

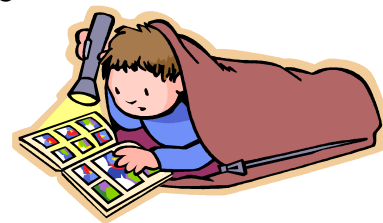
Best New Youth Books of 2011

NLA/NEMA Conference



October 7, 2011

presented by Sally Snyder
Nebraska Library Commission



Fiction for Older Teens

Black, Holly *WHITE CAT*

320p. Simon & Schuster 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-4169-6396-7
(Curse Workers series, Bk 1) In a society where curse workers (magic) are outlawed, organized crime is in control of all who can wield the power. Cassel, 17, is the only member of his family with no curse power. He feels disconnected, but still loyal to them. He works hard to blend in to normal society, but recent events have him rethinking his place there.

Black, Holly *RED GLOVE*

325p. Margaret K. McElderry Books (Simon & Schuster) 2011 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-4424-0339-0
(Curse Workers series, Bk 2) Cassel Sharpe thought he had no magical power, but learned he was wrong in *White Cat*. Now he is trying to decide what to do, join the Zacharov family (mobster-types) and use his curse working skills for them, or try to find some way to be “normal.” Is that possible?

Bruchac, Joseph *WOLF MARK*

374p. Tu Books (Lee & Low Books, Inc.) 2011 \$17.95 ISBN 978-1-60060-661-8
Luke (17) has learned a lot of things from his father and his uncle – martial arts, tracking, survival skills. And now he may need every skill he has learned. His father has been kidnapped and Luke plans to rescue him. Along the way he learns something more – that he, Luke, is a skinwalker, like his father. Bruchac blends native stories, European stories, danger, evil, and what it means to be human into his latest title.

Deuker, Carl *PAYBACK TIME*

298p. Houghton Mifflin 2010 \$16.00 ISBN 978-0-547-27981-7
Senior Mitch True has been the investigative reporter for the school paper, but this year he is assigned the sports beat. It isn't long before he is wondering what the coach is up to – why is the obviously talented new player pretending to be average? He makes key plays when needed to win the game but the rest of the time he stumbles along or sits on the bench. Soon Mitch and his sports photographer Kimi, are investigating.

Eulberg, Elizabeth **PROM AND PREJUDICE**

288p. Scholastic 2011 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-545-24077-2

As a scholarship student at an elite boarding school coming in for the first time as a junior, Lizzie Bennet is made to feel unworthy of attention by all students except her roommate, Jane, one of the nicest people possible. At a dance, Jane is smitten with Charles Bingley, and Lizzie suffers the snobbery of Will Darcy. From there we have a modernized version of *Pride and Prejudice* sure to appeal to younger teen girls. It is well done and brings in some changes but maintains many of the expected encounters and results for those who have read the original. For those who haven't, it may prompt them to give it a try.

Golden, Christopher & Tim Lebbon **THE WILD**

Illus. by Greg Ruth 348p. HarperCollins 2011 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-06-186317-2

(The Secret Journeys of Jack London, Bk 1)

Jack (17 & turns 18) travels to the Yukon to seek gold; he soon joins up with two friendly guys he met on the trail. At first their adventures are all wilderness related, but soon they turn supernatural. Alone, Jack runs from the Wendigo... and encounters a siren-like young woman who cares for him as he heals. Escaping her may be harder than facing the Wendigo. A good look at the trials of facing such a wilderness, with the added supernatural aspects of the story will attract readers.

Hauptman, Pete **BLANK CONFESSIOIN**

170p. Simon & Schuster 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4169-1327-6

Shayne Blank walks into the police station and calmly confesses to a murder. The detective on duty, George Rawls, listens as Shayne tells what happened. An unusual and compelling book. This is the 2012-2013 One Book for Nebraska Teens.

Herrera, Juan Felipe **SKATE FATE**

117p. HarperCollins 2011 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-06-143287-3

Lots of white space will appeal to reluctant readers, however this is not a quick read. Told all in poetry, Lucky Z is reconnecting to the world and celebrating life after an accident that left him in a wheelchair.

Hinds, Gareth **THE ODYSSEY**

248p. Candlewick Press 2010 \$14.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-7636-4268-6

A graphic novel version of the tale. What Hinds accomplished with *Beowulf*, he now does with *The Odyssey*. Wonderful adaptation with full color art, this will appeal to many. And a good place to start for teens who have not yet read Homer's version.

John, Antony **FIVE FLAVORS OF DUMB**

338p. Dial 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-8037-3433-3

Piper (18) is almost accidentally offered the job of manager for her classmates' popular rock band, called Dumb. This is a rather unusual job for someone who is deaf. Now if only she can keep them together and actually playing music.

Lim, Rebecca **MERCY**

269p. Hyperion 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4231-4517-2

She calls herself Mercy, though she remembers nothing about her life. All she knows is that she wakes up in someone else's body, stays there for a time (days or weeks, it is never the same) and then moves on, remembering very little of what happened before. This time she is in Carmen (about 16), a member of a high school choir group. The choir is staying in another town for 2 weeks, before a concert. Carmen is staying in the room of a girl who disappeared two years ago. The parents have given up and are trying to return to "normal." Her twin brother, Ryan (about 18), is certain she is still alive. For the first time Mercy sees she can do something, make a difference; soon Ryan and Carmen are working together to find Lauren. While Carmen is meek, Mercy is fearless, and also has some powers she doesn't really understand, making some changes in Carmen's life. This is the beginning of a new series with great appeal to teen readers.

Lindner, April **JANE**

365p. Little, Brown & Co. 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-316-08420-8

A modern retelling of Jane Eyre. Jane takes a nanny job after having to drop out of college due to her parents unexpected deaths. She is working for the famous rock star Nico Rathburn. Well done – my sister, a dyed-in-the-wool *Jane Eyre* fan, thoroughly enjoyed this version.

Lynch, Chris **HOTHOUSE**

198p. HarperCollins 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-167379-5

DJ and Russell, teens and sons of firefighters, work through the grief and the glory bestowed on them when their fathers die fighting the same fire. But soon, some rumors of wrong-doing begin to surface and suddenly DJ and Russell are no longer the honored sons of the town. We wait with DJ to find out what the final verdict will be about what happened that night.

Ray, Michelle **FALLING FOR HAMLET**

348p. Little Brown 2011 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-316-10162-2

Modern day Denmark: Hamlet is prince, attending college not too far away and Ophelia, a high school senior, is the daughter of the King's top advisor and PR person, and a longtime friend to Hamlet. Told from Ophelia's point of view, the text occasionally includes excerpts from a police interview of her, and periodic excerpts from an Oprah-like TV interview. These blend well into the story. The author follows Shakespeare's story with only one (or two) huge differences – Ophelia lives. And the final confrontation happens during a lacrosse game rather than in a sword fight. The main characters retain their names (Horatio, Laertes, etc.) while minor characters do not.

Shan, Darren **OCEAN OF BLOOD**

247p. Little, Brown & Co. 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-316-07866-5

(The Saga of Larten Crepsley, Bk 2) The second of four books, that are prequels to the Cirque Du Freak series. My husband read it and agrees the prequels continue the appeal and interest of the original series. In this book, Larten is tired of older vampires telling him how to behave, so along with his blood brother, Wester, he goes out into the world and falls full tilt into the joys of being a vampire. His enemies are waiting for the right moment...

Standiford, Natalie ***CONFESSIONS OF THE SULLIVAN SISTERS***

313p. Scholastic 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-545-10710-5

Told in three parts, we hear the confessions of Norrie, Jane, and Sassy for the affront their grandmother has suffered. Called “Almighty,” their grandmother has demanded a confession from the one who perpetrated the unnamed act. No one is certain what got Almighty so upset. Since their family is dependent on her, all three girls confess their secrets.

Ward, Rachel ***NUMBERS***

325p. Chicken House (Scholastic) 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-545-14299-1

Set in London, Jem (15) can see the date of the day someone will die if she looks into their eyes, so she rarely does that. She knows the date her best friend, Spider will die. They are both in line for a ride on the London Eye when she realizes everyone in line has that day's date in their eyes. As she and Spider run away, a bomb explodes. Afraid they will be accused, and afraid to explain why they ran, they leave town together - on the run. Spider doesn't know his day is coming soon, and Jem isn't sure what they should do next. Can she find a way to keep Spider alive?

Ward, Rachel ***THE CHAOS***

339p. Chicken House (Scholastic) 2011 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-545-24269-1

(Numbers series, Bk 2) Adam, 15, is the son of Jem from book 1. Since he can remember, he can see the date a person will die if he looks in his or her eyes, like his mother could. He can also feel what kind of death it will be, peaceful or painful; by knife or by catastrophe. He and his great-grandmother just moved back to London and he is appalled at how many people have 01/01/2027 as their date. What will happen in 6 months? Can he do anything about it? *Infinity* – the conclusion to the trilogy, is due out May 1, 2012.

Whitney, Daisy ***THE MOCKINGBIRDS***

335p. Little, Brown & Co. 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-316-09053-7

A junior at the boarding school, Themis Academy, Alex Patrick has trouble remembering how she ended up in Carter Hutchinson's bed. Over the next few days she begins to remember bits and pieces of that night, finally realizing she was date raped. Themis Academy faculty are so proud of their top students, they have no idea anyone might do something inappropriate, so the students have set up their own justice system – the Mockingbirds.

Nonfiction for Teens

Aronson, Marc & Marina Budhos ***SUGAR CHANGED THE WORLD: A Story of Magic, Spice,***

Slavery, Freedom, and Science 166p. Houghton Mifflin 2010 \$20.00 ISBN 978-0-618-57492-6
The history of sugar and its effects on religion, politics, and humanity (due to slavery); and also its several sources and forms.

Bragg, Georgia ***HOW THEY CROAKED: The Awful Ends of the Awfully Famous***

Illus. by Kevin O'Malley 162p. Walker 2011 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-802798176
Fascinating look at the deaths of 19 famous people, from King Tut to Albert Einstein the people are listed chronologically. Six to eight pages are given to each person, with a two-page spread after each that explains one to three things about them or items of their time. Great for browsing.

