LIBRARY SCIENCE & INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

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Spring Book Review

**Book lovers** – including librarians, professors, teachers, and students – convene for the biannual Book Review Session, in spring and fall, hosted by the Department of Library Science and Instructional Technology at Kutztown University. These energetic gatherings culminate in a selection of books to be reviewed by the attendees. The result of this process is the collection of reviews you hold in your hands.

To the publishers who generously contribute books, year after year, and the reviewers on the following pages...

**Thank you for your time and effort!**
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All Books are Alphabetized by Author’s Last Name
**Things That Float and Things That Don’t**


Have you even wondered why some things float and some don’t? Elementary students will thoroughly enjoy the engaging pictures and thoughtful explanations this book provides for that very question. The book begins by exploring an often confusing concept by asking readers to consider why a boat filled with people will float, while a small pebble thrown into that same water will sink. With this focus question in mind, the book encourages the use of inquiry by illustrating some suggestions to test this idea with household objects. A chart depicting the recording of simple data further sparks young minds to use their inquiry skills to examine this question on their own. Artful questioning scattered with scientific clarity provides a sound base for readers to understand why objects in liquid behave in different ways. Several key science vocabulary terms are highlighted and introduced providing a great springboard for more in-depth coverage. This book is a great example of how to weave inquiry, literacy, and non-fiction into one delightful piece. It is recommended as a key non-fiction book for any elementary classroom, school library, or public library.

*Picture Book; Non-fiction*  
Krista G. Varano, Elementary Education Professor, Kutztown University

**Horrors of History: City of the Dead**


Hurricanes are one of the most destructive forces in nature, and one of the most horrifying. In this fictional novel based on true events, a group of people in Galveston, Texas must deal with the aftermath of a hurricane that hit during the month of September in 1900. In the prologue, a reporter is witness to the results of the hurricane. Dead bodies floating in the water, a group of men pulling deceased children from the sand, and houses burning are only a few of the horrors that the reporter is witness to. Each of the ten chapters details particular time-frames during which the hurricane hit and afterwards. The story revolves around five main characters that actually lived and a sixth fictional character. Sprinkled throughout the text are real photographs of the outcome of the hurricane, and of people that lived in Galveston. The photographs give the reader a realistic sense of the story being told. Not for the squeamish, or the faint-of-heart, City of the Dead gives a more heart-wrenching narrative of the event than a purely non-fiction story might. The history-buff or a young person with a fascination for disasters would be particularly interested in this title and the others that will be within the Horrors of History series. This book would be more appropriate for a mature audience, ages ten and up.

*Historical Fiction*  
Meagan Blount, Senior, Kutztown University
Scholastic Discover More: Reptiles

The Scholastic Discover More Series is a great resource to have in the classroom and at home, and Reptiles does not disappoint. The book is easy and fun to navigate with a table of contents in the front and a glossary in the back. It starts off with general characteristics of reptiles and is then divided into two categories: snakes and lizards, and crocodilians and turtles. For almost every piece of information written there is an amazing picture to go with it. For example, Arlon and Gordon talk about the hairy feet of geckos, and with that they show six pictures of enlarged gecko feet. The pictures enhance the information given and will appeal to both boys and girls. At the end of the book there is a section on how to help save the sea turtles, and also an interview with Steve Backshall (an explorer, author, host of a wildlife show, and reptile enthusiast). Another appealing feature is the free digital book that comes with this: the reader just has to plug a code into the computer and can further their reading on reptiles. This one specifically talks about reptile attacks, and comes with quizzes and videos along with more characteristics of reptiles. This piece of nonfiction will excite its readers and spark their interest in reptiles.

Nonfiction

Andrea Siegfried

Scholastic Discover More: Weather

This book is a must have for weather related information for children. It begins with an explanation about weather and what it is. Each page has a heading at the top for the topic on the pages. Many photographs are included to show visual examples of the extreme weather conditions that occur on Earth. The book is organized well to make it a quick reference for children to use if they want to learn more about a specific weather related topic. There are three sections focusing on different aspects of weather. The Table of Contents includes the sections and the headings for each page by topic. Looking at text features, there is also an index and glossary included in this book. Most of the text is written as captions with a picture to describe and inform about the topic. Short text segments and many colorful photographs will grab a child’s attention in this book. Interesting facts and statistics are scattered throughout. Scholastic also features a digital companion book to supplement this series of books and the code is given on the first pages of the book.

Picture Book, Nonfiction

Tiffany Yehl, Teacher, PA Leadership Charter School
Best Foot Forward: Exploring Feet, Flippers and Claws

Animals use their feet to accomplish a wide variety of tasks: walking, climbing, gripping, pinching, swimming, digging and jumping. Feet have adapted to these uses in extraordinary ways. Arndt presents a wide variety of feet through gorgeously detailed photographs of the undersides of feet. Organized by how the foot is used, the text opens with a double-page spread of the bottom of a tiger’s paw, with the text, “Whose foot is this?” Every wrinkle in each pad is visible. Just enough fur is visible to allow readers who look closely to identify it as a tiger’s paw. The page turn reveals a clear color photo of a tiger, along with four smaller photos of other animal feet used to walk. Each photo is accompanied by text that identifies the animal and gives a fact or two about how the foot is used. Backmatter includes an index and a photo of the author’s own foot! Originally published in Germany in 2007, the American edition was translated by J. Alison James. While the text is not detailed enough for research, the photos are fascinating. Children who enjoy informational books about animals will find much to love about this selection.

Nonfiction

Stephanie Gibson, Librarian, Montessori Acad. of Lancaster

Zombie Baseball Beatdown

One Word: Zombie Cows! Rabi, Miguel, and Joe are three friends who all play for the Delbe, Iowa little league baseball team. Miguel’s aunt and uncle, both illegal aliens, are evacuated suddenly from while working at the local meat packing plant. Clearly the owners of the plant are trying to hide something. Miguel’s aunt and uncle will not tell anyone what is going on so Rabi, Miguel, and Joe set out to discover the truth for themselves. The boys find out that the plant is producing zombie cows and unwittingly creating a zombie apocalypse. The book is a little slow at the beginning but action is very fast pace and the book is a pretty quick read. The book also has a great message as well. Rabi is Indian and Miguel is Hispanic. Both boys live in a rural, small town in Iowa. The book attempts to explain the discrimination facing minorities as well as illegal aliens in America. This book is great for a lesson on cultural diversity and respecting others. Get ready to grab you bats, the zombie cows are coming!

Horror

Andrew Boyer, State Employee

I Have a Garden

A little white dog goes from page to page exploring in his garden. He finds a frog, a bird, a chipmunk, a bug, a bee, a butterfly, a snail, and many, many flowers. Seeing this community of creatures, he realizes that it is not his garden but everyone’s garden. I Have a Garden teaches a nice lesson that we are all a part of this world, and it belongs to all of us. The illustrations in this book are very vibrant and colorful. The technique uses a combination of paper collage, gouache, pastel, and pencil. The literacy of the text is appropriate for pre-kindergarten through second grade. Given this, the words are too simplistic for older children. The substance is a little lacking that even first and second graders may not be interested passed the first reading. This book could be used together with other books in a school curriculum or a public library program for a lesson on gardens, nature appreciation, or group unity.

Picture Book

Rebecca Rosato, Student, Kutztown University
The Nazi Hunters

After World War II ended, many Nazis were put on trial for the war crimes they had committed against the Jewish people. Unfortunately, some Nazis had managed to avoid capture and fled Germany so that they would not be put on trial. *The Nazi Hunters* by Neal Bascomb is a nonfiction account of how a high-ranking Nazi, Adolf Eichmann, was brought to justice after he escaped capture by the Allies in 1945. The team of Nazi Hunters would get leads that supported the fact that Eichmann was in Argentina, but they could never prove that the leads were true. Eventually, a girl named Sylvia was able to identify Eichmann in his home, which reopened the case. People surveyed Eichmann’s home to confirm that it was him before beginning an operation to capture and take him to Israel for trial. Once Eichmann’s identity was confirmed, the team of Nazi hunters needed to carry out their plan to capture him without the knowledge of the Argentinian government. Many things could have gone wrong with their plan, but they were able to capture Eichmann and get him on a plane to Israel for his trial.

*The Nazi Hunters* would be a great read for anyone interested in the Holocaust. This book reads more like a story then nonfiction account. The plans that the people come up with are detailed, and it is clear that Bascomb researched the topic of his book thoroughly. Throughout the novel photographs, and documents support the text, and make it more interesting to read. In addition to the pictures and documents there are also an index, chapter notes, and a list of participants to help the reader understand the book. However, even with the list of participants it can be hard to keep track of who the people are and what they do because how many names are in this book. *The Nazi Hunters* would be best suited for readers thirteen and up that have previous knowledge about World War II and the Holocaust.

Helen Keller’s Best Friend Belle

The story of Helen Keller’s life is shared through the relationship she had with one of her favorite dogs, Belle. Readers learn about Helen Keller’s incredible struggle to learn to read and speak that was, to some degree, enhanced by her desire to communicate with her beloved pet. In a more detailed biography that follows the story, readers will learn that animals figured strongly in Keller’s life for their unconditional love and companionship, and their seeming understanding of her limitations. For young readers, Barry’s version of Helen Keller’s inspirational story is fascinating in and of itself. The author makes this story more personal for readers, by showing this connection between Keller’s determination to overcome her disabilities and the relationship she shared with her furry companion. This book offers multiple uses, as a good read aloud for introducing biography to K-2, as a reference source for intermediate readers, or simply as a human interest story about compassion and perseverance.

**Nonfiction**  
Samantha Heck, Student, Kutztown University

**Biography/Picture Book**  
Kristine Seibert, Librarian, 10th & Green Elementary
**Hidden New Jersey**


This interactive journey through New Jersey is based on the history and geography of each section of the state. The book takes a child from the coast of Jersey to the inlands all the while giving interesting and informative facts about the state. Mitchell does an excellent job bringing New Jersey to life on these pages. The eye catching illustrations will keep any child interested. In addition, there is a fun hidden image game on each page making this book both interactive and educational. The downfalls of this book are that there are a few inconsistencies. The rhyming at times is a bit off and there is an inconsistency with numbers of certain things. This book is good for an elementary library or classroom. It is a great way to introduce the different states and use as a jumping off place for further discussion about other states.

*Non-Fiction*  
*Brittany Lee, Student, Kutztown University*

**The Demon Catchers of Milan**


A young girl’s life is interrupted after she is possessed by a demon that has been haunting her family for generations. To stay safe she must move to Milan, Italy, to be surrounded by her family. Along the way she learns more about herself, her family, and their family trade. The book is intriguing with a bit of a cliffhanger, lending itself well to a sequel.

*Fiction*  
*Gwen Fisher, Library Science Student, Kutztown University*

**Vampire School: Stage Fright**


This is the third book in this series for young readers. It was a cute story, but nothing special. Lee Price is the main character of these series, and he is a vampire, as are most of his friends, though other monsters are mentioned. Bella the vampire gets sick and is unable to sing in the vampire school’s “phantomime” performance of *Snow Fright and the Seven Dwarves*. What are Lee and his teacher, Mrs. Gargoyle, going to do? I’ll not spoil it, but read to find out! Overall this is a good book to have in your library. I could see it being some child’s favorite book, yet it’s not maybe going to be well received by every child who picks it up. The story took a while to get going. The illustrations are cute, and make it an enjoyable read.

*Chapter Book*  
*Sarah Camus, Alumna, Kutztown University*
Santa Retires
Gr. Pre K-3.
This colorful and engaging picture book tells the story of Santa, who gets tired of delivering presents. He admits that he likes to help make the toys, but the delivery process is beginning to become quite bothersome. He decides to take a little vacation, and after enjoying himself so much on Mistletoe Island, he extends his stay indefinitely. When the reindeer find out that Santa has retired, they do not take the news very well. After a while, Santa begins to miss many of the things about the North Pole. His sandmen are just not the same as snowmen, and surfing is not quite like sledding. He returns to the North Pole to find that everything has shut down without him! Santa and Mrs. Clause roll up their sleeves and get the North Pole back in tip-top shape. Santa is now happy to deliver all the presents, but decides to take a vacation every year after the holiday season. This story is a refreshing new twist on such a traditional concept. Children of all ages will enjoy hearing about how Santa gets overwhelmed with his responsibilities and needs a beach vacation.

*Picture Book; Fantasy*  
*Kara Solt, Graduate Student, Kutztown University*

Fox Forgets
Gr. PreK-1.
Bloom’s loveable characters, Goose, Bear, and Fox are back for another adventure. The story begins with some illustrations on the end papers. Fox is busy playing with his toys and forgets to tell Bear that Goose left, but will be right back. Bear is worried and wants to look for Goose while Fox is trying to distract him with games. Bear is not focused on the game so Fox wins. Fox doesn’t remember to tell Bear about Goose’s disappearance until Goose returns. The story ends when Goose arrives and everyone gathers in a group hug. The author reminds readers that everyone forgets at some point, even the author who writes reminder lists. The pastel illustrations and simple text make this a great read aloud for young beginner readers. This book would be useful when teaching young children to the importance of paying attention and listening when others are speaking. *Fox Forgets* is a great addition to the Goose and Bear books but if teachers are limited in time when presenting Bloom’s books *A Splendid Friend Indeed* would be a better example of her work.

*Picture Book*  
*Sara Meitzler, Circulation Manager, Lower Macungie Library*

The Frazzle Family Finds a Way
All members of the Frazzle family are very forgetful. They cannot remember anything no matter how much they try. It takes a musical trick to help them to remember all the things they once forgot, like pants. I think this book would be a great tool for teaching children that forgetting things once and while is okay, or that pneumonic devices are a great tool for remembering.

*Picture Book*  
*Gwen Fisher, Library Science Student, Kutztown University*
Radio Girl
All Cecelia wants to do is break into the radio scene during the Great Depression. Too bad her mother, an ex-dancer, doesn’t think her 14 year old daughter should get mixed up in the business, even though her father is a well-known radio sound engineer. This doesn’t stop her from successfully getting a job at CBS studios through her stubborn perseverance and well-tuned voice. This is a story of a young girl with big dreams, rocky family relationships, friendships, and the panic a simple Halloween radio broadcast of “War of the Worlds” can bring to the New Jersey residents. The author is able to convey the time period of 1938 in the phrases and slang used in the text and through the references from her father-in-law who lived during the famous Welles broadcast. Brendler makes a working radio station an exciting place as it was in the 1930s by explaining through Cece the tricks of the trade behind the sound engineering and roles needed at the CBS studio during the high times before World War II. Yet she is also able to convey the hard times that the depression brought to many people with the desperate hopefuls hoping to get a job at the station as a performer and just how important a single seven dollar whistling gig was to Cece and her family. Getting a look at the “War of the Worlds” famous freakout from the eyes of Cece is a delight and a cleverly planned twist is a big surprise in the plot that changes many important things. This book is recommended for the middle school aged reader.

Chapter Book; History

Sara Moyer, Library Assistant, Yocum Library at Reading Area Community College

The Dinosaur Tooth Fairy
The Dinosaur Tooth Fairy has gone centuries without adding a new tooth to her collect because all of her sources have gone extinct. She now dwells inside a museum polishing her collection of dinosaur teeth. She is lonely and knows she must add to her collection when suddenly a young girl loses a tooth. Determined to add the tiny tooth to her collection, the Dinosaur Tooth Fairy follows the girl and faces several unique nod amusing challenges, including her nemesis, the Human Tooth Fairy! The text is appropriate for grade and interest level, other than some tough dinosaur names. The silly conflicts and bright illustrations make this book a surprisingly amusing read.

