conversation, The Life You’ve Always Wanted reads easily, yet with depth.

Ortberg includes poignant key points, set apart in side-bar fashion, offering review of concepts taught. He shares family and ministry anecdotes illustrating his points. Also included are extensive resources for his views and other Willow Creek resources for church needs. Carolyn Hearing


248.4. Spiritual life--Christianity; Christian life. 110 p. Adult.

Quality 4 Acceptability 5

Often dynamiting the leading edges of the recipient’s thinking, guiding with alacrity and humor, constantly seeking to honor the Lord, The Wisdom of Each Other is a series of letters from a spiritually mature Christian to a friend new to Jesus. Answers to questions and replies to statements hint at the new Christian’s personality and growth. Subjects explored include: being prepared for the Spirit’s leading; appreciating your church family; not being enamored with the newest Christian celebrities and ideas; prayer; the ritual of daily living.

Acclaimed author of the Biblical paraphrase, The Message, Peterson knows that Christianity cannot rely on selling religious cosmetics. He strongly questions Christian stereotypes; sometimes relies on shock therapy (as when he uses bitch as a synonym for complain); points out the problems arising from thoughtless following of renowned Christian institutions. Peterson writes with love varying from tender to hard. The reader must cope with thought-provoking argument, eye opening agreement, painful growth towards Christian maturity. Always friendship’s intimacy seeks the best for the friend. All ideas are closely reasoned and clearly written. At times The Wisdom of Each Other’s wording shows that Peterson is a university professor. Even then his thought is clear and concise. This book is one of the Growing Deeper Series published by Zondervan. Donna Eggett


Quality 5 Acceptability 5

“You aren’t what you think you are, but what you think, you are,” remarks Mary Whelchel, in her latest book, What Would Jesus Think. Those few words neatly summarize her message, “take your thoughts captive and change your life.” Welchel focuses on typical patterns of “wrong thinking,” including fear, worry, obsession, addiction, and focusing on pain from the past. Each of the ten chapters specifically address how to recognize wrong thinking, take thoughts captive, and replace them with true, noble, pure, and admirable thoughts, found in Philippians 4:8. The short chapters and their content are presented simply. Welchel provides a checklist at the end
of each chapter and encourages the reader to copy and use them to identify problem areas and potential solutions.

Though the approach is simple, the daily discipline and practice required is challenging. Welchel encourages memorizing Bible verses to fill the “empty places” left by wrong thinking. She alludes to demons Jesus spoke about, who return sevenfold because the space they vacated is left unfilled. She emphasizes that scripture has the power to change thinking and build spiritual muscle.

The author says our thoughts are written for all to see in our words, actions, reactions, and facial expressions. That’s an excellent reason to put the contents of this book into practice. I recommend reading and applying it.  

Gail Welborn


Quality - 5    Acceptability - 5

Is it possible to become like the Proverbs 31 woman—one who is beautiful in God’s eyes? Elizabeth George, author and Bible teacher, believes it is. She shares many insights from the 31st chapter of Proverbs, gleaned from reading Proverbs daily for nearly twenty-five years. Her in-depth teaching from verses 10-31 gives a clear portrait of this biblical role model and includes practical suggestions to apply.

George points out that God’s view of beauty differs from man’s. She describes God’s beautiful woman as pure, honest, industrious, thrifty, strong in character, wise, and holy. “These internal qualities enable God’s beautiful woman to manage well her life, her time, her money, her mouth, her home, her relationships, and her self.” (p. 14) Whether married or single, these character traits reveal the beauty God desires in women.

Devoting a chapter or more to each verse, she thoroughly examines the virtues from historical and present-day perspectives. The author ends each of the twenty-four chapters with current application ideas called, “The How-To’s of Beauty.” Momentum builds with each new virtue taught, until “God’s alphabet of true feminine beauty” (p. 234) is complete. Because of her virtuous living, the Proverbs 31 woman is rewarded with a harvest of praise from her husband, children, and God.