Bristow, David L. ***SKY SAILORS: True Stories of the Balloon Era***

134p. Farrar, Strauss & Giroux 2010 \$18.99 ISBN 978-0-374-37014-5
Nebraska author and winner of the 2011 NCB Young Adult Nonfiction Award. Excellent nonfiction that reads like a story. Readers will learn about the experimentation and danger of the balloon era, something teens may not have encountered before. Illustrated with numerous photos and handbills of the time. Includes notes and a bibliography.

Carlson, Mary Kay ***THE BAT SCIENTISTS***

79p. Houghton Mifflin 2010 \$18.99 ISBN 978-0-547-19956-6
Another excellent title in the Scientists in the field series – the lure of bats should make this title popular.

Dutton, Judy ***SCIENCE FAIR SEASON: Twelve Kids, a Robot Named Scorch...and What It Takes to Win*** 288p. Hyperion 2011 \$24.99 ISBN 978-1-4013-2379-0

(marketed to adults) A fascinating look at six of the contestants for the 2009 Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF), as well as some of the winners from previous years. Each chapter is dedicated to one amazing student, telling how they became interested in their subject, what their project is about, and how they progressed from local to regional to the International competition. The author has an easy-going style that is appealing, and does an admirable job of explaining some of the more intricate scientific issues surrounding the projects. This is a wonderful book for casual science readers, as well as an inspiration for future science fair competitors.

Fleischman, Sid ***SIR CHARLIE: Chaplin, the Funniest Man in the World***

268p. Greenwillow Books (HarperCollins) 2010 \$19.99 ISBN 978-0-06-189640-8
The author's last book (he passed away in March of 2010) this gives the reader a look at Charlie Chaplin, from childhood poverty in London to his fame in silent movies. Fleischman does not ignore some of Chaplin's faults, both personal and professional. He also includes some details about early movie making, while keeping the reader engaged. Includes a timeline, references, bibliography, and index.

Gherman, Beverly ***SPARKY: The Life and Art of Charles Schulz***

122p. Chronicle Books 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-8118-6790-0
A positive biography of the "funny pages" artist, this may inspire future generations to give it a try. (If they have heard of him ☺)

Holzer, Harold ***FATHER ABRAHAM: Lincoln and his Sons***

209p. Calkins Creek (Boyd's Mills Press) 2011 \$17.95 ISBN 978-1-59078-303-0

A biography of Lincoln and his family, focusing on Lincoln's relationship with his sons. Numerous illustrations and photographs from the time break up the text and add interest. As *Booklist* noted, this look at Lincoln's family also gives the reader insight to Lincoln's personality. An excellent look at life in the 1800s. Includes notes, bibliography, and index.

Janezko, Paul B. ***THE DARK GAME: True Spy Stories***

248p. Candlewick Press 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-2915-1

Written in an appealing way, this title blends intriguing facts with some well-known – and some not so well-known – spies in history. Beginning with the American Revolutionary War, the author identifies some of the spies that saved our revolution and notes some of their methods. He moves on to the American Civil War, World War I & II, the Cold War, concluding with two cases of U.S. agents turning over secrets to others. Source notes, a bibliography, and an index are included.

Macauley, David ***BUILT TO LAST***

272p. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2010 \$24.99 ISBN 978-0-547-34240-5

Combines three previously published books in one volume. *Castle*, *Cathedral* and *Mosque* are included with some updates and now they are also in full color! Sure to attract browsers.

Murphy, Jim ***THE CROSSING: How George Washington Saved the American Revolution***

96p. Scholastic 2010 \$21.99 ISBN 978-0-439-69186-4

An excellent look Washington's crossing of the Delaware River. The author gives good background before presenting the event. How and why Washington was chosen as to command the Continental Army, early battles and skirmishes, Washington's plans for the crossing, and why, after such a victory, he decided on a night march to Princeton. Another excellent book by an award winning author. Includes a timeline, a list of Revolutionary War sites, source notes, and an index.

Fiction for Younger Teens

Anderson, Laurie Halse ***FORGE***

281p. Simon & Schuster 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4169-6144-4

Sequel to *Chains* (and Bk 2 in the Seeds of America trilogy) Curzon, abandoned by Isabel, stumbles into a battle and becomes one of General George Washington's troops. Her descriptions of the lives of revolutionary soldiers at Valley Forge give a sense of the terrible conditions there. Curzon makes friends and enemies, fears being called a runaway slave, and wonders about the future. When he encounters Isabel again, he is determined they should both run fast and far. Book 3 should be as engrossing and compelling.

Barrett, Tracy ***KING OF ITHAKA***

261p. Henry Holt & Co. 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-8050-8969-1

Odysseus has been gone for years. Sixteen years since he left, his son, Telemachos, is almost a man. Things are getting more tense in Ithaka, so Telemachos heeds the advice of a visiting sea captain and goes searching for news of his father. His voyage to visit Pylos and Sparta guide him to be a better man

and future king. This story is a bit different from the one we have heard before. It has action, adventure and a little intrigue.

Blackwood, Gary ***AROUND THE WORLD IN 100 DAYS***

358p. Dutton 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-525-42295-2

Twenty years after Phileas Fogg went around the world in 80 days, his son, Harry, is caught in a similar situation. This time Harry was expounding on motorcars and how they will take over from horses and buggies. He insisted that the model he and a friend have developed is far superior to any other. Now he must drive all the way, except when crossing water, in 100 days or lose the bet he can't afford. Great fun, some danger and trouble.

Carter, Ally ***UNCOMMON CRIMINALS***

298p. Disney Hyperion Books 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4231-4795-4

Kat (Katerina, 15) chose to leave the family business – stealing art, jewels, etc. – and is now stealing art in order to return it to its proper owners. Then she is asked to steal the Cleopatra Emerald. The biggest problems – she can't use any of her regular cons, and the emerald is cursed. Maintains the quality of the first book: *Heist Society*.

Condie, Ally ***MATCHED***

366p. Dutton 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-525-42364-5

Reminiscent of *The Giver*, Cassia lives in a well ordered society without fear, poverty or uncertainty. When she is matched with her friend Xander at the Match Banquet, she is certain her match is perfect. But a computer glitch shows her the face of someone else, Ky, an aberration who is not allowed a match. This begins her discovery of the flaws of her society. Be warned – this book is not the end of the story. Book 2 of the trilogy, *Crossed*, is now out.

Dashner, James ***THE SCORCH TRIALS***

360p. Delacorte Press 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-385-73875-0

(sequel to *Maze Runner*) The survivors of the Maze are told they have two weeks to walk 100 miles straight north to the Safe Haven. If they get there, they will receive an antidote to the disease, the Flare, and maybe their trials will be over. One hundred miles of desolation, except for the city which houses the Cranks, people with the Flare that are going crazy and are extremely dangerous. Compelling story in books 1 & 2; great examples of organizing, leadership, and survival. *The Death Cure*, the final title in the trilogy, is now out.

Delaney, Joseph ***RAGE OF THE FALLEN***

416p. Greenwillow Books 2011 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-202756-6

War still rages in the County so Tom, the Spook, and Alice must travel to Ireland, where they could end up facing the Morrigan or even the Fiend. Irish Mages are trying to connect with Pan, who is not interested, and a witch may also be after Tom. Plenty of danger and excitement with a few scary (for me) scenes.

Falkner, Brian **BRAIN JACK**

349p. Random House 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-375-84366-2

Sam Wilson (17), a hacker who has been caught by Homeland Security, is now working for them, helping to catch potential hackers who threaten the security of the nation. The newest thing are neuro-headsets, which connect to the brain. Sam can move much faster through the Internet with one, but maybe they are not such a good idea.

Finn, Alex **CLOAKED**

337p. HarperCollins 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-087422-3

Flinn (17) is a cobbler, as was his father and grandfather before him. He wants to see the world, but stays to help his mother. His best friend works in the restaurant of the grand hotel that houses his mother's shop (it's been hers since his dad disappeared years ago). One day the beautiful Princess Victoriana of Aloria secretly asks him to find her brother, who has been turned into a frog by a witch. This blending of several fairy tales is full of adventure, intrigue, and some humor. It is bound to be popular, though is not quite as satisfying as *Beastly*.

Fuller, Anne **BELLE BOY: A Sister in the Rebel Ranks**

132p. Fuller Minds, LLC 2010 \$9.95 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-9827430-1-0

(A Nebraska author.) Samantha, now Sam, joins the Confederate ranks disguised as a boy as she tries to find her brother, listed as missing after a battle.

Funke, Cornelia **RECKLESS**

394p. Little, Brown & Co. 2010 \$19.99 ISBN 978-0-316-05609-0

Jacob Reckless has been visiting the land through the mirror in his father's office, he finds fairy tales items for his customers – it can be dangerous. His father disappeared years ago, and now his younger brother, Will, has joined him in Mirrorworld just in time to be bitten by a Goyl. Now Will begins to change from flesh to a stony skin. He is becoming jade and Jacob is desperate to help him.

Henderson, Jason **VAMPIRE RISING**

249p. HarperCollins c2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-195099-5

(Alex Van Helsing series, Bk 1) Alex (14) is sent to an academy near Lake Geneva in Switzerland. He soon learns that what he believed all his life – his last name has nothing to do with the famous vampire hunter – is all wrong. He is Van Helsing's great-great-great grandson and is about to get in the middle of an ongoing fight against evil. Plenty of action makes this a great start to a new series.

Kalkowski, John **RED CELL**

150p. iUniverse 2010 \$21.95 ISBN 978-1-4502-1209-0; \$11.95 (pbk) ISBN 978-1-4502-1207-6

(Nebraska author) Major League baseball action adds to this story of terrorists and the fight against them. Will Conlan, in middle school, unintentionally discovers a connection between a commercial on television and the terrorists target. Who will believe him? Who can he tell?

Lee, Tony **EXCALIBUR: The Legend of King Arthur**

Illus. by Sam Hart unp. Candlewick Press 2011 \$21.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-4644-8

Told in graphic novel format, this version of the well-known tale will appeal to reluctant readers and King Arthur fans.