Fantasy; Picture Book

Mandalee Flannery, Student, Kutztown University
**Star Wars: Jedi Academy**  
$12.99. Gr. 7-1

Roan wanted to follow in his grandpa's, fathers, and older brother's footsteps to become a Starfighter pilot. Unfortunately he was rejected by the Academy so his only option left was the Agricultural middle school on Tatooine. But, later Roan gets invited to attend the Jedi Academy. What awaits him there are the usual middle school activities; dealing with bullies, getting a crush, tests in history and alien languages, building a light-saber, learning the force, and going on a class field trip to the Wookie planet. This is a graphic/journal style novel for the middle school age group. It deals with bullies, adventures with new friends, how to handle bad grades or disappointments and how to overcome them. Brown is able to tell this story through the setting and universe of Star Wars. The art is the same as his other two books, *Darth Vader and Son* and *Star Wars: Vader's Little Princess*, in a cartoon style. The story is told through written journal entries, comic strip panels, and various pamphlets, posters, photos, tests, and class schedules. Brown also encourages the reader to start their own journal with their own creative touch. Any young or old Star Wars fan will enjoy this book.

*Graphic Novel; Science Fiction*  
Sara Moyer, Library Assistant, Yocum Library at Reading Area Community College

**Marisol McDonald and the Clash Bash/Marisol McDonald y la Fiesta Sin Igual**  

As readers learned in Brown’s first book about Marisol McDonald, *Marisol McDonald Doesn’t Match*, Marisol reveals in being different. She is a Peruvian Scottish American girl who wears delightfully mismatched clothes and owns a puppy named Kitty. In this sequel, Marisol is preparing for her eighth birthday, but she has two problems. First, she cannot decide whether the party should be a soccer, pirate, princess, or unicorn party. More seriously, her beloved Abuelita, whom she has not seen in two years, may not be able to get a visa to travel from Peru for the party. Both problems are creatively resolved, resulting in a wonderful birthday. Palacios’ digitally enhanced, mixed-media illustrations are a terrific expression of Marisol’s energetic personality. Published in a bilingual edition, the story is a great addition to multicultural collections. An author’s note fills readers in on the inspiration for Marisol’s story. Marisol is an endearing and relatable character and is sure to find fans among children of any stripe: those who match and those who do not.

*Picture Book*  
Stephanie Gibson, Librarian, Montessori Acad. of Lancaster

**Killer of Enemies**  

In Killer of Enemies, we meet Lozen, a monster hunter in a dystopian world set in a not so distant future. Her family is being held captive by The Ones, and she needs to do their bidding if she wants to save the lives of her mother and her two siblings. The Ones want her to hunt their former pets, genetically engineered monsters that now hunt them for food. Lozen uses her skills as a tracker and hunter to track and kill these vicious beasts. Her Native American background tells the tales of hunters that took in the energy of their kills, and with each monster, her power grows. This story is well written and well paced, though younger readers may be a little frustrated by the complex vocabulary. Lozen is a strong female lead, and readers who enjoyed The Hunger Games and Divergent may enjoy this story more than others.

*Young Adult; Fantasy*  
Erin Ilch, Kutztown University Student
The Cart that Carried Martin

Sometimes picture books are written more for adults than for children. This is one such book. What child living today can understand the simple symbol the cart held or the importance of what it carried through the streets of the sobbing city of Atlanta? Can children understand the need for people to crowd around the cart just to catch a glimpse in order to help heal their own heart? No. Adults must walk children page-by-page, image-by-image through this text to transfer the message of the MLK’s death to the next generation. The heaviness in the eyes of the people singing in Ebenezer Baptist Church, the widow following behind, the two mules pulling the cart through the streets all pointing to the significance of this monumental funeral that Bunting grasps in simple text. Tate’s watercolors bring a powerful hope to this text as he also presents the sorrow and shock of the memories. Many in the adult community will not be able to walk away from this children’s book without their hearts singing, “We shall overcome some day.”

*Picture Book; Nonfiction*  
Nancy E. Cardenuto, Asst. Prof., Kutztown University

Stains-Saëns’s Danse Macabre

Composer Camille Saint-Saëns makes a visits the eerie catacombs below the lively Parisian streets of 1872 in search of inspiration. For weeks Camille is bewitched and enchanted by his experience at in the catacombs. Imagining skeletons doing an animated and spooky dance he composes a chilling song but no one else seems to appreciate his vision. The stubborn composer works tirelessly to capture his interpretation of Maestro Death and the dancing skeletons. Finally he decides to discard his lyrics and create a whole new composition written only for instruments, a boisterous waltz of prancing skeletons. His celebrated and chilling masterpiece becomes known as *Danse macabre*. The author pulls together some interesting facts from the conception of Saint-Saëns’s musical masterpiece and surrounding artistic endeavors to create a fanciful imagining of Saint-Saëns’s creation of the piece. The text uses some hearty words that are sure to be challenging for young readers to grasp. The watercolor illustrations are fittingly ghoulish but also rather bright keeping them from being frightening. Included with the book is a CD recording of Saint-Saëns’s *Danse Macabre* performed by the Pittsburgh Symphony in 1996. Music teachers will love to use this wonderful picture book to introduce students to a classical composer and his most famous piece.

*Biography; Picture Book*  
Mandalee Flannery, Student, Kutztown University
Gaby, Lost and Found

When a story goes beyond engaging thought and evokes emotion, it leaves a lasting imprint in one’s memory. This is such a story. Eleven-year-old Gaby is a typical, ordinary girl who attends sixth grade at St. Ann’s private school. Her best friend, Alma, along with two other good friends, Marcos and Enrique, established their friendships as young children playing in the same neighborhood. Uniqueness is revealed as the story unfolds: Gaby’s Honduran mother has been deported back to her native country because she was living and working in America illegally. Her blond, blue-eyed father who has been absent in her life since Gaby was about five years old, now has custody of her, even though he is seldom around and knows not how to be a father. As a class project, Gaby and her classmates volunteer at the Furry Friends Animal Shelter. Like her mother, Gaby has an affinity for cats and is drawn to a malnourished stray named “Feather.” The plot is described by the book’s title – Gaby’s broken home life, also reflected in that of the dogs and cats at the shelter, is slowly turned around for the better. The human-human bonds are understood through the portrayal of human-animal bonds; indeed, the most heart-wrenching moments are elicited when reading Gaby’s shelter animal profiles, scattered throughout the story, that she wrote for flyers to encourage animal adoption. An emotional climax occurs when Gaby’s father reads a profile she wrote privately for herself. Themes of community, parenting, bullying, illegal immigration, and love are explored in this book and not always exclusively in relation to two-legged creatures! If you are interested in a tear-inducing, poignant story with an uplifting, hopeful ending, this story’s for you.

Chapter Book Gayle R. Heath. Library Director, Tamaqua Public Library

Pick a Circle, Gather Squares: A Fall Harvest of Shapes

Chernesky takes readers on a visit to the pumpkin patch to hunt for the varied shapes that define the autumn season. Simple rhyming text is used to describe the shapes that can be found amidst the scenery at a farm on an “apple crisp October day.” Oval eggs, rectangular bales of hay, and even hexagonal chicken wire are a few of the shapes to be discovered. Swan’s colorfully detailed collage style illustrations invite an opportunity for kids to study the pictures carefully in search of the shapes that are depicted. While the story would be an enjoyable fall read aloud, the amount of detail might make it challenging for kids to find the objects unless they are sitting close by. No doubt readers will want to check this out for a firsthand closer look.

Picture Book Kristine Seibert, Librarian, 10th & Green Elementary

Breezier, Cheesier, Newest, and Bluest

Cleary continues to collaborate with Gable in another title for their Words are Categorical series. Comparatives and superlatives that follow the standard rules, along with those that are atypical and do not conform to the rules, are easily explained with rhymes and comical illustrations. A chart with the rules on how to form comparatives and superlatives is at the end of the book.

Non-Fiction, Grammar Sharon Breeden, Kutztown Graduate
But and For, Yet and Nor: What is a Conjunction?

This book is a short, fun story to help children learn what conjunctions are and how they are used. The story starts off with a definition of conjunctions on the first page and continues with a list of conjunctions. Examples of how conjunctions are used and what their purpose is in a sentence are scattered in an organized way throughout the book. A great feature is that all of the conjunctions used throughout the story are in various colored font while the other text is just in black. The slight rhyming pattern and short easy sentences make this a light and fun read for students without listing rules of conjunctions. Cleary touches on all main uses of conjunctions in sentences with numerous examples. Illustrations all match the sentences, making this an entertaining read as well. This book is part of the series Words are CATegorical and would be a great addition to any grammar lesson or nonfiction library.

Nonfiction, Picture Book

Tiffany Yehl, Teacher, PA Leadership Charter School

Job Site

Clement as both author and illustrator describes the daily operations at a busy construction site. Very simple text makes this a great read aloud or an easy read for beginners, who will marvel at the big, bold pictures of front loaders, bulldozers and cement mixers. There is plenty of action, and the text provides a good opportunity for teaching verbs. Construction vehicles and heavy equipment operators level, dig, scoop and dump. The illustrations offer interesting perspectives that will give readers a sense of the immensity of these trucks. Job Site offers lots of fun, all in a day’s work.

Picture Book

Kristine Seibert, Librarian, 10th & Green Elementary

Speed

Start—Your—Engines! Get ready for a high-speed adventure not unlike that of the Indianapolis-500 automobile race. Speed is a beginning reader’s introduction to car racing. A helpful illustration in the beginning of the book explains the different colored flags used in car races and their meanings. The other purpose of the book is to take a look at the world of your imagination. A play-by-play of a fast-paced car race is offered to the reader. Clement uses vivid descriptions and details to illustrate the action of the race, such as the revving of engines, the pit stops, the crashes and clean-ups, and the final crossing of the finish line. Just as the winning car crosses the finish line, there is a mysterious appearance of a hand in the computer-rendered illustrations that changes the pace of the story. The final page of the book brings it back to real-life as the reader finds out that a young boy is only dreaming of the professional car race while he is simply playing with his toy cars. He let his imagination take him somewhere fantastic. This ability to suspend disbelief is a strong feature of the author. Speed is a highly entertaining beginner’s book that is sure to appeal to a large demographic.

Picture Book; Sports

Rebecca Rosato, Student, Kutztown University
Year of the Jungle
When Suzy's dad gets drafted into the Vietnam War, Suzy has a lot of questions. She talks to grownups and finds out that her father will be in a jungle. At first, she pictures a happy jungle. As she goes through a year of school and holidays without him, she becomes more and more worried. One day, she sees live war footage on the TV, and she finally realizes the truth of the situation! However, her dad makes it home in the end. Based on the author's childhood, this would be a perfect talking point for children or even teens about the Vietnam War or war in general. The illustrations follow Suzy's ideas of war, starting with a happy jungle, to a scary jungle, to tanks and guns, to her father safely home. This is a powerful book for children and adults alike.

*Picture Book*  
Christine Weida, Library Clerk, Kutztown Community Library

Train
Take a trip across the country on a changing assortment of modern trains. Starting with a commuter train in New York City, the reader gets an up-close, detailed view of both the inside and outside of the train as it speeds west. The journey continues with a passenger train, a freight train, an overnight train and a high-speed train that arrives at the final destination: San Francisco. Elegant watercolor illustrations bring to life train stations, rail yards, dining cars, and the changing landscape of the United States. In one particularly effective double page spread, you can practically hear the freight train chugging across the Great Plains. Informative text matches the illustrations perfectly. Backmatter includes a glossary and short author’s note. This title will have huge appeal for train lovers. Even those readers who are not passionate about trains will find themselves drawn to this offering. Pair with Brain Floca’s 2013 title *Locomotive* to compare transcontinental travel in the past with train travel today. Highly recommended.

*Picture Book; Fiction*  
Stephanie Gibson, Librarian, Montessori Acad. of Lancaster

Hoop Genius: How a Desperate Teacher and a Rowdy Gym Class Invented Basketball
The game of basketball is played all over the world in one form or another, but how was it started? It all began in 1891 with James Naismith, a gym teacher, and his rowdy class. He tried to find a game that would excite the boys and decrease the amount of injuries. The answer to that was a version of the game of Duck on a Rock that became what the world knows as basketball. Coy is able to tell this story through Morse's creative artistic flair. The author includes the original rules of the game on the front and back pages of the book. The art is fun and playful yet informative in an acrylic painting style. The author's note includes biographical information for James Naismith and the resources he used for his research including a bibliography. This is a fun informational/history book for upper elementary level readers.

*Picture Book; History*  
Sara Moyer, Library Assistant, Yocum Library at Reading Area Community College
Pinch and Dash and the Terrible Couch

Pinch and Dash have been friends for a while. They do a lot together and they help each other when times get rough. But when Pinch receives a new couch from his Aunt, he doesn’t know what to do. He hates everything about this couch plus he already has a couch! What is he to do with this one? So Dash helps Pinch push and shove this horrible couch into Pinch’s living room. Not to mention that movers already shoved this couch into the house named Push and Shove. This endearing book is perfect for students who are beginning to read and love witty comments. It is very similar to the Frog and Toad series and will encourage the students to read because it looks like a large chapter book while it is still on their level. This would be perfect for the classroom or library.

Kaitlyn Verdon, Student, Kutztown University

Pinch and Dash Make Soup

Pinch and Dash are very good friends. They help each other and they have a lot of fun together. One day Pinch is very very hungry but also very very lazy. He wants to make a pot of soup but he doesn’t feel like it. Dash, on the other hand, is a great cook! But he doesn’t put enough pepper or hot sauce in his soup. So Pinch and Dash get together to try and make the perfect pot of soup. But since Pinch likes his soup with a little kick to it and Dash doesn’t put enough into his, these two friends might make this soup experience a bit tough. They begin this adventure like true friends and add cheese and potatoes and spinach. But then the bickering begins because it is not spicy enough. When Dash leaves the room for a quick minute, Pinch tries to make some adjustments. This book is witty and wonderful for students who are beginning to read and who love to laugh. It would be a wonderful addition to any classroom or library.

Kaitlyn Verdon, Student, Kutztown University

TouchThinkLearn: Colors

Apples are red, Bears are brown and whales are blue! *Colors* helps children who are just beginning to recognize color while helping them associate each color to a different object. The book is made of a sturdy cardboard making it great for young children handling it as well as long term use as well as each example is a raised additional layer inside the book that rests inside an indent giving the book touchable texture and a 3D likeness. This book comes across as a bit unorthodox in teaching color because it does not follow the ROYGBIV format instead the colors go completely out of order, while this may help children actually learn the colors instead of just repeating back it might also confuse children. *Colors* even mentions black and white, both are often left out of most books informing on color once again showing an unorthodox approach but not necessarily a bad one.

Sara Fiorenza, Student, Kutztown University
A Gold Star for Zog

Zog is a dragon and is very good at school, but he is also the most prone to getting into an accident. Through his adventures in school he meets a wonderful princess, who he was supposed to capture, while she tends to his injuries from when he fell from the sky. With this princess the dragon school is transformed. She meets a wonderful prince who wants to be a doctor. Zog and the princess then travel the world to help people.