This meaty book is not a quick read, but one to chew on and digest. It includes a thought-provoking study guide, suitable for personal or group use. Extensive footnotes and useful bibliography complete the book. This comprehensive verse by verse exposition will benefit women desiring to become beautiful in God’s eyes.  

Lydia E. Harris


Quality - 4    Acceptability - 5

Postmodern Times is the last book in the Turning Point Christian Worldview Series from Crossway Books. This book is an overview of the major ideas of postmodernism and its impact on Christianity. Veith begins with a historical review of thought from the modern period with its emphasis on rationalism and objectivity to the recent postmodern emphasis on deconstructing truth and the loss of personal identity. He gives helpful definitions of key postmodern terms and ideas as they are applied to literary analysis, religion, and philosophy.

Following the introductory section on truth and philosophy, Veith discusses postmodern art, postmodern society, and postmodern religion. In each of these sections, he applies postmodern concepts to art, politics, movies, literature, and religion. He gives many examples from each of these fields to demonstrate how deconstruction and contextualization have influenced writers and artists and architects in the last thirty years. For example, in the field of politics, there is a move toward tribalism and segmentation of society into interest groups who seek power and influence. Part of this movement is the current emphasis on multiculturalism in education and society. In the discussion on religion, Veith talks about the current trend toward spirituality without objective truth. He also discusses postmodern influences within Christianity.

The last part of the book contains some suggestions regarding future directions for Christianity in its struggle with postmodernism. Veith thinks there may need to be a return to confessionism and doctrinal emphasis in the Christian church, and a reorientation to truth as objective and knowable. Such a return would be welcome in a postmodern environment, he thinks.


262. Church; Yancey, Philip; Church attendance. 100 p. Adult.
Quality - 3    Acceptability - 5

Church Why Bother is a scholarly paper employing a large vocabulary. The original paper, entitled “Praising Rembrandt: But Despising His Paintings,” was delivered by Calvin DeWitt in 1996 as part of the Kuyper Lecture at Fuller Theological Seminary. This lecture series addresses three dynamics that are at work in contemporary culture: (1) the driving influence of competing worldviews on public life, (2) the comprehensive claims of Jesus Christ on the world, and (3) the strength of the international Christian community.

DeWitt says that we are in an eco-crisis brought about by “one peculiar and special species having amplified its presence to such an extent that it has become a major geological force.”

That’s us. He sums up this crisis in seven degradations of creation: global warming, land degradation, deforestation, extinction of species, water degradation, global toxification, and the extinguishing of long-standing cultures. In writing about halting the extinction of species DeWitt goes to the extreme, “The clear teaching of the Scriptures is that no expense of time, material, money, or reputation should be spared in this rescue operation.”

The latter part of the book is compiled of three responses to the paper. Professor Richard A. Baer Jr., fears that DeWitt turns too quickly from God to his convictions about species-preservation policy. Vernon J. Ehlers wishes DeWitt had addressed additional issues such as the tension between doing justice to property owners and doing justice to the environment.

Baer leaves this word of caution. “We do need to be wary of those forms of environmentalism that treat nature as ultimate reality, and human beings as a blight on this fragile planet.”  

Myrtle St. Pattman Crane


Quality - 5    Acceptability - 5

Caring for Creation is a scholarly paper employing a large vocabulary. The original paper, entitled “Praising Rembrandt: But Despising His Paintings,” was delivered by Calvin DeWitt in 1996 as part of the Kuyper Lecture at Fuller Theological Seminary. This lecture series addresses three dynamics that are at work in contemporary culture: (1) the driving influence of competing worldviews on public life, (2) the comprehensive claims of Jesus Christ on the world, and (3) the strength of the international Christian community.

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Myrtle St. Pattman Crane


262. Church; Yancey, Philip; Church attendance. 100 p. Adult.
Quality - 3    Acceptability - 5

Philip Yancey gives us a birds-eye view of his growing up years in a Southern “hellfire and brimstone” church. Describing the controlled environment of church as a sub-culture, he
avoided certain activities and obeyed external rules to protect himself from the sinful world outside. Despite this diligence, Yancey still rejected the legalistic environment of his childhood.