Lee, Y. S. **THE BODY AT THE TOWER**

337p. Candlewick Press 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-4968-5

(Mary Quinn Mystery series, Bk 2) In Victorian London, Mary is now 18 and her second assignment for the secret detective agency (all women) is to disguise herself as a boy and work at the construction site of the Houses of Parliament and the clock tower as an errand boy to try to discover any information concerning one man's death and the perpetual delays in the construction. Gives some insight into the plight of the everyday worker of the time, especially young boys. An interesting mystery, a strong capable woman, and some romance.

Lore, Pittacus **THE POWER OF SIX**

406p. HarperCollins 2011 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-06-211163-0

(The Lorien Legacies series, Bk 2) John Smith (of *I Am Number Four*) is on the run with Six and his best friend Sam. Alternating chapters tell their story, and the story of Marina (number Seven) hiding with her mentor in a Spanish convent. From Lorien, another planet, they have been hidden on Earth until they come into their powers. Their powers have begun to appear and the first three have been killed by the Mogadorians, who are determined to wipe out their race, with Earth being next. The remaining five (or is it six?) Loriens must find each other to save whatever is left of their planet, and to save Earth. At least one more title to come.

Mulligan, Andy **TRASH**

229p. Random House 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-385-75214-5

Three boys who live on a huge trash area and are some of many who sift through what is there to find what can be sold or made use of. One day they find a bag with some paper and a key in it. Now begins their search for what the key unlocks and what might be inside. Their lives are in danger since the police showed up to ask all the dwellers to look for the bag. This could be their jackpot, or their downfall. The author notes that he based the dump in the book on one he visited while living in Manila.

Myers, Walter Dean **CHECKMATE**

133p. Scholastic 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-439-91627-1

The second book in The Cruisers series, Zander, Kambui, LaSonda and Bobbi who attend the DaVinci Academy in Harlem. The assistant principal asks the four Cruisers to befriend Sidney Aronofsky and find out why he has been picked up for drug use. He is the school's star chess player, and drugs don't fit with who he is. Book 3, *Center Stage*, is on the way.

Myers, Walter Dean & Ross Workman **KICK**

197p. HarperCollins 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-299489-5

Co-writing with high school student Ross Workman, Myers tells us about Kevin Johnson, 13, who is accused of stealing a car and wrecking it on a light pole. Told from alternating viewpoints, that of

Kevin and that of police sergeant Jerry Brown – who is trying to find out what really happened. SLJ states that Ross Workman wrote the chapters from Kevin’s viewpoint. A compelling story.

Neri, G. ***YUMMY: The Last Days of a Southside Shorty***

Illus. by Randy DuBurke 94p. Lee & Low Books 2010 \$16.95 (pbk) ISBN 978-1-58430-267-4
This graphic novel with black-and-white art is a blending of fiction and non-fiction, and is based on a Chicago event from 1994. The author noted several sources he used, after telling the story of an eleven-year-old boy who became both a perpetrator and a victim of violence as a member of a gang. Told through the eyes of a fictional school mate, Roger, the author presents several questions; and quotes John D. Hull from Time Magazine (September 1994) who stated, “I still couldn’t decide which was more appalling: the child’s life or the child’s death.” A powerful story.

Peck, Richard ***THREE QUARTERS DEAD***

193p. Dial 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-8037-3454-8
Kerry, a sophomore, is stunned and thrilled when the three most popular seniors invite her to join them. They hang out together, but one day, the three older girls are killed in a car accident. Then, a while later, the queen bee calls Kerry on the phone asking her to come into the city and join the three of them. This ghost story with the additional appeal of joining the “in” crowd may appeal to a more than the ghost story fans.

Reichs, Kathy ***VIRALS***

454p. Razorbill 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-59514-342-6
First young adult book by the author (this is a new series). Tory Brennan, niece to Temperance Brennan of Reichs adult series and TV show *Bones*, lives with her father, a marine biologist. She and her friends (all boys) are accidentally exposed to a manufactured strain of parvo-virus – which has profound effects on their systems. They become embroiled in an old murder and a new mystery about who is behind it all. Compelling, lots of action. But maybe a little too much description of locations.

Restrepo, Bettina ***ILLEGAL***

251p. HarperCollins 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-195342-2
Nora (14) her mother and grandmother are living in Cedula, Mexico, trying to keep their orchard going. Papa has been gone three years, north to Houston to work on construction. When the money stopped coming, Nora insisted she and her mother go to Houston to find her father. The 10-hour trip in the back of a mango truck, their arrival in Houston with no idea how to find her father, and how to live, show the gritty side of life for those here illegally. Nora finds she must take the lead, try to find work, and not give up. Includes a glossary of Spanish words.

Riggs, Ransom ***MISS PEREGRINE’S HOME FOR PECULIAR CHILDREN***

352p. Quirk Books 2011 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-59474-476-1
After his grandfather’s death, Jacob, 16, travels with his father to an isolated island near Wales. There he finds the ruins of the orphanage his grandfather was sent to during WWII. Jacob accidentally finds a way to the past and learns that the children at the orphanage have unique and unusual abilities, and now

are in terrible danger. Illustrated with occasional unusual actual photographs from the past, the mystery and action will certainly appeal to reluctant readers.

Riordan, Rick, Peter Lerangis, Gordon Korman, & Jude Watson ***VESPERS RISING***

238p. Scholastic 2011 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-545-290593; \$12.99 (PLB) ISBN 978-0-545-32606-3 (The 39 Clues, Book 11) Beginning with Gideon Cahill - 1507, on to Madeline Cahill - 1526, to Grace Cahill - 1942, and finally Amy and Dan Cahill – present day; this book prepares the reader for the next set of books in the series. Damien Vesper was first a friend and then an enemy of Gideon Cahill. He desperately wanted the serum Gideon developed so he could rule the world. His descendants, and their hirelings, from 1507 on, have pursued Cahills to find Gideon's ring and the way to the serum. Get set for a lot more action!

Korman, Gordon ***THE MEDUSA PLOT***

224p. Scholastic 2011 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-545-29839-1
(The 39 Clues: Cahills vs. Vespers, Book 1)

One or more Cahills from each of the five branches have been kidnapped. The Vespers want the formula and demand one step at a time toward that goal within a designated time limit – or someone will die. Can Amy and Dan complete the task assigned them or Nellie will die. It is a bit strange to have the other Cahill families helping instead of hindering them. But Amy and Dan both know the world is at stake if the Vespers end up with the formula. (It looks like there will be at least 6 books in the new series. Book 2 is out: *A King's Ransom* by Jude Watson.)

Schmidt, Gary D. ***OKAY FOR NOW***

368p. Clarion Books 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-54715260-8
Sequel to *The Wednesday Wars*, this book has several levels of action throughout. Doug Swieteck (8th grade) and his family must move to a small town where his father has a new job. Adjusting to a new place, no friends, and a Saturday job for himself is a lot to handle. He stops in the library, open only on Saturdays, and is soon learning about art, as he protests that he doesn't like to draw. Add on his brother returning from Viet Nam, and his father continuing to be a jerk; Doug has a lot to handle but he is beginning to step into his own. Well-written, compelling story.

Smith, Alexander Gordon ***SOLITARY***

232p. Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux 2010 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-374-32492-6
Sequel to *The Wednesday Wars*, this book has several levels of action throughout. Doug Swieteck (8th grade) and his family must move to a small town where his father has a new job. Adjusting to a new place, no friends, and a Saturday job for himself is a lot to handle. He stops in the library, open only on Saturdays, and is soon learning about art, as he protests that he doesn't like to draw. Add on his brother returning from Viet Nam, and his father continuing to be a jerk; Doug has a lot to handle but he is beginning to step into his own. Well-written, compelling story.

Smith, Alexander Gordon ***DEATH SENTENCE***

264p. Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux 2011 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-374-32494-0

Alex struggles to remember his name as he is slowly changed into a monster. He feels the strength and power the special formula puts into him, and all he wants to do is kill and destroy. But one reminder of his name from a boy begins to pull him back from the monster. (Book 4 Fugitives, is due out in early 2012)

Stroud, Jonathan ***THE RING OF SOLOMON***

398p. Disney • Hyperion Books 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-1-142312372-9

A prequel to "The Bartimaeus Trilogy" this title gives us another chance to spend time with the wise-cracking, footnote writing djinni, Bartimaeus. It is still an alternate world, magician's use imps and djinni as slaves. Bartimaeus was summoned by one of King Solomon's magicians and is forced to do his bidding. The Queen of Sheba sends her most trusted guard, young Asmira, to Jerusalem to kill King Solomon and steal his powerful ring. The fun really begins when Asmira and Bartimaeus meet up. Secrets are uncovered and surprises are in store for the reader. Bartimaeus is a wonderful character.

TenNapel, Doug ***BAD ISLAND***

218p. Graphix (Scholastic) 2011 \$10.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-545-31480-0; \$22.10 (PLB) ISBN 978-0-606229999 (Turtleback)

A graphic novel – by the author/illustrator of Ghostopolis. A bad storm strands a family of four on an unusual island. Strange plants, creatures, and human-like beings reveal how bad this island is. An alternating story about beings in another part of space is interspersed with the story of Mom, Dad, teen Reese and pre-teen Janie; all doing their best to survive. Color art brings the creepy/scary/bizarre and sometimes cute creatures to life. Wonderful storytelling.

Vande Velde, Vivian ***CLOAKED IN RED***

127p. Marshall Cavendish 2010 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-7614-5793-0

Eight short story parodies of the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood." As she did with *The Rumpelstiltskin Problem*, Vande Velde starts by noting some issues with the story, such as why would people name a child after clothing. She includes humor and different main characters in the stories to add to the fun of the different twists.