Picture Book
Gwen Fisher, Library Science Student, Kutztown University

The Santa Trap

What is your favorite Christmas present you ever received from Santa Claus? Well, all mean, rotten Bradley Bartleby ever gets from Santa Claus is socks. Bradley decides one year to trap Santa and steal all of the presents. He spends the entire year training tigers, rigging the chimney with dynamite, and even booby trapping his stocking with a cage that will drop down if someone touches it. Christmas Eve comes and Bradley waits, and waits, and waits. Bradley lights a fire to keep warm, but forgets about the dynamite. This sets off a hilarious chain of events that ends in Bradley getting caught in his own Santa trap. Does Bradley end up getting more than socks for Christmas this year? Read “The Santa Trap to find out. The illustrations in the book are very well done. The colors really pop off the page. The reader can really tell how bad Bradley Bartleby is just from looking at him. The story is very funny, but it also teaches a great message about selfishness and being kind to others.

Picture Book, Fiction
Andrew Boyer, State Employee

Danny Who Fell in a Hole

Danny is a kid stuck in a strange situation. His parents want to take time apart to pursue their own interests. His mother wants to bake cheesecakes in Banff and his father wants to act on Broadway. Danny doesn't want to be forced to live two lives in two different places. Danny decides to run away and can you guess what happens? He falls in a hole. To survive, Danny creates shelter and food out of random objects from ever useful backpack. Danny finds out that his new temporary home is not uninhabited. A mole, surprising named Mole, shares his hole. The two become good friends, learns about each other's world, and Danny even saves Mole's life from a snake. This book is a great read for a struggling reader because it is easy to understand, and is a quick read. The 96 page book can be read about one and a half hours. I thoroughly enjoyed this book.

Fantasy
Andrew Boyer, State Employee
**Oy, Feh, So?**

When Aunt Essy, Aunt Chanah and Uncle Sam come to visit they always say the same thing; Oy, Feh, So? Their niece and nephews have heard enough and want them to say something else but it’s going to take a lot more than dragons and alien abductions before they feel like talking. This book had a great storyline with a heartwarming ending that many kids, aunts and uncles can enjoy together. The illustrations were a bit off-putting but the idea behind everything was so sweet that it could be looked past. The cover of the book is very plain and will probably not catch the attention of a child so this book would more likely circulate if it were on display for a while. While it was a quick read parents might want to be there to help children with some of the more difficult words.

*Picture Book: Humor*  
*Sara Fiorenza, Student, Kutztown University*

**Scare Scape**

*Scare Scape* has trouble holding the attention of the reader in the beginning of the book as it moves slowly and is a bit misleading. The summary of the book and the artwork on the cover give a sense that the monsters in the story would run absolutely wild throughout the house of the main character, Morton, but instead he solved the problem surprisingly early. The true interest of the book is the history behind Morton’s comic book, *Scare Scape*, in which he learns about the author/illustrator’s life with a teacher at Morton’s school. The most creative aspect about the book is the illustrations in the center of the book depict each monster of the story in a comic-style detail with descriptions of each monster’s capabilities in the world of *Scare Scape*.

*Novel; Horror/Humor*  
*Logan Stecher, Undergraduate Student, Kutztown University*

**A Gluten-Free Birthday For Me**

Sue Fliess, the author of *A Gluten-Free Birthday for Me*, has released six titles with an additional two coming out later in 2014. She writes on various topics including pirates, trucks, and building things. Though Fliess has not won any awards, she was the finalist for her book, *Shoes for Me*, for the 2012 SCBWI Crystal Kite Award. In *A Gluten-Free Birthday for Me* readers meet a little girl preparing for her birthday party, the final step is baking her cake, but the little girl can’t eat gluten. Her and her mom hit the cookbooks to find a recipe that will be gluten-free, they find one, and the party begins. Everything is going great until a little boy does not come in for cake, the birthday girl notices him sitting alone in the yard and asks what’s wrong. He can’t have gluten either and doesn’t think he will be allowed to eat the cake. To his happy surprise she brings him inside while explaining she can’t have gluten either and they made the cake from scratch, knowing there wasn’t gluten used. All of the guests love the gluten-free cake! The images used throughout the story are colorful and eye catching, perfect for reading to a small to medium group of children. This story is also perfect for an introduction to food allergies such as gluten for younger age levels. It would also do well with showing a student that may have food allergies that they are not alone. In the back of the book, recipes for gluten-free cake and ice cream are given, as well as tips for dealing the issues that come with the diet restrictions and websites.

*Picture Book*  
*Nicole Maney, Library Science Student, Kutztown University*
Where is Baby?
How many baby animals are called pups when they are born? Prairie dogs, bats, and wolves are just a few of the babies readers will learn about in this book. The large, two-page acrylic illustrations highlight the beauty and cuteness of animal and human babies from around the world. Most pages have one or two sentences describing where baby animals hide. There are big babies, such as the baby elephant which hides between its mother’s feet. There are also small babies like the baby robin, which can weigh less than a quarter when born. The book also has more information about the featured animals on the last three pages. Human babies also hide in this story, but not to fear. Mothers can always find where their babies are hiding. This is a great book for introducing animals to young children and is easy to read. Any public or school library can add this book to their collection.

Picture Book, Nonfiction  Jessica Serrenti, Student, Kutztown University

Revenge of the Dinotrux
The Dinotrux are back in this follow-up to Gall’s popular 2009 title, Dinotrux. The first book had a simple concept. Dinosaurs were melded with trucks and behaved as you might expect a combination of different dinosaur-trucks to behave. In the sequel the plot is thicker. Everyone’s favorite dinosaur-truck characters are stuck in a museum. After a day of being poked and prodded by noisy kindergartners, Tyrannosaurus Trux breaks through a museum wall and the other Dinotrux follow. The expected mayhem ensues, until the mayor intervenes and sends the Dinotrux to school. In school, the Dinotrux participate in the predictable school activities, including making friends. Playing directly to the audience that loves both dinosaurs and trucks, Gall creates a story with just the right balance of chaos and predictability. The bright, busy illustrations are engaging and well-matched to the tone of the story. The Dinotrux have huge kid appeal and will be popular in any library serving young children.

Picture Book  Stephanie Gibson, Librarian, Montessori Acad. of Lancaster

Unbreakable
Kennedy Waters thought she was a normal teenage girl until one fatal night her life changed forever. Unbreakable by Kami Garcia is about new beginnings, trust, and overcoming fears. Kenney never believed in the supernatural even after seeing a girl in a graveyard floating above the ground. She came up with numerous explanations for her mind to wrap around but never considered the girl to be anything but normal. Days later Kennedy finds her mother dead from heart failure, but this is not the case. Kennedy soon finds out that her mother was killed and the killer is out for more blood. Luckily Kennedy meets Lucas and Jared Lockhart who seems to know how to kill these creatures, but will it be enough to protect Kennedy’s life? Unbreakable pulls the reader in right from the beginning. The plot is well thought out and detailed. Kennedy’s skepticism is what will allow the reader to believe that this could actually happen. The reader can also connect with Kennedy from the despair of losing her mother and fall in love with her character as she tries to navigate through the unknown. Readers who love supernatural books with a strong female main character will fall in love with this book.

Supernatural, Young Adult  Crystal Hunsicker, Library Science, Kutztown University
Contaminated
Velvet and her younger sister are alone. Their parents have been taken after being contaminated with a dangerous disease caused by a diet drink called ThinPro. It has been a few years since the epidemic started and the government is allowing certain patients to go home after being treated as much as possible: but they are not the same. Velvet finds her mother has been given a shock collar because she was contaminated. This story is pretty intense and the danger doesn't end with controlling Velvet’s mother! This is a great book for older preteens and teens that are fans of The Walking Dead.
Fiction, Science Fiction, Horror

Shelby Foster, Student, Kutztown University

The First Drawing
Gerstein takes readers on an imagined journey to a prehistoric cave that is the site of the first drawing. What if there was a young boy who saw the world differently? When his relatives look at clouds and stones, they see only clouds and stones, but the boy sees shapes that remind him of animals. As he falls asleep, the fire casts shadows that look to him like animals running. His family begins to call him “Child Who Sees What Isn’t There.” In a frustrated attempt to show them what he is seeing, the boy traces the shadows on the wall with a charred stick; he invents drawing. The story is inspired by an 8 year-old boy’s footprint found near a cave painting in France. Second person narration gives the story an immediacy that helps to draw the reader into the main character’s frustration and excitement. Dynamic illustrations rendered in earthy colors complement the story perfectly. Pair this title with Emily Arnold McCully’s The Secret Cave: Discovering Lascaux for an inspiring art lesson about prehistoric man and the origins of self-expression.

Stephanie Gibson, Librarian, Montessori Acad. of Lancaster

Beavers
Elementary-age researchers looking for information about beavers need look no further. Gibbons presents a definitive overview about these curious mammals. From the dramatic first spread of a beaver chewing through the trunk of a crashing tree, to the final spread of children visiting a wetland to see beavers at work, this book is filled with informative pictures and text. The main text is concise, easy to follow, and printed in a large, readable font. The main text is supported by clear, detailed illustrations, which add to a reader’s understanding of the concepts presented. Each page is peppered with additional facts in a smaller font. Many illustrations feature labels highlighting parts of the beaver’s body or aspects of the complicated structures he builds. Inset diagrams give further details about different parts of the beaver’s anatomy. Backmatter includes additional facts and a short list of helpful websites for further research. While this title is an excellent resource for research, the presentation is engaging enough to make it a popular choice for those who enjoy reading informational texts about animals.

Stephanie Gibson, Librarian, Montessori Acad. of Lancaster
Hunter Moran Hangs Out

Life for Hunter Moran is quite adventurous and never boring, especially as it is shared with a twin brother, Zack. With only four days left until “doomsday”, first day back-to-school, the brothers, soon to be sixth graders, are informed of a planned kidnapping within their very own family. Frightened into constant action, they fear for the safety of their younger brother, five-year-old Stedman. The twins valiantly search for the “napper” by trying to build a look-out post in a tree and falling out, climbing out onto a second story window ledge and falling off, wading into a muddy pond on “Dad’s” boards and falling in. Someway, throughout all their mishaps the twins discover who the “napper” is, and who is taken and joyously found. This story is a great read from start to finish and shows how much fun can be had by children without any reliance upon electronic devices for entertainment. Giff gives us a wonderful, funny, laugh-out-loud family-oriented tale, to enjoy and fondly remember.

*Chapter Book*  
_Susan M. Schlosser, Staff, Tamaqua Public Library_

The Kingfisher Book of Soccer Skills: From warm-up to final whistle—the essential guide

The beautiful game, or as we know it- soccer, is one of the most popular sports in the world. *Soccer Skills* gives a brief history of how soccer began and how it was played among many ancient civilizations. This book describes the basics of the game how it is played, the equipment used, and how to exercise to prepare for the game. It gives step-by-step details on how to perform various plays. Along with directions, there are very clear and colorful pictures of kids demonstrating these plays on every page. There are tips given throughout the book of how to improve your moves along with the aid of pictures, mini facts, or a master’s class from famous soccer players who are known for their various plays and they show how they accomplished them successfully. Kids can also learn about the World Cup and soccer legends. This is a great addition to a library that has patrons who are very interested in learning the game of soccer and how they can improve their game with many tips for the player. There are excellent pictures shown throughout the book. If you have readers who are soccer players you will not be able to keep this book on the shelf.

_Nonfiction: Sports_  
_Melinda Bender, Librarian, Thirteenth and Green Elementary School_

I Am Roberto Clemente

One of a series of biographies written for elementary and middle school students, this book about baseball hero Roberto Clemente is easy to read, interesting, and informative. It captures the difficulties faced by Clemente as a black, Hispanic man in racially-charged Pittsburgh in the 1950s and 1960s. Details about his personal life, his positive attitude, his sense of responsibility, and his determination to prove himself show this man’s heroism. His strong faith and morality set an example that is hard to find in professional sports today. In addition, a timeline in the front and two lists of fun facts about Clemente in the back provide insightful trivia. This book is a useful nonfiction addition to the middle school classroom.

_Biography_  
_Marge McCormick, Tamaqua Area Middle School_
The Clockwork Scarab: A Stoker & Holmes Novel

What do you get when you mix a Steampunk version of the 1890s London, three murdered young women, and a time traveling young man? Welcome to the world of Stoker and Holmes and the mystery of the clockwork scarab. Two feisty heroines, Mina Holmes and Evaline Stoker, are brought together by Irene Adler to solve the murder of a young lady from the upper class who has in her possession a strange clockwork scarab. Mina Holmes is very much like her uncle, Sherlock, in that she is methodical and has the super observational skills to become a talented sleuth in her own right. Evaline is the sister of Bram Stoker and has inherited the family vampire hunting skills. The time traveling element comes into play when they discover the body of the young maiden and a boy named Dylan crouched over her. He comes from the future, not of his own accord but by force through a Sekhmet statue. It is used by an Egyptian cult for young ladies that is lead by a mysterious figure named the Ankh. What is this cult and why were these girls murdered? Only this trio can find out.

The chapters are broken up into an alternating point of view between Miss Stoker and Miss Holmes. Each one is written in a distinct way that makes the reader feel that they are seeing either Holmes or Stoker in their speech and thought as well as actions. The Steampunk touches are in the small details of the technology used (i.e. steam powered motorcycle, steam shooter gun) and how the trio travel throughout London by using special elevators that let them access the different levels of the city. The language also reflects the Steampunk theme and all the thematic touches are subtle enough to be believable to the reader. Gleason is able to weave many genres together to create a cohesive novel that any high schooler will enjoy. The end of the novel is written as if one chapter is closed for this trio but there is more to come.

Chapter Book; Mystery/Time Travel/Steampunk/ Egyptian mythology
Sara Moyer, Library Assistant, Yocum Library at Reading Area Community College

The Path of Names

Dahlia is not exactly excited to go to Jewish summer camp. She would rather do some magic tricks or math than sing songs and go on nature walks. But when she arrives at camp, strange things begin to happen to her and only her. She has odd dreams about a man in 1930s’ New York City. She also sees two little girls at camp that no one else can see. Could they be ghosts or just a dream? And then there’s the maze at camp that no camper is allowed to enter. The mystery and magic unfold when Dahlia enters the maze! This book has a pretty magical and unexpected ending. This would be the perfect book for middle school readers who are interested in magic and magic tricks.

Fiction, Fantasy, Adventure
Shelby Foster, Student, Kutztown University
Rocks and Minerals
This text provides an encyclopedic overview of rocks. With a companion digital book, young rock hounds have quite a bit of information at their fingertips. The index provides opportunities for this volume to be used in research or specific questions and topics. The text provides information for anyone interested in understanding how rocks form. Illustrations, photographs, and small graphs and charts further clarify the text to help to explain to any interested reader. The book even contains a cleverly designed rock identification chart to help young people with any rock discover if it is an igneous, sedimentary, or metamorphic rock. Crisp detailed photographs throughout provide hours of investigation. The connection between rocks and minerals is not made clear to the reader. Though stated that pieces of minerals are the “building blocks for rocks” it is not thoroughly explained to young readers. This text is an excellent addition to any classroom library or rock lover’s bookshelf.