For this, he blames his harsh church, full of condemnation and void of humility, for his stunted faith. After years of “climbing back toward faith and church,” he is able to identify the barriers of hypocrisy and church culture he overcame. Yancey challenges readers to ask if they are worshiping God, appreciating diversity of members, and meeting needs of others as a benefit of church attendance.

Throughout the book Yancey refers to positive experiences at a Chicago church pastored by a man who shares his background in racist fundamentalism. Admitting that churches fail due to blunders of humanness, readers are reminded that church is only a beginning.

Yancey suggests church-goers will discover what God intended if they keep trying to do what he asks. Filled with personal examples, Philip Yancey pulls one hundred pages of a personal journey together to offer hope for those frustrated with the role and mission of God’s body, the church. He claims to worship in the Protestant tradition, and offers numerous examples from a variety of denominations. 


Randy Becton advocates that all Christians embrace a lifestyle of evangelism. He says, “If evangelism is ‘the normal expression of the Christian experience,’ then it must be part of our everyday lives.” Becton also stresses that the results of our evangelization are up to God. According to Becton, our part is just to be faithful in telling the story of salvation in Jesus Christ. He will use our efforts to accomplish his will in his own time. He says, “very few people are converted all of a sudden through one experience. Usually conversion results from a series of events and interactions. A worthwhile goal for us is to seek to be one link in the chain of someone’s conversion. What role we play is not significant; that we are willing to play the role we can is all-important.” Becton suggests a strategy for evangelism involving spheres of influence. He recommends meeting regularly with a group of Christians with whom you can pray and be accountable to.

Everyday Evangelism moves from the general to the specific. Becton quotes numerous sources on evangelism, adding to them examples how ordinary individuals led many to Christ through simple acts of hospitality.


300's - Social Sciences


Preparing your Child for Dating starts with a discussion of the problems that parents face as they guide their children into Christian responses to today’s sexual pressures. Comparing such movements as Courtship and Parent-Directed Dating, Barnes comes down strongly on the side of dating. He looks at the need for father to be the director and instigator of plans before dating starts; suggests the usefulness of parent-child dating to introduce lessons such as responsibility, purity, and safety; gives directions for the family interview of those who want to date your child; proposes the steps towards dating such as group and double dating; and gives the logic of items like curfew, withdrawing of abused privileges, and post-game discussion. The final chapter looks at the handing over of responsibility to the mature dater.

A family ministries author and conference speaker, Dr. Barnes is also the successful parent of grown children who date wisely. Many examples from real life, including Dr. Barnes own, illustrate the problems, pitfalls, and triumphs discussed in Preparing Your Child for Dating. Each chapter ends with a summary, questions to ask yourself, and bibliographical notes. Several chapters include useful lists for coping with various aspects of parent-directed dating. A list of books by Dr. Barnes closes this book. Barnes employs a simple and straightforward style. Many of Dr. Barnes ideas have already been propounded in the writings of other family professionals, such as Dr. Dobson of Focus on the Family. This book is firmly based on Judeo/Christian principles, though it does not include scripture quotations. Donna Eggett


“Daddy, Where Were You?” is the reissue of a book first published in 1991. Author Heather Harpham Kopp uses her own experiences and those of others to help women suffering from a father-shaped void in their lives. She says, “Jesus wants to redeem the broken pieces of our hearts.”

Some problems associated with a painful father experience seem to be fairly universal like despair, low self-esteem, and intense longing for male approval and acceptance. Kopp deals with these issues and more. Father-loss puts strain on all family relationships. Chapters four and five clarify how this loss effects mother/child and sibling relationships. All the chapters conclude with thought-provoking questions to help readers come to conclusions about their own lives.