Whelan, Gloria ***SMALL ACTS OF AMAZING COURAGE***

224p. Simon & Schuster 2011 \$15.99 ISBN 978-1-4424-0931-6

The setting is India of 1919. Rosalind, 15, lives with her mother and has had quite a bit of freedom while her father has been away in the British military during World War I and after. She takes a couple of risks to help someone, as she struggles with the idea of a class system and why some people have so much and others so little. She is found out and sent "home" to England to live with aunts she doesn't know. Gandhi and the possible freedom of India intrigue her. The book gives a good sense of the time and place and also gives readers some food for thought.

Yee, Lisa ***WARP SPEED***

311p. Scholastic 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-12276-4

One of the members of the AV Club, those students who keep equipment running, Marley (7th grade) is also a Star Trek fan. His best friend is a Star Wars fanatic. Marley is regularly chased by bullies, and he

is able to outrun them if the way is clear. The track coach keeps asking him to try out for the team, but it is his friends in AV Club who trick him into doing so. Now everything could change if he becomes a jock.

Fiction for Grades 2-5 (or so)

Angleberger, Tom ***THE STRANGE CASE OF ORIGAMA YODA***

145p. Amulet Books 2010 \$12.95 ISBN 978-0-8109-8425-7; \$4.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-8109-9650-2
A collection of stories about advice an origama Yoda gives to kids in the 6th grade at McQuarrie Middle School. The stories are collected by Tommy, who is friends with the kind-of-weird kid, Dwight, who made Origama Yoda and walks around with it on his finger. Tommy is collecting information because he wants to know if he should trust Origama Yoda with a very important question (about a girl) and he is puzzled that Origami Yoda gives such good advice when Dwight is rather clueless. Instructions on how to make an origami Yoda are included.

Angleberger, Tom ***DARTH PAPER STRIKES BACK***

159p. Amulet Books 2011 \$12.95 ISBN 978-1-4197-0027-9
Now in 7th grade, Tommy finds it necessary to put together another notebook about Origami Yoda. This time it is in defense of Dwight – who may soon be sent to reform school. Harvey has created a Darth Vader paper puppet and he is determined to force Dwight to admit Origami Yoda is only paper, too. What gets Dwight in trouble is when Origami Yoda tells Jen, “Zero hour comes. Prepare to meet your Doom!” This was interpreted by the principal as “threatening speech and bullying.” Another entertaining story with lots of doodles on the edges of the pages, and instructions on making both an emergency 5-fold Origami Yoda and, a bit more complicated, Darth Paper.

Barrows, Annie ***IVY & BEAN WHAT’S THE BIG IDEA?***

Illus. by Sophie Blackall 131p. Chronicle Books 2010 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-8118-6692-7
(Ivy & Bean, Bk 7) The second-grade class is going to join the school Science Fair with ideas to help alleviate global warming. Ivy and Bean are enthusiastic - they just can't come up with a good idea.

Cannon, A. E. ***THE CHIHUAHUA CHASE***

illus. by Julie Olson 124p. Farrar Straus Giroux 2010 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-374-31259-6
Addy (4th gr) wonders why Teddy Krebs picks on her so much. But when his chihuahua, Phantom, disappears, she teams up with him to try to find the dog. Two (or maybe 3) possible candidates for dog-nappers will keep the readers guessing. A good early chapter book choice. Frequent illustrations break up the text.

Carris, Joan ***MAGIC AT THE BED & BISCUIT***

Illus. by Noah Z. Jones Candlewick Press 2011 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-4306-5
(sequel to *Welcome to the Bed & Biscuit* and *Wild Times at the Bed & Biscuit*) Grampa (a vet) has some livestock but also boards pets on his place. His household staff (he calls them his family) help out. Ernest, a mini-pig, Gabby, a mynah, Milly, a young cat, and Sir Walter, a puppy, help run the place.

This time a magician leaves Malicia, his Silkie bantam and part of his act, to get some rest. Mostly she gets bored and plays tricks on the other animals. Ernest still continues to uphold Grampa's philosophy of treating their guests with kindness and understanding, while trying to find a way to give Malicia her come-uppance. Good fun and perfect for readers just past the beginning reader level.

Chantler, Scott ***TOWER OF TREASURE***

112p. Kids Can Press 2010 \$17.95 ISBN 978-1-55453-414-2; \$8.95 (pbk) ISBN 978-1-55453-415-9 (Three Thieves, Bk 1) (gn) Dessa (14) is an acrobat with a traveling troupe, always looking for her twin brother. She is talked into helping her two fellow performers (Topper & Fisk) rob the Queen's treasury. They almost succeed, but instead are on the run. A good introduction to the characters and plot, with more adventures on the way in upcoming volumes (I assume). Full color art is included.

Chantler, Scott ***THE SIGN OF THE BLACK ROCK***

112p. Kids Can Press 2011 \$17.95 ISBN 978-1-55453-416-6; \$8.95 (pbk) ISBN 978-1-55453-417-3 (Three Thieves series, Bk 2) (gn) Dessa, Topper & Fisk are on the run, and the Queen's top men, the Dragons, are after them. They find a place to wait out the rain when the tavern keeper's wife hides them in the barn. Then a number of the Queen's men arrive for shelter and it seems the fugitives are bound to be caught.

Cole, Henry ***A NEST FOR CELESTE***

342p. HarperCollins 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-170410-9
Celeste, a small mouse who loves to weave baskets, lives in a southern plantation-type house. She is bullied by two rats who often steal her food. But one day, she encounters a young guest who enjoys her company and keeps her in his pocket. He is the apprentice to Mr. Audubon, who is there to collect specimens for his project. Celeste has some wonderful, and some scary, adventures and makes some friends. A note at the end of the book talks about Audubon and his techniques.

Cronin, Doreen ***THE TROUBLE WITH CHICKENS***

Illus. by Kevin Cornell 119p. HarperCollins 2011 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-06-121532-2
(a J.J. Tully Mystery, Bk 1) J.J. is a retired rescue dog (not his idea to retire) -- see the title page and dedication page for two of his exploits. He is relaxing in his doghouse when a chicken enters with a desperate case - two of her chicks are missing. J.J. takes the case, for a cheeseburger. Humor, some twists, and a likable hero are a good combination by a well-known author. This is her first novel, and is aimed at early chapter book readers with illustrations on most two-page spreads. A sequel is on the way: *The Legend of Diamond Lil*.

French, Vivian ***THE FLIGHT OF DRAGONS***

248p. Candlewick Press 2011 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-5083-4
(The Fourth Tale of the Five Kingdoms) The evil twins, Conducta and Globula are forced out of their home to find work, but they have no intention of working. Instead they team up with their exiled father, the horrible villain, Old Malignancy, who is hoping to take over the five kingdoms. There also is a rumor of a dragon egg that is ready to hatch and everyone wants it. The Trueheart, Gracie Gillypot and her friend Prince Marcus once again team up with some helpful bats and a friendly troll, Gubble, to

straighten everything out. Adventure and magic, these stories read like fairy tales. Illustrated with occasional line drawings.

Gidwitz, Adam ***A TALE DARK AND GRIMM***

250p. Dutton 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-525-42334-8

It takes some of the lesser known, original Grimm fairy tales and cleverly winds Hansel and Gretel through them. Starting with their adapted story (they get their heads cut off! and then reattached), he then has them continue through their kingdom and beyond, sometimes separately, to encounter the various troubles of the other fairy tales. The author occasionally addresses the reader throughout the book, at first mostly to request that all young children leave the room, for he tells the bloody, gruesome original versions of the stories, and to warn, on page 16, "...this is where things start to get, well, awesome. But in a horrible, bloody kind of way." Sounds awful, but it is a wonderful reworking of the fairy tales, and kids will be fascinated by the story.

Graff, Lisa ***SOPHIE SIMON SOLVES THEM ALL***

Illus. by Jason Beene 112p. Farrar, Straus & Giroux 2010 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-374-37125-8

Sophie is in third grade, is quite smart, and loves to read big, heavy books on difficult topics (like calculus). Her parents are quite a pair. They worry that she has no friends and call her names that escalate from "sugarplum" and "graham cracker" to "our little pudding pop" and "my darling lettuce wedge." They want only the best for her. Three students in her class each have a problem, and Sophie may have the solutions. Readers will love how Sophie combines the problems and has an interesting resolution for each. This is an early chapter book with a couple of illustrations per chapter. It's great to see it is not bad to be smart.

Grant, Michael ***THE CALL***

243p. HarperCollins 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-183366-3

(The Magnificent 12 series, Bk 1) When a 3,000 year-old man appear to Mack MacAvoy (12, in 7th gr) in the boys' room at school, he is startled when told he is one of the Magnificent 12 and his task is to find the other 11 and save the world before it is taken over by the Pale Queen and her daughter. Mack has numerous phobias and is not your typical hero. Stefan (15, also in 7th gr) is the ultimate bully, but he suddenly decides to help Mack with his task after Mack saves his life. The book contains adventure and humor; the series is off to a great start.

Grant, Michael ***THE TRAP***

294p. HarperCollins 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-183368-7

(The Magnificent 12 series, Bk 2) Mack, his friend Stefan, and Jarrah (the second of the 12) fly from Australia to China to seek the nine dragons of Daiku and the rest of the Magnificent 12. Mack is concerned because he thinks the last thing Grimluk said was, "beware of ...trap." Humor, adventure, magic, and more are in store for Mack and his friends.

Grimes, Nikki ***ALMOST ZERO***

Illus. by R. Gregory Christie 112p. G.P. Putnam's Sons 2010 \$10.99 ISBN 978-0-399-25177-1

(Book 3) Dyamonde makes a big mistake in telling her mother she wants a brand new pair of red tennis shoes and it is her mother's job to provide what she needs. The next day after school, Dyamonde has no other clothes or shoes. Her mom says she is providing what Dyamonde needs, but nothing more. Dyamonde is mad and sad, until a school classmate's family loses everything in a fire. Then Dyamonde gets busy helping.

Gutman, Dan **MISSION UNSTOPPABLE**

285p. HarperCollins 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-182764-8
(The Genius Files, #1)

Lots of action, danger, and humor. Twins Coke and Pepsi (almost 13) are traveling across the country in an RV with their parents. They must avoid assassins, solve puzzles, and save the world (without their parents finding out). The adventure will leave readers eagerly waiting for book 2.