*Informational Nonfiction*  
Nancy E. Cardenuto, Asst. Prof., Kutztown University

A Perfect Home for a Family
Mama and Papa Raccoon are on the hunt for a quiet, cozy, and safe new home before their twins arrive. They enlist A.J. Squirrel to locate the perfect property, pronto! Unfortunately, they soon discover that the grass isn’t always greener on the other side (and the neighbors aren't always quieter either). The soft yet vibrant illustrations in this book make it perfect for bedtime or anytime. The story is simple, heartfelt, and engaging. Reinforcing the classic mottos of “home is where the heart is” and "there’s no place like home", our proud parents find themselves right back where they started just in time to welcome their little ones. Young readers will enjoy the interesting reasons why no other house will do and older readers will appreciate the comical banter between husband and wife.

*Picture Book*  
Krystle-Dawn M. Willing-Tiedeman,  
MLS Graduate Student, Kutztown University

Pretenders
Setting up a new series, this book walks the readers through the diary entries of five high school students. Three girls and two boys have been chosen as the most outstanding students in their school, but one of them steals and shares their diaries to prove to everyone that there is nothing special about them. Their secrets, insecurities, and flaws are exposed. The relationships the writers have with each other and with other students are realistic. The style of each entry is unique to its author, exhibiting Harrison’s command of characterization. The book ends in a cliffhanger; readers will be lined up waiting for the next book in the series.

*Teen fiction*  
Marge McCormick, Tamaqua Area Middle School
The Rose Throne

Two kingdoms that both have power can expect to have problems; add magic to those kingdoms and then there can be a lot of problems. The magic is called weyr and it is very powerful. It can make the grass and flowers grow, neweyr, which is what women have, or it can make men bleed and animals die, taweyr, which is what men have. The two kingdoms have a prophecy that says one will reign them all with both weyrs. And the king of one kingdom will do anything he can to make sure this doesn’t happen, even kill his own daughter. This book is great for students who love complex plots about love and survival. They will be hooked to this book and won’t be able to put it down. It would be a great addition to any library.

*Chapter Book; Fiction.*

Kaitlyn Verdon, Student, Kutztown University

Darling, Mercy Dog of World War I

Take one happy-go-lucky family pet, add war-time Europe, several horrific battlefields, and numerous injured soldiers. Mix all together. What normally sounds like a recipe for disaster really is a recipe for canine heroism at its finest. *Darling, Mercy of World War I*, is the first in a new series of junior historical fiction books chronicling the roles dogs play in specific locales and situations. In this first installment, the reader is treated to a story as told from the dog’s perspective. Darling is a playful dog that likes to get into trouble, play hard, eat treats, and spend time with her human family. Unfortunately, Darling’s family lives in London and WWI is raging in Europe; owning a dog is considered a luxury which requires a dog tax. This tax becomes too much of a burden for the family, and Darling is ‘recruited’ into the army. She becomes a mercy/rescue dog, providing aid and comfort to injured soldiers on the battlefield. Eventually Darling’s luck runs out – she is hit by rifle fire and it is decided she will need to be destroyed. Because of the strong bonds she formed with soldiers she saved, a plan is hatched to save her. As a general is pinning medals on wounded soldiers, one of the injured soldiers pins the medal on Darling who was the real hero, and a picture is snapped. Darling can’t be destroyed when she is a national hero, and she can now return to her calmer, past life. A section describing dogs in the military and some general WWI facts are also presented. Nicely detailed pencil illustrations are present throughout the book. Though you can see where the story is leading most of the time, it is a place where you want to be led.

*Historical Fiction/Animal Story*

Steve Tichy, Staff, Tamaqua Public Library
**Horse Camp**


Chicken catching and pig wrestling are just two chores twelve-year old twins Penny and Percy learn on their Uncle Stretch’s farm. Spending the summer with their uncle wouldn’t be so bad if they could learn to ride, but all Stretch’s horses Bernie and Brenda like to do is sleep and eat all day. After Penny and Percy’s mother is arrested for illegally giving medical help to people who can’t afford it, their parishioner father wants a divorce. Caught in the middle of their parents’ fighting, Penny, Percy, and their adopted brother Pauly are taken in by their uncle. They start to realize that life on a farm can be fun when they meet Stretch’s friend, Sheryl and her daughter June Bug. The book’s chapters rotate between Penny and Percy’s point of view, allowing readers to relate to the mental and physical changes the siblings go through. The story also addresses how religion can have an important role in the way young teenagers think about the world around them. Christianity is discussed as a way for the main characters to question their belief in religion. For similar reading about faith, Deborah Heiligman’s *Charles and Emma: The Darwins’ Leap of Faith* is another young adult novel available to readers. This book can be placed in a public library or public middle school for students.

*Chapter Book, Coming of Age*  
Jessica Serrenti, Student, Kutztown University

**Little Red Writing**


This story plays off of the fairy tale Little Red Riding Hood in a clever way. A class of pencils is given an assignment to write a story and Little Red is convinced to write a story about a brave pencil. She is reminded by her teacher to stay on the story path and is given a basket of nouns to help her begin her writing. Different aspects of writing and grammar are explained while Little Red writes her story. On each page she writes, she meets different challenges such as run on sentences from the conjunction word glue or the adjective forest. Finally Little Red gets to the climax of her story where she meets a familiar foe. What happens to Little Red as she writes the ending to her story? This is a light-hearted story with creative illustrations that will amuse students as well as inform them of some common writing and grammar skills. The illustrations add so much to the story and the text of the story is woven in and around the illustrations making them weave together seamlessly. This book would be a fun introduction to a writing unit.

*Picture Book*  
Tiffany Yehl, Teacher, PA Leadership Charter School
**Prairie Chicken Little**  

The classic Chicken Little tale is retold in this humorous story. Mary McBlicken, the prairie chicken, hears a rumbling and grumbling and tumbling. She worries that a stampede is coming so she goes to warn Cowboy Stan and Red Dog Dan. Along the way she meets up with her friends, Jeffrey Snog the prairie dog, Beau Grabbit the jack rabbit, and June Spark the meadowlark. They are also worried about the stampede and help her in her search. The group of friends is stopped by Slim Brody the sly coyote that shows them a shortcut. Luckily Cowboy Stan and Red Dog Dan save the day by chasing the coyote away. They discover that there is no stampede, but that the rumbling and grumbling is coming from Mary’s stomach. In the end all of the friends join up for supper. Cole’s expressive watercolor, ink, and colored pencil illustrations combined with Hopkins’ rhyming repetitive onomatopoeia text make for an excellent funny read-aloud. Children who love the Chicken Little story will be surprised by the different ending of this new tale. Parents and teachers can teach children about not getting worried so quickly and knowing the facts before causing such a fuss. This book could be paired with any of Cole’s books especially *Bad Boys* or Hopkins’ *Goldie Socks and the Three Libearians.*

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**San Francisco, Baby!**  
$12.99. Gr. Pre-K.  

The signature trolley of the city greets readers on the cover of this short and sweet introduction to San Francisco. From sun up to sun down, the simple story follows the adventures of Baby in the city by the bay. Text and illustrations highlight popular locations like the Golden Gate, Alcatraz, Fisherman’s Wharf, and the crazy treat of Lombard Street. Capitalized text with bolded words make the story easy to read, while colorful illustrations are visually engaging. Whether an early reader is practicing on their own or a young child is entertained by a read aloud, this is a wonderful book to introduce the excitement and variety San Francisco has to offer.

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**The Cat with Seven Names**  

Tony Johnston, the author of *The Cat with Seven Names*, was born in California, and was originally an elementary school teacher. She has written many books for children, winning various awards. An award winning title by Johnston is *The Worm Family*. In an urban neighborhood, it can be difficult to know your neighbors, but in this neighborhood there are six people that don’t know they have something in common, a very large cat. He goes by the names of Stuart Little, Kitty Boy, Placido, Mooch, Dove, and Mouse. One day this multi-named cat scares everyone by walking in front of a moving car! Each of the cat’s “owners” calls their name for him, and even a new one comes into the picture, Regis. The car was owned by his original owner who had been looking for her kitty. Finally reunited she takes him with her, but promises that the cat will be back to visit. All of the people in the neighborhood that called after the cat start talking and bonding over different things, such as books, war, and food. The story is beautifully illustrated with water colors, and is could be easily read to students in kindergarten or first grade classes to show how even the smallest things can bond people together.

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**Folktale**  
Sarah Meitzler, Circulation Manager, Lower Macungie Library

**Picture Book**  
Krystle-Dawn M. Willing-Tiedeman, MLS Graduate Student, Kutztown University

**Picture Book; Animal Story**  
Nicole Maney, Library Science Student, Kutztown University
Zapato Power Freddie Ramos Makes a Splash

Freddie Ramos seems like any other normal kid in the neighborhood except his shoes have a special power, zapato power! When Ariana’s wallet goes missing, Freddy suspects it is the work of the neighborhood bully and is on the case. Then the tables are turned and Freddie’s back pack goes missing along with his super zapatos. Could the neighborhood bully be targeting Freddie? How can he help others without his superhero powers? *Zapato Power* is an easy read that is perfect for students who are ready to move on to a chapter book that is full of adventure. Students will relate to Freddie feeling confident one minute and then feeling vulnerable the next minute due to one person’s words. It is a Latin themed story that is excellent for schools looking to diversify their collection. This is a nice edition to add to your easy chapter fiction section that students will enjoy reading.

*Fiction: Easy Chapter*  
Melinda Bender, Librarian, Thirteenth and Green Elementary School

Life in Outer Space

Sam is the quintessential sixteen-year old geek. World of Warcraft, similarly-minded friends, and horror movies are the things in his life that keep him happy. So, when Camilla comes to town, he resolves to not acknowledge her existence. Camilla isn’t having it, though. Camilla is one of those people that can mix with the popular kids just as easily as the nerdy kids. She wants to be friends with Sam, and she won’t take no for an answer. She also has the unique ability to be able to get the more popular kids to accept Sam. To his surprise, Camilla shares many of the same interests as he and his friends do, and she introduces him to many things outside his experience. They live through many different events throughout the year together, and it brings Sam closer to someone than he ever thought possible. This realistic fiction novel provides a quirkily funny backdrop to the plights of many teenagers, and the fact that the book is set in Melbourne adds that Australian flare to the humor and description. Perfect for any teenager that has a little (or a lot) of a nerdy side, Keil shows that it’s alright to be who you are, but to also accept others as they are. This novel would be appropriate for ages fourteen to seventeen.

*Chapter Book; Realistic*  
Fiction Meagan Blount, Senior, Kutztown University

Openly Straight

Rafe is a normal teenage boy living in Boulder, Colorado. He participates in normal activities such as soccer and skiing, but Rafe is tired of being known as the “gay kid”. He has been out since the age of 14 and his label follows him everywhere. Though he is proud and even travels to other schools in the area to discuss tolerance, he decides to uproot his entire life by going to a private all boys school in New England, in order to have a chance at normalcy without labels. The only problem is, how long can he keep his true self a secret, especially when he develops a crush on his new straight best friend? *Openly Straight* will be enjoyed by any teen or adult that has an open mind. Author Bill Konigsberg brings humor to some sensitive topics such as sexuality and coming out. Konigsberg was born in 1970 in New York City, and was by no means a straight A student throughout school. He had various jobs throughout his twenties and even earned the title of “Least Stylish Gay Guy” in the Metro Denver Area. He published his first book in 2007, *Out of the Pocket*, which won the Lambda Literary Award in 2009.

*Realism; Chapter Book*  
Nicole Maney, Library Science Student, Kutztown University
The Hypnotists

Twelve-year-old protagonist Jackson Opus learns that he has the power to hypnotize others. When he attends an institute whose purpose is to help him focus those powers, he discovers that others who have similar attributes abuse the privilege. Jax also learns that his mentor has ulterior political motives. Set in New York City, the tale takes advantage of urban attributes such as the subway to intensify the conflict. Interesting and filled with enough action and intrigue to hold the attention of reluctant middle school readers, Korman has another award-winning bestseller with this book. This is a page-turner worth recommending.

*Adventure*  
*Marge McCormick, Tamaqua Area Middle School*

The Peanut-Free Café

Simon is a picky eater who limits his diet to four things: bagels, peanut butter, green grapes and purple lollipops. When a new student named Grant comes to Simon’s school the two boys become fast friends. Simon, however, is horrified to see that at lunch time Grant must sit at a new table that is labeled “Peanut-Free”. Grant is the only student at the table. When Principal Filbert and a group of students turn the “Peanut-free Table” into a “Peanut-free Café” with fun themes and activities, Simon (and his peanut butter sandwich) is left out. Simon is challenged to try new foods so that he can join Grant and the others in the Peanut-free Café. This is a great story for encouraging kids to try new things. It also models some positive ways for schools to be supportive of students with sensitive food allergies in a way that doesn’t segregate or stigmatize them. It can be a very useful tool for starting those conversations with students when there are changes in school menus and items admissible for cafeterias and classrooms. There is a helpful note for Teachers and Parents by Scott Sicherer, M.D. of the Jaffe Food Allergy Institute in the back of the book. Every school nurse and library should have this book within their collection.

*Picture Book; Realistic Fiction*  
*Stephanie Towles, Librarian, Reading School District*

My Crocodile Does Not Bite

Cindy Lou is so certain that her haughty pet poodle, Fifi, will win the annual school pet show that she cannot be bothered with anyone else or their pets. When Ernest shows up with a gigantic crocodile named Gustave, Cindy Lou insists that bringing a crocodile to school is not allowed—because they bite. Ernest insists his crocodile does not bite and then proceeds to show everyone all the amazing things Gustave can do (that poor Fifi can’t). As Cindy Lou and Fifi continue to try and impress the judges, Ernest continues to insist that Gustave does not bite. And when CindyLou follows Fifi, who follows a ball that disappeared, into Gustave’s wide open mouth, Ernest tries to explain that Gustave does not bite – but he does swallow his food whole. Alas, the warning comes too late as neither CindyLou nor Fifi return. However, there is a happy ending; Ernest wins the 1st Place Ribbon in the pet show. This was a cute story with nicely done illustrations. Young children will enjoy seeing the over-sized crocodile squeeze onto the bus and juggle tennis balls while riding a unicycle. It is a cute, imaginative addition to a classroom or school library collection; perhaps not a memorable ‘must-have’ but a nice ‘go-to’ story for read aloud or story time.

*Picture Book; Fantasy*  
*Stephanie Towles, Librarian, Reading School District*
Duke
*Duke,* a story about a boy giving away his dog to the US Army during WWII, is a great book to introduce the youth to American culture during the 1940s. It speaks in the ‘40s style language while mentioning old, fond products that would not exist today such as Ovaltine and iceboxes. The book is an easy read, with its short sentences, that it should be pushed toward the lower grades than the recommended such as grades 3-5. *Duke* teaches the youth the values of love, duty, honor and most of all commitment that are the essential foundations to building good character.

_Novel; Historical Fiction_  
Logan Stecher, Undergraduate Student, Kutztown University

Lion vs. Rabbit
Latimer, Alex. **Lion vs. Rabbit.** Atlanta: Peachtree Publishers, 2013. 978-1-5614-5709-0. 
$15.95. Gr. Pre-K – 3.
What should be done when a big bully lion makes everyone miserable? Hire other bullies to teach him a lesson, of course! When the bullies for hire get beat up by the original bully, things seem pretty grim. Since brawn didn't solve the problem, the animals do the right thing by turning to bunny brains. The vibrant illustrations accompanying this humor filled story are sure to engage readers, but the mixed messages might not be appropriate for the younger crowd. This twist on the tortoise and hare doesn't quite deliver the "slow and steady wins the race" message. Instead, it seems to suggest "if you can't stop a bully with more bullying, trick him until he feels bad!" Be sure to read this hilarious and well-written tale with caution to ensure the moral is made clear.