Dealing with the grief and anger is essential to healing. Many victims carry unresolved grief with them into adulthood and, as Kopp says, “Unexpressed grief is a blanket of sadness that smothers us.” She closes the book with a discussion of God as Father, how a father-deprived woman can have a distorted image of God.

Kopp is very open about her own feelings of neglect and loss. The damage done by an absent or neglectful father is not soft peddled. Sexual abuse is discussed openly. Yet she tackles the problems from a loving and forgiving attitude. Myrtlemay Pittman Crane


"Daddy, Where Were You?:" is the reissue of a book first published in 1991. Author Heather Harpham Kopp uses her own experiences and those of others to help women suffering from a father-shaped void in their lives. She says, “Jesus wants to redeem the broken pieces of our hearts.”

Some problems associated with a painful father experience seem to be fairly universal like despair, low self-esteem, and intense longing for male approval and acceptance. Kopp deals with these issues and more. Father-loss puts strain on all family relationships. Chapters four and five clarify how this loss effects mother/child and sibling relationships. All the chapters conclude with thought-provoking questions to help readers come to conclusions about their own lives.

Dealing with the grief and anger is essential to healing. Many victims carry unresolved grief with them into adulthood and, as Kopp says, “Unexpressed grief is a blanket of sadness that smothers us.” She closes the book with a discussion of God as Father, how a father-deprived woman can have a distorted image of God.

Kopp is very open about her own feelings of neglect and loss. The damage done by an absent or neglectful father is not soft peddled. Sexual abuse is discussed openly. Yet she tackles the problems from a loving and forgiving attitude. Myrtlemay Pittman Crane

Preparing Your Child for Dating starts with a discussion of the problems that parents face as they guide their children into Christian responses to today’s sexual pressures. Comparing such movements as Courtship and Parent-Directed Dating, Barnes comes down strongly on the side of dating. He looks at the need for father to be the director and instigator of plans before dating starts; suggests the usefulness of parent-child dating to introduce lessons such as responsibility, purity, and safety; gives directions for the family interview of those who want to date your child; proposes the steps towards dating such as group and double dating; and gives the logic of items like curfew, withdrawing of abused privileges, and post-game discussion. The final chapter looks at the handing over of responsibility to the mature dater.

A family ministries author and conference speaker, Dr. Barnes is also the successful parent of grown children who date wisely. Many examples from real life, including Dr. Barnes own, illustrate the problems, pitfalls, and triumphs discussed in Preparing Your Child for Dating. Each chapter ends with a summary, questions to ask yourself, and bibliographical notes. Several chapters include useful lists for coping with various aspects of parent-directed dating. A list of books by Dr. Barnes closes this book. Barnes employs a simple and straightforward style. Many of Dr. Barnes ideas have already been propounded in the writings of other family professionals, such as Dr. Dobson of Focus on the Family. This book is firmly based on Judeo/Christian principles, though it does not include scripture quotations. Donna Eggett
to bless, not impress. Willis concludes with an invitation to accept Jesus, the heart of Christmas. A quick, inspirational read, this attractive book brims with photographs and makes a “sense-sational” gift. *Lydia Harris*

### 600's - Technology (Applied Sciences)


613.2. Weight control. Adult.

Quality - 5
Acceptability - 5

There are three words that describe Gwen Shamblin’s new weight loss book and program, *Weigh Down Diet*. They are radical, controversial, contemplative. Radical as it may seem, Shamblin’s no fool. With a Master’s degree in nutrition science, she explains physiological processes of nutrition. She also explains theological processes of heart. And she comes across smart as a professor.

Shamblin’s plan breaks all the rules. It’s okay to skip breakfast, exercise, and vitamin pills; forget about drinking eight glasses of water every day; and, if you’re still hungry, eat dessert. “It’s all about God’s power, not will power,” she explains. God made our bodies to indicate when we need water, food, and sleep. We must learn to listen to our bodies. She teaches readers to control themselves (through prayer), not their food; and she promises—yes, promises—any one can do it if their heart is in it.