Hahn, Mary Downing **THE GHOST OF CRUTCHFIELD HALL**

153p. Clarion Books 2010 \$17.00 ISBN 978-0-547-38560-0
Florence, 12, an orphan for several years, has been called to Crutchfield Hall to live with her great-uncle and her cousin, James, an invalid since his older sister Sophia's death six months ago. It isn't long until Sophia is materializing and influencing Florence to do things. How can James and Florence send Sophia away? Another good ghost story, this one set outside London in the 1800s.

Jules, Jacqueline **ZAPATO POWER: Freddie Ramos Takes Off**

Illus. by Miguel Benítez 77p. Scholastic 2010 \$3.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-545-29100-2; Albert Whitman & Co. \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-8075-9480-3
Freddie finds a box addressed to him at his apartment door, with no return address. It contains a pair of purple shoes w/ wings on the sides and a note that says "Zapato Power for Freddie Ramos." No clue who gave them to him. He tries out the shoes, and he can outrun the train! Now his dream of becoming a superhero can become reality. But he is at school all day, how can a superhero do anything heroic in school? Good fun and a sequel is on the way: *Zapato Power: Freddie Ramos Springs into Action*.

Klise, Kate **TILL DEATH DO US BARK**

Illus. by M. Sarah Klise 122p. Houghton Mifflin 2011 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-547-40036-5
(43 Old Cemetery Road, Book 3) A large dog follow Seymour home from the library and he wants to keep it. Ignacious (a children's book author) and Olive (a ghost) -- his adoptive parents -- are not enthusiastic. It turns out the dog had belonged to Noah Breth, who recently passed away. Soon, Noah's son and daughter arrive and are looking for his millions. Told in their usual style of no narrative, just letters, newspapers articles, illustrations, and notes, readers will either love the format or want nothing to do with it.

Korman, Gordon **FRAMED**

234p. Scholastic 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-17849-5
(sequel to *Swindle* and *Zoobreak*) Griffin Bing, the Man With the Plan, is accused of stealing a Super Bowl ring from the school display case. Evidence supports the accusation, but Griffin didn't do it. Can

the team prove him innocent before he is sent to juvie jail? Action, great planning and lots of humor make this third book just as fun as the first two.

LaFevers, R L. ***THE UNICORN'S TALE***

144p. Houghton Mifflin 2011 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-547-48277-4
(Bk 4 of the "Nathaniel Fludd, Beastologist" series) The short chapters and frequent illustrations will appeal to readers in grades 2-4. Nate is 10 and his Aunt Phil is training him in the family business of beastology, working to save, protect, and keep secret numerous mythological creatures. Nate's "pet" goblin, Greasle, is a lively character who sometimes surprises Aunt Phil. In this adventure, Nate can barely think of anything else, all he wants to do is find that rotten cousin Obediah Fludd to learn what happened to his parents. Aunt Phil understands his anxiety, but they don't know where he went and they are still responsible for the beasts. They go to help a unicorn who is apparently ill, and the situation becomes dire.

Markey, Kevin ***WING DING***

961p. HarperCollins 2011 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-06-115225-2
(Super Sluggers, Bk 3) The All-Star game will be played on the Rambletown Field this year. Except that an enormous horde of grasshoppers blew in on the gusty wind and proceeded to eat all the grass. The wind continues to blow hard, and the team's crack shortstop has the yips. Lots of sports action with some humor and steady team support. Still has occasional "film noir" language. Three pages of line-ups and two of stats conclude the book.

McCranie, Stephen ***MAL AND CHAD: The Biggest, Bestest Time Ever!***

223p. Philomel Books 2011 \$9.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-399-25221-1
Graphic novel in black-and-white cartoon-like art. Mal, a fourth-grade genius, keeps his knowledge and brains to himself. He knows if anyone finds out, he will end up in college immediately and he wants to continue to enjoy being a kid. His dog, Chad, can talk with him and they have many adventures together. Mal loves inventing things, including a time machine which they use to travel back in time to the age of dinosaurs. Of course there are several difficulties about getting back. Clever, humorous and will appeal to many, including reluctant readers.

Musgrove, Marianne ***LUCY THE BAD GOOD***

illus. by Cheryl Orsini 135p. Henry Holt 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-8050-9051-2
Lucy has been having some bad days. Jacinta at school is always picking on her but the teacher never realizes it; and she sometimes makes bad decisions. Her great-aunt from Holland comes to visit and things get harder for Lucy; maybe she really is -- bad! A blending of cultures, Lucy lives in Australia and Tante Bep is from Holland, with her own ideas as to how things are or should be. But Tante Bep does have a soft side, too.

Parker, Jake ***RESCUE ON TANKIUM3***

146p. Scholastic 2011 \$21.99 ISBN 978-0-545-11716-6; \$10.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-545-11717-3
(Missile Mouse #2) This graphic novel continues the adventures of the Galactic Security Agency (GSA) best agent, Missile Mouse. (He does tend to blow things up and get in trouble with his boss,

though.) In this adventure, Missile Mouse must take a team of security bots and a robotic assistant with him, and he is against the use of robots for this duty. They travel to the planet Tankium3, where the local inhabitants' minds are being controlled so they will work as slave labor in the mines. This is a job for Missile Mouse, and Robot 44.

Peirce, Lincoln ***BIG NATE: In a Class by Himself***

224p. HarperCollins 2010 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-06-194434-5

Nate (6th grade but looks younger to me) is a bit of a trouble-maker—he is not fond of school—and in this first book, his fortune cookie fortune tells him he will surpass all others. Nate spends the day trying to do that, but he is only getting detention again and again. Lots of humor, cartoon like drawings (reminiscent of Wimpy Kid), and interesting characters. Sure to be a hit with readers. The character, Nate Wright, and his companions began as a comic strip.

Peirce, Lincoln ***BIG NATE STRIKES AGAIN***

216p. HarperCollins 2010 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-06-194436-9

Nate is paired with his nemesis, Gina, on a research project about a famous American. They both feel this is a tragedy; Nate because Gina is so "know-it-all" and Gina because she is sure her grade point average will suffer. As funny and appealing as the first book. Two companion books of Big Nate comic strips is available now.

Peirce, Lincoln ***BIG NATE ON A ROLL***

216p. HarperCollins 2011 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-06-194438-3

Artur has joined Nate's Timber Scout group and Nate feels the pain as Artur is soon selling many more "warm fuzzies" and it appears he will win first prize for sales – a new skateboard. This volume maintains the humor, fun, and horrible circumstances of the first two books. Lots of drawings.

Reeve, Philip ***NO SUCH THING AS DRAGONS***

192p. Scholastic 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-22224-2

Ansel (10) has been mute since his mother passed away three years ago. His father eagerly arranges for Ansel to serve Johannes Brock, a reasonably successful dragon hunter. Brock confides in Ansel that there really are no such things as dragons, but there is the fear of dragons so he always has work. This trip, though, he might be wrong. Very wrong. People and animals have disappeared and the townsfolk of the mountain village are desperate for help. More death is on the way. Excellent storytelling with a (mostly) sympathetic cast. Sure to be popular with boys and reluctant readers.

Rylander, Chris ***THE FOURTH STALL***

314p. HarperCollins 2011 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-06-199496-8

Sixth-grader Mac helps the grade-school kids with what they need. Trouble with bullies? Need some advice? Ma can help you for a reasonable fee. Vince is his right-hand man, keeping track of the money. Their office is in a never used bathroom. But one day, Mac finds out about a guy who is collecting gambling debts and putting pressure on the students. When Mac takes him on, Mac may end up squashed.

San Souci, Robert D. **HAUNTED HOUSES**

276p. Henry Holt & Co. 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-8050-8750-5
(Are You Scared Yet?, Bk 1) Ten stories of haunted houses: some grim, some hopeful; written to scare – and they mostly succeed. (I read all of the stories), some are pretty creepy. One illustration per story. Should be popular with readers who like the hair raised on the back of their necks.

Santat, Dan **SIDEKICKS**

216p. Arthur A. Levine Books (Scholastic) 2011 \$12.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-439-29819-3
Harry, aka Captain Amazing, has two pets, a dog and a hamster. He hasn't had a sidekick since The Claw (his cat) disappeared. Now he is beginning a search for a new sidekick – both the dog and hamster hope to be chosen—so does the chameleon Harry just brought home. And what about The Claw?... Great fun!

Scieszka, Jon **SPHDZ Book #2**

230p. Simon & Schuster 2010 \$14.99 ISBN 978-1-4169-7953-1
Things are getting more complicated. Jennifer, Bob and Fluffy (the class hamster) are from another planet and are here to get 3.14 million and 1 earthlings to be Spaceheads. Michael K. needing more help to spread the word and protect Jennifer & Bob, reveals the aliens to his friends TJ and Venus. They soon are all working on some plans to get more SPHDZ! Agent Umber (of the Anti-Alien Agency) continues his search to find and capture the aliens. Lots of illustrations and wacky goings-on continue in Book 2. Book 3 is out now.

Smith, Clete Barrett **ALIENS ON VACATION**

250p. Disney Hyperion 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-1-4231-3363-6
David, nicknamed Scrub, is sent from Florida, where he had all kinds of plans with his best friend, to Washington to stay with his grandmother for the summer before seventh grade. She has a bed and breakfast and he is certain a long boring summer is ahead. He soon learns his grandmother's reputation as a "crazy lady" is well founded -- her visitors are from other planets. Soon Scrub is helping new arrivals to touch up their disguises and trying to keep the prying sheriff, who knows something is off with the place, out of his grandmother's hair. Humor, sympathetic aliens, and some tension about being discovered will keep readers involved. After all, everyone deserves a vacation, as grandma says. Clever touches, such as the descriptions of the many - very different - aliens add to the fun. Certain to appeal to reluctant readers, this looks like the beginning of a wonderful series.