_Picture Book_  
Krystle-Dawn M. Willing-Tiedeman,  
MLS Graduate Student, Kutztown University

The King of Little Things
There once lived a very humble king. He was the king of little things. Other kings went about their business with the big things of the world but this king happily spent his time worrying about the little things of his kingdom. He was the king of coins, candles, burps, paper clips, and other such little things. But one king was very greedy and wanted to be the king of all things, big and little. So he sent his big army all over the land. He conquered every queen, czar, and empress. But this king forgot one last king; the king of little kings. So this king starts to think of a plan to take over this little king of little things. But one thing this big king didn’t think about was the little things that the little king reigned over. This book has wonderful alliteration and will be wonderful in any classroom. The ending of this story is so great that it will leave every student wanting to take care of the little things.

_Children’s Book; Fiction_  
Kaitlyn Verdon, Student, Kutztown University
**Thumpy Feet**  
Gr. PreK-1.  
Anyone who has ever owned a cat will immediately realize how accurately Lewin has portrayed a cat’s behavior when reading this book. But the book deserves more than one reading – and, in fact, it lures you into repeated readings with its clean, playfully vibrant, depictions of the everyday antics of a cat and its repetitive, musical text dancing across the pages. The complete focus a cat devotes to its current task is reinforced through the repetition; then with the turn of a page, the book illustrates how quickly a cat can be teased into another activity. When eating, grooming, and playing is completed, there is nothing quite like a cat nap! Even in sleep, Lewin’s illustrations conform to the totality of sleep and the cat’s various positions. Typically, a book for this age group would end there, but this book is much cleverer: Thumpy Feet wakes up to see a red ball of yarn that he chases unto the end pages of book and gives delighted readers a sense of what his next adventures might be. The combination of the boldly-black-outlined, energetic orange cat that seems to jump off of the pages and the fun, cadenced, read-aloud text will make this a favorite selection of preschoolers and open a dialog about the nature and behavior of a cat!  
*Picture Book*  
Gayle R. Heath, Library Director, Tamaqua Public Library

**Ling and Ting Share a Birthday**  
Ling and Ting are back and they are still not exactly the same. It is their sixth birthday and they engage in typical birthday activities, including purchasing presents for one another and baking a cake together. The second installment in the Ling and Ting series features all the wonderful qualities of the first book: bright gouache illustrations, easy to read repetitive text, and brief stories with simple conflicts cleverly resolved by the twins. The slightly stilted writing style brings to mind reading primers from the last century, and the dresses the girls wear reinforce this retro feel. However, the girls’ problem solving and thoughtfulness add a modern update to the flat text. The straightforward text will appeal to new readers who have not learned to read contractions and still benefit from repetition. Readers of all ages will enjoy the twins’ relationship. They are quick to share and anxious to find a bright side in every situation. They are attached to their sameness, but when they discover differences between themselves, they find ways to honor their differences as much as their similarities. Fans of the original Ling and Ting title will find much to love about this sequel.  
*Beginning Reader*  
Stephanie Gibson, Librarian, Montessori Acad. of Lancaster

**Choke**  
Windy is just your average eighth grader. She describes herself as the GP (general public); not popular, but not a loser either; just in between. But then she meets a new girl at school, Nina. They quickly become friends and Nina asks Windy to be her “breath sister”. Windy is finally feeling like she belongs somewhere. She is hanging out with the popular girls and they like her. But, when they begin the choking game Windy needs to decide if she wants to risk everything to be a “breath sister”. This book is a great coming of age story about finding yourself and finding out that the popular crowd is not always right. Windy finds out who she is and what she is and is not willing to risk for popularity.  
*Drama, Fiction, Coming of Age*  
Shelby Foster, Student, Kutztown University
The Upside of Ordinary
Eleven-year-old Jermaine Davidson comes from a typical middle class family and dreams of becoming a movie star. She doesn’t hold out much hope for her dream since her parents have no interest in relocating from Maine to California. She then becomes fascinated with the reality television craze and makes the decision to immediately become a reality television show producer. Of course, her family and friends are her prime subjects. Her filming episodes include exploding microwave popcorn, choppy home haircuts, the missing class pet tarantula and the emotional homecoming of her now penniless uncle who disappeared to pursue his electric balloon-fastening glue glove invention. In the end, Jermaine becomes famous in her family for aiding her mother with the invention of a new product for her pickle production business. Family and inter-generational relationships are explored in Lubner’s debut novel about an ordinary family.
Fiction; Chapter Book

Sharon Breeden, Kutztown Graduate

Nobody’s Secret
Emily Dickinson is a smart girl who likes to be out and about, meeting new people and trying new things. She hates doing chores and taking care of her mother, and longs for adventure! Little does she know that the mysterious man whom she nicknames “Mr. Nobody” will turn up dead in her family’s pond, turning her world on its head! Inspired by the poem, “I’m Nobody! Who are You?” as well as other Dickinson poems, this intelligent murder mystery will have readers identifying with the quirky Emily and wanting to read more! The Author’s Note at the end of the novel provides insight into the real Emily’s life, and also provides suggestions for additional reading. This would be a great book for history or mystery lovers, and could be used as a supplement to a poetry unit.
Chapter Book: Mystery
Christine Weida, Library Clerk, Kutztown Community Library

Whistle in the Dark
Clem Harding, a thirteen year-old boy, born and raised in Leadanna, Missouri, is the main character in this deeply moving story. His life changes dramatically on his thirteenth birthday in 1925. He is wished a “Happy Birthday” with a chocolate cake and a brand new miner’s helmet. This is the last day of his childhood and schooling. Because of his younger sister Esther’s medical bills acquired from having epilepsy, his father, a very proud miner, forces Clem to join him working in the lead mines. Clem had a very hard time adjusting to this brutal way of making a living. He was an avid reader, writer, and storyteller. Clem would often tell Esther stories in their shared bedroom, to help her enjoy her evening and fall peacefully asleep. With the combination of the death of his sister, a devastating tornado, the loss and return of his dog and friend, Clem’s writing abilities became more heartfelt. A passing newspaper man, in town to cover the tornado, heard a eulogy delivered by Clem for his mining friend, Otto, and offered Clem a chance to sell his writings. Clem’s second career, which was fueled by his many stories his sister had saved, was begun before turning 14 years old. Long has given us a story to help us grow and strengthen our own-selves through times of hardship and despair. This book would be a great “required reading” if only to show how well most students live in today’s world.
Coming of Age

Susan M. Schlosser, Staff, Tamaqua Public Library
**Bats: Biggest! Littlest!**


What is the largest bat on the planet? What is the smallest? These are just a couple of the questions asked in this educational/scientific picture book. Markle hooks the reader in at the very beginning by explaining that the “Gray-Headed Flying Fox” is the largest species of bat, and that the “Bumblebee Bat” is the smallest. Not only does Markle explain the different sizes of bats, she explains what attributes encourage the bat to have evolved to their particular size. Overall, there are fourteen bat species that are introduced and explained. At the end of the book, there is a more detailed explanation of the two bat groups, megabats and microbats. On the same page are definitions of some of the terminology presented, and there is a list of more resources that can be accessed for continued information on bats. The photographs featured are detailed, high-quality, and enticingly interesting. Bats are unique mammals that influence our ecology in so many important ways, and Markle does a terrific job of conveying her love and fascination of the species. This picture book would be appropriate for grades 1-4.

*Nonfiction*  
Meagan Blount, Senior, Kutztown University

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**What if You Had Animal Teeth?**


This book goes through what it would be like to have different animal’s teeth. From having a beaver’s teeth where your teeth would never stop growing to having hippopotamus teeth that do not yellow, this book shows it all. It has vampire bats, great white shark, naked mole rat, rattlesnake and many more animals; and it shows how the animals use their teeth and gives an example of what a human would do with the same teeth. Its cute illustrations help the reader get a picture of what humans would look like with all the different teeth and certainly brings a great deal of humor to the book. It contains interesting facts that are uniquely placed within the book’s fun-filled pages. This book will help elementary grade students understand different animals better and understand why they have the teeth they do. The format will definitely aid in the retention of the facts. This is a very informational, fun book that children will enjoy reading repeatedly.

*Nonfiction*  
Hannah Miller, Staff, Tamaqua Public Library

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**You Make Me Smile**


A snow day is always so special, especially for a certain little girl. A snow day starts off as a beautiful winter gray. Then, all of a sudden, it starts to snow. And then, the snow blankets everything she sees. That means that she can go outside and play! This is the one thing that every child loves to do right when it snows. She wants to experience the wonderful snow outside. And what is the first thing she does? Build a snowman of course! She gives him stiff branch arms, two eyes, a radish nose. But the one thing this snowman is missing is his smile. This wonderful children’s book is great for young children who love to play in the snow. There is also a little surprise at the end of the book that the reader wouldn’t guess. This would be a great addition to any classroom or home.

*Children’s book; Fiction*  
Kaitlyn Verdon, Student, Kutztown University
Grandma Rose’s Magic
This colorfully illustrated picture book tells the story of a grandmother who earns money by sewing and mending various clothing and fabrics for other people in the community. As the people come and pick up their finished products, they find that she always does a little bit extra for them. For example when one person comes to pick up their tablecloth, they also find that Grandma Rose has made them matching napkins at no charge. When people ask how they got these extra added bonuses, Grandma Rose replies that, “it must be magic”. While reading the story, you come to find that Grandma Rose is saving the money she makes as a seamstress to purchase a set of dishes that resemble the dishes she remembers her family having when she was a child. The dishes are special to her because they are sentimental and remind her of her family. Unfortunately, when she finally has enough money to buy the dishes, she finds that someone else had already bought the dishes she wanted. In the end, all the people in the town come together and each present her with one of the dishes in the set. This book is heartfelt tale of doing onto others as you would have done onto you. I think this would be a great addition to any elementary classroom library. It sends children the message that when you do nice things for others, nice things come back to you.

Picture Book; Realistic Fantasy
Kara Solt, Graduate Student, Kutztown University

Lulu: My Glamorous Life
Lulu needs help! Her favorite actress Penelope Glitter is holding a look-alike contest and the winner gets to meet her in person on the red carpet. Between volunteering at her local animal shelter, baking cookies, finding new outfits, and going to school, Lulu has a busy schedule. So Lulu entrusts the aid of her Lotus Lane Girl Club members, Coco and Kiki, to find the perfect outfits for the contest. But the school’s bully, Katy, has plans to ruin Lulu’s chances of winning. Lulu also doesn’t know whether she can trust her new friend Mika, who is also friends with Katy. Readers can follow Lulu’s adventures through her diary entries as she meets new friends and hears the contest judges announce the winner. Inspired by the author’s own diaries, May has created a quick, fun read that teaches the importance of friendship for young girls. The story is separated into small chapters with black and white pictures. Readers can follow all the girls’ adventures in the Lotus Lane series.

Chapter Book, Fiction
Jessica Serrenti, Student, Kutztown University
Better To Wish
This title is the first book in the Family tree series by Martin who is better known for her Babysitters Club series. *Better to Wish* focuses on Abby Nichols who was eight years old in 1930. Abby grows up in Maine with her family and friends Sarah, Orrin, and Zander. Abby moves from small town, Lewisport, to a large home in Barnegat Point. The book quickly passes from year to year until 1945. The book shows Abby’s struggles with growing up in a poor family who becomes rich, a new step mother who is only six years older than Abby, and a controlling prejudiced father. Children will have a hard time understanding the transition from Abby being a child to an adult and some of her adult decisions about wanting to go to college, living on her own in New York City, working, and her father telling her to accept a marriage proposal. There are historical details that are out of context and not described including things like paper dolls, paying for things with one nickel, an icebox, the New Deal, getting a store-bought dress, Charlie Chaplin and Shirley Temple. There are concepts and situations that will be difficult for present age children to understand because they are not explained well including miscarriages, Abby’s mother’s depression and death, Abby watching the death of her friend Sarah on a frozen pond, and when Abby finds out that her five year old disabled brother is taken to an institution to live. The book is very disjointed because each year is a presented in a short chapter so it is better to think of the book as a collection of short stories. This book would be better read aloud with an adult who can explain historical concepts and adult topics.

*Historical Fiction*  
Sarah Meitzler, Circulation Manager, Lower Macungie Library

Dear Santasaurus
Ernest B. Spinosaurus is trying desperately to stay on Santasaurus’s nice list but he also has a knack for misbehavior and mischief. The text is made up of seventeen letters to Santasaurus from young Ernest. In his letters, Ernest describes his daily life as well as the crazy things he does to entertain himself and get himself in trouble. In each letter he always includes what he wants from Santasaurus next Christmas but Ernest changes some details with each letter. Both the text and the illustrations are cheerful and humorous. The book is a fun and silly read for young dinosaur lovers but not all that entertaining or satisfying.

*Fantasy; Picture Book*  
Mandalee Flannery, Student, Kutztown University

Infinity Glass
The third and final book of the Hourglass trilogy is a joy to read. Set mostly in New Orleans, it brings together all things that any good science fiction should have: time travel, an adorable geek hero, a strong heroine, a setting filled with mystery and romance. Anyone who enjoys Doctor Who or Monty Python will catch on to the pop-culture references sprinkled throughout. The main characters, Dune and Hallie, will draw the reader in and make them forget that they are not real people. McEntire does an amazing job of bringing these characters to life and giving them each a unique voice. Though this book can stand alone, it is even better after reading the two books that come before it. This book is good for anyone who enjoys science fiction stories. There is no real age limit on this book though it will, of course, catch the attention of teenage girls first.

*Chapter Book; Fantasy; Coming of Age*  
Brittany Lee, Student, Kutztown University
Lulu and the Cat in the Bag
Eight-year-old Lulu is a kind-hearted girl with a soft spot for animals of all shapes and sizes. In this third book in McKay’s “Lulu” series, Lulu’s parents are traveling and Nan is baby-sitting both Lulu and her cousin Mellie. Sadly for Lulu, Nan is not an animal person. So when Lulu discovers an abandoned cat, Nan will not let Lulu keep her. Will Lulu be able to find a good home for the cat before Nan loses all patience? McKay’s gentle humor and ear for dialogue are as evident in this installment as in earlier Lulu stories. Lulu and Mellie have a very realistic relationship. The mild, but realistic, drama is perfect for the early chapter book format. Young readers will recognize the tension between trying to obey the rules while also wanting to follow one’s heart in situations that do not have clear right and wrong responses. Lulu is highly recommended for all newly proficient readers in search of a warm and funny book with a lot of heart.

*Realistic Fiction.*

Stephanie Gibson, Librarian, Montessori Acad. of Lancaster

Hide and Seek
This fictional story follows three children on an exciting adventure. As their parents are off trying to save the Jaguar cup, José, Anna, and Henry are on a mission to help their parents and find out who is the culprit. From sneaking into old caves and following leads, the three of them realize that while their parents are away, the culprit might be right in front of them. This exciting novel captivates the reader to the point that the rest of the world fades away. Messner does such an amazing job of telling this story that even though this book would generally be just for children, adults could enjoy it too. And it is a book that could be read over and over again with equal, if not more, enjoyment. If this book is not in your collection or if you have not read this book, it is highly recommended.