With fourteen years of Weigh Down programs behind her and 10,000 locations around the world, Shamblin often refers to testimonies of Weigh Down participants; in fact Appendix D is filled with them, including before and after pictures. These testimonies make believers out of readers. Other appendices include overweight children, body measurements, and a travel diary.

Shamblin keeps it simple. According to her, “our major objective is to replace our passion for food with a passion for God.” Simple, yes. Easy? Well, each one will discover that for themselves.


Quality - 5
Acceptability - 4

Since there are eight million people afflicted with eating disorders, and seven million of them female, there is a good chance every Christian will come into contact with one or more in church or school. This harrowing mental torture affects teens and young adults regardless of class or circumstance.

Coming from a position of deep respect for her patients, she says, “I am humbled by the intense suffering of the victims of eating disorders and those who love them, and awed by their uncommon courage against all odds” (p. 7). Her highly successful program is based on total unconditional support and gentleness. She promotes twenty-four-hour care for the most acute patients at her center. She believes the battle is not actually about food and weight but against the “Negative Mind.” This is the constant barrage of verbal abuse that the patient hears, convincing her she is essentially unworthy to live. As the patient gains strength, her Actual Mind takes over and eventually reduces the Negative Mind to a mere whisper.

Claude-Pierre addresses what parents should look for in their children when they suspect eating disorders. “Those predisposed to CNC (Confirmed Negativity Condition) are acutely sensitive to the needs of everyone and even everything else in their environment” (p. 45). “She becomes isolated from friends because she believes she is less than they are and does not want to impose her ignorance on them” (p. 57). Early intervention can prevent inpatient hospitalization. Though not a professing Christian, Claude-Pierre, director of one of the most successful eating disorder clinics, located in Victoria, Canada, and parent of two daughters that survived anorexia, encourages the use of spirituality to strengthen the Actual Mind against the Negative Mind. This book is truly a lifesaver for anyone dealing with eating disorders. *Anita Goldman Horning*


Quality - 5
Acceptability - 5

Among the most informative and user-friendly book regarding attention deficit disorders, McEwan has truly written an information-packed book. Written primarily for those with attention deficit, McEwan shows the reader how to stay organized. Above all else, her message is to focus on the ADD person’s strengths rather than weaknesses. She was herself diagnosed with ADD, yet managed to be a teacher, principal, mom, and writer of several self-help books. Anyone wishing to understand ADD better would greatly appreciate this book as well.

Readers will not have to read this book from front to back since she has information on topics ranging from “understanding your personal struggles” to “structuring the household” all well outlined and easy to parouse at any chapter. A clear, easy to follow A to Z format is followed in the table of contents and the book itself. Practical and useful tips are given to help teachers, family-members, and the ADD person him or herself with coping and managing life successfully. An ADD checklist is given which would allow the reader to determine if he or she has the disorder.

Personal testimonies and quotes from those with ADD are sensibly placed throughout the book to give deeper meaning and allow for personal identification with the issues being addressed. The importance of faith in God, as well as several quotes, scriptures, and Christian testimonies make this book a good reference and confirmation that God’s principles really do work in all areas of life and for all those with needs. *Peggy Claude-Pierre*


Quality - 5
Acceptability - 5

Dr. Townsend states, “Your task as a parent is to help your child develop inside what you have provided on the outside: responsibility, self-control, and freedom.” Setting limits creates these attributes, which the authors call boundaries and are the foundation for this book. They further define boundaries as a property line that shows where one person ends and another begins. The book is not problem centered, but principle centered... and is organized around key concepts that help children take control of their lives.

Problem areas addressed are defying authority, whining, inattention, conflict, and procrastination, among others. The focus is on how you behave with your child rather than you educating your child because a child learns their boundaries from the parent. The authors discuss the law of sowing and reaping, allowing mistakes and the lessons learned, and call it reality consequences. Consequences give the child ownership of the problem.

Organized in three sections, part one answers the question why kids need boundaries. Part two gives ten boundary principles children need to know, and part three tells how to implement those principles specifically with your child.