Smith, Roland **STORM RUNNERS**

143p. Scholastic Press 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-08175-7
(Book 1 of a proposed trilogy) Chase Masters (12) and his father have been traveling the country for a year, helping people rebuild after disasters (for a fee, of course). Chase changes schools so often it's hard to count. Now they are in Florida with a hurricane on the way; and while his dad thinks Chase is in a safe area the hurricane may end up right where he is. All he has learned from his father may keep him and two new friends alive. Great adventure. The first book does have a conclusion to one part of the story, but a cliff-hanger for another. Can't wait for Bk 2!

Smith, Roland ***THE SURGE***

133p. Scholastic Press 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-08179-5
(Bk 2 of “Storm Runners” series) The hurricane has passed but Chase, Nicole and Rashawn are still in danger. Getting to the farm, the winter home for a circus, seemed like a good idea. But now they know a dangerous leopard is on the loose, and other animals may be loose, also. Great storytelling: adventure, survival in a disaster, and having vital knowledge are all part of this series. (Bk 3: Eruption out on 3/1/12)

Sniegowski, Tom ***QUEST FOR THE SPARK*** (Book 1)

Illus. by Jeff Smith 218p. Scholastic 2011 \$10.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-545-14102-4
Thorn, the Queen, is gravely ill. Tom Elm, and his raccoon friend Roderick, should be helping his parents with the turnip crop. Before long he has encountered Percival Bone and his niece and nephew and they are embroiled in fighting the dark that is trying to take over the world.

Vernon, Ursula ***DRAGONBREATH: Lair of the Bat Monster***

203p. Dial Books 2011 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-8037-3525-5
(Bk. 4) Danny (a dragon) and his best friend Wendell (an iguana) are in the local swimming pool when they find a small bat trapped in the pool filter. Danny’s mom sends them on the mysterious bus to one of Danny’s cousins in Mexico who is studying bats. A visit to the jungle, bat poo, the guano beetles that eat the poo, and maybe a huge monster will definitely appeal to readers! Told mostly in text with numerous black, white, green, (and an occasional blue) illustrations, the story is occasionally told with a page or two of graphic novel format and then back to text. (A few cautions are included in the text about picking up animals, and a page about bats is included at the back of the book.) It’s also great fun.

Voake, Steve ***DAISY DAWSON AT THE BEACH***

Illus. by Jessica Meserve 89p. Candlewick Press 2011 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-5306-4
(The 4th book) School is out and Daisy is headed to the beach with her parents. There she makes several new friends: two rabbits who want to surf, a crab who loves to dance, and a dolphin. It helps that Daisy can talk to and understand the animals. But she hasn’t forgotten her animal friends at home. The illustrations, on almost every two-page spread, will appeal to new chapter book readers and add to the story.

Wallace, Rich ***THE BALL HOGS***

Illus. by Jimmy Holder 119p. Alfred A. Knopf 2010 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-375-85754-6; \$15.00 (PLB) ISBN 978-0-375-95754-3
(Kickers, Bk 1) (Book 1 of a new series, there will be 4 books, reportedly) Ben (4th grade) is on a new co-ed soccer team with Mark, who brags about his abilities and hogs the ball. Ben knows her should be a good team player but he hogs the ball sometimes himself, and it hurts the team. Maybe everyone needs to develop more team spirit. Well written with action on the soccer field and in the four square court at school. It’s great to have this excellent author writing for younger children, too.

Yee, Lisa ***BOBBY THE BRAVE (SOMETIMES)***

Illus. by Dan Santat 153p. Scholastic 2010 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-545-05594-9

[Sequel to Bobby vs. Girls (Accidentally)]

Bobby (4th grade) isn't anything like his Dad, a former football pro, or his older sister, now quarterback for the high school team. He accidentally overheard his father say so. Bobby has asthma, and tries not to draw attention to that fact. The story is about Bobby and his dad, and also Bobby's good friends. If parents are looking for a book with involved parents, this is a good choice.

Nonfiction for Grades 2-5 (or so)

Bishop, Nic ***LIZARDS***

48p. Scholastic 2010 17.99 ISBN 978-0-545-20634-1

Amazing photo, as expected, and clear concise text introduce some of the world's lizards to the reader. One two-page foldout shows the basilisk lizard running across water. The author/photographer's comments at the back of the book about some of the difficulties of getting these photos.

Borgenicht, David, Molly Smith, Brendan Walsh, & Robin Epstein ***THE WORST-CASE***

SCENARIO SURVIVE-O-PEDIA Illus. by Chuck Gonzales 141p. Chronicle Books 2011

\$16.99 ISBN 978-0-8118-7690-2

In alphabetical order, this volume give advice on a variety of dangerous situations, each covered in a two-page spread. Good information, and a sure-fire browser's choice. (I checked out surviving mountain lions, deserted islands, snake bite, electric eels, and more!)

Capaldi, Gina & Q. L. Pearce (adap.) ***RED BIRD SINGS: The Story of Zitkala-Sa, Native***

American Author, Musician, and Activist illus. by Gina Capaldi 32p. Carolrhoda Books 2011

\$17.95 ISBN 978-0-7613-5257-0

Adapted from her autobiography, this title tells the story of Gertrude Simmons, a Sioux girl born in 1876 in South Dakota, and her journey through white schools and beyond to find herself, her talents, and to speak for her people.

Colgan, Lynda ***MATHEMAGIC!: Number Tricks***

Illus. by Jane Kurisu 40p. Kids Can Press 2011 \$16.95 ISBN 978-1-55453-425-8

Ten magic tricks are offered and then explained. Each trick relates in some way to a mathematical principle. Good details in the text and illustrations make it clear how to do the trick, and why it usually works. (Your math teachers might want a look at this title.)

Heo, Bridget ***WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTING JOEYS: A Guide for***

Marsupial Parents illus. by Stéphane Jorisch 32p. Millbrook Press (Lerner) 2012 \$25.26 (PLB)

ISBN 978-0-7613-5859-6

Birth and development (but not insemination) of several marsupials in a question and answer format. Good information is conveyed, illustrations dominate the pages. A companion title to *What To Expect When You're Expecting Larvae*.

Krull, Kathleen ***KUBLA KHAN: Emperor of Everything***

Illus. by Robert Byrd unp. Viking 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-670-01114-8

Another excellent biography by Krull, she acknowledges in the book how difficult it is to write about Kubla Khan since so little about him was actually written down by trustworthy historians. Still, she carefully fills in what she can about him and his time. The illustrations are also impressive.

Lasky, Kathryn ***SILK & VENOM: Searching for a Dangerous Spider***

Photos by Christopher G. Knight 61p. Candlewick Press 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-4222-8

After an introductory chapter of information about spiders, we join Greta Binford on a research trip to try to find a particular spider in the Dominican Republic. Good information along the way as to her methods and techniques in the field and in the lab. Well written (of course!) and includes a picture glossary, sources and index.

Lee, Dora ***BIOMIMICRY: Inventions Inspired by Nature***

Illus. by Margot Thompson 40p. Kids Can Press 2011 \$18.95 ISBN 978-1-55453-467-8

Takes a look at how humans have observed nature and developed structures, tools, medicines and more that follow the shapes and designs of nature. One example: early bullet trains (running up to about 180 mph) caused booms when exiting tunnels due to the buildup of air. Looking at kingfishers led the developers to design the front of the train to be like the bird's long beak, to slice through the air. (p.21)

Markle, Sandra ***THE CASE OF THE VANISHING GOLDEN FROGS***

48p. Millbrook Press (Lerner) 2011 \$29.27 ISBN 978-0-7613-5108-5

This well-respected author has produced another excellent title. Markle looks at the puzzle of why the golden frogs of Panama are getting sick and dying. Scientists from around the world communicate similar problems in their areas, and finally the problem and a temporary solution are found. Excellent photos enhance the text. Includes glossary and index.

McDonough, Yana Zeldis ***WHO WAS ROSA PARKS?***

Illus. by Stephen Marchesi 106p. Grosset & Dunlap 2010 \$4.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-448-45442-9

A biography of Rosa Parks written in a conversational style. Occasional insets tell of other, related topics on a single page or a two-page spread. They cover items such as the Ku Klux Klan, Jim Crow laws, Brown vs. the Board of Education, as well as other Civil Rights leaders.

Nicolson, Cynthia Pratt ***TOTALLY HUMAN: Why We Look and Act the Way We Do***

Illus. by Diane Eastman 40p. Kids Can Press 2011 \$16.95 ISBN 978-1-55453-569-9

Information on questions kids will have: "Why do we get hiccups?" "Why do we burp and fart?" Goofy illustrations may add, or detract, from the information depending on your readers' point of view. The answers often refer to evolution and genes.

Peot, Margaret ***INKBLOT: Drip, Splat, and Squish Your Way to Creativity***

56p. Boyds Mills Press 2011 \$19.95 ISBN 978-1-59078-720-5

A bit of history, then a how-to of inkblot art. The author shares methods of making inkblots, and continues with how to draw within your inkblot. Numerous examples will help to inspire young artists.

Ritchie, Scot ***LOOK AT THAT BUILDING!: A First Book of Structures***

32p. Kids Can Press 2011 \$16.95 ISBN 978-1-55453-696-2

Just what it says, a good first look at how buildings are designed. The kids need to build a doghouse for Max. They go to the library to gather information and we eavesdrop on what they learn.

Roop, Peter and Connie ***TALES OF FAMOUS HEROES***

Illus. by Rebecca Zomchek 103p. Scholastic 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-545-23750-5

Eighteen figures of history or current day are covered in this title. Six pages are devoted to each person, including Sacagawea, Winston Churchill, Nelson Mandela, Sonia Sotomayor, and one group: the Tuskegee Airmen. All are positive biographies with a readable text and caricature type image at the beginning of each entry.

Silvey, Anita ***HENRY KNOX: Bookseller, Soldier, Patriot***

Illus. by Wendell Minor 40p. Clarion Books 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-618-27485-7

Tells of this lesser known patriot, and his skills at using artillery during the Revolutionary War, as well as his almost impossible task of bringing the cannons from Fort Ticonderoga to Boston. The trek of 300 miles with heavy equipment over lakes and mountains was amazing. Well-written with wonderful illustrations.