*Chapter Book*

Hannah Miller, Staff, Tamaqua Public Library

Are the Dinosaurs Dead, Dad?
In this simple, fast-paced story, little Dave takes a walk with his dad to see the dinosaurs at a museum. While his dad focuses on teaching Dave the dinosaur names and histories, Dave notices something strange happening with the dinosaurs - they may not be as dead as his dad had said! Told in short sentences with easy words, filled with dinosaur facts and illustrated in a bright and funky way, this book would be great for reading together with a new reader, as an introduction to a unit about dinosaurs, or for a fun story time!

*Picture Book*  
Christine Weida, Library Clerk, Kutztown Community Library
**My Mom is a Foreigner**  

With a title that invites excitement, a reader would expect a delightful book that helps children embrace the diversity of people that currently makes up society. Cover designs portray positive images of mothers from various backgrounds. A picture-walk through the text supports the upbeat theme from the images on the cover. Playful, light-hearted, comical images embrace a vast array of moms for the reader to enjoy. However, the rhyme and rhythm of the narrative does not flow off the tongue. It is clumsy and uncomfortable. The text needs to be reread to force the patterned language to work. This text could possibly be used for a study of diversity, but it disappoints and falls short of grabbing the reader’s attention.

*Picture Book; Fiction*  
Nancy E. Cardenuto, Asst. Prof., Kutztown University

**The 100**


Centuries after earth was abandoned one hundred teens are sent back on a mission. *The 100* by Kass Morgan is a dystopian novel where humans fled earth to live on spaceships because of a nuclear war which led to mass doses of radioactivity. Since they have limited space on the ship just stealing bread will sentence someone to death row. Clark, who was arrested for treason, and ninety-nine other teens on death row are given a chance to either stay and die or go back down to earth to see if earth is once again habitable. Once Clark and the other teens are sent down they realize that not everyone abandoned earth all those centuries ago. *The 100* is a fast pace suspense novel that will keep readers on the edge of their seats. The reader will be able to connect with Clark and the other ninety-nine teens from their detailed emotions about trying to survive harsh conditions while starting over in a place they only heard from in childhood stories. This would be the ideal book for teens who love dystopian novels.

*Dystopian, Young Adult*  
Crystal Hunsicker, Library Science, Kutztown University

**Pip and the Twilight Seekers: A Spindlewood Tale**


This is the second in the Spindlewood Tales series. It tells the story of Pip, Frankie, and Toad, three children hiding from the sinister, child-hating Jarvis and the folk of Spindlewood in the city of Hangman’s Hollow. Find out if Pip and friends are successful escaping Jarvis and the wild creatures of the wood! I wouldn’t suggest the book to reluctant readers, as the story seemed to drag a bit towards the end, but overall it’s great, and I bet when read as part of the series, readers will love these books. This series would be great for lovers of the *Series of Unfortunate Events* books, as some elements in these books resemble those in the *Unfortunate* series.

*Fiction*  
Sarah Camus, Alum, Kutztown University
**Spirit Animals: Wild Born**
This is the story of Connor, Abeke, Meilin, and Rollan; four children who are chosen to receive a spirit animal. To have a spirit animal is to have a rare bond between human and animal. These four children bring forth the four most powerful spirit animals from the past! Now the fate of their land, Erdas, lies with them. With the help of the Green cloaks, these four unlikely heroes must work together to save the land and people they love. This is a great adventure story about teamwork, overcoming fear, and friendship.
*Adventure, Animal Story, Fantasy*

**The Tortoise & the Hare**
Aesop’s familiar tale is brought vividly to life in this latest offering from Pinkney. Observant readers will note that Hare challenges Tortoise on the title page, so that the action picks up on the first page turn. Set in the American Southwest and rendered in a mixture of graphite, watercolor, gouache, colored pencil and pastel, the illustrations are exquisite. A combination of full-bleed double spreads, small panels surrounded by white, and isolated figures on fields of white help to set the pace and focus attention on details. Once the race is started, each spread gives alternating attention to the progress of either the tortoise or the hare. Tension builds as the tortoise passes the sleeping hare. The book is nearly wordless, with the exception of the fable’s famous moral: “Slow and steady wins the race.” This moral is presented cumulatively on the tortoise’s spreads. As he progresses along the race path, each page turn adds a word to the sentence, until finally, readers put the whole sentence together at the finish line where Tortoise wins by a length. Endpapers feature a map of the race course. An artist’s note provides background about why Pinkney chose this tale to illustrate and gives insight into his artistic process. This title is an essential purchase for any fable collection.
*Picture Book; Fable*

**Ketchup Clouds**
*Ketchup Clouds*, by Annabel Pitcher, is the story of Zoe, a typical fifteen year old girl. She has trouble with the boys at school, is caught up in an angsty love triangle, deals with her parents bickering about their own problems, and listens to her small minded and clueless sisters Dot and Soph. After hearing a nun speak at her school about capital punishment and prisoners on Death Row, she becomes intrigued. Zoe finds the one person she feels she can tell the truth, Stu Harris, convicted of murdering his wife, facing the death sentence. Mr. Harris becomes her new pen pal, even if he doesn’t answer back, for Zoe, it feels good to have someone to tell her innermost secrets, including the true story that’s left her weighing down with guilt. What she especially likes about talking to Mr. Harris is that he understands her more than anyone else; like Mr. Harris, Zoe also killed someone. This book goes through the letters Zoe writes to Mr. Harris, retelling her story. Because of Zoe’s self-discovery throughout the book, Zoe is an easy character to relate to for young teens. As the story progresses, with more characters introduced, the reader is hooked to flip through the pages to find out the end. Both the dialogue and narration are compelling, yet hilarious and heartbreaking. This book is a fast, heartfelt read that would appropriate for students in middle school to high school.
*Realism; Coming of Age*

*Shelby Foster, Student, Kutztown University*

*Stephanie Gibson, Librarian, Montessori Acad. of Lancaster*

*Melanie Stuhr, Student, Kutztown University*
The Haunting of Gabriel Ashe
The story of The Haunting of Gabriel Ashe is a story where one boy’s creation can be a nightmare to others that threatens their lives. Gabe Ashe gets mixed up in playing a deadly game with a kid, Seth Hopper, who is often bullied and shunned by the kids in his school; because of this, Gabe turns his back on him until a strange shadowy figure known as The Hunter arises. He then learns that he needs Seth in order to survive, thus learning and teaching young readers that your real friends are more important than school popularity. In addition to this, the novel teaches readers that any sacrifice is worth it if you care for someone hard enough. The book follows its genre well by providing an in-depth and chilling background that keeps readers turning the pages to uncover the story.
Novel; Horror
Logan Stecher, Undergraduate Student, Kutztown University

This is How I Find Her
When a young high school girl, Sophie, comes home one day she finds her mother overdosed on pills and her whole life is thrown out of whack. Living for years with a bi-polar mother who acted more like a child than a parent, Sophie learned how to be the primary caregiver for her family. Sophie lost touch with most of her family and old grade school friends, but when her mother becomes hospitalized, she seeks help from her estranged aunt. Living with her extended family is a complete change where she no longer has to act like the parent and can finally be a teenager. This book dives into the world of mental illness and the effect it has on the whole family. This is a great way to begin a conversation with children who may not know what others go through from day to day in their own families. Sophie is a lovable and relatable character who grabs the reader from the first page and takes them on a journey through the ups and downs of her life.
Young Adult; Coming of Age
Erin Ilch, Kutztown University Student

Carnivores
Young readers will be drawn to the interesting cover of this awesome book. Creatively shown in meat packaging, these troubled meat eaters are beautifully illustrated with bright, engaging color. Illustrator Dan Santat does an incredible job of bringing to life the great white shark, timber wolf, lion, and their herbivore feasts, uh, friends. Being at the top of the food chain unfortunately puts them low on the social totem pole, because everyone knows you shouldn’t play with your food. In an effort to be accepted by the other animals, our three carnivores go vegetarian. They attempt to change their behaviors and their appearances to win over the grass eating gazelles, but nothing seems to work. Will their fellow carnivore the owl be able to help? The conclusion of this moral tale involves some questionable animal actions that may not sit well with some readers, but carnivores must remain true to who they are, even if it means choosing food over friends (or friends as food).
Picture Book
Krystle-Dawn M. Willing-Tiedeman, MLS Graduate Student, Kutztown University
The Pets You Get!

This colorfully illustrated picture book tells the story of a young boy and his sister. The little boy’s sister is more than happy with her guinea pig, and tries her hardest to convince her brother that a guinea pig is a great pet. Despite his sister’s arguments, the young boy claims that there are much better choices for a pet than a guinea pig. Other choices include dogs, snakes, and even dragons. In the end he comes to realize that some of his choices might not be as wonderful as he thought. He promises his sister that he will be nice if he is allowed to play with her guinea pig sometimes. Many children would enjoy this story because they can relate to the different kinds of pets. Although it is a cute story and has bright and engaging illustrations, the story definitely lacks a real plot and meaning. Overall, it is a short enjoyable story, and young children will enjoy reading about unusual pets. This book would be a great quick read aloud story in any elementary classroom library.

*Picture Book; Fantasy*  
*Kara Solt, Graduate Student, Kutztown University*

Steam Train, Dream Train

This rhyming book, perfect for bedtime, is about all the animals loading up their unusual yet fun cargo for the night and rolling out for the next day. It is a beautifully illustrated children’s book that would make a wonderful addition to any collection with its engaging rhymes that mimic a beautiful poem as it tells a calming soft story with fun pictures. The book creators, Sherri Duskey Rinker and Tom Lightenheld have also written another book called *Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site* which was a #1 New York Times bestseller and is equally as lovely. This book could be used in home for bedtime or for a creative program like a pajama night at the library or public school. The charcoal illustrations are wonderfully colorful and creative with extreme shadowing to make this book a great resource for any young aspiring artists.

*Picture Book/ Poetry*  
*Sara Fiorenza, Student, Kutztown University*

The Schmutzy Family

This is a cute story about a family who values children’s curiosity and exploration. It is about a Jewish family and follows them through each day of the week. On each day the children explore their environment by doing some activity that creates a mess in the house but Mom doesn’t say anything. They draw other fruits to the pineapple wallpaper and turn the sink into a frog pond but Mom doesn’t seem to mind. On Friday before the Sabbath, though, Mom has everyone work together to clean the house, and themselves, up for the occasion. This story gives a glossary on the first page of some of the terms that may not be familiar to children related to the Jewish religion. It is a fun easy read with detailed and whimsical illustrations. It is a fun multicultural book that children would enjoy and relate to.

*Fiction, Picture Book*  
*Tiffany Yehl, Teacher, PA Leadership Charter School*
Thomas Jefferson Builds a Library

Thomas Jefferson built three different libraries during his lifetime, including the Library of Congress. Rosenstock tells the story of how books helped make Jefferson one of the United States’ most well-known leaders. He shared his passion and love for books with his wife, Martha, his children, and his colleagues. As he worked to create an alliance between the U.S. and France, Jefferson continued to buy books every day. When British troops burned down the original Library of Congress, Jefferson donated his personal library, doubling the collection that was there before. All illustrations are done with pen, ink, and watercolor and include many details such as the word “book” spelled out in, of course, books. Each page has one or two small paragraphs of text and an illustration. School libraries can use this book as a tool to teach students how to conduct research on a person. The quotes used in the story act as examples of primary sources. Rosenstock has also added a source list for all facts and quotes added in the story. The book can be used as a supplement for students learning about the formation of the United States.

*Picture Book, Biography* 
*Jessica Serrenti, Student, Kutztown University*

Volcano Rising

With the amazing pictures and a plethora of information on volcanoes, students will fall in love with this non-fiction picture book. The book is filled with rich vocabulary, information on how volcanoes are formed, and different volcanoes around the world. Rusch uses onomatopoeia to bring life to her words, and a student will be able to read this story with excitement and come out with a basic knowledge of volcanoes. Rusch uses two different size prints in the book: one is larger print more for the younger students, while on the bottom of the page is a deeper explanation in smaller print. The stories are parallel with the bottom information geared more towards older students. Along with more information, this is the part of the story where Rusch supplies her readers with specific volcanoes around the world and their past activity. At the end of the book, Rusch supplies a list of vocabulary to review and also lists a bibliography for further research on volcanoes. Students will enjoy this book and come out with a deeper understanding of volcanoes and how they work.

*Picture Book* 
*Andrea Siegfried*

Altered

Anna’s life has always been full of secrets. She helps her father work in the lab beneath their house. This lab is funded by the Branch, a very secretive organization, which is funded by the government. Four boys receive treatments and are monitored. As the story develops she finds out more things about the boys who have spent five years in cells in her basement, and her bizarre connection to them.

*Science Fiction* 
*Gwen Fisher, Library Science Student, Kutztown University*
Rachel’s Promise
Gr. 4-8.
This is the second book in a series that tells about the journey of a young Jewish girl, Rachel, and her
family as they fled from Russia in 1903. They traveled across the Asian continent to China hoping to
secure passage to the United States. In counterbalance to this plot Sergei leaves his home with hopes of
someday meeting up with Rachel along the journey. Sergei travels first to St. Petersburg to work in a
factory. The historical background of the story is rich as it opens the world of Russia and China during
the early 20th century to young readers. However, the characters are stiff and not well developed.
Entering the story in the second book was difficult, yet by the middle the action of the story covered the
weakness of character development. Going back to read the first book in the series, Rachel’s Secret,
provided the foundation that was needed to better understand the events in the second book. The
story of the journey of Rachel and her family belongs as an addition to the literature on the trials the
Jewish people faced worldwide during the early 20th century.
Middle Level Historical Fiction Nancy E. Cardenuto, Asst. Prof., Kutztown University

Uh-Oh, DoDo
Dodo is a very clumsy and accident-prone bird. He manages to get himself in all sorts of trouble. From
getting all covered in mud, to losing his mom. In the end his mom teaches him that everyone makes
mistakes and that it’s all part of growing up. I can’t wait to share this book with my younger
students who are still learning how to use all of their motor abilities.
Picture Book Gwen Fisher, Library Science Student, Kutztown University

Lifetime: The amazing numbers in animal lives
Schaefer, Lola M. Lifetime: The amazing numbers in animal lives. Illus. Christopher Silas Neal. San
In Schaefer’s picture book, she goes over how many times an animal does one specific thing over its
lifetime. The numbers start out small (a spider will spin one egg sac) and increase as the story goes on (a
male seahorse will carry and birth 1,000 seahorses). Each of the number facts about animals is
interesting and will grab the reader’s attention. This is not a counting book in the sense that there is a
pattern (counting by 1’s, 10’s, etc.). Some numbers may be hard to grasp for students when trying to
visualize how big these numbers are, but with manipulatives, the teacher or parent can help make these
numbers more concrete for their children/students. Schaefer has only one or two sentences on a page
for each animal she mentions. She expands upon this in the back of the book: there is a further
explanation of each animal that allows the reader to gather more information. Schaefer also talks about
what averages are and how to get them, and where she got her averages from. She even has a few math
problems in the back of her book for students to practice getting averages on their own. One can tell
that Schaeffer does a lot of research for her books, and it is very interesting to hear the facts that
Schaeffer gathers about animals.
Picture Book Andrea Siegfried
Bugs in My Hair

Bugs in My Hair, by David Shannon, teaches, and almost frightens, children about head lice. Head lice lay eggs that are really called nits. They make you itch, suck your blood, and host parties on your head. To get rid of head lice, you have to cut all of your hair off or soak it in mayonnaise. These unwelcome beasts might as well take over the world! David Shannon, Caldecott honor book and New York Times Best Illustrated book winner, brings a nonfiction book with a twist. The illustrations of head lice are realistic in features, however exaggerated in size and many other characteristics. Shannon illustrates head lice that wear clothing, eat popcorn on the couch, and terrorize cities. Kids will be intrigued by the hilarious facial expressions that are portrayed on each page. Once again, David Shannon brings a beautifully illustrated book for any children’s collection. However, beware this book will make you itchy!