The content is easy to read and understand; the issues addressed with humor and clarity, and examples are given on how to handle each situation. This is similar to their first book, *Boundaries*, for adults, Zondervan Publishing, 1992, which won the Gold Medallion Award, but the theme is how to instill boundaries in your child. *Gail Welborn*

★

Gary Richmond, author, speaker, and single parent pastor works closely with single parents, individually and within groups. This gives him the sensitivity and expertise to write about their shared problems with children.

Richmond suggests practical ways to address these problems, with precise illustrations by age grouping; one to five, six to twelve, and ages thirteen to twenty-five. His suggestions include balancing parents’ needs against children’s needs, how to deal with an absent parent and the need for new financial considerations because of changed circumstances. He discusses consistency in values and discipline and how to handle visitation rights, child support, and remarriage issues.

The author addresses the issues of single parents with concise examples, clarity, and the ability to convey hope using Jeremiah 29:11 as a theme verse. The bibliography is extensive and includes additional resources by subject, such as stress, loneliness, and depression. Gail Welborn

800’s —Literature


L’Engle, Madeleine—Criticism and interpretation; Christianity and literature—United States—History—20th century; Christian literature, American—History and criticism; Women and literature—United States—History—20th century. 249 p. Gr. 11 - Adult.

Quality - 4 Acceptability - 4

In this book editor Luci Shaw has collected sixteen essays by Christian writers to celebrate Madeleine L’Engle’s 80th birthday. L’Engle is a prolific author in several genres—non-fiction, both adult and children’s fiction, and poetry. She has been criticised by some elements of the Christian community, but has provided inspiration to others. This book is a tribute to her status as a Christian woman of letters.

Some of the essays deal with L’Engle directly, others only tangentially by virtue of her influence. The subjects are as diverse as the authors (who include Eugene Peterson, Robert Siegel, Calvin Miller, and Walter Wangerin, to name four)—and range from St. Patrick and the Celtic Church, through poets Herbert, Hopkins and Vaughan, to the use of story to communicate truth and taking the Bible seriously.

A danger in assembling such a collection is to ensure both a high quality of submissions and lack of repetition. In this, Luci Shaw has succeeded admirably. Whether discussing questions of L’Engle’s theology, or Binyan’s use of allegory, the authors achieve a high standard. The essays are all well-written and eminently readable.

While this book should appeal to L’Engle’s fans (for insights into L’Engle), it will also be appreciated by those who enjoy Christian literature in general. There is one use of the word ‘damn’ in a poem. Andrew Seddon

900’s - Geography, History, and Biography


090.7. Crusades; Fourth Crusade; Constantinople; Robert of Clari. Gr. 11 - Adult.

Quality - 5 Acceptability - 5

Our knowledge of the crusades is often gleaned from dry history texts, which provide second- and third-hand accounts of events, passed down and tidied up by scribes and scholars. The Conquest of Constantinople, on the other hand, was written by one who was actually there; it is a translation of a first-hand account, written by Robert of Clari, a French knight who served under Pierre of Amiens in what is now referred to as the Fourth Crusade.

Edgar McNeal has taken great pains to ensure that his translation is faithful to the original. The language is unsophisticated, and sometimes repetitive, reflecting Clari’s education, which was standard for his time, and his class. For example, he uses the past and present tense interchangeably. His style is still rooted in the oral tradition, and his words are those of a man unaccustomed to expressing himself in the written word.

The narrative opens with a description of the preparations for the journey, then follows the crusaders as they sail from Venice to Constantinople. Clari is part observer and part tourist; he embarks on several extensive sidebars, often making reference to historic figures and events which are fully footnoted by McNeal. There is no distinction made between legend and fact, which are combined in one seamless fabric. In the same way, orthodox religious beliefs are blended with what would today be considered superstition.