Smith, David L. ***IF THE WORLD WERE A VILLAGE: A Book About the World's People***

Illus. by Shelagh Armstrong 32p. Kids Can Press 2011, 2nd ed. \$18.95 ISBN 978-1-55453-595-8

This second edition is an update, and includes some new information. Topics covered include: nationalities, languages, ages, religions, food, air & water, school & work, money & possessions, energy, health, and the number of people in the past with speculation on the future.

Urbigkit, Cat ***PATH OF THE PRONGHORN***

Photos by Mark Gocke 32p. Boyds Mills Press 2010 \$17.95 IDBN 978-1-59078-756-4

A good introduction to the pronghorn and its life cycle, including enough information for report writers. Excellent photos will draw in readers. Includes a page noting the pronghorn almost became extinct.

WEIRD BUT TRUE! 3

199p. National Geographic 2011 \$6.95 (pbk) ISBN 978-1-4263-0766-9

Usually one, two or three facts and sentences per page Great browsing item. Some examples: "Every square inch of your skin hosts about 6 million bacteria." & "A British man ate 36 cockroaches in one minute."

WISE AT HEART: Children and Adults Share Words of Wisdom

72p. Kids Can Press 2011 \$18.95 ISBN 978-1-55453-630-6

Wonderful photographs highlight this collection of advice and wisdom from people of all ages. Some names we will recognize: Jane Yolen, Tom Hanks; some are kids from somewhere in the world. Lots to think about and discuss, as a class, as a family, as friends.

Picture Books

Ada, Alma Flor & F. Isabel Campoy ***TEN LITTLE PUPPIES / DIEZ PERRITOS***

Illus. by Ulises Wensell unpub. HarperCollins 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-147043-1

As it says on the front cover, this book is “adapted from a traditional nursery rhyme in Spanish.” Enjoyable fun as the girl counts ten puppies down to one. Includes both English and Spanish versions. The music is given at the back of the book, along with a short paragraph of information on each of the dog breeds used in the book.

Brett, Jan ***THE 3 LITTLE DASSIES***

Unpub. Putnam 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-399-25499-4

A retelling of the Three Little Pigs, set in Southern Africa. Dassies are also called rock hyraxes. In this version, the eagle is the predator they must outwit. Great fun and wonderful illustrations.

Brown, Tameka Fryer ***AROUND OUR WAY ON NEIGHBORS' S DAY***

Illus. by Charlotte Riley-Webb unpub. Abrams 2010 \$16.95 ISBN 978-0-8109-8971-9

A summer day spent celebrating companionship through the neighborhood block party. The vivid colors and action portrayed provide a sense of activity and belonging.

Dorros, Arthur ***MAMÁ AND ME***

Illus. by Rudy Gutierrez unpub. HarperCollins 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-058160-2

A follow-up to his 2008 title, *Papá and Me*, this title celebrates mothers and daughters. Spanish words and phrases are woven into the story, and are understood by the context. Another good purchase for your library.

Emberley, Rebecca & Ed ***IF YOU'RE A MONSTER AND YOU KNOW IT***

Unpub. Scholastic 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-21829-0

You can download the song for free (if you bought the book) or have the kids sing it with you as you read. The monsters will: snort & growl, smack your claws, and more! Sure to be a noisy story time!

Foreman, Michael ***FORTUNATELY, UNFORTUNATELY***

Unpub. Anderson Press 2011 \$16.95 ISBN 978-0-7613-7460-2

A series of events occur when the monkey-like boy's mom asks him to take granny's umbrella back to her. From whales to pirates to dinosaurs, the boy encounters alternately fortunate and unfortunate situations. The umbrella is key. A silly, fun, imaginative adventure.

French, Jackie ***DIARY OF A BABY WOMBAT***

Illus. by Bruce Whatley unp. Clarion Books 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-547-43005-8
A follow-up to her *Diary of a Wombat*, French gives us another humorous look at the lives, and needs, of wombats. This time, of course, the baby wombat goes exploring every day, encountering a human baby (someone to play with!) and eventually going into the house. Continues the humor of the first book.

Gall, Chris ***SUBSTITUTE CREACHER***

Unp. Little, Brown & Co. 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-316-08915-9
Reminiscent of *Miss Nelson is Missing*, the substitute teacher arrives promptly at eight a.m. Mr. Creacher warns them, "If your plotting some mischief, please don't even try; in the back of my head, you'll find more than one eye." He proceeds to let them know some of the stories of children he taught that misbehaved and suffered the consequences - all told in rhyme. The last story he tells is of himself as a child, and how he came to look like he does now.

Gibbs, Edward ***I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE***

Unp. Templar Books (Candlewick Press) 2011 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-5284-5
A round hole in the middle of the pages gives a clue, along with the text, as to what might be on the following page. I Spy..."something that is blue." "I am the biggest animal in the world." Kids will love figuring out the clues and guessing what the next animal will be.

Graves, Keith ***CHICKEN BIG***

Unp. Chronicle Books 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-8118-7237-9
A "big, humongus chick" hatches out of a large egg and the other chickens aren't sure what he is. Maybe "it's an elephant!" The chick saves the day several times, prompting the other chickens to change their minds about what he is: an umbrella, a sweater, and more. Fun and silly.

Hall, Michael ***PERFECT SQUARE***

Unp. Greenwillow 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-191513-0
Wonderfully creative look at how to make something out of something else. A perfect square is "perfectly happy" with its four corners and equal sides, then is cut into pieces and punched with holes on Monday. So it made itself into a fountain. Each day of the week something different happens and the square makes itself into something else. Until Sunday - when nothing happens; the square takes care of everything itself. Great inspiration for art projects with torn, cut, and/or punched paper.

Henkes, Kevin ***LITTLE WHITE RABBIT***

Unp. HarperCollins 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-200642-4
The little white rabbit goes exploring and wonders things like: "what it would be like to be green." or "to be tall." The following illustration shows what he is thinking. A fun adventure until he encounters a cat and hurries back to his mother and siblings. Children can then spend some time imagining if they were tall, or really small, etc.

Houston, Gloria ***MISS DOROTHY AND HER BOOKMOBILE***

Illus. by Susan Condie Lamb unp. HarperCollins 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-029155-6
A quiet story about a girl who lent her books to the neighborhood kids, knowing she would grow up to be a librarian. There was no brick building for her, instead she ended up driving a bookmobile in the mountains of North Carolina. Dorothy took books around the area and shared her love of reading with everyone. The Author's Note at the back of the book tells us Dorothy was a real book mobile librarian, remembered fondly by many.

Juster, Norton ***THE ODIIOUS OGRE***

Illus. by Jules Feiffer unp. Scholastic 2010 \$17.95 ISBN 978-0-545-16202-9
A horrible, worst-of-all ogre is used to getting his way. When he encounters a young lady who has never heard of him, and she offers him some tea, he is flabbergasted! Why isn't she screaming and collapsing on the ground? The ogre is at a loss how to deal with her.

Klise, Kate ***STAND STRAIGHT, ELLA KATE: The True Story of a Real Giant***

Illus. by M. Sarah Klise unp. Dial 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-8037-3404-3
Born in 1872, Ella was just like any other baby. But when she was 7 she began to grow, much faster than any other child. This fictionalized story of a real person tells of her loving parents who kept her home to save her from the taunts and teasing of others. But at age 18, and 8 ft. tall, she chose to go to Chicago and be featured at a museum. An author's note at the back of the book fills in some more information about Ella Kate Ewing.

Lies, Brian ***BATS AT THE BALLGAME***

Unp. Houghton Mifflin 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-547-24970-4
Get yourself a mothdog or a box of Cricket Jack, find your seat and get ready for the game! (Look for the young bat still wearing his water wings from the first book.) Lots of fun continues in this latest book from Brian Lies.

McDonnell, Patrick ***ME...JANE***

Unp. Little, Brown & Co. 2011 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-316-04546-9
A tribute to, not a biography of, Jane Goodall. It also encourages children to realize that they can dream dreams...which may come true some day.

McMullen, Kate ***BULLDOG'S BIG DAY***

Illus. by Pacale Lemaitre unp. Scholastic 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-545-17155-7
Bulldog leaves home to look for a job and sees many creatures hurrying to work. He tries fire fighter, window washer, and more but is not successful. He leaves a cookie he baked with each of the animals. At day's end, he finds a line of animals at his door asking for more cookies. He has a job, his own bakery! Lively art and busy pages will appeal to young listeners.

Milgrim, David ***EDDIE GETS READY FOR SCHOOL***

Unp. Scholastic 2011 \$8.99 ISBN 978-0-545-27329-9

Eddie has apparently discovered checklists. The end papers contain a humorous assortment, including "sneak cookie" check "put cookie back" check "sneak brownie" check. Each two-page spread has one or two checklist items (plus checks) in text with an illustration of the checked item. Eddie is exuberant in getting ready for school, although a few checklist items do not pass Mom's approval (watch cartoons, drink root beer). The final page: "Give myself 3 cheers! I did it!!" A great introduction to the idea of checklists.

Quackenbush, Robert **FIRST GRADE JITTERS**

Illus. by Yan Nascimbene unpub. HarperCollins 1982, 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-077632-9
Originally published in 1982, this edition has new illustrations, and the story still holds true. The boy is worried about first grade. Kindergarten was fine, but first grade will be different and he doesn't know what to expect. His friends, who have been gone all summer, are the ones to help with his jitters.

Rosen, Michael **TINY LITTLE FLY**

Illus. by Kevin Waldron unpub. Candlewick Press 2010 \$15.95 ISBN 978-0-7636-4681-3
The tiny fly teases the elephant, the hippo and the tiger. Each is sure they will catch him, but off he goes. Exuberant art and the slight text make this story shine. One two-page fold out shows the three large animals unable to capture the fly.

Savage, Stephen **WHERE'S WALRUS?**

Unpub. Scholastic 2011 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-439-70049-8
A zookeeper is looking all over town for the missing walrus, but can't find him anywhere. Can you? Young children will have fun with this, since walrus usually isn't too hard to spot.