Picture Book

Melanie Stuhr, Student, Kutztown University

Tiger In My Soup

Tiger in My Soup is a beautifully illustrated fantasy of an elementary school aged boy impatiently waiting for his teenage sister to read him a story about tigers. The teen however is preoccupied with her headphones and her own reading and serves the boy lunch, alphabet soup, never seeming to notice the adventure that is unraveling in their own kitchen. The text by Kashmira Sheth is a straightforward narrative told from the boy’s perspective. It is the fantastic illustrations by Jeffrey Ebbeler that bring the story to life and give the reader a glimpse into the imaginings of the young protagonist as he battles an irritable tiger that leaps from the bowl of soup. This entertaining story promotes reading; the characters are so deeply engaged in their books that they have little interest in their real world surroundings. Yet it also depicts the complexity of the sibling relationship, when one is in charge of the other, and the unfolding of a very familiar family scene. The illustrations are so vibrant and engaging that they could stand alone without the text. Readers of Tiger in My Soup will find themselves wanting more from both Sheth and Ebbeler.

Picture Book; Fantasy

Stephanie Towles, Librarian, Reading School District

Lights Out Shabbat

The story of a young Jewish boy celebrating Shabbat with his grandparents when all of a sudden the lights go out during an unusual storm in Georgia, this does not stop them from having a wonderful time together celebrating and enjoying their traditions. This book is excellent for those with some previous knowledge of Jewish religious practices since there is no help with pronunciation and no explanation for certain religious items like the braided candle or spice box. Brilliant coloring helps keep one’s eyes on the book as they flip through this short story as well as the narration of event to even with a repetition of “But the lights did not come on”. This would be great to showcase around the holidays since the story takes place when it is snowing but since Shabbat happens every Friday into Saturday it could be read anytime of the year.

Picture Book/ Holiday

Sara Fiorenza, Student, Kutztown University
**Ann and Nan are Anagrams: A Mixed-Up Word Dilemma**

This fun book follows young Robert, who takes the reader along with him on an anagram adventure! Robert’s grandmother starts talking to him in anagrams, so Robert does his best to find an object that can’t be made into an anagram, and therefore cure his grandmother! He has a hard time, and therefore runs into many more funny anagram examples along the way! The reader can easily spot the anagrams in the story by their fun fonts. Some of the anagrams are a stretch and take away from the tale, but overall the silly story and the bold illustrations still make this a great choice for using in a unit on anagrams, or just for reading aloud!

*Picture Book*  
Christine Weida, Library Clerk, Kutztown Community Library

**Body Parts: Double-Jointedness, Hitchhiker’s Thumb, and More**

This book focuses on traits and their appearance in genes. The specific traits examined occur in the hands and fingers. An activity to examine these traits in people is included at the end along with a glossary, an index and books, and websites for resources and further reading. Students will be fascinated by the pictures and intrigued by traits that they may or may not have ever seen before.

*Non-Fiction, Human Body*  
Sharon Breeden, Kutztown Graduate

**Seymour Simon’s Extreme Earth Records**

Combining the Earth’s extreme records with breathtaking pictures and superb writing, Simon captivates his audience with another fascinating informational text. Simon touches on topics such as the most extreme tsunamis and earthquakes, the coldest and hottest places on Earth, and the deepest and tallest places on Earth. Simon starts each topic by painting a picture in one’s mind: he uses great detail to describe things such as what it would feel like to be at the coldest place on Earth. Simon uses the pictures in this book to enhance the writing, and with both combined makes it easy for the reader to feel like he/she is right at the place that is being described. This would serve as a great starter book to peak student interest and students will be excited to do more research on whatever topic they choose. Simon also does a great job with making abstract ideas more concrete through the use of his comparisons throughout the book. Students and teachers alike should also take advantage of Simon’s website, and with most of his books (including this one) he offers questions to ask students as well as hands-on activities to do.

*Nonfiction*  
Andrea Siegfried
Bug Shots: The Good, the Bad, and the Bugly

From the title of this book that rhymes with “Mug Shots” to the clever acronym of FBI – Fellow Bug Investigator, and creative compilation of facts in the chapters to conform with the stages of an investigation, Bug Shots combines two kid-appealing subject areas (insects and investigation) in a powerfully magnified, appeal-factor way. Colorfully highlighted photomicrographs taken through a scanning electron microscope (SEM) are amazing – beautiful, sometimes scary, always fascinating! The informational text also concentrates on the more incredible and sometimes nastily gross insect facts. The seven chapters arranged around insect “orders” (taxonomy), are heavily peppered with basic criminology terms that makes reading it like an investigative textbook; and surprisingly, dilutes some of the formidable complexity of the text. An extensive glossary and index for the thirty-seven-text-paged book, along with lists of books, articles, multimedia, and websites for students and teachers, makes this truly an exceptional and outstanding book about entomology.

Nonfiction Gayle R. Heath, Library Director, Tamaqua Public Library

Bittersweet Summer

This book is part of a series. Katie Jordan may have to move because her dad is going to get a new job. Her mom is off touring, and will never come home to stay. Her new teacher may become her best friend’s new mom, even though Katie wants her to be her new mom. This is a great coming of age book for middle elementary. I found it very inspiring.

Short Chapter Book Gwen Fisher, Library Science Student, Kutztown University

“When Did You See Her Last”

The second book in his newest series, When Did You See Her Last? is about Snicket’s search for a wealthy young chemist who is missing. Some believe she has been kidnapped, while others think she went off on her own to work on a new project. Some of the clues are contradictory, building the suspense since the reader doesn’t know whom to trust. The convoluted plot includes secret phone conversations between Snicket and his sister as well as a fascinating array of ridiculous characters. Characters engage in predictably silly behavior. As with Snicket’s previous books, the author employs puns and colorful character names while stretching the reader’s vocabulary.

Mystery Marge McCormick, Tamaqua Area Middle School
The Boy on the Bridge

Natalie Standiford, the author of *The Boy on the Bridge*, is a native of Baltimore, MD and has written eleven books for both children and teens, spanning various topics. Standiford discovered a love of languages in high school and college, where she majored in Russian Language and Literature. She was even able to study in Russia for a while. Within the pages of *The Boy on the Bridge*, Standiford goes into a story of a young American student, Laura, studying abroad in the USSR in 1982. One fateful morning Laura is being harassed by a group of gypsy women on a bridge on her way back to her dorm, a boy a few years older than her, Alyosha, comes to her aid. Laura has been warned not to associate with the natives but something about him intrigued her, and soon she is unable to get enough of him. *The Boy on the Bridge* may not necessarily be suited for younger teen readers. The storyline is simple to understand and brings the reader close with the characters. The novel is placed in 1982 when drugs like marijuana and alcohol are used more openly. A few times in the book they are mentioned and parents may want to be informed in case the reader has questions regarding these topics. Overall, the book was well written, but it did not capture my attention as a book I would suggest to every reader, though it could be suggested to readers that want to read about the USSR in the 1980s.

*Historical Fiction; Romance; Chapter Book*

Nicole Maney, Library Science Student, Kutztown University

What’s Bugging Nurse Penny?

Sitting outside Nurse Penny’s office Max, Tessa and Van can’t help but notice that something has taken away her smile. As the children try to figure out what’s bugging Nurse Penny she puts together a presentation for the school about head lice. She explains what they are, what they aren’t, how they are spread and how to get rid of them. Nurse Penny’s assembly is full of helpful tips about how to avoid spreading lice and countering rumors children have heard about them. Nurse Penny then announces she is going home to delouse herself. This book, and others like it, are long overdue. Stier has done a great job of covering a lot of facts here that are helpful for professionals working with children who may have lice, for peers and classmates of those who may have them, and for the actual affected children and their families. The non-nonsense explanations from Nurse Penny erase any stigmas or misinformation that often abound when children in a classroom have been identified as having lice. The tips on avoiding lice are also helpful general hygiene hints that should become as common as hand washing and covering a cough or sneeze. The illustrations by Beaky are fun and light and keep the story from becoming too preachy or serious. Everyone who works with children should have a copy of this book; pediatrician offices, social workers, beauticians, camp counselors, little league coaches and especially teachers who ideally would have extra copies to pass out to each child when outbreaks occur.

*Picture Book; Realistic Fiction*

Stephanie Towles, Librarian, Reading School District
About Penguins

This title is part of the About series by Cathryn and John Sill. This particular copy is a revised edition full of beautiful, realistic watercolor illustrations of penguins. Each two page spread consists of one to two sentences of penguin facts along with a full page colored plate labeled with a caption. The book is very simple to understand and it would be a great resource for second grade animal reports. It would also work as a read-aloud to introduce a penguin unit to younger children. The book covers different penguin species, habitats, predators, how penguins move, what penguins look like, their eggs, and what penguins eat. At the end of the book there is an afterword with specific facts about each numbered plate. The afterword goes into detail about each kind of penguin which could be used for more in depth study. Books from the About series are listed at the end of the book. A glossary and bibliography are included. The only thing that could have been improved was that children would find that some of the websites listed would be difficult for them to understand.

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Discover More: Night Sky
$15.99. Gr. 3 and up.

Why do the stars appear to change positions? Why are there spots on the sun? These are only a couple of the questions posited in this informative, scientific, and educational text that is a part of the “Discover More” series. In what could be used as a teaching aid, informational text, or purely for the young amateur astronomer, the reader will find an abundance of factoids, maps, illustrations, and photography detailing what can be found in the night sky and beyond. The book is partitioned into four parts titled, “Watching the night sky, Searching for the stars, Discovering amazing planets, and Galaxies and the universe.” The range of material is expansive, but easy to understand. The text contains a glossary of terms, an index, and even a free digital book that can be accessed with a unique code provided before the contents. This book would be appropriate for grades three and up.

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Hide-and-Seek Science: Animal Camouflage
978-0-8234-2293-7. $16.95. Gr. 1-5.

This book gives an amazing example of the camouflage that animals use to blend in to their different environments and habitats. From swamps and deserts, to jungles and grasslands, this book covers them all. In each habitat, one first looks to see if they can find each animal; on the next page it shows where all the animals are located. Along with showing where all the animals are, it also gives reasons why that animal hides there and why it has a certain kind of camouflage. The illustrations are beautiful and finding all the animals is tons of fun. This is definitely a book that younger children will love to read, while searching for all the animals. And this book would equally entertain adults, who can learn previously unknown interesting facts about the animals presented. Overall, this is a wonderful book that would make a highly recommended addition to your library.
A Place for Turtles

Turtles play an important role in the food chains of a variety of habitats. Turtles in different parts of the world are endangered by the actions of humans. When dangers to turtles have been identified, environmentalists have stepped in to find solutions that protect turtles without too much disruption to their human neighbors. The opening spread introduces the reader to turtles. The following eleven double page spreads each show a different threat to turtles. The accompanying text is simple, straightforward and easy for young listeners to comprehend. Each spread contains a text box that offers more detail to support the simple text. Details in the text box include more information about the threat pictured: the turtle species affected, the location or habitat prone to be affected, and steps being taken to mitigate the threat. The text closes with easy steps readers can take to help protect turtles. The illustrations are richly detailed, beautiful color paintings, which clearly show the differences among the different species featured. Backmatter includes additional facts about turtles, and a selected bibliography. End papers feature maps showing the ranges of the twelve different turtle species highlighted in the text. Each map is accompanied by a detailed close-up painting of the related species. Other backyard animals receiving a similar treatment in Stewart’s “A Place for” series include: bats, birds, butterflies, fish and frogs. This series takes a unique approach to the standard animal book for this age group. The series will find a dedicated readership among budding environmentalists and animal lovers.

*Picture Book; Nonfiction.*

Stephanie Gibson, Librarian, Montessori Acad. of Lancaster

No Monkeys, No Chocolate

How can monkeys and chocolate be connected? Stewart and Young draw a clear line between the two seemingly unconnected things. The story of chocolate starts with the cocoa bean, so naturally, this book does as well. Working backward from the cocoa bean, Stewart and Young share the ecosystem and workings of the cocoa tree, including the insects and animals that affect it. Wong’s ink and watercolor illustrations are soft and clear, drawing focus to visuals that support key parts of the text. Stewart has a gift for writing text that is makes science concepts easy to understand. The main text is enhanced by a pair of Stadler-and-Waldorf-like worms, who are tucked into the corner of each page, cracking jokes related to the given facts. Backmatter includes as passage about cocoa and the rain forests, a list of things kids can do to help preserve rain forests, and an author’s note. Useful as a resource for research about chocolate, this title will also have high appeal for children who enjoy reading informational texts. Pair it with Robin Nelson’s, *From Cocoa Bean to Chocolate*, to show students what happens after the cocoa beans are harvested.

*Picture Book; Nonfiction*

Stephanie Gibson, Librarian Montessori Acad. of Lancaster
**Bring on the Birds**


Bright, bold illustrations, predictable rhymes, and a rollicking rhythm all come together to make board book perfection. Originally published in picture book format in 2011, Stockdale’s work is an obvious choice for reprinting as a board book. Like her earlier work, *Fabulous Fishes*, this book about birds is one that toddlers will want to hear again and again (and again!) The text is practically musical, with a strong rhythm and rhyme that make it easy for toddlers to mimic the adult reader. As simple as it is, Stockdale still manages to sneak in some excellent words to build toddlers’ vocabulary. Stockdale’s art is as impressive as the text. She has a unique style that is at once bold and graphic, yet filled with beautiful detail. This is an all-around excellent selection, and a must-purchase for all board book collections.

*Board Book*  
Stephanie Gibson, Librarian, Montessori Acad. of Lancaster

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**Stripes of All Types**


Animals with stripes can be found anywhere in the world. *Stripes of All Types* depicts several different animals in different places that have stripes on their bodies. The illustrations are large, brightly colored and fun to look at. Young children would have fun looking at the pictures, and playing a stripe matching game at the back of the book. At the end of the book there is a section that describes the animals that are featured and what their stripes do in nature. Any child who likes animals would love this book.

*Nonfiction/ Animals*  
Samantha Heck, Student, Kutztown University

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**Romeo Blue**


Felicity Budwig is your average teen. She lives in a house, has friends, and also has wonderful adventures, but she isn’t as average as she seems. Her parents dropped her off in Bottlebay, Maine and went back to London and she doesn’t know where they are or what they are doing. Her family is also a bit strange. Her father isn’t really her father but the uncle that she lives with in Maine is her real father. After all of this, you’d think Flissy would be happy that she is in contact with her real father and she is getting to know her long-lost relatives; not even close. She is mad that her parents left her here and she has no one to talk to, besides Derek. Derek was adopted by her relatives and Flissy is enamored. She loves to talk to him and take adventures with him. But once their adventures turn toward finding Derek’s real father, Flissy starts to doubt. She wants this boy but will his father take him away right when Derek finds that he wants her too? This book is great for middle school students who love to follow characters through their experiences. It would be a great addition to any library.