McNeal provides an extensive introduction, which examines the veracity, quality, and transmission of the text, as well as the integrity of its original author. The appendix provides a description of the fleet and its forces, and the bibliography is comprehensive and multi-lingual.

An excellent index and a map of the Constantinople of 1203 A.D. complete this fascinating look at history, and at those who lived it. Sylvia Stopforth


Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

Translated from Laszlo G. Terray from the original German edition, He Could Not Do Otherwise is the story of Lajos Ordass, the Hungarian Lutheran bishop who stood up against Nazism and Communism during and after World War II.

While the book tells about personal life of Ordass from his birth, the majority of it is about the details of the Lutheran church and the political maneuvering that went on behind the scenes when pressure was being put on them by the government.

Though the style is rather stilted in some places owing to the translation, and the foreign names and detailed facts make some of the reading laborious, this book is a treasure store of information on the history of the Lutheran church in Hungary.

Because of his unwillingness to compromise his convictions to a tyrannical, ungodly government makes the life of Bishop Ordass an inspiration to the Christian world. Esther Knaupp


092 (791.43). Motion pictures—Biography; Christian biography. 387 p. Gr. 10 - Adult.

Quality - 3 Acceptability - 5

The power and wealth of the corporate movie industry is something the average person will never see nor experience. Yet we all have experienced the final by-product: the feature length film. Larry Vaughn spent his entire career as a citizen of the film industry micro-culture. From a youngster spending the weekend at the neighborhood movie theater to becoming a key player in one of the country’s most powerful theater chains, The Reel Story tells of a personal journey from the worldly to the spiritual.

In the midst of the author’s climb up the corporate ladder he is introduced to a personal Savior through the loving loyalty of a friend. And his life is never the same. His desire to tell everyone of his Lord inevitably leads to a conflict of values. The conflict and the manner in which
he deals with it typifies the problem of living your faith in a world operating on a different agenda.

Besides the change which the Spirit brings to executive Larry Vaughn, we’re also privileged to witness the change that occurs in family man Larry Vaughn. As in the business world, his personal journey chronicles great joy, great tragedy, and triumphs of faith in Christ’s love and power.

The Reel Story is written in an easy to read style which gives the reader a feeling of hearing Mr. Vaughn’s story one on one. The book is peppered with photos of the author with various entertainment celebrities. The book would be more effective if the photos had been left out.

Throughout his career Mr. Vaughn was eager and bold in sharing his faith. His book is bold in now sharing that faith outside the corporate movie industry. Truly, once you’ve met the Savior, you will be changed. Carol Shearer


C.S. Lewis is well known in many Christian denominations as having been a staunch apologist for the Christian faith. As this book points out, he was equally effective as an evangelist—an aspect of his life and writing which is often not appreciated. Menuge has assembled a series of essays exploring the way in which Lewis communicated the Faith to those outside.

Lewis was effective for several reasons—his journey into faith, his ability to reason logically, his humility, his understanding of modernism (and presence of post-modernism). Lewis can be considered as a type of John the Baptist—laying the groundwork for the coming Gospel of Christ. He possessed an ability to explain Christianity in a way both Christians and non-Christians could understand. Overly in his non-fiction and more subtly in his fiction, he engaged in praeparatio evangelica.

Perhaps inevitably in a book of this nature, assembled with contributions from a number of Lewis scholars, there is some overlap and repetition. But the essays are well-written and informative. Both those familiar with Lewis’ writings or, like myself, who haven’t read his books for years, will benefit from the insights contained in these essays. For those interested in presenting the Christian message in story form, there are many ‘tips’ from examination of Lewis’ techniques. The authors go beyond mere criticism and analysis of Lewis to present insight into the Christian life and witness itself. Andrew Seddon


Red Runs the River takes a look at the spiritual journey of General Ewell and of those under his command. The scenery and costumes appear realistic enough; but the characters themselves are not developed enough that viewers empathize or feel with their plights. The story includes numerous camp songs sung by the actors and a mix of jokes and comedy rounds out the dramatic theme of the story. Michele Howe
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