Schmid, Paul **A PET FOR PETUNIA**

Unpub. HarperCollins 2011 \$12.99 ISBN 978-0-06-196331-5
Petunia loves her toy skunk and makes all kinds of promises because she "wants, wants, wants! a real pet skunk." When her parents say "no" because they stink, she has a fit and runs away. Then she meets a real skunk...and realizes they DO stink! Maybe her toy skunk is the best pet - until she sees a live, super-cute porcupine. Simple line drawings with lavender and soft orange touches convey the story and show how cute a skunk can be.

Stein, David Ezra **INTERRUPTING CHICKEN**

Unpub. Candlewick Press 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-7636-4168-9
Papa gets ready to read a bedtime story to little red chicken, but just as the story starts, she interrupts – with Hansel & Gretel she said, "Don't go in! She's a witch! So Hansel & Gretel didn't. The end!" Kids will love it, especially if they are already familiar with the tales Papa tries to read. This could create trouble for reading aloud, if you're reading fairy tales...

Tullet, Hervé **PRESS HERE**

Unpub. Chronicle Books 2011 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-81187954-5

Great fun with colored spots on a white background. The text is simple, "press here and then turn the page" and one yellow dot becomes two! Press again and dots in yellow, blue and red appear. Tilting the book, and more, add to the fun.

Venable, Colleen AF ***AND THEN THERE WERE GNOMES***

Illus. by Stephanie Yue 48p. Graphic Universe 2010 \$27.93 (PLB) ISBN 978-0-7613-4599-2;
\$6.95 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-7613-5480-2

(Pet Shop Private Eye series, #2) Sasspants, the private eye (and a guinea pig), and her assistant Hamisher (a hamster), must investigate the possibility of a ghost in the pet shop. Why else would there be strange spots of cold air? Told in graphic novel format, readers will enjoy the fact that the store owner does not know what kind of animals he has – all are mislabeled.

Venable, Colleen AF ***THE FERET'S A FOOT***

Illus. by Stephanie Yue 48p. Graphic Universe 2011 \$27.93 (PLB) ISBN 978-0-7613-5223-5;
\$6.95 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-7613-5629-5

(Pet Shop Private Eye series, #3) Sasspants, the private eye (and a guinea pig), and her assistant Hamisher (a hamster), must solve the mystery of who is vandalizing the signs on the cages of the pets. Told in graphic novel format, the characters are fun and the mystery will keep young readers guessing.

Vernick, Audrey ***IS YOUR BUFFALO READY FOR KINDERGARTEN?***

Illus. by Daniel Jennewein unp. HarperCollins 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-176275-8

Kids will love the sight of a buffalo trying to use scissors, almost using the swings outside, and getting ready for picture day. Silly and fun, it still gives children an idea of what to expect at kindergarten.

Watt, Mélanie ***SCAREDY SQUIRREL HAS A BIRTHDAY PARTY***

Unp. Kids Can Press 2011 \$16.95 ISBN 978-1-55453-468-5

Scaredy Squirrel is up to his usual tricks. He does a great job of planning his own birthday party, but only invites himself since that is the safest thing to do. Then he decides to invite his friend Buddy, the dog. Buddy shows up with a bunch of puppies in tow. Scaredy panics and ends up playing dead. Finally, everyone has a good time. Great fun!

Wiesner, David ***ART & MAX***

Unp. Clarion Books 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-618-75663-6

Arthur is a skilled artist. Max is an enthusiastic newcomer. Max doesn't know what to paint and when Art suggests Max paint him, Max takes him literally. This is just the beginning of the problems for Art. Great fun, excellent illustrations, and an opportunity for an interesting discussion about art styles and approaches.

Yolen, Jane ***ELSIE'S BIRD***

Illus. by David Small unp. Penguin Group 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-399-25292-1

After her mother's death, Elsie and her father move from Boston to the **Nebraska prairie**. Elsie finds the changes hard, missing her mother and the city she knew. She stays inside their soddy, not venturing

outside at all, until her parakeet flies away while her father is gone to town. Elsie runs after him to try to lure him back into his cage. That is when Elsie finds the prairie to be a beautiful place.

Beginning Readers

Bishop, Nic ***BUTTERFLIES***

32p. Scholastic 2011 \$3.99 (pbk) ISBN 978-0-545-28434-9
Large, colorful photographs highlight this beginning reader overview of butterflies and their caterpillars. It is unfortunate that it is not currently available in hardback.

Capucilli, Alyssa Satin ***SCAT, CAT!***

Illus. by Paul Meisel 32p. HarperCollins 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-117754-5
A small cat is lost, and as he walks along, through the city and into the country he cannot find any rest. Everyone keeps telling him to scat!

McMullen, Kate ***PEARL AND WAGNER: Four Eyes***

Illus. by R. W. Alley Dial 2010 \$15.99 ISBN 978-0-8037-3086-1
An eye test at school results in Wagner needing glasses. He does not like them and at the bus stop, Pearl must encourage him to wear them. When some bullies call him names he throws his glasses in his backpack. His friends have a creative (and non-violent) solution to the issue.

Minarik, Else Holmelund ***LITTLE BEAR AND THE MARCO POLO***

Illus. by Dorothy Doubleday 32p. HarperCollins 2010 \$6.99 ISBN 978-0-06-085485-0
Little Bear and Grandfather are in the attic, when they open a trunk they find the old sea captain hat and coat Grandfather used to wear. They talk about his old ship, the *Marco Polo*, and where it could take them. Still, Grandfather is quite happy at home with Grandmother.

Rylant, Cynthia ***MR. PUTTER & TABBY CLEAR THE DECKS***

Illus. by Arthur Howard unpag. Harcourt 2010 \$15.00 ISBN 978-0-15-206715-1
Mr. Putter & Tabby are bored, and hot. Mrs. Teaberry has an idea – a tour on an old boat. It is great fun (except for Tabby) but Zeke doesn't want to leave the boat when the tour is over. Another fun addition to the series.

Yee, Wong Herbert ***MOUSE AND MOLE, A WINTER WONDERLAND***

Unpag. Houghton Mifflin 2010 \$15.00 ISBN 978-0-547-34152-1
Mouse wants to play in the snow, but Mole wants to stay warm in bed. Mouse skates and builds a snowman by herself, but it is lonely. When Mole sees the snowman on her sled, he thinks someone is following her, so he gets dressed and runs outside. Soon they are both having fun in the snow, and some hot tea and cookies in the house. Good friendship story.

Zobel, Derek **ROAD ROLLERS**

24p. Children's Press & Bellwether Media 2010 \$15.95 ISBN 978-1-60014266-6
Clear full-color photographs dominate the pages with usually two sentences in large text. This title is aimed at emerging readers. The topic is sure to attract attention. Includes a glossary and index.

Nonfiction Picture Books

Bill, Tannis **PIKA: Life in the Rocks**

Photos by Jim Jacobson 32p. Boyds Mills Press 2010 \$18.95 ISBN 978-1-59078-803-5
An introduction to the life of a pika living in the Rocky Mountains. Plenty of excellent photos add to the brief text, which contains one to five sentences per page. Includes some "Pika Facts" at the back of the book.

Cleary, Brian P. **SIX SHEEP SIP THICK SHAKES: And Other Tongue Twisters**

Illus. by Steve Mack 32p. Millbrook Press 2011 \$16.95 ISBN 978-1-58013-585-6
Contains 24 tongue twisters with humorous, colorful illustrations. My favorite part of the book is "Make Your Own Tongue Twisters" on one page at the back of the book. A good challenge for readers!

Hatkoff, Juliana, Isabelle Hatkoff & Craig Hatkoff **LEO THE SNOW LEOPARD**

Unp. Scholastic 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-545-22927-2
The story of the rescue of snow leopard cub found all alone in the Karakoram Mountains of Pakistan by a local man, a goat herder. The cub's story shows the cooperation of several organizations and a zoo to keep him safe and give him a home. Numerous excellent photos enhance the story.

Jenkins, Steve & Robin Page **HOW TO CLEAN A HIPPOPOTAMUS**

Unp. Houghton Mifflin 2010 \$16.00 ISBN 978-0-547-24515-7
Lots of illustrations, several per two-page spread, highlight good information in this book on symbiosis. All animals are identified in the final pages of the book.

Prelutsky, Jack (ed.) **THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE SCHOOL: Classroom Poems**

Illus. by Jane Manning 32p. Greenwillow Books 2010 \$16.99 ISBN 978-0-06-082338-2
Various poets provide 18 poems about school. Sample: "Why the Class Frog is Purple" by Kalli Dakos
" We were painting / A mural today, / The frog got loose, / What can I say?"
My favorite is "The Drinking Fountain" on page 15.

Raczka, Bob **GUYKU: A Year of Haiku for Boys**

Illus. by Peter H. Reynolds unp. Houghton Mifflin 2010 \$14.99 ISBN 978-0-547-24003-9
Following the seasons, and beginning with Spring, this title offers 24 haiku poems aimed at boys. The author covers bike riding, tree climbing, skipping stones, and pondering the night sky. Peter H. Reynolds's wonderful illustrations are mostly in browns, with one other color per season: green with spring; yellow w/ summer; all brown for fall, blue with winter.

Schaefer, Lola ***JUST ONE BITE***

Illus. by Geoff Waring unp. Chronicle Books 2010 \$17.99 ISBN 978-0-8118-6673-2

A look at how much one animal's bite can contain, and how large or small their mouths are. The artwork carries the book; kids will be fascinated by the illustration sizes. 12 animals, from microorganisms, and worm to elephant and sperm whale are included. Brief information is listed at the back on each animal. One two-page spread folds out to four pages. Fun and informative.

Serafini, Frank ***LOOKING CLOSELY IN THE RAIN FOREST***

Unp. Kids Can Press 2010 \$16.95 ISBN 978-1-55337-543-2

(Looking Closely series) A series of photos show, on the first page, part of a photo enclosed in a circle surrounded by black. After the reader guesses what it is, the next page reveals the entire photo and a couple of paragraphs of text giving a little information on the topic.



Sally Snyder

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