*Chapter Book; Fiction.*  
Kaitlyn Verdon, Student, Kutztown University
“The President Has Been Shot!”
This is another great young adult history book by James Swanson. I was immediately drawn to this book because I have a Bachelor’s degree in History. The book covers a four day period leading up to and following the assassination of John F. Kennedy, one of the biggest moments in the history of our country. The only problem I had with this book is that I had a hard time at first determining what he believes about who shot JFK. Does he believe Oswald acted alone or does he believe in a conspiracy theory. Ultimately, I think he believes Oswald acted alone but you read the book and be the judge. The book includes lots of photographs, maps, and drawings to break up the text and keep the reader’s attention. This book would be great for students in 7-12 grade because it is written with authority but not written like a textbook. The story is engaging and appealing. Anybody who has an interest in American history should read this book.
Nonfiction
Andrew Boyer, State Employee

I Survived: The Japanese Tsunami, 2011
Readers will get a very realistic and terrifying sense of what it must have been like to experience the Japanese tsunami of 2011. The setting for the story is a coastal fishing village in northern Japan, where Ben, an 11 year old boy, his younger brother, and mother are visiting Ben’s uncle shortly after the death of Ben’s father. Ben is an embittered boy, who has lost his spirit with the loss of his father, but this quickly changes on the morning of the 9.0 earthquake and ensuing massive wave that separates him from his family. Tarshis spends little time introducing the characters, and setting up the story, and quickly hooks reluctant readers who crave thrilling action. Nor does the author hold back in her descriptions of cars, boats and people being ripped away by the torrent, and some readers may find it disturbing. As an added bonus, Tarshis includes a brief historical account of the actual events, an explanation of the science behind earthquakes and tsunamis, as well as an overview of how the Fukushima nuclear power plant was used to generate electricity.
Historical/Adventure Fiction
Kristine Seibert, Librarian, 10th & Green Elementary

The Three Little Pigs and the Somewhat Bad Wolf
Classic elements of “The Three Little Pigs” including houses of straw, sticks and bricks along with a huffing, puffing wolf appear in this humorous retelling of the classic story. A few twists appear as well. The first pig purchases potato chips with the money left after his purchase of straw. The second pig purchases sody-pop with the money left over after his purchase of sticks. The third pig plants a vegetable garden after buying bricks to construct his house. As the wolf makes his way to the first two houses, the first two pigs end up taking refuge in the brick house of the third pig. After the wolf collapses from huffing and puffing, the three pigs invite him to share a healthy meal made from the vegetables in the garden. Alas, the three pigs and the wolf end up living together in the brick house. Teague, illustrator of the How Do Dinosaurs books with author Jane Yolen and author/illustrator of the LaRue books, presents colorful and captivating illustrations which are sure to delight all ages.
Picture Book
Sharon Breeden, Kutztown Graduate
**Tommysaurus Rex**

*Tommysaurus Rex* is a great graphic novel that can help young teens learn to accept the death of a very dear pet and make the attempt to move onto new pets to love but to never forget those that have been lost. A boy named Ely loses his kind and friendly dog, named Tommy, in an accident. Ely is sent to his grandfather’s to work on a farm when later he stumbles upon a tyrannosaurus rex in a dark cave which is just as friendly to him, a just replacement for Tommy the dog, who is also named Tommy. The art style is very valuable to a young inspiring artist that, in his or her future, wished to make comic books. The art has a simplistic style that is easy to learn for starters. This entertaining story leaves a powerful impression from its hilarious humor to its remarkable heart-felt conclusion. This graphic novel is recommended to readers of age 15 and above for minor gore and crude humor.

*Graphic Novel; Fantasy*  
Logan Stecher, Undergraduate Student, Kutztown University

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**The Guardian Team: On the Job with Rena and Roo**

An orphaned wild burro and a puppy who is a runt sound like a strange match up, but they turn out to be the best livestock guardians in Wyoming. One year old Roo is a burro who moves to the ranch to help protect lambs when along comes 3 month old Rena a white energetic puppy to help out. Together this unusual pair learns how to socialize with each other and how to shepherd a flock of lambs from dangerous animals such as coyotes. Throughout this story the reader learns facts about the lives of sheep on a ranch and how animals can protect one another. By the end of the story we see a fully grown dog and burro that work skillfully as a team. This story is an excellent introduction to the history of working animals and the important roles they serve even in today’s world. This story promotes a wonderful message of teamwork. There are large beautiful pictures of the animals throughout the story. Readers of all ages will enjoy this book.

*Nonfiction: Picture Book*  
Melinda Bender, Librarian, Thirteenth and Green Elementary School

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**Alphabet Trucks**

“F” is for Fuel truck, “R” is for Recycle truck, and “V” is for Vacuum truck. Adorable illustrations accompany this simple rhyming alphabet story that would make a great read aloud for primary grades, especially squirmy little ones, who find it hard to sit still for story time. Vamos has successfully imagined a unique type of truck for every letter of the alphabet, and describes its function in the day-to-day operations of a community. O’Rourke captures the essence of each vehicle’s role with pleasingly colorful, lively drawings that evoke a sense of sweet nostalgia. The uncomplicated text is not too wordy, yet it will invite opportunities to introduce some new vocabulary to younger kids.

*Picture Book*  
Kristine Seibert, Librarian, 10th & Green Elementary
**Spies and Prejudice**


Gr. 7-10.

Strawberry Fields is a regular teenager by day and a private investigator by night. *Spies and Prejudice* by Talia Vance is about friendship, love, spies, and secrets. Strawberry A.K.A Berry works with her father as a private investigator because who is going to expect a teenager to be following them? She is driven by the need to figure out the mystery about her mother’s death years ago. On one of her stakeouts she meets Tanner and his brother. Berry just cannot put her finger on it, but something is just not right with them. When digging into her mother’s death she finds out that Tanner and his whole family might have had a hand in her death. *Spies and Prejudice* is fun and lighthearted while being serious and emotional. The readers can connect with Berry from her intense emotions about losing her mother. As the books goes on, the need to find out what happened to Berry’s mother heightens and the reader will become enthralled. This would be a great novel for grades 7-10 who love murder mysteries with a twist.

*Mystery, Young Adult*  
Crystal Hunsicker, Library Science, Kutztown University

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**Privateer’s Apprentice**


This story follows the young boy, Jameson Cooper. Formerly a printer’s son, left an orphan, Jameson finds himself in prison for seems to be an attempt at stealing bread. He is sold at auction by the very baker who has him arrested, and is spirited away while running an errand his very first night serving the baker. He finds himself a prisoner of the privateer Captain “Attack Jack” and his crew, and is left with no choice other than to serve on board the ship; not an easy task for Jameson at first. Eventually he becomes a skilled seaman and his skills as a printer/illustrator come in handy when he is made sea artist of the crew. I would not suggest this book to a reluctant reader, and was not as pleased with it as I thought I’d be. If you are looking for a pirate/privateer themed book this would be a good suggestion.

*Adventure/Historical Fiction*  
Sarah Camus, Alumna, Kutztown University

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**Figuring Out Fossils**


In five chapters, Walker gives a very brief, cursory overview of fossils – what they are, their age and how they are formed, the process of mineral replacement, where they are found, and why they are studied. Simple phrases and terms are used in the text and then defined in the glossary. As part of the “Do You Dig Earth Science?” series, several questions are posed throughout the book for which answers are NOT provided. This is meant to pique interest and hopefully, spur the curiosity of the reader enough to engage them to “dig” out the answers from other sources. A list of books and websites are provided at the book’s end so you do just that! The photos and diagrams in the book are interesting but not exceptional. The provided index gives readers an idea of what is contained in the book and where to quickly find the information. The scope of the book was very ambitious, which both positively and negatively impacted its appeal. While some readers would find this approach interesting, while providing a multitude of areas for further reading and investigations, other readers would be distracted and perhaps overwhelmed by this “shotgun” approach. If budgets allow for a number of books about fossils, this one would serve as a nice addition; otherwise, it should not be selected as the sole book for this subject area.

*Nonfiction*  
Gayle R. Heath, Library Director, Tamaqua Public Library
The Boxcar Children: Schoolhouse Mystery

The story begins as the four Alden children, along with their grandfather, embark on a vacation to a tiny fishing community in hopes of having an adventure, which they do. Mysteries surround the island village that is accessible to visitors only during low tides. These mysteries include unfriendly locals who watch but evade the Alden children, warnings about a stranger whom the locals refer to as the “money man,” and, not surprisingly, an old, abandoned schoolhouse. With its simple vocabulary, and as an introduction to the genre, *Schoolhouse Mystery* may be a good choice for emerging readers, however, the language and situations are at times outdated. Warner has written a pleasant story from an uncomplicated time and place that explores themes of cheating, teamwork, and the value of “old” versus “new” things, however, it may not be the best choice for sophisticated readers.

Kristine Seibert, Librarian, 10th & Green Elementary

The Boxcar Children: Spooktacular

This trilogy begins with *AHaunted Boxcar*. The four protagonists are orphans Henry, 14; Jessie, 12; Violet, 10; and Benny, 6, who currently live with their grandfather, Mr. Alden and his housekeeper, Mrs. McGregor. After their parents died and before their grandfather located them, they found an abandoned boxcar to use as a shelter. They became so attached to it that Mr. Alden had it moved to his backyard for them to play in. After meeting a man who was researching local lore, they started seeing strange lights and hearing funny noises coming from the boxcar. The children began to investigate, and in the process, they discovered a doll and an old diary. After doing some research to learn about the girl who wrote the diary, soon they realize that they have met one of her descendants. The second entry is *The Pumpkin Head Mystery*, in which the children help a family friend who has a farm. As they assist with the farm stand and a hayride, they learn that someone is smashing pumpkins. On a haunted hayride, they discover who is responsible for the trickery and help the adults solve the problem. The third story in the trilogy is *The Zombie Project*, in which the children visit a family friend’s country lodge where zombie rumors abound. While helping out around the lodge, they get to the root of the problem. The author’s style is simple and straightforward, with uncomplicated language, and the plots are methodical, providing clarity for young readers. These books were written half a century ago, and while the situations may still be interesting to young readers, the characters seem too good to be true in today’s society. The three siblings are always polite, supportive, and helpful to one another. Technology is virtually nonexistent in these stories. As with other children’s books from the mid-twentieth century, the days of *The Boxcar Children* series are numbered.

Marge McCormick, Tamaqua Area Middle School
The Boxcar Children: The Return of the Graveyard Ghost

A white lily appeared just when lightning struck—was it the LaFonte ghost? The Alden children want to prove to the town of Greenfield that ghosts don’t exist. Twelve-year-old Jessie Alden, along with her siblings Benny, ten-year-old sister Violet, and fourteen-year-old Henry, are out to investigate who is tricking the residents of Greenfield into leaving gifts at the cemetery in hopes of having a year of good luck. There are many suspects, but one mysterious person with a dark hooded jacket keeps lurking in the cemetery. Could it be the LaFonte ghost? This was surprisingly a very engaging story. For students who are looking for a good mystery, this will satisfy them with plenty of clues and suspicious characters. It has a very surprising ending. This is a fun book for students who are looking for a chapter book that will keep them reading all the way till the end.

Fiction: Mystery

Melinda Bender, Librarian, Thirteenth and Green Elementary School

Four Secrets

This is the strangest book I have read in quite some time. That being said, it is great for any reluctant reader, as the suspense of the story and the interesting illustrations throughout the book hold readers’ interest and make this book one difficult to put down. Three high school outcasts, Katie Havenga, Nate Wilson, and Renata Le Cortez, begin the story in a juvenile delinquent facility for having kidnapped and kept another student, Chase Dobson. What exactly drove these three normally good students to kidnap someone; (even if he was a bully?) And who knows what about whom? These are some questions to be answered only by reading this book to find out! Each of the three tell their story, and the different perspectives make it all the better. Nate and Katie’s stories are told using words and Renata’s perspective is told with pictures. I would highly recommend this book for your high school library.

Fiction

Sarah Camus, Alum, Kutztown University

Horseplay

This brightly illustrated picture books tells the funny story of a farmer who has trouble controlling his horses. This story begins with the farmer noticing that his horses have trouble staying awake. He becomes very upset because the horses are not very useful when they are sleeping instead of working. After investigating what could possibly be keeping them awake at night, he finds that they are busying engaging in pure horseplay! To solve the problem he puts them in separate stalls for the night. Unfortunately, they just pass notes and proved to be just as tired the next day. In the end, the farmer stayed up all night standing right in front of the horses. Since they had no choice but to sleep the horses got a good night’s rest. On the other hand, the farmer did not and snoozed all the next day. Overall, this story is very funny and lighthearted. Although it lacks any real solution to the problem, it does cause children to both chuckle and predict possible solutions.

Picture Book; Fantasy

Kara Solt, Graduate Student, Kutztown University
**Grumbles from the Forest: Fairy-tale Voices with a Twist: Poems**


This is a fairy tale book, unlike any other. It’s not the pea that’s keeping the princess awake, it’s all those mattresses! Snow White boldly yells at the evil witch through the mirror after she pleads and Goldilocks slips the three bears a letter of apology under the door, after she runs. Each fairy tale from Cinderella to Three Billy Goats Gruff, is told through a number of poems, explaining the true feelings of each character. Each poem is unexpected and beautifully written. *Grumbles from the Forest* is a brew of the classic fairy tale characters’ pleads, recollections, and grumbles in each of their stories. Each poem of the beloved tale is told from the point of view from other countries and the original versions of the fairy tales. The poems will leave the readers surprised. Each page has beautiful, unique illustrations of each fairy tale. Rumpelstiltskin will create chills up everyone’s spine. The colors of the paintings, along with the amount of detail, make the illustrations jump off the page. The realistic, but sometimes dark and eerie, interpretations of the characters will make the reader think twice the next time the Disney movies on TV. This book is a great way to tell children the original fairy tales, with not so happy endings, without them truly being horrified. Though due to the somewhat creepy illustrations, grade two should be youngest viewers for this picture book.

*Picture Book; Fairy Tale*  
*Melanie Stuhr, Student, Kutztown University*

**How Do Dinosaurs Say I’m Mad?**


Yolen and Teague have paired up again for another How Do Dinosaurs book. This rhyming book shows the importance of what children and adults should do and not do when they get angry. Yelling, slamming doors, pouting, throwing things, kicking, and destroying things are a few ways the dinosaurs show that they are mad. Then the story shows that the dinosaur can count to ten, breathe calmly, clean up their mess, apologize, and hug their parents when they are done having a temper tantrum. The author prefaced the story with strategies that everyone can use when they get mad. Yolen explains that people get angry for different reasons including being scared, wanting something they can’t have, feeling mean, or being sick. Yolen’s strategies are illustrated with the beloved dinosaur characters and parents. Teague’s bright acrylic illustrations are very recognizable and he identifies each type of dinosaur. Even though the dinosaurs are the ones behaving badly in the story the emotions and feelings that are expressed are relatable to children. Both parents and teachers can use this book to teach about feelings and anger management including what is appropriate behavior at home and school. Children can learn that there are consequences for their behavior, but know that their parents still love them even while they are misbehaving just like when a hug is shared between dinosaur and his parent. This book will be a great addition to any school, public library or home collection. What makes this series of books by Yolen and Teague so great is that children who enjoy reading dinosaur books will pick up this book and learn a great lesson as well. With that said, this book is appealing to both non-dinosaur lovers and dinosaur lovers.

*Picture Book*  
*Sarah Meitzler, Circulation Manager, Lower Macungie Library*